

Royal Commentaries of the Incas, In Two Parts (Excerpt)

by Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616);
Paul Rycaut (translation) (1629-1700)

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Citation

[Vega-G 1688] Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616); Paul Rycaut (translation) (1629-1700). *Royal Commentaries of the Incas, In Two Parts*, published by Miles Flescher for Jacob Tonson, London, England, 1688, 1072 pages. Archive.org ID [royalcommentarie00vega](https://archive.org/details/royalcommentarie00vega).

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THE
ROYAL
COMMENTARIES
OF
PERU,
IN
TWO PARTS.

THE FIRST PART.

Treating of the Original of their *Incas* or *Kings*: Of their Idolatry: Of their Laws and Government both in Peace and War: Of the Reigns and Conquests of the *Incas*: With many other Particulars relating to their Empire and Policies before such time as the *Spaniards* invaded their Countries.

THE SECOND PART.

Describing the manner by which that new World was conquered by the *Spaniards*. Also the Civil Wars between the *Piçarrists* and the *Almagrians*, occasioned by Quarrels arising about the Division of that Land. Of the Rise and Fall of Rebels; and other Particulars contained in that History.

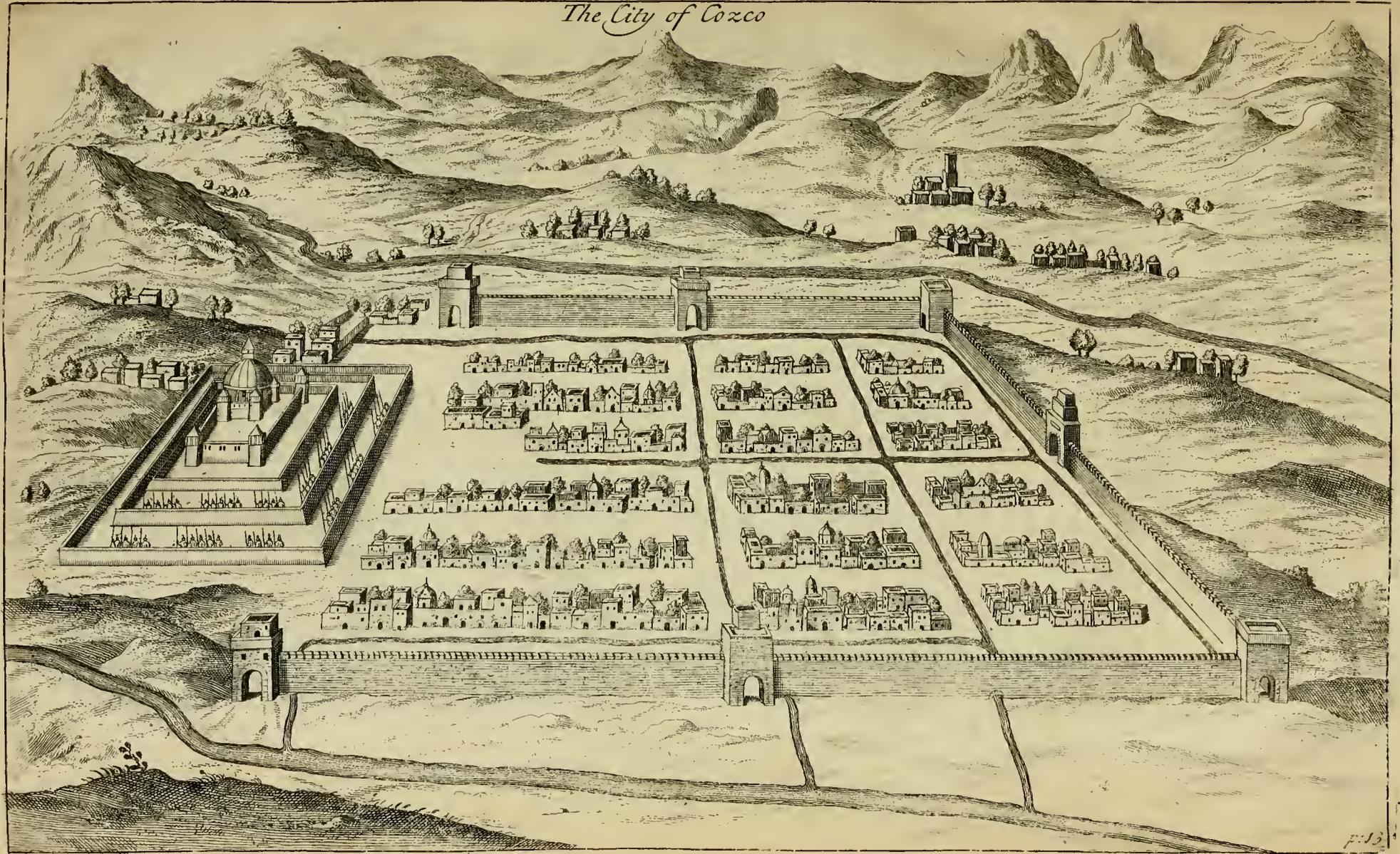
Illustrated with Sculptures.

