

**JAIME EGUIGUREN**

ART & ANTIQUES

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**Leonardo Flores (1650-1710?)**  
Audiencia Real of Charcas (Actual Bolivia)  
17th century

**THE LAST JUDGEMENT**

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**Leonardo Flores (1650-1710?)**

**Known as the Master of the School of El Collao**

Audiencia Real of Charcas (Actual Bolivia)

17th century

***The Last Judgement***

Oil on canvas

208.5 x 153.7 cm

Provenance: Private Collection

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The emergence of painting in South America was largely due to Italian and Flemish artists who set up workshops in the New World in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Subsequently, in the first half of the 17th century, most of the artistic output was undertaken by Spanish painters, who dominated the region until they started to become scarce. At that time the art being produced had not yet reached the point of forming its own independent style, with a “mestizo” identity. Rather, being artists of Western origin, the predominant artistic trends were European ones.

The introduction of Renaissance and Baroque art into the Americas served to foster the development and rebirth of indigenous creativity within this new society, through the emergence of new workshops in the different regions which, thanks to the ongoing presence of Indian aesthetics and ideology, gave rise to the creation of new artistic trends throughout the continent. Some schools began to move further away from European models, with indigenous tastes dominating where, in general terms, the paintings started to lack perspective, with varied anecdotal scenes prevailing featuring figures of conventional beauty. The gold that had gradually stopped being used with the arrival of the Renaissance began to make a reappearance, and works featuring gilding were highly sought after. Cuzco and El Collao were the main centres of this new trend.

In Bolivia, when it was just part of the Audiencia Real of Charcas, three schools emerged. That of Charcas, that of Potosí and that of El Collao.

Charcas, which was once the centre of one of the most important viceregal “audiencias”, or regional jurisdictions, enjoyed a hierarchised religious, cultural and artistic power. According to Pablo Cejudo Velázquez, its churches were so ornate it was known as the “Rome of the Americas”.<sup>1</sup>

With the arts flourishing, as the Villa Imperial and one of the largest cities in the western hemisphere, Potosí was of upmost importance when it came to architecture and painting. There one name in particular left all other artists in the shade: the master Melchor Pérez de Holguín.

The third school painting, the so-called School of El Collao, was not limited to the city confines, and what it may have lacked in intensity it gained in scope. It covered the entire area of old El Collao, where every town or settlement had to have its own church with its respective lands, properties and furnishings, sumptuously decorated in accordance with the canons of the day, which meant that artisan workshops were in high demand, forcing artists such as Leonardo Flores (1650-1710?) to travel throughout the region decorating a large number of shrines with his canvases.<sup>2</sup>

The first painters working in this region were the Jesuit of Italian origin Bernardo Demócrito Bitti (1583-1584) and the Flemish artists Diego de la Puente (1586-1663) and Viren Nury (active ca. 1640), who left their mark on the region’s pictorial school. And though there are no surviving records of any Spanish master, there was a certain influence exerted from afar through the originals and prints of works by painters such as Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) and Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664).

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The school of El Collao, or Colla, quickly diverged from its European model, featuring three prominent characteristics: it is “mestizo”, popular and anonymous. Of the huge number of works from this school that still survive today we have somewhere in the region of a dozen names. Sadly, these artists rarely signed their works, which means in the majority of cases what we are left with is an incessant curiosity that is hard to satisfy even for the most tenacious researchers in this field. Of these few names, and thanks to the signed documents from the period that have been preserved, we can state that the father of the School of El Collao was Leonardo Flores, a painter hailing from La Paz who did not sign his work, but did occasionally leave an initial as a mark. We now know of his characteristic style along with a few aspects about his life, thanks to the research efforts of the pioneering scholars of viceregal art José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, who as Cejudo Velázquez rightly pointed out, were Flores’ discoverers. Our painter worked in the towns and missions on the shores of Lake Titicaca (there are paintings by him in Guaycho, Yunguyo, Puerto Acosta, Italaque, Achocalla, Cohoni and Collana), including the city of La Paz, where he lived, under the protection of Bishop Queipo del Llano y Valdez (1642-1708). His style developed along the prevailing Baroque lines, influenced by Flemish prints, while the introduction of anecdotal details executed to an extremely high standard bears witness to his creative flair.

The biography of Flores written by Mesa and Gisbert in 1963 starts with the following statement: “After Melchor Pérez de Holguín (1665 – later than 1732) and Bernardo Bitti, the most important painter in the entire Audiencia of Charcas was undoubtedly Leonardo Flores”. And their text continues to heap praise on the painter’s artistic qualities and skills in the following terms: “We know of no other painter from this period, other than Holguín, whose work reached these heights”, and “With this work [painting of the Beggar Lazarus, **Fig. 1**] in the church of San Pedro in La Paz, Flores raises himself up to the same height as his contemporary Melchor Pérez de Holguín, the two being the greatest masters of our Baroque painting”.<sup>3</sup> Flores maintained a certain 16th-century *maniera*, hailing back to the Mannerism imported by Bitti, but at the same time he left his own stylistic mark on the painting that would develop in the 18th century. This is the most irrefutable proof of his importance and artistic value; that he left his mark on painting as both master and creator of the School of El Collao. The information in the surviving documentation from the archives of the La Paz Archbishopric, along with the mention of his name in the accounts of certain churches in the area, portray Flores as an artist very much in demand in the late 17th century. There are reports sent by Flores himself to the priest Miguel Galas de los Ríos, shedding light on his activities. It is clear this was a reasonably-well educated painter who could write his own letters, as well as being familiar with the social niceties expected of people in his position in accordance with etiquette in the viceroyalty of the day. Analysis of the documentation allows us to draw up a preliminary corpus of images which, following the iconographical and formal study carried out by Teresa Gisbert and José de Mesa, was expanded based on the attributions of other series of paintings. Attributions based on internal critique and the identification of similarities we will be using to support the authorship of our own canvas, taking into account that not all of the master’s works have written endorsements. The characteristic features that define this painter, as identified by Mesa and Gisbert, are clearly present in our Last Judgement. For example, the way he depicts his subjects’ clothes, full of excessive pomposity (**Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5**), while there are also similarities in the feathers (**Figs. 6, 7 and 8**), headdresses and jewels that appear like brooches decorating said clothes. The oval faces with blushing carnations are a constant feature in most of his works.<sup>4</sup> We can also observe a

3 MESA, José de and GISBERT, Teresa, *Leonardo Flores. Biblioteca de Arte y Cultura*, La Paz, 1963, pp. 7, 22-29.

4 MESA, José de and GISBERT, Teresa, *Holguín y la pintura Virreinal en Bolivia*. La Paz, Juventud, 1977; STRATTON-PRUITT, Suzanne, “El arte de la pintura en la Bolivia Colonial, 1600-1825”, in *El arte de la pintura en Bolivia colonial*. Philadelphia, Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2017, pp. 24-25.

