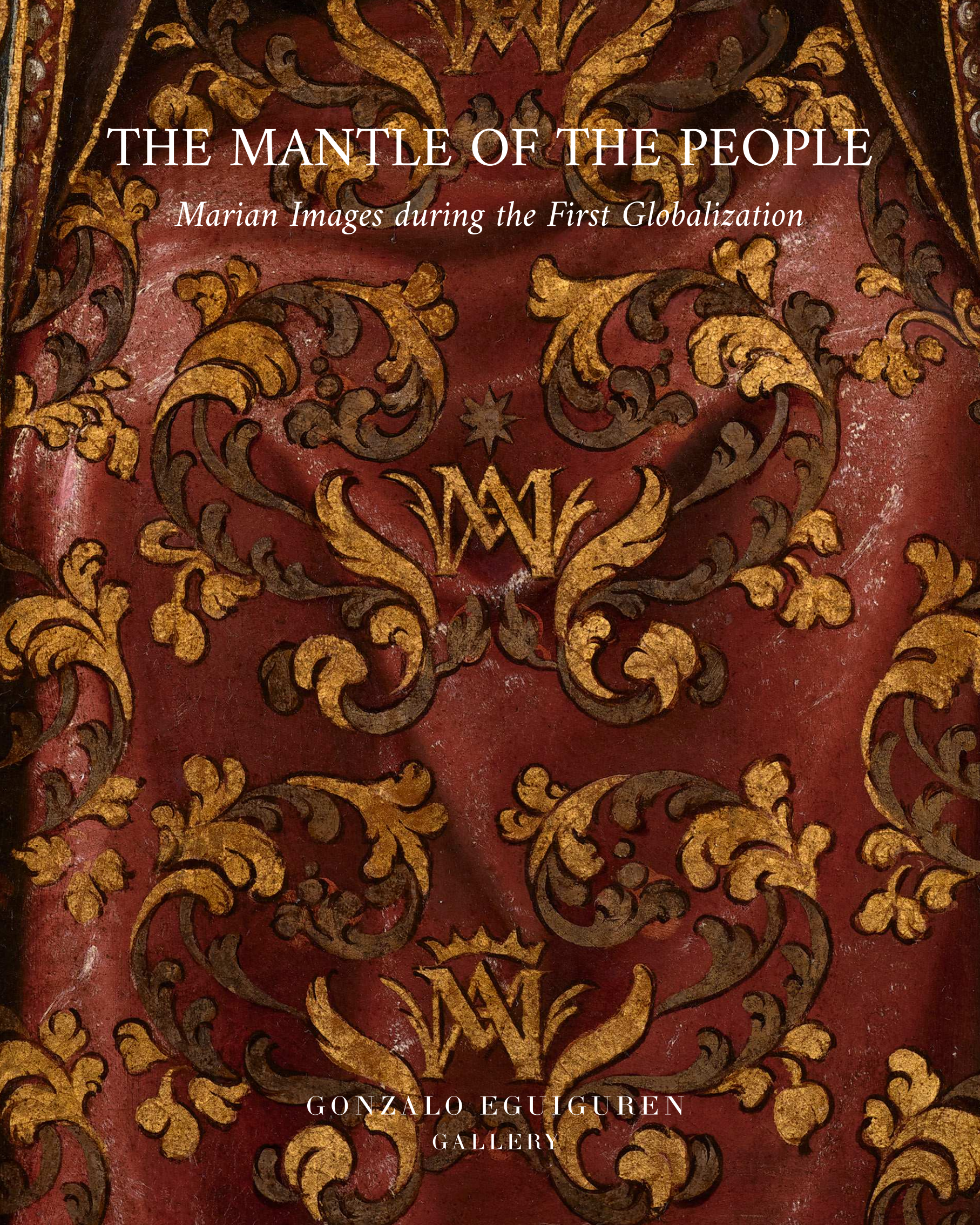




THE MANTLE OF THE PEOPLE

Marian Images during the First Globalization

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P R E F A C E

There are books that are born from an idea, others from an intention, and some – like this one – are born from a journey. I am not referring to a physical itinerary, although these pages travel through oceans, mountain ranges and diverse territories, but to an inner journey that began long before this project existed. Since my earliest years, I have lived surrounded by works that have crossed centuries and geographies, objects that have united worlds that have never met directly. Living with that visual universe taught me that art not only preserves the past: it also builds silent bridges between times, places and people.

