

THE TAKI ONQOY AND THE ANDEAN NATION: Sources and Interpretations

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In the 1530s, a handful of Spaniards conquered an immense Andean empire. Thirty years later, some Andean subjects of what was by then an immense Spanish empire resolved not to worship the Spaniards' God. Their resistance was associated with a Quechua ritual phrase, "Taki Onqoy," usually translated literally as "disease of the dance."¹ This movement was suppressed rapidly by Spanish authority and left no traces except in a few Spanish documents.

Before the 1960s, historians gave the Taki Onqoy only passing attention.² But in 1964, a brief article in a Peruvian journal touched off at least three decades of close study and interpretation. The sudden interest arose partly from the discovery and publication of new sources. But the fundamental stimulus was a massive surge of interest among South Americans and foreigners in this era in indigenous Andean culture. For the first time, many Spanish-speaking Peruvians, Bolivians, and Ecuadorians began to trace their national identity not to the Spanish conquerors but to the Andean conquered.

The new interest in Andean culture prompted historical questions that had not been asked before with such insistence. Did Andean peoples resist the new order? Had any authentic Andean identity survived and held its own? Since the mid-1960s, the Taki Onqoy has fascinated historians because it suggested answers to these questions.

Today the Taki Onqoy offers students of history another kind of opportunity: a case study in the historiographical process. As a historical

1. The spelling of Quechua words in this research note will follow the most common usage in the secondary literature. In particular, the spelling of the term *Taki Onqoy* will follow the practice of historians (based on their understanding of the Quechua language), rather than the forms in which it appears in the original Spanish sources, such as "Taqi Hongo" or "Taqi Ongo."

2. The subject received less than one out of eighty pages in George Kubler, "The Quechua in the Colonial World," in *Handbook of South American Indians*, 7 vols., edited by Julian Steward (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 2:407.

problem, the Taki Onqoy is significant, self-contained, and extremely limited in its sources. Thus it is not an epic canvas but a miniature scene in which the brushstrokes may be clearly discerned. A study of the available sources and the use to which they have been put may offer insights into how historians select and interpret evidence and what is at stake.

Sources

A generation after the conquest, Spanish priest Cristóbal de Molina preached in Quechua in front of the cathedral steps in Cuzco. Around 1574 he wrote the *Relación de las fábulas y ritos de los incas*, a treatise on the old Andean religion.³ The work catalogued the indigenous *huacas*—the countless divinities, large and small, embodied in the Andean landscape. At the end of the book, Molina brought his story up to date: “It was ten years ago, more or less, that there was disaffection⁴ among these Indians of this land. . . . [M]ost of them had fallen into the greatest apostasies, separating themselves from the Catholic faith that they had received and returning to the idolatry that they committed in the time of their infidelity.”⁵ Molina did not give a name to this movement but wrote that its adherents “made a sort of song, which they called Taqui hongo.”⁶

The movement that Molina described was well organized, having been spread by traveling preachers as far as Cuzco, Lima, and La Paz. He attributed the initiative to the fugitive Incas of Vilcabamba, successive heirs to the conquered Inca throne who maintained a foothold just outside Spanish reach. The first to discover the religious movement was Luis de Olivera, a priest outside the town of Huamanga (now called Ayacucho). Molina cited Olivera as his source on its teachings:

[T]hey believed that all the huacas of the kingdom, as many as the Christians had overthrown and burned, had come back to life, and had formed into two sides: some had joined with the huaca Pachacama, and the others with the huaca Titi-caca, and all traveled in the air commanding that they give battle with God and conquer him, and they held him to be already conquered; that when the Marquis [Pizarro] entered this land, God had conquered the huacas and the Spanish had

3. There are several editions of Molina’s book. The most recent is that of Henrique Urbano in *Fábulas y mitos de los incas*, edited by Urbano and Pierre Duviols (Madrid: Crónicas de América, 1989), 49–134. This volume brings together two different sources on the Taki Onqoy. On Molina and his book, see the introduction by Urbano, 9–41. Clements Markham included a translation of Molina’s book in *Narratives of the Rites and Laws of the Yncas* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1873), 3–64. Molina’s account of the Taki Onqoy, as discussed and quoted here, is found in Urbano and Duviols’s *Fábulas y mitos*, 129–32. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from non-English sources are my translations.

