



Master of Calamarca. *Angel with Arquebus, Asiel Timor Dei*, c. 1660-80, oil on canvas

1) Bailey, Gauvin Alexander. *Art of Colonial Latin America*. London: Phaidon, 2005. pp. 198, 203

In Latin America, non-European artists and craftsmen were never successfully suppressed by the guild system and they found that the most effective way to get beyond government restrictions was to found workshops and confraternities of their own. These foundations arose in a piecemeal fashion depending upon the region, but became especially prominent in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Andean painters got their way, however, and by the end of the century indigenous guilds and confraternities overwhelmed the European competition with vivid and exquisite renditions of the Madonna, the saints and biblical scenes for Andean and non-Andean patrons throughout Highland Peru and present-day Bolivia. Among their most celebrated products were paintings of archangels, including apocryphal ones, dressed in foppish court clothing and holding arquebuses, such as this elegant canvas of the apocryphal archangel Aspiel (c. 1660-80)) by the celebrated Master of Calamarca (associated with the workshop of Jose Lopez de los Rios). The archangel's coat is covered in delicate gold filigree and he raises his arquebus heavenwards.

2) Bailey, Gauvin Alexander. *Art of Colonial Latin America*. London: Phaidon, 2005. pp. 199, 203

These apocryphal angels were associated with the stars and natural phenomena, which gave them great appeal to an indigenous Andean population accustomed to worshipping celestial bodies. The majority of documented painters in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cuzco were of indigenous backgrounds, and although most of them were anonymous they included better-known figures like Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumaqallo, Francisco de Moncada and Pablo Chile Tupa, as well as virtual unknowns such as Antonio Chakiavi and Lukas Willka. These artists were responsible for an astonishingly high volume of production.

The most famous and distinguished of these non-European artists' organizations were the workshops of the so-called "Cuzco School" in Peru, founded in the second half of the seventeenth century in the midst of an intensive building campaign that followed the 1650 earthquake, vividly depicted in a large oil painting from c. 1650-60 in Cuzco Cathedral.

3) Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "Master of Calamarca, Angel with Arquebus," in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org/master-of-calamarca-angel-with-arquebus/>

The arquebus is a firearm with a long barrel created by the Spanish in the mid-fifteenth century. It was the first gun to rest on the shoulder when being fired and was at the forefront of military weapon technology at the time.

The Latin inscription of Archangel with Gun, Asiel Timor Dei indicates the name of the angel, Asiel, and a particular quality: Fears God. This painting was found by itself, but was likely part of a larger series that included angels performing other activities such as drumming and holding lances.

4) Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "Master of Calamarca, Angel with Arquebus," in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org/master-of-calamarca-angel-with-arquebus/>

Firearms did not exist in the Americas before the Spanish conquests, and there is evidence suggesting indigenous people saw guns as supernatural manifestations. Paintings of angels with guns were perhaps representative of both the power of the Spaniards over indigenous people and protection offered to faithful Christians. Prints from the 1607 series, *The Exercise of Arms*, by the Dutch Mannerist engraver Jacob de Gheyn, may have inspired paintings such as *Asiel Timor Dei*.

These prints were models for specific military positions and demonstrated how to fire a gun. However, the Andean paintings differ from the prints, since they combine local dress and do not present realistic military positions.

5) Bailey, Gauvin Alexander. *Art of Colonial Latin America*. London: Phaidon, 2005. pp. 199, 203

Andean artists and artisans played a crucial role in transforming Cuzco into the splendid Baroque city seen today, several of them attaining the position of master despite Spanish reluctance to allow them this honor. More than fifty names of indigenous artists have come down to us from the seventeenth century and even more names of mestizos.

Inevitably, competition broke out between these non-European artists and their European and criollo rivals. In 1687-8, eight Spanish masters were ordered to reply to a complaint from Andean painters that they were being mistreated and wanted to form their own guilds. Shaken by the possibility of such formidable competition, the minority Spanish masters resorted to labeling the Andean painters as “malicious” and as “people who are accustomed to getting drunk.” The Andean painters got their way, however, and by the end of the century indigenous guilds and confraternities overwhelmed the European competition.

6) Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "Master of Calamarca, Angel with Arquebus," in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org/master-of-calamarca-angel-with-arquebus/>

The Catholic Counter Reformation held a militaristic ideology that portrayed the Church as an army and angels as its soldiers. The armed angel in *Asiel Timor Dei* represented this philosophy: its gun and mere existence protects faithful Christians. Although the Council of Trent (1545–1563) had condemned all angelic depictions and names but those of Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael in the mid-sixteenth century, this ban was observed neither in the Viceroyalty of Peru nor in Baroque Spain.

In fact, angels appeared in paintings in the royal convents of Las Descalzas Reales and Encarnación in Madrid, Spain. Some of the angels in the paintings of both these convents (painted by Bartolomé Román in the early seventeenth century) were reproduced and sent to the Jesuit Church of San Pedro in Lima, Peru. The workshop of the famed Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán also sent paintings of angels to the Monastery of Concepción in Lima. The Spanish Inquisition later prohibited the cult of angels in the mid-seventeenth century, but depictions of angels still flourished in the “New World.”

7) Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "Master of Calamarca, Angel with Arquebus," in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org/master-of-calamarca-angel-with-arquebus/>

In Catholic teachings, angels explained the spiritual function of the cosmos, and thus could easily stand in for sacred indigenous beings. The asexual body of the angel in *Asiel Timor Dei* is consistent with biblical descriptions. Conversely, early American images often alluded to angels' connection to certain indigenous sacred planets and natural phenomena, such as rain, hail, stars and comets.

The Aymara and Quechua peoples in the Andes may have associated the harquebus-bearing angel with Illapa, the Andean deity associated with thunder. Catholic angels were also equated with Inka tradition through the myth of the creator god Viracocha and his invisible servants, the beautiful warriors known as huamincas. The Latin inscriptions in the upper left corner of the painting *Asiel Timor Dei* are approximates of the original names of angels, and were related to the names of planetary and elemental angels in indigenous religions.

8) Brett, Guy. “Being Drawn to an Image” from *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1991, pp. 3-9

The Bolivian art historian Teresa Gisbert writes that the Councils of Lima, which were responsible for questions of orthodoxy in the Viceroyalty: “sought to attract Indians to the new faith by the use of images that would be especially appealing to them.” Why were angels appealing to them? In the *Pelican History*, Martin Soria tentatively puts forward the theory that angels were popular because “they replaced similar messengers in pre-conquest beliefs.” Teresa

Gisbert produces evidence to show that Diego Quispe Tito's series of paintings of the zodiac for the Cathedral of Cuzco was commissioned in order to counteract the traditional indigenous worship of the stars and were intended to aid in Christianizing the Indians of the Andes.

Julia P. Herzberg, who calls these pictures representations of winged beings at once military, aristocratic and religious, given this explanation for their *raison d'être*: Paintings of angels with guns appeared at a time when the religious orders were confronted with the stubborn persistence of pre-conquest religion amongst their Indian charges. Immense problems remained not merely in the campaign to destroy Indian idols, but in teaching and reinforcing the principles of the new faith. Sermons and catechisms were of course the primary means of conversion, but images of angels with guns were useful symbols of important teachings of the church. The Spaniards conquered the Incas with both the Cross and the arquebus.

9) Saunders, Nicholas J. Traders of Light, "Traders of Brilliance: Amerindian Metaphysics in the Mirror of Conquest" from *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 33, Spring 1998, pp. 225-252.

Throughout the Americas, Amerindians saw spirituality in many shiny things, not just the few regarded as precious by Europeans. Spiritual essence, manifested as brilliance, inhered in the celestial bodies, meteorological phenomena, fire, water, metals, minerals, shells, ceramics, feathers, bone, blood, and semen, amongst other things.

Indigenous conceptions of brilliance emerged from a broader, shamanic appreciation of light and were linked to notions of a mirror-image realm inhabited by bright spirit-beings conceived as incorporeal souls, were-beings, and immanent forces. As arbiters of a world view that infused nature with sentient spirituality, shamans move back and forth between the physical and supernatural realms in visions aglow with shimmering light suggests the shamanic experience itself is brilliant; the processes by which certain shiny materials were obtained and fashioned is considered part of a potentially dangerous, but sacred body of transformative shamanic knowledge, fenced in by ritual activity- sometimes observed, though rarely understood, by Europeans.

Cosmic brilliance engendered and symbolized strength and was a potent weapon. The Inka emperor entered battle hurling slingstones of fine gold at his enemies and his warriors wore shiny metal plates (*pura-pura*) on their chests.

10) Brett, Guy. "Being Drawn to an Image" from *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1991, pp. 3-9

In speaking about the angels' clothing, Herzberg continues: "Far more important than the military aspects of the angel's costumes are the explicit references to the high social status of both Spanish colonial gentlemen and Inca royalty. Richly brocaded fabrics, ribbons, and lace characterize the opulent viceregal dress of the 17th century. The gentleman-aristocratic nature of angels with guns is defined by their elegant dress, which relates them directly to the ruling viceregal aristocracy."

Although the technical military details of loading and handling the gun and so on, of the angel paintings, is very precise- taken in fact from a Flemish military manual of 1607 – the "common soldier" of the image in the manual is not retained; he becomes the gorgeous aristocrat. The non-aggressive angel-like pose, is of course extremely seductive, which makes the threat of force oblique, only implied, as if a beautiful face was being laid over the ugly face of violent coercion. Are these pictures simply transcriptions of power, in which the hard approach is mixed with the soft, and the Church is allied with the State (and in this case hinting as well, not just at the

foreigner's domination of the native inhabitants but also at class conflict with colonial society, since the angel is a melange of Spanish and Inca aristocracies)? Perhaps. But again they seem to me more enigmatic, more multiple- images full of aesthetic tension.

11) Abigail Lapin Dardashti, "Master of Calamarca, Angel with Arquebus," in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org/master-of-calamarca-angel-with-arquebus/>

During the first half of the eighteenth century, when Asiel Timor Dei was painted, the use of gold and silver became prohibited in the clothing of nobility. The military was, however, exempt from this rule. The angels with guns personify at once the military, aristocracy, and sacred beings, and were adorned with the most lavish attire.

Francisco de Ávila, a priest in Peru who studied native customs, described the second coming of Christ as an event during which an army of well-attired angels with feathered hats would descend from the heavens. Ávila's writings directly allude to the angels with guns, and to the late Viceregal belief that portrayed the first conquistadores as messengers from God.
