

# THE RAINBOW FLAG OF THE INCAS

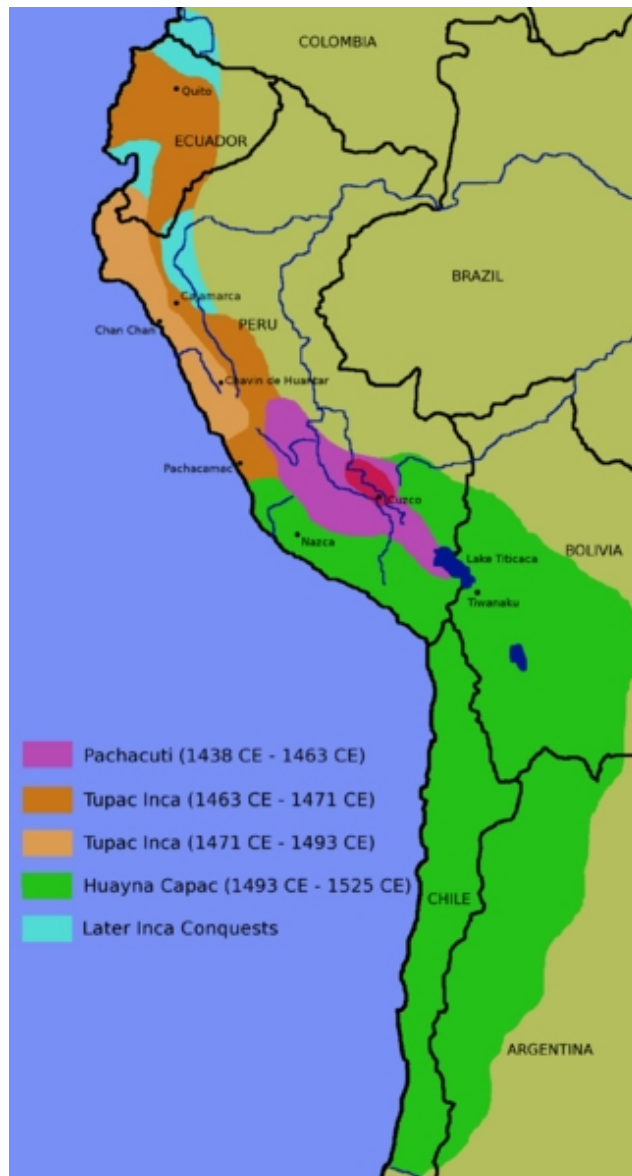
*by Gustav Tracchia*

## PROLOGUE:

The people of this pre-Columbian culture that flourished in the mid- Andes region of South America (known as The Empire of The Incas) called their realm: **Tawantinsuyo**, meaning the four corners.

The word *INCA* is Quechua for Lord or King and was attached to the name of the ruler e.g., Huascar Inca or Huayna Capac Inca.

In Quechua, the official language of the empire; **Suyo** is corner and **Tawa**, number four. **Ntin** is the way to form the plural.



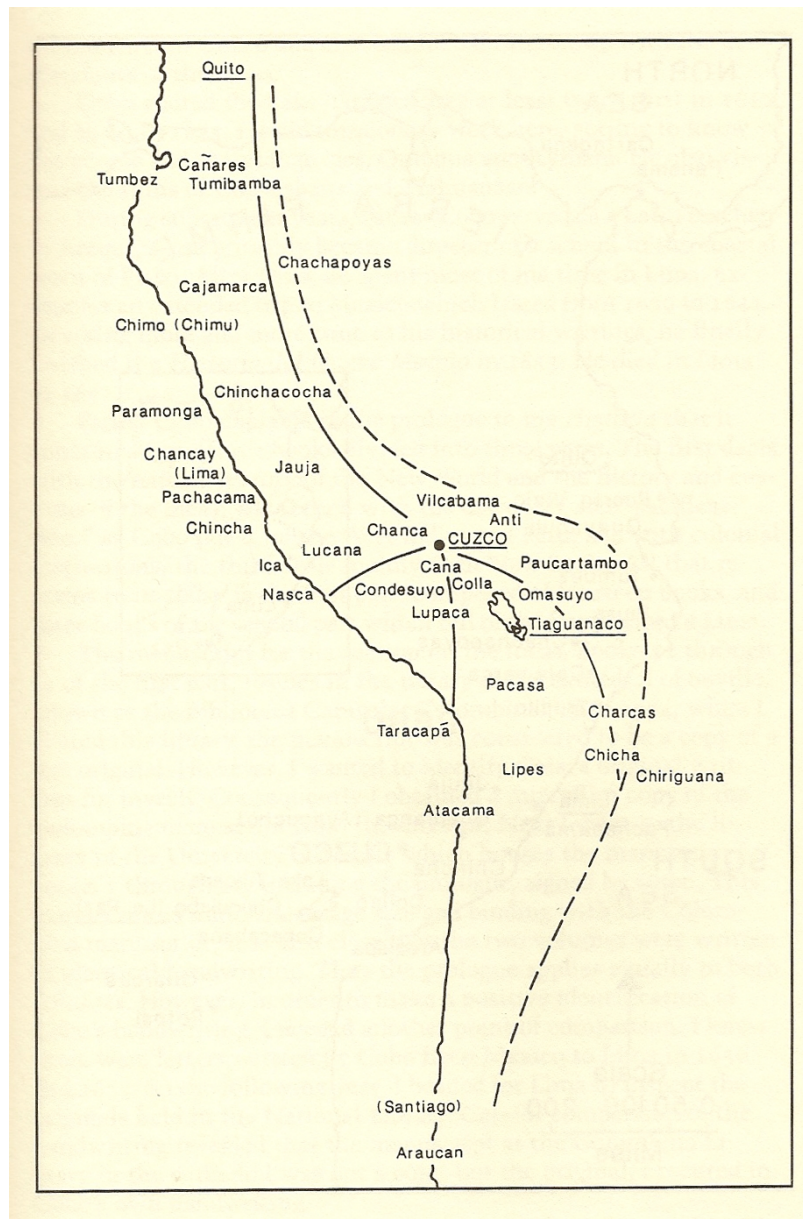
**Fig. 1**

Map of the Tawantinsuyo

Wikipedia, ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/file:inca\\_expansion.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:inca_expansion.png))

The "four corners" or *suyos* radiated from the capital, Cuzco:

- **Chincasuyo:** Northwest Peru, present day Ecuador and the tip of Southern Colombia.
- **Contisuyo:** nearest to Cuzco, south-central within the area of modern Peru.
- **Antisuyo:** almost as long as Chincansuyo but on the eastern side of the Andes, from northern Peru to parts of upper eastern Bolivia.
- **Collasuyo:** Southwest: all of western Bolivia, northern Chile and northwest of Argentina.



**Fig. 2**

Cobo, Historia, schematic division of the four suyos

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**Fig. 3**

Map of Tawantinsuyo, overlapping present day South American political division.

([www.geocities.com/Tropics/beach/2523/maps/perutawan1.html](http://www.geocities.com/Tropics/beach/2523/maps/perutawan1.html))

To simplify, I am going to call this still mysterious pre-Columbian kingdom, not Tawantinsuyo, but the "Empire of the Incas" or "The Inca Empire." I am also going to refer to events related to the culture of the Incas as "Incasic" or "Incan". "The Inca" in the singular, we are referring to the King, and when using "The Incas," we are referring to all the rulers as a group. (See **Note 1** on spelling of Quechua words.)

## **THE FLAG QUESTION**

As vexillologist, we have often noted the tendency, on quite tenuous evidence, to assign a single device as the main or only emblem, and usually in the form of a flag, to ancient cultures, empires or civilizations.

The Incas are no exception to this simplistic approach. From the 1970s, a trend has spread to assign a rainbow flag to the Inca Empire. In studying the flag usage, it is instructive to discern when and how (and why) unsubstantiated flag histories are created and disseminated to promote a shared cultural identity or nationalism.

The reality is that ancient empires lasting hundreds of years did so without a sole device as their main emblem. Rather they had several, in many cases coexisting, often in the form of solid vexilloids. Flags as we know them today, mobile pieces of decorated cloths, were either rare or more likely, did not exist at all.

It is only recently that South American indigenous cultural associations, groups, entities and in some cases governments officials, particularly in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, have seized upon to the idea of a rainbow flag used by The Incas.

Perhaps this is due to the belief, fostered mainly by indigenous groups from the three countries mentioned, that their native culture was neglected, the indigenous population was mistreated and subjected to an alien and imported culture.

