Portrait of an Enigma: The *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, Stirling Maxwell and Reception of El Greco

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The portrait now known as the Lady in a Fur Wrap *in the Stirling Maxwell Collection in Glasgow has fascinated viewers ever since it was exhibited in Paris, in the Spanish Gallery of King Louis-Philippe of France at the Louvre in 1838. From then on, its fame became linked with the rise in the international reputation of El Greco as its (presumed) creator. Amongst the visitors to the Galerie Espagnole was the young Sir William Stirling Maxwell, whose entry on the painter in his* Annals of the Artists of Spain *(1848) was to provide the fullest information on the painter in English up to that date, notwithstanding the author's criticisms of the artist's late style. Stirling went on to become the owner of the "gem" he had praised in his book, when he bought it at the auction of Louis-Philippe's collection in 1853. Through its frequent loan to temporary exhibitions and its repeated reproduction, the* Lady *in turn became the most famous picture in the Stirling Maxwell collection. This paper sketches the complex history of the reception of the portrait. A summarised account is also given of the debates on the identity of the sitter (daughter of the painter, Jerónima de las Cuevas, Infanta Catalina Micaela, etc.), the artistic attribution (to El Greco, Sofonisba Anguissola, Sánchez Coello, etc.), and the date. It concludes with some reflections on the scientific analysis of the painting now planned, and whether this will finally resolve the questions surrounding this most enigmatic portrait.*

Keywords: El Greco *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, Sir William Stirling Maxwell, Sofonisba Anguissola, Jerónima de las Cuevas, Infanta Catalina Micaela, Galerie Espagnole

Illustrations

1/ El Greco, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, The Stirling Maxwell Collection, Pollok House, Glasgow. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection

2/ El Greco, *Lady with a Flower in her Hair*. © Private Collection/ The Bridgeman Art Library

3/ El Greco, *Adoration of the Name of Jesus*, National Gallery, London. © National Gallery Picture Library

4/ Nicolaas Henneman, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, Talbotype photography of the watercolour by William Barclay, *Illustrations to the Annals of the Artists of Spain*, London, 1848, © Museo Nacional del Prado

5/ William Barclay after El Greco, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, watercolour, 1844-6, © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection

6/ Caldesi & Montecchi, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, photograph in*Gems of the Art Treasure Exhibition, Manchester, 1857*, Ancient Series no. 20, Manchester & Londres, Colnaghi, 1858. With permission of the Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library

7/ Paul Cézanne, *Femme au boa*, © Private Collection, London

8/ Studio of Sánchez Coello, *Infanta Catalina Micaela*, © Museo Nacional del Prado

9/ Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, © Museo Zamek, Lancut/ The Bridgeman Art Library

10/ El Greco, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, X-ray, 2004. With permission of the National Gallery, London and Glasgow Museums.

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This paper proposes to outline the complex history of reception of one of the most famous and enigmatic works associated with El Greco – the portrait now generally known in Spain as the *Dama del armiño* (or *Lady in a Fur Wrap* in the Anglophone world; Fig. 1).[1]The portrait has fascinated gallery visitors since it was exhibited in the *Galerie Espagnole* at the Louvre in Paris from 1838 to 1848 as part of the collection formed by Baron Taylor for King Louis-Philippe of France. In fact, it was the only El Greco painting in the collection that was favourably received.[2] The fame of the portrait, which at that time was considered to represent the painter's daughter, in turn brought the life and work of El Greco to the attention of a much wider public, and especially at an international level.A young Scotsman named William Stirling (later Sir William Stirling Maxwell) visited the *Galerie* with some regularity whilst he was compiling his *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, the first scholarly history of Spanish art in English, which was published in 1848. For him, the display of El Grecos in the Louis-Philippe Collection, and this portrait in particular, provided a reference point which opened the way to a significant, though far from unqualified appreciation of the artist.

During preparation of the *Annals*, Stirling also had the opportunity to study some of El Greco's masterpieces on his journeys to Spain in 1842 and 1845. He made a brief visit to Toledo on his way from Madrid to Andalusia at the end of 1842 and also in 1845 en route to Madrid from Valencia, when he also stopped in Illescas.[3] His 1845 notes on the *Disrobing of Christ* and the *Burial of Count Orgaz* suggest that Antonio Palomino had been his principal guide, especially in his praise of the Titianesque heads. In the *Disrobing of Christ*, Stirling discovered other points of biographical interest, believing that the painter had not only included a self-portrait but also a portrait of his daughter. In adapting his notes for the *Annals*, he emphasised that his source for identifying the likeness of the daughter was the portrait in the Louis-Philippe Collection:

[1] I am grateful for the help of Rocío Ruiz Nieto in the preparation of the Spanish text. In the field of reception of El Greco, I am especially indebted to ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, J. *De Ceán a Cossío. La fortuna crítica del Greco en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1987; andHARRIS FRANKFORT, E. "El Greco's 'fortuna crítica' in Britain", in HADJINICOLAOU, N. (ed.), *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium, Iraklion, Crete, 1-5 September 1990*, Iraklion, Municipality of Iraklion, 1995, pp. 481-97.

[2]BATICLE, J.andMARINAS, C.,*La Galerie espagnole de Louis-Philippe au Louvre. 1838-1848*, Paris, RMN, 1981, no. 268.

[3]STIRLING, W., Travel Itineraries, Stirling of Keir Papers (T-SK), on deposit at Glasgow Archives, T-SK 28/9, 30 Nov. 1842 and T-SK 28/11, 22-24 Apr., 1845. I am grateful to Archie Stirling for permission to cite these.

> … the Greek himself figures as the Centurian in black armour. He has likewise painted his beautiful daughter – distinguished by the white drapery on her head – as one of the three Maries in the foreground; at least, if her portrait in the Louvre be authentic[4].

Palomino was harsh in his criticisms of the 'extravagance' of El Greco's later manner, including what he described as the artist's 'contemptible and ridiculous' painting, 'disjointed drawing' and 'the harshness of the colouring'.[5] Stirling followed Palomino's example in his mixed opinions of the El Greco pictures in the Louis-Philippe Collection:

> In the Louvre we find near his excellent portraits, an "*Adoration of the Shepherds*", in his most extravagant style, in which the lights on reddish draperies and dark clouds are expressed by green streaks of so unhappy a tint, that those harmless objects resemble masses of bruised and discoloured flesh.[6]

But returning to the portraits, he concluded: 'Yet the perpetrator of these enormities sometimes painted heads that stood out from the canvas with the sober strength of Velazquez's and coloured figures and draperies with a splendour rivalling Titian'[7]

Such contrasts between the two manners of El Greco also echo the comments of Théophile Gautier: although he did not entirely share the Frenchman's romanticism, Stirling did enjoy the vividness of his descriptions and recognised that he had written 'ingeniously and well' on this painter. Thus, he cited Gautier's text on the *Christ on the Cross* in the main sacristy of Burgos Cathedral, where El Greco was described as:

> … an extravagant and singular painter, whose pictures might be taken for sketches by Titian ... In order to give his paintings the appearance of being executed with great energy of touch, he occasionally throws on to the canvas touches of incredible impetuosity and

[4] STIRLING, W. *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, London, John Ollivier, pp. 277-78.
[5] PALOMINO, A., *Museo pictorico y escala optica. El Parnaso español pintoresco laureado*(1724),Madrid, Sancha, 1796-97 ed., p. 427.
[6] STIRLING, W. *Annals*, op. cit., p. 286. Now in the National Museum of Romanian Art, Bucharest.
[7] Ibidem.

> brutality, with slender, steely lights gleaming through the shadows like sabre blades: all this does not prevent El Greco from being a great painter.[8]

Stirling did not include the praise for the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* which follows these comments by Gautier but he would certainly have had them in mind when he wrote his own:

> You have no doubt seen at the Spanish Museum in Paris the portrait of El Greco's daughter, a magnificent head which no master would disown, and you can judge what an admirable painter Domenico Theotocopuli [could be when he was in his right mind].

The tenderness of Stirling's text on the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* reminds us of the significance that portraiture held for him, in particular its capacity to give permanence to the transitory and to offer a tangible link with the past:

> The portrait of his daughter is one of the purest gems of [the Louvre], and would be a gem even in the Royal Gallery of Spain. She is painted in the prime of life and loveliness; her dark eyes and rich complexion are finely set off by the white-furred mantle drawn over her head; and her countenance, in depicting which her fond father has put forth all his skill, is one of the most beautiful that death ever dimmed, and that the pencil ever rescued from the grave.[9]

Stirling's distaste for the more extreme elements of El Greco's late style were also shared by most critics up to the beginning of the twentieth century.[10] Nevertheless, the *Annals* entry on El Greco remained relatively balanced overall, and constituted the most complete account of this artist in English by the mid-nineteenth century. And thanks for the sale of the Louis-Philippe Collection in 1853, his own collection of El Grecos became unique in Britain at that date. In that sale, he purchased four paintings, including the portrait of the lady which had so captivated

[8] STIRLING, W. *Annals*, op. cit., pp. 286-7, note 1. See also GAUTIER, T., *Voyage en Espagne* (1845), trans. C. A. Phillips as *A Romantic in Spain*, New York, Interlink, 2001 ed., pp. 35-6.

[9] STIRLING, W. *Annals*, op. cit., p. 285.

[10] See FORD, R., *Handbook for Travellers to Spain and Readers at Home* (1845), Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1966 ed., p. 1147 on the *Disrobing*. Comparable comments in ROBINSON, J.C. *Memoranda on Fifty Pictures*, London, private publication, 1868, pp. 38-39; and JUSTI, C. *Diego Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert*, Bonn, Cohen, 1888, pp. 48-52. A later, more moderate opinion in JUSTI, C. "Los comienzos del Greco", *Estudios de Arte Español*, II, *La España moderna*, Madrid, [Valentín Tordesillas], 1913, pp. 230-39.

him.[11] Already in 1851, he had acquired the portrait of a *Lady with a Flower in her Hair* (Fig. 2) at the auction of the collection of General John Meade, who had served as British consul in Madrid; and later, at the sale of the Conde de Quinto in 1862, he went on to buy the version of *Christ Carrying the Cross* that is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Lehman Collection).[12] In addition to these six oil paintings, his drawings collection included two studies, of *St John the Baptist* and *St John the Evangelist*, for the high altarpiece in the Convent of Santo Domingo el Antiguo in Toledo.[13]

Stirling's acquisitions from the Galerie Espagnole also reflected his scholarly interests in the *Annals*. He would have been interested in the small version of the *Adoration of the Name of Jesus* (now National Gallery, London; Fig. 3) as an example of the painter's custom of keeping such versions as a visual archive of his work, as Francisco Pacheco reported following his visit to Toledo in 1611, and had been noted by Stirling in the *Annals*.[14]Likewise, Palomino's praise of the version in the Escorial, and the identification in the *Notice de la Galerie Espagnole* of one of the figures as Charles V would have been of interest to him as historian of the Emperor.[15]Similarly, the *Portrait of Pompeo Leoni* (now Private Collection, Geneva) would have chimed with Stirling's interest in the representation of artists, including their role and social status, and their patronage by the Habsburgs and the Church, all of these being areas which emerged as central themes of the *Annals*.

Another theme which fascinated Stirling was the reproduction of works of art, including questions of faithfulness to the original,in relation to conventional methods of making copies and prints, as well as the possibilities of the new process of photography. In light of this, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that the first work attributed to El Greco ever to be photographed was the

[11]CHRISTIE & MANSON, *Catalogue of the Pictures Forming the Celebrated Spanish Gallery of His Majesty the Late King Louis Philippe*, London, 6-7, 13-14, 20-21 May, 1853, lots 21 *Pompés Léoni [sic]*, 22 *Gentleman of the Time of Philip III*, 82 *Daughter of El Greco*, 112 *Last Judgment* (*Adoration of the Name of Jesus*).

[12] On the *Lady with a Flower in her Hair*, seeCHRISTIE & MANSON,*Catalogue of the … Collection of Pictures Formed by the Late Hon. General John Meade*, London, 6-8 Mar. 1851, lot 284; andBROWN, J. (ed.) *El Greco of Toledo*, Toledo, OH, Toledo Museum of Art, 1982, no. 60. On the*Christ*, see Christiansen, K., "Christ Carrying the Cross", in DAVIES, D. (ed.), *El Greco*, London, National Gallery, 2003, no. 32.

[13] See DAVIES, D. (ed.), *El Greco*, op. cit., nos. 18-19. Other works in the Stirling Maxwell Collection included a miniature attributed to the School of El Greco (Pollok House, PC 29), as well as the engraving of the*Adoration of Shepherds* by Diego del Astor after El Greco (Metropolitan Museum, New York; 1978.545.1).

[14]STIRLING, W., *Annals*, op. cit., p. 288, citingPALOMINO, A. *Museo pictorico*, op. cit., p. 429.

[15]PALOMINO, A. *Museo pictorico*, op. cit., pp. 426-7; *Notice des tableaux de la Galérie Espagnole* …, París, Musée du Louvre, 1838, no. 264. See alsoSTIRLING, W. *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*, London, John Parker, 1852; andBLUNT, A. "El Greco's Dream of Philip II: An Allegory of the Holy League", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*,III: 1-2,London, University of London, 1939-40, pp. 58-69.

Lady in a Fur Wrap, as one of the 66 works of art included in the limited edition volume of Talbotype illustrations which accompanied the text volumes of the *Annals* (Fig. 4).[16] Photography was then a very new technology, and the process used in this case, which was invented by William Henry Fox Talbot, was still unstable. Direct photography of paintings remained too difficult to be able to produce reliable results. In any case, many still considered thatone of the principal uses of the new technique would be to offer a more reliable intermediate stage within the process of reproduction of works of art. In the case of the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, a watercolour by William Barclay (Fig. 5) was used as intermediary, which to modern eyes is likely to appear unreliable as a copy.[17]

The enormous advances in photographic technology during the 1850s meant that photographers and cameras regularly began to appear in museums, as well as at the great exhibitions of art aimed at mass visitors which were beginning to be organized. At the Manchester *Art Treasures* exhibition of 1857, where Spanish art from British collections made a significant impact, an awareness of the important contribution that photographic reproduction mightmake to the creation of the canon of great works of art could be detected, perhaps for the first time. Ten Spanish works from the exhibition were included in *The Photographs of Gems of the Art Treasures*, a high-quality publication with photographs taken by Caldesi and Montecchi, amongst them the artistic jewel now in Stirling's possession (Fig. 6). As a photograph of an oil painting, it shows some of the perennial problems of photography of this medium, especially the fact that light reflections cause the texture of the canvas to appear too prominent. Likewise, the ethereal effect noticeable above the sitter's shoulder seems to indicate the area where the canvas had been extended (see below)[18].

In the context of the impact that Spanish art had on the art of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is also worth bearing in mind the important role that reproductions played in the process of transmission and transformation. Thus, in one of the most famous examples, the

[16]SeeMACARTNEY, H. "Experiments in Photography as the Tool of Art History, No. 1: William Stirling's *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (1848)", *Journal of Art Historiography*, 5, Birmingham, Barber Institute, 2011, pp. 1-17.
[17]On Stirling's commissions to Barclay (1797-1859), seeMACARTNEY, H., 'La colección de arte español formada por Sir William Stirling Maxwell', in M. D. Antigüedad del Castillo-Olivares and A. Alzaga Ruiz (ed.), *Colecciones, expolio, museos y mercado artístico en España en los siglos XVIII y XIX*, Madrid, Editorial Universitaria Ramón Areces, 2011, (pp. 235-264), esp. p. 250. The squarer dimensions of the copy may indicate Stirling's original intention to reproduce it in the text volumes.
[18] The white line at the lower right corner appears to be a flaw in the photograph.

version of the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*painted by Cézanne (Fig. 7) around 1885-6 at a key moment in his artistic development, the French painter's inspiration did not come directly from the original but from a reproduction that was (at least) twice removed fromit: the engraving by Jean-Baptiste Laurens which appeared in the *Magazin Pittoresque* in 1860, and which was in turn based on the earlier wood engraving made during the Manchester exhibition.[19]The art dealer Ambroise Vollard told the scholar Meier-Graefe of Cézanne's passion for Spain and the Spaniards, even though he had never been there, and of his likely use of 'poor reproductions' of El Greco. When Meier-Graefe saw Cézanne's picture, he nevertheless insisted that it not only reminded him greatly of El Greco but that it was 'a piece of him'.[20]

Also surprising is the extent to which Cézanne's picture seems to re-create a work with more Greek or Byzantine features.As early as 1843, a lithograph of the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*in the curious *Atlas des nouvelles recherches historiques sur la principauté française de Morée* by Jean Alexandre Buchon, which was also probably the first reproduction of the *Lady*, had presented her as a Greek archetype. This association between the *Lady*, the supposed Greek features of the model, and the Greek identity of El Greco and his art would continue into the twentieth century.[21]

The importance given to El Greco's identity as a Byzantine painter, and to the possible continuation of Byzantine elements in his style,also increased from the beginningof the twentieth century onwards. One of the first to explore this topic was the Danish artist Jens Ferdinand Willumsen, whose discovery of the art of El Greco during his visits to Spain in 1910-12 profoundly influenced the new Expressionist tendency in his own work at this time, including his use of brighter colours. He wrote to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, elder son of Sir William and inheritor of the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, in1916 y 1922, whilst he was preparing his book on El Greco which was published in 1927. He never managed to visit Pollok, and instead based his comments in his book on a photograph and on Sir John's precise answers to his detailed

[19] See REWALD, J. (ed.), *The Paintings of Paul Cézanne: A Catalogue Raisonné*, New York, H. Abrams, 1996, no. 568. For later examples of the transfer and transformation of the image, see PORTÚS, J., "El Greco y la pintura europea del Surrealismo a las nuevas figuraciones", in BARÓN, J. (ed.), *El Greco y la pintura moderna*, Madrid, Prado, 2014, (pp. 288-314) esp. pp. 301-2 and Fig. 187.

