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# DISJUNCTIVE CIRCLES: MODERN INTELLECTUAL CULTURE IN CUZCO AND THE JOURNEYS OF INCAN ANTIQUITIES, C.1877–1921\*

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*This essay explores the journeys of Andean pre-Columbian antiquities across the Americas and the Atlantic during the late nineteenth century along the veins of intellectual networks, between Andean communities and European, North American and Creole collectors and museums. Centred on the studies and collection of José Lucas Caparó Muñiz, the essay focuses on the Creole and European practice of lifting pre-Columbian objects preserved or “still” in use in Andean communities out of their context and taking them to European and Creole private and public collections. Intellectual history has long paid scant attention to the many voices that its authors silenced, disfigured and suppressed. By looking at the journeys of Andean artefacts—at their owners, their brokers and their losers—this essay traces the systemic hierarchies and the chasms of an expanding modern intellectual culture.*

## A BLACK STONE TABLE WITHOUT FEET

During the 1870s, José Lucas Caparó Muñiz (1845–1921) began to form one of Cuzco’s most significant collections of “Incan antiquities”. Several of the artefacts in his collection Caparó did not excavate, but took them, purchased or exchanged them, from the villages in the surroundings of Cuzco, in Peru’s southern Andes. One of the artefacts in his collection was, as he explained in the catalogue entry, a black stone table without feet. It was not unearthed from a *huaca*, because it has been in constant use among the Indians from the village of Sangarará (province of Acomayo), who

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currently play *phiscay* on it, with a stone dice. Sir Federico Cuba has given it to me, taking some precautions, because the Indians idolater on it, they play games of chance for money or *chicha*, a fermented corn brew . . . It is very likely that before they play, they worship the gods of their ancestors, accompanying it with mysteriously pronounced words, a custom that has remained intact in the remote provinces, where the light of civilization has not yet arrived.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have argued for some time now that objects have the capacity to communicate complex histories,<sup>2</sup> and that “we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories”.<sup>3</sup> This essay follows the “black stone table without feet” as it went from being a gaming table in a village, to being the pride of Caparó’s cabinet of antiquities, to being—so it will seem from the comments of observers—sold later to a collection abroad, in Europe or North America. Like many other supposedly pre-Columbian artefacts, the black stone table travelled along the veins of an expanding market in antiquities, of personal connections and of scholarly networks, across the Americas and the Atlantic during the late nineteenth century. Even though *pishca* players, Cuzco antiquaries like Caparó and north Atlantic buyers were all entangled in the same transatlantic circuits that made the table travel, their intellectual participation in the space that materialized in between was uneven. While some voices that accompanied the journey remained unheard, the ones that were heard were assigned peculiar modes and degrees of audibility. By looking at the journey of Caparó’s black stone table—from Sangarará to the museum—this paper traces the systemic hierarchies and the chasms of a global modern intellectual culture: it scrutinizes both the ideas that circulated in and through its geography, and those that were left behind on the journey.

#### OBJECTS IN TRANSIT: A GLOBAL REPUBLIC OF LETTERS AND THE CIRCULATION OF INCAN ANTIQUITIES

Caparó’s museum, where the stone table had found a momentary resting place by 1878, was but one of numerous private collections in the city of Cuzco. Virtually every member of the local elite in the former capital of the Incan Empire owned a collection or at least some scattered Incan artefacts, openly

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<sup>1</sup> José Lucas Caparó Muñiz, “Colección de antigüedades peruanas”, *El Comercio*, 15, 17 and 18 May 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Natalia Majluf, “Working from Objects: Andean Studies, Museums, and Research”, *Res* 52 (2007), 65–72, 65.

<sup>3</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value”, in Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 5.

on display in their private mansions.<sup>4</sup> Caparó established his own collection of Incan antiquities as a museum in his Cuzco mansion, where it occupied various rooms. Its visitors gathered around precious stone utensils, gold and silver pins, earrings and figurines, painted ceramic vessels, wooden *queros*, colourful woven tunics and mummified human bodies. The collection grew continuously, and by 1919, two years before Caparó's death, it contained more than two thousand pieces.<sup>5</sup> Cuzco gentlemen—Caparó, himself a landowner, lawyer and deputy,<sup>6</sup> among them—organized archaeological expeditions into the Andes, to examine ruins and to bring back artefacts for their collections.<sup>7</sup> Incan antiquities were given as presents to one another among friends or family; they were exchanged among the city's antiquaries; and they were also, and had been ever since the conquest, subject to a local and, following the mid-nineteenth century, an expanding transatlantic market,<sup>8</sup> where they could be sold and purchased.<sup>9</sup> Caparó's catalogue documents how the antiquary excavated some pieces, how he received some as gifts from relations and acquaintances—among them the black stone table from his acquaintance Federico Cuba<sup>10</sup>—how he acquired collections “formed by a variety of individuals”,<sup>11</sup> and how he bartered pieces

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<sup>4</sup> Note, for instance, the Frenchman Castelnau's descriptions of the ancient artefacts Cuzco families kept in their homes. Francis de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud, de Rio de Janeiro a Lima, et de Lima au Para; exécutée par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1843 à 1847* (Paris, 1851), 244.

<sup>5</sup> For the 1878 catalogue see Caparó Muñiz, “Colección de antigüedades peruanas”. For the 1919 catalogue, registering 2,096 pieces, see J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Catálogo de las antigüedades incanas que constituyen el Museo Caparó Muñiz”, *Colección Manuscritos de José Lucás Caparó Muñiz* (Cuzco, 1919).

<sup>6</sup> Caparó served as district mayor, director of welfare, dean of the College of Lawyers, and—being a member of the Civil Party (*Partido Civil*)—as deputy for Canas between 1897 and 1902. César Itier, *El teatro quechua en el Cuzco* (Lima, 2000), 24; José Guevara Gil, “La contribución de José Lucas Caparó Muñiz a la formación del Museo Arqueológico de la Universidad del Cuzco”, *Boletín del Instituto Riva-Agüero* (1997), 167–226.

<sup>7</sup> See Caparó's report on the expedition to the Huatta Fort: J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “El Fuerte de Huatta”, *Boletín del Centro Científico* 4 (1901), 32–41.

<sup>8</sup> For the emerging market in Andean antiquities, and the role of forgery in it see Karen O. Bruhns and Nancy L. Kelker, *Faking the Ancient Andes* (Walnut Creek, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Tristan D. López, “Antigüedades jentílicas”, *El Ferrocarril* (1872).

<sup>10</sup> Caparó's niece, for instance, Concepción Saldívar de Palomino, supplied Caparó with artefacts. J. L. Caparó Muñiz, *Museo de Antigüedades peruanas precolombinas pertenecientes al D.D. José Lucas Caparó Muñiz quien las colectó con afán incesante de 15 años, en muchos pueblos del departamento, haciendo personalmente varias escavaciones de las huakas (tumbas)*, (Cuzco, 1891), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Guevara Gil, “La contribución de José Lucas Caparó Muñiz”, 172, 183.

with another collector, Emilio Montes.<sup>12</sup> A vivid intellectual sphere developed around and drove the pieces' circulation. Some of the antiquaries authored learned treatises on Incan artefacts, history or Quechua language. Caparó himself purportedly worked at night on his studies, in the few hours he could spare from his public duties.<sup>13</sup> Cuzqueños founded clubs where the area's pre-Columbian antiquities were exhibited and discussed.<sup>14</sup> Gatherings were restricted to, and remade, a local elite; even the public associations devoted to archaeological study that emerged following the 1860s would retain the air of private elite gatherings.<sup>15</sup> Cuzco's antiquaries—the city's landowners, judges, politicians and businessmen—gathered where the “light of civilization” had already arrived: in the salons, to pass around artefacts like the black stone table that were brought into the highland city, and to discuss their meaning.

The former capital of the Inca Empire not only was a geographical location, it also had long been a concept; by the late 1800s, Cuzco had become a living museum of a bygone Incan past, a “reservoir” of the remnants of pre-Columbian times.<sup>16</sup> Travellers and antiquaries from Europe and the United States passed through the highland city in growing numbers following Independence, attracted by Cuzco's close association with Incan history and its peculiar materiality, the visible presence of Incan structures. Local antiquities parlours like Caparó's provided forums of encounter for Cuzqueños and their visitors who had come to marvel at and, in many cases, to acquire Incan antiquities. Caparó published only very few of his studies in newspapers or journals, but he read out his manuscripts about Quechua linguistics and Incan archaeology in his museum to interested visitors,

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<sup>12</sup> Montes formed a collection of pre-Columbian pieces from the Cuzco area between the 1860s and the 1910s. Brian S. Bauer, *Avances en arqueología andina* (Cuzco, 1992), 114, 130.

<sup>13</sup> See Guevara Gil, “La contribución de José Lucas Caparó Muñiz”, 170–71; J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Khipu pre-colombiano”, *Colección Manuscritos de José Lucas Caparó Muñiz. Estudios especiales de José Lucas Caparó Muñiz sobre el khipus, geroglíficos, emblemas, fijos i mudables, i avisos volantes pre-colombianos* (Paruro, 1903), 3–4.

<sup>14</sup> One of the first post-Independence “clubs” devoted to the study of Incan antiquities in Cuzco was founded in 1825, and met regularly in “Jeraldino's pharmacy”. See *Varietades*, 11 May 1825.

<sup>15</sup> For an example see the account of a meeting of the Peruvian Archaeological Society, based in Cuzco: Manuel González de la Rosa, “Sociedad Arqueológica Peruana”, *El Nacional*, 5 Dec. 1868.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the increasing “musealization” of Incan culture and Cuzco over the nineteenth century see Natalia Majluf, “De la rebelión al museo: genealogías y retratos de los incas, 1781–1900”, in Natalia Majluf, Thomas Cummins, Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, Gabriela Ramos Cárdenas and Elena Phipps, eds., *Los incas, reyes del Perú* (Lima, 2005), 253–317.

both locals and foreigners.<sup>17</sup> Travellers effortlessly entered forums of antiquarian learning and collection in Cuzco, because both parties—the visitors and their hosts alike—met on the grounds of a European-style, bourgeois sociability, of shared aesthetic and intellectual affinities. Cuzco collectors self-identified in their majority as Creoles, a ruling elite whose sovereignty rested not only on identifying with indigenous America, as the justification for their independence from Spain, but also on being of Hispanic, and hence European, descent and thus capable of self-rule in the face of Europe’s imperial powers.<sup>18</sup> Cuzqueños had family and friendship ties with Europe, they read and engaged with European literature and science,<sup>19</sup> and the pre-Columbian artefacts in Cuzco collections stood amidst colonial furniture and next to imported French pianos.<sup>20</sup> Cuzco antiquaries and their visitors partook in the same cosmopolitan Republic of Letters: they shared a language, a culture and codes of civility with the European and North American elites that travelled and transformed the globe in the late nineteenth century. To Cuzco collectors and their counterparts in North America and across the Atlantic, European classicism had rendered Incan antiquities “aesthetically recognizable” at first;<sup>21</sup> it had suggested the Incas’ monumental structures, fine statuettes and exact drawings, in their similarities with Roman and Greek vessels, as legitimate objects of study, collection and exhibition to both.<sup>22</sup> North Atlantic and Peruvian collectors and students of antiquities not only

<sup>17</sup> J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Carta a D. Jorge Polar, Ministro de Justicia, Paruro, 3 de Junio”, *Colección Manuscritos de José Lucás Caparó Muñiz. Libro borrador de cartas, artículos necrológicos, histórico-arqueológicos* (1905). For comments by Caparó’s visitors and disciples see J. Tamayo Herrera, *Historia del indigenismo cuzqueño, siglos XVI–XX* (Lima, 1980) 137, 167.

<sup>18</sup> The work of David Brading has opened up research on Creole discourses about the pre-Columbian past in showing how Spaniards born in the New World created an American identity through an engagement with America’s pre-Columbian past as the historical foundations of their countries. David Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State 1492–1867* (Cambridge, 1991). See also Bernard Lavallé, *Las promesas ambiguas: Ensayos sobre el criollismo en los Andes* (Lima, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> David Cahill, “Curas and Social Conflict in the *Doctrinas* of Cuzco, 1780–1814”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16 (1984), 241–76, refers to a wide range of European writers available to Cuzqueños already during the eighteenth century.

<sup>20</sup> For a vivid impression of Cuzco elite family homes see Paul Marcoy, *A Journey across South America from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean* (London, 1873), 262.

<sup>21</sup> For a general discussion of the “aesthetic recognition” of American art see George Kubler, *Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art* (New Haven and London, 1991). The Roman Empire had had a profound influence on the Spanish understanding of the Incan Empire from the sixteenth century. Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton and Oxford, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Cuzco collectors persistently interlinked their praise of the antiquities’ purity, simple elegance and exact dimensions with references to their similarity to classical art. See,

shared an aesthetic perception, they also shared a methodology. Even though the distinctions between antiquarianism—the combination of textual and material evidence and typological classification on a descriptive basis—and archaeology—commonly associated with an emphasis on excavations, the distinguishing of layers of the soil through stratigraphy and an analysis of the find context—had crystallized by the end of the century, Caparó, his Peruvian counterparts and their north Atlantic correspondents alike resorted to an as yet varied set of practices: study collections on both sides of the Atlantic combined objects purchased from travellers or locals with objects that had been excavated by the scholars themselves.<sup>23</sup> An interconnected intellectual sphere emerged between Cuzqueños, North Americans and Europeans, through a shared intellectual and scholarly language, through conversations and friendly encounters in Cuzco parlours, and around the objects on display.

Along with the transfer of knowledge and ideas, material culture changed hands through the salons. In the absence of an appropriate state policy to hinder export,<sup>24</sup> numerous pre-Columbian antiquities left Peru through the presence of foreign visitors. Ana María Centeno, whose city mansion doubled—like Caparó’s—as a museum of antiquities and a parlour in Cuzco, was “kind enough”, as the US diplomat Ephraim George Squier observed, to bestow antiquities from her collection as gifts upon visitors.<sup>25</sup> Upon Centeno’s death in 1876 her collection was widely renowned in the period’s museums through the reports of those European and North American travellers who had enjoyed her hospitality.<sup>26</sup> Following her death Centeno’s heirs sold the collection to the

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for instance, catalogue entry 302, Emilio Montes, *Catálogo del Museo de Antigüedades peruanas e inkaikas de la propiedad del Dr. D. Emilio Montes y de Aldasábal Vasquez de Velasco* (Cuzco, 1892).

<sup>23</sup> For reflections on the transition from antiquarianism to archaeology see Alain Schnapp, “Between Antiquarians and Archaeologists: Continuities and Ruptures”, in Tim Murray and Christopher Evans, eds., *Histories of Archaeology: A Reader in the History of Archaeology* (Oxford, 2008), 392–405. On the Peruvian context see chaps. 1 and 3 in Stefanie Gänger, “The Collecting and Study of pre-Columbian Antiquities in Peru and Chile, c. 1830s–1910s”, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> It was only following legislation in 1892 and 1911 that control of the export of antiquities was practically enforced in Peru. On protective legislation in Latin America see Rebecca Earle, “Monumentos y museos: la nacionalización del pasado precolombino durante el siglo XIX”, in Beatriz González-Stephan and Jens Andermann, eds., *Galerías del Progreso: Museos, exposiciones y cultura visual en América Latina* (Rosario, 2006), 27–64.

