

The Nina-Nina, the Devil and Oruro: The Origins of a Diabolical Figure

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Abstract: The *Diablada* festivities, which take place in Oruro mining town in Bolivia, stage 'devils' that come out of the underworld through galleries and mines that communicate with the surface. The captions that accompany the worship of the Virgin of the Mine (*Virgen de la Mina*) on this occasion show a hero whose nickname in Quechua likewise designates a parasitic wasp, *nina nina*. In the world of the Andes, this wasp was associated with bad omens and to the devil by the Indian scholar Guaman Poma de Ayala in the 17th century. The contribution refers to these identifications to propose a new approach to the origin of the *Diablada* festivities suggesting that in the iconographic features of the devil could be recognized the features of the gods of the mountains worshiped by present and pre-Hispanic Andean populations.

Keywords: analogism; Amerindian iconography; devil; Diablada; Virgin of the Mine; Oruro; Andes; Bolivia; 21st century.

Resumen: Las festividades de la *Diablada* que se celebran en la ciudad minera de Oruro, Bolivia, ponen en escena a los 'diablos' salidos del inframundo a través de galerías y minas que se comunican con la superficie. Las leyendas que acompañan al culto rendido a la Virgen de la Mina, en esta ocasión nos informan de un héroe cuyo apellido en quechua designa asimismo una avispa parasitoide, *nina nina*. En el universo de los Andes, esta avispa ha sido ya asociada a los malos presagios y al diablo en los textos del indio letrado Guaman Poma de Ayala, en el siglo xvii. El presente trabajo retoma esa identificación para proponer una nueva aproximación al origen de estas festividades, sugiriendo que en los rasgos iconográficos del diablo podrían reconocerse aquellos de los dioses de las montañas propios de las poblaciones actuales y pre-hispánicas de los Andes.

Palabras Clave: analogismo; iconografía amerindia; diablo; Diablada; Virgen de la Mina; Oruro; Andes; Bolivia; siglo xxi.

The presence of the figure of the Andean devil, not only as a folkloric character but also as a support for popular beliefs in colonial and present-day indigenous societies, is a source of abundant anthropological literature (Absi 2003; Bouysse-Cassagne 1999, 2000, 2008; Nash 1979).

The most important contemporary iconographical expression of this character can be found in the folkloric festivities of Oruro, a mining city in Bolivia, during which the devil, accompanied by other biblical figures such as the Archangel Michael and the Virgin Mary, parade around the city in huge brass band processions.



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According to the authors mentioned, the origin of these religious festivities is rooted in a series of local popular legends. They present a thief who dies in his shelter built on the side of the mountain, after he tried to flee in the company of a young girl and he is killed by her father. While dying, the Virgin supposedly appeared to him and transported his lifeless or agonizing body to his shelter, where his body was found next to an image of the Virgin which the thief had painted on the wall of his cave. This image is proof of the devotion and repentance of this character, about whose identity we will have to enquire.

According to the same authors, the ‘carnival’ of Oruro is likewise linked to the pre-Hispanic Andean God *Wari*,¹ the God of the mountains who dwells inside them (similar to the *Otorongo*, or jaguar of the Lowlands according to Bouysse-Cassagne 2008). According to this author, it possesses iconographical characteristics similar to the devil, currently known with the name of *el Tío*, for example a strong feline-type dentition associated with its predator nature. Translated as ‘the uncle’, ‘the guy’ or ‘the God’ – a form of *dios* as pronounced in the Andes according to Bouysse-Cassagne (2008: 133), just as *diablo* is pronounced *tiyabulu* (Fernández Juárez 1998: 148) –, *el Tío* refers to a group of characters with diabolical features going from the deformed dwarf similar to the Peruvian *muqui*, to its personification in the form of sculptures present in the Bolivian mines where it is above all considered as the master of the site and of the metal which it exchanges for lives or for offerings (cf. Fernández Juárez 1998, 2000, 2013). *Tío* thus comes from the Spanish *Dios*, or God, as pronounced by the Indians in the Andes. And it is his depiction as a devilish figure in the mines that troubles the past and actual colonial society as the two distinct concepts Good/Evil are merged in a single character.

It likewise has a dual origin, on the one hand Christian, and on the other hand resulting from ancient Andean societies with the character of *Wari*, whose inclusion in the character of the Christian devil has allowed it to survive to the present day.

The aim of our contribution is to show that, on returning to the issue of the identity of the characters which appear in the legend of the thief, it is possible to plot a real affiliation not only with the pre-Columbian deity, but also to show that the latter is an anthropomorphized form of a parasitic wasp whose method of reproduction is attributed to the deity. The present contribution departs from a clear acknowledgment that in other parts of indigenous South America, the parasitoid wasp/prey is key to understanding human/deity relations and to postmortem destiny. A 2014 publication dealing with Moche iconography demonstrates that this relation between wasp and spider is clearly depicted on the pottery from that pre-Columbian civilisation (Karadimas 2014).

1 In Aymara, *Wari* designates an ancestor, and the domain of the world of ancestors is that of the underworld, equated by the Spanish to hell and to the devils which inhabit it (cf. Bouysse-Cassagne 2008: 128, note 5 and 129). More specifically found in the south of the Inca empire, it corresponds partly to a personification of *Apu* (mountains, caves and *huacas*) known elsewhere as *Viracocha*.

We had already proposed a similar hypothesis in a 2007 article, *Yurupari ou les figures du Diable*, in which there was an identification between a mythological and ritual figure of the Northwest Amazon and the devil (Karadimas 2007). Several of the populations of the Northwest make this assimilation between *Yurupari* and the wasp which multiplies itself thanks to other insects or spiders serving as vessels and as food for its larva. This behaviour is identified by the populations as a rather singular and negative way of reproducing, since it is carried out at the expense of the being which carries the descendants 'in its body' and is thus compared with a 'mother'. The same type of behaviour is attributed to the Master of the animals, 'inseminating' humans to reproduce game (an 'incubatory' interpretation of disease as arising from this deity). Humans are thus the spiders of the Master of the animals, or his prey (Karadimas 2003).

