

## WHY MODERN ARTISTS COPIED OR QUOTED EL GRECO

Estelle Alma Maré

"It is natural for all to delight in works of imitation" (Aristotle, *The Poetics*, fourth century BCE).

As a matter of routine late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century artists, like their predecessors during previous centuries, made copies of acclaimed masterworks. Copying is understood as the intentional reproduction of a work of art, but the intent behind copying varies from artist to artist. In early youth emulation of models could be part of art students' education and training, that is for the purpose of guiding their initial efforts until they have mastered their craft. Later in an artist's career reference to a model would amount to recreating an existing work on his or her own terms. While El Greco learnt his craft by copying works by Italian Renaissance artists, no artist would be able to learn to draw naturalistically by copying his later paintings. On the other hand, it is not strange that artists in a quest for a new approach to art would find of El Greco's unprecedented manner of figural expression, extreme degree of anti-naturalism and compositional abstraction a source of inspiration.

The reason why artists emulate, imitate, quote or copy works by their peers is not merely for the sake of delight as Aristotle maintained, but also to learn about their craft and explore aspects of the history of art. However, not all artists of the past were or are copied in modern times. Therefore, the fact that El Greco (1541-1614), a Byzantine icon painter in his Cretan youth, who emigrated to Venice, from there to Rome, Madrid, and ultimately to Toledo, has received renewed attention, not only by various art historians but also by individual painters during the late nineteenth, throughout the twentieth and also now in the twenty-first century, is worthy of art historical research.<sup>1</sup>

In a rather remarkable assessment of El Greco, Robert Byron writes, without further motivation: "In painting, the culminating Byzantine, El Greco, communicated his colour to Velázquez and [was] a fount of inspiration to the twentieth century."<sup>2</sup> Byron certainly overstates El Greco's influence. His categorization of El Greco as the culminating Byzantine painter is not viable and, furthermore, it is difficult to believe that Byzantine painting could have been a source of inspiration for twentieth-century painters. A more accurate assessment of El Greco's influence is attempted in this paper, especially regarding the way in which individual modernist painters explored his manner of painting for their own varied purposes, or, conceivably, were commonly in search of a paradigmatic change of style, most probably as a means of escape from the long valid paradigm of naturalistic art.

El Greco produced his most characteristic paintings in Spain from 1578 until his death. He cannot be characterised solely as a religious painter with his roots in Greek Orthodoxy. His oeuvre is varied and includes many secular themes such as landscape and portraiture. During his later years he expressed neither the ideals of Western painting, which he laboriously learned in Italy from 1568 to 1567, nor those of the Byzantine school in which he was educated during his youth, but he achieved an art anchored not in nature but in a worldview initiated by contemporary philosophers such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639). While proof cannot be offered that El Greco had read works by these philosophers, he was nevertheless an educated man, an intellectual in possession of an extensive library,<sup>3</sup> who would not have been ignorant of contemporary ideas, even in the relative isolation of Spain. He could not have been informed about the "heretical" ideas of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), but he was certainly not ignorant of the Copernican revolution and the demise of Aristotelean physics. The most acceptable thesis concerning his manner of

visual expression was proposed by David Davies, that in Italy and Spain he followed in the tradition of Renaissance Neoplatonism.<sup>4</sup> In Rome El Greco became a member of the *Accademia di San Luca* founded by Federico Zuccaro (1542-1609), who was the president of this painters' guild at the time.<sup>5</sup> Hence, El Greco was exposed to Zuccaro's theories on art, especially his reinterpretation of the meaning of *disegno*. Zuccaro believed that the term originated from the phrase *segno di dio in noi*, or "the sign of God in us", indicating that those skilled in drawing were divinely inspired.<sup>6</sup> The understanding of reality changed from what can be perceived in the physical world to what could be conceived in the mind. This late Italian Renaissance development of art theory influenced El Greco profoundly. In Spain he achieved a manner of painting in which physical reality was rendered only schematically or omitted completely, while his depiction of figures deviated greatly from anatomical correctness. In his mature works, such as the two versions of the *Baptism of Christ* (1596-1600 and 1608)<sup>7</sup> the representation of earthly reality becomes schematised. Thus, near the end of the sixteenth century El Greco turned painting into a mental construct, a way of stylistic representation lost on the art world for a long time, but recovered as a valid manner of expression centuries later. Therefore, as Aldous Huxley remarks, "Not long ago the mysterious Greek was considered a simple lunatic. Now he appears a giant in art, the forerunner of modern painters."<sup>8</sup> Why this incredible re-assessment? It is as if El Greco achieved a preview of Immanuel Kant's so-called "Copernican revolution", explained by Tsion Avital: "It is not reality that stamps itself upon the mind but on the contrary, schematism, and organizational categories that are innate or inherent to reason, are what construct our knowledge and reality."<sup>9</sup> And one may add: are what influence all enduring forms of art.

Pacheco, the sixteenth-century Spanish art critic, was right in saying that El Greco had no imitators, and art historians would agree that no artist ever imitated his characteristic manner of painting<sup>10</sup> which evolved during his later years. Most probably he had no imitators during the centuries following his death, with the possible exception of Vélazquez who was aware of his predecessor's art, because naturalism remained the norm in Western painting until the early decades of the twentieth century. Then the mostly forgotten painter, often maligned as a madman with an eye problem<sup>11</sup> emerged from obscurity.<sup>12</sup> His fame grew to the extent that his *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, is now ranked, together with the *Dos de Mayo* (Madrid, Prado) by Goya and *Las meniñas* (Madrid, Prado) by Vélazques, as one of the three greatest Spanish paintings. Several retrospective exhibitions and conferences in El Greco's honour have been held in the late twentieth century and the early years of this century, while art historians have devoted thousands of publications to explain his "enigmatic" paintings.

The question at issue here is why various modern artists copied paintings by El Greco, or quoted various details from them. Copies by Paul Cézanne and Jackson Pollock are known, while the fact that Pablo Picasso based his most experimental Cubist work on the structure of an El Greco painting is also now generally acknowledged. Other artists discussed here may come as a surprise to readers.

As a matter of routine late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century artists, like their predecessors, made copies of masterworks.<sup>13</sup> Copying is "understood as the intentional reproduction of a work of art either immediately or at some remove in time"<sup>14</sup>, but the intent behind copying varies from artist to artist. In early youth it could be part of their education and training, that is emulation – using models to guide a student's initial efforts until they have mastered their craft. Later in artists' career imitation of a model would amount to recreating an existing work on their own terms. While El Greco learnt his craft by copying works by Italian Renaissance artists,<sup>15</sup> no artist would be able to learn to draw in a traditional naturalistic way by copying his later paintings. On the other hand, it is not strange that young twentieth-century artists, in a quest for a new approach to art, would find of El Greco's unprecedented manner of figural expression, extreme degree of anti-naturalism and compositional abstraction a source of inspiration, since modern artists began to seek a divergence from, as John Richardson so succinctly puts it, "the principled march of reason, from baroque classicism through the neoclassical manner of Jacques Louis David and his disciples in the Academy".<sup>16</sup> It is also notable that:

A relationship always exists between the critical appreciation of the older masters and contemporary creative work. The period which saw the sudden and impressive rise to popularity of El Greco was the period 1908-1920 (1908 was the year when Cossio's biography, the foundation of all modern criticism of him was published and the year of Meier-Graefe's *Spanish Journey*).<sup>17</sup>

The early twentieth-century art scene was dominated by formalistic critics, most notably Roger Fry who appreciated El Greco mainly for the formal qualities of his paintings. On the occasion of the National Gallery's acquisition of El Greco's *Agony in the Garden* in 1920 Roger Fry wrote an essay on the artist in *The Athenaeum*, subsequently reprinted in his volume *Vision and Design*, in which his assessment of El Greco's impact on modernist artists is purely in terms of formal qualities. He avers that "very few artists of today have ever realised for a moment how unsympathetic to them is the literary content of an El Greco. They simply fail to notice what the pictures are about in the illustrative sense".<sup>18</sup> Ironically, this could well be true because in the investigation of works by artists who found El Greco worthy of emulation it appears that his "literary content", which Fry refers to, is changed. What was religious in the master's works is secularised or even profaned, as will be noted later in the discussion.

### DIEGO VÉLAZQUEZ (1600-1660) AND FRANCIS BACON (1909-92)

El Greco's *Cardinal Niño de Guevara* clearly influenced Diego Vélaquez when he painted the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*.<sup>19</sup> In his turn, Francis Bacon was fascinated by Vélaquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*. As proof of this fascination Bacon collected reproductions of the *Portrait*. In this regard Martin Harrison quoted Bacon as saying in the early 1970s: "I became obsessed by this painting and I bought photograph after photograph of it. I think really that it was my first subject."<sup>20</sup> (See Bacon's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*.)<sup>21</sup>

Bacon may not have known about Vélaquez's admiration for El Greco, but Harrison nevertheless makes an insightful remark about Bacon's interest in El Greco:

Although Bacon's radical transformation stood outside the tradition of artists learning by imitating masters, he was not the first to paraphrase Old Master paintings. In February 1939 several artists of his acquaintance participated in 'An Exhibition of Paraphrases (Free Copies)' at the Storrans Gallery, 5 Albany Court Yard, London. [...] [B]ut probably of more significance for Bacon was Graham Sutherland's painting based on El Greco's *Agony in the Garden*: if Bacon missed the exhibition, he had many opportunities to see the Sutherland.<sup>22</sup>

Harrison unfortunately does not motivate why Sutherland's version of the El Greco painting would have been important to Bacon.

### GUSTAVE COURBET (1819-77)

It has been noted that Gustave Courbet, when he decided to study painting instead of law, learned by copying the pictures of master artists.<sup>23</sup> All the mourners' portrait heads in Courbet's painting of *A Burial at Ornans* (image online: [artchive.com/artchive/C/courbet/ornans.jpg.html](http://artchive.com/artchive/C/courbet/ornans.jpg.html))<sup>24</sup> are on one line, like in El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. The mood of the painting is, unlike, El Greco's masterwork, completely secular; but nevertheless dignified, sombre and appropriate to the occasion.

### ÉDUARD MANET (1832-83)

Alain de Leiris quotes the critic Thoré who noted the resemblance of Édouard Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels*<sup>25</sup> which clearly quotes El Greco's *Pietà*:<sup>26</sup>

The most precise reference to El Greco was made by the critic Thoré in 1964 in his comments upon Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels* exhibited that year: 'In his second painting, the *Dead Christ*, he has imitated another Spanish master; El Greco, with equal intensity, no doubt as a sort of gibe at the bashful admirers of discreet and tidy painting.' ...Thoré associated the untidy technique and supernatural colors with El Greco, suggesting their revolutionary and unsettling impact on Manet's public.<sup>27</sup>

De Leiris formulates Manet's dialogue with Spanish art as more positive than Thoré:

The composition and the form of Édouard Manet's painting *le Bal à l'Opera* show evidence of having been based in part on El Greco's solemn painting *The Burial of the Count Orgaz*. This evidence affirms Manet's continuing interest in Spanish art in the 1870s, at the height of his personal 'impressionist' mode, and invites a new evaluation of Manet's response to the art of El Greco. The artist's debt to Velazquez and Goya is firmly established, but the possible ties with El Greco, when acknowledged, have been discussed only in general terms. In *Opera Ball* these ties are specific. The painting portrays an event of Manet's time but it is also an homage to El Greco.

[...] Both the *Opera* and the *Burial* present a contemporary crowd in a frieze arrangement, incorporating a great number of male figures, many of whom, if not all, are portraits. Both artists exploit the colour accent of the black dress of the standing men.<sup>28</sup>

Besides other remarkable correspondences in Manet's *The Ball at the Opera*<sup>29</sup>, all the male portrait heads in Manet's painting are on one line, like in the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. That is actually where the correspondence ends. Fry's note about content is entirely appropriate in this regard, that "very few artists of today have ever realised for a moment how unsympathetic to them is the literary content of an El Greco". In a straightforward assessment Julius Meier-Graefe called it a *Fleishbörse* (a flesh market).<sup>30</sup> And the same comment is valid in regard to Manet's *Music in the Tuileries Garden*<sup>31</sup>, in which the portrait heads are also in one line on the same height.

## HILAIRE-GERMAIN-EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)

In the *Beaux-Arts Magazine* of Sept 1997 Judd Tully briefly summarises Edgar Degas's collection that was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, from 1 October 1997 to 11 January 1998, under the title "The Private Collection of Edgar Degas":

Collectionneur instable. Degas était prêt à tous les sacrifices pour acquérir une oeuvre qui lui tenait à coeur. Le Metropolitan Museum de New York expose les trésors amassés par le peintre: nombre de ses xontemporains, tels Cézanne; Gauguin, Van Gogh, Manet, mais aussi le Greco, Ingres et Delacroix.<sup>32</sup>

Notably, Degas's collection included two El Greco paintings, a small replica of *Saint Idelfonso*.<sup>33</sup> According to José Alvarez Lopera he also possessed a portrait of *Santo Domingo de Guzman*, "que había pertenecido a Millet".<sup>34</sup> It is therefore reasonable to infer that Degas had studied works by El Greco and found a detail of a figure stoning St Stephan in the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* that more or less conformed to his early style and inserted it into a work entitled *Young Spartans Exercising*.<sup>35</sup>

Degas graciously acknowledged his debt to the "great masters" in a statement quoted by Irving Lavin: "There is no art less spontaneous than mine. What I do is the result of reflection and study of the great masters: of inspiration, of spontaneity, of temperament, I know nothing."<sup>36</sup>

## PAUL CÉZANNE (1839-1906)

According to Alvarez Lopera Cézanne's rather unremarkable copy<sup>37</sup> of El Greco's *Portrait of a Woman with an Ermine Shawl* was based on an engraving he saw in the *Magazin Pittoresque* (date unknown).<sup>38</sup> Other references to El Greco

need to be inferred. However, it could well be that Cézanne was acquainted with El Greco's *View of Toledo*. He famously said that he wants to do the master works over from nature, but at the same time, "Cézanne apprendre del Greco su abstracción cromática".<sup>39</sup> Also in his *Bathers*<sup>40</sup> there is a feint echo of El Greco's *Opening of the Fifth Seal* that would influence the youthful Picasso profoundly.

### JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863-1958)

The influence of El Greco on Willumsen, a Danish artist whose oeuvre evolved from Symbolism to Expressionism is described briefly on the Willumsen Museum website: "I det følgende årti fik Willumsens rejser i Middelhavslandene stor betydning sammen med hans studier af malerierne af den græsk-spanske kunstner El Greco (1541-1614)."<sup>41</sup>

At the Musée d'Orsay a retrospective exhibition (27 June to 17 September 2006) was held of Willumsen's artistic output, entitled "Willumsen: Du Symbolisme à Expressionnisme", in the catalogue of which it is stated under the heading "L'influence du Greco":

Au début des années 1920 l'art de Willumsen connoit un tournant décisif avec la découverte du Greco, auquel d'ailleurs le peintre consacra un ouvrage en 1927. Les couleurs s'intensifient, les contrastes se renforcent; a lumière se dramatise, les figures se distordent, aboutissant aux effets théâtraux extrêmes de la *Soupe du soir*, mettant en scène in seconde épouse et les deux filles de l'artiste, ou encore des vues nocturnes de Venise réalisées dans les années 1930.

### OSCAR KOKOSCHKA (1886-1980)

Edith Hoffman remarks that landscapes by Kokoschka recall El Greco's *View of Toledo* and that his figural art also shows an acquaintance with his paintings. A landscape by Kokoschka recalls El Greco's *View of Toledo*:

Kokoschka may be said to have something of the spirit of the Old Master, who was incidentally greatly admired by the Expressionists: the temperament and emotionalism that distinguished El Greco are also characteristic of Kokoschka, and Kokoschka has the same power of animating a natural scene as well as a human figure with the passions that fill his own mind.<sup>42</sup>

Hoffman's insight, stressing El Greco's emotionalism is the exact opposite of Fry's belief that only the form of his paintings was relevant to modernists.

### PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

Picasso's passion for El Greco is explained by Richardson. This passion dated back to 1897,

his sixteenth year, when he had gone to study at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid. [...] Picasso produced very little work during his nine months in Madrid, but he painted at least one copy of El Greco: a portrait. [...] The fact that El Greco was still perceived by most of the art establishment in Spain as a freak or madman only increased Picasso's enthusiasm for the artist. In this spirit he went to Toledo to copy the *Burial of the Count Orgaz*, but contempt for his teachers prevailed over admiration for the master. After first identifying the old master with his father, Picasso evidently came to identify El Greco with himself. No wonder his work of 1899 [...] includes so many pastiches of El Greco's portraits.<sup>43</sup>

Proof of Richardson's explanation is a burial scene of a childhood friend by the youthful Picasso in which he emulated El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. Then, at the midpoint of his career, Picasso once again turned to El Greco for inspiration. John Golding explains El Greco's influence on Picasso's most innovative work, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*<sup>44</sup> announces a change of style:

The relevance of a particular El Greco, *The Vision of Saint John* (now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York), known until recently as *The Seventh (sic) Seal* (and to Picasso himself probably and most importantly as *Profane Love*) was first pointed out by Ron Johnson in 1980 and then elaborated on, at the same time and entirely independent by Rolf Laessoe and, in even greater depth, by John Richardson. The affinities between this El Greco and the *Demoiselles* are so striking, not only at a multiplicity of visual levels, but also spiritually and psychologically, that it is hard not to believe that Picasso began the actual execution of the *Demoiselles* under its direct stimulus. Picasso had known and consulted El Greco's work for some time past, and he had almost certainly often seen this particular work, which belonged to the Spanish painter Zuloaga, then resident in Paris. But as so often with Picasso, revelation seems to have struck at precisely the appropriate moment, and maybe this faculty is one of the attributes of true genius. It is hard to see much of El Greco in the surrounding studies. The presence of this singularly apocalyptic El Greco behind the *Demoiselles* helps to explain why Breton, for one, viewed the painting of the interior of a whorehouse as a mystical experience.<sup>45</sup>

What was noted about Manet's quotation of a stylistic device from El Greco is also true about the way in which Picasso turned his reference to an apocalyptic scene into what Meier-Graefe would also have called a *Fleishbörse*. The echo of El Greco's religious work in which naked bodies are resurrected and clothed in pure white garments in Picasso's most banal presentation of a whorehouse in which naked bodies seem to change into demonised masked figures is rather remarkable. If there is some mystical element present in *Les demoiselles* it is the potential of El Greco's model as "a vehicle for [...] mystic nihilism", according to Richardson.<sup>46</sup>

## JACKSON POLLOCK (1912-56)

In the anteroom to the El Greco exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 7 October 2003 to 11 January 2004, Jackson Pollock's copies of the master's works were featured in the adjacent Robert Wood Johnson, Jr Gallery. Filippo de Montebello, Director of the Museum stated: "The work of El Greco was decried for its extravagance until 19th-century Romantics and such artists as Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin renewed an emphasis on individual expression. More recently, El Greco exerted a profound influence on major proponents of 20th-century modernism, including Jackson Pollock, who, three centuries after the Spanish Mannerist's death, was so moved as to have made drawings after the great master."<sup>47</sup> The reason for Pollock's fascination with works by El Greco that the young artist viewed in American collections since 1937 is explained by Albert Boime as an understanding of freedom of expression: "Lo que había empezado como expresión de triunfo del espíritu sobre la fuerza bruta terminó siendo un ejemplo de la liberación del espíritu de la esclavitud de todas las limitaciones que uno se impone a sí mismo, ya sean físicas o de cualquier otro tipo."<sup>48</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the art historians' survey of a selection of modern artists' fascination with El Greco, the information gathered still raises the question: why was El Greco a source of inspiration to them? If Byron's assessment of El Greco (quoted at the beginning of this paper) is unacceptable, the question remains, how one may assess El Greco's "influence" on modernism more convincingly. No doubt, El Greco's oeuvre has become "canonical", a term that Anita Silvers explains:

No artwork [oeuvre] attains canonical status totally independently of its ability to inspire enduring aesthetic admiration. No one can know at a work's [oeuvre's] point of origin, before it has had time to demonstrate its influence, whether it possesses this power.<sup>49</sup>

Independent assessments of El Greco's influence attest to the "power" of his oeuvre. The aesthetic admiration that Silvers refers to lapsed after El Greco's death; he only found a new audience during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. "Modern" traits such as the expressive distortion of forms were recognised in El

Greco's work which redeemed the traditional view of him as "a madman". Thus HLC Jaffé argues: "Inderdaad zijn vele van de kenmerken, die Greco's werk [...] kenmerken, in de moderne kunst weer te vinden, en wel juist in die jaren omstreeks 1908 [...]".<sup>50</sup> It seems that twentieth-century artists who realised that the naturalistic paradigm in painting had run its course and were seeking for a renewal sensed or intuitively understood that El Greco's late paintings offered a point of departure for renewal. Whether they were successful is a moot point. Most notably, Arnold Whittick asks: "Are the abstract patterns of modern artists more symbols of inner reality or of the artist's personality than the chiaroscuro of Leonardo da Vinci or Rembrandt or the rhythms of Rubens or El Greco?" And replies: "The best works of these masters have generally a higher abstract value than the works of modern masters."<sup>51</sup>

Karsten Harries claims that modern art tends towards "silence" and "hermetism", towards "privacy and incomprehensibility".<sup>52</sup> Insights into the dilemma of modern artists abound, but what is least explained is why abstract art took centre stage for a long time in the West during the twentieth century. According to Avital this trend in modern art lead to the dead end of, not incomprehensible, but meaningless "non-art".<sup>53</sup> Therefore, one may argue that to redeem the confusion of all the -isms generated by modern painters and the lack of content of abstract art, some artists turned their gaze at the masters of previous centuries. With the exception of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)<sup>54</sup> who strived to achieve the "spiritual" in abstract compositions – not in explicit religious themes – abstract artists never clearly articulated what they were searching for:

Without clear articulation of their insights except in painted copies and quotations from his works, various modern artists seem to have recognised that formally El Greco's late paintings are mental constructs, representing a schematic version of reality. So doing El Greco changed the communicative function from commenting on reality to constituting a reality. For various artists that may have been a starting point in finding a new paradigm for art that was at a loose end after the influence of disciples of the Academy terminated.

**Estelle Alma Maré** obtained doctoral degrees in literature, architecture, art history and a master's degree in town and regional planning. She practiced as an architect from 1975-1980 when she joined the Department of Art History at the University of South Africa. As an academic she published widely in the field of art and architectural history, aesthetics, literary subjects and cartography. She has edited various books, proceedings and accredited journals and is the present editor of the *SA Journal of Art History*. She received various awards from the University of South Africa and the National Research Foundation. The most prestigious award was a bursary from the Onassis Foundation for Hellenic Studies, Category A1, in 2001. In 2002 she was awarded an exchange scholarship by the French National Research Institute and in 2003 the Stals Prize for Art History by the South African Academy for Arts and Science. She is at present a research fellow in the Department of Architecture at Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa.

- 1 In Spain the influence of El Greco on twentieth-century Spanish artists is being documented extensively. See Lubar, Robert S, "La presencia de El Greco en el arte español del siglo XX", in José Álvarez Lopera et al., *El Greco* (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2003), 445-62.
- 2 Byron, Robert, *The Byzantine Achievement: An Historical Perspective, A.D. 330-1453* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964), 38.
- 3 Proof of the fact that El Greco was widely read is the list of books in his extant library. See: San Román, F de B, *El Greco en Toledo, o nuevas investigaciones acerca de la vida y obras de Dominico Theotocópuli* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1910), 195-7. San Román, F de B., De la vida del Greco (Nueva serie de documentos inéditos). *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología*, 3 (May, 1927), 13995. San Román, F de B., De la vida del Greco (Nueva serie de documentos inéditos). *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología*, 3 (December, 1927), 275339.
- 4 David Davies, "The Influence of Christian Neoplatonism on the Art of El Greco". In Nicos Hadjinicolaou ed., *El Greco of Crete: Exhibition on the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of his Birth*, (Iraklion: Municipality of Iraklion, 1990), 21-55.
- 5 Regarding El Greco's membership of the Academia de San Luca, see D Martínez de la Peña, "El Greco, en la Academia de San Lucas (el primer documento cierto sobre la estancia del Greco en Italia)", *Archivo Español de Arte*, 45 (158, April-June, 1967), 97105.

