

Latin American Independence

An Anthology of Sources

Edited and Translated by
SARAH C. CHAMBERS
and **JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN**



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PREFACE

“When the process of American emancipation began, Paraguay already had all the elements of nationhood and was the most prepared of all the countries for an independent existence. . . . Conscious and proud of its role in civilizing the River Plate region and other transcendental historical events, with an abundant population which was hardworking, racially homogenous and tested in battle, with a high level of social and cultural development, and with the political convictions of the age, Paraguay was called upon to play a principal rather than secondary part in the great revolutionary movement of *América*.”¹

This is the heroic voice of national history. Designed to inspire patriotism and create a shared identity among schoolchildren, such texts—whether published in Paraguay or Peru or Mexico—depicted nations with deep roots in American soil ready to stride onto the world stage during the age of republican revolutions. It is a tale with ongoing resonance throughout Latin America. Military officer-turned-president Hugo Chávez promises Venezuelans that he is building the republic envisioned by Simón Bolívar as he led troops into battle against Spanish rule. Every sixteenth of September, the Mexican head of state emerges onto a balcony to address a cheering crowd by repeating the call to arms issued in 1810 by revolutionary priest Miguel Hidalgo. Indigenous activists in the Andes invoke the names of other heroes, like that of Túpac Amaru, who took an Inca name to rebel against colonial exploitation in 1780. And the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*—the mothers of young people seized and tortured in the 1970s and 1980s by the military regime in Argentina—brought attention to their protests by silently marching around the monument to independence in the plaza in Buenos Aires where textbooks said the movement of emancipation began in May 1810.

The enduring power of patriotic history and the demands of activists that governments live up to the promises of independence invite us to reexamine these events. The documents edited and translated for this volume provide access to the words of people, both prominent and humble, who played roles in drawing rooms and on battlefields of the

1. Efraím Cardozo, *Breve historia del Paraguay* (Asuncion, Paraguay: Editorial El Lector, 1996), 49.

Latin American struggles for independence. Their voices are diverse, their motivations complex, and their stories defy simple heroic narratives of national liberation.

The way in which Latin American independence has been narrated and analyzed has varied over time. The earliest historians, who had lived through the era about which they wrote, naturally exhibited some degree of partisanship in their interpretation. Conservative Lucas Alamán was pessimistic about the future of Mexico when he wrote the 1852 history of which you will find an excerpt in Part Three of this collection. Given the prestige and prosperity of the old Viceroyalty of New Spain, he attributed Mexico's greatly diminished situation in the middle of the nineteenth century to the independence wars. These had unleashed popular unrest, resulted in the expulsion of Spaniards along with their wealth and know-how, and reduced Mexicans to a factionalist politics that made them vulnerable to the expansionism of the United States. Others writing a bit later in the nineteenth century, when many Latin American nations had achieved greater stability, were more sanguine and ready to celebrate the independence movements as their origin stories. Like Argentine Bartolomé Mitre, who compares José de San Martín to Simón Bolívar in another selection in this volume, these patriotic historians often painted flattering portraits of war heroes that began to smooth away the blemishes that had been all too visible to their contemporaries. By the twentieth century, these heroic tales were often further simplified for each nation's schoolbooks—there is nothing particularly unique about Latin America in this regard—and narratives were told as a unified march toward nationhood rather than the uncertain and twisting paths trod by those living at the time, who repeatedly had to ponder which fork to follow.

Professional historians of the twentieth century acknowledged greater complexities, but like their predecessors, they tended to depict nationalism as a primary *cause* rather than an *outcome* of the independence wars. According to such interpretations, exemplified by the quote about Paraguay above, national identities gradually developed among colonists who grew increasingly resentful of the privileged position within empire accorded to those born in Spain or Portugal. Such grievances deepened when Madrid and Lisbon raised taxes and tightened control over colonial governance, fueling rebellion throughout the eighteenth century. After the repression of those revolts, old wounds festered and colonial elites were inspired by Enlightenment critiques of absolute monarchy and by the examples of the North American and French revolutions. Then, the power vacuum resulting from Napoleon's invasion of Spain and capture of the king in 1808 gave eager separatists the perfect opportunity to

establish independent nations. Royal authorities fought back, especially when the king was restored to his throne in 1814, but within a decade or so patriot armies prevailed, liberating all but Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Told this way, the story focuses on the leading proponents of independence, the “great men” who were once presumed to shape history. In the “great man” story, victorious patriots appear as visionaries whose plans unfolded with few setbacks. At the time, however, many contemporaries regarded these grandiose plans as foolhardy and misguided, and around 1815 predictions of the end of Iberian empires would have struck most observers as premature. Leaders had to persuade their followers before they could bring their plans to fruition. Sources that relate to the broader social context complicate the inspirational narrative of founding fathers and reveal the contradictory birthing pains of these new nations.

Beginning in the 1970s, historians throughout Latin America began challenging the celebratory aspects of nationalist narratives. Rather than seeing independence as bringing freedom from tyranny, they interpreted it as a mere transfer of power from metropolitan to local elites. These revisionists argued that national emancipation did not meet the criteria of a revolution, which would have brought about significant change in the social structure to benefit and empower the masses. To the contrary, many of the new nations did not abolish slavery, formal racism may have been outlawed but continued in practice, and class hierarchies remained firmly entrenched, with a small elite possessing a disproportionate share of land and other resources. The shift in political regimes from monarchies to republics, these scholars maintained, made little difference in the lives of common folk, who were generally disenfranchised, and not much more among the middle and upper classes, as real power was usually exercised by military strongmen throughout the nineteenth century. This new interpretation generally denied that national identity went beyond a self-interested elite and depicted the chain of events as one of conservative continuity rather than progressive forward motion.

In the past couple of decades, there have been further revisions to the revisionist view, so to speak, modifying and providing nuance rather than overturning it. These new approaches tend to focus either on the macro or micro levels. Rather than depicting already formed nations throwing off their colonial chains, the macro view looks at how empires crumbled from within. Rather than tracing the formation of nations, that is, some scholars are increasingly emphasizing imperial breakdown, in which the actions of those in the metropole accelerated, rather than prevented, collapse by rigidly refusing to accommodate change and reform. Liberal delegates to Spanish and Portuguese parliaments placed

constitutional limits on absolutism but did not fundamentally change the dependent status of colonies upon the central kingdoms. Monarchs tried to maintain their hold over power through repressive rather than conciliatory means. Meanwhile, another extraneous influence, the rising commercial and military power of Great Britain, undermined Iberian attempts to maintain monopoly access to colonial resources and markets.

Another new trend complements this macro focus on empire, raising a different set of questions from a distinct vantage point. Historians digging deep into judicial and administrative documents in local archives have uncovered evidence of political activism among groups excluded from power and previously assumed to have been indifferent to the unfolding events of the era: Indian peasants, African slaves and their descendants, mixed-race cowboys, urban artisans, and women. Their studies do not claim that these groups initiated movements toward independence nor that the end of colonial rule resulted in dramatic improvements in their social status. Nonetheless, they demonstrate that members of the elite and the masses did pay attention to each other's actions and rhetoric in an effort to achieve their goals, whether these were shared or particular to one group. For example, military officers might promise manumission to slaves who would join their armies, and in some cases freedmen could pressure leaders who needed their support to broaden such offers into calls for the complete abolition of slavery. Women rarely advocated rights that we would now consider feminist, but they were aware of their particular usefulness as mediators or spies and took advantage of periods of disorder to expand their spheres of participation and influence. Popular energies could be found in both separatist and royalist camps, depending on which seemed to offer better opportunities for surviving violent and turbulent times and possibly improving people's situations. In the long run, though, the proponents of independence proved better able to recruit and mobilize their supporters; or perhaps the repressive measures taken by royal authorities pushed people to choose independence; or both—many interpretive questions are far from settled.

We have chosen documents for this collection that will present multiple perspectives and reactions to often rapidly shifting contexts and opportunities: elite nationalism, imperial breakdown, and popular activism. We include some of the classic texts that shaped the older heroic narratives: proclamations, republican editorials, and proposals for the establishment of new forms of government. But other sources represent voices translated into English for the first time: letters of women forced into exile for their political activities, patriotic poems and songs, and dialogues in the rustic lingo of ranch hands. Fervent royalists, fiery revolutionaries,

and moderate reformers will all have their say. We also include three visual documents, one to introduce each chronological part of the collection. More than illustrations, each image corresponds to a particular textual document where you will find context to aid in its analysis. The variety of documents and the diverse social types who make an appearance provide a richer view of this transformative era and the processes by which Spanish and Portuguese colonies became independent.

The transition from colonies to nations unfolded within both the context of gradual social and economic transformations and the rapidly shifting fortunes of war. Therefore, we have taken a broad perspective on the period of independence in order to encompass both eighteenth-century precedents and nineteenth-century legacies and memories. There is no doubt that some in the colonies were already beginning to form an autonomous identity vis-à-vis Europe before independence. Early rebellions served as an inspiration to some and as cautionary tales to others. Part One collects such sources from the colonial period. The most numerous documents, presented in Part Two, are from the period of the independence wars themselves, 1810–1825. Part Three features texts in which you will find the people of the new nations reflecting back on their memories of the events and debating the meanings and consequences of independence for a century thereafter.

Finally, a word about terminology. In most textbooks, you will see the term “Creoles” used to refer to people of Spanish or Portuguese descent born in the colonies and the term “peninsulars” to indicate people from Spain and Portugal. But other terms were more common and meaningful in the documents translated here. A distinction was drawn among those considered to be white between *españoles americanos* and *españoles europeos* (in Portuguese, *européus*), and these were the formal terms normally used in political discourse. Transforming these terms into “Creole” and “peninsular” obscures important historical meanings. We will translate the latter term into English as European-born Spaniards or just Spaniards (or Portuguese), depending upon the original, because the terms *européus* and *européus* vary between Spanish and Portuguese, are difficult to pronounce, and were not as central to the process of identity formation. In the colonial context, *americano* was used primarily for whites—for *españoles americanos*—but during the independence movements it could expand to encompass all those born on the continent, including Indians, blacks, and the numerous inhabitants of mixed descent. *Americano* and *América* were the preferred terms in patriotic declarations, proclamations, speeches, and songs, preceding national identifiers (Mexicans, Argentines, Brazilians, etc.) whose usage increased only *after* independence.

Because questions of nation and national identity have interpretive importance, our translations preserve the term *americano* where it is used in the documents rather than substituting “Creole” or translating it to “American,” which is less effective at signaling a collective identity being created in that time period. We will also preserve and apply the term *América* (with an accent), which was what patriotic *americanos* called their homeland, the region that became Latin America only decades later.

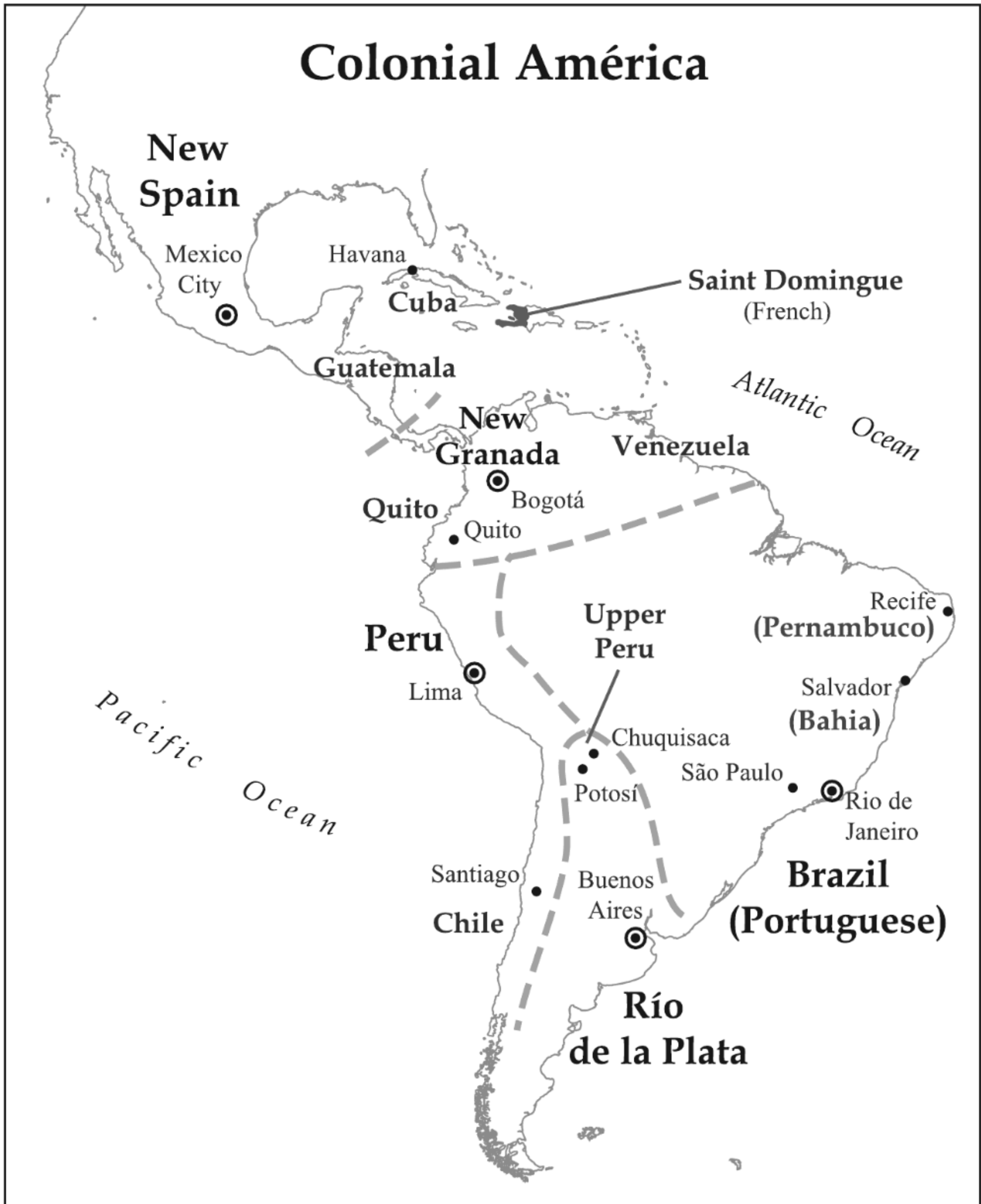
Let us commence, then, with a tour of colonial *América*.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1780 Clavijero refutes the myth of *americano* inferiority.
Túpac Amaru sparks an indigenous uprising in Peru.
- 1789 The Tiradentes conspiracy discovered in Minas Gerais.
- 1791 Viscardo calls for continental independence.
- 1796 The Caracas city council obeys but does not execute.
- 1797 Guatemala's friends of the country host a patriotic gala.
An echo of the French Revolution reaches Venezuela.
- 1798 The Tailors' Rebellion aborted in Bahia.
- c. 1800 Miranda hatches proposals and plans in London.
- 1807 Napoleon's troops enter the Iberian Peninsula.
The Portuguese Crown flees Lisbon for Brazil.
- 1808 The Spanish Crown falls into Napoleon's hands.
Crisis of the Spanish monarchy begins; juntas form
in Spain; *Cabildo abierto* in Mexico City; viceroy
deposed.
- 1809 Central junta coordinates Spanish resistance to
Napoleon.
Napoleon completes conquest of Spain except for Cádiz.
Who should rule in *América*? Debate proliferates.
- 1810 *Cortes* and regency established in Cádiz.
Juntas formed in Caracas, Buenos Aires, Bogotá, and
Santiago.
Hidalgo's multitude sweeps through New Spain.
- 1811 Miranda declares an independent republic in Venezuela.
Civil war begins in Venezuela, New Granada, and Chile.
Hidalgo captured and executed; Morelos takes over.
Mier writes to *El Español*, Monteagudo publishes the
Gazeta de Buenos Aires.
- 1812 The *Cortes* of Cádiz promulgates a liberal constitution.
The first Venezuelan republic collapses.
Calleja levels Zitácuaro.

- 1813 Bolívar proclaims “war to the death.”
Morelos offers his “Sentiments of the Nation.”
Artigas takes a federalist stand in Uruguay.
- 1814 Fernando VII restored, annuls 1812 constitution,
dissolves *Cortes*.
Javiera Carrera flees across the Andes from Chile to
Mendoza.
- 1815 Major reconquest force arrives from post-Napoleonic
Spain.
João VI’s United Kingdom makes Brazil equal to
Portugal.
Morelos captured and executed.
- 1816 Spanish reconquest of *América* complete, except for
Río de la Plata.
Bolívar’s sister shows her royalist colors.
Guerrilla resistance continues in upper Peru.
- 1817 San Martín crosses the Andes from Mendoza to Chile.
Bolívar’s comeback begins in Venezuela.
- 1818 Guerrero renews the spirit of rebellion in New Spain.
San Martín prepares his assault on Lima.
- 1819 Bolívar delivers triumphant Angostura address.
Gaucha persona emerging in patriotic verse.
- 1820 Constitutionalist revolutions in Spain and Portugal.
Major Spanish reconquest expedition aborted.
San Martín’s seaborne invasion of Peru begins.
- 1821 *Cortes* of Lisbon forces João VI’s return to Portugal.
Central America joins the Plan de Iguala, declares
independence.
Bolívar wins at Carabobo; San Martín bogs down in
Peru.
- 1822 Prince Pedro declares Brazil independent, crowned
emperor.
Iturbide acclaimed Emperor Agustín I of independent
Mexico.
Bolívar and San Martín meet in Guayaquil.

- 1823 Absolutist counterrevolutions seize both Spain and Portugal.
Agustín I overthrown, Mexico becomes a republic.
Bolívar's Peruvian campaign begins.
- 1824 Pedro I consolidates power in the Brazilian empire.
Battle of Ayacucho, final Spanish defeat in *América*.
- c. 1860 Madame Mendeville recalls viceregal Buenos Aires.



Map 1. Colonial América



Map 2. Post-Colonial América

PART ONE

The Colonial Experience



Portrait of Don Felipe Tupa Amaru, the Last Inca King. Anonymous. Eighteenth Century. Courtesy of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina. (See explanation on page 39.)

Introduction

Madame Mendeville's recollection of Buenos Aires on the eve of independence from Spain provides a colorful introduction to colonial life (see document 1). Her depiction of a highly ranked society, with strict hierarchies of class, color, age, and gender, rings true, and her lively stories of women's fervent religiosity (and the less pious attitudes of young men) could have taken place in almost any settlement throughout *América*. Other elements of her memoir are somewhat misleading, however, shaped by the particularities of Buenos Aires and its transformation during her lifetime into the cosmopolitan capital of an independent Argentina. One might get the impression from her memoir, for example, that all of *América* around 1800 was a sleepy backwater whose inhabitants passed rustic and monotonous lives. Certainly, life in Buenos Aires in Mendeville's youth was not as exciting as it was soon to become, and there were plenty of towns and villages across *América* where the pace of life was slower yet. Nonetheless, cities that had been important since the beginning of Iberian colonialism burgeoned into metropolises during this period. By the turn of the century, Mexico City, the capital of the old and extensive Viceroyalty of New Spain, was home to some 140,000, including sophisticated titled aristocrats, masses of beggars, and all social types between these extremes. Its wealthy families resided in mansions boasting the finest furnishings and libraries. They never had to lend out their dishes or cutlery to the viceroy's butler as Mendeville recalls for the case of Buenos Aires.

This Introduction will take the reader on a brief tour of *América* during the century of change leading up to 1810 in order to provide a context for thinking about the documents in this section. It charts changes in the demography and economy of the continent and traces imperial reforms aimed at tightening control over and increasing revenues from the colonies. It then examines the varied responses of the region's diverse inhabitants: conflicts between whites born locally (*americanos*) and recent settlers from Spain and Portugal, the embrace of certain Enlightenment reforms as signs of the continent's progress, the outbreak of rebellions against particular colonial policies, and finally conspiracies to separate from Spain and Portugal that failed owing to insufficient support among local inhabitants.

Had a traveler been able to undertake grand tours of *América* at the beginning and end of the eighteenth century, he or she would have been

particularly struck by the increasingly dense and widespread settlement of the continent. In the Viceroyalty of New Spain alone (the territory from Central to North America), the number of inhabitants tripled from roughly two million in 1700 to six million in 1800. Migrants accounted for some of the population growth across *América*, including small but visible numbers from Spain and Portugal. Over the eighteenth century, the rate of slave imports rose as hundreds of thousands of Africans were brought against their will, especially to the Caribbean and regions along the Atlantic coast. Many slaves died prematurely, limiting the natural increase of their population, but a considerable number of Africans or their descendants managed to acquire their freedom. Growth among the native-born population was even more impressive. The indigenous population, which had been decimated by epidemic diseases after contact with Europeans in the sixteenth century, increased steadily throughout the eighteenth century, particularly in the highland regions of the Andes, Central America, and Mexico. Finally, in all areas of *América*, there was a striking rise in the population of both whites, some of whom comprised the colonial elite, and people of mixed ethnic heritage (called *castas*), mostly belonging to the middling and laboring classes.

Thus the population of *América* was diverse: Indians (as they were called at the time), Europeans, Africans, and the mixed descendants of all of these. Colonial authorities categorized inhabitants by their lineage, reserving privileges for those deemed to be of “pure blood,” that is, the descendants of Christian Iberians, whether born in Europe or *América*. Throughout the eighteenth century, those born in the colonies began to articulate a distinct identity, based upon birthplace rather than bloodlines, as *americanos*. This elite was ambivalent about diversity. There was no denying the large population of color, immediately noted by travelers and new arrivals from Europe, so the local elite tried to highlight this variety as uniquely American and thus somewhat exotic while also domesticating diversity as unthreatening. In his *Ancient History of Mexico*, excerpted in this section, Francisco Javier Clavijero praised the ancient native civilizations and defended the contemporaneous inhabitants from the charge of degeneration leveled by European naturalists like Cornelius de Pauw, Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon, and William Robertson (see document 2).

Another striking example of this phenomenon was the genre of caste paintings, which depicted various ethnic mixtures through series of portraits of parents from different categories with their children, often in settings that also displayed distinctly New World flora and fauna or characteristic scenes and occupations. Many of the terms for mixture could

be found in daily use: a Spanish father and an Indian mother have a mestizo child; a Spanish father and a black mother have a mulatto child. (In many places, those of mixed African and European descent were called *pardos* rather than mulattoes.) But other categories were merely intellectual fancies, such as labeling the offspring of some variants of mixed parentage “suspended in midair” (*tente en el aire*) because the child neither advanced nor regressed on a scale of darker to lighter skin. In most cases, the paintings mirrored dominant ideas about gender and social status as well as color and ethnicity. By depicting the father as higher on the caste scale than the mother and by showing the darker-skinned parents hard at work, those who commissioned the paintings could depict racial diversity in an idealized and controllable manner. But some paintings also revealed elite fears of the possibility of a “throwback black” child (born to a mother who had passed as white) or prejudices about the lower classes in scenes of violence or broken families.

In daily life, the ethnic category to which one was assigned in a census or the perceptions of one’s neighbors certainly mattered, but in more complex and ambiguous ways than represented in painting. One of the most important boundaries was inclusion in the group of “Indians,” because that status carried both obligations—to pay tribute (a head tax) and periodically provide labor for mining or public works—and certain protections—such as access to a state attorney in court, a share of community land, and the right to a limited degree of local self-governance. Even so, being recognized as “Indian” did not necessarily mean that one had no ancestors from other groups. Cultural characteristics such as dress and language were as important as physical features in perceptions of identity. Of two men with the same color of skin and hair, one could support his claim to inclusion in an indigenous community by wearing customary clothing and speaking a native language, whereas the other might evade the tribute collector by migrating to the city, donning a European-style shirt and pants, learning a trade, and identifying as a mestizo. At the other end of the social scale, ethnic boundaries were more closely patrolled. Only men who could sufficiently prove their pure lineage from Christian Europeans were allowed to attend a university, exercise professions such as law and medicine, and hold positions in government. Although one had to present detailed genealogies to prove purity of blood, some well-to-do individuals with an Indian great-grandmother or an African grandfather were socially accepted, and a very few could even legally change their status by petitioning the king and paying a fee in a procedure known as *gracias al sacar*. By the late eighteenth century some elites, most vociferously the members of the Caracas city council (see

document 5), protested the Crown's sanctioning of such upward mobility. Among the vast population that fell between the officially recognized Indians and the elites with papers proving their "purity of blood," relations were neither color-blind nor segregationist. Blacks, mestizos, mulattoes, city-dwelling Indians, and even poor whites worked alongside each other and intermarried. But when conflicts arose, whether after too many drinks in the tavern or in moments of riot and rebellion, racial epithets could fly, and one likely regarded someone of the same ethnic group as a more trustworthy ally.

