



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS  
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

**VOLUME ONE**

Edited by Sarah Lees

With an essay by Richard Rand  
and technical reports by Sandra L. Webber

With contributions by Katharine J. Albert, Philippe Bordes, Dan Cohen,  
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**161 | Asensio Juliá** 1814

Oil on canvas, 73 x 57.8 cm  
 Lower left corner: P.º P.º Goya. 1814.  
 1955.83

Since this painting was first mentioned by Charles Yriarte in his 1867 book as a portrait of “Asensi Julia” by Goya, there has been a general consensus among scholars that this work is indeed by the Spanish master and that the sitter is Asensio Juliá, a well-documented student and assistant of Goya’s. The identification of the sitter in the Clark’s painting as Asensio Juliá seems appropriate, not only because of the name, which is very similar to the title given by Yriarte and matches exactly with that mentioned by Federico de Madrazo (1815–1894), the first known owner of the painting, in his correspondence, but also on account of the sitter’s age. The figure in the painting is middle-aged and Juliá was fifty-four in 1814, the date inscribed on the canvas. In addition, the sitter poses with a charcoal holder in his right hand, an element that clearly identifies him as an artist, Juliá’s profession.

The study of Asensio Juliá’s (1760–1832) life and work has been of great interest for academics such as Edward Sullivan, and most importantly, Rafael Gil, who in 1990 published a landmark biography about this artist.<sup>1</sup> His birth date had been questioned by scholars, but Gil determined that Juliá was born in Valencia in 1760 and entered the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos in Valencia at age eleven, where he studied until 1775. In February 1783, he applied to enroll as a student in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, and he exhibited his works there on several occasions throughout his career. After December 1818, Juliá was adjunct director of the ornaments section of the Royal School of la Merced, a center that was administratively dependant on the San Fernando Academy, the institution where he eventually became director until his death on 25 October 1832.

Both how and when Juliá met Goya, as well as the extent of their relationship, are uncertain. It has been mentioned that, in addition to his possible assistance with the execution of the famous frescoes of the Hermitage of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid (1798), Juliá was commissioned to do other decorative projects that were under Goya’s direction, such as the fresco decoration of the residence of Tadeo Bravo del Rivero in Madrid, for which Juliá painted an allegorical

subject.<sup>2</sup> It is also recorded that Juliá copied at least one painting by Goya, the famous late portrait entitled *Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta* (1820; Minneapolis Institute of Arts), of which it is documented that Juliá painted two copies (private collection, Madrid; and location unknown).<sup>3</sup>

Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, critics and scholars have admired and praised this portrait mainly for its romantic qualities and have compared it to the work of Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669). The French poet and art critic Théophile Gautier, writing in 1870, noted that Goya could be regarded as the precursor of the Romantic movement, and even suggested that the sitter in this work bore a close resemblance to a young Eugène Delacroix himself.<sup>4</sup> The Spanish art historian José Camón Aznar shared this opinion, and commented that it is a “deep romantic portrait, of the greatest sympathy and noble pose.”<sup>5</sup> Other art historians, among them Elizabeth du Gué Trapier, have especially highlighted the resemblance of the portrait to the work of Rembrandt, an artist who interested Goya. Trapier was the first Goya specialist to mention this connection with the Clark’s portrait, followed by Isadora Rose-de Viejo, who studied the topic in depth in a 1993 exhibition.<sup>6</sup>

The Clark’s portrait has a fairly solid provenance, since it was first mentioned by Yriarte in 1867, who wrote that he saw the work at the home of the Spanish painter Federico de Madrazo (1815–1894), a powerful and influential artist, in Madrid. The painting also appears in a period photograph from the old Madrazo archive.<sup>7</sup> Previously, Federico’s father, José de Madrazo (1781–1859), had a very important collection of Old Master paintings, and it is documented that he already owned three Goya paintings by 1856, none of which correspond with the portrait of Juliá. This means that over the years, Federico acquired more paintings by Goya. When Yriarte visited, he noted that Madrazo owned six Goya paintings, the Clark portrait among them.

