

Festival Threads: Khipu Calendars and Mercedarian Missions in Rapaz, Peru (c. 1565–1825)

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The introduction of the Christian calendar into Spanish American missionary zones often led to novel forms of calendrical record-keeping as pre-Christian methods of time-keeping were adapted to the Christian festival cycle. Yet while indigenous Christian calendars for Mesoamerica have been well studied, their Andean counterparts remain virtually unknown. This article examines a set of khipus (Andean cord texts) from highland Peru that, according to local ritual specialists, served as annual festival calendars. Research in diocesan archives and the Sixth Lima Provincial Council's unpublished reports (1772) reveals the episodic and intermittent nature of the liturgical worship in colonial Rapaz recorded on these khipu calendars.

Key words: Peru; Khipu; Catholic missions; Mercedarians; Sixth Lima Provincial Council

I. Introduction

The introduction of the Christian calendar into missionary zones in Spanish America often led to novel forms of calendrical record-keeping as pre-Christian methods of time-keeping were adapted to the newly imposed festival cycle. Yet while indigenous colonial calendars have been examined for Mesoamerica, their Andean equivalents remain relatively unknown.¹ During the Inka Empire (AD 1400–1532), calendrical infor-

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1. E.g. David Tavárez, "Zapotec Time, Alphabetic Writing, and the Public Sphere," *Ethnohistory*, 57, no. 1 (2010), 73–85; John Justeson and David Tavárez, "The Correlation Between the Colonial Northern Zapotec and Gregorian Calendars," in: *Skywatching in the Ancient World*, eds. Clive Ruggles and Gary Urton (Bolder, CO, 2007), 17–81. Puente Luna has analysed a recent description of a khipu calendar from the Republican era in: José Carlos

mation was kept on *kipus*—the knotted cords that served in the place of writing.² In colonial Peru, members of the Mercedarian religious order oversaw the creation of khipu calendars in which the feasts of the Roman Catholic calendar were knotted onto a “large cord” (“*cordel grande*”).³ No actual Christian calendrical khipu has been identified until now; the discovery of such an artifact would reveal how calendrical information was represented on khipus and provide emic insights into how Andean peoples experienced and understood Christianized time during the colonial era.

In 2011, the ritual specialist in San Cristóbal de Rapaz, Peru, told the author that the khipus preserved in the village ritual precinct were a “*com-putes*,” a term derived from Latin denoting an annual calendar of religious feasts held on different dates each year; in other words, that these are khipu calendars indicating festivals that varied annually. The Mercedarian order, who had charge of Rapaz in the colonial era, promoted the use of khipus in their missionary efforts in the Andean countryside; by analysing diocesan archives, along with the unpublished reports of the Sixth Lima Provincial Council, we can understand how Christian festivals were celebrated in Rapaz throughout the colonial period on a highly variable yearly schedule, a moveable timetable that is reflected in the khipus’ structure. This article will also present new evidence about the use of the term “*com-putus*” in conjunction with khipus and changeable yearly cycles of offerings in Central Andean Spanish. Colonial ledgers from the native confraternity in Rapaz that paid the friars for saying Mass will be presented to reveal the accounting gap fulfilled by khipus; the khipus will be examined to suggest how they represented the number and different kinds of Masses offered each year. This analysis concludes with a consideration of what the Rapaz khipu calendars can tell us about conceptualizations of time, the ancestors, and the sacred landscape.

Puente Luna, “Calendars in Knotted Cords,” *Ethnohistory* 66, no. 3 (2019), 437–64. The existence of Christian khipu calendars has been noted in: John Charles, *Allies at Odds: The Andean Church and its Indigenous Agents* (Albuquerque, 2010) and in: Galen Brokaw, *The History of the Khipu* (Cambridge, 2010).

2. Brokaw, *History of the Khipu*, 230; Gary Urton, “A Calendrical and Demographic Tomb Text from Northern Peru,” *Latin American Antiquity*, 12, no. 2 (2001), 127–47; Reiner Tom Zuidema, “Hacer calendarios’ en quipus y tejidos,” in: *Sistemas de notación inca: Quiipu y Tcapu*, ed. Carmen Arellano (Lima, 2014), 395–445.

3. Martín de Murúa, OM, *Códice Murúa: Historia y genealogía de los reyes incas del Perú del padre mercedario Fray Martín de Murúa*, ed. Juan M. Ossio (Madrid, [1590], 2004), 77v.

II. The Khipus of San Cristóbal de Rapaz

Khipus, multicolored cords that encode information, are one of the longest-lasting Native American forms of inscription, having been utilized in the Andes for over a millennium, from the Wari Empire (600–1100 AD) to the 20th century.⁴ Khipus have taken a variety of forms during their one thousand year history; however, the best known khipu type is that referred to as the “standard Inka khipu.” This consists of a main cord, held horizontally, from which hang multiple pendant cords. The pendants often display different colors, and may contain knots representing numbers in a base ten system. Figure 1 shows a colonial Andean administrator holding a standard Inka khipu in one hand, and a book for accounting in another. During the early colonial era, it was not unusual for khipus to be integrated with Spanish ledgers in local highland accounting systems.⁵

The Peruvian anthropologist, Arturo Ruíz Estrada, first disclosed the existence of the Rapaz khipus to the outside world in 1982.⁶ San Cristóbal de Rapaz, an isolated community with a population of approximately 700, sits at 4040 meters in elevation in the Central Andean province of Oyón. Mercedarians served Rapaz during the colonial period, constructing a village church whose magnificent interior murals were recently conserved by the World Monuments Fund and Patrimonio Perú.⁷ Several streets away from the church stands a walled ritual enclosure containing two adobe buildings—the “*Pasa Qulqa*” storage house and the “*Kaba Wayi*” which holds the khipu (Figure 2).

Ruíz Estrada believed that the Rapaz artefact was one giant khipu. Frank Salomon and his team discovered that, unlike standard Inka khipus, it consisted of approximately 267 separate and independent cords simply draped over a suspension stick, rather than tied to a main cord.⁸ Most of

4. Sabine Hyland, “Khipu Historiography,” *L'Encyclopédie des historiographies. Sources et genres. Afriques, Amériques, Asies*, Volume 1, eds. Pierre Ragon, Nathalie Kouamé, Eric Paul Meyer, and Anne Viguier (Paris, 2020), 964–72; Sabine Hyland, “Khipus,” in: *Information: A Historical Companion*, eds. Ann Blair, Paul Duguid, Anja Goeing, and Anthony Grafton (Princeton, NJ, 2021), 534–37.

5. José Carlos de la Puente Luna, “That Which Belongs to All: Khipus, Community, and Indigenous Legal Activism in the Early Colonial Andes,” *Americas*, 72:1 (January, 2015), 19–54.

6. Arturo Ruíz Estrada, *Los quipus de Rapaz* (Huacho, 1982).

7. Arturo Ruíz Estrada, “El Arte Colonial de Rapaz,” *Boletín de Lima*, no. 28, (July, 1983), 43–52; Frank Salomon, *At the Mountain's Altar*, 194 (New York, 2018).

8. Salomon, *Mountain's Altar*, 173.



FIGURE 1. A native Andean administrator holding a “standard Inka khipu” in one hand and an account book in the other. Image courtesy of the Danish Royal Library, GKS2232 kvart: Guamán Poma, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (c. 1615), 814v.

the khipus are single woollen cords up to fifteen meters in length, onto which are tied a variety of tufts and other items, including ten cloth figurines (Figure 3). Although there is similarity between the cords, there are no duplicates, and they vary in the number, kind, and sequence of attachments. Next to the khipu is a small altar for offerings (Figure 4), while additional ritual gifts hang from the rafters. Salomon’s team also found a straw cross inside the ceiling.⁹

Prior to his investigations in Rapaz, Salomon revolutionized khipu studies through fieldwork in Tupicocha that demonstrated that Central Andean peoples continued to create complex khipus well into the modern era.¹⁰

9. Salomon, *Mountain’s Altar*, 165–67.

10. Frank Salomon, *The Cord Keepers: Khipus and Cultural Life in a Peruvian Village* (Durham, NC, 2004).



FIGURE 2. The author studying the Rapaz khipu, which is in a museum case in the Kaha Wayi, 2019. Photograph courtesy of William Hyland.

