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Artistic and Architectural Heritage
of the Nobility Between Old and New Regimes

Umetnostna in arhitekturna dediščina plemstva
med starimi in novimi režimi

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“In the Appropriate Setting”

Continuity and Context in the Alba Collection in Liria Palace (1931–1957)

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Abstract:

“In the Appropriate Setting”: Continuity and Context in the Alba Collection in Liria Palace (1931–1957)

1. 01 Original scientific article

This paper presents a comparison of the exhibition of art in the Duke of Alba's original Liria Palace in 1931, which was destroyed in the Spanish Civil War in 1936, with a later exhibition in the reconstructed Liria Palace in 1957. It examines what is known of the original Liria Palace's exhibition of art, as well as the history of those spaces, and compare it with the reconstructed Liria Palace. It also reflects on the significance of the role the art collection played in the reconstruction process. The exhibition of the Alba collection in the reconstructed Liria Palace formed part of the Duke's strategies for perpetuating social distinction in the 20th century by preserving collective family memory, manifesting continuity, and imbuing the collection with unique meaning through the contextualization in this private setting.

Keywords: art collecting, museography, musealization, nobility, 19th century, 20th century, Spain, Alba, private collection, Prado Museum

Izveček:

»Primerno umeščena«. Kontinuiteta in kontekst zbirke vojvod Alba v palači Liria v Madridu (1931–1957)

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

Prispevek podaja primerjalno analizo prvotne stalne postavitve v palači Liria, madridski rezidenci vojvod Alba, ki je bila leta 1936 uničena v španski državljanski vojni. Avtorica prvotno postavitev primerja s povojno postavitvijo, ki so jo leta 1957 uredili v prenovljeni palači. Na podlagi arhivskih inventarjev v zasebnem arhivu vojvod Alba pogloblja vedenje o obeh posravitvah zbirke umetnin in o vlogi, ki jo je imela rodbinska zbirka pri rekonstrukciji med vojno uničene palače. Postavitev zbirke Alba je nastala pod izrazitim vplivom lastnikovih teženj po ohranitvi oziroma poudarjanju družbene razslojenosti v 20. stoletju s poudarjanjem kolektivnega rodbinskega spomina, po ponazarjanju kontinuitete in utemeljevanju pomena zbirke s kontekstualiziranjem v njenem prvotnem okolju.

Ključne besede: zbirateljstvo, muzeografija, muzealizacija, plemstvo, 19. stoletje, 20. stoletje, Španija, vojvode Alba, zasebne zbirke, Prado

Introduction and Remarks on Methodology and Sources

To speak of the Dukes of Alba is to speak of one of the most ancient and prestigious noble families in Spain, and in Europe, whose wealth, social glamour, and outstanding art collection has made the family the quintessence of the old nobility in Spain for centuries. Aside from notoriety as one of the top landowners in Spain, and the multitude of ancient noble titles they reunite, much of the mythical allure of the family is thanks to its legendary art collection, mostly concentrated in their principal residence in the Liria Palace in Madrid (fig. 1). Despite appearances however, the palace is not the original Liria Palace, which was destroyed in the Spanish Civil War in 1936; it is a reconstruction by Edwin Lutyens and Manuel Cabanyes completed in 1956 and inaugurated in 1957. In his recent article on the reconstruction of the Liria Palace, Iñigo Basarrate studies the architectural modifications applied to the new building.¹ This paper will provide a history of the treatment of the art collection in that process.

Before beginning it is important to mention a few details on chronology and the archival sources available for this research. The original Liria Palace was constructed around 1767–1785 and destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1936 in the Spanish Civil War although the vast majority of the art collection was saved.² The last known description of the decoration of the original palace comes from a detailed notebook, now in the Archive of the House of Alba (*Archivo de los duques de Alba*), that describes the location of paintings in different rooms in 1931.³ Following the end of the war in 1939, a large part of the collection was deposited in the Prado Museum and temporarily displayed from the end of 1942 until 1947.⁴ This exhibit was photographed and described in correspondence between its organizer, the sub-director of the Prado, Francisco Javier Sánchez Cantón and 17th Duke of Alba, Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart (1878–1953), as well as in the Prado Museum Board meeting minutes. In 1947 it was moved to a long-term, but temporary residence, the *Museillo*. The *Museillo* (little museum) was the name given to the flat where Alba lived with his daughter and displayed their art collection from 1947 until 1956, while the palace was in the process of being reconstructed. The inauguration of the *Museillo* was accompanied by the publication of a guide, which provides an account of the display of the collection in 1947.⁵ Liria Palace was finally inaugurated in 1956, under the auspices of the 18th Duchess of Alba, Cayetana Fitz-James Stuart (1926–2018) and her husband Luis Martínez de Irujo (1919–1972).⁶ The inauguration of the palace once again included the publication of a guide to the collections, and the description it provides is the most complete source to date for the original decoration of the reconstructed palace.⁷

Based on these principal sources, articles in the press and personal correspondence, and inventories, this paper reconstructs the arrangement of the collection and the narratives it generated, and their evolution; this ultimately allows for a comparison of the discourses created by the art

¹ Basarrate, “Edwin Lutyens,” 309.

² The exact dates of construction are unknown. On the destruction of the palace, see Valme and Rubio, “La historia recuperada,” 105–39; see also the recent study on the bombing of Liria Palace, García Hernan, *Jacobo*, 250–51, 272–82.

³ Cuaderno de Salas, Fondo artístico, Archivo de los duques de Alba (ADA).

⁴ 93/15.24/1–3; 93/15.24/4; AMP 407/11.237/1–1, El Archivo del Museo del Prado (AMP).

⁵ Sánchez Cantón, *Guía*.

⁶ Hernández Barral, *Luis Martínez de Irujo*.

⁷ Pita Andrade, *El palacio de Liria*.



1. Liria Palace, Madrid (© Fundación Casa de Alba)

collection in the original palace with those in the reconstructed Liria Palace. Although this research has involved the arduous task of tracking the movement of individual objects, rearrangements of this level of detail cannot be reproduced in their entirety here and will be limited to only the most necessary examples.

1931: The Closing of a Chapter

In 1928, Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, writer and literary critic, wrote an illuminating essay about the social life of Madrid, painting a picture of a withering noble class and the palatial life that went along with it—but the Duke of Alba and Liria Palace stood out among the rest. While many noble families and palaces were in decline, selling off collections, even selling property itself, the Liria Palace was a beacon for the old nobility's aspirations of endurance. In the first third of the 20th century, Liria Palace already stood as a symbol of perseverance of the lifestyle of another time that had all but faded in the 20th century: the palatial life and its unique blend of honor, purpose and glamour. He wrote:

Liria Palace is, as everyone knows, the brightest star of the aristocratic houses in Madrid today. It signifies the epitome of *chic* and it is the coveted Mecca of *snobbery*. But it isn't for such a futile reason that I have dedicated a comment to it, but rather because its current owner symbolizes a rare aristocratic specimen. Because of him, no Memoirs of our contemporary society can be written without citing what the sumptuous Liria Palace was and still is for artists, the most prominent figures of science and arts, or the illustrious foreigners that pass through Madrid.⁸

⁸ Alcalá Galiano, *Entre dos mundos*, 128. I thank José Miguel Hernández Barral for all of his generous conversations on the social and economic situation of the old nobility in the beginning of the 20th century in Spain.

Just a few years later, the scene in Liria Palace would be quite different. The social and political implications that came in 1931—with the end of Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship, the end of King Alfonso XIII’s reign in Spain and the arrival of Second Spanish Republic—moved the Duke of Alba to take precautionary measures with his collection.⁹ Alba stored the most important paintings in the basement of the Banco de España, and others in the British Embassy in Madrid.¹⁰ When Edwin Lutyens stayed in Liria during a visit to Madrid, he noted how the palace was “dark, with the curtains drawn and the shutters closed out of fear,” and that the “best paintings were stored somewhere, which left the walls of the with strange gaps”.¹¹ Although the original palace remained intact until 1936, its appearance was already changing. For this reason, the notebook dated 1931, the year that saw the exile of Alfonso XIII and the establishment of the Republican government, is very likely the last display of the original Liria Palace.

In 1931, the paintings were almost entirely displayed on the first floor in these spaces:¹²

Main Floor:

Vitrine Gallery

Grand Duke Room

Main Stairway

Bonaparte Room

Goya Room

Duke’s Small Bedroom (Empress Eugénie’s Bedroom) *

Duchess’ Bedroom*

Duchess’ Cabinet*

Gobelins Room (drawings by Boucher)

Stuart Room

Dining Room

Zuloaga Room

Duchess Mother’s Room*

Chinese Room*

Duke’s Office*

Duke’s Bedroom*

Duke’s Dressing Room*

Stairway near Elevator*

⁹ This is not the first time that paintings were hidden for safekeeping from a democratic uprising. In 1868, during the Glorious Revolution that would end in the First Spanish Republic, the best paintings were also placed in storage. For the 1868 inventory of “best paintings”, see 197.21, ADA. Another note in the archive of Liria Palace refers to their hiding: “Tasación hecha por Isidoro Brun de los mejores cuadros en número de 67 que se ocultaron cuando la revolución”, with the total sum of 2.879.000 reales, the same as the 1868 appraisal (209.5, ADA). See Dennis, “Collecting and Recollecting;” Dennis, “Reading between the Lines.”

¹⁰ Siruela, “Family Sketches,” 55; Basarrate, “Edwin Lutyens,” 312; Stuart y Silva, *Yo, Cayetana*, 37; García Hernán, *Jacobo*, 189–90, 219, 225, 236, 259.

¹¹ Basarrate, “Edwin Lutyens,” 312. These quotations appear in Spanish in the article by Basarrate, and are translated here to English by the author. The original in English may differ slightly from the English translation provided here.

¹² Cuaderno de Salas, Fondo artístico, ADA. The rooms listed on the second floor were private and contained over fifty paintings, but will not be addressed here so as to concentrate on the most representative exhibition spaces. The original chapel on the ground floor also featured an important series of murals by José María Sert although they were not included in the 1931 notebook because they were completed and installed later, just before the destruction of the palace in the Civil War. Several canvases were able to be extensively restored and decorate the chapel of the Liria Palace today.



2. *Liria Palace, main stairway seen from the first floor*
(© Archivo de los duques de Alba)

The Social/Public Spaces

The rooms marked with an asterisk (by the author) are the most private in nature, which leaves the remainder as the more important spaces for sociability, and therefore of strategies of self-projection. That being so, in 1931, one could say that the exhibition scheme with regard to the collection of paintings in spaces “of sociability” in Liria Palace revolved around rooms dedicated to family memory (Main Stairway, Grand Duke Room, Bonaparte Room, Stuart Room) and others to the tradition of artistic patronage (Goya Room and Zuloaga Room), with one unique space that was a mixture of both (the Vitrine Gallery).¹³

The Stairway

The main stairwell visually evoked the origins of the Berwick lineage, with portraits of Charles II and Jacob II of England by an artist in the circle of Peter Lely. The Bewick-Alba union, personified in the 7th Duke of Berwick and 14th of Alba, Carlos Miguel, is also seen in the sculptures by Antonio Solá representative of the 14th Duke’s famed art collecting, as well as the portrait of Ferdinand of Austria, Infante-Cardinal of Spain by Gaspar de Crayer, inherited from Carlos Miguel’s aunt, the 13th Duchess of Alba.¹⁴ As early as 1855, this space had a very similar appearance (fig. 2).¹⁵

¹³ Throughout the article these spaces will be referred to alternately as spaces of sociability or public spaces because although they were not accessible to the general public, they were the most knowable because of the nature of these rooms for receiving guests, and their appearance in articles in the press. These were the unofficial “face” of the collection. Furthermore, these very spaces would constitute the accessible section of the palace in the museum visit after its opening to the public in 2019. It must also be clarified that the “Chinese Room” in spite of its name, was in fact part of the Duke’s private quarters.

¹⁴ Cuaderno de Salas, Fondo artístico, ADA. The portrait of Ferdinand of Austria was part of the surprisingly small inheritance of 32 paintings that the 14th Duke of Alba Carlos Miguel inherited from his aunt, the 13th Duchess of Alba. On the law suit following the inheritance, see Urquizar-Herrera, “Las obras de arte;” Redín, “El XIV Duque de Alba.”

¹⁵ This photograph comes from a series of images that can be dated to around 1855. See Dennis, “Collecting and Recollecting.”

The Antesala

Although the Antesala is not described in the 1931 notebook, a 1920 newspaper article and 1919 photograph provide an account of the appearance of the room in the original palace which was decorated with paintings of hunting scenes by Paul De Vos and complemented in the 20th century with the 17th Duke's hunting trophies.¹⁶ The De Vos paintings had been displayed as a group since at least 1835 if we are to judge by the earliest inventories and catalogues of the palace.¹⁷ A photograph from 1919 shows the Antesala, along with other spaces, with decoration that matches the 1920 description with the De Vos paintings and hunting trophies.¹⁸

The Grand Duke's Room

The first reference to one of the palace's most recognizable features, the Grand Duke Room is in 1893, in the form of a dated photograph in the archive of Liria Palace (fig. 3).¹⁹ This fact, together with Rosario's research interest in the Grand Duke, and her father's rescue of the *Grand Duke's Battles* tapestries from sale in an auction in Paris in 1877, makes it likely that she is responsible for the design of this space as well.²⁰ In this room, everything is meant to evoke the memory of the *Gran Duque*, the 3rd Duke of Alba, don Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, with the marble bust of Charles V by Juan Bautista Monegro and three magnificent tapestries, woven in wool, silk and gold by Pannemaker in Brussels reliving the Grand Duke's military glories.²¹ In 1931, this space had a very similar appearance to its original conception.

The Bonaparte Room

Eugénie de Montijo, Empress of the French through her marriage to Napoleon III, was the sister of María Francisca de Sales y Portocarrero (1825–1860), the 15th Duchess of Alba, making the Empress Eugénie de Montijo a great-aunt of the 17th duke of Alba.²² Eugénie was very close with the Alba family and Liria Palace is full of her and her husband's memory, as well as an important part of her collection, as she left the contents of her last home, Villa Cynros in Cap Martin to her great-nephew, the 17th the Duke of Alba.²³ In 1931 this room held: Sèvres vases, gifts from Napoleon III and the

¹⁶ Serna, "Mansiones españolas." The De Vos paintings were also part of the 32 paintings that the 14th Duke of Alba Carlos Miguel inherited from the 13th Duchess of Alba. On the inheritance, see Urquizar-Herrera, "Las obras de arte."

¹⁷ Caja 157, n° 45–46, ADA: "Nota. De los cuadros existentes colocados por su orden numérico en la Galería del Excmo. Sr. Duque de Berwick y de Alba." The majority of paintings in 1835 were separated between *Sala 1* and *Sala 2*, but the De Vos paintings were displayed together in a hallway.

¹⁸ Medina, "Casas señoriales españolas;" Serna, "Mansiones españolas."

¹⁹ Fondo gráfico, ADA.

²⁰ Dennis, "Collecting and Recollecting;" Dennis, "Reading between the Lines."

²¹ Pita Andrade, *El palacio de Liria*, 31–32; Redín Michaus, *Nobleza y coleccionismo*, 65.

²² On her relationship with the Alba family, see Badetz, "Duquesa de Alba," 105–11.

²³ McQueen, *Empress Eugénie*, 320. Will and Testament of Eugénie 1928 (written 1916), ADA: "I bequeath to my nephew the Duke of Alba the whole of the furniture, objects of art, etc etc as an extra share which may be in the Villa Cynros Cap Martin at my death excepting those which I have disposed of by other legacies."



3. Liria Palace, Grand Duke Room, 1893 (© Archivo de los duques de Alba)

Empress; a painting by Winterhalter of the 15th Duchess of Alba; a portrait of the Prince Imperial, Louis-Napoléon by Jean-Louis Canon and another by Francesca Sindici; several portraits of Stuart pretenders and other members of the Sobieski family; and an engraving of the Empress Eugénie on horseback and wearing traditional Andalusian attire.²⁴

The Stuart Room

The Dukes of Alba also hold the title of Berwick, as descendants of James Fitz-James, the son of King James II of England and Arabella Churchill. In the original palace there was also a room dedicated to the memory of the title of Berwick and the family's relation to the Jacobite line of succession through the Stuart descendants of James II. This room seems to have been created between 1906 and 1931.²⁵ This is not at all surprising given the well-known Anglophilia of the 17th Duke, who felt very

²⁴ Cuaderno de Salas, Fondo Artístico, ADA. Francesca Sindici was a daughter of the Count of Galve, the 15th Duke of Alba's brother, making Sindici also a relative of the Empress, who was further linked to her for her interest in supporting women artists. Sindici gave this painting to the Duke of Alba as a gift in 1924. See Redín Michaus, "El príncipe imperial," 318. One of the Sobieski portraits, of Henry Benedict, Cardinal of York, was a gift from the Empress Eugénie to the 16th duke of Alba and his wife.

²⁵ It does not appear on a list of rooms in the palace in a 1906 inventory, 24.3, ADA.

connected to his British ancestry, and lived for many years in England.²⁶ It held: two anonymous paintings of the Knight of St. George; a *Marina* by Simón Vlieger; *Philip V placing the Collar of the Golden Fleece on the Marshal Berwick* by Jacques Dominique Ingres along with a preparatory sketch (both purchased by the 17th Duke Jacobo in 1924); a portrait of Catalina Ventura Colón Portugal by Jean Nattier; and another of the Prince Eugene of Savoy by an anonymous artist.²⁷

The Vitrine Gallery

The Vitrine Gallery was a unique library and exhibition space that was conceived by the 16th Duchess Rosario, with the help of Remón Zarco del Valle, Antonio Paz y Meliá, and Ángel María Barcia, her *consejillo* (council) of erudite advisors, experts in history and in art history.²⁸ In this room, historic documents were displayed in vitrines, and the walls were lined with over fifty paintings. The paintings show no coherent narrative of a theme of family memory, aside from their occasional relation to the documents on display, which in turn demonstrate the family's role in Spanish history. The paintings are mostly selections from an 1868 inventory of the "best paintings" in the Alba collection.²⁹ The paintings that were not taken from the inventory are principally personal gifts from close (and illustrious) family members, or acquisitions by the 16th Duke and Duchess.³⁰ The exhibition is a prime example of the trend of musealizing palaces in the 19th century, as the old nobility began to reorder collections incorporating the legitimating narrative of fine arts into exhibition spaces, complementing painting's inherent function of genealogical representation.³¹

²⁶ The Duke of Alba attended Beaumont College; was a founding member of the Anglo-Hispanic Committee of the Residencia de Estudiantes (a cultural institution in Spain which fomented the cultural exchange between Spain and the United Kingdom); oversaw an exhibit of Spanish art at the Royal Academy of Art in London in 1920 and would serve as Ambassador in London from 1939–1945; and hired Edwin Lutyens to reconstruct Liria Palace in 1942—to name just a few examples of his affinity for British culture. He also worked to strengthen the collaboration between the Prado Museum and the National Gallery, and hoped that the end of the Second World War would bring circumstances that would permit mutual temporary deposits between the museums, to have the opportunity to exhibit English painting to the Spanish public and vice versa; Acta 408, nº3, December 14, 1945, 19–15, 1380, AMP. See also García Hernán, *Jacobo*, 26–29, 118, 128–29, 242; Barón Borrás, "Exposición de Pintura Española;" Ribagorda, "El Comité Hispano-Inglés," 273–91; Avilés Farré, "La misión," 55–80.

²⁷ The painting by Ingres and its preparatory sketch were purchased by the 17th Duke of Alba in 1924 for 10,000 francs from the heirs of the Countess of Fitz-James in 1924, recovering a commission ordered by his predecessor, the 14th Duke, Carlos Miguel, which was never delivered due to insufficient payment. The drawing was given by the artist to the 14th Duke's secretary, Poublon, at the time of commission. Fondo artístico Ingres, ADA; Fitz-James Stuart, *Discurso de ingreso*, 17; Dennis, "Collecting and Recollecting."

²⁸ On the Vitrine Gallery, see Dennis, "Collecting and Recollecting." On the *consejillo*, see Calderón, "Doña Rosario Falcó y Osorio," 1–30; Calderón Ortega, "El Archivo de la Casa de Alba," 86–88.

²⁹ For the 1868 inventory see 197.21, ADA. Another note in the archive of Liria Palace refers to their hiding "Tasación hecha por Isidoro Brun de los mejores cuadros en número de 67 que se ocultaron cuando la revolución," with the total sum of 2.879.000 reales, the same as the 1868 appraisal. 209 nº 5, ADA; see also Dennis, "Collecting and Recollecting."

³⁰ Such as the *Christ Child with Lamb* by Bernardo Luini (then attributed to Leonardo da Vinci), given to Rosario by her father; *The Old Man and the Maid* by David Teniers, a gift from the Eugénie de Montijo, or the *Anunciation* with the supposed portrait of the 1st Count of Alba, purchased by the 16th Duke of Alba. See Fondo artístico, ADA; Barcia y Pavón, *Catálogo de la colección*, 2–7, 140. Several of the paintings had also been rescued from a sale of the collection in 1877 in the Hotel Drouot in Paris, such as *Portrait of Juan Antonio Ramírez de Miranda* by Murillo, and the *Way to the Market* by Rubens. See Dennis, "Collecting and Recollecting;" Dennis, "Reading between the Lines."

³¹ On this trend, see Urquizar-Herrera, "Memory and Taste," 181–209; Urquizar-Herrera and Vígara Zafra, "La nobleza española," 257–74.

The Zuloaga Room

The Zuloaga Room would necessarily have been a more recent creation, named so for the portraits of the 17th Duke and Duchess, Jacobo (fig. 4) and María del Rosario, painted by the Basque artist, Ignacio Zuloaga (1870–1945) in 1918 and 1921. Although in 1930 he also painted a portrait of the young Cayetana, the future 18th Duchess of Alba at age five, it does not seem to have been hung in this room, which is understandable as Cayetana's bright, lively juvenile portrait would have clashed with the serious tone of the portraits by Anton Raphael Mengs of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, of the 12th Duke of Alba, the Duchess of Arcos, as well as the artist's self-portrait; and the *Marina* by Van Der Velde and landscape by Van Goyen which were also displayed here.³² According to a recreation by Iñigo Basarrate of the floorplan of the original palace, the Zuloaga Room would have been in what was previously a Billiards Room.³³ In 1906 the Billiards Room held many of the same paintings as the Zuloaga Room in 1931, meaning this space probably transitioned over time, from a gathering of portraits and landscapes, to a more coherent discourse of the Duke of Alba as a supporter of contemporary arts, part of his noble duties.³⁴ The Zuloaga room represented the role of the Duke of Alba as an important art patron, friend and protector of a great Spanish contemporary artist. Its position on the western half of the palace reiterates its association with the living Duke of Alba, whose quarters were also situated there. This would provide balance to the narrative of the Duchess of Alba as muse and patron of Goya, which, as we will now see, was present in the Goya Room nearest the Duchess' quarters.



4. Ignacio Zuloaga: *Portrait of Jacob Fitz-James Stuart, 17th Duke of Alba, 1918, Liria Palace, Madrid* (© Fundación Casa de Alba)

The Goya Room

Pride of place in the Alba Collection today is reserved for a portrait by Goya, the 13th *Duchess of Alba in White* painted for Goya's known muse, friend and patron, María Teresa Cayetana de Silva

³² Fondo artístico, Cuaderno de Salas, ADA (for the 1931 inventory); 197.21, ADA (for the 1882 inventory); 24.3, ADA (for the 1906 inventory).

³³ Basarrate, "English Architect in Spain," 482. In 1906 the Billiards Room held 16 paintings, including the Mengs portraits, *Marina* and *Landscape* by Van de Velde and Van Goyen, that remained there in 1931, as well as other portraits; 24.3, ADA.

³⁴ Fitz-James Stuart, *Discurso de ingreso*, 146–49.

y Álvarez de Toledo. This painting is related to another, the *Duchess of Alba in Black*, in the Hispanic Society in New York. The opportunity to purchase this painting was offered to the 17th Duke by Archer Huntington, the famous hispanist and art collector, before finalizing his own acquisition of the painting. Jacobo reluctantly had to turn down the offer for its price, but remembered Huntington's gentlemanly gesture with affection and respect.³⁵ In 1931, portrait of the 13th Duchess hung with another by Goya, of the Marchioness of Lazán, an ancestor of the Empress Eugénie, who gave this painting to her grand-nephew, the Duke of Alba before 1907.³⁶ In 1882, both *The Duchess of Alba in White* and *The Marchioness of Lazán* hung in a "Portrait Room" which no longer existed in 1931.³⁷ This places the creation of the Goya Room sometime between 1882 and 1906.³⁸ Until at least 1915 another painting then attributed to Goya was also on display in this room: the portrait of the Countess of Montijo and her four daughters, although by 1931 it had been removed.³⁹ Even in its beginnings in 1906 the room was predominantly decorated with images of women, with five paintings of men and seven of women.⁴⁰

However, in 1931, the room would be exclusively dedicated to female protagonists in the family.⁴¹ Alongside the two magnificent Goya portraits of the Duchess of Alba and the Marchioness of Lazán, were another nine other images of female protagonists in the history of the family, such as: two portraits of the Duchess of Santoña; a bust of the 14th Duchess of Alba, Rosalía Ventimiglia; or another of Elisa Bonaparte. Presiding over the room was the impressive portrait of the Empress Eugénie by Winterhalter, the *Gallorum Imperatrix*. The collection of miniatures was also displayed here, an art form described as "analogous with the qualities of women" in a catalogue of the Alba miniatures published in 1924, for its beauty and also its underestimated value.⁴² Furthermore, it was Jacobo's mother, Rosario, who took an interest in the miniatures and proposed to Joaquín

³⁵ Memorias, Fondo Don Jacobo, 266, ADA: "He always kept a rule of not acquiring anything in Spain, and he repeated this exemplary trait in Paris when my mother was ill, and [he] did not want to acquire the famous portrait of the Duchess Cayetana with a black mantilla by Goya, without first assuring that we didn't intend to buy it. We lost the opportunity, but it was inevitable."

³⁶ It was already on display in the Goya Room as early as 1907. Mascarilla, "Concierto en el palacio."

³⁷ 197.21, ADA. An earlier catalogue from 1882 describes a "Portrait Room" that no longer existed in 1931, featuring 11 portraits by Murillo, Mengs, Van Loo, Goya, Parrocel and Richard, and Menéndez. Five portraits were of family members. Interestingly, four sitters were unidentified, and two had no genealogical relevance whatsoever (Mengs and Murillo).

³⁸ The Goya Room exists on inventories of the collection dated 1906, in preparation for the publication of a catalogue of paintings in 1911 by Ángel María Barcia. In that year, the Portrait Room only held one painting, a painting of the Duchess of Alba by Madrazo (which duchess and which Madrazo is unclear.) It seems that the Portrait Room was in the process of being dismantled.

³⁹ The attribution of this painting, of Empress Eugénie's aunts, was changed in the publication of the catalogue of paintings in 1911. In fact, it was the attribution of this painting alone that stalled the publication of the catalogue, which could have been published by Rosario, the 16th Duchess earlier, but she was reluctant to upset the Empress with the change of author. The 17th Duke Jacobo would supervise the publication of the catalogue where the painting was listed as "attributed to Goya," although it remained in the Salón Goya until at least 1915. See "Vida cultural."

⁴⁰ 24.3, ADA. In 1906 it held two portraits of Enrique Stuart and Carlos Eduardo Stuart by Parrocel, the Marquis of Santa Cruz by Mengs, a portrait of the Marshal Berwick, and another of Carlos Eduardo Stuart; and two portraits of a woman from the Sobieski family, another of Maria Clementina Sobieski, a Duchess of Liria, and the Countess of Montijo and her daughters by Goya as well as his portrait of the 13th Duchess of Alba.

⁴¹ With the exception of a few miniatures and one portrait of the Marchioness of Ariza with her two sons.

⁴² Ezquerro del Bayo, *Catálogo de las miniaturas*, 9–10. See the foreword of the catalogue on the comments on the femininity of miniatures.

Ezquerro del Bayo to publish a catalogue of the collection.⁴³ Rosario would not live to see it published, and this is one of her numerous initiatives that her son would take up and finish.⁴⁴ This display of feminine memory was located near the Duchess' rooms, while its masculine counterparts, in the Grand Duke Room and Zuloaga Rooms (spaces of military excellence and artistic patronage associated with the dukes), were nearest the office and bedroom of the Duke of Alba.

The establishment of a space dedicated to illustrious women in the family, may have been a way to set the stage, so to speak, for the next generation, which would be inherited by the 18th Duchess of Alba, just five years old in 1931. The 18th Duchess Cayetana repeatedly spoke of her admiration for her namesake, 13th Duchess Cayetana, with whom she identified.⁴⁵ The image and character of the 13th Duchess of Alba was a matter of concern for the 17th Duke, interested in polishing the reputation of the most famous precedent of a female head of house.⁴⁶

This space was also teeming with traces of the Empress Eugénie. Firstly in the objects it displayed: the grand Winterhalter portrait, but also a miniature of the Empress Josephine by Jean-Baptiste Isabey that had belonged to Eugénie and was purchased by the 17th Duke in London; and also in the Empire style table, said to have belonged to Napoleon III.⁴⁷ The portrait of the Marchioness of Lazán, was also gift from Eugénie to her grand-nephew.⁴⁸ As explained above, in years prior, this room also held the portrait of the Countess of Montijo and her four daughters, previously attributed to Goya, based on the insistence of Eugénie that her aunt, (one of the sitters), remembered having sat for Goya for this painting. There is a clear connection then, between Eugénie and the contents of the room.

Secondly, the memory of Eugénie de Montijo is present because of her physical occupation of this space. After Rosario Falcó's death in 1904, when Eugénie came to stay in Liria for some time to attend the funeral, she held audience in a room just off the Vitrine Gallery.⁴⁹

In the morning, before lunch, and in the afternoon, two to four, the Empress Eugénie concedes several audiences to the people of Madrid society who have solicited them. The august lady receives in the room next to the library, carrying out, in those cases, her official functions. [...] in the room adjacent to the library, decorated with interesting photographs, where the portrait by Winterhalter of the Duchess María Francisca de Sales, sister of the Empress Eugénie, the illustrious lady who sat on the throne of France gives audience.⁵⁰

This description matches a photograph from the archive of Liria Palace, with the portrait of the 15th Duchess of Alba (Paca) by Winterhalter, and the "interesting photographs" tucked into the

⁴³ Ezquerro del Bayo, *Catálogo de las miniaturas*.

⁴⁴ Ezquerro del Bayo, *Catálogo de las miniaturas*, 9–10.

⁴⁵ Stuart y Silva, *Yo, Cayetana*, 10, 15, 125.

⁴⁶ In 1945, tired of lascivious rumors about the 19th century duchess, Jacobo had her body exhumed to prove once and for all that because of her bone structure, she could not have possibly been Goya's lover, the results of which were published in Blanco Soler, *La duquesa de Alba*. In 1929–1930, the Duke also considered moving the 13th Duchess' sepulcher to the Paraninfo of the Universidad Central (previously the Noviciado Church), her original burial site and a central location and redecorating it, although this was not carried out. Lafuente Ferrari, *La vida y el arte*, 171.

⁴⁷ Fondo artístico, ADA; McQueen, Empress Eugénie, 194, n. 148. Although the provenance cannot be confirmed. See Azcue Brea, "Empress Eugenia de Montijo," 298.

⁴⁸ Barcia y Pavón, *Catálogo de la colección*, 52. It was already on display in the Goya Room as early as 1907; Mascarilla, "Concierto en el palacio."

⁴⁹ Mascarilla, "Las audiencias de la emperatriz."

⁵⁰ Mascarilla, "Las audiencias de la emperatriz."

molding on the wall (fig. 5).⁵¹ Later descriptions will also refer to the small armchair that belonged to Eugénie as a child, which Paca had saved and is visible in the photo.⁵² The ‘library’ likely referred to the Vitrine Gallery, also filled with books. The Vitrine Gallery was located in the equivalent of the Italian Room in today’s Liria Palace, which is adjacent to today’s Goya Room.⁵³ If the room where Eugénie received her guests is this same space, then the window for the Goya Room’s creation can be limited to sometime between 1904 (when Eugénie stayed at the palace after her Rosario’s funeral) and 1906 (when it was already arranged as a Goya Room). Between 1906 and 1931, all of the masculine portraits were removed and the Goya Room was given its final feminine air.⁵⁴

When Eugénie returned to the palace in 1920, just before her death, she used the same room again to hold audience, where the miniature collection had since been added, as well as Eugénie’s portrait by Winterhalter. Octave Aubury described the space:

The apartment where the Empress has moved in belonged to her sister, Paca. It was a room called the Miniature Room, At once library and museum, there one can look on the best portrait that Winterhalter painted of Eugénie, with a grand mink stole and her head lightly resting on her hand.⁵⁵

Although there is no surviving image of the Winterhalter in this space, the 1931 notebook corroborates Aubury’s account that this painting hung in the Goya Room (fig. 6).⁵⁶ Just as there are multiple connections between Eugénie and the Goyas, there are also many between her and this space.

The Private Spaces

As Alcalá Galiano wrote in *Entre Dos Mundos*, many palaces were able to put a handful of important paintings or a display of sumptuous furniture in one or two rooms, while the rest of the rooms remained an image of austerity; Liria Palace was, however, an exception, decorated through and through with its impressive collection of paintings, tapestries and furniture.⁵⁷ This study affirms that in the original Liria Palace many important paintings were kept in the Duke’s and Duchess’ private quarters.⁵⁸ These areas blended different art schools, time periods, genres, and provenances, with a highly personal criteria that did not obey any evident scientific criteria.

⁵¹ Fondo gráfico, ADA

⁵² Aubury, *L’imperatrice Eugenie*, cited in Badetz, “Duquesa de Alba,” 109–10.

⁵³ Thank you to Álvaro Romero for his help in researching the history of the interior of Liria Palace and confirming the former location of the Vitrine Gallery. See Basarrate’s reconstruction of the original floorplan; Basarrate, “English Architect in Spain,” 482.

⁵⁴ 24.3, ADA; Fondo artístico, Cuaderno de Salas, ADA. In 1906, the Winterhalter of the 15th Duchess in the photograph, the portrait of Eugénie by the same artist, as well as the portraits of the Duchess of Santoña that would later be hung in the Goya Room, were still displayed together in a “White Room” near the Duchess of Alba’s bedroom.

⁵⁵ Aubury, *L’imperatrice Eugenie*, 433–44, cited in Badetz, “Duquesa de Alba,” 109–10. It is true that Aubury says that this space is library, museum, and miniature room, but this may be a confusion on the part of the author, written over ten years after the fact. It is certain that this room was not the library, but all evidence suggests that it was the next room. The library-museum would likely refer to the adjacent Vitrine Gallery.

