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Resisting Colonialism: Cultural Syncretism, Indigenous Agency and Exploitation in Colonial Potosí

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Resisting Colonialism:
Cultural Syncretism,
Indigenous Agency, and Exploitation in Colonial Potosí

By
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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by
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Introduction

High in the Andes in modern day Bolivia, well over thirteen thousand feet above sea level, lies the legendary city of Potosí. A shadow lingers there, formed by the city’s dark past of mass exploitation and virtual enslavement. Tens of thousands of indigenous Andean peoples labored in Potosí during the Spanish Colonial Empire in the mountain called Cerro Rico, which towers three thousand feet above the city. This ever-looming Cerro creates an equally daunting shadow, blanketing the city in a continuous gloom.

The discovery of silver within the mountain in 1545 brought about the collision of native Andean peoples with Spanish Colonial power and an unmatched desire for precious metals. The wealth of silver collected from Cerro Rico’s mines was unparalleled, which created a city that lay somewhere in between the realms of myth and reality. Potosí entered daily language throughout the world, as something of great worth was said to “vale un Potosí”. The silver exported from the bowels of this mountain was circulated worldwide and the peso “of eight” became an established international currency due to the huge silver influx into Europe from South America.¹ This wealth came at an enormous price however, as much of it was painstakingly

extracted and refined by indigenous Andeans. Silver from Potosí is tarnished with the widespread suffering of oppressed peoples, and this can never be polished over.

The vast majority of historic studies of Potosí are centered around the Spanish exploitation of indigenous lives and resources and the widespread misery it caused. This is not incredibly surprising when one considers that the exploitive institution employed by the Spanish in Potosí had such widespread implications for Spanish-indigenous relations as well as the entire Andean world. This is exactly what historians emphasize in their works. As a result, the name Potosí is generally associated closely with exploitive colonial force. This negative characterization is not new, but originated centuries ago from people like Friar Domingo de Santo Tomás, who, as early as 1550, expressed his disdain for using native labor in the mines at the Council of the Indies.²

Since then historians have built upon early criticisms to form an extremely dark vision of Potosí’s history. However, a new field of historiography is expanding. While this new field recognizes that exploitation of indigenous peoples clearly occurred, it looks beyond this single narrative to focus on the intricate cross-cultural interaction that took place in Potosí. Led by historians such as Jane Mangan, this new historiography characterizes Potosí as a diverse hub rarely matched by other urban centers of the Spanish colonial world.³ A complex spectrum of racial identities developed in the city, and indigenous peoples were forced to adapt to Iberian influence much faster than elsewhere. European-indigenous interactions were so much more amplified in Potosí because the

² Hanke, Lewis. The Imperial City of Potosí; an Unwritten Chapter in the History of Spanish America. Martinus Nijhoff. (The Hague, Netherlands, 1956): 25; hereafter cited as Hanke, The Imperial City of Potosí.
city was a confluence; one of the first meeting points between Spanish and indigenous cultures.

Although the focus on native exploitation is a necessity for understanding the topic of Spanish colonialism, I argue that one must look beyond this broad narrative to view Potosí through the individual interactions that occurred there. Hierarchal power dynamics in the Spanish system of forced labor were very pronounced and concrete, however they cannot be applied to the rest of life in Potosí. The city’s marketplace for example, was the site of a complex cultural exchange. While inequality certainly existed there, indigenous peoples actively sought out economic opportunities and were sometimes very successful. Their efforts demonstrate that we cannot characterize Potosí’s past simply by applying the broad narrative of exploitation, but must look at social change in the city and analyze interactions between indigenous peoples and Spaniards. In this respect, one can think of Potosí less as an example of Spanish Colonial exploitation, and more of a cultural syncretism. Because of this, my argument aligns much more closely with historians like Mangan.

To explore this debate further, I have labored to disregard Eurocentric views of the past and instead to view developments through the indigenous lens. The purpose of this paper is to characterize indigenous-European relations by addressing both the benefits and the suffering indigenous peoples experiences by coming to Potosí. It is also a struggle towards comprehending the immense transition native peoples made as they migrated from their rural Andean communities to a colonial urban center. Whether voluntarily or under force, vast populations of indigenous peoples were driven from their societies to Potosí, where they found a thriving city, unmatched in population and wealth
by any other in the colony. This paper covers the first one hundred years of Potosí’s tumultuous history. My argument is twofold. An analysis of Peter Bakewell’s works as well as a variety of publications discussing Potosí’s *mita* system reveal that mining operations in Potosí offered indigenous peoples opportunity for economic gain only until 1573, when Viceroy Toledo implemented the infamous Spanish *mita* system. An onslaught of exploitation followed thereafter. However, opportunities for indigenous peoples were preserved in the marketplace of Potosí and I argue that these markets were the sites of elaborately developing racial identities, cross-cultural interaction, and social change.

I focus on the challenges and success indigenous peoples experienced during the transition from the Incan Empire to the society of Potosí. Placing emphasis on the indigenous perspective is difficult, given two factors. Indigenous Andeans had no system of writing, and so while European writers such as Bartolomé de las Casas gained fame for their accounts of the colonial world, they had no indigenous counterparts. This leaves portrayals of colonial times, especially of the role the indigenous played, incomplete. Historians run into another, more challenging difficulty when attempting to describe an indigenous transitional experience that varied across time and space. Indigenous peoples came to Potosí from a variety of homelands, with different traditions, status and vastly different cultures. Many spoke different languages. This heterogeneity caused some to experience the benefits of the transition, while others lost everything. The challenge of describing such a diversity of experiences within the larger context of Spanish-indigenous relations becomes next to impossible. Therefore, while I recognize the
richness and detail that will be ignored in the process, it is necessary to make some generalizations about the indigenous experience as a whole.

Chapter one delves into pre-conquest Incan society. It is my intention to provide the reader with a jumping off point in this chapter, to highlight the extent of the indigenous transition. This will serve as comparison for later description of Potosí. While the entire chapter endeavors to characterize a heterogeneous Inca Empire as a whole, it should by no means be considered a thorough depiction of Incan society.

The challenges I faced writing this chapter have been shared with all other writers describing Incan society: the Incas had no writing besides the khipu, a system of knots used to record information. The khipu has still not been completely deciphered, and because of this, our knowledge of pre-conquest society is limited to European accounts, and knowledge gained from the recently developed field of archeology. These two sources of information balance each other, filling in gaps where the other lacks, but at times contradict each other as well. In this paper I contrast sources written by several Europeans, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, and Bartolomé de las Casas, with information from secondary sources written by Andrew Malpass and Sally Falk Moore, which are based largely on archeological information. The accounts of Guaman Poma de Ayala and El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega are two other notable sources of information, made famous by the authors’ mixed heritage of indigenous and Spanish roots. While many of these sources are quite biased, they contain valuable information that, when coupled with recent finds from archeological discoveries, builds an interesting picture of the Incan

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Empire. Combined, they depict the Incan Empire as a diverse collection of relatively autonomous regions, joined by an adept government. Further, from these descriptions, one may come to understand how little preparation indigenous peoples had for the society of Potosí.

Chapter two discusses the experience of indigenous Potosinos in the first twenty-seven years of mining operations. From their opening in 1545 to the arrival of Viceroy Toledo in 1573, I argue that the mines of Potosí provided economic opportunity for both Spaniards and indigenous alike. Many indigenous peoples came to Potosí of their own accord because of the opportunities available to them. Once there, they were able to prosper from direct access to ore. This access, coupled with the lack of strict regulation surrounding mining operations that was later implemented made their labor worthwhile. Another group of indigenous peoples, called yanaconas, formed a monopoly within the refining sector, which demonstrated the direct control some indigenous held over the mining business. This chapter covers the initial development of the Potosí area upon the discovery of silver, and highlights the atrocious working conditions within the mines. Along with several European accounts of the era, I employ the works of Peter Bakewell, which were quite influential during my research. His book Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian labor in Potosí, 1545-1650, is one of the few secondary sources that focuses on Potosí’s early period of mining, and it stands out from other historiography because of this.\(^5\)

The third chapter highlights changes made to Potosí’s mining industry by Viceroy Toledo in 1573. Historians emphasize this period because it includes the introduction of

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Toledo’s *mita* system, which had a profound effect on large indigenous populations and silver output. Potosí’s mines were so productive in this period that their silver had a visible effect on the world economy. From an indigenous perspective however, these changes had long-lasting, degrading effects. Toledo singlehandedly ushered in a new era of exploitation in which the working relationship between Spanish and indigenous became much less equal. Indigenous workers effectively lost all benefits from working in Potosí’s mines and refineries. This chapter is built on a wider variety of sources, as this period of Potosí’s history has been better documented than earlier years. I draw information from a long list of secondary sources, the most notable of which is Lewis Hanke, a leading historian in the field of Latin American Study. Commentary from European colonial authors Cieza de León and Arzáns de Orsúa y Vela compliment these secondary sources.

The fourth chapter differs slightly from the earlier chapters because it breaks from the chronological order to discuss general trends in the marketplaces of Potosí throughout the first hundred years. While the two were closely interrelated, Potosí’s marketplace remained the site of indigenous adaptation and opportunity long after the mines became a system of native exploitation. Along with promoting shifting racial identities and social change, I argue that Potosí’s markets witnessed complex intercultural interactions. The marketplace facilitated shrewd indigenous adaptations from their previous economic and social systems as well as Spanish adaptation to indigenous goods. The competitive aspect of Potosí’s markets also served to speed up and amplify this transition, making the marketplace a rare revolutionary entity. Several European colonial authors wrote extensive descriptions of the marketplace, which I employ in this chapter. However, by
far the most influential source is the works of Jane E. Mangan. As an associate professor of history at Davidson College, Mangan did extensive archival research in Casa de la Moneda (Potosí), Seville and Sucre. The detail available in her works is unparalleled. While European writers provided excellent witness accounts of the marketplace, Mangan does an equally good job at analyzing greater trends, such as the important roles played by indigenous women. It is clear that the marketplace played a key role in the indigenous experience in Potosí.

Potosí was a fascinating city simply because it served as a meeting place between vastly different peoples. Few other cities in the New World held such acute focus by the Spanish and simultaneously experienced such an influx of diverse indigenous populations. The experience of indigenous in Potosí is equally captivating. While it must have seemed like an abrupt change considering the enormous disparity between Spanish influence and native culture, overall the transition was progressive and piecemeal, as it can be viewed in stages. The first three chapters of this paper proceed through this transition chronologically. They are followed by a break in the continuum with a discussion of Potosí’s marketplace over a much longer period of time. Combined they tell a story that goes beyond the outlines of the indigenous transition. It is a narrative full of innovation and adaptation, but also of preservation and endurance.
Chapter 1

Characterizations of an Incan Past:

A Point of Origin

To understand the social change that took place in Potosí under Spanish Colonialism, it is necessary to give a point of origin; the background of the people being studied. Indigenous Potosinos (the name given to inhabitants of Potosí), came from a wide variety of ethnic groups scattered throughout the Inca Empire. At its height, this empire stretched from the very southern tip of modern day Columbia, down the coast through Ecuador, Peru and Chile, and inland covering sections of Bolivia and Argentina. Commonalities certainly existed across the indigenous groups that made up the empire, but their cultures, practices and norms were as varied as the terrains they inhabited.

The following chapter will discuss one commonality that all indigenous Potosinos shared before coming to Potosí: being an integral part of the Incan Empire. This description of the Inca Empire is not meant to be an in depth look at Incan society, nor anything close to it, but instead a brief glance at the ways in which colonial accounts and contemporary historians have characterized the empire as a whole. Because the Incas had no written language, it is difficult for historians to piece together an accurate picture of what life was like. Accounts from authors living in the Spanish colonial era, as well as the expanding field of archeology combine to form an evolving understanding of how the Incas conducted their society. Despite some conflicting information from colonial accounts and archeology, it is clear that the Inca Empire was made up of many small, individual regions, each with a relatively high level of autonomy. A capable central
administrative body as well as the economic system known as the mit’a, governed and held these individual groups together to form the Inca Empire. Indigenous peoples had no competitive economic institutions to prepare them for the capitalist, Spanish-dominated society in Potosí.

In contrast with authors from the colonial era, recent historians have one big advantage. The field of archeology has led to a great expansion of knowledge of the Incan Empire within the last several decades. While this archeological information helps fill in gaps in some areas, in other cases it reverses prior understandings. Archeologist Alan Covey writes of several such points of contradiction in his article “Chronology, Succession, and Sovereignty: the Politics of Inka Historiography and Modern Interpretation”. For example, colonial accounts, which draw from Incan informants, point to the date of the Incan Empire’s origin in the year 1438, but Covey claims that archeological discoveries of Incan artifacts from long before disprove this date. Instead he moves the date of origin much earlier to somewhere between 1200 and 1400.1 This change has huge implications for our understanding of Incan chronology and would seem to contradict the accepted list from colonial accounts of twelve known Incan rulers.2 These recent discoveries are due to the work of archeologists like Brian Bauer, who investigated over 2,500 sites in the Cuzco basin.3 Archeology gives current historians the opportunity to compete with colonial testimonies that, until recently, were the only sources of information on the Incan Empire. With information from these two fields


2 Ibid., 193.

3 Ibid., 172.
melded together, historians have created a coherent picture of the Incan Empire pre-conquest.

Above all else, recent historians characterize the empire not as a unified entity, but as an evolving, diverse, flexible entity, made up of many individual, unique parts. To this end, historians credit the Incas with their impressive ability to bring together all of these parts. Nigel Davies sums up this point in his book titled *The Incas*, when he writes

> The brilliance of their achievement perhaps lay more in their ability to accept, use and even foster diversity. Hence, factors as the ecology of a given territory, the culture of its people, and the length of time since it was first conquered apparently led to marked differences in the way each was governed.⁴

This perspective presents the Incas as a flexible group who were willing to negotiate to meet their goals of expansion. The line between flexible and tolerant is thin however, and while this quotation demonstrates that the Incas understood accommodation to be a necessary requisite to controlling a heterogeneous population, it does not show an innate Incan inclination to act kindly towards all peoples. Davies’ quotation also emphasizes the fact that regional religious, governmental, and economic practices varied greatly throughout the empire depending on the manner in which the Incas conquered and incorporated them. This concept explains how the Incas were so successful in expanding their empire.

Holding together this diverse empire was the *mit’a*, or the primary system of exchange used for taxing the populace and collecting tribute in the Incan Empire. Because the Incas had no monetary system, goods and especially labor were the only contributions Incan subjects could make. As Andrew Malpass explains in his book titled

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Daily Life in the Inca Empire, this economic system differed from the classic model of taxation because it capitalized on the empire’s population itself instead of material tribute. The mit’a counted exclusively on labor as tribute, in place of material goods. In this way, the Inca Empire was still able to flourish and expand.

In order to function properly, the mit’a system depended on the set social hierarchy of Incan society. At its base, small social groups known as “allyus” consisted of relatives or family friends that lived within close proximity of one another. Ayllus served to organize agricultural work within each community, which included clearing fields, harvesting, and most importantly, irrigating. It was often required of people to marry within their respective ayllu, and so this social group played an important role within Incan society.5 Ayllus were also the primary sources of labor tapped by the mit’a system. One male adult from each selected household in a given ayllu was required to serve the empire for a specific period of time each year. This period was known as “mit’a service” and fulfilled tribute requirements. The nature of mit’a service could vary tremendously, and depended on the personal skill set of the individual. Military service was quite common, as the Incas depended on their armies to defend borders and expand territory. Other common forms of service included transporting goods, making specialized crafts, or construction projects.6 Mining was generally not a job included in the mit’a system, but was a specialized craft. This is probably due to the fact that gold and silver had no monetary value. Metals were taken to Cuzco for the Inca to be used in

6 Malpass, Daily Life in the Inca Empire, 46.
traditional gift giving and religious ceremonies. While minerals still held some significance, they were not essential to the functioning of society the way they were in the Spanish world.

