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**Ministers of Idolatry:  
The Society of Jesus, the Politics of Conversion, and the War on  
Indigenous Religious Traditions in Early Seventeenth-Century Peru**

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Two views of the Spanish Jesuits dominate the historical literature. One view is that the Jesuits, much like other religious orders of the era, were protectors of Indigenous peoples. As missionaries, Jesuit priests militated for Indigenous human rights against greedy *encomenderos* (Spanish colonists who had been granted by the Crown ownership of Native bodies and labor) and the corrupt colonial state. A recent articulation of this perspective maintains that “[t]he colonial Jesuits stood out for their defense of Indians and their cultures.”<sup>1</sup> The other view

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reluctantly acknowledges that the Jesuits did occasionally use force against Indigenous peoples but such force was more akin to discipline and only used when absolutely necessary. In support of this view, a historian of the Jesuits, writes: “Brute force was rarely if ever used to change habits of behavior. Only if the custom so clashed with Western mores, such as the practice of human sacrifice in Mexico or the continued worship of idols in Mexico and Peru, and only if Europeans exerted government control, was physical force used to bring an end to a practice.”<sup>2</sup> The author places human sacrifice on par with idolatry or at least identifies idolatry as an undesirable cultural trait, one that “so clashed with Western mores.” He assures his readers that “[o]therwise verbal criticism from [Jesuit] missionaries, and in some cases civil officials, was the weapon of choice.”<sup>3</sup>

Both views are curious given that the Jesuits in Spanish America—that is, New Spain and Peru—were explicitly and unapologetically dedicated to the eradication of what they perceived to be Indigenous religion, a key component of Indigenous culture.<sup>4</sup> As to the first view, even a cursory glance of any of the number of the official Jesuit annual letters and chronicles written during the period in question would support the idea that the Jesuits did not think highly of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey L. Klaiber, S.J., *The Jesuits in Latin America, 1549-2000: 450 Years of Inculturation, Defense of Human Rights, and Prophetic Witness* (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas P. Cushner, *Why Have You Come Here? The Jesuits and the First Evangelization of Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent study on the symbiotic relationship between European Christianity and modern imperialism, see George E. Tinker’s *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

cultural accomplishments of the Indigenous peoples they sought to convert nor did they see themselves as their protectors. As to the second view, which claims that violence was only used when Indigenous religious practices were radically different from those of the Europeans, one has to keep in mind that it was the Jesuits who sought to define Indigenous religious traditions.

As will be demonstrated below, the definition of Indigenous religious traditions or Indigenous religion varied among the Spanish Jesuits themselves and was neither precise nor uniform. In general, Jesuits defined Indigenous religion as idolatry in such a way as to justify the use of violence against Indigenous religious specialists who were not only considered to be religious leaders but also political leaders. In this way, Jesuit conversionary theory and political thought were essentially two sides of the same coin.

In this article I examine Jesuit conversionary thought during the first extirpation of idolatry campaign, as documented and advocated by the Jesuit priest, Father Pablo José de Arriaga in his treatise titled *La Extirpación de Idolatría del Pirú* (1621) [*The Extirpation of Idolatry of Peru*]. I argue that Jesuit conversionary thought of the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century was essentially political. Members of the Society of Jesus, as the harbingers of Catholicism, working alongside the colonial state, sought not only to extirpate idolatry in order to plant the seeds of Latin Christianity, but also to restructure Indigenous political systems, removing those men deemed to be political threats through choreographed displays of public humiliation, exile, or incarceration.<sup>5</sup>

The focus of this article is between 1568, the year when the Jesuits arrived in Lima, and 1621, the year that Arriaga's treatise was published. It is divided into four sections. First, I offer

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<sup>5</sup> During the time period under consideration the Jesuits seemed preoccupied with male Indigenous religious specialists, perhaps because, like in so many things, they erroneously assumed that religious/political leadership was the sole preserve of men.

a brief description of Jesuit conversionary theory and political thought and assumptions as articulated by Father José de Acosta in 1588. Second, I explain the origins of the first systematic extirpation of idolatry campaign and the Jesuits' collaboration with the colonial state. Third, I examine the way in which Arriaga perceived Indigenous religion as an inherently destabilizing force to Spanish colonial rule, which is in keeping with Acosta's perspective, though with some deviation, thereby drawing a direct connection between the two theologians. Finally, I address how Arriaga proposed to rid the Andes of Indigenous religious traditions through the use of force against those Indigenous people he perceived to be specialists, communal leaders, or keepers of traditional knowledge.

### **Jesuit Conversionary Thought in the Late Sixteenth Century**

The Society of Jesus arrived in Peru in 1568. Its first priority was the founding of *colegios* (colleges). This was accomplished with the aid of pious Spaniards who donated funds and property. The exploitation of African slave labor sustained the growth of the *colegios*, especially the central college called the Colegio de San Pablo in Lima.<sup>6</sup> The establishment of *colegios* enabled the religious order to begin the kind of ministry to the Spanish-born population that it had performed on the Peninsula.<sup>7</sup> Its second priority was to study the most effective means

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<sup>6</sup> Luis Martín. *The Intellectual Conquest of Peru: The Jesuit College of San Pablo, 1568-1767* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1968), 67.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the contribution of Jesuit education to Spanish society, see Richard L. Kagan's *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). For Colonial Mexico, see Peggy K. Liss's "Jesuit Contributions to the Ideology of Spanish Empire in Mexico: Part I The Spanish Imperial Ideology and the Establishment of the Jesuit within Mexican Society," *The Americas*. Vol. 29, No. 3 (Jan. 1973), 314-333; and "Jesuit Contributions to the Ideology of Spanish Empire in Mexico: Part II The Jesuit System of Education and Jesuit Contributions to Ongoing Mexican Adhesion to Empire," *The Americas* Vol. 29, No. 4 (Apr. 1973), 449-470.

of pursuing the religious conversion of the Indigenous peoples of the region. The religious order tasked its theologians with crafting intellectual works that would aid its members in the mission field.

The most influential Jesuit theologian of the time in Spanish South America was José de Acosta. Acosta was born in Medina del Campo in northeast Salamanca in 1540 to a successful merchant family and entered the Society of Jesus in 1552.<sup>8</sup> He was educated at the University of Alcalá where he studied Latin, Philosophy, Theology, and Logic. Although he was trained primarily in scholastic theology, Acosta did not seem to have an affinity for contemporary scholasticism, which was dominated by Dominican theologians.<sup>9</sup> In 1569, Acosta requested to be sent to the Spanish Indies. The young priest had long desired to be a missionary. On a 1561 survey/questionnaire, Acosta claimed to have joined the Society of Jesus in order to either be sent to the Indies or to minister to Negros.<sup>10</sup> With his wishes nearly fulfilled, Acosta departed Seville, Spain, on June 8, 1571.<sup>11</sup>

For a year, Acosta performed his ministerial obligations in Lima. The first Jesuit Provincial of Peru, Father Jerónimo Ruiz del Portillo, sent Acosta in 1573 to conduct visits throughout southern Peru.<sup>12</sup> Given the fact that there were few, if any, Jesuits outside of Lima, Cusco, and Potosí, one may surmise that besides fulfilling his administrative duties, Acosta was

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<sup>8</sup> Claudio M. Burgaleta, S.J., *José de Acosta, S.J. (1540-1600): His Life and Thought* (Chicago: Jesuit Way, 1999), 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 15-21.

<sup>10</sup> León Lopetegui, S.J., *El Padre José de Acosta, S.J. y Las Misiones* (Madrid: CSIC, 1942), 615; Burgaleta, *José de Acosta*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Burgaleta, *José de Acosta*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

able to observe other missionaries interact with the Indigenous population. When the priest returned to Lima at the end of 1574, he accepted a professorship at the University of San Marcos where he taught philosophy and theology.<sup>13</sup>

San Marcos was a Crown owned and operated university that Viceroy Francisco de Toledo had taken from the Order of Preachers (Dominicans).<sup>14</sup> Acosta did not remain at the university for long, however. Doctor Juan de Plaza, an official visitor of the Society of Jesus, appointed Acosta rector of San Pablo in September of 1575. Father Plaza was the representative of the Superior General and had arrived in Lima three months earlier with the intent of resolving the matter of the Jesuits' refusal—based upon their *Constitutions*— to accept the care of *doctrinas* (mission parishes). This was an issue because of Viceroy Francisco de Toledo's forced relocation of Indigenous Andeans to *reducciones* (reductions) and his mandate that the Society was to permanently assume control and/or establish parishes in the Cercado del Santiago, an impoverished section of Lima populated by deracinated *Indios* (Indigenous people), *mestizos* (mixed people of Spanish and Native heritage), and other *castas* (mixed people of unknown heritage).<sup>15</sup> On January 1, 1576, Plaza appointed Acosta to be the second provincial of the Society of Jesus within the Viceroyalty of Peru.<sup>16</sup> A little more than a year later, Acosta

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Martín, *Intellectual Conquest*, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 16-17. Kenneth J. Andrien, "Spaniards, Andeans, and the Early Colonial State in Peru," in Rolena Adorno and Kenneth J. Andrien (eds.) *Transatlantic Encounters: Europeans and Andeans in the Sixteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), writes: "Toledo's forced resettlement plans were a massive undertaking, perhaps affecting over 1,500,000 Andeans" (125).

<sup>16</sup> Lopetegui, *El Padre*, 615; Burgaleta, *José de Acosta*, 28, 37-38.

submitted his first major theological manuscript for review and publication to Rome.<sup>17</sup> He titled the treatise, *De Procuranda Indorum Salute* (1588) [*On Procuring the Salvation of Indians*].

In *De Procuranda*, Acosta states that there are essentially three kinds, classes, or categories of non-European peoples.<sup>18</sup> First, there are those cultures that are highly sophisticated, such as the Chinese and Japanese, though the former does not have an alphabet. These peoples are similar to the Greeks and Romans. Second, there are the cultures of the Mexica and the Incas, who are rather sophisticated but lack the written word.<sup>19</sup> Three, there are cultures that are nomadic, wild, and can be classified as complete savages. They lack cultural sophistication and are, more often than not, violent. Some in this category have religion and some do not. Acosta maintains, however, that there are some savages that are peaceful and docile such as those who inhabit the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that Acosta also played an important role in both the Jesuit provincial congregation and the Third Council of Lima, 1581-1583. Although the sessions of these official meetings are important for understanding Catholicism in colonial Peru, Acosta's participation in these gatherings is beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>18</sup> Acosta's categorization of the types of barbarians has been well documented by historians, see C.R. Boxer's *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1440-1770* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 46; Anthony Pagden's *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 162-165; D.A. Brading's *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492-1867* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 187-188; Sabine MacCormack's *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 267-268; and Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 127-129.

<sup>19</sup> For an excellent study on the relationship between Spanish imperialism and language, see Walter Mignolo's *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization*, Second Edition (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> José de Acosta, S.J., *De Procuranda Indorum Salute. Vols. I-II*, ed. Luciano Pereña Vicente (Madrid: CSIC, [1588] 1984, 1987), Proemio. This edition contains the original Latin with a modern Spanish translation.

Accordingly, Acosta describes three types of evangelical methods or approaches. The first is the apostolic method which was used by the early apostles. This method consisted of simple persuasion and the performance of miracles. The Portuguese Jesuits employed the apostolic method in India, China, and Japan.<sup>21</sup> These non-Europeans were culturally sophisticated enough to be reasoned with about religious matters. The second method consists of preaching within Latin Christian realms. In this way, missionaries are aided by the political reality of Christian dominion.<sup>22</sup> This, of course, pertains to the recently conquered Mexica and Inca. The third method consists of missionaries traveling with the aid of military protection. Acosta argues that this is the best method for the Americas. He cites the failure of La Florida and the destruction of a small, Jesuit contingent. In Acosta's view, the Jesuits in La Florida died without having converted a single Indigenous soul. The massacre occurred because the Indigenous people of La Florida mission willfully ignored natural law, and acted like wild beasts.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Acosta points out that trying to reason with some of these Indigenous people would be tantamount to befriending "*apris et crocodilis*" (wild boars and crocodiles).<sup>24</sup>

Further, to travel among these people without military protection is to needlessly sacrifice one's life. It is the same as casting pearls before swine.<sup>25</sup> Acosta says that Indigenous people due

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, Book II, Ch. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. "Quamobrem qui horum se rationi et arbitrio commiserit, poterit his cum apris et crocodilis amicitiam inire." / "Por lo cual confiarse a la razón y albedrío de estos bárbaros sería como pretender entablar amistad con jabalíes y cocodrilos."

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Book II, Ch. 8.



to their customs are a mix between animal and human, saying that they seem to be “*hominum monstra*” (human monsters).<sup>26</sup> Thus Indigenous people must be handled like wild men until they have been taught to act like proper humans. Acosta writes, “These barbarians are a mix human and animal, and we should treat them with a mix of kindness and hardness until they cease their native savagery, and become docile and start to slowly conform to proper human discipline.”<sup>27</sup> Discipline, for Acosta, is synonymous with custom or culture. As such, he makes a distinction between human customs and non-human customs or good and bad customs. In his view, Indigenous religions fall into the category of evil or bad customs.<sup>28</sup> Indigenous religious traditions are idolatrous practices. Idolatry is demonic. Natives or Indios, however, practice idolatry voluntarily and willfully, not from ignorance or demonic compulsion. Indios, through free will and because of poor political leadership, submit themselves willingly to the power of the Devil.

Acosta claims that the most efficient way to evangelize is to distinguish between good Indio customs and evil Indio customs. In order for this to be done properly, Indigenous customs and habits must be studied. Further, in order to understand their Indigenous ways, missionaries must learn the language of the people.<sup>29</sup> The mastery of Indigenous languages and evangelical

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, Book II, Ch. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. “Ut enim barbari, velut mixta humana et ferina natura, constat ut moribus non tam homines, quam hominum monstra videantur, sic quae cum illis instituenda est consuetude, partim humana et liberalis, partim subhorrida et ferox sit, necesse est usque dum nativa illa sua feritate deposita, paulatim mansuescere incipiant et ad disciplinam humanitatemque traduci.” / “Pues los bárbaros, compuestos de naturaleza como mezcla de hombre y fiera, por sus costumbres no tanto paracen hombres como monstruos humanos. De suerte que hay que entablar con ellos un trato que sea en parte humano y amable, y en parte duro y violento, mientras sea necesario, hasta que superada su nativa fiereza, comiencen poco a poco a amansarse, disciplinarse y humanizarse.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Book V, Ch. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Book VI, Ch. 13.

ethnographies for discernment of customs to distinguish the demonic from the non-demonic are the foundation of successful missionary work.<sup>30</sup> Even more, Acosta advances the idea, though without specifics on how to proceed, that Indigenous religious specialists are to be taken out of the equation as quickly as possible so that they cannot hinder the spread of the Gospel. Specialists are disruptive to Jesuit efforts because they maintain idolatry and idolatry is the foundation of a corrupt political system, which permits more idolatry. He even goes so far as to encourage his readers to teach converted, neophyte children how to ridicule their elders.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted, however, that encouraging children to dishonor their elders, no matter their religious system, is a clear violation of Catholic natural law, though this appears to be lost on Acosta.<sup>32</sup>

What Acosta is advocating, then, in *De Procuranda* is strategic and precise attacks on the cultures of Indigenous peoples, especially on those who are within the third class of barbarians. For him, anything having to do with Indigenous religion is evil and must be extirpated or rooted out. He believes everything else should remain, although he does not know where Indigenous culture ends and religion begins, which is why he calls for their study. This call for the surgical mutilation of Indigenous cultures is the first of its kind in the South American Church. Acosta is, to be fair, in accordance with the institutional philosophy of his religious order, trying to find the “good” in Indigenous cultural traditions. The Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans had

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Book V, Ch. 10; Book VI, Ch. 8; Book VI, Ch. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Book II, Ch. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Thomas Gilby and T.C. O’ Brien, 61 Vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, [1274] 1964-1981), Ia2ae.93.4. According to Thomas, Natural law dictates that parents must feed, clothe, protect, and educate their children. In return, children must respect and obey their parents. This applies to all peoples, at all times.

failed to distinguish religion from culture, or malevolent traditions from benign traditions, opting to undertake efforts for complete and total Latin Christian assimilation, slowly loosening the Devil's grip on the hearts and minds of Indigenous peoples.<sup>33</sup> For Acosta, Indigenous religious specialists were considered the primary obstacle to the conversion of the Indios. He asserts in a letter to the Superior General that the “*maestros de idolatrías*” (masters of idolatry) keep idolatry alive in the Andes.<sup>34</sup> Acosta would save his more developed ideas on Indigenous religion for his later work, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*.

In book V of his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (1590) [*The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*] claims that there are two forms of Indigenous religion or idolatry, each with two subcategories. The first kind is of the natural world; the second kind is of human fabrication or imagination.<sup>35</sup> First, there is the natural or nature. Within this category there is the

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<sup>33</sup> Antonia-Ma Rosales, O.F.M., notes in *A Study of a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Tagalog Manuscript on the Ten Commandments: Its Significance and Implications* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1984) that the Spanish Franciscans in the Philippine Islands, just as they had in New Spain and Peru, “viewed evangelization as directed to the whole man” (9).

<sup>34</sup> Egaña, Antonio de. (ed.) *Monumenta Peruana*, II (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1954-1981), Doc. 123, Sect. 17, Lima Apr. 1579.

