



**JAIME EGUIGUREN**

ART & ANTIQUES

**Vicente Macip**  
(Andilla, ca. 1475-Valencia, 1545)

**ADORATION OF THE  
CHRIST CHILD**

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(Andilla, ca. 1475-Valencia, 1545)

***Adoration of the Christ Child***

Valencia, ca. 1510-1525

Oil on panel

89.5 x 65 cm

Provenance: Spain, private collection.



## DESCRIPTION

This is a previously-unpublished work constituting a major addition to the corpus of paintings by Vicente Macip, formerly the Master of Cabanyes, one of the proponents of the Renaissance lexicon throughout the Valencian region. The work, whose visual effect is heightened by the use of perspective, its sumptuous wealth of detail and the partially Classicist design of the architectural features, is a perfect match for the known oeuvre of the Valencian master, and is the reflection of a major process combining Flemish tradition with Italianising innovation taking place across the Hispanic territories at the start of the 16th century.

The main figures from the episode appear in the foreground, with Mary and Joseph on their knees adoring the Christ Child, who is on the ground lying on his mother's blue cloak (**Fig. 1**). Jesus is pictured surrounded by a halo of slender golden rays, executed using mordant gilding, and making a gesture with his right hand while crossing his legs. He has fair hair and an unmuscular body. Mary is clasping her hands together out of respect, and her sweet and delicate face features prominent globular eyes that express inner rapture. She wears a red robe with gold trim at the neck and cuffs, as well as an undershirt that is white around the neck and violet at the cuffs. On top of that she had a blue cloak, the outer trim of which is also decorated in gold. Her brown hair, with delicate gold highlights, cascades down over her shoulders and back forming slight curls and ringlets (**Fig. 2**).



Fig. 1 Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child. Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.



Fig. 2. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.

St. Joseph appears in a similar position, his left knee resting on the ground, and showing his respect for the Christ Child by clasping his hands together. Like the Virgin, he too bows his head, looking towards his Son who, meanwhile, is seen looking upwards, seeking visual contact with his Mother. This establishes an interesting diagonal arrangement generating a sort of upside-down triangle. Joseph is wearing a tunic of iridescent tones and touches of gold at the neck, and a red cloak with ample folds and gold edging. His face, as opposed to what one might expect, is not that of a bearded old man with white hair, but a middle-aged one with a thick brown beard. In contrast to the face of his wife, which is perfectly illuminated, the painter has skilfully shadowed the area of Joseph's cheekbones and neck. Behind him we see three angels standing up, with dulcet

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faces, dressed in white albs and other garments executed in pastel tones. Two of them appear to be talking enthusiastically, while the third raises his hands as a sign of respect for the new-born Christ.

Another of the major figures featured in the scene is God the Father, a bust of whom appears in the upper register of the composition, surrounding by fluffy clouds imbued with a pronounced atmospheric charge (**Fig. 3**). The image of the Almighty underscores the transcendental nature of an episode taking place in the human world; the birth and arrival of his Son, the Redeemer. Dressed in robe and cloak, he holds his arms wide open and sends the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, who prepares to descend to earth to impregnate the Virgin Mary. At almost the other extreme of the painting, following the vertical axis, we find a curious depiction of the young St. John the Baptist, wearing a camel's skin that leaves a good part of his little body exposed (**Fig. 4**). He is seen kneeling in front of a moulded stone prie-dieu, surrounded by thick vegetation among which violets are prominent. Two angels present their respects to Christ's cousin, one by raising his hands, while the other clasps his together in prayer. Their scale is in contrasting proportion to that of the main figures, and their unfurled wings are executed in pastel tones. They are dressed as deacons, with white albs and dalmatics decorated with fine brocade featuring the characteristic “de la carxofa”, or artichoke, motif.

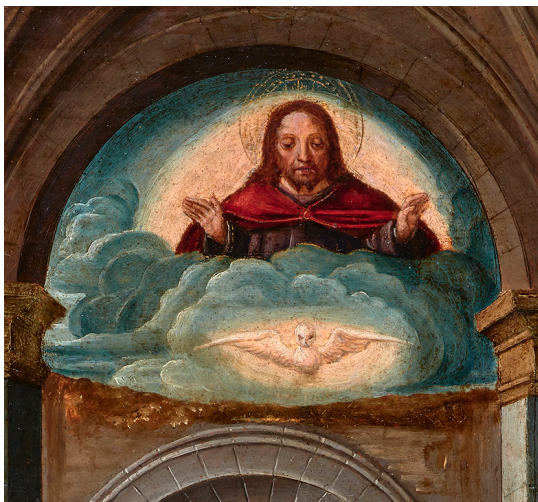


Fig. 3. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.



Fig. 4. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.

As for the three shepherds, one of them has entered the space where the Christ Child is lying, and has also fallen to his knees. He is dressed as such and wears a turban on his head, while holding onto a lamb. The other two shepherds are rather more removed from the action, remaining outside, standing behind a low parapet (**Fig. 5**). The painter paid close attention to his depiction of both, given that apart from the contrasting red and yellow attire, he presents one with a



Fig. 5. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.



Fig. 6. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.

shepherd's crook and a vessel made from an animal's horn hanging from his waist, while the other is depicted with a leather bag and a wind instrument rather like bagpipes. Their gestures suggest that the second shepherd is turning to his companion, gesticulating to tell him that they are in the presence of the Son of God, while the other shepherd listens closely. Behind them a wooden fence and some vegetation separate them from an episode that took place earlier in time, and which also has a bearing on them, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, taking place in the distance, where we can see an angelic apparition irradiating light against a deep blue sky of varying chromatic tones (**Fig. 6**). There, on a little patch of flat land with a building on it, we see a shepherd surrounded by his flock, raising his arm in wonder at the angel's message.

One of the most striking aspects of this work is the fact that the humble stable where Jesus was born has been transformed into an exuberant example of Classical architecture with a rib vaulted ceiling. This sort of symbolic ruin takes on such protagonism that it almost overshadows the figures within it. The painter has depicted two rows of square cross-section columns like pilasters, topped by semi-circular arches and decorated with a candelieri relief work, making up a visual structure of highly-pronounced depth. The goal is to represent a vanishing architecture

transformed into a preamble (guiding the eye along the diagonal lines of the floor tiles) to the background landscape, visible through one of the arches at the far end of the interior.

We say the artist went to great pains when depicting this architecture not solely on the grounds of the Italianising relief work of the columns, but also on account of the moulded capitals, the ribs of the vaulted ceiling and the gap in one of them just above God the Father. Be that as it may, he did not paint a three-dimensional space to contain his figures with absolute realism or proportion but, rather, indulged in an exercise in feigned dramatic skill, and yet with a final result that is not entirely credible due to the fact that this was a period at which Hispanic artists were still experimenting with Italian perspective. In any case, the architecture's leanings towards antiquity are beyond question, and are a clear reflection of the Renaissance-oriented ambience that had been subtly pervading the Crown of Aragon for some years. It is as such that one of the more significant aspects is the hybridisation formed between the square columns decorated with a candelieri motifs and the ribbed vaults above them, which speak of that language of transition and how innovations were being adapted to existing tradition.

The background landscape takes on an appearance of a river inlet located just at the convergence of the vanishing points marked by the floor tiles, and features typical images from Flemish painting that had been exported to the Iberian peninsula in the second half of the 1400s (**Fig. 7**). Despite the distance and the limited space available, the painter shows his desire to depict the scene in painstaking detail from the outset, making great efforts to depict a scene including water birds, a mill with a waterwheel and a series of little figures traced out in black, walking around what appears to be the little village where they live. To this we should add geographical contours, the occasional cloud and a smattering of vegetation.



Fig. 7. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child (detail). Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren.



## ICONOGRAPHY

In terms of iconography, one of the aspects that catches the eye most, and which could even be considered an oddity, is the presence of the young John the Baptist in the foreground, occupying an important position along the central axis of the composition. Furthermore, his figure is linked to the shepherd kneeling just behind Mary with the lamb, given the animal stands as a direct allusion to Agnus Dei, the symbol of Christ as Lamb of God. This motif, extremely common in Christian iconography, is based on the words uttered by the Saviour's cousin when he sees Jesus for the first time: "Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1: 29).

In the context of the *sacra conversazione*, the inclusion of the young John the Baptist in paintings focussing on the Virgin and Child was a popular device in Renaissance Italy, used to sweeten compositions and lend them an anecdotal narrative, as the figure of the Forerunner or Precursor allowed artists to complement their depictions with infantile and amorous nuances linked to the fact that John was Christ's cousin. Which explains why numerous painters from the Hispanic regions, as they adopted the Italianate lexicon during the first third of the 16th century, included the young Baptist when depicting the Virgin and Child or Holy Family, as we can see from a number of Valencian panels by Paolo de San Leocadio , or others by Macip himself . These works were intended for private worship, which is why the subjects were embellished with additional features that enabled the faithful to engage with the painting in a more emotional and empathic way, as befitted private and intimate prayer. The panel we are studying here, however, does not appear to belong to that category, but rather to an altarpiece compartment for which such details were neither necessary nor conventional. And even less so considering the image of the young John the Baptist, as linked to a Nativity or Adoration of the Christ Child, was by no means common. Not that it was the only time Macip would turn to such a device, given the Baptist appears once more in an altarpiece compartment depicting the Adoration of the Magi from the Lladró collection (Valencia) , on this occasion explicitly pointing at Christ (**Fig. 8**).





Fig. 8. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Magi. Valencia, Lladró collection.

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There are also other works in which Macip chose to depict the Virgin and the Christ Child surrounded by varying saints. Their inclusion, in greater or lesser numbers, is an iconographic device we can find in the compartment of the St. Anne with the Virgin and Child with Mary Magdalene from the altarpiece he painted in about 1507 as part of a commission from Llorenç Joan for the Carthusian monastery of Porta Coeli (Serra, Valencia) ; in a Crowning of the Virgin from the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, where we see a total of seven saints accompanying Mary and Jesus, including a young St. John the Baptist that invites close comparison with the one in the panel we are examining here ; or in two panels featuring exactly the same subject, The Virgin and Child with Angels and Saints, in which the young Baptist once again makes an appearance very much like in our panel. These sorts of compositions, with Jesus and the Virgin Mary surrounded by saints and angels, were extremely popular in Valencia in the first third of the 16th century , where the saints acted as humanity's intercessors before Christ, a role St. John the Baptist could be playing in our Adoration of the Christ Child. Furthermore, the Baptist's figure is key to images of the Deësis, as in those supplicatory images that is exactly the role he plays. He was the Precursor or Forerunner; Christ's herald, and his inclusion in this Adoration has much to do with that, and from there one can interpret his presence as linked to the Parousia, Christ's Second Coming for the Last Judgement.

With regard to the shepherds, one of which is pictured holding a wind instrument, their origin is to be found in the classical world. The appearance of these figures along with the praying postures adopted by the Virgin, St. Joseph, young John the Baptist and some of the angels, means the composition is more an Adoration of the Christ Child than a proper Nativity. On the other hand, the new-born Messiah is remarkable in his reduced size, and appears surrounded by the characteristic aureole of light in allusion to his divine nature. This detail is a direct reference to the Revelations of St. Brigitte of Sweden (1373), canonised in 1391, a text which claims, among other things, that once Mary had given birth, the Christ Child emitted such radiance that all the others in the stable were left in the shade .

The Christ Child's position on the floor, his legs crossed and lying back on Mary's cloak, accompanied by his parents who are seen kneeling with their hands clasped together, is reminiscent of 15th-century Flemish models. This sort of representation was rapidly exported to the Crown of Aragon, and was attempted by a number of Aragonese painters . The origin of these scenes bringing the three figures together can be traced to the north of Europe, where we find examples of Adorations with the three of them depicted with similar gestures and postures.

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This is the case of a panel preserved in the Munich Alte Pinakothek, which has on occasion been attributed to Johann Koerbecke . Where we find the closest parallels is in the immediate circle of Robert Campin, and in paintings by later masters such as Rogier van der Weyden or Hans Memling. Of those works close to Campin it is worth mentioning one panel dedicated to the life of St. Joseph preserved at Sint-Katharina church in Hoogstraten (Belgium), dated to about 1425, which was considered the copy of a lost original by the Flemish master, in which the Christ Child is lying directly on the Virgin's cloak, just like in our panel. As for the Van der Weyden circle, a polyptych of the Nativity preserved in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 49.109), attributed to a follower or member of the master's workshop, depicts Mary, the Child and St. Joseph in positions and poses similar to those seen in various Hispanic works. One might also mention a number of works by Hans Memling from the seventies, including the Adoration of the Christ Child from one of the wings of a triptych preserved in the Prado Museum, with the three figures portrayed in a similar manner .

