

# JAIME EGUIGUREN ART & ANTIQUES



## Circle of Padre Carlos

*Reliquary bust of Saint Genesius Martyr*  
Quito (Ecuador), 2nd half of the 17th century  
Polychromed wood  
68 x 49 x 37 cm  
Provenance: Private collection

Saint Genesius was a roman notary during the Tetrarchy government of Diocletian (286 AD–305 AD) who refused to support the decree of persecution against the Christians (The Diocletianic or Great Persecution), he deserted his service in the city of Arles and therefore he was prosecuted by the roman authorities, captured and beheaded. Through martyrdom he was made saint and became the patron of notaries and secretaries. The attributes of this saint are the book of the notaries and a tree branch.

This Saint was specially venerated in medieval Spain, thus his cult extended to all the viceroyalties during the 16th and 17th century, although the saint was called San Ginés de la Jara (Fig. 1), being essentially the Iberian version of Saint Genesius of Arles.

Reliquary busts were extremely popular in throughout the Spanish Empire, allowing the access of the worshippers to the cult of Saints in remote locations, as the provinces of the various viceroyalties. The relics were used to invigorate of the local Christian communities.

This reliquary bust gathers all the characteristics of the Ecuadorian school of sculpture, from the treatment of the polychromies to the construction of the facial features, through them it can be defined that the probable author of the sculpture is the friar Padre Carlos, active during the second and third quarter of the 17th century in Quito. He was the leading sculptor of the city, influencing important artists such as Bernardo de Legarda (Quito, 1700?–1773) and Manuel Chili Caspicara (Quito, 1720?–1796?).

*J.E.*



Fig. 1 Luisa Roldán (called "La Roldana") (1652–1706), *Saint Ginés de la Jara*, about 1692, Polychromed wood. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles