



1998.002

The Presentation in the Temple

Workshop of Bernardo Rodríguez

Ecuador, Quito

Late 18th century

Oil on canvas, 44 x 32 inches

This is one of two paintings in the Thoma collection that can be attributed to the productive workshop of Bernardo Rodríguez, the other representing Jesus, Mary and Joseph observed by God the Father and the Holy Spirit (1999.017). Both works share similarities of color (clear, bright, primary), as well as characteristic figure types.

The composition relies on a German print (fig. 1) that represents *The Presentation in the Temple* after a painting by Johann Georg Bergmüller.



Fig. 1. Johann Andreas Pfeffel (1674-1748), *The Presentation in the Temple*, mezzotint, by 1723 (Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic). Image courtesy PESSCA.

Although the proper subject of the painting is made clear by the presence of Simeon, it is possible that the patron who commissioned this painting was attracted by the number of members of the family of Jesus Christ who are included.

While the subject of the earthly trinity portrays Jesus' nuclear family, images of the Holy Kinship depict His extended family. After the Council of Trent, such images focused on five figures: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Anne, and Joachim. . . . It is not unusual for the heavenly Trinity to be shown as well In the Hispanic world, these family portraits of Jesus with His parents and maternal grandparents were titled *Los Cinco Señores* (The Five Lords) or *La Santa Parentela* (The Holy Kinship).ⁱ

The subject was also called *Los Antepasados de Cristo* (The Ancestors of Christ). This would not be the only example of print source somewhat repurposed to a different subject.

The Presentation in the Temple is a fine example of the paintings created in Rodríguez's productive workshop. The elaborate fictive frame that encloses the figural composition, "carved and gilded" in Rococo style, its curves interlaced with delicately rendered flowers, is also characteristic of Rodríguez's work. These decorative motifs were spread by prints from Augsburg that carried the German Rokoko throughout the Americas. Engravings by the Klaubers may still be found in Quito collections, such as that of the Museo Fray Pedro Bedón at the Franciscan convent, and engraved repertoires of ornament were also created by Frans Xavier Havermann, Carl Pier, Emmanuel Eichel and others during the second half of the century.ⁱⁱ These print sources had broad application throughout the Americas, reflected in the architecture of Brazilⁱⁱⁱ as well as the decorative arts of Quito.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt

ⁱ Joseph F. Chorpenning, O.S.F.S., "The Earthly Trinity, Holy Kinship, and Nascent Church: An Introduction to the Iconography of the Holy Family," in: *The Holy Family as Prototype of the Civilization of Love: Images from the Viceregal Americas*, exh. cat., Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA, 1996, 47.

ⁱⁱ And these were used by printmaker elsewhere in Europe, as well. See examples of rococo framing elements used in eighteenth-century Spanish prints in: Javier Portús and Jesusa Vega, *La estampa religiosa en la España del antiguo régimen* (Madrid, 1998).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Myriam Andrade Ribeiro de Oliveira, *O Rococó Religiosos no Brasil e seus antecedentes europeus* (São Paulo, 2003), 91-97.