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DEGREES OF INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY: AESTHETICIZING ARTISTIC SURVIVANCE
IN COLONIAL CUZCO (1690s-1780s)

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ABSTRACT

Frequently, Indigenous studies scholars apply theoretical approaches and methodologies to assess Europe's impact on the Americas. In an art historical context, there is a persistent tendency to narrate Indigenous traditions and material culture from the perspective of a Euro-American Western society, placing Indigenous works of art at the bottom of a hierarchy of aesthetics. Contrary to most published research, I aim to draw upon my Indigenous perspective as a person of Peruvian and Shasta heritage to aid my examination in highlighting the inequalities and disparities present within the visual interactions and exchanges of the early modern period. Through the artworks of three biracial Indigenous painters from Cuzco, which include Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao, Marcos Zapata, and Antonio Oblitas, I explore themes of identity, historicity, and coloniality.

My research begins with an analysis of these three artists, positioning them as active agents who, despite the constraints of colonialism, used their interracial identities and artistic practices to assert Inca cultural presence. The composition of the thesis is based on a chronological sequence of their paintings created between the late 1690s and the early 1780s. Each artist serves as an individual case study to illuminate their individual and significant contributions to Indigenous resistance. While this structure emphasizes each of their efforts, I also aim to demonstrate a broader pattern of Indigenous opposition and visual defiance over nearly a century.

I assert that the colonization of Latin America is evident in these artists' works, where they employed subversive aesthetic techniques to counter oppressive elements, such as

heteropatriarchy, forced assimilation, and Eurocentric modernity.¹ By examining their strategies of resilience and adaptation, I aim to contribute to the growing efforts to decolonize art history. In totality, this study challenges dominant narratives, highlighting the realities of colonization in the Americas and the enduring presence of Indigenous resistance, creativity, and survivance.

¹ Eurocentric modernity, otherwise known as Eurocentrism, refers to the notion that the modern world was shaped by European standards of progress, which were forcibly spread and replicated globally through colonization. This ideology constructs modernity from a European perspective, positioning Europe as the origin of progress while marginalizing non-European perspectives on gender, culture, and identity.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spanish colonists brought their artistic practices to the Americas, diffusing their aesthetic principles into Indigenous works of art, often forcing local inhabitants to construct and decorate colonial buildings and create religious artworks under coercive or exploitative conditions. In resistance to these forms of colonial control and persecution, a group of Indigenous Peruvian artists from Cuzco created their own guild, commonly known as the Cuzco School. From its inception, the guild employed Indigenous visual strategies in their artwork to subvert Eurocentric artistic conventions, with these resistive elements becoming more pronounced over time.² I argue that the artistic endeavors of artists from this guild, such as Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao, Marcos Zapata, and Antonio Oblitas, served to reaffirm Indigenous autonomy despite colonial constraints. These artists' works critically expose concerns related to Indigenous agency, colonial relations, and collective resistance.³ By examining their paintings as case studies, this thesis will demonstrate

² Although there are various spellings for the city of Cuzco, including the Spanish form *Cusco* and the Quechua phrase *Qosqo*, I have chosen to use *Cuzco* throughout this work. This spelling is widely recognized, particularly in scholarly publications. See Sabine MacCormack, "History, Historical Record, and Ceremonial Action: Incas and Spaniards in Cuzco," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (2001): 329, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2696657>; Thomas B.F. Cummins, *Toasts with the Inca: Andean Abstraction and Colonial Images on Quero Vessels* (University of Michigan Press, 2002), 51; Stella Nair, "Witnessing the Invisibility of Inca Architecture in Colonial Peru," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 14, 2007, 50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20355395>; Rolena Adorno, "'Obedezco Pero No Cumpro': Surviving Censorship in Early Modern Spain," *Textual Cultures* 13, no. 1 (2020): 66, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26954239>; Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat*, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021), 37, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.4908227>. Although *Qosqo* aims to reflect the original Inca pronunciation, it lacks standardization, and there is a debate among intellectuals, as Dean highlights, regarding the spelling's accuracy. See Carolyn Dean, "The Inka Married the Earth: Integrated Outcrops and the Making of Place," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 3 (2007): 507, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067338>. Therefore, Cuzco is used consistently here as the most commonly accepted form in English.

³ The Quechua spelling Pumacallao is used here in recognition of Indigenous naming conventions. See Ananda Cohen Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco. Artistic Splendor in the Andes* (Lima: Haynanka Ediciones, 2015), 21. This choice seeks to respect linguistic authenticity while providing consistency with established sources.

how each of these artists employed their interracial identities as visual mediators and preservers of their Indigeneity.

The Cuzco School guild was a collective of *mestizo* and other multi-racial Peruvian artists. I argue that, to distinguish themselves socially and artistically from the demands of European painting systems, this guild's formation symbolized a resistive effort to reclaim and assert local identity against aesthetic standards imposed by Spanish colonization. However, overt acts of revolt or direct defiance against colonial authorities would have jeopardized their livelihoods, making it impossible to survive within the prevailing colonial conditions. Instead, the Cuzco School members resisted through the adaptation of European narratives that methodically retained aspects of Indigenous heritage, often in the form of subtle visual cues and Indigenous symbolism that only locals would recognize. These elements became perceptibly more assertive throughout the eighteenth century, as later painters like Marcos Zapata and Antonio Oblitas made these resistive visual cues more apparent to non-Indigenous audiences.

The guild's creation, with key artists like Pumacallao among its founding artists, not only provided a space for artistic creation but also functioned as a microcosm of colonial structures that refined artists' identity and the overall role of art. While structurally influenced by European guild models, the Cuzco School emphasized the importance of workshops and collaboration, which were occasionally seen in Inca artistic practices, though these were still subject to the hierarchical dynamics of colonial society. Like European guilds, those located in Cuzco operated under procedures that required artists to undergo formal training, and after these requirements were met, commissions would become available.

Art historian Carol Damian highlights that these guilds were “organized in the seventeenth century according to medieval European customs and were associated with religious

societies called *cofradías* (confraternities or brotherhoods; ritual lay organizations comprised of members of parishes, including the native people in their parishes).”⁴ While Damian emphasizes the religious frameworks of these guilds, there is no definitive written evidence to suggest that all members were Catholic. From an Indigenous perspective, their engagement with Catholicism likely reflected a complex interplay of survival, adaptation, and resistance. This dynamic would have been shaped by the harsh realities of Indigenous life in a colonial society, where religious practices were frequently intertwined with broader strategies of self-preservation and negotiation.

Additionally, discrimination against non-white artists was rampant under these systems of coloniality. Out of the necessity for equality, the Cuzco School was born out of a sequence of events detailed by court records over a nine-year period, from 1677 to 1688, in which Indigenous artists filed eight separate formal complaints against their Spanish overseers. According to Damian, the event is documented as follows:

The Indians had apparently (no document could be located with this complaint) requested to separate from the Spanish workshop commissioned with the project of painting a triumphal arch for the Corpus Christi procession, one of the most important and spectacular religious events in the city. The Indigenous artists must have complained to the authorities that the Spanish painters were treating them poorly and violently. The Spanish described the Indians as drunken and malicious and said that they had been accused falsely of mistreating them... At the end of the seventeenth century, after one hundred years of ‘training’ in the churches and guilds of the city, the native and mestizo artists separated from their Spanish masters and established their own workshops with commercial independence... the authors of the definitive book on the history of Cuzco art, see this event of 1688 as the official birth of the true school of Cuzco painting.⁵

⁴ Carol Damian, "Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco: Workshops, Contracts, and a Petition for Independence," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* vol 4, no. 1 (1995): 40, <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1130&context=clahr>.

⁵ Damian, "Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco," 41-42.

Despite this legal and professional triumph, Indigenous and mixed-race artists were still negatively affected by the strict limitations set by the colonial conditions under which the guild operated. These constraints subjected them to the sociopolitical restrictions imposed by the colonial environment, requiring that their roles as artists and creations did not completely disrupt the overarching colonial dynamics. As this was true much earlier in its formation, the training of artists and the demand for European aesthetics still dominated many aspects of the guild. Artists like Pumacallao were forced to replicate colonial ideologies through painted recreations of Catholic narratives. To better understand these works, the term survivance is essential to implement within this colonial context. Originally coined by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, the term ‘survivance’ combines Indigenous people’s ability to both survive colonial imposition and resist oppression.⁶ This thesis draws on the concept of survivance to explore the experiences of these artists, analyzing the artistic legacies they left behind in their resistance to colonial structures.

I assert that although these artists were often required to reproduce religious narratives from colonial settlers, they managed to find ways to imbue Indigenous elements and references into their work as a form of resistance and cultural preservation. This is primarily evident through their color palette or manipulation of two-dimensional forms but also in their fusionist craftsmanship. The ability to create Catholic imagery with dual allusions reminiscent of Andean beliefs turned the artwork into evidence of not just colonality but an aesthetic marker of Indigenous opposition. These efforts to recontextualize European narratives to make visible the

⁶ Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance," in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 11

ideologies of the local people were seen within the earliest endeavors of the Cuzco School incorporating suggestive symbolism to transform the Virgin Mary into Pachamama, an Andean earth deity.⁷

The Indigenous perspective of the colonial order surrounding them is elevated in this thesis through the inclusion of local motifs. By concentrating on these infusions, my research demonstrates how these artists used the tools readily available to resist cultural erasure and highlight their realities under European rule. Pumacallao, Zapata, and Oblitas are pivotal figures in the guild who, at different times, advanced artistic efforts into a more visible form of resistance. Through their paintings, they demonstrate how art can be a powerful tool for Indigenous autonomy and artistic agency.

This study will take these issues into consideration to explore how the colonization of Latin America, and more specifically, Peru, is evident in key paintings that progressively indigenize European artistic techniques. Through my examination of the works of these mixed-race Indigenous artists from the Cuzco School, I aim to identify the salient features of the Peruvian Cuzco style, which include rich hues, elaborate gold embellishments, compressed forms, and Indigenous symbolism. The chapters will be organized chronologically, beginning with Pumacallao's painting *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco* (1698), followed by a thorough case study of Zapata's visible Indigenous elements in *The Last Supper* (1753), and will conclude with Oblitas's work, *The Sangarará Portrait* (1780s), which is related to the Túpac

⁷ See Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (New York: Phaidon, 2005), 94-98; Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 11.

Rebellions in the late 1700s. This structure will guide my argument through a linear timeline that ends with the early stages of Andean insurgency in the 1780s.

THESIS STRUCTURE

Each chapter will exhibit the evolving themes of Indigenous survivance that permeate the works of these artists. In Chapter 1, I will analyze *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco* (1698), painted by *mestizo* artist Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao (1661-99). The work is essential as it provides an insight into markers of Indigeneity that were identifiable to seventeenth-century European and Peruvian audiences. As one of the earliest identifiable paintings of the Cuzco School, its resistive elements visually reinforce the agenda of the Indigenous guild.

Acknowledged for initiating the Andean Baroque, the catastrophic earthquake of 1650 reduced the city to rubble, inspiring Spanish architectural reconstruction efforts to further assimilate the Indigenous landscape and culture into European modernity. This famous seventeenth-century calamity that ushered in indigenizing elements of European architecture is illustrated in Pumacallao's painting. It has notably been "dependent upon the resiliency of Andean values in their new Christian guise."⁸ As a result, the spread of Indigenous resistance sparked the establishment of the Cuzco School in the latter half of the seventeenth century.⁹

⁸ Patrick Thomas Hajovsky, "Shifting Panoramas: Contested Visions of Cuzco's 1650 Earthquake," *The Art Bulletin* 100, no. 4 (2018): 36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44972821>

⁹ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 431.

As my analysis shifts into the eighteenth century, the second chapter will focus on a case study of three renowned paintings by Marcos Zapata (1710s-70s) from the Cuzco School, exploring how they reflect the evolving integration of Indigenous elements in art. While Zapata's reconstruction of one of the most widely known Italian Renaissance mural painting, *The Last Supper*, demonstrates a consistent appeal to Eurocentric aesthetic ideals, he transforms the scene. Through the incorporation of local Peruvian food and drink, as well as the arguably effective portrayal of Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro as the Christian thief Judas, this painting serves as a visual example of Native survivance strategies that combat cultural erasure through the promotion of Indigenous agency and traditions. This chapter will explore how Zapata's reconfiguration of European narratives becomes a more emphatic form of resistance, highlighting the growing role of Indigenous elements in challenging the suppression of cultural identity.

In Chapter 3, I will examine how Indigenous material culture was influenced by the political climate during a time of Andean insurgency. The three-year-long Túpac Rebellions (1780-1783) in the late eighteenth century were sparked by a strong opposition to the state of the Peruvian economy and hostility toward the repressive policies of the Bourbon reforms, which were laws introduced by the Spanish ruling powers being in the year 1700.¹⁰ These European principles inflicted on the Peruvian state were aimed at enhancing Spanish dominance and authority over the colonized American territories. Both Indigenous and multiracial Native people were encouraged to fight against the Spanish empire through anticolonial insurgency operations,

¹⁰ Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking in the Era of Andean Insurgencies," in *Collective Creativity and Artistic Agency in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Maya Stanfield-Mazzi and Margarita Vargas-Betancourt (University Press of Florida, 2023), 169.

conducted by *mestizo* rebel José Gabriel Condorcanqui (1742-1781), popularly known as Túpac Amaru II.¹¹

Antonio Oblitas (1747-1781), a Cuzco-born *zambo* artist, will be the focal point of this chapter.¹² After executing his slave holder, Oblitas was granted freedom and used this opportunity to visually document Túpac Amaru's II rise to power through portraiture. Although the original portrait of Túpac Amaru II has been speculated to have been destroyed in the rebellion alongside the public execution of its subject in Cuzco, the Inca attachment to objects that have the potential to be inhabited by a deity or spirit remains significant.¹³ I contend that this painting should be considered part of these objects, which were often labeled as *huacas* or wak'a by the Indigenous people, but were perceived to be idols by Spanish settlers. Additionally, this reflected a colonial perspective that reinterpreted Indigenous systems of belief within the framework of European religious supremacy.¹⁴ Despite the presumed destruction of the original portrait during the rebellion by colonial forces, Oblitas's effort remains a significant example of how the visual arts were affected by political oppression. Chapter three explores how the artist's

¹¹ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 171.

¹² Cohen-Aponte defines the term *Zambo* as an individual of mixed Indigenous and African heritage. This term was part of a racial hierarchy imposed by Spanish colonizers, who categorized individuals based upon their perceived racial background, which was often used to reinforce social and economic control over colonized populations. See Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 177.

¹³ Although I have chosen to use the spelling 'Inca' to align with scholarly consistency, I do recognize that the spelling 'Inka' is derived from the Quechua language and is still widely used in the Andes today. See Dean, "The Inka," 502. In an effort to assist audiences that may not be familiar with the Quechua language and to maintain historical uniformity, I have opted to use the English spelling of 'Inca.'

¹⁴ Felipe Guman Poma De Ayala and Roland Hamilton, "Chapter of the Common Sorcerers," in *The First New Chronicle and Good Government: On the History of the World and the Incas up to 1615*, (University of Texas Press, 2009), 221. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7560/719590.18>. According to earlier accounts by Guamán Poma, who later converted to Catholicism, the *huaca* were used by "the Indian *huaca* muchas [idol worshippers]" in "idolatrous ceremonies, practiced by the Inca, *ñaupa pacha* [in ancient times]."

portrait of Túpac Amaru II reflected a blend of Indigenous and European visual traditions that work in tandem as a creative act of defiance against colonial authority.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For scholars specializing in colonial Latin American studies, the South Central Andes has been a significant area of research. Among these academics, I have been particularly informed by Leopoldo Castedo, Thomas B.F. Cummins, Carolyn Dean, Stella Nair, Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, and Ananda Cohen-Aponte (formerly known as Cohen Suarez). While their publications have elevated critical issues in the field, each respectfully within their own right, common themes among them have included Andean architecture, hemispheric connections, and Indigenous visual and material culture.

A particularly influential work is twentieth-century Spanish art historian Leopoldo Castedo's *The Cuzco Circle* from 1976, one of the first detailed studies of the Cuzco School. His research highlighted the lack of depth in studying the Cuzco School, which laid the foundation for the questions driving my thesis. Among the most significant studies, Castedo was particularly informative and helpful in establishing groundwork for understanding materiality and the European models artists in the Cuzco School guild consulted.¹⁵ Additionally, Cummins, a distinguished art historian who has been active since the 1980s was instrumental in advancing research that highlights the social and cultural identity of the Inca under colonialism. His

¹⁵ Leopoldo Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle* (The Center for Inter-American Relations/The American Federation of Arts, 1976), 20; 47-48.

analyses such as his book, “Toasts with the Inca: Andean Abstraction and Colonial Images on Quero Vessels,” have included Indigenous systems of knowledge with an examination of Andean iconography.¹⁶

Beginning in the 1990s, Carolyn Dean has expressed concerns regarding the colonial treatment of Inca architecture in Cuzco, including Sacsayhuamán, an Indigenous structural complex. In one of the numerous ways European forces attempted to suppress the Inca, sacred monuments and structures were nearly destroyed and repurposed by the Spanish to symbolize their power and authority.¹⁷ Dean’s research has also explored the social ramifications of colonial rule through Andean paintings and Catholic processions held directly on Cuzco’s streets. In her book, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Duke University Press, 1999), Dean considers how Indigenous populations forcefully conformed to Spanish Catholic religious tenets and processions. Similar to my examination of the artwork produced during his period in the same region, she focuses on issues of Indigenous resistance, adaptability, and resilience.¹⁸

Additionally, since the 1990s, another important contributor, Stella Nair, has focused on the art and architecture of the Andes. She has and continues to produce a substantial amount of research on Cuzco and Chinchero, a city located less than twenty miles north. While Nair’s interests thematically and geographically expand beyond the borders of central Peru, her publication, *Witnessing the In-Visibility of Inca Architecture in Colonial Peru* (University of

¹⁶ Cummins, *Toasts with the Inca*, 11; 167-168.

¹⁷ Carolyn Dean, “Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco: Sacsahuaman and What was Made of It,” *Andean Past* 5, no. 12 (1998): 169. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1076&context=andean_past.

¹⁸ Carolyn Dean, “Corpus Christi Triumphant,” in *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru*, (Duke University Press, 1999), 7-22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11sn2sv.10>.

Minnesota Press, 2007), is crucial to the definition of Indigenous survivance in Cuzco. Nair investigates the idea of Indigenous “in-visibility” which refers to the simultaneous ability to see Inca structural elements yet notice the colonial interventions that concealed them.¹⁹ The effects of European erasure efforts on built Indigenous environments are analyzed through the contemporary remains of these structures in Peru. The key elements of her argument relate to how the structural foundations of Inca architecture were repurposed and modified to create new forms of European architecture. Her examination of the points where Indigenous and European aesthetics converge raises questions about the city of Cuzco which have been instrumental in the formation of my research.

Furthermore, a significant number of works have been devoted to contesting and overturning the predominance of Eurocentric hierarchies and knowledge systems that were developed during the colonial era. The phrase “decoloniality” was initially developed by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano and was expounded upon by Argentine semiotician Walter Mignolo.²⁰ Since the 2000s art historians Maya Stanfield-Mazzi and Ananda Cohen-Aponte have applied the term decolonialism to works of art produced by the Cuzco School, focusing on the aspects of Indigeneity present in the work that would otherwise be relegated to the research footnotes while also addressing socioeconomic and ethnic inequalities. Stanfield-Mazzi uses this

¹⁹ Nair, "Witnessing the In-Visibility," 55.

²⁰ Walter D. Mignolo, Catherine E. Walsh, and Rita Segato, introduction to *Aníbal Quijano: Foundational Essays on the Coloniality of Power*, by Aníbal Quijano (Duke University Press, 2024), 5.

approach to emphasize the “humanness of the artmaker,” considering their role as arbiters, as well as disseminators of knowledge and their socially conditioned aesthetic limitations.²¹

While Cohen-Aponte is also interested in visible forms of artistic agency amidst colonial suppression, she uses the decolonial approach to consider how ethnic distinctions are visually demarcated through the “use of pigments, the delineation of facial features, strategic compositional devices, and the inclusion of ethnically-marked clothing and objects” to define “‘Spanishness,’ ‘Blackness,’ ‘Indianness’ and their multitudinous intermixtures.”²² To rebuild an analysis that considers the lived experiences of Indigenous people, the two academics collaborate to recontextualize artworks in their colonial setting.

Despite Cuzco being the focus of a substantial number of scholarly publications and research projects, the Cuzco School has received little attention. Due to the claim that many Indigenous creators were unknown or were the victims of colonial Indigenous erasure operations disguised as community-mandated labor, even less research has been extended to artists who belong to that guild. While Cohen-Aponte has written about the artist Antonio Oblitas, who was born in Cuzco and has historically been linked to Túpac Amaru II’s reign, most academic work related to the Grand Rebellion concentrates on the historical events. One of the most comprehensive books written about this topic, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion* (Harvard University Press, 2014), was authored by historian Charles F. Walker.²³ I am also aware that researchers

²¹ Maya Stanfield-Mazzi and Margarita Vargas-Betancourt, “Introduction: Artists as Agents beyond the Frame,” in *Collective Creativity and Artistic Agency in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Maya Stanfield-Mazzi and Margarita Vargas-Betancourt (University Press of Florida, 2023), 3.

²² Ananda Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes,” in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 188.

²³ Charles F. Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion* (London, England: Belknap Press, 2014).

have been captivated by Marcos Zapata's eighteenth-century adaptation of the Catholic narrative of the Last Supper.²⁴ During the colonial era, it was common for Indigenous artists to omit their names from their creations. However, over 200 paintings have been attributed to Zapata and his workshop, either due to signed works or aesthetic consistencies.²⁵ Despite the widespread effects of erasure, suppression, and subjugation of Indigeneity, Zapata was an artistic anomaly for Peruvian recognition.

THE RACIAL IMPLICATIONS OF *HYBRIDITY*

Although significant research exists regarding colonial Andean artwork, the majority has focused specifically on the nuanced blend of European and Indigenous elements present within these works. In their article, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," art historians Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn emphasize that the term hybridity, used by many academics to describe a Cusco-centric approach to European artistic techniques, reinforces settler ideologies placed on the artwork.²⁶ Labeling an artwork as *hybrid* reinforces the expectation that the object is contingent upon its European counterpart and is unable to exist independently.²⁷

²⁴ See Cesar Chacon Rosasco and Gretel Bardalez Zambrano, *Cusco's Cathedral and the Church of the Society of Jesus/La Catedral del Cusco: Y la Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús* (Cuzco, Peru: Editorial PIKI E.I.R.L., 2001), 13; Allison Lee Palmer, "The Last Supper by Marcos Zapata (c. 1753: A Meal of Bread, Wine, and Guinea Pig)," *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art* 9, 2008, 56; Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 83; Alfredo Hinojosa Gálvez, *Cusco Cathedral Guide* (Cuzco: Editorial Super Gráfica EIRL, 2019), 51.

²⁵ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 424.

²⁶ Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America*," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10609160302341>.

²⁷ Dean and Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents," 6.

The term hybrid is also associated with “the constitutive violence that lies at the origin of the social situation that serves as the framework for the aforementioned hybrid practices.”²⁸ In other words, art not only shows the aesthetics that were popularized due to European contact but also the socioeconomic conditions that existed at the time of its production. In this case, the art produced by the Cuzco School guild is directly reflective of its colonial conditions, which included not just a fluidity of global artistic exchange but also the displays of colonial Native and non-Native voices. However, there is also a darker reality present in the art that many scholars do not realize they circumvent when they conduct research on these colonial societies. Indigenous and biracial Native people subject to the effects of colonialization also endured oppressive power dynamics, global capitalism, labor exploitation, racial hierarchies, identity conflicts, xenophobia, European modernity, violence, the spread of disease, and environmental degradation.

Additionally, the label ‘hybrid’ suggests that for an object or practice to be considered as such by colonial forces, Europeans were unable to effectively assimilate it into their own society. Homi Bhabha, another academic concerned with the concept of hybridity, argues that the notion of such fusionist aspects—distinct from the label of ‘hybrid’—actually upend colonial forces merely by virtue of their existence. As such, these elements represent a direct evolution of colonial interactions that dissipated from the desires of the oppressor.²⁹ It is within this manner that the label ‘fusion’ creates a space of ambivalence between the colonized and the colonizer, which challenges colonial identities and their authoritative structure.

²⁸ Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance,” 72.

²⁹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994), chap. 6, Internet Archive.

As proposed and advocated additionally by Dean and Leibsohn, the term ‘fusion’ should also be applied when describing artwork produced by colonial Latin America rather than ‘hybrid’ because it acknowledges the contribution that Indigenous artists made to the evolution of a style imposed through colonial frameworks. Bhabha, Dean, and Leibsohn would all contend that, therefore, Indigenous and *mestizo* artwork should not be seen as an extension or mimicry of Western art practices but rather, an active example of indigenizing European aesthetics, which in many ways disrupts colonial dominance. In other words, this reflects not the “natural by-product of an “us” meeting a “them,” but rather the recognition—or creation—of an “us” and a “them.”³⁰

As identity is central to my examination of the painted canvases of three bi-racial Peruvian artists, scholars such as Charlene Villaseñor Black emphasize that race and ethnicity are inevitable subjects while examining viceregal art in the Americas.³¹ Although many academics have attempted to define the social categories based on genealogical, phenotypical, and behavioral traits, I have chosen to apply Black’s definition to my research as it directly references the colonial Andes and was informed by the following theorists: Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Richard Dyer, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Mikhail Bakhtin.³² While Black directly addresses the construction of race, she examines the social conditions in which *mestizo* individuals existed—a liminal space where they lived with the Indigenous population but worked among the Spanish, without fully belonging to either group. Often born from violent conditions like rape or colonial conquest, they occupied an unstable position within the caste

³⁰ Dean and Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents," 5.

³¹ Viceregal art encompassed artistic and architectural works created in the Americas under European influence, typically featuring a blend of European themes with Indigenous and African components.

³² Charlene Villaseñor Black, "Race and the Historiography of Colonial Art," *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, 2016, 303-304.

system.³³ As a result of these stratifications, artists were typically identified first by their ethnic qualification and second by their profession, reflecting the deep entrenchment of the racial tensions in colonial Latin America.

Within the context of the Cuzco School, the artists who joined the guild became powerful examples of individuals rebelling against a system that sought to limit their recognition and professional credibility, despite their skills. In her essay, “Race and the Historiography of Colonial Art,” Black discusses the political implications associated with the term ‘race’ and contends that Spanish conquistadors created social constructs to employ a hierarchal power dynamic between themselves and the Indigenous ‘other.’³⁴ As the artwork serves as visual evidence of racial inequalities and economic disparities present during its creation, it cannot be separated from its colonial conditions.

During the colonial era, the term *mestizo* was used to define individuals in the Americas who had a combination of Spanish and Indigenous heritage. This classification is particularly significant for my research on identity, as the first two chapters of this thesis focus on artists who identified as *mestizo*. The term was also used by architects to describe structures that combined European and Indigenous elements, demonstrating a propensity to objectify individuals by conflating them with the architecture itself. Thus, it was an aesthetic designation that was “used by Argentine architect and historian Angel Guido in his 1925 study of Peruvian architecture and was popularized in the 1940s by the North American scholar Harold Wethey in his monograph on Peruvian colonial architecture.”³⁵ Once again, *mestizo* was a distinct level of ‘Indianness’ that

³³ Villaseñor Black, “Race and the Historiography,” 310.

³⁴ Villaseñor Black, “Race and the Historiography,” 305.

³⁵ Villaseñor Black, “Race and the Historiography,” 305.

colonists used to distinguish social identities from their notion of ‘purity.’ During the colonial era, race and all its social classifications were weaponized as a means of justifying the seizure of new territories and the exploitation of Indigenous labor.

METHODOLOGIES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This thesis addresses questions surrounding issues of coloniality and identity by integrating a range of methodological approaches, ethical considerations, and critical concerns. The research has been carefully structured using an Indigenous conceptual framework, employing a particular emphasis on decoloniality.³⁶ However, due to the plethora of Native and non-Native scholarship attempting to define these terms, I have chosen to first define the specific way in which I will be using this language. In the words of Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach, “Applying the language of conceptual frameworks to Indigenous inquiries requires “unpacking” both the term and its intention.”³⁷ This technique, in my opinion as an Indigenous researcher, is essential in explaining my theoretical framework, thesis structure, and research findings. By decentering European voices and showcasing Indigenous survival strategies used to oppose coercive European assimilation, I am actively attempting to undermine the colonial agenda. To use an Indigenous conceptual framework is to instead, as an Indigenous

³⁶ I acknowledge that the term ‘decolonial’ faces criticism from academics for its overgeneralization in academia, frequent misuse that reinforces colonial dichotomies, and varied interpretations across different regions. Additionally, some academic institutions use the phrase in a performatively progressive manner, often without substantial change to aid the issues set forth in discussion. My use of ‘decolonial’ recognizes these critiques but aligns with the Latin American definition set forth by Quijano and Mignolo, who focus on critiquing Eurocentrism rather than addressing sovereignty or land rights.

³⁷ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts, Second Edition* (University of Toronto Press, 2021), 45.

descendant, make visible the voices of my ancestors. This visibility will be demonstrated by placing these paintings in the context of resistance and highlighting the symbolism and metaphors that Indigenous communities have historically and currently employed as a means of communication.

While Indigenous theories used in Native American art history are seldomly extended to Indigenous societies in colonial Latin America, I am making an intentional intervention by adapting these theories to examine the colonization of the Inca. Specifically, this research focuses on the dissemination of the colonial narrative, aiming to offer new context to these theoretical approaches. Whether it is within the context of Northern, Southern, or Mesoamerican communities, or even extended globally, the European objective to subjugate Indigenous people remained the same. Therefore, I argue that within this framework, Indigenous theories are equally relevant when considering the colonial history of the Inca, as Cuzco, their religious and administrative capital, was overtaken by European conquistadors. I address this history using the paintings as visual evidence to identify power relations existing between Spanish settlers and oppressed Indigenous Peruvians.³⁸ It is also critical to see the artwork as a historical and social conduit for Inca social and economic conditions. These issues are explored throughout each chapter, eventually aiming to show a “transformative and resurgent accounting of power relations” within the context of the final chapter’s account of Andean insurgency.³⁹

³⁸ Timothy E. Anna, “The Peruvian Declaration of Independence: Freedom by Coercion,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 7, no. 2 (1975): 248. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/156160>. Peru declared its independence from Spain in July 1821.

³⁹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 186.

Additionally, while the term ‘decolonial’ has been defined by scholars from a variety of disciplines both Native and non-Native, I will be directly referencing the conceptual framework of Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano. Applying Quijano's interventions to decoloniality will raise questions about the work's socioeconomic conditions. Quijano’s framework is a crucial intervention in the application of decolonial studies because he also indigenizes the narrative by implementing his perspective on the lasting impacts on society to advocate for minority equity and Indigenous inclusivity. While many researchers emphasize the importance of decolonial studies recognizing the persistence of a colonial world, they often continue to center the colonizer. Instead, Quijano explores how the coloniality of power constructs ideas about race, Western modernity, and the global economy. By then examining how these impacted Indigenous identities, Quijano argues that the coloniality of power has continued to persist through Eurocentric power structures, racial hierarchies, and Western concepts of knowledge. His argument then advocates for decolonial efforts to disrupt modern settler forces.

Quijano utilized the fact that the term decolonial originated in Latin America to highlight that it was misleading given the lack of effort being made to address the consequences or rectify harm done to the Andean community. It was not until the 1960s that “Quijano devised coloniality and the modern/colonial world-system ground on his lived experience in the South American Andes,” where he created four significant divisions, which are as follows: “the theology of liberation, the pedagogy of the oppressed, dependency theory, and, more recently, the coloniality of power.”⁴⁰ In other words, decoloniality alludes to a time in which a postcolonial society has

⁴⁰ Aníbal Quijano, *Aníbal Quijano: Foundational Essays on the Coloniality of Power* (Duke University Press, 2024), 7.

emerged. This simply does not exist.⁴¹ While it is considered to be a theory, it is really rather an Indigenous perspective that was meant to subvert settler realities and revive Indigenous cultures, customs, and epistemologies.⁴² It is with the application of Quijano's framework that the realities of the Indigenous symbolism present in the artwork analyzed in the following chapters come into discourse with Indigenous survivance. Quijano's perspective highlights how “Indigenous peoples have always engaged in collective resistance and affirmative refusal, constructing and maintaining decolonial/decolonizing otherwise” by considering the economic, cultural, and personal effects of the colonization of the Andes.⁴³

The works of Pumacallao and Zapata will be analyzed to support the theory that they were individuals who straddled the line between being neither fully Spanish nor Indigenous, but rather a blend of both. Oblitas operated in a separate category, embodying the intersecting worlds of Indigeneity and African heritage, further complicating the racial categorizations of identity. The following chapters will therefore highlight how themes of artistic freedom, Native visibility, and cultural preservation are conveyed within their paintings. Through their unique approaches, these artists not only employed techniques that acknowledged their mixed heritage but also emphasized the importance of Indigenous perspectives within colonial accounts. The inclusion of Inca motifs alongside European Catholic narratives can be seen as a way to reclaim cultural identity and challenge Eurocentric representations. Additionally, I intend to discuss materiality in

⁴¹ In this context, I refer to the idea of settler colonialism, which is a time when a European power sends colonists to a new region to extract resources and establish control. In Peru, settler colonialism began when the Spanish constructed settlements that shifted the socioeconomic environment.

⁴² Quijano, *Anibal Quijano: Foundational Essays on the Coloniality of Power*, 20.

⁴³ Quijano, *Anibal Quijano: Foundational Essays on the Coloniality of Power*, 4.

connection to Indigeneity, examining how the choice of materials and their cultural significance contribute to the reclamation of identity.

I have woven my own understandings and experiences as an Indigenous thinker, scholar, and cultural activist still living under the shadow of colonialism. This inclusion was added to honor and elevate the contributions of my ancestors, placing their legacies within mainstream scholarship and highlighting visual representations of Indigenous survivance that persist today. This thesis offers a deeper understanding of how art has historically fulfilled alternative functions for Indigenous communities, illustrating acts of survivance and resilience. For my people, art has existed as a tool of resistance, a means of preserving our heritage, and a vessel for reclaiming our identities.

CHAPTER ONE

The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco: Indigenous Survival and Colonial Imposition

In the year 1650, a catastrophic earthquake reduced the Peruvian city of Cuzco to ruins. Spanish colonists, who had already imposed their cultural norms and religious beliefs on the local Indigenous community for almost a century, seized the chance to further integrate the Inca into their civilization. As art historian Patrick Hajovsky explains, the Andean Baroque style emerged as a direct result of these reconstructive attempts, with Spanish architectural elements being integrated into local designs.⁴⁴ These restoration efforts included the introduction of Catholic Basilicas which sought to reinforce Spanish authority and assert European dominance. In spite of this oppressive environment, Quechua artists who were native to the Andean region of South America, like Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao, created works that blended Indigenous symbolism with the dominant Catholic faith. This chapter provides a close examination of Pumacallao's, *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco*, painted in 1698, by analyzing scenes within the composition and positioning them within a broader Indigenous context (Figure 1.1). The focus will be on the representation of the Virgin Mary and visible elements of Native culture, such as local textiles and landscapes, to explore how these elements reflect the resilience of Andean visual culture and the imposition of Spanish colonial forces.

In general, Pumacallao's painting was part of a larger Indigenous effort to reclaim artistic autonomy despite imposed constraints. Its production in Cuzco, as the capital of the former Inca empire, was a notable hub for the colonial exchange of material goods and artistic ideas. However, after the devastating earthquake of 1650, Spanish colonizers were inspired to rebuild

⁴⁴ Hajovsky, "Shifting Panoramas," 36.

the city with their influences. This dominating effort to control artistic production and maintain colonial hierarchies created an atmosphere of racial tension which prompted a response from Andean and *mestizo* artists who began to form their own artistic guilds. By 1688, a new aesthetic emerged, blending both European and Indigenous cultures, with a subtle resistive agenda, making the Cuzco School a transformative institution that implemented elements of Indigeneity into the visual arts.

Although Roman Catholicism was introduced to sixteenth-century Peru through colonial efforts, the growing influence of Spanish forces and missionaries created an environment that seventeenth-century artists of the Cuzco School found oppressive. Art critic and curator Guy Brett argues that the Dominican friars, in particular, were among the first of these earlier groups to recognize the impact of the visual arts on Indigenous people.⁴⁵ As a result, missionaries began to using art as a tool to transmit their teachings, and paintings quickly became a key tactic in their conversion efforts.

Brett highlights, one missionary, referred to as Dr. Tord, stated, “the friars discovered that the Indians were deeply impressed by sacred images created with the newest artistic techniques brought from the Old World...Those images were first seen in the catechisms, Bibles, books of hours, and hymnals used to convert the Indians and direct their worship.”⁴⁶ Additionally, the Jesuits were also establishing strongholds in mainland Peru as they sent Italian painter Bernardo Bitti to reside and paint in Cuzco in 1583.⁴⁷ As the dissemination of European aesthetics rapidly

⁴⁵ Guy Brett, "Being Drawn to an Image," *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (1991): 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1360273>.

⁴⁶ Brett, "Being Drawn to an Image," 3-4.

⁴⁷ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 20.

grew throughout the capital, Indigenous painters began receiving commissions to reproduce religious doctrine. Reportedly, “of forty-seven painters documented in Cuzco during the period, thirty-five were Indians, seven criollos or mestizos, four Spaniards, and one Italian. This list does not include the great number of Indians who remained anonymous.”⁴⁸

Alongside Bitti, Italian painters Angelino Medoro and Matteo Pérez de Alesio were instrumental artists for colonial church patrons, as their dominance in the art market shaped the aesthetic demands in Cuzco.⁴⁹ Castedo documents their influence by claiming that it was “the examples at hand of their works by Italian masters and their prestige and quality that indelibly shaped the mannerist period of Peruvian painting in general and the Cuzco school in particular... their style marked artistic creation in cuzqueño painting from the late sixteenth until well into the seventeenth century.”⁵⁰ Nevertheless, these artists were not alone in their prolific influence. Castedo also adds that Italian Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci's influence reportedly reached Diego Quispe Tito, one of the earliest founders of the Cuzco school. The author notes that this influence was prominent, whether it “came directly, through engravings,” or even through the “powerful influence of Bitti.”⁵¹ It is also crucial to note that two other European ateliers, inclusive of Spanish and Flemish artists, contributed their regional qualities to the artistic evolution of cuzqueño productions. These styles are best illustrated through the classicizing effects and emphasis on realism popularized in the arts of both European countries.

⁴⁸ Brett, "Being Drawn to an Image," 5.

⁴⁹ Junius Bouton Bird, *Peruvian paintings by unknown artists, 800 BC to 1700 AD* (Center for Inter-American Relations, 1973), 21.

⁵⁰ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 20.

⁵¹ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 20.

Although art historians often credit Diego Quispe Tito with being the first Indigenous artist in Cuzco who not only self-identified as ‘Inga’ (Inca) but also visually represented the “transition from imitation to freedom in personal expression,” the purpose of this chapter will focus on his contemporary, Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao.⁵² In the early stages of colonial influence, forensic examinations proved that many Peruvian painters imitated European aesthetics and directly layered original works to identically replicate them. Many of these duplicates were copied from Netherlandish prints, which at the time existed under Spanish control as the country was known as the Spanish Netherlands. This political tie would persist until the signing of the Treaty of Münster, in which the Netherlands broke free from Spanish colonial dominance in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵³ Therefore, while European aesthetics were influential to artists like Diego Quispe Tito, who were native to the Cuzco region, I contend it was truly Pumacallao who facilitated the emergence of such a significant artistic shift to promote Indigenous visibility. This theory has been touched on briefly in Castedo’s late twentieth-century book, *The Cuzco Circle* (The Center for Inter-American Relations and The American Federation of Arts, 1976), where Castedo states that “Basilio de Santa Cruz’s work goes beyond Bishop Mollinedo’s efforts to ‘Hispanicize’ the arts in Cuzco.”⁵⁴

Pumacallao’s artistic successes have frequently been attributed to his close association with the Spanish Archbishop of Cuzco, Manuel de Mollinedo y Angulo.⁵⁵ At the same time, it should be mentioned that many Indigenous and multi-racial individuals choose to pursue artistic

⁵² Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 20.

⁵³ Ann Sutherland Harris, *Seventeenth Century Art & Architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Melissa Danny (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 323.

⁵⁴ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 24.

⁵⁵ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 24.

careers since the conditions were less harsh than the other laborious crafts offered. During Pumacallao's career, the *mita* system was in full effect. Initially established by Spanish colonial forces in Peru and Bolivia in 1573, this colonial structure required the Native population to complete mandatory communal labor and lasted until a decade before Peru gained independence in 1821.⁵⁶ Cohen-Aponte highlights the severity of these racialized disparities through significant archival documentation that displays varied compensation depending on one's ethnic affiliation. At first, the systematic classification ranked professions according to their perceived value, but soon the labels began to incorporate the ethnic identity of each artist. As Cohen-Aponte states, "This ethnic qualifier of *indio* [Indian] always precedes the profession, carrying the implicit assumption that native masters would always be Indian's first, and artists second."⁵⁷ Yet Pumacallao's work complicates this notion —though he was commissioned to create religious propaganda for the various local cathedrals, his paintings revealed more than surface-level colonial ornamentation.

THE LEFT: THE SANCITY OF THE VIRGIN

Pumacallao's painting, *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco* is composed of three distinct thematic sections. From the viewer's left to the right, Pumacallao depicts the sanctity of the Virgin Mary, the prosperity of Catholic dictatorship, and the necessity of the icon's presence in Latin America. While there is very little published about the actual painting, the Virgin of

⁵⁶ Melissa Dell, "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining 'Mita,'" *Econometrica* 78, no. 6 (2010): 1863, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40928464>.

⁵⁷ Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance," 79.

Bethlehem was a highly reproduced figure in Cuzco School productions. To understand why the Virgin is centrally positioned in the painting, it is beneficial for the viewer to first grasp the narratives in the background, which provide a broader context for her placement in the artwork. According to a visual description provided by Ana Girard at the Menil Collection, a museum in Houston, Texas, the Virgin rests in between two very renowned colonial narratives that reflect her divine intercession. In the upper-left-hand corner of the painting, Pumacallao renders a view of both Indigenous and European people carefully crowded around one another to view a festival procession of the Virgin Mary.⁵⁸ Off to the left of a central elevated statue of the Virgin, the bishop is clearly identifiable by the vibrant white hue of his mitre (ceremonial Catholic headdress often worn by bishops) which looms over the individual heads in the crowd.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the shimmer of his pallium (vestment), which starkly contrasts against the dullness of the surrounding garments, emphasizes his importance.⁶⁰

The artist renders commotion as people rush to prevent the Virgin from falling off the wooden platform she balances on throughout the procession. Off to the side of the crowd, two men outstretch their arms, seemingly reaching out for her in despair, but they are disadvantaged by the distance. Girard identifies one man in particular named Selengue, as he appears positioned directly under the Virgin, reaching up to steady the pedestal with his hands. The narrative centers on the prompt actions of Selengue, who according to the Girard's research, is acknowledged as

⁵⁸ Ana Girard, "Our Lady of Bethlehem: An Iconic Image from Cuzco" (unpublished manuscript, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, 2024), 1, accessed November 27, 2024, <https://www.menil.org/read/online-features/enchanted/movement-and-meaning/our-lady-of-bethlehem>.

⁵⁹ A mitre is a distinctive, ceremonial headdress often worn by bishops in Catholic tradition.

⁶⁰ Steven A. Schoenig, "Obtaining the Pallium," in *In Bonds of Wool: The Pallium and Papal Power in the Middle Ages* (Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1gsmwbw.8>. Similar to a mitre, a pallium is a distinctive garment worn by high-ranking religious officials in Catholicism. It is worn as a liturgical vestment that represents their elevated status.

an Indigenous man.⁶¹ While he is absorbed in his own thoughts, the commotion of the Virgin falling rapidly brings him back to the present, where he feels remorsefully sinful as he rushes to prevent her from plummeting to the ground. This action supports several of the artist's suggestive placements. The viewer is first made aware of the hierarchal separation between Selengue and the Virgin as he reaches up towards her. This also places into context his diminutive size in contrast to the enormity of her height. Pumacallao also illustrates the spiritual distance between the two figures by positioning the Virgin Mary literally and figuratively above him. The narrative is played out further in the scene directly below as Selengue is shown running towards the Virgin as she lies face down. As he approaches her, she materializes in front of him, forewarning him of his sinful lifestyle as a non-Catholic believer before miraculously converting him through this action.

The pandemonium of the scene is disrupted by two rows of white figures leading into the foreground. Although little intellectual interest has been paid attention to the significance of the figures, it could be suggested that they represent Spanish elites or clergymen. The vibrant white satin of their full-length cloth covers the entirety of their bodies, careful not to reveal any aspect of their identity. Each of the individuals in the left row clutches a staff while the right is visually aligned across from their counterpart. Their deliberate placement further accentuates their political and religious significance, which is once again reinforced as they are joined by four Catholic nuns. The carefully crafted detail of their elaborate garments speaks not only to Pumacallao's skill as an artist but also serves to differentiate their presence from the Indigenous people visible throughout the artwork.

⁶¹ Girard, "Our Lady of Bethlehem," 1.

Beside them, a Spanish guard assumes his post at the entrance of a city with a bird's-eye perspective. While Pumacallao renders the city as a representation of a typical colonial Andean town, he also emphasizes elements of colonial imposition. Crosses dominate the horizon, and the architecture contrasts with the towering buildings that rise up into the skyline and cover the mountainous terrain of Peru. The inclusion of Spanish colonial buildings recalls the devastation and reconstruction of Cuzco, simultaneously drawing attention to the Christianization of the city.

Positioned in the far-left middle ground is a large apparition of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. The Virgin kneels before him as a burst of vibrant white light pools into a shimmering glow that envelopes the length of her body. Golden beams erupt from a crown positioned on her head, which is dramatically accentuated by the floating heads of cherub angels. With her hands clasped in prayer, the Virgin gazes tenderly up at Jesus Christ, who is seated on a throne above her, holding an orb and a cross. In European Renaissance paintings, the orb, referred to as the *globus cruciger*, “united the two main points of the Salvator Mundi theme- Christ’s bodily sacrifice and its ultimate purpose, the salvation of earthly humanity.”⁶² The symbol, popularized in fifteenth-century Italian painted reproductions, has origins that span back as far as the second century, where it was traceable to coins produced by the Roman Empire. This connection was again reinforced and promoted by Constantine I through reproduction of fourth-century coins. Arguably, the symbol became cemented in the visual arts through Italian Renaissance artists such as Andrea Previtali and Leonardo da Vinci, both of whom placed the symbol in Christ’s left hand, solidifying its association into the modern era (Figure 1.2 and 1.3). As it sits once more on

⁶² Meryl Bailey, "Salvatrix Mundi": Representing Queen Elizabeth I as a Christ Type," *Studies in Iconography* 29, 2008, 201, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23924149>.

the left side of Christ's body, Pumacallao places a wooden cross in between the object and Christ, displaying recognition of his martyrdom. Once more, a vibrant beam of heavenly light encircles his head.

Directly adjacent to the apparition, a man kneels before Mary, who extends her hand to bless him. The action of kneeling could be interpreted as a moment of veneration to her holiness or as him being shown in a moment of devotional prayer. Behind the pair, a figure is illuminated in a flood of light. The deep black hue of their clothes imbues them with an ominous presence. Pumacallao's direct omission of identifying facial features could be attributed to the microscopic scale of the individuals, but if size were to play a role, it raises the question of why they were included in the first place. Therefore, it could be speculated that the figure is not representative of one particular individual but rather symbolically represents Catholicism's authority and indirect influence over the hierarchical structure of the religious atmosphere in colonial Cuzco.

Below the more ambiguous scenes, the artist renders very clear depictions of demonic figures in the foreground. Often in Catholicism, demonic entities are associated with various sins, including temptation, gluttony, or sloth.⁶³ As he diverts his attention upwards to the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ to give them a piece of paper, one of the entities wraps his arm around a Spanish settler. Although little academic attention exists on this seemingly trivial detail, I contend that it could provide a significant amount of information about Pumacallao's views on the Catholic Church. Such a piece of paper could signify an offering for the individual's soul or a slight reference to the sale of indulgences. Existing decades prior to the painting's creation, the

⁶³ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 11.

process was actively a very contentious issue that resulted in the Protestant Reformation and the establishment of the Council of Trent.⁶⁴ As indulgences marked a transaction that occurred between the Catholic Church and a follower, allowing for the absolution of one's sins in exchange for a fee, it was perceived as an exploitative practice. In contrast, with the Virgin as a symbol of piety, the demon painted separately from the other entities within a muddled green could represent the Devil paying particular attention to the financial exchange of one's salvation as an artistic critique to the commodification of religion. This could be further extended to an acknowledgment of the faith's hypocritical nature and a wider recognition of colonial exploitation.

THE RIGHT: THE VIRGIN OF BETHLEHEM'S ARRIVAL IN COLONIAL CUZCO

Although still densely packed with symbolism, the viewer's right side of the composition is more directly related to histories of the Spanish conquistadors' arrival, the Virgin Mary's introduction in Peru, and her quick rise to prominence in Cuzco as a symbol of coloniality. In the farthest upper-right-hand corner, the Girard introduces the coastal scene as a reference to Lima, where three fishermen found a statue of the Virgin, which appeared in a wooden crate as it

⁶⁴ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Catholic (Counter) Reformation was launched as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation as it was created to reinforce the church's accomplishments and boost conversion rates. Martin Luther, a theologian known primarily for pinning '95 Theses' to the door of a Catholic church, served as the impetus for this reaction. Within this declaration, Luther declared several concerns, which included his disdain for Catholicism and its dictatorial authority over the populace. In response, the Council of Trent was established to reinterpret the core values of Catholicism to appease the public. Though the meeting was established to rectify the dispute, it ultimately reinstated the significance of indulgences, Catholic doctrine, and the role of visual media in communicating and disseminating those narratives. William A. Pelz, "The Other Reformation': Martin Luther, Religious Dogma and the Common People," in *A People's History of Modern Europe* (Pluto Press, 2016), 19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c2crfj.6>.

drifted up close to the shoreline.⁶⁵ The narrative unfolds throughout the composition as the painting describes their journey back to Cuzco with the figure, where they unpack the contents of the crate in front of the local inhabitants, who enthusiastically embrace her presence. Along the journey, Pumacallao incorporates smaller narrative details reflecting on the colonization of Peru, which can be divided into four sections.

While the coastal scene denotes the arrival of the Virgin Mary's statue in Peru, it also depicts the arrival of Spanish settlers in the mid-sixteenth century, acting as a chronological axis for the origins of colonial imposition in Cuzco. The scene shows both Native and European boats navigating the waters of the South Pacific Ocean. On the shore, one conquistador stands out, visually emphasized by a black, wide-brimmed cavalier hat with a feather that pokes out from behind his head. He is mounted beside two high-ranking officials on horseback as they enter into the city grounds with a cavalry who appear prepared for war.

As the viewer's gaze is drawn towards the foreground, the same three central conquistadors are rendered with slightly more detail. A man, possibly an interpreter, leads in front of the troop as he steers a donkey ahead of the trail with his right hand. The intricate details added by the artist reinforce the militarization of the colonial effort to subdue and oppress the Indigenous population. Further down the path, the scene grows more complex, combining a small gathering of Catholic officials with the Native population. Nonetheless, the Inca are positioned on the ground with their hands out awaiting the conquistador's arrival, which reinforces a clear visual delineation separating them from the European settlers.

⁶⁵ Girard, "Our Lady of Bethlehem," 1.

By including the Cuzco Cathedral, which assumes dominance over the spatial arrangement of the composition, the final two scenes on the right-hand side demonstrate the papal presence in Cuzco. The Cathedral's existence is indicative of the repression of Indigenous beliefs and the forcefulness of assimilation efforts, as it was constructed over the remains of the Sacsayhuamán, the most revered Inca temple in Cuzco.⁶⁶ Situated in the center of the city, the Cathedral asserted itself as a center for religious service as well as a hub for social gatherings, as Pumacallao illustrates with the bishop encircled by high-ranking Spanish officials.

Closest to the foreground, the narrative of the Virgin's arrival in Cuzco through sculptural form is concluded through her public unveiling. Contrasting both spiritually and aesthetically against the demons on the opposing side of the scene, her role as a religious authority and divine protector is elucidated. The people surrounding the event to witness the saintly reveal are visually arranged in order of the enforced racial hierarchy, with Spanish colonizers at the center and minority groups in the farthest back as some strain to look up over the crowd.

Beyond its Christian iconography, the portrayal of the Virgin Mary's statue being unveiled to the public may also suggest the Andean concept of *huacas*—sacred objects or places imbued with a spiritual presence. In this scene, the Virgin is not treated as a mere statue but rather, is portrayed as a revered object emblematic of the Virgin Mary herself. This treatment echoes how *huacas* were venerated in Andean communities. For an Indigenous audience, the depiction could have resonated as an adaption of their pre-Columbian understanding of the sacred, recontextualized within a Catholic framework. It is in this way that the statue functioned

⁶⁶ Dean, "Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco," 163.

as an active tool in religious conversions, offering a more relatable and adaptable symbol of the divine as it reflected the Andean notion of sacred presence found in the *huacas*.

With all these elements combined, the narratives work in conjugation to tell the story of Europe's colonial control over Cuzco, emphasizing the institutional and spiritual dominance and repression of Native belief systems and culture. These efforts are highlighted with specific attention placed on the dissemination of saints like the Virgin Mary, the missionization of Indigenous populations, and the forceful inclusion of European aesthetics.

THE CENTER: THE VIRGIN OF BETHLEHEM, BISHOP MOLLINEDO AND THE COLONIAL REACH

The center of the painting has arguably the most nuanced elements of the composition. The Virgin of Bethlehem, one of Cuzco's primary patron saints, is positioned theologically and symbolically in the center of the artwork to allude to her religious protection and unification over the city's inhabitants. Pumacallao elevates her by setting her atop a highly ornate wooden platform that rests on a silver altar.⁶⁷ This elevation signals her celestial status, which is reinforced through the crown on her head and the throne-like architecture that denote her status as the Queen of Heaven. As previously mentioned, platforms were also utilized in processions in which the Virgin was paraded through the streets. To further emphasize these religious festivals,

⁶⁷ In the dissertation, I plan to conduct a more thorough analysis of silver. Archaeologist and art historian Monica Bravo provides an excellent examination of the monetization of silver and the element's impact to the Americas. Her work will be incorporated and consulted more deeply in future studies to contribute to a broader examination of its significance. Monica Bravo, "Mercury Is a Messenger," *American Art* 39, no. 1 (2025): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1086/734850>.

it could be suggested that Pumacallao depicted her in this manner to display her role not only within the Catholic Church but also in a public space. This public veneration of the Virgin could also recall once more her dominating nature over other Native beliefs that were suppressed in her presence.

Bishop Manuel de Mollinedo y Angulo, who was active in Cuzco from 1672 until his death in 1699, is kneeling diagonally below her on the left.⁶⁸ Pumacallao's decision to position the ecclesiastical figure in front of the altar creates an intriguing artistic and historical link, though one might question how much creative autonomy he truly had in making a choice within the context of colonial expectations. Stanfield-Mazzi states that during his time in Cuzco, Mollinedo became heavily involved in replacing "altar frontals with costly, yet durable panels made of worked silver with wooden backings," which is visually supported by the platform he sits in front of.⁶⁹

As a significant patron of the arts and a primary supporter of Pumacallao's artwork, Mollinedo frequently commissioned mural projects and paintings to place in cathedrals as far as 30 miles outside of Cuzco's city limits in small towns like Huanquite for the church of Todos los Santos.⁷⁰ It could be argued that this propagandistic promotion of the arts originated during his time as a priest in Madrid, where art historian Aaron Hyman connects Mollinedo to Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens through the artist's tapestry series, the *Triumph of the Eucharist* (1625–26). Hyman states that Mollinedo was present to view the artwork during Spain's

⁶⁸ Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, "Weaving and Tailoring the Andean Church: Textile Ornaments and Their Makers in Colonial Peru," *The Americas* 72, no. 1 (2015): 89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43897418>.

⁶⁹ Stanfield-Mazzi, "Weaving and Tailoring," 89.

⁷⁰ Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat*, 31.

celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi on June 16, 1672.⁷¹ Later, in the same year, after moving to Peru, Mollinedo encounters Ruben's work again, this time as "paintings in the Indigenous parish church of the Hospital de los Naturales."⁷²

Pumacallao's inclusion of Mollinedo in the painting alludes to both his colonial authority, as he is positioned just slightly underneath the saint, and his instrumental influence of religious propaganda disseminated through the arts. He is also visually reinforced as a political administrator of colonial dominance as he is situated next to a heraldic crest. While this exact emblem has received little scholarly attention, I argue it is a direct link back to the Hapsburg dynasty in Spain. As historian Laura Leibman highlights, "When Charles II died in 1700, the Habsburg [sometimes spelled as Hapsburg] dynasty ended in Spain and its colonies. His successor, Philip of Anjou (grandson of Louis XIV of France and Charles's half-sister), started a new dynasty: the Bourbons."⁷³ This theory of visual bolstering the Hapsburg's reign, thus situating their colonial power reaching to other regions of the world, is strengthened when considering that historically Mollinedo was sent directly to the Andes under the dynasty's rule.

Separated into five sections, Pumacallao's painting incorporates many conventional characteristics from the original heraldic crest. The inclusion of tan and red coupled as a pair, the diagonal stripes, the tower, and the replication of the lion were all symbols associated with the Spanish monarchy. As evidence of the extent of Spanish colonial control in other territories,

⁷¹ Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat*, 29.

⁷² Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat*, 29.

⁷³ Laura Arnold. Leibman, "Limpieza de Sangre and Casta Paintings: New Spain: Eighteenth Century," in *In Jews Across the Americas: A Sourcebook*, 1492–Present, ed. Laura Arnold Leibman and Adriana M. Brodsky (NYU Press, 2023), 97, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.13944144.27>. It is also worth noting that the brackets are my own intervention to the source and they do not show up in the original text.

these emblems were so widespread that they were even replicated on stain glass panels in the Spanish Netherlands at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Figure 1.4). Together, the Virgin Mary, the Spanish bishop, and the heraldic crest form a visual triad that encapsulates the colonial dynamics of European colonization that is, political domination, cultural negotiation, and religious assimilation. In three, these elements demonstrate how Marian iconography was strategically employed to reinforce colonial rule and reinstate the monarch's belief that they had been divinely mandated to colonize the Americas.

Nevertheless, Pumacallao's depiction of the Virgin Mary is not just mere colonial ornamentation. In juxtaposition to many other colonial works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pumacallao's replication of the Virgin Mary has more explicit Indigenous influences. She appears to the viewer draped in Andean textiles indicative of local patterns and material dyes, including cochineal and tara spinosa (a specific tree species native to Peru).⁷⁴ Popular amongst Indigenous artists in Peru, the pigments were extracted from native plants and insects. As vibrantly exhibited in the painting, Stanfield-Mazzi also states that the use of "rich reds and yellows also recall an ancestral palette that relied on Andean dyeing capabilities" and the white which was created from camel fur "recalls the Inca palette and refers back to the finest of royal cumbi."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Alicia Seldes et al., "Green, Yellow, and Red Pigments in South American Painting, 1610-1780," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 41, no. 3 (2002): 228, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3179920>.

⁷⁵ Stanfield-Mazzi, "Weaving and Tailoring," 87.

COCHINEAL AND ITS SOCIOPOLITICAL CONDITIONS

In combination with a variety of earth tones, cochineal red dominates much of the painting's palette. The dye, extracted from a small insect with a similar shape and size to a pill bug, is commonly found in warm climates across the Americas on cacti known as 'nopales' or 'prickly pears.'⁷⁶ Although there is no definitive marker for when cochineal was first used as dye on textiles, archeologists and art historians have theorized that the people of the Chavin culture, who were active in the northern Peruvian Andes from 900 to 200 BCE, were the first to discover it and disseminate the striking color throughout Central America in pre-Columbian times.⁷⁷ Eventually cochineal spread to regions in Southern Mexico, where Indigenous populations, such as the Mixtec and Oaxaca, sold it in trade markets. By the 1500s, the red hue caught the eye of the Aztecs, who were renowned for creating brilliantly colored featherwork. The Aztecs referred to cochineal as 'nocheztli,' or "blood of the nopal," a term that emphasized the color's strong association with the nopal cactus, which was "central to Aztec identity and culture."⁷⁸

The cultivation of cochineal, however, was a labor-intensive operation. A manuscript detailing the production of cochineal shows the process of extraction as two figures, one Indigenous and the other fictitiously Spanish, work together to remove the insects off the nopal plant (Figure 1.5). This job was tedious as it took "as many as 70,000 dried insects—and sometimes more—to produce just one pound of dye."⁷⁹ After being harvested, the insects were

⁷⁶ Amy Butler Greenfield, *A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire* (Harper Perennial, 2006), 35.

⁷⁷ Elena Phipps and Nobuko Shibayama, "Tracing Cochineal Through the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum," paper presented at the *Textile Society of America, 12th Biennial Symposium*, Lincoln, NE, October 2010

⁷⁸ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 40.

⁷⁹ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 39.

placed in the sunlight to be dried out and then crushed into a powder to produce the pigment. As the demand for the vibrant red grew in Europe, historian Amy Butler Greenfield states that, “Indigenous farmers were relied on to produce most of the world supply of Mexican dyestuff—not only in the sixteenth century but throughout the entire period of Spanish rule.”⁸⁰

Yet, the pigment’s success soon became an issue for Indigenous farmers. While it created economic opportunities, it also created financial instability, which in turn created social unrest. After determining that the “various success of the trade was leading to social disorder,” the local council banned the production of cochineal in 1552.⁸¹ From an Indigenous perspective, cochineal was the most important product exported exclusively by Native people in colonial Latin America.⁸² Yet, it was far more than just a mere commodity. The colorant also represented a “living legacy from their ancestry, a gift that connected past and present, a critical source of strength and battle for personal and cultural survival.”⁸³

Even after the creation of Pumacallao’s painting, the source of cochineal remained unknown to Europeans. Its discovery as an insect was not publicly recorded by Britain until 1704.⁸⁴ The continued reliance on Indigenous production reveals a complex interplay of the interdependency on Native resources and people to fuel colonial dominance. Furthermore, the exploitation of both cochineal and the local farmers highlights a further layer of colonization, emphasizing the extractive nature of colonial rule. Scholars dedicated to decolonial studies refer

⁸⁰ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 92.

⁸¹ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 95.

⁸² Jeremy Baskes, "Colonial Institutions and Cross-Cultural Trade: Repartimiento Credit and Indigenous Production of Cochineal in Eighteenth-Century Oaxaca, Mexico," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 1 (2005): 192, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3875047>.

⁸³ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 101.

⁸⁴ Greenfield, *A Perfect Red*, 154.

to this hierarchical structure as ‘external colonialism,’ which is defined through the “expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants and human beings, extracting them in order to transport them to - and build the wealth, the privilege, or feed the appetites of - the colonizers.”⁸⁵

Positioning the painting within its historical context, it should be argued that Pumacallao’s inclusion of cochineal was not merely an aesthetic choice but one shaped by the laborious conditions of the resource. Scholars have noted that it was highly valued throughout Mesoamerica and South America, particularly among pre-Columbian Peruvian Indigenous communities, thus representing a vital connection to Indigenous artistic traditions. By incorporating it into the composition, cochineal is transformed into a statement of the complex trade networks existing between Indigenous groups and the frequently laboriously exploitative nature of its production. At the same time, it also serves as a testament to cultural continuity against oppressive odds.

ANDEAN TEXTILES

The vivid red, reminiscent of pre-Columbian Inca textiles, also recalls the complex geometric designs and symbolic motifs that frequently exhibited local flora and fauna. The patterns on the Virgin’s garments are reminiscent of the *tocapu*, a traditional design characteristic of elite Inca tunics (Figure 1.6). Often woven with gold and silver threads, these products were

⁸⁵ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 4.

reserved for elite members of nobility, carefully crafted by “master weavers of the Inca royal workshops.”⁸⁶ After the introduction of silk and metallic yarn, the tunics were worn “during Christian religious festivals, as recorded in the paintings dating to around 1675 that depict the procession of Corpus Christi in Cuzco.”⁸⁷ To fully support this claim that Pumacallao incorporated Indigenous textiles, textile scholar Elena Phipps states that:

Women of high social status, especially those of noble Inca lineage, likewise continued to wear indigenous garments: a wrapped dress (*anacu*), composed of a rectangular piece of cloth wound around the body and fastened together at the shoulders with *tupu* (shoulder pins), and a rectangular mantle (*lliclla*), which was worn around the shoulders and held at the breast with a *tipqui* (mantle pin).⁸⁸

These elements are all incorporated in the artist’s representation of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, the Virgin is embellished with fragments of gold leaf, which evoke a traditional Peruvian artistic technique known as ‘brocateado.’⁸⁹ This supports a localized understanding of the Virgin by blending European religious images with local artistic traditions, making the figure more recognizable to the local inhabitants.

⁸⁶ Elena Phipps, "Woven Silver and Gold: Metallic Yarns in Colonial Andean Textiles," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 29, no. 3 (2010): 4, <https://login.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/23208503>.

⁸⁷ Phipps, "Woven Silver and Gold," 4.

⁸⁸ Phipps, "Woven Silver and Gold," 5.

⁸⁹ Hajovsky, "Shifting Panoramas," 53.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

In the colonial context, the Virgin Mary became a figure that the Inca could relate back to their own maternal Andean deity, Pachamama.⁹⁰ The Virgin's associations with sacred creation and maternity made her a logical candidate for substitution. Additionally, local inhabitants familiar with pre-colonial processions that venerated female deities found similarities with European religious ceremonies such as the Corpus Christi, where Catholic churches paraded the Virgin's image around in the streets.⁹¹ These shared religious practices made the Virgin Mary a more accessible archetype for the Spanish to introduce into Indigenous culture, as a maternal icon who echoed the role of Pachamama. In particular, the Virgin of Bethlehem, who was portrayed as Cuzco's patron saint, was a central figure in these processions.⁹²

Affectionately deemed 'la mamacha' in Quechua (a language native to the Indigenous inhabitants) and 'la mamita,' in Spanish, meaning mother in both languages, these terms further solidified the Virgin of Bethlehem's connection to Pachamama.⁹³ Although the Spanish used processions like the Corpus Christi as a tool for assimilation, Castedo suggests that while Indigenous people participated in these festivals, many maintained their traditional beliefs.⁹⁴ Castedo explains, "It is certain and proved that in many places, disguised as the feast of Corpus

⁹⁰ Teresa Gisbert, "Los mitos prehispánicos en el arte virreinal," in *Iconografía y mitos indígenas en el arte* (La Paz, Bolivia: Gisbert, 1980), 17,

https://www.academia.edu/43922875/Gisbert_Teresa_Iconografia_y_mitos_indigenas_en_el_arte.

This is the earliest written source I was able to find that references this idea.

⁹¹ Corpus Christi is translated in English as the 'Body of Christ' from its Latin origins. The Corpus Christi festival celebrates this through the Eucharist, which is the consumption of bread and wine as the flesh and blood of Christ.

⁹² Gálvez, *Cusco Cathedral Guide*, 39.

⁹³ Carol Damian, "Pachamama and the Female Deities of the Andes," in *The Virgin of the Andes: Art and Ritual in Colonial Cuzco* (Miami Beach: Grassfield Press, 1994), 26-30; Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 55.

⁹⁴ Carolyn Dean also discusses the role of Virgin statues in Corpus Christi processions. Carolyn Dean, "Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 1 (1996): 101-110, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3046159>.