Written originally in *Spanish*,
By the *Inca* **GARCILASSO DE LA VEGA**,
And rendred into *English*, by Sir **PAUL RYCAUT**, K^t.

L O N D O N,

Printed by Miles Flesher, for Jacob Tonson at the Judge's-Head in Chancery-Lane near Fleetstreet, MDCLXXXVIII.

The City of Cozco



C H A P. XIV.

Of the Geometry, Geography, Arithmetick and Musick known to the Indians.

They had attained so much Geometry: as served them for to measure out their Lands, and make out limits and bounds to their several partitions; but this was not done in an artificial manner, but by their lines, and small stones, which they used in all their Accounts.

As to their Geography, they knew how to decypher in colours the Model of every Nation, with the distinct Provinces, and how they were bounded. I have seen an exact Map of *Cozco*, with the parts adjacent, and the four principal ways to it, perfectly described in a sort of Mortar, compounded with small stones and straw, which delineated all the places, both great and small, with the broad Streets, and narrow Lanes, and Houses which were ancient and decayed, and with the three streams running through it, all which were described with great curiosity.

Moreover in this Draught the Hills and Valleys, the turnings and windings of the Rivers were made to appear so plain, that the best Cosmographer in the World could not have exceeded it. The use of this Model was to inform the Visitors, which they called *Damian*, of the extent and division of the Countries, whensoever they went by the King's Commission to survey the Province, and number the people within the precincts of *Cozco*, and other places; this Model which I mention, was made in *Muyna*, which the Spaniards call now *Mohina*, and is distant about five Leagues from the City of *Cozco* towards the *Zur*; the which I had opportunity to observe, being then present with the Visitors, who went to number the *Indians* that inhabited the Division of *Garçilasso de Vega*, My Lord and Master.

In Arithmetick they knew much, and were skilled in a peculiar manner and nature in that Science; for by certain knots of divers colours they summed up all the accounts of Tribute, and Contributions; belonging to the revenue of the *Inca*; and thereby knew how to account, and discount, to subtract, and to multiply; but to proportion the respective Taxes on every Nation by way of division, they performed it in another manner by granes of *Mayz*; or Pebbles, which served in the place of Counters. And because it was necessary that Accounts should be kept of all charges relating to War and Peace, that the People, and the Flocks and Herds of Cattle should be numbred, that the payment of Tributes, and the like, should be registred and noted, there were certain Persons appointed for that work, who made it their study and business to be ready and skilfull in Accounts; and because perhaps one Person was appointed to keep the reckonings of three or four distinct things, as Accountant General, which seems difficult to be performed by the way of their threads and knots, we shall discourse it hereafter more at large, in what manner they distinguished their Accounts of divers businesses.

Of their Musick.

In Musick they arrived to a certain Harmony, in which the *Indians* of *Colla* did more particularly excell, having been the Inventors of a certain Pipe made of Canes glued together, every one of which having a different Note of higher and lower, in the manner of Organs, made a pleasing Musick by the dissonancy of sounds, the Treble, Tenor and Bass, exactly corresponding and answering each to other; with these Pipes they often plaid in consort, and made tolerable Musick, though they wanted the Quavers, Semiquavers, Aires, and many Voices which
perfect

perfect the Harmony amongst us. They had also other Pipes, which were Flutes with four or five stops, like the Pipes of Shepherds; with these they played not in consort, but singly, and tuned them to Sonnets, which they composed in meetre, the Subject of which was love, and the Passions which arise from the Favours or Displeasures of a Mistress. These Musicians were *Indians* trained up in that art for divertisement of the *Incas*, and the *Curacas*, who were his Nobles, which, as rustical and barbarous as it was, it was not common, but acquired with great Industry and Study.

Every Song was set to its proper Tune; for two Songs of different Subjects could not correspond with the same Aire, by reason that the Musick which the Gallant made on his Flute, was designed to express the satisfaction or discontent of his Mind, which were not so intelligible perhaps by the words as by the melancholy or chearfulness of the Tune which he plaid. A certain *Spaniard* one night late encountered an *Indian* Woman in the Streets of *Cozco*, and would have brought her back to his Lodgings; but she cryed out, *For God's sake, Sir, let me go, for that Pipe which you hear in yonder Tower calls me with great Passion, and I cannot refuse the summons, for Love constrains me to go, that I may be his Wife and he my Husband.*

The Songs which they composed of their Wars, and grand Atchievements, were never set to the Aires of their Flute, being too grave and serious to be intermixed with the pleasures and softnesses of Love; for those were onely sung at their principal Festivals when they commemorated their Victories and Triumphs. When I came from *Peru* which was in the Year 1560. there were then five *Indians* residing at *Cozco*, who were great Masters on the Flute, and could play readily by book any Tune that was laid before them; they belonged to one *Juan Rodriguez*, who lived at a Village called *Labos*, not far from the City: and now at this time, being the Year 1602. 'tis reported, That the *Indians* are so well improved in Musick, that it was a common thing for a Man to sound divers kinds of Instruments; but Vocal Musick was not so usual in my time, perhaps because they did not much practise their Voices, though the Mongrils, or such as came of a mixture of *Spanish* and *Indian* blood, had the faculty to sing with a tunable and a sweet Voice.

C H A P. XV.

*The Poetry of the Inca's Amautas, who were Philosophers;
and of the Haravec, who were Poets.*

THE *Amautas*, who were Men of the best ingenuity amongst them, invented Comedies and Tragedies, which on their solemn Festivals they represented before their King, and the Lords of his Court. The Actors were not Men of the common sort, but *Curacas*, or some of the young Nobility, and Officers of the Souldiery; because every one acted his own proper part; the plot or argument of their Tragedies was to represent their military Exploits, and the Triumphs, Victories and Heroick Actions of their renowned Men; and the subject or design of their Comedies was to demonstrate the manner of good Husbandry in cultivating and manuring their Fields, and to shew the management of domestick Affairs, with other familiar matters. So soon as the Comedy was ended, the Actors took their places according to their degrees and qualities. These Plays were not made up with interludes of obscene and dishonest farces, but such as were of serious entertainment, composed of grave and acute sentences, fitted to the place and auditory, by whom the Actors were commonly rewarded with Jewels and other Presents, according to their merit.

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Their poetical Verses were composed in long and short Meetre, fitted to amorous Subjects, and the Tunes to which they were set; their Kings, and the Exploits and great Actions performed in their respective Reigns, were also matter for their Poetry, which they recorded in verse, and served in the place of History; their Sonnets were not long, but short and compendious, so as they might more easily be committed to Memory; they used not rhimes, but loose verse, like our Heroick Poems. I remember four Verses of an amorous Song, which for curiosity sake, and to shew their short but compendious sense, I shall repeat here; being thereby best accommodated to the Aire of their Flute: the Tune also I would gladly set down, but that the impertinence thereof may easily excuse me. The Sonnet in four verses is this:

<i>Caylla Llapi</i>	}	In English	thus,	}	To thy Song
<i>Pununqui</i>					I will sleep
<i>Chaupituta</i>					At midnight
<i>Samusac.</i>					I shall come.

Many other sorts of Verses the *Incas*, who were Poets, composed, who had the Name of *Haravec*, which properly signifies an Inventour. *Blas Valera* in his Writings mentions certain Verses, which he calls Spondels, consisting of four syllables; the *Indian* words he hath translated into Latin, the Subject of them is philosophical, and treats of those second causes which God hath placed in the Air, such as Thunder, and Lightning, Rain and Snow, all which are described in verse, and are agreeable to the fancy of their Fables, one of which is this: That the Maker of all things hath placed in Heaven a Virgin, the Daughter of a King, holding a Bucket of Water in her hand, for refreshment of the Earth, when occasion requires; and that sometimes her Brother knocking upon this Bucket, causes Thunder and Lightning to proceed from it; these noises, they say, are effects of the violent nature of Man, but Hail, and Rain, and Snow, falling with less noise and impetuosity, are more agreeable to the gentle nature of a Woman. They say, that an *Inca*, who was a Poet and an Astrologer composed many Verses in praise of the Vertues and Excellencies of this Virgin Lady, which God had bestowed upon her for the good and benefit of his Creatures. This Fable and Verses *Blas Valera* reports to have found expressed in the knots and accounts of their ancient Annals, represented in the threads of divers Colours, and preserved by those to whom the care of the historical Knots and Accounts were committed; and he so much wondred at the ingenuity of the *Amantas*, that he thought those Verses worthy to be committed to Memory and Paper. I remember in my Infancy to have heard this Fable, with many others, recounted by my Parents, but being then but a Child, I was not very inquisitive to understand the signification. *Blas Valera* hath translated this Song out of the *Indian* Language into Latin, and which runs in this manner:

<i>Cumac Nusta</i>	Pulchra Nympha,	Fair Nymph,
<i>Torallayquim</i>	Frater tuus	Thy Brother
<i>Puynuy quita</i>	Urnem tuam	Strikes now
<i>Paquir cayan</i>	Nunc infringit	Thine Urne,
<i>Hina Mantara</i>	Cujus ictus	Whole blow
<i>Cunununun</i>	Tonat, fulget	Is Thunder
<i>Ylla Pantac</i>	Fulminatq;	And Lightning.
<i>Camri Nusta</i>	Sed tu Nympha	But thou Nymph
<i>Unuy quita</i>	Tuam lympham	Pouring forth
<i>Para Munqui</i>	Fundens pluis,	Thy water
<i>May nimir</i>	Interdumq;	Dropest rain,
<i>Chichi Munqui</i>	Grandinem seu	And again
<i>Riti Munqui</i>	Nivem mittis.	Sendest Hail
		Or Snow.

<i>Pacha rurac</i>	Mundi Factor	The Baker of the World	* A Name of one of their Gods.
<i>Viracocha</i>	* Viracocha	Viracocha	
<i>Cay-binapac</i>	Ad hoc munus	Hath committed	
<i>Churafunqui</i>	Te sufficit	and encharged this	
<i>Camafunqui.</i>	Et præfecit.	Office unto thee.	

With such trifles as these I have enriched my poor History; for whatsoever I have collected from *Blas Valera*, are all pearls and pretious curiosities, and such ornaments as my Countrey doth not deserve; which now, as they report, in these days improves in Poetry; for that the Mongrils, or those of *Spanish* and *Indian* bloud have taken a good strain in Verse, whose subject is Divine or Moral, God give them his grace that they may serve him in all things.

In this imperfect and gross manner had the *Indians* of *Peru* the knowledge of Sciences, which is not to be attributed to their want of natural parts and abilities of mind; for had they been instructed in letters, their capacities are such as might have improved every little beginning: And as the first Philosophers and Astrologers delivered the principles of their Sciences to their posterity, who erected on those foundations the more lofty buildings of reason; so these people were endued with the like capacities, sufficient to advance such learning as descended from their Parents, especially we find that they were well disposed to the learning of that Morality which contained the Customs and Laws of their Countrey; and which did not onely extend to those rules relating to justice and decent comportment of one Subject to another, but as it had reference to that obedience which Subjects and Vassals owe to their Sovereign, and those Ministers which act under their command; for these being a people who were inclined to live according to those Laws which the light of nature dictated, and rather to doe no evil, than know well, were more easily made capable of that Science which was directed by material and exterior objects, than of that which was conversant about more abstruse and immaterial notions. *Pedro de Cieca* in the 38th Chapter of his Book, speaking of the *Incas* and their Government, says, That they acted so well, and that their Government was so good and political, as might be compared to the Wisdom of the best frame and Model of Common-wealths in this World. And Father *Maestro Acosta*, in the first Chapter of his 6th Book, makes a discourse in favour of the *Incas*, and the people of *Mexico*, in these words;

“ Having in the preceding discourse laid down the Particulars of that Religion which the *Indians* profess; I design in the following Treatise to declare their Customs and Political Government, for two ends: First, that I may undeceive the World of that false opinion which they have framed concerning this people, as being so brutish, and of so little understanding, as deserve not the name of rational creatures: From which erroneous conception, many grievous calamities have been imposed on them without pity or compassion; and being esteemed no other than beasts, all that respect which is due to humane nature, or the person of Mankind hath been lost towards them. But this false notion, which none but the vain-glorious and confident of themselves (who are the common fools of the World) have entertained, hath been sufficiently confuted by more solid and considering men, who have made it their business to travel and converse amongst them, and to discover the secrets of their Customs and Government. To remove which prejudicial censure from them, the most expedite means will be to declare the Justice and Customs which were in use amongst them, at that time, when they lived by their own Laws; with which, though there was a great mixture of Barbarism, and many things without foundation; yet their Government contained many excellent things, and worthy of admiration, and such as may be compared with the best Model of our Common-wealths, and may afford us sufficient evidence of the genius of that people, and of that natural readines of mind capable to be improved to greater and higher matters. Nor ought it to seem strange, if some erroneous fancies have intermixed with their Customs; for even *Plato* and *Lycurgus*, and other excellent Legislatours have been guilty of some follies, and interwoven superstitions, and vain rites, with their more substantial Laws. And indeed in those wise Common-wealths of *Rome* and *Athens*, many ridiculous Customs have been in-

“ introduced ; which to considering men would appear as idle as any of those practices which have been in use amongst the *Mexican* or the *Peruvian* Commonwealths. But we who entred by the Sword, and afforded not time to these miserable *Indians* to give us proofs of their rationality, but hunted them as wild Beasts through the Mountains, and drew them as brutish creatures to bear the burthens of our slavish servitude, could not entertain any great opinion of their Wisdom : Howsoever, some observing men, who have been so curious, as to penetrate into the secrets of their ancient Government, and into the methods of their proceedings, have found that the Order and Rules they followed, were worthy of admiration. Thus far are the words of *Joseph Acosta*, who also adds, that they had certain compendious Systems of Morality, digested into Verse by way of Poetry ; in which also many of their Laws, and the great Actions of their Kings were rehearsed, and kept in a kind of tradition for better instruction of their posterity ; which favouring rather of Truth, than Romance, the *Spaniards* esteem them to be true and particular passages of their History : But many other things afford them matter of laughter, being ill-composed Fables, superstitious and vain, and such also as are contrary to common honesty.

C H A P. XVI.

*Of those few Instruments which the Indians attained to,
and made use of in all their Works and Handicraft-
Trades.*

HAVING already declared how far they were proceeded in their Moral and Natural Philosophy, and in their Poetry ; it follows now that we should declare something of their Mechanicks, and how much they failed in the Art of making those Instruments, which are necessary for shaping and framing those Utensils which are required for convenient living and well-being. And first to begin with their Silversmiths ; of which, though there were great numbers, and constantly laboured at their Trade, yet they were not so skilfull as to make an Anvil of Iron, or any other Metal ; caused, perhaps, for want of knowledge in what manner to dig their Iron, and separate it from its Ore ; of which they had several Mines, and called it *Quillay* ; and therefore instead thereof they made use of a certain hard Stone, of a yellowish colour ; which being planed, and made smooth, was rare, and of great value amongst them : They knew not the invention of putting a handle of Wood to their Hammers, but worked with certain Instruments they had made of Copper, mixed with a sort of fine Brass. Neither did they know how to make Files or Graving-tools, or Bellows for Melting down Metals ; but instead thereof used Pipes made of Copper, of about a Yard long, the end of which was narrow, that the Breath might pass more forcibly by means of the contraction : And as the Fire was to be more or less, so accordingly they used eight, ten or twelve of these Pipes at once, as the quantity of Metal did require : And still they continue this way, though our Invention of Bellows is much more easie, and forcible to raise the Fire. Nor had they the use of Tongs to take their heated Metal out of the Fire, but rather drew it thence by a piece of Wood, or some Bar of Copper ; with which they cast it into a heap of wet Earth, which they kept purposely by them to cool their Metal, untill such time as they could take it into their hands: Notwithstanding this want of divers Instruments, they made many things with great curiosity, especially in Boaring Metals, as we shall hereafter discourse more at large. And notwithstanding their simplicity, experience had taught them, that the Steam and Effluviiums from

Metals,