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Viceroyalty of Peru
(Audiencia of Charcas, Present-day Bolivia)
mid-17th century

**Virgin of Guadalupe of
Extremadura**

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Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura

Audiencia of Charcas (Present-day Bolivia), Viceroyalty of Peru
Early follower of Fray Diego de Ocaña (Ocaña, 1565 – Mexico, 1608)
mid-17th century

Oil on panel, with painted application of simulated jewels and iridescent ornamentation over gold
98 × 73 cm

Provenance: Private collection

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The present work belongs to the devotional tradition of the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura, an invocation that arrived in the Americas toward the end of the sixteenth century and achieved wide diffusion throughout the Andean highlands. Its composition and quality bear a close relationship to the style of Fray Diego de Ocaña, the Hieronymite monk who between 1600 and 1601 executed the first documented versions of this image during his travels through the Viceroyalty of Peru and other regions of the continent (Fig. 1).

Ocaña proved innovative in his pictorial translation of the Extremaduran model, incorporating rich ornamentation and symbolic elements that, once adapted within local workshops, acquired a distinctive hybrid aesthetic.

By virtue of its facture, decorative density, and chronology, this extraordinary painting is closely linked to the first generation of Guadalupan representations in Andean territory, predating by more than a century the serial and more widely disseminated productions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Virgin appears with her characteristic triangular silhouette, holding the Christ Child on her left arm. Both figures display mestizo facial features, a distinctive trait of the Andean reinterpretation of Iberian Marian icons (Fig. 2).

At the upper section of the crown worn by the Virgin appears a winged motif positioned beneath the cross, represented with open wings and axial symmetry. Although at first glance it might be interpreted as a purely ornamental element, its morphology allows it to be recognized as a stylized butterfly deliberately incorporated into the symbolic program of the image.

From a formal perspective, the figure does not correspond to a strictly naturalistic representation but rather to a decorative interpretation based on European visual models adapted to an American context. Nevertheless, the overall configuration—outspread wings, a clearly defined bodily axis, and contrasting chromaticism—recalls neotropical butterflies of the family Papilionidae, particularly species related to the genera *Parides* or *Battus*, widely distributed throughout subtropical and Andean regions of Bolivia (Fig. 3). The geometric stylization of the motif indicates that the artist did not seek precise zoological identification but rather a recognizable evocation of a local lepidopteran integrated into a sacred ornamental language.

Within Christian iconographic tradition, the butterfly

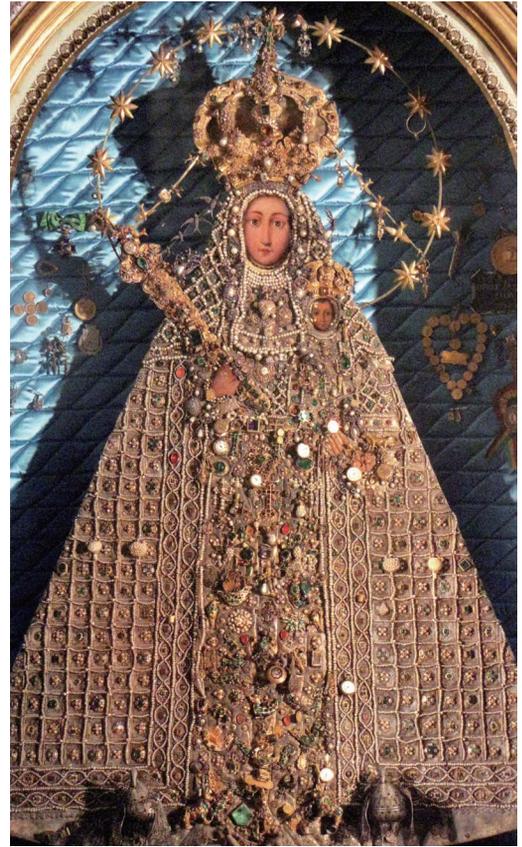


Fig. 1 Diego de Ocaña, *Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura*. Museo Catedral Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Sucre, Bolivia.



