

THE BEHAVIOR OF ATAHUALPA, 1531-1533

The story of the capture and death of the Inca Atahualpa has been told innumerable times, and always from the point of view of Pizarro. It is among the entrancing narratives of history, for the principals were a *condottiere* and a king without the law. The stake was an empire; and the outcome, an instance of tragic triumph. Hence the story has attracted literary men and poets. But rarely is it possible in their splendid narratives to catch sight of the drives and motives intrinsic to Indian culture. The story falls so easily into the pattern of the tragedies of the Renaissance in Europe, with deeds of transcendent *virtù*, and the fall of a monarch, that students have been reluctant to sacrifice the literary quality of the events for a less dramatic treatment of cultural behavior, as manifested by the Indians and more particularly by Atahualpa. Hence, in spite of the precarious and illegitimate nature of Atahualpa's authority, he tends to appear in narrative art as a kind of king by right divine; as a king wronged; or as a fantastic potentate serving as the foil for Pizarro's audacity. On the whole, literature has regarded Pizarro as the enigma, the problem, or the object of empathy; and few writers have shown dispassionate interest in the highly significant record of Atahualpa's behavior during the crisis of Peruvian Indian culture from 1531 to 1533. To recount this behavior, we shall begin with the events of Pizarro's first visit to Peru.¹

I

The Indians of Peru first viewed a substantial party of Spaniards in 1527-1528. This acquaintance differed radically from the second in 1530-1531. On the first occasion, the coastal tribes were at peace with one another and with their highland master, the Inca Huayna Cápac.² The Spaniards appeared as a small party

¹ The sources, both Spanish and Indian, are the conventional ones for conquest studies. Our method differs from that of other students only in selectivity; the notices relevant to Indian behavior are here given more attention than usual. These notices, recurring across a wide spread of sources, are consistent with one another; and they suggest an objective, if accidental reporting.

² Pedro de Cieza de León, *Segunda parte de la crónica del Perú, que trata del señorío de los Incas yupanquis y de sus grandes hechos y gobernación* (Marcos Jiménez de la Espada, ed., *Biblioteca hispano-ultramarina*, V, Madrid, 1880), p. 264.

of explorers, without horses, and in peaceful attitudes. The Indians evidently thought of them as merchants, received them hospitably, and encouraged their landings.³ During 1527, for example, one of the great *capullanas*, or women chiefs of the coast, entertained Francisco Pizarro on shore; and at another town, Pizarro was given two young boys, one of whom, Felipillo, later served as interpreter, after accompanying Pizarro to Europe in 1529.⁴ According to Herrera, who, in this section of his narrative, perhaps had access to detailed accounts now lost, the last months of Huayna Cápac's life coincided with the arrival of the Europeans at Túmbez.⁵ An emissary was sent by Huayna to view the foreigners; he dined on shipboard, and was given a steel knife and some baubles of glass and chalcedony.⁶ In return, the Europeans sent ashore two or three men who asked to be left behind.⁷ They were later killed, before Pizarro's return, probably because of misconduct with Indian women, and because of widespread hostilities among the coastal tribes, contingent upon the death of Huayna Cápac at Quito.⁸

By 1531, when Pizarro returned, Indian affairs in Peru had attained a tension and violence that affected even the smallest settlements of the coast. The situation was caused by the testamentary division of the empire by Huayna Cápac between his sons, Atahualpa of Quito and Huáscar of Cuzco. It was not the first instance of a cardinal weakness in the Incaic system of dynastic succession.⁹ Now it precipitated civil war between the brothers on a huge scale, and the main engagements were in progress during 1531-1532. After his father's death, Atahualpa had

³ Pascual de Andagoya, *Narrative of the Proceedings of Pedrarias Dávila in the Provinces of Tie.ra Firme or Castilla del Oro . . .* (Clements R. Markham, tr. and ed., Hakluyt Society Works, 1st. ser., No. XXXIV, London, 1865), p. 46; Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas i tierra firme del mar océano* (9 vols. in 5, Madrid, 1726-1730), déc. iv, p. 33.

⁴ Reginaldo de Lizárraga, "Descripción breve . . . del Perú, Tucumán, Río de la Plata y Chile," in *Nueva biblioteca de autores españoles*, XV (M. Serrano y Sanz, ed., *Historiadores de Indias*, II, Madrid, 1909), 491.

⁵ Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. iii, pp. 284-285.

⁶ Girolamo Benzoni, *History of the New World* (W. H. Smyth, tr. and ed., Hakluyt Society Works, 1st. ser., No. XXI, London, 1857), pp. 183-184.

⁷ Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

⁸ Felipe Huamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (codex péruvien illustré)* (Université de Paris, *Travaux et mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie*, XXIII, Paris, 1936), p. 370.

⁹ Cieza de León (*op. cit.*, pp. 232-233) gives an account of the confusion attending the succession of Huayna Cápac.

attempted to create an independent state in Quito,¹⁰ relying upon his prestige as a military man for support from the disaffected army leaders in Huáscar's camp. In retaliation, Huáscar sent a punitive expedition against his half-brother, which succeeded in taking Atahualpa prisoner at Tomebamba in modern Ecuador.¹¹ Escaping, Atahualpa rallied his forces and routed the enemy at Ambato. Left in control of the northern area, Atahualpa then massacred many of the Cañari tribesmen who had been loyal to Huáscar.¹² This vengeance so alienated the Cañari Indians from his cause, that until 1572 they remained implacably hostile to Atahualpa's successors. Meanwhile, Huáscar sent another army to meet Atahualpa, but after various battles, his forces were routed and Huáscar himself was taken prisoner. This decisive engagement occurred during the period in which Francisco Pizarro was seeking a foothold among the embattled Indians of Puná and Túmbez, early in 1532.¹³

In these areas, the coastal tribes were engaged in local reflections of the main highland struggle; and had the Spaniards reappeared, equipped as before in the guise of a small party of merchant adventurers, they might have been destroyed. Actually, Pizarro's compact and beautifully equipped force, with its magnificent striking power of cavalry and firearms,¹⁴ proved to be an agent of incalculable disorder. According to Herrera, the conflict between the inhabitants of Túmbez and the islanders of Puná had an economic significance transcending that of the conflict of two tribal groups.¹⁵ Puná formed the northern salient of the domain bequeathed to Huáscar by Huayna Cápac.¹⁶ Thus Huáscar was the legitimate ruler of the entire Peruvian coast. Its northernmost settlements, however, were economically and politically indispensable to Atahualpa. In effect, sometime before Pizarro's arrival, the chief of Puná, who was named Tomala

¹⁰ Juan de Santaacruz Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua, "Relación de antigüedades deste reyno del Pirú," in *Tres relaciones de antigüedades peruanas* (Madrid, 1879), p. 310; Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹¹ Juan de Santaacruz, *op. cit.*, p. 311-312; Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

¹² Juan de Santaacruz, *op. cit.*, pp. 313, 324; Cieza de León, *op. cit.*, pp. 275, 277, 279.

¹³ Pedro Gutiérrez de Santa Clara, *Historia de las guerras civiles del Perú (1544-1548) y de otros sucesos de las Indias* (M. Serrano y Sanz, ed., *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia de América*, II-IV, X, XX-XXI, Madrid, 1904-1929), III, 449.

¹⁴ *The Harkness Collection in the Library of Congress. Documents from Early Peru, the Pizarros and the Almagros, 1531-1578* (Washington, 1936), p. 216.

¹⁵ Herrera, *op. cit.*, IV, 147.

¹⁶ Cieza de León (lib. i, cáp. liv; and lib. ii, cáp. lxxv) gives a different account, in which Túmbez, rather than Puná, figures as the Inca salient.

or Tumbala, had entered an alliance with Atahualpa, giving him a coastal foothold. Atahualpa then sent destruction through the coastal valleys as far south as Pachacámac. At the moment of Pizarro's arrival, nevertheless, many settlements, such as Túmbez, were still loyal to Huáscar's party.¹⁷ Thus, when Pizarro captured and imprisoned Tomala, the chief of Puná, the gesture would have been interpreted as a hostile move by Atahualpa, but it appeared to Huáscar's adherents as a stroke in their favor.

At this moment, Pizarro himself was acquainted with the history and nature of the war between the brothers. The loyalties of the various Quechua spies and emissaries who came to Pizarro during 1531 and 1532 are now lost to view, but among them there were surely representatives of both factions. The chronicler Pedro Pizarro is alone in stating that his kinsman, Francisco Pizarro, actually negotiated with Huáscar's party before the ascent to Cajamarca,¹⁸ but since the fact appears again in later and better-informed sources,¹⁹ it may be assumed that the governor withheld the knowledge of these negotiations from other eye-witnesses to the conquest. In any case, news of the war between the brothers was sent to Panama in 1532, arriving there in September,²⁰ that is, two months before Pizarro's venture into the highlands, and just after the foundation of San Miguel de Tangarara in Chira Valley. Furthermore, Pizarro's men had spent nine months of 1532 in the area between Túmbez and Chira Valley, during which the highlanders certainly had ample notice and frequent communication with the Spaniards.²¹

¹⁷ Like Cieza, Father Juan Velasco (*Historia del reino de Quito en la América Meridional* [3 vols., Quito, 1841-1844], II, 73, 85-86) says that Túmbez was loyal to Atahualpa, and that Puná was rebellious. In any case, the two accounts agree that the hostilities were based upon the fraternal wars rather than upon strictly local issues.

¹⁸ Pedro Pizarro, *Relation of the Discovery and Conquest of the Kingdoms of Peru* (Philip Ainsworth Means, tr. and ed., The Cortes Society, *Documents and Narratives . . .*, No. 4, 2 vols., New York, 1921), I, 171.

¹⁹ Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Historia general del Perú . . .* (Madrid, 1722), lib. i, cáp. xvi, p. 18; Agustín de Zárate, *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista de la provincia del Perú* (Enrique de Vedia, ed., *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, XXVI, Madrid, 1862), p. 475; Fernando Montesinos, *Anales del Perú* (Víctor M. Maurtua, ed., 2 vols., Madrid, 1906), I, 72; Poma de Ayala, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-378; Velasco, *op. cit.*, II, 86.

²⁰ Roberto Levillier, *Gobernantes del Perú, cartas y papeles, siglo XVI; documentos del Archivo de Indias* (14 vols., Madrid, 1921-1926), II, 10-13.

²¹ The chronology may be reconstructed from the data given by the Anonymous Chronicler (*The Conquest of Peru, Reproduced in Facsimile from the Edition of 1534. . .* [Joseph H. Sinclair, tr. and ed., New York, 1929], p. 25). Juan de Santaacruz (*op. cit.*, p. 324) says that Atahualpa received news of Pizarro's landing at Túmbez a few days after the capture of Huáscar.

For Atahualpa, this period in 1532 was filled with plans and activities in which the Spaniards assumed little importance. In January, an army sent into southern Peru had captured Huáscar and occupied Cuzco. Atahualpa himself, in command of another army, slowly moved southward from Quito, consolidating his control over the northern highlands, and terrorizing the coast.²² The resistance of the men of Cuzco, however, did not cease with the capture of the Inca Huáscar. On the contrary, most sources agree that the remnants of Huáscar's armies were imposing enough to make Atahualpa hesitate fatally in the critical question of allowing Pizarro's advance into the mountains towards Cajamarca. Atahualpa's own forces were widely scattered; his main power, under the command of Quizquiz and Chalcuchima, was engaged in the subjugation of the Collao;²³ and Atahualpa himself was attended at Cajamarca only by raw recruits, while he awaited the arrival of seasoned troops from Quito.

Hence his interpretation of Pizarro's movements must have been, not in terms of Pizarro's real objectives, but only in terms of the Peruvian issue, that of Pizarro's possible relationship to the remnants of Huáscar's party in the area. Pizarro was deposing and executing the chiefs subject to Atahualpa, such as Tomala at Puná,²⁴ and others at Motupe and in Chira Valley.²⁵ Atahualpa received direct reports upon Pizarro's behavior from his captain, Maycavelica, stationed on the Río Chira.²⁶ Pizarro, nevertheless, in all his messages to Atahualpa, seemed to recognize him as a legitimate ruler and to pay him due respect. Atahualpa must have felt growing confusion during 1532 concerning Pizarro's actual intentions. The insults to his authority in the coastal area continued daily, alternating with cordial messages from their perpetrator. Atahualpa reciprocated in kind, alternating insulting gifts, such as the model fortresses and the skinned ducks,²⁷

²² Benzoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177; Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia general y natural de las Indias, islas y tierra-firme del mar océano . . .* (4 vols., Madrid, 1851-1855), IV, 154; Hernando Pizarro, "Letter . . . to the Royal Audience of Santo Domingo, November, 1533," in Clements R. Markham, tr. and ed., *Reports on the Discovery of Peru* (Hakluyt Society Works, 1st. ser., No. XLVII, London, 1872), pp. 11-127.

²³ Velasco, *op. cit.*, II, 88.

²⁴ Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. iv, p. 178; Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, I, 149-163.

²⁵ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 151-152.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁷ Cf. "Los errores y supersticiones de los indios, sacadas del tratado y aueriguación que hizo el licenciado Polo," in Juan Polo de Ondegardo, *Informaciones acerca de la religión y gobierno de los Incas* (Horacio H. Urteaga, ed., *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú*, 1st. ser., III-IV, Lima, 1916-1917), III, 38, on rites of bird sacrifice to invalidate the enemy's supernaturals.

symbolizing power and retribution, with lavish presents of food. He ignored Pizarro's native envoy from San Miguel, but sent cordial messages by his own spies. At one point word came to Pizarro that heavy forces were guarding the ascent to Cajamarca at three distinct levels; and yet, during the climb, Pizarro encountered no trace of these detachments.²⁸

At this moment, in November, 1532, Atahualpa felt himself securely anchored in the highland area between Cajamarca and Huamachuco. He controlled communications with the coast, holding the foreign enemy at a topographic disadvantage; and he faced any attacks from Cuzco from a favoring position. Concern over the possibility of the latter attack caused him to hesitate in the matter of preventing the Spanish advance into the highlands, but he also speculated upon the possibility of making an ally of the strange invader against the forces of Huáscar. Atahualpa's confusion at this point is revealed by the fact that while Pizarro was engaged in the ascent of the maritime Cordillera, only two days before the entry into Cajamarca, the Inca sent him a message to say that Huáscar had been captured, and that Atahualpa had thereby gained dominion over all the territory of his father.²⁹ The message was meant to frighten Pizarro, if indeed he had any relations with Huáscar; it signified also that Pizarro was caught far from his base in the defenses of a sovereign force. Pizarro replied that he rejoiced and would give aid against any rebellious chief.³⁰

Secure in the presence of dense numbers, Atahualpa felt on November 16 that his strategy of drawing Pizarro into the mountains had been entirely successful. The Spaniards entered the trap by taking up residence as invited in the close quarters of the city, and Atahualpa was at liberty to use them or destroy them. Yet the negotiations, prior to the disastrous interview that evening, were conducted by Atahualpa with a curious regard for protocol that must be explained both in terms of traditional Incaic behavior in dealing with an opposing Indian force, and in terms of his possible desire to utilize these invaders against the chief enemy. Elaborate official visits were exchanged.³¹ Since the Spaniards had made their call at the Indian camp bearing

²⁸ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 159; Francisco de Xérez, "A True Account of the Province of Cuzco, called New Castille . . .," in Clements R. Markham, tr. and ed., *Reports on the Discovery of Peru* (Hakluyt Society Works, 1st. ser., No. XLVII, London, 1872), p. 33.

²⁹ Hernando Pizarro, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

³⁰ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 170.

³¹ Cf. Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. v, p. 42.

arms, Atahualpa insisted that his men bear weapons in return. Pedro Pizarro gives one curious detail, to the effect that the Inca entered Cajamarca accompanied in another litter by the lord of Chincha.³² This was regarded by the Indians as an extraordinary distinction for Atahualpa to accord, and it is perhaps to be interpreted as his strategem for assuring the loyalty of a powerful ally just prior to an arduous engagement.

Within the hour following his entrance into the counter-trap arranged by the Europeans, Atahualpa's rank, status, and power were pulverized by a brusque attack in which the devastating force of Spanish arms swept unchecked through the surrounding masses of Indians. Atahualpa was Pizarro's prisoner; the rout of his army was complete; Pizarro was in a position to command Peru through Atahualpa's person. The Inca had totally miscalculated the dynamics of the situation, and it is of interest to review the erroneous impressions upon which his miscalculations were based.

II

Before Cajamarca, the Indians regarded the Europeans as marvelous curiosities. But they never experienced the full impact of horses, steel weapons, firearms, and Spanish tactics until the rout of Cajamarca. Thus their initial wonder was tempered by contempt for the small numbers of the Spanish force,³³ and they were quick to detect, imagine, and amplify weaknesses in the animals and equipment.³⁴ Titu Cusi, the next to the last of the rebel Incas, preserved a vivid account of this first impression.³⁵ The Europeans were striking, in the first place, because of the great physical differences among them; they wore red or black beards,³⁶ and the differences of skin color between the whites and the Negroes created a deep impression. The ability of the Europeans to communicate with one another by means of "painted sheets" was surprising, especially when the Indians' names were spoken from such inanimate papers. The horses were thought to have feet of silver, and the firearms were regarded as animate thunderbolts, as in Tumbéz, where the chief poured libations of chicha into the barrel of Candía's weapon. Yet it was believed

³² Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, I, 181; see also Xérez, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

³³ Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, I, 171; Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 161.

³⁴ Xérez, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁵ Diego de Castro Tito Cusi Yupanqui, *Relación de la conquista del Perú y hechos del Inca Manco II . . .* (Horacio H. Urteaga, ed., *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú*, 1st. ser., II, Lima, 1916), p. 8.

³⁶ Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. ii, p. 284.

that the Spaniards were ineffective when dismounted, and that the horses were powerless at night without their saddles.³⁷ Atahualpa received advices that the swords were no more dangerous than women's weaving battens,³⁸ and he was told that the fire-arms were capable of firing only two shots.³⁹ These reports were possible only because the Spaniards had never been forced to deliver their full striking power, and Atahualpa governed his reception of the Spaniards by such fragmentary information. Thus his belief that the horses were useless at night determined his procrastinated entry into Cajamarca at dusk on the evening of November 16, instead of at noon, as Pizarro had been led to expect.⁴⁰

It has often been suggested that the Indians regarded the Spaniards as divine beings. Atahualpa's behavior, however, indicates that he assessed them as ordinary humans. In general, the Indian concept of the status of the Europeans depended largely upon Indian faction:⁴¹ to the members of Huáscar's party, the Europeans were *viracochas*, or messengers of a divine providence appointed for the salvation of the cause of the men of Cuzco.⁴² In Atahualpa's party, however, they were known as the bearded men (*barbudos*), demonstrably vulnerable and mortal; hateful, yet perhaps useful. They were different but not unintelligible, and foolhardiness characterized all their actions. It would be underestimating Indian perspicacity to suggest that the illusion of superior beings persisted long in the Indian concept of the European. His technological equipment was far from mysterious. Horses were not vastly different from llamas. Steel was not incomprehensible to a people possessing bronze, nor was gunpowder inexplicable to the Bowman. The Spanish tactics of deployed forces and enveloping movements were used by the Indians, and their armies also were trained as homogeneous units possessing the reflexes necessary for coördinated action. The great difficulty, however, lay in reproducing European equipment without the necessary antecedent experience in such skills as horse breeding

³⁷ *Ibid.*; Zárate, *op. cit.*; Hernando Pizarro, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

³⁸ Velasco, *op. cit.*, II, 89.

³⁹ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 165.

⁴⁰ Hernando Pizarro, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁴¹ Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* (4 vols., Seville, 1890-1893), III, 200-201.

⁴² The term *viracocha* survived in common usage to designate white settlers throughout the colonial era. It was used in a matter-of-fact manner by Archbishop Reguera of Lima in 1782 (Pedro García y Sanz, *Apuntes para la historia eclesiástica del Perú* [segunda parte, Lima, 1876], p. 253) to refer to whites in a proposed parochial census.

and training, or the many intricate and precise processes in the manufacture of steel and gunpowder.

What Atahualpa fatally underestimated was the ability of the Spaniards to receive sea-borne reinforcements. In his experience and in that of his dynastic predecessors, no coastal society or state could expand beyond the wishes of a unified and powerful highland group, since the ocean at their backs constituted an impassable barrier from which no aid could come; and their inland expansion was limited by the mountains, where the highlanders had the strategic advantages, such as control of the headwaters of coastal streams. Atahualpa, therefore, regarded the advent of the Spaniards as a coastal disturbance of little significance where highland struggles were concerned. Thus he chose to draw the Spaniards away from their ships, by offering no resistance to their inland progress.⁴³ But had Pizarro delayed longer on the coast, the capture of Atahualpa might never have been realized, for he surely would have been forced sooner or later to spend the huge power of surprise, implicit in the massed use of his weapons, in some preparatory engagement, rather than against Atahualpa himself.

In Inca society, power was regarded largely as a function of control over great numbers of men. Public works, military campaigns, and administrative enterprises were staffed by enormous human aggregates at a low technological level. Atahualpa seems to have had no concept of the parity between a vast mass of foot-warriors and a few horsemen equipped with firearms. The enormous potential of horse, steel, and gunpowder against infantry, lances, and arrows; of ordered formation against shrieking hordes of loosely disposed Indians, became evident to him only on the evening of November 16, 1532. Until that moment, he firmly believed in the vulnerability of men and horses, since a small party of despised coastal Indians in Chira Valley had been able by themselves to kill three Spaniards and a horse.⁴⁴ Yet after his capture, Atahualpa sought to rationalize the disaster, not by crediting Spanish audacity and superiority of arms, but by accusing one of his commanders (Rumiñavi), who, he claimed, had fled from his assignment of attacking the Spanish rear.⁴⁵

III

In captivity, Atahualpa remained bound to the attitudes of his own culture. His attempts to fathom Spanish behavior may

⁴³ Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. v, pp. 39, 81.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ Zárate, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

be taken as representative of the bewilderment that overtook the members of his court. For example, he made an astute effort to discover Pizarro's personal concept of justice before he decided upon the murder of his brother Huáscar. Pizarro's object was to have all pretenders to supreme authority removed, with the result that in conversation, when Huáscar's death was mentioned, although it had not yet actually occurred, the Spaniard showed little concern over the pretended news, and even sought to console Atahualpa for the loss of a brother. Atahualpa then interpreted Pizarro's apparent acquiescence as moral indifference, and the crime as one for which European justice perhaps provided no penalty. Huáscar was accordingly put to death by his captors at Atahualpa's order. Pizarro, of course, withdrew from the personal position he had taken in conversation, and invoked Spanish law regarding homicide as an element in his justification for the execution of the Inca in August, 1533.⁴⁷ The case displays Atahualpa's misunderstanding of the multiple causes and levels of Spanish behavior, as well as his constant tendency to identify Spanish cultural drives with Pizarro's personal and military necessities.

In the matter of the ransom, Atahualpa again failed to realize the motive power of the Spanish conquest. With the appeal to greed, he did not know that the gold, instead of producing satiation, excited further appetite and served as collateral to guarantee reinforcements from the crown. His mistake lay in treating the Spaniards as bandits rather than as cultural missionaries impelled by an ethical dynamism not unrelated to that of his own culture. If, on the other hand, he were forced to acquiesce in the ransom, and if he knew its ethical falsity, he gave no recorded sign of understanding the vast sustaining power behind the first wave of the conquest. It is most unlikely that Atahualpa ever was aware of the expansive vitality of Spanish colonial policy. His remote successor, the Inca Titu Cusi, saw the Europeans in retrospect only as vulgar individuals, acting upon animal impulse, with the exception of Francisco Pizarro, in whom Titu Cusi affirmed a lofty political purpose. Atahualpa, *a fortiori*, with much less experience of European culture, can have comprehended only the play of personal motives among the invaders. Thus he displayed a natural skepticism regarding the territorial claim of the Spanish crown as voiced by Pizarro. Trinitarian

⁴⁶ Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, p. 42; Herrera, *op. cit.*, déc. v, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁷ Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

doctrine struck him as being confused and meaningless. In all his communications with the Spaniards, of course, insuperable linguistic obstacles were present, complicated by the personality of the interpreter Felipillo, but even had communication been flawless, there was nothing in Atahualpa's experience to equate with the Christian example of the humble Savior, nor was there any possible equivalent for the cult of Mary, the worship of a woman empowered to intercede with God for the sins of humanity.

The daily routine of captivity reveals some noteworthy details in Atahualpa's behavior. He was much interested by the reading and writing of the Spaniards, and spent some time attempting to learn the letters. When he was told that reading and writing were learned in childhood, he doubted the statement, preferring to believe that the faculty was congenital with Europeans.⁴⁸ Later on Manco Inca, during the siege of Cuzco in 1536, lacked real understanding of the value of written communication, and it was only in Titu Cusi's time (*ca.* 1570) that European writing became an instrument in the policy of the neo-Incas.

Atahualpa's conduct at games of chance was recorded by several eyewitnesses,⁴⁹ who were struck by the fact that, while playing chess, dice, or cards with the Spaniards, Atahualpa would refuse his winnings and give them to the loser. Thus the Spaniards got the stakes, regardless of the outcome of the game. The incident is of some interest, for it signifies that if Atahualpa enjoyed the tension of the game, gambling as such held no value for him. The stakes themselves, if precious metal, were indifferent. Although European glass gave him great pleasure,⁵⁰ the knowledge that glass was of common use in Europe robbed it of distinction. Then again, his sense of property was far less absolute than that of the Europeans. His conduct was regarded as most gentlemanly, and Atahualpa remonstrated when the gifts he presented to the losers were taken from them by Pizarro for the common fund.

In matters of civil administration, his captors were anxious to maintain the outer shell of his authority. While in custody, Atahualpa received the customary homage due him as Inca. He kept his retinue of servants, held council with his advisers, and when Chalcuchima, his commander in southern Peru, was brought to Cajamarca in March or April, 1533, the soldier assumed a burden before entering the presence and saluted Atahualpa

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49; Velasco, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁴⁹ On pre-conquest gambling, see Gutiérrez de Santa Clara, *op. cit.*, III, 550.

⁵⁰ Benzoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

obediently. The situation offered Pizarro a difficult problem. If he needed Atahualpa as a symbol of order, the Inca's person became a liability when released from Spanish control. Pizarro, therefore, fell under the necessity of killing the Inca rather than risking his escape.⁵¹ In effect, during the summer of 1533, serious discontent was stirring behind the façade of Inca worship. Among the responsible Indian officers, the question of the legitimacy of Atahualpa's claim to the Incaship was raised. Several distinct conspiracies were formed: to attempt Atahualpa's release, to displace him with another Inca, or to abandon him to the Spaniards, with each individual creating his own advantage in the crisis.⁵² In the last months of Atahualpa's life, the commander Chalcuchima possessed more authority among certain groups than the Inca himself; and since Atahualpa had allowed him to be tortured for information regarding gold, Chalcuchima was hostile to the cause of his former lord.⁵³ At this time, two half-brothers of Atahualpa came secretly to Pizarro as pretenders to the Incaship. It may be assumed they were members of Huáscar's party, and Pizarro gave them shelter in case he should need them in the future.⁵⁴

Atahualpa was put to death in August, 1533. He died disillusioned in certain aspects of his own religion. The story of his disgust with the oracle of Pachacámac is told by Pedro Pizarro, and amplified by Garcilaso.⁵⁵ Years earlier, Pachacámac had given an ineffective cure for Huayna Capac's illness, and later on, Atahualpa had received wrong answers regarding the outcome of the conflicts both with Huáscar and with Pizarro. It had been reported to him, moreover, that the coastal tribes were paying tribute in 1533 to Pachacámac rather than to Atahualpa,⁵⁶ so that the Inca may have been voicing an old political grievance rather than a religious skepticism. Otherwise, there is no evidence that he accepted Christian teachings or disavowed his own faith in the cult of the sun. He accepted baptism at the moment of execution, after the most cursory of catechetical exercises, to escape being burned to death, and in the hope that his body might be given the customary funeral honors.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, I, 218-219.

⁵² Cf. Xérez, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁵³ See the Anonymous Chronicler of 1534, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Xérez, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 71; Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, I, 208; Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Hernando Pizarro, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁵⁷ Cristóbal de Molina (of Santiago), "Relación de muchas cosas acaescidas en el Peru, en suma, para entender a la letra la manera que se tuvo en la conquista y poblazón destos

Thus Atahualpa's recorded behavior in captivity manifests passivity and inadequacy of action. He had no understanding of the motives for the conquest; he was bewildered by Spanish policy, and the captivity placed his authority in checkmate. It could not have been otherwise, faced as he was with the diversity of objective among the Spaniards and the divided loyalties among his own race. Nowhere could he find a solid footing for action. To attempt to conspire with Hernando de Soto, as he did in 1533, resulted in the alienation both of his Indian support and of Pizarro's dubious mercies; any gesture towards initiating revolt among the Indians was to precipitate his own execution, and in no case could he count upon support from the faction of Huáscar.

IV

Around Atahualpa, the culture of the Incas underwent many physical shocks during the months when the Spaniards were resident in Cajamarca, from November, 1532, to September, 1533. It is too early to speak of deep cultural changes: these did not set in until the much later creation of a Peruvian civil and religious government, when the Indians were incorporated in the Spanish colonial state. But that later incorporation could be achieved only after the authoritarian structure of Indian society had been undermined and broken. One of the gravest lesions sustained by the culture was caused by the weakening of the prestige of the Incaship. The process began before the conquest in the war between the brothers, and it was accelerated by the captivity at Cajamarca.

The striking fact about the kidnapping of Atahualpa is the instantaneous disintegration of his army at Cajamarca and of the administrative organization throughout northern Peru, if indeed that portion of the Inca state under Atahualpa's brief rule possessed anything resembling a durable organization. A ritual of Inca worship did survive his capture, but the society of which he was the military and civil executive apparently lacked elasticity. There is no indication that his powers were so articulated that properly constituted delegates might step in to fill the gap left by his absence. No scheme for the succession of power from him to designated dynastic heirs was discovered. In other words, the Inca state was vulnerable to decapitation; the structure was in-

reinos . . .," in Horacio H. Urteaga and Carlos A. Romero, eds., *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú*, 1st. ser., I (Lima, 1916), p. 117; Pedro Pizarro, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

capable of functioning in the absence of its keystone. No Inca government had ever experienced this particular form of distress, both internal, in the capture of Huáscar, and external, in that of Atahualpa; and no policy or formula existed for relief of the situation with a view to resistance. The behavior of Atahualpa and his commanders was marked by confused improvisation, such as the device of the ransom, and the Inca's vague, frustrated calls to arms among his provincial armies.

