

# Visual Culture and Indigenous Agency in the Early Americas

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# Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru

Ananda Cohen-Aponte

## 1 Introduction

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed scores of anticolonial rebellions, revolts, and conspiracies across South America, concentrated in the central and southern Andes in modern-day Peru and Bolivia. The Tupac Amaru (1780–83) and Oruro rebellions (1781), and the Chayanta rebellion (1780–81), along with countless others, sought the overthrow of Spanish colonial rule. The motivations for these rebellions are varied, but all were united by a rejection of crippling economic measures instituted under the Bourbon reforms during the 1770s, which included an increase in the sales tax, increased participation in the *mita* (forced rotational labor system), and the reimplementation of the *repartimiento de mercancías*, or the forced distribution of peninsular goods to indigenous communities. These grassroots insurgencies varied in their racial and ethnic composition: while the Tupac Amaru rebellion consisted of a multiracial coalition of native Andeans, mestizos, Afro-Peruvians, and creoles, the uprisings farther south remained largely indigenous. They surged during a period of increased social instability with the stripping of privileges that indigenous elites had enjoyed under Habsburg rule.<sup>1</sup> They also drew from a shared cultural template, as the revival of the Inca empire figured as a central rallying point for many insurgents. The Inca past, from which contemporaries were now separated by over two centuries, became rehistoricized as a site of native self-determination and sovereignty. Colonial portraits of the Inca kings, Inca-themed theatrical productions performed in Quechua, and the broad circulation of the second edition of ‘El Inca’ Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (1609) in 1723 all participated in the cultivation of memory around an idealized Inca past (Rowe 1954, 1967; Chang-Rodríguez 1999; Itier 2000; Dean 2005; Mazzotti 2008). While these rebellions were largely contained within the southern Andes, their reverberations were felt throughout the hemisphere; news about rumblings in the south migrated across the Amer-

<sup>1</sup> The scholarship on the age of Andean rebellions is vast. While by no means exhaustive, see the foundational studies by Lewin 1973; Durand Flórez 1980–1982; Stern 1987; O’Phelan Godoy 1988; Stavig 1999; Thomson 2002; Serulnikov 2013; and Walker 2014.

icas through print and visual culture, as well as through the travels of Spanish officials who had participated in their suppression (Thomson 2016).

The Spanish colonial administration brutally quelled these short-lived insurgencies with the support of local residents as well as reinforcements from Lima and Buenos Aires. It should be noted that rebels and royalists did not fall along strict caste lines; many black and Afrodescendant soldiers fought on the side of the Spanish, for instance, and the indigenous-dominated city of Cuzco remained largely opposed to the uprisings.<sup>2</sup> The exact death toll remains unknown, but scholars estimate that the Tupac Amaru rebellion, about which the demographic data is most accessible, resulted in the death of around 10,000 Spaniards and 100,000 indigenous Andeans (Rasnake 1988: 138–141; Cahill 2002: 121–122).

Historians have produced a number of studies on the literary and cultural dimensions of late colonial indigenous rebellions in South America (e.g., Szemiski 1987; Flores Galindo 1988; Pratt 1996; Mazzotti 2008; Silva Prada 2012). The relationship between the visual arts and insurgency, however, remains underexplored in the scholarly literature, although historians, anthropologists, and art historians have been instrumental in identifying both extant artworks and archival references to the visual arts within the context of the rebellion (Rowe 1954, 1967; Macera 1975; Gisbert 1980: 207–213; Estenssoro 1991; Cahill 2006; Cohen Suarez 2016: 145–181). Some recent articles and essays have also masterfully synthesized the data and interpretations already put forth by these authors, offering much needed reflections on the visual dimensions of insurgency and reminding us of its continued relevance to the field of colonial Latin American art history (see Iglesias 2016). Nevertheless, these foundational

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2 José Gabriel Condorcanqui managed to amass a heterogeneous confederation of supporters, and the royalist cause was equally diverse, consisting of Spaniards, creoles, mestizos, and indigenous supporters of the Crown. The actions undertaken by both groups, then, must be seen not as indicative of adherence to cemented notions of 'Andeanness' versus 'Spanishness', but rather as deliberate public acts that sent a powerful message of political contention to observers. Although beyond the scope of this article, the tendency to construct solidified categories of Andeanness, particularly within the context of the rebellion, stems from discourses around notions of an Andean utopia from the 1970s and 1980s put forth by Alberto Flores Galindo 1988 and Manuel Burga 1988. These authors emphasized the role of millenarian prophecies and idealized notions of the 'return of the Inca' as the primary ideological motivations behind the rebellion. These groundbreaking studies have been crucial in illuminating the role of utopia as a recurring leitmotif in Andean thought across the *longue durée* of Peruvian history, but their tendency toward assumptions of rebels as somehow operating in a wholly other space-time and historical framework has prevented more nuanced understandings of insurgent invocations of Inca history and concepts as resolutely tactical gestures. For further discussion, see Cahill (2002: 151–152), Serulnikov (2005, 2013: 6–10).

studies on the visual arts' entanglement with the rebellions of the eighteenth century have yet to be revisited and updated.

