



# Decolonizing the Sodomite: Queer Tropes of Sexuality in Colonial Andean Culture

*Michael J. Horswell*

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Early Andean historiography reveals a subaltern history of indigenous gender and sexuality that saw masculinity and femininity not as essential absolutes. Third-gender ritualists, *Ipas*, mediated between the masculine and feminine spheres of culture in important ceremonies and were recorded in fragments of myths and transcribed oral accounts. Ritual performance by cross-dressed men symbolically created a third space of mediation that invoked the mythic androgyne of the pre-Hispanic Andes. The missionaries and civil authorities colonizing the Andes deemed these performances transgressive and sodomitical.

In this book, Michael J. Horswell examines alternative gender and sexuality in the colonial Andean world, and uses the concept of the third gender to reconsider some fundamental paradigms of Andean culture. By deconstructing what literary tropes of sexuality reveal about Andean pre-Hispanic and colonial indigenous culture, he provides an alternative history and interpretation of the much-maligned aboriginal subjects the Spanish often referred to as "sodomites." Horswell traces the origin of the dominant tropes of masculinist sexuality from canonical medieval texts to early modern Spanish secular and moralist literature produced in the context of material persecution of effeminates and sodomites in Spain. These values traveled to the Andes and were used as powerful rhetorical weapons in the struggle to justify the conquest of the Incas.

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