Not only was the government decapitated, but the Incaship, while retaining vast symbolic potential, now lacked political effectiveness. An immediate consequence was the production of several Incas, sponsored by Pizarro in the person of the youthful Túpac Hualpa, and by Quizquiz in the young Paullu.⁵⁸ In Quito, the commander Rumiñavi had hopes of becoming Inca, and at Jauja, Pizarro raised the expectations of the captive Chalcuchima.

Among the people, demoralization was complete throughout the northern highlands. The economic dislocation of Indian life proceeded very rapidly after the capture, a dislocation which had been in progress since the outbreak of the war between the brothers. In Cajamarca, the process soon developed into disintegration, and it was more clearly defined there than elsewhere, until the Spaniards extended the mercantile economy and the feudal exploitation of the *encomienda* grant to the remote corners of the highland. Yet the circulation of currency, and the monetary remuneration of services were probably unknown to the Indians of Cajamarca, who entered Spanish service in the shadow of superior force rather than under the attraction of a medium of exchange as yet unfamiliar to them. The main rupture in Indian economic life was caused by Spanish ignorance and disregard of the skillful policies of conservation of livestock and manufactured goods practiced by the Indians.

Thus, after the great slaughter which accompanied the capture of Atahualpa,⁵⁹ the Indians were so intimidated by the power of Spanish arms, that for self-protection, large groups readily entered the personal service of the European soldiers, and the remaining elements of Atahualpa's army returned to their home provinces.⁶⁰ Some Spaniards had as many as two hundred people in their domestic retinues. Many of these servants were probably

⁵⁸ Some confusion exists with regard to Paullu at this time in his career. See Velasco, *op. cit.*, II, 108; and Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias* (Madrid, 1749), cap. cxxxiii; Cobo, *op. cit.*, III, 203-204; Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, cap. xxxix.

⁵⁹ Molina (of Santiago), *op. cit.*, p. 114 ff.

⁶⁰ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 177.

members of the serf-like *yanacona* caste, detached from Atahualpa's household. Their transfer to Spanish service occurred with Atahualpa's permission.⁶¹ Under their new masters, however, feeling secure against reprisal, the *yanaconas* behaved with great arrogance and disrespect for the Inca nobles, intriguing and spreading rumors to discredit the Indians with the Spaniards. But the chief consequence of the flow of available labor into domestic service was the neglect of food crops and of the herds of llamas. These latter resources were ravaged by the Spaniards in order that each man's personal retinue might be fed,⁶² and a dozen llamas would be killed only for the sake of securing the delicacy of the marrow bones.⁶³ The herds of livestock about the camp were regarded as nuisances, and Pizarro ordered them to be turned loose.⁶⁴ Early in 1533, the situation was aggravated by the arrival of Diego de Almagro with another substantial force of men and horses.⁶⁵ The wasteful consumption of the Europeans soon made the area of Cajamarca untenable, with the result that Atahualpa's execution and the march upon Cuzco were precipitated.

The Spanish departure from Cajamarca opens another phase in the evolution of colonial Peru, upon which Atahualpa's brief and violent career had little direct effect. In Indian society, new personalities and factions emerged,⁶⁶ related more closely to the men of Cuzco than to Atahualpa of Quito. But Atahualpa had revealed for Spanish eyes both the power and the weakness of Indian society: its undeveloped human wealth and its brittle polity.

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⁶¹ See the Anonymous Chronicler, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶² Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 180.

⁶³ Fernando de Santillán, "Relación del origen, descendencia, política y gobierno de los incas," in *Tres relaciones de antigüedades peruanas*, p. 56.

⁶⁴ Oviedo, *op. cit.*, IV, 177.

⁶⁵ Molina (of Santiago), *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁶⁶ See George Kubler, "A Peruvian Chief of State: Manco Inca (1515-1545)," *THE HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XXIV, No. 2 (May, 1944), 253-276. The present study, together with the one just cited, form part of a history of the colonial Quechua Indians. Other portions are in press for the *Handbook of South American Indians*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution.