

El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), 1541-1614
The Holy Family with Saint Anne and the Infant John the Baptist



KRESS CATALOGUE NUMBER

K1684

IDENTIFIER

2196

ARTIST

El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), 1541-1614

NATIONALITY

Greek

DATE

c. 1595/1600

MEDIUM

oil on canvas

TYPE OF OBJECT

Painting

DIMENSIONS

53.2 x 34.4 cm (20 15/16 x 13 9/16 in)

LOCATION

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

PROVENANCE

Probably in El Greco's studio at the time of his death; [1] probably his son, Jorge Manuel Theotocópuli, Toledo. [2] Carlos Beistegui, Paris and Venice. [3] Michael Dreicer [1868-1921], New York; [4] bequeathed by him in 1921 to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, where it was displayed 1922-1933; [5] returned 1933 to Dreicer's heirs, who had challenged his will; [6] Michael Dreicer's widow, Maisie Dreicer Whyte de Kerchove [1889-1976, née Shainwald], by 1937; [7] consigned in the 1940s to (Paul Drey Gallery, New York); [8] sold or consigned 24 February 1948 to (French & Co., New York); [9] sold 7 December 1949 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York; [10] gift 1959 to NGA. [1] This seems probable because the painting appears to have been owned by the artist's son in 1621 (see note 2). Because the inventory of El Greco's estate in 1614 does not include measurements, it is difficult to identify the National Gallery painting with a specific reference in this document. However, if the painting was given the same title in

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1614 as in 1621, it can probably be identified as "Una imagen, con el niño dormido y S. Joseph y Santa ana y S. Jn bautista" ("An image with the sleeping child and Saint Joseph and Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist"); Francisco de Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, Madrid, 1910: 192. However, as Harold E. Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, Princeton, 1962: 2:59, suggests, the National Gallery painting might have been described as "Una imagen con el Niño y s. Joseph y S. Ana no acabada" ("An unfinished painting with the Child and Saint Joseph and Saint Anne"). See Francisco de Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, Madrid, 1910: 193. [2] No. 16 in the inventory made of his possessions in 1621 reads: "Una ymagen con su niño dormido santa ana y san Joseph y San Ju bautista, y quadro dorado, tiene de ancho casi media vara y de alto dos terzias" ("An image [of the Virgin] with the Child sleeping, Saint Anne and Saint Joseph and Saint John the Baptist, and a gilded frame, measures in width almost half a vara and in height almost two-thirds"). Francisco de Borja de San Román y Fernández, "De la vida del Greco," *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* 3 (1927): 288. Because a *vara* (a traditional Spanish measurement) equals approximately 84 cm, no. 16 of the inventory would have been 42 cm in width and 56 cm in height. These figures are close to the measurements of the NGA painting. El Greco's other interpretations of the subject are significantly larger. Compare Wethey 1962, 2:58, 59, nos. 85, 87. The copies of El Greco's other paintings of the subject are significantly larger than the NGA painting. Compare Wethey 1962, 2:189-190, nos. X-105 through X-109. [3] Wethey 1962, 2:60, no. 88. According to a letter from Mrs. Wethey dated 2 August 1988, in NGA curatorial files, Beistegui was "a fabulously rich Argentinian of Spanish descent...who lived for many years in Europe" and once owned the eighteenth-century Palazzo Labia in Venice. [4] Michael Dreicer, *Collection of Michael Dreicer*, New York, no date: 4, 15. Dreicer preferred to collect exclusively small-scale paintings like the present example. See Macdonald Parish-Watson, "Art and the Businessman: A Note on the Michael Dreicer Collection," *Arts and Decoration* 15 (1921): 249-295, 319. [5] Harry B. Wehle, "The Michael Dreicer Collection," *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 17 (1922): 100, 103; Bryson Burroughs, *Catalogue of Paintings: The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1931: 145, no. G791-2. [6] Colin Eisler, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: European Schools Excluding Italian*, Oxford, 1977: 202, no. 1527. [7] M. Legendre and A. Hartmann, *Domenikos Theotokopoulos Called El Greco*, Paris, 1937: 144, where the painting's owner is identified as "private collection, London." This individual and the European collector resident in New York (see n. 8), was very likely Michael Dreicer's widow, Maisie Shainwald Dreicer, who, after her first husband's death, traveled frequently between New York and Europe. Born Maisie Seville Shainwald, she married twice more, first, in 1923, to the British engineer and naval architect, Jardine Bell Whyte (1880-1954), and second, after their divorce, in February 1935 to Baron René de Kerchove d'Exaerde (1883-1971), author of *International Maritime Dictionary*, first published in 1948. After her third marriage she was known as the Baroness de Kerchove. Dr. Tara Mitchell Mielnik, of the Metropolitan Historical Commission in Nashville, kindly shared her research about the Baroness; see her e-mail of 24 September 2010, in NGA curatorial files. [8] Robert Carlucci of the Paul Drey Gallery, letter of 4 August 1988, NGA curatorial files, wrote that the painting was owned during the early 1940's by a European collector resident in New York, who still owned it in 1947, and who consigned it to the Paul Drey Gallery "for some period of time." See n. 7. [9] French & Co. stock records at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, stock no. 79690A. A sizeable group of paintings from the Baroness was recorded in the French & Co. stockbooks in 1948. French & Co. sent the painting out to the Paul Drey Gallery in May 1948; no date of return is recorded. [10] French & Co. stock records at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

ACCESSION NUMBER

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LEGACY NGA NUMBER

1527

1 ACQUISITION

French & Company, December 7, 1949

1 DISTRIBUTION

Gift to National Gallery of Art, April 30, 1959

EXTERNAL LINKS

Related Collection Record

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.45889.html>

Related National Gallery of Art Library Image Collections Record

https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1p5jkvq/alma99233913804896

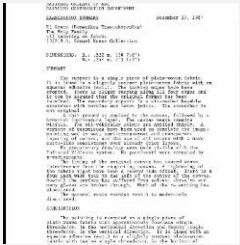
Related National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalog

<https://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/research/publications/pdfs/spanish-painting-15th-19th-centuries.pdf>

2 ARCHIVAL ITEMS



K1684 - Condition and restoration record, circa 1950s-1960s



K1684 - Examination summary, 1987

RECORD LINK

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/2196>