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Clements R. Markham

Excerpt

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AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE FABLES AND RITES OF
THE YNCAS.

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THE FABLES AND RITES OF THE YNCAS,

BY

CHRISTOVAL DE MOLINA,

*Priest of the Parish of Our Lady of Healing of the Hospital for
 Natives in the City of Cuzco*:¹

Addressed to the Most Reverend LORD BISHOP DON SEBASTIAN DE
 ARTAUN,² of the Council of His Majesty.

As in the account which I submitted to your most illustrious Lordship of the origin, lives, and customs of the Yncas, Lords of this land, of the names and number of their wives, of the laws they gave and the wars they waged, and of the tribes and nations they conquered; I also treated, in some places, of the ceremonies and worship they established, though not very fully; I now propose, chiefly by reason of the wish expressed by your reverend Lordship, to take similar pains to describe the ceremonies, worship, and idolatries of these Indians. For this purpose I assembled a number of aged persons who had seen and participated in them in the days of Huayna Ccapac, of Huascar Ynca, and of Manco Ynca, as well as some leaders and priests of those days.

¹ For an account of the origin of this hospital, see my translation of *G. de la Vega*, ii, p. 258.

² *Bishops of Cuzco*—

1534. Fray Vicente de Valverde.

1543. Fray Juan Solano, to 1550.

1570. SEBASTIAN DE ARTAUN. Died at Lima 1584, at a Provincial Council.

1584-93. Fray Gregorio de Montalvo.

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And first with regard to the origin of their idolatries, it is so that these people had no knowledge of writing. But, in a house of the Sun called Poquen Cancha, which is near Cuzco, they had the life of each one of the Yncas, with the lands they conquered, painted with figures on certain boards, and also their origin. Among these paintings the following fable was represented.

In the life of Manco Ccapac, who was the first Ynca, and from whom they began to be called children of the Sun, and to worship the Sun, they had a full account of the deluge. They say that all people and all created things perished in it, insomuch that the water rose above all the highest mountains in the world. No living things survived except a man and a woman who remained in a box, and when the waters subsided, the wind carried them to Huanaco,³ which will be over seventy leagues from Cuzco, a little more or less. The Creator of all things commanded them to remain there as *mitimas*;⁴ and there, in Tiahuanaco, the Creator began to raise up the people and nations that are in that region, making one of each nation of clay, and painting the dresses that each one was to wear. Those that were to wear their hair, with hair; and those that were to be shorn, with hair cut; and to each nation was given the language that was to be spoken, and the songs to be sung, and the seeds and food that they were to sow. When the Creator had finished painting and making the said nations and figures of clay, he gave life and soul to each one, as well men as women, and ordered that they should pass under the earth. Thence each nation came up in the places to which he ordered them to go. Thus they say that some came out of caves, others issued from hills, others from fountains, others from the trunks of trees. From this cause, and owing to having come forth and commenced to multiply,

³ Tia-huanacu.

⁴ Mitimac, a colonist or settler.—See *G. de la Vega*, I, lib. iii, cap. 19.

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from those places, and to having had the beginning of their lineage in them, they made *huacas* and places of worship of them in memory of the origin of their lineage which proceeded from them. Thus each nation uses the dress with which they invest their *huaca*; and they say that the first that was born from that place was there turned into stones, others say the first of their lineages were turned into falcons, condors, and other animals and birds. Hence the *huacas* they use and worship are in different shapes.

There are other nations which say that when the deluge came, all people were destroyed except a few who escaped on hills, in caves, or trees, and that these were very few, but that they began to multiply, and that, in memory of the first of their race who escaped in such places, they made idols of stone, giving the name of him who had thus escaped to each *huaca*. Thus each nation worshipped and offered sacrifices of such things as they used. There were, however, some nations who had a tradition of a Creator of all things. They made some sacrifices to him, but not in such quantity, or with so much veneration as to their idols or *huacas*. But to return to the fable. They say that the Creator was in Tiahuanaco, and that there was his chief abode, hence the superb edifices, worthy of admiration, in that place. On these edifices were painted many dresses of Indians, and there were many stones in the shape of men and women, who had been changed into stone for not obeying the commands of the Creator. They say that it was dark, and that there he made the sun, moon, and stars, and that he ordered the sun, moon, and stars to go to the island of Titicaca, which is near at hand, and thence to rise to heaven. They also declare that when the sun, in the form of a man, was ascending into heaven, very brilliant, it called to the Yncas and to Manco Ccapac, as their chief, and said:—"Thou and thy descendants are to be Lords, and are to subjugate many nations. Look upon me as thy father, and thou shalt be my

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children, and thou shalt worship me as thy father." And with these words it gave to Manco Ccapac, for his insignia and arms, the *suntur-paucar*⁵ and the *champi*,⁶ and the other ensigns that are used by the Yncas, like sceptres. And at that point the sun, moon, and stars were commanded to ascend to heaven, and to fix themselves in their places, and they did so. At the same instant Manco Ccapac and his brothers and sisters, by command of the Creator, descended under the earth and came out again in the cave of Paccari-tambo,⁷ though they say that other nations also came out of the same cave, at the point where the Sun rose on the first day after the Creator had divided the night from the day. Thus it was that they were called children of the Sun, and that the Sun was worshipped and revered as a father.

