

# THE AS-IF OF THE BOOK OF KINGS

## Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo's Colonial Poetics of History\*

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*Abstract: Prior to the nineteenth century, the book of kings, or dynastic history, was the dominant mode of historiography in Europe and the Americas. This article explores the as-if or in-theory dimension of colonial dynastic history by way of a reading of Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo's early-eighteenth-century histories of Spain and Peru. Peralta's histories have been read as sycophantic, premodern texts that not only do not live up to the modern standards of historiography but moreover are in bad taste, that is, rhetorically prone to the excesses of Lima's colonial court culture. In contrast, I argue that Peralta's poetics of history reveal the subtle and ingenious rhetorical means by which history came to occupy, via imitating the figure of the prince, a sovereign and prognostic position of critique as the prince's simulacrum, that is, as a copy that has no original other than itself. In the case of Peralta's histories, this position of critique was colonial and postcolonial.*

Venerable Antiquity called Histories Books of Kings, in part because they are composed of the actions and events of kings, and in part because its principal teachings point directly to the Arts of Rule, since one may collate from the variety of Examples what Providence may reveal and what Imitation should embrace. It follows from this principle that the noble temerity of Writers who dedicate their Works to Great Kings is less presumptuous, and more generous among Historians who, without disputing the estimation of the other disciplines, must assume the Education of the grandest of Auditors.

—Antonio de Solís, *Historia de la Conquista de México, población, y progressos de la América Septentrional conocida por el nombre de Nueva España, 1684*

Lofty dedications to the king or prince open countless secular history books printed in Europe and Spanish America prior to the nineteenth century, and many of these are accompanied by impressive frontispieces that feature the figure of the king or prince, as Solís's official *Historia de la Conquista de México* did (see figure 1). Princely prologues were more than

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Figure 1 *Frontispiece, Antonio de Solís, Historia de la conquista de México, población, y progresos de la América septentrional conocida por el nombre de Nueva España (Madrid, 1684). Photographic reproduction courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.*

obligatory genuflections to rulers, patrons, and censors, however, and they are as characteristic of unofficial or noncommissioned—published and unpublished—histories as they are of official ones. Indeed, it is probable that most such books of kings were not read or commissioned by kings, princes, or their courts but instead sponsored by councils, academies, or circles of the lettered.<sup>1</sup> What can we learn from the royal earwax? Did it perhaps rub off on histories themselves?

1. The term *book of kings* is of ancient Hebrew origin. It referred to the histories of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and to such key personages as David, Solomon, and Nebuchadnezzar. It became part of the Old Testament of Christianity and its stories and

In this essay I will argue that early-modern histories were shot through with a princely poetics not because historians adored or feigned to adore princes, and not because historians hoped to legitimate their voice by mimicking prescribed codes of evidence and appeal to royal authority, but because, in theory, histories would have the ear of the king and the voice of the prince. I am interested in the in-theory or as-if rhetorical nature of what I call “colonial dynastic history.” Colonial dynastic history was a “letter to the king” that was written not so much as a *libellus* (a legal petition to an absent person) but as if the ear of the absent king were within its acoustical range. Within an overhearing and imaginary royal earshot, dynastic histories would require not only the prescribed forms of a respectful appeal but also a bright-eyed, noble, and sweet poetics; in short, they would acquire the aura of the prince to whom the history was most fondly addressed. This poetic aura was “majestic” and humanistic and is not to be confused with the legal robe and skeptical reason of the judge so admired by Jean Bodin (1969) and his modern followers; it was not merely a question of following numinous classical examples; and it was not merely a picaresque *carte d’identité* (González Echevarría 1998, 55). Colonial dynastic histories imitated or copied the dynastic addressees and subjects they created in discourse, thereby turning themselves into the absent prince’s present double and, eventually, his simulacrum (a copy that has no original). History thus became, in the words of Peralta, an “animated reason” that was “truer than life,” and as such could stand in a sovereign, critical, and future-looking position vis-à-vis the past of the empire, the absent king, and the imaginary prince. In summary, the princely as-if aura of dynastic history lent itself to a characteristically ambivalent form of colonial (and postcolonial) critique in which, as the prince’s tutor and double, histories not only sent an undelivered “letter to the king” but also became both the sender and the addressee of “the answer” to the prince’s “question.” As such, history founded in the simulacrum of its “animated reason” is its own sovereign domain of truth and critique, thereby making itself available to political and aesthetic projects, including those revolutionary ones that would later decapitate the prince in the name of a “history” or “destiny” that history itself had made imaginable. Stated another way, this decapitation in the realm of discourse may proceed efficaciously only, to use Peralta’s terms, whence “the royal head of the Nation” is no longer “the prince” but his figural double or imitation: “history.”

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topoi became models for medieval, Renaissance, and early-modern historiography. The Hebrew tradition has much in common with Hellenistic historiography’s preoccupation with kings, and both of these were influential sources in the formation of the Hispanic tradition.

## IMAGINARY COURTIER

Although the poetics of imitation that characterized books of kings in this age was surely a courtesan road to personal success, scholarly fame, and “eternity in heaven,” if not a notarial path to a public exculpation or the restoration of honor, that road was often lonely and more often it led not to high places but into the deep country of the book and the archive. As a result, the aspirations of the historian-courtier or historian-notary could be considerably more ample if not altogether dreamy. Failed bids to make it at court were more common, so that the success of any history came to be another higher, more eternal measure, sufficient reward in itself for studious labors in dusty annals. In the composite Hispanic world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, histories were addressed not only to the king and his court but above all to the prince, and after him to the viceroy, the militant nobility or *hidalgos*, and to the clergy, but also the *letrados* of the administration and the *estudiosos* of the university, and beyond these to the abstract subjects of the historical and political imagination: nation, *patria*, country, the political orb, the universe, and even the Virgin Mary or “Spanish Mars,” as was the case with Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Historia general del Perú*. Notably, these latter preternatural and imagined addressees and subjects of history were also configured in dynastic and biblical idioms of blood and heroism as if they too were kingly lineages and princely mirrors of a noble character.

Since the Renaissance, history in Europe and the Americas was also considered “the noble science of princes” because history lessons were princely, that is, principled discourses full of examples of virtue and heroism that should be imitated. These examples were always contrasted with admonishing instances of tyranny and vice—often in the figure of Oriental despots—to be avoided, and in this regard, “the noble science” guarded the Ciceronian topos of *historia magister vita*. Noble or princely histories in the Hispanic world, however, were not just secular treatises on how to live and how to govern nor erudite investigations into self-interested but otherwise obscure corners of the New World archive. Such histories were frequently also “secular scriptures” that mythologized or, in Hayden White’s (1978, 103–104) sense of the term, *historicized* such imaginary subjects as the “empire” and “the country” as “our nation” and “our patria”; and as such these histories were and are still often retrospectively read in the postcolonial or modern period both as foundational “national histories” and as “literature” of a universal type. Like the ancient histories of mandgody Greece and not unlike twentieth-century Latin American boom novels of the “marvelously real” (real maravilloso) or “magical realist” style, Spanish American dynastic histories realistically inscribed the celestial forces of the religious imagination—avenging archangels, conquer-



ing virgins, prophetic apostles, interventionist saints—as decisive agents in the political history of “our” patria and “the orb,” such that religious and political idioms were folded over one upon the other. Historians certainly had to negotiate with the requirements of political and religious discourses and censors, but they were not constrained by the modernist evidentiary epistemology that reigns today over the rhetorical conventions of the historical discipline, and for the most part they did not configure themselves as unified writing subjects or omnipresent narrators with a single authoritative voice.<sup>2</sup> That these histories were written in royal, sacred, and literary idioms did not mean, however, that they were not modern, rigorous, or philosophical by contemporary standards. Renaissance, baroque, neoclassical, and Enlightenment histories (in truth, there were no discreet divisions among these) composed in the Hispanic world of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries were often exemplars of the most modern research methods available, and they were frequently informed by sophisticated theories of style and representation (Cañizares-Esguerra 2001). Indeed, in many ways, dynastic histories clearly anticipate the “historicist” and “genealogical” tropes of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment national and social histories of Europe and the Americas.