<sup>35</sup> José de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (Sevilla: Casa de Juan de Leon, 1590); Joseph de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, ed. Edmundo O’Gorman (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1940, 1962, 2006); and Josef de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, ed. Fermín del Pino-Díaz (Madrid: CSIC, 2008), Book V, Ch 2: “La idolatría, dice el Sabio, y por él el Espíritu Santo, que es causa y principio y fin de todos los males, y por eso el enemigo de los hombres ha multiplicado tantos géneros y suertes de idolatría, que pensar de contarlos por menudo es cosa infinta. Pero reduciendo la idolatría a cabezas, hay dos linajes de ella: una es cerca de cosas naturales; otra cerca de cosas imaginados o fabricadas por invención humana. La primera de éstas se parte en dos, porque, o la cosa que se adora es general como sol, luna, fuego, tierra, elementos; o es particular como tal río, fuente o árbol, o monte, y cuando no por su especie, sino en particular, son adoradas estas cosas; y este género de idolatría se usó en el Perú en grande exceso, y se llama propriamente *guaca*. El segundo género de idolatría, que pertenece a invención o ficción humana, tiene también otras dos diferencias: Una de lo que consiste en pura arte y invención humana, como es adorar ídolos o estatuas de palo, o piedra o de oro, como de Mercurio o Palas, que fuera de aquella pintura o escultura, ni es nada, ni fué nada. Otra diferencia es de lo que realmente fué y es algo, pero no lo que finge el idólatra que lo adora, como los muertos o cosas suyas, que por vanidad y lisonja adoran los hombres. De suerte, que por todas contamos cuatro maneras de idolatría que usan los infieles, y de todas converná decir algo.”

general and the specific. General idolatry consists of worshipping the earth, sky, water, etc., in the belief that natural wonders were deities. Specific idolatry focuses upon a particular rock, an animal, a hill, a tree, or a stream, for instance. Second, there is the fabricated. Within this category there is the imagined and the monument. Imagined idolatry is the result of human art or fantasy. According to Acosta, sacred objects or idols created from human imagination are usually ugly and diabolic looking, no doubt capturing the true essence of the demons that they represented. Monument idolatry focuses upon the idea of honoring someone who is either dead or living.

Idolatry, then, stemmed from the natural world and from human fabrication. An idol was not something that was necessarily created by the hands of humans. As historians Fernando Cervantes and Nicholas Griffiths have noted, for Acosta, idolatry is the worship of anything that had been created by God.<sup>36</sup> In Acosta's view, only the Christian God—in his triune form— was to be worshipped and honored. Since the Devil desires to be worshipped and honored as God, he and his demons have occupied the idols, thereby enjoying the worship that is properly due only to God the father, the Man-God Jesus of Nazareth, and the Holy Spirit. The Devil, through idolatry, mimics God and his Church. This explains why the Mexica and Inca have temples, priests, sacraments, ceremonies, and sacrifices.

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<sup>36</sup> Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 25-30; Nicholas Griffiths, *The Cross and the Serpent: Religious Repression and Resurgence in Colonial Peru* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 51-53.

## The Anti-Idolatry Campaign of the Early Seventeenth Century

Father Acosta died in Spain in 1600. Nearly a decade later, a secular priest named Francisco de Avila, an orphaned mestizo with a Jesuit education, initiated the first centralized campaign for the extirpation of idolatry.<sup>37</sup> Avila, who was fully Hispanized, believed that many of his Indigenous parishioners at the San Damián doctrina in the province of Huarochirí were active in traditional religious practices, and had not truly been converted to Latin Christianity.<sup>38</sup> According to historian Kenneth Andrien, in 1600 and again in 1607, Avila had come under official scrutiny for exploiting Native labor and for propositioning girls and women for sexual favors.<sup>39</sup> While incarcerated, Avila had supporters collect information about the religious practices of his parishioners in the hopes of punishing traditionalists for apostasy. After the official investigation of Avila stalled, he was released from jail. Upon his release, he presented the findings on local idolatry to archbishop Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero. The archbishop was sympathetic to Avila's cause, along with the Viceroy, the Marqués de Montesclaros. Avila's strongest supporters were his former professors.

After having delivered a couple of well received sermons on the evils of Indian idolatry, Francisco de Avila presided over an *auto de fe* (act of faith) in Lima on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1609.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Karen Spalding, *Huarochirí: An Andean Society Under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 252-253.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid; Sabine Hyland, "Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy in the Peruvian Priesthood: A Seventeenth Century Dispute," *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 84, No. 3 (July), 454.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth J. Andrien, *Andean Worlds: Indigenous History, Culture, and Consciousness Under Spanish Rule, 1532-1825* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 171.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 173. Juan Carlos Estenssoro Fuchs, *Del Paganismo a La Santidad: La Incorporación de Los Indios de Perú al Catolicismo, 1532-1750*. Gabriela Ramos (trans.) (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2003), 313.

The first victim of this form of public humiliation and punishment was Hernando Paucarr, who had been accused of practicing idolatry. Not only was Paucarr's hair hacked off, which was/is a method of emasculating Andean men, he was given two hundred lashes, and sent into exile to a Jesuit colegio in Chile.<sup>41</sup> In addition, *chancas* (lineage deities), *conopas* (personal deities), *malquis* (mummified corpses), and other objects believed to be idols were burned publicly. Four days after the *auto*, Francisco de Avila was cleared of all the allegations he had earned while acting as the pastor of San Damián.<sup>42</sup> In early 1610, Francisco de Avila was appointed by the archdiocese of Lima as the first judge and extirpator of idolatry.<sup>43</sup>

In his new position as lead *visitador* (investigator or inspector) of idolatry, Avila, who had maintained a close relationship with his former Jesuit teachers, was able to provide positions for many of his staunchest supporters, among them was the Jesuit Pablo José de Arriaga. Avila and his supporters modeled the new judicial institution upon the Lima inquisition. Unlike the inquisition, however, defendants were deprived of the ability to appeal the priestly tribunal's ruling to either Madrid or Rome. In theory, those suspected of or found guilty of idolatry were not to be executed for apostasy. Methods of punishment for idolatry consisted of ritualized acts of public humiliation, exile, or incarceration.

The Society of Jesus played a substantial role in the first anti-idolatry campaign, and then reduced their role in the campaign of the 1650s.<sup>44</sup> The extent of which the other religious orders

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<sup>41</sup> Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 30; Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 30

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 14. According to Kenneth Mills, historian Pierre Duviols claims that there were three anti-idolatry 'campaigns' in Peru during the seventeenth century: 1609-1621; 1625-1626; and 1646-1667.

were involved in the first campaign idolatry is unclear. Arriaga mentions working closely with certain Dominicans but it seems that these priests were assigned to particular doctrinas.<sup>45</sup> What can be said with certainty is that Jesuits were not in control of the campaign, though they were certainly influential in its prosecution. The full extent of Jesuit involvement in the extirpation of idolatry campaigns has not been studied. Whatever the case, the command and control of the campaign was firmly in the hands of the archbishop of Lima.<sup>46</sup> Having been the last major religious order to arrive in Peru, and missing the upheavals of the newly established colony or kingdom, the Society seems to have welcomed any opportunity to be a part of any activity that would help it gain political points, favors, or respect with the civil authorities and the wider colonial Church.<sup>47</sup>

The Jesuits entered the campaign against idolatry with the full force of its intellectual and material resources. Not only did Jesuits attempt to clarify their thought on idolatry, they also saw to more practical matters such as intensifying attempts to learn Indigenous languages, especially Quechua and Aymara, in regions where Indigenous religious traditions had yet to be eradicated.

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It is not known why the Jesuits reduced their participation in the third anti-idolatry campaign. Iris Gareis in her “La Evangelization de la Población Indígena y Afro, y las Haciendas Jesuitas de la América Española: Logros y desencuentros” in *Esclavitud, Economía y Evangelización: Las Haciendas Jesuitas en La América Virreinal*, Sandra Negro and Manuel M. Marzal (eds.) (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú, 2005), surmises in footnote 36, on page 54, that the Jesuits did not want to be identified with the systematic repression of Native religion. Jeffery L. Klaiber, S.J. in *The Jesuits in Latin America, 1549-2000*, writes: “the mentality which gave rise to the extirpation campaigns clearly stood in opposition to the open-minded humanism of Jesuit spirituality” (51). These are curious statements given the Jesuits’ sustained anti-idolatry efforts in Northwestern New Spain, the Philippine Islands, and the Mariana Islands during the mid to late seventeenth century.

<sup>45</sup> Pablo José de Arriaga, *La Extirpación de Idolatria del Pirú* (Lima: Geronymo de Contreras, 1621), Ch. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 36.

<sup>47</sup> For a discussion on the impact of the Jesuits on the Indigenous “elite” of Colonial Peru, consult Monique Alaperrine-Bouyer’s *La Educación de las Elites Indígenas en el Perú Colonial* (Lima: IFEA-Instituto Riva Agüero, 2007).

As early as 1577, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus reminded the Jesuits of the Province of Peru how important it was for them to learn the Indigenous languages of the region.<sup>48</sup> The men of the Jesuit Province were in front of the General on this matter. When the Jesuits arrived in Lima in 1568, they were aware that if they were to become an effective missionary force they would have to acquire the linguistic skills necessary to convert the Indigenous population. The question, then, was how the men of the religious order would most effectively learn Quechua, the dominant Indigenous language.<sup>49</sup>

Fortunately for the Jesuits the other religious orders, especially the Dominicans, had produced grammars and dictionaries of Quechua. Jesuit linguists would improve many of these works. Quechua was not the only language that needed to be learned, however. Within a relatively short period of time, the Jesuits had earned a reputation for their ability to acquire languages besides the *lingua franca*, though the dominant Indigenous languages took priority over the others. The Jesuits would find themselves encountering languages that had yet to be Latinized and, to a great extent, Christianized. In 1579, Acosta himself, during his tenure as Provincial, boasted to the Superior General that

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<sup>48</sup> Egana, *Monumenta Peruana*, II, Doc. 29, 25 Jun. 1577. “La tercera es que, comliéndose con las Constituciones de nuestro Padre Ignatio, de sancta memoria, por las quales manda aprender la lengua de la India, es muy probable que Dios nuestro Señor concurrirá con mayor influxo de gracia a nuestros trabajosa; y quando todo esto no fuera, es cierto que el despojarse del amor natural que cada uno tiene a sus cosa y lengua, y el hazarse niño para aprovechar a los niños y idiotas os causará no pequeño merecimiento delante el acatamiento de Dios nuestro Señor, y aun mayor benevolencia y amor, y la lengua que hablaréis os hará parescer uno dellos.”

<sup>49</sup> The Jesuits were not alone in emphasizing the importance of language. In a 1584 directive friar Diego Porras of Nuestra Señora de la Mercedes (Orden de la Merced), a little studied religious order, made it clear to his subordinates that the Sacrament of Reconciliation was to occur in the Indigenous language. “...las confesion general, en lengua, que para esto les queda en cada puebla.” *Pastells Collection*, Peru, 8(77,8), Roll 1, 6 housed at the Vatican Film Library at Saint Louis University.



In Juli there are eleven members of the Society, eight priests and three brothers. The Fathers all know the language of the Indios; if not, one is going to learn now. Some even know two languages, Quechua and Aymara, and some also Puquina, which is another difficult language and is used often in those provinces. They have great ability with the language and each day together for one or two hours they compose exercises, translate, etc. In this way, within four or five months they learn the language of our Indios enough that they are able to confess, catechize, and within a year they can preach.<sup>50</sup>

Jesuits produced grammars and dictionaries for the acquisition of Indigenous linguistic knowledge. In Peru, by 1582 all priests not affiliated with a religious order were mandated by the archbishop to enroll in language classes at the Colegio de San Pablo in Lima.<sup>51</sup> Two years later, San Pablo became the home of the first printing press in Spanish South America, producing Indigenous-language catechisms, confessional manuals, and sacramental texts, pamphlet-like study materials.<sup>52</sup> Quechua and Aymara were analyzed, transliterated, and modified systematically by Jesuit linguists, the most notable being Father Alonso de Barzana, a mestizo who produced a Quechua grammar in 1586.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Egana, *Monumenta Peruana* II, Doc. 123, Sect. 14, 11 April 1579, Lima. “En Juli están al presente once de la Compañia: ocho sacerdotes y tres Hermonos. Los Padres todos saben la lengua de los indios, si no es uno que la va aprendiendo agora; y algunos dellos saben las dos lenguas Quichua y Imara, y algunos también la Puquina, que es otra lengua dificultosa y muy usada en aquellas provincias; tienen gran exercicio de la lengua y cada día se juntan una o dos horas a conferir haziendo diversos exercicios de componer, traducir etc., con esto tenemos ya experiencia que en quatro o cinco meses aprenden la lengua de los Indios los Nuestros, de suerte que pueden bien confessor y cathequizar, y dentro de un año pueden predicar....”

<sup>51</sup> Martín, *Intellectual Conquest*, 50-51.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> For a detailed account of the missionary lives and activities of the major Jesuit linguists, see Sabine MacCormack’s “Grammar and Virtue: The Formulation of a Cultural and Missionary Program by the Jesuits in Early Colonial Peru” in John O’Malley et al. *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 576-601. Also of interest in the same anthology is Aliocha Maldavsky’s *The Problematic Acquisition of Indigenous Languages: Practices and Contentions in the Missionary Specialization in the Jesuit Province of Peru (1568-1640)*, 602-615.

In 1607 Father Diego González Holguín produced his exhaustive Quechua grammar; he followed in 1608 with a dictionary of the same quality of craftsmanship.<sup>54</sup> Both works expanded upon and nuanced Barzana's grammar and dictionary to aid priests in combating idolatry. Father González cautioned users of dictionaries about the limitations of Quechua. He writes: "Be advised that the Indios do not have every word for spiritual matters, nor vices, nor virtues, nor the other life and its state, this dictionary copies that which is most necessary for preaching and catechizing."<sup>55</sup>

In 1612, during the height of the anti-idolatry campaign, the Italian-born Jesuit priest and linguist Father Ludovico Bertonio authored a book on the life and miracles of Christ in Aymara and a fairly detailed Aymara dictionary or lexicon for conversion purposes.<sup>56</sup> As with the Quechua works, Aymara linguistic aids were made for conversionary and pastoral purposes. Father Bertonio, under *anotación* IV (annotation IV), *Modo de Estudiar esta Lengua* (Way to Study this Language) reminds his readers that: "The principal thing that will help you to learn this language is a great desire to procure the true salvation of the Indios because without this sense of urgency all the care that you should have ceases."<sup>57</sup> The intent behind the acquisition of

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<sup>54</sup> Alan Durston, *Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian Translation in Colonial Peru, 1550-1650* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 158-160.

<sup>55</sup> Diego Gonzales Holguín, *Vocabulario de la Lengua General de Todo el Peru Llamada Lengua Quichua [sic] o del Inca* (Lima: Imprenta de Francisco del Canto, 1608). "Advertase que los indios no tenían vocablos de todo lo espiritual ni vicios, ni virtudes, ni de la otra vida y estados de ella, y este Vocabulario da copia desto, que es muy necessario para predicar y catechizer." Cf. Martín, "Peruvian Indian," 209.

<sup>56</sup> Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 160-161.

<sup>57</sup> Ludovico Bertonio, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Aymara* (Juli: Imprenta de Francisco del Canto, 1612). "La principal cosa that ayuda para saber esta lengua es un deseo grande de salir con ella para procurar de versa la salvación de los indios; porque sin este despertador cesará todo el cuidado que en esto debe haber."

Indigenous languages is to free the Indio from the *infernal tirano* (infernal tyrant).<sup>58</sup> This was needed of course to teach Indios proper doctrine and to stop them from “*adorando los cerros*” (adoring hills) and “*confesándose con sus hechiceros*” (confessing with their sorcerers). Bertonio defines *hechicero* (sorcerer) as *layca, tala, tata, troqueni, hamuni, and hamuttani*. *Diablo* (Devil) and *demonio* (demon) are defined as *supayu*, which is an Andean evil spirit. Aymara words, like other Indigenous languages, for Indigenous religious specialists were defined as being associated with the Devil.

### **Jesuit Conversionary Thought in the Early Seventeenth Century**

Father Pablo José de Arriaga was the highest profile Jesuit to be involved in the first campaign. Born in Ocaña, Spain, and arriving at Lima in 1585, he became a professor of rhetoric and style and was the rector of the Colegio Seminario de San Martín in Lima.<sup>59</sup> He had spent nearly two years in Rome, from early 1601 through 1602, acting as procurator. While in Rome he published a book on rhetoric and style. He also wrote a manuscript of commentary on the *Spiritual Exercises*. This work was never published and has been lost.<sup>60</sup> The most famous of his intellectual production was his extirpation manual, *La Extirpación de la Idolatría del Pirú* (1621) [*The Extirpation of Idolatry of Peru*].

Although the treatise or manual, as is it sometimes called, is well known by religious historians of early modern Peru, it is relatively unknown to scholars of religion whose focus is not Andean religion. Unlike Acosta’s works, especially the *Historia*, it does not have wide

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Egana, *Monumenta Peruana*, VII, Doc. 50, Sect. 21, 15 Mar. 1601, Lima.

<sup>60</sup> Martín, *Intellectual Conquest*, 35; MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*, 384-385.

appeal by virtue of its topic, which is the undeniable advocacy for the destruction of idolatry or Indigenous religious traditions, coupled with the nonchalant manner in which the author relates the brutality deployed against Indigenous communities. It is important to note that Acosta's words about the most efficient means of uprooting idolatry were, for the most part, theoretical; Arriaga's words concerned actual events.<sup>61</sup>

*La Extirpación* is divided into twenty chapters, beginning with how idolatry came to be discovered in Peru and ending with affirming the importance of the missions. Arriaga states that although his text is not formerly divided into three parts or sections, the reader can easily identify three parts: the nature of idolatry and its protectors, the reasons idolatry has persisted in a Christian region, and how inspectors should go about the extirpation of idolatry.<sup>62</sup> Still, it is a relatively small treatise; it reads less like a manual at times and more like a memoir. It was published in Lima and made available to those involved in the campaign to rid the Andes of idolatry. As such, the treatise's production, publication, and distribution was not only approved by the Society of Jesus to articulate the evils of idolatry and the best methods to be destroy it, but it also was used by the broader Church in South America.<sup>63</sup> In this way, Jesuit missiology seeped into the larger Church culture. The most important aspect of the manual is that it unabashedly demonstrates its disdain for Indigenous religion while persistently attempting to separate idolatry and superstition from Indigenous culture. Arriaga, unlike Acosta, neither engages natural law

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<sup>61</sup> Egana, *Monumenta Peruana*, VI, Doc. 192, Sect., 32, 29 Apr. 1599, Lima. In the 1599 annual letter to Superior General Aquaviva, Arriaga expresses admiration for the truthfulness of Acosta's *De Procuranda Indorum Salute*.

<sup>62</sup> Arriaga, *Extirpación*, Prologo.

