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Three Letters of María Antonia Bolívar and Simón Bolívar

Evelyn M. Cherpak

María Antonia Bolívar was Simón Bolívar's favorite sister.¹ Born into an elite Caracas family whose wealth included plantations, slaves, properties in Caracas and La Guaira, and the Aroa copper mines, the two siblings were alike in temperament and physical features. This filial closeness continued throughout their adult years, despite their radically different political opinions. María, a confirmed royalist, supported the Spanish side throughout the war for independence in Venezuela, as she owned extensive properties and slaves, which she hoped to protect, while Bolívar worked for an independent state and led the patriot armies to victory throughout northern South America.

When hostilities began María was living in Caracas. In 1813, when Bolívar announced the War to the Death, she moved to her estate in Macarao where she harbored royalist sympathizers in her home, a deed punishable by death.² With the collapse of the Second Republic in 1814 and the Royalists again in power, she returned to Caracas where she assumed she would be safe; however, when Bolívar returned from exile in 1816, he ordered María and her family to leave Venezuela for their own safety. Escorted by armed guards from her home to the port of La Guaira, she first went to Curaçao and then moved to Havana, Cuba, in 1819.³ During her exile, she petitioned royal officials for permission to return to Venezuela; she requested the repatriation of her embargoed properties; and she asked for a pension of one thousand pesos a year, which King Ferdinand VII granted and eventually doubled.⁴

¹María Antonia Bolívar was born on 1 November 1777. She married Pablo Clement Palacios y Francia in 1792 and had four children: Anacleto, Valentina, Josefina, and Pablo Secundino. She died on 4 October 1842.


³Ibid.

⁴Inés Quintero, “María Antonia Bolívar: Convicciones monárquicas de una criolla principal,” (paper presented at Central University of Venezuela, Caracas, July 2002), pp. 7, 8, 10. She is the author of a forthcoming biography of María Antonia Bolívar.

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Maria finally returned to Venezuela aboard a United States frigate in 1823 and accepted the new political arrangements. Thereafter, the two siblings began an extensive correspondence dating from 1824 to 1830, when the Liberator was president of Peru and Gran Colombia. During his long absence from Venezuela, Bolivar granted his sister power of attorney to conduct his affairs, with responsibility for renting and repairing his urban properties and rural estates, and for renting and selling the Aroa copper mines. She was also responsible for distributing gifts of money to family members, widows, and servants, among those, his nurse, Hipólita. Family ties, mutual dependence, and Bolivar's long absence from Venezuela during the war and its aftermath dictated his granting these responsibilities to his trusted sister.

María Antonia's letters to her brother are full of political news and advice, family news, information on the status of their lawsuits, and the condition of his rural and urban properties, including the Aroa mines. One of the topics that consistently appears in their correspondence was the rental, sale, and the lawsuit over the copper mines at Aroa. The mines were part of the Bolivar family patrimony and came to the Liberator upon the death of his brother Juan Vicente in 1810. They had been abandoned in 1804 and taken over by two women, Maria de la Cruz Urquia and Francisca Sagarzasu, who operated them during the war. Simón Bolivar's claim to ownership of the mines resulted in a lawsuit instituted by Señores Lazo and Estévez that dragged on in the courts for several years. In 1824, María was successful in renting the mines to British entrepreneurs John D. Cochrane and Robert Lowry, who turned them into a profitable enterprise for Bolivar. Despite this, he urged María to advertise their sale in the London newspapers for no less than one hundred thousand pounds sterling. The monies from the sale would support both of them in retirement abroad. María's lack

6S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 10 July 1825, Simón Bolivar, Cartas del Libertador corregidas conforme a los originales, ed. Vicente Lecuna, 12 vols. (Caracas: Lit. y Tip. del Comercio, 1929) V, p. 19; S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 7 April 1825, ibid., IV, p. 303; S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 2 July 1827, ibid., VI, p. 326.
8"Cartas dirigidas a Bolívar: Correspondencia de parientes del Libertador." Boletín de la academia nacional de la historia XVI (April–June 1933) p. 265; María Antonia Bolivar to Simón Bolivar, 28 March 1826, Papeles de Bolivar, II, pp. 159–60.
9S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 24 October 1825, Cartas del Libertador, V, p. 145.
of diligence in selling the mines caused Bolivar to transfer power of attorney to her son-in-law, Gabriel Camacho in 1828, and then to Lino Clemente in 1829. The mines were finally sold to British investors in 1832, two years after the death of the Liberator.

