

# “Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos”: An Example of an Understudied Genre in Ricardo Palma, The Essay

Thomas Ward  
Loyola University Maryland  
tward@loyola.edu

Peruvian author Ricardo Palma gained prominence as South America’s preeminent literary figure with his *tradiciones*, but he also cultivated lesser-known genres such as poetry and theater, as well as the essay, the topic of the present study. This article investigates why Palma’s “Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos” is an essay and not a *tradicción*, an apparent, yet erroneous category for it, since it appeared in *Peruvian Traditions*. In it, Palma utilizes a philological analysis of the anonymous play *Ollantay* and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Royal Commentaries* to prove that the Inkas used the decimal system of numbers. The present article considers why this piece is an essay by comparing its constituent elements with the characteristics of the essay as José Luis Gómez Martínez outlines them, including discursivity, lack of a rigid structure, incitement to reflection, digression, and vagueness in quoting practices. If Palma completes a philological commentary on *Ollantay* and the *Royal Commentaries*, the present article accomplishes a philological analysis of Palma’s “Sistema decimal,” which reveals qualities properly belonging to the essay.

**Keywords:** Ricardo Palma, Inkas, essay, discursivity, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Ollantay*, Peruvian literature

El autor peruano Ricardo Palma logró preeminencia como luminaria literaria sudamericana mediante sus “tradiciones”, pero se dedicó también a géneros menos conocidos en su obra, como la poesía y el teatro, además del ensayo, sujeto de este estudio. Aquí investigamos por qué el texto “Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos” es un ensayo y no una “tradicción,” categoría obvia, aunque errónea, ya que apareció en el libro *Tradiciones peruanas*. En él Palma utiliza un análisis filológico del drama anónimo *Ollantay* y los *Comentarios reales* de Inca Garcilaso de la Vega para probar que los Inkas usaron el sistema decimal de números. Este artículo considera la cuestión de la esencia ensayística del texto al comparar sus elementos constituyentes con las características del ensayo esbozadas por José Luis Gómez Martínez, incluyendo la discursividad, la ausencia de una estructura rígida, el estímulo a la reflexión, la digresión y la vaguedad al citar fuentes. Así como Palma lleva a cabo un comentario filológico de *Ollantay* y de los *Comentarios reales*, este artículo realiza un análisis filológico de “Sistema decimal” de Palma que revela las propiedades de un ensayo.

**Palabras clave:** Ricardo Palma, Inkas, ensayo, discursividad, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Ollantay*, literatura peruana

## Introduction

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, as evolutionary positivism became the basis for social science research, the idea of “degenerate races” was applied to pre-Hispanic, colonial and post-Independence people known as “Indians.” In his canonical “Nuestros indios,” Peru’s most famous essayist, Manuel González Prada (1844–1918), censured, for example, ethnology’s acceptance of “Humanity’s division into superior and inferior races, having recognized white superiority” (la división de la Humanidad en razas superiores y razas inferiores, reconocida la superioridad de los blancos) (1985–1989, 3: 196). In the midst of the infusion of social science theory into Peru’s intellectual fabric, the country lost a terrible war to Chile that concluded with an unfavorable peace treaty in 1883. Many elites, including Ricardo Palma (1833–1919), unfairly laid the blame for Peru’s loss on the country’s indigenous inhabitants. However, while some blamed the “Indians,” they separated this category from “Inkas,” creating the paradox Cecilia Méndez G. (1996) has aptly described as “Incas Sí, Indios No.” While Palma, Peru’s most famous author from the nineteenth century, was not known for his love of indigenous people, probably because he could not realistically represent them in his *Tradiciones peruanas* speaking in the criollo style with spark and sarcasm, he did have interest in the Inkakuna (plural of Inka) to the degree most Peruvians do. The essay “Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos,” included in the eighth series of *Tradiciones peruanas, Ropa apollillada* (1891), results from Palma’s (albeit limited) interest in the Inkakuna.

## Literary Genre and the Latin American Essay

It is sometimes recognized that, besides the famous *Tradiciones*, or *Traditions*, Palma cultivated theater, *Rodil* (1851), poetry, *Armonías* (1865), and historical and linguistic studies, *Anales de la Inquisición* (1863) and *Neologismos y americanismos* (1911), yet his cultivation of the essay has gone virtually unnoticed. Exploring “Sistema decimal” as an essay reveals another facet of Palma’s indisputable literary capability. What exactly is an essay?

To discuss Palma’s essay, the problem of genre, literary genre, must come up. Palma made the editorial decision to include diverse genres of literature under the general rubric *tradiciones*, which became synonymous with his name. For example, in the prologue to the very first volume titled simply *Tradiciones*, he referred to “All the *Traditions* that make up this volume” (Todas las tradiciones que forman este volumen) (1872, 4; italics added). Yet in the very same tome he included *Anales de la Inquisición* (originally published in the *Revista de Lima*, 1863), more properly understood as a work of historiography. Other texts, “La gruta de las maravillas” and “La achiriana del Inca,” added to the 1883 edition of the second series, also do not fit into the template of the better-known *tradiciones*, because they have no historical inquiry into a *refrán*, or saying, the narrative does not fragment, and

they are simpler in structure.<sup>1</sup> These Inkanist narratives are more aptly described as legends. In similar fashion with respect to the vagaries of literary genre, the third series of *tradiciones* opens with a poem, "Y el mundo que es de oropel idólatra," and concludes with two inquiries into literary history, "Los plañideros del siglo pasado" and "Una sesión literaria: un poeta de las adivinanzas" (1875, xiii–xv; 227–261; 262–280). Palma even wrote a biographical sketch of Dolores Veintimilla, an Ecuadoran antideath-penalty advocate, which appeared in various places at different times. This is not to say that Palma did not understand genre. His 1865 *Armonías* was a collection of poetry. Another book, listed as a *Tradiciones y artículos históricos* (1899), can more correctly be appreciated as a collection of essays, for this work in prose is at times more argumentative than descriptive. Palma shows he was very aware of genre in his 1900 book *Cachivaches*, which is divided into sections: "Literary Articles" (Artículos literarios), "Biographical Articles" (Artículos biográficos), "Critical Paragraphs" (Párrafos de crítica), and "Historical Studies" (Estudios históricos). The variance among the types of writing Palma cultivated—legend, *tradición*, history, poetry, theater, and essay—echoes the variety of norms for the essay, which is multiform. While untold volumes of research have been completed on the *tradiciones*, little has been done regarding the essay as written by Ricardo Palma, a modern genre that was starting to take root in Peru at that time. Here we will examine one essay with an eye toward correcting that lacuna in Peruvian literary history.

