



The Stirling Maxwell Research Project: supported by Santander

The First Photographically Illustrated Book on Art: The Talbotypes Volume of William Stirling's *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (1847-8)



Annals Talbotype no. 41 Alonso Cano, Penitent Magdalen, pen, wash and chalk drawing; photographed by Nicholaas Henneman, 1847. Photo courtesy of National Media Museum, Bradford/ Science and Society Picture Library.

In 1848, William Stirling's *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, the first scholarly history of Spanish art in English, was published. To the three volumes of text, Stirling (later Sir William Stirling Maxwell) added a fourth, supplementary volume of photographic illustrations, of which only 50 presentation copies were printed and given to family, fellow scholars, and libraries. The *Annals of the Artists of Spain* thus became the first photographically illustrated book on art. The experimental Talbotypes volume contains the first photographic illustrations of Spanish paintings, prints and sculpture, by artists including El Greco, Velázquez, Murillo, Zurbarán, Ribera and Goya, in addition to examples of architectural designs and book illustrations. The difficulties experienced in producing the Talbotypes reveal the many limitations of the new process. Chemically, they were unstable, affected by daylight and other factors, including the paper and glue used in the bound volumes. Their deterioration began immediately, and may now be slowed only by restricting the conditions for viewing surviving copies. The *Annals* Talbotype volume is so rare and so fragile that very few people, even specialist scholars, have ever seen a copy.

Project Aims and Outcomes: The project will research the context and significance of this landmark in the history of photography and in photography as a tool of art history. The major outcome will be the publication of a facsimile and critical edition of the the *Annals* Talbotypes. The facsimile will demonstrate, as far as possible, the quality and condition of the *Annals* Talbotypes at the time they were produced, based on the best surviving examples of each of the illustrations. Interpretive essays will examine the Talbotypes volume in relation to the history of the reproduction of art, as well as Stirling's scholarship of Spanish art and his interest in the illustrated book. Studies will also include analysis of the Talbotype process and the role of its inventor, William Henry Fox Talbot, and his assistant Nicholaas Henneman.

Project Partners: UK: University of Glasgow; National Media Museum, Bradford. Spain: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, Madrid; Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Project Team:

University of Glasgow: Professor Nick Pearce; David Weston; Dr Hilary Macartney; National Media Museum: Brian Liddy
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