



ANA ZABÍA DE LA MATA

FIVE CASTA
PAINTINGS BY
BUENAVENTURA
JOSÉ GUIOL,
A NEW
DISCOVERY

JAIME EGUIGUREN

EDUARDO COHEN



JAIME EGUIGUREN
~ STUDIES ~

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**Five *Casta* Paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol
A New Discovery**

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Jaime Eguiguren

Author

Ana Zabía de la Mata

Photography

Joaquín Cortés Noriega

Román Lores Riesgo

Project Coordinator

Sofía Fernández Lázaro

Translation

Edward Ewing

Design and Layout

Laura Eguiluz de la Rica

Printing & Binding

Jiménez Godoy

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Clara E. Aranda Ruiz

Colección Phelps de Cisneros

Denver Art Museum

Encarnación Hidalgo Cámara

Fernando Rayon

Francis X. Rocca

Tomás González Sada

Hugo Armando Felix Rocha

Jorge Rivas

La Troupe

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Mirta Insaurralde Caballero

Museo de América

Museo Regional Michoacano

Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

Vivian Velar de Irigoyen

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FOREWORD

When referring to the *castas*, we are transported to Hispanic-American society: more precisely, to that of 18th Century Mexico. Through these series, which have lasted over time, we can observe with some certainty, the intermingling and coexistence of different types of races that produced new lineages defined by specific names. The descendants of these mixed races formed the various *castas*. While the Spaniards in Hispanic America were, of course, those of the highest social rank, their spirit, often kind and amorous, did not prevent them from mixing and having children with Native American Indians, blacks and *mestizas*. As a result, *Mestizos*, *Mulattos*, *Castizos* and a great variety of different races were born. There were also other mixed races such as, for example, *Mulattos* with Native American Indians, “*Wolves*” and black women; *Chinos* with American Indian women, *Barcinos* with female Indians...and many more combinations were possible.

These paintings portraying the customs of daily life enjoyed enormous success in Mexico and a great majority were destined for Spain, where they were displayed by the most aristocratic and important families of the time. In fact, this exquisite series painted by Buenaventura José Guiol in 1777 comes to us from Spain. The painter masterfully captured these eloquent scenes on canvas, making use of a type of unique painting in the art world.

I wish to thank Ana Zabía for the dedication and effort that she put into writing this study, which is the fruit of her passion for the picturesque genre of typical Latin American *costumbrismo* called *castas*.

Jaime Eguiguren



CONTENTS

- 12 Five *casta* paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol,
a new discovery

ANA ZABÍA DE LA MATA

Introduction

What was meant by '*casta*' in the New Spain of the 18th century?

Casta paintings as historic testimony

The beginning of the genre thanks to an Enlightened Viceroy *avant la lettre*

Evolution of the *casta* genre from 1760

The production of *casta* paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol

Images of nature in the work of Guiol

Fact sheets for individual paintings

- 64 Buenaventura José Guiol
From Spaniard and Mestiza, a Castiza is Born
(Number 2 in the series), 1777
- 70 Buenaventura José Guiol
From Spaniard and Morisca, an Albina is Born
(Number 7 in the series), 1777
- 76 Buenaventura José Guiol
From Loba and Indian, a Zambaigo is Born
(Number 10 in the series), 1777
- 82 Buenaventura José Guiol
From Cambujo and Mulatta, an Albarazo is Born
(Number 12 in the series), 1777
- 88 Buenaventura José Guiol
From Black and China, a Genisara is Born
(Number 16 in the series), 1777

Buenaventura José Guiol
(Mexico, second half of the 18th century)

De Español y Mestiza nace Castiza
(From Spaniard and Mestiza, a Castiza is Born)

Number 2 in the series

Mexico, 1777



Oil on canvas.

Measurements: 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Spain, Minguela family.

Buenaventura José Guiol

(Mexico, second half of the 18th century)

De Español y Morisca nace Albina
(From Spaniard and Morisca, an Albina is Born)

Number 7 in the series

Mexico, 1777



Oil on canvas.

Measurements: 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Spain, Minguela family.

Buenaventura José Guiol
(Mexico, second half of the 18th century)

De Loba e Indio nace Zambaigo
(From Loba and Indian, a Zambaigo is Born)

Number 10 in the series

Mexico, 1777



Oil on canvas.

Measurements: 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Spain, Minguela family.

Buenaventura José Guiol

(Mexico, second half of the 18th century)

De Cambujo y Mulata nace Albarazo
(From Cambujo and Mulatta, an Albarazo is Born)

Number 12 in the series

Mexico, 1777



Oil on canvas.

Measurements: 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Spain, Minguela family.

Buenaventura José Guiol
(Mexico, second half of the 18th century)

De China y Negro nace Genisara
(From Black and China, a Genisara is Born)

Number 16 in the series

Mexico, 1777



Oil on canvas.

Measurements: 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Spain, Minguela family.

Five *casta* paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol, a new discovery

Introduction

Casta Painting is the most fascinating pictorial genre in Mexican art history. Born in New Spain at the beginning of the 18th century and, most likely, died out towards the end of that century, certainly before the advent of Mexican independence in 1821.

It is a genre of increasing interest, leading to new pieces gradually appearing on the market, such as the Buenaventura José Guiol series, which is the subject of this catalogue. Although today the *casta* paintings of the Americas far exceed the price of many works with religious themes, this was not always so.¹ For example, in the literature dedicated to Mexican art in the viceregal (colonial) period and particularly in Manuel Toussaint's reference work *Arte colonial en México (Colonial Art in Mexico)* (1963), it was not even mentioned.² However, later publications, including that of Efraín Castro Morales in 1983³, Concepción García Sáiz in "Las castas mexicanas, un género pictórico americano" ("The Mexican Castas, a pictorial American genre") of 1989⁴ and "La Pintura de Castas" ("Casta Painting") by Ilona Katzew in 2004⁵, the main academic reference nowadays, have come to fill this gap, raising new questions and reflections as the market surprises us with the emergence of new and more complex collections of *castas*.

Casta paintings or paintings of *mestizaje* unions, typically produced using oil on canvas or, on some occasions, on copper, consist of a series of images representing the racial mixes arising in New Spain from three primary racial

groups: Spaniards, American Indians and Blacks, giving rise to numerous types. Some fifty possibilities have been counted⁶. A typical series covers sixteen basic types although the largest known series comprises twenty paintings.

In a certain way, this genre evokes the cosmopolitan nature of Mexico City in the colonial period, when it became one of the world's largest and most important cities. In many respects, it was comparable to such large European capital cities as Madrid, London and Paris. Its international character derived from its strategic location: a point of confluence for major trade routes connecting Spain, Asia and America. In fact, many examples of Oriental Art arrived in European salons through Mexico, thanks to the Manila Galleon (also known as the *Nao de China* in New Spain). This was a commercial route linking the port of Manila with that of Acapulco approximately twice a year since 1565.

Casta paintings usually depicted a couple (a mother and father) in which each is a member of a different racial group, and they are accompanied by a small child. Texts alluding to the designations assigned to each individual are included. These correspond to the relevant castes.

In order to understand the names, let's take a look at the following example of a series by Miguel Cabrera (circa. 1763) that is partially preserved in the Museum of America in Madrid.⁷

1. Spaniard and American Indian, Mestiza
2. Spaniard and Mestiza, Castiza;
3. Spaniard and Castiza, Spaniard;
4. Spaniard and Negress, Mulatto.
5. Spaniard and Mulatta, Morisca;
6. Spaniard and Morisca, Albina;
7. Spaniard and Albina, *Torna atrás* ("literally Throwback");
8. Spaniard and *Torna atrás*, *Tente en el Aire* (literally "In mid-air");
9. Black and Indian, *China cambuja*;
10. Chino cambujo and Indian, *Lobo*;
11. Lobo and Indian, *Albarazado*;
12. Albarazado and Mestiza, *Barcino*;
13. Indian and Barcina, *Zambuigua*;
14. Castizo and Mestiza, *Chamizo*;
15. Mestizo and Indian, "Coyote";
16. "Indian gentiles".

Historians have highlighted that these names were artificial inventions created by intellectuals and by the artists of series on castes. The nomenclature used to designate successive combinations is entirely picturesque. Sometimes the terms come from those used to designate animals and are, in fact, just confusing.

There are also inconsistencies in the terminology used between series. In *casta* painting number 10, an Indian male and a *Loba* give rise not to an “*Albarazado*” as in the series by Miguel Cabrera, but a “*Zambaigo*”. These names never had any application in daily life nor any legal scope but, without a doubt, they reflected a certain mentality of the period where skin color was a sign of social distinction and of access to economic privileges. In fact, official documents only use the term “*casta*” to generically designate those whose ethnic mix distinguishes them from Spaniards or Native Indians. No further details are obtained and the possibility of crossing racial lines does not feature.

The picturesqueness of the paintings to which we refer is evident in the use of words like “*Tente en el aire*” (= *In mid-air*), “*Salta Atrás*” (*Leapback*) and “*Torna Atrás*” (*throwback*) and “*No te entiendo*” (*I don't understand you*) etc., and their nature can be hurtful (for example, “*Lobo*” (= Wolf) for designating the descendent of a “*Cambujo*” man and an Indian woman, “*Coyote*” for characterizing the descendent of an Indian male and a Mestiza female, “*Barcino*” – this is a zoological term that alluded to animals with colored spots – to portray the child of an *Albarazado* and Mestiza, or “*Cambujo*” as a term in Spain used to describe black-colored birds to designate the cross between Blacks and Native Americans).

Of more than one hundred series of *casta* paintings found to date, practically all come from New Spain⁸, with only one known exception: the series of twenty oil paintings originating from the Viceroyalty of Peru and housed in the National Anthropological Museum in Madrid. Many are anonymous while others, in general those of the highest quality, are signed.

It should be noted that the quality of the paintings varies considerably from one series to another and even within a single series. Some pictures are delightfully painted with excellent coloring – as is the case with the extraordinary series signed by Miguel Cabrera. On the other hand, some do not even manage to be mediocre, presenting serious defects, especially in the drawing.⁹

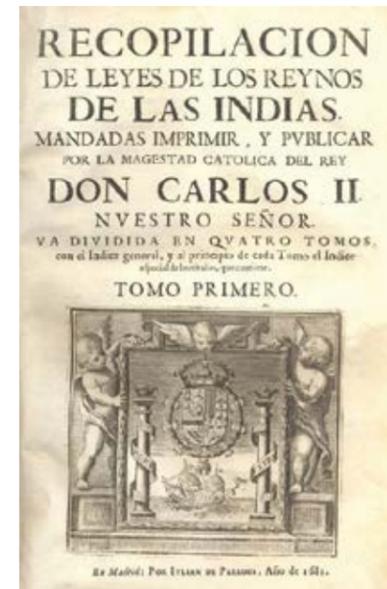


Fig. 1 Ivlian de Paredes, *Recopilación de leyes de los Reynos de las Indias*, 1681, Madrid.

What was meant by ‘casta’ in the New Spain of the 18th century?

To better understand the concept of caste, it must be traced back to the Mexican conquest in the first part of the 16th century. From the beginning of the colony, there were numerous cases of stable relationships between the *conquistadors* and Indian women which, according to the scholar Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, could not be considered the fruit of force since “they were established from the outset as or subsequently drifted towards the constitution of what was a true family”.¹⁰ In addition, during the Viceroyalty, the civil legislative framework was relatively lax and always facilitated the institutionalization of relationships between couples who were not necessarily married and the subsequent legitimization of the offspring.¹¹

In fact, the laws on Indians from the Spanish monarchy allowed, right from the beginning of the conquest of the New World, mixed marriage between Spaniards and the indigenous people as illustrated in the following provision:

“It is by our will that male and female Native Americans have, as they should, full freedom to marry whomever they wish, thus with Indians as with natives of these Kingdoms of ours, or Spaniards, born in the Indies, without this being an impediment. And we stipulate that no order of ours, that has been given, or shall be given, may impede or prevent the marriage among the Indians with male and female Spaniards, and that they have complete freedom to marry whomever they wish, and our Courts to ensure that this is kept and fulfilled” (Real Cédula de Felipe II, on October 19th, 1514, ratified in 1515 and in 1556, and included in the *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias* [Compilation of Laws of the Indies] from 1680, Sixth Book, First Heading, Law II) (Fig 1).

Although the white elite always favored marriage to those in their own racial group, from the beginning the *mestizaje* or racial mixing was produced either through marriage or concubine relationships. With the arrival of African slaves, especially since 1580, the mix became even more complex. So much so that the name of caste was originally applied to those who had slave ancestry, although the use of caste became generalized to all who were not white (Spanish) or Indian.

The registry book of baptisms registered caste for those recognized as having a racial mix in their family and even for some Native Indians who should have received the sacrament in their own parish (the Indians lived in separate areas from the Spaniards and therefore had their own parish churches where they were baptized).

Without formal discrimination until the late 16th century (e.g. for a hundred years there were no restrictions imposed on *mestizos* and mulattos in the Real Universidad de México (*Royal University of Mexico*), yet most of the elevated posts were reserved for Spaniards and, within this group, a privileged minority of people born in mainland Spain. This was to the detriment of those born in the Americas (to which this group would refer as “*criollos*”, a term appropriated from “creole” into the Spanish language). Only the first group of Spaniards could occupy command positions in the army or posts at the top of the viceroyalty administration. All of this fed, little by little, the awareness of a difference between the American Spanish and the European Spanish, with the former considered to be a group unfairly treated by the Spanish Crown and its representatives.

While the *mestizo* tested its links to the Spanish group, attempting to be on the same level, over time, due to the extraordinary biological growth of this group during the 17th and 18th centuries, more and more restrictions were placed on their rights, especially in the field of labor, with a supposed growing threat to the privileged white minority.¹² They were forbidden access to senior command posts in the army, could not exercise the duties of *escribanos* or public notaries, were denied enrollment at university (formerly allowed) or prevented from acting as electors of trade members (many were engaged in retail trade with obvious success).¹³

The *mestizo*, with great skills in trades and crafts, was soon affirming a conviction of being superior over the indigenous people (who would, sadly turn out to be the great losers after independence). The *mestizo* dedicated himself mainly, apart from retail business, to manual or mechanic trades, joining the craft guilds of trade and industry, both the most distinguished (silverware, painting, silk, tailoring, hosiery, etc.), as well as the more modest (dressers, fullers, grocers, etc.). *Casta* paintings from the second half of the 18th century go on to display these trades in great detail.

In short, the term caste was used in everyday language to refer to citizens with a mixture of blood from the major basic ethnic groups (initially Spanish and Indian). Africans were incorporated later. In the case of the most unprotected group in society, the Blacks and their descendants, mixed race or not, were always considered as belonging to castes.

In a report drawn up in 1820 by Fernando Navarro, which corroborated the census of 1793, and prepared by the Secretariat of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, the three large social groups were quantified as follows.¹⁴

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Spaniards | 685,362 | 18% |
| European | 7,904 | |
| American | 677,458 | |
| Indians | 2,319,741 | 61% |
| Castes | 794,458 | 21% |
| TOTAL | 3,799,561 | 100% |

This census did not include the military or the clergy, most of whom belonged to the first group.

Alexander Humboldt reworked these calculations in the memorandum delivered to Viceroy José de Iturigaray in 1804. It elevated the final figure of inhabitants to 5,764,731 (data for 1803), in part owing to alleged errors of the official register with regard to natural population growth. According to the 1820 report by the aforementioned Fernando Navarro, the memorandum by Humboldt established that the number of Indians increased to 2.5 million (41% of the total population) and that of castes to 2.4 million (39%) and for Spaniards, 1.2 million (20%). As can be seen, the discrepancy between the official census data of 1793 and the data that Navarro attributes to Humboldt is enormous, above all with respect to the relative weighting of each group.¹⁵

Whatever the case, from the amalgamation of the data mentioned, two conclusions can be drawn: 1) the low population density of the Viceroyalty (which in those times was included the current American states of California, New Mexico and

Texas, among others), and 2) the growing preponderance of *mestizos*, or group of castes, by far outweighed that of the group of whites which in turn was composed of mostly American-born Spaniards.

That is why Jacques Lafaye asserts that the Mexican “national consciousness” was engendered during the novo-Hispanic era.¹⁶ In fact, according to Lafaye, it is not possible to speak of a Mexican national consciousness, but from the perspective of the formation of the novo-Hispanic society (i.e. what today we’d call a “melting pot” of ethnic groups and cultures) without forgetting the common religious sentiment “of being a member of a patriotic ‘super-confraternity’, namely the ‘*hijos de Guadalupe*’ (Sons of Guadalupe) on a site chosen by the Virgin Mary herself.”¹⁷

Casta paintings as historic testimony

Margarita Orellana states that “it is in this society where almost everyone is mixed, in this New Spain whose novelty is precisely the mixing, where the *casta* paintings appear.”¹⁸ Orellana is right, we could almost say that this mix of races and ethnicities – with the approval of legislators, as seen above – was a world-first, without parallel in the history of humanity.

What answer would then have to be given to the question Ilona Katzew poses in the introduction to her book on *casta* paintings: does this genre correspond to a way of promoting the hierarchical organization of society?¹⁹

On the one hand, it is obvious that the attire of the characters represented reflects the geography of the social stratification of the time: male Spaniards are usually represented with portly distinction reflecting their high social standing and the Indian woman, in general, with exquisite elegance – especially when married to a white man – in contrast to the greater sobriety with which mixed race women are depicted. Some of the scenes reproduce topics that can even be upsetting, such as the recurring role of black women as abusive and domineering. Without a doubt, the *casta* painter tends towards idealizing reality to a certain extent. However, a willful purpose of social engineering was certainly not the original thought of the novo-Hispanic painter nor of his clients. In fact, novo-Hispanic society was formed almost spontaneously with the progress of time, with little or

no strategic planning (beyond the basic project of evangelizing the new world). An initial vision of two Republics, “that of the Spaniards” and “that of the Indians”,²⁰ gave rise over time to a novo-Hispanic society composed of Spaniards, Indians and castes, where socio-labor discriminations in favor of the white minority were a matter of fact, but would be softened as time goes on in the course of the 18th century. It finally led to the emergence of a Mexican national consciousness that aimed at the integration of all socio-ethnic groups on a basis of equality, with a varying degree of success. Without a doubt, the privileged position enjoyed by those from the Spanish mainland in occupying key positions in the army and civil and religious administrations was hurtful and unjust – to the detriment of the Spaniards born in America and those of mixed race – although it is obvious that it was due more to political reasons than a spurious design of a social hierarchy. When all is said and done, this particular Hispanic-Spanish discrimination has little or nothing to do with the *casta* paintings themselves.

Although little documented in this regard, it seems that the best known *casta* painters were *mestizos*. We refer in particular to the most important of them all: from Miguel Cabrera to José de Ibarra (son of a Morisco and a Mulatta) and Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz. However, they described themselves as Spaniards and were even recognized as such by the society of the time, which proves that the caste system was relatively flexible.²¹

Efraín Castro Morales points out with lucidity that, while the *casta* pictures were considered a truthful testimony to the existence of castes, it cannot be claimed that they were painted on the orders of political or religious authorities “to serve as codes to which all issues had to be submitted with respect to mestizos and their origins or degrees of *mestizaje*”.²² In fact, Castro Morales maintains, they were painted to show the racial blends of the population of New Spain, using scholarly classifications, unintelligible and impracticable, which never had any application in practice.²³

The beginning of the genre thanks to an Enlightened Viceroy *avant la lettre*

Castro Morales found a key manuscript by Andrés de Arce y Miranda, dated October 28th, 1746, who was a learned ecclesiastic from Puebla. It was addressed to his friend Juan José Eguiara y Eguren, the eminent professor of the Real y Pontificia Universidad de México. In this letter Arce claims that informing King Felipe V and the Court of the mixtures of the diverse types of race in some *casta* paintings by the painter Juan Rodríguez Juárez was “ingenious thinking” on the part of the Viceroy of New Spain, Duque de Linares (1710-1716).

If we lend full credibility to the written testimony from Arce y Miranda in 1746, there is no doubt that the Viceroy Linares was an Enlightenment Man *avant la lettre*. When Carolus Linnaeus, the father of modern taxonomy, was no more than a young teenager and the Enlightenment movement had not yet hatched in Europe, Linares already had the vision to commission the first series of *casta* paintings from the novo-Hispanic painter Rodríguez Juárez in his eagerness to classify different racial types.²⁴

The paintings of Rodríguez Juárez mentioned by Arce y Miranda probably correspond to one of the two anonymous series that Ilona Katzew attributed to him and are dated around 1715.²⁵

In the first set by Juárez, there are only seven known pieces. Each painting has a descriptive legend on the racial mix presented, a practice that will be followed by all *casta* painters thereafter. The figures of Rodríguez Juárez involve half bodies. In *De Español y de India, produce Mestizo* (Fig. 2), the Spanish man is dressed according to the French fashion of the time, newly introduced in Spain after the arrival of the first Bourbon King of Spain (Felipe V in 1700). He wears a typically French dress coat and wig and carries a three-cornered hat under his arm. The Indian woman, for her part, wears a richly adorned blouse and luxurious dressing which includes a bracelet, earrings and a necklace of pearls while a young servant carries her child. In *De Castizo y Española, produce Española*, (Fig. 3) one can see the exuberant clothing of the characters whereas in *De Español y Mulata, produce Morisca* (Fig. 4), the Spaniard wears the sober Spanish cloak and a wide-brimmed hat, while the mulatto woman wears common attire for this period. The highlights of the collection are *De mulato y mestiza, produce Mulato es Torna Atrás* (Fig. 5)



Fig.2 Attributed to Juan Rodríguez Juárez, *De español y de india, produce mestizo*, c. 1715, oil on canvas, Private Collection



Fig. 3 Attributed to Juan Rodríguez Juárez, *De castizo y española, produce española*, c. 1715, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

Fig. 4 Attributed to Juan Rodríguez Juárez, *De español y mulata, produce morisca*, c. 1715, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

Fig. 5 Attributed to Juan Rodríguez Juárez, *De mulato y mestiza, produce mulato es torna atrás*, c. 1715, oil on canvas, Private Collection.



where the attire of the *mestiza* is extremely rich and somewhat reflects the higher social status of *mestizos* with respect to mulattos.

The second of these series consists of fourteen pieces and belongs to a private collection in the United Kingdom. However, the collection is uneven and therefore it is not possible to assert that the works are by a single-painter. Nor can the series be definitively stated to be complete. In 1989, Concepción García Sáiz²⁶ revealed to us that the fourteen pieces attributed to Rodríguez Juárez were submitted by the owner, Lady Hulse, at the 18th International Congress of Americanists that took place in London in 1912.²⁷ A third series is documented by García Sáiz,²⁸ which only seems to be a copy of the previous one. With great fidelity, it follows the strokes, modifying only minor details. In this third series, six paintings are known to belong to a private collection in Mexico.

Returning to the important manuscript of 1746 by Arce y Miranda, it also mentions the commission made by the Bishop of Puebla de los Ángeles, Juan Francisco de Loiza (1743-1747), to the painter from the same town, Luis Berrueco.

We transcribe verbatim the text from a manuscript of the time regarding the work of Berrueco:

“A canvas divided into 16 panels, to be sent to Spain, and each one shows a combination of three persons, father, mother and child, which I saw, and the distribution is as follows, with the names he added [*the description of the 16 mixed races follows*].”

The whereabouts of Loiza’s commissioned canvas is unknown, but it reflected all castes in a single painting. However, an anonymous piece produced in Puebla follows Berrueco’s model (Fig. 6), that Ilona Katzew dates at around 1750.²⁹

Along with Rodríguez Juárez, Luis Berrueco and Manuel Arellano, we should also mention the painters José de Bustos and José de Ibarra (1685-1756), as representatives of the first period of the genre of *casta* paintings, which would approximately cover up to the middle of the 18th century. The former, José de Bustos, characterizes himself in a signed series in Paris, dated around 1725,



Fig. 6 Anonymous, *Pintura de castas*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, Private Collection.



Fig. 7 José Ibarra, *De Mestizo, y Española, Castiza*, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo de América.

Fig. 8 Luis de Mena, *Pintura de Castas*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo de América.

by the presentation of characters wearing sumptuous costumes, regardless of racial origin. The latter, José de Ibarra, closely linked to Rodríguez Juárez and perhaps his disciple,³⁰ introduced the innovation of painting the whole bodies of the figures (Fig. 7). Some scholar has labeled him as the “Mexico’s Murillo”. A canvas from the end of this era (circa. 1750) by Luis de Mena (Fig. 8), conserved in the Museum of America in Madrid, shows a set of castes under the Guadalupe Madonna. The canvas consists of four levels, upper and lower, and at the bottom a series of tropical fruits are represented, evoking the exuberance of the New World.



Fig. 9 Attributed to José de Ibarra, *De negro e india, lobo*, c. 1725, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Spain.

Fig. 10 José de Bustos, *De español e india, produce mestiza*, c. 1725, oil on canvas, Paris, Private Collection.

The written testimony of Arce y Morales allows us to infer that the first patrons of *casta* paintings included senior representatives of the viceroyalty's civil and religious administration whose intention was to illustrate the Court and other opinion leaders in peninsular Spain about the racial diversity of the Viceroyalty, perhaps with the aim of disproving untruths that were circulating in the metropolis about the dissipated spirit and the dissolute mores impregnating the Viceroyalty, which equally affected the Spanish, Indians as well as *Mestizos*. The *casta* painter transmits an almost idyllic social image to the Spanish mainland: inter-ethnic relations are woven, at all levels, through the institution of marriage, monogamy and egalitarianism (Fig. 9); the characters, whatever their social category wore elegant if not luxurious costumes, although this would vary later. The complicit looks between husband and wife, or toward their child, transmit a tenderness and sweetness that can even stir up emotions. The backgrounds, in this initial period, in many cases are imbued with a rich Baroque embodiment of living nature and floral elements (Fig. 10). All convey an image of moral rectitude, of order, of love and mutual respect, happiness, exuberance.

However, the same Arce y Morales, a Spaniard born in Mexico would complain many times in the cited manuscript of 1746 to Eguiara y Eguren that these paintings transmit to the metropolis an image that does not make the most of American Spaniards, “nor does it honor them” since it can create the perception that in America everyone was mixed, which would strengthen the prejudices of the European Spanish against the American Spanish. It should be noted that Arce cannot be suspected of elitism since in addition to mastering the Mexican language, he dedicated his life to the indigenous communities of Puebla and was considered to be a “Protector of Indians”.³¹ Arce also urged Eguiara to remove the appellation of “criollo” to refer to Spaniards born in America from the draft of his “Biblioteca Mexicana” because “it was invented for the children of black slaves born in America.”³²

Evolution of the *casta* genre from 1760

In the second half of the 18th century, the production of *casta* paintings reached its peak, coinciding with the reforms that the enlightened King Carlos III (1759-1788) was introducing in the Spanish Americas. Most of the series that stand out in terms of quality and originality were executed from 1760 onwards, and they tend to be signed.

At this time, the demand for works of this genre increased greatly from Spanish collectors in the metropolis, such as the series the Viceroy Bucareli sent to his niece in 1777, the Countess of Gerena, residing in Seville,³³ or that of José Joaquín Magón, which the then Archbishop of Mexico City, Francisco José Lorenzana, brought with him to Toledo in 1772, and is now housed at the National Museum of Anthropology in Madrid.

It is obvious that by this point neither painter nor client were aiming to provide the metropolis with an expression of the idyllic feeling of order, exuberance and happiness for everyone that was common during the first half of the 18th century.

In contrast, during the second half of the 18th century, many of the concerns of intellectuals appear illustrated and reflected in the *casta* paintings, which bring together scenes that allude to new times of reform and the promotion of economic progress. Scenes involving characters carrying out their professional activities in the most diverse fields are extremely common, such as tailoring, chocolate shops (Fig. 11), tobacconists, ice cream parlors, tooth extraction, fruit stands, looms, *pulque* spirit bars, etc. The reforms undertaken in the areas of cattle and agriculture are also reflected in the series. Scenes of characters playing cards are also very common (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11 José de Páez, *De español y morisca, albina*, 8, c. 1770-1780, Private Collection.



Fig. 12 Anonymous, *De mulato y española, sale morisco*, 6, c. 1780, oil on canvas, Mexico, Collection of Malú and Alejandra Escandón.



Fig. 13 Andrés de Islas, *De Español, y Negra, nace Mulata*, 4, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo de América.

Fig. 14 Anonymous, *De albina y español, nace torna atrás*, c. 1785-1790, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

In contrast with the series from the first half of the century, not everything is domestic harmony. Scenes of domestic violence occasionally appear, portrayed amongst the lower classes (Fig. 13). The staging of socioeconomic stratification is reflected in a more visceral (and perhaps realistic?) manner than at the outset of the *casta* painting genre. Spanish males usually appear in a lavish outfit and, on occasions, engaged in some occupation that indicates their high social position (Fig. 14). In contrast, the members of the disadvantaged castes may appear dressed in rags, something unheard of in the first period. On a positive note, the novo-Hispanic painter's sensitive approach to women is striking, seldom depicting them in ragged attire, whatever their social status, as would be the case with males.

In this new era, the elements that symbolize American abundance, such as food, its flora and fauna, appear in a more systematic way³⁴ (Fig.15).

The two most prominent artists from this new era, and who marked its transition, were Miguel Cabrera (1695?-1768) and Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz (1713-1772). The first is considered to be the principal master of the genre, and is probably the figure who received the most commissions from the elite classes of his day. Both introduced iconographic innovations that left their mark on *casta* painting for decades, in part thanks to their knowledge of painting in 17th-century styles: Flemish and Dutch.³⁵ Furthermore, both initiated the custom of using clothing as an element to differentiate between social and economic classes: the contrast between the sumptuousness of the costumes of the Spaniards and the poverty-ridden clothing of lower caste members is remarkable.

Another two major figures from this period were Andrés de Islas and José de Páez (1720-1790?). Both were contemporaries of Cabrera and their works are reminiscent of his style. There is no doubt that De Páez, a successful artist with a prolific studio, influenced Buenaventura José Guiol. Guiol was also influenced by José de Alcibar (c. 1725-1803), who became one of the most prolific artists and was representative of the pictorial scene in Mexico City during the second half of the 18th century. He received a great many commissions, especially religious pictures for various churches and portraits of eminent figures from Mexican society. He was one of the founders of the Real Academia de Artes de San Carlos in 1784.



Fig. 15 Miguel Cabrera, *De Negro, y d India, China-cambuja*, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo de América.



Turning now to the artist who is the subject of our study, Buenaventura José Guiol, we should point out that we do not currently have a great deal of personal information about him. The above-mentioned work by Miguel Toussaint, “Pintura Colonial en México”, claims that there are two known works of his, one carried out under the patronage of Saint Joseph at the Michoacán Regional Museum (Fig. 16), and a painting entitled “Fauna Mexicana”. These works and a series of *casta* paintings, to which these five new paintings are added, tell us that Guiol was an interesting artist about whom future research might well throw up a few surprises. Having a surname of clearly French origin, one cannot rule out the possibility that he had an ancestor who arrived in New Spain from that country, something a little out of the ordinary but which did happen in practice.

Fig. 16 Buenaventura José Guiol, *Patrocinio de San José*, oil on canvas, Museo Regional Michoacano.

To date his known works consist of three incomplete series of *casta* works and another series, also incomplete, on the birds of Mexico. To this we must add the series of *casta* paintings belonging to a private Spanish collection that is now going on sale, and probably the other incomplete series on Mexico’s birds in a private collection in France attributed to our painter.

The analytical consensus dates the known works of Guiol as being from 1770 to 1780, that is to say the period marking the maturity of the *casta* painting genre. His work is reminiscent of the master Miguel Cabrera, whose influence, as commented earlier, may have reached him through the painters of his circle: José de Páez and José de Alcívar.



Fig. 17a Buenaventura José Guiol, *De español, e india, nace mestizo*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

Fig. 17b Buenaventura José Guiol, *De español, y castiza, nace castiza*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

Fig. 17c Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Collote, e india, nace chamiso*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

Fig. 17d Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Mestizo, e India, nace Lobo*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

Fig. 17e Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Albarasada, y Mulato, nace Barcino*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

Fig. 17f Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Español, y Morisca, nace Alvina*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.

The production of casta paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol

As mentioned earlier, until now we knew of three series of *casta* paintings by Buenaventura José Guiol. Let us take a moment to examine them.

The first series consists of an incomplete set of eight unsigned and undated paintings unveiled by García Sáiz in 1989.³⁶ Although they were not attributed to any painter in particular, they were rightly dated as belonging to the last quarter of the 18th century. Subsequently, Ilona Katzew attributed them to Guiol after comparing them with two signed paintings in a private collection in Mexico City, to which we will refer later.

With regard to this first series of eight paintings, currently in a private collection in Monterrey, García Sáiz considers them as belonging to the circle of Miguel Cabrera's followers, due to the similar presentation of the backgrounds. In addition, as pointed out earlier, it is our understanding that Guiol's painting is reminiscent of two painters close to Cabrera: José de Páez and José de Alcívar.