This is an important need because Latin America has embraced the essay and made it distinctly its own. To illustrate, there are a number of "great" essayists from the region including Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Eugenio María de Hostos, Manuel González Prada, José Martí, José Enrique Rodó, Luisa Capetillo, José Carlos Mariátegui, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, Jorge Luis Borges, Alfonso Reyes, Octavio Paz, Rosario Castellanos, and William Ospina. All participated in the development of the essay in their respective countries, and this was certainly the case for Peru, where various authors contemporary to Ricardo Palma began to cultivate the essay, such as Francisco de Paula González Vigil, Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, José Casimiro de Ulloa, José Antonio de Lavalle, González Prada, and the group Francesca Denegri calls the Enlightened Women, including Carolina Freyre de Jaimes, Clorinda Matto de Turner, Teresa González de Fanning, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, and Margarita Práxedes Muñoz. While not generally considered outside of Peru as cultivators of the essay, the Peruvians certainly were also very involved with the institution of this genre in the Spanish-speaking republics.

Palma had contact with many of these authors, and while he may not have known them all personally, he certainly was familiar with their works. To offer an example of the literary network in which he found himself at the center, after the sacking of the National Library during the War of the Pacific (1879–1883), he wrote to authors around the Hispanic world, asking for book donations to restock the collection (see Pantigoso 2017). The Puerto Rican Hostos, for example, was one of the authors with whom he corresponded. These authors were in contact with each other during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The journalistic article and the essay were prominent genres during the

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on Palma's cutting and pasting from one series of the *Tradiciones* to another, see Flor María Rodríguez-Arenas, "Historia editorial y literaria" (1993).

period, along with poetry, the novel, and theater, and Palma would have been aware of it, just as he was aware of all the genres.

The themes highlighted in the essay are as varied as the authors who cultivate them. They are political, philosophical, literary, sociological, and of other varieties. During Palma's time, however, we can say there was a generalized interest in the nation, its nature, its possibilities. Hugo Neira describes a search for the nation's character, an attempt to synthesize, which sets up the conditions for a meticulous analysis of society (2008, 87). The Peruvian nation could not/cannot disengage from history, archeology, legends, or the literary or collective memory of the Inkakuna because they were, alongside others, an important foundation, even if an array of criollo writers would not like to admit that.

## **Characteristics of the Essay**

There is no one genre of literature, there is no one genre of the essay, and there is no one definition of the essay. We can begin the discussion by saying what "Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos" is not. As an essay it does not share characteristics generally associated with the *tradición*, for example, the examination of a saying, and the inclusion of historical characters (Tauzin Castellanos 1999; Huarag Álvarez 2018), and humor as a primary attribute, whether it be ironic or satirical (Tanner 1986; Arista Montoya 2017). It is primarily narrative, constituting a variant of the short story, although it pretends not to be fiction, as it includes historical episodes. The historiographical pretense, of course, differentiates it from the historical novel, another genre frequently produced during Palma's time.<sup>2</sup>

While scholarly authorities are not in agreement about the genre's characteristics (Mead 1956; Gómez Martínez 1981; Oviedo 1991; Arenas Cruz 1997; Neira 2008; Morales Mena 2019), José Luis Gómez Martínez in his *Teoría del ensayo* starts by stating that the essay can generally be described as a "pleasant dissertation instead of a severe and rigorous investigation" (*disertación amena en vez de una investigación severa y rigurosa*) (1981, 20). Here we will take as our framework five attributes outlined by Gómez Martínez, one of the twentieth century's foremost experts on the essay written in Spanish. These include: 1) discursivity, 2) lack of a rigid structure, 3) incitement to reflection, 4) digression, and 5) vagueness in quoting practices. These categories are not exhaustive and indeed, besides these five, a reasonable array for a journal article to discuss, there are another ten that Gómez Martínez covers. Other scholars list additional characteristics germane to our topic, such as Javier Morales Mena writing on the little-discussed essay cultivated by the polygraph Mario Vargas Llosa, a different Peruvian author famous for another genre, the novel, who also delved into the essay as a literary form whose characteristics include, again, discursivity, and other attributes such as narrative suspense (2019, 118–124). Literary historian José Miguel Oviedo, author of a well-known compendium on the Latin American essay, tells us that this genre has two features, one that it is interpretative, and the other that points toward the future (1991, 14). Ricardo Palma's essay to which we now turn was discursive

---

<sup>2</sup> On the historical novel in Latin America during this period see Anderson Imbert (1952) and Skinner (2006).

(interpretive) in nature. Discursivity is a characteristic found in all the authorities, Gómez Martínez, Oviedo, and Morales Mena suggesting its importance in singling out the essay in terms of literary genre. Palma’s essay, “Sistema decimal,” which is ostensibly a defense of the Inkakuna’s knowledge of mathematics and the decimal system, can be defined in terms of a pliable structure of discursivity that fosters reflection, tending toward digression, with imprecise quoting practices.

The features that give form to the essay, that which makes it essayistic, make it a distinctive genre. If “Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos” were a *tradición*, it would bear characteristics distinct from those of the essay. In fact, “Sistema decimal” presents a thesis—that the Inkakuna used the decimal system—and explains why this is so. It then presents the antithesis: that some scholars deny decimal-system usage among the Inkakuna, and then the synthesis, the logic and proof of decimal usage among the Inkakuna. It is not a “neat” essay, however, because it is not well organized, and thematically it goes all over the place. These attributes do not detract from this piece’s essayistic quality—theorist Gómez Martínez cites the essay’s lack of a rigid structure (1981, 63–67) and notes its digressiveness (1981, 68–72). Thematically Palma’s essay goes from decimals, to Manqo Qhapaq and the Inkakuna as civilizing agents, and then to the philological questions surrounding *Ollantay*, the first Qheswa-language play to make it into print in Spanish and English.<sup>3</sup>

Palma wrote his essay in the manner described by theorist Gómez Martínez: “the essayist’s intention is to write essays that suggest and incite the reader to reflect” (la intención del ensayista al escribir ensayos es la de sugerir e incitar al lector a reflexionar). Palma’s interest is also different from what would be the traditional *modus operandi* of the essayist because he does not do what Gómez Martínez thinks the essayist does, which is write his essay “on that which is common to us in daily life” (sobre aquello que nos es común en la vida cotidiana) (1981, 81). Gómez Martínez repeats this idea of being current in various moments in his study of the essay, which could set up the idea of an essay oriented toward the future, as mentioned above, with respect to Oviedo. Palma takes a different track.

In this essay published just four years before he founded the Academia Peruana de la Lengua in 1887, Palma goes tête-à-tête with an unnamed member of the Academy of Sciences of Paris who denies the possibility that Americans before the Conquest could have developed the decimal system (1961, 1180). Palma’s piece is essayistic in the sense that, instead of telling a story, it makes an argument and then tries to convince the reader of its validity. He is concerned with the Inkakuna who ruled Peru before 1572, or even 1532, not the Qheswa speakers who survived into the colonial and republican eras, as noted by Marcel Velázquez Castro (2013, 274). It is a classic case of the paradoxical “Incas Sí, Indios No” interest in Inkakuna as a worthy object of study, while disdaining Qheswa speakers in the modern era, as described by Cecilia Méndez. Palma, who loved history, takes us back to the past, not so much to understand the present, for all Peruvians are familiar with the decimal system, but more as a Peruvian way of feeling proud of the achievements of the past, to then feel good about the present. It is a clear-cut case of Inkanism as expressed from the criollo perspective, but as we will see, it is not

---

<sup>3</sup> Traditionally spelled “Quechua” in Spanish and English, the *Diccionario quechua-español-quechua/Simi Taqe qheswa-español-qheswa* (1995) prefers the spelling *Qheswa*. Other variants I have seen are Qquichua, Keshua, and Quichua.

an absolute through-and-through kind of Inkanism. More precisely it is an Inkanism that doubts the value of the Inkas at certain moments.

## **Inca Garcilaso de la Vega as Basis, and *Ollantay* as Digression**

Intermeshed with all these aspects was Palma's reading of the chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, whom he embraced and rejected at the same time deepening the layers of discursivity. Since Palma was drawing on the early-seventeenth-century author Garcilaso and the eighteenth-century play *Ollantay*, his essay does not seem to point toward the future, as Oviedo prescribes, but rather toward the past. Palma once wrote that the past is poetic, the present prosaic (1949, I: 55). Given his love for the past, even an ultra-criollo such as Ricardo Palma could not completely avoid an Inkanist thematic frame, which is what informs the essay now under study. While Garcilaso is an established source on the Inkakuna, *Ollantay*, coming during the late colonial period, would have to be considered a source adulterated by the effects of colonialism, and thus represents an unnecessary digression. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, a more relevant source since his maternal family was Inkan, flows through all of Palma's arguments in this essay, even though in other writings the author seems to come more fully under the influence of Spanish intellectuals Marcos Jiménez de la Espada and Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who held Peru's first published author in low esteem.<sup>4</sup> In *Tradiciones peruanas completas*, sometimes Palma embraces the chronicler, sometimes he belittles him, and sometimes he takes from him without acknowledging he is doing so, taking credit where credit is not due. In "Carta canta," a well-known *tradición*, Palma cites the Spanish chronicler López de Gómara as the source, but in fact the source is Garcilaso. Despite the authority and resonance of Jiménez de la Espada and Menéndez Pelayo's depreciating philological and archival work (Cortez 2018), Palma's early embrace of Inca Garcilaso is not extinguished completely. This is not surprising since we are talking about the formidable Inkakuna imaginary in Peru, and, as Sir Clements Markham wrote in 1871, Inca Garcilaso "was the only author, contemporary with the first conquerors, who had a correct knowledge of the Incas; and the only one therefore, whose testimony has any real value" (*Ollanta* 1871, 1).<sup>5</sup> However, as he came into continued contact with the Spanish philologists, both in Peru and Spain, Palma became simultaneously attracted to and repelled by Garcilaso, as can be seen in "Sistema decimal."

Palma's essay is ostensibly about the decimal system, but before getting to that topic, the author in true essayistic form digresses from his central theme and diverts to the subject of literary

---

<sup>4</sup> On the Spanish authors' influence in the great debates on Garcilaso, see Cortez (2018). Cortez's analysis shows that Menéndez y Pelayo does not try to dispose of Garcilaso completely, but to discredit him as a historian without banishing him from the house of the humanities, seeing him as something of a novelist (Cortez 2018, 117–161). This makes sense, since Menéndez y Pelayo was interested in literature, but surely it is a posthumous slap in the face to Garcilaso, who did not view himself as another Cervantes, his contemporary. In the book I am presently writing, *The Inka's Footprints*, I will dedicate chapters to various post-Independence Peruvian intellectuals who were not completely swayed by the Spanish authorities and to several others who were.

<sup>5</sup> With respect to Markham, he was an established authority that Palma consulted (and disputed) in "Sistema decimal" (1961, 1181).

genres among the Inkakuna. The digression consists of turning against Garcilaso's assertion that the Inkakuna put on "representaciones escénicas," in other words, theater, with which Palma disagreed (1961, 1181). Conversely, he offers arguments that *Ollantay*, the Qheswa-language play of mysterious authorship, dates from the eighteenth century. The fear within Palma's discursive frame is that the closer *Ollantay* is to the sixteenth century the more likely it becomes a support to argue that the Inkakuna enjoyed theater, which would be contrary to the essayist's argument.

Specifically, Palma observes, "only the historian Garcilaso gives notice of theatrical representations, an announcement that, without critical analysis, has been accepted by almost all contemporary Americanists" (sólo el historiador Garcilaso da noticia de representaciones escénicas, noticia que sin examen crítico ha sido aceptada por casi todos los americanistas contemporáneos) (1961, 1181). Firstly, Palma argues correctly that *Ollantay* is from the late colonial period, after 1780, but he follows with a non sequitur affirming, because of that late date, that "dramatic poetry, theater, was unknown among the ancient Peruvians" (la poesía dramática, el teatro, fue desconocido por los antiguos peruanos) (1961, 1181). Certainly, this logic is faulty. Simply because a play comes from after the Inka period does not prove that theater was not cultivated during the Inka period. On this point, Palma dismisses Garcilaso, who had written the following in the *Royal Commentaries*: "The *Amantakuna* (plural of *Amauta*), who were philosophers, were not lacking in their abilities to compose comedies and tragedies, which on holidays they represented before their monarchs and lords" (No les faltó habilidad a los amautas, que eran filósofos, para componer comedias y tragedias, que en días y fiestas solennes representaban delante de sus Reyes y de los señores) (1943, II, xxvii). Palma's conflating the literature of the Inkakuna with that of Qheswa speakers two-hundred and fifty years after Inkan elites lost the wars to Spaniards distorts the literary production of both the rulers of Tawantinsuyu (the Inkan Empire) and the Qheswa-speaking colonial subjects.