[20]Cited inREWALD, J. (ed.), *The Paintings of Paul Cézanne: A Catalogue Raisonné*, New York, H. Abrams, 1996, no. 568.

[21]See HADJINICOLAOU, N., "El Greco revestido de ideologías nacionalistas", in ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, J. (ed.), *El Greco. Identidad y transformación. Creta. Italia. España*, Madrid, Museo Thyssen, 1999, (pp. 57-83) esp. p. 75 and Fig. 4-7.

questions about the tones and pigments. Nevertheless, the portrait became the paradigm of Willumsen's thesis, and he concluded: 'the headdress is from Crete, and in *ancien* style. The lady must then be a Cretan girl, and the picture painted in the painter's very early Venetian period'.[22]His arguments on the origins of headdress and sitter, as well as on the date and where it was painted were later largely rejected.

Another focus on El Greco's origins occurred in the exhibition of Greek art from ancient times to the modern era which took place in the National Gallery of Scotland in 1943. The principal inspiration was *The Birth of Western Painting*, by Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice, published in 1930, a pioneering study of Byzantine art and its relationship to western art, whose aims included that of showing El Greco's Byzantine roots.[23]One of the rooms echoed the book's thesis through its juxtaposition 'for the first time in any exhibition' of examples of Byzantine art from before, during and after El Greco's time, with pictures by the artist himself.[24] Of the six paintings by El Greco, four were from the Stirling Maxwell Collection, including the *Lady in a Fur Wrap.*[25]

The frequent loan of the *Lady* to many of the most significant temporary exhibitions during the century following her first public appearance in 1838 had thus converted her into an emblem of El Greco's work and of Spanish art, as well as of Greek or Byzantine art. She had appeared in the first major British exhibition devoted to Spanish art at the New Gallery in London in 1895-6, and in that of *Spanish Old Masters* at the Grafton Galleries, London in 1913-14, the date of the first published notice of El Greco by the art critic Roger Fry.[26] The exhibition of Spanish art held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London in 1928 marked a definitive moment in the reception of El Greco, and of this portrait in particular, and appears to have given rise to a number of offers

[22] J.F. Willumsen to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 6 Jan., 1922, Maxwell of Pollok Papers (T-PM), on deposit at Glasgow Archives, T-PM 122/2/40.I am grateful to the Maxwell Macdonald family for permission to cite these. See alsoWILLUMSEN, J.F.,*La Jeunesse du peintre El Greco. Essai sur la transformation de l'artiste byzantine en peintre européen*, 2 vols, París, Crès, 1927, p. 51, with photograph of a woman in traditional Cretan dress with white headdress.

[23]BYRON, R. andRICE, D. T., *The Birth of Western Painting: A History of Colour, Form and Iconography*, London, Routledge, 1930. Talbot Rice was Professor of History of Art at the University of Edinburgh from 1934.

[24]SELTMAN, C.andCHITTENDEN, J. *Exhibition of Greek Art 3000 B.C.-A.D. 1938*,Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1943, p. 4.

[25]The *Lady* and the *Gentleman* (see note 11) lent by Sir John Stirling Maxwell,the*Adoration of the Name of Jesus*and the*Christ Carrying the Cross*by Col. William Stirling of Keir, grandson of Sir William. Other versions of the exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow,1943, and the Royal Academy, London, 1942 and 1946.

[26]ROBINSON, J.C. (ed.), *Exhibition of Spanish Art*, New Gallery, London, 1895-96, no. 81. BROCKWELL, M. W. (ed.), *Spanish Old Masters*, Grafton Galleries, London, 1913-14, no. 128. See alsoFRY, R., "Some Pictures by El Greco", *Burlington Magazine*, 24:127, London, Burlington Magazine, 1913, pp. 3-4.

to buy it. One of these, from a London dealer, was for an unspecified 'extravagant figure', although he feared that 'no price whatever' would tempt its owner. Sir John's reply to all of these offers was 'not for sale'.[27]

Meanwhile, as scholarship on El Greco grew from the end of the nineteenth century, the romantic and biographical associations of the portrait with El Greco's daughter, which had stimulated Stirling's interestin the painter [as well as his caution], and that of other visitors to the Galerie Espagnole, were finally abandoned due to the lack of evidence that El Greco had ever had a daughter.Nevertheless, such an identification hadno doubt gained acceptance as a response to the unusually intimate and informal character of the picture, which belongs to a period in which few portraits of women are known, apart from those of royalty, or members of the court or the nobility, in which conventions of formality and distance are generally observed. The possibility of identifying the sitter in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* as Jerónima de las Cuevas, mistress of El Greco and mother of his son Jorge Manuel, was thereafter explored by various writers from the beginning of the twentieth century on.[28]Like the painting itself, this enigmatic figure, has, however, continued to frustrate the attempts of scholars to establish her biographical details and genealogy.[29]

Perhaps the major advocate of the theory that the lady represented is Jerónima was Sir Ellis Waterhouse, one of the foremost British art historians, who believed he had deciphered the Greek letter gamma on the larger of the two rings worn by the sitter in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, and associated this with Jerónima's name. This belief then contributed to his later description of the picture as 'perhaps the first "modern" portrait of a beloved woman'.[30]For others, what he had spotted was no more than a brushstroke indicating the reflection of light. As Director of the National Galleries of Scotland, Waterhouse organised the exhibition of *Spanish Paintings from El Greco to Goya*for the Edinburgh Festival in 1951, in which the majority of the works were

[27]Letters to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 1928-30, T-PM 122/2/40: from Gerard Crutchley, London, 22 Oct., 1930.

