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fourth Inca -- [18] The life of Capac Yupanqui, the fifth Inca -- [19] The life of Inca Roca, the sixth Inca -- [20] The life of Tito Cusi Hualpa, whom they commonly call Yahuar Huacac -- [21] What happened after the Ayarmacas kidnapped Tito Cusi Hualpa -- [22] How it became known that Yahuar Huacac was alive -- [23] Yahuar Huacac Inca Yupanqui, the seventh Inca, begins the Incaship only after the death of his father -- [24] The life of Viracocha, the eighth Inca -- [25] The provinces and towns that Viracocha Inca, the eighth Inca, conquered and tyrannized -- [26] The life of Inca Yupanqui, or Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui, the ninth Inca -- [27] The Chancas attack Cuzco -- [28] The second victory that Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui had over the Chancas -- [29] Inca Yupanqui Inca raises himself as Inca and takes the tassel without the consent of his father -- [30] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui rebuilds the city of Cuzco -- [31] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui rebuilds the House of the Sun and establishes new idols in it -- [32] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui depopulates [the area] two leagues around Cuzco -- [33] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui kills his older brother named Inca Urcon -- [34] The nations that Pachacuti Inca destroyed and the towns he attacked; first, Tocay Capac, the cinchi of the Ayarmacas, and [then the] destruction of the Cuyos -- [35] The other nations that Inca Yupanqui conquered by himself and with Inca Roca -- [36] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui endows the House of the Sun with great wealth -- [37] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui conquers the province of Collasuyu -- [38] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui sends [Capac Yupanqui] to conquer the provinces of Chinchaysuyu -- [39] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui establishes mitimaes in all the lands he had conquered -- [40] The Collas, sons of Chuchic Capac, rise up against Inca Yupanqui, seeking their freedom -- [41] Amaru Topa Inca and Apu Paucar Usno continue the conquest of the Collao and defeat the Collas once again -- [42] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui appoints his son Topa Inca Yupanqui as his successor -- [43] Pachacuti arms his son Topa Inca as a knight -- [44] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui sends his son Topa Inca Yupanqui to conquer Chinchaysuyu -- [45] Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui inspects the provinces conquered by him and his captains -- [46] Topa Inca Yupanqui sets out a second time by order of his father to conquer what remained of Chinchaysuyu -- [47] The death of Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui -- [48] The life of Topa Inca Yupanqui, the tenth Inca -- [49] Topa Inca Yupanqui conquers the province of the Andes -- [50] Topa Inca Yupanqui goes to conquer and put down the risen Collas -- [51] Topa Inca makes the yanayacos -- [52] Topa Inca Yupanqui orders a second inspection of the land and does other things -- [53] Topa Inca builds the fortress of Cuzco -- [54] The death of Topa Inca Yupanqui -- [55] The life of Huayna Capac, the eleventh Inca -- [56] They give the tassel of Inca to Huayna Capac, the eleventh Inca -- [57] The first things that Huayna Capac did after being invested as Inca -- [58] Huayna Capac conquers the Chachapoyas -- [59] Huayna Capac inspects all the land from Quito to Chile -- [60] Huayna Capac wages war on the Quitos, Pastos, Carangues, Cayambes, and Guancabillas -- [61] The Chiriguanas leave to wage war in Peru against those conquered by the Incas -- [62] What Huayna Capac did after those wars -- [63] The life of Huascar Inca, the last Inca, and that of Atahualpa -- [64] Huascar Inca leaves in person to fight against Chalco Chima and Quizquiz, Atahualpa's captains -- [65] The battle between the forces of Atahualpa and Huascar and the imprisonment of Huascar -- [66] What Chalco Chima and Quizquiz said to Huascar Inca and the others of his group -- [67] The cruelties that Atahualpa ordered be committed against the defeated and captured men of Huascar -- [68] News of the Spaniards reached Atahualpa -- [69] The Spaniards reach Cajamarca and capture Atahualpa, who orders that

Huascar be killed, and he also dies -- [70] Noting how these Incas were oath-breakers and tyrants against their own, in addition to being against the natives of the land -- [71] Summary account of the time that the Incas of Peru lasted 206 Statement of the proofs and verification of this history -- Appendix 1: Sample Translation -- Appendix 2: Editions of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa's The History of the Incas -- Appendix 3: The Rule of the Incas, Following Dates Provided by Sarmiento de Gamboa -- Appendix 4: The Incas of Cuzco, Following Information Provided by Sarmiento de Gamboa -- Notes -- Glossary -- Bibliography -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

The History of the Incas may be the best description of Inca life and mythology to survive Spanish colonization of Peru. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, a well-educated sea captain and cosmographer of the viceroyalty, wrote the document in Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire, just forty years after the arrival of the first Spaniards. The royal sponsorship of the work guaranteed Sarmiento direct access to the highest Spanish officials in Cuzco. It allowed him to summon influential Incas, especially those who had witnessed the fall of the Empire. Sarmiento also traveled widely and interviewed numerous local lords (curacas), as well as surviving members of the royal Inca families. Once completed, in an unprecedented effort to establish the authenticity of the work, Sarmiento's manuscript was read, chapter by chapter, to forty-two indigenous authorities for commentary and correction. The scholars behind this new edition (the first to be published in English since 1907) went to similarly great lengths in pursuit of accuracy. Translators Brian Bauer and Vania Smith used an early transcript and, in some instances, the original document to create the text. Bauer and Jean-Jacques Decoster's introduction lays bare the biases Sarmiento incorporated into his writing. It also theorizes what sources, in addition to his extensive interviews, Sarmiento relied upon to produce his history. Finally, more than sixty new illustrations enliven this historically invaluable document of life in the ancient Andes.