Fig. 2. *Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura* (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

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Fig. 3 *Battus polydamas*, Phylionidae family. Distributed from Mexico to Argentina, including tropical and subtropical regions in Bolivia



Fig. 4 White-winged Parakeet/Amazonian Parakeet, *Brotogeris versicolurus*, Psittacidae family. Amazon Basin and subtropical valleys of Peru, Bolivia, and the eastern Andean regions.

possesses a well-established symbolic meaning dating back to Late Antiquity and medieval European art. Its life cycle—caterpillar, chrysalis, and winged emergence—was interpreted as a metaphor for resurrection and the transformation of the soul, becoming a visual emblem of eternal life and spiritual victory over death. During the Baroque period, this symbolism gained particular relevance in devotional contexts, where natural elements functioned as visible signs of theological truths.

In the seventeenth-century Andean sphere, this European symbol underwent a process of reinterpretation. The incorporation of a butterfly inspired by American species within the Marian crown suggests an intention to integrate local nature into sacred representation, affirming the universality of Christian order through references to the natural environment of the territory. The butterfly thus ceases to function solely as an abstract sign of resurrection and becomes instead an indication of the sacralization of the American natural world, subordinated to the celestial sovereignty of Mary.

The placement of the motif—in the upper axis of the crown and directly beneath the cross—reinforces its symbolic function. Situated at the transitional point between the Marian figure and the redemptive sign, the butterfly acts as an image of spiritual transformation mediated through Christian redemption. In this way, the natural element becomes fully integrated into the theological discourse of the work, participating in an iconographic program in which nature, ornament, and doctrine converge in a synthesis characteristic of seventeenth-century Andean devotional painting.

At both sides of the central motif placed upon the Virgin's crown appear two small birds facing one another, depicted in profile and adapted to the ornamental structure of the headdress. Although reduced in scale and executed according to a stylized decorative language, their morphological features allow them to be identified as psittacine birds—that is, American parrots or parakeets.

The figures display compact bodies, rounded heads, and short, curved beaks, characteristics typical of the family Psittacidae, widely distributed throughout South America. The predominant coloration—an intense green accented with warm tones—corresponds to species common to the Andean and subtropical regions of Bolivia, particularly small parakeets of the genera *Brotogeris*, *Forpus*, or *Psittacara*, birds well known in the inter-Andean valleys and yungas regions (Fig. 4). Although the representation does not aim at ornithological precision, the general identification as American birds is both clear and meaningful.

The inclusion of these birds within the Marian crown should not be interpreted as a merely ornamental device. In devotional painting produced in the American viceroyalties during the seventeenth century, one observes a progressive process of visual localization of sacred images through the incorporation of natural elements belonging to the American environment. Flowers, fruits, insects, and exotic birds gradually became integrated into iconographies of European origin, generating a visual

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reinterpretation that affirmed the universality of Christianity in geographically distant territories.

In Christian symbolic tradition, birds possess multiple meanings associated with the spiritual realm. Their capacity for flight transforms them into images of the elevated soul, of communication between heaven and earth, and of the celestial dimension of existence. Within Marian contexts, small and harmonious birds are also commonly associated with purity, divine grace, and the restored paradise. When depicted in facing pairs—as in this image—they evoke ideas of balance, concord, and cosmic order.

In the Andean sphere, these European connotations were enriched through the incorporation of local fauna, producing a distinctive symbolic synthesis. American parrots and parakeets, owing to their brilliant coloration and their association with fertile and warm regions, were perceived as signs of natural abundance and of a paradisiacal landscape. Their presence beside the Virgin thus suggests the integration of the American natural world into the sacred order, affirming Mary as sovereign not only of heaven but also of visible creation within the territory where the image was venerated.

The position of the birds, flanking the central axis of the crown and oriented toward the upper motif, reinforces their symbolic function as creatures that recognize and accompany the Virgin's celestial royalty. Rather than mere ornaments, they act as visual mediators between nature and theology, participating in an iconographic program in which the created universe appears harmonized under divine authority.

In this way, the birds constitute a significant example of how seventeenth-century Andean devotional painting transformed European iconographic models through the conscious incorporation of elements drawn from the American environment, producing images in which faith, nature, and local culture are integrated into a visual synthesis characteristic of the South American viceroyalties.

The Child wears a richly ornamented red tunic and bears upon his chest a singular emblem: a Latin cross set over an inverted triangle. This motif, uncommon within seventeenth-century Hispanic iconography, may be interpreted as a Christological symbol alluding to the mystery of the Incarnation: the inverted triangle, associated with the material or earthly realm, joins with the cross—the emblem of the divine—suggesting the descent of God into the world. The typology of the cross—with expanded terminals and the possible application of enamels or precious stones—corresponds to a late Renaissance and Mannerist tradition characteristic of devotional jewelry, in perfect consonance with the overall ornamental treatment of the work. The Child appears as a regal and frontal figure, fully integrated into the symbolic program of celestial kingship that structures the image. Beyond the Christological emblem described above, his attire constitutes a complex iconographic field in which animal, natural, and fantastic elements actively participate in the theological construction of the figure (Fig. 5).

The red tunic, a color traditionally associated with sacrifice and divine royalty, is covered with an abundant decoration of simulated gemstones and zoomorphic motifs arranged rhythmically. This ornamental treatment transforms the garment into a true symbolic space, in which nature appears subordinated and ordered under the authority of

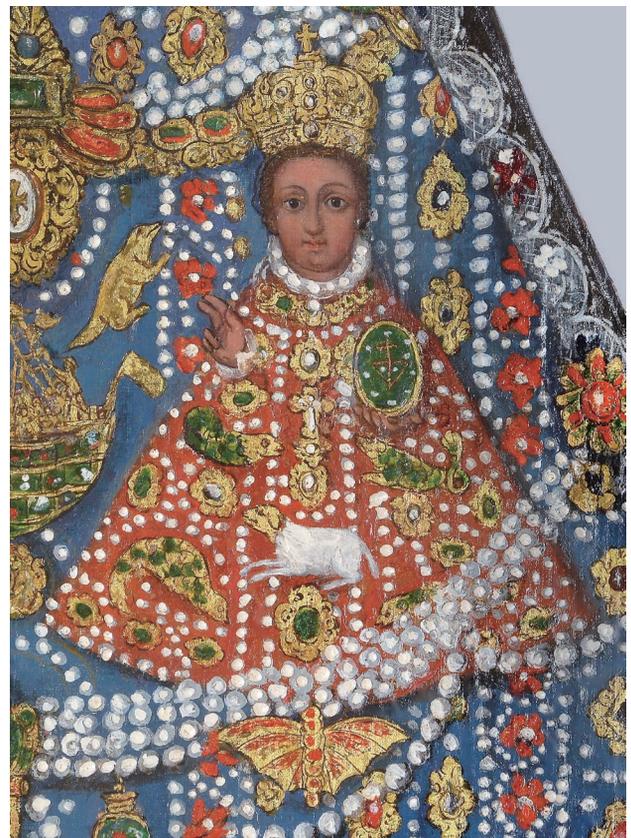


Fig. 5 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

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the Child as the incarnate Christ.

Among the most significant elements is the presence of hybrid or fantastic creatures, particularly visible in the lower areas of the garment. These figures, of ambiguous morphology—combining features of birds, reptiles, and imaginary animals—should not be interpreted as mere decorative fantasies. Within the Baroque artistic tradition, heir to medieval and Renaissance repertoires, fantastic animals functioned as symbols of the natural world in its total dimension, including that which is unknown or marvelous. Their inclusion suggests Christ's universal dominion over all creation, visible and invisible, ordered and chaotic.