While this marginalizing is a fact of history, local sensibility and pride prompted a need to show that the Incan empire was not inferior to European empires or kingdoms. Therefore, to narrow the scope to our main field of interest: "The Incas," as a popular saying goes "had flags."

## **PART I: THE CHRONICLERS**

The chief challenge for vexillologists is to go beyond just the existence of a flag and to investigate the reason and purpose of flags. We also need to discern when a flag was used, who used it and the real meaning of its devices if any or its design configuration.

Unlike the Aztecs and the Maya, and despite their many other achievements, the Incas never developed a system of writing. The closest analog was an accounting device of string and knots known as *quipu*, but this was simply a device used for numerical records of storage food, animal stock and to individualize some important deities or names.

The earliest and most valuable writings accounts - that have survived - by **Juan de Betanzos** and **Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa** were taken from witnesses and Incan people interviewed a few years after the conquest, so we are looking at sources from the mid to late 1500s.

The question naturally arises as to the reliability of these sources. If the authors had only oral accounts to rely on, how could their native informants remember the vast details of events, names and places recorded by the European chroniclers? How accurate is this information?

Surprisingly the answer is very simple. In the classical Greece, epic events and histories of people were recited orally long before a system of writing developed. The evidence is there in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Oral epic poetry is widely known even today in small hamlets in the Balkans, Congo and even Ireland, events are narrated in the same tradition of ancient troubadours.

## **THE FADING OF THE INCAS**

Most historians agree that the 11<sup>th</sup> Inca, Huayna Capac Inca, was the last formally invested Inca of Cuzco.

Francisco Pizarro had previously arrived during the first discovery of Peru in 1526-1527 and explored the northern coasts, without making any contact with the Incas. Pizarro returned to Spain to secure from Emperor Charles V titles and privileges over those newly discovered lands.

By the time he returned in 1532, a five year civil war was raging in Peru between Huascar and his half-brother Atahualpa. Both claimed the title of Inca after the deaths of their father, Huayna Capac Inca and his appointed successor, Nimay Cuyoche, both said to have been from smallpox or measles. (European diseases spread southward from Panama, even before direct contact.)

In the same way that Hernan Cortez had gained allies from tribes and nations subjugated by the Aztecs, Francisco Pizarro found favor and assistance among subjugated nations seeking to overthrow the rule of the Incas. Even so, the conquest took four years, from 1532 to 1536 and uprisings continued for another 40 years.

Waging war against the Spaniards, descendants of Huascar maintained the title of Inca residing, not in Cuzco, but in the remote town of Vilcamba,

These last Inca rulers are known as The Incas of Vilcamba: Manco Capac II, 1533-1545. After the interval of Paullu Inca 1545-1549 who governed in Cuzco as a "puppet" Inca, the Vilcamba Incaship was resumed by Titu Cusi Inca, 1549-1571. The last Inca of Vilcamba was Tupac Amaru, who led the final rebellion, culminating with the imprisonment and execution in 1572,

## **THE TESTIMONIES**

### **Juan de Betanzos**

One of the earliest chronicles of the Inca Empire was written by Juan de Betanzos (1510-1576) in his "*Narrative of the Incas.*" Historians today consider Betanzos account as the most accurate and reliable as his information was later on verified from other sources.

Juan de Betanzos was born in Spain but spent most of his adult life in Peru. There he married Cuximaray Ocllo from one of the noblest Incan families of Peru. Her baptized name was Angelina Yupanqui. She is supposed to have been the wife of Atahualpa - arranged when she was 10 years of age and Atahualpa 13. Obviously, the marriage was never consummated.

Betanzos became a greatly respected interpreter of the language of the Incas; Quechua. He translated Christian teachings into Quechua, used by the Padres to help to spread among the indigenous population the Christian doctrine. In his "*Narratives,*" Betanzos' sources were mainly from the Atahualpa family. We learn that many languages were spoken within the empire, but Quechua was the one official and everyone was ordered to learn it. Betanzos also details the funeral ceremonies of the Inca - brown was the color of mourning. He also records details of the coronation of the successor.

The new Inca would be crowned with a headband of red wool with a tassel of golden threads - *borla* in Spanish, *Mascaypacha* in Quechua that hung from the forehead to the eyebrows. *Borla* is often rendered in English as "fringe." In vexillology, that can be misleading, where a fringe is taken to mean a border hanging loose around the outer edges of a flag. The English word "tassel," as used by Briar Bauer and Vania Smith in the translation of Sarmiento de Gamboa seems more accurate.





**Fig 4.**

Year 1616. Illustration by Martin de Murua from the Getty Center, Los Angeles  
(<http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/peru/>)

Marriage to the former "wife/widow" of Atahualpa gave Betanzos an inside perspective that few others could have and much other important information is found in the *Narratives*. However, no mention is made anywhere of a rainbow flag not even in chapters describing events ranging from politics, law, calendar, marriages and military where such reference might have found natural place. For example: "*These (soldiers) were well armed with quilted cotton tunics, helmets, battle-axes, clubs, halberds, lances and shield.*" (Narratives, Chapter 15, Part II, page 226.)

Despite reference to it by previous chroniclers, the full manuscript of "*Narratives*" resurfaced in 1987. The text of *Narrativas de los Incas* confirms many events narrated, after Betanzos, by Sarmiento de Gamboa, who wrote from a different perspective, than to the Incan viewpoint of Betanzos.

## Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa

Sarmiento de Gamboa, (1532-1592) wrote what is considered by historians one of the best descriptions of Incan life and mythology.

Well educated, he was also an accomplished mariner, cartographer, diplomat, historian, cosmographer and astrologer. His interest in astrology drew the attention of the Inquisition. His credentials and connections in high places helped him after an investigation by the Inquisition to regain his status and place, but not before completing the penitence imposed by the magistrates.

Sarmiento de Gamboa is the romantic figure of the Spanish conquest. He charted the Pacific coast of southern America to the edge of the Straits of Magellan. He is credited with the discovered of the Solomon Islands on the trans-Pacific crossing under Alvaro Mendana, who died on the trip. Sources note that if Mendana had followed Gamboa's navigational advice, Australia and/or New Zealand would have been discovered long before the arrival of Captain Cook.

Gamboa also wrote about Atlantis and theories concerning the peoples of the Americas. He recommended that King Phillip II of Spain, colonize the Solomon Island and extreme south of present-day Chile. For his many years of service to the Crown, King Philip II made Sarmiento de Gamboa Admiral of an armada of galleons. He died on board his flagship in 1592.

Golfo Sarmiento and Monte Sarmiento in southern Chile and Tierra del Fuego are testimony to this great explorer, author and historian. .



**Fig 5**

Chilean postal stamp honoring Gamboa  
(<http://sio.midco.net/danstamps/degamboa.htm>)



Sarmiento de Gamboa's book "*History of the Incas*" was finished and published in 1572 well within the memory of people who had lived under Incan rule. Commissioned by the Viceroy of Peru, Francisco de Toledo, it was devised as a "memorial" to provide Philip II with a record of the history of the empire of the Incas - an empire that he now ruled.

For his book Gamboa interviewed people who held important positions under Incan rule. He interviewed Incan noblemen and direct descendents of the Inca ruling family. When the "memorial" was finished, it was read aloud in the main plaza of Cuzco in front of all the indigenous people, with the purpose of correcting or confirming the information recorded. This was the first time the life and times of the Incas had been set down in writing (Betanzos' *Narratives* was not published during his lifetime; as mentioned, the manuscript only came to light in 1987)

The indigenous people of Peru welcomed this work as a way to spread their culture and achievements to other peoples. No one questioned the fidelity of the writing and everyone agreed that the "memorial" was a true account of the history of the Inca Empire. The book was supplemented with painting cloths unfortunately all lost depicting scenes of Incan myths such as that of the Creator, Viracocha. Others presented a visual history of the Inca rulers of Cuzco.

Catholic priests arriving in Peru were disconcerted to find that the Incan people had an existing story similar to that of Genesis and angry god had sent a universal flood that only the Incas survived. In recounting the origins of The Inca, Sarmiento de Gamboa narrates that seven brothers and sisters, known as the Ayar, declared themselves descendents of the sun and imposed their rule over the residents of Cuzco. In one opportunity they saw a rainbow on a nearby hill called Huanacauri. This was taken as a sign that the world will be never be destroyed by a flood again.

The Ayar, whose leader was Manco Capac, climbed the summit and close to the rainbow there, they saw a shrine. One of them, Ayar Uchu, sat on top of it and was turned to stone. The others went to his aid but in vain. Ayar Uchu remained there forever and the investiture of knights took place there every year.

In this ceremony, boys aged between 13 and 15, direct descendents of the Inca and noble families were selected to serve the Inca as knights, in the same way we see in medieval Europe and other cultures.

Sarmiento tells us that Manco Capac was the first to hold the title of Inca and was crowned in the year 665 AD. (More conservative estimates place the crowning of Manco Capac in the 1300's century AD) His successors expanded the realm in the same fashion as ancient Rome or Egypt.

The exploits of Incas as Pachacutic and Huayna Capac can be compared, in their massive building of roads, palaces and temples with those of Roman emperors Trajan and Hadrian, or the Pharaohs Ramses II or Thutmose III. Like those ancient rulers, the Inca took a new name when the Incaship was bestowed on them. The Inca considered himself Son of the Sun god Inti, the source of his divine right to rule as gods and conqueror of other peoples. To name just a few, Tito Cusi Hualpa was known after coronation Huayna Capac Inca, and his son, Topa Cusi Hualpa Inti Illapa was called Huascar Inca, when he was invested with the golden tassel. The 8<sup>th</sup> Inca ruler, Atun Topa Inca, considered himself so powerful that when he took the tassel, changed his name to Viracocha, equating himself with none other than the Creator god of the same name.

Sarmiento de Gamboa describes the 10<sup>th</sup> Inca, Topa Inca Yupanqui, *as frank, merciful in peace and cruel in war. Friend of the poor, brave; a man of much industry, a builder. He was the greatest tyrant of all Incas.* (Historia de Los Incas, Sarmiento de Gamboa, page 171.)

He also described the practice by the 9<sup>th</sup> Inca, Pachacutic Yupanqui, of dressing with the attire and headdress of the nation he had conquered, when visiting lands those lands, so as to identify himself with his vassals.

An important fact written in Sarmiento de Gamboa "memorial" is about the ceremony of crowning Pachacutic Inca with the Royal Tassel, by his father Topa Inca Yupanqui while he was still alive: a dual monarchy existed similar to that of the Pharaohs.

To put the history of the Incas in a European perspective, Gamboa writes: *"The ancient and terrible tyranny of Manco Capac Inca began in the year 665 of the Christian era. Justinian III was Roman (Byzantine) emperor. Loyba, son of Athanagild the Goth, was King of Spain, and John III was the supreme pontiff. It ended in the year 1533 when the most Christian Charles V was the most meritorious emperor and King of Spain. The whole period begun with Manco Capac Inca and ended with Huascar Inca. It lasted 968 years."* (Historia de Los Incas, page 206.)

Sarmiento de Gamboa draws similar analogies between each Inca and their contemporary Popes and Kings Spain,

Significantly, in all his writings, and while including the legend about a flood, Sarmiento de Gamboa makes no reference to a rainbow other than in the story of the rainbow on Huanacari Hill.

Further, he makes no mention of flags or rainbow flags at all, despite having described, like Betanzos before him, the size of the armies, ranks, war tactics and other aspect of military importance where reference to flags is usually found. Moreover, Gamboa came from a culture where flag usage was common and its rituals clearly understood. If he had seen a rainbow flag as a banner, or rituals of any kind, given his tendency for details, it is very likely he would have noted such visually striking devices.

## Fr Bernabe Cobo SJ

The next clue is given to any flag devices of the Incas comes from Father Bernabe Cobo, a Jesuit priest and scholar and author of two monumental books: *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* and *Inca, Religión y Costumbres*, both completed in 1653.

Cobo was well known, even during his lifetime, as a naturalist interested primarily in plants and animals, detailed in ten other books. In these two works, Cobo covers such topics as language, food, clothing, marriage, childrearing, agriculture, warfare, medicine, practical crafts, religion and burial rituals - a just of the many aspects of Incan life. He also described the political organization of the Inca Empire, its laws and economy.

Cobo was born in 1580 in the town of Lopera near Seville in Spain. He arrived in Lima in 1599, by that time a cultural center with the best schools in Spanish America, where he received his secondary education and entered the Jesuit Order. He virtually grew up in Peru, and traveled the former Inca Empire from Quito to Lake Titicaca. He died in Lima in 1657.

Unlike Betanzos and Sarmiento de Gamboa, who had the opportunity to interview people with first-hand knowledge of Incan the life before, during and after the Conquest, Cobo relied mainly on earlier manuscripts and accounts, including, scholars believe, Betanzos' account and/or Gamboa's "Memorial."

Aside from his main interest in plants and animals, Fr. Cobo's historical research expressed the mentality of a 17th century priest, and so his interpretation of the Incaic myths and beliefs were considered to be nonsense superstition.: *"Anyone[ he wrote] who knows about the the old world of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, the Greeks and the Romans, will find nothing new or strange in reading the fables and foolishness of these Indians."* (**Religion** page 6 Book I)

For all that, Cobo wrote about the Incaic culture precisely and with discernment. Like Betanzos and Sarmiento de Gamboa before him, Fr. Cobo covered many aspects of the life and customs of the Incas, which was quickly disappearing in front of his own eyes.

Cobo's manuscripts remained virtually unknown until publication of *Historia*, and *Religion*, between 1890-1893. Their discovery and publication helped modern archeologists enlarge upon and better understand many aspects of Inca people and the culture of the land.

Understandably, Fr. Cobo focused on the religion of the Incas writing about Viracocha, supreme lord and creator of all things. After Viracocha, the Incans worshiped Inti, the sun god. They believed that the Sun was a man, the Moon his wife, the stars their daughters as lesser deities.

Pachamama was also important as Mother Earth, a goddess linked with Inti in maintaining world order.

Second only to Inti, Chuquie Illa (meaning Golden Radiance), was venerated as the god of thunder and storms, the source of rain and hail, whirlwinds and lightning - and ultimately, the rainbow. According to Cobo, the "Indians" believed that the end of the rainbow was the gate of hell: to look at the rainbow was considered bad luck and a harbinger of death. This seems to contradict Sarmiento de Gamboa's account of Manco Capac and his sibling and the interpretation they gave to the rainbow. However Cobo also says that: *sometimes, the rainbow was considered (to be) a good sign...* while, other authors reinforce that idea by associating Chuquie Illa also with abundance and the rebirth of Spring.

Compared with the previous chroniclers of the Incas reviewed above, Cobo is the one furthest removed from the events he describes. He had arrived in Peru well after the conquest, and at a time when Spain had already reaffirmed and secured his position. Cobo must therefore be considered a secondary source. Nevertheless, Cobo is the one source providing the only and most important information about flags and more significantly, the rainbow flag.

Fr. Cobo first mentions of flags without description or detail is made in "**Historia**," Chapter 13: Of the rest of Pachacutic's Victories, page 138,

*" Pachacutic moved ahead with his banners during the conquest of Chincaysuyu..."* (Chincasuyo is the region of present day Northern Peru, Ecuador and Southern Colombia.)

Flags are next mentioned when narrating the conquest of Chile by Tupa Inca Yupanqui. Cobo tells us about the fierce resistance the Inca encountered from the Araucanians (Mapuches). The Inca had to settle for (modern Chile) territory north of the River Maule. The Araucanians remained lords south of the river over the rest of Chile. (In fact, they were a force to be reckoned with even after Chilean independence in 1810. Cobo writes: *"On other occasions the Inca's captains tried to place their banners on the other side of the river, but the valiant Araucans, blocked their way and did not allow the Incas to possess one bit of land on the other side of the river Maule."* (**Historia**, Chapter 14, page 146.)

For our study, the most important is Chapter 36 of the "**Historia**," where Cobo describes the coronation ritual for the new Inca, who had to be a legitimate son of the *Coya*, or queen (The sons of the Inca's many concubines did not qualify.)

Like Betanzos, Cobo described the emblem of Inca authority - the red headband and the golden tassel. However, describing other regalia of the Inca he adds something very important and significant

*"Besides the tassel there was the **sunturpaucar** (royal staff), the **champi** (mace), the **rainbow** and **two serpents** and other emblems that each one (Inca) picked out."* (**Historia**, Chapter 36, page 244.) [bold added]

No clear explanation is given by Cobo of either the rainbow or the serpents. As to the "other emblems," he writes that each Inca had his main "heraldic" motif, which might be a puma, a condor or any other animal or device.

On the regalia, Cobo continues:

*el guión o estandarte real era una banderilla cuadrada y pequeña, de diez o doce palmos de ruedo, hecha de lienzo de algodón o de lana, iba puesta en el remate de una asta larga, tendida y tiesa, sin que ondease al aire, y en ella pintaba cada rey sus armas y divisas, porque cada uno las escogía diferentes, aunque las generales de los Incas eran el arco celeste y dos culebras tendidas a lo largo paralelas con la borda que le servía de corona, a las cuales solía añadir por divisa y blasón cada rey las que le parecía, como un león, un águila y otras figuras.* (JJ Vega, La Guerra de los Wiracochas y de Los Incas.)

that is,

*The royal banner or standard was small, about ten or twelve palms made of cotton or wool. It was fixed to a long pole so as to stand stiffly and not to wave in the wind.*

*Each king had his arms and emblems painted on it, because each one chose different ones although the most usual for the Inca was the celestial arch and two serpents stretched out the length of it with the tassel which served as the crown*

*[and] to which each king would normally add his own emblem, as an eagle a lion an other figures.."* (**Historia**, Chap 36, page 246.) (Note A)

To clarify: Cobos's reference "with the tassel that served as a crown," intends it to be part of the Inca regalia, supplemental to the "standard or banner" (*el guion o Estandarte real.. .era una banderilla*), not part of the Inca's banner itself..



## The Unancha Capac

At this point it is time to introduce the Quechua word for flag *unancha*. The oldest Quechua Lexicon by Fray Domingo de Santo Tomas, published in *Valladolid* in 1560, translate *unancha* as a banner and given that most "national" flags of the time were actually royal banners, the meaning could be extended also to "flag."

The Quechua word *capac* is rich and wealthy. It is also associated with "principal, main, important", and when added to a personal name, the meaning is equivalent to "Chief", as in the case of Manco Capac. The Inca standard was called "*Unancha Capac*" meaning, "main emblem" or "principal banner" or to put into the proper perspective, "The Royal Banner."

Unfortunately Cobo nowhere tells us if he had the opportunity to see the *Unancha Capac*. Nor does he reveal how he got the information or which Inca(s) use it.

However we have some other things to go by. Cobo says that the banner was of "10 palms" square. A palm is about 10 inches, so the banner was around 30 inches (75 cm) on all sizes and taut so as not to wave. From this description, without any supporting sources it is clear that it was a vexilloid used by the Inca only, very static thus its ornament always visible.

Cobo's is the only record we have of the rainbow flag and its function as a personal "royal" banner. Interestingly, his text does not say "arco Iris," (the Spanish for rainbow,) but "arco celeste," or "celestial arch" in English. Cobo would not use the term "iris" associated with pagan beliefs. (Iris was the ancient Greek winged divinity, whose scarf of seven colors was identified with the rainbow.)

Nor Cobo makes use the Quechua words *unancha* and *capac* discussed above. Those come to us from other sources, as we will see later. Nevertheless, everyone almost is certain that by "arco celeste," Cobo meant not a light blue arch but a rainbow.

Aware of the pomp and circumstance with which the Inca surrounded himself, the idea of a vexilloid indicating his presence seems to be proper and logical though it has to be emphasized that Cobo is the only source known to justify the usage of the modern rainbow flag by people whose forebears were once subjects of or subjugates by the Incas.

## Guaman Poma de Ayala

I now introduce the writings of **Guaman Poma de Ayala**. His full name was a combination of Quechua and Spanish names, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. Guaman is falcon and Poma is puma (also known as the American lion). Born around 1550, he was from a family that had held important posts during the Empire of the Incas, and believed he wrote his "letter" ca. 1616.

Guaman Poma saw that the indigenous people were considered as an inferior race and badly treated by their conquerors. He thought of writing a letter to the King of Spain, Phillip III and traveled to Lima with his small son to give the letter to the Viceroy, asking him to deliver in turn the letter to the King. The purpose of the letter was to inform the King that the Indians had prospered before the conquest and to made him aware of the abuses they had suffered since.

Philippe III never got the letter. In fact no one knew of it until 1908 when a German scholar found it, by chance, in the Royal Danish Library of Copenhagen. The letter, titled by the author "New Chronicle and Good Government" is of immense importance today since it:

- provides an Indian's own and direct description of contemporaries events from his point of view
- Is illustrated with over three hundred hand made drawings,
- reveals interesting customs of the Quechuas and other indigenous of the realm and
- corroborates and completes knowledge we had by other authors, those reviewed above and of others such as Cieza de Leon and the most famously, of the writers, Garcilaso de la Vega, known as "El Inca" Garcilaso. (Note B)

The letter has over 1000 pages, divided into chapters, full of information since the beginning of mankind. It not only praises indigenous culture; it also criticizes what was bad. Guaman Poma treats the Spanish equally.

For our study, the most important aspect lies in the drawings, for these provide first-hand documentary evidence of great significance. In all this rich variety however, neither in the text nor the drawings, is there the slightest hint of a rainbow flag or mention of even a rainbow. I have selected the illustrations were flags can be seen as well as ceremonies of importance with the Inca as the predominant figure. (**Figs 6-15**, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, [www.kd.dk/permalink/2006/poma](http://www.kd.dk/permalink/2006/poma))



Fig. 6

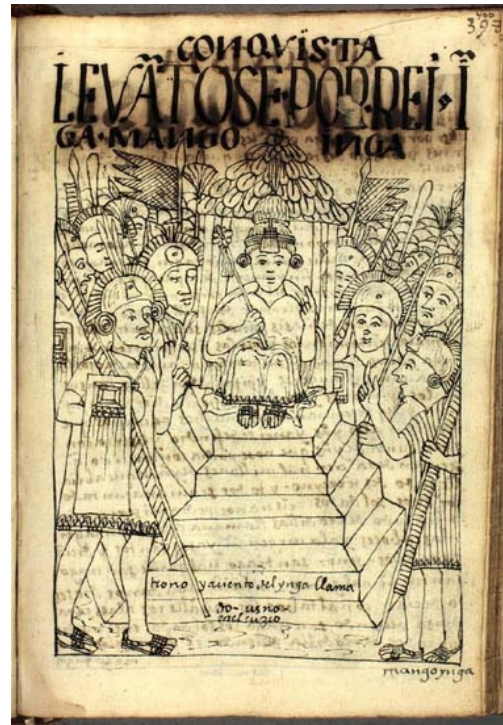


Fig. 7

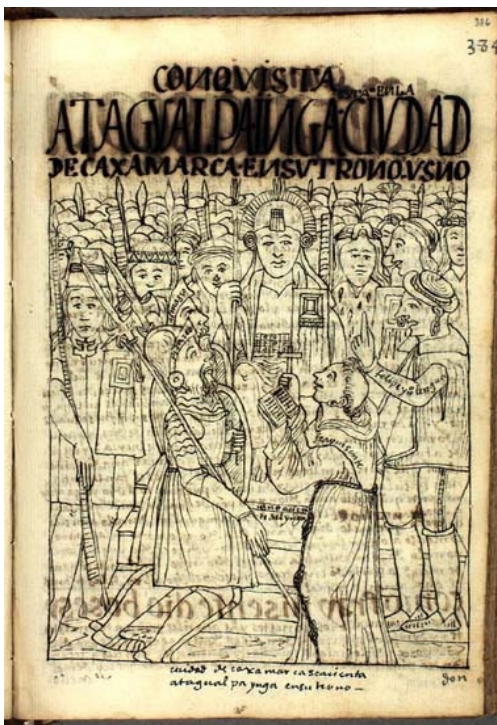


Fig. 8

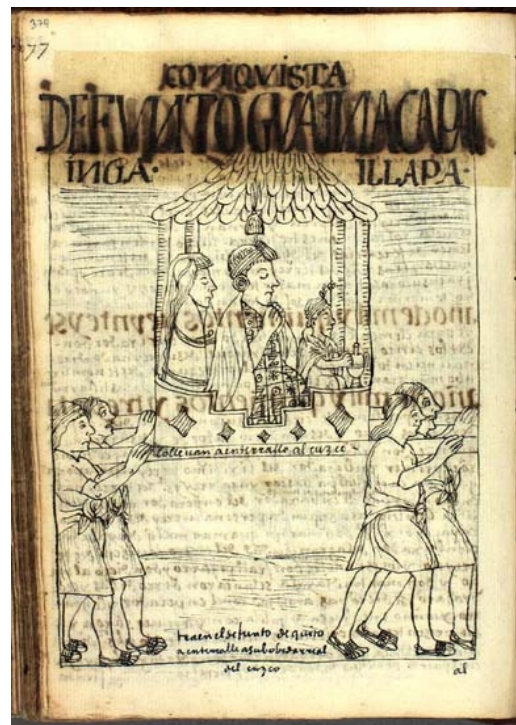


Fig. 9





Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13





Fig. 14



Fig. 15

### Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui

Finally, one more native source is the account written by Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui, an indigenous nobleman, born after the Spanish conquest in what is today Bolivia, but who spent some time in Cuzco. He wrote *An Account of The Antiquities of Peru*, around 1616 and he was a contemporary of Guaman Poma.

In three instances, Pachacuti Yamqui, makes mention of the Ccapac Unancha. (Note the spelling used for Capac)

"p92. Prince Yupanqui armed all the men and entering the temple he took the ccapac unancha and unfurled the standard of the Yncas."

The above paragraph is significant for we learn that the Capac Unancha was kept in a temple. We might assume that it was Coricancha, the main temple.

The next mention is describing the coronation of Huaynca Capac; "p106 They also delivered to him the ccapac-unancha or royal standard."



The third and most impressive reference is to the Capac Unancha when Pizarro arrived in Cuzco for the coronation of the new Inca, Manco Capac II, who later rebelled when he realized he was to be just a puppet of Pizarro.

*"p120. The Ynca in his litter lined with rich plumes sumptuous clothes, the sunturpaucar (the maze) in his hand and the royal insignia of the ccapac-unancha, was greeted with great joy by the people."*

Unfortunately none of these references give details of the *unancha* and once again the writer is narrating events he didn't witness, though he must have had some sources to make them part of his *Account*.

Fr. Cobos described the banner but does not use the term *capac unancha*. While Pachacuti Yamqui does not describe it but uses the term *capac unancha*. We are under the impression that both are talking about the same flag/banner

## **PART II REINTERPRETING THE PAST.**

Reading contemporary authors, we find more on flags from Juan Jose Vega, (1932-2003) a well known Peruvian historian and author of *La Guerra de los Wiracochas y de los Incas* (1963) and *Historia General del Ejercito Peruano* (1981).

In *La Guerra*, JJ Vega writes: "*The Empire (of the Incas) in the same fashion of other great States of antiquity had a flag.*" [emphasis added]

That is very much a 20<sup>th</sup> century westernized outlook. Vega assumes from the outset that all ancient "States" had a unique and one single flag. As if to justify that statement, Vega refers to the "ancient Hellenistic" civilization and the usage of the Owl in Athens. The Athenians did use the Owl as a symbol, but of the city's patron Athena. It was essentially a religious symbol, found mainly on coins. Not a secular one as today's flags invariably are. Athens had no flag with or without owl.

With that opening, Vega's intent seems to be to put the Empire of the Incas on equal footing with European Kingdoms and ancient cultures; it is a cultural attitude by educated people of Latin America, of looking to Europe as the yardstick of world culture. In any case, neither Athens, nor any ancient cultures and civilizations had flags in the fashion and style as we know today.

To his credit, Vega did assemble written accounts from 16th century manuscripts and books from people of diverse backgrounds, as follows:

**Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo.** (1478-1557) was a government administrator in Antigua and a historian. Everyone going or coming from/to Peru called at Antigua, and Oviedo had many opportunities to interview travelers and troops in transit. In his **Historia**

**General de las Indias Occidentales**, Seville, 1535" he wrote:

"... *in battle they (The Inca troops) used to bring differentiated flags in very organized squadrons.*"

though exactly how such flags different from each other, we do not know.

**Pedro Cieza de Leon**. (1520-1554) took part in the civil war in Peru between the government and Gonzalo Pizarro in 1548. In his **Cronicas Del Peru**, he wrote: "... *each capitania (company) had a flag. Some were spearmen; others carried slings and other carried clubs...*"

From this account, we see that each company carried different weapons and had a peculiar and unique flag.

**Pedro Gutierrez de Santa Clara**, wrote in his **Historia de las Guerras Civiles del Peru (1544-48)**

"... *they (the Incans) were distributed in capitancias and under flags and marched in very good order and silence...*

**Francisco Lopez de Jerez**. (1497 - ?) a notary from Spain and secretary of Francisco Pizarro, author of the **Relaciones de la Conquista del Peru, 1534 o Nueva Castilla** also noted:

"... *all were distributed in squadrons with their flags and commanded by captains, in such good order as the Turks.*"

His comment about "the Turks" is remarkable. At the time, the Turkish armies were considered among the best and most professional. For a European to compare the Inca's army to a Turkish suggests that the Incans must have made a deep impression.

Even though most of these testimonies are from persons not actually witness to the "Conquista", we must recognize that there is solid agreement on the use of flags and, as in Vega, primarily for military purposes. Unfortunately none of these authors describe the flags, whether made of fabrics or if any type of device, colors, or combinations of, were painted on them. Nor do we know if these flags were actual flags, in the modern sense of the word.

It seems to me that the word flag (*bandera* in Spanish) was the only immediate point of reference they could come up with to describe what they saw or were told by third parties. The value in these indirect testimonies to "flags" is not that they were similar to flags as European knew them, but because from their point of view, these so called "flags" served the same function. Their own Western perspective is what we see in their writings. From a military point of view, it makes sense that each company, division and column would be differentiated and individualized with some flag-like device or vexilloid.

JJ Vega also mentions the rainbow flag, but Vega's single source is Fr. Bernabe Cobo account.

## NEO-INCANISM

During the past 20 years, some groups mainly in Peru, Ecuador and most noticeably in Bolivia, have found the need to substantiate their own identities by re-inventing their history. Rainbow flags in these countries have spread like wildfire. However, the question arises as to why only the rainbow was chosen as the sole element of the Flag of the Incas throughout the 1970s, 80s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How about the serpents?

Cobo wrote that "*...the most usual for the Incas was the celestial arch...*" which he seems to be saying that not all the Incas used the "celestial arch" although it was "*the most usual.*"

That tells us that this movement of neo-incanism is manipulating historical events. Myths can be reinterpreted, re-written, but history is always based on facts and research to substantiate those facts.

The Quechua word "unancha" has been translated as flag or banner, that is, *any* flag or banner. Today, however, "Unancha" is only applied to the flag of seven horizontal stripes, but as we shall see, confusingly, referred to as the Rainbow Flag.

Peruvian and Bolivian academics are also concerned by this movement and their criticism has been noted.

**Arturo Gomez Alarcon**, a Peruvian professor of history, has referred with some sarcasm, but also disbelief, a proposal by Francisco Canaza and Aldo Estrada, National Congress Representatives, to introduce a bill to declare the "gay flag of The Incas" as co-national flag of Peru.

<http://amautacuna.blogspot.com/2006/11/los-incas-s-tuvieron-banderas.html>

**Professor Jose Augustine de la Puente Candado**, cathedratric of the Catholic University of Peru and **Lilliana Regalado**, a specialist of ethno- history of the Andes, expressed objection to the proposed institutionalization of the Unancha Capac. Both agree that there is no document or source that allows us to corroborate in any way the existence of the supposed flag of Tawantinsuyo. Professor Regalado remarks that "any reference to ancient pottery, petro-glyphs or textiles as possible motif for flags, are completely out of context and arbitrary." "Flags and arms" she continues, "belong to the Old World (Europe.) They do not belong to the ancient cultures of the Andes."

**Alfonso Oramas Gross**, a Peruvian reporter and writer has also questioned the significance of the Unancha Capac or the "Flag of Tawantinsuyo," constantly promoted by Ollanta Humala, a candidate to the Peruvian Senate. Gross adds: "It is obvious that this is an effort to revive the Incan Empire. In accordance with neo-indigenous interpretation, the seven colors are a representation of the cosmos, the galaxies, our planet..."

In researching Incan culture and beliefs for this paper, I noted that the Incas - like many cultures of the ancient world - observed celestial phenomena to predict their position at a given time or period, reaching the same conclusions as other ancient cultures about seasons and equinoxes, as a guide to the agricultural cycle as well as events of religious significance. Yet, the Incans were not familiar with the concept of galaxies and the physical nature of the cosmos. In fact, were astounded when the Spaniards explained the true nature and cycle of eclipses.

Observing that several historians and experts agree that a "flag of Tawantinsuyo" never existed, Gross, was puzzled that the rainbow flag of Peru, is also used by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). (<http://conaie.nativeweb.org/>) Present-day Ecuador, as well as western Bolivia were ruthlessly subjugated by the Incas, many rebellions suppressed with great bloodshed.

