



1997.012

Unidentified Artist

Peru, Cuzco

*The Surrender of Seville to Saint King Ferdinand III*

Ca. 1661-1700

Oil on canvas, 47 x 64 inches

Inscribed: [very abraded: Con su Ora . . . y fe . . . Fernando . . . merece . . . Pues humilde . . .]

The Saint King Ferdinand (1198-1252) became king of Castile in 1217 and of León in 1230. For nearly three decades he led a crusade against the Moors in Andalusia. These campaigns in the south of Spain were key to the eventual Christian reconquest of the peninsula. In 1236 Ferdinand recaptured Córdoba, and soon thereafter his forces took Murcia, Jaén, Cádiz, and Sevilla. The painting shows the moment on 29 June 1236 that the keys to the city of Seville were handed from the kneeling Moor to the young king. According to the chronicles, the Virgin appeared there to Ferdinand, in her guise as Our Lady of the Kings (a cult image in Seville Cathedral), telling him “they will quickly deliver them to you and your labors will be over.” Those are the words emanating from the tiny figure of Our Lady of the Kings in the heavens toward Ferdinand: “presto se entregarán y tendrán fin tus trabajos.” Ferdinand was buried in the Cathedral of Seville, clothed in the habit of the Third Order of Saint Francis, before the image of the Virgin Mary.

Ferdinand was declared a saint in 1671, during the pontificate of Clement X. That date provides us with a reasonable *terminus post quem* for this painting and others representing the same subject. There is a version very similar to the Thoma painting in the Museo Pedro de Osma in Lima, and Gregorio Vásquez de Ceballos painted the same composition in reverse as one of four warrior saints for the Cathedral of Santa Fe de Bogotá in Colombia, and yet another version (fig. 2) now in the Museo Colonial in that city. The composition must have been widely distributed by an engraving made in Spain to celebrate the canonization of the saint.



Fig. 1. Gregorio Vásquez de Ceballos, *The Moorish King Delivers the Keys of Seville to Saint Ferdinand*, c. 1675-1680, oil on canvas, 106 x 84 cm. Museo Colonial, Bogotá. Photo: Oscar Monsalve.

It is likely that the illegible inscription on the cartouche of the Thoma painting was transcribed from the engraving.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt