

[Denning on Bauer and Halac-Higashimori and Cantarutti, 'Voices from Vilcabamba: Accounts Chronicling the Fall of the Inca Empire'](#)

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Brian S. Bauer, Madeleine Halac-Higashimori, Gabriel E. Cantarutti. *Voices from Vilcabamba: Accounts Chronicling the Fall of the Inca Empire*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016. 264 pp. \$28.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-60732-425-6.

Reviewed by Robert Denning (Southern New Hampshire University) **Published on** H-Empire (October, 2017) **Commissioned by** Charles V. Reed

The conquest of an empire is a messy, drawn-out enterprise. Many histories of the Spanish conquest of the Inca end with Francisco Pizarro's victory over Atahualpa in 1533, but of course the story does not end there. Inca resistance continued until the capture of Tupac Amaru in the remote region of Vilcabamba and his execution in 1572. *Voices from Vilcabamba: Accounts Chronicling the Fall of the Inca Empire* tells the story of those last four decades of Inca resistance and the integration of the region into the greater Spanish colonial enterprise afterward.

The lead author, Brian S. Bauer of the University of Illinois at Chicago, is an anthropologist who has written extensively on the Incas in general and Vilcabamba in particular. The other authors, Madeleine Halac-Higashimori and Gabriel E. Cantarutti, are PhD candidates at the University of Illinois at Chicago. *Voices from Vilcabamba* can be seen as a companion piece to *Vilcabamba and the Archaeology of Inca Resistance*, which Bauer published with two co-authors in 2015. Indeed, parts of the first chapter here first appeared in that latter volume.

In *Voices from Vilcabamba*, the authors hope to “provide an enhanced narrative on the nature of European-American relations during this time of important cultural transformations” (p. 4). In formulating an “enhanced narrative,” the authors are successful. Using translations of five documents, some of them published in English here for the first time, the authors build a detailed narrative of Inca resistance to Spanish rule in the Vilcabamba region and Spanish efforts to colonize and pacify the region after the execution of Tupac Amaru, the last of the Inca rulers.

This narrative unfolds over two chapters. Chapter 1 provides a detailed narrative of Inca resistance in and around Vilcabamba to Spanish colonization after Manco Inca's unsuccessful siege of Cuzco in 1536. Manco Inca hoped to use the remote region to regroup and reorganize his supporters and to serve as a base for resistance against the Spanish. He successfully repelled two Spanish attacks but was assassinated in 1544 by a small group of rebellious Spaniards to whom he had granted refuge. Manco Inca's son, Sayri Tupac, took control of the region afterward and opened communications with the viceroy Lope García de Castro in Cuzco in 1557. Discussions between the resistance and the Spanish had to start all over again after Sayri Tupac died in 1560 and his brother, Titu Cusi Yupanqui, inherited the role of Inca. Titu Cusi Yupanqui signed the Accord of Acobamba in 1566, wherein the Spanish granted amnesty to the Inca in exchange for submission to Spanish rule and

conversion to Christianity. Tensions flared when Titu Cusi Yupanqui died suddenly in 1570 and the Inca's supporters blamed two Christian priests, Martín Pando and Diego Ortiz. Loyalists executed Pando immediately. They killed Ortiz after he tried and failed to resurrect the dead Inca. Loyalists then killed Atilano de Anaya, an emissary from the viceroy charged with reestablishing communications with the Inca. This was the last straw for Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, who ordered a final invasion of the Vilcabamba region. By this point, Manco Inca's last son, Tupac Amaru, had assumed the role of Inca. In the summer of 1572, Spanish forces conquered Vilcabamba and captured the Inca royal court. Thus ended the Inca resistance to Spanish colonization.

Chapter 2 discusses Spanish attempts, led by the new governor of Vilcabamba, Martín Hurtado de Arbieta, to pacify and colonize the Vilcabamba region after the death of Tupac Amaru. Based in San Francisco de la Victoria de Vilcabamba, a new town located near the mining districts, Hurtado de Arbieta solidified Spanish control of the region through the construction of churches, religious conversion, and strategic alliances with Native American groups. He launched raids against the cannibalistic Pilcosuni in 1582 and 1583 but both ended in failure. The cost in blood and treasure of those expeditions, and the general mistreatment of Native Americans in the Vilcabamba region, provided opportunities for Hurtado de Arbieta's political opponents to charge him with misconduct. The king and the viceroy revoked Hurtado de Arbieta's governorship in 1589 and, after rounds of legal wrangling, the crown took direct control of the Vilcabamba region by 1600.

