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Attributed to Marcos Zapata
(active 1748 – 1773)

Our Lady of the Rosary with Saints in Heavenly Glory

oil on canvas

inscription along the lower margin: *A devocion del YLmo Señor Dr. Dn Juan Manuel Moscoco y Peralta, Natural de la Ciudad de Arequipa Dionissimo Obispo de la Ciudad de Cordoba.*
83 x 63 cm.; 32.7 x 24.8 in.

Provenance

Private Collection, Spain.

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Marcos Zapata was a painter whose family belonged to the native aristocracy of Cuzco, and his surname was “Sapaca”, which became Zapata on being hispanized, although he also sometimes signed his paintings “Sapaca”. Alongside his contemporary Basilio de Santa Cruz, he was the foremost exponent of the Andean Baroque style, also known as the *Barroco de Indias*. He is considered one of the main figures from the Cuzco School of the 18th century, and was in charge of one of the most popular and renowned workshops of the day. As the years went by, he received and completed a great number of commissions both from Cuzco and beyond. His work was highly valued due to its simple and devote artistic language. His brush produced visually vibrant and energetic works, with a unique creative identity that made a valuable contribution to the pictorial heritage, rich in syncretic elements where his indigenous roots shine through. His entire oeuvre makes an unquestionable iconographic contribution to the study of the way colonial society functioned in the Hispanic Americas. The emergence of the many schools of the Altiplano (High Plateau region) was largely due to the widespread dissemination of Cuzco painting throughout the Viceroyalty.

In 1748, Marcos Zapata undertook a series on the life of St. Francis of Assisi for the Capuchin Monastery in Santiago de Chile. This series gave a foretaste of the potential and maturity this innovative artist would subsequently attain, as he showed two years later with the execution of a series of canvases preserved at the *Templo del Triunfo* in the city of Cuzco.

Zapata was active during the so-called “Mollinedo Era”, undertaking major projects for the Cathedral of Cuzco, generating a noticeable contrast with the works of Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao (1635-1710), preserved in said Cathedral. These works were carried out thanks to the extensive artistic knowledge and vision of Bishop Mollinedo, who left his mark on paintings that helped to establish the public image of the Inca renaissance and the consolidation of the Cuzco School.

Within the ensemble of Zapata works carried out for the Cathedral, there is a painting entitled *The Virgin in the Moment of Glory* (fig. 1), in which we can discern parallels with our canvas, such as the prevalence of the use of red, blue and white, and the typical arrangement of the figures, their physiognomy and the light-colored halos. In both works, the figures of God the

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Father and God the Son would appear to be sitting in a rather unnatural fashion on inexistent thrones. The treatment on the folds in the fabrics is also identical.

The unpublished work we are presenting here, and which is the subject of this study, is a canvas that can be rolled up and stored inside its original container or case. Said case is in red polychrome and its interior boasts dazzling gold leaf. The use of gilding on the inside guaranteed the work's survival over the centuries, given the incorruptibility of the noble metal. As with the majority of Zapata's paintings, our work presents a predominance of the colors red, white and ochre for the aureoles that meld into the blue sky. The Virgin Mary, located in the middle of the composition, dominates the painting as the main figure. She holds a rosary in her right hand and cradles the Infant Christ in her left arm, the latter leaning to one side while blessing with a cross. The Holy Trinity completes the composition, made up of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both God the Father and Christ are resting on a cloud that also supports the Virgin, and this connection represents the divine link binding them. The rest of the scene's figures are also seen floating on clouds that make up the heavenly stage, each one occupying his/her respective position. Underneath the Virgin we find St. Michael the Archangel who, holding a red banner, defends Catholic truth. Under St. Michael, a cherubim is holding a staff, the official pastoral symbol, flanked by two miters on both sides. Moving clockwise, to the right of God the Father we find St. Gabriel, dressed in the same fashion in which St. James the Greater tends to be depicted, that is to say as a pilgrim with a staff, short coat, hat and drinking flask (similar attire to that of the Archangel holding the Infant Jesus in the Zapata work entitled *The Birth of Francis*, from the Capuchin Monastery in Santiago de Chile), St. Rose of Lima and Child, St. Anne and the Infant Virgin, St. Francis of Paola, St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque, St. Barbara of Nicomedia, St. Teresa of Jesus, St. John Nepomucene, St. Dominic of Guzmán, St. Anthony the Great, St. Joseph and Child, and the Archangel Gabriel carrying a lily.

Along the lower margin of the work, we find the following inscription: *A devoción del YL^{mo} Señor Dr. Dⁿ Juan Manuel Moscoco y Peralta, Natural de la Ciudad de Arequipa Dionissimo Obispo de la Ciudad de Cordoba.*¹ This tells us that the work was executed for the personal devotion of Don Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Bishop of Córdoba, who was appointed

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Bishop of Córdoba del Tucumán in 1771, taking possession of said post two years later, information we can use to date the work to between 1771 and 1773, which marked the end of Zapata's artistic activity.

