From Marvelous Antidote to the Poison of Idolatry: The Transatlantic Role of Andean Bezoar Stones during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

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On October 12, 1598, one month after the death of Spain's powerful monarch Felipe II, officials commenced the royal accounting of his vast estate. The detailed inventories of books, paintings, jewels, statues, medals, unicorn horns, coral, and other exotic items attest to the fact that Felipe II had assembled one of the most remarkable collections in sixteenth-century Europe.[1] Among the king's diverse belongings were curiosities and marvelous objects that he had received from America. The Peruvian viceroy, don Francisco de Toledo, sent the king a variety of gifts during his time in office (1569–81), including stone idols, a 23-karat-gold llama with white enamelling, and, most intriguingly, a number of bezoar stones. The inventory indicated that the largest of these stones were designated as gifts to be given to the archduchess Margarete of Austria, wife of Felipe III, and to various members of the royal family in Spain and Germany, while others became the property of the celebrated San Lorenzo pharmacy at the royal palace, El Escorial.[2]

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1. For more on Felipe II's sumptuous collections see F. J. Sánchez Cantón, ed., *Inventarios reales: Bienes muebles que pertenecieron a Felipe II*, 2 vols., Archivo Documental Español, vols. 10–11 (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1956–58).

2. Sánchez Cantón, *Inventarios reales*, 1:275, 2:136–40. For a discussion of the different objects that viceroy Toledo sent the king, see Catherine J. Julien, "History and Art in Translation: The *Paños* and Other Objects Collected by Francisco de Toledo," *Colonial Latin American Review* 8, no. 1 (1999): 61–89.

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How did bezoars come to be such highly prized possessions? The bezoar stone is basically a calcinated concretion formed in the digestive tract of ruminants, including the four species of Andean camelids (llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos). For several reasons, in spite of its less than glamorous physiological genesis, the bezoar stone played a dramatic yet surprisingly neglected role in shaping the social and economic history of early modern Europe and Spanish America. First of all, it was widely held throughout Europe that these uncommon and difficult-to-obtain stones constituted an excellent remedy for all kinds of poisons. Physicians and apothecaries lauded the powerful curative virtues of bezoars used as antidotes and claimed them to be equally effective in combating serious illnesses of the time, such as the plague, typhus, malignant fevers, melancholy, fainting, palpitations of the heart, vertigo, and intestinal worms. Secondly, due to their famed medicinal attributes, bezoar stones were frequently exchanged among kings, princes, religious elites, and other members of the nobility. For example, in 1587 Duchess Marie Eleanore wrote to Emperor Rudolph II to request his assistance in acquiring Turkish bezoar stones because she was deeply concerned about her husband, Duke Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia, and his ongoing bouts of melancholy.[3] Thirdly, bezoar stones were so highly regarded during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that catalogues of royal treasuries grouped them with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, and other precious gems. When presented as a sumptuous gift, it was not uncommon to have a bezoar stone mounted in exquisite gold or silver settings inlaid with colorful stones and costly gems.[4] Indeed, many of the bezoar stones that Viceroy Toledo and others sent to Felipe II were embellished with detailed gold or silver ornamentation, and some were even encased in delicate gold boxes. These marvelous treasures, moreover, constituted one of the most sought-after objects for the cabinets of curiosities and chambers of wonders that were in fashion among kings and princes and the incipient European bourgeoisie of the north. In America, the bezoar stone produced further surprises when its wondrous

3. H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1994), 90.

4. See for example Marnie Stark's study of the role bezoar stones and other exotic objects played in the decorative arts of the period. Marnie P. Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns: Decorative Objects as Antidotes in Early Modern Europe," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 11, no. 1 (2003–4): 69–94. Cristina Esteras Martín's work is an important source on the role of colonial Hispanic silver in the medical and decorative arts. See for example her essay "Silver and Silverwork, Wealth and Art in Viceregal America," in *The Arts in Latin America: 1492–1820*, organized by Joseph J. Rishel with Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), 178–227.

qualities became tinged with the threat of danger. The Spanish discovered that bezoars were esteemed by indigenous peoples in Andean pastoral communities, and colonial religious authorities consequently argued that the stones figured prominently in idolatrous practices. They began to include bezoars among the dangerous objects that should be hunted for and publicly destroyed. Thus the bezoar stone played an unexpected role in the colonial drama of competing epistemologies.

This article explores the discovery of the bezoar stone in Peru by Spanish soldiers in 1568, a significant event which heretofore has received little critical attention. This story was first told in a medical book, *Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que siruen en medicina*, written and published in three parts during the second half of the sixteenth century by Nicolás Monardes (ca. 1493–1588), a prominent medical doctor from Seville. Monardes's *Historia medicinal* is notable for its scope and complexity, covering, among other things, medicinal plants and animal products that were sent to him from throughout Latin America over the course of several years. I will first look briefly at Monardes's biography so as to better situate the publication of the *Historia medicinal* within the double frame of individual and collective colonial economic interests. I will also touch on the role of bezoar stones in the history of medicine as described in a treatise on poisons and their antidotes, a work that Monardes included in the first part of his *Historia*. Concerning this last point, however, my objective is not to affirm or refute the medical effectiveness of the bezoar stone but rather to consider how the bezoar stone came into being as a salient transatlantic cultural and economic object toward the end of the sixteenth century.[5]

To learn how the stone acquired medical, aesthetic, and commercial value in Europe and America, I consulted archival documents, colonial chronicles, pharmaceutical manuals, books of medical recipes, and inventories of cabinets of curiosities. Finding out how Andean indigenous peoples treasured and used the stone was more difficult. For this, I looked at indigenous and colonial chronicles, the early bilingual Spanish–Quechua and Spanish–Aymara dictionaries, accounts of the extirpation of idolatries, and present-day anthropological studies and conversations with herders. I quickly realized that it would take this widespread kind of inquiry to comprehend the many layers of meaning and desire

5. Lorraine Daston's work describing how scientific objects become salient fits the bezoar stone. See Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects," in *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, ed. Lorraine Daston (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 1–14; and Daston, "Preternatural Philosophy," ibid., 15–41.

that bezoars came to accrue. My analysis of these different sources shows the multiple ways in which the bezoar's historical importance resonated materially and metaphorically due to the convergence of competing Spanish and indigenous interests around it. Embedded, literally, in the stomach and viscera of the Andean camelids, the stones were also entangled in a nexus of relationships among commerce, knowledge, and colonial power. For the Spanish, the fortuitous discovery of bezoar stones in Peru represented an unanticipated economic boon and a chance to compete with Portugal's monopoly of bezoars, which were brought into Europe from its colonies in Asia. As Peruvian bezoars became increasingly visible in the local and international networks of trade and commerce, however, the Spanish discovered that they had a disturbing "dark side" when the campaigns of extirpation found the stones secreted away in indigenous homes and storehouses throughout the area surrounding Lake Titicaca, and even openly displayed on "altars," or in shrines and tombs called *huacas*.[6] The bezoar stone unexpectedly revealed hidden layers of doubled meaning that linked it directly to what Europeans feared as Andean idolatry. Thus, even as the Peruvian bezoar stone gained fame throughout Europe for its unequaled merits as an antidote for poisonings, in Peru, for Spanish priests participating in the campaigns of extirpation, its presence in indigenous households symbolized the dangerous poison of idolatry that urgently needed an antidote. Ironically, however, the knowledge that indigenous peoples valued bezoar stones further increased their currency in Europe because it added a patina of exoticism to their already marvelous origin.

For Andean pastoral communities, the Spanish discovery of the bezoar stone had far-reaching and devastating consequences that went beyond the ransacking of their homes and huacas by extirpators. Herds of camelids, including the wild vicuñas and guanacos, were decimated soon after the arrival of the Spanish due to excessive hunting and the spread of disease. The discovery of the bezoar stone would be a third critical factor affecting the population of camelids and, by extension, indigenous peoples. Their lives depended on the delicate balance of a fragile ecosystem 4,000 meters above sea level, where the camelids played a central role. Following the publication of Monardes's *Historia medicinal*, however, Spanish bounty seekers, soldiers, Indians complicit in this commercial enterprise, and others slaughtered the animals in the search for the stones. The

6. Complex material, symbolic, and performative sites, Andean huacas were tombs and shrines as well as agential forces of ancestral beings or gods. Huaca ancestors could become angry and even dangerous when the proper rituals were neglected or enacted incorrectly.

Spanish priest Father Bernabé Cobo, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, clearly indicates the impact that finding these stones must have had for the camelids (and wild deer): "One generally finds in the belly of each of these animals a single stone, and in some, two, three, four and even more. It is also true that bezoar stones will not always be found in all animals of these species because it sometimes happens that *for every hundred killed only one or two will have them*."[7] Cobo's chilling description of the massacre of Andean camelids by the hundreds suggests that the search for bezoar stones played a major role in further reducing the already diminished herds of wild vicuñas and guanacos. Moreover, the devastation was not limited to these immediate material consequences; indeed it had symbolic overtones that would resonate throughout herding communities. As I will show, bezoar stones were central to the reproduction of native cultural practices and directly linked to the foundational myths of Andean cosmology. For Andean indigenous peoples, loss of the stones signified the potential loss of the community's power of regeneration, or what Frank Salomon has termed the Andean cultures' "inheritance for continuity."[8]

Monardes's *Historia medicinal* and His Treatise on the Bezoar Stone

The second half of the sixteenth century was characterized by a series of discoveries in the area of New World pharmacopoeia. Due to widespread outbreaks of deadly diseases, epidemics, and plagues that devasted European cities and rural areas, the news of an abundant source of medicinal plants and animal products heretofore unknown to doctors and apothecaries generated as much enthusiastic fervor as would the discovery of penicillin centuries later.[9] Information regarding these new products was first disseminated throughout Europe and

7. Bernabé Cobo, *Obras del P. Bernabé Cobo de la Compañía de Jesús*, vol. 1. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, vol. 91 (Madrid: Atlas, 1956), 128–29; emphasis added. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

8. Frank Salomon, "Andean Opulence: Indigenous Ideas about Wealth in Colonial Peru," in *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530–1830*, ed. Elena Phipps, Johanna Hecht, and Cristina Esteras Martín (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art / New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), 116.

9. F. N. L. Poynter, foreword to *Two Pioneers of Tropical Medicine: Garcia d'Orta and Nicolás Monardes*, by C. R. Boxer (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963), 3. In 1597, Miguel Martínez de Leyua advocated use of the bezoar stone for combating the plague, noting that it was "first and foremost for curing and protecting." Miguel Martínez de Leyua, *Remedios, preservativos, y cvrativos, para en tiempo de la peste: Y otras curiosas experiencias. Diuidido en dos cuerpos* (Madrid: En la Imprenta Real por Iuan Flamenco, 1597), 128.

America when Monardes published his *Historia medicinal* in three parts. The initial publication came out in 1565, with the second following six years later in 1571.[10] In 1574, Monardes published the third and final part, which incorporated the 1565 and 1571 texts along with new chapters describing the most recent discoveries and experiments. The complete title of this third publication was *Primera y segvnda y tercera partes de la Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que siruen en medicina. Tratado de la piedra de bezaar y de la yerua escuerçonera. Dialogo de las grandezas del hierro y de sus virtudes medicinales. Tratado de la nieve y del beuer frio*.[11] To give an idea of the positive reception that Monardes's work received, during the ensuing four decades there appeared more than 30 editions of his books in Spanish, Italian, English, French, Portuguese, German, Dutch, and Latin.[12] As many have noted, the title of John Frampton's English translation, *Joyfull Newes out of the Newe Founde Worlde*, first published in 1577, best captured the spirit of excitement rising throughout Europe as word spread about these new medicines.[13]

Monardes himself never traveled to the Americas; however he was able to obtain this materia medica because in addition to practicing medicine in Seville, he was also well established as a successful businessman. In 1533, years before the publication of his *Historia medicinal*, Monardes formed a mercantile enterprise that sent shiploads of slaves as well as freight such as cloth to be sold in port cities of the New World. On the return run, the ships would be loaded with precious metals, spices, and other medicinal products, and additional items purchased with the money made from these sales.[14] Due to a series of familial

10. José Pardo Tomás refers to the 1574 publication as a "mixed" or hybrid work (*obra mixta*) that brings together European, Asian, and American products and knowledge. José Pardo Tomás, *Oviedo, Monardes, Hernández: El tesoro natural de América: Colonialismo y ciencia en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Nivola, 2002), 110–11.

11. Nicolás Monardes, *Primera y segunda y tercera partes de la Historia medicinal . . .* (Seville: En casa de Alonso Escriuano, 1574). All subsequent references to the text are from this edition.

12. Pardo Tomás, *Oviedo, Monardes, Hernández*, 81; Francisco Guerra, *Nicolás Bautista Monardes: Su vida y su obra (ca. 1493–1588)* (Mexico City: Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey, 1961).

13. For a discussion on the politics and economics of pharmacological publication during the sixteenth century, see Francisco Guerra, "Drugs from the Indies and the Political Economy of the Sixteenth Century," in *Materia Medica in the XVIth Century*, ed. M. Florkin, Analecta Medico-Historica 1 (Oxford: Simposium Publications Division, Pergamon Press, 1966), especially 48–52.

14. Guerra, *Nicolás Bautista Monardes*, 24–26; Pardo Tomás, *Oviedo, Monardes, Hernández*, 99–100.

and financial misfortunes, Monardes was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1567, owing close to 25 million *maravedíes* (1 real = 34 maravedíes) to his creditors. To avoid jail, he sought refuge in the Regina Coeli monastery in Seville, from where he quickly set about to regain his former financial standing. The following year the Consejo Real de Indias granted the license permitting the first part of the *Historia medicinal* to be reprinted, while observing that Monardes was still living in asylum at the monastery.[15] José Pardo Tomás's research has shown that Monardes was finally released precisely so that he could continue his medical writings in the effort to pay off his debts. During the second half of the sixteenth century, royal officials, bankers, and entrepreneurs not only encouraged but also financed the search for information on new commodities, so it is unsurprising that so prominent a figure as Monardes would have been freed in order to continue with his writings and study of New World medicinal products. Indeed, during the years between 1568 and 1588, the year of his death, Monardes paid off more than 16 million maravedíes of his debt. Pardo Tomás has observed that it probably was not coincidental that the publication of the three-part *Historia medicinal* took place during these years of economic crisis and recovery; consequently, it is still uncertain to what degree Monardes's writings were conditioned by his precarious financial situation. Regardless of the impetus behind the publication of the *Historia medicinal*, clearly Monardes's work was widely received and highly acclaimed throughout Europe precisely because it created connections with all kinds of interests, commercial and scientific as well as collective and individual.[16]

This brief recounting of Monardes's life calls attention to the role that the colonial economic context most likely played in instigating the writing and publishing of the *Historia medicinal*. The discovery and commercialization of new American drugs had become a lucrative enterprise during the sixteenth century.[17] Notable examples were the German banking families Fugger and Welser, who made a fortune from their monopolies of spices and medicines.[18]

15. Pardo Tomás, *Oviedo, Monardes, Hernández*, 101.

16. Ibid., 101, 103.

17. Miguel de Asúa and Roger French, *A New World of Animals: Early Modern Europeans on the Creatures of Iberian America* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 91–92, 104–7. Also of interest is Harold J. Cook's recent book, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2007).

18. Antonio Barrera-Osorio examines how the study of nature and the institutionalization of empirical practices in sixteenth-century Spain were linked to the search for commodities and commercial sources of revenue. Antonio Barrera-Osorio,

Monardes described in detail on the first pages of his book the economic benefits to be obtained from the commercialization of New World medicinal products, which he compared to the fabulous wealth generating from the exploitation of metals, precious stones, and exotic animals and birds already arriving from the New World. His lengthy, itemized catalogue of trees, plants, herbs, roots, saps, gums, fruits, seeds, liquors, and stones underscored the diversity and proliferation of an untapped source of wealth, which, he argued, promised an even greater bounty than the fortunes created from the transatlantic flow of silver and gold.[19] There is little doubt that Monardes's *Historia medicinal* stood as a kind of promise or guarantee of economic gain and profit on several levels.

When Monardes published the first part of his *Historia medicinal* in 1565, in addition to his initial study of New World products he included there a separate treatise on the bezoar stone and the *escuerzonera* plant, two antidotes to poisons. Of the many different medicines and remedies that he treated in this inaugural work, the bezoar stone stands out as being one of the most culturally and economically significant. Even before the sixteenth century, Europeans were somewhat familiar with the medicinal benefits of Asian bezoars.

For his treatise, Monardes drew from Pliny's *Natural History* and the medical writings of the great Persian, Arab, and Jewish philosopher-physicians from the ninth through the twelfth centuries to describe the animal that produced the bezoar stone, the formation of the stone inside the animal, its medicinal virtues, and the great danger of counterfeit stones. Monardes also included information on the (folk) etymology of the word itself. He provided the translation used in several different languages while paying special attention to the Hebrew form. His description underscored the stone's widespread dissemination and the magnitude of its healing powers:

> This Bezaar stone hath many names: for the Arabiens doe call it *Hagar*, the Persians *Bezaar*, the Indians *Bezar*, the Hebrewes *Belzaar*, the Greekes *Alexipharmacum*, the Latinistes against venom, the Spaniardes the stone against venom and sounding. Conrado Gesnero . . . saith that this name Belzaar is an Hebrew name, for that (*ben*) in Hebrew is as much to say as

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Experiencing Nature: The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2006); also Guerra, "Drugs from the Indies," 44–48.

19. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 11–1v. Additionally, see Daniela Bleichmar, "Books, Bodies, and Fields: Sixteenth-Century Transatlantic Encounters with New World *Materia Medica*," in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 90.

Figure 1. Administering the bezoar stone to an ill man. From Johannes de Cuba, *Ortus sanitatis*. Translaté de latin (de Jean de Cuba) en françois (*Le traictié des bestes, oyseaux, poissons, pierres précieuses et orines du Jardin de santé*) (Paris: A. Verard, ca. 1499–1502), fol. 135v. Image courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

> Lorde, and (*zaar*) venom, as if ye would say, Lord of the venomes, and by good reason it is so named, seeing that this stone is Lady of the venomes, and doeth extinguish and destroy them as being Lady, and mistresse over them. And of this it commeth that all thinges that are against poison, or venomous things are called Bezaarticas, for their excellencie.[20]

In Monardes's *Historia medicinal*, the bezoar stone emerged unequaled in the hierarchy of antidotes, esteemed for its power as both sovereign Lord and Lady over all poisons. Some of the writings that Monardes consulted told of bezoars found in the stomach of a kind of ruminant original to Asia. In other sources such as travelers' accounts, the animal was described as looking like a wild goat or ram, or as a kind of deer. Additional references presented it as a wild goat-deer (*cervicabra*) found only in the most remote highlands of India and

20. John Frampton, *Joyfull Newes Out of the Newe Founde Worlde, Written in Spanish by Nicholas Monardes Physician of Seville and Englished by John Frampton*, Merchant, 2 vols. (1577; London: Constable and Co. ltd. / New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), 2:69. All translations of Monardes are from this edition.

Persia.[21] According to these authors, the bezoar stone was considered to be a very powerful and noble remedy because it served as an antidote to a wide variety of poisons derived from plants and herbs, insects and serpents. Moses Maimonides in his *Treatise on Poisons and Their Antidotes*, written in 1198, judged the bezoar as equal to crushed emeralds for its confirmed effectiveness against poisons.[22] The stone could be placed either whole or in powdered form in one's food or beverage in order to counteract the effects of a possible poisoning, a popular method for doing in one's enemies or rivals at the time. Beautifully crafted receptacles known as poison cups often had a bezoar attached by a chain so that it could be dipped in the liquid held in the container. Others had a screw or "cage" for securing the stone in the base of the vessel. It was believed that the bezoar could absorb or neutralize the toxic substances, thereby rendering the beverage safe. Bezoars could also be set among other jewels in amulets, rings, or pendants for easy access. As Monardes had noted, due to the perceived potency of this remedy, the word *bezoar* became a generic term used to describe any effective antidote.

Regarding the formation of the bezoar stone in the animal, Eastern and Western sources provided two basic versions. The first account tells of a kind of deer found in mountainous regions. During a certain time of the year, the animal seeks out caves where poisonous serpents live and devours them all. As the poison heats up its body, the deer takes refuge in a lake or river, submerging its body so that only the head is left showing above water. Large viscous tears form in the corners of its eyes, caused by the heat of the poison. As the sun shines down on the animal's head, these tears draw the poison from the animal's body as they slowly dry and solidify like stone, and in the process, turn different colors. Once the deer comes out of the water, these hardened tears drop off and fall to the ground, and so they can be found along lake shores and river banks.[23] In a 1681 catalogue of items contained in the medical collection at Gresham College, England, it was noted that one could find there: "A Stag's Tears. A thicken'd Excretion from the inward Angle of his Eye. In colour and consistence almost like to Mirrh; or Ear-wax that has been long harden'd in the Ear. Of a strong stinking smell, like that of the Animal's sweat."[24] A second,

21. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 133v–140r.

22. Moses Maimonides, *Selected Medical Writings of Moses Maimonides*, trans. and ed. Suessman Muntner and Fred Rosner (1198; New York: The Classics of Medicine Library, Division of Gryphon Editions, 1997), 17–18.

23. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 134r–135r.

24. Nehemiah Grew, *Musaeum Regalis Societatis. Or a Catalogue & Description of the Natural and Artificial Rarities Belonging to the Royal Society and Preserved at Gresham College.*

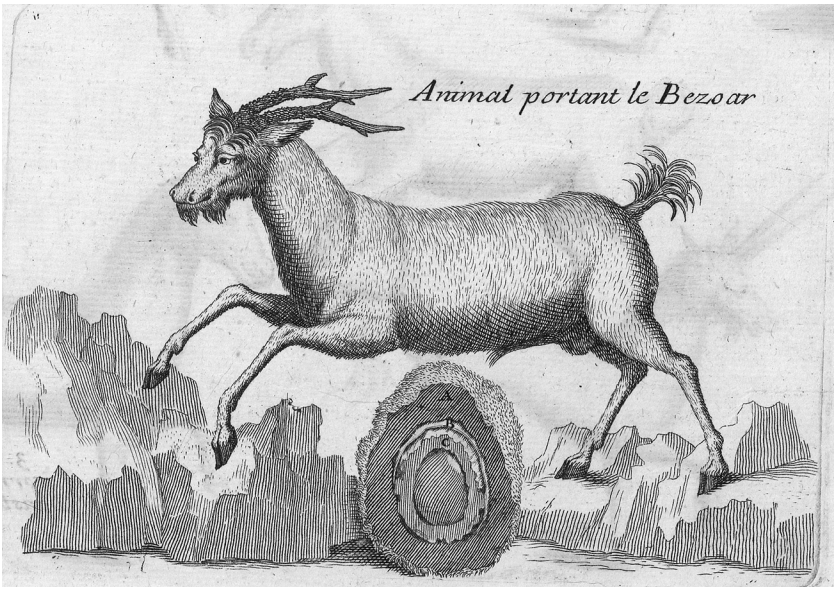

Figure 2. This cross section of the bezoar, although not drawn to scale, reveals the stone's onionlike layers. From Pierre Pomet, *Histoire générale des drogues, traitant des plantes, des animaux, & des minéraux*, Seconde Partie, Livre premier, *Des animaux*, Chapitre III, *Du Bezoar* (Paris: J.-B. Loyson et A. Pillon, 1694), 10. Image courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

similar variation of how the stone is formed centers around a wild goat found in the mountains of the East. After eating the serpents and submerging its body in water, the animal eats healing plants which congeal and solidify in its stomach, forming a hard stone made of layers, like an onion.[25] (See figure 2.)

In his *Libro de las virtvdes y propiedades marauillosas de las piedras preciosas* (1605), the Spanish apothecary Gaspar de Morales explained that precious stones such as bezoars were made up of a mix of different elements, and so their healing virtues derived from these same substances. Because the animal had eaten poisonous serpents as well as therapeutic plants, true bezoars contained both poison and antidote.[26] This paradoxical combination would have impor-

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Whereunto is Subjoyned the Comparative Anatomy of Stomachs and Guts (London: Printed by W. Rawlins, for the Author, 1681), 21.

25. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 135r, 136r.

26. Gaspar de Morales, *Libro de las virtvdes y propiedades marauillosas de las piedras preciosas* (Madrid: Luys Sanchez, 1605), 64r, 203v–205r.

tant ramifications for the role of bezoars in the Andean campaigns to extirpate idolatries.

The importance that Monardes gave to the Asian bezoar stone can be measured by the fact that he dedicated his treatise to the duchess of Béjar, the woman who introduced him to the stone and its medicinal significance. Monardes recounted that the duchess had a son who had suffered from fainting spells since he was a young boy. While looking for a cure, she was informed that at the royal court bezoar stones were used to treat such illnesses. The duchess went directly to Monardes, her doctor, to tell him about this discovery. Monardes sent inquiries to Lisbon, the center of the East Indies spice and drug trade, to try to obtain the stone so that he might treat his friend's son. This inquiry produced two gold-encased bezoar stones, which, when given to the young man on a daily basis, immediately alleviated his blackouts and eventually eliminated them altogether.[27]

By dedicating the treatise to the duchess and presenting the story of her son's illness and cure, Monardes positioned his readers and patients as important witnesses to the effectiveness of these medicines while at the same time creating a niche market and network of potential consumers.[28] The narrative described the incident in detail, thereby underscoring the fact that it was a patient who brought the important bezoar stone to the doctor's attention. Monardes could concede this without losing his own authority, because ultimately he was the one who made the appropriate inquiries to Portugal, acquired the stones, and successfully treated the ailing young man. Still, his work offered readers, especially those in the New World, a way of interacting with his text and with nature, a method that invited them to join him in the quest for new materia medica.[29] The example of the duchess served as a prototype for this scientific method of inquiry and discovery: like a hunter, the reader would follow clues with the goal of "capturing rare secrets," such as heretofore unknown plant specimens or animal products, but their curative benefits would be administered and confirmed by Monardes, the ultimate author/authority.[30] Due, at least in part, to

27. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 143v–144v. As already noted, the treatise was dedicated to the duchess; the first portion of the *Historia medicinal*, which included the treatise, was dedicated to the Archbishop of Seville. Notably, Monardes dedicated the second part of the *Historia medicinal* to King Felipe II, and the third part to Pope Gregory XIII.

28. My discussion of how Monardes empowered his readers draws in part from Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550–1600* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2007), 5. See also Asúa and French, *A New World of Animals*, 107.

29. For more on how such a methodology could work, see Kavey, *Books of Secrets*, 59–94.

30. On "capturing rare secrets," see William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press,

this kind of professional testimony based on documented experimentation of New and Old World medicinal products, the initial publication of the *Historia medicinal* in 1565 was hugely successful, and the book circulated widely throughout Europe and America, where merchants, explorers, government officials, and soldiers carried it as a kind of pharmaceutical manual and guide.[31]

The Letter from a Spanish Soldier in Peru to Monardes

It was in the 1571 publication that readers first learned the exciting news of the discovery of the bezoar stone in Peru. Monardes included a transcription of the letter sent to him by a Spanish soldier detailing the history of this event. Along with the letter, the soldier, whose name was Pedro de Osma, sent Monardes sample stones for his experimentation and use, in addition to other herbs and seeds.[32]

In his introductory remarks to the letter, Monardes became increasingly effusive as he praised the wonderful remedies being discovered each day in the West Indies. Illnesses that could not be controlled before, he wrote, were now being treated, thanks to these marvelous new products.[33] Monardes called the reader's attention to his own much-celebrated role in promoting the knowledge and use of these new medicinals. Thanks to these efforts, he continued, he received a letter from Peru announcing the discovery there of bezoar stones:

1994), 271. Sabine MacCormack has been helpful to the development of ideas central to this discussion and to the final section of my essay. She has theorized the epistemological relationship among authority and divine and demonic power as worked out in the 1530 writings of the Spanish priest Pedro Ciruelo. MacCormack observes: "In Ciruelo's mind, the distribution of natural and divine power in the universe was mirrored and made effective by designated experts. Ordained priests were authorized to administer words imbued with divine power, while physicians after prolonged study administered the natural power inherent in certain plants and minerals. There existed no such thing as knowledge 'infused by God without the need of a teacher's instruction or the study of books.' Practices described by Ciruelo as 'idolatrous superstition' threatened, not only true religion and scientifically accurate knowledge, but also the proper ordering of society." From Sabine MacCormack, "Demons, Imagination, and the Incas," *Representations* 33 (1991): 126.

31. Bleichmar also describes Monardes's networks of travelers, patients, and others, from whom he gathered information regarding these heretofore unknown products. Bleichmar, "Books, Bodies, and Fields," 89–91.

32. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 72r–72v. Pardo Tomás highlights the letter, noting that it is one of the first sources extolling remedies found in Peru; prior to this, most of the pharmacopoeia that Monardes described originated in the Caribbean and New Spain. Pardo Tomás, *Oviedo, Monardes, Hernández*, 107–8.

33. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 71v.

> that you may see the fruite that this my labour hath dooen, I will put here a Letter that a Gentleman of the Peru sent mee well nere two Monethes past, by the whiche you shall see by reason of that I wrote, in the firste parte thei have discovered the Bezaar stones, in the Peru, that with suche greate estimation thei dooe bring from the India of Portingall, and howe by the relation and order which I wrote, they came to the knowledge of them, a thing truely of greate estimation, and worthy to be muche made of.[34]

Monardes emphasized how this discovery happened only because he had already written about the virtues of the famous bezoars brought from the Portuguese colonies of the East Indies and had provided the essential clues regarding the kind of animal that contained the stones. Monardes's rhetorical strategy here seems to be deliberately calculated. By juxtaposing the Peruvian bezoar stone alongside the Eastern bezoar in the same sentence, he implicitly drew comparisons of worth between them. Furthermore, he established textually an equivalence between Peru, a Spanish colony, and Portuguese territories in India noted for their tremendous wealth of spices and other medicinals. After establishing these favorable comparisions, however, Monardes next pointed out crucial differences between the two stones in order to assert the superiority of the new bezoars arriving from the Spanish colonies. Monardes invoked contrasts that played equally to commercial and medical interests when he stressed the marvelous quality of the Peruvian bezoars, their easy accessibility, the enormous price they brought in, and finally, their authenticity. Directly addressing and currying favor with King Felipe II, to whom this second part was dedicated, the doctor declared:

> seeying that it is a thyng so marveilous and of so greate price, and hath been founde in our Indias, and are so easie to bee had and so true, that we have not any neede to doubte of their effectes and vertues, the whiche is not so of them that thei bryng from the Orientall Indias. For if there come tenne that are true, there cometh an hundreth whiche are false. Whereby they that doe buye them ought to looke muche unto it, that they bee not deceived.[35]

By insistently affirming the "marvelous" nature of this news in his introductory observations, Monardes primed his readers so that they would be fully

34. Frampton, *Joyfull Newes,* 1:134.
35. Ibid., 134.

prepared to appreciate the wonders described in Pedro de Osma's letter.[36] Stephen Greenblatt has noted how during this period the marvelous was associated with the rhetorical and pictorial tradition that described voyages of discovery and encounter: "To affirm the 'marvelous' nature of the discoveries is, even without the lucrative shipments yet on board, to make good on the claim to have reached the fabled realms of gold and spices."[37] Monardes linked his work with this rhetorical strategy when he established in his narration an explicit relationship between his own leading role in the discovery of this marvelous stone and the promise of economic gain: "many persones doe bring them, whiche are nowe come in this Fleete, whiche come to mee as though that I were the first discoverer of them. They doe declare marveilous effectes of them, that it seemeth wonders."[38] New World nature emerged thus in his writings as a source of wondrous, priceless commodities. In addition to calling the attention of his ideal reader, King Felipe II, to the miraculous properties and abundance of the Peruvian bezoar stone, as well as to his own role as "broker," it is even possible to imagine that Monardes, a man pursued by debts, also was directly addressing here his creditors.[39]

The author of the letter, Pedro de Osma, tells how on June 15, 1568, he and a few other soldiers went hunting in the Peruvian high sierra because they had seen there some curious animals that looked similar to the bezoar deer-goat Monardes had described in the first part of his *Historia medicinal*.[40] Because Monardes's text did not include any engravings of the animal, the soldiers had only a vague written depiction to guide them and so they believed that the swift, reddish animals they had spotted were identical to the Persian and Indian bezoar goats, with the exception that the Peruvian specimens had no horns.

The soldiers killed several of these animals and, following Monardes's directions, they selected the largest and oldest to open. Unfortunately, however, they found not a single bezoar inside it, neither in its abdomen nor anywhere. Fearing then that this animal was not the same as the kind described by the doctor, the soldiers questioned the Indians who accompanied them as their servants, asking them where the animals had their stones. De Osma explained that the Indians claimed to know nothing about them because they were enemies of the Spanish

36. See for example Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), 73.

37. Ibid., 74.

38. Frampton, *Joyfull Newes*, 1:146.

39. In this same vein, see Guerra, "Drugs from the Indies," 51–52.

40. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 73v.

and refused to reveal any of their secrets. At this time, a young Indian boy around ten years old came forward and spoke to the men: "he seeying, that we were so desirous to knowe the same, did shewe us the secret of the cause, he did shewe us where the beast had the stones, that wee had there dead." The Indians, de Osma explained, wanted to kill the young boy because he had betrayed them by showing the Spanish soldiers the sacred stones that played a central role in their idol worship and rituals of sacrifice: "because the Indians doe esteeme muche of these stones, and they doe offer them unto their Goddes, or to their praiyng places where their Idols are, unto whom they doe offer the thinges that are most precious. And so they doe offer these stones, as a thyng of greate estimation, and also they doe offer, Gold, Silver and Precious stones, Beastes and Children."[41]

Pedro de Osma's commentary here is of critical significance because it established an unanticipated linkage between bezoar stones and indigenous idolatry, a relationship that will be taken up in detail in the next section. At this point, however, I wish to call attention to how the initial groundwork for this association was being laid when de Osma observed that the Indians, like the Spanish, held the stones in high regard, considering them to be a priceless treasure. The difference between the Europeans and the native peoples, de Osma wanted his readers to believe, was the brutal, pagan nature of the Indians who were prepared to sacrifice the young boy because of his betrayal of their idolatry. Following this assertion, de Osma took a small step back from his immediate narrative to offer a more general observation on indigenous sacrifice, explaining how Indians grouped bezoars with gold, silver, precious stones, animals, and children, all of which were given as offerings to the idols. For de Osma, such perceived savagery on the part of the Indians justified the soldiers' intervention in the protection not only of the small boy but also of these treasured commodities. Predictably, however, de Osma and his companions soon forgot about the boy in their excited hunt for more animals: "And afterwarde wee understoode that those Indians whiche went with us had sacrificed the Boye, whiche with our huntyng we had forgotten. And they caried hym away from us by those Mountaynes, where we never more sawe hym."[42] Once the boy had fulfilled his colonial function he vanished from the text.

Readers of the time might have picked up on a second, more subtle connection between the stones, idolatrous practices, and commercial benefit through de Osma's use of the word "negocio" to describe the moment of discovery when the boy showed them where the stones were to be found in the animal: "nos

41. Frampton, *Joyfull Newes*, 1:136–37.
42. Ibid., 1:137.

mostro el secreto del negocio" ([he] showed us the secret of the cause).[43] Stephen Greenblatt describes how Columbus's writings achieved a similar association between religious and commercial enterprises by employing a rhetoric of conversion for the exchange of precious stones and pearls for gold and for the conversion of idolatrous souls. While this rhetorical slippage might seem unexpected, Greenblatt reminds us that "in the Spanish of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the Crusade to the Holy Land was called not the *cruzada*—that word referred to the special papal concessions granted to the Spanish crown to fight against the infidel within its own territory—but rather the *empresa* or *negocio*, terms in which the mercantile and the religious are intertwined." In other words, Greenblatt continues, "The rhetorical task of Christian imperialism then is to bring together commodity conversion and spiritual conversion."[44] De Osma and the other soldiers thus enacted what would become standard practice in the campaigns of extirpation when they removed the stones from all of the dead animals, thereby ensuring that the idolaters would not have them to use in their diabolical practices. This action, far from being disinterested, also guaranteed the stones' conversion into treasure or fortune for the soldiers. It bears reiterating, moreover, that the economic value of the stones increased in European markets when word spread of their association with exoticized indigenous rituals. Another irony emerged: from the indigenous point of view, the soldiers' hunting and butchery of all these animals may well have seemed to be as barbaric as their sacrifices were to the Spanish. The Inca Garcilaso de la Vega pointedly observed that, unlike the Indians, the Spanish took bezoar stones from guanacos and vicuñas as well as from deer and other ruminants: "These days they take the stones from all of the wild animals; in my time they never would have imagined doing such a thing."[45]

All of the soldiers present at the hunt that day recognized both the significance of having found a new source of bezoars and what the commercialization of the stones could mean for them. Moreover, it appeared that they had discovered a plentiful supply in these animals. De Osma remarked that in total the first animal had nine bezoars and that all of the others killed also had stones. The soldier thanked Monardes effusively:

> All this is owing to your worship, seeyng that with your booke we had knowledge to find them, and to discover them, and to take them out of

43. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 73v.

44. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 71.

45. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales de los Incas*, ed. Aurelio Miró Quesada, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Caracas: Fundación Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1985), 188.

> these beastes, whiche had them so hidden that surely there is much owing to your worship, who hath discovered to us so great a treasure, as this is, *whiche is the greatest that hath been found in these partes*, whereby our nation is muche bound to you, and likewise all the world, because all men shall profite of theim, and of the reste of the secretes which you have put into your booke, the whiche doth unto us greate profite.[46]

De Osma's claim that these stones constituted the greatest treasure yet found in these parts makes an implicit comparison between the stones and the already famous silver mines of Potosí. As early as the publication of the first part of the *Historia medicinal*, Monardes had contended that the profits from these New World medicinals would surpass the income generated by the prosperous mining industry.[47] The soldier's discovery of the costly bezoar stone in Peru was further confirmation of this bold assertion. Consequently, just as samples of the silver were sent back to Europe, de Osma explained that he was sending Monardes a dozen of the stones in recompense for his work and so that the doctor could make good use of them with his patients. He called attention to the fact that in Peru the stones had already demonstrated amazing medicinal benefits, curing all kinds of illnesses ranging from poisonings and pestilent fevers to malignant humors.[48]

In his final commentary following the transcription of Pedro de Osma's letter, Monardes indicated to his readers that he would indeed experiment with these wonderful bezoar stones and publish the results, noting that he had already begun to use them with patients.[49] Three years later in 1574, just as he had promised, Monardes published the final part of his *Historia medicinal*, providing a detailed description of the Peruvian bezoar stone that included the results of the experiments he had conducted, a discussion of the many illnesses it treated, and recipes or formulas for its use. And so, from Monardes's *Historia medicinal* onwards, the Peruvian bezoar stone—or what would come to be known also as the occidental bezoar stone, in order to differentiate it from the oriental, or eastern, bezoar stone—would take a prominent role in transnational commercial networks as a highly prized pharmaceutical remedy, as an exotic object without peer in collections of marvels, and as a sumptuous gift worthy of a king.[50]

46. Frampton, *Joyfull Newes*, 1:139. Emphasis added.

47. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 1r–1v.

