

Akemi Luisa Herráez Vossbrink

## The Circulation of Paintings by Zurbarán and Murillo in the New World

### ABSTRACT

Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664) and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) spent most of their career in Seville where their paths mostly overlapped in the mid-seventeenth century. Both competed for the growing number of commissions from local religious orders, parish churches and private patrons. Zurbarán's sharp figures against dark backgrounds were preferred during the first half of the seventeenth century whereas Murillo's lighter soft compositions became increasingly popular in the second half. Whereas Zurbarán and Murillo competed at a local level, Zurbarán was recorded as having been much more active on a global scale, exporting over 200 paintings to Latin America from Seville, one of Europe's main ports to the Americas. This article will for the first time develop a comparative approach considering both artists' presence in the Spanish viceroyalties. There have been several studies on Zurbarán's presence in Latin Amer-

ica, especially by Zurbarán specialist Benito Navarrete Prieto, and an increasing number of scholars considering Murillo's American presence. Navarrete Prieto has focused on Zurbarán's workshop paintings destined to the Americas and their print sources. There has also been some work on the documents related to Zurbarán's painting shipments overseas which will be discussed later. Whereas there are several studies on Zurbarán's presence in the Americas since the viceregal period, most work on Murillo focuses on paintings by his circle, the circulation of copies and his influence on Latin American artists. This study will focus on both artists' presence in the Spanish viceroyalties considering documentary and written evidence of their involvement with the Americas, how their families facilitated these transactions, existing and lost paintings by them in Latin America which provenance dates to the colonial period, their presence in Lima's Convent of Buena Muerte and finally how they perceived the Americas.

In the seventeenth century, Seville was the main port to the Americas. The city's prominence explains why artists based there, such as Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664) and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), were involved in the transatlantic market. Apart from this famous pair, there were also lesser-known artists, such as Juan de Luzón (1608-1662), who worked exclusively for the Americas.<sup>1</sup> These artists relied on their workshops to produce painting series quickly for the open market. These markets were in port towns, such as Portobello (Panama), where the paintings were typically acquired by merchants selling them throughout the Spanish viceroyalties. There was also a notable number of commissions, especially from religious orders decorating their newly founded churches, convents and monasteries. For transportation, these paintings were often removed from their stretchers, rolled up and placed in crates. Given the demand, their lightness and the relatively small space they occupied, paintings were, after prints and paintings on copper, the most collectable images in the Americas. These were especially collected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the colonial painting tradition was still developing. Recent research by Sandra van Ginhoven, referring to shipment listings in Seville's Archivo de Indias, has shown an increase of shipments with artworks destined to the Americas towards the end of the seventeenth century, growing from seven in the 1630s to one hundred and forty in the 1670s.<sup>2</sup> Among the artworks exported, paintings of religious subjects comprised 64% of those shipped to the Viceroyalty of Peru, but only 30% of those sent to New Spain.<sup>3</sup> The most popular images were Virgins, saints and angels, and the exports by Zurbarán and Murillo were no exception.<sup>4</sup>

The two painters spent most of their careers in Seville, where their paths overlapped in the middle of the seventeenth century. Both competed for the growing number of commissions from local religious orders, parish churches and private patrons. Zurbarán's crisply painted figures against dark backgrounds were preferred during the first half of the century, whereas Murillo's lighter, soft compositions became increasingly popular in the second. Zurbarán and Murillo competed both locally and overseas, as will be demonstrated by the case study of the Convent of Buena Muerte in Lima which housed paintings by their workshops.

This article will, for the first time, develop a comparative approach, considering both artists' presence in the Spanish viceroyalties. There have been several studies on Zurbarán's presence in Latin America, especially by Benito Navarrete Prieto who has focused on Zurbarán's workshop paintings destined for the Americas and their print

---

1 Duncan Kinkead, Juan de Luzón and the Sevillian Painting Trade with the New World in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century, in *The Art Bulletin* 66/2 (June, 1984), 303-310.

