



2016.042

Unidentified Artist

Bolivia, possibly Potosí

Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata

1669

Oil on canvas, 65 x 43 ¼ inches

Inscribed: *verdº retrato de nra. S.ª del Ros año 1669*



Fig. 1. Unidentified artist (possibly Potosí, Bolivia), *Our Lady of Pomata with Saints Bartholomew and Rose of Lima*, 1672, oil on canvas, 64 ½ x 38 ½ inches. Church of Nuestra Señora de Jerusalén, Potosí, Bolivia. Photo: Antonio Suárez Wiese.

There are two sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the shores of Lake Titicaca. The earlier of the two establishments is devoted to Our Lady of Copacabana, and the slightly later one, on the opposite shore of the immense lake, is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary in the Church of Santiago, Pomata. It has been suggested that the sculpture of Our Lady of the Rosary in the Church of Santiago in Pomata might be attributed to a Spanish artist named Diego Ortiz de Guzmán or to another Spanish sculptor working in the Viceroyalty of Perú.ⁱ The sculpture was in the church at Pomata as early as 1567.ⁱⁱ

Art historians and others have identified many European prints upon which artists in the Spanish colonies based their paintings. Very little attention has been paid to the creation of religious prints in the Americas and their use by artists for images of local cults that do not appear in European prints at all.ⁱⁱⁱ There is, however, documentary evidence of the local production of prints. In Juan Meléndez's 1681 *Tesoros Verdaderos de las Yndias* he discussed at length the subject of this painting in the Thoma collection:

and they commonly call it Our Lady of Pomata due to the place in which she wanted her image to become a remedy to all those in need. The miracles made in her name and presence, and with its *medidas* [i.e., lengths of ribbons the size of the statue and touched to it]^{iv} and prints, are innumerable, and require a second book.^v

These ephemeral prints would have been cheap prints on cheap paper and thus have not come down to us. However, a comparison between the painting of Our Lady of Pomata illustrated above with another version in a church in Potosí, Bolivia (fig. 1) makes clear they share common graphic source. That would partially explain the relative flatness of the painted images.

Interestingly, the two paintings discussed above are dated closely together, 1669 for the Thoma painting, and 1672 for the painting in the Church of Our Lady of Jerusalem in Potosí. The latter, which includes a representation of Saint Rose of Lima who was canonized only a year earlier in 1671. The painting may therefore celebrate not only Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata, but the first saint born in the Viceroyalty of Peru.



2003.04

Unidentified Artist.

Peru, Cuzco

Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata.

Eighteenth century

Oil on canvas, 68 x 44 inches

Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata is always shown crowned with a jeweled diadem sprouting plumes, an iconographical detail specific to this devotion, and she and the Christ Child held in her left arm always offer a rosary. The cape she wears over her gown is richly embroidered and closed with festoons of pearls held in place by scarlet bows and roses. There were many versions of this painting created in Cuzco during the eighteenth century.^{vi} The

richness of details in this painting distinguish it from the two paintings discussed above that may have been painted in Potosí. Single garlands of roses are multiplied. The mantle of the Virgin is more richly embroidered. The faces of the Virgin and the Christ Child are modeled in the round, giving the impression of bisque dolls.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt

ⁱ Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, *Object and Apparition. Envisioning the Christian Divine in the Andes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 67-72.

ⁱⁱ *Ibidem*.

ⁱⁱⁱ An exception is an article by Teresa Gisbert, "Salvador Hidalgo y el grabado en Charcas," *Anuario de Estudios Bolivianos, Archivísticos y Bibliográficos* 12 (2006): 127-50. Emily C. Floyd has done extensive research on printmakers in South America. The publication of her dissertation is eagerly awaited.

^{iv} Stanfield-Mazzi, *Object and Apparition*, 121.

^v Juan Meléndez, *Tesoros Verdaderos de las Yndias* (Rome: Imprenta de Nicolas Angle Tinassio, 1681), Primera Parte, 620.

^{vi} Years ago, when the first study of the Thoma collection of Spanish colonial art was published in 2006, I proposed that this painting of Our Lady of Pomata might have been painted in Potosí. The acquisition of 2016.042 and my further continuing study of painting in the Viceroyalty of Peru has prompted due reconsideration. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, ed., *The Virgin, Saints and Angels. South American Paintings 1600-1825 from the Thoma Collection* (Milan: Skira, in association with The Iris & Gerald Cantor Center for Visual arts at Stanford University, 2006), 160.