<sup>25</sup> Ephraim George Squier, *Peru: Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas* (London, 1877), 458.

<sup>26</sup> For Squier’s visit and account see *ibid.* The German traveller Brühl also commented on Centeno’s museum, in a passage that bears close resemblance to Squier’s account of his visit. Gustav Brühl, *Die Culturvölker Alt-Americas*, 8 vols. (Cincinnati, 1875–87), 126.

Ethnological Museum in Berlin, an institution that had long been competing for its acquisition.<sup>27</sup> Commercial interests drove the pieces' transfer across the Atlantic, but the forums of an interconnected intellectual sphere, of friendship and intimacy, mediated the possibility of the transfer of specimens at first. Among the many objects that left Peru through Cuzco's parlours was probably also Caparó's black stone table. Following the entry on the table, the second piece described in Caparó's 1878 catalogue was "a stone dice of whitish-brown colour" belonging to the same game, *pishca*, or, as Caparó spells it, *phiscay*. As in the case of the stone table, Caparó commented that the brownish dice had "not been unearthed, because of its constant use among the Indians", and that Señor Bartolomé Ceballos, "a foremost inhabitant [*habitante principal*] of Sangarará" had given him the dice.<sup>28</sup> In the last of the three catalogues Caparó published during his lifetime, immediately before he sold the remainder of his collection to the local university in 1919, the dice still appears, and Caparó mentions that the game used to be played on a black stone table, but the table itself is no longer recorded in the catalogue.<sup>29</sup> By the end of his life, Caparó was in financial trouble, and began to sell, bit by bit, antiquities from his collection to the foreign travellers who visited his antiquities parlour.<sup>30</sup> Even though it cannot be ascertained with certainty, it is likely that the black stone table ended up in a private collection or a museum abroad. Caparó, like Centeno, stood in dialogue with European and American scientific communities: through their parlours, they drew disperse localities together and opened up both a material and an intellectual give-and-take. The black stone table, one of Cuzco's many antiquities that made their

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Francis de Castelnau published a widely read travelogue, in which he refers to Centeno's museum, but by the name of her husband, Romainville. Francis de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud*, 244.

<sup>27</sup> For the correspondence between the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and Centeno's heirs in relation to the transaction see Adolfo Romainville, "Carta a Adolf Bastian, Lima, 24 de Septiembre", *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Ethnologisches Museum: Sammlung Centeno Pars I b. Litt. A.* (1887); A. Romainville, "Carta a Adolf Bastian, Cuzco, 1 de Marzo", *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Ethnologisches Museum. Sammlung Centeno Pars I b. Litt. A.* (1887).

<sup>28</sup> The stone table is described in catalogue entry number one, the dice in number two. J. L. Caparó Muñiz, "Colección de antigüedades peruanas".

<sup>29</sup> Caparó Muñiz, "Catálogo de las antigüedades incanas". Caparó's collection is still at the basis of what is today Cuzco's Museo Inka. Albert Giesecke, "Los primeros años del Museo Arqueológico de la Universidad del Cuzco, hoy Instituto Arqueológico del Cuzco", *Revista del Instituto y Museo Arqueológico de la Universidad Nacional del Cuzco* 12 (1948), 36–44.

<sup>30</sup> Max Uhle, director of the National Museum in Lima, lamented that Caparó was selling out the collection bit by bit. Max Uhle, "Carta al Presidente del Instituto Histórico, Lima, 1 de Mayo", *Archivo del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia. Colgante 2000–6* (1907).

journey across the Atlantic and the Americas during the late nineteenth century, gives us a glimpse of how intellectual and material networks intersected and how they were, at times, identical.

### INTIMATE STRANGERS: BROKERS IN MODERN INTELLECTUAL GEOGRAPHY

In one of his manuscripts, Caparó related how for over thirty years he had observed the ceremonies of the “Indians” in the highlands of Cuzco:

We have seen by the light of the *cconucuy* (nightly fireplaces) numerous groups with their *khuñas* (napkins), which contained, wrapped up, their *inccaichos* (amulets and *conopas*), their *kipus*, their *Illas* and their protective stones. We have witnessed the ceremonial spilling of *chicha* to the *Apus* (genies), to the *Anquis* (mediators) and afterwards to the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the *huakas* (gods), that is to say, the hills and the roads in the woods . . . and they say they are similar to wild beasts, humans and animals . . . We have heard them sing the *tuyallay*, the *huanccasccar* and the *harahui*, with mournful and monotonous tones . . . weeping at their current disgrace, compared to their ancient greatness. We saw all of this, an age of fantastic shadows . . . the objects through the prism of what lies beyond the grave . . .<sup>31</sup>

Caparó often laid emphasis on his intimacy with Andean customs or ceremonies, and on his observations of peoples’ uses of Incan material culture, reminiscent to him of Incan times. He also recorded meticulously his conversations with “Indians” in his archaeological expedition reports, documenting how he sought to elicit from them what he believed they “still” knew about the meaning of ancient forts or pre-Columbian pottery, what they had heard about it from “their ancestors”.<sup>32</sup> The idea that “they” were the same people, “in their current disgrace” as much as in “their ancient greatness”, the suspicion that they “still” knew, that they were connected with that past through their usage of the same *conopas*, *inccaichos* and *kipus* he associated with Incan rule, pervaded Caparó’s writings and his collecting practices, as it did with those of many of his Cuzco contemporaries. Scholars have long argued that Creoles perceived a rupture

<sup>31</sup> J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Khipu pre-colombiano”.

<sup>32</sup> See Caparó’s transcription of an interview with Mariano Huamán, an Indian guide, J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “El Fuerte de Huatta”. On the stereotype of the “inscrutable Indian” see chap. 8 of N. Majluf, “The Creation of the Image of the Indian in 19th-Century Peru: The Paintings of Francisco Laso (1823–1869)”, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Texas, 1996. Miruna Achim has pointed to the conviction among eighteenth-century Mexican naturalists that the Indians treasured knowledge of pre-Columbian medicinal cures. M. Achim, *Lagartijas medicinales: Remedios americanos y debates científicos en la Ilustración* (Mexico, 2008), 118–19.

between pre-Hispanic Incan glories and Indians' miserable, abject present.<sup>33</sup> Peruvian writings of the late nineteenth century suggest, however, that ideas about continuity also underlay their authors' thinking: even though Indians were unaware of their history, even though their connection with that past was distorted, through their cultural practices and "continued" use of material culture they were "still" intrinsically connected with the pre-Columbian past. To Caparó, the Indians were ultimately the same as their "ancestors": they were relics of the past in the present, "fantastic shadows" from "beyond the grave".<sup>34</sup> Caparó's interviews with "Indian informers", his words about how he "had seen", "witnessed" and "heard" people worship, or weep, or sing, are part of a peculiar kind of rhetoric rather common among southern Andean intellectuals: a claim to intimacy and proximity with indigeneity.

Even though Cuzco antiquaries, like Caparó, and north Atlantic buyers were all entangled in the same transatlantic networks of intellectual and material exchange, the antiquities' journeys uncover how each of its partakers was allotted a peculiar position. By the end of the nineteenth century, north Atlantic museums were considered to be the world's "centres of calculation", maintaining cycles of accumulation that allowed them to draw together, compare and synthesize material culture into new meanings. In one of Europe's or North America's large collecting museums, as well as in Lima's National Museum, an artefact like the "black stone table without feet" would not cease to change in meaning—museums are not the final resting place of artefacts, the place they go when their lives in the "real" world are over: a museum in Oxford or Berlin, as historians of collecting have long argued, is as emergent, as constantly being brought into being through the actions of people, as is Caparó's cabinet or village social life.<sup>35</sup> And yet, the table would have been subject to new practices of ordering and objectifying, moving into and through a variety of different intellectual scales in these "centres": juxtaposed with Chinese pottery and Egyptian mummies, it would stand for one of mankind's many variations, or, in its relative complexity, indicate evolutionary progress, or, alternatively, add to the range of exotic artefacts testifying to the successful imperialist expansion of late nineteenth-century nation

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<sup>33</sup> Rebecca Earle, among other historians, has come to the conclusion that "while the pre-Hispanic past began slowly to be incorporated into the national heritage alongside the colonial period, contemporary indigenous peoples were declared to have lost their connection to that past". Rebecca Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810–1930* (Durham, NC and London, 2007), 20.

<sup>34</sup> I make this argument at length in chap. 3 of Gänger, "The Collecting and Study of pre-Columbian Antiquities".

<sup>35</sup> For this idea see Chris Gosden and Frances Larson, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884–1945* (Oxford, 2007).

states.<sup>36</sup> Historians have long recognized that manuscripts, natural specimens and, as in this case, non-European material culture were considered to gain epistemological value as they travelled towards the “centres”.<sup>37</sup> Little attention has hitherto been paid to the fact that the distance covered by the object in transfer was also thought to lead to the loss of detail, context and information, to change and distort the pieces’ meaning, as in a game of “Chinese whispers”.<sup>38</sup> In fact, however, European and American scholars alike shared a sense that the objects not only gained, but that they also lost, epistemological value, as they travelled away from the Andes and were situated in relation to another world of objects. Historians have long overlooked the important role played by Peruvian antiquaries in transatlantic archaeological networks around 1900. The considerable international demand, traceable in the correspondence of Europe’s and North America’s scholars, museums and societies, was premised upon a peculiar kind of expertise attributed to Peruvian antiquaries: their presumed intimacy with indigeneity, and their capacity to mediate it. In their dialogue with museums abroad, Cuzco collectors supplied first-hand observations, pre-Columbian artefacts and Andean “legends” or the voices of “Indian informers”—for scientists in Europe or North America.<sup>39</sup> In Cuzqueños’ access to Andean material culture, in their dominion of indigenous languages and in their observations of the inhabitants of the Andes themselves, they were seen to be in possession of knowledge and resources that constituted a privilege, naturally amiss in Europe, the US or distant coastal Lima. Whereas European scientists were

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<sup>36</sup> For overviews of Europe’s and North America’s ethnographic collections see, for Germany, H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2002). For the United States see David Jenkins, “Object Lessons and Ethnographic Displays: Museum Exhibitions and the Making of American Anthropology”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1994), 242–70. On British collecting in India see Bernard S. Cohn, “The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art in Nineteenth-Century India”, in Barbara Stoler Miller, ed., *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture* (Delhi, 1992), 301–29.

