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The Social Fabric: Deep Local to Pan Global

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A Virgin Martyr in Indigenous Garb? A Curious Case of Andean Ancestry and Memorial Rites Recalled on a Christian Body

Gaby Greenlee

At roughly the time that Spaniards were making incursions into the lands of Indigenous Andeans and displacing the authority of the Inka empire, the Catholic Church in Europe was beset with threats to its own dominion.¹ Between 1545 and 1563 the Council of Trent debated, among other doctrinal matters, the place of images in church dogma and the significance these would have in consolidating the Faith; as the Council affirmed the importance of imagery for indoctrination, so too did the Spanish crown see the potential of images within the colonial project.²

The March of Saints into the New World

In the late 15th century the Catholic monarchs propelled evangelization in Andalucía through visual rhetoric, demanding that Christian households showcase their religiosity through devotional imagery such as in representations of the Virgin and other saints.³ This move anticipated the use Spain would find for images in the colonies. As Kenneth Mills points out, the painted saints that entered the colonial context were figurations of a “triumphant Spanish self-image” that, with heavy investment in piety and intercession, not to mention battle-worn righteousness, had been honing itself throughout the period of the Reconquista.⁴ In the New World context, images of martyred saints such as St. James, the Virgin, and Jesus Christ accompanied the church-sanctioned Spanish armies as protective emblems and as evangelizing tools to ‘civilize’ the native populations and ‘reform’ them through Christian education.

Through ritualized, particularized attention to saints’ devotion the Church could control how Catholicism was experienced. There were rules for saint veneration and how their images would be circulated and, soon after Spanish invasion, official inspectors were on hand to ensure devotional practice did not deviate from official purpose.⁵ Attention to saints was presumably not located in saints’ biographies, per se, but in typology and how a saint’s life corresponded to lives of saints prior and, ultimately, to the life of Christ.⁶ Therefore, the saint served as an emblem and

¹ Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017) 18-19. ‘Spaniards’ is a somewhat anachronistic term; it was only towards the mid-1500s that “clear signs of the ‘hispanization’ of the Habsburg monarchy as a Spanish common identity was being constructed among many of the territories under their sovereignty.” Though the late 15th c. marriage of the monarchs Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, combined with their Catholic faith, had created a ‘foci of loyalty and union’, they had not been keen on absorbing the various Iberian kingdoms into one single identity.

² Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Cultural Transfer and Arts in the Americas,” in *The Virgin Saints and Angels: South American Paintings 1600-1825 from the Thoma Collection*, ed. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, and Milan: Skira Editore, 2006), 20.

³ Erin Kathleen Murphy and William Keyse Rudolph, eds. *Highest Heaven: Spanish and Portuguese Colonial Art from the Collection of Roberta and Richard Huber* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art, 2016), 22.

⁴ Kenneth Mills, “Religious Imagination in the Viceroyalty of Peru,” in *The Virgin Saints and Angels: South American Paintings 1600-1825 from the Thoma Collection*, ed. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, and Milan: Skira Editore, 2006), 29-33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶ Allan Greer, “Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France,” *The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series*, Vol. 57, no. 2 (April 2000): 325: “Thus, it can be misleading to treat hagiography as an imperfect version of ethnography or historiography; hagiography follows a different paradigm, one which presupposes a

it would correlate that in visual representations a specific aesthetic related to a saint's specific virtues would come across.⁷

Saint paintings decorated churches and private spaces in Spain and they would do the same in the viceroyalties of the Americas. One well-known transmitter of saint imagery was the Spanish tenebrist painter Francisco de Zurbarán. Churches in Bogotá and Lima commissioned groups of his well-known series of virgin saints during the mid-17th century.⁸ Zurbarán's works thus would have set a template for virgin saint iconography in the colonies; however, the transmission of a European painting style would be variable and fragmentary, echoing Kenneth Mills' description of the 'uneven' transmission of Catholic beliefs on the whole within the colonial context.⁹ In the transcultural exchange, no matter the intention or construal of the Church and its extensions, there was no singular mode for infusion of Catholic dogma nor a singular mode of receiving it.

A Virgin Martyr's Shifting Skirts

The question of how cultural information was transmitted, received, and transformed in Viceregal Peru is punctuated in this painting, titled *A Virgin Martyr*, which threatens to escape the boundaries that perhaps had been imagined for it.

distinct set of purposes, methodologies, and criteria of significance. In its own way, hagiography can be extremely rigorous..."

⁷ Ibid., 327-35.

⁸ Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, "From Spain to the Viceroyalty of Peru: Paintings by the Dozen," in *At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America and Early Global Trade, 1492-1850*, eds. Donna Pierce y Ronald Otsuka, Symposium Series (Denver: Denver Art Museum/University of Oklahoma Press-Mayer Center for Pre-Columbian & Spanish Colonial Art, 2012).

See also <https://www.museothyssen.org/en/collection/artists/zurbaran/saint-casilda>: "In 1647 the artist was paid for twenty-four virgin saints for the monastery of Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación in Ciudad de los Reyes, Peru, while in 1649 he sent another fifteen to Buenos Aires."

⁹ Mills, "Religious Imagination in the Viceroyalty of Peru," 33.

*Fig. 1 Anonymous. Late 17th century- 18th century (?)
A Virgin Martyr. Oil on canvas. 160 x 112.1 cm (63 x 44 1/8 in.)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin
Image courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art*

As were many of the figures in the tradition of virgin saint imagery, the young woman in this late 17th-early 18th c. colonial Peruvian painting is presented in full-figure pose, extending the palm frond that is iconographic of saints' martyrdom (Fig.1). Ever virtuous, she holds a prayer book in her left hand yet there is little specification as to which virgin martyr she may be. Rather, curious aspects surface. Lifted by the wind, the skein of undone mauve drapery trailing behind her offsets the ample garments that ground her. Is she firmly planted in the blue-green landscape? She seems a figure both having arrived and yet just arriving, offering, in this swirl of presence, more questions than answers about what her role may be.

St. Casilda the Convert?

One avenue I pursue in thinking about her possible identity is her resonance with St. Casilda, one of many female saints painted by Zurbarán (Fig. 2). Painted during his flourishing career in Sevilla, Zurbarán's St. Casilda is among the first of its type.¹⁰ It is possible that copies of the type made their way to the Viceroyalty of Peru, and there are several reasons to loosely link it to the unknown virgin martyr painting.

¹⁰ Odile Delenda and Maria del Mar Borobia Guerrero, eds. *Zurbarán: a New Perspective* (Madrid: Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2015), 15.

Fig. 2 Francisco de Zurbarán. *Saint Casilda*. Spain, ca. 1630–35. Oil on canvas, 171 x 107 cm. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

In Iberia at the end of the 16th century the lives of local saints received particular historical as well as literary attention, and St. Casilda, patron saint of Briviesca (Burgos), was among those whose narratives circulated in hagiographies and theatrical performances.¹¹ Though considered a lesser female saint, her association with the Reconquest may have been particularly interesting in the period of Spanish incursion into the Americas, when Christianity encountered a new counterpart to the historical “infidel”: St. Casilda’s father was an 11th century Muslim king of Toledo but she converted to Christianity and displayed her Christian virtue by smuggling food to Christian prisoners jailed under her father’s rule.¹² In the yet-to-be Christianized New World St. Casilda would have resonated as an exemplar of Christian faith withstanding the influence of a local, unsanctioned religiosity. Allusions to the conquest of Muslim infidels were frequently made in relation to unconverted Indigenous peoples in both the Mesoamerican and South American colonial spaces.¹³ For example, the popular colonial image of St. James on his steed