In 1748, Don Juan Manuel de Moscoso held the post of *alférez real* (royal ensign) in Arequipa, his native city, which shows that, prior to being widowed and starting his ecclesiastical career, he already had sufficient funds to be able to afford the expenses of the feasts and festivities involved in occupying this honorific post. It would not be his sole show of generosity and power as, on occupying the position of Bishop of Córdoba de Tucumán, he made the cathedral a gift of a gold monstrance adorned with precious stones. To judge by the pictorial quality of the copper portrait work seen below (figs. 2a and 2b), Manuel de Moscoso was undoubtedly quite willing to hire artists of the first order.² It would be no surprise if the Bishop got word of Zapata, all the more so given his origins in Arequipa and the links he established there during his studies in Lima and Cuzco, where he graduated as a Doctor of Theology. Manuel Moscoso was an influential figure, with contacts at the highest levels of society, both inside and outside the Church.

By 1778 he was transferred to the episcopal seat of Cuzco, which he would take possession of a year later, and set sail for Spain in 1786. His career reached its peak when he was appointed Archbishop of the city of Granada in 1789. He was finally awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Charles III in 1794. It is quite feasible that he would have taken the painting we have before us here, intended for his personal worship, on the boat back to Spain, and then on to the varying destinations God has in store for him and that, subsequently, it ended up in the hands of the local Granada family who were its final owners.

Of small dimensions, but of great historical importance and major significance for dating our painting of *Our Lady of the Rosary*, is the little copper work (also unpublished to date) mentioned in the previous paragraph, depicting the *Our Lady of Loreto* (with Portraits of Juan Manuel de Moscoso y Peralta and Juan de Otalora), arranged on a cloud resting on the House where the Holly family lived, surrounded by angels. The House of God represents the evangelical work undertaken by the two bishops portrayed on the earth, and the pleased gaze

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of the Virgin and the Infant Jesus indicate their acceptance of, and thanks for, their religious activities. The subjects depicted are Juan de Otalora, Bishop of Arequipa, and Manuel de Moscoso y Peralta, who by the inscription on the back of the copper holds the title of “Bishop of Córdoba del Tucumán” without having yet officially taken possession of the post, which explains why we are able to date our canvas to between 1771 and 1773, the year in which Moscoso did finally take possession of the post, while also coinciding with the last year in which Zapata was artistically active. The final notice we have is that the master was imprisoned, as recorded by Mesa and Gilbert, at which point his closest disciple, Cipriano de Toledo y Gutiérrez, replaced him, having been called on to value some paintings in the parish church of San Blas.

The discovery of *Our Lady of the Rosary*, attributed to the master Marcos Zapata, marks a significant contribution to Cuzco painting, being in all likelihood one of the last works produced by the hand of painter. This study has enabled us to shed light on a relatively undocumented period in the oeuvre of one of the most prominent and innovative artists of Hispano-America.

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Figure 1. Marcos Zapata, *Virgin Mary in the Moment of Glory*. Cuzco Cathedral, Peru

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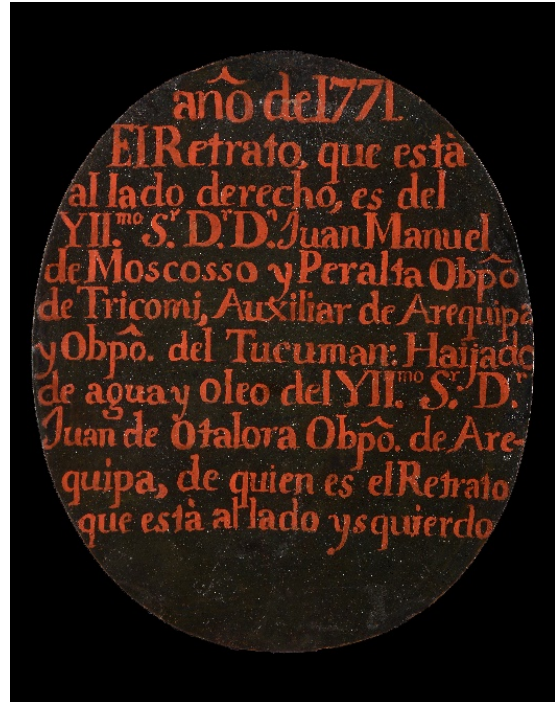


Figure 2a. Anonymous artist, *Immaculate Virgin*, 1771

Figure 2b. (reverse) *Immaculate Virgin*. Inscription: *año de 1771. El Retrato que está al lado derecho es del YIL^{mo} Sr D^r. D^r. Juan Manuel de Moscosso y Peralta Obispo de Tricomi, Auxiliar de Arequipa, y obpô de Tucuman ahijado de agua y oleo del YIL^{mo} Sr. Dⁿ. Juan de Otalora Obpô. de Arequipa de quien es el retrato que está al lado ysquierdo.*

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Footnotes

¹ Translation: “For the Devotion of the Most Illustrious Dr. Don Juan Manuel Moscoso y Peralta, Native of the City of Arequipa, Most Godly Bishop of the City of Cordoba”.

² Translation: “The Portrait on the right-hand side is that of His Most Illustrious Doctor Juan Manuel de Moscoso y Peralta, Bishop of Tricoma, Assistant of Arequipa and Bishop of Tucuman, godson in oil and water to the Most Illustrious Don Juan de Otalora, Bishop of Arequipa, who is depicted on the left-hand side”.