The third iconographic motif worth highlighting is the presence, towards the top, of a theophanic vision of God the Father accompanied by the Holy Spirit. What we have here is a clear allusion to the incarnation and personification of the Word. This theophany has multiple theological functions. It is clear that it successfully distinguishes Jesus with regard to all other Christians, as it is God who reaffirms the birth that has just taken place in Bethlehem, conferring a Messianic character on it. Furthermore, it serves to make it quite clear that Jesus was not like other mortals, as the appearance of the Almighty is an obvious indication of the divinity of the Son of God, reinforced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to what we normally find in Annunciation episodes, which usually feature similar images, this theophanic vision does not show us the Son bearing the cross of the Passion, the so-called *parvulus puer formatus* , a motif that lent greater force to the redemptive and eucharistic connotations of the episode, within the framework of the medieval doctrine that defended Christ's formation outside his mother's womb. And we do not find it here because it is not relevant, given Mary had already given birth.



## STYLE AND ATTRIBUTION

The description and analysis we have provided of the elements depicted are relevant to understanding the importance of the work we have before us here. Its meticulous detail and passion, which force us as viewers to run our eyes across the architectural space, as well as the great depth the artist sought to express through the vanishing points, are remarkable elements that define the personality of the painter who executed the work we are studying here; the man that was Vicente Macip. The panel stands out in terms of its Italianising appearance, palpable not only in the proliferation of classical motifs in the architecture, but also in other details such as the presence of the young John the Baptist, linking it to the Italian *sacra conversazione*, as well as in the postures of the shepherds and angels portrayed in conversation.



Fig. 9. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child.  
Tarragona, Museu Diocesà de Tarragona.

The spatial, ornamental and decorative profusion displayed by this panel can also be found in other works by Macip, the most similar one being an Adoration of the Christ Child preserved in the Museu Diocesà in Tarragona (115 x 93 cm; inv. no. 2.999) , which in all likelihood originated from the Cathedral (where it must have arrived from the antiquities market), and which presents numerous points of convergence with our panel (**Fig. 9**). One of the main similarities between the two is the combination of Gothic tradition with new Italianising styles. As such, the Tarragona panel also features openings onto the outside through semi-circular arches where the columns are also square. On the other hand, here we find a

barrel (rather than ribbed) vault decorated with coffers. The depth of the space is key, though the absence of diagonal lines formed by the floor tiles means the image has less perspective perception. As with our panel, the background landscape opens up through one of the arches, which also includes the scene of the Annunciation to the Shepherds, though moved to a different location. The theophanic representation, meanwhile, is depicted just above the arch, just like in our panel. With regard to the figures portrayed, there are some close parallels that immediately catch the eye, such as the three central ones, with the exception that Joseph is no longer looking at the Christ Child. The two angels kneeling in the foreground are exact matches, making precisely the same hand gestures. The shepherds, meanwhile, have been shifted from the left to the right, but one of them also holds a wind instrument under his right arm. We find another change in location for the second group of angels, who in the Tarragona panel appear behind the Virgin, and two more angels have been added, holding a phylactery praising the Son of God. In spite of all of these changes, the compositional approach is extremely similar, and there is no doubt that these two panels were the work of the same artist. We can even identify the same delicate gilt work in the halos, which are identically translucent and were executed using mordant gilding.

Another Adoration of the Christ Child that could join this list is the one that was housed in the old Milà collection (Barcelona) (**Fig. 10**). Although the composition presents noticeable variations, such as the inclusion of St. Jerome, or the change in the positions of St. Joseph and the shepherds, we once again find the Christ Child lying on the floor on top of his mother's cloak, with the angelic choir on the right as well as an architectural backdrop of similarly Classical leanings. The columns supporting the vaulted ceiling are also square, and the capitals are moulded, while the shepherds are once again depicted behind a parapet, while the background features a deep landscape including the annunciation to the shepherds scene.

There are, however, some major differences in the scene depicting the same subject found in the



Fig. 10. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child. Barcelona, former Milà collection.

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San Miguel altarpiece from Villar del Arzobispo (Valencia), now housed in Valencia's Museo de la Catedral, and one of Macip's first works, dating from about 1500 . Due to its early chronology, there is neither the depth nor the Renaissance touches in the architecture, this being a much less ambitious composition rooted in the Gothic tradition. In any case, the model used for the Virgin Mary is the same, pictured in the same position, and the Christ Child is also arranged lying on the floor on top of his mother's cloak. The pastors are depicted in much the same way, and the two angels are once again portrayed paying their respects to the new-born Saviour.

We can say much the same for another panel from the same museum in Valencia, if anything a slightly closer match for our composition, though with less depth of perspective and lacking in the classical decoration of our panel . The parallels, however, are numerous: the characterisation and arrangement of the main group of figures is a match, particularly the Virgin and Christ Child; the inclusion of square, moulded pillars; the fact that one of the shepherds is carrying a wind instrument; or the execution of the clothes of two of the angels, the similarities being particularly clear with regard to the angel dressed in white from our panel, where we can observe the same voluminous folds in the fabric around the waist. Finally, we should also mention that the Valencian work also includes the annunciation to the shepherds scene, though this time in a landscape featuring fewer Flemish connotations.

With regard to style, the face of the Virgin Mary presents similar features to those of the angel with a crown of thorns from a fragment of dust guard preserved in the Museu de Belles Arts in Valencia . There are also numerous parallels with an Annunciation from the Laia-Bosch collection (Bilbao) , where Mary is depicted in accordance with an analogous human model featuring a similar face, the only difference being that her robe and cloak are of the same colour (**Fig. 11**). The gilt decoration is the same in both works, with delicate gold fabric borders and translucent halos of fine rays. The same can be said for the classical architecture, the angel's clothes, the way the floor tiles are arranged and the appearance of the theophany from which the Almighty sends the dove of the Holy Spirit to impregnate the Virgin. Saying that, the human model of the Virgin, along with her position, are not far removed from what we have in the epiphanies of the altarpiece of St. Michael and the altarpiece of Sts. Dionysius and Margaret preserved in the museum of Valencia Cathedral , where Mary also appears in similar blue cloak and red robe. In the second of the aforementioned altarpieces, the scene depicting the Dormition of the Virgin, the apostle pictured reading in the foreground has a head that invites comparison with that of St. Joseph from our Adoration of the Christ Child .



Fig. 11. Vicente Macip. Annunciation. Bilbao, Laia-Bosch collection.

Of all the works bearing similarities with our panel, the one whose parallels are most notable would have to be the Christ, Man of Sorrows from the Museu de Belles Arts in Valencia, originally housed in the Servite monastery of Sagunto (Valencia) , where the face of the St. John the Evangelist accompanying Christ is immensely reminiscent of that of our Virgin Mary (**Fig. 12**). Furthermore, Joseph of Arimathea closely resembles our St. Joseph, while the use of mordant gilding on the halos, translucent once again, presents the same delicate touch and mode of execution. It is interesting to observe that said panel was from the central compartment of a triptych which, on one of the wings (currently in a private collection), included a Flagellation of Christ that is particularly notable in the classicist architecture that serves as a setting for the episode, which suggests we are dealing with works carried out at much the same time. Furthermore, the outside of one of the wings features a St. Gabriel from the Annunciation which has numerous similarities with the young angels from our Adoration . There are also comparable counterparts to said angels in other works by Macip, such as the Ecce Homo with Four Angels preserved in the church of Santa Cruz in Valencia ; the aforementioned Adoration of the Christ



Fig. 12. Vicente Macip. On the left, Christ, Man of Sorrows (detail) originally from the Servite monastery of Sagunto (Valencia, Museu de Belles Arts de Valencia). On the right, Nativity (detail) (Buenos Aires, Jaime Eguiguren).

Child from the Museo de la Catedral de Valencia, or the also aforementioned panel depicting the same subject from the old Milà collection.

We find an identical approach to the architecture in a Virgin and Child between Sts. Joachim and Anne from the old Viñas collection , where we once again observe an Italianising decorative repertory applied both to the structural space housing the figures and the throne on which Mary and Jesus appear. Much the same may be said for the aforementioned Annunciation from the Laia-Bosch collection (**Fig. 11**), where apart from a structure of columns and mouldings, we also find a majestic church door with medallions, columns and even inscriptions, as well as other elements inspired by a classical repertory. And, finally, when it comes to the landscape background of our Adoration, one might draw parallels, in terms of depth and meticulous detail, with the Descent from the Cross that was included on the second wing of the aforementioned triptych from the Servite monastery of Sagunto, or with the landscape featured in the Annunciation to St. Joachim from the aforementioned Joan altarpiece made for the Carthusian monastery of Porta Coeli. In short, all of the above leads us to conclude that the style of the painting suggests it was the work of Vicente Macip's later years, a time in his artistic career at which he was using devices that appear in many of his other works, both in terms of human models and in the introduction of Italian-inspired elements on compositional, iconographic and decorative levels.





## **THE PAINTER: VICENTE MACIP**

In the Valencia of the first half of the 16th century, a number of families came to the fore that had members dedicated to painting altarpieces, with prominent surnames including Osona, Cabanes and Macip. Of the latter, two names stand out, Vicente and his son Juan Vicente Macip, more commonly known as Joan de Joanes. Macip senior was one of those responsible for introducing the Renaissance lexicon into Valencian painting, along with other figures such as Paolo de San Leocadio, the Osonas and the Hernandos.

He was born in the Valencian region (probably in the town of Albaida), in about 1473-1475, and in 1493 he married Isabel Navarro, with whom he had two children, Isabel Ana and the aforementioned Juan Vicente . He was already working as a painter by that point, though we do not know who he studied under. According to the documentation, his workshop was located in the Valencian parish of Santa Cruz, and the earliest records we have of him, from the 1490s, contain hardly any information on his professional life. It is not until 1507 that he is recorded as charging a sum of money for an altarpiece, the one that Llorenç Joan commissioned for the Carthusian monastery in Porta Coeli. He would subsequently undertake altarpieces for the church of San Nicolás in Valencia, dedicated to the souls in purgatory (1507-1508), and for Betxí, as commissioned by Blanca de Cardona (1517). By the end of the 1520s his son, Joan de Joanes, starts to take on a central role within the family, signing contracts alongside his father, as we can observe from the commission they carried out for the high altar of Segorbe Cathedral (1529-1532), signing a contract with the Valencian guild of silversmiths (1534), the work they painted for the church of San Bartolomé in Valencia (1537), or the project they undertook in the headquarters of the Brotherhood of the Preciosísima Sangre de Cristo (Most Precious Blood of Christ), (1539). In 1542, Vicente Macip took on his last commission for an altarpiece with his son, for the Valencian guild of wool dressers, and intended for the church of San Nicolás y San Pedro Mártir. On the other hand, his more minor commissions, such as contracts for crowns, plinths or tabernacles for the Valencia city Council and Cathedral Chapter, he tended to sign on his own, along with the occasional little altarpiece of lesser importance, such as the one he painted

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for the Puerta del Mar in Valencia, dedicated to the Guardian Angel (1532-1533). We also know that he took on apprentices at his workshop, that his wife died in 1544 and that that same year he drew up his last will and testament, being by that point both old and infirm, though he did not die until 10 October 1551.

The figure of Vicente Macip has been revisited in depth in recent times, mainly due to the research work carried out by Fernando Benito and the exhibition of his work organised by Valencia's Museu de Belles Arts in 1997 . As such, his identification as the Master of Cabanyes enabled scholars to attribute a healthy number of works to him, filling in the gaps in his early artistic output prior to undertaking the documented Segorbe altarpiece (1529-1532), which to that point has served to define his style. However, the stylistic differences between said altarpiece, or the impressive Christ at the Column preserved in Alba de Tormes church in Salamanca, with earlier works now considered to be part of his catalogue raisonné, such as the altarpiece painted in about 1507 as a commission from Llorenç Joan for the Carthusian monastery of Porta Coeli , led experts such as Ximo Company and Lluïsa Tolosa to question whether these early works should be attributed exclusively to him . Benito justified these differences, arguing that the artist evolved after 1521, when a number of works by Sebastiano del Piombo arrived in Valencia, brought from Rome by the ambassador Jerónimo Vich, who had them installed in his Valencian palace, and which Macip may well have seen . Company and Tolosa, on the other hand, voiced the opinion that the arrival of a few works could hardly be the sole argument to explain such a radical evolution and shift in style. They argued that it was more plausible that Vicente's son, Juan Vicente Macip, also known as Joan de Joanes, took on a more central role in the workshop from the Segorbe project onwards. In short, Company and Tolosa concluded that those works whose style leant towards Del Piombo and the Italy of the day, which had been included as part of the Vicente Macip corpus, should actually be attributed to Joan de Joanes. It is therefore of great significance that a 1534 document commissioning both father and son to execute an altarpiece for the Valencian guild of silversmiths should explicitly and repeatedly stipulate the painting be the responsibility of Joan de Joanes, thereby appearing to suggest that he was held in greater esteem as an artist than his father. Be that as it may, it is known that Vicente Macip passed on some of his models to his son who, despite easily surpassing his father in quality and renown, incorporated designs, details and motifs inherited from his father into his compositional repertory . We can see this for example in an Adoration of the Christ Child preserved in the Museo de Valladolid, or in the one from the aforementioned Segorbe altarpiece .