These two chapters provide a detailed political and military history of the conquest and pacification of the Vilcabamba region. The first chapter focuses on the political line of Inca succession and the second focuses mainly on the actions of Governor Hurtado de Arbieta. There is very little discussion of the "important cultural transformations" that the region underwent during the period of colonization, though (p. 4). Hurtado de Arbieta built churches in and around San Francisco de la Victoria de Vilcabamba, but the authors do not discuss the process of conversion or other religious activities centered on those churches outside of naming a couple of Native American converts. These chapters contain passing references to mining, agriculture, and Native Americans held in slave-like conditions, but most of the Spanish-American interactions described here are of the military and political variety. There are also precious few references to the broader Spanish colonial enterprise in the Americas. One paragraph describes the murder of Pizarro and his brother Gonzalo's uprising against the colonial authorities. The only references to the Spanish colonial government outside of Vilcabamba come when the king or viceroys appoint local officials.

This may be due to the limitations of the primary source materials used to develop the narrative. Outside of the two-chapter narrative, the book consists of English translations of five primary documents or collections of primary documents. The first document is the authors' translation of part of Martín de Murúa's *General History of Peru*, written sometime before 1616. Murúa was a Mercedarian priest who lived in Peru and was familiar with the Vilcabamba region, and his account is well known. "Many of our most renowned historians," note the authors, "have used Murúa's *General History of Peru* as a major source for their own overviews of Inca history" (p. 43). The portions of this document relevant to Vilcabamba—part of chapter 70 and all of chapters 72-85—are published here in English for the first time. This document provides a detailed account of Manco Inca's flight to Vilcabamba after his failed siege of Cuzco; the intrigue and assassination of Manco Inca; meetings between Spanish officials and Sayri Tupac; the deaths of Titu Cusi Yupanqui, Martín Pando, Diego Ortiz, and Atilano de

Anaya; the conquest of Vilcabamba; and the capture of Tupac Amaru.

The second document is a translation of Baltasar de Ocampo Conejeros's "Descripcion de la provincia de Sant Francisco de la Victoria de Vilcapampa" (ca. 1611). This document, a report written for Viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna with the hope of financial compensation, was translated into English in 1907 but, according to the authors, "Ocampo's account remains one of the least studied documents describing the ultimate decades of Inca resistance in the Vilcabamba area" (p. 109). Ocampo's report covers much of the same ground as Murúa's book, described above, but also discusses the activities of Governor Hurtado de Arbieta in the decades after the execution of Tupac Amaru. As the authors note, Ocampo wrote this account decades after the events described therein, and the document is riddled with factual errors. Perhaps this is why Ocampo's account is "one of the least studied documents" on this topic. The authors draw no conclusions about that.

The third document is a translation of a report by Diego Rodríguez de Figueroa, who helped negotiate the Accord of Acobamba with Titu Cusi Yupanqui and served as *corregidor* of Vilcabamba until the final conquest of the region in 1572, whereupon he became an *encomendero*. This report describes his meeting with Titu Cusi Yupanqui in 1565, at which both sides agreed to the initial terms of the accord. It provides, the authors note, "a glance into the inner workings of the Inca realm and insights into one of its least-known rulers" (p. 153). This report includes detailed descriptions of Inca ceremonies, diet, political structures, and religion. The authors do not say whether this document has appeared in English translation before, but this document has been known to historians for quite some time because it provides a rare reference to Machu Picchu.

In the fourth document, Antonio Bautista de Salazar, who served under two viceroys in Peru, provides an eyewitness account of the fall of Vilcabamba to Spanish forces and the execution of Tupac Amaru. This document is noteworthy because it includes transcriptions of other documents, such as the letter from the viceroy to the Inca carried by Atilano de Anaya when he was killed by Titu Cusi Yupanqui's loyal supporters.

The final document is a collection of excerpts from documents related to the Augustinian Order's investigations into the death of Friar Diego Ortiz. As Bauer, Halac-Higashimori, and Cantarutti note, these "investigations reveal new details of Citi Cusi Yupanqui's and Ortiz's deaths and highlight the Augustinians' determination to elevate Ortiz's death to an act of martyrdom worthy of a Christian saint" (p. 194). While these events formed a small part of the overall narrative, these documents demonstrate the relationship between the colonial and religious authorities in recently conquered Inca lands.

This book provides the new student of late Inca history or Spanish imperial history with a useful narrative and introduction to primary accounts of the final fall of the Inca, but it offers little to senior scholars. The two narrative chapters offer no new interpretations of late Inca or early Spanish colonial history. Scholars have long known of the existence of the primary source documents. The book's value, however, comes from the local perspective. We meet individuals who played large and small roles in the Inca resistance, Spanish conquest, and postconquest colonization efforts. It will be up to future scholars to integrate these individuals into the broader sweep of Spanish imperialism.

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