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# AIC's 40th Annual Meeting, Paintings Session, Thursday May 10, "Comparison Between Two Identical Portraits of Fray Camilo Henriquez" by Monica Perez.

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Perez's talk focused on the comparison and resulting attributions of two painted portraits of Chile's beloved Fray Camilo Henriques. She first detailed the history and importance of the sitter and the painting itself (this iconographic portrait was the source of most subsequent depictions of the sitter), and then went on to describe the painting and treatment of the version owned by the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile (National Library).

The painting hangs in the private office of the director of the National Library, so very few have ever seen it and most don't even know of its existence. In fact, it was originally assumed to be the very popular and nearly identical version painted by José Guth, prominently displayed in the Museo Histórico Nacional, Santiago, Chile (National Hist. Museum). The Guth version was actually originally owned by the National Library until it was gifted to the National Hist. Museum in 1920.

These two identical paintings raised many questions, including whether they were both painted by Guth and which one was actually the original. Of course, both institutions believed they owned the original version. Perez was able to examine the National Hist. Museum's painting along side the National Library's for comparison's sake. Infrared reflectography revealed a number of telling details, including numerous compositional changes in the National Hist. Museum's painting, which the National Library's version lacked, and cross section analysis revealed differences in the layering structures of the foreground and background in the two paintings. This and other evidence led Perez to hypothesize that the Museum owned the original painting by Guth, and the Library's version was a later copy. Interestingly, the Library's painting appears to have been copied from the Museum's painting while still in its frame, as all four edges of the copy are cropped.

A loan agreement from 1960 revealed that the Museum lent their copy to the Library for a brief period of time, during which period Perez believes the Library may have commissioned a copy to be made. No artist attribution has been made for the Library's copy, and, as usual, this research and discovery has sparked a whole new set of questions. Fortunately the discovery has not detracted from either institution's opinion of their work, both of which remain prominently on view in their respective locations, and other scholars have taken up researching the questions surrounding the copy.

## About the author

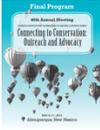


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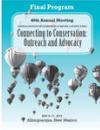
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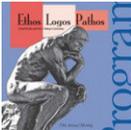
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