<sup>37</sup> Bruno Latour’s concept of the “centre of calculation” refers to a metropolitan centre that possesses the power to maintain a cycle of accumulation through a wide network of individuals and institutions. See B. Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, 1987). For an application of the concept to the Indian intellectual context see Savithri Preetha Nair, “Native Collecting and Natural Knowledge (1798–1832): Raja Serfoji II of Tanjore as a ‘Centre of Calculation’”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15 (2005), 279–302.

<sup>38</sup> Historians of science have pointed out how plants or things often moved easily from the Americas or Africa into Europe, but how the knowledge of their many uses and meanings did not necessarily follow the same path. Robert N. Proctor and Londa Schiebinger, *Agnology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance* (Stanford, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> I examine this in Gänger, “The Collecting and Study of pre-Columbian Antiquities”.

advantaged in their access to technology, material culture for global comparison or a range of publications, Caparó and his contemporaries saw themselves and were seen as scholars privileged in their access to the “local”—a category that appears to have emerged in scholarship precisely in conjunction with Europe’s and America’s global cycles of intellectual accumulation. In his manuscripts, Caparó condescendingly disparaged what he called “writings from a bird’s-eye view”, studies carried out by foreign researchers and Lima authors who came only for a short while to the Cuzco area, who took Incan antiquities to distant museums where the isolated pieces would be “mysteries without a key”. Foreign or Lima-based studies of Incan antiquities were “generous attempts”, and yet they were bound to fail because these scholars lacked “a comprehensive knowledge” of Andean languages and customs and of the ancient structures. According to Caparó, “archaeological and linguistic . . . studies about the Peru of the Incas could not be useful if they were not undertaken in Cuzco, by a Cuzqueño”.<sup>40</sup> His studies, Caparó was certain, would “surprise” the intellectual world abroad.<sup>41</sup>

Historians of Iberian science have long observed how eighteenth-century Creole naturalists emphasized their experience of, and proximity to, American nature and to Amerindian groups: they saw themselves as translators into the enlightened sciences of the indigenous languages they understood or the medicinal practices they observed among the Indians. Denouncing European scholars’ failure to meaningfully include American materials or to fully understand American culture and nature, Creole intellectuals’ discourse of proximity, their “localism”, was a way of reaffirming their particular kind of belonging to and the significance of their role in global networks of knowledge production, transmission and exchange.<sup>42</sup> Caparó’s words about how he had

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<sup>40</sup> J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Apuntes y tradiciones que se pueden utilizar para la historia del Imperio de los Incas”, *Colección Manuscritos de José Lucás Caparó Muñiz* (Cuzco, 1887).

<sup>41</sup> J. L. Caparó Muñiz, “Carta a Dr. Santiago Geraldo, Paruro 6 de Noviembre”, *Colección Manuscritos de José Lucás Caparó Muñiz: Libro borrador de cartas, artículos necrológicos, histórico-arqueológicos* (Paruro, 1904).

<sup>42</sup> Miruna Achim shows how Mexican Creole naturalists’ collaboration with “Indian informers” and their role as mediators and translators was a way of reaffirming their belonging to transatlantic scientific networks. Achim, *Lagartijas medicinales*, 118–19. Marcos Cueto has discussed Andean naturalists’ belief in the failure of European scientific works to include American materials. Marcos Cueto, “Natural History, High-Altitude Physiology and Evolutionary Ideas in Peru”, in Thomas Glick, Miguel Angel Puig-Samper and Rosaura Ruiz, eds., *The Reception of Darwinism in the Iberian World: Spain, Spanish America and Brazil* (Dordrech, 1999), 83–94. Natalia Majluf has made a similar point for the visual arts, in arguing that the marginalization of mid-nineteenth-century Latin American cosmopolitans has been effected primarily through the discourse of cultural authenticity. See N. Majluf, “Ce n’est pas le Pérou”, or the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855”, *Critical Inquiry* 23 (1997), 868–93.

“seen” and “heard” struck a very particular chord: they elucidate the peculiar position as brokers that Cuzco antiquaries held in the intellectual geography that materialized around the antiquities’ journeys.

### CHINESE WHISPERS: BREACHES OF SILENCE IN THE CIRCULATION OF INCAN ANTIQUITIES

Caparó associated the *pishca* game with pre-Columbian times: the fact that he placed the black stone table and the whitish-brown dice in his “collection of Incan antiquities”, and that he emphasized how both “had not been unearthed”, suggested that they should have been: that it was underneath the ground, and to an archaeological past, that both belonged. Caparó thus implied not only that Indians had failed to evolve towards modernity on the line of progress, but also that in their lives and practices the past had survived. Caparó’s remarks on the *pishca* game reflect, on the one hand, long-standing Creole cultural tropes about indigeneity; on the other hand, however, they also give us a glimpse of a factual reality that has occupied scholars for decades.