Before his research, it was thought that, except for relatively simple herding cords, khipu use died out in the early colonial period. In Rapaz, Salomon developed an ideal model for conducting research on sacred artefacts in remote communities.¹¹ Working closely with village leaders, he and his team cleaned and repaired the Rapaz khipus, which were in danger of decay through infestations of mold and insects.¹² He also studied the rituals conducted in the Kaha Wayi in honor of plants and mountain “deities,” the presence of the khipu is considered essential to the success of these rites.

Salomon initially speculated that each cord represented a yearly calendar to “record interactions with the divine mountain peaks.”¹³ This is what he was told by the primary ritual specialist in Rapaz and “other elders strongly attached to Kaha Wayi’s sacred regimen,” who themselves learned

11. Salomon, *Mountain’s Altar*, 148–182.

12. Carrie J. Brezine, *Dress, Technology and Identity in Colonial Peru* (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2011); Frank Salomon and Renate Peters, “Governance and Conservation of the Rapaz Khipu Patrimony,” in: *Intangible Heritage Embodied*, eds. Helaine Silverman and Dede Fairchild Ruggles (Frankfurt, 2009), 101–25.

13. Brezine, *Dress, Technology and Identity*, 13.



FIGURE 3. Some of the figurines in the Rapaz khipus, 2019. Photo by author.

this as a tradition passed down from their ancestors.¹⁴ However, Salomon rejected this as an explanation of the cords' origin because, he reasoned, any calendar of ritual activities would have to follow a regular sequence from year to year, leading "to a pattern of recording that was less variable" than that seen on the cords.¹⁵ In 2011, Salomon and his team hypothesized that the khipus recorded information about the animals provided to General Juan Antonio Alvarez de Arenales' pro-Independence armies in the 1820s.¹⁶ However, in his 2018 book about Rapaz religion and the role of the khipus therein, Salomon does not repeat his earlier theory about the cords as a record of livestock contributions to the Independence armies. In this most recent analysis, he treats the khipus simply as multivalent symbols that are interpreted in various ways by different constituencies in the community. Nonetheless, he emphasizes that for the ritual specialists who conduct ceremonies involving the khipu, the cords "record how particular people served the mountains with ritual duties."¹⁷

14. Frank Salomon, Carrie J. Brezine, Reymundo Chapa, and Victor Falcón Huayta, "Khipu from Colony to Republic: The Rapaz Patrimony," in: *Their Way of Writing*, eds. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Gary Urton (Washington DC, 2011), 353–78, here 363.

15. Brezine, *Dress, Technology and Identity*, 14.

16. Salomon, *et. al.*, "Khipu from Colony to Republic," 319–52.

17. Salomon, *Mountain's Altar*, 171–80.



FIGURE 4. Altar with coca leaf offerings, a ritual bag (*walki*), and ceramic containers for liquid libations, 2019. Photograph courtesy of the author.

III. The “Computus” of Rapaz

In 2011, Melecio Montes, the *bendelhombre* (ritual specialist) in Rapaz explained to the author that the khipu was a “computus that orders everything, that determines all that happens” (“*un computus que ordena todo, que determina todo lo que pasa*”). Computus is a Latin derived term for the calendar of Easter and the other Roman Catholic feasts, such as Corpus Christi, whose dates change every year based upon the date of Easter. Throughout the colonial era, computus tables typically were found at the beginning of the Roman Missal, the liturgical book containing the rubrics for celebrating Mass. An unpublished inventory of the Rapaz church from 1774 lists “a Missal with its lecturn” (“*un Misal con su atril*”) among the church possessions.¹⁸ Eighteenth century missals provided the dates for each year as a horizontal line which listed the year, the Sunday letter (to determine the date of Sundays for the year), the golden number (to determine the full moon dates), the epact, followed by dates for Septuagesima Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and the first Sunday in Advent, color coded in red and black (Figure 5).

18. Antonio de León, “Visita Pastoral de San Juan de Churín,” Ms. Obisado de Huacho, May 8 (1774) British Library EAP333/1/2/139.

1754	f	7	xxv	30 Jan.	16 Febr.	11 Mar.
1755	e	8	vi	18 Febr.	7 Mar.	11 Apr.
1756	d c	9	xvij	10 Febr.	27 Febr.	14 Apr.
1757	b	10	xxviij	26 Jan.	12 Febr.	30 Mar.
1758	A	11	ix	15 Febr.	3 Mar.	18 Apr.
1759	g	12	xx	6 Febr.	23 Febr.	10 Apr.
1760	f e	13	j	22 Jan.	8 Febr.	26 Mar.
1761	d	14	xij	11 Febr.	28 Febr.	15 Apr.
1762	c	15	xxiij	3 Febr.	20 Febr.	6 Apr.
1763	b	16	iv	18 Jan.	4 Febr.	22 Mar.
1764	A g	17	xv	7 Febr.	24 Febr.	11 Apr.
1765	f	18	xxvi	30 Jan.	16 Febr.	3 Apr.
1766	e	19	vij	19 Febr.	7 Mar.	22 Apr.
1767	d	20	xviij	3 Febr.	20 Febr.	7 Apr.
1768	c b	1	x	26 Jan.	12 Febr.	30 Mar.
1769	A	2	xj	15 Febr.	4 Mar.	19 Apr.
1770	g	3	xxij	31 Jan.	17 Febr.	3 Apr.
1771	f	4	ij	22 Jan.	8 Febr.	26 Mar.
1772	e d	5	xiv	11 Febr.	28 Febr.	15 Apr.
1773	c	6	xxv	27 Jan.	13 Febr.	31 Mar.
1774	b	7	vij	16 Febr.	4 Mar.	19 Apr.
1775	A	8	xvij	7 Febr.	24 Febr.	11 Apr.
1776	g f	9	xxviij	30 Jan.	16 Febr.	3 Apr.
1777	e	10	ix	12 Febr.	1 Mar.	16 Apr.
1778	d	11	xx	4 Febr.	21 Febr.	7 Apr.
		12	j	26 Jan.	12 Febr.	30 Mar.
				15 Febr.	4 Mar.	19 Apr.

FIGURE 5. The first page of a table of moveable feasts; the remaining feasts for each year are continued on the facing page. From an 18th century missal in Ancash, Peru. Photograph courtesy of the author.

Since the computus established when the most important annual rituals occurred—ceremonies upon which the entire well-being of the community depended—it could indeed be considered to “determine all that happens.”

The term “computus” also appears in the *Entablo*, a sacred ritual manuscript from the Andean community of San Pedro de Casta.¹⁹ Written primarily in 1921, the *Entablo* describes how the annual water festival should be conducted. The title, *Entablo*, is a pun meaning “agreement” as well as the khipu-alphabetic texts called “Entablos” in regional eighteenth-century pastoral visitations. Until the 1950s, these *Entablos*, or “khipu boards” structured the ritual activities of each day of the festival.²⁰ Each khipu cord on the *Entablo* was associated with the name of a villager; the

19. *El Entablo*. Ms. 57 pages, Comunidad de San Pedro de Casta, Huarochirí, Peru, 1921.

20. Sabine Hyland, Sarah Bennison, and William P. Hyland, “Khipus, Khipu Boards and Sacred Texts: Towards a Philology of Andean Knotted Cords,” *Latin American Research Review*, 56: 2 (2021), [in press, 1–41].

kipu cords encoded information about the various contributions—labour, food, drink, and ritual items—that the associated person had to provide. During the water ceremony, a special khipu board of “twenty pitchers” tracked the amount and type of alcohol (and possibly food) that women from each moiety were required to give. According to the text, before the khipu board of “twenty pitchers” was set up, “two very judicious persons” (“*dos personas muy juiciosos*”) first arranged a computus by setting kernels of maize in a line on the floor to show the distribution of women by moiety along with the quantity of alcohol that each women had to give.²¹ The computus varied from year to year as the population and individual circumstances changed.²² In this context, “computus” refers to an annual line of items or objects that indicates contributions that are different every year. Neither the sequence nor the quantities of items on the “computus” are the same from year to year. “Computus” is one of several Latin words in the Entablo, whose Central Andean Spanish retains many colonial usages.²³

The use of the term “computus” to describe the Rapaz khipus would suggest that each cord, as a line, represents a year, with the tufts and other attachments symbolising the different feasts or festival offerings of that year. But if this is the case, why should the khipu cords vary as much as they do? Even with the annual changes in the dates of the moveable feasts, one would expect there to be a similar sequence of festivals each year, repeated year after year, cord after cord. Why is the sequence of attachments on the Rapaz khipus so irregular from one cord to the next? Moreover, why would the ritual specialist state the cords represented offerings to the mountain deities rather than to Roman Catholic saints?

IV. Festival Calendars in Remote Villages

The archival evidence described below reveals that the Mercedarians in charge of Rapaz and other *doctrinas* (“native parishes”) in the Central Andes generally did not observe the major feasts of the church like Christmas and Easter in remote villages like Rapaz. Instead the friars concentrated on celebrating local saints who lacked a set feast day and whose

21. Entablo, 7v.

22. This process is similar to the tradition of interpreting khipus in conjunction with pebbles or maize kernels on the ground; however, for this the kernels were arranged in a mathematical grid pattern, and were set up to interpret the khipu cords, not to help determine them. See Marco Curatola and José Carlos Puente Luna, “Contar concertando,” in: *El Quipu Colonial*, eds. Marco Curatola and José Carlos Puente Luna (Lima, 2013), 193–244.

23. The author is indebted to Dr. Sarah Bennison for her insights into “computus” and the unusual Latin derived terms in the Entablo.

reverence was easily conflated with that of the local mountain peaks and other *huacas*, probably intentionally so.²⁴ Moreover, as the evidence will demonstrate, the Mercedarians said Mass in remote annexes with irregular frequency from year to year, responding as much to changing personnel issues and to demands for funds from their Lima house, as to their parishioners' needs. In the 1770s, when Diego Antonio Parada, archbishop of Lima (1762–79), tried to force the Mercedarians to stick to a fixed calendar of festivals to celebrate every year, the Mercedarians refused to comply. In this situation, it is easy to understand why the Rapaz *kipus* would vary from year to year, with different attachments indicating diverse offerings, such as the structured fees for different types of Masses, candles, incense, alcohol, etc., for the saints/divine mountains.

By the eighteenth century, the Mercedarians administered a large number of rural highland doctrinas in the Viceroyalty of Peru, second only to the Dominicans among the religious orders.²⁵ Detailed information about the Mercedarians' internal administrative affairs in the Central Peruvian Andes can be found in the Huacho diocesan archives preserved in the British Library (British Library EAP333). These archives contain 152 unpublished reports of episcopal visitations of the doctrinas between 1613 and 1794, as well as dozens of lawsuits, confraternity ledgers, baptismal records, etc. Of the twenty-seven doctrinas in the Huacho diocese for which there exist pastoral visitations, nine were originally Mercedarian, including the Churín doctrina, where Rapaz is located. Many of the reports in the archive, especially from the late eighteenth century, contain detailed information about the Mass stipends and tithes that were paid in each native parish.

Colonial doctrinas in the Andean highlands generally consisted of a "head" town and church whence priests administered to a number of more remote annexes. So, for example, the Mercedarians in the doctrina of San Juan Bautista de Churín lived in the head town of Churín, whence they served thirteen other communities, many of which, like Rapaz, were at considerable distances from Churín over difficult terrain.²⁶ Only one or

24. On *huacas*, see Bill Sillar, "The Social Agency of Things," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 19:3 (2009), 367–77; Bruce Mannheim and Guillermo Salas Carreño, "Wak'a: Entifications of the Andean Sacred," in: *The Archaeology of Wak'as*, ed. Tamara Bray (Boulder, CO, 2014), 46–72.

25. Allan James Keuthe and Kenneth J. Andrien, "Clerical Reform and Secularization of the Doctrinas de indios," in: *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Allan J. Keuthe and Kenneth J. Andrien (Cambridge, 2014), 167–93.

26. Severo Aparicio OM, *La Orden de la Merced en el Perú*, Tomo I (Cuzco, Peru, 2001), 105–06.

two priests staffed most highland doctrinas; the question of how to celebrate major Christian feasts in remote annexes with such inadequate personnel remained an enduring problem throughout the colonial period. The matter was much debated, for example, during the Sixth Lima Provincial Council.²⁷ One solution was to compel natives in distant villages to travel to the head community to participate in Mass on major holidays; another strategy was to sub-contract with unemployed priests to offer Mass in remote annexes on Easter and other obligatory feasts. The Mercedarians chose instead to emphasise the celebration of saints' feasts and Masses for the dead in annexes like Rapaz, leaving the priests free to offer Mass on major holidays in the head town.

A typical example of the Mercedarian's strategy can be found in the Lampián doctrina's annex of San Pedro de Carac, where the Mercedarians appear to have celebrated only one major liturgical holiday—Corpus Christi. We can gain an understanding of the celebrations that the Mercedarians conducted in Lampián from a pastoral visitation carried out in 1770.²⁸ In this report, the inspector listed the Masses that took place in Lampián and each of its annexes. Although the Mercedarians had lost control of the doctrina in the 1760s, the priest in 1770 insisted that the feasts he offered were based on those celebrated by the Mercedarians in the year prior to his arrival, and which he had fixed into an annual calendar. Besides Corpus Christi and the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8), the Masses were mainly for feasts whose dates varied considerably. The Exaltation of the Cross, whose official feast day was May 3, was observed on June 30 in Carac, and on June 26 in a neighbouring annex, Cotos. The feast of Blessed Magdalena of Seville, a Mercedarian saint, was celebrated on September 10 in Carac, but on June 25 in Lampián. In Cotos, St. Rose of Lima was honoured on her official feast day, August 30, but in Carac her Mass was said on September 9. In every annex, the Mercedarians also said Masses for the dead and special Requiem Masses which could be offered on almost any day of the year. A pastoral inspection from the Huamantanga doctrina in 1770 reveals a similar situation.²⁹ The Mercedarians had

27. See Gerónimo de Aumente, *Informe 15*, Ms. Sixth Lima Provincial Council, (1772); Marques de Casa Concha, *Informe 35*, Ms. Sixth Lima Provincial Council, (1772); Pedro Falcón, *Informe 36*, Ms. Sixth Lima Council. (1722); Thomas de Arrantia and Manuel de Concha OM, *Informe 37*, Ms. Sixth Lima Council, (1772); and Manuel Arroniz OM, *Informe 45*, Ms. Sixth Lima Council, Box 10, Ms 25, Duke University Special Collections, (1772).

28. Francisco de Echevarría, *Visita Pastoral hecha por Echevarría contra Fermín Salmán*, Ms. Lampián, Peru, May 26, (1770). British Library, EAP333/1/2/126.

29. Francisco de Echevarría, *Visita Pastoral hecha por Echevarría contra Antonio Sancho Dávila*, Ms. Huamantanga, Peru, June 13 (1770). British Library EAP333/1/2/127.

been stripped of this doctrina in the 1760s; in 1770 the priest, Father Sancho Dávila, explained to the inspector that his Mercedarian predecessor, Fray Juan de Castañeda, had established all the feasts that Dávila continued to say in each village. Masses for Corpus Christi, Holy Week, Easter and Christmas were said only in the head town of Huamantanga. In the annexes, the inspection report shows the same pattern of celebrating feasts on different days: the Exaltation of the Cross in January in the village of Hama, in September in Huamantanga, in October in Rauma, and in December in Puruchuco and Quipan. Blessed Magdalena, who was celebrated in September and June in the Lampián doctrina, was observed on different July days in Puruchuco and Marco. The Nativity of the Virgin, whose feast is September 8, was honored in October in Rauma, while St. Rose was celebrated on her feast day in August in Huamantanga, but in December in the Puruchuco annex.

These pastoral inspections suggest that the Mercedarians greatly varied the days for celebrating relatively minor Catholic feasts; however, these reports reveal only how priests who succeeded to Mercedarian doctrinas fixed the Mercedarian practices into a static calendar. On September 30, 1772, Archbishop Parada sent instructions to all the priests in the Lima archdiocese that they must prepare catalogues—"margesi"—of all the feasts that they observed in each parish.³⁰ Priests were ordered to make wooden tablets which listed the Masses that would be said in the parish every year, along with the requisite Mass stipends. These tablets were affixed to the church door, and priests were not supposed to earn any extra income by saying additional Masses.³¹ Archival reports reveal that during each diocesan visitation after 1772, the inspector made the priest bring all the *margesi* physically to the head town, where the inspector interrogated native parishioners about whether they were ever forced to pay for additional Masses not listed on the *margesi*. The inspectors' primary concern was whether the Catholic priests celebrated extra Masses not on the fixed calendar. Although the Mercedarians would be at the forefront of resisting Parada's program of rationalizing the ritual calendar, other religious orders in the highlands apparently had similar practices of saying Mass on an irregular schedule with extra Masses added at the last minute, necessitating the Archbishop's legislation.

30. E.g. Antonio de León, "Visita Pastoral de San Domingo de Ocros," Ms. Obispado de Huacho, June 3 (1774), British Library EAP333/1/2/133.

31. Casa Concha, *Informe 35*; Falcón *Informe 36*; Rubén Vargas Ugarte, SJ, *Concilios Limenses (1551–1772)*, Tomo II (*Textos*) and Tomo III (*Historia*) (Lima, 1954), II, 62–65.

In May 1774, when the episcopal inspector, Don José Antonio de León, appeared in the Churín doctrina where Rapaz was located, the Mercedarian Fray Pedro Salazar absolutely refused to comply with the demand that he show the inspector their calendar of feasts.³² The friar brought out the wooden boards ("*padrones*") that listed the members of every family in each village and allowed the inspector to make inventories of all the goods in each of the doctrina's thirteen churches. Yet Salazar simply denied the inspector access to any records of the Masses and Mass stipends from each community, including Rapaz.

Similarly, when inspector Nicolas de Aspúr visited the Mercedarian doctrina of Concepción de Baños (now the Baños district of Lauricocha province), Fray Manuel Garro refused to show Aspúr the actual records of Masses said in each village with the associated stipends.³³ Instead, Garro prepared what he called a "payroll" ("*planillo*") based off of these concealed accounts. The payroll showed which Masses were said in Baños and in each of its annexes, but without any breakdown by month or date. Garro listed the stipends for each Mass, ranging from 13 pesos, 4 reales for a sung High Mass to 2 pesos, 2 reales for an octave low Mass. More populous annexes celebrated more feast days; the highest number of Masses was offered in Baños (population 495), and the lowest in Cosma (population 20). The inspector ordered Garro to reduce the number of annual Masses in Chuquis (population 276) from twelve to six because the villagers could not afford to pay the Mass stipends. Garro did show his expense ledger to the inspector, which revealed the amount of money that he had to send annually to support the Mercedarian house in Lima: one thousand four hundred pesos, a very sizeable sum.

Fray Manuel Arroniz explained the Mercedarians' justifications for their refusal to adhere to a fixed festival calendar in his formal report, *De celebratione missarum*, which he presented to the Sixth Lima Provincial Council in 1772.³⁴ The Sixth Lima Provincial Council has been little studied; it is known primarily for its debates over probabalism, a type of moral theology

32. León, "Visita Pastoral de San Juan de Churín," Ms. May 8 (1774).

33. Nicolás de Aspúr, *Visita pastoral hecha por Aspúr contra Fray Francisco de la Fuente OM*, Concepción de Baños, (1774) British Library EAP 333 1/2/141.

34. Arroniz, *Informe 45*, Ms, 1772. Duke University's Special Collections contains the original manuscripts of all 56 unpublished reports that were prepared for the conciliar deliberations. Because the Sixth Lima Provincial Council is so little studied, it was necessary to consult the original reports to understand the Mercedarian response to the Archbishop's attempts to regularize how often Mass was celebrated in the countryside.

associated with the Jesuits.³⁵ However, if one reads through its reports and regulations, it becomes apparent that Archbishop Parada intended the council to achieve a widespread reform that would bring the Peruvian church into line with Pope Benedict XIV's legislation, which is cited repeatedly. Benedict XIV's numerous bulls and apostolic constitutions included attempts to "purify" Christian practice from any trace of pagan rituals or beliefs.³⁶ So, for example, in *Ex quo singulari* and *Omnium solitudinum* he outlawed the custom of accommodating non-Christian words and usages to express Christian ideas, as had been done extensively in the Indian and Chinese missions.³⁷ Likewise, Benedict XIV reformed the Church's calendar of feasts, restricting the number of and emphasis on saints' feasts, which he thought served all too often as vehicles for European pre-Christian celebrations to survive within the Church. Therefore, he reduced the number of saints' day festivals in countries like Spain and Austria, and tried to purge public saints' celebrations of behaviors he deemed unseemly and unchristian.³⁸ The influence of Benedict XIV's reforms are visible in Parada's rationalization of the religious calendar and in his insistence that doctrina priests adhere to a fixed and stable annual calendar of feasts. Under Parada's leadership, the Sixth Lima Provincial Council also condemned non-Christian festivities such as bullfights—which included the Andean *yawar fiesta* contests between bulls and condors—and "idolatrous" Andean drinking bouts during Christian celebrations; this was in keeping with Benedict XIV's policies for the universal church, although similar legislation had already been enacted in previous Lima Provincial Councils.³⁹

The Council chose Mercedarian Fray Manuel Arroniz to prepare a report on the Archbishop's proposed legislation about how Mass should be offered.⁴⁰ In Arroniz's analysis, which he sent for approval to the head of the Mercedarian Order in Spain,⁴¹ he discussed several issues relating to the frequency and timing with which Mercedarians could celebrate Mass.

35. The decrees of the Sixth Lima Provincial Council can be found in Vargas Ugarte, *Concilios Limenses*, vol. 3.

36. Renée Haynes, *Philosopher King: The Humanist Pope Benedict XIV* (London, 1970); David E. Mungello, *The Chinese Rites Controversy* (Nettethal, 1994); and Rebecca Messbarger, Christopher Johns, and Philip Gavitt, *Benedict XIV and the Enlightenment* (Toronto, 2017).

37. Mungello, *Chinese Rites Controversy*, 31–64.

38. Haynes, *Philosopher King*, 81–121.

39. Vargas Ugarte, *Concilios Limenses*, II, 64–66.

40. Arroniz, *Informe 45*, Ms, 1772.

41. Manuel Arroniz, OM, "Carta de fray Manuel Arroniz, a Don Antonio Manuel Artalejo, padre general de la Orden de la Merced," Ms. March 12 (1773), Lima. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Diversos colecciones, 37, n. 79.

Although officially he was not charged with addressing the question of making a fixed catalogue of Masses, he nonetheless presented arguments to support the Mercedarian's right to say Masses whenever and as often as they wished, with no prior scheduling or fixed *margesí*. At the heart of Arroniz's disquisition on why the Mercedarians should be free to say Mass as frequently as they were able, without a fixed yearly calendar, was Alexander V's fifteenth-century papal bull, *Venerabilibus fratribus*, which asserted that no prelate had the right to forbid the collection of alms to ransom Christian captives held as slaves. The Mercedarians had been founded explicitly for the purpose of ransoming Christian captives of the Moors, and continued to devote themselves to this cause in the eighteenth century. Thus, according to the privileges granted by Alexander V, no bishop had the authority to hinder the Mercedarians' collection of fees or alms in any way whatsoever, since these funds ultimately supported the Mercedarians' purpose of ransoming enslaved Christians in Africa. A fixed *margesí* of Masses would limit the Mercedarians' ability to raise funds, and therefore was forbidden by papal bull as Arroniz interpreted it.