4. The text shows *yronía*, “irony.” A better reading seems to be *erronía*, meaning “opposition” or “disaffection.”

5. Molina, *Fábulas y mitos*, 129.

6. *Ibid.*

conquered the Indians; but that now the world had turned, and God and the Spanish would be conquered this time and all the Spaniards would die, and their cities be flooded, and the sea would rise and drown them. . . .⁷

The apostates proposed that the gods of the two races were equal: ". . . they believed that God Our Lord had made the Spanish and Castile and the animals and sustenance of Castile but that the huacas had made the Indians and this land and the sustenance that the Indians previously had. . . ."⁸ The Indians could hasten the huacas' reconquest by resuming their old fasts and sacrifices, and also by "not eating the things of Castile, nor using them in eating or dressing, nor entering the churches, nor responding to the call of the priests, nor calling themselves by Christian names."⁹ What made the huacas most angry was to see Indians baptized.

The huacas were traditionally embodied in features of the landscape, such as mountains and stones. According to the new movement, however, ". . . the huacas no longer put themselves into stones, clouds, or springs to speak, but embodied themselves in the Indians and made them speak. . . . And thus there were many Indians who trembled and rolled on the ground, and others threw stones as if possessed, making faces. . . ."¹⁰ The Indians venerated those whom the huacas possessed, and after such an episode, "the whole village celebrated for two or three days, dancing and drinking, and invoking the huaca whom that man . . . said he held in his body. . . ."

In Molina's view, this organized apostasy was a sin and a crime. The Spanish Empire was developing a program of "extirpation of idolatry" to combat such movements. But Molina was a bit vague about the official response in this instance. Although he said the apostasy extended from Lima to La Paz, the only attempt at extirpation that he mentioned was that by Olivera, the discoverer. Olivera informed the secular and spiritual authorities about the problem and proceeded to "punish" the offenders, but Molina did not say how. The apostasy lasted "more than seven years," according to Molina, but after its predictions failed and the last Inca died, it was defeated.

Until recently, Molina's account (widely read in several editions) provided the only known account of the Andean apostasy of 1565. But in 1964, Peruvian historian Luis Millones called attention to another source: the *Informaciones de servicios* by Cristóbal de Albornoz.¹¹ A Spanish priest

7. *Ibid.*, 130.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 130–31.

11. This source was first mentioned in print in a bibliographical work published in 1947. It was first analyzed in Luis Millones, "Un movimiento nativista del siglo XVI, el Taki Onqoy," *Revista Peruana de Cultura* (Lima) 3 (1964):138–40. Millones edited and published the document in *Las informaciones de Cristóbal de Albornoz* (Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Docu-

and Molina's contemporary, Albornoz was an ambitious ecclesiastical bureaucrat who became at last a deputy of the Bishop of Cuzco. On several occasions in the course of lawsuits and petitions for advancement, Albornoz submitted formal testimonials regarding his own accomplishments. A manuscript containing testimonials from 1569, 1570, 1577, and 1584 was deposited in the Archivo de Indias in Seville. As documented therein, Albornoz's main accomplishment was his work in suppressing the Andean religious movement described by Molina.

Each of the four *informaciones* began with a list of detailed questions, followed by the responses of various priests, officials, and landowners. The witnesses included both Cristóbal de Molina and Luis de Olivera. All the witnesses supported Albornoz's claims. Most simply repeated the language of the questions, while some volunteered details of their own. In the fourth question in the 1570 testimonial, the witnesses were asked:

Whether they know that the said Cristóbal de Albornoz, cleric, was appointed by the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of Cuzco . . . as its *visitador* [inspector] in the city of Huamanga, . . . [where he] discovered . . . the sect and apostasy that was kept among the natives of the Taqui Ongó, also known as Aira, . . . and that they preached in the name of the huacas Titicaca, Tiaguanaco, and sixty others, and that these huacas had conquered the God of the Christians and that his turn [*mita*] was now over, . . . [and that] the said preachers were discovered and found by the said Cristóbal de Albornoz in the number of eight thousand natives . . . ; some of the principal members and inventors he sent captive to the Dean and Chapter in Cuzco, . . . and the rest he punished, instructed, and indoctrinated, . . . and gave them salutary penance conforming to their crimes.¹²

Unlike Molina's *Relación*, the *Informaciones* identified the apostasy as a "sect" with a name: Taqui Ongó or Aira. Otherwise, this source generally agreed with Molina's description of the Andeans' beliefs, hopes, and practices as well as the place where it was discovered and suppressed.

