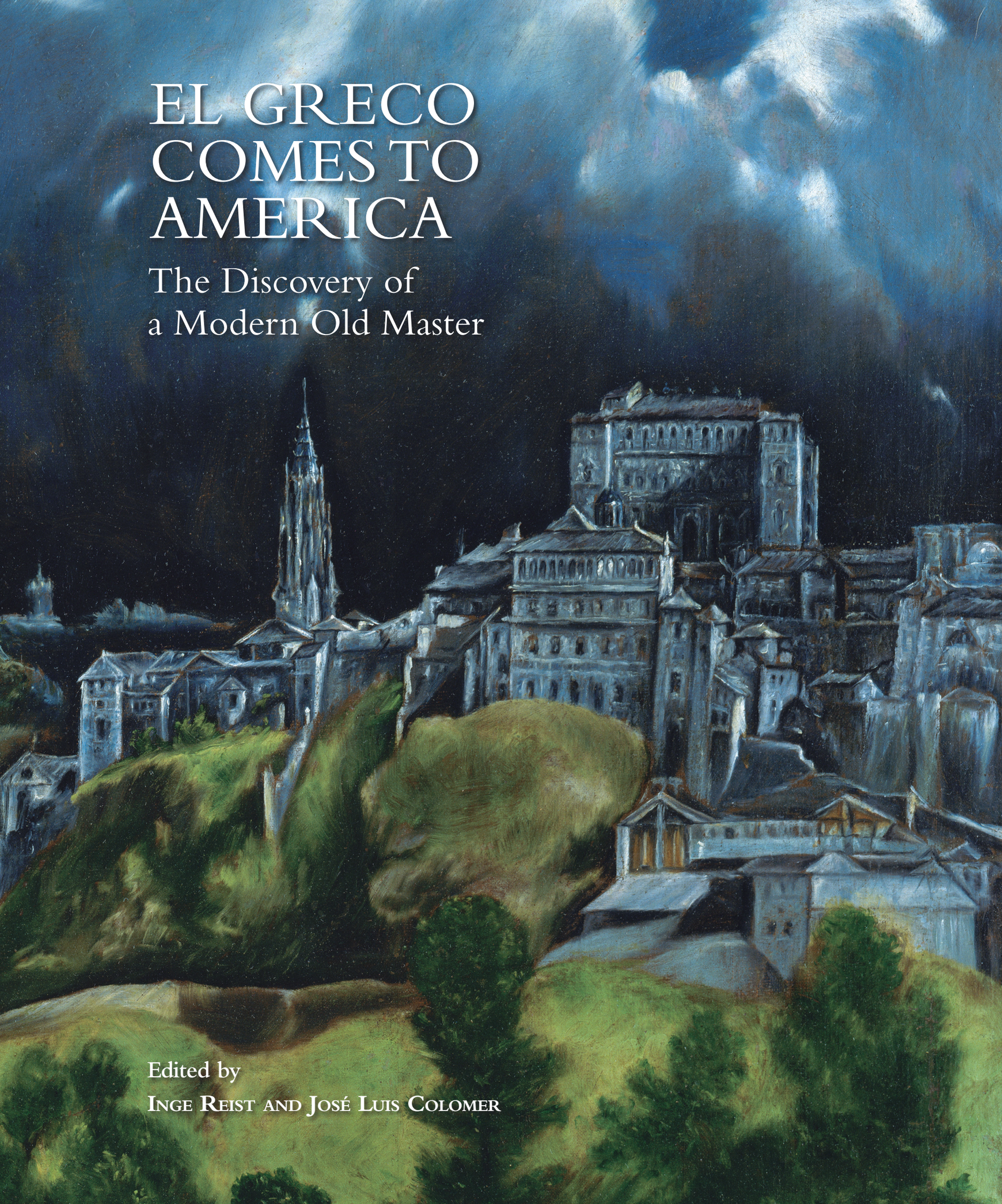


EL GRECO COMES TO AMERICA

The Discovery of a Modern Old Master

Edited by
INGE REIST AND JOSÉ LUIS COLOMER

EL GRECO COMES TO AMERICA

The Discovery of a Modern Old Master

EL GRECO COMES TO AMERICA

The Discovery of a Modern Old Master

Edited by
Inge Reist and José Luis Colomer

The Frick Collection

CEEH
Centro de Estudios
Europa Hispánica

CSA
CENTER FOR SPAIN
IN AMERICA

Published in 2017 by

The Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street
New York, NY 10021

Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica
Felipe IV, 12
28014 Madrid

Center for Spain in America
New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017047893
ISBN (The Frick Collection): 978-0-912114-71-2
ISBN (Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica): 978-84-15245-73-5
D.L.: M-25564-2017
Printed in Spain

Major support for this publication was provided by the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica (CEEH) and the Center for Spain in America (CSA).

This publication was organized by the Center for the History of Collecting at The Frick Collection and Frick Art Reference Library, New York, the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica (CEEH), Madrid, and the Center for Spain in America (CSA), New York.

Inge Reist, *Director, Center for the History of Collecting*
José Luis Colomer, *Director, CEEH* and *CSA*
Laura Díaz, *Image Research and Color Proofing Supervision*
Esmée Quodbach, *Manuscript Editor*
Isabel Morán, *Production Editor and Coordinator*

Jenny Dodman (Amaya Alzaga Ruiz and José Luis Colomer), *Translator*
PeiPe S.L. Diseño y Gestión, *Designer*
Advantia, *Prepress, Filmsetting, and Printing*
Felipe Méndez, *Binding*

This volume evolved from the Symposium "El Greco Comes to America: The Discovery of a Modern Old Master," organized by the Center for the History of Collecting at The Frick Collection, with generous support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. New York, January 26, 2015.

Frontispiece and pages 20–21: El Greco, *Laocoön* (detail), ca. 1610–14.
Oil on canvas, 137.5 × 172.5 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art.

Page 8: El Greco, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (detail), ca. 1605–10.
Oil on canvas, 163.8 × 106.7 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Preface

Inge Reist
José Luis Colomer

ALTHOUGH collectors in the United States were far from the first to fall under the spell of El Greco's unique personal style, the enthusiasm with which they embraced his work during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is undeniably a subject ripe for examination. To mark the enduring appeal of El Greco's art, as well as the four-hundredth anniversary of the artist's death, major museums in America—The Frick Collection (fig. 1), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 2), and the National Gallery of Art—mounted focused exhibitions of pictures that had come into their collections as a result of the *Grecomania* that afflicted earlier generations of collectors. These exhibitions were the inspiration for the symposium co-organized by the Center for the History of Collecting and the Center for Spain in America and generously sponsored by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation that took place at The Frick Collection in January 2015, when eight scholars from the United States and Spain gathered to shed light on American collectors' avid quests for El Greco's paintings during the Gilded Age and subsequent decades. Their presentations outlined not only that El Greco could be appreciated as an Old Master steeped in the tradition of Venetian Renaissance art, but perhaps more significantly, that he was an artist whose idiosyncratic style allowed his work to be displayed comfortably in collections dominated by avant-garde artists of the early twentieth century. Thus, collectors and patrons of American and European Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, such as Louisine Havemeyer and Duncan Phillips, enthusiastically placed El Greco in a unique, modernist category of his own, even as more traditionally-minded collectors such as Henry Clay Frick, Peter Widener, Arabella Huntington, and her son Archer would also be drawn to the elongated forms and electrically charged palette of the artist. Reflecting the prevailing enthusiasm for El Greco's art were also artists, curators, and dealers, including Mary Cassatt, Roger Fry, and Knoedler & Company, who mounted exhibitions of his work such as the one held at Knoedler in 1904 that fanned the flames of *Grecomania*.

The success of the symposium convinced us that the presentations should form the nucleus of a publication that would be exclusively focused on the taste

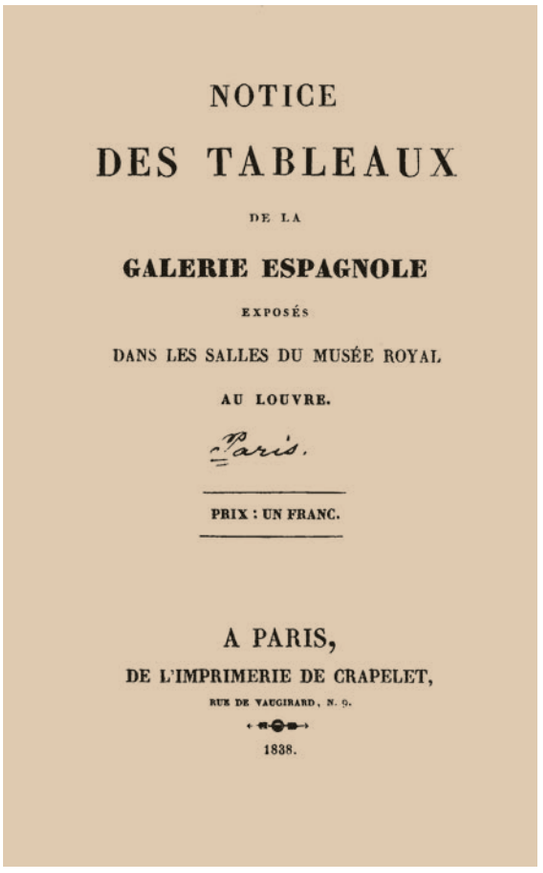
Collecting El Greco in Nineteenth-Century Europe: The Pre-History of *Grecomania*

Ellen Prokop

Attributed to El Greco, *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, ca. 1570–80. Oil on canvas, 62 × 59 cm. Glasgow, Pollok House.

Given El Greco's unconventional career and idiosyncratic style, it is not surprising that the critical response to his legacy is complex and often controversial.[1] Although the artist achieved professional success during his lifetime, his work was increasingly marginalized in the decades after his death in 1614. His reputation reached its nadir in the eighteenth century among critics who supported Neoclassicism and had no tolerance for the elongated figures, gestural brushwork, and vibrant, sometimes discordant color that characterized his paintings, especially his late religious works. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the artist's achievement was revisited and his reputation revived, and revised. Historians dedicated to stimulating a national consciousness in Spain recast El Greco as an early naturalist, a crucial influence on Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) and thus the founder of the Spanish school. The Romantics, Symbolists, and other artists, critics, and writers who valued the expression of subjective experience discovered in El Greco's late religious paintings a powerful model of spiritual statement. For modernists, the Old Master's formal innovations—especially his seemingly arbitrary use of color and compressed space—were challenges to the precepts of academic painting and an affirmation of their ambition to rethink the central issues of their art from additional perspectives. Due to these developments, El Greco's rehabilitation has been closely associated with the cultural breakthroughs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although scholars continue to debate whether the artist's distinctive style inspired these developments or if interest in the Old Master was a symptom of these events, it is clear

[1] For discussions of the artist's critical fortunes, see Brown 1982; Pita Andrade 1984; Álvarez Lopera 1987; Álvarez Lopera 1999a; Hadjinicolaou 2005; Storm 2006/2016; Wismer and Scholz-Hänsel 2012; and Barón 2014a.


NOTICE

DES TABLEAUX

DE LA

GALERIE ESPAGNOLE

EXPOSÉS

DANS LES SALLES DU MUSÉE ROYAL

AU LOUVRE.

Paris.

PRIX : UN FRANC.

A PARIS,

DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE CRAPELET,

RUE DE VAUGIRARD, N. 9.

1838.

5a. Cover of *Notice des tableaux de la Galerie Espagnole*. Paris, Impr. de Crapelet, 1838.

5b. Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Louis-Philippe de Bourbon*, 1841. Oil on canvas, 284 × 184 cm. Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

The general European public was introduced to El Greco in 1838 at the opening of Galerie Espagnole of King Louis-Philippe (1773–1850; fig. 5a–b), one of the most controversial collections ever formed.[16] Benefitting from the secularization of the monasteries under the liberal government briefly headed by Juan Álvarez Mendizábal (1790–1853), French agents operating under the direction of Baron Isidore-Justin-Séverin Taylor (1789–1879) traveled secretly to Spain from October 1836 to April 1837 and secured more than four hundred paintings for the king's collection, which was exhibited at the Louvre, Paris from

[16] For the history of the Galerie Espagnole, see Guinard 1967, 277–310; Baticle and Marinas 1981, 168–75; and Luxenberg 2008.

