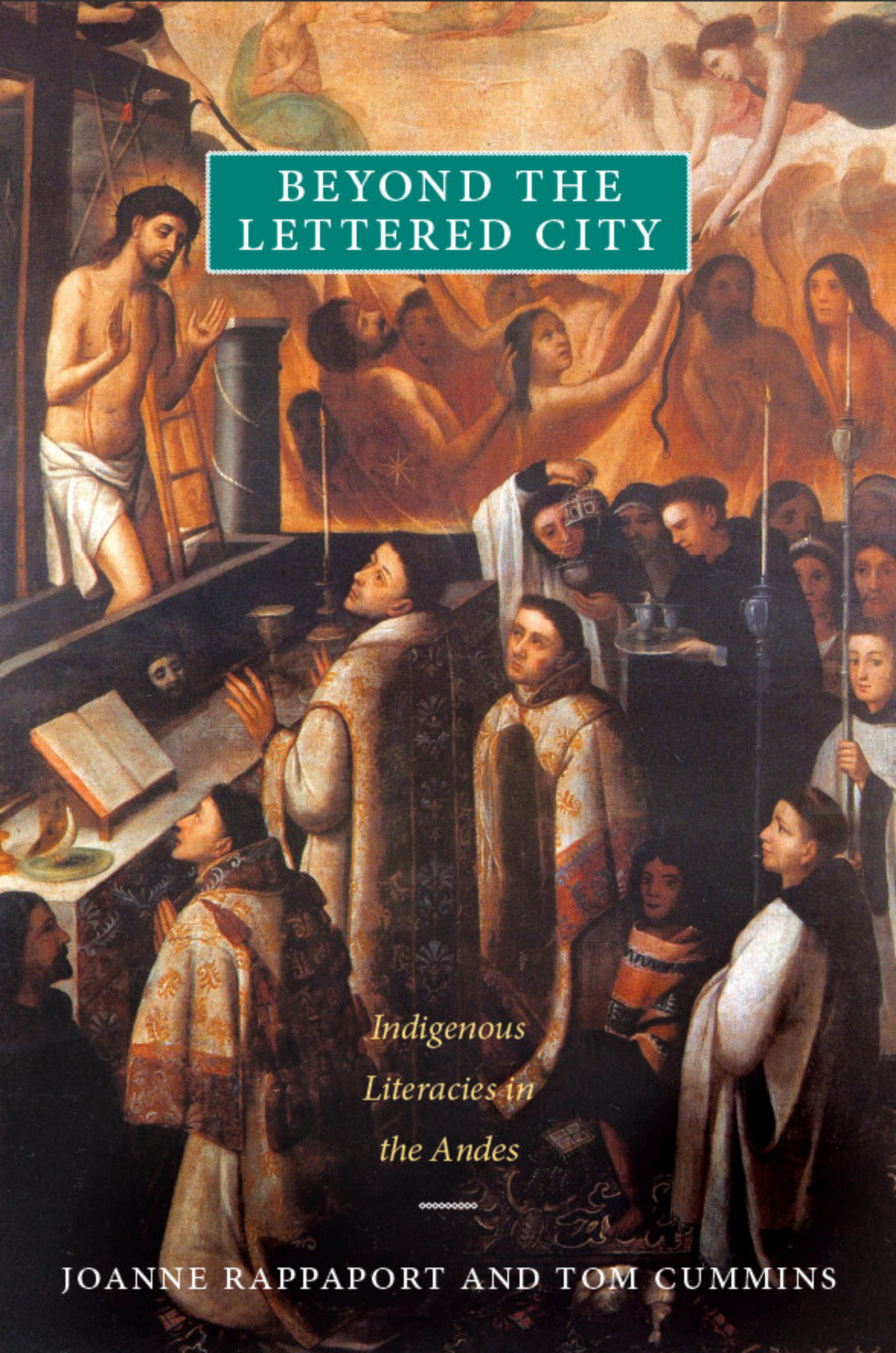

BEYOND THE LETTERED CITY

Indigenous Literacies in the Andes

JOANNE RAPPAPORT AND TOM CUMMINS

BEYOND THE LETTERED CITY

Narrating Native Histories

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Indigenous Literacies in the Andes

JOANNE RAPPAPORT AND
TOM CUMMINS

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FOR DAVID, KYLE, AND JIMMY

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About the Series

Narrating Native Histories aims to foster a rethinking of the ethical, methodological, and conceptual frameworks within which we locate our work on Native histories and cultures. We seek to create a space for effective and ongoing conversations between North and South, Natives and non-Natives, academics and activists, throughout the Americas and the Pacific region. We are committed to complicating and transgressing the disciplinary and epistemological boundaries of established academic discourses on Native peoples.

This series encourages symmetrical, horizontal, collaborative, and auto-ethnographies; work that recognizes Native intellectuals, cultural interpreters, and alternative knowledge producers within broader academic and intellectual worlds; projects that decolonize the relationship between orality and textuality; narratives that productively work the tensions between the norms of Native cultures and the requirements for evidence in academic circles; and analyses that contribute to an understanding of Native peoples' relationships with nation-states, including histories of expropriation and exclusion as well as projects for autonomy and sovereignty.

By critically extending and reconceptualizing the concept of literacy as formulated in Angel Rama's *The Lettered City*, Rappaport and Cummins contribute in an absolutely central way to the goals of our series. A historical analysis of literacy as a social process that included interactions between oral and written texts and alphabetic and pictorial forms, their work pays attention to indigenous agency even as it highlights the inevitable embeddedness of literacy in a system of colonial domination. Focusing on the Northern

Andes, Rappaport and Cummins trace the emergence of a stratum of literate indigenous people and mestizos who, in effect, created an alternative indigenous lettered city. Composed of alphabetic and visual renditions, paintings, and legal documents and petitions, this indigenous lettered city forces us to rethink the notion of literacy as exclusively alphabetic, while also questioning it as simply a technology of production and reception of meanings. Instead, the authors demonstrate, literacy was a technology that, by framing the world ideologically from the perspective of the colonizer and encouraging the participation of literate and non-literate alike, ultimately helped consolidate and reproduce European hegemony in the Americas.

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Introduction

From 1574 until his death in Madrid in 1590, Don Diego de Torres, the hereditary chief or cacique of the Muisca town of Turmequé, near Bogotá, fought a legal battle to regain the rights to his chiefdom, taken from him by members of the Royal Court, or Audiencia, in Santafé de Bogotá in a move to block his efforts to denounce the multiple abuses that Spanish authorities had committed against the indigenous population there. Don Diego, son of a Spanish conquistador and the sister of the cacique of Turmequé, was a mestizo and an educated, highly literate, and cosmopolitan colonial actor who produced innumerable legal petitions in impeccable Castilian Spanish, all signed with a clear and precise hand.[1] He was fully aware of the genres through which he should formulate his various texts, and he was conversant enough in the laws of the Indies to address his needs and complaints properly.[2] Furthermore, he understood the need for graphic representation as part of his presentation, perhaps in response to the royal questionnaire known as the Relaciones Geográficas of 1571. In his petition presented to the king in 1586, he includes two European-style maps, made two years before (figures 1 and 2). They form an integral part of Don Diego's document—he addresses Philip II directly, in word and in image—that voices his hopes that the king would remedy the abuses committed in the areas represented by the maps. One of them represents the indigenous communities and the jurisdiction of the Province of Tunja, in which Turmequé was situated; the other configures the same for Santafé de Bogotá. These are the earliest carto-

FIGURE 1 Map of the province of Tunja, its towns and jurisdiction, artist unknown, ca. 1586, AGI/S, MP Panama 7. Ink and paper. Courtesy of Archivo General de Indias, Seville.

FIGURE 2 Map of the province of Santafé, its towns and borders, artist unknown, ca. 1586, AGI/S, MP Panama 8. Ink and paper. Courtesy of Archivo General de Indias, Seville.

graphic documents we know for Colombia and they were meant to demonstrate in the visual channel the place described in prose in the document, a place where one could still see similar mistreatment—"verlo ocularmente," as he states—such that "it would require a thick book" (Seria hacer un libro de gran volumen) to describe it all (AGI/S 1586b, 232r). Don Diego de Torres turned the pen to two different acts, writing and drawing, but toward a single purpose, the defense of his rights and those of his community.

To accomplish this, the cacique of Turmequé did not just send his letters to Spain. Rather, he traveled twice in his forty years to the Royal Court, where he was granted audiences on multiple occasions and where he socialized with the elite of Santafé and Madrid society. While in Spain he married a Spanish woman, to whom he left his estates in the New Kingdom of Granada (AGI/S 1633); he also served in Spain as executor of the will of Alonso de Atagualpa, grandson of Atahualpa, the last pre-Hispanic Inca ruler. Accused of leading a general native rebellion in the Bogotá region, Don Diego did not neglect his American subjects; he maintained close relations with most of the caciques of the Muisca area, as well as in other regions of Colombia to which he traveled.[3]

Indigenous Peoples and the Lettered City

This sophisticated and prolific man, who moved with ease between indigenous and Spanish society, was not altogether unusual in the colonial Spanish American world. Other members of the Andean and Mexican native nobility composed petitions and myriad other documents that are clear indications of the eloquence of the colonial indigenous voice. Among them are figures more well-known than Don Diego de Torres—such as Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (1980 [1616]), Diego Muñoz Camargo (1981 [1585]), and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1723 [1609])—whose writings are today considered to be part of the colonial literary canon. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the exceptional nature of Guaman Poma, Muñoz Camargo, and Garcilaso's contributions, they were, essentially, petitions to the Crown (Adorno 1986; González Echevarría 1990), a quotidian activity common among members of the colonial elite—both European and indigenous—throughout Latin America.[4] In fact, written documents, many of which had some form of legal status, constituted one of the primary channels of communication between native peoples and Europeans, as well as between Europeans themselves. Indeed, the Spanish American world was, as Ángel Rama (1996 [1984]) has aptly suggested, a "lettered city," a social constellation built on an ideology of the primacy of

the written word; within this system, the urban landscape was constituted as a literate scenario for indigenous conversion and domination, structuring the exercise of power by native actors and Spaniards alike. Legal documents functioned as prime vehicles for transforming native perceptions of time, space, and the discourses of power (Abercrombie 1998a; Rappaport and Cummins 1994). Stored and circulated within the indigenous community, where these papers were transmitted across generations of hereditary chiefs, the written record became a source of legitimacy and authenticity, as well as a vehicle that significantly reconfigured the native memory, since only those historical referents that were legally acceptable in the Spanish worldview were transmitted in writing to future readers.

This process of reconfiguration began very early, especially within the native communities that almost immediately allied themselves with the Spanish conquerors, such as the Tlaxcalan lords in central Mexico or the Wanka ethnic lords from Jauja, in central Peru. For example, in 1567, several of the bilingual sons of the Wankas, including the principal cacique Felipe Guacar Paucar, traveled to Spain with their own notaries to petition the court for rewards for their loyalty to the Crown (AGI/S 1563). Some of them were able to meet with the king, who in written documents granted them not only certain rights and privileges, but also bestowed upon them the use of coats of arms, bringing them into the visual field of Spanish symbolic power (Murra 1998, 55–56). This interaction between political power on the one hand, and image and text on the other, was more fully realized later, when the Tlaxcalan lords of Mexico presented themselves before Philip II at the Royal Court in Madrid. There, the mestizo historian Muñoz Camargo, official interpreter of the 1583–85 Tlaxcalan embassy, personally presented the Codex Tlaxcala to the king (Acuña 1981, 9–12). The Codex consisted of the history of the Tlaxcalan community and its early service to the Crown, illustrated with 156 pen-and-ink drawings. Two years later, the cacique of Turmequé—another mestizo—presented his *relación* to the royal court. Perhaps, Don Diego de Torres met with Diego Muñoz Camargo or Inca Garcilaso de la Vega at court. It was a "new world" that, within less than a hundred years, had suddenly become very small. These lords, who sprang from such diverse social and cultural realities, shared very similar concerns in defense of their own standing and that of their communities. Passivity in the face of the symbolic techniques of colonial power was inconceivable for these gentlemen. Rather, they actively engaged with the written word and pictorial image at the highest levels of political and cultural power.[5]

