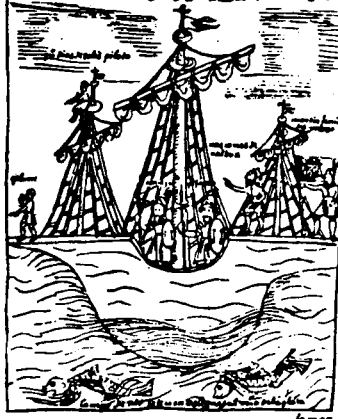


**Sabine G. MacCormack**

Children of the Sun and Reason of State  
Myths, Ceremonies and Conflicts in Inca Peru

DISCOVERING  
THE ♦ AMERICAS



**1992 LECTURE SERIES**

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## Children of the Sun and Reason of State Myths, Ceremonies and Conflicts in Inca Peru

The year 1532 promised to be a memorable one in Tawantinsuyo, the Inca empire of the "four parts" of the world, for it witnessed the end of an embittered civil war between the brothers Guascar and Atawallpa, sons by different mothers of the great Inca ruler Guayna Capac, who had died some years earlier. In this war, Atawallpa, whose power centered in contemporary Ecuador and Northern Peru, around Tumbamba and Quito, enjoyed the support of the lineage of his mother who had been a descendant of the ninth Inca Pachacuti. Guascar in turn was supported by his own mother's kin, the lineage of the tenth Inca Tupa Yupanqui, and controlled the Inca capital city of Cuzco.<sup>1</sup> It was in 1532 that Atawallpa's generals captured Guascar, thereby bringing the war to an end. But the year had in store a yet more momentous event, for in November, a band of Spanish knights and soldiers, led by Francisco Pizarro and accompanied by the missionary Vicente de Valverde attacked and captured the victorious Inca Atawallpa. This attack occurred while Atawallpa surrounded by his soldiers and courtiers entered the main square of Cajamarca in northern Peru in a slow and solemn procession. Ten months later, the Spaniards strangled their royal prisoner, and the long war of the conquest of Peru began in earnest.

Embroided though they were in almost constant warfare for nearly two decades, the invaders repeatedly commented on particulars of Inca courtly ceremonial and on the religious awe with which the Inca's subjects approached their ruler. An intricate set of rules governed every detail of the Inca's physical functions. One *conquistador* from Extremadura thus observed that when Atawallpa spat, he did so not on the ground but into the hands of a lady of his court.<sup>2</sup> Atawallpa wore his garments, which were woven with the most exquisite artistry, only once, and immediately changed if a garment

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rostworowski de Díez Canseco, *Historia del Tawantinsuyo*, Lima, 1987, pp. 148 ff. On the Inca kinship system see the fundamental work of R. T. Zuidema, *The Ceque System of Cuzco. The Social Organization of the Capital of the Inca*, Leiden, 1964. Now to be consulted with J. H. Rowe, "La Constitución inca del Cuzco", *Histórica*, 9 (Lima, 1985), pp. 35-73.

<sup>2</sup> Juan Ruiz de Arce, "Relación de los servicios en Indias de don Juan Ruiz de Arce...", *Boletín de la Academia de la Historia*, 102, (Madrid, 1933, hereafter Ruiz de Arce), p. 361.

was soiled. On one occasion, a Spaniard thus watched Atawallpa withdraw in the middle of his meal so as to change tunics.<sup>3</sup> He ate alone from gold dishes and goblets especially designated for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> No one touched the Inca's food once it had been placed before him,<sup>5</sup> and everything with which the Inca had come into contact was subsequently burned.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, access to the Inca's person was meticulously controlled. Pedro Pizarro, the conqueror's brother thus noted that people who came into Atawallpa's presence found him hidden behind a ceremonial cloth held up by two ladies, who lowered the cloth only when commanded to do so.<sup>7</sup> Even great lords presented themselves before the Inca barefoot, and never without carrying a burden or a gift as a token of submission and reverence.<sup>8</sup> The *conquistador* Juan de Mena had watched how individuals desiring to speak to Atawallpa would wait, standing at a distance;<sup>9</sup> and Francisco Pizarro's secretary Xerez had observed how when coming nearer they would kiss the Inca's hands and feet.<sup>10</sup> Andeans blew eyelashes to the divine Sun as an expression of veneration, and likewise to the Inca.<sup>11</sup> Like the *guacas*, the Andean holy presences, the Inca was only addressed with lowered eyes,<sup>12</sup> and himself rarely looked at anyone.<sup>13</sup> When giving a command, the Inca did it merely with a gesture or a glance of his eyes, without

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<sup>3</sup> Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 92), Madrid, 1964 (hereafter Cobo), 12, 36, p. 138b.

<sup>4</sup> Cobo, p. 139b.

<sup>5</sup> Juan de Betanzos, *Suma y narración de los incas*, Madrid, 1987 (hereafter Betanzos), 1, 8, p. 31b.

<sup>6</sup> Cobo, p. 140a.

<sup>7</sup> Pedro Pizarro, *Relación del descubrimiento y conquista de los reinos del Perú*, Lima, 1978 (hereafter Pedro Pizarro), 8, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Pedro Cieza de León, *Crónica del Perú. Segunda parte*, Lima, 1985 (hereafter Cieza, *Segunda parte*), 13; Betanzos, 1, 46, p. 193; Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, *Historia Indica* (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 135, hereafter Sarmiento), 43, p. 247a.

<sup>9</sup> A. Pogo (ed.), "The Anonymous *La conquista del Perú...*", *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 64, 1930 (hereafter Mena, because the work is by Cristóbal de Mena), p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Francisco de Xerez, *Verdadera relación de la conquista del Perú*, Madrid, 1985 (hereafter Xerez), p. 125.

<sup>11</sup> Sarmiento, 44, p. 249a; 65, p. 271a.

<sup>12</sup> Cieza, *Segunda parte*, 12; Martín de Murúa, *Historia del origen y genealogía real de los reyes incas del Perú*, Madrid, 1946 (hereafter Murúa, 1590, this being the version that was completed in 1590), III, 48, pp. 276-7; also II, 5, p. 117; 7, p. 123.

<sup>13</sup> Xerez, p. 125; cf. p. 106; Mena, p. 236.

speaking,<sup>14</sup> and he never raised his voice. Atawallpa's manner was imposing and exalted; he expected and received from his subjects the most unquestioning obedience.<sup>15</sup>

On the day when the Inca was captured, representatives of the four parts of the empire carried him into the square of Cajamarca on his royal litter, his sacred person being shaded by a parasol or awning. The litter was escorted by a standard bearer, by Inca and other nobles and courtly attendants. Before it walked musicians and a host of sweepers who cleaned the Inca's path.<sup>16</sup> At a little distance, Pedro Pizarro observed the Lord of Chinchá, who was later identified for him as the most powerful nobleman of Atawallpa's empire, being carried in a litter almost as fine as the Inca's.<sup>17</sup> While all but a handful of the invaders were ambushed in houses surrounding the square, the missionary Valverde made ready to speak to Atawallpa. A woodcut on the title page of Juan de Mena's short treatise on the *Conquest of Peru* of 1534 depicts the fateful encounter which led to the Inca's capture. (FIGURE 1)

This clumsy image is symptomatic both of what sixteenth century Spaniards perceived and admired in Inca kingship, and of what they utterly failed to perceive. What Spaniards perceived, admired and commented on was particulars of Inca material culture, power and custom for which there existed Spanish or European counterparts. The public appearances and attire of European sovereigns followed as carefully formulated rules and precedents as did the appearances of the Inca. Their own experience in Spain had prepared the invaders to observe and understand the functioning of a court. Even in the Europe of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, diplomatic correspondence and courtly gossip abounded in details of what a sovereign wore, who he spoke with, how he carried himself, down to what he ate and drank. Not surprisingly, therefore, particulars of this kind make up a considerable part of the description of divine kings in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, which was first published in 1890 and has haunted the study of kingship ever since.

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<sup>14</sup> Xerez, p. 107.

<sup>15</sup> Pedro Pizarro, 8, p. 33; see also on the death of Tupa Amaru, Antonio Bautista de Salazar in *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía*, 8, Madrid, 1867, pp. 279; 281.

<sup>16</sup> Ruiz de Arce, p. 362; Murúa, 1590, III, pp. 1; 3; Cieza, *Segunda parte*, 47, p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> Pedro Pizarro, 9, p. 37.

Like Frazer's divine kings the world over, Atawallpa appeared before the Spanish invaders poised "between heaven and earth," shaded from the sun by a parasol, and lifted up from the ground in his throne litter. As Frazer would have explained it, the Inca's potent charge was in this way prevented from escaping into the environment, while at the same time the environment could not contaminate his sacred power. The intricate rules which, as the first Spaniards in Peru observed so carefully, governed the life of the Inca's court and controlled access to his person can be interpreted in clear cut Frazerian terms, for they were all rules of seclusion which set the Inca apart both from other humans and from the natural world of which he was at the same time the lynch pin.

Frazer described the divine king as standing at the centre of a cosmic and a social order which was controllable by magic, in particular by the powerful magic of the king. Sixteenth century Spanish observers of the Inca, on the other hand, although they did record data such as Frazer could have utilized for his theory of divine kingship, viewed the Inca as occupying the peak of a social and ceremonial hierarchy, much as they viewed the king of Spain. They did not, of course, regard Atawallpa as in any sense an equal of Charles V, but they watched the court of the Inca with the same detailed attention they would have devoted to the royal court of Spain. Similarly, they applied to the Peru of the Incas the same political vocabulary as they would have used at home. Among the political qualities which these Spaniards appreciated in friend and foe alike was a certain hard headed shrewdness and a capacity to dissemble so as to achieve one's goals; in the later sixteenth century this quality came to be described as reason of state. In the eyes of his captors, Atawallpa possessed this quality in ample measure and they admired him for it.<sup>18</sup>

The turbulent encounter between Atawallpa and the destroyers of his empire thus produced a set of suggestive observations on Inca kingship. At the same time, however, whether we evaluate these observations in Frazerian terms or in the sixteenth century Spanish context in which they were actually made, they must remain limited in scope because they refer to no more than the external logistics of Inca courtly life. We learn nothing from these observations of what the Incas and Andeans themselves thought of their ruler, and for what specific purpose particular observances were designed. Only the

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<sup>18</sup> Pedro Pizarro, 9, pp. 42-43.





Figure 1. The Inca Atawallpa shaded by a parasol and lifted from the ground on a litter is carried into the square of Cajamarca. Titlepage of the anonymously published treatise (by Cristóbal de Mena) *La conquista del Perú*, Seville, 1534.

palest and most distant glimmer of Inca majesty thus transpires to the reader of those eyewitness accounts of Atawallpa's capture and to the beholder of the 1534 woodcut depicting him enthroned in his litter. To get beyond this limited grasp of Inca kingship, we must turn to the colonial historians of sixteenth and seventeenth century Peru who recorded data not so much from their own personal observation as from Inca quipus and oral traditions. In so doing, we replace the perceptions of foreign eyewitnesses with Inca and Andean self perception. Knowledge motivated by an outsider's experience is thus supplemented by knowledge motivated by long experience of living in the Andes.

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The Andes abounded with myths of origins. At the beginning of the current epoch, a creating deity had called forth the human beings who now live from lakes and mountains, caves and crags, while some lineages traced their origin back to *illapa* or *llibiac*, the lightning. Each kingroup, however small, thus knew the place whence their first ancestor had come forth, while those whose original ancestor was *illapa* or *llibiac* recounted from where they had first migrated to their present abode. The primary Andean process of generation was the transformation of rocks and of inanimate matter in general into human beings. This process was held in tension by its opposite, the transformation of humans into rocks. The Andean landscape was thus littered not only with a multitude of places of origin, but also with rocks which had once been human and now acted as guardians of fields and villages, rocks which were therefore conceptualized as being somehow endowed with personhood. These pan-Andean themes also speak in the Inca myth of origins.

The first Incas, four brothers and their four sisters, had come forth from an opening in a rock at Pacaritambo, the "inn of the dawn," near Cuzco. From there they journeyed toward what was to become the city of Cuzco. One of the brothers who was so strong that he made mountains into valleys and valleys into mountains, was sent back with an attendant to fetch the gold implements and ornaments which had been left behind in the rock. Once he was inside the rock, the attendant treacherously immured him there and he was metamorphosed into stone. The remaining siblings journeyed on, stopping at the hill Guanacauri, where another of the brothers was turned into stone. He became a protecting sacred presence for those who lived on. Later the Incas celebrated their annual initiation of

young men at Guanacauri in his honour and offered sacrifices there.<sup>19</sup> The first of these initiations was that of Sinchi Roca, son of Manco Capac the leader of the brothers and of his sister consort Mama Ocllo. Proceeding from Guanacauri, one of the sisters, Mama Huaco, threw a golden rod which struck the field Guanaypata<sup>20</sup> close to Cuzco; the Incas therefore claimed this field from its previous occupants by planting a crop in it.<sup>21</sup> Next, Manco Capac ordered his third brother to take possession of the site of Cuzco itself; the brother did so and turned into stone as a boundary marker on the future site of the temple of the Sun, known as Coricancha, "enclosure of gold."<sup>22</sup> On this site Manco Capac and his sisters built for their abode a small stone house with a thatch roof.<sup>23</sup> When Manco Capac died, he also was transformed into a stone which was preserved in Coricancha, was revered by his lineage, and was taken into battle as a talisman.<sup>24</sup>

Rivalries like the one between the four brothers which this version of the myth of origins posited as an ineluctable ingredient of Inca political life did indeed pervade Inca history. The bitter civil war between Guascar and Atawallpa of which the invading Spaniards witnessed the outcome was only the last of many such rivalries. On other occasions, however, conflicts of this kind had been acted out and thus blunted in the ceremonial ordering of the Inca's inauguration and funeral.

Throughout the Andes, it was customary for positions of power to be filled by that kinsman of the previous incumbent who displayed most ability. Such an individual could be, but did not have to be an oldest son, and he could be but did not have to be the previous incumbent's choice of successor. In theory, therefore, the Inca, like any other Andean lord, could be chosen from among any of the young men of Inca lineage who had undergone initiation because initiation formed the first phase of the ceremonial of inauguration.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cieza, *Segunda parte*, 6, pp. 14-15; Sarmiento, 13, p. 217b, sacrifice of *capacocha*.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the field Guanaypata is identical with Guanipata in Cobo's list of ceque shrines, see J. H. Rowe (ed.), "An account of the shrines of ancient Cuzco", *Nawpa Pacha*, 17 (1979, hereafter Rowe, 1979), Co-3:4.

<sup>21</sup> Sarmiento, 13, p. 217a.

<sup>22</sup> Sarmiento, p. 217 ab.

<sup>23</sup> Cieza, *Segunda parte*, 8, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Sarmiento, 14, pp. 219b-20.

<sup>25</sup> Cieza, *Segunda parte*, 7, p. 17 "son dinos si los eligen de tomar la corona."

A case in point was the ninth Inca Pachacuti, who ruled in the mid fifteenth century. Pachacuti's father Viracocha had designated as successor his older son Inca Urcon. However, at a time of national emergency, during the invasion of the Chanca enemy into Inca lands, Viracocha and Inca Urcon took flight. Pachacuti successfully organized the defence of Cuzco and became *de facto* ruler.

Yet, *de facto* rulership was not sufficient and a protracted powerstruggle ensued between Pachacuti and Viracocha, which was acted out in ceremonial terms. Pachacuti brought his Chanca spoils and prisoners before Viracocha for him to tread underfoot in the traditional Inca gesture of triumph.<sup>26</sup> But when Viracocha insisted that Inca Urcon perform this ritual, Pachacuti withdrew his spoils and prisoners.<sup>27</sup> Although his supporters among the Inca nobles of Cuzco now suggested that he assume the "headband of state," *mazcca paycha*,<sup>28</sup> which Inca rulers wore over their forehead, Pachacuti refused, explaining that he would only accept the headband from his father. Alternatively, he would take it from the head of Inca Urcon "along with the head itself," in return for the insult he had endured when Viracocha would not triumph over his spoils and prisoners so as to allow Urcon to do so.<sup>29</sup> As a result, the nobles persuaded Viracocha to endow Pachacuti with the imperial headband.<sup>30</sup> But this was not the end of the ceremonial duel between father and son. For Pachacuti completed his own investiture by forcing his father to drink chicha from an ordinary and soiled goblet before the eyes of the assembled Inca nobility.

Viracocha, understanding what he had been ordered to do by the new lord took the goblet and without replying one word drank the chicha and when he had drunk it, he abased himself and bowed before Pachacuti.<sup>31</sup>

By agreeing to drink chicha from anything other than one of the gold vessels set aside for the use of the Inca, and moreover from a

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<sup>26</sup> Betanzos, 1, 9, p. 36b; cf. Betanzos, 1, 19, p. 95 on Pachacuti's triumph over Soras.

<sup>27</sup> Betanzos, 1, 9, p. 38b.

<sup>28</sup> The headband, Diego González Holguín, *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Perú*, Lima, 1952 (hereafter Holguín), p. 232, s.v. *mazcca paycha*.

<sup>29</sup> Betanzos, 1, 17, pp. 82; 83b.

<sup>30</sup> Betanzos, 1, 17, p. 83b.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

# CAPITULO PRIMERO EN TIERRA DE LA INCA LLAPA A LA DEFUNTO

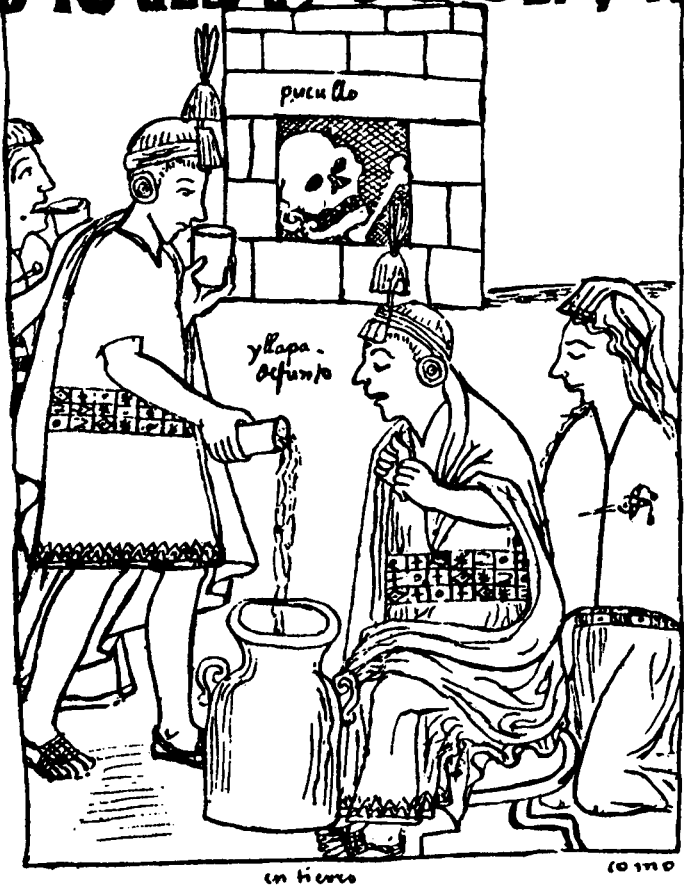


Figure 2. The living Inca pours chicha (maize beer) for the dead Inca and his consort. The living Inca pours from the cup in his right hand, thus addressing the deceased as persons of superior status, see Garcilaso, *Comentarios reales*, 6, 23 p. 223a. The cup in the living Inca's left hand contains chicha for his own consumption. Guaman Poma, *Corónica*, p. 287.

soiled vessel, Viracocha not only renounced his consecrated status but also confirmed the consecrated status of his son, whose command he had obeyed. When thus Atawallpa, although a prisoner of the Spaniards, observed the courtly rules of cleanliness by changing tunics in mid-repast, he laid claim to his continuing consecrated status.

The set of ceremonial events which culminated in Viracocha's drinking from a soiled cup defined the relationship between the new Inca Pachacuti and his father and brother. A further set of ceremonial events defined Pachacuti's position in relation to his other Inca kinsmen and the people of Cuzco at large. These events spelt out that Pachacuti enjoyed the support of the divine Sun, who was at this time emerging as the Inca empire's principal deity, and of the Sun's priesthood. Having defeated the Chancas,

Pachacuti found himself to be in a position of great power and the leader of many people. He thus [...] ordered a great sacrifice to be offered to the Sun in Indicancha, the House of the Sun, and then they went to ask the statue of the Sun who should be Inca. The oracle which they had there [...] answered that [the Sun] had designated Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui. At this response all those who had gone to make the sacrifice prostrated themselves before Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui and called him [...] son of the Sun.<sup>32</sup>

By way of implementing the oracle's statement, the Inca nobles once more escorted Pachacuti to the temple of the Sun,

and when they came before the statue of the Sun, which was of gold, of the stature of a man, they found it holding the headband in its hand, as though freely offering it. Pachacuti, having made the customary sacrifices, came before the statue of the Sun and the Sun's chief priest [...] took the headband from the hand of the statue and with much ceremony placed it on the forehead of Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui. Thereafter, all acclaimed him as [...] Son of the Sun, Lord, the Turning about of the World.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Sarmiento, 29, p. 235a.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

This ritual became part of the regular inauguration ceremonial, for a similar procedure was followed when Pachacuti designated as his successor his son Tupa Inca Yupanqui, who in turn was to be succeeded by his own son Guayna Capac. This was another complicated succession, because Pachacuti had earlier nominated a different son to follow him on the throne. Those royal Incas who approved the succession of Tupa Inca Yupanqui described his inauguration as a harmonious cooperation between the old Inca Pachacuti and his sons.<sup>34</sup> Those who disagreed by contrast, described a situation where the divine authority of the Sun was exploited to sustain a shaky claim to empire. It was as the weaker claimant to empire, these people maintained, that Tupa Inca Yupanqui had been led before the statue of the Sun which held out the imperial headband to him. However, the momentum of the ceremonial, once begun, weakened or silenced dissent. When accordingly the priests of the Sun had placed the headband on the young Inca, he sat down before the Sun on a low golden seat, was clothed in the imperial tunic and received the sceptre. Having been designated officially as his father's successor, Tupa Inca Yupanqui received all the honours which, as Pizarro's Spaniards had observed, Andeans bestowed on a ruling Inca:

Tupa Inca Yupanqui went about with such majesty and pomp, that wherever he passed, no one dared look at his face [...] And people turned aside from the roads on which he was to travel, and ascending mountains they worshipped and adored him from a distance. And they plucked out their eyelashes and eyebrows and blew them away as an offering to the Inca. Others offered him handfuls of coca leaf, which is a plant much prized among them.<sup>35</sup>

The ceremonial of inaugurating Tupa Inca Yupanqui as Inca before the statue of the divine Sun thus emerged as an effective means of equipping him to take over the government when some years later, the aged Pachacuti died.<sup>36</sup>

However, the deceased Inca remained a power to be reckoned with. For while the young Inca founded a new royal lineage of his

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<sup>34</sup> Betanzos, 1, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Sarmiento, 42; 44, pp. 248b-49.

<sup>36</sup> Betanzos, 1, 31, p. 145.





own, the deceased Inca's embalmed body, *mallqui*, remained head of his lineage and retained control of his property, his palace in Cuzco, his fields, herds and retainers throughout the empire. These diverse possessions were administered on behalf of the *mallqui* by his kinsfolk and their descendants. In the course of the celebration of an Inca's obsequies, these people assumed their new privileges and obligations. At the same time, the young Inca took up his charge. The Inca funerary ceremonial therefore had a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it created a new persona for the deceased Inca, and on the other, it projected the divinity and power of the living Inca to the noble Inca lineages of Cuzco and to the imperial subjects at large.

Accordingly, once Pachacuti's death had been made public, his kinsfolk called on him and searched for him in all the places he had frequented and loved during his lifetime; some of these places were in due course incorporated into the network of holy sites surrounding Cuzco. Places where an Inca had been born or where he had rested or dreamt a dream were thus set aside as holy by periodic sacrifice.<sup>37</sup> Other sacrifices marked sites where battles had been won, while rocks known as *pururaucas* were divinely appointed warriors, who had been metamorphosed into stone after helping Inca Pachacuti to defeat the Chancas.<sup>38</sup> With each Inca's reign, therefore, Cuzco and the surrounding countryside became more richly textured with holy places which projected their sacred power into the present. The ritual search for the dead Inca ended when after fifteen days, one of his kinsmen announced that the old Inca now "lived in the sky with his father the Sun."<sup>39</sup> This was the signal to commence the rites of mourning in the city of Cuzco, during which the dead Inca's victories were celebrated in ritual battles, and his deeds, like the deeds of all his predecessors, were recited and sung, so that "a memory remained of their ancient past." These recitations made up part of the oral traditions which later the Spaniards recorded in writing.<sup>40</sup>

During the funerary celebrations and during all subsequent festivals, the *mallquis* of deceased Incas, enthroned on their elaborately painted wooden seats which were decorated with

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<sup>37</sup> Rowe, 1979, e.g. Ch-2:8; Ch-5:1; Ch-8:4; Ch-9:2.

<sup>38</sup> Rowe, 1979, p. 9 for battles; pp. 9-10 for *pururaucas*.

<sup>39</sup> Betanzos, 1, 31, p. 145b; cf. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales de los incas* (hereafter Garcilaso), 2, 8, p. 54b. The Inca about to die says, "mi padre me llama que me vaya a descansar con él."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Betanzos, 1, 17, p. 86a.

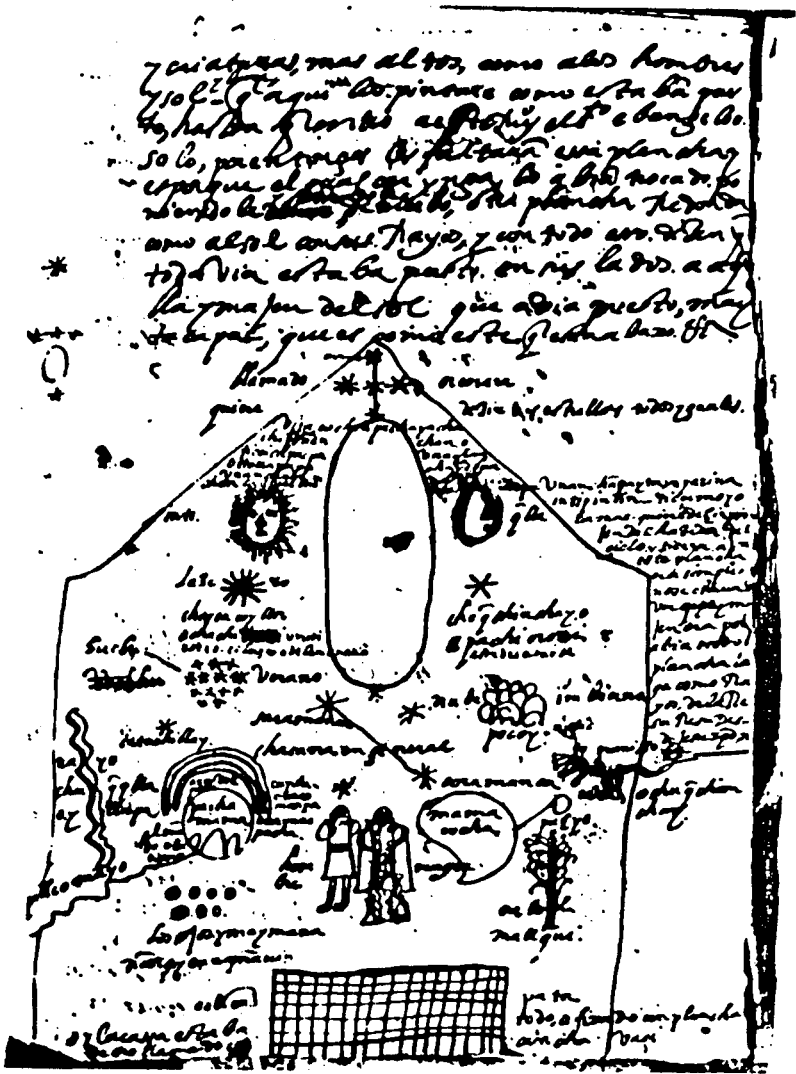


Figure 4. The universe according to Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui (f. 145 v.): in the central register he depicts things on earth with, inter alia, yllapa (lightning), a rainbow with Pachamama (Mother Earth), Mamacocha (Mother Sea), and mallqui (tree).

many-hued feathers<sup>41</sup> were honoured “as though alive.” Not only did the *mallquis* listen to chants celebrating their deeds, but also, every morning and evening they received for their sustenance sacrifices of maize, coca and chicha, because they “ate and were (sons) of the Sun and dwelt with the Sun in the sky.” [FIGURE 2] During the eleven months of Atawallpa’s captivity, when the ceremonial of the Inca state was still functioning, the Spaniards observed how the *mallquis* and their representatives interacted with other powerful personages. On one such occasion, Pedro Pizarro, the conqueror’s brother, was sent to Cuzco to obtain the consent of a *mallqui* for the marriage of one of his kinswomen to an Inca captain. “I thought that some living Indian was going to speak,” Pedro Pizarro wrote, remembering how he had entered the central square of Cuzco where all the *mallquis*, surrounded by their retainers, were enthroned on their seats.

But they took me to the figure of one of these dead people where the lady [whose marriage was under discussion] was sitting inside a rostrum [...] and the Indian designated to speak [for the deceased sat] at one side and the lady on the other [...] Now when we arrived before the deceased, and the interpreter gave the message, they remained for a while hesitant and silent until the Indian looked at the lady -which I took to be to find out her wishes. And after they had remained as I say they replied to me jointly saying that their lord the deceased said that it should be thus, that the captain should marry the lady.<sup>42</sup>

But matters did not always work out so harmoniously. When thus Guayna Capac at the height of his power wanted to marry a certain Inca lady, her father’s *mallqui* refused to give a response and the

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Betanzos, 1, 17, p. 85b. G. W. Conrad and A. A. Demarest, *Religion and Empire. The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism*, Cambridge, 1984, esp. pp. 110 ff., ascribe the Incas’ imperial expansion to their system of split inheritance, whereby the kin of each deceased ruler retained control of his property, while the new ruler was forced to make conquests by way of gaining property in his own right. But there were limits to the size of the empire the Incas were able to control, so that “in the end the ancestors to whom the Inca looked for protection, turned against their descendants and brought them down.” (p. 139) The thesis is attractive in its simplicity but is too sweeping. To mention only one problem: the authors assume that deceased Incas retained control of landed estates throughout the Inca empire in the same way as they did in the valley of Cuzco. Sixteenth century *visitas* do not support this hypothesis.

<sup>42</sup> Pedro Pizarro, pp. 53-54.

projected marriage foundered.<sup>43</sup> In one sense, the Inca, son of the divine Sun, was all powerful and those who resisted were punished with bloodcurdling ferocity. But on the other hand, the Inca's power was circumscribed and limited by the power of his ancestors acting through their representatives. The Inca was divine, but only as long as his divinity could be orchestrated in a ceremonial and political order which allocated vital positions to the kinsfolk of every past Inca, going back to the mythic founder Manco Capac.

When the Inca Guaina Capac, father of Guascar and Atawallpa, died unexpectedly, this order, fragile and prone to reflecting the discords, as well as the agreements of the Inca aristocracy, failed to function satisfactorily. All Inca rulers had sons by more than one consort, so that the choice of a successor also entailed the choice of the candidate's maternal kinsfolk.<sup>44</sup> The Inca nobles accordingly warned the ailing Guaina Capac, then residing in Quito, that if he did not name a successor himself, then the nobles in making the election

would become entangled in passions because the kinsmen of one son of the Inca would wish him to rule so that he had ties of obligation toward them, and the others would desire the same [for their kinsman], so that some discord would arise between them.<sup>45</sup>

Guaina Capac thus named his son Ninan Cuyoche to succeed him. When divinatory rituals carried out on his behalf gave a negative verdict, Guaina Capac named Guascar, but again the oracles were opposed. At this point, Guaina Capac died. Guascar, his mother and his sister and projected consort Chuqui Huipa began the ritual fast which had to precede the ceremonies of an Inca's inauguration. Meanwhile Guaina Capac's *mallqui* was solemnly escorted to Cuzco.<sup>46</sup> There, Guascar celebrated a spectacular posthumous triumph for his father and by way of legitimizing his succession, joined Guaina Capac's generals in trampling underfoot the deceased Inca's spoils

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<sup>43</sup> Joan de Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui, *Relación de antigüedades deste reyno del Perú*, ed. M. Jiménez de la Espada in *Tres relaciones...*, Madrid, 1879 (hereafter Santacruz Yamqui), p. 300.

<sup>44</sup> M. Rostworowski, *Historia...*, pp. 137-152 .

<sup>45</sup> Betanzos, 1, 46, p. 194a.

<sup>46</sup> Betanzos, 2, 48, p. 199; Sarmiento, 62-63.

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HAYCAICVS QVI

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Figure 5. Drawing by Guaman Poma depicting the Inca who “drinks with the Sun on the festival of the Sun,” during the June solstice, when the sun is small and weak. Guaman Poma was a Christian and thus imagined the chicha being conveyed to the Sun by a devil. *Corónica*, p. 246.

and prisoners.<sup>47</sup> But this recourse did not suffice to win the allegiance of the Inca royal lineages. There were conflicts even in his own lineage, for the *mallqui* of his grandfather Tupa Inca Yupanqui refused to give its consent to Guascar's projected marriage to his sister Chuqui Huipa. Meanwhile, the kinsfolk of Atawallpa's mother, who was a descendant of Pachacuti, backed Atawallpa to become Inca. The invading Spaniards, arriving at just the juncture when after murderous warfare Atawallpa had defeated Guascar, were the beneficiaries of the strife among kinsmen which Guaina Capac's nobles had foreseen but had been unable to prevent, magnified as this strife was by the polarisation of Inca subjects throughout the empire on one or other of the warring sides.

As long as all participants in the Inca political and religious order agreed with one another, an Inca's career was shaped by a twofold set of forces. While alive, he was set apart from humankind by an elaborate courtly ritual. When by contrast the Inca became a *mallqui*, courtly ceremonial endeavoured to emphasize his human characteristics. Food and drink were served him, and he spent the day in social activities in the main square, returning at night to his palace. In short, the living Inca's human life was extended into divine life, while the deceased Inca's divine life was extended into human life.

This courtly ceremonial was characterized by *longue durée* and repetition. An Inca would nominate his successor; years later, when this Inca had died, the nomination would be reiterated by the Inca nobility of Cuzco. *Longue durée* spoke not only through these ceremonial actions which followed one another in the course of many years, but also through the *mallquis*. For as a *mallqui*, endowed with inalienable palaces, lands, herds and male and female retainers, an Inca was in effect immortal and continued playing a role in the affairs of the living.

The *longue durée* of the ceremonial of an Inca's death and his successor's inauguration had been evolved, as the Spaniards' Andean informants said repeatedly, to forestall rebellion of the Inca subjects and discord among the Inca royal lineages.<sup>48</sup> In practical and political terms, the ceremonial was designed to eliminate the possibility of sudden change by bringing the Inca's successor into the public limelight as early as possible. In religious terms, the ceremonial

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<sup>47</sup> Martín de Murúa, *Historia general del Perú*, Madrid, 1962 (apparently finished in 1611, therefore hereafter Murúa 1611), 1, 42, pp. 119-20.

<sup>48</sup> Betanzos, 1, 26, p. 128a; 28, pp. 133b-34; 29, p. 137b; 30, p. 141a; cf. 33, p. 150a; 39, p. 171a.

# AGOSTO CHACRAIA PVI



tiempo de labranza - hayllinmi ynca

ya ca

Figure 6. Representatives of the four parts of the Inca empire ceremoniously initiate the season of ploughing and planting at "the time of agricultural work." Guaman Poma, Corónica, p. 250.

exalted the Inca as "Son of the Sun," thus spelling out his dominion over time both in life and after death. To fall victim to time was the lot of everyone except, so the ceremonial of Inca death and inauguration suggested, the Inca. In cosmic terms, at death the Inca returned to his origin so as "to rest with his father the Sun." In human terms, the dead Inca "as though alive"<sup>49</sup> participated in the doings of his successor through the services of his retainers and kinsmen.

The presence of the *mallquis* in the daily life of the Inca state spells out a conception of the relationship between life and death which was utterly different from that of the invading Spaniards. In practical terms, the *mallquis* provided the basis upon which the kin of deceased Incas continued wielding political and economic power. In religious and philosophical terms, the *mallquis* anchored Inca power in the order of nature. For as objects of cult, the *mallquis* figured as one category in a vast array of Andean worshipful entities. These worshipful entities comprised, in the first instance, the distinct origins of different groups of people. Thus, some Andeans attributed their origin to *illapa*, the lightning, and *illapa* is also one of the terms which the seventeenth century Andean historian Guaman Poma de Ayala used to refer to *mallquis*. [see FIGURE 2] Another Andean historian and contemporary of Guaman Poma, Joan de Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui described Manco Capac's mother and father as *mallquis* or trees, and drew a schematic picture of the opening of the rock at Pacaritambo which is flanked by these two trees. [FIGURE 3] Trees, like *illapa*, also attracted cult in their own right, and not only as first ancestor and point of origin to some group of people. [cf. FIGURE 4] In this sense, trees figured among the broad category of worshipful entities which Andeans described as *guaca*.<sup>50</sup> Stones, springs, caves, indeed any feature of the landscape, could also qualify as *guaca*. So did the three siblings of Manco Capac who turned into stone, as well as Manco Capac himself, for his *mallqui* was a stone. As *mallquis* therefore, the Incas shaped on the one hand the historical past, and on the other, they shaped the natural environment, the geographical cosmos.

The celebration of an Inca's inauguration and death, in marking different points in his life span, described his power in human and

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<sup>49</sup> Betanzos, 1, 26, p. 128a; 1, 39, p. 177b .

<sup>50</sup> J. E. Sherbondy, *Mallki: ancestros y cultivo de árboles en los Andes*, Proyecto FAO-Holanda /INFOR GCP/PER/027/NET, Ministerio de Agricultura, Lima, 1986; for *guaca*, see Garcilaso's classification, in Garcilaso, 2, 4.



social term. According to the Inca festival calendar as observed in Cuzco, these celebrations took place within the framework of calendrical ceremonies which described the living Inca's power in terms of time orbeit in terms of the chronological cosmos.

Inca calendrical festivals were organized around the two solstices in June and December. Inti Raimi, the "festival of the Sun" in June, marked the winter solstice of the Southern hemisphere and was the central event in a nexus of celebrations which began in late April and May with the maize harvest, and ended in August with ploughing. Both harvest and ploughing were inaugurated by the ruling Inca. In May, he ceremoniously harvested the fields which had been hallowed by Inca myth and history. One of these, Sausero, was the property of Mama Huaco who had thrown the golden rod to Guanaypata, thereby making a beginning of Inca agriculture in the valley of Cuzco.<sup>51</sup> The maize grown in Sausero was used for chicha (maize beer) to be consumed in her cult. A maize field belonging to the Sun was situated inside the enclosure of Coricancha. Its crop was distributed throughout the Inca empire as a token of fellowship and communion. Another such maize field was laboriously cultivated next to the temple of the Sun in the harsh mountain climate of distant Titicaca, while in Cuzco, Colcampata, the "garden of the Sun," was also planted with maize.<sup>52</sup> Harvesting was followed by a solemn procession, repeated over several days, to the open space Limapampa, where the Inca nobles led by the ruling Inca sang to the Sun from dawn to dusk. This event was attended by the entire population of Cuzco, including the *mallquis* of deceased Incas with their servants and retainers.<sup>53</sup> Offerings to Guanacauri and other holy places in the vicinity of Cuzco followed, and the Inca "drank [chicha] to the Sun" to enhance its strength at this time when it stood at its lowest point in the sky. [FIGURE 5]<sup>54</sup>

The festival season closed in August with the ploughing of the same sacred fields that had earlier been harvested. The ruling Inca along with the Inca nobles wielded golden digging sticks evocative of the golden rod that had been thrown by Mama Huaco. While

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<sup>51</sup> Cristóbal de Molina, *Fábulas y ritos de los incas*, Lima, 1943 (hereafter Molina), pp. 66-67.

<sup>52</sup> S. MacCormack, "From the Sun of the Incas to the Virgin of Copacabana," *Representations*, 8, (1984), pp. 30-60 at p. 45; Garcilaso, 2, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Molina, pp. 50-52.

<sup>54</sup> Molina, p. 27; Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*, Murra, Adorno (eds.), Mexico, 1980 (hereafter Guaman Poma), p. 246.

working they sang *aravis*, “songs about the deeds of others or about the memory of absent loved ones, or about love,”<sup>55</sup> interspersed with *hayllis*, “songs of rejoicing in war or about fields which have been well finished and conquered.” [FIGURE 6]<sup>56</sup> Befitting the triumphal theme of *haylli*, the ploughmen, once their work was completed, returned to the main square of Cuzco adorned in the tunics they had won in warfare.<sup>57</sup> The solemn harvesting and ploughing which the Inca inaugurated in Cuzco was the signal to all parts of the empire to initiate these tasks there also.

The constellation of observances grouped round Inti Raimi in June was balanced in December by Capac Raimi, the “great festival” which marked the summer solstice of the Southern hemisphere. Capac Raimi was preceded in November by the initiation of young men and women into adulthood, which had, in the old days, been celebrated by each family in private.<sup>58</sup> It was Pachacuti who transformed these family festivals into one single public and imperial celebration to honour the divine Sun who had favoured him both with victory and with his kingdom. A series of family festivals thus became an imperial celebration, and private sacred time was coordinated with the sacred and historical time of the city of Cuzco and the empire at large. This coordination of private with imperial time was spelt out in the order of events during initiation, where the public core of the festival, which unfolded in sacred and urban or imperial space, was framed by a set of domestic activities: weaving and making chicha at the outset of the festival, and ritual drinking in a familial setting near its end. A similar coordination of public with private concerns was explicit in the rituals of harvesting and ploughing. In May, the harvest began with gathering the crop of the sacred fields belonging to the divine Sun and to deceased Incas. Thereafter followed the harvesting of all the other fields, both in Cuzco and throughout the empire. The same order was followed at the time of ploughing.

These festivals were not isolated occasions celebrated one by one in the course of a calendar year. Instead, they formed an interconnected fabric of sacred time. The initiation of young men overlapped with the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, which the Incas celebrated in its own right. And the celebration of

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<sup>55</sup> *Aravis* and *hayllis*, Holguín, pp. 152; 157; Molina, p. 67; Guaman Poma, p. 245; Cobo, 13, 27, p. 215a.

<sup>56</sup> Holguín, p. 157; Guaman Poma, p. 250.

<sup>57</sup> Cobo, p. 215a.

<sup>58</sup> Betanzos, 1, 14, p. 65b.

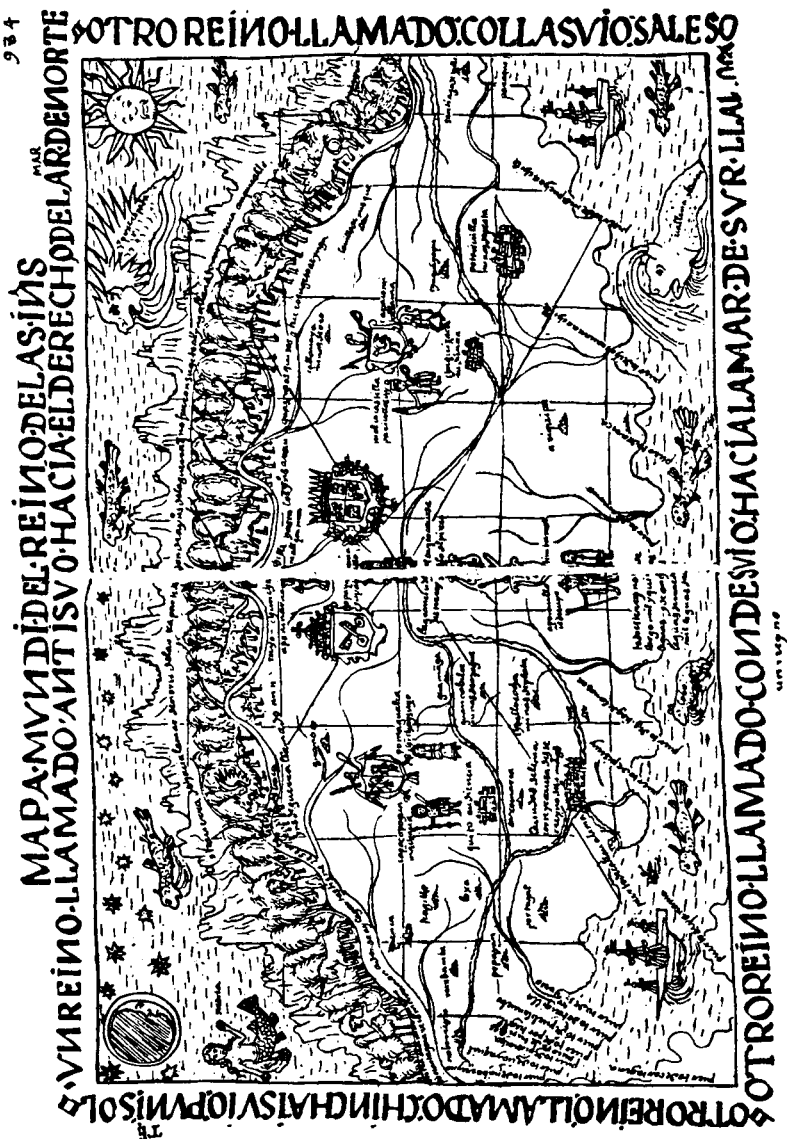


Figure 7. The four parts of the Andean world, with Cuzco at the centre. Guaman Poma, *Corónica*, p. 983.

harvest and ploughing overlapped with the shortest day of the year at the winter solstice, which was itself the occasion of a set of rituals. Moreover, the young men who had been initiated during the preceding November and December participated in the harvest celebrations as a distinct group, for they were attired in tunics especially woven for the occasion out of thread of gold and silver with adornments of iridescent feathers. In this garb, they assisted the Inca and his nobles in their task of harvesting and ploughing.<sup>59</sup> The tunics which the young men donned for this festival were the last in a series of changes of clothes, and marked the final stage of initiation. For the young men were at last ready to participate in an adult task. The festivals of December and June were accordingly brought into relation with each other not merely by ceremonies focusing on the course of the divine Sun, but also by ceremonies focusing on growth and change in society. Calendrical time marked by movement of the sun, and agricultural or social time marked by the growth of human beings and the crops were thus celebrated in a carefully articulated conjunction.

The themes of Inca myths and festivals were familiar throughout the Andes. Throughout the Andes, people traced their origins to rocks and mountains, lakes and springs, and throughout the Andes myths told of the transformation of humans into rocks and rocks into humans. Similarly, harvest and ploughing, irrigation and the distribution of fields to those cultivating them were everywhere orchestrated by rituals akin to those observed by the Incas. What gave the Inca versions of myths and the accompanying celebrations their distinctive colouring was the central role which the ruling Inca and his predecessors occupied in them. For the Incas, in positing that their own society had been preceded by societies which were either radically different or else in some respect inchoate and incomplete, laid claim to all culturally and politically meaningful time. Similarly, the Inca empire of the "four parts" of Peru occupied all culturally and politically meaningful space. As an Andean historian writing in the early seventeenth century saw it, all roads led to Cuzco [FIGURE 7]<sup>60</sup> and Cuzco stood the centre of these four parts. Spain was an exact replica of this configuration, with one crucial difference: in

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<sup>59</sup> Betanzos, 1, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Guaman Poma, pp. 983-4; *Relación del origen y gobierno que los incas tuvieron...* in *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú*, 2 ser., vol. 3 (1920) pp. 59-60.

Spain the sun did not shine. [FIGURE 8]<sup>61</sup> The human focal point of this outwardly harmonious but intrinsically tension ridden conglomerate of myth, ceremony and history was the ruling Inca. He was the leading agent in ceremonial events, while myth traced the historical coherence between present and past through the lineage of his predecessors, going back to the founder Manco Capac.

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For the invading Spaniards, such a perception of a ruler's power was in part familiar, and in part deeply alien. As we have seen, the invaders observed with interest how Andeans honoured their Inca sovereigns. Indeed, superficially, resemblances did exist not only between Inca and Spanish courtly gestures but also between Spanish attitudes to kingship and those of Incas and Andeans. At the very time when in the mid sixteenth century, the first accounts of Peru and the Incas were being published, the historian Florián de Ocampo put the finishing touches on a history of Spain which traced the line of kings who had ruled in the peninsula back to a grandson of Noah. Like other historians of his own and an earlier period, Ocampo believed Spain to have been ruled by a sequence of "natural lords" who derived legitimacy from their god-willed origins in a long distant mythic past, from institutional continuity with those origins,<sup>62</sup> and from implicit or explicit popular consent. Two crucial criteria of legitimating continuity were on the one hand that a given territory should have been occupied from time immemorial, and on the other, that royal succession should function according to the clearcut rule of male primogeniture.

In the eyes of some historians and many Spanish officials, these same criteria were applicable in Peru, but had regularly been infringed by the Incas. Firstly, Spaniards tended to argue, the Incas had gained their empire by conquest and by displacing earlier potentates who had ruled with a better title. The Inca foundation legend could be told in different ways; Spanish historians intent on questioning the legitimacy of Inca rule thus told it from the point of view of the nations which the Incas had displaced when founding Cuzco. Secondly, these Spaniards argued, if there had been an Inca rule of succession, it had been broken more frequently than it had

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<sup>61</sup> Guaman Poma, p. 42.

<sup>62</sup> On Alfonso el Sabio, see F. Rico, *Alfonso el Sabio y la General estoria*, Madrid, 1972, pp. 113 ff.

been observed. Pachacuti had thus become Inca in violation of the rights of Inca Urcon, and Atawallpa ruled in violation of the rights of Guascar. In this light, the Spanish invaders were able to view themselves as representatives of legitimate sovereignty which Atawallpa had violated.

In one sense, this attitude resulted from the imperatives of conquest: some justification for the Spanish presence overseas had to be found. Yet, the attitude was also the product of a confrontation between the fluid traditions of an oral culture and the immutable traditions of a literate culture drawing its *raison d'être* from unchanging written texts. On the one hand, therefore, there stood the Bible and certain works of biblical exegesis, along with written compilations of Spanish law going back to the thirteenth century *Siete partidas* and beyond. And on the other hand, there were the oral traditions of the Incas, reshaped as these had been from generation to generation in ceremonial and in political interaction. Invariably, Spanish interpreters found these traditions to be both contradictory and incomplete and accordingly pointed out countless inconsistencies between myth on the one hand and history, ceremonial and daily practice on the other.

It was with a mind to contradicting these criticisms of the Incas that in the later sixteenth century the historian Garcilaso de la Vega, whose father had been one of the Spanish conquerors and whose mother was a descendant of the tenth Inca Tupa Yupanqui began reflecting on the Andean and Inca past. In 1609, he published the fruit of these reflections, a history of haunting beauty in which he described the achievements of his maternal ancestors beginning with their mythic origins, and continuing down to the Spanish invasion and his own lifetime. Garcilaso's central purpose was to describe Inca myth, history and statecraft as a coherent and consistent whole, thus suggesting that the inconsistencies in Inca myth and the illegalities of Inca government which earlier authors had discussed resulted from misperceptions. Myth or "historical legend," he carefully pointed out, is not the same as historical narrative and must not be expected to convey factually and historically accurate information. However, Garcilaso also thought that like other myths, so the foundation myths of the Incas did contain a historical core. Moreover, he thought, these myths enunciated a political programme.

Most versions which the Spaniards were told of the Inca foundation myth mentioned the divine Sun as father of the Incas only incidentally or not at all. In the myth chosen by Garcilaso, however, the divine Sun is central. For Garcilaso focused his discussion on the

# PONTIFICAL MUNDO

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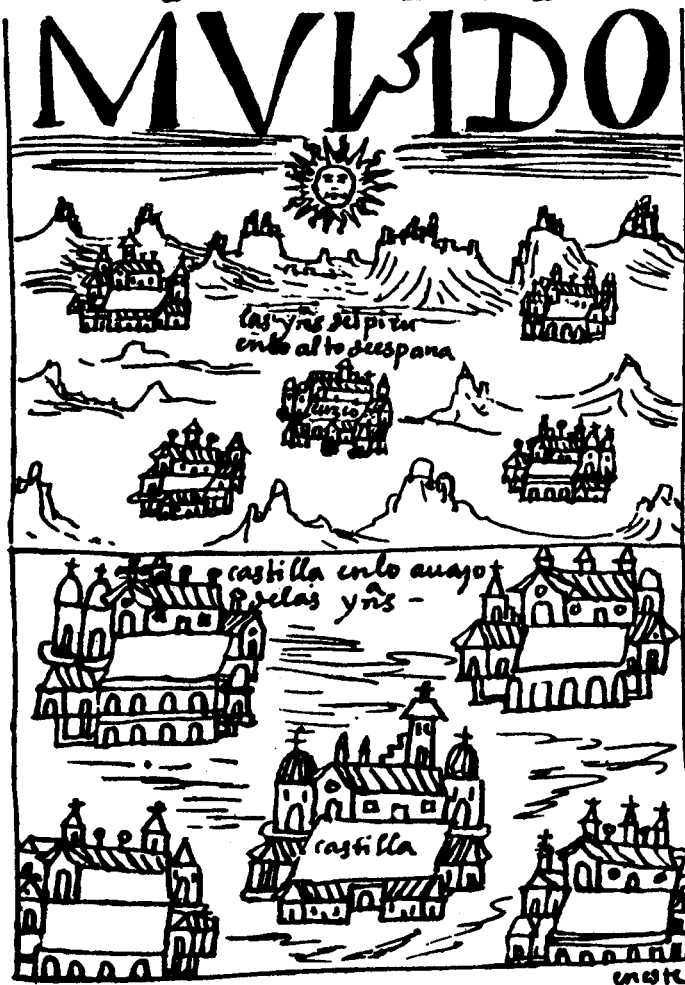


Figure 8. "The Indies of Peru above Spain." Here, the sun shines. "Castille below the Indies" is without sun. Guaman Poma, *Corónica*, p. 42.

Inca state at its height. It was under Pachacuti that the Incas first penetrated the Titicaca region where the solar creation myths which Garcilaso recounted in his version of the Inca myth of origin were at home. Here, so these myths related, the sun had been born at the beginning of the current era. Taking stock of the religious horizons of their growing empire, the Incas thus incorporated the solar myth of origins from Titicaca into their own myth of origins from Pacaritambo.<sup>63</sup>

In ancient times, Garcilaso remembered being told by one of his aged Inca kinsmen, the divine Sun sent his own son and daughter, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, to teach human beings the arts of agriculture and civilisation. Carrying a golden rod the divine pair journeyed from Lake Titicaca to settle in the place where their rod would sink easily into the soil. Stopping to rest at Pacaritambo, they reached the hill Guanacauri where they thrust the rod into the ground,<sup>64</sup> and gathered people to be the first settlers of their city of Cuzco.<sup>65</sup> Manco Capac's successor was his eldest son who married his eldest sister.<sup>66</sup> All subsequent Inca rulers, Garcilaso wrote, were born from such brother sister marriages,<sup>67</sup> and at death were believed to return to their father the divine Sun.<sup>68</sup>

As described by Garcilaso, the transfer of power from one Inca to the next was a peaceful, predictable and harmonious affair. In other respects also, Garcilaso's Inca empire was an exemplar of the same cosmic and social harmony as was described in his version of the foundation myth. On earth, the Inca ruled as a benefactor who attracted subjects to his dominion by persuasion more than by force, just as Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo had done when founding Cuzco. From heaven meanwhile, the Sun, father to the Incas and principal deity of their empire, bestowed warmth and light, rain and increase on all human beings alike.<sup>69</sup> Personal traits of individual Incas were subsumed under their lineage's divinely ordained mandate

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<sup>63</sup> See F. Pease, *El dios creador andino*, Lima, 1973; and MacCormack (above n. 52):

<sup>64</sup> First Incas children of sun and moon, Garcilaso, 4, 9; on Guanacauri during the initiation of young men, cf. Garcilaso, 6, 24.

<sup>65</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 16; 21.

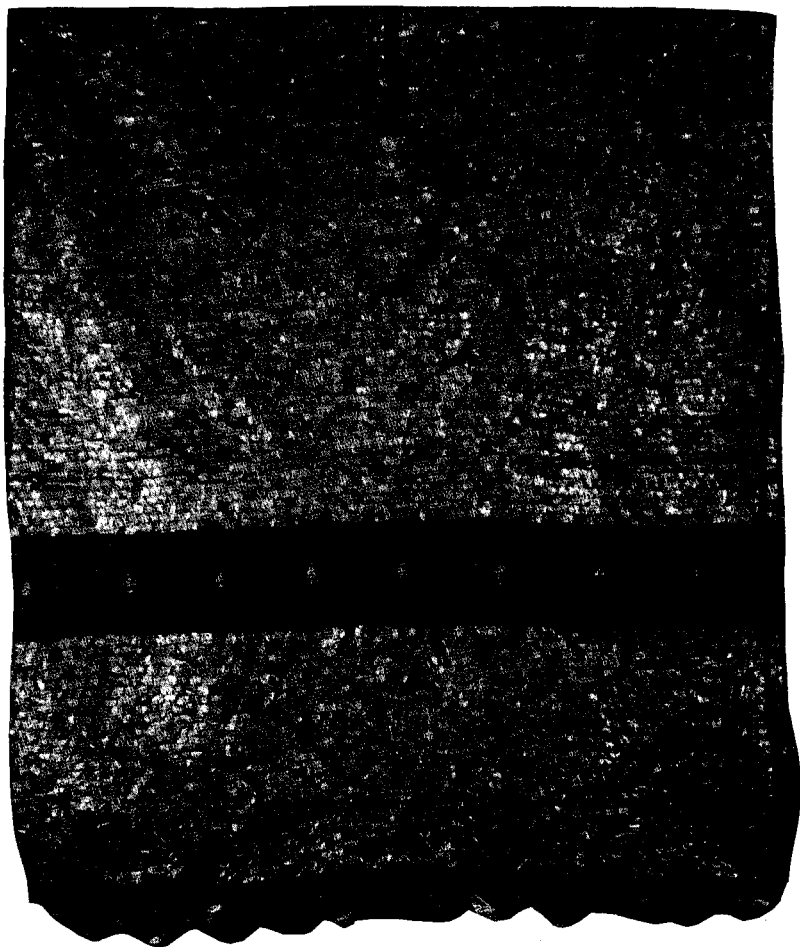
<sup>66</sup> Garcilaso, 4, 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 25, p. 38b.

<sup>68</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 23; 2, 16; 20; 7, 26.

<sup>69</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 15, p. 27a; 1, 16.





*Figure 9. Tunic for a high dignitary or member of the Inca royal family. The garment is covered with tiny gold plaques which are woven into the cloth. The woollen cloth itself is only visible in the band of lozenges running across the tunic. The centre of each lozenge is decorated with a small gold mask. Museo de Oro, Lima.*

to rule, which initiated civilisation in the Andes. Garcilaso thus wrote of Manco Capac:

Because the deeds of this first Inca are the beginning and foundation of the history we will write, it is as well to recount them here [...] so as not to repeat them later, when describing the lives and deeds of each of the Incas his descendants. For all the Incas, whether of royal or of common birth, prided themselves of imitating, in each and every respect, the doings and customs of this first prince Manco Capac. And having written of him, we will have written of all the Incas.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout his history, accordingly, Garcilaso described each ruling Inca as being endowed with the same virtues of wisdom and moderation which he had attributed to Manco Capac.<sup>71</sup> Political precept and political action, myth and history had thus been completely continuous with each other in the empire of the Incas, and the multifarious contradictions and inconsistencies which earlier historians had found vanished in Garcilaso's narrative.

But inconsistency arose at another level. Garcilaso insisted repeatedly that Andeans literally believed the first Inca to have been "a divine man come down from heaven,"<sup>72</sup> just as he had told in his version of the foundation myth, and that therefore Andeans adored Manco Capac and each of his successors "as god, son of the Sun."<sup>73</sup>

The Indians called their first king and all his successors [...] Son of the Sun. But they bestowed this title on the Inca with respect to his nature, as they falsely believed it to be, not as a given name.<sup>74</sup>

Garcilaso's divine Inca rulers thus bore a twofold face. As portrayed in their founding myth and as seen by their subjects, they were the true children of the divine Sun, to be approached with religious awe. They acted in the world as a beneficial cosmic force and were

<sup>70</sup> Garcilaso 1, 19, p. 32b; also see 2, 9.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Garcilaso, 1, 24, p. 37b.

<sup>72</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 21.

<sup>73</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 25, p. 38b.

<sup>74</sup> Garcilaso, 1, 24, p. 37b, translation following Livermore; cf. 4, 1, p. 122a, the *acllas* (chosen women of the Sun and prospective wives of Incas) must be of royal blood to ensure pure descent.

portrayed as such by the ceremonial of Inca calendrical festivals. On the other hand, as seen by themselves and by Garcilaso the historian and his readers, the Incas were human statesmen who deployed the fiction of their solar origin to enhance their political authority. Garcilaso accordingly explained that Manco Capac “must have been some Indian of good understanding, prudence and resourcefulness,”<sup>75</sup> who invented the solar myth and his divine title so as to persuade people to obey him.

Garcilaso was not alone in rationalizing Inca myth. Another variety of rationalisation comes from his contemporary Martín de Murúa, who thought Andeans regarded the Incas as children of the Sun because Manco Capac had appeared to them on a mountain wearing a diadem on his head and attired in a tunic adorned with gold plaques.

And when the rays of the sun fell on the plaques and the diadem they radiated and shed a bright light and splendour. The Indians seeing this were struck with fear and thought him to be a son of the sun and something divine. [see FIGURE 9]<sup>76</sup>

In a similar vein, the royal chronicler Antonio de Herrera considered the miraculous elements in the Inca foundation myth to be explicable by reference to sorcery, “because among those nations there were many sorcerers.”<sup>77</sup>

Like Garcilaso, Murúa and Herrera derived their strategies of extracting from mythic narratives a certain historically truthful dimension from Greek and Roman historians and philosophers.<sup>78</sup> Murúa did little to distinguish myth from history, but Garcilaso and Herrera recognized that the Inca myths of origins, like certain myths of classical antiquity, were exemplary stories about the past which conditioned and defined the present. What mattered about such myths was not whether they were literally and historically true. Rather, what mattered was how the myth formulated the framework

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<sup>75</sup> Garcilaso, 25, p. 39a.

<sup>76</sup> Murúa, 1611, I, 3, pp. 28-29; cf. Miguel Cabello Valboa, *Miscelánea antártica*, Lima, 1951 (hereafter Cabello), 3, 10, p. 266.

<sup>77</sup> Antonio de Herrera, *Décadas*, Madrid, 1615, 5, 3, 7, p. 78; cf. Cabello, 3, 9, p. 262.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe their Myths?*, Chicago, 1988, pp. 46 ff; 53 ff.

of values, ideals and realities within which the present was to be understood. Changes in present circumstance were reflected by changes in myth, whether this was in classical antiquity or in Inca Peru. The solar myth of Inca origins which Garcilaso laid at the foundation of his account of the Inca empire emphasized those aspects of Inca society, politics and religion which he most wanted his readers to take in. Garcilaso thus reiterated again and again that the Incas traced their origin back to the sun, which according to the natural philosophy of the day was the most exalted of all created beings.

Beyond this assertion, however, he left his account of the remotest Andean antiquity uninterpreted, and focused his rationalisation of the Inca myth of origins on Inca society and on the Inca state as observed by Spaniards in Peru. Here, he sought to validate both Spanish observation and Andean experience. Garcilaso knew that Spaniards coming from a culture totally distinct from that of the Andes would find any formulation of the divine or solar origins of the Incas incredible. But Garcilaso also knew that for Andeans, the Inca foundation myth was intelligible because the values and realities it expounded were familiar to them and could be taken for granted. At the same time, Garcilaso's explanation, which differentiates the myth's literal and historical veracity from its content as understood by those who actually told the story and lived within the cultural framework the story posits, is an outsider's explanation. For such an explanation can only convince people who are unable to comprehend or accept a given myth for what it states in its own context.

Most of Garcilaso's contemporaries and readers were such people. For Spaniards and Europeans who had never seen the Andes, the Inca empire was a distant barbarian polity of legendary wealth and strange customs. Even in Peru itself, the Incas had, by Garcilaso's time of writing, become a memory. Some Andeans thought the Inca would one day return, but their image of the returning Inca differed profoundly from the Inca rulers of the empire that had been conquered by the Spaniards. A new myth of a new divine ruler was in the making, but it was a ruler hidden in a future epoch, in another world, of which Garcilaso appears not to have been aware.

He was, however, very much aware of the writings of sixteenth century political theorists,<sup>79</sup> thinkers who, in the footsteps of Machiavelli, had reached the conclusion that for better or worse, religion was a means of political control. This had nothing to do with the truth or falsity of the religion being practiced in any polity under discussion. Reason of state, the considerations which a wise prince, and even a Christian prince was duty bound to weigh up in the interest of good government, dictated that these realities had to be taken into account.

Granted that the Incas were not Christian, Garcilaso endeavoured to prove that they had in every respect been wise statesmen. This was why, according to Garcilaso, the Incas had followed the dictates of a responsible reason of state and had propagated the myth of their solar descent in order to enhance their authority. In offering this explanation of Inca divine kingship, an explanation which rendered its functioning intelligible to his contemporaries, Garcilaso also suggested that as described in his version of the Inca foundation myth, this kind of kingship did not exist. Andeans had bestowed on the Inca the title Son of the Sun "with respect to his nature, as they falsely believed it to be."<sup>80</sup> Garcilaso thus explained away the very thing he endeavoured to explain. It remains to be seen whether we in our time can do any better.

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<sup>79</sup> Garcilaso cites Giovanni Botero's *Relazione*, in *Historia general*, 1, 7, and Jean Bodin's *Republique*, also in *Historia general*, 1, 3. For the background, see Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 1, Cambridge, 1978, pp. 248 ff.; J. A. Fernández-Santa María, *The State, War and Peace. Spanish Political Thought in the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1977.

<sup>80</sup> Garcilaso, *Comentarios...* 1, 24, p. 37b.



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