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José de Acosta praises the textiles of the Andes, 1590

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The meat of the llama is good, although tough, and that of the suckling llama is one of the best things to eat, and most frequently given as a gift; but they rarely use the animal thus, because the llama's principle use is for its wool, for making clothing, and for its service in carrying burdens. The Indians work the wool to make the clothing they wear, one rough and common type they call *havasca*, and another delicate and fine called *cumbi*. They make table and bed coverings of this *cumbi*, and tapestries with coats-of-arms and other panels with highly esteemed skill, which last a long time, and have a lovely luster, as if they were part silk, one of the distinct qualities of their way of weaving the llama wool. They weave two-faced cloth when they wish, and neither a thread or loose end visible in the entire piece of cloth. The Inka, the king of Peru, had textile masters to weave his *cumbi* cloth, and the main ones lived in the district of Capachica, next to the great lake of Titicaca. They use different grasses to give the wool different colors, and with it make various works. And from the rough and workaday fabrics, to those that are polished and sophisticated, all the Indians living in the Andes are masters, having their looms in their houses, never needing to go out and buy, or have made, the clothes that they need for their households.

SPANISH ORIGINAL

La carne de éstos es buena, aunque recia; la de sus corderos las cosas mejores y más regaladas que se comen; pero gástan poco en esto, porque el principal fruto es la lana para hacer el servicio de traer y llevar cargas. La lana labran los indios y ropa de que se visten; una grosera y común que llaman *havasca* otra delicada y fina que llaman *cumbi*. De este *cumbi* labran sobremesas y cubiertas, y reposteros y otros paños de muy escogida labor, que dura mucho tiempo y tiene un lustre bueno cuasi de media seda, y lo que es particular de su modo de tejer la lana. Labran a dos haces todas las labores que quieren, sin que vea hilo ni cabo de él en toda una pieza. Tenía el Inga, rey de grandes maestros de labrar esta ropa de *cumbi*, y los principales residían en el repartimiento de Capachica, junto a la laguna de Titicaca. Dan con yerbas diversas diversos colores y muy esta lana, con que hacen varias labores. Y de labor basta y go de pulida y sutil, todos los indios e indias son oficiales en lo teniendo sus telares en su casa, sin que hayan de ir a comprar a hacer la ropa que han menester para su casa.