In the seventeenth-century Andean context, such creatures acquire an additional nuance, as they enter into dialogue with local visual traditions in which hybrid beings and zoomorphic forms occupied a significant place within the pre-Hispanic symbolic imagination. Without abandoning the Christian doctrinal framework, these figures allow for a visual integration of diverse cultural sensibilities, contributing to the construction of a devotional language that was both accessible and profoundly meaningful for local communities.

Upon the tunic there also appears the figure of a white lamb, clearly identifiable as the *Agnus Dei*. This motif constitutes one of the oldest and most fundamental Christological symbols, derived from the Gospel of John ("*Ecce Agnus Dei*") and associated with Christ's redemptive sacrifice. The inclusion of the lamb within the Child's own garment introduces a particularly eloquent theological dimension: the incarnate Child already bears the sign of his sacrificial destiny. The image thus establishes a visual continuity between Incarnation and Passion, recalling that Christ's birth already contains, in potential, the mystery of redemption.

The lamb, represented with simplicity and chromatic purity, deliberately contrasts with the surrounding ornamental exuberance, standing out as a doctrinal nucleus within the decorative display. This opposition between symbolic simplicity and material richness responds to a Baroque strategy intended to emphasize the centrality of sacrifice within the economy of salvation.

Among the multiple natural elements incorporated into the garment appears also a butterfly, rendered in a stylized manner and previously analyzed in detail in relation to the Marian crown. Its presence within the sphere of the Child reinforces the symbolism of transformation and resurrection associated with the life cycle of the lepidopteran, establishing a conceptual link between the Incarnation and the future victory over death.

Taken together, the iconography of the Christ Child does not merely express his infant condition but presents him as sovereign and redeeming Christ, whose authority extends over the entirety of the cosmos. Real and fantastic animals, sacrificial symbols, and natural motifs converge in a visual synthesis characteristic of seventeenth-century Andean devotional painting, in which ornament becomes a vehicle of theological thought and a privileged means for expressing the universality of the Christian message.

The Virgin's face radiates serenity and frontal composure, marked by a direct yet restrained gaze. The blue mantle, richly embroidered, incorporates simulated pearls, cameos, emeralds, rubies, and enameled elements applied over a gold ground through the technique of *tornasolado*, which produces chromatic variations and a shifting luminosity.

The Virgin holds in her right hand an elongated object surmounted by a cross, whose form combines characteristics of a royal scepter and a cruciform standard, an element frequently found in Baroque Marian iconography throughout the South American viceroyalties. From a typological perspective, the object may be more precisely identified as a cruciform scepter, a hybrid symbol that unites royal authority with the redemptive meaning of the cross (Fig. 6).

Formally, the object presents a rigid vertical shaft culminating in a Latin cross, a configuration that recalls ceremonial scepters employed in representations of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven (*Regina Coeli*). In Western Christian tradition, the scepter constitutes one of the principal attributes of royalty, derived from biblical and monarchical models symbolizing legitimate governance, justice, and spiritual

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dominion. Its adoption in Marian imagery became especially consolidated during the Early Modern period, when Baroque theology emphasized Mary's role as celestial sovereign and universal mediator.

The incorporation of the cross at the upper extremity transforms the scepter into a theologically specific object. It is not merely a sign of authority but an explicit affirmation that such authority derives from Christian redemption. The cruciform scepter indicates that Marian kingship is not autonomous but participatory: Mary reigns by virtue of her relationship with Christ and her role within the history of salvation.

Within the seventeenth-century Andean devotional context, this attribute also acquires a particular political and catechetical dimension. Marian images disseminated throughout the American viceroalties were conceived as visual instruments of doctrinal instruction, capable of expressing complex concepts through easily recognizable symbols. The cruciform scepter simultaneously communicates three fundamental ideas:

1. Celestial kingship: Mary as sovereign of heaven and universal mediator.
2. Christian victory: the cross as the sign of redemptive triumph.
3. Spiritual order: the legitimation of the Christian world under divine authority.