The occupation of kuraca was key to the success of the mit’a. In reality, five different positions existed under this one title, and these positions governed the selection process of mit’a service. Kuracas were responsible for ten thousand, five thousand, one thousand, five hundred or one hundred households, depending on their position in the hierarchy. Each kuraca was responsible for selecting individuals for mit’a service from the group of households he controlled. This decision was normally based on who could afford to leave the community to serve the empire. Kuracas were therefore responsible to the people they governed while at the same time representing the interests of the Incan government. The job was a necessary go-between that connected the Incan government, often a far off, foreign seeming power, to the population of the empire.

Malpass argues that the genius of the mit’a system was that it allowed Incan rulers to draw together vast amounts of labor from across the empire, while simultaneously minimizing governmental intervention in each respective Andean community. The selection of an individual for mit’a service meant the absence of that individual in his community for a significant period of time. To fill this gap, other members of the ayllu were responsible for completing the normal work of the mit’a laborer while he was gone. In this way, Malpass argues that ayllus acted as a communal safety net that worked to decrease the negative effects the mit’a system had on small Andean communities.

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7 Davies, The Incas, 122.
8 Malpass, Daily Life in the Inca Empire, 46.
9 Ibid., 46.
Another aspect of Incan society emphasized by recent historians is the concept of ecological verticality. Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University John Murra first described the concept in 1972 when he wrote that, “[verticality] was achieved by attempting to settle one’s own people on as many tiers as circumstances (military, religious, and kinship ties) allowed.” Davies argues that this facilitated form of trading made up the vast majority of all economic exchange in the empire. Many indigenous groups established small settlements throughout the various ecological zones of the empire including areas of desert, semi desert, altiplano, Andean cordillera, tropical, subtropical and the plains. The inhabitants of these outposts were then responsible for harvesting all natural products native to their specific area to provide for the main settlement from which they originally came. The result was multi-ethnic interaction, as well as an emphasis on self-sufficiency for each region instead of free trade. There probably were a few exceptions, such as in Ecuador, the only region in which a certain shell used for ritual purposes could be found naturally. These shells were later found far south of their place of origin, hinting that some small-scale trade may have existed to move these shells that were unnecessary for survival. However, overall, Davies argues that free-trade was largely absent from the Incan Empire, with regulation being a significant duty of the imperial administration.

Sally Moore, author of Power and Property in Inca Peru expresses another perspective on Incan society. As a legal anthropologist and Harvard University professor with a focus on cross-cultural legal theory, she acknowledges the traditional view of land

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11 Davies, The Incas, 127.

12 Davies, The Incas, 178.
division in the Incan Empire. This perspective originates from colonial accounts and claims that lands were divided between those that were taxed (land worked for the Incan ruler and his government or state religion) and those that were communal lands. However, Moore notes a difference between the theoretical functioning of this division, and how it may have realistically played out. Specifically, she points to a lack of clarity with regard to how equal this divide was. The amount of produce of these lands that stayed within the local community, and the amount that was put aside for government (the Inca) and religion (the sun) is unclear from colonial documents.¹³

Moore also argues that some kuracas, governors and other Incan officials may have held personal land titles. Her proof rests in accounts of lavish gift-giving - mostly among kuraca nobles and the Inca - and large numbers of servants, so the question becomes how they accumulated that wealth. While she admits that in some cases it is unclear whether references to land ownership are simply to a percentage of produce from the community lands or the government share, in other situations evidence points to actual ownership by officials.¹⁴ At the very least these officials may have had a vested personal interest in how productive their province was. Evidence also exists that land was inherited with some governmental positions or that it was given to kuracas as a reward for good service to the Inca.¹⁵ All of these interpretations point to the conclusion that land and property division was very different from the traditionally held view that, with exception of the Incan himself, all lands were communally held.


Moore later proposes the possibility that a feudal relationship existed between *kuracas* and laborers in certain coastal valleys of the pre-Incan kingdom of Chimor. In this region - along the northern coast of modern-day Peru - Moore argues that *kuracas* had expanded powers over the land and its inhabitants. Laborers were comparable to tenants, working the land to keep a certain percentage of the produce for themselves. While Moore does not find this example to be representative of the rest of the empire, it does demonstrate that the utopian view of communal lands may not have been accurate everywhere. It also brings up one of Moore’s most significant contributions to the evolution of perspectives on Incan society. Despite encouraging a common standard of practice throughout the empire, aspects of Incan society and government probably varied greatly from province to province due to differences in the manner of Incan conquest. In order to incorporate such a large number of unique indigenous groups into one empire, it is likely that the Incas allowed many local traditions or practices to persevere.

The Inca Empire that is described in secondary sources was a vast collection of diverse regions, grouped together under a loose but well organized government. Autonomy is a strong point of emphasis although it is widely accepted that the *mit’a* was a unifying aspect of the empire that all regions participated in. With the expansion of knowledge from the field of archeology, these authors have been able to shed light on the practice of ecological verticality and the facilitated form of trading that was so commonly practiced. However, one cannot fully understand the impact archeology has had on the field of Incan study without first examining colonial accounts, as well as their significance and possible biases.

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Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala and Garcilaso de la Vega offer a colonial perspective on Incan culture and society. As Spanish educated-Inca noblemen, the two chroniclers’ establish a very positive perspective, and they laid the foundations for how Inca society has traditionally been viewed by historians. Although their writings mostly focus on basic ideological structures of Incan society, they provide a good introduction to understanding how the society functioned. Their writings emphasize the efficiency, organization and fairness of the Incan Empire. This perspective has been described as the “utopian view”, however it is important to point out that this term does not refer to a utopian society in the contemporary meaning of the word. The utopia these colonial authors describe is one in which class distinctions and divisions are still very real, and equality refers more to economic distribution and judicial law.

Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala was born around the year 1535, two years after the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. His family was Incan nobility, and he claimed descent from the indigenous leader Huaman Chava Ayaucá. From an early age he learned the Spanish language and grew up fiercely devoted to the Spanish Church. According to Rolena Adorno, chair of the department of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale University, a Spanish Viceroy unjustly punished Guaman Poma during a land dispute, and this personal betrayal led to a drastic change of heart.\(^{17}\) The incident opened his eyes to the ways in which the Spanish were mistreating indigenous peoples. As a result he wrote *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, (The First new Chronicle and Good Government), a 1,189-page letter to the King of Spain, exposing the many injustices and

abuses Guaman Poma found within the Spanish colonial system. Whatever the reason for his sudden reversal of perspective, Guaman Poma’s diverse background containing both Incan heritage and connections to the Spanish Church gives his writing unique intrigue. Throughout *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, Guaman Poma highlights the positive aspects of Incan society, characterizing the empire as orderly, just, and above all else, civilized. He meant this description to be a critique of Spanish colonial abuses, but it is unlikely the king of Spain ever read it.

In Guaman Poma’s account, the Incan Empire functioned in accordance with a unique social hierarchy, led by a single man, known as “the Inca”. Traditional accounts show twelve Inca leaders ruled the empire successively until the Spanish conquest in 1532. Underneath them were two distinct groups that made up the rest of society.

Ancestry was one of the most important factors in defining one’s social status and we can see this when Guaman Poma discusses occupational requisites: “We order that captains be of good lineage and faithful and not traitors”. 18 This suggests that ancestry was more than a qualification and rather part of one’s identity. This identity dictated how society treated an individual. For example, proper ancestry of noble descent was a requisite for Incan leaders of high position. However, Guaman Poma indicates that these Incan leaders also needed good ancestry in order to be obeyed by local lords under their control. 19 This example hints at not only the importance of lineage for obtaining a job,

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but demonstrates the role it played in personal interaction within Incan society. Without the proper ancestry, an Incan leader had no way to command the respect of those he ruled.

Guaman Poma also goes into great detail discussing the Inca division of labor that existed to demonstrate high levels of productivity. Above all else, he depicts an industrious society in which everyone has their own productive role to help the greater good. As one can see in his document, these roles vary hugely. The “first age division” of men was an ex-warrior class around the age thirty-three that was chosen to colonize new parts of the empire, work in mines, and do other mitimae – or mit’a service - labor. This contrasts starkly with the “third age division” of men known as Rocto Macho, or “deaf old man”. This group contained all senior citizens ages 80 and up. Guaman Poma points out that even though this group was no longer capable of doing much manual labor compared to the first age division, they were still responsible for contributing in other ways, such as making ropes and blankets. Similar divisions existed for women in Inca society. While women’s main role seemed to revolve around weaving clothing, older groups were responsible for looking after the house, orphans and other children. According to Guaman Poma, inspections were made every six months or so to insure appropriate levels of production were reached. Overall his chapter on the Inca system of labor depicts an Inca society that valued productivity, fairness and mutual benefit.

These qualities were synonymous with those of a “civilized” society in the eyes of Europeans of the era. Creating a sophisticated representation of Inca society was clearly

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20 Adorno and American Council of Learned Societies, Guaman Poma Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru, 148.

21 Ibid., 152.

22 Ibid., 169.
one of Guaman Poma’s primary goals throughout the letter. His accounts also note that Inca society was structured to take care of those who could not care for themselves, such as orphaned children, the aged and the sick. At this point Guaman Poma even goes on to compare this system to the European model, saying, “No Christian kingdom has ever had such a good system”. Clearly this statement was meant to catch the attention of the Spanish king and perhaps persuade him to think of the Incas as something like equals.

It is easy to take Guaman Poma’s word for granted because of his indigenous background and his close proximity to the fall of the empire. These characteristics give his perspective an authenticity that many other authors lacked. However, one must revisit Guaman Poma’s background and motivation for writing the letter before taking it as the gospel. When he wrote *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, it seems clear that Guaman Poma identified with his indigenous roots over his connections to Spain, and thus, his letter could be seen as an effort to validate the prestige of his own roots. This does not mean we should dismiss his perspective, but take it with a grain of salt. His accounts paint an important picture of Incan society from the perspective of someone living directly in its aftermath.

Guaman Poma was not the only colonial author to heavily influence the field of Inca studies. Garcilaso de la Vega, often called “El Inca” Garcilaso to distinguish him from another Spanish author of the same name, was another prominent author that wrote about the Inca Empire. He was born in 1539 in Cuzco, several years after the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. El Inca Garcilaso shared Guaman Poma’s positive depiction of Incan society and close proximity to it. His father was a Spanish

conquistador and his mother was a daughter of the Inca Tupac Yupanqui. This parentage was not altogether uncommon, as the Spanish conquistadors often married local nobility. However, this gave El Inca Garcilaso a similar background to Guaman Poma’s. Both had ties to the Incan elite and a first generation perspective of the empire. His most famous work, Comentarios reales de los Incas, offers significant insight into pre-conquest Inca society, as relayed to him by his Inca relatives.

Garcilaso also describes the importance of proper ancestry in Inca society, making an ethnic distinction between the rulers and the ruled. Those with direct lineage to the original Incan indigenous group were referred to as “Incan by blood”. This group enjoyed a much higher social position in society than their counterparts known as “Incan by privilege”, who consisted of all of those indigenous groups conquered by the Incas. Needless to say, the latter was far larger than the former and represented a large percentage of the empire. This distinction is very apparent in Garcilaso’s writings as he continuously refers to Incas by blood as “Incas” and Incas by privilege as “Indians”. Clearly this difference was a very significant aspect of one’s personal identity in Inca society. The context in which Garcilaso refers to “Indians” however, shows disdain, and often a lack of respect, which would lead one to believe that he shared widely accepted European concepts of racism as well as the notion that most indigenous peoples were uncivilized savages. It is evident, however, that he does not include the Incas in this category, perhaps to uphold the status of his own group of origin and show it to be

civilized. This makes much of his account akin to Guaman Poma’s, while differentiating it from those of other Europeans of his time.

The idea of such a concrete distinction existing in Incan society brings up an interesting question however. Wouldn’t this contradict Garcilaso’s overall positive depictions of a fair and moral Incan society? Did this difference in identity not lead to a difference in treatment? From Garcilaso’s writing and the tone with which he refers to “Indians”, one would assume that this social division probably did affect how the Incan government treated certain indigenous groups they conquered. It is hard to imagine a society completely without inequality. It is also important to realize that Garcilaso lived in a time in which such class segregation was an accepted part of life, and so it is likely that his commentary on Incan society concerns overall fairness of law and the just distribution of resources to all groups. He was probably much less concerned with social equality.

Garcilaso’s lack of regard for social equality becomes visible he compares the act of Inca conquest to bringing “light to savages that live in the dark”.\textsuperscript{25} He also makes the claim that local conquered peoples were, for the most part happy to become part of the Inca Empire.\textsuperscript{26} While it is hard to imagine anyone expressing outright joy at the prospect of being conquered by a foreign power, Garcilaso clearly believed that the lives of newly incorporated Incas by privilege were improved by the Incan economic and judicial systems. It is important to consider possible advantages and opportunities which communities gained from joining the Incan Empire. Besides added security and defense

\textsuperscript{25} Vega, \textit{Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and General History of Peru}, 40.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}, 96.
from neighboring communities, one can imagine that additional technologies and skills could have been learned as well.

Garcilaso also adds to our understanding of the Incan system of justice. According to him, the empire employed a system of local judges that allowed little room for argument or discussion. Punishment was swift and severe. While this may sound barbaric to people familiar with contemporary systems of justice, Garcilaso claims that because such harsh and assured consequences existed, “there were therefore no vagabonds or idlers, and none dared do what he ought not do for his accuser was near and his punishments severe.”

Michel Foucault, the 20th century French philosopher, identified the intended purpose of swift and consistent punishment to be widespread discouragement of crime. While Foucault also described many unintended consequences of swift punishment in public executions in France, such as a shift in blame to the executioner and frequent riots, Garcilaso doesn’t seem to acknowledge any of these consequences at all in the Inca Empire. However, it is difficult to view his statements to be anything but an exaggeration. Garcilaso continues to explain, “there was hardly any crime to punish the whole year through in the empire of the Incas.” Again, this quotation cannot be taken at face value, but must be seen as a validation of Incan practices. While Garcilaso’s description of the set-up of the Incan judicial system may be quite accurate, his depiction of a crimeless society is probably not as accurate.

Garcilaso also provides an excellent case example of how the *mit’a* may have functioned when he discusses the construction of bridges throughout the Incan royal road network. The Incas employed two main types of bridges to complete their impressive

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system of roads that connected different regions of the empire. The first kind of bridge was built by weaving long cables of osier to make a suspension bridge. Garcilaso claims that one of these bridges ran a distance of 200 paces. The second bridge necessitated massive amounts of straw and reeds approximately 14 feet wide that were laid across the surface of a river roughly 150 paces across. All labor for these bridges was from neighboring provinces of close proximity, and these provinces also supplied the materials necessary for construction. More intriguing than the sophisticated design of these bridges however, was the fact that they needed to be replaced every six months to a year. While this fact in itself isn’t all that surprising given the natural resources used in construction, it indicates two things. Bridge construction projects were taken on quite frequently and were built rapidly so as to keep the royal roads open for fast, dependable routes of communication. These two factors indicate that bridge building required an enormous but consistent pool of labor, and this is exactly what the mit’a was capable of providing.

In contrast to this image of a smoothly functioning mit’a system, Spanish authors such as Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa were much more critical of the Inca Empire, depicting it as oppressive, uncivilized society. As a Spanish sea captain and royal cosmographer, Gamboa wrote quite negatively of the Inca Empire. Gamboa’s History of the Incas, written approximately forty years after the Spanish conquest, and on the order of Viceroy Toledo, tells an entirely different story of an Incan Empire defined by subjugation and inequality. After he collected information on a tour of the colony, Gamboa emphasized the cruel character of the Incas as they expanded their empire.

29 Vega, Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and General History of Peru, 150.
30 Ibid., 169.
Unlike Guaman Poma and Garcilaso, Gamboa writes of different motivations for ascension to power:

aspiring to superiority, [the Incas] would inflict violence on their compatriots and on other foreign peoples to subjugate them and to bring them to obedience and place them under their rules so they could make use of them and make them tributaries.\(^{31}\)

This statement alludes to the presence of inequality, violence and exploitation as defining aspects of Inca society. It is somewhat unclear what Gamboa means when he uses the word “compatriots”: it could be interpreted that violence and strife existed not only between Incas by blood and Incas by privilege, but within the Incan by blood group as well. Regardless, the overall notion one gets from this quotation is of an aggressive Incan nature, and a clear distinction between rulers and ruled.

Gamboa goes further to detail the Incan subjugation of specific indigenous groups. Again, the tone and language used in his writing gives his descriptions a very negative slant. He writes of a tyrannical reign in the case of the Inca Manco Capac’s conquest of a small indigenous group known as the Alcabizas in the Cuzco valley. He depicts the relationship between the Incas and Alcabizas as violent, and very unequal. Gamboa points out that Manco Capac committed this abuse for no other reason than that he simply wished to.\(^{32}\) The image of Incan society that Gamboa describes reminds one of an absolute monarchy. Widespread corruption and power hungry, immoral rulers are common themes in Gamboa’s Incan history.

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When one inspects Gamboa’s motivation for writing this document however, his negative perspective of the Incan Empire seems to come into focus as the product of his background. As mentioned earlier, Gamboa was ordered to write this history of the Incan Empire by Spanish Viceroy Toledo, the highest authority in the colony. Indeed Gamboa starts off his writing by acknowledging that

this case was carried out so carefully and faithfully by the order and diligence of the most excellent viceroy Don Francisco de Toledo, no one can doubt that everything that is in this volume as been most fully investigated and verified, leaving no room for argument or contradiction.\(^{33}\)

Toledo wanted Gamboa’s work to dismiss Inca society as a tyrannical, uncivilized, heathen world. This description would put Toledo and the Spanish colonial regime in the position of saviors, rescuing the indigenous peoples from themselves. This would justify the colonial regime and Toledo’s actions in the eyes of the European world. However, as with previously discussed sources, Gamboa’s writing should not be ignored. Although it was forty years after the Spanish conquest, Gamboa was able to tour the empire and probably observe many surviving elements of Incan society.

Colonial accounts do provide some useful detail of the Inca Empire, but concealed motivations and the sometimes questionable sources of their information render them imprecise at times. Bartolomé de las Casas for example, a Spanish historian and friar that became widely known as the “Protector of the Indians”, wrote *Apologetica historia sumaria*, which argued that the Incas lived in a civilized society and that any opinion to the contrary originated in European ignorance. Casas’ perspective was quite similar to that of Guaman Poma and El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and it was very

influential on the field of Inca studies. However, it is important to recognize that Casas never traveled in the Andes.\textsuperscript{34} This lessens his credibility significantly.

While some colonial era writers did their own investigations in the Andes, others used information gathered from Spanish-conducted indigenous witness surveys. These surveys, which Spanish Colonial authorities produced as early as 1571, may have been responsible for inaccuracies that were common in colonial accounts. One hundred indigenous people participated and answered questions about the pre-conquest empire. This group was not randomly selected but included descendants of seven Inca rulers. Despite their close familial ties to Incan government, few individuals provided any precise chronological information. Witnesses were asked to remember information that had been passed on to them orally when they were still quite young, and because of this, many of their accounts were quite contradictory.\textsuperscript{35} Furthermore, several individuals went out of their way to compliment the accuracy of Gamboa’s history, which may indicate some tampering of survey results by the Spanish.

Together, these colonial accounts provide an eclectic variety of perspectives. Proximity to the fall of the empire might cause some to credit the accounts with overwhelming authenticity. However, alternative motives and questionable sources of information do seem to define how colonial authors characterize Incan society. While the Spanish sought to undermine the Incan authority they had just ousted in order to justify their colonial power, authors of indigenous origin sought to prove the civility of their ancestors by portraying the Incas in a positive light.

\textsuperscript{34} Covey, \textit{Chronology, Succession, and Sovereignty}, 176.
\textsuperscript{35} Covey, \textit{Chronology, Succession, and Sovereignty}, 184.
These competing perspectives can be somewhat confusing, but becomes clearer when one adds information from recent archeological finds to information from colonial accounts. Together they create a picture of the Inca Empire that remains disappointingly incomplete, but certainly less obscure. Above all else it is important to understand the diversity of practices within the empire and the emphasis the Incas placed upon autonomy. Although the Inca government employed the widespread *mit’a* system and facilitated ecological verticality, regions were probably left largely undisturbed to continue life as it had been before the Incan conquest. Inca society lacked a monetary standard, and put no emphasis on mining or free trade. These characteristics provide stark contrast to the capitalist, silver crazed society of Potosí that indigenous peoples would soon become a part of.
Chapter 2
Early Potosí and Indigenous Economic Benefits

“The power of silver, desire for which draws all other things to itself, has populated [Potosí] with the largest number of inhabitants in all those realms” – José de Acosta (1583)

Spanish desire for silver was immense. Unlike the British, who came to the New World to settle, or the French who settled isolated outposts for trading, much of Spain’s colonial efforts can be characterized by the search for valuable minerals. This ambition led Spaniards to a mountain in the Andes, well over 13,000 feet above sea level. They discovered silver in this mountain, which came to be known as Cerro Rico, or “rich hill”.

The environment was inhospitable, the land uninhabited, but the compensation proved to be worth their while.

The following chapter discusses the first several decades of mining at Potosí, beginning with the discovery of silver in 1545, and ending in 1572 when Viceroy Francisco de Toledo first visited the city. Admittedly, these first twenty-seven years of mining at Potosí lack the intensive colonial administrative documentation historians have available to them from later years.
However, what information of pre-Toledo Potosí we do have shows a city characterized less by the image of mass indigenous exploitation and Spanish Colonialism than many historians describe. This short period at the beginning of Potosí’s long history is unique for the simple fact that indigenous peoples experienced real economic benefits from working the mines.

According to Peter Bakewell, “The name Potosí is commonly associated as no other in colonial Spanish American history with forced labor. The Black Legend hangs heavily around the town’s history.”¹ The term Black Legend refers to a common European sentiment against Spanish imperialism. The Black Legend was meant to invalidate Spain’s right to conquest by casting colonial activities in a dark light.

Contemporary literature on Potosí normally depicts similar themes of forced labor involved in Viceroy Toledo’s new mita system (discussed in chapter 3) as part of a greater focus on Spanish colonialism. An emphasis on widespread exploitation of indigenous peoples and the horrible working conditions that existed in the mines are common as well. These characterizations accurately depict most of the colonial period, however the first several decades of mining in Potosí differed radically from later years.

To be clear, even in the first decades of operation, power dynamics and mine conditions were similar to those in later years. Spaniards controlled operations, creating glaring inequality, and working conditions were unbearable. However, economic profit was often shared among all parties, indigenous included. I argue that this shared opportunity dictates the existence of a different kind of relationship between indigenous

and Spanish, based on mutual interest in accumulating wealth. Despite horrific working conditions, many indigenous people braved the mines of Potosí of their own initiative in order to take advantage of economic opportunity. This represents a form of agency because many indigenous workers made the personal decision to come to Potosí, judging adaptation to certain Spanish values to be worth their while. Their efforts and success, although limited, must be recognized.

During Francisco Pizarro’s conquest in the early 1530s, Spaniards plundered and seized all Incan possessions of silver and gold. They then began a search for sources from which the objects had come. Legends and tales of Incan mines were abundant. The first Spanish administrator for Huarochirí, a region outside modern day Lima, claimed there was “a rich gold mine that used to be worked, so it is said, for the Inca, and the Indians have buried it so that no one can work it.” Such claims were quite common, but often backed by little evidence. Word of the silver discovery at Potosí spread in similar fashion, with myth and truth intertwined. Traveler Nicholas del Benino wrote in his journal in 1550 that the amount of silver at Potosí “seemed almost a fable”, while Spanish friar Diego de Ocaña described the unimaginable splendors of a night he spent in the town of Potosí while passing through the area almost fifty years later. These descriptions served to draw Europeans and indigenous alike to Potosí.

There are several different variations on the story of how silver was discovered in the mountain overlooking what would become Potosí. Colonial era author Pedro de

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Cieza de León recounted what has become a widely accepted version of the story that describes a native by the name of Diego Hualpa climbing the mountain on a hunt for deer. In order to ascend the steep slope, Diego Hualpa grabbed handfuls of gueñua, a native plant, when all of a sudden one of the plants came loose, exposing a pile of silver underneath. After keeping his discovery a secret for some time, he eventually told his friend Xauca, who told his Spanish master, a man named Villaroel.\(^4\) A plaque in Plaza 10 de noviembre, the center of contemporary Potosí, recognizes Hualpa as the sole discoverer of the Potosí’s silver. Another version of the discovery story tells of two indigenous men traveling past the cerro when a llama in their train ran astray on the mountain. While recovering the llama, they found a similar patch of silver, which they kept secret and eventually told their Spanish masters about.\(^5\)

There is some debate as to whether natives of the area had known about the silver before its discovery in 1545. A large number of indigenous worked at the nearby Porco silver mines, roughly fifty kilometers to the southwest, so it is difficult to believe that nobody knew about it.\(^6\) Popular Spanish legend claims that when the Inca leader Guayna


Capac invaded the region to conquer the local Aymara tribes, he spotted the *cerro* from a distance. He ordered some of his men to go explore the area. They discovered the *cerro’s* great wealth, but refrained from mining it after a voice told them, “Do no take the silver from this mountain. It is for other masters.” However aware indigenous peoples were of the *cerro’s* silver, the metal was only used for decoration and religious purposes in the Inca era, so even if even if indigenous knew of Potosí’s silver, it is possible they lacked the incentive to mine it. The Spanish presence in the Andes gave mining an entirely new importance. Mining of the first vein “la Rica” began in April of 1545 in Potosí, followed by other veins later that same year.

Before the city of Potosí developed, the area was an uninhabited, barren land. At the time of silver discovery, the closest town or urban center of any sort was Cantumarca, two miles to the west. An Aymara Empire claimed the region before the Incas arrived in the 15th century. Locals therefore spoke both Aymara, and further to the north, Quechua. At an elevation of over 13,000 feet, Potosí’s land was difficult to cultivate, and so the main local resource was livestock, which was also used for tribute to the Incan Empire. Frequent thunderstorms from December through April as well as snow, hail and strong winds known as “Tomahavi” during the rest of the year made the surrounding environment inhospitable and also explains why few people lived in the area prior to the discovery of silver. All trade in the region was between the small population of indigenous people that lived in the direct vicinity and other communities in different

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6 Ibid., 24.
7 Mangan, Trading Roles, 24.
8 Ibid., 24.
10 Mangan, Trading Roles, 26.
ecological zones. As discussed in chapter one, this kind of trading was characterized not by motivation for profit as much as mutual benefit. This was in part due to familial ties throughout the different ecological zones.\(^\text{11}\)

The town of Potosí began as a modest gathering of miners living together in a cluster. The first large rush of indigenous miners sent by their ayllus occurred in 1549 and this caused Potosí’s first big population boom\(^\text{12}\). The earliest property transaction recorded in Potosí from July of the same year shows that the beginnings of the town were oriented around a small stream that ran down Kari-Kari Massif\(^\text{13}\). This stream became a geographic border separating indigenous living quarters from the Spanish section early on in the town’s development.\(^\text{14}\) By 1559, property transactions hint at the existence of churches, a hotel named “Casa de Morada” as well a main street. These features would lay the foundations for the structured town that was beginning to form.\(^\text{15}\)

The mountain looming over Potosí originally contained four separate “veins” of silver called \textit{la rica}, \textit{centeno}, \textit{estaño} and \textit{mendieta}. These veins were essentially vertical shafts, all located on the eastern side of the mountain. Other smaller veins and mines ran from these four main ones. In \textit{la rica} for example, Cieza de León detailed 78 individual mines. The creation of horizontal shafts called \textit{socabenes}, dug from the side of the mountain to reach the deepest parts of mines, aided accessibility and ventilation.\(^\text{16}\) In general, the mines of Potosí were less susceptible to flooding and collapses than most

\(^{11}\) Mangan, \textit{Trading Roles}, 25.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^{13}\) Bakewell, \textit{Miners of the Red Mountain}, 10.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{16}\) Cieza De León, \textit{The Travels of Pedro De Cieza De León}, 388.
mines of the era due to a low water table and the porphyritic type rock found commonly in the Cerro, which does not crumble easily\(^\text{17}\).

Perhaps the most widely accepted fact about Potosí is that working conditions within the mine were atrocious. In 1630, an official “defender of people” from the region of Chucuito described the life of *mitayos* as working twenty-three weeks a year without rest, day and night,

> without light, 1,200 to 1,800 feet down, dragging themselves along [passages] and over supports, cutting ore with bars weighing 30 pounds, at the expense of blood and sweat; and the *apires*, who are those carry and extract the ores, crawl along like snakes, burdened with ore, and when they have to pass through narrow places, they tie their sacks to their feet, exerting greater than human efforts with their bodies, and so, dragging themselves along, they get by; and if they do not do so quickly, the *mineros* deal them many kicks and lashes with a whip.\(^\text{18}\)

Although this account is from 1630, it is likely that conditions in the first several decades of mining were not much different. Bakewell points out that parts may be exaggerated slightly, but most aspects of this account are probably accurate. Forcing miners to work day and night without rest for example, does not sound realistic. While it is true that miners worked around the clock, many accounts detail day and night shifts, giving each man at least some minimal rest period.\(^\text{19}\)

It is difficult to give an exact figure for the mortality rate of indigenous miners. Writing at an indeterminate date before 1585, Luis Capoche claimed that roughly fifty indigenous died per year from mining and refining injuries. This number does not account for individuals that died immediately from mining accidents, so we can expect the overall mortality rate to be higher. Capoche went on to describe a mine as a, “harsh

\(^{17}\) Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain*, 145.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 142.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 143.
executioner of Indians, for each day it consumes and destroys them, and their lives are made misery by the fear of death”.

When one looks at the mining safety regulations of the era, or the lack thereof, this description seems quite apt. Responsibility for the safety of miners was left largely to mine owners, who were supposed to train miners in safe mining practices. These owners had a vested interest in the safety of their workers in order to extract the largest amount of silver possible. Accidents, injuries and deaths only disrupted silver excavation. Indeed, out of ninety-four clauses of mining ordinances passed in 1561, only two referred directly to safety regulations.

Later in 1574, Viceroy Toledo’s arrival in Potosí prompted a revision of these clauses, but little changed in terms of safety regulations. The only provisions that can be found in these ordinances put a ban on the practice of opencast mining, or extracting all material from a mine instead of just ore, and called for supports of natural rock (called *puentes*) to be left in tunnels and protected against further excavation. Another clause stated that ladders must be of certain strength and dimensions. Of course, it is impossible to tell if these ordinances were enforced, especially in the early years of Potosí. However there is evidence that safety inspections did occur at times later on in Potosí’s history. There are also records of light punishment in the form of fines handed down to mine owners that violated some of these clauses and put their workers at “unnecessary” risk. Despite such horrific descriptions of mining conditions at Potosí, it is likely that on the whole, they were less undesirable than in other mines, such as those

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22 Ibid., 149.
in Huancavelica. Bakewell states that deaths from mining accidents were not too large in number, and in all likelihood, lower in number than many other published works claim.

Remarkably, conditions in the mines of Cerro Rico have changed little over the centuries of activity. Even today, there are still many tunnels in use that have wooden planks holding up their ceilings. Other sections are so narrow and shallow that one must crawl through one’s stomach to pass. A variety of toxic growths cling to the walls, adding to the already unhealthy atmosphere. Because today’s miners still use dynamite and pickaxes as their primary tools, roughly the same equipment used several centuries ago, the air is thick with dust, which causes the lung disease known as silicosis. Most miners today are diagnosed with silicosis after just ten years of working in the mines. Symptoms include shortness of breath, a persistent cough, fatigue, fever, chest pain, weight loss, skin discoloration, and eventually death. One can imagine that the account describing working conditions in 1630 might apply today as well.

Extracting silver from the mines was merely the first step in the process of producing silver in the 1500s. Miners took the ore to be smelted in molds called guayras.

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23 Ibid., 151.
**Guayras** were small, often portable ovens with holes for ventilation and charcoal, wood or llama dung for fuel. This smelting process physically separated the silver from other minerals through application of heat over a period of two days. The ore would then be smelted a second time, followed by a third and final smelting in a larger indoor furnace called a *tocochimbo*.\(^{25}\) The name *guayra* comes from the Quechua word for wind, *huayra*, because the ovens were left out on the side of the mountain to let the wind blow into them and melt the ore inside them. Until the 1570s, *guayras* were at the center of silver refining and so important to production that the clergy in Potosí regularly led prayers for steady wind.\(^{26}\) Thousands covered the slopes of *cerro rico* as late as the year 1608.\(^{27}\) After the refining, silver was taken to the Potosí market and sold.

Job sectors in Potosí were fairly segregated, and included both unskilled and skilled workers. Indigenous people of varying backgrounds made up a vast majority of the labor force that did the most physical work of mining the ore within the *cerro*. This group was commonly called *indios varas*. These individuals were assigned a length of a specific vein of silver, measured in *varas*, which they were to mine (hence the name). Although many *indios varas* came to Potosí voluntarily in search of personal profit, others were brought by their *kurakas* to make money with which to pay their *ayllu’s*

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 19.  
\(^{27}\) Cieza De León, *The Travels of Pedro De Cieza De León*, 389.
The job of refining the ore once it had been extracted fell almost exclusively to indigenous workers from the Incan era social class of *yanaconas*. The term *yanaconas* referred to indigenous people with no specific *ayllu* connection, and individuals from this group were the most skilled workers in Potosí.

Working conditions within the *cerro* were generally quite brutal, demonstrating a calculated risk many indigenous people took when they decided to come to Potosí. Clearly many individuals thought that mine work was worth enduring. Bakewell points to a Spanish survey done in the first few decades of mining work at Potosí, in which many indigenous claimed to be happy living there. The Guaqui people for example, an indigenous group from just south of Lake Titicaca, were pleased with the large variety of food available to them in Potosí markets as opposed to what was available to them in their homeland near Lake Titicaca, where maize and potatoes didn’t grow well. This survey also included reports of improved health from indigenous workers upon reaching Potosí, in part due to a better diet. Nevertheless, Bakewell analyzed the survey more closely and found that many subjects were *kurakas*, and that all interaction with indigenous people went through a Spanish interpreter. Needless to say, the Spanish, and at times *kurakas* as well, did not have indigenous people’s best interest in mind. The results of this survey are therefore somewhat suspect.

Employing the indigenous work force was an eclectic group of silver seekers. While there were a few elite indigenous families who owned mines, most owners were

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30 Ibid., 41.

31 Ibid., 42.

32 Ibid., 44.
wealthy Spanish individuals who often chose to live in more developed cities like Lima.\textsuperscript{33} Each owner owned a share of the mines, which was run by a hired \textit{agozuero}, normally a recent Spanish immigrant to Potosí.\textsuperscript{34} Deals between Spanish and indigenous were often informal agreements between individuals, with the indigenous miners required to give a specified weight in silver to their Spanish masters after each day’s work. One account claims that \textit{indias varas} were required to hand over to their Spanish masters only the purest ore they collected, called \textit{cacilla ore}, indicating that indigenous workers were allowed to keep all else excavated.\textsuperscript{35} Other accounts claim that the required payment was two marks of silver every week. Regardless of the exact quantity, all accounts agree that after this requirement was filled, indigenous were allowed to keep all ore they excavated.\textsuperscript{36} From this common work agreement developed the category of workers known as \textit{caxchas}, who worked extra hours throughout the weekends excavating to then sell all silver collected to their masters on Sunday entirely for profit. Indigenous workers quickly learned to take advantage of this practice and were soon hiding any rich veins discovered during the week for the weekend; instead they excavated them over the weekend in order to make more personal profit. The Spanish attempted to stop this development, but were largely unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{37}

Some indigenous also smuggled varying quantities of silver ore out of the mines illegally. Indigenous miners could then either sell their ore for a profit in Potosí’s growing market, or bring it back to their homelands to be sold elsewhere. Evidence for

\textsuperscript{33} Mangan, \textit{Trading Roles}, 8.
\textsuperscript{34} Galef-Brown, Nathan. \textit{The Spanish Mit’a and Its Consequences for Andean Communities}, 4; hereafter cited as Galef-Brown, \textit{The Spanish Mit’a}.
\textsuperscript{35} Bakewell, \textit{Miners of the Red Mountain}, 51.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.}, 36.
\textsuperscript{37} Hanke, \textit{The Imperial City of Potosí: an Unwritten Chapter in the History of Spanish America}. (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1956), 15; hereafter cited as Hanke, \textit{The Imperial City of Potosí}. 

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this practice comes from Arzáns de Orsua y Vela’s discussion of the Potosí market place. When writing about Spanish taxation of silver profits shortly before Viceroy Toledo’s arrival in 1573, he mentions that many indigenous were obviously hiding and taking large quantities of silver back to their homelands from the mines. In this specific case, Arzáns de Orsua y Vela indicates that this was done to avoid the “royal fifth” tax.\textsuperscript{38} Any and all profit from the Potosí mines was subjected to a twenty percent tax to the Crown of Spain; by not selling their silver in Potosí, indigenous miners avoided this cost. As late as 1953, Potosí’s mining superintendent grudgingly acknowledged the ongoing illegal smuggling of minerals out of the mines.\textsuperscript{39} This speaks to how skillful miners have become in the art of smuggling, as well as the impossible challenge faced by mine owners to put a halt to the practice. It is difficult to put a figure on the extent of indigenous profit from smuggling silver out of Potosí for the obvious reason that the act of smuggling was illegal according to Spanish law, and therefore the acts were never officially documented. However, it is quite likely that smuggling occurred


\textsuperscript{39} Hanke, \textit{The Imperial City of Potosí}, 18.
frequently, given that it is alluded to quite often in many accounts. This represents one manner in which indigenous gained economically from working in Potosí.

The other method indigenous people employed to benefit from their work in Potosí was to go into the refining business. The term *yanaconas* eventually lost its Incaic meaning, and in 1578 it was declared by Potosí’s royal treasurer to mean any domestic who served the Spanish. However in Potosí the name became closely associated with the refining sector. These *yanaconas* had greater social status than the average indigenous mine worker. This was due to the favor they held with the Spanish, who felt that *yanaconas* were loyal, cooperative subjects because they had no *ayllu* ties and had started mining for the Spanish earlier than other indigenous peoples.

As a result of this preferential treatment, *yanaconas* were not required to pay tribute (until 1572) or do *mit’a* service. This meant that *yanaconas* kept all earnings they made from smelting silver for profit, and there is evidence that they typically made a great deal. One resident of early Potosí wrote that *yanaconas* would “become wealthy and bring to their lands a great quantity of this silver. And this was the reason why so many thousands of Indians from many parts of the realm came to this town.” Until several decades after the opening of Cerro Rico, all excavated ore had to go through these *yanaconas* to be refined in their *guayras* before being sold in market, so they held an unofficial monopoly on this part of the mining process. *Yanaconas* were also completely free to leave Potosí whenever they wished, which demonstrates the high level of freedom they possessed. Arzáns de Orsua y Vela backs up this claim. In his accounts of Potosí

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41 Ibid., 25.
he discusses *yanaconas* who were contracted by Spanish individuals to smelt silver from their mines. While this may seem like a hierarchical relationship, he makes it very clear that *yanaconas* were understood to be free indigenous people, and could contract with whomever they wanted. This demonstrates not only a certain level of freedom, but agency as well. Because *Yanacos* enjoyed a noticeably higher social status and profit margin than the average mineworker, assuming the identity of a *yancona* became an increasingly popular way to escape *mit’a* service in the mines. This eventually led to a decrease in *yancona* status, as different indigenous social groups melded together in a society with starker distinctions: indigenous and Spanish.

This chapter does not seek to negate the perception that the general experience of indigenous at Potosí was anything less than abysmal. However, given the immediate, drastic change from Incan society to the harsh, unforgiving, silver-crazed society of Potosí, it must be recognized that some indigenous individuals adapted swiftly and made the best of a truly horrible situation. Indigenous workers braved the intolerable conditions of Potosí’s mines, entering willingly or by force, to eventually make significant economic gains. When one considers how foreign the concept of silver as currency must have been, it is still more incredible how savvy these indigenous miners were. The exact extent to which indigenous gained economically is unclear, but it is obvious that certain individuals did indeed profit. By working over weekends, smuggling silver as well as dominating the refining sector of the mining process, indigenous miners benefited right along with the Spanish in the first decades of operation at Potosí. This would all change with Viceroy Toledo’s visit in 1572.

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44 Arzáns de Orsúa y Vela, *Historia De La Villa Imperial De Potosí*, 149.
Chapter 3
Viceroy Toledo and the Spanish Mita

On March 19, 1569, Francisco de Toledo left Spain with twenty slaves, seventy-two servants and their families, 6,000 pesos worth of jewelry and assorted arms to defend himself as he sailed in a fleet bound for the New World. Born in Oropesa, Spain on July 10, 1515 to the third Count of Oropesa and Maria de Figueroa, Toledo was related to a wide group of royalty, and was third cousin to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. On May 20, 1568, Charles V’s successor, Phillip II, appointed him to the position of Viceroy of Peru. Toledo arrived in the new colony in September of 1569, serving as the viceroy of Peru for the next thirteen years and answering exclusively to the Spanish king, who gave him a list of orders to fulfill. Toledo’s first task was to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity. He was then instructed to look after other indigenous affairs such as putting a halt to the practice of indigenous personal service to Spaniards and giving authority back to the chiefs (kurakas).¹ Toledo’s term as viceroy (1568-1581) was notable for sweeping changes to the empire such as the reducciones and repartimientos that reorganized indigenous communities into European-styled villages for purposes of taxation, control and religious conversion.

Toledo was also responsible for several key administrative and economic reforms that simultaneously elevated Potosí’s silver production to its highest levels and plunged indigenous workers to new depths of inequality and exploitation. His reforms conform to the Spanish colonialist goal of wealth extraction for the crown, but they had disastrous


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results for the indigenous population already living in the city, as well as for populations scattered throughout the Andes. Included in these reforms were policies regulating mining operations, ordering the creation of water-powered mills for silver refining, and supplying the city with necessary amounts of mercury, water and labor. Above all else, the introduction of mercury amalgamation to the process of refining silver, and the implementation of the mita system of forced indigenous labor completely altered the existing working relationship between the indigenous and Spanish of Potosí. As a result of Toledo’s reforms, indigenous workers lost their foothold in the refining sector and were forced to relinquish any control they had of the mining process to the Spanish. Tragically, these changes ushered in a new era of heightened inequality that effectively ended any opportunities indigenous people held for economic gain within the mines.

By the 1570s, the supply of pure silver ore in Cerro Rico had been mostly depleted. Mine owner Luis Capoche described many of the mines as being “almost abandoned, the buildings in disrepair, and the residents empty-pocketed” by 1572. Viceroy Toledo arrived later the following year, as part of a long tour of the colony. The introduction of mercury amalgamation to the process of refining silver ore was one of Toledo’s most significant reforms in Potosí. While the concept of mercury amalgamation had been around for quite some time, a Spaniard by the name of Bartolomé de Medina had only perfected it several decades earlier. The advantage of mercury amalgamation

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2 The mita system that Toledo implemented is spelled without the apostrophe to distinguish it from its Incan predecessor.


was that it allowed the refining of much lower grade silver compared to previous methods\(^5\). Even though the purest ore in Cerro Rico was already long gone, there was still a large amount of this low-grade silver left to be mined; this new refining process allowed that silver to be accessed.

A steady supply of mercury and water were needed for the new amalgamation process. Mercury, which was used to separate the silver from the rest of the ore, did not exist in the immediate vicinity of Potosí. It was imported from Huancavelica, approximately 200 kilometers south east of Lima, and still more was brought from Spain.\(^6\) Large amounts of water were necessary to power the new refining mills, and this posed yet another problem, as the arid environment of Potosí provided little outside the rainy months from January to April. Toledo solved this problem with a massive dam-building project that would last from 1573 to 1577. Approximately 20,000 indigenous workers labored to build a system of eighteen dams that spanned a distance of eleven miles in the mountains up above the city. These dams collected rainwater, which was then released in a controlled flow of approximately sixty-six gallons.

\(^5\) Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosí; an Unwritten Chapter in the History of Spanish America* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1956), 20; hereafter cited as Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosí*.


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*Figure 7*

A reconstructed water wheel of an *ingenio* or refining mill in Potosí

*Source:* Isaac Galef-Brown
per second down through the ribera to turn the water wheels of 100 refining mills.\textsuperscript{7}

Potosí’s thirst for a steady flow of water had effectively replaced their previous need for steady wind, and Toledo’s dams were a success.

Although the process of mercury amalgamation brought new life and efficiency to the sputtering system of silver production in Potosí, it also functioned to cut out economic opportunity for indigenous Potosinos. The Spanish no longer had any need for the yanaconas, the experienced smelters who reaped profit during the first several decades of mining. Guayras became an antiquated piece of the past, and could not compete with mercury amalgamation. On top of this loss, another of Toledo’s reforms required yanaconas to begin paying tribute to the crown\textsuperscript{8}. The combination of these two factors withdrew from yanaconas their superior status and individuality, while drawing all indigenous together into the same group.

Mercury amalgamation also furthered the suffering of indigenous workers in Potosí for the obvious reason that mercury is extremely toxic. Despite common knowledge in Potosí of the dangers posed by direct contact with mercury, approximately 2,300 indigenous workers labored unprotected in silver refineries at any given time during the inaugural year of the mita, in 1573.\textsuperscript{9} The number of indigenous refinery workers was even greater than the number of indigenous miners. One can only guess how many indigenous workers suffered from the effects of mercury poisoning, whose symptoms including uncontrollable shaking, tooth loss, drooling, weight loss, gum discoloration, and anemia.

