In veritable fac-simile:

Issues of Reproduction and Conservation in the Photographic Illustrations for Stirling Maxwell's *Annals of the Artists of Spain*

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The First Photographically Illustrated Book on Art

By adding a volume of Talbotype illustrations to his pioneering book on Spanish art, the *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (1848), Sir William Stirling Maxwell created the first photographically illustrated book on art. The photographs were taken by Nicolaas Henneman, assistant to William Henry Fox Talbot, inventor of the first negative-positive process which made multiple photographic images possible. Only 50 copies of the additional experimental volume were produced, each containing 66 Talbotypes which were the first photographic illustrations of Spanish art. There were many limitations to the Talbotype or Calotype process as a method of reproduction of art, and since it was not yet possible to photograph large works directly in museums, watercolour copies and etchings, engravings and lithographs after oil paintings were photographed instead, a practice which was common until at least the 1870s. An international collaborative research project on the *Annals* Talbotypes, based at the University of Glasgow, is studying the volumes and interpreting their significance for the History of Art and History of Photography, and in particular for the use of photography as an essential tool for the study of art by specialist scholars as well as the wider public.

Fig. 1 *Annals* Talbotype 13, Juan Martínez Montañés, *Christ Child and Infant St. John,* polychromed relief sculpture, Richard Ford Collection, London. Salt print by Nicolaas Henneman, Prado Museum, Madrid. © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

The Deterioration of the Image

The census being compiled of surviving examples shows that the tonal range of the *Annals* Talbotypes varied considerably from print to print and volume to volume, from rich red-browns, aubergines and dark grey-browns through to pale brown and green in areas of fading. Many prints are known to have deteriorated immediately or soon after they were produced. The principal causes have been debated over many decades but are believed to have included problems with rinsing the prints, as well as other chemical and environmental factors, possibly including the glue used to tip the prints into the volumes. The most obvious form of deterioration is the classic edge fading.

Fig. 2 *Annals* Talbotype 32, Drawing by James Swinton after Velázquez, *Infanta Margarita*. Salt print by Nicolaas Henneman, Prado Museum, Madrid. © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Retouches

Most of the salt prints have darker retouch spots, no doubt done in the studio at the time. More extensive, often rather crude retouching, possibly in pencil or crayon, and perhaps also watercolour, occurs in some but not all volumes, and shows a more freehand approach. It may also have been done at the time or soon after, and provides hints as to the original tone.

Fig. 3 *Annals* Talbotype 62, Lithograph by Vicente Camarón after Bernardo Germán Llorente, *The Divine Shepherdess.* Salt print by Nicolaas Henneman, Private Collection, Glasgow (photo courtesy of Roderick Simpson.) The original oil painting is in the Prado and was formerly attributed to another of Murillo's followers, Alonso Miguel Tobar.

Stirling Maxwell and the Reproduction of Art

Stirling was one of the first art historians to value copies of all kinds as evidence of lost or altered works, as well as of the transmission of artistic ideas, the critical reputation of individual artists, and the creation of a canon of great art. His decision to experiment with photographic illustrations in the *Annals* was influenced by the publication of Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* (1844-6), the first book with photographic illustrations, at precisely the period when he was gathering materials for his own publication. Although he later considered the *Annals* Talbotypes a failed experiment, he nevertheless included photographs of engraved portraits in a limited edition of his popular history of the Emperor Charles V (1853), and returned to experimenting with the reproduction of art when photo-mechanical processes first became available in the 1860s and 70s. He too was involved in facsimile editions of illustrated books.

Fig. 4 E. Blanco after Sánchez Coello, *Infante Don Carlos, Son of King Philip II of Spain*. Albumen print, probably from an early collodion negative, illustrated in William Stirling, *The Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V*, 3rd edn., 1853. Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

An Ideal Facsimile?

The principal output of the project will be a facsimile edition with an accompanying volume of critical and interpretive material. The aim is to produce an 'ideal' facsimile which reproduces the best surviving example of each Talbotype, rather than a single copy of the volume. But using the latest digital technology to create a facsimile of a book which was made using one the earliest photographic processes raises a number of questions and challenges which require thorough interrogation. How literally should we attempt to replicate all the materials, including paper, binding and embossing, and should the images be printed on the page or tipped in as in the original – or do we simply provide the look and feel of the real thing? What would the 'ideal' facsimile be like? The (unfulfilled) ideal in Stirling's/ Henneman's mind? The best of the authentic but imperfect surviving examples? The best of the authentic but imperfect surviving examples as we think they looked when produced? How faithful do we need to be to the original artworks/intermediaries versus the original Talbotype illustrations? Is digital enhancement acceptable if thoroughly recorded? And composite images?

Fig. 5 *Annals* Talbotype 63, Francisco de Goya, *Tauromaquia*, Plate 19, etching & aquatint. Unbound salt print by Nicolaas Henneman, National Media Museum, Bradford. © National Media Museum/ Science & Society Picture Library.

The Talbotype prints of this plate in surviving bound copies are completely faded. This print could be superimposed over a faded print with undamaged corner.

Scientific Examination

The project is using modern scientific techniques such as X-ray fluorescence to try to understand the process, the materials, and the variations in condition. Fade patterns within the volumes are also being recorded. In addition, the retouches are being examined to try identify the media and what it was hoped they would cover.

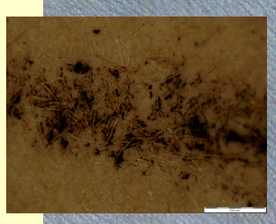

Fig. 6 Photomicrograph x 40 of crayon(?) retouch on *Annals* Talbotype 62, National Library of Scotland. Courtesy of Dr Jim Tate.

Stirling Maxwell Research Project Partners:

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