2 Sandra van Ginhoven, *Connecting Art Markets. Guiliam Forchondt's Dealership in Antwerp and the Overseas Paintings Trade* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 51.

3 *Ibid.*, 54.

4 Duncan Kinkead, Artistic Trade between Seville and the New World in the Mid-seventeenth Century, in *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas de Caracas* 25 (1983), 80.

sources.<sup>5</sup> Further research has scrutinised documentary evidence relating to Zurbarán's painting shipments overseas, which will be discussed below. Whereas several studies on Zurbarán's artistic presence in the Americas exist, most work on Murillo and America focuses on paintings by his circle, the dissemination of copies and his influence on local artists from the viceregal period to the early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Incorporating documentary, archival and visual evidence, this study will focus on both artists' relations with the Spanish viceroalties: the extant and lost paintings sent during the colonial period, the role of their families in facilitating these transactions, their presence in Lima's Convent of Buena Muerte and finally how they perceived the Americas.

## Written Sources and Documents on Artists and Paintings Travelling to the Americas

Writing in the early eighteenth century, Antonio Palomino, Zurbarán and Murillo's first biographer, does not mention Zurbarán's involvement in the Americas, while Murillo's is merely touched upon, with the claim that "after having earned enough to support himself by painting for the fairs... he did a batch of paintings to be sent to the Indies".<sup>7</sup> Zurbarán's American transactions were also overlooked a century later by Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, whereas Murillo was associated with another shipment: "[Murillo] Bought a portion of a canvas: divided it into many paintings: primed them with his hand, and painted on them devotional subjects: later he sold them to one of the many dock-workers destined to the Indies that existed in that city."<sup>8</sup> Despite the accounts of Palomino and Ceán Bermúdez, there is no documentary evidence of Murillo sending paintings to the Americas.

Whereas Murillo's involvement is mostly based on later biographical accounts, archival evidence of Zurbarán's painting shipments to the Americas emerged through the research of Celestino Martínez López in 1932, who published documents relating to two shipments from Seville's notarial archives.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, several other documents

---

5 Benito Navarrete Prieto and Odile Delenda, *Zurbarán y su obrador. Pinturas para el Nuevo Mundo* (Valencia: Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia, 1998).

6 María de los Ángeles Fernández Valle, De Sevilla a un mundo soñado: Murillo en el escenario americano, in Lidia Beltrán Martínez and Fernando Quiles García, eds., *Cartografía murillesca. Los pasos contados* (Seville: E.R.A Creación y Patrimonio en Redes, Sevilla, 2017), 167-184.  
Paula Mues Orts, De Murillo al murillismo o del cambio de la mirada, in *Caminos del barroco: Entre Andalucía y Nueva España* (México: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2011), 86-95.

7 Antonio Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, Nina Ayala Mallory, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 280.

8 Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Diccionario histórico de los más ilustres profesores de bellas artes en España* 2 (Madrid, 1800), 49.

9 Celestino López Martínez, *Desde Martínez Montañés hasta Pedro Roldán* (Sevilla: Tipografía Rodríguez Giménez y Compañía, 1932), 224-225.

related to his New World activity have been discovered.<sup>10</sup> One exceptional case is that of Lima's Monastery of the Encarnación, for which Zurbarán painted a series of martyr saints and scenes from the Life of the Virgin. The contracts for this commission, signed in Seville and Lima, detail both the format of the work, its subject matter and dimensions, and the details of its shipment – outlining a timetable for its despatch and naming the agents involved.<sup>11</sup> The other documented shipments, dated between 1636 and 1649, were destined for Lima, Buenos Aires and Portobello. Produced mostly by Zurbarán's workshop, these included series of paintings of female saints, apostles, founders of religious orders, archangels, noblemen, Roman Emperors on horseback and the Tribes of Israel destined for religious and civic buildings as well as private collections. The religious series of saints, apostles and founders of religious orders were common subjects in both Spain and the viceroyalties, whereas archangels and Tribes of Israel had a special significance in the Americas due to their relation to pre-Colombian beliefs and foundation myths of the Americas.

There is no documentary evidence that Zurbarán himself travelled to the Americas, but it is possible that Murillo went to the Viceroyalty of Peru when he was a teenager; a document of 1633 from Seville's notarial archive indicates that he intended to travel to South America, although it is unclear whether or not this visit ever took place.<sup>12</sup> If it did, he may have followed his relatives' footsteps, as his sister, María, moved to what is now the Dominican Republic and Haiti (La Española), her son and Murillo's nephew, Luis Sánchez Carrascoso, who was about the same age as Murillo, travelled to the Americas and Murillo's cousin, Bartolomé Pérez Ortiz, travelled to Mexico with the Spanish armada.<sup>13</sup> Other family members, such as the husband of another cousin, José de Veitia Linaje, were officials of Seville's House of Trade of the Indies, the *Casa de Contratación de las Indias*.<sup>14</sup> These personal connections testify to the family's involvement with the New World.

---

10 María Luisa Caturla, Zurbarán exporta a Buenos Aires, in *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 4 (1951), 39-43.

Jesús Palomero Páramo, Notas sobre el taller de Zurbarán: un envío de lienzos a Portobelo y Lima en el año 1636, in Enrique Valdivieso, ed., *Zurbarán: IV centenario del nacimiento* (Badajoz: Museo de Bellas Artes de Badajoz, 1998), 17-31.

Guillermo Lohmann Villena, Las pinturas de Zurbarán para el Convento de la Encarnación de Lima, in *Revista del Archivo General de la Nación* 19 (1999), 171-182.

11 Lohmann Villena, Las pinturas de Zurbarán, 171-182.

12 Diego Angulo Íñiguez, El viaje de Murillo a Tierra Firme en 1633, in *Archivo Español de Arte* 46/183 (1973), 354.

13 Ibid., 355.

14 José Manuel Cruz Valdovinos, Notas sobre la clientela de Murillo, in Benito Navarrete Prieto et al. eds., *Murillo ante su IV centenario. Perspectivas historiográficas y culturales* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2019), 193.

## Transatlantic Family Networks

Although there is no evidence that Murillo sent paintings to the Americas during his lifetime, there are documents that chart related monetary transactions. These were transcribed and published by Pablo Hereza but they have not been discussed together.<sup>15</sup> Dating from between 1650 and 1658, these transactions show Murillo granting loans to several travellers to South America.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, he was able to rely on some of his relatives mentioned above and agents, who were either based there or involved with the American trade networks to guarantee that Murillo would be remunerated.<sup>17</sup> An apparent failure to do so may have left him incapable of paying the rent of some houses in front of the Monastery of Madre de Dios in Seville, and he was subsequently held prisoner in October 1655.<sup>18</sup> Despite Murillo's volatile American investments, his son, Gabriel de Murillo, travelled to Bogota (Colombia) in 1679 and was named mayor of the nearby municipality of Ubaque.<sup>19</sup> Gabriel's posthumous inventory lists over fifty anonymous paintings, including apostles and Virgins that might have been executed by his father.<sup>20</sup> Gabriel's brother Gaspar sent two paintings by Murillo to Bogota after their fathers' passing in 1682.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that these two paintings are listed in Gabriel's estate inventory. Even though Murillo himself did not disseminate his work in the Americas, his sons were active promoters.

Zurbarán, too, depended on family members, some of whom were based in Peru. As agents in the South American trade, they were directly involved with paintings destined for Lima, the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru. According to Odile Delenda's research at the Archivo de Indias, six of Zurbarán's family members requested to move from the Basque country to Peru in the early sixteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Like Murillo, Zurbarán struggled to obtain financial compensation for the works he had sent to Latin America. In 1662, Zurbarán entrusted his brother-in-law, Captain Miguel de Torderas, to collect the missing payment for sixty-three paintings that had been sent to Buenos Aires in 1649, including series of saints, Virgins, Tribes of Israel, kings and noblemen.<sup>23</sup> The combination of so many outstanding payments for works with Zurbarán's increasing debts in Madrid, where he is documented as a resident since 1658, explain the urgency with which he had

---

15 Pablo Hereza, *Corpus Murillo. Biografía y documentos* (Seville: ICAS, 2017).

16 *Ibid.*, 228-243, 271-272, 274-276, 277-279, 294-295, 333-337, 341-343.

17 *Idem.*

18 *Ibid.*, 294-295.

19 *Ibid.*, 499.

20 Diego Angulo Íñiguez, *Historia del Arte Hispanoamericano 2* (Barcelona, Salvat Editores, 1950), 456.

21 Michael Brown. Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos (1638-1711) in *Viceregal Colombia: Workshop Practices and the Role of Draftsmanship*, RACAR 38/2 (2013), 58.

22 Odile Delenda, *Francisco de Zurbarán: pintor 1598-1664* (Madrid: Arci Libros, 2007), 16.

23 Caturla, Zurbarán exporta, 40, 43.

agents dispatched to Buenos Aires. It is not known whether they were successful, but the long wait suggests that they were unable to find the individuals who had sold Zurbarán's paintings. Even if they had traced them, Zurbarán would have hardly been able to benefit from the proceeds, as he passed away two years later.

The fact that both Murillo and Zurbarán were able to rely on family members did not shield them from the complicated nature of financial transactions with the New World. As demonstrated by Murillo's brief imprisonment and Zurbarán's increasing debts, these emerging markets fluctuated constantly and were therefore unpredictable. It is probably against this background that, by the mid-1660's, after both Murillo and Zurbarán had withdrawn from transatlantic engagements, merchants and agents paid painters in advance, thereby mitigating the risk of non-payment and avoiding the long waits that both artists had frequently suffered.<sup>24</sup>

## Zurbarán and Murillo's Latin American Legacy

In addition to family members, Zurbarán and Murillo's artistic presence in the New World was dependent on their workshops. In the whole of Latin America there is only one painting that can be attributed to Zurbarán himself. The *Supper at Emmaus* (fig. 1) signed and dated 1639, it is now preserved at Mexico City's Museo Nacional de San Carlos. There is evidence to suggest that it had been in the city's Church of San Agustín since the seventeenth century, where it was first recorded in the 1850s as hanging on a church transept wall.<sup>25</sup>

Other paintings signed by Zurbarán that reached the Americas in the colonial period include *St. Augustine* and *St. John of God* (1640s), now also in the Museo Nacional de San Carlos. These are collaborations between Zurbarán and his workshop or perhaps even entire workshop products. This is probably also true of the series in Lima, such as the apostles at the Convent of San Francisco (c. 1640), the founders of religious orders at the Convent of Buena Muerte (c. 1650) and the archangels at the Monastery of the Concepción (c. 1645-1655).<sup>26</sup> There are also signed paintings by workshop members in South America, including a *Virgen de los Reyes* by Bernabé de Ayala (Institutional Court, Lima) which is dated 1662, and a *Crucifixion* by Ignacio de Ries (Monastery of Santa Teresa, Potosi), dated 1646.<sup>27</sup>

---

24 Van Ginhoven, *Connecting art markets*, 240.

25 A lithograph published in the Mexican weekly journal *La Cruz* between 1855 and 1857 shows both paintings hanging in the church transept.  
María Teresa Suárez Molina, La pintura andaluza barroca en las colecciones mexicanas, in Rafael López Guzmán, ed., *Andalucía y América. Cultura artística* (Granada: Editorial Atrio, 2009), 31.

26 For detailed studies on these series, see:  
Navarrete Prieto and Delenda, *Zurbarán y su obrador*, 43-55, 61-67.  
Jorge Bernales Ballesteros, La pintura en Lima durante el Virreinato, in *Pintura en el Virreinato del Perú* (Lima: Banco Crédito del Perú), 79-82, 347-354.

27 Jorge Bernales Ballesteros, Una pintura original de Bernabé de Ayala en Lima, in *Archivo Hispalense* 50/153 (1969), 176-179.

While the paintings mentioned above have been studied extensively, evidence from colonial private inventories has been largely overlooked. These inventories mostly refer



Fig. 1: Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664), *Supper at Emmaus*, 1639, oil on canvas, 228 x 154 cm  
Mexico City, Museo Nacional de San Carlos.  
From: *Caminos del barroco: Entre Andalucía y Nueva España* (México: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2011), p. 152.

to collections in Lima, which is also home to the largest number of paintings currently attributed to Zurbarán and his workshop. The fact that the artist's name is frequently cited, qualifies the assumption that colonial collectors were merely collecting series, regardless of authorship.<sup>28</sup> These attributions must be treated with caution, however, as most of the pictures that remain in Latin America are workshop products, or the works of later followers and copyists.

The paintings by Zurbarán that are documented in Limenian seventeenth- and eighteenth-century inventories include still-lives, the so-called *Virgin of the Antigua* and twelve female martyrs.<sup>29</sup> A recent archival discovery added four large paintings that María Josepha Blanco de Villanueva gave to her husband Captain Carlos Gonzales y Recalde as part of her dowry.<sup>30</sup> Inventoried in Lima

---

Rafael Ramos Sosa, Un crucificado de Ignacio de Ries en Potosí, in *Laboratorio de Arte* 27 (2015), 605-610.

28 Benito Navarrete Prieto and Odile Delenda, *Zurbarán y su obrador*, 22.

Juan Miguel Serrera, Zurbarán y América, in *Zurbarán* (Museo del Prado: Madrid, 1988), 65.

29 Lohmann Villena, *Las pinturas de Zurbarán*, 173.

Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, La Catedral de Lima y el "triunfo de la pintura", in Guillermo Lohmann Villena et al., eds., *La Basílica Catedral de Lima* (Lima: Colección Arte y Tesoros de Perú, 2004), 245.

Antonio Holguera Cabrera, El coleccionismo pictórico de las élites en la Lima del siglo XVIII, PhD Thesis, Universidad de Sevilla (2019), 591.

30 Scribe Francisco Pérez de Soto, Dowry from Carlos Gonzales y Recalde to his wife María Josepha Blanco de Villanueva, Archivo General de la Nación (Lima), Portocolos Notariales 1527 (1679-80), 133R.

My thanks to the scholar Diego Carrillo for indicating this source.

between 1679 and 1680, these four pictures represented the Adoration of the Magi, the Nativity, Esther before Ahasuerus and the Judgement of Solomon.<sup>31</sup> The Adoration of the Magi and the Nativity were popular subjects: Zurbarán's prime examples are the paintings now at the Musée de Grenoble, which were previously at the Charterhouse of Jerez de la Frontera (Cadiz, Spain) (fig. 2). By contrast, no paintings of the two Old Testament



Fig. 2: Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664), *Adoration of the Magi*, 1638, Oil on canvas, 264 x 176 cm  
Grenoble (France), Musée de Peinture et de Sculpture.  
From: *Zurbarán* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 1988), p. 209.

Murillo known to have reached the Americas during the colonial period is the *Virgen del Belén* (fig. 3), which Archbishop Manuel Rubio y Salinas (1703-1765) brought to Mexico

subjects have been ascribed to Zurbarán. These were generally unusual subjects in seventeenth-century Spain. In 1690, the Spanish painter Matías de Arteaga painted *Esther before Ahasuerus* as part of a series of paintings related to the Eucharist for the sacristy of the Church of the Sagrario in Seville, while a rare example of a *Judgement of Solomon* was recently attributed to the young Jusepe de Ribera (Galleria Borghese Rome, c. 1609-1610). Apart from the series of patriarchs, these two are the only other known Old Testament subjects attributed to Zurbarán in Latin American collections.