The Cult of El Greco: *El Grecophilitis* in Philadelphia

Richard L. Kagan

El Greco, *Saint Martin and the Beggar* (detail of fig. 10).

At the dawn of the twentieth century American collectors were purchasing Old Master paintings at a record pace. In doing so, they assembled private collections that ranked among the world's finest and most diverse. To find out what they had purchased, in the fall of 1911 Dr. Wilhelm Bode (1845–1929; fig. 1), founding director of Berlin's Kaiser Friedrich Museum—now the Bode Museum on that city's Museum Island—spent a month visiting the United States with an eye towards evaluating the country's major private collections along with several of its museums. His tour included New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Rochester, Cincinnati, and Detroit, and when his visit was over, Bode published a pair of articles in *The New York Times* that recorded his impressions of what he had seen. He criticized the museums—he disapproved of their "giant" long hallways, reliance on skylights, and unprofessional directors—but had only praise for the quality of the Old Masters he encountered in the country's private collections. He did, however, have one reservation—El Greco. In fact, at the very start of his tour he offered the following criticism of American tastes: "El Greco," he wrote, "is represented by twelve of his finest examples. I do not quite understand the American appreciation of El Greco. I am repulsed by his style—it is too mannered."[1]

Bode was not alone in his criticism of El Greco's style; others felt the same. In 1906, after New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art put its first and newly-acquired El Greco on public display—the canvas in question was the *Nativity* (now known as *The Adoration of the Shepherds*; see p. 8)—one prominent collector published a letter in the *Times*, criticizing the Museum for having spent $35,000 on what he called a "defective" and "worthless" picture. "From an art point of view," he wrote, "it is as complete a failure as possible. As to composition,

[1] "Dr Wilhelm Bode Talks," *American Art News*, vol. 10, 4 (Nov. 4, 1911): 4. For his comments on collectors and museums, see "Dr. Bode Amazed by Our Collections," *The New York Times*, Dec. 10, 1911, C2, and "Dr. Bode, German Art Expert, Criticizes Our Museums," *The New York Times* (Dec. 28, 1911): SM11.

A Painter's Painter: El Greco and Boston

Ronni Baer

In 1901, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) purchased its first major Spanish painting: Castle Howard's splendid *Don Baltasar Carlos with a Dwarf* by Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) from Knoedler & Co. (via Messrs. Lawrie & Co. in London) for $80,000 (fig. 1).[1] Velázquez, the subject of intense admiration by nineteenth-century European painters and their American counterparts, many of whom took up residence in Europe in order to study his works, was the most revered of Spanish painters. His unusual genre subjects, innovative depiction of space, rich grays and blacks, and suggestive brushwork were enormously influential to artists attempting to break free—in terms of subject and style—from the expectations of the official Salon.[2] The esteem in which Velázquez was held by artists was also shared by collectors. Between 1880 and 1920, for example, the distinguished citizens who would become the benefactors of New York's major museums acquired a significant number of his works for their own collections.[3]

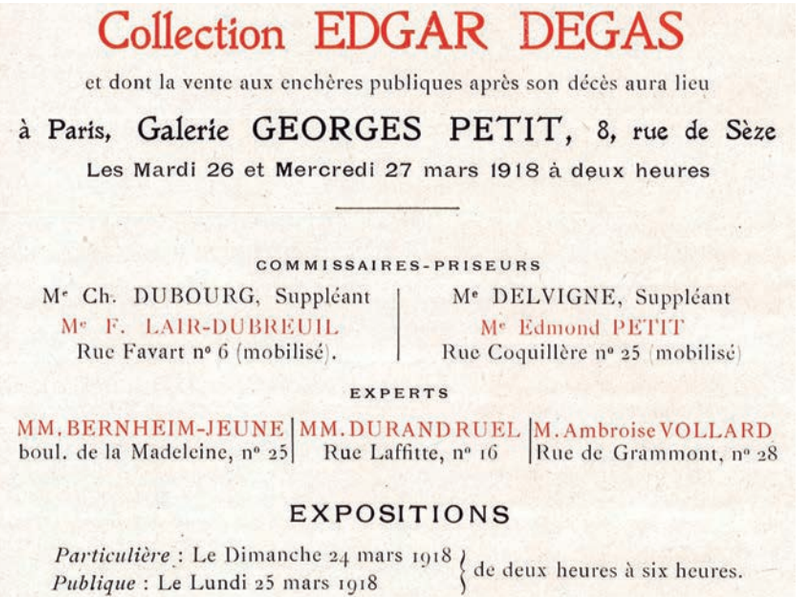
El Greco, *Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino* (detail of fig. 2).

Writing this article in a very short time was only possible through the diligence and ability of European Paintings Research Assistant Odilia Bonebakker, to whom I owe immense thanks. I am also grateful to many other MFA colleagues: Erica Hirshler, Torie Reed, Julia Welch, John Hawley, and our archivist extraordinaire, Maureen Melton. Thanks, too, to Richard Ormond, Elaine Kilmurray, Chris Atkins (Philadelphia Museum of Art), Casey Monahan (Harvard University Art Museums), Lisa Feldmann (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum), Ann Dumas, and Richard Kagan for their help with specific queries.

1 Velázquez paintings commanded princely sums. For example, Isabella Stewart Gardner paid the equivalent of almost $73,000 for a portrait of *Philip IV* in 1896 (now considered a product of the workshop) and, in 1906, $96,500 for what is now considered a copy of *Pope Innocent X*. See Prokop 2012, 110, 113. According to Saltzman 2008, 272, the pound sterling was worth approximately $4.86 in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2 For the qualities of Velázquez's paintings that appealed to nineteenth-century artists, see Cikovsky 1992, 18; and Prokop 2012, 108. For an exhaustive look at nineteenth-century French taste for Spanish painting, see Tinterow and Lacambre 2003.

3 See Colomer 2012, 251–77.



Collection EDGAR DEGAS

et dont la vente aux enchères publiques après son décès aura lieu

à Paris, Galerie GEORGES PETIT, 8, rue de Sèze

Les Mardi 26 et Mercredi 27 mars 1918 à deux heures

COMMISSAIRES-PRISEURS

Me Ch. DUBOURG, Suppléant
Me F. LAIR-DUBREUIL
Rue Favart no 6 (mobilisé).