In his own *Relación*, Molina had not mentioned the leaders of the movement. But in his 1577 statement on Albornoz's behalf, Molina wrote that Albornoz had arrested "the most principal dogmatists, who were two men and a woman. . . ."¹³ In 1584 Molina modified this point: "the most guilty were two native Indians," one of whom was called Joan Chocne or Joan Chocna, who "said that he carried with him one whom they did not see, who told him these things."¹⁴ Sent to Cuzco for punishment, the lead-

mentación, 1971). The edition cited here is the corrected one by Millones and Pedro Guibovich in *El retorno de las huacas: Estudios y documentos sobre el Taki Onqoy, Siglo XVI*, edited by Millones (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990), 43–308. On Albornoz and this document generally, see Guibovich, "Nota preliminar al personaje histórico y los documentos," in the same volume, 23–40.

12. Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 63–64.

13. *Ibid.*, 181.

14. *Ibid.*, 225.

ers tearfully recanted after a fiery sermon delivered by Molina himself. Two other witnesses in 1570 recalled an odder detail about the sect's leadership: "certain Indian women . . . called themselves Santa María and Santa María Magdalena and other names of saints . . . in order to be revered as saints. . . ."15 Although Molina claimed that the apostates rejected Christian names and ideas; there were apparently exceptions to this rule.

As well as adding new details to Molina's picture of the Taki Onqoy movement, Albornoz's *Informaciones* enriched it with the testimony of numerous ordinary Spaniards and lists of sect members and huacas. Shortly after the *Informaciones* came to light, another original source appeared. In 1967 French scholar Pierre Duviols edited and published another manuscript from the archives in Seville, also by Cristóbal de Albornoz: the *Instrucción para descubrir todas las guacas del Pirú y sus camayos y haciendas*, written in the early 1580s.¹⁶ Like Molina's *Relación de las fábulas y ritos de las incas*, Albornoz's *Instrucción* collected information about traditional Andean huacas. But while the title of Molina's book reflected his anti-quarian interests, Albornoz's title and his approach were frankly functional. His book was a how-to guide to extirpating idolatry.

Compiling a case study in extirpation, Albornoz recounted his own efforts in Huamanga, where he served as ecclesiastical visitador from 1569 to 1571. There he found "an apostasy preached among the natives, which kept most of the natives perverted and separated from our faith and Christian religion."¹⁷ Albornoz did not give a name to this apostasy, but it was clearly the same movement discussed in his own *Informaciones*: the Taki Onqoy. He described the apostasy in detail, noting, "it is necessary to say something of the principles and order that they had in their preaching, and from whence such an invention came, in order to say from where I drew the principle of discovering huacas. . . ."¹⁸

Albornoz presented a rather different picture of the Huamanga apostasy in his *Instrucción* from that given in his *Informaciones*. In the *Instrucción*, the Taki Onqoy appeared as an integral part of the Inca campaign for reconquest:

These Incas always wanted to regain these kingdoms by any means possible, . . . and finding no better way than by their religion and by resuscitating its preach-

15. *Ibid.*, 89, 99.

16. This document was first mentioned in print in 1890. It was first edited and published by Pierre Duviols as "Un inédit de Cristóbal de Albornoz: La *Instrucción para descubrir todas las guacas del Pirú con sus camayos y haciendas*," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* (Paris) 56, no. 1 (1967):7–40. The edition cited here is the corrected one by Duviols in Urbano and Duviols, *Fábulas y mitos*, 163–98. On this source generally, see the introduction by Duviols, 137–59. The *Instrucción's* account of the Taki Onqoy, as discussed and quoted here, is found in Urbano and Duviols, *Fábulas y mitos*, 192–95.

17. Urbano and Duviols, *Fábulas y mitos*, 192.

18. *Ibid.*

ing, they procured *ladino* Indians raised among us, and brought them inside with gifts and promises. And they scattered them through all the provinces of Peru, . . . praying and exhorting all the people who were faithful to their lord to believe that the huacas were returning above them and would conquer the God of the Christians, and to do their duty and bring back their natural lord from the mountains where he was buried.¹⁹

This Inca religious revival was directed as much against indigenous local religion as against Christianity: “[K]nowing the power that their own native huacas and the huacas’ magic-making *camayos* [priests] had among the natives, in order that no one else should order or preach any other religion than that of the Inca, . . . they asked . . . for the names of the huacas and their *camayos* along with the services and the property that they had, and later they brought these *camayos* together and danced and got drunk with them and killed them without anyone resisting.”²⁰ According to Albornoz, the Inca’s emissaries preached the return of the official huacas only. Other huacas they sought out and destroyed, much like the Spanish officials did.

These three sources assembled by two Cuzco priests in the twenty years following the outbreak provide all that historians now know about what they call the Taki Onqoy. The accounts vary in their details. Only the *Relación* describes a radical rejection of Spanish names, food, and clothing. Only the *Instrucción* describes a campaign against local huacas. All three sources, however, agree on the central premise of the movement: “that the huacas were returning above them and would conquer the God of the Christians.”²¹

Interpretations

Students of the Taki Onqoy have differed radically in their interpretations of the heart of the movement. Some saw a campaign of reconquest by the old Inca order. Others saw instead a resurgence of popular Andean culture, as distinct from the Inca state. A third group saw a crisis or transformation in Andean culture. Finally, a fourth group has concluded that the Taki Onqoy was mainly significant as an imaginative construct among Spanish intellectuals.

The debate on the Taki Onqoy began in 1964, when Luis Millones published the first of two brief articles on the Taki Onqoy in Lima journals. They were based on Molina’s *Relación* and on the *Informaciones* of Albornoz, a source never before studied. Their purpose was to introduce Peruvian intellectuals to a little-known episode from their past. Millones perceived the Taki Onqoy as a campaign of “cultural defense.” He described

19. *Ibid.*, 193–94.

20. *Ibid.*, 195.

21. *Ibid.*, 194.

it as “one of the movements of greatest magnitude in colonial America, which when linked to the most powerful assertion of reconquest—the Incas of Vilcabamba—rapidly extended throughout the Diocese of Cuzco up to the outskirts of the capital.”²² Millones’s second article speculatively enlarged the movement’s magnitude, finding traces of it as late as 1613 and as far away as the Argentine border. He apologetically acknowledged Christian influences on the Taki Onqoy. Regarding the saints’ names mentioned in the *Informaciones*, Millones commented that “thirty years of evangelism sufficed for Christianity to enter into the Indian mentality.”²³ In spite of this taint, Millones celebrated the Taki Onqoy as a nationalist attempt at “reconquest.”

In 1971 Pierre Duviols introduced a European audience to the subject in his book *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial*. He analyzed the religious dimension of Spanish conquest, a crucial one in the “encounter between two theocracies”—the Spanish and Inca empires.²⁴ After Millones’s articles appeared, Duviols discovered and published the *Instrucción* of Albornoz, which viewed the Taki Onqoy as an Inca attempt “to regain these kingdoms by any means possible.”²⁵ Duviols endorsed this view, describing the Taki Onqoy as a “religious reconquest on two fronts” (against both Christianity and local religions) by the “great priest of Vilcabamba” and his “theologians of *huaquismo*.”²⁶ Duviols called the movement “the most important indigenous rebellion of the sixteenth century.”²⁷ He concluded that its collapse was inevitable after the death in 1572 of Tupac Amaru, the last Inca and the “living symbol of civil and religious authority.”²⁸

Those who first studied the Taki Onqoy accepted the interpretation of it given in the sources: a movement of reconquest by the old order against the new. If conflicting interests existed within the Andean nation, as Duviols read the *Instrucción*, then the Taki Onqoy firmly took the side of the Inca state against both the Spanish and the Andean masses.

Later historians reversed this alignment, however, making the Taki Onqoy an expression of Andean popular culture, in which the Inca state

22. Luis Millones, “Un movimiento nativista del siglo XVI: El Taki Onqoy,” in *Ideología mesiánica del mundo andino*, edited by Juan Ossio (Lima: Prado Pastor, 1973), 85. The article was first published in the *Revista Peruana de Cultura* in 1964.

23. Luis Millones, “Nuevos aspectos del Taki Onqoy,” in Ossio, *Ideología mesiánica*, 97–98. This article was first published in *Historia y Cultura* in 1965.

24. Pierre Duviols, *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial: “L’extirpation de l’idolatrie” entre 1532 et 1660* (Lima and Paris: Institut Français d’Etudes Andines, 1971), 337.