They also have another fable, in which they say that the Creator had two sons, the one called Ymaymana Viracocha, and the other Tocado Viracocha. Having completed the tribes and nations, and assigned dresses and languages to them, the Creator sent the sun up to heaven, with the moon and stars, each one in its place. The Creator, who in the language of the Indians is called Pachayachachi⁸ and Tecsiviracocha, which means the incomprehensible God, then went by the road of the mountains, from Tiahuanaco, visiting and beholding all the nations, and examining how they had begun to multiply, and how to comply with his commands. He found that some nations had rebelled and had not obeyed his commands; so he turned a large number of them into stones of the shape of men and women, with the same dress that they had worn. These conversions into stone were made at the following places: in Tiahuanaco, and in Pucara, and Xauxa, where they say that he turned

⁵ One name for the Ynca's head-dress. The "brilliant circle".

⁶ The battle-axe used with one hand.—*G. de la Vega*, I, lib. 9, cap. 31.

⁷ Near Cuzco. From *Paccari*, the dawn, and *tompu*, an inn.

⁸ "Teacher of the World."

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the *huaca* called Huarivilca into stone, and in Pachacamac and Cajamarca, and in other parts. In truth there are great blocks of stone in those places, some of which are nearly the size of giants. They must have been made by human hands in very ancient times ; and, by reason of the loss of memory, and the absence of writing, they invented this fable, saying that people had been turned into stones for their disobedience, by command of the Creator. They also relate that in Pucara, which is forty leagues from the city of Uuzco on the Collao road, fire came down from heaven and destroyed a great part of the people, while those who were taking to flight were turned into stones.

The Creator, who is said to be the father of Ymaymana Viracocha, and of Tocado⁹ Viracocha, commanded that the elder, named Ymaymana Viracocha, in whose power all things were placed, should set out from this point, and go by the way of the mountains and forests through all the land, giving names to the large and small trees, and to the flowers and fruits that they bear, and teaching the people which were good for food or for medicine, and which should be avoided. He also gave names to all the herbs, and explained which had healing virtues and which were poisonous. The other son, named Tocado Viracocha, which means in their language “the maker,” was ordered to go by the way of the plains, visiting the people, and giving names to the rivers and trees, and instruction respecting the fruits and flowers. Thus they went until they reached the sea, whence they ascended to heaven, after having accomplished all they had to do in this world.

They also relate, in this same fable, that at Tiahuanaco, where all mankind was created, all the different kinds of birds were made, male and female, and that each was given the songs they were to sing ; those that were to live in the

⁹ The “Tocay” of the tradition given by *G. de la Vega*, I, lib. i, cap. 18.

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forest being sent there, and each kind to its respective place. In like manner all the different beasts were created, male and female, and all the serpents and lizards that are met with in the land; and the people were taught the names and qualities of each of these birds, beasts, and reptiles.

These Indians believed for a certainty that neither the Creator nor his sons were born of woman, that they were unchangeable and eternal. The tribes have many other fables teaching their origin, insomuch that if all were to be told, there would be no end. I will, therefore, only insert some of these fables.

In the kingdom of Quito, there is a province called Cañaribamba, and the Cañaris Indians are so named from their province.¹ These Cañaris say that, at the time of the deluge, two brothers escaped to a very high mountain called Huaca-ñnan. As the waters rose the hill also increased in height, so that the waters never reached them. After the flood had subsided, their store of provisions being ended, they came forth and sought for food in the hills and valleys. They built a very small house in which they dwelt, living on herbs and roots, and suffering much from hunger and fatigue. One day, after going out in search of food, they returned to their little house, and found food to eat and *chicha* to drink, without knowing who could have prepared or brought it. This happened for ten days, at the end of which time they consulted how they should see and know the being who did them so much good in their great need. So the elder of the two agreed to remain concealed. Presently he saw two birds, of the kind called *agua*, and by another name *torito*. In our language they are called *guacamayos*.² They came dressed as Cañaris, with hair on their heads fastened in front as they now wear it. The concealed

¹ See my translation of *G. de la Vega*, ii, pp. 241, 335, 527.

