



JAIME EGUIGUREN

ART & ANTIQUES

Cuzco, Peru
Late 17th–early 18th century

Our Lady of Guápulo

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Oil on canvas

157.7 x 114.1 cm

Provenance: Private collection

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Jimena Aznar
Art Historian

The representation of the Virgin of Guápulo conforms to an iconographic model widely disseminated among Marian advocations, characterized by the integration of the Virgin Mary within a large, rigid, conical mantle. This mantle, which entirely envelops the figure, suppresses any perception of the human silhouette, leaving only the head and hands visible. A prominent feature of this iconography is the large coral rosary suspended over the mantle, reinforcing the devotional character of the image.

Similarly, the Christ Child, depicted in the Virgin's arm, is also represented enveloped in a conical garment, thereby maintaining visual and symbolic coherence between the two figures. This mode of representation responds to an artistic tradition that emphasizes the solemnity and sacred nature of the image, as well as its function as an object of worship and devotion.

Both figures are crowned and share analogous decorative patterns in their garments. The series of bows adorning the clothing, together with the markedly large cuffs or sleeve ornaments, suggests a dating between the final period of the Habsburg dynasty and the early Bourbon era.

The various versions of the Virgin of Guápulo display minimal differences, primarily in the brocaded textiles or the volumetric treatment of the garments. They consistently feature a large rosary placed over the mantle and hold small bouquets of flowers. In certain representations, the Christ Child's attire is further embellished with pendant emeralds.

This image is based on the Virgin of Guadalupe, from whom this American avocation derives its name—possibly through syncope—sharing with it the geometric structuring of the garments. Etymologically, however, the term may also have Chibcha origins.¹ The devotion was disseminated across various American regions largely due to the determined efforts of Diego de Ocaña, whose extensive theoretical and artistic knowledge, coupled with his awareness of the communicative power of



Fig. 1. Martirio de San Sebastián. Quispe Tito. Painting destroyed in the fire of the Church of San Sebastián in Cusco in 2016.

¹ Schenone, H. H. (2008). *Iconografía Colonial. Santa María*. Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina Santa María de los Buenos Ángeles. p. 406.

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images, contributed significantly to its propagation.² He traveled to present-day Ecuadorian territory, where Franciscan missionaries established a mission that eventually developed into a sanctuary.

Although the work does not initially appear to be a product of the Cuzco School, the modeling of the angels suggests an affinity with the Inca painter Diego Quispe Tito, as observed in his painting of the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian (fig. 1).

Another version of the Virgin of Guápulo, of unknown authorship but from the same period, is located in the Monastery of Santa Catalina in Cusco (Fig. 2), featuring less voluminous attire. The extension of the Quito devotion to the city of Cusco may support the attribution of this artwork to the workshop of Quispe Tito.



Fig. 2 Our Lady of Guápulo, anonymous. 17th century. Monasterio de Santa Clara, Cusco.



Fig. 3 Our Lady of Guápulo, anonymous, 18th century. MET, New York.



Fig. 4. Our Lady of Guápulo, Peruvian anonymous . c. 1680. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin.

The process of the extension of this mestizo devotion to the city of Cusco is evident in another work (Fig. 3), housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The museum attributes the authorship to a Cuzco artist and dates it to the 18th century. During this period, the devotion became even more widespread, resulting in the proliferation of the image.

Another version (Fig. 4), also featuring a translucent veil, is held by the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, Texas, and is dated around 1680. The devotion did not stop there but spread to Bolivia, where a version more similar to the Peruvian style can be found.

Lastly, it is important to mention the Sanctuary of the Virgin of Guápulo itself, founded in 1620. Located at the entrance to the Amazon, it allowed for political control over the indigenous population of the area,³ becoming a focal point for evangelization. The temple centers around a replica of a Baroque sculpture that was destroyed in a fire. Miguel de Santiago, an indigenous painter, created a series of paintings depicting miracles associated with this Virgin. One Marian image there (Fig. 5), identified as

² Mogollón Cano-Cortés, P., & López Guzmán, R. (2019). La Virgen de Guadalupe de Extremadura en América del Sur. Devoción e Iconografía. Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste. p. 25.

³ Romero, M. E., Mármol, M. C., Vásquez, C. A., Espizona, F., Díaz, R. del C., & Santamaría, E. (2021). Aproximación al contexto de producción de la obra pictórica “Milagro de la Virgen de Guápulo en su Santuario”, atribuida a Miguel de Santiago (Siglo XVII). Ge-conservación, 19, 155.

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Fig. 5 Virgen de Guadalupe, "La Peregrina." Anonymous. 17th century. Sanctuary of the Virgin of Guápulo.

"La Peregrina" or the Virgin of Guadalupe, nevertheless shares many characteristics with the Virgin of Guápulo, despite the absence of the Baroque style present in the studied image. This reaffirms the transatlantic connection and continuity between both devotions.

Bibliography

- Mogollón Cano-Cortés, P., & López Guzmán, R. (2019). La Virgen de Guadalupe de Extremadura en América del Sur. Devoción e Iconografía. Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste. <http://hdl.handle.net/10662/10089>
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