

BERNABÉ COBO (1580–1657)
HISTORY OF THE NEW WORLD (1653)

The entire empire of the Inca, though so extensive and composed of so many diverse nations, was a single commonwealth, ruled by the same laws, statutes, and customs and observing the same religion, rites, and ceremonies . . .

The first thing that these kings did after conquering a province was to remove six or seven thousand families, more or less, as seemed best to them, taking into account the capacity and temper of the population, and to transfer these families to the quiet, peaceful provinces, assigning them to different towns. In their stead they introduced the same number of people, taken from the places to which the former families had been sent or from such other places as seemed convenient; among these people were many nobles of royal blood. Those who were thus domiciled in the new lands were called mitimaes – that is, newcomers or strangers, as distinct from the natives.

The Incas introduced these changes of domicile in order to maintain their rule with greater ease, quiet, and security for since the city of Cuzco, their capital, where they had their court and residence, was so distant from the provinces most lately acquired, in which there were many barbarous and warlike nations, they considered that there was no other way to keep them in peaceful submission.

The Inca profited further by this transfer of their vassals from one part to another in that throughout the length and breadth of the Empire similarity and conformity prevailed in religion and government. All the nations learned and spoke the language of Cuzco, which thus came to be general throughout Peru; for through this change of domicile the newly conquered peoples, removed into the interior of the kingdom, learned all this quickly and without difficulty or coercion, and the old vassals who were resettled in place of the new subjects who were being pacified taught it to the natives. The Inca required everyone to absorb their language, laws, and religion, with all the beliefs about those matters that were established at Cuzco; they either partly or wholly abolished their former usages and rites and made them receive their own. In order to introduce and establish these things more effectively, in addition to transferring people they would remove the principal idol from a conquered province and set it up in Cuzco with the same attendance and worship that it had formerly had; all this was seen to by persons who had come from that province, just as they had done when they had had the idol in their own country.

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