¹¹ Ibid., 116.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ilona Katzew, in the essay “Remedo de la ya Muerta América: The Construction of Festive Rites in colonial Mexico,” in *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew. Exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 170, discusses how the Muslim infidel of Iberian history could be seen as a gloss for the nonbeliever in the colonial context: in mock battles performed during colonial festivals in New Spain, “battles were meant to remind colonial subjects of Iberian supremacy, and Indians often acted the part of Moors. The battles, however, also symbolized the victory of Christians over heathens and infidels in general, and offered a space for Christian Indians to affiliate with the victors.”

toppling native Andeans or Inkas (*Santiago Mataindios* or *Mataincas*) replicated the Reconquest image type of St. James the 'Moorslayer' (*Santiago Matamoros*).¹⁴

In terms of its representational aspects, too, we may draw comparison between St. Casilda and the unknown virgin martyr through, for example, hair color and general form. We may also link the two images through iconographic traits in their attire. Both figures wear similar bejeweled diadems, suggesting that the unknown virgin martyr, like the St. Casilda of Muslim royalty, comes from wealth. (Some scholars have suggested that Zurbarán's St. Casilda could be a rendition of St Elizabeth of Portugal but that saint wears a crown befitting a queen whereas Casilda is portrayed as a younger woman, not yet a queen.¹⁵) The painted figures also display the same cloisonné brooch with a dark gem encircled by small pearls.

Still, though these features may be enough to tenuously link the two, it is odd that the virgin martyr's particular advocacy should be unclear. As the stature of the Virgin Mary increased within the church, the lesser saints developed cults according to their reputations and so particular and identifiable attributes would have been quite relevant.¹⁶ All the more so in the context of the colonizer's evangelizing program. Why the vagueness in attribute? Here is an opportunity for various interpretive paths. Another tangent I would like to follow in this exercise of transposing St. Casilda's identity onto this unspecified virgin martyr may lead us to look more closely at the figure's unique skirt, contextualizing it—as well as her—within a particularly Andean cultural complex.

A late 16th century hagiography of St. Casilda recounts that the convert secretly hid food in her gathered skirt to take to Christian prisoners;¹⁷ when caught in this subterfuge, she tells her father that rather than food she is carrying roses which, miraculously, appear instead of the bread she had been carrying.¹⁸ Her skirt, then, both before and after her father's discovery is a source of bounty or fecundity of some kind: whether holding the nourishing bread or fertile flowers. She bears both in the folds of her garment. Although a preliminary comparison with Zurbarán's St. Casilda might lead us to infer that the rendition of the Andean virgin martyr does not quite carry the same symbolic weight, there are layers to pull back.

In the Andean painting we see flowers, too, although they appear rather as stylized motifs along horizontal bands at the midpoint and bottom hem of the figure's skirt. Through a Europeanized reading of form and representation, St. Casilda and the unknown virgin martyr are disparate depictions—one figure *holds* figural flowers while the other *wears* the abstraction of flowers. An interesting correspondence, and yet simultaneously a chasm of difference. Have we reached a dead end with the comparison of the two dead saints? It is possible that for a colonial Spanish viewer of this painting, its content diminishes at this point. However, within the cultural context of the Andes if we look again at the virgin martyr's woven skirt we may understand the textile and its motifs quite differently, in such a way as to expand again the painting's dynamic content.

¹⁴ See, for example, the painting *Santiago Mataincas* from the Collection of Carl and Marilyn Thoma, currently held at the Blanton Museum of Art (PL2016.56): <http://utw10658.utweb.utexas.edu/items/show/3260>

¹⁵ See Jeannine Baticle, ed. *Zurbarán*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Paris: Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 1987-88), 252.

¹⁶ Mills, "Religious Imagination in the Viceroyalty of Peru," 33.

¹⁷ Delenda et. al, eds. *Zurbarán: a New Perspective*, 116.

¹⁸ Baticle, ed., *Zurbarán*, exh. cat., 252.