\textsuperscript{7} Robins, Mercury, mining, and empire, 27.
\textsuperscript{8} Bakewell, Miners of the Red Mountain, 69.
Mercury amalgamation and increased production of silver necessitated a vast supply of cheap labor in order for it to be profitable for the Spanish. To this end, Toledo implemented a system of forced indigenous labor, known as the *mita*. As discussed in chapter one, Toledo was not the first to use such a system. The Incas successfully employed their *mit’a* system for drafting labor as well. Toledo’s *mita* was quite different however, a distortion of the previous system to match the enormous labor requirements of Potosí. The practice of adapting existing systems of control to Spanish goals was quite common throughout the empire’s history, as it was thought that this would minimize the effects of Spanish takeover. Instead, Toledo’s *mita* proved to be a destructive force that drastically altered the indigenous way of life.

Starting in 1573, the year after Toledo’s first visit, 13,000 *mitayos*, or *mita* workers were sent to Potosí where they would work for a period of one year. Slightly fewer than 4,000 *mitayos* worked in mills and mines at any given time in three shifts. *Mitayos* were indigenous men of working age, between eighteen and fifty, and hailed from a great many locations. Although Africans were used occasionally, they were never considered a convenient replacement for indigenous workers. The Spanish didn’t consider Africans to be skilled miners, and believed that the high altitude and native food rendered them “unfit” for work in Potosí. On the other hand, most Europeans such as Cieza del Leon, claimed that the climate of Potosí was “healthy, especially for the Indians”. He went further to discuss how few indigenous seemed to get sick while in the

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Indigenous workers seemed like an ideal solution to the problem of a shortage of labor and this opinion reflected contemporary colonial ideas of race and environment.

Toledo chose the sixteen provinces surrounding Potosí from which to draft mitayos. While the furthest provinces were required to send only one seventh of their able-bodied men, provinces closer to Potosí had to send a slightly higher percentage. Toledo’s mita was also highly dependent upon the ability of indigenous kurakas, who were responsible for choosing individuals for mita work, just as in the Incan system. In this way, Toledo’s mita built upon foundations set by the Incan mit’a by only requiring a small percentage of men from each village and relying on local leaders to facilitate. However in other ways it differed radically.

Although Toledo’s mita was by definition a form of forced labor, the 1542 New Laws, established by Emperor Charles V banned the use of forced indigenous labor. Spaniards believed that indigenous, unlike Africans, had souls worth saving. This did not by any means lead to a belief in racial equality but did necessitate a standard of treatment. In 1570 Toledo called together the junta consultiva to discuss the labor shortage in Potosí. After some debate, the council decided that “legitimately, and without injury to the Indians, His Majesty [Phillip II], and in his name his viceroy, may compel the Indians, in a determined number, to work in the mines at Potosí and elsewhere in Peru, given certain provisions for their good treatment, adequate and assured compensation, and moderate work”.

Despite providing conditions of labor, the junta consultiva could not have been much more vague in its requirements. The exact manner in which the

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Spanish were to “compel” the Indians to work, along with the “certain provisions for their good treatment” were completely unspecified, leaving Toledo with more than enough freedom to create a new mita system to his liking.

Toledo promulgated various regulations concerning indigenous working conditions, the most significant of which called for a two-week rest period for every one week of mita work. This rest period was supposed to be free time and limited the amount of actual mita work to seventeen weeks out of every year for each mitayo. Theoretically, the rest period would protect indigenous from being overworked, as well as aid mine owners by encouraging mitayos to participate in free labor during their time off. Toledo also set a standard wage for all mitayos of three or four reales per day of mita work, depending on whether the mitayo was working in the mines or mills. Mine owners were ordered to pay mitayos half wages for the time it took them to travel to and from Potosí from their home provinces. These regulations were passed with the express intent of giving indigenous peoples motivation to come to Potosí. To be clear, mita service was compulsory for those who were chosen, but Viceroy Toledo was interested in incorporating incentives into the system to ensure both proper quota attendance and decent treatment of mitayos. His organization and regulations succeeded in supplying Potosí with a continuous pool of cheap indigenous labor. Historian Enrique Tandeter points out that the process of leading workers to Potosí from their homelands was handled quite efficiently, given the difficulties of long distance travel.

18 Tandeter, Coercion and Market, 37.
Nevertheless, Toledo’s provisions for protecting the indigenous from poor
treatment were an utter failure. In reality, most mitayos never received any rest period
whatsoever. This was due to the enactment of oppressive changes that were gradually
introduced by the mine owners. Although Toledo’s regulations were clearly stated, he
had completely left out any means by which to enforce them, and so mine owners were
essentially free to disregard anything that got in the way of profit.

For example, many mine owners eventually switched from the system of hourly
mit’a work that Toledo had dictated, to a system of production quotas. This new system,
called working por tareas, required mitayos to produce an amount of ore equivalent to
twelve costales per day of work, for every week of mita service. If this quota was not
met, mine owners refused to pay a mitayo his wages. Quotas were purposely set
unrealistically high, which resulted in mitayos working longer and longer to fulfill them,
often working well into their two-week rest period. Toledo later implemented night shifts
as a response to increasing pressure from Spain for a higher output of silver. Again, he
articulated that mitayos were not to be overworked; however by 1606 this meant that
some mitayos were spending their entire week of mit’a labor within the Cerro.

Viceroy Toledo’s system of wages gradually collapsed. Even after the
introduction of mercury amalgamation, mining was not always productive enough for
mine owners to fully pay mitayos and still come away with a significant profit. Enrique
Tandeter calculated that if mitayos had been paid their officially set salary regularly, the
total cost to mine owners would have been 28.7% of all revenue. On top of the royal fifth
tax and other production costs, mine owners’ profit margins would have grown thin

19 Fabrega, Potosi, 59.
20 Tandeter, Coercion and Market, 37.
indeed. Because of this, wages were often ignored completely. If a *mitayo* missed a single day of work during his *mita* service, he might not receive payment for any of his work.\(^1\) In reality, only 11.4\% of mining revenues were spent paying *mitayos*, less than half of the appropriate amount.\(^2\)

Mine owners were not only stingy with wages, but mistreated and exploited *mitayos* as well. The Spanish were desperate to make a profit, so when *mitayos* were unfit for work in the mines, mine owners commonly rented them out to other businesses in Potosí, despite Toledo’s regulation forbidding the practice. Both white and indigenous overseers, called *mayordomos* and *pongos* respectively, were the immediate authority within each mine, and they mistreated *mitayos* continuously. The Spanish viewed *mita* workers as lazy and slow moving and overseers commonly imposed physical punishments.\(^3\) Added together, these factors made *mita* service a virtual death sentence.

Cerro Rico became known as “the mountain that eats men”.

Historians usually focus on the Toledo viceroyalty period because there were very larger indigenous populations involved, facing much more disastrous circumstances than ever before. Hellish descriptions, like those of *cacique* and general captain of the *mita*, paint a picture of deplorable working conditions, stark inequality and rampant indigenous exploitation in Potosí:

> The tunnels are blocked and at every pass the Indians have to enter and exit through small passages in the earth with much difficulty, seeing the obvious precipices and collapses of the mines from poor repairs and tripping constantly on snags and holes that cover the paths. Many are buried in the heart of the Cerro, and it is incomprehensible to work for ten or twelve *costales* of silver per day and others as much per night, for in

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\(^1\) Fabrega, *Potosí*, 61.  
order to take one costal worth of silver from the center of the mine to the entrance necessitates an entire day.\textsuperscript{24}

This quotation demonstrates just how unrealistic quota expectations had become for mitayos. It also paints a picture of just how dreadful working conditions in the mines were. Clearly little had changed since the early days of mining operations at Potosí. Indigenous exploitation has characterized many interactions between Europeans and natives in the New World, and the Potosí mita is a prime example of the phenomenon. According to Lewis Hanke, “no other institution provoked such reams of correspondence, such heated discussions before king, council of the Indies, and viceroys.”\textsuperscript{25}

After introducing the mita system to Potosí, Toledo turned his attention to the city itself and implemented further small-scale structural reforms. These reforms served to segregate the city’s populations and put indigenous at further disadvantage. The Viceroy’s structural changes were on a par with the standards of the day and were probably meant to increase efficiency while simultaneously discouraging interracial conflict. For example, he

\textsuperscript{24} Translation from Fabrega, Potosí, 62: “Los caminos están ciegos y a cada paso los indios tienen que entrar y salir por troneras arrastrándose por ellas con mucha penalidad, viendo patentes los precipicios y derrumbamientos de las minas por mal reparadas y tropezando constantemente con escalones y gabarras de que están sembrados los caminos. Muchos están sepultados en las entrañas del Cerro, y por ello es incomprendible el trabajo por tareas de 10 y 12 costales de metal limpio y pallado de día y otros tantos de noche, pues para sacar un costal del centro de la mina a la superficie de ella es menester un día entero.”

\textsuperscript{25} Hanke, The Imperial City of Potosí, 16.
organized Potosí’s poor and *mitayos* into areas outside the city called *rancherías*, between the mines and *ingenios*. These locations were then further segregated by *ayllu* of origin, creating small neighborhoods in effect, based on one’s ancestry. 

Toledo also widened streets in Potosí, further separating the Spanish section from the indigenous with the *ribera*, a channeled stream, acting as a natural border. These changes moved indigenous residents physically closer to the *cerro*, and thus made herding the indigenous workforce easier access for forced labor. This housing disparity is still somewhat visible today.

However, it was obvious that these residential districts were by no means equal in quality. When natural disasters hit the region, indigenous settlements were always affected more than those inhabited by the Spanish. A hailstorm in 1573, for example, destroyed many indigenous homes and killed thirty of their indigenous occupants while leaving the Spanish part of town largely unscathed. This indicates, among other things, substandard indigenous housing. Occasional floods from breaks in the *Kari-Kari* dams also laid waste to indigenous sections of the city, affecting the Spanish far less. This was due in part to the location where the indigenous were placed, which was lower and more vulnerable to flooding than the areas reserved for the Spanish. These factors

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27 Arzán de Orsúa y Vela, *Historia De La Villa Imperial De Potosí*, 147.

*Figure 9* A gate that once separated the indigenous section from the European section.

*Source:* Isaac Galef-Brown
added significantly to the era of inequality Toledo ushered in.

The precise figures of mitayos who died working in Potosí are not known. The variety of hazards that indigenous workers were exposed to on a daily basis would lead one to assume that the number was quite significant. A member of the council of the Indies claimed in 1550 that “what is carried to Spain from Peru is not silver, but the blood and sweat of the Indians.”\(^{28}\) Within the first fifty years of the implementation of the mit’a indigenous Andean populations experienced a drastic decline in population from 1,045,000 in 1570 to an alarming 858,000 in 1620.\(^{29}\) While this decline is clearly linked to the high mitayo mortality rate in Potosí, it should be noted that indigenous emigration from the sixteen provinces designated by Toledo for mita service contributed as well.\(^{30}\) Evidence suggests that this number was by no means negligible and for many, uprooting entire families was a better option than working in Potosí.

Emigration did not, however, protect indigenous from getting caught and returned to their province of origin. For this reason, many took a second escape route by claiming the status of yanacona and working for Spaniards. A census within the provinces designated for mita service taken in 1650 showed a figure of 14.2% yanaconas, a dramatic rise in the category since Toledo’s census in the 1570s. Tandeter points out that this change is too large to be explained by heredity alone, but instead proves that many individuals utilized the status of yanacona and the personal service associated with it to get out of mita labor.\(^{31}\)

\(^{28}\) Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosí*, 25.
\(^{29}\) Fabrega, *Potosí*, 56.
\(^{31}\) Tandeter, *Coercion and Market*, 27.
After Spanish American independence, Simon Bolivar finally abolished Toledo’s mita system in 1825, but not before several centuries of damage had been done. The mita system has been called a “form of servitude worse than slavery” and “accused of depopulating the provinces subject to it”.

We are still struggling to understand its widespread effects today. However its immediate effects in Potosí can be defined more easily. Indigenous Potosinos were effectively removed from control within the silver production process. In their place, azogueros were put in charge, leaving the indigenous to suffer in their new role as exploited wage earners. Viceroy Toledo successfully implemented a system in which Spaniards were the only ones who could profit. Silver from Potosí was circulated worldwide, and the Spanish peso became common currency. Indigenous Potosinos had lost their shaky but profitable foothold in the mines of Cerro Rico.

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Chapter 4

The Marketplace of Potosí

"Common observation of status competition shows that in times of change, people attain or retain status by being alert to styles and values emanating from new centers of power and internalizing them. Responding to subtle cues, even unconsciously, we adopt new styles of dress, speech, and self-carriage, new likes and dislikes— to a degree, new identities." - Jeremy Mumford

The story of indigenous Potosinos does not end with mass exploitation. While large populations were destined to labor in the mines and refineries for the next 250 years with little opportunity for autonomy, other indigenous peoples came to Potosí for an entirely different reason. In the heart of the city, in the ever-looming shadow of Cerro Rico, lay Potosí’s thriving marketplace.

This would inspire many indigenous to come to Potosí of their own accord. Throughout the city’s history, markets in Potosí provided a site for complex intercultural social change, where indigenous simultaneously made significant economic gains and resisted colonial pressures that had begun spreading.

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across the Andes. The introduction of the mita system and mercury amalgamation had brought an end to indigenous interest in mining by rupturing the control they held in the refining sector and enforcing the already existing power dynamics. This meant that the marketplace was the only remaining institution that contained economic prospects for Spanish, indigenous and Africans alike. Here, it was that indigenous peoples became crucial participants and administrators in an emerging confluence of indigenous goods, tradition and practice. The market acted as a catalyst, promoting direct contact with European customs and capitalism.

In this chapter I argue that the markets of Potosí decreased the pressures placed on indigenous communities by Spanish colonial forces. Tributes, challenges to their culture, mita service and forced migrations from the sixteen mita provinces were all examples of colonial pressure. Potosí’s markets eased this stress by allowing many indigenous to preserve their traditions and norms and to pay off tribute debts. Ayllu participation in the marketplace, facilitated by kurakas, eventually evolved to make indigenous women the primary market actors, seeking to accumulate personal wealth under the European Capitalist market model and enabling them to become more independent from men. Potosí’s marketplace also sparked the creation of new identities and social roles for indigenous Potosinos, who were constantly adapting to the new system.

These breakthroughs developed in an environment that provided stark contrast to conditions in the mines of Cerro Rico above the city. Potosí’s markets reflected the vast diversity of the city itself, with an eclectic variety of peoples from Europe, Africa and the Andes converging simultaneously. The led to the development of a wide spectrum of racial identities, formed by the Spanish in an attempt to make sense of an ethnic diversity
they had never encountered before. This diversity promoted an enormous variety of cross-cultural interactions and cultural syncretism. Certainly the marketplace contained elements of racism and inequality, but cooperation and intermingling existed as well. These elements combined to create a truly unique setting that managed to endure throughout the city’s long history.