In this same contribution, we used data from Andean pre-Hispanic iconography to show that the figure of the wasp was already a central character of the Andean pantheon, in the same way as it is today in the Northwest Amazonian lowlands. The identification of *Yurupari* with the Christian devil certainly arose from indigenous populations which, confronted with the iconography of the devil conveyed by the church and its representatives, had recognized their own deity from the fact that both share common features. Among these features we can mention wings, claws, a strong bestial dentition, the fact that they are hairy, the visible presence of the phallus and, finally, being equipped with horns on the head. As for the wasp, this last detail is most often an anthropomorphized form of the mandibles which appear as elements added on top of the head of an upright Hymenoptera and for which they form 'horns' like a Christian devil. Faced with a dangerous being which possessed similar characteristics, the indigenous populations recognized an iconographical form that they used as a depiction of their own deity. Unlike the Andean iconography, the presence of a 'horned' being is infrequent in the Northwest Amazon, even if it sometimes appears as one of the features of the masks of the Master of the animals of the *Miraña* with which we have worked since 1988 (Karadimas 2007). In this group, this mask is sometimes called *el diablito* in Spanish (the little devil), not because it is a personification of the devil but rather because it shares this morphological feature with the Christian figure.

We used iconographical elements from pre-Hispanic cultures to show that these characters equipped with horns existed prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Their presence in the region is thus prior to the figure of the devil which spread after the conquest. Thanks to the analysis of the iconography of painted textiles, one of Wari origin (southern Peru, 6th - 9th centuries), and another Chimú (northern Peru, 11th - 15th centuries), we have been able to show that these characters are an anthropomorphized form of a deification of parasitic wasps.

To show that the same deified figure has taken on the features of the Christian devil in the region of the Bolivian Andes, and thus also from Peru, we propose to resume the

analyses already published on the genesis and the presence of the devil in present-day Andean religious forms. Currently likened to the Christian devil, the character of the *Tío*, worshipped by the miners of Bolivia, will likewise be a figure studied starting from bibliographical sources (cf. Absi 2003; Bouysse-Cassagne 2008; Salazar-Soler 2002). Finally, we will make a comparison between these characters and the parasitic wasp starting from the nickname given in Quechua to the hero of the legend, *nina-nina*, at the origin of the *Diablada*.

More sociologically oriented works (e.g. Abercrombie 1992) underline the confrontation of two worlds, the Spanish-mestizo and the Indian. In the Oruro carnival celebration, the Spanish-mestizo appropriates images of indigenosity to establish the autochthony and legitimacy of the white population. Our approach, based exclusively on documentary sources and iconographic analysis, challenge the question of the Amerindian part of the celebration in a comparative exercise where some linguistic and mythological clues serve to reveal a somewhat unreachable past still present in the name of its key legendary figure.

Our general intention is to show that, although arising from historical situations different to those found in the Northwest Amazon, the types of contact between two religious forms have produced similar results. To be able to continue to exist, an indigenous deity has been assimilated into a Christian character, and is disguised as the devil. The frequent associations between the Antichrist and the Andean deity of the mountain would thus be the result of this transfiguration. Instead of maintaining a local deity against the will of the Spanish, who demanded the eradication of local beliefs and complete acceptance of the Christian faith, the option which appears to have been chosen is that of finding a corresponding figure from the characters of Christian mythology and its fantastic iconography, in this case the devil, and of investing it with the divine prerogatives until then assigned to the Master of the underworld and of *post-mortem* destinies. This process would, however, have been created by Amerindian societies and would represent an adaptive cultural response to the desire to completely eliminate their system of beliefs, as in the Northwest Amazon. This deity would be an anthropomorphization of a parasitic wasp and its similarity with the negative figure of Christianity would be due to the both mythological and iconographical connections. We also want to show how this central figure continues to be present with the features of the devil in the festivities of Oruro carnival, and that the secondary characters which accompany it come from the same mythology as the characters appearing in the myths of the Northwest Amazon. Our purpose is thus not to essentialise the indigenous religious world, maintaining against all evidences that it has been kept free from any foreign influences. We rather want to underline that the complete opposite – the hypothesis of the emergence of an entirely new form of religion – is also an ideological point of view. Therefore, it is necessary to take the indigenous point of view as a departure point, and to look at

the festivities as an opportunity given by the local belief system to incubate a dominant religious form in a hidden and parasitic dissemination of the old belief form.

Before beginning with the presentation of the historical elements of the arrival of the figure of the devil in the Andes, we need to specify again that this work is essentially of a bibliographical nature. Our first contact with the *Diablada* festivities goes back to 1997, when we were invited to participate, as a contributor, on the Huitoto Indians of the Columbian Amazon who came, together with other groups from the South American continent, to the “Printemps des comédiens”, organized by Montpellier municipality (France). During this ‘folkloric’ event, certain Huitoto and also Ticuna from the Amazonian Trapeze in southern Colombia, near Leticia, were invited to present some of their dances and artistic productions in the form of masks and feather art and for whom the organisers had requested ethnologists specialised in these groups to present contextual and ethnographical data.² Included among the indigenous representatives from Chile, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, a troupe of dancers from the Bolivian city of Oruro from the butchers’ guild came to present the *Diablada*. Our curiosity, accompanied by that of the Huitotos, allowed us to hold a series of discussions with these Bolivian dancers about the meaning that they gave this dance. The Huitotos likewise played an active role in these conversations because, although completely different to their way of organizing their own festivals, these masked characters echoed in a certain way their own mythological figures present in rituals in the form of masks, equipped, just like these devils, with a strong dentition and aggressive and threatening behaviour in relation to humans, although not yet led by the Archangel Michael on the path of the Virgin.

From the Andean God to the Christian devil

Guaman Poma de Ayala (1615/1616), a scholarly Indian who set down on paper a series of beliefs, practices and knowledge from the Andean world in 1615, presents in Quechua and Spanish, on folio 281 [283], a set of “superstitions and bad omens”. These included the fact that coming across a *nina nina* transporting a larva is an omen

2 We have written folkloric here in inverted commas because this event was perceived differently depending on the people involved. If the spectators from Montpellier came to see an outdoor show, the Huitoto Indians were accompanied by a pair of dugout drums specially prepared for this purpose which they submitted quite officially to the municipality of this city. For them, this gesture was not at all folkloric, because the preparation and the bequest of a pair of drums represents a strong diplomatic gesture by means of which they recognize obsequiously in their hosts the ability to listen in relation to their own situation and also they expect fruitful exchanges (the speeches made at the time by Juan Flores, the Huitoto leader of the Malocas of the ‘kilometres’ from Leticia and accompanied by his son, currently in charge, are there to bear witness). None of the groups of dancers, Wayu, *Diablada*, Mexican *Voladores*, etc., came only to demonstrate folklore.