From his godfather, Canon Juan Félix Jerez Aristeguieta, Bolivar inherited plantations, slaves, and houses in both Caracas and La Guaira that added substantially to his wealth; however, this inheritance was contested by José Lecumberri and a member of the Canon’s family. In 1824, the Supreme Court of Bogotá ruled in favor of Bolivar, and in 1827 he turned over the properties to his nephew Anacleto. In the interim, María managed the estates and houses, arranged for repairs, collected the rents, and kept Bolivar aware of their general condition. She wrote that the climate, plagues of insects, the loss of slave labor, and the general decline in agriculture in the aftermath of a destructive war made some of their estates unprofitable.

María was Bolivar’s political eyes and ears in Venezuela. She reported on the anarchic conditions there, including the uprising of troops in Valencia and Apure whose purpose was to reinstate President José Antonio Pérez after he was arrested for creating a civilian militia. She was concerned about the attacks on the clergy, as well as the movement to create an independent Venezuela and, thus, destroy the union of Gran Colombia that Bolivar had established. She begged Bolivar to return to Venezuela as he was the only one able to save the country from disintegration. According to María, living in Caracas was untenable; she feared becoming a victim of the political opposition and was desperate to emigrate north.

While the Liberator relied on María for information on the political situation in Venezuela, he did not approve of women becoming involved in politics. His letter of 10 August 1826, sternly warned her to refrain from involvement in the volatile politics of the country, which centered around

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10S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 19 November 1828, Cartas del Libertador, VIII, p. 124; S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 5 February 1829, ibid., VIII, p. 238.
13Ibid., p. 93.
16M. Bolivar to S. Bolivar, 11 July 1830, Papeles de Bolivar, II, pp. 166–67.
him. He believed that women should attend to domestic affairs and not meddle in matters of state, and he urged her to devote her energies to home and family. His was a typical patriarchal attitude shared by the men of his time. Women assumed non-traditional responsibilities in times of crisis, but once the crisis passed they were to return to their respective spheres. However, Bolivar had no objection to María’s handling his financial affairs or managing his properties in his absence. But when she failed to complete the paperwork for the sale of the mines, he became frustrated with her inaction, chastised her, and in 1829 removed her from further authority over his affairs, charging that women were not capable of understanding business matters and paperwork. Despite this rift near the end of his life, Bolivar conceded that his sister was a woman of great talent.

A select few of Bolivar’s letters to María are found in several volumes of Cartas del Libertador corregidas conforme a los originales, edited by Vicente Lecuna, in two volumes of Papeles de Bolivar also edited by Lecuna, and in two volumes of Selected Writings of Bolivar compiled by Lecuna. Some of María’s letters to Bolivar are in the latter two works, as well as in a series of documents entitled “Cartas dirigidas a Bolivar: Correspondencia de parientes del Libertador,” published in the April-June 1933 volume of the Boletín de la academia nacional de la historia in Caracas.

The two letters of María Antonia Bolivar in this article are from the “Cartas dirigidas a Bolivar: Correspondencia de parientes del Libertador” in the Boletín de la academia nacional de la historia cited above. There are thirty-five letters from María to Simón Bolivar reprinted there, dating from 20 October 1824 to 12 October 1828. While her personal letters form most of the correspondence in this compilation, there are also personal letters from other relatives, including Bolivar’s sister Juana, his sister-in-law Josefa María Tinoco, his niece Felicia Bolivar, his uncles Esteban and Feliciano Palacios, and his cousin Lieutenant Colonel Leandro Palacios. All of these were written between 1824 and 1830.

Simón Bolivar’s letter to María Antonia of 10 August 1826, is found in volume VI of the Cartas del Libertador cited above. Vicente Lecuna, a Bolivarian scholar, sought to collect and publish all of Bolivar’s extant personal correspondence, including some important official correspondence that had not been previously published in the Cartas. Copies of most of

18S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 10 August 1826, Cartas del Libertador, VI, p. 53.
19S. Bolivar to M. Bolivar, 4 August 1829, Ibid., IX, pp. 65–66.
Bolívar’s official correspondence already existed, while most of his personal correspondence had not been copied or published, hence this edition preserved an important segment of Bolívar’s private writings for historians.

The letters contained in the twelve volumes of the *Cartas* were obtained from a number of private archives kept by collectors; some were gifts from individual donors, while others were taken from previously published works. Lecuna gave special recognition to Aristides Rojas for his efforts in collecting the Liberator’s letters, including those of María Antonia Bolívar.

Lecuna organized the letters chronologically. Corrections were made when errors were found in the published letters and the copies, but only when the editor could verify the error; otherwise, the correspondence was reproduced as it appeared with errors presumably made by the copyist. Readers are directed to the notes where comments on the corrections appear. All dates and events were verified.

In translating the three letters, every effort was made to adhere as faithfully as possible to the language of the originals. The preliminary translations were then edited to create readable versions that would contribute to an understanding of the relationship between María Antonia and Simón Bolívar.21

María Antonia’s letters of 24 April 1826, and 4 May 1826, and Simón Bolívar’s letter of 10 August 1826, are representative of the larger body of correspondence between the two and focus on the issues that concerned them during the years that they corresponded. The English translation and the original Spanish follow.

**Caracas, 24 April 1826**

*To the most excellent lord liberator of Colombia, Simón Bolívar*

My dear brother:

I have received yours, which you sent to me from Potosí, and I find it strange that you do not receive my letters, nor do you have news of your interests as you tell me; for I write to you of everything in all the mail and now I do it again to tell you the same thing as I have told you in my previous letters. The Aroa mines continue to be rented to the English—the two principal renters have died of fever—for which the deposit without deducting from the funds in the London bank has not been verified. But it shall be

21 The author wishes to thank David Carrozza for assistance in the translation of the letters.
done, for I have already advised the company that it be deposited.

The money that I have taken are 10,000 pesos from the first year of rent and 10 from the copper that I had in the mines, of which 10,000 pesos are embargoed until the conclusion of the trial and the remainder I have distributed according to your wishes in the amount of 3800 exact in favor of Codecido, 500 according to your dictates to the widow Paul, 240 to the wife of General Valero, 1000 to Señor Miguel Peña, 400 for Fernando who is in the north, 300 for the composition of the Cuadra, 1000 for the mine suits and the judgment on Antonio Palacios for rents on the Macaira estate, 600 for Carreño's wife, 2000 that I took, which I paid for Anacleto, 300 as direct contribution, 2000 pesos to Don Antonio León who has asked me to thank you for your remembrance, which reached him just in time. The feasts of the Holy Trinity I have settled, because they should be paid from the estate of San Mateo, which are those for the years 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826, which amount to 100 pesos with music, wax, sermon, lighting and the rest, all amounting to 400 pesos. Three hundred pesos were also paid to the commissioners, who twice have gone to Aroa, once to take charge of the mines and the other to open the silver one; you can take out the account and see how much these quantities amount to, all of which can serve you for control, so you can tell me what you wish.

I have won the mine suit against Estéves and Lazo; I think they will appeal to Bogotá, but I am not worried because I will defeat them there as well. Their injustice is well known and everyone knows that the mines are ours. The tenth of your wealth that you have offered to me I have not taken. I shall do as you tell me regarding the Concepción estate. Anacleto continues in Bogotá, I have told you that he asked for 10,000 pesos as if I had a lot of money to spare, when I barely have enough. San Mateo or his renter pays 100 pesos each month toward my pension, 50 for Juanica, which with the 100 I give her totals 150, 30 for Hipólita and the 10 I give her for the house make 40, 1600 pesos that he gave to complete the 5000 pesos of Codecido this I can tell you; noting that there remain in your favor 400 pesos of these funds. I shall ask Durán for the general ledger, and I will report to you. The estates of Muy, Macaira, and Araguita are lost to the extent that they do not yield enough for their costs or for their servants who are more lost than the estates themselves, to the extent that they drive me crazy, but I shall put them in order if this is a priority.

The San Vicente ranch is worthless; the house is a mound, the land and everything is destroyed. Tell me if you want me to sell the place—if there is
someone who wants it. I received the income from the Guaira houses last
November and they were down; they earn 270 pesos each month from
which are paid the monthly allowances for Juanica of 100 pesos and of Josefa
Maria of 50: the latter are very ill-tempered with me concerning the houses
such that they talk and say whatever comes to them, and Juanica has even
gone so far as to claim the little ones [houses] as her own based on her 30
years of tenure. I have grown tired of making her see that they are yours
because they are part of the San Mateo estate. To no avail, she has made her
claim, and I await impatiently your response on this, for it is scandalous that
she present herself in opposition to you in this matter. The houses will be put
right as soon as there are funds; if you want me to sell them, let me know. In
April I will receive 5000 pesos from the revenue of the mines; you will have
them at your disposal. The silver mine is open. My son went to Aroa and saw
it. He brought back silver ore, saying that it is very rich and good. If you sell
[the mines] I would not let them go for less than 200,000 pesos because they
are worth it. Nine years of rent alone are worth 100,000 pesos. I will have
them listed in the English gazettes as you have asked, but first I want to draw
up a description to demonstrate their merit and increase their value; of the
land alone there are 30 leagues and more than 1000 inhabitants who pay
rent for their houses, ranches, and farms. All of this and more have I written
to you via Briceno who went to Panamá.

I have told you that San Mateo was somewhat ruined by the fever plague,
which has taken more than 10,000 souls, and there are no workers to be
found; nevertheless, Durán is getting more than 20,000 pesos yearly, which
has by now made him wealthy, and he bought two farms. If San Mateo were
mine, I would not have it on the price that it pays. Suata and Caicara are lost,
I will see if they can rent, that which I find difficult because of the lack of
laborers to work it because of the epidemic in this area that I told you about
before. Tell me whether to sell to Chirgua because that Feliciano fellow says
he only rented his part and that he owes nothing.

Caracas is worse each day; your absence is great, since the excesses are
infinite for you to make sense of your state, I will tell you what happened to
the most patriotic cleric to be found in all of Colombia, that is Father
Sanctana, who has just been imprisoned where they put the dissolute, the
second mayor for having reprinted a paper printed in Bogotá: the effect that this
imprudent step can cause I leave to your consideration, and in addition to
the aforementioned vexation, there appeared a handbill—although they later
removed it—depicting a skull and ecclesiastical bonnet with the inscription:
Die all priests. This vile act manifests the loathing that has been engendered toward the ministers of the altar because they promulgate the law of God and deplore the vices that have been so common.

For this (and for much more that I omit) I say to you that if you do not come this year and fix this disorder that has reached the greatest extreme, and to fix all of this I would have to exceed the heroism that you have exerted in all the conquests you have made; if this is not verified, I am heading north; because one cannot live here, and I am afraid that I may fall victim to one of the deplorable consequences that are threatened. So come here as soon as possible, so that so many of the evils that afflict us will end, for I would prefer to beg for alms in another country than live here. I have told the clerics and consoled them as well with what you have said in your letter.

I am sending you the paper that I have had sent to the London newspapers regarding the sale of Aroa; when there is any result, I will let you know. I repeat that I would not give less than 200,000 pesos for it. If this is verified, please give me 50,000 pesos to go live in the north or someplace else where I can be peaceful and safe.

The suit of the mines I have won against Estèves and Lazo; I think they will appeal to Bogotá, but I am not concerned because I will beat them there too. Their injustice is known to all, and everyone knows that the mines are ours. To Señor Peña I paid the amount of 1000 pesos as I mentioned before, and now he has come back to ask for another amount of 1000 pesos approved by you in his favor. As in your recent letters you have said nothing about this, I have not wanted to pay it, because it could be a lie; and as theft is very much in vogue around here now, it would not be strange if this were false, so let me know if this is the truth or not. Also, tell me if you have received a trunk that I sent you containing a uniform along with various trifles about a year ago; I know nothing of the Englishman who carried it off.

Peñalver has notified me of having received one letter of yours in which you speak of the sale of the mines and Chirgua. I am prepared to sell all that you wish, but in order to do it, it is necessary for you to send me your power of attorney.

General Páez is disgusted at having been accused before the Senate for infringing the constitution for having ordered through the streets of this city brigades of soldiers to seize people to press them into the militias. I thought you should write to him.

A French admiral has just reached Puerto Rico, with three thousand
French to take possession of the island by order of the King of Spain: there embarked from there Laborde with four Spanish frigates to cruise into Cartagena. Lino is not here as it has been several months since he was summoned by the government to Cartagena to take command of a fleet that was being outfitted there.

Now the people of Caracas are making another attempt on the federal government. I do not know if this will now happen as before; all of this is a result of your not coming here for so long. Let me know if you have received the letters and a little carton of public papers and several trifles with Briceno. We have Señor Mendoza as quartermaster. Farewell my dear; I hope this year we will see each other as implores your

Antonia.

Caracas 24 de abril de 1826.

Al Excmo, Señor Libertador Presidente de Colombia, Simón Bolívar.

Mi querido hermano:

He recibido la tuya que me dirijiste del Potosí, y extraño mucho como es que no recibes mis cartas, ni tienes noticias de tus intereses como me dices; pues de todo te escribo en todos los correos y ahora vuelvo a hacerlo para decirte lo mismo que te he dicho en mis anteriores. Las minas de Aroa siguen arrendadas a los ingleses, los dos principales arrendatarios han muerto de calenturas por lo que no se ha verificado el poner el dinero en el banco de Londres sin descuento de la moneda, pero se hará, pues tengo ya avisado a la compañia para que se ponga. El dinero que he tomado son diez mil pesos del primer año de arrendamiento y diez del cobre que había en las minas; del cual están embargados hasta la conclusión del pleito diez mil pesos y los restantes los he distribuido según tus disposiciones en tres mil y ochocientos a la letra a favor de Codecido, quinientos por tu orden a la viuda de Paul, doscientos cuarenta a la mujer del General Valero, mil al Señor Miguel Peña, cuatrocientos para Fernando que está en el norte, trescientos la composición de la Cuadra, mil pues que valen ya los pliegos de las minas y ejecución de Antonio Palacios por arrendamientos de la hacienda de Macaira, seiscientos a la mujer de Carreño, dos mil que tomé yo y los pagué por Anacleto, trescientos de contribución directa, dos mil pesos a Don Antonio León el que me encarga te dé las gracias por el recuerdo que has hecho del y que le han llegado muy a tiempo. Las fiestas de la Santísima Trinidad las he hecho, porque se deben pagar del mayorazgo de San Mateo, que son las de los años 23, 24,
25, 26, las que valen cien pesos con música, cera, sermón e iluminación y demás, todas importan cuatrocientos pesos. También se pagaron trescientos pesos a los comisionados que dos veces han ido a Aroa, una a recibir las minas y la otra para descubrir la de plata; puedes sacar la cuenta y ver a cuanto alcanza estas cantidades, todo lo que te puede servir de gobierno para que me digas lo que tengas por conveniente.

El pleito de las minas se los tengo ganado a Estèves y Lazo; creo que apelarán a Bogotá, pero no tengo cuidado porque allá también les gano. Su injusticia es conocida de todos y todos saben que las minas son nuestras. El décimo que tu me ofreces de tus bienes no le he tomado.

Haré lo que me dices del mayorazgo de la concepción, Anacleto sigue en Bogotá, te he dicho que mando pedir diez mil pesos como si tuviera yo mucho dinero de sobra, pues apenas tengo para lo preciso. San Mateo o su arrendatario paga todos los meses cien pesos para mi pensión, cincuenta para Juanica que con ciento que yo le doy son ciento cincuenta, treinta para Hipólita y diez que yo le doy para la casa son cuarenta, mil seiscientos pesos que dió para el completo de los cinco mil pesos de Codesto esto es lo que puedo decirte; advirtiendo que queda a tu favor cuatrocientos pesos de este dinero. Pediré a Durán la cuenta general y te avisaré. Las haciendas del Tuy, Macaira y Araguita perdidas en términos que no dan ni para sus costos y sus criados más perdidos que ellas, en términos que me traen loca, pero yo los arreglaré si esto toma algún orden.

La hacienda de San Vicente no tiene nada es una montaña la casa, el repartimiento y todo está destruido. Dime si quieres que venda la posesión que hay quien la tome. Las casas de la Guaira las recibí en noviembre de este año pasado muy arruinadas, ganan mensualmente doscientos setenta pesos de los cuales se pagan las mesadas de Juanica de cien pesos y de Josefa María de cincuenta: éstas están bravísima conmigo por las casas en términos que hablan y dicen cuanto se les viene a la boca y Juanica hasta se ha presentado reclamando las pequeñas como suyas por tener treinta años de posesión dice ella. Yo me he cansado de hacerle ver por la vinculación que son tuyas por ser del mayorazgo de San Mateo. Nada ha valido, se ha presentado y yo espero con impaciencia tu contestación sobre esto pues es un escándalo que ella se presente contra ti. Las casas se compondrán luego que haya dinero si quieres que las venda avisame. En abril me entregarán cinco mil pesos de la medianía de las minas, puedes disoponer de ellos. La mina de plata está descubierta, mi hijo fue a Aroa y la vió y trajo piedras de plata, dice que aquello es muy rico y muy bueno. Si las vendes yo de mi parte no las doy menos de doscientos mil pesos porque los valen, cien mil solo valen los nueve años de arrendamiento. Haré ponerlas en las gacetas de Inglaterra como me dices pero antes quiero sacar un plano para hacer ver su mérito y darles valor; pues solo de tierras tiene treinta leguas y más de mil habitantes.
que pagan arrendamientos por sus casas, haciendas y conucos. Todo esto y más te he escrito con Briceño que fué a Panamá.

San Mateo te dije que estaba algo arruinado con motivo de la peste de calenturas que se ha llevado sobre diez mil almas, y no se hallan peones; sin embargo Durán saca más de veinte mil pesos al año, de modo que está rico ya, y compre dos haciendas. Si San Mateo fuera mío no lo tendría en el precio que paga. Suata y Caicara están perdidos, veré si se pueden arrendar, lo que difícil por la falta de peones con que cultivarla por la peste que antes te he dicho de estos valles. Dime si vendo a Chirgua porque el tío Feliciano dice no arrendó sino su parte y que nada debe.

Caracas está cada día peor, tu falta es grandísima, ya los excesos tocan en lo infinito y para que hagas juicio de su estado, te diré lo que acabo de suceder con el canónigo más patriota que puede hallarse en todo Colombia que es el padre Santana que acaba de ponerlo en la cárcel pública donde se ponen los facinerosos, el Alcalde segundo por haber hecho reimprimir un papel publicado en Bogotá: el efecto que puede causar este imprudente paso lo dejo a su consideración, y a mayor abundamiento de la vejación dicha, amanece después un pasquin aunque luego lo quitaron, figurando una calavera y un bonete con una inscripción: Mueran todos los sacerdotes. Este hecho vil manifiesta el tedio que se ha fraguado a los ministros del Altar porque promulgan la ley de Dios y reprenden los vicios que tanto han abundado. Por esto y mucho más que omito te digo que si no vienes en este año para corregir este desorden que ha llegado al último extremo, y que ordenar esto tendría yo por mayor heroismo que todo lo que con tantas fatigas has conquistado; si esto no se verifica me voy al Norte; porque aquí no se puede vivir, y me temo ser víctima en un momento en las funetas consecuencias que amenazan. Conque ven lo más pronto posible, para que cesen tantos males que nos afligen, pues yo prefiero pedir limosna en otro país que vivir aquí. He dicho y consolado a los clérigos con lo que me dices en la tuya.

Te mando el papel que he mandado poner en los periódicos de Londres sobre la venta de Aroa, cuando haya algún resultado te avisaré, vuelvo a decirte que no las doy menos de doscientos mil pesos. Si esto se verifica me das cincuenta mil pesos para irme a vivir al Norte u otra parte donde pueda estar tranquila y con seguridad.