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Fig. 1. *The Beggar Lazarus and the Rich Man* – Leonardo Flores. Museo de la Catedral de La Paz, Bolivia

particularly unique way of rendering the movements and actions of the human body (**Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14**). When examining the general aspects of his work and comparing them with those of our Last Judgement, it is easy to see how Flores' brush stood out when it came to the facial features and human anatomies present in works by other masters, such as José López de los Ríos (doc. 1684), and others from his school, such as Juan Ramos Contreras, the master of the Life of Christ and the master of Calamarca<sup>5</sup>, where the subjects are depicted in a much flatter fashion and with less movement (**Figs. 15 and 16**). As observed by Mesa and Gisbert, these anonymous 17th and 18th-century painters did not attain Flores' exquisite artistic quality, so clearly on display in our Last Judgement.

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5 José López de los Ríos (doc. 1684), following the line of thought of Mesa and Gisbert, is also considered by Donahue-Wallace as the author of the Calamarca series of archangels, this being one of the most complete series known, executed 1660-1680. DONAHUE-WALLACE, Kelly, *Art and architecture of viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*. New Mexico, UNM Press, 2008, p. 160.

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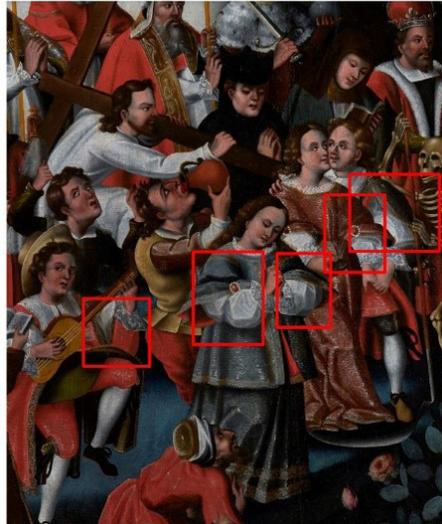
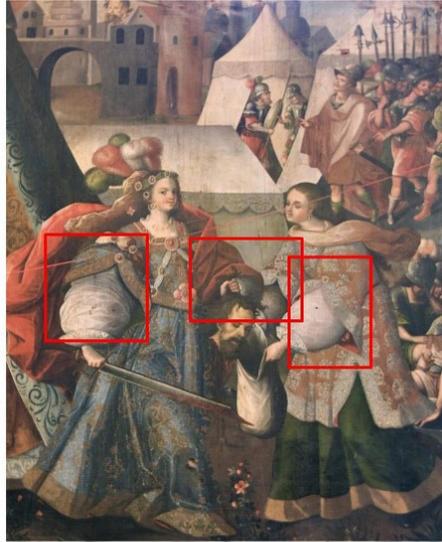
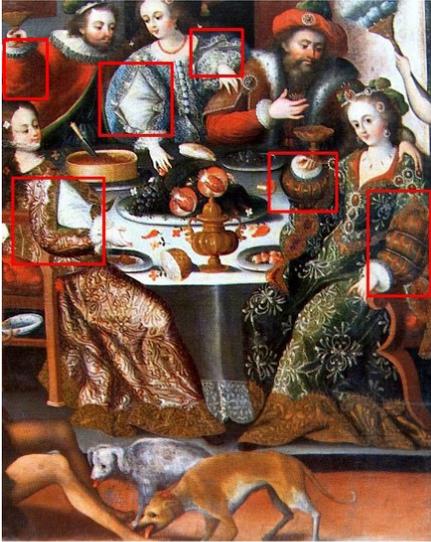


Fig. 2. Detail of *The Beggar Lazarus*, Leonardo Flores. Museo de la Catedral de La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 3. Detail of *The Beheading of Holofernes*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig 4. Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig 5. Detail of *The Last Judgement*.

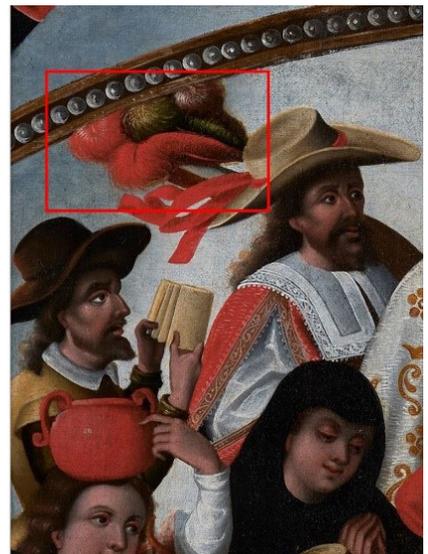
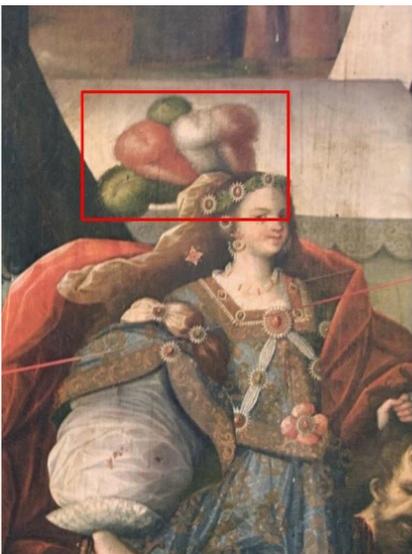


Fig. 6. Detail of *The Beheading of Holofernes*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 7. Detail of *St. George*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 8. Detail of *The Last Judgement*

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Fig. 9. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 10. Detail of *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

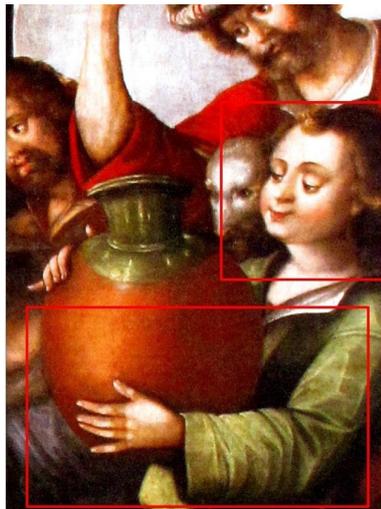


Fig. 11. Detail of *The Last Judgement*.  
Fig. 12. Detail of *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia



Fig. 13. Detail of *The Last Judgement*.  
Fig. 14. Detail of *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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Fig. 15. Detail of *The Last Judgement*, José López de los Ríos. Church of Carabuco, Carabuco, Bolivia. Fig. 16. Detail of *The Triumph of the Eucharist*, Juan Ramos Contreras. Church of Guaqui, La Paz, Bolivia.

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## ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Influenced by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Third Council of Lima (1582-1583) was held with the purpose of organising the evangelisation of the Andes. Not only were catechesis texts published in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, but a growing number of works with images from the Gospels started to appear, exerting a powerful impact on the public. The main guideline was to avoid any misunderstanding of the concepts being communicated. The efficacy of these images was noted by Antonio de la Vega in about 1600 in his “History and Narration of events occurring in this college in Cuzco...” (“Historia y narración de las cosas sucedidas en este colegio del Cuzco...”), where he refers to the Judgement and Hell painted by Bernardo Bitti for the Capilla de Indios:

“...y a avido notables mudanzas y conversiones de yndios con la consideración del juicio y gloria y penas de los condenados, que está todo pintado por las paredes de esta iglesia y capilla, y particularmente de las penas y castigos que en el infierno tienen los vicios y pecados de los yndios que están allí bien dibujados por sus especies y diferencias; por que los indios se mueven mucho por pinturas y muchas veces más que con sermones”.<sup>6</sup>

“...and there have been marked changes and conversions of Indians in consideration of the judgement and glory and the torments of the condemned, which is all painted on the walls of this church and chapel, and particularly the torment and punishment suffered in hell by the Indians with sins and vices who are well-drawn therein, with their types and differences; so the Indians are much moved by painting, often more than by sermons”.

To spread the word of God and address the issue of good and evil as a fundamental part of the change in indigenous ethics, numerous versions were painted of the Last Judgement and the Four Last Things. The chronicle of Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (1534-1615) emphasizes the importance of this sort of iconography when referring to the guild of artisan trades:

“Pintor, entallador, bordador, artificios del seruicio de Dios Nuestro Señor en este rreyno:”

“Painter, sculptor, embroiderer, trades in the service of Our Lord in this kingdom”

“Que los cristianos se concierten para la hechura y semesanja de Dios....Pues que uiendo las santas hechuras, nos acordamos del seruicio de Dios Y ancí en las yglecias y tenplos de Dios ayga curiociudad y muchas pinturas de los santos. Y en cada yglecia ayga un juycio pintado. Allí se muestre la uenida del señor al juycio, el cielo y el mundo y las penas del ynfierno, para que ea testigo del cristiano pecador. Y ancí se lo pague al dicho oficial la limosna de la fábrica o de la limosna que cayre o de los bienes de la yglecia. Y que le cirua y le dé de comer y no le ucope los caciques en sus borracherías.”<sup>7</sup>

“For Christians to agree on the deeds and semblance of God....For by seeing holy deeds, we remember our service to God, and thus in the churches and chapels of God let there be curiosity, and many paintings of the saints. And let each church have a painted judgement, with a depiction of the Lord’s coming to the

<sup>6</sup> Vega Antonio de la *Historia y narración de las cosas sucedidas en este Colegio del Cuzco desde su fundación hasta hoy, 1 de noviembre Día de Todos los Santos, año de 1600*, pag. 42 y 43. Ed. Vargas Ugarte, Lima 1948. Una descripción de la obra pictórica de Bernardo Bitti en relación con esta capilla se encuentra en: José de Mesa y Teresa Gisbert. *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña*. Ed. Wiese. Lima 1982. T.I pags. 58- 59

<sup>7</sup> Guamán Poma de Ayala. *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno*. Ed. Siglo XXI, Vol. III. México 1980. pag. 883.

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judgement, the heaven and the world and the torments of hell, so that the Christian sinner be witness. And therefore let the artisan be paid for painting it, or receive alms, or goods from the Church. And let its serve him and pay for his food, and not be spent by the rich landowners on drunken speers.

Probably our *The Last Judgement* has missing parts on the sides comparing to the original canvas. The one we have here may be divided into three main sections: the celestial register, dedicated to “Glory”, at the top, with Christ in the middle surrounded by saints and the Virgin Mary, who is depicted slightly larger than the rest of the figures. Then there is the earthly sphere, lower down, dedicated to “Death”, where the middle portrays the “Judgement”, which is presided over by Christ the Judge with his hand raised in a sign of blessing. The souls dressed in white appear as a heavenly host on a triumphant march accompanied by angels in lavish silk clothing adorned with dazzling jewellery made up of precious brooches, all heading towards a background of celestial light. The souls on the opposite (right-hand) side, around whom the sinister flames of hell are licking, are being pushed and shoved against their will by an ominous devil towards the flaming depths of eternal hellfire, where we see individuals with expressions of terror while horrific black smoke billows all around. In contrast to more conventional works depicting this subject, where St. Michael faces the viewer from the middle of the composition, here we see him from behind, leading the angels with trumpets heralding the end of days, accompanying the souls entering the kingdom of heaven. This is not the only compositional change compared to the Carabuco work (**Fig. 17**), which is more faithful to Flemish prints. I have not been able to identify the original source used by Flores here, so we do not know how much artistic licence he took, but I have not found any other composition or prints portraying live beings stalked by Death



Fig. 17. *Last Judgement*, José López de los Ríos. Church of Carabuco, Carabuco Bolivia.

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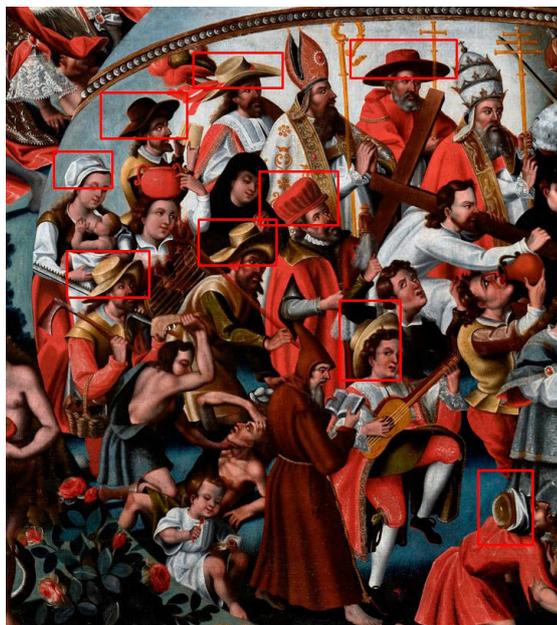
while inside an orb. Inside said orb depicting the world we see numerous figures who appear alien to the rest of the composition. If we focus on the lower left-hand side of the orb, we observe a child playing at blowing bubbles, which within the “vanitas” iconography stands for the fragility of life and the inherent vulnerability of humankind. As early as in ancient Rome the writers Varro and Lucano immortalised the phrase “Homo bulla est”, meaning we are all as fragile as bubbles. It is particularly striking that all those depicted here march on, unaware of said fragility, towards “Death”, whose scythe is resting under the feet of lovers. If we turn to the two figures above the innocent child, we see Cain in the act of killing Abel out of envy for God’s love. This vile act represents the sin and evil the first son of man bore within. Near them, but out of the earthly plane, we see their parents, Adam and Eve, having already tasted the forbidden fruit, tempted by the snake who led them inadvertently into the very sin that would trigger the events depicted in the painting. In the middle of the world, between both the just and the sinners, we see Christ, bearing the cross, also dressed in white as a mark of purity. The composition features a range of earthy yellows that are typical of Flores, and which are similar to those of the areas on the shores of Lake Titicaca, and pigments in harmonious contrast that are reminiscent of the late Contra-Maniera imported by Bitti. The proportions are indicative of that same taste, in the slender figures with their idealised faces, although there is one difference in that they often seem childlike.