The motifs captured in the *casta* paintings are characteristic of the genre's mature period (last third of the century), although the characters only appear from the waist up, and not in the open domestic or outside spaces characteristic of *casta* paintings at the end of the 18th century.

Of particular note are the scenes relating to trades: an Indian saleswoman married to a Spaniard publicly exhibits a succulent collection of tropical fruits (Fig. 17a); a male Spaniard married to a Castiza woman in a wine trade establishment (Fig. 17b); a "Collote" (the son of an American Indian male and a Mestiza) in their shoe workshop (Fig. 17c) – a theme in keeping with a painting from the series that is now going on sale; and another scene of a Mestizo and an Indian female in a shoe shop (Fig. 17d). There is also a surprising scene in a Mexican *pulque* spirits bar where the Albarazada mother offers her Barcino son a bowl of this beverage (Fig. 17e). Commonly drunk in Mexico before the Viceroyalty, *pulque* was prepared from fermented maguey (Mexican agave), which had a low alcohol content and, in the genre with which we are concerned, its consumption was often identified with the lowest classes.

Another painting from this collection bears great similarity to one of Guiol's paintings now going on sale: it depicts a male Spaniard married to a Morisca woman and an Albina daughter (Fig. 17f). The man is a notary – a profession reserved at that time for Spaniards – and appears dressed in a luxurious *banian*, or white robe, with a flower garland motif, and a white scarf and typical Mexican hat for wearing around the house. This scene, in turn, is very similar to a painting attributed to José de Alcíbar.

With regard to the two remaining paintings from the series, the following should be noted. The first depicts a male Spaniard and a Castiza playing cards (Fig. 17g). This is an often-recurring scene in *casta* paintings – and in the work of Guiol especially – where individuals from higher castes usually appear. In fact, the daughter of a male Spaniard Castiza was considered by artists of the genre as Spanish, because she had seven-eighths Spanish blood and just an eighth part Indian. The last painting in this series is of a Spaniard and a Black woman in the midst of a family quarrel (Fig. 17h), a scene often repeated in many paintings where the black woman is the protagonist, undoubtedly reflecting the issues of the period.



Fig. 17g Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Español, y Castiza, nace Española*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.



Fig. 17h Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Español, y Negra, nace Mulata*, oil on canvas, Private Collection, Monterrey.



Fig. 18a Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Español y Castiza, nace Española*, 2, c. 1770-1780, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

Fig. 18b Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Español e India, nace Mestiza*, 1, c. 1770-1780, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

The second known series by Guiol is made up of two signed pictures belonging to a private collection in Mexico City. These two pictures were reproduced graphically in the 1990 article by María José Rodilla entitled “Un Quevedo en Nueva España satiriza las castas”,³⁷ and due to the similarity of style, Ilona Katzew attributes the eight paintings from the above-mentioned Monterrey collection to Guiol. As occurs in many other instances, this series is incomplete. The characters also appear from the waist up. The first image represents a Spaniard and a Castiza woman playing cards (Fig. 18a). As already mentioned, this game was associated with the social elite, so the work bears witness to the fact that the daughter of a Spaniard and a Castiza was considered Spanish. In addition, we have the fact that the woman is richly attired and is portrayed with an entirely white appearance, up to the point of sporting the characteristic *chiqueador* with which great ladies used to make themselves up. Finally, the other painting depicts a Spaniard and an Indian woman, with their Mestiza daughter (Fig. 18b). The Spaniard could well be a tailor given that he has a work box with scissors and scraps of fabric. The Indian woman is adorned with beautiful couture and wears a necklace and earrings.

The third series of *casta* paintings attributed to Guiol belongs to the *Colección Phelps de Cisneros de Venezuela* (Figs. 19a, b, c & d), paintings that were exhibited in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 2010. This is an incomplete series of four paintings; the first entitled “Barbarian Indians” portrays an Indian couple with two small children in a basket which the woman is carrying on her back, and depicted according to the conventions of a typology rather more characteristic of European painters: dresses with a short skirt of feathers, a feather crown adorning the head and armed with bows and arrows. Portraits of Indian couples were a recurring theme in both the first and last works from a number of *casta* painting series, and the word “Barbarians” usually indicated that they still lived in remote mountain areas, rather than in settlements promoted by missionaries, and that they had probably not been Christianized. They stand in contrast to the images of the Indian castes married to Spaniards.



Fig. 19a Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Calpamulato y Coyota, Barcino*, 3, oil on canvas, Collection of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.



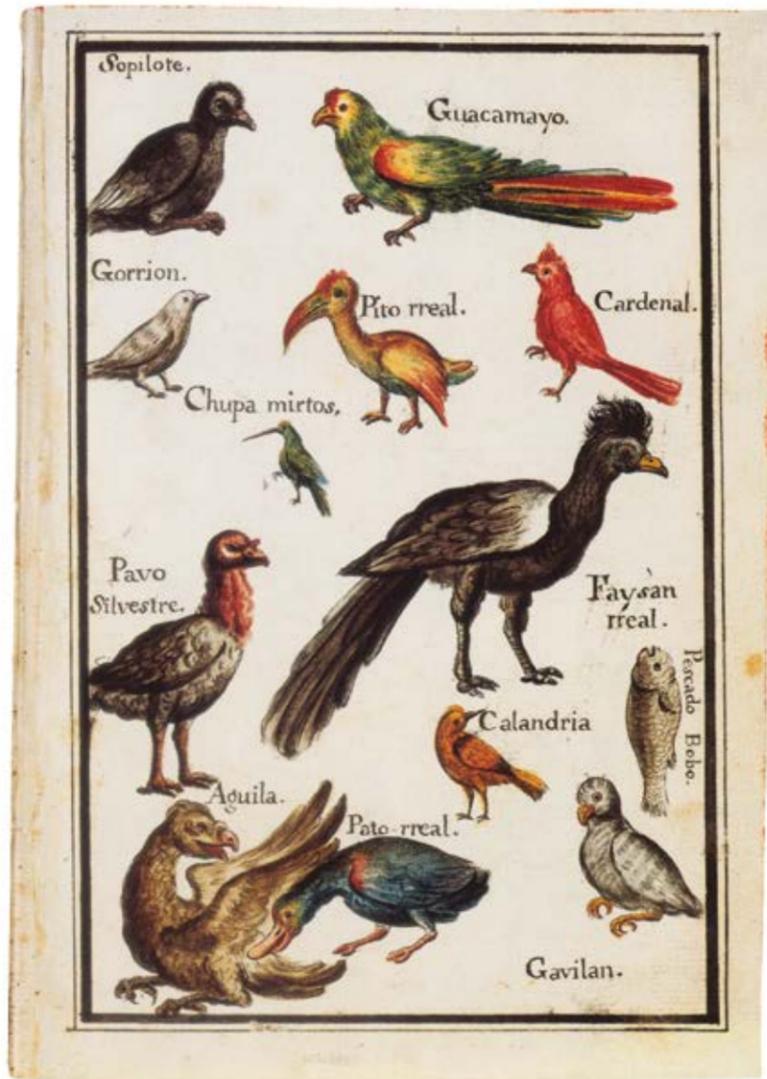
Fig. 19c Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Yndia y Negro, Loba*, 9, oil on canvas, Collection of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.



Fig. 19b Buenaventura José Guiol, *Yndios Barbaros*, 8, oil on canvas, Collection of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.



Fig. 19d Buenaventura José Guiol, *De Sambaygo y Mulata, Calpamulato*, 12, oil on canvas, Collection of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.



Images of nature in the work of Guiol (Fig. 20)

As the 18th century was approaching its midpoint, the new intellectual airs of the Enlightenment started to blow through the courts of Europe. In the field of Art, this resulted in a growing interest in the methodological analysis of nature and attempts to classify it “scientifically”, brought together under the “Three Kingdoms of Nature”: the Mineral Kingdom, the Animal Kingdom (which in the terminology of that period was understood as including the “quadrupeds” (mammals), birds, insects, reptiles and shelled creatures) and the Vegetable Kingdom. This theme, which became known as “animal parks”, had been enormously popular in 17th century painting.³⁸

Fig. 20 Birds, *Idea compendiosa del reino de la Nueva España* (1774), Pedro Alonso O’Crowley, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España.



Fig. 21a Buenaventura José Guiol, *Sample of American Birds* (inscribed “Calandria, Pajaro Mulato, Golondrina, Alcatruz, Sarjento, Cardenal, Gavilan”) c. 1770-1780, oil on canvas, Denver Art Museum, gift of the Collection of Frederick and Jan Mayer.

Fig. 21b Buenaventura José Guiol, *Sample of American Birds* (inscribed “Ganga, Pajaro Canoa, Lechuza, Pito Real, Cotorrera, Misto, Loro”) c. 1770-1780, oil on canvas, Denver Art Museum, gift of the Collection of Frederick and Jan Mayer.

This new scientific desire is what moved the Hispanic monarchs of the 18th century, especially Carlos III through his Royal Decree in 1776, to send very precise instructions to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the overseas territories in America and Asia to send the metropolis samples of all kinds of minerals, animals (living or desiccated), wood, plants and tree barks, etc. along with any other “curiosities” or objects produced by the indigenous peoples from before “the conquest”.

Without doubt, the eagerness to please the Monarch moved the Viceroys and bishops to commission descriptive pictorial works and classifications of this type of object. Worth noting among these is certainly the shipment from the Viceroyalty of Peru of the great work commissioned by Bishop Martínez Compañón, carried out between 1780 and 1790, including nine volumes of flora and fauna watercolors, as well as archeological sites and pieces, a treasure trove to be kept at the Royal Palace in Madrid, and which led Richard Schadel to proclaim its author, the learned Martínez Compañón, as the founder of Peruvian archaeology.³⁹



The two paintings of birds, which have been housed at the Denver Museum of Art since 2013 (Figs. 21 a&b), should be identified as belonging to this context. Both works, which were in Spain until at least 1998 when they were sold to the Mayers, undoubtedly belong to a greater series as they bear the numbers 2 and 3 on the back, along with the inscription “*Guiol fecit in Mexico*”, once again highlighting the artist’s pride in his work and his Mexican origins. The birds depicted are native to the area, being unknown to the Spanish public, bearing the following names: calandra lark, sparrowhawk, red-winged blackbird, *alcatruz*, blue mockingbird, cardinal, swallow, *pájaro canoa*, owl, green woodpecker, pin-tailed sandgrouse, *cotorrena*, grassland yellow finch, and parrot.

In the background, the sky is seen in motion, and highly charged with blue coloring lending a disturbing atmosphere to the scene. The names of the birds are written in Spanish rather than in Latin, something that differentiates these works’ taxonomy from those of the scientific exhibitions of the 18th century. The

Fig. 22a Luis Paret y Alcázar, *Dos Pájaros*, c. 1770, gouache / tempera on laid paper, Second half of the XVIII century, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.



Fig. 22b Luis Paret y Alcázar, *Oropéndolas*, c. 1770, gouache / tempera on laid paper, Second half of the XVIII century, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

importance of the landscape and the sense of the birds’ grouping, coming to life almost as if they were in dialogue, bring the work closer to a more domestic sense of the *casta* paintings than the taxonomic coldness of the paintings from scientific expeditions with white funding and Latinate descriptions.⁴⁰ These works are more closely related to depictions of nature from the brushes of Spanish Court painters such as Paret y Alcázar, by whom various gouaches on the subject of birds have also appeared recently to complete the catalogue of works on the theme of protected birds housed in the Prado National Museum (Figs. 22 a&b).⁴¹

Although we are not familiar with the painting itself, we are aware of references to another bird-related work by Guiol that features in the catalogue for a 1930 “*Aportación al estudio de la cultura española en las Indias*”, organized by the Spanish Association of Friends of Art, entitled “*Fauna americana*” (signed with the characteristic Buenaventura Joseph Guiol “*Fecit in Mexico*”), and belonging to Mr. José Domínguez.⁴²

Fact sheets for individual paintings

The entire ensemble of works by Guiol is now increased by the emergence of this incomplete set of five *casta* paintings (numbered 2, 7, 10, 12 and 16), which complement the fascinating oeuvre of an artist whose other works we hope to learn more about over time.

Buenaventura José Guiol

From Spaniard and Mestiza, a Castiza is Born
(Number 2 in the series)

1777

Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.



Buenaventura José Guiol

From Spaniard and Morisca, an Albina is Born

(Number 7 in the series)

1777

Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.



Buenaventura José Guiol

From Loba and Indian, a Zambaigo is Born

(Number 10 in the series)

1777

Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.



Buenaventura José Guiol

From Cambujo and Mulatta, an Albarazo is Born

(Number 12 in the series)

1777

Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.



Buenaventura José Guiol

From Black and China, a Genisara is Born

(Number 16 in the series)

1777

Oil on canvas, 62.3 x 55.2 cm

Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.



Buenaventura José Guiol

De Español y Mestiza nace Castiza (From Spaniard and Mestiza, a Castiza is Born)

Number 2 in the series
1777

Oil on canvas
62.3 x 55.2 cm
Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.

This family group is made up of a Spanish father, who is leaning over his daughter in her baby walker, and a servant girl, while the Mestiza mother hands over a bracelet. The scene takes place in the interior of an elegant house. On the right, there is a piece of paper stuck to the wall, as if it were a painting, with the number 2 and a text identifying the scene as “De Español y Mestiza nace Castiza”.

In our catalogue, this painting bearing number 2 is the first in the series⁴³, and it is interesting to note that these signed and dated works are on public display for the first time. As a result, it would hardly be surprising for other works by the artist to come to light thanks to the identification of this new set of *casta* works, thereby completing the series and leading to a reevaluation of the collection.

The elevated social status of the group is made explicit by the richness of the attire and the presence of a Black servant elegantly dressed and holding the little Castiza girl's baby walker. The great beauty and harmony of the domestic group is not reminiscent of any known prototype, and may be Guiol's own invention. The faces of the children are close to the style of José de Páez.







Buenaventura José Guiol

De Español y Morisca nace Albina (From Spaniard and Morisca, an Albina is Born)

Number 7 in the series
1777

Oil on canvas
62.3 x 55.2 cm
Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.

In the interior of an elegant house, this family painting portrays a Spanish father, a Morisca mother and their little Albina daughter.

The Spaniard is writing and is interrupted by the mother who brings him the daughter, at which time the father takes the opportunity to give her an object that seems to be a bracelet. In the lower background we see an archway with a servant carrying a tray of food, and another servant asking her to share it with him.

The homely atmosphere of the scene is highlighted by the clothes worn by the Spanish father; he is dressed in a banyan, a typical long men's coat almost reaching the feet, and a white cap, clothing that was only worn in the house. Banyans used to be made of chintz, cotton printed with Chinese drawings transported to America through the Nao de Acapulco, bearing witness to the extensive trade links between Asia and Mexico. This type of garment is depicted in many *casta* paintings, demonstrating that such models were common among the painters of the time. This work sees Guiol sticking close to the prototype and revisiting compositions characteristic of Cabrera, Páez and Magón. Let us not forget that a guild system existed in 18th-century Mexico, which explains why various artists repeated similar models.

In the foreground we see a piece of paper on the floor with the number Seven for the series and a text identifying the scene "De Español y morisca nace Albina". In the lower right-hand corner, on a kind of bench seat, the painter's proud signature is to be found, reading "Bonaventura Jose Guiol fecit Mexico año de 1777".

The importance of the signature in this work is two-fold. On the one hand, the painter's ownership of the series, as we have already mentioned, but also a subject that is being highlighted by the latest publications on Viceregal Art, which point to the 18th century as the most important period within novo-Hispanic painting. Throughout the century, painters continued to become increasingly aware of their own contributions, and this awareness was what made cultured painters start to use the phrase "Pinxit Mexici" and "Fecit Mexici" together with their signatures. This makes the painting and painter's origin explicit. The use of Latin is symbolic of artists' growing awareness as being part of a widespread transatlantic tradition where Latin acted as the *lingua franca*.⁴⁴







Buenaventura José Guiol

De Loba e Indio nace Zambaigo (From Loba and Indian, a Zambaigo is Born)

Number 10 in the series
1777

Oil on canvas
62.3 x 55.2 cm
Signed in lower right-hand corner Buenaventura José Guiol in Mexico 1777.
Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.

A scene of great beauty, set indoors with the background separated by a lattice and two large windows, with the family grouped around the work of the father who is sitting patching shoes next to a table where several of the tools of his trade are visible. To the left his wife prepares a meal while their son completes the scene sitting on the ground beating leather. The dark-skinned woman is wearing jewelry, a pearl necklace and fine matching earrings. At first glance, such extravagant and cared-for jewelry may seem a touch extreme given the domestic setting, but the abundance of pearls in the American seas meant they found their use in jewelry across all social classes during the colonial era.