This chapter is built upon a number of primary and secondary sources. European visitors to Potosí wrote extensive descriptions of its marketplace, and these are quite helpful when attempting to conceptualize the population that participated in these economic transactions. Arzans de Orsúa y Vela and Cieza de León provide detailed first hand accounts of what was sold in Potosí, and who was selling them. These accounts also detail the changing population of Potosí, and this provides insight into the role Potosí played as a developing center for trade with the surrounding regions. The work of Jane E. Mangan was by far the most influential source when writing this chapter. Although I am normally hesitant to depend so considerably on one source, her research is based heavily on archival work, and thus presents information from a plethora of primary sources unavailable to me. She introduces persuasive ideas about the significant role indigenous women played in the marketplace, and also looks at the development of cultural syncretism through the production and consumption of two mediums: bread and chicha. Steve Stern is another historian that has contributed significantly to our understanding of Potosí’s marketplace. Through analyzing general market trends and patterns, his research suggests that indigenous peoples resisted colonialism through their market participation. This argument gives new depth and importance to indigenous transactions and adds an entirely new aspect to interpretations of the marketplace.
Combined, these sources provide a completely different image of Potosí than a traditional focus on Toledo’s mita system might render.

Although many of Viceroy Toledo’s reforms throughout the city led to further spatial segregation of the city’s population (see Chapter 3), he was also responsible for ordering the construction of the famous Plaza del Gato in the center of town. Its name came from a Spanish corruption of the quechua word “ccatu”, and it was here that Potosí’s biggest and most important market would flourish.

Ironically, Plaza del Gato and other markets throughout the city only prospered because of the population influx and incredible diversity of people that Toledo’s destructive mita system brought to the city. This ethnic diversity is important to recognize in order to understand precisely who was participating in Potosí’s markets. From its founding, the city was rapidly transforming into a diverse collection of different cultures and ethnicities. By 1611, the city’s population was approximately 160,000 inhabitants, which included 76,000 indigenous, 3,000 Spanish, 35,000 creoles, 40,000 non-Spanish Europeans, as well as 6,000 Africans or mulattoes. The major increase in indigenous inhabitants can largely be explained by the rise in numbers of indigenous women. These women and their children came to Potosí due to a common practice of mitayos bringing their families when they were called for mita service.

Potosí’s African population may have seemed slightly out of place in the Andes, where their individuals of their ethnicity were quite rare still. They represented a distinct

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diversity found in few other places throughout the Spanish colonies. Many were slaves, but a free African population certainly existed, motivating the Spanish authorities to issue an order in 1589 barring Africans from employing yanaconas or indigenous miners. This order demonstrates two things about Potosí’s racial mix: blatant racism was incorporated into the city’s governing structure, and part of the free African population in Potosí was in a respectable financial and social position.\(^4\) Spanish law commonly suppressed non-whites in Potosí, especially peoples who experienced any kind of success that might challenge the defined social hierarchy introduced by the Spanish.

Potosí’s Spanish population was also changing, as marked by the first Spanish baby to be born in Potosí in 1584. This birth represented the introduction and growth of the Spanish family unit and female population.\(^5\) This implies a notable absence of Spanish women, as Spanish men had lived and worked in Potosí almost entirely without their female counterparts for the previous thirty-nine years. It was thought that Potosí’s high altitude, along with the rough terrain of the entire colony was unfit for Spanish women, and especially for giving birth. Potosí’s female Spanish population only grew after several decades of mining operations, by which time areas of Spain’s colony such as Potosí had become more developed, and better fit to receive Spanish women.

Historian Lewis Hanke sees the absence of Spanish women in Potosí’s society to have been a leading factor in the rise of a large mestizo population.\(^6\) This population was important because it challenged existing Spanish racial views. The mestizo populations of Latin America had become synonymous with illegitimacy because of the different


\(^{6}\) Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosí; an Unwritten Chapter in the History of Spanish America*. (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1956), 34; hereafter cited as Hanke, *The Imperial City of Potosí*. 
statuses of a Spanish father and an indigenous mother. Becoming intimate with anyone of lesser status was a very degrading trait in Spain; when a Spaniard had sex with an indigenous woman in the Americas, this shame was normally passed on, stigmatizing the child. Some individuals were able to take advantage of their part Spanish heritage, which normally came from their father, to receive education and financial benefits. Hiding under the guise of mestizaje also became a common manner in which mitayos resisted fulfilling their mita service. Mestizos were not required to labor in the mines, and this represents one significant comfort that came with the mixed racial identity. In his book Race and Sex in Latin America, anthropologist Peter Wade writes, “the pressures generated by subordinate people seeking to escape the strictures of oppression were very hard to contain fully.” This was certainly the case in colonial Potosí.

The convergence of so many racial identities forced the Spanish authorities to form a new racial hierarchy in order to make sense of life in Potosí. These divisions were both fluid and dynamic. While ancestry and phenotype were by far the most important categories, other characteristics such as religion, family, dress, job, language and wealth played a part in defining one’s race as well. The Spanish concept of limpieza de sangre literally translated as “pure blood”, was transferred from the Iberian Peninsula to colonial societies of the Americas, where it ran into novel challenges. Originally used to identify Christians without a trace of Jewish ancestry, the Spanish Crown gave out the title of limpieza de sangre to all indigenous who converted to Christianity, essentially giving the title of racial purity to non-whites and demonstrating that concepts of race were not

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9 Wade, Race and Sex in Latin America, 86.
always based purely on ethnicity.\textsuperscript{10} Newfound diversity in cities such as Potosí created a rapidly adapting society unmatched by most other parts of the colonial empire. Lewis Hanke confirms Potosí’s unique diversity and emphasizes the social unrest that it directly caused.\textsuperscript{11} It is hard to image that the city was without violent disturbances, given the novelty of such a varied population in tandem with the obvious presence of racism.

The silver craze caused by the discovery at Cerro Rico in 1545 made Potosí a unique hub, incorporating an eclectic variety of indigenous groups, Spaniards, Africans, and other Europeans. The official spectrum of racial identities was a result of Spanish attempts to make sense of a type of ethnic diversity they had never before encountered. As historian Jeremy Mumford insightfully puts it, “the native born people of the Americas had many identities- based on age, sex, ethnicity, property, status- but it was colonialism that stamped on them the label “Indian”. This caused the creation of racial categories in Potosí that Mumford describes as “fluid, malleable, yet constrained.”\textsuperscript{12}

As their majority status in Potosí’s population statistics might suggest, indigenous peoples and their goods dominated the marketplace. In 1603, only 9.5% of goods in Potosí’s markets came form outside the Americas, and this is evidence of heavy indigenous involvement.\textsuperscript{13} Unfortunately, almost all indigenous trade went unrecorded because any goods that could be categorized as ‘indigenous’ (also called productos de la tierra) were not taxed by Spanish authority. This was in part due to the realization that most indigenous were financially unable to pay taxes but this leniency was also meant to

\textsuperscript{10} Wade, Race and Sex in Latin America, 69.
\textsuperscript{11} Hanke, The Imperial City of Potosí, 34.
\textsuperscript{12} Mumford, “Aristocracy on the Auction Block,” 1.
be a minor compensation for their *mit'a* service.\(^{14}\) It should be noted however, that indigenous traded many goods that were not under the category of *productos de la tierra*. Silver for example, was a common product of indigenous trade that by Spanish law should have been taxed. Instead, only an estimated thirty-five percent of all transactions were taxed, with the Spanish authorities tending to act more as a distant power in matters concerning trade.\(^{15}\)

Some of the best descriptions we have of Potosí’s market come from visitor accounts. Many Europeans marveled at the extent of such wealth laid out in one plaza. Arzans de Orsúa y Vela for example, exclaimed that Plaza del Gato “was of such magnitude and richness that very few or none are equal to it in the world.” He went on to detail the extent of indigenous participation in the market place:

> The Indians sell many goods from Peru along with jewels and clothing, much to the convenience of the buyer. The said provisions are sold everyday of the week in this plaza.\(^{16}\)

Orsúa y Vela estimated the value of all the goods traded exclusively among indigenous as somewhere between 25,000 and 30,000 pesos of gold per day, with some especially busy days ranging to upwards of 40,000 pesos. Products sold by the indigenous traders varied hugely, but included coca leaves, dried potatoes, maize, blankets, cloth, fine clothing, bread, the alcoholic corn beer chicha, meat and baskets.\(^{17}\) Additional smaller markets existed throughout the city, such as at Plaza del Carbon, the second largest market, in which indigenous sold hens, eggs, lard and charcoal. Other vendors sold flour, barley,


\(^{16}\) Translated from Arzás de Orsúa y Vela, *Historia De La Villa Imperial De Potosí*, 148: “Las indias venden cuantos mantenimientos se cogen en el Perú, como también otras alhajas y ropa con mucha conveniencia. Los dichos mantenimientos se venden todos los días de la semana en esta plaza.”

\(^{17}\) *Ibid.*, 149.
firewood, ore, llama dung for fuel and wax.\textsuperscript{18} Cieza de León, a Spanish traveler who visited the city early on in 1549, confirmed Orsúa y Vela’s impressions, adding that Potosí’s markets were far larger than the market in Cuzco, and that the sheer quantity of items drove prices down to the lowest in the area.\textsuperscript{19}

An area in the market was reserved for a practice that became known as \textit{rescate} trade. These transactions were entirely unofficial dealings among indigenous Potosinos, mostly trading stolen, smuggled silver as well as silver extracted in miners’ free time. This contraband silver was never registered at refineries, and so the royal fifth was never taken from it.\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Rescate} trade is an interesting example of indigenous participation in the marketplace because, unlike the sale of other goods, it was completely uninterrupted by Spanish authority. This practice demonstrates the direct connection that existed between Potosí’s markets and the silver mines. Most of the silver mined by indigenous workers over the weekend or smuggled out of the mines (see chapter two) wound up in the \textit{rescate} trade, enabling both indigenous miners and traders to prosper from the business.

While \textit{rescate} trade was not representative of all trade in Potosí, it does demonstrate exclusively indigenous participation in sectors of the marketplace. The accounts of the priest Cristobal Díaz de los Santos, an early Spanish visitor to Potosí, summed up indigenous marketplace domination when he observed in 1556 that Potosí offered “great benefits for \textit{indios} and \textit{yanaconas} in this said Villa because together they bring things to the market in the Villa [and] from everything they make money.”\textsuperscript{21}

Cristobal Díaz brings up another key point relating to indigenous participation and that is 

\textsuperscript{19} Cieza De León, \textit{The Travels of Pedro De Cieza De León}, 391.
\textsuperscript{20} Mangan, \textit{Trading Roles}, 32.
\textsuperscript{21} Mangan, \textit{A market of identities}, 66.
how goods came to Potosí. Because the vast majority of goods traded in Potosí were of indigenous origin, the market was quite dependent upon regional indigenous suppliers. Traditional supply routes and modes of transportation throughout the Andes remained from Incan times, and many of these were adapted, remodeled and enlarged to fit Potosí’s growing needs. An indigenous monopoly on supply routes is clear evidence of a behind-the-scenes but key role they played in the market economy.22

Historian Steve J. Stern argues that indigenous participation within the colonial markets of Potosí represented a form of resistance in itself. Faced with overwhelming colonial pressures of forced migrations, mit’a labor and monetary tribute to the Spanish, many ayllus made the decision to become part of the developing market economy. By making this decision, ayllus took advantage of the increase in material demand that colonial markets created. Joining the market economy on their own terms allowed many ayllus to maintain their independence, preserve their traditions and norms, while simultaneously easing colonial pressures.23 For example, if an ayllu had a surplus of goods after a harvest, the kuraka might send a representative to Potosí to sell the surplus in exchange for money, which could then be used to pay off tributes the entire ayllu owed. This represented an entirely new role for the traditional Andean social group of the ayllu. While it seems that many ayllus maintained their communal functioning, their participation within Potosí’s market economy is a perfect example of how indigenous peoples preserved their traditions while adapting to new colonial norms.

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Stern argues that a second form of indigenous resistance took place in Potosí’s markets, initiated by those indigenous who actively chose to participate in the market economy in order to accumulate personal wealth. This strategy, mainly employed by women, closely followed the European capitalist economic model, and showed a very high degree of adaptation from the Incan economic system.

In fact, according to Mangan, indigenous women much more often than men carried out actual economic transactions in Potosí. While indigenous males worked with ayllus to contribute products in bulk quantities to the market, indigenous women made up the vast majority of the actual vendors within Potosí markets. They were an integral part of Potosí’s economy as early as the 1550s and began developing identities based on this participation. Indias pallas for example, were a group of indigenous noblewomen who joined Potosí’s marketplace. They were mostly coca traders, and developed an identity through this trade as well as though their dress, jewelry, and heritage. Their unique identity was even discernable to European outsiders like Cieza de León, who commented on their general attractive physical appearance when he visited the city.

Although female vendors were often sent as representatives of their ayllus, but from the 1570s onwards there is evidence that many women gained some independence

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24 Mangan, A market of identities, 62.
25 Ibid., 68.
and acted on their own. This is demonstrated by the fact that many Spaniards in Potosí stopped making trade agreements with *kurakas*, making them instead with the indigenous women vendors in the market, which was often more convenient.\footnote{Mangan, *A market of identities*, 69.} Other evidence points to the same conclusion of indigenous women gaining economic independence. Mangan points out that it was far more common for indigenous women than indigenous men to notarize wills in Potosí.\footnote{Mangan, *Trading Roles*, 11.} It is obvious that women were in charge of business affairs to a significant degree, had the experience necessary, or were perhaps more knowledgeable than men. Mangan also writes that it was also far more likely for women than men to receive credit extensions, indicating a level of confidence creditors held in female merchants, which could have been based on both experience and skill working in the marketplace. Indigenous women later expanded their role within Potosí’s markets to become prominent grocers, vendors and creditors themselves, as well as owners real estate. Eventually indigenous women owned and rented out about a third of all Potosí establishments dealing in food or drink.\footnote{Ibid., 61.}

Indigenous women barkeepers and producers of the Andean corn beer, called chicha, played an even bigger role in Potosí’s economy. As of 1603, 1.6 million bottles of the beverage were consumed annually in Potosí. Fray Diego de Ocaña wrote that chicha sales amounted to roughly 300,000 pesos every week, commenting, “This is the most notable thing I can say of Potosí.”\footnote{Ocaña, Fray Diego. *Un Viaje Fascinante Por La América Hispana Del Siglo XVI*. Edited by Arturo Alvarez. (Madrid, Stadium, 1969), 191; hereafter cited as Ocaña, *Un Viaje Fascinante*.} The importance and consumption of chicha had changed dramatically between the pre-conquest times and colonial eras. Originally used for rituals, regulated by the state and mostly consumed by elites, consumption grew and
became more varied in Potosí. Overall, the Spanish refrained from drinking the beverage and abhorred the common binge drinking it occasioned, considering chicha morally bad and a potential cause of a decrease in silver production.\textsuperscript{30} Spanish elites even tried several times to repress the production and consumption of chicha, which they believed to be “offensive to God”. When the Spanish began importing corn flour into the city for bread production, they found that much of the import ended up going towards chicha instead. The large indigenous population living in Potosí meant there was consistently a very large market and high demand for the drink. The growth of the chicha business parallels Potosí’s increase in population and diversity; the two were directly related.\textsuperscript{31} Despite Spanish attempts to intervene by regulating the importation of corn flour and shutting down \textit{chicherías} in town, production and consumption continued unimpeded.\textsuperscript{32} Many indigenous women just modified their recipes. Chicha conflicts represented a form of passive indigenous resistance with the intentional circumvention of Spanish law in an effort to uphold and preserve pre-conquest tradition.

Clashes between Spanish legal officials and indigenous women vendors were quite common in Potosí and they demonstrated how prominent some women had become. One group of women, called \textit{indias regatones} for their aggressive marketing techniques, sparked widespread controversy. Arising in the 1580s as a response to a decrease in overall profits caused by the introduction of Spanish women to the market economy, these indigenous women were known for their raucous street vending. They employed aggressive strategies such as buying goods cheaply outside of the city limits and reselling them at a much higher price in the city center, all the while aware that

\textsuperscript{30} Mangan, \textit{Trading Roles}, 82.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, 159.
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, 91.
Spanish authorities were constantly trying to regulate product pricing in an effort to control the markets. *Indias regatones* did not work alongside any *ayllus* nor *kurakas*, but were independent.\(^{33}\) They are a good example of indigenous Potosinos who prospered from the market economy, but also of a conscious indigenous effort to resist colonial control.

The Spanish harbored both resentment and concern towards the developing indigenous involvement in the marketplace. As early as 1561, Juan de Matienzo, a Spanish official visiting Potosí, counted approximately 20,000 indigenous peoples making their living in Potosí by selling in the market. Matienzo described the many indigenous Potosinos who kept themselves busy with “unimportant tasks such as making candles and bread, and selling fruit and other things to eat.”\(^{34}\) Matienzo’s disdain for indigenous trade was probably shared by Spanish officials, as most Spaniards held an exclusive focus on silver production. Despite this obvious bias, it demonstrates more than widespread indigenous involvement in the marketplace. The Spanish clearly thought little of market trade early on in Potosí’s history, but as time went on they would not be able to ignore it.

After noticing the success that indigenous experienced within the market, Spaniards gradually began to participate as well. The role of merchant or grocer was considered to be an exclusively indigenous role in early Potosí society. Hanke found that gradually, more and more Spaniards began to take on this position. Eager to profit but worried about the implications of contradicting social standards, some Spaniards claimed they were going on hunting trips so as to cover their real intentions of seeking

\(^{33}\) Mangan, *A market of identities*, 70.
\(^{34}\) Bakewell, *Silver and Entrepreneurship in Seventeenth-century Potosí*, 22.
commercial goods to sell in Potosí as merchants.\textsuperscript{35} As Spanish trading became more common, the role of merchant eventually became an acceptable position for a Spaniard to hold. And while still unenthusiastic about \textit{chicha}, some accepted the increasing demand for the product, and they producing the beverage for sale right alongside indigenous counterparts.\textsuperscript{36} The Spanish were adapting to traditionally indigenous roles, and Potosí society evolved to deem the roles acceptable. These two developments aren’t incredibly surprising when one recognizes Potosí as a society driven by the individual goal of accumulating personal wealth.

Adaptations were not limited to the business of selling however, but spread to food consumption and taste. Indigenous Potosinos gradually began to eat bread on a regular basis despite it being a product introduced to the Andes by the Spanish.\textsuperscript{37} Although wheat and barley were never as popular as quinoa because of their poor adaptability, indigenous Andean peoples did begin to grow them in small quantities.\textsuperscript{38} Potosí’s markets acted as a cultural exchange and, with the increase of cross-cultural interaction, traditional norms and prohibitions collapsed. Motivation for profit served as inspiration for both indigenous peoples and Spaniards to break traditional paths of behavior.

Cooperation between indigenous and Spanish traders in the form of business agreements and trade developed as well. Orsúa y Vela explained in his accounts of the Potosí market that indigenous who worked with the Spanish tended to do very well and always sold everything they brought. He elaborated by saying that “todas partes acudian

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\textsuperscript{35} Hanke, \textit{The Imperial City of Potosí}, 28.
\textsuperscript{36} Mangan, \textit{Trading Roles}, 46.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 46.
con bastimentos y cosas necesarias para su proveimiento”.

Orsúa’s observation demonstrates the existence of a clear cross-cultural partnership that hints at the presence of equality, albeit limited, within the marketplace.

Overall, Potosí’s markets demonstrate adaptation from the Incan economy to the capitalist system introduced by the Spanish. For example, although much of Potosí’s market economy was based on silver from the mines, which was used as a form of currency, a complex system of credit developed as well. This mixture of payments in cash, food and credit represents a transitional phase between the pre-conquest Incan economy that had no form of currency, and the European capitalism, which was based entirely on silver. Bakers and chicheros needed credit to buy ingredients to make their products, consumers commonly used it to buy these products and employees were often paid in a combination of food, cash and credit. The role of coca in Potosí also illustrates this transition from Incan to colonial economic patterns. During the Inca Empire coca was used mostly for religious purposes and not heavily traded. In Potosí however, the product gained a new monetary value, and due to the rising demand from Potosí’s concentrated indigenous population, became available in bulk for the first time.

Despite widespread inequality and Spanish marketplace regulations, many indigenous peoples prospered within Potosí. Indigenous women especially gained significant independence from their access to Potosí’s silver currency and their new role as economic actors within the marketplace, which included overseeing a large percentage of all transactions and agreements. A variety of new market-based identities emerged as well, as new groups sought opportunity provided by Potosí’s markets. More than

39 Arzáns de Orsúa y Vela, Historia De La Villa Imperial De Potosí, 149.
40 Mangan, Trading Roles, 110.
41 Ibid., 30.
anything else, these developments demonstrate a wide spectrum of indigenous adaptations. Some of them can be viewed as forms of resistance to colonial forces, and this proves that Spanish control over Potosí’s markets was largely theoretical. In reality, indigenous peoples were some of the most influential actors in the market economy.

Potosí’s marketplace was a catalyst of change because it offered indigenous peoples an opportunity they had never experienced; trade with a diverse but concentrated population in a city with high demand for their products and a monetary system to standardize transactions. These factors combined to create ample room for economic profit that was unavailable elsewhere. Potosí’s unmatched atmosphere of competition drove indigenous adaptations to develop at a faster pace, speeding up significantly what might otherwise have been a lengthy process of transition between Incan and colonial systems.42

Conclusion

I have always been fascinated by the phenomenon of vastly different cultures meeting for the first time. The expansion of European power worldwide during the age of exploration witnessed many of these interactions, almost always with disastrous implications for native peoples. While stories like those of Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro conquering vast empires against all odds are intriguing, they are very broad narratives that tend to emphasize the European perspective of the encounter. These narratives can explain long lasting power dynamics, as well as the spread of Spanish and Christianity through much of South America. They reveal little complexity regarding social and cultural changes that took place as a result of the interaction, nor describe any kind of immediate change in the lives of average people apart from the effects of contracting deadly European diseases.

How does one characterize the encounter between Spaniards and indigenous peoples in Potosí? Should one emphasize the mita system as a whole to demonstrate the exploitive nature of Spanish Colonialism? Or would it be more accurate to take a “bottom-up” approach that studies individual interactions between Spaniards and indigenous peoples in Potosí? These approaches tell diverging narratives; the former describes a relationship defined by inequality from a Eurocentric view and portrays Spanish colonialism as a form of globalization that westernized the rest of the world, the latter describes a more complex relationship of resistance to European colonial forces and a mutual social change. In truth, a combination of both historical approaches may give us
the most rounded interpretation and suggests that Potosí’s history is laden with multiple narratives of cross-cultural interaction.

While one must understand the complexity of Spanish-indigenous relations in the colonial era, it is also important to recognize that elements of its unequal power dynamic remain prevalent throughout Latin America today. In countries like Bolivia, international corporations have replaced imperialist nations as a lingering foreign influence in national affairs, sparking conflict with Bolivians that can be seen throughout the country’s mining industry and politics. In 2006, the country elected its first president of indigenous heritage. Originally a coca farmer in eastern Bolivia, Evo Morales rose to political prominence as leader of the coca union, becoming president of the country with the highest indigenous population in the continent. The significance of Evo’s rise is enormous. He is the first man of indigenous heritage to lead Bolivia, following a long line of criollos (locally-born people of pure or mostly Spanish ancestry) who had ruled it ever since independence in 1825. With a turbulent past of violent coups and civil wars, Evo’s presidency represents a triumph for indigenous populations throughout South America and perhaps a step towards regaining some control of their country.

Bolivia’s mining industry remains quite substantial and the developments in this sector within the past several decades relate to the indigenous resistance that persists in the country to this day. The country’s vast silver deposits are long gone, but mines like

Figure 12
Graffiti on a wall in El Alto, Bolivia
Source: Isaac Galef-Brown
Potosí are still open. Large amounts of other minerals remain untapped. The mines of Potosí are still such in operation today but are worked mostly for the less valuable mineral of tin, which is a major export. Zinc, lithium and natural gas have also become significant factors in the national economy.

In 1952, Bolivia’s mines were nationalized with the creation of COMIBOL, (Bolivian Mining Corporation).¹ Miners benefited from this development, but the dropping prices of metals worldwide and the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies in the sixties and seventies returned the majority of Bolivia’s mining industry to privatization. COMIBOL still operates several mines throughout the country today, employing unionized, regularly paid miners. This small percentage of the indigenous mining workforce enjoys rights that were unheard of in colonial times. Unfortunately, the rest of Bolivia’s mines are operated by either small, private cooperatives or international companies like the US based Coeur d’Alene and Apex Silver Mines.² Cooperatives control operations at Potosí today, and their miners are generally paid according to the amount and quality of the ore. Working conditions are still oppressive, and silicosis normally sets in after approximately ten years of mine work. I visited the mines as part of a three-week trip to Bolivia in December of 2012. Our tour

² Keane, “Bolivian Miners Protest Tax Increase.”
only lasted about an hour, but by the end I was very ready to leave. Tourists are expected
to bring gifts of coca, *ceibo* - a highly alcoholic drink - or dynamite to the miners in
return for entrance into the mines. The necessity of these three items for work is a
testament to the plight of modern indigenous miners working throughout the country.

While it is clear that Bolivia’s indigenous groups have taken strides towards
freeing their country of foreign influence, the mining industry is a prime example of an
area in which exploitation remains prominent. Working conditions and contractual
arrangements often remain similar to those the *mitayos* faced working under the quota
system in the colonial period. Colonial mining methods using pick axes and dynamite
are also still used today as well. Large international companies have replaced the
Spanish colonial authority, and they retain the profits from these deposits, which are still
leaving the country. A keen foreign interest in Bolivia’s minerals remains and most
indigenous miners today gain very little from their labor.

Bolivia’s booming lithium industry is a case in point. Many have begun to call
the poor landlocked country the new ‘Saudi Arabia’ of lithium, the valuable mineral used
to manufacture batteries having been discovered in vast supply in the southern salt flats
of Uyuni. Although the industry is still in its infancy and more testing needs to be done
to determine the accessibility of lithium concentrations, Evo Morales has led the way in
encouraging excavation. Understandably, many indigenous Bolivians are hesitant about
the development of this industry and fear that it could lead to further exploitation of the
country’s resources and inhabitants. History seems to agree with this assumption.

President Morales, however, believes that a middle ground can be reached. He wishes to

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nationalize the industry, but needs to involve foreign investors initially. Achieving this while simultaneously protecting the country’s profits from foreign pockets will be difficult, but local companies don’t yet have the technology to replace foreign companies.⁴

Despite these challenges, Morales is optimistic and continues to promote growth in the lithium industry. Negotiations with foreign companies have begun, but interest has dwindled significantly due to the stipulation that the Bolivian state receives the majority of lithium earnings in any deal with foreign investors.⁵ This leaves significantly less room for foreign profit.

Although multinational corporations have replaced an imperial power, the Bolivian mining industry offers a view of enduring foreign influence that closely resembles Spanish control of mining operations in colonial Potosí. The vitality of this foreign-native power relationship is distressing to say the least, but change may be on the horizon. The message of President Morales is clear: foreign exploitation of the country’s populations and resources will no longer be tolerated. The Bolivian mining industry may at last be experiencing a fundamental but necessary transition. The indigenous struggle to resist lingering colonial influence, a struggle that has remained prominent for over 450 years may finally be coming to fruition.

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⁴ Alpert, “Bolivia Opens First Lithium Plant.”
⁵ Ibid.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:


Bartolomé Arzáns de Orsúa is considered to have been one of the most important chroniclers of colonial Potosí, in part because he lived his entire life in the city. *Historia de la villa imperial de Potosí* discusses everyday life in the city of Potosí, including subjects like class, race relations, role of women, health and art. He is most famous for this work, but he also wrote another less well-known account, called the *Annals of the villa imperial de Potosí*. *Historia de la villa Imperial de Potosí* gave me a firsthand account of transactions and the character of the market in Potosí.


Originally published in London in 1864, *The Travels of Pedro de Cieza de León* is an example of the many travel journals written by Europeans touring South America in the early colonial era. His chronicles of Peru were written in four parts; only the first was published during his lifetime. Cieza was born in Extremadura, Spain around 1520, and throughout his life took part in various expeditions throughout his life in South America. His works describe geography, daily life of both colonist and indigenous, as well as plants and animals native to the regions he visited. These descriptions were some of the first of their kind to reach Europe, and represent some of the first writing done on these areas of South America. Although his writings offer interesting insight into colonial society, one must read Cieza’s work with an eye towards European bias, which is prevalent throughout.


From his home in Extremadura, Spain, Diego de Ocaña, a Jeronymite friar, was sent to Peru to spread devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe and to gather alms for the home sanctuary and monastery. The accounts of his travels throughout the New World provide excellent witness reports of colonial affairs. Written in 1599, (but published much later), *Un Viaje Fascinante Por la América Hispana del Siglo XV* details Ocaña’s brief visit to Potosí, in which he describes the rapidly expanding popularity of chicha, the native corn beer. His views on this
consumption are negative, but are representative of many Spanish Elites of the time that found the practice to be immoral.


This source is an English-translated version of the letter Guamán Poma de Ayala sent to King Philip III of Spain. Although Guamán Poma was born to indigenous parents, he was quite loyal to the Spanish Church for the first part of his life. An unjust sentence handed down to him in a land dispute however, opened his eyes to the mistreatment of indigenous people throughout the Spanish colonies. This letter is his formal complaint to the Spanish king in the hope of stopping these abuses. While King Philip III probably never read the letter, the document remains one of the few colonial accounts of the Inca Empire, and Guamán Poma’s native heritage gives it authority. Many of the details in his letter have been challenged by archeology in the last few decades, but his pro-Inca argument is important to studies of the Incan Empire nonetheless. Along with his written accounts, Guamán Poma included many drawings of the topics he describes, and these have contributed to our understanding as well. I use his work as an example of how the Incan Empire has been characterized over time, depending on the personal background of the chronicler.


Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa was a Spanish historian, explorer and author. After a brief stint in the Spanish military and participation in several expeditions throughout South America, Gamboa was commissioned by Viceroy Toledo to write a complete history of the Incan Empire. Despite the fact that the account was supposedly sent to the Spanish King Philip II, the work was misplaced or lost for quite some time, until it resurfaced and was widely distributed several centuries later. Gamboa’s account is a perfect example of the Spanish bias at work. Throughout his work, Gamboa describes the Inca Empire quite negatively, which in turn justifies the Spanish Colonial regime as a kind of savior, stepping in to install order in a society that never had any. I have used Gamboa’s work to represent the larger category of colonial era Spanish writers, and their anti-Incan views. This perspective justifies the Spanish Colonial regime.

Born in 1539 in Spanish Colonial Peru, Garcilaso de la Vega, or “El Inca” Garcilaso is best known for his accounts of Incan society and culture. He was born to a Spanish conquistador and an Incan noblewoman, and because of this partial Incan lineage, his accounts hold more authority than many Spanish accounts from the same period. With a European education in Spain as well as experience traveling in the new world, El Inca’s works had been viewed quite highly until recent developments in the field of archeology have thrown some of his specifics into question. In general, his presentation of the Incan Empire is quite positive and corresponds with the accounts written by Guaman Poma de Ayala. Prior to *Royal Commentaries of the Incas, and a General History of Peru*, he also wrote *Historia de la Florida*, in which he recounts Hernando de Soto’s travels in Florida. I use his work as an example of one way in which authors have categorized the Incan Empire.