My discussion of such foundational histories here could range across many more notable historians and historical texts of the imperial or colonial period—from Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Los comentarios reales de los Incas* and Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *Carta al rey* or *El primer nueva coronica I buen gobierno* to Bernardino Sahagún’s *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* and Antonio de Solís’s *Historia de la Conquista de México* or even Francisco Xavier Clavigero’s *Storia antica del Messico*—but because my space is limited and because the task at hand requires some closer reading, I will focus on what is perhaps the most brilliant Peruvian example of colonial dynastic historical writing. This writing is to be found in the lesser-known, and when known often disparaged, early-eighteenth-century writings of the gifted Creole “Cosmographer and Engineer of the Realm,” Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo (1664–1743). A late baroque and early Enlightenment polymath, Peralta was mathematician, astrologer, poet, historian, and rector of Lima’s university (founded in 1551). Unfortunately, Peralta (and his style of historical discourse) has been frequently mishandled by professional historians—beginning with the influential Peruvian iconoclast José de la Riva-Agüero (1885–1944)—as backward, scholastic, fond of empire, and lacking both a critical colonial consciousness and modern empirical methods (Riva-Agüero 1965). But as the Peralta scholar and literary critic Jerry Williams (2003, xi–lii) has recently argued, Peralta’s work consciously exhibits the colonial marks of Creole hybridity and ambiguo-

2. For a postcolonial reflection on modern history’s epistemological constraints, see Chakrabarty (2000, 97–115).

ity, his epistemics are most modern by the measures of the time, and the shortcomings of his scholarly research are largely the product of a limited library and a lack of funds.<sup>3</sup> An admirer of Antonio de Solís's theory of discourse, Peralta wrote parallel histories in prose and verse of Spain and Peru dedicated to the Spanish prince and the Peruvian viceroy, respectively, but not sponsored directly by either one: *Historia de España vindicada* (History of Spain vindicated, 1730), and *Lima fundada, o La conquista del Perú* (The founding of Lima, or The conquest of Peru, 1732). These two histories serve as the primary subject matter of this article.

Peralta's *Historia de España vindicada* is an explicit historicist defense of a Spanish empire in crisis and increasingly under attack by northwestern European pirates, powers, and intellectuals, but it is also an ingenious and unprecedented colonial Creole critique of that empire. It appears to be the only history of Spain ever written by a colonial subject, and Peralta is acutely aware of his provincial but also futural place within the empire and thus of the boldness of his intellectual enterprise. What is immediately noteworthy about this history is that it is only as-if, or in theory, dynastic history; that is, it is a history not of the royal houses of the Goths, the Hapsburgs, or the Bourbons but of "Spain" as if "she" were a noble "lineage" and queen. Peralta achieves this as-if effect of Spain as queen by linking in a single mythical chain or political genealogy the several dynastic houses and culture heroes, human and divine, that have at one time or another guided "the Political Ship of Spain," from the early "Hispanic" kings to the Roman Caesars, Jesus Christ the King of kings, the Virgin Mary, various archangels and martyrs, the Gothic kings, and, had the second part or volume been completed, the dynasts of "Modern Spain" from Alphonso the Wise to Ferdinand and Isabella, the Hapsburgs, and finally the Bourbons. Although the Alphonsine historians had invented the political and imperial subject of history named *Spain* much earlier (González-Casanovas 1997), Peralta gave this history a new colonial twist that would resonate with Peru's history of Inca and viceregal culture heroes. As we shall see, the true subjects of Peralta's history are "the Political Ship of the Name of Spain" and "the country" named "Iberia" but these subjects are interpolated from a Peru that is in many ways both Spain's double and its future. The second half of Peralta's *Historia de España vindicada* has not been found and appears not to have been completed because of a lack of funds and Peralta's waning health. Although the history is dedicated to

3. Williams's critical edition is a welcome recovery of Peralta's history, out of print for some 273 years. My reading notes and any citations to the text are based on the 1730 Lima imprint held in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. In this imprint, the dedication to the prince and Peralta's prologue are unnumbered. The body of the text is numbered by columns. Therefore, many of my references to Peralta's text are without page numbers.

the Bourbon Prince Fernando (1713–1759) who would inherit the throne in 1746 from King Felipe V, Peralta never received a requested commission from the king to sponsor the work, and there is no evidence that the prince ever read it, despite the fact that copies were sent to Spain (Williams 2003, xi–lii).

The dedication to Prince Fernando (proclaimed later Fernando VI) that precedes *Historia de España vindicada*, headed “Al Principe Nuestro Señor,” was penned by Peralta’s local sponsor and academic colleague Ángel Ventura Calderón y Cevallos. The content of such princely dedications—including those of official chroniclers such as Solís—was normally much more than a stylistic genuflection before the majesty of power. Instead, such dedications were seized as golden opportunities to reflect on the philosophical nature and political utility of the history that followed. Don Ángel’s eloquent discourse took full advantage of that opportunity: “Among all the illustrious Works that men undertake, History is among those that are at once the most glorious and the most useful, since all is directed toward Honor and Example. It is an enterprise formed by two beams of immortality: that which shines on the past with its name; and that which predicts the future with its rules. Indeed, History does more than actual heroism, and it extends beyond all great deeds, because it is itself a fecund heroism, it is itself the sum of all immortal deeds” (Peralta 1730, n.p.). History, wrote Calderón y Cevallos, “completes with memory what was unclear in life.” Not only does history “compensate for the lack of events, it improves upon them, since the reality of its lights exceeds the evidence of the cases.” History is not merely a mirror of all that is great in life; history “is greater than life” because it is nothing less than “the sum of all immortal deeds.” And what is the king? He is “the sum of all the immortal deeds of his ancestors.” Thus, history’s cognitive objects (the sum of the immortal deeds of the past) imitated the lineage of history’s sovereign subject (the sum of the immortal deeds of the king’s lineage). But like princes, Calderón y Cevallos wrote, each new history book should “improve” upon past history books or “ancestors.” The stuff of histories was kingly and dynastic, but histories were “greater” than the king and his dynasty because, like the prince, every new history was a “fecund heroism” that should improve on previous histories. Histories thus acquired a dynastic or heroic model of progress or advance and, as such, became the bookish doubles of the prince in the realm of learned discourse.

As the bookish double of the prince, history was endowed with a cumulative dynastic temporality and renewable authority, and as such, it embodied a mythopoetic and critical power that exceeded that of the *relación*, of the notarial archive, or of simple “rustic annals.” In his brilliant reading of the repeating origins of Latin American narrative as “myth and archive,” Roberto González Echevarría argued that novels and his-

tories constantly return to that origin of writing which is “the founding of cities and punishment” and “the control of the State, which determines its mimetic penchant.” This repressive return to origins is done “through the figure of the Archive, the legal repository of knowledge and power from which it sprung” (González Echevarría 1998, 3–8). In the critical hands of González Echevarría, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Los comentarios reales*—an urtext for Peralta—is reduced to a legalistic appeal to authority set in a high Renaissance and autobiographical mode so as to exonerate his father’s questionable actions during the conquest of Peru. But what both Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Los comentarios reales* and Peralta’s *Historia de España vindicada* amply demonstrate is that colonial history’s legal “appeal to authority” and “return to the archive” are never sufficient, as the “truth-bearing power” that their histories claim may be made manifest only in the courtesan, rhetorical as-if stature of the text as the literary double of the prince, and which in the case of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and in Peralta’s *Lima fundada*, is none other than the Inca or kings and princes of Peru. Moreover, it is precisely this as-if poetics that establishes history’s futural subject-position of critique and authority vis-à-vis the archive or, as Peralta put it, “the sum of all immortal deeds” that is “the Prince’s lineage.” For dynastic history, then, “the return to the archive” is both necessary and insufficient. It was insufficient because as the double of the prince (and as we shall see, of the queen as country), history would have the ear of the king, and in this sense it was a child and mistress of power and grace born of the historian’s pen. This, Calderón y Cevallos sagely observed, was the theory of Peralta’s *Historia de España vindicada*.

Peralta supplies his own erudite prologue or meta-prologue, which serves as an extended commentary on the “Dedication to the Prince.” Here Peralta makes it quite clear that his history is “not merely the repayment of a debt that corresponds to [the King’s] dominion,” but rather:

A Copy dedicated to Your Highness by Virtue, since Your Highness is an improved compendium of her Kings and Heroes; such that one could say that from this moment forward Your Highness is a supremely animated History of your deeds, and that History is the inheritable mental Reign of your royal seals. In this History Your Excellency will see all that your August Blood has been, and all that shall exceed your immortal Name. Your Sovereign Progenitors have not formed, but rather entered Your Excellency’s Greatness as communicating Oceans, such that the Circulation of Regal honor that Your Highness receives makes perennial your glory. These are registered in this History not only for the pleasure of Your Highness, but as a stimulus. . . . Read them not to learn what you desire, but to imitate with respect . . . only that which deserves an ardent cult, erecting your Royal Veins like the animated Altars of the August Saints they contain. Thus Your Highness will adore your own Royal Lineage, rendering your qualities as offerings (Peralta 1730, n.p.).

The language here may be mistaken today in some quarters for an exaggerated colonial flattery, but at the time it was surely nothing of the sort.



Instead, Peralta's discourse on his own discourse summons an erudite philosophy and poetics of history. The prince of his history is informed that "one could say" that he is a "supremely animated History of your deeds, and that History is the inheritable mental Reign of your royal seals." Peralta fully equates history with the prince in the subjunctive (each is the "one could say" or as-if double or image of the other) via the concepts of "animated reason" and "inherited mental reign." Both history and the prince are greater than the "communicating Oceans" and "inheritable mental Reign" that flow into them precisely because they actively select that which "deserves an ardent cult," and this is why Peralta's history is a truly animated copy of the prince.

Peralta "consecrates" his history to "Our August Prince" not only so that he should learn "from his Royal Ancestors" but more important "so that the fruit of this History should in a single stroke [*en sola una atención*] extend to the two Worlds, since Royal heads are the seat of the soul of the kingdoms [of the composite monarchy] and it is from [those heads] that the spirits of instruction should be diffused in wise choices and good deeds." Peralta now confesses that his hope is that his history "would render a singular service to the Nation and to the Political Orb."

The nature of this "singular service" was twofold. First, what Peralta as a colonial subject had to offer "the Nation and the Political Orb" was a critical but "generous" account of Spain's "History vindicated of the offenses [against truth] committed by [Spanish self-]love and emulation." Peralta presents his history as the most credible response (because it is not infected by Spanish *amor propio*) to the attacks of anti-Spanish French and Protestant intellectuals who had set out to defame and Orientalize Spain and her Indies as "despotic" and backward.<sup>4</sup> Second, what Peralta's history of Spain had to offer "to the Nation" via "the Prince" was the prospect of killing two birds with one stone, and this is why Concolorcorvo's enduring blast against Peralta is dead wrong.

Concolorcorvo's much-cited *Lazarillo de ciegos caminantes desde Buenos Aires hasta Lima* (1773) anticipated the lambasting of twentieth-century Latin American *dependentistas* when its pseudonymous author lamented that, in Williams's words (2003, xlv), Peralta "idled away his time pursuing a defense of the Monarchy" and writing about Europe when he should have been writing about "our history."<sup>5</sup> For the alias Concolorcorvo (1773), Peralta's history of Spain reflected "an inclination to follow events in far-away lands at the expense of what goes on in his own." Although Peralta had indeed written much about Peru since the early 1700s, the Creole his-

4. On the intellectual siege of Spain and Spanish America, see Cañizares-Esguerra (2001).

5. Concolorcorvo was the alias of the compiler Don Calixto Bustamante Carlos Inca. The text presents itself as the travel diary of colonial official Alonso Carrió de la Vándera.

torian's desire to publish his history of Spain before his history of Peru was not and is not readily grasped, even though it made perfect political and intellectual sense. To understand this sense, however, requires an appreciation both of Peralta's art and the lexicon within which it operated. But first, it is worth noting that such an understanding has not been readily forthcoming from modern professional historians, Peruvian or otherwise. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this lack of understanding.

In his widely cited 1910 doctoral thesis on Peruvian historiography, *La historia en el Perú*, the young José de la Riva-Agüero (considered by many in Peru to be the father of modern Peruvian history) found notable things to admire in Peralta but rather more to ridicule and reject. Riva-Agüero judged not only Peralta but also his entire "epoch" as suffering from a "terribly bad style" (*pésimo estilo*) marked by "frivolous veneration." For Riva-Agüero Peralta's style was "normally very bad and detestable because overblown, extremely affected, and very pedantic" as were for the most part his "adulatory" politics at court, also deemed "typical" of Lima life. What was even worse or more "blind" for Riva-Agüero, however, was that "in confirmation of the irremediable blindness and perversity of the taste of that epoch, there were those who proclaimed that [Peralta] was an example of clarity."

Notably, however, Riva-Agüero does at one point admit that Peralta himself had a very different sense of his own writing. Indeed, Peralta claimed that "as far as style goes, I reject all affectation." Following the insights of Juan María Gutiérrez, Riva-Agüero conceded that what appeared to be "adulation" and "servitude" might be "rhetorical affectation" and an adherence to the "empty" and "courtly" gestures (*cortesana y hueca*) of an "enduring" colonial culture, but such a concession misses the point. Riva-Agüero made the concession because he wished to resuscitate Peralta as a Creole patriotic precursor of a Peruvian national tradition, such that, beneath the sycophantic style, the historian would find some useful "historical facts" (*noticias*) and, on rare occasions, evidence of true "political" thought, that is, of an earnest Creole nationalism. Unfortunately, of course, what was wise and truly useful in Peralta's histories was nearly always "damaged by the deplorable literary taste of that age." In a typical rhetorical move, Riva-Agüero positions his own voice as steering a middle course between those who condemn and those who celebrate Peralta, but the criteria of what is positive in his assessment is always "evidence of good judgment," that is, of what is "correct" and "useful" in the histories from an empiricist and nationalist perspective, never the rhetoric or theory of the work itself, which is of course detestable or simply passed over.

More recently, the British historian of ideas David Brading has in a few widely read pages judged Peralta in ways that echo the prejudices that color Riva-Agüero's more extended treatment. For Brading (1991), Peralta's

talent is outrun by his ambition, "and the entire project was vitiated by the incongruity between his elevated style and his often banal subject matter." On this point, Brading adds that "the often inane exuberance of his classical comparisons soon prov[e] more wearisome than amusing." This very same point was made by Riva-Agüero in 1910, when he wrote, "From an artistic perspective, what most mars [*Lima fundada*] and produces a grotesque effect is the strange mixture of classical mythology, the Christian miraculous, and the indigenous names and idols: the angel of America asking Jupiter to send Christians to convert the natives of Peru." Brading identifies Peralta's ostensibly incongruous style with a narrow Lima patriotism of an urban aristocracy that defended the Spanish Empire, that is, with the interests "of a social class rather than a possible nation." In short, both Riva-Agüero and Brading dismiss Peralta's "affectatious" and "inane" style in favor of a more sober and measured nationalist prose, and both insinuate that his style is consonant with an imperial and "frivolous" politics that fails to meet modern criteria of truth (see Riva-Agüero 1965, 272–292; Brading 1991, 393–399).

