Many Voices, Many Facets: The Involvement of the Clergy in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion

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Independent Study for Honors

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Submitted: April 15, 2016
Abstract

The Tupac Amaru Rebellion (1780-1782) was perhaps the most far-reaching uprising to occur in Spain’s New World colonies. Arising from centuries of mistreatment aggravated by increasing regional hardships, the rebellion quickly spread from its origins in the southern provinces of Cusco to the Lake Titikaka basin and sought to replace Spanish officials with native Peruvians. For much of these two years, colonial authorities feared that the violent rebels would oust them from the peninsula and exterminate white Spaniards living within the colony. From the royalist point of view, the rebel’s desires were entirely opposite their own.

Religious authorities and the personal religiosity of leaders shaped the direction of the rebellion as well as the discourses by which rebels and royalists sought to justify themselves. As a result, the Church and its representatives were critical to the success of the colonial authorities at this uncertain moment. This project seeks to explore the role of religious representatives in directing the rebellion as well as the religious dimensions of rebel and royalist discourse.

Keywords: Tupac Amaru Rebellion, clergy, religion
Introduction

The Tupac Amaru Rebellion (1780-1782) was perhaps the most far-reaching uprising to occur in Spain’s New World colonies. Arising from centuries of mistreatment aggravated by increasing regional hardships, the rebellion quickly spread from its origins in the southern provinces of Cusco to the Lake Titikaka basin and sought to replace Spanish officials with native Peruvians. For much of these two years, colonial authorities feared that the violent rebels would oust them from the peninsula and exterminate white Spaniards living within the colony. From the royalist point of view, the rebel’s desires were entirely opposite their own.

In hindsight, however, the two sides were not diametrically opposed. Rebels and royalists had different philosophies about the integration of indigenous people into society, but they also shared many values and assumptions about the clergy and the role of the Spanish crown in the administration of its territories. For both groups, the Church and the monarchy were so intertwined that to formally cast off one was to cast off another. Thus, not even the rebel leaders could imagine a world without both the king and the Church hierarchy that helped reinforce the colonial order. Religious authorities and the personal religiosity of leaders shaped the direction of the rebellion as well as the discourses by which rebels and royalists sought to justify themselves. As a result, the Church and its representatives were critical to the success of the colonial authorities at this uncertain moment. This project seeks to explore the role of religious representatives in directing the rebellion as well as the religious dimensions of rebel and royalist discourse.
Historiography

Given the magnitude of the rebellion and its far-reaching effects, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion has received a great deal of scholarly attention over the last fifty years. In spite of the plethora of sources available, many avenues of investigation remain; the range and complexity of the uprising lend themselves to new approaches. Consequently, the questions this paper seeks to answer—What role do clerics play in the rebellion? Where in their arguments do royalists and rebels employ religious ideology and biblical imagery? — have yet to be addressed within the existing literature on the Tupac Amaru Rebellion.

The earliest secondary sources, written in the 1960s, are dedicated to understanding precisely why the rebellion happened, as well as to a general timeline of events. The Last Inca Revolt, by Lillian Fisher, and La Rebelión de Tupac Amaru, by Boleslao Lewin, are both excellent examples of this large group of sources. Both engage in top-down analyses of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion that begin with colonial oppressions and Spanish excesses and continue through the end of the rebellion in 1782-83. In these analyses, the indigenous people have little agency. Both authors frame the rebellion as a reaction to pressure from above and focus on the actions and impact of colonial officials and the indigenous elite rather than on those of poor villagers. For example, Lillian Fisher, writing in the mid-1960s, points to the oppression of the Indians as the primary motivation for the rebellion, citing the *repartimiento de mercancías* and the *mita* in particular.\(^1\), \(^2\) Fisher also refers to the uprising as “the Last Inca Revolt”, which

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\(^2\) The *repartimiento de mercancías*, often called simply the *repartimiento*, was the forced sale of goods to indigenous people at inflated rates, intended to bring more income to the Spanish crown. The *mita* was a labor tax, in which a community would have to provide a percentage of their labor force to colonial projects. See Stavig, *The World of Tupac Amaru*. 
indicates that she sees it as the result of pent-up hatred on the part of the remnants of the Inca Empire, led by a charismatic descendant of the last Inca.³

If secondary sources from the 1960s were focused on the influence of powerful men in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, U.S. scholars in 1980s were more likely to cite the economic hardships of the alcabala⁴ and repartimiento,⁵ as the focus shifted from political factors to the collective action of those Steve Stern calls peasants: the indigenous people at the lowest levels of the social hierarchy.⁶ Stern’s primary concern was the motivation and activity of indigenous communities, rather than those of the elites who ruled. According to Stern, the deluge of bottom-up analysis was in large part connected to the Cold War-era emphasis on with peasant culture, rooted in a desire to understand the popular uprisings that took place worldwide in the 1970s and 1980s.⁷ Rather than provide an overview of the rebellion itself, these authors engaged in analyses of peasant motivations that focus on the conditions that led to rebellion. For instance, Steve Stern wrote about the Tupac Amaru Rebellion as part of a larger pattern of rebellion that began in 1742 with the Juan Santos Atahualpa Rebellion in the alta selva, the high jungle, of the eastern Andes and continuing until the end of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion in 1782. In this interpretation, the increasing economic hardships of colonial rule in the eighteenth century caused the rebellions, while the “political culture” of Andean culture, including Inca revivalism

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⁴ The alcabala was a sales tax. It rose from 4% to 6% in the late 1770s and began to include coca leaves, which had hitherto been exempt because of their importance to Andean culture.
⁵ For example: Mörner and Trelles in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness*.
and a “protonational identity,” had a great deal to do with the spread and reach of the violence.\(^8\) Mörner and Trelles, in “A Test of Causal Interpretations of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion,” focus on correlating demographic, economic, and geographic data to patterns of rebelliousness, thereby creating a profile of the communities that experienced unrest.\(^9\) In their analysis, they do not ask who fought, but rather examine the economic commonalities between rebellious communities.

A second thread of scholarship from the 1980s focused on rebel ideology, but viewed it as a motivation for rebellion rather than as a factor with considerable political and ideological pull on both sides of the struggle. For instance, Leon Campbell’s essay, “Ideology and Factionalism during the Great Rebellion, 1780-1782,” considers the influence of rebel ideology on the structure of the rebellion.\(^10\) Campbell’s definition of “rebel ideology” relates to traditional Andean cosmology, as opposed to Catholic interpretations, including extensive discussion of Inca millennialism.\(^11\) Additionally, prior to this article, few scholars addressed the question of rebel factionalism. As a result, historians typically portrayed the rebels as a uniform mass rather than an uneasy and complicated composite. In fact, the divisions between them were too important be ignored, particularly as the rebellion moved south towards Lake Titikaka. In the area around the modern day border between Perú and Bolivia, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion came into contact with the Kataristas, led by Julián Apaza, also known as Tupac Katari.\(^12\) This second

\(^8\) Steve Stern, in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\(^{th}\)-20\(^{th}\) Centuries*, 76.


\(^10\) Campbell in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\(^{th}\)-20\(^{th}\) Centuries*, 110-111.


\(^12\) Apaza took the name Tupac Katari in tribute to Tupac Amaru and Tomás Katari, the initial leaders of the two Andean revolts, both of whom were executed in the first few months of 1781.
rebellion had been in full swing since October of 1780 and was nowhere as cohesive as the Tupac Amaru conflict to the north.\textsuperscript{13} While royalists feared an alliance between the Kataristas and the Tupac Amaru forces, their differences in language (the Kataristas spoke Aymara rather than Quechua) and in the willingness of the Katarista leaders to condone what some scholars have called “genocide” kept such an alliance from coalescing.\textsuperscript{14} Campbell’s analysis draws attention to this dimension, and demonstrates the extent to which competing beliefs contributed to tensions between the two rebel groups.\textsuperscript{15}

Jan Szemiński’s essay, “Why Kill the Spaniard? New Perspectives on Andean Insurrectionary Ideology in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century”\textsuperscript{16} also addresses rebel ideology and seeks to explain by what processes the rebels could justify the massive levels of violence they perpetrated during the uprising.\textsuperscript{17} Of the multiple factors Szemiński discusses, the question of heresy is most fascinating, as it includes a heavy dose of Catholic belief. According to Szemiński, Tupac Amaru accused the colonial officials of being “fearless of God, rebels against the king, heretics, apostates condemned to Hell, traitors to their king, and not Christians at all,”\textsuperscript{18} thereby justifying the acts against them. This essay also includes an extensive discussion of the ways in which the

\textsuperscript{15} Leon G. Campbell, “Ideology and Factionalism” in \textit{Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} Centuries}, 133.
\textsuperscript{16} Jan Szemiński, “Why Kill the Spaniard? New Perspectives on Andean Insurrectionary Ideology in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century,” in \textit{Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} Centuries} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
\textsuperscript{17} Szemiński in \textit{Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} Centuries}, 166.
\textsuperscript{18} Szemiński in \textit{Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} Centuries}, 168.
worship of certain Catholic saints reflects traditional Andean beliefs, an important interaction to consider when examining ideology.

By the 2000s, historians’ approaches began to incorporate elements of both top-down and bottom-up analyses, as they used them to explain one another. The 1990s and early 2000s are a period of reinvention in the Tupac Amaru literature; elements of the bottom-up approach of the 1980s remain, but are combined with other considerations to show a wider variety of perspectives.¹⁹ Scholars also began to incorporate cultural history and subaltern studies. Perhaps the most significant work to emerge from this period is The World of Tupac Amaru, published by Ward Stavig in 1999. Rather than focus only on the uprising itself, Stavig considers the social and cultural backdrop that influenced both the start of the rebellion and the course it took, including such things as priest-parishioner relations, the excesses of the corregidores,²⁰ and understandings of reciprocity that affected a community’s willingness to accept harsh treatment.²¹

Charles Walker’s chapter on the clergy in The Tupac Amaru Rebellion offers the most comprehensive work on the subject of clerical involvement. In addition to considering the religious beliefs of the indigenous participants, Walker acknowledges that Tupac Amaru and his wife Micaela Bastidas were devout Catholics, which formed the cornerstone of their interactions

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¹⁹ Smoldering Ashes, by Charles Walker, and Genocide in Upper Peru, by Nicolas A. Robins, are both excellent examples of this combination approach, combining State involvement with popular concerns and ideologies to discuss the origins of the rebellion and scope of violence, respectively.
²⁰ Corregidores were colonial officials equivalent to regional governors. They collected taxes, settled certain legal disputes, and administered the repartimiento de mercancías. See Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru.
with royalist authorities and the ways in which they sought to justify their actions. He also discusses the great power held by the Church as a political and financial institution in Cusco, while still recognizing the variation within and between parishes and dioceses. In addition to revealing the sticky situations many priests found themselves in during the rebellion—they were ordered by their bishop to preach against the rebellion, but were liable to be killed or imprisoned by the rebels if they did so—Walker encourages readers to be cautious about ascribing too much influence to the Church; the Church alone did not win the struggle for the royalists.

Because so many rebellions took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Latin America, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion has a place in a larger body of literature on Latin American rebellions. The scholarship on this topic tends to fall into two camps: that of popular rebellions, and that of overtly millennialistic rebellions. A popular or agrarian rebellion, according to Stern, is a collective action of peasants in defense of their lives and livelihood. Much of the literature on popular rebellions tends to ignore the influence of religion and religious authorities on the course of events, thereby leaving plenty of room for an analysis that examines together popular rebellion and religious influences. Another branch of analysis focuses on rebellions with strong millennialistic motivations; that is, rebellions founded on the belief that God’s second coming is near. Many of these have incredibly strong religious overtones, but the style of analysis is not particularly useful for the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, which, though it had

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some millennialistic influence, was primarily a popular rebellion. Rather than separate religious influence and popular uprising, this paper will approach the Tupac Amaru Rebellion with an eye to religious influence without conflating religious involvement, operating under the belief that not all rebellions in which religious people are involved are by nature millennialistic.

The Colonial Context and an Overview of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion

After the relative stability of the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century was a time of remarkable change for Spain and its American colonies. The first of these changes was the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1700, which inaugurated a new royal family: The Bourbons. The Bourbon monarchs enacted numerous reforms, all aimed at consolidating Crown control, streamlining the flow of resources from the New World into Spain, and strengthening the military to protect against invasions by the British, the French and the Portuguese.28 Charles III (1759-1788) was responsible for the majority of these changes, and their implementation modified the shape of Spanish colonial government in the Americas.

Although some authors vindicate Charles III as a “giant among Bourbon midgets,” such claims are overstated. He certainly seemed inclined to effect the modifications necessary for Spain’s survival, and because Spain’s problem was “not the monarchs nor the bureaucrats but the institutions,” his attempts at reform aimed to streamline the colonial administration and thereby increase Crown revenue. Others, however, question whether he and the Bourbon dynasty created prosperity and economic sprightliness to the degree with which they are credited.31 In fact, in

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some respects the Bourbon Reforms affected Perú very little. For example, in Perú, the colonial government was not restructured until 1784. Therefore, in the decade before the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, the traditional colonial administrative system remained largely intact on the political level. On the other hand, the Bourbon Reforms did have a strong effect on the region’s trade dynamics, and these changes contributed to the tensions that led to the Tupac Amaru Rebellion in 1780. Beginning in 1776, the territory of Upper Perú—modern-day Bolivia—was annexed to the new viceroyalty of Río de la Plata. Consequently, the silver trade from the Potosí mine in Upper Perú, which had traditionally been sent north through the mountains to the Peruvian port of Callao, was shipped south to Buenos Aires in today’s Argentina, causing a sizeable loss of income for the Peruvian market.

If merchants and the nobility were decrying the lack of silver money, basic governmental functions and structures remained largely untouched. The kurakas, a royal office based on the concept of local Indian chiefs, governed their people; the corregidores, Crown officials charged with collecting tribute and settling certain conflicts, continued to collect what the government was owed. The sizeable indigenous population remained subject to the alcabala sales tax, payment of tribute, and repartimientos, but with less income from trade it became much more difficult to meet harsh colonial demands.

In addition to monetary taxes, Indians were also subject to the mita, a form of labor tax that required communities to send a percentage of their labor force to work for the colonial

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33 In the Spanish colonial system, a complex hierarchy of local and regional officials was in charge of governing. Technically, they were answerable to the king, but in practice, there was a fair amount of autonomy for colonial officials to exercise their whims.
government for 3-6 months per year. The most common destinations for these workers were the silver mines at Potosí in Upper Perú, the mercury mines in western Perú at Huancavelica, or the textile factories known as obrajes. The death tolls in the mines were astonishing, and resulted from cave-ins, falls, or mercury poisoning. Very few of the men who left for the mines returned to their homes.\textsuperscript{36} The obrajes also boasted miserable living conditions, and kept workers in a condition of near-slavery. Many obrajes even included prisons, and thus were the targets of angry villagers during the Tupac Amaru Rebellion.

By the end of 1781, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion had developed a powerful racial component, in which rebels targeted Spaniards and Hispanicized Indians for such crimes as speaking Spanish, going to church, and wearing Spanish clothing,\textsuperscript{37} so the colonial racial framework is worth defining briefly. The colonial system in the eighteenth century did not interpret race strictly by skin color. Indios, the indigenous population, were indios because of social and cultural markers, not necessarily because they had copper, rather than white, skin. Indios\textsuperscript{38} were the only ones who had to pay tribute and fulfill the mita requirements; all other groups were exempt from these demands. They also spoke a variety of non-Spanish languages – Quechua (in many parts of the Andes) and Aymara (in the Lake Titikaka basin), to name two of many languages — and wore a diverse selection of indigenous clothing. Non-indios, by contrast, spoke Spanish, dressed in Western clothing, and typically (though not always) had more

\textsuperscript{36} Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 186-188; Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 26.
\textsuperscript{38} For the purposes of this paper, I will use the English word “Indian,” the English equivalent of the term indio, as colonial classifications are essential to the discussion of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion. I would remind readers, however that “Indian” is a dubious catch-all phrase that oversimplifies a diverse range of cultures and languages, and that it should only ever be used circumspectly.
disposable income than either *indios* or blacks. Although few people consider the black population when discussing colonial Peruvian race, a notable percentage of Peruvians, both slave and free, were of African descent, even outnumbering white Spaniards in some localities;\(^\text{39}\) this classification unlike others, was based entirely on skin color and origin. Further complicating this idea of race is the significant mixed population, sometimes called the castes. There were many words for the offspring of mixed unions, depending on which populations had combined to make them. For example, *mestizos* were part Spanish and part *indio*, *mulatos* were part Spanish and part black, and *zambo* referred to someone who had cinnamon-colored skin, usually the result of black and *indio* heritage. Interestingly, the place of one’s birth mattered a great deal for whites, as whites considered *peninsulares*, those born in Spain, as superior to the *criollos* born in the Americas and thus could expect higher status.\(^\text{40}\)

Regardless of the importance of caste, racial differences alone were not responsible for the beginning of the revolt, although they did form part of its eventual character. Similarly, economic hardships in and of themselves were not necessarily the whole problem. Ward Stavig, in his book, *The World of Tupac Amaru* argues that harsh demands alone were not enough to cause such sweeping violence. Individual interactions and the respect that a *corregidor* or *kuraka* gained within a community had an effect, as well.\(^\text{41}\) According to Stavig, rebellions were likely to occur when the colonial authorities violated the moral economy of the community by making harsh demands that remained unreciprocated—that is, exacting excessive tribute or labor requirements without fulfilling their obligations to the community. For instance, the last

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\(^{41}\) Stavig, *The World of Tupac Amaru*, 220.
corregidor before the Tupac Amaru Rebellion for the province of Canas y Canchis before the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, Juan Antonio Reparaz, was respected by his people; although he certainly did exact tribute, he also performed his duties well by donating money for the development of the community, and he did not, according to the standards of the day, appear over-inclined to use violence as motivation. In contrast, the execution of his successor, the unfortunate Antonio de Arriaga, which was the starting point for the Tupac Amaru Rebellion in November of 1780, took place in large part because local residents and officials considered Arriaga a cruel, greedy man who did nothing to give back to the communities under his control.

While the framework of moral economy does not necessarily apply to all rebellions, it certainly works well in the Andean context because Andean cultures place a strong emphasis on the idea of ayni, or reciprocity. In modern indigenous communities, it often takes the form of accepting help with planting one’s fields with the understanding that one will reciprocate that help the next time a neighbor’s walls need to be fixed. In the context of the Inca Empire ayni meant working a certain number of days per year on imperial projects, with the understanding that the Inca would take care of his people in case of famine or invasion. Under Spanish control, the Indian perception was that, in return for paying tribute and providing labor through the mita, the authorities would give them rights to their land in addition to helping in times of hardship. When officials neglected these obligations, communities found ways to rid themselves of troublesome leaders. For solutions, they turned either to the legal system or to mob

42 Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 220.
43 Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 221-222.
44 Constance Classen, Inca Cosmology and the Human Body (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 1-2.
45 Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, xxvii.
46 Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, xxvii.
violence. In the case of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, the relationship between *ayni* and moral economy explains why communities were willing to rise up against colonial officials, even to the extreme of emptying villages in order to send men to Tupac Amaru’s armies.

Reciprocity does not fully explain the motivations of the rebel leaders. The head of the rebellion, José Gabriel Condorcanqui Tupac Amaru, a *kuraka* who claimed to be descended from the last Inca, had many reasons to dislike the colonial authorities. In addition to his position as *kuraka* for the towns of Tungasuca, Pampamarca, and Surimana, José Gabriel was an *arríero*, a muleteer, and so had felt the pinch of the trade shift to Buenos Aires. He also had been embroiled in multiple disputes with Spaniards over titles that he considered his birthright and had lost at least one title that, according to Fisher, should have rightfully gone to the descendant of the last Inca. The significant scholarly discussion of José Gabriel’s humanitarian interest in the suffering of his people cites evidence that he fought entrenched colonial institutions like the *repartimiento* and that he had often decried the cruelty of colonial exactions.

Regardless of his exact motivations for doing so, Tupac Amaru captured Antonio de Arriaga, his enemy and detested local *corregidor*, on November 4, 1780, and executed him a week later on November 10, setting off the rebellion. The revolt remained at first confined to the provinces of Canas y Canchis and Quispicanchis, the southernmost provinces of the *departamento* (state) of Cusco, and made it quite perilous for any stranger, especially a Spaniard,

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47 A *kuraka* was usually an Indian or *mestizo* authority in charge of directly overseeing indigenous communities. Some have translated the term as meaning “local Indian chief.”
50 Lillian Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 34-35
to travel the roads.\footnote{Charles Walker, \textit{The Tupac Amaru Rebellion}, 102.} On November 17, 1780, following the burning of a church in the town of Sangarará in Quispicanchis, the Bishop of Cusco excommunicated Tupac Amaru, damaging the rebel leader’s credibility with many undecided parties.\footnote{Charles Walker, \textit{The Tupac Amaru Rebellion}, 68.} Thereafter, support for the rebellion remained largely confined to rural Indian communities, rather than becoming the sweeping, multiclass revolution that Tupac Amaru had hoped to instigate.\footnote{Charles Walker, \textit{The Tupac Amaru Rebellion}, 70.} The rebels successfully captured several towns in the winter of 1780-1781, but in January of 1781 were not able to take Cusco city, the ancient Inca capital and major urban center for the \textit{departamento}, and withdrew into their strongholds located several days’ travel south of the city. In April of 1781, royalist forces captured Tupac Amaru, his wife Micaela Bastidas, and several other rebels, including Tupac Amaru’s oldest sons. The colonial authorities subsequently put the rebel leaders on trial for treason throughout the month of April, and had them publicly executed on May 18, 1781, in the Plaza de Armas, the center square of Cusco city. By official order, Tupac Amaru and Micaela Bastidas’ dismembered corpses were placed in various towns as reminders of the consequences of rebellion.\footnote{Walker, \textit{The Tupac Amaru Rebellion}, 166.}

After the capture of Tupac Amaru, his cousin Diego Cristóbal took his title and position and led the rebel troops south into the highlands near Lake Titikaka, in what is now the \textit{departamento} of Puno, assisted by Tupac Amaru’s surviving son Mariano, and cousin, Andrés Mendiguire. At this point, the rebellion became something more of a caste war, with Indians pitted against whites and both sides committing atrocities against their opponents.\footnote{Walker, \textit{The Tupac Amaru Rebellion}, 181; Robins, \textit{Genocide and Millennialism in Upper Peru}, 1-4; Szeminski, “Why Kill the Spaniard?” 169-171.} The violence
was so severe that, in spite of the death of Tupac Amaru and the alleviation of any immediate threat to Cusco, royalist leaders still feared that they would lose control of the region. Several large towns on the lakeshore were sacked by rebel forces between June and September, and rumors of blood drinking, theft, and massacre increased desertions from the royalist forces.

While in Puno, the Peruvian rebels joined forced with a band of rebels from Upper Perú, led by Tupac Katari, who had taken over the rebellion started by Tomás Katari in October 1780. The Kataristas had no qualms about violence and had already been wreaking widespread havoc in the region around La Paz, the modern-day capital of Bolivia, for some months. Royalists were terrified that a formal alliance between Diego Cristóbal and the Kataristas would render them unbeatable but, although Diego Cristóbal did communicate with and occasionally support Tupac Katari, he never fully approved of Katari’s methods or low birth and so did not make a formal pact with him.

Although royalist fears of a rebel coalition never came to pass, the rebels managed to make it impossible for the royalists to control both the Titikaka basin and Charcas (northern Bolivia) for about two years after the death of Tupac Amaru. The highlands of Puno and Charcas are even higher and barer than those of Cusco, and the royalist troops, many of whom were from the coast, suffered from vicious attacks of altitude sickness. The rebels’ guerilla tactics also contributed to a general atmosphere of panic. As time went on, though, the rebel allegiance

frayed and royalist forces captured and bloodily executed key leaders. Working together, the Bishop of Cusco and other important colonial officials persuaded Diego Cristóbal to surrender in early 1782, thereby ending the worst of the northern fighting, although it took another year or two to fully pacify the south.63

Priests were involved in almost every step of the rebellion, either as agents of one side or another, or as victims of violence. Religious ideology permeated the discussions and negotiations in which royalists and rebels engaged with one another. By considering these interactions within the context of the rebellion, the extent to which clergy influenced the tumult around them will become evident. With this goal in mind, Chapter One of the paper will explain the role of the Catholic Church and its agents in supporting the colonial system. Chapter Two examines the role of a specific Church policy—that of excommunication. Chapter Three will be dedicated to a specific cleric, Bishop Juan Manuel Moscosoy Peralta, and his influence over the course of the rebellion, while Chapter Four reveals the activities of individual clerics at the parish level. The paper concludes with Chapter Five’s discussion of religious discourse as employed by the rebel leaders. In the process, I will demonstrate that the Church and its representatives were critical to the success of the colonial authorities at this crucial juncture, although they may not have been the only defining factor in the royalist victory.

Chapter One: The Church and the Colonial System

From the very first Spanish foray into Perú, priests and religion were intimately involved with the colonization process. For instance, the oldest official records of the conquest tell us that the Inca Atahualpa’s rejection of the Bible and Christianity’s One God was the impetus for the violent attack and defeat of the Peruvian forces at Cajamarca in 1532.64 Perhaps the most important information to be gleaned from this first attempt at evangelism is that the Spanish were willing to use religious arguments as justification for violence. The Church and the State were partners; the Church gave the rationale and the absolution while the state meted out immediate consequences for paganism.

The pattern of joint Church and State collaboration in the colonization process became particularly important in the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century with campaigns to eradicate indigenous religion in Perú. Known as extirpation, it took place in the departamento of Lima and was far less violent than the Inquisition in Spain. Its primary aim seems not to have been the death of non-believers but rather the re-education of Indian villagers. Although the examiners preached sermons, whipped transgressors, and burned idols in order to erect crosses in their place, there were none of the dramatic, terror-inducing public executions typically associated with the Inquisition.65 This difference had little to do with particular compassion or aversion to violence, but rather with legal practice and policy. It was, in fact,

illegal under colonial law to apply the Inquisition to Indians; the Spanish considered them too ignorant and easily led astray to be tried for religious deviance. As an alternative, the colonial state sought to stamp out the symbols of traditional Andean religion and replace it with symbols of Christian faith. Priests seem to have had a particularly strong presence in this movement, conducting visitas de idolatria (idolatry inspections) in parishes and bringing stray sheep back into the fold. The examiner would look for the shrines and images involved in traditional Andean beliefs and collect confessions and denouncements from the village residents. Then he would act on the information and either destroy the shrine to erect a cross in its place or whip the guilty person. The goal was to demonstrate that these symbols of Andean religion were useless in the face of God’s power and to ultimately save the souls of the lost.

The assimilation of European beliefs was neither uniform nor complete. The mixture of European and Andean beliefs evolved as part of an incredibly complicated process that created hybrid beliefs and patches of resistance in addition to greater degrees of assimilation in other contexts. Also, pressure to convert was not as strong in many rural areas as it was in major cities, so many communities were able to compromise to varying degrees, maintaining some elements of traditional beliefs while incorporating Christian teachings as necessary. This process was one of constant negotiation in which villagers had a great deal of agency. However, the surviving documentation limits the visibility of Andean resistance because it was written primarily by the clergy. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which Andean peoples continued to

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resist Christianity. For the purposes of this paper, it is enough to say that extirpation campaigns reveal the threat that Church and State alike associated with the practice of this non-Christian religion. Followers of the Andean religion worshipped outside of city limits, away from the limits of Spanish control and outside the view of European priests. They also conducted their ceremonies in Quechua, the language of the Inca Empire, rather than in the language of the Spanish conquerors. Although these practitioners were not fomenting armed rebellion, they signaled that colonizers had not yet won the most important ideological battles. As long as there were symbols and followers of the old faith, the souls of the colonized and the control of the state were both in peril. Therefore, the Church was a critical component of colonial power as the Spanish sought to strengthen their hold over the Andes.

By the eighteenth century, however, Spanish control was much more firm than it had been previously, so the Church’s involvement in the system shifted. For the first two centuries of Spanish rule, clerics had aided the colonial government first by converting Indians and then by extirpating as much of the traditional Andean beliefs as possible. Once Spanish control became more stable, the Church and its agents were able to solidify their position as well. Where before priests and missionaries had been on the front lines of an ideological battle, they became part of an established institution with a deep tradition of its own in the New World, an institution that had an immense amount of influence across caste lines. For Tupac Amaru, then, the Church was stable and worthy of reverence, an important component of his life rather than a symbol of oppression. His interactions with clerics in the course of the rebellion were shaped by this attitude.

The Church had its own particular organization, divided into regular and secular categories. Regular clergy were those of religious orders, including, but not limited to, the
Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits (until 1765). These clerics lived in separate communities (cloisters) and followed the rules of their religious order. For the first hundred and fifty years of colonial occupation, the missions run by the orders were a critical part of both state control and evangelization efforts. By the 1750s and 60s, the Spanish crown grew nervous about the amount of wealth and power that many of the regular clergy had amassed in the New World. Some, like the Jesuits, who owned most of what is now Paraguay, even rivaled the king in terms of power and riches. The Crown reacted by expelling the Jesuits from all Spanish territories in 1767, thus effectively signaling the end of missionary dominance in the New World.

Unlike the religious orders, secular clergy had an entirely different hierarchy and function within the colonial system, which kept them connected to the colonial apparatus. As uncloistered clerics—priests, bishops, and archbishops—they served their purpose by working in their respective parishes. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the priests who attended to the daily business of their parishes. The priests answered to the bishop of their diocese, who in turn answered to an archbishop. The colonial government made appointments to positions like bishoprics (the territory governed by a bishop), and such charges had a great deal to do with one’s political and social status; a nearly-illiterate priest with fewer than a hundred parishioners would not be selected as a bishop. Because of the close correlation between politics and Church authority, bishops and archbishops were far more beholden to governmental whims and authority than were the members of regular orders and, through them, the parish priests were roped into the political machinery as well.

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Perhaps the biggest effect the Church had on colonial society was in everyday interactions at the parish level. First, priests often owned land and interests of their own and commanded a certain amount of labor and service from their parishioners in order to maintain priestly dignity.\textsuperscript{73} No legal or written recommendation existed to outline precisely how many days of labor priests could command of their parishioners or how many people they could compel to work. Such matters were left to the priest’s discretion. Some priests employed a few servants, while others treated their parishioners like slave labor, even using a whip when demands were not met.\textsuperscript{74} As was true of the expectations of the corregidores, communities expected priests to fulfill their obligations, marrying, burying, and absolving members of the community at a reasonable cost. In return, they could expect service from the parishioners in the form of labor, food, and tithes. Of course, the priests did not always live up to these expectations and sometimes found themselves in legal battles with their church members, who often turned to the colonial system to relieve themselves of burdensome religious leaders.\textsuperscript{75}

The secular clergy, like their regular counterparts, also became intimately involved in the struggle to mold Andean morality into a European framework. The confessional played a considerable role in this process. For instance, priests were concerned about the sexual liberty among their church members and, during confession, asked them about their sexual habits.\textsuperscript{76} This occasion gave priests the opportunity to attempt to mold their parishioners’ behavior and attitudes to suit the European Catholic definition of right and wrong as well as to condemn Andean traditions as the work of the devil. Of course, the efficacy of this approach varied greatly.

\textsuperscript{73} Stavig, \textit{The World of Tupac Amaru}, 157-161.
\textsuperscript{74} Stavig, \textit{The World of Tupac Amaru}, 158-159.
\textsuperscript{75} Stavig, \textit{The World of Tupac Amaru}, 159.
\textsuperscript{76} Stavig, \textit{The World of Tupac Amaru}, 38-40.
depending on the community and the tradition in question. The confessional also served as a way for priests to gather information about illegal activity, as many people having prior knowledge of a crime or an uprising would go to their confessors to unburden their conscience.\textsuperscript{77} Although the concept of the privilege of the confessional did exist in the colonial period, neither priests nor colonial officials seem to have considered it applicable in cases of rebellion and treasonous conspiracy.\textsuperscript{78}

The extent to which priests were personally involved in the violence and exploitation of the colonial system depends in part on the priest and parish in question. Some priests committed abusos y excesos, abuses and excesses, others did not, but there was a marked tendency among priests to use corporal punishment in order to discipline Indians,\textsuperscript{79} much as one might discipline a child. One extreme account of physical retribution, written in 1782, speaks of one priest, Don Vicente de la Puente, priest of Corporaque, who was known and hated for “the violences and extortions that he practices with his parishioners of Corporaque.”\textsuperscript{80} According to this account, in 1780, when Puente was transferred from Corporaque to Yauri, a town about ten miles from Corporaque, the residents were not happy with his arrival, because of his reputation, but they had little choice in the matter. Following an “insult” to a recently-appointed ecónomo, or royal accountant, Puente made it known that he would “put to the knife the residents of Yauri by order of the Bishop for the insults given to the ecónomo [Don Juan José] Palomino.”\textsuperscript{81} According to Eusebio Balza de Verganza, the author of this account, Puente chased them down on horseback,

\textsuperscript{77} Spalding, Huarochirí, 273.
\textsuperscript{78} Spalding, Huarochirí, 273.
\textsuperscript{79} Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 157-159.
\textsuperscript{80} Verdad desnuda, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, Vol II, Pt 1, 467.
\textsuperscript{81} Verdad desnuda, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, 467.
killing one, injuring several, and, when the citizens took refuge in the church, he dragged out one unfortunate man and personally executed him.\textsuperscript{82}

While Verganza’s account is quite lurid and certainly raises questions about the ways in which the clergy might choose to maintain order in their parishes, the source is problematic. The account is contained within a reprint of \textit{La verdad desnuda} (\textit{The Naked Truth}) a lengthy document written as a condemnation of the Bishop of Cusco, and the authors of this particular passage are the relatives of Antonio de Arriaga, the \textit{corregidor} executed at the beginning of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion. Their purpose was to prove that their kinsman acted like a noble Spaniard, and to ensure that Puente received punishment. In the process, they sought to demonstrate that the bishop sided with Puente and may even have ordered the attack. Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, the bishop implicated in the event, and Arriaga detested one another, and Arriaga’s relatives, in writing this document, aimed to get him removed from office on charges of conspiracy and rebel sympathies. Consequently, the bias of the account is a concern, even though there is a footnote provided by the original authors that verifies the existence of the case. This type of violent excess is not mentioned or discussed in secondary sources, so there is little with which to compare the story. In fact, the literature on Peruvian priests in the eighteenth century is sadly lacking because there is a remarkable amount of continuity in the condition and power of the clergy after the extirpation campaigns. Therefore, it can only be assumed that actions like Puente’s were outliers in the overall scheme of priestly discipline.

Both the religious orders and the secular clergy, as we have seen, were often involved in acts of cultural assimilation, and most, if not all, clerics were involved in their regional economies, owning land, extending credit, and employing or enjoying the labor of community

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Verdad desnuda}, 467.
members. Throughout the colonial era, the Church and the state worked together to ensure the domination of Spain and its Western culture. The Church provided justification for the military aspect of conquest, as well as support and manpower for the ideological battles that were just as important as the military ones. In return, clerics received extra converted souls and the tithes that those souls contributed to the Church. Without the Church, the state’s efforts would not have been anywhere near as successful; without the State, the Church could not have spread its faith or gained the wealth that it did. This pattern of mutual assistance carries through the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, as the Church bolstered and aided State efforts to quell the rebellion. Whereas the State may have taken the lead in military action, the Church was the vanguard in the ideological and propaganda battles that helped secure a royalist victory.
Chapter Two: Excommunication

A particularly notable example of clerical involvement in the colonial system is the career of Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, the Bishop of Cusco from 1778 to 1783. Born in 1723 to a prominent Spanish family in the Peruvian city of Arequipa, Moscoso entered the priesthood after the deaths of his wife and newborn child in 1751 and moved quickly up the ecclesiastical ladder. At the time of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, Moscoso was a powerful man, secure in his authority as a prominent ecclesiastical leader. Although Moscoso’s many other contributions to the royalist cause will be discussed at length in chapter three, his noisiest public action—the excommunication of Tupac Amaru—must stand on its own, grounded as it is in complex theology. Because of the disgrace and spiritual disownment associated with excommunication, the excommunication restricted the rebel leaders’ ability to gain sweeping multiclass support. This chapter will provide an overview of the theology of excommunication. Then, it will apply the theory to the Tupac Amaru Rebellion in order to demonstrate that Moscoso’s excommunication of Tupac Amaru blended ideology and politics into one common goal: preserving the colonial order.

An Overview of Excommunication

The practice of excommunication is, in essence, a spiritual disownment. An excommunicate is forbidden to enter a church or receive the Sacraments (including marriage),

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and is banned from all contact with other believers.\textsuperscript{84} Therefore, excommunication is among the most severe of the Church’s punishments for Catholics; if one cannot receive communion, baptism, marriage, Last Rites, and so on, then one is doomed to Hell because it is impossible to enter a church to hear Mass, receive absolution, or be given the Sacraments, all of which are the means by which grace can be dispensed.\textsuperscript{85} The potential shunning aspects of such an edict compound an excommunicate’s isolation, and make him a spiritual and social pariah.

The precedent of excommunication is firmly established in Church history and continued to evolve from the first century through the medieval and early modern periods. In fact, the idea of excommunication has its roots in ancient Jewish law related to the concept of uncleanness. According to the Old Testament book of Leviticus, a person who failed to follow Jewish law was banned from community with other Jews until he or she had been ritually cleansed.\textsuperscript{86} This concept continued into the early Christian Church, where a person who regularly committed egregious sins would be removed from the community of believers until he or she received absolution,\textsuperscript{87} a practice now known as excommunication.

The concept of removing persistent sinners from the Church through excommunication was frequently applied in cases of heresy, in which the goal was to separate a convicted heretic from decent Christians to avoid the spread of sinful ideas,\textsuperscript{88} but the Church’s power to issue writs of excommunication was not limited only to situations involving heresy. It could also excommunicate those who violate Church law in other ways. For instance, in 1302, when Phillip

\textsuperscript{84} Giles of Rome, \textit{On Ecclesiastical Power}, 201.
\textsuperscript{85} Giles of Rome, \textit{On Ecclesiastical Power}, 201.
\textsuperscript{86} This is a standard punishment for many infractions. Examples can be found in the book of Leviticus.
\textsuperscript{87} For example: John 9; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11; Romans 1:18-25; 1 Timothy 5:8.
\textsuperscript{88} Martin Nesvig, \textit{Ideology and Inquisition: The World of the Censors in Early Mexico} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 64.
IV of France tried to tax the clergy of his country to pay for a war, Pope Boniface VIII responded by asserting the authority of the pope over secular leaders, and threatened Phillip with excommunication if he did not relinquish his tax schemes, because priests were technically under the jurisdiction of Rome. Included in the threat of excommunication was the implication that Philip would forfeit both his position and his property because non-believers and those out of grace with the Church were not entitled to property. The theology of this last relates, once again, to the idea of being spiritually disinherited. According to some medieval theologians, the pope had the right to disinherit kings when they were not right with God because the Church, as a spiritual authority, was superior to earthly powers.

Excommunication, because of its far-reaching social and spiritual consequences, also provided political leverage in ways that operated outside the realm of royal power. Any high-ranking churchman—from bishops to the Pope—could excommunicate someone under his jurisdiction, meaning that a pope could excommunicate any Catholic, while a bishop only had power to excommunicate within his diocese. Since bishops were political people as much as spiritual authorities, their spiritual tools could be turned to great political advantage within their spheres of influence. In fact, a precedent for that type of action existed in Latin America prior to the Tupac Amaru Rebellion. In Córdoba, Argentina, in 1752, spiritual authorities in the region threatened excommunication for all those possessing and disseminating an anti-Jesuit tract, including those who had knowledge of the perpetrators and did not denounce them. This threat proved effective in persuading people to denounce the culprits, two of whom were members of

the secular clergy. While the formula of court testimony can mask nuances, it is clear that fear of excommunication was a motivating factor for the witnesses. As the cases of Philip IV and the Córdoba trials demonstrate, politics and religion were not as separate as modern readers might expect. This blending of politics and religion became critical in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion.

**Excommunication and the Tupac Amaru Rebellion**

Moscoso’s excommunication order against Tupac Amaru came about because of a particularly unfortunate encounter between rebel forces and royalist militia, which resulted in the burning of a church. According to the surviving accounts, royalist forces took shelter from a snowstorm in a church in the town of Sangarará, and were trapped inside when the rebels surrounded them. Battle ensued and, somehow, the church caught fire, killing those trapped inside. Needless to say, rebels and royalists had different interpretations of the event. Rebels, including Tupac Amaru himself, cited a freak gunpowder explosion, while those on the side of the colonial government claimed the battle was murder and a desecration of holy ground. With so much conflicting evidence, we will never know for sure what happened. The fact remains that the burning of the church at Sangarará gave Bishop Moscoso the impetus to excommunicate Tupac Amaru, a spiritual move that also proved to be a political master-stroke. First, remember the shunning component of excommunication: good Christians could not speak to an excommunicate. Tupac Amaru, a devoted Catholic, was then quite literally outside of

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94 Document 275, reprinted in *Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, Vol 2, Pt 3*. 
communication with other Christians and unable to rally significant support. The excommunication also ruined much of the credibility the rebel leaders might have had with mestizos and criollos, most of whom were observant Catholics. The excommunication was not the only factor in the rebels’ inability to gain multiclass support; other factors, like increased racial violence and concerns about Tupac Amaru’s origins, also played an important role. The excommunication did, however, make it very difficult for the rebels to gain ideological traction with non-Indians and it gave the royalists an edge in the propaganda battle that accompanied the next years of military conflict. As people beyond the grace of the Church, the rebel leaders’ sphere of influence became limited to others of similar spiritual condition: provincial Indians with no reason to love the Church’s colonial influence or no way of receiving the propaganda that announced the excommunication to the world. Excommunication, then, carried political advantages, in addition to condemning Tupac Amaru to hell because he could not receive the Sacraments.

After carrying out this severe punishment, Moscoso was relatively quiet about his decision, only mentioning the excommunication in a long letter to the Bishop of La Paz in July of 1782, after most of the fighting was over. In this letter, Moscoso made two important references to the events surrounding the excommunication. The first was to the event of the church fire itself, in which he says that there “perished more than seven hundred [people]; those who were spared the sword and club, the fire devoured, that reduced to ashes even the temple that they [the victims] took for asylum.” Moscoso then spent the next three pages discussing other rebel transgressions before he said, “having excommunicated Tupac-Amaro and his followers for the atrocious crime of being arsonists at Sangarará and its profaners.... neither he

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95 Document 275, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
nor his men were permitted to receive my pastoral care with immunity, because their attempts were thwarted, there followed the desertion of many [of his followers].” Moscoso’s recounting of events gives us an idea of the magnitude of the crime in the eyes of the Church, assuming that the fire was intentional and that the death total was not exaggerated by rumor. While this account claims that many people deserted him as a result of the excommunication, however, the text does not specify precisely what sort of followers deserted him. The excommunication may have led to a mass desertion of men from his forces, because they could not receive the benefits of the Church. It is also possible that Moscoso was referring to a withdrawing of support from upper class patrons—a different kind of desertion than that of the army. This interpretation is also logical, given that authorities and common people alike took excommunication and church burning very seriously. A man who stood accused of such an “atrocious crime” could not expect to maintain wide-reaching support.

One analytical challenge that historians face with Tupac Amaru’s excommunication is that this measure failed to stop the rebellion. Significant violence in Cusco continued for another two months and the uprising in the Titikaka Basin and the Charcas region expanded for another year. Therefore, the excommunication clearly did not have the sort of universal influence that Moscoso anticipated. As we have seen, the ways in which Andean and European religions mixed was complicated, as was a parish’s relationship with its priest. Consequently, it is fair to assume that every community received the excommunication differently, depending on their interaction with Christianity. For instance, a mestizo from Cusco or an indigenous person from the relatively prosperous Sacred Valley just to the north of the city often had a different relationship with the

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Moscoso’s estimate is the highest I’ve seen. Estimates given by other clerics and by authorities range from 300 to 500. See Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion.*
colonial state and with the Church than did an indigenous villager in Southern Cusco, relationships that may have predisposed communities to either observe or ignore an excommunication order. Communities in the south, particularly between the cities of Cusco and Puno, where colonial rule was harsher and more impersonal, cared far less for excommunication orders than did mestizos, criollos, and many of the towns close to Cusco.97 Catholic ideology also had less effect in rural areas to the south of Cusco, particularly in the Lake Titikaka region where the population was almost completely indigenous, so the religious implications of excommunication would have meant little to many. Face-to-face interactions were also important to communities,98 meaning that relationships with particular priests, kurakas, and correjidores also influenced a town’s potential reaction to the excommunicated rebel. In short, Indians had a great deal of agency when deciding where to align themselves throughout the rebellion.

A second analytical challenge comes from the timeline of events, which is not consistent between sources. One account of the events at Sangarará, contained in the introduction of a collection of reprinted sources in 1836, claims that the royalist forces arrived at Sangarará on the night of November 17, 1780, took refuge in the church at about three in the morning on November 18, and were attacked just after dawn.99 The excommunication order, however, is dated November 17, 1780, and clearly names the burning of Sangarará’s church as the reason for the action.100 Even modern secondary sources are none-too-clear on the timeline, which makes it difficult to resolve the conflict in the data.101 The most logical explanation is that, because it was

97 Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 176.
98 Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 19.
101 Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 52-53 and 68.
written down some fifty years after the event, the 1836 account was inaccurate in its reckoning. The date on the excommunication order itself is far more reliable. The information on Sangarará in the 1836 collection is best considered a secondary source because the reference is from the introduction rather than one of the many primary sources it reprinted and is not confirmed in any of those sources. In contrast, although the version of the excommunication order available for this project is a translation, the document itself is an official record and so more likely to be accurate. Given these documents and their sources, it seems most reasonable to accept that the church was burned on the morning of November 17 and that word reached Cusco by the end of the day. Sangarará is 107 kilometers (approximately 66 miles) from the city of Cusco. A relay of runners or mounted messengers used to the altitude could manage that distance within ten or twelve hours with fair weather and clear roads, so Moscoso could have issued the proclamation on November 17. It is also possible that the 1831 account is correct, which would imply that Moscoso had pre-written the order and waited for an excuse to issue it. Given the explicit reference to Sangarará, though, this does not seem likely. Without clear proof to the contrary, the traditional interpretation of Moscoso’s actions must stand.

Important though it was in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, Moscoso’s excommunication order was not without precedent, nor was its mixture of religion and politics. Church and Crown often worked very closely with one another in colonial Latin America, and many ranking clerics like Moscoso behaved like politicians. Excommunication, as in the cases of Phillip IV and the Córdoba trials, also involved a mixture of spiritual and temporal motivations, usually involving power, money or both. In the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, the outrage over burning the church—a terrible spiritual transgression — combined with the notable political advantages of removing a dangerous rebel from Christian society, made excommunication a valuable tool for the royalist
side. It is impossible to determine exactly how much Moscoso was motivated by spiritual concern or by political opportunism. It is doubtful that he himself would have differentiated between the two, because the source of a bishop’s political power was his religious authority.

In the coming chapter, the extent to which this relationship was true will become more evident as we consider Moscoso’s involvement in the rebellion more thoroughly.
Chapter Three: The Many Voices of Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Bishop of Cusco

When Moscoso received his appointment to the bishopric of Cusco in 1778, his arrival in the city was not welcome; because he was from the city of Arequipa, midway between Cusco and Lake Titikaka, many prominent cusqueños resented him, feeling that he had been brought in over their heads. Like many politicians, he acquired numerous enemies in his rise to power; rumors of unpriestly conduct abounded, perhaps aided by his adversaries, and included allegations that he had fathered several illegitimate children. At the time of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, Moscoso was a powerful man, secure in his authority as a prominent ecclesiastical leader. In fact, he was so powerful that Tupac Amaru wasted several valuable days on the eve of the siege of Cusco writing to the bishop in hopes of gaining his support.

As the previous chapter suggests, Moscoso’s most famous contribution to the royalist cause was the excommunication of Tupac Amaru in November of 1780, less than two weeks after the uprising began. Afterwards, the bishop continued to be heavily involved in the royalist efforts, even contributing significant amounts of his own money to raise and equip an army to defend Cusco in 1780 and 1781. His actions were not entirely unambiguous. Some scholars, including Leon Campbell, have pointed out that Moscoso and corregidor Arriaga detested each other and that Moscoso was suspiciously slow to respond after Arriaga’s death. Other evidence against him comes from Verdad desnuda, written by Arriaga’s relatives, which accused him of unethical conduct, rebel sympathies, and generally being unworthy of his position.

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102 Doc 275; Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion
104 Verdad desnuda, 465-486.
Most scholars now believe that his initial sluggishness was due more to his rivalry with Arriaga than to rebel sympathies, as his later contributions to the royalist cause certainly went above and beyond mere obligation.

In his own time, Moscoso’s superiors were suspicious of his loyalties. He did not remain in his bishopric for long after the Tupac Amaru Rebellion; his political adversaries—including Viceroy Jáuregui, Visitador General Areche, intendant Matalinares, and the family of murdered corregidor Antonio de Arriaga—maneuvered him out of the position and eventually out of the country with their accusations. It was at this moment that Miguel de Arriaga, brother of the dead corregidor, and Eusebio Balza de Verganza, his nephew and legal counsel, wrote Verdad desnuda and sent it to the King of Spain. As a result, Moscoso wrote his own book-length response and traveled to Spain to appeal directly to the royal courts. Although eventually acquitted of treason, the courts did not permit Moscoso to return to Perú; perhaps they felt him a liability to the stability of the colonial regime. Instead, the king named him Archbishop of Granada, and he lived the rest of his life in Spain, dying in 1811.

The concept of separating the Church from State politics simply did not exist in eighteenth-century Perú. As a consequence, leading churchmen like Bishop Moscoso often were as much politicians as they were spiritual authorities. Beginning in 1780, Moscoso corresponded with nearly every key player on the loyalist side of the uprising, including Visitador General José Antonio de Areche and Viceroy Augustín de Jáuregui, as well as a few important figures on

106 Campbell, “Church and State in Colonial Peru,” 267.
107 The viceroy was the head of the colonial government in Perú, the king’s stand-in in the New World. The Visitador General was one step below the viceroy and, in this case, his equal in terms of political power.
the rebel side, like Tupac Amaru and his cousin Diego Cristóbal. He even wrote at least one letter to the king of Spain. The most important component of Moscoso’s correspondence, however, is not necessarily to whom he wrote, but how he wrote to them. Like most people, Moscoso changed his language based on his audience, adjusting tone, adding honorifics, and becoming more or less formal depending on his position relative to the intended recipient of his letter. Such changes are particularly telling in this case because they reveal the many voices that Moscoso employed in the course of the rebellion, thus illuminating the many facets of his influence. In the process, Moscoso also reveals his own position within the colonial hierarchy and the extent to which his own power was dependent upon his religious position.

Throughout the rebellion, Moscoso, as a leading cleric, blended his religious beliefs with politics, and his correspondence reflects the blurring of the lines between secular and religious authority that often happened in colonial government. Therefore, the first of his so-called voices is largely political, but as his political value lay in the authority that society associated with his ecclesiastical position, there is still significant evidence of religious rhetoric and involvement in this type of correspondence. For instance, on December 22, 1780, Moscoso wrote to Visitador General Antonio de Areche, to provide him with information on recent events in the rebellion. His news was not entirely encouraging. Although the rebels had not managed to enter Cusco, the last engagement had taken place only two leagues (six miles) from the city, and the inhabitants of the city were bracing for a battle. The only good news that Moscoso had to offer, other than the fact that the city was still in royalist hands, was that the rebels had still been unable to seize towns north of the city. In this communication, Moscoso’s political importance lay in his ability to receive good intelligence; the Visitador General was not himself in Cusco, and so had

to rely on those authorities who were. Moscoso’s true value, however, came from his sources of information, which included the priests of his diocese, as well as to the soldiers and captains who had taken up residence in the city. The role of parish priests in the rebellion will be addressed later; for now, it suffices to say that Moscoso, by merit of his position as bishop, was the only man in Cusco who could send out feelers by way of the parish priests, and then distill the information for the authorities. His political importance to Areche, therefore, came from his religious authority. Moscoso’s value to the Viceroy, Augustín de Jáuregui, was also dependent upon his ecclesiastical position. On January 5, 1781, while Cusco remained under siege by Tupac Amaru and his forces, Moscoso wrote to Jáuregui to provide him with an update on the state of affairs in the city. The letters that Tupac Amaru had dispatched to Moscoso in hopes of gaining support from the bishop dominated this communication. Moscoso said that the Junta, the governing council of the city, had considered these letters but made no reply, considering the letters “unworthy of all attention.” The rest of the communication was taken up with reports on the activities of various clerics, some of whom were loyal informants and therefore useful to Moscoso, others of whom were of suspect allegiances.

The most crucial detail of this letter lies in the closing paragraph: “I keep myself vigilant as much as I can with my pastoral care and supervision in order to maintain the secular and regular clergy in fidelity, obedience, and love for the Sovereign; and in order that they may know to inspire these sentiments, with frequency, in the heart of all.” While this passage is in many ways a dramatic flourish, it is also a valuable insight into Moscoso’s greatest political asset. Although Moscoso was to some extent answerable to the colonial authorities, he possessed a

110 Document 122, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
111 Document 122, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
power that neither Jáuregui nor Areche could claim: control over the teachings of the clergy. Because Moscoso was the bishop of the diocese of Cusco, the priests of his diocese were beholden to his command. Therefore, if Moscoso ordered his priests, as he said in his letter, to preach loyalty to the king, they had to do so or risk serious consequences. Thus, Moscoso was crucial to the ideological struggle that underpins the Tupac Amaru Rebellion; even as Tupac Amaru tried to justify himself by sending letters to Moscoso, the colonial authorities also recognized the value of allying themselves with people like Moscoso who had a considerable amount of ideological authority and thus the ability to be heard and believed.

Moscoso seems to have exerted his influence rapidly and effectively. On February 4, 1781, Moscoso wrote to Jáuregui: “I reproduce my official letter to the priests and ecclesiastic ministers, and I have the satisfaction that with their voice and example they reinforce the weakness of those who at every step seek to sink the violent eruptions of the Tyrant [Tupac Amaru]. So efficient have these means been, that... I do not wish to occupy Your Grace’s attention with all the stories of success.” Of course, this claim must be taken with a grain of salt; the rebellion was far from over, and many military battles remained. It is still, however, quite likely that Moscoso’s exhortations to his priests were having an effect.

As the rebellion progressed, Moscoso continued to provide useful information to Jáuregui and Areche. In a letter to Jáuregui on February 4, 1781, Moscoso reported on military progress—in this case, the modest successes of the counterinsurgency campaigns that had begun to push into rebel territories—and related the intelligence that he gathered from his priests about violence and sacrilege at the hands of rebel forces. The information Moscoso related in this communication was mostly of a political, as opposed to a spiritual, nature, and dealt primarily with the movements and activities of soldiers and the conditions in those communities that sent
to him for help. His awareness of these facts stemmed directly from his position within the Church. Many of his informants were clerics themselves, typically the priests of troubled parishes. For example, one of Moscoso’s reports of unspeakable violence came from one cura teniente (deputy priest), Don Rafael de Castilla, stationed in the village of Caycay. Castilla reported that three thousand Indians from Calca (an area north of Cusco city) entered Caycay and began to cause trouble. Castilla came to the door of the church dressed in his vestments and carrying “the Sacrament” (the Host), “in order to contain the tumult,” and from this vantage point was witness to the murder of an Indian community leader and the public humiliation of three black men.112 Priests in Calca and Colcha, to the north of Cusco, also sent word of disturbances, and the priest of Colcha asked for assistance from the city.113 Another priest, stationed in Pític, to the northwest of the city, notified Moscoso of the movements of Tupac Amaru.114 Once again, Moscoso’s political value to Jáuregui came from his own position within the Church. Although Moscoso did get some information from captains, soldiers, and loyal kurakas, his access to the clergy was a byproduct of his status as bishop, and this access permitted him to gather so much information from scattered villages separated by rough terrain.

Bishop Moscoso’s involvement in the rebellion also permitted him to write to the king of Spain. This letter reveals yet another of the many voices that Moscoso employed in his capacity as Bishop of Cusco during the Tupac Amaru Rebellión: that of a pious and loyal cleric. A week before this letter was sent, royalist forces had captured Tupac Amaru, his wife Micaela Bastidas, and two of their sons—a major victory for the colonial cause. In fact, it is possible that that event was the catalyst for this particular communication, though no concrete evidence exists to support

113 Document 146, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
114 Document 146, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
that conclusion. In some ways, this letter is similar to those written to Jáuregui at around the same time, being primarily occupied with narrating recent military successes and advances towards rebel-occupied territory. One key difference, though, provides even more insight into the origins of Moscoso’s power within the system. Although Moscoso’s letters to both Areche and Jáuregui were not devoid of religious rhetoric, he tended to confine his spiritual observations to occasional statements about the divine legitimacy of the monarch in particular and of the royalist cause in general. Moscoso’s letter to the king on the other hand, contained a quote from Scripture, along with several other statements about the God-granted authority of the king. One page alone held three examples of such statements. First, Moscoso said, “But those who resist authority resist the order of God.” Less than a paragraph later, he added that Perú was allotted to the monarch of Spain by “divine disposition,” and later he stated that “the cause of God is the same with that of Your Majesty.” Although the ostensible purpose of this letter is to provide a military report, Moscoso still needed to emphasize the connection between his spirituality and his loyalty to the king because the source of his power—his religious prominence—was controlled by royal authority. With the Pope’s permission, the monarchs of Spain and Portugal made appointments to church positions within their territories, so Moscoso owed his prominence to royal favor. Therefore, Moscoso’s constant references, both to Scripture and to the divine right of the monarch, were important in that they underscored his qualifications and

115 The reprinted collection of documents upon which I relied for much of this project contained only one letter from Moscoso to the king of Spain. There is no note that indicates that the king ever responded, or that he even saw the letter. The original document was found in the Cusco archives.
reinforced his own power as the voice of the God who ordained the king’s position. These professions also emphasized Moscoso’s loyalty to the Crown, an advantageous declaration given that he was a criollo bishop who was serving in a region rife with New World rebellion.

The final and most important of Moscoso’s voices is that of the kindly spiritual father, which he uses in communicating with Diego Cristóbal Tupac Amaru, José Gabriel (Tupac Amaru)’s cousin and successor, who took up his position and title when José Gabriel was captured in April of 1781. Moscoso and Diego Cristóbal wrote several letters to one another at the end of 1781 and the beginning of 1782, while colonial authorities were in the process of negotiating a ceasefire with the rebels. The second half of 1781 had been difficult for both rebels and royalists, and both were willing to negotiate with one another. Areche and his allies offered a general amnesty for all rebels who surrendered, as well as one year’s exemption from tribute and the mita; in return, the rebels would cease fighting, and leaders like Diego Cristóbal would encourage peace. Diego Cristóbal, understandably, was suspicious of Spanish motivations for making such an offer, and was reluctant to strike a bargain. Therefore, Areche and Jáuregui enlisted Moscoso to write to him and assure him of their honorable intentions; after all, a wary insurgent like Diego Cristóbal was much more likely to trust a bishop than a politician.  

One letter, written on January 3, 1782, as arrangements were being made for a meeting between colonial officials and Diego Cristóbal, contained significant evidence of the trust that Moscoso had managed to accrue in previous weeks. First, Diego Cristóbal began the letter with the opening line, “Most Illustrious Sir,” followed by “Sir,” before beginning the body of the letter.  

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119 The typical opening format for letter in Spanish during this time period mentions the honorifics of the recipient twice, as follows:
   “Most Illustrious Sir. Sir—I have received your letter of the 21 of last month...”
In general, in correspondence between two people of unequal status or who were not closely familiar with one another, the opening contained a great many exaggerated honorifics, so Diego Cristóbal’s omission of such elaboration says a great deal about the nature of their correspondence. It is also evident that Moscoso and Diego Cristóbal had talked at length about religion and the spiritual ramifications of the rebellion, because Diego Cristóbal said: “helped by the grace of God I have turned myself and returned to resolve myself to the path that I must follow [that is, the ceasefire and the surrender]. And so I beg that Your Grace not forget to commend me to God with everything that you can, dispensing unto me this grace by means of the prayers of the religious communities, for Your Grace knows what God can do with the prayer of a just person.” It seems that Diego Cristóbal had come to see his surrender as a matter of divine intervention and grace, and he credited Moscoso’s “loving letters” and “charitable advice” for the change of heart that he experienced.

Moscoso, for his part, seems to have treated Diego Cristóbal in a fatherly way. In a letter to Diego Cristóbal on April 6, 1782, several months after the successful ceasefire negotiation and surrender, he addressed the letter to his “Dear son Diego Tupac Amaru” without any other honorific, further underscoring their familiarity, and continued to refer to him as “my son.” Moscoso also made references to his own role in Diego Cristóbal’s surrender: “As to the end I have carried at calling you with such loving, incessant, and effective instances to the obedience of the Sovereign, it has not been only to save your temporal life and that of your entire family,

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120 For example, Moscoso begins his letters to Areche, his clear social and political superior, with “Most Illustrious Sir Visitador General” and “Lord of my greatest veneration,” or other similarly solicitous phrases.


122 Document 241, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú
but also the eternal [life] that may be the end of Christian conduct...” and expressed his commitment to personally perfecting the “the grand work of your penitence.” His voice in this section was that of an involved spiritual mentor and, given that this mentorship resulted in a critical ceasefire, it can be argued that this spiritual facet of Moscoso’s position was, in fact, his most important contribution to the quelling of the rebellion.

Moscoso’s motivations are difficult to evaluate. After all, he treated Diego Cristóbal as a son in Christ even though he refused to communicate with Tupac Amaru. One of many possible interpretations is that Moscoso’s only aim was the end of the violence, and that, because he was egged on, at least at first, by his political allies, he and other authorities intended to double-cross Diego Cristóbal, as indeed happened in 1782. Hypothetically speaking, if the best way to accomplish this goal was to pretend become Diego Cristóbal’s spiritual mentor and lull him into a false sense of security, then the ends would justify the means; after all, as the saying goes, one catches more flies with honey than with vinegar. This interpretation is entirely possible. Moscoso, as has been demonstrated, was perfectly capable of calculating his religious appeal for maximum effect, and so he clearly possessed the ability to be disingenuous in his communications with Diego Cristóbal in order to gain his trust.

There are, however, several problems with this idea. First, it does not account for the year or so between Diego Cristóbal’s surrender in January of 1782 and his arrest on trumped up charges in 1783. Second, it does not allow for the numerous public expressions of favor that Moscoso showed Diego Cristóbal after his surrender. Not only did Moscoso himself officiate at Diego Cristóbal’s wedding on January 29, 1782, but he also permitted him to give his cousin

José Gabriel a decent burial, which is indicative of special favor given Jose Gabriel’s crimes. Finally, the fact remains that Moscoso’s professions of loyalty and commitment to the Crown remained constant in all of his correspondence. He told Areche, Jáuregui, and king alike that the rebellion was a crime against God as well as the Spanish crown, because from God came the king’s right to rule. Therefore, all Christians owed obedience to the sovereign and it was Moscoso’s obligation as a bishop to teach those who had forgotten. The frequent repetition of this theme is indicative of sincere belief, which means that his encouragements to Diego Cristóbal were not at all out of line with what he had been trying to do from the beginning: eradicate the sin of rebellion. The implication, then, is that Moscoso sincerely believed that he was saving Diego Cristóbal’s life and soul with his intercession, and counted the penitence and forgiveness as another battle won for Christ.

Throughout the rebellion, Bishop Moscoso blended religious and political authority to aid in the success of the royalist cause. Because he was an agent of the colonial Church, it is very difficult to separate precisely which components of his behavior belonged to which sphere. He was a bishop who derived temporal power from his spiritual authority, a canny politician who knew how to use his office for the benefit of the colonial government. He was a religious man who sincerely believed in a divinely ordained monarchy, and who knew just how to represent those views so as to maintain his credibility with his superiors. Valuing the souls of rebels, he became a spiritual mentor for Diego Cristóbal and encouraged him to surrender and repent. On the other hand, this encouragement originally happened at the orders of Areche and Jáuregui. Also, Diego Cristóbal’s surrender placed him and his fellow leaders in a precarious position, vulnerable to accusations of treacherous relapse. Diego Cristóbal trusted Moscoso to help protect him from such accusations, but to no avail; Diego Cristóbal and his young cousin, one of Tupac
Amaru’s surviving sons, were executed for treason in 1783. Thus, one could argue that Moscoso’s involvement, though offered in genuine sympathy, led to Diego Cristóbal’s death.

When considering Moscoso, it entirely pointless to attempt to separate politics and religion. Like his excommunication order, each action and role Moscoso took in the course of the rebellion carried with it aspects of both considerations. When he made religious decisions, political advantages often lay behind them; when he made political moves, his ability to do so was dependent upon his religious authority. Each of Moscoso’s voices is completely valid in its own context, and listening to all of them together provides a more complete image of the man that he was: powerful, political, and devoutly religious. This interaction between spiritual and temporal power, however, was not unique to the elite churchmen. The same held true of priests at the parish level, allowing them to influence and participate in the rebellion in their own spheres.

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Chapter Four: Loyalty and Piety: The Actions of the Parish Priests

Moscoso’s actions offer a case study of a particularly powerful leader within the Church. As a bishop, he was in the limelight, making decisions, attracting attention, and leaving behind a big paper trail for scholars to follow. The clergy in charge of smaller parishes left no such trail. Few of any letters that such people may have written remain, but what can be determined of their activities during this time period indicates that they had a great deal of influence at ground level. Of course, as with Moscoso, it is incorrect to assume that they won the rebellion single-handedly. Because of the prominence of their position within their communities, however, the priests became key parts of royalist and rebel networks as informants, messengers, and preachers.

The precedent of using priests as informants appears to have been established by the time of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion. In April of 1780, seven months before the outbreak of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, Moscoso was attempting to learn the truth of a specific rumor of unrest. He wrote to Areche on April 12, 1780, “Before, I supposed that the rectors of the cathedral, [and the rector] of Oropesa and his assistants signed the declaration, and they said it answered for them, by confession of various penitents, and having been ordered to appear they assured all questioners that the supposition was false; and even though afterwards I tried to authenticate it with a declaration from Fray Miguel Mauricio Maldonado, a monk of San Francisco, in which he expresses having received from a certain penitent a denunciation of an uprising he had planned, I have taken it for a tall tale...”126 The document goes on to discuss other rumors, conspiracies, and

disturbances, ending with a promise to continue to cauterize them like a wound.\textsuperscript{127} From a purely chronological standpoint, this account demonstrates that unrest and rumors of unrest were on the rise in the months before Tupac Amaru executed Arriaga, but it also shows the extent to which priests were accustomed to serving as the ears of the powerful. For one thing, neither the author of this document nor his audience were particularly surprised by the source of the information. For another, the government had clearly established a system for priests to report problematic confessions, as evidenced by Moscoso’s access to a cleric’s formal declaration about the denunciation of a penitent. Therefore, it does not seem like too far of a leap to assume that priests frequently notified the authorities when confessions and denunciations reached their ears via the confessional. Although the sources used in this project contain no evidence that this practice was continued, it is not likely that priests would stop reporting on denunciations in such a highly charged climate of rebellion.

Confessionals aside, priests also knew a great deal of what was happening in their communities and were often able to exchange news among themselves. In one communication to Jáuregui in February of 1781, Moscoso relayed the following:

A letter has appeared in my house written by the priest of Pític in which he gives notices that José Túpac Amaro is in the immediate vicinity of this village, with the intention of visiting the priest of Mara in a friendly fashion founded on the kinship of affinity that he has with him, and the other priests think to avail themselves of the occasion and surprise the Indian [Tupac Amaru] with as many troops as they have; [they are] only accompanied by three thousand, being the greatest number of the allies, maybe this instrument which seems to us so weak will serve God, to give an end to so much unrest, offensive to the Religion, to the Crown, and to the common establishment.\textsuperscript{128}

In this communication, what immediately stands out is the extent to which the anonymous priest of Pític was aware of rebel movements. Not only did he know precisely where Tupac Amaru

\textsuperscript{127} Document 49, reprinted in \textit{Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú}.

\textsuperscript{128} Document 146, reprinted in \textit{Colección documental de la Independencia del Perú Vol 2 Pt 2}. 
was, but he knew with whom he would be meeting, and was able and willing to communicate that information to Bishop Moscoso. Additionally, the priest of Pític had already communicated with his fellow clerics even before writing to his superior. Clearly, they were able to communicate effectively with one another and arrange to combine forces.

Another excellent example of priests’ ability to gather information comes from a short communication, written on December 19, 1781 by priest Juan Antonio Corrales at Atapampa to Don Antonio Lastarria. By this time, Diego Cristóbal had already agreed to the amnesty offered by Areche and his allies, and arrangements were being made for a ceasefire and official surrender. Given this context, the content of the letter seems odd. According to Corrales, Diego Cristóbal had ordered all the Indians of the region to gather their herds and assemble at Acubiri with the soldiers that they had recruited to fence in the troops from Arequipa. Like the priest of Pític, Corrales was aware of the events happening around him and had the desire and ability to communicate those events to the authorities. This account leaves readers in no doubt as to the priest’s source of information. Corrales mentions that Diego Cristóbal ordered two decrees published so that everyone knew where and when to gather. Although this approach would certainly be effective in getting the word out, it also ensured that a priest with a quick ear would learn of it in time to send word to a royalist captain. Unfortunately, the documents offer no clues as to the eventual outcome of this series of events. The only thing that remains clear is that Corrales, as a priest, had his ear to the ground and was able to pass on useful information to the royalist cause.

Some priests served the rebel side instead of the royalists. One exchange between Tupac Amaru and José de Maruri, priest of Asillo, reveals the sort of relationship that the rebel

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leadership may have had with priests. This exchange of letters on December 6 and 7 of 1780, deals primarily with Tupac Amaru’s request that Maruri receive four letters and recruit some of his parishioners to serve in the fight.\(^{130}\) While Tupac Amaru spoke very respectfully to Maruri, calling him “your grace,” and wishing him good health, he clearly expected to be obeyed.\(^{131}\) For his part, Maruri filled his response with expressions of loyalty and piety without actually giving a direct answer to Tupac Amaru’s request.\(^ {132}\) This detail can be interpreted in two ways. First, it is possible that Maruri was hedging his bets; he might not have been certain of his ability to recruit men for Tupac Amaru’s army and in that case would not want to commit himself. It is also possible, however, this his obedience was such a foregone conclusion that it was not even worth mentioning. Regardless of this detail, it is clear that Maruri served two functions for the rebel leader: an authority with the power to recruit, and a recipient of letters—in this case, the four letters mentioned in Tupac Amaru’s note.\(^ {133}\) Maruri himself drew attention to this last function when accused of treason in the first weeks of 1781. In his testimony, Maruri stated that he allied with the rebels “in order to choose the lesser evil [that is, in order to save his own life and the lives of others]; the conduct of which... has resulted that to me they [the rebels] have directed letters, for the receipt of people in this province, and now finally it [my agreement] sent me to the country of Guadgua Cartaguia, in order that the decree of convocation travel the entire province, under my protection and care.”\(^ {134}\) Maruri, then, was in charge of his province’s correspondence, holding letters until their recipients could claim them and even carrying proclamations about the area, a role that made sense given his occupation.

\(^{131}\) Document 94, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
\(^{133}\) Document 94, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
Priests were perhaps the easiest people to locate within a community because they were known to every member of the village and because the church was one of the central buildings in each town.\textsuperscript{135} Therefore, to have a priest serve as a way station for correspondence streamlined the communication process. A letter could travel straight to the priest without any difficulty and its intended recipient would know precisely where to go to find it. Additionally, priests were generally considered to be honorable and godly men, the sort of people who could be trusted not to pry into correspondence not addressed to them. As for enlisting Maruri as a message carrier, this, too, made sense; priests were less likely to be stopped, robbed, or killed along the side of the road than an ordinary villager.\textsuperscript{136} For the rebels, having a man like Maruri on their side was highly useful. Although no further evidence in the documents alludes to the presence of other priests serving similar functions, it seems probable that there were. Such people were too potentially useful not to be engaged wherever possible.

Priests were not impervious to accusations of treason for their various roles in the rebellion. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence that royal authorities put potentially disloyal priests on trial. In one of his communications to Jáuregui, Moscoso mentioned the names of several priests whom he suspected of disloyal conduct: Don Gregorio Yépez in Pomacanchi and Don Tomás Otazu in Accha Hanansaya. The disloyalty of a third, Don Antonio López de Sosa of Pampamarca, was a foregone conclusion, as he was a close friend of Tupac Amaru and Micaela Bastidas, and was implicated in the execution of Arriaga.\textsuperscript{137} Between September 1781 and May 1782, as the rebellion moved away from Cusco and into a ceasefire, Don Gregorio Yépez faced

\textsuperscript{135} Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 20-22.
\textsuperscript{136} Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 73-75.
charges of consorting with an excommunicate and aiding and abetting outlawed rebels. The evidence against him was a series of friendly, even fawning, letters, in which he compared Tupac Amaru to biblical figures, and said that he and his wife were “the blow of heaven against the Europeans.” Yépez made the excuse that he said such things out of “great fear that he conceived... due to the threats of the Rebel [Tupac Amaru],” which was indeed a valid excuse under canon law, but the fiscal remained unconvinced and recommended that Yépez receive “the punishments established by rights.” The sentencing phase of the trial is missing from this document, so the ultimate outcome remains a mystery.