It will be recalled that there is no indication that Murillo shipped paintings to the Americas during his lifetime, and indeed there are far fewer paintings by Murillo and his workshop if compared to Zurbarán. The only painting attributed to

31 Idem.

City's Metropolitan Cathedral in 1749.<sup>32</sup> It was then placed in the choir, where it has been admired and copied by Mexican artists ever since.



Fig. 3: Attributed to Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), *Virgen del Belén*, undated, Oil on canvas, 120 x 94 cm  
Mexico City, Sacristy of the Metropolitan Cathedral.  
From: *Caminos del barroco: Entre Andalucía y Nueva España* (México: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2011), p. 163.

Murillo's followers Juan Simón Gutiérrez (1643-1718) and Esteban Márquez de Velasco (d. 1696) also helped disseminate the "Murillesque style" in seventeenth-century Mexico.<sup>33</sup> Sofía Sanabrais discovered a document of 1678 from Seville's notarial archive that certifies that Gutiérrez shipped no fewer than thirty-three devotional paintings to Mexico.<sup>34</sup> This is the first documentary evidence for Murillesque paintings reaching Mexico. As for Márquez de Velasco, a series of eleven paintings depicting the life, death and miracles of Saint Francis of Assisi (Museo Regional, Guadalajara, Mexico) has recently been attributed to him. Initially thought to be by Murillo or by a related Mexican artist, this new ascription is based on stylistic and technical evidence as well as the recent discovery of a Sevillian notarial document, dated 1694, which documents the commission for these paintings by the presbyter Don Fernando Ramírez de Arellano.<sup>35</sup> Even though one painting is now missing from the series, probably lost or damaged, there are several striking similarities with the documented series, including the

- 
- 32 For more on the provenance and copies after these paintings, see: Xavier Moyssen, Murillo en México, La Virgen de Belén, in *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 18 (1967), 16-17.
- 33 Whereas Murillo's followers were more active trading with Mexico, there is also evidence that one follower called Juan López Carrasco (active in the second half of the seventeenth century) exported his work to South America. For more information on this artist, see: Duncan Kinkead, Juan López Carrasco, discípulo de Murillo (documentos nuevos), in *Archivo hispalense: Revista histórica, literaria y artística* 72/220, (1989), 323-328.
- 34 Sofía Sanabrais, The Influence of Murillo in New Spain, in *The Burlington Magazine* 147/1226 (May 2005), 327-330.
- 35 Adriana Cruz Lara Silva, Las atribuciones del ciclo pictórico de la vida de San Francisco del Museo Regional de Guadalajara en México, in Inmaculada Rodríguez Moya et al., eds., *Arte y patrimonio en Iberoamérica. Tráficos transoceánicos* (Castellón de la Plana: Universitat Jaume I, 2016), 115-134.

near-identical dimensions and subjects (of which eight coincide).<sup>36</sup> Paintings by Murillo and his followers made a strong impression on local artists. This relationship began in the late seventeenth century with Cristóbal de Villalpando and reached its apex in the eighteenth, with artists such as Juan Rodríguez, Juan Francisco de Aguilera and José de Ibarra.<sup>37</sup>

As with Zurbarán, private inventories also recorded works by Murillo during the colonial period. These were mostly compiled in Diego Angulo's *catalogue raisonné* dated 1981, where they are generally listed without further interpretation. One notable example is a series of paintings on copper ("laminas") of the Virgin, the Flight into Egypt and the Assumption of the Virgin described in the will of Juana Sebastiana Galindo, dated 1733.<sup>38</sup> In addition to religious subjects, it is known that popular street scenes of "beggar" boys reached the Americas. Antonio Holguera's extensive research on eighteenth-century Limenian collections mentions a canvas by Murillo of two gluttons ("dos golosos") in the Marquis Zelada de la Fuente's inventory of 1799.<sup>39</sup> These could have resembled paintings such as Murillo's *Two Boys Eating Melon and Grapes* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, c. 1650).<sup>40</sup>

