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E.K. Waterhouse's unpublished El Greco catalogue raisonné

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In the late 1920s E.K. Waterhouse embarked on an El Greco catalogue raisonné, a project that occupied him on and off for the following forty years. His notes for this unpublished work, in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, reveal that it occupies an important place in the sequence of El Greco catalogues in the twentieth century, in particular because of its influence on Harold E. Wethey's standard work of 1962.

The Waterhouse papers in the Special Collections of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (hereafter the EKW Papers), is a collection of documents produced by the British art historian Ellis K. Waterhouse (1905–85) throughout his scholarly career.¹ The papers were acquired by the Getty Center in 1986 because of their value for the Getty Research Library and the Getty Provenance Index. Their emphasis is on Waterhouse's interest in Renaissance and Baroque European painting; his research material on British art was bequeathed to the Paul Mellon Centre, London.² The EKW Papers include notes, draft catalogue entries, essays, lectures, photographs, annotated printed catalogues and correspondence with art historians, curators, collectors and dealers. Among these research files is material that forms part of an unfinished project on which Waterhouse was working intermittently from the mid-1920s until approximately 1965 but never saw the light of day: a catalogue raisonné of the works of El Greco.

The present article is part of a wider research project into the material on El Greco in the EKW Papers. Currently under development, this will include a critical edition of the catalogue raisonné and its related materials. The purpose of this article is to address the contributions that the catalogue raisonné makes to the historiography of El Greco, discuss the catalogue as a source of information on the provenance and circulation of El Greco's works and enhance the understanding of a catalogue raisonné as a textual and epistemological device. Since the catalogue never took a final form, but consists of working materials profusely annotated by Waterhouse and developed through different versions over time, it represents an exceptional opportunity to investigate the research practices and intellectual and material processes that underlay the building of a catalogue raisonné during the first half of the twentieth century.

Waterhouse is largely associated with the study of Italian Baroque and eighteenth-century English paintings.³ However, he has also been acclaimed for having produced one of the most significant studies of El Greco, an article on his Italian period published in *Art Studies* in 1930.⁴ This article, which contains a catalogue of twenty-six works produced in the artist's Italian period, succeeded in dispelling the confusion about El Greco's origins and his first paintings in Italy.⁵ Waterhouse published only three other works on El Greco: the catalogue of a 1951 exhibition in Edinburgh;⁶ a thirty-five-page pocket book published c.1978;⁷ and the eight-page introduction to an English translation of Edi Baccheschi's *Il Greco: tutti i dipinti* (1980), which was edited by David Piper.⁸

Waterhouse first announced that he was working on a larger El Greco project in the opening sentence of his 1930 article, 'The

¹ Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, no.870204, Ellis K. Waterhouse Notebooks and Research Files (hereafter EKW Papers).

² There are also letters from E.K. Waterhouse to Basil Gray in the archive of the National Gallery, London, NGA16 and NG57.

³ See in particular E.K. Waterhouse: *Italian Baroque Painting*, London 1962, and *idem: The Pelican History of Art: Painting in Britain 1530–1830*, London 1953. For a full account of his career, see M. Levey: 'Ellis Waterhouse: an appreciation', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 147 (2005), pp.668–73.

⁴ E.K. Waterhouse: 'El Greco's Italian period', *Art Studies. Medieval Renaissance and Modern* 8 (1930), pp.61–88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.84–88. See N. Hadjinicolaou: 'El Greco's Italian period and Ellis K. Waterhouse', in *idem, ed.: El Greco in Italy & Italian Art. Proceedings of the International Symposium (Rethymno, Crete, 22–24 September 1995)*, Rethymno 1999, pp.71–103.

⁶ E.K. Waterhouse: exh. cat. *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Spanish Paintings from El Greco to Goya*, Edinburgh (National Gallery of Scotland) 1951. In 1952, while Waterhouse was Director of the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, the gallery purchased a version of El Greco's *Christ blessing*, inv. no.2160.

⁷ E.K. Waterhouse: *El Greco. 1541?–1614*, New York 1978.

⁸ E. Baccheschi: *El Greco. The Complete Paintings*, ed. D. Piper with an introduction by E.K. Waterhouse, London 1980.

following pages are only the prelude to a larger work, covering the whole of Greco's life, which, half-completed today, I hope some time to have brought up to that point of scholarship which might make publication at least permissible'.⁹ No further reference to this project appeared in print until 1962, when in the introduction to his catalogue raisonné of El Greco, Harold E. Wethey (1902–84) wrote that 'Professor Ellis K. Waterhouse, Director of the Barber Institute at Birmingham University, an expert in sales catalogues and the history of art in general, generously allowed me to consult the notes on El Greco which he prepared with the intention, now abandoned, of publishing a catalogue of the artist's pictures'.¹⁰ However, the material in the EKW Papers reveals that this task had not in fact entirely been set aside, as suggested by Wethey and later by Nicos Hadjinicolaou, who proposed that Waterhouse 'must have abandoned the project by circa 1931, dedicating himself to the study of Roman Baroque painting'.¹¹ Although his research on El Greco was never again so intense after 1931, Waterhouse continued working on the catalogue until the mid-1960s, as an analysis of the versions of it in the EKW Papers demonstrates.

The material on El Greco comprises six types of documents, each of them related to the catalogue raisonné project: diaries and notebooks relating to Spanish journeys made during the summers of 1927 and 1929; exhaustive reports on the locations of El Greco's paintings in museums and private collections in the United States and their appearance in auctions there during the second half of the 1920s; correspondence with collectors, dealers, museum directors, galleries and art historians; short essays, in which Waterhouse tackles specific issues raised by his research; an impressive collection of approximately seven hundred photographs of El Greco's works (as well as forgeries of them), profusely annotated by Waterhouse; and clippings, postcards and supplementary texts.

Four typescript versions of the catalogue raisonné are preserved. The information provided by Waterhouse's numerous handwritten notes has made it possible to reconstruct their chronological sequence. The first version, which lists 571 works, dates from the period when Waterhouse was working on the *Art Studies* article, around 1929–30. The second is more detailed and incorporates handwritten notes made by Waterhouse on the typescript of the first version. Dating from around 1930–31, it lists 625 works. A preface for this version exists on a loose page, which must have been written by Waterhouse at around the same period, as it includes a handwritten note by him dated 1930 (see Appendix). The third version was probably prepared shortly afterwards, since the latest date it refers to is 1931. This incorporates the notes Waterhouse made on the second version and increases the corpus of works to 689. This is the version that Waterhouse used as a basis for revisions made in the form of handwritten notes at various points in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the 1950s Waterhouse started a fourth and final version of the catalogue, which was more comprehensive and more elaborate than the previous ones.¹² Yet Waterhouse completed only sixteen pages, with a total of sixty-six records, together with nine sheets devoted to an analysis of the paintings of St Francis by El Greco and by other artists in his circle after the painter's death. Once Wethey's catalogue had been published, Waterhouse resumed work on his catalogue by pencilling in the corresponding record numbers given by Wethey to each work and incorporating some new information. The latest date that appears in these notes is 1965. Waterhouse's work on the four versions of the catalogue extended, therefore, over a nearly forty-year period and was an active project for most of his professional career. According to the materials in the EKW Papers, the project was begun systematically during the time Waterhouse was a Commonwealth Fund fellow in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, in 1927–29. Although it had earlier roots – a diary dated 1925 includes a bibliography of El Greco¹³ – Waterhouse's decision to produce a catalogue raisonné took place in, and was imbued with, the intellectual, collecting and commercial climate that surrounded El Greco's work during the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁴ This reached a peak of enthusiasm in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in North America, which formed a culmination of the process of rediscovery of El Greco begun in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ One of the first milestones in this process was a two-volume monograph published in 1908 by the Spanish scholar Manuel Bartolomé Cossío (1857–1935), which was the first attempt to produce a catalogue raisonné of El Greco.¹⁶ This was followed by a catalogue published in 1926 by the German scholar August Mayer (1885–1944), which was presented as an update of Cossío's monograph.¹⁷ This scholarly interest in El Greco can be explained by a number of different factors, from the identification of his paintings with the idiosyncratic values of what was considered the essence of the Spanish spirit and identity to the correlation that was made between his images and the new pictorial languages of contemporary avant-gardes. El Greco's appeal to scholars intersected with interest in him in the art

⁹ Waterhouse, *op. cit.* (note 3), p.61.

¹⁰ H.E. Wethey: *El Greco and His School. Catalogue Raisonné*, Princeton 1962, p.19.

¹¹ Hadjinicolaou, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.90.

¹² This version probably dates from the early or mid-1950s, as in a description of a copy of *The Adoration of the shepherds*, Waterhouse stated, 'It is said now to belong to D. Matías Errazuriz y Alvera, Buenos Aires', EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7, p.9, and the work entered that collection after 1951.

¹³ EKW Papers, box 1, folder 2.

¹⁴ According to Michael Levey, who knew him well, Waterhouse's interest in El Greco was first aroused by a classics master, George Sargeant, at his school, Marlborough College, Wiltshire, which he attended from 1918 to 1923, see Levey, *op. cit.* (note 3), p.669.

¹⁵ See J. Álvarez Lopera: *De Ceán a Cossío: la fortuna crítica del Greco en el siglo XIX*, Madrid 1987.

¹⁶ B.M. Cossío: *El Greco*, Madrid 1908.

¹⁷ A.L. Mayer: *Domenico Theotocopuli, El Greco. fritisches und illustriertes Verzeichnis des Gesamtwerkes*, Munich 1926.

market and among collectors in the first third of the twentieth century, an interest that became especially intense in the United States.¹⁸ This fascination with El Greco was considered by the art historian Vitale Bloch, writing in a draft typescript preserved in the EKW Papers, to be a hallmark of North American rather than European art collecting:

Maybe the true passion of the Americans, of the young generation as well as of the old, for paintings free of any historical or cultural associations is best reflected in the series of magnificent Grecos which I saw. Not only in Boston, New York, Elkins Park, and Chicago are there superb achievements by Greco, but the smaller galleries, Saint Louis, Cleveland, and Kansas City, have also succeeded in acquiring fine examples. The highest tribute that can be paid to the American taste of today and yesterday is that, while European connoisseurs have been shy and cautious, the Americans have enthusiastically devoted themselves to assembling El Greco.¹⁹

One result was enthusiastic commercial activity around El Greco's works, which was reflected in the constant adjustments made by Waterhouse to the provenances of works recorded in handwritten notes on the four versions of his catalogue.

In this context of scholarly and commercial interest, one of the fundamental issues around which studies on El Greco revolved was the need to establish a canonical corpus of his works, from the point of view of both authorship and chronology. Issues of attribution were central to the model of art history prevailing at that time, but they also coincided with the needs of a vibrant market. In the case of El Greco, the process of attribution had become remarkably complex thanks to a combination of different factors, such as the activities of his studio and numerous followers and uncertainty about his biography and its associated chronology. As a result, and as El Greco's work became increasingly valuable, there was an upsurge in gratuitous attributions.

These issues were addressed by Waterhouse while preparing the catalogue raisonné in a document entitled 'Pictures attributed to Greco and his school without foundation'.²⁰ In this, Waterhouse refers to a book by Jens Ferdinand Willumsen (1863-1958), *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco. Essai sur la transformation de l'artiste byzantine en peintre européen* (1927), as being one of the main factors contributing to the state of confusion, since he had attributed to El Greco a considerable number of works from the Bassano workshop, together with 'a small number of quite worthless pictures of wholly nondescript character'. Waterhouse also states that it would be

equally impossible to enumerate all the pictures which sale catalogues, dealers or private owners have called Greco. Some of the earlier sale references I have included in the body of the texts under their several subjects as 'Unknown'. Probably many of these are quite irrelevant, but I have thought them just worth putting in when I have happened to come across them. A number of oddments which hopeful owners have attributed to Greco will be found among the boxes in the Witt library and I have thought it neither kind nor necessary to list them. Where no comment is made it means that I am satisfied that the picture is wholly unrelated to Greco or his school; with pictures of this kind it is not necessary to give alternative attributions.²¹

Yet the situation was more complex than the simple dismissal of improbable attributions. Several annotations about the provenance and attributions of works of art in the EKW Papers reveal that the process of attribution constituted a space of tension and conflict among the actors involved, as can be observed in a note by Waterhouse regarding a painting recently acquired by the collector Albert C. Barnes:

'Espolio' nothing in this is autographic. Barnes says he bought it for almost nothing in Paris thro' a dealer from a private collection, and that then it was fearfully dirty. He doubts its identity with the Detty picture, but on no grounds except that he thinks it a discovery of his own but the measurements are so identically the same that all doubt is set at rest. Barnes says M. [Mayer] thinks it in part studio work and stoutly denies it.²²

It was surely this challenging scenario that encouraged the young Waterhouse to focus on El Greco rather than on any other artist. As Waterhouse's words in the preface to his catalogue raisonné suggest, the main purpose of his research was the need to clarify the attributions that had been made to El Greco up to that time.²³ This purpose also guided his 1930 article in *Art Studies*, which was mainly devoted to reviewing particularly controversial attributions in Mayer's 1926 catalogue and Willumsen's book. The article was in effect the first outcome of Waterhouse's research project on El Greco, which was driven by the 'drastic need of purgation' of the works then claimed for the early phases of the artist's activity.²⁴

Waterhouse's interest in El Greco was welcomed on his arrival at Princeton and he was granted a fellowship to study the

¹⁸ See I. Reist and J.L. Colomer, eds: *El Greco comes to America: The Discovery of a Modern Old Master*, Madrid and New York 2017.

¹⁹ 'Report on American Collection by Vitale Bloch, 1939', EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7.

²⁰ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² 'The Barnes Foundation (Albert C. Barnes). Merion. Pennsylvania', note dated 8th November 1927, EKW Papers, box 21, folder 9 (unpaginated). The Barnes Foundation painting, inv. no. BF90, is now catalogued as 'School of El Greco'.

²³ See Appendix.

²⁴ Waterhouse, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.61.

artist in Spain. He thus had the opportunity to travel there twice, during the summers of 1927 and 1929. His diaries of these two trips are in the EKW Papers.²⁵ It is not known if there was any special reason that triggered Princeton's interest in promoting such thorough research on El Greco. The close relationship between Waterhouse and Frank Jewett Mather (1868–1953), professor of art and archaeology at Princeton and from 1922 Director of the university's art museum, together with comments contained in letters from various correspondents in the EKW Papers²⁶ suggests that Mather particularly encouraged Waterhouse's El Greco project during its first years. However, Mather is not known to have been interested in Spanish painting before then and the only documented connection between him and El Greco is a portrait of Juan de Ávila (later proven to be a fake) that he had purchased for himself in 1926. Although Mather was a well-known collector, he owned no other Spanish pieces. Yet, it is significant that in his *Art Studies* article, Waterhouse illustrated Mather's painting, noting that it was the first time that it had been reproduced and identifying it as an original work by El Greco.²⁷

What we know for certain is that the call for 'purgation' was the argument used by Waterhouse to situate his catalogue as a necessary response to Mayer's. He had, therefore, no hesitation in emphasising the German scholar's numerous inaccuracies, as he states in the preface. Rhetorical kindness does not mitigate the severity of the judgment, 'It [the catalogue] is, of course, based on Mayer's large catalogue, issued in 1926 [. . .] That that catalogue is full of small inaccuracies is only natural considering that it was the first attempt that has been made on so ample a scale: many of these I have been able to correct'.²⁸ Consequently, a traditional catalogue raisonné approach, based on correcting and updating, allowed Waterhouse to justify the need for his project in a scholarly setting, defined also by intense competitiveness. It may be relevant that Cossio's 1908 catalogue was in Spanish, Meyer's was published in German in a luxurious format and Waterhouse was endeavouring to produce the first comprehensive catalogue raisonné of El Greco in English. The materials in the EKW archive provide some evidence that this pursuit was perceived as a kind of competition.²⁹

Waterhouse's catalogue did not include any essays or preliminary explanations, other than the succinct preface. This preface, together with the analysis of the composition and structure of the catalogue, is, therefore, crucial to understanding the rationale underlying the project. The need to organise the artistic production related to El Greco, discriminating between originals, copies, fakes and so on, partly accounts for Waterhouse's maximalist approach ('This catalogue attempts to include every picture, however dubious, which has any sort of connection with El Greco'), with the result that he recorded almost two hundred more works than Mayer had done, despite the fact that, unlike Mayer, Waterhouse did not include the sculptures.³⁰ The reasons for this exclusion remain unknown, and the EKW Papers do not provide any clue. This maximalist approach also explains the title chosen by Waterhouse, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of El Greco and His Studio*.³¹ Waterhouse's bolstering of El Greco's studio and followers as a subject for research precedes by several years the approach taken by Halldor Soehner, whose catalogue, published in 1957–59, although limited to works by El Greco in Spain, included works associated with his studio and successors in a separate section.³² This approach was taken even further in Wethey's catalogue, as will be discussed.

Although Waterhouse presented his catalogue as a necessary update of Mayer's, it went further than merely correcting his attributions. Waterhouse developed a structure for his catalogue that forms one of its major contributions. Comparison between the four versions of the catalogue shows that there are no significant differences between them in terms of conceptualisation, structure or classification system. The configuration of the work was, therefore, fundamentally fixed around 1929–30. The main differences between the four versions are the number of works, which increased in each version, and the extent of the individual records, which tended to become longer and more elaborate. The structure of the records is the same as that of the small 1930 catalogue raisonné, and includes measurements, likely dates, provenance, bibliography and condition. It also usually includes

²⁵ EKW Papers, box 21, folders 3, 7 and 8.

²⁶ See, for example, letter from Svetoslav Roerich (Roerich Museum) to Waterhouse, 4th February 1930, EKW Papers, box 21, folder 14; and letter from Walter Enrich (Enrich Galleries) to Waterhouse, 24th March 1930, EKW Papers, box 21, folder 14.

²⁷ Waterhouse, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.88.

²⁸ See Appendix.

²⁹ For example, the art historian Basil Gray concluded a letter to Waterhouse of 29th February 1929, 'Any news of Charles? Forgive this catalogue which rivals yours', EKW Papers, box 21, folder 14. 'Charles' has not yet been identified.

³⁰ Mayer's catalogue included 502 works, of which 357 were classed as autograph. Thirty-one of these were new attributions, fourteen of which were accepted by Waterhouse, see T. Posada Kubissa: *August L. Mayer y la pintura española*, Madrid 2009, p.259. The differences between the attributions made by Mayer, Waterhouse and Wethey will be the subject of a forthcoming article by the present author.

³¹ For the fourth version, Waterhouse changed the title to *Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of El Greco & his Imitators*, which is better suited to its objectives, since it includes modern versions and fakes.

³² H. Soehner: 'Greco in Spanien (Kritischer Katalog der in Spanien befindlichen Gemälde von El Greco)', published in four instalments in the *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 'Grecos Stilentwicklung in Spanien', 8 (1957), pp.123–94; 'Teil II: Atelier und Nachfolge Grecos', 9–10 (1958–59), pp.147–242; 'Teil III: Katalog der Gemälde Grecos, seines Ateliers und seiner Nachfolge in Spanischem Besitz', 9–10 (1958–59), pp.147–242; and 'Teil IV: Die Retabel Grecos', 11 (1959), pp.179–86.

comments about the photographs used in the attribution process, with an indication of whether or not Waterhouse had been able to see the original.

Although in general Waterhouse closely followed the thematic organisation that Mayer had initiated in his 1926 catalogue, he expanded it, made it more complex and significantly transformed it. Waterhouse used a twofold classification system. Mayer's catalogue arranged the works in large thematic blocs, including religious paintings, portraits, landscapes and genre, using chronological criteria to order each of these blocs. Waterhouse, on the other hand, subdivided them further and, more importantly, classified El Greco's paintings according to a typology based on iconographical and compositional variants, thus providing an accurate 'design' taxonomy to order the oeuvre. An example is the theme of the Annunciation, for which Waterhouse proposed up to six different types, leaving a last category open for 'unknown types':

Type A (the scene takes place in a hall paved with blocks of marble: the Virgin kneels at a priedieu at the left, Gabriel floats in from the right: cherubs in the air: no attributes of the Virgin). Type B (the same position of the main figures as Type A, but the background is sky, there are no angels, and – in the authentic version – the work-box and Burning Bush are included as symbols or attributes of the Virgin). Type C (variant of type B, with the Angel's right [hand] going back behind his head. Type D (A tall, upright, design in which the Virgin kneels away from the priedieu and faces the Angel: the Burning Bush motive is much amplified, and the heavens are full of cherubs and Angels making music). Type E (Circular design with certain affinities to type D). Type F (Considerably varied from type D, with the Angel standing on a paved floor and the scene taking place in an interior.³³

This choice of classification system is explained in Waterhouse's comment that 'Greco's chronology is at present too uncertain to justify a dogmatic statement, so that it is perhaps enough to say that Dr. Mayer's chronology is incomprehensible'.³⁴ Waterhouse's system was, therefore, partly a response to the uncertain chronology of El Greco's life and work and consequent difficulty in providing an accurately dated sequence for his paintings. In the model proposed by Waterhouse, the chronology is embedded in the 'design' types: 'the rule it has proved convenient and reliable, to follow: that Greco perfects one design for a subject before experimenting with another'.³⁵ Consequently, the ordering of the different iconographic-compositional typologies creates a chronological sequence and this allows, therefore, the artistic evolution of El Greco to be analysed within the framework of each thematic series. By using this classification system, which relegates chronology to a subordinate parameter of 'design' types, Waterhouse took the works' compositional and iconographical components as the essential basis for analysing El Greco's work in the most coherent way that the state of knowledge permitted at the time. As Waterhouse remarks in his discussion of El Greco's paintings of St Francis, this subordination of chronology in favour of a more intelligible order for the purpose of image analysis means that 'the catalogue here, therefore, follows an order rather of convenience than of rigid chronology'.³⁶

This is not a trivial point since it appears to be the first time that this kind of typological classification had been proposed for a catalogue raisonné. It is true that the concept of iconographic and compositional 'variations' had appeared in Mayer's catalogue, in which certain paintings were considered to be 'variants' (*variationen*) of others.³⁷ However, Mayer's catalogue did not provide a systematic typology as such. For example, he did not divide the paintings of the Agony in the Garden between two compositional models, horizontal and vertical, as set out in Waterhouse's catalogue, but stated simply that a particular painting was a variant of another.

Since El Greco's portraits do not fall into compositional types, they were organised on a different basis by Waterhouse. Mayer had tried to order the portraits alphabetically, which in addition to being arbitrary from the standpoint of the visual analysis of the images, resulted in an inconsistent organisation, as in the case of anonymous portraits it demanded descriptive paraphrases (*Nobleman with his hand on his chest: Portrait of a scholar*, and so on). Waterhouse was the first to make a clear separation between portraits that could be attributed to El Greco and those that could not and propose a tentative chronological order.³⁸

Waterhouse combined his thematic organisation with an exhaustive classification system based on the degree of the works' proximity to El Greco's hand, making use of seven different categories for works that are not autograph: studio versions; school versions; mixed schools; copies; derivatives; later copies without a connection to El Greco; and 'unknown' (works known from documentary sources or cited in the literature that could not be traced). These seven types constitute, therefore, what could be called grades of deviation from the original. In this way, Waterhouse also rectified Mayer's approach, in which missing originals, replicas, studio works and other categories all appeared together, making it difficult to appreciate these differences. In doing

³³ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7.

³⁴ Waterhouse, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.61.

³⁵ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7, p.90.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ This approach can be traced back to Cossio's 1908 catalogue, where some of the works produced in Spain were allocated to the 'Italian era' section for the sake of greater intelligibility, as being 'repetitions and old copies of the Italian topics of El Greco', see Cossio, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.62, transl. the author.

