A few years after the conquest, when the first Spanish expeditions began to push into the Amazon forests on the trail of abundant and enticing ‘noticias ricas’ (news of rich lands), their imagination had already been piqued by certain notions as to what they would find in this mysterious and inhospitable region. These ideas drew in part on the expectations and preconceptions brought from the Old World, but mostly they came from local sources. In most of the early Peruvian chronicles, the first images of the Amazonian Indians came only through the filter of the Andean perspective.

In 1981, Renard-Casevitz remarked that the view of the montaña (high jungle of the Eastern Andean slopes) and the Amazonian lowlands from the Andes is always a view from the top down, from ‘civilization’ to ‘barbarism’. This perspective was developed over many centuries during the pre-Columbian era by the close links and opaque frontiers between the two regions, by exchange and migration, as well as by conflict, rivalry and prejudice. The limited success of the Inca state in its eastward expansion – simply compare the size of the empire from north to south, as opposed to its obvious narrowness from east to west – and the difficulties in defining and controlling the jungle peripheries turned the Amazonian Indian into the principal bearer of the stamp of ‘otherness’, indomitable and to be feared, respected in some regards, dismissed and mocked in others.

All the Peruvian chronicles that discuss the natives of the montaña and the lowland plains bear to a greater or lesser extent this stamp of Andean prejudices. To analyse them in the most illustrative and concise way, I here take three canonical texts: the Nueva Corónica by Guamán Poma de Ayala, the Comentarios Reales by Garcilaso de la Vega, and the Relación de antigüedades of Joan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui. (For further discussion of Guamán Poma, see Chapter 5.2 by Bertazoni.) Of course, this selection of texts is somewhat arbitrary and might be
challenged on a number of grounds. For example, it might be noted that Garcilaso de la Vega’s writings are more riddled with European clichés than those of many Spanish authors, despite his blood relation to the land of his birth. It could also be argued that another chronicler, Juan de Betanzos, had a more immediate and prolonged contact with noble circles in Cuzco. Nevertheless, to set ourselves a task achievable within the constraints of this brief chapter, we shall limit ourselves to these three sources.

Of course, ‘the Andes’ constitute no uniform or undifferentiated mass. Each of the authors discussed here came from a different social and geographical context: Garcilaso from the native and mestizo nobility in Cuzco, Guamán Poma from the Yaravilca ethnic group of Huánuco, and Pachacuti Yamqui from the province of Canas and Canchis. This necessarily entails differences in their respective backgrounds and viewpoints. In addition, it should be remembered that the ‘Andean perspective’, in its pure state, is mediated in these documents by several decades of drastic cultural change, and that what we trace here is in truth only its remote echoes.

So far as is known, none of our three authors was particularly familiar with Amazonia. This is readily substantiated in the case of Guamán Poma by reference to his celebrated mapamundi, in which the eastern regions are compressed into a narrow strip of thick jungle inhabited, among other creatures, by unicorns and winged dragons, and through which meanders the solitary and unrealistic Marañón river (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1615/2008, ff.983–4 [1001–2]; mapamundi reproduced in Chapter 5.2). Pachacuti Yamqui, in a passage devoted to female warriors (a clearly Amazonian motif), includes Coquimbo, Chile and Tucumán among the neighbouring provinces, opening up an enormous geographical panorama (Pachacuti c. 1613/1993, f.29r). The most learned of the three, Garcilaso (who may have travelled in his youth to the coca fields of Cosñipata, in Amazonian lowlands near Cuzco) makes a typical mistake when he supposes that the Madre de Dios (Amarumayu) is a tributary of the River Plate. None of the three, in describing the jungle ‘savages’, gives evidence of having had direct contact with them.

‘Nations’ and ‘provinces’

Firstly, let us consider the proper nouns (ethnonyms and ‘provincial’ names) associated with the eastern regions by each of our chroniclers. Among the most frequently recurring terms are Anti, Chuncho and Chiriguana. We know that in historical sources devoted to given regions of Amazonia, these names have more specific meanings: the Antis are generally Arawak-speaking groups (Machiguenga and Asháninka, among others) of the upper Madre de Dios, the Urubamba, the lower Apurimac and their tributaries (Renard-Casevitz et al. 1988, 81–99). The Chunchos generally inhabit the lower Madre de Dios, the left bank of the Beni river, and Apolobamba; most of them were speakers of Tacanan languages (see
Tyuleneva 2012, 49; Ferrié 2018). The Chiriguanas are the Guaraní who raided along the south-eastern frontiers of Tahuantinsuyu (Combès 2010, 129–138). In our three authors, however, these terms are used generically, with neither ethnic sensibility nor any very clearly defined territories.

Anti or Ande is the vaguest and most general term. Since it was used to denote one of the four suyus or ‘quarters’ of the Inca Empire, it was often applied by Peruvian chroniclers to the whole of the population of this ‘Antisuyu’. To add to the confusion, it was later used to refer to the entire mountain range of western South America, which thus became the ‘Andes’ that we know today. Thus, the Andes–Amazonia duality present in the colonial texts now seems inverted to us: in their formulations of highlands/Andes, or Cuzco/Andes, or Peru/Andes, the term ‘Andes’ in fact refers to the Amazonian region. In principle, Antisuyu formed part of the Inca state. In practice, when the chroniclers tell of Inca expeditions against the Antis/Andes, it is understood that they are referring to vastly greater territories, whose limits extend eastwards beyond the visible horizon (see Guamán Poma de Ayala 1615/2008, f.103, f.154 [156], f.269 [271], f.292 [294], f.323 [325], ff.983–4 [1001–2]; Pachacuti c. 1613/1993, f.23r, f.27v, f.29r; Garcilaso 1609/1985, book 4, chap. XVI; book 7, chap. XIII–XIV).

In Guamán Poma, Chuncho seems to be synonymous with Anti/Ande, and in many passages the two names are used together (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1615/2008, f.103, f.323 [325], f.439 [441], f.461 [463], f.1073 [1083]). On one occasion, a hybrid term is even coined: Andesuyo-Chuncho (f.154 [156]). In his mapamundi, the ‘warlike Indians called Anti Suyo Chunchos’ occupy a peripheral region between the known world and the jungles inhabited by monsters and wild beasts (ff.983–4 [1001–2]). For Garcilaso, by contrast, the warlike Chuncho inhabitants of the lower section of the Madre de Dios appear to be a sub-group of the Antis (book 7, chap. XIV).

All three chroniclers mention the Chiriguana. Guamán Poma calls them Chiriuanais and counts them among the tribes of the montaña (f.873 [887], f.901 [915]), although he places them not in Antisuyu but in Collasuyu (f.271 [273], f.325 [327]). Pachacuti Yamqui only mentions them in passing (f.39v). Garcilaso, who devotes greatest attention to them, classifies them among the Antis and sets them to the east of Charcas, in ‘very bad lands’, ‘of very little use’. He presents them as the model and maximum expression of barbarity: ‘the natives were most savage, worse than the wild beasts’. Their name was evoked to frighten small children (book 7, chap. XVII). Not entirely without gratification, Garcilaso compiles a long list of examples of their bestial behaviour: they had neither laws nor ‘good customs’; they built neither villages nor houses; ‘they went naked’; they practised incest between close relatives; they ate human flesh and drank human blood, and preferred human flesh to that of animals; they attacked neighbouring villages and killed all their captives so as to eat them; they ate their own dead; they had no religion; and they buried their dead (or rather, the bones left over from their feasts) in crevices in the crags or hollows in the trees. As we shall see, many of
these reprehensible characteristics were often attributed to Amazonian natives in general.

*Anti, Chuncho* and *Chiriguana* as generic terms for the Indians of the eastern regions are not, of course, exclusive to the texts of Guamán Poma, Pachacuti Yamqui and Garcilaso de la Vega. They are found in most of the documents that, in one way or another, seek to sketch out a portrait of Amazonia as seen from the Andes. Let us now consider some of the more concrete names used by each of our authors.

Both Pachacuti Yamqui (f.27v, f.29r) and Guamán Poma (f.176 [178], f.323 [325], f.784 [798], f.901 [915], f.982 [1000], ff.983–4 [1001–2], f.1032 [1040], f.1064 [1074], f.1073 [1083], f.1074 [1084]), two chroniclers known for their fluency in Quechua, repeatedly use the term *Guarmi Auca/Uarmi Auca*, which can be literally translated as ‘woman warrior(s)’. Pachacuti Yamqui includes a passage referring to ‘a province solely of women’ (f.27v), and then adds that Inca troops conquered the land of the *Guarmi Aucas* ‘where they left a group of men to serve as studs [para que servieran de garañones]’ (f.29r).