Gross concludes that: "the usage of the Unancha as a political symbol during the campaign of a politician as well as by Indigenous groups of Ecuador, Peru or Bolivia, is done in a way to indicate a common pass."

In view of what actually was perpetrated by the Incas it seems that the champions of the Rainbow flag are less concerned about the legitimacy of the flag, or that it portrays events contrary to historical fact, than they are with using it to make a purely political point and to foster a "memory" of past grandeur.

A noted Bolivian writer, **Jorge V. Ordenes L.**, in *Los Tiempos* (Bolivia) wrote with sadness a short letter " *y Yo que la quiero Tanto.*" (...and I love it so much) how Bolivian Flag Day, 20 of August of 2008, when without any notice or mention by officials of the government. But at the same time the *Wiphala* could be seen everywhere.

(<http://jvordenes.wordpress.com/2008/08/21/yo-que-tanto-quiero-unir/#comment-774>)

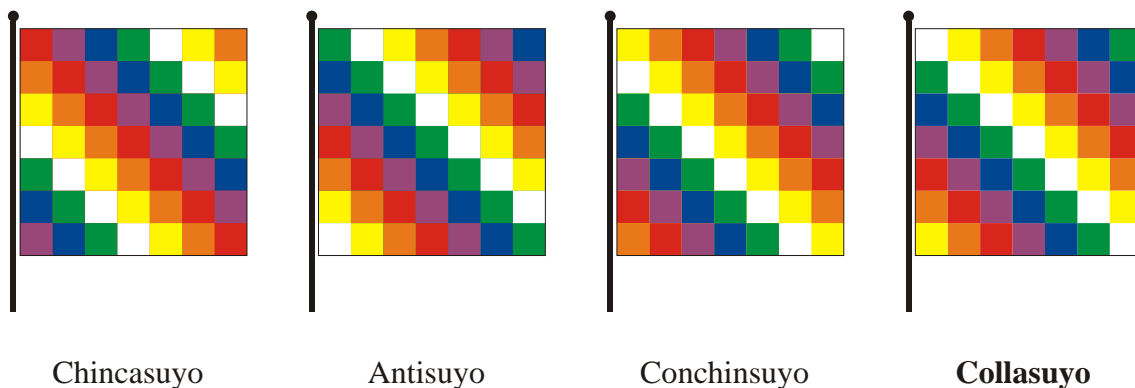
## THE WIPHALA

I digress to comment on the Wiphala. This alternative rainbow flag design is seen mainly in Bolivia and to a lesser degree in north-western Argentina, used by indigenous groups, cultural associations and individuals. The checkered design is quite complicated, but more important is that if the Unancha of Peru is of dubious origins, the Wiphala design as a flag, sadly, is a total fabrication.

In the Aymara language of western Bolivia, *Wiphala* means flag - any flag. It also refers to a group dance in which the leader of the group flourishes a white handkerchief - sometimes is attached to a stick in the form of a flag. *Wiphala* could thus also be translated as the *flag dance*.

However, today the term is generally used to describe not just any flag, but that with checkered rows in rainbow colors. Indigenous groups using the Wiphala assert that color variants of the central diagonal stripe represent the respective *suyos* of the Incas:

- **red** was for Chincasuyo and the soil.
- **green** for Antisuyo, and vegetation.
- **yellow**, the energy of the sun, is the color of Conchinsuyo.
- and **white**, for Collasuyo or Qulla- Suyu and the air,



**Fig 16**

Wiphala

Drawing by Francisco Gregoric

The Wiphala used in the uplands of Bolivia and northwestern Argentina logically is the version with the diagonal stripe white. Curiously, the other three variants assigned to the other *suyos* are not used at all in the areas meant to represent.



None of this is recorded in any way, anywhere, either from the Incan period or by 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish chroniclers, nor by present day ethno-historians or archeologists. The idea of four flags for each *suyo* is a romantic one, even a likable one. But, it is still a fantasy with good intentions perhaps, but serving today to only manipulate history and peoples aspirations. (See Note 2)

The current president of Bolivia. Mr. Evo Morales has been playing with the idea of introducing the Wiphala as a national symbol, and even proposing adoption of national flag



**Fig 17**

Evo Morales President of Bolivia

La Driza by JM Erbez.

([http://driza.blogspot.com/2006\\_10\\_01\\_archive.html](http://driza.blogspot.com/2006_10_01_archive.html))

However, the referendum held this past January 25, 2009 in Bolivia, drew an overwhelming majority for the new constitution that Morales had proposed in December of 2008. Among many reforms, Article 6,II describes the national symbols, adding the Wiphala - of Collasuyo. In consequence, since January 25<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Wiphala enjoys equal status with the national tricolor of Bolivia. See full text on link below.

(<http://boliviademocratica.net/accion.php?idMenu=143517&&idSeccion>)

Returning to our narrative, the contention here is that no one suggests that indigenous groups and cultural associations of countries and regions once occupied by the Inca Empire should not use a rainbow flag as their own. After all, Indigenous groups in North America have adopted Eurocentric flag models. The Mapuche of Chile, the Tehuelche of Argentine Patagonian region, the Tahinos of Puerto Rico and other indigenous groups of Latin America have followed suit.

What is questionable is the intent to elevate the seven striped Unancha Capac used in Peru and Ecuador and the checkered Wiphala of Bolivia, both with the colors of the rainbow, to the status of a national symbol in disregard to other Indigenous natives nations of these countries. Moreover, the idea of institutionalizing a flag with a rainbow as a sole device ignores the totality of Incan culture and history.

There is no more eloquent statement on this issue than that of one of the most distinguished ethno historians of the Andean cultures, Dr Maria Rostworowski de Diez Canseco of the San Marcos University of Lima:

*"No existió ninguna bandera en el mundo prehispánico. Grábenselo bien."*

In the pre-Hispanic world no flag ever existed. Get that straight! By that she is saying that no flag existed in the way, function and style flags are used today.

### **PART III THE RAINBOW FLAG**

Reading James Ferrigan presentation for the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Vexillology on the evolution of the Rainbow flag adopted in the 1970's, by male and female homosexuals groups, commonly called "gays," shed light on two significant aspects of comparative vexillology.

Firstly, Ferrigan tell us, that Artie Bressan proposed the usage of "a permanent" flag for gay demonstrations and festivals and that Gilbert Baker was inspired by the idea of a "permanent" flag, having also been exposed to earlier multi-colored flags used by hippies. Ferrigan speculated that one such flag was the so-called "Flag of the Races," and confirmed that the first "gay" flag had eight stripes of different colors, similar to those of the spectrum, but not precisely a rainbow. A meaning was ascribed to each color. Despite using the name "rainbow" the colors chosen were not specifically those of the rainbow - which scientifically speaking has seven.

As demand for the Gay flag grew, the economics of mass production and the difficulty in obtaining all eight colors, including the famous "hot pink," prompted the Paramount Flag Company of San Francisco to suggested making the flag with six colors (red-orange -yellow-green- blue - violet.) Six stripes saved time and money, would require both less sewing and less fabric and could, therefore be fabricated from stock colors. The thought was also that "no one will notice the difference."

As Ferrigan observed: "it was the whole of the flag which was the symbols, not a particular number of stripes."

Here, once again, we see that the idea of the rainbow is just a name given to the display of many colors approximating the sequence of the solar spectrum. The so-called "rainbow" flags are simply conventional representation, with some approximation to the rainbow as seen in nature. From the scientific stand point, it is not a rainbow and it was never the initial intention to be one, but rather to have a flag of diverse colors and meaning, and to be distinctive from others.

The second point in reading Farrigan's essay is that the Gay flag, in all its versions, evolved, as many flags have, independently of any Inca device.

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT**

Another flag that closely resembled the rainbow flag of The Incas is that used since 1925 by the International Cooperative Movement. (ICA) ([www.ica.coop/ica/index.html](http://www.ica.coop/ica/index.html)) The ICA was founded in Europe in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its main symbol is the stylized representation of two green pine trees on a yellow circle. The idea of a flag of seven colors, was of the inspiration of Charles Fourier (1772-1837) displaying the sequence of the spectrum, but intended more to represent the colors of all the flags of the world. It was also thought to be a symbol of peace and world harmony.

This symbol of peace and world harmony coincides with the religious Christian belief, that the rainbow was the first flag of mankind.

It was only in 1925, that the rainbow flag was instituted by Charles Gide (1847-1932) as the flag of the Cooperativism movement. **(See Note 3)**

Due to the wide spread usage of the rainbow flag by gays, the ICA in 2001, changed its flag to retain the rainbow but as unfinished arch on a white field. In a way this was a return to the first designs used by ICA between 1892 and 1923. **(See Note 4 and Fig 18)**



**Fig. 18**  
International Cooperative Alliance Flag  
Drawing by Francisco Gregoric

Despite the fact that many other organizations have made use of the colors of the rainbow in a variety of forms, not to mention how many countries flags are believed to have the rainbow as the source of inspiration, the flag of the cooperative movement has a tenuous connection with the Rainbow Flag of the Incas.

Anthropologists and ethno-historians do sometimes compare the economic system of the Incans with the idea and function of the cooperatives. The Incan economy system functioned without currency; all the goods produced or manufactured were taken to storage houses called *tambos*. The *curacas* or district supervisors, used a *quipu* to keep an account of all the goods in storage, ranging from food, pots, utensils and clothing, to be later distributed to the population in accordance to their needs. To many scholars and economist, the Inca system was the closest to cooperativism we will ever get. In his article *Bandera Internacional del Cooperativismo* Professor Donda Beltrmaino emphasizes the close connection of the ICA movement with Incasic practices.

## CITY OF CUZCO

The ancient capital of the Incas, Cuzco, is today a tourist and archeological center. In 1978 it adopted as the city flag the sequence of the colors of the solar spectrum displayed in horizontal stripes.



**Fig. 19**

City of Cuzco

([http:// www.Raicesmilenarios.com/?p=740](http://www.Raicesmilenarios.com/?p=740))

The Mayor of the city wears a sash in these colours as the symbol of his investiture.



**Fig. 20**

Mayor of Cuzco Don Mariano Bacca Anaya.

(<http://www.municusco.gob.pe/web/index.php>)



In 1978 Gilberto Muniz, the mayor of Cusco, declared that the flag adopted for the flag for the city was based on the one hoisted in 1973 to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Radio Tawantinsuyo. Mr. Raul Montesinos, the proprietor of the Radio Tawantinsuyo, struggling to combat the influence of foreign music, broadcasted the Incan vernacular, popularly known as the "music of the Andes." Celebrating 25 years on the air and as part of the commercial campaign, Montesinos decided to display the Rainbow Flag of the Incas, claiming that it was the Flag of Tawantinsuyo.



**Fig 21**

([www.pospost.blogspot.com](http://www.pospost.blogspot.com))

No one knows what inspired or why he chose to display the colors of the rainbow in that fashion. However it seems his promotion triggered the sentiment of an "Incan" flag.

Today the rainbow flag is displayed at the central Plaza of Cuzco alongside the national flag of Peru and on the City Hall tower. Private individuals and merchants also use it. Much discomfort cause among the city of Cuzco council members and citizen alike, when it became known that the rainbow flag of the Andes was to all intent and purposes the flag used by Gays. Some proposed changing the format of the City flag. Others defended the historical basis of the flag and opposed any change citing the rainbow flag's ancestral origin.

American tourists visiting Cuzco are very surprised to see the rainbow flag so widely displayed. This caused resentment among some tourists because they believed that the restaurants, stores, gift shops and other commercial establishment were "gay friendly," or some type of gay gathering was taking place in Cuzco.



**Fig. 22**

## **SUMMARY**

The flag today is known as the Rainbow flag of The Incas or of Tawantinsuyo as well as the Andean Liberty Flag, Andean Resistance Flag, or by others as the "Unancha."

Its use and misuse for a variety of purposes and causes, from popular ones and festivals, to political rallies and campaigns, has meant that the "rainbow" flag has acquired a life of its own. It is currently represented with seven horizontal stripes of red-orange-yellow-green- light blue- dark blue and purple. The original rainbow color indigo has been completely obliterated. My only guess is that this is due to the inability of obtaining that shade from the flag manufacturers, who most probably are from Taiwan or Korea and wholesaler suppliers for retail stores in Peru as well as in the USA.

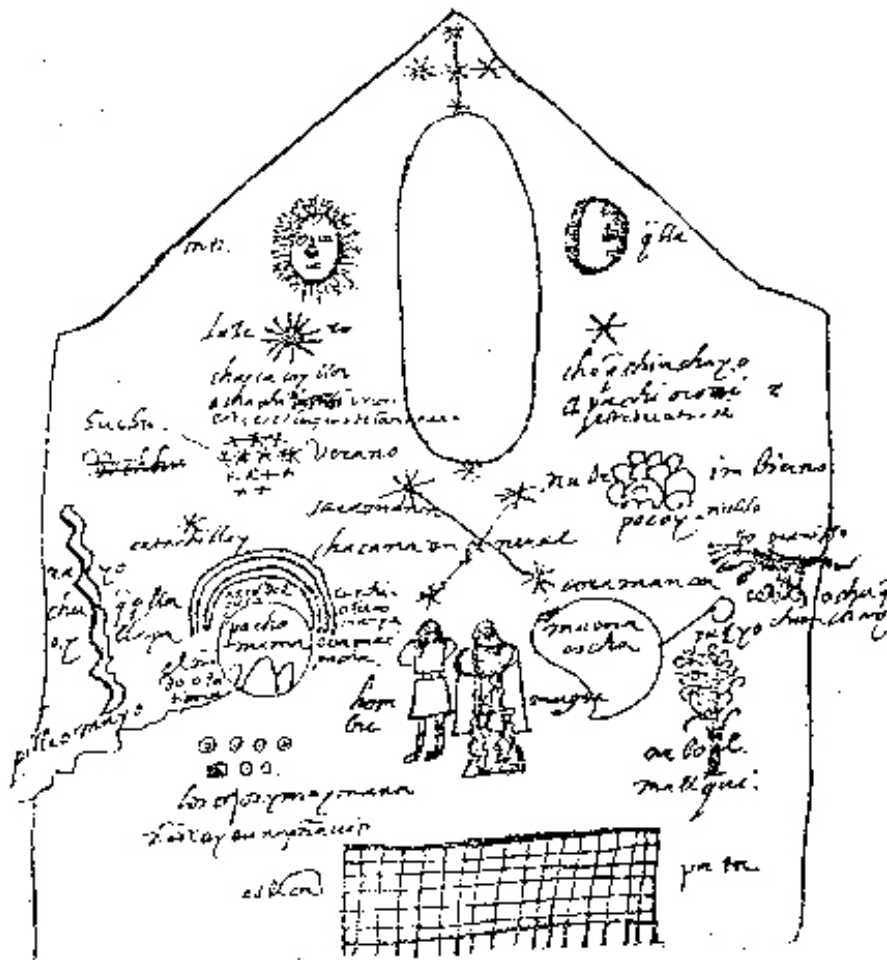
As to why the rainbow symbol alone is used in a flag claimed to be of Incan origins, escapes reasonable explanation. Fr. Cobo clearly explained that the "celestial arch" - and it was an *arch*, not horizontal lines - was just one of the many elements of the Unancha Capac. Furthermore, Prof. Donda Beltramino has pointed out, that The Incas rainbow consisted of five colors only, orange and indigo were considered variations of red and purple.

No one has yet found evidence of the flag or "*estandarte*" described only by Cobo, nor of anything similar to it. Nevertheless, we do have evidence in the way and the style the rainbow was represented by the ancient Incas in two items, one graphic, the other very solid, that have survived. We can call them "proto-unanchas."

The first of these is a diagram of the golden plate displayed at the main temple of Cuzco, "Coricancha," (Quechua *curi*=gold, *cancha*=place.) Made of solid gold, the plate was placed on an altar in the principal chamber of the temple. This had no roof, so that the plate caught the rays of sun to demonstrate vividly the strength of Inti the sun god. The plate was engraved with many symbols representing weather patterns, celestial events and divinities the Incas revered. Among these is the rainbow.

Earlier I referred to Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui who wrote about the *capac-unancha*. Pachacuti Yamqui researched the plate of Coricancha. It seems that he got a description of it and drew a schematic sample adding with by his own hand the meaning of each element represented in the plate, including the rainbow. (<http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/news.html>)

Among many other recognizable symbols as the sun, the moon, Venus, and known constellations, Pachacuti Yamqui indicates that the representation of the rainbow, god Chuqui Illa as the divine source of rain, abundance and the spring. The rainbow itself is represented as an arch.

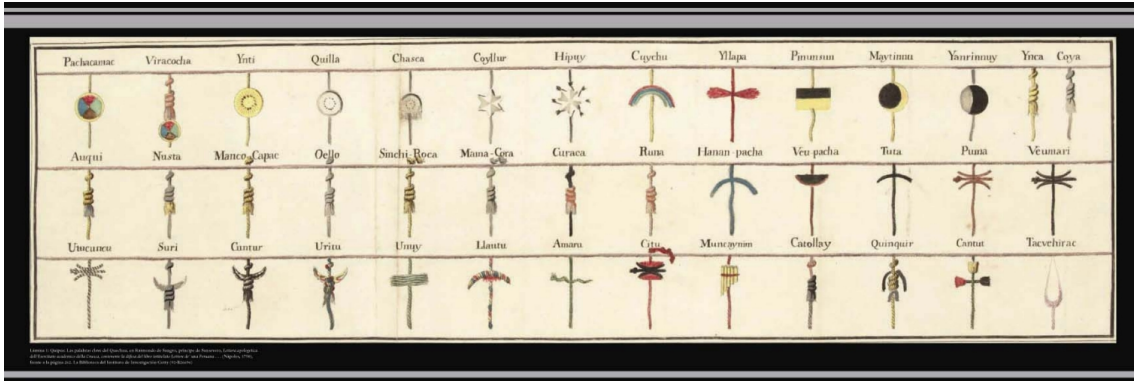


**Fig. 23**

Cosmology of the Incas

(<http://www.infoperi.com/en/view.php>)

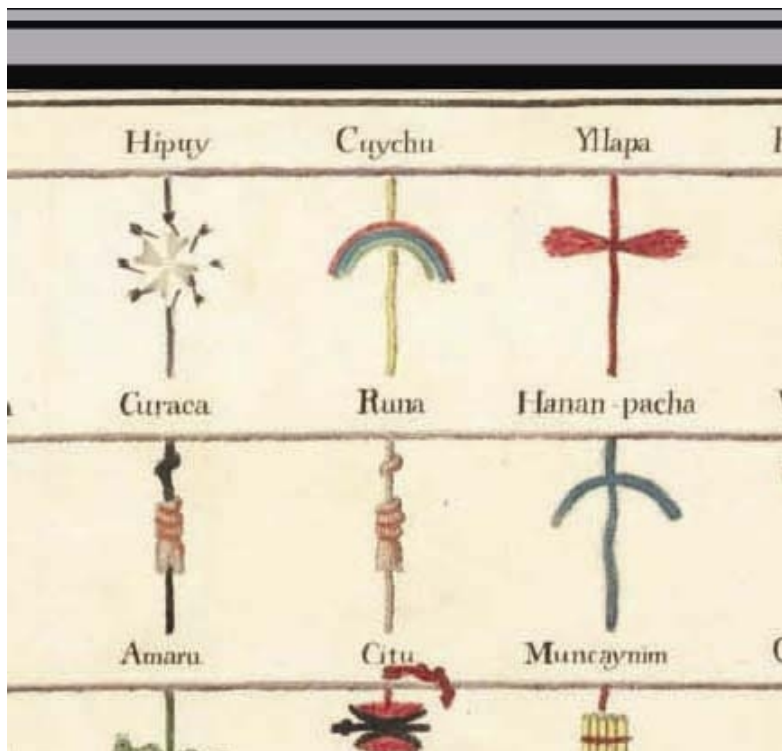
The other proto-unancha is the representation of the rainbow found in a *quipu*, again representing Chuqie Illa as the Rainbow Divinity, part of the collection of The Getty Center of Los Angeles. The *quipu*, also shows clearly that the Incas represented the rainbow in the form of an arch.



**Fig 24**

Getty Museum California

[\(http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/peru/\)](http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/peru/)



**Fig 25**

Detail of fig. 24

[\(http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/peru/\)](http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/peru/)

## CONCLUSION:

The three Spanish chroniclers selected for this essay were chosen because they had the closest contact with the vanishing culture of the Incas and their writings survived up to our times.

**Juan de Betanzos**, the Quechua scholar, describes the customs and rites of the Incas from an inside perspective that few Europeans had. His manuscripts of **Narratives** were found in Palma de Mallorca, known henceforth as the "Palma" manuscript, edited in Madrid in 1987 and believed to be complete.

**Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa**, mariner and explorer, was also a scholar aware of the culture of this pre-Columbian civilization. As an historian he kept the facts in focus but wrote from a European perspective, drawing parallels for events in South America with those in Europe. Gamboa's **History of the Incas** is actually the second of three books on the Incas: the first dealt mainly with geographical features of the land and the third covers the period of Spanish rule.

The reasons as to why Gamboa manuscripts went unknown for such long time are complex. The brutal execution of Tupac Amaru, the last Inca, by Viceroy Toledo, was one. The King of Spain saw in Tupac Amaru's violent death a violation of the European tradition of rights of kings and was very disturbed by the brutality in which Tupac Amaru was executed. It was also a breach of indigenous sovereignty that the Spanish Crown recognized in principle if not observed in practice.

Toledo was disgraced and anything connected with him, such as Gamboa's "Memorial" forgotten and neglected. Published in English in 1907, Gamboa's manuscripts are a valuable complement to the history of the Incas.

**Fr. Bernabe Cobo** wrote about the Incan people and their religion and he is the one who made mention, and to some extent describes, the rainbow devices of the Inca. The fact that his narration is not more forthcoming is part of the Scholastic method in which Cobo was trained. Sources were only acknowledged if some issues or idea were being debated. Roland Hamilton, who translated Cobo's **Historia del Imperio de Los Incas**, into English, writes "...contained 43 books divided in three parts. Most of "**Historia**" has been lost and what remains of it is only the first part composed of only fourteen books plus three books of the second part concerning the foundation of Lima."

We can only speculate that in Cobo's lost books, there may have been more details of the rainbow flag and other insignia of the Inca.

Others manuscripts are known to have existed before the writings of Betanzos, Gamboa or Cobo, (all of whom may have drawn from them and in the case of Cobo, selectively) but none have survived.

We can see from these three major and oldest works that some things were lost, but a lot gained. In the meantime, we are still looking for a "VexiGrail" that will shed more light on the so far elusive Inca Rainbow Flag. [GT](#)

Gustav Tracchia, Yokomaha, Japan ICV 23, July 2009.



**NOTES:**

(1) The orthography of Quechua words into Spanish or English varies depending on the writer. Since the Incas had no form of writing of any kind, I have followed the style established by the Royal Academy of Spanish Language. However many other forms of spelling are seen that try to get closer to the pronunciation of the words in the original Quechua, and thus you will see; Quichua for Quechua, Qosqo or Cusco for Cuzco, Ynca, Ynga, Inka or Ynka for Inca, Capag for Capac, Huiracocha or Wiracocha for Viracocha, Tawantinsuyo or Tahuantinuño, and so on..

(2) Maria Cristina Fernandez of the AAV narrated to the author an actual event that she witnessed in the Southern Argentine town of Bariloche where groups of different indigenous cultural associations were meeting. The Mapuche delegation was surprised when the Aymaras of Bolivia made their entrance with the rainbow flag. One of the Mapuche leaders asked them why they were using the flag of their conquerors. The question stunned the Aymara delegation who could only respond that *"If it was good for the Incas it is good for us."*

(3) The flag of the Cooperativism is formed by the seven colors of the rainbow, was approved by ICA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE in 1932. It signified unity in diversity and a symbol of peace and hope. (ICA Charter, 1932.) However although the flag was changed in 2001, some countries choose to keep the 1924 design. Costa Rica is one of those.

(4) Professor I. Osvaldo Donda Beltramino recounts that the second and third flags of ICA consisted of a white field with an arch with the colors of the rainbow. See AAV publication "Estandarte" No.40, June 4th, 2003, illustrated by Francisco Gregoric.

Note A: In the English translation, the word Rainbow is used.

Note B: **Garcilaso de la Vega**, (b. **Gómez Suárez de Figueroa**; 1539 1616) .Peruvian historian and writer who is recognized primarily for his contributions to Inca history, culture, and society. Although not all scholars agree, many consider Garcilaso's accounts the most complete and accurate available. Because of the fact that there was also a Spanish author named Garcilaso de la Vega, he is more commonly known as "**El Inca Garcilaso.**"



THANKS; To Dr. Scot M. Guenter PhD, Coordinator of American Studies at San Jose State University, former president of NAVA, whose insight in flags and symbiosis give to the author important hints and suggestions. Also many thanks to Anthony Burton, Australian vexillologist, member of the Flags Australia and its current president. Mr. Burton has been in contact with aboriginal societies of Australia working in the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs. As such he has been exposed to the effect that Aboriginal cultures suffered when encountering western customs and beliefs. Burton's points of views and experience were taken into consideration to write this paper.

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