Many works by Zurbarán and Murillo registered in colonial inventories have been lost, destroyed or sold to North American and European buyers. The paintings inventoried in Latin American collections cannot be linked directly to paintings mentioned as part of Zurbarán's shipments, as dimensions and ultimate destinations are not specified. Although shipment records frequently mention the intended destination, the respective paintings would then have been sold to anonymous buyers or intermediaries.

## Zurbarán and Murillo's presence at Lima's Convent of Buena Muerte

In some cases, works by Zurbarán's and Murillo's workshops arrived at the same destination. For example, the Convent of Buena Muerte owned, at least since the eighteenth century, the previously mentioned series of founders of religious orders by Zurbarán (fig. 4), plus a painting of the *Holy Family* dated to the 1660s or 1670s and attributed to Murillo's workshop (fig. 5) (Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida). Scholarship has so far overlooked how both artists rivalled with each other in religious orders outside of Seville.

---

36 Ibid., 121-123.

37 For an overview of Murillo's influence on Mexican artists, see: Paula Mues Orts, *Con pincel suave y colorido amable: Murillo y la pintura novohispana*, in Benito Navarrete Prieto et al., eds., *Murillo ante su IV centenario. Perspectivas historiográficas y culturales* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2019), 483-494.

38 Diego Angulo Íñiguez, *Murillo. Catálogo crítico* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe S.A., 1981), 388, n. 910.

39 Holguera Cabrera, *El coleccionismo pictórico*, 466.

40 Ibid., 574.

The Convent of Buena Muerte belonged to the Camillians or Clerics Regular, a sixteenth-century order of Italian origin. Their main mission was to tend to the sick. They first established themselves in Lima in 1709 but were not authorized to exercise their ministry until 1736, when construction works on the Convent of Buena Muerte began.<sup>41</sup>

Zurbarán's series of founders was donated to Father Laguna in 1769 by a Doña Gertrudis de Vargas.<sup>42</sup> These were scattered throughout the convent and were brought together in



Fig. 4: Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664) and Workshop  
Series of Founders of Religious Orders. Lima, Sacristy of the Convent of Buena Muerte.”  
© Author's photo. Photograph authorized by the Convent of Buena Muerte, Lima.

the sacristy, where they now hang, sometime in the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> Juan Contreras y Ayala, the Marquis of Lozoya, who saw the paintings in the early 1940s, mentioned that they were probably copies or imitations of Zurbarán and that Gertrudis de Vargas originally donated thirty paintings of which seventeen are now lost.<sup>44</sup> Despite the uneven quality of these paintings, the involvement of Zurbarán's workshop is clearly discernible.

41 Pablo F. Luna, Posesiones de conventos y monasterios en Lima; segunda mitad del siglo XVIII, inicios del siglo XIX. El Convento de Buenamuerte, in Bernard Bodinier et al., eds., *De la Iglesia al Estado. Las desamortizaciones de bienes eclesiásticos en Francia, España y América Latina* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2009), 82n7.

42 Juan de Contreras y López de Ayala, Zurbarán en el Perú, in *Archivo español de arte* 16 (1943), 11.

43 Marqués de Lozoya, Zurbarán en el Perú, in *Mercurio Peruano* (1942), 11.

44 Juan de Contreras y López de Ayala, Zurbarán en el Perú, 11.

In some instances, the heads and hands seem to have been painted by the master himself.