25. Urbano and Duviols, *Fábulas y mitos*, 193.

26. Duviols, *La lutte contre les religions autochtones*, 115–16, 346.

27. *Ibid.*, 347.

28. *Ibid.*

was at best irrelevant and at worst hostile. Several factors tended to diminish the importance of the Inca state from its previously central place in Andean historiography. One was a worldwide trend among historians during the 1970s away from political history and into social history, shifting from a top-down to a bottom-up approach. Another factor was the discovery of archaeological evidence confirming the short life span of the Inca Empire, only about a hundred years. A third factor, one specific to the Taki Onqoy, was a simple observation from the sources that both Millones and Duviols failed to make: the highest god of the Incas was the Sun, yet the Sun did not appear among the gods of the Taki Onqoy.

Peruvian historian Franklin Pease also dealt with the Taki Onqoy in his imaginative reconstructions of Andean religion. He noted that after the conquest, "one does not observe the least trace of the survival of a solar cult."²⁹ Rejecting the sources' claim that the Taki Onqoy revived "the rites and ceremonies of the time of the Incas," Pease concluded instead that it was an older popular faith that arose in defiance of the Inca state religion.³⁰ For Pease, the key to the movement was the Quechua word *mita*, meaning *turn*. The *mita* was the alternating and reciprocal work detail that had structured the old Andean economy. Pease heard in this one word the essence of an ancient "Andean cyclical messianism": "these huacas had conquered the God of the Christians and his *mita* was now over."³¹

Italian historian Marco Curatola, studying the sociology of colonial "crisis cults," built on Pease's ideas. Suggesting that the name "Taki Onqoy" referred to the epidemic diseases of the Conquest era, Curatola traced the movement to precolonial rituals performed to ward off disease. Curatola considered the persistent grassroots integrity of Andean culture to be the first step toward a "consciousness of the Indians in the Andes, [a] self-identification as a unique nation."³² The Taki Onqoy, with its grand alliance of huacas, appeared to him to be a microcosm of this Andean nation. Curatola was himself committed to the Peruvian national idea. In the 1990s, he put his current research to one side to write a textbook on Peruvian social history.³³

Pease and Curatola both emphasized the absence of the sun from

29. Franklin Pease, *El dios creador andino* (Lima: Mosca Azul, 1973), 44.

30. Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 75.

31. Pease, "El mito de Inkarrí y la visión de los vencidos," in Ossio, *Ideología mesiánica*, 450; and Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 64.

32. Marco Curatola, "Mito y milenarismo en los Andes: Del Taki Onqoy a Inkarrí," *Allpanchis* (Cuzco) 9 (1976):65–92, 85. See also his article "El culto de crisis del 'Moro Onqoy,'" in *Etnohistoria y antropología andina*, edited by Marcia Koth de Paredes and Amalia Castelli (Lima: Centro de Proyección Cristiana, 1978), 179–91.

33. Curatola, *Historia y cultura del Perú* (Lima: Universidad de Lima, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, 1994).

the Taki Onqoy pantheon. Further research, however, reassessed the significance of this absence. A 1979 article by Guillermo Cock and Mary Eileen Doyle questioned the thesis of the "'death' of the Sun . . . and restoration of the huacas."³⁴ These two researchers found evidence that a community of Andean peasants in the seventeenth century secretly worshipped the sun. This empirical finding was small and isolated, but it suggested an intriguing line of thinking. If the solar cult did not perish with the Inca Empire but survived in clandestine popular worship, perhaps state and popular Andean religion were not so far apart after all. Perhaps both sets of beliefs relied on the sun to raise crops and on the huacas to ward off disease. Cock and Doyle thus cast doubt on the idea that the Taki Onqoy—or the Andean people generally—rejected "the time of the Inca."³⁵

But this finding did not halt the trend toward disengaging Andean popular religion from the Inca state. Other factors still argued for such disengagement: the social-history revolution and the brevity of the Inca Empire. Both factors influenced the writings of John Murra, a body of work that has helped historians understand the relationship between Andean popular religion and Inca state religion.

Under the Inca Empire, a complex distribution of labor and goods over a huge area operated according not to markets but to the will of the Inca in Cuzco. How had the Inca state come to wield such power in so little time? U.S. historian John Murra proposed a model to answer this question. Andean society, he theorized, was composed of "archipelagos"—tight-knit but geographically scattered groups. The society had evolved organically into an economy based on long-distance reciprocal obligations rather than on free exchange. By manipulating this system, the Inca state was able to acquire massive economic power in a short time.³⁶

The same logic might be applied to Andean religion. Even if no conflict existed between popular and official religion, as Cock and Doyle suggested, it did not follow that popular religion arose from the state. Rather, the state may have appropriated an existing popular religion, just as it did an existing system of exchange.

Murra's influence can be detected in several works by U.S. scholars that dealt with the Taki Onqoy. In the early 1980s, Steve Stern and Karen Spalding wrote histories of specific Peruvian regions under Inca and Spanish rule. Their choice of subject matter made a historiographical point: ignoring political periodization, each studied a local society that was acted on from outside by the Inca and Spanish states. Both followed Murra's

34. Guillermo Cock and Mary Eileen Doyle, "Del culto solar a la clandestinidad de Inti y Punchao," *Historia y Cultura* (Lima) 12 (1979):51–73, 51, 53.

35. *Ibid.*, 53.

36. John Murra, *Formaciones económicas y políticas del mundo andino* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1975).

analysis of the Andean economy, and both perceived the Taki Onqoy as a development from local "traditional roots." In 1991 Sabine MacCormack pursued the same logic in asserting that "the persuasive power of Inca religion resided not so much in its imperial prestige as in the fact that it converged with long-established Andean religious traditions."³⁷

Three years earlier in 1988, MacCormack had brought the Andean-nationalist interpretation of the Taki Onqoy to a wide audience in the United States. He published a lengthy paper on colonial Andean religion in the *American Historical Review*, the flagship journal of the historical profession in the United States. Replete with mythological anecdotes and full-page reproductions of art, the piece gave many readers their first look at an exotic subject. It argued that forced conversion neither destroyed nor transformed Andean religion. Rather, indigenous ideas remained a self-contained and uncompromised system within colonial Catholicism. Andeans "persisted in constructing their own logically coherent and complete interpretation of their world and their experience."³⁸ The Taki Onqoy, meanwhile, expressed the traditions of ritual healing and the cyclical worldview discussed by Pease and Curatola, which MacCormack characterized as a "heightened expression, brought on by conquest, of a perennial Andean theme."³⁹

Throughout the 1980s, then, the predominant interpretation of the Taki Onqoy was nationalist, viewing the movement as an enduring Andean culture centered on either the Inca or the nation at large. During the same period, a dissenting minority proposed another interpretation. These scholars saw the movement as a form of social pathology, a gesture of despair in the face of colonization. Thus whereas the first group tended to celebrate the Taki Onqoy as a culture bearer, the second group tended to deprecate it as irrational or ineffectual.

The earliest example of this second approach was Nathan Wachtel's *La vision des vaincus* (1971), published in the same year as Duviols's book. The two works covered much of the same ground but differed in style and substance. Wachtel's book, an impressionistic reconstruction of the Andean experience of conquest, had a more accessible style and reached a wider audience.

37. Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1982), 3–26, 71; Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri, an Andean Society under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984), 23–41, 247–48; and Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 148–49.

38. Sabine MacCormack, "Pachacuti: Miracles, Punishments, and Last Judgment: Visionary Past and Prophetic Future in Early Colonial Peru," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 960–1006, 961.

39. *Ibid.*, 984.

Both Duviols and Wachtel attributed to the Inca a central role in the Andean world and psyche. Both defined the Taki Onqoy in terms of its relationship with the fugitive Incas of Vilcabamba. But while Duviols viewed the Taki Onqoy as part of the Vilcabamba campaign of reconquest, Wachtel perceived contradictions between the two movements. Whereas the Vilcabamba Incas combined an active plan for reconquest with a free use of Spanish technology (including guns, roof tiles, and even Christian missionaries), the Taki Onqoy adopted an attitude of cultural purity but did not try to revolt.⁴⁰

Wachtel interpreted the Taki Onqoy's posture in psychological terms. In his opinion, because the Inca was at the center of the Andean universe, the murder of the Inca Atahualpa in 1533 was more than a tragedy—it was an existential crisis. Wachtel described this event as “the birth of chaos,” “order brutally shattered,” “a collective trauma,” and the “destruction” and “deculturation” of Andean society. The Taki Onqoy, as a psychological defense against metaphysical chaos, created a “divide” between traditional and colonial worlds. By abjuring the clothes, food, and faith of the Spaniards, these Andeans attempted the “restructuring” of their universe. The Taki Onqoy passively and ineffectually waited for the huacas to end the Spaniards' mita, stop the chaos, and repair the shattered order.⁴¹

Another pathological interpretation of the Taki Onqoy was found in Steve Stern's 1982 study of the Huamanga region, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest*. Historiographical currents in the intervening decade had carried Stern far from some of Wachtel's assumptions. Stern's bottom-up perspective foregrounded the local community, from whom Inca and Spanish authorities seemed equally distant. Yet Stern's interpretation of the Taki Onqoy was remarkably similar to Wachtel's, save that it reflected a local “destruction” rather than a national one.

Stern attributed the emergence of the Taki Onqoy to “the special moral character of the crisis experienced in Huamanga.”⁴² Materially, Stern argued, Huamanga “adapted more or less successfully to colonial conditions.”⁴³ He estimated that the region's mortality from epidemic diseases was only 0.5 percent per year. Moreover, local elites benefited initially from the substitution of Spanish overlords for Inca ones. But the loyalty of those in Huamanga to the old ways created psychological conflict and guilt. Their sense of collaboration with an evil order led to the Taki Onqoy, which sought to purge Andean society of any trace of the Spanish

40. Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished: The Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes, 1530–1570*, translated by Ben and Sian Reynolds (Hassocks, Engl.: Harvester, 1977), 179.

41. *Ibid.*, 30, 205, 182, 180.

42. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*, 68.

43. *Ibid.*, 44.

world. Unlike the neo-Inca state, the Taki Onqoy “focus[ed] internally upon the misdeeds of native society rather than externally upon the European agents of evil,” and as a result the movement was “politically defeatist.”⁴⁴

Yet another reading of the Taki Onqoy as a pathological response to defeat was a 1990 essay that analyzed the movement in Freudian terms. Like Stern, Moisés Lemlij and his coauthors (including Luis Millones, the initiator of Taki Onqoy historiography) emphasized Andeans’ guilty participation in Spanish culture, citing the saints’ names taken by certain participants. These analysts suggested that if Andeans were tormented by cultural contradictions, they might naturally focus attention on the care of the self, on the body. The Taki Onqoy, by policing their clothes, food, and speech and seeking enlightenment through ecstatic dance, demonstrated that the body is “the last refuge of the principle of resistance.”⁴⁵

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, those who studied the Taki Onqoy tried to use it as a window into Andean culture following the Spanish Conquest. Their interpretations—whether nationalistic or pathological, finding cultural survival or cultural despair—were not entirely inconsistent and at times differed mainly in emphasis. The first group was encouraged by finding cultural persistence, while the second was discouraged by finding cultural trauma. Since 1990, however, a group of young Peruvian historians has challenged using the Taki Onqoy as an index to the state of Andean culture. Reflecting a greater detachment from agendas of Andean national history and a more precise and skeptical attitude toward the sources, these historians have suggested that the documents on the Taki Onqoy may reveal more about their authors than about their ostensible subject matter.

In *El retorno de las huacas* (1990), which combined a new edition of Albornoz’s *Informaciones* with several interpretive essays, two contributions heralded the beginning of the new historiography. The first was an introduction to the *Informaciones* by a co-editor of the text, Pedro Guibovich. He expanded the piece the following year into a biographical study of Cristóbal de Albornoz. Guibovich examined in detail the ways that Albornoz, originally sent to the Huamanga area to investigate non-payment of tithes, turned the Taki Onqoy into a career opportunity. Gui-

44. *Ibid.*, 44, 37, 69.

45. Moisés Lemlij, Luis Millones, Alberto Pédola, María Rostworowski, and Max Hernández, “El Taki Onqoy: reflexiones psicoanalíticas,” in Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 429. Another treatment of the Taki Onqoy as a response to cultural mixing, created by what the *Instrucción* called “ladino Indians raised among us,” can be found in Rolena Adorno, “Images of Indios Ladinos in Early Colonial Peru,” in *Transatlantic Encounters: Europeans and Andeans in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Adorno and Kenneth J. Andrien (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

bovich argued persuasively that the Taki Onqoy was a much smaller phenomenon in numbers and extent than Albornoz claimed.⁴⁶

