

TEXTUAL STRATEGIES AND THE *RITUAL FORMULARIO E INSTITUCIÓN DE CURAS* (1631) BY JUAN PÉREZ BOCANEGRA*

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*ABSTRACT: This article analyzes different textual strategies in the *Ritual formulario e institución de curas* (1631) by the father Juan Pérez de Bocanegra. We argue that the questionnaire has different textual mechanisms that aid to build, condense and repeat sins, which alters Andean beliefs and standardizes idolatry.*

KEYWORDS: Colonial Andes, missionary texts, Juan Pérez Bocanegra, extirpation of idolatries, sins.

ESTRATEGIAS TEXTUALES Y EL *RITUAL FORMULARIO E INSTITUCIÓN DE CURAS* (1631) DE JUAN PÉREZ BOCANEGRA

*RESUMEN: El siguiente trabajo observa diversas estrategias textuales en el *Ritual formulario e institución de curas* (1631) del padre Juan Pérez de Bocanegra. Argumentamos que, en el cuestionario del confesionario, aparecen mecanismos textuales en donde se construyen, homogeneizan y repiten los pecados, lo que ayuda a alterar las creencias religiosas andinas y estandarizan los comportamientos idólatras.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Andes coloniales, textos misioneros, Juan Pérez Bocanegra, extirpación de idolatrias, pecados.

STRATÉGIES TEXTUELLES ET LE *RITUAL FORMULARIO E INSTITUCIÓN DE CURAS* (1631) DE JUAN PÉREZ BOCANEGRA

*RÉSUMÉ : Le travail suivant examine différentes stratégies de text dans le *Ritual formulario e institución de curas* (1631) de le prêtre Juan Pérez de Bocanegra. Nous soustenons que, dans le questionnaire du confessionnal, des*

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mécanismes textuels apparaissent dans lesquels les péchés sont construits, homogénéisés et répétés, ce qui contribue à modifier les croyances religieuses andines et à standardiser les comportements idolâtres.

MOTS CLÉS : Andes coloniales, textes missionnaires, Juan Pérez Bocanegra, extirpation de l'idolâtrie, péché.

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1. Introduction

More than a century after the Conquest, the bachelor and presbyter Juan Pérez Bocanegra published his *Ritual formulario e institución de curas* (1631), a ritual created for the administration of the Christian sacraments and instruction of Catholicism. Using as a main source the Roman ritual published by Pope Paul V in 1620, the priest adapted it to the Andean context by translating the Latin version to Spanish and Quechua. Along with this, Pérez Bocanegra introduced new questions to the sacrament of Penitence.¹ The author arranged several questions as indigenous communities were considered highly superstitious. In the questionnaire, he described different impious behaviors that priests could use as a guide to recognize whether Indians were offending God or not. Nonetheless, those questions were not simple inquiries regarding some sins but a textual procedure that controlled its possible answers while altering Indian's religious perspective. In the following pages we will argue that the questionnaire enacts a mechanism consisting in three steps: a) creation of sins: the denunciation of *idolatrías* as a consequence of the European perspective over different Indians behaviors; b) the conformation of different "idolatrours" practices into a uniform mass; and c) repetition of sins: a dialogical strategy where the priest drives the Indian to the recognition of such sins and the declarative repetition of them.

2. The Devil all the time in the Andes

Andean religions were one of the main concerns during the first decades of the colonization of the Americas. Several thinkers considered different satisfactory

1. "Quitando muchas cosas, que había hallado, así impresas como escritas de mano; y añadiendo otras de grandes necesidad, e importancia, para administrar válida, y devidamente, los santos Sacramentos (en particular el de la Penitencia) a estas tiernas plantas, que hoy son muy nuevas, en la ley de Cristo, y de sus ministerios; por defecto nuestro bien conocido, en la negligencia tan grande, que tenemos, en las enseñar, ejemplificar, y predicar" (1631: 28).

explanations for those evil behaviors presented by the indigenous communities. As father Joseph de Acosta explained, even though the Andean people belonged to the offspring of Adam and Eve, they had been deceived by the Devil who drove them to the adoration of idols and natural elements.² A few years earlier, Pedro Cieza de León thought similarly while he was writing his *Crónica del Perú*. In his writings, he denounced the presence and intervention of the Devil.³ The idea of the influence of the Devil remained strongly during XVII century. For example, this topic was regularly used by the *extirpadores de idolatrías* like Francisco de Ávila and Fernando de Avendaño.⁴

On the contrary, two other sources, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala and Titu Cusi Yupanqui, had dissonant perspectives about the Spaniard position on this issue. In the case of the former, he argued that the deviated people from the Christian way were, in fact, the Spaniards in Peru. As the ancient fathers (the Uari Uira Cocha Runa) were the ones genuinely Christian. In the case of Titu Cusi Yupanqui, rather than considering the Devil as an important influence on Indian religions, he remembered what Manco Inca told once about Spaniards being the true Devils.⁵

2. Describing the Indian idolatry, Joseph de Acosta argues that: “Finalmente, quien con atención lo mirare, hallará que el modo que el Devilio ha tenido de engañar a los indios, es el mismo con que engañó a los griegos y romanos, y otros gentiles antiguos, haciéndoles entender, que estas criaturas insignes, sol, luna, estrellas, elementos, tenían propio poder y autoridad para hacer bien o mal a los hombres, y habiéndolas Dios creado para el servicio del hombre, él se supo tan mal regir y gobernar, que por una parte se quiso alzar con ser Dios, y por otra dio en reconocer y sujetarse a las criaturas inferiores a él, adorando e invocando estas obras, y dejando de adorar e invocar al Creador, como lo pondera bien el Sabio por estas palabras...” (2006: 249). Mentioning the Indians from Peru, Acosta adds: “Mas en los indios, especialmente del Pirú, es cosa que saca de juicio la rotura y perdición que hubo en esto; porque adoran los ríos, las fuentes, las quebradas, las peñas o piedras grandes, los cerros, las cumbres de los montes que ellos llaman Apachitas, y lo tienen por cosa de gran devoción; finalmente, cualquiera cosa de naturaleza que les parezca notable y diferente de las demás, la adoran como reconociendo allí alguna particular deidad” (2006: 250).

3. Pedro Cieza de León refers to the beliefs of the Indians near the Ecuador: “Hay muchas y muy grandes sepulturas, y que no deben ser poco ricas. Tenían primero una grande casa o templo dedicado al demonio [...]” (1985: 71).

4. In the sermon called “La Epifanía del Señor y Pascua de los Reyes”, Francisco de Ávila blames the Devil for the Indian adoration of idols. In his preach, Ávila denounces: “Mirad hijos míos, que el maldito demonio es nuestro enemigo y que de continuo está diciendo: ‘¡ah! ¿cómo haría yo para que el hombre no fuese al cielo?’ y trabaja porque erremos el camino y todo lo que en orden a esto hace, donde pone más fuerza es en que no se adore al verdadero Dios” (Taylor 2002: 47). Fernando de Avendaño also emphasizes the presence of the Devil in the religious deviation of Indians. In one of his sermons, Avendaño explains that: “Demás de esto habéis de saber que los hombres que pasaron a poblar esta tierra no eran de una sola familia de los hijos y nietos de Noé, sino de muchas familias, como ya os he enseñado, y todos eran idólatras, porque habían muchos años que se habían apartado de su abuelo, Noé, y, como no tenían libros ni maestros que les enseñasen a conocer al verdadero Dios, por esto adoraron al sol, y el demonio, nuestro enemigo, los engañó para que adorasen las huacas [...]” (Taylor 2002: 148).