## CHRONOLOGY

Compositions depicting the same subject as the panel we are studying here, such as in the aforementioned St. Michael altarpiece originally from Villar del Arzobispo, or the one preserved in Valencia's Museo de la Catedral, where the absence of classical elements and the clearly Gothic overtones are obvious, need to be dated to around 1500 or thereabouts. Rather closer to ours in terms of date of execution would be the aforementioned altarpiece Vicente Macip painted for the Carthusian monastery of Porta Coeli, documented as having been undertaken in 1507. The two known panels from this ensemble present a similar style to our Adoration of the Christ Child, although the Italian stylings are as yet somewhat inchoate.

It is therefore quite clear that the aforementioned works stand in stark contrast to our Adoration and other works such as the panel depicting the same subject from Tarragona's Museu Diocesà (**Fig. 9**), which Benito thought was executed prior to the Segorbe altarpiece (1529-1532), by which point the central role and innovative skills of Macip junior, Joan de Joanes, had completely overshadowed his father at the workshop. In the light of the numerous compositional, decorative and figurative features the Tarragona panel shares with the work we are studying here, we can only conclude they were painted in approximately the same period, 1510-1525.



Fig. 9. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Christ Child.  
Tarragona, Museu Diocesà de Tarragona.

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All these works can only have been executed during Vicente Macip's mature period, in the second and third decades of the 16th century, when he had started to incorporate a more profound and modern use of perspective in his compositions, combined with spaces defined by architectural structures replete with elements of a classical nature, such as the wings of the aforementioned triptych from the Servite monastery of Sagunto. There is little doubt that the rise of the Hernandos, Fernando Yáñez de la Almedina and Fernando Llanos, as well as that of Paolo de San Leocadio, was key to his renovating his own painting, and leaving the Gothic paradigm behind. Another work executed at the peak of his powers, before his son Joan de Joanes started to dominate the workshop with the Segorbe altarpiece, is the Calvary of Redemption from the Orts Bosch collection , where we find figures portrayed with similar bony faces, though delicate and fragile, and a deep landscape reflecting a similar approach.

Other works that ought to be included in this period (1510-25) include two apparently Italianising panels depicting the same subject, the aforementioned Virgin Mary and Child with



Angels and Saints, one housed in Madrid's Museo Lázaro Galdiano and the other recently sold in London (2019), as in both Macip included classical elements in the architectural design of the thrones. Another prominent aspect of both is that they include a young St. John the Baptist on his knees and dressed in camel skin in the lower register, unmistakably reminiscent of what we have in our panel, and which reinforces the Italian leanings of these works. We also find that very same iconographic detail in the aforementioned Adoration of the Magi from the Lladró collection (**Fig. 8**), once again sharing the same style and dated to about 1520-1525 . Dated to about 1510-1520 is an Annunciation from the Laia-Bosch collection (**Fig. 11**), where we can observe

Fig. 8. Vicente Macip. Adoration of the Magi. Valencia, Lladró collection.

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many of the same details found in our panel, and we would suggest that a Prayer in the Garden, previously only known through old photos, but which we have been able to examine personally in a private collection in Barcelona, was also executed in this same time frame. This work invites parallels with the Adoration of the Christ Child both in the profound and detailed execution of the landscape and in the introduction of classical elements in the architecture, as we can observe in the capital and mouldings in the upper left area (**Fig. 13**).



Fig. 11. Vicente Macip. Annunciation. Bilbao, Laia-Bosch collection.



Fig. 13. Vicente Macip. Prayer in the Garden. Barcelona, private collection

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