[28]Beginning withSAMPERE Y MIQUEL, D., "Domenikos Theotokopoulos", *Revista de la Asociación artística-arqueológica barcelonesa*, 18, Barcelona, Vives y Susany, 1900, p. 393.

[29] See esp.MARÍAS, F., *El Greco:Life and Work – A New History*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2013, pp. 155-6; WETHEY, H., *El Greco and his School*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 2 vols, I, pp. 11-12. According to Marías, it is likely that she died young, perhaps during the birth of their son Jorge Manuel in 1578 or in the 'flu epidemic of 1580. No portrait of her appears in the inventories of the possessions of El Greco orJorge Manuel.

[30]WETHEY, H., *El Greco*, op. cit., II, no. 148; WATERHOUSE, E., *El Greco: The Complete Paintings*, London, Granada, 1980, p. 7.

from the Stirling Maxwell Collection.[31]The exhibition reunited the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*with another enigmatic portrait, the *Lady with a Flower in her Hair* (Fig. 2), following its sale to Viscount Rothermere in 1925.[32]This painting, signed by El Greco, was likewise identified as a portrait of the artist's daughter in the nineteenth century. In addition to the flower, the sitter's clothing in this portrait appears to be broadly similar to that in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* – her headdress falls like a hood of diaphanous material around her neck and throat, and through it a dark necklace and a slightly décolleté neckline can be discerned. Both the costume and the style of the painting would appear to indicate a dating in the 1590s. The identity of the sitter remains unknown, although Sánchez Cantón suggested that it represents Antonia de los Morales, who married El Greco's son Jorge Manuel in 1603.[33]

At the end of the twentieth century, revisited 'the old question' of whether the sitter in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*could beJerónima, as a possible explanation for the informal tone of the portrait.[34]The relationship between the sitter and the spectator is a key point in explaining the portrait's fascination, and also its modernity that has so frequently been commented upon. In his discussion of the sitter's apparent response to the viewer's gaze, through her gesture of drawing her fur around her, Davies included the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*within the tradition of depictions of the *Venus Pudica* (or modest Venus), whose 'refined, almost chaste sensuality' in this case is 'destined for the eyes of one man only'. Thus, the portrait's air of intimacy persuaded Davies to leave open the conjecture that Jerónima might have been the artist's model, despite the lack of documentary evidence.

Nevertheless, and despite the informal character of the portrait, the theory that has gained most acceptance in recent years is that it represents the younger daughter of Philip II, the Infanta Catalina Micaela. Certainly the luxurious fur, especially if it is ermine, although some believe it is lynx, might indicate a royal, or at least a noble sitter. The identification of the model with Catalina Micaela is even more persuasive when the *Lady* is compared with a portrait in the Prado

[31]After the death of Sir William in 1878, the collection was divided between his two sons and the houses at Pollok and Keir respectively. The dispersal of the Keir portion began in the 1920s, with major sales in the 1960s and 1990s; see MACARTNEY, H., 'La colección de arte español", op. cit., pp. 235-264.
[32]WATERHOUSE, E., *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Spanish Paintings from El Greco to Goya*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Society Ltd., 1951, nos. 14 & 13 respectively.
[33]SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN, F. *La mujer en los cuadros del Greco*, Barcelona, Amigos de los Museos, 1942, p. 28.
[34]DAVIES, D., "La dama del armiño", in CHECA CREMADES, F. (ed.), *Felipe II. Un monarca y su época. Un príncipe del Renacimiento*, Madrid, Sociedad estatal para … los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1998, no. 234.

(no. 1139), traditionally attributed to Alonso Sánchez Coello and now given to his studio, which has also been identified as representing the Infanta (Fig. 8). This portrait is, of course, more conventional, and in both the dress and the distance of the approach, is typical ofportraits of high-status women. But the facial similarities are indeed striking, as Carmen Bernis demonstrated in her article in 1986, where she included a photo-montage of the face of the Prado portrait over the *Ladyin a Fur Wrap*.[35]The Prado portrait has been dated 1584-5, since this was the date of the Infanta's marriage to the Duke of Savoy and her departure to her husband's lands.

Another suggestion has been that the portrait represents Juana de Mendoza, Duchess of Béjar.This theory, published by Jeannine Baticle in 1984, was based on the similarity between the sitters in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* and a portrait identified as *Juana de Mendoza as a Child, with a Dwarf* by Sánchez Coello, from the collection of the Dukes of Montellano, as well as a miniature attributed to Sánchez Coello in the Louvre of a young girl in court dress richly adorned with jewels.[36]The author identified all three images as portraits of the Duchess and also questioned the identification of the Prado portrait (Fig. 8) as a representation ofCatalina Micaela, although she also acknowledged that there was some uncertainty surrounding portraits of the Infanta.[37]

These arguments emphasise the difficulty of distinguishing between similarities in the features of a number of these female sitters on the one hand, and both the ideals of beauty and the conventions of portraiture of the period on the other. Likewise, David Davies has also observed that the make-up which some of the sitters, including the *Lady in a Fur Wrap,*seem to be wearing, makes the task of identifying and ageing them even more difficult.[38]The identification of the sitter likewise has implications for the date of execution of the painting, which has traditionally been given in this case as around 1577-80. The Infanta was not born until 1567 and died in 1597. Likewise, Juana de Mendoza did not marry the Duke of Béjar until 1595, when she would probably have been no more than twenty years of age.

[35]BERNIS, C., "La *Dama del armiño* y la moda", *Archivo español de arte*, 234, Madrid, CSIC, 1986, (pp. 147-170) esp. p. 149, Lám. 1B.
[36]BATICLE, J., "A propos de Greco portraitiste: identification de la *Dame à la fourrure*", in BROWN, J. (ed.), *Studies in the History of Art*, 3, *El Greco, Italy and Spain*, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1984, pp. 11-21.
[37] See also ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, J., "La dama del armiño", in ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, J. (ed.), op. cit., no. 27. [Some of the doubts concern contemporary references to the Infanta's poor complexion.]
[38]DAVIES, D., "El Greco's Portraits: The Body Natural and the Body Politic", in DAVIES, D. (ed.), op. cit., p. 253.