Textiles and Visual Communication in the Andes

Native Andeans had been weaving camelid and cotton textiles for thousands of years before Spanish invaders were ever seen ascending the steep paths of the highlands. Predominant carriers of symbolic content in a region without alphabetic script, Andean textiles visually communicated—and still do today—a vast amount of information about the wearer, his/her origins, ethnicity, geographic attachment, as well as, in many cases, sacred belief. For the Inka empire which immediately preceded the Spanish imposition, “society was structured through sight;”¹⁹ textiles, whose production could be regulated and whose finished state was mobile and highly visible, were critical tools of cultural and political sway. Furthermore, and specifically referring back to the comparison between Zurbarán’s St. Casilda and the Andean unknown virgin martyr, Indigenous woven textiles strongly invoke the Andean landscape and its productive, fertile capacity.

For example, an Andean woman’s *lliklla* or mantle can be said to manifest social relationships involved in various production processes. The *lliklla* is an iteration of native Andean’s deep attachment to land and cycles of production (and reproduction) and, particularly in the Inkaic period, it could be extrapolated to implicate authority and geo-political attachment as well as cosmological references all tied to earthly cycles. As Marianne Hogue notes: “Weaving... was used as a metaphor for farming by the Inca; they referred to it as ‘weaving the land.’”²⁰ In a woman’s *lliklla*, the broad bands of solid color (called *pampas*) are associated with open, uncultivated land whereas the bordering designed areas (called *pallay*) are associated with production and cultivation of goods or are otherwise references to acculturated space. In late 16th and early 17th century Quechua dictionaries, the word *pampa* is translated variously as open space, communal space, or flat space while *pallay* derives from the verb *pallaniy* which translates as to harvest or to lift from the ground.²¹ With this understanding, we might reconsider the comparison of Zurbarán’s St. Casilda holding the flowers and the seemingly abstract flowers on the unknown virgin martyr’s textile skirt. Within their own particular visual culture contexts, they reference similar attention to abundance, provision. A skirt such as the one the virgin martyr wears would not have been part of a pre-Hispanic outfit and yet it is quite possible that certain meanings inherent to Indigenous textiles and their formal aspects would have transposed to new garment types in the colonial phase.

However, it is useful to point out notable discrepancies in reading her skirt too easily in terms of Indigenous women’s textile attributes. For example, even though the horizontal bands at the

¹⁹ Constance Classen, “Sweet Colors, Fragrant Songs: Sensory Models of the Andes,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 17, no. 4 (Nov., 1990): 726.

²⁰ Marianne Hogue, “Cosmology in Inca Tunics and Tectonics” in *Andean Textile Traditions, papers from the 2001 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum*, eds. Margaret Young-Sánchez and Fronia W. Simpson (Denver: Denver Art Museum: 2006), 116.

²¹ See Domingo de Santo Tomás’s 1560 *Lexicon, o Vocabulario de la Lengua General del Peru* (Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Córdova, 1560), 159: *pallani* = coger; *pampa* = hera donde trillan; *pampa* = plaça, lugar donde no ay casas; *pampa* = campo raso, como vega; *pampa* o *cuzca* = cosa llana generalmente. Access at: John Carter Brown Library,

http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/exhibitions/ildb/details.php?id=21

See also Diego González Holguín’s *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Peru* (Lima: Francisco del Canto, 1608), 273: *pallani* = coger del suelo, o de árbol o la cosecha, o mies; *pallani* = coger a mano cualquiera cosa; *pampa* = plaça, suelo llano o llanada pasto, çauana, o campo; *pampa* = cosa común y universal.

