

TITU CUSI YUPANQUI (ca. 1530–1572)

THE HISTORY OF HOW THE SPANIARDS ARRIVED IN PERU (1570)

I. Instruction of the Inca Don Diego de Castro Titu Cusi Yupanqui

It is also necessary for His Majesty to know that my father, Manco Inca Yupanqui, son of Huayna Capac and grandson of Topa Inca Yupanqui . . . was the principal lord of these kingdoms of Peru, chosen to rule by his father Huayna Capac . . . And he should also make His Majesty understand why I am suffering from such need in this desolate wilderness, where my father left me at the time the Spaniards defeated and killed him, while he still reigned and governed Peru and all of its territory. And also that His Majesty should know in detail, as will be declared below, of the manner, and of how and when, the Spaniards entered the land of Peru, and of how they treated my father while he lived and until they killed him in the territory I now possess . . .

II. History of how the Spaniards Arrived in Peru and what Happened to Manco Inca

At the time the Spaniards first arrived on the coast of Peru and when they arrived in the town of Cajamarca . . . my father Manco Inca was in the city of Cuzco. He was there exercising all the power and authority that his father Huayna Capac had conferred upon him. And it was there that he received a message from his older brother (although a bastard) named Atahuallpa, in Cajamarca . . . that they had seen some people arrive in their land who dressed very differently from our people and who seemed to be *viracochas*, which is the name we used long ago to refer to the creator of all things . . . And they called the people they had seen by this name [*viracocha*] because they were very different in their dress and appearance from the people here, and also because they rode very large animals with silver feet—and they thought this because of the light given off by their horseshoes. They also used this name to refer to them because they heard them speaking all by themselves to some white sheets, like one person would speak to another, and what they were watching was the reading of books and letters. And they also called them *viracochas* because of the excellence of their appearance and the great differences between them, because some had black beards and others had red ones; and because they were seen to eat on silver dishes; and also because they had *yllapas*, the name we use to refer to the thunder, but here it referred to the harquebuses they carried, because it was thought they were like thunder from the sky.

And my father, when he heard their words, became distraught and said: “Well, how is it that such people have dared to enter my lands without my orders or consent? What manner of people are they?” And in response, the messengers said: “Lord, they are a kind of people that—without doubt—cannot be anything less than gods since they say they arrived with the wind, and they are bearded and very beautiful and white. They eat on silver dishes and the very sheep that carry them on their backs are large and have silver shoes. They emit bolts of thunder like the sky itself. And don’t you think that people like this, and who behave in this manner, must be *viracochas*?”

Taken from Titu Cusi Yupanqui, *History of How the Spaniards Arrived in Peru* [1570], trans. Catherine Julien (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 3–15.