

The Body Politic of Spanish Habsburg Queens

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The ideology of Spanish Habsburg rule was that the King had been ordained by God. Therefore, supreme power was vested in the King:

Toda persona esté sometida a las autoridades superiores, porque no hay autoridad que no venga de Dios; y las que existen, han sido establecidas por Dios. Por lo cual, el que resiste a la autoridad, resiste a la disposición de Dios ... (Romanos, 13:1-2).

Political writers of the period expanded on the political notions implicit in this rôle and utilized the traditional image of the “Body Politic” as a figure for the King and the kingdoms under his dominion. The King was the head of the Body Politic, and was responsible for its members, such as the ecclesiastical and military arms ¹.

According to traditional concepts of kingship, the King was thought of as having two bodies –the Body Natural and the Body Politic ². The former applied to his own person and was subject to decay, the latter signified the sovereignty of his rule and was perpetual. The King was a mortal being but in his office and dignity he was devoid of imperfection and immortal ³. The idea is succinctly

¹ See, for example, A. de Guevara, *Vida del Famosísimo Emperador Marco Aurelio, con el Relox de Príncipes*, Seville 1532; F. Furió Ceriol, *El Concejo y Consejeros del Príncipe*, Antwerp 1559. I am grateful to the late Ronald Cueto for these references.

² E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton 1957.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 497.

expressed in the acclamation: “The King is dead! Long live the King!” Thus the person of the King is subsumed into a grander design which signifies the order and harmony of a monarchy that, like the cosmos, was believed to have been divinely ordained. This was manifested in court ceremonial or etiquette. As in the Mass, it was not an end in itself, but the means to an end. The intention was to elevate the mind to the abstract idea that it encapsulated –the exaltation of the King and, ultimately, the glorification of God. Moreover, the repetition of ceremonial practices also made the idea more memorable and more significant.

In addition, in order to sustain his sovereignty the King himself would have to merit God’s grace. Therefore he was obliged to exemplify in his person and especially in his body politic, those virtues that were intrinsic to Christian rule –the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and the Cardinal Virtues of Justice, Fortitude, Prudence and Temperance. As Aquinas had propounded, the King has to be a paragon of virtue⁴.

He is represented as such in J. Pantoja de la Cruz’s portrait of *Philip II* [Fig. 1]. The King stands still. Rarely are Spanish Habsburg Kings shown seated. They have to appear upright and zealous in intent and action. His expression is grave, thoughtful and watchful. His physique is ascetic. His attire is priestly black in colour –“black as sackcloth of hair” (*Apocalipsis* 6:12). It is significant that his pose is similar to that of doña Juana de Austria [Fig. 10] and that both would appear to be represented as at an audience. In the portrait of Philip II, the style is iconic. The body natural has been abstracted in order to signify the essence of those qualities of Justice, Prudence and Temperance that are inherent in the King. It is a conceptual image of the King in his body politic.

Velázquez’s portrait of Philip IV [Fig. 2] is different in style, because it is based more closely on the imitation of nature, but it encapsulates the same ideas. The King stands erect, not at ease, and with his arms at his sides. His expression is sober and impassive. He, too, is dressed in black and wears the prescribed simple, plain collar, the “*golilla*”. His self-abnegation is also indicated by the bare setting and his slim physique. Yet X-rays have revealed that Velázquez significantly modified the original composition. He reduced the fleshy and heavy jowl of the King, as well as the width of his cloak. He also changed the

⁴ *Aquinas. Selected Political Writings*, ed. by A.P. D’Entrèves, trans. by J.G. Dawson, Oxford 1948, p. 49.

position of his legs so that his weight is now no longer supported only on one leg, with the other leg bent at the knee, as in a relaxed attitude⁵. As a result, the King appears slimmer, taller and more erect. In addition, his high-brow attests to his intellect, his steady gaze and calm deportment suggest composure, and his sober expression reveals the seriousness of his commitment to duty. It is evidently visible that he has the capacity to rule.

Portraits of Queens were complementary to those of Kings. They, too, are depicted in formal attitudes and appear as composed, serious and detached. They neither indulge in food or mirth nor exude seductive charm. Their rôle, too, was of great importance. Through procreation they sustained the legitimacy and succession of the Spanish Habsburgs.

Nevertheless, they were subordinate to Kings. In accord with Scripture, they had to obey their husbands: "... *pues no fue criado el varón por causa de la mujer, sino la mujer por causa del varón*" (I, Corintios, 11:9). The subordination of Queens was reflected in portraiture. For example, Kings are shown on the left and Queens on the right. This, too, is based on Scripture. After his Ascension, Christ sat on the right of his Father: "*El Señor Jesús ... fue elevado al cielo y está sentado a la derecha de Dios*" (Marcos, 16:19). However, in the Scriptural hierarchy, the Queen or Virgin is also placed on the right of God the Father or God the Son to indicate her pre-eminence over others: "*Se presentó la reina a tu derecha con manto de oro, rodeada de variedad*" (Salmos, 44:19).

In these circumstances –as in the Last Judgement, the Crucifixion and Titian's *Gloria* [Fig. 9]– she, too, is depicted on the viewer's left. Otherwise females are shown in the subordinate position of being on the left of those males who are regarded as superior and, therefore, on the viewer's right. Accordingly, the Emperatriz doña Isabel de Portugal is depicted on the left of Carlos V [Fig. 3]. The order intrinsic to their relationship is also suggested by the symmetry of the composition, and symbolized by the clock⁶. The moral implication of the clock was explicit in the title of Fr. Antonio de Guevara's *Relox de Príncipes* (1529). It is significant that this book was dedicated to Charles V and that, in the prologue to Book II, it is stated that:

⁵ J. López-Rey, *Velázquez. A Catalogue Raisonné of his Oeuvre*, London 1963, pp. 211-212, plates 443, 444. See, also, the author's brief but perceptive discussion of the "Quasi-Divine" nature of Velázquez's portraits of Philip IV, pp. 37-40.

⁶ For the social and moral implications of the clock in Titian's portraiture, see E. Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, mostly iconographic*, London 1969, pp. 88-90.



Fig. 1
Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Felipe II*, Monasterio de El Escorial



Fig. 2
Diego Velázquez, *Felipe IV*, Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 3
Pedro Pablo Rubens, copia del original perdido de Tiziano,
Carlos V y la Emperatriz Doña Isabel de Portugal, Fundación Casa de Alba, Madrid



Fig. 4
Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Infantes Don Felipe (IV) y Doña Ana*,
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Viena

*Y tracta el auctor en el presente libro de la manera que los príncipes y grandes señores se han de aver con sus mugeres y de cómo han de criar a sus hijos*⁷.

It is interesting that, after their marriage, Charles V gave Isabel a large gold clock as a present⁸. Likewise, doña Ana is seen in a similar position in relation to her younger brother, the Infante don Felipe (IV), because of his precedence as male heir to the throne [Fig. 4]. The same principle is intrinsic to the disposition of tombs and the congregation in churches. The Gospel or Evangelist side, which is to the right of the altar and to the left of the congregation, is more prestigious than the Epistle side. Thus, in the Basilica of the Escorial, Philip II respectfully placed his father's effigy on the Gospel side and his own on that of the Epistle [Fig. 5].

To fulfil their obligation to God and hopefully merit His grace in order to secure their rule and the welfare of their kingdoms, the Spanish Habsburgs zealously upheld, primarily, the Theological Virtues. The Escorial, which had been founded by Philip II, was the setting for their fervent devotion to the Eucharist. In the gilded bronze group of Charles V [Fig. 5], for example, all kneel in humility and hold their hands in prayer. Their dress is stately, their attitude is uniformly rigid and erect, and their position is calculated to convey their hierarchical status. Thus the Empress Isabella is again on the left of Charles V. In accord with Scripture, the male members are bareheaded to show respect to God. Conversely, the females cover their heads to be respectful to men:

Pero quiero que sepan que Christo es la cabeza de todo varón, el varón la cabeza de la mujer y Dios la cabeza de Cristo ... El varón no debe cubrir su

⁷ Fray A. de Guevara, *Relox de Príncipes* (estudio y ed. de E. Blanco), Madrid 1994, p. 401.

⁸ M^a J. Redondo Cantera, "Formación y gusto de la colección de la Emperatriz Isabel de Portugal", en *El arte en las cortes de Carlos V y Felipe II, IX Jornadas de Arte*, Madrid 1999, pp. 225-236, p. 229.

For the artistic patronage and pictorial representations of Isabel, see M^a J. Redondo Cantera, "Formación y gusto de la colección...", J. Sebastián Lozano, "Choices and Consequences: The Construction of Isabel de Portugal's Image", in T. Earenfight (ed.), *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, Aldershot 2005, pp. 145-162. For an analysis of the political character of her court, see F. Labrador Arroyo, "La Emperatriz Isabel de Portugal, mujer de Carlos V: Casa Real y facciones cortesanos (1526-1539)", *Portuguese Studies Review* 13 (1-2), (Peterborough, Ontario, 2005), pp. 135-171.

cabeza, porque es imagen y gloria de Dios; pero la mujer es gloria del varón ... Por eso la mujer debe llevar la señal de sujeción sobre su cabeza ... (I Corintios, II: 3,7,10).

Besides being shown in prayer, the piety of Queens could be signified by their holding a prayer book. Thus, in Titian's posthumous portrait of the Empress Isabel [Fig. 6], she is depicted holding what is probably a Psalter since the first letter of the text is "B", the rest of which is illegible. The first Psalm opens with the words "*Beatus vir ...*" ("*Bienaventurado el hombre que no siguió el consejo de impíos*")⁹. In this context it is significant that most of the books in Isabel's library were on religion, particularly liturgy, which included *salterios*, and spiritual reform:

*Además de lecturas piadosas habituales desde fines de la Edad Media, figuraban en su biblioteca textos de espiritualidad ascética y de filosofía estoica como los Pensamientos de Marco Aurelio. Significativamente estaban también presentes la devotio moderna, con la Imitatio Christi, y la nueva mentalidad reformista, con el Enchiridion de Erasmo*¹⁰.

Charles V would have been intimately aware of her keen interest in spiritual matters and presumably discussed this with Titian prior to his painting of her portrait. Thus, in her portrait, her detached gaze is intended to suggest not the mystique of majesty but her meditation on the text. In this connection it is possible that the mountainous landscape seen through the window is related to her meditation. It has been compared to the "blue mountain peaks of Cadore", the birth place of Titian¹¹. As a pictorial foil to the foreground scene it also served as a backcloth in Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin* (Venice, Accademia) and *St Mary Magdalen in Penitence* (Busto Arsizio, Collection of P. Candiani)¹². In the latter, the Saint is praying in penitence so that the wilderness in the background is appropriate. In Titian's portrait of the Empress Isabel, the mountain scenery could be a figure for the arduous ascent of the mind to God. It serves

⁹ I am especially grateful to Professor Michael Kauffmann for his help and suggestion that Isabel is holding a Psalter.

¹⁰ M^a J. Redondo Cantera, "Formación y gusto de la colección...", pp. 230-231.