Our task, then, is to present the traces of this sustained engagement with literacy, so as to understand the nature of the intellectual participation of indigenous peoples in the social formation of colonial Latin America. More precisely, it is through the examination of the nature of visual and alphabetic inscription among native peoples of the northern Andes (today, Colombia and Ecuador) that we can recognize not only such traces, but their implications. Literacy is not a univocal term for us. Rather, we understand it to comprise a complex constellation of channels of expression, both visual and alphabetic, which functioned in the colonial Andean world within an ideological system that saw the two as inextricably interconnected and as prime tools for reorganizing the worldviews and everyday lives of native South Americans. In this respect, our aim is not that of exploring literacy as a technology in the unilinear evolutionary manner of the early theorists of the topic (Goody 1977, 1987; Havelock 1986; Ong 1982; cf. Street 1984). Instead, we propose to engage in a specific historical analysis of how literacy operated as a social process in relation to orality and bodily experience by examining a series of historical cases, following in the footsteps of medieval and early modern historians, art historians, and literary scholars (Camille 1989; Clanchy 1993; Fox 2000; Johns 1998; Justice 1994; Smail 1999; Stock 1983, 1990) and ethnographers (Bowen 1991; Messick 1993) who have examined the introduction of Western alphabetic literacy into previously oral societies or into communities that did not use the Roman alphabet and have taken visuality as seriously as the command of the alphabet. Like our fellow Latinamericanists (Gruzinski 1993 [1988]; Hanks 2000; Mignolo 1995), we take the implications of alphabetic and visual literacy to be inextricably entangled with an analysis of Spanish colonial domination and how writing and pictorial expression functioned as both a measuring stick of cultural hierarchy in a colonial world and as a vehicle for incorporating native peoples into the colonial project.[6]

Contours of Literacy

The role of alphabetic writing within the colonial Latin American social formation is not an isolated phenomenon. It would be an error to imagine literacy as restricted to the production and reception of alphabetic writing; literacy also includes the visual, which must be understood in relation to the written word. Colonial cultural politics, as it sought to impose systems of Western European sociability, was enacted through an engagement with

both image and text. Literacy, in this sense, can be understood as an interrelated strategy. It imparted a system of referentiality that, in the colonial context, fostered the expression of a divine and secular power that was embedded within a hierarchy of natural authority. Learning to look at pictorial images within the paradigms of European visual culture, as well as learning to conduct oneself within the architectural grid of the Spanish-style town, form as much a part of colonial literacy as learning to read the alphabetic text of a catechism. Both the alphabetic and the visual systems of representation are abstract, concerned with looking and decoding, and in the colonial era, both skills were intimately connected to the didactic, religious, and legal practices of Europeans in the New World as they were directed toward native peoples (Bryson 1988; Durston 2007; Gruzinski 1999, 2001 [1990]; Mannheim 1991; Mignolo 1995; Pagden 1982).

Our interpretive move connecting alphabet with visual image is not merely an analytical tool. Visual and alphabetic literacy were, in fact, perceived by colonial-era Spaniards and native Andeans as being intimately related. In a continuation of the medieval notion of the fundamental identity of pictures and writing, both of which were believed to produce images in the mind when read aloud and memorized (Carruthers 1990, 1998; Clanchy 1993; Huot 1987; Yates 1966), literacy was not understood by colonial Latin Americans as being entirely alphabetic in nature. The most extensive book on memory is the *Rhetorica christiana*, written in Latin by Diego Valadés (1579), probably a mestizo from Tlaxcala. Valadés discusses and illustrates two ways to know letters. One is by the sound: the letter *a* is to be recognized by the initial sound "a," as in "Antonio." Another is to recognize a letter by its form, in association with an object: an open compass or ladder represents the letter *a* (figures 3 and 4). Valadés follows the convention of European illustrations of a "visual alphabet" as used in the art of memory (Sherman 2000, 150–52); however, he also localizes it by including indigenous Mexican forms to facilitate learning. Valadés's "visual alphabet" is not directed toward reading or writing a text, but instead is meant as a tool for recalling from memory texts that can then be recited out loud.[7]

The alphabet and literacy were thus both something visual and very much a part of orality. This oral aspect is also captured in the 1611 dictionary of Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco (1995 [1611], 706), which defines *leer*—"to read"—as, "To pronounce with words that which is written in letters" and "to teach a discipline publicly."[8] The two forms of literacy, visual and alphabetic, were thus mediated by orality, a practice common to Spaniards and natives

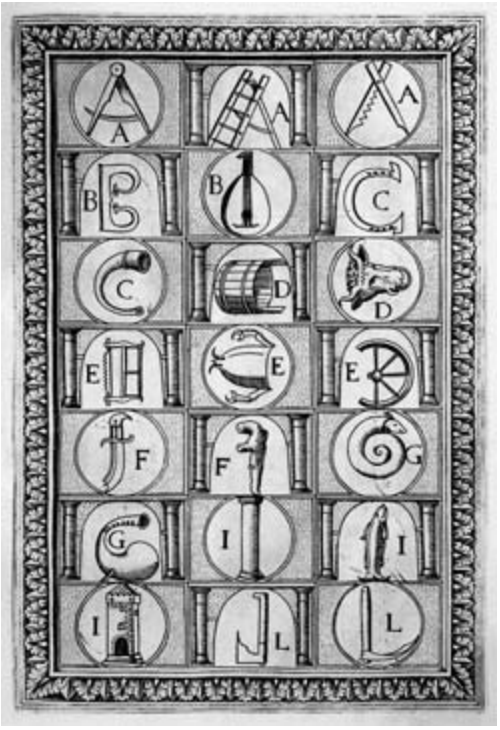

FIGURE 3 Alphabet with European figures, Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana* (Perugia, 1579). Engraving.