5. In the *Corónica*, Guamán Poma claims: “¡Oh, qué buena gente! aunque bárbaro, ynfiel, porque tenía una sonbrilla y lus de conocimiento del Criador y Hazedor del cielo y de la tierra y todo lo que ay

Pérez Bocanegra's *Ritual* also takes part on this discussion as he acknowledges that the Indians were dominated, blinded and immersed in ignorance:

Demás, de que el Confesor está obligado a preguntar al penitente inhábil, torpe, vergonzoso en se confesar; y en dos casos particularmente. El primero, cuando es ignorante, y no sabe acusarse de sus pecados (como los son estos Naturales, que tantas confesiones hacen informes, y atropelladas, por su gran rudeza, y suma ignorancia.) El segundo, cuando confiesa el pecado, y no la circunstancia del, o los pecados, que cometió anexos a el: como si confiesa un pecado de carne, le ha de preguntar las circunstancias del: es a saber, si requirió, o procuró, o mandó requerir a la parte, para la incitar, y provocar al pecado. Y aunque en esto no sea necesario declarar las particularidades, que en el interviniere, es lo con todo, confesar las que mudan la especie del pecado. (1631: 105-106)

3. Forging sins in the Andes

The existence of the Devil in ancient Andean cultures appears basically from the European and Christian perspectives. From what we know about Andean religions, the idols they believed in were considered earthly forces. In the case of Pérez Bocanegra's questionnaire for *idolatrias*, it is possible to recognize that those behaviors were considered an offense to the Christian god. Strictly speaking, along with their Christian contemporaries, Pérez Bocanegra believed in the real influence of the Devil in Andean religious practices. Christians categorized those behaviors as *idolatrias* without knowing that these practices differed greatly depending on the communities, as they corresponded to different Andean religions. Indeed, there were several Andean beliefs as Spaniards arrived in America, though the Europeans only considered one as the most important and extensive for all Andean people: Inca religion. Because the most important thing was not the preservation of these religions but its annihilation, the missionaries' main point was to discover those conducts and classified them as *idolatrias*. In the case of

en ella. Sólo dezir Runa Camac, Pacha Rurac es la fe y es una de las más graves cosas, aunque no supo de lo demás ley y mandamiento, euangelio de Dios, que en aquel punto entra todo. Ued esto, cristianos letores, de esta gente nueva y prended de ellos para la fe uerdadera y serbicio de Dios, la Sanctísima Trinidad" (1992: 43). On the other hand, Titu Cusi Yupanqui mentions: "[...]pues, ¿eso manda el Viracochan, que tomeis por ffuerça la hazienda y mugeres de naidie? no se vsa tal entre nosotros, y bien digo yo que bosotros no sois hijos de Viracochan sino del supay' (que es el nonbre del demonio en nuestra lengua)" (2006: 40).

Pérez Bocanegra's *Ritual*, there was an explicit effort to collaborate in that construction.⁶

The campaigns of extirpation started as a way to suppress Indian religions and superstitious beliefs in Peru during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but the most aggressive part of it was during the archbishop of Bartolomé Lobo y Guerrero (1610-1622), Gonzalo de Campos (1625-1626), Fernando Arias de Ugarte (1630-1638) and Pedro de Villagómez (1641-1671). The last twenty years of the XVI century saw Francisco de Toledo, the Viceroy of Peru, using the *extirpación* as an effective way of repression of the Taqui Oncoy's rebellion and paganism among Andean communities. As in the case of Pérez Bocanegra's *Ritual*, for the *extirpadores* there was no intention of identifying particular Andean religions neither preserving them. On the contrary, the main goal was their erasure. During the rule of archbishop Lobo y Guerrero, there was an institutionalization of the visits with a highly legal and bureaucratic apparatus backing the process of extirpation. Each process consisted in testimonies, counter testimonies, edicts, defenses, archives, exhibition of idols and application of punishment. These processes were structured according to the fault committed. In addition, the ecclesiastical and legal machine had to set up a list of behaviors and actions that were recognized as faults, vices and transgression of the system. Thus, while those behaviors were not considered in their relationship with a particular community or specific Andean religion, they were accumulated under the name of *idolatrías*, leaving behind any Andean religious differentiation (Duviols 2003: 23). Both Pérez Bocanegra's questionnaire and the *extirpadores* worked hand in hand in the construction of an enormous compilation of practices. Indeed, before the arrival of Spaniards, Andean communities maintained their distinct beliefs even though the Incas ruled them. Since the Inca administration did not constrain them to forget their gods, these religions coexisted until the Spanish presence. Using the categorization of *idolatrías*, therefore, the Spaniards saw the same impious behaviors in each of them.