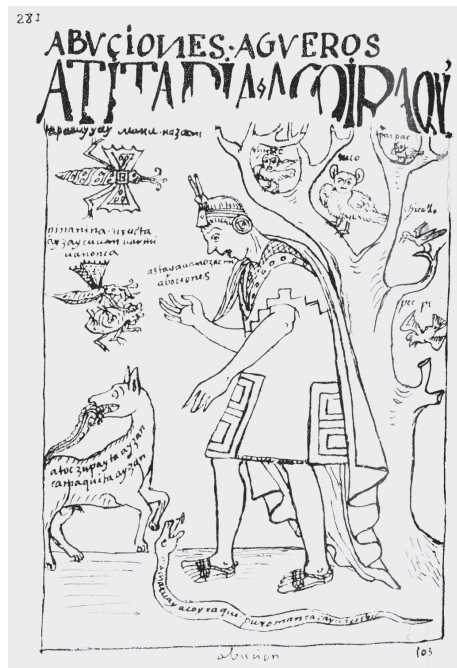


Figure 1. Set of “superstitions and of bad omens”. Modification from: Guaman Poma de Ayala 1615/1616, folio 281 [283].

of the imminent death of the wife of the person observing the scene (“*Nina nina curucta ayzaycuuan, uarmi uanonca*”). “A *nina nina* (a sort of wasp) has dragged a worm, my wife is going to die” – in modernized Quechua: / *Nina nina khuruqta aysaykuwan, warmiy wañunqa*). The author’s drawing, on the other hand, shows a spider rather than a larva or a worm. This undoubtedly comes from the use of the term *uru* which, for the entomologist Renán García who collected several names of insects in ‘Quechua’, indicates on the one hand “*kuru, uru*: denominación general de todos los animales, con más frecuencia de todos los ‘gusanos’, tales como las orugas y otras larvas de insectos” and, on the other hand “*uru, urusu*: araña, nombre de los Araneida en los alrededores de la ciudad de Ayacucho” (García 1976: 15).

This omen, as indicated by Guaman Poma, is linked to the fact that, like in the Northwest Amazon, the relationship between predator and prey is transferred on an anthropomorphic register as that of a man (wasp) and of a woman (prey). This relates to what Reichel-Dolmatoff reported for the Northwest Amazon when he rendered the words of an informant evoking the Desana name of the Yurupari hero,

-*komé -mahsá bēgē*, lit. ‘metallic people old time creature’, a name given to a large black and yellow wasp which is characterized by a bluish ‘metallic’ color. [...] A pertinent comment was: ‘That wasp is always looking for fresh meat to lick; it is always after woman’ (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1996: 243).

This recognized behavioural feature of the Hymenoptera can also reflect the character of Don Juan or of the womanizer, or even of the woman thief attributed to the hero of the legend. In any case, it explains the fact that *nina nina* is a popular expression to designate those who own several women at the same time, both in the image of the wasp and its women-prey.

On the other hand, it can be remarked that Guaman Poma does not mention the similarity of this insect with flies, or that of flies with the dead. In Quechua, the etymology

of *nina nina* refers to a ‘fire fire’³ in so far as, like in other traditions, this Hymenoptera appears, due to its extremely painful and burning sting, to be associated with fire, but also on referring to an underworld linked to volcanic activity (Cusco Cultural 2014). The same term, *nina nina*, is sometimes used in Quechua to indicate fireflies, although the appropriate usage of the term remains that of a parasitic Hymenoptera of spiders, a pompilid wasp, and/or a parasitic Hymenoptera in general. The different occurrences of *nina nina* in Quechua – Spanish dictionaries thus all refer to this insect, even in the much criticized 2005 one of the regional government of Cusco:



Figure 2. A *nina nina* wasp transports a larva or a spider”. Modification from: Guaman Poma de Ayala 1615/1616, folio 281 (detail).

nina nina. s. Zool. (Pepsis versicolor y otros). Avispa de los muros. Insecto del orden hyme-nóptera, familia pompilidae, de tamaño grande, color pardo, la hembra con frente roja y el macho con frente amarilla. Para su reproducción la *nina nina*, pone sus huevos en el abdomen de la tarántula (simbiosis). SINÓN: *ninaqara*. Pe.Caj: *ninakuru*. Pe.Aya: *ninasiki*. Ec: *ninakuru*.

nina kuru. s. v. KUCH'UY NNA NINA, PINCHINKURU.

nina k'ara. s. v. NINA NINA (Cusco Cultural 2014).

According to the same dictionary, when other parasitic Hymenoptera are named, their name usually contains a reference to the *nina nina*:

s. Zool. (Trachypirus gleonis). *Nina nina* pequeño. De la familia ichneumonidae de color azul metálico y rojo. SINÓN: *ninakuru*. Pe.Aya: *ninasiki* (Cusco Cultural 2014).

According to the ethno-entomological survey by García (1976), in addition to *nina nina*, other names are sometimes given to it, such as *nina uru*, “Avispas de la familia Pompilidae, especialmente las de mayor tamaño que corresponden al género Pepsis” (García 1976: 15) (that is to say those which parasitize tarantulas). On the other hand, *pinchinkuru*, *nina kara*, *nina kalla*, *nina uru*, and *nina kuru* can also be used to designate fireflies: “Luciernaga. Los coleoptera de la familia Lampyridae, algunos Elateridae y sus respectivas larvas” (García 1976: 15). *Nina uru* can therefore designate both a ‘fire larva’ (firefly) or a ‘spider wasp’ (pompilid wasp).

3 According to J. J. Rivera (personal communication), the duplication in Quechua can also be an expression of abundance. In this case, for example, *nina nina* could also be translated as ‘a great many fires’.