Perhaps, the *Holy Family* by the workshop of Murillo was also simultaneously donated to the convent or shortly afterwards. It certainly remained in the convent until 1842, when it was acquired by Henry Coit, then American consul in Lima. In 1936 it was bequeathed to the Ringling Museum of Art, where it underwent a controversial restoration in 1949, during which many areas were repainted or lost. This restoration today makes a firm attribution almost impossible.



Fig. 5: Attributed to the Workshop of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), *Holy Family*, 1660s-1670s, Oil on canvas, 215.3 x 163.1 cm  
From: Virginia Brilliant, *Italian, Spanish, and French Paintings in the Ringling Museum of Art* (Sarasota: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2017), p. 381.

The *St. Dominic* from Zurbarán's series and the Murillo *Holy Family* were copied by Limenian artists. A half-length copy of *St. Dominic* is signed and dated 1793 by Julián Jayo. A close, unpublished copy of the *Holy Family* also exists, probably executed in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, confirming the interest in continuing the legacy of the Spanish Golden Age painters in Lima. Coincidentally, both copies are now at Lima's Franciscan Convent of the Descalzos. Given that the original paintings were both held at the Convent of Buena Muerte, it would appear that the Franciscans at the Descalzos wished to emulate the neighbouring convent by asking Lima's artists to copy their Spanish prized possessions.

## Conclusion

Zurbarán and Murillo's exchanges with the Americas were not unidirectional, as they also used materials from the Americas for painting

and depicted saints living or actively preaching in the New World. While Zurbarán used carmine from cochineal insects, which was mostly collected in Mexico, Murillo is known to have used obsidian as a surface on at least three occasions, for two paintings at the Louvre, Paris, and one at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.<sup>45</sup> As for depictions of saints

45 María Domínguez Domínguez-Adame, El Proceso de restauración, in *La Restauración de los Zurbaranes de la Cartuja* (Seville: Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla, 1997), 38-39.

active in the Americas, Murillo's painting of Saint Rose of Lima established a prototype that both Spanish and colonial artists followed immediately after her canonization in 1671.<sup>46</sup> Whereas Murillo painted the first saint from the Americas, Zurbarán painted another saint active there – St Louis Bertrand, a Spanish Dominican friar who preached in South America during the sixteenth century (Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville, c. 1640). These portraits demonstrate the significance of Murillo and Zurbarán's paintings for the evangelisation process throughout the Americas.

There is bibliographical, documentary and material evidence for Zurbarán's and Murillo's involvement with the Spanish viceroalties. Even though there are no known documents that prove that Murillo directly exported his paintings to the Americas, it has been speculated that he may even have travelled there. He certainly provided loans to friends travelling to the Americas, and his disciples actively exported their works there from the late seventeenth century. Meanwhile, Zurbarán is known to have shipped paintings to the Americas, but there is no record of him travelling there. These colonial enterprises would not have been possible without the support of their agents, among whose number were members of their own families.

Several collections belonging to important ecclesiastical figures and noble families have been shown to contain significant numbers of Spanish Golden Age pictures. These should be studied together with collecting practices in the colonies. In order to understand how these collectors perceived these paintings in terms of authorship, subject and value. Many works from these private collections were subsequently donated to churches, convents and monasteries, blurring the boundaries between secular and religious contexts, as exemplified by Zurbarán's series of portraits of religious founders for the Convent of Buena Muerte. A closer investigation of colonial inventories and a reconstruction of the display of paintings in convents and monasteries, still holds great potential towards realising a better understanding of Zurbarán and Murillo's legacies in the Spanish viceroalties.

*Akemi Luisa Herráez Vossbrink is a Curatorial Fellow in Spanish paintings at the National Gallery (London).*

---

Oliver Meslay, Murillo and "smocking mirrors", in *The Burlington Magazine* 1175/143 (February 2001), 73-79.

46 The prime example, at the Lázaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid, served as a model for Mexican artist José Rodríguez Juárez (1675-1728), who painted St. Rose in 1715.