4. Framing the sinner

There was a mechanism based on repetition that appeared in the questionnaire of Pérez Bocanegra that helped to construct these idolatries.

6. "Y a esta causa escribo este formulario, con la brevedad que otros Confesionarios (que de molde, y de mano) e visto, sino muy ad longum, declarando por muy menudo, todas las maneras comunes, y exquisitas, que tienen los Indios de pecar: y no remitirlas a la incipencia, y mal examinada conciencia del Indio, o Indias penitente; que jamás se confiesan bien, sino muy preguntados, y entonces hay duda, si dice todo lo que hizo mal y lo que tiene que confesar" (1631: 105).

Before presenting the questions, the priest admonished his readers with a series of warnings for an “appropriated confession” of the Indians: “Y cuando al penitente no se le acuerde determinadamente, enséñele a decir cuántos pecados le parece ha cometido, poco mas, o menos” (1631: 106). Indeed, the most important warning from the priest was that Indians always hide sins; they were always guilty of something and, therefore, the confessor had to convince them to confess their faults:

Y si le pareciere al Sacerdote, que el Indio, o India calla, o oculta algún pecado, haláguete dulcemente, con palabras amorosas, y blandas; ayudándole, y animándole, a que diga todas sus culpas: especialmente aquellas, que (por sus razones) quiere ocultar, que fácilmente se hallará de ver; por el tragar amenudo la saliva, y no sosegar de rodillas, toser, mirar a una, y otra parte, y otras señales, que Dios quiere que muestre, cuando quiere cometer este sacrilegio. Diciéndole estas razones, u otras semejantes en su lengua: Amado hijo, por la abundancia de la divina gracia, tenemos este gran don, y saludable remedio, que por nuestra verdadera confesion, alcanzamos perdón de nuestros pecados. No hallas pues verguenza, por la salud, y bien de tu alma, de decir la verdad en presencia mía: pues yo soy tan gran pecador como tu: y quizá habré cometido muchos, y más graves pecados, que los que me has confesado, y te quedan por confesar: y en este lugar hijo mío, no te oigo yo como hombre, sino como puesto en lugar de Dios: y de mis pies te levantarás perdonado, y de enemigo de Dios, por tus pecados, te haré amigo suyo. (1631: 109-110)

In an “ideal” confession, the penitent goes to the priest already acknowledging that there is a sin to be told. However, the ideal confession was left behind in the case of Pérez Bocanegra’s questionnaire. As Bocanegra points out, priests have to discover the penitents’ sins in their acts:

Los que se excusan por ignorancia, dicen, que nunca oyeron, ni supieron, que tales actos eran pecados. Y haciéndoles las preguntas escritas, los vienen a confesar, de la manera que confiesan las culpas, que han tenido, con varones, o mujeres. (1631: 138)

Thus, the priest had to presume guiltiness in the Andeans who had to be carried in order to confess a sin. As question number 22 asks:

22. Acuérdate de los pecados que has hecho después que te confesaste, ocultando ese pecado?
Si dijere, que no se le acuerda, dirale.

Pues hijo, desde el tiempo que ocultaste ese pecado hasta ahora, piensa tus pecados bien, y pensados vente, que yo te confesaré, y acuérdate de las veces, que te has confesado en este tiempo. (1631: 143)

And then, in question number 53:

53. Tienes la Bula de la Cruzada, desta última predicación?

Diga luego el Sacerdote: Hijo mío, dime todos los pecados, como te acordares, que después yo te iré preguntando los que ahora se te olvidaren. (1631: 145)

After these interrogations, there was a set of questions prepared exclusively for the offenses against God:

El primer Mandamiento de la ley de Dios, dice: Amarás a Dios sobre todas las cosas.