Several other priests from the area faced similar charges. The record of one Carlos Rodriguez, priest of the Yanaoca parish, is particularly detailed. Lasting from October 1781 to June 1782, his trial was, like those of the other priests, the result of his communications with Tupac Amaru and his wife Micaela Bastidas. The evidence against him was “the communication that he carried on with Micaela Bastidas, wife of the Rebel, José Gabriel Túpac Amaru, whose treason is now discovered, and [who was] in a state of greater excommunion,” in which he asked that she send him sugar, and assured her that he prayed for her soul. His defense was standard; he wrote the letters, he said, out of fear for his life. Rodriguez still had to give full declarations, in which he describes being surrounded by barbarians, wanting to save the lives of Spaniards who were being targeted, and trying to prevent men from enlisting in Tupac Amaru’s

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139 Document 222, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
140 Document 222, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
141 The fiscal was an official in charge of court prosecutions.
142 Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 76-77.
143 Yanaoca is in one of the areas strongly controlled by the rebel leaders.
145 Document 231, Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
army. Unfortunately, the end result of the trial is not stated, though it is not difficult to guess the outcome. Dr. Miguel Iturrizarra, the man in charge of examining him, said at the end of the first proceeding: “Overall, the Fiscal feels that he [Rodriguez] did not proceed from malice in this clause, but rather by grave fear as has happened to many others.” Therefore, it seems likely that Rodriguez was acquitted of treason.

Rodriguez does bring up a good point: priests were often caught in unfortunate positions. On the one hand, they were beholden to the crown apparatus through the Church structure and the wishes of their bishop. On the other hand, many of them lived in areas that experienced great unrest, and to resist the rebels could mean their lives. The account of one group of priests related to Moscoso illustrates the sort of proximity to violence that many priests experienced. One priest witnessed the death of one man and the public humiliation of several others from the steps of his church. Several others were forced to take refuge in their churches and experienced a sort of frightening disregard for the niceties of the so-called Most Holy Sacrament (communion). Still others journeyed to Cusco to ask the bishop for help. In such situations, some priests sought to appease the rebels rather than let themselves and their communities experience the sort of atrocities inflicted by marauding armies.

Parish priests were prominent members of their community and so, in addition to being messengers and potential targets, were key components in the efforts to discredit the rebellion. This particular role is hinted at numerous times in Moscoso’s correspondence. Perhaps the most telling instance is an exchange between Moscoso and Areche during May of 1781, ten days 

146 Document 231, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú. 
147 Document 231, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú 
before the execution of Tupac Amaru and several of his co-conspirators. In this letter Areche hinted that he suspected the loyalties of the Church body as a whole. As a result, Moscoso wrote a great deal about the services that the Church had performed for the royalist cause and mentioned the personal debt of loyalty that many clerics, including himself, owed to Areche. Moscoso also asked, towards the end of this communication, “if the Clerical Body was with Tupac Amaro, for what reason would this [man] destroy and afflict its Ministers?”\textsuperscript{150} a question that indicates that priests in general were not in Areche’s good favor at that particular moment. Moscoso, in addition to making suggestions for the prosecution of suspected traitors among the clergy, also requested that Areche publish an edict prohibiting the defamation of the Church and requesting that anyone with knowledge of a crime committed by a cleric denounce the cleric to Areche and to Moscoso.\textsuperscript{151} Areche responded with praise for Moscoso’s zeal and spirit and agreed to do his part in stopping the rumor mongering. The most noteworthy paragraph is the following passage from Areche’s letter:

Promote, then, Your Grace, your edict: I will publish my proclamation; but the noise of the murmurers might not cease.... I beg Your Grace to add the particular charge to Preachers and Confessors to destroy it [sedition] or diminish it as much as they should: to the first [the preachers] so that they paint this vice as it is or with its results or effects in the world, and in the other life: and to the second [the confessors] so that in the Holy Court of Penitence they make a more lively effort with their Penitents to the end that it [sedition] may not occur.\textsuperscript{152}

This passage is one of the few texts to reference the power that a parish priest had to spread propaganda. Because custom and law alike dictated that each person attend Mass regularly, if a priest preached against the rebellion and told his community that supporting the king was their

\textsuperscript{150} Document 190, reprinted in \textit{Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, Vol Pt 2.}
\textsuperscript{151} Document 190, reprinted in \textit{Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.}
\textsuperscript{152} Document 190, reprinted in \textit{Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.}
duty as observant Christians, then there was a good chance that his community would hear him and obey his exhortations. Of course, the same could be true for the opposite side of the equation as well; if a priest spoke in favor of the rebellion, his people might pay more attention to that message. Having the majority of the region’s priests under royalist orders, then, was quite an asset, one which the royalist authorities shamelessly exploited. In a letter to Jáuregui in February of 1781, Moscoso said, “I reproduce my orders to the priests and ecclesiastical ministers, and I have the satisfaction that with their voice and example they enforce the weakness of those who at every step seek to sink the violent eruptions of the Tyrant.”¹⁵³ When Moscoso went on to praise the efficacy of this method, he gave all credit for success to the “hate [for the rebellion] that many priests, and ecclesiastics have incited, who have openly opposed the uprising.”¹⁵⁴ The priests, according to Moscoso’s and Areche’s own conclusions, were an important part of convincing villagers that joining the rebellion was ill-advised. The documents do not, however, demonstrate the extent to which these attempts at propaganda achieved what Moscoso and Areche hoped for. Priests had to negotiate their position between their communities and their bishop and so may have softened or avoided altogether the message that Moscoso wished them to convey.

The clergy served one final, more unusual function during the uprising: raising an army and defending Cusco against the rebels. Moscoso, as the leading cleric in the city, spearheaded these efforts with every other member of the clergy—both regular and secular—in the city following his lead. In a letter to Don Gregorio Francisco, the Bishop of La Paz, in July of 1782, Moscoso described the efforts of the clergy to protect Cusco. The wealthy among them

¹⁵⁴ Document 146, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
contributed vast amounts of money and goods to pay and supply an army. Moscoso himself claimed to have contributed 12,000 pesos to the cause and mentioned other clergy who also donated significant sums.  

Most interestingly, many cusqueño priests took up arms in defense of the city. They served as sentinels, patrols within the city, and even fought in militia companies, in addition to filling more normal positions as chaplains and leaders of religious processions to raise morale. Although it would have been entirely normal for priests to donate large amounts of money and spiritual assistance in cases of impending invasion, it does not appear to have been standard procedure for them to serve in battle, given that Moscoso felt compelled to justify the idea of putting churchmen to such uses: “in the University of Lima it is defended as a sure system, that in similar circumstances [i.e. rebellions] the ecclesiastics can and should arm themselves.” One other report from February of 1781 also indicates that priests occasionally had the ability to recruit and lead militias. Even though priests were endowed with more than spiritual power, the extent to which they served in a military function during the rebellion remains unclear. Their military participation may have only been a reaction to extreme circumstances, such as immediate threat to a city or town, or it could have been part of a larger pattern. The documents are inconclusive.

Like their superior Moscoso, parish priests had a great deal of influence because of the societal prominence that was integral to their religious authority. Therefore, they were valuable sources of information in addition to their ability to recruit, command, and serve in armies. Priests’ central location within rural communities meant that they were hubs for communication.

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156 Document 275, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
157 Document 275, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
158 Document 146, reprinted in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú.
and could easily receive and disseminate messages and sermons as the situation required. However, just because a village received a message did not mean that they obeyed it. Other factors, like the relationship a community had with its priest, as well as those it had with its corregidor and kuraka, affected their receptiveness to the royalist message. Nevertheless, the potential influence of priests was significant and frequently effective.

Colonial authorities did not often explicitly acknowledge the vast range of functions that the parish priests could perform for the government. Rather, people like Areche and Moscoso primarily discussed the importance of religious rhetoric and sermons in reasserting the ideological power of the Church and the Crown. It is natural that they should do so, but their fixation on this type of dialogue seems odd when one considers that priests were not the only people capable of using religious rhetoric in their arguments. In fact, leaders on both sides routinely invoked God and their faith in order to justify the violence that took place.
Chapter Five: Religion and Rebellion

Although religious rhetoric is often considered the dominion of clerics, that was not necessarily the case in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion. Leaders on both sides of the rebellion sought to justify their claims by using the Christian faith to illuminate their own glories as well as illustrating the shortcomings of the opposition. The result is a fascinating combination of arguments and explanations derived from Catholic doctrine. For the royalists, religious rhetoric served as explanation for the campaigns they carried out against the rebels. For the rebel leaders, devout Catholics themselves, it performed the opposite function, giving them a justification for subverting the colonial order. Religious considerations also profoundly influenced the conservative nature of the rebellion. This chapter will first address the various ways in which royalists and rebels used religious rhetoric to create their identities. Then, it will consider the influence of religion and the Church on the vision each side had for the future.

On the royalist side, some of the justification for killing Indians revolved around the religious practices of the rebels. Several documents portray the rebels as sacrilegious, “gentile Indians,” and of course, excommunicates, whom we have discussed at length, all words aimed at emphasizing the opposition’s disconnect from the tenets of Catholicism. Sacrilege is defined as a “the violation or injurious treatment of a sacred object.” The crime of sacrilege covers a wide range of actions, including disrespect for the Host, defacement of a religious book or image, the defamation or injury of priests, and the burning of churches. As royalists attributed all

159 Document 275, Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, Vol 2 Pt 3.
of these activities to rebels throughout the rebellion, it is clear that sacrilegious behavior was far from acceptable. The term “gentile” has various meanings depending on context. In the Christian Bible, gentiles were those outside of the Jewish community, but the term is often used more generally to refer to those who are neither Jews nor Christians. In the context of colonial Perú, the term “gentile Indians” meant that they were so-called pagans, followers of Andean religions. The royalist use of such words serves to separate the Indian rebels from loyal servants as well as to justify the violence committed against them.

Although religious terminology was commonplace in royalist correspondence, royalists used very few direct quotes from Scripture. Their arguments tended to be founded instead on the simple statement of beliefs. The little Scripture used is illuminating and carefully chosen. In his letter to the king on April 13, 1781, Moscoso made a particular Scriptural reference as proof of the inevitable success of the royalist cause, the only quote from Scripture contained in any of his correspondence. In the Bible, this passage is part of the story of how the Israelites, God’s chosen people, conquered the Promised Land after their long journey in the desert. Before they went into battle, God spoke the following: “This very day I will begin to put the terror and fear of you on all the nations under heaven. They will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you.” In utilizing this passage, Moscoso drew a very clear parallel between the Israelites and the king. Because the Israelites were God’s chosen ones, their enemies could not prevail. The king, as God’s chosen monarch, was under the same protection. Thus, the rebels who sought to fight against the king were doomed to failure. In short, Moscoso and, presumably, his allies, believed that God was on their side, thereby ensuring an eventual victory. Given that

164 Deuteronomy 2:25 (NIV)
this letter was written just after the capture of Tupac Amaru and his wife, their optimism is entirely understandable. Nonetheless, the rebellion went on for at least another year and spread to other regions.

Tupac Amaru and his supporters were no less vehement in their own use of religious rhetoric than were their royalist opponents. In his trial 1781, Don Gregorio Yépez faced accusations of writing a letter to Tupac Amaru in which he compared Tupac Amaru to the biblical figures of David and Moses, thereby aligning the rebellion with the holy, noble causes of those people. These figures were powerful images to evoke. David, a famous king of Israel, began life as a shepherd boy and came to the attention of the king by defeating a giant in single combat armed only with a sling and five stones. Yépez’s point was that, like David, Tupac Amaru was hopelessly overmatched. Also like David, Tupac Amaru would win because God was on his side. Moses was a key Old Testament prophet who followed God’s orders and led the Israelites out of Egypt, across the desert, and to the Promised Land. Again, the parallel that Yépez drew between Tupac Amaru and the biblical story is fairly clear. Tupac Amaru, in this scenario, was Moses, ordained to save his people from slavery. Ironically, while Yépez doubtless would not have drawn this particular parallel, the fact is that Moses, like Tupac Amaru, was not permitted to see the Promised Land and perished within sight of his goal. The most important information from this set of references is that the rebels, like the royalists, believed that God was on their side and that they were sure to win. The rebels sought to justify themselves by claiming to be fighting colonial officials like the corregidores, rather than against the king. From their perspective, the corregidores and other corrupt officials had gone against God’s law by treating

165 1 Samuel: 17
166 The story of Moses occupies portions of several books of the Bible. Most of it, however, is contained within the book of Exodus.
their people unfairly and this treatment justified the uprising. In a letter to Bishop Moscoso sent on December 12, 1780, from just outside Cusco, Tupac Amaru laid out his precise issue with the colonial government. He did not, he said, wish to go against the church or its priests, but he would do whatever was necessary to curb the excesses of the corregidores, whom he compared to the biblical Pharaoh, who had enslaved the Israelites in Egypt.