Among all these images, the figure of the Virgin Mary appeared again and again as a common thread. With different shapes and different materials, with intimate or majestic gestures, with a pearly radiance or the sobriety of stone, the same intuition always returned: his mantle. This protective gesture, transformed by each region and each culture, seemed to contain a secret map of the first globalization. It could accommodate Asia, Europe and America; there was room for personal stories, entire communities, domestic devotions, and great spiritual programs. The mantle was a refuge, but also a language.

This book arises from that certainty. It invites us to travel through the Iberian and American world through the Marian images that inhabited and defined it. It is not a linear or uniform history: it is a network of routes and perspectives, of techniques and sensibilities, of encounters and translations. That's why I brought together researchers whose perspectives I deeply admire. Each one observes Mary from a different territory: from the materiality of her transpacific origin to the intimacy of devotion in New Spanish homes; from the circulation of prints and coppers to Spanish genealogies; from Mesoamerican syncretisms to the Andean skies. Together, these voices make up a broad and plural landscape where the Virgin is not a theme, but a form of relationship between peoples. This journey is also an exercise in gratitude. To those who have trusted me to study, guard or share these works; to those who dedicate their lives to understanding the complexity of the viceregal world; to those who have accompanied this project with generosity and intellectual demand; and to whom, at different times in my life, they showed me that art can be a place where one finds belonging.

In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to my father, whose love for art opened up a way of seeing and living that became a source of happiness. This project was born from that gratitude: from having learned, from an early age, that art can be a space to find meaning and to build one's own path, a path that today I continue with conviction and joy.

This book does not claim to offer a definitive version of Marian history in early modernity. Rather, it proposes a place to look. A space where the reader can discover that, beneath the diversity of materials and styles, the same impulse beats: the need to find refuge, to weave community, to get closer to the sacred. That impulse takes the form of a mantle that travels, that connects, that transforms. A mantle that, in some way, we continue to inhabit.

Gonzalo Eguiguren

Understanding the pictorial traditions of the viceroyalties begins with recognizing the material conditions that shaped artistic practice. Painters worked within changing markets of available materials, long-standing workshop methods, and the devotional demands of sacred imagery. Their technical decisions were not secondary but central to the look and meaning of their works. This study offers a concise overview of these practices, organized by supports and techniques canvas, wooden panel including *enconchado*, and reverse painted glass, to highlight how each material and technique influenced artistic production across the viceroyalties.

Painting on canvas: Materials, Preparation, and Chromatic Practice

Oil painting on canvas emerged as the dominant format in viceregal artistic production, valued for its versatility, portability, and its capacity to sustain the rich, saturated color aesthetic characteristic of the period. Viceregal workshops blended European techniques with local materials, resulting in paintings grounded in shared technical practice. Canvas supports allowed for greater scale than panel, responded well to oil-based media, and facilitated the increasingly elaborate compositions associated with Baroque religious imagery.

Artists employed a wide range of textiles such as linen, cotton, mixed fibers, and repurposed household fabrics they adapted them through sewn joins, inserted patches, or reinforced seams to achieve the desired format.¹ These interventions were integral to the preparation process and reflect the pragmatic, resource-conscious nature of viceregal workshops. Once selected and the desired format achieved, the textile was stretched on a stretcher and had its ground preparation applied, often bearing the subtle regional coloration characteristic of local workshop practice, to create a suitable surface for paint.²

The palettes of viceregal painters demonstrate extensive command of both mineral and organic pigments. Common mineral pigments included lead white, red and yellow iron oxides (such as hematite and ochre), azurite, smalt, carbon black, vermilion, and arsenic sulfide pigments like orpiment.³ These were complemented by organic dyes and lakes particularly cochineal and indigo whose intense hues played a central role in achieving the vivid tonalities favored in devotional subjects.⁴ Together, these materials enabled artists to construct luminous, layered surfaces through combinations of opaque body color, translucent *glazes*, and resinous media.

Gilding also played a significant role in Novohispanic painting, and ultimately in the broader traditions of Andean and Peruvian viceregal art. Gold held profound material and sacred value in many Indigenous cultures, where it was associated with solar power and divine beings an association documented by chroniclers and evident in pre-Hispanic ritual uses of the metal.⁵ Its use in painting therefore resonated across cultural frameworks,

¹ Alejandra Castro Concha, *La consistencia material de la pintura colonial andina* (Lima: IFEA/PUCP, 2019), 103–109.

² *Ibid.*, 110–113.

³ Gabriela Siracusano, *El poder de los colores: De lo material a lo simbólico en las prácticas culturales andinas* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005), 62, 76–80, 84–96, 108–120.

⁴ Rocío Bruquetas Galán, “Pigmentos y colorantes azules en la pintura del Siglo de Oro: circulación y usos en el ámbito hispánico,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 41, no. 115 (2019): 61–94.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

In colonial Latin America, copper images of the Virgin could be either matrixes for production of printed images or supports for delicate paintings. In either case, these images were small-format devotional works characterized by fine detail. Intimate and intricate, they placed the Virgin into the hands of the devotee, appropriate for use in the home or when traveling, although they might equally be found in chapels or integrated into the elaborate altarpieces of churches.

Two such works depict the Virgin Mary painted on a relief etched and engraved copper support (Figs. 1-2). In terms of both style and technique, these paintings on copperplates with relief are unique to the colonial Andes; they have historically been associated with the region around Lake Titicaca, in what is now Peru and Bolivia and have recently been linked to the Jesuit Order.⁴⁷ Their small format and ornamental qualities would have made them particularly appropriate for private devotion, a point possibly underscored by the fact that all of the existing known works have religious subject matter, yet none are today in situ in a church or chapel.⁴⁸ They are delicately and carefully painted with great skill and often feature added details in gold leaf. The etching, burnishing, and engraving of the underlying copper support creates a varied, textural surface, while the final layer of oil paint and gold leaf adds richness and brilliance to the works.

Several of the existing painted copperplates with relief depict regional images of the Virgin, such as the Virgin of Copacabana or, as in the case of one of the two plates in this exhibition, the Virgin of Pomata, a miracle-working sculpture of the Virgin housed in the tiny town of the same name, perched on an outcropping overlooking Lake Titicaca (Fig. 1).⁴⁹ The Virgin of Pomata is recognizable due to the plumes of ostrich feathers both she and the Christ child wear in their crowns, adornments specific to this iconography. The Virgin's other accoutrements are fairly typical of Andean dressed sculptures of the Virgin: she wears a wide triangular mantel that drapes over her gown, her long dark wavy hair is bejeweled and ornamented, she holds a standard with a rebus comprised of the letter S and a nail, or *clavo* in Spanish, *s-clavo*, *esclavo* (slave) a reference to spiritual slavery to the Virgin. She floats on a crescent moon supported by clouds while, to either side of her, male saints similarly rest on cloudbanks.

The other painting on copperplate with relief in the exhibition shows the Virgin of the Assumption, an iconography that refers to the Virgin's bodily assumption into heaven (Fig. 2). In this case, the representation of the Virgin is based on an engraving after an iconography by Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens. Aaron Hyman has demonstrated, however, that this iconography was widespread in the region; the artist may not necessarily have been aware of the Flemish source but could have copied the Virgin from other works that employed this model.⁵⁰ In this version of the Assumption, the artist has added the figures of the three persons of Trinity welcoming the

⁴⁷ The association of these works with the area around Lake Titicaca was first asserted by Teresa Gisbert. As Siracusano et al note, however, we lack evidence to locate them precisely to a specific narrow region. Teresa Gisbert, "Del Cusco a Potosí. La religiosidad del Sur Andino," in *El Barroco Peruano* (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2003), 61-97. Gabriela Siracusano, et al, "Nuevas miradas sobre la pintura sobre cobre con relieve en el Virreinato del Perú," *Archivo Español de Arte*, 98, no. 390 (2025): 11-12.