**Secondary Sources:**


This LA Times article was very helpful when I was writing my conclusion. Specifically, it helped me grasp the bigger picture of what is going on today in Bolivia’s mining industry, and how the future holds hope for change. Lithium is an expanding industry, and I was interested in its development because it is taking place on the salt flats of Uyuni, Bolivia, one of the sites I visited on my trip several months ago. Reporter Emily Alpert has previously worked for the *Voice of San Diego*, a non-profit news organization, and now writes for the *LA Times*. She has written articles on a wide variety of international events.


From this source I gleaned a bit of information about Guaman Poma de Ayala’s background and past. Specifically, this article explains his reasons for writing his letter to King Phillip II, and his change of heart towards Spanish Colonialism.


As a professor at the University of New Mexico, Southern Methodist University and Emory University, Peter Bakewell has been one of the leading historians in the United States on silver mining in colonial Spanish America. He has written several books, including *Silver Mining and Society and Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546-1700* (1971), and *Silver and Entrepreneurship in seventeenth-century Potosí: the life and times of Antonio Lopez de Quiroga* (1988). His work *Miners of the Red Mountain*, recounts the early development of the town of
Potosí, techniques of silver production, and in general, proceeds from an indigenous point of view. In doing so he points out that many indigenous were willing to work for the Spanish in order to make individual profit. From this source, I have taken background detail on the city of Potosí, and used several examples of indigenous people taking the initiative in silver entrepreneurship.


Bakewell focuses on a later period of Potosí’s history in this later work of his. However, it was still somewhat helpful when researching the impact of Viceroy Toledo as well as other long-term population changes in Potosí. In addition, it gave me an idea of how the city developed after the period of my study ended.


Arnold Bauer is received his Ph.D. in Latin American History in 1969 from UC Berkeley and is now a Professor Emeritus in the History Department at the University of California Davis. His book *Goods, Power, History: Latin America’s Material Culture* discusses consumption in Latin America over a 500 year period, and attempts to explain these long-term patterns. His thesis intertwines these patterns of consumption with developing ideas of identity. From this work I have taken small amounts of information regarding indigenous consumption of bread, as well as some of his larger connections of consumption to identity. Bauer has published several other works including *Time’s Shadow: Remembering a Family Farm in Kansas*, *The Search for Codex Cardona*, and *Chilean Rural Society: From the Spanish Conquest to 1930*.


Teresa Cañedo-Argüelles Fábrega has a doctorate in the history of Americas from the University of Sevilla. In 1989 she received a postdoctoral grant from the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas de España. She is an associate professor in department of history of America at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and has taught courses and seminars in Argentina, Peru and Paraguay. She specializes in ethno history and has studied the indigenous communities in the Andes in depth. She has published several other works, including *Al sur del margen: avatares y limites de una region postergada Moqueagua (Peru)*. From this source I have taken information on the climate of Potosí, as well as the effects of Toledo’s *mit’a* system on indigenous people.

Jeffrey Cole has taught Latin American Studies at a variety of institutions including University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Cornell University, Smith College, Tulane University, Clark University and SUNY-Oswego. He has also led over 50 Smithsonian Journeys to Latin America over the past twenty-one years. His field of expertise lies in Colonial South American history as well as civil-military relations in Argentina and Chile. His book *The Potosí Mita, 1573-1700: Compulsory Indian Labor in the Andes* focuses on the ins and outs of Viceroy Toledo’s mita system. Along with detail of how the mita functioned, he also discusses the results it had on the mining industry in Potosí and the effects it created throughout the Andes. I cite information from this source several times in Chapter Three.


As assistant professor of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University, R. Alan Covey specializes in the history of the Inca Empire. He is the author of several other works including *How the Incas Built their Homeland*. In “Chronology, Succession, and Sovereignty: The Politics of Inka Historiography and Its Modern Interpretation”, Covey expertly lays out a variety of arguments made about the character of the Inca empire, from those of colonial authors, right up to the arguments of contemporary historians. His work compares these arguments and also details the effect recent archeology has had on this field of study. Overall, this is a great source for someone attempting to understand the development and evolution of our understanding of the Inca Empire.


Author of an extensive list of works on native American civilizations such as the Incas and the Aztecs, the name Nigel Davies has become associated with studies of central and South American pre-colonial history. Among other titles, he has written *The Toltec Heritage: from the fall of Tula to the rise of Tenochtitlan, The Aztecs, a history, the Ancient Kingdoms of Mexico*, and *The Incas*. *The Incas* gives an excellent overview of Incan society and how it functioned. The work does not look at any aspect of Incan society in great detail, but is a good resource for someone trying to understand general characteristics of the empire.

This article from the BBC discusses the relationship between the Bolivian mining industry and foreign influences. It contains information on recent mining history that was helpful when writing my conclusion.


*Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America* is a compilation of works from many authors, compiled and edited by Andrew Fisher and Matthew O’Hara. The essays in this book show the developing formation of identities under imperial rule. The information I have taken from it is from two specific chapters, one written by Jane E. Mangan (author of *Trading Roles*) and another written by Jeremy Mumford. This information guided by understanding of developing concepts of race and identity in Potosí. Andrew Fisher is an assistant professor of history at Carleton College. Matthew O’Hara is an assistant professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz.


*The Spanish Mita and Its Consequences for Andean Communities* is a paper written by my older brother at the end of his undergraduate education at the University of Chicago. It details the larger effects of Toledo’s *mita* system throughout the Andes as well as their longer-term impacts on indigenous society and hierarchy. His paper provided useful information on working conditions of the *mita* system as defined by Toledo himself. It is cited several times in my third chapter. Galef-Brown graduated from the University of Chicago in 2011 with a major in economics and minor in Spanish language. He now works for the Peace Corps and lives in Chupamarca, Peru.


Hanke received his B.S. and M.A. in history from Northwestern University. He received his Ph.D from Harvard in 1936 and later served as the first chief of the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, where he also led the Hispanic Foundation until 1951. Before his retirement in 1975, he taught at University of Texas, Columbia University and University of Massachusetts Amherst and is considered to have been one of the leading historians in the field of Latin American study. His major works include *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America, People and Issues in Latin American History: From Independence to the Present, Guide to the Study of United States History outside the US, 1945-1980, Latin America, a Historical Reader, and People and Issues in Latin American History: the Colonial Experience*. In *The Imperial City of Potosí An unwritten chapter in the history of Spanish America*, Hanke reviews
historiography of Potosí, and argues that no single source can analyze all information on Potosí, quite simply because there is too much. He looks at Potosí’s evolution and what Potosí represents in the large picture of Spanish Colonialism. From this work, I have used information about indigenous miners and the Potosí market place.


Olivia Harris is a reader in Social Anthropology at Goldsmiths’ College, University of London. She lived in Bolivia for a number of years doing fieldwork, research, and teaching. She has gotten one other work published, titled *Inside and Outside the Law.* *To Make the Earth Bear Fruit: Essays on Fertility, Work and Gender in Highland Bolivia* is a compilation of essays based on anthropological work in the North of the Bolivian department of Potosí within the last quarter century. I never directly sited this work in my paper because it deals with a different time period than my focus, however it was still helpful when I was trying to understand the evolution of Potosí after 1650.


This Washington Post article was helpful when writing my conclusion. Specifically it aided by understanding of the current state of the Bolivian mining industry. The article discusses a recently protest in El Alto, Bolivia, sparked by controversial new taxes applied to the mining industry. The article highlights disagreement, and violent aspects of a clash between the miners and the government. Although never directly sited in my paper, the source convinced me that Bolivian miners are still quite prevalent in the country’s politics and relevant to my discussion. Dan Keane covered Bolivia’s transition under new president Evo Morales from 2006 to 2009. His journalism was published in the New York Times, Washington Post along with several other newspapers.


*Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology* is a collection of essays edited by Olivia Harris and Brooke Larson, with contributions from Enrique Tandeter. The book addresses the clash of Andean culture and society with the economic system of the Spanish colony. The information I have used from this book comes from chapters by Olivia Harris and Steve Stern. Stern’s argument about characterizing indigenous market participation as a form of resistance was very influential in my fourth chapter.

Michael A. Malpass is a Professor of Anthropology and the Dana Chair in the Social Sciences at Ithaca College in New York. He has written works on a variety of topics such as archeology, agricultural structures, ethnohistory and the development of complex societies in South America. His list of authored and edited works includes *Provincial Inca: archaeological and ethnohistorical assessment of the impact of the Inca State*, and *Distant provinces in the Inka empire*. In *Daily Life in the Inca Empire*, Malpass outlines the various aspects of Incan society and daily life. Most of the information in this book is based on discoveries from the field of archeology, with a small amount of information coming from Spanish colonial era documentation. This source is similar to Nigel Davies’ *The Incas*, but goes into far more detail, giving the reader a more in depth picture of the Incan Empire. From Malpass’ work I have taken information on various aspects of Incan society, cited in chapter one, including *kuracas* and *ayllus*. 


Author Jane Mangan is associate professor of history at Davidson College. Although *Trading Roles: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Urban Economy in Colonial Potosí* is her only published book, she is said to be currently researching a book focusing on family structure in sixteenth-century Spain and Peru. Trading Roles is a revolutionary work, because it zeros in on life in the city of Potosí, instead of the mines themselves, as most other works do. Within the town of Potosí, Mangan argues complex social, religious and racial interactions were occurring, which came to define the society. Among other things, she argues that while indigenous people were obviously exploited by the Spanish, in certain situations they clearly took the initiative. She also claims that in addition to the exchange of material goods, cultural and conceptual exchange was taking place. Her book is a good example of a relatively recent trend in historical literature in which relations between Europeans and Native Americans are examined more closely, with the idea of indigenous agency in mind. This negates the concept of the “noble savage”. Mangan’s book is used extensively in my discussion of Potosí’s market economy.


Sally Moore began her long, impressive career as a legal anthropologist with extensive fieldwork in Tanzania, on which she published works on cross cultural, comparative legal theory. After attending Columbia Law School she participated in the Nuremburg Trials as a staff attorney at the International Military Tribunal. She received her PhD in anthropology from Columbia in 1957, became chair of
the anthropology section at the University of Southern California, leaving to become a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles and later at Yale University. She joined the Harvard University faculty in 1981 and four years later became Dean of the Harvard Graduate School. In 2010 she became Affiliated Professor of International Legal Studies at Harvard Law School. Her book Power and Property in Inca Peru argues against the “utopian” perspective of Incan society by revisiting the ways in which many historians have interpreted earlier sources on Incan society. Specifically, she cites many examples that demonstrate a lack of freedom for the common Incan citizen and focuses on the concept of land ownership to show that previously accepted ideas of Incan society may be erroneous. I cite Moore’s argument against the “utopian” views of Incan society in my first chapter.


As curator of anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Craig Morris was best known for his excavation of the Huanuco Pampa site and his written works. He has co-authored several publications such as Huanuco Pampa: An Incan City and Its Hinterlands, and The Inka Empire and Its Andean Origins. In The Incas: Lords of the Four Quarters, Morris discusses different aspects of Incan society, such as religion, economics and architecture. He then uses this description to argue that although the Incas ruled some peoples directly, many regions they conquered were left largely untouched. This source is comparable to Malpass’ Daily Life in the Inca Empire. I have used Morris’ work for information on the twelve King list of Incan leaders, which represents the traditional history of the Inca Empire.


This article discusses female agency in early colonial Peru. It is based on information from legal documents and accounts from Spanish encomendaras and Inca elite women. Quispe-Agnoli was born in Peru and is now an Associate Professor of Colonial Latin American Studies in the Department of Romance and Classical Studies at Michigan State. She received her Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies from Brown University and has published several works including La fe indígena en la escritura: resistencia e identidad en la obra de Guamán Poma de Ayala. She is also a creative writer and has received awards for her short fiction works. This article was never directly cites in my paper, however it helped mold my understanding of indigenous women in the Spanish Colonial world.

Nicholas Robins is a Latin American history professor at North Carolina State University. In this work, he details the implementation of mercury in Potosí as an agent to refine the silver ore. He then goes on to analyze the obvious and less obvious effects this had on the industry, the workers, and the city. He published three works prior to his book on Mining: *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and practice, Priest-Indian Conflict in Upper Peru: The Generation of Rebellion*, and *Native Insurgencies and the Genocide Impulse in the Americas*. I have drawn information on the effects of mercury from this source to use in my paper.


Karen Spalding is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in Latin America history, colonial and modern Andean history, European expansion as well as the transformation of European culture in the US. She is currently researching local Andean communities and the Spanish colonial state, as well as the role of the state in the construction of history. She has published several works including *Essays in the Political, Economic and Social History of Colonial Latin America, The Crisis and Transformations of Invaded Societies, 1500-1580- Andean Area, Social Climbers: Changing Patterns of Mobility among the Indians of Colonial Peru*, and *Resistencia y Adaptación: el gobierno colonial y las elites nativas*. In her book on Huarochirí, Spalding focuses on the region, and how it changed over time under the effects of colonialism. I have used information on Spanish interest in silver from her book, as well as general information on the Incan Empire.


Enrique Tandeter is a Professor of History at the University of Buenos Aires and a senior researcher at the National Council of Scientific Research of Argentina. He has been involved (either authored, edited or contributed) in a long list of works on colonial Potosí, Spanish colonialism and Andean society. This book discusses the *mit’a* system of forced indigenous labor as well as minor ways in which indigenous miners benefited from direct access to the valuable minerals. Most of the information I used from this book concerned the implementation of the Toledo’s *mit’a* system.


Unlike *Coercion and Market: Silver Mining in Colonial Potosí, 1692-1826*, Tandeter’s *The Market of Potosí at the End of the Eighteenth Century* deals more with the marketplace in Potosí than the actual mines. It details market trends and
indigenous participation in the late 1700s. He focuses on a period long after the
topic of my paper ends, but several of the points he emphasizes apply to the
Potosí markets throughout their history, so it was still relevant to my studies.
Details of how Spanish authority taxed market goods for example, were quite
useful when writing my fourth chapter.

Wade, Peter, ebrary, and ebrary, Inc. Race and Sex in Latin America. Anthropology,
Culture, and Society. London; New York: New York: Pluto Press; Distributed in the
United States of America exclusively by Palgrave macmillan, 2009. http://0-

Peter Wade is an anthropologist from England and a professor of Social
Anthropology at the University of Manchester. He has written a long list of
published works discussing race, ethnicity and sexuality in Latin America. His
book argues that Iberian concepts of these three entities played a huge role in
interactions with indigenous peoples of the Americas and helps to explain novel
social developments. I have used information from his book concerning
indigenous gender roles and racial concepts in my fourth chapter.

Zimmerman, Arthur Franklin. Francisco De Toledo, Fifth Viceroy of Peru, 1569-1581.
Caldwell, Id: The Caxton Printers, ltd, 1938.

Arthur Zimmerman was a professor of history at Colorado State College. His
book demonstrates how the Spanish Viceroy represented Spanish kings in the
New World and carried out colonial government. Zimmerman focuses almost
exclusively on Viceroy Toledo because he was responsible for laying the legal
foundations of Spanish colonial policy. I used information from this source in my
third chapter to discuss both Toledo’s personal background, as well as his actions
as Viceroy.