

# MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

## El Primer Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno

Ref N° 2006-28

### PART A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

#### 1 SUMMARY

*The item is an autograph manuscript of 1,200 pages including 400 full-page drawings. Since its rediscovery in 1908, the item has become widely known as the only extant document conveying a purely indigenous (Andean Indian) viewpoint on pre-conquest Andean life and Inca rule, the Spanish conquest 1532, early Spanish colonial rule, and the systematic abuse of the rights of the indigenous population by the political, legal, and ecclesiastic authorities of the colony. The item is a "letter" to King Philip 3, suggesting that the government of Peru be returned to the indigenous population, if the once quite rich country is not to be utterly destroyed by rural depopulation and urban proletarianization.*

#### 2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

##### 2.1 Name (person or organisation)

*Erland Kolding Nielsen, The Royal Library, Copenhagen*

##### 2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

*The nominator is Director General of the institution, which has housed the item since ca. 1660.*

##### 2.3 Contact person (s)

*Ivan Boserup,  
Head of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books,  
The Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

##### 2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

*Ivan Boserup  
Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books  
POB 2149  
DK 1016 Copenhagen K  
Denmark*

#### 3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

##### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

*Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (d. 1616): "El primer nueva coronica y buen gobierno ".  
Call number in the Royal Library: GKS 2232 quarto.*

##### 3.2 Description

*See Appendix.*

## 4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

### 4.1 Authenticity

*The manuscript is an autograph, and the author is known through archival documents preserved in Seville (Archivo General de Indias), with a signature matching the author's signature in the item, and in Ayacucho/Huamanga, Peru. Furthermore, the author's handwriting and artistry has recently been identified in a contemporary manuscript (in private ownership), the so-called Poyanne-manuscript or Martin de Murua's Historia general del Peru (published in facsimile in Madrid in 2004).*

### 4.2 World significance, uniqueness and inreplaceability

*The item is unique and irreplaceable not only in a Peruvian or Latin-American context, but is unparalleled as a self-conscious and eloquent voice of the oppressed and abused peoples of all ages, races and creeds.*

### 4.3 Criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style.

*(a) The author of the item was born shortly after the Spanish conquest of Peru 1532.*

*(b) The author of the item grew up and travelled extensively through early colonial Peru during civil wars, campaigns of extirpation of idolatry, organisation of forced labour in gold- and silver-mines, and hastily growing appropriation by Spanish settlers of the land earlier owned by the Indians.*

*(c) The author of the item describes in words and drawings the miseries of his people, and advocates for the abolishment of Spanish rule and the establishment of Indian self government.*

*(d) The item is an autograph manuscript of 1,200 pages, including 400 full-page drawings of unique originality and expressiveness.*

### 4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

*The item is the only known "chronicle of the Indies" written by an indigenous author, i. e. with an independent, non-Spanish viewpoint, and in direct polemic against the standpoint of the first generation of historians of the conquest.*

## 5 LEGAL INFORMATION

### 5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

*The item has been in the custody of the Royal Library, Copenhagen, since ca. 1660, i. e. from less than 50 years after its completion by its author and dispatch by Spanish convoy from Lima to Madrid. It was probably brought to Copenhagen and presented to the Danish King Frederic 3 by a Danish book collector who acted as ambassador to the Spanish court for a number of years. The item bears no sign whatsoever of earlier ownership. The item was rebound in the Royal Library in the 1860s and in 1927.*

### 5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

*Same as 5.1.*

### **5.3 Legal status:**

(a) Category of ownership

*Full ownership by the Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

(b) Accessibility

*Accessible to scholars in the Royal Library's high-security reading room upon written request with detailed exposition of the reason why research is considered to be a necessity.*

(c) Copyright status

*Full copyright owned the Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

(d) Responsible administration

*Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, The Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

(e) Other factors

*The item was totally digitized in 2001 and made universally available on the Internet: [www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma](http://www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma).*