Christi, actually the feast of Oncoymita is being celebrated. To be able to worship an idol in female form, which the Andeans call Chupixamor and Mamayoc, they make feasts in honor of the image of Our Lady of Assumption.”⁹⁵ This reaffirms that Indigenous people were able to use Marian iconography as substitutions for their own ideologies by fusing the two deities in practice.⁹⁶

In Inca cosmology, Pachamama is representative of Mother Earth, therefore granting her symbolic undertones as a maternal figure and caretaker of all living things. The story of Pachamama’s identity can be traced back to the Inca community’s reciprocal relationship to the land referred to as *anyi* in Quechua.⁹⁷ As Dean recounts, this relationship is often narrated through the understanding that the “earth is gendered female,” which reflects “the Andean belief, dating from pre-Hispanic times, that the Earth in general, called Pachamama (Earth-Mother) is feminine.”⁹⁸ From the Inca perspective, this connection to the land is easily understood. In other words, if the Earth is taken care of, the land will take care of the people residing on it in return. This relationship parallels the nurturing bond typically found in a mother-child dynamic. From an Indigenous standpoint, even her name beginning with ‘Mother’ is reflective of how the Native people saw this link.

⁹⁵ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 33.

⁹⁶ It is important to note that Peruvian anthropologist Ramón Mujica Pinilla attributes the artwork, *The Return of the Holy Sacrament*, created from 1680 to 1685, to Pumacallao. This artwork not only serves as an example of these processions but also functions as further evidence of the Virgin of Bethlehem’s role in these types of religious festivals. Ramón Mujica Pinilla, *El Barroco Peruano* (Lima: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2002), 119. Additionally, Cohen-Aponte highlights that, unlike other artistic portrayals of similar events, each of the Indigenous figures is given defined facial features. This choice signifies an attempt to individualize and humanize the figures, standing in opposition to other colonial depictions that tended to generalize Indigenous people. Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 151.

⁹⁷ Carolyn Dean, *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock* (Duke University Press, 2010), 68.

⁹⁸ Dean, *A Culture of Stone*, 68.

Pachamama's profound connection to the landscape, particularly the mountains, is exemplified further by the Quechua term, *apus*, which translates to 'Lord' and denotes the sacredness of mountains.⁹⁹ Though traditionally her form is denoted as an abstract spiritual concept, she has been frequently linked to the mountains, which reflects the complex nature of her essence.¹⁰⁰ This connection highlights Pachamama's nourishing capabilities, as the mountainous region of Peru has often been described as an extension of her presence.

In support of this, art historian Gauvin Bailey and decolonial semiotician Walter Mignolo have published extensive scholarship arguing that these renditions of the Virgin subtly reflect Pachamama. This fusion is supported with Latin American paintings such as the *Virgin Cerro* created in 1720. Mignolo suggests that it is an evident "fusion between Pachamama (Mother Earth) in Andean cosmology and the body of the Virgin in Christian cosmology" (Figure 1.7).¹⁰¹ In the *Virgin Cerro*, Mary is represented as a gigantic, mountainous figure, with no separation between her body and the landscape. In this context, it becomes evident that she is the mountain itself, illustrating how Indigenous artists reimagined the Virgin as an alternate manifestation of Pachamama's spiritual essence. These inclusions of Indigeneity in the visual arts were thus evidence of local painters subverting colonial ideology.

The fusion of the Virgin Mary's identity with Pachamama is also evident in Pumacallao's painting, *The Virgin of Bethlehem*. Created even earlier than the *Virgin Cerro*, her garments are not just rich with textiles, but their shape is deliberately designed to evoke a mountainous form.

⁹⁹ Dean, *A Culture of Stone*, 255.

¹⁰⁰ The Inca spiritual connection to the mountains will be discussed further in chapter two.

¹⁰¹ Walter D. Mignolo, "Response: Las Meninas: A Decolonial Response," *The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 1/2 (2010): 44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27801655>.

The vibrant colors and silver threads on her clothing are reminiscent of textiles reserved for Andean nobility. During the colonial period, Andean textiles were indicative of one's social position. The materials used, including not only the pigments used to dye the garment, but also the fibers required to weave the clothing, were also determined by an individual's rank. As a result, the garment reflected the wearer by visually conveying their role or status through abstracted designs and colors, which were most often reds and yellows, thus communicating not just meaning stylistically, but socially.

The finest *uncus*, which were often reserved for elite men is reflected in a study conducted by art historian Joanne Pillsbury, who highlights that this relationship between wearer and garment was so significant that the “unku, so closely associated with an individual in life, were used upon death as evidence or testimony to his place in history.”¹⁰² These garments, like the *All-T'oqapu Tunic*, seen in Figure 1.6, are not only reflective of this visual system of social hierarchy in Andean culture, but also demonstrate how textile designs were used to reinforce identity and position within that structure.

Pumacallao's reuse of recognizable motifs reinforces the Indigenous desire for cultural inclusion amidst suppressive colonial forces. His depiction of the Virgin Mary is not merely an aesthetic replication of Catholic iconography but a subtle blend of Indigenous spirituality and a symbol of resistance against complete assimilation. The incorporation of recognizable elite textiles, especially those that were only reserved for ceremony, ties in with the sacred identity of the Virgin Mary.

¹⁰² Joanne Pillsbury, "Inka Unku: Strategy and Design in Colonial Peru," *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art* 7, 2002, 71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20079720>.

CUZCO CATHEDRAL

The last component of the painting that merits special attention is the Cuzco Cathedral due to its demonstration of the severity of colonial imposition. Beginning in 1560 and continuing until completion in 1664, the Cathedral was erected over the site of an ancient Inca palace belonging to the Indigenous ruler, Viracocha. The formation of the church was also constructed in part from the ruins of a sacred Peruvian temple that was dismantled by Spanish forces.¹⁰³ Prior to the conquest, its presence was a symbol of great pride to the Inca as a noticeable fortress and monumental construction effort, but after the Spanish conquest it became known as a symbol of colonial control. In fact, the Spanish “adopted Sacsayhuamán as their symbol of the conquest of Cusco and the Inca” having taken full control of the Cuzco in 1536 after “the battle for Sacsayhuamán.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, its deconstruction in the century that followed, along with the repurposing of its stones into the Catholic Church, represented both militaristic and theological victory. In this context, the inclusion of the Cuzco Cathedral in the right-hand side of the composition, can be interpreted to the local inhabitants as a symbol of Spanish conquest and cultural suppression, offering viewers a visual representation of colonial dominance.

According to Dean, the Virgin Mary's miraculous intervention during the battle for Sacsayhuamán led the Spanish to name the reconstructed cathedral as El Triunfo (“The Triumph”) to commemorate their victory over the Inca. Dean states that the Spanish claimed Mary “descended at the sunter wasi, a circular tower that was the focus of the Inca ritual and

¹⁰³ Dean, "Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco," 166.

¹⁰⁴ Dean, "Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco," 166.

where the Spaniards had taken refuge.”¹⁰⁵ In addition, the construction of the Cathedral was erected not just in the faces of the Inca, but they were also the “laborers who, under Spanish supervision, dislodged the stones of Sacsayhuamán and built the Cathedral.”¹⁰⁶ The Basilica Cathedral, which is flanked by the Church of the Holy Family on the left and the Church of the Triumph on the right, is the largest of the Cathedral's three distinct sections. As featured in Pumacallao’s painting, the Basilica is often recognized by its two enormous bell towers. As it exists now, the Cathedral serves as a colonial indicator of the subjugation of Inca culture and traditions under Spanish control. The Cathedral, still an active site, is used by the Indigenous population as a place of processions, worship, and religious festivals like the Corpus Christi. It also serves as a museum space that disseminates information about the paintings in its collection to viewers through individual plaques. The text that accompanies the artwork functions as an object that bears both the weight and responsibility of expressing the message of each of these paintings, not only within their original colonial context but also in how they are interpreted today.

In conclusion, by incorporating local dyes, Indigenous motifs, and elements of Andean culture, Pumacallao’s painting serves as a reminder of Peruvian resistance against colonial imposition. The indigenization of the Virgin with these visible elements, including the subtle artistic gesture towards her dual identity as Pachamama, transforms her from mere artistic imitation of Catholic iconography into a symbol of the resilience of Indigenous beliefs in the wake of colonial suppression. These artistic choices capture a crucial moment in the colonization

¹⁰⁵ Dean, "Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco," 168.

¹⁰⁶ Dean, "Creating a Ruin in Colonial Cusco," 169.

of Indigenous peoples, revealing that *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco* is not just a fusion of aesthetic techniques but a deliberate act of autonomy and resistance against assimilation and Indigenous erasure.

CHAPTER TWO

Zapata's Andean Reinterpretations: Reimagining Catholic Narratives Through Indigenous Reclamation and Resistance

While seventeenth-century artists like Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao used artwork produced through the Cuzco School guild as an aesthetic outlet to subtly integrate aspects of Indigeneity, it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that painters such as Marcos Zapata integrated these elements as part of a more overt resistive strategy that asserted Indigenous agency. Among the most notable examples, the most common theme attributed to the resistant efforts of the Cuzco School is their reinterpretation of Catholic narratives which Indigenized the compositions. Arguably the most prolific of his era, Zapata gained notoriety for his inclusion of distinctly Indigenous features, which typically included Andean cuisine, Native textiles, and a vibrant Peruvian palette. In this chapter I will analyze the subversive stylistic strategies of Marcos Zapata through a comparative analysis of three of his works, *The King Josafad* (1764), *The Last Supper* (1753), and *Adoration of the Magi* (1760). This examination will highlight his integration of Indigenous symbolism, regional landscapes, and resistive visual strategies that challenged colonial authority and asserted Indigenous autonomy through aesthetic conventions.

Within the context of colonial Cuzco, it is crucial to acknowledge that there were two broad sects of Indigenous artists in the eighteenth century: those producing works with European techniques and others who were implementing Native culture and customs within those techniques. Though dominant Spanish aesthetic compositions reflected Catholic beliefs, Peruvian authors like Cesar Chacon Rosasco and Gretel Bardalez Zambrano state that “this way of thinking opposed Indigenous pantheist beliefs closely associated with the earth, nature, and

the enjoyment of life without prejudice.”¹⁰⁷ Among the groups of artists who were concerned with combating total assimilation, Zapata’s deliberate adaptation of European religious narratives is a demonstration of him exercising his artistic autonomy.

Although he was one of the most prominent *mestizo* artists of the eighteenth century, much of Zapata’s personal life remains undocumented, and even the exact years of his birth and death have been left uncertain to scholars. However, due to the volume of artwork he left behind and its lasting influence, art historians have been able to narrow the years of his career, which spanned from the 1740s until the 1770s.¹⁰⁸ As a young painter, he studied in an ethnically diverse guild organization where he was given the opportunity to observe artists of Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Flemish descent. Unlike other artists of the era, Zapata was affectionately referred to as Marcos Sapaca Inka, a term connoting high respect, due to his level of artistic talent and his notoriety for having produced over 200 paintings.¹⁰⁹ This level of recognition was particularly exceptional due to a racialized labor system established by Spanish forces, which directly oppressed evidence of artistic autonomy and Indigenous creativity.

Zapata, who had more freedom than other artists of fully Indigenous descent, used his *mestizo* identity to visually reimplement Indigenous culture and aspects of his heritage against a system designed to erase Indigenous-descended artists. The *mita* system, initially established in 1573 to assert Spanish colonial dominance over Bolivian and Andean people, forced labor to be framed as a collective, community-based responsibility.¹¹⁰ This system also directly targeted

¹⁰⁷ Rosasco and Zambrano, *Cusco's Cathedral*, 45.

¹⁰⁸ Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 83.

¹⁰⁹ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 203.

¹¹⁰ Dell, "The Persistent," 1863. It is also worth stating that this source states the system was active in Peru until 1812.

artists by stripping them of individual recognition and enforcing disparate pay structures. Evidence of this system has been found in over 240 contracts written in Cuzco between the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹¹¹ These contracts record not only the profession of Indigenous workers but also the ethnic categorization of Native artists labeled either as “*indio maestro* (indian master) or *indio oficial* (indian journeyman).”¹¹² Although Spaniards were considered to still be the minority during this time, their ethnicity was rarely identified in documentation as it was considered to be an irrelevant factor of the artistic commission.¹¹³

These racial disparities can be reduced to, as Cohen-Aponte states, “numerical terms” showing that “Spaniards make up 86% of the top earners and indigenous Andeans make up 73% of the lowest earners.”¹¹⁴ It can be argued that despite these barriers, Zapata used his *mestizo* identity to his advantage, securing a position that enabled him to reclaim aspects of his Indigenous heritage. Even by asserting ownership over his paintings, Zapata initiated a cultural transition away from communal responsibility, Indigenous erasure, and the passive acceptance of racial oppression. As Stanfield-Mazzi states, “Artists, who due to their skills and community linkages operated from relative positions of privilege, can be considered as activists in the field.”¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance,” 76.

¹¹² Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance,” 79.

¹¹³ Further research of this documentation revealed the socioeconomic conditions of colonial Peru highlighting the systemic inequalities Indigenous artists were faced with. Cohen-Aponte states that the results show that “The top thirty earners in the sample received wages spanning 1,000 to 100,000 pesos for a single commission... Among these thirty artists, only two are identified as indigenous and an additional two area of indigenous descent but not labelled as such. These artists also occupy the lower limits of the group, earning 1,000 and 1,500 pesos for their work.” Pesos are Spanish currency used in Peru. Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance,” 81-88.

¹¹⁴ Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance,” 88.

¹¹⁵ Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, “Artists as Activists: The Development of Indigenous Artists' Rights during the Sixteenth Century,” in *Collective Creativity and Artistic Agency in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Maya Stanfield-Mazzi and Margarita Vargas-Betancourt (University Press of Florida, 2023), 19.

THE KING JOSAFAD

In this context, just as color played a significant role in artworks produced by seventeenth-century artists in the Cuzco guild, the element remained equally crucial for eighteenth-century artists like Zapata. His painting, *The King Josafad* created in 1764, serves not only as a quintessential example of the unique characteristics of Cuzco School art but also as subtle commentary on the colonial history of color (Figure 2.1). Although the palette in colonial Latin America was often limited, artists in guilds had the opportunity to collectively oversee the materials they used and often encouraged the use of local resources. As Bailey highlights, “Unlike in Italy, most artists in Latin America and Iberia did not enjoy a particularly high social status and they were taxed as common laborers. Guilds were an important means for artists to gain solidarity and to voice their concerns collectively during economic slumps or when faced with unfair treatment by patrons.”¹¹⁶

Though pigments were frequently imported from Europe, Indigenous painters in Cuzco would “generally depend upon excellent earth, animal, and vegetable pigments.”¹¹⁷ By incorporating indigo blue into the composition, which held historical significance due to its association with traditional Andean dyeing practices, rather than using European blues like azurite, smalt, or Prussian blue, Zapata seized the opportunity to assert his autonomy. Having significant cultural ties to traditional Andean dyeing techniques, the choice to implement indigo as a central element of the painting represents a continuation and reclamation of Indigenous artistic practices. By analyzing the use of indigo in *The King Josafad*, I contend that the palette,

¹¹⁶ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 182.

¹¹⁷ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 190.

combined with the color's rich history in Peru, elevates the painting to serve as resistive commentary against colonial imposition.

As his eyes meet two allegorical figures on a pedestal, King Josafad is seen in the artwork sitting with his knees bent and one arm extended toward the ground. An incense burner is held up by the other hand, thus recalling its close association with religious Catholic purifying practices. As curator Tera Lee Hedrick and archeologist Nina Ergin note, "The use of fragrances and sweet smells for the purposes of purifying and sanctifying religious space has been practiced for millennia."¹¹⁸ As displayed in *The King Josafad*, their research highlights the connection to incense smoke in Byzantine Churches and its distribution. The smoke was spread with "swinging censers during the eucharistic liturgy, as well as from stationary censers that burned in front of icons."¹¹⁹

As Josafad looks up towards the icons for spiritual guidance, his pensive expression is replicated in his body language through the slight tilt and nod of his head, his helpless gesture, and the momentary pause of the scene. King Josafad, also known by his Latin name Josaphat, is a legendary character often conflated with the Buddha that has debated and nuanced origins. Although the narrative of Josafad was not truly created and popularized until the 13th century, when Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine included it in his collection of saintly biographies called *The Golden Legend* (1260), academics have speculated that the story can be traced back to

¹¹⁸ Tara Lee Hedrick and Nina Ergin, "A Shared Culture of Heavenly Fragrance: A Comparison of Late Byzantine and Ottoman Incense Burners and Censing Practices in Religious Contexts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69 (2015): 331, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26497721>.

¹¹⁹ Hedrick and Ergin, "A Shared Culture of Heavenly Fragrance," 331.

earlier influences.¹²⁰ Though some scholars to attribute Josafad's invention to the theologian St. John of Damascus, others assert that the *Lalitavistara*, a Mahayana Buddhist sutra detailing the story of Prince Siddhartha's life, served as the inspiration for St. John to create the legend.¹²¹ Further claims suggest that St. John of Damascus used Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah, as a model for the Christianized version of Josaphat. Since both Josafad and Jehoshaphat are renowned for being faithful worshippers and disseminators of God's word, and Josafad is venerated as a saint in Eastern Orthodox Churches, these heavily debated religious influences for the popular story included in *The Golden Legend* are all plausible claims.¹²²

Regardless, the story of Josafad begins in *The Golden Legend* detailing his embrace of Christianity after being taught by an eremite (religious recluse) despite his father's wishes. Seeking balance, Josafad compares his newly adopted faith, which rejects extreme indulgences, to his dictatorial position, which is governed by power and material wealth. In Zapata's composition, Josafad is caught in this moment of eternal struggle as he looks at the two figures. The figure farthest from the viewer is a woman dressed entirely in gold cloth. She is identifiable in a Catholic context as Lady Justice as she holds the scales of fairness and balance in one hand and a leaf, possibly symbolic of peace, in her right. Standing next to her is an elderly man dressed in red and blue garments holding a large staff. Considering the religious context, he appears to serve as a powerful symbol of faith or a profound allegory for wisdom. Together,

¹²⁰ Siegfried A. Schulz, "Two Christian Saints? The Barlaam and Josaphat Legend," *India International Centre Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1981): 138, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23001850>.

¹²¹ Monique B. Pitts, "Barlaam and Josaphat: A Legend for all Seasons," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 16, no. 1 (1981): 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40873618>; It should be noted here that intellectuals like Schulz have also claimed that a Christian monk "translated the story into Syriac and Arabic and added to it a good number of Christian tenets," where eventually the story "reached the Sabas Monastery in Jerusalem, where John of Damascus (approx. a.d. 680-750) transformed it into a scholarly treatise (in Greek) based entirely on Christian theology." Schulz, "Two Christian Saints?," 131-134.

¹²² Schulz, "Two Christian Saints?," 138.

these figures emphasize the overarching theme of Josafad's story within a Catholic context: the potential for spiritual transformation and the rejection of transitory riches. In a broader sense, the inclusion of Josafad underscores his unusual position as a Catholic convert who lies outside of the traditional canon of commonly depicted European religious figures, therefore making him more relatable to Indigenous viewers.

INDIGO: A PRE-COLUMBIAN COLOR

The red, gold, and blue hues in the two figure's clothing are replicated in Josafad's attire. Notably, the most visually striking amongst the others is the indigo blue, as it is starkly highlighted on the breastplate and shoes of the monarch's ornate ensemble. The choice of indigo is not just aesthetically pleasing but also symbolically significant in a Christian context. Red evokes the story of Christ's sacrifice and the martyrdom of saints, which mirror Josafad's abandonment of life as a materially inspired monarch and his turn towards Catholicism.¹²³ Blue, representing divinity, the heavenly realm, and loyalty, contrasts against the warmth of the red to further emphasize this tension between spirituality and ephemeral wealth.¹²⁴

Furthermore, the vibrant hue of indigo has an intricately woven history in Indigenous textile practices in South America. Extracted and cultivated from plants in the *Papilionaceae* family, the color was one of the most valuable exports to Europe during the colonial era.¹²⁵

¹²³ Michel Pastoureau and Jody Gladding, "The Blood of Christ," in *Red: The History of a Color* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 68, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.3919389.12>;

¹²⁴ Vivian Jacobs and Wilhelmina Jacobs, "The Color Blue: Its Use as Metaphor and Symbol," *American Speech* 33, no. 1 (1958): 29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/453461>.

¹²⁵ Alicia M. Seldes et al., "Blue Pigments in South American Painting (1610-1780)," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 38, no. 2 (1999): 102, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3180041>.

Though it has native origins in the Indus River Valley, the earliest archaeological evidence of indigo's use in human history has been found in Peru at a pre-Columbian site, Huaca Prieta.¹²⁶

This discovery found in textiles was identified as the pigment derived from *Indigofera*, a species native to Peru solidifying it as the “earliest reported use of indigo in the Old World.”¹²⁷ Though indigo can be sourced from several species, two native to Peru, anil (*Indigofera suffruticosa*) and llangua (*Cybistax antispyhilitica*) are known to “supply indigo blue, a vat-type dye.”¹²⁸

When the Spanish arrived in the Americas to expand their imperial dominion, the rich diversity of pigments native to the continents captivated their interest. Scholar David H. Rembert explains that

three sources of dyes used by the South American Indians were important to the Spanish. One was of animal origin (the red dye derived from the cochineal insect-*Coccus cacti*) and two of plant origin. The blue was from indigo plants (*I. suffruticosa*) and the purple extracted from other legume species *Haematoxylon brasiletto* and *H. campechianum*.¹²⁹

According to a study on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century available color resources for artists, indigo was the sole locally sourced blue pigment used in *The King Josafad* despite the

¹²⁶ Jeffrey C. Splitstoser et al., "Early Pre-Hispanic Use of Indigo Blue in Peru," *Science Advances* 2, no. 9 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1501623>.

¹²⁷ Splitstoser et al., "Early Pre-Hispanic Use of Indigo," 1. To understand the variety of indigo dye sources, archeologists explain that “Indigoid dyes may be prepared from different plants, such as those belonging to the *Indigofera*, *Strobilanthes*, *Isatis*, and *Polygonum* genera. All indigoid dyes contain indigotin, the main blue dye component, and indirubin, a structural isomer of indigotin. To date, there are no known features to distinguish between the genera; however, research has shown that, statistically, the proportion of indirubin to indigotin is higher in blue-dyed textiles from China, India, and Latin America as compared to those of European origin, for instance.” Additionally, to provide clarification for the reader, the term ‘Old World’ used by the source is not referencing the Eurocentric usage that originated after European colonization of the Americas, which deemed Europe old territory and North and South America ‘New World’ land. Rather, the source used the phrase ‘Old World’ in a literal context, focusing on the civilizations that inhabited the world in a pre-Columbian setting.

¹²⁸ Kay K. Antúnez de Mayolo, "Peruvian Natural Dye Plants," *Economic Botany* 43, no. 2 (1989): 183, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4255151>.

¹²⁹ David H. Rembert, "The Indigo of Commerce in Colonial North America," *Economic Botany* 33, no. 2 (1979): 129, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4254039>.

common adoption of imported materials.¹³⁰ This could perhaps be attributed to its accessibility, as it was locally available in Peru. As Castedo highlights, the range of pigments in the colonial Andes was limited due to their availability or their relationality to their tradition in textiles, dating to pre-Inca cultures, including the “Nazca and Tiahuanaco Expansive...as well as the Chuquimanca, Chinchu, Chancay, confederations, and the Inca. And very little difference can be discerned between the colors used in Cuzco painting during the eighteenth century.”¹³¹ Aside from Indigenous traditional artistic practices and colonial limitations, Native artists typically relied on local pigments such as *coravari* (chrysocolla) for green, ochres, and other natural pigments for earth colors, as well as *achiote* or dragon’s blood for red, often even in combination with cochineal from Mexico due to their accessibility and affordability.¹³²

I contend that Zapata, as head overseer of an extensive artistic workshop, could have used his privileged status to acquire more valued pigments. Nevertheless, he chose indigo despite its reputation amongst eighteenth-century Spanish and Indigenous artists alike agreeing on its use in painting as a pigment used in artworks of “‘lesser importance,’ saving other finer blue pigments for more important works.”¹³³ Though racial hierarchies were prevalent in colonial Latin America, these imposed stratifications are echoed in the valuation of regional pigments. To promote European imported dyes, Indigenous artists were also trained to use non-native pigments, including *cardenillo* (verdigris) for green, *genuli* (orpiment) or saffron for yellow, vermillion or minimum for red, white lead for highlights, and ivory black for adding a darker

¹³⁰ Seldes et al., “Blue Pigments in South American Painting,” 102.

¹³¹ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 42.

¹³² Seldes et al., “Green, Yellow, and Red Pigments,” 227.

¹³³ Seldes et al., “Blue Pigments in South American Painting,” 105.

tone.¹³⁴ This broader effort to integrate Eurocentric painting conventions into Indigenous visual arts was inspired by colorants used in Renaissance and Baroque oil paintings and frescos from the fifteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries.

Moreover, Zapata's choice may be reflective of Indigenous customs as colors held great significance to the Inca. Indigo, a pigment possibly cheaper and more accessible to Zapata, also aligns with broader pre-Columbian aesthetic practices, where colors were intended to depict symbolic concepts. In an investigation of the significance of local and imported pigments in South American painting, scholars highlight:

In pre-Hispanic South America, the color red, as well as blue, green, and yellow, were symbolically associated with the Inca himself and the gods. For the Native population, the bright and glittering, well-defined colors in the clothes and headdresses of noblemen were a symbolic manifestation of holiness and an expression of social inequalities, domination, and political, economic, and military.¹³⁵

The headdress mentioned, the *mascapaycha* was a royal headband and feathers worn by the ruler.¹³⁶ This can be seen in portraits of the monarchs, such as the nineteenth-century one, *Portrait of Inca Túpac Amaru*, in which the *mascapaycha* is represented with layers of gold formed around a gemstone and topped with two feathers: one red and the other blue, highlighting Túpac Amaru's royal status (Figure 2.2). The colors emulated on the garments of King Josafad in Zapata's painting arguably reflect those found on the *mascapaycha* traditionally worn by the

¹³⁴ Seldes et al., "Green, Yellow, and Red Pigments," 227.

¹³⁵ Seldes et al., "Green, Yellow, and Red Pigments," 226.

¹³⁶ Kenneth J. Andrien, *Andean Worlds: Indigenous History, Culture, and Consciousness under Spanish Rule, 1532-1825* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 17.

Sapa Inca (an Inca ruler), suggesting a continued connection between nobility and Indigenous color symbolism.

INDIGO AS A MARKER OF INDIGENOUS SURVIVANCE

Furthermore, given his background, Zapata's usage of indigo may not only be one of accessibility and cost but also signify a deeper connection to the Indigenous history of the pigment. It is worth considering that the use of indigo could have also been a conscious decision due to his familiarity with the color as a trained member of the Cuzco School guild or a reflection of the guild's goal to cultivate an aesthetic separation from European artistic influences. The use of indigo as a resistive effort is highlighted as there are additional elements in *The King Josafad*, such as the flattened forms typical of the Cuzco School, which signal a continued active rejection of European aesthetic techniques.

It must also be noted that the production of indigo cultivation in Mesoamerica and South America came at a historically violent cost to the Indigenous populations. Due to Spanish reliance on the Native communities, the laborious forced extraction of the pigment turned it into a marker of colonial exploitation. As it was regarded as an exotic product, scholar Kenneth H. Beeson highlights that indigo was "important to the economy of eighteenth-century Spanish America."¹³⁷ As a result, its discovery quickly transformed the pigment into a lucrative commodity on the European market. Nevertheless, the inclusion of indigo in artwork such as *The*

¹³⁷ Kenneth H. Beeson, "Indigo Production in the Eighteenth Century.," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (1964): 214, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2511598>.

King Josafad recalls both its colonial past and historic prominence as a color used in Inca material culture. While it is crucial to view indigo as a subtle reflection of the violent extraction tied to forced labor, brutal working conditions, and commodification of Indigenous resources, Zapata's inclusion of the pigment also shows the resilience of the Peruvian people and serves as a material trace of traditional aesthetic practices. Indigo should be understood as historical evidence of Indigenous adaptation and survivance, reflecting not only the resilience of the Peruvian people in the face of colonial forces, but also their ability to preserve and transform traditional artistic practices, adapting them to the environment while maintaining their heritage.

THE LAST SUPPER

Although Zapata employed resistive elements as a means of visually representing Indigenous survivance, these attempts were even more prominent earlier in his artistic career. One of Zapata's most famous works, *The Last Supper* completed in 1753, hangs in the Cathedral Santo Domingo, known predominantly as the Basilica Cathedral of Cuzco (Figure 2.3). The painting displays Jesus Christ centrally composed around twelve of his most devoted disciples. As an adult figure, Christ is easily identifiable because of a halo of light surrounding the crown of his head. In each of his hands, Zapata paints two iconic evangelical symbols: the sign of benediction and a reference to the Eucharist (the sacrament in which bread and wine are consecrated into Christ's body and blood and consumed). As the title alludes, the Lord's Supper was and is still observed today during the Consecration of Mass (the part where the bread and wine are ritually transformed). For Catholics, the Eucharist replicates the action of transubstantiation, the belief that the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood. In other

words, the Catholic ritual signifies the action where Christ is consumed by his followers after he has transformed both figuratively and literally into an edible form.¹³⁸ Zapata's inclusion of the bread suggests this sacred transformation.

The arrangement of Zapata's work is reminiscent of other European representations of the narrative, emphasizing Judas' deception and the circular arrangement of twelve disciples. The most convincing European artistic influence brought forth by a collaborative effort between scholar Almerindo Ojeda and colonial Latin American art historian Nelly Siguat suggests a compositional influence from Baroque German engraver Martin Engelbrecht (1684-1756).¹³⁹ In his own depiction of the Last Supper titled *Agnus Dei Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi Exaudi Nos Domine* ("Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, hear us, Lord"), almost every compositional aspect is similar to Zapata's painting (Figure 2.4). The central placement of Jesus, his gesture, and the halo of light emphasizing his divinity are strikingly similar. Furthermore, the engraving depicts the twelve apostles gathered around Jesus at a round table as they await for him to bless the bread in his hand and a chalice of wine in front of them. The table is empty except for a few disciples' arms, which bend towards Jesus to better hear his words. A dark curtain hangs over a grouping of columns behind them, highlighting a stone tablet centerpiece. It could be suggested that it refers to the Tablets of the Ten Commandments, which are believed in a Christian context to be the principles of God's commandments revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. Next to the stone tablet is another reminder of Jesus's holiness as an open archway reveals

¹³⁸ Amy Nelson Burnett, "The Social History of Communion and the Reformation of the Eucharist," *Past & Present* no. 211 (2011): 77, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23014812>.

¹³⁹ Almerindo Ojeda, Project for the Engraved Sources of Spanish Colonial Art (PESSCA), 2005–2025, colonialart.org, accessed 02/21/2025, PI 767A.

a view of Jesus' crucifixion as a foreshadowing of what is to come. This inclusion further links not only Christ's divinity but also his imminent sacrifice as prepared after the Eucharist.

In the lower section of Englebrecht's print, there is also a jar and bowl set beneath the disciples. As a possible reference to the Mandatum Ritual, the objects recall an event on the night of the Last Supper in which Jesus assumed the role of a servant washing the feet of each apostle to teach humility.¹⁴⁰ Below the scene is the title of the work and a description in Latin that reads, "Ipse cibus, conviva, torus, solatia, mensae nectare nequaquam deficiente Deus, tu nos exaudi propter Genetricis amorem| Rom. 5.8. qui proprio pastor corpore pascis oves." In a rough translation in English, this states: "He himself is the food, the guest, the table, the comfort, God with the feast's never failing. Hear us for the love of the mother. | Romans 5.8. You, the shepherd, feed the sheep with your own body."¹⁴¹ With the crucifixion mirrored in the background, this inscription emphasizes the Catholic belief that Jesus's life was a sacrifice for humanity's sins and that Catholicism is the only path to eternal salvation.

ANDEAN CUISINE AND CATHOLIC HYPOCRISY

In contrast, the most apparent difference between Zapata's version of the Last Supper and other European compositions including Englebrecht's print, is the inclusion of not only food, but Indigenous cuisine. Filling the once empty plate is a small rodent native to the Andes. The

¹⁴⁰ Susan E. Von Daum Tholl, "Life According to the Rule: A Monastic Modification of Mandatum Imagery in the Peterborough Psalter," *Gesta* 33, no. 2 (1994): 151, <https://doi.org/10.2307/767165>.

¹⁴¹ This is my own translation.

animal is debated among scholars, with some claiming it is a Peruvian delicacy known as *cuy*.¹⁴²

Also referred to as guinea pig in English, this identification has been accepted in general scholarship because it was associated with healing practices, was used in religious sacrificial rituals, and was readily available amongst the Andean population.¹⁴³ However, a plaque positioned in the church directly beneath the painting, which was written by descendants of the Inca. It states:

The most remarkable element of both symbiosis as well as Andean cultural resistance can be perceived in the representation of the paschal lamb. Instead of depicting a lamb [as was traditional in the Last Supper scene] the artists drew an image of a *Viszacha* (wild

¹⁴² The earliest known written mention I was able to locate of guinea pig appearing in Zapata's painting appears to have first been published in 2003. Max Harris makes the claim that, "Although the iconography of the saints and altars is largely European, some bear signs of their Peruvian setting. On an altar representing the Last Supper, the meal set before Christ and the disciples appears to be — as it is in Marcos Zapata's painting of the Last Supper that still hangs in the cathedral—the Andean specialty of roast *cuy* (guinea pig)." Max Harris, "Saint Sebastian and the Blue-Eyed Blacks: Corpus Christi in Cusco, Peru," *TDR* (1988-) 47, no. 1 (2003): 154, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147036>; There is an additional mention in a source published in 2004 by Herón Márquez who reinforces Harris's statement claiming that "Zapata's work showed Jesus and the Apostles, just like the original painting, but he also inserted Peruvian foods, including the guinea pig, onto the dinner table." This source also underscores the blending of Spanish iconography with local cuisine. Herón Márquez, "Cultural Life," in *Peru in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2004), 50-51, <https://archive.org/details/peruinpictures0000marq/page/51/mode/1up>; The idea gained wider recognition through Palmer's 2008 article, in which she discussed in depth the symbolism of the guinea pig as a potential substitute for the sacrificial lamb in Catholic iconography, as well as its healing significance in Andean culture; Palmer, "The Last Supper by Marcos Zapata," 54. Palmer also references the dissertation "Ukhu Mankakuna: Culinary Representations in Quechua Cultural Texts" for further exploration of the role of guinea pig in the region; Alison Marie Krogel, "Ukhu Mankakuna: Culinary Representations in Quechua Cultural Texts" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 2006), 85-87, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33961268_Ukhu_Mankakuna_Culinary_Representations_in_Quechua_Cultural_Texts/citation/download; Palmer's analysis was later cited by Christina Zendt, who draws on Palmer's article for her research on the small rodent known locally as *cuy*. Additionally, for further information on the sociological role guinea pig plays see Christina Zendt, "Marcos Zapata's Last Supper: A Feast of European Religion and Andean Culture," *Gastronomica* 10, no. 4 (2010): 9-10, <https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2010.10.4.9>; Additionally, I use the phrasing 'debated among scholars' because it should be noted that this rodent has been analyzed and claimed to likely be a *viszacha*. See America Meredith, "The Cuzco School: Andean Visions in Oils and Gold," *FirstAmericanArt*, Spring 2014, <https://firstamericanartmagazine.com/no-2-spring-2014/>; See also Cohen-Aponte's book published a year later. Suarez, *Paintings of Colonial Cusco*, 83; One year later, published in 2016, a two-volume book titled *The Spanish Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia*, also made the claim that the rodent in Zapata's *The Last Supper* painting was *viszacha*. See Micheal Tarver, "Groups and Organizations," in *The Spanish Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Micheal Tarver and Emily Slake (ABC-CLIO, 2016), Vol 2: 233.

¹⁴³ Palmer, "The Last Supper by Marcos Zapata," 70.

chinchilla) not a guinea pig or *cuy* because in Andean ideology the Viszacha is the guardian of the lakes and sacred mountains.¹⁴⁴

The plaque also compares the Viscacha to the Paschal Lamb but emphasizes the Viscacha as the more likely subject due to its strong associations with Andean spirituality. Its placement within the scene reinforces Zapata's focus on the sacred landscape depicted in the background. Additionally, surrounding the small rodent is a variety of colored potatoes, maize, peppers, and chicha—a fermented corn liquor that is still enjoyed today—as a replacement for wine. Furthermore, Zapata emphasizes the cultural importance of potatoes, highlighting that the Andes are home to over 3,000 distinct varieties. Each potato has a unique flavor and they are regularly used in traditional gourmet preparations. The region's long agricultural history is further highlighted in the painting by the presence of locally grown foods like potatoes, maize, and peppers that have been cultivated in the Andean landscape since pre-colonial times.

This artistic blending of the Christian narrative with Indigenous components powerfully underscores the broader theme of conquest, which exploited the land, provoking critical discussions about the historically distorted portrayals of Indigenous communities. European artists disguising fictitious narratives as anthropological reports characterized Indigenous peoples as 'primitive' to elucidate the distinction between Europeans and the 'savage other.' Examples of this can be seen in both Theodore de Bry's sixteenth-century engravings depicting cannibalism in Brazil, sourced from Hans Staden's account of his experiences in colonial Brazil and Theodoor Galle's seventeenth-century engraving *Allegory of America* (Figure 2.5 and 2.6). These artistic

¹⁴⁴ Text from wall plaque at Cuzco Cathedral as of January 2025. It should also be known that the English spelling for viszacha is viscacha.

representations, and many others not mentioned in this thesis, were widely distributed depicting scenes of cannibalism and human sacrifice as offerings to malevolent deities to bolster Eurocentric rationalizations for enslaving the Americas. However, de Bry and Galle's portrayals of Indigenous practices highlights the hypocrisy of Catholic settlers, especially when considering the act of transubstantiation in Catholic rituals, where the consumption of the body and blood of Christ mirrors the very practices they condemned in Indigenous cultures.

JUDAS, PIZARRO, AND HISTORICAL ALLEGORY

Another difference in Zapata's *The Last Supper* is the central positioning of Judas, who nervously meets the viewer's gaze. While the disciples are anxiously centered around Christ, awaiting his next words, Judas jerks his face backward to challenge the viewer's gaze, therefore creating a stark contrast between him and the surrounding disciples. Just below the table, he grips a satchel filled with silver out of sight of the group. His cunning actions allude to his betrayal of Christ when he infamously reported his location to Roman authorities, resulting in his crucifixion. Palmer suggests that a colonial audience may have mistakenly identified Judas as Francisco Pizarro, the Spanish conquistador responsible for atrocities against the Andean people. She notes that this interpretation is often discussed by local guides and is considered common knowledge among them, as explored at length in her analysis of the painting.¹⁴⁵ Despite historical evidence, the visual resemblance between the two asserts a compelling connection, particularly considering that the Spanish, under Pizarro's command, facilitated the decline of the

¹⁴⁵ Palmer, "The Last Supper by Marcos Zapata," 54-55.

Inca Empire, which in turn allowed for greater Iberian influence in the Andes. Building on Palmer's comparison, I have identified an eighteenth-century portrait of Pizarro (shown in Figure 2.7) that closely resembles Zapata's portrayal of Judas.¹⁴⁶ Zapata emphasizes Judas with more detailed attention than the other apostles, subtly drawing the viewer's focus to his resemblance to Pizarro. However, to fully understand this comparison, it is necessary to briefly analyze the history of Pizarro's colonization of Latin America.

As historians Burkholder and Johnson state, "the fall of the Inca Empire climaxed the initial era of Spanish expansion in the Americas."¹⁴⁷ Despite the repeated failed attempts of Spanish voyagers, internal conflict and the spread of the smallpox epidemic aided Spanish forces in the capture and execution of the last functioning emperor of the Inca Empire, Atahualpa, in July 1533. Forced to establish an autonomous region in Vilcabamba, the last Inca monarch was taken prisoner and put to death, ending Andean resistance to colonizing powers in 1572.¹⁴⁸ As an Indigenous person, Zapata would have been aware of these events given its colonial history in the Andes.

REMOVING COLONIAL HEGEMONY OVER INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPES

These ideas of conquest are not just positioned in the foreground but also replicated in the background with Zapata's erasure of the Ten Commandments. In its place, an expansive view of

¹⁴⁶ Antonio de Solís., *Retratos de los Españoles Ilustres con un Epítome de sus Vidas (Portraits of Illustrious Spaniards with a Summary of their Lives)* (Madrid, Spain: En la Imprenta Real, 1791), 167, <https://archive.org/details/retratosdeloses00goog/mode/2up>.

¹⁴⁷ Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52.

¹⁴⁸ Burkholder and Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 56.

the Peruvian landscape serves as the centerpiece of the room. Drawing attention to it, Zapata adds two hanging lamps to frame either side of the view and adds small details to embellish the architecture of the columns. This is done with the vibrancy of cochineal and the contrasting color of indigo, which is further duplicated on the saints in an alternating pattern on every third apostle's garment. The expansive view of the Andean mountains framing a large body of water is a stark contrast to the colonial view, which saw Indigenous land as a commodity ordained to the European colonizers from God. A brilliant array of stars illuminates the sky as a sliver of the moon peeks through the darkness. The mountains below merge into the sea, which eventually forms into land on the other side of the bank. The expansive Peruvian landscape in Zapata's work not only contrasts the colonial view which turned land into a mere resource for territorial expansion, but it also reinforces the intrinsic connection between the land and Indigenous identity.

Zapata's display of the landscape also challenges eighteenth-century Spanish portrayals of the Andes region, which were not only territorial but also romanticized and exploitative. One such painting, *Description Of Cerro Rico And The Imperial Municipality Of Potosi*, created by Spanish artist Gaspar Miguel De Berrio in 1758, depicts a similar view of a lake surrounded by a mountainous landscape (Figure 2.8). The focal point of the painting depicts the town of Potosí, located in the region once known as Upper Peru (now Bolivia) in the Andes mountains, which was historically under oppressive Spanish colonial control. However, rather than serving as a prideful representation of the beauty of the landscape or reflecting the popular scientific exotification of the region common among colonizers, Berrio's artwork functions as an imperial map. The role of the landscape transforms into a statement on the expansion of European

ownership and authority in the Americas, as reflected by the artist's decision to hardly make visible any trace of Indigenous presence.

What is not shown in the painting, however, is the dark extractive truth and European greed of Potosí, which dates to the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Since its establishment as an active mining site over 468 years ago, the mountain Cerro Rico (“rich mountain”) has claimed the lives of “approximately sixteen thousand miners still toil at Cerro Rico.”¹⁴⁹ Since the Spanish colonists found silver on the surface of the mountain, an estimated “eight million perished at Cerro Rico.”¹⁵⁰ These atrocities in Potosí are chronicled by Andean poet and professor Pedro Shimos, as he states,

We no longer feel shame going out on the street and jostling the world. Here they are, blood and sweat – our blood and pain and our land – our land (I look at what’s mine – what’s always been mine) Now our hearts are burning like fire and our thoughts are flashes of lightning. Like flames our fathers were herded away to war. Cannon fodder, they died without knowing why – they simply served as a ladder – our fathers were buried alive in the mine they treated us like animals – saying, “dumb Indian,” they scolded us like ill-bred children – we couldn’t even wear a coarse cotton shirt, they wouldn’t let us enter cities, – “filthy servants” – they sold us and no one protested we were meant to suffer in misery, shoved around, to suffer contempt, that’s what we were there for . . . They took away our land, they stupefied us, but we no longer feel fear (never again will we return to feel it, I swear) now we’ve learned to speak your language, sir, to tell you we are men – many men – and that our hearts burn with the very same fire.¹⁵¹

Although the *Description Of Cerro Rico And The Imperial Municipality Of Potosi*, was created only five short years after Zapata’s display of the Last Supper, Zapata’s view of the land was not exploitative or idealistic, but rather a celebratory expression of his home.

¹⁴⁹ Tom Zoellner, "The Mountain That Eats Men: Dark Ecotourism in Potosí, Bolivia," *World Literature Today* 88, nos. 3-4 (2014): 83, <https://doi.org/10.7588/worllitetoda.88.3-4.0083>.

¹⁵⁰ Zoellner, "The Mountain That Eats Men," 86.

¹⁵¹ Zoellner, "The Mountain That Eats Men," 87.

Finally, Zapata's display of the Andean landscape in *The Last Supper* is a symbolic gesture that connects the sacredness of the land with Christ's sacrifice. The view of the terrain is extended to the crucified Christ, which emphasizes religious and territorial tensions between European colonizers and Indigenous people in the colonial era. As the Spanish attempted to justify their territorial expansion through Catholicism, land conquest and Indigenous disposition was relabeled as divine right. To maintain European domination and land acquisition, religious scare tactics and conversion initiatives through Christ were employed.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Towards the end of his career, Zapata continued visually illustrating European narratives but began heavily incorporating Andean elements into his work. One of the clearest examples of this shift can be found in *Adoration of the Magi* created in 1760 (Figure 2.9). In this piece, Zapata integrates Peruvian elements such as gold leaf and a distinctively Andean landscape, challenging European depictions. Therefore, *Adoration of the Magi* serves as a quintessential example of Zapata's complete shift to the Peruvian stylization of Catholic doctrine.