48. Ibid., 74r–74v.

49. Ibid., 78r.

50. To date, information regarding the trade of bezoar stones is dispersed and difficult to come by. Further research is required to complete our understanding of how the stones

In Pursuit of the Peruvian Bezoar Stone: From Acquisition to Inquisition

Pedro de Osma's letter not only introduced the Peruvian bezoar but also pointed to unforeseen discourses that were already proliferating around the stone, serving to distinguish it further from the stones being brought into Europe by the Portuguese. Unlike its Asian counterpart, which was known solely for its medicinal virtue, the Peruvian bezoar took on more complicated associations because of its significance in indigenous idolatrous practices as well as medicine. The paradigm of the hunt for treasure is what connects the pursuit of new scientific-medical knowledge and commodities, and the search for and eradication of suspicious Andean religious practices.[51] While the hunt, or *venatio*, served as a literal and metaphorical method of scientific inquiry with its emphasis on the quest for the occult forces of nature (such as bezoars and other novel materia medica), in the context of the New World it also encompassed the pursuit and discovery of additional kinds of hidden influences, such as the demonic power subtending indigenous idolatry. As Stuart Clark has argued, the epistemological similarities between *magia daemonica* and *magia naturalis* meant that both were "philosophical analogues, providing parallel explanations—sometimes in competition, sometimes in alliance—for the same range of phenomena."[52] Both the language of scientific experimentation and that of the extirpation of idolatries made use of a vocabulary permeated with nouns and adjectives such as "secret," "hidden," and "occult forces," and verbs such as "to discover" and "*desentrañar*," meaning to eviscerate or, figuratively, to discover a secret or mystery. These parallel discourses are observable in Pedro de Osma's letter and in reports by the inspectors of idolatries. For example, de Osma referred to how the pursuit of nature's occult secrets led him to the innermost recesses of the animal's body, the stomach and entrails, where he eventually discovered the treasured stones

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circulated. For example, it is not known yet the extent of the role played by the Jesuits. Luis Martín has shown that they were actively involved in shipping large quantities of bezoars from the Colegio Jesuita de San Pablo in Lima to Rome. Luis Martín, *La conquista intelectual del Perú: El Colegio Jesuita de San Pablo, 1568–1767* (Barcelona: Editorial Casiopea, 2001), 125.

51. My reading of the epistemology of the hunt draws from William Eamon's chapter "Science as a *Venatio*," in *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 269–300. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra has also shown how the language of medicine and demonology converge in early colonial writings. See Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2006), 120–77.

52. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 155.

"so hidden" within.[53] The same terminology utilized to describe the hunt for nature's marvelous secrets had also played a central role in the centuries-long struggle to overcome and vanquish the Moorish idolaters from the Iberian Peninsula. Not surprisingly, and as many have shown, it was deployed again in the New World to distinguish the forces of Christ from those of Satan.[54] And so, in his 1621 inspection report, Licenciado Rodrigo Hernández Príncipe described Andean idolatry in general as a "deeply hidden secret," while noting that he had discovered so much evidence in his travels of the diabolical hidden rituals and ceremonies "that I thought I was among Moors and Arabs and such was the degree of my affliction, having discovered and revealed this terrible evil that had been hidden until now."[55]

Once the second part of Monardes's *Historia medicinal* was published and the account of Pedro de Osma's discovery made public, the Peruvian bezoar stone acquired high intrinsic value not only in European and New World medicine but also in the Andes in the language and struggle over religious conversion and cultural transformation. There it became associated with both divine and demonic power: when it was in the possession of the Spanish it was lauded for its extraordinary curative virtues, and when discovered secreted away in the homes and huacas of indigenous peoples it was considered to be a clear sign of the kind of idolatry so harshly censured by Hernández Príncipe.[56] Due to the hidden location of the stone inside the animal's gut, its medical association with occult properties, and the role it appeared to play in indigenous rituals, the bezoar

53. Frampton, *Joyfull Newes*, 1:139.

54. See Sabine MacCormack, "Demons, Imagination, and the Incas," 128.

55. Licenciado Rodrigo Hernández Príncipe, "Mitología andina," *Inca* 1, no. 1 (1923): 25, 64.

56. It is possible to map a clear shift in the terminology used for bezoar stones if we look at the reports of religious authorities written before the 1571 publication of the second portion of Monardes's *Historia medicinal* (which included the transcribed letter from Pedro de Osma and news of the Peruvian bezoar stone), and those that followed. For example, the report on idolatrous practices in Huamachuco written by four Augustinian *religiosos* in 1560 indicated that the friars had discovered bezoar stones but they identified them simply as stones or hardened dung and not as medicine or as a potential source of wealth in the European sense of the word. Religiosos Agustinos, "Relación de idolatrías en Huamachuco por los primeros Agustinos," in *Informaciones acerca de la religión y gobierno de los Incas*, ed. Horacio H. Urteaga, Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú, vol. 11 (1560; Lima: San Martí y Compañía, 1918), 48. As this essay will show, by the time Cristóbal de Albornoz was describing idolatrous practices ca. 1585 these stones were no longer referred to as dung; instead they were identified as bezoar stones and their value to Europeans was duly noted.

exemplified both a secret treasure (as a sign of medicinal and economic benefit) and a treasured secret (as a sign of idolatry). Precisely because Iberian colonizers and Andean pastoral peoples alike valued the stone, it became a focal point in the struggle over competing worldviews. As noted earlier, Europeans believed the bezoar to be structured by overlapping layers of poison and healing virtue; hence, its symbolic resonance was necessarily ambiguous. We get a sense of the many-layered interests produced around the stone from Pierre Pomet's artistic representation of a cross section of the bezoar (see figure 2). His depiction of the stone from this perspective underscored the bezoar's layers and how much they matter, literally as well as symbolically. In the pages that follow, I will unwrap some of the bezoar's layers to examine the ambiguity or "essential undecidability" that the Peruvian bezoar stone acquired following the publication of Monardes's *Historia medicinal*, when it took on a salient role in Andean colonial relations as both antidote and poison.[57]

The Poison of Idolatry

Renowned for its wondrous, even miraculous, healing qualities, the bezoar stone shared a certain kinship with religious relics kept in medieval thesauri, or treasures belonging to the church or to powerful sovereigns. These relics and marvels of nature "served as objects of meditation" and as a testimony to the power of God.[58] In his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590), the Jesuit José de Acosta dedicated a chapter to the Peruvian bezoar stone, praising the wonderful medicinal benefits it provided mankind while highlighting its particular usefulness for combating poisons and poisonous diseases. Acosta believed that the discovery of the Peruvian bezoar was yet one more indication that the Almighty God had generously distributed his gifts, secrets, and marvels throughout this Earth. Recognizing the signficance of this stone, the priest called on his readers to glorify and adore the Lord for his magnanimous beneficence.[59] Historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, writing on the perceived influences of Satan on New

57. The phrase "essential undecidability" is from Peggy Kamuf's introduction to Jacques Derrida's essay "Plato's Pharmacy" in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 112–13.

58. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books / Cambridge, MA: distributed by the MIT Press, 1998), 76.

59. José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias en que se tratan de las cosas notables del cielo/ elemento/ metales/ plantas y animales dellas/ y los ritos/ y ceremonias/ leyes y gobierno de los indios*, 2nd ed. (1590; Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962), 212–14.

World nature, has noted how, just as there were herbs that seemed to embody demonic forces, it also "became clear [to the Iberian colonizers] that there were plants and animals that God had chosen as allies in the struggle to oust the devil from the continent."[60] Certainly San Luis Beltrán (1526–81, canonized in 1671), the Dominican priest and, later, saint, had reason to give thanks for the bezoar stone when divine intervention revealed to him that he had been given a poisoned drink by the same indigenous peoples he was in the process of converting to Christianity. In his representation of the scene (ca. 1636–38), the noted Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán portrayed the priest at the precise moment of discovery, just as he was about to drink the poisoned beverage (see figure 3).

In Zurbarán's work, San Luis Beltrán looms large, depicted in austere black and white against two exemplary landscapes: in the picture's lower right, he is sermonizing to the indigenous peoples of Colombia; on the lower left, he supervises the burning of native idols. Holding in his left hand a silver poison cup, also known as a *bernegal*, he makes the sign of the cross with the right hand, causing the poison to reveal itself miraculously by taking the shape of a winged serpent or dragon.[61] Divine intervention becomes equated here with the bezoardic antidote because it exposes and ultimately conquers the poisonous serpent. Thus the themes of poison, idolatry, and spiritual conversion come together in powerful visual imagery in Zurbarán's painting.

The iconographic representation of poison as a serpent pervaded the pictorial and decorative arts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; consequently it was not unusual to find mounted bezoars and poison cups that included figures of dragons or serpents as part of their ornamentation. One well-known example, the gold poison cup recovered in 1973 from the wreck of the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, a famous Spanish "treasure ship" that sank in 1622, has striking dragonlike figures as handles (see figure 4).

The Atocha bernegal is a model of the kind of exquisite craftsmanship being carried out in the Peruvian viceroyalty, where there was great need precisely of this kind of vessel. In Peru, the Spanish had found an astonishing variety of venomous snakes and poisonous plants. As the Augustinian priest Fray Antonio de la Calancha observed somewhat dryly in 1639, "where there are riches there must, perforce, be poisons."[62] Yet, because it could be a life-threatening substance, poison denoted any corrupt influence that overwhelmed the flesh *or* the spirit. Pierre

60. Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors*, 146.

61. See Enrique Valdivieso, ed., *Zurbarán: IV centenario de nacimiento* (Seville: Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla / Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 1998), 138.

62. Antonio de la Calancha, *Crónica moralizada*, ed. Ignacio Prado Pastor, 6 vols. (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1974), 2:1171.

Figure 3. *San Luis Beltrán*, by Francisco de Zurbarán. Image courtesy of the Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville, Spain.

Figure 4. Gold bernegal from the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*.
Photo credit: Dylan T. Kibler, Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society.

Duviols, in his well-known work *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial: "l'extirpation de l'idolâtrie" entre 1532 et 1660*, observed that idolatry was defined in the Old Testament as a "poison that inevitably pervades all human faculties and pursuits: 'for the worship of idols is the principle, the cause and the end of all evil.'"[63] In the New World it was not long before indigenous idolatry was broadly defined as a dangerous poison or malignancy in desperate need of therapeutic intervention. The famous extirpator of idolatries, Pablo José de Arriaga, deployed a series of medical metaphors to describe idolatry in general while claiming that in the Andes there was still hope for the indigenous peoples as it had not yet become a widespread cancer in the same way that it had for the Moriscos in Spain. He played off the double meaning of the word *mal* as illness and evil to argue that the remedy was simple for those who genuinely desired to be cured, punning, "What is needed is a cure or curate."[64]

63. Pierre Duviols, *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial: "l'extirpation de l'idolâtrie" entre 1532 et 1660* (Lima: Institut Français d'Études Andines / Paris: Éditions Ophrys, 1971), 21.

64. Pablo José de Arriaga, *Extirpación de la idolatría del Pirú*, in *Crónicas peruanas de interés indígena*, ed. Francisco Esteve Barba, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, no. 209 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1968), 195.

Spanish association of indigenous peoples with mortal evil and poison extended beyond their religious practices to include very material implications as well. Soldiers like Pedro de Osma and priests like San Luis Beltrán discovered early on that native Andeans were both very knowledgeable and skilled in the direct application of many different kinds of lethal poisons. In his letter to Monardes, de Osma emphasized how the Indians made frequent use of dreadful poisons to kill each other and especially the Spanish, thereby underscoring a specific and immediate role for the bezoar stone.[65] Fray Martín de Murúa similarly cautioned readers, pointing out that indigenous weapons such as lances, arrows, and darts were often carefully treated with deadly poisons.[66]

It could be argued that indigenous expertise in the use of harmful substances was a key factor for the Spanish colonial imaginary as it forged through metonymy an unequivocal correlation between indigenous peoples and poison itself. Indeed, the bezoar stone's prominence throughout the Andean region helped to make this metaphor literal. For example, the early seventeenth-century bilingual dictionaries provide abundant evidence of the application, function, and even geography of poisons. Diego González Holguín, in his Quechua *Vocabulario* (1608), distinguished between "poisoned beverage," "natural poison found in plants, or animals," and "a natural poisonous thing."[67] Ludovico Bertonio's *Vocabulario de la lengua aymara* (1612) underscored the ambiguous nature of poison as both remedy and lethal substance. It noted that *colla* signified "medicinal philter, or poison for killing" as well as a "purgative, food item, or drink, or any kind of plaster or curative medicine," whereas *hihua colla* denoted any "food or beverage that is poisonous and kills." *Collatha* was translated as "to cure someone sick," and a *colla camana* was a doctor, while *collani asiro* was a poisonous serpent.[68] These definitions indicate close etymological ties between the word *colla* of Collasuyo, one of the four territories governed by the Inca, and medicine and the accompanying authority, knowledge, and skills of application required by carefully trained specialists.

65. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 74r.

66. Fray Martín de Murúa, *Historia general del Perú*, ed. Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois (ca. 1611; Madrid: Dastin, S.L., 2001), 397. Additionally, see Jan G. R. Elferink, "The Use of Poison and Malevolent Magic in Criminal Practices among the Incas in Pre-Columbian Peru," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 8, no. 3 (1999): 339–60.

67. Diego González Holguín, *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Perú llamada lengua qquichua o del Inca*, Edición facimilar de la versión de 1952 (1608; Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1989), 690.

68. Ludovico Bertonio, *Vocabvlario de la lengua Aymara*, Transcripción de la edición de 1612 (1612; Arequipa: Ediciones El Lector, 2006), 473, 538.

Indigenous proficiency in administering poisons added further nuance to the association that Europeans made between native Andeans and the dragon or winged serpent. However, the serpent already carried meaning in Andean cosmology beyond its Christian connotations of poison, idolatry, and the devil. Indigenous peoples incorporated the European dragon into their own worldview and systems of representation, associating it with *amaru*, the legendary serpent believed to be found in the Antisuyu region.[69] Amaru had ties to the Andean concept of *pachacuti*, meaning the established world turned on its head, and both amaru and pachacuti constituted important elements of the Taqui Onqoy, or "dance of disease," a large-scale movement determined to overthrow the spiritual and political rule of the Spanish during the late sixteenth century. In Sabine MacCormack's words, "The Taqui Onqoy marked the time when 'the world was turning round.' In terms reminiscent of Andean myths of creation, Andean leaders asserted that the victory of the huacas over the Spaniards and their god would shortly inaugurate a 'new world' of 'other people' and that the Spanish would be swallowed up in the sea."[70] In this paradigm, disease or poison became a symbol of Andean resistance to the cure/curate.

How did bezoar stones figure in the struggle of the huacas to overthrow the Spanish? This question can only be answered once we understand the role bezoars played in native pastoral communities. Because bezoars came from the camelids, they were deeply embedded in indigenous cultural practices and directly linked to the foundational myths of Andean cosmology. In his letter to Monardes, Pedro de Osma claimed that "indios amigos" told him that indigenous peoples also used the stones against poisons, poisoned wounds, and other pestilential illnesses.[71] While there is little evidence to support this claim, it is clear that bezoar stones were highly valued by herding communities and that they represented a kind of treasure. According to native foundational narratives, the camelids, especially the llamas and alpacas, had been sent to mankind by the deities, but they were only *on loan*, and their continuing presence depended primarily on the treatment they received. The appropriate care included providing the animals with adequate pasture and water, treating their maladies, protecting them from predators, and carrying out each year the proper ceremo-

69. Cristina Esteras Martín, "Acculturation and Innovation in Peruvian Viceregal Silverwork," in Phipps, Hecht, and Esteras Martín, *The Colonial Andes*, 66.

70. Sabine MacCormack, "*Pachacuti*: Miracles, Punishments, and Last Judgment: Visionary Past and Prophetic Future in Early Colonial Peru," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (1988): 983.

71. Monardes, *Historia medicinal*, 74r.

nies to the huacas. If the divinities believed that they had been forgotten, they could become angry and take the camelids away.[72] One early story explained that humanity would survive only as long as there were alpacas.[73] Because the camelids were and are so highly valued, anthropologist Jorge Flores Ochoa argues that it is not surprising that communities of the high puna region would carry out elaborate rituals designed to protect the health and well-being of these animals, whose numbers can be quickly and easily decimated by predators, thieves, natural disasters, and disease.[74]

Among the traditions that persist to the present are the carefully guarded ritual objects that pastoral families keep wrapped in small bundles of layered woven cloths. These sacred bundles, known as *señalu q'epi*, contain precious objects such as bezoars, small stones shaped like camelids, coca leaves, and other ceremonial items. Kept private from all but the family, they protect the wealth and livelihood of "their children": "For the herder, [the bundle] is both a 'mother and a father' that provides food and the possibility of survival. It should only be brought out when it is appropriate according to the ritual calendar. Otherwise, one has to perform a full ceremony of propitiation in order to prevent it from becoming angry enough to 'eat' someone, or make them sick and perhaps even die, while at the same time no longer protecting the herd."[75] The value of these bundles for pastoral families is unmistakable and the objects within should never be purchased. Instead, they are passed on to the eldest son of each generation, who protects their contents and makes certain that the rituals are carried out properly.[76] Designated by the term *illa*, the bezoars and stones that are kept in the bundles possess the quality of *enqa*, which is the vital generating force of life and the source of the family's happiness, abundance, and well-being. Like talismans, they protect the herds and consequently the herding families who depend on the health of the animals for their own subsistence.[77] When these illa have enqa, they are considered to carry masculine or feminine powers of reproduction: "The sex varies in accordance with the context of the prayers or songs being performed, or of the stage of the ceremony. Like mothers, they

72. Jorge A. Flores Ochoa, "Enqa, enqaychu, illa y khuya rumi," in *Pastores de puna: Uywamichiq punarunakuna*, ed. Jorge A. Flores Ochoa (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1977), 227.

73. Ibid., 234.

74. Ibid., 212.

75. Ibid., 214–16.

76. Ibid., 217, 235.

77. Ibid., 218–19.

conceive and give birth to offspring. Like fathers, they are the powerful machos with the desired nature and qualities to impregnate the females."[78] In part, then, the illas' power is actively sexual because through ritual celebration they ensure the reproduction of the herd, which is the family's "silver" and "gold."[79]

The illas' enqa is nourished and preserved through elaborate rituals and songs where women play a key role. Anthropologist Denise Arnold has explored the relationship between gender and the symbolic currency of the bundles for the rituals of reproduction in her analysis of midwife singers from the pastoral community of Qaqachaka, Bolivia. Arnold draws from numerous songs and stories to describe how women symbolically rebirth the herd animals:

> In rituals such as the marking of the animals, the women record certain named stone *illas*, said to generate the *ayllu* herds in their vicinity, as a part of this larger cosmic recycling of souls. The women retell the stories woven around these stones and name them in their songs. Each woman herder manages a ritual bundle of miniature *illas* found in such places, wrapped in cloth, and they are taken out and washed on these occasions, so that they gleam as if they were palpitating with new life. In songmaking, too, the women draw on these same key elements of stone node and woven wrapping to "envelop their animals in sound and color." Both combinations of stone and wrapping, in ritual and song, appeal to a common corporal matrix, a placental wrapping of a seed element, to effect the necessary transposition of the herd animals toward a cultural rebirth. In rebirthing their animals into human society, the women midwife-singers seem to drape them in cultural placentas, as woven cloth and fleece in sung wrappings.[80]

The midwife-singers remember the histories of these illas through their songs and the ritual act of cleansing and wrapping them, thereby transforming the stones into life-generating seeds that guarantee the reproduction of the herd and the community's future livelihood. Failure to carry out the ceremonial obligations may result in the loss of life, as the stones' generosity can take a dangerous turn. Becoming hungry, the stones satisfy their need by devouring

78. Ibid., 224.

79. Ibid., 226.

80. Denise Y. Arnold, "Midwife Singers: Llama-Human Obstetrics in Some Songs to the Animals by Andean Women," in *Quechua Verbal Artistry: The Inscription of Andean Voices. Arte expresivo Quechua: La inscripción de voces andinas*, ed. Guillermo Delgado-P. and John M. Schechter (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2004), 156.

people and animals in the vicinity.[81] Frank Salomon has observed that the priceless wrappings containing the treasured bezoar stones are important because they document a particular relationship among the individual, the family and its ancestors, the larger community, and the surrounding natural environment, of which the camelids are an indispensable, if not the principal, element. This relationship is one of reciprocity, and as a result it must continually be renewed through the proper ceremonies and rituals.[82]