Peralta's poetics of history were informed not by modernist and nationalist epistemologies but by the Neoplatonist imaginary of the colonial Hispanic baroque, wherein enigmatic icons or heraldic emblems were read not only as aids to historical interpretation but also as powerful embodiments of the providential design and original "word" of the cosmos, that is, in Peralta's words, of "His True Thought." Peralta's appreciation of the poetics and procedures of history was also classical, however, drawing specifically on the styles and methods of Tacitus, Livy, Salustius, and Florus. Thus, and like Vico's (2001) *New Science*, which also begins with an "explanation of the frontispiece," Peralta opens his preface to *Historia de España vindicada* with a demonstration of his own powers as an interpretive historian, and in so doing he repeats a gesture made famous by Erasmus. "Since the engraver's Chisel was the interpreter of Thought, it would not be disagreeable if the historian's Pen should interpret the [engraver's] Plate" (1730, n.p.; see figure 2) as the engraver's image would inevitably lose meaning over time, whereas the historian's pen could provide enduring clues for its interpretation.

Peralta's pen would have us know that in the engraver's graphic art, "Spain" is "interpreted" in the "elegant and august figure of a beautiful Queen fitted in her Triumphant Crown and sublimely occupying her heroic Throne." The throne's three steps of virtue (valor, constancy, and religion) take the queen "to the heights of Eternity," as in these steps we may divine "the three spheres of her glory." "Spain" as the queen holds high the "Image of Our Lord the Prince." The prince's image is encircled by the inscriptions of the four royal houses that have ruled "Spain" across the ages: the Gothic, Hispanic, Hapsburg, and Bourbon dynasties. Meanwhile, under Spain's heavy throne groan the historical trophies of her invincible

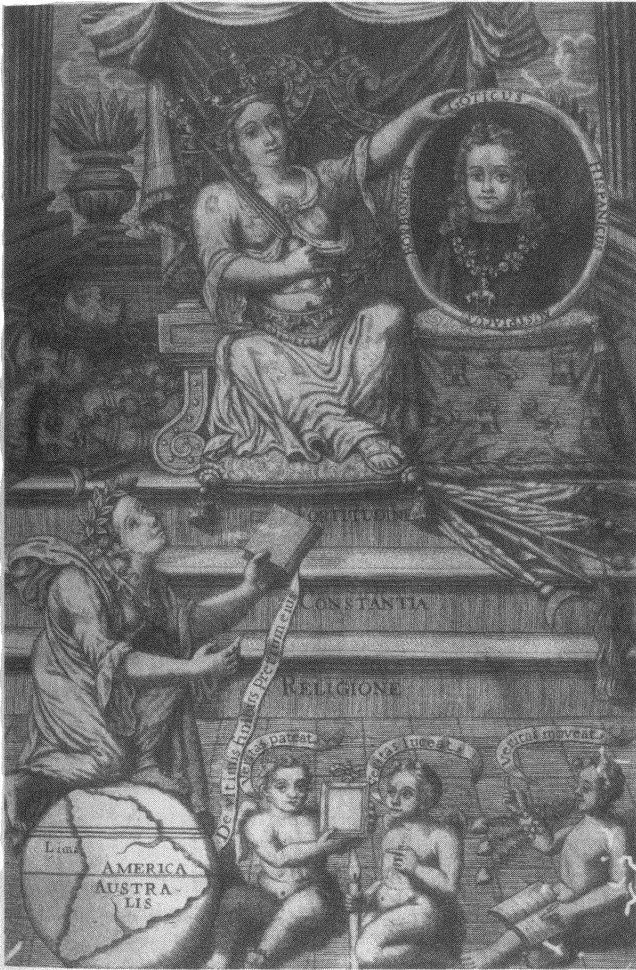


Figure 2 Frontispiece, Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo, *Historia de España vindicada* (Lima, 1730). Photographic reproduction courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

arms: Barbarians, Romans, and Muslims. At the base of Spain's throne stands an "elegant Nymph who represents History"; crowned with laurel, History "ponders the Globe" that supports her. This globe is turned to "the New Orb, the point from which this work is offered." The nymph, or History, is a symbol of the intellectual virtues of Peru, for she (as Peralta) offers a "History of Spain" to "Spain." This Peruvian nymph of history is accompanied by "three beautiful genies that signify the three qualities that History should have: Truth, Elegance, and Instruction." Symbolized by the mirror and glossed in St. Augustine's motto, *Veritas pateat*, Peralta



reminds us that the “first Genie represents clarity.” The second, notes Peralta, wields a torch that indicates “brilliant splendor” and her motto is *Veritas luceat*, while the third, with “gold chains that attract hearts flowing from his lips,” expresses persuasion and is clearly identified by the motto *Veritas moveat*. Although St. Augustine’s sublime trinity of *Veritas pateat, veritas luceat, veritas moveat* was intended originally for the teaching of Christian doctrine, Peralta explains that the same rules clearly apply to “the judgments and reflections of History” as well.

Peralta’s exegesis of his own frontispiece is an ingenious hermeneutical move, a copy of a copy, or an interpretation of an interpretation, of the “True Thought” of “Spain” whose true author is, of course, “the Pen” of history—none other than the Peruvian historian, Peralta himself. Following the critical insights of Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra (2001), Williams (2003, xlv–li) notes that Peralta’s project boldly challenged disparaging European theories about the inferiority of the Creole intellect and the American continent.

Central to the imagery of Peralta’s commented frontispiece is the queen who represents or “interprets” the nation and the country (not the same thing, as we shall see below) and the nymph. The nymph represents a history that stands upon the orb, and who in effect is Peralta’s copy of himself. It is notable that no “Indian” lies crushed under Spain’s throne. As we shall see, in *Lima fundada*, Peralta presents “the conquest of Peru” not as the vanquishing of Indians by Spanish elites but as the conjoining of “two empires into [a new] one” whose new historical center is not Madrid or Cuzco but Lima, “The City of Kings of Peru.” In the plate, Lima (Peralta’s home) is the point from which “the History of Spain” is “vindicated” and “offered” to “the Prince.”

Peralta distinguishes “true history” from crude and simple annals. History, he writes, is an elegant and precise “poem of truth” whose ultimate task is “to instruct.” Akin to the prince, true history is “a living animation of reason,” whereas annals are, like the royal lineage, lifeless “statues of narration.” Here Peralta turns to the classical historians of Rome for support. He notes that in the great works of history the classical historians frequently deployed “metaphor, hyperbole, and antithesis” to achieve the rhetorical effect of “living reason.” These classical stylistic devices and thought-images are, Peralta writes, “the savings of discourse, by means of which an idea is made manifest, since these are at once reason and example, thought and object.” Nevertheless, history was not an affectitious play of words. This is so as “History only has the form and not the content of Poetry.” History has a “style of thought, not a style of speech,” for “pleasure and devout affection are the doors of perception and understanding.” It was precisely the aesthetics of an elegant and true discourse of “animated reason” that distinguished “true history” from the “humble huts of memory” found in primitive annals. True history instructed, and



the most persuasive way to do so was in a precise and exemplary style that illuminated the events and personages of history “with a majesty that authorizes.” Cicero had said that “History was the light of reason”; Peralta now added: “Why not make it shine?” And if history was the “science of princes,” Peralta wondered, why should it not have “grammatical rules of style” to “govern” its reading? Peralta concludes: “these have been the conclusions of the best critics who have written about the art and style of History.”

Peralta applies these classical and Christian lessons of style to the history of Spain’s mythic genealogy of heroic figures, human and divine, each of whom has at one or time another steered, across “the Ocean of the Ages,” that sturdy “Political Ship” that is “the Name of Spain.” As in the thought of Peralta’s once equally obscure contemporary Giambattista Vico,<sup>6</sup> the course of history is guided by divine Providence and assisted by heroic *dramatis personae* who, in this case, ensure the perpetuity of Spain’s name, and in that name the universal development and spread of Christian “civil” or “human” institutions around the globe. Despite periods of darkness in which events were inhospitable to the keeping of records, Peralta’s history would prove that “Spain” had existed in unbroken perpetuity since the time of Hercules. As such, “the Name of Spain” was—despite threats from pirates, armchair philosophers, and the British and French empires—unlikely to soon disappear from history. In addition to its most ancient and glorious name, which in effect summed up the entire history of world civilization, Spain could claim what no other empire could, for she “had added another World to the World.” The best and most glorious part of that “New Orb” was none other than the “Empire and Name of Peru,” whose viceregal capital was Peralta’s home: Lima. In “the intellectual Map of all the Ages,” concludes Peralta, the “Name of Spain” was clearly the most famous because Spain had forged “the oldest and greatest of all the Empires.” Like the good prince, the historian of Peru now carried that fame forward. Peralta’s history seeks to “improve” upon the great tradition of Spanish imperial “mythic” dynastic history, which began under King Alphonso the Wise and continued through the court historians of Philip II and Philip IV.<sup>7</sup> Not only does Peralta employ more rigorous methods than they did; he also engaged in a critique of the errors of “love and emulation” that led certain Peninsular Spanish historians astray, and he does so by virtue of the critical but generous distance that his position as colonial subject affords.

6. Vico was for a time a provincial vassal of the composite Spanish monarchy via the Aragonese principality of Naples under Charles VII (1735–1759). Charles named Vico “Historian of the King” late in life; the same king later became Charles III, emperor of Spain and the Indies, in 1759.

7. On mythic genealogical history under Charles V and Philip II, see Tanner (1993).

## "AS IF EMPIRE WERE GENERATIVE":

## PERALTA'S POETICS OF "COUNTRY" AND "NATION"

Following the dedications to Prince Fernando, Peralta's first substantial chapter is dedicated to the "country and clime" of Iberia. *Historia de España vindicada* thus anticipates a convention or topos still characteristic of the national and social history genres in Peru, France, and elsewhere. This topos is of classical origin and is traceable to Herodotus and Tacitus. The geographical "background" chapter so common to modern histories and ethnographies ostensibly provides the indispensable "setting" for the historical actors or subjects of the narrative. In truth, this device actually prefigures or "sets the stage"—with strong emphasis on sets—of the historical actors or agents presented in the following chapters, which creates the literary effect of belonging and "context." The geographical prologue in such histories functions in much the same way as the dedication to the prince, for we soon learn that "the country and clime" or natural stage, is actually a strange kind of master subject-object that exercises a certain sovereignty over men and history. This geohistorical sovereignty is also expressed in an as-if (*como si*) dynastic idiom that clearly anticipates the language of postcolonial republican Peru's "history of the people and the patria" (Thurner 2006).

The purpose of the geohistorical sketch is to establish not only "the stage" of Spanish history but also, and more fundamentally, the poetic "character" of Spain's people, as an "intimate relation" obtains between "the country" and its "inhabitants." And so Peralta launches the chapter with a lyrical and detailed description of Iberia's idyllic clime and celestial glow, her fertile soil and the "fruits of the land." The intimate relation between this fertile and blessed country and its inhabitants is configured in these dynastic terms:

The nobility of the soil where one is born has always been the first honor of mortals, as if the temperament of the clime were an influence on virtue, and as if the properties of the terrain were privileges of the blood. These things provide the universal stock of the Nation, which shares a common Lineage [*Estirpe*] in the same Patria. Lands are like manly minerals which in accordance with the actions of their spirits produce the wealth of genius; and since the purity of metals may hardly lie about the quality of the rock, the generosity of the soul rarely contradicts the excellence of the Country [*Pays*]. It thus follows that by the accident of the region one may judge the quality of her inhabitants. Now it is true that the same inhabitants form their nature by the lights of their own customs, making a virtue of their origin in the sympathy of imitation. But there is no doubt that as in the luminous bodies of the Sky where there are Constellations or Stars of more pure composition or more benign light, so too on Earth by virtue of the special constitution of the Celestial Sphere are there exhaled more favorable spirits and influences on the immediate terrestrial sphere, and which men receive at their birth. And so it would appear that, as if Spain had been chosen to be the gate and throne of Europe, she was adorned with illustrious gifts by the Supreme Author

of Nature . . . and this nobility is the first fortune of her native sons [*naturales*]. Situated at the edge of Africa, it appears as if she takes [that continent's] valor without her barbarity since she enjoys the softening effects of the Temperate Boreal Zone. [In short,] she has inherited an Estate [*Mayorazgo*] of happy influences. (Peralta 1730, chap. 1, cols. 3–4)

This passage is typical of Peralta's as-if rhetorical phrasing. Here the as-if signals in the first instance the common knowledge wherein the naive may think that the clime produces virtue and the soil "privileges of the blood" but where Peralta, the learned "Cosmographer and Engineer," knows better. Metals do not lie, nor do the "special constitutions" of the celestial and terrestrial spheres. But we soon see that the as-if may not be far from the truth, because it appears to be confirmed by the course of history. Spain's privileged position between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and between Africa and Europe made her "the gate and throne of Europe" (a reference to the Pillars of Hercules that, since Charles V, adorn the Crown's royal seal). It is as if Spain had been adorned with "illustrious gifts" from "the Supreme Author of Nature" Himself. It is as if history confirmed what was always geographically true by the grace of God. This effect of confirmation is achieved by the geohistorical sketch, then as now, one notes with or without God's grace.

Given Peralta's polymath academic formation as astronomer, astrologer, mathematician, and engineer, his emphasis on metals and stars is hardly surprising; what is more notable in this passage is the aristocratic-dynastic language that lends the as-if its rhetorical weight. The soil is "noble" and is man's "first honor," while the clime appears to instill "virtue" and the "terrain" would flow in the "blood." The as-if soon becomes the self-evident truth of the patria, which is itself a lineage that establishes "the stock" of "the Nation." The dynastic metaphors common to the biblical discourse of the church merge with a neo-Aristotelian discourse on the influences and "exhalations" of minerals and the sublunary sphere, and the "inhalations" of the terrestrial. As a "country" blessed with the best of African and European climatic influences (a condition confirmed by history), Spain has inherited an "Estate" of happy influences.

In short, "the country" in Peralta is an as-if noble lineage and inheritance that founds itself not in climate and soil but in the dynastic language of history in which these things are imagined, and in the succeeding chapters this noble lineage of the country is made to harmonize with the noble lineage of culture-heroes. Notably, Peralta applies similar notions and language to Peruvian history, and many of these are well-established topoi drawn from Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Los comentarios reales* (1609–1617), in which, for example, the mineral riches of Peru were said to produce "generous faculties" and "mines of understanding" among her native sons—faculties that, given the extraordinary richness of Peruvian mines, clearly exceeded those of Europeans.