¹¹ H.E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, II: "*The Portraits*", London 1971, p. 110.

¹² H.E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, I: "*The Religious Paintings*", London 1969, pp. 123, 146.



Fig. 5

Pompeo Leoni, *Cenotafio de Carlos V*, Real Basílica del Monasterio de El Escorial



Fig. 6

Tiziano, *La Emperatriz Doña Isabel de Portugal*, Museo Nacional del Prado

this purpose in both Scripture and spiritual writings. For example, Moses ascends Mt Sinai to meet God (*Éxodo*, ch.19); Christ goes to the Mount of Olives to pray to his Father (*Mateo*, 26:30), and also goes up a mountain to pray prior to his Transfiguration (*Lucas*, 9:28). Similarly, St Francis ascends Mount La Verna, where he receives the Stigmata, and St John of the Cross and Bernardino de Laredo recount their spiritual experiences in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Ascent of Mount Sion* respectively. In pictorial imagery there are precedents for mountain tops as the abode of Virtue, notably in Raphael's *Dream of Scipio* (London, The National Gallery) and Dürer's engraving of *The Christian Knight, Death and the Devil*.

It is conceivable that Titian was also inspired by Petrarch. The analogy between Titian's portrait of Isabel and Simone Martini's portrait of Petrarch's beloved and deceased Laura¹³, and between the affective responses of Charles V and Petrarch respectively has been perceived¹⁴.

Likewise Titian's mountainous landscape may have been influenced by Petrarch's *Ascent of Mont Ventoux*. Initially, Petrarch climbed the mountain to admire the view but on reaching the summit he read the passage in St Augustine's *Confessions* in which the saint chides men for admiring earthly things, such as high mountains, and, thereby, deserting themselves. Stunned by this truth, Petrarch recognized that the physical climb of the mountain should be forsaken for the ascent of the mind to God. Elsewhere in his account he described this allegorical progress:

The life we call blessed is located on a high peak. "A narrow way", they say, leads up to it. Many hilltops intervene, and we proceed "from virtue to virtue" with exalted steps. On the highest summit is set the end of all, the goal toward which our pilgrimage is directed¹⁵.

¹³ For Petrarch's responses to Simone Martini's portrait of Laura, see *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, transl. ed. by R.M. Durling, Cambridge, Mass., and London 1976, pp. 176-178, poems 77 and 78.

¹⁴ M. Falomir Faus, "Imágenes de poder y evocaciones de la memoria, usos y funciones del retrato en la corte de Felipe II", in *Felipe II. Un Monarca y su época. Un Príncipe del Renacimiento*, Madrid, 1998-1999, pp. 204-205.

¹⁵ E. Cassirer, P.O. Kristeller and J.H. Randall Jr. (eds.), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, Chicago and London 1948, p. 40.

Accordingly, it would seem that the inclusion of the mountainous landscape was intended to indicate that Isabel, having read the words of her prayer book, was meditating on their spiritual meaning and, thereby, was mentally ascending closer to God.

The symbiotic relationship of religion and politics in the rule of the Spanish Habsburgs is also implied in Titian's portrait of the Empress Isabel by means of the emblem of the Imperial double-headed eagle that is woven into the fabric of the curtain. However, in Pantoja de la Cruz's portrait of Queen Margarita [Fig. 7], which was painted in 1605 as a gift for James I after the peace treaty between Spain and England had been signed, the ideology of Spanish Habsburg rule is much more blatant. Her pose is rigid and her full-length body dominates the surrounding space. Her stiff dress is emblazoned with castles (Castilla), lions (León) and crowned double-headed eagles (Austria), as well as with monograms and sprays of flowers. It is also showered with pearls—a pun on the Latin noun of *margarita*¹⁶. She also wears the spectacular *joyel rico* which was composed of the *Estanque*, that is, a large, square, flat diamond with an elaborate setting from which was suspended a pear-shaped pearl known as the Peregrina¹⁷. Like the Empress Isabel she holds a prayer-book (Book of Hours) but unlike her she is not lost in thought. Instead, she looks directly at the viewer and holds open a page of the book with an illumination of the *Woman of the Apocalypse* (Ch. 12). Thus she demonstrates not only her faith in the Catholic religion but also her commitment to the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is symbolized by the image of the Woman of the Apocalypse. Since Protestants had rejected the Virgin as the Prime Mediatrix between man and Christ, doña Margarita's stance would seem to be an emphatic and resolute response to exalt the Virgin. In fact, she wrote letters to Rome to promote papal definition of the Immaculate Conception¹⁸. Indeed, in recognition of her zeal for this cause, the celebrated Trinitarian poet, Fray Hortensio Paravicino, compared her to the Woman of the Apocalypse of whom St John had a vision on the island of Patmos:

¹⁶ Fray H. Paravicino, *Sermones Cortesanos*, ed. de F. Cerdán, Madrid 1994, p. 230, n. 48.

¹⁷ P.E. Muller, *Jewels in Spain. 1500-1800*, New York 1972, pp. 53-54.

¹⁸ See S.L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 90-92.

¡Oh, generosa, real, santa, grande Margarita! ... Sí, llevo a mirar en Madrid, como a ser pudiera en Patmos, una mujer coronada de estrellas, que aun en el cerco del sol obstinan sus resplandores...¹⁹.

A further testament of her “Faith and Good Works” was her foundation of the convent of *Las Descalzas Reales* in Valladolid, the *Real Monasterio de la Encarnación* in Madrid, and the Jesuit house in Salamanca.

To sustain the religious commitment of the Monarquía Católica, the Queen impressed her zeal on to her children. This is reflected in Pantoja de la Cruz’s portrait of the *Infantes Don Felipe [IV] y Doña Ana* [Fig. 4]. Philip is dressed in the manner of a friar (*vestido de fraile*)²⁰ and his jewelled pendant is decorated with a large cross. His sister also wears a conspicuously large jewelled cross, seemingly the same as that worn by the Queen in another of her portraits by Pantoja (Museo Nacional del Prado, Cat. núm. 1032).

The piety of doña Margarita and her family was also manifested in those religious compositions in which they appeared in the guise of the principal characters –*retratos a lo divino*²¹. For example, the Virgin is shown with the features of doña Margarita in Pantoja’s Annunciation (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Similarly, in Pantoja’s *Birth of the Virgin* (Museo Nacional del Prado) [Fig. 8] the Queen’s mother, doña María de Baviera, plays the rôle of St Anne, and her sisters, Leonor and Catalina Renata, assist her by holding a towel to dry the Virgin Mary and garments with which to clothe her. Thereby they demonstrate their Faith and Good Works which, for Catholics, were instrumental for their salvation. Their desire to be seen to perform these works was effected by their conspicuous presence in the foreground, the strong light that shines on them, and the fact that they are the only figures who look at the viewer. Indeed, the very inclusion of identifiable figures would naturally attract attention. According to Alberti, a celebrated Renaissance architect and theorist:

¹⁹ Fray H. Paravicino, *Sermones Cortesanos...*, p. 243. See, also, R. Mulcahy, “Images of Power and Salvation”, in S. Schroth and S. Baer (eds.), *El Greco to Velázquez. Art during the reign of Philip III*, Exhib. Cat., Boston 2008, p. 136.

²⁰ See Pantoja’s submission of a list of the paintings executed for the Queen, 1600–1607 in M. Kusche, *Juan Pantoja de la Cruz*, Madrid 1964, p. 240.

²¹ On *retratos a los divinos*, see J. Portús, “‘Soy tu hechura’. Un ensayo sobre las fronteras del retrato cortesano en España”, in *Carlos V. Retratos de Familia*, Madrid 2000, pp. 188–189.

... when the figure of some well-known person is present in a “historia”
... the face that is known draws the eyes of all spectators, so great is the
power and attraction of something taken from nature²².

However, the identification of the Habsburgs in Pantoja’s painting was not for visual effect alone. As in the case of donors in devotional images, theologically they could benefit from the prayers of others. In particular, they would hope for the intercession of the Virgin, the prime mediatrix between man and Christ. To this end, doña María de Baviera kneels in humility, with her sleeves rolled up, as she holds her precious charge, her patron saint.

The grandest pictorial testament to the religious faith of the Spanish Habsburgs is undoubtedly Titian’s *Trinity (La Gloria)* [Fig. 9]. It was painted for Charles V, eventually taken by him to the Hieronymite monastery at Yuste, where he retired, and was contemplated by him as death approached.

It is unusual, but not unique, in that Charles V, the Empress Isabel, Prince Philip (II), Mary of Hungary (?) and Princess Juana are shown in heaven among the elect. The explanation would seem to be based on the Scriptural notion of righteousness. St Paul exhorted the individual to aspire to righteousness:

Pero nuestra morada está en los cielos, de donde esperamos al Salvador, nuestro Señor Jesucristo ... (Filipenses, 3:20).

... por cuanto por él, unos y otros tenemos entrada en el Padre con un mismo Espíritu. De manera que ya no son huéspedes, ni extranjeros, sino que son conciudadanos de los santos y familiares de Dios ... (Efesios, 2:18-19).

It was this vision of the celestial city and the pilgrimage on earth that was at the basis of St Augustine’s *City of God* –the city of the righteous in which God, his angels and the saints in heaven (the Church Triumphant) are united spiritually with the righteous on earth (the Church Militant)²³. It would seem that these are the textual sources for the inclusion of the Imperial family among the heavenly throng.

Dressed in white shrouds and kneeling in awe and adoration, Charles and Isabella are reminiscent of those:

²² Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, transl. C. Grayson, Harmondsworth 1991, p. 91 (Book III, p. 56).

²³ St Augustine, *The City of God*, introduction by E. Barker, 2 vols., London 1945, I, pp. 14-15.



Fig. 7

Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *La Reina Doña Margarita de Austria*, Colección Real, Londres



Fig. 8

Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Nacimiento de la Virgen*, Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 9
Tiziano, *La Gloria*, Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 10

Antonio Moro, *La Princesa Doña Juana de Austria*, Museo Nacional del Prado

... ante el trono y delante del cordero, cubiertos con vestiduras blancas y con palmas en sus manos. Clamaban en voz alta diciendo: "Salud a nuestro Dios que está sentado sobre el trono y al Cordero" (*Apocalipsis*, 7:9-10).

In this glorification of the Trinity, the Emperor and the Empress are seen to proclaim their love of God. In the pre-eminent position of the Virgin among the elect they affirm their belief in her rôle as the prime mediatrix between man and Christ. Painted less than a decade after the opening of the Council of Trent (1545), the picture is also a testament to their commitment to uphold those Catholic beliefs which had been rejected by the Protestants²⁴.

Queens, like Kings, had to exemplify in their body politic not only the Theological Virtues but also the Cardinal Virtues of Justice, Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance. These virtues are also quoted in Scripture:

Si alguno ama la justicia, sus obras producen grandes virtudes, porque enseña templanza y prudencia, justicia y fortaleza, que es lo mas útil que hay en la vida para los hombres (Sabiduría, 8:7).