En las preguntas siguientes, se contienen todos los ritos, ceremonias, y adoraciones, que antiguamente los Indios tenían. Juntamente con sus agujeros, y hechicerías, que aunque ahora por la misericordia de Dios, no haya mucho desto en esta ciudad del Cuzco, y haya personas que digan, y engañen a su Magestad del Rey Don Felipe nuestro señor con falsedad, que hay idolatrías, dicenlo por sus intereses, y ambiciones y no porque haya, a lo menos, con publicidad nada desto hay algo fuera del, y en raras partes. (1631: 28)

These questions cover areas where the Indian could be sinning: adoration of idols (questions 1st to 6th), dreams (7th to 20th), stumbles (21st to 23rd), animals and food (24th to 30th), witchcraft (31st to 48th), *malquis* and mourning (49th to 54th), nature (65th to 77th, 99th to 100th), *huacas* and festivities (78th to 87th), land (88th to 90th), housing (91st to 93rd), and ceremonies (100th to 126th). Almost every group of these questions start with a simple inquiry that refers to an idolatrous act. For example, in relation to stumbles, Pérez Bocanegra asks: “21. Haz tomado por agujero tropezar cuando sales de casa?” (1631: 128). The question connects a simple action, the stumble, with an impious intention, the *agujero*, showing to the Indian the connection between the elements and its connotation. If the Indian said “yes”, the priest should ask: “22. cuando has tropezado, sueles agujerear la parte donde tropezaste, con el prendedero?” (1631: 128). The second question already assumes the meaning of the first one and installs the penitent into a fixed situation “agujerear la parte donde tropezaste, con el prendedero” related to the belief of the *agujero*. This took the person into a fixed belief. Finally, the last question develops the *idolatría* further into another fixed situation:

23. cuando tropiezas con el pie izquierdo, yendo pensando en algo, sueles decir, no ha de ser lo que pienso? Y así mismo tropezando con el pie derecho, dices, efecto ha de tener lo que voy pensando? (1631: 128)

In another example, the first question asks: “7. Crees los sueños, diciendo bien, o mal he soñado? acontecido me ha como lo soñé?” (1631: 146-147). Then, he expands the inquiry: “9. Cuando durmiendo pasas entre sueños algún puente, sueles decir, que es para apartarte de alguna persona?” (1631: 147). Thus, the questionnaire tries to put the penitent in an already fixed situation starting from a simple one, and then, driving him or her through alternatives identified in advance. Every question jumps into another one, trying to construct a narrative of the impious behavior of the Indian through a script that builds *a priori* the sin.

In the textual construction of the questionnaire, there is an “ideal” sinner that follows every trace saying “yes” implicitly to each question. As Umberto Eco’s “model reader”,⁷ Pérez Bocanegra elaborates a “model sinners” by driving the penitent into an already fixed situation. The penitents have to articulate their sins from a variety of sequence predetermined by the priest. Thus, if the penitents do not enter in the strategic mechanism of the confessional by negating all the sins proposed by the priest, he has to make them go away and come back:

Si dijere, que no se le acuerda, dirale.

Pues hijo, desde el tiempo que ocultaste ese pecado hasta ahora, piensa tus pecados bien, y pensados vente, que yo te confesaré, y acuérdate de las veces, que te has confesado en este tiempo. (1631: 143)

Furthermore, the priest educates the fixed answer elaborated by himself. He conduces and forces the penitent into one of the predetermined structures of the “model sinner”. This is where the molding of sins in the indigenous communities appears through Pérez Bocanegra’s text. The penitent is constrained to confess as he or she assumes a sin that has been already classified as *idolatría*. Since the confession does not allow the absence of a fault, the Indian must appeal to a fixed fault induced by the “model sinner” from several offenses and behaviors that are undifferentiated. Thus, the Indian is forced to assume a sin, a religious behavior selected from the guide of offenses. This results in an education of practices used