<sup>63</sup> MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*, 385.

arguments nor delves into high scholastic political theory. This is because Arriaga assumes his audience is well versed on the subject. However, on the whole, historian Luis Martín is correct in calling Arriaga “one of the true intellectual heirs of Acosta.”<sup>64</sup>

Still, scholars must be careful to not assume that Arriaga agreed in every manner on every topic with his predecessor. Although Arriaga’s definition of idolatry has some similarities to Acosta’s, it is not identical, primarily because it is in line with the Jesuit political desires of the day. Arriaga does not make a formal distinction between general and specific for either nature or fabricated idolatry. In essence, Arriaga believes that there are two forms of idolatry in the Andes: *fixas* or *immobiles* (fixed or immobile) and *mobiles* (mobile).<sup>65</sup>

The former is essentially what can be termed Nature idolatry, or the worship of “natural things.” Arriaga notes that Indigenous peoples worship the *Punchao*, the sun, which is synonymous with day. They also worship *Inti*, the moon; *Mamacocha*, the sea; and *Mamapacha*, the earth. Even more they revere *puquios*, streams; *rao* or *riti*, snow covered mountains; and *pacarinas* are their place of origin. Arriaga writes: “The above said things are all huacas, which

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<sup>64</sup> Luis Martín, “The Peruvian Indian through Jesuit Eyes: The Case of José de Acosta and Pablo José de Arriaga” in Christopher Chapple (ed.) *The Jesuit Tradition in Education and Mission: A 450-Year Perspective* (Toronto: University of Scranton Press, 1993), 205-214. Although the title suggests that Acosta and Arriaga are treated equally, the focus is primarily on Acosta’s educational strategies concerning the religious assimilation of the children of the cacique (noble) class of Indigenous peoples. The Jesuit deployment of violence and coercion are omitted from the narrative. Extraordinarily, and despite all the evidence to the contrary, Martín concludes his essay with these words: “A reflective and comparative reading of the works of José de Acosta and Pablo José de Arriaga will show that they saw the Indian as a full human type, the result of a distinctive historical process within the peculiar environment of the New World... The Indians should not be forced to accept Christianity, but rather should be educated to choose it by their own free will. Both Acosta and Arriaga were convinced that such a process could not even begin until the European Jesuits would change, first by becoming fluent in the language of the Indians, and then by adapting to their culture. Acosta seemed to be saying to his fellow Jesuits that to Christianize the Indians one must begin by ‘Indianizing’ the Christians” (213).

<sup>65</sup> Arriaga, *Extirpación*, Ch. 2. “Todas las cosas sobredicnas son Huacas que adoran como a Dios, y ya que no se les pueden quitar delante de los ojos, porque son fixas, y immobiles.... Otras Huacas ay mobiles que son las ordinarias...”

they believe to be God, and they cannot be removed from their eyes, because they are fixed and immobile.”<sup>66</sup> As such, Catholic priests must rid this form of idolatry from the hearts of the people and be able to give natural explanations regarding these environmental wonders.

The latter form of idolatry, which Acosta designates as fabricated idolatry, pertains to objects that are mobile or able to be relocated. These idols or huacas are mobile and ordinary with particular names. Arriaga writes: “These [huacas] ordinarily are of stone, many of them are without form; others have diverse forms of men and women, and some are said to be children or women of other huacas; and other huacas have animal forms.”<sup>67</sup> In essence, these objects could range from being small stones to ornately crafted objects. What is more, however, is that “[t]hese huacas have particular priests who offer sacrifice to them.”<sup>68</sup>

According to Arriaga, the people truly responsible for the persistence of idolatry despite being exposed to seven decades of Latin Christianity are the Indigenous ministers or priests of traditional Native beliefs and practices. Specialists of religious knowledge communicate with the Devil.<sup>69</sup> However, this does not mean Arriaga has forgotten the duty of the Church. In his view, these ministers of idolatry would not have been able to spread their lies if, in fact, the Church had performed its pastoral duties correctly. In chapter 7, “*De La rayzes, y causas de la Idolatria, que oyen dia se halla entre los Indios*” (On the Roots and Causes of Idolatry that are Found among

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. “De ordinario son de piedra, y las mas vezes sin figura ninguna, otras tienan diversas figuras de hombres o mugeres, y a algunas destas Huacas dizen, que son hijos o mugeres de otras Huacas, otras tienen figura de animales....Estas Huacas tienen todas sus particulares sacerdotes, que ofrecen los sacrificios...”

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, Ch. 1.

the Indios Today), he asserts that priests within the doctrinas do not know the language and are not vigilant enough of their flock, and do not teach Church doctrine. In Arriaga's view, then, for idolatry to truly be eradicated from the Andes the Church's attack must be twofold: 1) idols, whether fixed or mobile, must be destroyed and 2) the men and women who guard, look over, convey messages for, or protect idols must be dealt with in a convincing manner.<sup>70</sup>

Arriaga makes it clear that everyday Indios or Andeans were not targets of the campaign. For him, the various Indigenous religious specialists who persisted in idolatry and who regularly led their people astray were the real threats to Catholicism, although the Indigenous population of the Andes, on the whole, was still suffering from severe demographic decline caused by disease and forced labor.<sup>71</sup> Arriaga, moving beyond Acosta, made an effort to systematically identify and classify the types of religious specialists an extirpator or inspector might encounter. In chapter 3, titled "*De los ministros de Idolatrias*" (Ministers of Idolatry), he lists sixteen types, their offices and functions.<sup>72</sup> A few examples will suffice. The *umu* or *chacha* or *auqui* Arriaga defines as simply as a "father" or "old man"; he probably means an elder.<sup>73</sup> The *Huacavillac* is one who cares for and communicates with a *Huaca*. The *Malquipillac* is one who cares for and communicates with malquis. The *Libiapavillac* is one who communicates with lightning; the *Punchaupvillac* communicates with the sun. All of these leaders have assistants called *Yanápac*. The *Macsa* is a healer and the *Aucachic* is a "confessor" at ceremonies and festivals. For Arriaga

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, Ch. 11.

<sup>71</sup> Noble David Cook in *Demographic Collapse: Indian Peru, 1520-1630* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) writes, "The overall decline was approximately 93 percent for the century following contact between the European and Andean inhabitant" (114).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Ch. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

and his fellow extirpators, these religious specialists and the others not mentioned posed a real danger to the survival and growth of Catholicism in the Peru.