Notwithstanding the sublime effects of radiant minerals, soft breezes, and a lovely light, the intimate relation of earthly and manly lineages in Peralta is effectively realized by means of the time-honored poetic and political gold of homonymy. Homonymy creates as-if effects by virtue of the multiple referents or domains that are covered by a single name. Indeed, history is one such homonymy.<sup>8</sup> In Peralta's history, place-names (Hispania, Iberia, Spain) harmonize with the names of kings (Hispania), rivers (Ibero), and peoples (Iberians, Spaniards), albeit in source-critical, as-if ways. Peralta was a rigorous researcher who understood that toponyms could be the result of error or wishful thinking. After all, he noted, "a Florentine usurper had given title to a whole world." Moreover, and following Inca Garcilaso, Peralta noted that Peru's name "was imposed by the accident of an utterance repeated by her barbarous owner, a mere inhabitant of a village encountered by a ship which, reconnoitering the coast, had been sent to discover the Pacific Ocean" (Peralta 1730, chap. 1, col. 104). In his critical discussion of the origin of the name *Iberia*, Peralta notes with satire that "there are those who will have no River without her King and who, sistering [*hermandando*] that river with the region, pretend that the name [of the country] was born of the King." Those credulous authors had argued that *Ibero* was the name of an ancient wandering king. However, Peralta insists that in the case of *Ibero*, this claim was an "absolute conjecture . . . founded on the custom by which men have made the first kings into the descendents of their own kingdoms, as if Empire were generative, and to whom, in a species of political genealogy, they have left their name as lineage, as has been seen in the cases of the Assyrians, the Medes, the Trojans, the Latins, and the Romans" (Peralta 1730, chap. 1, col. 105). Here again Peralta enlists the same kind of language and argument as in the passages about the "clime and soil" of Spain examined previously. By "custom" men believe what is manifestly contrary to reason; that is, they talk about the past as if it were descended from the present, as if origins could be divined from consequences. But unlike certain of the more strictly rational Enlightenment historians of the late eighteenth century, Peralta (like Vico) does not reject such "custom" out of hand. Williams (2003) interprets Peralta's tolerance of such thinking as a "negotiation" of his censored milieu, but I would like to suggest that there are strong reasons for reading it as a faithful reflection of his as-if poetics of history.

Peralta's disapproval of upstreaming or "generative political genealogy" did not keep him from conceding that, in fact, the customary idea that "a river must have her king" was in the case of "Ibero" and Iberia "not a weak idea." It was "constant" for Peralta that the name *Iberia* was in fact taken from the Ibero River (Ebro, Latin *Iberus*). The problem was not

8. On history as homonymy, see Rancière (1994).

so much that no king named *Ibero* could be traced in the annals of history who might have given his name to this river, but that the river, understood as a “communicating” geographical subject, seemed to historically confirm its own geographical claim, etched in the land, to “unite the Peninsula.” The riverine hypothesis “was not without foundation” precisely because it affirmed what appeared to be an empirically observable geographical fact: the Ibero River “communicated the country.” Of course, the argument for the river is no more convincing than the argument against the king, because it is not on empirical, geographical grounds that “Ibero” makes its stand in the history of a “country” that did not yet exist. Ibero’s stand is made on the homonymic grounds of the ancient Greek poetic custom of naming peoples after rivers, and this is the same ground on which the king stands.

Greek colonists who came ashore at the mouth of the “Iberus” in the sixth century B.C. apparently named the inhabitants of the region “Iberians,” and it is possible that the name was derived or understood to have been derived from the Basque words for *river* (*ibai*) and *valley* (*ibar*). This custom of naming peoples after rivers is a poetic device that is found in abundance in *The Histories* of Herodotus, for example. Herodotus spilled literary rivers of ink on both eyewitness and hearsay descriptions of other rivers, lands, and peoples which he “baptized” for Greek history under a plethora of corresponding logoi and toponyms (Geary 2001). A similar poetic device and topos is also traceable to Herodotus and, more precisely, to the Greek belief that “barbarian” peoples “could never live without a king” (Hartog 1988, 200). More fatal or useful (depending on your perspective) to Peralta’s reasoning, however, is that no “river” or “king” may give its name to a “country” that does not yet exist as such, except in the sense that the one is the double or “echo” of the other. In other words, “country” and “river” and “king” are all as-if poetic inventions of language or images of thought that may only name one another. In summary, what makes the riverine hypothesis “verisimilar” for Peralta is precisely the poetics of “political genealogy” that on the surface he rejects in the case of the king named *Ibero*, and this is so because Peralta’s language of history has already invented or prefigured “the country” as a strange kind of animated as-if subject-object that corresponds to those who “inhabit” it.

Peralta is quite willing to accept the idea that “Hispania” has her king. “Hispania” (which for Peralta is the origin of *España* and so “the Political Ship that is the Name of Spain”) presented similar problems of etymology, association, and historical interpretation as did *Ibero*. But after considering the alternatives Peralta settles on the “verisimilar” likelihood that “Hispania” had taken her name from “Hispano, partner of Hercules of Egypt.” For Peralta, then, “Hispano” is the first king and founder of “Hispania.” Notable here is Peralta’s rejection, in the case of *Ibero*, of the ancient, apparently antihistorical “custom” of “political genealogy” and



the strong relevance of this custom in the case of "Hispano." Despite the rhetorical warnings, Peralta's finding aligns "Spain" with those famous ancient empires whose names were also derived, in a species of "political genealogy," from those of founding kings, including Rome. By granting "Ibero" another origin, and one moreover that is not dissimilar to the origin of the name *Peru* (also named after a river and a native in a barbarian tongue), "Ibero" was differentiated as a "country" at its origins from the "Political Ship" of empire named "Hispania," and later "Spain."

Peralta's project—which was to "vindicate" both "Spain" and "Peru" as empires and at the same time to differentiate the "countries" of "Iberia" and "Peru"—would exercise "generative" effects on his history. I wish to suggest that it was Peralta's own as-if subject position as a colonial historian of Spain—that is, his Creole status as an as-if Spaniard writing the "political genealogy" of the name of Spain from the "country" of Peru "as if" the "Peruvian empire" were a future Spain—that best explains or, better, "interprets" his enterprise. Although the Peruvian historian has never set foot on "Spanish soil," he is nevertheless a provincial vassal of the "Empire of Spain," and so he reads its history with a colonial "generosity" that is not based on *amor propio* but instead on the critical distance of a transoceanic affinity that lives in names and books. Following the great armchair examples of Tacitus and Livy (who never set foot in lands they wrote about) and of the official Spanish court historians of the Indies, Antonio de Herrera and Antonio de Solís (Peralta 1730, chap. 1, cols. 1–4), Peralta waves aside the then current mania for eyewitness knowledge and travel and instead insists on that hermeneutic intimacy available to those patient souls who wander in the recesses of the archive.<sup>9</sup> This move is also defensive, for in the same gesture Peralta deflects contemporary European dismissals of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Los comentarios reales*, now routinely accused of those gross exaggerations that were supposedly the inevitable result of that new historiographical sin known as *amor propio*.

