

## Written Sources on Andean Cosmogony

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In ancient America, two widely believed theories of creation existed, one among Mesoamerican peoples, and the other in the Central Andes.

The Andean histories of creation are the main subject, but some discussion of the Mesoamerican cosmogony is necessary because of two conditions. In the first place both may arise from a common ancestry in Asiatic paleolithic time as much as 40,000 years ago when immigration to America is now thought to have begun via Beringia. Secondly the Spanish conquest mingled both traditions Mesoamerican and Andean, in ways that do not disguise their underlying affinity of origin.<sup>1</sup>

Before discussing the Andean tests I should briefly mention the Mesoamerican evidence.

The Legend of the Suns is a cosmogonic narrative preserved in ten fragmentary versions (Moreno, 1967). Parts of it are also shown in eight figural representations as cosmogonical diagrams, where varying schemes of imago mundi and a ring of time cojoin in an emblem of the extent and duration of the Mesoamerican universe.

The narratives are about the incomplete (or imperfect) creations of the universe that have been recognized until now only in colonial Mexican and Maya versions. These explain the coming into being of the universe and the appearance of mankind as a succession of divine creations marked by different suns, named for the agents of their destruction as earth, wind, fire, flood and earthquake. Each of these ages had different natures as to regent deity, color, direction, animal life and food. The

fourth age ended in total destruction, but the gods who had been the previous suns recreated the universe a fifth time at Teotihuacan in A.D. 694, under the dispensation of human sacrifice to maintain the gods in existence. These early colonial versions reflect different periods and peoples. Some narratives mention four ages, while others add a fifth. Those with four ages may be of non-Aztec origin, when the successive creations were thought to form a continuity that was reasserted by human survivors after catastrophes. The Aztec recension, however, turned the preceding ages into failed creations, upon which the new thought had for a short time tried to impose the dispensation of human sacrifices on a very large scale.

Figural representations, both before and after the Conquest, are preserved mainly as pictorial manuscripts, on the same subject of cosmogony, but viewed as maps of ritual objects and processes. Both types, whether cosmological histories or ritual maps, are arranged according to the same chronological system of periodic intervals. These are cycles of 9, 13 x 20, 365 and 584 days interlocking with yearly intervals of 2 x 52 (104), 7 x 52 (364), 8 x 52 (416), and 9 x 15 (468) years of 365 days.

In Peru similar theories of multiple creation were noted by a least sixteen cronistas before 1650. Their accounts divide as two chronological groups. The earlier of these, mentioning only two creations, appears in the period 1550-1572. Another group after 1572 until 1633 includes evolutionary schemes like Acosta's and Garcilaso's, as well as systems of three, four and five separate creations like those of Mesoamerica.

The method of presentation will be to indicate when the author wrote, and what his sources were, followed by a summary of the cosmogony he

presents, and of its relation to other versions of the same notion.

The long list of 16 sources is really shorter, for some authors are only mentioned because they generously borrowed from others, as Garcilaso did from Blas Valera, or Gregorio Garcia from Juan de Betanzos.

Group I (1550-1572)

1. Pedro Gutierrez de Santa Clara was born a mestizo in Mexico City after 1521. He claims to have gone to Peru in 1543/4,<sup>2</sup> but he said he returned with Pedro de Gasca to Panama in 1550. His history of the civil wars has an ending at his death, in 1605.

The history of creation Gutierrez presents may have been collected before 1550 (Gutierrez, 1963:231-234), but it is more likely that he took it from Gómara after 1552; Gómara was Hernando Cortés' secretary and biographer and therefore close to Mexican sources.

In the Gutierrez account the first gods were Cons and Pachacama, or the sun and moon as a couple who populated the earth. Cons appeared first and formed earth, sun, sky, moon, stars and all living things before leaving earth for sky. Many centuries later Pachacama came as creator and reformer, destroying everything made by Cons, and turning people into monkeys, before creating another humanity after a flood.

Gutierrez may have taken the monkeys and the flood from the Mexican Legend of the Suns, the various texts of which are analyzed by Roberto Moreno de los Arcos (1967). The main theme for Gutierrez, however, is that of a two-time creation, once by Cons, and again by Pachacama. Yet these gods are not given territorial identity, as they will be later on, in 1565-7 by Calvete de Estrella, in De Rebus Indicis.

2. Juan de Betanzos learned Quechua from his Inca wife, Doña Angelina, the sister of Atahualpa and daughter of Huayna Capac. After

serving Pizarro as interpreter, he was commissioned by Viceroy Mendoza to write the Suma y narración (Betanzos, 1968), completing it in 1551. Only the first half of the manuscript has been found, covering events to the reign of Pachacutec.

The first creator was Contitiviracocha, who made heaven and earth leaving all dark. Then he made people who angered him and he turned them into stone at the same hour of creating sun and day, moon and stars. Of the stone people he created other viracochas as replicas or clones of himself to populate the land. These two creations, however, were not separate but the work of the same creator, who multiplied himself in the second one.

3. Francisco Lopez de Gómara was chaplain to Cortés in Spain and never saw Peru. His Historia General de las Indias appeared in print at Valladolid in 1552. It contains a creation story like the one told by Gutierrez about Con and Pachacama (Gómara, 1852:233-234) with other details.

Con was a man from the north without bones calling himself son of the sun who swelled the earth with men and women. Pachacama was also a son of the sun and moon and he exiled Con, turning humans into black cats. A new creation then ended by flood, and the present age will end by sun and moon disappearing after a drought.

Thus two creators are responsible for two creations, followed by two more without named creators. Gómara separately tells the Legend of the Suns in its Mexican form.<sup>3</sup> The legend of Con is seen in ethno-historical evidence from many coastal sites by M. Rostworowski (1977:141-154) as a water deity whose cult preceded Pachacama's in the north and on the coast as far south as Chillón Valley. Gómara, who had access to state papers,

was the first to put Mexico and Peru together as a Renaissance historian.

4. Pedro Cieza de Leon, although depending on interpreters in Peru to understand Quechua, had the guidance of the lexicographer Domingo de Santo Tomás as his preceptor. After four years of travel in Peru he revised the Señorio in Spain between 1552 and 1554. The first two chapters are lost, but the creation story continues in the third as an account of a flood and an origin of humanity in springs and lakes and on peaks (Cieza, 1967). This creation was by Ticiviracocha, a white man accompanying the first emergence of the sun at Titicaca Island. A flood later destroyed all peoples save a few, among whom the Inca rulers emerged in the Andean two-stage account.

Cieza's surviving text is incomplete, opening only after the Ticiviracocha creation. The missing chapters may have mentioned Con as a primary creator, as in the cluster of related sources including Betanzos, Gutierrez and Gómara.

5. Bartolomé de las Casas was never in Peru but when writing the Apologética Historia between 1552 and 1559, he took what he needed from Cieza and Cristobal de Molina. After mention of Condicibiracocha, he names Taguapiracocha as the evil off-spring of the Creator. An interesting pre-Inca condition of rule by lords in small states is mentioned as lasting five or six centuries (Las Casas, 1939:9).

6. Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella became chronista en latin in 1587 until his death in 1593 at the court of Philip II. He was never in America. His cosmogony (written 1565-1567) differs from his predecessors' by a separation of Pachacamac and Viracocha as coastal and highland creators. His information may have come from Gasca's papers, which he used in his account of the rebellion of 1565-1567.<sup>4</sup>

7. Blas Valera, a mestizo Jesuit, was more erudite than most writers in this group, being able to write catechisms in both Quechua and Aymara as well as other works destroyed at Cadiz in 1596. He writes of Viracocha as a "dios immenso" who created the sky and its bodies, which Peruvians adored long before idols. Images of his "ideas" were the first to be adored (Valera, 1945:5). This wording suggests the concept of allegory.

Valera too cites Gómara's version of the Leyenda de los soles (Valera, 1945:51). Other remarks by Valera were properly quoted by Garcilaso (1962: 41-352) at length on other topics as well. Valera's work also underlies that of Montesinos, who restructured Andean history in part on the lines of the Leyenda taken by Valera from Gómara.

#### Group II (1572-1633)

8. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa completed the Historia General Indica in 1572. He tells the fable of the origin of Peru (1942:100-110) by interpreting the sources of the period before his time in a narrative reconstruction. He separates two ages as in the sources, but he supplies details occurring only in his account.

