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[Ananda Cohen-Aponte](#)

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Jaime Lara's beautifully illustrated *Birdman of Assisi: Art and the Apocalyptic in the Colonial Andes* offers a sweeping account of the special role that painted and sculptural imagery of Saint Francis of Assisi played in Andean religiosity during the period of Spanish colonial rule. Lara deftly highlights the iconographic transformations that occurred when Saint Francis traveled to the Andes as an agent of religious conversion. Countless processional sculptures produced in Peru and Bolivia feature Saint Francis with silver wing attachments, while canvas paintings and murals depict the saint flying through the heavens. These iconographical shifts, Lara argues, can be attributed to early Franciscan conversion efforts that drew on preexisting Andean conceptions of the divine as embodied by flying shamans and other airborne figures. In fact, no known European paintings or sculptures of a winged Saint Francis existed prior to the mid-eighteenth century....

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reconsolidation in Nazca during the Late Intermediate Period especially fascinating and will be surprised by the modest impact of the great Inca empire at La Tiza. With its theoretical discussion and general evaluation of Nazca within broad anthropological interests, this book will be enjoyed by a wide range of readers. However, it holds special appeal for professional archaeologists, students, and aficionados of New World prehistory.

WILLIAM H. ISBELL, State University of New York at Binghamton

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Birdman of Assisi: Art and the Apocalyptic in the Colonial Andes. By JAIME LARA.

Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies. Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2016.

Photographs. Maps. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiii, 353 pp.

Cloth, \$79.95.

Jaime Lara's beautifully illustrated *Birdman of Assisi: Art and the Apocalyptic in the Colonial*

Andes offers a sweeping account of the special role that painted and sculptural imagery of Saint Francis of Assisi played in Andean religiosity during the period of Spanish colonial rule. Lara deftly highlights the iconographic transformations that occurred when Saint Francis traveled to the Andes as an agent of religious conversion. Countless processional sculptures produced in Peru and Bolivia feature Saint Francis with silver wing attachments, while canvas paintings and murals depict the saint flying through the heavens. These iconographical shifts, Lara argues, can be attributed to early Franciscan conversion efforts that drew on preexisting Andean conceptions of the divine as embodied by flying shamans and other airborne figures. In fact, no known European paintings or sculptures of a winged Saint Francis existed prior to the mid-eighteenth century.

Part 1 of the book, titled “The Apocalyptic Francis in the Old World,” offers a thorough overview of the life of Saint Francis, the chronicles of his life that began to be codified by the thirteenth century, and the theological debates that ensued between the Franciscans and the Dominicans with respect to his Christlike experiences as described in some of the chronicles. It is in this section that Lara displays his theological chops, providing highly nuanced yet accessible explanations of the specificities of monastic intellectual life and their resultant manifestation in the visual representations of the saint. Part 1, with its meticulous attention to the specificities of Saint Francis’s hagiography and visual representations from the medieval period to the Renaissance, offers ample contextual information for understanding the saint’s entry onto colonial Andean soil in the sixteenth century.

Part 2, “The Apocalyptic Francis in the New World,” details the cultural appeal that avian creatures, both animal and anthropomorphic, held in the Andes prior to the Spanish invasion. Chapter 3, “The Birdmen of the Andes,” sets the stage by offering an overview of avian imagery and anthropomorphic images of winged creatures during the pre-Columbian period. Lara includes a representative sample of pre-Hispanic “birdmen” that includes Chavín carvings, Paracas embroideries, Moche ceramic vessels, the Nazca lines, and Tiwanaku’s famed Gateway of the Sun. Specialists are likely to take issue with Lara’s quick glossing of some of the greatest hits of pre-Columbian Andean

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