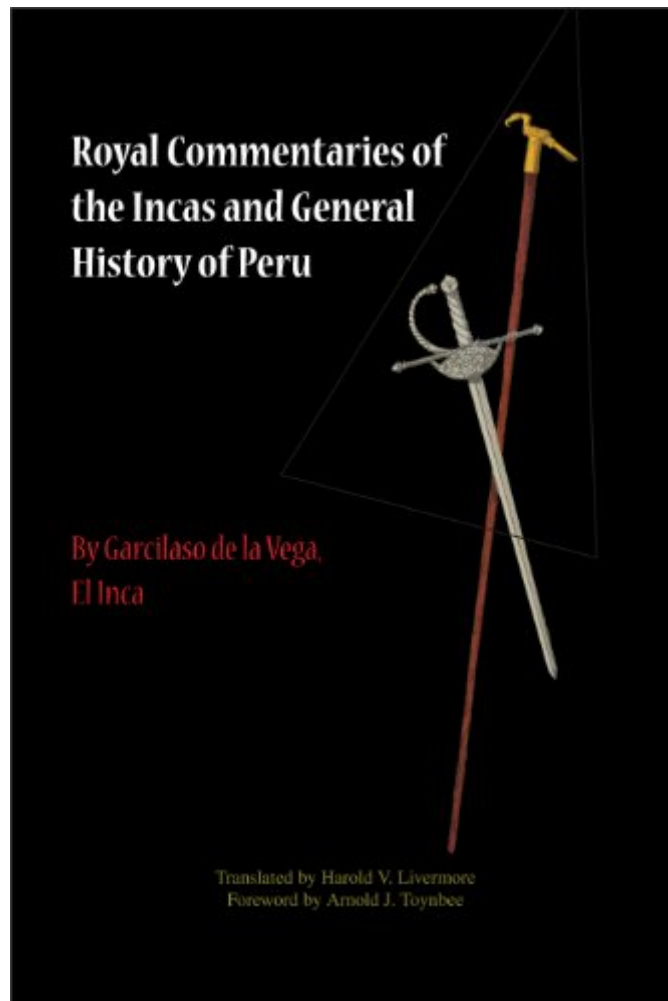


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Royal Commentaries Of The Incas And General History Of Peru, Volume 1 And Volume 2



Synopsis

Garcilaso de la Vega, the first native of the New World to attain importance as a writer in the Old, was born in Cuzco in 1539, the illegitimate son of a Spanish cavalier and an Inca princess. Although he was educated as a gentleman of Spain and won an important place in Spanish letters, Garcilaso was fiercely proud of his Indian ancestry and wrote under the name El Inca. *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* is the account of the origin, growth, and destruction of the Inca empire, from its legendary birth until the death in 1572 of its last independent ruler. For the material in Part One of *Royal Commentaries* "the history of the Inca civilization prior to the arrival of the Spaniards" Garcilaso drew upon "what I often heard as a child from the lips of my mother and her brothers and uncles and other elders . . . [of] the origin of the Inca kings, their greatness, the grandeur of their empire, their deeds and conquests, their government in peace and war, and the laws they ordained so greatly to the advantage of their vassals." The conventionalized and formal history of an oral tradition, *Royal Commentaries* describes the gradual imposition of order and civilization upon a primitive and barbaric world. To this Garcilaso adds facts about the geography and the flora and fauna of the land; the folk practices, religion, and superstitions; the agricultural and the architectural and engineering achievements of the people; and a variety of other information drawn from his rich store of traditional knowledge, personal observation, or speculative philosophy. Important though it is as history, Garcilaso's classic is much more: it is also a work of art. Its gracious and graceful style, skillfully translated by Harold V. Livermore, succeeds in bringing to life for the reader a genuine work of literature. Part One covers the history of the Incas up to the arrival of the Spanish. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Garcilaso de la Vega's recollections of pre-Hispanic Peru (and Bolivia) are perhaps the most important in any language. Known as "El Inca," De La Vega was of two bloods -- the illegitimate son of a Spanish conquistador and an Inca princess. He was born in the Incan capital of Cuzco, Peru, and steeped in both traditions. So his accounts of what life was like before The Conquest of the Queshua-speaking people of Peru and Bolivia are the closest to what it truly was like before the illiterate son of a pig farmer, Francisco Pizarro, and a handful of armored and horsed Spanish adventurers exploited multiple coincidences to "conquer" the so-called Inca empire. These variables included the unrest in the Incan empire after Atahualpa, the last "Inca" (name of the "Son of the Sun" -- the king) defeated his brother, Huascar, for the kingship; and the facts that the Queshua-speaking people of Peru and Bolivia (misnomered as: The Inca) had never seen horses, had no firearms and were expecting the return of a white, bearded god named "Viracocha" -- who they took Pizarro to be. Curiously the Aztec of Mexico were defeated a few years earlier because of a similar "white bearded god" myth -- the Aztec thought Hernan Cortes was Quetzalcoatl, their name for the "white bearded god" who had promised to return to the people of Mexico hundreds of years before The Conquest by Cortes. The marvels of the organization of most of South America under the "Inca" empire are wonderfully illustrated by De La Vega in his "Royal Commentaries." Life as he "remembers" it before Pizarro (since he was born just after the conquest) comes alive under the pen of "El Inca" as under no other historian.

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