This study presents the seeds of a larger project on visualizing insurgency in the southern Andes, offering new examples culled from the rebellion's extensive documentary record to show how historical actors utilized the visual world as an agent of political transformation. As the historian David Cahill (2002: 95) notes, the Tupac Amaru rebellion and its many offshoots are among the most meticulously documented events in colonial Latin American history. The rebellion produced a massive paper trail in the form of court proceedings and testimonies, letters exchanged among rebel groups as well as government officials, and inventories of goods confiscated by colonial authorities. Yet, this rich corpus of archival material remains to be systematically mined for its art historical value. These documents beg the question: How can we tell a history of insurgency through objects? How did rebels' intervention into an object's materiality through defacement or modification destabilize its power or meaning? Icons of saints could suddenly become demonic; everyday objects, talismanic; Inca portraits, subversive. These interventions had the power to produce a critique or attach a new narrative to a given object. As the historical archaeologist Matthew Liebmann (2008: 361) notes, 'Materiality calls into question the objectivity of artifacts and recognizes their agency, positing that humans think through things, not just about them; thus, physical objects both shape and are shaped by mental processes'. An art historical perspective provides a crucial link between ideology and the underexplored material world with which rebels and royalists interacted. This article thus examines how visual culture mediated both political dissent and loyalty, demonstrating that artists and viewers saw images as a battleground of sorts over which both parties sought to assert interpretive control. Both rebels and royalists appropriated icons of saints, reams of cloth, and liturgical items to cooperate in their efforts to promulgate a particular vision of justice.

## 2 The Efficacy of Images

In the midst of mounting political strife, asserting control over the world of sacred objects and images served as a tactical strategy among both rebels and counterinsurgents. The documentation of these revolts is rife with accounts describing rebels entering into churches and drinking *chicha* (fermented beverage) from the holy chalice, profaning sacred images, and burning church ornaments in public squares (Serulnikov 2013: 93–95). During the Oruro

rebellion, peasants threatened to behead the statue of the Virgen del Rosario in the town of Sillota, Bolivia, deeming her ‘a witch whose evil powers worked against them’ (Thomson 2002: 176–177). These acts of iconoclasm, whether invoked as a threat or realized, did not necessarily signify a rejection of Christianity—in fact, Tupac Amaru and the majority of the rebels considered themselves Catholics. Rather, as Erina Gruner (2013: 328) suggests, they ‘may have less to do with the sanctity of these objects within Catholic doctrine than with the symbolic seizure of the rights and privileges associated with them’.

Indeed, the practice of destroying or defacing Christian icons by a subjugated group occurred in a variety of contexts across the hemisphere. To take one example, during the 1680 Pueblo revolt in New Mexico, native insurgents smashed church bells (Aguilar and Preuce 2013: 285), repurposed holy vestments, and even ‘scalped’ a carving of Christ (Hackett and Shelby 1942: 1, 203–204; cited in Gruner 2013: 318). These desacralizing gestures are not a clear-cut rejection of Christianity. Rather, they signify an attempt to restrain or reroute their divine power against the colonizing force.

A report issued by the *cofradía* (confraternity) of St. James the Apostle in Cuzco stated that insurgents entered into churches and tied together the hands of statues of the tutelary saint (Cahill 2006: 94).<sup>3</sup> The attack on this particular devotion was most certainly intentional. Santiago, the patron saint of Spain credited with the defeat of the Moors at the Battle of Clavijo, took on new meanings during the conquest of the American continent; he was quickly given the moniker ‘Santiago Mataindios’ (St. James the Indian-killer), which was added to that of Santiago Matamoros (Domínguez García 2008; Cummins and Feliciano 2017: 1039–1040). In the Andes, Santiago was believed to have brought the Spaniards to their victory during the 1536 siege of Cuzco. During the final battle between the Spaniards and Incas at the fortress of Sacsayhuaman, Santiago descended from the heavens like a bolt of lightning in order to ensure an Inca defeat, leading to his conflation with Illapa, the deity of lightning and thunder (Figure 10.1).<sup>4</sup> As Irene Silverblatt (1988) points out, Santiago held an ambivalent position in colonial Andean society: indigenous communities paradoxically celebrated the very saint associated with the mil-

3 The original document comes from the Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia del Cuzco, Legajo 15, Consejo expediente sobre la erección en la ciudad del Cuzco..., 1 de agosto de 1786, fol. 3r.