Moreover, the behaviour of the ‘prey carrier’ of the pompilid wasp has earned it another name, *aya waylis*, ‘corpse wasp’, or *aya wantu*, ‘corpse carrier’ (García 1976: 14), which in Quechua also refers to the funeral hoard or the coffin (from *aya* corpse, and *wantu* to carry). Although it targets them in particular, this name is not reserved exclusively for these Hymenoptera, but rather for any insect transporting a prey. Dragonflies can thus also be designated with the term *aya wantu* and are also drawn on some pre-Hispanic pottery next to pompilid wasps, such as this Inca-style *aribalo* preserved in the Rafael Larco Museum where the dragonflies, recognizable thanks to their outstretched wings, are placed next to insects which until now had been interpreted as butterflies, although the drawing and the colours of their wings (orange, or smoky surrounded by black) are typical of pompilid wasps (Figure 3).



Figure 3a. Inca *aribalo* with drawings of dragonflies and pompilid wasps *Pepsis heros*, parasites of tarantulas.⁴



Figure 3b. Pompilid wasp *Pepsis heros* (photo by D. Karadimas).

On another *aribalo* from the same tradition (Figure 4) there are different insects – flies, dragonflies and pompilid wasps. The latter are represented in two different forms, first in a frame with triangular wings and second accompanied by a parasitized spider graphically treated as a head with hirsute hair which constitutes its legs and which the wasps are about to place within a tubular structure.

⁴ <<http://www.museolarco.org/catalogo/ficha.php?id=14907>> (20.11.2015).

According to a study on Quechua and Aymara phrases characteristic of Bolivia, *nina nina* would, in addition to the reference to the Hymenoptera, also be a term used to designate men having several women simultaneously, just as the term refers to dishevelled people and/or to red-heads, or to people with hair of a reddish colour:

nina-nina [ai., qu. *nina* 'fuego'] 'hombre que tiene relaciones amorosas con varias mujeres al mismo tiempo', 'nombre de varias especies de himenópteros, de hasta 5 cm de largo, de color amarillo o naranja brillante con bandas transversales negras o azules metálicas', 'persona, generalmente un niño, traviesa e inquieta', 'persona que tiene el cabello rojizo' (Coello s.d.).

We have seen that the term *nina nina* is likewise the nickname given to the hero at the origin of the legend of the Virgin of the Mine and of the *Diablada* festivities of Oruro in Bolivia. During these festivities, the miners used to disguise themselves as devils and, under the command of the Archangel Michael, emerged from under the ground to take possession of the city. Nowadays, several fraternities of the city finance colourful processions during the festivities. The 'devils' are accompanied by other characters of local origin, such as condors, toads and spectacled bears (*Tremarctos ornatus*: despite the fact that in the processions the latter appear as white bears) and others with less local appearance, such as the 'dragons' which decorate the costumes.

We now need to know why the name *nina nina*, 'fire fire', explicitly designating a wasp – at least since the 17th century – is used as the nickname of the one who would become a 'devil' and be at the origin of the Oruro *Diablada* festivities.

The first association could allow us to see in the term *nina nina* a direct reference to the Christian devil in view of the repetition of the term 'fire' and thus an evocation of hell. However, as shown by Taylor (1980), the missionaries very quickly used the term *ucupacha* for the underground world from which emerges primeval humanity and that of the *supay*, formerly the 'soul of the dead' to evoke the Christian devil. Thus, on this



Figure 4. Inca *aribalo* on which there are flies, dragonflies and pompilid wasps (Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, V A 49836.⁵ infographics by D. Karadimas).

5 <<http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=46693>> (20.11.2015).

same image by Guaman Poma de Ayala (Figure 1), a fox pulls its own tail, a sign of upcoming misfortune because, the author tells us, “the fox pulls the demon, it pulls its creator” / “*Atoc zupayta ayzan camaquita ayzan*” [“El zorro arrastra al demonio, arrastra a su creador”]: in modernized Quechua: *Atuq supayta aysan kamaqita aysan*). *Supay* refers to the demon here and he is his own creator, that is to say the fox, since he bites his own tail (moreover an image of the narrative form). In other words, the fox is a personification of the demon, more precisely a personification of an underground being. Finally, we can add that, according to Absi, “*Tío* is often the name given to the fox” (2003: 103).

Rather than seeing an association with hell due to a name associated with fire, it remains to be seen whether giving this nickname to a legendary character at the origin of the *Diablada* of Oruro is a historical coincidence or whether, as we believe, it is a reference to the ancient God of the mountains of Andean populations, likened to a parasitic wasp.

This proposal would be surprising in more than one way. Indeed, the Andean populations of Bolivia have understood the Christian devil in a similar way to the populations of the Lowlands with which they did not have any contact during the colonial period. Moreover, this assimilation would have been made possible thanks to a reworking from mythology toward legend, from mythology toward history, thus offering an understanding of one (mythology) to interpret the other (history), and not the opposite, as the interpretative tendency of certain historians now tends to accept.⁶

Indeed, is the structure described above between pre-Hispanic ‘horned’ beings and Christian devils still valid in the iconographies of the masks of the *Diablada*, or are we witnessing a new hybrid figurative model, uniting characteristic Indian features with those of the Christian devils? Is it moreover possible to associate all these elements with the figure of the devils present in the mines and known under the name of *el Tío*, most probably referring to the *Tiw* of Aymara mythology?

The *nina-nina* of the legend

The first legend includes the intervention of Amerindian deities and considers that the festival comes from the mythology of the Uru, a pre-Columbian people from the region.

The chthonic deity *Wari*, responsible for earthquakes, falls in love with *Inti Warra*, the eldest daughter of the Sun/*Inti*, who rejects him. The Sun comes to the aid of his daughter and buries *Wari*. Learning that the Uru worship *Inti* (Sun) represented by

⁶ We are thinking in particular of the different works by Molinié-Fioravanti (1982; 1996) in which she advocates a resolutely historical approach to the changes introduced by colonization of the Andes – perfectly justified for the interpretation of the short term –, without yet appreciating the complexity of the anthropological phenomena linked to the continuation of beliefs in the long term.

Pachakamaq,⁷ the chthonic deity *Wari* takes revenge on the Sun by sending against his worshipers all sorts of plagues, such as huge ants, lizards, toads and serpents which are often – except for the ants – included as ornaments on the masks of the *Diablada*. The inhabitants are protected by a *ñusta*, a daughter of *Inti* who, in the shape of a condor, petrifies the different creatures threatening the city in all four directions. She forces *Wari* to return underground where he manifests himself as master of the chthonic world and of the mines through his volcanic activity. He joins or resembles *el Tío*, responsible, according to the miners, for their fortune (ore) and misfortunes (accidents, sickness, downfall, etc.), in short for their destiny. On saving the inhabitants from the fantastic animals, the *ñusta* has been likened to the Virgin of the Mine.

The hero of the second legend would be a historical character, Anselmo Belarmino, to whom popular culture has given two nicknames, *nina-nina* and *chiru-chiru*. As already mentioned, the former would be linked to the fact that he had relations with several women at the same time or to having disheveled hair.

On the Saturday of Carnival in 1789, according to the legend narrated by the priest Emeterio Villaruel at the end of the 19th century, *nina-nina* is stabbed by the father of a young girl, Lorenza Choquiamo, when he tries to abduct her. Known until then as a sort of Andean Robin Hood, stealing from the rich to give to the poor (in actual fact, stealing from the colonists to give to the Indian peasants), this time he forgets his promise made to the Virgin to spare the needy and takes it out on the daughter of a poor man. Stabbed by the father of this young girl, the dying man is transported by the *Virgen del Socavon* ‘Virgin of the Gallery’ or ‘Virgin of the Mine’ (accompanied by the Child Jesus in her arms), to the depths of his cave at the foot of the mount Pie de Gallo where his body will be discovered. According to the version of the church, the Virgin forgives him for his misdeed and does not allow him to become a devil, while the local populations attributed this *post-mortem* destiny to their deceased. Thus, according to Bouysse-Cassagne:

The ‘Indian’ dead, buried other than in Christian cemeteries, became ‘Devils’: Refusing to bury the dead in the cemeteries built near churches, considering that they were more comfortable in their former abodes, the Indians buried their dead in the fields, mountains and caves and pursued their worship, giving food and drink to those that the Spanish considered to be ‘Devils’ (Bouysse-Cassagne 2008: 129).

The second term designating the hero of this legend, *chiru chiru*, refers to the *trogloodyte* (*Troglodytes audax* Tsch. family of *Troglodytidae*), a small bird hardly bigger than a wren.⁸ Like the thief living in a gallery or a cave of the mountain, the troglodyte is known not

7 According to J. J. Rivera, it is noteworthy that, in the central coastal region of Peru, this deity is precisely an underground being responsible for earthquakes (personal communication).

8 According to an ancient source, “Chiru Chiru: Troglodytidae. Troglodytes audax Tsch. Ziemlich häufig in der Umgebung der Stadt und selbst im Hochlande. Span, ‚ruiseñor‘. Quichua: ‚chiru-chiru‘; er ist kleiner als T. tessellatus und misst nur 9 cm” (Boeck 1884: 163).

only for living and quickly finding refuge in the crevices of walls, in any crack or fissure providing him with occasional shelter, but he also shares with the *nina nina* a diet exclusively made up of arthropods,⁹ in particular spiders.

Although *shiru shiru* – and not *chiru chiru* – is likewise the name given in Quechua to certain particularly aggressive and feared social wasps (*Polybia sp.*, essentially found in the Lowlands), this name could be applied by phonetic assimilation to the nickname of the character from the legend, as it likewise refers to a Hymenoptera. In our opinion, however, the first identification is more likely, that of the troglodyte, in so far as both the habitat and the behaviour of one can be applied to the other.

We may thus initially think that the nicknames of the heroes insist on their habitat, a cave or a gallery, since the *Diablada* is a festivity during which the miners originally dressed up as the devil in order to parade in the streets. Indeed, according to Cajías, “Los periódicos orureños del siglo XIX señalan que el sábado de carnaval los mineros interpretaban la danza de los diablos en honor a la Virgen de la mina, por eso llamada Virgen del Socavón” (2009: 92).

The *nina nina* has the same qualities as an inhabitant of the underworld and likewise looks for its prey and/or accommodates them in the walls and fissures. We moreover know that several of these Hymenoptera are burrowers, that is to say they make burrows, while the sand or earth arising from this activity accumulates in front of the hole leading down to the galleries, like human miners when the result of their excavations forms big characteristic embankments outside the mountain. The galleries of the *nina-nina* are thus a miniature version of those produced by mining activity.

What attracts our attention in the construction of legends on the festivities of the *Diablada* is their structure, certain behaviours recalling the mythical episode – or its variants – found among the Miraña. The structure of the initial part of the first legend thus resembles the ‘historical’ legend, in so far as it is a lover who a potential ally of generation +1 sends into the underworld.

The first characteristic of the hero of the legend is that of the thief (here a woman thief) which, in relation to mythological construction, corresponds not only to a feature of the character from Miraña mythology, but likewise to one of the Andean traditions which presents the central star of Orion’s Belt with the features of a thief that the moon sends to be seized and devoured by vultures (Calancha 1638 in Karadimas 2005). Then, if the Moon is beheaded by jealous and incestuous brothers-in-law, the nocturnal monkeys/spiders in the Miraña myth, in the episode of the legend of the *nina nina* it is a possible father-in-law not wanting to yield up his daughter which leads to the mortal blow. The essential aspect is that, structurally speaking, the allies of the hero kill or behead the main character from the first part of the myth and that either his body or

9 See online: <<http://www.oiseaux.net/oiseaux/troglodyte.austral.html>> (18.11.2015).

his head is buried or is found in a tube or a gallery in the underworld (or even, as in the Miraña myth, in the underworld of fish).

This jealousy is then interpreted as leading to or having as its cause incestuous behaviour between blood relations of different genders. In the legend of the *nina nina*, however, this incestuous episode does not appear to be present in the narration. Instead of the allies (brothers-in-law or father-in-law) taking over the body of their rival, it is the Virgin who intervenes to transport the dying body of the hero in order to (re)place it in his hiding place, a cavity or gallery.