The gesture of holding the scepter in the right hand—traditionally associated with action and authority—reinforces its active function. The Virgin does not appear merely crowned but symbolically exercising her spiritual power over the created world.

Likewise, the vertical character of the object establishes a visual axis connecting earth and heaven, reinforcing Mary's mediating function between the human and the divine realms. In viceregal compositions, this type of attribute contributes to transforming the Marian image into a figure that is simultaneously devotional and regal, integrating European models of sacred monarchy with local sensibilities.

In this way, the cruciform scepter should be understood not as an ornamental accessory but as a central element of the work's iconographic program: a visible sign of Marian spiritual authority, grounded in the cross and symbolically extended over the territory and community that venerated the image.

Beneath the Virgin's right hand appears a single-masted vessel supported by angels, typologically identifiable as an ocean-going nao of Iberian tradition, similar to those used in Atlantic voyages between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although stylized, its form clearly recalls the ships that made possible the maritime connection between Europe and America.

In Christian tradition, the ship constitutes an ancient symbol of the Church (*navis Ecclesiae*), understood as the spiritual community that traverses the world guided toward salvation. By holding it, the Virgin appears as protector and guide of the Christian people, reinforcing her mediating role within the salvific order.

In the seventeenth-century Andean context, this motif also acquires a specific historical meaning. The naos were the vehicles through which the Christian faith, devotional images, and Marian



Fig. 6 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail).
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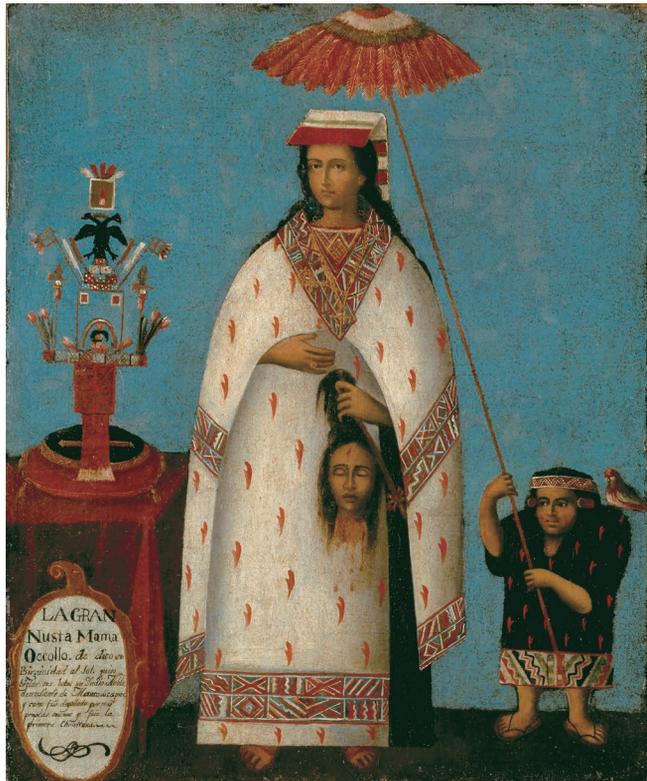


Fig. 7. La Gran Nusta Mama Occollo. Peru, c. 1800. Denver Art Museum.

advocations arrived in the Americas. The vessel may therefore be interpreted as a symbolic allusion to the transatlantic passage and to Marian protection over the expansion of Christianity on the continent.

The ship thus functions simultaneously as a theological symbol of the Church and as a visual memory of the oceanic journey that linked both worlds, integrating history and doctrine within the iconographic program of the image.

To the left of the Virgin's hand appears an object of great symbolic importance: a tupu (or tupo), a ceremonial pin traditionally used by Andean women to fasten their garments—especially the *acsu*, mantle, or related textiles. It constitutes a characteristic element of pre-Hispanic and viceregal female attire, whose presence in the painting explicitly introduces material references to Andean culture.

