



1997.017

Unidentified artist

Peru

Annunciation

First half of the seventeenth century

Oil on canvas, 67 x 42 3/8 inches

The subject of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by Saint Gabriel the Archangel as told in the Gospel of Saint Luke (1:27-38) was a favorite theme for paintings throughout the Christian world, with an iconography established by tradition. Mary is pictured at her prie-dieu, her prayer book open before her, interrupted by the arrival of an angel identified as Gabriel by the branch of lilies that he bears. The painting by an unknown artist working in the Viceroyalty of Peru is based on a composition by the Italian painter Orazio Samacchini (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Agostino Carracci engraving of ca. 1579-1581 after a painting by Orazio Samacchini (Pinacoteca, Forli).

The pastel palette, delicately formed limbs, balletic poses, and delicate facial features seen in the painting reflect a Mannerist style that might reflect the influence of the Italian painter Bernardo Bitti, who worked in the Viceroyalty of Peru. Or, the style could have been brought from Seville, where Italian influence briefly held sway in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

One of the mannerist painters thought to have emigrated to the Viceroyalty of Peru from Seville was Leonardo Jaramillo. He was mentioned in the seventeenth-century chronicles of Antonio de la Calancha in relation to the earthquake that shook Trujillo in 1619. Calancha reported that Jaramillo was a good painter who restored the image of Our Lady of the Angels at the Augustinian convent in that city. In the Archivo Departamental de Cajamarca is a document dated 1623 that records Jaramillo working on an altarpiece for the church in that town. In Cajamarca in 1635 the artist signed a contract to teach the *oficio de pintor* to Tomás Ortiz de Olivares and Juan Sotomayor. Jaramillo is next documented working in Lima, where his only signed work, the impressive *Imposition of the Chasuble on Saint Ildefonsus* in the Convento de los Descalzos (fig. 2), was commissioned in 1636.



Fig. 2. Leonardo Jaramillo, *Imposition of the Chasuble on Saint Ildefonsus*, 1635, Lima, Convento de los Descalzos (Photo: Daniel Giannoni)



2016.001
Unidentified Artist
Bolivia
Annunciation
Late 17th or early 18th century.

Oil on canvas, 63 1/8 x 43 3/4 inches

This version of the Annunciation in the Thoma Collection dates from at least a half century later than the painting discussed above. It was painted in the region of Charcas, later called Alto Perú, and today is the country of Bolivia. The artist's style reflects the influence of the prolific artist Leonardo Flores, who created series of paintings for the village churches of the Altiplano and for the Franciscan church in La Paz, commissioned and paid for by the bishop. Closely associated with Flores' style are the depiction of Gabriel's mantle as billowing in the breeze, and the rendering of his garments in sharp folds that catch blades of light.

That having been said, however, the faces of the Virgin Mary and Gabriel in the Thoma painting, with their serenely cheerful countenances, bear no resemblance to faces painted by Flores and the members of his workshop. And the charming putti at upper left are without precedent in Flores's oeuvre, bearing closer resemblance to productions from cuzqueño artists of the time. The miraculous moment is attended by the dove of the Holy Spirit surrounded by a golden aura.



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