The *pishca* game Caparó refers to can indeed be traced back to Incan rule. Andeanists at present concur that a game called *pichca* came in use all over the Andes as a consequence of Incan expansion in these territories.<sup>43</sup> There is evidence from the early colonial chroniclers and from archaeological finds that the game was, in the Cuzco area and beyond, associated with the ceremonial consultation of *huacas* as oracles, with foresight and divination. The game is recorded as being played in a number of different contexts: Bernabé Cobo relates that Incan rulers played what was called *pichca* against local leaders in the dependent territories, as a symbolic element in the taking of power, and the native chronicler Guama Poma de Ayala mentions that the game was played in connection with the harvest.<sup>44</sup> Caparó’s assertion that he was witnessing an ancient custom “that has remained intact in the remote provinces” is one we find in the writings of numerous Andeanists, up to the present. There is evidence from various parts of the territories that belonged to the Inca Empire—the Argentine province of San Luis, the province of Azuay in Ecuador, and from Anta, in Cuzco, among others—that a game now called *pishca* or *pisqay* was played during the twentieth century. According to Caparó, *pishca* was a “game of chance” for money or *chicha*, but he conjectured that it was “possible” that people also “idolatered” when they played

<sup>43</sup> Santiago Ordóñez Carpio, “El juego del huayru o pishca: Una aproximación a la reestructuración del cambio y la muerte en los Andes”, unpublished MA dissertation, FLACSO Ecuador/CBC Colegio Andino, 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Margarita Gentile, “La pichca: oráculo y juego de fortuna (su persistencia en el espacio y tiempo andinos)”, *Bulletin de l’Institut Francais d’Études Andines* 27 (1998), 75–131.

it, and worshipped the gods of their ancestors. In fact, from recent scholarship on *pishca*, it seems that in the Cuzco area during the mid-twentieth century, people played for money in the context of funerary rites, to win prayers for the deceased. Observers have suggested that the role of the game in mortuary rites might still be that of an oracle at present, and that the medium consulted is the deceased, in transit between life and death during the five days following his passing.<sup>45</sup>

The *pishca* table was not the only object Cuzco antiquaries took out of “constant use”. Throughout the period, collectors took or purchased objects from “Indians” who, so the collectors believed, had kept the pieces “since the times of the empire”, and had “continued” to use them for practical, ceremonial or religious purposes. Antiquaries’ writings illustrate that, while some of the “Indians” who owned artefacts willingly participated in a circuit of exchange and commoditization, others clung to these pieces as meaningful things embodying personal memories or as objects of utility and ceremonial artefacts and deterred those who attempted to collect them. Federico Cuba supplied Caparó with several artefacts “that had not been unearthed”: a “pot of very fine stone, greenish . . . with the faces of wildcats sculpted on it”, “still” used in rituals commemorating the *accorasis* (Incan princes) among the Indians, or stone mortars that “continued to be in use” because they were “so practical”.<sup>46</sup> There is evidence, as in the case of *pishca*, that cloth, vessels and utensils that observers and owners alike associated with pre-Columbian times were kept, revered, reproduced or put to new uses in the Andes. The objects Caparó mentions in his description of the ceremony he had observed—*kipus*, *illas* and *conopas*—have been described by archaeologists of the pre-Columbian period, by colonial historians and by anthropologists working on the twentieth-century Andes. *Conopas* are small carved stone figurines representing llamas or alpacas kept among the belongings of Andean herders, and *illas* are carved figures or natural pebbles that evoke animals, houses or crop plants, found on the hillside as gifts to the mountain deities, the *apus*. Both types of miniature are used in Andean rituals as offerings. Caparó’s reference to the *huacas* as “gods, that is to say, the hills and the roads in the woods”, reveals the antiquary’s awareness of the animate power of the material world in both the pre-Columbian and the modern Andes.<sup>47</sup> Their practicality might have played a part in why pieces held to be Incan were used in the Andes around 1900, as in the case of the mortar, and so might village and family traditions. The *kipus* that Caparó refers to—bundles of knotted strings—are associated with Incan culture, and there is evidence that they served Andeans

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> See catalogue entries one and five. Caparó Muñiz, “Colección de antigüedades peruanas”.

<sup>47</sup> Bill Sillar, “The Social Agency of Things? Animism and Materiality in the Andes”, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19 (2009), 367–77.

during the nineteenth century as a mnemonic tool to keep track of information.<sup>48</sup> As in the case of the “greenish pot”, some uses of pre-Columbian material culture appear to have represented genuine attempts at preserving or creating a relation with the Inca past.<sup>49</sup> Yet we can only conjecture as to the meaning of the greenish pot, the *kipu*, the mortar, or, indeed, the black stone table: for the life the pieces had led before they entered Caparó’s collection was left behind on the journey.

The antiquarian and archaeological practice of lifting pre-Columbian objects out of their context and taking them to private and public collections not only produced “circulation”; it also produced a rupture. Caparó and his European and North American visitors conversed on the joint premise that the table was an Incan antiquity, an object of antiquarian scrutiny and collection, that it should have been unearthed. In this matter at least, neither Caparó nor his visitors shared common ground for communication with those who, over that same table, wept over the death of their beloved, or “worshipped the gods of their ancestors”, or sought to tell what the future would bring, with the people for whom the table was not an antiquity, but a part of their present. The incommensurability of forms of knowledge, the impossibility of translation in the peculiar instant of loss around the stone table’s journey, is representative of many such instances in the history of ethnography and archaeology. Scholars have examined other parts of the globe for how Western collecting and museum practices made sacred, inalienable objects into scientific data and alienable commodities, stripping them of meanings, of their auditory, tactile, or olfactory intricacies, and reducing them to visual signs to be decoded.<sup>50</sup> Ceremonial objects, insignia of status, useful tools, or indeed a gaming table, were reconfigured into “antiquities” or *etnografica*, transformed into objects on display, divesting them of their usefulness, meaning and memories. Caparó did not tell why people “idolatered” on that black table, what their “mysteriously pronounced words” were, and what the “gods of their ancestors” meant to them: he deliberately invoked a sense of mystery, rather than providing a “key” to unravel it, painting a dark world of the past where “the light of

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<sup>48</sup> On the post-conquest evolution of the *kipu*, see Frank Salomon, *The Cord Keepers: Khipus and Cultural Life in a Peruvian Village* (Durham, NC and London, 2004), Carol Mackey, “The Continuing Khipu Traditions”, in Jeffrey Quilter and Gary Urton, eds., *Narrative Threads: Accounting and Recounting in Andean Khipu* (Austin, 2002), 320–47.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, Thomas Cummins, “Let Me See! Reading Is for Them: Colonial Andean Images and Objects ‘como es costumbre tener los caciques Señores’”, in Elizabeth Hill Boone and Thomas Cummins, eds., *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks 2nd through 4th October 1992* (Washington, DC, 1992), 91–148.

<sup>50</sup> On how Western collecting and museum practices made sacred, inalienable objects into museums objects, see Cohn, “The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art”, Annette Weiner, “Inalienable Wealth”, *American Ethnologist* 12 (1985), 223–30.

civilization had not yet arrived”<sup>51</sup> Caparó’s words reflect a discourse of intimacy, not genuine inquisitiveness; they embody a narrative of familiarity, not real acquaintance, with the world he described; in sum, they mirror the position as a “broker”, an intermediary, that Caparó had assumed in a transatlantic intellectual community. Caparó brought together his own world and that of his European contacts, but he divided, at the same time, that shared sphere from the *phisca* players in Sangarará.

Whereas Caparó’s barter with don Federico Cuba, the conversations in Caparó’s parlour, and the transactions with European and North American buyers reveal an interconnected intellectual sphere, and whereas we know how elite belonging was reified as people gathered around that black stone table in Caparó’s antiques parlour and how a transatlantic intellectual community instituted its order on that table’s back, the meaning that revolved around the table in Sangarará was left behind on the journey. The table’s journey reveals not only an interconnected intellectual world in which people spoke to each other across borders and continents, but also a disjunction, in revealing the ways in which some did not speak, and were not spoken to. Meanings crossed oceans if they travelled along the veins of a shared intellectual language and within the conventions of bourgeois sociability, but they hesitated to cross a distance as short as that between two people facing each other when there was no shared language and no shared sphere to hand them on.

## HISTORIES OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS

The language of “liquidity” so prevalent in research about globalization today invokes an image of unimpeded, all-encompassing movement—of agentless “flows”, universal mobility and effortless “circulation”<sup>52</sup> But the world is no even medium of transmission. Whereas the transactions between a Cuzco antiquary, a North American diplomat and a museum in Berlin reveal how systemic hierarchies were translated into peculiar scholarly roles in the modern intellectual geography that moved ideas back and forth, the table’s journey between the players and the cabinet reveals a moment of encounter that led to the loss, rather than the transfer, of ideas and knowledge. The circuits that moved Andean antiques reveal the material interconnectedness of different parts of the world in the late nineteenth century but they also reveal how intellectual exchange along those same veins was not fluid, how it was subject to inequalities, restrictive and contingent. Histories of interconnectedness may well be episodic or disjunctive.

<sup>51</sup> Caparó Muñiz, “Colección de antigüedades peruanas”.

<sup>52</sup> For one recent critical discussion of the “mobility bias” in global history see Stuart Alexander Rockefeller, “Flow”, *Current Anthropology* 52/4 (2011), 557–78.

Rather than being prevented from thinking about interconnectedness by the existence of breaches, inequity and discrimination, these disjunctions must be seen as intrinsic and constituent elements in these journeys and their analysis. The formulation and movement of ideas neither is a disembodied enterprise nor does it consist only of those that appear “emblazoned on the title pages of European texts”: it consists invariably also of the many voices that it silenced, disfigured and suppressed.<sup>53</sup>

The ideas that were transmitted in peculiar modes and those that stayed behind, when Andean antiquities were taken out of one context and moved into another, remind us that in processes of global circulation there were always also ideas that would not circulate, that were inwardly directed, fragmenting, excluded from or reluctant about movement. There were always ideas that were not communicated and not shared, and that were particular to their time and place, and again others that had little to do with the wider world. Lumps and gaps, divergence and disparity marked the trajectories of material culture and the ideas attached to it through the Andes and across the Atlantic; they were disjunctive circles, rugged paths full of meaningful silences.

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<sup>53</sup> Neil Safer, *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (Chicago and London, 2008). A number of historians have put forth similar claims. For a useful synthesis see Sujit Sivasundaram, “Sciences and the Global: On Methods, Questions, and Theory”, *Isis* 101 (2010), 146–58.