Secondly, the discussion is somewhat spurious since Garcilaso never mentioned *Ollantay*, which may be based on legends in circulation before 1616, but which, as Julio Calvo Pérez points out, was not made public until 1835 (1998, 9). Those legends could be nothing more than a pre-text. However, based on his research, Calvo Pérez concludes that the themes and arguments in the play are from later, after the "the advent of new ideas" (advenimiento de nuevas ideas) (1998, 9). So, as Palma's flawed argument goes, *Ollantay* could not have been from the Inka period because the Inkakuna did not have theater. Here we must conclude that if *Ollantay* is from the postcontact period, it cannot be used diachronically to prove or disprove something in Garcilaso or in Tawantinsuyu.

Thirdly, not all precontact Qheswa-speaking people were Inkakuna. The Qheswakuna (plural of Qheswa) were not Inkakuna, although after their absorption into Tawantinsuyu, they went through a process of Inkanization. The Wankakuna were not Inka, and they sided with Conquistador Pizarro in the initial stages of the Forty-Year War.<sup>6</sup> These Qheswa-speaking groups were not part of the elite Inka system of *panakakuna* (plural of *panaka*) and thus displayed different cultural traits.<sup>7</sup> If one group

---

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on the two terms, the Conquest and the Forty-Years War, see Ward (2017, xvii–xviii).

<sup>7</sup> The *panaka* was a family group, akin to a clan. The ruling Inka class was organized into ten *panakakuna* (some scholars say twelve). See Ward (2018, 130–141).

had a cultural attribute, it would be incorrect to assume that the whole patchwork of pre-Pizarro nations had the same attributes, although there were many shared affinities. Hypothetically speaking, just because one group did not have theater, it does not follow that other groups also did not. To resolve the difficulty, literary scholars need to consult with their colleagues in anthropology and archeology. Palma, as was common for that time, dealt with all pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples as Inkakuna, drawing on the binary *either/or* colonist framework of “Indians and Spaniards.” At the same time, he conflated pre-Hispanic elites and indigenous colonial subjects.

## **Palma and the Literary Genres among the Inkakuna as Digression**

Besides the dualist paradigm of Spaniard-Indian still operating in the nineteenth century that obfuscated local cultural details, another problem resides in the nature of Spanish-language theater in that century, especially with respect to the characters’ spoken lines that were often poetry. In the minds of nineteenth century literati, poetry and theatre may have seemed fused into one harmonious genre. However, there can be dramatic poetry, and there can also be lyrical and epic poetry. In his late-period book, *Cachivaches*, Palma, drawing on the author of the *Comentarios reales*, does accept nontheatrical poetry among the Inkakuna. He writes approvingly: “One of the distinctive characteristics of lyrical poetry among the indigenous was the philosophical and sententious tone of its concepts. Garcilaso has transmitted to us some samples that justify this belief” (Uno de los caracteres distintivos de la poesía lírica entre los indígenas fue el tono filosófico y sentencioso de sus conceptos. Garcilaso nos ha transmitido algunas muestras de ella que justifican esta creencia) (1961, 1470). Palma’s colleague and contemporary Eugenio Larrabure y Unanue takes up the issue of *Ollantay* and argues that it does not make sense to insist that the Inkakuna did not have “poesía,” or poetry, or “songs, choruses, and dramatic representations” (cantares, coros y representaciones dramáticas), a fact suggested by an array of chroniclers who validated its existence among them including Polo de Ondegardo, Cieza de León, Oviedo, Father Valera, Herrera, and of course Garcilaso (1893, 202; also 253–254). Even accepting lyrical poetry, “philosophical and sententious” as it was, Palma cannot conceptualize theatrical poetry among the Inkakuna, even though he accepts lyrical poetry among them. He makes this argument against Garcilaso to discredit the idea that the Inkakuna had theater.

Garcilaso seems merely to have been representing the literary attributes of Tawantinsuyu, and Palma got it wrong. Others have affirmed and continue to affirm the presence of theater in pre-Hispanic Tawantinsuyu, such as Ricardo Roca Rey who writes about the time of Manqo Qhapaq, the first Inka sovereign, and two temples on two islands in Titicaca lake, each of them serving as a theater. He concludes his arguments: “A place: the temple. A scene: the altar. Some actors: the interpreting priests. A representation: the ritual. A wardrobe: gold and silver ornaments. Some spectators: the adoring attendees. A sacred theater in its most pure form” (Un local: el templo. Un escenario: el altar. Unos actores: los sacerdotes intérpretes. Una representación: el ritual. Un vestuario: los ornamentos de oro y plata. Unos espectadores: los asistentes adoradores. Un teatro sacro en toda su más pura



expresión) (qtd. in Carrillo 1986, 151). Nevertheless, the resolution of this complex issue is not our concern here, as we are simply arguing that Ricardo Palma cultivated an essay with "Sistema decimal." We are not interested so much in what Garcilaso got right or wrong, although he got the theater right, but in how Garcilaso weaved his way into Palma's discursive frame.

## Philological Conclusions Regarding the Decimal System

Curiously, Palma thinks Garcilaso got it wrong on this largely digressive issue regarding theater, but regarding his primary concern, the decimal system among the Inkakuna, Palma completely embraces the early seventeenth-century historian, although he reorients him to suit his needs. In his exposition, he goes over some general research on the development of mathematics among humanity, explains what *kipukuna* (plural of *kipu*) devices are and how they can add, but not narrate, and then links them to Inkan military organization. He then turns back to Garcilaso and uses him to support his argument that the Inkakuna employed the decimal system in their accounting practices. He quotes the chronicler:

Garcilaso literally says: "All games are called *chunka* (ten) in Qheswa, because all numbers end up at the tenth. Peruvians took, then, the number *ten* for *game*. To say, 'let's play,' they say *chunkasun*, which, strictly speaking in terms of meaning, means let's count by *tens*."