It appears that an overall substitution allowed the identities to be redistributed in such a way as to ratify the Christian dualism between 'good' and 'evil', by placing the Virgin and the Angels on one side, and the devils and the demons on the other side, where Andean mythology only saw these notions as two sides of the same mythological character. Indeed, the action undertaken by the Virgin to 'transport the corpse' or the body of a victim is equivalent in Quechua to *aya wantu*, that is to say to one of the names given to the parasitic wasp. We moreover know that the fox was one of the personifications of the capacities of this wasp (its burrowing capacity) and that it appeared in the form of 'the lunar animal' inside a lunar crescent in the Moche tradition, but also, more generally, that the moon, during its underground journey, was associated with this wasp (Figure 5b and Karadimas 2007).

The Christian iconographies of the late Middle Ages, of the Renaissance but also of the Andes, both from this century and later, associate the Virgin with a lunar crescent most often depicted at her feet (Figure 5a). For the Amerindian populations who viewed this Christian iconography, the being placed in this lunar crescent should have been associated with the parasitic wasp or with the fox, but in any case with the underworld. In other words, the name 'Virgin of the Mine' or 'Virgin of the underworld' refers to this possibility, more so as she is often painted with a supplementary pair of wings, like an angel, while her mantle of stars associates her directly with the stellar world.

Here we are thinking in particular of the 'Virgin of the Apocalypse', represented with eagles' wings on a lunar crescent, rays of sunlight emerging from her being while 12 stars form her crown. She is represented like St Michael or St George, slaying a dragon or serpent with a lance, or trampling it underfoot (Pacheco Bustillos 2001). In Spanish art, but also with Dürer and others (Figures 6 and 7), the dragon associated with this Virgin is a monster with seven heads coming out of a single body, which appears to be the first reference to the dragons with numerous heads of the masks of the *Diablada*.

This is, however, precisely what cannot be envisaged for the Christian universe. Although associated with the moon, the Virgin cannot under any circumstance be an inhabitant of the depths of the world, a space reserved for the devil and demons.



Figure 5a. Virgin of the Mine represented with the Child Jesus on a crescent moon associated with the stars (Oruro, Bolivia).¹⁰



Figure 5b. Pottery from the Moche culture with the 'lunar animal' with the features of the fox or canid inscribed on a lunar crescent associated with the stars (Ethnographisches Museum, Berlin, V A 4608).¹¹

Although in the legend she is accompanied by the Child Jesus when she transports the dying person into the gallery of the mountain, the explicit purpose of this transportation is not to serve as a solar renaissance and/or as a deity with which Jesus/*Inti* should, however, have been identified. Instead, it appears that the mythology underlying the festivities currently accepted by the Catholic Church allows the thief, seen as a devil but 'saved' by the Virgin, to thus be authorized to access a Christian afterlife. In this festivity, there is thus a confrontation of two universes which mutually adapt to each other, to construct an acceptable vision of the system of beliefs of each of them.

10 "Virgen de la Candelaria Oruro Bolivia 01" by Oscar Jesús Elías Lucero. Available under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike licence 3.0-2.5-2.0-1.0 via Wikimedia Commons. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Virgen_de_la_Candelaria_Oruro_Bolivia_01.JPG#mediaviewer/File:Virgen_de_la_Candelaria_Oruro_Bolivia_01.JPG> (20.11.2015).

11 <<http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=4699>> (20.11.2015).



Figure 6. Albrecht Dürer: Die Frau der Apokalypse, 1497.¹²



Figure 7. Matthias Gerung: Illustration of the Bible of Ottheinrich, 16th century.¹³

However, the mythical structure and the winged character accompanied by a descendant and placed in a lunar crescent transporting a dying person or a corpse, correspond relatively well to the Andean understanding of the method of reproduction of the pompilid wasp applied to celestial bodies. Continuing with this interpretation, the child in the arms of his mother, therefore Jesus, would correspond to the solar entity which should be reborn from the body of a dead person buried or placed by his mother in the underworld (and to a reversal of the sexes, in so far as it is the father who, in the Amerindian universe, possesses the soul, the sperm, which he is going to 'deposit' like the *muhu* 'seed' in the female body compared with the earth to form the foetus (La Riva Gonzalez 2000: 171).

The being from the underworld of Andean societies is the *Tio/Tiw* and, in any case, a personification of the parasitic wasp (*nina nina*). For the Christian religious system, the being from the underworld is the devil associated with his demons. If the hero of the

12 <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apokalypse_%28D%C3%BCr%C3%A9r%29#/media/File:Durer,_apocalisse,_10_la_donna_vestita_di_luce_e_il_drago_a_sette_teste.jpg> (20.11.2015).

13 <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femme_de_l%27Apocalypse#/media/File:Ottheinrich_Folio295r_Rev12.jpg> (20.11.2015).

legend is named in accordance with the name of this wasp, it occupies the place of the devil in the underworld and forms the chthonic complement to the Virgin of the Mine (division of Good and Evil). In the festivities of the *Diablada*, it is thus the devils who are led by the Archangel Michael, whereas everything, in this recomposition, should have led to the identification of the Virgin and of the Angels with the wasps and with the wasp-God, and the demons or the dragons should have been identified with the human victims, the spiders. As we will show below with other sources from contemporary Peruvian literature, in this predator/prey couple, the wasp-God parasitizes the spider-humans (*uru*) in order to transform them into beings which are equivalent to him, that is into devils.

In the legend the shift occurs because, according to Christian belief, the Virgin cannot under any circumstance commit a homicide. Although replacing the body of the hero at the bottom of the mine, she is thus obliged to save the poor man's soul. On the contrary, during the processions of the *Diablada*, it is the Archangel Michael or *San Miguel* who leads the devils after having killed Lucifer in person by openly plunging a sword into him. In the ritual dance form, it is thus the Archangel Michael who slays the Beast and can now occupy the active, homicidal place that the Virgin of the Mine cannot embody. For Amerindian populations, the character of *San Miguel* would in a way be the male counterpart, a blood relative of the Virgin (a sort of 'cousin' or 'brother') who can thus, like in the *Miraña* myth, kill the *nina nina* in the form of a devil who becomes the equivalent of a prey.