The effects of population growth were most evident in areas of the continent, such as Venezuela and the hinterland of Buenos Aires, that had been sparsely settled frontiers around 1700 but had become dynamic regions by 1800. In addition to population increase, which provided necessary labor, rising global demand for new trade goods boosted economies in these regions. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spain had seen minerals (most abundantly silver) as the primary source of wealth, and so the areas with deposits, especially in the Andes and parts of Mexico, had been the important colonial centers. Revenue from precious metals had declined in the seventeenth century, owing both to decreasing production and to increasing contraband, but production boomed in the eighteenth. At the same time, planters recognized the potential profit of commercial crops such as sugar, cacao, and tobacco, particularly if cultivated close to Atlantic ports for easier shipment to Europe. In Portuguese Brazil, the proportions among export commodities shifted in the other direction, *toward* mining. After a long reliance on sugar, grown especially on the northern coast of the colony, gold and gems were discovered around 1700 in the south-central interior in the eighteenth century, sparking migration to those areas and ultimately a transfer of the capital city from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. And although the spread of settlement would have logically impressed our imaginary traveler, we should not overlook that vast territories—in Patagonia, Amazonia, and throughout much of North America—still remained in control of their original indigenous inhabitants.

The changing demography and economy of *América* caught the attention of a new royal family who occupied the throne in the Spanish empire after a dynastic war at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Influenced by Enlightenment ideas for improving efficiency that other members of the triumphant dynasty had begun to introduce in France, these Bourbon monarchs, especially Carlos III (1759–1788), decided to retool imperial administration for the new context. Portuguese monarchs also embarked upon a similar reform strategy from 1750 to 1777

under the administration a royal minister known by his title, Marquis of Pombal. The ultimate aim of these measures was to reverse the seventeenth-century decline in imperial revenues by raising taxes, reducing bureaucratic waste and fraud, and increasing the volume of colonial exports to Europe. The potentially lucrative mining sector continued to receive special attention in Spanish colonies: European experts modernized methods of excavation and the draining of tunnels. Officials increased transport capacity by licensing private shippers rather than relying on the cumbersome system of annual fleets. Spanish officials also attempted to reduce contraband in precious metals through both greater oversight and a reduction in the Crown's royalty share from one fifth to one tenth, the only tax rate to decline in this era. Even as silver revenues increased, Bourbon monarchs did not overlook the potential profits from new agricultural exports. For example, they licensed monopoly companies to buy up cacao from Venezuelan planters and offered incentives for the cultivation of sugar cane in Cuba. Between 1782 and 1797, during a respite from European wars that frequently disrupted shipping, the average annual export of American resources to Spain increased tenfold. On the other hand, Bourbon officials discouraged the production in *América* of commodities that might compete with imports from Spain, such as textiles, and placed limits on tobacco cultivation beyond the amount that could be processed as snuff or rolled into cigars by the women, like the Carmen of Bizet's opera, who worked in the royal tobacco factories in Seville and Mexico City. In the same fifteen-year period, the shipment of goods from Spain to *América* rose by a factor of four. (These would have included the wines, furnishings, windowpanes, and fine tableware you will read about in Madame Mendeville's memoir.) As the economy grew in the colonies, so too did the collection of various tariffs, licensing fees, and royalties. Moreover, the Spanish Bourbons raised the sales tax (*alcabala*) twice over the century, from 2 to 6 percent. Estimates for New Spain show a rise in annual revenues from about three million pesos in the middle of the eighteenth century to about twenty million by the end.

Revenues rose naturally with economic growth but could increase even more with zealous and effective officials to crack down on evasion and fraud. Administrative reform, therefore, was also critical to the success of economic reform. The Spanish strategy was twofold: increase the number of royal bureaucrats in the colonies and limit opportunities for them to pursue their own profit or those of local cronies rather than acting in the best interests of the Crown. Believing that one viceroy in Lima could not possibly oversee the rapidly growing settlements throughout South America, especially given the natural barriers to communication

and transportation, the Bourbons created two new viceroyalties: New Granada (composed of the modern countries of Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela) with its capital in Bogotá and, shortly before Mendeville's birth, Río de la Plata (roughly Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Argentina) with its capital in Buenos Aires. Thus, the once dominant Viceroyalty of Peru was shorn of territory and its best silver mines, including the "rich mountain" of Potosí. Subsequently, these viceroyalties (with the exception of New Granada) were further subdivided into regions called "intendancies" with governors to oversee existing provincial authorities, *corregidores*, who were renamed "subdelegates." Finally, three additional superior judicial districts (*audiencias*) were established in Buenos Aires, Caracas, and Cuzco. Along with this redistricting, the Bourbons ended the prior practice of selling these bureaucratic positions to *españoles americanos* and favored instead the appointment of officials born and educated in Spain who would presumably be less corruptible by local ties. Of the 266 judges appointed to the *audiencias* between 1751 and 1810, only 63 had been born in *América*. Finally, although relations between the Crown and the Catholic Church generally remained cooperative, secular authorities and courts did increasingly encroach upon the jurisdictions of their ecclesiastical counterparts. Most dramatically, first Portugal in 1759 and then Spain in 1767 seized the properties of the Jesuits, a religious order that had resisted royal oversight and deferred solely to the authority of the Pope. Many colonial subjects, especially those who attended Jesuit schools, were dismayed to see the friars exiled, and Jesuit intellectuals, such as Francisco Javier Clavijero and Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán (see documents 2 and 8) became strong proponents of a distinct *americano* identity.

Textbooks generally highlight the Bourbon Reforms as the key source of grievances for colonial subjects, who reacted with rebellions that ultimately developed into independence movements. We should be careful, however, not to draw lines of causation that are too direct because reactions to these policies varied. Unsurprisingly, higher taxes and more efficient revenue collection were widely unpopular with virtually all sectors of society and provoked numerous small-scale riots and revolts. *Americanos*, moreover, widely resented their reduced access to official posts, although they began to regain a presence in the bureaucracy by the end of the century. On the other hand, many colonial elites participated in the spirit of reform. New ideas about increasing the efficiency of local governance and promoting economic growth were often embraced by *americanos*, who proposed policies to improve public health and infrastructure through their membership in city councils and learned societies, such as

the Royal Economic Society of Guatemala (see document 4). The impact of other reforms varied by social group and region. Miners and planters prospered, though the latter would have preferred to sell their products more freely in the global market. On the other hand, owners of textile workshops near Quito saw their fortunes decline, and tobacco farmers in some provinces of New Granada faced the burning of their crops by official order if they did not shift to a different commodity. Elites residing in Bogotá, Caracas, and Buenos Aires benefited from the raised status of those cities and the opening of approved ports, whereas the merchants and officials of Lima lost their former privileged position.

Indians experienced the most dramatic changes in their standard of living and survival strategies. The long decline in the native population, owing to the disruptions of conquest and the effects of epidemic diseases, finally reversed itself in the eighteenth century. Improved life expectancy was certainly beneficial, but with growing pressure on the lands assigned to them by the Crown, more Indians had to seek work to supplement subsistence farming precisely when a growing labor supply suppressed wages. In the central parts of New Spain (Mexico) in particular, the landless population made up of mixed-race *castas* as well as Indians increased significantly. Moreover, Bourbon policies closed off opportunities that Indians had previously used to evade rather than openly resist taxes and forced labor. Censuses in the sixteenth century had established tribute (head tax) quotas for all native communities, but individuals who fled their communities of origin and settled elsewhere (often in other indigenous villages) were removed from the tax rolls. Under the Bourbons, however, these migrants and their descendants (*forasteros*) were forced to pay tribute wherever they happened to reside, albeit at a lower rate if they had no access to communal lands. In Peru alone, the revenue from indigenous tribute almost doubled between 1785 and 1811 (from 752,000 to 1,300,000 pesos annually), reflecting improved collection as well as population growth. Throughout the colonial period, moreover, indigenous communities and their internal authorities had learned to seek relief from extreme burdens and abuses in Spanish courts, and occasional successes reduced incentives for rebelling against the colonial system as a whole. Bourbon judges, however, proved to be less flexible than their predecessors. Finally, many customary authorities who claimed descent from pre-Columbian nobility (*caciques*) were replaced by officials from the class of commoners or even mestizos, men dependent upon, and therefore more compliant with, the Spanish authorities who appointed them.

Increased hardship for most if not all of the American-born population and a colonial administration less amenable to negotiation proved a

volatile combination. Violent protests broke out across *América*: menacing announcements appeared nailed to the doors of public buildings; census takers and tax collectors were forced to flee villages and even major cities like Quito; crowds broke into state-monopoly warehouses, burning tobacco and dumping alcohol into the streets; and Indians, slaves, and *castas* subjected unpopular authorities to the same kinds of humiliating insults and punishments that had earlier been inflicted upon them. Women (and cross-dressed men) were visibly present in and even at the head of these crowds. Responsible for family welfare, women were often the first to feel the effects of scarcity, and their calls for authorities to act in a more paternalist manner carried a strong symbolic charge. Most strikingly, given the longstanding colonial strategy of “divide and rule,” people of diverse ethnic groups and social classes frequently united in these riots. Mine owners, merchants, and landed aristocrats naturally looked on with horror, but provincial *americanos*, be they landowners, traders, or artisans, sometimes joined and often believed they could channel and control the anger of the crowd.

In most cases, these revolts remained small and targeted particularly abusive officials, while the rioters proclaimed their loyalty to empire: “Long Live the King and Death to the Bad Government!” But by the last decades of the century, a few turned into large-scale rebellions. When a zealous high-level official, Juan Francisco Gutiérrez de Piñeres, arrived in 1781 to enforce the Bourbon fiscal reforms in the Viceroyalty of New Granada, a local protest against the state tobacco and alcohol monopolies in the town of Socorro gathered steam and resulted in some twenty thousand rebels setting siege to Bogotá. Gutiérrez de Piñeres turned tail, leaving the archbishop to negotiate a settlement that reversed or temporarily halted unpopular tax increases and commodity restrictions. Calling themselves *comuneros*, the protestors hearkened back to medieval principles in which the people assented to the rule of a just and benevolent monarch who would care for their commonwealth. The more elite *comuneros*, therefore, demanded the appointment of *americanos* to local government posts. Most historians characterize their call for a restoration of older forms of governance as traditional rather than revolutionary. Nonetheless, the Crown had never explicitly recognized settler claims that provinces in *América* were coequal with, rather than dependent on, Iberian kingdoms. Moreover, whether intentional or not, the invocation of communal rights in the eighteenth century could resonate with more contemporary understandings of popular sovereignty. Exiled Jesuit Juan Pablo Viscardo, for example, lauded the *comuneros* but went

further, calling for the separation of the kingdoms of *América* from a Spanish monarch who, unlike his predecessors, acted as a tyrant (see document 8).

The *Comunero* Rebellion was resolved through negotiation within a few months, but a contemporaneous movement further south in the Andes lasted longer, spread further, and resulted in high casualties on each side before its violent suppression. This uprising is known by the symbolically charged name claimed by one of its chief leaders: Túpac Amaru, “royal serpent” in native Quechua (see document group 3). José Gabriel Condorcanqui, as he was originally known, was a landowner and trader from the province of Cuzco. Throughout the 1770s he sought legal recognition of his claim to hereditary authority over the Indians in the district as their cacique so that he could advocate for reforms such as the abolition of the forced sale of overpriced goods to indigenous communities, a practice called *repartimiento*. He traced his lineage back to the Inca rulers, but his family, like most of the indigenous nobility, had also intermarried with Spaniards and mestizos. Unsuccessful in his efforts to work within the system, in November 1780 he renamed himself after the last Inca to be captured and executed by the Spanish in 1572 and, in an act of revolt, meted out a similar punishment to the abusive Spanish official in his district. Túpac Amaru, as he now called himself, began to recruit allies among the indigenous nobility like himself, but he also reached out to the regional elite of Spanish or mixed descent with whom he had many business and personal connections. The proclamation included in this section explicitly targeted only European-born Spaniards as enemies and called for unity among all *americanos*. Initially, Túpac Amaru had some success in building a broadly based, multiethnic coalition, evidenced by the whites, mestizos, and mulattoes later prosecuted for insurrection. However, as his army swelled with mostly indigenous soldiers, who did not always distinguish Spanish oppressors born in Europe from those born in *América*, other potential allies were scared off. A rebel attempt to seize the city of Cuzco in January 1781 failed, and in April the royal army captured Túpac Amaru, along with his family and high command. The sentence against him, including sending his body parts to various cities as a warning against other would-be insurgents and prohibiting all reminders of the Incas’ past glory, failed to erase his legacy. Although the movement around Cuzco was weakened, Túpac Amaru’s lieutenants who managed to evade arrest forged contacts with others who had rebelled farther south, in what is today Bolivia. Even after that movement, too, was repressed, predictions that the severed head of the Inca (either the first or

the second Túpac Amaru) would grow a new body in order to return and redeem his people circulated in Peru into the twentieth century, keeping alive a spirit of resistance.

Some Peruvians see Túpac Amaru as the precursor to their declaration of independence from Spain some forty years later, but historians highlight ambiguities that complicate such a claim. Despite identifying with his Inca heritage, Túpac Amaru remained a faithful Catholic and not only declared his allegiance to the Spanish king but also even asserted that Carlos III had ordered his actions. The first leader of the movement in Bolivia, Tomás Katari, actually sought such approval, traveling through difficult terrain for three months to meet with the new viceroy in Buenos Aires. He accused the entrenched colonial officials back in the highlands of fraudulently skimming off tribute revenue owed to the Crown and promised that indigenous authorities could actually increase the amount properly collected. Although he gained the viceroy's support, local officials ignored orders from Buenos Aires and arrested Katari, which led to the outbreak of rebellion. Like many colonials of all social ranks, Katari clearly respected royal authority. On the other hand, the demands of the movement's leaders—the abolition of forced sales, labor drafts (the *mita*), and African slavery—were anticolonial if not explicitly separatist. Moreover, the ideology and tactics of the rebellion became increasingly radical as time went on and Indian commoners seized the initiative. Finally, the sentence against Túpac Amaru, included in this section, demonstrates how Spanish authorities perceived the threat posed by his movement. Whether or not you see the rebellion as separatist, it likely delayed Peru's ultimate independence, as the majority of *americanos* of Spanish or mixed descent feared the potential for another Indian uprising.

Andean rebels, both the *comuneros* of New Granada and the followers of Túpac Amaru, thought in terms of a monarchy, recognizing the legitimacy of a distant and benevolent king in Spain. On the Atlantic side of the continent, however, conspirators drew on republican models. A minority of prominent *americanos* imagined that their prosperity could grow by following the example of North Americans who, weary of the burdens of taxation without political representation, had established the independent republic of the United States. The growing radicalism of the French Revolution and the opportunity it provided to slaves to fight for their freedom and declare an independent state in Haiti, by contrast, inspired many slaves, free people of color, and artisans even as it shocked most colonial elites. The Brazilian documents in this section (see document group 9) are drawn from two such conspiracies, which authorities uncovered before they could develop into full-fledged rebellions.

In general, the Portuguese, except under the administration of Pombal, had governed Brazil with a lighter touch than had their Spanish counterparts in *América*. But expectations of greater revenue from the mines in the Captaincy of Minas Gerais, even after the gold rush had subsided, created tensions between residents and royal officials. In 1789, when the governor threatened to impose a new tax to make up for the decline in mineral royalties, several members of the heavily indebted elite considered declaring independence in order to manage their own economic fortunes and revenue. The youngest conspirator, Dr. José Álvares Maciel, had attended the University of Coimbra in Portugal and took advantage of the opportunity to visit England, where he discussed the possibility of Brazilian independence with merchants eager to gain access to the country's markets. But it was the most humble of the group, a low-ranking militia officer nicknamed Tiradentes, "tooth-puller," who served as scapegoat, as you will see in the confession reprinted in this section, and he suffered the fate of Túpac Amaru—his quartered remains displayed throughout the province as a warning to others. Tiradentes is thought to have had some African ancestry, but he identified with the socially conservative values of his more prosperous co-conspirators. They, in turn, considered incorporating native emblems into the new republic's flag to symbolize their *americano* identity, but they did no recruiting among real Indians, much less among their slaves.

The second major plot to be uncovered in Brazil (its notoriety outweighing any real threat it posed) embraced a distinct set of ideals. In 1798 broadsides appeared in Bahia, the heart of the region of sugar plantations, calling for "liberty, equality, and fraternity" for all citizens regardless of color. Authorities quickly rounded up the suspects, who included African slaves and free *pardos* as well as some humble whites. Many were militiamen or artisans, most notably tailors, including some who were literate enough to read materials coming from Europe or the Caribbean and propagate their ideals in an attempt to recruit supporters. You will find examples of their broadsides in the document section.

Similar plots, and even open revolts, sprang up throughout *América* in the wake of the French and Haitian revolutions. The "Song for *América*," printed during such a conspiracy in Venezuela in 1797 (see document 7), praised similar ideals, though in less racialist terms than the Bahian broadsides (see document 6). Even in Buenos Aires, where the opening of its port to Atlantic trade had resulted in increased imports of slaves, officials zealously investigated rumors of a "French" (and black) conspiracy, but they turned up little evidence and so it apparently made little impression on the future Madame Mendeville, just a young girl at

the time (see document 1). Although these movements never came close to replicating the achievements of the Haitian revolutionaries, their specter spread fear among *americano* elites up and down the Atlantic coast, as the memories of the Túpac Amaru rebellion did among their Andean counterparts. Henceforth, planters carefully weighed their actions against their potential impact upon the slave system and the preservation of racial hierarchies, wondering whether they could better preserve the status quo on their own or with the aid of their monarchs. Such matters were certainly on the minds of the Caracas councilmen as they sent their protest to the king over the granting of white status to some *pardos* (see document 5).

So it was that those few *americanos* who really did want to declare complete independence from Spain and the Spanish king, conspirators like the expatriated Francisco de Miranda, who attempted to “liberate” Venezuela with a small invasion force in 1806 (see document group 6), found it difficult to recruit supporters in the final decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the dawning nineteenth century. Although here and there *americanos* of diverse classes and castes briefly united to protest high taxes and imperial interference in local affairs, they discovered that other issues, such as forced labor and racial inequality, continued to separate them. Moreover, although many resented the colonial officials with whom they interacted on a day-to-day basis, most maintained their belief that the distant king had their best interests at heart.

1. A Colonial Memoir

Madame Mendeville Recalls Viceregal Buenos Aires

Mariquita Sánchez (1786–1868) was a rebel in both private and public life. Although her parents planned to marry her to an older Spanish man, the teenage Mariquita fell in love with her handsome second cousin, Martín Thompson. In 1804, she successfully sued in court to be allowed to marry the man of her choice. After Thompson's death, she wed Jean-Baptiste de Mendeville, the French consul in Buenos Aires, thus acquiring the name of Madame Mendeville. When he was transferred to Ecuador and later retired to France, she chose to live on her own in Buenos Aires. She supported independence from Spain and hosted salons at which the literary and political notables of the day convened and where the national anthem was sung for the first time. She was also one of the founders in 1823 of the Society of Beneficence, which administered schools, hospitals, and other charities. In a letter to the noted Argentine writer Juan Bautista Alberdi, she wrote, "My life is necessarily more that of a male philosopher than that of a woman, with the misfortune of having the heart of a woman, a head erupting ideas like a volcano, and none of that frivolity of my sex to distract me."¹

Late in her life, apparently in the 1860s, she looked back on the last years of colonial rule and, in a casual and grandmotherly tone, dictated the following reminiscences of daily life in her city around 1800. Its principal export product, hides, had risen from some 40,000 annually at the beginning of the eighteenth century to about 330,000 per year by its end. Since 1750, Buenos Aires had grown from a dusty frontier village with 5,000 residents to the capital of a vast viceroyalty with a population of 42,000 in 1810.²

Houses and Furnishings

Buenos Aires was the seat of the viceroy, the *audiencia*, and other royal officials. The members of the small viceregal court, a tiny enclave within the population as a whole, could have fine things nobody else possessed.

1. Clara Vilaseca, ed., *Cartas de Mariquita Sánchez* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Peuser, 1952), 348.

2. María Saenz Quesada, *Mariquita Sánchez: vida política y sentimental* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1995), 29–46.

You can still see the outlines of the few great houses of the time, which were almost all furnished the same way. In the front room were jacaranda-wood chairs, thick carpets, and damask wall hangings all special ordered from Spain. The front room was not used every day, though. Most of the time, visitors went back to an interior sitting room or to a side of the patio where there were some everyday chairs with wicker seats, birdcages, a sewing table, a small shrine with a saint's image, a ceramic water jar and glass, and that's about all. From there one could see the main entrance and watch over the house. Sometimes there was a Cordoban rug there, and in the winter, a brazier to keep warm, not that people felt the cold much, accustomed, as they were, to living in unheated rooms. In the dining room, you would see a table of varying size, depending on the family, also a sideboard and cabinets with glass doors so that you could see what was inside.

Furnishings were quite scarce and, in general, not fancy—unless one counts the abundance of silver, which was considered absolutely indispensable. China, on the other hand, was rare and expensive. An economical family might have a dozen china plates, a few china serving dishes, and all the other table service, such as it was, made of silver. Overall, there was a monotonous absence of material goods. People did not own everything that they occasionally needed and constantly had to lend things to each other. This applied even to the richest households. Families ordered their tableware from Spain, and shipments arrived, often enough, with a broken piece or two. On the day that every place setting was needed for a dinner, one family had to borrow the missing pieces from another. Imagine. Even the viceroy, who was a sort of miniature king here in Buenos Aires, was not immune. When he gave a banquet, his butler would go around, very discreetly, borrowing things he needed from the houses of his more well-to-do subjects.

To furnish one's house in good taste took quite an effort. And most of the wealthy men of the city were *nouveaux riches*, stingy merchants with a pile of money and without refined taste. Their wealth was in real estate and slaves, not comfortable furnishings. What we would consider bare necessities were luxuries back then. Only Spanish ships came here. Trade was the monopoly of a few, and they imported expensive items in very small quantities. Windowpanes, for example, had to be ordered from Spain and took a long time to arrive. When one broke, it was socially acceptable to fill the space in the window with a piece of white paper in the meantime.

Clothing and Shoes

Tailors were the absolute worst, and shoemakers, not much better. People who wished to dress elegantly ordered their clothing from Spain, but it took forever, so the well dressed were few, indeed. Women's dresses were short-sleeved and low cut. They wore lace mantillas and held their heads high "with grace," as they said, in a manner that would seem arrogant today. Very ordinary cloth looked elegant because that's all one ever saw. To keep warm, ladies wore a wool wrap that was called a *rebozo*, usually decorated with a showy piece of ribbon. Poor women wore *rebozos* of a very plain wool cloth called *picote* that was made in Córdoba, usually white. People kept *picote* in purple and other colors to dress their servants in. Servants had to run around all week getting shoes ready for Sunday if their mistresses were particular. Families with means had their slaves do everything.

Usually, a lady's shoes were covered with satin, in various colors, white being most common, even though the streets were unpaved! The greatest luxury was to have shoes embroidered with gilt or silver and gems, worth an ounce of gold for the pair. For common people, shoemakers used ordinary, foul-smelling lambskin for women to finish trimming at home. The nice leathers one finds today couldn't be obtained, so ladies of quality stuck with satin. Men wore shoes of heavier fabric, and younger men, a variety of leathers nobody these days even remembers. There was no such thing as shoe polish, either. As for poor people, there wasn't much work and everything was expensive, so they went barefoot and very poorly dressed. Sometimes they wore hand-me-down shoes that their feet wouldn't even go all the way into.

As for children, theirs was the same as the adults' clothing—boys wore tailcoats, vests, and knee breeches, like their elders, and girls went around like little *señoras*.