³⁸ EKW papers, box 21, folder 7, p.120. Wetthey, *op. cit.* (note 10), also followed an alphabetical arrangement for the portraits.

so, Waterhouse placed the structure of the catalogue raisonné in the service of the necessary ‘ordering task’ that was at the core of his project.³⁹

Waterhouse’s aim of bringing order to the body of works of art related to El Greco explains why attribution was one of his main concerns. His preface to the catalogue reveals some of his ideas about his methods. As a good empiricist, committed to the modern scientific paradigm based on objective evidence, Waterhouse brought together a visual examination of the work – what he called ‘autopsy’ – and information from documentary sources. However, unlike other specialists in attribution (such as Mayer or Bernard Berenson), Waterhouse downplayed the importance of the expert connoisseur’s eye, which in his view had to be subject to documentary sources. He emphasised the factors that affected judgments by eye – on the one hand, photographic reproductions, which were the usual basis of attributions; on the other, the context in which observation of the work took place, since optimal conditions could not be ensured: ‘often, alas, the mere sight of a picture, under conditions unfavourable to a careful study, is a more dangerous thing than no sight of it at all’.⁴⁰ One example demonstrates the care that Waterhouse took over such issues. In a note dated 16th March 1928 headed ‘Annotations on Grecos seen at Mrs Henry Clay Frick’, Waterhouse recorded his impressions of two paintings:

S. Jerome as cardinal. Downstairs in the drawing room over the mantle. This is a perfectly stunning picture in what looks like the most perfect condition and painted in the softest and most classical manner of which Greco was capable. Large soft brush strokes like Renoir. Unfortunately the position of the picture makes close access impossible, (3) Purification of the Temple; sitting-room upstairs, over the mantel. This has been highly varnished in a manner reminiscent of Duveen and also does not admit of very close inspection.⁴¹

The conservation status of a painting, which in many cases was precarious, was also a challenge to the attribution process. Consequently, Waterhouse was aware that the axiom that considered the work itself to be the main source of information was, in many cases, an ideal that was not consistent with the circumstances of research. Scientific rigour had to be guided by the honesty principle, that is, the ‘impartial opinion on the evidence available’, by making the conditions in which the analysis took place explicit.

Waterhouse’s cautious approach to connoisseurship helps to explain his emphasis on documented provenance, or ‘pedigree’, as one of the most reliable ways of endorsing an attribution. On the basis of the EKW Papers, it could be argued that Waterhouse was obsessed with the need to provide a complete provenance for a work of art. The papers give an idea of the way he meticulously collected any item of information about provenance, however small. Owner of one of the largest private collections of sales catalogues, he made an exhaustive record of the commercial transactions and exchanges between collectors, art-dealers, galleries and museums to which El Greco’s works were subjected during the first third of the twentieth century. It is not surprising that when Waterhouse reviewed Wethey’s catalogue for *The Burlington Magazine* in 1964 he criticised the brevity of the provenances: ‘There are not always enough dates in the pedigrees to establish just when a particular picture belonged to a particular person’.⁴²

The influence of Wethey’s catalogue on subsequent studies of El Greco is indisputable. Since its publication in 1962, it has remained the standard catalogue raisonné that is invoked in any research undertaken on the artist. Examining the connections between Waterhouse’s and Wethey’s catalogues has, therefore, notable historiographical value. Wethey recorded that he saw and used Waterhouse’s materials,⁴³ and the EKW Papers contain correspondence between him and Waterhouse. J. Álvarez Lopera and Hadjinicolaou realised that there was a direct connection between Waterhouse’s research and Wethey’s catalogue and argued that the latter continued the ‘call to order’ made by Waterhouse in 1930.⁴⁴ It is also relevant that Waterhouse was the reviewer for Wethey’s catalogue in *The Burlington Magazine*. However, the rediscovery of Waterhouse’s catalogue and its related materials reveals that it played a much more crucial role than was known in the conception and production of Wethey’s 1962 catalogue, thereby opening up new questions about the extent to which Wethey was indebted to Waterhouse’s work.

It had been assumed until now that Wethey’s catalogue was the first to adopt a typological classification of El Greco’s works as a basic component of its structure, but it is now clear that this approach was underpinned by Waterhouse’s organisation of his catalogue thirty years earlier. It is no coincidence that Wethey criticised the chronological order used by Sohenr in his 1957–59 catalogue in similar terms to those employed by Waterhouse: ‘His chronological arrangement of the catalogue is less than ideal according to my view, since differences of opinion as to dates are considerable, and the iconographic relationships

³⁹ In the last version of his catalogue, Waterhouse established a different notation system for works that are not originals, using a separate numbering preceded by the letter A. Yet their location in the catalogue did not change, immediately after the works by El Greco with which they were associated.

⁴⁰ See Appendix.

⁴¹ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 9 (un-paginated). Both paintings mentioned by Waterhouse are in the Frick Collection, New York, inv. nos.1905.1.67 (*St Jerome*); and 1909.1.66 (*Purification of the Temple*).

⁴² E.K. Waterhouse: Review of ‘El Greco and his School’, by Harold E. Wethey, *The Burlington Magazine* 106 (1964), p.238.

⁴³ Wethey, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.3.

⁴⁴ J. Álvarez Lopera: ‘De *historiografía*. La recuperación del período italiano del Greco’, in Hadjinicolaou, ed., *op. cit.* (note 5), p.38; and Hadjinicolaou, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.92.

are thus minimised'.⁴⁵ Some of the typologies attributed to Wethey, such as the classification of the paintings of the Agony in the Garden into two types based on their compositional orientation, were already present in the first version of Waterhouse's catalogue, from where it is likely that Wethey took them.

Waterhouse's influence on Wethey's typology of the Adoration of the Shepherds is also significant. Wethey's types II, III, IV, and V correspond exactly to Waterhouse's types A, B, C, and D, although Wethey's description of them is more elaborate.⁴⁶ Wethey's comment that the Adoration of the Shepherds cannot always be distinguished from the Nativity seems to have been taken directly from Waterhouse, who states that '*un nazimientto* [. . .] with Greco, seems always to have meant the Adoration of the Shepherds. The Adoration of the Kings is a subject which does not appear in Greco's work, although a number of pictures of it have been ascribed to his early years'.⁴⁷ Wethey writes: 'The Adoration of the Shepherds is not always distinguished from the Nativity, and a matter of fact this subject is repeatedly cited under the latter title [. . .] Many critics attribute these works [the Adoration of the Kings] to El Greco at the beginning of his Italian period [. . .] No certain picture of the Epiphany by El Greco is known, whereas he painted the Adoration of the Shepherds several times'.⁴⁸ The typology proposed by Wethey for the Crucifixion also closely follows that of Waterhouse. Thus, Wethey's type II is defined in the same terms as Waterhouse's type B ('with the Virgin, S. John, the Magdalen and angels'),⁴⁹ and Wethey's type III corresponds to Waterhouse's types C and D ('the Crucifixion with St John the Evangelist and the Virgin').⁵⁰

There are also connections between Wethey's catalogue and Waterhouse's material on provenance and attributions. Waterhouse's exhaustive knowledge of the provenances of El Greco's works was recognised by Wethey, who did not hesitate to resort to him on numerous occasions to complete the records in his own catalogue, as he himself pointed out several times. However, in some cases, the information provided by Wethey's catalogue seems to have been extracted directly from Waterhouse's materials without such acknowledgment. It is generally assumed that in his discussion of the *Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist* in the John G. Johnson Collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Wethey was responsible for correcting the erroneous attribution of the painting in Cossío, Mayer and Camón Aznar's catalogues.⁵¹ However, although Wethey explicitly expresses his gratitude to D. Faustino Arocena, director of the archive of the Diputación of San Sebastián, Spain, for his 'help in the investigation of the first stage of the history of this work',⁵² the fundamental argument for attributing it to El Greco, based on a full reconstruction of its provenance, had already appeared in Waterhouse's materials.⁵³

The relationship between the two catalogues is complex and is not limited to Wethey's debts to Waterhouse's research. Since Waterhouse provided Wethey with materials for his project, it must be inferred that he was satisfied that Wethey had resumed his unfinished project and in a manner completed it. However, Wethey also made his own intellectual decisions regarding his catalogue, prompting criticism from Waterhouse when they deviated from his concept of the catalogue, as in the approach to provenance discussed above. In particular, Wethey transformed the gradation of distinctions between original and non-original works established by Waterhouse into a radical separation between El Greco's own works and those painted by 'others', which were dealt with in two different parts of the catalogue. This clear division forms the basis of Wethey's arrangement and is unlike Waterhouse's (and Mayer's) thematic structure. The precedent for this lies in Soehner's partial catalogue, the structure of which depends on distinguishing original works from non- originals. Like Waterhouse, Soehner made use of a number of categories of non-autograph works, all of which were reduced by Wethey to a single general category, numbered as an 'X series'. This reductionism was criticised by Waterhouse in his review for *The Burlington Magazine*: 'It is perhaps unfortunate that this X certificate covers so wide a range of deviations from the pure original'.⁵⁴

As well as tracing the provenances of paintings back in time, Waterhouse's catalogue also incorporated new detailed information about the circulation of works between galleries, art dealers and collectors, making it the most important source of documentation for understanding the movements of El Greco's paintings during the first half of the twentieth century, a position previously awarded to Mayer's catalogue.⁵⁵ Many of these expanded provenances have appeared in the catalogues published in the course of the twentieth century; others, however, have remained unpublished. This opens up an interesting area for exploration, since the information provided by Waterhouse makes it possible to revise provenances that remain ambiguous or incomplete, or at least will stimulate further discussion on the subject. Waterhouse was in direct contact with art dealers and gallery owners and had access to their records and photographs, as the materials in the EKW Papers demonstrate.

⁴⁵ H. Wethey: 'Critical notes on bibliography', in Wethey, *op. cit.* (note 10), II, p.ix.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, II, pp.25–27.

⁴⁷ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7, p.7.

⁴⁸ Wethey, *op. cit.* (note 10), II, pp.25 and 165.

⁴⁹ For Wethey's Type II, see *ibid.*, II, p.48; for Waterhouse's Type B, see EKW Papers, box 21, folder 7, p.35.

⁵⁰ Wethey, *op. cit.* (note 10), II, pp.48–49.

⁵¹ J. Camón Aznar: *Dominico Greco*, Madrid 1950.

⁵² Wethey, *op. cit.* (note 10), II, p.51.

⁵³ *Ibid.* It is now catalogued by the Philadelphia Museum of Art as 'Workshop of El Greco'.

⁵⁴ Waterhouse, *op. cit.* (note 42).

⁵⁵ Posada Kubissa, *op. cit.* (note 30), p. 259.

He visited collections and galleries in the United States and in Spain, where he also inspected paintings in churches and monasteries. Consequently, he had access to first-hand information that would have been difficult to obtain through other means. He also made use of important sources, such as Louis Souillié's collection of French sale catalogues, which, as he indicated in the preface, helped him trace provenances further back than ever before.⁵⁶

The *Visitation* (Fig.1) is an example of the potential that Waterhouse's catalogue provides for studies of the provenance of El Greco's work. As stated in the catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Washington, it was not known who brought the painting to the United States or when.⁵⁷ Likewise, it had not been possible to confirm the belief that the painting was owned by the financier and art collector J. Horace Harding (1863–1929). Álvarez Lopera's 2005–07 catalogue states only that the painting was in the United States before 1934 and gives the Harding collection as a possible stage in its provenance.⁵⁸ In a recent publication, Fernando Marías located the painting in the hands of M. Knoedler & Co. in 1934 and assumes that it was purchased by Mrs Horace Harding in 1935.⁵⁹ Richard Kagan has recently affirmed that although Robert Woods Bliss and Mildred Barnes Bliss, who owned the painting from 1936 to 1940, had discussed its potential acquisition with their artistic adviser, Royal Tiller, as early as 1931, 'nothing happened until 1935', when Mildred Stapley Byne, widow of the dealer Arthur Byne, 'succeeded in shipping the picture to the United States', and it was in the hands of Knoedler and Co. by 1936.⁶⁰



Fig. 1. *The Visitation*, by El Greco. c.1610–14. Oil on canvas, 96.5 by 71.4 cm. (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington).

Thanks to material in the EKW Papers, it is now known that the painting arrived in the United States as early as the winter/spring of 1931 and was in Knoedler's possession. This is stated in a note sent to Waterhouse by his friend Jere Abbot, Assistant Director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, dated July 1931 (Fig. 2): 'Just a transatlantic note. Knoedler has

⁵⁶ See Appendix. Luis Souillié (1860–1940) was a renowned bookseller, art dealer and bibliographer.

⁵⁷ Available at <http://museum.doaks.org/Obj823?sid=243&x=57657>, accessed 20th April 2018. Fernando Marías has provided valuable information about the vicissitudes of this painting prior to its arrival in the United States. See F. Marías: 'La chapelle Ovalle de Tolède: une esemble perdu et una immaculée', in M. Vallès-Bled, ed.: *El Greco: Un chef-d'oeuvre, une exposition; L'Immaculée Conception de la chapelle Oballe*, Sète 2017, pp.67–105.

⁵⁸ J. Álvarez Lopera: *El Greco. Estudio y catálogo, I: Fuentes y Bibliografía. II Catálogo de obras originales: Creta, Italia, Retablos y grandes encargos en España*, Madrid 2005–07, I, p.212.

⁵⁹ Marías, *op. cit.* (note 57), p.103.

⁶⁰ Kagan: 'The cult of El Greco. El Grecophilis in Philadelphia', in Reist and Colomer, eds., *op. cit.* (note 18), pp.47–67.

brought to New York a really first order Greco of which I am unfamiliar but which you may know. A private Spanish collection or I suspect Monastery, due to recent rumpus there. Mary and the Angel at the Tomb'.⁶¹ In the mid-1930s Waterhouse included this information in a handwritten note in his third version of the catalogue.

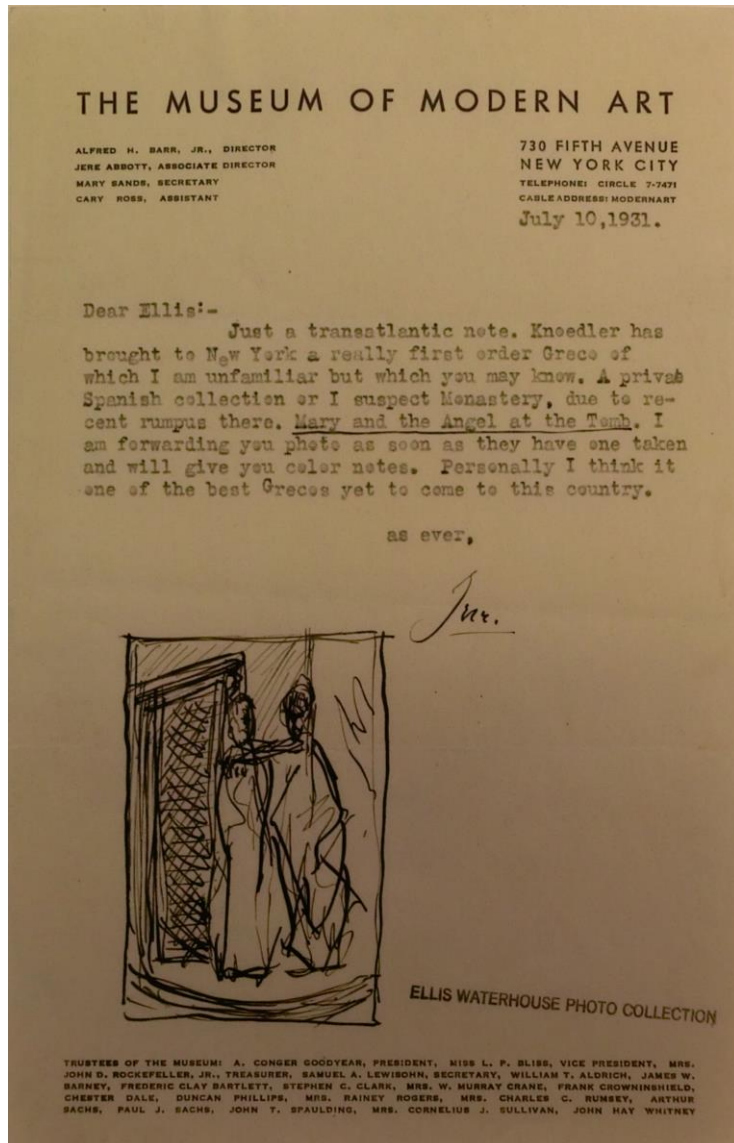


Fig. 2 Letter from Jere Abbot to E.K. Waterhouse incorporating a sketch of 'The Visitation' by El Greco, 10th July 1931. (Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Special Collections, Ellis K. Waterhouse Notebooks and Research Files).

In addition, a document in the archive of the art historian Frank Simpson at the Paul Mellon Centre suggests that the painting was never part of Horace Harding's collection and that it was acquired by Knoedler directly from Arthur Byne (Fig. 3). In 1939 an unknown correspondent asked Knoedler's office in London whether a painting sold by the firm to the Fogg Museum, Cambridge MA, 'mentioned by Mayer' might be the painting by El Greco of the Apparition of the Virgin that had been part of Harding's estate. Knoedler's office replied that the previous owner of the picture to which Mayer was referring was in fact 'a man named Byne, of Madrid, now dead'.⁶²

⁶¹ EKW Papers, box 21, folder 14.

⁶² Paul Mellon Centre, London, Collection Archives, Frank Simpson Archive, FHS/3/1/1/72.

Greco, El. Apparition de la Vierge
 P. to L. 16 June/39: - 5497
 13044
 CG 1283.
 Dr. Aug. Mayer ment⁹ a pic. by S. sold to the Fogg
 Art Mus., Camb. Can it be the same pic. sold
 for the Harding Estate?
 London to P. 20th: -
 (Mrs. Eavey) It is a pic. called 'The Golden Gate' wh. is
 meant, the owner of wh. was a man named Byne,
 of Madrid, now dead.

Fig. 3 Note. Frank Simpson Archive, London, Paul Mellon Centre, Collection Archives, FHS/3/1/1/72.

That painting was the *Visitation*, as can be verified by Knoedler's photographic archive (Fig. 4).⁶³ Furthermore, in October 1935 the painting was still with Knoedler, since the gallery lent it to an exhibition, *Spanish Painting*, staged at the Brooklyn Museum that year.⁶⁴

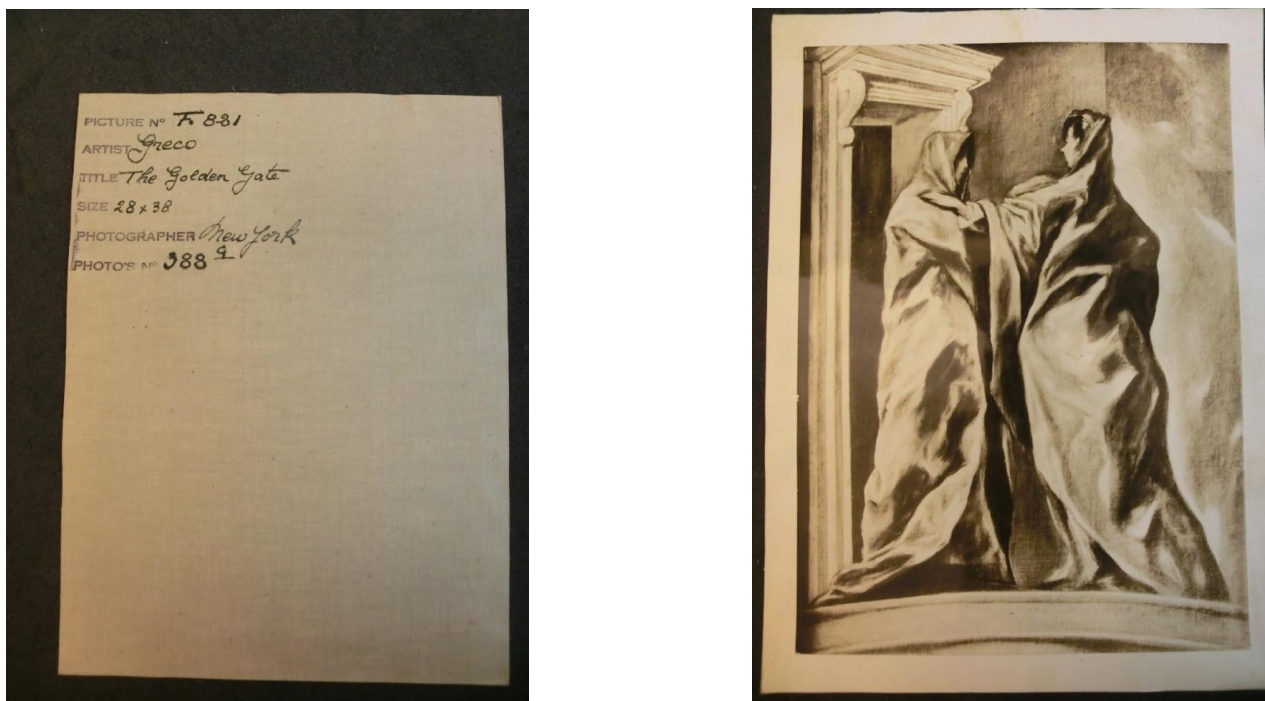


Fig. 4 Back and front of the photograph of the *Visitation* in Knoedler's records. Knoedler Records, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Special Collections (accession number: 3003-622), Series VII, box 2.360.

⁶³ Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Special Collections, M. Knoedler & Co. Records, series VII, box 2.360, where the painting is titled *The Golden Gate*.

⁶⁴ Brooklyn Museum Archives, 07-09_1935, 096-8, records of the Department of Public Information, press releases, 1931-36, available at: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/1572>, accessed 20th April 2018.

Another example of the value of Waterhouse's notes is the provenance he provides for *The concert of angels*, which lists the intermediate steps in its journey from the collection of the Viscount of Rota to that of Marzell von Nemes (1866–1930) in Budapest. By examining Waterhouse's materials, we now know that the painting passed through the hands of the art dealers Lionel Harris, Paul Cassirer and Julius Böhler before ending up with Von Nemes, from whose collection it was purchased by the National Gallery, Athens, in 1931. This expanded provenance is especially interesting when considering the group of non-original paintings, since such exhaustive cataloguing is less common for this type of work.

Although it always remained in draft format, Waterhouse's catalogue has sufficient substance and consistency to be included among El Greco's catalogues that were published during the first half of the twentieth century and it made an original contribution to the understanding of the artist's work. When considering catalogues raisonnés in a sequence of genealogical affiliation, in which each catalogue is built upon previous ones in a dialectical process involving correcting, updating and surpassing, it could be said that Waterhouse's catalogue is a connecting bridge between Mayer's catalogue and Wetthey's. Comparisons with other catalogues of El Greco, especially those closest to Waterhouse's, clearly illustrate that catalogues raisonnés are not mere lists of works of art with associated information, but constitute a projection of the mental map that a particular scholar has of the configuration of an artist's work. It also provides a structure that gives meaning to the pieces included in the œuvre. Waterhouse's aim, as with other scholars, was not only to put in order correct attributions of the works related to El Greco but to provide an organising structure for the artist's work and its sphere of influence as a whole. In any case, it is possible to affirm that a new place can be found for Ellis K. Waterhouse in the historiography of El Greco.

Appendix

E.K. Waterhouse's preface to his El Greco catalogue raisonnée, 1930. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Special Collections, Ellis K. Waterhouse Notebooks and Research Files, box 21, folder 5.

Preface to the Catalogue.

The following catalogue attempts to include every picture, however dubious, which has any sort of connection with El Greco. Much has doubtless escaped me and more will certainly turn up in the future. It is, of course, based on Mayer's large catalogue, issued in 1926, which has saved me more trouble than I can well imagine. That that catalogue is full of small inaccuracies is only natural considering that it was the first attempt that has been made on so ample a scale: many of these I have been able to correct, but I have presumably made as many new inaccuracies of my own which others will have the same pleasure in discovering, as I have those made by Mayer. Many of the pedigrees should have a far more generous sprinkling of question marks than I have allowed to them, for I have thought it best to multiply entries as little as possible and to fit on early sale records to the pictures to which they seem to me (often for reasons which it would take many tedious pages to analyse) most probably to belong. Many of these combinations may prove to be wrong, but it is easier to correct a considered error of this kind than it is to weigh the evidence for making the original combination, and I have on my side the distinguished precedent of Hostede de Groot.⁶⁵

It has, unhappily, for reasons which are obvious, been impossible to see anything like all the pictures catalogued, and I may well have often called a picture original or studio work from the photograph, where autopsy would have enabled me to reverse this opinion. I have only too often found, in the past, that the sight of the original has led me to reverse an opinion of which I felt morally positive after a study of the photograph: sometimes, too, the reverse has been the case. In spite of this I have felt that a considered, impartial, opinion on the evidence available was not without a certain value in a catalogue of this kind. Often, alas, the mere sight of a picture, under conditions unfavorable to a careful study, is a more dangerous thing than no sight of it at all.

My gratitude to countless people is enormous, but it is impossible to enumerate so long a list. Special thanks, however, are due to M. Louis Soullié, who put at my disposal, with unparalleled generosity, his collection of entries from French sale catalogues, which have often enabled me to carry back the history of a picture much farther than has been done hitherto. [Handwritten: 'His tabulation of the records of all Spanish pictures which have appeared at auction will be of immense value to students.']

⁶⁵ H de Groot: *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, London 1908.