4 Inca state religion venerated environmental and celestial phenomena, often in unmediated form. In other words, there was no distinction between Illapa as thunder/lightning and Illapa as deity.



FIGURE 10.1 *Milagro del señor Santiago mayor, apóstol de Jesucristo* (Miracle of Saint James the Great, apostle of Jesus Christ). From Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, 1615: 404 [406].

itary defeat of their ancestors. However, citing a variety of seventeenth-century accounts from both the Cuzco region and the Lima highlands of native Andeans invoking Santiago's powers during rituals honoring the mountain spirits, she demonstrates that many saw Santiago's military prowess and power as qualities that could be rerouted to 'do battle for those whom he was commissioned to vanquish' (Silverblatt 1988: 186–187; see also Gose 2008: 176–177). As a case in point, Tupac Amaru himself commissioned a now-lost portrait

of himself in the purported guise of Santiago, seated on a white horse replete with royal insignia, which was sent to Alto Perú (modern-day Bolivia) to help spread news of his rebellion (Estenssoro 1991: 421–423).

With his hands tied, the *cofradía*'s miracle-working statue of Santiago, who once interceded on behalf of Spanish conquistadors to defeat the Incas, was now physically restrained in order to prevent him from assisting the colonizers once again. Yet Santiago ultimately performed under the aegis of the status quo, and the attempt to restrain his power was met with renewed fervor in his cult in the rebellion's aftermath. In 1781, after the rebellion had been largely quelled with the public execution of Tupac Amaru and his supporters, the parish priest of the staunchly royalist church of San Jerónimo in southern Cuzco commissioned a sculpture of Santiago trampling over José Gabriel and his cousin Diego Tupa Amaro in order to showcase the victory of the royalist forces (Estenssoro 1991: 423; see also Cohen Suarez 2016: 156).<sup>5</sup>

The binding of Santiago's hands, Tupac Amaru's patronage of a portrait of himself atop a white horse, and the creation of a rebel-trampling statue in the wake of the rebellion represent yet another iteration of a practice with deep historical roots in the Andes of reconfiguring Christian deities to work in the service of local interests. The insurgents did not wish to destroy the statue of Santiago, thus rendering the charge of rebels as idolaters or iconoclasts moot. Restraining his material form perhaps served as the ultimate acknowledgment of Santiago's sacred power.

Megan Holmes' (2013: 181) discussion of Renaissance miraculous images is of particular relevance here: 'the materiality of miraculous images—the very matter and form out of which they were made—thus had the potential to contribute to the perception that the images were responsive to the needs of supplicants and were animate in this responsiveness' (see also Stanfield-Mazzi 2013: 4–5). This direct engagement with the materiality of the icon mediated confrontation of the literal religious embodiment of Spanish colonial authority in the New World. Binding Santiago's hands, in effect, meant binding the state. This gesture of anticolonial praxis entailed the act of seeing, of touching, tying, and handling the material world as a means of securing a desired political outcome. As objects transform, so, too, do their interlocutors.

5 Estenssoro describes this work (which, to my knowledge, is no longer extant) as a painting, but upon consulting the original inventory in the Archivo Arzobispal in Cuzco, it is clear that the *párroco* commissioned a sculpture of Santiago to be placed in a niche of a retablo dedicated to St. Peter. There does exist the possibility that there was also a reference elsewhere in the inventory to a painting. I did not find this in the inventory, however, and Estenssoro does not list the folio number of the original document. See Cohen Suarez (2016: 156; 230n46).

Moreover, indigenous beliefs that originated in the pre-Columbian era permeated colonial religious expression in the formation of a localized Andean Catholicism. Many Andeans viewed *huacas* (sacred sites and objects), stones, mummified ancestors, and landscape features themselves as vibrant, animate forces that had the ability to move, change physical shape and form, and most importantly, to directly intervene in human affairs (Salomon 1998; Bray 2009; Dean 2010; Brosseder 2014).<sup>6</sup> A *huaca* did not embody a singular, static identity, but rather engaged with the human world through the bonds of reciprocity, signifying what Keith Basso describes as 'reciprocal appropriation' (Basso 1996; cited in Allen 2015: 28). In other words, the *huaca*'s essence could not be contained within the parameters of its physical form. Instead, the ritual practices of offerings and performances created a reciprocal relationship that helped distribute the *huaca*'s powers to different human, sentient, and environmental domains.