Like Yépez, Tupac Amaru believed that his revolution would be the means by which his people were liberated from their state of near-slavery, just as Moses freed the Israelites from Pharaoh. Tupac Amaru was also careful to say, “Although today I am noted as a traitor and rebel, unfaithful and tyrant to our monarch Charles, he will come to understand in time that I am his vassal, and that I have not intentionally contradicted my Holy Church, and Catholic Monarch, but I only intend to remove the tyrannies of the kingdom, and want to observe the holy and Catholic law, living in peace and quietude.” Tupac Amaru saw himself as still following the rule of both his monarch and the Church, even though he was without the support of both these pillars of colonial society. This sort of justification was not unusual for the era. Many people in the early days of the Mexican Revolution in the 1810s, for instance, either advocated for the continued rule of the king or believed they were fighting in his name. However, there is little—if any—discussion of the phenomenon in literature on Peruvian rebellions, so it is

171 In so far as time has allowed, I looked at some literature on two other 18th-century Peruvian rebellions: Juan Santos Atahualpa (1742) and Huarochirí (1750). It seems that both these rebellions did indeed seek to be rid of the entire apparatus, including the king, but my research in this area has not been exhaustive.
difficult to know whether Tupac Amaru’s professions of continued loyalty were remarkable or standard.

Tupac Amaru repeats many of these same sentiments in a letter to one Don Josef Paredes, canon of the church of La Paz on January 26, 1781, after the rebel retreat from Cusco. In addition to claiming the support of the king, he also compared the corregidores to false gods. He professed to be returning the people to the proper adoration of the true God: “I have made report to His Majesty representing my designs, and promising to advance likewise that which the thieves gave to the kingdom; and, believe, Your Grace, that so will be maintained in peace and quietude and that things will be repaired for God with due admiration, without having many corregidor gods or ministers with His Majesty’s cape creating hostility among the miserable.”

Here his own justification as a religious man loyal to his king was also a slap at his opponents. He wanted to restore God to the praise and adoration that He deserved by removing the corregidores, who, in their turn, had set themselves up as gods on Earth. Consequently, he believed his actions against them were just and holy, and he himself was acting as God would wish.

Most of Tupac Amaru’s attempts at self-justification revolved around his identity as a good and observant Christian. As an excommunicate, his faith was suspect, restricting his support. Therefore, he sought to justify his faith to religious and secular authorities alike and to make his public identity reflect the way he thought of himself. In his December 12, 1780, letter to Moscoso, Tupac Amaru affirmed his Christian faith, respect for the clergy and their churches, and for Catholic law. He also pledged not to inconvenience, harm, or otherwise meddle with the Church, and gave particular attention to the “peace of the monasteries,” which he claimed to

\[172\] Document 140, reprinted in *Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, Vol 2 Pt 2.*
have no desire to disturb. This cannot have been an insignificant comment, given that, when the letter was written, his armies were camped on the outskirts of Cusco, preparing to overrun it. They were never able to penetrate Cusco’s defenses, so there is no evidence that Tupac Amaru would not have made good on his promise to leave the houses of worship alone. Regardless, it seems that Tupac Amaru imagined that the Church would continue to be an important part of society once he established his own authority.

The fact that neither side envisioned a world without either the Catholic Church or the king speaks volumes about the nature of the rebellion. Unlike other rebellions that sprang up worldwide in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion was, at its core, a profoundly conservative movement. It sought to shift the stronghold of power away from the dominant Spanish minority and into the hands of the repressed Indian majority, but it did not seek to change the essence of the system. That is, the rebel leaders seem to have viewed themselves as viceroys and inspector generals to the king, rather than as kings and princes in their own right, although Tupac Amaru’s chief claim to authority was certainly his royal heritage. Some, though by no means all, of this conservatism may have been rooted in their attachment to the Church and in the effect of the Church’s teachings on their personal beliefs. For one thing, the Church had long taught that the king was ordained by God to rule over Perú, and it was customary to pray for the king’s wellbeing during Mass. Therefore, a Peruvian Catholic like Tupac Amaru would very likely have agreed with Moscoso’s discussion of a king’s divine right to rule and would not dream of angering God by attempting to overthrow the monarch. For another, the Church was deeply integrated into the colonial system. As a person with deep respect for the Church and its ministers, Tupac Amaru would not wish his rebellion to

intentionally harm clerics or to rearrange the system on which every religious person was
dependent. One way to manage this feat and yet still effect change was to maintain the essence of
the colonial system, but to replace the Spanish authorities with the Indians and mestizos who
made up the bulk of the population. Other motivations for maintaining the colonial system—
social and economic advancement, for example—were also highly relevant, but the rebel leaders
were devout Catholics for whom God’s will was vitally important. Thus, their continued support
of a divinely appointed monarch is understandable.

Religion, then, and all of the dialogue that accompanied it, was an important part of how
groups perceived themselves and how they wished others to perceive them. Being right with God
and king was clearly a priority for Tupac Amaru, and he wasted no effort in assuring his
correspondents of his devotion to God, king, and Church. He saw himself as a good Christian
and constructed his letters in order to convince his audience of this fact. The royalists also used
religion to explain themselves, claiming that the king, as one of God’s chosen representatives on
Earth, would inevitably triumph. These beliefs formed an integral part of how each group
conceived of its identity—either as a movement that sought to invert the traditional racial
hierarchy or as the stalwart defenders of the king’s right to rule—and helped to ensure that these
identities remained essentially conservative. Neither side could imagine living without the
Church, and both sides believed that God was fighting for them. Thus, religiosity as a force in
the lives of individual people was at the very heart of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion and affected
the visions that each side had for the future of Perú.
Conclusion

Throughout the colonial period, Church and State worked together intimately to establish and preserve the colonial political and social order. While the priests’ roles varied greatly, ranging from missionaries and idolatry inspectors to preachers and caretakers, all were part of the colonial apparatus designed to maintain control of the Indian population. As such, priests often mixed spiritual concerns with secular concerns and few would have separated those spheres as many people do today. Nevertheless, the power of priests varied greatly by region and Andean communities had room in which to negotiate their own relationships with the Church and with the colonial state. By the time of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion, the connection between the Church and the state was so deeply ingrained in colonial society that not even the rebel leaders could—or would—contradict the very system that had repressed them for years.

The application of excommunication was a visual representation of the tendency to blend religion and politics, as bishops and popes had a history of enacting this punishment for temporal crimes as well as spiritual transgressions. In the case of Tupac Amaru’s own excommunication, a religious crime—sacrilege—received due punishment, but the consequences reached beyond Church walls to the rebellion, limiting Tupac Amaru’s influence with mestizos, criollos, and even many other kurakas for whom considerations of religion and social status meant a great deal. Thus, the political and religious reasons for the excommunication are closely related and therefore impossible to separate completely.

Bishop Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Bishop of Cusco, who issued the excommunication order against the rebel leader, was both a politician and a religious authority
and therefore exemplified the same intricate combination of spirituality and temporality represented by the excommunication. In fact, he does not seem to have differentiated between the two worlds in terms of his involvement on the royalist side and adopted whichever of his many faces the situation required. To his superiors in colonial government, he was a difficult ally, a criollo bishop with money and influence whom they tolerated because of his connections and abilities. In his interactions with these figures, Moscoso proved skilled at emphasizing his religiosity whenever necessary to reinforce his utility. He proved a spiritual father to Diego Cristóbal in spite of the latter’s serious transgressions against God and king, but to his subordinates among the parish priests, he was an unforgiving, implacable authority whose insistence kept them at their posts even as violence increased.

These parish priests covered a similar range of secular and religious influence. They were able to collect valuable information for Moscoso and for the rebels, and were potentially useful allies for both sides because of their religious and social prominence. The royalists in particular believed firmly that preaching would control the rebellion’s spread, but the extent to which that was true remains unclear, as the agency of individuals and communities cannot be discounted.

Religion as an ideological force entered the rebellion through the hands of rebel and royalist leaders as well as the priests and bishops. Religious rhetoric served as justification for violence on both sides. Whether claiming that the corregidores were false gods or emphasizing the right of the king to rule, each claimed to be acting with the approval of God. Both sides agreed that the Spanish monarchy was a divinely-ordained institution and that the king must remain in power; the rebels only differed in that they wanted to replace Spanish officials with native Peruvians of Indian heritage. The religious belief behind these arguments may have
contributed to the conservative nature of the rebellion, as neither side would overthrow God’s chosen monarch or harm the Church whose teachings were so integral to the colonial order.

The integration of the Church in the colonial system and the actions of its agents in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion serves to emphasize one critical point: in late colonial Perú, there was no separation between Church and State. Religious leaders like Moscoso had significant temporal power because of their spiritual leadership and used that power to maintain the status quo within the so-called secular world; Tupac Amaru, a secular leader, made his personal beliefs public knowledge in order to establish his identity as a devout Catholic who could be trusted to respect the sanctity of Church and Crown. In spite of the power of religious authorities and ideology, the rebellion was not a millennialistic rebellion insofar as its leaders conceived of it. Tupac Amaru did not claim to have special powers or to be the Reborn Inca, as indeed some people may have believed, but rather to be an agent of God and the Spanish king. From his own perspective, he was simply restoring the system to its rightful owners and he, as the descendant of the Inca, had the right to serve as the king’s stand-in over the territory that once belonged the Inca. The Catholic Church, its agents, and its ideology remained unchallenged.

Though the Church remained firmly integrated into late colonial society, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion in general was a defining event in Peruvian history that caused a great deal of change. Elites were so petrified of another Indian revolt that they sought to thoroughly beat down and assimilate the indigenous population, changing long-standing policies about Indian lands and

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creating racial stigmas and stereotypes that still persist in Perú today. Also, because of the trauma of the rebellion, Perú did not participate in the sweeping popular rebellions that began to oust the Spanish all over Latin America. In fact, Perú was the last Spanish colony in South America to gain its freedom, and it was not liberated by popular rebellion so much as by the encouragement of foreign revolutionaries who arrived to bolster the criollo elite. Thus independent Perú was notably conservative, maintaining most of the oppressive regimes designed to control the Indians and merely replacing peninsulares with criollos in positions of governmental power.

For nearly a century, the Tupac Amaru Rebellion carried the stigma of being the rebellion that almost worked. For those who had opposed the rebellion, Indians as well as white elites, it was a symbol of how tenuous government control could be. For its supporters, the failed rebellion was a reminder of how close they had been to overthrowing the Spanish. Not until the Velasco regime of the 1960s was the rebellion recast as a proud symbol of Andean resistance, and thus is it still remembered. In the city of Cusco today, the Plaza de Tupac Amaru, located about fifteen minutes’ walk outside of the historic center, contains a monument to the dead rebel with a plaque commemorating others who perished in the rebellion. Another plaque affixed to the side of the Compañía de Jesús cathedral in the Plaza de Armas is a reminder of Tupac Amaru’s execution.

As for the priests, many of those mentioned in the course of the rebellion seem to have fallen back into obscurity. Moscoso was exiled from Perú for his so-called questionable loyalties

175 Walker, 269-71; Stavig, The World of Tupac Amaru, 260.
178 Serulnikov, Revolution in the Andes, 7-8; Walker, The Tupac Amaru Rebellion, 276.
and received a promotion from the king in compensation, but none of the documents available for this project so much as hint at the lives of other clerics. It seems that little is known about how priests fared in the post-rebellion reforms. This is an avenue for further research. It is strange that people so integral to society and to the practice of religion should be so hidden in the aftermath of one of the most important moments in Peruvian history. In the Tupac Amaru Rebellion as well as in later years, the Church, its agents, and its teachings were important parts of how society functioned and of how people defined themselves and their positions.
Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Laura Shelton, for all the work she has done for the last year. From the project’s beginning in the spring of 2015 to the final editing this last month, she has always been there with good advice and accurate criticism when I needed it. Even when I presented her with some pathetic early drafts, she always believed that I would succeed. This project would not be what it became without all of the hours she spent helping me improve it.

Second, many thanks are due to my committee: Doctors Louise Stevenson, Doug Anthony, and Scott Smith. Thanks to their tremendous patience and excellent feedback, I was able to polish my writing and consider my own analysis critically. I am beyond grateful that they took time out of their busy semesters to be such vital parts of the honors thesis process.

I am also grateful to Dr. Stephen Cooper and to Rev. Doug Gray, both of whom provided invaluable recommendations for theological and biblical references. Thanks to their assistance, my analysis of religious ideology remained grounded in texts. Further thanks are due to Rev. Gray, my father. Few would say that being a preacher’s kid has advantages, but when one is considering the ways in which clerics interact with people, a real life example helps build a framework.

Finally, no major project happens without significant behind-the-scenes support. Particular thanks, though, go to my mother, Cynthia Gray, for proofreading my final draft, but all of my friends and family have been involved in this to some extent. Whether they were fielding frantic phone calls, sending me their independent studies so I could mine their footnotes, or just putting up with my obsession for the last year, I could not have accomplished any of this without their support.