Other criteria affecting the dating of the portrait include the costume and hairstyle, which in turn have implications for the identification of both sitter and artist. The great specialist in the History of Dress, Carmen Bernis, insisted that the *Lady in a Fur Wrap* must have been painted in the 1590s. Her argument was based principally on the hairstyle with a high quiff (*alto copete*) at the front which she considered to be a defining characteristic of that decade. From its form and size, the frilled cuff also appeared to her to date from the same decade, although she also observed that 'it was not painted in detail'.[39]Bernis also found that the ítems of clothing that are most noticeable in the portrait, however – the short cape lined with fur and the headdress or veil – did not help in establishing the date of the portrait, since they remained similar in form over a long period.[40]The short cape (*bohemio*) had been introduced to Spain in the middle of the sixteenth century as an item of male court dress. A similar fur-lined example to the one in the*Lady in a Fur Wrap*appears in theportrait of *Prince Don Carlos* (Prado no. 1136), datable to c. 1557. Later, the *bohemio* was also worn by women of high status.[41]In the case of the veil, this would have been worn by a wide range of women, except unmarried girls, up to the second decade of the seventeenth century.[42]The fine, transparent example with lace border worn in the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*must have beenof very high quality. Davies, however, insisted that nothing resembling this headdress appears in any other portraits of the infantas and, noting the informal and asymmetric way in which it is wrapped around the head, he claimed that the apparently careless detail of the end protruding at one side 'excluded the possibility of it belonging to a royal lady'.[43]In the case of the rings, which are certainly similar to those worn by royal sitters, Davies pointed out that they are not worn on the same fingers as in the portraits of Catalina Micaela. The necklace, whose shape at least can be made out under the veil, is even more intriguing, since it looks more popular than precious in type.

In the past twenty years or so, however, it is the artistic attribution of the portrait that has become the most hotly debated issue. By the early twentieth century, the attribution to El Greco already had one or two detractors, including Aureliano de Beruete, who suggested it could be by

[39]BERNIS, C., "La *Dama del armiño*", op. cit., p. 166. The unusual ochre tone could indicate the use of gold thread.
[40]BERNIS, C., "La *Dama del armiño*", op. cit., p. 154.
[41] For another example, see theSánchez Coello portrait of an *Unknown Young Woman*, c. 1567, Prado (no. 1140).
[42]For a print illustration, see GRASSI, B., *Dei veri ritratti degli habiti de tute le parte del mondo*, Roma, P. Bertelli, 1585, in BERNIS, C., "La moda en la España de Felipe II", in SERRERA, J.M. (ed.), *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el retrato en la corte de Felipe II*, Madrid, Prado, 1990, (pp. 65-111) esp. Fig. 76.
[43]DAVIES, D., "La dama del armiño", in op. cit., no. 234.

Tintoretto, and Lafuente Ferrari, who leaned more towards Alonso Sánchez Coello.[44]The Venetian qualities of the paint and the colouring, and the very detailed facial modelling, which has been compared to that of the Roman portraits of Scipione Pulzone, would favour an early dating in El Greco's Spanish career, around 1577-80, if the traditional attribution were to be maintained.And indeed many El Greco scholars have continued to argue for this, including José Álvarez Lopera, David Davies and,most recently,Fernando Marías.Their defence of the attribution has includedpointing to the extraordinary quality of the portrait andthe singular ability of El Greco to reinvent and adapt his style, as well as to the elegant gesture of the hand (in spite of the criticisms of its drawing), and the presence of a distinct psychological element in the representation of the sitter 'for the first time in Spanish painting'.[45]Thus, Álvarez Lopera concluded: 'I do not believe that any other painter, of those working in Spain in that period, would have been capable of such refinement of technique and expression'.[46]

Since the late 1980s, a sustained campaign to reattribute authorship of the portrait to Sofonisba Anguissolahas been mounted with such success that this has become the dominant attribution.[47]As historian and collector of art in Spain, Stirling was himself interested in the life and work of this woman artist. His text on her in the *Annals* focused on the international recognition she achieved, according to Vasari, and on the royal patronage of Philip II and his family[48]. His comments on the scarcity of Sofonisba's works, and his surprise at the lack of examples of her art in the Museo Real (Prado) in Madrid (despite the inclusion of one work by her sister Lucia) anticipated recent interest in recovering her oeuvre and critical reputation. Likewise, his description of her*Self-Portrait Playing the Spinet* (Spencer Collection, Althorp) was typical of his interest (discussed above) in portraits of artists throughout the *Annals*, and in

[44]BERUETE, A., "Exposition d'oeuvres de peintres espagnols en Guildhall de Londres", *Gazette de Beaux-Arts*, XXVI: 53, París, Gazette de Beaux-Arts,1901, (pp. 252-55) esp. p. 252; BERUETE Y MORET, A. *El Greco, pintor de retratos*, Madrid, Blass, 1914, pp. 14-15;LAFUENTE FERRARI, E. *Breve historia de la pintura española*, Madrid, Dossat, 1946, p. 111.
[45]MARÍAS, F., "Retratos", in MARÍAS, F. (ed.), *El Griego de Toledo*, Toledo, Fundación El Greco, 2014, p. 161.
[46]ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, J., "La dama del armiño", in op. cit., no. 27, p. 365.
[47]See esp. Kusche, M., "Sofonisba Anguissola en España, retratista en la corte de Felipe II junto a Alonso Sánchez Coello y Jorge de la Rua," *Archivo Español de Arte*, 248, 1989, pp. 391-420; "Sofonisba Anguissola retratista de la corte española," *Paragone*, XLIII: 34-35 (509-511), Florencia, Servizi Editoriale, 1992, pp. 3-34; "Sofonisba Anguissola. Vuelta a Italia. Continuación de sus relaciones con la corte española," *Paragone*, XLIII: 36 (513), 1992, pp. 10-35.
[48]STIRLING,W., *Annals*, op. cit., pp. 185-190.