FIGURE 4 Alphabet with European figures, Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana* (Perugia, 1579). Engraving.

alike. Alphabetically written teachings furnished the basis for oral presentations in which visual materials supplied crucial pedagogical tools. Sermons were among the most common texts read aloud to both Spanish and indigenous audiences while they observed religious paintings and sculptures, gathered in communal spaces of the church's interior or in the exterior plaza. However, in sermons prepared for a native audience, the spheres of administrative documents and religious images were drawn together through ontological analogy such that various forms of colonial culture and society overlapped in unexpected ways (Lima, Concilio de, 1990 [1585], 653). We will detail such juxtapositions in the following pages, probing the ideological substratum that underlay not only the introduction of the alphabet and the naturalistic pictorial image, but also inspired particular ways of promoting urban life among native peoples, infused public administration with a ritualization of the written word, and attuned the indigenous inner eye to particular visual templates which generated miraculous visions. That is, we see literacy as larger than writing and painting, encompassing a diverse range of experiences in the colonial world, something performative and embodied in specific ways by individuals of particular social groups.

By bringing together a variety of interrelated documentary and visual materials, we will analyze the means by which literacy contributed to the constitution and reconstitution of European institutions in native northern Andean society, primarily among the Muisca (Chibcha), Pasto, and Nasa (Páez) ethnic groups; the former two were the largest aboriginal populations north of the boundaries of Tawantinsuyu, the Inca empire. We have chosen to concentrate our analysis on the northern Andes, what is today Colombia and Ecuador, in an effort to focus on Andean culture in a non-Incaic setting. We intend in this way to expand what is more broadly meant by Andean. Along with examining excellent evidence for indigenous deployment of literacy in this area, both in the defense of communities before the Spanish administration and in their internal social and political life, by focusing on a region beyond the Inca sphere of influence, we gain new insights into the colonial process, precisely because this area was never part of the state-level constellation of Tawantinsuyu. Such a vantage point permits us to compare and contrast a multiplicity of adaptations to European literacy by various ethnic groups. Given that the Spaniards sought to impose Quechua and Incaic models upon northern Andean peoples, northern ethnic groups exhibit a distinctive overlay of native and imported elements of Andean culture that can be analyzed in the course of the study of the implications of literacy

for the region. Nonetheless, we do not see the northern Andes as an isolated or discrete colonial culture in relation to the colonial formations in Peru. In contrast, Bogotá and Quito were politically and ecclesiastically linked to the metropolitan center of Lima and to Spain. Not only did the viceroy in Lima hold ultimate jurisdiction in this area, but important doctrinal publications, such as the 1585 catechism of the Third Council of Lima (Lima, Concilio de 1990 [1585]), held religious authority there, as well. So, at times we turn to examples from the central Andes, where we often find more ample documentation, as well as unique or telling acts that articulate the colonial intersection between visual and alphabetic literacy.

Literacy, in its broadest sense, is a critical component of what has come to be called colonial discourse, a heterogeneous set of communicative strategies and practices proper to the colonial situation. Colonial discourse was at once local and international; it was transcultural in nature, its expressive forms overlapping a diverse set of colonial actors—Europeans and American-born Europeans, Native Americans, African populations, and the *castas*, the numerous groups that arose out of their mixture (mestizos, mulattos, etc.). The study of colonial discourse has been tremendously useful for studying the process of cultural formation from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, as it provides a window for examining the multiple and conflicting voices of colonial actors, as well as for viewing members of subordinated groups, such as indigenous peoples, as active agents in cultural creation (Seed 1991). Literacy, in our extended understanding, is fundamental to the study of colonial discourse. Writing provided one of the most important interfaces of the different groups inhabiting the colonial landscape, while images created a common focus for devotion, imagination, and fear, as well as for economic and political interests. And although these forms of literacy created the symbolic arena within which the various European colonizers, both secular and religious, could construct and implement a policy of colonization and conversion to Christianity, it is also through literacy that the indigenous colonized could textually describe and visually present themselves to their colonizers and press their demands in the colonial political arena.

Too often, however, the process of acquiring literacy is understood as the process of shifting from an oral to a written culture, such that a native person becomes learned in the European textual tradition. Participation in literacy implies more than learning to read alphabetically inscribed texts and produce Western forms of pictorial representation. Native literacies emerging out of the colonial context were richer than mere adaptations to Euro-

pean practices of reading and viewing; they also transformed them, spawning intertextual readings that interacted with indigenous forms of recording and representation, including knot records (khipus), textiles, and sacred geography. That is, literacy is not always—nor ever was—a passive process in which forms of authority and power are reproduced through mechanical everyday practice. When literacy is taken up and used by subaltern groups, it becomes what Steven Justice (1994, 24) calls "assertive literacy." The copying in the colonial period of documents and images, or the creation of new ones by subordinated social groups acting in relation to dominant ones, were acts that engaged with these media and their technology. Out of this engagement emerged the historical specificities of colonial culture and society. So too, the orthodox making and veneration of images became heterodox almost immediately, thereby transforming the shared space of the visual field into a multiple one in which all eyes may be focused on the same image, but what is being seen is not the same (Cummins 1998a). With these features in mind, it is possible to view literacy as a crucial arena within which colonial culture was contested and negotiated by native peoples and their Spanish overlords.

Manuscript Interculture

In the late eighteenth century, in a dispute over maize lands in the warm country of Puntal, the Pasto caciques of Tuza presented a series of packets of legal papers comprising a range of documents produced over the course of two and a half centuries, bound roughly together by thread (ANE/Q 1792b).[9] Carefully stored in home archives by generations of hereditary chiefs, this documentation legitimized their strategies of expansion into productive warm-country territory (Powers 1995, 124–27). In addition to the rich historical information contained in these pages, the Tuza document packets can also be approached in terms of their form and materiality: the ways in which such documents are written, compiled, conserved; how they are related to one another and to nonwritten referents in an intertextual series; the ritual uses to which they were put. They are an example of what could be called a "manuscript interculture," participated in by both native Andeans and members of the dominant Hispanic society. We intentionally employ the term *interculture* in place of *culture* here, borrowing from Thomas Abercrombie's work on colonial Bolivia (1998a, 114–15), to emphasize the fact that the written word provided a creative interface within which members of different cultural traditions expounded upon and adjusted to an unequal relationship

born of colonialism (1998a, 215). This literary contact zone (Pratt 1992) developed over time, producing complementary and contradictory interpretations on the part of both native and European readers and writers, whose self-perceptions and views of the Other were imbued with colonial metaphors and cultural typologies in which the categories of "indigenous" and "Spanish" took on new meanings (Gruzinski 1999, 211–13).

