In Search of an Inca: Identity and Utopia in the Andes. By Alberto Flores Galindo. Edited and translated by Carlos Aguirre, Charles F. Walker, and Willie Hiatt. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xxix + 270 pp., editor's introduction, tables, maps, glossary, notes, index. $75.00 cloth, $21.99 paper.)

Thomas Lyle Whigham, *University of Georgia*

Some works leave ripples in the pond of general knowledge that seem barely traceable and are acknowledged, if at all, only because some kind reviewer sees fit to append another "useful contribution" tag to a rather long list of titles. Other works generate great controversy at first, shine brightly for a time in the scholarly firmament, and then abruptly vanish, almost as if they had never been written. The rarest works of all, however, are like mini suns: they burn with steady intensity from the beginning and never cease affecting those who read them, for every new consultation yields more nuanced meanings and insights. *In Search of an Inca* definitely belongs in the last category.

The author, Alberto Flores Galindo (1949–90), was an original thinker of the first order. Born into a middle-class Limeño family, he initially enjoyed a fairly conventional Catholic education that appeared well suited to his shy and studious character. But the young scholar came alive in the ferment of the tumultuous 1960s, and it brought out in him a marked sympathy for his country's poor. After receiving his doctorate from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, he returned home convinced that his work had to make a real difference. He wanted to understand how Andean society as he knew it had become so fragmented, so contentious and class-dominated, and how the perennial divides could somehow be bridged by modern politics. He dedicated his scholarly energies to this quest, and before he died at the age of forty, he produced a sizable and brilliantly executed oeuvre.

In Search of an Inca represents Flores Galindo's greatest achievement, for in it he finds an overarching locus of meaning that ties the pre-Hispanic world to the long trajectory of Peruvian history, leading ultimately to the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) insurrection of the 1980s. Stated in its simplest terms, when Pizarro had Atahualpa executed, he killed a man, the Inca, but he also inaugurated the myth of the Inca's return, a broadly utopian vision that inspired popular feeling over the generations. Like Siegfried, the Inca dwells in the collective memory of the highland Indians, permitting them to link their glorious past with the promise—the redemption—of the future.

This thesis, arranged in a sophisticated but polemical fashion, is original and attractive, if not entirely compelling. It allowed Flores Galindo to

find common themes in the Taqui Onqoy movement of the 1560s, the Túpac Amaru rebellion of 1780, and the guerrilla uprisings in the latter half of the twentieth century. It allowed him to assert the primacy of utopian indigenous traditions in the broad sweep of Peruvian historical consciousness. And it allowed him to suggest a common ground for modern urban intellectuals and the Indian plebe, whom the former had previously reduced to a simple object of study.

These propositions are certainly exciting and were treated as such when the book first appeared in 1986. It is not every work that receives both the Casa de las Américas prize and the Clarence Haring Prize from the American Historical Association.

Like all polemical works, however, *In Search of an Inca* can be criticized from along the edges, for no explicative model is equally sustained by every historical detail. Taqui Onqoy, for instance, was hardly the mass-based "dance sickness" that is usually found in the secondary literature, and thus appears ill suited as a "decisive moment in the construction of the Andean utopia." Similarly, though Flores Galindo implies otherwise, Sendero Luminoso's ideological precepts always drew more from dogmatic Maoism than from anything redolent of a highlands ethos (its cadres managed even to discourage the speaking of Quechua).

Flores Galindo never wavered in embracing a Marxist interpretation of history—though, to be sure, his militancy was rather heterodox, being much influenced by French antecedents, by Gramsci, and by E. P. Thompson. This stance led him to stress popular struggle and revolutionary potential as powerful forces for change. This is natural enough. But one could just as easily emphasize the long periods of relative calm in the Andes, where native peoples either colluded with the colonial (or national) order or were effectively suppressed by it. Why should the bright, intermittent sparks be given preference in such a gray and lugubrious historical tableau? Indeed, in those periods of seeming stasis, how much evidence really exists for a defiant, uniquely Andean notion of historical destiny?

To his credit, Flores Galindo was aware of the limitations imposed by the polemical form, and he sought a way to supersede it through a creative interplay of sources and analytical techniques. He eschews neither archival documentation nor anthropological fieldwork nor literature in his effort to uncover new layers of understanding. In this respect, his treatment of the novelist José María Arguedes merits considerable attention.

Flores Galindo recognized that the utopian vision was shot through with historical contradictions from the beginning—as indeed are all idealized constructs. These contradictions deserve to be debated. To write of the Andean utopia, moreover, is not the same thing as endorsing it as a valid

alternative to the modern nation-state, and Flores Galindo never did the latter. One wonders what he would have thought of the destruction of the PCP-SL (Partido Comunista del Peru-Sendero Luminoso) by the Fujimori dictatorship, the reconfiguration of the APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) under Alán García, and most particularly, the career of Ollanta Humala. Could that last figure ever have played the role of a latter-day Inca (or Messiah)?

In Search of an Inca was a best seller that became a classic, and an English translation has been long overdue. Readers should be aware, however, that this translation omits chapter 6 of the definitive Spanish text. Despite this omission, students in the Northern Hemisphere have reason to celebrate. They now will be able to read this fascinating study and contemplate its originality, its depth, and its humanity.

DOI 10.1215/00141801-1263983

Cartas Mapuche: Siglo XIX. Compilado por Jorge Pavez Ojeda. (Santiago: Ocho Libros/CoLibris, 2008. xvi + 851 pp., sumario, agradecimientos, presentación, bibliografía citada, cartas mapuche, índice de autores, índice detallado, índice de ilustraciones. $15,850 Chilean pesos, paper.)

Alison J. Bruey, *University of North Florida*

Cartas Mapuche: Siglo XIX consists of two principal sections: Pavez's introductory essay and a collection of Mapuche letters spanning the period 1803–98. An appendix containing reproductions of archival photographs may also be of interest to researchers. Pavez asserts that the letters reproduced in this collection are merely the "tip of the iceberg" of the written correspondence that must have circulated within and through Mapuche territories. These letters and others that still languish in closed archival collections offer several significant opportunities for study, including the role of *caciques'* secretaries and translators—*wingka* (foreigners, Spaniards, or mestizos) and literate Mapuche alike—in Mapuche writing and politics; the role of schools and missions in spreading the alphabet through Mapuche territories; the relationship between written and oral communication in Mapuche politics; and Mapuche-state relations.

Pavez proposes that researchers embrace the heterogeneity of the letters and their authors rather than subsuming them within homogenizing, colonialist categories such as *indígena*. He argues that "if the idea of transculturation has been, in its principal exponents, the expression of 'a