

# Caylus



**FRANCISCO DE GOYA Y LUCIENTES**

(Fuendetodos, 1746 – 1828, Bordeaux)

*The Holy Kinship*

Ca. 1774

Oil on canvas

96.6 x 74.7 cm

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Vitoria-Gateiz

EXHIBITIONS:

Vitoria, Museo de Bellas Artes de Álava, *Un nuevo Goya. Berri bat. La Virgen niña con san Joaquín y santa Ana*, on loan 2012-2019.

Zaragoza, Museo Goya. Colección Ibercaja, *Goya y Zaragoza, 1746-1775*, 26 February - 28 June 2015, cat. 18.

LITERATURE:

TABAR ANITUA, F., «Una obra maestra juvenil de Goya», en *Ars Magazine*, 11 (July-September 2011), pp. 54-65.

BUSTINDUY FERNÁNDEZ, M<sup>a</sup> P., «Una obra en buen estado», en *Ars Magazine*, 11 (July-September 2011), pp. 66-67.

MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B. (coord.), *Goya y Zaragoza, 1746-1775*. Exhib. cat. Zaragoza: Fundación Goya en Aragón; Gobierno de Aragón, Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Ibercaja, 2015, pp. 142-143.

Three years after Francisco de Goya entered the studio of the Zaragoza painter José Luzán Martínez, his first master for both painting and drawing, he applied for a grant from the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. The application was made in December 1763 when Goya was seventeen. At that date he regularly attended the studio of Francisco Bayeu (another former student of Luzán), aspiring, like so many other young artists, to gain the recognition of the Academia. Goya was not however successful in his application, nor was he in 1766 as a candidate for the entry level painting class.

Nonetheless, Goya's determined nature led him to undertake a trip to Italy in 1770 with the aim of completing his training and gaining more recognition. His surviving sketchbook or *taccuino* and his written observations indicate that he made the journey overland, crossing the south of France and northern Italy before spending much of his time in Rome. He visited most of the most important Italian cities, studying pictorial techniques, analysing the aesthetic qualities of the country's greatest artists and expanding his repertoire of classical images derived from antique sculpture. He also observed regional costumes and the typical

masks used in popular theatre and the *commedia dell'arte* in Rome and Venice, offering proof of his early interest in the grotesque and the satirical.

During Goya's time in Italy he took part in a competition organised by the Academy in Parma, for which he carefully prepared himself through preliminary studies that provided the basis for a painting of *Hannibal crossing the Alps*, which was the competition's stipulated subject. The academicians of Parma praised the artist's ability to express the figures' emotions and admired the fluidity of his brushstroke but the unrealistic palette was not to their liking and the prize was awarded to another painter.

Goya returned to Zaragoza soon after submitting his canvas in April 1771. Shortly after, in the October of that year, the twenty-five-year-old artist received his first important commission, to paint the vault of the small choir in the Basilica of El Pilar. Following this, he secured new contracts from various Aragonese aristocrats to paint the pendentives in the churches at Muel and Remolinos, followed by canvases to decorate the chapel in the remodelled palace of the Count of Sobradiel in Zaragoza. Also at this period Goya's master Francisco Bayeu gave him permission to marry his sister Josefa, who was a year older than Goya. The wedding took place in the church of San Martín in Madrid on 25 July 1773, although the young artist continued to work in Zaragoza during these years, as demonstrated by tax records for that city.

Goya's career advanced rapidly. The major cycle of mural paintings on the Life of the Virgin for the Charterhouse of the Aula Dei increased his fame in 1774, demonstrating his great facility at organising large compositions. Shortly after that project Anton Raphael Mengs, First Painter to Charles III, summoned him to court to paint tapestry cartoons for the Royal Santa Barbara Tapestry Manufactory. In January 1775 Goya established himself permanently at court.

The above information summarises the period between 1746 and 1775, which corresponds to the years of Goya's training and formation. This was a fundamental chapter for his life and work and one that has been the subject of numerous studies in recent decades since the reappearance of the *Italian Sketchbook*. Above all, the research undertaken by Manuela Mena and the curatorial team in the Department of Spanish Painting and Goya at the Museo del Prado has cast light on this period and allowed for the identification of a

considerable number of works that were first shown together in the exhibition *Goya y Zaragoza, 1746-1775*, held in Zaragoza in 2015.

The present canvas of *The Holy Kinship* should be dated to this period, after 1771. Like most of Goya's religious works from these years, this depiction of the Virgin with Saint Joachim and Saint Anne is a work intended for private devotion. Its composition, with its emphatic, monumental classicism, is comparable to others tried out in the *Italian Sketchbook* and in particular to the compositions for the above-mentioned Aula Dei murals. This apparent simplicity contrasts with the colours and expressivity of the figures who, with simple gestures, reveal their attitude towards the young Virgin and their family ties with her. Authors such as Tabar Anitua and Mena Marqués have noted the connections between this work and others such as *The Sacrifice to Vesta* (Félix Palacios collection, Zaragoza), *Lot and his Daughters* (private collection), and *Saint Barbara* (Museo del Prado, P-007794), as well as to the scenes of *The Birth of the Virgin* and *The Circumcision* for the Aula Dei [figs. 1 and 2].

Other recently rediscovered works that also date from this period and reveal similar technical procedures are *The Flight into Egypt* [fig. 3] and *The Death of Saint Albert of Jerusalem* [fig. 4].



Figs. 1-2. Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Birth of the Virgin* and *The Circumcision* (details), ca. 1774. Oil on cast, 307 x 790 and 304 x 650 cm. Zaragoza, Aula Dei.



Fig. 3. Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Flight into Egypt*, ca. 1772-1774.  
Oil on canvas, 35 x 60 cm. Private collection.



Fig. 4. Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Death of Saint Albert of Jerusalem*, ca. 1772-1774.  
Oil on canvas, 35 x 60 cm. Private collection.