El pleito de las minas se los tengo ganado a Estéves y Lazo; creo apelarán a Bogotá, pero no tengo cuidado porque allá también les gano. Su injusticia es conocida de todos y todos saben que las minas son nuestras. Al señor Peña pague la letra de los mil pesos como te he dicho antes, y ahora vuelve a presentar otra de igual cantidad de mil pesos tirada dice por ti a su favor. Como en tus últimas cartas nada me dices de esta nueva letra, no he querido pagarla, porque puede ser mentira; y como aquí está muy en moda robar, no sería extraño fuese fingida la letra y así avisame si
es verdad o nó. También dime si has recibido un baúl que te mandé con un uniforme y varias frioleras hace cerca de un año y nada sé del inglés que lo llevó.

Peñalver me ha avisado haber recibido una tuya en que le hablas de la venta de las minas y Chirgua yo estoy pronta a vender todo lo que quieras pero para efectuarlo es preciso me envíes tu poder.

El General Páez está muy disgustado por haber sido acusado ante el Senado, como infractor de la constitución por haber mandado en esta ciudad, partidas de soldados por las calles a coger gente para alistarlos en las milicias. Me parecía bien que le escribieras.

Acaba de llegar a Puerto Rico un almirante francés, con tres mil hombres también franceses a tomar posesión de la isla por orden del Rey de España; y de allí ha salido Laborde con cuatro fragatas españolas a cruzar sobre Cartagena. Lino no está aquí pues hace algunos meses que recibió orden del gobierno para ir a Cartagena a tomar el mando de una escuadra que se alistaba allí.

Ahora vuelven los caraqueños a tratar sobre el gobierno federal no sé si ahora no se efectuará como antes todo esto es efecto de que hace mucho tiempo no vienes por acá. Avisame si has recibido las cartas y un cajoncito con papeles públicos y varias frioleras con Briceno. Tenemos de intendente al señor Mendoza. Adiós mi querido, espero que en este año nos veremos como te lo suplica,

Antonia.

Caracas, 4 May 1826

To his Excellency the Liberator, Simón Bolívar.

My dear brother:

On this day we witness with displeasure a revolt of the troops of Valencia and Apure, to replace in the general command of General Páez, who was deposed by executive power, for having ordered soldiers to force people to serve in the militia, because they did not obey when he called them and Señor Escalona complained and they ordered him to take command. This unpleasantness in Bogotá has placed us in a state of anarchy, for thus it has as many others placed the people of Valencia and the army as well in a disposition of asking for separation from Bogotá, which to me seems prejudicial. Caracas has to adopt this measure so as not to become involved in a civil war, for as you know the strength of this nation is in the flatlands. God only knows where this will end if you do not hasten to remove us from this great danger.
There are four rogues who constantly have us in political upheavals; they are Carabaño, Francisco Rivas, Pedro Pablo Díaz, a certain Lander, a son-in-law of Duarte whom they call Level de Goda, who is a great friend of the blacks and a revolutionary by principle. It is imperative that you come, for if not you can be sure this nation is lost, for the factions are about to collide, and Señor Santander seeing himself crowned in Bogotá. In short, I wait for you to come flying, and do not fear anything, for the people love you and want you: everyone cries out for you, and if you do not come, send an English ship that will take us wherever you will be because no one can live here.

We have as pretender Mendoza and Soublet is about to arrive, which is another farce, which the devil [only] can understand. It has been more than six months they took poor Lino to Bogotá to take command of a squadron and they still have him there vegetating and doing nothing. This country is lost I tell you again; if you do not come very soon, or take energetic measures that can save it. Our enemies work ceaselessly to destroy us; I send that letter of Páez for you to see.

Answer me as soon as you receive this.

María Antonia

Caracas, 4 de mayo de 1826

Al Excmo. Señor Libertador, Simón Bolívar.

Mi querido hermano:

En este día tenemos el disgusto de ver una revolución de las tropas de Valencia y Apure, para reponer en la comandancia general al señor general Páez, que estaba depuesto por el Poder Ejecutivo, por haber cometido la falta de mandar algunos soldados a coger gente para hacer milicias, por que no quisieron obedecer cuando los citó y el señor Escalona intendente de aquel tiempo se quejó y le mandaron tomase él la comandancia. Esta impolítica de Bogotá nos ha puesto en estado de anarquía; pues así esta medida como otras muchas han puesto al pueblo de Valencia y al ejército en disposición de pedir separación de Bogotá, cosa a mi parecer prejudicial. Caracas tiene que adoptar esta medida para no verse envuelta en una guerra civil, pues ya sabes que las fuerzas de este país están en los Llanos. Dios sabe en que parará esto si tú no vuelas a sacarnos de este eminente peligro.

Aquí tenemos cuatro pícaros que nos tienen siempre en convulsiones políticas, que son Carabaño, Francisco Rivas, Pedro Pablo Díaz, un tal Lander, un yerno de...
Duarte que llaman Level do Goda muy amigo de los negros y revolucionario por principio. Es preciso que vengas, y si no cuenta que este país es perdido, pues los partidos están ya al chocarse; y el señor Santander viendo como se corona en Bogotá. En fin, te espero que vengas volando, no temas nada que los Pueblos te quieren y te desean: todos claman por ti, y si no vienes manda un buque inglés que nos lleve donde estuviéres tú, porque aquí no se puede vivir.

Tenemos de intendente a Mendoza y Soublette está para llegar, esa es otra farza que el Diablo que la entienda. Al pobre Lino hace más de seis meses que se lo llevaron a Bogotá y que a tomar el mando de una escuadra, y todavía lo tienen allí vegetando sin hacer nada. Este país es perdido vuelvo a decirte si no vienes muy pronto o tomas medidas energicas que lo puedan salvar. Nuestros enemigos trabajan sin cesar para destruirnos, te remito esa carta de Páez para que la veas.

Contéstame inmediatamente que recibas esta.

María Antonia

Lima, 10 August 1826

(Senora María Antonia Bolívar)

Dear María Antonia,

I have had the pleasure of receiving yours of the end of April and 4 May in which you speak of our family business and of Venezuelan public affairs. I have decided to go presently to Colombia, and I will send Señor Antonio Leocadio Guzmán by way of Panama to communicate to those of influence in Venezuela the plan I have conceived for saving us all. He will apprise you.

I advise you not to mix in political matters, neither aligning with nor opposing any party. Allow [public] opinion to develop, even though you believe it to be anathema to your way of thinking. A woman should remain neutral in public matters. Your family and your domestic responsibilities are your foremost obligations. A sister of mine must observe perfect indifference in a nation that is in a state of dangerous crisis and where I am seen to be at the midst of these debates. The way you are handling the sale of my properties should occupy you constantly because it is what matters most. It is essential that you take care of what I entrust to you.

Señor Guzmán will bring you a portrait of me.

Guzmán will relate to you a thousand things on my behalf. Above all, do not involve yourself in anything political. Sell our properties in England or
the United States and all will be well.

Yours,

Simón

Lima, 10 de agosto de 1826

(María Antonia Bolívar)

Querida María Antonia:

He tenido el gusto de recibir tus apreciables de fines de abril y 4 de mayo en que me hablas de nuestros negocios de familia y de las cosas públicas de Venezuela. Estoy resuelto a marchar muy pronto para Colombia, y antes envío por Panamá al señor Antonio Leocadio Guzmán para que vaya a comunicar en Venezuela a las personas de influjo las ideas que he concebido para salvarnos todos. El te las comunicará.

Te aconsejo que no te mezcles en los negocios políticos ni te adhieras ni opongas a ningún partido. Deja marchar la opinión y las cosas aunque las creas contrarias a tu modo de pensar. Una mujer debe ser neutral en los negocios públicos. Su familia y sus deberes domésticos son sus primeras obligaciones. Una hermana mía debe observer una perfecta indiferencia en un país que está en estado de crisis peligrosa, y donde se me ve como al punto de reunión de las opiniones. El modo de ver como vendes mis bienes debe ocuparte constantemente porque es lo más que nos interesa. Te encargo mucho que lo ejecutes porque esto es esencial.

El señor Guzmán te entregará un retrato de mí.

El señor Guzmán te dirá mil cosas de mi parte. Sobre todo no te metas en nada de política. Vende nuestros bienes a plata en Inglaterra o Estados Unidos y todo estará bien.

Tuyo,

Simón

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