Making the Archive Speak: Unearthing Inca Nobles in Mexico

Rocío Quispe-Agnoli
2004: Archivo de Indias de Sevilla (Spain)
Topic: Litigant Indians in 16\textsuperscript{th}-18\textsuperscript{th} centuries
Collection “Mapas y Planos” (Maps and Charts)

- Maps, charts
- Coats of arms
- Portraits
- Other visual-iconic Texts

And I found this → Imperial coat of arms of Charles V (MP77)
And I also found this:

MP78
(1) Portrait of the Great Túpac Yupanqui
(2) Coat of arms granted to Don Gonzalo Uchu Guallpa and Don Felipe Túpac Inca, sons of Inca Huayna Cápac, and grandsons of Inca Túpac Yupanqui (year 1545-royal decree signed by Charles V).
Questions: (1) where did these images belong?

• Expediente de pretensiones de Doña María Joaquina Inca. Gobierno de la Audiencia de México, also known as México 2346.

• Next, I asked to see Mexico 2346

• Dated 1800-1801, but events recorded here took place between 1544 and 1801.

• And it has 401 leaves = 802 pages.
Question (2): why were these documents about an Inca family in files related to Mexico?

- Did the document(s) travel from one to another archive?
- Were the persons who produced the documents hemispheric travelers?
- If so, how and why Inca noblemen and noblewomen were in Mexico?
- ...I kept digging....
A long journey: 2004-2014

- Funding
- Purchase of microfilm (2010)
- Digitization of 802 pages
- First transcription (18th century script + 17th century script)
- Revision of transcription
- Funding → sit and write
Apparent inconsistencies:

1. What was a Noble Inca family doing in Mexico in the 18th century and why were they conducting a petition like this one?

2. Why was the file so big?

3. Its main character, María Joaquina Uchu Inca, claimed her direct descent from Inca kings. What evidence was she able to produce to support her claim?

4. What was the purpose of the three images? Why was a Spanish Imperial coats of arms there?
Apparent inconsistencies (continued):

1. What did the Inca-Spanish coat of arms symbolize?
2. Why a portrait of a deceased Inca besides this coat of arms?
3. Maria Joaquina claimed to be an Inca noblewoman, why then was she referred to in the documents as “española”?
4. Why were there so many documents that did not relate directly to the case of this family?
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2. Why were there so many documents that did not relate directly to the case of this family?
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What was María Joaquina Uchu Inca asking?

- Being recognized as direct descent of Inca Huayna Capac (and even from Aztec king Moctezuma II).
- Privileges for Indian nobility
- Tax-exempt
- A “decent” job for her husband(s)
- Scholarships for her two sons to attend a school for Indian nobles.
- Pension from Spain’s treasury (for her family and her siblings’)

![Image of a handwritten note]
### Tres viceroys of Mexico (1788-1801) and king Charles IV *1788-1814*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conde de Revilla Gigedo (1789-1794)</th>
<th>Marques de Branciforte (1794-1798)</th>
<th>Duque de Santa Fe (1798-1800)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tension</td>
<td>- Significantly less tension and confrontation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confrontation</td>
<td>- Promises but lack of action</td>
<td>• Sympathetic to the case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Denied</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Takes action especially with the archivists of Sevilla.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Grants her a small pension (300 pesos/2 families) → she is not happy.  
- Later on she and her brother will receive 1000 pesos.
How did it end?

(you will have to read my book) →

Nobles de papel (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la ANR, 2014)