The two ages of creation were both by Viracocha (as in Betanzos). The first was of the giants, and the second was of the present peoples of Peru. After them the "inca tyranny" began in A.D. 565.

Porras (1962:281) contrasts Sarmiento's "rude, vital vision" with Garcilaso's "idyllic, tame account" from Cieza. In 1572, the survivors of the Inca lineages attested after hearing Sarmiento's Historia indica and correcting details, that it was "buena y verdadera" (1942:283-4).

9. José de Acosta, the Jesuit historian, was in Peru 1572-86 and in Mexico briefly before returning to Spain (1940:516) where his Historia natural y moral de las Indias appeared in 1590 at Seville. He was

concerned with separating the "natural doctrine" of Peruvian Indians from man-made "denials of the highest God." He also introduced an early idea of social evolution from "savage barbarians" to "tribal communes," and then to "states or monarchies" such as the Inca and Mexican polities. But he says little about their own cosmogonies as these were by his own words "denials of the Highest God" he knew.

10. Cristobal de Molina is probably closest among these authors to the standard of impassive historical objectivity. He was perhaps a mestizo (Molina, 1916, vii-xvi), becoming curate of the parish of the Hospital de Naturales in Cuzco and receiving salary as a preacher in Quechua. Three of his lost writings were on Inca history and sacred places. Fabulas y ritos was written in 1576 (Porrás, 1962:88).

For Molina creator gods were not born of woman but immutable and eternal (1916:14). Creation history began with Manco Capac and Viracocha, who were coeval, in making of peoples and turning the disobedient into stone images (1916:8-14), as in the account by Juan de Betanzos.

11. Guaman Poma de Ayala wrote mostly in Quechua between 1612 and 1615, recently translated (1980, edited by J. V. Murra). Claiming to be Garcilaso's cousin, he sought to rival him, adding new information to the record. His was a five-stage developmental sequence: cavedwellers; sowers and builders; weavers and metalworkers; rival powers; and the Inca state. This evolution lasted from creation 2000612 years, during which two vast ages preceded three more totalling 5300 years. Guaman Poma then enumerates seven ages, beginning with 1) those of the dawn, 2) those of the cataclysm, then the five ages of man: primeval; legendary; desolation; growth; warfare; Inca (1980, I, 5-105 and III, 1097-8). This scheme was widely diffused in a recent history written for school use in Peru (Tello, 1939).

12. Garcilaso de la Vega (el Inca) had little to say about cosmogony. The closest he came to it was around 1600 in a developmental history of tribal behavior where he blames Mexicans for cannibalism in the primeval age. His second age begins with the Inca dynasty. He sees himself as an apologist for Inca society, writing about it in Spain, seeking coherence and combining variant evidence. His literary art helped him to validate his position. On many points he used the papers of Blas Valera (Garcilaso, 1967, II:vii-viii).

13. Martín de Murua wrote the Historia General del Peru at Cuzco between 1606 and 1611. He belongs as historian among a group (Kubler, 1947:174) including Cristobal de Molina and Guaman Poma (who detested Murua).

Murua, a Mercedarian friar, wrote that from creation to Mama Ocllo in Inca history, four suns had passed before the present fifth sun (1962, I, 70). The first ended by water, the second by collapse of the sky on the earth, the third by fire. The fourth was omitted. The fifth sun was the disk of gold in Coricancha at Cuzco before which Huayna Capac was crowned. This scheme, based on the Mexican Leyenda, also appears in the work by Guaman Poma. Both authors probably took it from Gómara and/or Gutierrez de Santa Clara.

14. Bernabé Cobo, a Jesuit writing a Historia del Nuevo Mundo between 1613 and 1653, spent 40 years in Peru and 20 in Mexico after 1626. His summary of Andean origin myths (Cobo, 1964:150-163) mentions several creators. They are at Tiahuanaco (or Titicaca or Chucuito); Pachacamac; Huanacauri (near Cuzco); Quito, and several more ending in succession by flood, hunger, pestilence and fire.

The creator at Tiahuanaco shaped and painted all kinds of life, but the methods of the other creators are not mentioned. Cobo has the merit



of listing various myths at many known places, e.g., Cañaribamba near Quito, or Ancasmarca near Cuzco. He assumes that these were versions of local history after the Biblical Flood, in an effort approaching historical precision (Rowe, 1979).

15. Fernando de Montesinos was a mining metallurgist working in Peru 1629-1644. His chronology for Peru extends 4500 years since the Biblical Flood. This span falls short of the Leyenda de los Soles. But it lists 103 rulers divided as being in nine pachacutis, or periods each of 500 years (Imbelloni, 1941:302, 316-319). Two pachacutis mark one sun of 1000 years. Nine pachacutis are four elapsed suns and a fifth present one. This calculation follows an earlier one by Blas Valera, as cited by Garcilaso (1967, Bk II, ch. 6). The term pachacutiy also means "end of the world" in the dictionaries (Holguín, 1608; Torres Rubio, 1603) both Quechua and Aymara.

The emerging position of Montesinos today is that he was on the whole in line with the thought of his time. That he is out of line with our time, is a measure of our continuing reluctance as historians to accept the values governing the thought of other centuries and peoples.

16. The clearest colonial statement of ideas on Andean cosmogony is by the Augustinian friar, Antonio de la Calancha who began the Coronica moralizada in 1630-31, completing it in 1633. According to him (Calancha, 1638:92-98), Viracocha divided the world in four at Tiahuanaco after the Flood.

Since then, five suns or creations, as in the Mexican legend, pursue their course as in Gómara's account. The present age was 858 years old in 1552. Darkness was everywhere after A.D. 694. Man and woman were formed in A.D. 701. The new sun was created in A.D. 704 when the old gods

died.

These borrowings from Gómara are followed by the passage from Acosta about stages of culture: "forest dwellers living in lands without King or lord," followed by "democracy, a pestilential government where everyone rules," then 3) "monarchy." Thus, Calancha reconciles Inca history with the Five Suns of Mesoamerica, and with the social science of the sixteenth century.

A surprising quality in these Mexican and Peruvian combinations of texts, is their mutual adaptation within official Spanish standards. As to the appropriateness of mixing Mesoamerican and Andean sources, it is in the words by Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, archbishop of Puebla in 1649. For his lovely discourse of that year, entitled La naturaleza del indio (Palafox y Mendoza, 1546), he wrote that "New Spain and Peru were as one birth...like twins born from one womb and at the same time and hour...preserving their resemblance in innumerable ways..."

As to the doubled creator gods of the Andean peoples, they may be older and nearer to the beginnings than the elaborate Mesoamerican imagery of spatial figures of time.

Although from paleolithic beginning to discovery the twins were unaware of each other, the remark by Palafox is proving to be more and more prophetic, both in archaeology and ethnohistory, in our relationship here in the north to the rest of America, being all, north, central and south, "as one birth...preserving their resemblance..."

Footnotes

1. A. A. Demarest (1981:75) finds that "broad comparison of Mesoamerican and Andean celestial high gods confirms the parallels in both underlying conceptions and later manipulations."
2. M. Bataillon 1961, thinks that Gutierrez never saw Peru. Denied by Perez de Tudela, who edited Gutierrez (1963-65:xcv-xcvi).
3. This was borrowed from Gómara by Michel de Montaigne before 1588.
4. A. Paz y Melia, ed., Rebelión de Pizarro in el Perú, Madrid, 1889, 2 vols.

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## Appendix 1

The reference listing is lacking dates for several original manuscripts. These dates are included here and relate to the composition of relevant parts of texts which may have spanned many decades.

As these are dates the author has deduced, they are part of the research, rather than the bibliography.

1. Pedro Gutierrez de Santa Clara, 1544-1550
- \* 2. Juan de Betanzos, ?-1551
3. Francisco Lopez de Gómara, 1552
4. Pedro Cieza de León, 1550-1554
5. Bartolomé de Las Casas OP, 1552-1559
6. Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, 1565-1567
7. Blas Valera, before 1572-1590
8. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, 1572
9. José de Acosta SJ, 1572-1587
10. Cristobal de Molina, 1576
11. Felipe Guaman Poma, 1583-1613
12. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 1590-1600
13. Martin de Murúa OSA, 1606-1611
14. Bernabé Cobo SJ, 1613-1653
15. Fernando de Montesinos 1629-1644
16. Antonio Calancha OSA, 1630-1633
  
- \*2A. Gregorio Garcia, 1607, repeats 2