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## FASHION ACCORDING TO FLORES

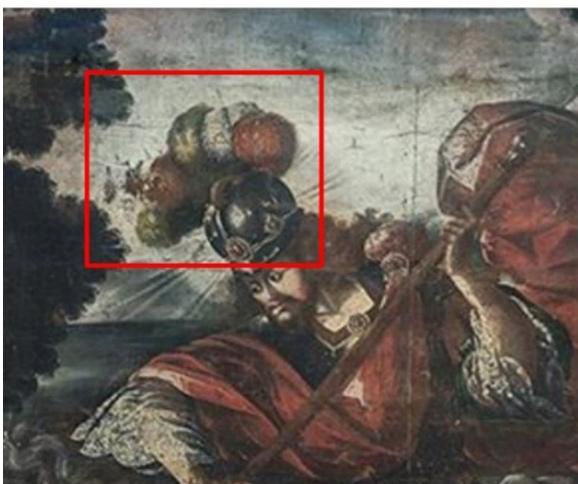
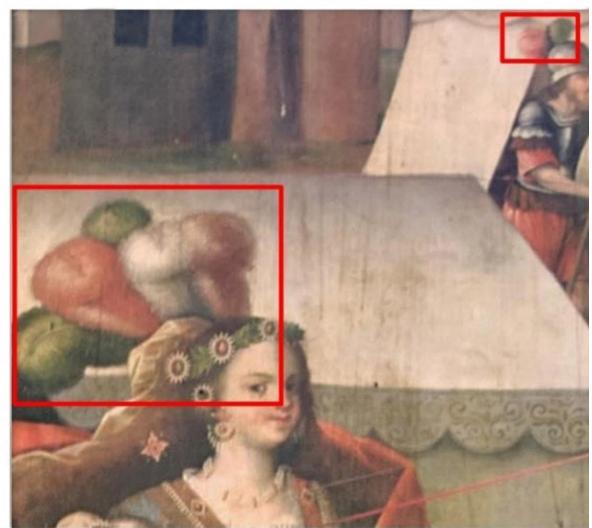
Each one of Flores' works presents such obsessive levels of meticulous detail that he would depict the clothes his subjects wore in a painstaking, faithful and exquisite manner. This wealth of detail can be observed in the jewels and accessories (headdresses, hats, tiaras) (Figs. 18-33) that reappear throughout his oeuvre. In the paintings of Poor Lazarus and others such as Esther and King Ahasuerus, the variety of the items depicted by the artist seems boundless, and his brush transforms into a limitless font of creativity.



FEATHERS, HATS AND HEADDRESSES Fig. 18,20 Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig.19. Detail of *Saint James the Moor-slayer*, Leonardo Flores. Ilabaya Temple, Bolivia. Fig. 21. Detail of *The Beggar Lazarus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.

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FEATHERS, HATS AND HEADDRESSES Fig. 22. Detail of *Saint James the Moor-slayer*, Leonardo Flores. Ilabaya Temple, Bolivia. Fig. 23. Detail of *The Fall of Jericho*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 24. *Triumphant Return of David*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 25. Detail of *The Beheading of Holofernes*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 26. Detail of *St. George*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 27. Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.

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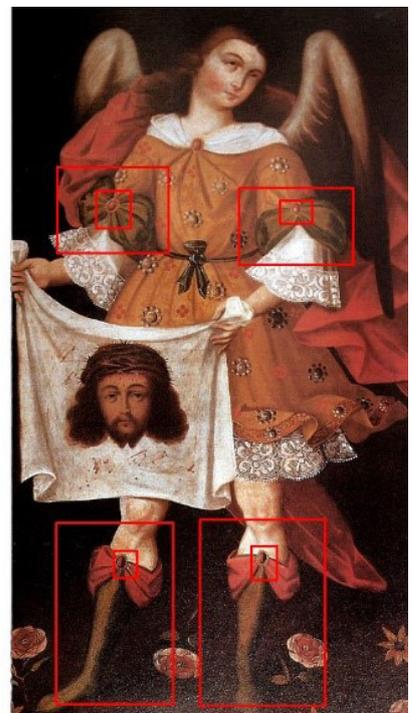


FEATHERS, HATS AND HEADDRESSES Fig. 28. Detail of *Saint Michael the Archangel*, Leonardo Flores. Fundación cultural Banco Central, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 29. Detail of *David and Abigail*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 30. *Death of Absalom*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 31. Detail of *David and Goliath*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 32. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 33. Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.

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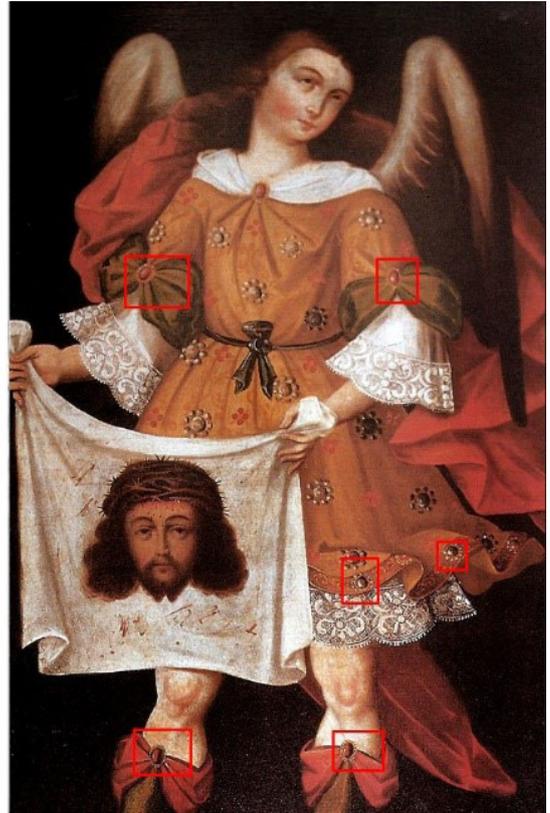
There is no other painter within the territories governed by the Audiencia of Charcas who embellished his works with so many jewels and brooches (Figs. 34-39), other than Holguín, who made use of this device in some of his canvasses, but whose style stood in stark contrast to that of Flores.



FLORES' OBSESSION WITH PRECIOUS JEWELS AND BROOCHES. Figs. 34, 36. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 35. *Saint Margaret*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 37. *Angel holding the Veil of Veronica*. Attributed to Leonardo Flores. Denver Museum, Denver, EE. UU.

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FLORES' OBSESSION WITH PRECIOUS JEWELS AND BROOCHES. Fig. 38. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 39. Detail of *Angel holding the Veil of Veronica*. Attributed to Leonardo Flores. Denver Museum, Denver, EE.

