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Cornelis Schut III

Portrait of a Lady Belonging to the Guzman-Davalos Family, 1682

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CORNELIS SCHUT III

(Antwerp 1629 – Seville 1685)

PORTRAIT OF A LADY BELONGING TO THE GUZMAN-DAVALOS FAMILY, 1682

Signed, *dated* and inscribed: Cornelis Schutt. *Pinc. / et. f. año de 1682. en / Sevilla.*; and inscribed: *ÆTATIS. SVÆ. / AN. 14. MEN. 2.*

oil on canvas

126.3 x 98.8 cm; 49 3/4 x 38 7/8 in.

Provenance

Du Pré Alexander, 2nd Earl of Caledon (1777-1839);

By descent to James, 4th Earl of Caledon, K.P. (1846-1884), 5 Carlton House Terrace, London;

With Agnew's, London, where acquired by

Sir Francis Watson, K.C.V.O. (1907-1992), by August 1969;

Sold by his heir, Christie's London, 9 July 2014, lot 164 (as Cornelis Schut III).

Literature

G.F. Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain*, London 1857, pp. 150-51 (no. 3 listed under 'Murillo').

I. Cano, in *Murillo y su estela en Sevilla*, ed. B. Navarette Prieto, Seville 2017, p. 260, cat. no. 49, reproduced.

Exhibition History

Seville, Convento de Santa Clara, *Murillo y su estela en Sevilla*, 6 December 2017 - 8 April 2018, no. 49.

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Cornelis Schut III was a Flemish-born painter who became a central figure in seventeenth-century Seville. He was the nephew of the painter Cornelis Schut I (1597-1655) and son of Pieter Schut (c.1601-1646) – an engineer who nonetheless collaborated with his brother on flower-garland paintings and produced engraved and illuminated books. He likely settled in Seville between 1642 and 1644. The first firm evidence of his presence in Seville is his betrothal to Agustina Tello de Meneses in 1653, sister-in-law of sculptor José de Arce, with whom Schut collaborated. He lived in the parish of the Sagrario (1653-54), then on Calle de las Sierpes beside the cathedral (1655-58), and later in the parish of San Nicolás (from 1658), where he remained longest. In 1654 he passed the exam to qualify as *maestro pintor de ymaginería*. Between 1660 and 1674 he was closely involved in establishing Seville's Academy of Painting, serving first as attorney, then as consul from 1673, and being elected president on two occasions (1670 and 1674). His output encompassed history painting, portraiture, and still life, but he specialised in religious imagery, notably numerous "Immaculate Conceptions" in the tradition of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. His style fused Flemish draughtsmanship with Sevillian softness of light and devotional atmosphere. Patronised by the Seville Cathedral chapter and by wealthy Flemish merchants in Andalusia, he nonetheless died in poverty after a costly illness.

The present portrait, signed and dated 1682, depicts a young noblewoman from the Guzmán-Dávalos family, as indicated by the coat-of-arms carved upon the base of the column. The sitter, shown in three-quarter view within an elaborate architectural setting, exemplifies the refined portraiture of late Habsburg Spain. Her attire reflects the transitional fashion of the 1680s: she has abandoned the stiff *guardainfante* silhouette of Philip IV's court for a more elongated, graceful form. The fabrics are rich yet restrained – silks and lace in pale tones offset by crimson ribbons and lustrous pearls. In one hand she holds a pearl-edged silver salver heaped with jasmine and orange blossoms, emblems of purity, youth, and fragrance. Schut deploys the scenographic devices characteristic of his mature style: the fluted column symbolising moral steadfastness, the marble balustrade and distant landscape creating a sense of both grandeur and perspective. The architectural framework, rendered with sharp contrasts of light and shadow, lends solemnity to the composition while enhancing the sitter's dignity. The crisp handling of lace and jewellery recalls Flemish precision, while the softened modelling of flesh and atmospheric restraint situate the painting firmly within the Sevillian orbit of Murillo.

When the great connoisseur Gustav Waagen saw the painting in 1857, he described it as a "Portrait of a lady of pretty features, and in a rich dress," noting its "transparent colouring" and acknowledging it as "a good Spanish painter, though unknown to me." His comments reflect its early misattribution to Murillo yet acknowledge its quality within the Sevillian

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tradition. The painting's authorship was conclusively established when its signature was recognised prior to its sale in 2014. The painting's early provenance traces to the distinguished collection of Du Pré Alexander, 2nd Earl of Caledon (1777-1839), and was housed at 5 Carlton House Terrace, London, later passing by descent through the Caledon family. By 1857 it hung in the Drawing Room alongside Sir Anthony van Dyck's celebrated full-length *Portrait of a Lady with her Daughter* - then identified as the Marchesa Spinola and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art.

A companion portrait of a man - historically identified as the *Conde de Ávalos* - was recorded alongside the present painting from at least the early nineteenth century (fig. 1), when both hung in the Caledon collection.¹ Sharing the same coat of arms, fictive marble cartouches, architectural columns, and nearly identical dimensions, the two works were long considered pendants and were each attributed to Murillo in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The male sitter, dressed in black with a white lace collar and holding a glove, bears the inscription *Ætatis suæ 34* on the column behind him. Diego Angulo later placed it among Murillo's doubtful works, suggesting a Flemish hand from the circle of Victor Boucquet,² until the rediscovery of the present signed and dated canvas established both portraits as by Cornelis Schut III, painted in Seville in 1682. Ignacio Cano, in his 2017 publication, further explains the identification of the female sitter as "belonging to the Guzmán-Dávalos Family" and the male sitter as the "Count of Ávalos". He notes the "Count of Ávalos" title is a later invention - no such county existed - and the sitters almost certainly belonged to the wider Guzmán lineage, one branch of which bore the additional surname Ávalos or Dávalos. The coat of arms on the female portrait's column base confirms her association with that family, though her personal identity remains unknown; the compound "Guzmán-Dávalos" is best understood as a descriptive label based on heraldic rather than archival evidence.

¹ I. Cano, in *Murillo y su estela en Sevilla*, ed. B. Navarette Prieto, Seville 2017, p. 258, cat. no. 48, reproduced.

² D. Angulo Iñiguez, *Murillo*, Madrid 1981, p. 564.

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Fig. 1. Cornelis Schut III, *Portrait of the Count of Avalos*, oil on canvas, 126.5 x 98.5 cm, private collection.

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