⁴⁸ Two are today in monastic collections, they are framed but not integrated into a larger altarpiece or retable. Gabriela Siracusano, director, Proyecto Metales Piadosos. PICT 2020-SERIEA-0748.

⁴⁹ See Siracusano, et al., for a list of 45 of these works and their iconographies. "Nuevas miradas," 4; on the Virgin of Pomata, see Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, *Object and Apparition: Envisioning the Christian Divine in the Colonial Andes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013).

⁵⁰ Aaron Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021), 52.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

We will trace the evolution of the Virgin in Spanish art and the transfer of Spanish Marian advocations and iconographies to the Americas where it mixed with local and other European devotions. Knowledge of Marian iconographies and devotions from other parts of Europe in the viceroyalties were partly mediated by Spanish preferences. Spain controlled much of the commercial activity with the Americas through the ports of Seville in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and Cadiz in the eighteenth century. This diffusion of the Marian image was especially moderated and promoted after the Council of Trent (between 1545 and 1563) in which six of the fifteen members appointed to address the issue of images were Spanish.⁷⁰ However, this mediation was diluted when it reached the Americas where certain advocations were promoted more than others in the peninsula (especially with the presence of inhabitants from certain Spanish regions). Representations of these devotions were mixed with local iconographies and rites. Local artists also transformed the images adapting them to regional tastes.

The image of the Virgin in Spanish art evolves from a more hieratic and distant figure to a maternal representation with an enhanced sweetness and theatricality that culminates in the Baroque. These changes are not linear since they depend on the type of devotion, the avocation and the previous models among other factors. These stylistic transformations also evolved differently in America. For example, some cities with a greater influx of foreign works through ports or other trade routes such as Lima were closer to the European stylistic evolution while more isolated centers, such as Cusco, developed a more distinct style. There were also paintings of statues of virgins, known as *verdaderos retratos* that, both in Spain and the Americas, depicted sculptures whose earlier production sometimes follows more hieratic medieval models.

From Gothic to Renaissance

The Virgin and Child with Musical Angels by the Master of Belmonte (Fig. 1) demonstrates the transition towards a growing humanism that was already perceived in the late Gothic.⁷¹ The Virgin and Child are relatable as they carry earthly elements such as the lily, symbol of the virginity of the Virgin, and the bird tied to a rope, associated with the future Passion of Christ. Despite these earthly elements, the Virgin, depicted as *Regina Coeli* or the Queen of Heaven, still has a regal and celestial appearance. She appears seated on a throne with her crown, is draped in a cloak with golden and silver motifs and is set against a gold-brocade background surrounded by six musical angels. The mantle of the Virgin and the background stand out, which the master highlights with various techniques such as *estofado*, to

⁷⁰ Ramón Mujica Pinilla, "Semiótica de la imagen sagrada: la teúrgia del signo en clave americana", en *La imagen transgredida: estudios de iconografía peruana y sus políticas de representación simbólica* (Lima: Congreso de la República, 2016), 477.

⁷¹ For a more extensive study of this work, see:

Alberto Velasco González, *Virgin and Child with Musician Angels: The Master of Belmonte and the Late Gothic Aragonese Painting* (Jaime Eguiguren: Arts & Antiques, 2017).



Fig. 1







Fig. 2

The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe constitutes one of the most complex and significant iconographic phenomena of the Ibero-American world, not only because of its devotional centrality but also because of its ability to articulate multiple aesthetic and theological traditions in a transatlantic axis. From its origin in the Monastery of Cáceres in Extremadura (Spain) to its reinvention in New Spain, the Guadalupana was consolidated as a symbol that articulates cultural and religious identities that can be found in this set of paintings presented by Gonzalo Eguiguren Gallery.