This waving aside of the eighteenth-century preference for ethnographic authority was and is condemned by professional historians and anthropologists, but it was surely amenable to Peralta's deeper political and poetic cause. This cause was not only to establish Peru via her illustrious sons as a tribute to Spain's virtue and empire, nor to merely suggest that the relationship of Peru to Spain was now the same as that which had once obtained between Hispania and Rome when Hispania was that great empire's most noble province. Those points had been made earlier by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. To be sure, they needed remaking now that Peru had matured and, in certain respects, Spain had declined in gran-

9. See Cañizares-Esguerra (2001). Peralta turns the tables on Creole "patriotic epistemology."

deur, but precisely for that reason, a second edition of *Los comentarios reales* was printed in Madrid in 1723. Peralta would go further. Hispania had become Spain and a modern Rome, spreading the humanist virtues of the pen and the sword to her favored provinces on the other side of the globe. Despite the lack of libraries and sponsors like those that abounded in Europe, Peru could now offer to Spain a virtue it did not possess but desperately needed: a critical yet generous history of itself. This colonial history of the metropole was, like the prince, an animated reason that was greater than the dynastic chain of culture-heroes that had steered the "Political Ship" across "the Oceans of the Centuries." Thus, what Peralta proposes is that the animated reason and future of the name of Spain lie in Peru. His history of Spain is, therefore, a *translatio studii* or geographical shift of the seat of knowledge from the old imperial metropole to the new colonial metropole.

#### LIMA FUNDADA, OR THE COLONIAL SEAT OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND EMPIRE

Having thus prepared the ground by translating or transferring the seat of knowledge to Lima, Peralta was now ready to pen a history of Peru in verse. Appropriately dedicated to the Marquis de Castelfuerte, viceroy of Peru, *Lima fundada, o La conquista del Perú* (The Founding of Lima, or The Conquest of Peru) is a heroic poem of truth that sings the founding of the viceroyalty of Peru and her "City of Kings of Peru." But this is no ordinary poem. *Lima fundada* is essentially a transposition in verse of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's prosaic *Los comentarios reales*. Notably, however, Peralta's history of Peru has only the form and not the content of a poem, for its animated reason is supported not only by Inca Garcilaso's history but also by an ant army of footnotes that reveal vast erudition.

Peralta's princely dedication in *Lima fundada* immortalizes the current viceroy of Peru. Not unlike the Spanish prince who is the immortal sum of all the deeds and blood of his ancestors, the viceroy is linked by the geometry of honor to the conqueror of Peru and founder of Lima, the Aeneas-surpassing Francisco Pizarro, and this long chain of honor is composed of Peru's viceroys, archbishops, saints, and illustrious men. Both the conqueror and the viceroy are heroes of the Peruvian empire (*Peruano Imperio*, a term used by Inca Garcilaso), but also of the Peruvian orb. The *Orbe Peruano* glosses that vast reach of Lima's viceregal power that stretched beyond the limits of the Inca Empire, reaching north to Panama and south to Patagonia. But Peralta's geometry of honor reaches back in time beyond Pizarro, indeed all the way back to the founding Inca dynast himself, the mythical Manco Cápac. The deep genealogical reach of Peralta's history is the product of a dynastic historical tradition in Peru that included Inca, Jesuit, mestizo, and Creole intellectuals who had collectively connected the

Inca and Spanish dynasties in a single narrative chain of Peruvian emperors. Most important, what had linked the two royal lineages of Cuzco and Castile was the historical act of transference (*translatio imperii*) and union performed by Francisco Pizarro. Singing Inca Garcilaso's account, Peralta notes that Pizarro had passed the "borla colorada" (*maskaypacha*; see Dean 1999) or Inca royal seal from the executed Inca "tyrant" Atahualpa to the next legitimate heir, Manco Inca (because Prince Huascar had been slain) but that Manco had returned it to Pizarro. Pizarro tells Manco that before accepting the Inca royal seal he must first consult with his emperor. In the end, and in part as a result of the celestial interventions of the Archangel Michael and the Virgin Mary at Cuzco, the Inca royal seal is passed to the Roman emperor of Christendom, Charles V:

*Y con assombro de ambos Hemisferios,  
Un Imperio formar de dos Imperios.*

Under the eyes of divine Providence and "to the astonishment of two Hemispheres," sings Peralta, "One Empire is formed from two." Peralta's heroic poem tells us that Pizarro's next move is to march to the coast to found Lima, "the City of Kings that forms one Empire." Notably, Peralta refers to Lima as "the City of the Kings of Peru" (*Ciudad de los Reyes del Perú*). In Spanish the meaning of this titular phrase is possibly ambiguous and in Peralta it seems purposively so, as it may be translated to English as "the City of Kings in Peru" or the "City of the Peruvian Kings," that is to say, the city of the (Inca and Spanish) kings of Peru.

As he explains in the prologue, Peralta's poetic models in *Lima fundada* are Homer, Horace, and Virgil, although the latter's work is "the most admirable for its prognostics." Like Vico, Peralta argues that at the origin of civilized or political life lies verse: "if men were subdued to the political life, their first settlements were the conquests of Verse." Pizarro's deeds are favorably compared to those of Achilles, Ulysses, and Aeneas but such deeds "do not serve for much unless there is a voice of genius that intones them." For Peralta, this is why Virgil is "the Prince of the Epic," for he

united the illumination of the Patria with that of the Heroes via the memory of the great men that she had produced after him and up to Augustus Caesar (in whose time he wrote) so as to exalt the future lineage with that of posterity and celebrate example with imitation. But since that could not be done without breaking the Law of the Unity of Action and going beyond the Catastrophe or the Conclusion [of history] he decided to present those great men as a prediction, doing them homage ahead of time and addressing them in a song of the future. . . . The same zeal for the Patria could not help but burn in me just as actively as in that famous poet. . . . And so desiring that the thread of glory of this famed City not be allowed to fall out of hand, I aspired to make manifest that virtue with which, having become a Political Phoenix, she has been wise enough . . . to be her own heir by uniting her high Origins with [her own] learning and competing [in the world], thus making that [Origin] pay what it owes her, to give her that which will enrich her (Peralta 1732, n.p.).

In this remarkable passage Peralta divulges his poetics and politics of history, which is to make the sung heroes of the past pay for the future that the historian's voice has announced. Pace Riva-Agüero, a more political and national approach to history can hardly be imagined. This is how and why Lima harmonizes the Inca and Spanish dynasties as that "Political Phoenix" that in its rise spans a bridge, from the glory of the heroic past to the greatness of the patria's future. Pace Brading, Peralta's interest in Lima is no more narrowly aristocratic or urban than most of Peru's nineteenth- and twentieth-century national histories; on the contrary, Lima is sung because (like the prince) it is the royal head and seat that historically unites the civilizing dynasties of Spain and Peru, and there is nothing historical to the subjects named *Spain* and *Peru* that is not dynastic or genealogical.

A striking graphic representation that approximates the imagery of Peralta's as-if dynastic poem was printed for Antonio de Ulloa and Jorge Juan's *Relación histórica del viaje a la América meridional* (1748) and inserted in the appendix titled "Resumen histórico del origen, y sucesión de los Incas, y demás soberanos del Perú, con noticias de los sucessos más notables en el reynado de cada uno" (Historical summary of the origin and succession of the Incas and other sovereigns of Peru, with notes on the most notable events in the reign of each one). The plate (see figure 3) captures the classical and majestic style of Peralta's histories and the spirit of the times, for it was made for the royal occasion of Prince Fernando VI's proclamation ceremony. The engraving was made by Juan Bernabé Palomino and based on a drawing by Diego Villanueva, which in turn was based on the graphic art of Alonso de la Cueva, a Creole churchman working in Lima. Like Peralta's *Lima fundada*, the "Resumen histórico" (compiled by Ulloa) was an abridged and, at moments, critical rendition of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's account of the Inca dynasty, albeit in a dry annals style (much admired by professional and national historians) that Peralta would likely have found tedious and primitive.