## **6 MANAGEMENT PLAN**

6.1 *There is no management plan but the Royal Library has been highly aware of the uniqueness and global importance of the item since its rediscovery by a German scholar in 1908. It has encouraged facsimilation, and it financially supported the production of a now obsolete facsimile printed in Paris in 1936 (ed. by Paul Rivet, professor at the Sorbonne University). The item is stored in the climatized vault of the Royal Library, constructed in 1999. In order to reduce the need of scholars and of a wider public to access the original item itself, a website in Spanish and English was created in 2001 which currently comprises the following elements: a high-quality digital facsimile of all 1200 pages, a detailed description of the item's physical construction, a complete scholarly and annotated transcription, relevant documents in facsimile, and an extensive bibliography. A cd-rom with the complete facsimile was produced in 2002.*

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

*(a) The nominator and the owner are identical.*

*(b) The nominator has appointed the custodian.*

*(c) The nominator is currently president of the Memory of the World National Committee.*

## **PART B - SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

### **8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

8.1 *The item is a well-preserved but fragile paper-manuscript. Due to numerous rebindings and quite extensive paper corrosion by oxidized ink, the item must be handled with the utmost care. Scholars worldwide have recognized the necessity of severe restrictions on the access to the original after the publication of the whole manuscript on Internet.*

*The digital facsimile available on Internet and on cd-rom has also dramatically reduced the risk of vandalism, mutilation, and theft.*

*No loan requests have been granted since 1992.*

9 **ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION**

9.1 *The climatized vault of the Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

**PART C - LODGEMENT**

This nomination is lodged by:

*Erland Koldin Nielsen, Director General, The Royal Library, Copenhagen*

On 14 February 1615, from Santiago de Chipao in the province of Lucanas in the south central Peruvian Andes, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala wrote King Philip III of Spain that he had just completed a “chronicle or general history”.



Title page of Guaman Poma's *Nueva corónica*

It contained, he said, everything he had been able to learn in his eighty years about Andean history and Spanish rule in the Andes. He added that he would be glad to send his work to the king, should he request it. Guaman Poma's chronicle of more than a thousand pages had two main purposes: to give the king an account of ancient Andean history from the beginning of time through the reign of the Incas and to inform the monarch about the deepening crisis in Andean society that was a result of Spanish colonization. Guaman Poma called his work “El primer *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*,” that is, a “new chronicle” and a treatise on “good government” or governmental reform for the Peruvian viceroyalty.

The Andean author called his chronicle “new” because it presented a version of pre-columbian and conquest history unfamiliar to readers of the Spanish-authored histories of Peru then in print. He called it a “chronicle or general history” because he posited it as a comprehensive history that took as its subject “the kingdom of the Indies of Peru” from the Andean perspective, in contrast to the genre of the

comprehensive or general history of the Indies at large written from the Spanish viewpoint.



The author presents his book and counsels to the king of Spain, page 975.

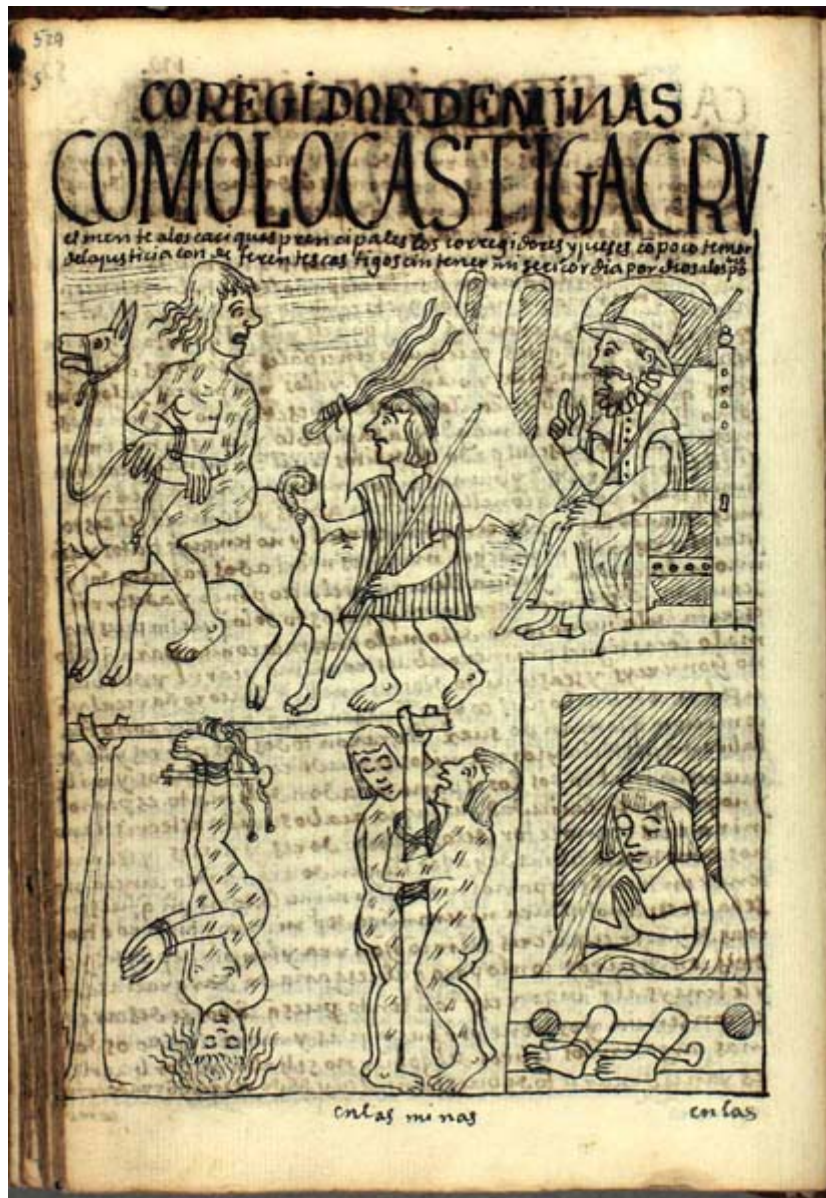
Guaman Poma presented an elaborate and complex cosmology that wove the dynasties of the Andean past into a Christian model of universal history, and he made the Incas not the first and only great Andean dynasty, but merely the most recent one, succeeding that of the Yarovilcas of Allauca Huánuco from which he claimed descent. With respect to the theme of good government, Guaman Poma sought to convince the king to take action to halt the destruction of Andean society that he described in these terms: The traditional Andean social hierarchies were being dismantled (the world was “upside-down”). The native Andeans were being exploited in the countryside and driven to death in the mines. To escape a dire fate, they were fleeing to the cities where they engaged in the dissipated lifestyle of rogues and prostitutes. From Guaman Poma’s Andean perspective, one of the greatest threats was the rapid growth of the mestizo (mixed race) population. Unlike native Andeans, mestizos were free from paying tribute to the colonial administration and, due to miscegenation and intermarriage with native Andeans, they were increasing in numbers at an alarming rate. Meanwhile, the ethnic Andean population was declining precipitously. Large-

scale miscegenation, armed violence, the exploitation of native labor, and the spread of epidemic disease would bring an end, in Guaman Poma's view, to the Andean peoples and their culture.



Guaman Poma's grandfather, 12th Inka captain, page 167.

Guaman Poma thus fashioned himself in his work as a trustworthy advisor to the king. He claimed the right to address the king because of his service to the colonial administration and, most importantly, on account of his aristocratic credentials as heir to the Yarovilca dynasty that had preceded the Inkas and as the son and grandson of men who had served the Inka lords of Tawantinsuyu in important posts.



Punishments inflicted on the indigenous population, page 529.

The vehicle in which Guaman Poma presented his views was a long prose text, written mostly in Spanish with occasional sections in Quechua, one of Guaman Poma's native languages. He complemented his written text with 398 full-page line drawings interspersed throughout the work. Guaman Poma explained his creation of the pictures by remarking that he understood the king to be fond of the visual arts. Yet Guaman Poma's heavy reliance on the pictorial mode to state his positions and argue his points, particularly about the colonial abuse of the native population, suggests instead that he considered his drawings to be the most direct and effective way of communicating his ideas to the king and persuading him to take remedial action. Guaman Poma wrote that he hoped the king would have his work published so that its advice might be followed by the full range of the king's civil and ecclesiastical officials to halt colonial abuses, protect the native Andeans, and ensure their well-being.



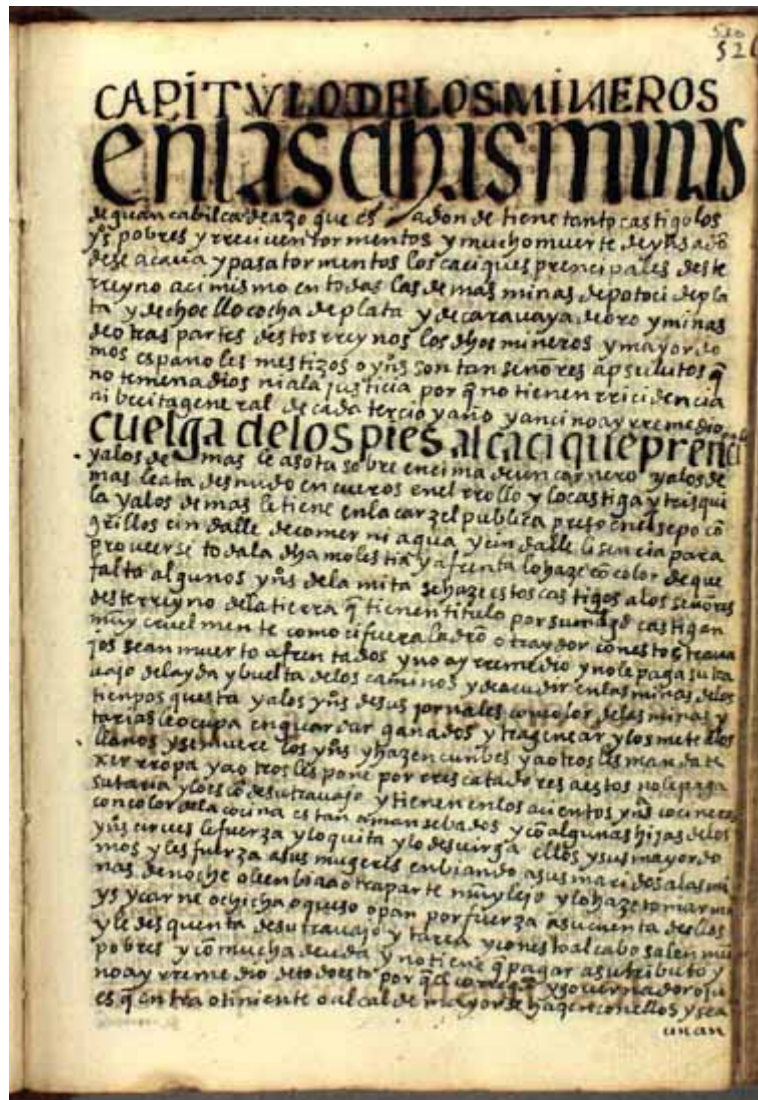


Guaman Poma's map of Peru (Up is East), pages 1001-1102

A dramatically truncated sentence on the penultimate page of the manuscript announces its intended presentation to an unnamed recipient: “in the city of the kings of Lima, royal court and principal city of Peru, it was presented before. . . .” Left blank are the designation of the recipient and the date of presentation. Circumstantial evidence suggests, however, that the manuscript did pass through the viceregal court at Lima. A Franciscan friar, Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdoba, who served as a page at the court of the viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna from 1607 to 1615, repeats Guaman Poma’s uncommon version of pre-Incaic Andean history. He may have been at the court when Guaman Poma’s manuscript arrived and made later use of its contents in his own *Memorial de las historias del Nuevo Mundo Perú* (1630). It has been suggested that Guaman Poma was Salinas y Córdoba’s source.

We will never know whether King Philip III personally received Guaman Poma’s book, although it seems almost certain that the manuscript arrived at the Spanish court because of its apparent passage through aristocratic hands and its ultimate and present location at the Royal Library of Denmark. This seems to suggest that there had been some form of diplomatic acquisition, such as, for example, the possible receipt of Guaman Poma’s manuscript by a Danish ambassador and collector of books who came upon it at the Madrid court.

