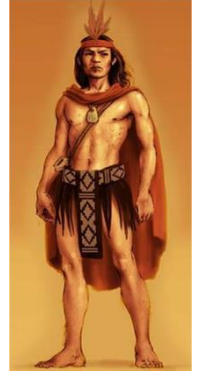


Biography

“**Lautaro**” is the story of a real person’s life written by somebody else. A **biography** is a non-literary, expository text proceeding chronologically through the stages of a person’s life.

LAUTARO

Lautaro; (circa 1534, Peteroa - 1557) is a legendary figure, considered one of the most important Mapuche leaders and warriors during the Arauco War against the Spanish conquerors. His name comes from ‘**Lef**’, which in Mapuzugun means ‘fast’, and ‘**Txaru**’, which means ‘hawk’. He was an excellent strategist and had a key role in the war by applying his knowledge of the Spanish culture in favor of the Mapuche resistance.



Lautaro was born around 1534, probably near Tirúa, in the Nahuelbuta Mountain Range. He was the son of an important logko named **Kuriñamku** (‘**Kuri**’ = black, ‘**Ñamku**’ = Small eagle). At the age of 11, he was taken prisoner and turned into a ‘**yanacona**’ (a servant aborigin). After several years as a prisoner, he became a personal page boy for Pedro de Valdivia himself. As the Spaniards could not pronounce his name correctly, they named him Felipe Lautaro.

Among his many tasks as a servant, Lautaro was in charge of Pedro de Valdivia’s horses and he accompanied the conqueror in battles and military exercises. This experience gave him great knowledge of the Spanish culture, and he learnt not to fear the horses, he also learnt how to ride a horse until he became a good rider, and he watched the battle exercises of the Spaniards, learning from Valdivia their military tactics and strategies.

In 1550, Lautaro witnessed the cruel punishments inflicted to the native population after the battles of Andalién and Penco as an example to avoid future rebellions. **This fact** had a great impact on him, and he decided to escape and join his people.

In 1553, after abandoning the Spaniards, Lautaro appeared as the main leader in the Battle of Tucapel – he was appointed **Toki** (Main Chief in times of war). With thousands of his peers, he destroyed the Tucapel fortress. Besides, this also resulted in Pedro de Valdivia's death. This was a big success for the Mapuche warriors. After the victory in Tucapel, Lautaro became highly respected and he assembled a great army with the help of other mapuche communities.

In February 1554, Lautaro showed his leadership and talents again at the Battle of **Mariweñu**, where they crushed the Spanish soldiers under the command of Francisco de Villagra. This allowed them to continue to Concepción, which was looted and burned to ashes the same year.

In 1555, Lautaro and his army destroyed Angol because its inhabitants escaped to La Imperial, and the Mapuche warriors continued to Concepción where they defeated the Spaniards again and destroyed it a second time.

During these years, some diseases brought by the Spanish people and the lack of food because of the war affected the mapuche population. This meant a decrease in the intensity and frequency of the battles. However, Lautaro started combat again in 1556 in order to reach his main objective – the total expulsion of the Spanish from the central area of our country.

In his attempt to arrive in Santiago, he could only get to the northern bank of the Maule river, but he had to retreat after a defeat in the Peteroa Battle.

Finally, on April 30, 1557, Lautaro found his death at the Battle of Mataquito, where the leader established a '**malal**' or fortress. A group of Spanish conquerors and about 1000 yanaconas attacked Lautaro and his men by surprise. When he was coming out of his ruka, a spear went through his body and ended his existence. He was betrayed by a Promaucae native, who told the Spanish about his position in Mataquito. The body of Lautaro was dismembered and his head was placed in a spear and shown at the Main Square in Santiago for a long time.

With Lautaro's death, his figure was catapulted to legendary heights in the hearts of his people, and got the respect of his enemies. He is definitely one of the most prominent characters in Mapuche and Chilean history.