The Indigenous Hand: The Virgin of Guadalupe by Luis de Texeda (Fig. 1)

The image of Guadalupe cannot be understood without the participation of the indigenous painters from the early viceregal period. Far from being an exclusively European or Creole creation, Guadalupan iconography is a result of the interaction between Christian theology, indigenous artistic sensibility, and the system of workshops that flourished in the Valley of Mexico during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Since the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of central Mexico preserved a long pre-Hispanic pictorial tradition, applied in codices, murals, ritual objects and symbolic representations. This tradition did not disappear after the Conquest, but was channelled towards the new purposes of Christian evangelization. In Mexico, the *tlacuilos*—indigenous painters and scribes—were integrated into ecclesiastical workshops, especially in San José de los Naturales and in the Colegio de Tlatelolco, where they learned European techniques such as oil and tempera, without completely abandoning their aesthetic heritage. Indigenous participation in the formation of Guadalupan art was early and decisive. The sixteenth and seventeenth century documents mention ‘Indian painters’ in charge of copying religious images for convents and parishes, as they were recognized for their discipline, fidelity to the model and technical skill. The first copies of the Virgin of Guadalupe, made a few decades after the apparitions of 1531, most likely came from indigenous hands. In fact, the religious emphasized that native painters were especially apt to accurately reproduce the image considered miraculous.

Numerous iconographic features of the image of Guadalupe show affinities with Mesoamerican aesthetics: the mandorla of light as a solar symbol; the blue-green mantle associated with the supreme deities; the crescent moon linked to the cult of the feminine; the figure of the angel as an intermediary; and the delicacy of the face, closer to the indigenous canon than to European models. These characteristics, far from contradicting Christian symbolism, show a unique process of visual syncretism, in which the indigenous gaze reinterpreted the Christian message without losing its traditional symbolic structure.

Within this context, the figure of Luis de Texeda (or Tejeda) becomes paradigmatic. Although direct documentation of his life is scarce, his work—signed and stylistically consistent with seventeenth-century painting—reveals characteristics that could be typical of indigenous workshops: refined use of linear gold, absolute fidelity to the Guadalupan model, absence of narrative



Fig. 3



In 1755, the Jesuit Juan Antonio de Oviedo published one of the most important Marian texts of the New Spanish period, the *Marian Zodiac*. This book, initially written by the Jesuit, Francisco de Florencia, at the end of the seventeenth century, is a compendium of the most famous images of the Virgin venerated in “North America and the kingdoms of New Spain”, as indicated in its long title.⁹⁶

The printed text presents the figure of Mary as protector of the vast geography of New Spain through different advocations whose devotion was more or less local, as specified in each case. The compendium does not begin with the most popular image of the viceroyalty, Guadalupe of Mexico, but begins with Our Lady of Yucatán or Izamal, following a chronological and spatial sequence starting with the introduction of Marian worship by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. The book shows a cartographic configuration of the representations of the Virgin Mary, with devotions located from the south of the current United States of America to Nicaragua, through the narration of the history, origin and miracles of each selected image.

In this Marian universe we find frequent advocations, such as the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption or the Virgin of Sorrows, which acquire their proper name – or surname, as Oviedo points out – from their place of veneration, origin or apparition; physical and material characteristics, or miraculous power. This practice was part of the religiosity promoted by the Catholic Church of the Counter-Reformation and the Spanish Monarchy since the sixteenth century, although it must be understood that the cults listed by Florencia and Oviedo are successes of specific religious, political and social projects, which were consolidating their presence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the viceroyalty.⁹⁷

The *Marian Zodiac*, moreover, raises an unavoidable question when analyzing the New Spanish Marian religiosity: the abundant production of its images in a context of devotional competition. These images were associated with corporations or social and regional groups that were identified by a particular advocacy.⁹⁸ These groups had pious practices with an emphasis on the paintings and sculptures produced, mostly, by New Spanish artists in production centers distributed throughout the territory.

⁹⁶ Francisco de Florencia, y Juan Antonio de Oviedo, (ed.), *Zodiaco mariano, en que el sol de justicia de Cristo, con la salud en las alas visita como signos, y casas propias para beneficio de los hombres los templos, y lugares dedicados a los cultos de su SS. Madre por medio de las más célebres, y milagrosas imágenes de la misma Señora, que se veneran en esta América Septentrional, y reinos de la Nueva España*, (México: Imprenta del Real y más antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 1755). Disponible en: <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc5m6b4>

⁹⁷ As can be guessed, the *Marian Zodiac* did not record all the Marian cartography from that period and its omission of some devotions have had an impact on subsequent historiographies. However, sometimes there have been artistic testimonies about the existence of cults that were less successful. See one of the most interesting cases in: Jaime Cuadriello, “La Virgen como territorio: los títulos primordiales de Santa María Nueva España”, *Colonial Latin American Review*, 19:1, pp. 69-113. Available in: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10609161003643693>

⁹⁸ In addition to the well-known case of the Virgin of Guadalupe, valuable contributions have been made to the artistic study of other important Marian devotions in New Spain such as the Virgin of Los Remedios, the Virgin of Loreto, the Virgin of the Light, the Virgin of Juquila or the Virgin of Solitude. See: Jaime Cuadriello, “Tierra de prodigios. La ventura como destino” en *Los pinceles de la historia. El origen del Reino de la Nueva España 1680-1750*, exhibition catalogue (Mexico: Museo Nacional de Arte, 1999), 181-227. Jaime Cuadriello, *El Zodiaco mariano*, exhibition catalogue (Mexico: Basilica of Guadalupe, 2004). Luisa Elena Alcalá. *Art and Location of a Global Cult. The Virgin of Loreto in Mexico* (Madrid: Abada editores, 2022). Selene del Carmen García Jiménez, *Imagen, santuario, culto y patrocinio: la Virgen de la Soledad de Oaxaca, 1682-1819* (México: UNAM/ Secretaría de Arte y Cultura del municipio de Oaxaca, 2024).

When we speak of colonial painting from the Viceroyalty of Peru, it is usually associated almost exclusively with Andean religious compositions, enriched by a decorative ornamentation called *brocateado* (Figs. 4, 8, 10, 12). However, this is only one of the many stylistic variants present in this vast territory in the period spanning between the sixteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The diversity of the Peruvian pictorial production is manifested in both its chronological and geographical dimensions. The formal language, with adaptations to local interpretations, underwent transformations parallel to the European ones, moving from mannerist to baroque formulas. However, even more relevant is the geographical heterogeneity, which led to the establishment of numerous centres of artistic creation.

The Viceroyalty of Peru was established in 1542 as the second great administrative unit in the newly discovered Americas.¹¹¹ Formally, its territory was of an extraordinary extent, which generated significant difficulties to effectively manage and control of all subordinate areas. It is considered that, until the creation of new administrative entities in the eighteenth century, the Viceroyalty of Peru encompassed practically all of South America that was known at that time, except for the territories under Portuguese rule. However, in practice, the control exercised by the viceregal authorities over this space was extremely limited. The territory was made up of several regions, sometimes weakly interconnected. In the north, the Audiencia of Santa Fe de Bogotá and the Audiencia of Quito were established very early, in the first half of the sixteenth century, and, since then, they enjoyed considerable autonomy. The Audiencia de Charcas (also known as Upper Peru, largely corresponding to the highland areas of present-day Bolivia) was created in the second half of the sixteenth century. On the Pacific coast, the degree of subordination to Lima's government depended on distance; naturally, further south the control became weaker. Therefore, the Captaincy of Chile constituted a relatively autonomous territory in administrative terms.¹¹² Only at critical moments did the central power in Lima remember these areas' dependence on the capital. In the eighteenth century, the Spanish Crown decided to divide the vast extension of the Viceroyalty of Peru. First, the Viceroyalty of New Granada was created, which functioned temporarily between 1717 and 1723, and was finally established in 1739, covering the areas of the Audiencia of Santa Fe de Bogotá, Quito and Panama, as well as the territories that today belong to Venezuela and that previously depended on the Audiencia of Santo Domingo. Later, in 1776, the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata was founded, made up of the Audiencias of Charcas, Tucumán, Cuyo, Paraguay and Buenos Aires.

¹¹¹ In 1542, the so-called New Laws were approved, which, among other provisions, established the creation of the Viceroyalty of Peru. For this topic you can see: Ramón María Serrara, *La América de los Habsburgos* (1517-1700) (Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2011), 182.

¹¹² The sixteenth-century sources already confirm the autonomy of different regions. José de Acosta affirms: "By Pirú we mean not all that part of the World that they call America, because it includes Brazil and the Kingdom of Chile, that of Granada, and none of this is Pirú", in José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: FCE, 2006 (1590)), 142-143.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2