

= Princess Maria Amélia of Brazil =

Dona Maria Amélia (1 December 1831 ? 4 February 1853) was a princess of the Empire of Brazil and a member of the Brazilian branch of the House of Braganza . Her parents were Emperor Dom Pedro I , the first ruler of Brazil , and Amélie of Leuchtenberg . The only child of her father 's second marriage , Maria Amélia was born in France after Pedro I abdicated the Brazilian throne in favor of his son Dom Pedro II . Before Maria Amélia was a month old , Pedro I went to Portugal to restore the crown of the eldest daughter of his first marriage , Dona Maria II . He fought a successful war against his brother Miguel I , who had usurped Maria II 's throne .

Only a few months after his victory , Pedro I died from tuberculosis . Maria Amélia 's mother took her to Portugal , where she remained for most of her life without ever visiting Brazil . The Brazilian government refused to recognize Maria Amélia as a member of Brazil 's Imperial House because she was foreign @-@ born , but when her elder half @-@ brother Pedro II was declared of age in 1840 , he successfully intervened on her behalf .

Maria Amélia became engaged to Archduke Maximilian of Austria in early 1852 , but before the marriage could take place she contracted tuberculosis , and was taken to the town of Funchal on the Portuguese island of Madeira . Despite its reputedly healthy climate , her health continued to deteriorate , and she died on 4 February 1853 . Her body was taken to mainland Portugal and interred in the Braganza Pantheon ; almost 130 years later , her remains were taken to Brazil . In honor of her daughter , Maria Amélia 's mother financed the construction of the " Princesa D. Maria Amélia " hospital in Funchal . Maria Amélia 's fiancé , Maximilian , made a pilgrimage to Brazil and Madeira , a journey that influenced his acceptance of the throne of Mexico in 1864 .

= = Early life = =

= = = Birth = = =

Maria Amélia was born on 1 December 1831 in Paris and christened Maria Amélia Augusta Eugênia Josefina Luísa Teodolinda Elói Francisco Xavier de Paula Gabriela Rafaela Gonzaga . She was the only daughter of Dom Pedro , the Duke of Braganza , and his second wife Amélie of Leuchtenberg . Through her father , Maria Amélia was a member of the Brazilian branch of the House of Braganza (Portuguese : Bragança) , and was referred to by the honorific Dona (Lady) from birth . She was the granddaughter of the Portuguese King João VI . Maria Amélia 's mother was the daughter of Eugène de Beauharnais , Duke of Leuchtenberg and the stepson of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France . Eugène was married to Princess Augusta , eldest daughter of King Maximilian I of Bavaria .

Pedro had formerly been the first Emperor of Brazil , as Pedro I , and also King of Portugal , as Pedro IV . He was succeeded on the Portuguese throne by his eldest daughter , Maria II , Maria Amélia 's elder half @-@ sister . The young Queen was the child of Pedro 's first marriage to Archduchess Maria Leopoldina of Austria . In 1828 , Maria II 's crown was usurped by Dom Miguel I , Pedro 's younger brother . Eager to restore his daughter to her throne , Pedro abdicated the Brazilian crown in April 1831 and departed for Europe with Amélie , who was pregnant with Maria Amélia .

To acknowledge Maria Amélia 's rights as a Brazilian princess , Pedro invited several guests to observe her birth , including the Brazilian diplomatic envoy to France . The newborn 's godparents were the French King Louis Philippe I and his consort Maria Amalia of Naples and Sicily , after whom she was named . Pedro sent a letter to his children who had remained in Brazil ? including his son , child @-@ emperor Dom Pedro II ? with the message : " Divine Providence wanted to lessen the sorrow that my paternal heart feels in the separation from Y.I.M. [Your Imperial Majesty] , giving me one more Daughter , and to Y.I.M. , one more sister and subject " .

= = = Brazilian princess = = =

When Maria Amélia was only 20 days old , her father departed France to invade Portugal . For almost two years , she lived in Paris with her mother and half @-@ sister Maria II . When news arrived that the Portuguese capital , Lisbon , had fallen to Pedro 's forces , Amélie of Leuchtenberg left Paris with her infant daughter and stepdaughter for Portugal . They arrived in Lisbon on 22 September 1833 and disembarked the next day . Charles John Napier , a British naval officer who had fought alongside Pedro , wrote about the emotional reunion : " I never saw [Pedro] so happy and pleased ; he went onboard just a little above Belém ; he was received at the ladder by the empress [Amélie] who hugged and kissed him with the greatest affection : the queen [Maria II] was very moved and could not hold her tears . The little Princess [Maria] Amélia , his youngest daughter , took much of his attention : she became somewhat scared of seeing his bushy beard and did not warm to his caresses . "

With Miguel I defeated and in exile , and Maria II restored to the throne , Maria Amélia and her family remained in Portugal , first residing in Ramalhão Palace , and later in the Royal Palace of Queluz near Lisbon . But the war had taken its toll on Pedro 's health , and he was dying of tuberculosis . Maria Amélia , who was not yet three years old , was taken during the early hours of 24 September 1834 to Pedro 's deathbed . Very weak , Pedro raised his hands to bless her and said : " Always tell this child of the father who loved her so dearly ... not to forget me ... always to obey her mother ... those are my last wishes " . Pedro died in the early afternoon of the same day .

The widowed Amélie never remarried , and spent her time overseeing her daughter 's upbringing in Portugal , where they remained despite not being members of the Portuguese Royal Family , though closely related . Neither Amélie nor her daughter ever visited Brazil , but Amélie unsuccessfully petitioned the Brazilian government to recognize her daughter as a member of Brazil 's Imperial Family , which would have entitled her to an income . Maria Amélia 's half @-@ brother Pedro II was a minor , and the government of Brazil was in the hands of a precarious regency . The government refused to acknowledge Maria Amélia as a Brazilian princess owing to her foreign birth , and forbade both her and her mother from setting foot in Brazil . The situation would only change after Pedro II was declared of age in 1840 and was in a position to insist that she be recognized as a member of his household . Aureliano Coutinho (later Viscount of Sepetiba) , the Minister of Foreign Affairs , requested the Brazilian parliament to grant Maria Amélia recognition , which occurred on 5 July 1841 .

= = = Education and engagement = = =

With the purpose of refining her education , Maria Amélia moved with her mother in the middle 1840s to Munich , capital of Bavaria , where many of her relatives lived . A dedicated student , she was given classes that encompassed a broad array of subjects that included rhetoric , philosophy , history , geography , German literature , mathematics and physics . She learned to speak and write not only in Portuguese , but also in English , French and German . She became highly skilled in drawing , painting and playing the piano . An intelligent young woman with a fiery temper and shrewd mind , Maria Amélia was described by a teacher as having , " without knowing , an exceptional talent for dialectic , an ability that would make the fortune of a young law student . "

The memory of her father apparently motivated Maria Amélia 's dedication to her education . The late Duke of Braganza cast a large shadow in her life , and was always remembered by his daughter , who would often ask the people around her : " and my father , who looks at me from heaven , shall he be pleased with his daughter ? " She was never quite able to cope with her father 's death and it deeply touched her . Maria Amélia remarked after she saw a garden where Pedro planted a sycamore : " A profound sadness invaded me when contemplating these trees , which had survived my father and probably shall survive all of us . It is an image of human fragility . Man is the most frail of all beings ; he dies , while the objects which were seemingly created for his use , endure the centuries ! ... But I am digressing in my melancholic reflections " .

At the end of 1850 Maria Amélia and her mother returned to Portugal , and settled in the Janelas Verdes palace . In early 1852 , her cousin the Austrian Archduke Maximilian , then serving in the

Austrian navy and on a stopover in Portugal , paid a visit to her . Maximilian 's mother was the younger half @-@ sister of Maria Amélia 's maternal grandmother , and both women were members of the House of Wittelsbach from Bavaria . He was also related to Maria Amélia 's older half @-@ siblings , as his father was the younger brother of Brazilian Empress Leopoldina . They had met previously at a family reunion in Munich in 1838 , when she was only a child . In this second meeting , however , they fell in love . Maximilian was enthralled by Maria Amélia , a kind young woman with blue eyes and blonde hair " of striking beauty as well as cultivated intelligence " . They were betrothed , but the engagement was never made official as a result of her early death .

= = Later years = =

= = = Death = = =

In February 1852 , Maria Amélia contracted scarlet fever . As the months passed , she did not recover and developed a persistent cough , the onset of tuberculosis . On 26 August , the princess departed from the Janelas Verdes palace , where she lived , and traveled to the island of Madeira . The island 's climate had a salutary reputation , as Maria Amélia noted : " the fevers disappear , they say , as if by magic ! "

Maria Amélia and her mother , who had accompanied her , disembarked on 31 August in Funchal , the capital of Madeira . The entire town greeted her joyfully , and a crowd followed the princess to her new home . She adored the island and told her mother : " If I one day recover my previous robust health , isn 't that so mommy , we will stay a long time in this island . We will make long excursions in the mountains , we will find new paths , just as we did in Stein ! " But her health worsened , and by the end of November , all hope was gone . By the beginning of 1853 , the princess was bedridden , and she knew death was approaching : " My strength diminishes from day to day ; I can feel it ... we are reaching the beginning of the end . " A little after midnight in the early hours of 4 February , a priest administered the last rites . Maria Amélia tried to comfort her mother : " Do not cry ... let God 's will be done ; may He come to my aid in my last hour ; may He console my poor mother ! " She died later that morning at around 04 : 00 .

The princess 's body remained in a chapel next to the house where she died until it was taken back to the Portuguese mainland on 7 May 1853 . On 12 May , the coffin was disembarked at Lisbon , and a grandiose funeral followed . Her remains were interred next to her father 's in the Braganza Pantheon , located in the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora . Almost 130 years later , in 1982 , Maria Amélia 's remains were carried to Brazil and placed in the Convento de Santo Antônio (Convent of Saint Anthony) in Rio de Janeiro , where other Brazilian royals are interred .

= = = Legacy = = =

Emperor Pedro II had never met his younger sister in person , but had developed a strong relationship with her through her letters . He wrote in his journal seven years after her death : " I heard the mass for my sister [Maria] Amélia with whom I was so close and feel so sorry for never having met . " Amélie visited her daughter 's tomb every 4 February until her own death , and financed the construction of a hospital in Funchal called " Princesa D. Maria Amélia " in her daughter 's honor ; the hospital is still in existence . Amélie bequeathed her properties in Bavaria to Archduke Maximilian , " whom [she] would [have felt] happy having as a son @-@ in @-@ law , had God conserved [her] beloved daughter Maria Amélia " .

Archduke Maximilian was haunted by the memory of Maria Amélia , and after his marriage to Charlotte of Belgium he made a pilgrimage in 1859 ? 60 to locations connected to his ex @-@ fiancée . Upon reaching the island of Madeira , he wrote : " Here died , of tuberculosis , on 4 February 1853 , the only daughter of the Empress of Brazil , an extraordinarily gifted creature . She left this flawed world , pure as an angel who returns to Heaven , her true native land . "

Maximilian visited the hospital in Funchal that bore Maria Amélia 's name , and until his death

financed the maintenance of a double hospital room there . He also donated a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in memory of Maria Amélia . Next he visited the house (called Quinta das Angústias , or Anguished Villa) where she died ; he wrote : " for a long time I stood silent amidst thoughts of sorrow and longing under the shadow of a magnificent tree that enfolds and protects the house where the angel , so bitterly wept for , ceased to exist " . In his memoirs , Maximilian also mentioned the island of Madeira , where " the life [was] extinguished that seemed destined to guarantee my own tranquil happiness " .

Following his arrival in Brazil on 11 January 1860 Maximilian became fascinated by the country , the only monarchy in South America , and then under the rule of his deceased fiancée 's elder brother . Inspired by the stability and prosperity he saw there , on 10 April 1864 he agreed to become emperor of the newly founded Mexican Empire , believing he could achieve the same results in Mexico . But instead Maximilian was executed on 19 June 1867 , after being captured by Mexican republicans . In a last homage to Maria Amélia , as he was stripped of his belongings to face a firing squad , Maximilian asked that the small medallion of the Blessed Virgin Mary she had given to him , and which he wore around his neck , be sent to her mother . While Maria Amélia 's life had little effect on events in either Brazil or Portugal , her death had significant , if indirect , repercussions on the history of Mexico .

= = Titles and honors = =

= = = Titles and styles = = =

1 December 1831 ? 4 February 1853 : Her Highness The Princess Dona Maria Amélia of Brazil

= = = Honors = = =

Princess Maria Amélia was a recipient of the following Brazilian Orders :

Grand Cross of the Order of Pedro I.

Grand Cross of the Order of the Rose .

She was a recipient of the following foreign honors :

Royal Order of Noble Ladies of Queen Maria Luisa .

Grand Cross of the Portuguese Order of the Immaculate Conception of Vila Viçosa .

Grand Cross of the Portuguese Order of Saint Isabel .

Insignia of the Austrian Order of the Starry Cross .

Insignia of the Bavarian Order of Saint Elizabeth .

= = Ancestry = =

= = Endnotes = =