- 6 Federico Zuccaro, *L'idea de' pittori, scultori et architetti* (Turin: Dissertorio, 1607).
- 7 See Estelle A. Maré, "Angels in the Baptism of Christ: A Survey With Reference to El Greco's Innovative Approach to the Scene", *South African Journal of Art History* (15, 2001), 85-95.
- 8 Aldous Huxley, "El Greco", *Life* 28 (24 April, 1950), 86.
- 9 Tsion Avital, *Art versus Nonart: Art Out of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.
- 10 Since "style" is an ambiguous modern term and the fact that the term "*maniera*", as used by Giorgio Vasari in his *Vite*, has been translated as "style" has given rise to various misconceptions about Mannerism, the author prefers to use the Italian term or to translate it as "manner of painting" or "working method". See Estelle A Maré, *El Greco's "Achievement of His Personal Maniera"*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2002.
- 11 Stuart Anstis settled the matter by proving scientifically that "even if El Greco were astigmatic, he would have adapted to it, and his figures [...] would have normal proportions. His elongations were an artistic expression, not a visual symptom." "Was El Greco Astigmatic?", *Leonardo*, 35(2, 2002), 208.
- 12 Reassessment of El Greco's artistic achievement was done by M Cossio, *El Greco*, 2 volumes (Madrid: Victoriano Suarez, 1908), Julius Meier-Grafe, *Spanische Reise* (Berlin: S Fischer, 1910) and Maurice Barrès, *Greco ou le secret de Tolde* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1912).
- 13 During the period he spent in Venice, El Greco assuredly became acquainted with Tintoretto's paintings and working method. Indeed, he sketched one such cast of Michelangelo's *Giorno* (Medici Chapel, Florence). Although the date of the drawing is unknown, it is one of the earliest authenticated works by the hand of the Cretan artist.
- 14 Brunhilde S Ridgeway, "Defining the Issue: The Greek Period", *Studies in the History of Art*, 20 (1989), 15.
- 15 "Michelangelo's biographers wrote that his first painting copied a well-known engraving by the German artist Martin Schongauer (1448-1491). Made in about 1487-88, *The Torment of Saint Anthony* has been known for many years, although it has not always received proper attention due to accumulations of discolored varnish and disfiguring overpaints, which obscured the qualities of the picture's masterful execution and remarkable color palette." (Quoted from "Michelangelo's first painting", the Special Exhibitions website of The Metropolitan Museum, New York.)
- 16 John Richardson, "On the 'Multiple Viewpoint' Theory of Early Modern Art", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53 (2, Spring, 1995), 130-31.
- 17 AC Sewter, "Roger Fry and El Greco", *Apollo* (52, 1950), 33.
- 18 Roger Fry, "El Greco", in *Vision and Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1920), 169.
- 19 1650, oil on canvas, 114 x 119 cm, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili.
- 20 Martin Harrison, *In Camera Francis Bacon: Photography, Film and the Practice of Painting* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 14.
- 21 Francis Bacon, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1953, oil on canvas, 153 x 118.1 cm, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, [http://www.artquotes.net/master/bacon\\_paintings.htm](http://www.artquotes.net/master/bacon_paintings.htm).
- 22 Harrison, *op. cit.*, 61.
- 23 Pioch, Nicholas, 2009, Courbet, Gustave, <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/courbet>, accessed 2009/06/25.
- 24 1849-50, oil on canvas, 314 x 663 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
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