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FRANCISCO HERRERA THE YOUNGER

(SEVILLE, 1627–MADRID, 1685)

Religion

1671

INK AND BLACK CHALK ON LAID PAPER

181 X 125 MM

Together with Juan Carreño de Miranda and Francisco Rizi, Francisco Herrera the Younger was the leading name in Madrid Baroque painting in the second half of the 17th century. Born in Seville in 1627, he first trained with his father, the painter and printmaker Francisco Herrera the Elder (c. 1590–1654) from whom he learned the rudiments of painting. In order to further his studies he moved to Rome in 1649 where, according to Antonio Palomino, he studied “with great application, both life studies and the famous sculptures and celebrated works of that city; as a result of which he became not just a great painter but also highly skilled in architecture and stage design.”¹ Although it is not known when he returned to Spain we know that Herrera was in Madrid in 1654 where he was commissioned to paint the main altarpiece for the convent of the Barefoot Carmelites. After his return to Seville, where in 1656 he painted *The Triumph of the Host* (Seville Cathedral), he founded the Academia Sevillana with Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. In 1663 Herrera was summoned to Madrid by Philip IV to paint the frescos (now lost) in the church of Nuestra Señora de Atocha. From this date onwards Herrera attempted to secure the post of Painter to the King, finally succeeding in 1672, followed by further appointments within the royal household. In 1674 he executed the altarpiece for the Hospital de Montserrat while between 1680 and 1682 he lived in

Saragossa. Herrera died in Madrid on 25 August 1685 and was buried in the parish church of San Pedro.

Aside from his activities as a painter, Herrera the Younger was an extremely successful designer of temporary decorations and scenery and also produced prints. With regard to the former, a notable work is his *Decoration for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception* (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi), as well as his designs for the proscenium arches and backdrops for the play *Los Celos hacen estrella* by Juan Vélez de Guevara, performed in the Salón Dorado in the Alcázar, Madrid, in 1672 to mark the birthday of Queen Mariana of Austria (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence).² As a printmaker Herrera the Younger worked with Murillo and Valdés Leal in 1671 on a sumptuous edition of Fernando de la Torre Farfán’s book on the celebrations in Seville to mark the canonisation of Fernando III el Santo.³ Herrera designed the illustration for the frontispiece of this publication on the subject of *The Exaltation of Fernando III el Santo* and designed and engraved the allegorical composition on page 19 with a portrait of Charles II of Spain as a child.⁴

The present drawing is executed in pen and black chalk on laid paper. It depicts a mature woman holding a cross and incense burner in her right hand and a book in her left on which is a pelican that is now difficult to see. Beneath her feet on the left is a sort of dragon or monster while barely



Francisco Herrera the Younger,
*Allegorical Portrait of Charles II as Catholic
King*, 1671. Madrid, Biblioteca
Nacional



Francisco Herrera the Younger,
*Initial Study for the Allegorical Portrait
of Charles II as Catholic King*, c. 1671.
Harvard, Houghton Library

sketched in on the other side is the figure of an angel holding an object. All these elements suggest that the figure of the woman represents Religion. The monster at her feet would thus be the devil, conforming to Cesare Ripa's description, while the pelican is a clear reference to the Eucharist.⁵

From a formal viewpoint this work is evidently a preparatory drawing for the image of Religion on page 19 of the *Fiestas de la Santa Iglesia de Sevilla* by Torre Farfán. As noted above, that volume includes an allegorical depiction of Charles II as Catholic King. The image of the child king is set in a large medallion and flanked by allegories of Religion and Peace. Towards the bottom, two small angels hold up the royal coat-of-arms, while to the left of it is the artist's signature: "D. Fr. De Herrera F.". In addition to the present drawing, there is an initial design for this engraving in the Houghton Library in Harvard that reveals the significant modifications made by Herrera between the

initial design and the final image.⁶ Initially, for example, Herrera envisaged an architectural background that was not ultimately used. With regard to differences with the present drawing, Religion was originally veiled, holding an incense burner in one hand and a smaller cross in the other. The woman initially had the book under her right arm while the figure of the devil was on her right. The present drawing thus reflects an exercise of profound reflection and study of the composition through which Herrera achieved greater compositional clarity, giving the design enormous monumentality and a broader sense of space.

The style of the present drawing corresponds perfectly to the technique used by Herrera the Younger in other surviving drawings. All reveal the use of an agitated, tangled line. This undoubtedly derives from his time of study in Italy in the circle of Pietro da Cortona and reflects his interest in creating a sense of dynamism in his compositions.

1 Palomino (1715-1724/1947), p. 1020. For his time in Rome see also Ceán Bermúdez (1800), vol. II, pp. 279-280.
2 For these drawings see *Dibujo español de los siglos de oro* (1980), pp. 77-78, cat. nos. 147 and 151, and Carreño, Rizi y Herrera (1986), p. 93.
3 Torre Farfán (1671).
4 On the print of Charles II see Los Austrias (1993), pp. 312-313, cat. no. 324 and Pascual Chenel (2010), pp. 482-483, no. cat. GC3.

5 Ripa (1593/1987), vol. II, pp. 259-263. The source for the pelican seems to be the emblem in Bolzani (1602), pp. 200-201 entitled "Pietas et amor in filios".
6 Published by Sánchez Cantón in 1930 when still in the Boix collection. See Sánchez Cantón (1930), vol. V, pl. CCCLXXII and Garvey (1978), pp. 28-37, pl. II, and also Pérez Sánchez (1986a), p. 250.