There are characteristics in our Last Judgement that invite comparison with the rest of Flores' work. The decorative patterns found in the sleeves and skirts, executed with white brocade, are identical. Our canvas also features his unmistakable style of painting coloured brocades, included as part of the subjects' clothing. (Figs. 40-51)

This mode of painting fabrics embroidered with fine silk reflecting the shimmering light uses the same technique based on the repeated application of linear forms of white pigment on top of the colour of the clothes until the effect, so typical of the artist, has been attained (Figs. 52-55). The garments have a certain tendency towards being stiff and lifeless, which is reminiscent of Bitti's style. (Figs. 56-59)

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PATTERNS OF DECORATIVE BROCADE. Fig. 40. Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 41. Detail of *The Beheading of Holofernes*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 42. Detail of *David and Abigail*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 43. Detail of *Triumphant return of David*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 44. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 45. Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.



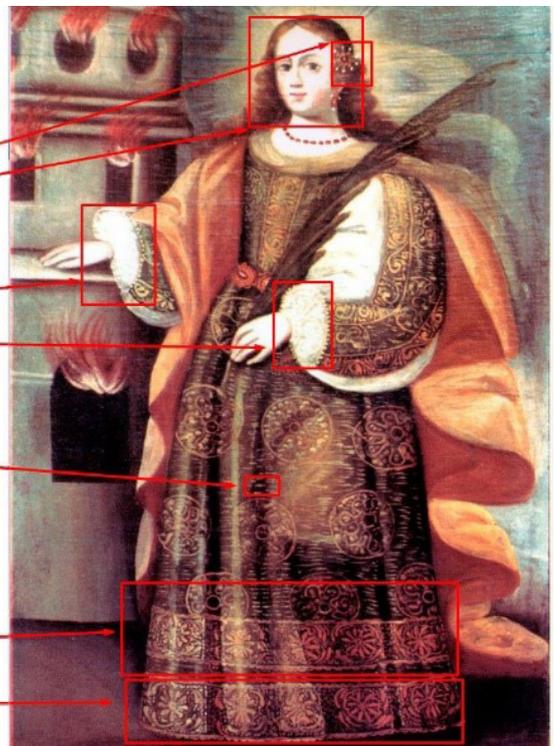
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PATTERNS OF DECORATIVE BROCADE. Figs 46,48,50. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 47, Detail of *Esther and King Ahasuerus*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 49. Detail of *The Last Judgement*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 51. Detail of *The Fall of Jericho*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.

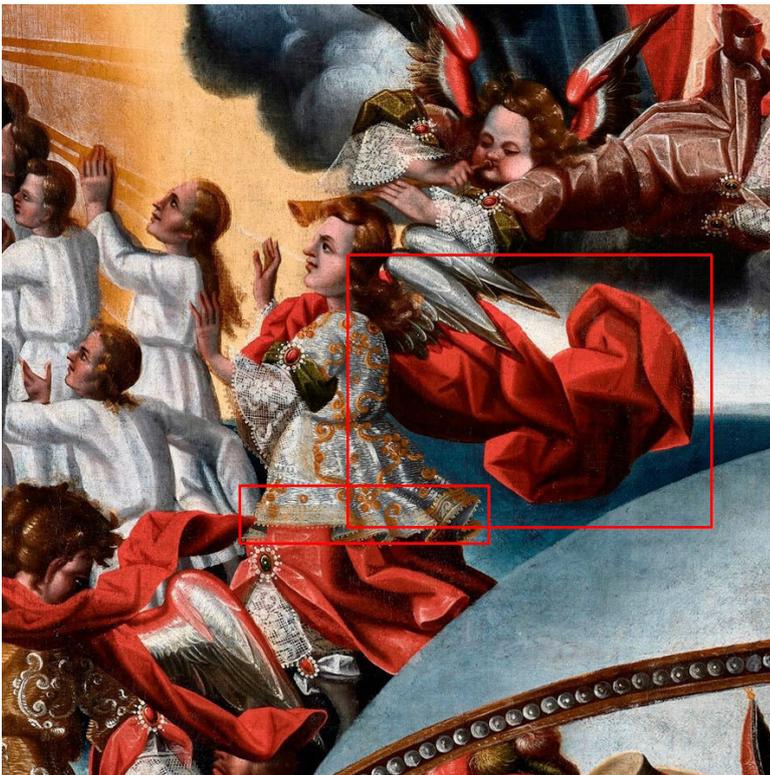
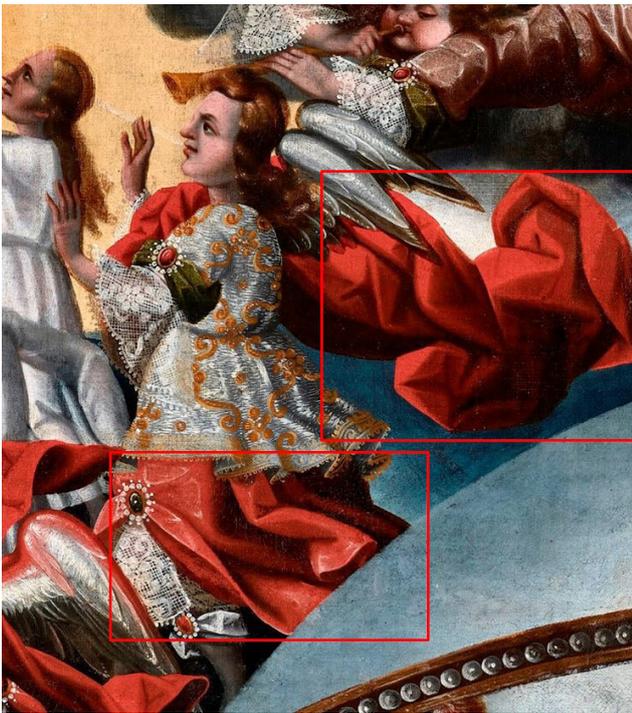
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FINE SILKS. Figs. 52, 54. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 53. *Saint Margaret*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 55. *Saint Barbara*, Leonardo Flores. Museo de arte nacional. La Paz, Bolivia.

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BITTI'S STYLE GARMENTS. Figs. 56, 58. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 57. *Saint Raphael the Archangel*, attributed to Leonardo Flores. Fundación Banco cultural de Bolivia, Bolivia. Fig. 59. *Saint Margaret*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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## THE THIRSTY DRINKER

Further reaffirming the authorship of this Last Judgement, a comparative analysis of the character of the Thirsty Drinker really does dispel any possible lingering doubts that this work is by Leonardo Flores.

The only difference we can identify between our figure and that of Autumn (**Figs. 60, 61**) is that our drinker is far more elaborate, presenting a richer palette of colours, more skilfully painted and precise.



Fig. 60. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 61. Detail of *Autumn*. Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

I think that if any doubts remained regarding the authorship of our Last Judgement, this image is enough to dispel them. Having already made use, some pages earlier, of the classical method of comparative analysis, I will now continue along that line for the rest of this study.