Other episodes from the rebellion tell us of more overt beliefs in the animacy of sacred materials. For example, according to several witnesses, 'after having entered the town of Pilpinto', an indigenous man by the name of Miguel Anco, suspected by authorities to be part of the rebellion, 'went to the church, and ordered that the statue of San Luis be given to him. And getting angry with it [the statue], he put it by his side, where he profaned it and the church by drinking *chicha* and getting drunk and causing various scandals' (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 758).<sup>7</sup> During his testimony, Anco admitted that he did ask for the statue of San Luis to be brought to him but insisted that he neither sat with the statue nor drank *chicha* (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 766). While it is impossible to know precisely what happened on that fateful day, the accusation speaks to common themes that crop up in the rebellion's documentation. We do not know of the vessels from which Anco allegedly consumed *chicha*, but other accounts refer to rebels using sacramental chalices to drink the corn beverage (e.g., Serulnikov 2013: 95), suggesting that Anco may have done the same. It is also telling that he chose to sit in the company of the statue, as if to share the *chicha* with him. Ritual drinking associated with ancestor veneration was and continues to be a communal activity in the Andes, and Anco's story is no exception.

6 Although beyond the scope of this article, the great pandemic of 1719–1720, which took the lives of over 20,000 inhabitants of Potosí and thousands in the Cuzco region, also became imbued with strong religious overtones (Stavig 2000). For a discussion of artworks related to the event, see Mesa and Gisbert (1982, vol. 1: 248).

7 '...así dijeron todos a una misma voz que el indio Miguel Anco, habiendo entrado al pueblo de Pilpinto, fue a la iglesia, y mandó sacar un bulto de San Luis, y airándose con él, se le puso sentado a su lado, donde le profanó y a la iglesia con respecto de beber chicha y embriagarse y hacer varios escándalos'. Translation by the author.

We can see a direct connection to Inca practices of feasting and drinking *chicha* with the ancestors, which was most prominently enacted on Cuzco's *hau-caypata* (plaza) with the mummified remains of Inca kings to celebrate their continued presence in imperial governance (Gose 1996). The practice of ritual drinking brought together individuals of varying social status through the bonds of reciprocity engendered by this shared act of consumption (see Flores Ochoa, Kuon Arce, and Samanez Argumedeo 1998; Cummins 2002). The trial testimony suggests that Anco honored San Luis as an ancestor through the consumption of *chicha* in the statue's presence, while also engaging him as a crucial intercessor with God in an unambiguously Christian space. We can thus interpret Anco's behavior as a desire to consult with San Luis for guidance or counsel. When he did not receive the news that he desired, he became angry, perhaps in frustration with the statue's failure to reciprocate Anco's generous offering.

The diverse religious landscape of the eighteenth-century Andes defies easy categorization into 'folk' or 'popular' Catholicism versus orthodox modes of practice. In times of heightened political tension, however, heterogeneity often gives way to polarity. The inclusion of *chicha* within that formula unequivocally pushed Anco's act into the realm of sedition, attested to by the very fact that his case was tried alongside other alleged supporters of the rebellion. While religious officials in the Andes had long reviled the sacred Andean beverage as a dangerous substance associated with idolatry, in this context of rebellion what was once deemed idolatrous is now reclassified as political subversion.

The veracity of these claims becomes almost secondary, for whether true or not, it is in these small, otherwise insignificant tales that we can see how contemporaries—both accusers and the accused—envisioned insurgency. Liberation or sedition (depending on the perspective of the person framing it) was described in the court documents not as an all-encompassing ideology but as a series of interactions with and modifications of the material world, however slight or subtle. Statues of Santiago became modified and crafted anew by a diverse set of interlocutors that corresponded with the ideological positions they espoused. We can likewise read Miguel Anco's case either as a projection of what political subversion was supposed to look like from the perspective of his accusers or as how Anco himself understood liberation during these moments of uncertainty when the rebellion temporarily destabilized colonial protocol.

### 3 Weaving Liberation

Other episodes from the rebellion involved more explicit revivals of pre-Hispanic sociopolitical and ritual practice. In addition to invading churches,

sacking *obrajes* (textile mills) also became a rallying point for Tupac Amaru's campaign. *Obrajes* were prime targets for rebels because of their direct association with the *repartimiento de mercancías*, a detested institution whose abolition served as one of the major platforms of the rebellion (Moreno Cebrián 1977; O'Phelan Godoy 1988: 117–174). Indigenous people who were unable to afford the useless objects that they were forced to purchase at inflated prices—a long list that included brass rings, silk stockings, velvet cloths, metal buckles, and tiny mirrors—had to repay their debts by working in the poorly ventilated, overcrowded mills.<sup>8</sup> Tupac Amaru's troops confiscated cloth and burned down *obrajes* throughout the Quispicanchi and Canasy Canchis provinces. This practice also reverberated into the central Andes, particularly in the Ayacucho region (Hu 2016: 282–329). The best-documented invasion occurred at Pomacanchi in Cuzco's Acomayo province, where rebel forces destroyed the building to its foundations after Tupac Amaru redistributed thousands of pounds of wool to his supporters (Walker 1999: 36). After the sacking of the Pomacanchi *obraje*, the troops entered into the town of Quiquijana with great pomp and circumstance—one testimony described troops circling the plaza while playing clarinets—and raided the house of the local *corregidor*, Don Fernando Cabrera (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 1: 78). The troops then placed all of the confiscated items in the center of the plaza, including fine clothes and silver, and redistributed the spoils among themselves (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 1: 211). The redistribution of cloth became a multimedia spectacle that rendered it a performance staged at the focal point of the Andean town.