Dice literalmente Garcilaso: "Todos los juegos se llaman en quichua *chunga* (diez), porque todos los números van a parar al deceno. Los peruanos tomaron pues, el número *diez* por el *juego*, y para decir *juguemos* dicen *chuncasun*, que en rigor de significación es *contemos* por *dieces*." (*Comentarios reales*, capítulo XIV, libro XX) (Palma 1961, 1182)<sup>8</sup>

Here we have clear-cut proof that Ricardo Palma appreciated Garcilaso's authority enough to undergird his arguments about the Inkakuna grounding their mathematics in the decimal system with a direct quotation. Nevertheless, this Garcilasian basis of support reveals signs of doctoring or sloppiness, or both.

It jumps right off the page that Garcilaso would explain that *chunka* means ten in a language called "Qheswa." Garcilaso never assigned a glottonym, a proper noun, to his mother tongue that he simply calls "the language of the court, the one that today is called the general language" (la lengua de su corte, que es la que hoy llaman lengua general) (1943, VII, i).<sup>9</sup> That is, he never calls this language "Qheswa," a word that for him was not a glottonym, but an ethnonym, a proper noun referring to a people, which referred to a non-Inkan nation contemporary to the Inka world. He refers to "the

---

<sup>8</sup> Santo Tomás's *Lexicón* prefers *chunga* over *chunca* for the number ten (1560, 118). The *Diccionario quechua-español-quechua/Simi Taqe qheswa-español-qheswa* updates the spelling to *chunka* (1995, 74)

<sup>9</sup> The *Diccionario quechua-español-quechua/Simi Taqe qheswa-español-qheswa* (1995, 488) refers to Qheswa-speaking people as *Qheswa Simi*.

province called Qheswa” and “the nation called Qheswa” (la provincia llamada quechua), (la nación llamada quechua) (1943, III, xii), but never to a language called Qheswa. Hence, Palma’s quote becomes immediately suspect. Palma’s use of glottonyms, ethnonyms, and demonyms is revealing.

## **Glottonyms, Demonyms, Decimals, and Imprecise Quoting Practice**

Another fascinating manner whereby “Sistema decimal” maintains a point of contact with the essayistic genre is one that Gómez Martínez characterizes as imprecise quoting practice (1981, 41–44). But where Gómez Martínez is talking about omitting a reference, here we are referring to an imprecise reference (which will be discussed shortly) and even more striking, to the doctoring of the actual wording (to which we turn first). We know the term Qheswa was in use as a glottonym during the colonial period after Garcilaso departed for Spain in January of 1560.<sup>10</sup> Its utilization as a glottonym can be observed as the subtitle of the second section of Santo Tomás’s *Lexicón*, “the General Language of the Indians in the Kingdoms of Peru, called Qheswa” (la lengua general de los Indios de los reinos del Perú, llamada Quichua) (1560, 106). It later became codified, as seen in the title of González Holguín’s *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Perú llamada lengua qquichua* (1608), published just eight years before Garcilaso’s *Royal Commentaries*. It gained authority in the modern world when it appeared as *quichua* in the Royal Spanish Academy’s *Diccionario* of 1767 (Terreros y Pando 1767, 260) and as *quechua* in the 1855 and 1884 editions (Real Academia Española 1884, 886). During this trajectory, the glottonym became common usage in Peruvian Spanish. Palma certainly derived it from Santo Tomás, Gonzalez Holguín, or other colonial or republican sources, or what become standard usage, but not from Garcilaso.

In a similar linguistic vein, taking risky artistic license, Palma also updates Garcilaso’s prose by inserting the demonym *peruano*, or *Peruvian*, into it. Garcilaso never used such a demonym to refer to his country, although he did offer commentary on the proper noun, *Peru*. He explains “how this name was deduced, the Indians not having it in their language” (cómo se deduxo este nombre, no lo teniendo los indios en su lenguaje) (1943, I, iv), and then, given that the name Peru is not to be found in the “Indian’s language,” he spends three chapters explaining how it was derived by the Spaniards from their ignorance about names of rivers and people (1943, I, iv–vi). There is no reason to go over these details that Durand has adequately probed (1976); suffice to say that in Garcilaso’s time, the demonym *peruano* still had not been imagined since there was no political use for it.

While the proper noun *Perú* existed in Garcilaso’s time, the demonym *peruano* still had not been coined, and certainly its meaning was hidden by the dark cloud of colonialism. In fact, although *peruano* appeared in diverse editions of the Real Academia’s dictionaries during the first half of the nineteenth century, the meaning was *perulero*, a Spaniard who makes money in Peru. In 1869, the definition appears for the first time as “the Peruvian language or Qheswa” (la lengua peruana o quichua)

---

<sup>10</sup> For the date, I have consulted Mazzotti (2017, 374).

(Domínguez 1869, 256), and at the same time as "born in Peru" (natural del Perú) (Real Academia Española 1869, 598). This latter meaning of "born in Peru" is confirmed fifteen years later (Real Academia Española 1884, 1821). Peru was finally gaining its independence linguistically, culturally, and politically in the minds of Spaniards.

We may today talk about ancient "Peruvians," but Garcilaso definitively would not describe pre-Hispanic people as Peruvians because he knew that *Peru* originated in Spanish not in the General Language. Again *Peru*, and later *peruano*, were Spanish neologisms derived onomatopoeically from an indigenous language that now we cannot confirm. We cannot say it held meaning semiotically in Qheswa.

Garcilaso clarifies that indigenous peoples never accepted the word *Peru* in their language. Precisely, he explains:

Peru's natural Indians, although it has been seventy-two years since they were conquered, did not let this name pass through their lips, it never being imposed on them, and although through communication with Spaniards they know what it means, they do not use this word because in their language they did not have a generic name, such as saying Spain, Italy, or France, to name the kingdoms and provinces that their natural kings lorded over...

Los indios naturales del Perú, aunque ha setenta y dos años que se conquistó, no toman este nombre en la boca, como nombre nunca por ellos impuesto, y aunque por la comunicación de los españoles entienden ya lo que quiere dezir, ellos no usan dél porque en su lenguaje no tuvieron nombre genérico para nombrar en junto los reinos y provincias que sus Reyes naturales señorearon, como dezir España, Italia o Francia... (1943, I, v)

Therefore, as Garcilaso explains, native speakers of Qheswa, or any other indigenous language, for that matter, would not use the proper noun "Peru" to describe where they live, and they certainly would not refer to themselves as Peruvians. Furthermore, Garcilaso would not have applied such nomenclature to his New World ancestors. This did not change over the centuries and surely was not the case during the nineteenth century, even as the demonym *peruano* was gaining currency. In the period after the abolition of the so-called Indian tribute in 1854, counterintuitively, the identity of native Andeans, according to historian Heraclio Bonilla, contracted. He explains:

This dispersion and lack of communication reduced the horizon of consciousness among the indigenous population with respect to its situation. Probably the Indians, who not only were not "Peruvians," ceased to perceive themselves as Indians, as Quechuas, or as Aymaras, taking on a parochial consciousness. "I am from such and such town" or "from such and such hacienda" is surely the expression that best translates this situation.

Esta dispersión e incomunicación redujo el horizonte en la conciencia de la población indígena sobre su propia situación. Probablemente los indios, que no sólo no eran “peruanos”, dejaron también de percibirse como indios, como quechuas o como aymaras, para asumir una conciencia parroquial. “Yo soy de tal pueblo” o “de tal hacienda”, es seguramente la expresión que mejor traduce esta situación. (1988, 95)

Besides the modernization of terms, there is also the possibility of tampering with a passage’s wording or with allowing the actual reference to have inaccurate information. It is also possible to give greater weight to a particular topic than the original author did, or conversely, to emphasize a topic less than the original author did. All of these become part of Palma’s discursive strategy. It is hard to say from the reference Palma provides when discussing the number *chunka* (chapter 14, book 20), from which edition of the *Royal Commentaries* Palma may have been quoting. The first part of the *Commentaries* has only nine books, and the second part, known as *General History of Peru*, consists of eight, so there can be no “book 20.” The reference to chapter 14, though, is helpful. It seems plausible that Palma would quote from the 1800–1801 edition, inversely called the *Historia general del Perú o Comentarios reales* that had thirteen volumes. I did find a passage in the first part of *Commentaries* in the second book, chapter 14, that discusses this material. While Palma’s citation reveals a good degree of editing of Garcilaso’s wording, the theme coincides with Garcilaso, especially in the few clauses that survive intact. Thus, we must conclude that Palma distorts Garcilaso’s original prose in several ways.

In an important passage Palma turns to what should be the central thrust of his rhetorical strategy, the decimal system among the ancient Inkakuna. This passage deals with decurions, which Garcilaso calls *caporales*, that is, Roman sergeants in charge of ten soldiers, a term Garcilaso and other chroniclers resemanticize to describe Amerindian army organization:

They called these decurions for the number of their decuria: the first ones are called chunkakamayoc, which is to say in charge of ten, a compound noun composed of *chunka*, which is ten, and *kamayoc*, he who is in charge. The same goes for other numbers, but to avoid being prolific, we will not say them all in the same language, which for the curious is pleasant to see three numbers multiplied, compounded with the noun *kamayoc*, a noun that has many meanings.

Llamaban a estos decuriones por el número de sus decurias: a los primeros llamaban *Chunca Camayu*, que quiere dezir el que tiene cargo de diez, nombre compuesto de *chunca*, que es diez, y de *camayu*, el que tiene cargo, y por semejante con los demás números, que por escusar prolijidad no los dezimos todos en la misma lengua, que para los curiosos fuera cosa agradable ver dos y tres números puestos en multiplicación, compuestos con el nombre *camayu*, el cual nombre sirve también en otras muchas significaciones. (1943, II, xiv)

If we return to Palma's quotation of Garcilaso, it reveals how the focus on the game, the suppression of the military context, and the insertion of neologisms all altered the text. Yet if we add italics to show where Palma did quote Garcilaso word for word, we can see that he truly was quoting Garcilaso: "Todos los juegos se llaman en quichua chungo (diez), porque *todos los números van a parar al deceno*. Los peruanos tomaron pues, *el número diez por el juego, y para decir juguemos dicen chuncasun, que en rigor de [...] significación es contemos por dieces.*" Clearly, we can see that Palma was accepting Garcilaso in this matter, despite any possible influence the Hispanist scholars from Spain were having over him.

The military need for counting is placed in another context. Of the various meanings of the term *chunka* included in Garcilaso's discussion, the one that Palma underscores in his adulterated quotation is its ability to signify "play." By doing this he makes the Inkakuna out to be a fun-loving people, which makes them more palatable to his late-nineteenth-century readers. Of course, when Garcilaso mentions play, he himself shows his capacity for digression, anticipating Palma in the act. This is to say, in a way, Palma imitates the chronicler.

Besides this imprecise quoting, we must consider why Palma would rewrite Garcilaso's phraseology to have him talking about "peruanos" as people and "quichua" as a language during the pre-Hispanic age, as illustrated above. It could be a rewriting of history in the postbellum period to blot out the horror of the War of the Pacific, where class embarrassingly trumped nation, and the more economically advantaged Chile defeated the more class-conscious Peru, a rewriting of history to insert patriotism in the form of "peruanos" and "quichua" into the Peruvian nation. In an essay from 1904 that remained unpublished until it was posthumously incorporated into the second edition of his *Horas de lucha*, "Nuestros indios," González Prada finds cause for astonishment that "during the War of the Pacific the indigenous looked at the conflict between the two nations as a civil struggle between General Chile and General Peru" (durante la Guerra del Pacífico los indígenas miraban la lucha de las dos naciones como una contienda civil entre el general Chile y el general Perú) (1985–1989, 3: 208). González Prada understands that Andeans did not accept (he would say understand) the demonym *Peruvian* to describe themselves. His assessment was correct, as verified by Bonilla's recognition that *patria* for Andean people was reduced to "I am from such and such town." Palma also understood this, but he did not directly engage the issue as a problem of nationness, that is, the quality of being a nation, except to blame the autochthonous Andeans for Peru's loss in the war. As Osvaldo Holguín Callo has noted, Ricardo Palma and others, such as the politician Manuel Candamo, revealed racist tendencies in their writing after the War of the Pacific as way to deflect blame from elites for Peru's shameful defeat (2009, 242). Instead of making the intellectual effort to recognize that class was more powerful than patriotism in that war, it was simply easier to insert "Peruvian" into Garcilaso's prose where it never had been, solving the problem, at least through literature, by using the term to encompass a people who did not all embrace it.

It could be that Palma rewrote Garcilaso's phraseology because he was unconsciously reflecting lexicographic usage of his time. Another possibility is that he may have been quoting from memory causing inaccuracies in the passage, as was common during that time. His contemporary

González Prada did this, for example, when he quoted from Balzac to make a point in another essay from 1904, “The Slaves of the Church,” as noted in Cathleen Carris’s translation of the essay (González Prada 2013, 768, 775–776n4). Revealingly, inexactitude in quoting practice in both Palma and González Prada tends to substantiate this element in Gómez Martínez’s theory of the essay. Because Palma was writing essay, there may have been nothing devious about what he was doing. He was merely cultivating a genre whose norms allowed imprecision in quoting practice. To paraphrase Gómez Martínez, we can say that the quotation is subordinated to the content, not Garcilaso’s content, but Palma’s (1981, 44).

