

2 From Mexico to Peru

With modern national boundaries as references, we will discuss the various pre-Columbian cultures, focusing on the musical instruments of the culture concerned, as well as their iconography and function. Whenever relevant, we refer to pre-Columbian instruments and musical practices that have survived until these days.

Mexico

Pre-Columbian Mexico (-1500 / +1521) can be divided chronologically into: Preclassic, Protoclassic, Classic, and Postclassic. The Olmecs were the first culture in Mexico of whom archaeological remains have been found (-1500 / -500). They lived in the tropical lowlands near the Gulf of Mexico, and are known for their sculptures of large stone portrait heads. The Colima and Jalisco States flourished between -500 and +300 on the West Coast, the Totonac culture existed on the Gulf Coast between +300 and +900, and the Aztec culture in the Valley of Mexico between +900 and +1521. The Maya culture flourished from +300 to +900 in the peninsula of Yucatán.

The Maya, the Aztecs and the Mixtecs (State of Oaxaca) painted codices on paper or deer skin. These codices contain valuable information regarding the musical instruments that existed at the time (ill. 6, 7, and 10). The Spanish priest Fray Bernardino de Sahagún wrote the *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* based on the *Codex Florentino* of the Aztecs.

Apart from the codices and books written by Spanish chroniclers, information about the music and dance of pre-Columbian Mexico may be deduced from musical instruments, effigy-vessels showing musicians, and paintings on jars. Aztec flutes are particularly interesting (there are triple and even quadruple specimens), as well as their slit-drum ('teponaztli') and single-skinned drum ('huehueltl'). Colima produced interesting flutes and representations of dancing people accompanied by a musician (pl. 1 and 2).

'Music' as a term seems not to have existed in Mexico; it was described in terms such as 'fiesta' (feast), referring to the whole of music, dance, theatre and games. The poet was a 'singer' and singing was 'flowered speaking'. Musicians ranked high in the social hierarchy because they were priests as well. There were special music schools and each temple or palace had its own musicians, singers, dancers and poets.

The instruments used in pre-Cortesian times (before the arrival of Cortés) were mostly idiophones and aerophones. Some are shown in the *Codex Florentino* (ill. 6 and 7). Their names are mostly in Nahuatl, the language used by the Aztecs and still spoken in parts of Mexico. Examples are the bone scrapers ('omichicahuaztli') scraped with a snail shell, slit-drums ('teponaztli'), tortoiseshells which were beaten with an antler ('ayotl') (pl. 4), rattle sticks ('chicahuaztli'), gourd rattles ('ayacaxtli'), etc. The only membranophone



6. Drawing of a hall where musical instruments were kept, guarded by two men. Codex Florentino, Mexico. [In: Martí, 1970:52]

7. Drawing of two men playing 'huehuetl' and 'teponaztli', accompanying four dancers, two of which play rattles. Codex Florentino, Mexico. [In: Martí, 1970:54]



depicted was the single-skinned 'huehuetl' drum. Models of these instruments, in stone or terracotta, have often been found in graves; some of these finds do not produce sound, thus suggesting that these imitations were funeral gifts.

The slit-drum is still played today. The instrument deserves a separate description. The *teponaztli* only existed in Meso America (a cultural boundary which comprises part of Central Mexico and Central America) and there it is very ancient. It was used during rituals because of its magical powers. The slit-drum is a horizontal wooden idiophone made out of a hollow log in which two tongues have been cut out in an H-shape. The drum is beaten on these tongues with two padded beating sticks and the tones produced have intervals of a fifth or a diminished third. Sometimes the tongues consist of a thick and a thin part, producing both the basic tone and other intervals.

The most simple aerophone from pre-Cortesian Mexico is the shell horn. It is a natural horn with only a blow hole. The shell horn was a ritual instrument used exclusively by rulers and priests. It is an attribute of the creator-god Quetzalcoatl (the Feathered Serpent) and his priests, and was worn on a necklace. According to legend, Quetzalcoatl created man by blowing on the holy shell horn, symbol of fertility and spiritual rebirth, of the Lord of the Kingdom of the Dead. An Aztec myth tells of the 'huehuetl' drum and the 'teponaztli' drum being gods that had been exiled on earth; up till this day these drums are believed to have magical powers.

The terracotta flutes are extremely interesting because they have as much as four tubes. A triple flute from the Gulf Coast is decorated with a small monkey's head, associating it with Macuilxochitl, the god of music, song and poetry. The melody is played on one of the tubes, the other two tubes each produce a basic tone. This indicates the existence of a musical system.

The Tropenmuseum owns five pre-Columbian musical instruments from Mexico: two round rattles, two flutes (pl. 1) and a flute (possibly an ocarina). Moreover, three figurines representing musicians and dancers (pl. 2, 4).

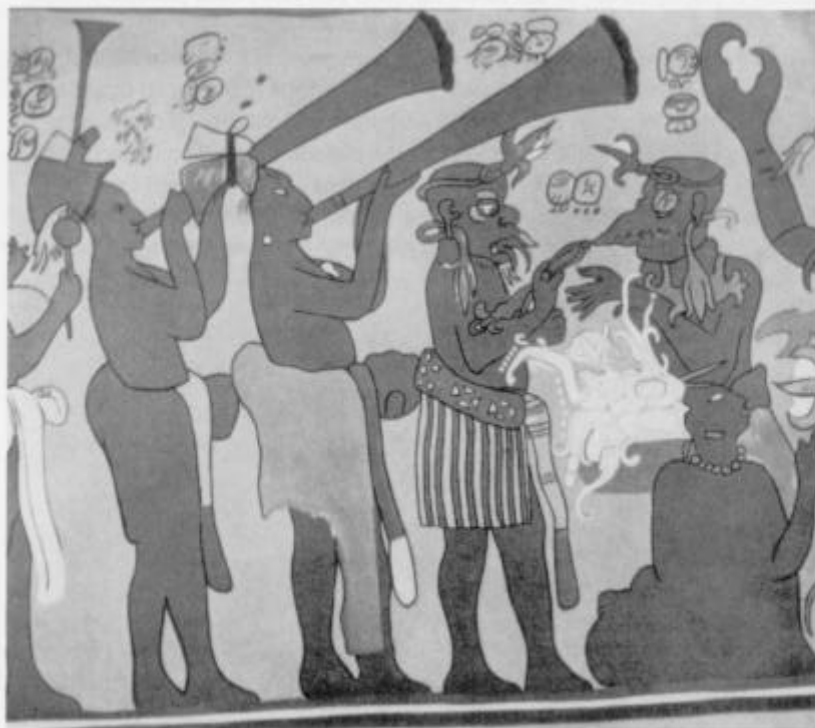
Although it is impossible to reconstruct the melodies played on these instruments, some information as to how they were used can be obtained from pictorial sources. Aztec musicians may be seen in the *Codex Florentino*: four singing and dancing men with rattles, accompanied by 'huehuetl' and 'teponaztli' drums (ill. 7). The Maya murals in Bonampak show a number of the above-mentioned musical instruments: rattles, 'huehuetl' drum, and beaten tortoiseshell. Large bark trumpets formed part of the ensemble as well. The ensemble accompanied masked dancers during elaborate processions (ill. 8 and 9). A figurine from Colima shows a panpipe player with a large ceremonial headdress. In his left hand he holds panpipes and in his right hand a rattle; his body is decorated with geometrical motifs.

Music played an important role during rituals and ceremonies, to accompany dance, drama and poetry. This is testified by the (18) calendar festivals dedicated to an equal number of gods (Van Giffen-Duyvis, 1957:99-101;154-166). In the *Codex Borbonicus* the gods of music, song and dance are depicted: Huehuecoyotl, in the guise of a coyote, sings to the accompaniment of rattles; Macuilxochitl ('Five-Flower') sings while accompanying himself on the 'huehuetl' drum. Song is indicated by means of volutes from the mouths of the singers. Both singers wear the headband which indicates that they are musicians (ill. 10).



8. Wall painting from Bonampak (Maya culture), Mexico, showing men playing (from left to right) a slit-drum made of tortoiseshell, a drum and a rattle. [In: Marti, 1970:118]

9. Wall painting from Bonampak (Maya culture), Mexico, showing men playing bark trumpets. [In: Marti, 1970:123]



The music of the Lacandon, a people of whom a few hundred families still live in the tropical forests of Yucatán, may be closely related to that played in pre-Cortesian times. Lacandon instruments are simple, as is their tonal material; vocal music is important, and few people participate in a musical ensemble.

The Mayo, living in the State of Sonora, perform their 'dance of the deer' with ancient instruments: a so-called 'water drum' (a ceramic jar placed upside down in a container filled with water and beaten with a padded stick), and two scrapers fastened onto an upside-down jar and scraped with a stick. The performers play and sing. The deer dancers use gourd rattles, rattles made of deer hooves and rattles made of butterfly cocoons. This dance is performed during Easter, weddings, parties and patron saint festivals.

In the State of Veracruz the 'dance of the jaguar', danced by two men, still exists. This is an old magical dance which was forbidden by the church during colonial times. The men imitate the movements of a feline and wear a feline skin. The dancers hold rattles and are accompanied by a 'teponaztli' and a reed flute with an air duct made out of the shaft of a feather; like the slit-drum this type of flute may be of pre-Cortesian origin.⁸

Between Mexico and Peru

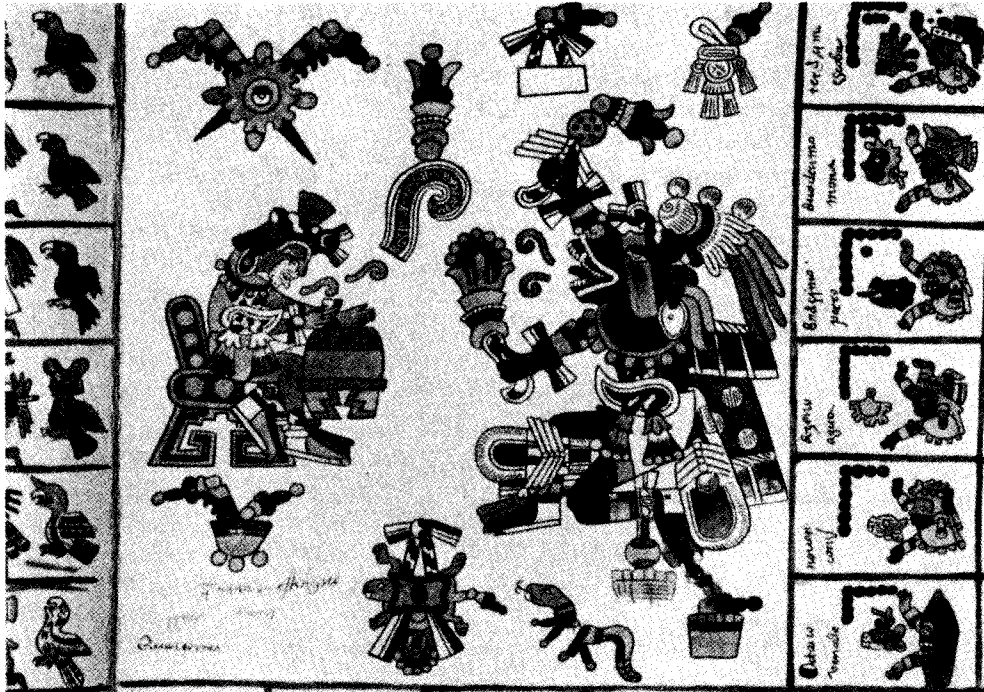
The Indian world 'between Mexico and Peru' stretched over 2 500 kilometers, from the Honduras to west Venezuela and in the south to Ecuador. For thousands of years peoples and cultures from the North and from the South crossed here (Bischof, 1982:249).

Central America

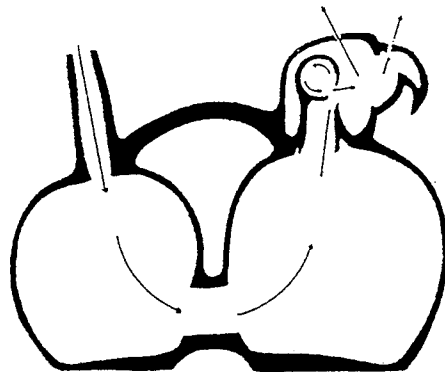
Scientific archaeological field work in Costa Rica only began relatively recently; most excavations date from the mid-1970s when a program for archaeological investigation was started. Costa Rica can be subdivided into three archaeological zones: Guanacaste-Nicoya, in the northwest, on the Pacific side; the Central Highlands-Atlantic Watershed, in the centre; and Diquís, in the southwest, on the Pacific side. Chronologically, a division into six periods has been made, covering the period from -8000 to +1550 (Snarskis, 1981:15-24). Panama's history is equally divided into six periods – of which periods IV, V and VI coincide with those of Costa Rica.

When Costa Rica was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1502, it was inhabited by groups with northern South American cultural traditions, speaking languages of the Chibcha group. They practiced root-crop shifting cultivation and lived in small dispersed villages of pole-and-thatch houses (Ferrero, 1981:93-103).

Ocarinas are the main instruments in Central America, together with conch shells, whistles and an occasional rattle.⁹ According to Raoul d'Harcourt (1930) ocarinas from Panama generally have two holes and produce three notes, whereas those from Colombia and Costa Rica have four holes, giving five notes, the pentatonic scale. The ocarinas have a human shape or – more frequently – the shape of birds and other (mythological) animals such as snakes or jaguars (pl. 7 and 8).



10. Drawing from Codex Borbonicus, showing the gods Macuilxochitl and Huehucayotl. They play music and sing, which is shown by volutes coming from their mouths. The volute in the middle is very elaborate. On their chests the musicians wear cross sections of large shells, and in front of them a turtle is depicted; these are emblems honouring musicians. [In: Marti, 1970:54]



11. Drawing of how a whistling jar works: the jar is filled with liquid and tilted, thus compressing the air which then escapes through the air holes, giving a whistling sound. The whistling mechanism is located in the head of the animal. [In: Hickmann, 1990:53]

The function of the ocarinas from Panama and Costa Rica may have been mainly non-musical. They were often funeral gifts and may also have served as amulets, since they often have holes for a string to be pulled through. It is also possible that these instruments were played only by a single person. They do not have fixed scales, so tuning in with others may have been difficult.

Among the musical instruments from Costa Rica and Panama the elaborate three-legged funeral jars are noteworthy as well. The legs are often hollow and filled with terracotta pellets. They are considered to be musical instruments, in this case rattles. These tripod vessels are very striking, in colour and in form, and show mythical animals like monkeys, alligators, and birds (pl. 5).

The Tropenmuseum possesses only one instrument from Guatemala: an ocarina. There are 18 musical instruments from Costa Rica, mostly ocarinas and rattles; 17 from Panama, mainly ocarinas and rattles; and an ocarina from El Salvador (pl. 5, 6, 7). Many of these were collected by Hans Feriz. He also collected three figurines representing men with musical instruments, all aerophones. These images of musicians are made from volcanic stone from the Atlantic Watershed in Costa Rica (Feriz, 1966:93-95).

Nowadays, the offspring of less than ten Indian groups still inhabit the Costa Rica and Panama isthmus. After centuries of Spanish rule and suppression, and of Afro-American influences as well, culminating in the last fifty years of rapid acculturation and modernization, few of the remaining groups fully maintain the practices and traits of their ancestors. Conch shell horns, flutes and drums, however, are still used, and their dances often imitate animals, like the buzzard, monkey, serpent, and tiger.

Colombia/Ecuador

The earliest known culture of Colombia is that of San Agustín (-600 to +900) in the southern Andes. The Tairona culture (+750 / +1550), situated in the Sierra Nevada in North Colombia, is well known for its elaborate small ocarinas representing hybrid beings, part human, part animal; they are particularly interesting due to the abundance of details and intricateness of the ornaments.

The oldest culture of Ecuador is that of Valdivia (-3500 to -1500), on the Central and South Coast. Its small female figurines are the earliest representations of human beings. Another well known culture is that of La Tolita (-300 to +700) situated on the North Coast. The culture has been chronologically divided into: Early Formative, Middle Formative, Late Formative, Regional Development and Integration.

In Colombia as well as in Ecuador, whistles and ocarinas abound among the pre-Columbian instruments. Especially interesting are the Ecuadorian shell-shaped terracotta ocarinas, and the beautiful human-effigy ocarinas of La Tolita and related cultures (pl. 8). Also, other musical instruments, such as gold bells and jingles, conch shell horns, terracotta ocarinas, flutes, panpipes, whistling jars and drums were part of the musical culture.¹⁰

According to Dale Olsen (1986), an expert on Colombian ocarinas, the musical effigy-figurines of the Tairona often depict animals, mostly bats and jaguars. The majority of ocarinas with antropomorphic features show priestly personages with zoomorphic faces or masks, sitting upon crescent thrones and wearing large crescent headdresses. These ocarinas have four finger holes, two on each half of the crescent; the blowhole is on top of the headdress and the

window is at the back of the head. The mouthpieces of the musical effigy-figurines are in most cases in such a place, that the animal or human represented is facing the same direction as the performer. Thus the figurine and its 'voice' are ahead of or in front of the performer, and are, therefore, in a position to meet potential dangers before these can reach the individual performer. Olsen regards these ocarinas as totemic ancestor guardian spirit effigies, because of their recurring emphasis upon animal facial stylization, representing either a masked or a transformed human. These effigies show a shamanistic transformation from human to animal. Olsen also states that the flutes of the Tairona did not employ predetermined tuning systems that could be correlated to the exterior design of the instrument; this absence of a fixed scale again (as in the case of the Central American ocarinas) suggests an individualized personal, extra- or non-musical use of the ocarina.

This observation is confirmed by the fact that ocarinas, many of which were excavated in Colombia, were not mentioned by chroniclers such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés. The instruments were either kept out of sight of the Spaniards or went simply unnoticed. Olsen relates the music of the Tairona to that of present-day Indians such as the Kogi, the Warao, the Shuar and others. This continuity is seen especially in relation to the phenomenon of magical protection among native Americans, either through music, through guardian spirits, or a combination of the two (Olsen, 1986).

Many effigies of musicians exist, of which those from the Jama Coaque culture (-300 to +1533) are especially beautiful, as well as the ocarinas and rattles in the shape of humans from the Chorrera (-1200 to -300), the La Tolita (-300 to +700) and the Bahia (-300 to +1533) cultures.

The Tropenmuseum collected nine musical instruments from Colombia and 23 musical instruments from Ecuador, mostly whistles and ocarinas. Three of these are small terracotta replicas of conch shells. The whistles and ocarinas often have the shape of a bird or a human being.

Today Indians in Colombia (Cuna, Tukano, Cuiva, Arhuaco, Ika) and Ecuador (Shuar, Quichua, Siona, Colorado) still use many instruments that were used by their ancestors, such as calabash rattles, conch shell horns, terracotta ocarinas, bone and reed flutes and reed panpipes; fruit shell rattles are tied to dancers' legs when executing dances that imitate animals like the deer or the eagle. Music and dance accompany various ceremonies, such as the harvest celebration, burial ceremonies, initiation rites, and curing of diseases.

Peru

With pottery as a starting point, archaeologists distinguished five main cultural periods in Peru up to the arrival of the Spaniards. In three out of these five cultural periods, one culture was dominant in large areas of Peru; these three cultures are called Horizon styles, the last being that of the Incas (+1340 to +1534); the other two were the Middle Horizon style of the Huari-Pachacamac-Tiahuanaco cultural complex (+600 to +950) and the Early Horizon style of the Chavín culture (-1400 to -400). One of the earliest sites in Peru is Chavín, situated in the north-central Andes; it can be dated between -1000 to -500

(Early Horizon) and is well known for its stone carving. The influence of Chavín on the surrounding areas has been great.

The three Horizon styles are separated from each other by the Early and Late Intermediate periods (-400 to +600 and +950 to +1350 respectively), each with a number of independent cultures. The Moche culture flourished in the Early Intermediate period (0 to +650), whereas the Chimú culture developed on the north coast during the Late Intermediate period (+950 to +1350) (De Bock, 1988:7-8).¹¹

Peru is divided into three zones by the Andes mountain chain: the coastal strip, the Andean mountains, and the tropical rain forest east of the Andes. Due to the desert climate of the coastal strip, a great deal of perishable archaeological material such as wood and fabric have been preserved. It is here that most of the cultures referred to in the following discussion of Peruvian musical instruments were situated, such as the cultures in the fertile Chicama and Moche valleys of the Northern Coast, the Chancay valley of the Central Coast, and the Nazca valley of the Southern Coast.¹²

The Nazca and Moche culture thrived contemporaneously. The area was inhabited by peasants in the valleys and fisherfolk along the coast, ruled by an elite of warriors and priests. The ceremonial centres consisted of pyramids and several plazas, with chambers at the top of the pyramids, and sometimes inside as well. The building material was adobe – sun-dried bricks. The river mouths and lagoons backing the coastal region were important centres of settlement. Material culture reached a high level. Pottery was of good quality, the same can be said concerning metallurgy, shell and bone artefacts, and textiles. Objects made from these materials are found in graves, in previously undisturbed ground, under house floors, and in ceremonial structures (De Bock, 1988:7-10)

Peru is extremely rich in pre-Columbian artefacts, including musical instruments and their effigies. Best known are the effigy jars of the Moche culture, sometimes in the shape of a musician, on which scenes are painted of ceremonies showing music and dance. The Chimú culture is known for its whistling jars and metal bells and rattles. From the Nazca culture originated beautiful terracotta single-skinned drums and panpipes, often painted with war scenes and a mythical Man-God (pl. 9, 10, 11, 12).

Idiophones used in pre-Columbian times were (metal) jingles, bells, and terracotta rattles; single and double-skinned drums were the membranophones most used, and aerophones like whistles, shell and terracotta horns, reed flutes and panpipes abounded. An interesting type of aerophone is the whistling jar, which usually has two round chambers, joined by a stirrup-spout. It contains a whistle mechanism, usually situated in the head of the animal depicted on the vessel. When it is filled with a liquid substance and tilted or when one blows into the spout, a whistling sound is made (ill. 11).

Among the earliest archaeological finds of musical instruments are a bone whistle and some terracotta whistles found at the Temple of the Crossed Hands in Kotosh (Huánuco); these date from before -3000 and were most likely used for hunting, or for signalling. In the Temple of Chavín de Huántar (Ancash), dated -1000, a ceremonial shell horn was found, as well as terracotta whistles. People of the Vicús culture are well-known for their whistling jars, their shell-shaped whistles and their terracotta drums. The Moche provided us with much

information in scenes of music playing and dancing on their ceramics and sculptured vessels. From the Nazca many documents have been inherited concerning their daily life, among which are representations of musicians and dancers. Many terracotta panpipes were found (thus suggesting that this instrument was widespread), as well as terracotta drums and whistles (Bolaños, 1988:1-64).

The instruments most used in pre-Columbian America were rattles, drums, whistles and flutes. Numerous notched flutes ('quenás') have been found in graves on the Peruvian coast. They usually have seven, occasionally six, stops. Panpipes existed in Peru long before the Incas came to power, as can be seen from Nazca and Moche instruments and effigies. A Moche whistle has the shape of a human being playing panpipes. Terracotta panpipes, as well as jars with panpipes painted on them and jars in the shape of panpipe players, have been found in Nazca. Also the terracotta bodies of single-skinned drums have been found in the Nazca area. Double-skinned drums were also used in pre-Columbian times, as representations on jars show.

The Tropenmuseum possesses nine musical instruments from Peru: rattles, whistles, a terracotta trumpet, panpipes, a reed flute, and a number of whistling jars. Most are from the Chimú, Moche and Chancay cultures, all from the Peruvian coastal area. There is also a Moche stirrup-spout vessel representing a blind musician playing panpipes (pl. 12).

Music and dance were generally performed during festivals, ceremonies and funerals; this shows their ritual importance. The most important celebration in Inca culture was 'Capac-raymi', the festival of the December solstice.

Guamán Poma de Ayala shows a number of instruments in use at that time, as well as the context in which they were used (ill. 1). On folio 315 he refers to the unit 'taqui-cachuia-haylli-araui'. 'Taqui' means song as well as dance, 'cachuia' designates a choral dance with joined hands, 'haylli' a joyful victory song after battle or after the sowing of seed, and the 'araui' is a song about absent beloved persons.¹³

The musical role of women seems to have been restricted. Women did sing for the Inca and his captains when they took dinner; the singers accompanied themselves with a drum. Folio 324 shows a woman playing a large suspended drum. Rattles are shown on folios 318 and 322. The natural shell trumpet (folio 35) was – and still is – used for signalling. Guamán Poma defended local musical practice against the conquerors. He insisted that this was innocent entertainment and did not involve idolatry, witchcraft, or other evils of the world. Maybe he foresaw the excessive Roman Catholic religious zeal which led to the destruction of many cult objects and the repression of religious customs, instigated by people like Pablo José de Arriaga, the author of *Extirpación de la idolatría del Perú* (1621). Other chroniclers, among them Garcilaso de la Vega, Bernabé Cobo and Pedro de Cieza de León, inform us about music and dance in Peru as well.

Even though Peru was rapidly taken over by the Spaniards, and Spanish influence has been very strong, a number of pre-Columbian traits can be traced in modern musical instruments, dances, and occasions on which music and dance play a role. Rattles, conch shells, stamping sticks with jingles attached to

the upper end, flutes, panpipes and double-skinned drums are still used, mostly by the indigenous populations of Peru. Stringed instruments that arrived in Peru with the Spaniards have been adopted by the local population in a selective way: the harp and violin are mostly used by Indians, whereas the guitar and the 'charango' are the preferred instruments of mestizos, the large population group descended from Indians and Spaniards.

A good example of cultural continuity is the 'huayno', today's equivalent of the 'taqui' mentioned by Guamán Poma. It is an inextricable unit of music, song and dance, very popular, characteristic of the highlands, as a symbol of Indian and mestizo cultures alike. Huaynos are played on all types of instruments, both traditional and modern. They are often pentatonic (five notes to the octave), like the taqui of ancient times. The texts are in Quechua, the language still spoken by the Indians, and in Spanish. The huayno is rapidly becoming a national genre, due to large numbers of highland people migrating to the coast (Den Otter, 1985:131-155). It is a secular dance, performed by couples.

Traditional dance groups are quite common at religious events, such as patron saint festivals. They wear vegetal rattles around their lower legs, just like the dancers shown on Guamán Poma's drawing (see ill. 1). A number of dances represent the Conquest or battles fought during colonial times. In the Callejón de Huaylas, a valley in north-central Peru, traditional groups dance in a rather belligerent way, wearing rattles tied to their lower legs and beating swords and shields. Other dances represent folk dramas, dealing with the capture and death of the last Inca, Atahualpa, or referring to pre-Columbian times. These dances do revive the past and contribute to keeping history alive (Den Otter, 1985:157-169). Reference to the past, albeit more 'folkloristic', is also made at the annual festival of the Sun, 'Inti Raymi', which is celebrated on June 24, the solstice, whereas the many music ensembles using reed panpipes, 'quena's' (notched flutes), rattles and drums, are very popular among mestizo youths.