² A macaw.

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Indian saw them begin to prepare the food they brought with them, as soon as they came to the house, the larger one taking off the *Uiclla* or mantle worn by the Indians. When the concealed man saw that they were beautiful, and that they had the faces of women, he came forth; but as soon as they saw him, they were enraged and flew away without leaving anything to eat on that day. When the younger brother came home from searching for food, and found nothing cooked and ready as on former days, he asked his brother the reason, who told him, and they were very angry. On the next day the younger brother resolved to remain in concealment, and to watch whether the birds returned. At the end of three days the two *guacamayos* came back, and began to prepare the food. The men watched for an opportune time when they had finished cooking, and shutting the door, enclosed them inside. The birds showed great anger; but while they were holding the smaller one, the larger went away. Then they had carnal knowledge of the smaller one, and had by it six sons and daughters. It lived with them for a long time on that hill, and they subsisted on the seeds they sowed, which were brought by the *guacamayo*. And they say that from these brothers and sisters, children of the *guacamayo*, all the Cañaris proceed. Hence they look upon the hill *Huaca yñan* as a *huaca*, and they hold the *guacamayos* in great veneration, and value their feathers very highly, for use at their festivals.

In the province of Ancasmарca, which is five leagues from Cuzco, in the Anti-suyu division, the Indians have the following fable.

They say that a month before the flood came, their sheep displayed much sadness, eating no food in the day-time, and watching the stars at night. At last the shepherd, who had charge of them, asked what ailed them, and they said that the conjunction of stars showed that the world would be

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destroyed by water. When he heard this, the shepherd consulted with his six children, and they agreed to collect all the food and sheep they could, and to go to the top of a very high mountain, called Ancasmarca. They say that as the waters rose, the hill grew higher, so that it was never covered by the flood; and when the waters subsided, the hill also grew smaller. Thus, the six children of that shepherd returned to people the province. These and other tales are told, which I do not insert, to avoid prolixity. The chief cause of the invention of these fables, was the ignorance of God, and the abandonment of these people to idolatries and vices. If they had known the use of writing they would not have been so dull and blind. Nevertheless, they had a very cunning method of counting by strings of wool and knots, the wool being of different colours. They call them *quipus*, and they are able to understand so much by their means, that they can give an account of all the events that have happened in their land for more than five hundred years. They had expert Indians who were masters in the art of reading the *quipus*, and the knowledge was handed down from generation to generation, so that the smallest thing was not forgotten. By the *quipus*, which are like these strings that old women use for praying in Spain, only with ends hanging from them, they keep such an account of the years and months, that no error is committed in the record. The system became more complete under the Ynca Yupanqui, who first began to conquer this land, for before his time the Yncas had not advanced beyond the vicinity of Cuzco, as appears from the account now in the hands of your Reverence. This Ynca appears to have been the first to order and settle ceremonies and religions. He it was who established the twelve months of the year, giving a name to each, and ordaining the ceremonies that were to be observed in each. For although his ancestors used months and years counted by the *quipus*, yet they were never pre-

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viously regulated in such order until the time of this Lord. He was of such clear understanding, that he reflected upon the respect and reverence shown by his ancestors to the Sun, who worshipped it as God. He observed that it never had any rest, and that it daily journeyed round the earth; and he said to those of his council that it was not possible that the Sun could be the God who created all things, for if he was he would not permit a small cloud to obscure his splendour; and that if he was creator of all things he would sometimes rest, and light up the whole world from one spot. Thus, it cannot be otherwise but that there is someone who directs him, and this is the Pacha-Yachachi or creator. Influenced by this reasoning and knowledge, he ordered the houses and temple of Quisuar-cancha³ to be made, which are above the houses of Diego Ortiz de Guzman,⁴ coming towards the great square of Cuzco, where Hernan Lopez de Segovia now lives. Here he raised a statue of gold to the creator, of the size of a boy of ten years of age. It was in the shape of a man standing up, the right arm raised and the hand almost closed, the fingers and thumb raised as one who was giving an order. Although the Yncas had a knowledge of a creator of all things from the first, whom they revered and to whom they offered sacrifices; yet he never was held in such great veneration as from the time of this Ynca, who gave orders to the heads of provinces throughout his dominions that temples should be erected to him, and that he should have flocks, servants, farms, and estates, out of which the sacrifices should be provided. This also was the Ynca who so sumptuously erected the house of the Sun at Cuzco: for

³ *Quisuar* is the name of a tree (*Buddleia Incana*). *Cancha*, a place.

⁴ See *G. de la Vega*, i, p. 295, and ii, p. 243, of my translation; and the plan of Cuzco. There is still an ancient wall, with serpents carved on it, at this spot.