Me DELVIGNE, Suppléant
Me Edmond PETIT
Rue Coquillère no 25 (mobilisé)

EXPERTS

MM. BERNHEIM-JEUNE, boul. de la Madeleine, no 25 | MM. DURAND RUEL, Rue Laffitte, no 16 | M. Ambroise VOLLARD, Rue de Grammont, no 28

EXPOSITIONS

Particulière : Le Dimanche 24 mars 1918
Publique : Le Lundi 25 mars 1918
} de deux heures à six heures.

10. Title page of the catalogue for the first Degas collection sale, 26–27 March 1918. From Ann Dumas et. al., *The Private Collection of Edgar Degas*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, 265.

Ildefonso linked Degas both to Millet and to Rouart. These connections and a deep appreciation for the Old Master, rather than Degas's trip to Spain in 1889, were likely the more important attractions of El Greco's art.

After Degas's death, the El Greco paintings were auctioned in the first of five sales of the artist's collection on March 26, 1918 (fig. 10). They were mentioned in almost all of the press notices, called "fine examples" and "remarkable pieces" and, for the auction, were exhibited on the back wall of Galerie Georges Petit, along with Delacroix's full-length portrait of *Baron Schwiter*.[33] *Saint Dominic*, for which Degas had paid 3,000 francs, sold at auction to Trotti for Hermann Heilbuth (1861–1945) of Copenhagen for 52,500 francs.[34]

---

comme je suis heureux de savoir qu'elle t'appartient." It was almost assuredly about the *Saint Dominic* that Rouart was writing; either Degas's purchase was negotiated before the sale or he made a mistake in dating the letter in his inventory. My thanks to Ann Dumas (e-mail correspondence to the author, Jan. 4, 2016) for this information.

The appearance of El Greco in the collections of Degas and Rouart is notable because Old Master paintings were not being extensively collected in late nineteenth-century France; ibid., 127. Degas's friend Paul Lafond, director of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Pau, also likely encouraged the artist in his taste for El Greco. Lafond was a pioneer in championing El Greco in France at the time and collaborated with the authoritarian Catholic, Maurice Barrès, on a widely read book on the painter that was published in 1911; ibid.

[33] B. D., "Paris Letter: Degas Sale in Paris," *American Art News* 16, no. 22 (March 9, 1918): 5–6); "Upcoming Auctions" *New York Herald* (Paris edition), March 12, 1918: 3; "The Degas Sale," *New York Herald* (Paris edition), March 26, 1918, 3, in Rabinow 1997, 306–16.

[34] By the time the MFA purchased *Saint Dominic* for $12,000 in 1923 from the Ehrich Gallery, the Museum owned one painting, three pastels, and a charcoal by Degas: *Racehorses at Longchamp* (03.1034), two landscapes in pastel over monotype (09.295 and 09.296), a pastel of *Dancers in Rose* (20.164), and the charcoal *Dancer Taking a Bow* (20.840).

11. El Greco's paintings displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1930 (by unidentified photographer). *Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino*, *Saint Martin and the Beggar*, and *Saint Dominic in Prayer.*

first of three works attributed to El Greco acquired by the Fogg over the course of several decades, none of which is today considered autograph.[40] An important exception resides far from Cambridge. Even as they prepared to give Harvard the property and collection of their Washington, D.C., home, Mildred (1879–1969) and Robert Woods Bliss (1875–1962) purchased El Greco's fine *Visitation* in 1936 for their Music Room at Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 13). Because the painting was conceived for the ceiling above the altar in the church of San Vicente, Toledo, the figures in this late, unfinished painting are broadly conceived and viewed from below. The wide-ranging and sophisticated taste of the Blisses, who

addition to the autograph versions of the composition with changes in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (no. 104), the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (no. 105), and the National Gallery, London (no. 108), Wethey lists two other versions in which El Greco had a hand (nos. 109, 110) and three more copies (nos. X-128-130).

[40] In addition to *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (1930.188), the Fogg acquired a workshop *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Wethey X-38: "a copy of the late type represented by the pictures in the Prado Museum and at Olot;" 1943.102), bequeathed by Grenville Winthrop in 1943, and a painting of *Saint Simon* by a follower of El Greco (Wethey X-230; 1966.31), bequeathed by Edwin H. Abbot in 1966.

The Madrazos and the New York Collectors of El Greco

Amaya Alzaga Ruiz

El Greco, *Saint Ildefonso* (detail of fig. 12).

THE nineteenth century saw a gradual reassessment of El Greco's work by Spanish artists, not without commercial motives in the latter decades.[1] This essay analyzes the growing and decisive role played by the Madrazo family of painters—major guarantors of official taste in Spain in their day—in the progressive appreciation of the painter. The family patriarch, José de Madrazo, a pupil of Jacques-Louis David, was directly involved in spreading knowledge of El Greco's oeuvre, as he was a collector of the Old Master's paintings and admired their masterly coloring. Like his father, José's son Federico de Madrazo was director of the Prado Museum, and, although he continued to uphold the institution's role as a gallery of models of visual perfection, he valued El Greco's painterly essence. The members of the next generation, Federico's two painter sons Raimundo and Ricardo, who were more cosmopolitan, played an important part in raising awareness of the value of El Greco's paintings and in their acquisition by New York art collectors during the Gilded Age.

José and Federico de Madrazo, Directors of the Prado Museum

José de Madrazo (1781–1859; fig. 1), a neoclassical painter and the family's patriarch, served from 1838 to 1857 as the fifth director of the Prado, which was then called the Royal Museum of Painting and Sculpture.[2] As court painter, he was the first artist appointed to this position. When the Museum's collection was reorganized in 1838–39, he brought all the El Greco paintings out of storage—except for one—and hung them in the newly-renovated galleries, although

[1] Álvarez Lopera 1987. On the presence of the painter's works in Spanish collections, see Martínez Plaza 2014, 77–99.

[2] For a biographical and artistic outline of the painter, see Díez 1998.

El Greco at The Phillips Collection

José Luis Colomer

PROUDLY presenting itself as "America's first museum of Modern Art,"[1] The Phillips Collection is internationally recognized for its many splendid works by European and American Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and avant-garde painters, including masterpieces such as Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1880–81; see fig. 5), Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire with Large Pine* (1886–87), Bonnard's *The Open Window* (1921), and Braque's *The Round Table* (1929). These are just some of the highlights of a collection of more than four thousand pieces, which visitors have been enjoying since 1921, in the original galleries—and three significant additions—of a Georgian Revival home in Washington, D.C.'s Dupont Circle neighborhood.[2]

It may come as a surprise to most of its public to learn that this "experiment station"[3]—the first to dedicate a space to Mark Rothko's (1903–1979) color-filled canvases in a chapel-like room that was designed by the founder in 1960, with suggestions from the artist himself—also contains a fine example of Spanish Counter-Reformation painting: El Greco's *The Repentant Saint Peter* (fig. 1), one of

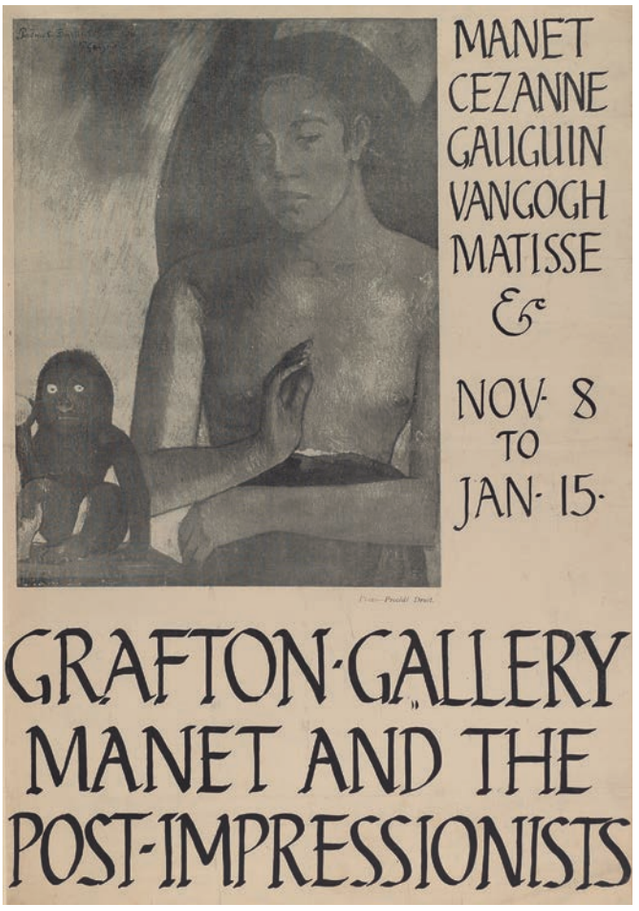
1. El Greco, *The Repentant Saint Peter*, 1600–05. Oil on canvas, 93.7 × 75.2 cm. Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection. Acquired 1922.

My research at the Phillips Collection archives was facilitated by Head Librarian Karen Schneider, who generously granted me access to Duncan Phillips's manuscript diaries and unpublished writings. I am also indebted to her and Michele DeShazo for some of the photographs used here as illustrations.

[1] See Passantino and Martin 1986, available online: http://www.phillipscollection.org/sites/default/files/attachments/chronology.pdf.

[2] The 1897 family home where Duncan Phillips originally exhibited his collection was adapted over time to include more galleries and offices, particularly after the Phillips family moved out in 1930, and then in 1960, when a modernist wing was added by the founder. This annex was reconceived and expanded in 1989 through a major gift. Finally, in 2006 a large renovation and expansion project was completed incorporating an adjacent former apartment building. The full history is available on the museum's website (pdf dated July 2015).

[3] As defined by its founder, The Phillips Collection is "a small, intimate museum combined with an experiment station." Phillips 1926 and several later editions.



12. Poster of the exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, designed by Roger Fry for the Grafton Gallery, London, November 3 to January 15, 1910. London, The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery.

> technically he was far ahead of his period and, although tolerated, he was certainly not appreciated or understood even in the Spain he saw so profoundly. He would have been regarded as a fanatic to the majority of almost any date. … If El Greco had lived in our day he might have devised something similar [to Cubism]. . . . Impressionism for him, as for Cézanne, would have been but a means to an end—as it was indeed in his own life when effects of light, cold, or incandescent were conceived and controlled for emotional expression.[51]

What Roger Fry had called "sustained rhythm of design" in El Greco, Phillips elaborated on in *Terms We Use in Art Criticism*:

> Every part of his picture was in precisely the style of the whole. . . . Emphatic architectural and geometrical stylism is pervaded by a consistent and an insistent pattern. Whereas Greco was a prophet of this attitude he was also great

[51] Fry 1929, 100–04.

El Greco at The Hispanic Society of America

Marcus B. Burke

El Greco, *Holy Family* (detail of Alzaga Ruiz fig. 8), ca. 1585. Oil on canvas, 106 × 87.5 cm. New York, The Hispanic Society of America.

THE collection of pictures by El Greco and his school acquired by Archer Milton Huntington (fig. 1) from 1904 to 1925 for The Hispanic Society of America includes six autograph works, one possibly autograph fragment with later additions, a picture of quality by his workshop, a picture by his son, Jorge Manuel Theotocópuli (1578–1631), two pictures of quality by a contemporary and a follower, and four inferior works by followers—fifteen paintings in all. Huntington (1870–1955) founded the Hispanic Society in 1904, quickly adding the acquisition of Old Master Spanish paintings to his previous acquisitions of rare books, manuscripts, and other objects relating to Spanish culture, although the paintings were acquired in a context that presented both specific handicaps and considerable advantages.

The New Collector of Spanish Art—Self-Imposed Hurdles

Pictures had always formed part of Huntington's plans for the Society, but he was initially very leery of his own gifts for connoisseurship, in spite of a wide knowledge of Spanish art. On the subject of rare books, however, he was much more at ease (fig. 2). One of the first things he did with the immense fortune

I wish to acknowledge the previous scholarship and advice of Mitchell A. Codding, executive director of the Hispanic Society, and Patrick Lenaghan, curator of Prints and Photographs. In addition to the texts cited in the notes below, Codding has provided information on the context of Huntington's collecting of El Greco in Codding 2013, 55–57; and Codding 2017, *passim*. Lenaghan has outlined Huntington's interest in El Greco and his role in the Casa-Museo de El Greco in Lenaghan 2009, 141–55. I also wish to thank Shelley Bennett, long-time curator and scholar at The Huntington Library, San Marino—see the notes below—as well as Susan Galassi of The Frick Collection, whose advice and sharing of important documents on New York dealers has been essential. All of Huntington's El Greco acquisitions were catalogued in Trapier 1929, 75–121. For an overview of the Hispanic Society collections, emphasizing paintings, see Burke 2016, 125–43.

13. El Greco, *Head of Saint Francis*, ca. 1600. Oil on canvas, 45.3 × 39 cm. New York, The Hispanic Society of America.

as "attributed" to El Greco, the works are today considered to be only in the "manner of El Greco," not the least because they are painted on panel, a support rarely used by the master. However, as with the earlier purchases from Ehrich, there is no evidence that either Ehrich or Huntington had reservations about the attribution. Rather, they may have been drawn to the paintings because of the connection between El Greco and modernism discussed above.

The third work from the 1916 group is, however, a wonderful surprise: the possibly fragmentary *Head of Saint Francis* (fig. 13). Over-painted and badly photographed, the work was often questioned in the literature until recently. Newly restored, it has rightly joined the canon of autograph works.

A Chronological Review of Huntington's Acquisitions

To appreciate Archer Huntington's achievements as a collector of El Greco—and to rate his sources, all of which were outside of Spain—a review of his purchases from each dealer or agent can be instructive.

Henry Clay Frick and El Greco

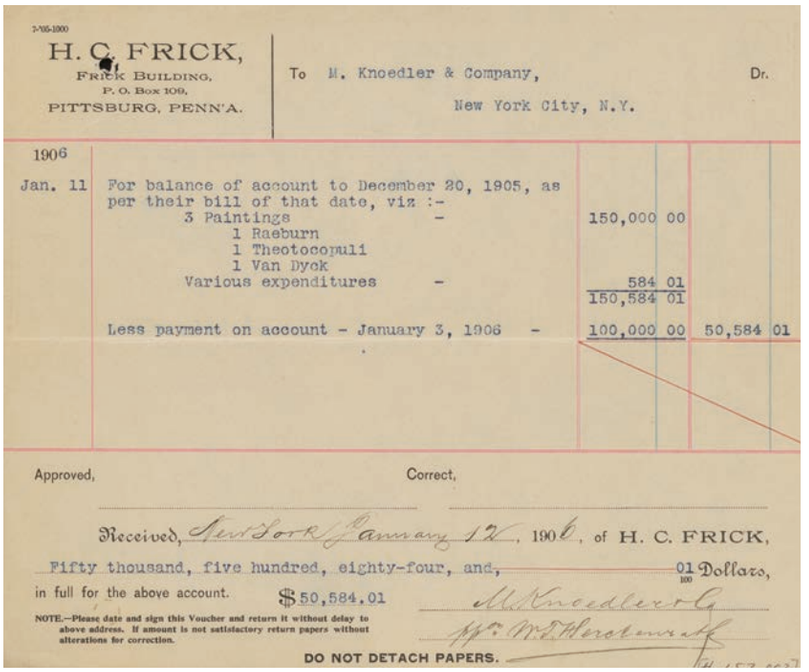
Xavier F. Salomon

El Greco, *Purification of the Temple* (detail of fig. 13).

In the posthumous portrait of Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919) painted in 1925 by Sir Gerald Kelly (1879–1972; fig. 1), and commissioned by Frick's daughter Helen, the American financier and collector appears standing in the gallery of what was his most enduring legacy, The Frick Collection. Partly based on a photograph, Kelly's painting portrays Frick in front of the east wall of the large West Gallery, the room designed and built in the second half of the 1910s to accommodate the most important masterpieces from his collection. Under Frick's feet is an important Persian Herat carpet from the seventeenth century, next to him are two bronzes, the group of a *Nereid and Triton*, attributed to Hubert Gerhard, and the *Hercules* attributed to Antonio Pollaiuolo. As a backdrop, behind Frick, are two of the European paintings bought by him and displayed in the house at 1 East 70th Street. This is indeed where the two paintings hung when Frick died in 1919, before this part of the house was transformed by John Russell Pope in the 1930s (fig. 2).[1] To the left, over the mantelpiece, and in what was the center of the wall is Velázquez's portrait of *Philip IV at Fraga*, and next to it El Greco's portrait of *Vincenzo Anastagi*. The canvas by Kelly, not particularly exceptional for what concerns its artistic merits, is however a very good summary of Frick as a collector, showing him surrounded by paintings, sculptures and decorative arts—both from the West and the East—in an elegant symbiosis which has been carefully preserved to this day at The Frick Collection. Interestingly, the two paintings shown behind Frick in the canvas are not British, Dutch, or Italian works as one would expect considering the collector's own typical preferences, but both are by Spanish artists, and in fact the whole end wall of the West Gallery was dedicated to three giants of Spanish art: El Greco,

I would like to acknowledge for all their help with this essay Roberto Alonso, Xavier Bray, Andrea Cavaggioni, Susan Chore, Susan Grace Galassi, Peggy Iacono, Julie A. Ludwig, Benito Navarrete, and Jenna Nugent.

[1] For an architectural history of Frick's house at 1 East 70th Street, see Bailey 2011.



H. C. FRICK,
FRICK BUILDING,
P. O. BOX 109,
PITTSBURG, PENN'A.

To M. Knoedler & Company, Dr.
New York City, N.Y.

1906				
Jan. 11	For balance of account to December 20, 1905, as per their bill of that date, viz :-			
	3 Paintings -		150,000 00	
	1 Raeburn			
	1 Theotocopuli			
	1 Van Dyck			
	Various expenditures -		584 01	
			150,584 01	
	Less payment on account - January 3, 1906 -		100,000 00	50,584 01

Approved, Correct,

Received, New York January 12, 1906, of H. C. FRICK,
Fifty thousand, five hundred, eighty-four, and, 01/100 Dollars,
in full for the above account. $50,584.01
M. Knoedler & Co.
Wm. M. Henderson

NOTE.—Please date and sign this Voucher and return it without delay to above address. If amount is not satisfactory return papers without alterations for correction.

DO NOT DETACH PAPERS.

8. Receipt for Henry Clay Frick's purchase of El Greco's *Saint Jerome*, Van Dyck's *Ottaviano Canevari*, and Raeburn's *Mrs. James Cruikshank*. New York, The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives.

As Frick's collection was being moved from Pittsburgh to New York, El Greco's *Saint Jerome* joined the other paintings in the Vanderbilt house at 640 Fifth Avenue. A series of cables from M. Knoedler & Co. records the hanging of the works in the house. On October 4, 1905, Thomas Gerrity wrote from New York to Charles Carstairs (1865–1928), director of Knoedler's London branch:

> We have at least gotten through with the work in the house, as I cabled you yesterday—'Gallery hung'. Frick pleased with new purchases. . . . There has [sic] been several changes in the hanging from the plan that you sent me, chiefly on the north wall. The Grecho [sic] was hung over the mantel instead of the Rembrandt [*Portrait of a Young Artist*]; the Raeburn [*Mrs. Cruikshank*] on the right of the mantel near the Grecho, and the Van Dyck [*Ottaviano Canevari*] on the left, and I think that the change was a very good one.[12]

On the same day Gerrity also wrote to Roland Knoedler (1856–1932) himself in Paris: "As I wrote to Mr. Carstairs, and cabled him, as he was anxious to know if Mr. Frick would be pleased with his new purchases, he likes them very much, and had several friends there the evening we got through hanging, and seemed to me to take great pleasure in them, the Grecho especially. Everything looks well in the gallery and there is certainly room for a lot more."

[12] Galassi 2001, 38.

El Greco in Chicago

Rebecca J. Long

El Greco, *The Assumption of the Virgin* (detail of fig. 1).

THE paintings by El Greco in Chicago come primarily from two sources: purchases made by the Art Institute of Chicago, and purchases made by Charles Deering, one of the most active collectors of Spanish art in America of his era. Because of the close relationship of Deering with the Art Institute, however, the museum has been the beneficiary of paintings still owned by Deering's family trust, many of which have been on long term loan to the museum.

Building a Collection: Early Purchases by the Art Institute of Chicago

The first El Greco to come to Chicago is by far the most important painting by the master to be found outside of Spain, and was an incredibly bold purchase by the Art Institute in 1906, two years before the publication of the first monograph dedicated to the artist by Manuel B. Cossío (see Salomon fig. 5) and at a time when a re-appreciation of El Greco's work was just beginning in the United States following the decline of his critical legacy in the nineteenth century. *The Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 1) was the central painting of the retablo mayor made for the Cistercian convent of Santo Domingo el Antiguo in 1577–79, part of the commission that is credited with bringing the artist to Spain from Rome seemingly thanks to his friendship with Luis de Castilla, the son of the patron Diego de Castilla (ca. 1507–1584), dean of Toledo Cathedral.[1] The painting is one of nine that made up this important commission, which was to commemorate a recently deceased Toledan noblewoman, Doña María de Silva (d. 1575), for whose estate Diego de Castilla served as executor of (there is speculation that she may have been the mother of his illegitimate son, Luis). Luis and Diego de Castilla's funerary tombs were to be opposite hers in this newly-constructed chapel.

[1] For full cataloguing of the painting, see Richard Mann's entry in Wolff 2008, 54–61.

5. Unidentified photographer, *Mary Cassatt*, 1914. Frederick A. Sweet research material on Mary Cassatt and James A. McNeill Whistler, 1872–1975. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Gabriel's collection in 1835.[4] Happily, the painting was very minimally cleaned and restored during the ensuing centuries, until a complete conservation project and technical study was undertaken at the Art Institute in 2017 (post-treatment photographs were not available when this publication went to press).

Sebastián Gabriel de Borbón was a Carlist, rebelling against Isabel II (1830–1904) in the debate over succession to the Spanish Crown, and therefore ran afoul of the government as it was officially established. In retaliation, his royal titles were stripped and his art collection was seized by the Crown and folded into the display of the new Museo de la Trinidad in 1835. It was returned to him only in 1861. Following his death, his heirs decided to sell all of the art he had owned. In 1901, the American painter Mary Cassatt (1844–1907; fig. 5) saw *The Assumption* in Madrid through the dealer Joseph Wicht, who was known for being able to gain access to noble collections. As she often did, Cassatt set about trying to find an American buyer for the painting.

Cassatt's work as an art advisor to American collectors was extensive—she had a deep and committed desire to place fine European paintings in American collections that had lacked such examples when she herself was a young art student seeking to study and copy from the masters.[5] In this vein,[6] she approached the great New York collectors Henry O. (1847–1907) and Louisine Havemeyer (1855–1929; see Alzaga fig. 6), but they apparently felt content with their recent purchase (in 1904) of El Greco's portrait of *Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara* (now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the size of *The Assumption*, at over thirteen feet unframed, was indeed overwhelming for their picture gallery. Cassatt turned to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was at the same time in negotiations over the purchase of *The Adoration of the Shepherds* and declined to purchase *The Assumption*. Cassatt similarly reached out to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which in 1904 had purchased El Greco's *Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino* (see Baer fig. 2) on the advice of John Singer Sargent and did not feel the need for another example by the artist. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts similarly passed on the opportunity to purchase. In the meantime, Cassatt had, in 1904, persuaded Paul Durand-Ruel (1831–1922) to purchase the picture from

---

[4] Águeda Villar 1982, 106, inv. no. 26.

[5] See Hirshler 1998, 177–211.

[6] Durand-Ruel first saw *The Assumption* in 1903 in Madrid and wrote to Henry Havemeyer about it in April of 1904 ("... great Greco that Miss Cassatt would [also] like to see bought by you or by an American museum. This painting is a masterpiece, but I certainly can understand that its size is an insurmountable obstacle for you."). By the end of 1904, Durand-Ruel bought the painting and brought it to Paris with financial backing from H. O. Havemeyer. Stein 1993, 233.

Stranger in a Strange Land: El Greco in New York Exhibitions, 1912 to 2014

Susan Grace Galassi

El Greco, *The Agony in the Garden* (detail of fig. 9).

