



2011.040

Unidentified Artist

*Our Lady of Cocharcas*

Peru

1751

Oil on canvas, 50 ½ x 41 inches

Inscription at upper left: *DE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM*

Inscription at upper right: *DEIPARA INVENTA SVMERCO IMMACVLATA*

On banderoles held by angels: *TOTA PULCHRA ES MARIA*

On the base of the cart: *N.ª S.ª Cocharcas año de 1751*

In the late sixteenth century, an indigenous artist named Tito Yupanqui created a sculpture of Our Lady of the Purification. Although the sculpture was not at first accepted by the clergy in

charge of the church at the town of Copacabana on the Bolivian shores of Lake Titicaca, it was finally installed in 1583. The image, soon credited with miraculous powers, was visited in 1598 by a young Indian from the town of San Pedro de Cocharcas (Departamento de Chincheros, Peru) named Sebastián Quimichi. He traveled to Copacabana to pray for the healing of an injured hand, and, when his prayers to the image of Our Lady effected the cure, he obtained a copy of Tito Yupanqui's sculpture that he brought home to Cocharcas. According to the chronicler Fernando de Montesinos, the statue was carried into San Pedro de Cocharcas in 1598, an event celebrated with *fiestas*, dances, arches decorated with flowers, and fireworks. This image, like the original in Copacabana, was soon credited with miracles, and many of the faithful were drawn to participate in an annual pilgrimage which is informally represented in this painting.

Like Our Lady of Copacabana, Our Lady of Cocharcas represents Mary presenting Christ in the Temple, called Our Lady of the Purification, or of Candlemas (Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria). However, as time has passed, each of these local devotions was given a day of celebration separate from the February 2<sup>nd</sup> Feast of the Purification, and the iconography has further included inscriptions related to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, as in the Thoma painting.

Although the sculpture was carried into Cocharcas in 1598, and a new church was built to house it in 1623, and then rebuilt in 1675 by Cristóbal de Castilla y Zamore, Bishop of Huamanga, the paintings of Our Lady of Cocharcas carried beneath her baldaquin through the Andean landscape, all date from the mid-eighteenth century. This painting, for example, is dated 1751, and the version in The Brooklyn Museum is dated 1765 (fig. 1). It is not yet known why there should have been a cluster of paintings of this subject created around the same time.



Fig. 1. Cuzco School, *Our Lady of Cocharcas Under the Baldaquin*, 1765, oil on canvas 78 ¼ x 56 ½ inches (198.8 x 143.5 cm), Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Mary T. Crockcroft, by exchange, 57.144.

The presentation of the figure on a silver processional cart suggests the annual pilgrimage, but the figures are busy with a variety of pursuits, not parading toward the church at the upper right of the canvas. From upper left is a hunter, a bullfight (more accurately, a horseman pursued by bulls), a shepherd with his flock, some place names (Lalaxa?, Cocharcas), a river with swimmers, members of several religious orders distinguished by their habits, a gentleman whose black slave holds the reins of his horse, and so forth, up toward the church itself. It is not known how the iconography originated, but the inclusion of many genre elements scattered through the landscape suggest a compositional inspiration for the Thoma painting of Saint Isidore the Farmer (2011.024).

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