



Our Lady of Cayma

Unidentified Artist

Peru, Arequipa

Ca. 1771-1782

Oil on canvas

67 x 46 ½ inches (170.2 x 118.1 cm)

Inscribed lower left: EL YLLMO SEÑOR ABAD YLLANA and, at lower center, CAYMA

Carl and Marilynn Thoma Collection 2003.002

The hermitage of Our Lady of the Candlestick of Lari Lari, the Collagua Indian name for Cayma, near Arequipa, is first found in a notarial document of 1571.¹ The statue of Our Lady of Cayma was venerated from that time on. The 1.7-meter-high sculpture, a sixteenth-century polychromed figure brought from Spain, is said to have been sent to the Dominican mission by the emperor Charles V (King Charles I of Spain). This direct association with the Holy Roman Emperor finds parallels in the legendary origins of other miraculous images in the New World.

In Cayma, the Virgin Mary (now a dressed statue, fig. 1) is shown as Our Lady of Candlemas, holding the Christ Child to her left, with the candlestick in her right hand and two doves in a basket suspended from her right wrist. She is shown at the moment of her Purification and the Presentation of the Christ Child in the temple, which is celebrated on February 2. The cult of Our Lady of Candlemas (in Spanish, *Candelaria*) was widespread throughout Peru, in Argentina, and in Bolivia, where she is the patroness of the country as Our Lady of Copacabana.

In 1589, when the city of Arequipa was afflicted by the plague, the image of Our Lady of Cayma was carried in procession there.ⁱⁱ When Quinistacas erupted in 1600 the hermitage was ruined, but then reconstructed by its devotees. Four years later, in August of 1604, Our Lady of Cayma was once again carried to Arequipa. Until the late nineteenth century the practice of carrying the statue to Arequipa in August continued, and it was common for citizens of Arequipa to make the trip to Cayma to ask the Virgin for her aid. Captain Domingo de Orúe had model ships and flags hung in the sanctuary in recognition of the favor of Our Lady of Cayma in his battle in the area of the Galapagos Islands with two English frigates. With her aid, Orúe vanquished his foes.ⁱⁱⁱ

In the sanctuary is a series of 13 paintings by Jacinto Carbajal, commissioned in 1780 by the parish priest Juan Domingo de Zamácola y Jáuregui, which document the devotion to Our Lady of Cayma and the miraculous interventions attributed to her.^{iv} These paintings were evidently new versions of older paintings, for they bear various seventeenth and eighteenth-century dates and claim their fidelity to the originals: “Así consta del original,” “es copiado del original,” and so on. Each of the paintings bears a large cartouche with a legend explaining the image. One inscription declares the sculpture as “one of the most precious jewels with which the Emperor Charles V enriched this Empire,” and recalls the legend (a tale repeated in other cases of miraculous images) that the sculpture was carried to Cayma by Indians and that she told them to carry her no farther, and indeed could not be budged from the spot. An Indian tried to kill his wife by throwing her, with her child in her arms, off a cliff. The Virgin saved her. A young man fell under a team of yoked oxen. She saved him. In the final painting of the series, the Virgin is worshipped by five indigenous people, characterized by dark complexions, garments of Andean textiles and feathered headdresses, who give thanks for her intercessions.^v What is unusual about Carbajal’s paintings, which are quite provincial in style and technique, is the constant presence of the church itself.

Indeed, the home of Our Lady of Cayma had its own series of disasters: In 1672 the sanctuary was of adobe with a straw roof; it was damaged by tremors and a new church seems to have been built. That, too, was destroyed in a 1687 earthquake. In 1719 it was finally decided that a really solid edifice be built to house the miraculous image, and its design was commissioned of Antonio Pérez del Cuadro, who was then in Arequipa on his way to Chuquisaca [Sucre] where he had contracted to build the cathedral. The new sanctuary was inaugurated in 1730 but continued to suffer damage over the years. Following the 1764 earthquake and a fire, the priest Juan Domingo Zamácola undertook its restoration again. The vicissitudes of the building itself continued throughout the nineteenth century, with the image of Our Lady of Cayma always miraculously undamaged, the sanctuary always rebuilt. No wonder the church (fig. 2) appears in the Thoma Collection painting as a major protagonist!

The inscription on the painting identifies the figure kneeling at lower left as Monsignor Manuel Abad e Illana, a professor at the University of Salamanca, who served as bishop of Tucumán and Arequipa from 1771 to 1782. However, the figure of the bishop is probably not a donor figure. More likely, this painting was commissioned by the priest Zamácola, who was also the bishop’s secretary and biographer, as a reflection of the novena to Our Lady of Cayma that Abad e Illana wrote, and which Zamácola himself arranged to have printed and practiced.^{vi} If this painting were indeed commissioned by Zamácola to honor Abad e Illana’s novena, perhaps he modestly had himself, with his parishioners, included without an inscription, at lower right. The composition of the Thoma painting bears certain similarities to the paintings commissioned of Carbajal in 1780: the architecture in the Thoma painting is generally like that in the Carbajal paintings (though both versions are fanciful), the little figure of the Virgin in red appears over the portal of the church, and the Virgin’s red patterned gown is also similar. However, despite its apparent naïveté, the painter of this work has quite a different style from Carbajal – clearly, symmetrically organized where Carbajal’s compositions are jumbled; light and clear ambiance where Carbajal’s is stormy and threatening (as befits the horrors he depicts); with trees as ordered as in an Italian quattrocento painting, while Carbajal’s are wildly irregular and windblown. Although related to the 13 paintings still in the sanctuary, the Thoma painting differs in style, lacks the inscribed cartouches, and is considerably larger than Carbajal’s series. It may have been commissioned as a gift from Zamácola for his greatly admired prelate Abad e Illana, whose novena to Our Lady of Cayma is practiced even today.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt

Captions:

Fig. 1. Our Lady of Cayma. Photo: author.

Fig. 2. Sanctuary of Our Lady of Cayma. Photo: author.

ⁱ Rubén Vargas Ugarte, *Historia del culto de María en Iberoamérica y de sus imágenes y santuarios más celebrados* (Buenos Aires: Editoriales Huarpes, 1947), 567.

ⁱⁱ It has been noted that “the figure of Our Lady of Cayma . . . is undoubtedly the one featured in Guaman Poma’s drawing which portrayed Arequipa during the notorious “*vómito negro*” of 1600, a moment when local citizens were known to have carried Our Lady of Cayma through the streets in an effort to seek divine protection from the volcanic eruption that had covered their city with a thick layer of ash.” Richard L. Kagan (with the collaboration of Fernando Marías), *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1493-1793* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 146.

ⁱⁱⁱ Vargas Ugarte, *Historia del culto*, 568.

^{iv} The subjects are described by Ricardo Mariategui Oliva in *El santuario de Caima* (Lima: Emp. Gráf. Stylo, 1952), 21-23. Two of the paintings are illustrated on plate X. Two others are

illustrated in Jorje Luis Recavarren, ed., *Pintura virreynal*, in *Artes y Tesoros del Perú*, eds. José Antonio de Lavallo and Werner Lang (Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 1973), 190 and 191.

^v Illustrated in color in the essay by Teresa Gisbert, "Del Cusco a Potosí. La Religiosidad del Sur Andino," in *El Barroco Peruano*, vol. 2 (Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 2003), 71, fig. 8.

^{vi} *50 Aniversario Candelaria de Cayma. Edición Conmemorativa 1947-1997* (Arequipa: UNSA, 1997), 49. I am grateful to Richard L. Kagan for generously lending me photocopies of this and other publications he acquired on a visit to Cayma.