Importantly, however, the gleaming energy of the illa's enqa also nurtures a cultural rebirth that goes beyond that of the individual pastoral family and its animals. Enqa has played a significant role as a generating life force for recent messianic ideology in the Andes and the persistent belief that the Inca will one day return, as anthropologist Guillermo Delgado-P. has shown. Drawing attention to the meaning of the word in Quechua, he explains how *enqay* refers to the action of stirring up embers and bringing fire back to life in all of its heat, light, and energy. Contemporary Andean social movements are nourished through enqa, he argues, as they look to the return of messianic leaders such as Tupak Amaru (*amaru* = serpent, Quechua) or Tupak Katari (*katari* = serpent, Aymara), who were apprehended by the Spanish colonial authorities toward the end of the eighteenth century and publicly drawn and quartered: "Hope emerges as the driving force of messianic ideology. The idea persists that those severed limbs, representing the divided or quartered body, become a metaphor of the indigenous peoples lying in wait and regenerating their energy, their *enqa* or *tupaq*, as once again the resplendent, re-membered body newly forms a vital and unified whole."[83] Enqa's resplendent energy that engenders and nourishes Andean resistance to colonialism is embodied in the bezoar stone or illa. For example, González Holguín translated *yllarini* as "to blaze, dazzle, shine, and illuminate," and *yllarik* as "a resplendent thing." [84] Antonio de la Calancha wondered at the range of different colors of Peruvian bezoars, including shining gold.[85] The

81. Flores Ochoa, "Enqa, enqaychu, illa y khuya rumi," 226.

82. Salomon, "Andean Opulence," 115–16. For further analysis of the role illas play in herding communities, see Denise Y. Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita, *Río de vellón, río de canto: Cantar a los animales, una poética andina de la creación.* Trans. Denise Y. Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita with Ian Marr (La Paz: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Carrerra de Literatura, Universidad Mayor de San Andres, 1998), especially 222–38. For a reading of the semiotics of the woven bundles, see Elayne Zorn, "Un análisis de los tejidos en los atados rituales de los pastores," *Revista Andina* 5, no. 2 (1987): 489–526.

83. Guillermo Delgado-P., "'*¡Katari, Jatariy!*' Una revisita al mesianismo y tres *canciones-memoria*," in Delgado-P. and Schechter, *Quechua Verbal Artistry*, 194.

84. González Holguín, *Vocabulario*, 367.

85. Calancha, *Crónica moralizada*, 1:129.

bezoar illa's energy thus regenerates and gives life to the persistence of Andean traditions and ways of knowing that continue to be under siege from colonialism. In this regard, it becomes clearer how the occult nature of the bezoar stone constituted a threat to the Spanish during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Precisely because of its ubiquitous presence in the homes and huacas of indigenous peoples in herding communities, the bezoar stone's enqa suggested that the poison of "idolatry" was potentially more powerful than its antidote (colonialism).

Translation and Appropriation

In the remaining pages, I will trace some of the ways that the Spanish colonizers attempted to appropriate the bezoar stone first by disentangling it from its Andean cultural context and then by repositioning it as a treasured commodity in the Western sense. It is important to stress from the outset, however, that present-day anthropologists' descriptions of its ongoing symbolic relevance for pastoral communities and indigenous movements provide ample evidence that these early efforts came up against resistance and met with only partial success. Spanish strategies used to colonize the bezoar stone and dissociate it from its role in the reproduction of Andean epistemologies emerge at the interstices of the early dictionaries, the colonial chronicles, and inquisition reports.[86] For example, as Delgado-P. has argued in the case of the dictionaries, Andean concepts translated into Spanish were often manipulated to conform to Spanish categories of knowledge and power, and in ways that benefited the colonizer.[87] The translations of *illa* into Spanish in the dictionaries and the accounts of illas in chronicles become an important case in point.

For instance, Bernabé Cobo noted how much indigenous peoples prized bezoars, yet he dismissed as superstition Andean cultural practices associated with them: "The Indians of Peru call the bezoar stone *illa*; as idolaters, they

86. My analysis for this last section takes as its point of departure studies by Regina Harrison and Guillermo Delgado-P. examining concrete ways that the early bilingual dictionaries and religious documents were tools used in the attempt to dismantle Andean epistemologies specifically through language. See Regina Harrison, "The Language and Rhetoric of Conversion in the Viceroyalty of Peru," *Poetics Today* 16, no. 1 (1995): 1–27; and Guillermo Delgado-P., "Una aproximación filológica para entender las luchas por la autonomía ayllica: El concepto Quechua del poder," in *Conocimiento indígena y globalización*, ed. Ethel Wara Alderete (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2005), 35–58.

87. Delgado P., "Una aproximación filológica," 39–40; Harrison, "Language and Rhetoric of Conversion," 3–4.

associate it with certain superstitions, one of which was to always carry it around so that they might become rich."[88] Conveying a frame of reference similar to Cobo's, the lexicographer González Holguín wrote that illa was a "very large or notable bezoar stone, the size of an egg or larger, one carried around out of superstition for wealth and good fortune."[89] Both Cobo's description and González Holguín's translation worked simultaneously on several levels. First of all, they took illa, a very complicated Andean cultural category as we have seen, and simplified it through translation to express meaning primarily related to riches in the Western sense. Drawing from the work of Hiroyasu Tomoeda, Delgado-P. described such a process of transformation as a struggle resulting in Spanish translations that "reduced, distorted, substituted, generalized or assumed unidirectional ideas in arbitrary fashion."[90] González Holguín's first definition of illa as a bezoar the size of an egg or larger transformed the stone into a commodity by reducing its significance to its economic value in the Western sense, since a stone of this size would have brought huge sums of money in Europe. The second part of his translation operated on more subtle levels when he denigrated the importance to Andeans of carrying illa around. What was being marginalized with this dismissal were traditional Andean symbols of power, which included illas and which authorities carried in bundles for ceremonial purposes and/or for reasons of governance.

González Holguín's subsequent entries added further nuance to the initial translation and transformation of *illa* by recodifying it not only as a valuable commodity but also as a European-style treasure. This definition, as I will show, helped to legalize the seizure of bezoars from homes and especially from huacas. And so, for example, he rendered *yllayoc runa* as "A very rich and fortunate man, who has and safeguards treasure." Working from Spanish to Quechua, the lexicographer translated the Spanish word for treasure as *illa curi* or *colque*, but again the translation did not carry any of the connotations of treasure in the Andean sense of the word, such as the examples looked at earlier.[91] Salomon characterized González Holguín's word choice as "a curious Quechua circum-

88. Bernabé Cobo, *Obras*, 130. In Cobo's description, the bezoar appeared to function as a sort of magic talisman that, if carried about, would bring wealth to its fortunate holder. Interestingly, many Europeans also believed the bezoar to have talismanic powers. Due to its occult properties, the bezoar stone could also be worn on a cord around the neck and kept next to one's heart, as Miguel Martínez de Leyua observed in 1597. Martínez de Leyua, *Remedios, preservativos, y cvrativos*, 128.

89. González Holguín, *Vocabulario*, 366.

90. Delgado P., "Una aproximación filológica," 39.

91. González Holguín, *Vocabulario*, 366, 679.

locution: 'Treasure, *ylla* gold or silver, and something made *ylla*; and to treasure something [is] *yllaycuni*.'"[92] I would argue that this rendition was strategic more than curious because it equated *illa* with gold and silver, making *illa* clearly recognizable to the Spanish as a form of treasure. Other variations of *illa* that the dictionary provided similarly associated it with wealth and riches. Thus, *yllayoc* was someone who "gets rich quickly or has good fortune"; *ylla huaci* denoted a "rich and abundant and fortunate house that has ylla"; and *ylla* as "everything that is old and safeguarded for many years."[93] Word choice such as "safeguarded for many years" formed part of the legal definition of what constituted a treasure.[94] Although Bertonio's Aymara–Spanish translations similarly indicated the value of bezoars for Europeans, he also provided additional information, specifying which animals had bezoars, where they were located in the animals' general anatomy, and, more ominously, how they were prized by Indian "sorcerers." Thus, under the Spanish entry *Piedra bazaar* one finds: "Hayntilla. Large [bezoar] stones: Illa, Llaullacasu."[95] Bertonio defined *hayntilla* as "Small bezoar stones found in the gut of vicuñas and 'carneros'; the large ones are called Illa," and *Llaullacasu* as "a small stone that looks like a llama, highly esteemed by sorcerers."[96] These llama-shaped stones were sometimes called *illas-llamas* and *conopas*, and all of these terms became part of the vocabulary of the campaigns of extirpation because for the Spanish visitors they denoted the presence of occult demonic practices.[97]

Both González Holguín's and Bertonio's translations helped to position the bezoar as a secret treasure and the illa as a treasured secret or sign of idolatry. Describing the many forms of Andean idolatry in his "Instrucción para descubrir todas las guacas del Pirú y sus camayos y haziendas" (ca. 1585), Cristóbal de Albornoz, the famous priest who had been involved in the suppression of the

92. Salomon, "Andean Opulence," 124.

93. González Holguín, *Vocabulario*, 366–67.

94. The jurist Juan de Solórzano y Pereira defined treasure as "any money, gold, silver, jewels, or other precious personal property and of whose owners there is no information, and these items, having been placed or hidden long ago in secret places, are preserved for the future." Juan de Solórzano y Pereira, *Política indiana*, 5 vols. (Madrid and Buenos Aires: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1972), 4:335.

95. Bertonio, *Vocabulario*, 344.

96. Ibid., 535, 594. The Spanish often referred to Andean camelids as *carneros* (sheep, rams) and *ovejas* (ewes, sheep).

97. For a discussion of conopas, see Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640–1750* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), 75–100. See also Max Uhl, "Las llamitas de piedra del Cuzco," *Revista Histórica* 1 (1906): 388–92.