On dancing with the devil and the Virgin of the Mine, the first dancers of Oruro have partly integrated the Christian duality of good and evil, distributing the roles in accordance with the characters of the church, the Virgin and the Devil, or following the two brothers who are enemies, Archangel Michael and his fallen brother Lucifer, according to the two spaces, aerial and chthonic (or Heaven and Hell).

Echoing this Christian division that the Amerindian populations have associated with their deity, we can underline that the Spanish name given in Bolivia and in the North of Argentina to this wasp is *Avispa San Jorge*, 'St George Wasp', referring to another saint who, represented on his horse this time, slays the demon in the form of a dragon with his lance. St George is thus likened to a variant of the Archangel Michael (who slays the demon with his sword). Indeed, the 'dragon' of the Hymenoptera St George is his prey the spider (*uru*) or the larva (*kuru*), which he slays with his sting to parasitize it. In this relationship, each one is a form of 'dragon'. Among the other fantastic animals present on the garments of the devils of Oruro, we find spiders and dragons embroidered or placed as a crest on the masks. We believe that their presence is due to this Amerindian reading of the iconography of St George slaying the dragon rather than that of having integrated Asian dragons which are completely alien to the

area. This latter hypothesis is currently privileged to interpret the presence of 'dragons' on the masks and costumes (Vargas Luza 1998 in Dias Araya 2011: 84).

In a vocabulary list presented in the *Anales de la Sociedad Científica Argentina* (Vol. 45-46, 1898: 266), this wasp is "*Ninanina*: el San Jorge ó *runahuanchi*, así llamado en Bolivia, su picadura es un fuego". In the Quechua of Bolivia and northern Argentina, *runahuanchi* and wasp have the same etymology: "*Runahuanchi*: San Jorge, avispon negro blindado, que persigue a los apasancas ó tarantulas. ETIM: *Huanchi*, el que mata; *runa*, indio" (1898: 347). In this regional variation of Quechua, this wasp is thus an 'Indian-killer' in the sense that Indians identify themselves as *uru* (small bugs and spiders). Transferred on a cosmological level, the wasp/prey relation becomes a God/Human relation, where the wasp plays the God figure.

Absi had already underlined this association of the devil with St George, as for the Bolivian miners of Potosí, in addition to *Supay*, the generic name of *el Tío* is *Jorge* (Absi 2003: 143), and he "moreover refers to another saint, also a slayer of demons: St George" (2003: 133). This association would refer more to the name of the wasp St George embodied by *el Tío*. Whether in the form of *nina-nina* or of *Jorge, el Tío* of the mine is associated with the names given to the Hymenoptera.

For the Spanish world, the wasp would thus be associated with Good (St George; the slain spider representing evil), while for the Amerindian world as expressed in the *Diablada*, the same wasp would be associated with a chthonic entity, the devil *nina-nina*, or *el Tío*, which has become an incarnation of Evil following a Christian reinterpretation of spaces, although maintaining a positive form for the exploited populations.

Indeed, it appears that the hero of the legend has the nickname *nina nina* on having had the same negative behaviour as the woman thief, while his place in the legend intervenes so that he is placed in the gallery of the mine with the perspective of reappearing as a devil. In this construction, it is the result of the *post-mortem* metamorphosis which converts a human into a 'devil', a human into a God, in the same way that a wasp is formed from a spider or, as in the legend, a *uru* (spider) gives birth to a *nina nina* (a wasp).

This transformation of the prey into predator should be borne in mind when looking at the preparation of the costumes and masks of the *Diablada* of Oruro, paying particular attention to the beings having lent their features to the devils.

A 'devil' in the sky

Before envisaging the study of the iconography of the masks of the *Diablada* – which we reserve for another contribution – in order to describe how, voluntarily or involuntarily, the features usually given by Andean societies to wasps and/or to their gods have been concealed behind the features of the devil, it is again necessary to refer to how the Amerindian view could have come to interpret the figures of Christian iconography assimilating them to their God.

In the Andean region of Bolivia, Bouysse-Cassagne highlights that the God of the mountain of local religions was explicitly likened to the Christian Antichrist:

And it is undoubtedly for this reason that an adoration of the Antichrist appears in one of the most important churches of the Bolivian Altiplano in Caquiaviri (1739), for this reason also that during an extirpation of idolatry at Conchucos in 1656, in central Peru, one of the villagers challenged by the extirpator spontaneously replied that Guari, the bearded giant, God the Creator and cultural hero founder of the kinship groups (*ayllu*), living under ground, was in actual fact the Antichrist (Duviols 1986: 163) (Bouysse-Cassagne 2008: 126, translation D. Karadimas).

When we look at the features given to this figure of the Antichrist on the frescoes of Caquiaviri painted in 1739, they are fully symptomatic of this assimilation. Confronted in the air with the Archangel Michael and fighting over someone who is dammed, from whose belly the flames of hell are already emerging, one of the 'devils' of the fresco does indeed possess the hybrid features borrowed from a serpent, from a human and from insects (Figure 8). This Antichrist has the lower half of his body coiled like the tail of a serpent or a reptile, but with the abdomen even more like that of an insect, as it is segmented. This is all the more likely as the upper part of the character is equipped with



Figure 8. Kingdom of the Antichrist, anonymous, 1739, (Church of Caquiaviri, La Paz, Bolivia) (Bouysse-Cassagne 2008: 128).

rounded membranous wings, identical to those of insects, like the second little devil located along the leg of the dammed. The horns of this first winged devil are coiled at the end like a wasp's antennae (by way of comparison, we can take the drawing of this wasp made by Guaman Poma de Ayala, cf. Figure 1). The whole appears to correspond to an anthropomorphic depiction of the Andean winged God, thus having the same features as a wasp. The third winged devil has the wings of a bat or a dragon, which were found in Christian iconography to depict a chthonic devil. Placed below this winged being, the diabolical character with its arms raised, equipped with claws and holding a hook, is closer to a feline version, which Bouysse-Cassagne associates with the *Otorongo*, the jaguar of the Lowlands.