Guamán Poma does not comment explicitly on the meaning of the term *Uarmi Auca*, but in his chapter on fiestas in Antisuyu, he describes the dance of this name, performed by men dressed up as women: ‘dancing in a circle holding hands, they make merry and have their fiesta and dance *Uarmi Auca*, all the men dressed like women with their feathers’ (f.323 [325]). These, doubtless, are the famous ‘Amazons’ or ‘women without husbands’, who feature on every respectable list of South American geographical myths (see for example Levillier 1976).

In Guamán Poma (but not Pachacuti Yamqui), the name *Uarmi Auca* is closely associated with another term that morphs between a proper name and an ethnonym: *Ancauallo*. Often, the two terms appear together, with no comma to separate them, and seem to refer to the same group. The mapamundi describes them as ‘warlike Indians who were not conquered by the Incas, called *Uarmiauca Anquuallo*’ (this distinguishes them from the *Antis/Chunchos* who were subjects of the Incas). They inhabit ‘another sierra towards the Northern Sea’, a hypothetical range that extended along the whole Atlantic coast, beyond the woods with unicorns and dragons, clearly beyond tangible geographical space (ff.983–4 [1001–2]).

Ancauallo (or Hanco Huallu) Chanca is quite a popular figure in the Andean chronicles, most of which place him in the time of the war between the Incas and the Chancas, and immediately thereafter. This is the case with Pachacuti Yamqui (ff.18r–20v) and Garcilaso (book 5, chap. XXVI; for the versions by other authors, see also Nir 2008). Generally, Ancauallo is a Chanca chief or captain, who makes a temporary alliance with the Incas after the war, but ultimately opts for independence and flees with his people towards undefined eastern regions. Some authors identify these regions with Chachapoyas, while others seem to point further to the south. Guamán Poma and Pachacuti Yamqui convert Ancauallo’s name into an ethnonym that includes all of his fugitive subjects (see Pachacuti, f.20v: ‘The Ancoallos go deep into the montaña carrying their idol’).
In Guamán Poma, Ancauallo Changa is a semi-mythical figure from the time of Manco Capac, and emerges from a lake with fifty billion Indians, with ambitions to ‘become Inca’ (in what is probably a metamorphosis of the motif of the Chanca invasion itself), and is finally killed by the true Inca. The numerous subjects of Ancouallo, taking his name as their ethnonym, ‘withdrew to the montaña and passed over to the other part of the Northern Sea, in the lands and sierra beyond the montaña, a cold and hard territory where they remain to this day, and they are pagan Indians’ (f.85).

The linked pair formed by the names Ancouallo and Uarmi Auca in the chronicle of Guamán Poma is not easy to explain. At first glance, they could be interpreted simply as the names of two neighbouring groups. But on several occasions, the two are so intimately united that they seem rather to be two parts of the same ethnonym. If we recall the ‘stud men’ that, according to Pachacuti Yamqui, the Inca army left behind among the Guarmi Aucas, and also if (getting ahead of ourselves for a moment) we reference the Inca expedition to the Musus, described by Garcilaso, when the Inca soldiers receive Musu women as wives, then a recurrent pattern emerges based on the formation of Andean enclaves in the lowlands out of a masculine element of Andean or newcomer origin and a local, feminine counterpart. Perhaps the Ancouallo–Uarmi Auca duo provides a further example of this pattern, albeit a rather sketchy one.

It is worth pausing to consider the ritual dance called Uarmi Auca, described by Guamán Poma as the most representative of the Antisuyu festivals: ‘the fiesta of the Andesuyos from Cuzco to the montaña and the other part towards the Northern Sea is sierra [sic]. They sing and dance Uarmi Auca, Ancauallo. There are many pagan people, the Antis and Chunchus sing and dance’ (f.323 [325]). Although we cannot be sure whether this author saw the dance with his own eyes, it seems clear from the context that this is no imaginary fiesta from the impossibly remote lands of the Uarmi Auca, but rather the tradition of another group of Antis, nearer to the highlands, who personify the Uarmi Auca. The description has an accompanying drawing (f. 322 [324]) which bears the annotation ‘Curipata anti’. This name might offer a clue as to the specific location in which the dance was held – Coripata, in the Bolivian yungas? – though in the times of the chronicler, Coripata must have been a relatively common toponym. The custom of representing ethnic groups from distant regions through dance, with masks and costumes, persists to this day in Paucartambo (which, it might be noted, formed part of the highland extension of Antisuyu), and in many other places in the Peruvian highlands. It is possible that Guamán Poma’s notion of the Uarmi Auca was formed precisely on the basis of this dance and the interpretation accorded to it.

