



1997.002b  
José Sánchez  
Perú, Lima  
*The Christ Child Appearing to Saint Anthony of Padua*  
After 1739  
Oil on copper, 14 ¼ x 10 ¼ inches  
Inscription: "Jø Sanchez" at lower left.



1997.002a  
José Sánchez  
Peru, Lima  
*Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*  
After 1739  
Oil on copper, 14 1/4 x 10 1/4 inches each oval

The painter who signed himself “Jø Sanchez” is thus far unidentified. However, these two small paintings on copper can surely be attributed to an artist who worked in Lima, and they can be dated to some time after 1739. The copper plate was first used for an engraving on the reverse side of the paintings. It was then cut into ovals, recycled to serve as the support of these paintings.

On the reverse of *The Christ Child Appearing to Saint Anthony of Padua* is the upper portion of an engraving (fig. 1) representing an equestrian figure of the Spanish king Philip V on a flat platform with a balustrade, beneath which is an entablature with classical decoration, and below a remnant of what appears to be a triumphal arch. The pedestal is decorated with the coat-arms of Castilla y León and the symbol of the Order of the Golden Fleece below.



Fig. 1 Reverse of *The Christ Child Appearing to Saint Anthony of Padua*





Fig. 2 Reverse of *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*

On the reverse of the *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child* (fig. 2) is an incised ruler giving the width of the monument: 20 varas, or about about 60 feet across. Below the arch is a foliated cartouche guarded at either end by Indians in feathered headdresses with arrows in their quivers. The cartouche is inscribed:

El Exmo. Sr. Marqués de Villa García,  
siendo virrey, mando coronar este arco, poner en  
el la estatua del rey nuestro Señor Don Phelipe Quinto  
(Que Dios guarde)  
Cometió la obra el Sr. Marqués de Cassaconcha  
oydor decano desta Real Audiece  
Lima, año 1739

Don José Antonio de Mendoza Caamaño y Sotomayor, Marquess of Villagarcía was the twenty-ninth viceroy of Peru: he served from 1736 to 1745. The engraving celebrating the creation of the monument to King Philip V of Spain must have been produced during his tenure in Lima, especially as the statue did not last much beyond that. Created by Baltasar Gavilán,<sup>i</sup> the bronze statue was placed in 1738 on the bridge over the Rimac River in Lima and then partially destroyed in an earthquake in 1746. Despite its short life, the sculpture was remarkable for its time and place. Francisco Stastny has noted that it was probably the first equestrian statue in the

Americas, predating by 65 years the monument to Charles IV by Manuel Tolsá in Mexico City.<sup>ii</sup> No prints showing Gavilán's achievement are known to exist: the copper plates which bear the Thoma paintings on the reverse are the only visual records of its existence (figs. 1 and 2). These engravings have been attributed by Emily C. Floyd to the printmaker Juan Francisco de Rosa, who was active in Lima from 1735 to 1771.<sup>iii</sup> There is a small painting in the Thoma collection (2018.042) that demonstrates Rosa's skill in other mediums.

Study of eighteenth-century painting in the Viceroyalty of Peru lags behind interest in the earlier centuries, but we may yet discover the identity of José Sánchez, who is thoroughly in command of the compositions, brushwork and palette of these small paintings. The subjects are in a tradition of gentle religious imagery inspired by the art of the seventeenth-century Sevillian painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, a tradition that continued in Sevillian art for decades after the master's death in 1681. José Sánchez may have emigrated to Lima from the south of Spain, bringing with him an academically correct command of his art, the devotional spirit of Murillo's paintings, and a palette contrasting golden tones with clear blues, hinting at the Rococo style of the later decades of the eighteenth century.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt

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<sup>i</sup> Pál Kelemen, *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Dover, 1967), 119.

<sup>ii</sup> Francisco Stastny, "From Fountain to Bridge: Baroque Projects and Hispanism in Lima," *Studies in the History of Art* 66 (2005): 206-24.

<sup>iii</sup> Correspondence with Emily C. Floyd (January 2020).