



2020.094

Unidentified artist

Indian Woman of Perú

19th century

Oil on canvas

21 x 17 3/16 in.

This simple composition, showing an Indigenous woman holding a basket of fruit and leading a tethered llama, belies the tangled circulation of images that preceded it. The India del Perú, as she is titled in the various prints on which this painting was based, wears a simple tunic (*acsu*) ornamented by two silver *tupus* at the shoulders, a *lliclla* (mantle) draped over her left arm. The basket of fruits she bears includes a cherimoya, plantains, granadilla, watermelon, and figs, recalling the set of six paintings by Vicente Albán (fig. 2) documenting the racial types and fruits of Ecuador.



Fig. 2 Vicente Albán (active 1769-1796), *Sra principal con su negra esclava* (detail), c. 1783, oil on canvas. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

This work arises out of the genre of *costumbrismo*, a literary and artistic movement emergent in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, that sought to capturing the people (“types”), customs, and costumes of given lands. Created largely by European traveler-artists, these drawings and prints circulated widely within Latin America and Europe. This painting may in fact be of European origin, as the skin tone of the India has a distinct red tint not found in Spanish American works.

The Thoma painting of the India can be linked to a number of prints that began to emerge in the 1770s. The first was produced in 1774 by the French engraver François-Robert Ingouf (1747-1812), also known as Ingouf le jeune. Ingouf’s engraving of the India (fig. 3) is dedicated to Don Manuel de Salas y Corbalán (1754-1841), lieutenant of the Regiment of the Nobility of Lima. Unlike subsequent engravings of this scene, Ingouf sets the India in a mountainous landscape. The same year, Ingouf produced a companion print of the *Sra Criolla de Lima* bearing a dedication to Dr. Don Joseph Perfecto de Salas (1708-1778), the father of Don Manuel and a high government functionary in Chile. Both prints were commissioned by an unknown figure known only as “Pedro M***” who describes himself as a friend and servant of the two noblemen and contain citations from Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo’s (1664-1743) epic poem *Lima fundada* (1732), indicating a strong link to the viceregal capital. It is unclear how the task of creating these two prints was taken up by a French engraver who is not known to have traveled

to the Americas. Both works indicate that Ingouf based them on paintings by Julián Dávila of Lima.



Fig. 3 François Robert Ingouf, *Indienne du Pérou vêtue selon l'usage du Pays*, 1774, engraving. British Museum, London.

The name Julián Dávila is little known or documented beyond these prints. Various scholars have linked Dávila to Julián Jayo (mid 18th c.-1821).¹ The name Dávila appears in only one notarial record linked to Jayo, that of his 1771 marriage to María de la Encarnación Caballero, in which the artist styled himself as Julián Dávila y Jayo, legitimate son of Don Bernardo Davila y Jayo and Doña Francisca Sava.² Jayo is best known for his series on the life of St. Peter Nolasco at the monastery of La Merced in Lima and the decoration of the *gabinete* of the wife of Viceroy Manuel de Guirior (r. 1776-80), though he was also an active portraitist. The original paintings for the *India* and *Criolla* are likely no longer extant and have not been

¹ Omar Gonzalo Esquivel Ortiz, “Estudio histórico, formal e iconográfico del retrato de Simón Bolívar por Pablo Rojas en 1825” (MA thesis, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2015), 29-36; Raúl Adanaqué Velázquez, “Julián Jayo: pintor limeño” *Sequillo* 3 (1993), 73-77. My thanks to Emily Floyd for sharing these references with me.

² Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Pliego matrimonial, no. 10, December 1771. Quoted in Esquivel Ortiz, “Estudio histórico,” 31. Esquivel Ortiz suggests that name Dávila may come from his maternal grandfather, Don Joan de Ávila or that it may have been another surname not used by his mother Francisca.

documented, nevertheless prints based on Dávila's compositions circulated in various costume books in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Among these are is version in Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla's *Coleccion de trajes de España, tango antiguos como modernos, que comprenden todos los de sus dominios* (1777-1784), which is the likely source for the Thoma painting (fig. 4). The print shares the pared-down background found in the painting, its most distinctive feature a small leafing plant shown behind the llama's head.

Olmedilla's work appeared over nearly a decade in eight installments of twelve prints. Both the Criolla and India appeared as plates 35 and 36 in the third installment, which also included two works based on drawings by Luis Paret y Alcázar from his exile in Puerto Rico, the *jibaro* (peasant, pl. 29) and an enslaved woman holding a child (pl. 30). The third installment appeared in 1778 and by 1780 the prints were available for sale in the Madrid bookstore of Copin.³ Olmedilla's prints were an immediate success, spawning knockoff editions in France and Germany, as noted on plate 76.



Fig. 4 Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla, *India del Perú*, from *Coleccion de trajes de España, tango antiguos como modernos, que comprenden todos los de sus dominios*, 1778. National Library of France.

³ *Mercurio histórico y político*, February 1780, page 219.

Dávila's image of the *India* continued to circulate in European costume books including Venetian Teodoro Viero's (1740-1819) *Raccolta di 126 stampeche rappresentano figure ed abiti de varie* (1783-90) and W. G. Hausleutner's *Gallerie der Nationen* (1793) where she appears as "Eine Peruanerin." Indeed, the *India* had a longer life than her counterpart the *Criolla* in many of these costume books, as Europeans were frequently more interested in the indigenous and "authentic" cultures of faraway lands.

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