The painting recalls the popular story where three Magi—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar—gathered from three separate areas of Persia and traveled together for three days to greet the birth of Jesus.¹⁵² According to the gospel of Matthew, the star of Bethlehem guided the kings on their journey to Jesus' exact location where they gave gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and

¹⁵² A. V. Williams Jackson, "The Magi in Marco Polo and the Cities in Persia from Which They Came to Worship the Infant Christ," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 26 (1905): 80, <https://doi.org/10.2307/592877>.

gold. In the painting, the narrative unfolds throughout the composition as the three kings gather around an infant Jesus with their gifts readied. Zapata emphasizes the Magi embellishing their clothing with gold leaf and intricate ornamentation, hinting at their status. Dressed in a fur and golden threads, the first Magus, presumably Melchior, is arranged at eye level with Jesus, forcing the viewer to be made aware of the shining golden halo of light around Jesus' head. This radiant divine glow is also replicated on Mary to reinforce the pair's holiness and embed a hierarchical component into the composition. Melchior, rendered as an elderly European man, is placed within the scene to symbolize Christ's reach to Europe.

Flanking either side of the Magus, the other two kings, Caspar and Balthazar, share similar expressions of awe. Caspar, positioned in the foreground, is visually reminiscent of a Persian aristocrat, symbolizing Christ's presence in Asia. He too kneels, lavishly dressed in cochineal crimson garments and gold thread, eager to present his gift of myrrh. His turban is laid next to him which has been removed to indicate respect and veneration in the presence of the Christ child. The turban also functions as a compositional tool to draw the viewer's eye around in the circular arrangement of the three Magi, the Blessed Virgin, and infant Jesus. On the opposite side, Balthazar, the third king, stands above the other two holding a vessel of frankincense. His darker complexion suggests the reaches of Christ's control in Africa and the Middle East. Once again, he is depicted in richly ornamented cochineal-colored garments with gold thread as his attire is accompanied by a turban. Notably, that the arrangement of Balthazar places him at the visual center of the scene, therefore incorporating a hierarchy that deviates from European depictions of Christ's nativity. This compositional decision reflects Zapata's awareness of colonial stratifications of race and offers a subtle challenge by disrupting traditional visual and social orders.

Waiting nearby with outstretched arms and a light smile, Mary presents Jesus to the Magi. She and the Christ Child are elevated with several steps, reinforcing their importance, while a youthful depiction of Joseph stands behind them, watching the scene. Flanking the three Magi, two guards stand at attention, their garments reminiscent of those seen in Zapata's painting *The King Josafad*. They wear an indigo-colored chest plate that extends into long cochineal-colored sleeves, with gold embroidery at the hem of their necklines. Atop their heads, two distinctive styles of headwear seem to evoke their foreign identities. They exchange glances as one gestures towards the scene, reinforcing the meaning of their expressions. Behind them, a man attempts to look over the guard's shoulders to catch a glimpse of the Christ Child.

Further in the background, a procession of people and camels forms a line that disappears behind a hill extending upwards from behind the Holy Family and the three Magi. In the distance a town nestles in the upper left-hand corner of the composition, suggesting the origin of the procession. The right half of the composition is dominated by an expansive stretch of mountains. The height of one appears from behind the procession, towering over the landscapes as it extends upwards into the clouds. The mountains recede into the distance, producing a sense of depth that focus the viewer's attention to a bright shooting star above, symbolizing the North Star, which is identified throughout the narrative as the guiding light to Jesus.

Throughout, Zapata incorporates textiles that allude to his own Indigeneity. Mary's clothing, for example, reflects her elevated status, visible to a colonial Peruvian audience. As Phipps notes the material significance of the garments reflect "The finest of the extant garments from the colonial era are tapestry," which were woven out of "wedding mantles composed of

lustrous camelid-hair fibers or silk and embellished with figures woven in metallic yarn.”¹⁵³

Additionally, the attire of the three Magi is adorned with gold stamping, suggesting an Andean artistic technique. Although their clothing suggests foreign fabrics such as silk and metallic threads, Indigenous textiles often incorporated such materials to “heighten the symbolic power as well as the beauty of individual garments.”¹⁵⁴

RECONTEXTUALIZING THE NATIVITY IN THE ANDES

The most obvious inclusion of local elements, however, is seen in Zapata’s depiction of the landscape. Though paintings like *The Last Supper* depict the landscape in a fragmented or limited way, Zapata expands it in the *Adoration of the Magi* to become the entire backdrop. By fully immersing the Catholic narrative within Peru’s landscape, the artist evokes the idea that the nativity of Jesus occurred in the Andes mountains. For the Inca, mountains were sacred and rooted in their cosmology, evoking a spiritual connection to the land around them.

As highlighted by anthropologists Johan Reinhard and María Constanza Ceruti, “We know from present-day studies that the Quechua people are very conscious of a landscape that for them is full of meaning.”¹⁵⁵ This recognition of spiritual significance to the land is echoed by scholar Catherine Allen, who when writing about the Indigenous inhabitants living near Cuzco, stated that “every aspect of the topography is distinctive enough to be called a landmark in our

¹⁵³ Phipps, “Woven Silver and Gold,” 5.

¹⁵⁴ Phipps, “Woven Silver and Gold,” 5.

¹⁵⁵ Johan Reinhard and María Constanza Ceruti, “Sacred Landscape,” in *Inca Rituals and Sacred Mountains: A Study of the World's Highest Archaeological Sites* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2010), 163.

terms and has a specific and individual name and selfhood.”¹⁵⁶ Specifically, the mountainous topography of Cuzco held religious significance for both the Inca and other nearby conquered Indigenous communities. As they were central to creation stories, the mountains were thought to be linked to the “ancestors of the Incas when they came to occupy Cuzco Valley.”¹⁵⁷ As a result, the Inca frequently visited the mountain ranges, seeking guidance from these ancestors or their loved ones who were buried at the base of these sacred sites.

Similar jagged representations of rocks stretching into the skyline as in Zapata’s painting also appear in earlier Indigenous depictions. One such example, appears as a seventeenth-century illustration from colonial Andean chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala displaying two sacred Andean mountains, Pitusiray and Sahuasiray (Figure 2.10). According to Reinhard, Guamán Poma notes these mountains were *huacas*, which are sacred places or objects with spiritual significance and cultural importance for the Inca. It is also worth noting that Zapata’s mountain, which dominates the horizon, could also be a reference to Ausungate, Cuzco’s tallest visible mountain range and one of the most important *huacas* as denoted in the 1600s by Guamán Poma.¹⁵⁸

Although Spanish colonial forces used the visual arts to impose Catholic ideals on the Inca, Zapata’s paintings rejected this assimilation. Through a palette rooted in Indigenous artistic practices, the integration of local cuisine, and the representation of an Andean landscape, Zapata’s work challenged European narratives and reclaimed Peruvian identity despite colonial

¹⁵⁶ Catherine J. Allen, "Chapter One: Water, Stones, and Light: A Cosmology," in *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*, 2nd ed. (Smithsonian Books, 2002), 41.

¹⁵⁷ Reinhard and Ceruti, "Sacred Landscape," 167.

¹⁵⁸ Reinhard and Ceruti, "Sacred Landscape," 165.

constraints. The use of indigo in his paintings, particularly in *The King Josafad*, reflects not only the violent reality of colonial exploitation in the Americas but also serves as a reclamation of traditional artistic practices. Additionally, paintings like *The Last Supper* reimagine Catholic narratives through the insertion of Indigenous culture and landscape into the composition. Furthermore, works such as the *Adoration of the Magi* challenge Spanish perceptions of land as a commodity by reframing it within an Indigenous context, highlighting its interconnectedness to its inhabitants. As a result, Zapata's work not only exposes tensions existing in colonial Latin America but also transforms these imposed narratives into progressive representations of Indigeneity.

CHAPTER THREE

Túpac Amaru II and the *Sangarará* Portrait

*“It is unlikely that in the history of revolutions, another will appear that is more justified or more unfortunate. Spanish America had become in those times the theater of the most extensive tyranny, but the yoke lay most heavily on the necks of the Peruvians. — Gregorio Funes.”*¹⁵⁹

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the political climate in Latin America shifted as the Indigenous inhabitants began to outwardly rebel against their Spanish oppressors. The age of insurgency that followed has often been told by scholars through historical accounts of rebel leaders, their battles, and the political strategies they employed. However, a closer examination of the contemporaneous material culture and how it was used to express both political devotion and dissatisfaction reveals another layer of insurgency: one that is embedded within the objects themselves. As Cohen-Aponte notes, historical archaeologist Matthew Liebmann emphasizes the importance of recognizing the agency of material culture, suggesting that objects are not passive but rather actively promote and influence human thought and action. Liebmann states, “Materiality calls into question the objectivity of artifacts and recognizes their agency, positing that humans think through things, not just about them.”¹⁶⁰

Within the context of the Túpac Amaru rebellion, the largest Indigenous revolt in the Americas, one pivotal object was a portrait created by the Cuzco School artist, Antonio Oblitas.¹⁶¹ Throughout this chapter, I will focus on the role of Oblitas and his portrait of the rebel leader Túpac Amaru II, contending that material culture, shaped by the political environment,

¹⁵⁹ Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, introduction.

¹⁶⁰ Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," in *Visual Culture and Indigenous Agency in the Early Americas*, ed. Alessia Frassani (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 190, <https://anandacohenaponte.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/cohen-aponte-imagining-insurgency-in-late-colonial-peru.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Lillian Estelle Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt, 1780-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), ix.

was central to the rebellion's momentum, ultimately becoming the visual symbol of Peruvian resistance in the colonial era. Furthermore, I argue that the ritualized treatment of Túpac Amaru II's portrait, which symbolically foreshadowed his execution, and the public spectacle of his death served as acts of symbolic destruction intended to suppress Indigenous resistance, yet paradoxically reinforced his status as a martyr for that very cause.

In the eighteenth-century Andes, portraiture possessed a unique duality, serving as a medium for both rebels and loyalists to promote their disparate ideologies. A ban on portraits by the Spanish *visitor* (general) Antonio de Areche claimed that such artwork “abounded in the houses of Indians who take themselves to be nobles in order to sustain their descendant.”¹⁶² As portraiture was effectively used both by Indigenous and Spanish royalty to assert their hereditary right to govern, the European prohibition on portraiture was an evident declaration of Spanish colonial efforts to censor and repress Native populations. According to historian Kenneth Andrien, this ban began in the 1780s when Spanish officers acting on orders from royal officials began confiscating Indigenous portraits “fearing that any such overt links to the Inca past would only inflame the passions of indigenous people during what became known as the Great Age of Andean Rebellions.”¹⁶³ Two paintings will serve as examples in this chapter: the *Equestrian Portrait*, which I will mention briefly, and the *Sangarará Portrait* created by Oblitas, which will be the primary focus. To contextualize these portraits, I will provide a brief overview of Peru's political atmosphere, the conditions leading up to the insurgency, and a discussion of Túpac

¹⁶² Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 141.

¹⁶³ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 141-144.

Amaru II's role, all of which are necessary to deepen my analysis of the *Sangarará Portrait* and the artist's intention in its creation.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND: THE TÚPAC REBELLIONS AND SPANISH COLONIALISM

The rebellion sparked by Túpac Amaru II was not an isolated act but rather a broader movement of Indigenous resistance against colonial tyranny. Between 1780 and 1783, various other uprisings took place, including the Chayanta (1780-81), Oruro (1781), and two others led by Tomás Katari and Túpac Katari until 1783.¹⁶⁴ As the majority of these efforts remained in Peru and Upper Peru [now modern-day Bolivia], Túpac Amaru II's rebellion stretched over the course of six months from "its base in Tinita, just south of Cuzco, to what is today northern Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and much of Peru," until his capture by Spanish authorities and a few years thereafter.¹⁶⁵ As Cohen-Aponte points out, Peruvian historian Pablo Macera describes Tupac Amaru II as a "hero without a face."¹⁶⁶ This is mainly due to the fact that, despite records indicating the existence of portraits of Tupac Amaru II, only the titles of these works of art remain, as Cohen-Aponte suggests in her article "Art-Making and Art-Breaking in the Era of Andean Insurgencies."¹⁶⁷

Scholars have concluded that except for the two portraits as well as "confessions, letters, and reports by military personnel," there is little documentation of Túpac Amaru II's life because

¹⁶⁴ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 195; Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," 187.

¹⁶⁵ Charles F. Walker, *Smoldering Ashes: Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru, 1780-1840* (Duke University Press Books, 1999), 12-16.

¹⁶⁶ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 171.

¹⁶⁷ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 171.

there is not a visual portrayal of the rebel leader.¹⁶⁸ However, his ancestry has been so meticulously recorded by scholars like Lillian Fisher, that though he was born in 1742, his lineage can be traced back to his ancestor who moved to Cuzco after being forcibly baptized, given the Spanish name Diego, and passed away in 1560.¹⁶⁹ In fact, his lineage has been documented so extensively on both his Indigenous and Spanish ancestry that it was remarked that as a mestizo, he possessed “the noblest blood of Peru and Spain.”¹⁷⁰

Originally born as José Gabriel Condorcanqui, the leader assumed the name Túpac Amaru II to emphasize his paternal descent from the last Inca ruler, Túpac Amaru I, and to position himself as the symbolic return of the Inca king.¹⁷¹ This marked a significant transformation to the Quechua-speaking population as the name was not only “highly venerated by the Indians,” but was understood in the language to mean “‘shining serpent’, or a person highly endowed with the gifts of nature.”¹⁷² Additionally, this reclamation was rooted in the Andean prophecy *inkarri*, which held that upon avenging Túpac Amaru I’s death from the hands of the Spanish, there would be a “millennial return to the power of the Inca dynasty.”¹⁷³

According to the Peruvian oral tradition, *inkarri* originates from the belief that the head of Túpac Amaru I would grow “itself back into a body which will eventually rise out of the ground making the moment of a new *pachakuti*, when Andeans will rise up and restore Inca

¹⁶⁸ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 171.

¹⁶⁹ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 22.

¹⁷⁰ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 24.

¹⁷¹ Mary Louise Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes: Contact Zones and the Struggle for Interpretive Power," *IDB Cultural Center*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.18235/0007919>; Sergio Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes: The Age of Tupac Amaru*, trans. David Frye (Duke University Press, 2013), 35, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smsr1>.

¹⁷² Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 32.

¹⁷³ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 2.

rule,” following his decapitation and subsequent separate burial of his head from his body.¹⁷⁴

Taking advantage of this belief in a restorative period of Indigenous reclamation, Túpac Amaru II’s insurgency efforts gained significant traction amongst the Inca. This desire to revive the Inca past served as a major driving force behind the uprising, fostering sentiments that supported Native autonomy and sovereignty.

However, there were motivations for the rebellion that reflected more sinister actions by the Spanish, which spurred the large-scale reaction in opposition to colonial rule. Though many factors played a role, Cohen-Aponte summarizes that the rebellions were

united by a rejection of crippling economic measures instituted under the Bourbon reforms during the 1770s.... included an increase in the sales tax, increased participation in the *mita* (forced rotational labor system), and the reimplementation of the *repartimiento de mercancías*, or the forced distribution of peninsular goods to indigenous communities.¹⁷⁵

According to reports, the tax conditions the Indigenous people were subjected to was so appalling that Túpac Amaru II declared that it seemed “only the air was free.”¹⁷⁶

In combination with fiscal persecution, the Spanish exercised their despotic authority, forcing Indigenous people to remain away from their families sometimes for years at a time. If they were non-compliant, made a mistake, or failed to complete their task, they were “whipped or fettered or tortured.”¹⁷⁷ According to some sources, the severity of the torture inflicted on

¹⁷⁴ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 7. Additionally, it is worth noting that the Quechua word *Pachakuti* has been defined by scholars like Sinclair Thomson who state that it is the “charged notion of upheaval and cyclical historical renewal, the symbolic significance of the Inka and the anticipation of his return.” Sinclair Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency*, ed. Robert Levine (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 41.

¹⁷⁵ Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," 188; It is worth noting that as I acknowledge the Inca had established a pre-Columbian system of rotational labor, the *mita* has been defined by historian Kenneth Mills as an oppressive Spanish modification of that preexisting structure. Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 290.

¹⁷⁶ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 15.

¹⁷⁷ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 9.

Indigenous factory workers frequently resulted in the deaths of numerous Andeans before their debts were fully settled because of inadequate ventilation, a supply of rotting food, and a lack of access to sufficient hygiene.¹⁷⁸ Thus, Fisher highlights that these repressive systems were the “direct cause of the Inca revolt.”¹⁷⁹

Therefore, Túpac Amaru II’s advocacy for Native equality garnered support among the Andean community. However, his appeal extended beyond oppressed Peruvians also attracting mestizo, Africans, bi-racial Indians, and as historian Sergio Serulnikov states, “even some Europeans, whether born in the Old or New World.”¹⁸⁰ Despite his revolutionary stance, Túpac Amaru II was a notably deeply religious Christian follower who, in some instances claimed his actions were on behalf of the Christian Church and the present Spanish monarch, King Charles III.¹⁸¹ As Walker highlights, between these events there was left “little doubt about his immediate objective to demolish Bourbon colonialism.”¹⁸²

Yet, while these elements contributed to fueling the insurgency, the rebellion was ignited by one central event: the public execution of *corregidor* Antonio de Arriaga.¹⁸³ This action signaled the shift from ideological opposition to direct military confrontation, which set into motion the Andean revolt. However, the conditions that created these events had been set into motion with restrictive social stratifications, exploitative structures, and the Spanish official

¹⁷⁸ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 14.

¹⁸⁰ Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, xii.

¹⁸¹ Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, 17.

¹⁸² Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, 17.

¹⁸³ The term *corregidor* was given to Spanish officials whose jobs were to “impose fines, to punish through labor service, and to imprison.” Roger Neil Rasnake, *Domination and Cultural Resistance: Authority and Power among an Andean People* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 90. Additionally, Fisher notes that the *corregidores* each had authority over the labor system allocated to their area. Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 14.

Antonio de Areche's refusal to acknowledge Túpac Amaru II's claims to legitimacy and the right to reign as a *cacique* in Tinita.¹⁸⁴ As Cohen-Aponte states, Túpac Amaru II took advantage of this growing power and as many other rulers had done before him, "utilized the visual world as an agent of political transformation."¹⁸⁵

THE EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT

The first of these objects that promoted the governance of Túpac Amaru II was created by Indigenous artist Simón Ninacancha. Later referred to by scholars as the *Equestrian Portrait*, as its original title was lost to time, the artwork reflects the Peruvian adaptation of the symbolic Catholic militant figure, St. Santiago.

St. James, subsequently reconfigured with the new name St. Santiago, was originally one of the twelve Christian apostles, but his later veneration as a militant saint stems from a key event in Iberian history. According to the oral histories, St. James miraculously appeared in the ninth century on a battlefield, allegedly leading Christian forces to victory over Muslim rulers, which earned him the name *Santiago Matamoros* (St. James the Moor Slayer).¹⁸⁶ Though this story emerged centuries after St. James' death, it played a crucial role in the Spanish

¹⁸⁴ A *cacique* is another term for a *kuraka* or communal authoritative figure. The *kuraka* are the primary overseer of over the *kuraqkuna*, which are indigenous authorities. Rasnake, *Domination and Cultural Resistance*, 65-66. Furthermore, Mills states that the *cacique* "played an intermediary role between Spanish authorities and native Andeans." Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 290. Túpac Amaru II's recognition as a *cacique* would have made him exempt from the poor mining conditions in Potosí. Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, 42. Additionally, Tinita is a town near Cuzco.

¹⁸⁵ Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," 190.

¹⁸⁶ Barbara F. Weissberger, "Patronage and Politics in the Court of the Catholic Monarchs: The Cancionero de Pedro Marcuello," *Studies in Iconography* 26, 2005, 193, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23923661>.

Reconquista, which was a centuries-long Catholic effort to reclaim the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim rule.¹⁸⁷ In recognition of his divine intercession, he was canonized as the patron saint of Spain and credited with this military effort of reclamation.

St. James' introduction to the Andes through Catholicism coincided with another key point in Spanish conquest from a battle. Following the death of Sapa Inca Atahualpa, a large-scale Indigenous resistance effort emerged in 1536 to deny Spanish occupation in Peru. The battle, which lasted for several months, began to drain the supplies of the Indigenous rebels, which granted the Spaniards the opportunity to overwhelm them in numbers, ultimately leading to the siege of Cuzco. Colonial narratives attribute this victory once again to the divine intercession of St. James, crediting him with solidifying Spanish colonial control in the Andes.¹⁸⁸

The Spaniards, determined to capitalize on this domination and claim it was divinely fated, promoted St. Santiago's intervention, transforming him from a Muslim slayer to an Indian one. As Castedo states, St. Santiago's adaptation into the Spanish and *mestizo* societies in Peru was promoted with the ideology that "there were 'good' Indians (the submissive ones) and 'bad' Indians (the rebels). Against the latter, St. James fought dauntlessly... Thus, in the many Indian representations of the Apostle, St. James, Slayer of the Moors is transformed into St. James, Slayer of the Indians ('bad' Indians, naturally)."¹⁸⁹

This adaptation is presented and shown in an illustration by Guamán Poma, titled *Conquest: Miracle of St. James the Great, Apostle of Jesus Christ* (Figure 3.1). Guamán Poma's

¹⁸⁷ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 57.

¹⁸⁸ Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," 191.

¹⁸⁹ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 57.

depiction closely mirrors representations of St. Santiago, such as eighteenth century painting *Santiago Matamoros* attributed to the Cuzco School, which drew from European iconography of the saint as a militant figure (Figure 3.2).

In both artworks, St. James is depicted on horseback and dressed in Spanish garments, raising a flag in one hand while triumphantly wielding a sword in the other, thus signifying victory. The Cuzco School artwork, which reflects traditional European compositions, displays him on a white horse with its front legs raised above the bodies of Muslim figures lying on the ground in defensive positions. Similarly, in Guamán Poma's illustration, the horse appears above the body of another victim. However, in this case, the figure appears to be replaced with a Quechua man lying face down on the ground, which reflects the attitude of Spanish colonial dominance in the Andes.¹⁹⁰

Yet, in Simón Ninacancha's *Equestrian Portrait*, the narrative is transformed in a way that symbolizes Indigenous reclamation. Túpac Amaru II replaces St. Santiago and adopts his position on the white horse, both of whom are ornamented with insignia. As the painting has since been lost, eyewitness reports state that the portrait was "sent to Alto Peru (modern-day Bolivia) to help spread news of his rebellion."¹⁹¹ This adaptation of Túpac Amaru II in the place of St. Santiago would have caused further agitation among Spanish authorities, although eyewitness accounts who saw this portrait did not include a statement of whether there was an inclusion or alteration of the figure underneath the horse's feet. However, the portrait signaled a common Andean belief amongst many Indigenous people who believed that St. Santiago's

¹⁹⁰ Castedo, *The Cuzco Circle*, 58.

¹⁹¹ Cohen-Aponte, "Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru," 192-93.

powers could be invoked “during rituals honoring the mountain spirits” and that he could perhaps be “rerouted to do battle for those whom he was commissioned to vanquish.”¹⁹²

According to Cohen-Aponte, Indigenous adaptation to Catholic figures was not uncommon, since the Inca had a long history of “reconfiguring Christian deities to work in the service of local interest.”¹⁹³ Interestingly, in support of this portrait, historical accounts describe Túpac Amaru II riding into Azángaro, a town south of Peru, where he was seen on a white horse and cloaked in blue velvet garments that were embroidered with gold. His riding cloak matched the rest of his garments, and it was stated that, “Over his suit he wore the *uncu* of his ancestors, in the shape of a bishop’s rochet...Around his neck hung a gold chain to which a large golden sun was attached, the insigne of his princely ancestors.”¹⁹⁴ The reclamation of a figure like St. Santiago not only reflects the violent imposition of Spanish colonial powers but also Indigenous efforts to resist oppressive European domination.

ANTONIO OBLITAS: ARTIST AND REBEL

It has been claimed by Cohen-Aponte that although there is little documentation about Simón Ninacancha, “Oblitas’s biography looms large in the story of the Túpac Amaru Rebellion.”¹⁹⁵ As both artists were reportedly commissioned to create a portrait of Túpac Amaru II, neither underwent any formal training. Their depictions of the rebel leader, however, were

¹⁹² Cohen-Aponte, “Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru,” 192.

¹⁹³ Cohen-Aponte, “Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru,” 193.

¹⁹⁴ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 30.

¹⁹⁵ Cohen-Aponte, “Art-Making and Art-Breaking,” 177.

dependent upon their ability to adapt European artistic conventions as they were “well versed in both Andean and Iberian iconographies of power.”¹⁹⁶

Although Antonio Oblitas became an assistant to Túpac Amaru II and was appointed to aesthetically preserve his memory, he was first a slave to the aforementioned *corregidor* Antonio de Arriaga.¹⁹⁷ Although the artist’s identity has been recorded in court documents as both a *mulato libre* (free man of African and Spanish ancestry) and a *zambo* (Indigenous and African), he is mostly identified as the latter. Born in Cuzco, raised in Arequipa, and later returning to Cuzco as a shoemaker for Arriaga, Oblitas’s actions are credited with being the spark that set off the revolt.¹⁹⁸

On November 10, 1780, Túpac Amaru II announced before an audience of four thousand onlookers that he would publicly execute Arriaga, “declaring that he had orders from King Charles III condemning the *corregidor*.”¹⁹⁹ Court records from the subsequent trial of Túpac Amaru II are recalled by his wife after their capture. She testified that “it is true that her husband ordered *Corregidor* Arriaga to be hanged, and he had been hanged by a *zambo* named Antonio... and he had offered to do it; and that he hanged him to abolish the *repartimientos*.”²⁰⁰

Oblitas’s portrait of Túpac Amaru II, later referred to as the *Sangarará Portrait*, reflected the events that followed the execution of *corregidor* Arriaga. The painting recalls the battle that ultimately divided the criollo, mestizo, Indigenous, and bi-racial individuals into opposing sides:

¹⁹⁶ Cohen-Aponte, “Art-Making and Art-Breaking,” 171.

¹⁹⁷ Cohen-Aponte, “Art-Making and Art-Breaking,” 177.

¹⁹⁸ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 48; Cohen-Aponte, “Imagining Insurgency in Late Colonial Peru,” 181.

¹⁹⁹ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 212.

²⁰⁰ Ward Stavig, ed., *The Tupac Amaru and Catarista Rebellions: An Anthology of Sources*, trans. Ella Schmidt (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 124.

those who supported Túpac Amaru II and those who remained loyal to the dominant Spanish powers that had governed the Andes for centuries.

The action of hanging *corregidor* Arriaga was already deeply personal for Túpac Amaru II, as he had known Arriaga prior to this event for denying him the opportunity to become a *cacique*.²⁰¹ Notably, Arriaga had already been excommunicated and condemned by the Catholic Church on July 27, 1780, first for his tyrannical and brutal oppression of the Indigenous inhabitants, but primarily because he had “run afoul of the bishop of Cusco, Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta in a series of jurisdictional disputes with clergymen.”²⁰²

THE BATTLE OF SANGARARÁ

After Arriaga was captured by Túpac Amaru II’s rebel followers on November 4, 1780, his subsequent execution placed a bounty on the rebel leader’s head, showing that his actions were no longer conceptual but led to physical and violent force. The Battle of Sangarará, which was the true inspiration of Oblitas’ painting, was set into motion. A military defense force led by the Spanish commander Don Tiburcio Landa was sent to suppress the rebellion, aided by a few volunteers. Walker states that those who helped subdue the insurgency were promised a generous award for Túpac Amaru II, regardless of whether he was captured or killed.²⁰³ With the promise

²⁰¹ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 212.

²⁰² Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 212.

²⁰³ Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, 36-38.

of money, the group quickened their efforts. On November 17, 1780, around four in the morning, Andrien describes the tragedy as follows:

The soldiers posted no sentinels, and at four in the morning they awoke to find themselves surrounded by Tupac Amaru's indigenous army. The rebel leader [Tupac Amaru II] ordered all creoles, women, children, and clergymen to leave before his troops attacked, but Landa apparently prevented anyone from evacuating the building... In the fire and the melee that followed, at least 576 of Landa's troops lost their lives, including twenty Spaniards. As a sign of goodwill, Tupac Amaru ordered the twenty-eight creoles treated for their wounds and released... Nevertheless, the bloodbath at Sangarará also frightened potentially sympathetic creoles and promoted Bishop Moscoso to excommunicate his former friend, rebel José Gabriel Condorcanqui-Tupac Amaru.²⁰⁴

What is not shared in this account is that the collapse of the building, which ultimately cost many their lives, was caused by Spanish forces firing a cannon at the Inca through a hole where the wall had collapsed. In retaliation for this killing seven Peruvians, Fisher states that "the Natives then set fire to the four corners of the church.... Tupac Amaru later declared that he did not order the church destroyed."²⁰⁵

The Battle of Sangarará ushered in further socioeconomic divide to the Andes, in spite of the rebellion's initial efforts to upend racial hierarchies and promote equality. According to historian Sinclair Thomson, despite Túpac Amaru II's claims that he envisioned a society in which all races coexisted together to overthrow oppressive Spanish control, the "Indians came to

²⁰⁴ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 213. It is worth noting that Andrien's usage of the term 'friend' is historically controversial, as Bishop Moscoso made it his number one mission to sponsor royalist initiatives and remove himself from any beliefs that he may have aided the rebel. When he excommunicated Túpac Amaru II on November 17, for setting fire to the church in Sangarará, additional charges were added claiming Túpac Amaru was "being a bandit and rebellious traitor to the King; for seditiously working against peace; and being an usurper of Royal Rights." Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, 68. Túpac Amaru II and his wife, Micaela, who were fervent Christians, were believed to be devastated and claimed that "Moscoso's decision was illegitimate" for months following his determination. Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, 69. As the Inca revolutionist believed himself to be an exemplary Christian, he claimed this decision "would be the single most efficient weapon against him in the propaganda war that was beginning to rage." Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, 69.

²⁰⁵ Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 103.

identify the enemy not as Europeans exclusively, but as “Spaniards” of either peninsular or American origin.”²⁰⁶ From this point on, the rebel movement gained momentum, causing it to spiral out of Túpac Amaru II's grip. The Spanish saw Sangarará as an “emblem of what was at stake: Indians against whites, apostates against Christians... in short, everything that occurred that unfortunate day provoked horror and commiseration, sentiments never felt by the rebels; blinded by fury and thirsty for blood, they only thought of stabbing all the whites,” as Serulnikov highlights, rendering Túpac Amaru II's ideologies ineffectual.²⁰⁷

THE SANGARARÁ PORTRAIT

The Battle of Sangarará was memorialized in Oblitas' portrait, celebrating the rebel triumph that led to the demise of numerous Spanish troops, their volunteers, and the innocent lives caught in the action, unable to escape. Cohen-Aponte describes the composition displayed Túpac Amaru II:

under a parasol wearing Inca insignia and holding a *bastón* (staff of power)... According to witnesses, on one side of the painting was a church engulfed in flames, with dead and naked bodies represented; the other side represented Indians burning the prison of Sangarará, with one grabbing the hair of the prison guard as the imprisoned were set free.²⁰⁸

Cohen-Aponte's analysis continues as she asserts that this composition was an inversion of an earlier colonial narrative, which had been visually documented and widely circulated

²⁰⁶ Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule*, 77.

²⁰⁷ Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, 45.

²⁰⁸ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 173.

through artistic propaganda efforts. Among the most popular was the eighteenth-century painting, the *Virgin of Sunturhuasi*, which was attributed to the Cuzco School artist Marcos Zapata (Figure 3.3). In the original depiction, the Virgin Mary is shown miraculously intervening on behalf of the Spanish during the battle against the Inca forces in 1536, led by the hereditary ruler, Manco Inca.²⁰⁹ The Spanish claimed this event was divine affirmation of their right to colonize Peru, using the visual arts to reinforce the belief that this win was preordained by God. As it was told in the Spanish narrative, Zapata's painting depicts the Virgin Mary hovering above the smoke and roaring flames of a burning structure. Accompanied by two cherub angels and a halo of eleven angelic floating heads indicating her holiness, she peers downwards at the battle raging below her feet.

Zapata's representation of the Virgin Mary recalls Catholic depictions of the Woman of the Apocalypse, who is a powerful figure in the Book of Revelation. In early European art, this apocalyptic figure is frequently portrayed as a winged celestial woman who triumphantly stands on a dragon meant to signify Satan or the notion of heresy. Signifying her divinity, a brilliant halo of light accompanied by twelve stars signifying each of the apostles of Christ erupts from the crown of her head. Similar to other colonial Andean depictions of the Apocalyptic Virgin, such as the *Winged Virgin of the Apocalypse (Virgen alada del Apocalipsis)* created by Miguel de Santiago a century prior, she is shown in a very modest manner, with a layer of cloth covering her entire body that only exposes her face and neck (Figure 3.4). The placement of cherub figures surrounding her to support her holiness and the background shrouded in golden light are all replicated in the *Virgin of Sunturhuasi*.

²⁰⁹ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 173.

Below the Virgin Mary in Zapata's painting, the Spanish clamor inside the building as the Inca surround it calling attention to their dead and wounded brethren lying at their feet. Their torches threaten as incendiary weapons awaiting to engulf the thatched roof of the Spanish hideout in flames. Yet, the Inca appear frozen, staring up at the Virgin, recalling the instant the Spaniards were saved by her miraculous presence as she "extinguished the fire with sand or hail."²¹⁰ For these reasons, an inversion of this story in which the Virgin does not intervene, and the Spaniard's lives are taken by the fire, combined with a celebratory tone, transformed the *Sangarará Portrait* into the ultimate visual indicator of Indigenous resistance to colonial forces.

Cohen-Aponte goes so far as to state that this painting represented "anticolonial tenor" as it advocated for the liberation of Indigenous and bi-racially oppressed people, emphasizing the necessity of the revolt. The *Sangarará Portrait* became the quintessential indicator that violence could, and in this instance, should be used as a tool to correct injustices created through the hostile rule of Spanish colonial authority. It is, therefore, also crucial to recognize Oblitas' significant role as a visual documenter of Túpac Amaru II's rise to power. As Cohen-Aponte asserts, his involvement in the rebellion "merits further consideration, complicating our understanding of artistic identity and artistic patronage in the colonial Andes."²¹¹ This statement opens a discussion about art as both a tool of propaganda and a mechanism of censorship often employed by the Spanish to suppress Indigenous identity and cultures. At the same time, colonial authorities used art to propagate their own religious ideologies and assert their dominance. Upon becoming ardently aware of how portraiture was being used to resist their authority, the Spanish

²¹⁰ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 173.

²¹¹ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 181.

responded by issuing bans against its creation. They recognized the power portraits held, which would either promote loyalty or, in this case, ignite rebellion.

Furthermore, while the promotion of Inca sovereignty through this portrait was undeniably tied to violent resistance, it also created a shift that was unable to exist prior to the revolt. The rebellion, which transformed the political atmosphere, was the key that allowed the painting to be created, therefore reinforcing Túpac Amaru II's role as a leader sent to reclaim a romanticized Inca past. The message of the painting conveyed to the Indigenous population, who had been oppressed for centuries by foreign inhabitants, that there was once again hope for their return to power. The choice of displaying this message through portraiture also signaled an assertion of a return to hereditary rulership as it was "grounded in a specifically Indigenous genealogy of representation."²¹²

THE EXECUTION OF TÚPAC AMARU II AND THE PORTRAIT'S SIGNIFICANCE

The leadership of Túpac Amaru II dramatically came to an end after he was captured by Spanish forces on April 6, 1781, just six months after the insurgency began.²¹³ It was decided by the royally appointed Spanish official Antonio de Areche, whom Túpac Amaru II knew personally, that he would be publicly executed in a manner that replicated the execution of the final Sapa Inca before him, Túpac Amaru I, from whom the rebel leader got his name. It has been

²¹² Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 178.

²¹³ David Cahill, "Violence, repression, and rebellion in southern Peru: the uprising of Túpac Amaru, mortality, and material destruction," in *From Rebellion to Independence in the Andes: Soundings from Southern Peru, 1750-1830* (Aksant Academic Publishers, 2002), 126.

stated by Andrien that the original execution, which took place on September 24, 1572, almost two hundred years prior, was a “carefully orchestrated ritual” intended to publicly display Spain’s superiority and designed to “symbolize the final defeat and humiliation of the Inca.”²¹⁴ The execution, which was to take place on Cuzco’s main square, known as *Huacaypata* (now the modern-day Plaza de Armas), held deep significance to the Inca as it had formally served as a site for all governmental, religious, and cultural ceremonies prior to Spanish oppression.²¹⁵

The night prior to the execution, the Bishop of Cuzco, acting in accordance with Areche’s wishes, visited Túpac Amaru II in an attempt to force him to provide the names of his allies with the threat that if he was non-compliant, God would enact eternal suffering upon him in the afterlife.²¹⁶ Unable to force him to speak and reportedly resistive to the “adamant requests of Areche to yield up the names of his accomplices,” it was claimed by eyewitnesses that Túpac Amaru II replied, stating, “Here there are no accomplices besides you and me: you for oppressing the people and me for trying to free them.”²¹⁷ Therefore, on May 18, 1781, over a month after his capture, a hasty trial, and records of torture resulting in a dislocated shoulder, Túpac Amaru II was tortured again and publicly executed in the town square. Prior to his death, he was forced to watch as the violent murder of his eldest son, Hipólito, his wife, Micaela Bastidas Puyucagua, and five members of his family, including his uncle, Francisco, and his brother-in-law, Antonio.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 193-194

²¹⁵ Rosasco and Zambrano, *Cusco's Cathedral*, 57.

²¹⁶ Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, 105.

²¹⁷ Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, 105.

²¹⁸ Stavig, *The Tupac Amaru and Catarista Rebellions*, xxvii; 120. It also worth noting that Micaela Bastidas Puyucagua’s identity, much like Oblitas, has been manipulated by various records. Fisher, who have extensively

As an Indigenous scholar of Peruvian descent, I feel it is my responsibility to bear witness to this history in its entirety. Therefore, within this next section it is necessary although many scholars do not give a warning, that I feel as a disseminator of the following account, I must. If recounting it is this difficult, I cannot imagine what it was to endure. The inclusion of this description is not meant to sensationalize suffering but to confront the cruelty inflicted on the Indigenous people as this level of violence was enacted by the Spanish as a means of asserting their dominance and authority over the Inca as well as distinguish resistive efforts.

I debated whether to omit certain details to spare the reader from the brutality, but ultimately, I believe it is essential to present the full truth of the vicious cruelty of Spanish colonial forces. The next section is an execution order recounted in the scholarship of Mary Louise Pratt, who provides a detailed and harrowing description of the execution of Tupac Amaru II, his family, and his followers. If the details become overwhelming, I encourage the reader to skip ahead.

It reads as follows:

I must do and condemn José Gabriel Tupac Amaru to be taken out to the main public square of this city, that is Cuzco, dragged out to the place of execution, where he shall witness the execution of the sentences imposed on his wife Micaela Bastidas, his two sons Hipólito and Fernando, his uncle Francisco, and his brother-in-law Antonio, as well as some of the principal captains and aids in his iniquitous and perverse intent or project, all of whom must die the same day. Once their sentences have been carried out, the executioner will cut out his tongue, and he will then be tied or bound by strong chords on each one of his arms and feet in such a way that each rope can be easily tied or fastened to others hanging from the saddle

documented Túpac Amaru II's family lineage, believe that she was a *criolla* (Spaniard born in the Americas) born in Pampamarca, Peru, despite claims of her *mestiza* status. Fisher, *The Last Inca Revolt*, 26-27.

In support of this fully Spanish identity, her wedding certificate asserts that both of her parents were Spaniards although there is record of her having a mother with a Quechua surname, Josepha Puyucagua (meaning "look at the clouds"). Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, 21.

There have also been claims that Micaela Bastidas was a *zambo* who thus possessed Indigenous and African heritage.

straps of four horses, so that in this position each one of these horses facing opposite corners of the square will pull toward its own direction, and let the horses be urged or jolted into motion at the same time, so that his body be divided into its many parts, and then once it is done, the parts should be carried to the hill or high ground known as Pichu which is where he came to intimidate and demand the surrender of this city, and let there be lit a fire which shall be prepared in advance and let there be ashes thrown into the air and a stone tablet placed there detailing his main crimes and the manner of his death as the only record and statement of his loathsome action. His head will be sent to the town of Tinta [where the rebellion began-mlp] where, after having been three days on the gallows, it shall be placed on a stake at the most public entrance of the town. One of his arms will go to the town of Tungasuca, where he was chief, where it will be treated in a like manner. And the other in the capital of the Province of Caraballa. One of the legs shall likewise be sent for the same kind of demonstration to the town of Libitaca in the province of Chumbivilcas, where the remaining leg shall go to Santa Rosa, in the Province of Lampa, along with an affidavit in order to the chief magistrates that this sentence shall be proclaimed publicly with the great solemnity as soon as it arrives in their hands...²¹⁹

Although it is not explicitly stated in the sentencing speech, Oblitas was also put to death during Túpac Amaru II's execution for the creation of the *Sangarará Portrait*. He was one of three people hung first, after which his body was thrown and left behind the gallows.²²⁰ The manner of his execution mirrors the fate of the portrait.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PORTRAIT: THE SYMBOLISM OF OBJECTS

When soldiers arrived, they described the *Sangarará Portrait*, stating that it depicted "Tupac Amaru on a horse with the royal insignias he had brought as trophies from [our] very painful defeat at Sangarará, where he had burnt the church and taken prisoners."²²¹ For the Inca, the *Sangarará Portrait* might have been perceived as a *huaca* (sometimes spelled as *w'aka* or

²¹⁹ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 9-10. It should also be stated that the bracketed text with the letters 'mlp' stand for the author's name, Mary Louise Pratt.

²²⁰ Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, 165.

²²¹ Stavig, *The Tupac Amaru and Catarista Rebellions*, 120.

guaca) acting as a vessel for the rebel leader's spirit. While *huaca* is a nuanced term, it is perhaps most broadly encompassed with historian Kenneth Mill's definition as a "local or regional sacred place and divinity; often but not exclusively an ancestor being and 'founder' in the surrounding landscape, regularly nourished with offerings and given reverence, whose deeds and histories make sense of the region and are recounted by people who are his or her progeny."²²²

The initial understanding of *huacas* was derived from the pre-Columbian belief that the world was once inhabited by god-like men "who were called *huacas* by their descendants," and for the Inca, there was "no doubting that the *huacas* had once lived upon the earth, where they carried out their various feats."²²³ In the end, after their purpose in life had been fulfilled, they would either turn into stone, an animal, or another object that would be imbued with their essence, continuing as "'active' and 'living' forces integrated in the world of their people."²²⁴ In other words, *huacas* were most commonly interpreted as objects imbued with these god-like spirits. Túpac Amaru II's use of *inkarri* may have portrayed him as a *villca*, known to the Inca as a "demigod or high-ranking huacalike human."²²⁵

It could be argued that eyewitness accounts claiming that the *Sangarará Portrait* hung from the gallows was an action meant to symbolize the figurative and literal death of Túpac Amaru II. This theory gains credibility when additionally considering the ideological value portraits had in Spain. As Cohen-Aponte states in her analysis,

²²² Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 289.

²²³ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 46.

²²⁴ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 46.

²²⁵ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 293.

Portraits were believed to hold the traces of the absent or deceased referent. Royal portraits of Spain's monarchs lent material and visual form to absent kings... Royal simulacra were always publicly displayed in elaborate ceremonies and understood to contain the king's aura and presence. Indeed, as far as his subjects throughout his vast empire were concerned, these objects were the *king*. The paintings of Tupac Amaru carried the affective and ideological weight of royal portraits, whose rituals of presentation and display had been established in the Andes since the early colonial period.²²⁶

Similarly, Dean claimed that she believed the Spanish were aware that their actions would cause psychological trauma to the Inca, given that the belief in *huanques* (spelled also as *wawkis*) had existed prior to Spanish colonization. According to Dean's analysis, *huanques* were originally sculptures made from stone that housed the "powerful essences (the *animas*) of rulers" and that it was possible that after seeing the European tradition of portraits being substitutes for monarchs, the Inca adopted colonial paintings in the same manner.²²⁷ Regardless of painting or sculpture, the Spanish were aware that inanimate things could house the spirit of a deity or king as believed by the Inca, and so the Spaniards regarded the objects as "dangerous because they commanded considerable authority- both political and religious."²²⁸

It should also be noted that, as Andrien argued, the manner of Túpac Amaru II's execution was ritualistic. The destruction of the *Sangarará Portrait* should be contextualized within the colonial Spanish practice of *diligencias*, a symbolic ritualistic action that resulted in the public destruction of idolatrous items.²²⁹ *Visitadors* (royally appointed Spanish officials) like Antonio de Areche led these actions so that "religious offenders could be isolated by the Spanish

²²⁶ Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 177-178.

²²⁷ Carolyn Dean, "Inka Nobles: Portraiture and Paradox in Colonial Peru," in *Exploring New World Imagery: Spanish Colonial Papers from the 2002 Mayer Center Symposium*, ed. Donna Pierce (Denver, CO: Denver Art Museum, 2005), 90.

²²⁸ Dean, "Inka Nobles," 80.

²²⁹ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 288.

Christian authorities in order to be disciplined and ridiculed before their own people, and the so-called instruments of idolatry—the false gods, the ancestor’s remains, and the sacrificial materials—could be physically destroyed.”²³⁰ Punishments inflicted on the offender would usually include various forms of torture and harassment.

A parade of humiliation was a significant part of Túpac Amaru II’s execution. It was noted that all the members of his family, his followers, including Antonio Oblitas, and Túpac Amaru II himself were stripped of their clothes, placed in shackles and handcuffs, and forced to wear bags used to haul maté (a traditional South American herbal drink).²³¹ Thus, the *Sangarará Portrait* should be understood as a horrific example of a *diligencias* ritual. As Cohen Aponte states, “the *Sangarará Portrait* itself, rather than an improvisational stuffed effigy, was selected for this ritual of justice suggesting that contemporaries recognized it as a highly charged, numinous incarnation of the absent rebel and that seizure of his painted form would precipitate his actual capture and execution.”²³²

THE SYMBOLIC DESTRUCTION OF THE BODY OF TÚPAC AMARU II

Similarly, Túpac Amaru II’s execution held symbolic meaning, as did the treatment of the *Sangarará Portrait*, which foreshadowed the event. The Spanish, aware of the local Native beliefs, used the execution to demonstrate power dynamics and quell future insurrections. The rebel leader, who had once vowed to end his people’s oppression, was fated to suffer publicly by

²³⁰ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 267.

²³¹ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 13.

²³² Cohen-Aponte, "Art-Making and Art-Breaking," 177.

the hands of those oppressors. Pratt suggests two compelling claims that posit Spanish awareness of Andean beliefs included the treatment of Túpac Amaru II's body as well as the land in which those atrocities were committed.

Although it is not stated in the execution sentencing, the removal of Túpac Amaru II's tongue, as well as those of his wife and son, was likely linked to their refusal to remove Indigenous languages from daily activities.²³³ To eradicate the culture of the people's land in which he inhabited, Areche publicly banned any connections to Inca culture, including portraiture, theatrical plays, literature, traditional garments, and Native languages like Quechua and Aymara to assimilate the Indigenous people into the colonial agenda. In his commitment to epistemicide and cultural erasure, Areche reportedly claimed, "It gives me the greatest sorrow to walk around this land not understanding those who speak to me, quite in spite of the frequency with which the king has ordered that they be taught, and that has not been sufficient."²³⁴ Additionally, when placing the execution in historical context with the Andean prophecy *inkarri*, the separation of the Andean leader's limbs was to ensure that the Inca knew there would be no resurrection, as it directly "counteracted popular beliefs that Túpac Amaru II simply cannot be killed."²³⁵

Furthermore, the very land on which the execution took place held great significance to the Inca. Prior to European contact, the empire was divided into four distinct sections and called Tawantinsuyu (or Tahuantinsuyu), translated as "land of the four quarters."²³⁶ For the Andean

²³³ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 10.

²³⁴ Serulnikov, *Revolution in the Andes*, 136.

²³⁵ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 10.

²³⁶ Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 292.

people, Cuzco was the center of the universe, which was why their capital was situated on that land. According to Inca cosmology, “Cuzco occupied the center of a symbolic universe bisected by two diagonals, which marked out the four quadrants of the Inca empire (Figure 3.5). The city of Cuzco was divided physically by those diagonals, which met at the center, the very plaza where the executions were to take place.”²³⁷ Therefore, it was no mistake when Areche determined that Túpac Amaru II’s body would be separated into four halves, given the significance of the number four, which was deeply ingrained in the Andean people’s relationality to their land. As Pratt states, “When the judge prescribed this particular diagonal, a four-cornered configuration for the destruction of Tupac Amaru’s body, the prospection, whether he knew it or not, read directly into Andean cosmography.”²³⁸

I contend that the execution was deliberately performed to speak to local Indigenous sensibilities and destroy further resistive actions that may have threatened the Spaniard’s colonial control in the Andes. This theory is supported when using the words of Manuel Espinarte Lopez, a local Spanish official who was an eyewitness to the execution who documented the Indigenous reaction to the execution scene. It is his last entry. It is as follows:

It seems that the devil schemes and arranges certain things to confirm these Indians in their abuses, omens, and superstitions. I mention this because after a period of dryness and very quiet days, this particular day dawned so overcast that the sun’s face was hidden and it was threatening to rain everywhere, and around twelve o’clock when the horses were pulling on the Indian, there arose a strong gust of wind, and after it a downpour which forced all the people, even the guards, to withdraw in haste. This has resulted in the Indians saying that *the sky and the elements all felt the death of the Inca, that the humane and inhumane and ungodly Spaniards were killing him with such cruelty.*²³⁹

²³⁷ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 10-11.

²³⁸ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 10-11.

²³⁹ Pratt, "Apocalypse in the Andes," 14-15. It should be noted that the text is italicized in the source.

For the Inca, the destruction of Túpac Amaru II's body, the desecration of his portrait, and the public atrocity committed were so horrendous that it provoked a cosmic reaction, causing even the Earth to weep because of such unspeakable cruelty. For the Indigenous Andeans, the Earth was not just a physical space, but a nurturing force and a living sacred entity that was intimately intertwined with their spirituality and identity. Therefore, it seemed as though the rain was an intervention, a silent mourning for a loss so profound that its sorrow rippled beyond the people, as if the Earth herself shared in their anguish.

In conclusion, portraiture served two distinct functions: it was either a tool to advance Spanish ideologies or a subversive mechanism of defiance against colonial authority. In the case of the *Sangarará Portrait*, Oblitas employed it to function as the latter, using the portrait to challenge Spanish rule. Additionally, both the artwork's creation and its eventual treatment reveal the intersection of Indigenous beliefs and Spanish perceptions of them. The tension between these systems of belief, such as *huacas*, which existed as objects infused with one's essence, became validated through Spanish responses as these beliefs were not dismissed but rather treated as dangerous forms of idolatry. The treatment of these objects, which I contend is evident through the *Sangarará Portrait*, underscores Spanish colonial efforts to erase Indigenous epistemologies and, conversely, the role of artists like Oblitas in resisting that erasure. Therefore, the *Sangarará Portrait* serves as historical proof of Peruvian resistance as well as the extent of Spanish actions taken to suppress it, illustrating the role of visual arts in Indigenous resistance movements and their continued relevance in contemporary debates on colonial legacies.

CONCLUSION

When considered as individual case studies, the works of Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao, Marcos Zapata, and Antonio Oblitas visually document and participate in a progression of Indigenous resistance spanning from the late 1690s to the early 1780s. Across this near century-long period, their aesthetic interventions reflected the evolving artistic strategies utilized by the Cuzco School as a means of cultural assertion. Within the guild's earlier years, Pumacallao subtly imbued his art with references to local textiles and Native pigments such as cochineal. His painting, *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco*, was evidence of this layered iconography, including the sacred Andean deity, Pachamama.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Zapata's artistic decisions become particularly apparent through his reinterpretation of Catholic narratives, demonstrating further Indigenous opposition to Spanish assimilation tactics. Additionally, Native artistic traditions served as the foundation for his use of a regional palette that prioritized indigo, which he emphatically embraced in his work. The incorporation of Peruvian cuisine and the depiction of an Andean landscape in Zapata's artwork, however, most clearly demonstrated his intention to not only maintain an Indigenous presence.

The final chapter, which examined the work of Afro-Indigenous artist Antonio Oblitas, carried my analysis into the latter half of the eighteenth century during a period when the political atmosphere of the Andes was rife with colonial tensions. By examining his portrait of the rebel leader, Túpac Amaru II, and contextualizing the conditions in which it was created, I contended that the *Sangarará Portrait* was not only a reflection of the colonial environment but a catalyst for Andean insurgency. Furthermore, by demonstrating that the Spanish were cognizant

of local Andean beliefs, the public treatment of the portrait, which paralleled the execution of Túpac Amaru II. However, these acts of violence only transformed Túpac Amaru II into a martyr for Indigenous resistance, thus transforming both his death and the portrait into a lasting emblem of Peruvian fortitude.

The primary aim of this thesis has been to illuminate how three artists navigated Spanish colonialism while asserting their Indigenous identities through expressive mediums. By prioritizing an Indigenous focused analysis, I have highlighted how their artwork has resisted Spanish imposition and adapted colonial narratives to subtly incorporate their own perspectives. Unlike the majority of scholarship that often analyzes the work of the Cuzco School through a Eurocentric lens, my analysis highlights aspects of their Indigeneity woven within the materiality, symbolism, and artistic techniques popularized by their guild. Additionally, my thesis seeks to contribute to the ongoing understanding of materiality through a close examination of Latin American pigments like cochineal red, which was a symbol of Indigenous cultivation efforts and a desired resource on the colonial global market. Lastly, my analysis has strived to offer an intervention to understandings of Inca systems of belief, including Pachamama and *huacas*, which predate European contact and actively persist today. This approach aims to challenge academic discourse that prioritizes analyzing the Catholic narratives within these works of art and rather encourages a more nuanced understanding that incorporates Indigenous perspectives.

Although this thesis has focused on Cuzco School paintings, further study is needed to examine art produced by other nearby Indigenous guilds. I aim to expand on this research during my dissertation as I consider paintings from Quito and Potosí, where Ecuadorian and Bolivian artists engaged in their own acts of Indigenous survivance. Moreover, significant gaps remain in

the existing literature that detail the significance and interconnectedness of Inca materiality and its relationship to the land. Future research could aim to close these gaps, providing an analysis that details the ways in which artists attempted to preserve their cultural memory through painted form.

Ultimately, these paintings serve as a testimony to the efforts of artists who asserted their Native identities while navigating the complexities of Spanish colonial rule. Rather than seeing the paintings as passive expressions of their identity, they remain cultural markers of Indigenous defiance and resilience. Against all odds, they continue to echo the voices of a people who were once oppressed yet fought regardless to preserve their cultural memory and render Indigenous worldviews. As a result, when placed in a chronological context and when viewed as separate entities, these paintings reflect varying degrees of Indigenous autonomy by aestheticizing artistic survivance in colonial Cuzco.



Figure 1.1

Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao, *The Virgin of Bethlehem of the City of Cuzco*, 1698, oil on canvas. Basilica Cathedral of Cuzco.



Figure 1.2

Andrea Previtali, *Salvator Mundi*, 1519, oil on wood, 61.6 x 53 cm, 24.25 inches x 20.87 inches.
National Gallery, London.



Figure 1.3

Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, *Salvator Mundi*, 1499-1510, oil on walnut panel, 45.7 cm x 65.7 cm, 25.8 x 19.2 inches. In the collection of the Crowned Prince of Saudi Arabia.



Figure 1.4

Unknown Spanish Netherlandish artist, *Heraldic Panel with Arms of the House of Hapsburg*, 1504–6, Pot-metal glass, white glass, vitreous paint, and silver stain, 86.4 x 53.3 cm, 34 x 21 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 1.5

Unknown artist, "The Nopal plant that is grown in America and produces seed," in Reports on the history, organization, and status of various Catholic dioceses of New Spain and Peru, 1620-1649, manuscript. Newberry Library: Vault Ayer MS 1106 D8 Box 1 Folder 15



Figure 1.6

Unknown Inca artist, *All-T'oquepu Tunic*, 1450–1540, camelid fiber and cotton, 90.2 x 77.15 cm.
Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C



Figure 1.7

Unknown artist, *The Virgin Mary of the Cerro Rico of Potosí*, eighteenth century, oil on canvas, 134.6 x 104.1 cm, 53 x 41 inches. Casa Nacional de Moneda, Potosí



Figure 2.1

Marcos Zapata, *The King Josafad*, 1764, oil on canvas, 2.070 x 1.66 meters. Humahuaca Cathedral, Jujuy, Argentina



Figure 2.3

Marcos Zapata, *The Last Supper*, 1753, oil on canvas, 635 x 585 cm, 250 x 230.31 inches.
Basilica Cathedral of Cuzco, Peru.

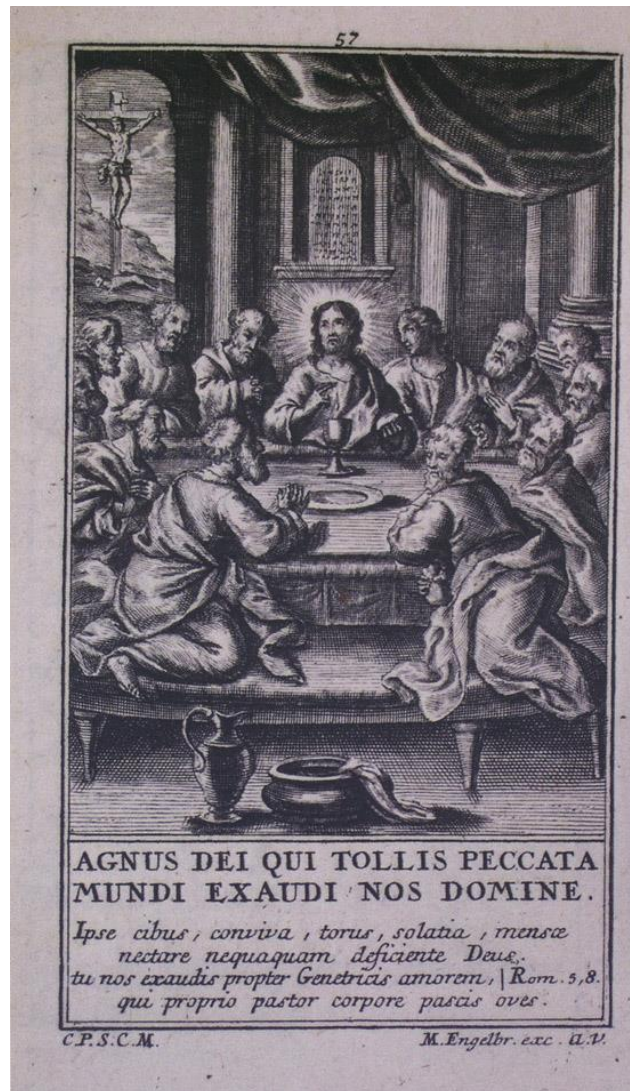


Figure 2.4

Martin Engelbrecht, *Agnus Dei Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi Exaudi Nos Domine*, 1732, engraving.



Figure 2.5

Theodore de Bry, engraving illustrating cannibalism in Brazil, from volume 3 of *Collected travels in the east Indies and west Indies*, collected from Hans Staden's account which detailed his experiences in colonial Brazil, 1594, engraving. British Library.



Figure 2.6

Theodoor Galle (Netherlandish) after Jan van der Straet, called Stradanus (Netherlandish), *Allegory of America*, from *New Inventions of Modern Times (Nova Reperta)* plate 1 of 19, 1600, engraving. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 2.7

Attributed to José Maza, *Francisco Pizarro González*, etching from the series *Retratos de los Españoles Ilustres con un Epítome de sus Vidas* (Portraits of Illustrious Spaniards with a Summary of their Lives), 1791. The New York Public Library Digital Collections.



Figure 2.8

Gaspar Miguel De Berrio, *Description of Cerro Rico and The Imperial Municipality of Potosí*, 1758, oil on canvas. Museo Colonial Charcas in Sucre, Boliva.



Figure 2.9

Marcos Zapata, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1760, oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, 187.96 cm x 126.03 cm, 74 inches x 49 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Denver Art Museum



Figure 2.10

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *The Sacred Mountains of Pitsusiray and Sahuasiray*, 1623, black ink on paper illustration from *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*)



Figure 3.1

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Conquest: Miracle of St. James the Great, Apostle of Jesus Christ*, seventeenth century, black ink on paper illustration from *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*)

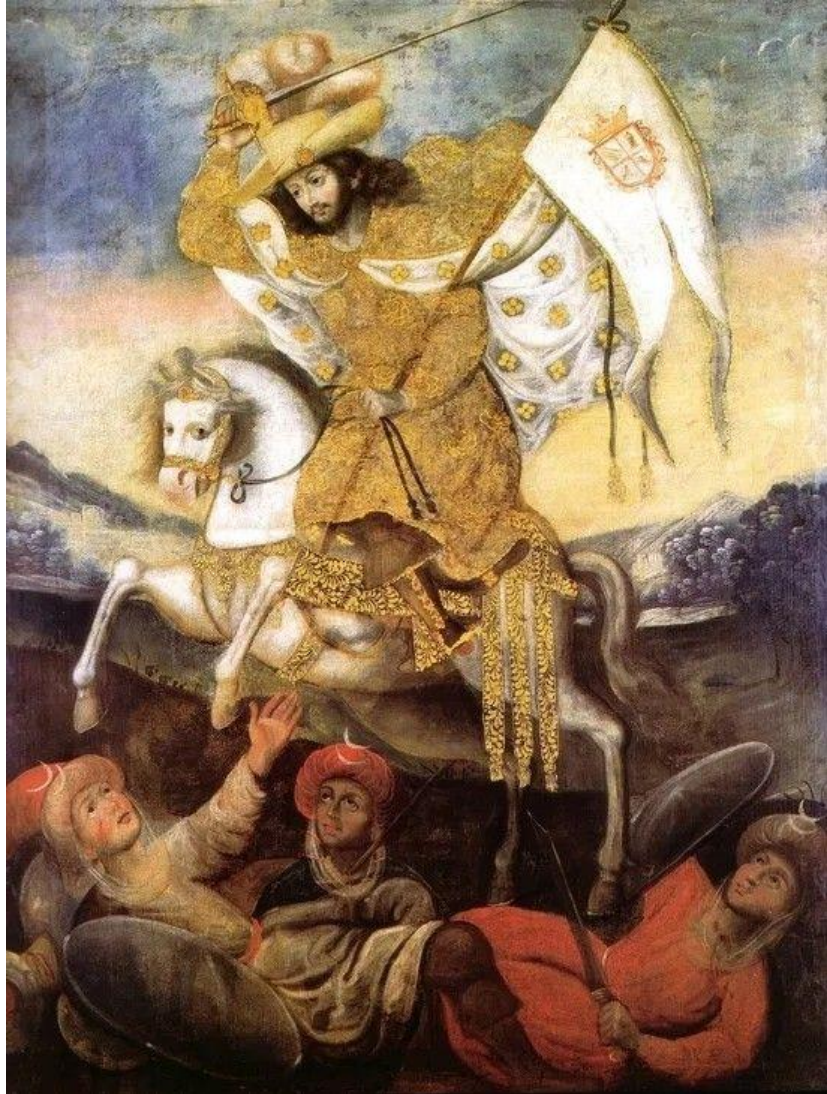


Figure 3.2

Unknown, attributed to the Cuzco School, *Santiago Matamoros* ('Saint James the Moor Slayer'), 1680-1700, oil on canvas, 131,000 x 165,000 cm without the frame. Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima.

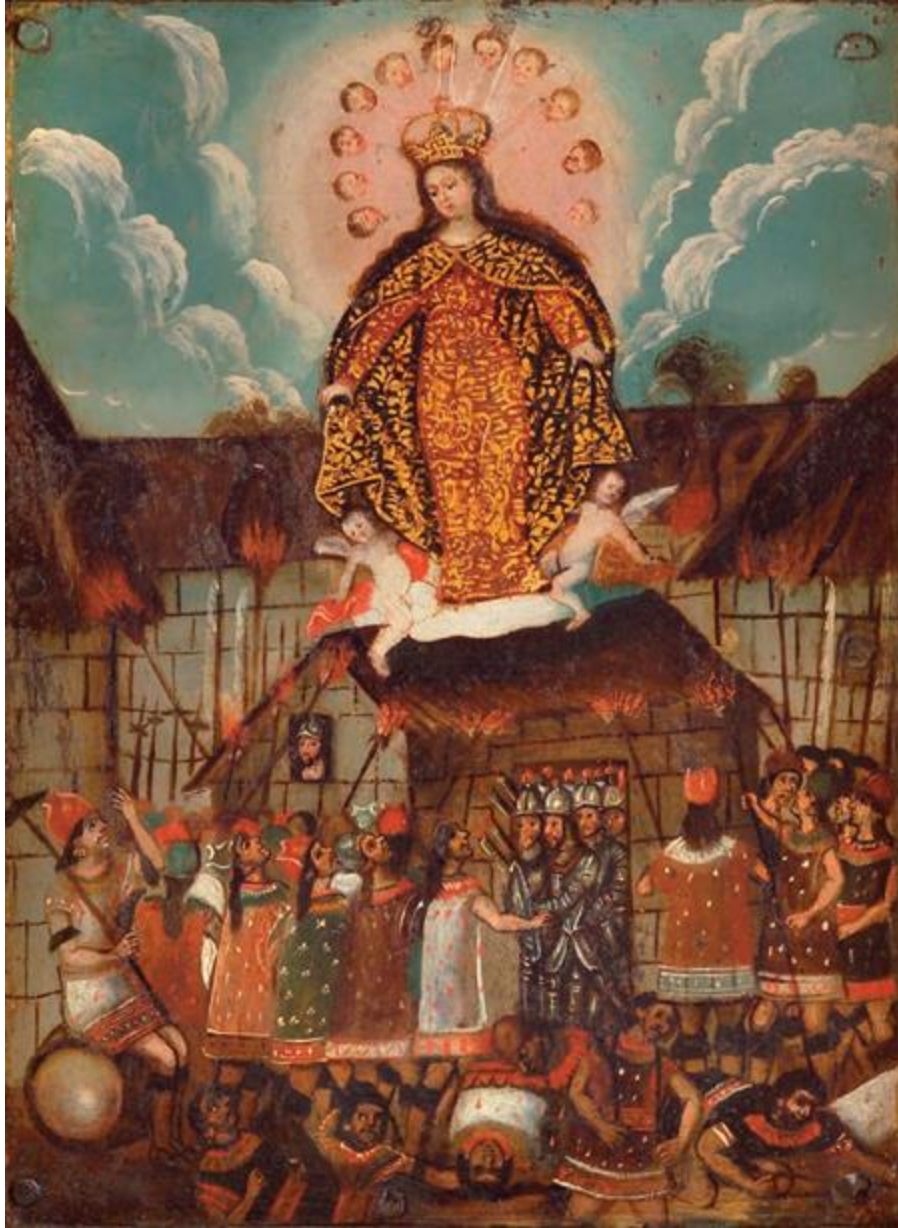


Figure 3.3

Attributed to Marcos Zapata, *Virgin of Sunturhuasi*, eighteenth century, oil on metal, 25 x 18.5 cm, 9.84 x 7.28 inches. Colección Barbosa-Stern, Lima.



Figure 3.4

Miguel de Santiago, *Winged Virgin of the Apocalypse (Virgen alada del Apocalipsis)*, seventeenth century, oil on canvas. Church and Convent of St. Francis, Quito, Ecuador.



Figure 3.5

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Mapamundi*, seventeenth century, black ink on paper illustration from *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*)

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