1854 he succeeded in acquiring an example for his own collection, the *Self-Portrait Painting a Picture of the Virgin and Child*, c. 1556 (now Museo Zamek, Lancut; Fig. 9)[49].

In her indefatigable efforts, the late Maria Kusche attempted to reconstruct the life and work of Sofonisba through letters and other documents, as well as the reattribution of certain key paintings. In this task, her starting point was the portrait of the *Infanta Catalina Micaela*in the Prado(Fig. 8), whose traditional attribution to Sánchez Coello she rejected, identifying it instead as having been painted by Sofonisba in Geneva in 1585. She also elaborated on the argument put forward by Carmen Bernis on the relationship between the Prado portrait and the *Lady in a Fur Wrap,* claiming that: 'not only do they represent the same person, but they were also both painted by the same hand.'[50]She, therefore, situated the production of the *Lady* in Turin in 1591, and suggested that this portrait, whose characteristics suggest a private commission, might have been the one mentioned in letters of Philip II to his daughter Catalina Micaela as being delivered by the Duke of Savoy to the King that year.[51]A third picture which Kusche related to the *Lady* and the portrait in the Prado was the portrait of a girl with a dwarf in the collection of the Dukes of Montellano.In this case, she identified the sitter as Margaret of Savoy, eldest daughter of Catalina Micaela,the artist as Sofonisba, and the date as 1599. Thus, Maria Kusche reclaimed for the painter from Cremona three beautiful portraits which had also been fundamental to Baticle's quite different argument. In response to doubts about the differences in style and quality between the portrait of Catalina Micaelain Prado and the *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, Kusche argued that in the latter, the artist 'brought the sum of Italian and Spanish influences to her new concept of the portrait', which included a manner that was 'freer, more assured, more ... original' and 'much more lively than in the first portrait of the Duchess.[52]However, in spite of the advances in research on Sofonisba, many doubts about the development of her style remain, and leave open the question of whether she could have been the painter of this portrait.

[49]CHRISTIE'S, *Sale of the Collection of the Reverend Newton Dickinson Newton*, London, 20 Mar. 1854, lot 77; SOTHEBY'S,*Old Master Paintings*, London, 3 Jul. 1963, lot 35.
[50]KUSCHE, M., "Sofonisba Anguissola. Vuelta a Italia", op. cit., p. 23.
[51]KUSCHE, M., "Sofonisba Anguissola. Vuelta a Italia", op. cit., p. 24, citing Bouza Álvarez, F. (ed), *Cartas de Felipe II a sus hijas*, Madrid, Turner, 1988, p. 144.Bernis also believed that the portrait was painted in Italy. The relationship to the *Portrait of a Young Man*, formerly in the Thyssen Bornemisza Colection, with the same pose and gesture and now attributed to the North Italian School, remains to be explained. See Sotheby's, *The Bentinck-Thyssen Collection*, London, 6 Dec, 1995, lot74.
[52]KUSCHE, M., "Sofonisba Anguissola. Vuelta a Italia", op. cit., p. 24.

The attributions to both El Greco and Sofonisba also depend on comparisons with Sánchez Coello, as principal court painter to Philip II and inheritor of the typology of the court portrait established by Anthony More, since it is to his style that it has been argued that each of these foreign artists adapted their own style when they arrived in Spain. Thus, Sánchez Coello continues to be relevant in any debate on the authorship of the *Lady*, and in particular, because of the similar treatment of the fur-lined cape in his portrait of *Prince Don Carlos*.

The fame of the *Lady* has also impacted on her conservation history. By 1922, Sir John Stirling Maxwell had already expressed a desire to have the varnish removed, perhaps for the inclusion of the picture in an exhibition of his father's collection at the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.[53]This remained unfulfilled until 1928, however, but whilst the painting was in London for the exhibition of Spanish art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, Sir John sought advice on the accretions of dust and the discoloured varnish from his friend D.S. MacColl, art critic, painter, and former curator of the Wallace Collection, where Sir John was a trustee.[54]MacColl thought it would be very interesting 'to see that beautiful picture cleaned', but in an apparent reference to the controversy that had erupted around the cleaning of paintings by Titian at the National Gallery, London in the nineteenth century, and which continued to arouse opposition, he warned that the result might be startling at first, compared with the brown varnish. Sir John perhaps decided that he did not wish to see his picture completely 'stripped', but it appears that he consented to the removal of some of the discoloured varnish by W. A. Holder, a trusted restorer at the National Gallery.[55]In 1952, shortly before Sir John's death, another restoration of the picture was carried out, in the course of which the curious form near the top right corner appeared.[56] This form might be understandable as part of an architectural moulding in a painting whose dimensions had been reduced, but in this case its presence remains unexplained. The picture now measures 63 by 50 cm, due to the lining of the original canvas. The date of the lining

[53]T-PM 122/2/40 J. F. Willumsen to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 25 Jan., 1922. Sir John Stirling Maxwell was a Trustee of the National Gallery of Scotland. There was no catalogue of the 1922 exhibition but details are recorded in the Gallery's archives.
[54]See CONSTABLE, W. (ed.),*Catalogue of an Exhibition of Spanish Art*, London, privately printed, 1928.
[55]T-PM 122/2/40, D.S. MacColl to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 13 & 27 June, 1928; W.A. Holder to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 7 June, 1928. For the debate surrounding the cleaning of these pictures, seeHENDY, P. (ed.), *Exhibition of Cleaned Pictures (1936-1947)*, London, National Gallery, 1947.
[56]WETHEY, 1962, no. 148. The appearance of the supposed architectural moulding following cleaning can be verified in photographs taken before and after. Wethey's catalogue in fact reproduced the painting before cleaning. See alsoVÁZQUEZ CAMPO, A., *El divino Greco*, Madrid, Editorial Prensa Española, 1974, p. 244, for an account of the author's journey to Pollok House in 1959 and the change in colours following the (then) recent cleaning.

is unknown, but the photograph of 1857 (Fig. 5) seems to indicate that it had already taken place.[57]The edges of the original canvas have been unfolded, whilst the dimensions have also been extended by a new canvas border of more than 4 cm at each side. Not surprisingly, the edges that had been wrappedaround the previous stretcher show signs of considerable wear. There is also a larger area of damage at the upper right of the picture.