Flores, like many other artists from the Old World, frequently returned to the same models, actions and ideas in different compositions. This may be clearly observed in the facial features of the character from Flores' secular painting, which are an exact match for those of the drinker in our Last Judgement (**Figs. 62, 63**). The face tilted slightly upwards, the mouth open, with the content of the jug visibly pouring into his mouth. The eyes are almond-shaped and there is a hint of red in the cheeks, although it is likely that Flores, in the autumnal scene, intended for the red colour to be a reference to the long hours his subject would have spent out in the sun, and from there we can conclude that it was probably he who, with the sweat of his brow, prepared the banquet. The artist's meticulous detail can but astonish. The gesture of the two characters, the identical way they hold the jug. They are clearly thirsty and thus drink voraciously, the precious elixir spilling down their cheeks.

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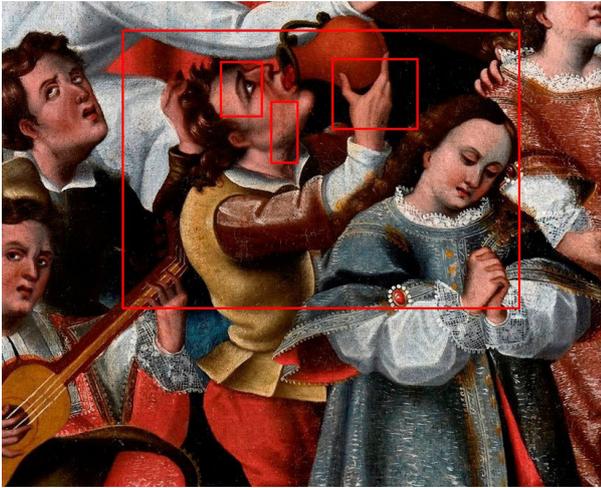


Fig. 62. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 63. Detail of *Autumn*. Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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## A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN

Both Flores' Last Judgement from the church in Cohoni and our version present an identical model (Figs. 64, 65). In the lower right-hand section of both compositions, near the souls in hell, we find the profile of a woman. In our version she is depicted naked, while in the other she is dressed in white. What was our outstanding painter trying to represent in this secondary scene? Perhaps this enigmatic woman was someone close to the artist, and some story from his life is concealed within her. Might it not be that Flores himself was judging the woman, and for that reason using his brush to portray her? That theory would not be so very far-fetched, given he was a prodigious artist, meticulous in his work, someone who took religion seriously and who tried to serve God and the faith of his fellow Christians through his art. His unstinting commitment to his faith is borne out by letters written in his hand that still survive to this day. He was scrupulous in delivering the works he was commissioned on time, and in his life there was no place for chance, as that would have been to the detriment of order and his moral values.

Perhaps the artist is inviting us to guess at the hidden story of the woman with the curly hair, given in our Last Judgement, despite being dead the fate of her soul has yet to be decided. She is seen physically detached from the concerns of the world, yet also alert, observing what is happening or what happened there, standing close to Death, just next to her, indicating that perhaps her turn has just come and she is still in purgatory, her fate hanging in the balance. In the Cohoni Last Judgement, which was probably painted after our canvas, an archangel takes her hand, showing that her fate, having been in a sort of purgatory, reflecting on her life, is now finally being decided. Now dressed in white, a symbol of purity, the eternal kingdom of heaven awaits her.

Other characteristics have been identified that may help to understand Flores' approach to painting, such as the way he depicted human anatomy and postures. The facial features, beards and clothes of the senior figures from the Catholic Church in our canvas bear close similarities with those of the priests in *The Fall of Jericho* (Figs. 66-71).

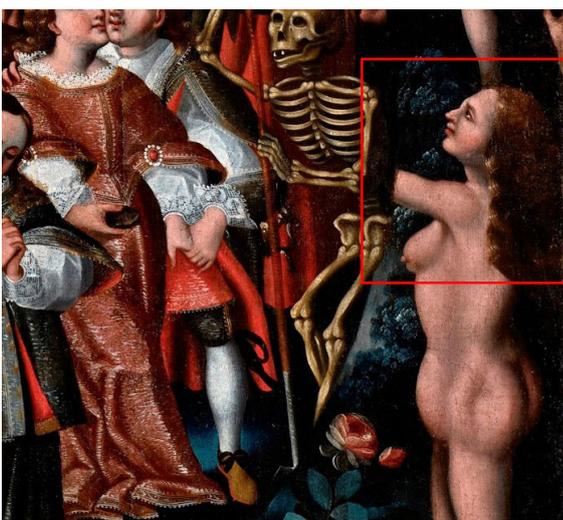


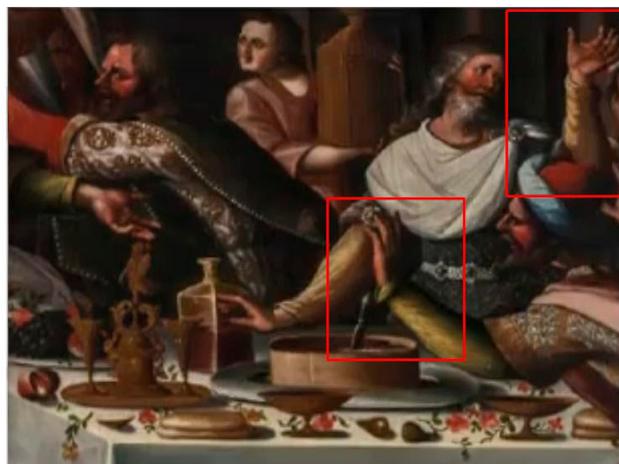
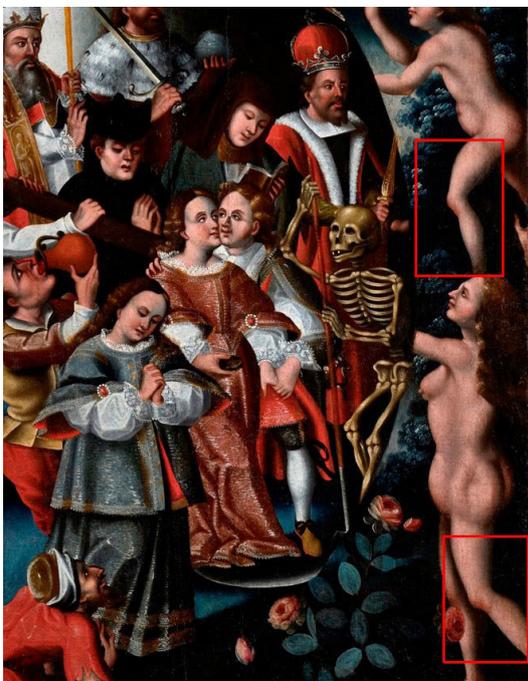
Fig. 64. Detail of *The Last Judgement*.