As Scarlett O'Phelan Godoy (1995: 156–157) and others have pointed out, the redistribution of cloth references pan-Andean practices of reciprocity and gift giving. The Inca king himself was known to distribute high-quality clothing to other elites and humbler cloth to commoners as a means of maintaining strict

8 Tupac Amaru himself testified to the litany of useless items that members of his community were forced to purchase through the *reparto*: 'De suerte que los géneros de Castilla, que han cogido por montón y lo más ordinario, y están a dos o tres pesos nos amontonan con violencia por diez o doce pesos la vara; el cuchillo de marca menor que vale un real, nos dan por un peso; la libra de fierro más ruin, también a peso...nos las dan a peso; fuera de esto nos botan alfileres, agujas de cambray, polvos azules, barajas, anteojos, espejitos, estampitas, trompas de muchachos, sortijas de latón y otras ridiculeces de esta especie, que no nos sirven. A los que tenemos alguna comodidad nos botan fondos, terciopelos, piñuelas, sarguillas, calama-cos, medias de seda, encajes del pui, hebillas de metal...como si nosotros . . . usáramos . . . modas españolas, y luego en unos precios tan exorbitantes, que cuando llegamos a vender no volvemos a recoger la veintena parte de lo que hemos de pagar' (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 208). On the exploitative conditions of the *obrajes* in eighteenth-century Peru, see Stavig (1999: 129–161).

sumptuary codes. Through the gifting of cloth, Tupac Amaru performed equity and good governance as described in the pages of his beloved *Comentarios reales*. For instance, in book 5, chapter 9, Garcilaso de la Vega, paraphrasing the Jesuit historian José de Acosta, states, 'Where the climate was hot, cotton from the royal revenues was distributed for the Indians to dress themselves and their households. Thus all that was required for human life in the way of food, clothes, and footwear was available to all, and no one could call himself poor or beg for alms' (Garcilaso de la Vega 1966: 257). The redistribution of textiles enacted by the Inca sovereign was recalled, idealized, and set to the written page by Garcilaso, whose words were brought back into the fold of reality by Tupac Amaru nearly two centuries later. These acts also transformed abstract notions of justice into a tactile reality, enabling rebels to hold, touch, and wear the fruits of their insurgent labor. But aside from harking to past practices of the Incas, the redistribution of cloth from *obrajes* was also a resolutely contemporary gesture, which directly undermined the logic of the *reparto* system. If the *repartimiento de mercancías* entailed the forced distribution of goods to indigenous communities, then Tupac Amaru's acts offered an alternative, elective form of redistribution. In other words, these acts directly responded to the terms under which late colonial economic measures were enacted, repaying indigenous people with the fruits that many of them were forced to produce through grossly undercompensated labor.

Insurgents keenly recognized the connections between the destruction of buildings and the labor expended in their construction (and by extension, the construction of the institutions they embodied). For instance, in Caquiaviri, Bolivia, Aymara insurgents attacked a jail, arguing that 'they would do away with everyone inside because the jail had been built with their labor and therefore they would return it to nothing' (Thomson 2002: 152).

Cloth and fiber attained an almost talismanic quality; while once the product of an oppressive labor system, when confiscated and released from the *obraje*, the cloth gained a newfound autonomy that served as a material analogue for human liberation. And the revolutionary potential of textiles was not just limited to cloth. There is also evidence that *khípus* (knotted cords) were utilized during the era of Andean insurgency. For instance, in 1791, rebels in Valdivia, Chile, used a colonial-period *khípu* to track the movements of insurgents (Brokaw 2006: 49–50). The use of an expressly Andean mode of literacy to orchestrate rebellion undermined the primacy of European computational systems and modes of communication and ensured greater protection against Spanish officials who were unable to read *khípus*. Moreover, the tactility of the medium offered a sensorial link through which participants touched and manipulated fibers to effect social transformation.