In Mor's portrait of the *Princesa doña Juana de Austria* [Fig. 10], the virtues of Justice and Prudence are appropriately manifested since her portrait was painted (c.1559) when she was Regent of Spain (1554-1559). It would seem that she is portrayed as at an audience²⁵. The inclusion of a chair is sometimes associated with judgement, as in the "Judgement Seat of God" (*Job*, 23:3-4), the judgement of Pilate: "*Estando sentado en su tribunal ...*" (*Mateo*, 27:19), and in the vision of St John: "*Vi unos tronos; se sentaron [los santos y escogidos] sobre ellos y les fue dado poder para juzgar*" (*Apocalipsis*, 20:4). The chair is also associated with prudence. For example, in Francesco degli Allegri's *Tractato nobilissimo della Prudentia et Justicia*, Venice, 1501 (?), there is among the woodcut illustrations, one of a judge flanked by two allegorical figures of Prudence and Justice, and another showing Justice and Prudence seated²⁶.

²⁴ For discussions of this picture, see E. Panofsky, *Problems in Titian...*, pp. 63-71; H.E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, I: "*The Religious Paintings*", pp. 165-167; F. Checa, *Tiziano y la Monarquía Hispánica*, Madrid 1994, pp. 60-65.

²⁵ E. Bermejo, "Doña Juana de Portugal", in *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el retrato en la corte de Felipe II*, Exhib. Cat., Madrid 1990, p. 138. She refers to Karl Justi's observation that "*la princesa parece dar audiencia*".

²⁶ I am most grateful to Professor Robert Sharples for this reference.

In Mor's portrait the chair also serves to prevent too close a proximity to the Princess. Familiarity is avoided since this will undermine her judgement. She stands erect and still. Her height is accentuated by the verticals of the chair legs and the narrow vertical format of the frame. Her arms are at her sides²⁷. Rhetorical gestures would undermine her detachment. Her composure is striking! Her expression is serious and her gaze is steady. The setting is bare and dark in colour. Curtains and columns are excluded. Light gently picks out her head and hands and reflects dimly on her silk scarf and the little folds of her black dress. Light is not used to contrast dramatically with the darks to project the figure into the viewer's space. All is under control! In widow's weeds she reveals, respectfully, her obedience to her father through her pendant of "Hércules", and her prudence to her brother, *el Rey Prudente*²⁸.

Mazo's portrait of Queen Mariana [Fig. 11], the widow of Philip IV and Regent during the infancy of the child king, Charles II, is very different in mood from Mor's portrait of doña Juana. It is characterized by familiarity owing to the inclusion of her son, together with his attendants, in the background, the presence of the small pet dog in the foreground, the fact that the setting is recognizable as the Alcázar of Madrid, and the less grave expression on the face of the Queen. The positioning of the Queen in a room with a high ceiling and a deep space beyond also liberates her from the closed space of Mor's portrait, which is much more concentrated and intense in feeling. Nevertheless, Mazo's portrait also draws attention to the virtues of justice and prudence which Mariana has to exemplify. She has received a petition from Mazo, which is signed and dated 1666. Therefore, her gaze suggests not that she is sitting for her portrait but that she is facing Mazo and giving thought to his request. Subtly, her prudence is revealed. Although she is not standing, as in Mor's portrait of doña Juana [Fig. 10] and Pantoja's of Philip II [Fig. 1], it is possible that she was following the example of her deceased husband, Philip IV, who, in his late years "sat almost motionless for an hour in public

²⁷ Her pose and the position of the chair would seem to have inspired Pantoja when he portrayed Philip II [Fig. 1).

²⁸ See E. Bermejo, "Doña Juana de Portugal...", and L.R. Gómez, "Joanna of Austria", in J. Portús (ed.), *The Spanish Portrait. From El Greco to Picasso*, Exhib. Cat., Madrid 2004-2005, pp. 329-330. For the historical background to her regency, see J. Martínez Millán (dir.), *La corte de Felipe II*, Madrid 1994, ch.2.

audience to receive petitions ...”²⁹. In this context it is also relevant to note that Ripa referred to it as an attribute of princely rule: “... *se simboliza el Señorío de los Príncipes con la figura sedente, no conviniendo fallar juicios en público sin mantenerse sentado ...*”³⁰.

Consequently, Mariana’s adoption of a seated pose would be identified with a manly rôle and, therefore, strengthen her position as Regent³¹.

It is instructive to compare Mariana’s image as Regent with that of doña Ana de Austria, Queen of France and sister of Philip IV [Fig. 12]³². She, too, was a widow, although the implied colour, decoration and style of her dress are in marked contrast to that of Mariana. She is also seated but surrounded by images that proclaim the fame of the Bourbon dynasty, rather than provide an actual physical setting. Nevertheless, the dissemination of Queen Ana’s image in print form in a book was likely to be a more effective means of securing her position and propagating the dynasty.

Queens were also shown seated in other contexts. In Mor’s portrait of Mary I [Fig. 13], Titian’s lost portrait of the Empress Isabel, known through an engraving after a copy by Rubens (and therefore in reverse) [Fig. 14], and Rubens’ portrait of Ana de Austria, Queen of France [Fig. 15], the sitters are shown seated and in half-length. Consequently, they are closer to the picture plane than if they were shown full-length, and the effect is more intimate. They also hold flowers, particularly roses, which are offerings to their husbands whose presence is implied³³. This motif would seem to be derived from a famous Classical statue of *Flora* which was in the Farnese collection. As such it signifies love and fertility and, therefore, the promise of ensuring dynastic succession.

²⁹ M. Hume, *The Court of Philip IV*, London 1907, p. 447.

³⁰ C. Ripa, *Iconología* [ed. 1613], transl. J. & Y. Barja, R.M. Mariño Sánchez-Elvira, F. García Romero, prólogo A. Allo Manero, Madrid 1987, II, p. 185.

³¹ For further discussion, see the article by my former postgraduate student, M. Llorente, “Imagen y autoridad en una regencia: los retratos de Mariana de Austria y los límites del poder”, *Studia Historica. Historia Moderna* 28 (Salamanca 2006), pp. 211–238.

³² P. Vinatea, “Ana de Austria, Regente de Francia, rodeada de triunfos militares. Roccroci, 1643”, *Los Austrias*, Exhib. Cat., Madrid 1993, pp. 297–298.

³³ For a discussion of the various meanings of the rose, especially in relation to Mor’s portrait of Mary I, see J. Woodall, “An exemplary Consort: Antonis Mor’s portrait of Mary Tudor”, *Art History* 14/2 (London, June 1991), pp. 210–211.

The rose is also an attribute of Venus, thereby suggesting physical love. In the context of these portraits it is significant that there is a celebrated Scriptural source, notably the Canticle of Canticles, which applies to the bride (“sponsa”): “*Yo soy flor del campo, lirio de los valles*” (2:1). And she is also described as: “*Huerto cerrado eres, hermana mía, esposa*” (4:12).

The “sponsa” was identified by Christians with the Church and, in particular, the Virgin. Another important source was *Ecclesiasticus* in which Wisdom (Prudence) was personified and described herself: “*Como planta de rosa en Jericó*” (24:18), and states that: “*mis flores son fruto de honor y de abundancia. Yo soy la madre del amor hermoso ...*” (24: 23-24). The imagery in both the Canticle and *Ecclesiasticus* was applied to the Virgin, notably in relation to her Immaculate Conception. It is also noteworthy that kings were exhorted to love Wisdom:

Si hallan contento en los tronos y cetros, oh reyes de los pueblos, amen la sabiduría para reinar eternamente. Amen la luz de la sabiduría todos los que mandan sobre los pueblos (Sabiduría, 6: 22-23).

Thus, in these three portraits it would appear that the offering of flowers, especially roses, was a symbol not only of conjugal love but also of their virtue. Consequently, although they are offering their gifts to men, they are also desirable to men.

Kings were not the only object of their affection. In Bartolomé González’s portrait of *Queen Margarita with a Dog* [Fig. 16], the latter rests her hand on the head of the dog. The tradition for this composition was established in portraits of Charles V by Jacob Seisenegger and Titian. In these the powerful hound faithfully and affectionately gazes at his master, while the latter casually holds its collar, supremely confident of his control over the dog. The power and fortitude of the Emperor and the obedience of the hound are clearly signalled. This association of meanings is repeated in Sánchez Coello’s portrait of Charles’ daughter, *Doña Juana de Portugal with a Dog* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). In this case, the dog does not gaze adoringly at his mistress but inclines its head. Her show of fortitude, which is also symbolized by the adjacent column, is appropriate since she was Regent of Spain. Clearly, she has adopted a manly rôle to demonstrate figuratively her political control. The portrait of *Queen Margarita* upholds this tradition. Calmly she pats the head of the powerful hound who is totally submissive. Doña Margarita is not a Regent but would seem intent to show her fortitude, that is, her power and her courage.



Fig. 11

Juan Bautista del Mazo, *La Reina Doña Mariana de Austria*, Galería Nacional, Londres

The Body Politic of Spanish Habsburg Queens



Fig. 12

François Bignon y Zacharie Heince, *La Reina Doña Ana de Austria, Regente de Francia*



Fig. 13

Antonio Moro, *La Reina Doña María Tudor de Inglaterra*, Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 14

Pieter de Jode, grabado después de la copia por Rubens del original perdido de Tiziano, *La Emperatriz Doña Isabel de Portugal*



Fig. 15

Pedro Pablo Rubens, *Doña Ana de Austria, Reina de Francia*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 16

Bartolomé González, *La Reina Doña Margarita de Austria*, Museo Nacional del Prado

The display of fortitude by Kings was intrinsic to their rule as head of the body politic. The numerous portraits of Kings and Princes in armour are obvious testaments to this. In order to sustain their singular rôle and ensure the succession of the dynasty, portraits of Queens were occasionally included with them. The most notable example was that in the Salón de Reinos in the palace of the Buen Retiro³⁴. On the end wall were equestrian portraits of Philip III and doña Margarita [Fig. 18], and on the entrance wall were those of Philip IV, Baltasar Carlos (above the entrance door) and Queen Isabel de Borbón [Fig. 19]. The Kings were positioned on the viewer's left, reflecting their hierarchical eminence, and in half-armour on rearing steeds that perform the levade. The Queens do not wear armour, ride side-saddle and their steeds seem to walk at a stately pace. They present an even more remarkable contrast to Rubens' baroque celebration of Marie de Medici at the Triumph of Jülich [Fig. 20].

A significant precedent for this combination of military strength and dynastic succession in the Salón de Reinos would appear to be Antonio de Holanda's illumination of the "Genealogy of Queen Isabella of Portugal" in the *Genealogia dos Reis de Portugal*, published in Lisbon, 1530-1534 [Fig. 17]. The King, her father, don Pedro de Aragón, is on the left, in full armour and on a dark brown horse that rears and bares its teeth. His wife, Constanza de Sicilia, is not in armour, and rides side-saddle on a white horse that submissively lowers its head³⁵. They are connected by an arch of roses upon which is seated Sta. Isabel de Portugal (1271-1336). As in the Buen Retiro scheme of decoration, the setting is the open countryside and not a military parade ground or a formal setting such as a palace forecourt. The similarity between these two sets of images is striking.

However, one wonders whether the presence of doña Margarita and doña Isabel in the predominantly military context of the Salón was exclusively to signal the legitimacy of the dynastic succession. Might they also have been seen as possible peace-makers? In *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, Christine de Pisan states:

³⁴ See J. Brown and J.H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King. The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV*, New Haven and London 1980, ch. VI, especially p. 156.

³⁵ On the horses and the etiquette of administering the stables of the Spanish Habsburg Queens, see F. Labrador Arroyo y A. López Álvarez, "Las caballerizas de las reinas en la monarquía de los Austria: Cambios institucionales y evolución de las etiquetas, 1559-1611", *Studia Histórica. Historia Moderna* 28 (Salamanca 2006), pp. 87-140.

This work is the proper duty of the wise queen and princess: to be the means of peace and concord, to work for the avoidance of war because of the trouble that can become of it³⁶.

It is noteworthy that Sta. Isabel de Portugal, who shared the Queen's Christian name, would have been familiar to the Spanish Habsburgs. She was renowned for her love, fortitude and prudence by fearlessly going to scenes of conflict, confronting warring parties, and persuading them to make peace. Her life is described in Ribadeneira's *Flos Sanctorum* (July 4th) and she was canonised by Urban VIII in 1625. Undoubtedly, her example would have been familiar to those who were conceiving the decorative scheme in the Salón in the early 1630s.

Another possible exemplar, but for a different purpose, was Queen Isabel de Castilla. In Juan Pérez de Moya's *Varia historia de sanctas e illustres mugeres* (Madrid, 1583) the author states that she was present at the siege of Granada where, accompanied by her *damas*, she and they exhorted the Spanish Christian knights to fight with valour. They, in turn, demonstrated their courage in order to win the favour of their *damas*. Isabella's courage and exhortations were widely known. Significantly, they are singled out in Book III of Baldesar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528)³⁷, an apparent copy of which belonged to Velázquez³⁸.

Such exemplary behaviour would appear to be reflected also in Velázquez's painting of a *Boar Hunt* (National Gallery, London) and in Francisco Collante's engraving of a *Boar Hunt* in Juan de Mateos' *Origen y dignidad de la caza*. In the former, the Queen and her *damas* are shown in carriages positioned within the *tela real*, in contrast to those who are mere spectators and are located outside it. Thus the Queen and her entourage, in the manner of Queen Isabella of Castile, are close at hand to encourage the hunters who, in response, demonstrate their skill and courage. Thus the scene mirrors a medieval tournament. Clearly, the age of chivalry was not yet past.

³⁶ Ch. de Pisan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (c. 1410-1415), Harmondsworth 1985, p. 51.

³⁷ B. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, transl. C.S. Singleton, New York 1959, pp. 236-237, 257.

³⁸ *Varia Velazqueña*, 2 vols., Madrid 1960, I, p. 398, no. 489: *Cortejo de Castillan en ytaliano*.



Fig. 17

Antonio de Holanda, *Genealogy of Queen Isabella of Portugal*, British Library, London



Fig. 18
Diego Velázquez y otros, *La Reina Doña Margarita de Austria, a caballo*,
Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 19
Diego Velázquez y otros, *La Reina Doña Isabel de Francia, a caballo*,
Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 20
Pedro Pablo Rubens, *El Triunfo de Jülich*, Louvre, París

In their pursuit of Temperance, their self-discipline is variously manifested. One means of signifying their mental order was through the inclusion of a clock, as in Titian's portrait of *Charles V and Isabella of Portugal* (Museo Nacional del Prado) [Fig. 3] and Velázquez's *Queen Mariana* (Museo Nacional del Prado) [Fig. 22]. Moreover, such is the need for self-control that Queens, like Kings, were never shown laughing. Such indecorous behaviour was indulged in by *gitanas* and *pícaros* [Fig. 23]. It is revealing that in Porreño's book on Philip II the second chapter is entitled: "*Su gravedad, severidad, y mesura*". In that chapter, he extols Philip's self-restraint by claiming that the King had never been seen to laugh nor lose his composure: "... *jamás se vido risa, ni cosa que no fuese suma compostura*". Such behaviour was entrenched in court etiquette. Those who did not refrain from restraining their mirth were admonished –even Queens! Not long after Queen Mariana of Austria had arrived in Madrid she is reported to have laughed at the comic antics and witticisms of the fools. According to Antoine de Brunel (1655), "It was made known to her that this was not appropriate to a Spanish queen and that her behaviour should be more serious"³⁹.

According to Juan Luis Vives, the temperance of women was to be exemplified primarily in their chastity. In this connection, it is striking that the dress of the Spanish Habsburgs extends to their wrists, their necks and the toes of their feet. Bare arms are not visible as they are in Van Dyck's *Henrietta Maria* [Fig. 24] and Rubens' *doña Ana* [Fig. 15]. The body is totally concealed [Fig. 21]⁴⁰. On one occasion, a vendor went to the palace to sell silk stockings to the Queen but was informed that the Queen of Spain has no legs!⁴¹. The Queen's body was sacrosanct. According to Madame D'Aulnoy:

... if the queen in walking should happen to fall, unless her ladies were near enough to help her up though there were a hundred gentlemen there, she must be pleased either to rise by herself or lie all day upon the ground, for none dare take her up⁴².

³⁹ Quoted by M. Defourneaux, *Daily Life in Spain in the Golden Age*, London 1970, p. 52.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of 17th century Spanish dress and decorum, see Z. Veliz, "Signs of identity in *Lady with a Fan* by Diego Velázquez: Costume and Likeness Reconsidered", *Art Bulletin* (London, March 2004), pp. 75-95.

⁴¹ F. Saxl, *Lectures*, 2 vols., London 1957, I, p. 320.

⁴² Madame D'Aulnoy, *Travels into Spain*, intro. and notes by R. Foulché-Delbosc, London 1930, p. 384. I am most grateful to Prof. Bouza for kindly drawing my attention to this phenomenon.

In spite of concealing their bodies, their dress was characterised by lavish adornments of precious stones, gold and pearls [Figs. 6, 7, 21, 22]. This was not only a mark of respect for their husbands and the institution of monarchy, but also associated them with Scriptural imagery:

And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (*Apocalipsis* 21:2).

Having the glory of God, and the light thereof was like to a precious stone, as to the jasper stone, even as crystal (*Apocalipsis* 21:9-11).

Such imagery inspired the decoration not only of Spanish Habsburg Queens but also of statues of the Virgin, such as Luisa Roldán's *Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza Macarena* [Fig. 25], and *Nuestra Señora del Sagrario* in Toledo Cathedral. Francisco Pisa described the latter thus:

*Tiene esta santa imagen vestidos y joyas muy preciosas, que en ciertas fiestas y procesiones la ponen, y aderezan sobre un trono de ángeles con un arco de plata alrededor, y en la cabeza una corona de oro, piedras y perlas*⁴³.

Their make-up, too, would seem to have been modelled on the complexion of the Virgin. Because there is no description of her appearance in the Gospels, it is traditionally based on the imagery in the Canticle of Canticles:

How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! (*Cantar de los Cantares* 4:1).

Your lips are as scarlet lace ... Your cheeks are as a piece of a pomegranate ... (*Cantar de los Cantares* 4:3).

Your neck as a tower of ivory (*Cantar de los Cantares* 7:4).

It is characteristic of images of the Virgin that she is invariably shown with a fair complexion and pink lips and cheeks. Even pictures painted in Mediterranean climes, such as the Madonnas of Botticelli and Raphael, conform to this tradition. Thus, when Pacheco, the master of Velázquez, gave instructions as to how to depict the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., he, too, followed this tradition:

Hase de pintar, pues, en este aseadísimo misterio esta Señora en la flor de su edad, de doce a trece años, hermosísima niña, lindos y graves ojos, nariz y

⁴³ *Apuntamientos para la II Parte de la "Descripción de la Imperial Ciudad de Toledo"* (ed. J. Gómez-Menor Fuentes), Toledo 1976, p. 42.



Fig. 21
Alonso Sánchez Coello y Taller, *La Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia y Magdalena Ruiz*,
Museo Nacional del Prado



Fig. 22

Diego Velázquez, *La Reina Doña Mariana de Austria*, Museo Nacional del Prado

boca perfectísima y rosadas mexillas, los bellísimos cabellos tendidos, de color de oro... ⁴⁴.

Velázquez's picture of this subject closely relates to Pacheco's description [Fig. 26]. The Virgin is shown with brown hair, pink lips and cheeks, and fair skin. Her beauty was synonymous with her purity, that is, the absence of the stain of Original Sin. Therefore, at a time when her rôle as the prime mediatrix between man and Christ was challenged by Protestants, it is conceivable that women applied make-up lavishly to remove any "stain" and to proclaim the purity of the Virgin and of their faith. For those with a dark complexion, the need to remove the "stain" was greater since they would also have to distance themselves from the Moorish infidel in order to demonstrate that their blood and, therefore, their faith, was pure. The use of lavish make-up was common. In 1594, the Papal Nuncio, Camillo Borghese recorded that:

The women are generally dressed in black, ... using as a rule the rouges whereby they alter their naturally brown complexions and they put on so much that they really seem painted ⁴⁵.

Lady Fanshawe, the wife of the English Ambassador at the Court of Madrid during the 1660s, recorded that: "They all paint white and red, from the Queen to the cobbler's wife, old and young, widows excepted".

In widowhood, Queens generally adopted a dress that exemplified the rejection of vanities. Some retired to convents, although not all entered the particular order and took vows. Some dressed in the habit of nuns, such as the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, who adopted the habit of a Clarisa [Fig. 27]. Others wore a mourning dress that was based on that of Queen Juana, the widow of Philip I. According to an anonymous author of the *Viaje de los Reyes Archiduques a España en 1506*:

Tan pronto como supo que habían llevado el cadáver de su marido á la Cartuja de Miraflores, quiso ir á ella, y se hizo preparar trajes de duelo, nuevos todos los días, hechos á su capricho, á veces en forma de hábito de religiosa ⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ F. Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura* (ed., introd., y notas de B. Bassegoda i Hugas), Madrid 1990, p. 576.

⁴⁵ *Madrid. A Travellers' Companion*, selected and introduced by H. Thomas, London 1988, p. 344.

⁴⁶ A. RodríguezVilla, *La Reina Doña Juana La Loca*, Madrid 1892, p. 185.

According to Palomino, it was shroud-like and fashionable only in Spain. Such a dress was used to cover a statue by Becerra of *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* [Fig. 28]. Later it was depicted by Pantoja de la Cruz in his portrait of the *Empress Doña María* [Fig. 29] and by Mazo in his portrait of *Queen Mariana of Austria* [Fig. 11].

In response to various historical circumstances, the Spanish Habsburg Queens would seem to have adopted a body politic that was intended to exemplify the Theological and Cardinal Virtues. It was clearly profoundly influenced by Scriptural ideas and images. The Queen of Heaven was undoubtedly the supreme exemplar. It would also seem that, although Queens were subordinate to Kings, their rôle was not merely confined to procreation or pleasure, but also positive in that they embodied the principles of Wisdom, and thereby constructively contributed to the Catholic Monarchy.

* * *

To visualize how these hierarchical and virtuous ideals were reflected in daily life at court, as opposed to their more conspicuous and concentrated manifestation in formal portraits of individuals, it will be instructive to focus attention on that most subtle and revealing illusion of reality – Velázquez's *Las Meninas* [Fig. 30].

The earliest writer to date the painting and to identify the apartment and all but one of the figures was Antonio Palomino (1724), court painter to Charles II⁴⁷. Although he did not meet Velázquez (he did not settle in Madrid until 1678)⁴⁸ he was given information by Juan de Alfaro, a pupil of Velázquez, and by Juan Carreño de Miranda, a collaborator of Velázquez⁴⁹. Palomino describes the picture as follows:

⁴⁷ A. Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica*, 3 vols., Madrid 1715-1724, vol. 3: "El Parnaso Español Pintoresco Laureado", VII. The edition used here is that of Madrid 1947, pp. 920-922.

⁴⁸ E. Harris, *Velázquez*, Oxford 1982, p. 225.

⁴⁹ Palomino acknowledged his debt to Alfaro and Carreño in his Preface to vol. 3, pp. 766-767. On the accuracy of Palomino's information, see J. Brown, *Velázquez, Painter and Courtier*, New Haven and London 1986, pp. 253-256.



Fig. 23
José de Ribera, *Muchacha con pandero*, Galería Nacional, Londres



Fig. 24

Anton Van Dyck, *La Reina Henrietta María de Inglaterra*, Colección Real, Londres



Fig. 25
Luisa Roldán, *Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza Macarena*,
Basílica de Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza, Sevilla



Fig. 26

Diego Velázquez, *La Inmaculada*, Galería Nacional, Londres

Entre las pinturas maravillosas, que hizo Don Diego Velázquez, fué una del cuadro grande con el retrato de la señora Emperatriz (entonces Infanta de España) Doña Margarita María de Austria, siendo de muy poca edad: ... A sus pies está de rodillas Doña María Agustina, menina de la Reina, hija de Don Diego Sarmiento, administrándole agua en un búcaro. A el otro lado está Doña Isabel de Velasco ... en principal término está un perro echado, y junto a él Nicolasito Pertusato, enano ... detrás está Mari Barbola, enana de aspecto formidable: en término más distante, y en media tinta está Doña Marcela de Ulloa, señora de honor, y un guardadamas, que hacen a lo historiado maravilloso efecto. A el otro lado está Don Diego Velázquez pintando: tiene la tabla de colores en la mano siniestra, y en la diestra el pincel, la llave de la cámara, y de Aposentador en la cinta y en el pecho el hábito de Santiago, que después de muerto le mandó Su Majestad se le pintasen ...

El lienzo, en que está pintado es grande, y no se ve nada de lo pintado, porque se mira por la parte posterior, que arrima a el caballete.

Dió muestra de su claro ingenio Velázquez en descubrir lo que pintaba con ingeniosa traza, valiéndose de la cristalina luz de un espejo, que pintó en lo último de la galería, y frontero a el cuadro, en el cual la reflexión, o repercusión nos representa a nuestros Católicos Reyes Felipe y María Ana. En esta galería, que es la del cuarto del Príncipe, donde se finge, y donde se pintó, se ven varias pinturas por las paredes, aunque con poca claridad; conócese ser de Rubens, e historias de los Metamorfosios de Ovidio ... A el lado izquierdo del espejo está una puerta abierta, que sale a una escalera, en la cual está José Nieto, Aposentador de la Reina ... Acabólo Don Diego Velázquez el año de 1656 ...

Esta pintura fué de Su Majestad muy estimada, y en tanto que se hacía asistió frecuentemente a verla pintar; y asimismo la Reina nuestra señora Doña María Ana de Austria bajaba muchas veces, y las señoras infantas, y damas, estimándolo por agradable deleite, y entretenimiento ...

Hierarchy is subtly indicated by the implied presence of the King and Queen, who are shown together in their reflection in the mirror on the wall. The King is on our right and the Queen is on our left. However, since the mirror shows their positions in reverse, Velázquez, the Infanta and her entourage would see them in their proper hierarchical positions, that is, the King on their left and the Queen on their right⁵⁰. In accord with the direction of the gazes of

⁵⁰ F. Marías, "El Género de *Las Meninas*: Los Servicios de la Familia", en F. Marías (ed.), *Otras Meninas*, Madrid 1995, p. 266.

Velázquez, the Infanta Margarita, don José Nieto, doña Isabel de Velasco and Mari Barbola, the King and Queen are imagined to be facing the Infanta, standing slightly to the right of her, and at some distance from the foreground plane⁵¹. In that position, the King would be opposite the centre of the perspective, that is, the lit wall beyond the distant doorway. This is the central vanishing area (there is no single vanishing point in the perspectival construction of the painting). Here, the orthogonals, such as the oblique lines formed by the lamp holders on the ceiling (*colgaderos para lámparas*) and the picture frames on the right wall, converge. Thereby, the viewpoint of the King would correspond to that of Velázquez when he painted *Las Meninas*. Thus, ingeniously, Velázquez has created an optical illusion. By means of the mirror, the focused gazes of some of the figures, and the perspective, the King and Queen are envisaged not only viewing the scene but also taking part in it.

As such, it is they who witness the appearance of the Infanta in the room and not the opposite. Although she is the focus of attention in *Las Meninas*, Velázquez is shown painting the portrait of the King and Queen which, as Palomino stated, is reflected in the mirror⁵². This can be simply demonstrated. Thus, the two projecting lamp holders on the ceiling (*colgaderos para lámpara*) would be in line with the central longitudinal axis of the ceiling. The mirror on the wall is perpendicular to that axis so that it is centrally placed on that wall⁵³. However, the Infanta and the implied position of the King and Queen are not in line with the lamp holders above, but are to the right of it. Therefore, the King and Queen would be at an oblique angle to the mirror. Therefore, they cannot be reflected in it. Therefore, the reflection is that of their portrait which

⁵¹ For a similar disposition of artist, sitter and direction of light, see the background scene in Martínez del Mazo's *The Artist's Family* (Gemaldegalerie, Vienna), in which an artist is painting a portrait of the Infanta Margarita. Mazo was Velázquez's son-in-law and was clearly inspired by *Las Meninas*.

⁵² This was convincingly demonstrated by Philip Troutman in a three-dimensional model of the room, reduced to scale, which he constructed and exhibited at the Slade School of Art, University College London, in 1992. See, also, J. Snyder y T. Cohen, "Respuesta Crítica. Reflexiones sobre *Las Meninas*: La Paradoja Perdida", en F. Marías (ed.), *Otras Meninas...*, p. 117.

⁵³ The central position of the mirror can also be inferred by reference to the symmetrical arrangement of the paintings on the original wall. See S.N. Orso, *Philip IV and the Decoration of the Alcázar of Madrid*, Princeton 1986, p. 171, diagram 3.

Velázquez is shown painting on his canvas. Therefore, they are the implied sitters to Velázquez. Therefore, they have not casually entered the *cuarto del Príncipe* to see the Infanta. Instead, it is she who has entered the room to appear before them. She is the central figure in *Las Meninas* but she is subject to the King, the *paterfamilias*.

It is significant, too, that the King and Queen appear dignified and impassive in their reflection in the mirror. Thereby, in the form of a visual conceit, it is cleverly implied that their appearance in their portrait is the same as that seen by the Infanta and her entourage, and reminiscent of that recorded at their attendance of theatrical events⁵⁴.

In response, the Infanta interrupts the Menina's offer of water in order to face the King and Queen and concentrate her attention on their response. She, too, adopts a formal pose, one that repeats the earlier, full-length portrait of her in white and silver (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). In both, her clearly defined, triangular shape echoes that in portraits of her mother and many previous Spanish Habsburg Queens and Infantas⁵⁵. In its symmetry, it conveys a sense of stability and harmony. She, too, stands erect, shoulders back and arms at her side. Likewise, the shape of her body, especially her legs, is concealed by her dress. No toes peep out from beneath her *guardainfante*. She is the epitome of temperance, and evokes the calm dignity and stately formality that characterized the body politic of those Queens and Infantas. Indeed, for one so young, her self-discipline, self-confidence and self-awareness are remarkable. There is no hint of the child-like innocence and liveliness that Titian captures in his portrait of *Clarice Strozzi* (Berlin, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie). Nor is there any correspondence with the characterless, puppet-like images of royal children painted by Alonso Sánchez Coello and

⁵⁴ For a comparison of the scene with the stage, see C. Justi, *Diego Velázquez and his Times*, London 1889, p. 417; J. Brown, *Velázquez, Painter...*, pp. 259 and 303, note 62, in which he also refers to J.E. Varey, "The Audience and the Play at Court Spectacles: The Rôle of the King", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 61 (1984), pp. 399-406. For the self-restraint of the King during a play, see F. Bertaut, *Journal du Voyage d'Espagne*, Paris 1669, quoted by M. Hume, *The Court of Philip IV*, London 1907, p. 473. For a discussion of the reflection as an exemplary image of majesty, see J. Snyder, "Las Meninas y el Espejo del Príncipe", en F. Marías (ed.), *Otras Meninas...*

⁵⁵ For Velázquez's repeated use of the same compositional formula for these formal portraits, see E. Harris, *Velázquez...*, p. 162.

Pantoja de la Cruz⁵⁶. Clearly, the Infanta has the physical deportment and the mental potential to assume the mantle of majesty.

The principles of hierarchy and decorum are also manifested in those around her. Thus, political and social authority diminishes from the exalted status of the Infanta at the centre to the *meninas* at either side, who are daughters of high standing aristocrats⁵⁷, and thence to the painter and the dwarf and midget (Nicolasio Pertusato) at the periphery⁵⁸. All know their place and are in place. The individual is subsumed into a grander design that is manifested in the hierarchy of the court. These, in turn, signify the order and harmony of a monarchy that, like the cosmos, was believed to have been divinely ordained and favoured.

Decorum, too, is ingrained. In imitation of the Queen, the *meninas* wear the *guardainfante* and have rouged their cheeks. Attentively and reverently they wait upon their precious charge. Doña Isabel de Velasco seems to hover in anticipation of either the Infanta's wish or the King's command. Doña María Agustina kneels at the feet of the Infanta in an act of obeisance that was typical of court etiquette. A similar event is described by Madame de Motteville:

She [doña María Teresa] is waited on with great respect, few have access to her ... When she is thirsty a "menin" [maid] brings a glass to a lady, who kneels as does also the "menin"; and on the other side is also a kneeling attendant, who hands her the napkin; opposite stands a Maid of Honour⁵⁹.

The men are soberly dressed in black as a sign of their *modestia*. The fashion for black as "black as sackcloth of hair" (*Apocalipsis* 6:12) had been established at court by Philip II. They also wear the simple, plain collar, the *golilla*, which

⁵⁶ Regarding the style and iconography of these portraits, see, especially, S. Breuer-Hermann, in *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el Retrato en la Corte de Felipe II*, Exhib. Cat., Madrid 1990, pp. 144-145, cat. nos. 24-27.

⁵⁷ For their identity, see not only Palomino but also F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Velázquez. Las Meninas y sus personajes*, Barcelona 1943, pp. 16-17, 34.

⁵⁸ See Ch. de Tolnay, "Velázquez' *Las Hilanderas* and *Las Meninas*", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* XXXV (Paris 1949), p. 35.

⁵⁹ F. Bertaut de Motteville, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Anne d'Autriche depuis 1615 jusq'au 1666*, Amsterdam 1723. Cited and quoted by C. Justi, *Diego Velázquez...*, p. 414.



Fig. 27
Paulus Pontius, grabado a partir de un cuadro de Rubens,
La Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, Regente de los Países Bajos (detalle)



N.ª S.ª DE LA SOLEDAD DE LA VICTORIA,

*Dibuxada por la misma Esfigie, que se venera en su Capilla,
sita en el Convento de P.ª P.ª Mínimos de S.ª Fran.ª de Paula de Mad.ª*

Grabada p.ª D.ª Juan. Ant.ª Sal.ª Carmona.ª

Fig. 28

J. A. Salvador Carmona, *La Virgen de la Soledad*

had been prescribed by Philip IV in 1623 to avoid the excessive expenditure on ruffs⁶⁰. Nevertheless, Velázquez is elegantly dressed. His black sleeves, slashed with white, appear silken. At his waist is the key of his elevated office, that is, Chief Chamberlain of the Palace (*Aposentador mayor de Palacio*). Don José Nieto was the Queen's Chamberlain (*Apostentador de la Reina*), whose function was to "be in attendance to Her Majesty, wearing a cape but not a sword or hat, in order to open doors as he is ordered to do"⁶¹. In a subtle conceit, Velázquez has portrayed him in an open doorway. The fact that he wears a cape and holds his hat may allude to this official duty⁶² or, alternatively, that he has been in the presence of the King and, since he does not appear to have been a grandee, has had to take off his hat.

Doña Marcela de Ulloa, *Guardadamas mujer de las damas de La Reina*⁶³ is in "widow's weeds". In fact, her mourning dress is similar to that in which the sculpted *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* was draped [Fig. 28], which was based on that worn by Queen doña Juana and which would be adopted by Queen doña Mariana [Fig. 11]⁶⁴.

Although positioned at the right margin, the dwarf, midget and dog are in the foremost plane of the foreground. Perhaps this was intended to indicate their more intimate association with the King and Queen than that of other courtiers. Mari-Bárbola⁶⁵ is also dressed in the fashionable *guardainfante*, but her complexion is ruddy and her loose hair is unadorned. As in the case of Alonso Sánchez Coello's portrait of *Doña Infante Isabel Clara Eugenia and Magdalena Ruiz* [Fig. 21], her appearance, like that of Magdalena, is in striking contrast to the coiffed hair, pale skin and rouged cheeks of the *Meninas*. Attentively she gazes at the King but not with the acute concentration of

⁶⁰ See R.M. Anderson, "The Golilla; a Spanish Collar of the Seventeenth Century", *Waffen und Kostümkunde* (Berlin 1969), pp. 5-8.

⁶¹ This quotation is taken from J. Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth Century Spanish Painting*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1978, p. 91.

⁶² *Ibídem*, p. 92.

⁶³ See F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Velázquez...*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ A. Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors* (translated and annotated by N. Ayala Mallory), Cambridge 1987, pp. 21-22, n. 13.

⁶⁵ See F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Velázquez...*, p. 17.

Velázquez. Nevertheless, her demeanour is calm and serious, and Velázquez has positioned her such that the light glances off her head, shines on her hair and reduces her protuberant features.

At her side is the midget, Nicolasito Pertusato⁶⁶. He is in the act of casually and confidently rubbing the loose skin on the back of the dozing mastiff. Momentarily, he is oblivious of the Infanta and the King and Queen. Thus Velázquez, in accord with literary and pictorial precedents, introduces a mundane incident initially to distract one's attention but ultimately to serve as a foil to accentuate the formal appearance of the Infanta.

Thus the scene is characterized by a strict, hierarchical positioning of the figures and by their decorous behaviour and dress. Indeed, these courtly values are so deeply ingrained in their person that they are manifested even in this scene of everyday life. As such, it is a microcosm of the body politic of the Monarquía Católica of which the King is the head. The figures are members of the body and are seen to play out their respective rôles in his implied presence.

In his capacity as "Painter to the King"⁶⁷, Velázquez has represented himself as one who practises not a mechanical but a liberal art⁶⁸, which is on the same intellectual level as grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Thus, as he stands back to scrutinize the appearance of the King and Queen, he reveals the working of his mind. It is the intellect that guides the hand that holds the brushes. Moreover, his elegant, black attire, which is scarcely the most appropriate garment in which to paint, is probably a sign that he regards his work as both serious and intellectual. A classical precedent is found in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, three copies of which are recorded in the inventory of Velázquez's library⁶⁹. According to Pliny, "Famulus ... took his work very seriously, as he always wore a toga, even when in the midst

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

⁶⁷ His appointment is dated 6th October 1623. See *Varia Velazqueña...*, II, p. 222, no. 22.

⁶⁸ See Ch. de Tolnay, "Velázquez' *Las Hilanderas* and...", pp. 36-38, and M. Soria, "Velázquez", in G. Kubler and M. Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500-1800*, Harmondsworth 1959, p. 268. Jonathan Brown has considerably elaborated their ideas in "On the Meaning of *Las Meninas*", in *Images and Ideas...*, pp. 87-110.

⁶⁹ *Varia Velazqueña...*, p. 397, no. 416; p. 398, no. 522; p. 399, no. 552.

of his easels”⁷⁰. Leonardo, too, stated that, being elegantly dressed was appropriate for mental activity. In his notes on the intellectual superiority of the painter over the mechanical practice of the sculptor, he wrote:

... for the painter sits before his work, perfectly at his ease and well-dressed, and moves a very light brush dipped in delicate colour; and he adorns himself with whatever clothes he pleases⁷¹.

The elegance of Velázquez’s attire is matched by the graceful way in which he holds his brush and leans back to survey his royal sitters.

Indeed, it is his close association with the King that has enabled him to construct this image of himself as a liberal artist. On this matter, the statements of Francisco Pacheco, the master and father-in-law of Velázquez, and Antonio Palomino are revealing. The former relates that Velázquez’s first portrait of the King, which he painted in 1623 (now lost), was “... *a gusto de Su Majestad, y de los Infantes y del Conde Duque [de Olivares], que afirmó no haber retratado al Rey hasta entonces ...*” and that the conde Duque promised him “*que él solo había de retratar a Su Majestad y los demás retratos se mandarían recoger*”⁷². Thus, in *Las Meninas*, the fact that Velázquez shows himself painting a portrait of the King and Queen upholds the practice that is testament to the superiority of his skill and the nobility of his art⁷³. Pacheco writes that:

*No es creíble la liberalidad y agrado con que es tratado de un tan gran Monarca; tener obrador en su galería y Su Majestad llave dél, y silla para verle pintar de espacio, casi todos los días*⁷⁴.

Palomino, too, as quoted earlier, recounts that the King, Queen and Infantas frequently came to watch Velázquez painting *Las Meninas*. Consequently it would seem likely that the appearance of the Infanta while Velázquez was painting the portrait of the King and Queen was inspired by this royal custom.

⁷⁰ Pliny, *Natural History*, Loeb ed., 10 vols., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959, IX, Book XXXV, XXXVII, 120, p. 349.

⁷¹ See K. Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, Harmondsworth 1961, p. 83.

⁷² F. Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura...*, (Libro Primero, Cap. VIII), pp. 204–205.

⁷³ For a discussion on the topic of the nobility of art, see J. Brown, *Images and Ideas...*, p. 94.

⁷⁴ F. Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura...*, p. 209.

Velázquez would also have been fully cognizant of the celebrated classical precedent established by the relationship between Alexander the Great and Apelles⁷⁵. Pliny recounts that:

In fact he (Apelles) also possessed great courtesy of manners, which made him more agreeable to Alexander the Great, who frequently visited his studio –for, as we have said, Alexander had published an edict forbidding any other artist to paint his portrait...⁷⁶.

Both Palomino and Pacheco compare Velázquez to Apelles. Palomino likens the visits of Philip IV to the studio of Velázquez with those of Alexander to that of Apelles⁷⁷. Pacheco, in a sonnet dedicated to Velázquez on the occasion of his having painted an equestrian portrait of Philip IV, extols the King because he will glorify Velázquez's name with a new lustre since he is greater than Alexander and Velázquez is his Apelles: "*Que el planeta [Felipe IV] benigno a tanto cielo, tu nombre ilustrará con nueva gloria, pues es más que Alexandro y tú su Apeles*"⁷⁸.

Accordingly, Velázquez's portrait of himself as a practitioner of a noble and liberal art ultimately reflects the greatness of his Alexander, that is, Philip IV as King and maecenas⁷⁹.

Thus Velázquez and the others are seen to fulfil their respective rôles dutifully and respectfully. All are members of the body politic of which the King is

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the significance of this classical subject for Velázquez's status as an artist, which had been specially pointed out by Pacheco and Palomino, see J. Brown, *Images and Ideas...*, pp. 93-94.

⁷⁶ Pliny, *Natural History...*, (Book XXXV, XXXVI, 85), p. 325.

⁷⁷ A. Palomino, *El Museo Pictórico...*, pp. 904, 909.

⁷⁸ F. Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura...*, p. 213. The equestrian portrait is now lost.

⁷⁹ Compare, too, the observations of Michael Levey:

Also underlying the painting, I believe, is the other association of Apelles with Alexander as the only painter to whom the king would sit ... Both painting as an activity and the painter are honoured in *Las Meninas*, at the centre of which is, however, the king (*The Painter Depicted. Painters as a subject in Painting*, Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture, London 1981, p. 14).

In the same vein, the very large canvas upon which Velázquez is portraying his royal sitters may have been intended to signify the importance of the art of painting but it would also proclaim the greatness of the King and Queen.



Fig. 29

Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *La Emperatriz Doña María*, Descalzas Reales, Madrid



Fig. 30
Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, Museo Nacional del Prado

the head. Among the members, Velázquez has clearly constructed an image of himself as a liberal artist with noble aspirations⁸⁰. Yet, with *modestia*, he has positioned himself further back and in the shadows. For Velázquez, the protagonist in *Las Meninas* is clearly the Infanta Margarita. It is she who holds the centre of the stage⁸¹. Indeed, in spite of the contrast in scale between the lofty room and the diminutive size of the Infanta, her importance is not diminished. In fact it is enhanced. The verticals and horizontals of the picture frames, mirror, and door and window embrasures⁸² act as a foil to the rigid triangular shape of the Infanta. In turn, the distinctive diagonals of that shape are echoed in the outlines of most of the other figures as they lean to right or left, whereas she stands still and upright. Her pose is the most formal.

Moreover, in contrast to the shadowy ambience of the room and to the other figures who are shown in half-light or shadow, the Infanta stands out because she is bathed in a strong light. It irradiates her fair skin and shimmers on her pale dress.

Yet the most telling evidence of her pre-eminent rôle in the painting would seem to be her expression. As she looks at the King and Queen (and not at Velázquez painting) she reveals that she is conscious of being looked at by them. It is she, not Velázquez nor any of the others, who is the centre of their attention. To concentrate on this crucial exchange, Velázquez has employed a characteristic device –suspended action⁸³. Velázquez himself momentarily pauses

⁸⁰ Brown has maintained that this is the meaning of *Las Meninas*. See *Images and Ideas...*, pp. 87–110, esp. p. 109.

⁸¹ Although the original canvas has been reduced on the left, so that the centre of the composition would have been further to the left, Carmen Garrido has stated that: “la visión actual de las ondas que se forman en la tela por la fijación del lienzo al bastidor nos hacen pensar que fue poco, pero no se puede determinar la medida”. C. Garrido, “Observaciones sobre la interpretación de la documentación técnica”, in J. Brown, “*Las Meninas* como obra maestra”, in *Velázquez*, Barcelona 1999, p. 118.

⁸² Tolnay also drew attention to the geometry of the composition, Ch. de Tolnay, “Velázquez’ *Las Hilanderas* and...”, p. 35.

⁸³ Regarding this device, see J. Ortega y Gasset, *Velázquez, Goya and The Dehumanization of Art*, transl. by A. Brown; introd. by P. Troutman, London 1972, p. 105 (originally written in 1943); Ch. de Tolnay, “Velázquez’ *Las Hilanderas* and...”, p. 36; J. Brown, *Images and Ideas...*, pp. 90–91; D. Davies, “Velázquez’s Bodegones”, in D. Davies and E. Harris, *Velázquez in Seville*, Exhib. Cat., Edinburgh 1996, p. 57.

before brushing paint onto his canvas, doña María Agustina Sarmiento is stilled by the Infanta's response, doña Isabel de Velasco hovers in anticipation. Don José Nieto, framed in the open doorway, has stopped and turned to gaze at the King and Queen, and Nicolasito Pertusato is about to rub his foot on the back of the dog. The Infanta, still and silent, dignified and disciplined, expectantly awaits the response of the King and Queen.

The rôle of the Infanta as protagonist in this scene was recognized and acknowledged in later descriptions of the picture. In the 1666 inventory of the Alcázar of Madrid, it is listed as a portrait of "*la Señora Emperatriz con sus damas y una enana*" (the Infanta had married the Emperor Leopold I in that same year)⁸⁴. In the 1686 inventory of the Alcázar it is recorded as:

*Retratada la S^{ra} Emperatriz Infanta de España, con sus Damas y Criados, y una Enana original de Diego Belázquez Pintor de Camara y Aposentador de Palaçio donde se Retrato así mismo pintando*⁸⁵.

In Felix da Costa's manuscript treatise on *The Antiquity of the Art of Painting* (1696), it is described as:

... the portrait of the Empress, the daughter of Philip IV, together with his own ... the picture seems more like a portrait of Velasquez than of the Empress⁸⁶.

In the 1700 and 1702 inventories of the Alcázar the wording of that of 1686 is repeated⁸⁷. As quoted earlier, Palomino (1724) referred to it as: "... *el retrato de la señora Emperatriz (entonces Infanta de España) Doña Margarita María de Austria ...*". After the palace fire on Christmas Eve in 1734, the picture was described in the subsequent inventory as: "*La familia del Señor Rey Phelipe Quarto*"⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Velázquez...*, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁵ Y. Bottineau, "L'Alcázar de Madrid et l'inventaire de 1686. Aspects de la cour d'Espagne au XVIII^e siècle", *Bulletin Hispanique* LX (Bordeaux 1958), p. 27, no. 513.

⁸⁶ F. da Costa, *The Antiquity of the Art of Painting*, introd. and notes by G. Kubler, New Haven and London 1967, pp. 258, 458.

⁸⁷ *Inventarios Reales. Testamentaria del Rey Carlos II. 1700-1703*, Madrid 1975, I, p. 46, no. 286; III, p. 472, no. 601.

⁸⁸ F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Velázquez...*, p. 10.

Thus, until this last cited inventory, it is evident that the Infanta Margarita was regarded as the protagonist, and that her portrayal was the principal subject of the picture, irrespective of any other meanings that it might incorporate, such as the promotion of painting as a liberal and noble art.

In the inventory compiled after the fire, the subject is extended to include the *Familia*. Ortega y Gasset pointed out that this meant not only blood relations but also servants⁸⁹. As such, it had been defined by Sebastián de Cobarruvias: "... Y debaxo desta palabra familia se entiende el señor y su muger, y los demás que tiene de su mando, como hijos, criados, esclavos; ley b, tit 33, part. 7"⁹⁰.

The law cited by Cobarruvias would seem to be based on that of Roman Law, in particular, the *Institutes* of Justinian which formed a legal basis for Christian monarchs with an absolutist ideology, such as the Spanish Habsburgs⁹¹. According to T. C. Sandar's summary:

The Roman family was modelled on a civil rather than on a natural basis. The tie which bound members of the same family was not that of blood ... The head of a Roman family exercised supreme authority over his wife, his children, his children's children, and his slaves ... The head was the "*paterfamilias*", a term not expressive of paternity, but merely signifying a person who was not under the power of another, and who, consequently, might have taken others under his power ... If a daughter married, she left this family, and passed into the family of her husband.

Nevertheless, "... the mere expression of a consent (to marriage was not) sufficient to constitute a marriage"⁹². It is significant that the legal status of the *paterfamilias* is complementary to the religio-político status of the head of the

⁸⁹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Velázquez, Goya and...*, p. 264.

⁹⁰ *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* (Madrid 1611), Madrid 1977, p. 584. Marías has also drawn attention to Covarrubias' definition of "*Familia*" in F. Marías (ed.), *Otras Meninas...*, p. 255. See, also, *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Madrid 1732), Madrid 1990, II, p. 717, "*Familia Real*". It is conceivable that the entries on "*Familia*" and "*Familia Real*" in this latter dictionary (1732) influenced the compilers of the inventory when they chose the title.

⁹¹ I am most grateful to Prof. Pascalis Kitromilides for informing me about the relevance of Justinian's *Institutes* to the legal system of such rulers.

⁹² *The Institutes of Justinian*, introd., translation and notes by T.C. Sandars, 6th ed., London 1878, pp. xxxviii-xxxix, 26-27, 31.

body politic of the Monarquía Católica. It is the *raison d'être* for the presence in the picture not only of the King and Queen but also of the Infanta, courtiers, maids of honour, dwarf, midget and mastiff. Although some belong to the King's household and others to that of the Queen, all are included together because they are subject to the King. It is also the basis for the strict, hierarchical arrangement of the figures.

There are precedents for this social range of figures, their hierarchical disposition, and their involvement in a narrative in some "Family" portraits. Andrea Mantegna's fresco in the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, of *Lodovico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, with Members of his Family and Court*, which also includes a female dwarf and a dog, is a celebrated example. Indeed, it is conceivable that Velázquez was made aware of the classical foundation of this tradition through his previous contact with Rubens who, like Mantegna earlier, had a profound interest in classical antiquity, and had served the House of Gonzaga in Mantua. In fact, it has been proposed that certain family portraits by Rubens were inspired by Mantegna's fresco⁹³.

This politico-legal concept was also manifested in other contexts. For example, in Alonso Sánchez Coello's painting of the *Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia and Magdalena Ruiz* [Fig. 21], the hierarchical chain is explicit. The Infanta holds a cameo of her father, Philip II, in one hand, and rests the other on the head of the dwarf, Magdalena Ruiz, who, in turn, holds a miniature portrait and supports two monkeys⁹⁴.

The examples of prospective foreign brides of Spanish Habsburgs exchanging their native dress for a Spanish one when they crossed the frontier into Spain as also symptomatic of the fundamental concern to be intimately identified with the *Familia Real*. In turn, Infantas could be sent abroad to many foreign royals for political ends since they were in the power of the King, the *paterfamilias*. On the chessboard of Europe, Infantas were pawns. Thus, legal as well as religious and political principles were intrinsic to the *Familia Real*, the microcosm of the body politic of the Monarquía Católica.

⁹³ F. Huemer, "Portraits", *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, Brussels 1977, Part XIX, I, pp. 98, 115.

⁹⁴ The dynastic aspect, as well as that of filial devotion, has been noted by J.M. Serrera in his seminal essay, "Alonso Sánchez Coello y mecánica del retrato de corte", in *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el retrato en la corte de Felipe II*, Exhib. Cat., Madrid 1990, pp. 53-55. See, also, J. Portús, "'Soy tu hechura'. Un ensayo...", see pp. 190-210, especially p. 201.

Contemporary courtiers would have recognized, most probably, the complex mechanism of this ideology of rule when they looked at *Las Meninas*. Consequently, they would have been instantly aware of the conspicuous omission of the Infanta María Teresa and the prominent presence of her younger, half-sister, the Infanta Margarita, as the protagonist at the centre of the stage. It would have been particularly striking because there is no record of María Teresa being either sick or absent from Madrid in the year in which the picture was painted (1656). In fact, Palomino recounts that both Infantas, in the company of the King and Queen, would go and watch Velázquez painting *Las Meninas*.

Xavier de Salas would appear to have been the first to propose that the omission of the Infanta María Teresa was because of her projected marriage to Louis XIV. As a consequence, he argued that she would no longer be a member of *La Familia*, and that the Infanta Margarita would inherit the throne and, possibly, marry her cousin, the Crown Prince Leopold, in order to perpetuate the House of Austria:

Todo lo dicho explica por qué la Infanta María Teresa no se halla presente en la composición, ya que estaba destinada a ser Reina de Francia, a no heredar la Corona de España. Por esto es la hija segunda el centro de “La Familia”.

*... creo se impone considerar el cuadro de “La Familia” como representación de la posibilidad de verse perpetuar la Casa de Austria en la Corona de España a través de la boda de la Infanta Margarita con su primo austriaco*⁹⁵.

This interpretation would seem to be of fundamental importance for an understanding of the meaning of *Las Meninas*, and particularly the manifestation of the concept of the body politic. It was repeated but, inexplicably, not acknowledged by Mena Marqués⁹⁶. Thus she, too, argued that *Las Meninas* represents “*la presentación de la Infanta Margarita como heredera del trono de los Austrias*”⁹⁷. She also developed Salas’ argument by examining the historical evidence in much more detail. In particular, she cited Jerónimo Barrionuevo’s *Avisos* and the correspondence between the King and both Sor María de Ágreda

⁹⁵ X. de Salas, “Rubens y Velázquez”, *Studia Rubenniana* II (Madrid 1977), [there are no page numbers nor notes].