Furthermore, Arroniz addressed the Archbishop's desire to restrict the veneration of the Eucharist to a permanent, fixed schedule written on a board. The Mercedarian theologian argued that this was impossible because priests needed to have the freedom to "extend or restrict this [this worship] . . . as they see fit or deem convenient," and therefore could not make a set schedule for Eucharistic veneration.⁴² Additionally, Parada wanted to limit priests to saying one Mass per day; Arroniz responded by stating that, according to the decrees of Pope Benedict XIII, the archbishop lacked the authority to legislate on this matter. In fact, the Mercedarians in the highlands frequently offered two Masses in the same day, celebrating an octave Mass immediately after a feast's high Mass, or saying a Mass for the Dead after a patronal Mass. Arroniz clearly wanted to ensure that the Mercedarians would be allowed to continue this practice.

The ongoing process of secularization of the doctrinas throughout the eighteenth century had severely affected Mercedarian finances in Peru, along with that of the other mendicant orders.⁴³ In 1751, Viceroy Manso

42. "ampliar o restringuir . . . según mejor les pareciese o tubieren por conveniente," Arroniz, *Informe* 45, Ms.

43. Kenneth Andrien, "The Coming of Enlightened Reform in Bourbon Peru: Secularization of the Doctrinas de indios, 1746–1773," in: *Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies*, ed. Gabriel Paquette (Farnham, 2009), 183–202, here 190–99; Keuthe and Andrien, "Clerical Reform," 167–93.

de Velasco began to implement a royal policy of removing native doctrinas from the regular orders and putting Andean parishes under the control of secular priests directly responsible to a bishop.⁴⁴ The Mercedarians lost considerable revenue as their doctrinas slowly were given over to secular priests. Doctrina priests received generous salaries as well as tithes which, if they were members of a religious community, they turned over to their Order. Arroniz's defense of the Mercedarians' rights allowed them to maximize the income from Mass stipends in the face of their declining presence in the countryside. Both salaries and tithes represented fixed sums; Mass stipends, however, were more flexible and provided a way to increase revenues as long as the friars were not required to stick to a fixed, permanent schedule of Masses.

The Mercedarian strategy of offering Masses on a changing schedule from year to year could explain the variation in the Rapaz khipu cords, in which attachments that represented offerings, such as tassels and tufts of wool, are repeated in variable sequences and inconstant numbers. The bendelhombré's testimony that the Rapaz khipu is a "computus"—that is, a set of yearly calendars of changeable feasts—fits with the archival evidence concerning how Mercedarians celebrated saints days and other religious festivals in remote communities like Rapaz.

V. Syncretism: Saints and Mountain Gods

Understanding Mercedarian pastoral history explains the variety of Masses said in remote villages like Rapaz from year to year; however, the question remains: why does the current ritual specialist and his inner circle believe that offerings recorded on the Rapaz khipu computus were presented to the mountain peaks and not to Roman Catholic saints? It is likely that this is due to the long tradition of syncretism in the Andes, in which traditional local deities continued to be worshipped in the guise of reverencing saints. In Miguel de la Rinaga's report on the veneration of the saints that he prepared for the Sixth Lima Provincial Council, the Franciscan friar explained that Andean people continue to worship their local deities during the Christian Mass.⁴⁵ He described how images, such as the Sun, and objects representing the native *huacas* were often placed near the Tabernacle in highland churches so that all of the worship offered to the saints would also be given to the autochthonous gods. Rinaga's description

44. Kuethe and Andrien, "Clerical Reform," 179.

45. Miguel de la Rinaga. *Informe 48*. Sixth Lima Council. Box 10, Ms 25, Duke University Special Collections (1772).

indicates the extent to which the syncretism between Christianity and Andean belief remained present in the eighteenth century, despite over a century of efforts to suppress worship of native huacas.⁴⁶

It must be noted that attempts to suppress Andean religious practices were not shared equally among the religious orders in colonial Peru. The Mercedarians enjoyed a much more accepting policy toward indigenous Andean customs and people as demonstrated by their eagerness to welcome men of native descent into the order in Peru as full members, unlike the Dominicans, Augustinians, and Franciscans. While the question of ordaining men of native descent in Peru was a complicated issue, one of the primary reasons that so many orders refused to do so was because of fears that priests with an indigenous heritage would spread paganism.⁴⁷ Prominent Mercedarians, such as the author Melchior Hernández, and the Commander of the Lima house, Blas de Atienza, were well known to have had native Andean mothers. The Mercedarian order was the only religious order to advocate for the ordination of men of mixed descent during the deliberations of the Third Lima Provincial Council in 1582. In contrast to the Jesuits, who stopped accepting men of mixed native and Spanish parentage once the Society became convinced that such men perpetuated “idolatrous” customs, the Mercedarians were untroubled by accusations that friars of indigenous descent supported Andean practices in highland doctrinas. The Mercedarians’ relaxed attitudes toward syncretized religion is also apparent in their hostility to the “extirpation of idolatry” campaigns in the Peruvian viceroyalty.

Throughout the colonial period, periodic episcopal campaigns to extirpate “idolatry”—that is, the Andean traditions honoring the beings who controlled the natural universe—shook the highlands.⁴⁸ Extirpators rooted out and destroyed images of the so-called Andean “idols” while punishing those natives who maintained the huaca cults. The extirpation campaigns enjoyed widespread support within the Church, especially among the

46. For an analysis of how this syncretism developed in the colonial period, see Peter Gose, *Invaders as Ancestors: On the Intercultural Making and Unmaking of Spanish Colonialism in the Andes* (Toronto, 2008).

47. Sabine Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas: The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera SJ* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2003), 183–95; Sabine Hyland, “Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy in the Peruvian Priesthood: A 17th Century Dispute,” *Catholic Historical Review*, 84.3 (1998), 431–54.

48. Nicholas Griffiths, *The Cross and the Serpent* (Norman, OK, 1996); Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies* (Princeton NJ, 1997); Joseph de Arriaga, SJ., *The Extirpation of Idolatry in Peru*, Translation and introduction by Louis Clark Keating (Lexington, KY, 2015).

Jesuits, the secular clergy, the Dominicans, and to a lesser extent, the Augustinians. Extirpators, outraged at the continuing presence of Andean practices in Mercedarian doctrinas, often targeted Mercedarian friars, whose missionary practices fostered syncretism. For example, in 1626 Archbishop Gonzalo de Campo conducted a visitation of the diocese of Lima that led him to write a blistering report attacking Mercedarian practices in numerous doctrinas including Churín, Lampián, and Baños.⁴⁹ The Archbishop claimed that the natives in Mercedarian parishes knew little about Christianity and practiced their ancient faith with scant interference from the Mercedarian friars. He even excommunicated a Mercedarian in Bombón who dared to defend his native parishioners against the Archbishop's extirpators.

The Mercedarian provincial, Gaspar de la Torre, defended his Order's pastoral practices, explaining that the Archbishop had failed to distinguish between actual idolatry and mere superstitions, which were found everywhere.⁵⁰ The native practices were of little consequence, he asserted, and in no way detracted from the belief in Christianity. The provincial's attitude echoed the sentiments expressed in one of the documents that distilled Mercedarian mission practice in the Andes: Friar Diego de Porres's "Instructions," written in the 1580s.⁵¹ Porres had served for years as a missionary in Churín, in neighbouring Andajes, and elsewhere in the Central Andes; his tract expressed his experience in these regions and included references to the many ways in which khipus should be used within doctrinas. He concluded by reminding his confreres that Christianity can be distilled into two concepts: the love of God and the love of neighbour, and that teaching these two ideals should be the focus of their missions. In Porres's theology, where these ideals formed the fundamental focus of Christianity, any possible equivalence between the saints and sacred mountain peaks would be of minor concern. Within a theology that embraces syncretism, the costs associated with the Mass, such as Mass stipends, the purchase of incense and candles, etc., can be seen as redounding to the glory of the huacas and the community's well-being. Moreover, villagers would be more likely to comply with paying these stipends when each Mass focused on native entities and, therefore, the prosperity of the entire community was at stake.