Food and Restaurants

People's eating habits were quite plain. Nobody used a fork, for example. The normal breakfast was hot chocolate or coffee with buttered toast or pastries. Dinner was at noon for poor families, at 1 pm for middle-class families, and at 3 pm for the wealthiest, with supper at 10 pm or 11 pm for everyone. Rich families had a slave or two who had learned to cook food that was more or less half-Spanish and half-French. Havana sugar was the best one could get. White salt was unknown and people washed rock salt at home and dried it in the sun—a lot of work and lower quality than

what we have today. Only the very wealthy drank Spanish wine. Everybody else drank wine from San Juan and Mendoza.

There was only one inn, The Three Kings, on the street now called 25 de Mayo, and no need for more, owing to the small number of travelers in those days. A certain Monsieur Ramón prepared meals at his house and either served them there or catered elsewhere with his own servants. For a fee, people sent their slaves to learn to cook at Monsieur Ramón's house. After a year or two he sent them back well trained. On San Francisco Street, there was a French pastry shop that served good coffee and cakes and many families ordered from it. The other places called *cafés* were really pool halls. Men went there to converse. Lots of places put on cockfights, too.

Children's Education

Children had a sad life back then. As soon as they started to grow up, their parents acted very serious and stopped showing them affection. Children could not express themselves freely with their parents and regarded them with a mixture of respect and fear. They addressed their parents in very formal terms, with their eyes on the floor. Parents believed it their duty to be extremely stern. When they sent children off to school, they gave instructions to treat the youngsters with rigor rather than kindness. Whippings were going on all day at one school that I recall. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," as the saying goes. A child recited the day's lesson and, if he made a mistake, six strokes, further study, and another mistake? Twelve more strokes. He'll get it!

That was the method applied by one Marcos Salcedo, who really enjoyed administering physical punishment. They used to tell the following story about him. One day, the boys at the school were dying to see a show during the school day, and Salcedo started to ask them all individually if they wanted to go. Some said yes, others no, and only one answered "correctly," saying, "Whatever you wish, sir." Salcedo ordered six strokes for the boys who had said they wanted to go, for impudence, and twelve for those who had said no . . . for lying! It is really amazing to contemplate the harm that can be done by mistaken ideas of discipline. And to think that parents accepted such behavior!

Public executions were fairly rare because the accused spent eight or ten years in jail before their sentences were finally handed down. They were executed in a different manner from today. A tall post was erected and the condemned man sat with his back against it with a heavy cord

around his neck and around the post. The executioner twisted the cord to tighten it around the prisoner's neck until his tongue stuck out and he was strangled to death. Teachers took schoolchildren to witness this. Returning to school, teachers like Salcedo would whip the children "so they wouldn't forget what they'd seen." Others, a little more enlightened, would talk to them about crime and punishment. I forgot to say that someone always preached a sermon after the execution.

Marriages

When a man from Spain arrived in Buenos Aires to seek his fortune, his countrymen here would take him in immediately. He represented a business opportunity. It was hard to invest money at interest, so families saved it to attract a husband for one of their daughters. The father of the family arranged everything according to his own criteria. Commonly, he would tell his wife and his daughter about the marriage only three or four days before it happened. It was a farce to speak of affairs of the heart with people like that, pointless to argue that marriage was a sacrament, not a way to build a family fortune. The poor daughters didn't dare open their mouths and simply obeyed. Oh, youth of today, if you had any idea what we suffered, you would better appreciate the liberties you enjoy now! Parents believed they knew best and trying to change their minds was a waste of time. They married a lovely girl to a man who might be unstylish, unattractive, and old enough to be her father. As long as he was thrifty and industrious, nothing else mattered. Very few marriages resulted from the bride's inclination, and those that did greatly upset the parents. To marry for love, a young woman had to disobey her parents, and she had to endure terrible things or finally submit to their will. Love! The word was considered inappropriate in the young woman's mouth. Love was a scandal, a crime.

Imagine what women's lives were like then. Young brides who submitted went to live in their new houses under conditions that women today would view as imprisonment. They were allowed to go out to hear mass, of course, and to visit acquaintances every two or three months, but otherwise they sat at home sewing and directing housework. Having fun was not considered important. But young people did know their own minds, and to believe differently is to ignore the human heart. To avoid being forced to marry a man who inspired aversion, rather than love, many girls preferred to enter a convent.

Men

As for men, here in Buenos Aires they could train for only two things, to be a priest or a craftsman. Boys from decent families became apprentices at fourteen or fifteen, which amounted in practice to being a servant. The boss found all sorts of ways to humiliate his apprentices. The apprentice had to sweep, make the boss's bed, clean the candlesticks (that was the only source of lighting), and that sort of thing, without pay until he was well advanced in learning the trade, and even then the wages were miserly.

Aristocratic families sent their sons to Spain to become officers in the army or navy, the two most-distinguished corps, and they usually went quite happily. Their families continued to send them money until they rose in rank and could support themselves. These young men rarely returned to Buenos Aires except for an occasional visit on leave. American-born officers were well treated in the service of the Spanish king and were devoted to him.

But our young men have never really shown much inclination toward military careers, preferring to study law. Back then, one could only begin a law degree in Buenos Aires and had to go finish it in either Córdoba or Chuquisaca. It was expensive to do that, but the parents' investment would be compensated by the advantages of their sons' distinguished education. You couldn't name a lawyer, in those days, without also praising him, his integrity, his unimpeachable conduct, his great learning and eloquence, that kind of thing. Some lawyers of the day—Leiva, Cañete, Labardén, Castelli, Pacheco—really were sages and have not been properly remembered. Today's readers will find this all the more so if they stop to consider how difficult it was then to get an education and acquire books. Particularly because the Inquisition, although they never had occasion to burn anyone at the stake, did scrutinize every book brought from Europe before it could go on sale.

Life in the Countryside

Country people lived poorly, on wages that scarcely permitted them to buy clothes. A gaucho had to have a poncho, a hat, and a bandana to tie around his head, but if he also bought a shirt, then he couldn't afford pants, and vice versa. No part of our society was more unjustly maligned, in my view, than the gauchos. Their poverty was passed down from father to son, and what could be done about it? The products of the country weren't worth anything in monetary terms. A cow was sold for half a

peso and any calves at her side were thrown in for free. An English traveler remarked that a pound of lard cost the same as a cow. And a mare was valued at less than half the cost of a cow. Nobody would ride mares, because they considered that undignified. A friend of mine tried to sell mares as saddle horses, but he couldn't find anyone willing to break them or ride them. There were many small farms called *chacras* around the city, mostly worked by slaves. The farmers barely scraped by, borrowing money each year to hire extra labor for the harvest.

Despite this poverty, though, there was not a lot of theft. They say that the great royal shipments of silver from Potosí came with only a small, armed guard and were never stolen.

Burials

People liked to be laid to rest beneath the church floor and considered that a sign of religious devotion. The nearer to the principal altar, the more expensive the niche. They would place the body in the earth directly, without a coffin, pack the dirt tightly over it, and replace the paving stones without mortar, so that eventually the bare bones could be removed. You can imagine the odor that pervaded churches, especially near the altar, and yet people resisted the creation of cemeteries as a matter of religion.

I must not forget to say that everyone was buried in the habit of some religious order. One would buy an old habit from a friar or nun, depending on which religious community the deceased had supported—Franciscan, Dominican, Mercedarian—for forty or fifty pesos, and dress the corpse in it. No person of means was buried without such a habit as a burial shroud because it was believed to ensure salvation. And when a child fell ill, before even calling the doctor, the parents would pray, promising to dress the child in a religious habit if he were spared. Then, as soon as the child got better, they would dress him in a little habit, especially made for the occasion, and even cut his hair in a tonsure. It was amusing, on Sundays, to see the church full of little friars and the miniature gentlemen in tailcoats that I described earlier.

If the child did not get better, the funeral was a show. The idea was that an innocent little angel went straight to heaven, so the mood was celebratory. The burial was announced with fireworks and the joyful ringing of bells—unlike the sad, slow tolling of bells for an adult's funeral. The little body was dressed in a surprising manner, in the richest of satins, covered with jewelry. This was when people really brought out the family treasures for the funeral ceremony in the church. Afterward, they would take the poor little angel over to the side and remove all the treasures before the

burial. What extravagant things were done! All dolled up, the little bodies might be presented standing or sitting, dressed as shepherds or seraphim. Once, when a little boy and a little slave died at the same time, the family dressed them as Saint Michael and the Devil. The mother of the little black cried and begged them not to bury her child that way, but because she was a slave, there was nothing she could do. Fortunately, some good soul informed the authorities and an order came to remove the devil costume and give the little black boy a proper Christian burial.

Good Works

There was a Brotherhood of Charity composed of men from the most distinguished families. When a prisoner was sentenced to death for some crime and spent three days “in chapel,” as they said, preparing to die, the Brotherhood of Charity took care of him, provided the best possible food, saw to his confession and communion, and walked with him to the place of execution.

The Brotherhood of Charity had a lot of money. It created and maintained the Women’s Hospital that still exists today. It also ran another institution for women in the style of the time—part school, part convent, part orphanage, part reformatory. I’ll explain what I mean. They took in orphaned girls who would otherwise be homeless. Let’s say some poor man and wife had died leaving nothing for their children. The judge charged with protection of minors would send the girls to the Brotherhood’s School for Orphaned Girls. The staff cut their hair and dressed them in blue with yellow caps. After that, they became more or less the permanent property of the school. They could not go out at all. They sang for mass and played the organ. Other women got sent there for disciplinary or precautionary purposes: a wife who had separated from her husband, a girl who had run away from home. There was a little bit of everything there. Even girls from decent families were placed there to study. The school taught sewing and embroidery, ironing, and how to cook pastries and sweets, the fancy stuff that confectioners do these days; but they spent little time teaching the girls to read or write.

There was a clergyman named González who raised money for the place, carefully shepherded its resources, and exercised extraordinary faculties in its administration. If a man with an established trade or a middling fortune wanted to get married, he would go see González and give an account of himself. González would ask around to determine the man’s fortune, reputation, and above all, his piety. If reports were positive, González would assemble all the orphans of marriageable age for the man

to look over and choose from. That evening, the chosen girl would be invited to meet and talk with her suitor while González initiated preparations for the marriage, at which he officiated personally.

Father González was the absolute head of this tribe. He acted without appeal and without oversight. He was a mixture of charity and piety, on the one hand, and cold harshness, on the other. And he was immensely wealthy, yet he lived in a room connected to the school, where he got his meals. After his death, the properties of the school were administered by other clergy until after independence, when Rivadavia made it a state educational institution and canceled all its extracurricular functions.

Religious Life

The city of Buenos Aires was divided into seven parishes. There were two convents for religious women and four orders for men, including Mercedarians, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Bethlehemites. Various of these orders ran a hospital for men and the insane, a seminary to train clergy, and a school that taught Latin, philosophy, and theology.

Events organized by the church constituted the principal social activities of the city. Basically, praying and eating (on days not designated for a fast) is what we did. What a gentle, tranquil life, you may say, but you would be wrong. There was plenty of discord within convents and rivalry among parishes. When a parish organized a procession, everybody in the neighborhood participated, delighted to overshadow the efforts of a rival neighborhood. They would spend a pile of money and go all out, partly from religious devotion and partly from pride. For example, in the neighborhood around the church of La Merced lived a lady who came up with marvelously creative ideas for religious festivals. One year, she built a framework to represent a cloud. What could a cloud be made of? No doubt you're wondering. Cotton! Cotton dyed sky blue and white and spangled with shiny little stars. The resulting illusion was incredible. And inside the cloud was a lovely little boy with a beautiful singing voice, dressed as an angel. The cloud hung from the roof of the church, high up, and as we sang the Gloria during mass, they lowered the cloud, to a height not far above our heads, with the little angel inside singing and tossing out flowers and verses. Then, still singing, they raised him back up. Just imagine the amazement of the congregation, the satisfaction of those who created the spectacle, and the fright of the little boy way up there. People talked about it for days afterward.

When Lent came, everybody had to buy indulgences from the church, both for the living and for the dead. On the second Sunday of Lent there

was a procession in which families showed off the documents that proved their purchase of indulgences. A man would hold the paper up with both hands for everyone to see or pin it to his chest during the procession. One could not be a good Christian, people thought, without such a document. And meat was banned during the whole forty days of Lent, so you had to eat fish. Later one could purchase permission to eat meat four days a week during Lent. The price varied according to the wealth of each individual. A male head of household paid twelve, twenty, or even more pesos, less for the other members of the family, and less still for the servants. Finally the permission came down to abstain from meat only on Fridays and during Holy Week, as we do now.

On Palm Sunday, the Viceroy and members of the *audiencia* and the *Cabildo* heard a sermon preached in the cathedral. Another was preached in each of the parish churches on Sunday afternoon. The biggest sermon of all, though, was preached in the city's main square, in front of the portico, usually by one Father Montero, who had a voice you could hear four blocks away. Women spread rugs on the ground in a half-circle around him, and behind them men from the countryside listened on horseback. After the sermon, people took turns holding a crucifix and fervently professing their contrition. There were always a few women whose acts were so fervent that they injured themselves and had to be carried home.

Those older than I talked about the "blood processions" that were a big deal before my time. The men in the procession dressed in white, with their faces hidden and their backs uncovered. During the procession, they scourged their own backs with whips. And because the whips had bits of glass or metal points at the tips, the streets where this procession passed got spattered with blood. Some even wore reins and bridles like horses and went accompanied in the street by a man who periodically jerked on the reins, drawing blood from the mouth of the penitent. I never actually saw this, thank God.

I did see the big processions of girls dressed as angels, more or less the way that ballerinas dress today, except that they wore powdered wigs and carried religious symbols. Because these were girls from the city's best families, many were accompanied by a liveried servant who walked alongside the procession. The dresses were uncomfortable and the girls hated this procession, but their mothers loved it. That was the beginning of Lent, a procession sponsored by one of the seven parishes on each day of the week.

A priest was there to examine each woman's knowledge of Christian doctrine. A woman would kneel before the seated clergyman, and he asked her questions. If she answered correctly, he gave her a tiny certificate printed with the word "Examination" to show she had passed. Men

were examined in the same way, but not in the same place. For sport, the examiners sometimes asked questions that were hard to answer. For example, one of them asked a self-confident old lady: "Where was God before he made the world?" She wasn't a bit cowed and answered firmly: "Out cutting firewood to burn the nosy people curious about his whereabouts." Her answer fueled conversations all over town.

Those who had been examined proceeded to the confessional, merely a matter of formal compliance, they said, and through a slot in the confessional they received a second certificate, printed with the word "Confession." Proceeding to the appropriate table, they submitted the Examination and Confession certificates together in return for another one reading "Communion," without which they would not be allowed to participate in that sacrament. Then after Lent, they would come around to people's houses collecting the certificates. Now, everyone of an age required to take communion was on a list, and there were always young people who didn't do what they were supposed to. So there was a lot to scrambling and intrigue when they came around with the list. Those caught without Communion certificates got their names posted on the door of their parish church, as an object of public scorn.

Let's finish with Holy Week. Maundy Thursday was the day when people dressed up to show off their finest clothing. Good Friday was a frightening day, with lots going on in the churches and a big public procession. People lined the streets from early in the morning. The procession carrying images of Christ's passion and crucifixion arrived at the church of its destination, and that was when priests dressed in white lowered Christ from the cross and there was a big sermon. People got so emotionally worked up, after many hours on their feet and without food. You could hardly breathe in that crowd and there were always accidents, doctors giving first aid, all that. They put the image of Christ in the holy sepulcher, and the procession took off, after which all the women who had fainted were carried out, leaving everybody apparently deep in meditation concerning *the greatest story ever told*. Who, I wonder now, dared to play Judas in the procession?

The next morning, Saturday, they brought out Judas effigies, dressed in old clothes and full of firecrackers, to burn at noon. This was a day of celebration and, finally, the end of the fast. In those days the custom was to have a big supper, and the worst part of Lent was the requirement that one not eat more than eight ounces of food in the evening. On Saturday of Holy Week, women cooked a good supper, full of everything we had not eaten during Lent, and at the stroke of twelve midnight, people rushed to the table. After the meal, we waited for the bells to call us to Resurrection

Mass at three or four in the morning. That day's procession of Our Lord Resurrected was one of the best attended of all. It started out from La Merced church after morning mass and met the procession of the Virgin Mary coming from Santo Domingo church. The two processions came face to face in the plaza, the Virgin and Our Lord exchanged greetings, and each procession returned to the church from where it started.

2. A Scholarly Polemic

Clavijero Refutes the Myth of Americano Inferiority

*Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731–1787), born in Veracruz, was one of the many Jesuits banished from América by the Spanish Crown in 1767 when the Jesuit order failed to submit to regal, rather than papal, authority. In Italian exile, Clavijero wrote The History of México (1780) that helped lay the intellectual foundations for a distinct national identity. The book narrates “Aztec” history: the founding of Tenochtitlan, the imperial expansion, and the Spanish invasion and conquest. But he frames the history to respond to an eighteenth-century intellectual debate. In the following excerpts, from the preface and from one of the several appendices termed disertaciones, Clavijero refutes several influential European authors who had argued that all things in the New World, including the native people, were inferior to their Old World counterparts. Contrary to normal colonial usage, Clavijero makes a point of calling the indigenous people americanos rather than indios or natives (naturales). The thirty-page disertación has been abbreviated here by paraphrasing some parts in italics.*³

Preface

I have undertaken to write *The History of México*, despite the demanding nature of the study and the high cost of buying books from Madrid and Cádiz, as well as other European cities, for three reasons: to avoid the irksome inactivity to which I found myself condemned, to serve my *Patria*⁴

3. From Francisco Javier Clavijero, *Historia antigua de México (facsimil edición Ackermann 1826)* (Jalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1985), Introduction, 1:xi–xii; Disertación V, 2:311–46.

4. *Patria*, which could be translated as “homeland” or “fatherland,” was an important but still somewhat ambiguous term in this period.

insofar as I was able, and to restore the splendor of the truth about *América*, so unjustly maligned by certain modern writers. Therefore, I have read almost everything previously published on the subject and examined a large number of *Mexica* painted manuscripts.⁵ I have compared the various versions of the story and taken into account the authority of each author. I have made use of readings done earlier, during my life in México, and I have consulted many men with experience in those lands. In addition to these studies, and perhaps clarifying my dedication to the topic, are the thirty-six years during which I lived in several of the many provinces, my study of the *Mexica* language, and my direct experience with the *Mexica* people whose story I write.⁶

I do not flatter myself, nonetheless, thinking that I have done a perfect piece of work. I lack the wit, judgment, and eloquence that a good historian must have. Unfortunately, many of the *Mexica* manuscripts have been lost, and those in México itself were, of course, unavailable to me. A complete *History of México* cannot be written far from *América*. Yet I hope that my gesture in that direction will be welcomed, and not for the elegance of its style or the beauty of its descriptions, not for the gravity of its conclusions, not even for the grandeur of the events that it records. Let it be welcomed, rather, for the diligence of its research, the natural style of its narration, and for the service it offers to men of letters eager to learn of *Mexica* antiquities, bringing together in one work the best materials previously published elsewhere, as well as many things formerly unpublished.

Dissertation on the Physical and Moral Constitution of the *Mexica* People

Four classes of men can be discerned in México and the other countries of *América*. They are: 1) Those who are vulgarly called Indians, but ought to be called *americanos*, that is, the descendants of the original inhabitants of the New World, whose blood has not been mixed with that of the Old World; 2) Those from Europe, Africa, or Asia who presently live in *América*; 3) The children and descendants of these newcomers, who are called creoles (especially when of pure European descent) by the Spanish;

5. Original: *pinturas históricas megicanas*—what today we call the various “codices” composed by Nahuatl scribes.

6. Clavijero means Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs (who were more properly known as the *Mexica*).

4) The mixed races, whether European/*americano*, European/African, or *americano*/African, collectively called *castas* by the Spanish. Mr. de Pauw applies his vicious criticisms to all these classes of men. He supposes, or perhaps deliberately misrepresents, the climate of *América* to be so malignant that it causes degeneration not only in the creoles and *americanos* but even in the Europeans who were born under the supposedly more benign skies, in a climate supposedly more favorable to all forms of animal life.

Leaving aside the errors that Mr. de Pauw and other writers of his ilk direct against other classes of men, I will address only what he says about those properly called *americanos*, the most maligned and most defenseless against his criticisms. If I were motivated by a desire to benefit or aggrandize myself, I would naturally have preferred to write a dissertation clearing the creoles against Mr. de Pauw's slanders. Besides being the easiest defense to make, it is the one that most nearly touches me, because I was born in *América* of Spanish parents, without a trace of Indian blood, nor have I anything personally to gain here. It is only a love of truth and of humanity that leads me to embrace the cause on behalf of which I write. And disinterest makes me less likely to err.

The first long section of the dissertation deals with the supposed physical inferiority of the natives of the New World according to Cornelius de Pauw in Philosophical Investigations on the Americans (1768). Clavijero attacks de Pauw's accusations regarding the natives' inherent weakness, deformity, and sickliness, taking up de Pauw's arguments one by one and refuting each with abundant evidence. He then turns to de Pauw's equally extreme accusations concerning their mental inferiority.

Thus far we have examined what Mr. de Pauw says about the physical qualities of *americanos*. Let us see what nonsense he has to offer concerning their mental and spiritual qualities. He finds their memories to be so defective that they cannot remember today what they did yesterday. He believes their minds so obtuse that they are incapable of thought, their spirits so cold that they do not feel love. Mr. de Pauw paints their portrait in hues so grim that he certainly would have numbered among those who, centuries ago, called into question their very humanity. I know that many other Europeans, and strangely, even a few descendants of Europeans born in *América*, share de Pauw's way of thinking, some out of ignorance or lack of reflection, some simply because they desire to affirm the superiority of Europe. But their opinions, even were they more widely shared, cannot overwhelm the force of my own experience, as well as the testimony of certain Europeans whose great authority flows, not

only from their learning, but also from their direct experience in *América* and their willingness to speak out, in honor of the truth, against their own compatriots. One could easily fill a thick volume with quotations in defense of the *americanos*' mental capacities, but leaving aside the majority of the evidence, in order not to try our readers' patience, we will limit ourselves to a few of the most important authorities.

Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of México, a prelate of sterling reputation, highly esteemed by Fernando and Isabel because of his personal and doctrinal purity, his pastoral zeal, and his tremendous labors on behalf of the faith, wrote the following about the Indians in a letter of 1531: "They are chaste and possess considerable skill, particularly in the art of painting. Their souls are good, thanks be to God." But Mr. de Pauw does not value the testimony of Zumárraga whom he insults freely, as he tends to do with all those who disagree with his theory of degeneration.

Let de Pauw then read the words of the famous Bartolomé de las Casas, the first bishop of Chiapas, who knew the Indians well, having dealt with them in various countries of *América*.⁷ Here is the description of them that Las Casas put in a report to Felipe II: "[The *americanos*] possess a lively intelligence. They are gentle and receptive to good doctrine, virtuous in customs; among all the peoples of the world, they are among the most apt to receive our holy faith. . . ."

If de Pauw rejects the authority of Las Casas for whatever mistaken reason, however, let him consult the writings in Latin of Julián Garcés, the first bishop of Tlaxcala, an extremely learned man, considered brilliant by many, including his teacher, Antonio de Nebrija, among the great scholars of the Spanish language—particularly the letter that Garcés wrote to Pope Paul III in 1536, after ten years of practical and eyewitness experience with the Indians. Among the many praiseful things that Garcés says about the Indians, about their good character and spiritual gifts, he lauds their creativity, which he regards as superior, in some ways, to that of Spaniards.

But if Mr. de Pauw refuses to credit these three witnesses no matter how great their credibility—possibly because they are clerics, a condition that he seems to equate with imbecility—perhaps he cannot resist the authority of the famous Bishop Palafox, whose work on *The Virtue of the Indian* has been reprinted so many times, a man whom even the Prussian,

7. Las Casas, a Dominican friar and prolific writer in the sixteenth century, was the most famous critic of the abuses inflicted by colonists upon the native peoples of the Americas.

free-thinking Mr. de Pauw himself has called “a venerable servant of God.” If de Pauw believes everything that Palafox wrote against the Jesuits, must he not also accept what Palafox wrote in favor of the *americanos*? Let him read, then, what Palafox has to say about the fine qualities of the Indians.