Today, a widespread theory would have it that the legend of the ‘Amazons’ of South America, who feature in colonial texts, was simply imported to the local context from the classical tradition of the Old World. But the evident popularity of the Quechua expression Guarmi Auca, and above all the existence of a dance with the same name, might be taken as evidence of the indigenous roots of this geographical
It appears that the tribe of warrior women provoked abundant comment in the Andes even before the arrival of the Europeans.

Turning our attention to Pachacuti Yamqui’s *Relación*, in addition to the *Guarmi Aucas*, we find a series of other jungle ‘nations’ and ‘provinces’ mentioned in the context of Inca incursions into the eastern regions (see also Tyuleneva 2011). Among them are the Opatiri and Manare, both of which names Renard-Casevitz identifies with the Arawak and related groups of the upper Madre de Dios, Urubamba, and Apurímac (Renard-Casevitz et al. 1988, 81–99).

But the most striking ‘province’ of all those listed by Pachacuti Yamqui is that of *Escay Oyas* (‘two faces’ in Quechua): '[the Inca expedition] encountered a great kingdom, called Escay Oya, a rich land, and its people far more warlike than any of the nations here, who it is said feed on human flesh. And they know how to shoot poisonous and venomous [arrows] like people who make pacts with devils, and they are great bowmen, with whom two very hard battles were fought’. Pachacuti also mentions in passing that ‘this province is called Dorado’ (f.28r). This latter detail brings to mind one of so many versions of the ‘news of rich lands’ that circulated in the Andes at the time, raising hopes and drawing hundreds of dreamers beyond the world of maps. Renard-Casevitz, giving Pachacuti Yamqui’s text a more tangible and concrete orientation, identifies its *Escay Oya* with the *Iscaycingas* (two-noses) of other chronicles, and places them on the river Ene (Renard-Casevitz et al. 1988, 89).

Garcilaso demonstrates familiarity with the geography of the upper Madre de Dios (the details of which he notes with considerable accuracy in sections devoted to the conquest of the coca-producing valleys by Inca Roca: book 4, chap. XVI), though his knowledge of the rest of the eastern regions is sketchy at best. His most extensive reference to Amazonia is structured around the Inca expedition to the *Musus* or *Mojos*. Throughout the colonial period this name, the widespread use of which seems to date from the expedition of Pedro Anzúrez to the river Tuichi in 1538–9 (Tyuleneva 2015), was applied to widely dispersed locations and became one of the most sought-after of the shifting goals of the treasure-hunters. Its application to the savannahs of the Mamoré (Llanos de Mojos) is probably a late phenomenon (see Combès 2012; Tyuleneva 2012, 188–98).

Garcilaso’s ‘province’ of the *Musus/Mojos*, ‘a land with many warlike people, fertile in its own way’, supposedly lay 200 leagues from Cuzco in a little-defined region. It was reached via the Amarumayu (Madre de Dios), which for Garcilaso united all the great rivers of southern South America, and in turn joined (according to him) the River Plate. The Incas reached the *Musus* exhausted, their ranks thinned after conflicts with the *Chunchos* of the river banks (a clear distinction is made here between the *Chunchos* and the *Musus*). The *Musus* ‘rejoiced to receive the friendship of the Incas and to embrace their idolatry, laws, and customs, for they seemed good to them, and they promised to govern themselves by them and to worship the Sun as their principal god. But they did not wish to submit to the Inca as vassals,
since he had not conquered them and subjected them by arms ... The Musus gave them their daughters as wives and rejoiced in the relationship they thus formed, and today hold them in great veneration and are ruled by them in peace and war'. It is an idyllic portrait, in line with the general tenor of the Comentarios, in which the main goal of the well-meaning Incas was 'to raise [the Amazonian 'nations'] out of the barbarous and inhuman customs they had, and to bring them knowledge of their father the Sun' (book 7, chap. XIV).

Characteristics of Amazonians as seen from the Andes

We turn next to considering those general characteristics attributed to all the natives of Amazonia by our three authors.

Nudity, body decoration, use of feathers

Nudity is among the most typical and obvious attributes that distinguish the ‘savages’ of Antisuyu from the ‘political nations’ of the Andean highlands. In four of the six of Guamán Poma’s drawings that show the inhabitants of Antisuyu, they appear naked or semi-naked (f.155, f.175 [177], f.291 [293], f.322 [324]), and in the written text of the Corónica this aspect is also reiterated several times (f. 323 [325], f.334 [336], f.948 [962]). By contrast, Guamán Poma’s Ancauallos ‘have clothes like the Indians of this kingdom’, apparently due to their ‘civilized’ Andean origins (f.323 [325]). The section devoted to the noble lady of Antisuyu, Capac Mallquima, reads: ‘this said lady, though they are well made and very beautiful, whiter than a Spanish lady, nevertheless they wear [only] bunches of grass, and some of them stripped naked, for this is their caste and nature, both men and women’ (f.176 [178]). Guamán Poma is unique among the three chroniclers in remarking upon the physical appearance of the Antis, emphasizing their light complexion with some admiration (‘they are very white, like the Spanish’, f.901 [915]). It is not possible to say with certainty whether degree of whiteness as an aesthetic criterion existed in the Andes prior to the Spanish conquest, or if it responds to an imported scale of prestige. Garcilaso also mentions the nudity of the Chunchos: ‘because that land and region are very hot, they went about naked, with only loincloths’ (book 7, chap. XIV).

Other common motifs in descriptions of the appearance of the Antis and the Chunchos include body paint: ‘they are stained and smeared all over their bodies with mantor [annato, a reddish pigment]’ (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1615/2008, f.176 [178]); ‘their faces, arms and legs are coloured with red ochre, and their whole bodies, with different colours’ (Garcilaso 1609/1985, book 7, chap. XIV); and feather adornments: ‘they wore great feathered headdresses, of parrot
and macaw’ (Garcilaso 1609/1985, book 7, chap. XIV). Guamán Poma includes impressive feather headdresses and adornments in his drawings showing the Anti captain Capac Apo Ninarua (f.167 [169]; image reproduced in Chapter 5.2) and the dancers of the Uarmi Auca (f.322 [324]), and writes of ‘feather costumes’ in funeral rites in Antisuyu (f.292 [294]).

**Worship of jaguars and snakes, and other aspects of religion**

As well as what was understood as the inferiority and barbarism of the appearance of Amazonians, a further series of stereotypes referred to their spiritual barbarity. Andean beliefs, regarded as ‘enlightened’, are set in opposition to the ‘savage’ Amazonian cults. All three chroniclers were good Catholics, and for these writers, Christian norms were the basic reference point and measure of all things. Inca religion, on this scale, occupied an intermediate level; for Garcilaso, it sat not far from the monotheistic standard, to which he sought at any cost to compare his own simplified version of the cult of the sun and the worship of the supposed creator god. Meanwhile, the spiritual universe of the hapless Antis lay sunk in the most brutal form of paganism.

Garcilaso does not go into any great detail, limiting himself to a dismissive comment on the ‘animals, sticks and stones, and other vile things’ worshipped by the Musus (book 7, chap. XIV). Pachacuti Yamqui accuses the Escay Oya people of ‘having pacts with demons’ (f.28r). Guamán Poma pays the greatest attention to the topic of religion and beliefs: ‘they worship the jaguar, the otorongo, and the amaro, the snake, the serpent, they worship out of fear, not because these things are uacas or idols, but because they are fierce animals that eat people, they think that if they worship them they will not be eaten’ (f.269 [271]). In Pachacuti Yamqui’s Relación, when the Incas undertake the first conquest of Antisuyu beyond the Paucartambo cordillera, they encounter a ‘fearsome snake, which they say ate many people’; it is defeated by an eagle (f.23r). The serpent figures as a symbol of the Antis, while the eagle protects the Inca army.

Guamán Poma relates how Inca Roca and his son, Otorongo Achachi, both members of Inca royalty who nevertheless had close blood ties with Antisuyu, possessed the ability to turn themselves into jaguars: ‘they say that [Inca Roca] could turn into a jaguar, and his son as well, and that is how he conquered any Chuncho’ (f.103, see also ff.155–4 [156]). Another object of veneration among the Antis mentioned by Guamán Poma is the coca leaf (f.269 [271]). In his account, it was precisely Inca Roca and his son who introduced the use of coca among the Incas, importing it from Antisuyu (f.103, f.154 [156]). Garcilaso similarly relates the reign of Inca Roca to the establishment of the coca fields of the valleys of the upper Madre de Dios (book 4, chap. XVI), but fails to mention the ceremonial use of the plant among the Antis.
Guamán Poma describes funerary rites in Antisuyu thus: ‘As soon as [the deceased] takes his last breath, they dress him in certain feather costumes they make, and they remove the feathers, and strip him and wash him, and they begin to butcher him, and they take the bones and the Indians carry them off, and neither the men nor the women weep, and they place them in a tree they call *uitaca*, where the worms have made a hole, they place them there and they seal it all very well. And from that moment, they never see him again in all their lives, nor do they remember him, and neither do they know any other ceremony like the Indians of the highlands’ (f.292 [294]; see also Chapter 5.2). Though Guamán Poma was a true and faithful Catholic, his voice here betrays a discreet reproach, not only for the custom of cannibalizing the bodies, but for the absence of laments and ceremonial and for the fact that the deceased is never to be seen again. From the context it is clear that a dignified, respectful treatment of the dead consists of a burial with grave goods, accompanied by a given set of rituals, with periodic subsequent acts of homage and care.

Warlike behaviour

Despite their ‘beastlike’ customs, the natives of Antisuyu are presented as valiant warriors and honourable adversaries, which helps to justify the repeated failure of Inca military undertakings in the east. Guamán Poma attributes warlike qualities both to the *Ancouallos* (f.85, f.982 [1000]) and to the *Antis-Chunchos* (ff.983–4 [1001–2]), emphasizing that, in contrast to many docile Andean groups, the ‘Indians of the montaña’ often presented violent resistance to the Spaniards (f.1068 [1078]). As mentioned, Pachacuti Yamqui writes of the province of the *Escay Oyas*: ‘the people there [are] far more warlike than any of the nations here’ (f.28r). Garcilaso tells of the exhausting battles that the Inca expedition had to fight on its way to the *Musus*, and describes their province itself as ‘a land peopled by many warlike folk’, whose inhabitants refuse to submit to the military might of Tahuantinsuyu (book 7, chap. XIV).

The three chroniclers, like many other authors, comment on the skill of the Amazonian natives with bow and arrow, a warlike art quite different from Andean tactics and weapons. Guamán Poma portrays both Otorongo Achachi, the Inca prince with jungle allegiances (f.155), and the captain of Antisuyu Capac Apo Ninarua (f.167 [169]), with a bow and arrows (illustrations reproduced in Chapter 5.2). He also states that the dressed-up dancers of the *Uarmi Auca* carried arrows while they danced (f.323 [325]). The *Escay Oyas* of Pachacuti Yamqui are ‘great bowmen’ (f.28r). The *Chunchos* of Garcilaso carry ‘bows and arrows as weapons of war, which are what all the nations of the Antis use most often’ (book 7, chap. XIV). To this traditional Amazonian weapon, Pachacuti Yamqui adds the ability to ‘shoot poisonous and venomous [arrows]’ (f.28r).
Cannibalism

Cannibalism is the most notorious and scandalous feature of life among the Indians of the montaña, and what definitively sets them apart from the ‘political’ Andean societies. Garcilaso emphasizes cannibalism only in the above-mentioned case, of the Chiriguanas, but not when he writes of the Anti, the Chuncho, or the Musu. Pachacuti Yamqui gives us but a terse note to the effect that the Escay Oyas tribe ‘feeds on human flesh’ (f.28r). By contrast, Guamán Poma devotes two passages to this matter. In his chapter on funerary customs among the Antis, he describes their mortuary cannibalism: ‘since they are Indians of the montaña who eat human flesh, and so the deceased has barely expired when they begin to eat him, so that they leave no flesh but only bones’ (f.292 [294]). On campaign in Quito, the army of Huayna Capac took with it several Anti warriors, including the celebrated Capac Apo Ninarua, ‘only so they could eat the rebel Indians, and thus these people ate many chiefs’ (f.167–8 [169–70]). As a punishment for serious offences, noble Andean women ‘are given to the Anti Indians to be eaten, and they eat them alive’ (f.312 [314]). Tupac Yupanqui, Guamán Poma’s favourite Inca emperor, ‘had with him the chiefs of the naked Chuncho Indians, who eat human flesh, for the memory and greatness of the world’ (f.948 [962]). A common moniker for the Amazonian natives in the ‘Corónica’ is ‘Anti runa micoc’, that is: ‘man-eating Anti’ (f.323 [325]).

Inhospitable lands and natural riches

The natural environment that framed the savage lives of the Antis/Chunchos was a sphere of extremes and contradictions, where the greatest challenges to human life were juxtaposed with fabulous riches. Garcilaso states that in the Antisuyu there were both rich provinces (‘one of the best’ was that of the Musus), and completely inhospitable and even scarcely penetrable ones ‘because of the great mountains, lakes, swamps and marshes’ (book 7, chap. XIII). It seems that Garcilaso himself visited the ‘mountain called Cañac-huay, which drops almost vertically five leagues, and makes one nervous and fearful simply to see it’, on the way down from the Paucartambo cordillera towards the Cosñipata valleys (book 4, chap. XVI). Guamán Poma states that towards the rich land of the Ancuallo ‘it is impossible to pass through, because in the rivers there are lizards and serpents and poisonous snakes, lions, jaguars, oounces, and many other animals, and hard and mountainous lands’ (f.982 [1000]).

In all three chronicles the echoes of ‘news of rich lands’ resonate powerfully, which might suggest a pre-Columbian origin for the Andean belief in the existence of populous and prosperous lands to the east. Guamán Poma speaks wonders of the unattainable province of the Ancuallo Uarmi Aucas: ‘It is said there are many Indians with a great many costumes and lineages … and that there is much gold
and silver and much land and cattle, and the land is fertile' (f.85); similar comments are scattered throughout his work (f.168 [170], f.176 [178], f.982 [1000]).

Pachacuti Yamqui states that the province of the Escay Oyas is that which was called Dorado, and so concealed great mineral riches (f.28r). The Inca expedition to the Guarmi Aucas, described in the same document, brought back ‘a great quantity of the finest gold to Cuzco. And so the Inca, having seen so much good quality gold brought back, had sheets of gold made to serve as tapestries in Coricancha’ (the main temple of the Sun: f.29r). The motif of Amazonian gold used to adorn Coricancha is also present in the chronicle of Betanzos (see Tyuleneva 2011). Another anecdote related to the riches of the eastern regions and recounted by Pachacuti Yamqui tells of the arrival in Cuzco from the ‘Andes of Opatari’ of 300 ‘Andes Indians, all loaded with gold in dust and nuggets’.

Behind these repeated references to precious metals undoubtedly lay the real riches of the gold-bearing jungle regions of the Madre de Dios, Carabaya, Apolobamba, and Larecaja. But in other cases the notion of wealth extended beyond gold and silver alone. For example, Garcilaso’s province of the Musus was rich and attractive not because it possessed highly prized minerals, which are not even mentioned, but because it was fertile and populated.

Andean enclaves in Amazonia

Finally, a prominent aspect present in the three texts is the notion of Andean enclaves established in Amazonia. In Guamán Poma, the enclave is that of the Chancas Ancouallo, in a rich but inaccessible land on the edges of the continent, who form a curious union with the Uarmi Aucas, the women warriors; in Pachacuti Yamqui, the reference is to the ‘stud’ Incas who remain behind among the Guarmi Aucas, in a land also associated with riches; in Garcilaso’s Comentarios, it was the remnants of the Inca army lodged in the fertile province of the Musus and married to women of the region. It requires little effort to see common traits in all three accounts.

We know that the legend of the ‘fugitive Incas’ remained current for many decades after the Spanish conquest and that in part it was based on traditions regarding the kingdom of Vilcabamba. However, close study of the three versions described here might lead us to suppose that the motif of the Andean colony in the lowlands precedes the arrival of the Europeans and dates to pre-Columbian times. It might also be surmised that before the ‘fugitive Incas’ there were the ‘fugitive Chancas’; or perhaps both versions coexisted in parallel.

Conclusion

Self-evidently, to reconstruct solidly and consistently the concepts regarding Amazonia that prevailed in the Andes in Inca times represents an impossible task.
What is possible is to capture the reflections of these concepts scattered throughout the colonial sources. And many of the more persistent stereotypes remain alive and well even today.

In recent decades, there has been a growing tendency to erase regional frontiers, to seek routes of connection instead of dividing lines, and continuity instead of rupture. Conflicts, contradictions, prejudices, and opposing views are part of this continuity. They are an undeniable manifestation of diversity, and the logical fruit of contacts and interactions.