49. Dino León Fernández, *Evangelización y control social en la doctrina de Canta, siglos XVI–XVII* (Thesis, University of San Marcos, Peru 2008), 137–38.

50. León Fernández, *Evangelización y control*, 138.

51. Diego de Porres, "Instrucciones . . . para los sacerdotes," in: *Los mercedarios en el Perú en el siglo XVI*, ed. Victor Barriga, OM, Volume 4 (Arequipa, 1954), 174–83; for a discussion of khipus in Porres' *Instrucciones*, see Charles, *Allies at Odds*, 75–80.

In general, the Mercedarians, with their inclusive approach and dedication to liturgical worship, seem to have built up a reservoir of good will within the doctrinas. For example, in 1770, Alberto Yraso, a native *alcalde* in Huamantanga, and eleven other indigenous authorities penned a letter to the inspector, Francisco de Echevarría, complaining about the greed and violence of their new secular pastor compared to the Mercedarian, Fray Juan de Castañeda, who previously ministered to them. Now that the doctrina was no longer under Mercedarian control, they wrote, they were mistreated, mocked as “infidels” (“*ynfieles*”), and rarely had Mass.⁵² Positive views of the Mercedarians were also expressed by the native official, Don Manuel Joseph de Tello, in Atavillos Bajos in 1775. During Echevarría’s inspection, Tello criticized the secular priest who had been assigned to them, explaining that he visited only once a year to collect his tithes. Therefore, Tello explained, the community had asked the Mercedarians in Huamantanga to send someone to serve as their pastor; they were very grateful to have Friar Ignacio de Escobar living among them, saying Mass and serving their needs.⁵³ This was not mere rhetoric; the Andean villagers paid Escobar’s salary themselves and provided him with food and lodging just so that they would have the friar available to minister to them.

VI. Khipus and Mass Stipend Accounting

Porres’s sixteenth-century instructions for how Mercedarians should administer their rural doctrinas included a description of how to use khipus attached to flat boards to indicate tithes and other obligations.⁵⁴ This device, the khipu board, spread throughout the Andes, to Ecuador to the north and as far south as Chile; the Entablo, mentioned above, described its presence in San Pedro de Casta in the Central Andes.⁵⁵ The Mercedarian khipu board tradition continued into the twentieth century in San Pedro de Pari (Ondores), which was founded as a Mercedarian doctrina in the sixteenth century. In 1958, Federico Kaufmann Doig observed two khipu boards hanging in the sixteenth-century colonial church in the village.⁵⁶ Villagers’ names are inscribed on these large rectangular wooden

52. Echevarría, *Visita Pastoral*, Ms. Huamantanga, Peru, June 13 (1770).

53. Francisco de Echevarría, *Visita Pastoral hecha por Echevarría contra Sebastián Otavola, Atavillos Bajos*, Ms. September (1775) British Library EAP333 1/2/161.

54. Porres, *Instrucciones*. 1953 [1572–1579].

55. On the Mercedarian use of khipu boards, see Sabine Hyland, Gene A. Ware, and Madison Clark, “Knot Direction in a Khipu/Alphabetic Text from the Central Andes,” *Latin American Antiquity*, 25:2 (2014), 189–97; and Hyland, Bennison, and Hyland, “Khipus, Khipu Boards, and Sacred Texts,” (2021), forthcoming.

56. Federico Kaufmann Doig, *Manual de Arqueología Peruana* (Lima, 1983), 60–61.

boards; next to each name is a hole through which a khipu cord hangs. Pastoral visitations in Pari in 1770 and 1775 mention the presence of similar khipu boards in the doctrina at that time, suggesting the vital role that these khipus played in the religious life of this Mercedarian parish.⁵⁷

The evidence reveals that the Mercedarians also encouraged villagers to employ khipus to record Mass stipends. In Andajes, the Mercedarian doctrina adjacent to Churin and Rapaz, khipus were used to record how many Masses were offered along with the stipends owed.⁵⁸ It appears that khipus served a similar function in Rapaz and some of the other annexes in Churin. In several instances, the diocese of Huacho archives preserve transcriptions of the colonial ledgers that recorded the payment of Mass stipends. As described below, an analysis of these ledgers reveals the existence of an accounting gap in the Rapaz ledger book, in which crucial information about which Masses were being said and for what price was never recorded in writing. Yet in similar ledgers from more urban doctrinas, this data was entered every time Mass was offered. The accounting gap in the Rapaz ledger indicates some of the information that would have been kept on the khipu computus, including very specific data about which Masses were said in the community along with the stipends that the community paid.

It is worth noting that according to canon law the payment of fees for Mass should be voluntary. In 1772, the theologians Juan Negrón and Ignacio de Ribera examined this issue for the Sixth Lima Provincial Council.⁵⁹ While the two men agreed it would be undesirable to compel Indians to pay Mass stipends under normal circumstances, they argued that there were some conditions in which the payment of Mass stipends could be made obligatory. One of these was when the compulsory payment of such stipends already existed as a well-established custom; this, they asserted, was the situation in Peru. In fact, the Lima archdiocese had determined set stipends for different types of Masses, although individual doctrinas often had their own customary stipends that predated the diocesan attempts at regulation.⁶⁰ The Baños “payroll” of Mass stipends for a typical Mercedarian doctrina shows four different levels of payments depending on the type of Mass: 13 pesos, 4 reales; 9 pesos; 6 pesos; and 2 pesos, 2 reales.⁶¹

57. Huacho diocesan archives, EAP333/1/2/124 and EAP333/1/2/165.

58. Puente Luna, “Calendars,” 458–460.

59. Juan Negrón and Ignacio de Ribera, *Informe 42*. Ms. Sixth Lima Council. Box 10, Ms 25, Duke University Special Collections, (1772).

60. Kydalla Young, *Colonial Music, Confraternities and Power in the Archdiocese of Lima* (PhD thesis, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, 2010), 212–15.

61. Aspúr, *Visita pastoral*, Ms. Concepción de Baños, (1774).

By the eighteenth century, most Mass stipends in the countryside were paid by native confraternities (*"cofradías"*), such as Our Lady of the Nativity in Rapaz. The confraternities were endowed with livestock in order to provide for all of the costs associated with Christian worship—Mass stipends, candles, incense, wine, bread, oil, vestments, mules for transporting goods, etc. *Cofradías* were required to keep a book containing the confraternity constitution as well as a single entry running ledger listing income received and income spent. In the doctrina of Ticllos, for example, which was run by secular priests, the seventeenth-century confraternity ledger survives for the rural village of San Miguel de Corpanqui.⁶² The book states that don Cristóbal Suntur Machagua and other indigenous officials founded the brotherhood in honour of Our Lady of Candelaria, whom the "natives" (*"naturales"*) revere "for her protection and advocacy" (*"su protección y abogada"*). In the ledger portion of the book, there is an entry for each time Mass was said, stating the amount of money that was paid to the priest. A typical entry for the year 1665 says, "Received from Alonso Culla and Martín de Quintana, mayordomos of Our Lady of the Candelaria of this pueblo of Corpanqui, two pesos, two reales for a sung Mass that I said . . . April 13, 1665, [signed] Father Juan de Salazar Montesinos."⁶³ A separate entry was made for each Mass that was celebrated, interspersed with entries for other expenses, such as candles, and for income from the sale of agricultural products. Other surviving confraternity ledger books record the Mass stipends in the same way, with a single entry for each time Mass was offered with the amount paid to the priest.⁶⁴ This reflects the single entry accounting found in hacienda ledgers and other local financial records.

The confraternity records for Our Lady of the Nativity in Rapaz, however, contain a curious gap. In 1693 the Mercedarian in charge of the doctrina, Fray Nicolas Gutiérrez Solano, together with don Gonzalo Quispi Huaman, the leading native authority (*"indio principal"*) in Rapaz, petitioned the courts for 500 pesos that a local landowner owed the confraternity.⁶⁵ In the course of this complicated legal fight, the *cofradía* ledger

62. *Libro de la cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, San Miguel de Corpanqui*, Ms. (1653–1720) British Library. EAP333/1/1/15.

63. *Ibid.*, "Recibí de Alonso Culla y Martín de Quintana, maiordomos de N S de la Candelaria deste puo de Corpanqui dos pesos y dos reales de una Misa cantada que dixé," *Libro de la cofradía de Corpanqui*, p. 18.

64. E.g. *Libro de la cofradía de las Benditas Ánimas, San Cristóbal de Roca*. Ms. (1667–1720) British Library. EAP333/1/1/25.

65. Nicolas Solano and Gerónimo Quispi Huaman, *Autos sobre la recaudación de las manadas*. . . Ms. (1693–1697), British Library. EAP/333/1/1/67.

book was entered in full into the legal record. These records reveal just one entry per year for all the Masses said in 1695: "I, Captain Diego Gamarra, am obliged to give and to pay the Father Curate of this doctrina, Fray Nicolas Gutiérrez Solano, one hundred and forty three pesos and three reales for the Masses . . . for the year '95 . . . [signed] Diego Miguel de Gamarra."⁶⁶ This was a lump sum for all the Masses that Solano said that year, including requiem Masses, Monday Masses and feast days with their second Masses. There was no breakdown detailing each Mass said, although such information would have been absolutely crucial so that the *cofradía* would know what was owed to the priest. The Rapaz *kipu* cords, described as yearly calendars of festival offerings, would have contained this information, which was then recorded as a lump sum in the confraternity ledger book at the annual settling of the accounts.

According to *kipu* expert Mariano Pumajulka, who described how *kipus* were used in the Central Andean village of Anchucaya in the early twentieth century, *kipu* accounts were settled at the end of the year in a ritual called the "*watancha*," a "ceremony that was done once a year and whose principle purpose was to render the accounts, services, communal labours given during the year."⁶⁷ When the author spoke with Mecias Pumajulka, Mariano's grandson, Mecias explained that *kipu* accounts had to be made "clean" ("*limpia*") at the end of every year. By this he meant that all the debts knotted onto the cords had to be settled at the end of the year so that there was a "clean" cord for the New Year. Since communities that kept *kipu* accounts settled them once a year, it makes sense that this is how the Mass fee accounts would be paid when the fee information was recorded on *kipus*; the annual lump sum payment of Mass stipends in colonial Rapaz was in keeping with the nature of *kipu* accountancy in the Central Andes.

Khipus played an important role in local record-keeping in the Churín doctrina and neighbouring regions throughout the period when the Mercedarians were present. For example, in 1725 diocesan inspectors interviewed a *kipu* expert from the Churín diocese—possibly from Rapaz

66. Ibid., "*Digo yo, el Capitan Diego Gamarra, que me obligo de dar y pagar al Padre Cura desta doctrina, Fr Nicolas Gutierrez Solano, ciento y cuarenta y tres pesos y tres reales procedidos de las missas . . . del año de '95.*" Solano y Quispe Huaman, p 37.

67. "*ceremonia que se realizaba una vez al año y cuyo objeto principal era la rendición de las cuentas, servicios, tareas comunales prestados durante el año.*" Julio C. Tello, "Información suministrada por Mariano Pumajulka," Ms. Archivo Tello, Centro Cultural de la Universidad de San Marcos, Lima, Peru. Kipus, Paquete XXXIV (1935). See Sabine Hyland, "How Khipus Indicated Labour Contributions in an Andean Village," *Journal of Material Culture*, 21.4, (2016), 490–509.

itself. This individual possessed a khipu with detailed information about every member of his kin group (“*panaca*”), including their names, status, livestock, property, and communal labor obligations.⁶⁸ Likewise, in nearby Ambar in 1662, a pastor named Joseph Quispi kept all the accounts of the church’s flocks on a khipu.⁶⁹ Quispi’s khipu recorded both sheep and cattle, including information on sex, age, how many were sold at what price, how much money was used to pay the priest’s tithes, and that six reales came from selling dried meat that Quispi prepared from cattle killed by pumas.

Khipus also appear to have been employed in an annex of Rapaz called Huacho, (not to be confused with the coastal city of Huacho) to keep track of confraternity livestock as well as Mass stipends. As part of Quispi Huaman’s Rapaz lawsuit described above, Joseph Ticsi Huaman of Huacho petitioned the bishop for relief from the tithes they owed.⁷⁰ Ticsi Huaman emphasized that his confraternity owned no account books whatsoever, yet he presented detailed accounting information about the *cofradia* flocks, data that echoed Joseph Quispi’s khipu records in their categories and detail. In his list of the confraternity’s assets and debts, Ticsi Huaman included the Mass stipends that they had to pay—3 pesos 3 reales for their patronal feast, plus 3 pesos 3 reales for the second Mass. The Andean leader did not state explicitly that this data was derived from khipus, but in the absence of any written accounts, it seems certain that this financial obligation would have been knotted onto khipus.

The evidence shows that Mercedarians promoted the use of calendrical khipus in doctrinas to indicate the Christian festivals that they celebrated, as a way of ensuring the proper collection of Mass stipends. This was the situation, for example, in Oyón, another rural annex of Churín, where the ledger for the local confraternity reveals that Mass stipend entries were written down only once a year. In this case, the Masses were grouped by price. So, for example, in 1746, there is one entry for 13 sung Masses costing 3 pesos 3 reales each for a total of 30 pesos 3 reales, followed by another entry for “daily Masses” at 3 pesos 2 reales each for a total of 40 pesos 5 reales, followed by other expenses.⁷¹ It is highly likely that the Oyón *cofradia* maintained khipu cords indicating each time Mass was said and for

68. Carlos Radicati di Primeglio, *Estudios sobre los quipus* (Lima, 2006), 303.

69. Juan Sarmiento de Vivero, *Visita pastoral, Ambar, Peru*, Ms. (1662), British Library, EAP333/1/2/42, pp. 16–17.

70. Solano and Quispi Huaman, *Autos*, 23.

71. “*Autos contra Fray Félix de Celis*,” Ms. (1748–1750), British Library. EAP333/1/1/93, pp. 80, 128–29.

what price; these sums then were written into the ledger at the *watancha*, revealing an integration of knotted and alphabetic accounting. If we examine the Rapaz khipus' structures, can we gain insights into how such stipends/offerings may have been coded on khipus, and what this would reveal about the ancestors and the mountains?

VII. Khipu Calendars, Time, and the Ancestors

Writing at the close of the sixteenth century, the Mercedarian chronicler Martín de Murúa described how an Andean lord in Capachica had created a khipu calendar of Catholic saints feasts at the request of a Mercedarian friar many years previously: "An old Indian kuraka had on a large cord all of the Roman calendar and all of the saints and festivals they kept."⁷² This appears similar to the bendelhombre's description of the large single cords of the Rapaz khipus as a "computus" of annual feasts. Understanding the Mercedarian pastoral practices in remote annexes like Rapaz during the colonial era would explain why the offerings recorded on the Rapaz khipus varied so much from year to year; this history also suggests the extent to which Rapaz villagers wanted to preserve their own records of the expenses incurred throughout the festival year in the accounting medium with which they were most familiar.