In 1869, two years after Yriarte’s book was published, Federico de Madrazo sold the painting to the French art dealer Durand-Ruel. This transaction, which further confirms that the painting once belonged to Madrazo, was documented in a letter that the Spanish artist sent from Madrid on 29 January 1869, to his son, the painter Raimundo de Madrazo (1841–1920), who had been living in Paris since the mid-1860s. The letter stated that Luis de Madrazo (1825–1897), Federico’s brother, received a telegram from a gentleman named





Fig. 161.1 Francisco de Goya, *Asensio Julià*, c. 1798. Oil on canvas, 54.5 x 41 cm. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Mr. Godecharle, asking him to tell Federico to send “the portrait of the painter D. Asensio Juliá (el pescadoret) by Goya” to Durand-Ruel, who had offered to buy the painting for two thousand francs.<sup>8</sup> Although the history of ownership is uncertain for a number of years after 1870, the painting resurfaced in a 1923 sale, and was purchased by Sterling Clark the following year.

There are three other paintings that are related to the Clark’s picture. One is a cabinet painting done by Goya during the last years of the eighteenth century representing a man, also considered to be Asensio Juliá, posing in front of scaffolding (fig. 161.1). This identification is based on the inscription on the painting, which reads “Goya a su / Amigo Asensi” (Goya to his / Friend Asensi), and the scaffolding in the background, which some scholars interpret as the structure erected to execute the frescos of San Antonio de la Florida. As noted, some specialists believe that Juliá assisted Goya in this project, and the scaffolding would be a direct reference to that collaboration. The identification of the figure in this canvas, however, has been increasingly questioned by specialists, based, among other issues, on the clear inscription on the canvas reading “Asensi,” a name which could indicate an individual other than Asensio Juliá.<sup>9</sup>

Another supposed Goya portrait representing Asensio Juliá was mentioned by Sullivan and Gil in their studies on Juliá, and is currently located at the Frick Art and Historical Center in Pittsburgh (fig. 161.2).<sup>10</sup> The painting depicts a half-length portrait of a young man dressed in an overcoat with wide lapels,



Fig. 161.2 Style of Goya, *Portrait of Asensio Julià*. Oil on canvas, 54 x 45.7 cm. Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh

white shirt, and a silk tie around his neck. Although this portrait bears similarities to the Clark’s, it is difficult to confirm whether they are indeed the same sitter. Further, its attribution to Goya has been questioned. Therefore, the identity of the sitter as well as the painting’s authorship remains open to debate.

A third painting connected with the Clark’s picture is a copy that the nineteenth-century Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874) is reported to have made of this canvas, probably when it was still in the possession of his father-in-law, Federico de Madrazo. His biographer recorded that during his short lifetime, Fortuny made at least six copies of Goya’s works, one of them a “Portrait of Julia de Valence, student of Goya.” The description corresponds with the portrait at the Clark, being “a life size, half length view, with a charcoal holder in his hand.”<sup>11</sup> The location of this copy, however, remains unknown.

Many scholars have written very positive critiques of the Clark’s painting and have found its attribution to Goya unquestionable.<sup>12</sup> Further, most scholars have identified the sitter as Goya’s assistant, the Valencian artist Asensio Juliá. There are important inconsistencies, however, that complicate the study of this work. In fact, there are three significant discrepancies: the name given to the sitter, the various inscriptions that have been mentioned, and the description of the painting itself.

Although some authors entitled the painting “Portrait of Asensio Juliá,” the accepted name of this assistant of Goya, and in some cases added his pseudonym



Fig. 161.3 Photograph of *Asensio Julià*, during conservation treatment, 1965

or family nickname, “El Pescadoret” (the little fisherman), others have given the name subtle alterations, including *Asensi*, *Ascensio*, and *Asencio*. The addition or omission of the “o” on the sitter’s name has been given different interpretations by scholars. Some have suggested that the name variation is based on its translation; *Asensi* would be the Valencian name of *Julià* and would translate to *Asensio* in Castilian. Others have gone so far as to conclude that the names are entirely different, and that the Clark painting is not a portrait of the artist at all.

Similar inconsistencies are found with the readings of the inscription on the painting given by these scholars. These vary from August Mayer’s “Pr. Goya. 1814. A. D. *Asensio Julià su amigo*” (by Goya. 1814. To Mr. *Asensio Julià* his friend), to Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño’s “A D<sup>n</sup>. *Asensio Julià su amigo Pr. Goya, 1814*” (to Mr. *Asensio Julià* his friend by Goya, 1814), to the sale catalogue of 1870, which read “A Dn. *Aseniro Julio su amigo*” (To Mr. *Aseniro Julio* his friend).<sup>13</sup> In fact, following Gaya Nuño’s publication, and with only slight alterations, all scholars write that the only inscription found on the painting is what is visible today, “P.† P.† Goya. 1814.” The most likely explanation for the current absence of an inscription next to the signature would be that it was concealed or erased during a conservation treatment. This could also explain why there are so many variations on the name of the artist, with scholars basing their identification on when and how they read the inscription.

The third problematic issue concerns the variations

throughout the years in the description of the painting. The first scholar to document the Clark’s portrait, Yriarte, described the sitter as “wearing a hat similar to the one worn by Goya in the profile of his head in the *Caprichos*, a three-colored rosette attached to the hat and an almost cruel accent provide this canvas with a particular character.”<sup>14</sup> This description fits the portrait at the Clark with the exception of the “three-colored rosette” which is absent from the painting today. This ornament was also later mentioned by authors such as Ceferino Araujo Sánchez and Paul Lafond around 1900. From Trapier’s 1964 publication on, however, instead of a multicolored rosette, the only ornament mentioned as attached to the hat is the one visible on the Clark’s painting today, a red rosette.<sup>15</sup> There is no document that explains why this three-colored rosette is not present in today’s canvas, and its disappearance might again be explained by an erasure or repainting during a conservation treatment, since we know that through the years the painting has suffered considerable damage. A photograph of the painting, taken in 1965 while it was in the process of conservation, shows not only the former state of the work, but also how a great percentage of the surface has simply disappeared (fig. 161.3). The area around the coat has suffered the most, with vast areas abraded. This same condition is found in parts of the face, especially the forehead and cheek, as well as the hat and the background.

The best preserved part of the painting is the hand, while the signature underneath the paper appears very faint. In this signature, the first “P.†,” an abbreviation that means *por* (by), which is thickly painted, is probably a residue of a repainting or a later addition, since the artist would not have repeated the same letters twice. In fact, this anomaly might indicate that there had indeed been a longer inscription on the painting, such as those mentioned by various authors in the nineteenth century. A similar inscription to these appears incised and then filled in with charcoal on the central bar of the stretcher, on which is visible “A D<sup>n</sup> *Aseniro Julia su amigo. Goya.*” This text may be the source of the inscription recorded in the 1870 sale catalogue, which repeats it almost exactly, and it might perhaps have been inscribed on the stretcher during one of the conservation campaigns in order to record the existence of a former, longer inscription on the face of the canvas, or written by one of the painting’s multiple owners.

Admittedly, this work remains a shadow of its original state. The first scholars to highlight and

emphasize the poor condition of the painting were Goya specialists Juliet Wilson-Bareau and Pierre Gassier, who, in 1971, catalogued the Clark's portrait as a Goya, while noting that it was "almost entirely repainted," and that it "can be considered only as a record of Goya's original painting."<sup>16</sup> The issue of the poor conservation state of the picture and the question of its attribution were revisited in 1993 by Wilson-Bareau; when studying the "Asensi" Goya painting at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, she briefly stated that the Clark's painting is "of doubtful authenticity and largely repainted."<sup>17</sup>

Although Wilson-Bareau has yet to publish further discussion of the issues that led her to doubt the authenticity of the Clark's portrait, her statement has opened an avenue of inquiry. From this author's perspective, the painting should be considered a Goya until new documentation or evidence is discovered that clearly testifies to the contrary. Since the condition of the painting is so poor, finding a close copy of the original, such as the Fortuny, would help to further the understanding of the Clark's picture and perhaps reveal more about its original state with respect to color, inscriptions, and lost elements of the composition, such as the three-colored rosette. As for the identity of the sitter, the most likely identification remains that of Asensio Juliá, although it is possible that in the future, when the study of the life and work of artists of Goya's circle, including Juliá, has advanced, a different identification may be made. MR

**PROVENANCE** Federico de Madrazo, Madrid (after 1856–69, sold to Durand-Ruel, Paris, Jan. 1869); [Durand-Ruel, Paris, from 1869]; Edwards, Paris (until 1870, his sale Drouot, Paris, 7 Mar. 1870, no. 29, ill., as *Julio [élève de Goya]*, sold to Durand-Ruel); [Durand-Ruel, Paris, from 1870]; Bamberger, Paris (until 1923, his sale, Drouot, Paris, 17 Mar. 1923, no. 48, ill., as *Portrait du peintre Asensio Julia "El Pescadoret"*, sold to Trotti); [Trotti, Paris, from 1923]; [Knoedler, New York, sold to Clark, 18 Jan. 1924]; Robert Sterling Clark (1924–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

**EXHIBITIONS** Williamstown 1955, no. 83, pl. 63; Williamstown 1958b, pl. 26; Dallas 1982–83, pp. 66–67, no. I.13; Williamstown 1991b, no cat.

**REFERENCES** Yriarte 1867, pp. 77, 137; Gautier 1870, p. 1; Araujo Sánchez 1896, p. 116, no. 230; Lafond 1902, pp. 64, 131, no. 147; Loga 1903, p. 199, no. 264 (2nd ed., p. 197, no. 264); Calvert 1908, p. 136, no. 169; Stokes 1914, p. 332, no. 125; Mayer 1923, p. 195, no. 326 (English ed., pp. 34, 159, no. 326); Beruete 1928, p. 56; Desparmet Fitz-Gerald

1928–50, vol. 2, pp. 206, 263, no. 495, pl. 409; Mayer 1934, pp. 174–75, ill.; Chicago 1941, p. 33; Comstock 1955, p. 305; Frankfurter 1955, p. 28, ill.; Lafuente Ferrari 1955, p. 108; Gaya Nuño 1958, p. 176, no. 1074; *Emporium* 1959, p. 79, ill.; Werner 1961, p. iv, ill.; Trapier 1964, pp. 39, 56, no. 72, pl. 72; Polley 1967, p. 31, ill.; Lewis 1968, p. 202, ill.; Gudiol 1971, vol. 1, p. 329, no. 625, vol. 4, p. 827, fig. 1014; Gassier and Wilson 1971, pp. 254, 262, no. 902, ill.; De Angelis 1974, p. 127, no. 562, ill.; Salas 1981, pp. 123, 194, no. 456; Sullivan 1982, pp. 106–9, fig. 4; Winner 1982, pp. 131, 133, ill.; Camón Aznar 1984, vol. 3, p. 366, ill., vol. 4, pp. 30–31; Gil 1986, pp. 79, 81, fig. 1; Hempel-Lipschutz 1987, pp. 221–22, fig. 11 (French ed., pp. 71–72, pl. 11); Gil 1990, pp. 63–65, 119–20, pl. 1; Gil 1991, p. 61, fig. 3; Baticle 1992, p. 413; Gil 1992, p. 81, ill.; Pita Andrade and Borobia Guerrero 1992, p. 593; Geneva 1993, pp. 76, 80, 82 ill.; Madrid–London–Chicago 1993–94, p. 371; Morales y Marín 1994, p. 322, no. 443, ill.; Madrazo 1994, vol. 2, pp. 677–768, no. 303; Kern et al. 1996, pp. 40–41, ill.; Indianapolis–New York 1996–97, p. 257, fig. 2; Lille–Philadelphia 1998–99, p. 184; Santander–Madrid 1998, p. 172; Amsterdam 2000, pp. 65, 67, ill.; Mena Marqués, 2008, pp. 52, 59; Madrid 2007, p. 110.

**TECHNICAL REPORT** The original support is a coarse, moderate-weight linen (9 x 13 threads/cm), with irregular thread sizes, which has an early glue or paste lining. The picture may have been treated through Knoedler Gallery at the time of purchase in 1924. The lining, which appears quite old, discolored, and degraded (though stable), may date from the nineteenth century. The stretcher is slightly out of plane. Radiating corner stress cracks appear in the two upper corners, and there are age cracks elsewhere. The entire surface is extremely abraded and was carefully, though massively, reconstructed in two campaigns; the first in 1965 by Alan Thielker, with additional inpainting in 1976 by Sheldon Keck. In ultraviolet light, the small, thin, careful strokes of the two conservators can be clearly seen, despite the dense fluorescence. Retouching is visible in the forehead, eyes, cravat, hat, coat, and background. The face and white areas are more completely cleaned than the rest, and there are some very heavy deposits of old resin in the lower left quadrant of the image. The signature and date are very faint, and the hand is the area in the best condition. The surface gloss is good.

The ground layers seem to be an orange-tan over a red layer, and are rough and uneven in surface texture. Distortions in the weave around the edges, together with the surface character, suggest that the artist stretched and primed the canvas himself. The ground layers were probably applied by palette knife, as knife marks and patchy ground application seen in the X-radiograph may indicate. The ground layers may not be especially thick, as the weave of the canvas is visible through the abraded paint. A possible sketchy charcoal underdrawing was seen under low magnification in the line of the mouth and nose details, although in most other places it remains hidden by black paint outlines. These painted outlines may actually constitute an oil sketch, whose strong lines

were then incorporated into the final image. The paint technique is very thin in most places with the ground color and canvas texture visible beneath. The background, which was laid in with large brushes, may have been painted a light gray color prior to the present olive green tones. The X-radiograph may show changes in the hat outline in the left background, and it reveals some damage along the lower right edge. The paint is so thin, except in the shirt, that the face barely records on the film and the hand does not appear at all.

1. Gil 1990.
2. Gil 1990, p. 68.
3. See Gil 1990, pp. 82–83.
4. Gautier 1870, p. 1: “Goya peut être à bon droit regardé comme le précurseur du mouvement romantique en peinture. . . . Un autre portrait . . . offre cette particularité singulière de ressembler extrêmement à Eugène Delacroix jeune.”
5. Camón Aznar 1984, vol. 4, p. 30: “Retrato de grave empaque romántic, de la mayor simpatía y noble postura.”
6. See Trapier 1964 and Geneva 1993.
7. This photograph is reproduced in Madrid 2007, p. 110.
8. Federico de Madrazo to Raimundo de Madrazo, 29 Jan. 1869, in Madrazo 1994, p. 677, letter 303: “el retrato del pintor D. Asensio Juliá (*el pescadoret*), por Goya.”
9. For more on this painting, see Madrid–London–Chicago 1993–94, pp. 264–65, 365.
10. The provenance for this painting is not fully documented, but it includes, in the twentieth century: Edward R. Bacon, New York (d. 1915); Walter Rathbone Bacon, his brother (d. 1917); Mrs. Walter Rathbone Bacon, his widow, sold to Henry Clay Frick, 1918. The painting was officially accessioned by the Frick Art and Historical Center in 1984.
11. Drovot 1875, p. 50, no. 130: “Portrait de Julia de Valence, élève de Goya. De grandeur naturelle, vue à mi-corps, tenant à la main un porte-crayon (d’après Goya), Toile—H. 0.72, L. 0.54.”
12. These include Gudiol 1971, De Angelis 1974, Camón Aznar 1984, Baticle 1992, and Morales y Marín 1994, among others.
13. Mayer 1923, p. 195; Gaya Nuño 1958, p. 176; Drouot 1870, p. 97.
14. Yriarte 1867, p. 137: “coiffé d’un chapeau semblable à celui que Goya porte dans le profil en tête des *Caprices*, une cocarde tricolore fixée au chapeau et un accent presque cruel donnent à cette toile un caractère particulier.”
15. Araujo Sánchez 1896, p. 116; Lafond 1902, p. 131; Trapier 1964, p. 56.
16. Gassier and Wilson 1971, p. 254.
17. Madrid–London–Chicago 1993–94, p. 365.

## Style of Francisco de Goya y Lucientes

162 | **The Madrileña** Late 19th century

Oil on canvas, 77 x 54.8 cm  
1955.82

This waist-length portrait features a young woman posing against a neutral background. She is seated on a chair, slightly turned to the left with her right hand on her hip and the other resting on her lap. A long black mantilla covers her hair and drapes down the sides of her dress. A leafy red rose adorns her hair.

Bearing the title *The Madrileña* (the woman from Madrid) and formerly attributed to Francisco de Goya, this painting was probably done in the late nineteenth century by a Spanish or French painter. The artist was most likely an admirer of Goya who tried to imitate or find inspiration from his style. Although the attire, pose, and simple background evoke similar Goya portraits, especially those from the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the technique differs from the vibrant, intense manner that characterizes the work of the Spanish master. When compared with other female portraits by Goya, such as *Doña Isabel de Porcel* (before 1805; The National Gallery, London), *Thérèse Louise de Sureda* (c. 1802–4; National Gallery of Art, Washington), *Portrait of Doña Antonia Zárate* (c. 1805–6; National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin), *Doña Amalia Bonells de Costa* (c. 1805; Detroit Institute of Arts), and *Portrait of Doña Joaquina Candado* (c. 1790; Museo de Bellas Artes, Valencia), *The Madrileña* bears certain similarities, but the disparity in quality is apparent. The portrait of Isabel de Porcel is probably the most closely related to the Clark’s painting in attire, pose, composition, and background, yet even after taking its somewhat damaged condition into account, *The Madrileña* lacks the refinement and intensity of Goya’s portrait.

The unknown artist who created *The Madrileña* concentrated on elaborating the visage of the young woman and the red rose that adorns her hair, but painted the mantilla, dress, and chair in a more rapid manner. The result is a somewhat unbalanced composition worsened by proportional inconsistencies, such as her bulky right arm. The artist took care in defining the woman’s features—mainly her thick eyebrows, wide eyes, and full lips—yet poorly reproduced