⁵⁶ Fondo artístico, Cuaderno de Salas, ADA.

⁵⁷ Alcalá Galiano, *Entre dos mundos*, 129.

⁵⁸ In 1882, the Duke and Duchess had perhaps the most splendid exhibits in their private quarters.



5. Liria Palace, the room in which Empress Eugénie likely received audience in 1904 (© Archivo de los duques de Alba)



6. Liria Palace, The Goya Room, c. 1906 – c. 1915 (© Archivo de los duques de Alba)

The Destruction of Liria Palace, and the Deposit of Paintings in the Prado Museum

As explained above, between 1931 and 1936, Liria Palace would have had a different, darker, emptier appearance. But more drastic changes were yet to come. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) in July of 1936, when the nationalist forces led by Francisco Franco rebelled against the government of the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936), the Republican administration legalized the occupation and seizure of private property.⁵⁹ The Republican Fifth Regiment then seized Liria Palace, first with the intention of making it their headquarters, but then opting to turn it into a public museum.⁶⁰ Shortly after, on the November 17, 1936, planes supporting Franco's advances dropped incendiary bombs on Liria Palace, destroying it with multiple attacks, though the very vast majority of the art collection was saved from destruction by the militia occupying it.⁶¹ The scope of this article will not address the full complexity of the events that took place in Liria and the management of the collection, but it is important to know that the art collection was saved almost entirely, and stored in various deposits in Madrid after the end of the war, principally in the Prado Museum.⁶² And as we will see, what happens to the collection during the years it is in temporary deposit, with no palace to return to, will directly affect how it hung in the reconstructed palace years later.

The Alba Collection in the Prado Museum

The Duke of Alba had been the president of the Board of the Prado Museum since it was created in 1912, although due to his official function as the Spanish Ambassador to the United Kingdom (1939–1945), he spent lengthy periods away from Madrid and participated in museum matters from a distance. The board must have expressed their interest in exhibiting the Duke's immense collection soon after reviving their monthly sessions after the end of the war, because by May of 1941, the Duke sent his approval of the temporary exhibition of his collection with the conditions that it be labelled "temporary deposit" and "property of the Duke of Alba".⁶³ Bearing in mind the advancing reconstruction plans that coincided with the display of the art collection in the Prado Museum, the Duke's insistence on the "temporary" label acquire deeper significance, as he intended to eventually move the paintings back to his own home.⁶⁴ There were many deposits of private collections in the Prado Museum for at least some time after the war, but the majority ranged from one to five paintings,

⁵⁹ Del Valme Muñoz Rubio, "La historia recuperada," 113. On this topic, see also Saavedra Arias, "El Patrimonio Artístico."

⁶⁰ Del Valme Muñoz Rubio, "La historia recuperada," 113.

⁶¹ Castellary, *Patrimonio cultural*, 367. The designation of the disaster's cause as a "bombing" by nationalist forces, or a "fire" by the Republican occupants, gives rise to heated discussions which are not the focus of the present article, but important to bear in mind when studying the psychology of the Alba's artistic management behind the museographic history of Liria Palace. See also García Hernan, *Jacobo*, 272–82.

⁶² Between July 5, 1939 and April 20, 1940, 167 paintings and 58 miniatures from the Duke of Alba's collection arrived to the Prado Museum for long-term deposit; 93/15.24/1–3, 93/15.24/4, 407/11.237/1–1, AMP.

⁶³ Acta 380, 1380/19–15/3, AMP; García-Montón, "España de ficción," 241.

⁶⁴ Alba demonstrated his hope to rebuild Liria Palace almost immediately after the war. He met and corresponded frequently with Edwin Lutyens, though the final drawings were not complete until around 1942. On his interactions with Lutyens, see Basarrate, "English Architect in Spain," 260.

occasionally rising to twenty or thirty.⁶⁵ The Duke's deposit of 167 paintings and 58 miniatures was without parallel in size or quality in the way of private collections.⁶⁶ This provided the museum with a unique opportunity: the ability to see the legendary Alba collection in person, normally inaccessible to the general public except occasionally through the pages of newspapers and weekly illustrated publications, such as *Alrededor del Mundo* and *La Última Moda: revista ilustrada hispano-americana*. The news of Alba's collection displayed in the Prado Museum attracted the attention of the public and made headlines in newspapers throughout the country, and abroad.⁶⁷

The installation of the Duke's collection on the December 27, 1942 in the newly renovated rooms by Pedro Muguruza, was attended by the Spanish cultural and political elite.⁶⁸ General Francisco Franco and his wife, Carmen Polo, attended the event, as well as Franco's closest circle of government leaders, including the Director of Fine Arts, and the Prado Museum Board of Directors.⁶⁹ Franco lauded the exhibition, and spent several hours in the museum, making promises about his interest in the Prado and his support for a new addition to the building, something Alba celebrated, although his initial eagerness for Franco would be exhausted over the next decade.⁷⁰

The Duke's paintings were spread over five rooms of the lower level of the Prado Museum (figs. 7–10). The installation was overseen by Francisco Javier Sánchez Cantón, subdirector of the museum, and personal friend and art advisor of the Duke. He related updates on the installation to Jacobo, and described the distribution of paintings, which naturally would be more suited to the institutional setting of the most prestigious art museum in Spain, where a professional, academic ordering would be necessary. This is the first time that the paintings' exhibition would be clearly organized according to art historical criteria.⁷¹ The exhibition of the Duke's collection was effectively

⁶⁵ 93/15.24/ 1–3, AMP

⁶⁶ 93/15.24/ 1–3, AMP

⁶⁷ "El duque de Alba visitó las nuevas salas del Museo del Prado." *El Compostelano*, December 28, 1942, unpaginated; "Las nuevas salas del Museo del Prado," *Hoja del Lunes*, January 4, 1943, 2. In January of 1943, Francesco Cambó also wrote from Argentina that news of Alba's collection in the Prado was in the papers; Letter from Cambó to Sánchez Cantón, January 5, 1943, 102–05, Archivo Museo de Pontevedra (MP); García-Montón, "España de ficción," 242. And when the Duke announced his intentions to collect his paintings, Sotomayor, the director of the museum, thanked him saying that the exhibit did indeed increase public interest. Acta 407, June 25, 1945, 1380/15–19/3, AMP.

⁶⁸ Acta 393, 1380/19–15/3, AMP

⁶⁹ Acta 393, 1380/19–15/3, AMP

⁷⁰ Acta 393, 1380/19–15/3; Acta 416, 1380/19–15/3, AMP. While Alba initially celebrated Franco's supportive attitude in the Prado, the Board Meeting minutes show that a few years later (1948—the year Franco denied Alba his passport as a reproach for his monarchic activities) he would grow tired of the Generalísimo's propagandistic whims, and in the following years distanced himself considerably from the board's activities after a disagreement concerning a request from the Franco's office of propaganda for a loan. Alba said that in the end, "nothing is done except what the ultimate authority wants [...] the final decision depends on others". On the passport restriction, see Hernández Barral, "La nobleza," 422. For Alba's initiatives against Franco in this year, see Hernández Barral, *Luis Martínez de Irujo*, 86–89. For the quote about the lack of independence of the Prado Board of Directors, see García Hernan, *Jacobo*, 510. For the final confrontation between Alba and the Prado Board on account of orders from the General Director of Propaganda, after which Alba would not return to a board meeting for over a year and a half, see Acta 416, 1380/19–15/3, AMP.

⁷¹ The ordering of the collection in catalogues took these criteria into account earlier. An inventory of the collection in 1882 lists the paintings alphabetically by artist name with an accompanying biographical sketch (197.21, ADA). The first catalogue of the collection of paintings was published by Ángel María Barcia in 1911, separating the paintings by family portraits (and by noble house), and then by artistic school, but the grouping by schools did not affect the palace's display. However, Barcia's catalogue would provide the base for Sánchez Cantón's installation. Barcia y Pavón, *Catálogo de la colección*. See also Dennis, "Reading Between the Lines;" Urquizar-Herrera and



7. Flemish and Northern School Room of the temporary exhibit of the Duke of Alba's collection in the Prado Museum, 1943-1947 (© Archivo del Museo del Prado)



8. Italian Room of the temporary exhibit of the Duke of Alba's collection in the Prado Museum, 1943-1947 (© Archivo del Museo del Prado)



9. Room of Family Portraits in the temporary exhibit of the Duke of Alba's collection in the Prado Museum, 1943-1947 (© Archivo del Museo del Prado)



10. The Grand Duke Room in the temporary exhibit of the Duke of Alba's collection in the Prado Museum, 1943-1947 (© Archivo del Museo del Prado)

adapted to its place of installation. This would have been a significant gain in terms of the symbolic capital of the Duke's collection, which, in a way, absorbed the institutional distinction of the Prado Museum. This spoke of the quality of the Alba Collection, deemed sufficient to be exhibited in the most important Spanish museum, and occupying five rooms—a privilege not available to just any collector.⁷² Although as we will see, it would still preserve the personal idiosyncrasies of a private art collection belonging to the Duke of Alba.

Three rooms were divided by school: there was a Spanish room, a Flemish and Northern Schools room, and an Italian room, while another two rooms retained the aura of their origins: one being a room of family portraits, and another which was a recreation of the Grand Duke Room.⁷³ The exhibition of the duke's collection, complete with a recreation of the Grand Duke Room in the Prado—particularly at a time when the Duke of Alba had no palace in Madrid—would have been a powerful image of continuity after the tumultuous years of civil war.⁷⁴ Sánchez Cantón admitted that the display was truly impressive, and the Duke had no doubt it would be “the best outside of Liria”.⁷⁵ Shortly after, in 1943, Alba gave a speech upon entering the Real Academia Española in which he spoke of the unique contribution of nobility to society through the stewardship of their collections “in the appropriate setting”—the private one—where the objects could acquire their full meaning with the contextualization of their surroundings.⁷⁶ Although the institutional setting of the Prado added prestige, it could potentially also pose a threat to the Duke's relevance, rendering his cultural contribution to society via his collection obsolete. In reiterating the importance of contextualization, he reasserted his personal relevance in the construction of meaning in the collection. Not even the Prado Museum could replace Liria Palace...

Nearing the end of the Second World War, and after the Lausanne Manifest, where the Spanish pretender to the throne called on any of his supporters who were also Franco's agents to relinquish their posts in protest at Franco's refusal to reinstate the monarchy, Alba announced his resignation as ambassador in London and began to plan his return to Spain.⁷⁷ Part of these plans involved the reconstruction of his palace, and also a more long-term, yet still temporary, solution for his residence and the exhibition of his art collection. He wrote to the Prado Board from London on June 25, 1945, celebrating that the collection had been able to be on view to the public for so long, and thanking the museum for its generosity in storing it, but announced that it was time to begin to prepare its removal.⁷⁸ Modesto López-Otero, an architect and member of the Prado's Board of Directors, along with Sánchez Cantón, the museum's assistant director, and Fernando Álvarez Sotomayor, the director, helped to outfit a building, designed by Antonio Ferreras, on the same

Vigara Zafra, “La nobleza española,” 257–74.

⁷² The Count of Cibera also hoped to exhibit his collection in the Prado Museum, although the Board was reluctant to accept the whole collection, and insisted that any exhibition of Cibera's art would have to be limited to only the best pieces; Acta 393, 1380/19-15/3, AMP. Luis Sazatornil recently presented on his research the Count of Cibera's collection in the Prado Museum in the conference *La visibilidad del coleccionismo privado: De la Ilustración a la Segunda República*, Prado Museum in Madrid, October 17–18, 2022.

⁷³ Patricia García-Montón, “España de ficción,” 242.

⁷⁴ On the idiosyncrasy of “a Duke without a palace,” see Hernández Barral, “La nobleza,” 411–16.

⁷⁵ Letter from Alba to Sánchez Cantón, November 23, 1942, 102–56, Archivo Museo de Pontevedra (MP).

⁷⁶ Fitz-James Stuart, *Discurso leído*, 28.

⁷⁷ Hernández Barral, “La nobleza,” 421–23.

⁷⁸ Acta 407, 1380/19-15/3, AMP.

block of his Liria Palace, where he would live and display the collection.⁷⁹ This flat was endearingly given the name, *Museillo*.

The *Museillo*

In March of 1947, over the course of 12 days, multiple trucks moved the collection from the Prado Museum to the flat on Mártires de Alcalá Street, the *Museillo*.⁸⁰ On June 3, 1947, Alba wrote to Sánchez Cantón, thanking him effusively for the work he had done on the *Museillo*, to which Cantón replied that the pleasure of "finding a narrative" in the ordering of the *Museillo* was all his.⁸¹ And this one phrase constitutes the principal difference between the ordering of the collection in the original palace, with that of the *Museillo* (and by extension, the reconstructed palace): the imposition of a more sophisticated, academic museographic narrative, to complement—not replace—the exhibition of family memory.

Alongside the opening of museums in the 18th century and throughout the 19th, private collections began to adopt the discourse of fine arts to order their collections.⁸² The exhibit in the Prado constituted a major advance in the progression of the musealization of the Alba art collection. When the paintings returned to private installation, it retained most of the professional presentation it was given in the museum, with a renewed prestige as an art collection able to exhibit *more* than family memory, but also a narrative of art history worthy of exhibition in the Prado Museum.

The *Museillo*'s itinerary was published in a pamphlet that accompanied the inauguration, titled *Guía de las Colecciones Artísticas de la Casa de Alba*, and listed the spaces as the following:

- Foyer and Stairway
- Vestibule
- Italian Room (15th and 16th centuries)
- Italian Room (16th and 17th centuries)
- Spanish Room
- Northern Schools Room
- Meeting Room
- Grand Duke Room
- Stuart Room
- Duchess of Alba Room
- Empress Eugénie Room

Many of the spaces are an impressive demonstration of the continuance of the arrangement of the original palace, with appearances that are scarcely altered, and only enhanced, such as the Grand Duke Room (fig. 11).⁸³ Others are new creations that maintain the professionalization, or

⁷⁹ Letter from Alba to Sánchez Cantón, July 7, 1944, Fondo Don Jacobo Correspondencia, ADA: "Thanks to you [Sánchez Cantón], Sotomayor, and López Otero, the plans for the new museum on Mártires de Alcalá Street were finalized last spring." The design of the structure was by Antonio Ferreras. See Basarrate, "Edwin Lutyens," 321.

⁸⁰ 2/17.04/5, AMP.

⁸¹ Correspondence between Alba and Sánchez Cantón, June 3–5, 1947, 105–1, MP.

⁸² Urquizar-Herrera, "Memory and Taste," 181–209; Urquizar-Herrera and Vigarra Zafra, "La nobleza española."

⁸³ Added to this space were: the double portrait of Charles V and Isabel of Portugal, and a portrait of the Grand

very literally, the “musealization” that the paintings had undergone on display in the Prado Museum, such as the Italian Rooms (separated chronologically and by school), and the Northern School and Spanish Rooms (fig. 12). Although once more, the exhibition was adapted to its place of installation—this time, the residence of the Duke of Alba. This explains, for instance, why the portrait of the 13th Duchess of Alba by Goya was displayed in the Spanish Room of the Prado Museum (where the personality of the artist would outweigh that of the sitter); in the *Museillo*, however, the portrait returned to a room where the personality of the Duchess warranted exhibition apart from the rest of the Spanish school, as it had been in the original palace.

Ultimately the collection was divided into two, recalling earlier decorative schemes: areas dedicated to family memory; and areas of aesthetic pleasure, but with the new academic criteria of an art historian. The former were given stronger narratives, with recent acquisitions by the 17th Duke of Alba, and the latter were rearranged, by chronology and art school. These two groups also reflected different forms of provenance, with the latter being constituted almost entirely by the numerous acquisitions of the 14th Duke of Alba in the 19th century. This not only separated the newly acquired works from objects of more ancient provenance, but served to celebrate the tradition of collecting in the House of Alba. The two branches worked together to build a discourse of ancient noble roots as well as patronage of fine arts—part of the nobility’s traditional value in society (albeit one that was increasingly hard to justify with the artistic minded and philanthropic rising bourgeoisie.)

Sánchez Cantón explained his decisions in the inaugural pamphlet:

The following disclaimer will allow one to appropriately judge the present installation, which neither intends to resemble a palace, nor a museum. Because the collections in Liria Palace have two different types of provenance, which is reflected in the arrangement given. Direct reminders of past times of family splendor are distributed among four rooms, personified in the Grand Duke of Alba; the 1st and 2nd Dukes of Berwick; doña María del Pilar Teresa Cayetana de Silva, 13th Duchess of Alba; and the Empress Eugénie. In another four rooms, the rest of the collection, acquired by the 7th Duke of Berwick and 14th of Alba, don Carlos Miguel (1794–1835) is ordered by school, [he was] dominated by the passion of acquiring paintings, statues and Greek vases, and travelled tirelessly through Italy, Germany and France [...].⁸⁴

Half of the exhibition refined displays of family memory, while the other half reinforced discourses of Albas as art collectors, for example in the glorification of the history of the 14th Duke of Alba by perfecting the presentation of his acquisitions with art historical criteria—expressing both the noble act of patronage and also the excellence of the Albas’ elite, cultivated taste for beauty. In this way, the exhibition showed noble qualities in ancient bloodline, as purveyors of good taste and as generous art patrons. The blend of these two narratives fused family memory and the duty as guardians of art and history and served to set the Duke of Alba apart from other social classes, and other institutions, that were both increasingly able and eager to collect and exhibit art.

The professionalization of the display of art in the *Museillo*, based on the temporary exhibit in the Prado Museum, marks an important step on the path towards the musealization of Liria

Duke, both by Rubens after Titian, and both purchases made by the 17th Duke of Alba in London and exhibited in the Prado. Sánchez Cantón, *Guía*, 24; Pita Andrade, *El palacio de Liria*, 32; Jiménez-Blanco and Uría Prado, “More Than a Collecting Tradition,” 317.

⁸⁴ Sánchez Cantón, *Guía*, 6–7. Note that the Duke of Berwick was a descendant of the family of Mary Stuart, and so the room containing the Berwicks’ portraits is also the Stuart Room.



11. *The Grand Duke Room in the Museillo, 1947-1956* (© Archivo de los duques de Alba)



12. *The Italian Room in the Museillo, 1947-1956* (© Archivo de los duques de Alba)

Palace which was notably influenced by the British tradition of country houses, primarily evident in the choice of architect—Edwin Lutyens—and style—augmenting the already neoclassical air of the building.⁸⁵ The treatment of the art collection also resembled the Anglo-Saxon tradition of museography which emphasized the importance of narrative and context, as opposed to the French (Mediterranean) approaches which tended to arrange by genre, focusing on the singularity of an art object itself.⁸⁶

The Duke of Alba said that of all the things that surprised North Americans about his lifestyle, the most shocking to them was that he indeed “lived in a museum”.⁸⁷ Of course, the wealthiest of North American collectors could amass enormous and expensive collections as well, but Alba’s collection was different. The context of the private and noble setting differentiated him from public institutions, and also from these “capitalist classes” of art collectors, demonstrating that which Alba felt was truly the noble class: “that which has known how to preserve ‘in the appropriate setting’—in palaces, pious foundations that they have constituted and funded, in their councils and their temples—the family portraits, notable paintings, the sculptures and funerary monuments, and all of the artistic treasures that it can conserve.”⁸⁸ As a collector, Alba strived to recover paintings and sculptures that had been separated from the collection for any number of reasons.⁸⁹ His dedication to reconstructing Liria Palace in part reveal his aspiration to preserve “the appropriate setting” for his art collection, in spite of the enormous difficulties.⁹⁰ He longed for measures like those taken in England and France that helped the owners of historic houses to preserve them.

In the way of old houses, something is coming to a head. In France, the idea of conserving the ‘demeure historique’ is helping the owners in the face of the insatiable taxman. In England, the current socialist government has named a commission to study how to provide tax relief to owners [of historic homes] in amounts that are sufficient help for the maintenance of the Houses that are worth it, and whose loss would mean a definitive loss for the national cultural heritage. Without this, in not many years, none of these houses—products not only of the wealth of their owners but of their good taste, their patronage, without which the great artists in many cases (if not all) would not have been able to be known or have the opportunity to develop their genius—will last.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Basarrate, “Edwin Lutyens;” Basarrate, “English Architect in Spain,” 235–71.

⁸⁶ Gómez Martínez, *Dos museologías*, 159–72. Thank you to Luis Sazatornil for his generous and insightful conversations on museology.

⁸⁷ Fitz-James Stuart, *Discurso leído*, 29.

⁸⁸ Fitz-James Stuart, *Discurso leído*, 28.

⁸⁹ Dennis, “Collecting and Recollecting,” 56–70.

⁹⁰ The reconstruction was not initially covered by the insurance company, and the duke took on the enormous costs and filed a lawsuit against the insurance company, which was not settled until 1951. See “Cerca de tres millones de pesetas recibirá el duque de Alba por el seguro del palacio de Liria.” *Pueblo: Diario de Trabajo Nacional*, June 30, 1951, 1. See also García Hernán *Jacobo*, 272–75. Thank you again to José Miguel Hernández Barral for discussing the reconstruction of Liria with me.

⁹¹ *Memorias*, 315–16, Fondo Don Jacobo, ADA.

In the Reconstructed Palace

When Alba hired Edwin Lutyens, the renowned English architect known for his neo-classical style and aristocratic clientele, he initially proposed the idea of building separate structures on the property, with one dedicated exclusively to the exhibition of the art collection, and the other to be used as a residence.⁹² This is similar to an earlier idea he had of building a separate structure for the archives.⁹³ Nonetheless, it seems that the future Duchess of Alba, Cayetana, was partial to the idea of reconstructing one structure for both the residence and the art collection, as it had been before the Civil War.⁹⁴ Even when Lutyens suggested that the new palace reserve a large gallery as the "museum" of the palace, following Cayetana's preferences, the new palace repeated the original layout with numerous smaller rooms on the main floor, where the paintings would be distributed similar to how they had been in the *Museillo*.⁹⁵

The inauguration of the reconstructed palace in 1957, instigated the publication of another pamphlet, written by José Manuel Pita Andrade, under the auspices of the 18th Duke and Duchess of Alba, Cayetana Stuart y Silva and Luis Martínez de Irujo, after the passing of Jacobo Fitz-James four years earlier.⁹⁶ Without scrutinizing the details of the display of each room, the list of spaces clearly shows that the reconstructed palace intended in large part to recreate the original palace, but was influenced by the *Museillo*'s itinerary (in turn, a reflection of the musealization in the Prado Museum temporary exhibit). The rooms were labelled:

- Foyer and Stairway
- Vestibule
- Flemish and Dutch Room
- Grand Duke Room
- Spanish Room
- Zuloaga Room
- Italian Room
- Duchess of Alba Room
- Room of the Loves of the Gods
- Empress Eugénie Room
- 17th Duke of Alba's Stairway

- (Second Floor Rooms)
- (Rear Ground Floor Rooms)
- (Other Ground Floor Rooms)

The most apparent demonstration of continuity through cultural patrimony is the very reconstruction of the palace, which overwhelmingly is more similar to the original than it is dissimilar (albeit with nuances in architectural decisions, as Basarrate explains in his doctoral thesis and

⁹² Basarrate, "Edwin Lutyens," 311, 313. This would not have been the first time that the paintings in the Alba Collection were displayed in a gallery outside of the palace. See Sánchez, "El proyecto museográfico," 131-96.

⁹³ Basarrate, "Edwin Lutyens," 311.

⁹⁴ Basarrate, "Edwin Lutyens," 313.

⁹⁵ Basarrate, "Edwin Lutyens," 313.

⁹⁶ On the opening of Liria Palace, see Hernández Barral, *Luis Martínez de Irujo*, 135-44.

recent article). A case in point is the rejection of Lutyen's proposal for a diaphanous modern gallery, and a replication of the original palace's numerous smaller rooms. With regard to the exhibition of the collection, the spaces dedicated to family memory also remain almost entirely the same, as does the stairwell, with the only notable changes being additions to strengthen their iconographic programs.⁹⁷ Even the ratio of spaces in 1957 is consistent with that of 1947 and of 1931, with half of the spaces dedicated to family memory, and the other half arranged with a predominantly aesthetic criteria. As explained in the previous section, it is the arrangement of the latter half that constitutes the most notable change.

In summary, this means that of the reconstructed palace's eleven most sociable/public spaces, which also constitute the palace's accessible spaces today as a museum (those listed above, except for the 17th Duke's stairway, which is not part of the visit), only three rooms were not part of the original palace's museographic design: the Spanish, Italian, and Flemish and Netherlandish Rooms. These are precisely the three rooms that were reorganized by Sánchez Cantón during the collection's temporary housing in the Prado Museum (the basis for the installation in the *Museillo*). To create these rooms, others were eliminated, such as the Vitrine Gallery, and others' decoration was reduced, such as the Duke and Duchess' private quarters.

Other spaces, which concentrated on the tapestry collection as opposed to painting, were recreated almost the same as the originals, such as the Room of the Loves of the Gods (Tapestry Room), or the Dining Room in a show of continuity. The remaining spaces saw their narratives refined. The Bonaparte Room gave pride of place to the figure of the Empress, and the narrative of her legacy consequently no longer competed with that of Goya. And other rooms' programs were reinforced with professional museography and the continual acquisitions of the 17th and then 18th Duke and Duchess of Alba, as is the case in the Grand Duke Room.⁹⁸

Three rear ground floor rooms mentioned in the inaugural pamphlet show the continued musealization of the palace with an academic arrangement and coherent museographic narrative centered on engravings, the Second Empire era in France, and 18th century Spanish and French paintings and decorative arts.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, when the palace opened as a museum in 2019, these spaces would not be accessible to public—again, the most representative spaces are those that recreated the original palace, demonstrating continuity in the exhibition of the art collection. The second-floor rooms described in the inaugural pamphlet were reserved as a private space for guests staying at the palace. The personal nature of these rooms is reflected in the display of paintings, which “no longer follows a historical or museographic criteria”, and featured a variety of styles:

⁹⁷ It is true that Alba accepted Lutyens ideas for a modern staircase, although somewhat hesitantly. Hernández Barral, “La nobleza,” 412; Basarrate, “English Architect in Spain,” 257–58.

⁹⁸ The 17th Duke's purchases for the Grand Duke Room have been mentioned in previous sections of this contribution. The 18th Duchess purchased also bought an important portrait of the Imperial Prince by Winterhalter for the Empress Eugénie Room. The family already owned a copy of this painting which they inherited from the Eugénie de Montijo; Fondo Artístico, ADA.

⁹⁹ The first was an Engravings Room, which holds the remainder of the collection of engravings that was lost in the Civil War. There was a Second Empire Room, again remembering the Empress Eugénie, decorated with the variety of furniture, paintings and sculptures in the collection related to Napoleon III, Eugénie and the Imperial Prince. And lastly was the “long room” principally decorated with paintings from the 18th century, with the exception of a painting and preparatory sketch by Jacques Dominique Ingres of Philip V placing the Collar of the Golden Fleece on the Marshal Berwick, purchased by the 17th Duke Jacobo. Lastly is a room with various sculptures, including the Marquesa de Ariza by José Alvarez Cubero, Napoleon III by Bartolini, and a modern bust, Zöe, by Emiliano Barral, another acquisition by the Duke Jacobo.

18th century English portraits, landscapes by Antonio Joli, and Gustave Courbet, as well as family portraits and busts by Juan Antonio Morales or Mariano Benlliure.¹⁰⁰ This study shows how, over time, the further the collection is from the public eye, the less academic is its arrangement. Again we remember Alcalá Galiano's comment in 1928, and see that the reconstructed Liria Palace still boasted the unique capability of filling both "public" and "private" spaces with its impressive art collection.

Conclusion

The evolution of the Alba collection's exhibition over time is just one of many ways to evaluate the ancient nobility's strategies to persevere and adapt to changing times, and is one that is well-endowed with documentation available in inventories, catalogues, photographs, press coverage, and the Prado Museum Board meeting minutes. This history brings to light information about the creation and/or optimization of different narratives constructed with the art collection that form part of the collective memory of the Alba family, and are integrated into the museography of Liria Palace. The analysis of the collection's exhibition history illuminates the function of the art collection for self-fashioning, inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly in the defining and refining of role models and collecting priorities; and outwardly in the tangible manifestation of distinction, continuity, and perseverance of the Alba family in tumultuous times for the nobility. But as we have seen, continuity is not synonymous with immutability. Numerous changes were made in the exhibition of the palace—aside from the fact the palace itself was a new construction—while the overall effect was one of continuity, bringing to mind ideas of the "fiction of continuity".¹⁰¹

Postscript: Continuity and Context

The exhibition of the art collection provided a means for the family to demonstrate its continuity and the perseverance of the nobility in aftermath, and in the midst of, great, and threatening, social and economic changes. When the reconstructed Liria Palace was inaugurated, Sánchez Cantón wrote that it was like "a phoenix rising from the ashes".¹⁰² The importance of the exhibition of the art collection was a significant part of the Duke's desire to rebuild the palace because the art collection, like the palace acquired a significance in its capability to display continuity.

Alba's insistence on the exhibition of the collection "in its appropriate setting" refers to the value of *context* in providing meaning. In any other setting the collection can boast objects of beauty or of historical importance. Yet, no other collector—state museum, noble, bourgeois collector or otherwise—could activate the element of collective family memory in the way the possession by the Duke could. For the collection to acquire its "full" sense, it needed to be exhibited then in an appropriate setting. This granted a special function to the Duke of Alba in society, as a provider of context to suffuse the collection with meaning—a meaning constructed with the tangible evidence

¹⁰⁰ Pita Andrade, *El palacio de Liria*, 76–80. The pamphlet does not describe the most personal private living areas of the palace.

¹⁰¹ Bourdieu, "Postface," 385–97.

¹⁰² Sánchez Cantón, *El palacio de Liria*, 15.

of the continuity of the collective memory of the Albas. In Alba's worldview, the stewardship of his collection, and the special meaning it attains in his possession, would serve as one of the justifications for the existence of the nobility in the 20th century.¹⁰³

The collection's meaning depended on the duke, as the duke's role in modern society depended on the collection.¹⁰⁴ The subject and object, the collector and collection, simultaneously reaffirmed one another. The symbiotic relationship built on intangible memory and distinction is made tangible in the art collection *when* exhibited in the appropriate context. The creation of context depended on the Duke of Alba, but it also called for a physical space, an original space—it required the reconstruction of Liria Palace.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ For Alba's defense of the nobility as art patrons and promoters of good taste, see his speech upon entering the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando; Fitz-James Stuart, *Discursos*.

¹⁰⁴ Hernández Barral, "La nobleza," 421.

¹⁰⁵ I thank the team at the Fundación Casa de Alba, especially José Manuel Calderón, Álvaro Romero, and Jaime Fernández. Research for this article was carried out within the framework of the project *Politics for the Legitimation of Nobility: Similarities, dissimilarities, and appropriations in the collecting of the nobility and bourgeoisie (1788–1931)*, PID2019-107636GA-100, and the Program of History, Art History and Territory at the National University of Distance Education, the International Doctoral School.

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»Primerno umeščena«
Kontinuiteta in kontekst zbirke vojvod Alba v palači Liria v Madridu (1931–1957)

Povzetek

Stalna postavitve rodbinske zbirke vojvod Alba v palači Liria v Madridu je nastala pod izrazitim vplivom lastnikovih teženj po ohranitvi oziroma poudarjanju družbene razslojenosti v 20. stoletju s poudarjanjem kolektivnega rodbinskega spomina, po ponazarjanju kontinuitete in utemeljevanju pomena zbirke s kontekstualiziranjem v njenem prvotnem okolju. V prispevku je podana primerjalna analiza prvotne stalne postavitve v rezidenci vojvod Alba, palači Liria, leta 1931; palača je bila leta 1936 porušena v španski državljanski vojni. Avtorica prvotno postavitve primerja s povojno postavitvijo, ki so jo leta 1957 uredili v prenovljeni palači. Na podlagi arhivskih inventarjev v zasebnem arhivu vojvod Alba pogloblja vedenje o obeh postavitvah zbirke umetnin in o vlogi, ki jo je imela rodbinska zbirka pri rekonstrukciji palače. Celovito ohranjena arhivska dokumentacija, ki med drugim vključuje inventarje, kataloge zbirk, fotografije interjerjev, odmeve v medijih in zapisnike sestankov svetovalnega odbora muzeja Prado, je omogočila temeljito proučitev sprememb v postavitvi zbirke. V njih se zrcalijo strategije, s katerimi se je ena najbolj etabliranih evropskih plemiških dinastij prilagajala družbenim spremembam v 20. stoletju. Dolgotrajno deponiranje in nadomestno vključevanje umetnin v razstave muzeja Prado sta zaznamovala muzeografijo rekonstruirane palače. V prispevku so tematizirani vidiki formiranja in optimiziranja narativov, ki spremljajo umestitev zbirke v interjerje, kot osrednjih elementov kolektivnega rodbinskega spomina vojvod Alba in so integrirani v muzejsko predstavitev v palači Liria. Takšna obravnava historiat zbirke in sprememb v njeni umestitvi omogoča njeno proučevanje v ožjem in širšem kontekstu: v ožjem z iskanjem vzorov njene prezentacije, v širšem pa s proučitvijo materialnih manifestacij njenih posebnosti, kontinuitete in vidikov ohranjanja rodbinske vloge in pomena v turbulentnem obdobju in neugodnih razmerah, s katerimi se je soočalo plemstvo. Kontinuiteta rodbine v tem primeru ne pomeni ohranjanja oziroma nespremenljivosti. Ob dejstvu, da je bila po uničenju med državljansko vojno palača ponovno zgrajena, je v novi postavitvi zbirke kljub težnjam po kontinuiteti prišlo do sprememb, na podlagi katerih lahko historiat postavitve zbirke Alba pojasnimo z Bordieuevim pojmom »fikcija kontinuitete«. Člani rodbine Alba so se zavedali, da sta pomembnejša rodbinska prispevka ravno skrbništvo nad rodbinsko zbirko in njeno upravljanje, vključno s primerno umestitvijo v njihov zasebni družinski prostor v palači, v kateri bivajo. Simbolična vrednost in pomen, ki temeljita na vojvodi, ter kulturno-družbena vloga vojvode pa so vzajemno povezani tudi z zbirko. Subjekt in objekt – v tem primeru zbiratelj in zbirka – se vzajemno potrjujeta in utemeljujeta. Simbolični odnos med lastnikom in zbirko, zgrajen na nesnovnem spominu in distinkciji, postane snoven samo, kadar je zbirka umeščena v primeren kontekst. Za ustvarjanje konteksta je poskrbel vojvoda Alba, ustvaril ga je z umestitvijo v prvotni prostor – z rekonstrukcijo palače Liria.