7. Umberto Eco considers the “model reader” as the author’s construction of an ideal reader(s) who activates particular traces left behind on purpose by the writer to develop the stories and interpretations of a text (1979: 207-208).

probably in another community or Andean religion. Then, the repetition of this situation probably induced a modification in the Indians religious perspective of their own beliefs. Forced by the confession, they had to acknowledge a Christian re-framed version of their own religions. As a consequence, the repetition through the confession could allow the Andean communities to become more acquainted with sins as Pérez Bocanegra explains:

Por lo cual no se ha de temer mucho, lo que algunos temen; que preguntarles semejantes preguntas, no sea enseñarles a pecar, particularmente a muchachos, y muchachas. (1631: 138)

5. Framing idolaters

Thirty years later, the *extirpador de idolatrias* Bernardo de Noboa used a similar idea of model sinners and fixed responses during his visit of extirpation in San Francisco de Mangas between August 9th and October 21st of 1661. At the beginning of the file dated on August 9th, the bachelor Noboa wrote the accusation against the *curaca* of San Francisco de Mangas, Alonso de Callampoma, addressing that:

Miguel de Hartabeitia fiscal nombrado en esta visita digo que la mayor culpa que de ella resulta es contra Don Alonso Callampoma cacique y Gobernador de esta doctrina de Mangas por cuanto da culto y hace mochas a un ídolo o malqui llamado Condortocas y a su hermana Coya guarmi por ser el primer progenitor de su ayllu llamado Cotos y del dicho malqui tiene su etimología el dicho ayllu y en todos los días de corpus y cubiertas y repajas de casas nuevas hace traer al ídolo Coya Guarmi que es a manera de un cántaro vestido con gargantilla y zarcillos y lliquillas y anaco y en casa del dicho curaca le hacen bailes y cochas baile superstisioso y el dicho Don Alonso se viste para este fin con camiseta de cunui y en el brazo se pone como brazaletes una chipana o tincurpa de plata y guama de plata en la cabeza adornos y vestiduras gentilicias con que se visten los ministros de ídolos para hacerles sus ritos y mochas y para que sirvan al dicho ídolos Cui Guarmi y Condortocas le tiene ministros señalados y diputados y los tiene reservados y los recepta y ampara en su casa que son Domingo Nuna Callan Pedro rimay chagua y Biolante quillai para que sirvan los dichos ídolos y ahora año y medio poco más o menos cubriendo su casa de nuevo hizo que los ministros trajesen el ídolo a su casa y tres días le bailó el dicho Don Alonso con los ministros vestido con las vestiduras referidas asistiendo todos los indios y haciéndolos cooperar en este pecado [...]. (Duviols 2003: 579-580)

This accusation –probably obtained from two Indians unhappy with Alonso– was the basic information used by the *visitador* to interrogate every witness. Indeed, each testimony covered at least seven different idolatrous situations: 1) Traen al ídolo para Corpus Christi; 2) Traen al ídolo para el día de cubierta de casa; 3) Traen al ídolo para los días de repaja de la casa; 4) Es el ídolo Coyaguarmi una especie de cántaro vestido con gargantillas y zarcillos y liquillas y anaco; 5) Se hacen bailes en la casa de Alonso Callampoma; 6) Se viste Don Alonso especialmente para mochechar con camiseta de cunui, brazaletes de chipana o tinaurpa de plata, y guama de plata, más algunos adornos en la cabeza; and 7) Quienes acompañana a Alonso son Domingo Nuna Callan, Pedro Rimay Chagua y Biolante Quillai. What relates this situation to our opinion is the *repetition* presented in the testimonies which are similar to the accusation received. For example, on August 26th of the same year, Biolante Quillai depicted the idol as: “[...] manera de un cantarillo y lo traían vestido con anaco y llicla y topos y tipinas de plata con gargantillas y zarcillos y cuentas que llaman pinis [...]” (Duviols 2003: 590); and later, she described Alonso’s costume as: “[...] camiseta de cumbi con dos chipanas de plata puestas en las manos como brazaletes[...]” (Duviols 2003: 590). On September 26th, Ysabel Santa described Coyaguarmi as: “[...] un cantarillo con forma de mujer vestido con lliclla y anaco y zarcillos y gargantillas y cintas y topitos de plata y sus llanquesitos[...]” (Duviols 2003: 592). Like these examples, we can find several others throughout the processes of Cajatambo. Whether or not these testimonies follow exactly the situations presented in these accusations, they remain and repeat the general idea of Noboa with small differences and variations that do not break the main argument. Indeed, every testimony seems to be induced in advance. As the model sinner follows the traces left by the priest, the witness is carried into different situations in which he or she must declare its authenticity and agreement. Thus, there is a witness previously constructed in the testimonies predetermined by the *visitador* as we can see in the almost identical confessions and information provided by the Indians.

6. Conclusion

Both the procedure of repetition of a fixed answer that appearing in the case of Pérez Bocanegra’s questionnaire and the testimonies of the witnesses may refer to a usual practice among priests during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The uniformity of responses reveals the desire of the bureaucratic apparatus to homogenize society. In addition, as in the case of the indoctrination of sins, the

constant repetition left a mark in the witnesses that produced a transformation on how they conceived their religious practices. The projection of Christian conceptions of these practices on Andean communities –along with the forced repetition carried by them–, probably helped in the alteration of the different Andean religious beliefs.

The acquisition of pristine information on pre-Columbian Andean cultures evokes the problem of how we obtain knowledge on a civilization that left illegible records for contemporary specialists. As Sabine MacCormack explains, the only way to access to ancient Andean societies is through the interaction between them and Spaniards. The only documents that experts are prepared to interpret are those that appeared during the colonial years. While quipus and other elements are indecipherable (mostly eliminating any direct conception of pre-Columbian Andean cultures), the closest sources are texts recovered from the early colonial period (MacCormack 1991: 4). In other words, most of what we can comprehend from these cultures should be extracted from an indirect acquaintance that uses Spaniard and European sources. Besides, there is an important barrier that appears in the effort of gaining factual knowledge from the colonial documents: the Spanish perspective did not concede a clear voice where Indians were allowed to express their history and culture. Instead, they framed indigenous cultures into a picture already drawn by European beliefs and fears as we have been arguing. In early documents of the Spanish conquest we can discover, trace and delineate how could have been Pre-Columbian societies, only if we accept that the knowledge acquired by Europeans on Indigenous people was constructed through dialogical forms. And mediated by European perspective. The documents managed by the *extirpadores*, as the questionnaire of Pérez Bocanegra, have plenty information on antiques Andean religious practices, a vital source for a coherent reconstruction of the different religions of the Andes region. However, we need to be very careful on how we take that information.

Both the questionnaires of Pérez Bocanegra and the processes of Cajatambo present particular problems in relation to the acquisition of knowledge of Andean religions. First, it is reasonable to think about the influence of the interpreters and scribes as they translate those testimonies. They probably produced interferences with indigenous voices in the case of the processes of Cajatambo as well as in translating the questionnaires to Quechua language. Then, there is a categorization of different practices as *idolatrias* in a homogeneous accumulation without a depiction of their distinctive origins. Indeed, sometimes we have to investigate if what the *extirpadores* and Pérez

Bocanegra considered as *idolatrias* were perhaps non-religious practices or just inventions of the Spaniards without a real support.

What complicates the scenario of the Andean religious studies is the relevance of mechanisms like repetition of *idolatrias* in Andean life that we can observe in Pérez Bocanegra. Thus, by forcing to accept the existence of some “sinful” behaviors, Spaniards altered Indian’s perspective of their own ancestral religions. In this case, Indian beliefs were in a constant dialogue with the homogeneous and reframed European discourse on them. The importance of these texts is based not just in the information about indigenous religions that they can give us but also in the complex dialogical relations that traverses the construction of those beliefs after the Spanish conquest.

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