

FRANCISCO BAYEU'S STUDY OF A DOG FROM LIFE

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Detail of Francisco Bayeu, *Study of a Dog from Life*, c. 1783–84,
oil on canvas, 43.3 × 72.7 cm. Bishop Auckland, Spanish Gallery [fig. 3.1]

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CHAPTER 1

FRANCISCO BAYEU, ‘BOTH APELLES AND ARISTIDES IN EQUAL MEASURE’¹

Francisco Bayeu y Subías (1734–1795) was the most distinguished Spanish painter of the second half of the eighteenth century after his brother-in-law Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746–1828). The pictorial language of this Zaragozan artist had its roots in the Neapolitan Baroque tradition, albeit filtered through the subsequent Rococo of Corrado Giaquinto (1703–1766).²

Bayeu became acquainted with classical sources, particularly sculpture, from casts and engravings, but also via Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779),³ first painter to Charles III of Spain (1716–1788), who was Bayeu’s first master in Madrid and who promoted him at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. With Mengs, Bayeu perfected his ‘correctness’ in drawing, composition and the expression of emotions. Like Goya, he possessed a remarkable ability to devise large and complex scenes filled with figures. Also significant is the influence on his work of Giambattista Tiepolo (1696–1770).⁴

1 León de Arroyal, *Ode XXXIX*, stanza 2, line 9; Ansón Navarro 2007, 41.

2 Pérez Sánchez 2006, 82–84.

3 Sancho 1997, 515–28; Roettgen 2003, 217–78; Hollweg 2008, *passim*; Jordán de Urríes 2013, esp. 97–98; Sancho 2013.

4 Sánchez Cantón 1953; Whistler 1986; Bray 1997; Mano 1997.



CHAPTER 2

PAINTED DOGS

Francisco Bayeu was familiar with the physical and not just intellectual experience of that ‘arduous but equally enjoyable exercise of hunting’,¹ a fact that gave him a mastery of the depiction of dogs when he needed to include one in a work.

‘One of those little dogs they call lapdogs’:² the portrait with a dog

The portrait of a woman with a lapdog was a typology established in the Renaissance and developed during the Baroque period. In the second half of the eighteenth century and as a result of the Rococo aesthetic, this already consolidated genre evolved and the portrait or scene with a dog acquired an unprecedented sensuality. The quintessential examples from the French school by artists such as François Boucher, Jean-Marc Nattier and Jean-Honoré Fragonard now reveal a particular approach to showing the relationship between the woman and her pet dog.

Francisco Bayeu did not pursue that approach in his portrait of *María Teresa del Castillo* [fig. 2.1], acquired in 2016 by the Meadows Museum, Texas, in which the young girl (identifiable from an old inscription on the original

1 Palomino 1715–24, III, 332.

2 Cervantes 2013, 622.



CHAPTER 3

*STUDY OF A DOG FROM LIFE:*¹ THE DOG IN THE SPANISH GALLERY

A reassessment in the light of the sources and previous studies

Francisco Bayeu painted a dog in a signed but undated work now in the Spanish Gallery [fig. 3.1]. The first documentary reference to it was published in 1952 by the Marquis of El Saltillo.² In addition, Xavier de Salas, at that time deputy director of the Museo del Prado, was starting his research on Manuel Godoy's collection of paintings. Salas published an inventory of paintings of 1805 requested by Charles IV's prime minister from the widow of the royal jeweller Leonardo Chopinot (1734–1799), in which the work is again listed.³ It was not, however, until 1990 that José Manuel Arnaiz discovered the original oil which, basing himself on the sources, he entitled *Sleeping Dog* but which he did not date.⁴ A year later it was exhibited for the first time in Zaragoza, dated to 1784 by José Luis Morales y Marín on the basis of its relationship with the fresco of *Saint Eulogius exhorting the Future Martyrs* (1784) in Toledo Cathedral [see fig. 4.1].⁵ Morales y Marín registered the painting in an identical manner in his catalogue of the complete

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- 1 Listing of the painting now in the Spanish Gallery in the inventory accompanying Bayeu's will.
 - 2 Saltillo 1952, 74, no. 110.
 - 3 Salas 1968–69, 31.
 - 4 Arnaiz 1990, 48–49.
 - 5 Morales y Marín 1991, 136.



CHAPTER 4

THE DOG IN THE SPANISH GALLERY AS A MODELLO

Dogs played a brief but notable role in Francisco Bayeu's visual repertoire. The dog in the Spanish Gallery was used as a modello on at least three known occasions: for two works by his hand (1784 and 1790) and another by his brother Ramón (1785).

'A very still, peaceful dog sleeping on the ground',¹ 1784

The Bishop Auckland *Dog* was first used as a modello for the scene of *Saint Eulogius exhorting the Future Martyrs* in the lower cloister of Toledo Cathedral, a fresco completed in 1784 [fig. 4.1]. Saint Eulogius of Córdoba (800–859) was a Mozarabic martyr of great intellectual renown and bishop elect of Toledo, hence his inclusion in the complex programme for the cathedral.² The scene is located on the wall of the medieval tower on the south gallery of the cloister (there are no other murals on this side), at the far west end next to the stairs to the Mollete doorway. This door gives onto the Calle del Arco of the Archiepiscopal Palace, followed by the Plaza del Ayuntamiento, one of the city's most emblematic locations.³

1 Parro 1858, I, 658.

2 Gutiérrez Pastor 1996, 77–100; Mingo Lorente and García Briceño 2003.

3 Navascués Palacio, Merino de Cáceres and Berriochoa Sánchez-Moreno 2011, ground plan, 139–65, esp. 162–63.

Conclusion: A Portrait of a Dog

Study of a Dog from Life in the Spanish Gallery is a figurative portrait of a healthy hunting dog in mid-life of a breed that cannot be identified using current standards [fig. C1]. The canvas functioned as a model (via the use of a cartoon) for two large and complex compositions by Francisco Bayeu executed for Toledo Cathedral as commissions promoted by Archbishop Lorenzana [figs C2, C3 and see fig. 4.7]. The dog was also used in a cartoon for a tapestry executed under his supervision by his brother Ramón for the decoration of the Apartments of the Prince of Asturias, the future Charles IV, at the palace of El Pardo, Madrid [fig. C4]. These works present a range of ideas relevant to Spanish Enlightenment culture, such as the championing of Velázquez, the importance of the signature as a commercial, authenticating element but also one of self-affirmation by the artist, exoticism, the technique of using cartoons for the multiplication of an original, and more. Taken together they go beyond any anecdotal pretext for a study of the presence of the dog in the work of Bayeu and in painting of this period in general.

The canvas remained in the artist's collection throughout his life, demonstrating his particular appreciation of it and its practical utility; a work that allowed him to add greater *varietà* to his compositions and thus fulfil one of the key principles in the literature on art since the Renaissance.



Fig. C1 Francisco Bayeu, *Study of a Dog from Life*, c. 1783–84 [fig. 3.1]



Fig. C2 Detail of fig. 4.1

This book was printed in 2024,
290 years after Francisco Bayeu y Subías
was born in Zaragoza.