Despite his customarily implacable hatred of Catholic clergy, and of Jesuits above all, our Prussian researcher has justly praised Acosta’s *Natural and Moral History* as an “excellent work.” The judicious, learned, and impartial Acosta observed *americanos* in both Peru and México, and he devotes the sixth volume of his “excellent work” to demonstrating their fine mental qualities through reference to their former empires, laws, calendar, and record keeping in pictographs and cord [*quipus*]. One can get an idea of Acosta’s views by reading only the first chapter, and I humbly beg Mr. de Pauw (and all my readers) to do that. There is a remarkable contrast between de Pauw’s jaundiced vision and Acosta’s clear-eyed one. Mr. de Pauw calls *americanos* “beasts”; Acosta considers anyone who harbors such an idea to be out of his mind. Mr. de Pauw says that the best *americano* falls short of the worst inhabitant of the Old World when it comes to wits and hard work; Acosta, on the other hand, lauds *Mexica* governing institutions, believing them better than those of many European states. Mr. de Pauw recognizes nothing but extravagance and barbarism, where Acosta finds admirable laws, worthy of imitation by Christian peoples. Whose testimony should we believe? I leave that to the impartiality of my readers.

Still, I cannot refrain from quoting a passage of Mr. de Pauw’s *Philosophical Investigations*, a work in which the author shows himself to be a scurrilous enemy of the truth. “At first,” he writes, “the *americanos* were believed not to be people, but rather, satyrs or large monkeys that could be killed without scruple or regret. Finally, a pope promulgated a ridiculous bull declaring that, as he desired to found bishoprics in the rich country of *América*, it was his decision, and therefore that of the Holy Spirit, to make official recognition that *americanos* were in fact people. So, had it not been for the decision of an Italian, the inhabitants of the New World would be today, in the eyes of the faithful, not quite human. Never before or since, in the history of men and monkeys, has such a decision taken place.” Would that such insolent calumnies as Mr. de Pauw’s had never been heard! In order to unmask their falsehood, we will quote the bull in question after first explaining its context.

Some of the first Europeans who established themselves in the New World, no less powerful than avaricious and determined to enrich themselves at the expense of the Indians, worked them continually, treating them more or less as slaves. To escape scolding from missionaries and bishops, who demanded that the Indians be treated more humanely,

giving them some free time in which to provide for themselves and learn and practice Christianity, these avaricious Europeans began to claim that the Indians were slaves by nature, incapable of learning. The Indians' ecclesiastical defenders then appealed to the justice of the Catholic monarchs of Spain, Fernando and Isabel, and finally obtained from them the *New Laws of the Indies* so favorable to the Indians, so honorable for the monarchy, and which Bishop Las Casas did so much to bring about.

For his part, Julián Garcés, Bishop of Tlaxcala, knowing that the Spanish respected the authority of Pope Paul III, wrote His Holiness the famous letter which I have already mentioned, explaining how bad Christians abused the Indians and begging him to intercede. The pontiff was moved by the letter and thus promulgated a bull, *not* declaring that *americanos* are people, which would make no sense for him or any other pope to declare, but rather, advocating for the *americanos'* natural rights, protecting them from persecution, and condemning the inhumane and unjust treatment to which they had been subjected. The Spanish really would be stupider than the worst savages of the New World if it took a decision in Rome to make them recognize that *americanos* are human beings.

Clavijero next addresses and, one by one, refutes the errors of William Robertson's History of America (1777) regarding the inferiority of Indians, one of these being that no Indians became priests. Clavijero counters that thousands of Indians had entered the priesthood in México alone and that some had earned scholarly degrees.

If our English historian commits such gross errors regarding such clear-cut matters, how trustworthy can he be on less easily verified points? After all, he is writing at a great distance about lands that he has never even visited.

In contrast, it was my good fortune to deal intimately with *americanos* for many years. I witnessed the creation and initial development of the College of Guadalupe, founded by the Jesuits in México for the education of Indian girls. I dwelled for several years in a seminary for Indians and had many among my students. I dealt with many *americanos* of all walks of life, from artisans to nobles. I closely observed their character, inclinations, and habits of thought. I have diligently studied their ancient history, their religion, their government, their laws, and their customs. Basing my informed opinion on practical experience and painstaking study, I can say without fear of error that the souls of *americanos* are in no way inferior to the souls of Europeans, that *americanos* are capable of all the sciences, even the most abstract. If their education were seriously

cultivated by good teachers, if the students received proper stimulation and rewards, one would find among them philosophers, mathematicians, and theologians to rival the most famous in Europe. But it is difficult if not impossible to make such progress when weighed down by continual poverty and servitude. Anyone who contemplates the state of Greece today might doubt the country's ancient glories, were they not so well known. Yet the difficulties faced by modern Greeks who wish to study science are nothing compared to the difficulties facing *americanos*. I wish that Mr. de Pauw and men like him could be present and witness, without being seen, the community councils that Indians hold to discuss their affairs, that he could hear the eloquent civic debates of these so-called "satyrs" of the New World!

Clavijero next explains that the Spanish conquest of México was not the work of 450 Spaniards but of 200,000 fighters, most of whom were the Spaniards' Indian allies against the Aztecs. He then addresses at great length a list of vices and moral failings, ranging from gluttony to ingratitude, of which de Pauw accuses the Indians. Finally, he concludes:

If a bright and well-informed *americano* cared to pay back Mr. de Pauw and like-minded writers in similar coin, it would not be difficult to compose a book of *Philosophical Investigations* concerning the inhabitants of the Old World. Following the same method employed in Mr. de Pauw's book, he could collect everything written about the most inhospitable parts of the Old World, its most disease-ridden climates, most impassable mountains, most impenetrable forests, most barren deserts, and most useless swamps. He could further research its poisonous snakes and most unpleasant reptiles, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, beetles, and lice; its smallest and weakest quadrupeds; and, among the human population, the most physically degenerate, deformed, disproportionate, and discolored, the morally stupidest, cruelest, and most pusillanimous. And what endless material offers itself for the chapter on Old World vices! The history of ancient Rome, the most celebrated nation of European history, could supply endless examples of the most horrible kind imaginable. Of course, he would see that not all the people of the Old World can be fairly tarred with the same brush. But following the example of Mr. de Pauw, he would do just that. And the resulting book would be far more believable than its model, because Mr. de Pauw cites exclusively European authors in his defamation of *América* and *americanos*, whereas our hypothetical researcher would base his criticism of the Old World entirely on information provided by Old World authors.

3. Documents from a Rebellion

Túpac Amaru Sparks an Indigenous Uprising in Peru

*The Túpac Amaru rebellion (1780–1781) was the most significant to occur in eighteenth-century Spanish America. It began in the vicinity of the ancient Inca capital, Cuzco, in the Andean highlands of Peru but spread south far into what is today Bolivia. The leader of the rebellion, José Gabriel Túpac Amaru, was a local authority among the indigenous people, one who claimed descent from the last Inca emperor, Túpac Amaru. Contemporaries and, subsequently, historians have debated the goals of the movement. Was it an Indian rebellion aiming to restore the Inca empire or a precursor to independence appealing to a broader coalition of americanos?*⁸

First Proclamation

When he issued his first proclamation, José Gabriel Tupa Amaro (as the name was spelled in these documents) had just seized and executed the local corregidor, a royal official. Similar proclamations were sent to other provinces on the same day.

I, don José Gabriel Tupa Amaro, Indian of imperial Inca blood, hereby address residents of the Province of Chumbivilcas, including all who currently dwell there, of whatever color, condition, or social status, whether or not they are original inhabitants. Be it known that there have been repeated outcries directed to me by the indigenous people of this and surrounding provinces, outcries against the abuses committed by European-born crown officials, the *corregidores*, among others—justified outcries that have produced no remedy from the royal courts. I must take pity on these poor wretches, for their condition is pitiable, indeed, and they naturally turn to me as the most distinguished and highborn among them. I have considered the situation long and carefully, and I have acted not against our holy Catholic religion but only against the mentioned abuses and to preserve the peace and well-being of Indians, mestizos, zambos, as well as native-born whites and blacks. I must now prepare for the consequences

8. Originals reprinted in Luis Durand Flórez, ed., *Colección documental del bicentenario de la revolución emancipadora de Túpac Amaru* (Lima: Comisión Nacional del Bicentenario, 1980), 1:418–19 (proclamation) and 3:268–77 (sentence).

of these actions. Therefore, I caution my beloved compatriots not to guide, aid, or obey any royal authorities in pursuit of me and my followers. Those who betray me will suffer my vengeance with the full rigor that present circumstances demand, and no one will be exempt from it, most particularly no one born in Europe, for such persons, and anyone who tries to defend them, will be wiped out totally, eliminating the corruption that has benefited their collaborators but offended God. Four provinces have asked for my protection and joined in my efforts to liberate them from the unjust servitude that they have suffered for so long. May Divine Providence illuminate me, for I will need all its help.

So that my struggle be made known, let copies of this edict be posted.
 José Gabriel Tupa Amaro Inca.
 Tungasuca, November 15, 1780

Death Sentence against Túpac Amaru

The revolt led by Túpac Amaru spread quickly, but it was eventually put down by royal troops with the help of indigenous people who remained loyal. The rebel leader was captured in April 1781 and sentenced to death in the following judicial document. His allies, particularly in Upper Peru (today Bolivia), continued to resist through the end of the year.

In the public prosecution pending against José Gabriel Tupa Amaro, cacique of the town of Tungasuca in the province of Tinta, for the horrendous crime of Indian and caste rebellion, premeditated during five years and instigated throughout this viceroyalty and that of Buenos Aires, a crime carried out with the obsessive intent of being crowned Inca over the lowly inhabitants whom he freed from supposed abuses, a crime that began with the execution of his *corregidor*, don Antonio de Arriaga; as presiding judge in this case, having studied the legal arguments made by don José Saldívar y Saavedra, doctor of laws and prosecutor assigned by the Royal *Audiencia*, and by defense attorney, doctor of laws don Miguel de Iturrizarra, also assigned by the Royal *Audiencia*, and having, additionally, reviewed the evidence and all pertinent documentation, I have arrived at a verdict.

Several matters have been taken into consideration during sentencing. The prisoner has twice attempted to escape his imprisonment, and news of his speedy execution will help reestablish tranquility in our rebellious provinces, disproving the idea of his immortality that has become disseminated among the Indians, who are superstitious and inclined to believe such impossibilities, believing him to be the direct descendant and

rightful heir of the Inca emperors, as he has claimed to be, making him supposedly the natural lord of this entire kingdom and all its vassals.

Another pertinent matter is the low nature, weak character, and degraded condition of the Indians and mixed castes who joined the rebellion led by the prisoner. Tupa Amaro kept them under his spell, fascinated, submissive, and obedient to his every command, greatly facilitating the execution of his depraved intentions. Such was his power that the Indians stood firm in the face of our gunfire despite their enormous fear of it. And he provoked in them an implacable hatred of all Europeans, and even, of all whites—*pucacuncas*, or palefaces, as they call us—becoming, along with them, the perpetrators of innumerable crimes and unheard of violence, rape, looting, robbery, and murder. They profaned churches and ridiculed clergy, despite the dire threat of excommunication, believing themselves immune because Tupa Amaro, whom they called their Inca, said so.

Thus, while protesting his loyalty to the church in his orders and edicts, copies of which are included in the judicial proceedings, the prisoner nevertheless saw fit to defy the maximum penalty of our Catholic religion. He behaved in the same manner regarding his legitimate sovereign, the most august, benign, kind, just, and venerable monarch to have yet occupied the throne of Spain and *América*, usurping royal prerogatives just as he usurped ecclesiastical ones. He entered churches amid the pomp appropriate to a bishop and appointed provincial judges as if speaking for the king; he seized both private property and royal funds; he canceled the *repartimientos* and other perquisites from which royal officials and clergy are allowed to profit; he eliminated various supposedly unjust taxes; he allowed the workers to leave *obraje* sweatshops, then burned them down; he abolished the mita labor drafts of various towns and expropriated personal wealth from their inhabitants; and, not content, he wanted to raid royal coffers, as well.