As in Peralta's *Historia de España vindicada*, Palomino and Villanueva's plate is an allegorical offering to Prince Fernando VI and it represents his as-if succession to an imagined Peruvian throne that is constituted by virtue of a retrospective political genealogy.<sup>10</sup> In Peralta's words, this "Peruvian throne" was the prince's "inheritable mental Reign," as the "borla

10. Prince Fernando VI was the hope of Spanish reformists, including the leading and most controversial Spanish philosopher of the time, Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, with whom Peralta had corresponded. Notably, Martín Sarmiento—Feijóo's student and for a short time official chronicler of the Indies—had also sought the prince's favor for his design of a palatial facade at the Bourbon Palacio Real in Madrid. Sarmiento's design included allegorical columns in the image of Atahualpa (the Peruvian emperor) and Montezuma (the Mexican emperor) as "trunks" that fed into the vast royal genealogy of the Spanish throne (see Sarmiento 2002).



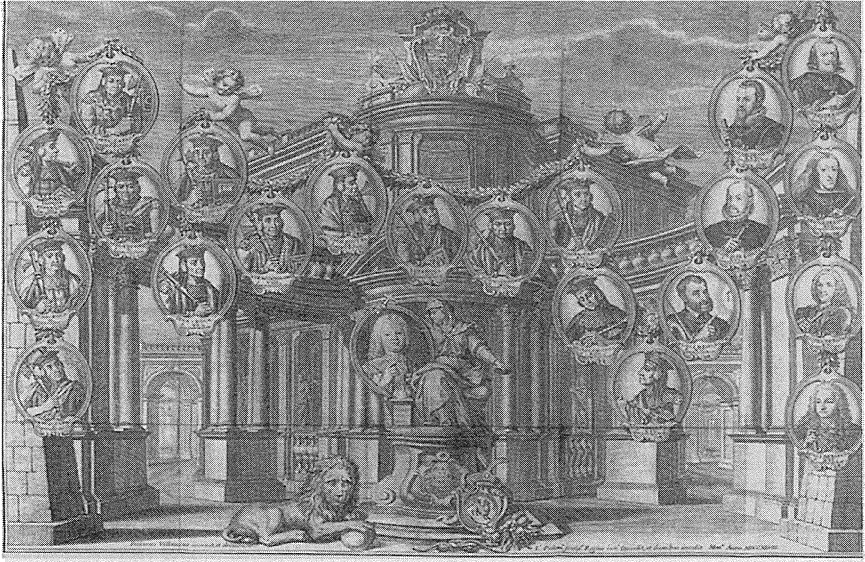


Figure 3 Insert, Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, *Relación histórica del viaje a la América meridional* (Madrid, 1748). Photographic reproduction courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

colorada" of the Incas was one "of your royal seals." Indeed, this plate is a paper "Mirror of the Prince" (*espejo del príncipe*), a bookish double of those ephemeral arches that were erected for viceregal entries in Mexico and Peru (Cañeque 2004; Osorio 2008), and the succession or processional imagery it presents was performed in the plazas of Lima.<sup>11</sup> The "Peruvian Emperors" are framed by the "authorizing majesty" of what appears to be an allegorical representation of the *teatro político* (literally, political theater, a Spanish golden-age topos that glossed the notion of political orb and here represents "the Peruvian Orb") of the "Peruvian Emperors." Hovering angels suspend the gold "chain of honor" that links the pendants of Peru's Inca and Spanish dynasts, from the founding Inca Manco Cápac to the newly proclaimed King Ferdinand VI. In this majestic representation of Peru as a sovereign dynastic lineage, the last Inca Atahualpa appears as the fourteenth Peruvian emperor. Atahualpa offers his royal scepter to the sword-wielding Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, here named

11. The image of Lima as the union of the two dynastic histories of Inca and Spanish monarchs of Peru was performed in royal ceremonies (*fiestas reales*) in the plazas of Lima described by Peralta himself in 1723. Notably, Peralta appended to his description of the celebrations a historical summary of the Inca dynasty that anticipated Ulloa's (see Peralta 1723).



"XV Emperor of Peru." The pendant of Charles V exhibits the holy cross. The Christian light of the cross absorbs and displaces the pagan but luminous light of Manco Cápac's idolized sun, from which the first Inca himself is descended (depicted in the first royal pendant on the lower left of the plate). The forger of this "Peruvian dynasty" is (as divine Providence has revealed) Fides or La Fe (Faith). Faith now holds the pendant of Fernando VI, preparing it to be hung as the latest link in the "thread of glory" of "Peruvian Emperors."

Notably, here Faith occupies the place of the queen in Peralta's frontispiece to *Historia de España vindicada* (compare figures 2 and 3). There the queen holds aloft the image of the same prince whom "the Nymph" or "History" (Peralta) is "instructing" in the interests of "the Nation"; here Faith installs that same prince as the next king of Spain and emperor of Peru. The centrality of La Fe in this majestic composition of Peru as dynasty marks it as quite distinct from Alonso de la Cueva's schema and others like it made in Peru in the 1720s, and which had served as models for Villanueva and Palomino (which Peralta was undoubtedly familiar with). In Cueva's representation of the imperial succession of "the kings of Peru" and in other Peruvian versions of the same, "Jesus Christ the King of kings," sits in his celestial throne at the top of the composition, flanked on either side by the royal seals of (Spanish) Castile and (Inca) Peru, respectively. Unlike Palomino's engraving, where the royal seal of Castile adorns the cornice of the imperial arch and the "borla colorada" or *maskaypaycha* of the Inca is strewn on the lower left foreground, in the earlier Peruvian versions the dynastic seals of "Spain" and "Peru" are placed on equal footing on the same high plane. In addition, the Inca Queen Mama Oclla or Mama Huaco appears in the Peruvian versions opposite Manco Cápac as the urmother or progenitor of all of "the Kings of Peru." Villanueva and Palomino's plate displaces Mama Ocllo with Faith, perhaps to avoid any suggestion of an Indian or pagan bloodline from a lineage that includes Hapsburgs and Bourbons.<sup>12</sup> Faith may thus watch over "the geometry of honor" and "thread of glory" that gave Lima both its exalted historical status as the "head" of "the Peruvian Empire" and "Peruvian Orb" but also its political predicament as a "Kingdom and Province" under the paw of a "Spain" in evident decline.

It is to this ambivalent Creole and *limeño* predicament that Peralta's colonial poetics of history bear witness. Rather than dismiss Peralta's rhetoric of history, I have proposed instead that his as-if dynastic histories of "Spain" and "Peru" offer brilliant insights into the nature of history in the early-modern colonial Hispanic world. Peralta employed classical and Neoplatonist poetics to configure history as if it were the "animated rea-

12. On Alonso de la Cueva's and other Peruvian images of the Inca and Spanish kings, see Majluf 2005.

son" and "the royal head of the Nation" and "the Patria" past, present, and future. This was precisely the position of Lima and of Peralta vis-à-vis "Spain" and "Peru." "The Nation" here was imperial and transoceanic, but the favored "countries" and "patrias" of Iberia and Peru in which that nation dwelled were mirror images of each other, with the added difference that "Peru" was to "Spain" what "Hispania" was to "Rome." "Lima" made that futural conjugation possible because it was the site of a *translatii studii* and *translatii imperii* performed and sung by Peralta himself in his two histories of Spain and Peru, respectively. It is in his colonial Limean capacity as "Nymph of History" that Peralta offers to "Spain" a history that "interprets" Spain's deep past and "sings" it as Peru's promising future. In sum, and because "true history" is none other than the animated reason of "the prince" of its own design, Peralta's history makes Lima into that seat of knowledge from which "Peru" may have its brilliant future and "Spain" its glorious past. Peralta's prognostic dynastic history is thus a bold answer to the prince's question: "How shall I rule?" History's advice to the prince is: "as if you were a copy of my future self."

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