The Rapaz computus is not the only known post-Inka khipu calendar. Historian José Carlos de la Puente Luna uncovered a written description of calendrical khipus from 1857 created by native Andeans on a cattle ranch in the Cuzco region.⁷³ These khipu cords recorded information on the baptismal fees owed to the local Catholic priest. According to the actual description, the calendars were single cords that each represented a month, with each day shown by a knot, and special feast days indicated by extra threads tied into the knot. This invaluable testimony reaffirms the idea that calendrical khipus could be single cords, with added inclusions to indicate festivals. An early twentieth-century Araucanian khipu calendar consists of a single cord with knots indicating units of time.⁷⁴ On Taquile island, the twentieth-century khipu expert, Nieves Yucra, created a khipu that denoted the ten festivals of the annual calendar.⁷⁵ The calendar was found

72. "[U]n indio curaca y viejo tenía en un cordel grande destos todo el calendario Romano y todos los sanctos y fiestas de guardar," Murúa, *Códice Murúa*, 77v.

73. Puente Luna, *Calendars*, 437–449.

74. Swedish Museum of Cultures, *Quipu Knutkalender*, 1929.24.0001.

75. Carol Mackey, "Nieves Yucra Huatta y la continuidad en la tradición del uso del quipu," in: *Quipu y yupana*, ed. Carol Mackey (Lima, 1990), 157–64.

on a single pendant cord that formed part of a larger, Inka style khipu. The calendrical khipu cord had ten knots to denote yearly festivals, with tassels to signify the most important: Holy Cross = a white tassel; St John the Baptist = a purple tassel; Santiago = a red and white tassel. It is uncertain the extent to which Catholic missionaries may have modified Andean khipu traditions when the cords were adapted to the Christian calendar; Catholic record-keeping practices may have adapted a pre-existing single cord Andean calendar tradition, or may have altered khipu calendars in a more fundamental way. Nonetheless, it seems clear that throughout the colonial and Republican periods there existed a tradition of single cord khipu calendars in the Andes in which the Rapaz khipus apparently took part.

Research by Salomon and his team reveals that each of the Rapaz khipus is comprised of a single cord made from alpaca or llama fibres, with one group fashioned from sheep wool.⁷⁶ Every khipu carries small objects attached in varied sequences along their length, which is up to 15 meters long. While the khipus are predominantly brown and/or white, some contain plies of blue and yellow. Salomon notes that the knots are limited to overhand knots for attaching things; the meanings reside in the attached objects themselves, not the knots. Attachments include: leather tags; pieces of animal pelt; tufts of unspun animal fibre; and pompoms or tassels of animal fibres.

The ritual specialist indicated to Salomon that the khipus represent interactions with the divine mountain beings. Typically in the Andes such interactions are expressed by humans giving offerings to *huacas* or “earth beings” in an act of reciprocity. The attachments, therefore, appear to record the offerings given throughout a calendar year. This certainly seems to be the significance of the pieces of animal pelt. A similar tally of offerings—in this case presented to an estate owner rather than to the mountain beings—comes from the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca, where ear tips, with the fur still clinging to the hide, were attached to a single cord as a record of the owner’s animals.⁷⁷ Colonial ledger books indicate that Catholic priests sometimes were paid in livestock rather than cash. Tufts of unspun wool presumably signified offerings as well, with different Mass stipends being indicated by tufts of different sizes and shapes. Other attachments would indicate other expenses; ledger books from native confraternities record the purchase of candles, wine, hosts, linen, palm fronds,

76. Salomon, *Mountain's Altar*, 148–83.

77. Smithsonian Museum, #E554325-0. The author is indebted to Dr. Christine Lee for bringing this to her attention.



FIGURE 6. The “soldier” in the Rapaz khipus. Photograph courtesy of the author.

and so forth, with most of these items being bought at irregular intervals, and not always every year. Offerings, accompanied by songs and invocations, form a special kind of interaction that, as Salomon described, cause “water, the stuff of life, [to] flow down the mountains to the ocean and up again via the Milky Way to renew the cycle. Life emerging from the moistened surface of the earth gives of itself and its vital tokens to prime the circuit and attract flow toward itself. . . . Kaha Wayi [with its khipus] is the pump house for Rapaz’s share of this system.”⁷⁸

Ten human figurines are tied onto different cords, a unique feature of the Rapaz khipus.⁷⁹ Among them are little herdsmen carrying bags of coca for use in sacred rites, an infant, a soldier in a blue coat, and a lady with a flowing white skirt. The current ritual specialist considers each one to be “a human-like avatar of a specific mountain,” gathered together on the khipus as a governing council.⁸⁰ Earth-beings such as mountains are known to take human form, appearing in dreams and visions. Given the high degree of syncretism

78. Salomon, *Mountain’s Altar*, 159.

79. Brezine, *Dress, Technology and Identity*, 75–122.

80. Salomon, *Mountain’s Altar*, 179.



FIGURE 7. Male figure with ritual coca bag under his poncho. Photograph courtesy of the author.

in Andean Christianity, it is possible that each doll depicts a Catholic saint who is also a mountain spirit or other sacred *huaca*. For example, the Virgin of the Nativity, a major object of veneration in colonial Rapaz and the confraternity's patroness, is often shown as an infant, while St. Martin of Tours, hugely popular in colonial Peru, is pictured as a soldier (Figure 6).

By the eighteenth century, Rapacinos also enjoyed a special devotion to St. Joseph, who is presented in the Christian nativity story as a powerful mystic and dreamer not unlike Andean ritual specialists (Figure 7).

Other saints revered in eighteenth-century Rapaz include St. Christopher, St. Rose of Lima, and St. Anne, Christ's grandmother.⁸¹ The lady in white could be St. Anne, often shown in white as a sign of purity, who protects the childless, the pregnant, and the widowed (Figure 8).

Within Rapaz, Roman Catholic traditions and celebrations meld seamlessly with belief in the power of the mountain peaks and the other

81. León, *Visita*, May 8, 1774.



FIGURE 8. White skirt of the “Lady.” Photograph courtesy of the author.

huacas. As Salomon has written, “Andean ritual tradition . . . coexists easily with Catholic Christianity.”⁸² The village church, visible from the Kaha Wayi, maintains images of saints such as St. Christopher and St. Rose, who are held in deep veneration and respect by Rapacinos. The feast of St. Rose remains an annual highlight, celebrated with a pageant in which villagers dress as Inka emperors accompanied by their entourages of Andean princesses (“*pallas*”) and soldiers. Embossed on the front of the Tabernacle is an image of the sun, a symbol that perfectly blends the Christian token of the Sun as Christ with Andean solar reverence, an example of syncretism against which Rinaga warned in 1772.

As tangible proof of centuries of interaction between the ancestors and the gods, the khipus of Rapaz physically manifest the central relationship that maintains human harmony with the sacred environment.

82. Salomon, *Mountain's Altar*, 143.

Through the khipu calendars, time is no longer ineffable—it can be seen, touched, and remembered, as proof of the continuing ties between humans and the mountains. Even today, most homes in this region are sanctified with old calendars that display photos of previous ceremonies and village rituals, hung on the walls amidst crosses and images of Christ and the Virgin. In the ritual space of the Kaha Wayi, such calendars live on, a corded computus “that orders everything, that determines all that happens.”

VIII. Conclusion

The custodians of the Rapaz khipus in the Kaha Wayi have preserved an oral tradition that claims that the cords are calendars detailing their ancestors’ interactions with divine beings. The variation in the sequence of attachments from cord to cord does not refute the idea that they are calendars. Rather, the changeable sequences fit the way that Mass was celebrated in the colonial past by Mercedarians in Rapaz, as revealed by documents from Huacho diocesan archives and the Sixth Lima Provincial Council. The Mercedarian chronicler, Martín de Murúa, testified to how members of his order created khipu calendars, which appear to have been long single cords with attachments indicating the festivals that the native people celebrated. Evidence from other khipu calendars suggests that the Rapaz khipus may perhaps exemplify an established khipu tradition within the colonial and Republican Andes.

In the Rapaz khipus, time is made tangible, an assurance of continuity between the past and the future, humanity and the mountains. Instead of representing a static delineation of sacred time, the calendars served as a record of actual offerings, revealing in their varied structures the episodic and intermittent nature of liturgical worship during the colonial era.

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