BEGINNING in 2014 and continuing into the following year, major exhibitions of the work of El Greco (Domenicos Theotocópuli, 1541–1614) were held in the artist's adopted home of Toledo, Spain, and in Madrid, to mark the four-hundredth anniversary of his death.[1] This wave of celebrations reverberated across the Atlantic to New York, the most important center for El Greco's work outside of Spain, where the anniversary was marked by a collaboration of three museums. Held at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition *El Greco in New York*, organized by Keith Christiansen, John Pope-Hennessy Chairman of the Department of European Paintings, and Walter Liedtke, curator in the Department of European Paintings, brought together in one large gallery eight works solely by El Greco and two additional works by the artist and his workshop. All of the works came from either the museum's collection or from The Hispanic Society of America. During the run of the exhibition, from November 4, 2014 to February 1, 2015, this impressive display was complemented by a smaller tribute at The Frick Collection, where three paintings by

I thank Inge Reist and José Luis Colomer for inviting me to participate in the 2015 symposium *El Greco Comes to America*. Discussions with Jeongho Park, associate curator at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, led to my taking on this topic. The material presented at the symposium, and in this essay, is the result of a joint exploration with Joanna Sheers Seidenstein, former research assistant, and Eloise Owens, former curatorial assistant, of the flow and identification of various versions of works by El Greco through exhibitions. I gratefully acknowledge their essential contributions to the conceptual as well as the organizational aspects of this material. Eloise Owens contributed further research on the American press and gave meticulous care to the text and notes for publication. Rebecca Leonard, current curatorial assistant, obtained most of the illustrations. I would like to acknowledge Marcus Burke and the late Walter Liedtke for generously sharing information with me. Thanks are due to Esmée Quodbach and Isabel Morán García for their fine editing, and Laura Díaz Tajadura for her work on the illustrations.

[1] Among the largest shows were *The Greek of Toledo* (March 14–June 14, 2014) at the Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, and *El Greco and Modern Painting* (June 24–October 5, 2014) at the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

2. Unidentified photographer, *Suffragette Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer Holding the Torch*, June 9, 1915. Bettman Collection. Getty Images.

Masters.[5] Not only did the art dealers orchestrate the flow of works from Spain into the hands of American Gilded Age collectors, but they made available to the public many of the important works they sold to their clients in loan exhibitions held at their premises, often as benefits for particular causes. In these early exhibitions, El Greco was often paired with Francisco de Goya (1746–1848; see Colomer fig. 9a–b), another artist whose work appealed to modern taste and was available on the market in the early years of the twentieth century before export laws preventing their flow out of Spain were fully in place. These small-scale exhibitions featuring works by El Greco newly acquired by New York and other East-Coast collectors attracted a large public and were widely reviewed, spreading the artist's reputation. A look back at a selection of these exhibitions provides insight into the unfolding of the El Greco cult on this side of the Atlantic in the first decades of the century, and sheds light on the diverse and often incongruous contexts in which his work was presented. The star power of the stranger from Greece, with his idiosyncratic expressive language and direct emotional appeal, it was discovered, could be harnessed to a variety of causes.

The first exhibition to feature works by El Greco in New York was held at the Knoedler Galleries, then located on Fifth Avenue between 45th and 46th Street, from April 2 to 20, 1912. A month earlier, the Copley Society in Boston had organized a loan exhibition on a grand scale featuring over one hundred works by various Spanish masters, including eleven by El Greco.[6] The Knoedler show, by contrast, was small and focused, presenting four of El Greco's paintings with eleven by Goya, all from private collections. While held at Knoedler's premises, the driving force behind the show was Louisine Havemeyer, not only the leading collector and promoter of both artists in America but a social activist and suffragette (fig. 2).[7] Almost all of the works in the show were lent anonymously

[5] The Ehrich Gallery was founded by Louis R. Ehrich, and after his death in 1911, run by his son Harold Louis Ehrich.

[6] Founded in 1879 by alumni of the Boston School of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Copley Society of Boston organized exhibitions, lectures, art classes, and social gatherings for its members. Its *Exhibition of Paintings of Spanish Masters* was open for three weeks beginning on February 27 in Copley Hall. Among the works by El Greco in the show was Henry Clay Frick's *Saint Jerome* (no. 15).

[7] For Louisine Havemeyer's interest in the suffrage movement, see Havemeyer 1922; Weitzenhoffer 1986, 223–29; and Rabinow 1993. She organized another anonymous loan show in 1915, entitled *Masterpieces by Old and Modern Painters*, at the Knoedler Gallery for the benefit of women's suffrage. The later show featured her works by Impressionists and did not include any works by Spanish masters.

Epilogue:
The Many Facets of El Greco

Jonathan Brown

Previous page:

El Greco, *Madonna and Child with Saint Martina and Saint Agnes* (detail), ca. 1597–99. Oil on canvas, 193.5 × 103 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art.

By any account, El Greco (1541–1614) was a singular Renaissance painter—born and raised in Crete, trained in Italy, and active in Spain. He was late to develop; it was not until after he moved to Spain in 1577 that he enjoyed success. He was then in his mid-thirties, an advanced age to begin to forge a reputation.

El Greco's singularity was to have a decisive impact on how succeeding generations interpreted his art. It is fair to say that, for the most part, he was ignored or scorned until the later years of the nineteenth century. For instance, Carl Justi (1832–1912), the most influential specialist of Spanish art of his time, held El Greco in low esteem.[1] However, even as the German's opinion was circulating, a countercurrent of admiration was beginning to flow. The revision of El Greco occurred in different ways in different places, each providing a powerful antidote to the negative opinions of his critics. Among these admirers were artists of the early twentieth century, who included Ignacio Zuloaga (1870–1945) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). El Greco also was enthusiastically endorsed by the German Expressionists. To these painters, El Greco was a forerunner of anti-academic painting. A key player in this revisionist movement was the American Impressionist Mary Cassatt (1844–1926). Cassatt was not only a painter, she was an artistic adviser. Her clients included H. O. (1847–1907) and Louisine (1855–1929) Havemeyer, who purchased such masterpieces as the *View of Toledo* (see Galassi fig. 1) and the portrait of *Cardinal Ferdinando Niño de Guevara* (see Alzaga Ruiz fig. 7), which were donated to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Perhaps the most spectacular acquisition made by an American museum was *The Assumption of the Virgin* (see Long fig. 1), which was offered to the Havemeyers, only to end up in 1906 in the Art Institute of Chicago. These acquisitions were crucial in cementing the reputation of El Greco in the

[1] Justi 1888.