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OPEN-ACCESS, PEER-REVIEWED/ACCESO ABIERTO, JURADO PROFESIONAL

To the Last Breath

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—*Francisco Pizarro*¹ *shortly after noon on 26 June 1541; Lima, Peru; on the floor of his house and surrounded by Juan de Herrada, Juan Rodríguez Barragán, Diego Méndez, and several other Almagristas*

¹ **Francisco Pizarro** (1478-1541), the illegitimate son of a Spanish captain, never learned to read or write and was Hernán Cortés's second cousin. In 1513 he traveled with Vasco Núñez de Balboa across the Isthmus of Panama when Balboa first saw the Pacific Ocean and in late 1518 arrested Balboa and took him to Acla, where he was executed. After forming a conquest company with Diego de Almagro and Hernando de Luque and making two exploratory voyages along the Pacific coast of South America, he returned to Spain in 1528 and both requested and received permission from Queen Isabella to conquer Peru (MacQuarrie 17-36). He left again in January 1530, and the next year sailed from Panama to Peru with three ships, about 200 men and 40 horses. During the next few years he conquered the Incas in much the same way that Cortés conquered the Mexica, founded Ciudad de los Reyes (or City of the Kings, which is now Lima), and was named Marquis d'Albillos by Charles V, which effectively made him the ruler of New Castile (northern Peru). As a result of a conflict between Pizarro and Diego de Almagro over authority in Peru, Almagro was captured, tried, garroted, and beheaded by Pizarro's half-brother Hernando and followers in July 1538. Three years later, out of revenge, supporters of Almagro and enemies of the Marquis, stormed the palace, fought through a few defenders, and, in the ensuing sword fight, cut Pizarro's throat. He collapsed, drew a cross on the floor with his blood, kissed it, and died (Kirkpatrick, 1946, pp. 246-47; MacQuarrie, 2007, pp. 339-43).