Another possibility is that he may have had a philological reason for grafting the term to Garcilaso’s prose. He may have been looking for some kind of coeval relationship between Spanish and Qheswa, and so he just rewrote Garcilaso to achieve this balance, thereby making his essay a bit more comprehensible to his nineteenth-century readers and elevating the Qheswakuna’s importance in their minds somewhat, a task also undertaken by his other very famous contemporary, Clorinda Matto de Turner, in her two-part essay “Estudios históricos” (1888a; 1888b). While the adoption of a linguistic framework based on coevalness where none existed is antihistorical, it could be taken as noble intent in defining the imaginary of the nation.

In sum, there are three interesting operations that occur in Palma’s surreptitious rewriting of the Inkan chronicler. He injects into Garcilaso’s prose a glottonym (*quichua*), to refer to the language which for Garcilaso did not have a glottonym, a noun neither Garcilaso nor the Inkakuna would have ever used. He interpolates a proper name, a demonym (*peruano*) into Garcilaso’s prose, that Garcilaso would never utilize to refer to pre-Hispanic people. He then elevates Garcilaso as an authority to praise the fact that early “Peruvians” did have the decimal system, yet this is an adulterated Garcilaso, modulated to meet the discursive needs of Palma’s essay. This does not diminish the fact that the nineteenth-century essayist holds up the seventeenth-century chronicler as an authority even though he criticizes him at other junctures, even calling him a “teller of tall tales” (*embustero*) at other points (1961, 37, 421n1).

## **Conclusions**

The open relationship with Garcilaso in this essay is ambivalent but palpable. On the one hand, Palma digresses to refute Garcilaso stating that the Qheswa-language play *Ollantay* could not serve as proof for the existence of theater among the Inkakuna, when Garcilaso never brought *Ollantay* into his narrative frame, nor could he have, since that particular play is a colonial production, probably a late colonial production, despite some of its thematic elements possibly stemming from the centuries before it was fixed as an alphabetic text. On the other, he turns to Garcilaso, respecting his discussion of the decimal system in terms of military formation and of games among the Inkakuna, even respecting entire phrases used to build a complete thought, but distorting him again, this time only to a degree by inserting modernisms Garcilaso would never have employed. Selectively choosing from the facts Garcilaso offers, making it into a kind of a game, might seem frivolous. Such frivolity

diminishes Garcilaso's accomplishments. Finally, by siding with Palma over Garcilaso while the former "debates" the question of "theater" among the ancient Inkakuna, the reader becomes susceptible to believing other parts of the well-known and beloved traditionist's, here essayist's, arguments. The reader ends up thinking that Palma is infallible and superior in his intellect, while Garcilaso is fallible, his prose riddled with errors, despite the fact the latter was writing about his own culture, the former, not. Palma comes off as the *master* and Garcilaso, the *student*, the *criollo* the teacher, and the *indio* the student.

Ironically, we, the readers, also end up accepting Palma's argument that the Inkakuna had the decimal system, and a peg is taken out of the edifice of the Eurocentrism of the French Academy of Sciences that Palma censures. "Sistema decimal" is not history, it is not fiction, it is not poetry. It is essay, an understudied genre found among the many and varied kinds of works Palma cultivated. Its discursivity seems to point toward the past, but it has meaning for the present. This is because, by bucking the notion of "degenerate races" and defending those who came before, a small (perhaps unintentional) opening is created that embraces those who came before. In doing that, a small discursive crack opens to a future where Peruvians of all stripes are incited to reflect on a sliver of a big-tent, inclusive, ideal of Peru. In this way, Palma's essay begins to point toward the future, aligning it with Oviedo's second essayistic trait. It is perhaps also ironic that a Palma concerned with getting words from Peru included in the Spanish Royal Academy's *Diccionario* (Tanner 2002), achieving coevalness between Continental and American Spanish, would turn to Garcilaso. In doing so a seventeenth-century author became substance for an essay, a modern literary genre *par excellence*, in a literature today known as Peruvian.

---

---

Thomas Ward is Professor of Spanish and Director of Latin American and Latino Studies at Loyola University Maryland. He is a corresponding member of the Academia Peruana de la Lengua and the Instituto Ricardo Palma in the homonymous university, where he has also been named Honorary Professor. In 2002 he received the Mid-Atlantic Council for Latin American Studies Harold Eugene Davis Prize for Best Article. Among his books are *La anarquía inmanentista de Manuel González Prada* (1998, 2001), *La teoría literaria* (2004), *La resistencia cultural* (2004), *Buscando la nación peruana* (2007), *Decolonizing Indigeneity* (2017), and *The Formation of Latin American Nations* (2018). He has also published three dozen articles on Latin American literature as well as edited and translated various works.

---

---

## References

Anderson Imbert, Enrique

1952 "Notas sobre la novela histórica en el siglo XIX." In *La novela iberoamericana*, edited by Arturo Torres-Rioseco, 1–24. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Arenas Cruz, María Elena

1997 *Hacia una teoría general del ensayo. Construcción del texto ensayístico*. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.

Arista Montoya, Luis Alberto

2017 “La razón irónica en las *Tradiciones Peruanas*.” *Aula Palma* 16: 111–123. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31381/test2.v0i16.1339>.

Bonilla, Heraclio

1988 “Etnia, religión y la cuestión nacional en el área andina.” In *Indianidad, etnocidio, indigenismo en América Latina*, edited by Groupe de recherches sur l’Amérique latine Toulouse-Perpignan, translated by Ana Freyre de Zavala, 87–110. México: Instituto Indigenista Interamericano/Centre d’études mexicaines et centraméricaines.

Calvo Pérez, Julio

1998 “Análisis de la obra anónima quechua *Ollantay*.” In *Ollantay: Edición crítica de la obra anónima quechua*, edited by Julio Calvo Pérez, 9–189. Cuzco: Centro de Estudios Regionales “Bartolomé de las Casas.”

Carrillo, Francisco

1986 *Literatura quechua clásica*. Lima: Editorial Horizonte.

Cortez, Enrique E.

2018 *Bibliografía y polémica: El Inca Garcilaso y el archivo colonial andino en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Veuvuert.

*Diccionario quechua-español-quechua/Simi Taqe qheswa-español-qheswa*.

1995 Cusco: Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua.

Domínguez, Ramón Joaquín

1869 *Nuevo suplemento al Diccionario Nacional o Gran Diccionario Clásico de la Lengua Española*. Madrid: Imprenta y Librería Universal de los Señores Crespo, Martín y Comp., Editores.

Durand, José

1976 *El Inca Garcilaso, clásico de América*. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública.

Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca

1943 *Comentarios reales de los Incas*, 2 vols, edited by Ángel Rosenblat. Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores.

Gómez Martínez, José Luis

1981 *Teoría del ensayo*. Salamanca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca.

González Holguín, Diego

[1608] 1989 *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Perú llamada lengua qquichua o del Inca*. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos.



González Prada, Manuel

1985–1989 *Obras*, 7 vols, edited by Luis Alberto Sánchez. Lima: PetroPerú (Copé).

2013 "The Slaves of the Church." Translated by Cathleen Caris. *PMLA* 128 (3): 765–777. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2013.128.3.765>.

Holguín Callo, Osvaldo

2009 "El indio valeroso en la literatura de la Posguerra con Chile." In *La República de Papel*, edited by Marcel Velázquez Castro, 235–273. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de Ciencias y Humanidades.

Huarag Álvarez, Eduardo

2018 "Los refranes en las *Tradiciones peruanas* de Ricardo Palma." *Aula Palma* 17: 253–268. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31381/ap.v0i17.2132>.

Larrabure y Unanue, Eugenio

1893 *Monografías histórico-americanas*. Lima: Imp. De Torres Aguirre.

Matto de Turner, Clorinda

1888a "Estudios históricos: A la Sociedad Arqueológico-Lingüística. Trabajo leído en el 'Círculo Literario de Lima.'" *El Perú Ilustrado* 69 (1 de septiembre): 302c–303c.

1888b "Estudios históricos: Al Doctor Luis Cordero. Trabajo leído en la velada literaria en casa de la autora." *El Perú Ilustrado* 71 (15 de septiembre): 330b–331c.

Mazzotti, José Antonio

2017 "El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega." *Historias de las literaturas en el Perú*. Volumen 2. *Literatura y cultura en el Virreinato del Perú: Apropiación y diferencia*, coordinated by Raquel Chang-Rodríguez and Carlos García-Bedoya M., 371–404. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica, Casa de la Literatura, Ministerio de Educación del Perú.

Mead, Jr., Robert G.

1956 *Breve historia del ensayo hispanoamericano*. México: Manuales Studium.

Méndez G., Cecilia

1996 "Incas Sí, Indios No: Notes on Peruvian Creole Nationalism and Its Contemporary Crisis." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28 (1) (Feb.): 197–225. DOI: [10.1017/S0022216X00012682](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X00012682).

Morales Mena, Javier

2019 *La representación de la literatura en la ensayística de Mario Vargas Llosa*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Katatay.

Neira, Hugo

2008 *Teoría y práctica del ensayo*. Lima: Editorial Siklos.

*Ollanta: An Ancient Incan Drama*

1871 Translated from the original Quechua and edited by Clements R. Markham. London: Trübner and Company.

Oviedo, José Miguel

1991 *Breve historia del ensayo hispanoamericano*. Madrid: Editorial Alianza.

Palma, Ricardo

1865 *Armonías. Libro de un desterrado*. París: Librería de Rosa y Bourret.

1872 *Tradiciones*. (First series). Lima: Imprenta del Estado.

1875 *Perú. Tradiciones*. (Third series). Lima: Benito Gil.

1883 *Tradiciones peruanas*. 2nd ed. Lima: Imprenta del Universo, de Carlos Prince.

1891 *Ropa apollada* (octava y última serie de *Tradiciones*). Lima: Imp. y Librería del Universo de C. Prince.

1899 *Tradiciones y artículos históricos*. Lima, Imp. Torres Aguirre.

1900 *Cachivaches*. Lima: Imprenta Torres Aguirre.

1949 *Epistolario*. 2 tomos. Lima: Editorial Cultura Antártica.

1961 *Tradiciones peruanas completas*. 4th ed, edited by Edith Palma. Madrid: Aguilar.

Pantigoso, Manuel

2017 “Ricardo Palma, el ‘Bibliotecario mendigo’: amor al libro a través de sus cartas.” *Aula Palma* 16: 285–308. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31381/test2.v0i16.1353>.

Real Academia Española

1869 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana por la Real Academia Española*. Undécima edición. Madrid: Imprenta de Don Manuel Rivadeneyra.

1884 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana por la Real Academia Española*. Duodécima edición. Madrid: Imprenta de D. Gregorio Hernando.

Rodríguez-Arenas, Flor María

1993 “Historia editorial y literaria.” In *Tradiciones peruanas*, edited by Julio Ortega and Flor María Rodríguez-Arenas, 381–408. Nanterre: Allca XXe. Colección Archivos.

Santo Tomás, Domingo de

1560 *Lexicón, o Vocabulario de la lengua general del Perú*. Valladolid: Francisco Fernandez de Cordoua, impressor de la M.R.

Skinner, Lee Joan

2006. *History Lessons: Refiguring the Nineteenth-Century Historical Novel in Spanish America*. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta.

Tanner, Roy L.

1986 *The Humor of Irony and Satire in the Tradiciones peruanas*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

2002 “Ricardo Palma ante la Real Academia Española de la Lengua.” *Lexis* 26.2: 493–507.

Tauzin Castellanos, Isabelle

1999 *Claves de una coherencia: las “Tradiciones peruanas” de Ricardo Palma*. Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma.

Ward - "Sistema decimal entre los antiguos peruanos"

Terrerros y Pando, Esteban de

1767 *Diccionario castellano con las voces de ciencias y artes y sus correspondientes en las tres lenguas francesa, latina e italiana*. Tomo 3. Madrid: Viuda de Ibarra. (Colección entera, 1788).

Velázquez Castro, Marcel

2013 *La mirada de los gallinazos. Cuerpo, fiesta y mercancía en el imaginario sobre Lima (1640-1895)*. Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú.

Ward, Thomas

2017 *Decolonizing Indigeneity: New Approaches to Latin American Literature*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

2018 *Formation of Latin American Nations: From Late Antiquity to Early Modernity*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.