Because of their intrinsic interest, it seems certain that Guaman Poma’s pictures assured the work’s survival. Here a particular kind of collector’s motivation comes into play. The learned reading public of northern Europe would have been familiar with Johann Theodor de Bry’s illustrated accounts of the Spanish conquests in the New World. For example, his Latin translation (Frankfurt, 1598) of Bartolomé de las Casas’s *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies), included copper engravings that illustrated the horrors of conquest.

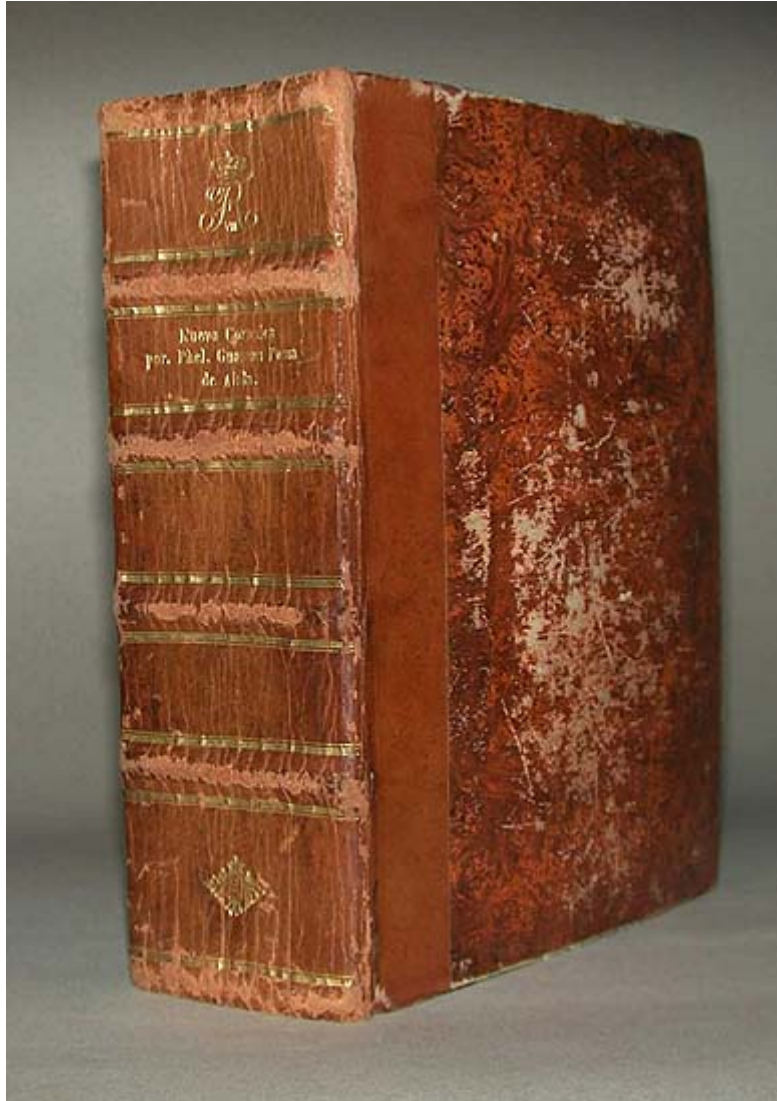


Text page (520)

The agencies responsible for the Nueva corónica's Scandinavian destination were quite likely to have been interested in its pictorial testimony that the work offered and its potential contribution to the international Black Legend of Spanish history.

In this regard, it is worthy of note that the Danish Royal Library houses one of the most important European collections of materials on the Spanish Inquisition. In addition to the New World conquests and Spanish domination of the Low Countries, the Inquisition was one of the principal sources of the construction of the Black Legend of Spanish history. The political interests of Protestant northern Europe were thus likely factors influencing the Nueva corónica's northern European destination. In this context of international cultural politics, its final repository could as well have been in northern Germany, the Low Countries, or any other country of the Protestant north.

(Adapted from text by Professor Rolena Adorno (Yale University), copyright 2001)



The manuscript GKS 2232 quarto, in its 19th century binding.