Tupa Amaro condemned to death those who disobeyed him, and he set up gallows in every town to carry out his threats, hanging many. He demanded tribute payments from towns and entire provinces, thereby usurping the authority of their legitimate lord and master, the sovereign monarch chosen by God to rule over them. The prisoner chose a site where he would build his palace and planned to become the undisputed ruler of the land. He went so far as to convince his followers that, at the time of his coronation, he would be able to raise from the dead those who died in battle. He made them believe that their cause was just, that he was their liberator and the rightful heir of the Incas. He even melted down copper and church bells, which he had stolen, to make cannon with

which to oppose Spanish arms. He intended to announce his royal investiture to the entire Indian nation, as attested by a draft document found on his person at the time of his capture. To commemorate his supposed triumph at Sangarará, he commissioned a painting of himself with the royal insignia of the Incas—the *unco* [tunic] and *mascapaicha* [head-dress]—along with depictions of the dead and wounded on the battlefield, a church on fire, and prisoners that he released from jail.

José Gabriel Tupa Amaro's claim to descend from the Inca emperor Felipe Tupa Amaro was never confirmed. It was pending before the Royal *Audiencia* of Lima at the time of his revolt, with strong evidence against it. However, this doubtful claim made such an impression on the rustic Indians that they addressed him with the respect and submission due a monarch, as "Excellency," "Highness," and "Majesty." Representatives of various provinces paid him homage, thereby betraying their true and natural sovereign—clear, evident, and painful proof of how far the miserable masses have strayed and become insubordinate.

. . . .

Considering all this, as well as the liberties and perverted ideas that this vile insurgent used to attract the Indians and mixed castes, even granting freedom to slaves; considering, too, the terrible state to which the rebellion has reduced these provinces and the many years that will be required to repair the damage done to them; and considering, finally, the urgent need to reestablish order, tranquility, and subordination to God, to the King, and to his ministers by means of exemplary punishment, I condemn José Gabriel Tupa Amaro to be dragged through the main plaza of Cuzco to the place where such sentences customarily are carried out, there to watch the execution of his wife Micaela Bastidas, his two sons Hipólito and Fernando, his uncle Francisco Tupa Amaro, his brother-in-law Antonio Bastidas, and other leaders of his iniquitous project who are scheduled to die the same day. After their sentences have been executed, the executioner will cut out the tongue of José Gabriel Tupa Amaro and tie his hands and feet to four horses who will then be driven at once toward the four corners of the plaza, pulling the arms and legs from his body. The torso will then be taken to the hill overlooking the city, from which Tupa Amaro had the temerity to demand its surrender, where it will be burned in a bonfire. His ashes will be dispersed to the wind and a stone marker enumerating his principal crimes and describing his execution will be raised as a warning to others. Tupa Amaro's head will be sent to Tinta to be displayed for three days in the place of public executions and then placed upon a pike at the principal entrance to the city. One of his arms will be sent to Tungasuca, where he was the cacique, and

the other arm to the capital of the province of Carabaya, to be similarly displayed in those locations. His legs will be sent to Livitaca and Santa Rosas in the provinces of Chumbivilcas and Lampa, respectively. This sentence must be solemnly announced on the day in which provincial officials receive news of it in each locality. It must be read again publicly on that date every year, and written confirmation of these readings must be sent to the competent authority.

Tupa Amaro's houses will be destroyed in the presence of all the townspeople and the grounds sown with salt to make them forever barren. All his property will be confiscated. All the members of his family not yet brought to justice are hereby declared infamous and may by no means claim or inherit such property now or at any time in the future. All documents concerning Tupa Amaro's mentioned claim to royal Inca descent will be collected from the Royal *Audiencia* of Lima, the originals located, and all burned publicly in the main plaza of that city so that not even the memory of his claim will remain.

The King shall determine general measures to be taken to prevent a repetition of such horrible events among the foolish Indians in case of future attempts to claim royal Inca descent. His Majesty shall determine whether, because Tupa Amaro gathered his army by influencing the caciques of Indian towns, it is advisable that Indian towns no longer be governed by caciques, but rather by annually elected mayors, preferably Spanish speaking, whose beneficence and good conduct shall be approved by the local *corregidor*. The only allowable exceptions will be caciques of proven fidelity and obedience, those who have displayed the highest degree of submission, respect, and gratitude toward our great monarch by refusing to heed the threats and inducements of Tupa Amaro to risk their lives and property in defense of His Majesty. Nor shall the caciques who remain pass that office to their heirs, it being granted for one lifetime only.

Pending the approval of His Majesty, no Indian may henceforth wear noble or royal Inca clothing, which has no function except to remind them of the past and inspire resentment against Spain for conquering them, besides which, such clothing is ridiculous in appearance and, worse, blasphemous, being decorated with representations of the sun, their former deity. Specifically prohibited are the garments known as *unco*, *yacollas*, and *mascapaicha*, as well as any others resembling them or carrying similar meanings. Such garments are to be unstitched and surrendered to the local *corregidor*. In addition, local authorities should destroy without exception the paintings of Inca royalty commonly found in the houses of Indians who claim royal Inca descent. Bishops and archbishops should

give permission to efface any similar paintings located on the walls of old churches, monasteries, or convents, replacing them, should a replacement be necessary, with images of His Majesty or previous Catholic Monarchs of Spain. By the same token, all *corregidores* should be alert to prevent the performance of plays and public ceremonies which the Indians use to recall their ancient kings. Likewise, prohibited from now on are: the conch-shell trumpets of strange and lugubrious sound which the Indians use to grieve for the disappearance of their past glories; and the wearing of black to mourn for their ancient kings or to commemorate the time of conquest, which they regard as catastrophic and we regard as fortunate because it brought the Indians to the Catholic Church and the sweet and felicitous domination of our beloved monarchs. Furthermore, it shall be absolutely prohibited for any Indian to sign his name using the title "Inca," a simple trick that makes a powerful impression on other Indians. Our *corregidores* should make certain that all Indians who possess documents or genealogies tracing their Inca descent must send them to officials designated by the viceroys, who will consult His Majesty concerning the appropriate handling of such documents. These prohibitions should extend to all the provinces of South America.

In order to calm the hatred which the Indians now harbor towards us, they should be obliged to speak Spanish, dress in Spanish clothing, and follow Spanish customs. To that end, greater emphasis should be placed on Indian children attending schools to be instructed in such matters, and those who fail to send their children when given sufficient opportunity should be strictly punished. To the same end, an order should be sent to the ecclesiastical hierarchy requiring that success in teaching the Indians to speak Spanish become a primary criterion for the advancement of clergy assigned to Indian parishes. Normally, four years should be considered sufficient time for Indians to acquire perfect knowledge of our language. Careful records of progress in learning Spanish should be kept and periodically remitted to superior authorities, so that His Majesty may reward the loyal Indian communities who are most successful in learning it.

Finally, the manufacture or possession of cannon of any sort whatsoever shall be absolutely prohibited. Anyone of noble birth who violates this prohibition shall be confined for ten years in one of our African penal colonies, and commoners shall suffer the same fate, with the additional punishment of two hundred lashes. The manufacture of gunpowder, as well, may be similarly prohibited after due consideration. Because many sugar mills, sweatshops, and large agricultural estates currently possess a great variety of small cannon, as soon as the current rebellion is definitively quashed, local *corregidores* will need to collect and

transfer such weapons to military authorities who will find an appropriate use for them.

This is my final verdict and sentence, in sign whereof I affix my signature.

José Antonio de Areche,
Special Royal Commissioner, Visiting Inspector General of Justice of the Viceroyalty of Peru, Knight of the Royal Order of Carlos III, and Councillor of the Royal Council of the Indies, Etc. Etc. Etc.

Cuzco, May 15, 1781

Portrait of Don Felipe Tupa Amaru

The caption on the painting pictured on page 1 reads, “Don Felipe Tupa Amaru, the last Inca of the Pagan Kings of Peru; he was married according to native rites with various women of his royal lineage and according to Catholic rites with Doña Juana Quispe Sisa with whom he had a son and up until today nine legitimate descendants have been accredited. He passed from this life to the eternal one in the year 1572, receiving the grace of baptism before being beheaded on the public gallows by order of his Excellency, Lord Don Francisco Toledo, viceroy of these realms, to the disapproval of his Majesty Felipe the Second. He was buried in the church of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Cuzco to the sorrow of his royal family and of all those in the city, owing to his innocence.”

During the eighteenth century, there was a revival of interest in the Incas across *América*. *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, originally published by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega in 1609, began to circulate widely. It is likely from this text that the painter derived the idea that King Felipe II had disapproved of the execution of Túpac Amaru. Indigenous nobles in the Andes who claimed descent from the Incas frequently had their portraits painted in traditional dress and with the royal insignia of the Incas. The fullest expression of Inca revivalism was the massive rebellion launched in 1780 by José Gabriel Condorcanqui, who took on the name of the Inca ruler in this painting: Túpac Amaru. But even white *americanos*, who were beginning to conceptualize an identity that distinguished *América* from the Old World, saw the Incas as a potent symbol. Francisco de Miranda, for example, in his plan for new governments titled the chief of state an “Inca” (see document 6), and Juan Pablo Viscardo denounced the Spanish execution of the Inca royalty (see document 8).

4. Minutes of a Meeting

Guatemala's Friends of the Country Host a Patriotic Gala

In the late 1700s, a number of public improvement associations were founded in various parts of América. These Royal Economic Societies of Friends of the Country, Amigos del País, as they were called, brought together local exponents of economic diversification and general social betterment in a spirit of applied Enlightenment learning. The language of "the republic" and its patriotic citizens in this case does not refer to an independent nation but rather asserts Guatemala's equal footing to other kingdoms within the Spanish empire. On December 9, 1797, Guatemala's Royal Economic Society held its third public meeting, chronicled in the following minutes, presented here in condensed form.⁹

Presiding at the meeting was the Director of the Society, Jacobo de Villa Urrutia, Judge of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, who called the session to order in the chambers of the Guatemala City Council. In attendance was a numerous and distinguished group, including several Master Artisans. The Director announced that circumstances beyond his control had limited his activities during the past six months, but that, nonetheless, the Royal Economic Society had continued to operate for the benefit of Guatemala. He then read a summary of what had been achieved, touching on the following topics:

AGRICULTURE (Cacao, Silk, Indigo, Linen, Cotton)

INDUSTRY (Spinning, Weaving, Craft Guilds)

INSTRUCTION (Mathematics, Drafting, Natural History, Public Schools)

SURGERY

SOCIETY TREASURY

The Director next recognized a meritorious member, Father Matías de Córdova, to whom the Royal Economic Society awarded a certificate and

9. From Elisa Luque Alcaide, *La sociedad económica de amigos del país de Guatemala* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1962), 181, 194–203.

gold medal for his accomplishments. In honor of the occasion, the Director delivered the following address:

“What a great day this is for us, gentlemen! Let us leave aside for a moment the birthday of Our Lady the Queen, a joyous occasion that otherwise would occupy all our attention, and justly so. Let us leave aside, as well, contemplation of the benefits produced by the Society’s recent labors. Let us consider solely, for now, the prize that has just been awarded.

“This is the first time in the history of *América* that useful knowledge conducive to public improvement has been honored with a prize of this kind. Never before had such knowledge been so effectively applied, as on this occasion, when a member of this patriotic society reported on the public benefits that derive from having all our Indians adequately dressed and shod. Men of profound and penetrating judgment! Calculate, if you are able, just how many and how great are the benefits that will ultimately result from the report authored by Father Matías de Córdova. With clarity and precision, his writing has dispelled childish fears, correcting ancient and widespread errors. Our sovereigns are pious and just, but our society is still far from perfect. Calculate whether a learned society anywhere in the broad expanse of *América* has ever achieved so much with a single public improvement, whether any medal has ever commemorated a victory more worthy of remembering than the medal awarded today.

“With such an achievement the Kingdom of Guatemala has demonstrated the ignorance of the Encyclopedists¹⁰ and other superficial philosophers who mistakenly announce the absence of intelligence and talent in *América*. Let us show that *América* has scientists able to discover the mysteries of the natural world, create exact anatomical models, and invent new surgical instruments. Let us show that sons of our soil deserve prizes in the most useful of sciences, those that contribute to the social and economic advancement of mankind.

“Glory to the Dominican Order, to which Father Matías de Córdova belongs. No longer can anyone depict you as a backwater of sterile scholasticism. No need to cite glories of long ago and far away when here and today you produce scientists capable of doing so much for the public good. Glory to the illustrious Royal Economic Society of Guatemala, which opened this broad avenue of social progress and provided the initial

10. French philosophers of the Enlightenment published their ideas between 1751 and 1772 in the serial *Encyclopédie* and, therefore, are known as the Encyclopedists.