The X-ray taken in 2004 at the time of the El Greco exhibition at the National Gallery, London (Fig. 10)provides some clarification of the history of the picture's physical condition. It shows an old canvas of fine tabby weave. The cusping of the canvas at the left appears consistent with this being the original edge of the picture. There are retouches over many of the paint losses, including notably on the fur wrap. The lighter areas indicate the presence of lead white. The face can, therefore, be seen to be the most highly worked area as regards the treatment of light and shade. The supposed moulding at top right, on the other hand, cannot be seen.[58]

In this year of the fourth centenary of El Greco's death, the emergence of new theories and debates about this most enigmatic portrait would not be surprising. Such an example is the allegation that the picture is either a nineteenth-century fake or a case of a nineteenth-century portrait mistaken for a sixteenth-century one, according to a journalist whose ideas were recently covered in the press.[59] For a fake to succeed, however, there first needs to be a market for the real thing, as well as a shared understanding of what the real thing looks like, whereas we have seen that El Greco was still little known, particularly at an international level, and that there were no familiar, authentic models on which to base the deception.

The arguments surrounding the portrait reflect its exceptional beauty and complexity but none of them seems to have resolved all the questions. The range of theories and interpretations also serves to highlight the fact that no catalogue raisonné has ever been produced of Stirling Maxwell's Spanish paintings collection. At last, however, a research project on the collection is planned, which will include a catalogue, as well as technical analysis of some of the key works at

[5757]Lining of paintings was very common at this date. Stirling had it carried out by Messrs. Leedham in London on many of his pictures. It could also have been done whilst in the Louis-Philippe collection or when it was in the possession of Serafín García de la Huerta. The dimensions given in the *Notices* of the Galerie Espagnole are slightly smaller – 0.62 x 0.46 m, but are often unreliable in this source.

[58] An earlier X-ray dates from 1981. A note in the files on the picture at Glasgow Museums records a suggestion by a previous curator that the head might have been painted twice.

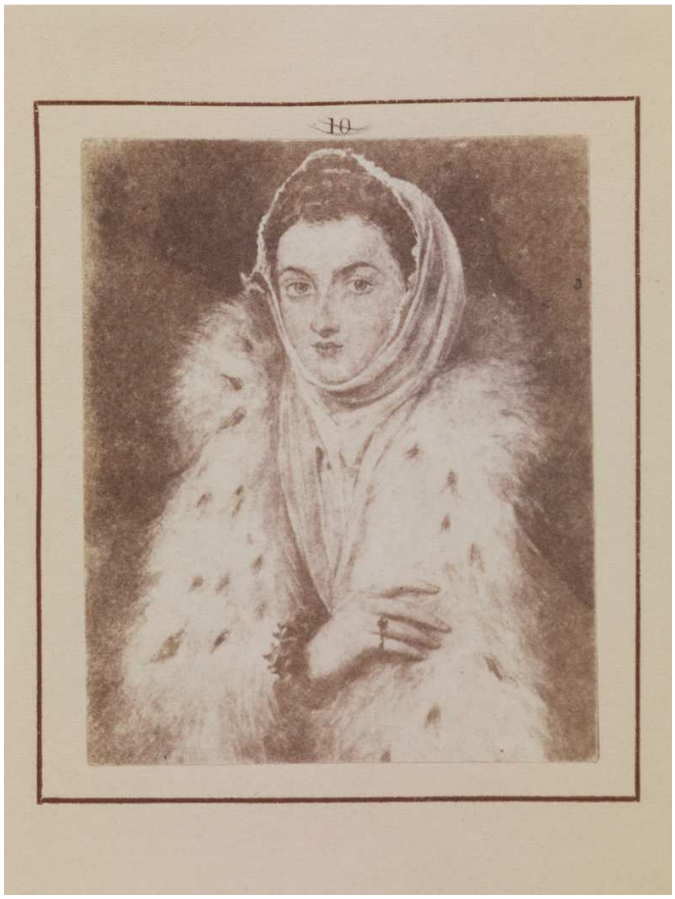
[59] For example, *Sunday Mail*, 26 Jan., 2014, p. 13, based on allegations by Antonio García Jiménez.

Pollok House. The *Lady in a Fur Wrap* will, of course be included in the group of works to be analysed, as will other portraits of the reign of Philip II, including those by Sánchez Coello of *Philip II* (PC 159) and *Anne of Austria* (PC 137), and the *Don John of Austria* attributed to Juan Rúa (PC 6), as well as the *Gentleman of the Time of Philip III* by El Greco (PC 17). In scientific investigation, no guarantee can be given of definitive results, but we shall at the very least know much more about how this most enigmatic portrait was painted and its relationship to other important pictures in this and other collections.[60]

[60]The project will be a collaboration between the University of Glasgow, including specialists on Technical Art History, Glasgow Museums and National Trust for Scotland, in association with the Prado Museum. It will facilitate technical and other comparison of the *Lady* with research carried out on other relevant works in the Stirling Maxwell Collection, the Prado and elsewhere. For existing technical studies, see esp. GARRIDO, C., "Estudio técnico", in SERRERA, J.M., op. cit, pp. 215-43.

Figs. 1-2

Figs. 3, 9



Figs. 4-5

Figs. 6-7

Figs. 8, 10