Early Modern Spanish political thought linked the absence of currency (‘money’) with barbarity, offering Spaniards a reason to wage ‘just war’ against ‘uncivilized’ communities allegedly incapable of political autonomy. Since Spaniards did not find money when they arrived in the Andes, mestizo historian Inca Garcilaso de la Vega faces a grave issue in his textual defense of the Inca empire, _Royal Commentaries of the Incas_ (1609): how to admit to the Incas’ lack of money, and simultaneously claim that this lacking did not preclude them from achieving the kind of well-being and autarchy that Aristotle identified with an ordered and autonomous political community?