Fig. 65. Detail of *The Last Judgement*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia

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Figs. 66, 68, 70. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 67, 69. Detail of *The Fall of Jericho*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 71. Detail of *Death of Elijah the King*. Church of Collana. Collana, Bolivia

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## A FLORAL FLORES

I will now take the liberty of mentioning one curious observation readers may at first discard as nothing more than a fanciful spark of imagination, but which viewed in a more positive light might actually help us to link our canvas with other known works by the artist. A large number of paintings by Leonardo Flores feature little flowers (“flores”, in Spanish) that seem to be scattered randomly throughout, in what looks like a whimsical exercise in wordplay alluding to the artist’s surname. Might these ubiquitous little flowers not be the painter’s way of identifying himself, for posterity, as the author of his works? The very function of flowers is to produce seeds, and I am thereby sowing this question in the mind of the reader, while I will now attempt to defend this theory.

When observing Flores’ compositions, one observes that he often drew closely on Flemish engravings by the likes of Hieronymus Wierix, Crispijn van de Passe, Bassano and Luis de Alcázar, but in spite of being inspired by them, he always took a certain artistic licence, lending his works their own unique identity. One example of this would be the little flowers and columns of flowers the artist included in his Marian series of works depicting the Assumption in Guaycho. None of the prints he would have seen featured anything like that, and instead of the columns of flowers he uses to divide the scenes, in the original Flemish works by the illustrator Wierix we simply find dividing lines.<sup>8</sup> Even more important to the matter at hand here are the two ornamental jugs at the bottom of the central motif, which Flores inserts, the fruit of his own imagination, in the aforementioned Marian series (Fig. 70), as noted by Cejudo Velázquez. Our canvas also features two flowering plants at the bottom of the central motif, which certainly gives us food for thought.



Fig. 70. Detail of *Consolatrix Virgin*, Leonardo Flores. Church of Puerto Acosta, Guaycho, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 71. Detail of *The Fall of Jericho*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 72. Detail of *The Last Judgment*

<sup>8</sup> CEJUDO VELÁZQUEZ, Pablo, *Coloristas de Collao: una biografía de Italaque y del pintor Leonardo Flores*. La Paz, Talleres Gráficos Bolivianos, 1966, p147

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I have been through some 50 paintings featuring the same iconography, including murals, canvases and panels executed in the Americas during the period at which our artist was working, and into the 18th century. Despite having found little flowers scattered throughout certain areas of one work by Quispe Tito, another by Melchor Pérez de Holguín, one by José López de los Ríos and also in a number of later paintings imitating those masters, there are no flowering plants arranged symmetrically at the bottom of the central motif as occurs in our work and in the Marian series. Nor do we find these flowers and flowering plants in the original engravings that so inspired these New World artists, including works by Johan Sadeler I (1550 - 1600), Philippe Thomassin (1562-1622), Jan Theodor de Bry (1561-1623), Pieter de Jode I (1565-1639) Cornelis Cort (1528-1583), Justus Sadeler (1583 – ca. 1620) Jan Wierix (1544-1625) and Ambrogio Orio (1737-1825). We can paint an even clearer picture of this supposed word game involving the artist's surname, transformed into a series of clues supporting the authorship of our canvas, when we analyse the following paintings by the master from El Collao: the Fall of Jericho (Figs. 71, 72) from the church in Cohoni, the Triumph of the Eucharist from the one in Achocalla, and the Fides Originaria and Spes from the church in Pucarani. All of these feature one or two plants with flowers that bear a close resemblance to those observed in our Last Judgement, and in all cases they are arranged at the bottom of the composition.

In the painting depicting Autumn we examined earlier, we have before us what is probably one of the few secular works by Flores known today, and one would assume it was part of a series of four paintings depicting the seasons. In this canvas in particular, we can also observe the same characteristics highlighted above (Figs. 73, 74), bearing a close similarity with our painting in terms of the way the artist drew and coloured the flowers, which appear to be roses: round fleshy bodies with white at the outer edges and transparencies, exposing the shaded area inside.



Fig. 73. Detail of *Autumn*. Leonardo Flores. Museo nacional de arte, La paz, Bolivia.



Fig. 74. Detail of *The Last Judgment*.

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## THE ARCHANGELS

We might say that Flores was one of the artists who created the angelical model that proved so popular in the Andean region. Dozens of winged figures have come to life thanks to the brushes of the varying artists who followed the master's design. Always adorned with jewels and brooches, they also boasted sumptuous sleeves with brocades that seem to fall down forming triangles. Comparing and contrasting with other images, it is possible to affirm that, in addition to his other characteristics, which we have already addressed, the master of El Collao also had a highly personal way of depicting these winged companions of God (Figs. 75-78).

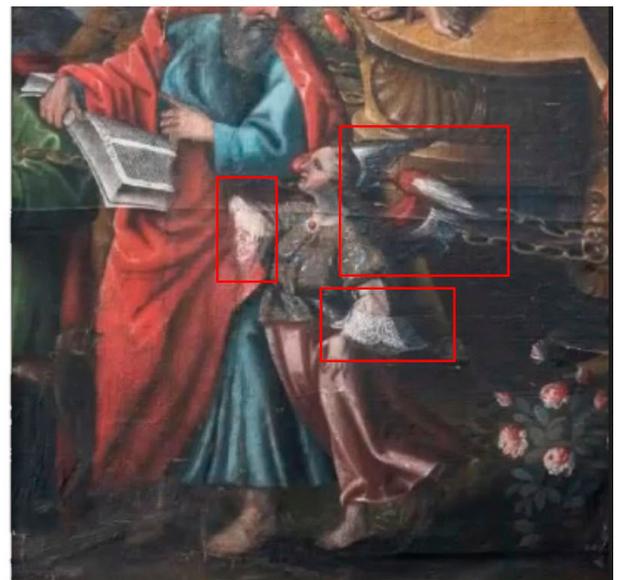
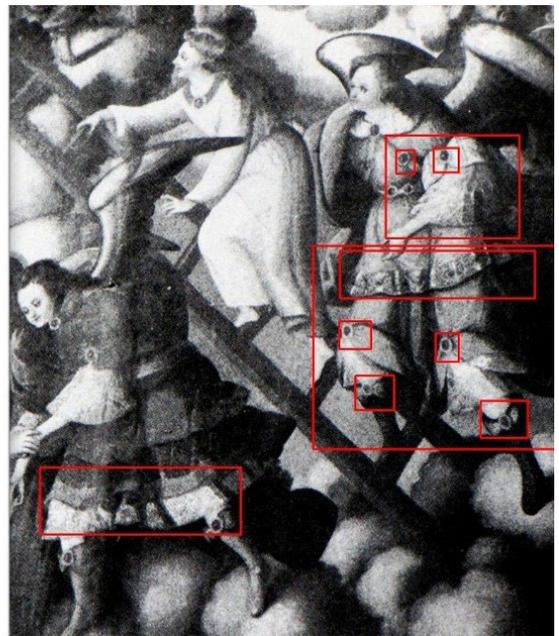


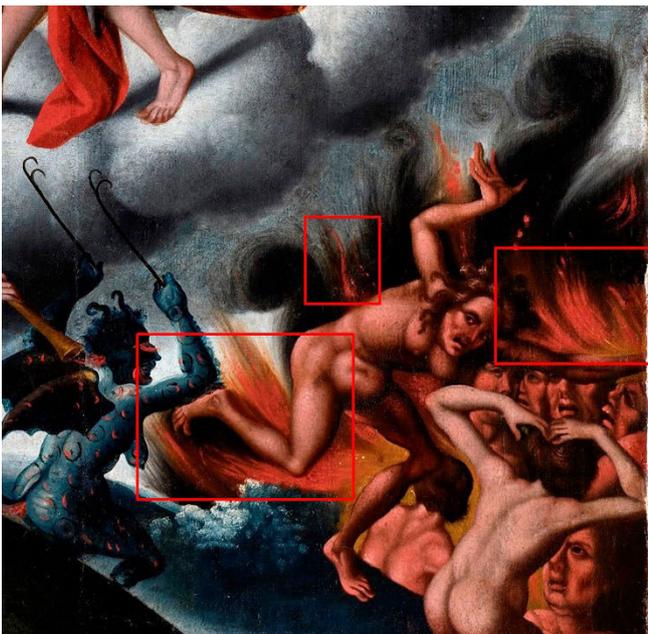
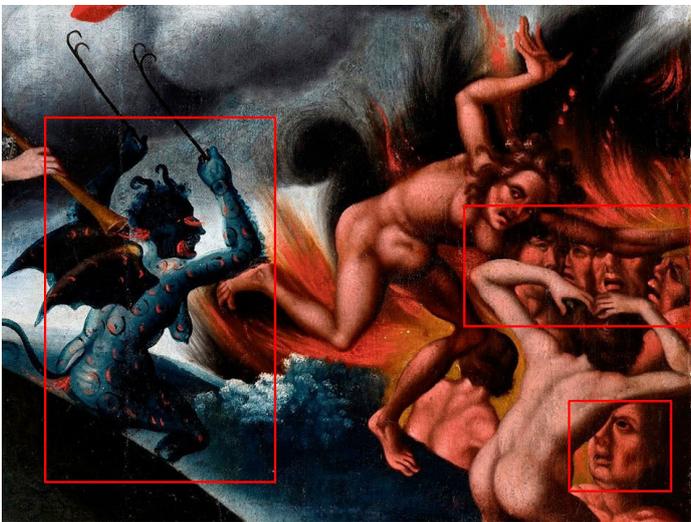
Fig. 75, 77. Detail of *The Last Judgment*. Fig. 76. Detail of *Angels saving souls from purgatory*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 78. *Triumph of the Eucharist*, Leonardo Flores. Church of Achocalla, Bolivia

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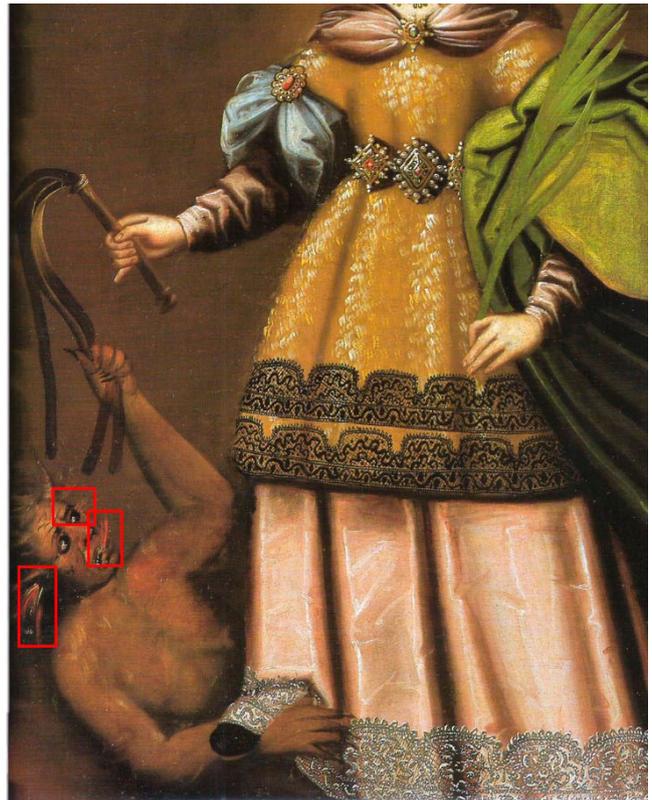
## FIRE AND THE BEAST

While the angels were part of God's army, the devils were recruited to Satan's ranks, and were depicted in such a way as to contrast with the angels. Grotesque and naked, they bring to mind the vilest creatures ever created. In the images selected, which serve to provide a comparative yardstick, we see them linked to hellfire. In the beast portrayed under St. Margaret, or in the St. Michael canvas, as well as in our Last Judgement, we can observe horrifying flaming tongues, which appear to be causing agony and suffering. Furthermore, if we compare our canvas with the Cohoni one, we can also find aesthetic similarities in the way the devils are depicted, such as the colours used and the act of causing terror through the pain they are inflicting on the souls about to undergo the worst possible fate of being devoured by the flames, flames which share a similar design in all of Flores' works (Figs. 79-86).



Figs. 79, 81. Detail of *The Last Judgement*. Fig. 80. Detail of *The Last Judgement*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia. Fig. 82. *Saint Barbara*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte. La Paz, Bolivia.

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Figs. 83, 85. Detail of *The Last Judgment*. Fig. 84. *Saint Michael the Archangel*, attributed Leonardo Flores. Fundación Cultural Banco Central de Bolivia, La Paz, Bolivia. Fig. 86. *Saint Margaret*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

*Gonzalo Eguiguren*



*The Last Judgement, Leonardo Flores, Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques*

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*Saint Margaret, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia*

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*The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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*Triumph of the Immaculate*, Leonardo Flores. Originally in the Church of Achocalla, Bolivia. Now unknown location.



Fragment of *The Fall of Jericho*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.

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*Beheading of Holofernes*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.



*Autumn*. Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia

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*David and Abigail*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia.



*Triumphant Return of David*, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cohoni, Bolivia

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*St. George*, Leonardo Flores. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Pan, Bolivia

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*Saint James the Moor-slayer, Leonardo Flores. Ilabaya Temple, Bolivia*

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*The Last Judgement, Leonardo Flores. Church of San Bartolomé, Cochoni, Bolivia.*



*The Last Judgement, Melchor Perez de Holguin. Church of San Lorenzo, Potosi, Bolivia.*

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*The Last Judgement*, Diego Quispe Tito. Convent of San Francisco, Cuzco, Peru.



*The Last Judgement*, Gregorio Vasquez de Arce y Ceballos. Church of San Francisco, Bogotá, Colombia.

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Figure *The Last Judgement*, Juan Pérez Mejía, Museo Banco de la República, Bogotá, Colombia.

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*The Last Judgement*, Hernando de La Cruz. Church of the Compañía de Jesús, Quito, Ecuador.