skirt's base adhere to the Andean highland custom that equates horizontal orientation of bands with female design, the pattern of light vertical lines that also appears inserts an incongruous masculine design element.²² In Andean textile terms the woman's dress seems to code both masculine and feminine properties. Furthermore, although the skirt's color and schematic design point to Indigenous woven cloth, the garment's tailoring to form a skirt distances it from certain pre-Hispanic Indigenous traditions.²³ In elite highland weaving traditions that preceded the colonial phase and whose influence would have been felt in this painting's highland region of origin, fabric would not have been cut from the loom or tailored; textiles were woven directly on the loom according to size and design specifications, with no further adjustments made besides the stitched seams that would close the garment around the body (in the case of male tunics) or unite two panels of a shawl (in certain highland areas).²⁴ Nonetheless, it is still possible to understand the virgin martyr's skirt within an Andean textile idiom; it is clearly differentiated from the figure's European clothing and, furthermore, the horizontal bands and patterning are specific enough to strongly invoke Indigenous women's textile modes. I argue that these indices of Indigenous wear ask us, in fact, to recognize that through her woven textile she carries, upon her being, the abundance of the earth with fields awaiting harvest.

Commenting on the skirt's floral motifs, variously combined with diamond/rhomboid forms, stripes, and zigzags, Stratton-Pruitt points to the similarity between this patterning and the *tokapu*, or geometric motifs, seen on Inka male tunics.²⁵ It is not certain exactly what information geometric Inka *tokapu* relayed but they seem to suggest divisions that correlate to ways the Inkas organized territorial space.²⁶ Although this virgin martyr's woven flowers are more sloping or curved (perhaps corresponding less to elite Inka interlocking weft/tapestry structures), their four-petaled forms could still refer to organizational concepts, and perhaps even territorial concepts, that the Inkas seem to have incorporated into their textile designs, namely as seen in divisions emphasizing duality and quatripartition.²⁷ The diamond patterning that frames some of the

²² Elena Phipps, "Garments and Identity in the Colonial Andes," in *The Colonial Andes, Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830*, eds. Elena Phipps, Johanna Hecht, and Cristina Esteras Martín (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 21. (However, a common design style among *unkus* (tunics) worn by elite Inka males included garments with a horizontal band at waist level, often with diamond patterning; see John H. Rowe, "Standardization in Inca Tapestry Tunics," in *The Junius B. Bird Pre-Columbian Textile Conference, 1973*, edited by Ann P. Rowe, Elizabeth P. Benson, and Anne-Louise Schaffer (Washington D.C.: Textile Museum and Dumbarton Oaks, 1979), 251-257.

²³ Elena Phipps, "Textiles as Cultural Memory: Andean Garments in the Colonial Period," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diana Fane (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1996), 144-5.

²⁴ Phipps, "Garments and Identity in the Colonial Andes," 18.

²⁵ Stratton-Pruitt, "From Spain to the Viceroyalty of Peru."

²⁶ See, for example, Rebecca R. Stone's essay, "'And All Theirs Different from His': The Dumbarton Oaks Royal Tunic in Context," in *Variations in the Expression of Inka Power*, edited by R. L. Burger et al. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2007) and her discussion on how *tokapu* motifs, particularly as seen on the Dumbarton Oaks all-*tokapu unku* (tunic), could suggest territories the Inkas wanted to lay claim to.

²⁷ Here I would like to thank comments and questions raised by Elena Phipps and Ann P. Rowe at the presentation of this paper, which will guide my explorations of this image further. Elena Phipps pressed the question of how the flower patterns might correspond to an Inka mode of configuring space while Ann P. Rowe noted the flower patterns seem to suggest warp-faced weaving of a broader highland tradition rather than the Inkas' elite weft-faced/ tapestry weaving tradition. This angle of exploration may expand my analysis that this figure's skirt suggests ideas related not only to cultivation but perhaps as well to 'place'; for example, does the skirt's demonstration of a dominant highland tradition of warp-faced weave bring forward a visual rhetoric that counters the elite Inka weft-faced tapestry weaving tradition—and does this rhetoric set the textile within a context of non-Inka versus Inka

flower designs also have meaning that may directly be associated with aspects of the land. In a study of enduring use of diamond/rhomboid patterning in central Andean textiles today, in the community of Choquecancha, Seibold notes that it can be fluidly interpreted as the Andean deity *Inti* (the Sun), or as *phutu* (a bud), or as *Tawantinsuyu* itself (the quadripartite spatial division of the Inka empire).²⁸ Similarly, the skirt's subtle horizontal *k'enko* (zigzag) pattern may be interpreted as lightning but also as running water or a river form, clearly relevant to agricultural and territorial concerns.²⁹

If Andean textiles evoked spatial understanding related to landscape or territory, they also invariably had a sacred dimension since a significant aspect of local belief systems is the acknowledgment that Andeans inhabit a sacred geography. We see how this lasting belief system provoked significant turmoil among Catholics, for example in the Jesuit Pablo Joseph de Arriaga's 17th c. text regarding his extirpation of idolatry campaigns meant to root out worship of 'idols' in the landscape.

In a questionnaire he extended to Andean inhabitants, the nervous attention to the living landscape is palpable: "what is the name of the principal idol?...Is it a peak, a cliff, or a small stone? Does it have children who are also stones, a father, a brother, or a wife? Which idols are worshipped for the fields, which for the maize, the potatoes, and the livestock?"³⁰ To Andeans, and to the distressed Jesuit, the landscape was alive with various objects, materials, or natural forms that seemed to embody numinous presence. To return to the unknown virgin martyr's woven skirt, it would not be out of place within Andean cosmology to suggest that a textile, too, could be understood not just as transmitting ideas of land and productivity, but also as *embodying* that earth and the cyclical elements related to its fertility. After all, everything that went into the construction of a textile, from the fibers, to the dyes, to the design elements, were embedded with local and lived geographic and cosmological value.

To extend understanding of Andean textiles in relation to landscape and then to aspects of divinity, we may also point out that during the Inka period, Inka rulership chose virgin maidens from across its conquered territories to weave garments both for the state and for the state religion (linked in the body of the Inka ruler, who was considered semi-divine). Virgin weavers, called *accllakuna*, would spin fine wool fibers for the elite *cumbi* fabric of the state.³¹ Thus the

identifications of territoriality? In light of the colonial context, where Inka conquest over various highland ethnic groups was being overturned by Spanish power, does this skirt's warp-faced patterning assert something about non-Inka highland associations with the landscape—with notions of territorial legitimacy? (In an email exchange, the collector Robert Huber informed me that the painting was thought to have been produced in Puno, in the Lake Titicaca area—an Aymara-dominant region that for the Inka empire was notoriously difficult to absorb and pacify. The painting is now in the collection of the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin.)

²⁸ Katherine E. Seibold, "Textiles and Cosmology in Choquecancha, Cuzco, Peru," in *Andean Cosmologies Through Time*, eds. Robert V.H. Dover, Katherine E. Seibold, and John H. McDowell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 179.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁰ Heidi V. Scott, *Contested Territory: Mapping Peru in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2009), 101.

³¹ Phipps, "Garments and Identity," 24. To offer perspective on this, Phipps notes the fineness of *cumbi* weavings in comparison to the contemporaneous textile tradition highly valued in Europe: whereas an Inka *cumbi* textile typically "has about 30-35 warps and more than 200 wefts per inch...[the] famous Hunt of the Unicorn series [has] 16-18 warps and 60-96 wool wefts per inch."

context of an Inka socio-religious program comprised of virgins committed in service to a state religion, which preceded the Spanish and therefore preceded this Christian unknown virgin martyr painting, begins to hang its weight on her mysterious woven skirt and nudges the viewer to consider that she may present conflicting values or residual values emplaced within a new cultural space.

I conclude this paper with one more cultural factor to take into account. Within socio-sacred practices, Andeans would connect ideas of earthly fecundity not only to cosmological cycles but to life cycles directly involving the human experience, specifically in the form of ancestor worship.

Mallkis

As part of burial practice prior to Spanish invasion, Andean ancestors would often be bundled in cloth and, furthermore, might be kept in accessible places such as caves or above-ground monuments so that their bodies could be revisited, re-clothed, and communed with regularly. The early 17th c. Indigenous author and illustrator Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala offers various drawings that show people engaging socially with their deceased relatives.³² Ancestors who are linked to a kin-group's originary lineage and its originary lands are called *mallki* and are seen as a group's protector and as the force that will continue to ensure its generative and productive viability.³³ Although the *mallki* could also be embodied in other natural objects or sites on the landscape, often devotion to a *mallki* involved veneration of a mummy bundle, layered in multiple traditionally woven textiles.

With that in mind, looking again at the unknown virgin martyr's woven skirt, can we correlate that we are encountering in her martyred identity an aspect of the long-held Andean tradition of ancestor worship—ancestors who were eternal protectors and guides? But how can we associate a female saint with Andean ancestor worship that typically involved a male lineage bearer? The Quechua word *mallki*, in fact, translates as seed. As Carolyn Dean notes, upon death the nature of a male ancestor-as-*mallki* was rendered conceptually *female* because, in its seed-like state, it was seen as dormant, not yet sown. Waiting “to be acted upon by outside forces” and “owing to its inactivity, the *mallki* was feminized.”³⁴ Perhaps this gender ambiguity—applicable in some ways to Catholic saints but now also, we see, to Andean ancestor worship—mitigates the confusing male/female signals in the martyr's Indigenous woven skirt.

Though it is not easy to set up this vantage point, it is worth trying to consider the production of cultural meaning in the colonial period as a process of inherent oscillation. Returning to the virgin martyr with her textile skirt, we might now recall deceased Andean kin figures who continued to be invested in their communities and vice versa, promising productive agricultural cycles or recalling a protective aspect that involved attachment to ideas of place, to the land, and to a past that could be continually revisited. In their fever to evangelize in the New World, and as

³² See Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's "*Primer Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*," (image #s 377 [379]; 287 [289]; 256 [258]), Royal Library of Denmark website, accessed 1/24/19, <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/titlepage/es/text/?open=idm45821230787600>

³³ Alexis Mantha, "Territoriality, social boundaries and ancestor veneration in the central Andes of Peru," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 28 (2009): 161.

³⁴ Carolyn Dean, "Andean Androgyny, Making Men," in *Gender in Pre-Hispanic America*, eds. Cecilia F. Klein, Jeffrey Quilter (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2001), 165-6.

a strategy of the Counterreformation, Spaniards promoted the use of images in the New World because it was thought to be beneficial for conversion; however, as Luisa Elena Alcalá notes, cults arise from particular circumstances and share in local social complexities; devotional practices could easily escape the control of missionaries and evangelizers.³⁵

Despite the fact that the Andean textile tradition spans thousands of years and clearly contains rich content from which to draw, there are large gaps in our ability to visualize how native textiles were experienced and worn in the colonial Andes; this is perhaps made more difficult with the insertion of European modes of representation. This painting seems only to add to our quandaries about the colonial space. And yet, this is perhaps its prime virtue: that it duly fragments our understanding of cultural encounter and complicates the scenario further rather than distilling it.

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³⁵ Luisa Elena Alcalá, "Imagen e historia. La representación del milagro en la Pintura colonial," in *Los Siglos de Oro en los Virreinos de América, 1550-1700* (Madrid: Museo de América, 1999), 108: "Cada culto surge por circunstancias de su entorno: condiciones sociales, históricas y económicas además de religiosas y culturales que explican su desarrollo y sentido para sus seguidores. La flexibilidad de los cultos, sobre todo los marianos, y la complejidad de las sociedades virreinales compuestas por españoles, criollos, mestizos, negros e indios (aculturizados en diversos grados) hizo posible la codificación de múltiples y a veces contradictorios mensajes en cada devoción."

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