The modification of Christian objects and the confiscation of cloth from textile mills constitute targeted attacks on the material embodiments of oppressive institutions. The radical recontextualization of objects associated with indigenous subordination, coupled with the strategic usage of objects associated with the Inca empire, helped catalyze political dissent at the grassroots level. These rebellions, thus, did not simply entail violent combat between rebels and royalists; they also became a war among objects over which both parties sought to gain control.

#### 4 The Royalist Response

At the same time that rebels reconfigured the visual landscape in their quest for liberation, Spanish colonial officials engaged in a counterattack that involved not only military mobilization but also the strategic appropriation of images. As early as November 20, 1780, a little over two weeks after the hanging of Antonio Arriaga that kicked off Tupac Amaru's insurgency, Bishop Juan Manuel de Moscoso issued an *auto* (decree) announcing an eight-day period of prayer in the city of Cuzco, indicating that those who 'confess and take the sacrament, praying for the peace of the republic' would receive forty days of indulgence for each day committed to it (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 1: 120).

In addition to special days of prayer, there was also talk among Cuzco's religious officials to encourage spiritual resilience and solidarity within the community through the promotion of certain local devotions. Indeed, Moscoso mobilized indigenous religiosity as a political strategy to ensure their fidelity to the royalist cause. In a letter to the *visitador general* (royal inspector), José Antonio de Areche, Moscoso wrote:

My orders were executed promptly, proceeding with a general prayer with sacred images, whose devotion pertains more to the Indians [and ensures] their permanence in the faith, such as the Lord of the Earthquakes and Our Lady of Bethlehem, which I ordered to be brought out in procession from their parishes. This allowed the Indians to understand that the war against the rebel [Tupac Amaru] was a religious duty they have to attend to as Christians. They are very addicted to these simulacra of Christ and his Holy Mother. (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 1: 213)<sup>9</sup>

9 'Mis órdenes se ejecutaron prontamente, procediéndose a una rogativa general, con las imágenes sagradas, en cuya devoción se interesa más la religión de los indios y su permanencia en la fe, como es la del Señor de los Temblores y de Nuestra Señora de Belén, que mandé



FIGURE 10.2 The Lord of the Earthquakes in procession on Holy Monday, Cuzco.

Moscoso's selection of the Lord of the Earthquakes (Figure 10.2), lovingly referred to as *taytacha temblores* (grandfather of the earthquakes), was especially appropriate. The Cuzqueño devotion to this image quickly rose

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se trajese procesionalmente desde su parroquia, haciendo comprender a los indios, que la guerra contra el rebelde, se miraba como punto de religión, que deben atender, según la calidad de cristianos. Ellos son muy adictos a estos simulacros de Cristo y su Santísima Madre'. Translation by the author.

to prominence in 1650 when priests brought the statue to the central plaza in the middle of the city's great earthquake. Its presence, according to witnesses, miraculously caused the tremors to cease (Stanfield-Mazzi 2007; Stanfield-Mazzi 2013: 97–116). The parish of Our Lady of Bethlehem was destroyed by the 1650 earthquake but rebuilt in 1680 under the patronage of Bishop Manuel de Mollinedo (Cummins 1996: 168–169), an act that instilled a renewed fervor in the cult (Figure 10.3). The Lord of the Earthquakes and Our Lady of Bethlehem were both associated with resilience in the face of



FIGURE 10.3 Our Lady of Bethlehem during the Corpus Christi procession, Cuzco.

destruction, and both enjoyed a large indigenous following. Moreover, as Maya Stanfield-Mazzi (2013: 107) points out, they were often conceived of as a familial unit akin to husband and wife, given the Lord of the Earthquakes' association with Viracocha, the creator god, and the Virgin of Bethlehem's with Pachamama, the female earth goddess. Thus, the selection of these two statues for procession in the streets of Cuzco was not random or accidental. It was a direct appeal to the city's indigenous constituents to view the conflict as a holy war between Christians and infidels.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, natural disasters were seen as a form of physical punishment for religious laxity and transgression (Schreffler 2010: 57–61; Walker 2008). Moscoso's letter suggests that framing the rebellion as an unleashing of God's wrath, akin to an earthquake, helped to ensure indigenous fidelity to the Crown. His decision to bring out the statue of the Lord of the Earthquakes, then, helped to ensure local residents of its power to stop the rebels, in much the same way that it had stopped the earth from shaking on that fateful day in 1650. The comparison may not be as arbitrary as one may think; in fact, in a November 1780 testimony, an observer at the battle of Sangarará described Tupac Amaru's approaching troops as sounding like 'an earthquake' (Walker 2014: 52).

