**Toward a Canon in Latin American Political Thought:**

**Incorporating the Early Peruvian Indigenous Writers**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The incorporation of non-European political theory into broader undergraduate and graduate education in political science is beginning, and here I seek to advance that incorporation by looking at three works written by Indigenous Peruvian authors in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These discussions, along with extended selections from the writings of each author, will form chapters in an anthology of readings in early Latin American political thought designed for advanced undergraduates. A discussion of the thought of three Indigenous writers formed a chapter in the book *Cases of Exclusion and Mobilization of Race and Ethnicities in Latin America* edited by Marc Becker and published by Cambridge Scholars Press in 2013.

In his *Relación*, Titu Cusi Yupanqui maintains that his ancestors were “natural lords” of the “kingdoms and provinces of Peru” and relates in dramatic form discussions about the nature of the European invaders. Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala’s *First New Chronicle and Good Government* is an example of the universal genre of "mirror of princes" literature while *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas* by the European-influenced Inca Garcilaso de la Vega has been viewed for centuries as utopian writing.

***An Inca Account of the Conquest of Peru* by Tito Cusi Yupanqui**

While students of Latin American history are familiar with the accounts of the conquerors, few have read the writings of the people they conquered. The *Relación* (or *Instrucción*) by Titu Cusi Yupanqui, the second to the last Inca, was the first to document the forty year resistance of the people of the Andes to the Spanish invaders and his writing has been called “a rare legacy from the Inka world.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This 1570 work is an account of the conquest from point of view of the vanquished. In what reads like a dramatic performance, Titu Cusi presents speeches by his father and others that question the nature of the invaders from across the sea and whether they are gods or men, speeches which lament the evils and injustice being committed by these invaders against the inhabitants. Titu Cusi begins by saying that his ancestors were “natural lords” of the “kingdoms and provinces of Peru,” a statement similar to those of Friar Bartolomé de las Casas in asserting the rights of the Indigenous kingdoms of the New World to govern themselves under the Spanish King. There are also controversies around authorship of this work given that Titu Cusi was assisted in its writing by his Mestizo secretary and a Spanish friar.

Titu Cusi was the grandson of Huayna Capac who had at his prime ruled a vast empire that extended from what is now Ecuador to central Chile. That empire, called Tawantinsuyo and centered on the highland city of Cusco, had grown in the 1400s with the conquests of the ninth Inca, Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui, and his son and successor Tupac Inca.

The Inca Empire, however, had no established policy of succession, only the custom that the Inca’s most able son would inherit the title of Inca. At the death of Huayna Capac in 1525 (from smallpox brought by the Spaniards who had landed in South America the year before), a conflict arose between two of his sons, Huascar and Atahualpa, over who would take the throne. Kenneth J. Andrien states that a “stalemate soon developed, with Atahualpa and his generals ruling in the north, and Huascar and his allies in Cusco controlling the imperial state apparatus and the remainder of the empire.”[[2]](#footnote-2) In the end Atahualpa defeated his brother Huascar and ordered the killing of Huascar’s family, generals, and supporters in 1532 and finally of Huascar himself in 1533. However, in November of 1532, Atahualpa was captured by the Spanish under Francisco Pizarro in the town of Cajamarca when he agreed to a meeting with the strange new men who had arrived in his land. Atahualpa was then killed by the Spanish only a few months after the death of his brother Huascar. The Spanish proclaimed Tupac Huallpa, a younger brother of Atahualpa and Huascar, as Inca and, when he died suddenly, they chose another brother, Manco Inca Yupanqui, as their puppet ruler.

Manco Inca initially collaborated with the Spaniards but, in 1536, as their treatment of him worsened, he turned against them calling together an army of 100,000 warriors and attacking Cusco and Lima. His army laid siege to Cusco for more than a year but that effort eventually failed and, in 1537, Manco abandoned the highlands for the eastern slopes of the Andes, establishing his capital at Vilcabamba. From there, his forces were able to harass the Spaniards, their towns, their crops, and the travelers on their roads, until his death in 1545. Manco Inca made the mistake of giving refuge to six Spaniards, followers of Diego de Almagro, fleeing punishment for the assassination of Francisco Pizarro. However, after a time, Spanish officials offered the murderers clemency if they would kill Manco Inca, which they did while playing *herron* (a type of ball game) with him. The murderers were then themselves killed while trying to escape.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Sayri Tupac succeeded Manco Inca while his brother Titu Cusi Yupanqui was named high priest of the Sun. But, in 1556, emissaries from the Spanish Viceroy convinced Sayri Tupac to leave Vilcabamba to live in Cusco with the grant of substantial lands and tax income plus the threat of military attack if he did not agree. Sayri Tupac died unexpectedly in 1560 or 1561[[4]](#footnote-4) and Titu Cusi then succeeded to the throne.

Titu Cusi was born around 1530 in Cuzco. The name of his mother is not known but she was referred to as a wife of Manco Inca and an important woman from the town of Anta.[[5]](#footnote-5) Titu Cusi and his mother and sisters were taken by Manco Inca to Vilcabamba in 1537 but shortly thereafter the children and their mother were captured during a Spanish raid and taken to Cusco where they spent about five years in the home of a Spanish official. In about 1542, Manco Inca succeeded in abducting his son and returning him to Vilcabamba[[6]](#footnote-6) where he would remain for the rest of his life.

The territory controlled by the rebellious Inca was far from small. Nathan Wachtel notes that Titu Cusi’s state “consisted of the tropical Andes region: an almost limitless expanse to the east, and running from the latitude of Huanuco in the north to south of Cuzco. …. All the inhabitants of these provinces…paid him tribute.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Titu Cusi, like his father before him, harassed the Spanish settlements and commerce while engaging in sporadic diplomatic negotiations with the apparent goal of establishing a recognized neo-Inca state.

In 1565 a messianic religious rebellion arose called the *taki onqoy* in which leaders said the old gods would be revived and the Spanish defeated. The hope was that Indians from Quito in the north to the land of the Araucanians in the south would rise up. The plot was betrayed and crushed by the Spanish.[[8]](#footnote-8) But, Titu Cusi negotiated favorable terms with Governor Lope García de Castro, signing the Treat of Acobamba in 1566 or 1567, depending on the source.[[9]](#footnote-9) In the treaty, Titu Cusi agreed to end the fighting and accept Christianity, taking the Christian name of Diego de Castro. In turn, he achieved agreement on the marriage of his son to the daughter of Sayri Tupac and the promise of lands that had previously been under control of the Inca, plus tax revenues. Following this agreement, Augustinian friars were allowed to enter the Inca kingdom to evangelize the Indians but Titu Cusi, in this as in every aspect of his relations with the Spanish, ceded only the minimum necessary. It is likely that he never intended to leave Vilcabamba as the Spanish hoped.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In 1570, Titu Cusi dictated the missive to the governor with a message for the King of Spain that we examine here. But before he could even know whether his message was delivered, Titu Cusi died, from pneumonia or, according to some historians including Edmundo Guillén Guillén,[[11]](#footnote-11) poisoned, in 1571.

Titu Cusi was succeeded by his half-brother Tupac Amaru. At this time, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo realized, according to Raquel Chang-Rodriguez, that

Spanish hegemony in the region would always be challenged as long as Vilcabamba remained in the hands of the rebels; thus he ordered the military campaign that destroyed that last bastion of Andean resistance. The capture of Tupac Amaru I, and of the statue of the god Punchao belonging to the Cuzco temple of Coricancha, put an end to a struggle which had lasted more than forty years.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Viceroy Toledo held a three day trial at the end of which a Spanish judge ordered the beheading of Tupac. The execution took place on the plaza of Cusco on September 24, 1572,[[13]](#footnote-13) before a crowd of his mourning subjects. Sayri Tupac’s daughter Beatriz (who had been betrothed to Titu Cusi’s son) was then married to the Spaniard who had led the expedition that captured her uncle Tupac Amaru.

Ralph Bauer points out that Andean resistance against the Spanish invaders continued. While the execution of Tupac Amaru marked the end of the paternal line of the Incas, descendants of the maternal line, including resistance leader Tupac Amaru II in the 1780s, claimed the mantle of the royal house.[[14]](#footnote-14) As for Vilcabamba, the Spanish founded a town with the same name some distance away and, as time passed, the site of the Inca city was lost to the memory of even the local people. When scholar-explorer Hiram Bingham stumbled upon Machu Pichu in 1911, the city that he had actually been looking for was Vilcabamba. It would not be until 1976 that Peruvian scholar Edmundo Guillén Guillén finally discovered the actual “lost city of the Incas” –Vilcabamba.[[15]](#footnote-15)

There is general agreement that Titu Cusi’s manuscript was completed in February of 1570 and taken to Spain by Lope García de Castro who was just then completing a term as governor of Peru. In 1574, it was copied and the original returned to García de Castro with the copy given to King Philip II.[[16]](#footnote-16) The copy resides in the Royal Library of the Monastery of El Escorial, the royal residence, chapel, library, and mausoleum built by Philip outside Madrid. It has been digitized but not yet posted on the internet; however, scholars can request a digitized copy.[[17]](#footnote-17) The work was rediscovered and a few fragments published in 1877 by Marcos Jiménez de la Espada but it was not published in its entirety until 1916 by Horacio H. Urteaga and Carlos A. Romero.[[18]](#footnote-18) Further Spanish editions were released in 1973, 1985, 1988, 1992 and 2001, while translations were done into German (1984) and Japanese (1987) and finally, in 2005 and 2006, three English translations appeared all at once.[[19]](#footnote-19) Digital versions of the Spanish text are also available on several web sites.

Titu Cusi’s work is composed of three parts—1) a few introductory paragraphs addressed to Governor García de Castro with the request that, “upon safe arrival in Spain,” he present Titu Cusi’s case for compensation to King Philip; 2) the long historical “*relación*” of the conquest and Incan resistance; and 3) a power of attorney for the former governor to represent his interests in Spain.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Although Titu Cusi had spent part of his boyhood among the Spanish in Cusco, he was probably not fluent in the Spanish language. Song No points out that the production of the document was complicated: Titu Cusi told his story aloud in Quechua; his Mestizo secretary Martin de Pando translated it into Spanish and finally Friar Marcos García put it in proper order in cultured 16th century Spanish.[[21]](#footnote-21) The long section in which Titu Cusi related the resistance struggle of his father was witnessed by Pando and García and also by three of Titu Cusi’s captains, Suya Yupanqui, Rimache Yupanqui, and Sullca Varac. Chang-Rodríguez notes that it was important to show that the narrated story was an accurate account of what had occurred.[[22]](#footnote-22)

How important was the involvement of Pando and García in the final product of Titu Cusi’s account? To what degree is it a hybrid work? Liliana Regalado de Hurtado states that, given what we know about the manner in which the document was written, we cannot deny the difficulties for the modern reader in distinguishing in every case between what are Titu Cusi’s ideas and what might have been the ideas of Pando or García.[[23]](#footnote-23) Titu Cusi recognized the importance of the written word. Chang-Rodríguez says that he and other indigenous writers accepted those important European symbols in order to describe their history and personal merits and make demands while, at the same time, they were rejecting European institutions.[[24]](#footnote-24) Some indigenous scribes appropriated the Spanish alphabet to write in their Indigenous languages, including the collaborators of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún and the writers of the *Annals of the Cakchiquel Maya*. Guamán Poma de Ayala was able to write in Spanish and like Sahagún made extensive use of drawings. Titu Cusi chose to work with a scribe and a translator and Susana Jákfalvi-Leiva says that, in her view, all three must share credit for authorship.[[25]](#footnote-25) Bauer, however, gives more credit to Titu Cusi and says that, in his account, Titu Cusi made “calculated use of everything he had learned about Spanish culture without becoming unfaithful to his own culture.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

Titu Cusi’s writing can be classified as what is known as a *relación de méritos*. Nicole Delia Legnani states, “The *instrucción* or *relación* had a specific function within the legal framework of the Spanish conquest: often addressed to the king, it requested immediate gratification or relief for the services that the author or the petitioner had rendered to the Crown.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Titu Cusi’s account tells a story of injustice and then asks for redress. It is similar to the well-known letter that Isabel de Guevara wrote from Asunción, Paraguay, to Princess Juana of Spain. Jákfalvi-Leiva adds, however, that what is new here is that an indigenous leader demands the return of his own lands and the recognition of his authority as Inca.[[28]](#footnote-28) Tito Cusi requests that Governor Lope García de Castro, who was about to depart for Spain, do him the favor of

enlightening His Majesty the King, our lord Don Philip under whose protection I have placed myself about my identity and the hardships I suffer … as a result of His Majesty’s and His vassals’ having taken possession of this land, which belonged to my ancestors. Perhaps His Excellency could begin by giving a testimony about who and whose son I am, so that His Majesty is entirely clear on the reasons why I am entitled to compensation.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Titu Cusi’s narration is different from the *relaciones de méritos* sent by colonial Spaniards in another way also: its oral nature. In the first place, it was designed by Titu Cusi to serve as a memory aide for Governor García de Castro (much as the knotted strings known as quipus served as memory aides for the Incas) when he presented the petition verbally to King Philip, rather than to be delivered to the King for him to read. Oral presentations by claimants were not unheard of in the Spanish court but, sadly, Legnani states that in this case “there is no evidence that such a performance … ever transpired.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

Secondly, Titu Cusi’s account is full of speeches in the voices of Manco Inca and his captains and dialogue from the Pizarro brothers to the degree that it reads like a dramatic performance. Julien speculates that the speeches were based on the memories of Manco’s comrades and “may have been truer to the emotions of the speakers… than to the words themselves.” She adds that in combining the Spanish informational *relación* with indigenous oral discourse, “Titu Cusi created an entirely new and original literary genre.” [[31]](#footnote-31)

“Are they gods or men?” is what the Incas asked themselves when they saw the first Spaniards mounted on giant beasts and carrying sticks which emitted deadly fire. Titu Cusi reports that a group of Manco Inca’s subject people brought news of these recent arrivals to him:

Thus, they left for Cuzco and, upon their arrival, addressed my father with these words: “Sapai Inca” (which means “you, our sole lord”), “we have come to tell you that a new sort of people [*género de gente*] has arrived in your land, a race that has never been heard or seen before by our nations and that without doubt appears to be that of the Viracochas” (which means “gods”).[[32]](#footnote-32)

The Spaniards decades earlier had also asked themselves what kind of beings they had found on this new continent. Less than two decades after Columbus’ arrival on the island of Hispaniola, it fell to Dominican Friar Antonio de Montesinos to chastise the Spanish colonizers for their treatment of the Indians. He attacked them in an Advent sermon asking about the Indians, “Are they not human beings? Have they no rational soul?” He also asked, “What right have you to enslave them?”[[33]](#footnote-33) While this question was debated at the highest levels of the Spanish government for decades, the nature of the Spaniards was also a subject for debate in the courts of Montezuma in Mexico and Atahualpa and Manco Inca in Peru. Nathan Wachtel states, “The whole of Indian mythology implied the *possibility* that the white men might be gods and everywhere this was a source of doubt and anguish.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

The Indians of Peru soon decided that, based on their behavior, the Spaniards were not, in fact, gods but rather demons. Titu Cusi has Manco Inca explain to his people in this fashion:

“For you must know, my brothers, that they are the sons not of Viracocha but of the Devil [demonio], as they have proven to me time and again since they first arrived in this country. What they have done to me since their arrival, and are still doing to me, is evil, as you can see with your very own eyes.”[[35]](#footnote-35)

And Titu Cusi has one of Manco Inca’s commanders, Vila Ona, chastise the ruler in this way:

I am not surprised that they treat you in this manner. You have brought it upon yourself by allowing such insidious people into the country without first asking our opinion. I tell you, if you had left me to deal with them when they first arrived at Cajamarca, they would have never made it to where you are now, for I and Challcochima, with the help of our faithful troops, would have prevented them from entering the country, regardless of what they wanted to do. ….We are losing our possessions, our women, our sons and daughters, our fields; we are becoming the subjects of people we don’t even know.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Hélene Roy states that Titu Cusi sets up a contrast in which the Indians exhibit virtues such as generosity and loyalty and the Spanish exhibit contrasting negative values such as greed and cruelty. Roy postulates that this use of dualities, contrasting of good and evil, by Titu Cusi reflects the influence of Christianity.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Would the writing of Titu Cusi be considered subaltern expression? According to Gayatri Spivak, the subaltern do not include dominant foreign groups or dominant indigenous groups on the national level, regional level, or local level.[[38]](#footnote-38) Monica Díaz says that definition of subaltern “would easily annul many of the indigenous subjects who have left a written record in Latin America” as Spivak would consider the Inca ruler to be a member of a privileged elite rather than of a subaltern group.[[39]](#footnote-39) Florencia Mallon, however, states that “no subaltern identity can be pure and transparent; most subalterns are both dominated and dominating subjects, depending on the circumstances of location in which we encounter them.”[[40]](#footnote-40) This is certainly true in the case of Titu Cusi.

Catherine Julien makes the point that most historians have accepted the version that control of Peru passed to the Spanish with the capture of Atahuallpa in 1532 and that what followed were merely operations to put down various rebellions. But, she notes, “As Titu Cusi’s *History* makes clear, there are other ways to tell the story.”[[41]](#footnote-41) Chang-Rodríguez says that it “is not simple tale, but rather history recorded from the point of view of the vanquished. The events narrated thus acquire a unique poignancy because the writer uses them to defy Spanish rule.”[[42]](#footnote-42) She adds that Titu Cusi’s is the first Indigenous chronicle to narrate the resistance of the Incas to the conquest and that it is saturated with the nostalgia of one who contemplates the disappearance of a way of life, of a world that is disappearing.[[43]](#footnote-43) Liliana Regalado de Hurtado states that, until the capture of the Inca Tupac Amaru, Vilcabamba constituted for the Andean people the tangible expression of an ideological position, of a hope for the reconstruction of a lost world.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Titu Cusi states at the very beginning of his narrative that his ancestors were “natural lords” of the “kingdoms and provinces of Peru.” This term “natural lords” was also used by Spanish theologians such as Francisco de Vitoria at the University of Salamanca and the activist Bishop of Chiapas Bartolomé de Las Casas to indicate rulers of ordered societies whose subjects accepted their rule. Vitoria maintained that it was not legitimate to attack these societies except in the case of tyranny, protection of innocent people, or self-defense.[[45]](#footnote-45) Las Casas wrote in his *Doce Dudas* that the Catholic King of Castille, in order to save his soul, was obligated to return the kingdom of Peru to the King Titu because the Spanish had established a tyranny over that kingdom that in the past had belonged to his grandfather and which had been taken from him against all justice.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Titu Cusi makes a special point of tracing his ancestry as son of Manco Inca and grandson of Huayna Capac in order to establish his legitimacy as the natural lord of his land of Peru. And, Bauer notes that

[T]he emphasis on the uncompromising loyalty of the various local leaders to Titu Cusi’s father as well as his own conversion to Christianity, reinforces the political ideal of him as a natural Christian prince *voluntarily* placing himself under the imperial protection of the king. …. [H]e requires legal assurances from the monarch that his status as the legitimate Christian prince of Peru will be respected before he can reasonably be expected to consider giving up his refuge at Vilcabamba.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Jákfalvi-Leiva adds that Titu Cusi uses a series of dichotomies (again dualities) of good versus evil, order versus chaos, virtue versus vice to try to convince the King that the native government has the moral and political right to exercise power.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Las Casas speaks of Titu Cusi Yupanqui as the Inca ruler in his work *Doce* Dudas in 1564 but, after the fall of Vilcabamba in 1572, Titu Cusi was largely forgotten, most remarkably by the important Indigenous historians Guamán Poma de Ayala and El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. Both writers tell the stories of Manco Inca and of Tupac Amaru while omitting reference to Inca Titu Cusi. (Spanish historian Andrés González de Barcía added information about the life of Titu Cusi to the 1723 edition of Garcilaso’s *Royal Commentaries of the Incas.[[49]](#footnote-49)*) No one has a satisfactory answer to the question of why Poma de Ayala and Inca Garcilaso did not include Titu Cusi. Some writers, Spanish and Indian, rejected Titu Cusi’s legitimate right to the Inca throne although Garcilaso refers to him as of legitimate birth and royal blood and also as an army commander.[[50]](#footnote-50) Moisés Castillo discusses the question of whether Titu Cusi was involved in the *taki onqoy* religious rebellion as a possible reason and also suggests, as an alternative explanation, the Inca custom to eliminate all reference to rulers who were judged inadequate, possibly because of Titu Cusi’s negotiations with the Spanish.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Are the ideas of the *taki onqoy* movement reflected in Titu Cusi’s writing? Legnani states that independent of whether there was “military and ideological coordination between the Takiy Unquy and Vilcabamba movements, some of the phrases in the writingseem to echo Takiy Unquy precepts.”[[52]](#footnote-52) She notes as an example that Titu Cusi has his father say the following to his people as he prepares to withdraw to Vilcabamba:

Further, they may order you to worship what they themselves worship, namely some sort of painted rags that they claim to be Viracocha. Even though they are just mere rags, they will demand that you pray to these rags as you would pray to our huacas. Don’t do it but keep with what we have, for, as you can see, the *villcas* speak to us; we can see the sun and the moon with our own eyes….[[53]](#footnote-53)

Michael J. Horswell notes that “missionaries and early extirpators of idolatry … attempted to tie a localized millennialist movement known as *Taki Onqoy* to the Inca priests of Vilcabamba.” A later missionary called Vilcabamba a “university of idolatry” led by Titu Cusi Yupanqui and Túpac Amaru.[[54]](#footnote-54) Horswell adds that Titu Cusi’s writing “marks the beginning of a new culture of Inca accommodation and resistance in the colonial Andes [that] will give way to a later, new Inca elite’s negotiations with the subsequent viceroyal and Republican societies of the Andes.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

What has been the influence of Titu Cusi’s account in recent times? The publication in 1916 of the work edited by Urteaga with Romero’s biography of Titu Cusi was intended, according to Legnani, to raise the Peruvian national consciousness with a text “that seems to embody for the editors the promise of a new ‘mestizo’ morality.” She notes that liberal Peruvians of that period were turning to their pre-Hispanic roots in their search for a national identity.[[56]](#footnote-56) Guillén Guillén puts the resistance at Vilcabamba at the center of what he calls a three century history of struggle for reconquest from Spanish domination that was not achieved until the Battle of Ayacucho in 1824 which assured independence. However, the struggle continued, Guillén said, because the new leaders of the republic disdained ancestral values and it was not until the early 20th century that anthropologist Luis Valcarcel and archeologist Julio Tello rescued the early social principles of the Andean world.[[57]](#footnote-57) Chang-Rodríguez adds that Titu Cusi’s 1570 account shows the duality of the Peruvian history and soul described by José Carlos Mariátegui and Peru’s destiny of division into two universes described by José María Arguedas.[[58]](#footnote-58) Legnani adds that in modern times, “Tawantinsuyu has been characterized as a primitive communist society, a socialist empire or a totalitarian theocracy, the dictatorship of one ethnic group over many. Increasingly, it has become the salient symbol for unity and cooperation among the indigenous peoples of the Andean region.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Titu Cusi’s narration is an example of a voice from among the vanquished, a voice that is rarely heard in history. His speeches and dialogues present a vivid story of Spanish injustice and back up his claims for compensation in accord with his status along with recognition as a natural lord and legitimate prince of Peru under the Spanish king.

***The Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru* of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega**

El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, author of *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, was one of the first mestizos (or persons of mixed Spanish and Indigenous blood) in Peru who became a noted figure in Spanish Renaissance letters and whose works inspired leaders in the fight for independence in Latin America centuries later. While his writing about the political-economic system of the Incas has been compared to utopian writing, he based it on stories he had heard from his Andean elders and viewed it as an example of an ideal civilization with a discoverable history.

Inca Garcilaso was born Gómez Suárez de Figueroa in Cuzco, Peru, on April 12, 1539. His father, Captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega y Vargas, had arrived in Peru with Pedro de Alvarado in 1534, two years after Francisco Pizarro’s landing there in 1532. At the time, the Incas were not yet subdued and there were, as well, fierce battles among the Spaniards. The Captain’s companion, Inca Garcilaso’s mother, was Isabel Suárez Chimpu Ocllo, niece of the Inca Huayna Capac and granddaughter of Inca Tupac Yupanqui. Like other children of conquistadors and Inca noblewomen, he was exposed to both cultures. In 1549, when he was ten years old, his father, following a new rule from Madrid, married a well-born Spanish woman and married Isabel Chimpu Occlo off with a dowry to a Spanish foot-soldier. Garcilaso moved to live in his father’s house and visited his mother and her relatives in their homes. From a Spanish tutor, he learned Spanish, Latin, and other skills such as swordsmanship appropriate to the child of an aristocratic Spanish family while from his mother and her relatives he learned Quechua and the traditions and customs of the Incas as well as the origin and history of the Inca Empire. As he grew older, he served as his father’s clerk.[[60]](#footnote-60)

In 1560, Garcilaso’s father died and, with the small inheritance left him, the young man sailed for Spain to study. He took part in two military campaigns (in 1564 and 1570) and spent time in an unsuccessful effort to rehabilitate his father’s reputation which had suffered after he was suspected of supporting Gonzalo Pizarro’s rebellion against the crown. But, after receiving an inheritance from his father’s brother in 1570, he spent the rest of his life in study and writing in the village of Montilla and later in the city of Cordoba. It was in Spain that he took the name of his father and a poet ancestor Garcilaso de la Vega (1503-1536) and also began to call himself “El Inca”. Inca Garcilaso’s will, which included a list of the books he owned, was discovered in Spain in 1948. Sara Castro-Klaren states that the list showed that “The Inca had clearly immersed himself in the Italian Renaissance, the Christian theological and philosophical tradition, the rediscovery of Greek and Roman culture, and the literature and political thought of his Spanish contemporaries.”[[61]](#footnote-61)

Garcilaso’s first published work, in Madrid in 1590, was a translation from the Italian into Spanish of *The Dialogues of Love*, a neo-platonic philosophical work by Judah Abravanel, also known as Leo Hebraeus. This book, although it was later withdrawn from publication by the Inquisition, brought Garcilaso recognition as a major figure in Spanish Renaissance letters. José Durand notes that, “With this work, Garcilaso established himself as a European humanist scholar of the highest caliber, yet he called attention to his mestizo status by styling himself ‘Inga’ on the title page.”[[62]](#footnote-62) Max Hernandez states that by daring to call himself mestizo in a full throated way, he could express the intellectual possibilities gestating in a world that was both Spanish and Indigenous.[[63]](#footnote-63) Neo-platonic philosophy sought to reconcile conflicting schools of thought and whether it helped to form Garcilaso’s ideas or was found by him to embody ideas he already held, it would be reflected strongly in his future writing. His next work, entitled *La Florida del Inca* and published in 1605, was a chronicle of Hernando de Soto’s expedition to Florida, based on the recollections of his friend Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the members of that expedition.

Meanwhile, Garcilaso wrote his mestizo classmates in Peru asking for their memories of the stories of Incan life and history, brought together an impressive library of chronicles of the conquistadors and the friars who accompanied them, and began his two volume work on the Inca civilization in Peru and the conquest of Peru by Spain. Inca Garcilaso said that the first volume, the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, was written to fulfill an obligation to his mother’s people, and the second, which ended up with the name of *General History of Peru,* written to fulfill an obligationto his fathers’ line. The first volume, completed in 1604, was published in Lisbon in 1609 after approval by the Inquisition, and the second, completed in 1612, was published in 1617 in Cordoba. But Garcilaso died before the *General History* was published--on April 23, 1616, (at the age of 77)—on the same date as William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes.

The *Royal Commentaries*, seen from the time of its publication as an important work, has been read and discussed by innumerable scholars for four hundred years. Jose Antonio Mazzotti said that “Garcilaso’s intention was one of gigantic proportions: to rewrite the history of his people and to expand the borders of the Spanish language in order to create the discourse of a new identity.”[[64]](#footnote-64) In Latin America, the book helped inspire the uprising of Tupac Amaru II against the Spanish in 1782 after which the crown ordered it taken out of circulation. It was read in the 19th century by liberators Simon Bolivar and José de San Martin and in the 20th century inspired the *indigenista* movement in Latin America led by such writers as José Carlos Mariategui and José Vasconcelos. Ricardo Rojas said that no other book of the colonial period had transcended its time so greatly or moved people’s spirits so deeply as had the *Royal Commentaries*.[[65]](#footnote-65) In Europe, the French translation of 1633 went through six editions and was popular with the French encyclopedists. Karen Spalding notes that “Voltaire drew upon *Royal Commentaries* for his portrait of the enlightened society encountered by Candide in the Americas.”[[66]](#footnote-66)

The book has also been the subject of numerous controversies, beginning in the 18th century when Scottish historian William Robertson accused Inca Garcilaso of being unable to discriminate between the factual and the fabulous.[[67]](#footnote-67) Another controversy concerns how much of the indigenous remained in Inca Garcilaso’s writings given that he never returned to Peru after leaving at age twenty and absorbed the philosophy of Renaissance humanism in Europe. However, Garcilaso’s reliance on the traditional narratives of the lives and deeds of the Inca rulers that he heard as a child can easily be seen in the *Commentaries*. Mazzotti says that

to read the *Commentaries* and only recognize traces of the most prestigious discourses within sixteenth century Humanism is to unintentionally betray…particular levels of meaning…. These other levels of meaning stem from a discursive tradition which is peculiarly Andean, and which, although transformed in the process of transcription into Spanish, retains something of its origins.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Inca Garcilaso compared Cuzco to Rome as the capital of a vast empire. Both had conquered many different tribes and “had excellent laws applied to the good government of the two states,”[[69]](#footnote-69) he said. Other writers of the period, including Pedro Cieza de Leon had also compared the Incan Empire to Rome.[[70]](#footnote-70) Sabine MacCormack says that explaining events in Peru in light of Roman precedent was a way of incorporating the experience of Andean peoples into human experience “across space and time.” She adds that “those who criticize these writings for imposing—as they perceive it—alien norms on Andean subject matter should consider the alternative that the Andean world would remain forever separate and secluded from the rest of humanity.”[[71]](#footnote-71)

However, some still accused Garcilaso of writing idealized fiction. MacCormack answers this accusation by pointing to “the care with which he consulted earlier historians of the Incas, the effort he expended in collecting his own documentation, and his interest in problems of translation from Quechua into Spanish.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Spalding adds that he credited his sources, including those with whom he disagreed.[[73]](#footnote-73) Aurelio Miró Quesada accepts as valid some criticisms of the work, including that of Garcilaso’s denial of human sacrifice among the Indians, the disdain he shows for the pre-Inca period, and his description of the supposedly always harmonious conquests made by the Incas.[[74]](#footnote-74)

In the list of works found in Garcilaso’s library, we see the name Fizino which refers to Marsilio Ficino, a neo-platonist philosopher who lived between 1433 and 1499 and was a translator of Plato’s works including his late dialogue *Timaeus*. Sara Castro-Klaren points out that Ficino was interested in showing the compatibility of pagan philosophy with Christian theology while Garcilaso wanted to show that Inca religious ideas could lead believers to Christianity. Also, *Timaeus* would have been of particular interest to Inca Garcilaso because Plato expresses clearly in the work that there is only one world.[[75]](#footnote-75) In the dialogue *Timaeus*, the question is asked and answered thusly: “Are we right in saying that there is only one world, or that they are many and infinite? There must be one only, if the created copy is to accord with the original [pure idea in the mind of the creator].”[[76]](#footnote-76) Something similar is expressed by Inca Garcilaso in the first paragraph of the *Royal Commentaries*:

Having to treat of the New World, or the best and noblest parts of it, the kingdoms and provinces of the empire known as Peru, of whose antiquities and of the origin of whose kings we propose to write, it seems proper to follow the usual custom of writers and discuss here at the beginning whether there is only one world or many …. But trusting in God’s infinite mercy, I will say at the outset that there is only one world, and although we speak of the Old World and the New, this is because the latter was lately discovered by us, and not because there are two. And to those who still imagine that there are many, there is no answer except that they may remain in their heretical imaginings till they are undeceived in hell.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Castro-Klaren notes that “The possibility of sustaining that the world was always one and made forever in a single unified creation was a point of keen interest to Garcilaso in light of the disputations concerning the origin and nature of the New World as well as the rapidly growing notion that Amerindians were not quite the same as, were lesser than, the inhabitants of the Old World.”[[78]](#footnote-78) The famous argument between Bartolomé de Las Casas and José Ginés de Sepúlveda at Valladolid in 1550 on the nature and rights of the Amerindians had still not been fully resolved even though Pope Paul III in 1537 had said that the Indians were “truly men.”[[79]](#footnote-79)

The neo-platonic philosophy of the *Dialogues of Love* coincided with Garcilaso’s hope (as one of the first mestizos of Peru) for what Jose Carlos Rovera and Remedios Mataix call a loving union between the New and Old Worlds; another sign of the reconciling power of love as a universal force. Rovera and Mataix add that for Garcilaso the conquest and the resulting *mestizaje* (he himself, for example) would be evidence of this universal loving union.[[80]](#footnote-80) D.A. Brading states, however, that “The creation of a Holy Inca Empire, based on the marriage of conquerors and Inca noblewomen, governed by a mestizo encomendero class, Christian in religion, ruling a native peasantry in accordance with the principles of Inca legislation, had failed to emerge.”[[81]](#footnote-81) One cannot help but note, however, that this hopeful vision of an ideal, superior, mestizo union appears again in Jose Vasconcelo’s *Cosmic Race*, written in the 20th century during the Mexican Revolution. But Aurora Fiengo-Varn says that, by asserting that the Indians in acquiring the Christian “faith attained a higher degree of perfection than they ever had before even at the loss of their culture and their lives,” Garcilaso “represented his father’s group: the conquerors.”[[82]](#footnote-82)

Some, such as noted Spanish literary critic Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo in 1905,[[83]](#footnote-83) said that the *Commentaries* was not history at all but rather an imaginary, idealized utopian treatise or novel in the same vein as Plato’s *Republic* orThomas More’s *Utopia*, the latter of which was published in 1516 and had eleven editions in circulation at the time Garcilaso began his *Royal Commentaries*.[[84]](#footnote-84) As D.A. Brading points out, Inca Garcilaso “emphasized that all families, sick and elderly included, received an adequate sustenance.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Garcilaso explains further, “They first tilled the part assigned to the Sun and then that of the widows and orphans and those who were unable to work owing to age or ill health. The latter were regarded as the poor, and the Inca therefore bade that their land be tilled for them.” [Part One, Book Five, Chapt. II][[86]](#footnote-86) This is not dissimilar to More’s description of the agricultural system of the island of Utopia: “Under such a system, there is bound to be plenty of everything, and, as everything is divided equally among the entire population, there obviously cannot be any poor people or beggars.”[[87]](#footnote-87)

The arguments of scholars like Margarita Zamora crediting More’s fictional Utopia for influencing Garcilaso are strong. Zamora says, “More’s ideal republic was situated in America, somewhere south of the Equator but more significantly, the Utopian sociopolitical model was the only one available at the end of the sixteenth century that presented a contemporary pagan civilization in a favorable light.”[[88]](#footnote-88) But, Zamora insists, Garcilaso did not write the *Royal Commentaries* as fiction.[[89]](#footnote-89) While More contrasted a fictional Utopia with European civilization, Garcilaso holds up Tahuantinsuyu (as the Inca Empire was called) as an example of an ideal civilization with a discoverable history. And Inca Garcilaso maintained that the Inca Empire was governed, as was More’s Utopia, according to natural law, even though neither place had been exposed to the Christian religion. Brading says that Garcilaso portrayed the Incas “as philosopher-kings, who, much as the Greeks before them, practiced a natural religion, the truths of which were discovered through the exercise of their reason, which is to say, through the operation of the Divine Light in which human intelligence participates.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Inca Garcilaso describes how Manco Inca, the first Inca ruler, taught his vassals:

At the same time he instructed them in the urbane, social, and brotherly conduct they were to use toward one another according to the dictates of reason and natural law, effectively persuading them to do unto one another as they themselves would be done by so that there should be perpetual peace and concord among them and no ground for the kindling of envy and passion. They were not allowed to have one law for themselves and another for the rest. [Part One, Book One: Chapter XXI][[91]](#footnote-91)

Zamora adds that, while it is true that it failed to develop, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s ideal Peru would have been that of a Christian Utopia, “a product of the harmonious integration of the dictates of natural reason and Christian revelation.”[[92]](#footnote-92)

In the *General History of Peru*, the second part of Inca Garcilaso’s work, he treats the arrival and war making of the Spanish conquistadors against the Incas, the deaths of the two quarreling Inca brothers—Huascar and Atahualpa, the resistance of Manco Inca at Vilcabamba, and the fighting among the Spaniards themselves, including the rebellion against the King of the youngest of the Pizarro brothers, Gonzalo. James Fuerst point out that, in spite of the negative consequences for Inca Garcilaso’s family of Gonzalo Pizarro’s rebellion (when his father, Capitan Sebastian Garcilaso de la Vega, was accused of aiding Gonzalo’s efforts), Inca Garcilaso exalts Gonzalo and his top military advisor Francisco de Carvajal. “In speaking so highly of Gonzalo and Carvajal, Inca Garcilaso was defending sordid characters indeed,”[[93]](#footnote-93) Fuerst says. Why does he do such a thing? Fuerst maintains that he uses Gonzalo Pizarro and Francisco de Carvajal as vehicles for the laying out of his vision of a mestizo Peru.

[A]t stake in his portrayal of Gonzalo’s rebellion is nothing less than Inca Garcilaso’s espousal and endorsement of a political perspective vehemently opposed to the absolutism of the Spanish monarchy and viceregal regime. Inca Garcilaso not only favored an independent Peru, but he used the events of Gonzalo’s rebellion, and particularly the character of Francisco de Carvajal, to suggest the kind of government a liberated Peru should adopt. This government was to be a monarchy with a system of co-rule between Incas and Spaniards and an advisory court comprised of a landed aristocracy from the leading cities.[[94]](#footnote-94)

Fuerst goes on to say that Inca Garcilaso is the first to argue for the possibility of a Peru independent from Spain and to see armed rebellion as a means to that end. He wants to coordinate Spanish and Indigenous elites and institutions and for the monarch (who would be Spanish in the first generation) to take as his wife the highest ranking Inca princess. This was in contrast to the ideas Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, expressed in his late work *Doce Dudas* in which he wanted the King of Spain to return the land of Peru to the Incas (who would rule it as a subject province of the Spanish crown), and also to the ideas of the Indigenous writer Guamán Poma de Ayala who, while recognizing the permanence of the Spaniards and the value of the Christian religion, wished for Spanish and Indians to live separately.[[95]](#footnote-95) Here Inca Garcilaso has Carvajal advising Gonzalo Pizarro:

With all the gold and silver they were reputed to have Your Lordship can buy the whole world, if you want to be master of it. And pay no attention if they say you are a traitor to the king of Spain; you are not, for as the saying goes, no king is a traitor. This land belonged to the Incas, its natural lords, and if it is not restored to them, you have more right to it than the king of Castile, for you won it at your expense and risk, together with your brothers. Now, by restoring it to the Inca, you are simply doing what you should by natural law; and in seeking to govern it yourself as its conqueror and not as the vassal and subject of another, you are doing what you owe to your reputation, for anyone who can become king by the strength of his arm should not remain a serf for lack of spirit. [Part Two, Book Four, Chapter XL][[96]](#footnote-96)

Of course, by the time Inca Garcilaso was writing this, both Gonzalo and Carvajal had been executed and the mestizo kingdom had not developed through union of Spanish and Incas but Fuerst says Garcilaso believed that there might still be ways in the future “through which the two could come together socially, culturally, and politically for their mutual benefit. This is the utopian ideal and progressive postcolonial hope of the *Royal Commentaries….”[[97]](#footnote-97)*

Thus, Garcilaso preserved a vision for his mestizo Peru, a union of Spanish and Indian, a utopian vision which has inspired hope and provoked arguments for many generations in Peru, Latin America, Spain, and the world.

***The First New Chronicle and Good Government* by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala**

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, author of *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, was born in the Peruvian Andes city of Huamanga (modern Ayacucho) sometime between 1535 and 1550.[[98]](#footnote-98) He was descended on his father’s side from pre-Incan royalty and his mother, he said, was the daughter of the Inca Tupac Yupanqui, who ruled the Incan empire from 1471 to 1493. He learned Quechua and Christian doctrine and to read and write in Spanish as a boy. In the period 1569-1570, he participated (probably as an interpreter) in a campaign to put down the indigenous Taqui Onqoy movement[[99]](#footnote-99) that practiced the old religion and preached resistance to Spanish ways. He later came to regret his participation in that repression.[[100]](#footnote-100) He also condemned the actions of Spanish Viceroy Francisco de Toledo who carried out a policy of resettling natives to make labor more available for the Spanish land owners.

In the years before writing *The First New Chronicle*, Poma travelled around Peru documenting the lives of the indigenous inhabitants. It probably took him over a decade to write the *New Chronicle* which consists of 1200 pages, including 398 full-page drawings. He finished the final draft with additions and changes around 1615 and sent the book to King Philip III of Spain in the hope that it would serve him as the guide for his governance of Peru.

It is not known if the King himself saw the book but it did arrive at the Spanish court. It came into the hands of the Ambassador of Denmark to Spain, Cornelius Lerche, who donated it to the Danish Royal Library between 1650 and 1662 and it first appears in a catalog of that library in 1729. Since it was part of a closed collection, it was perfectly conserved over the centuries. It was re-discovered by German historian and librarian Richard Pietschmann in 1908. A facsimile edition of the work was published in France in 1936. In recent years there has been much attention to Poma and his writing and in 2001 a digital facsimile of the entire work was published on line by the Danish Royal Library with Rolena Adorno as editor. It can be seen at: <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm>.

For years, the only available English version of the work was Christopher Dilke’s 1978 abridged translation entitled *Letter to a King*. However, in 2006, David Frye published a new abridged translation and, in 2009, a complete translation of the first third of the work by Roland Hamilton was released.

*The First New Chronicle* is divided into three parts: 1) a recounting of ancient Andean history; 2) the story of the Spanish conquest; and 3) Poma’s suggestions for reform of the colonial system. The book is important because it is the work, not of a Spanish conquistador (such as Bernal Diaz del Castillo who wrote of the conquest of Mexico) or of a person of mixed blood who lived the life of the elite in Cuzco or Lima or Spain (as did El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega) but rather of a provincial Indian nobleman who lost his land in legal battles and knew firsthand the struggles of his people.[[101]](#footnote-101) Adorno writes that “to unmask the excesses of colonialism and to defend the cultural and historical dignity of his race were the literary tasks to which Guamán Poma applied himself.”[[102]](#footnote-102)

Poma’s drawings are among the only surviving illustrations of pre-Conquest Indian life and contain a wealth of information for scholars. But the drawings also are used by Poma to graphically denounce the mistreatment of the Indians and to show concrete aspects of what he sees as the misgovernment of the Viceroyalty of Peru by colonial civil and religious authorities.

Within the *First New Chronicle and Good Government*, we find geography, anthropology, theology, history, and politics. We see what Poma accepts of European culture, the Christian religion, for example, and what he rejects, principally the treatment of the Indians. David Frye points out that Poma condemns the Spanish order “as contrary to the very Christian principles that the Spanish themselves claimed to follow.”[[103]](#footnote-103) We are interested here in Poma’s political writings on colonial reform because it is that part which is composed of normative political theory, i.e. his views on how a society, in this case colonial Peru, should be governed. He believed that the King of Spain should govern his various territories through local indigenous rulers, even offering himself as a deputy to carry out the policies he recommended for Peru. Poma wished for the Indians to live separately from the Spaniards, recuperate their lands so that they could grow crops, and reverse an alarming decrease in their numbers: “I say to your Majesty that, in every province, these Indian men, women, and children should be gathered into some old pueblo, for they are lost. Give them cropland and bounded pastures, so that they may serve God and Your Majesty. Let them be called your royal crown Indians….”[[104]](#footnote-104)

*The First New Chronicle* can be seen as an example of a universal genre of literature of advice to rulers, often called “mirror of (or for) princes.” Robert Dankoff, in his introduction to *Kutadgu Bilig* (writtenin the 11th century by the Turko-Islamic writer Yusuf Khass Hajib), says, “We find mirrors for princes wherever there is a tradition of autocratic state organization. There are examples from the ancient Near East, from China, India, the Islamic Near East, from the ancient Greek tyrannies, and from medieval Europe.”[[105]](#footnote-105)

Students of Western political thought are likely to study 12th century writers John of Salisbury (British) and Giles of Rome (French), and the Italians Christine de Pizan (15th century) and Niccolo Machiavelli (16th century). Spanish writers of “mirror” literature included Antonio Guevara, Jerónimo Osorio, Felipe de la Torre, Marco Antonio de Camos y Requesens, and Jerónimo Merola. Fadrique Furio Ceriol wrote to Philip II with advice, while the works of Pedro Ribadeneyra, Juan de Mariana, and Juan de Santa Maria were dedicated, like the book by Poma de Ayala, to Philip III.

Mercedes Lopez-Baralt points out that Poma fulfilled the qualifications for an advisor to the king as laid out by Furio Ceriol. Furio states that, if the ruler has many lands under his governorship, he should seek advisors not only from among his countrymen but also from among those in his subject territories.[[106]](#footnote-106) Poma lists his qualifications to be the King’s advisor: he has impeccable aristocratic credentials from the pre-Incan and Incan nobility and he has served the King by working with the colonial administration in several situations. Here Poma addresses the King of Spain:

I, as the grandson of the king of Peru, would like to serve Your Majesty; to meet with you face to face; to speak and communicate about these things in your presence. But I cannot travel so far, being eighty years old and infirm. [Internal references hint that Poma was somewhat younger.] I hope that you will be pleased with my thirty years of working in poverty, leaving my house, children, and estates to serve Your Majesty. Therefore, we will meet through writing and sending letters. So, Your Majesty, please ask me questions, and I will reply to them in this way.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Poma may very well have read similar advice manuals in Lima. Scholars believe that copies of works by the Spaniard Antonio Guevara, the Italian Francesco Patrizi, and German Johann Boemus could have been in libraries there. Enrique Garces, who spent many years in Peru, translated a work by Patrizi in 1591, which he dedicated to the aging Philip II.[[108]](#footnote-108) Whether or not he read these earlier works, Poma de Ayala’s *First New Chronicle and Good Government* can be classed among them as part of the important genre of mirror for princes literature.

Beyond this, a number of Peruvian scholars have called Poma de Ayala a precursor of later ideas on freedom, equality, and universal education. Juan Andía Chávez states that Poma demanded from the authorities all that was necessary for the continued existence of his people and insisted that the law be applied equally to all. He demanded a return to the Indians of the lands that had been taken away by the Spaniards and, Andía notes, this demand has thus been considered by some as a precursor of the call for land reform in Latin America.[[109]](#footnote-109) Juan José Vega emphasizes that Poma de Ayala insisted on education for all girls and boys. He notes that Poma, breaking with Incan and European practices of elite patriarchal education, supported universal education for both sexes with schools in even the smallest villages.[[110]](#footnote-110) Andia summarizes by saying that Poma de Ayala can be seen as one of the first great precursors in the struggle for universal human rights.[[111]](#footnote-111)

Conservative Peruvian writers have tried to diminish his stature. In the 1940s, Raul Porras Barrenechea called him a resentful Indian, full of hate, possibly enlivened by alcohol, who wanted to replace one despotism with another even older despotism.[[112]](#footnote-112) Porras’ countryman, José Varallanos, however, writing in 1979, stated that it was time to resurrect Poma de Ayala as a great patriot, rescuing him from among the “dead leaves of history” and from the social and racial discrimination against him as an Indian.[[113]](#footnote-113)

Poma de Ayala, according to Jean-Philippe Husson, believed that Spaniards were foreigners in Peru and as such had no right to its riches while the Indians had rights to the land, to minerals under the soil, and to the country’s cultural heritage. Poma felt that while the indigenous society of Peru could be criticized because it lacked Christianity, that defect did not have negative consequences for the rest of Peruvian civilization. In contrast, the Spaniards, although they were formally Christian, conducted themselves in a way that made them unworthy of salvation.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Poma de Ayala felt that the Spaniards had corrupted Indigenous women, as pointed out by Sara Vicuña Guengerich. Vicuña notes that Guamán Poma criticized the Spaniards who, under the flag of Christianity, came to transform Indian women into sinners. Poma says, “The Spaniards look for women in their houses and scattered settlements. They do not leave them alone, day or night. If the women’s fathers and mothers defend them, they are mistreated. The Spaniards go to seek them out where they hold their fiestas. They do not allow them to get married or to lead a married life with their husbands.”[[115]](#footnote-115) These actions contributed to the convulsion of the Andean world, Poma says, putting it “upside down.” His solution was complete segregation of Indians and Spaniards which would promote the ancestral way of life of the Andean people. This, Vicuña states, was in direct contrast to the view of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega who believed that a stable colonial society could only emerge from the fusion of the Andean and European cultures.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Because Poma de Ayala has in recent years become such an iconic figure as a representative of the Indigenous of Peru, the discovery of several documents in Italy in the 1990s which indicated that a mestizo Jesuit priest rather than Guamán Poma was the author of the *New Chronicle and Good Government* caused a tremendous stir in Peru and around the world. According to the documents, which were discovered in a private library in Naples, the mestizo Jesuit priest Blas Valera, who had supposedly died in Spain in 1597, instead returned to Peru where he worked until 1618 before going back to Spain and dying there in 1619. The documents asserted that while in Peru he wrote the *New Chronicle and Good Government* using the name of Guamán Poma de Ayala.[[117]](#footnote-117) The documents were found in the library of teacher and journalist Clara Miccenelli. She had inherited them from her uncle Ricardo Cera who had received them from a comrade in arms, Duke Amedeo of Savoia-Aosta.[[118]](#footnote-118) University of Bologna Anthropology Professor Laura Laurencich-Minelli was given access to the documents and has published extensively about them.

The first of the two Miccinelli manuscripts to be published was *Historia et rudimenta linguae Piruanorum* (History and Primer of the Language of the Peruvians). The document details the biography and beliefs of Blas Valera and was supposedly written by Italian missionaries Juan Antonio Cumis and Juan Anello Oliva in two periods, in 1610 and in 1637-8.[[119]](#footnote-119) The second manuscript, *Exsul immeritus Blas Valera populo suo* (Blas Valera, Unjustly Exiled, to His Followers), is dated “Alcalá, Spain, 1618”. It is in Latin and purports to be the handwritten will and testament of Blas Valera himself.[[120]](#footnote-120) Laurencich explains that the two documents assert things that challenge history in a number of way by saying that 1) Francisco Pizarro defeated the Inca Atahualpa by giving Inca officials poisoned wine rather than Atahualpa being strangled with a garrote as is commonly believed; 2) Father Blas Valera was imprisoned in Peru and later exiled to Spain not for an affair with a woman but for his political/religious beliefs; 3) the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega changed in substantive ways the materials Valera sent him for his *Comentarios Reales*; and finally (as noted above) 4) Valera did not die in Spain in 1597 but returned to Peru where he wrote the *Nueva Corónica and Buen Gobierno*.[[121]](#footnote-121)

As the controversy over the documents continued over the years, three positions emerged: first, that the documents are authentic; second, that they are modern forgeries; and third, that they were forgeries from the seventeenth or the eighteenth century, the product of bitter battles within the Jesuit order over the evangelization of the Indies. Laura Laurencich states that all the tests to which the documents have been subjected—handwriting, ink, seals, textiles, and the signatures of those who have owned the documents through the centuries—have indicated that they are authentic.[[122]](#footnote-122) At a conference held in Rome in September of 1999, scholars and experts on all sides of the issues presented papers. Technical expert Luigi Altamura, hired by Laurencich-Minelli, reported that all of the documents were written in a natural organic flowing fashion that is very distinct from that of forgeries.[[123]](#footnote-123) Tests of the inks and colors used in the documents showed results indicating that the pigments were consistent with those used in the seventeenth century.[[124]](#footnote-124)

However, when the documents were presented to the [Asociación Société des Américanistes](http://www.red-redial.net/centro-de-investigacion-1567.html) in Paris for review and publication, they were rejected as “highly suspicious.”[[125]](#footnote-125) Expert Juan Carlos Estenssoro, who examined the documents for the Asociación, stated that while the papers were from the correct period, they had marks of seals in the wrong places and were apparently envelopes that were being recycled to perpetrate a fraud. He also stated that the Quechua text would not have been understandable by a Quechua speaker because the syntax was Spanish.[[126]](#footnote-126) Rolena Adorno insisted that it was imperative that the Naples manuscripts be subjected to independent forensic and scientific examinations by an international team of experts in a first class laboratory.[[127]](#footnote-127) Another accusation of an even more modern fraud was made in 2015 by Ivan Boserup and Mette Kia Krabbe Meyer who asserted that the drawing accompanying a supposed contract between the Jesuits and Guamán Poma is a tracing from the touched up drawings in the 1936 facsimile edition of the *New Chronicle and Good Government* which it matches more accurately than the original drawings which suffer greatly from ink bleedthroughs.[[128]](#footnote-128)

However, these technical matters are less significant than the problem of the lack of correspondence between the known beliefs of Guamán Poma and Blas Valera. Blas Valera was a mestizo whose mother was from the Chachapoyas ethnic group. He believed that the Indigenous of Peru could be best brought to Christianity by preserving aspects of their Inca religion which he felt was similar to Christianity and he was suspected by the Inquisition of founding a neo Inca-Christian movement. Adorno says that Guamán Poma, on the other hand, condemned the new mestizo race constantly and obsessively, held an orthodox view of Catholic priests and their campaigns against Indigenous religion and rites, and held the Chachapoyas in fierce contempt. He railed against corrupt and lecherous priests but not against the goal of evangelization. On mestizos Adorno says, “Guamán Poma’s resounding condemnation of *mestizaje* constitutes one of the basic premises of his work’s conceptualization.”[[129]](#footnote-129)She states that these beliefs are expressed throughout the *New Chronicle* and also in legal documents and drawings that are separate from that major work. She adds that it is impossible to dismiss the enormous energy of the two great forces motivating *New Chronicle*: the desire to extirpate idolatry and the fear of the disappearance of the Andean race caused by *mestizaje* (the mixing of Spanish and Indian).[[130]](#footnote-130)

Finally, Blas Valera biographer Sabine Hyland lays out the reasons why she believes that the Naples documents are what she calls “true lies,” that is, later forgeries but also dating from the seventeenth century. She first examines the critiques by Estenssoro finding them “hardly…sufficient to label the document a modern forgery.”[[131]](#footnote-131) She also provides evidence against Adorno’s accusations of anachronistic text and summarizes by stating that none of the arguments that the documents are a modern forgery are “capable of withstanding scrutiny.”[[132]](#footnote-132) She goes on to say that,

These documents, therefore, present a very real mystery. On the one hand, there is strong evidence—such as the letter discovered by [Maurizio] Gnerre [in a Jesuit archives] and the authentication of the signatures of Anello Oliva, Llanes, and Savioa-Aosta—that the documents are genuine seventeenth-century artifacts. On the other hand, the story that they tell is bizarre and contains obvious falsehoods.[[133]](#footnote-133)

She therefore agrees with R. Tom Zuidema and others that they are “authentic documents containing falsehoods that express the frustrations and desires of certain Jesuits in Peru.”[[134]](#footnote-134) She believes that Anello Oliva wrote the parts of *Historia et Rudimenta* that were ascribed to him and probably at least part of *Exsul Immeritus*, which was supposedly written by Blas Valera, noting that Valera’s signature on that latter document does not match his only surviving signature from the time of his novitiate. She adds, “One major question remaining is whether these documents were one man’s anguished vision or part of a larger Jesuit movement.”[[135]](#footnote-135)

*The First New Chronicle and Good Government* appears to have survived a bizarre and unexpected attack on its authenticity and it maintains its status as a major work of advocacy for the rights of Peru’s Indigenous people and an example of the universal genre of mirror of princes literature by a notable seventeenth century Indigenous man, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala.

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11. Guillen Guillen 1979, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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111. Andía, 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
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