In her contribution of 2008, Bouysse-Cassagne does not give the Spanish or Indian origin of the painter or painters of this composition, because they are 'anonymous'. This origin could, however, be decisive. It is indeed either a painting of Indian origin which voluntarily gives its diabolical character the features of an insect, or it is by a

Spanish painter or one of colonial origin and the combination comes from a trend already established by Jérôme Bosch of depicting fallen angels as devils with monstrous forms taking elements from the anatomy of insects (according to Teulière 2001: 678, it is this second hypothesis that should be retained). Following one or the other of these possibilities, it can be envisaged that the reading of this figure of the Antichrist with the features of *Wari* is the result of the Amerindians. Rather than a devil, they saw their own God.

Conclusion

There are not, however, many contemporary ethnographical data from the Amerindian universe of the Andes concerning this Hymenoptera. They can only be found in the 'folklorist' literature of José María Arguedas, ethnographer of the Andean populations and Peruvian writer of short stories who opposes these two worlds, where the parasitic Hymenoptera intervenes on several occasions as an evil entity under the different names of *Waylis* or *Avispa San Jorge*. In his novels, the words that Arguedas gives his main characters, above all Quechua-speaking Indians, mainly come from his ethnographical investigations. The latter form the basis of his accounts, and we therefore allow ourselves to compare them to ethnographical data.

In an analysis of the Amerindian and Andean elements present in this literary work, Carlos Huamán underlines that Arguedas introduces the *Waylis* (generic Quechua word for 'wasp') and its behaviour as a hunter of spiders as a metaphor for the death of the Indians:

El *waylis*, conocido también como *aya wantu*, cargador de muertos, atrapa al *apasank'a* o tarántula y lo lleva a su 'cueva', un hueco preparado anticipadamente. Allí introduce a su presa y deposita sus huevos en el vientre de esta, para que sus hijos, al crecer, se puedan alimentar de ella (Huamán 2004: 247).

However, neither Arguedas nor the analyst of his work remark that the spider is still alive, and that the act performed by the wasp is carried out at the expense of a paralyzed being.

On the other hand, Huamán explicitly associates this Hymenoptera with the Indians' perception of it as a representative of the Christian duality of Good and Evil, but focuses on the fact that, in view of its Spanish name, it would rather be associated with Good by the Colonists, and Evil by the Indian populations. Above all, he identifies it with the Christian devil:

Curiosamente, por su nombre en español, pareciera que fuera un santo devorador de 'herejes', un colonizador con nombre de santo pero con el veneno infernal en el cuerpo. Es un elemento positivo para el mundo blanco y negativo para el indio. [...] El muertero brujo, *waylis* de fuego, representa el mal y el bien; es la encarnación del diablo blanco, el que inyecta su letal veneno en el cuerpo velludo del *apasank'a* [...] (Huamán 2004: 247).

It is thus likely that the origin of the nickname given to the historical character Anselmo Belarmino in 1789, according to the legend spread to the present day and at the heart of the festivities of the *Diablada*, comes from this identification with the parasitic wasp whose name, *nina nina*, he has. The fact that this name is given as the nickname of a thief who is going to die in the middle of the mountain and become a devil (associated with the Virgin of the Mine), then called *Tío* (in actual fact Dios ‘God’), is quite typical of this mechanism which was at the origin of the demonization of *Yurupari* in the Northwest Amazon.

Still according to Huamán, this comparison of the miner with the wasp-God can be found explicitly in the novel by Arguedas entitled *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (in reference to the fox and the underground God):

Don Esteban, el serrano embutido de carbón de la mina de Cocalón en *El zorro...*, no escapa a ser comparado con la avispa por su mujer, Jesusa, debido a su alejamiento de Dios y a su decisión de vencer a la muerte, arrojando el carbón de sus pulmones sobre periódico en el cual se registran los acontecimientos del Perú: ‘Su pecho comenzó a roncar. Su pestaña es igual que las patas del San Jorge Volador, animal [sic] brujo; su pecho de diablo. ¡No se confiesa! ¡No quiere hablar con el hermano!’ pensó Jesusa (Huamán 2004: 247).

In other words, it is the same entity from the underworld, responsible for the ore, who transforms the miners into a wasp-God, that is into itself.

In both cases – the Northwest Amazon and the Andes –, the Indian communities recognize in the devil similar features to their own entity with its devouring behaviour, or even the iconography of the pre-Hispanic God *Wari*, himself probably a personification of a wasp. In both cases, the recognition of the images and the behaviour leads the Indian communities to see their gods in the Christian devils. Their main representative, Lucifer, takes the place of the God *Wari* as, ultimately, and in the eyes of the Amerindians, this is just the form that the white people give him. As the God of the mountains and/or of the underworld associated with the mines and with volcanic activity, *Wari* would likewise be a deification of the same parasitic wasp, a *nina nina*, which is operative in the Northwest Amazon.

Finally, we can add that the folklorization of the local legend of Anselmo Belarmino is another sign of the presence of a pre-Hispanic mythology. Indeed, on comparing the structure of the Miraña myth at the origin of the festival of the masks with peach palm beer (*Bactris gasipaes*; cf. Karadimas 1999, 2003), we observe that they are constructed in a similar manner. In the Miraña myth, it is the father of the hero, identified with the Moon, who secretly has sexual relations with a young girl (identified with the star Venus), without him having declared his relations to his family-in-law. The four monkeys, his brothers-in-law, identified with Orion, behead him and make his head fall into the underground world of fish. His son, identified with the Sun, will come to avenge him and recover the flesh of his father in the form of racemes of peach palm.

Here, the woman thief *nina nina*, instead of being killed by members of the same generation (his brothers-in-law), is stabbed by the person who takes the place of a father-in-law, that is a member of generation +1. His body is transported by the Virgin (associated with the moon) into the underworld of the mine. The Virgin holds a child, Jesus, in her arms, identified in the Andes with the figure of the sun. The Child and his Mother are not likened to chthonic creatures, while the body of the thief becomes a 'Wari-Devil', takes the place of the god of the underworld *el Tio* and takes the name of a wasp *nina nina*. We thus return to Bouysse-Cassagne in her conclusions when she indicates that "[...] The figures of the ancestors continued to exist as transcendent figures even if, under the effect of evangelization, they will often adapt formally to the images of the devil" (2008: 129), as this possibility means that the ancestors, or the beings supposedly incarnating them, share, with the devils of evangelization, formal features that the Andean populations have been able to recognize in the figures of the devil, that is to say another expression of their own ancestors in predatory form (*Wari*).

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