

REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN IN THE INDIGENOUS REVOLT OF 1783, PERU

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1 SUMMARY

In 18th-century colonial Peru, **Felipe Tupac Inca Yupanqui**, claiming to be related to Tupac Amaru II, the head of the large but unsuccessful 1780 uprising against Spain, leads an **indigenous rebellion** in the province of **Huaro-chiri** against the Spanish

occupation. He is arrested and trialled in **1783** along those who helped him. Among these are two women, his common-law wife **Manuela Marticorena** and **Maria Rodriguez**, who sheltered him with her husband.

Aims and methods of the research

- Understand the role of two women in the revolt as well as their fate after the trial which condemned them both.
- Gain more knowledge about the place they were sent to, the Beaterio de las Amparadas de la Purísima Concepción Lima.
- Being little to no published research about both the women and the beaterio, most of my findings are original archival work.

2 Role in the rebellion

Manuela Marticorena

- Mestiza (of mixed race); 30-year old, owner of a shop selling religious artefacts¹
- Common-law wife of Felipe Yupanqui for four years: is involved in the revolt because of love
- She informed Felipe of matters in Lima through letters while he was in Huaro-chiri
- Was informed of all the plans and events of Felipe and his right-hand man, Ciriaco Flores

Maria Rodriguez

- Mestiza; 26-28 years old
- Wife of Nicolas Almendras, a shoemaker
- Neighbours with Manuela
- Felipe stayed hidden in her house for several days when Manuela's house was stormed by soldiers, escaping through the roof
- Unlike Manuela, she was unaware of the details of the rebellion

THE TRIAL

- Both women are judged alongside Felipe and his accomplices
 - Manuela defends herself because of her love for Felipe
 - They are both sentenced to ten years in the Beaterio de las Amparadas



Plaza and Church of La Buena Muerte (« The Good Death ») in the centre of Lima. Manuela and Maria's houses were next to each other on this plaza.

3 Beaterio de las Amparadas: a turbulent story

Beaterio:

community or house of women living under informal religious vows.³

BEATERIOS IN PERU

- part of cultural and religious influence from Spain: beaterios are found throughout Latin America starting the 16th century
- A place of spiritual retreat
- Also seen as a middle ground between the secular outside world and the sacred institutions of convents: a way to dispense a proper education and protection for young girls

Recogimiento:

House of women 'recogidas' in order to « protect them from the contamination of the world; or conversely, to separate those women labeled as licentious and sexually immoral from others. »⁴

SPECIFICITY OF THE BEATERIO DE LAS AMPARADAS

- **1670:** created by the Count of Lemos in order to ameliorate women caught "in the nets of the World, the Devil and the Flesh"⁵.
- Known as the Casa de las Amparadas de la Purísima Concepción, but also as Casa de Recogidas, as it served the purpose of a recogimiento:
 - « it operated as a beaterio and a recogimiento – in other words, as a lay pious house for spiritual expression and as an asylum for secular women. »⁶
 - Also functioned as a prison, a school, and a place for women in the process of getting a divorce
- It stood out from other beaterios as it accepted casta women (of non-European or mixed ancestry).
- **1708:** the recogidas are evicted from their house as the nuns of the Convento de Santa Rosa, one of the most powerful convents of the city, desired the building for themselves.
- The beaterio almost completely disappeared until **1766** when they were given a new building (pictures below). However, the beaterio's reputation suffered from their expulsion, and, now seen as the poorest of all the beaterios in Lima, lacked financial support from then on.
- It eventually closed down in **1870** because of the lack of new recogidas and funds.



The former Beaterio de las Amparadas in their local from 1766 to 1870. This is the place both Manuela and Maria were sent to. After becoming a maternity hospital and a woman school, it houses since the Peruvian National School of Fine Arts (ENSABAP). The original colonial patios and fountains have remained (left), while the Church of the Recogidas has been turned into an auditorium (right).²

4 Life in the beaterio

A life of spiritual reflexion...

- Daily prayers and mass
- Attend to daily chores of the beaterio
- Modest and discreet clothing
- Very little contact with the outside world, and always under surveillance

... but not for all the recogidas

- Manuela and Maria entered the beaterio as punishment
- Manuela asked judges for her daughter to be with her in the beaterio, but it seems like that request wasn't met
- Both Maria and Manuela were living in terrible conditions: they slept on the floor, in rags they had come with
- In October 1783, Maria got sick and the Mother superior asked for her removal of the beaterio, as well as Manuela's⁷
- Maria seems to have been sent to a hospital while Manuela stayed in the beaterio.

5 CONCLUSION

If both Manuela and Maria got involved in the revolt more through their husbands rather than their own political beliefs, they still had a significant role in the rebellion. They were also judged in the same way as Felipe's supporters who were exiled from Lima or sent to prison. Their treatment both in the trial and in the beaterio helps us understand how indigenous women were perceived in colonial Peru, as well as how a place like the Beaterio de las Amparadas functioned.

Although this rebellion was also unsuccessful, it shows both the influence of Tupac Amaru II's uprising a few years before, and the growing desire for Peruvian independence from Spain, which happened in 1821.

REFERENCES

- [1] Information about Manuela and Maria: personal comm. Sabine Hyland
- [2] own pictures, June 2018.
- [3], [4] and [6] Nancy Van Deusen (2002). *Between the Sacred and the Wordly: the Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial*

Lima, p.267, 270 and 271 respectively.

- [5] Pedro García y Sanz (1863) *Vida del Venerable y Apostólico Francisco del Castillo de la Compañía de Jesús*, p111.
- [7] Archivo General de la Nación, Peru, Superior Gobierno leg. 17 C 464 (1783).

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