In chapter 14, “*Como se a de comenzar la Visita,*” (How a Visit Should Begin) Father Arriaga suggests that the best way to identify and locate idolaters in an Andean village. He advises that, first, all of the townspeople should be gathered in one location, ideally in the village Church; second, Holy Mass should be celebrated and sermons denouncing idolatry preached in the language of the people; and third, the Viceroy’s decrees against drunkenness and idolatry should be read. After this has been completed, the inspectors must, then, first, “*ganar algún Indio de razón*” (to gain some reasonable Indio)—that is, find an informant; second, locate an “*algún Indio viejo, que parezca de buena capacidad*” (some old Indio that seems to have a strong [intellectual] capacity)—that is, an elder, and speak to him privately, be kind to him, and give him gifts for information about the huacas, and if he fails to give any information, tell him that he will be punished; if this fails, then, third, interview the cacique privately and threaten him with exile or the loss of his office; fourth, ask the cacique or elder in gentle manner about his personal religious lineage, for they are morally bound by their ancestors to be honest about this, and about the huacas of neighboring towns; fifth, find out who the healers of the town are, and talk to them about healing to discover whether or not they are ministers of idolatry, which they probably are; sixth, religious leaders, both men and women, can be discerned by their old age or by other distinguishing features such as a physical deformity and/or handicap; and seventh, those found to be sorcerers should be punished publicly—this usually included floggings—in the most humiliating manner and the offender’s head should be shaved. It should be proclaimed that the offender was punished not for being a sorcerer but for refusing to reveal himself and for having



lied to the inspectors.<sup>74</sup> The following chapter goes into greater detail on conducting successful interrogations if public humiliation or simple exile failed to dissuade ministers of idolatry from their illicit activities. The next step was incarceration.

According to Arriaga, the Casa de Santa Cruz was established in 1618. The Jesuits managed the location from 1618 until around 1627.<sup>75</sup> It served as both a prison for Indigenous religious specialists who were victims of the first extirpation of idolatry campaign and as a boarding school for the sons of elite Indigenous nobles. The prison and the boarding school were in two different buildings. The Casa's dual purpose was punishment and education. Two types of alleged religious specialists seemed to have been sent to the prison: those specialists who had been unfortunate enough to have been discovered by the inspectors or extirpators on more than one occasion and those specialists who had been imprisoned as an example to others in a given village or community. The first prisoner was sent to the Casa in 1618, a victim of an extremely intense period of the campaign.

Father Arriaga boasts that at the time of his writing there were about 40 men incarcerated in the prison. According to him, inmates were allowed on feast days to attend Mass, but only under direct Jesuit supervision. Jesuit priests also regularly taught the inmates the intricacies of Catholic doctrine. Prison sentences were usually indefinite, ranging from months to years, and parole or release depended upon whether the prisoner had renounced his ways and had truly

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, Ch. 14. Cf. Klaiber, *Jesuits in Latin America*, 50.

<sup>75</sup> Iris Gareis, "Repression and Cultural Change: 'Extirpation of Idolatry' in Colonial Peru." In *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America*, Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes (eds.) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 234.

embraced Latin Christianity. In the Casa, inmates were forced to spin wool.<sup>76</sup> Arriaga claims that a large number of prisoners had escaped and that healthy individuals regularly attempted to flee, although many of the prisoners were over 80 years old.<sup>77</sup>

Arriaga, essentially, takes Acosta's conversion ideas to their logical conclusion by advocating that physical force be used—because experience has shown that it works—specifically against the ministers or teachers of idolatry, for they, the religious specialists are the only humans that can articulate the idolatrous ideas of the Devil. Still, Arriaga only advocates the use of force against the common Indigenous folk if they are found to be purposely concealing information from inspectors or extirpators about specialists.<sup>78</sup> In essence, Arriaga's book was designed not only to help extirpators and missionaries to identify the idols of Indigenous deities but to help them distinguish or discern the Indio religious specialists from the common people.

Father Arriaga died one year after the publication of his book. Although many Indigenous religious specialists had been exiled or incarcerated, new specialists filled the voids. These specialists were not as educated in the traditional epistemologies as the elders they replaced; however, they knew enough about the huacas, traditions, and rituals to threaten the stability of colonial Christianity, hence the need for other anti-idolatry campaigns. It is difficult to judge how valuable Arriaga was to the prosecution of the campaign. What we do know is that Jesuits

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<sup>76</sup> Arriaga, *Extirpación*, Ch. 18. It appears that the prison also served as an obraje or sweatshop. Klaiber, in *Jesuits in Latin America*, calls the Casa in Lima and a similar prison in Juli "special houses of reclusion" (50).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, Ch. 14.

continued to perceive idolatry—not to be confused with unorthodoxy or heresy or illicit syncretism— as the primary threat to Catholicism until the time of the Society’s suppression.

### **Conclusion**

Indigenous religious traditions survived for two reasons: the natural resilience of Indigenous ways of being—i.e., the sophistication of Native languages, the linguistic survivance of place names, the inherent beauty and sanctity of specific locations, the relationship with the land—and the persistence of Indigenous religious specialists who maintained their ancestral knowledge. It was not, to be sure, because Jesuits “let,” “permitted,” or “allowed” Indigenous religion to exist. The Jesuits in Peru attempted to eradicate Indigenous religion because they believed it to be demonic.

The Society of Jesus used no more violence than the other missionary orders that were laboring to save the Indigenous peoples from their own beliefs, heritage, and traditions. This, I think, is difficult for both those individuals who admire the historical Jesuits and those who resent them to understand: the Jesuits were neither better than nor worse than their mendicant counterparts, though they were unique in justifying their persecution of Indigenous religious specialists. The Jesuits were products of the historical time and place wherein they struggled for control of Indigenous communities. Jesuit definitions of idolatry shifted to meet the religious demands of the day, which were political. To remove an Indigenous religious specialist was to remove a political threat. In the Jesuit world, which was early modern and Spanish, religion and politics were one in the same, and the Jesuits projected this worldview on their would-be converts, just as they did their notions of true and false religion. The Jesuits sought not only to

restructure the spiritual worldviews of Indigenous peoples, but also to restructure how Indigenous peoples lived, governed, worshipped, and perceived reality.