The explanatory note with the series number is located on a piece of paper pinned to the right-hand wall, with the number ten, “De Loba e Indio nace Zambaigo”.

Although Guiol sticks to the norm, and the scene is very similar to those depicted by other painters from the second half of the 18th century, portraying trades with the same shelves and molds with shoes hanging down, certain details, like the still life of the kitchen scene or the ceramic jug resting on the window sill, show us an interesting and well-versed artist. This piece is associated with the so-called “Tonalá ceramics”, whose main feature was a glossy finish effected through a characteristic burnishing process which, in contrast to pre-Hispanic pottery, started to be popular following the Spanish settlement due to the workshops set up by the religious orders which, in addition to their evangelizing activities, taught new Spanish techniques. The prominence given to these clay pieces means that they appear in numerous still-life paintings by the greatest specialists of the time. In their still lifes, the Spaniards Van der Hamen and Antonio de Pereda often depicted containers that are directly related to Mexican red ceramics. Guiol uses the jug to lend depth to the scene, which is opened up via a window to the outside.



Figs. 23 a. b & c
Tonalá ceramic,
Madrid, Museo de
América.





Jo.
De Loba, é
Indio, na-
ce Zam-
baigo.

Buenaventura José Guiol

De Cambujo y Mulata nace Albarazo
(From Cambujo and Mulatta, an Albarazo is Born)

Number 12 in the series

1777

Oil on canvas

62.3 x 55.2 cm

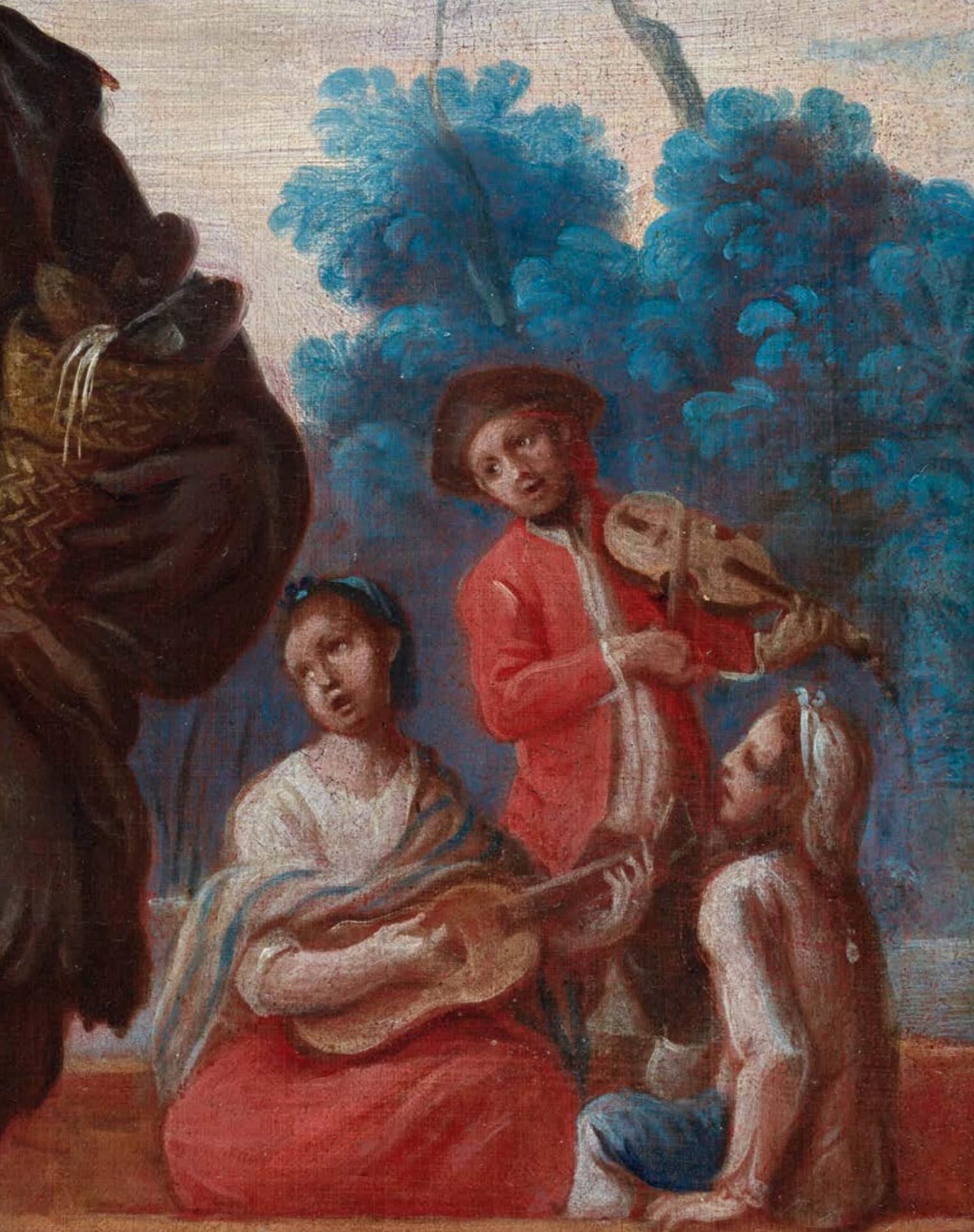
Signed in lower right-hand corner Guiol in Mexico 1777

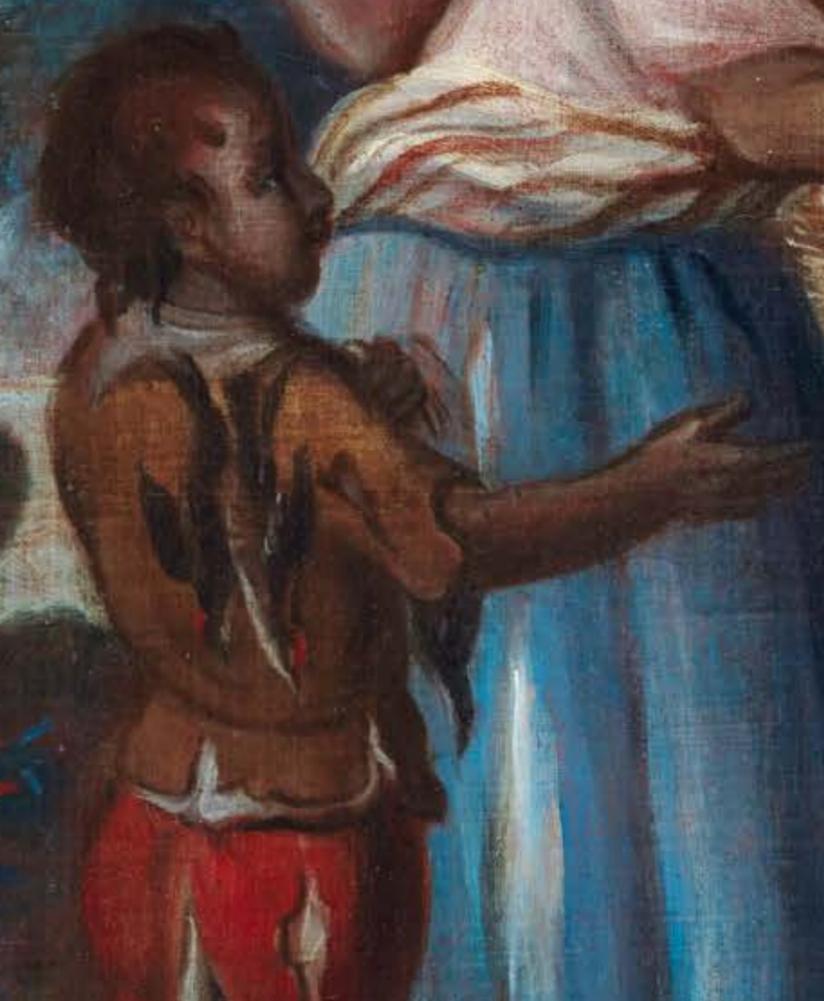
Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.

An outdoors scene that trades the rich clothing of the upper classes for the simple threadbare dress of a couple and a boy walking barefoot near a river. In the background, a boat scene with an elegant couple singing and playing the guitar contrasts with the main scene of the Cambujo and the Mulatta. This work makes an allusion to something we commented on in the introductory text on *casta* paintings: the further one gets from White Spanish, the greater the poverty – particularly in works dating from the second half of the 18th century. The characters don't even have a home, seeming to wander carrying all their possessions with them. Their son looks at them doubtfully, caught between the choice of carrying on walking with them or stopping where he is. As we have seen, family scenes in the *casta* painting genre usually take place in the domestic sphere or in its immediate surroundings. It is as such that this outdoors painting might be attempting to convey the idea that the castes represented (Cambujo, Mulatta and Albarazo) live on the margins of society with no fixed abode, like vagabonds.

The landscape is reminiscent of other works by Guiol; it resembles a theatrical scene with musicians singing, very similar to European artists in the Rococo style. All of this seems to point to the need, with regards the *casta* paintings genre, for further research into the relationship these works might have with the courtship scenes of M. A. Housse or Paret y Alcázar.







Buenaventura José Guiol

De China y Negro nace Genisara
(From Black and China, a Genisara is Born)

Number 16 in the series
1777

Oil on canvas
62.3 x 55.2 cm
Signed in lower left-hand corner: Guiol fecit en Mexico 1777.
Provenance: Private collection (Spain) Minguela Family.

The last painting to comment on and the one that concludes the series is number 16. This, as we pointed out earlier, was a typical number for these series of paintings. The work depicts a couple in the midst of a quarrel. The man is attacking the woman, grabbing her by the hair and wielding a knife. The woman is defending herself by pulling the man's hair and she holds a wooden spoon as a weapon. The little girl is grabbing at her father's leg in an attempt to separate the couple.

As a result of the fight, a small table laden with earthenware has become unbalanced and is falling over with a huge clatter, as if the painter wanted to capture the moment. The scene looks like a balancing act between the couple, and while the other works from the series speak of marital harmony and understanding, this scene transports us to a universe of quarrelling and hardship.

The harshness of this scene of domestic violence surprises us in an artist such as Guiol, who depicted the kinder side of society. Yet he, like so many of his contemporaries, also dares to portray subjects that must have been regular occurrences in most countries, however little pictorial evidence there may be.

The work, signed and dated in Mexico in 1777, sticks to the *casta* genre prototype and draws this fascinating series to a close.



16.
De China y Negro,
nace Ge-
nitara





NOTES

1. With the same quality of work, *casta* paintings have a large market value due to their theme.
2. Edward J. Sullivan, “Un Fenómeno visual de América”, in *Artes de México*, Number 8, Summer 1990, pp. 60 to 71.
3. Efraín Castro Morales, “Los cuadros de castas de la Nueva España”, *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft, und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, Band 20; Böhlau Verlag, Cologne-Vienna, 1983, p. 671-690.
4. María Concepción García Sáiz, *Las Castas Mexicanas. Un Género Pictórico Americano*. Ed. Olivetti, Milan, 1989.
5. Ilona Katzew, *La Pintura de Castas. Representaciones raciales en el México del siglo XVIII*. Ed Conaculta-Turner, Mexico City, 2004.
6. Teresa Castelló Yturvide, “La Indumentaria de las Castas del Mestizaje”, in *Artes de México*, Number 8, Summer 1990, pp. 73 to 79; citing Nicolás León, *Las castas del México Colonial o Nueva España*, México, 1924.
7. The best collections of casta paintings are distributed between the Museum of America in Madrid, and the Museum of Mexican History in Nuevo León, (Sada Collection).
8. They have come to be called paintings of the Mexican land.
9. Efraín Castro Morales, op. cit. p. 673.
10. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “‘La familia’ y las familias en el México colonial”, in *Estudios Sociológicos* X: 30, 1992, Ed. El Colegio de México, 1992, p. 698.
11. All in all, the presence of illegitimate children was on the increase over the years, so that during the 17th century in the city of Guadalajara, illegitimate children accounted for 40, 60 and 50 percent of the total number baptized” (Pilar Gonzalvo, op. cit. pp. 707 and 708, citing Thomas Calvo, *La Nueva Galicia en los siglos XVI v XVII*, Guadalajara, El Colegio de Jalisco/CEMCA, pp. 65-68). Also: “Because for one hundred years there were no restrictions against mixed race and mulattos in the Real Universidad de México, nor were there stringent demands for legitimacy” (Pilar Gonzalbo, op. cit. p. 708).
12. María Ángeles Eugenio Martínez, “Sociedad”, in *Historia General de España y América: los primeros Borbones*; volume XI, part 1, Luis Navarro García et al., Ed. Rialp, Madrid, 1989.
13. María Ángeles Eugenio Martínez, op. cit. p. 252-253.
14. Fernando Navarro, *Memoria sobre la Población del Reino de Nueva España*, Mexico, 1820.
15. See also Jacques Lafaye, “La Sociedad de Castas en la Nueva España”, in *Artes de México*, Number 8, Summer 1990, pp. 25-34, who in turn attributes different figures to Humboldt (Indians: 2.5 million; Spaniards: 1.1 million; Castes: 1.24 million).
16. Jacques Lafaye, op. cit. p. 34.
17. Jacques Lafaye, op. cit. p. 35.
18. Margarita de Orellana, “La Fiebre de la Imagen en la Pintura de Castas”, in *Artes de México*, Number 8, Summer 1990, p. 54.
19. Ilona Katzew, op. cit., p. 1.
20. Concepción García Sáiz, “«Que se tenga por blanco» – El mestizaje americano y la pintura de castas”, in *Arqueología, América, Antropología. José Pérez Barradas, 1897-1981*; Madrid, 2008, p. 354.
21. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 202.
22. Efraín Castro Morales, op. cit. p. 678.
23. To reinforce this thesis, Castro Morales makes explicit reference to the study of Gonzalo Aguirre on the black population of Mexico [“La población negra de México”, Mexico City, 1972], in which the author points out that these complicated racial classifications were never carried out in practice, since none of the documents examined during his research mention the terms listed in the casta paintings. Aguirre considers that it is about scholarly classifications, confusing in the designations used and that they had the defect of being unintelligible and impractical, like the logical product of minds educated in Culteranismo.
24. The painter Manuel Arellano is known author of a picture of a mulatto “daughter of Black and Spaniard” (painted in 1711 and now in the Denver Art Museum) and three other oil paintings representing an Indian and two female “Chichimeca” Indians, respectively, all dated in 1711 and two of which are preserved in the Museum of America in Madrid. Although not the typical representation of father and mother with descendant, consideration could be given to Arellano, a native of Mexico City and the son of the painter Antonio Arellano, as the immediate precursor, or even initiator *sensu lato*, of the casta painting genre.
25. Ilona Katzew. Op. cit. p. 71.
26. María Concepción García Sáiz, op. cit.: 1989, pp. 62 to 65.
27. María Concepción García Sáiz, op. cit.: 1989, pp. 54 to 61.
28. María Concepción García Sáiz, op. cit.: 1989, pp. 62 to 65.
29. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 36.
30. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 16.
31. Columba Salazar Ibarguen, “Los discursos sagrados en la Puebla novohispana. Andrés de Arze y Miranda”, in *Anuario Saber Novohispano 1995*, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, pp. 389 to 397.
32. From French Creole. Efraín Castro Morales, op. cit. p. 8.
33. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. 147, citing Francisco de Solano, ed., Antonio de Ulloa y la Nueva España, (Mexico: UNAM, 1987), p. 370.
34. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 109.
35. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 106.
36. María Concepción García Sáiz. op. cit. 1989, pp. 184 to 187.
37. María Jose Rodilla “Un Quevedo en Nueva España satiriza las castas”, in *Artes de México, Number 8, Summer 1990*, pp. 40 to 48.
38. Ilona Katzew, op. cit. p. 150, footnote on p. 82 as follows: “See the examples by the Flemish artist David de Coninck, in Debra Edelstein, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous*, cat. exp. (Dartmouth, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, 1991). 348. Or another example by a Spanish artist in Juan de Arellano 1614-1686, cat. exp. (Madrid: Caja Madrid, 1998), 66”.
39. Richard Schaedel (1949): “Martínez Compañón, Founder of the Peruvian Archaeology”, in *American Antiquity*, N° 15.

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JAIME EGUIGUREN
ARTS & ANTIQUES

JAIME EGUIGUREN ARTE Y ANTIGÜEDADES
POSADAS 1232
BUENOS AIRES 1011
ARGENTINA

jaimееguiguren@jaimееguiguren.com