The depicted tupu stands out for its exceptional richness, as it appears fashioned in gold, a material reserved for contexts of high symbolic prestige. Historically, most surviving tupus are made of silver, whereas golden examples

are extremely rare and associated with Indigenous elites or ceremonial use. Its inclusion in the image therefore does not respond to everyday observation but rather to a deliberate choice that elevates the object into the realm of the sacred and the regal (Fig. 7).

The incorporation of the tupu within the Marian mantle constitutes a significant iconographic gesture. The object, originally linked to Indigenous female identity, is re-signified within Christian devotional language, becoming integrated into the ensemble of royal insignia and symbolic jewels surrounding the Virgin. In this way, an element belonging to Andean dress is transformed into a sign of sacralized dignity, participating in the process by which Marian images of the vicerealties incorporated local cultural references without abandoning their doctrinal framework.

Resting upon the tupu is also a small bird, carefully rendered. The presence of the bird introduces an additional symbolic dimension. In Christian tradition, small birds are often associated with the soul, divine grace, or the harmony of the created world; however, within the Andean context they also evoke the close relationship between nature, fertility, and cosmic order. The bird thus transforms the utilitarian object into a living element, integrating nature and ornament within the visual program of the work.

The combination of the tupu and the bird may be interpreted as a particularly eloquent symbolic synthesis: the Indigenous feminine ornament, elevated to a regal category through the use of gold, becomes a support of life and creation under Marian protection. The Virgin thus appears not only as celestial queen but also as a figure capable of integrating and dignifying local material traditions within a universal Christian order.

Taken together, this detail reveals one of the most characteristic features of seventeenth-century Andean devotional painting: the transformation of everyday Indigenous objects into bearers of theological meaning, in which cultural identity and religious symbolism are articulated within an image of profound visual and spiritual complexity.

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Next to the tupu appears the figure of a pelican, identifiable by its long curved beak and stylized frontal disposition. This motif belongs to one of the oldest symbolic traditions of Christianity and possesses a deeply Christological meaning. Since the Middle Ages, the pelican was interpreted as an image of Christ's sacrifice, based on the belief—widely disseminated in medieval bestiaries—that the bird fed its young with its own blood, wounding its breast to give them life. This legend transformed the pelican into a visual emblem of redemption and sacrificial love, closely associated with the Eucharistic mystery.

The lower section of the mantle constitutes one of the most complex iconographic spaces of the work, where a true symbolic microcosm unfolds, composed of real animals, fantastic creatures, and hybrid figures arranged within medallions and ornamental axes. Far from responding to a merely decorative program, these elements configure an allegorical representation of the created universe subjected to the divine order embodied in the Virgin and the Child.

Along the central axis appears a vertical succession of animal figures that visually organizes the composition. At the lower level, a male figure stands out, mounted upon a large flying bird that recalls the imaginative world of Bosch. Above it appears a pelican with outspread wings, and above this can be seen a bird perched frontally, probably an American parrot or parakeet, a species already associated in Andean art with fertility, abundance, and the paradisiacal character of American nature.

In the lower area of the mantle appear two hybrid figures clearly identifiable as sirens (Fig. 8), characterized by female torsos and fish-like tails, both playing stringed instruments resembling guitars or vihuelas. This motif holds a notable presence in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Andean art and constitutes one of the most revealing examples of the local adaptation of European symbolic repertoires.

The siren originally derives from classical and medieval European tradition, where it was interpreted in an ambivalent manner: a symbol of seduction and spiritual danger, but also an image of musical harmony and the power of sound over the soul. In the Andean context, however, its



Fig.8 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

meaning underwent a substantial transformation. Musical sirens were integrated into a visual imaginary in which water, fertility, and music possessed profound pre-Hispanic cosmological resonances. Various studies have suggested that these figures may have symbolically dialogued with Andean aquatic divinities and with local conceptions of balance between nature and cosmic order. Consequently, rather than functioning as negative moral warnings—as in many European models—Andean sirens frequently appear associated with universal harmony, abundance, and the sonic celebration of divine order.

The fact that both figures perform stringed instruments is particularly significant. The guitar and the vihuela, introduced into the Americas during the sixteenth century, quickly became central instruments of viceregal musical life, both in religious and festive contexts. Musical sirens thus symbolize the integration of European sound within the American symbolic landscape, representing a musicalization of the cosmos under Marian authority.

In the lower registers appear two mounted male figures: one riding a horse and the other mounted upon a fantastic animal of hybrid morphology, possibly derived from European bestiary models reinterpreted locally. These figures evoke the chivalric imaginary widely disseminated throughout the seventeenth-century Hispanic world, in which the rider symbolized nobility, dominion, and social order.

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Fig. 9 Virgen del Apocalipsis, Círculo del Maestro del Gabinete de Ámsterdam, ca. 1480–1490. Vitral. The Metropolitan Museum of Art – The Cloisters, Nueva York.

The garments worn by the riders provide important clues for iconographic dating. Both figures wear short garments fitted closely to the torso, with tight sleeves and relatively short breeches, characteristics typical of European male attire disseminated between the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century.

At the base of the composition, immediately beneath the Marian figure, appears the representation of a crescent moon, an iconographic element of profound tradition within Christian art. This motif derives directly from the apocalyptic vision described in the Book of Revelation (12:1): “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars,” a passage that, since the Late Middle Ages, was interpreted as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, especially in her invocation as the Immaculate Conception.

The systematic incorporation of the moon into Marian imagery began to consolidate in Europe between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Fig. 9), particularly within the Hispanic sphere, where devotion to the Immaculate Conception acquired exceptional importance. During the sixteenth century, the crescent moon became a stable iconographic attribute of the apocalyptic Virgin, widely disseminated through Flemish and Spanish

engravings that circulated extensively throughout American territories. By the mid-seventeenth century, its presence was already fully codified and understood as a sign of Mary’s absolute purity and of her victory over the mutable and earthly world, traditionally associated with the lunar sphere.

Within the Andean viceregal context, the moon also acquired additional resonances. Its placement beneath the Virgin’s feet expresses the subordination of the cosmos to divine order, while simultaneously engaging with ancient Andean conceptions related to celestial cycles and the sacred nature of the stars. The Marian image thus appears as a cosmic figure who integrates and governs the natural universe, reinforcing her character as celestial queen and universal mediator.

A decorative language characteristic of the mid-seventeenth century, marked by the development of the early Baroque, is evident here. The symmetrical volutes, gentle scrollwork, and dynamic molding of the support display affinities with ornamental repertoires derived from late European Mannerism, reinterpreted in Andean workshops through a tendency toward stylization and linear clarity. This type of decoration, still restrained and balanced—without the Rococo exuberance of the eighteenth century—is fully consistent with a chronology situated around the second third of the seventeenth century (Fig. 10).

Taken as a whole, the moon does not function solely as an apocalyptic attribute but as the symbolic foundation of the entire image: by standing upon it, the Virgin affirms herself as a supracosmic figure whose authority encompasses both the Christian celestial order and the totality of the natural world represented within the mantle.

The presence of the crescent moon does not derive from the original model of the Virgin of

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Fig. 10 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

Guadalupe of Extremadura but instead constitutes an iconographic addition characteristic of American Baroque development, in which the invocation was reinterpreted through the incorporation of apocalyptic and Immaculist imagery. This process reflects the creative adaptation of European models within the seventeenth-century Andean devotional context, transforming a medieval image into a cosmological representation of universal scope (Fig. 11).

The reverse of the panel presents a delicate floral polychromy in pink, ochre, and green tones, contemporary with the execution of the work. This decoration indicates that the piece was conceived for prominent devotional use, whether in a fixed altar setting or within processional contexts (Fig. 12).

The ornamental finish of the work corresponds to a highly specialized pictorial technique based on the use of tornasolado over gold, a procedure characteristic of the most technically refined devotional painting of the seventeenth century. The process began with a careful preparation of the support through layers of ground, upon which a reddish or yellowish bole was applied to enhance adhesion and the subsequent brilliance of the gilding. Over this base, gold leaf was laid and carefully burnished in the ornamental areas, generating a homogeneous and highly reflective metallic surface.

Once the golden layer had been established, the artist applied successive translucent glazes of pigment—principally blues, reds, and greens—that allowed partial passage of light toward the underlying metal. This procedure produced a distinctive optical effect: the color did not obscure the gold but transformed it into a vibrant and shifting surface capable of simulating precious enamels or inset gemstones. The volume of the gems was subsequently reinforced through fine outlining in dark tones and small touches of white highlights that accentuated the sense of relief and depth.



Fig. 11. Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura. 12th–13th century. Royal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe, Guadalupe, Cáceres, Spain.

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The final result is a polychrome gilding of extraordinary visual richness, in which painting and goldsmithery appear to merge. The pictorial surface thus acquires an almost material quality, evoking liturgical objects and sacred jewelry rather than mere decorative elements. This technical virtuosity not only intensifies the perception of luxury and three-dimensionality but also situates the work within a pictorial tradition closely linked to courtly visual languages and to the most sophisticated devotional aesthetics of the seventeenth-century Hispanic and American worlds (Fig. 13).

The iconographic ensemble analyzed reveals that the image must be understood as a total symbolic construction, in which each element of the mantle participates in a coherent program of Marian cosmological meaning. The moon beneath the Virgin establishes her apocalyptic and supracosmic dimension; the ship simultaneously alludes to the Church and to the transatlantic passage that made possible the arrival of Christianity in the Americas; the golden tupu incorporates Andean materiality and feminine identity into the sacred sphere; the birds, the butterfly, and the natural and fantastic bestiary express the integration of the created world—both real and imagined—under divine order; while the musical sirens and mounted riders evoke universal harmony and Christian social organization through visual repertoires inherited from the European imaginary. The mantle thus becomes a true visual microcosm, where nature, history, and theology converge in a synthesis characteristic of seventeenth-century Andean devotional art.

Within this context, the painting acquires exceptional importance both for its symbolic complexity and for the technical mastery achieved by the artist. The pictorial execution demonstrates outstanding command in the recreation of precious surfaces, particularly in the representation of jewels and simulated gemstones. Through subtle chromatic modulations, delicate highlights, and a precise alternation between opacity and brilliance, the painter achieves a remarkable illusion of materiality that transforms the mantle into an almost tangible textile. Especially noteworthy is the treatment of the emeralds, whose intense green coloration—marked by translucent nuances and carefully graduated tonal variations—produces an extraordinary effect of depth and luminosity, approaching the optical appearance of the real stone. This technical virtuosity not only demonstrates a refined knowledge of Baroque ornamental painting but also reveals a particular



Fig. 12 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques



Fig. 13 Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura (detail). Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

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sensitivity toward the symbolic value of gemstones, traditionally associated with incorruptibility, eternal life, and celestial royalty.

The ornamental richness, iconographic density, and organic integration of European and Andean elements place the work among the most refined examples of the American reinterpretation of Hispanic devotional models. In particular, it constitutes one of the most remarkable artistic testimonies of the representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura in the South American sphere, where the invocation was transformed through processes of cultural appropriation and local symbolic elaboration. The rarity of certain elements—such as the golden tupu, the elaborate symbolic bestiary, and the sophisticated cosmological articulation of the mantle—confers upon the painting a singular character within the pictorial production of the period, demonstrating an exceptional intellectual and artistic level. Consequently, the work possesses not only high devotional value but also stands as a fundamental piece for understanding the creative capacity of seventeenth-century Andean workshops, capable of transforming tradition, technique, and symbolism into an image of extraordinary visual and conceptual richness.

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