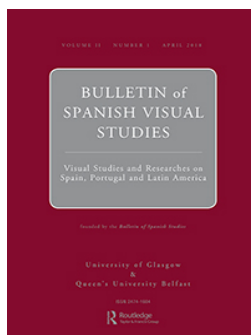


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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

***Copied by the Sun: Talbotype Illustrations to the Annals of the Artists of Spain* by Sir William Stirling Maxwell.** Facsimile and Critical Edition by Hilary Macartney and José Manuel Matilla. Madrid: Museo del Prado/Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica. 2016. 2 vols: I, 368 pp. + 274 illustrations; II, 144 pp. + 68 illustrations.

It is well known that Stirling Maxwell's *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, first published in 1848, was a pioneering study of Spanish art. Less well known is that it was also the first history of art book to include photographs. Indeed, as well as the three volumes of text, Stirling Maxwell published a fourth volume of *Talbotype Illustrations*, containing sixty-six small photographs reproducing examples of works of art discussed in the text. As it was an experiment using an entirely new reproductive tool, only fifty copies were produced—in equal numbers of large and small format volumes—to be given to friends, family and some institutions. This, added to the fact that the reproductions quickly faded and that the three volumes of text were already illustrated with woodcuts and fine steel engravings, explains why the fourth volume was soon forgotten. The discovery of one of the rare volumes in the Prado Museum's library was what initially prompted this facsimile, which is carefully edited by Hilary Macartney, leading scholar on Stirling Maxwell, and José Manuel Matilla, Head of Drawings and Prints at the Prado—who had already included the Museum's copy in his exhibition *Velázquez en blanco y negro* (2000). The facsimile of digitally reconstructed photographs is accompanied by

an interpretative volume which contains an in-depth study of the historic publication and a *catalogue raisonné* of the Talbotype illustrations.

This is indeed a fascinating read that goes far beyond a narrative of the making of the original book by Stirling Maxwell and its remaking as an 'ideal facsimile' by Macartney and Matilla. What can be learned from the various contributions that meticulously build a complete image of this audacious enterprise? Firstly, the figure of Sir William acquires a new dimension: he is seen as embracing with enthusiasm an entirely new and risky technique in his desire to provide his readers with a comprehensive experience of a school of art that was still largely unknown outside Spain. Stirling's bibliophile interests, his knowledge of Spanish printmaking from the sixteenth century to Goya, and his network of scholar friends all assisted in bringing the venture to fruition. Thanks to surviving correspondence between Stirling Maxwell and the Scottish historian Mark Napier from 1845, Macartney is able to reconstruct the full process of Stirling's decision to reject conventional prints, which were not always truthful reproductions of art, in favour of Talbotypes. Larry J. Schaaf, director of the *William Henry Fox Talbot Catalogue Raisonné*, gives a lively account of the method used by Nicolaas Henneman, Talbot's former valet, to produce the photographic prints on salt paper.

In their essays, Macartney and Matilla provide detailed analysis of the practical and intellectual reasons behind the choice of each Talbotype. They underline how, as in his text, Stirling Maxwell sought to represent all the visual arts in Spain. Hence, although painting remains predominant, he also reproduced examples of monuments and city views, sculpture, and drawings and prints, many of them through photographs of engravings. His aim was to enable the reader to discover new works of art, choosing, for example, paintings by Murillo still in Seville churches and never engraved, rather than cabinet paintings already known through prints. The impossibility of photographing *in situ*, due to the darkness of Spanish churches or the too large dimensions of the works of art, led Stirling to rely on the few existing engravings or on small-scale copies: the reproduction of Murillo's *Immaculate Conception of the Franciscans* (No. 46) in Seville Museum is in fact a photograph of a small oil copy commissioned for the purpose from the painter José Roldán y Martínez; and the same is true for several paintings then in King Louis-Philippe's Galerie Espagnole at the Louvre, which are reproduced through photographs of small watercolour copies by William Barclay. As this enterprise predates most of his personal collection, Stirling Maxwell also had to rely on his friend Richard Ford for portable works that could easily be taken to Henneman's studio to be directly reproduced. Macartney painstakingly analyses the difficult process of photographing Ford's two terracotta reliefs attributed to Martínez Montañés (Nos 13 & 14) as well as some of the drawings, most notably Murillo's *Christ on the Cross* (No. 56; Ford Collection, London). Matilla's study of the choice of engravings, first for the three volumes of text, then those reproduced in Talbotypes, is particularly brilliant: after a useful outline of the Spanish lithographic collections which Stirling Maxwell knew so well, he examines the variety of his choices that ranges from straightforward reproductive prints to Goya's etched interpretations of Velázquez's paintings.

None of the diverse aspects of this enterprise has been forgotten: Macartney and David Weston devote a chapter to the physical construction of all four volumes, including the text volumes which were published in London by John Ollivier in June 1848. Rich archival sources of Maxwell and Stirling family papers in Glasgow, largely reproduced in the appendices, allow them to follow the whole procedure and to analyse how the production of the fourth volume—a sort of *incunabulum*—was still an incipient process, largely handcrafted and far from perfect. Thanks to another rich primary source—485 salt prints made by Henneman as positive proofs (Talbot Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford)—Macartney, Brian Liddy and Colin Harding reconstruct the taking and retouching of the pictures during spring 1847, including the challenges posed by the colours of the painted copies and sculptures. This first part of the book concludes with an analytical

investigation of the rapid deterioration of the bound volumes of Talbotypes, which seems to have been mainly due to atmospheric pollution that added sulphur to the plates (Jim Tate, Macartney and Maureen Young).

Compiled by Macartney and Matilla with Beatriz Naranjo, the *catalogue raisonné* of the photographic plates in the *Annals Talbotypes* volume is a gem: each entry contains not only descriptions, but also a comparative study of the state of the plates in surviving copies. This last aided the selection of examples for digital reconstruction in the facsimile. Also included are details of related proofs in Henneman's stock and a short outline of the artwork photographed and the original (if different), along with references in the *Annals* text and relevant bibliography. Among the highlights is a small watercolour by Barclay reproducing Luis Tristán's *Last Supper* for the monastery of La Sisle (Glasgow Museums). Adapted by Stirling Maxwell for Tristán's *Self-portrait* (No. 11), it provides the only visual reference to this now lost work. The catalogue is followed by a census of the bound copies of the volume which is an absolute mine for the history of collecting.

This outstanding publication will strengthen the place of Sir William Stirling Maxwell among pioneering historians of art and provide a long-lasting model of scholarly research.

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