Our focus on textual literacy goes beyond the obvious point that alphabetically written archival documents provide the major source of our information on the colonial period. We intend to focus on writing's critical role as an arena for the playing out of cultural differences and the appropriation of cultural forms, particularly in the struggles surrounding the production of legal discourse. In the colonial context, such struggles most frequently took place in the space of handwritten manuscripts. The manuscript constitutes a particular form of writing that reproduces features proper to orality:

> Each manuscript is unique (as is each oral performance). It is the work of one or more human individuals. Both processes respond to their environment, vary over time and according to circumstance (oral poetry can be rained out, a written line can detour around a hole in the parchment, a leaf or the writing on it can wear away). It is modified by its audience (as the oral performer tailors his performance to audience reaction, as members of the audience react to one another, as the manuscript text is mediated by generations of glosses). The handwritten text as product resembles the mechanically reproduced book; the process of its creation mimics the unique, occasional nature of oral tradition and oral performance. The rhetorical nature of orality, too, carries over into the realm of the manuscript text, always conditioned by and elaborated according to its circumstantiae. . . . The manuscript text is constituted by the individuals who created it: scribe, rubricator, corrector, illuminator. In the case of the scribe, these traces include individual hands (no matter how formalized), the variants caused by minor distractions whose causes are lost to us forever (a bird flying through a window), misreadings, misunderstandings, interference of dialects, poor eyesight, an aching back, and a host of other quirks that situate the product squarely in the process of its creation in a way that the printed book can never be. (Dagenais 1994, 17)

Handwritten, displaying the penmanship of the scribe, exhibiting corrections and revisions, idiosyncratic in its partial reproduction of generic models, with an abundance of marginalia only sometimes providing a di-

rect gloss of the contents (Barletta 1999; Camille 1992), the manuscript, John Dagenais argues, is the antithesis of the printed book. The performance that engenders the manuscript is embodied within its very form, unlike the printed book, whose discourse, he contends, is standardized, reified, and removed from the conditions of its production. However, recent authors have insightfully suggested that print culture only developed modern standards of veracity and uniformity over time as a result of specific economic and political arrangements that fostered such appreciations of the possibilities of print (Johns 1998). Nonetheless, the dichotomy of manuscript versus print is hardly relevant to the case we are studying, because manuscripts were the only objects of alphabetic literacy that could be produced within the colonial indigenous community. Printing presses were few and very far between in the colonial Americas, and natives in general had little familiarity with the mechanical reproduction of the printed page. Of course, the printed page was ever present, but it was something that was to be read aloud, perhaps even to be copied, and this was done by hand. What Dagenais contributes to our understanding of colonial indigenous literacy is not so much the distinction between manuscript and print, as the fluid nature of the manuscript and the ways in which fluidity is embodied in its visual form.

The mechanics of writing by hand was a meaningful activity in itself, often a subject of pictorial representation in Mexican and Andean colonial manuscripts. Natives and Europeans are depicted seated at tables replete with the instruments of their profession. In Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (henceforth, *Nueva corónica*) (1980 [1616], 828; figure 5), a native scribe, identified as a *quilcacamayo*—literally, "maker of writing"—is seated at a desk with a half-written document before him. The image is not meant to depict the literal act of writing; rather, it displays the scribe as a person looking downward and away, pen in hand and laid to paper, but not forming a letter. The page is, in fact, turned away from the scribe and placed parallel to the picture plane, so that the viewer can see it. On the desk are arranged the instruments of writing: an extra quill, ink blotter, ink and case for the quills. A similar image is found in the colonial Mixtec manuscript of Yanhuitlán, in which the Dominican friar Domingo de Santa María, the priest of the village of Tepozcolula, is depicted seated at a table, holding a quill pen and writing, while two Mixtecs, Seven Deer and Ten Monkeys, approach him (figure 6). Here, in a Mexican manuscript, the image of Western writing is subtly infused with Mixtec writing, conveying the names of the

FIGURE 5 Native scribe, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, p. 814 (824), 1616. Ink and paper. Courtesy of Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen.

FIGURE 6 Seven Deer and Ten Monkeys approach Dominican monk, Codex Yanhuitlán, f.29r, artist unknown, 1545–50, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City. Ink and paper.

two individuals through a place-glyph composed of a mountain and a copper axe (Jiménez Moreno and Matos Higuera 1940 [1545–50], 65).

These two images, one from Mexico and one from Peru, consciously register through iconography the complexity of the scribe's work. By work, we do not only mean the intellectual exercise of writing, but the physical task itself. For as Justice notes in relation to English medieval literacy, "the laboriousness of writing—the recalcitrance of pen and the resistance of paper, the variability of ink, and the job of sharpening—meant that the activity had to enter consciousness as something more than the extension of reading or thought" (1994, 24, n. 34). In taking up writing, indigenous authors came to understand themselves, along with mimicking the symbolic technology of writing, as inhabiting and working differently in space, working at a task to produce an object. It meant working with an alien surface—paper—that was produced far away and brought with great labor and expense to the farthest reaches of the empire.[10] Writing often meant being indoors and seated in a chair at a table; such furniture was listed in native wills with great frequency, as we will describe in the coming chapters.

The same elements and tasks of the native author were employed, albeit for different effect, in the act of drawing. Although the tasks of making an image and making a letter require different conceptual skills and abilities—the conversion of sound and the conversion of sight to a graphic system—they employ the same tools: pen, ink, paper, and the gesture of the hand. The graphic elements of the word and the image are distinguished only through cultural recognition of the communicative system through which the lines are inscribed on paper. Our own Western frames of reference lead us to see written text and drawing as discrete (Goodman 1976, 127–73). However, the act of making them is the same. In fact, these two culturally separate tasks are brought together in one of the most remarkable drawings by Guaman Poma (1980 [1616], 784) of a principal cacique seated behind a large table (figure 7). Unlike Guaman Poma's image of the scribe, who is depicted as a passive cipher, the cacique is shown as an active agent. He turns to listen to a member of his community, who gestures as he speaks. At the same time, the cacique steadies a piece of paper with his left hand and writes with the other. The pen touches the paper in the process of forming a word, the continuation of a clearly legible text that is turned upside down from the perspective of the viewer/reader. This is, then, the precise moment of transformation of the oral into the written. But what, precisely, are we seeing beyond that? The figure is speaking Quechua, which we learn from the heading. The cacique is listening

FIGURE 7 Cacique principal, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva coronica y buen gobierno*, p. 770 (784), 1616. Ink and paper. Courtesy of Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen.

to his Quechua utterance, but is simultaneously translating it into Spanish as he writes, something that is instantiated in almost all Andean documents when testimony is given in a "mother tongue," but inscribed in Spanish.[11]

But there is another instance of simultaneity when we ask about visual, rather than linguistic, decoding. Is the viewer to read the text or to see it as depicting writing? It is both, although we can only read what is written if we turn Guaman Poma's manuscript upside down and assume the position of the cacique. If we look at the drawing head on, we see that it is writing, but without necessarily being able to read it precisely. Here, then, the operations of drawing and writing become undifferentiated and equivalent in relation to the Quechua orality imagined to be shared by the two figures. The lack of differentiation between drawing and writing is most clearly realized at the precise moment that the next letter is about to be formed. Suddenly and effortlessly, Guaman Poma swaps modes of Spanish symbolic technology

and begins to draw, the letter becoming the tip of the pen; his graphic gesture now flows up the curved line that articulates the contour line of the quill. Only at this instant is the distinction between writing and drawing completely effaced: when the tip of the pen represents simultaneously the instrument of writing and drawing, as well as a sign for these two activities. That is, Guaman Poma shifts from writing a word to making a drawing, so as to express the nature of both the communication between the speaking and listening figure, and the production of a document. We would argue that this is a natural act, rather than a calculated one on the part of Guaman Poma; that is, he feels perfectly at ease in the physical transition from one code of line making to another, as it is the same gesture and set of instruments.[12]

Moreover, the viewer must turn the manuscript upside down to read what is written/drawn, something that Guaman Poma presumably also had to do to create this part of the drawing. But when the reader/viewer rotates the page, he or she is placed behind the image of the cacique, looking over his shoulder, so to speak: it is as though the viewer were moved deep into the picture plane. Guaman Poma's own position as artist/viewer at this point does not simply mirror the cacique in the image; he becomes the cacique: his right hand is drawing the right hand that is writing, just as his left hand and the cacique's are holding the paper to steady it. In many ways, this image complicates the distinction between the graphic reproduction of sound and vision. Nelson Goodman argues in *Languages of Art* that realism is not a matter of "any constant or absolute relationship between picture and its object but a relationship between the system of representation employed in the picture and the standard system" (1976, 38). Here, Guaman Poma is careful both in word and drawing to appeal to the standard system, so that he might in fact produce something that gives a real and effective representation of the Andean experience, as well as a portrait of his own creative act.

Whereas Guaman Poma's drawing both depicts and performs a colonial orality congealed in picture and writing, the 1633 will of Don Andrés, the Muisca cacique of Machetá, displays the dynamic oral component of colonial manuscript culture (AGN/B 1633a). Don Andrés dictated his desires to the notary, who recorded the numerous possessions, landholdings, debt relationships, and pious bequests enumerated in this lengthy testament of a wealthy man. In the process, the cacique recurrently backtracked, remembering possessions and directives that he had forgotten to include in their proper position in the will. As a result, the document recapitulates his haphazard oral performance. A literate man, Don Andrés frequently referred to

papers validating his possessions and the debts owed him, so that his will conjures up the image of man on his deathbed, shuffling through his files and composing his will according to what he finds. The feeling of eavesdropping on a meeting in progress that one derives from reading Don Andrés's will is apparent in more modest documents, as well. Juana Sanguino, an urban *india* from Bogotá who worked as a servant for a Spaniard named Bartolomé Sanguino, provides early on in her 1633 will for burial in the Church of Our Lady of Las Nieves, the parish of many of Santafé's indigenous inhabitants (AGN/B 1633d, 142v).[13] However, this provision is revoked at the end of the two-page testament in favor of interment in Santafé's Cathedral, in a tomb belonging to her employer. Presumably, Juana Sanguino was notified of the possibility of this burial site by the notary, Estacio Sanguino Rangel, a relative of her benefactor—in fact, she requests his permission to be interred there in the very text of the will (1633d, 143v). Thus, her testament provides a window onto a notarial process, in which a last-minute reminder by the notary causes her to backtrack and alter her last wishes.

In essence, then, if we take a manuscript as an object and appreciate the ways in which its contents unfold on the space of the page, we can get a sense of how it was composed. Kathryn Burns (2005) notes that the very process of drawing up notarial documents, which generally took place in stages, is reflected in colonial-era manuscripts. Clients frequently signed blank pages, allowing notaries and their assistants to compose entries after the fact in their official record books. This practice left visual traces of scribal procedure on the written page, such as the crowding of print into a space too small for its contents or extra-large writing where too much space had been reserved. But notwithstanding the manuscript's oral tone, in an era in which manuscripts were far more ubiquitous than the printed word, scribal writing emitted an aura of authority deriving from its perceived uniformity, its embellishments, and its relation to the holy scriptures (Ross 1994, 232–34). In colonial Latin America, the authority of the manuscript originated in its control by the state apparatus, the official notaries (Herzog 1996) whose scribblings were hardly uniform and were frequently illegible—as indigenous litigants sometimes complained—but were surrounded by a mystique of "respect, awe, and obedience" (Ross 1994, 234). Their aura was intensified by the rituals to which manuscripts were subjected (Seed 1995), a theme we will treat in detail in later chapters.[14]

Colonial-era manuscript production and reception were mediated by numerous gatekeepers and impinged upon by particular cultural contexts.

A number of factors are key to understanding these manuscripts. The language of transmission, which was not necessarily that of the petitioners or litigators, was mediated at the grassroots by scribes, artists, town criers, interpreters, missionaries, and catechumens, dissolving the notion that these documents had a single author. Many indigenous writers and readers were forced to work through interpreters—nonnative speakers of indigenous languages, whose level of proficiency is never remarked upon in the documentation—or to compose briefs and letters in Spanish, which was a second language for most of them, resulting in documentation that does not entirely capture the intent of its authors. In the Pasto case, there is a double overlay, since documents were frequently written in Spanish, based upon testimony collected in Quechua, among people whose native language was Pasto. Quechua was probably introduced among the Pasto under Spanish domination, given that only a small number of Pasto chiefdoms were brought under Incaic control, and then only for the space of a decade or so (Landázuri 1995).[15] In addition to the pitfalls inherent in translation, scribes and notaries frequently mediated the transcription of these documents with their own glosses of what was translated, producing an imperfect record of the already-defective account supplied by the interpreter.

The people who penned letters and petitions were influenced by the institutions and methods by which literacy was taught, the legal networks in which they were enmeshed, and their geographic location. Although there were schools established for caciques throughout the Andes (AGI/S 1577; AGI/S 1604,16r–v; AGN/B 1576; ANE/Q 1695, 67r; Cárdenas Ayaipoma 1975–76; Galdo Gutiérrez 1970; Hartmann and Oberem 1981; Jaramillo Uribe 1989; R. Wood 1986), the extent of indigenous literacy varied by region. In the northern Andes, considerably more Pastos than Muiscas could sign their names, if the presence of chiefly signatures on documents is any indication of the acquisition of literacy skills. In contrast, there is no evidence at all for Nasa literacy in this period. Many Pastos and Muiscas claimed proficiency in Castilian Spanish—the documents frequently designate bilingual witnesses and litigants as *ladinos*, or native people who spoke Spanish. In contrast, there is little evidence that the Nasa were bilingual in Spanish and Nasa Yuwe (the Nasa language) in the colonial era, except possibly for a handful of caciques. Differences in literacy across the region may be due to the relative isolation of the Pastos in comparison to the Muiscas. It is likely that the Pastos were forced to assume by themselves the most elementary documentary procedures, given the arduous journeys they had to undertake to reach

a notarial office in the provincial capitals of Pasto or Ibarra. The Muisca, in contrast, were able to secure the services of notaries and lawyers in the nearby cities of Santafé and Tunja, obviating the need for native people to learn to write contracts, wills, or petitions; the huge indigenous presence in the capital of the Audiencia, including both servants and artisans, as well as caciques, only reinforced their dependence upon the official gatekeepers of the legal world.[16] In addition, the vicious struggle over the fate of the indigenous population between the Church of the New Kingdom of Granada and the Audiencia of Santafé—the latter allied with powerful Spanish settlers—meant that the Muisca enjoyed less direct access to the sort of literacy necessary for a relatively unmediated participation as legal actors (Ares Queija 1989; Gálvez Piñal 1974; Rojas 1965). The Pasto Province was, in comparison, a backwater of the Audiencia of Quito, and thus to some degree cushioned from such struggles.[17] In the case of the Nasa, geographic isolation operated conversely, hampering the acquisition of literacy within this small and rebellious group that was not as integrated into the colonial state's administrative apparatus as were the Muisca and Pasto. Hence, the Nasa had less need of literate expertise. Such differences in access to literacy are significant, given that the processes of production and reception of manuscripts were conditioned upon mastery of this skill. These variations lead us to interpret literacy as more than a technology: literacy is better understood as a set of practices deeply embedded within social, political, and economic realities. Social arrangements deeply impacted upon the ways that literacy was employed in the colonial era (Gee 1988; Graff 1987).

The legal framework of manuscript composition determined the extent to which genre boundaries could be transgressed and indigenous petitioners could be considered authors. The existence of mediators, particularly notaries and scribes, alerts us to the fact that colonial-era literacy was much more than simply the ability to read and write. It also involved a familiarity with legal precepts and formulas, the province of notaries, judges, and other specialists. Brinkley Messick, writing about legal literacy in Yemen, captures this point compellingly:

> In the legal document genre, entextualization rests on a double movement, a double relation. The first is a movement from Text to text, that is, from law on the books to the document; while the second is from the world (as event) to text, from a specific human undertaking, such as a sale, to the document. Behind a given document text is the law, in front

> of it is the world. . . . The writer, the notary, through his document text, mediates both the reproduction of the Text and the incorporative 'translation' of the world. (1989, 35)

The manuscript, at least of the legal sort, is the product of a collaborative—or adversarial—vision of the world that was, in the case of the northern Andes, necessarily interethnic. The law and its gatekeepers were European, while the litigants belonged to a range of subordinated ethnic groups. Notaries mediated law and document, filtering translations of indigenous observations of the world into acceptable legal discourse. In this sense, we can only comprehend indigenous literate production as an intercultural phenomenon.

In a highly insightful interpretation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century notarial manuals used in the New Kingdom of Granada—the sorts of manuals that someone like Don Diego de Torres, cacique of Turmequé, would have consulted—Juan Felipe Hoyos García (2002, chap. 6) argues that the role of the notary was to convert raw testimony into colonial legal truth, by guiding witnesses into providing him with testimonial material that he could insert into his own text. The notarial document, unlike testimony, obeyed a specific legal epistemology and was marked by a distinct set of linguistic usages. It rearranged witnesses' statements so that their contents fit within certain categories:

> [There is a] . . . correlation among types of knowledge that are specified through expressions of two types of knowledge: "ciencia cierta" [complete certainty], "público y notorio" [public and well known] and "pública voz y fama" [widely stated] all shared in the direct knowledge of acts, but the latter two distinguished between public occurrences and traditions; "creencia" [belief] and "común opinión" [common opinion] specified that the testimony was inferential based on inconclusive facts, while "común reputación" [commonly reputed] was also an inference, but of the causes, based upon the effects . . . that were perceived but inconclusive; "oídas" [things heard] and "tiempo inmemorial" [time immemorial] shared in indirect knowledge—through verbal description—of a fact, determining from whom or how it had been heard and its temporal distance from whoever had learned it directly. (2002, 121–22)[18]

The notary could never be certain that indigenous witnesses fully understood these legal categories; he could not trust them to classify the truth value of their statements according to a European epistemology. In fact,

in many Andean languages epistemological concerns are marked by precise referential validators, frequently in the form of suffixes, whose classifications of types of knowledge differ considerably from those outlined by Hoyos (Hardman 1988; Howard-Malverde 1990; Rojas Curieux 1998); some linguists have suggested that these meanings carry over into nonstandard usages in popular Andean Spanish as well (Zavala 1996). The extent to which the epistemologies embedded in native languages conflicted with the epistemology that the notary was at pains to draw out of the testimony of indigenous witnesses, underscores the ambivalences inherent in these collaborative texts.[19]

Finally, manuscript production was accompanied by ritual acts, both sacred and secular, in which alphabetic, visual, and gestural symbols intermingled. Signatories to legal briefs vowed by the sign of the cross that their testimony was true, simultaneously making the sign of the cross on their bodies and placing their signatures on documents in which notaries had already drawn crosses next to the description of the ritual act. Recipients of royal decrees demonstrated their obedience to the Crown by kissing manuscripts that bore the royal seal, subsequently placing them on their heads. As a will was drawn up, testator, notary, and witnesses recited the prayers to which the testaments alluded. We must think of literacy as more than simply the ability to reproduce or decipher writing. It was part of a much more complex performative process marked by extraliterate ceremony, as well as by graphic notation. The significance of these performances was sometimes interpreted quite differently by native peoples and by Spaniards, both of whom assigned their own meanings to ceremonial acts. Moreover, while it might be appealing to ascribe these rituals to the native cultures to which colonial indigenous litigants belonged—which is what Andeanists have traditionally done—many of these ceremonies are of European origin, demonstrating that oral culture had a hold over Europeans, as well as native Andeans (Clanchy 1989; Fox 2000).

The Visuality of Literacy

The precise nature of the relationship between text and image has always been unstable in Western thought and practice, and the two have been articulated in various forms (Bedos-Rezak 1993; Derrida 1987; Goodman 1976; Marin 1988; Mitchell 1986). The simultaneous introduction in the Americas of both modes and their relationship as the preferred means of sym-

bolic communication of legal, social, historical, and religious knowledge has never been fully addressed, particularly in the Andes, where literacy as both a cognitive and visual system supplemented and supplanted pre-Columbian systems that depended upon different chains of historical referents and visual cues from those articulated in written or visual European texts.[20] The pre-Columbian northern Andes knew no alphabetic or hieroglyphic literacy; nor did pictorial representation take a narrative form. Thus, in 1574 Don Francisco Guillén responded to a royal questionnaire, stating that the natives of Muzo, near Bogotá, had no writing nor painted boards to keep records of their past, and that what they knew was passed down to them, presumably in the oral channel, from their parents and grandparents (AGI/S 1574).

Northern Andeans had to come to terms with more than a new technology of inscription and a novel set of literary genres. Because theirs was a "nonliterate" society before the Spanish invasion, they had to learn to recognize the surface-ground relationship between paper and graphic mark as a concrete manifestation of language. The introduction of this new technology was embedded within European administrative and philosophical systems that redrew the contours of Andean social and topographic space, as well as native hearts and minds. The encounter of Andean and Spanish technologies and ideological systems under conditions of European domination produced a distinctly colonial culture of communication.

When we refer to visual literacy, we are not speaking exclusively of the ability of Andean natives to read the message contained in European art forms, although, as we will demonstrate, the Spaniards made analogies between the referentiality of paintings and that of legal documents. Alphabetic writing merged with other forms of representation in the colonial world. The most celebrated example of native Andean literacy, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva corónica* is itself an object of representation within the pictorial realm. One of his illustrations depicts the presentation of his book to the king by the author himself (figure 8; Guaman Poma 1980 [1616], 961). This imaginary scene suggests that among other things, writing is something to be seen, handled, and exchanged rather than being just a text to be read. At the same time, Guaman Poma's text supplements his black-and-white drawings by describing color, sound, and movement, thereby providing descriptively that to which neither written word nor pictorial line could directly refer. In the larger context of colonial cultural interaction, text and image are interwoven visually in religious images, such as the murals in the native Church of San Juan Bautista in Sutatausa, Cundinamarca (figure 9), where

FIGURE 8 The author's presentation to and discussion with the king of Spain, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, p. 961 (975), 1616. Ink and paper. Courtesy of Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen.

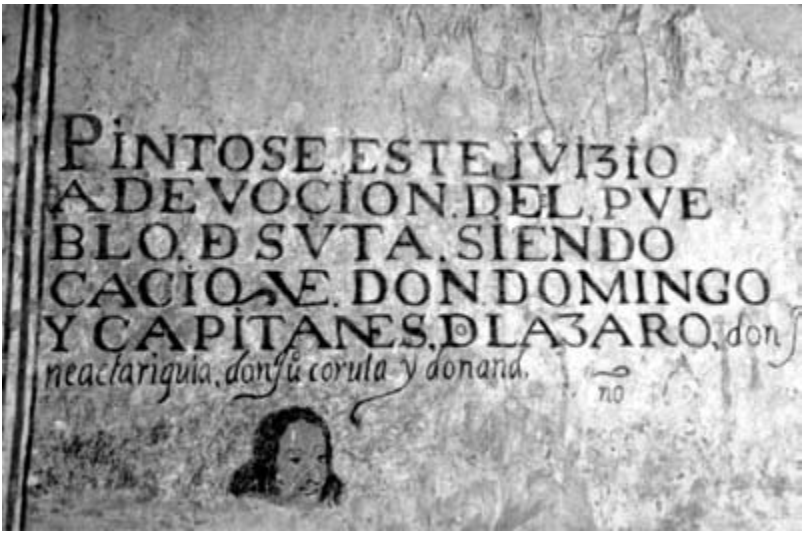

FIGURE 9 Names and portraits of donors and caciques, mural in the nave of the Church of San Juan Bautista, artist unknown, ca. 1620, Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.