Moscoso employs a condescending tone in his discussion of indigenous faith, describing devotees as 'addicted' to the statues.<sup>10</sup> His attitude toward native devotees implies a certain distrust of indigenous religiosity as hovering at the interface of devotion and idolatry, a leitmotiv of colonial religious discourse that continued well into the eighteenth century. He refers specif-

10 'Adicto' was often used in reference to idolatry during this period, as can be seen in this passage, as well as in a letter from Juan de Moscoso to José Antonio de Areche from April 1781: 'Mucho tiempo há era el obgeto de mi dolor ver tan imbuidos a los indios de nuestra America en las maximas de su gentilismo, tan sequesces de los ritos, y costumbres de sus antepasados, y tan adictos a sus supersticiosos dogmas, y tradiciones' (Comité Arquidiocesano del Bicentenario Túpac Amaru 1983: 270). In fact, claims of idolatry ran rampant during the rebellion and in its aftermath, used as a point of attack by both sides. In addition to Spanish religious officials blaming the rebellion on the machinations of sacrilegious and superstitious rebels (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 1: 186), Tupac Amaru himself referred to *corregidores* as 'idolaters of gold and silver', likening them to atheists, Calvinists, and Lutherans (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 207) as well as 'apostates of the faith' that 'violate the church' and 'disparage sacred images' (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 216; see also Szemiński 1987: 168). Tupac Amaru's characterization of Spanish governmental officials as corrupt and anti-Christian draws on precedents set in the seventeenth century, particularly in anti-Spanish accounts fueled by the black legend (Cañizares-Esguerra 2001: 130–135; Lamana 2008: 117–149).

ically to the 'simulacra', or the material manifestations of the sacred. Nevertheless, the purported 'addiction' to Christian icons was far more preferable than rejection of the colonial enterprise. Moscoso harnesses the charismatic religiosity of Cuzco's indigenous residents as a political wedge. Paradoxically, this very addiction served as the grounds upon which Miguel Anco was tried in the ecclesiastical courts for seditious activity. Moscoso recognized the import of the numinous quality of these statues among Cuzco's native devotees. By ordering them to be brought out from their parishes and processed through the streets, he relied upon the material presence of these statues—which would be viewed, touched, and kissed—as a two-pronged strategy that both ensured loyalty to the royalist defense and positioned religiosity as a buffer that would prevent them from sympathizing with the rebels.

Portraits of members of the indigenous elite became prime targets for censorship in the wake of the Tupac Amaru rebellion. José Antonio de Areche's 1781 decree stated that portraits of Incas and their descendants were to be erased so that 'no sign remains [of the original image]' (*de modo que no quede señal*), and that they should be substituted with portraits of the king or other Catholic sovereigns (CDTA 1980–1982, vol. 3: 275–276; Cahill 2006). The iconic portrait of Manuela Tupa Amaro, the matriarch of the Betancur family who litigated against Tupac Amaru in the 1770s for the coveted title of Marquisate of Oropesa, served as evidentiary proof of the family's claims of direct descent to Tupac Amaru I during the court proceedings (Figure 10.4). The painting, produced around 1777, is a copy of a lost original from the late seventeenth century and may be the only surviving colonial portrait of a named noble Andean woman (Majluf 2015: 170).

Despite the fact that the Betancur family remained loyal to the Spanish Crown during the rebellion, the portrait nevertheless seems to have succumbed to Areche's mandate. At some point after 1781, an artist painted an image of none other than the Lord of the Earthquakes over the portrait (Figure 10.5). The decision to efface Manuela Tupa Amaro with this particular image brings us back to Moscoso's orders. In the same way that the icon of the Lord of the Earthquakes intervened in Cuzqueño public space in an effort to stop the rebels, the superimposition of his image on the visage of an Andean noblewoman suppressed, or perhaps protected, the claims to nobility articulated in the portrait. The devotional image of the Lord of the Earthquakes did not merely represent but rather asserted control over Manuela Tupa Amaro's image; the canvas served as a visual platform upon which contemporaries mediated a shifting political landscape. It would not be for another two centuries that the Betancur matriarch would be liberated once again by modern restorers.



FIGURE 10.4 Anonymous Cuzqueño artist, *Manuela Tupa Amaro, Ñusta*, ca. 1777.

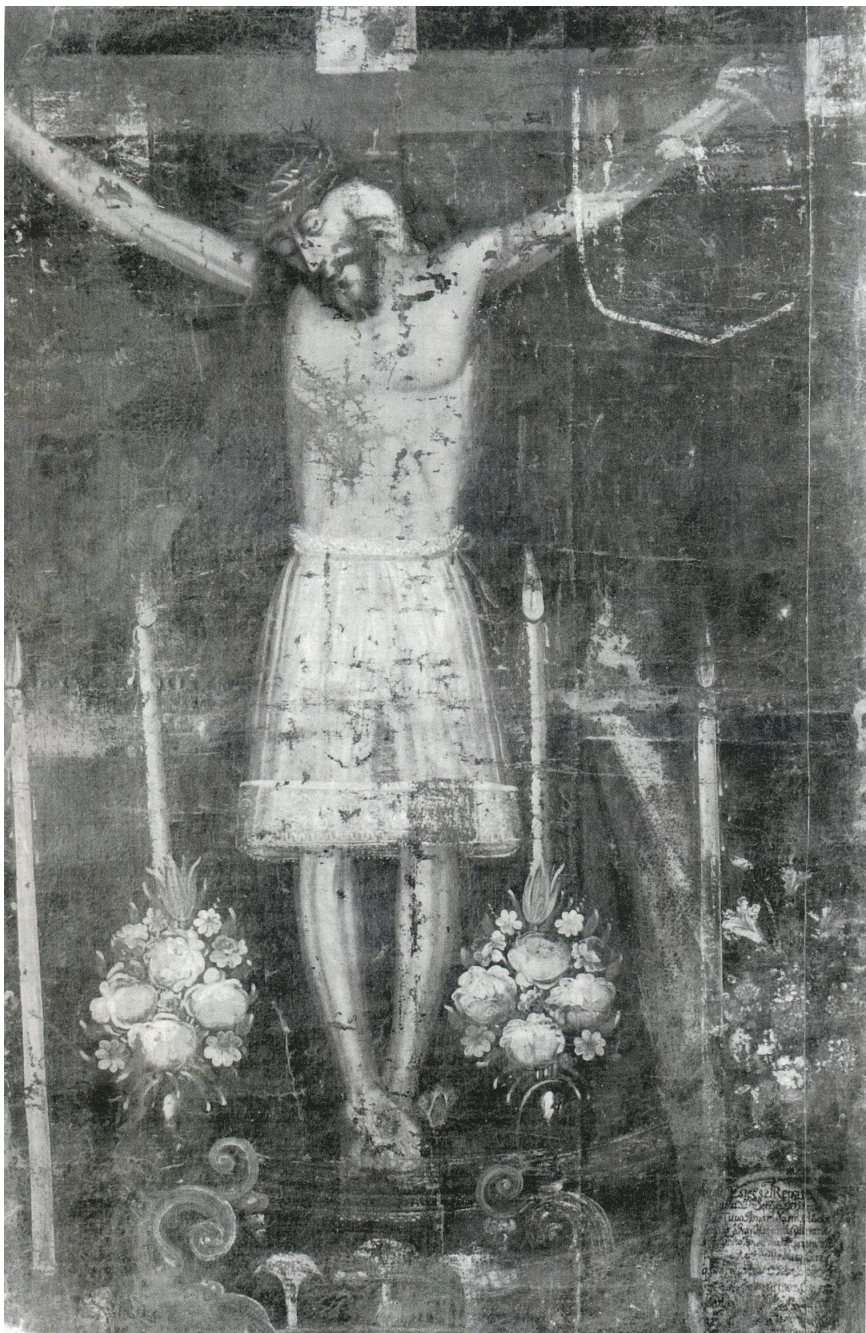


FIGURE 10.5 Pre-restoration photograph of *Manuela Tupa Amaro, Ñusta*, showing the overpainting of *Our Lord of the Earthquakes*, ca. 1781–1800.

## 5 Conclusion

The objects described in this essay were often manipulated in ways that ran counter to their original function, demonstrating the polysemous nature of colonial visual culture to simultaneously contain conflicting meanings based on the interventions undertaken by various historical actors at different moments in an object's biography. Such acts presuppose a shared understanding of the power of images to intervene and perform in the service of political action, calling to mind Alfred Gell's (1998) notion of art's agency as residing at the intersections of its representational and presentational capacities. Most importantly, they demonstrate how the repurposing or modification of an image served not as an endpoint to the history of a given object but as marking a new moment in its dynamic and shifting biography (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Flood 2002).

A consideration of these materials has enabled us to understand anticolonial ideologies as not merely discursively articulated but as seen and felt. Participants repurposed and curated religious objects to fulfill unprecedented requests, and each of the examples discussed herein challenge normative definitions of objects as having a singular purpose, creator, and function. With further archival research and art historical analysis of artworks produced and modified during the rebellion, we can gain an even clearer sense of the critical role that material and visual culture played during one of the most violent and transformative moments in colonial Andean history.

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## Abbreviations

CDTA: *Colección documental del bicentenario de la revolución emancipadora de Tupac Amaru* 1980–1982. Durand Flórez, L. (ed.). Vols. 1–5. Comisión Nacional del Bicentenario de la Rebelión Emancipadora de Tupac Amaru, Lima.

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