⁹⁶ M.B. Mena Marqués, “El encaje de la manga de la enana Mari-Bárbola en *Las Meninas* de Velázquez”, in *El Museo del Prado. Fragmentos y detalles*, Madrid 1997, pp. 135-161.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

and Sor Luisa Enríquez Manrique de Lara. She drew attention to the on-going problem of the lack of a male heir, the recurrent discussions concerning the *ju-ramento* of the Infantas (nothing of which materialized), the urgent need to secure an honourable peace with France and to consolidate it through the marriage of one of the Infantas with Louis XIV, and the desire to strengthen the relationship with the Austrian Habsburgs. She speculated that, after the French legates had come to Madrid in the Summer of 1656 to discuss the cessation of war, Philip IV had decided that María Teresa would marry Louis XIV, and Margarita would inherit the crown of Spain. Accordingly, she proposed that it was at the end of the Summer of 1656 or soon afterwards, that Velázquez painted *Las Meninas*⁹⁸.

Jonathan Brown, with the collaboration of John Elliott and Carmen Garrido, responded to the essay of Mena Marqués⁹⁹. Brown and Garrido strongly criticised her statements on the supposed symbolism in the painting. Elliott totally dismissed the idea that the painting signified the future succession of the Infanta Margarita as heir to the throne. He cited a letter, dated 22 Dec. 1656, from Philip IV to the Marqués de la Fuente, and commented: “*Según esta carta, no tenía ninguna intención de sustituir a María Teresa como presunta heredera por la infanta Margarita*”¹⁰⁰. and added:

*... hasta ahora no se ha aducido ninguna prueba documental clara de que el rey proyectara en ningún momento lo que habría sido un cambio revolucionario en el orden de sucesión al trono de España para facilitar un enlace franco-español*¹⁰¹.

*Así pues, la evidencia documental de que disponemos hasta ahora excluye la interpretación que hace la doctora Mena de Las Meninas como expresión de las intenciones políticas de Felipe IV respecto a la sucesión en el trono*¹⁰².

⁹⁸ She also proposed a symbolic meaning for many of the elements in the painting, some of which she detected in the X-ray photographs. In my opinion, most of these observations are unfounded.

⁹⁹ J. Brown (con la colaboración de J.H. Elliott y C. Garrido), “*Las Meninas como obra maestra*”, in *Velázquez*, Barcelona 1999.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 100.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 101.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 101.

Strangely, neither Brown nor Elliott refer to Salas' essay nor to the conspicuous absence of the Infanta María Teresa in *Las Meninas*. Apparently, there is no contemporary documentary evidence that the Infanta Margarita would inherit the Spanish throne, although in later years there is a documentary reference to its possibility in the Testament of Philip IV (see below). Nevertheless, there is circumstantial evidence, both before and after 1656 (the probable date of the painting), which reveals that if a Spanish Infanta married a French royal it was likely that she would have to renounce her rights to the Spanish throne. Therefore, in the absence of a male heir, if María Teresa was to marry Louis XIV, the Infanta Margarita would be regarded as a potential successor. An important precedent for the renunciation of rights of succession was provided by the double marriage alliance (1615) between Ana de Austria (the daughter of Philip III) and Louis XIII, and Isabel de Borbón and the future Philip IV. Both princesses had to renounce their respective rights to the Spanish and French thrones.

The issues of renunciation and succession continually affected the negotiations concerning the marriage of the Infanta María Teresa and Louis XIV. According to the distinguished jurist, Francisco Ramos del Manzano, as early as 1645 the French legate, Hugues de Lionne:

*Reconociéndose por medio único para la paz de las Coronas el matrimonio, entre el Delfín entonces [the future Louis XIV], y la Infanta D. María Teresa, también se reconocía, que primero se auía de proveer, y resguardar al caso de la sucesión; y esto aún en tiempo que se hallaua España con el Príncipe Don Baltasar...*¹⁰³.

Furthermore:

*... una renūciaciō, que desde el año de 45. se suponía como inescusable para este matrimonio, y que el mismo Lione lo experimentó en Madrid el año de 56. Y la Francia en el último Tratado de la Infanta Doña Ana*¹⁰⁴.

Thus, on condition that there was no male heir, the Infanta Margarita could succeed her older sister as heir presumptive if the latter did marry Louis XIV because she would –and did– have had to renounce her rights to the throne.

¹⁰³ F. Ramos del Manzano, *Respuesta de España al tratado de Francia sobre las Pretensiones de la Reyna Christianissima*, Madrid 1667, fol. 9v.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, fol. 12r.

This is succinctly affirmed in a legal tract written after the marriage of the Infanta María Teresa:

The Son by his own right did enjoy this prerogative to be prefer'd before the Daughters: but in case the whole masculine line of the King should fail, then a Renunciation was in itself necessary, that the elder Daughter should be excluded by the younger, or the next Heir of France by the more remote of Spain¹⁰⁵.

In accord with this principle, it is significant that in Philip IV's testament he decreed that in the absence of a male heir the Infanta Margarita and her mother, Queen Mariana, would inherit his kingdoms:

*... institutio en falta de ellos [male heirs] por mi universal heredera en todos los dichos mis reynos, estados y señorías a la infanta doña Margarita, mi hija y de la Reyna doña Mariana...*¹⁰⁶.

María Teresa, then Queen of France, was excluded from succession unless her marriage was dissolved and she was left widowed and without children and returned to Spain. Only then and with the approval of the King or his son could she be considered as a successor¹⁰⁷.

Thus, in accord with Salas' interpretation and Mena Marqués' amplification of it, it would seem that the fundamental meaning of *Las Meninas* is dynastic. The following reasons would seem to be of crucial significance. Firstly, at the time when the picture was painted –probably in 1656 or possibly in the first half of 1657– the King was constantly concerned with the issue of succession. Secondly, the conspicuous omission of the Infanta María Teresa most probably implies that she would be no longer in the *Familia* because of an intention to betrothe her to Louis XIV or, alternatively, that she had been “taken off the market” in order not to undermine negotiations with the French. Whichever the exact reason, her absence is undoubtedly of dynastic significance. Thirdly, the singular prominence of Margarita as the protagonist in the scene almost certainly indicates that Philip IV intended her to succeed him. This would

¹⁰⁵ *A Deduction ... that the Delay of Paying the French Queen's Dowry doth not annull The Renunciation which she made at Her Marriage*, London 1667. [British Library, 808.c.6(3)].

¹⁰⁶ A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Testamentos de los Reyes de la Casa de Austria*, Madrid 1982, 4, p. 21, Clause 12.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 37, Clause 15.

follow from María Teresa's renunciation of her right to succession if she married Louis XIV. It would also follow that Margarita's prospects as a bride would be enhanced.

These dynastic reasons would seem to explain why she is depicted not against a blank wall or a decorative prop, such as a curtain or column, but in a grand room in the Alcázar of Madrid, specifically that which was formerly inhabited by Baltasar Carlos. Perhaps the choice of this same room was also intended to evoke the idea of succession. In addition, Margarita is shown as having entered into and not as departing from this room. It is as if she is making her *début* on the world stage. She joins the other members of the King's *familia*, assumes her central place, and becomes the focus of the attention of the King and Queen. Clearly, in this context, she is perceived as the potential successor to the King, the *paterfamilias*. As such, she is singled out not only by her formal pose, self-discipline and self-awareness but also by her being on centre stage and in the spotlight. She sparkles in the penumbra. She is the jewel in the crown!

Accordingly, *Las Meninas* is neither solely a manifesto for the nobility of the art of painting nor exclusively a scene of everyday life at court. Velázquez has transcended these to convey an image of the *Familia Real*, that is, a microcosm of the body politic of the Monarquía Católica, of which the King is the head, and the Infanta Margarita his potential successor. Thus, the picture is not a commemoration of an actuality but a declaration of its potentiality. It is a statement not of fact but of intent. That is why there is no documentary reference to its dynastic meaning.

* * *

In conclusion, it is evident that, as members of the body politic of the Monarquía Católica, Queens were subject to Kings. Their function was to sustain and legitimize the dynasty through their progeny who, in turn, like Infantas, might be used as pawns for political ends. Their love for the King was displayed through their dress, make-up, jewellery and flowers. Indirectly and ironically, their appearance and adornments also glorified the Kings since they were the objects of their attention. However, their rôle was not confined to procreation or pleasure. Their portraits also reveal that they embodied Christian and

moral principles, notably the Theological and Cardinal Virtues, in imitation of the Kings. Since the latter believed that they were ordained by God, they were obliged to exemplify these virtues in their person. Thereby they hoped to please God and to be recipients of his grace. Inevitably, the ultimate source of inspiration for Queens was the supreme female exemplar, the Virgin Queen of Heaven.

It is characteristic, too, that Queens are seen to manifest these virtues in a ceremonious manner. As in court etiquette and in the Mass, the intention is to elevate the mind to the abstract idea that it encapsulates. Thus the extreme formality of Queens in their portraits not only exalts the Kings, to whom they are subject, but also elevates the mind to God, who ordained them. It is also evident that some of these ceremonial forms, such as poses, are repeated in portraits from one generation to another. The formation of such a tradition—as in court ceremonies and icon paintings—not only makes it easier to abstract or recognize the idea, but also establishes its authority.

So ingrained were Christian and moral principles in Infantas and Queens—from the cradle to the grave—that they seem natural to the person in their portraits. *Las Meninas* exemplifies this. Yet, as this analysis has shown, their portraits are carefully constructed, and the scene in *Las Meninas* is highly contrived. Nevertheless, portraits of Infantas and Queens in their body politic are not untruthful. They represent the reality of an ideal. However, there is no portrait of a Queen in her body natural. Nor is there any suggestion of an independent spirit. There is no one like Cervantes' "Marcela" who would stand up and speak¹⁰⁸. Yet, Barrionuevo did report that:

*Dícese que la señora Infanta mayor [María Teresa] habló las días pasados a su padre muy cuerda y ajustadamente sobre todo lo que está sucediendo ... y que quedó el Rey admirado y pensativo de lo que le había oído*¹⁰⁹.

Nevertheless, nothing of this temperament is reflected in Velázquez's portrait (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna).

Nor is there any pictorial evidence, except in Mazo's portrait of *Queen Mariana as Regent* [Fig. 11] of their intellectual capacity or cultural interests. The learned women listed by Juan Pérez de Moya in his *Varia historia de sanctas e*

¹⁰⁸ M. de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, pt. 1, ch. XIV.

¹⁰⁹ J. Barrionuevo, *Avisos* (CLXVIII, Madrid, 13 de diciembre de 1656), Madrid 1892.

illustres mugeres were engaged variously in Latin, Greek, Painting, Poetry, Rhetoric, Philosophy, Music, Astrology and Medicine¹¹⁰. Spanish Habsburg Queens were not seen to be involved in the Liberal Art or Sciences. They had to exhibit higher ideals. They had to embody the Theological and Cardinal Virtues. Thereby they contributed to the well-being of the Monarquía Católica because, hopefully, that would merit the bestowal of God's grace.

¹¹⁰ Madrid 1583, Book 3, chapters xlviiii-lvii.