The second path-breaking essay in the 1990 collection, a longer piece by Rafael Varón, agreed that Albornoz had probably exaggerated the Taki Onqoy's importance to advance his own career. Varón argued that the sources leave unanswered many questions about the Taki Onqoy. One concerns the movement's relationship with the neo-Inca state. A connection was not impossible, but Albornoz and others had a vested interest in linking their local campaign against the Taki Onqoy with the national campaign against the Vilcabamba Incas. None of the documents originating from Vilcabamba mention the Taki Onqoy. A second area of uncertainty was the movement's relationship to Inca state religion. Lists of Taki Onqoy huacas and Inca huacas overlap, but only partially. A third issue is the movement's relationship with local power structures. The sect apparently attacked certain local priests, but according to the *Informaciones*, its members included certain local kurakas or leaders. Varón concluded that without more documentation, crucial questions about the Taki Onqoy will remain unanswered.⁴⁷

Varón went on to propose that a more fruitful approach would be to investigate the Taki Onqoy's role in Spanish colonial developments. He made a suggestive beginning in this direction by speculating on the role of the extirpation campaign in the rivalry between secular clergy and the Dominican Order.⁴⁸

The promise of Varón's speculations was fulfilled in 1992 by Juan Carlos Estenssoro's fascinating article, "Los bailes de los indios y el proyecto colonial."⁴⁹ Estenssoro focused on a little-studied aspect of the Taki Onqoy: its practice of ritual dance, as reflected in the movement's name. The colonial period witnessed a vigorous debate over the permissibility of Indian cultural practices. Following the teachings of illustrious chronicler Bartolomé de las Casas, the Dominican order defended such practices as long as they were not explicitly idolatrous. The Spanish government and the secular clergy, however, resented Dominican "meddling." The Taki Onqoy, which was discovered by secular priests in certain Dominican-controlled parishes near Huamanga, may have been used as a tool to discredit Dominican pro-Andean policies. Descriptions of madness and possession—"Indians who trembled and rolled on the ground" or "who

46. Pedro Guibovich, "Nota preliminar al personaje histórico a los documentos," in Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 23–40; and Guibovich, "Cristóbal de Albornoz y el Taki Onqoy," *Histórica* (Lima) 15 (1991):205–36.

47. Rafael Varón, "El Taki Onqoy: Las raíces andinas de un fenómeno colonial," in Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 333, 351, 346–47, 353, 355.

48. *Ibid.*, 397–400, 333.

49. Juan Carlos Estenssoro, "Los bailes de los indios y el proyecto colonial," *Revista Andina* (Cuzco) 10 (1992):365–66.

walked like fools and people who had lost their sense"⁵⁰—may have been invidious characterizations of the traditional dances that the Dominicans were defending. Thus the primary significance of the Taki Onqoy may have been as a political tool in colonial infighting.⁵¹

The most aggressively revisionist study of the Taki Onqoy was published in the same year as Estenssoro's article by the same Cuzco journal, *Revista Andina*. In "Política eclesiástica y extirpación de la idolatría," Gabriela Ramos found no reason for believing that the Taki Onqoy ever actually existed as a movement. Albornoz's *Información* of 1569, written four years after the Taki Onqoy allegedly appeared, did not mention it. The second *Información* (from 1570) talked about fasts and attachment to huacas but said nothing that might not apply to any community of reluctant, half-evangelized Andeans. Arguing that Molina's *Relación* was written at a later date than previously thought, Ramos concluded that every testimonial to a new and distinctive Andean "sect" was belated and unreliable. In sum, the Taki Onqoy as an organized movement may have been the invention of one man for the sake of advancing his own career.⁵²

In comparison with the earlier treatment and given the paucity of the sources, the Taki Onqoy has received unusually intense study and interpretation for more than three decades. The phenomenon first attracted this attention because it was useful to historians as a vehicle for Andean national identity. For some it was a vehicle of hope, for others, one of despair. But in recent years, historians have concluded that a historical phenomenon about which so little is known cannot fairly be required to carry such a burden. The Andean nation, like every collective entity, looks to its past for meaning. But we show the historical moment respect by assigning to it no more responsibility than its traces can bear.

50. Urbano and Duviols, eds., *Fábulas y mitos*, 131; and Millones, ed., *El retorno*, 99.

51. Estenssoro, "Los bailes de los indios."

52. Gabriela Ramos, "Política eclesiástica y extirpación de la idolatría: Discursos y silencios en torno al Taqui Onqoy," *Revista Andina* (Cuzco) 10 (1992):147–69, 150ff, 162.

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