Taqui Onqoy resistance, provided detailed accounts of the kinds of huacas for which visitors of idolatry should be on the lookout. Included among them were shrines and tombs where Indians reportedly kept gold, silver, and other minerals and precious stones for worshipping.[98] Albornoz devoted a paragraph to the large caches of bezoar stones he had uncovered:

> Likewise, in the native cattle known as llamas, there can be found some stones that we call bezoars, and some of them are very large and heavy. These have been collected and stored in areas where there are native cattle and [the Indians] worship them in great reverence, calling them *illas llamas*. I have found them in many provinces where these cattle are, and have had them burned, because [Indians] make use of them in many of their superstitions and they believe that when they worship this stone, no lamb will abort, nor will anything bad happen to their cattle, nor will they catch the terrible skin disease known as "carache" that afflicts these animals. And ever since they have realized that we are interested in these stones, they have hidden them away, especially the large ones, because since the smaller ones are so easily found they give them to us, not realizing the virtue that they have. I publicly burned many trunkfuls of these stones after I discovered them, in the main squares of numerous provinces of this bishopric.[99]

Albornoz must have caught his reader's attention when he indicated the quantities of bezoar stones to be found in areas where there were camelids. Although claiming that the Indians used them for superstitious purposes, he also gave a sense of their value for the herding communities: the stones protected the animals from abortions and from the highly contagious and devastating skin disease known as "carache." The priest suggests in his report that the Indians compromised by turning over the smaller bezoars while hiding the large stones from the Spanish. Albornoz's theory was that the Indians seemed willing to part with the small bezoars because they were unaware of their value (*virtud*). His commentary indicates that even though he understood their worth,

98. Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), 185; and Luis Millones, "Las informaciones de Cristóbal de Albornoz: Documentos para el estudio del Taki Onqoy," *Sondeos* 79 (1971).

99. Pierre Duviols, "Un inédit de Cristóbal de Albornoz: 'La instrucción para descubrir todas las guacas del Pirú y sus camayos y haziendas,'" *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 56, no. 1 (1967): 18.

he nonetheless burned large numbers of them openly as a visible, public lesson for the Indians.

In his introduction to Albornoz's *Instrucción*, Pierre Duviols makes the compelling argument that the text reads as if it had been commissioned by a high authority, most likely the viceroy himself. According to Duviols, even though the title announced that the text was a practical guide to the extirpation of idolatries, the document served equally as a vade mecum for the treasure hunter. Given the viceroyalty's perennial financial troubles, it made sense that there would be keen interest in the wealth uncovered from the huacas.[100] Viceroy Francisco de Toledo's *Disposiciones gubernativas* certainly bears out Duviol's hypothesis. Of particular interest is the ordinance outlining the procedures to be followed when a huaca was discovered and dismantled. Toledo ordered that for any treasure that once belonged to principal authorities and leaders, including gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and other items, found in grave sites, mines, tombs, temples, and religious houses of idols and gods, the viceroyalty was due the *quinto real*. For gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and so forth discovered in peoples' houses, religious sites, burial grounds, and elsewhere, the viceroyalty expected to receive payment in half. In other words, the huacas should be cleared out to discourage Andean idolatry, but the viceroyalty was to receive its due. To ensure that this happened, Toledo included specific instructions regarding who was to be present when a huaca was dismantled and who was to write an inventory of the value of the goods found.[101]

The viceroy's ordinances clearly challenged Bartolomé de Las Casas's earlier writing on the subject. Las Casas had argued against the right of the Spanish to these treasures in his *De thesauris*, which he finished in 1563.[102] His position

100. Ibid., 11.

101. Guillermo Lohmann Villena and María Justina Sarabia Viejo, eds., *Francisco de Toledo: Disposiciones gubernativas para el virreinato del Perú, 1569–1574*, 2 vols. (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos / Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas / Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Sevilla, 1986–89), 1:286–88.

102. In this text, Las Casas put forward three fundamental propositions spelling out the reasons why the Spanish had no legal jurisdiction over these riches, propositions which he then explicated in all of their legal ramifications. Summarizing, the three propositions argued first that these riches had been used to glorify and honor the dead with whom they had been buried. Secondly, the treasures and the glory and fame associated with them also honored the living who continued to have connections with the dead. Thirdly, these treasures had not been abandoned; rather they belonged to the families of the dead. See Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los tesoros del Perú*, trans. and ed. Angel Losada García (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1958), 11–27. His general conclusion argued that it was a mortal sin to disturb a tomb in the search for treasure. *Los tesoros del*

did not appear to carry much weight with subsequent legislation. Upholding Toledo's laws, the prominent jurist Juan de Solórzano y Pereira argued that it was perfectly legal to remove treasures found in tombs and huacas so long as any bodies uncovered were treated respectfully and carefully put back in place.[103] These procedures were systematized in his *Política indiana* (1648). Specifically, in the chapter "De los tesoros, huacas, o enterramientos que se hallan en las Indias y de sus derechos; y si es lícito cavarlos por esta causa," he defined what constituted a treasure, who had the right to look for treasure in the huacas, and what percentages of the riches discovered should be handed over to the crown.[104] Like Toledo, Solórzano y Pereira's concern was to clarify that the riches, even those discovered in the huacas and shrines, belonged to the royal authorities rather than to the church, as some had argued. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss Solórzano y Pereira's entire commentary regarding the discovery of treasure in huacas, it is important to underscore his argument that the laws did not prohibit the ransacking of huacas if the search for treasure was undertaken so that the wealth might be used to further the public good, as exemplified by the actions of the crown, rather than for reasons of personal greed. Solórzano y Pereira concluded his chapter by specifying that for those treasures discovered in huacas and other temples and shrines, the riches should be divided according to the following percentages: the assayer should receive one and a half percent; following this the royal fifth, or quinto real, should be deducted for the crown, while the remaining amount should be divided in half, with 50 percent going to the person who discovered the treasure and 50 percent to the tribunal or *cámara*.[105]

In addition to the viceroyalty claiming its share in the wealth, there is also evidence that extirpators and others did not always burn the idolatrous items discovered or seized, nor turn them over to the royal authorities. Solórzano y Pereira had observed the value of bezoar stones while noting that to his knowledge the crown received little revenue from them: "And so, for as much as these stones are removed and collected, I have never seen any *quinto* or other tax be paid to His Majesty for them."[106] Reflecting again on the value of bezoar stones for Europeans and the prices they would bring, one can surmise that many a

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Perú, 33. On the topic of Las Casas and the restitution of treasures, see also MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*, 240–48.

103. Solórzano y Pereira, *Política indiana*, 4:342.

104. Ibid., 4:35–44.

105. Ibid., 4:342–44.

106. Ibid., 4:326.

bezoar may have accidently been slipped into a pocket or two, only to be sold later. Regarding the bezoars that Viceroy Toledo sent to Felipe II for his collection, the royal inventory specifically mentioned that many of the stones, like the idols, came from peoples' houses.[107] As was suggested earlier, in Europe, such a story would only enhance the stone's value by endowing it with an even greater aura of exoticism.

Bezoar stones thus represented a priceless commodity to both native Andeans and the Europeans. For indigenous peoples, having bezoars seized from their homes during the campaigns of extirpation must have signalled indeed a kind of pachacuti, or the overturning of life as they knew it, and the commencement of a new epoch marked by hunger, due to the threat of the disappearance of the camelids that were being reclaimed by the angry huacas.

Paradoxically, then, bezoar stones both gave life and took life away. Some historians of science have dismissed the bezoar stone, claiming that Monardes made a mistake by including it in his books when he had so many more genuine New World medicinals to introduce to early modern Europe.[108] Skepticism regarding the bezoar's medical efficacy actually began with the stone's introduction into Europe and by the mid-nineteenth century, with few exceptions, medical interest in the bezoar had completely waned. In 1868, the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences Médicales* dismissed bezoars, mentioning them solely for their historical appeal: "In the Middle Ages, drugs from Arabic medicine were introduced into Europe along with the superstitious ideas of the Orient. Bezoars were considered to be endowed with marvelous abilities; they expelled venoms, they neutralized poisons, they restored life that was on the verge of expiring, etc., etc. These prodigious attributes existed only in the imagination of those extolling bezoars. Today, these so highly praised medicinals are of historical interest only."[109] As this entry indicates, by the time of the encyclopedia's publication most Europeans considered the bezoar to be solely the stuff of Eastern superstition and Western fantasy, relevant at best as a historical curiosity. The bezoar stone continued to incite curiosity after medical and scientific interest in it had faded, however, appearing occasionally in nineteenth-century travelers' accounts. The fascinating and complicated story of the role played by the bezoar as protagonist in the politico-cultural history of European medicine

107. Sánchez Cantón, *Inventarios reales*, 1:275.

108. See Boxer, *Two Pioneers of Tropical Medicine*, 24, and Guerra, *Nicolás Bautista Monardes*, 78.

109. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*, vol. 9, *Bej–Ble* (Paris: Victor Masson et Fils; P. Asselin, Sr. de Labé, Place de l'École-de-Médecine, 1868), 221.

and travel literature must be saved for another time. During the early colonial period, however, the bezoar stone constituted a surprising meeting point for different discourses on the intertwined themes of wonder, profit, occult forces, and hidden treasure. Indeed, as I have argued here, the bezoar stone is a tremendously productive site for reading the complex intersections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial commercial interests and knowledge production for Europeans and Andeans alike.

From Marvelous Antidote to the Poison of Idolatry: The Transatlantic Role of Andean Bezoar Stones during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

Marcia Stephenson

Introducing intertwined themes of profit, the hunt for treasure, and the excavation of camelid bodies; and drawing from the analysis of Renaissance medical books, bilingual Aymara–Spanish and Quechua–Spanish dictionaries, inquisition records, and inventories of curiosity cabinets, this essay considers how Peruvian bezoar stones acquired transatlantic importance following their discovery in 1568 by a Spanish soldier. In spite of its less-than-glamorous physiological genesis as a calcinated concretion formed in the digestive tract of ruminants, including the four species of Andean camelids, the bezoar stone played a significant yet academically overlooked role in the social and economic history of modern Europe and Spanish America for its use as an antidote to poisons, and the stones constituted one of the most sought-after objects for the fashionable cabinets of curiosities belonging to Europe's powerful elites. However, for indigenous pastoral peoples, bezoars were central to the reproduction of native cultural practices and directly linked to the foundational myths of Andean cosmology. The stones were believed to protect the herds and the shepherds, for whom the camelids represented the primary source of wealth. Consequently, the bezoar stone takes on unforeseen significance as a neglected site where the colonial drama of competing epistemologies was enacted.