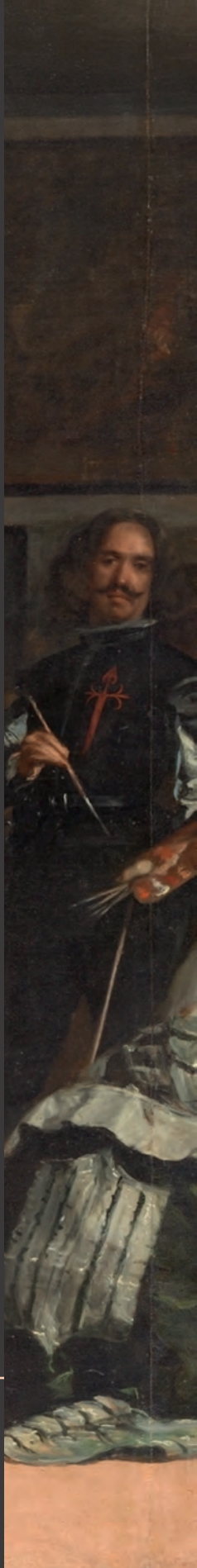


Brill's Studies on Art, Art History, and Intellectual History 80



# Velázquez, Painter & Curator

JULIA VÁZQUEZ

*Series Editor:* WALTER S. MELION

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Velázquez, Painter & Curator

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# Velázquez, Painter & Curator

*By*

Julia Vázquez



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# Contents

Acknowledgments VII

List of Illustrations IX

Introduction: Toward a History of the Curator 1

## 1 Origin Myths 18

1 Titian's Equestrian Portrait of Charles V 21

2 Velázquez's Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV 34

## 2 Multiple Viewpoints 40

1 The Octagonal Room 43

2 Velázquez, *veedor y contador* 63

3 Velázquez's Sculptures 68

## 3 Recto/Verso 96

1 The Vaults of Titian 99

2 *The Rokeby Venus*, Reconsidered 119

## 4 El Escorial 126

1 Sacristy, Ante-Sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and Chapter Room of the Prior 129

2 Velázquez's Frames 142

## 5 Velázquez, Painter and Curator 166

1 Velázquez, *aposentador mayor de palacio* 168

2 From "New Room" to "Hall of Mirrors" 176

3 *Mercury and Argus*, Reconsidered 183

## 6 Les Suivants 195

1 Reconsidering *Las Meninas* 196

2 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo's *The Family of the Artist* 208

3 Juan Carreño de Miranda's *Charles II* 222

Conclusion(s) 230

Appendix 235

Bibliography 237

Index 277



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# Illustrations

- 0.1 Spanish Colonial, *Gold Bullion*, 1622, gold, 11.9 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, AGO ID.29439 4
- 0.2 Giorgio Vasari, *Portrait of Alessandro de' Medici*, 1534, oil on panel, 157 × 114 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 1563 5
- 0.3 John Singer Sargent, *The Wyndham Sisters: Lady Elcho, Mrs. Adeane, and Mrs. Tennant*, 1899, oil on canvas, 292.1 × 213.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.67 6
- 0.4 Kehinde Wiley, *Barack Obama*, 2018, oil on canvas, 213.7 × 147 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG.2018.16 7
- 0.5 Giorgio Vasari, Bernardo Buontalenti, and Alfonso Parigi the Elder, Gallerie degli Uffizi, 1560–81. Piazzale degli Uffizi, 6; Florence, Italy 9
- 0.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Sense of Sight*, 1617, oil on panel, 64.7 × 109.5 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001394 10
- 0.7 David Teniers the Younger, *The Archduke Leopold William in His Picture Gallery in Brussels*, 1647–51, oil on copperplate, 104.8 × 103.4 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001813 11
- 0.8 Antonio Canova, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1804–6, marble, 242.6 × 191.8 × 102.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1967, 67.110.1 12
- 0.9 *Belvedere Apollo*, Hadrianic age—Antoninian age, marble, 224 × 118 × 77 cm, Musei Vaticani, MV.1015.0.0 13
- 0.10 Gustave Courbet, *Exhibition et vente de 40 tableaux et 4 dessins de l'œuvre de Gustave Courbet*, June 1855. Pavillon du Réalisme; 7 Avenue Montaigne; Paris, France 14
- 0.11 Edgar Degas, *Self-Portrait with Albert Bartholomé (1895–1900)*, ca. 1895–97, photograph, 9.6 × 13.3 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, EO-53-PET FOL 15
- 0.12 Installation view, *First Annual Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists*, April 10–May 6, 1917. Grand Central Palace; Lexington Avenue and 46th Street; New York City, NY. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Library and Archives, Arensberg Archives, WLA, Box 63, Folder 9, No. 001 16
- 0.13 Yves Klein, *Le Vide*, April 28–May 12, 1958. Galerie Iris Clert; 3 Rue des Beaux-Arts; Paris, France 17
- 1.1 Titian, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*, 1548, oil on canvas, 335 × 283 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000410 19
- 1.2 Titian, *Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory*, 1573–75, oil on canvas, 335 × 274 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000431 22
- 1.3 Titian, *Religion Assisted by Spain*, 1572–75, oil on canvas, 168 × 168 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000430 23
- 1.4 Titian, *Tityus*, ca. 1565, oil on canvas, 253 × 217 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000427 24
- 1.5 Titian, *Sisyphus*, 1548–49, oil on canvas, 237 × 216 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000426 25
- 1.6 Juan Pantoja de la Cruz (after Titian), *The Emperor Charles v*, 1605, oil on canvas, 183 × 110 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001033 27

- 1.7 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and Diego Velázquez after Peter Paul Rubens, *Philip IV of Spain on Horseback*, ca. 1645, oil on canvas, 393 × 267 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 792 39
- 2.1 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Sol*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 198 × 71 × 44 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003151 45
- 2.2 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Venus*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 117.5 × 40 × 52 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003153 46
- 2.3 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Jupiter*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 208 × 103 × 48 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010387 47
- 2.4 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Saturn*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 190 × 95 × 62 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010386 48
- 2.5 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Mars*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 243 × 80 × 45 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010389 49
- 2.6 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Luna*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 187 × 88 × 50 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003152 50
- 2.7 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Mercury*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 200 × 38 × 80 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010388 51
- 2.8 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Emperor Charles V and the Fury*, 1551–55, bronze, 251 × 143 × 130 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000273 52
- 2.9 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Philip II*, 1551–68, bronze, 171 × 72 × 46 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000272 53
- 2.10 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Mary of Hungary*, 1553–64, bronze, 175 × 60 × 70 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000263 54
- 2.11 “El Emperador Carlos V,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated 56
- 2.12 “Estatua del Emperador Trajano,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated 57
- 2.13 “Estatua de Semyramis Reyna de Babylonia,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated 58
- 2.14 “Estatua de Scipion,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated 59
- 2.15 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Emperor Charles V and the Fury (The Nude Figure)*, 1551–55, bronze, 251 × 143 × 130 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000273 60
- 2.16 José de Ribera, *Tityus*, 1632, oil on canvas, 227 × 301 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001113 61

- 2.17 José de Ribera, *Ixion*, 1632, oil on canvas, 220 × 301 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000114 62
- 2.18 Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni Pietro del Duca, *Germanicus*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 190 × 74 × 41 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010390 75
- 2.19 Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni Pietro del Duca, *Satyr in Repose*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 183 × 59 × 45 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010391 76
- 2.20 Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni Pietro del Duca, *Discus-Thrower*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 184 × 79 × 49 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003154 77
- 2.21 (a–c) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 88–90, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168 79
- 2.22 (a–c) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 2–4, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168 81–83
- 2.23 (a–f) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 81–86, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168 84–89
- 2.24 (a–g) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 92–98, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168 90–93
- 2.25 Anonymous, *The Boy with the Thorn (Spinario)*, ca. 1652, bronze, 73 × 45 × 55 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000163 95
- 3.1 Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus ("The Rokeby Venus")*, 1647–51, oil on canvas, 122.5 × 177 cm, National Gallery, London, NG2057 97
- 3.2 "The Actual Damage Done to the Rokeby 'Venus' by the Suffragette with a Chopper." *Illustrated London News* 54, no. 1401 (March 14, 1914): 407 98
- 3.3 Titian, *Adam and Eve*, ca. 1550, oil on canvas, 240 × 186 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000429 100
- 3.4 Titian, *Tarquin and Lucretia*, ca. 1571, oil on canvas, 188.9 × 145.1 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, PDP 914 101
- 3.5 Titian, *Venus with an Organist and Cupid*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 150.2 × 218.2 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000421 102
- 3.6 Titian, *Danaë*, 1551–53, oil on canvas, 115 × 194 cm, Wellington Collection, Apsley House, 256.B 102
- 3.7 Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1554, oil on canvas, 186 × 207 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000422 103
- 3.8 Titian, *The Rape of Europa*, 1562, oil on canvas, 178 × 205 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, P26e1 104
- 3.9 Titian, *Diana and Callisto*, 1556–59, oil on canvas, 187 × 204.5 cm, National Gallery, London, and National Galleries of Scotland, NG6616 105
- 3.10 Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556–59, oil on canvas, 184.5 × 202.2 cm, National Gallery, London, and National Galleries of Scotland, NG6611 106

- 3.11 Titian, *Perseus and Andromeda*, ca. 1554–56, oil on canvas, 183.3 × 199.3 cm, Wallace Collection, P11 107
- 3.12 Titian, *Venus with a Mirror*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 124.5 × 105.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.34 108
- 3.13 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, 1630–35, oil on panel, 220.5 × 182 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001670 109
- 4.1 Titian, *The Glory*, 1551–54, oil on canvas, 346 × 240 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000432 128
- 4.2 Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto, *The Washing of the Feet*, 1548–49, oil on canvas, 210 × 533 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P002824 130
- 4.3 Correggio, *Venus with Mercury and Cupid* (“*The School of Love*”), ca. 1525, oil on canvas, 155.6 × 91.4 cm, National Gallery, London, NG10 131
- 4.4 Raphael, *The Holy Family, or “The Pearl,”* ca. 1518, oil on panel, 147.4 × 116 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000301 132
- 4.5 Andrea del Sarto, *Virgin and Child between Saint Matthew and an Angel*, 1522, oil on panel, 177 × 135 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000334 133
- 4.6 *Plan of the Chapter Room of the Prior*, 1657–60, drawing on laid paper with brown wash, 45.5 × 75.1 cm, Real Biblioteca de Palacio, Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, IX/M/242 138
- 4.7 Titian, *Christ on the Cross* (framed), ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 208 × 103 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014803 145
- 4.8 Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene* (framed), ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558 146
- 4.9 Mirror, 1656–60, carved and gilded wood, 139 × 122 × 19 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014796 147
- 4.10 Sandro Botticelli, *Annunciation* (framed), 1489–90, tempera on wood, 150 × 156 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 1608 154
- 4.11 Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux* (framed), 1739–41, pastel and gouache on blue paper, mounted on canvas, 200.7 × 149.9 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, 94.PC.39 157
- 4.12 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (framed), ca. 1599, oil on canvas, 145 × 195 cm, Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica—Palazzo Barberini, 2533 160
- 4.13 Detail of the frame on Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene*, ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558 161
- 4.14 Detail of the frame on Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene*, ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558 162
- 4.15 Alonso Cano, *The Martyrdom of Saint John*, ca. 1667, pen, brush, and brown ink, 22.38 × 14.29 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Graphic Arts Council, M.77.54.2 164

- 5.1 Matteo Bonuccelli, *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O000453; *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002939; *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002940; and *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002943 177
- 5.2 Diego Velázquez, *Mercury and Argus*, ca. 1659, oil on unlined canvas, 127 × 250 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001175 182
- 5.3 Peter Paul Rubens (and workshop), *Mercury and Argus*, 1636–38, oil on canvas, 180 × 298 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001673 187
- 5.4 Diego Velázquez, *The Spinners, or the Fable of Arachne*, 1655–60, oil on canvas, 220 × 289 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001173 188
- 5.5 Peter Paul Rubens, *Pallas and Arachne* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 26.67 × 38.1 cm, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 58.18 189
- 5.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Rape of Europa* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 18.9 × 13.7 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P002457 190
- 5.7 Peter Paul Rubens, *Cupid and Psyche* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 26.6 × 24 cm, Musée Bonnat-Helleu, CM 2 191
- 5.8 Titian, *The Flaying of Marsyas*, probably 1570s, oil on canvas, 220 × 204 cm, Archbishop's Palace, Kroměříž, KE 2370, O 107 193
- 6.1 Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, 318 × 276 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001174 197
- 6.2 Carlos Manso and Manuel Olivares, Gallery 15A of the Museo Nacional del Prado, 1977. Museo Nacional del Prado; Calle de Ruiz de Alarcón, 23; Madrid, Spain 199
- 6.3 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *Las Meninas*, 1656–77, oil on canvas, 142.2 × 121.9 cm, Kingston Lacy Estate, Dorset, National Trust, NT 1257140 207
- 6.4 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *Queen Mariana of Spain in Mourning*, 1666, oil on canvas, 196.8 × 146 cm, National Gallery, London, NG2926 209
- 6.5 Diego Velázquez, *Infanta Margarita in a White Dress*, ca. 1656, oil on canvas, 105 × 88 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie 3691 212
- 6.6 Italian, *Titian and His Son*, ca. 1560–70, gold, wax, seed pearl, and wood, 13 × 12.9 × 2.3 cm, National Museums Scotland, K.2004.38 215
- 6.7 Agostino Ardeni, *Titian (1488/90–1576)*, ca. 1563, lead, 10.3 cm, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, gift of Amanda Marchesa Molinari, 1966.106.21a 216
- 6.8 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *The Family of the Artist*, 1664–65, oil on canvas, 149.5 × 174.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie 320 219
- 6.9 Juan Carreño de Miranda, *Charles II*, ca. 1675, oil on canvas, 201 × 141 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000642 223
- 6.10 Juan Carreño de Miranda, *Queen Mariana of Austria*, ca. 1670, oil on canvas, 211 × 125 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000644 226
- 7.1 Luca Giordano, *Homage to Velázquez*, ca. 1692–1700, oil on canvas, 205.2 × 182.2 cm, National Gallery, London, NG1434 233



# Introduction: Toward a History of the Curator

For a figure so ubiquitous in museums, Kunsthallen, and biennials, the curator is mad-deningly difficult to define. There are, it would seem, as many ways to be a curator as there are kinds of institutions at which to be one, and no single history that can account for them all. Attempts to answer the question of what it means to be a curator inevitably read like taxonomies of species of birds. The encyclopedic museum is the habitat of one kind of curator: studious and bookish, an “academically capable researcher who spends the majority of their time in libraries.”<sup>1</sup> The biennial is that of another entirely: hyper-mobile, charismatic, a “transient, independent curator visiting the studios of a global array of artists.”<sup>2</sup> If there is no history of the curator, Daniel Birnbaum suggests, “maybe it has to do with the fact that the curator wasn’t, and maybe shouldn’t be, such a well-defined figure.”<sup>3</sup> So many of the assumptions that we might make about this profession can be readily contradicted by one of its practitioners. What is easiest to assume about the profession is that it is new.

Irrespective of genus, the figure of the curator as we know it now is perhaps largely a nineteenth- and twentieth-century invention, but much of the work of the curator is not as modern as we think. In his *Curator’s Handbook*, Adrian George locates the origins of the term “curator” in the fourteenth century, its Latin root “curare” indicating that at its heart is some concept of “care.”<sup>4</sup> Looking through the history of art, it seems that as long as there have been collections, there has been what is still described in museum circles as “collections care.” Scattered throughout the literature on the great ages of collecting in Europe is anecdotal referencing inventories taken, acquisitions made, and restorations undertaken, largely by collectors and connoisseurs, if not also by artists and architects.

This was certainly the case in early modern Spain. The art collection of King Philip IV was one of the largest in early modern European history, accumulated over the course of a century.<sup>5</sup> His paintings alone numbered in the thousands, an overwhelming number of

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1 Morgan 2013, p. 29.

2 Morgan 2013, p. 29.

3 Daniel Birnbaum, cited in George 2015, p. 3.

4 George 2015, p. 2. Although the parameters of the figure of the curator remain obscure, the curator is currently exploding as a subject of art historical interest. Subgenres of literature on the topic include at least one handbook to curatorial practice (George 2015); compiled interviews with curators (Thea 2001; Obrist 2008; Micchelli and Thea 2009; Obrist 2011; Szeemann 2012; Micchelli and Thea 2016); biographies of particularly high-profile contemporary curators (Beasley 1998; Laclotte 2004; Müller 2006; Bonami 2014; Obrist and Raza 2014); and journals devoted to the subject (the recently minted *Journal of Curatorial Studies* and *Manifesta Journal*, to name two examples). This is only a selection of the growing literature examining curatorial practices of different kinds, somehow already too extensive to list here in its entirety.

5 An introduction to the Habsburg art collection can be found in Brown 1995, pp. 95–145. Specialized literature on this collection will be cited in the chapters to follow.

which were commissioned by, purchased on behalf of, or simply given to King Philip IV himself.<sup>6</sup> The publications of Zahira Véliz and Ángel Aterido Fernández hint at the work that artists and other craftsmen did at the Spanish court to restore, catalogue, and clean them. Painters were expected to be skilled in restoration; period treatises like those of Francisco Pacheco and Antonio Palomino even include instructions on how to clean paintings without removing their paint and recipes for fresh varnish that might replace old layers of varnish darkened by smoke and time. As they aged, paintings could be in-painted, relined, structurally stabilized.<sup>7</sup> Frames were made in-house by teams of cabinetmakers and gilders; if a painting arrived at the palace rolled up, a carpenter would make a stretcher to go with it.<sup>8</sup> Alongside secretaries and notaries, artists helped both to inventory works of art, recording such data as their authors, subjects, and dimensions, and to appraise them.<sup>9</sup> As Aterido Fernández and Véliz point out, many of the methods to which these documents allude are already outdated, but it is hard not to hear in this work the echoes of the conservation laboratories, frame workshops, and collections' management databases that are so integral to the operations of the modern museum.

At least one period treatise gives a sense of the ends toward which this work was the means. As early as 1560, when the collection was only beginning to take shape, Felipe de Guevara made a curious remark in a treatise titled *Comentario de la pintura y pintores antiguos*. "Paintings [that are] covered and hidden," he writes, "are deprived of their value, which consists in the foreign eyes [that look at them] and the judgments that men of good understanding and good imagination make of them, which cannot be done unless they are in places where they may occasionally be seen by many [people]."<sup>10</sup> Guevara's text is no curator's handbook; more fittingly for his age, it was written as counsel on the ways in which art could support the moral, governmental, and economic stability of Spain. In the process, however, it voices the view that one of the essential functions of artworks is to be displayed.

This conviction that the Habsburg art collection should be displayed was extraordinarily consequential for the Habsburgs' most celebrated painter, Diego Velázquez, who over the course of his career came to be its curator. To be sure, while in the service of King Philip IV of Spain, Velázquez made paintings, including those that earned him his stellar reputation in the history of Western art. However, he also made acquisitions of paintings

6 For a useful breakdown of the artworks in the royal art collection at the time of Philip IV by reign under which they were acquired, provenance, category of object, and so on, see the tables in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 19–20.

7 Aterido Fernández and Véliz 2016.

8 Aterido Fernández et al. 2004, pp. 370–74.

9 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015.

10 Guevara 1560, unpaginated: "las pinturas encubiertas y occultadas se priuan de su valor, el qual consiste en los ojos ajenos y juizios que dellas hazen los hõbres de buen entendimiento, y buena ymaginacion, lo q<sup>l</sup> no se puede hazer sino es estando en lugares donde algunas vezes puedan ser vistas de muchos." Republished in Guevara 1788, pp. 4–5. On this text in particular, see Vázquez Dueñas 2010; Galende Díaz et al. 2013; Giménez-Berger 2014; in addition to the existing literature on Felipe de Guevara, broadly considered.

and sculptures for the art collection of which he was the steward; made attributions, sometimes erroneously; selected works of art for installation in spaces with public audiences; and commissioned frames of varying designs to adorn them. No curator in recent memory has executed a canvas to rival *Las Meninas*, but the average working curator can be expected to have done the rest of it.

Perhaps not entirely unlike those of the present day, the early modern museum that was the Alcázar palace cannot be extricated from the systems of power that created it, and those that it in turn created. In his book on the portrait of the king, Louis Marin concluded that “the king is only truly king in images,” a precept that bears itself out in different ways in Velázquez’s royal portraits.<sup>11</sup> It might be said that the king was also king in his objects; the Habsburg art collection was an imperial project, as was the Alcázar that housed it. The Alcázar palace was, in Jesús Escobar’s succinct phrasing, “the preeminent built symbol of power in seventeenth-century Madrid.”<sup>12</sup> Within the limits of what the surviving documentation permits, Escobar describes an interior littered with imperial iconographies: busts of Roman emperors, maps of the globe and architectural plans for royal projects, grand staircases. Because of the high vantage point of the palace overlooking the surrounding forests, even the views through windows to the building’s immediate surroundings would have given a sense of dominion over a sweeping landscape. Like this palace, the Habsburg art collection, which consisted not only of paintings and sculptures but also of rugs, tapestries, furniture, frescoes, and all manner of *objets d’art*, was the product of the aggregation of labor, materials, and talent to the very center of the Habsburg world, sometimes by diplomatic but more often by exploitative—if not murderous—tactics. Not for nothing does Adrian George remind us that “the nascent development of the role of curator in its current form is inexorably linked to the development of collecting as a pastime of the rich.”<sup>13</sup> At least one disc of gold bullion of the kind that would have been shipped from the Americas to Spain during this period still survives to the present day (fig. 0.1). This object epitomizes the literal transfer of wealth across geographies and toward the Spanish capital in the centuries leading up to Velázquez’s tenure there. It also serves as a reminder that the goods and services listed above, whether labor, materials, or talent, are simply capital by any other name. As Byron Hamann importantly argues, *Las Meninas* is not only a paean to artistic virtuosity; it is an index of empire.<sup>14</sup>

By the time Velázquez was finished with them, the exhibition spaces under his purview in the Alcázar palace and the royal monastery at El Escorial would sit somewhere between the Gallerie degli Uffizi of Renaissance Italy, with its linear telling of a history of art, and the Château de Versailles of Louis XIV’s France, a monument to absolutism. His was a conjoined set of motives, both political and artistic; as it happens, exhibition

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11 Marin 1988, p. 8.

12 Escobar 2022, p. 47. On the topic of the Alcázar, see also Checa Cremades 1994a and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 23–148, both referenced in Escobar’s text.

13 George 2015, p. 2.

14 Hamann 2010.



FIGURE 0.1 Spanish Colonial, *Gold Bullion*, 1622, gold, 11.9 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, AGO ID.29439  
IMAGE © AGO

is an apparatus well suited to both kinds of objectives. In an essay simply titled “What Is an Exhibition?,” Elena Filipovic offers the following answer: “Of course it can be many things, but perhaps first and foremost it is not a neutral thing. In its many lives, it has been understood as a scrim on which ideology is projected, a machine for the manufacture of meaning, a theater of bourgeois culture, a site for the disciplining of citizen-subjects, or a *mise-en-scène* of unquestioned values (linear time, teleological history, master narratives).”<sup>15</sup> With each of these propositions, Filipovic reminds us that historically, exhibitions have always been to one degree or another about power as much as they have been about art. If this is so, it is likely because art has always been about power as

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15 Filipovic 2013, pp. 74–75.



FIGURE 0.2 Giorgio Vasari, *Portrait of Alessandro de' Medici*, 1534, oil on panel, 157 × 114 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 1563

IMAGE © GABINETTO FOTOGRAFICO DELLE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI



FIGURE 0.3 John Singer Sargent, *The Wyndham Sisters: Lady Elcho, Mrs. Adeane, and Mrs. Tennant*, 1899, oil on canvas, 292.1 × 213.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.67

IMAGE © BPK | THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



FIGURE 0.4 Kehinde Wiley, *Barack Obama*, 2018, oil on canvas, 213.7 × 147 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG.2018.16

IMAGE © KEHINDE WILEY, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

much as it has been about art (figs. 0.2–0.4). Either way, as the official portraitist to King Philip IV of Spain, Velázquez was tasked with representing the Spanish monarchy. There was, it turned out, more than one way to do this at the Habsburg court. Like royal portraits, the Alcázar palace and the monastery at El Escorial were sites of negotiation of the political and aesthetic legacy of the Habsburg art collection, where art itself was made and remade for Velázquez, the painter, and for the king, his patron.

The central premise of this book is that curatorial interventions of any kind are meaningful, if not meaning-making, gestures and that this has been true in advance of the existence of the figure of the curator as we currently understand it. The work of art history is so often to determine what paintings meant to the people who made them, or to the people for whom they were made. But to investigate the history of the exhibition of artworks is to ask how the meaning of an object could be configured or eventually reconfigured by the space that housed it. Likely thanks to an increasingly self-aware museum culture, it has recently become possible for curators Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne to write that “exhibitions are the primary site of exchange in the political economy of art, where signification is constructed, maintained, and occasionally deconstructed. Part spectacle, part socio-historical event, part structuring device, exhibitions—especially exhibitions of contemporary art—establish and administer the cultural meanings of art.”<sup>16</sup> Although written with modern curatorial practices in mind, this thought raises useful questions for those who work on the collections that formed the foundation of modern museums and especially the gallery spaces that were their precursor. How did the changing display of collected works shape the way they were understood by their audiences? How might it have determined what responses those works inspired, or what responses they could inspire?

These questions take on further urgency when one considers that artists themselves have often—and in all periods since the Renaissance—gotten in on the curatorial game. If exhibition is the site at which the meaning of a work of art is staged, then it should hardly come as a surprise that artists might see its installation as the final artistic act, the modern-day equivalent to the traditional *vernissage*, the double entendre that equates the work’s last coat of varnish with its first view to a public. For Filipovic, that artists might furthermore see curatorial work as an extension of artistic practice is obvious. “Many artist-curated exhibitions,” she writes, “are the result of artists treating the exhibition as an artistic medium in its own right, *an articulation of form*.”<sup>17</sup> Again, this is a formulation that depends on a seemingly modern kind of figure, the “artist-curator,” defined everywhere in relation to a specifically modern conception of “the exhibition.” Nevertheless, it poses a useful challenge to what we understand to be the limits of an artistic practice like that of Velázquez. To once again invoke Adrian George: “Whatever [artist-curators] do could be defined as

16 Greenberg et al. 1996, p. 2.

17 Filipovic 2017, p. 8.

a work of art, an installation for instance, even if that installation is made up of work by other artists.”<sup>18</sup>

The modern “artist-curator” depends on an art-industrial complex that did not exist in the early modern period in the form that it does now; however, the “artist-curator,” too, is a figure with a rich history.<sup>19</sup> Velázquez was not the only painter of the long early modern period to perform the kinds of work approximating that which we would now assign to museum curators—that is, the work of mediating works of art for a public, usually within the context of a dedicated display. Beginning in 1560, Giorgio Vasari designed and built what are now still the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence, whose linear floor plan recalls the teleological history of art in Florence found in his own treatises (fig. 0.5).<sup>20</sup> Peter Paul Rubens rebuilt his Antwerp home in the 1610s and 1620s to accommodate the



FIGURE 0.5 Giorgio Vasari, Bernardo Buontalenti, and Alfonso Parigi the Elder, Gallerie degli Uffizi, 1560–81. Piazzale degli Uffizi, 6; Florence, Italy

IMAGE © GABINETTO FOTOGRAFICO DELLE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI

18 George 2015, p. 8.

19 On the artist-curator, see Smith 2012; Jeffery 2015; Johnstone 2015; Filipovic 2017 along with the succeeding essays in the same volume; and Green 2018, all of which assume the artist-curator a modern—if not totally contemporary—figure.

20 On Vasari and the Gallerie degli Uffizi, see especially Gahtan 2014.



FIGURE 0.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Sense of Sight*, 1617, oil on panel, 64.7 × 109.5 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001394

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

presentation of his personal collection of gems, coins, sculptures, and paintings, likely in anticipation of the visits to the collection eventually made by foreign dignitaries to Flanders (fig. 0.6).<sup>21</sup> In 1660 the painter David Teniers the Younger produced an illustrated catalogue of the art collection of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, titled the *Theatrum Pictorium*, alongside oil paintings that assembled its contents in fictive gallery hangs (fig. 0.7).<sup>22</sup> Beginning in the 1780s, sculptor Antonio Canova mounted exhibitions of his own works in Rome and then in Naples, Milan, and Venice, presenting his contemporary sculptures alongside the works from antiquity that had inspired them as a strategy for staging their “neoclassicism” (figs. 0.8 and 0.9).<sup>23</sup>

Into modernity comparable case studies readily come into view: In 1855 Gustave Courbet organized a solo presentation of his rejected submissions to the state-sponsored Salon, mounting a pavilion within sight of it and distributing his “Realist Manifesto” as an accompanying catalogue (fig. 0.10).<sup>24</sup> Beginning in 1897, Edgar Degas fashioned his private home and studio into a *maison-musée*, arranging his paintings, textiles, books, and furnishings in a deliberately disheveled tableau (fig. 0.11).<sup>25</sup> Marcel Duchamp

21 On Rubens’s art collection, see Müller 1989 and Belkin and Healy 2004.

22 On the *Theatrum Pictorium*, see Vegelin van Claerbergen 2006.

23 On Canova’s exhibition strategies, see Ferando 2011, part of which was previously published as Ferando 2010.

24 For the exhibition catalogue, see Courbet 1855. On the exhibition, more broadly considered, and its context, see Font-Réaulx et al. 2008, pp. 165–225.

25 On Degas’s *maison-musée*, see Crisci-Richardson 2012.



FIGURE 0.7 David Teniers the Younger, *The Archduke Leopold William in His Picture Gallery in Brussels*, 1647–51, oil on copperplate, 104.8 × 103.4 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001813  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

anonymously submitted his notorious *Fountain* (lost) to the 1917 Society of Independent Artists Exhibition, on whose “hanging committee” he himself was also serving as president; when it was rejected, he resigned from the post in protest (fig. 0.12).<sup>26</sup> In 1958 Yves Klein produced *Le Vide*, a performance piece consisting of painting the walls of a commercial art gallery white, by which he presented the “white cube” as its own autonomous work (fig. 0.13).<sup>27</sup> No history of the artist-curator has ever been written.<sup>28</sup> The examples just enumerated suggest, however, that such a history is possible. Because the “artist-curator” was never—and continues not to be—a clearly demarcated or substantially codified

26 On Duchamp’s curatorial, archival, and art-administrative interventions, see Filipovic 2016.

27 On Klein’s *Le Vide*, see Klein 1982.

28 Bonaspetti and Cernuschi 2017, p. 5: “In the context of long-sustained and venerable art historical scholarship, the *history* of the exhibition is still nascent (if recently beginning to expand), and the story of the artist as curator, a key aspect of that fascinating narrative, largely remains to be written.”



FIGURE 0.8 Antonio Canova, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1804–6, marble, 242.6 × 191.8 × 102.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1967, 67.110.1

IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



FIGURE 0.9 *Belvedere Apollo*, Hadrianic age–Antoninian age, marble, 224 × 118 × 77 cm, Musei Vaticani, MV.1015.0.0

IMAGE © GOVERNATORATO SCV—DIREZIONE DEI MUSEI



FIGURE 0.10 Gustave Courbet, *Exhibition et vente de 40 tableaux et 4 dessins de l'œuvre de Gustave Courbet*, June 1855. Pavillon du Réalisme; 7 Avenue Montaigne; Paris, France  
IMAGE © INSTITUT GUSTAVE COURBET

professional category, this history could be no linear tale.<sup>29</sup> Rather, it would take the form of an anthology of what would appear to be isolated episodes, united by the direct engagement of their diverse protagonists with the particular institutional frameworks of their time and place that determined what art meant, to whom, and how.

This book is not a history of the artist-curator, nor does it seek to answer the many questions such a figure conceivably provokes. The aim of this book is simply to reevaluate Velázquez's relationship to the exhibition apparatuses of his immediate age, reconsidering the various ways in which Velázquez's activities as a painter and his activities as curator of the Habsburg art collection informed each other.<sup>30</sup> Velázquez's paintings

29 Then again, neither is the history of the modern museum (Paul 2012, p. viii).

30 Of the many monographs on the life and career of Velázquez, none are more attentive to his role at the court of Philip IV—and especially the way his relationship to Philip IV structured the trajectory of his career—than Brown 1986b and Marias 1999. On the professional titles that Velázquez held in addition to court painter, see especially Barrios Pintado 1999; Muñoz González 1999; Portús Pérez 1999; Cordero and Hernández 2000; Cotillo Torrejón 2003; Barrios Pintado 2003; and Cruz Valdovinos 2008. A brief



FIGURE 0.11 Edgar Degas, *Self-Portrait with Albert Bartholomé* (1895–1900), ca. 1895–97, photograph, 9.6 × 13.3 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, EO-53-PET FOL  
IMAGE © BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

express ambitions and attitudes toward his art historical predecessors that would motivate Velázquez's reorganization of parts of the royal collection that included their works. In turn, the collection and display of paintings in royal exhibition sites would cultivate in Velázquez a knowledge of art and its history that would inform the paintings he produced at court. Velázquez's simultaneous roles as painter to King Philip IV of Spain and the curator of his art collection were the twinned expressions of a single creative imagination, his paintings and his gallery hangs the products of a unified set of artistic and professional imperatives. The figure of the "artist-curator," however seemingly contemporary or nebulously defined, calls into question what a monographic view of the career of a painter like Velázquez might look like: what it can and should include if its author means to provide the most complete picture of the output of an artist like Velázquez, whose painting production was one aspect of a larger field of artistic productivity while in the service of the Habsburgs.

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summary of Velázquez's work on the changing decoration of the Alcázar palace was recently written up in Hermoso Cuesta 2021.



FIGURE 0.12 Installation view, *First Annual Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists*, April 10–May 6, 1917. Grand Central Palace; Lexington Avenue and 46th Street; New York City, NY. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Library and Archives, Arensberg Archives, WLA, Box 63, Folder 9, No. 001

IMAGE © PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

A sizeable tome could likely be written on the secondary art market, the emergence of the picture gallery, the history of restoration across early modern Europe, among other factors that converged across the European continent to facilitate the roles that painters came to play in the acquisition, cataloguing, and display of the substantial art collections that had been amassed by the start of the seventeenth century. This is to say nothing of the ink that could be productively spilled on the ways that collecting practices—both on the part of painters and on the part of patrons—shaped trends in artistic output in this period. This book has a comparatively modest ambition. Irrespective of methodological affiliation, scholars have for decades been calling Velázquez the “curator” of the Habsburg art collection.<sup>31</sup> This book endeavors to define precisely what that means.

31 For just three examples, see Brown 1986b, p. 241; Portús Pérez 1999; and Alpers 2005, pp. 183–89.

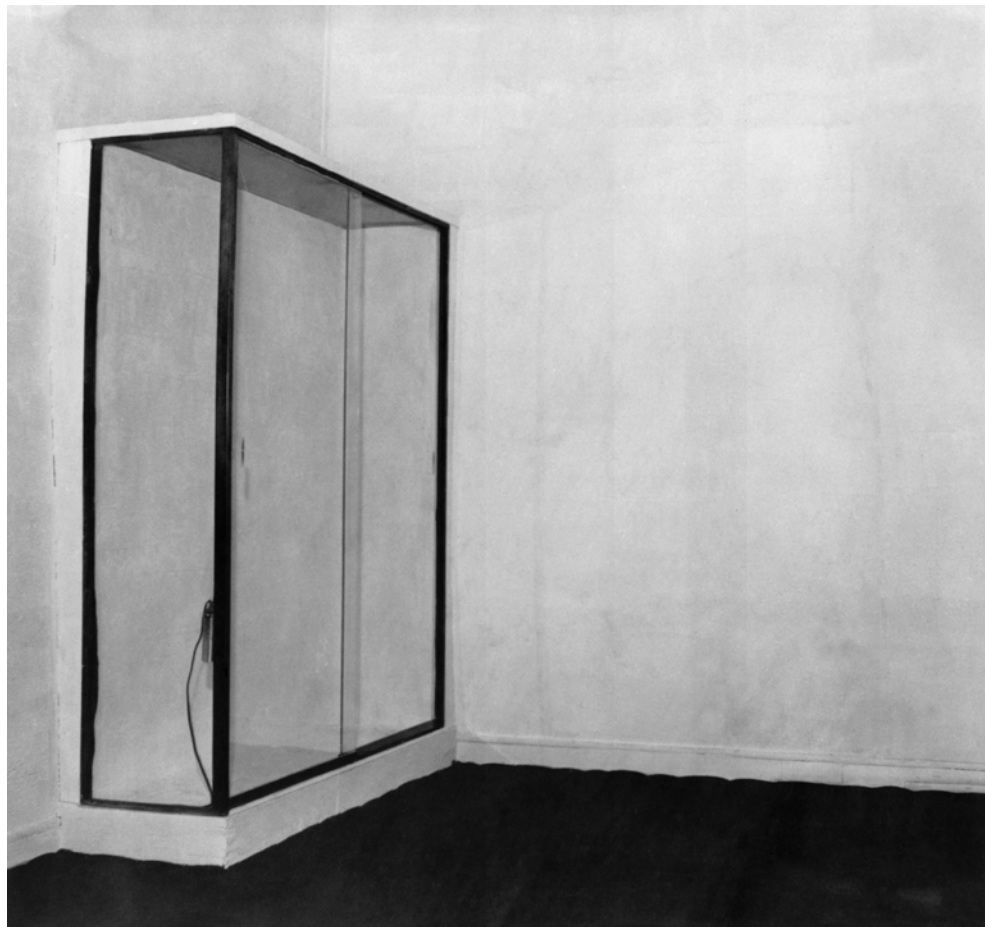


FIGURE 0.13 Yves Klein, *Le Vide*, April 28–May 12, 1958. Galerie Iris Clert; 3 Rue des Beaux-Arts; Paris, France  
IMAGE © SUCCESSION YVES KLEIN

## Origin Myths

When Velázquez came to the Spanish court in the early 1620s, he also came to be surrounded by the most spectacular paintings collection that had ever been assembled in western Europe. It was a vital moment in the history of the Habsburg art collection. In these years, the renovation of the seat of Spanish power was nearing completion, and the rehang of the royal art collection was about to begin. The “New Room” at the center of the palace was the first gallery to be redecorated, likely under the auspices of Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimental, the Count-Duke of Olivares and then a power player at the court of Philip IV.<sup>1</sup> This room was to serve as the site of representation of the Habsburg monarchy before international audiences and demanded a suite of paintings befitting its political charge. Its centerpiece was Titian’s *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*, a monumental equestrian portrait of the founder of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain and Philip IV’s most illustrious ancestor (fig. 1.1).<sup>2</sup> In subject matter and scale, the painting was suitably commanding. Velázquez arrived in Madrid just before the campaign to redecorate the New Room began. He was therefore present for the installation of the *Mühlberg* portrait in the site that it would occupy for the next century.

The installation that Velázquez witnessed was no empty gesture. By the time Velázquez arrived at the court of Philip IV, Titian’s *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was the most celebrated painting in the royal art collection. At various points in its historiography, Titian’s equestrian portrait has been described as “the image par excellence of the [Habsburg] dynasty and the one with the greatest influence over the course of history,” and “the foundational work of the image of power of the Spanish Habsburgs.”<sup>3</sup> The hang of this painting in the New Room was one of the factors that made it so. The move of this painting to the center of an ambitious decorative program mounted in the most symbolically charged gallery in the royal palace accorded it a starring role within the royal art collection as a whole, tying the fame of Titian at the Habsburg court perhaps to this canvas more than any other. The reception of Titian’s great painting was demonstrably uneven since its production in the mid-sixteenth century, shifting through the decades until just

1 Orso 1986, pp. 112–13. On this figure, see especially Elliott 1986.

2 The bibliography on this painting is rightfully rich. Accounts of the painting are reliably included in the broader literature on Titian’s life and career (Rosand 1982; Checa Cremades 1994b; Freedman 1995; Falomir Faus 2003), the history of portraiture under the Habsburgs (Bodart 2011), the visual culture of Charles v (Checa Cremades 2000a; Cascione 2006), and the history of Spanish arms and armor (Frieder 2008; Soler del Campo 2010), among other topics. On the *Mühlberg* portrait alone, see Beinert 1946; Hope 1996; Checa Cremades 2001; Checa Cremades and Falomir Faus 2001; Moffitt 2001; and Falomir Faus 2010.

3 Checa Cremades 2000b, p. 152: “la imagen por excelencia de la dinastía y la de mayor influencia a lo largo de la historia”; and Bodart 2011, p. 270: “l’oeuvre fondatrice de l’image du pouvoir des Habsbourg d’Espagne.”



FIGURE 1.1 Titian, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*, 1548, oil on canvas, 335 × 283 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000410

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

before the coronation of Philip IV, when several factors converged to bring the painting into visibility once more. The display of this work in the site of representation of the Spanish monarchy was an intervention in this changing critical fortune, the culminating gesture in the painting's reevaluation. It established definitively what the painting meant for Philip IV and therefore what it would mean for Velázquez, his portraitist.

Velázquez's involvement in the constitution of the decorative program of the New Room in these years was in no way curatorial; his only contributions were made as a painter, and even then, only making paintings that Philip IV asked of him. It is likely no coincidence, however, that his first major assignment for Philip IV was to produce a painting that directly responded to a work from the royal art collection and that was intended for display within the very same gallery that housed its model. Shortly after the *Mühlberg* portrait was hung in the New Room, Philip IV commissioned from Velázquez an equestrian portrait of himself for display across from it. For Philip IV, this commission was the means by which to fashion his political persona in the example of his illustrious great-grandfather. For Velázquez, it was his first direct confrontation with his predecessor and most distinguished forebear in the history of Habsburg portraiture. The events spanning the installation of the *Mühlberg* portrait in the New Room and the hang of Velázquez's commission in the same gallery were brief and unceremonious, taking place over the course of just a few years. Nevertheless, this early episode in Velázquez's career at the Habsburg court dramatizes one of the essential conditions of its unfolding in the decades to follow. As court portraitist, Velázquez would make a name for himself by following Titian's shining example; this is well known. But his access to "Titian"—or whatever ghost of Titian haunted the Spanish court—was mediated by the contents of the royal art collection that had survived from Titian's day into that of Velázquez. Velázquez's understanding of who Titian was as a painter to the Habsburgs was surely determined by the biographies and treatises that had been written about the master, renowned as he was across Europe, but it was also determined by the objects that remained within the royal palace and, just as importantly, how those objects were framed by the palace walls.<sup>4</sup> Titian was present to Velázquez in paintings like *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, in the galleries of the Alcázar; the commission to produce an equestrian portrait to match it demanded that Velázquez meet him there.

4 By the time of his death in 1660, Velázquez possessed a relatively substantial library that included a number of treatises and biographies with references to Titian's life and work. Among these were the treatises of Giorgio Vasari and Federico Zuccaro, which will factor importantly in the pages that follow (Sánchez Cantón 1925, p. 400, no. 100, and p. 392, no. 30, respectively; Ruiz Pérez 1999, pp. 208–9, cat. 79). Other treatises in Velázquez's collection that made mention of Titian were those of Gaspar Gutiérrez de los Ríos, Giovanni Baglioni, and eventually Francisco Pacheco (Sánchez Cantón 1925, p. 394, no. 46, p. 401, no. 108, and p. 394, no. 43, respectively; Ruiz Pérez 1999, pp. 210–11, cat. 80, pp. 212–13, cat. 81, pp. 230–31, cat. 89, and pp. 252–53, cat. 100).

## 1 Titian's Equestrian Portrait of Charles v

The history of the exhibition of the royal art collection in the New Room begins in earnest after 1622. This is the year that the construction of this room on the south façade of the Alcázar was finally completed.<sup>5</sup> The reconstruction of the south façade of the palace had been initiated in 1608, and changes to the façade had necessitated a reevaluation of the adjacent rooms within the palace walls. In 1618, under the auspices of court architect Juan Gómez de Mora, the decision was made to construct the New Room on the main floor of the palace just behind the very center of the façade.<sup>6</sup> In the following years, the interior architecture of this gallery was completely refurbished: the ceiling was rebuilt, the floor was finished, and the carpentry of the doors and windows was redone.<sup>7</sup> Toward the end of 1622, the room was finally ornamented with marble trimmings, and the cornice was gilded.<sup>8</sup> From this date onward and into the next few decades, paintings and other objects were moved in and out of the New Room in a continuously changing decorative scheme. Most of these came from the existing holdings of the Habsburg art collection; some were commissioned for this purpose. As with the *Mühlberg* portrait, the paintings that were installed and de-installed in this gallery in the succeeding years fit the gallery's intended use as the site of royal ceremonies and especially the reception of foreign dignitaries. Always large in scale and dramatic in their subject matter, these included portraits of Habsburg rulers, like Titian's *Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory* (fig. 1.2) and Velázquez's 1628 portrait of Philip III, *Philip III and the Expulsion of the Moriscos* (lost);<sup>9</sup> scenes from Roman history and mythology, like Vicente Carducho's painting of Scipio Africanus and Eugenio Cajés's painting of Agamemnon (both lost); and allegories like Titian's *Religion Assisted by Spain* (fig. 1.3) and his *Tityus* (fig. 1.4) and *Sisyphus* (fig. 1.5), paintings better known then as now as the *furias* (furies).<sup>10</sup> These paintings and the many others assembled and reassembled in this decorative program evoked the themes with which the room itself became associated, including the defense of the Catholic faith against heresy, the purported mission of the Habsburg dynasty since its

5 For histories of this room (addressing, to varying degrees, its construction, use, and decoration), see Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, pp. 34–47; Crawford Volk 1980; Orso 1986, pp. 32–117; Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 129–36; Checa Cremades 1994a, pp. 391–94; Rodríguez Rebollo 2006, pp. 96–109; Pierguidi 2011; Barbeito Díez 2015; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 58–70.

6 On the reconstruction of the south façade of the Alcázar, see Gérard 1978.

7 Barbeito Díez 2015, p. 24.

8 See Azcárate 1960b, p. 360; Crawford Volk 1980, p. 172; Barbeito Díez 1992, p. 132; Díaz Padrón 2004, p. 85; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 61.

9 Although lost, this painting was the subject of a recent exhibition that offers a hypothesis regarding its original appearance (see Elliott et al. 2017).

10 On Titian's *furias*, see especially the excellent contributions in Falomir Faus 2014a.



FIGURE 1.2 Titian, *Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory*, 1573–75, oil on canvas, 335 × 274 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000431

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO



FIGURE 1.3 Titian, *Religion Assisted by Spain*, 1572–75, oil on canvas, 168 × 168 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000430

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

foundation; the exaltation of the Habsburg monarchy; and the legitimacy and continuity of Habsburg rule.<sup>11</sup>

Velázquez had arrived at the Spanish court in Madrid in August 1623, less than a year after the completion of the New Room, and was officially contracted to work as painter to the king the following month.<sup>12</sup> The earliest record of paintings entering the New

11 See Crawford Volk 1980, p. 168; Orso 1986, pp. 87–107; and Rodríguez Rebollo 2006, pp. 102–9.

12 Francisco Pacheco tells us the date that Velázquez arrived in Madrid (Pacheco 1649, p. 102; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 204; Pacheco 2018, p. 34). The archive of the royal palace conserves all surviving documentation of his contracting as court painter (Archivo General de Palacio, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9).



FIGURE 1.4 Titian, *Tityus*, ca. 1565, oil on canvas, 253 × 217 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000427  
 IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

Room dates to November 1623, when eight works—the first of them *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*—were summoned from the Royal Palace of El Pardo for display in this gallery.<sup>13</sup>

Confirmation of Velázquez's official hire as court painter in October of 1623 can be found in AGP, Administración General, Cédulas Reales, Tomo XI1, fols. 179v and 180r; and in the documents published in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 42, docs. 23–24. For a comprehensive account of the events surrounding Velázquez's arrival to the court of Philip IV, see Brown 1986b, ch. 2.

13 Barbeito Díez 1992, p. 132, n. 215.



FIGURE 1.5 Titian, *Sisyphus*, 1548–49, oil on canvas, 237 × 216 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000426  
 IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

A payment was registered for a gilded frame for the *Mühlberg* portrait on September 11, 1624, suggesting that the painting was finally installed on the gallery walls around this date.<sup>14</sup> The centrality of this painting to the decorative program of this gallery cannot be overstated, and it is little wonder: as an image of the founder of the Habsburg dynasty in battle, it seems to exemplify so readily the glorious vision of the Spanish monarchy at work in the gallery. The painting was produced to commemorate a specific event in the

14 Orso 1986, p. 44.

history of Spanish politics: the military victory to which the painting's present title refers. The battle that took place at Mühlberg at dawn on April 24, 1547, was decisive. It brought an end to a war with the Protestant Schmalkaldic League and thus reestablished the political authority of Charles v over the whole of the Holy Roman Empire. The painting was commissioned shortly after this battle took place, and its contents adhered closely to the account produced by Luis de Ávila y Zúñiga, whose official record of the battle appeared in his 1550 *Comentario ... de la Guerra en Alemaña, hecha de Carlo V. Maximo, Emperador Romano, Rey de España*.<sup>15</sup> Much of what is visible on Titian's canvas can be traced to Ávila's account, including the emperor's dark brown horse, dressed in a caparison of crimson velvet with gold trim; his white and gilded armor, red taffeta sash, and German helmet; and the half-pike he holds in his hands.<sup>16</sup> Even the "bleeding" sky over the bank of the river Elbe, imagined here as a mixture of red, orange, and black tones, is recorded in Ávila's text.<sup>17</sup> Writers of palace inventories quickly elided the details of this particular battle in their written descriptions of the work, none of them directly invoking the events that had taken place at Mühlberg that had occasioned its painting, but the canvas remained the most compelling surviving image of Charles v in victory on the battlefield.<sup>18</sup> As a painting of the founder of the Habsburg dynasty in military conquest, it is now widely regarded as the very image of the Spanish monarchy whose glorification was the New Room's apparent purpose.

For many years, however, this was not how contemporaries saw it. By the time Velázquez had arrived at the Spanish court, two records existed of the history of art under the Habsburgs: a written record, in the form of the treatises and histories that had been written on Spanish rulers and their painters, and an object record, in the paintings and sculptures that had survived from the reign of Charles v into that of Philip iv. Until just before the ascent of Philip iv to the throne, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* had factored importantly in neither. The first surviving record of the painting after its production suggests that shortly after it was made, it was taken to Brussels and absorbed into the art collection of Mary of Hungary.<sup>19</sup> When Philip II inherited the art collection of Mary of Hungary in 1558, he used its contents to assemble a portrait gallery in the Pardo palace, a hunting lodge just outside the limits of Madrid. The gallery consisted of portraits of members of the Habsburg dynasty, arranged as a genealogy with Charles v positioned as its progenitor. Portraits of Titian and Anthonis Mor, the authors of many of the portraits exhibited in the gallery, were included as well. The

15 That this text was an immediate source for Titian's painting is asserted in Soler del Campo 2001, pp. 87–90; Bodart 2006, pp. 284–85; Bodart 2011, pp. 255–60; and Checa Cremades 2013c, pp. 257–60. Fernando Checa further makes the claim that Luis de Ávila y Zúñiga's text used Charles v's own *Memorias* as a source material in Checa Cremades 2013c, p. 258, thus tying the painting even more closely to a specific historical event.

16 Ávila y Zúñiga 1550, fol. 85r.

17 Ávila y Zúñiga 1550, fol. 93v: "sangriento."

18 For records of the painting in inventories from 1558 to 1986, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 700–701, no. 76. On the shift in perception of this painting from *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* to "equestrian portrait of Charles v," see also Bodart 2011, pp. 268–70.

19 For the painting's complete provenance, see Wetthey 1971, pp. 89–90.



FIGURE 1.6  
 Juan Pantoja de la  
 Cruz (after Titian),  
*The Emperor Charles v*,  
 1605, oil on canvas, 183 ×  
 110 cm, Museo Nacional  
 del Prado, P001033  
 IMAGE © ARCHIVO  
 FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO  
 NACIONAL DEL PRADO

painting chosen to represent Charles v in this hang was not Titian's equestrian portrait but a full-length portrait of Charles v in armor cut down to three-quarters to fit (fig. 1.6).<sup>20</sup> As with the equestrian portrait, Titian made this painting during his visit to the imperial court at Augsburg in 1548 in celebration of Charles v's victory in battle.<sup>21</sup> While

20 Kusche 1991b, p. 262. Although lost, the appearance of this painting is now known thanks to copies of Titian's full-length original made by Juan Pantoja de la Cruz in 1605 and 1607–8 for the Escorial (García-Frías Checa 2001, pp. 408–9).

21 García-Frías Checa 2001, p. 408.

this painting enjoyed pride of place in the Pardo rehang, the equestrian portrait, by contrast, was stored in one of the rooms of the Casa del Tesoro in the Alcázar, alongside other portraits like Titian's *Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory* and Justus Tiel's *Allegory of the Education of Philip III* (MNP, P001846).<sup>22</sup> Despite their ideological charge, all three were so irregular in format and typology as to preclude their inclusion in the Pardo display, which was overwhelmingly ordered by these criteria. If the exhibition of portraits at the Pardo palace was in any way a genealogical record of the history of Habsburg rulers beginning with Charles v (and with it, a genealogical record of the painters supported by their patronage), Titian's singular equestrian portrait had, at the time, no role to play in the material constitution of that history.<sup>23</sup>

In written narratives of the painter's own life, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was similarly invisible. Titian appeared frequently in Italian Renaissance art literature as a model of professional success and social elevation thanks to his famous appointment as painter to Charles v. Over the course of what are now believed to have been a series of meetings and a small number of portraits, Charles v established a relationship with Titian as patron and painter overtly modeled on that of Alexander the Great and Apelles. The role that individual paintings played in the series of events that led to this exemplary relationship remains a mystery, and written sources were consistently so imprecise in their descriptions of Titian's early portraits that even identifying these works and establishing a conclusive timeline of their production are still nearly impossible tasks.<sup>24</sup> The story of the development of the privileged relationship cultivated between Charles v and Titian appears in the treatises and biographies of Ludovico Dolce, Raffaello Borghini, Federico Zuccaro, and Giorgio Vasari. While describing Titian's service to Charles v as a portrait painter, which was, in their thinking, the foundation upon which this relationship stood, all of them mention a single portrait described in such vague terms that no single work from Titian's oeuvre has ever been irrefutably identified with it. In order of their writing, their accounts read as follows:

In that time the Emperor Charles v came to Bologna; because Titian da Cador, most excellent painter came to make the portrait of his Majesty. ... And with so much grace did [Titian] make his image: that in addition to his name, in this [Titian] acquired 1000 *scudi*, which the Emperor gave to [him].<sup>25</sup>

22 A concise but informative account of the distribution of artworks in the Alcázar palace under the reign of Philip II can be found in Checa Cremades 1994a, pp. 379–81. A brief account of the exhibition of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* in the Alcázar palace between 1600 and the fire that burned the palace down in 1734 can be found in Falomir Faus 2001, pp. 82–83. An abbreviated list of primary sources by which we can locate *Mühlberg* between its production and its entry into the Museo Nacional del Prado is compiled in Wethey 1971, pp. 89–90.

23 For complete accounts of the decoration of the Pardo palace during the reign of Philip II, see Woodall 1995; Kusche 1991a; Kusche 1991b; and Kusche 1992.

24 Bodart 2011, p. 45. See also Falomir Faus 2000, p. 161.

25 Vasari 1550, p. 779: "Venne in questo tempo l'Imperator Carlo v. a Bologna; perche Tiziano da Cador, pittore eccellentissimo venne a ritrarre sua Maestà. ... Et tanto co[n] grazia esprese la effigie di quello:

But continuing on the greatness of princes, what shall I say of Charles v, who, as an emulator of Alexander the Great, for [all] the many cares and almost continuous travails, which matters of war bring him, does not stop turning his thinking often to this art, which he loves and appreciates so much, that the fame of the divine Titian having reached his ears, [Charles v] called him to the court with kind and affectionate invitations twice: where beyond having honored him like the first people that were at this court, conferred to him the greatest privileges, permissions, and prizes: and for one single portrait, which [Titian] made of him in Bologna, he ordered that 1,000 *scudi* be given to him.<sup>26</sup>

It is said that in the year 1530, the emperor Charles v being in Bologna, the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, called Titian there by means of Pietro Aretino, where he painted a most beautiful portrait of His Majesty entirely in armor that pleased [him] so much that he made 1000 *scudi* be given to him.<sup>27</sup>

The most famous portraits done by [Titian] are these, of the Emperor Charles v, done many times, and the last time that [Titian] portrayed [him] he made [Titian] a knight and 200 *scudi* [were] allotted to him at the beginning of the year by the Camera of Naples, and every time [Titian] did his portrait he would have 1000 *scudi* as a gift.<sup>28</sup>

Still no less in our times have there been such excellent imitators of the truth, than some things which have unexpectedly fooled many people, as with among others a portrait of Charles v by the hand of the so very famous painter Titian.<sup>29</sup>

These writers consistently invoke a portrait but refuse any descriptive information that unequivocally identifies that portrait with any single surviving object. If legend had it

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che oltre il nome, che in quella cosa acquistò de' mille scudi, che l'Imperatore donò a Tiziano."

- 26 Dolce 1557, p. 17v: "Ma seguendo le grandezze de' Principi, che dirò di Carlo Quinto, ilquale, come emulo di Alessandro Magno, per le molte cure, e per i trauagli quasi continui, che gli apportano le cose della guerra, no[n] lascia di uolger molte uolte il pe[n]siero a quest'arte, laquale ama et apprezza tanto, che essendogli peruenuta al l'orecchie la fama del diuin Titiano, co[n] benigni et amoreuoli inuiti due uolte lo chiamò alla corte: doue oltre allo hauerlo honorato al pari de' primi personaggi, che erano in essa corte, gli co[n]cesse priuilegi, prouisioni, e premi grandissimi: e d'un solo ritratto, ch'ei gli fece in Bologna, mille scudi ordinò, che gli fossero dati."
- 27 Vasari 1568, p. 810: "Dicesi, che l'anno 1530, essendo Carlo quinto Imperatore in Bologna su dal Cardinale Hippolito de'Medici, Tiziano, per mezzo di Pietro Aretino, chiamatò la, doue fece un bellissimo ritratto di sua Maestà tutto armato che tanto piacque, che gli fece donare mille scudi."
- 28 Borghini 1584, p. 528: "I Ritratti piu famosi fatti da lui son questi, di Carlo Quinto Imperadore fatto piu volte, e l'ultima volta che il ritrasse fu da lui fatto Caualiere, & assegnatili 200 scudi d'entrata l'anno sopra la Camera di Napoli, & ogni volta che fece il suo ritratto hebbe 1000 scudi di donatiuo."
- 29 Zuccaro 1607, vol. 2, pp. 27-28: "Non meno anchora à tempi nostri sono stati sì eccellenti imitatori del vero, di alcune cose che hanno all'improuiso ingannato molti, come frà gli altri vn ritratto di Carlo Quinto, di man di Tiziano, sì famoso Pittore."

that the relationship between painter and patron turned around a single portrait, we may never know what exactly that portrait looked like, or what became of it; then again, there is nothing to suggest that Dolce, Zuccaro, Borghini, or Vasari knew what it looked like either.<sup>30</sup> The Bologna portrait in these texts perhaps functions less as historical object than as literary device, a rhetorical trope around which to structure a narrative. But if Titian did in truth produce a single portrait of Charles v at Bologna so compelling that it forged a bond between them as painter and patron, that portrait was certainly not—and, perhaps more importantly, was never necessarily thought to be—*Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*.

Just before the ascent of Philip IV to the Spanish throne, however, the critical fortune of Titian's equestrian portrait of Charles v would take a conclusive turn, the object record and the written record uniting in this single, unmistakably singular work. On March 13 and 14, 1604, the Pardo palace was burned nearly to the ground. Of all the galleries in the Pardo that were damaged by the fire, the portrait gallery suffered more than any other. Witnesses to the fire claimed in written testimonials that they had made every effort to remove the paintings from the walls of the portrait gallery, but the portraits were firmly affixed to the walls with plaster and therefore impossible to remove. All of the portraits by Titian, Anthonis Mor, Alonso Sánchez Coello, and Sofonisba Anguissola were lost, including Titian's full-length-turned-three-quarter-length portrait of Charles v.<sup>31</sup> When the galleries at the Pardo were finally reinstalled, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was among the canvases selected to replace the lost portrait gallery, filling a newly made gap in the material record of the Habsburg rulers and their painters.<sup>32</sup> It remained there until its eventual transfer to the New Room in 1623. And when the story of the life and career of Charles v's favorite painter was rewritten in 1622, the equestrian portrait was suddenly accorded a starring role in this history. In an anonymous biography of the painter's life, commissioned by Titian's heirs and published in Venice just before Philip IV took the Spanish throne, the events of Titian's life would coalesce around the production and critical success of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*:

But above all [Titian] was cherished and loved by the unconquered emperor Charles v, who, imitating the heroic deeds of Alexander the Great, also wished to follow his example in his love of painting. And if [Alexander] wanted a Homer and

30 The likely impossibility of ever determining which painting is meant in these accounts of the meeting of Charles v and Titian at Bologna has been more thoroughly treated in Bodart 1997, p. 61; Falomir Faus 2000, p. 161; Checa Cremades 2001, pp. 24–25; and Bodart 2011, p. 45.

31 For an account of the 1604 Pardo fire, including citations from the above-mentioned testimonials, see the first chapter of Lapuerta Montoya 2002, which expands on Lapuerta Montoya 2000.

32 Falomir Faus 2001, p. 82. A useful starting point for a reconstruction of the exhibition history of this painting is the list of entries from inventories in which the painting appears from Mary of Hungary through the early nineteenth century (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 700–701, no. 76). On the origins of the painting in the collection of Mary of Hungary, see especially Checa Cremades 2010.

had an Apelles, [Charles v] had Titian. Having gone ... to Bologna in 1533, where His Majesty was to establish peace in Italy, [Titian] was unable to pay his respects to him the same day that he arrived. His Majesty having learned of [Titian's] arrival, he went through the city for an entire day looking for him with much perseverance, and the next day, finally in his presence, he received him with incredible joy and great honors, named him his knight, and gave him an annual salary, as one can see from his very noble and genuine Privilege. So as to make known that he was worthy of so many honors in the eyes of the greatest princes in the world ... he painted the portrait of Charles v in white armor on a fierce horse, which he put at the end of a room on the ground floor. One saw [in this painting] the Majesty of the Emperor's usual appearance, painted from life, and the movement of the horse [painted] with so much grace, that he lacked nothing but vital spirits. And if a person brought faith to his eyes, he would deceive himself and believe that [Charles v] was once again present there [before him]. Thus, if Zeuxis [was able to] fool a bird by painting grapes, and Parrhasius [did] the same to him [by painting] a curtain, Titian, who was not inferior to them nor to anyone else, fooled almost all of the most important barons and knights of Charles v. Passing through the room where the painting [hung], they revered it, thinking that it really was their true and living Emperor. This brought Titian so much glory, that it is no wonder that he was desired, revered, and loved by everyone. He made still more works of exquisite excellence in Augsburg, where he was called by the king of the Romans in the year 1548.<sup>33</sup>

33 Tizianello 1622, unpaginated: "ma sopra tutto fù caro & amato dall'Inuittissimo Carlo Quinto Imperatore: il quale imittando l'eroiche operationi d'Alessandro Magno, vuole anco nell'amar la Pittura imitarlo, & se quelli desiderò un Homero, & hebbe un Apelle, questi hebbe Titiano, il quale essendosi nel tempo di Clemente Settimo Sommo Pontefice tranferito l'anno 1533 à Bologna, doue era Sua Maestà per stabilire la pace d'Italia, nè potendo l'istesso giorno, ch'egli vi gionse andare à fargli riuerenza, inteso da Sua Maestà l'arriuò di lui lo fè con ogni diligenza tutto un giorno cercare per la Città, & finalmente il seguente giorno gionto alla sua presenza, fù con incredibile allegrezza, & honore da lui receuuto, & fatto suo Caualliere, & Annualmente stipendiato, come dal suo nobilissimo Priuilegio autentico si può vedere, onde per farsi conoscere meriteuole di tanto honore negli occhi de' maggior Prencipi del Mondo, anzi nello cospetto del fiore di tutto il Mondo, che s'era in Bologna ridotto, ritrasse il sudetto Carlo in arme bianche sopra un ferocissimo cauallo, & lo pose nel capo di una Sala Terrena: qui se vedeva la Maestà dell'Imperatore con la solita dispostezza, in maniera al vino ritratto, & con tranta [sic] leggiadria il moto del cauallo, che altro non li mancaua, che li spiriti vitali, & se l'huomo all'occhio voleua prestar fede, inganaua se stesso, & credeua, che questi ancora vi fossero; onde se Zeusi ingannò l'uccello, formando l'uua, & Parrasio lui medesimo col velo, Titiano ceh non fù minore di questi, ne d'altri, che fusse mai ingannò quasi tutti i principali Baroni, & Caualliere di Carlo Quinto, che impassando per la Sala, dove era il quadro, lo riueruano, stimandolo realmente il vino, & vero loro Imperatore. Il che accrebbe tanto la gloria di Titiano, che non è marauiglia se da ogn'uno era desiderato, riuerito, & amato." Republished in *Vita dell'insigne pittore ...* 1809, pp. 5–6. On this biography, see especially the introduction in Puppi 2009.

This version of the story, which collapses the timeline of Titian's meetings with Charles v and his eventual designation as Charles v's official painter into virtually a single master-stroke, was subsequently popularized by Carlo Ridolfi, whose description of the work approximates the appearance of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* even more closely:

Having learned of the arrival of Titian, the emperor ordered him to appear before him as soon as he came, receiving him with signs of great honor, and wanted [Titian] to put his hand to his portrait without delay, who represented [him] with graceful majesty, dressed in gleaming armor studded with precious ornaments, on a bay horse sprinkled with stars and covered with a rich harness, which, proud [to carry] such noble weight, with a magnificent bearing, blowing generous audacity from its nostrils, gnawed its gilded bit, while stepping proudly on the ground. And so vividly did [Titian] depict that glorious monarch, that the painting [having been] placed at the far end of a hall was believed at first glance to be the Emperor, by which Caesar was astonished, seeing himself at life size in this way by Titian's hands, content that his image was revered by everyone. Such reverence and awe came to the Captain Cassandro, upon seeing the image of Alexander painted by the famous Apelles ... [When] the Emperor left Bologna, Titian returned to Venice, decorated with honors.<sup>34</sup>

Ridolfi's account, in turn, became an indispensable reference text for biographers after him.<sup>35</sup> In its general form and content, the established narrative of Charles v's early encounters with Titian persisted past the Pardo fire, unencumbered by the disappearance of the objects with which it was interwoven. All the familiar topoi from Titian's many *vite* are present in Ridolfi and his anonymous precursor: the privileged relationship to a celebrated patron, the career-making portrait, the conferral of knighthood by the patron to his chosen artist, the meeting that sealed their bond. The lost portrait gallery was reconstituted, and in the same site as before. What changed, more so than anything else, was that the *Mühlberg* equestrian portrait was reassigned to these narratives and

34 Ridolfi 1648, vol. 1, pp. 153–54: “inteso l’Imperadore l’arriuo di Titiano, ordinò, che tantosto à lui venisse, riceuendolo con segni di molto honore, e volle, che senza dimora ponesse mano al suo ritratto, qual rappresentò con maestà leggiadra, adorno di lucide armi sparse di pretiosi fregi, sopra à baio cauallo stellate in fronte, e di ricche barbature guernito, che fastoso di sì nobil peso, con portamento superbo, sbuffando dalle nari generoso ardire, rodeua il dorato freno, stando in atto di passeggiare alteramente il suolo: e sì viuamente espresse quel glorioso Monarca, che posto il quadro nel capo d’vn porticale, a prima vista fù credito per l’Imperadore, di che Cesare stupì, vedendosi in cotal guisa al viuo formato dalle mani di Titiano, godendo, che l’image sua fosse da ogn’vno riuerita. Vna simile riuerenza, e timore accadè in Cassandro Capitano, nel mirar l’effigie d’Alessandro dipinta dal famoso Apelle. ... Partito l’Imperadore da Bologna, Titiano decorato d’honori, ritornò à Venetia.”

35 For a complete and incisive account of the changing biography of Titian's life and career, see Bodart 2011, pp. 35–49. For an analysis of the historical veracity of Titian's early biographies and their sources, see Hood and Hope 1977, pp. 551–52; and Hope 1993.

asked to stand in literally and figuratively for the many works that were lost, suddenly shifted from the periphery of two interlocking histories to the very center of both.

It is unclear precisely where or how these records coincided: Could it have been possible for the 1622 biography to have landed in Spain in the years immediately after its publication, or for news of the Pardo rehang to have made it to Venice in time for its writing? Whatever their historical connection, the sudden centrality of the *Mühlberg* portrait to both the object record in Spain and the written record in Italy suggests a larger shift in the part that the painting had to play in Titian's international reputation. If nothing else, Titian's early seventeenth-century biographies likely articulate the same impulses behind the installation of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* as the centerpiece of the New Room in the mid-1620s, an event that cannot be understood outside of the painting's changing reception history since its production a century previous. As an image of the founder of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty victorious in battle, the painting handily served the political purposes of this gallery. This alone may have been enough to explain its inclusion in this hang. But the painting was in addition an object, bound to a moment in time that was key to both the history of Spanish politics and the history of Spanish art; and the changing critical significance bound up in the tethering of Titian's equestrian portrait to the mythic point of origin of his relationship to Charles v cannot be overstated. In his decree conferring nobility to Titian, Charles v christened the artist the "Apelles of [their] century"; in the process, he made of himself a new "Alexander the Great and Augustus Octavian."<sup>36</sup> Reconfigured as the portrait around which this relationship turned, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was thus an imperial artifact, the vestige of an event by which Charles v had invented himself as the heir to the Roman emperors. The decision to install it in the New Room in 1624, the site by which Philip iv meant to construct his own image as the heir to Charles v, surely depended on this reconfiguration. It was also, however, the seal of the portrait's changing reception history, its final ratification.

The hang of the painting in the New Room of the Alcázar palace was the culminating act in the painting's rise to stardom between its production for Charles v and its reception by Philip iv. It postdated a long but relatively uneventful history over the course of which the painting was made, transferred over to the care of Mary of Hungary, and ultimately relegated to the palace reserves. On the one hand, this installation surely depended on the reevaluation of the painting leading up to Philip iv's ascent to the Spanish throne, but on the other, the installation was itself the final step in the making of the *Mühlberg* portrait as a monument to the Habsburg dynasty. It was a meaning-making gesture that definitively codified the painting's significance for Philip iv and his court. No member of the royal house would feel the consequences of this more directly than his court painter.

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36 Cadorin 1850, p. 17: "l'Apelle di questo secolo"; "Alessandro Magno ed Ottaviano Augusto." On this document, see also Bodart 2011, p. 36.

## 2 Velázquez's Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV

The hang of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* in the New Room in 1624 was the culmination of the coalescing of a narrative around the painting, its provenance, and its perceived role in both the history of Spanish politics and the history of Spanish art, but it would also serve, in turn, as the starting point for new one. The equestrian portrait of Philip IV that Velázquez executed in response to Titian's equestrian portrait of Charles v represented the new king's desire to picture himself in his ancestor's image. By the time it was selected for display in the New Room, the *Mühlberg* portrait had come to stand for a model of imperial patronage between ruler and his court painter. When Velázquez received a commission to produce a pendant painting for exhibition in the same space, he was effectively asked to respond to the painting as the gallery had made it, and on that gallery's very walls.

Of the many paintings that were commissioned for the decorative program of this gallery, Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip IV was likely the first.<sup>37</sup> It was installed in the New Room by December of 1625, only one year after the installation of the *Mühlberg* portrait.<sup>38</sup> Although Velázquez's painting no longer survives, telling details regarding its appearance are revealed in period documents of different kinds. The first record of the work dates to August 22, 1625, when the first of a number of payments was registered for a gilded frame for it, sized to match that of Titian.<sup>39</sup> This payment describes "a large frame for the portrait of his Majesty that is in the new room with its stretcher of 13 3/4 pies tall and 11 3/4 wide ... [whose] molding conforms to that of the emperor."<sup>40</sup> A more detailed description survives in a travel diary written by Cassiano dal Pozzo, the secretary of Cardinal Francesco Barberini who went to the Spanish court with the cardinal on a diplomatic visit in 1626. In his diary, he describes Velázquez's painting as it appeared hanging in the New Room of the Alcázar across from Titian's portrait of Charles v on May 29 of that year. He mentions several paintings by Titian, including the following:

Above these is a Tityus said [to be] entirely by Titian, larger than life-size by half; [what] follows [is] a great portrait of Charles v armed on horseback in the act of riding at full speed, with a beautiful landscape, and [what] follows [is] another Tityus responding to the other, by the hand of the Spaniard El Mudo. Opposite the portrait of Charles v at the other end of the room is a portrait of the current King armed and

37 That this was the first commission for this gallery is argued in Orso 1986, p. 48.

38 Barbeito Díez 2015, p. 43, n. 20.

39 For the payment record dating to August 1625, see Barbeito Díez 2015, p. 30. For documentation that the frame of Velázquez's equestrian portrait matched that of Titian, see Azcárate 1960b, pp. 360–61. For a more comprehensive treatment of the production of this frame and its gilding, in addition to the production of hooks for the hang of this portrait in the New Room, see Orso 1986, pp. 48–49.

40 Cited in Azcárate 1960b, pp. 360–61: "un quadro grande para el retrato de su Magd. questa en el salon nuevo con su bastidor de treçe pies y tres quartos de alto y onze y tres quartos de ancho ... la moldura conforme a la del emperador."

on horseback, life-size, [with] a beautiful landscape, and sky, entirely by the hand of a Spanish painter, well situated in the middle of two other Tityi.<sup>41</sup>

No more precise description of the painting's final appearance than that of Cassiano dal Pozzo survives from Velázquez's lifetime.<sup>42</sup>

However little is known about its appearance, there can be no doubt that Velázquez made this portrait with Titian's model in mind. Titian's painting of Charles v on horseback

41 Dal Pozzo 2004, p. 99: "sopra questi è un Titio dicesi pur di Titiano maggiore del vero per metà, segue del medesimo un gran ritratto del naturale di Carlo v armato à cavallo in atto di spigner a carriera con un bellissimo paese, e segue un'altro Titio rispondente all'altro di mano del Mudo spagnuolo, di rimpetto al ritratto di Carlo v nell'altra testata della sala è un ritratto del Re d'hoggi a cavallo armato grande del vero, v'è un bel paese, e aria di mano pur di pittor spagnuolo, vien messo in mezzo da due altri Titii." On this passage of dal Pozzo's diary, see Dal Pozzo 2004, pp. XLVII–LXI; and Harris 1970.

42 Francisco Pacheco's biography of Velázquez includes a description of this portrait that is exceedingly abbreviated, saying simply that it is "a Portrait of his Majesty on Horseback, all of it imitated from life, even the countryside" (Pacheco 1649, p. 102: "el Retrato de su Magestad a Cavallo, imitado todo del natural hasta el pais"; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 205; Pacheco 2018, p. 36: "the portrait of His Majesty on horseback, done entirely from nature, even the landscape"). Antonio Palomino's biography offers a similarly abbreviated account, albeit with descriptive details including that the king was armed and that the painting was life-size (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 326; see also Palomino 1947, p. 897; Palomino 1987, p. 145; Palomino 2018, p. 68). All other surviving records of the painting are disputed. One entry in the 1686 inventory of the contents of the Casa del Tesoro (literally "Treasure House") immediately adjacent to the palace proper describes "a portrait of the king our lord Don Philip iv armed and on horseback, life-size, with a baton in his right hand, an original by the hand of Diego Velázquez *pintor de cámara* and *aposentador de palacio*, on a canvas five *varas* tall and three and a half wide, more or less, without a frame" (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3, fol. 71v: "un retrato de el Rey nro señor D<sup>o</sup> Phelipe quarto siendo moço armado y a cavallo al natural con baston en la mano derecha original de mano de Diego Velazquez Pintor de Camara y Aposent<sup>or</sup> de Palacio en un lienço de cinco varas de alto y tres y media de ancho poco mas ó menos sin marco"). Scholars continue debating, however, whether this inventory entry describes the equestrian portrait in question or another entirely, also presumed to be lost. That it is the 1625 portrait is argued in Justi 1889, p. 88; Cruzada Villaamil 1885, pp. 37–40; Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 5, p. 474; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 62, n. 143. A vehement argument against this theory can be found in Morán Turina 2006a, p. 49, esp. n. 11. The inventory of Velázquez's possessions at the time of his death also includes a portrait of "our lord the King on a brown horse, one *vara* high," but there is no supporting documentation to connect this smaller-scale work to any finished canvas (Mariño 1999, p. 78: "El Rey Nuestro señor en un caualllo castaño, de bara de alto"). No painted copies or preparatory stages of the work are known. Miguel Falomir has suggested that the image of Philip iv on horseback that appears in Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo's *Charles II with the Images of His Ancestors* (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid) might recall Velázquez's original, but it is difficult to evaluate this suggestion given the uncertainty of the surviving evidence (Falomir Faus 2001, p. 83). José Luis Sancho has offered another hypothesis, proposing that the equestrian portrait that was eventually exhibited in the Buen Retiro palace is the 1625 portrait, enlarged and retouched for this site when it was decorated in the 1630s (Sancho 1991). Proper evaluation of this hypothesis would require a comprehensive study of the portrait but also of the decoration of the Buen Retiro in its entirety, a preliminary bibliography for which would include Brown and Elliott 1980, republished as Brown and Elliott 2003; Liedtke and Moffitt 1981; Moffitt 1987–88; Baticle 1999; and Úbeda de los Cobos 2005.

was the first of its kind in the history of easel painting.<sup>43</sup> Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip IV can have had no clearer prototype. Period descriptions reveal very little about the ways that Velázquez's approach to this subject may have departed from Titian's, but they propose substantial similarities: the depiction of the subject in armor, the situation of the central figure in a landscape, and especially the scale of the painting (which was, it is worth repeating, sized to match the *Mühlberg* portrait). Philip IV had a real stake in the choice of this model: as scholars have consistently pointed out, Philip IV and Velázquez, too, sought to model their relationship on that of Alexander and Apelles, indeed in emulation of Charles V and Titian, whose relationship was modeled on that same ancient trope.<sup>44</sup> By the time Philip IV inherited it, *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg* was among the only surviving witnesses to this relationship between Habsburg patron and his painter, the immediate product of the climactic meeting where that relationship was forged. In the commission and production of an equestrian portrait in response to *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, Philip IV repeats a defining moment in the history of Spanish art, with Velázquez's execution of the work an artistic performance directly inspired by a preexisting object, and by the performance—however imagined—that had brought that object into being.

By all accounts, the painting was an immediate success. Francisco Pacheco, Velázquez's father-in-law, teacher, and first biographer, claimed in his *Arte de la Pintura, Sv Antigüedad y Grandezas: Descrivense los hombres eminentes que ha auído en ella, assi antiguos como modernos; del dibujo, y colorido; del pintar al temple, al olio, de la iluminacion, y estofado; del pintar al fresco; de las encarnaciones, de polimento, y de mate; del dorado, bruñido, y mate. Y enseña el modo de pintar todas las pinturas sagradas* (henceforth *Arte de la Pintura*) that the king who commissioned it was so pleased with the work that he exhibited it in the Calle Mayor before installing it in the royal palace.<sup>45</sup> Several sonnets were written to the portrait, largely praising the ruler it depicted and the lifelike manner in which he was painted.<sup>46</sup> None expressed so clearly the painting's historical stakes as that of Pacheco.<sup>47</sup> In Francisco Pacheco's thinking, Titian's professional success was defined by the proximity to Charles V that his work as a portraitist allowed him. Invoking the most common trope in Titian's written *vite*, Pacheco christens Titian the Apelles to Charles V's Alexander

43 Panofsky 1969, p. 84.

44 Scholars from across the historiography have remarked on the role that the trope of Apelles and Alexander gave to the structuring of Velázquez's relationship to Philip IV, including Brown 1978, pp. 93–94; Marias 1999, p. 215; and Bodart 2011, p. 251, among others.

45 Pacheco 1649, p. 102; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 205; and Pacheco 2018, p. 36.

46 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 51–55, docs. 38–40.

47 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 51–52, doc. 38. This sonnet originally appears in Pacheco 1649, p. 110; see also Pacheco 1990, pp. 212–13; and Pacheco 2018, pp. 46–47. For the most thorough treatment of the events leading up to and immediately following Velázquez's establishment as painter to King Philip IV, as narrated by his biographers (and especially on the role the equestrian portrait played in these events), see especially Bodart 2011, pp. 249–55.

the Great.<sup>48</sup> His sonnet to Velázquez's equestrian portrait concludes with this same trope, stating that "the Planet [King], kindly to such a Heaven, will uplift [Velázquez's] name with new glory, as he is more than Alexander, and [Velázquez] his Apelles."<sup>49</sup> Just as Titian's equestrian portrait of Charles v was accorded a role in his biographies as the seal of their professional relationship, so too did Velázquez's equestrian portrait become, for Pacheco, the means by which Velázquez established himself as the Apelles to Philip iv's Alexander. One way of reading this is to say that Pacheco here imposes a pattern from literature onto historical events, making the latter conform to the former; another is to say that Pacheco simply registers the degree to which the events unfolding at the Habsburg court were themselves patterned on existing narratives, and on the literary tropes that gave those narratives legible structure. In his elegy to Velázquez's equestrian portrait, Pacheco affirms Velázquez's place in a lineage of painters with privileged relationships to patrons that found its ancient origins in Apelles and Alexander and its early modern apex in Titian and Charles v, and seals the intended role of Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip iv as the object around which that lineage was made to turn.

There is a further point worth making here: Cassiano dal Pozzo's description of the painting appears within an ekphrasis of the picture gallery in which it was exhibited. Just as significant as the commission and production of one painting in response to another is the display of the painting in full view of its model. Dal Pozzo's diary records what was likely the first installation program of the New Room. However incomplete at the time of his visit and however fragmentary his account of it, the decorative program of the New Room was clearly bookended by equestrian portraits, that of Charles v appearing flanked by two of Titian's *furias* on one wall, by Titian, and that of Philip iv appearing flanked by the remaining *furias* on the opposite wall, by Velázquez.<sup>50</sup> Whatever efficacy the painting had as an expression of the inscription of Philip iv and Velázquez in a lineage of patrons and painters that included Charles v and Titian can only have been amplified by this display strategy. The context from which Philip iv's equestrian portrait derives this meaning is this other equestrian portrait, and the display of Velázquez's portrait across from its predecessor, in a hang symmetrical to that of its predecessor, articulates the patterned performances on which the meaning of Velázquez's work depends. If Philip iv's intention

48 Pacheco 1649, p. 66; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 147. On the recurrence of the trope of Alexander and Apelles in Titian's biographies, see especially Bodart 2011, pp. 36–41.

49 Pacheco 1649, p. 110: "Qu'el Planeta benigno a tanto Cielo, tu nombre ilustrará con nueva gloria, pues es mas que Alexandro, i tu su Apeles." See also Pacheco 1990, p. 213; and Pacheco 2018, p. 47.

50 Once installed, *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* and Titian's *furias* would never move. Every inventory made of the contents of this room of the royal palace between the writing of Cassiano dal Pozzo's travel diary and the destruction of the Alcázar palace in a fire in 1734 records the presence of these paintings on the walls of the gallery on which they were installed in the early 1620s. These include the inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace of 1636 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 2, published as Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007); the inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace of 1686 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3, published in Bottineau 1956–58 and in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015); and the testament of Charles II written between 1701 and 1703 (published in Fernández Bayton 1975).

was to use the hang of this gallery to establish his political identity in relation to the memory of Charles v (and Velázquez's opportunity, in tandem, was thus to establish his artistic identity in relation to the memory of Titian), this object was produced to conform to this narrative and to enable that narrative's inscription on the walls of this gallery. To whatever extent the production of Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip iv could be considered the willful repetition of an imagined historical event, its exhibition alongside *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was the deliberate staging of a history repeating.

The success of Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip iv was woefully short-lived: In 1628, Velázquez's equestrian portrait was replaced by one by Peter Paul Rubens, then an ambassador at the Spanish court whose international star handily eclipsed the name of a Sevillian upstart; the painting is now known through a surviving copy (fig. 1.7).<sup>51</sup> Sonnets to the painting proclaimed Rubens the new Apelles to Philip iv's Alexander, jeopardizing—however fleetingly—Velázquez's claim as Philip iv's favorite painter.<sup>52</sup> It was an undeniable setback in Velázquez's early career at the court. Nevertheless, there is a lesson to be learned here, just as Velázquez surely learned it in the 1620s. The installation of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* in the New Room in 1624 was a kind of prismatic moment in the history of the royal art collection and its exhibition. On the one hand, it was conclusive in the assignment of a new signification to the *Mühlberg* portrait, and with it, the establishment of the centrality of this object in the history of art in the century preceding its reception by Philip iv. On the other, it was the starting point for a new historical argument constituted by the objects assembled around the *Mühlberg* portrait and in dialogue with it, and none more so than the pendant that was Velázquez's equestrian portrait. In the case of *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*, a narrative was rewritten to conform to a surviving object; in that of Velázquez's equestrian portrait of Philip iv, an object was fabricated to facilitate a desired narrative. In both, the walls of a gallery were the site where the significance of these works was negotiated, assigned, and even re-assigned. Velázquez's name at the Habsburg court would come to depend on the legacy of Titian, the most successful painter to the Habsburgs before him.<sup>53</sup> The first hang of the New Room in the 1620s demonstrates the extent to which the royal art collection and its changing reception on the walls of the Alcázar were among the conditions of that legacy. Velázquez could not have known then the extent to which it would eventually serve to secure him his own.

51 On Rubens's *Philip iv of Spain on Horseback* (lost), see Vergara 1999, pp. 65–80; and Portús Pérez 2003, among others. On the state of the New Room at the time of Rubens's visit to the court between 1628 and 1629 and the paintings that he contributed to its program, see Díaz Padrón 2004, ch. 6.

52 On the sonnets, see especially Ligo 1970.

53 The respective bibliographies on Titian and Velázquez are enormous, but considerably fewer publications closely examine these figures in dialogue. Texts that do this include Pérez Sánchez 1976; McKim-Smith 1988; Checa Cremades 1994b; Marias 2003b; and Bodart 2011.



FIGURE 1.7 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and Diego Velázquez after Peter Paul Rubens, *Philip IV of Spain on Horseback*, ca. 1645, oil on canvas, 393 × 267 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 792  
IMAGE © GABINETTO FOTOGRAFICO DELLE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI

## Multiple Viewpoints

When Velázquez arrived at the Habsburg court, he was contracted to work for the king in a single capacity: that of painter to the king. In the following decades, however, Velázquez accumulated titles and positions in the courtly retinue that expanded his responsibilities at court and in the royal palace. In the middle of his career, the nature of these assignments took a decisive turn. Philip IV occupied himself in the 1630s with the construction of the Buen Retiro Palace and the Torre de la Parada, sites of royal representation and recreation for which major suites of paintings were not collected from the king's existing possessions but instead commissioned from some of the most prominent painters in Europe, Velázquez included.<sup>1</sup> Philip IV's court painter dutifully made canvases for each suite commissioned. It has been proposed, furthermore, that Velázquez had a hand in planning the installation of both projects. No single document puts him incontestably in charge of either; nevertheless, his presence at both was likely instructive in the years leading up to what was eventually his own work in this same arena.

Between the two projects, the Buen Retiro is the one that most closely followed the New Room in artistic ambition, political charge, and chronology. The birth of Prince Baltasar Carlos on October 17, 1629, occasioned a ceremony of fealty that customarily took place at the church of San Jerónimo el Real. Seeing the opportunity that this presented, the Count-Duke of Olivares secured the position of governor of the Royal Apartment of San Jerónimo, just adjacent to the church, on July 10, 1630, and launched a construction campaign that enlarged this site into a palatial complex with courtyards and gardens.<sup>2</sup> On December 1, 1633, the keys to what was then officially the Palacio del Buen Retiro were given over to the king and queen of Spain, with inaugural celebrations to take place within the week.<sup>3</sup> With what remained of the decade, the interior was filled with hundreds of works of art, including tapestries, paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts, many of them commissioned or acquired expressly for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> The jewel in the crown of the Buen Retiro was the Hall of Realms, for which Velázquez executed a suite of equestrian portraits of the royal family to hang alongside paintings of battles from the history of Spain, including his own *Surrender of Breda* (MNP, P001172), and images of "Hercules Hispanicus."<sup>5</sup> As has been supposed for the New Room, the Count-Duke of

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- 1 On the Buen Retiro Palace, see especially Brown and Elliott 1980, republished as Brown and Elliott 2003; Harris 1980; and Úbeda de los Cobos 2005. On the Torre de la Parada, see especially Alpers 1971; Vergara 1999, pp. 124–30; Georgievska-Shine and Silver 2014; and Silver 2016.
  - 2 Brown and Elliott 1980, p. 55; Brown and Elliott 2003, p. 55.
  - 3 Brown and Elliott 1980, pp. 68–71; Brown and Elliott 2003, p. 70.
  - 4 Brown and Elliott 1980, pp. 105–40; Brown and Elliott 2003, pp. 107–48.
  - 5 Brown and Elliott 1980, pp. 141–92; Brown and Elliott 2003, pp. 149–202. The question of the possible reconstitution of the hang of the Hall of Realms has been examined in a standalone essay in Úbeda de los

Olivares himself oversaw this work, commissioning from a panoply of Spanish painters a suite of paintings that thus exalted the Habsburg monarchy, glorified Spain's military might, and mythologized its origins. Jonathan Brown and John Elliott have posited the close participation of Velázquez and court poet Francisco de Rioja in overseeing the realization of the decorative program of this space, although no documentation can confirm it.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Velázquez is plausibly credited with having brought Francisco de Zurbarán from Seville to produce the Hercules canvases, originally commissioned as a series of twelve of which only ten were finally executed, and one battle painting, namely *The Defense of Cadiz against the English* (MNP, P000656). Whatever Velázquez's involvement beyond this, what resulted was almost certainly the most significant site of representation of Habsburg power since the New Room before it.

Starting in 1635, attention shifted to the Torre de la Parada, a royal hunting lodge, the construction of which is thought to have been completed in 1637.<sup>7</sup> This project seems to have been directed by King Philip IV himself, who authored a *memoria*, now lost, initiating a commission of paintings from Peter Paul Rubens for it and communicated instructions through correspondence over the course of its execution.<sup>8</sup> Whatever role Velázquez might have had in shaping the decoration of this building cannot be determined with any real certainty; that said, he contributed a trio of mythological paintings as well as several more court portraits to its total hang, otherwise largely the creative vision of Rubens and logistically brokered by Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, then governor of the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> The Cardinal-Infante reported to the king that Rubens had begun work on the cycle by November 20, 1636, and it was probably completed by February 27, 1639, when a final shipment of paintings was delivered to Spain.<sup>10</sup> This exchange generated the single largest commission that Rubens and his workshop ever received from the king of Spain, consisting of approximately sixty paintings of mythological stories, most of them derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The Torre de la Parada was a private space of leisure in comparison to the Buen Retiro's public-facing site of political theater; its paintings therefore depicted hunting and animal scenes befitting its function, as well as images of erotic and comic entertainment.<sup>11</sup> For Velázquez, the Torre de la Parada

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Cobos 2005, and is in the process, as of this writing, of further exploration by the curators at the Museo Nacional del Prado who have acquired the surviving building that once housed the Hall of Realms in their expansion of the "Campus Prado."

6 On Velázquez at the Buen Retiro, see Brown and Elliott 1980, p. 191; Harris 1980; and Brown and Elliott 2003, p. 200.

7 Alpers 1971, p. 28, esp. n. 19.

8 The most complete history of the commission, including this documentation, can be found in Alpers 1971, pp. 29–41.

9 On Velázquez at the Torre de la Parada, see Alpers 1971, p. 30, esp. n. 23, and p. 39; and Georgievska-Shine and Silver 2014, pp. 3 and 8.

10 Vergara 1999, p. 125.

11 Alpers offers a direct comparison between the Buen Retiro and the Torre de la Parada in Alpers 1971, p. 105, an introduction to her longer analysis of the decorative program as a whole (Alpers 1971, pp. 101–45).

was the arena within which to test himself against the Flemish painter, Velázquez's paintings of *Aesop* (MNP, P001206) and *Menippus* (MNP, P001207) a countermove to Rubens's own *Heraclitus, the Crying Philosopher* (MNP, P001680) and *Democritus, the Laughing Philosopher* (MNP, P001682), and Velázquez's *Mars* (MNP, P001208), a depiction of the Greco-Roman god of war as "a real historical figure," his experiment in the capacities of the royal portraitist in the realm of mythological painting.<sup>12</sup> If Rubens's work for the New Room gave Velázquez a sense of what Rubens was capable of in the realm of political diplomacy, international ambassadorship, and creative force, what he witnessed take place in the Torre de la Parada can only have reinforced this lesson.

By the 1640s, the king's attention turned once again to the reconstruction of rooms within the Alcázar palace that would function as exhibition spaces for the royal art collection and the sites where Velázquez's career as curator of the royal art collection would finally unfold. The first major project that the king set into motion was the reconstruction and redecoration of what became the "Octagonal Room," a gallery space constructed from a former corridor located just in front of the New Room. Originally decorated with a small number of paintings with seemingly no relation to each other, this corridor would be refashioned into the site of display of the most important sculptural holdings of the royal art collection, for which the gallery seems to have been expressly redesigned.<sup>13</sup> Toward the end of the decade and with the reconstruction of the space well under way, Velázquez was hired to work on the project in the capacity of *veedor y contador* (supervisor and bookkeeper), a position he would hold only for the duration of and in direct relation to this particular project. Even within the larger team of people tasked with carrying out such projects, that of Velázquez was a consequential role. As *veedor y contador*, the painter would oversee the selection, preparation, and installation of artworks in the gallery space, coming over direct control of the exhibition of a part of the royal art collection for the first time in his career.

Velázquez installed the Octagonal Room twice over the course of an approximately four-year period, an exercise that offered him a glimpse at the uses to which works of art could be put in the contextualization of other works of art. That the Octagonal Room was intended from the beginning as a gallery for the display of sculpture made it unlike any other renovation project undertaken at the Alcázar during Velázquez's lifetime. Until this project, sculpture had not functioned at the court of Philip IV as the focal point of any single gallery decoration. Every aspect of the Octagonal Room would be oriented around this medium. Over the course of its decoration and redecoration between the late 1640s and early 1650s, what this meant would change.

12 On Velázquez at the Torre de la Parada, see especially Cruz Valdovinos 1999; Georgievska-Shine and Silver 2014, pp. 183–200; Georgievska-Shine 2017; and Mena Marqués 2000. On the presentation of *Mars* as "a real historical figure," see Cherry 2007, p. 258.

13 For the original installation of this corridor, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 87 and 144, no. 15. For useful overviews of the Habsburg sculpture collection, see Morán Turina 1994; Coppel Areizaga 2007; Helmstutler Di Dio 2008; and the relevant chapters in Helmstutler Di Dio and Coppel Areizaga 2013.

## 1 The Octagonal Room

As the only dedicated sculpture gallery assembled in the Alcázar palace of Philip IV, the Octagonal Room posed a new challenge both to Velázquez, as the de facto curator of its contents, and to the architects responsible for its renovation.<sup>14</sup> The medium made demands on the interior architecture of the gallery space that a suite of paintings would not have. Construction began in 1646, when master builders Alonso García and Alonso Gómez were assigned the destruction of the tower adjacent to the intended Octagonal Room so that a stairwell could be built connecting the main floor of the palace—most notably the New Room—to its lower apartments, to be discussed in the next chapter. Toward the end of this same year, joiner Antonio de Lancharte began work on a wooden model of the Octagonal Room for which he was finally paid in full in January of 1647. Around this time, Juan Gómez de Mora, court architect and *maestro mayor* (foreman) of this project, requested that a canvas from the existing supplies at court be prepared so that he could begin working on the designs (*trazas*) of the room. If succeeding payment records are any indicator, these designs detailed the numerous ornamental aspects of the interior architecture, which was among the most elaborate in the royal palace. Payments made to joiners, carpenters, *puertaventaneros* (“door-windowers”), painters, and floorers cite niches, pilasters, cornices, corbels, windows, and the like, some of which were executed in colored tile, jasper, and marble.<sup>15</sup> As José Manuel Barbeito has pointed out, this gallery distinguished itself from other galleries in the palace not only because sculpture was the focus of its decorative program but also because the richly ornamented walls of this gallery stood in visible contrast to the comparably bare walls of adjacent galleries.<sup>16</sup> Ten niches were built into the plan of the room from the beginning, suggesting a predetermined installation plan that assumes ten objects of roughly the same size, shape, and format.<sup>17</sup> Unlike the New Room, where paintings were seemingly chosen for the gallery according to its intended function after its construction, the Octagonal Room was thus specifically designed around the set of objects that it was to house. Almost certainly on the grounds of the architectural aspect of this project, Theodoro Ardemans and Antonio

14 Histories of this room, its reconstruction, and its decoration can be found in Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, pp. 55–61; Orso 1986, pp. 153–62; Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 157–73; Barbeito Díez 1994, pp. 88–90; Checa Cremades 1994a, p. 403; Barbeito Díez 2007, pp. 120–22; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 52–58.

15 Azcárate 1960b, pp. 370–71.

16 Barbeito Díez 1992, p. 169.

17 It is worth citing here a dictum made by Leone Leoni in his correspondence with Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, Bishop of Arras and direct councilor to the Spanish king, concerning the assembly of sculpture galleries. Leoni writes that “it is not up to [him] to execute figures according to galleries; on the contrary, it is the galleries that must be constructed around the figures” (Plon 1887, p. 65: “car je n’ai pas à exécuter les figures d’après les galeries; mais, au contraire, ces sont les galeries qui doivent être construites en conséquence des figures”). Written in the century before the construction of the Octagonal Room, it is unlikely that its architects built it with this dictum in mind. Nevertheless, the coincidence between what Leoni advocates in his letter and what happens in the Octagonal Room is worth noting.

Palomino would claim Velázquez as part of the history of architecture in Spain. In an enumeration of the great artists and architects in Spain and abroad, Ardemans would write that Velázquez was both “painter and architect,” explicitly citing the Octagonal Room as his grounds for doing so; Palomino, perhaps in conversation with Ardemans, would unequivocally credit Velázquez with the “traza” of this gallery, in addition to its decoration.<sup>18</sup> Although this is likely an exaggeration of Velázquez’s involvement in the architectural design of this new gallery, documents indicate his intervention in the project as early as January of 1647, suggesting that he may have had a hand in determining its final shape.<sup>19</sup>

Scholars have agreed, however, that Velázquez’s most significant contribution to the project consisted of the selection, preparation, and disposition of artworks for the decoration of the gallery, which included oil paintings of hunting scenes, marble medallions and busts of Roman emperors, and freestanding bronze sculptures. Like the Buen Retiro before it, the Octagonal Room interwove the symbolic languages of mythology, Roman antiquity, and Spanish history in a total display of Habsburg political power. The Roman emperors represented in the busts and medallions were the historical predecessors of Charles V and his lineage, with all its imperial aspirations. The paintings almost all included mythological characters, none better represented than Hercules, the Habsburgs’ mythic avatar.<sup>20</sup> But the ensemble of bronzes was the undisputed centerpiece of this program. Our knowledge of these works comes in the form of a record of a payment made on May 28, 1647, to master gilders Francisco de Córdoba and Juan Cerrano “for cleaning ten bronze sculptures that were brought from the royal house of the Buen Retiro, seven of them the seven Planets and, [among] the other three, one a portrait of Philip II and another of the emperor and another of the Queen of Hungary, which were to be put in the new octagonal room that was made in the Alcázar of Madrid” (figs. 2.1–2.10).<sup>21</sup> According to the records of this *pagador*, the payment was directly authorized by Velázquez, as *veedor* of this project, and by Juan Gómez de Mora, as its *maestro mayor*.<sup>22</sup> The “Planets” cited here can be readily identified as Jacques Jonghelinck’s seven planetary deities, executed in bronze with gilded attributes, namely *Luna*, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*,

18 See Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 340 (see also Palomino 1947, p. 917; Palomino 1987, p. 162; Palomino 2018, p. 135) and Ardemans 1719, p. 281: “Pintor, y Architecto.” While many scholars agree that Ardemans and Palomino exaggerate the extent of Velázquez’s contribution to the history of architecture at the Spanish court, a different perspective is offered in Bonet Correa 1960 and Blasco Esquivas 2011.

19 Azcárate 1960b, p. 370.

20 For Rubens’s cycle of paintings of the Labors of Hercules, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 562, nos. 846–53. Although the subject of the paintings is not specified in the 1666 inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace, the 1686 inventory does identify them as paintings of “the labors of Hercules and myths” (Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, p. 58: “las fuerças de Ercules y fabulas”). For the marble medallions, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 573–77, nos. 869–80.

21 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 180, doc. 201: “por limpiar diez estatuas de bronce que se trujeron de la Cassa Real del Buen Retiro, las siete dellas los siete Planetas y las otras tres una el retrato de Phelipe segundo y otra del enperador y otra de la Reyna de Ungría, las quales fueron para poner en el salon nuevo ochavado que se hiço en el alcaçar de Madrid.” See also Azcárate 1960b, p. 372.

22 Azcárate 1960b, p. 372.



FIGURE 2.1 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Sol*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 198 × 71 × 44 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003151

IMAGE BY FRITS SCHOLTEN; COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.2 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Venus*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 117.5 × 40 × 52 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003153

IMAGE BY AND COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.3 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Jupiter*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 208 × 103 × 48 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010387

IMAGE BY FRITS SCHOLTEN; COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.4 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Saturn*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 190 × 95 × 62 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010386

IMAGE BY AND COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.5 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Mars*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 243 × 80 × 45 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010389

IMAGE BY AND COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.6 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Luna*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 187 × 88 × 50 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003152

IMAGE BY FRITS SCHOLTEN; COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.7 Jacques Jonghelinck, *Mercury*, ca. 1570, gilt-bronze, 200 × 38 × 80 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010388

IMAGE BY FRITS SCHOLTEN; COURTESY OF ARIE PAPPOT



FIGURE 2.8 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Emperor Charles V and the Fury*, 1551–55, bronze, 251 × 143 × 130 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000273

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

*Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Sol.*<sup>23</sup> The remaining three were the portrait figures commissioned from Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, one the *Philip II* of the collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado, another the *Mary of Hungary* of the same collection, and

23 Jonghelinck's series of seven planetary deities originally included a bronze-cast figure of Bacchus seated on a barrel that is markedly different from the others in format and, if to a lesser extent, iconography; this work remained in the Jardín de la Isla at Aranjuez, where it continues to function as the centerpiece of a fountain. For surviving documentation regarding the commission of these works, their previous owners, and their eventual gifting to Spain, see Meijer 1979; Buchanan 1990; and Pérez de Tudela 2019. For a more comprehensive treatment of Jonghelinck's career and working methods, see Pappot and Wiersma 2017.



FIGURE 2.9 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Philip II*, 1551–68, bronze, 171 × 72 × 46 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000272

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

finally *Emperor Charles V and the Fury*.<sup>24</sup> Taken together, the sculptures around which the Octagonal Room was ostensibly designed were a collection of works relatively consistent in their material and format, depicting figures from Spanish political history and Roman mythology.

When putting together this installation plan, Velázquez would have found a ready handbook to the royal sculpture collection in Spanish Renaissance treatises on sculpture that circulated at the court, which reproduced modern bronzes among their pages.

24 Orso 1986, pp. 157–58. The same attributions are made in Checa Cremades 1994a, p. 403; and in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 53. The general bibliography on Leone and Pompeo Leoni is justifiably rich. A preliminary bibliography would include Plon 1887; Mezzatesta 1980; Urrea 1994; Gatti Perer 1995; Helmstutler Di Dio 2011; Schröder 2012; Arciniega García 2013; and Coppel Areizaga et al. 2013.



FIGURE 2.10 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Mary of Hungary*, 1553–64, bronze, 175 × 60 × 70 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000263

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

These included the very same bronzes that had come under Velázquez's care as *veedor y contador* of the Octagonal Room. The most focused treatment of this art form were the two discourses written at the end of the previous century by antiquarian and humanist Diego de Villalta: his *Tratado de estatuas antiguas, y el principio que tuuieron con memoria particular de las figuras, y retratos de los Reyes de España* (henceforth *Tratado de estatuas antiguas*) and his *Tratado de las Antigüedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* (henceforth *Tratado de las Antigüedades*), the latter now known only through a manuscript copied in the eighteenth century from the sixteenth-century original. Villalta's *Tratado de las Antigüedades* contains chapters on several sculptures in the royal art collection, including the most virtuosic: Leoni's

*Emperor Charles v and the Fury* (fig. 2.11).<sup>25</sup> Villalta offers a basic description of the sculpture, listing its component parts and highlighting the way in which the figure of Charles v steps on the figure of Fury below him. He goes on to interpret the work, writing that it allowed those who view it to appreciate the valor and strength that Charles v brought to his battles and invoking Latin verses addressing the cruelty of war and its consequences. “Furor arma ministrat [fury furnishes weapons],” Villalta writes, citing Virgil’s *Aeneid*. He then proceeds to recount Charles v’s many victories against the enemies of the Spanish empire, characterizing the emperor as a valiant Christian uniquely capable of quelling the fiery Turks and furious Saxons.<sup>26</sup> Significantly shorter chapters on Leoni’s sculptures of Mary of Hungary and Philip II appear shortly thereafter. Although Villalta spills considerably less ink on the figures depicted in these works, he makes clear his esteem for their accomplishments in life, saying of Mary of Hungary, for example, that “she was a very valiant woman, and thus deserved to be portrayed with the rest of the Kings.”<sup>27</sup> Interspersed among the chapters on Leoni’s portraits are illustrations of sculpted portraits of figures like the Roman emperor Trajan, the Babylonian queen Semiramis, and the military general Scipio, figures that contextualize the Habsburgs’ own royal conquests in the language of history and myth (figs. 2.12–2.14).

These ekphrases, however brief, give a strong sense of Villalta’s interpretive priorities. Sculptures have, for Villalta, seemingly little purely aesthetic value. Rather, they are witnesses to a history that they effectively memorialize. For Villalta, the art of sculpture consists, first and foremost, of images of the great rulers preceding the present king, and portrait sculptures—as the titles of each of his treatises clearly indicate—are at the heart of this conception. Like painted portraits of kings elsewhere at the Habsburg court, sculpted portraits serve in Villalta’s texts to narrate a history of the great accomplishments of the rulers they depict. In the chapter in his *Tratado de las Antigüedades* in which he sets out to elaborate the origins, principles, and purposes of the art of sculpture, Villalta writes that sculptures functioned alongside history books, buildings, medals, and the like to “make the memory [of great men] everlasting, and to honor their names and their great deeds, and to make them immortal on the earth.”<sup>28</sup> The series of descriptions of modern sculptures in the *Tratado de estatuas antiguas* are exegeses that consist of nothing more than chronicles of the great deeds that had made the subject of each

25 Both treatises were expressly addressed to King Philip II of Spain and therefore speak to a courtly art culture. On Villalta and the reception of the work of Leone and Pompeo Leoni in Spain, see Mariás 1995a.

26 Villalta S. XVIII, unpaginated.

27 Villalta S. XVIII, unpaginated: “fue una muy valerosa muger, y assí merece estar retratada con las demas de los Reyes.” The reasons that Velázquez did not include Leoni’s portrait of the Empress Isabel of Portugal (MNP, E000274), also included in Villalta’s treatise, remain a mystery. Of these portrait figures, Villalta had the least to say about the portrait of Isabel of Portugal, and depending on how closely Velázquez studied Villalta’s writings, this may have been a factor in his choice to exclude it. More likely reasons include the difficult political situation with Portugal, which was then at war with Spain for independence, or the fact that Isabel of Portugal was not a member of the Habsburg bloodline, or both.

28 Villalta S. XVIII, unpaginated: “dexar perpetua su memoria, y engrandecer sus nombres, y grandes hechos, y dexarlos inmortales aqui en la tierra.”

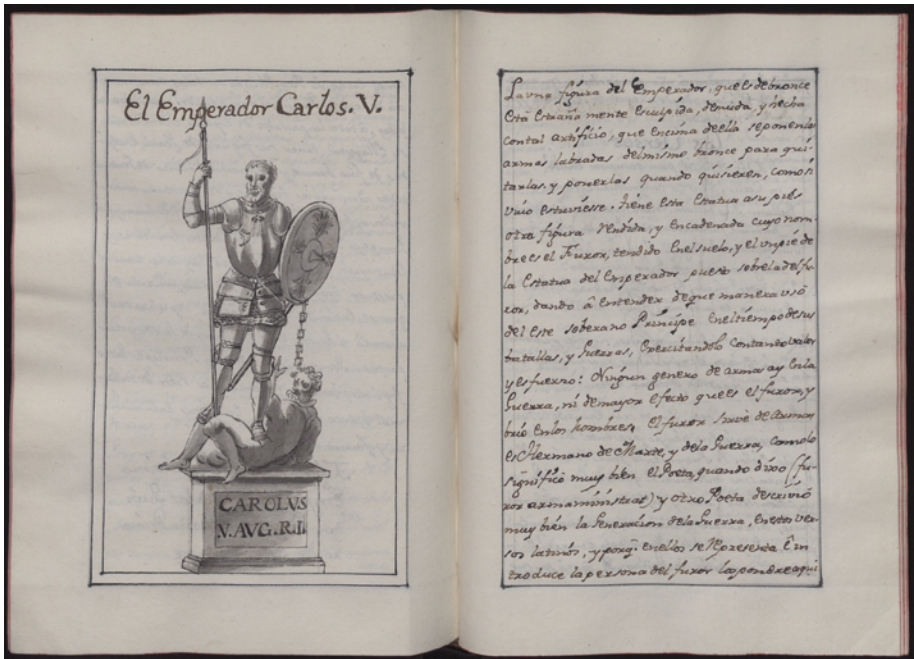
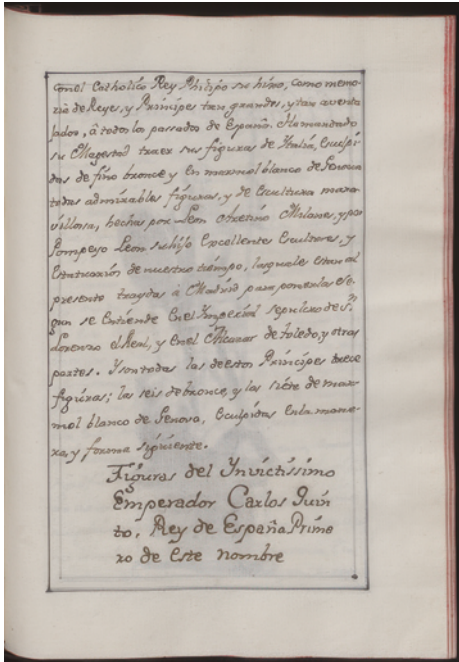


FIGURE 2.11 “El Emperador Carlos v,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated  
IMAGE © MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

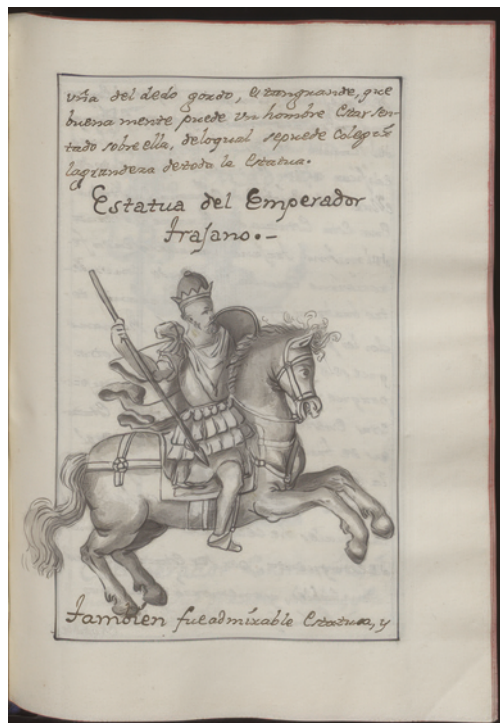


FIGURE 2.12

“Estatua del Emperador Trajano,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos*; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated  
 IMAGE © MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

sculpture worthy of immortalization in this medium. For Villalta, “sculpture” (by which he means portrait sculptures of individual figures) is defined by its commemorative function, and thus by its relationship to the historically significant persons it was made to make immortal.<sup>29</sup> In his view on the art of sculpture, portraiture is primary, art operates in the service of historical record, and political imperatives overwhelm any others.

With his first ensemble for the Octagonal Room, Velázquez put the bronzes in the Habsburg art collection to the services outlined in Villalta’s treatises, organizing this gallery around its same vision of what the art of sculpture comprises and the purposes that it serves. Jonghelinck’s planetary deities and Leoni’s historical portraits represent precisely the kinds of subjects for sculpture that Villalta’s thinking accommodates (which are also,

29 It is worth noting that although Villalta’s texts date to the end of the sixteenth century, this viewpoint—that is, that paintings and sculptures served the purpose of memorialization—persisted into the 1640s. Diego de Saavedra Fajardo’s 1640 handbook on the education of princes, *Idea de un príncipe político christiano: Rapresentada en cien empresas*, echoes Villalta’s point of view. “The heroic deeds of one’s Ancestors,” Saavedra Fajardo advises, “are written on canvas by the paintbrush, on bronzes by the burin, and on marbles by the chisel; may you read them at all hours, because such Statues and Paintings are fragments of history, ever present before one’s eyes” (Saavedra Fajardo 1640–42, p. 14: “Escriva el pincel en los lienzos, el buril en los bronzes, i el sinzel en los marmoles los hechos heroicos de sus Antepasados, que lea à todas horas, porque tales Estatuas, i Pinturas son fragmentos de historia, siempre presentes à los ojos”).



FIGURE 2.13

“Estatua de Semyramis Reyna de Babylonia,” from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España* ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated IMAGE © MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

it is worth noting, the only kinds of subjects for sculpture that Villalta’s thinking accommodates). Like the adjoining New Room, the Octagonal Room functioned as a site of representation of the Habsburg monarchy thanks to its portraits of the dynasty’s founding monarchs. Jonghelinck’s mythological figures work on the portraits in much the same way that Villalta’s citations of Latin verses and references to personages from Greco-Roman myth and legend work on the history of Spanish monarchs to which his writings are so committed. The *Tratado de las Antiquedades* opens with Villalta’s assertion that in antiquity, statues were raised to the greatest princes and emperors, including Julius Caesar, Augustus Octavian, Septimius Severus, and other such figures. By laying this groundwork before proceeding to describe the sculptures made of contemporaries like Emperor Charles V and King Philip II, Villalta establishes an ancient precedent for the practice of immortalizing important figures from the history of Spain in bronze and marble. Included in this lineage are even mythological characters like Hercules, who, according to Villalta, “was also a most ancient King of Spain.”<sup>30</sup> Velázquez’s exhibition of Leoni’s portraits figures alongside Jonghelinck’s mythological bronzes works according to the same logic, the monarchs

30 Villalta 1590, fol. 11r–v: “que tambien fue antiquissimo Rey de España.”

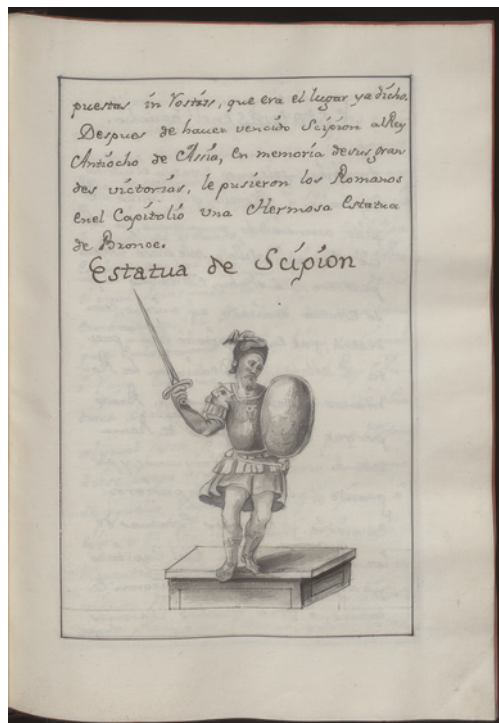


FIGURE 2.14

"Estatua de Scipion," from Diego de Villalta, *Tratado de las Antiquedades de la memorable Peña de Martos*; donde al principio se trata de las Estatuas Antiguas, con particular mención de algunos Bultos, y Figuras de Nuestros Reyes de España ([S.l.]: [s.n.], 1590), unpaginated

IMAGE © MUSEO LÁZARO GALDIANO, MADRID

represented in *Emperor Charles v and the Fury*, *Philip II*, and *Mary of Hungary* elevated by Jonghelinck's deities to mythic scope and given a pedigree dating to antiquity.

The exception that provides the rule to this gallery is *Emperor Charles v and the Fury*, the single sculpture within which the principles of Villalta's thinking actively operate. Originally commissioned to include only a portrait of the emperor, Leoni's sculpture came to include an allegorical "fury," a figure almost certainly derived from the same Virgilian source material mentioned above but nevertheless reminiscent of Titian's *furias* in the gallery just adjacent.<sup>31</sup> Unlike Titian's paintings, which depicted particular figures from Roman myth, Leoni's figure is a distillation of these kinds of characters into the iconographic type to which all of them belong: the monumental, heroic nude, contorted into a tortured pose. Between Prometheus, Sisyphus, and their cohort, this figure corresponds to none of these: it is the "furia" in its most abstracted form. Paired with the portrait of Charles v, it serves to elevate him from his historical specificity to a universal principle, as indicated by the inscription running along the base of the sculpture: *CAESARIS VIRTUTE DOMITUS FUROR* (Fury conquered by the virtue of Caesar). Within

31 For accounts of the production of this work, including citations to primary sources documenting Leoni's ambitions for this work, see Helmstutler Di Dio 2011, pp. 15–17; and Helmstutler Di Dio 2012, pp. 46–48. Many of the primary sources themselves are published in Plon 1887.



FIGURE 2.15 Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni, *Emperor Charles V and the Fury (The Nude Figure)*, 1551–55, bronze, 251 × 143 × 130 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000273  
 IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

the inscription, Charles V is transfigured from historical figure to the embodiment of imperial virtue. By juxtaposing two figures that operate on two different representational registers—one the mimetic likeness of a real personage, the other an allegorical personification of an abstract idea—Leoni makes the one work on the other, the total meaning of the sculpture emerging from their contradiction. Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni seem themselves to have been aware of this: the hinged armor, once removed from the figure of Charles V, reveals a heroic male nude, the apotheosis of Habsburg monarch to Greco-Roman god complete (fig. 2.15).



FIGURE 2.16 José de Ribera, *Tityus*, 1632, oil on canvas, 227 × 301 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001113  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

By surrounding this and related figures with images of planetary deities, Velázquez repeats the representational strategy of Leoni's *Charles v*, rippling the scope of this strategy outward from this single work to the gallery as a whole. The exhibition of Jonghelinck's *Planets* alongside Leoni's portraits allows these works to act on each other in the same way that Leoni's *Fury* does on his *Charles v*. Habsburg rulers dating back to Charles v, that most illustrious ancestor of Philip IV and immediate model, had regularly used the visual language of antiquity to cast themselves in the guise of mythological gods and heroes. This decorative program for the Octagonal Room was entirely in keeping with a rhetoric of Habsburg rule in which kings were compared to the planets, and none more so than Philip IV, the self-styled "Planet King."<sup>32</sup> No sculpture of Philip IV was included in this gallery, but it nevertheless functions as a portrait of his dynastic identity, rendered in the symbolic language—that of planetary deities—with

32 Ackroyd et al. 2005, p. 48.



FIGURE 2.17 José de Ribera, *Ixion*, 1632, oil on canvas, 220 × 301 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001114  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

which he ornamented his political persona. The combination of subjects of the works included in this installation of the Octagonal Room, some of them Habsburg rulers and others Greco-Roman deities, thus functioned to establish continuity between a glorious, heroic imperial past and the figures depicted in Leoni's portraits—and Philip IV, by association.

Today Leoni's *Emperor Charles v and the Fury* is on view in a circular gallery at the Museo Nacional del Prado in the company of two further "furies": José de Ribera's *Tityus* and *Ixion* (figs. 2.16–2.17). Like Jonghelinck's *Planets* before them, Ribera's titanic figures redouble the extraordinary conceit of Leoni's imperial bronze. Within their sightline is Titian's *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* alongside his own *furias*, *Tityus* and *Sisyphus*, the visual echo of Leoni and Ribera's trinity. At work here—just as it was at work in Velázquez's Octagonal Room, and even the New Room before it—is an awareness of the power of one image or group of images to transform another, and of the gallery as the site for such transformation. In the Octagonal Room, a single suite of sculptures was made to represent Habsburg glory, past and present, with images of mythic deities apotheosizing the historic kings with whom they stood shoulder to shoulder. But it would not remain this way for long.

## 2 Velázquez, *veedor y contador*

The ensemble that Velázquez first put together for the Octagonal Room represented a curatorial vision with a coherent understanding of the parameters and purposes of the artistic medium around which it was designed. As *veedor y contador* of the Octagonal Room, Velázquez's responsibilities to the project could have ended here, with the installation of Leoni's and Jonghelinck's ten bronzes. However, shortly thereafter Velázquez traveled to Italy to expand the sculpture collection of Philip IV. It is unclear that he did so with the express intention of bringing back bronzes for the Octagonal Room, but this is what he did. The acquisitions that Velázquez made while in Rome were added to this gallery upon his return, giving its decorative program its final form; it was an intervention in the management of this gallery that falls nowhere within the parameters of his job title as *veedor*, instead more consistent with privileges normally afforded to court artists. The title of *veedor y contador* of the Octagonal Room may have given Velázquez practical control of the program of artworks on view in this gallery, but it was as a painter that he gave the gallery its defining shape.

Velázquez's official involvement in the construction and decoration of the Octagonal Room dates to very early in the life of the project; nothing in either the protocols governing his official title or his day-to-day exercise of its powers suggests that it included a trip to make acquisitions for the gallery under his control. On January 22, 1647, Velázquez was officially named *veedor* of this project in a royal decree. Philip IV promoted Velázquez to the post himself, on the grounds that the existing *veedor* on the payroll of the royal palace, Bartolomé de Legasa, was already so occupied as to be unable to oversee such a project.<sup>33</sup> In a document dating to March 2 explicitly written as a follow-up to the decree of January 22, Philip IV named Velázquez *contador* of this project, thus assigning him the management of the funds issued for its execution.<sup>34</sup> Velázquez's appointment to these posts is definitively established in a document included in the royal account books dating to March 7, 1647. The terms of this document are relatively precise in their description of what the job entailed.<sup>35</sup> As *veedor y contador*, Velázquez was to maintain records of all the monies paid on the project, ensuring that the appropriate expenses were assigned to different aspects of the project, including labor and especially materials, and ensuring the timely execution of tasks by those hired to carry them out. In addition, he was to author expense forms that would be signed by both Velázquez and the palace's *maestro mayor* and circulated between the *pagador* (paymaster) of the royal palace and the *tenedor de materiales* (manager of the building materials). According to this document, Velázquez was to oversee the execution of this project in keeping with the king's stated orders for it. In turn,

33 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 174, doc. 195. A transcription of this document is also available in Cruzada Villaamil 1885, p. 158.

34 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 175, doc. 196. A transcription of this document is also available in Cruzada Villaamil 1885, pp. 158–59.

35 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 175–76, doc. 197. See also Azcárate 1960b, pp. 368–69.

the *maestro mayor* of the palace's royal projects would recognize his authority as the *veedor y contador* of this project, and the various laborers who executed the work on it would answer to him. On March 10, the king issued another decree requesting that Bartolomé de Legasa give the existing documentation of all expenses made in relation to the Octagonal Room to Velázquez, thus completing the transfer of the project into Velázquez's hands.<sup>36</sup>

As Philip IV's decrees indicate, the *veedor y contador* of any particular royal project was one of a number of moving parts that all worked together to realize it. The protocol for the execution of such a project, specifying which employees of the royal house would work on it and in what capacity, was handed down in an official set of instructions.<sup>37</sup> The instructions stipulated that the *veedor y contador* of any single project keep meticulous records of monies assigned to whom, for what service, and on which date in record books to be handed over to the *pagador* of the project for processing. Once the money to pay the costs of the work had been gathered together, it was to be kept inside a strongbox with a bound book recording the amount of money deposited in the strongbox and taken out of it, the date of each transaction noted therewith. The strongbox had three keys; the *veedor*, *maestro mayor*, and *pagador* were each in possession of one of these, and it was stipulated that no two keys could ever be held by a single person at any time. Separate records books were also kept for the monies paid to employees of the royal house for work executed on a project and for any repairs or corrections made to the work executed. At various points, it is stipulated that decisions on the project were subject to the king's approval and should not be carried out without it. Although not included in the official instructions, the court *superintendente de obras reales* (superintendent of royal projects) would report progress on such projects to the king and, in turn, communicate the king's orders to the *veedor y contador*, *maestro mayor*, and *pagador*.<sup>38</sup>

36 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 176–77, doc. 198. See also Azcárate 1960b, p. 369.

37 For a thorough treatment of this document, see Azcárate 1960a. Although it dates to June 30, 1615, we know that this document remained current by the time the reconstruction of the Octagonal Room was undertaken because on December 14, 1646, Philip IV specifically requested that it be revised to include a newly created position at the court, the *superintendente de las obras reales* (superintendent of royal projects). Azcárate discusses the reform of the document undertaken by Philip IV in Azcárate 1960a, p. 223, n. 1. A copy of the reformed version of the royal document survives in the archives of the royal palace, although the content does appear mostly consistent across both versions (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 712bis, exp. 9). A copy of the original version of this document was made for consultation purposes when the post of *superintendente de obras reales* was extinguished at the end of the seventeenth century (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 712bis, exp. 89). The most comprehensive treatment of the existence and revision of such instructions is Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 221–45. Another version of these instructions that deals only with the post of *veedor y contador* of the royal palace was drawn up in 1656, a few years after the completion of the first iteration of the Octagonal Room (Mayoral López 2007, pp. 605–11). It repeats much of what can be gleaned from the written instructions already cited above: that the *veedor y contador* was to manage the salaries and expenses associated with the running of the royal house, liquidate the funds required to do so, and maintain account books accordingly.

38 See Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 246–54; and García Morales 1990b. The position was not uncontroversial, as *superintendentes* came into conflict with *vedores y contadores* and *pagadores* repeatedly throughout

In the documentation surrounding the Octagonal Room, a set of key players emerges as central to the management of the gallery's creation; these players correspond precisely to the team of people indicated in the set of instructions on how to execute a royal project. The instructions indicate that the royal employees with the most involved roles to play in the execution of such a project were the literal and figurative "keepers of the keys": the *veedor y contador*, the *maestro mayor*, and the *pagador*. While few individual documents survive pertaining to the Octagonal Room (despite the repeated call in the instructions for forms and record books documenting every *real* and *maravedí* dispensed), we have already seen this dynamic play itself out in at least one payment record signed by Velázquez, as *veedor y contador* of the project, and Juan Gómez de Mora, the palace *maestro mayor*, long regarded the authors of this gallery. Although Velázquez and Gómez de Mora are consistently given the most attention in secondary literature pertaining to this project, it is worth remembering that much of our information about the project can be found among the records of the court *pagadores* in the Archivo General de Simancas, and for good reason. This information is scattered across three different account books: activity from the years 1646 and 1647 is documented within the files of *pagador* Francisco de Villanueva and activity from the years 1648 and 1651 within the files of *pagador* Francisco de Arce.<sup>39</sup> This is no bureaucratic mistake: Francisco de Villanueva was made *pagador* at the royal palace on October 18, 1640.<sup>40</sup> He held this position until January 15, 1648, at which point it was decided that he was too ill to continue exercising this office. The job then passed to Francisco de Arce, his son-in-law and one of the palace's existing *tenedores de materiales*, who held this office until 1677.<sup>41</sup> The administration of this project thus moved between Velázquez, Gómez de Mora, and the court *pagador* (first Francisco de Villanueva, then his replacement, Francisco de Arce), the dynamic articulated in the official instructions on how to execute a royal project visibly playing itself out across the surviving documentation of the execution of the Octagonal Room.

This documentation does not directly account for the royal sculpture collection, nor for how the sculptures to be displayed in this gallery came under Velázquez's direct supervision. That said, there were certainly immediate precedents during the reign of Philip IV that establish that, in practice, the artworks to be incorporated in a royal project were under the care of that project's *veedor*. While the Alcázar was still being renovated, Philip IV had ordered the transfer of all the sculptures then conserved in the vaults of the

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the existence of the position. In fact, when the position was eliminated at the end of the century, it was precisely because his work with the palace *veedores*, *contadores*, and *pagadores* was judged to be superfluous (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 711, 1675). It is by now well known in the literature that Velázquez and the Marquis de Malpica, who served as *superintendente de obras reales* over the course of the execution of the Octagonal Room, did not get along.

39 Azcárate 1960b, p. 370, n. 41.

40 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 710, 1640.

41 For Francisco de Arce's appointment, see AGP, Administración General, Legajo 710, 1648. José Manuel Barbeito Díez documents a record of de Arce's continued holding of this office on March 28, 1677, in Barbeito Díez 1992, p. 299. According to Barbeito Díez, by July 26 of the same year, a Melchor de Arce had taken over the post.

Alcázar to the royal site of Aranjuez.<sup>42</sup> This transfer was one of the most ambitious movements of sculpture from the royal art collection from one site to another to be undertaken during the reign of Philip IV. According to the terms of this document, Hernando de Espejo, the king's *guardajoyas* (keeper of the treasury) “or whatever other person [was] in charge of them” was to deliver the sculptures to the person to be indicated by the Junta de Obras y Bosques, the board that oversaw activity across the royal grounds and palatial complexes.<sup>43</sup> Philip IV's order tells us very little about how he expected such a task to be carried out, but a follow-up document offers a more precise picture of the roles played by various court employees in its execution. The works would be received at Aranjuez by the *veedor* of that royal site, prepared by the *aparejador* (building engineer), and then given over to the *tenedor de materiales*. From there, the sculptures would be paid for and put in their place. Attached to this document was an inventory that specified which works were to be transferred to Aranjuez.<sup>44</sup> Like the above-cited documentation, this inventory confirms that the sculptures were under the care of Hernando de Espejo and were to be received at Aranjuez by the *veedor* on site. Scholars overwhelmingly address Velázquez's role in curating the Octagonal Room by suggesting that such control over the decorative program of this gallery was a function of the privileged relationship he shared with Philip IV, who regularly granted licenses to Velázquez that he did not to other painters at the court. It is worth noting, however, that if this was Philip IV's intention, the assignment to work on the project as its *veedor y contador* was the right one. The documentation concerning the delivery of the sculptures in the royal art collection to the palace at Aranjuez offers a clear and unequivocal precedent for the practical control

42 On the use of these bronzes as outdoor sculptures at the royal site of Aranjuez, see Sancho 1994.

43 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 41<sup>3</sup>, exp. 120: “o otra qualquier persona que los tuviese a su cargo.” On the Junta Real de Obras y Bosques, see García Morales 1990a; Díaz González 2002; Díaz González 2005–6; and Fernández Talaya 2014.

44 AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales, Legajo 306, fol. 265. All three of Leoni's portrait figures are recorded in this inventory. Leoni's *Emperor Charles V and the Fury* appears listed as follows: “Una estatua entera de bulto de bronze algo mas q[ue] al natural del enperador carlos quinto n[uest]ro ss[en] or armado con la espada en la mano yzquierda y una lanza en la derecha con el Turco a los pies prisionero estatua grande de bronze desnudo sentado sobre una peana de bronze con despozos de armas con cadenas al pezquezo y los pies y braços” (One full-length statue in the round of bronze, roughly larger than life-size, of the emperor Charles V our lord armed with a sword in his left hand and a lance in the right, with the Turk a prisoner at his feet, a large statue in bronze, nude, seated on a bronze plinth with spoils of weapons, with chains on his neck and his feet and arms). Shortly thereafter, Leoni's *Philip II* is listed as follows: “Otra estatua entera algo mas q[ue] al natural de bulto de bronze del Rey Don Phe[lip]e n[uest]ro senior armado con un baston en la mano yzquierda y un alfanje al lado derecho con manto y peana de lo mismo” (Another full-length statue in the found of bronze roughly larger than life size of the King Don Philip our lord armed with a baton in his left hand and a sword at the right, with a cloak and a plinth of the same [medium]). Finally, Leoni's *Mary of Hungary* is listed as follows: “Otra estatua de bulto mas que al natural de la Reyna Maria de Ungria siendo viuda de bronze con las manos asidas y una chia echada al cuello que baja [h]asta los Piez con peana de lo mismo” (Another statue in the round in bronze larger than life-size of the Queen Mary of Hungary as a widow, with her hands clasped and a mantle falling on her neck that falls to her feet, with a plinth of the same [medium]). To the best of my knowledge, this inventory remains unpublished, but for a useful summary of the documentation surrounding this move, see Sancho 1994, p. 74, n. 28.

that Velázquez would exercise over the sculptures to be included in the Octagonal Room beyond what was specified in nomination forms and instruction manuals. It would not have been much of a stretch to move from overseeing the installation of a set of objects in this gallery to selecting them in the first place.

That said, nothing in the above-cited documentation can account for the defining move in Velázquez's curating of the Octagonal Room: the trip to Italy during which he made a set of acquisitions with which he decided the final ensemble of works exhibited in this gallery.<sup>45</sup> Velázquez was authorized by King Philip IV to make this trip to Italy not specifically to complete the decoration of this particular gallery (at least, not that any documentation can incontestably demonstrate) but to purchase artworks for the royal art collection and in particular to expand its sculptural holdings. This was a privilege with less precedent in the work of *veedores* before him than in the work of court painters before him. The assignment to travel abroad to acquire works for the royal art collection was more frequently reserved for two kinds of figures. The most obvious of these was the foreign diplomat, usually a member of the royal family with close ties to the king himself.<sup>46</sup> Salvador Salort Pons and Miguel Morán Turina, however, have both pointed out that by sending Velázquez to Italy expressly to expand his collection of artworks, Philip IV was following the example of other great rulers before him who had sent artists abroad for this very purpose.<sup>47</sup> In 1540 King Francis I of France sent the artist Primaticcio to Italy to purchase antiquities for his art collection at Fontainebleau. He returned to France with 125 casts of sculptures from some of the most famous collections in Rome, eventually revisiting Italy in search of more.<sup>48</sup> While in the service of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, Rubens traveled widely as an ambassador of the Mantuan court; this included going to Rome to study its marbles, as well as its coins, gems, and engraved cameos. The Gonzaga family possessed an impressive collection of antiquities, paintings, tapestries,

45 Cordero and Hernández claim that Velázquez made this trip in an official capacity as "comprador de obras del Rey de España" (buyer of artworks of the King of Spain), but no primary source documentation is offered to support Velázquez's nomination to such a post nor does any account for the existence of this office at the Habsburg court (Cordero and Hernández 2000, p. 91).

46 While governor of the Low Countries, the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand purchased artworks from Rubens's estate on the king's behalf at the auction occasioned by the artist's death in 1640, soliciting the king's instructions via personal correspondence (Vergara 1999, pp. 145–46). Similarly, the art collection of Charles I of England was auctioned off between 1649 and 1653, occasioned by the king's deposition from the throne. For what was likely a combination of political and financial reasons, Philip IV acquired art from this collection through an agent, Luis de Haro, who in turn purchased artworks at the sale through Alonso de Cárdenas, the Spanish ambassador to England (see Brown 1986b, pp. 210–13; Burke 2002, pp. 92–98; Haskell 2013, pp. 151–57). It is worth mentioning here that the *Planets* themselves were also originally acquired for the collection around 1637 by the Cardinal-Infante, although the circumstances surrounding this acquisition remain unknown (see Brown and Elliott 1980, pp. 109–10; Buchanan 1990, pp. 108–9).

47 See Morán Turina 1992, pp. 243–44; Salort Pons 1999a, pp. 416 and 423; Morán Turina 1999, pp. 64–65; Morán Turina 2001, pp. 225–26; Salort Pons 2002, p. 90; and Morán Turina 2006b, pp. 116–17.

48 On Primaticcio's bronzes for the King of France, see Bensoussan 2009 and Occhipinti 2010.

and other art objects, to which Rubens himself eventually contributed.<sup>49</sup> In 1631 King Charles I of England sent Hubert Le Sueur to Italy to do the same. The court sculptor returned to London with molds of sculptures from antiquity from which bronzes were cast and installed in the gardens outside St. James's Palace.<sup>50</sup> Nothing in the guidebook for the role of the *veedor* of a royal project can account for travel to Italy in pursuit of artworks for display in royal spaces, but there was a ready precedent for such work in the careers of artists from other major European courts. Velázquez's role as *veedor y contador* of the Octagonal Room put him in the position to intervene in the decorative program of this gallery. But Velázquez's most substantial contributions to it came thanks to the privileges afforded to him as painter to the king, an accomplishment all the more remarkable insofar as he was seemingly the first of his profession to hold this office.<sup>51</sup>

### 3 Velázquez's Sculptures

Combining the managerial powers of his role as *veedor y contador* with the privileges afforded to him as a painter, Velázquez assembled a decorative program for the Octagonal Room upon his return from Italy that reflected a new understanding of the medium around whose display this space was designed. Among the impressive number of works that Velázquez acquired in Rome were the three sculptures that came to form part of the final iteration of the decorative program of the Octagonal Room. Seemingly acquired expressly for this gallery, the sculptures now known as the *Germanicus*, *Satyr in Repose*, and *Discus-Thrower* express Velázquez's direct engagement with the sculpture collections that he would encounter in Italy, remaking the very conception of sculpture at the heart of this gallery in light of what he discovered there.

There is little surviving documentation that can account for the trip that Velázquez made to Italy between 1648 and 1651, but we know enough to evaluate Velázquez's purchase of the three sculptures that were eventually added to the Octagonal Room within the larger timeline of his trip. Velázquez's second trip to Italy has been reconstructed by Salvador Salort Pons and Enriqueta Harris to the extent that the documentation permits, and so only a brief summary of the most important dates will be offered here.<sup>52</sup> Plans

49 On Rubens and the marble sculptures of Rome, see especially Aymonino and Dodero 2021. On Rubens and the Gonzaga art collection, see especially Morselli 2016.

50 On Hubert Le Sueur's bronzes for the King of England, see Avery 1980–82.

51 For a complete roster of those hired to work as *vedores y contadores* at the Habsburg court, see Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 291–301, appendix 3.

52 Enriqueta Harris's study of this trip remains foundational within the literature on this topic (Harris 1960). Salvador Salort Pons has also published extensively on this phase of Velázquez's career (Salort Pons 1999a; Salort Pons 1999b; Salort Pons 2002; Salort Pons 2008, pp. 239–71). Salort Pons offers a very useful chronology of significant dates and events during this phase of the painter's life in Salort Pons 2002, pp. 403–8. Both authors rely on the account of this trip provided in Antonio Palomino's life of the artist, which is the most extensive known primary source pertaining to Velázquez's second trip

for Velázquez to take a trip to Italy were made as early as November of 1646, when the archbishop Giulio Rospigliosi wrote a letter to Cassiano dal Pozzo describing Velázquez's keen desire to visit Italy to study the paintings on view there.<sup>53</sup> The first clear record of the trip in question dates only to November 25, 1648, when the king allotted Velázquez the use of a coach and a mule for transportation. This document specifies that Velázquez would accompany the diplomatic party sent to receive Mariana of Austria, the new queen of Spain.<sup>54</sup> Traveling with this party, Velázquez arrived in Málaga on December 7, 1648, leaving for Genoa on January 21, 1649.<sup>55</sup> From there, he passed through Milan and Padua before landing in Venice on April 21, 1649.<sup>56</sup> After leaving Venice, he went on to other artistic centers including Bologna, Florence, Modena, Parma, and Naples before finally arriving in Rome, where he would stay for nearly the remainder of his trip.<sup>57</sup> Although the precise date of his arrival remains unknown, a surviving letter from the Cardinal de la Cueva gives us the terminus ante quem of May 29, 1649.<sup>58</sup> He remained in Rome until around mid-November of 1650.<sup>59</sup> After a period of several months during which Velázquez revisited Florence, Modena, Venice, and likely Bologna, Velázquez left Italy from Genoa in May of 1651, arriving in Valencia on June 13.<sup>60</sup> A letter from the king to the

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- to Italy (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 335–40; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 910–18; Palomino 1987, pp. 156–63; Palomino 2018, pp. 114–37). Although these remain the most fundamental sources on this topic, a more complete bibliography on Velázquez's second trip to Italy might also include Pita Andrade 1960; Brown 2002; Rodríguez G. de Ceballos 2007; and Castillo Ramírez and Mañas Romero 2008, pp. 17–34.
- 53 Salort Pons 2002, pp. 442–43, doc. 335.
- 54 AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9. See also a related document published in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 193, doc. 223; and in Cruzada Villamil 1885, p. 163. That Velázquez left for Italy in November of 1648 and traveled with the diplomatic party sent to receive the new Queen Mariana is confirmed in Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 335; see also Palomino 1947, p. 910; Palomino 1987, p. 157; and Palomino 2018, p. 116.
- 55 For documentation of each of these dates, see *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 194–95, doc. 224; and *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 196, doc. 227.
- 56 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 335; see also Palomino 1947, p. 911; Palomino 1987, p. 157; and Palomino 2018, pp. 116–17. The precise date of his arrival in Venice is recorded in a letter written to the king by the Marquis de la Fuente, his ambassador in Venice, in which he describes his enthusiasm to show Velázquez all the paintings in his collection (AGS, Estado, Legajo 3548, fol. 114). This letter appears in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 199–200, doc. 233.
- 57 The above-cited letter from the Marquis de la Fuente gives the impression that Velázquez went to Modena immediately after leaving Venice (AGS, Estado, Legajo 3548, fol. 114). Palomino suggests that Velázquez went first to Bologna and Florence before going to Modena, stopping also in Parma and Naples before finally settling in Rome (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 336; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 911–12; Palomino 1987, pp. 157–58; Palomino 2018, pp. 118–20).
- 58 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 200, doc. 234. See also Pita Andrade 1960, p. 152.
- 59 This is suggested by a letter sent to the Duke del Infantado from Fernando Ruíz de Contreras dated to November 16, 1650, during which Ruíz de Contreras alludes to the fact that by its arrival, Velázquez should have already departed Italy (Harris 1960, pp. 111 and 134). This letter and a related letter from November 1650 signaling Velázquez's upcoming departure from Italy are reproduced in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 231, docs. 265 and 266.
- 60 For documentation confirming Velázquez's visits to Florence and Modena in late November and December of 1650, see *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 232–33, docs. 268, 268a, and 269. For

Duque del Infantado tells us that Velázquez finally arrived in Madrid on June 23, 1651.<sup>61</sup> A day later, thirty-six crates of paintings and sculptures were reported as having arrived in Spain from Naples.<sup>62</sup> Velázquez spent a year and a half in Rome, approximately half the total amount of time he spent in Italy. Velázquez bought numerous paintings and conducted business in other artistic centers, but if his primary aim for his second trip to Italy was to purchase sculptures for the royal art collection, this was an aim he set out to accomplish in Rome.

Little is known about Velázquez's activities in Rome for the first six months after his arrival, but it is likely that he would have challenged himself simply to view the great number of sculpture collections that the city contained.<sup>63</sup> There can be no doubt that he spent time, for example, studying the Tribuna in the Uffizi Galleries and the Octagonal Patio in the Belvedere, both octagonal spaces decorated with sculptures. While it is not possible to reconstruct the precise display of works in either space at the time of Velázquez's trip, it cannot have been lost on the painter that neither contained sculpted portraits. Rome's sculpture collections instead overflowed with gods and heroes. As foreigners to the city, Velázquez and Juan de Córdoba, an aide who helped Velázquez arrange the production and shipment of copies and casts, came to know these collections by means of a number of guidebooks.<sup>64</sup> At the time of his arrival to Rome, the most recently published guidebook to the city would have been Fioravante Martinelli's widely disseminated *Roma Ricercata nel suo sito, e nella scuola di tutti gli Antiquarj ... E descritta con breue, e facil modo per istruttione del curioso, e deuoto forastiero nel visitare li più celebri luoghi antichi e moderni della Città*, first published in 1644.<sup>65</sup> Intended as a revindication of modern Rome in view of the legacy of ancient Rome, this guidebook alone would have done little to improve Velázquez's knowledge of the many sculpture collections in the city. As an aid to his reader at the start of the book, however, Martinelli offers an annotated bibliography of further reading on specific topics of interest to the Italophile, one of which is sculpture:

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documentation concerning Velázquez's visit to Venice during this period, see Salort Pons 1999a, pp. 431–32, esp. n. 76. That Velázquez might have returned to Bologna during these months is suggested in Salort Pons 1999a, p. 432. On Velázquez's departure from Genoa and arrival in Valencia, see Harris 1960, p. 126.

61 Harris 1960, pp. 111 and 135. Palomino confirms Velázquez's return to Madrid in this month (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 340; see also Palomino 1947, p. 917; Palomino 1987, p. 162; Palomino 2018, p. 135).

62 Morán Turina and Rudolf 1992, pp. 294 and 300–301, docs. 24–26.

63 Salort Pons 1999a, p. 421. On the sculpture collections of early modern Rome, see Salcedo Garcés 2007 and Desmas and Freddolini 2014.

64 For Juan de Córdoba's oversight of the final stages of production and shipment of sculptures commissioned by Velázquez, see Parisi 2007b; García Cueto 2011; and Parisi 2022.

65 For a more comprehensive account of guidebooks to the city of Rome from the Middle Ages until the twentieth century, see Paziienti 2013. Briefer but still useful introductions to this topic can be found in Gage 2014a and Haskell and Penny 1981, pp. 16–22.

As for sculptures, Ulisse Aldovrandi has written on these, and [his book] comes as an attachment to Lucio Mauro's "Antiquity"; but you will find little in the places that he mentions. The Marquis Vincenzo Giustiniani has had engravings made of his Gallery in two large volumes; the first of which contains the sculptures, and the second the bas-reliefs. And Francesco Perrier after him has drawn and engraved one hundred of the noblest sculptures in Rome, from which virtuosos of every profession can benefit greatly.<sup>66</sup>

Martinelli suggests a number of texts that might have been available to Velázquez in Rome. Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Di tutte le statue antiche, che per tutta Roma in diuersi luoghi, e case particolari si veggono, raccolte e descritte*, first published in 1556 as an appendix to Lucio Mauro's *Le antichità de la città di Roma: Breuissimamente raccolte da chiunque ne ha scritto ò antico ò moderno*, remained one of the most significant treatises on sculpture to have been written in the century preceding Velázquez's arrival in Rome. That said, for reasons that will make themselves clear in the pages to follow, it was indisputably François Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru: quæ temporis dentem inuidium euasere Urbis æternæ ruinis erepta, typis æneis ab se commissa perptuæ uenerationis monumentum* (henceforth *Segmenta nobilium*), a book of engravings first published in 1638, that structured Velázquez's reception of the holdings in the city's impressive sculpture galleries.

No guidebook that Velázquez could have consulted while in Rome presented as comprehensive a picture of ancient sculpture, or so coherent a statement about this art form, as that of François Perrier. This album of images, which was very successful on the market, cheap to purchase, and continuously reprinted, comprised one hundred engravings of sculptures from Roman antiquity accompanied by no text other than its frontispiece and the index that appeared at the end of the book.<sup>67</sup> It was the first of its kind to organize itself around perceived virtuosity before any other. It was also different from other comparable texts in ways that would have made it particularly well suited to Velázquez's purposes. To consider only the two examples offered in Martinelli's guidebook, Aldrovandi's treatise, which sought to be a comprehensive and complete account of every ancient sculpture in Rome, neither included images of the works listed nor offered any guidelines for discerning between works of high quality and artistic significance and works of low quality and little historical importance.<sup>68</sup> The guidebooks to the collection of Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Galleria*

66 Martinelli 1644, preface, unpaginated: "Delle statue hà scritto Vlisse Aldobrando, é vâ annesso con l'antichità di Lucio Mauro; ma poche ne ritrouarete in quelli luoghi, ch'egli v'accenna. Il Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniano hà intagliata la sua Galleria in doi grossi volumi, il cui primo contiene le statue, & il secondo li bassi rilieui. Et Francesco Perrier dopo lui hà disegnato & intagliato cento delle più nobili statue di Roma, dalle quali i virtuosi di tutte le professioni possono assai profittarsi."

67 The exception to this was Michelangelo's *Moses*, the only modern work among them (Perrier 1638, plate 20).

68 Haskell and Penny 1981, pp. 18–21. It is true that prints of sculptures had existed before the publication of Perrier's album, and in his search for source materials, perhaps Velázquez came across collections

*Giustiniana del Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani*, first published in the 1630s but reprinted in 1640, were rich with images but limited to a single collection, one from which Velázquez would ultimately not purchase a single sculpture. By contrast, Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium* was the one guidebook available to Velázquez that would have offered him only a vetted selection of the best sculptures from across the city's collections.

Enough of the casts that Velázquez finally brought back to Spain with him are represented in Perrier's album to allow us to be certain that he studied its contents extremely closely, even using it as a catalogue.<sup>69</sup> Alongside the surviving casts themselves, our knowledge of what sculptures Velázquez commissioned and from which collections derives from the following documentation: contracts, inventories of the royal art collection postdating his trip, drawings of works in need of restoration after the fire of 1734 that destroyed the Alcázar palace, and the relatively detailed account of Velázquez's acquisitions that Antonio Palomino includes in this episode of the painter's biography. By cross-referencing these sources, José María Luzón Nogué has compiled a list of approximately thirty freestanding figures executed in plaster or in bronze that Velázquez brought back with him from Italy.<sup>70</sup> Almost all of these derive from the most famous collections in Rome, including approximately fifteen in total from the Galleria Borghese and the Vatican collections.<sup>71</sup> His acquisitions included copies of the *Laocoön* group from the Vatican collections (Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, V-012); the *Apollo Belvedere* (lost); the Farnese *Hercules* (RABASF, V-001); the *Dying Gaul* (lost); the Ludovisi *Mars* (lost); *Silenus with the Infant Dionysus* (RABASF, V-026), then in the Borghese collection; along with the Borghese *Gladiator* (RABASF, V-023); the Borghese *Hermaphrodite* (MNP, E000223); and so on.<sup>72</sup> These sculptures were certainly appreciated as being among the most masterful of

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of these bound together with a frontispiece by Antonio Lafreri that bore the name *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, which visitors to the city would often produce to commemorate their travels (on this practice, see Lowry 1952). For his purposes, however, a preassembled album like that of Perrier would have served Velázquez better in his mission.

- 69 For the suggestion that Velázquez used Perrier and other such guidebooks as catalogues to the city's sculptural holdings, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 428–30, cat. 37; and Solís Parra et al. 2010, p. 387.
- 70 For a comprehensive list, see Luzón Nogué 2007a. For each sculpture listed in this essay, there is a corresponding entry in the same catalogue. This list was expanded in Solís Parra et al. 2010. The number cited above does not include the small selection of busts that Velázquez brought back with him and the lions and eagles that would ultimately be incorporated into the redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors in the 1650s (to be addressed in chapter 5 of this book). The present study does not concern itself with the practical matter of the transport of the sculptures that Velázquez commissioned between Italy and Spain. Once the contracts were finalized, Velázquez departed without necessarily seeing through the execution of the casts; as mentioned above, Juan de Córdoba remained to oversee the final stages of production and shipment (see Parisi 2007b; García Cueto 2011; Parisi 2022). On the challenges of shipping sculptures between Italy and Spain in the early modern period, see Helmstutler Di Dio 2015.
- 71 Documentation pertaining to Velázquez's efforts to access the Vatican collections and receive permission to produce copies after their contents is published as *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 219, doc. 249, and p. 221, doc. 251, respectively.
- 72 For the Vatican *Laocoön*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 487–90, cat. 76; although Velázquez's plaster copy of the *Apollo Belvedere* is now lost, a brief summary of relevant information can be found in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 473–74, cat. 68, and pp. 494–95, cat. 79; for the Farnese *Hercules*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 379–81, cat. 1; although Velázquez's plaster copy of the Ludovisi *Mars* is now lost, a brief summary of relevant information can be found in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 389–91, cat. 5; for

Western antiquity. Just as importantly, almost every sculpture of which Velázquez acquired a copy—with a few noteworthy exceptions—was included in Perrier's album.

What is extraordinary about the three sculptures that Velázquez commissioned for the Octagonal Room is not their art historical significance or the fame of the collections from which each derives, but rather the degree to which they do not conform to the criteria governing the selection of almost every other freestanding figural sculpture included among Velázquez's acquisitions. On December 13, 1649, roughly six months after arriving in Rome, Velázquez drew up a contract commissioning from local bronze-founders Giovanni Pietro del Duca and Cesare Sebastiani bronze copies of three sculptures, each proceeding from a different Roman collection. In order of their appearance in the contract, these were:

One standing figure of a nude Emperor at a height of between eight and nine *palmi* that is in the Garden of His Excellency Signor Cardinal Montalto in Termini, which has a drapery falling on its left arm.<sup>73</sup>

The second is a statue of a nude faun with a pelt around it, which is in the entrance of the loggia of the Palazzo of the Signori Gaetani on the Corso, which is leaning on a tree trunk, and the sculpture in bronze should still have this tree trunk.<sup>74</sup>

The third is a standing nude sculpture of a gladiator, which is in the house of Signor Hippolito Vitelleschi on the Corso, which is holding a shield, or a small wheel, in its left hand, and in the right, although it is now without its arm, should not be holding anything.<sup>75</sup>

This was the first contract that Velázquez wrote up while in Rome, and it was a contract that he authored himself.<sup>76</sup> Now identifiable as the *Germanicus*, the *Satyr in Repose*, and the *Discus-Thrower* currently conserved in the existing royal palace in Madrid, the sculptures included in this contract are those that took the place of Leone Leoni's portrait sculptures of Charles V, Philip II, and Mary of Hungary in the Octagonal Room upon Velázquez's

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*Silenus with the Infant Dionysus*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 470–71, cat. 65; for the Borghese *Gladiator*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 463–65, cat. 61; for the Borghese *Hermaphrodite*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 447–50, cat. 49. The inventory numbers offered in Luzón Nogué 2007b for some of these sculptures differ from those listed in the digital database of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando; where discrepancies appeared, those in the digital database were privileged.

73 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 212, doc. 244a: “Una figura in piede d’un Imperatore ignuda daltezza di palmi otto in nove che sta nel Giardino del Em<sup>o</sup> Signor Cardinale Montalto a Termini, che ha una cascata d’un panno sopra il braccio sinistro.” See also Parisi 2007a, p. 351, doc. 1.

74 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 212, doc. 244a: “La seconda è d’una statua d’un fauno nudo con una pelle attorno, che sta nel entrare della loggia del Palazzo de Signori Gaetani al Corso, quale sta appoggiata al tronco, e pero anco alla statua di bronzo vi doverà essere il d<sup>o</sup> tronco.” See also Parisi 2007a, p. 351, doc. 1.

75 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 212, doc. 244a: “La Terza è una statua in piede nuda d’un gladiatore, che sta in casa del Signor Hippolito Vitelleschi al Corso, che nella mano manca tiene un scudo, o rotella, e nella dritta, se bene adesso è senza il braccio, non doverà tener’ cos’ alcuna.” See also Parisi 2007a, p. 351, doc. 1.

76 A discussion of the terms of this contract can be found in Parisi 2007b, pp. 87–90. The document appears transcribed in its entirety in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 212–14, doc. 244a; and Parisi 2007a, pp. 351–52, doc. 1.

return from Italy (figs. 2.18–2.20).<sup>77</sup> In every respect, these three sculptures flout the rubrics seeming to govern Velázquez's other acquisitions: Each of these sculptures was the only sculpture a copy of which was commissioned from its respective collection. None appear in Perrier's guidebook, nor should any of them necessarily have been known to Velázquez by fame alone.<sup>78</sup> If the terms by which they are described in the contract are any indicator, Velázquez had little—if any—interest even in correctly identifying each work or its subject.<sup>79</sup> It is telling in this regard that the entry in the 1666 inventory of the contents of the Octagonal Room corresponding to these works describes them simply as “another three bronze figures, the same size [as Jonghelinck's *Planets*],” without identifying their subjects or suggesting any iconographic justification for their inclusion in this room.<sup>80</sup> Just as telling is the mention in their contract of the sculptures' size, which matches that of the *Planets*. We can be certain that this was no coincidence thanks to a specification that was made later on in this document: that each sculpture be made with “a square plinth also in bronze of a height of eight or nine fingers more or less as concerns the height of the statue according to the discretion of said Signori Don Diego [Velázquez], or Don Juan [de Córdoba].”<sup>81</sup> It is unclear precisely when Velázquez decided to replace Leoni's portrait figures, whether before leaving Spain or sometime during his first six months touring Italy. But the fact that the contract includes all three of these sculptures, that it includes only these three sculptures, and that it was the first that Velázquez authored after arriving in Rome suggests that Velázquez had, upon their purchase, a fixed vision for how they would complete the decorative program of the Octagonal Room.

Until now, the suggestion that Perrier's album functioned as a catalogue to the sculptural holdings of the city of Rome has usually meant only one thing: that the inclusion of particular sculptures among its pages encouraged Velázquez to purchase copies of those very sculptures. But there is another way that Perrier's album may have guided

77 On the *Germanicus*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 486–87, cat. 75. On the *Satyr in Repose*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 455–56, cat. 54; and especially Negrete Plano 2007. On the *Discus-Thrower*, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 452–53, cat. 52; and especially Kiderlen 2007. Yves Bottineau and Enriqueta Harris are among the first to propose that these three sculptures are those that ultimately joined the *Planets* in the Octagonal Room, although both express vocal doubts about their identification (see Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, p. 60; Harris 1960, pp. 119–20). Nonetheless, scholars after them have readily accepted the suggestion, including Orso 1986, p. 158; Barbeito Díez 1992, p. 169; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 55 and 570–73, nos. 866–68.

78 It is worth mentioning here that none of these three sculptures was reproduced in print media leading up to Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium* (Luzón Nogué 2007b, p. 429, cat. 37).

79 For one thoughtful case study in the challenges involved in determining the subjects—or lack thereof—of early modern sculpture, see Cole 2008.

80 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 570, nos. 866–68: “Otras tres figuras de bronce, del mismo tamaño.”

81 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 213, doc. 244a: “un zoccolo riquadrato pure di bronzo di altezza di otto in dieci dita più, e meno secondo importerà l'altezza della statua ad arbitrio di di Signori Don Diego, o Don Gio.” See also Parisi 2007a, p. 352, doc. 1. On the significance of these plinths, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, p. 487, cat. 75; and Luzón Nogué 2022, p. 74. Almudez Pérez de Tudela has written that the same was done to the *Planets*; however, she cites no sources that can support this (Pérez de Tudela 2019, p. 130).



FIGURE 2.18 Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni Pietro del Duca, *Germanicus*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 190 × 74 × 41 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10010390  
PHOTO BY E. SÁENZ DE SAN PEDRO



FIGURE 2.19  
Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni  
Pietro del Duca, *Satyr in  
Repose*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 183 ×  
59 × 45 cm, Patrimonio  
Nacional, Madrid, 10010391  
PHOTO BY E. SÁENZ DE SAN  
PEDRO



FIGURE 2.20 Cesare Sebastiani and Giovanni Pietro del Duca, *Discus-Thrower*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 184 × 79 × 49 cm, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10003154  
PHOTO BY E. SÁENZ DE SAN PEDRO

his thinking, even and perhaps especially in the case of copies of sculptures that were not included among its pages. What differentiates Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium* from treatises like those written by Villalta is not—or not only—the discerning list of sculptures figuratively inventoried in his album but the precise form that his images take and the presentation of those images within its pages. The question here, to be clear, is not only which sculptures were figured in the *Segmenta nobilium* and of which of these sculptures Velázquez went on to purchase copies but rather how those sculptures were figured, and the ways in which the logic ordering their figuration informed the reconceptualization of sculpture at work in Velázquez's second installation of the Octagonal Room. The *Segmenta nobilium* structures itself as a series of prints, each presented individually not on single pages but on a single folio. Every time the reader turns the page, in other words, they are presented with a new image, and only one new image at a time. These images are ordered not by collection and not necessarily by iconography but more apparently by formal similitude of format and subject. To be sure, some of the sculptures included in the album were not readily comparable to any of the others: the *Laocoön* group from the Vatican collections, the *Spinario*, and Michelangelo's *Moses*, copies of each of which Velázquez acquired, appear as anomalies in the *Segmenta nobilium*, their images preceded and followed by images of other works with which they establish no ready visual dialogue.<sup>82</sup> But for the most part, sculptures of a kind appear in series: The supposed "Cleopatra" of the Medici collections, *Venus with a Shell, or Nymph*, and the Borghese *Hermaphrodite*, all reclining (mostly) female figures, appear one after the other (fig. 2.21 [a–c]).<sup>83</sup> These are closely followed by the *Dying Gaul*, the *Tiber*, the Vatican *Nile*, the Capitoline *Nile*, and the Capitoline *Neptune*, all reclining male nudes that again appear one after the other.<sup>84</sup> This pattern persists throughout the *Segmenta nobilium*, where heroic male figures (the Farnese *Hercules*, the Vatican *Commodus as Hercules*, and the Borghese "Faun"), standing female nudes (the Medici *Venus*, the Borghese *Venus*, two distinct *Venuses* from the Vatican), and so on are consistently presented in sequence.<sup>85</sup> If

82 For the Vatican *Laocoön*, see Perrier 1638, plate 1; for Velázquez's plaster copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 487–90, cat. 76. For the *Spinario*, see Perrier 1638, plate 42; for Velázquez's bronze copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 441–45, cat. 47. For Michelangelo's *Moses*, see Perrier 1638, plate 20; for Velázquez's plaster copy of the head of this figure (now lost), see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 514–15, cat. 90.

83 For the Medici "Cleopatra," see Perrier 1638, plate 88; for Velázquez's plaster copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 391–94, cat. 6. For *Venus with a Shell, or Nymph*, see Perrier 1638, plate 89; for Velázquez's bronze copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 445–47, cat. 48. For the Borghese *Hermaphrodite*, see Perrier 1638, plate 90; for Velázquez's bronze copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 447–50, cat. 49.

84 For the *Dying Gaul*, see Perrier 1638, plate 91; although Velázquez's plaster copy is now lost, a brief summary of relevant information can be found in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 504–5, cat. 85. For the *Tiber*, see Perrier 1638, plate 92. For the Vatican *Nile*, see Perrier 1638, plates 93–95; although Velázquez's plaster copy is now lost, a brief summary of relevant information can be found in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 491–93, cat. 78. For the Capitoline *Nile*, see Perrier 1638, plate 97. For the Capitoline *Neptune*, see Perrier 1638, plate 98.

85 For the Farnese *Hercules*, see Perrier 1638, plates 2–4; for Velázquez's plaster copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 379–81, cat. 1. For the Vatican *Commodus as Hercules*, see Perrier 1638, plate 5. For the Borghese "Faun," see Perrier 1638, plate 6; for Velázquez's plaster copy, see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 470–71, cat. 65. For the Medici *Venus*, see Perrier 1638, plates 81–83; although Velázquez's



FIGURE 2.21 (A–C)  
 François Perrier,  
*Segmenta nobilium  
 signorum e statuaru ...*  
 (Rome: [s.n.],  
 1638), plates 88–90,  
 Bibliothèque de  
 l'Institut national  
 d'histoire de l'art,  
 collections Jacques  
 Doucet, FOL EST 168  
 IMAGE © INHA

Velázquez used Perrier's album as a catalogue to the city's sculptural holdings, this was not a transparent record of existing sculptures but an organizing framework that ordered sculptures according to its own internal criteria.

Still more striking in this regard is that interspersed within these informal series are individual images of some of the sculptures included in the album as they would have appeared from discrete viewpoints. Perrier's album is comprised of one hundred and one images of a total of only eighty-four sculptures; seventeen of the images included therein are not images of additional sculptures but instead images of additional viewpoints of sculptures already present in the album.<sup>86</sup> Within the album itself, there is no existential distinction established between different viewpoints of a single sculpture and individual, autonomous works. Viewpoints of sculptures like the Farnese *Hercules* and the Borghese *Gladiator* from the front, side, and back, like viewpoints of the Medici *Venus* from three distinct frontal viewpoints, are each given an individual page in the album, with no indication of the subordination of any one of these viewpoints to any other, apart from the order in which they appear (fig. 2.22 [a–c]). Moreover, with no ready identifying information to indicate otherwise, it is easy to confuse exactly which images in the text represent additional viewpoints of a preceding sculpture and which present a new sculpture entirely. Using the possibilities available to the medium of print, Perrier thus suggests a conceptual interchangeability between distinct viewpoints and autonomous works.

In its commingling of different kinds of images with no guiding text to distinguish between them, Perrier's album both proposes that sculpture is an art of multiple viewpoints and redefines, however subtly, what exactly constitutes a multiple viewpoint.<sup>87</sup> Just as second or third views of a single sculpture are treated in the text as entirely new works, Perrier's *Segmenta nobilium* makes it possible to see autonomous sculptures with comparable formal characteristics presented in sequence as variations on each other (see fig. 2.23 [a–f] and fig. 2.24 [a–g] for two such series that contain both kinds of images with no clear distinction between them). The inclusion of multiple images of single sculptures in Perrier's album allows the reader to see the remaining sculptures represented therein

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plaster copy is now lost, a brief summary of relevant information can be found in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 497–99, cat. 81. For the Borghese *Venus*, see Perrier 1638, plate 84. For the Vatican *Venus*, see Perrier 1638, plates 85 and 86, respectively.

86 The only image in the text that is wholly unlike these is plate 87, which imagines a scene populated by a number of the sculptures reproduced in the text (Perrier 1638, plate 87).

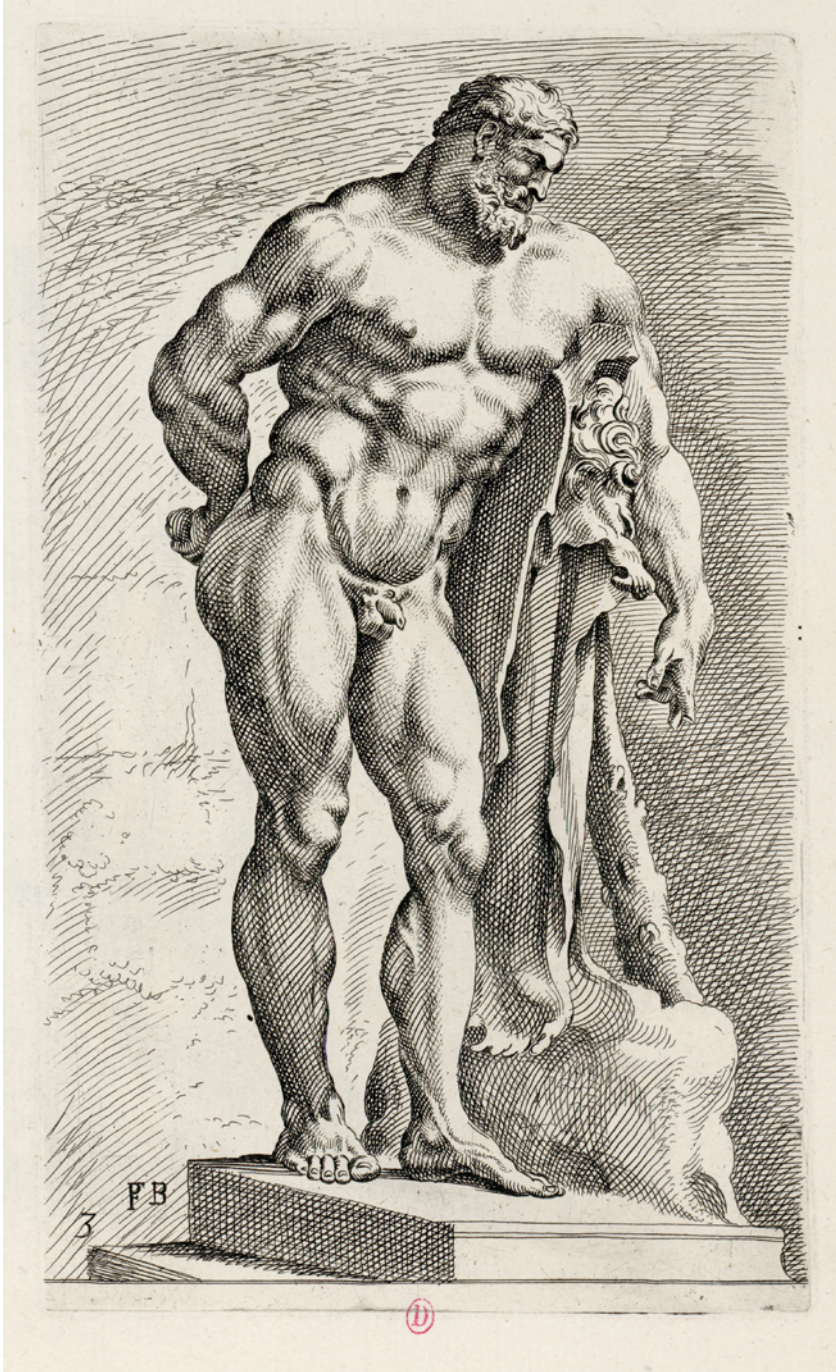
87 In this respect, Perrier's text touches the long-standing debate first in Italy and then in Spain on the relative merits of the arts of painting and sculpture, colloquially known as the *paragone*, best problematized in Spain by the polychrome sculpture that was especially popular in Velázquez's native Seville (on polychrome sculpture in Seville, see especially Bray 2009). Different from the *Planets* in every way, including medium (painted wood, rather than gilded bronze), subject matter (religious, rather than mythological), and purpose (processional or devotional instrument, rather than political propaganda or collector's item), Velázquez's familiarity with this unique marriage of painting and sculpture can only have served to underscore the distinctly Italianate qualities of both Leoni's and Jonghelinck's output (on the culture that made Sevillian polychrome sculpture possible, see especially Webster 1998 and Kasl 2009).



A

FIGURE 2.22 (A-C) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 2-4, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168

IMAGE © INHA





C

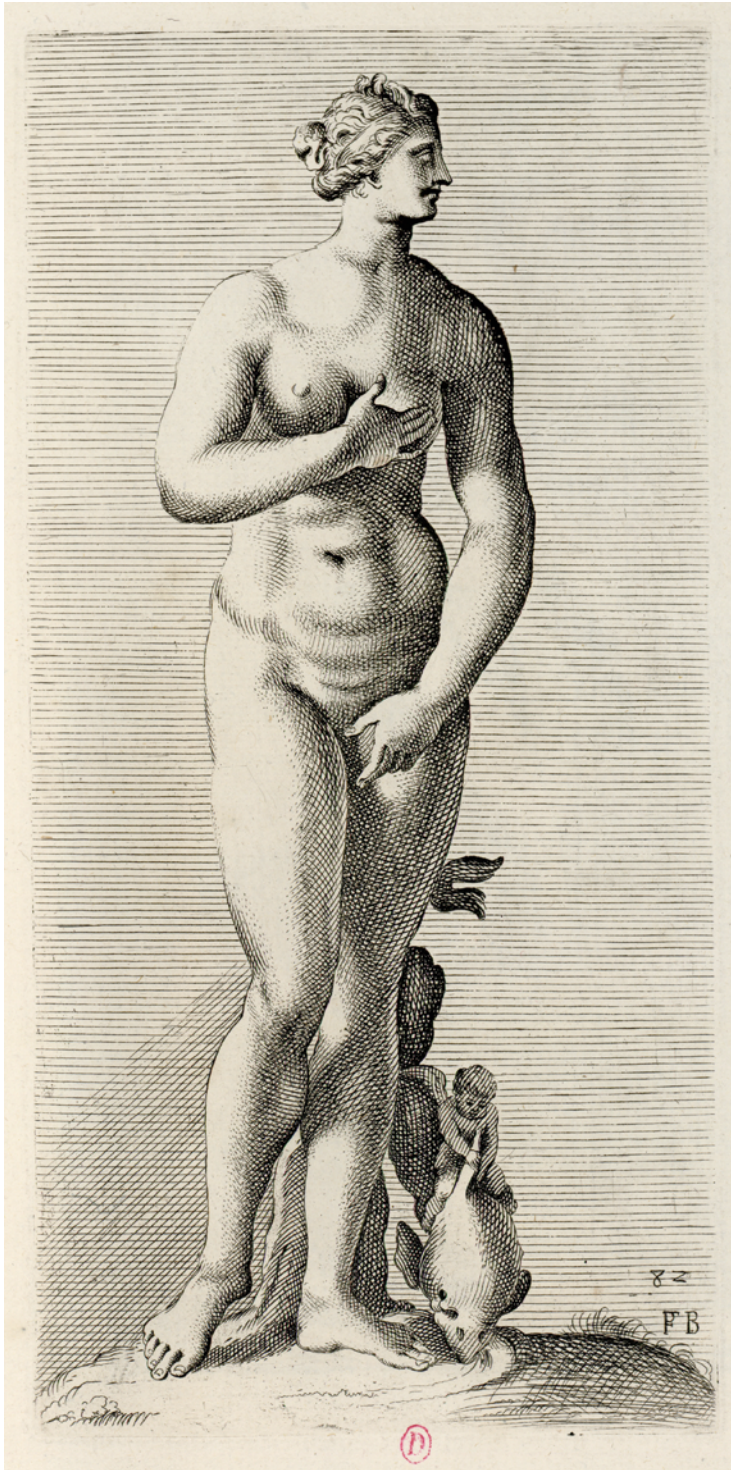
as variations on a set of basic forms and figures, making of his album a manifesto in print on sculpture as an art of the multiple viewpoint.<sup>88</sup>

This view underpins the substitution of Leoni's *Emperor Charles v and the Fury*, *Philip II*, and *Mary of Hungary* for the *Germanicus*, *Satyr in Repose*, and *Discus-Thrower* in

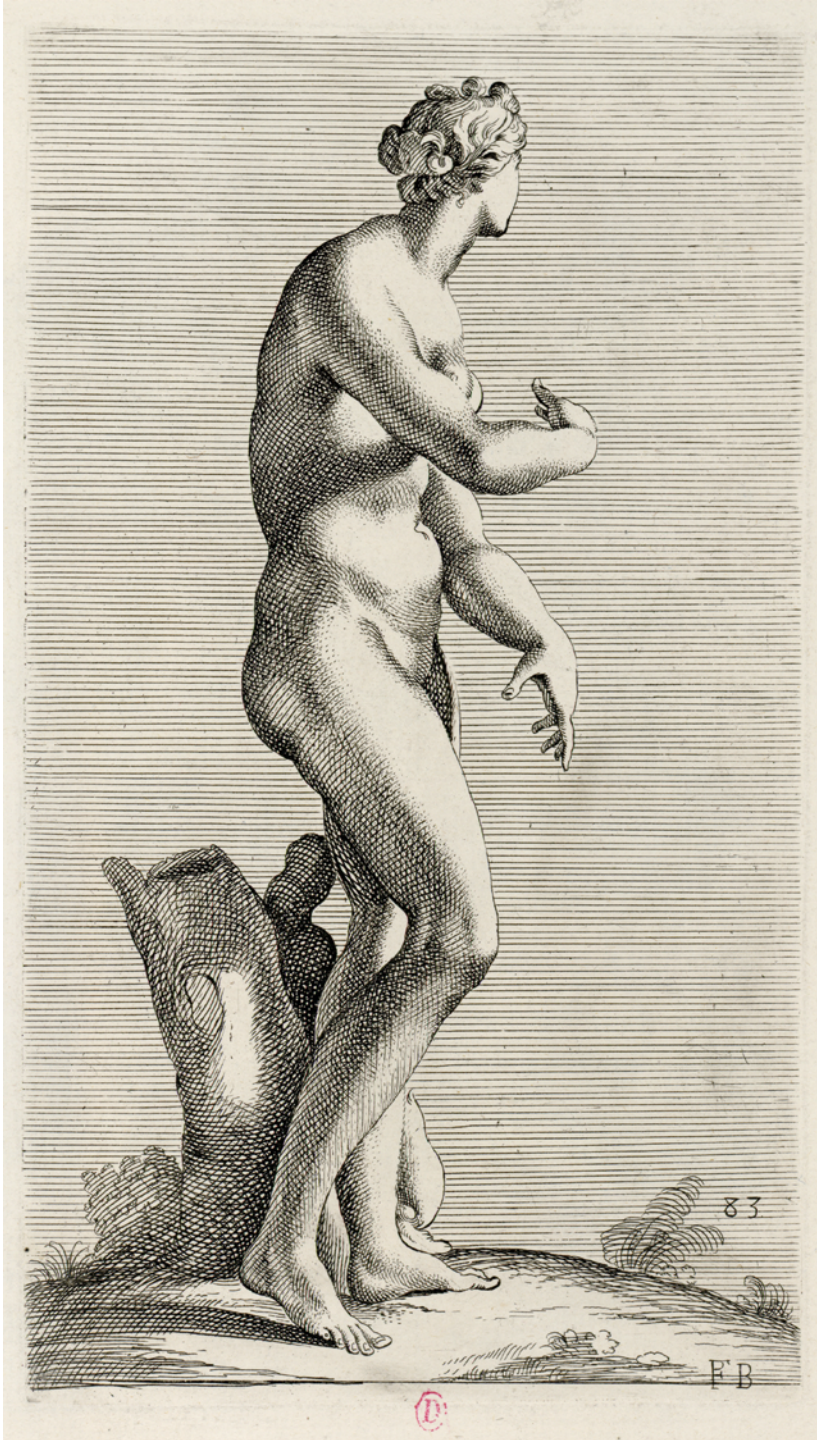
<sup>88</sup> For a thoughtful case study on the effects of one kind of reproductive print media on the intelligibility of early modern sculpture, see Cole 2015.



FIGURE 2.23 (A–F)  
 François Perrier, *Segmenta  
 nobilium signorum e statuaru ...*  
 (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates  
 81–86, Bibliothèque de  
 l'Institut national d'histoire  
 de l'art, collections Jacques  
 Doucet, FOL EST 168  
 IMAGE © INHA



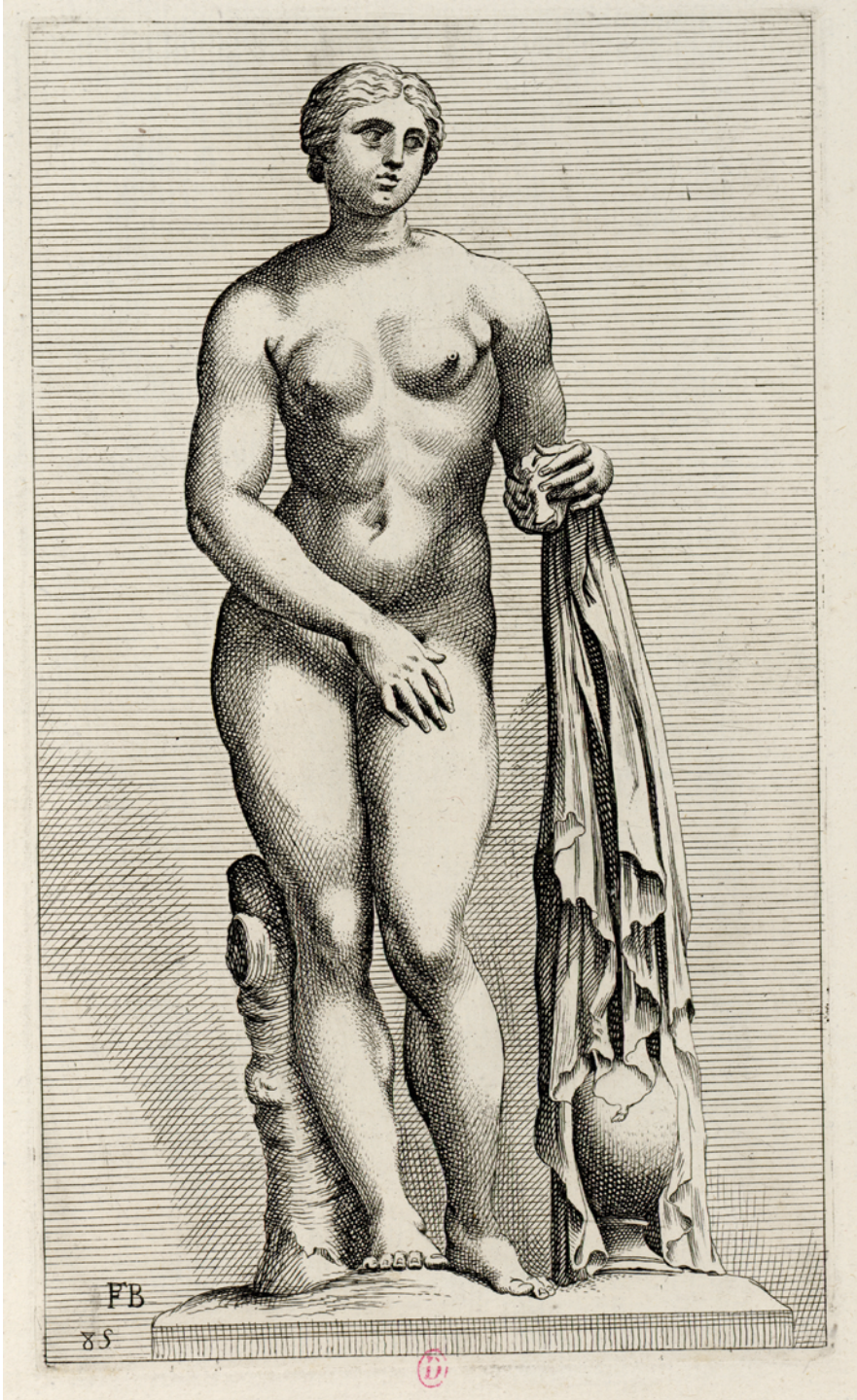
B

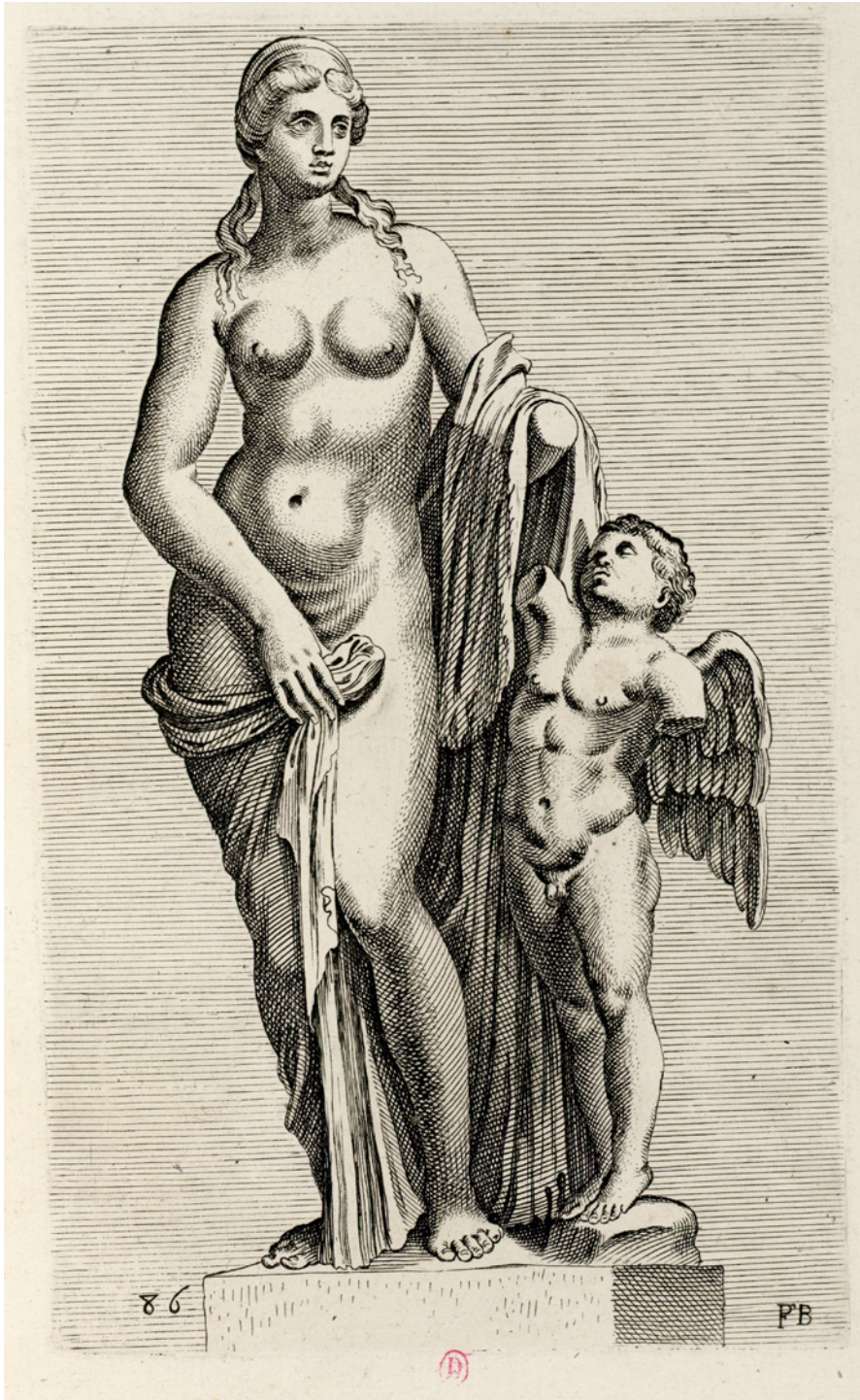


C



D







A



B

FIGURE 2.24 (A–G) François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru ...* (Rome: [s.n.], 1638), plates 92–98, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, collections Jacques Doucet, FOL EST 168  
IMAGE © INHA



C



D



E



F



G

the Octagonal Room.<sup>89</sup> The relationship between the latter three works and Jonghelinck's *Planets* operates according to the very same logic structuring Perrier's reproductions. The *Germanicus*, *Satyr in Repose*, and *Discus-Thrower* are formally like the *Planets* in ways that Leoni's portrait sculptures were not: the subject of each of these, however vaguely articulated in Velázquez's contract, derives from Roman antiquity rather than Spanish history. Unlike *Charles v and the Fury*, none consist of more than a single figure, and unlike *Philip II* or *Mary of Hungary*, they all appear as nudes. They are, in other words, variations on the same type of work represented by each of the *Planets*, consistent on formal grounds and format before any other imaginable criteria (whether specific iconography, authorship, or provenance). The *Planets*, in turn, find themselves utterly recontextualized by this new configuration of works; freed from the charge of deifying Leoni's portrait figures, it is their format and disposition that become their most privileged characteristics, just as format appears as the organizing principle of Perrier's album. Whatever imperatives motivated the exhibition of the portrait figures together with the *Planets* (be they historical, political, commemorative, or most likely a combination thereof), they yield in this new formulation to aesthetic ones, with formal variation across typological sameness the governing order.

89 Stephen Orso offers a different characterization of the change made by Velázquez's installation of three new works to the meaning of this gallery, in Orso 1986, p. 162.

That the notion of the art of sculpture as one of the multiple viewpoint became the organizing principle of the gallery is perhaps best demonstrated by the object that came to be literally and figuratively central to the gallery's decoration, an object that embodies, if in very different terms than the *Planets*, the very same idea: the *Spinario*.<sup>90</sup> Upon his return from Italy, Velázquez installed at the center of the Octagonal Room a copy of one of the most celebrated sculptures of Greco-Roman antiquity, a sculpture of a boy absorbed in the task of pulling a thorn from his foot. The bronze copy of this work that Velázquez commissioned survives in the Museo Nacional del Prado (fig. 2.25). It is unclear precisely when it was made. It is possible that the copy was commissioned in Italy alongside the many other bronzes that Velázquez purchased while in Rome. Scholars think it more likely that the cast was made after an existing bronze copy of the work decorating a fountain at the Spanish royal palace at Aranjuez upon Velázquez's return to Madrid.<sup>91</sup> Either way, Velázquez may have already had the work in mind while making his selections in Rome. Just before his departure from Spain in 1649, arrangements were being made at the Habsburg court on Velázquez's orders to produce a foot for the octagonal table on which the *Spinario* was eventually displayed in the center of the gallery.<sup>92</sup> Velázquez already knew that something would be installed in the center of this gallery, and his eventual selection of the *Spinario* is a choice that confirms much of what the *Germanicus*, *Satyr in Repose*, and *Discus-Thrower* suggest about the new imperatives of this gallery decoration. In many respects, the *Spinario* was, within the program of the Octagonal Room, exceptional. It is the only work included therein that was installed to be circumambulated, and rightly so. Because of the twist of the figure's gaze, the angled pose of its leg, and the bend of its torso, the *Spinario* is the only sculpture in this gallery that would inspire circumambulation, demanding to be looked at from different angles. That said, the act of circumambulation would, in turn, position the viewer to appreciate the other sculptures in the gallery in a manner of which Perrier would have approved: in succession, as though flipping the pages in a portfolio. Exemplifying in its composition the concept that sculpture is an art of multiple viewpoints, the *Spinario*'s installation at the center of this gallery, in this way, would give this order to the rest.

With his substitution of Leone Leoni and Pompeo Leoni's royal portrait sculptures for the three male nude bronzes that he acquired in Italy and his installation of the *Spinario* as its centerpiece, Velázquez reoriented the design for the Octagonal Room away from one set of assumptions about the parameters and purposes of sculpture toward another entirely. This gallery thus served Velázquez as a site of experimentation for the making and unmaking of meaning around a set of works of art, through which Velázquez

90 On the *Spinario*, see most recently Parisi Presicce 2014.

91 The arguments supporting each of these theories are outlined in Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 441–45, cat. 47.

92 Some documentation of this octagonal table appears in Azcárate 1960b, p. 373. Further mentions appear in AGS, Casas y Sitios Reales, Legajo 344 (part 2), fols. 6–7.



FIGURE 2.25 Anonymous, *The Boy with the Thorn (Spinario)*, ca. 1652, bronze, 73 × 45 × 55 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, E000163

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

examined and then reexamined the limits and purposes of the artistic medium for which that gallery was designed. In the New Room, Velázquez had observed the ways that a gallery hang could be used to arbitrate the meaning of any single work of art. In the Octagonal Room, he tried his hand at it.

## Recto/Verso

While in Rome, Velázquez was largely preoccupied with the acquisition of works of art for the Habsburg art collection, including the suite of sculptures that he commissioned for the Octagonal Room. Nevertheless, he still found time to make paintings of his own. Sometime around the year 1651 and likely while still in Italy, Velázquez produced the only surviving painting of a nude female figure executed by a Spanish artist in the early modern period.<sup>1</sup> While other such paintings have sometimes been supposed for the painter, *The Toilet of Venus* (“*The Rokeby Venus*”) is the only to have persisted to the present day, although it very nearly did not (fig. 3.1).<sup>2</sup> The only painting in Velázquez’s oeuvre to have inspired iconoclasm, *The Rokeby Venus* was attacked in the National Gallery in London by suffragette Mary Richardson on March 10, 1914, in protest both of the recent arrest of fellow suffragette Emily Pankhurst and, as she later stated, of what she perceived as the indecent leering of male visitors to the Gallery.<sup>3</sup> Using a meat cleaver, Richardson delivered several slashes to the work, largely across the back and hips of the figure depicted (fig. 3.2). As Lynda Nead has pointed out, the media that reported on the event used language suggesting that these wounds were inflicted not on a painterly representation of a woman but on an actual body. Confusing the canvas with the form painted on it, journalists documented a “cruel wound in the neck” and cuts across the “shoulders and back,” as well as “bruising” throughout.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, with relining and repair, *The Rokeby Venus* was restored within a year, enduring its attack to become the veritable unicum in the history of Spanish art that it is still considered today.<sup>5</sup>

The production of this singular canvas coincided with the advent of a new practice in the display of the royal art collection. The stairwell that occasioned the reconstruction of the Octagonal Room led to a series of vaulted rooms on the very ground floor

- 
- 1 It must be specified that the claim made above excludes copies made by Spanish artists of paintings of nude figures originally made by foreign practitioners, like those of Velázquez’s son-in-law Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo (who produced smaller-scale copies of Titian’s paintings of nude figures without ever making original paintings with this subject).
  - 2 Scholars have identified approximately three others that Velázquez likely produced, none of which survive in any form. Two of these are the *Venus and Adonis* and *Cupid and Psyche* that Velázquez would execute circa 1659 for the Hall of Mirrors in the Alcázar palace, to be treated in chapter 5 of this book. The last corresponds to an entry appearing in the inventory of Velázquez’s possessions at the time of his death (Mariño 1999, p. 78).
  - 3 For one especially thoughtful account of this event, see Nead 1992, pp. 34–43. On November 6, 2023, *The Rokeby Venus* was once again the subject of attack, this time by the climate activist group Just Stop Oil, one of a series of such demonstrations undertaken by this group (on this event, see Marshall 2023, among others).
  - 4 Cited in Nead 1992, p. 39.
  - 5 Ruhemann 1968, p. 294, appendix B, 2. Cleaning Report 11.



FIGURE 3.1 Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus* (“*The Rokeby Venus*”), 1647–51, oil on canvas, 122.5 × 177 cm, National Gallery, London, NG2057

IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

of the palace, giving directly onto the Garden of the Emperors and situated just below the newly remodeled Prince’s Chamber, which served as Velázquez’s studio.<sup>6</sup> Beginning sometime in the mid-1630s and therefore in the same years in which Rubens was painting his mythological cycle for the Torre de la Parada, paintings including nude female figures were suddenly exhibited all together in these vaulted rooms, eventually dubbed the “Vaults of Titian.” It was the start of a long history at the Spanish court of the display of paintings of nude figures in such galleries. Many of the paintings that Rubens made for the Torre de la Parada depicted the erotic misadventures and sometimes sexual crimes of the Greco-Roman pantheon. The decade or so leading up to *The Rokeby Venus* was thus transformative for the nude female figure at the Habsburg court, and not without its consequences: Javier Portús Pérez has convincingly proposed that the exhibition of paintings of nude female figures all together in dedicated galleries in the Alcázar palace classified these works as their own genre of painting within the royal art collection.<sup>7</sup> Titian, as we

6 For a brief summary of the construction history of the Vaults of Titian, see Barbeito Díez 2007, pp. 123–24; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 109–12.

7 Although this idea seems to underpin universally Portús Pérez’s thinking on the exhibition of paintings of nudes in Spain, he states this most clearly in Portús Pérez 1997, p. 46; Portús Pérez 2002b, p. 95; and Portús Pérez 2016a, p. 51.



FIGURE 3.2 "The Actual Damage Done to the Rokeby 'Venus' by the Suffragette with a Chopper." *Illustrated London News* 54, no. 1401 (March 14, 1914): 407  
IMAGE © CHRONICLE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

will see, was the central figure in these galleries and the unquestioned inspiration for Velázquez's attempt at this kind of painting. Yet again, the masterclass that was the corpus of his paintings of this type that survived into the reign of Philip IV was delivered by means of and thus mediated by their hang. In both its content and form, *The Rokeby Venus* not only registers Velázquez's understanding of the significance of Titian's paintings of nude female figures; it registers his awareness of the signification that they were assigned by their display.

In his influential—if controversial—discourse on the nude in Western art, Kenneth Clark begins by very simply asking, "What is the nude?"<sup>8</sup> The most long-standing pictorial trope in Western art history, the nude female figure has served artists across the centuries as a source of fascination, if not a ready visual metaphor for the art of painting. By way of response to his own query, Clark proposes that "the nude is not the subject of art, but a form of art."<sup>9</sup> He does little to explain what he means by this. And yet, with a

8 Clark 1956, p. 4. For a feminist critique of Clark, see Nead 1992.

9 Clark 1956, p. 5.

statement like this one, Clark just begins to articulate what is perhaps worth expanding into a more complete thought process. In modern parlance, it has become easy to refer in an uncomplicated way to “the nude.” To do so is not to acknowledge that “the nude” can refer to two things, and sometimes at once: Within the realm of easel painting, “the nude” can refer, on the one hand, to an individual nude figure, a pictorial element included within a composition. On the other, it can refer to an object characterized by the inclusion of such a figure and, by extension, to the genre to which said object belongs. One is merely a part; the other, the whole. On the walls of the Alcázar palace, as in Velázquez’s *Rokeby Venus*, “the nude” would come to function as both.

## 1 The Vaults of Titian

The 1630s and 1640s saw the creation in the Alcázar palace of the Vaults of Titian, dedicated gallery spaces for the exhibition of paintings of nude female figures.<sup>10</sup> Between Portús Pérez’s many publications, the hang of the paintings of nudes in the royal art collection over the course of Velázquez’s career at the Habsburg court has been extremely well documented, and therefore only a summary of the most salient points will be made here. The first record of a gallery exclusively devoted to paintings of nude female figures dates to 1636. The inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace made in this year includes a description of the paintings hanging in the room in the king’s summer apartments on the northeast ground floor of the palace designated the “last of the vaulted rooms with a window to the east in which his Majesty retires after eating.”<sup>11</sup> This hang consisted of the following works: Titian’s *Adam and Eve* (fig. 3.3), *Tarquin and Lucretia* (fig. 3.4), and *Venus with an Organist and Cupid* (fig. 3.5), alongside his *Danaë* (fig. 3.6), *Venus and Adonis* (fig. 3.7), *The Rape of Europa* (fig. 3.8), *Diana and Callisto* (fig. 3.9), *Diana and Actaeon* (fig. 3.10), and a copy of his *Perseus and Andromeda* (fig. 3.11).<sup>12</sup> This first installation already

10 On the Vaults of Titian, see Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 4, pp. 289–326; Barbeito Díez 1996, p. 61; Checa Cremades 1994a, pp. 405–7; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 109–19. On the Vaults of Titian within the larger question of the exhibition of the nude in Spain, see Portús Pérez 1998a, pp. 93–116; Portús Pérez 1998b; Portús Pérez 2002b; and Portús Pérez 2016a, pp. 50–66.

11 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 2, fols. 49–50: “Pieça Ultima de las bobedas que tiene bentana al Lebante en que su Mag<sup>d</sup> se retira despues de comer.” See also Crawford Volk 1981, p. 520, and especially the transcription of this inventory included in the appendix to this same article; Portús Pérez 1998a, p. 98; Portús Pérez 1998b, pp. 94–98; and Portús Pérez 2002b, pp. 43–46. This portion of the inventory has since been published in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 19–20 and 181–84, no. 42.

12 The attribution of the Apsley House *Danaë* as the original painting of this subject included in Philip II’s *poesie* series was made in Falomir Faus and Joannides 2014. The conversation surrounding the attribution of this work continued in Hope 2015; Falomir Faus and Joannides 2016; and Hope 2016. The version of Titian’s *Danaë* (MNP, P000425) that was long considered original to the series was in fact one that Velázquez purchased in Italy in the late 1620s and replaced the version already on view there sometime between 1636 and 1666 (Falomir Faus and Joannides 2014, pp. 26 and esp. 27–31).



FIGURE 3.3 Titian, *Adam and Eve*, ca. 1550, oil on canvas, 240 × 186 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000429

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO



FIGURE 3.4 Titian, *Tarquin and Lucretia*, ca. 1571, oil on canvas, 188.9 × 145.1 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, PDP 914

IMAGE © THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

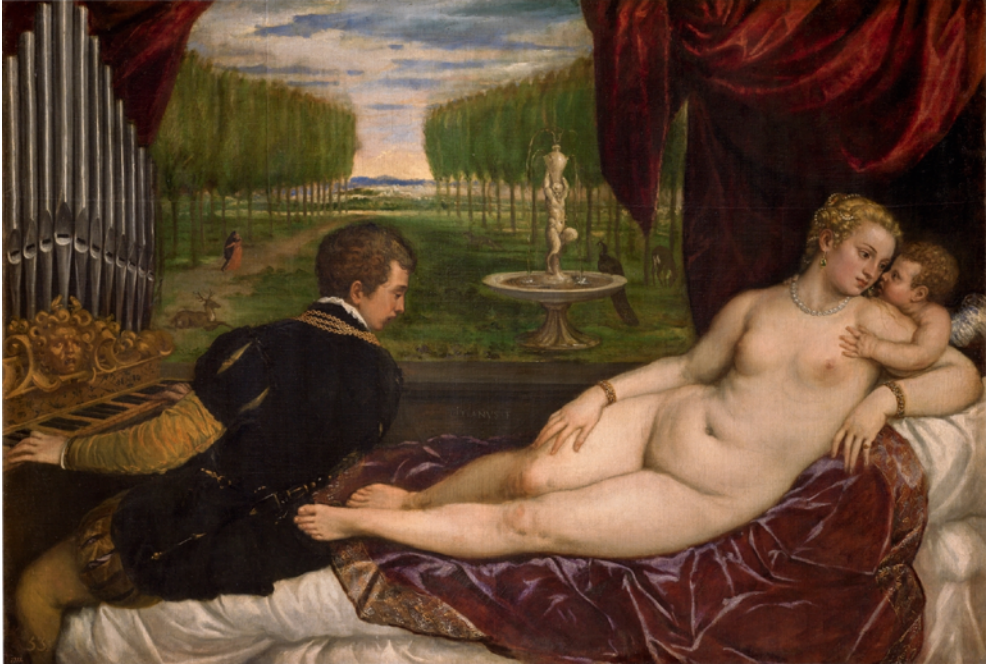


FIGURE 3.5 Titian, *Venus with an Organist and Cupid*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 150.2 × 218.2 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000421

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO



FIGURE 3.6 Titian, *Danaë*, 1551-53, oil on canvas, 115 × 194 cm, Wellington Collection, Apsley House, 256.B

IMAGE © STRATFIELD SAYE PRESERVATION TRUST



FIGURE 3.7 Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1554, oil on canvas, 186 × 207 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000422  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

establishes some of the organizing principles of the exhibition of paintings of nudes in the Alcázar palace into the following decades. In the first place, the painting of nudes is here inextricably tied to the name of Titian, the author of all these works. In the second, they are bound together by a single subject, or perhaps better phrased, a single pictorial form: the nude female figure. The inclusion of Titian's *Adam and Eve* tells us that this is not a collection of mythologies, in the strictest sense; it is an ensemble of paintings brought together under the rubric of the one pictorial element that is common to all of them.

Between 1636 and 1666, the collection of paintings of nude female figures exhibited all together in the Alcázar would expand into what were eventually termed the Vaults of Titian, a series of rooms on the ground floor of the south façade of the royal palace.<sup>13</sup>

13 The precise reason for the transfer of these paintings from one part of the palace to another are unknown, although it is noteworthy that Giulio Mancini, whose treatise includes a section addressing



FIGURE 3.8 Titian, *The Rape of Europa*, 1562, oil on canvas, 178 × 205 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, P26e1

IMAGE © ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM, BOSTON

The stairwell that occasioned the reconstruction of the Octagonal Room led to a series of vaulted rooms on the very ground floor of the palace, giving directly onto the Garden of the Emperors and situated just below the newly remodeled Prince's Chamber.<sup>14</sup> The collection of paintings of nude figures had continued to expand into the early 1640s; these vaulted galleries would have provided adequate space for the growing collection, where they were likely installed in the years immediately preceding the production of

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the display of paintings in palaces, advocates the display of such paintings “in garden galleries and secluded ground-level rooms” (Mancini 1956, p. 143: “nelle gallerie di giardini e camere terrene ritirate”). Although unique in its inclusion of rules for the acquisition and display of paintings in a collection, this seventeenth-century Roman treatise suggests a more comprehensive reevaluation of this problem across early modern Europe.

14 For a brief summary of the construction history of the Vaults of Titian, see Barbeito Díez 2007, pp. 123–24; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 109–12.



FIGURE 3.9 Titian, *Diana and Callisto*, 1556–59, oil on canvas, 187 × 204.5 cm, National Gallery, London, and National Galleries of Scotland, NG6616

IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

*The Rokeby Venus*.<sup>15</sup> The inventories of the contents of the Alcázar palace taken in 1666 and 1686 tell us that these rooms eventually included not only paintings by Titian, in addition to all those already listed above (with the exception of *Danaë*), but also paintings by Veronese and Tintoretto, a copy after Correggio's *Leda*, paintings by Rubens, and comparable works.<sup>16</sup> Several of the paintings in this decorative program have been lost, and

15 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 109.

16 The surviving record of these paintings begins in the inventory of 1666 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 2, fols. 58r–61v; see also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 589–610 and 614–16, nos. 925–50 and 951–53). We know that this inventory was left unfinished, as is explicitly stated in an inventory of the changes made to the hang of paintings in the Alcázar palace between 1666 and 1686 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 5; see also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 901–8). Additionally, the final page is torn in such a way that it is clear that the final pages of the inventory are missing. But we can reasonably complete the decoration of these galleries



FIGURE 3.10 Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556–59, oil on canvas, 184.5 × 202.2 cm, National Gallery, London, and National Galleries of Scotland, NG6611  
IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

the provenance of others is sometimes uncertain, but we can trace the acquisition of a number of them to the years just before Velázquez's departure to Italy. Titian's *Worship of Venus* (MNP, P000419) and *The Andrians* (MNP, P000418) were given to Philip IV in 1637 by Niccolò Ludovisi, Prince of Piombino.<sup>17</sup> Eugenio Cajés's copy of Correggio's *The Fable of Leda* (MNP, P000120), what was thought to be Rubens's *Love of Cupid and Psyche* (MNP,

using the surviving record of these rooms in the inventory of the Alcázar palace taken in 1686 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3, fols. 40r–42v; see also Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 4, pp. 318–25, and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 610–13 and 616–25, nos. 901–3 and 906–17), subtracting the paintings listed in the separate inventory of works added to these galleries between 1666 and 1686 cited just above (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 5; see also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 901–8).

17 For Titian's *Worship of Venus*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 597–98, no. 937. For Titian's *Andrians*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 603–4, no. 943.



FIGURE 3.11 Titian, *Perseus and Andromeda*, ca. 1554–56, oil on canvas, 183.3 × 199.3 cm, Wallace Collection, P11  
IMAGE © WALLACE COLLECTION, LONDON/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

P001548), and Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* (fig. 3.12) were added to the Vaults of Titian from other rooms in the palace.<sup>18</sup> Rubens's *Three Graces* (fig. 3.13) was likely acquired at the 1640 auction of Rubens's art collection.<sup>19</sup> And a number of paintings were brought to the Alcázar from the royal palace in Valladolid by Velázquez and Alonso Cano, who

18 For Cajés's *The Fable of Leda*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 589–90, no. 925. For what was thought to be Rubens's *Love of Cupid and Psyche*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 592–93, no. 930. This painting is now attributed to Jacob Jordaens. For Titian's *Venus with a Mirror*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 608–9, no. 947. The original painting is now lost; the best surviving version is that in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.34).

19 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 593–94, no. 931. The most comprehensive treatment of this painting remains Vergara 2001. On the auction of Rubens's possessions, see Müller 1989.



FIGURE 3.12 Titian, *Venus with a Mirror*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 124.5 × 105.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937-1.34

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON



FIGURE 3.13 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, 1630–35, oil on panel, 220.5 × 182 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001670

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

traveled there together to retrieve paintings around 1640.<sup>20</sup> These included Veronese's *Rape of Europa* (lost), *Venus and Adonis* (MNP, P005204), and *Judgment of Paris* (lost).<sup>21</sup> We can be reasonably sure that the years preceding *The Rokeby Venus* saw the assembly of at least eighteen paintings of nude female figures in a single set of galleries. The designation of these spaces as the Vaults of Titian in the inventory of 1666 of the contents of the Alcázar palace tells us that the painting of nudes remained associated with his name (and, to judge by the other authors whose works were included in these galleries, with the school of Venetian painting of which he was the star). More importantly, all the paintings are consistent in one aspect more than any other: their inclusion of one or more nude female figures.<sup>22</sup>

The clear centerpiece of this decorative program is Titian's series of *poesie*, so exemplary of Titian's aptitude for this subject and the foundational monument in the tradition of painting to which *The Rokeby Venus* makes a claim. A word about method: Seemingly inexhaustible, the *poesie* have been subject to many competing readings over the course of the history of art.<sup>23</sup> The line of inquiry to be pursued here depends on the recent reassessment of Miguel Falomir, who has argued that the relentless overinterpretation of the paintings' subjects "betrays a wholesale loss of confidence in the aesthetic values of art."<sup>24</sup> Falomir goes on to suggest that insofar as they "were intended as a *dimostrazione d'ingegno*, ... the choice of one theme over another was largely immaterial ... as long as they shared a 'fabulous' nature, and enabled certain aesthetic ideals to be given visual expression."<sup>25</sup> Following Falomir's line of thinking, the figures in Titian's *poesie* appear less iconographic signifiers than pictorial elements with which Titian was able to engage in a kind of formal experimentation and thereby demonstrate his creative ingenuity.

20 Alonso Cano documents this trip in Aterido Fernández 2002, pp. 377–78, doc. 337. For context, see Wethey 1955, p. 18.

21 For Veronese's *Rape of Europa*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 596–97, no. 936. For his *Venus and Adonis*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 604–5, no. 944. For his *Judgment of Paris*, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 606–8, no. 946.

22 That Velázquez understood that these were the organizing principles of the galleries is perhaps made apparent by the works he eventually purchased for inclusion in these same galleries: a cycle of seven paintings by Tintoretto, two of which included single female nude figures (*Susanna and the Elders* [MNP, P000386] and *Joseph and the Wife of Putiphar* [MNP, P000395]) and whose centerpiece, *The Purification of the Midianite Virgins* [MNP, P000393], included several (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 619–25, nos. 911–17).

23 The bibliography surrounding Titian's corpus is enormous. On the *poesie* in particular, see Panofsky 1969, pp. 139–74; Rosand 1982; Wethey 1975, pp. 71–84; Tanner 1976; Padoan 1980; Hope 1980; Ginzburg 1980, republished as Ginzburg 1997; Nash 1985; Goffen 1997; Checa Cremades 2002a; Rosand 2004; Puttfarken 2005, pp. 155–81; Checa Cremades 2008a; Falomir Faus 2014b; and Wivel 2020. All this is to say nothing of the excellent existing literature on the production of replicas of, copies after, and prints after the *poesie*, studies of Titian's work for Spanish patrons more broadly considered, or studies of Titian's late style, so exemplified by his late mythologies; this is too vast to summarize for the purposes of this argument.

24 Falomir Faus 2014b, p. 57. For more of Falomir on the *poesie*, see Falomir Faus 2021.

25 Falomir Faus 2014b, p. 58.

Titian himself gestures toward this line of thinking in an oft-cited letter to Philip II dating to September 10, 1554, wherein he explains the logic structuring the paintings' interrelationships. In this letter, Titian announces the dispatch of the *Venus and Adonis* and explains that "because the Danaë that [he] already sent to His Majesty was seen entirely from the front, [he] wanted in this other *poesia* to change [the viewpoint] and show the opposite side, so that the *camerino* where they are to be may appear more attractive to the eye."<sup>26</sup> Titian then promised to send shortly a painting of Andromeda and another of Medea and Jason, "which will have another viewpoint different from those" of *Danaë* and *Venus and Adonis*.<sup>27</sup> However frequently this citation may appear in secondary literature addressing this painting series, the citation is worth revisiting insofar as it demonstrates so clearly the extent to which the paintings were conceptualized as a single series, and one whose internal coherence is essentially formal in nature. It establishes that whatever else Titian's intentions for it, the *poesie* were a fundamentally artistic exercise, and one in which the nude female figure operates both as a means and as an artistic end.

The history of the exhibition of this series at the Habsburg court is fragmentary and almost certainly discontinuous.<sup>28</sup> At the time that Philip II received the paintings, his court was itinerant, and it is unclear even when the paintings were first united in a single palace. Thanks to Titian's famous letter, however, it is well known that the *poesie* were meant to be hung together, in a *camerino*, or small room, likely meant for private study.<sup>29</sup> Although the *camerino* in question seems never to have existed, Philipp Fehl suggests that when using this word, Titian may have had in mind the *camerino d'alabastro* that he decorated for Alfonso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara. Like the imagined *camerino* for Philip II, this *camerino d'alabastro* was decorated with a single suite of paintings exploring a similar topic across several canvases.<sup>30</sup> Insofar as this is the case, the display of the *poesie* all together seems written into Titian's project from the start, forming part of his authorial intention for the series as a whole. In the case of Alfonso d'Este's *camerino d'alabastro*, the suite of paintings made for this space—a cycle of exuberant bacchanals, including Titian's *Worship of Venus* and *The Andrians*, both of which were eventually absorbed into the Vaults of Titian—represents variations on a theme. In that of the unrealized *camerino* of Philip II, the collection of paintings gathered together were variations on

26 Puppi 2012, p. 213: "E perchè la Danae che io mandai già a Vostra Maestà, si vedeva tutta da la parte dinanzi, ho voluto in quest'altra poesia variare e farle monstrare la contraria parte, acciochè riesca il camerino, dove hanno da stare, più grazioso a la vista." Other useful starting points for primary sources relevant to Titian's career under the Habsburgs include Mancini 1998 and Mancini 2000, pp. 513–22.

27 Puppi 2012, p. 213: "che avrà un'altra vista diversa da queste."

28 For a comprehensive history of the paintings' exhibition in royal palaces leading up to and including Philip IV, see Wethey 1975, pp. 78–84, as well as the catalogue entries for each painting included in the same volume.

29 One hypothesis regarding Titian's intentions for the display of the *poesie* in such a space can be found in Fehl 1980, pp. 139–47; republished as Fehl 1992, pp. 115–29.

30 For the *camerino d'alabastro* of Alfonso d'Este, see Hope 1971a; Hope 1971b; Shearman 1987; and Fehl 1992, pp. 46–87.

a pictorial form. If Titian meant for his *poesie* to hang in a single space, it is perhaps because the specifically formal variation to which he alludes in his correspondence makes itself most readily apparent when the paintings are considered all together. Titian's *poesie* have long seemed to embody a recognized association between artfulness, the painting of nude figures, and the art of painting itself, and these qualities are only enhanced when the paintings are viewed all together. Most importantly, the central conceit of the series—the variegation of a single pictorial form across multiple canvases—is most readily if not exclusively appreciable when the works are shown in view of each other. Nowhere has this been more apparent than when the *poesie* were reunited in a single gallery, seemingly for the first time in several hundred years, in the landmark exhibition *Titian: Love, Desire, Death* at the National Gallery in London and the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh in 2020, then again in *Titian: Women, Myth, and Power* at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 2021.<sup>31</sup>

Unwittingly, Titian's *poesie* were not only the centerpiece of the galleries named for their painter; they gave the rule to them. Among the organizing principles of the Vaults of Titian were simply Titian himself and the disciples of his tradition: Veronese, Rubens, and other artists who followed him in their pursuit of both this subject and style. Still more immediately legible would have been the presence of at least one nude female figure in every composition. These paintings, made by chronologically and geographically disparate masters, illustrating narratives from mythological and biblical sources alike, each individually offer any number of conceivable readings, with iconographies and narratives rich for the interpretation. When hung in the company of the others, however, these multiple readings yield to one above the rest: the nude female figure in each of these paintings emerges from their grouping as the privileged pictorial element, so privileged by their grouping and made more readily appreciable by that grouping. Insofar as this is the case, the principles underpinning the interrelationships of the *poesie* come to overwhelm the remaining works in these galleries. Titian's paintings were, by their maker's design, meant to be exhibited all together, but the selection of works that was eventually assembled around them was not. Titian's series was seemingly made with a rule in mind; the paintings added to its number were subordinated to a rule for which they were never intended. The paintings in these rooms, hung next to one another in a way that permits ready visual comparison, come to appear by means of this hang as variations on a single figural type, over and against any possible iconographic or narrative connection between them. By isolating a group of paintings according to pictorial motif, that pictorial motif is then able to become the defining characteristic of a new category of painting to which that group belongs. The display of this group of paintings all together is what set this reciprocal operation into effect.

How fitting, then, that paintings like Rubens's *Three Graces* and Veronese's *Judgment of Paris* eventually formed part of the decorative program of these galleries. The first of

31 The directors of all three institutions make reference to how briefly the *poesie* remained together in the Spanish royal collection in their jointly written foreword to Wivel 2020.

these depicts goddesses who represented virtues coded as feminine, including charm, elegance, and youth. In Rubens's composition, they appear with limbs intertwined and their bodies each presented to the viewer at a different angle, a hallmark of this iconography since antiquity and reminiscent of the interrelationships of Titian's *poesie*. They appear virtually identical, the same woman refracted into three. Furthermore, their only narrative is to look at each other, just as the viewer is meant to do. So much of what this painting represents exemplifies the appeal of such galleries as the Vaults of Titian for a male audience, from what has sometimes been appraised as the lusciousness of the bodies depicted to their sensuous brushwork. This single work combines female nudity, a concept of beauty, and a willful artfulness, all of them the hallmarks of Titian's series. We may never know if Veronese's *Judgment of Paris* was so indulgent in its approach to the depiction of such a mythology. That said, the iconography of the *Judgment of Paris* is likewise one of evaluative appreciation of the nude female form: three goddesses—Juno, Venus, and Minerva—are presented before a male arbiter, who is put upon to look at each and decide, impossibly, which is the most beautiful. In both stories, three nude women are gathered together so that a male viewer, whether internal or external to the painting, may compare them and delight in doing so. The paintings in the Vaults of Titian were brought together for this same purpose. Neither artist seems to have made his painting with its display in the Vaults of Titian in mind: Veronese's death predates the reign of Philip IV by several decades, and Rubens's *Three Graces* remained in his personal collection until he died. Nevertheless, as paintings of multiple nude female figures that thematize comparative viewing, they are the very *mise-en-scène* of the curatorial operation at work in these galleries, rendered, upon installation, its *mise en abyme*.

At precisely the same moment that the Vaults of Titian were coming into being, texts written by representatives of the Spanish Church took up a long-standing debate surrounding the painting of nudes, and these texts give a sense of the logic that made these galleries possible. The painting of nude figures often made only brief appearances in Spanish art treatises of the period; the most comprehensive treatment of such works and especially the terms by which the paintings of nude figures were constituted as a category would come from a different literary corpus altogether.<sup>32</sup> Spain was the heir to a conversation that began at the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century regarding the many ways that painting could be indecent, whether by depicting biblical stories in seemingly heretical ways, in ways that made them illegible to the public, or in ways that inspired inappropriate worship.<sup>33</sup> Of the topics on the agenda, the painting of

32 The question of whether it was decent or indecent, noble or ignoble to include nude figures in painting was only briefly touched upon in the treatises of writers like Francisco Pacheco, Vicente Carducho, and Diego de la Vega, within which the consideration of such matters formed part of larger arguments regarding the nobility of painting in a post-Tridentine world (Portús Pérez 1998b, pp. 31–36).

33 Javier Portús Pérez narrates the course of these ideas from the Council of Trent through the Spanish treatises here in question in Portús Pérez 1998b, pp. 27–69. The controversy surrounding the painting of nudes in early modern Spain is a topic Javier Portús Pérez has examined to varying degrees and for different purposes in the following publications: Portús Pérez 1995; Portús Pérez 1996; Portús

nude figures proved to be among the most controversial in Catholic Spain. Theologians debated not only the production of such works but also their exhibition, considering sites as accessible as plazas and public streets and as private as the interior spaces that were commonly used by collectors for their display. The most direct address to paintings of nude figures came in the form of the 1632 pamphlet titled the *Copia de los pareceres y censuras de los reverendissimos padres maestros, y señores catredaticos de las insignes Vniversidades de Salamanca y Alcalá y de otras personas doctas sobre el abvso de las figuras y pinturas lasciuas y deshonestas; en que se muestra que es pecado mortal pintarlas, esculpiras, y tenerlas patentes donde sean vistas* (henceforth *Copia de los pareceres* or simply the *Pareceres*). Seemingly intended for and read by members of the Spanish royal court, this text consists of the collected—if sometimes contradictory—opinions of clergymen and professors in response to the question of whether it was a sin to display nude paintings and, if so, on what grounds.<sup>34</sup> It is remarkable insofar as it designates paintings of “lascivious” and “scandalous” figures for the first time as their own “genre of painting,” however unceremoniously it does this.<sup>35</sup> The text nowhere offers a straightforward definition of this genre, which existed in excess of those outlined in treatises.<sup>36</sup> But without a fixed term to use when evoking paintings including nude figures, the friars and professors who contributed to this pamphlet would invent less straightforward ways to refer to paintings of nudes and therewith come to characterize the terms of this genre.

The writers of the *Copia de los pareceres* and related texts invented expressive formulations that confused the contents of the paintings that were the subject of controversy with the paintings themselves. The unnamed author of the introductory text to the *Pareceres* was careful to discuss which paintings he thought were appropriate to look at and especially where.<sup>37</sup> He warns that to exhibit paintings of great devotional content in unseemly places, where they cannot be shown the reverence they warrant, is itself a sin, and he cautions his readers of the abuse it is “that pious eyes should be able to see crosses exiled to filthy places, and the figures of Diana, and Venus, etc. [*las figuras de*

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Pérez 1998a; Portús Pérez 1998b; Portús Pérez 2002b; and Portús Pérez 2006. On this topic, see also Civil 1990. A useful more general source on the impact of the Council of Trent on the types of paintings under consideration here can be found in Cooper and Hall 2013.

34 We can be certain that this pamphlet reached the court in Madrid and the artists at work there thanks to the direct reference to the *Copia de los pareceres* made in Carducho 1633, fols. 122v–124r; see also Carducho 1977, pp. 362–65. On Carducho 1633, see Andrews et al. 2016.

35 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fols. 2v, 26v, and 27r: “este genero de pinturas.” The first time this turn of phrase appears in the text is in the preface to the many opinions that represent the body of the text. Its writer, Christobal de Torres, does not explain himself when he introduces this term; the preface simply explains the purposes of the text as a whole, which exists not to define this genre of painting but rather to denounce it.

36 For a useful summary of the reception of the hierarchy of genres in Spanish art literature, see Hellwig 1999, pp. 253–80.

37 Javier Portús Pérez identifies the author of this text as the Portuguese writer Francisco de Braganza in Portús Pérez 2002b, p. 32; and Portús Pérez 2006, p. 63.

*Diana, y Venus, &c.*] placed in the galleries of Princes and Lords.”<sup>38</sup> Later in his text, this same writer gave one example of such abuse. “Ecclesiastical histories,” he writes, “refer to the impious Jews who, in order to hide the place where the cross of Christ was buried and to obstruct the faithful from going to venerate it, put in the same place a Goddess Venus [*una Diosa Venus*], so that the Christians, scandalized by her clumsy image, would not dare to go where the cross of Christ was.”<sup>39</sup> Another contributor to the *Copia de los pareceres* agreed “that it is a mortal sin to have (at least in public) lascivious paintings”<sup>40</sup> because “if the paintbrush is valiant, there are no shades of Rhetoric that are as persuasive as those of one of these canvases.”<sup>41</sup> He goes on to provide an example of one such canvas, saying that “noteworthy is the case ... of that Venus [*aquella Venus*], to which one servant of God saw demons by night infuse in the smoke of incense the fire of lust that she enflamed in those that looked at her by day.”<sup>42</sup> The *Pareceres* inspired a response from the important preacher Fray Hortensio Paravicino in the form of a text that would, paradoxically, condemn paintings of nudes with still more vehemence than the *Copia de los pareceres* while most openly acknowledging the artistic value of these works. He raises the difficult issue that while nudity in art is always reprehensible, the greatest poets reach the height of their talent not in the writing of devotional stories, but of profane ones. “So too,” he continues, “do those that do not even know how to grind colors always work on images of Saints, and the Masters of most valiant brush do not know how to lift their hands from Venuses, Ledas, Danaës, Andrómedas [*Venus, Ledas, Dánaes, Andrómedas*].”<sup>43</sup> Already in his 1628 “Panegírico Funeral a la Reina Doña Margarita de Austria,” Paravicino had once condemned the public display of what he similarly described as “the Venuses, the Danaës, the Ledas [*las Venus, las Danaes, las Ledas*].”<sup>44</sup>

These are not the only terms by which these paintings appear in such written sources, but they are some of the most telling. In other scholarly contexts, the citations

38 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fols. 4r–v: “¿ojos pios podran ver desterradas las cruces en lugares inmundos, y colocadas las figuras de Diana, y Venus, &c. en las galerias de los Principes, y Señores.”

39 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 8v: “De los impios ludios refieren las historias Ecclesiasticas, que para encubrir el lugar donde la Cruz de Christo fue enterrada, y estoruar ¿ los Fieles no fuessen a adorarla, pusieron en el mismo lugar vna Diosa Venus, para que escandalizados los Christianos de su torpe retrato, no se atreuiessen a llegar adòde estaua la Cruz de Christo.”

40 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 16v: “que sea culpa mortal el tener (por lo menos en publico) pinturas lasciuas.”

41 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 16v: “si el pincel es valiète no ay colores de Retorica, que persuadã como los de vn lienço destes.”

42 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 16v: “Notable es el caso ... de aquella Venus, a quien vio cierto sieruo de Dios ¿ pegauã los demonios de noche en humos de incienso el fuego de lasciuia ¿ ella encendia en los que de dia la mirauan.”

43 Portús Pérez 1996, p. 104: “Así también los que ni moler colores saben, trabajan perpetuamente imágenes de Santos, y los Maestros de más valiente pincel no saben alzar la mano de Venus, Ledas, Dánaes, Andrómedas.” The transcription of this entire text, the original version of which is in the possession of the Hispanic Society of America (B.2472), is provided in Portús Pérez 1996, pp. 101–5.

44 Paravicino y Arteaga 1994, p. 250: “las Venus, las Danaes, las Ledas.” The relevant paragraph also appears cited in its entirety in Portús Pérez 1996, pp. 91–92, n. 56; and in part in Portús Pérez 2002b, pp. 30–31.

collected above would be interesting primarily for what they reveal about attitudes toward indecent paintings in post-Tridentine Spain. But at stake in this argument is not whether paintings of nude figures were condemned in early modern Spain but rather the means by which these paintings were articulated in early modern Spanish sources. With no common term by which to refer to paintings like the *poesie* and the rest of the works that eventually entered the Vaults of Titian, these writers deferred instead to references to the names of the specific figures within those paintings that made them so objectionable. It is possible that this was simply an easy and convenient way of circumventing the problem posed by a lack of codified terminology for these paintings. Nevertheless, the choice has implications that are worth considering: In referring only to the name of the nude figure, these writers isolate it from the rest of the painting's possible contents, from its narrative context, from its source material, from a larger pictorial tradition of which it may be a part. They single out the nude figure as the painting's most important aspect and ask it to stand in, both in their thinking and in the thinking of their audience, for the work as a whole. There is, then, a metonymic operation at work here. The *Copia de los Paraceres* was the heir to long art-theoretical traditions with their origins in Italy, discursive traditions, as Elizabeth Cropper has compellingly shown, that conflated the depiction of beautiful female figures with the art of painting.<sup>45</sup> In the parlance of our Spanish friars, however, this thinking takes a distinctly material turn: to evoke the nude figure of Venus is to evoke a painting of her, the figure of Venus standing in for the very canvas on which said Venus is depicted. If there was an equivalence anywhere in seventeenth-century Spanish thinking between paintings of nude figures and nude figures themselves, we begin to see it here.

Elsewhere in the *Copia de los pareceres*, the confusion between object and subject matter finds an even clearer formulation. The writers of the *Pareceres* take direct umbrage with the nudity of figures contained in these paintings, condemning the impropriety of the nudity of painted figures, male and female alike. But throughout their texts, these writers confuse the individual figures that appear in the paintings with the paintings themselves, attributing nudity not to the figures but instead to the paintings. The term "desnudo" (nude) appears in the *Copia de los pareceres* in two ways. The first is straightforward: the word "desnudo" appears as a modifier for the figures that were the subject of the paintings to which these writers objected. Questioning the Christianity and modesty of those who owned these paintings and displayed them in their homes, the writer of the introduction to the *Copia de los pareceres* poses the following question:

For what would [the saints] say, if in the house of a Christian man, who professes chastity, modesty, and composure, they saw the indecencies of profane paintings, of lascivious Venuses, of nude Cupids [*Cupidos desnudos*], of Asclepius, Floras, and other gods of the Gentiles as dishonest as those?<sup>46</sup>

45 Cropper 1976 and Cropper 1986.

46 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 8r: "porque ñ dixeran estos, si en la casa de vn hombre Christiano, cuya profession es de castidad, modestia y compostura, vieran indecencias de pinturas profanas, de Venus

Another *parecer* reveals more conflicted sentiments when considering the presence of nudity in religious paintings:

There will be people who, by their natural complexion or by malice, are bothered just by seeing the figure of a man or woman, beautiful [and] nude [*desnudos*]; for this alone I will not condemn he who would have these paintings, because in that case we would have to banish from all the churches and oratories [every] Adam and Eve, [given] how they are painted in Paradise, and other saints that are painted beautiful and nude, like Saint Sebastian and Saint Lawrence and others.<sup>47</sup>

When considering the matter of the public exhibition of such works, the author of another *parecer* determines the following:

Placed on view, [such a painting] makes up for the absence of that which is wanted and awakens the will to one's desires; all the more will a painting incite [those that see it] to such sentiments [when] placed in public and with a visible nude body [*cuero desnudo*], as a sensual imagination attains its greatest strength when it represents within what these figures offer in plain sight.<sup>48</sup>

However conflicting these opinions appear in their attitude toward paintings of nude figures and the dangers they pose to their viewers, in every case we see a consistent use of the term "desnudo" to describe these figures.

That said, this term appears in the *Copia de los pareceres* not only to describe the figures in the paintings in question but as an epithet transferred to the paintings themselves. The anonymous introduction to the *Paraceres* included in the text, for example, includes a lament phrased as follows:

I don't know how thanks to our sins so great an abuse as that of nude paintings [*pinturas desnudas*] of profane men and women came to be in our time, [paintings] full of such indecencies against Christian purity, that there are no chaste eyes that dare to look at them even from a great distance, so as not to be stained by images so obscene that even the pen flees from writing them.<sup>49</sup>

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lasciuas, de Cupidos desnudos, de Eseulapios, Floras, y otros dioses de los Gentiles, tan deshonestos como ellos?"

47 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 12v: "personas aura, q̄ por complexion natural, o por malicia con solo vèr la figura de vn hombre, o muger hermosos desnudos se irriten; por solo esto no condenara yo a quien tuuiera estas pinturas, porque desta suerte huuieramos de desterrar de las Iglesias, y Oratorios a Adan, y Eua, como se pintan en el Parayso, y a otros Santos que pintan hermosos, y desnudos, como san Sebastian, y san Lorenço, y otros."

48 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 20r: "puesto a la vista suple la ausencia de lo q̄ bien se quiere, y despierta la voluntad a sus deseos; quanto mas incitarà a semejâtes afectos la pintura puesta en publico, y manifesto de vn cuerpo desnudo, pues la mayor fuerça q̄ puede llegar a tener vna imaginacion sensual, es quâdo en lo interior representa lo que estas figuras ofrecē a la vista."

49 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 7v: "No se como por nuestros pecados se ha introduzido en estos tiempos vn abuso tan grâde, como son pinturas desnudas de hombres y mugeres profanes, llenas de tantas

The writer of another *parecer* echoes these sentiments in the same terms:

Dishonest nude images [*imagenes desnudas*] give the opportunity and moral danger approaching great falls into lust, and the greater the skill of the art, the more effective will be the opportunity, and the danger, and thus I hold it a mortal sin of most pernicious scandal to have such paintings of the form which is in question in this text ... and it is very just and necessary to prohibit said uses of such images.<sup>50</sup>

Similar condemnations appear in still other *pareceres*:

I hold as sure and true the resolution of the Fathers and professors on the issue proposed in this text, and I know that an Ecclesiastical Prince, [and] general Inquisitor, moved by saintly and Christian zeal, tried by means of a very serious minister of his to put an end to and destroy such paintings [that are] nude [*pinturas desnudas*] in said way a few years ago because he judged them harmful and gravely pernicious to the honesty which professes, and should profess any Christian man.<sup>51</sup>

The Church has used nude paintings [*pinturas desnudas*] for martyrdoms and ancient stories wherein either beauty moves us toward the praise of the Creator or torments [move us] to the imitation of his suffering.<sup>52</sup>

We see this formulation occur everywhere in the *Copia de los pareceres*, wherein the perception of nudity is transferred from the individual figures observed in the paintings in question to the paintings themselves.<sup>53</sup> The metonymic thought process by which

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indecencias cōtra la pureza y modestia Christiana, que no ay ojos castos que aun a larga distancia se atreuan a mirarlas, por no mancharlos con representaciones obscenas, que aun la pluma se corre de escriuir las."

50 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 22v: "las imagenes desnudas deshonestas dan ocasion, y peligro moral proximo a caidas graues en luxuria, y quanto mayor fuere el primor del arte, tanto mas eficaz serà la ocasion, y peligro, y assi tengo por pecado mortal de escandalo perniciosissimo tener tales pinturas en la forma que se pregunta en esta duda ... y es muy justo, y necessario prohibir los dichos vsos de tales imagenes."

51 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 23v: "Tengo por cierta, y verdadera la resolucion de los Padres Maestros, y señores Catedraticos al caso propuesto en este papel, y me consta que vn Principe Ecclesiastico, Inquisidor general, mouido de santo y Christiano zelo, intentò por medio de vn Ministro graue suyo acabar, y destruir las tales pinturas desnudas en la forma dicha, pocos años ha, por juzgarlas por perjudiciales, y perniciosas grauemente a la honestidad que professa, y deue professar qualquier hombre Christiano."

52 *Copia de los pareceres* 1632, fol. 17v: "Pinturas desnudas ha vsado la Iglesia en los Martires, y historias antiguas, donde, o la hermosura nos mueue a alabança del Criador, o los tormentos a la imitacion del sufrimiento."

53 The same terminology appears in textual sources preceding the *Copia de los pareceres*, suggesting that its appearance in the *Pareceres* is not specific to this particular text but rather that it was codified over

paintings came to be identified by the name of the nude figure they contained here finds its most explicit expression. In their ascription of nudity to figures and paintings alike, these writers make no distinction between nude paintings (that is, “nudes,” conceptualized as a painting genre) and paintings that include nude figures (that is, “nudes” in the sense of the painting subject). Perhaps for these writers, there was none to be made. The use of the term “desnudo” to refer both to figures painted and paintings themselves betrays a practical interchangeability between nude figures and paintings of nude figures. In a phrasing like “pintura desnuda,” the conflation between the nude figure and the canvas on which said figure appears is total.<sup>54</sup>

Across the centuries since the reign of Philip IV, the galleries that have been devoted to the display of paintings of nude figures in Spanish royal sites—and eventually the Museo Nacional del Prado—have expanded and contracted.<sup>55</sup> Between the inventory of 1636, which records the first true grouping of such paintings all together and in isolation, and the inventory of 1666, by which the Vaults of Titian had been formally constituted, the space devoted to this display expanded from just one gallery to several. Perhaps the Vaults of Titian are thus best understood not only as a particular site but also as a curatorial strategy, at the heart of which was the metonym expressed everywhere in the discourse around paintings of nude female figures. The genre created by this practice was a function of this metonym, by which a pictorial trope was turned into a painting type and where “the nude” as a subject for art—the “cuerpo desnudo”—gave way to “the nude” as a form of art—the “pintura desnuda.”

## 2 *The Rokeby Venus, Reconsidered*

Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset once characterized Velázquez as a painter of singularities, an artist who seems never to have repeated himself, such that each of his most accomplished paintings appears to be a one-off within his oeuvre.<sup>56</sup> *The Rokeby Venus* has proven to be among the most singular of these, and correspondingly the most enigmatic. Like Titian’s *poesie*, the painting has been subject to relentless iconographic interpretation and reinterpretation over the course of its historiography, often as an allegory

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time and by means of an intertextual discourse of which the *Copia de los pareceres* was the culminating contribution. These sources include Jesús María 1601; Villegas 1625; and Butrón 1626.

54 It is worth noting here that paintings of nude figures that were not sequestered in private apartments were covered by cloth curtains. This is a practice that takes literally the notion that a painting could be nude (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 110, n. 314). For a thematic treatment of covering paintings with curtains throughout the history of art, see Elsner 2015, pp. 219–58.

55 For a brief history of the movements of paintings of nude figures across the centuries as well as a reconstruction of the so-called “Sala Reservada” at the Museo Nacional del Prado between 1827 and 1838, see Portús Pérez 2002b, pp. 67–74.

56 Ortega y Gasset 1972, p. 95.

of such themes as love, vanity, and beauty.<sup>57</sup> Whatever the painting's iconography, the Vaults of Titian make possible a new comprehension of *The Rokeby Venus* as an exercise in the production of paintings of a certain genre, as that genre was itself produced in the most significant galleries in the history of the nude in Spain.

What is extraordinarily striking about *The Rokeby Venus*, in the context of so many paintings of nude figures with readily legible iconographies with rich contextualizing details and narrative motivations, is how spare Velázquez's conception appears by comparison. The setting of the painting is totally nondescript; nothing about its construction suggests a recognizable—or even convincingly rendered—three-dimensional space for its central figure to occupy. This figure has no discernible attributes that might identify her with any mythological character, Venus or otherwise; the features revealed in her mirror reflection are indistinct. There is no action taking place anywhere in the painting, no story that it seems to tell. So little of what is usually required to justify the painting of a nude female figure is present here.

The specific circumstances by which the only surviving female nude in the history of early modern Spanish painting came to be remain a mystery.<sup>58</sup> That the painting formed part of the collection of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, seventh Marquis of Carpio and Marquis of Heliche, shortly after its production is universally accepted, but documents recently brought to light confirm the suspicion that it was not commissioned by Haro, even suggesting that it was made for no one in particular. The first mention of the painting appears in the inventory drawn up on November 18, 1651, after the death of little-known painter and sometimes art dealer Domingo Guerra Coronel:

Firstly, a painting of a nude woman [*muger desnuda*], [measuring] one and a half *varas* tall and two and a quarter wide with a black frame.<sup>59</sup>

57 See Soria 1953, the relevant portions of which were republished as Soria 1957; Mateo Sauro 1987; Bernal Muñoz 1990; Prater 2002; Carr 2006, p. 214; Cherry 2007, pp. 241–77; Checa Cremades 2008b, pp. 47–48; and Georgievska-Shine 2016, pp. 61–72, among others. It is worth noting that while major monographs on Velázquez unfailingly include an account of *The Rokeby Venus*—including Justi 1889; Beruete 1906; Gudiol 1973; Harris 1982a; Brown 1986b; López-Rey 1996; and Marías 1999, to name only some of them—these are more concerned with the question of the painting's date and style than with its interpretation. The painting was also included in two recent exhibitions on Velázquez, with entries for the painting included in the corresponding catalogues (see Haag 2014, pp. 201–7 and 312–15, cat. 31; and Kientz 2015, pp. 222–23, cat. 60).

58 On the date of the painting, its first owner, and related concerns, see MacLaren 1952, pp. 125–29; Pita Andrade 1952; Harris 1957; and more recently, Bull and Harris 1986; Bull and Harris 1994; and Aterido Fernández 2001, pp. 91–94. An address to the reception of *The Rokeby Venus* in the collection of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, likely the first owner of the painting, can be found in Portús Pérez 2006. For a more extensive treatment of the art collection of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, see López Torrijos 1991; Frutos Sastre 2004; Frutos Sastre 2006; Frutos Sastre 2009; and García Cueto 2014. On the collection of paintings of nudes by Spanish aristocrats, especially those in the orbit of the Habsburg court, see Cherry 1997. On the reception of *The Rokeby Venus* in collections outside Spain, see Haskell 1999 and Pezzini 2016.

59 Cited in Aterido Fernández 2001, p. 91: “Primeram<sup>te</sup> un quadro de una muger desnuda de bara y media de alto y dos baras y quarta de ancho ... con su moldura negra.”

The same painting appears listed (albeit with erroneous measurements) in an inventory dated to March 7, 1651, of goods seized by Sebastián de Arenas Ruiz, to whom Guerra Coronel was deeply indebted at the time of his death:

A large painting [measuring] two and a half *varas* tall and two wide of a nude woman [*muger desnuda*] by the hand of master painter Diego Velázquez.<sup>60</sup>

Once the debt was settled, the painting was returned to Guerra Coronel's estate and put up for auction. The notarized copy of the results of this auction includes the following entry in the listings for September 16, 1652:

A painting of a nude woman [*muger desnuda*] by the hand of Diego Velázquez sold to an employee of the Marquis of Heliche for 700 *Reales*.<sup>61</sup>

Once in the possession of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, it appears in an inventory of the contents of his household as follows:

222 A painting on canvas of a nude woman [*muger desnuda*] lying on a cloth painted from the back, leaning on her right arm [and] looking at herself in a mirror that is held by a boy, by the hand of Velázquez, [measuring] two and a half *varas* wide and one and a half high with a black frame.<sup>62</sup>

Whatever confusions these documents fail to dispel, they are also the only written commentaries on Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* that date to his own lifetime. They are therefore our only immediate insight into what a seventeenth-century Spanish audience might have thought of it, however little they seem to tell us. They provide the dimensions of the work, identify its author, and sketch out the visible contents of the painting, focusing on those that appear most prominent: the woman who is the painting's clear centerpiece, the mirror into which she gazes, and the boy who holds that mirror before her face. What these inventory entries do *not* do is tell us that this winged boy is Cupid and that she is Venus. They suggest no content for the painting apart from the pictorial form of the

60 Cited in Aterido Fernández 2001, p. 91: "un quadro grande de dos baras y media de alto y dos de ancho de una muger desnuda de mano de Diego Belazquez maestro pintor."

61 Cited in Aterido Fernández 2001, p. 92: "Remato un quadro de Pintura de una Muger desnuda de mano de Diego Velazquez en un criado del s<sup>r</sup> Marq<sup>s</sup> de lichi en setecientos R<sup>s</sup>."

62 Cited in Burke and Cherry 1997, p. 476: "222 Una pintura en lienço de Una muger desnuda tendida sobre Un paño pintada de espaldas Recostada s.<sup>ra</sup> El braco derecho mirandose en Un espejo q. le tiene Un niño de la mano de Velazquez de dos baras y media de ancho y Una y media de Cayda con su marco negro." Aterido Fernández points out that although this inventory appears in a folder dated to June 1, 1651, the inventory itself is left undated, the implication being that the painting was purchased at auction in 1652 and the inventory in question was simply added to a folder that predated the sale (Aterido Fernández 2001, p. 92).

nude, thus expanding the possibility that the painting's content simply is this form and, relatedly, that form itself is this painting's content.

Upon closer analysis, *The Rokeby Venus* reveals itself to be a carefully constructed object, one whose composition consists almost entirely of elements that Velázquez would have observed in the Vaults of Titian. Nearly every significant feature of *The Rokeby Venus* can be traced to one of the paintings by Titian included in these galleries. The fact that his figure is female already indicates that Velázquez was closely studying the works included in the most significant gallery hang that had ever been assembled on the subject, a hang whose paintings contained almost no nude male figures. The subject of the nude reclining on a bed, which Titian himself likely invented, would have been immediately observable to Velázquez in paintings like *Danaë* and *Venus with an Organist and Cupid*.<sup>63</sup> The pose, as scholars have often noted, is directly lifted from the *Sleeping Hermaphrodite* (Musée du Louvre, Ma 231.1) then in the Borghese collection, a flirtation with the *paragone* between painting and sculpture undoubtedly inspired by Velázquez's time in Rome.<sup>64</sup> The conceit of flipping the posture of this body from a frontal viewpoint to a viewpoint from the back, however, is entirely in keeping with the compositional ethos of Titian's *poesie* series as a whole, motivating his *Venus and Adonis* in particular.<sup>65</sup> Finally, the motif of the mirror, held up by a cupid figure, is likely borrowed from Titian's *Venus with a Mirror*.<sup>66</sup> Although Velázquez's combination of them in this painting is totally original, this subject, compositional conceit, and motif, all of which have been learned from examples of Titian's work in the royal art collection, are recombined in a way that is suggestive of the same kind of formal experimentation that was at the heart of Titian's foundational series. In its construction out of pictorial tropes and motifs deriving from multiple works, *The Rokeby Venus* is just as convincingly an inquiry into the painting of nudes as an art form, one that questions how such a work is composed and investigates

63 See Poglajen-Neuwall 1934, p. 381; MacLaren 1943, p. 7; Tolnay 1960, p. 339; Brown 1986b, pp. 181–82; Mateo Sauro 1987, p. 9; Bernal Muñoz 1990, p. 116; Bull and Harris 1990, p. 12; Prater 2002, pp. 20–25; Carr 2006, p. 214; Morán Turina 2006c, p. 143; Cherry 2007, p. 258; and Checa Cremades 2008b, pp. 47–48, among others. On the invention of the painting of reclining female nudes in Renaissance Venice, see Anderson 1980.

64 This citation was brilliantly staged in a retrospective exhibition at the Grand Palais in 2015 (see Kientz 2015, pp. 222–25, cats. 60 and 61). Previously, this connection was observed in Justi 1889, p. 462; MacLaren 1943, p. 10; Soria 1953, p. 273; Tolnay 1960, p. 340; Sánchez Cantón 1960, p. 144; Bull and Harris 1986, p. 653; Portús Pérez 2002a, p. 93; and Georgievska-Shine 2016, pp. 62–64, among others. An interpretation of the meaning of this citation has most recently been offered in Knox 2019, pp. 121–39. As mentioned in chapter 2 of this book, Velázquez is known to have commissioned a bronze copy of the *Sleeping Hermaphrodite* for the royal sculpture collection while still in Italy (MNP, E000223; see Luzón Nogué 2007b, pp. 447–50, cat. 49).

65 See Justi 1889, p. 462; MacLaren 1943, p. 7; Bull and Harris 1986, p. 653; Bull and Harris 1990, p. 12; Portús Pérez 2002a, p. 88; Morán Turina 2006c, p. 139; and Georgievska-Shine 2016, p. 62, among others.

66 See Justi 1889, p. 462; Poglajen-Neuwall 1934, p. 378; MacLaren 1943, p. 7; Soria 1957, p. 36; Tolnay 1960, p. 340; Brown 1986b, pp. 181–82; Bernal Muñoz 1990, p. 116; Bull and Harris 1990, p. 12; Checa Cremades 2002b, p. 80; Prater 2002, pp. 20–25; Portús Pérez 2006, p. 65; Carr 2006, p. 214; Morán Turina 2006c, p. 143; Cherry 2007, p. 258; and Georgievska-Shine 2016, p. 63, among others.

its constituent parts. Like so many artists of the early modern period, Velázquez consistently used sources in his paintings, whether for single figures or particular motifs or compositional structures. But the practice seemingly finds its apex in this painting, entirely composed of parts borrowed from other paintings, perhaps a *dimostrazione d'ingegno* of a different sort. *The Rokeby Venus* thus reads as an exercise in the production of paintings of a certain type, derived from examples of this painting type that Velázquez would have seen in the Vaults of Titian.

At issue here, however, is not only which individual paintings in these galleries account for Velázquez's output but also how the Vaults of Titian structured Velázquez's reception of those paintings. Even superficial observations about the painting suggest that the work corresponds to the parameters of the genre of the nude as it was articulated in the Vaults of Titian. It is a genre in which a mythological or biblical gloss is necessary but narrative itself incidental, and in which every other element of the painting is subordinated to the female figure itself, the pretext for which such elements exist.<sup>67</sup> Velázquez's Venus is absolutely central to the composition of his painting. Other representational elements, including the red curtain above her and the blue and white sheets beneath her, converge around her form, imitating the contours of her figure. The cupid figure is present only to support the mirror that he holds in front of her, revealing nothing apart from the otherwise invisible face of the nude figure. What might be read as a wall exposed behind the red curtain is an entirely flat, indeterminate zone, offering the viewer no point of exit from the painting, and repeated in the grey ground of the reflection in the mirror. Most importantly, the mirror and the body of the nude figure are both presented roughly parallel to the picture plane as if themselves two sides of a single plane. Seeming not to expand a space between the figure and her mirror image but instead to compress it, they flatten the image toward the flatness that is the very material condition of the painted object, an impression further underscored by the figure stretched out across the picture plane from end to end, like the canvas itself across its stretcher.<sup>68</sup> In all the above respects, *The Rokeby Venus* visualizes the equivalence between nude female figure and painting canvas itself on which the emergence of the nude as a pictorial category within the Vaults of Titian was fundamentally predicated. There is an immediate identification in this work of what is represented in *The Rokeby Venus* (the body of the nude female figure) with the material structure of *The Rokeby Venus* (the object on which that figure was painted).

But there is a still more direct way of observing this analogy in *The Rokeby Venus* between what the painting represents, on the one hand, and the painted object itself, on the other. The mirror is a device that Velázquez famously used in another painting in his oeuvre: *Las Meninas* (fig. 6.1), made within the same decade of the painter's life

67 For a history of the use of mythology as a pretext for the painting of nude female figures, see Morán Turina 2014a.

68 For a very different take on the spatial situation between the mirror and the female figure in *The Rokeby Venus*, see Campo y Francés 1994.

as *The Rokeby Venus*. The mirror in *Las Meninas* has been the subject of tremendous art historical debate, and it would be fruitless to rehearse the many arguments made about it.<sup>69</sup> Insofar as it is the most notorious instance of this device in Velázquez's painted output, however, it serves as an essential point of comparison to the mirror in *The Rokeby Venus*.<sup>70</sup> The literature on the mirror in *Las Meninas* overwhelmingly concerns the recurring question of exactly what this mirror is reflecting: the royal couple of King Philip IV of Spain and Queen Mariana of Austria, seemingly located in the space just in front of the picture plane, or the image of the royal couple on the canvas on which Velázquez depicts himself at work within *Las Meninas*.<sup>71</sup> Scholars who treat this part of the painting usually argue for one of these readings over the other. A recent reassessment by Diane Bodart has made it possible to accept them both: the mirror in *Las Meninas* reflects both the king and queen, physically present in front of *Las Meninas*, and their image on the canvas within it.<sup>72</sup> This argumentation will be more closely attended to in a later chapter of this book, more focused on *Las Meninas* itself and especially on the questions that it poses to royal representation. What is significant for the purposes of this chapter is only the conclusion of this line of thinking, which establishes a triangulated relationship between the mirror, the space immediately in front of *Las Meninas*, and the canvas depicted within it. The mirror in *Las Meninas* reveals—both directly, by reflecting the front of the depicted painting canvas, and indirectly, by reflecting the king and queen standing in front of the picture plane—what Velázquez is ostensibly in the process of painting on the canvas whose front is otherwise invisible to the viewer.<sup>73</sup> To put the matter a bit more succinctly: the mirror in *Las Meninas* is the recto to the verso of the canvas depicted within the painting.

It seems that in *The Rokeby Venus*, we have another kind of recto/verso: with her face visible only as a mirror reflection and her body turned away from the viewer, we are given a viewpoint of the reclining female figure that recalls the turning away of the canvas

69 A more thorough treatment of this painting and its historiography can be found in chapter 6 of this book.

70 Andreas Prater must be acknowledged for having thought to make this comparison previously, although it is difficult to determine from his text precisely to what end he makes it (Prater 2002, pp. 76–77).

71 The second of these readings can be credited to Antonio Palomino, who claims this in his description of the painting in his 1724 biography of Velázquez (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 342–43; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 920–22; Palomino 1987, pp. 164–66; Palomino 2018, pp. 144–50). The first has been inextricably associated with the name of Michel Foucault, whose ekphrasis of the painting assumes that the mirror is meant to reflect what is just in front of the picture plane (Foucault 1970, pp. 3–16).

72 Bodart 2011, pp. 301–6.

73 This argumentation assumes that the event recorded by the painting is Velázquez's painting of a double portrait of the king and queen. The other possibility that seems, in the eyes of this writer, less likely is that the king and queen are simply visiting Velázquez to observe him at work in the studio. For the paradigmatic example of an interpretation of the painting that might take such an assumption as its starting point, see Brown 1978, pp. 87–110.

in *Las Meninas*.<sup>74</sup> We have already observed within *The Rokeby Venus* an identification between the represented body of the nude female figure and the painting canvas that was its material support; when comparing the use of the mirror image in *The Rokeby Venus* to that in *Las Meninas*, this identification finds a still more direct expression, whereby the body of the nude female figure and her mirror reflection correspond to the great canvas on which Velázquez depicts himself painting and the mirror image that tells us precisely what it is he paints. In both paintings, the mirror functions as a device by which to triangulate a relationship between an element within the painting's composition and another—namely, a viewer—just in front of the picture plane. The mirror within *Las Meninas* reveals the relationship between the figures of the king and queen standing just in front of it and the canvas depicted within it; the face reflected in the mirror in *The Rokeby Venus* connects the nude figure contained within the limits of the canvas to the gaze of the (presumed male) viewer otherwise nowhere visible within the painting but likewise standing just in front of it. Departing from this visual analogy, if the mirrors in each painting are correlating elements, then so too are the large canvas represented in *Las Meninas* and the body of the female nude figure in *The Rokeby Venus*. The body of this nude figure and the mirror reflection of her face thus become a visual metaphor for a painting canvas, one that is attentive to the fact of such an object's double-sidedness, and to the relationship between recto and verso. The Vaults of Titian were a site where a pictorial form became equivalent to the object on which that form was painted. In the comparison between *Las Meninas* and *The Rokeby Venus*, we see this equivalence between nude figure and “nude painting” find its most literal expression, whereby the body of the figure appears an analogue to nothing other than a canvas.

On several interpretive registers, *The Rokeby Venus* gives form to the genre of the nude as Velázquez might have observed it in the Vaults of Titian, wherein a total curatorial focus on the body of the nude female figure established an equivalence between such figures and the paintings that contained them. In *The Rokeby Venus*, Velázquez visualizes the interchangeability of the nude figure that is the subject of the painting and the painting itself by making of the body of his figure a metaphor for the canvas in two distinct but mutually reinforcing ways. The Vaults of Titian were the space from which the subject of the nude female figure was able to reemerge as a painting genre, and thus as an autonomous art form; *The Rokeby Venus*, in response, takes this art form as its subject.

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74 That paintings have a front and a back—that is, a recto and a verso—was first brought to my attention by Foucault 2009, to which the thinking that follows owes a tremendous debt.

## El Escorial

Velázquez's trip to Rome between 1647 and 1651 was extraordinarily productive, resulting in major commissions of bronze and plaster sculptures for the royal art collection and one of the painter's most beloved works, *The Rokeby Venus*. Velázquez also brought back with him a more intangible treasure: a knowledge of the recent phenomenon of the picture gallery, which fundamentally reordered the display of art collections in early modern Rome and which was already making itself felt in noble collections across Spain.<sup>1</sup> The years after Velázquez's return to Madrid saw him taking on increasingly ambitious curatorial projects at the Habsburg court, among them the redecoration of the royal monastery San Lorenzo de El Escorial, a task that would occupy him from the mid-1650s until his death. El Escorial was and remains an enormous architectural complex encompassing not only a functional monastery but also a royal palace, burial site, and library, and it is therefore among the most visually imposing sites of representation of the monarchy in early modern Spain. Antonio Palomino wrote of the many paintings that Velázquez brought to this site, some of them purchased at auction, others diplomatic gifts, and still others acquisitions that Velázquez had made while in Italy.<sup>2</sup> According to Fray Francisco de los Santos, the monastery's eventual prior and its unofficial historian, Velázquez made use of them as follows:

By order of his Majesty, may God keep him, he composed the Sacristy, the Hall of Moral Theology, the Prior's Chapel, and other Rooms with such impressive original Paintings, as we have seen and will continue seeing, some which have been here since Philip II, others which by his diligence were brought from different parts of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 The most comprehensive resource on aristocratic collections in Spain remains Burke and Cherry 1997. Indeed, the transcription of the inventory of the collection into which *The Rokeby Venus* was absorbed shortly after Velázquez's return to Spain from Rome suggests that the principles of the Roman picture gallery were at play in its display alongside a sixteenth-century Venetian painting depicting a nude female figure reclining in a landscape, insofar as this display strategy would have encouraged the kind of comparison and contrast that the Roman picture gallery was designed to generate (on this "companion" piece, see Bull and Harris 1986 and Bull and Harris 1994).
  - 2 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 343; see also Palomino 1947, p. 922; Palomino 1987, p. 166; and Palomino 2018, pp. 150–51.
  - 3 Santos 1667, fol. 81r: "De orden de su Magestad, que Dios aya, compuso la Sacristia, la Aulilla, el Capitulo del Prior, y otras Pieças de tan grãdiosas Pinturas originales, como hemos visto, y iremos viendo, vnas que se estauan aqui desde Filipo Segundo, otras que por su diligencia se truxeron de diuersas partes de Europa."

In San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Velázquez found ample testing ground for the trends in collections display unfolding across Roman picture galleries. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas has famously described the monastery at El Escorial as “the world’s first museum or picture gallery”; if this is true, what Velázquez learned about the display of art collections in Italy is in no small part what made it so.<sup>4</sup>

That San Lorenzo de El Escorial would house some part of the Habsburg art collection seems to have been intended from the start. Philip II oversaw the construction of the monastery between 1563 and 1586.<sup>5</sup> Under his direction, shipments of hundreds of paintings, prints, and other furnishings were made to the monastery as early as April 15, 1574, with the last of them dating to September 17, 1611. Over 1,300 objects were brought to the Escorial over the course of these decades by artists such as Titian, Hieronymus Bosch, Rogier van der Weyden, Sebastiano del Piombo, and Joachim Patinir. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas has even said that the furnishing of the monastery at El Escorial with works of art was integral to the great act of patronage that was the monastery’s foundation, construction, and decoration with fresco paintings.<sup>6</sup> By the time Cassiano dal Pozzo visited the court in 1626, the decoration of the monastery had remained virtually unchanged.<sup>7</sup> Dal Pozzo’s effusive account of his tour of the Escorial made between June 28 and July 1 of this year elaborates a heterogeneous mix of works of art mostly from Italy and the Netherlands crowding its cloisters, hallways, and refectories, to say nothing of the enormous basilica that was the monastery’s architectural centerpiece. He reserved his superlatives for the paintings of Titian in particular, remarking especially on the fame of such works as *Madonna and Child in an Evening Landscape* (Alte Pinakothek, 464), then on view in the sacristy, and *The Glory*, in the Hall of Moral Theology (fig. 4.1). Dal Pozzo described the figures in the former as “reputed [to be] of the best manner that Titian ever had” and the latter as “a most accomplished work.”<sup>8</sup> By the time Velázquez was

4 Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 375; Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, p. 325: “el primer museo o galería de pinturas del mundo.” Comparable statements appear in Bassegoda i Hugas 1998, p. 133; and Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, p. 140.

5 On the architectural composition of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, see Barbeito Díez 2000.

6 Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, pp. 465–72; and especially Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 17–27. An itemized inventory of objects brought to El Escorial during this period was compiled in Zarco Cuevas 1930 and Zarco Cuevas 1931, which has since been updated as Checa Cremades 2013b.

7 Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 36. Cassiano dal Pozzo’s account of this visit is published in isolation as Andrés and Harris 1972; since then, it has been republished in dal Pozzo 2004. The latest account of the paintings in the Escorial monastery dating to before Velázquez’s intervention is an anonymous inventory thought to have been taken some time between the 1640s and 1650s and published as Bouza Álvarez 2000; it largely confirms that the hang of the Escorial recorded in 1626 persisted into the following decades (Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 40).

8 On Titian’s *Madonna and Child in an Evening Landscape*, see Andrés and Harris 1972, p. 13: “reputata della miglior maniera che mai tenesse Titiano.” On Titian’s *Glory*, see Andrés and Harris 1972, p. 19: “opera complitissima.” The bibliography on the paintings collection at the Escorial is substantial, even broken down by nationality and sometimes artist. On Titian and the Venetian school in particular, see Cloulas 1980; Ruiz Gómez 1991; Suárez Quevedo 2001; and Checa Cremades 2013a, pp. 235–49.



FIGURE 4.1 Titian, *The Glory*, 1551–54, oil on canvas, 346 × 240 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000432

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

tasked with its redecoration, the monastery at El Escorial possessed the most celebrated paintings of religious subjects in the royal art collection, including works by Velázquez's long-standing exemplar.

According to Francisco Pacheco, Velázquez first visited the monastery at El Escorial in April of 1622, in advance of his appointment at the court of Philip IV.<sup>9</sup> According to Palomino, Velázquez went back to El Escorial in 1628, this time in the company of Rubens.<sup>10</sup> Rubens is widely credited with encouraging Velázquez's pursuit of a Venetian style of painting and especially his taking up of Titian as a model, although scholars differ regarding how exactly Velázquez's painting practice was changed by the senior painter's lesson.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Rubens was responsible for Velázquez's shift to the mythological subjects in the painting of which Rubens himself was an expert; his use of the loose brushwork that Rubens, too, had perfected; the pursuit of social rank exemplified by Rubens's own international diplomacy; and the application of lead white paint as a canvas primer, the best of which, Spanish treatises consistently pointed out, was to be found in Venice. These are just some of the ways that Rubens may have followed Titian's example and subsequently modeled for Velázquez what it meant to be a student of this particular master. What transpired on Velázquez's second visit to the Escorial remains a mystery, as Palomino says little more about it than that the painters delighted together in the many works of art on view by artists of renown from across Europe. Nevertheless, the hang that the two of them studied was almost certainly that recorded by Cassiano dal Pozzo, with its exemplary paintings of religious subjects by Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and other painters of their school, and we can be certain that it was to these paintings that the conversation eventually turned. Indeed, there can have been no better site for Velázquez's induction into the Venetian style of painting than the monastery at El Escorial, and no better guide than Rubens. It is little wonder that when Velázquez was given the opportunity to rehang it so many years later, he would deliberately reorient its hang around the school of painting in which by then he himself had a professional stake.

## 1 Sacristy, Ante-Sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and Chapter Room of the Prior

As with so many of the decorative projects in the Alcázar palace that were assigned to Velázquez, the redecoration of the Escorial was occasioned by the completion in the reign of Philip IV of a construction campaign begun by an ancestor. In 1617 Philip III initiated the construction of the Pantheon of the Kings at the monastery at El Escorial, intended

9 Pacheco 1649, p. 102; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 203; and Pacheco 2018, p. 34.

10 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 299 and 327; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 859 and 899–900; Palomino 1987, pp. 103 and 147; and Palomino 2018, p. 76. Francisco Pacheco confirms that Rubens and Velázquez went together to the Escorial, even claiming that they had corresponded previously, although no correspondence between them survives (Pacheco 1649, p. 100; see also Pacheco 1990, p. 202).

11 Reference to Rubens is everywhere in the literature on Velázquez; for a particularly self-conscious address to the debate regarding the role that Rubens played in Velázquez's career, see McKim-Smith 1995.

as a burial site for the Spanish royal family.<sup>12</sup> Construction was definitively completed by March 15, 1654, when the sepulchral chamber of the Pantheon was inaugurated, and the royal remains were transferred there for permanent interment on March 17.<sup>13</sup> According to the oft-repeated account of his chaplain, Julio Chifflet, Philip IV was aware that his own remains would one day lie at the Escorial as well and resolved to adorn it with the most beautiful paintings of religious subjects in his collection.<sup>14</sup> The challenge that the redecoration of the Escorial posed was to bring some sense of order to a paintings collection that not only included the many works accumulated by rulers before Philip IV but that had also been enriched in recent years by purchases that Velázquez had made in Italy, gifts from viceroys and ambassadors across the European continent, and especially the acquisitions rapaciously made at the sale of the art collection of Charles I of England. The sale began in October 1649, and shortly thereafter Alonso de Cárdenas, the Spanish ambassador in London, began corresponding with and buying on behalf of Luis Méndez de Haro y Guzmán, working as a proxy to Philip IV.<sup>15</sup> Paintings began to arrive in Madrid as early as 1651.<sup>16</sup> Among the spoils from this sale were Tintoretto's *Washing of the Feet* (fig. 4.2); Correggio's *Venus with Mercury and Cupid* ("The School of Love") (fig. 4.3), which Velázquez dismissed as a forgery, now famously; Raphael's *Holy Family, or "The Pearl"* (fig. 4.4); and Andrea del Sarto's *Virgin and Child between Saint Matthew and an Angel* (fig. 4.5).<sup>17</sup> The first records of any intervention on Velázquez's part in the movement of



FIGURE 4.2 Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto, *The Washing of the Feet*, 1548–49, oil on canvas, 210 × 533 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P002824

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

12 Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 37.

13 García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 31; Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 257; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 17.

14 Andrés 1964, p. 407.

15 On the collection of Charles I of England, including a chapter devoted to its sale, see Haskell 2013. On Luis de Haro more specifically, see Burke 2002.

16 Haskell 2013, p. 153.

17 While the purchase of all these works is mentioned in Haskell 2013, pp. 151–57, a more thorough account of the movements of each between their sale in England and their reception in Spain can be found in Brown and Elliott 2002. For Correggio's *School of Love*, see p. 236; for Tintoretto's *Washing*



FIGURE 4.3 Correggio, *Venus with Mercury and Cupid* ("The School of Love"), ca. 1525, oil on canvas, 155.6 × 91.4 cm, National Gallery, London, NG10  
IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



FIGURE 4.4 Raphael, *The Holy Family, or "The Pearl,"* ca. 1518, oil on panel, 147.4 × 116 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000301

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO



FIGURE 4.5 Andrea del Sarto, *Virgin and Child between Saint Matthew and an Angel*, 1522, oil on panel, 177 × 135 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000334

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

works of art around the Escorial date to September 21, 1654, when a small number of Flemish paintings on panel and a marble crucifix were brought from the royal treasury to the Pantheon at the artist's request.<sup>18</sup> Thus Velázquez's work in the Escorial began.<sup>19</sup>

Between the publications of Carmen García-Frías, Antonio Martínez Ripoll, Rosa Gutiérrez García, María Jesús Muñoz González, and especially Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas, Velázquez's involvement in the redecoration of the Escorial has been as comprehensively reconstructed as the known documentation seems to permit. Therefore, only a relatively bare-bones summary is needed of what was Velázquez's years-long project to reinstall the picture collection at the Escorial monastery. A group of paintings including the Tintoretto and Raphael named above were already gathered in the king's apartments at the Escorial by September 26, 1654, when Luis Méndez de Haro y Guzmán wrote to Alonso de Cárdenas to say that they had been received with much enthusiasm by both Velázquez and the king.<sup>20</sup> Installation of paintings in the sacristy and the ante-sacristy, both just off the principal lower cloister, is thought to have begun by the start of 1655 and finished by sometime around mid-1656.<sup>21</sup> At the very latest, these two spaces must have been fully redecorated by October 17 of this year, when Julio Chifflet documented the yearly visit that the king and his entourage made in these months in search of some respite from the demands of Madrid.<sup>22</sup> It is thought that by this point the Hall of Moral Theology, located one story above the ante-sacristy, had also been decorated.<sup>23</sup> The most comprehensive account of what was on view in each of these rooms survives in the *Descripción breve del Monasterio de S. Lorenzo el Real del Escorial. Vnica maravilla del myndo: Fabrica del prvdentissimo Rey Philippo Segvndo: Aora nvevamente coronada por el*

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*of the Feet*, see pp. 238–39; for Raphael's *Holy Family*, see p. 244; for Andrea del Sarto's *Virgin and Child between Saint Matthew and an Angel*, see p. 248. On the question of Velázquez's connoisseurship, including his misattribution of Correggio's *School of Love*, see especially Harris 1982b.

- 18 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 303–4, doc. 362, p. 304, doc. 363, and pp. 304–5, doc. 363a. The paintings and the marble crucifixion in these documents seem to be the works of art requested in correspondence between the king and Nicolás de Madrid, then the prior of the monastery (Andrés 1965, pp. 206–7, doc. 25). On the marble crucifixion, see Tormo y Monzó 1925; Hernández Perera 1960b; and Cruz Yábar 2019.
- 19 Carmen García-Frías suggests that Velázquez's first intervention in the decoration of the Escorial monastery dates instead to the years 1652 and 1653, when the Pantheon was in its final stages of completion (García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 31). She does this on the grounds that one of the witnesses whose testimony was included in Velázquez's application for admission to the Order of Santiago credited him with “finish[ing] and perfect[ing] the Pantheon of the Escorial” (as per García-Frías, this document appears in Cruzada Villamil 1885, p. 245: “acabó y perfeccionó el Panteón del Escorial”). However, no other scholar of this period of Velázquez's life acknowledges this start date, nor are there published primary sources dating to these years that definitively corroborate what is written in this testimony.
- 20 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 305, doc. 364.
- 21 This tentative timeline is offered in Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 266; it is repeated in Gutiérrez García 2018, p. 65.
- 22 Andrés 1964, p. 406.
- 23 This is suggested in García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 33.

*Catholico Rey Philippo Quarto el Grande con la magestosa obra de la capilla insigne del Pantheon, y traslacion à ella de los Cuerpos Reales* by Fray Francisco de los Santos (henceforth *Descripcion breve*).<sup>24</sup> Santos authored four versions of this text, the first in 1657, with subsequent editions dating to 1667, 1681, and 1698. Antonio Palomino does make mention of a “description and report”—known throughout the historiography as Velázquez’s *Memoria*—that Velázquez made to record the subjects, authors, descriptive characteristics, and locations of the paintings that he had installed in the sacristy, ante-sacristy, and other spaces by 1656. Had an entirely undisputed copy of this *Memoria* survived to the present day, it would be not only more essential as a source on Velázquez’s redecoration of the Escorial monastery than Santos’s *Descripcion breve* but also the only substantial surviving piece of writing by Velázquez on art.<sup>25</sup> The *Memoria* effectively repeats the list of paintings included in the Escorial and their locations provided by Santos’s writings, however. Therefore, for our purposes, its authorship may remain an unsolved mystery. According to Santos’s account, the ante-sacristy was decorated with nine paintings, among them paintings from the royal collections in addition to gifts from Spanish noblemen and at least one acquisition from the sale of Rubens’s art collection in 1640.<sup>26</sup> The sacristy was decorated with thirty-two paintings, which included paintings collected by Philip II and gifts from Spanish ambassadors in addition to paintings from the collection of Charles I of England.<sup>27</sup> The Hall of Moral Theology was decorated with twelve

24 Santos has a respectable bibliography in his own right. As with all topics concerning the Escorial, Bassegoda i Hugas’s contribution on the *Descripcion breve* is indispensable (Bassegoda i Hugas 2008a); however, the most thorough recent study of the *Descripcion breve* and, more specifically, of the ways its scope and contents compare across its many versions is Vega Loechas 2016.

25 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 343; “Descripcion y memoria”; see also Palomino 1947, p. 922; Palomino 1987, p. 166; and Palomino 2018, p. 151. Seemingly every scholar who has worked on this phase of the history of the display of art in the Escorial has been required to render a judgment regarding the open question that is the authenticity of Velázquez’s *Memoria*. The strongest argument against its authenticity comes from Marias 2004, and the strongest in favor comes from Bassegoda i Hugas 2008b. The person who first discovered the *Memoria* published a transcription in Castro 1871, pp. 500–520; it has since been included in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 336–44, doc. 407. Scholars have noted the similarities between Velázquez’s *Memoria* and the writings of Fray Francisco de los Santos; of note in this regard is that Velázquez was in possession of a copy of the 1657 edition of the *Descripcion breve* (Sánchez Cantón 1925, p. 402, no. 117; Ruiz Pérez 1999, pp. 156–57, cat. 54).

26 Santos 1657, fols. 41v–43r. See also Bassegoda i Hugas 1998, p. 146; García-Frías Checa 1999, pp. 32–33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, p. 474; Martínez Ripoll 2001, pp. 267–69; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 45 and especially 97–107; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, pp. 107 and esp. 120–24; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, pp. 317–19; Muñoz González 2006, pp. 399 and 402; and Gutiérrez García 2018, pp. 65–68.

27 Santos 1657, fols. 43v–51r. See also Bassegoda i Hugas 1998, p. 146; García-Frías Checa 1999, pp. 32–33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, p. 474; Martínez Ripoll 2001, pp. 267–69; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 45 and esp. 108–34; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, pp. 107 and esp. 124–30; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, pp. 312–16; Muñoz González 2006, pp. 399 and 401–2; and Gutiérrez García 2018, pp. 65–68.

paintings, most of them acquired by Philip II.<sup>28</sup> These three galleries constitute the first phase of Velázquez's work in the Escorial.<sup>29</sup>

Between the king's visit to the Escorial in 1656 and Velázquez's death in 1660, plans were made for Velázquez to redecorate to the chapter rooms of the prior and the vicar, also just off of the principal lower cloister. A note accounting for these spaces already appears in the 1657 edition of Santos's *Descripción breve*, where, after briefly listing paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, Lavinia Fontana, Hieronymus Bosch, and others, he writes the following:

The remaining paintings that are in these chapter rooms are also by great painters, as they demonstrate by their excellence; but of all of these very few will remain in these chapter rooms, because the Majesty and piety of King Philip IV, has determined that they will be decorated like the Sacristy, with other [paintings] more worthy, which are being looked for at his order.<sup>30</sup>

Santos does not specify whether the decision was made to redecorate the chapter rooms at the same time as the decision to redecorate the sacristy and ante-sacristy or only after it, but he does make clear that the work on the chapter rooms likely did not begin until

28 Santos 1657, fols. 70v–73r. See also García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, p. 474; Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 266; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 45 and esp. 135–46; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, pp. 107 and esp. 130–32; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, pp. 320–22; Muñoz González 2006, pp. 399 and 402–3; and Gutiérrez García 2018, p. 65.

29 Scholars sometimes attribute to Velázquez the redecoration of the Old Church at the far end of the chapter rooms across the cloister from the sacristy and ante-sacristy in these same years (see García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 33; Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 266; Muñoz González 2006, pp. 400 and 404–5; and Gutiérrez García 2018, p. 65). In the 1657 *Descripción breve*, Santos records thirty-two paintings in this space, some of them having been moved there from the sacristy and ante-sacristy (Santos 1657, fols. 54v–57r). Bassegoda i Hugas has argued that because some renovation work was being done in that space that was only completed by around February 25, 1661, and a definitive reinstallation of an even larger group of paintings of higher quality itself only done by around March 25, 1661, we can take this first group to be provisional, rather than necessarily representing a finished vision for the space (see Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, pp. 474–75; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 45–46; and Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, p. 312). By the time a second edition of Santos's *Descripción breve* was published in 1667, the group of paintings on view in the Old Church was comparatively unrecognizable (Santos 1667, fols. 58r–61r; see also Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 194–218). Bassegoda i Hugas does assign the sacristy of the pantheon to this phase of Velázquez's work (see Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, p. 474; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 45–47 and esp. 147–56; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, pp. 107 and esp. 132–33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; Bassegoda i Hugas 2004, pp. 322–23). However, no period sources—neither Chifflet nor Santos, nor any correspondence between friars and king—unequivocally designate this space as among those for which Velázquez was responsible.

30 Santos 1657, fol. 67r: "Los demas Quadros que ay en estos Capítulos, son tambien de Pintores grandes, como lo muestran en su valentia; mas de todos ellos quedaràn muy pocos en estos Capítulos, porque ha determinado la Magestad, y piedad del Rey Filipo Quarto, que se adornen como la Sacristia, con otros mas estimables, que se estàn buscando por su orden."

around 1657. At the very earliest, it could have begun in late 1656, as the first edition of Santos's manuscript was already ready for publication by October 15 of this year.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the precise start date, correspondence between Prior Francisco de Castillo and the king indicates September 21, 1660, as a *terminus ante quem* for the prior's chapter room.<sup>32</sup> Although this postdates Velázquez's death on August 6, 1660, by approximately six weeks, a surviving drawing sketching out a display program for this space that corresponds with what is written out in the 1667 edition of Santos's *Descripcion breve* suggests that a finished plan was in place within Velázquez's lifetime (fig. 4.6).<sup>33</sup> As described in the 1667 edition of the *Descripcion breve*, the prior's chapter room contained twenty-two paintings, many of them acquired by the same means as those in the sacristy and ante-sacristy.<sup>34</sup> All but Daniel Seghers's four flower paintings appear in the surviving installation plan, seemingly indicating that these four were not part of Velázquez's final conception for the room's design. The chapter room of the vicar, by contrast, remained unfinished by the time that Velázquez died and was likely left to court painters Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo to complete.<sup>35</sup> In the correspondence between Prior Francisco de Castillo and King Philip IV cited above, the prior remarked on the unfinished state of the chapter room of the vicar. The king's response: "For now, the decoration of the second chapter room will not be easy, as I find myself without paintings of the necessary quality."<sup>36</sup> It is thus unclear how much of the final installation can be responsibly credited to Velázquez, especially in the absence of a drawn plan comparable to that of the chapter room of the prior. While scholarly accounts of Velázquez's work in the Escorial sometimes include other spaces beyond the five cited above, these five are the only to be universally recognized as unequivocally having been

31 Gutiérrez García 2018, p. 65.

32 Andrés 1967, pp. 117–18, doc. 1.

33 This drawing was originally published in López Serrano 1944, p. 23, plate 29, no. 33. Scholars equivocate on the question of the drawing's authorship, which looks to belong jointly to Velázquez and a court architect, whether Juan Gómez de Mora (see especially *Juan Gómez de Mora* 1986, p. 362, cat. 203) or Alonso Carbonel (see Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 270). Either way, Bassegoda i Hugas sees no more likely use for such a drawing than as an installation plan, perhaps so that whoever realized the installation could do so without Velázquez needing to be physically present to oversee it (see Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 47–48, esp. n. 51).

34 Santos 1667, fols. 70v–86r. See also Bassegoda i Hugas 1998, pp. 146–47; García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, p. 475; Martínez Ripoll 2001, pp. 270–73; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 47–49 and 157–70; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, pp. 107–8 and esp. 134–37; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; Muñoz González 2006, pp. 399 and 403–4; and Gutiérrez García 2018, p. 65.

35 Santos 1667, fols. 70v–86r. See also García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 33; Bassegoda i Hugas 2000, pp. 475–76; Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 274; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 49–50 and 171–86; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, p. 108; Bassegoda i Hugas 2003, p. 36; and Muñoz González 2006, pp. 399–400 and 404.

36 Andrés 1967, p. 118, doc. 1: "El adorno del segundo capítulo no será fácil por ahora, pues me hallo sin pinturas de la calidad necesaria."

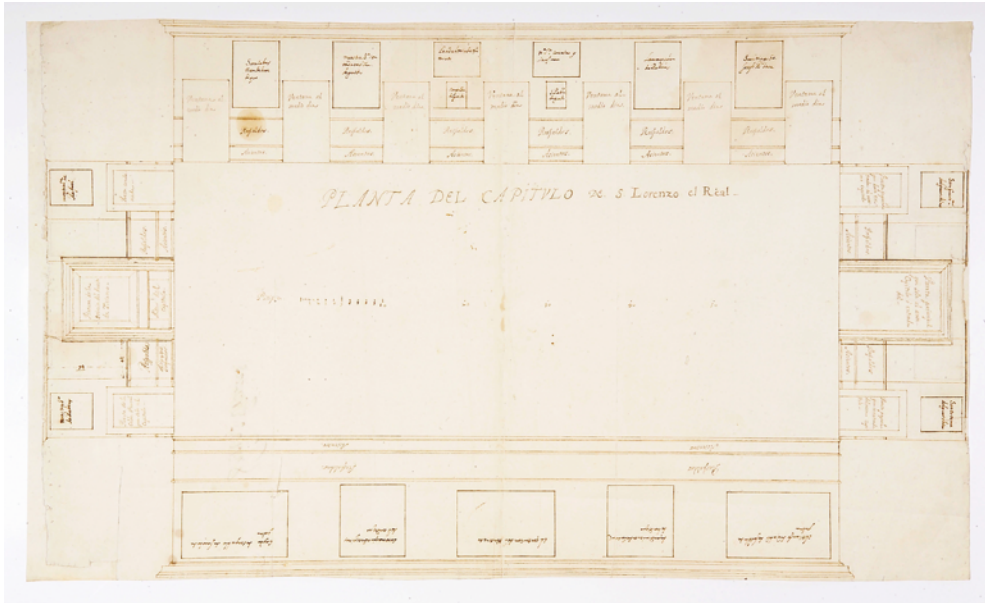


FIGURE 4.6 *Plan of the Chapter Room of the Prior, 1657–60, drawing on laid paper with brown wash, 45.5 × 75.1 cm, Real Biblioteca de Palacio, Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, IX/M/242*  
IMAGE © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

assigned to the artist by the surviving primary sources.<sup>37</sup> The last recorded intervention that Velázquez made to the Escorial dates to around July 28, 1659, when a bronze crucifixion whose commission he may have facilitated was finally imported into Spain from Italy.<sup>38</sup> It was installed over the altar of the Pantheon toward the end of 1659 or in early 1660.<sup>39</sup> As Felipe Pereda has shown, at the heart of this object was a long-standing and ongoing debate about the dynamic intertwining of aesthetic artfulness and sacred truth in the religious artwork; it thus emblemizes the intertwining of art and faith that might be thought to characterize the Escorial as a whole.<sup>40</sup>

Whether or not the sacristy, ante-sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, chapter room of the prior, and (unrealized) chapter room of the vicar were the only rooms in the Escorial

37 Martínez Ripoll ascribes to Velázquez the decoration of several other spaces, among them the chamber of reliquaries and a choir hung with liturgical vestments, among other rooms on the first and second stories off of the principal cloister (Martínez Ripoll 2001, p. 266). With the exception of the Old Church mentioned above, none is recognized by other scholars as among the spaces for which Velázquez was responsible, and Martínez Ripoll does not provide clear documentation to justify his doing so. Therefore, they will not be included in the present study.

38 *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 262, doc. 310.

39 On the sculpted crucifixions that were installed here in succession over the course of the 1650s, see García-Frías Checa 1999, p. 31; and especially Tormo y Monzó 1925 and Cruz Yábar 2019.

40 Pereda 2017, pp. 57–63; Pereda 2018, pp. 33–38.

monastery under his purview, they give a clear set of priorities at work in Velázquez's rehang of the Escorial. The paintings exhibited in these spaces are united, first and foremost, by their religious subject matter, as befitted the function and symbolic significance of the monastery. There is no question that the subjects depicted resonated with the devotional practices of the monks that inhabited the spaces that these paintings occupied. Francisco de los Santos's language furthermore gives a sense of some of the art-critical criteria by which these paintings were selected: their "harmony" (*armonía*), "grace" (*gracia*), and the "caprice" in their "invention" (*capricho en la invención*). Across all galleries, however, the hang also overwhelmingly presents as a compendium of the Venetian school of painting from the Renaissance through the seventeenth century. All four of the galleries whose design was completed within Velázquez's lifetime were hung primarily with paintings by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, the leading lights of this school during the Renaissance, alongside comparatively minor members of the Venetian school like Palma il Giovane and Luca Cambiaso.<sup>41</sup> Worth noting is that the hang was not delimited by nationality and that the criterion of style rather than artist's city of origin made space for foreign-born practitioners across the centuries. The Venetian school, as per Velázquez's program, could accommodate Flemish painters like Anthony van Dyck and especially Rubens. Velázquez's program also included a small selection of paintings by Valencian artist and star painter of Spanish Naples José de Ribera, who (although now better known for his Caravaggism) was a student of Venetian colorism, as well as a small number of paintings by the Escorial's former painter-in-residence Juan Fernández de Navarrete (better known as "El Mudo"), who not only trained in Titian's workshop but also restored many of his paintings for Philip II.<sup>42</sup> In the Escorial, the Venetian school could thus also include native Spaniards.

There are several metrics by which this hang might be evaluated. Very few, however, are to be found in Spanish sources, perhaps because Velázquez's ordering principles do not derive from Spanish models. María Jesús Muñoz González made the claim that Velázquez's knowledge of how to hang paintings was acquired in Italy; recent literature on the Italian picture gallery has made it newly possible to understand just what this means.<sup>43</sup> The first few decades of the seventeenth century saw the emergence in Rome of the picture gallery, within which paintings and other works of art, newly mobile, could be arranged and rearranged by their collector in a game of display for an educated spectator.<sup>44</sup> While in Italy pursuing paintings and sculptures for the royal collection, Velázquez also occupied himself with painting the portraits of popes and noblemen pioneering the new

41 On the relationship between Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese and the unfolding of the Venetian Renaissance, see especially Delieuvain and Habert 2009.

42 For a recent reconsideration of Ribera's "neo-Venetianism," see Dombrowski 2009. On Navarrete at El Escorial, see especially García-Frías Checa 2017.

43 Muñoz González 2006, pp. 397–98.

44 Fumaroli 1994 was the foundational essay on this topic. Since then, a comprehensive study on display in the early modern Roman picture gallery has been published as Feigenbaum 2014.

exhibition model. His portraits of Pope Innocent x (Galleria Doria Pamphilij, FC 289) and Cardinal Camillo-Astalli Pamphilij (Hispanic Society Museum & Library, A101) alone establish Velázquez's connection to a family of active art collectors with substantial palaces in which to house their collections.<sup>45</sup> The galleries in palaces such as these were the site for experimentation with new strategies for displaying paintings. According to Christina Strunck, seventeenth-century picture galleries were laboratories for unexpected juxtapositions and serendipitous connections motivated by collectors' own taste and connoisseurly discernment.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the rules governing the Escorial redecoration are given in the one treatise of the period to offer guidelines for the decoration of Italian palaces, authored not by an artist but, fittingly, by an art collector: Giulio Mancini's *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, which includes a chapter titled "Rules for buying, placing, and conserving paintings."<sup>47</sup> Although the only text of its kind, Mancini's treatise exemplifies the ways that collectors in Rome were generating new rules for the display of paintings in their picture galleries, rules that Velázquez observed and put into practice at El Escorial.

Scholars overwhelmingly agree that Velázquez's hang is a showcase of the Venetian school of painting. The numbers certainly bear this out: Of the seventy-one total paintings that Velázquez put on display in the sacristy, ante-sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and the prior's chapter room, fifty were painted in the Venetian style. Eighteen of these were by Titian, making him the indisputable star of this decorative program and the figure around which the Venetian school, as recreated in these galleries, coalesced. Veronese and Tintoretto, Titian's close contemporaries and sometimes rivals, were represented by twelve and five paintings each, with next-generation painter Palma il Giovane represented by three. Flemish adherents van Dyck and Rubens followed close behind with six and three paintings each, with Spaniards Ribera and El Mudo given two and one painting each. That Velázquez's priority was the Venetian school could not have been more obviously stated than by the sheer percentage of paintings in the Venetian style that were on view in the Escorial by the time he was done redecorating it. As for the remaining twenty-one paintings across the four spaces just mentioned, these were executed by artists from artistic centers across the Italian Peninsula: Rome, Florence, Genoa, Bologna, and Parma. Not one of these centers is represented by enough paintings to challenge the primacy of Venice within Velázquez's program for the Escorial. In fact, Mancini's treatise provides a rule by which these paintings might serve a gallery hang whose subject is the Venetian school:

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45 On these and other aristocratic collections in Rome in this period, see Cappelletti 2014.

46 Strunck 2014.

47 Mancini 1956, p. 139: "Regole per comprare, collocare e conservare le pitture." On Giulio Mancini, see especially Gage 2014b and Gage 2016.

But I would not like it if the very same school and manner were put together, as for example with sacred [paintings] all the [paintings] by Raphael and his school, like Giulio Romano, Timoteo Viti, Giovan Francesco Penni, and others already mentioned, but I would like that they alternate with other manners and schools from the same century.<sup>48</sup>

Mancini goes on to explain that this variety not only makes the paintings more delightful to look at but also permits the comparison of different painting styles. According to the organizing logic of the early modern picture gallery, the distinguishing characteristics of the Venetian school would more fully come into focus by comparison and contrast with paintings from other schools. The paintings included by artists like Raphael, Guido Reni, Annibale Carracci, and Andrea del Sarto could thus be understood as a strategic counterpoint to the paintings by Renaissance Venetian masters who overwhelmingly came to occupy these spaces, wherein the articulation of one school of painting was facilitated by contradistinction to another.

If the numbers present a clear picture of Velázquez's intentions for the rehang of the Escorial monastery, the order of the hang refines that story further. Using Francisco de los Santos's records as a starting point, Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas has worked to meticulously reconstruct the layout of paintings within the interior architecture of the sacristy, ante-sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and prior's chapter room. What results is a decorative scheme visibly ordered by the criteria that modern curators might recognize as the means by which to use gallery spaces to structure a group of paintings into a hang. These criteria include which paintings are centrally placed on walls, which above focal points like altarpieces, and which across from main doors and therefore along privileged sightlines. Again, in this regard Giulio Mancini's treatise provides a baseline with which Velázquez's choices are consistent:

And because in paintings we make note of the periods "rebirth," "good," "perfect," [and] "in decline," therefore, having assumed the sites where the particular paintings should be placed, one should hang first the oldest, observing as much as possible the suitable lighting and spaces by the sizes of the paintings.<sup>49</sup>

48 Mancini 1956, pp. 144–45: "Ma non vorrei già che fosse messa insieme la medesima scuola e maniera, come per esempio nelle cose sacre tutte le cose di Raffaello e sua scuola, come di Giulio, Timoteo, Buon Fattore et altri già detti, ma vorrei che si tramezzassero con altre maniere / e scuole del medesimo secolo."

49 Mancini 1956, p. 144: "Et perchè nelle pitture sono stati notati i secoli rinascente, buono, perfetto, declinante, pertanto, supposti i siti dove si devon collocare le pitture particolari, si dovranno collocare prima le più antiche, osservando al possibile i lumi convenienti e li spatij per le grandezze delle pitture."

Mancini here advocates a procedure for ordering a gallery hang in which paintings are seemingly prioritized by age, beginning with those that are the oldest, then proceeding chronologically toward the present. His breakdown of paintings into discrete periods suggests an awareness not only of age but of corresponding historical significance. This same prioritization of older paintings within an essentially historical narrative is observed in the order in which paintings appear in Velázquez's decorative scheme. That Titian was the progenitor of the Venetian school is made clear by the location of his paintings within the galleries, which establish him as the primary painter of Venice. Nearly every spot on a wall across from a central door or over a major focal point, such as an altarpiece, is occupied by a painting by this artist. Titian's paintings appear flanked, more often than not, with paintings by Tintoretto and Veronese, their status as second to Titian in both chronology and artistic accomplishment registered in the location of their paintings on the gallery walls in relation to his. The paintings by Ribera and El Mudo, already few in number, tend to occupy the visually weakest locations within their respective galleries: on the wall with the most prominent door, and therefore at the viewer's back upon entering the room, or across from the central altar, and therefore out of his field of vision when trained on the gallery's visual focal point.

The only exception to these rules is Raphael's *Holy Family*, the most expensive painting acquired from the collection of Charles I of England and, for Alonso de Cárdenas, his most triumphant purchase.<sup>50</sup> "The Pearl," as it came to be known, was situated across from the largest door of the sacristy and above its central altar and thus given indisputable pride of place within this gallery. The reasons behind this, however, are readily offered by Julio Chifflet: "This painting is there isolated from the rest, as the most exquisite, since it is certain that His Majesty is in the habit of calling it his favorite."<sup>51</sup> As his patron, Philip IV's personal preferences took precedence over Velázquez's curatorial imperatives. Nevertheless, the historical unfolding of the Venetian school otherwise appears precisely articulated in the paintings' relationships to one another within each gallery in the Escorial that fell under Velázquez's purview.

## 2 Velázquez's Frames

Across the ante-sacristy, sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and chapter room of the prior in the Escorial, Velázquez used many of the strategies available to modern curators in the elaboration of the Venetian school of painting as it unfolded across the European

50 Haskell 2013, pp. 146 and 154.

51 Andrés 1964, p. 408: "esta pintura está allí aislada de las demás, como la más exquisita, pues, es cierto que Su Majestad acostumbra a llamarla su favorita." An anonymous record of the paintings in the Escorial dating to 1698 describes it as "the Pearl of King Philip IV" (Andrés 1971, p. 59: "la Perla del Sr. don Felipe IV"), hence the nickname by which it is often referred in secondary literature.

continent. These included both refining a selection of a group of paintings and ordering those paintings on the gallery walls, both well studied by scholars of Velázquez and the Escorial alike. Less attention has been given, however, to Velázquez's design of a frame to adorn them. For the Octagonal Room, Velázquez had designed simple black frames like those that would appear in paintings recording Velázquez's hang for the Hall of Mirrors, to be discussed in the next chapter.<sup>52</sup> For the Escorial, Velázquez opted instead for frames gilded and richly carved. In their books on the topic, Lynn Roberts and Paul Mitchell write of the many things that a frame can do for a painting: it can protect a painting from dust and damage; it can enhance a painting's color, light, or composition; it can harmonize a painting with the interior that it occupies; or, seemingly entirely by contrast, it can isolate the painting from its decorative and architectural surroundings.<sup>53</sup> When confronted by individual frames, however, it becomes apparent that while any single frame can do any one of these things, it is unlikely to do all of them at once. The design of a frame—and especially the design of a frame as it fits a specific painting for which it is intended, or a specific site—is a statement of priorities about which of these things it will do and at the

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52 For documentation of the black frames that Velázquez used in the Octagonal Room, see Azcárate 1960b, p. 372; this document also appears cited in a longer treatment of this topic in Aterido Fernández et al. 2004, pp. 370–74. On the paintings recording Velázquez's hang for the Hall of Mirrors, see chapter 6 of this book. On Velázquez's use of black frames in the Octagonal Room and the Hall of Mirrors generally, see Aterido Fernández et al. 2004, pp. 370–73.

53 Mitchell and Roberts 1996b, p. 8. The secondary literature on frames careens between two fascinating extremes. The first of these addresses “the frame” in conceptual, sometimes even metaphorical, terms, with no existing individual frames necessarily in the mind of the author. Exemplary of this approach are texts like Schapiro 1971–73; Derrida 1979; Marin 1982; Derrida 1987; Ortega y Gasset 1990; Simmel 1994; Marin 1996; Stoichita 1997, republished as Stoichita 2015; and Crowther 2009. The second consists of studies of discreet groups of surviving frames, often rich in images, so granular in their breakdown of design styles as to take the form of connoisseurship. Examples of this kind of work include Guggenheim 1897; Brock 1902; Roche 1931; Morazzoni 1951; Bisacca et al. 1990; Pérez-Hita 2006; and Newbery 2007. Most common are general surveys and catalogues covering the whole history of frames in western Europe, century by century, such as Heydenryk 1963; Grimm 1981; Brettell and Starling 1986; Mitchell and Roberts 1996a; Mitchell and Roberts 1996b; Bailey 2002; Lodi and Montanari 2003; Karraker 2009; and Penny 2010, among others. Credit must be given to Lynn Roberts for her extraordinary dedication to the study and publicizing of the history of frames, as exemplified by her establishment and ongoing maintenance of *The Frame Blog* (<https://theframeblog.com/>), an ever-expanding repository of articles, interviews, and other resources on frames from all periods of European history, and her illuminating lecture on the topic delivered at the Museo Nacional del Prado on November 28, 2016 (Roberts 2016). Other useful general resources include the bibliographies published on the website of Paul Mitchell Ltd. (<https://www.paulmitchell.co.uk/publications/bibliography/>) and the website of the National Portrait Gallery, London (<https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/the-art-of-the-picture-frame/research-bibliography/>). By contrast, close readings of individual frames are comparatively scarce; nevertheless, there is a virtuosic interpretation of the frame on Pisanello's *Virgin and Child with Saints Anthony Abbot and George* (National Gallery, London, NG776) in Wright 2019, pp. 18–19.

expense of which others. The question becomes what functions Velázquez's frames are fulfilling and how they are fulfilling them.

Of all the paintings that Velázquez included in his decorative program for the monastery at El Escorial, only two retain his frame: Titian's *Christ on the Cross* (fig. 4.7) and Tintoretto's *Penitent Magdalene* (fig. 4.8).<sup>54</sup> Although the painting has since been rehoused, one photograph survives of Rubens's *Holy Family with Saint Anne* with Velázquez's original frame (MNP, P001639).<sup>55</sup> In addition, two mirrors from the sacristy survive with frames of related design (fig. 4.9).<sup>56</sup> Julio Chifflet already makes mention of the frames that Velázquez had designed for the sacristy and ante-sacristy in his record of the king's visit to the Escorial in October 1656:

Diego Velázquez, painter and valet of His Majesty, has been occupied [for] several months with arranging everything and has arranged to carve gilded frames for the paintings.<sup>57</sup>

These frames did not escape the attention of Francisco de los Santos, who, while not much more descriptive than Chifflet, is certainly more effusive. As he wrote in the 1657 edition of the *Descripcion breve*, addressing the sacristy:

These [paintings] and the rest mentioned, beyond the grandeur of their quality, have frames of gilded carving, uniform in their luster and delicacy, which the Mirrors with the same adornment imitate, giving this room beauty and majesty, and everywhere drawing the eye and [commanding] respect, demonstrating [themselves] in their royalty and bearing to be jewels of [one of the] marvel[s of the world] and the tokens of the superior taste and devotion of its patron and owner, who never ceases to show it, [being] so great a monarch as [he is].<sup>58</sup>

By the time Santos published the 1667 edition of the *Descripcion breve*, similar improvements had been made to the paintings in the chapter rooms of the prior and the vicar:

54 Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 372; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, p. 138. For the catalogue entry to Tintoretto's *Penitent Magdalene*, see Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 131; for Titian's *Christ on the Cross*, see Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, p. 132.

55 This photograph has been published in Cruz Yábar 2019, p. 953, fig. 2.

56 Bassegoda i Hugas 2002a, pp. 113 and 372; Bassegoda i Hugas 2002b, p. 138.

57 Andrés 1964, p. 409: "Diego de Velázquez, pintor y ayuda de cámara de Su Majestad, ha estado varios meses ocupado en disponerlo todo y ha dispuesto labrar marcos dorados para los cuadros." Part of Chifflet's account, including this mention of Velázquez's frames, has been included in the *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, p. 329, doc. 394.

58 Santos 1657, fol. 47v: "Estos, y todos los demas referidos, despues de la grandeza de su valentia, están con Marcos de Talla dorados, vniformes en el lustre, y primor, à quien imitan los Espejos con el mismo adorno, dando à esta Pieça hermosura, y Magestad, y por todas partes lleuandose los ojos, y el respecto, mostrando en su realeza, y porte, ser alhajas de vna Marauilla, y prendas del superior gusto, y deuocion de su Patron, y Dueño, que nunca cessa de ilustrarla, como tan gran Monarca."

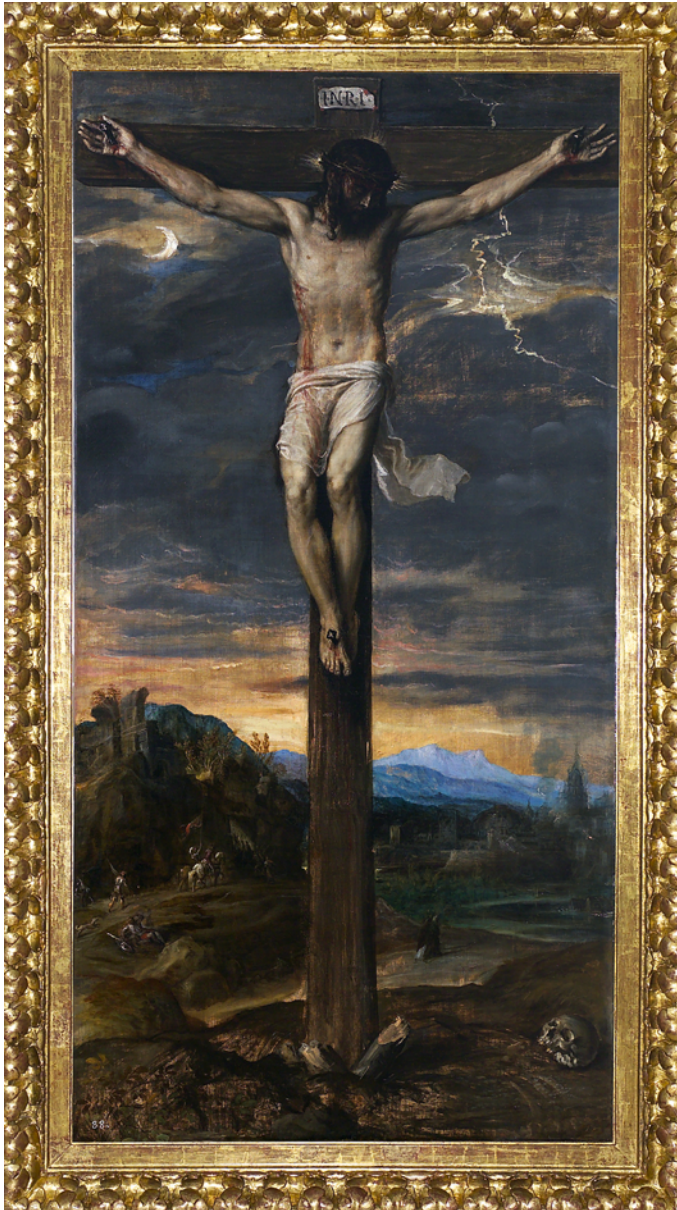


FIGURE 4.7  
 Titian, *Christ on the Cross*  
 (framed), ca. 1555, oil on  
 canvas, 208 × 103 cm, Real  
 Monasterio de San Lorenzo  
 de El Escorial, Patrimonio  
 Nacional, Madrid, 10014803  
 IMAGE © PATRIMONIO  
 NACIONAL

Universally, they have frames of gilded carving, wide, proportionate, and with very well-shaped moldings, with which in any case they make for a majestic decoration for these rooms.<sup>59</sup>

59 Santos 1667, fol. 83v: “Vniuersalmente están con Marcos dorados de talla, anchos, con proporcion, y con molduras de muy buena forma, cõ que de todas maneras hazen magestuoso adorno a estas pieças.”



FIGURE 4.8 Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene* (framed), ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558  
IMAGE © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL



FIGURE 4.9 *Mirror, 1656–60, carved and gilded wood, 139 × 122 × 19 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014796*

IMAGE © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

Taken all together, this documentation suggests that Velázquez produced a universal frame design specifically for the paintings in the spaces of San Lorenzo de El Escorial under his purview, and that they were carved, gilded, and suitably beautiful.<sup>60</sup> Although executed several decades later, Claudio Coello's *King Charles II of Spain Adoring the Host* (Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial), which depicts the sacristy at El Escorial with six of these frames visible in the background, offers a glimpse of the dazzling impression they must have made.<sup>61</sup>

The surviving documentation surrounding the frames that Velázquez made for the paintings exhibited in the Escorial monastery tells us virtually nothing about the reasoning behind his design, nor about why and how it distinguishes itself from others from the history of frames in Europe. But then again, primary sources on frames generally do very little to explain why frame designs differ so dramatically across historical periods. The inventories that were made of the Habsburg paintings' collection—which, while not especially verbose on any single work, at least make it possible in many cases to identify which paintings were in the Habsburg art collection and where they were kept at any point in time—offer only cursory descriptors of the frames in which they were kept. In the inventories made in 1636, 1666, and 1686, paintings are usually listed as either “con su marco negro” (with its black frame), “con su marco dorado” (with its gilded frame), or “con su marco negro y dorado” (with its gilded and black frame).<sup>62</sup> Qualifying details—such as that a black frame was made out of ebony, that a gilded frame was smooth rather than elaborately carved, or that a gilded and black frame was black with a gilded profile—appear exceedingly rarely. At least one inventory of frames that were removed from their paintings survives in the archives of the royal palace in Madrid. Even here, frames are classified according to only three categories: “Black, Gilded, and in poor

60 Cruz Yábar claims that Velázquez put smooth frames on the paintings in the ante-sacristy; he cites no primary source that can support this (Cruz Yábar 2019, p. 952). Among the first visitors to the monastery at El Escorial after Velázquez's redecoration were Francisco Bertaut, who saw the monastery while in the diplomatic entourage of the Maréchal de Gramont in 1659, on the occasion of the negotiation of the Peace of the Pyrenees, and Antonio de Brunel, who went to El Escorial in 1665 while accompanying the children of Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck, first governor of Suriname, on a grand tour of Europe. While both are appropriately appreciative of the paintings on display there, neither makes any mention of their frames (Bertaut 1959, pp. 617–21; and Brunel 1959, pp. 435–37, respectively). Cosimo de' Medici visited the monastery in 1668; while surviving versions of his diaries from this trip list painting upon painting by Titian, Raphael, and other artists, he, too, makes no mention of their frames (Mariutti de Sánchez Rivero and Sánchez Rivero 1933, pp. 127–32).

61 The most complete accounts of this work remain Sullivan 1985 and García Cueto 2016, pp. 195–214. The paintings that can be readily identified in this work are Tintoretto's *Washing of the Feet*, visible at far left, and Titian's *Virgin and Child between Saints Anthony of Padua and Roch* (MNP, P000288) and van Dyck's *Christ and the Adulteress* (Hospital de la Venerable Orden Tercera, Madrid) on the wall at the back of the composition. As per Velázquez's installation for this space, three vertical-format paintings appear in between them, presumably Titian's *Madonna and Child in an Evening Landscape* (Alte Pinakothek, no. 464), Giulio Romano's *Visitation* (MNP, P000300), and Titian's *Agony in the Garden* (MNP, P000436).

62 See Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007 and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015.

condition.”<sup>63</sup> Frames are seemingly as nondescript—if not entirely invisible—in treatises as they are in archival records. Francisco Pacheco does not include even a mention of them in *Arte de la Pintura*, and neither does Vicente Carducho nor Jusepe Martínez in their own treatises. Antonio Palomino’s *Museo pictórico y escala óptica* offers no extended treatment of the topic, instead limiting his address to an entry in the glossary of terms at the end of the first volume:

Frame [*marco*], singular, masculine. The Molding, or Adornment that encircles, or adorns a Painting; which tends to be smooth, or carved; gilded, or black. Lat. *Ornamentum, Circumscriptio picturae*.<sup>64</sup>

Palomino’s definition confirms what can largely be observed in the inventories already cited above: it does not offer any clues as to what might be indicated in the choice between geometric or floral motifs, for example, or allover or partial gilding. It does not explain why black frames with carved and gilded leaves at the corners and at the centers of each side are thought to have predominated in Spain in this period, and why Velázquez chose something else entirely.<sup>65</sup>

Seventeenth-century sources from across the European continent are similarly vague as to why a frame might be designed one way as opposed to another, even as artists increasingly took an interest in them. Velázquez’s French counterpart, Nicolas Poussin, openly expressed his opinions regarding how his paintings should be framed in his personal correspondence with patron Paul Fréart de Chantelou.<sup>66</sup> In a 1639 letter concerning his forthcoming canvas *Manna* (Musée du Louvre, INV 7275), Poussin writes that “[the painting] needs [the frame] so that while judging them in all their parts the rays of the eye may be retained and not scattered outside [it] upon receiving the bits of other neighboring objects that coming pell-mell, cause confusion with the things painted.”<sup>67</sup> He goes on to suggest for the work a simple frame in matte gold, arguing that such a frame would be harmonious with the painting’s colors without clashing with them.

63 AGP, Administración General, Inventarios, Leg. 768, exp. 12, fol. 1: “Negros, Dorados, y maltratados.”

64 Palomino 1715, unpaginated: “Marco, s, m. La Moldura, ò Guarnicion que circunda, ò guarneze vna Pintura; el qual suele ser liso, ò tallado; dorado, ò negro. Lat. *Ornamentum; Circumscriptio Picturae*.”

65 Horacio Pérez-Hita characterizes black frames with carved and gilded foliate motifs at the centers and corners as “a genuinely Spanish contribution to the history of this art, as it was in Spain that they were carried to their ultimate formal consequence” (Pérez-Hita 2006, p. 122). On Spanish frames, see also Timón Tiemblo 1998; Timón Tiemblo 2002; Timón Tiemblo 2010a; and Timón Tiemblo 2010b.

66 Poussin’s personal correspondence appears to have been first published as Poussin 1824. Omissions of certain letters and discrepancies between the transcriptions published in this book and those more generally accepted in the secondary literature have led this author instead to rely on the transcriptions published in Poussin 1911 and again as Poussin 1968.

67 Poussin 1911, pp. 20–21; Poussin 1968, p. 20: “il en a besoin, affin que en le considérans en toute ses parties les rayons de l’oeil soient retenus et non point espars au dehors en recepuant les espèses des autres obiects voisins qui venant pesle-mesle, avec les choses dépeintes confondent le jour.” For two especially provocative readings of this letter, see Lebensztejn 1988 and Marin 1999, pp. 5–28.

According to his patron, “simple” frames, “without burnished gold,” were the painter’s preference, and frames fitting this description appear in Poussin’s celebrated *Self-Portrait* (Musée du Louvre, INV 7302), made for Fréart de Chantelou in 1650.<sup>68</sup> Poussin’s correspondence offers rare insight into the viewpoint of a painter on the question of framing, a painter whose compositions were carefully ordered within the limits of the canvas and who clearly viewed the frame as an instrument of this order. Aspects of his thinking—that frames exist to distinguish the work of art from its surroundings, that they should harmonize with rather than overwhelm the painting that they adorn—are now standard in the literature on frames.<sup>69</sup> In Poussin’s France, however, this was not necessarily yet the case. Court historian André Félibien’s *Des Principes de l’architecture, de la sculpture, de la peinture, et des autres arts qui en dependent, avec vn dictionnaire des Termes propres à chacun de ces Arts*, published in Paris in 1676, offers little more than this definition of the frame:

Frame [*quadre*]. We call thus all the square borders [*bordures*] that enclose some work whether of sculpture or of painting, or other things, of whatever materials they may be ... In addition to frames serving as an ornament to paintings, they help still further to make them look to best advantage.<sup>70</sup>

The dictionary of the French language published by the French Academy, the first edition of which dates to 1694, is even more to the point: “Frame [*bordure*], s. f. That which borders something, & serves as its ornament.”<sup>71</sup> As with Spanish sources, French texts thus say little more about frames than that they exist to beautify their paintings. Ultimately, even Poussin’s letters—for whatever they reveal about his thoughts regarding, for example, whether a gilded frame should be matte or burnished—seem superficially to have a similar assumption at heart.

Seventeenth-century Italy saw the proliferation of new frame designs, including those by artists, with equally little textual justification for any one of them. Salvator Rosa, to whom Bernardo de Dominici eventually credited the design of the “Salvator Rosa” frame, is recorded by Filippo Baldinucci as having stated simply “that the frame

68 Poussin 1911, p. 21, n. 2; Poussin 1968, p. 21, n. 2: “bien simples”; “sans or bruni.” Marin addresses the 1650 *Self-Portrait* in Marin 1999, pp. 183–208. Otherwise, within the enormous literature on Poussin and this painting, Cropper and Dempsey 1996, pp. 177–215, remains standout.

69 That these are the insights of Poussin’s letter is suggested in Lebensztejn 1988, pp. 37–38.

70 Félibien 1676, p. 712: “Quadre. On appelle ainsi toutes les bordures quarrées qui enferment quelque ouvrage soit de sculpture soit de peinture, ou autres choses, de quelques matieres qu’ils puissent estre. ... Outre que les Quadres servent d’ornement aux tableaux; ils contribuent encore à les faire paroistre davantage.” It is worth noting that Félibien includes an entry for “Bordure, ou Corniche d’un tableau” (Frame [*bordure*], or frame [*corniche*] of a painting), which offers no standalone definition but rather simply guides the reader to the entry cited above (Félibien 1676, p. 498).

71 *Dictionnaire de l’Académie françoise* 1694, p. 113: “Bordure, s. f. Ce qui borde quelque chose, & luy sert d’ornement.”

[*l'adornamento*] was a great pimp for paintings.<sup>72</sup> In a letter written to his friend Giovan Battista Ricciardi in 1651, Rosa reports having sent some paintings to one of his patrons “accompanied by gilded frames [*cornici*] and varnish, both things necessary in order to make [the paintings] more distinguished.”<sup>73</sup> In his biography of Carlo Maratta, painter and art theorist Giovanni Pietro Bellori mentions the frames that Maratta had designed, “new models of black frames in pearwood, which imitate ebony, with exquisite gilded carving set against a fine dark background, and which today are in use everywhere, lending much grace to painting.”<sup>74</sup> In both cases, the frame functions simply to make its painting more beautiful. Contemporaneous written theory on the frame appears limited to Mancini’s *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, in which the art collector shares his opinions regarding how paintings should and should not be framed:

As for frames [*cornice*], there is no doubt that they are suitable, first as a defense to paintings against external hazards, then because they give majesty to paintings, which they cause to be seen as though through a window, or we might say through a horizon thus circumscribed, and they render them ornamented with a certain majesty. I do not like, however, the use of a new kind that makes it so that the frames are so far behind the painting that they almost hold it out and exposed to injury because, beyond not giving them said majesty, it adds damage and, furthermore, that the frame is not seen, such that money is spent to put it in the dark and the painting in danger.

And the ornament, whether it is to be gilded or not gilded, I would think that in [the case of] some small things, [that are] brightly colored and that do not have too much relief, as in the style of Baroccio, [frames] in black would be much better than gilded [ones], because thus they would not dazzle the eye and [act as] an impediment to looking at the painting. But when the painting is old, as those from the centur[ies] of rebirth, the good, and even the perfect, because with time the vigor of color is extinguished, so I would think that it would be better to gild them. As for the manner of coloring of Caravaggio, which touches so much on black, it is much better to gild them. But in small paintings, as with miniatures or others by good masters, and those which are given to princes, then frames are commonly made from ebony, accompanied by joins of silver rosettes and leaves made with filaments

72 See de Dominicis 1742, p. 256; Baldinucci 1830, p. 123: “che l’adornamento era alle pitture un gran ruffiano.” On the “Salvator Rosa” frame style, see Mitchell and Roberts 1996a, pp. 261–91; Karraker 2009, p. 71; and especially Amendola 2010, Amendola 2012, and Amendola 2014.

73 Rosa 2003, p. 92, doc. 86: “con l’accompagnamento delle cornici indorate e della vernice, tutte due cose necessarie per renderle più riguardevoli.”

74 Bellori 2005, p. 414. On the “Carlo Maratta” frame style, see Mitchell and Roberts 1996a, pp. 261–91; Karraker 2009, pp. 27–28; Amendola 2012; and Amendola 2014.

of silver and of gold, depending on what is available, but these are made mostly by the High Pope to give to emperors, kings, and great princes.<sup>75</sup>

There is some richness here, as in Mancini's reference to a window, which recalls the art theory of Leon Battista Alberti, or in his observation that paintings age. Nevertheless, his first paragraph is a statement of the purposes of frames that is hardly specific to any single design, these purposes consisting of protecting paintings from dust and other sources of harm while conferring to the paintings a degree of beauty and dignity. The second paragraph is an expansion of the kind of advice given by Poussin, the question of which frames should adorn which paintings resolved largely by the paintings' size, palette, and composition. Underpinning the whole, again, is the idea that frames serve as an adornment to paintings, and the question of which frame is best suited to which painting a function of this idea.

All this is to say that if the specificities of frame designs changed dramatically over the course of the centuries across Europe, these changes cannot be accounted for by what treatises have to say about frames, which in total is very little. Even a cursory glance at the gamut of frame designs across time reveals that frames and their history are richer and more variegated than any description offered in corresponding texts. More importantly, they cannot be pinned to shifting perceptions in the basic function of frames, which remained virtually unchanged from the Renaissance forward. And yet, tracking broadly across history—as one must, with frames—reveals noticeable patterns.

As early as the mid-fifteenth century, Renaissance Tuscany saw the rise of tabernacle frames composed of pediments, columns, volutes, cornices, and other elements observable from contemporaneous innovations in architecture.<sup>76</sup> These are the elements out

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75 Mancini 1956, pp. 145–46: “Quanto alle cornici non è da dubitare che convengono, prima per essere una difesa alle pitture dai nocimenti esterni, doppo perchè danno maestà alle pitture, che le fanno vedere quasi per una fenestra, o vogliam dire per un orizzonte così fattamente circoscritto, e le rendono con una certa maestà ornate. Non mi piace però l'uso d'alcuno introdotto che fanno in tal modo le cornici che sono più in dentro della pittura talmente che quasi la tenghino in fuori et esposta all'ingiurie perchè, oltre che non gli dà quella maestà detta, s'aggiunge l'ingiuria e, quel che è più, il non esser vista la cornice, talchè si fa la spesa per metterla all'oscuro e metter in pericolo la pittura. // E l'ornamento, se deve esser dorato o non dorato, crederei che in alcune cose piccole, di color molto vivace et che non han troppo rilievo, come è la maniera del Baroccio, fossero molto meglio di color nero che dorate, perchè in questo modo non farebbe abbagliar la vista et impedimento nel guardar la pittura. Ma quando la pittura fusse antica, come quelle del secol rinascente e del buono et anco del perfetto, perchè con il tempo già s'è spento il vigor del colore, allhora crederei che fusse meglio il dorarle. Come ancora in questo modo di colorir del Caravaggio che toccano assai di negro, è molto meglio dorarle. Ma nelle pitture piccole, come le miniature o altro di buon maestro, e che si donano a' precipi, allhora communimente le cornici si fanno d'ebano, accompagnato con commettiture di rosette d'argento e fogliami riportati a filetti d'argento e d'oro con metterci appresso, secondo che vien a proposito, ma queste si fanno fare il più dal Sommo Pontefice per donare ad imperatori, re et precipi grandi.”

76 On Italian tabernacle frames, see Mitchell and Roberts 1996b, pp. 19–20; and especially Allen and Powell 2010, pp. 32–120.

of which Renaissance thinkers like Leon Battista Alberti advocated that frames be made, and he writes in his treatise *De pictura* the following:

I will certainly not condemn all the other ornaments of artisans, as [are], of course, the [framing] sculpted columns around [the painting], the bases, and the pediments that one adds to a painting, also if they will be in silver and in solid gold or in a very pure gold completely. A perfect and finished *historia*, in fact, is very worthy also of the ornament of gems.<sup>77</sup>

This is the same text in which Alberti formulates his now famous theory of painting—referring not to the frame but to painting itself—as a window: “First I trace as large a quadrangle as I wish, with right angles, on the surface to be painted; in this place, it [the rectangular quadrangle] certainly functions for me as an open window through which the *historia* is observed.”<sup>78</sup> Alberti goes on to advocate for a new compositional system by which to order a painting so as to create the convincing representation of three-dimensional space: one-point perspective.<sup>79</sup> Pictorial compositions so structured—often with geometric pavements, archways, and loggia to demarcate the orthogonal lines giving them shape—would have been complemented by the architectural elements out of which the frame for such a painting was also composed. This is the same system by which, as Marvin Trachtenberg has demonstrated, the urban space of Florence was redesigned, such that one could look out a Renaissance Florentine window and come to see a scene that increasingly looked like a Renaissance Florentine painting.<sup>80</sup> The ground floors of several prominent Renaissance Florentine palazzi dating to the mid- to late fifteenth century—including the Palazzo Pitti and Palazzo Medici—sport windows made up, like Tuscan picture frames, of pediments, columns, and cornices. Whether or not architects, the craftsmen responsible for Tuscan frame design, or thinkers like Alberti were directly in conversation with one another, their theories and practices express a sympathy in Renaissance Tuscany around the concept of painting as a window, with frames designed to match.

Period examples bear this sympathy out: Sandro Botticelli’s *Annunciation* is one Renaissance Florentine painting that still retains its original frame, thus making it possible to consider how the design of its frame complements the principles of painting expressed by this work (fig. 4.10).<sup>81</sup> The painting depicts precisely the kind of *istoria* that Alberti claimed to be the noblest subject for and purpose of painting: a biblical story consisting of large-scale figures acting out a narrative, in this case the annunciation to

77 Alberti 2011, p. 73.

78 Alberti 2011, p. 39.

79 On perspective, see Panofsky 1991 and Damisch 1994, among others.

80 On the design of the Florentine urban landscape according to one-point perspective, see Trachtenberg 1997.

81 On the frame on this painting, see Roberts 2016, 00:22:30–00:24:18.



FIGURE 4.10 Sandro Botticelli, *Annunciation* (framed), 1489–90, tempera on wood, 150 × 156 cm, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, no. 1608

IMAGE © GABINETTO FOTOGRAFICO DELLE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI

the Virgin of the incarnation of Christ by the angel Gabriel. They do this in a rigorously shaped architectural setting delimited by orthogonal lines that meet at a single point in the horizon. The figures appear parallel to the picture plane, as do these lines, visibly worked into the composition of the painting as tiles on the floor. The careful geometric shaping of this space is reinforced by the walls and doorways depicted, framing devices that echo the gesture of sketching out a window, which Alberti considers the first step in making a painting. The frame, composed entirely out of architectural elements like pilasters, cornices, and columnar capitals, repeats these framing devices, coinciding with the orthogonal lines at the lower right- and left-hand corners of the composition. The

moldings of the lectern behind which the Virgin moves and running around the room reappear in detailing all over the frame, thus reinforcing the sense that the frame is an architectural opening through which to view the scene unfolding. In their allusion to the Annunciation, the inscriptions at the bottom edge of the frame further reinforce the painting's purpose in the depiction of an *istoria*, as does the detail of Christ's resurrection from his tomb, the end of the story of which the Annunciation was the beginning. Together, painting and frame complement one another in their use of architectural elements to frame the telling of an *istoria*, supporting the conception of painting as a window broadly underpinning the art theory and architectural practices that so characterized the Florentine Renaissance.

Sympathies elsewhere in time and place could look very different. Eighteenth-century France saw the advent of the Louis xv frame style, characterized by arabesques, shell-like cartouches, and swirling floral and foliate motifs.<sup>82</sup> Decorative ornamentation of this sort derived from the moldings that increasingly came to adorn eighteenth-century French interiors.<sup>83</sup> The French Rococo interior was characterized by complete sets of furnishings staged within *boiserie* framing devices and by these means designed to produce a certain kind of bourgeois subject, a consumer of goods that both evinced erudition, wealth, and gentility and created the site for the performance of erudite, wealthy, and gentle subjectivity.<sup>84</sup> Out of the same impulse emerged portraits of individual sitters that likewise produced them as such a subject, portraits that were themselves yet another good to be consumed by this type of subject. The frame designs of this period coincided with what Noémie Étienne has demonstrated was a lively debate in eighteenth-century France surrounding the standing of painting within this kind of interior and specifically surrounding the question of whether painting could be counted as a piece of furniture.<sup>85</sup> In his widely reprinted *Reflexions critiques sur la poesie et sur la peinture*, the abbot, historian, and diplomat Jean-Baptiste Dubos in 1719 unfavorably compared contemporary attitudes toward painting to those of the ancients, saying that “ultimately, the works of great Masters were not considered, in the time of which I speak, as ordinary furnishings destined to beautify

82 On French Rococo frames, see Mitchell and Roberts 1996a, pp. 200–260; Mitchell and Roberts 1996b, pp. 41–43; and especially Pons 1987.

83 Penny 2010, p. 23.

84 So characterized in Scott 2005, my reading of which was graciously suggested and guided by Anne Higonnet, who brilliantly expanded upon everything that it had to say in a personal communication, August 22, 2020.

85 Étienne 2017, pp. 128–29. As Étienne tells it, the view that painting was a simple furnishing lost out to the competing notion that painting should serve as the agent of politics around the time of the French Revolution. Correspondingly, the design of French frames changed to reflect this change in station: The decorative motifs on the frame of Jacques-Louis David's *Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 87.PA.27) includes bay leaf garlands like that which Napoleon wore during his coronation (on this frame, see Roberts 2016, 01:10:57–01:14:43). These motifs reinforce the painting's politico-moral charge, with its veiled message as an allegory of Napoleon in exile and the debt owed him by France.

the apartments of individuals.”<sup>86</sup> Writers in Denis Diderot’s *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres*, completed in 1765, devoted entire pages to painting, restating within a comprehensive history of the art form that there was once a time when painting did not exist to furnish private homes.<sup>87</sup> For his part, Benedictine monk and student of history, mythology, and the alchemical sciences Antoine-Joseph Pernety likewise felt compelled to write in his own *Dictionnaire portatif de peinture, sculpture et gravure; avec un Traité pratique des différentes manières de peindre, dont la théorie est développée dans les articles qui en sont susceptibles*, published in Paris in 1757, that “the painting is not only an agreeable furnishing, it is useful, it is instructive.”<sup>88</sup> Eighteenth-century French frames, designed within the context of the French Rococo interior, thus expressed the broader—if contested—view in the period that painting was itself a kind of furnishing.

As in Renaissance Tuscany, paintings from this period that retain their original frames bear this out: Maurice-Quentin de La Tour’s *Portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux* is unlike many other pastels of its type in that it still bears its original frame (fig. 4.11).<sup>89</sup> The painting is a portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux, the son of a wealthy financier and thus a member of the bourgeois class, seated in the kind of Rococo interior befitting a person of this socio-economic standing. The scene includes no narrative other than de Rieux’s self-presentation through his engagement with the objects that surround him: the large book whose pages he confidently turns while seated at a desk equipped with books, papers, quill and inkstand, and a globe. He appears already framed to a degree by the large armchair on which he sits, as well as the screen behind him, which repeats the patterns of the carpet beneath him and the shapes of the back of the armchair peeking out from behind his shoulders. All the consumer objects within this space signal both the refined taste required to select them and the financial capital required to purchase them, as does the frame, also visibly sophisticated, visibly expensive. With its sinuous forms and *rocaille* details, the frame repeats the ornamentation of the furniture depicted within the composition, including the screen and armchair, as well as the clock in the upper left-hand corner of the image, itself little more than a set of Rococo shapes with a watch face at center, and the *boiseries* just beneath it. Like the frame, the office depicted here exists to structure the space for de Rieux’s self-fashioning, seemingly only emphasized by the triumphant trophy element at the top of the frame’s design. The frame thus complements both the portrait and the Rococo interior depicted within the portrait in their production of its sitter as a bourgeois consumer, evoking the conception of painting in this period as one of any number of furnishings that could shape eighteenth-century French subjectivity.

86 Dubos 1719, p. 131: “Enfin, les ouvrages des grands Maîtres n’étoient point regardés, dans les temps dont je parle, comme des meubles ordinaires destinés pour embelir les appartemens d’un particulier.”

87 For the entry on painting (with various subsections devoted to Greek painting, modern painting, and so on), see Diderot 1751–65, pp. 267–80.

88 Pernety 1757, p. xxj: “Le tableau n’est donc pas seulement un meuble agréable, il est utile, il est instructif.”

89 On the frame on this painting, see Jeffares 2018.



FIGURE 4.11 Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux* (framed), 1739–41, pastel and gouache on blue paper, mounted on canvas, 200.7 × 149.9 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, 94.PC.39

IMAGE © THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

In the case of Botticelli's *Annunciation* and of de la Tour's *Portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux*, the frames on each work to evoke the two entirely different conceptions of painting belonging to each period: the window of Renaissance Tuscany and the furnishing of Rococo France, respectively. This is not to say that frames in Renaissance Italy were never designed to look like furniture, which we know that they were, nor that eighteenth-century France had wholly abandoned the notion that painting could function as a window, which we know that it did not.<sup>90</sup> It is simply to observe that the broader trends in frame design that emerge and predominate in any given historical time and place do not do so by chance, and that they in fact seem to speak to the most fundamental assumptions of that age about the status not of the frame but of painting itself.

If seventeenth-century southern Europe can be said to have produced a frame, it was indisputably what is sometimes called the "gallery frame." This originated in Italy, perhaps more specifically in Rome, a city so essential to Velázquez's formation (and, for that matter, to the formation of Nicolas Poussin, Salvator Rosa, and Carlo Maratta, cited above). The first few decades of the seventeenth century saw the rise in Rome of the picture gallery, a designated space within the palace of a wealthy and erudite amateur for the display of art and the performance of its appreciation in the company of colleagues and friends.<sup>91</sup> This in turn prompted the rise of a new kind of painting, the "gallery picture," and, correspondingly, the gallery frame. Among the gallery picture's defining characteristics was its site-non-specificity, a trait that frame designs from this period often foregrounded. Gallery pictures were *pittura amovibili*: of a limited size and easily movable, whether from one wall space to another or from collection to collection.<sup>92</sup> Essential to the gallery picture was thus its "aesthetic autonomy as a self-sufficient whole," in the phrasing of Michael Fried, an autonomy predicated on its "severing from its surroundings."<sup>93</sup> Gallery frames like those designed by Rosa and Maratta were made to be consistent not with the contents of the individual paintings that any one of them adorned, nor the furnishings with which they were in company, nor the architectural elements that could be observed in the buildings that housed them. Rather, they were made to be consistent with each other. As scholars often point out, this imposed a uniformity on the works that privileged the expression of their collector's ownership over them over other, potentially competing

90 For some examples of decorative techniques that were used both in the designs of Italian Renaissance frames and in those of contemporaneous furnishings (e.g., *cassone*), see Mitchell and Roberts 1996a, pp. 28–31 and 41–45; for one especially unexpected approach to the question of painting-as-window in eighteenth-century France, see Étienne 2017, pp. 95–106.

91 On the picture gallery in particular, see especially Fumaroli 1994. For a more comprehensive approach to the display of art in Roman palaces, see Feigenbaum 2014, the introduction to an entire volume of useful essays on this topic.

92 Gage 2014b, pp. 204–5.

93 Fried 2011, p. 107. On the issue of the severing of the gallery picture from its surroundings as a leitmotif in the work of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, whose oeuvre Fried interprets as a function of the gallery picture and around whose figure he first explores what he will come to call a "Caravaggisti pictorial poetics," see Fried 2010.

qualities.<sup>94</sup> It also, however, made of the gallery frame an agent of the autonomy that was among the gallery picture's defining characteristics. The gallery picture may have occasioned the development of the gallery frame, but the gallery frame was also among the gallery picture's mechanisms, the smooth and unbroken line of its design demarcating a clear border between the painting and the wall on which it hung.

In his elaboration of the gallery picture, Michael Fried uses the work of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio as an interpretive lens through which to explore this essential autonomy, understanding Caravaggio's oeuvre as among the first to engage the gallery picture as its artistic paradigm.<sup>95</sup> Fried observes the severing of the gallery picture from its surroundings effectively illustrated in Caravaggio's paintings of biblical and mythological stories of beheading, and none more so than his paintings of Judith and Holofernes, which depict the act itself (fig. 4.12).<sup>96</sup> Working within this analogy, it is Judith's weapon in particular that accomplishes within the story of the painting precisely what the gallery frame was designed to do outside it: deliver the severing blow. In Caravaggio's depiction, Judith wields a curved blade, likely the Assyrian scimitar cited in biblical sources for the story. In later versions by other Roman artists, the weapon more closely resembles early modern Italian short swords and long swords. In both cases, the rhythms of alternating sharp ridges and smooth planes of these weapons recall the design of the standard *Salvator Rosa* frame, which both functions to cut the picture from its surroundings and, in its blade-like design, dramatizes the cut. It is often repeated that frames exist to separate art from the world around it, to distinguish between what is within and what is without. The comparison of seventeenth-century Roman gallery frames with eighteenth-century French frames—designed to integrate painting in a furnished interior—and sixteenth-century Tuscan frames—designed to mimic architectural superstructures—reveals that some frames do this more intentionally than others. In Renaissance Tuscany and Rococo France, we have observed a sympathy at work between a certain conception of art and the frames that emerged in the service of its circumscription. There is sympathy here, too, in the Roman picture gallery, where a new kind of display space made for a new kind of painting, and so too did a new kind of frame.

Within this context, how then to make sense of Velázquez's design? The frames that Velázquez designed for the paintings and mirrors in San Lorenzo de El Escorial correspond only poorly to the examples of frames cited above, seeming not to have been copied from any existing frame designs but instead original to Velázquez. Velázquez's design for the frame for the paintings turns around a single fleshy leaf, repeated around the

94 The first collectors to do this were Leopoldo and Giovan Carlo de' Medici in Florence, who uniformly framed their collections with a highly idiosyncratic auricular style of frame still observable on paintings hanging in the Gallerie degli Uffizi and the Palazzo Pitti (on the "Medici frame," see especially Mosco 2007).

95 Fried's most thorough treatment of this topic remains Fried 2010.

96 The bibliography on Caravaggio and his followers is substantial. On the iconography of Judith and Holofernes in their work, however, see in particular Terzaghi 2021.



FIGURE 4.12 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (framed), ca. 1599, oil on canvas, 145 × 195 cm, Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica—Palazzo Barberini, 2533  
IMAGE © GALLERIE NAZIONALI DI ARTE ANTICA, ROME (MIC)

frame's entire perimeter.<sup>97</sup> The leaves alternate in their almost imperceptible lean off their central axes, such that light thrown from their gilding will scatter in different directions. The design resolves at the corners of the frame without extra embellishment, the same motif simply turning around the corner so that the pattern that it follows is barely broken (fig. 4.13). At the sight edge is a smooth line of gilded wood from which the leaves seem to originate, lifting at the outer edge away from the frame's ground and curling over again toward the sight edge (fig. 4.14). For the mirrors in this same space, Velázquez cleverly plays with the conceit of a mirror image by reversing the design such that at the outer edge is a smooth line of gilded wood, the same fleshy leaves instead lifting away from the ground at the sight edge and curling back out toward the outer edge. Sources predating Velázquez's involvement are unsurprisingly sparing in their descriptions of the frames on

97 I am grateful to Carmen García-Frías Checa and the staff of the conservation laboratory at the Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, for facilitating access to the frame on Tintoretto's *Penitent Magdalene* while it was undergoing restoration.



FIGURE 4.13

Detail of the frame on Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene*, ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558

IMAGE © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

the hundreds of canvases that were brought to the Escorial monastery during the reign of Philip II; nevertheless, what little description there is suggests many different frame designs adorning the group and nothing like the coherence of the framing scheme that resulted from Velázquez's intervention.<sup>98</sup> Some are described as gilded and painted black or blue, others only gilded. Some were richly carved with motifs like cords or seraphs, others marbled. A small number came with taffeta curtains, most of them green or red but some purple or blue. However sparse these notations, what emerges from them is the sense of a profusion of designs likely reflecting the diverse provenance of the paintings. This variety of frame profiles is what ultimately gave way to Velázquez's leafy alternative.

Superficially, Velázquez's design of a frame for the monastery at El Escorial possesses much of what made Carlo Maratta's and Salvator Rosa's designs for gallery frames

98 Bouza Álvarez 2000 makes no mention of the frames on the paintings included in this inventory. That said, Julián Zarco Cuevas compiled a comprehensive inventory of the many objects brought to the Escorial between 1571 and 1598 from several sources, including archival inventories and the essential account of Fray José de Sigüenza (recently republished as Sigüenza 2000). His inventory of the paintings collection—complete with information such as subject, author, dimensions, and, when possible, their frames—can be found in Zarco Cuevas 1930, pp. 655–68; and Zarco Cuevas 1931, pp. 34–94.



FIGURE 4.14

Detail of the frame on Domenico Tintoretto, *Penitent Magdalene*, ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 158 × 128 cm, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, 10014558

IMAGE © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

effective in response to the new demands of picture galleries and gallery pictures in Italy. Overwhelmingly, Roman gallery frames were gold bands ribboned around the canvases displayed in picture galleries; thus, Velázquez's implementation of an all-over gilded frame—a departure from the black frames that appeared at other royal sites—immediately invokes the Roman picture gallery. That Velázquez would impose a universal frame design on the hang at all already recalls the strategies used in picture galleries to bring order not to commissioned suites of paintings, like those that could still be sourced from a single artist or workshop during this period, but rather to the collections of works of disparate origin and diverse authorship that were in part the byproduct of the emergence of the secondary art market, like the sale of the art collection of Charles I of England. Aspects of Velázquez's design reinforce its function as a universal adornment to just such a collection. Insofar as the design consists of a small, single motif repeated in a regular pattern, the design is modular and thus ostensibly infinitely malleable, easily lengthened or shortened to fit paintings of various length and width, and neither so insubstantial as to disappear around the larger canvases in the group nor so substantial as to overwhelm those of smaller scale.

The elegant resolution of the design at the corners of the frame, the resistance against ornamental embellishments on any part of it, and the orientation of its motifs toward the sight edge all the way around its design ensures that the frame has no right side up. Velázquez's frame can thus accommodate paintings both of horizontal and of vertical format indiscriminately. The glimmer of light across the alternating leaves evokes the one formal characteristic that united the painters of the Venetian school across generations and nationalities: the vibrant brushwork and glittering highlights of their canvases. To consider only those paintings that retain Velázquez's frame, we might observe this in the dynamic atmospheric effects, most notably the strike of lighting, in Titian's *Christ on the Cross*; or the glow around the head of Tintoretto's *Penitent Magdalene*, to say nothing of the sheen on the draperies encircling the composition. What might appear under-designed by comparison to the most ornate frames across art history is a frame profile that in fact totally prioritizes those qualities that would have been required of a universal frame intended to bring some regularity to paintings of different sizes, orientations, and authorship, such as simplicity and versatility. The Roman gallery frame functioned to unify paintings of varying provenance; without directly copying any frame in use in early modern Italy, Velázquez's frame seems oriented toward the same objectives. The paintings included in Velázquez's hang for the monastery at El Escorial were organized according to the strategies of the picture gallery; the idea of a simple, all-over gilded universal frame design was consistent with those strategies.

And yet, the motifs out of which Velázquez composed his design for the frame for the paintings and mirrors at San Lorenzo de El Escorial are not quite those that appeared on frames coming out of Italy in this period. Rather, the leaves on Velázquez's frame most closely resemble those in a drawing by Alonso Cano of a martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist (fig. 4.15). Virtually nothing seems to be known about this drawing, which hardly appears in the secondary literature on this aspect of Cano's practice.<sup>99</sup> But Cano was a successful draftsman and designer as well as painter, sculptor, and architect whose output included large-scale *retablos* of a distinctly Spanish genus. These include one *retablo* depicting this iconography, produced in collaboration with Juan Martínez Montanés for the Monastery of Santa Paula in Seville in 1637, a few years before Cano and Velázquez traveled together to Valladolid on the king's behalf.<sup>100</sup> The drawing, while not necessarily preparatory for the Santa Paula *retablo*, nevertheless includes elements familiar from this and comparable *retablos* by these two artists: the saint, whose figure casts a shadow on the ground behind him, suggestive of a figure sculpted in the round; the cartouche spanning the space that he occupies and the space just above him; and the

99 Strangely, this drawing does not appear in the catalogue to a major exhibition of Cano's drawings (Matilla 2001), nor in their catalogue raisonné (Véliz 2011). Nevertheless, the latter includes architectural drawings with an almost identical vegetal pattern to that being compared here to Velázquez's frame (Véliz 2011, pp. 482–83, cat. 115, and pp. 484–85, cat. 116). That the drawing in question might be meaningfully brought into dialogue with Spanish frames is implied by its inclusion as an illustration in Avila 2019, even though it is not directly commented on in the text. Noteworthy for what follows, this text also makes the claim that *retablos* can and should be conceived of as large-scale framing devices.

100 On this *retablo*, see Wethey 1955, pp. 35–36 and 146–48.



FIGURE 4.15 Alonso Cano, *The Martyrdom of Saint John*, ca. 1667, pen, brush, and brown ink, 22.38 × 14.29 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Graphic Arts Council, M.77.54.2

IMAGE © MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA (WWW.LACMA.ORG)

cherubs perched overhead. In addition, the drawing features a border of leaves that themselves seem first to curl away from the center of the image and then back toward it and thus bear strong resemblance to Velázquez's frame design. To suggest that Velázquez had this drawing in mind when designing his frame for the paintings at El Escorial is almost certainly to ascribe too much importance to this single sheet. That said, the similarity between Velázquez's leafy ribbon and the band of vegetal motifs running around the figure of Saint John the Evangelist in Cano's drawing proposes another source for Velázquez's motif: the visual language of the *retablo*, which in the seventeenth century increasingly came to include baroque components like leafy bands framing the many painted or sculpted panels out of which such objects were traditionally composed.<sup>101</sup> In his rehang of its spaces, Velázquez likewise brought the form of the Italian picture gallery to the function of the working monastery that was San Lorenzo de El Escorial, whose largest and most impressive space—the basilica at its architectural center—was itself adorned with a *retablo* dating to within decades of its foundation. The motif out of which his frame design was composed derived from the visual culture of just such a space.

Thus considered, Velázquez's frame encapsulates his project as a whole, which was to refashion a Spanish site for the display of paintings (the monastery at El Escorial) according to the rule of an Italian one (an early modern picture gallery). It cuts down a traditionally Spanish devotional framing device (the *retablo*) to the single element that could most closely correspond to the type of frame newly coming out of Italy (the gallery frame). The addition of a frame to a painting, like any other curatorial gesture, is itself an act of interpretation of that painting. At the monastery at El Escorial, works of art served a dual purpose, on the one hand as devotional instruments and on the other as collector's items, and their frames correspondingly married the visual vocabulary of one site for the viewing of paintings with that of another. The rehang of the sacristy, ante-sacristy, Hall of Moral Theology, and chapter room of the prior was all together the single most ambitious assignment that Velázquez received from the king of Spain. To understand Velázquez's approach to the rehang of the paintings at San Lorenzo de El Escorial, we needed to look no further than his frame for them.

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101 Cruz Yábar suggests that Velázquez chose his frame from a selection of models available from Pedro and José de la Torre (Cruz Yábar 2019, p. 952, n. 19). The text does not offer a source for this, nor a reference to surviving frames by Pedro and José de la Torre with which Velázquez's design may be compared; nevertheless, insofar as the two sculptors were renowned for their highly baroque *retablos*, Cruz Yábar's hypothesis supports the idea that Velázquez's frame design evokes the decorative ornamentation of a baroque *retablo*.

## Velázquez, Painter and Curator

By all accounts, the 1650s were a very busy decade for Diego Velázquez. As official painter to the king, Velázquez produced in this single decade what remain his most ambitious and celebrated paintings, paintings whose sophistication would earn him the reputation he still enjoys as one of the greatest painters in the history of Spanish art. But on February 16, 1652, Velázquez was appointed by King Philip IV to a position in the managerial infrastructure of the royal palace that few—if any—painters would enjoy before or after him: that of *apostentador mayor de palacio* (chamberlain of the royal palace).<sup>1</sup> Of the many palatial offices that Velázquez would occupy over the course of his career at the court of Philip IV, none would feature so prominently in Velázquez's afterlife as that of *apostentador mayor*. Court biographers and treatise writers Lázaro Díaz del Valle, Jusepe Martínez, and Antonio Palomino would all describe this title as one of the highest honors that Philip IV would bestow on Velázquez over the course of his lifetime. Martínez said that it was a “charge of much importance, and honor.”<sup>2</sup> For Díaz del Valle, it was a well-deserved award for the brilliance that Velázquez brought to all his professional pursuits under Philip IV.<sup>3</sup> In the now famous biography of the painter in his *Museo pictórico y escala óptica*, Antonio Palomino echoed the sentiments of these two, saying that it was a great honor for Velázquez to hold this title, but Palomino went on to regret that the very excellence that earned Velázquez this honor—the excellence that he brought to his painting practice—was in fact oppressed by the burden of the many responsibilities that accompanied this title.<sup>4</sup> In lengthy prose, Palomino openly lamented that the job of *apostentador*

1 Velázquez's nomination to *apostentador mayor de palacio* on February 16, 1652, is recorded in a now famous document from his personal file at the Archivo General de Palacio (AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9; see also *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 263–64, doc. 312). The first page of this document is reproduced in Brown 1986b, p. 215; and in Barrios Pintado 1999, p. 5. A transcription is available in Cruzada Villaamil 1885, pp. 182–83. In addition, the text is reproduced and transcribed in its entirety in Cordero and Hernández 2000, pp. 210–15. Javier Cordero and Ricardo Hernández provide an analysis of this text in Cordero and Hernández 2000, pp. 95–97. It is worth mentioning here that the document follows a formula common to nominations under Philip IV: Within the document, individual candidates were proposed by a committee of noblemen with a brief résumé of the virtues that qualified each of them for the position in question and a ranking of their relative suitability according to the opinion of each member of the committee. The king would then write, on the front of the document, the name of his chosen candidate from among those listed. Very often this corresponded to the candidate who ranked most consistently among the first or second choices of the members of the selection committee; as scholars have previously noted, it is especially remarkable that Velázquez was selected despite his ranking among the third and fourth candidates proposed.

2 Martínez 1673–75, fol. 71r: “cargo de mucha importancia, y honor”; see also Martínez 2017, p. 107.

3 García López 2008, pp. 255 and 256.

4 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 340–42; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 918–20; Palomino 1987, pp. 163–64; and Palomino 2018, pp. 137–44. In a much gentler reproach than that of Palomino, Martínez mentions in his

was so all-consuming as to leave Velázquez with little time to produce paintings in these years, finally concluding that “to suspend the exercise of a skill is more punishment than prize.”<sup>5</sup> If the title of *apostador mayor de palacio* was at all a great honor, it was one that came to Velázquez, according to Antonio Palomino, at a certain price.

Since the publication of Palomino’s treatise, scholars seem to have accepted this dual characterization of Velázquez’s appointment to *apostador mayor* at face value. In his 1885 monograph, Gregorio Cruzada Villaamil cites Palomino directly, saying that “it is not possible to formulate a more correct judgment of this new charge of Velázquez’s than that made by the painter Palomino.”<sup>6</sup> “Unfortunately,” Carl Justi writes in his monograph a few years later, “[the job] involved a number of petty duties, which deprived him both of the leisure and disposition for nobler pursuits,” including, one readily imagines, making paintings.<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Brown, while acknowledging that this “office carried numerous responsibilities which made use of Velázquez’s capacities as a designer and increased his prestige at court,” nonetheless regretted that “many of [his] duties [as *apostador*] put heavy demands on Velázquez’s time and negligible demands on his artistic talents.” “It is no wonder,” he states, “that [in the last eight and a half years of his life] the brushes in Velázquez’s studio were more often wielded by assistants than by the master.”<sup>8</sup> Yves Bottineau openly wondered “if a large part of [Velázquez’s] time was not taken up by prosaic problems that one would not imagine would fall ... under the jurisdiction of the master [who made] *Las Meninas*, if archival documents did not make the matter incontestably clear.”<sup>9</sup> He ultimately concludes that “Velázquez was exhausted by an activity that kept him away from [artistic] creation.”<sup>10</sup> Even Enriqueta Harris, whose account of Velázquez’s appointment to *apostador* remains otherwise relatively neutral, subtly echoes Palomino’s caveats: “As Palace Chamberlain as well as Gentleman of the Bedchamber,” she says, “[Velázquez] was fully occupied; yet he still found time to create some of his greatest masterpieces.”<sup>11</sup> However each of these scholars phrases it, the overwhelming impression from the historiography is that Palomino was right in saying that whatever the title of *apostador* brought to Velázquez in honor and prestige it took

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biography of Velázquez that the charge of *apostador* left Velázquez little time to produce paintings, quickly qualifying this statement by saying that the few paintings that Velázquez did manage to produce in these years were very successful (Martínez 1673–75, fol. 71r; see also Martínez 2017, pp. 107–8).

5 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 340–41: “Suspender el ejercicio de una habilidad, mas es castigo que premio”; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 918–19; Palomino 1987, pp. 163–64; and Palomino 2018, pp. 138–43.

6 Cruzada Villaamil 1885, p. 184: “No puede formarse un juicio más acertado sobre este Nuevo cargo de Velázquez que el hecho por el pintor Palomino.”

7 Justi 1889, p. 373.

8 Brown 1986b, pp. 215–17.

9 Bottineau 1998, p. 250: “On peut se demander, cependant, si une grande partie de son temps ne fut pas absorbée par des problèmes prosaïques, dont on n’imaginerait pas qu’ils aient relevé, dans les détails ou dans la supervision, du maître des *Ménines*, si les documents d’archives n’apportaient à ce sujet des précisions incontestables.”

10 Bottineau 1998, p. 250: “Velásquez s’est usé dans une activité qui l’éloignait de la création.”

11 Harris 1982a, p. 29.

away from him in time and energy to devote to the profession for which he is now most famous. In the face of this consensus, however, one is left to wonder if no other approach to Velázquez's appointment to this post is possible. What, we should ask, might the charge of *apostador mayor de palacio* have brought to Velázquez's painting practice? And, furthermore, what might Velázquez, the painter, have brought to the profession of *apostador mayor*?

Whatever demands the job may have made on Velázquez's time to paint, his appointment to the position of *apostador mayor de palacio* put the artist in an unprecedented position in relation to the royal art collection. It is perhaps true that the job of *apostador mayor* entailed, more than anything else, the routine maintenance of the appearance of the Alcázar palace interiors. This maintenance work, however, included the oversight of the paintings exhibited on the walls of those interiors, paintings in relation to which Velázquez had sought to make his name since the start of his career at the Spanish court in the 1620s. It was within the parameters of this maintenance work that Velázquez took on the redecoration of the New Room, the large gallery on the first floor of the south façade of the royal palace where Velázquez had witnessed a major installation upon arriving at the Habsburg court three decades prior. Over the course of the 1650s, Velázquez assembled a decorative program for this gallery that would remain virtually unchanged until 1700. It was the most significant curatorial project that the artist executed as *apostador*, and quite possibly the most important redecoration made to the Alcázar palace during the reign of Philip IV. In this assignment, more than any other, Velázquez's simultaneous careers as painter to the king and as curator of his art collection perfectly converged. Velázquez made paintings for this gallery display that further reveal the impact of his curatorial career on his painting practice, demonstrating how the intelligence Velázquez cultivated in his curatorial work could direct his painted output. It was also a project by which Velázquez found the means to pursue the same objectives that Velázquez had pursued over the course of his career as painter to the king, finding in this curatorial project a new medium through which to express his painterly ambitions.

## 1 Velázquez, *apostador mayor de palacio*

The charge of *apostador mayor* as Velázquez executed it was defined in the *Etiquetas de Palacio* (Protocols of the Palace) of Philip IV, published in 1651.<sup>12</sup> This text, modeled on the 1545 *Etiquetas de Palacio* of Charles V, served as a kind of handbook for the many

12 Copies of these remain extant in various Spanish repositories (see, among others, AGP, Administración General, Caja 49, exp. 2; and Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS 1080). Although the seventeenth-century iteration of the job of *apostador de palacio* was modeled on the role described in the *Etiquetas* of Charles V, Cordero and Hernández situate the origins of this position even earlier, under the reign of the Catholic kings (Cordero and Hernández 2000, p. 99). There is the most thorough treatment of Velázquez's career as *apostador* in secondary literature to date, although major monographs frequently include comparatively abbreviated accounts. The reader should take note that the *Etiquetas* of both Charles V and Philip IV include other *apostadores*, called the *apostadores*

employees of the royal house, detailing the demands of each position and its corresponding salary. As outlined in this text, the *apostador de palacio* was at the head of an office with the name of the *furriera* (the office of the royal house charged with keeping the keys of the royal palace, its cleanliness, the maintenance of its furnishings, and so on). This consisted of a small staff of employees, including *ayudas de la furriera*, *sotoayudas de la furriera*, and a *mozo de la furriera* (assistants to the *apostador de palacio*, ordered by decreasing rank).<sup>13</sup> They were responsible, on the whole, for ensuring the proper outfitting of the spaces that the king and his court were to inhabit. Much could be made of the apparent privileges that accompanied this title: the possession by the *apostador* of keys that opened every door in the royal palace, or his involvement in royal ceremonies. Nevertheless, the job of *apostador de palacio* consisted, for the most part, of the mundane, continuous, and occasionally unglamorous upkeep of the royal palace and especially the appearance and furnishing of its interior spaces. The *apostador* was required to provide firewood and coal to heat the palace over the course of the year and to ensure the presence and good condition of the furnishings in the king's apartments, including beds, chairs, tables, and other objects of this kind. In addition, he was required to be present, in person or by proxy, when the king's apartments were swept clean. When the king traveled to royal sites outside the Alcázar palace, the *furriera* was required to prepare living quarters for the king and anyone who accompanied him, confirming that there were enough beds for the king and his entire party. And every month, the *apostador de palacio* was to prepare reports for the standard (in seventeenth-century parlance, "ordinary") and any additional ("extraordinary") expenses required to fund these tasks, including the costs of tools and materials and the salaries of employees who carried them out. These included, among others, locksmiths, carpenters, and floor-sweepers, all of whom answered directly to the *apostador*.<sup>14</sup> These concerns were, overwhelmingly, what occupied the time and energy of the reigning *apostador de palacio*.

Existing records confirm that Velázquez and his aides executed all these tasks during the near decade of his tenure as head of the *furriera*. Records of monthly expenses exist for every month between March of 1652 and July of 1660 with Velázquez's name and title visible on the first page. By this time, these documents had become rather lengthy and, in the case of "ordinary" expenses, relatively formulaic: they record the salaries of existing employees and the pensions distributed to the widows of deceased employees, the funds required for raw materials like firewood and coal, and so on. In addition to these official records, hundreds of documents survive recording the expenses required to fund the king's journeys to other royal sites, as well as individual bills covering the costs of firewood, beds and the changing of linens, the lighting of lamps at night, the production and

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*de casa* and the *apostadores de camino*, respectively (BNE, MSS 1080, 41r; BNE, MSS 1041, 50v–51r). These were different offices entirely, with their own histories and their own rosters of employees.

13 The total number of employees included on the roster was subject to change over time depending on the perceived need for a larger or smaller staff to aid the *apostador* in the realization of his duties.

14 Again, copies of these *Etiquetas* are available for consultation in a number of Spanish repositories (see, among others, AGP, Histórica, Caja 53, exp. 2; and BNE, MSS 1041).

placement of mats for the floor of the king's quarters, the supply of curtains for the palace windows, the construction of tables, the gilding of keys, the production of hinges and latches, and so on. These documents bear witness to the close, consistent involvement of the office of the *furriera* in the day-to-day life of the palace and its basic upkeep.<sup>15</sup> Whether or not Velázquez personally authored each of these documents, his name and often his signature make clear his responsibility for their contents and thus his ongoing oversight of the many tasks for which the *furriera* was responsible. If Palomino was right in suggesting that Velázquez's time was overwhelmingly taken up by the requirements of his post as *apostador mayor*, this documentation stands as the most compelling surviving evidence with which to make the case for it.

But it is less remarkable that Velázquez competently executed the many tasks of the *apostador mayor de palacio* than that he was appointed to the position in the first place. When scholars and biographers recognize the great prestige that this title bestowed on Velázquez at the end of a successful career at the court of Philip IV, they implicitly—and rightly—acknowledge this appointment as a kind of professional milestone within the timeline of the painter's life. What they consistently fail to mention is that within the longer history of the profession of *apostador mayor*, Velázquez's tenure is singular in at least one very noteworthy respect. Over the course of the seventeenth century, the position of *apostador mayor de palacio* was occupied by a number of individuals, almost all of whom held the position until death, when a new *apostador* was appointed by the reigning king as his replacement. Surviving records dating to before approximately 1598 remain relatively fragmentary. Nevertheless, we can, at the very least, reconstruct a chronology of those who held this profession roughly from this date through the end of the Habsburg dynasty:

- 1579–1597: Juan de Herrera<sup>16</sup>
- 1597–1598: Felipe de Benavides<sup>17</sup>
- 1598–1610: Francisco de Mora<sup>18</sup>

15 Documents pertaining to these and related issues can be found in AGP, Administración General, Legajo 6735; and AGP, Administración General, Legajo 624. Reproductions and transcriptions of similar documents are provided in Cordero and Hernández 2000, pp. 216–359.

16 According to surviving documentation, Juan de Herrera held the position of *apostador de palacio* as early as 1579, although these documents do not specify that this was the year that Herrera received this appointment (AGP, Registros, T. VI, fol. 283v–284; additional documents from this year are cited in Wilkinson Zerner 1993, p. 175, n. 51). That he held the position until his death is perhaps confirmed by his written will and testament in 1584, in which he describes himself as *apostador mayor de palacio* (Llaguno y Amirola 1829, p. 342), and in the notice of his death in 1597, in which Herrera is again described as *apostador mayor* (Llaguno y Amirola 1829, p. 357).

17 The first record in which Felipe de Benavides appears listed as *apostador de palacio* dates to the year 1597, which we might take to be the year in which Benavides was appointed to the position (AGP, Registros, T. IX, fol. 227). A record exists of his death in 1598, which we might take to be the probable date that he vacated the position of *apostador* (AGP, Registros, T. IX, fol. 317).

18 We can date the start of Francisco de Mora's tenure as *apostador mayor de palacio* to 1598 thanks to a baptismal record from this year naming him as such (Iglesia Parroquial de Santiago, Madrid, *Libro 3.º de Bautismos*, fol. 37; cited in Cervera Vera 1984, p. 64, n. 16). Documents in the Archivo General de Palacio and in the Archivo General de Simancas dating to 1601 and 1604 confirm Francisco de Mora as

- 1611–1641: Pedro del Yermo<sup>19</sup>
- 1643–1652: Pedro de Torres<sup>20</sup>
- 1652–1660: Diego Velázquez<sup>21</sup>
- 1660–1664: Francisco de Rojas<sup>22</sup>
- 1664: Juan Marban<sup>23</sup>

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- apostatador mayor de palacio* among the employees of the royal house (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 624; AGP, Administración General, Legajo 710; AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales, Legajo 304, fol. 94; and AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales, Legajo 322, fol. 252). We can date the end of his tenure to 1610 thanks to two documents, one listing salaries for Francisco de Mora's employees in the royal house between 1605 and 1610 that remained unpaid after his death (AGP, Personal, Caja 2654, exp. 13), and the other the inventory of his possessions taken on August 10, 1610, which explicitly describes him as *apostatador mayor de palacio* (Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid, Protocolo de Bartolomé Gallo, 1610 to 1612, Protocolo 2698; cited in Cervera Vera 1950, p. 155).
- 19 Pedro del Yermo swore in as *apostatador de palacio* in April of 1611 (AGP, Personal, Caja 111, exp. 3), and documents from within the records of the *furriera* confirm his occupation of the post starting as early as July 1, 1611 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 896). His continued occupation of this position is recorded in documents dating to 1614 and 1615 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 896). In addition, a "Pedro del Yermo" is named as the current *apostatador mayor de palacio* in González Dávila's 1623 *Teatro de las grandezas* (González Dávila 1623, p. 334). His death in 1641 (and with it, his evacuation of the post of *apostatador*) is recorded in two documents, one from Pedro del Yermo's own personal file (AGP, Personal, Caja 111, exp. 3) and another from the personal file of Juan Gómez de Mora, who would ask the king to consider his candidacy for this office in Yermo's place (AGP, Personal, Caja 448, exp. 6).
- 20 Pedro de Torres was nominated to *apostatador mayor de palacio* on January 28, 1643 (AGP, Personal, Caja 1040, exp. 5; his swearing in as such on January 31 of the same year is recorded in AGP, Personal, Caja 40, exp. 10). His promotion to *secretario de cámara*, which occasioned his evacuation of the position of *apostatador*, is recorded in a document dating his swearing in as such to February 8, 1652 (AGP, Personal, Caja 1040, exp. 5). The last expense reports that he executed for the *furriera* date to February of 1652 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 898). In addition, Antonio Palomino names Pedro de Torres Velázquez's immediate predecessor in his biography of the painter (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 340; see also Palomino 1947, p. 918; Palomino 1987, p. 163; Palomino 2018, p. 137).
- 21 Documents among the records of the *furriera* demonstrate Velázquez's continued exercise of this office from the year of his appointment until his death in 1660 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 898).
- 22 A document from Velázquez's personal file that confirms his nomination to *apostatador* on February 16, 1652, and his death in August of 1660 lists the next three *apostatadores* after him, starting with Francisco de Rojas on August 9, 1660. The document gives the date of Rojas's death in July of 1664 (AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9). Documents from Francisco de Rojas's personal file describe him as *apostatador mayor de palacio* as early as September 1660 and confirm the date of his death (AGP, Personal, Caja 912, exp. 35). His vacating this job upon his death is explicitly stated in the document nominating his successor (AGP, Personal, Caja 617, exp. 3). There is, in addition, one document in the archive of the Museo del Prado dated to 1661 regarding the passage of some furnishings to the care of Francisco de Rojas that explicitly names him as Velázquez's successor (Archivo Museo del Prado, Caja 3635, exp. 18), and Antonio Palomino also names him as such in his biography of Velázquez (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 340; see also Palomino 1947, p. 918; Palomino 1987, p. 163; Palomino 2018, p. 137).
- 23 Juan Marban is included in the above-mentioned list of *apostatadores* following Velázquez in his personal file, recording his appointment in July 8, 1664, and his death in September 1664 (AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9). A document recording Juan Marban's appointment to *apostatador mayor de palacio* as Francisco de Rojas's replacement is also extant (AGP, Personal, Caja 617, exp. 3). His unusually brief tenure is addressed in a document in his personal file written by his widow Maria de Montalvan, who

- 1664–1677: Joseph Pacheco<sup>24</sup>
- 1677–1698: García Marban<sup>25</sup>
- 1701–1706: Juan Francisco de Marañón<sup>26</sup>

Every one of these was already a long-standing employee of the royal house, having obtained between them a list of titles and positions so varied as to make very clear that there was no fixed path to the post of *apostentador*. Three of them—Juan de Herrera, Francisco de Mora, and Pedro del Yermo—had worked previously as architects at the court.<sup>27</sup> Four of them—Felipe de Benavides, Pedro de Torres, Francisco de Rojas, and Joseph Pacheco—were simultaneously employed as the head of the tapestry workshop. A few of them—Juan Marban, Juan Francisco de Marañón, and, eventually, Diego Velázquez—were knights of the Order of Santiago. In addition to a small number of other positions that the men on this roster had also held at the Habsburg court (*mayordomo mayor*, *ayuda de la furriera*, and so on), most of them served as the king's *ayuda de cámara* (manservant).<sup>28</sup> If there were any prerequisite for obtaining the title of

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says that she hopes to receive the pension he would have enjoyed as *apostentador* even though he was not able to exercise the office for very long (AGP, Personal, Caja 617, exp. 1).

- 24 Joseph Pacheco, who was previously a candidate for the position in competition with Juan Marban, is the last *apostentador* to appear in the roster of *apostentadores* after Velázquez included in his personal file, where Pacheco's appointment is dated to September 19, 1664 (AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9). His occupation of the position is confirmed in a document from Francisco de Rojas's personal file (AGP, Personal, Caja 912, exp. 35). Unlike many of his predecessors, Pacheco did not vacate the position by dying out of it; he was excused from the post for unspecified reasons in a document dating to January 26, 1677 (AGP, Personal, Caja 777, exp. 35).
- 25 A number of documents confirming García Marban's nomination to *apostentador* on January 26, 1677, remain extant in his personal file, including his official nomination (AGP, Personal, Caja 617, exp. 3). His death in December 1698 is recorded in a document filed with other documents pertaining to the employees of the royal house, specifically among the papers pertaining to the *apostentadores* (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 624).
- 26 Juan Francisco de Marañón, who originally appeared as a candidate for the position of *apostentador* when it was given to García Marban, was finally appointed as such in on March 7, 1701, and was officially sworn in on March 9 of the same year (AGP, Personal, Caja 616, exp. 2). Although his official nomination specifies that he succeeded García Marban, who vacated the position upon his death, the document does not account for the brief period between Marban's death and Marañón's appointment. Marañón would die out of the position in 1706, at which point Luis de Valdes succeeded him (AGP, Personal, Caja 1311, exp. 5). It is perhaps worth noting, however, that Luis de Valdes had already served since 1702 as a kind of interim *apostentador* because Marañón was too ill to carry out the duties of this office.
- 27 José Manuel Barbeito Díez has previously suggested that Juan Gómez de Mora may have once held the position of *apostentador mayor de palacio*, but it is unclear what primary source documentation exists to support this claim (Barbeito Díez 1999). Gómez de Mora does credit himself with serving as *apostentador de palacio* during the visit of a pair of foreign diplomats to the court of Philip IV in a document dating to April 4, 1932 (AGP, Personal, Caja 448, exp. 6). However, if he did so, it is likely because then-*apostentador* Pedro del Yermo was not in the condition to exercise this office himself.
- 28 The practice of appointing an *ayuda de cámara* to the position of *apostentador* was so consistent that when Juan Francisco de Marañón received his appointment in 1701, he requested on the very day that

*aposeñador de palacio*, we might see it here, in the post of *ayuda de cámara*; otherwise, no single trajectory is discernible from the *résumés* of the figures included in this roster. But what is clear is that of the many positions that Velázquez's predecessors and successors over the course of the seventeenth century would hold, painter to the king was not one of them. Velázquez was thus the first painter after 1598 to be appointed to the position of *aposeñador mayor de palacio*, and quite possibly the only painter ever to hold this title under the Spanish Habsburgs.

If this is not the date at which the position of *aposeñador de palacio* was first invented, 1598 is nevertheless the most important date in the history of this profession when we consider the special significance of Velázquez's appointment to the post. At the very start of the reign of Philip III, the organization of the royal house was subject to extensive reforms, and the *aposeñador de palacio* was charged with new responsibilities that would have been of interest to Velázquez when he would obtain the title five decades later.<sup>29</sup> A document dated to 1598 and written by Juan Sigoney (the author of the *Etiquetas* of Charles v) offers a list of the charges and responsibilities of the *aposeñador de palacio* in excess of those recorded in the *Etiquetas* of Charles v and Philip iv.<sup>30</sup> Among other responsibilities, it is stated "that additionally [the *aposeñador de palacio*] is charged with all the paintings and portraits that are hung and placed in the galleries and apartments of his majesty."<sup>31</sup> The paintings in the royal collection were and would remain the jurisdiction of the king's *guardajoyas* (treasury), where many of them were stored alongside other precious objects. But the artworks hanging on the palace walls were transferred, as of this reform, to the care of the *aposeñador de palacio* and the office under his control. This begins to explain, for example, why it was Juan Gómez de Mora, then *ayuda de la furriera*, who delivered the oil paintings, illuminations, and little *retablos* that were removed from exhibition in the king's oratory to the *guardajoyas* in 1623.<sup>32</sup> It explains why the 1636 inventory of the contents of the royal palace lists these

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he swore in as *aposeñador* that the king appoint him to *ayuda de cámara*, precisely on the grounds that so many *aposeñadores* before him had enjoyed both honors simultaneously (AGP, Personal, Caja 616, exp. 2).

29 The organization of the royal house under Philip III is thoroughly studied in Mayoral López 2007. This unpublished thesis includes in its first chapter an overview of the history of the *Etiquetas de Palacio* from their origins under Charles v through their eventual reform under Philip iv. The remaining chapters include careful analyses of each of the employees of the royal house and the history of his job title, with an extensive bibliography of relevant secondary literature.

30 AGP, Administración General, Caja 939, exp. 7. For a complete transcription of this document, see appendix.

31 AGP, Administración General, Caja 939, exp. 7: "que assimismo se le haga cargo de todas las pinturas y retratos que estubieren colgados y puestas en las galerias y aposentos de su mag.<sup>d</sup>"

32 The inventory of these is reproduced in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 196–201, after an early twentieth-century transcription by F. J. Sánchez Cantón. Although the original document is now lost, Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo offer a brief but helpful summary of the history of this

objects under the care of Simon Rodríguez, by then also an *ayuda de la furriera*.<sup>33</sup> It explains why the team of people that carried out the inventory of 1666 includes, among other figures, Joseph Pacheco (as *aposentador de palacio*) and Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo (both *pintores de cámara*, court painters, who held the position of *ayuda de la furriera* at the time of the inventory's execution).<sup>34</sup> The cast of characters responsible for producing much of the documentation that accounts for the display of paintings in the Alcázar palace demonstrates that the 1598 protocol was no honorific certificate but a handbook dictating real behaviors and practices. This remained true into the tenure of Velázquez: marginal annotations to the inventory of 1636 place specific objects directly in Velázquez's custody. Several of these are dated to 1652, precisely the year he was conferred the title of *aposentador*.<sup>35</sup>

The job of *aposentador mayor de palacio* would thus put Velázquez firmly in charge of the paintings and other objects on view in the royal palace, making of the painter the curator of the royal art collections. Documents recently brought to light by Ángel Aterido Fernández give us a sense of just what this might have meant, in practical terms. The most revealing of these is a document in which Velázquez himself described the specific requirements of his job as follows: In a petition to the king for an extra *mozo de la furriera* to aid him with the decoration of the many rooms in the palace, Velázquez writes that he requires assistance "to adorn, hang, and clean the paintings," among other unspecified tasks.<sup>36</sup> The cleaning of the paintings had been explicitly included in the *furriera's* monthly expense reports since the tenure as *aposentador* of Pedro de Torres, who listed them among the other furnishings, windows, and doors in the palace to whose cleanliness the *furriera* diligently attended.<sup>37</sup> As for their adornment, we might take this to

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document, its discovery, and eventual disappearance (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, p. 191).

- 33 Documents pertaining to the transfer of these objects from Juan Gómez de Mora's charge to that of Simon Rodríguez can be found in AGP, Personal, Caja 911, exp. 6. This inventory is transcribed and annotated in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 71–127. The original and a manuscript copy have both survived (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768). Toward the end of Pedro del Yermo's tenure as *aposentador*, Yermo was excused from many of his assignments, which were then delegated to Simon Rodríguez (AGP, Personal, Caja 911, exp. 6). This included executing the *furriera's* monthly expense reports, on which Simon Rodríguez's name appears and which are conserved in AGP, Administración General, Legajo 897.
- 34 A useful overview of the contents of the inventory of 1666 of the Alcázar palace and the circumstances surrounding its production can be found in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 17–21. A full list of the *pintores de cámara* employed between 1666 and 1700 who also held other titles can be found in the table in Aterido Fernández 2015, pp. 358–61.
- 35 These appear on fols. 1 and 11 of the first copy of this document and on fols. 16, 22, and 23 of the second copy of this document, both in AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 2; see also Cruzada Villamil 1885, p. 185. The objects cited included maps, desks, religious paintings, and a portrait.
- 36 AGP, Personal, Caja 947, exp. 25: "aderezar, colgar, y limpiar las pinturas." The relevant paragraph is published in Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 325.
- 37 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 898. It is worth mentioning here that the cleaning of the paintings cited in these documents does not apparently correspond to the cleaning of artworks as executed by modern conservators and restoration specialists.

mean the paintings' framing, as an inventory consisting entirely of frames in stock in the office of the *furriera* survives from the period,<sup>38</sup> and documentation exists recording an episode in which Alonso Carbonel, *ayuda de la furriera*, ordered frames from the court woodworker and neglected to ever pay him for them.<sup>39</sup> But most interesting, of course, is Velázquez's assertion that it was his responsibility not only to take care of the paintings on view in the palace but to hang them there. When Gil González Dávila wrote in his 1623 *Teatro de las grandezas de la Villa de Madrid Corte de los Reyes Catolicos de España* that the *apostentador mayor de palacio* was responsible for the "composition of the Palace," this is perhaps what he meant: that the *apostentador de palacio* had a hand in the arrangement of works exhibited in the palace at any given point in time.<sup>40</sup> Velázquez was directly credited, by at least one painter who claimed to have worked with him, with the "composition of the Palace with the decoration of Paintings" that remained on the walls for decades after Velázquez's death.<sup>41</sup> His own descendent Gaspar del Mazo Velázquez asserted that Velázquez undertook "many projects and decorations [for the purpose of] composing and perfecting" the Alcázar while employed as *apostentador*.<sup>42</sup> Employees of the royal house often solicited their desired positions in petitions written to the king; if Velázquez knew that the job of *apostentador de palacio* would give him a degree of control over the exhibition of artworks, this was certainly part of its appeal.<sup>43</sup> As per the document nominating Velázquez to the post, his candidacy was considered on the grounds of a testimony that he himself had authored, in which he stated that already "for many years he [had been] occupied with the decoration and arrangement of the apartment of His Majesty."<sup>44</sup> His appointment to *apostentador mayor de palacio* would give Velázquez more control over these matters than he had ever exercised.

38 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 12.

39 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 711.

40 González Dávila 1623, p. 333: "la composicion de Palacio." The information about the *apostentador mayor de palacio* provided in González Dávila's text would be repeated in later editions of Alfonso Núñez de Castro's *Libro historico político, solo Madrid es corte, y el cortesano en Madrid* (Núñez de Castro 1698, pp. 163–64). Cruzada Villaamil transcribes this part of one edition of this text in Cruzada Villaamil 1885, pp. 184–85.

41 AGP, Personal, Caja 979, exp. 9: "la composicion de Palacio con el adorno de Pinturas." Citations from this document pertaining to curatorial matters are published in Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 324. Mentions of Velázquez's hand in the decoration of the royal palace can be found scattered throughout the testimonials included in Velázquez's application to the Order of Santiago (Archivo Histórico Nacional, Órdenes Militares, Caballeros de Santiago, exp. 7778; see also, *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 344–451, docs. 408–408.17). And in one of the monthly reports of "extraordinary" expenses that Velázquez would execute in the late 1650s for the *furriera*, he would record a payment made to Carlos de Salazar for "composing the Galería del Cierzo" (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 898: "componer la Galería del Cierzo").

42 AGS, Casa y Reales Sitios, Legajo 316, fol. 334: "muchas obras y adornos para componer y perficionar."

43 Carl Justi explicitly claims that Velázquez solicited the office directly in Justi 1889, p. 375.

44 AGP, Personal, Caja 1084, exp. 9: "que ha muchos anos que se ocupa en el adorno y compostura de el aposento de VMg.<sup>d</sup>" This part of the document is transcribed in Cordero and Hernández 2000, p. 95.

## 2 From “New Room” to “Hall of Mirrors”

The redecoration of the New Room in the 1650s was the most significant curatorial project that Velázquez executed in the Alcázar palace while *apostador* and easily the most ambitious.<sup>45</sup> Although ostensibly begun upon Velázquez’s appointment to *apostador* in 1652, this project was eventually given greater urgency thanks to a reception that was scheduled to take place on October 16, 1659, in celebration of the Peace of the Pyrenees that ended a war between Spain and France that had persisted for almost thirty years, and of the wedding between the Spanish Infanta María Teresa and Louis XIV that was its seal.<sup>46</sup> Undertaken at a time when the Habsburg monarchy, desperately in want of a viable heir, was at its most fragile, the stakes of the project could not have been higher. The decorative program that Velázquez assembled in this gallery between 1652 and 1659 was appropriately dazzling, including oil paintings, gilded bronze sculptures, furnishings, and a new fresco cycle for the ceiling. The centerpiece of the ensemble was a set of four paintings that had served for three decades as the axis around which the program of the room was continuously reorganized: Titian’s *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg*, Titian’s *Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory*, Velázquez’s *Philip III and the Expulsion of the Moriscos*, and Rubens’s *Philip IV of Spain on Horseback*. Nearly every change that Velázquez made to the decorative program of the New Room might be interpreted as a function of these four works, and of their exhibition together in this room.<sup>47</sup> Since their installation in the 1620s, these paintings visualized the lineage of rulers who had governed Spain from the foundation of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty, represented by Charles v, to the present day, in the image of Philip IV. Exhibited in this configuration, these portraits of individual kings together visualized the dynasty of which Philip IV

45 For histories of this room (including, to varying degrees, its construction, use, and decoration), see Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, pp. 34–47; Crawford Volk 1980; Orso 1986, pp. 32–117; Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 129–36; Checa Cremades 1994a, pp. 391–94; Rodríguez Rebollo 2006, pp. 96–109; Pierguidi 2011; Barbeito Díez 2015; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 58–70.

46 Gramont 1717, vol. 2, p. 170. The signing of the peace treaty itself and the handing off of the infanta would occasion another significant project that Velázquez executed as *apostador mayor de palacio*, albeit not one that would require the hang or the production of paintings: the construction of the Spanish pavilion on Pheasant Island, between France and Spain (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 351–54; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 932–35; Palomino 1987, pp. 175–78; Palomino 2018, pp. 178–87). On the role of art in the negotiation of the Peace of the Pyrenees, see Portús Pérez and Ribeton 2016.

47 The most comprehensive record that survives of the 1659 hang of the New Room is the inventory of the contents of this room in the 1686 inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace. The original document survives in the Archivo General de Palacio (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3), but the relevant portion of this inventory is transcribed and analyzed in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 700–724, nos. 76–106 and 1584–603. The New Room was not included in the 1666 inventory of the Alcázar because this inventory was never finished. This is explicitly stated in an inventory of the changes made to the hang of paintings in the Alcázar palace between 1666 and 1686 (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 5; see also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 901–8). If the 1686 inventory was executed with the 1666 inventory in hand, this suggests that the 1686 inventory might have been executed specifically for the purposes of completing the task left unfinished by the writers of the 1666 inventory.



FIGURE 5.1 Matteo Bonuccelli, *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O000453; *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002939; *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002940; and *Lion*, 1651, gilt-bronze, 75 × 61 × 107 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, O002943  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

acted as the living representative. The subject of the room, to judge by the portrait series, was thus the Spanish monarchy itself.

That Velázquez understood the political stakes of this project is made clear by the many elements he included in the decorative program beyond the oil paintings themselves, all of which reinforced the sovereign majesty of the Habsburg dynasty in different ways. While in Italy, Velázquez had arranged the production and purchase of a set of twelve bronze sculptures of lions modeled on the Medici lions in the Loggia dei Lanzi (fig. 5.1). Cast by Matteo Bonuccelli and gilded by Girolamo Ferrer, the sculptures were sent to Spain in 1652, when all twelve were installed as supports for the six porphyry tables that were already in the gallery.<sup>48</sup> In addition, Velázquez had commissioned from

48 See Herrero Sanz 2007 and Cruz Yábar 2017. See also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 719–21, nos. 1584–89. The contracts for their founding and their gilding, respectively, are reproduced in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 216–17, doc. 245a (see also Parisi 2007a, pp. 353–54, doc. 3); and *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vol. 1, pp. 255–56, doc. 302a (see also Parisi 2007a, pp. 358–59, doc. 10).

Domingo de Rioja and Pedro de la Sota sculptures of eagles (lost), executed in gilded bronze, to frame the eight large mirrors that would give the room its new name, the Hall of Mirrors.<sup>49</sup> Lions and eagles both functioned as emblemata of the Habsburgs. In their evocation not of individual rulers but of the dynasty to which those rulers belonged, these lions and eagles effectively reinforced the message communicated not by any one of the royal portraits hanging on the walls of the gallery but by their arrangement all together in a genealogy. If the hang of the portraits in series works as a representation of Habsburg dynasty, it is because their proximity hints at an invisible superstructure that contains them and unites them together—that is, it invokes the absolute monarchical power of which each of the depicted rulers in turn was the living embodiment. This is what makes the portraits sensible as a genealogy, what justifies their exhibition in a chronological series. Rather than capture the visage of any one of the figures in these royal portraits, Velázquez's additions to the program give visual form to what manifests between them when hung altogether in a single room, and to the invisible structures of power that animate their interrelation. Furthermore, by exhibiting his single-headed eagles in pairs, facing each other across a central axis, Velázquez invokes the existing symbol of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty while simultaneously evoking the memory of its mythic founder, Charles V, and the twin-headed eagle that was his emblem. With the living monarch present in the room, the ensemble assembled around him would have thus served to reinforce the continuity of his power, from the dynasty's origins to the present day.

The fresco cycle that Velázquez designed for this gallery similarly reiterated the viability of the Spanish monarchy by looking not back to the dynasty's origins but forward to its posterity. The wedding that occasioned the redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors was a politically significant event that took place at a moment of crisis in the history of the Habsburg dynasty.<sup>50</sup> In the decade leading up to the reception, the lack of a male heir to continue the Habsburg line was deeply felt throughout the court.<sup>51</sup> A new Habsburg prince was born in 1657. By the time of the reception, the pressing issue of the succession of the most powerful dynasty in Europe was therefore resolved, but just barely. The cycle of frescoes that Velázquez designed for the ceiling of the room depicted a set of subjects entirely suited to this crisis. The cycle included four scenes arranged around a large oval in the center of the ceiling, executed by court painters Francisco Rizi and Juan Carreño

49 See Barrio Moya 1989 and Cruz Yábar 2016. See also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 723–24, nos. 1596–603. In his article, Juan María Cruz Yábar proposes that the idea to ornament the frames on the mirrors with eagles was originally that of Alonso Carbonel, the architect who oversaw the remodeling of the Hall of Mirrors between 1639 and 1642, nevertheless ultimately affirming that their final form can be credited to Velázquez (Cruz Yábar 2016). The Spanish *salon de los espejos* is thought to have inspired a now much more famous counterpart at the French court of Louis XIV; for this *galerie des glaces* and others within the longer history of the “hall of mirrors” as an exhibition strategy, see Bazin-Henry 2021.

50 For a particularly compelling account of the ways that this crisis expressed itself in other forms of early modern Spanish art (namely theater), see the third chapter of Bass 2008.

51 Philip IV voices this in his personal correspondence to his confidantes (see Seco Serrano 1958).

de Miranda and especially the Bolognese duo Agostino Mitelli and Angelo Michele Colonna, whom Velázquez brought over from Italy expressly for this purpose after Pietro da Cortona, Philip IV's preferred candidate, apparently turned down the job.<sup>52</sup> According to Palomino, the four frescoes around the central oval depicted scenes from the life of Pandora, including her birth and her wedding to the mythical figure of Epimetheus, a highly unusual iconography appearing seemingly nowhere else at the Spanish court. It cannot be a coincidence that the central scene in the fresco series was not, in fact, the scene of the wedding of Pandora to her suitor, which might have seemed more appropriate for the occasion that was surely looming by the time the fresco cycle was executed in April of 1659.<sup>53</sup> Rather, the central scene was that in which the gods of the Roman pantheon assemble to bestow gifts upon Pandora in anticipation of this wedding, an allegory of the Infanta María Teresa's many admirable virtues and, moreover, a reassertion of the strength of Habsburg progeny.<sup>54</sup> The aim here was not—or not only—to celebrate the upcoming wedding of the royal infanta but to stake a claim around the viability of the Habsburg dynasty before a foreign audience. The overwhelming message of the decorative program that Velázquez assembled for this gallery was thus the sovereignty of the Habsburgs, and the sculptures, furnishings, and fresco cycle that Velázquez installed in this gallery all worked in the service of this single message.

As the first painter to stand at the head of such a consequential curatorial project, Velázquez had a unique professional stake in it (and, more specifically, in the final ensemble of paintings chosen for display in this gallery). In the portraits that constructed an image of a political genealogy, Velázquez saw an image of the artistic tradition to which he had diligently worked to lay a claim over the course of his career as a painter. It was not one but two histories that were composed on the walls of the Hall of Mirrors: The first was the lineage of Habsburg kings, the patrons who had made possible the art collection on view in this gallery. The second was that of their painters. Visitors to the gallery universally commented

52 Accounts of the services rendered to Diego Velázquez by Agostino Mitelli and Angelo Michele Colonna are provided in Antonio Palomino's biography of Diego Velázquez in *El museo pictórico y escala óptica* (Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 343–47; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 922–26; Palomino 1987, pp. 166–70; Palomino 2018, pp. 150–65) and in Carlo Cesare Malvasia's biographies of Angelo Michele Colonna and Agostino Mitelli in the *Felsina pittrice, vite de pittori bolognesi* (Malvasia 1678, pp. 389–420). While Steven Orso is the first to interpret the unusual iconography of the ceiling in relation to the overall program of the Hall of Mirrors (Orso 1986, pp. 104–7), Ángel Aterido Fernández and Felipe Pereda have since provided a more convincing reading (Aterido Fernández and Pereda 2004). The most recent and complete accounts of the work executed by these two painters at the court in Spain, however, remain those of Salvador Salort Pons (Salort Pons 2002, pp. 147–82) and especially David García Cueto (García Cueto 2005). On Velázquez's efforts to contract Pietro da Cortona's services for this work, see especially Colomer 1993, in addition to García Cueto 2005, pp. 57–60; and Salort Pons 2002, pp. 105–9.

53 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 344–45; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 923–25; Palomino 1987, pp. 167–69; and Palomino 2018, pp. 154–60.

54 This is the interpretation provided in García Cueto 2005, pp. 118–46. This interpretation is echoed in the Maréchal de Gramont's own judgment of the infanta in his memoirs, wherein he comments on the "rare qualities with which [she] is gifted" (Gramont 1717, vol. 2, p. 196: "râres qualitez dont la Serenissime Infante est douée") and describes the infanta as "a Princess full of virtues and charming qualities" (Gramont 1717, vol. 2, p. 268: "une Princesse pleine de vertus & de qualitez charmantes").

on the visible richness of its furnishings, their enthusiastic responses attesting to the efficacy of the dazzling combination of materials that Velázquez assembled as a whole.<sup>55</sup> But they also recognized the paintings for the painters who had made them. Agostino Mitelli, describing the gallery as he saw it in the late 1650s, said that it was “enriched with the paintings of Titian, Paul Rubens, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, [and] Diego Velázquez.”<sup>56</sup> On a visit to the court in 1687, the Grand Duke of Moscow wrote that in the paintings on the walls of this gallery, one can enjoy “the dexterity of Titian, the lovely coloring of Rubens, the placement of Velázquez’s figures and of many other excellent painters.”<sup>57</sup> Visitors to this gallery were able to recognize the authors of the paintings included in the gallery hang by name, appreciating the paintings as demonstrations of the skills that each of those authors had possessed. The artists who were ultimately included in the redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors would thus be visible to an international public equipped to remember their names. As painter to the king, Velázquez had more to gain from this gallery hang than any other *apostentador* before him.

Examining the hang of the gallery in terms of the paintings’ authorship, a pattern appears across its four walls. The works of Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez constituted twenty-one of the total thirty-one paintings on view in this gallery by 1659. All of these—with the exception of Velázquez’s four mythological paintings, to be discussed shortly—were already present in the room before Velázquez began.<sup>58</sup> The four paintings by Tintoretto (MNP, P000390 and P000399; otherwise lost), one painting by Bassano (MNP, P005263), and Veronese’s *Christ among the Doctors in the Temple* (MNP, P000491),

55 For period commentary on the decorative program of this gallery, see, among others, the account of Antonio Palomino in Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 348–439 (see also Palomino 1947, pp. 928–29; Palomino 1987, p. 172; Palomino 2018, pp. 169–70); the account of the Maréchal de Gramont in Gramont 1717, vol. 2, p. 194; the account of Lázaro Díaz del Valle, published as García López 2008, pp. 255 and 257–58; and the account of the ambassador of the Grand Duke of Moscow, cited in Checa Cremades 1994a, p. 502.

56 Cited in García Cueto 2005, p. 101, n. 290: “arrichitto di quadri di Ticiano, Paulo Rubens, Tintoreti, Paolo Veronese, Diego Velasco.”

57 Cited in Checa Cremades 1994a, p. 502: “la destreza de Tiziano, lo colorido y hermoso de Rubens, la colocación de las figuras de Velázquez y de otros muchos pintores excelentes.”

58 All the paintings by Titian included in the 1659 hang of the gallery are already recorded there in the inventory of 1636, as was Velázquez’s portrait of Philip III (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, p. 84, no. 409). Rubens’s equestrian portrait of Philip IV (lost), *Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau* (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, no. inv. 1302), *Mucius Scaevola before Lars Porsenna* (lost), and *Achilles Discovered by Ulysses and Diomedes* (MNP, P001661) are also all recorded in this gallery in the inventory of 1636 (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 84–85, nos. 411, 408, 414, and 415, respectively). Rubens’s *Three Nymphs with a Cornucopia* (MNP, P001664) and *Satyr and Tigress* (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Gal.-Nr. 974) are described in this room in the inventory of 1636 as *Diosa Ceres* and *Un Sátiro*, respectively (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, p. 86, nos. 428 and 427, respectively). The remaining four (*The Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines* [lost], *The Rape of the Sabine Women* [lost], *Perseus Freeing Andromeda* [MNP, P001663], and *Hercules and Antaeus* [lost]) were commissioned for this room between 1636 and the painter’s death (Vergara 1999, pp. 134–36).

*Finding of Moses*,<sup>59</sup> and *Rebecca and Eliezer*<sup>60</sup> had all been added to this room between the mid-1630s and 1659.<sup>61</sup> The existing documentation of the changes made to the decoration of this room between the mid-1630s and 1659 is so fragmentary as to make it impossible to assign too much significance to any one of these changes because we cannot know under what circumstances each of them was made. Nevertheless, the paintings included in the final hang of the Hall of Mirrors in 1659 form a coherent program, and one that is entirely consistent with the ambitions that Velázquez expressed as a painter over the course of his whole career at the court of Philip IV. If Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez were the protagonists of the hang of this gallery, almost every other painter included in the hang—that is, Veronese, Tintoretto, and Bassano—visualized the tradition of painting to which all three of these painters adhered: a Venetian tradition, the history of which was newly visible in the galleries of the Escorial monastery. The impression of the history of art under the Habsburg kings that visitors to the room would have gotten thus takes the form of another kind of lineage: one spanning Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez, all of whom were patronized by the Spanish monarchy and who thus formed a kind of tradition of painting under the Habsburgs.<sup>62</sup>

No change that Velázquez made to the decoration of the Hall of Mirrors during the 1650s was more telling, however, than the production and installation of Velázquez's four

59 It is possible that the painting described in the 1686 inventory as Veronese's *Finding of Moses* is simply a misattribution of the painting of this subject recorded in this gallery in the 1636 inventory, which, although left unattributed in this inventory, is now thought to be the painting of this subject by Orazio Gentileschi in the Prado (MNP, P000147; Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, p. 85, no. 413). This is first suggested in Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, pp. 43–44.

60 It is possible that Veronese's *Rebecca and Eliezer*, presumed lost until now, is in fact the painting of this subject by Battista Zelotti currently in the possession of the Prado, and that the attribution of this painting to Veronese in the 1686 inventory of the Hall of Mirrors is simply incorrect (MNP, P000512; Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 65 and 714, no. 98).

61 Gloria Martínez Leiva and Ángel Rodríguez Rebollo discuss the provenance of all of these in their recent book on the 1666 inventory of the Alcázar palace. In many cases, it has been suggested that Velázquez might have purchased these works while in Italy between the years of 1648 and 1651, but the provenance cannot be securely reconstructed for any (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 711–15, nos. 91–98). Two accounts of the paintings that Velázquez purchased during these years survive to the present day, the first in Marco Boschini's *La carta del navegar pitoresco: diálogo tra vn Senator venetian deletante, e vn professor de Pitura, soto nome d'Eclenza, e de Compare* and the second in Antonio Palomino's biography of Velázquez. While these two accounts provide contradictory information that make a definitive list of the paintings acquired in Italy uncertain, it is noteworthy that the accounts of both writers suggest that Velázquez purchased more paintings by Veronese and Tintoretto than by any other individual painter (Salort Pons 2002, pp. 130–31). We can be certain, therefore, that the sudden appearance of works by these two painters in the display program of the Hall of Mirrors did not come about by chance.

62 The latest record of the contents of this room before the year 1659 can be found in the 1636 inventory of the Alcázar palace. The original is in the possession of the Archivo General de Palacio (AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 2). The relevant entries from this inventory are reproduced in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 84–86, nos. 401–38, with corresponding images provided in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 138–43.

mythological paintings on the south wall of the gallery. Although only one of these has survived to the present day, these were originally a set of four paintings of *Venus and Adonis* (lost), *Cupid and Psyche* (lost), *Apollo and Marsyas* (lost), and *Mercury and Argus* (fig. 5.2). Of all the contributions that Velázquez could have made as a painter to the hang of paintings in this room, this is an unusual choice: it is the only series of mythological paintings that Velázquez would execute over the course of his career, and the only paintings Velázquez would execute for a gallery that he himself was in the process of redecorating. But if we consider this cycle a response to the very paintings they were meant to join in the hang of this gallery, the reasons behind this unusual choice make themselves clear. Within the hang of this room, Titian and Rubens were both characterized as painters of portraits and mythologies. Even before Velázquez's involvement in the redecoration of the gallery, Titian was represented on the walls by two royal portraits and four mythological paintings.<sup>63</sup> Rubens, similarly, was represented by one royal portrait and nine mythological paintings. Velázquez, by contrast, was only represented by a single royal portrait. If Velázquez sought in the redecoration of this room to position himself as the living member of a tradition of painting represented first and foremost by these two masters, the production and installation of a cycle of mythological paintings would have been the way to do it. In his inclusion of these paintings in the decorative program



FIGURE 5.2 Diego Velázquez, *Mercury and Argus*, ca. 1659, oil on unlined canvas, 127 × 250 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001175

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

63 It is worth repeating that the four mythological paintings hanging in this room (namely the *furias* that factored so importantly in the first chapter of this book) were not, in fact, all executed by Titian. Although all four of them were originally authored by Titian, two of these were lost and replaced by copies executed by Alonso Sánchez, as is faithfully recorded in the 1636 inventory of the contents of royal art collection (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, p. 84, nos. 402–5). In the inventory of 1686, however, the four paintings are all described as “originals by the hand of Titian,” a designation that allows us to believe that the original authorship of the paintings was not forgotten by their courtly audience (Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 2, p. 40: “originales de mano de Ticiano”). Although the *furias* appear in much of the general secondary literature on Titian, the most dedicated single study on these works is Falomir Faus 2014a.

of the gallery, Velázquez purposefully styles himself, like Rubens and Titian, as a painter both of royal portraits and of mythologies. The decision to make and install a cycle of mythological paintings within the hang of this room is, in this respect, the apotheosis of a career-spanning desire to approximate the success of the two most illustrious painters in the history of art under the Habsburgs.

If the assemblage of paintings all together in a single gallery was an inherently historical project, the cycle of paintings that includes *Mercury and Argus* was therefore a specifically auto-historicizing gesture.<sup>64</sup> They were produced, it would seem, to fulfill a role within a larger narrative that Velázquez, as curator of the gallery in which they were exhibited, would have the occasion to compose. In the Hall of Mirrors, Velázquez thus accomplishes what Maria Loh has coined “autocanonization: the inscription of the self within a larger, linear narrative of a history that he was in the process of writing.”<sup>65</sup> One of Velázquez’s great ambitions as a painter to the king was to make history alongside his famous predecessors; here he *makes* history, by composing its artifacts into a coherent narrative and by using objects of his own design to stage his place in it.

### 3 *Mercury and Argus*, Reconsidered

The redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors in the Alcázar palace over the course of the 1650s offered Velázquez a new medium through which to express the very same ambitions expressed in his paintings for King Philip IV. Velázquez’s mythological cycle had a role to play in this, as we already know, but it is worth considering the role that the Hall of Mirrors might have played in the cycle, and the ways that Velázquez’s work curating the contents of this room would determine the form and content of his painting series. The Hall of Mirrors demonstrates how Velázquez’s work as curator of the king’s art collection was informed by his career as painter to the king. The question that logically follows is how the paintings Velázquez made for installation in this gallery, in turn, might demonstrate the ways that Velázquez’s painting practice was informed by his curatorial project.

The best known of these paintings is Velázquez’s *Mercury and Argus*. *Mercury and Argus* is often treated in secondary literature on Velázquez’s paintings in isolation and out of context. The painting is rarely interpreted according to the conditions of display that Velázquez might have intended for it: as one of a total of four paintings in a single series, hanging on the walls of the Hall of Mirrors.<sup>66</sup> The 1734 fire that burned down the Alcázar

64 This from a painter who, it should be mentioned, was in possession of not only three copies of art historical *vite* but also Francisco Pacheco’s *Arte de la Pintura*, which includes the earliest known biography of Diego Velázquez himself (Sánchez Cantón 1925, p. 394, no. 43; Ruiz Pérez 1999, pp. 212–13, cat. 81, pp. 230–31, cat. 89, and pp. 252–53, cat. 100).

65 Loh 2007, p. 87.

66 Convincing associations between the four paintings are offered in Portús Pérez 2007, associations that make more plausible the idea that the four paintings were conceived as a series. The painting has been interpreted specifically as a function of its exhibition site only twice before: in an essay by Gonzalo M.

palace and destroyed Velázquez's *Apollo and Marsyas*, *Venus and Adonis*, and *Cupid and Psyche* has made it easier for scholars to treat *Mercury and Argus* as an autonomous work and to bring it, for better or worse, into dialogue with other images of violence in the history of western European art, or with images of music.<sup>67</sup> But period sources suggest that *Mercury and Argus* cannot be separated from the context for which it was created. The only contemporaneous written text on these paintings takes the form of entries in the 1686 inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace. These read as follows:

Two other paintings of the same size, [to hang] between windows, three *varas* wide and one *vara* tall, of two fables; the one, of Apollo flaying a satyr and the other of Mercury and Argus with a cow: both originals by the hand of Velázquez<sup>68</sup>

Two other paintings of the same size, a *vara* tall and a *vara* and a half wide, the one of Adonis and Venus and the other of Psyche and Cupid: originals by the hand of Velázquez<sup>69</sup>

However little information about any one of these paintings is provided here, these inventory entries tell us two things about the four paintings all together: The use of the term “entreventana” (between windows) to describe *Mercury and Argus* and *Apollo and Marsyas* reminds us that the paintings were designed with an architectural frame in mind, that they were almost certainly intended for installation in this room. The grouping of *Apollo and Marsyas* and *Mercury and Argus* in one of these entries and *Cupid and Psyche* and *Venus and Adonis* in the other, in addition, tells us that the paintings were

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Borrás Gualis and in Steven Orso's book on the decoration of the New Room, both of whose efforts to resituate the painting within the New Room lead them to the conclusion that *Mercury and Argus* has an allegorical significance in keeping with the larger theme of the Habsburg dynasty as defenders of the Catholic faith. Specifically, Borrás Gualis argues that *Mercury and Argus* is a political reinterpretation of the story of Mercury and Argus as it appears in Juan Pérez de Moya's *Philosophia Secreta: donde debaxo de historias fabulosas, se contiene mucha doctrina prouechosa a todos estudios, con el origen de los Idolos, o Dioses de la Gentilidad*. Borrás Gualis does not say, however, how the subjects of *Apollo and Marsyas*, *Venus and Adonis*, or *Cupid and Psyche*—not all of which appear in Pérez de Moya's treatise—support this reading (Borrás Gualis 1999). Steven Orso reads all four paintings as cautionary tales about the human behaviors that might elicit reward or punishment, respectively (Orso 1986, pp. 103–4). By contrast, Simon Vosters is the only scholar to write on *Mercury and Argus* that believes the painting cannot date to the redecoration of the New Room because of what he interprets as a reference to the painting in Manuel de Gallegos's 1637 ode to the Buen Retiro, *Obras varias al real palacio del Bven Retiro* (Vosters 1990, p. 365). This author, however, cannot find a clear reference to *Mercury and Argus* anywhere in this text (Gallegos 1637).

67 For *Mercury and Argus* as an image of violence, see Svetlana Alpers's chapter on the painting in Alpers 2005, pp. 111–32. For *Mercury and Argus* as an image of music, see Benito Olmos et al. 1997 and Flórez Asensio 2005, pp. 155–68.

68 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3, fol. 8: “Otros dos quadros yguales, de entrebentanas, de a tres varas de ancho y vara de alto, de dos fábulas; la una, de Apolo deshollando [un sátiro] y la otra de Mercurio y Argos con una vaca: ambos originales de mano de Velazquez.”

69 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 3, fol. 8: “Otros dos quadros yguales, de vara de alto y vara y media de ancho, el uno de Adonis y Venus y el otro de Siquis y Cupido: originales de mano de Velazquez.”

conceptualized as a set of pairs. These written descriptions thus give us a sense that the production of this painting in a cycle of four and the hang of the cycle in this gallery were not arbitrary or circumstantial conditions of this particular work. Rather, they constitute integral aspects of a coherent project that includes *Mercury and Argus*, but whose concept extends far beyond the contents of this single canvas.

Superficially, there are several ways that the form of Velázquez's mythological cycle registers his awareness of the paintings' intended exhibition space. It is difficult to evaluate Velázquez's approach to their design because of the loss of three of the four paintings that comprise this cycle. *Mercury and Argus* is not a standalone work; it is a single fragment of what has already been suggested was an internally coherent larger project. Nevertheless, Velázquez's compositional choices at least for *Mercury and Argus* speak directly to the paintings' intended viewing site on the south wall of the Hall of Mirrors. That the paintings functioned as *entreventanas* is specified in the 1686 inventory, and it is a specification with some weight. It indicates, firstly, the precise location that the paintings occupied on the wall and suggests, secondly, that they were to some degree defined by the wall space they were to occupy. The dimensions of the four paintings are readily explained when one considers that the suite was designed to fill a set of particular spaces on the wall, limited on either side by windows and the edge of the wall itself and above and below by the remaining decorative objects in the gallery, be they porphyry tables or other oil paintings. The disposition of the figures of Mercury and Argus horizontally across the picture plane fits well within the rectangularity of the canvas, even drawing attention to the challenge of producing a painting of figures as monumental as those that appeared in Titian's *furias* or Rubens's history paintings within the constraints of the painting's unusual shape. Cleverer still is Velázquez's handling of the figures' faces. Mercury's eyes are entirely hidden by his winged hat, the rest of his face obscured in shadow. Argus's expression is barely visible beneath his hair, his features cast down as he sleeps with his chin to his chest. These choices, which are all the more remarkable because they were made by a professional portraitist, would only have been enhanced by the effects of backlighting imposed on them by the painting's display between windows. There is much that Velázquez's choices for *Mercury and Argus* by itself cannot tell us about Velázquez's pictorial strategy for the cycle as a whole in response to the particular challenges posed by making paintings for the south wall of the Hall of Mirrors. Nevertheless, they demonstrate how the qualities that should have made the space that this cycle eventually occupied disadvantageous as a site of display could be made to work in the service of Velázquez's demonstration of virtuosity.

Most important is the rigorously symmetrical composition of *Mercury and Argus*, if not also of the cycle itself (comprised of a set of pairs, displayed symmetrically). The figures of Mercury and Argus, centrifugally positioned along a central axis, echo the symmetrical pairings of lions and eagles in the sculptural decorations that Velázquez purchased in Italy; the symmetrical composition of the cycle as a whole ripples outward in the symmetry of the hang of the paintings within the gallery and the interior architecture of the gallery itself. In his treatise from circa 1675, Jusepe Martínez would define symmetry in art as "the correspondence that there is between parts, and from the parts to

the whole.”<sup>70</sup> This rule is visible everywhere in this gallery, where east and west walls are symmetrical with each other, where individual walls are symmetrically composed, where single objects are symmetrically designed around central axes. The laws that govern the whole are thus the laws that Velázquez brought to the part. Symmetry is not only the dominating compositional principle of Velázquez’s individual painting: it is the principle by which the curatorial “composition” of the entire gallery is organized.

But for viewers who were capable of reading it, the content of the series reveals the true scope of Velázquez’s ambitions for this project. If Titian and Rubens were characterized in the hang of the gallery as painters of mythologies, this characterization was best exemplified at the Habsburg court in the form of two cycles of mythological paintings that were among the most important contributions to the royal art collection by each master: Titian’s *poesie* paintings, the cycle of six canvases executed for Habsburg patrons that in turn served as the starting point for the hang of nudes all together in the Alcázar palace; and Rubens’s suite of paintings for the Torre de la Parada. There can be no doubt that Velázquez had these contributions in mind when composing his cycle. Velázquez’s *Mercury and Argus* undoubtedly takes its subject from Rubens’s *Mercury and Argus* of the paintings for the Torre de la Parada (fig. 5.3), the red and blue draperies of each figure taking their cues from Rubens’s formulation. Likewise, the most famous painting of the subject of Venus and Adonis at the Habsburg court was Titian’s *Venus and Adonis*, the second painting in his *poesie* series and the surest model for Velázquez’s own *Venus and Adonis*. In the composition of his own painting cycle, Velázquez included subjects derived from other major cycles of mythological paintings produced for Habsburg kings. The same art historical self-awareness that Velázquez brought to the gallery hang thus reappears here, within the cycle itself. By choosing subjects from paintings already on view at the Habsburg court, Velázquez produced a cycle of mythological paintings that is aware of a history of mythological cycles before it, and that folds this history into itself.

The most telling paintings in the cycle, from this standpoint, are the paintings whose sources have proven more difficult to locate: *Cupid and Psyche* and *Apollo and Marsyas*. For these, we will need to consider more carefully aspects of Velázquez’s reception of the mythological paintings of Rubens and Titian and especially the ways that his reception of either figure could map onto his reception of the other. In particular, we will need to look carefully at Velázquez’s painting *The Spinners, or the Fable of Arachne* (fig. 5.4, henceforth *Las Hilanderas*, as it is more colloquially known), which he made in the same years in which he was finalizing the decorative program of the Hall of Mirrors. The painting uses a scene of everyday life in the royal tapestry workshop to tell the story of the weaving contest held between Minerva and Arachne originally narrated in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.<sup>71</sup>

70 Martínez 1673–75, fol. 5r: “la correspondencia q; hai entre las partes, y de ellas al todo”; see also Martínez 2017, p. 43.

71 The particular iconography of this painting has not always been so certain. On the painting’s subject and meaning, see Angulo Íñiguez 1948 and the related Angulo Íñiguez 1952; Tolnay 1949; Cavallius 1972; Millner Kahr 1980; Burke et al. 1981; Sebastián López 1984 and the related Sebastián López 1986; Moffitt 1985 and Moffitt 1986b; Stapleford and Potter 1987; Sotomayor Román 1990; Bedaux 1992; Pita Andrade 1992; Martín del Burgo 2001 and the related Martín del Burgo 2006; Krieger 2002; Bauer and



FIGURE 5.3 Peter Paul Rubens (and workshop), *Mercury and Argus*, 1636–38, oil on canvas, 180 × 298 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001673

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

In Ovid's telling, the tapestry that Arachne weaves illustrates the story of the rape of Europa by Jupiter, who, disguised as a gleaming white bull, carries her across the sea. In her groundbreaking study of the painting, Svetlana Alpers traces Velázquez's source for each of these stories—the first of which appears to be taking place in the middle ground of *Las Hilanderas*, the second in the background as a tapestry on the wall behind the figures of Minerva and Arachne—to the mythological cycles of Rubens and Titian. Velázquez's version of the rape of Europa derives quite clearly from Titian's painting of the same subject for his *poesie* series. Alpers also sees in his version of the weaving contest between Minerva and Arachne a reference to Rubens's painting of this subject for the Torre de la Parada (fig. 5.5).<sup>72</sup> The composition thus builds out of images within images, seamlessly merged into a single, coherent narrative. It is, in Alpers's words, a "complex of copies" that reproduces Titian's *poesie* by way of Rubens's example.<sup>73</sup> What Alpers does not point out, however, is that Rubens's *Pallas and Arachne* already contains a

Bauer 2003; Sanmartín Arce 2003 and the related Sanmartín Arce 2005; Hellwig 2004; Alpers 2005; Portús Pérez 2005; Moreno Amaya 2007; the relevant chapters of Knox 2009; Angelini 2010; and Portús Pérez 2020. On the related issue of Pedro de Arce (the painting's owner) in particular, see Caturla 1948 and Marías 2003a. All this is in addition to the many monographs on the painter, which reliably include an account of the painting.

72 Like many of his most interesting paintings for the Torre de la Parada, all that survives of this work is an oil sketch. On Rubens's oil sketches, see Held 1980; and Lammertse and Vergara 2018.

73 Alpers 2005, p. 194. Alpers offers a preliminary version of the same argument in Alpers 1999 and further explores the interrelation between these three painters in Alpers 2002.



FIGURE 5.4 Diego Velázquez, *The Spinners, or the Fable of Arachne*, 1655–60, oil on canvas, 220 × 289 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001173

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

self-citation to his own *Rape of Europa*, also executed for the Torre de la Parada (fig. 5.6). By substituting Rubens's *Rape of Europa* for that of Titian, Velázquez reimagines the *poesie* as a point of reference for Rubens's cycle of mythologies for the Torre de la Parada, willfully seeing in the one mythological cycle the source material for the other. In light of all that Alpers has said about *Las Hilanderas*, we might consider it a meditation on art historicity, framed as a kind of weaving and interweaving of references to preexisting masters and models. But Velázquez's insertion of Titian's *Rape of Europa* into Rubens's *Pallas and Arachne* in *Las Hilanderas*—especially at the expense of Rubens's own version of *The Rape of Europa*—gives a sense of the degree to which the history of art visualized in this work is of Velázquez's own invention.

It is this inventive take on the mythological paintings of his predecessors, the will-to-historicity at the heart of *Las Hilanderas*, that begins to explain the choices behind Velázquez's *Cupid and Psyche* and *Apollo and Marsyas* for his own mythological cycle. A source for Velázquez's *Cupid and Psyche* has never been identified. As a pair to *Venus and Adonis*, however, the story of Cupid and Psyche is fitting, as both describe a thwarted love between a deity and a "lesser" being. Moreover, there was a precedent within the mythological canvases of Titian and Rubens for a painting of this subject, albeit not where one might expect. It was not Titian who included a painting of this subject among his *poesie*, but rather Rubens in his suite for the Torre de la Parada (fig. 5.7). It is a subject of the kind



FIGURE 5.5 Peter Paul Rubens, *Pallas and Arachne* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 26.67 × 38.1 cm, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 58.18  
IMAGE © VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BY TRAVIS FULLERTON

that Titian famously painted from within a cycle executed by Rubens. Insofar as this is the case, this choice of subject suggests that the history of which Velázquez's mythological cycle is aware is richer than his *Mercury and Argus* and *Venus and Adonis* could indicate by themselves. Velázquez's *Cupid and Psyche* suggests that he does not view Titian's *poesie* and Rubens's cycle for the Torre de la Parada as isolated events, with no relationship to each other. Alejandro Vergara has convincingly suggested that Titian's *poesie* served as an important precedent for the series of mythological paintings that Rubens would make for the Torre de la Parada—in other words, what Titian made for the kings of Spain can account in some way for what Rubens made for the kings of Spain.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps this is true; perhaps it is not. It may be the case that Rubens's *Cupid and Psyche*, in particular, has no direct relationship to Titian's *poesie* at all, given how little Rubens's painting resembles any one of Titian's erotic works. What is important here is that by selecting a subject from one cycle that so readily recalls the other, Velázquez imagined—perhaps

74 Vergara 1999, p. 130. We know that Velázquez was present to observe Rubens's studious production of copies of Titian's *poesie* while in residence at the court between 1628 and 1629, copies which entered the royal art collection upon Rubens's death in 1640 (on these copies, see Cavalli-Björkman et al. 1987; and Vergara 1999, pp. 98–104).



FIGURE 5.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Rape of Europa* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 18.9 × 13.7 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P002457

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO



FIGURE 5.7 Peter Paul Rubens, *Cupid and Psyche* (sketch), 1636–37, oil on panel, 26.6 × 24 cm, Musée Bonnat-Helleu, CM 2

IMAGE © BAYONNE, MUSÉE BONNAT-HELLEU, BY A. VAQUERO

willfully fabricated—a connection between the masters' projects. There are many ways that Rubens's cycle departs from that of Titian: the total number of paintings Rubens made for the Torre de la Parada far exceeds Titian's six *poesie*, the scale of the paintings is significantly more varied, and the subjects are much more wide-ranging. Nevertheless, if Velázquez was looking at Rubens's suite of paintings for the Torre de la Parada for evidence that Rubens painted it with Titian in mind, he would have found it in the small number of paintings of erotic subject matter that Rubens included in this suite, like

Rubens's *Cupid and Psyche*. In producing a painting of *Cupid and Psyche* (in reference to Rubens) to serve as a pendant to his *Venus and Adonis* (a reference to Titian), Velázquez visualized the dialogue between masters in which he sought to participate with his own mythological cycle.

The choice of the subject of Apollo and Marsyas reflects a similar interweaving of the legacies of Rubens and Titian as painters of mythologies reflected in Velázquez's *Cupid and Psyche*. To the extent that both can be characterized as paintings of music and violence, the story of Apollo and Marsyas serves as an entirely appropriate pendant to that of Mercury and Argus, and it thus convincingly takes up themes from Rubens's cycle of paintings for the Torre de la Parada in excess of the erotic adventures of the Greco-Roman gods. Before Velázquez executed this work, there was no single example of a painting of this subject at the Spanish court. Nevertheless, it was not one entirely without precedent in the history of art: one of Titian's last great mythologies was a painting of precisely this subject (fig. 5.8).<sup>75</sup> Titian's *Flaying of Marsyas* remains something of a mystery. It is unknown for whom the painting was made or what became of it in the century after Titian finished painting it (assuming, of course, that he did finish painting it).<sup>76</sup> The provenance history of this painting is extremely uncertain, and it is unclear that Velázquez ever saw it while in Italy or where he may have heard of it. But if Velázquez did choose the subject of his own *Apollo and Marsyas* with Titian's work in mind, then in this painting we see Velázquez bringing his mythological cycle full circle. In *Apollo and Marsyas*, Velázquez finds a way, through Rubens's example, to rediscover Titian.

There is an awareness that Velázquez evidences in the cycle, composed out of subjects derived from other cycles, that his own mythological cycle postdates two others; still more importantly, there is a self-conscious positioning of these two cycles as the preconditions for his own. If we are unable to say very much about the pictorial composition of most of the paintings in Velázquez's cycle, the cycle as a whole is itself a carefully composed work of art. The relationships of the individual paintings to preexisting models and especially their interrelationships work all together to position Velázquez's cycle as the culmination of a history of mythological cycles that unfolds as a dialogue between Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez himself. If it is the only mythological cycle that Velázquez would produce over the course of his career, it was not the first that had ever been made for Spanish patrons, and this is very much the point. The interventions that Velázquez made to the final hang of the Hall of Mirrors permitted him to stage a history of art under

75 As with many of the paintings by Titian in this book, the bibliography on this painting is substantial, overlapping to no small degree with the books on Titian and his late paintings already cited above. On Titian's *Flaying of Marsyas* in particular, however, a select bibliography might include Neumann 1962; Fehl 1968; Wyss 1996, pp. 133–41; Cranston 2007; Held 2008; Carvalho 2010; Rosand 2010; Campbell 2016; Apesos 2018; and Sapir 2018.

76 In his still essential catalogue of Titian's mythological paintings, Harold Wethey lists no primary sources that make mention of this work, with the exception of a single inventory dating to 1655 and thus after Velázquez's final departure from Italy (Wethey 1975, pp. 153–54).



FIGURE 5.8 Titian, *The Flaying of Marsyas*, probably 1570s, oil on canvas, 220 × 204 cm, Archbishop's Palace, Kroměříž, KE 2370, O 107

IMAGE © ARCIDIECÉZNÍ MUZEUM KROMĚŘÍŽ (ARCHDIOCESAN MUSEUM KROMĚŘÍŽ), BY ZDENĚK SODOMA

the Habsburgs, one whose protagonists were Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez. This revision to the historical record that is effectuated when Velázquez's cycle is inserted into the gallery hang is thus thematized within the cycle itself: his mythological cycle is Velázquez's performance of his place in the history of art under the Habsburgs, by which Velázquez repeats the performance of Titian and Rubens before him, and which takes this performance as its very subject.

There is still another way that Velázquez's cycle is a performative repetition of the history of art under the Habsburgs. Titian and Rubens did not only produce series of

mythological paintings for the kings of Spain; they produced these paintings for installation in royal sites. As has been noted above, Titian's letter of September 10, 1554, to King Philip II makes clear that the *poesie* were intended by their author to be hung in a *camerino* in the palace. Whether or not Velázquez knew this, it was a desire that eventually found its strange realization in the Vaults of Titian, a site with which Velázquez was deeply familiar. And the earliest known documentation of the paintings for the Torre de la Parada describes these as paintings that the king specifically commissioned for this royal site, perhaps even in advance of the selection of Rubens as their painter. While negotiating their commission, Philip IV's representative in the Netherlands writes to him the following: "[As for] the paintings that Your Excellency orders me to have made for the Torre [de la Parada], Rubens is already in charge of them and tells me that [he] has started some of them."<sup>77</sup> In both cases, whether or not a site is specified by name, the installation of the painting cycle in a royal exhibition space is written into the cycle from the start; in both cases, Titian's and Rubens's paintings functioned as the visible centerpieces of a display program of a royal site. When Velázquez inserts his mythological cycle into the decorative program of the Hall of Mirrors, the history spanning Titian and Rubens effectively repeats itself. It is not only their subject matter or the production of these paintings as a cycle that situates these paintings and their maker within a larger history of art production at the Habsburg court: installation, in and of itself, here constitutes a part of Velázquez's artistic performance. And as quite possibly the first painter in the history of the profession to hold the title of *apostador mayor de palacio*, it was an artistic gesture that Velázquez was uniquely in the position to make.

The lament that Antonio Palomino issued in his 1724 biography of Diego Velázquez has reverberated throughout the painter's historiography. But while it may be true that the total number of great works that Velázquez produced toward the end of his career is very low, a painting like *Mercury and Argus* would have been impossible except under the circumstances in which Velázquez found himself in the last decade of his life and career. If his work in the palace was an honorable burden, as Palomino would characterize it, this was not a burden that impeded Velázquez's painting practice at the end of his life. This was, in certain respects, its very foundation.

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77 Rooses and Ruelens 1909, p. 170: "Las pinturas que me manda V.M. para la Torre que se hagan, está ya Rubens encargado dellas y me avisa se han comenzado algunas."

## Les Suivants

To judge by the biographies of Velázquez written by Lázaro Díaz del Valle, Jusepe Martínez, and especially Antonio Palomino, his career as *apostador mayor de palacio* was unequivocally successful, and his redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors his crowning achievement in this arena.<sup>1</sup> Velázquez's work in the Hall of Mirrors demonstrates the way his role as curator of the royal art collection could serve as a vehicle for his ambitions as a painter and the way his curatorial work could, in turn, inform his painting practice. But the reception of this and other projects he carried out as *apostador mayor de palacio* also indicates that this work came to be interwoven into his professional identity at the Spanish court, and with significant consequences for the painters that sought to follow his example. Velázquez's extraordinary success at the court of Philip IV changed what it meant to be a painter for the Habsburgs, and especially what it meant to be their portraitist. Velázquez became an indispensable model of professional success for royal portrait painters after him. That this is the case is made clear enough by the portraits of members of the royal family produced by his followers according to conventions that he had perfected in his own portraits. For these same artists, however, to emulate Velázquez was not only to make portraits that took his paintings as a model; it was also to follow his example as *apostador mayor de palacio*.

The generation following Velázquez saw a shift in the types of work pursued by artists at the Habsburg court.<sup>2</sup> Nearly every *pintor de cámara* after Velázquez through the end of this dynasty was hired to work simultaneously as *ayuda de la furriera*, a position which, like *apostador mayor de palacio*, candidates were required to solicit themselves. These included Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo, Juan Carreño de Miranda, Claudio Coello, and Luca Giordano, all of whom made significant contributions to the history of art during the reign of Charles II, Philip IV's only surviving son and heir to his throne. Their collective oeuvre demonstrates in different ways the impact of Velázquez's work as a painter on the artistic culture of the Habsburg court. As their employment record suggests, all were aware that Velázquez's appointments in the managerial infrastructure of the royal palace had played a role in his success as a court painter. Moreover, several substantial projects undertaken by these artists reveal the practical consequences of Velázquez's double legacy. The work of Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and of Juan Carreño de Miranda in particular gestures toward the same interchange of painterly and curatorial imaginations so exemplified in the Hall of Mirrors. Aspects of Mazo's work as *ayuda de la furriera* offer a case study, however subtle, in the consequences of a painter's occupation of this post. And paintings made by Juan Carreño de Miranda reveal one

1 For a critical interpretation of Velázquez's biographies, see Hellwig 2007–8.

2 For comprehensive overviews of this generation of painters and their professional activity at the Habsburg court, see Pérez Sánchez 1986; and Aterido Fernández 2015, pp. 320–61.

especially sophisticated way that Velázquez's curatorial work could inform painting in his stead. Although only two examples of artistic activity undertaken in the wake of Velázquez, they suggest the different ways in which to be an artist after Velázquez meant to acknowledge both aspects of his career at the court of Philip IV.

It is not possible, however, to discuss the work of artists who followed Velázquez without first discussing the one painting perhaps in the entire history of Western art to which artists have most consistently responded and around which his reception necessarily revolves: *Las Meninas*, Velázquez's other tour de force of the 1650s (fig. 6.1). This painting was the single most provocative work that Velázquez executed over the course of his career at the Spanish court. It served artists after him as a model for royal portraiture, one that could seemingly be endlessly reworked according to the needs of the artists who took it as such. Made in 1656 and therefore precisely when Velázquez was assembling the Spanish Hall of Mirrors, *Las Meninas*, too, is the product of two creative imaginations at work simultaneously. The history of the reception of Velázquez's career as an artist under the Habsburgs cannot be told without reference to this painting, considered only as a painting. But as a work of installation, with a specific intended audience and a judiciously decorated exhibition space, *Las Meninas* once again represents the fruits of both of Velázquez's artistic identities at the Habsburg court working as one.

## 1 Reconsidering *Las Meninas*

Velázquez produced *Las Meninas* at precisely the same moment that he executed the most significant curatorial project of his career. The Hall of Mirrors was a project within which Velázquez's intelligences as a painter and as a curator were able to work in tandem; so too was *Las Meninas*, seemingly produced for an exhibition space with which it was in vivid dialogue. The site of display of *Las Meninas* reinforces the internal working of the painting around what remains its most polemical feature: the mirror at the center of the painting, and the image of King Philip IV and Queen Mariana that it affords the spectator. It should come as little surprise in light of the moment of its production that Velázquez's greatest painting problematizes the very act of looking. Of the many lines of inquiry the painting manages to inspire, the issue of the painting's display and thus its viewership broaches a series of interrelated questions with which the painting's historiography has become inseparably associated: Who is standing in front of it? What is the mirror reflecting? What is the painting's internal structure? It is here that the conversation surrounding *Las Meninas* inevitably begins.

The mirror at the center of *Las Meninas* has been the subject of overwhelming scholarly debate.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, many of the arguments constructed around the mirror make

3 The bibliography on this painting is too voluminous to summarize here in its entirety. On the mirror, see Penzol 1948; Buero Vallejo 1970; Foucault 1970; Mestre Fiol 1972; Campo y Francés 1978; Cohen and Snyder 1980; Searle 1980; Steinberg 1981; Alpers 1983; Moffitt 1983; Kubler 1985; Snyder 1985; Carrier 1986; Stoichita 1986, republished as Stoichita 1995; Kemp 1990; Bal 1991, pp. 247–85; Damisch 1994; Mitchell 1994;



FIGURE 6.1 Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, 318 × 276 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P001174

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

one of two seemingly incompatible assumptions. The first of these has its origins in the work of Michel Foucault, whose book *The Order of Things* opens with an ekphrasis of *Las*

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Schmitter 1996; Sanmartín Arce 2005; Nieto Alcalde 2007–8; Knox 2009, pp. 162–66; Bodart 2011; and Zaparaín Hernández 2018, among others. For an overview of the many methodologies brought to bear on this painting, see Kesser 1994 and Stratton-Pruitt 2003. A now outdated but still useful general bibliography on the painting can be found in Portús Pérez 2000a, pp. 253–85.

*Meninas*. For Foucault, the problem of the painting's viewership is central. Foucault's text directly addresses the game of gazes at work within the painting and even beyond the picture plane, his descriptive prose moving through and outside the painting in an effort to untangle the apparently "incompatible visibilities" of and "invisibilit[ies] made visible" to the painter, his model, and the spectator.<sup>4</sup> Throughout this ekphrastic movement, Foucault makes little distinction between the space in front of the painting and that within it, treating them as continuous and drifting back and forth between them as the painting directs his gaze. For Foucault, it is as though the picture plane of *Las Meninas* functions not merely as a window into a represented space; it bisects the spaces (both fictive and real) for which it accounts, spaces that are interpenetrated by the reciprocal gazes of those on either side of the divide and, crucially, by the mirror at the center of the painting. "What [the mirror] is reflecting," Foucault writes, "is that which all the figures within the painting are looking at so fixedly, or at least those who are looking straight ahead; it is therefore what the spectator would be able to see if the painting extended further forward, if its bottom edge were brought lower until it included the figures the painter is using as models."<sup>5</sup> Around the time that Foucault was at work on the painting, *Las Meninas* was on view in a gallery called the "Sala de las Meninas," where it was exhibited in the company of just one other object: a mirror, installed across from it (fig. 6.2).<sup>6</sup> It is not difficult to imagine the vertiginous sense of circularity that this installation would have generated, absorbing everyday visitors to this gallery within a system of interlocking mirror reflections. Likewise, Foucault's viewpoint, articulated in the age not of royal palaces but of public art museums, is a "democratiz[ing]" one: for Foucault, it appears that "the painter's gaze ... accepts as many models as there are spectators," Velázquez's painting thus recasting the average museumgoer as the Spanish monarchs.<sup>7</sup> Resituating the work in the 1660s, the interchange between the mirror within the painting and the space just in front of the picture plane seems instead to reveal the painting's spectators—the figures that are standing in front of the painting, as dictated by the contents of the painting itself—to be the king and queen of Spain. This is the position often adopted by the "philosopher/theorists" who have taken *Las Meninas* as their subject: that the mirror is reflecting the space immediately in front of the painting.<sup>8</sup>

The other possibility that presents itself derives from the most frequently cited source on *Las Meninas*: Antonio Palomino's description of the painting in his biography of Velázquez, perhaps the most direct address on the part of one of Velázquez's (near) contemporaries to the question of what, exactly, is being reflected in the mirror in *Las Meninas*. When Palomino encountered the painting, it was still on view in the Alcázar

4 Foucault 1970, pp. 4 and 5.

5 Foucault 1970, p. 8.

6 On the exhibition history of *Las Meninas* in the Prado, see Portús Pérez 2009; for related reflections on the role of the Prado in the nineteenth-century rediscovery of Velázquez, see Portús Pérez 2000b.

7 Foucault 1970, p. 4. On the "democratiz[ing]" aspect of his analysis, see Arasse 2013a.

8 So characterized in Stratton-Pruitt 2003, p. 135. On the role played by Foucault in the critical afterlife of *Las Meninas*, see Dubreuil-Blondin 1993.



FIGURE 6.2 Carlos Manso and Manuel Olivares, Gallery 15A of the Museo Nacional del Prado, 1977.  
Museo Nacional del Prado; Calle de Ruiz de Alarcón, 23; Madrid, Spain  
IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

palace, which Velázquez had so pointedly worked to transform into a museum of the Habsburg dynasty and its painters and within which he could cement his own role as the creator of the image of Philip IV's kingship.<sup>9</sup> In the only section of Palomino's prose addressing the mirror, he describes it as follows:

The canvas on which he is painting is large, and one sees nothing of what is painted, because one sees it from the back part that is attached to the easel.

Velázquez demonstrated his clear ingenuity by discovering what he was painting with an ingenious design, making use of the crystalline light of a mirror that he painted at the back of the gallery, and opposite to the canvas, whose reflection, or repercussion, presents to us our Catholic King and Queen, Philip and Mariana.<sup>10</sup>

Palomino claims that the mirror is reflecting the canvas whose recto is otherwise invisible to the viewer, praising the ingenuity of Velázquez's use of a mirror reflection to reveal the images of King Philip IV and Queen Mariana on which he depicts himself at work.<sup>11</sup> Palomino articulates no interaction between *Las Meninas* and anything outside the space depicted within the realm of the picture plane, locating the source of the mirror reflection within its confines. Palomino's account of the mirror reflection is supported by the construction of the space that is the setting of *Las Meninas*, the former chambers of Prince Balthasar Carlos on the ground floor of the Alcázar palace, which had come to function as Velázquez's studio. The space depicted is constructed according to geometric perspective, by which a system of orthogonal lines establishes a direct connection between the recto of the canvas on which Velázquez works and the mirror reflection.<sup>12</sup> This is the viewpoint most vocally championed by "empirically inclined historians": that

9 That Palomino's perception of the history of art in Spain and consequently his writings on this topic were inflected by what he saw on the walls of the Alcázar palace was explored in Riello 2016.

10 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 342–43: "El Lienzo, en que està pintando es grande, y no se vè nada de lo pintado, porque se mira por la parte posterior, que arrima à el caballete. / Dió muestras de su claro ingenio Velazquez en descubrir lo que pintaba con ingeniosa traza, valiendose de la christalina luz de vn Espejo, que pintò en lo vltimo de la Galeria, y frontero al Quadro, en el qual la reflexion, ò repercussion nos representa à nuestros Catholicos Reyes Phelipe, y Mariana"; see also Palomino 1947, p. 92; Palomino 1987, p. 165; and Palomino 2018, p. 148.

11 On the invisibility of the recto of the canvas in *Las Meninas*, see Portús Pérez 2016b, pp. 186–88.

12 On the setting of *Las Meninas* in the former chamber of Prince Balthasar Carlos, including questions regarding the system of orthogonal lines ordering the space depicted, see Moya 1961; Moffitt 1983; Moffitt 1986a; Orso 1986, pp. 165–82; Campo y Francés 1991; Plaza Santiago 1995; Witko 2008; Llórente 2015; Ramón-Laca 2017; and Zaparaín Hernández 2018, among others. That the space functioned as Velázquez's painting studio is central to the interpretation of the painting offered by Jonathan Brown, which remains essential to the painting's historiography (see Brown 1978, pp. 87–110; Brown 1986b, pp. 253–64; and Brown 2008a). However, Brown's argument assumes that the king and queen are simply visiting Velázquez to observe him at work in the studio rather than modeling for Velázquez as he paints their portrait. Although Jonathan Brown's argument that the painting is Velázquez's bid for nobility for the art of painting is perhaps most widely known and most highly esteemed, other scholars have pursued different and sometimes complementary lines of

the mirror at the center of *Las Meninas* reflects the image of the royal couple painted on the canvas within the bounds of the picture plane.<sup>13</sup> Between the respective viewpoints of Palomino and Foucault, two answers to the question of what the mirror is reflecting seem possible, each of which represents a visual regime at first glance entirely irreconcilable with the other. The one corresponds to the painting's geometrically determined internal structure, offering an intellectual resolution to the question that presents itself in the face of *Las Meninas*, while the other corresponds to the optical illusion of the mirror's address to a present spectator, and of an experiential resolution to this same question.

Diane Bodart has convincingly suggested that the mirror in *Las Meninas* does both: it is a double vision that reflects both the surface of the canvas on which the painter Diego Velázquez is shown at work and also his model/spectator, physically present in front of the canvas.<sup>14</sup> She suggests, in other words, that Palomino's assertion that the mirror reflects the front of the canvas within *Las Meninas* and Michel Foucault's assumption that it reflects the figures standing in front of *Las Meninas* are not at odds with one another but occurring simultaneously and, furthermore, that the painting's efficacy in fact depends on their simultaneous occurrence. Her argument begins with a simple but effective gesture: she includes *Las Meninas* within the corpus of royal portraiture produced for Habsburg rulers beginning with Charles V and ending around the time of Charles II. For her, the painting constitutes a kind of double portrait of King Philip IV and Queen Mariana. Thus situated within this pictorial category, the painting is able to operate within and, as Bodart demonstrates, manipulate the laws of this genre. Her thought process begins with the philosophy of Louis Marin addressing "the powers of substitution, of intensification, and of legitimation of presence specific to the royal portrait as a 're-presentation.'"<sup>15</sup> For Marin, the king and his portrait are both images of the monarchy and thus existentially equivalent—if not mutually reinforcing—incarnations of the sovereign authority of Habsburg royalty. Taking the portrait as a literal re-presentation that makes present the body of the king in its absence, Marin claims that "at the place of re-presentation"—that is, at the site of the portrait itself—"there is a thing or person absent in time or space, or rather an other, and a substitution operates with a double of this other in its place."<sup>16</sup> This doubling of the sovereign body at the site of the painted portrait is what makes it possible, according to Bodart's analysis, for "the visual image ... to replace the corporeal and individual presence of the monarch."<sup>17</sup> Marin even claims that

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argumentation that ultimately arrive at the same conclusion (see Kubler 1966; Millner Kahr 1975; Crawford Volk 1978; Orso 1986, pp. 173–78; Umberger 1995).

13 So characterized in Stratton-Pruitt 2003, p. 135. The most vocal of these, as per Stratton-Pruitt's account, is Jonathan Brown, whose publications on *Las Meninas* will be addressed later in this chapter.

14 Bodart 2011, pp. 301–6.

15 Bodart 2011, pp. 16–17.

16 Marin 1988, p. 5.

17 Bodart 2011, p. 17: "l'image visuelle ... de remplacer la présence corporelle et individuelle du monarque."

“the king is only truly king, that is, monarch, in images. They are his *real presence*.”<sup>18</sup> As an expression of the “metaphysics of royalty,”<sup>19</sup> a royal portrait can therefore stand in for the physical presence of the king, albeit with one caveat: “The efficacy of the redoubling and of the superimposition between the king and his image rests on their concentration in a single apparition. If the portrait substitutes itself for the king in his absence, it inevitably effaces itself in his presence.”<sup>20</sup> In the presence of the king, the bodily manifestation of the monarchy, the portrait loses its power.

These are the laws that *Las Meninas*, operating as a royal portrait, sets into action. If we accept that *Las Meninas* is a variation on royal portraiture of the kind that Velázquez was contracted to produce at the court of Philip IV, then we can accept Bodart’s proposal that “the mirror of *Las Meninas* seems ... to play with the redoubling and the superimposition of the body of the king and of his image” that was essential to the very working of imagery of power at the Habsburg court.<sup>21</sup> In this aspect of her analysis, Bodart takes up the line of inquiry of Victor Stoichita, for whom the mirror serves as the axis around which the limits of representation of the royal body hinge in Velázquez’s work.<sup>22</sup> Bodart concludes that “the mirror suggests, in effect, the condensation within a single vision of the reflection of the portrait-in-progress on the canvas which Velázquez is in the process of painting and of the reflection of the royal couple in flesh and blood ... at the opposite end of the gallery.”<sup>23</sup> If the mirror reflects both the canvas within *Las Meninas* and, perfectly simultaneously, the body of the king and queen standing in front of it, then it visualizes the equivalence of the monarch and his image. In addition, *Las Meninas* offers a solution to a problem emerging from within the metaphysics of kingship and its expression in royal portraiture: the inability of the royal portrait to accommodate the physical presence of the king and queen in front of it, being, as they were, in existential competition with one another as expressions of monarchy. The mirror image of the king and queen in *Las Meninas* permits the painting to absorb the bodies of the monarchy into itself. Rather than compete with their presence, *Las Meninas* makes their presence an integrated part of its illusionistic conceit. Even more than it is a royal portrait, then, *Las Meninas* is a meditation on the very nature of royal portraiture. Thanks to the mirror, the painting only accommodates the presence of the king and queen in front of it. And thanks to the mirror, *Las Meninas* is the only portrait that accommodates the presence

18 Marin 1988, p. 8.

19 Arasse 2013a, p. 153. Arasse begins exploring this concept in Arasse 2003.

20 Bodart 2011, p. 301: “l’efficacité du dédoublement et de la superposition entre le roi et son image repose sur leur concentration en une seule apparition. Si le portrait se substitue au roi en son absence, il s’efface inévitablement en sa présence.”

21 Bodart 2011, p. 305: “Le miroir des *Ménines* semble ... jouer du dédoublement et de la superposition du corps du roi et de son image.”

22 Stoichita 1986, republished as Stoichita 1995.

23 Bodart 2011, p. 305: “la glace suggère en effet la condensation en une seule vision du reflet du portrait en cours d’oeuvre sur la toile que Velázquez est en train de peindre et du reflet du couple royal en chair et en os ... à l’extrémité opposée de la galerie.”

of the king and queen in front of it. The meaning of *Las Meninas* as a representation of the nature of the representation of sovereignty thus emerges from within a closed system that the painting itself constructs. The interrelationships between the bodies of the king and queen in front of the painting, their reflection in the mirror at the painting's center, and the canvas depicted within it expand a space across the picture plane, at the heart of which the metaphysics of the royal portrait stage their dynamic.

The site of the painting's exhibition had a role to play in this extraordinary conceit. The painting imagines a scene in Velázquez's painting studio in the southern part of the palace, with the *escalera del Rubinejo*—the staircase whose construction had occasioned the redecoration of the Octagonal Room and that led to the Vaults of Titian—visible in the background.<sup>24</sup> However, it was hung instead in an office in the summer apartments of the king, situated within a series of rooms in the northern part of the palace.<sup>25</sup> These rooms served the king and queen, in the company of a select entourage, as refuge from the summer heat, but this office in particular was intended for the exclusive use of the royal couple.<sup>26</sup> These rooms were also, it should be noted, under Velázquez's jurisdiction during his time as *apostador mayor de palacio*.<sup>27</sup> In the absence of any other firsthand accounts of the appearance of this gallery, our knowledge of its contents largely derives from the 1666 inventory of the Alcázar palace. The inventory lists twenty-nine paintings in addition to *Las Meninas*, executed by painters from across early modern Europe. Although many of the paintings' authors are not given, those listed included Rubens, Ribera, Guido Reni, Correggio, Tintoretto, Guercino, van Dyck, Veronese, and Snyders, none of whom is better represented in the room than any other.<sup>28</sup> Many of the paintings

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- 24 For a meticulous reconstruction of the architecture of the room depicted in the painting and its relationship to the *escalera del Rubinejo* and contiguous spaces, see Sáseta Velázquez 2011 and Sáseta Velázquez 2013.
- 25 Fernando Marías, Juan María Cruz Yábar, and Thierry Greub offer different readings of the painting based on the paintings with which it was exhibited in the king's summer office in Marías 1995b; Cruz Yábar 2017–18; and Greub 2019, respectively, with the latter two attempting a reconstruction of the decorative program. For another hypothesis regarding the painting's hang in this gallery space (considering such questions as the wall on which the painting might have been hung, the painting's size in proportion to the wall, and the relation between internal and external light sources), see Moffitt 1991. On the construction and decoration of these galleries, see Bottineau 1956–58, pt. 4, pp. 289–304; Barbeito Díez 1992, pp. 154–57; Checa Cremades 1994a, pp. 405–7; Barbeito Díez 1996, pp. 58–59; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 122–48.
- 26 See Moffitt 1983, p. 281; Brown 1986b, p. 259; Marías 1995b, p. 250; Marías 2000, p. 159; and Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 122, among others.
- 27 Although long before Velázquez likely began even conceptualizing *Las Meninas*, in 1645 Velázquez was charged with the care of the paintings hanging in these galleries and is said to have reordered them (AGP, Personal, Caja 911, exp. 6; cited in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 124). It is unclear precisely for what purpose and in what capacity Velázquez did this work. If nothing else, it suggests that Velázquez would have been readily familiar with the king's summer apartments and their decorative program by the time he painted *Las Meninas*.
- 28 For a complete list of the paintings exhibited in this gallery, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 269–94, nos. 161–93.

in this decorative program were still life paintings, and others were light-hearted images of Cupids, bacchanals, and landscapes. The decorative program of the room included seven large mirrors and six stone desks, richly bedecked and heavily worked and, in the case of the mirrors, each ornamented with two eagles.<sup>29</sup> The inventory made of the Alcázar between 1701 and 1703 also reveals that Agostino Mitelli and Angelo Michele Colonna, the same fresco painters who were contracted to produce a fresco cycle for the Hall of Mirrors, executed frescoes for three rooms in the king's summer apartments, this office included; it is thought that the subject of this fresco was the fall of Phaeton, historically misinterpreted as the god Apollo.<sup>30</sup> One's first impulse in the face of this material richness may be to attempt to read *Las Meninas* within the context of the suite of paintings selected for this space.<sup>31</sup> More telling, however, are its furnishings. Without documents definitively tying Velázquez to the decoration of this room, perhaps only conservative assumptions about his role in curating the site of display of his most successful painting are prudent. But his role as *apostador* virtually guarantees that Velázquez had a hand in the choice to hang his painting in this particular room and gives him plausible responsibility for the gallery's contents. He likely chose to install *Las Meninas* in this gallery knowing that it would be surrounded primarily by mirrors. The adjoining rooms in the king's summer apartments were furnished with the occasional bookshelf or desk, and one included a single mirror, but none contained the same proportion of mirrors as this office.<sup>32</sup> In the privacy of this room, itself a kind of "hall of mirrors," the king and queen would have been surrounded by their own image not in the form of conventional portraits but in the form of mirror reflections.

It is in this context that the king and queen would have seen *Las Meninas* and, within it, yet another mirror reflection. If *Las Meninas* functioned as a staging of the central dynamic of royal portraiture, it was surrounded by objects that restaged that dynamic. It is significant that *Las Meninas* was displayed among mirrors, but just as significant that it was not displayed among portraits (installed instead alongside paintings that were unlike *Las Meninas* in every conceivable way, that could not have interfered with its essential working). Mirrors and portraits both constitute forms of representation, but each relates

29 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 2, fol. 16v: "Siete espejos grandes de cinco quartas de alto las lunas y mas de tres de ancho con molduras de ebano con faxas de espejos en los frisos guarnecidas de molduras ondeadas y dibididas de listas de bronce dorado caladas de labores vale cada uno ochocientos ducados de plata / seis bufetes de pasta enbutidos con sus pies digo de marmol de Jenoba los tableros de bara bien cumplida de ancho y dos baras de largo y bara y q<sup>ta</sup> de alto con sus pies de ebano y bronzes dorados y en las pilastras y frisos de las cornisas sus enbutidos de jaspe de colores de pastas y los tableros de marmol enbutidos todos tasados en cinco mill y duzientos ducados de plata"; see also Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 294–95, nos. 194–206. On the decoration of the mirrors with eagles, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 129.

30 García Cueto 2005, pp. 105–18.

31 This is the approach to the interpretation of the site of exhibition of *Las Meninas* in Marías 1995b.

32 It is perhaps noteworthy that none of the rooms within the king's summer apartments listed in the 1636 inventory of the Alcázar have a readily comparable decorative scheme (Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2007, pp. 100–120 and 156–84, nos. 26–44).

to what it represents differently. As Victor Stoichita reminds us, unlike a painting, the image in a mirror does not take the place of what it represents. He writes, "For the mirror to be a representation (and not simply a polished and framed surface), the thing represented must be positioned in front of it, whereas the thing represented in a painting ... is always 'elsewhere.'"<sup>33</sup> The display of *Las Meninas* in this gallery capitalizes on the very qualities that distinguish mirrors from any other kind of representational apparatus, including paintings. They are forms of representation that not only accommodate the king's presence but in fact require it. In order to function as representations of the royal couple, mirrors require the presence of the king and queen in front of them: they require the interplay between representing object and represented body that animates royal portraiture and, furthermore, that animates *Las Meninas*. The mirrors in this gallery serve as an important reminder that *Las Meninas* only works when the king and queen meet their painted gaze. Thus considered, the painting no longer appears organized around the mirror at its center, but around an eyeline, one that would have been further emphasized by the reciprocity of the many gazes staring back out of the painting. The decorative program of the site in which *Las Meninas* was displayed would thus reinforce the painting's internal working, repeating and even redoubling the operation that made *Las Meninas* not a royal portrait but the very dramatization of royal portraiture.

In the careful coordination of the painting's contents, its intended audience, and its site of exhibition, we again see Velázquez's curatorial and painterly intelligences working as one. It is likely that the mirrors and stone tables in this gallery were evenly distributed around the gallery (with the mirror in *Las Meninas*, one imagines, serving as an eighth mirror); the furnishings therefore would have made of this space a Hall of Mirrors in miniature, or perhaps turned inside out. If the Hall of Mirrors was the most public exhibition space in the palace by the end of the 1650s, the summer office was among the most private; the paintings Velázquez included in the final decoration of the Hall of Mirrors were suited to the international audience the room was destined to enjoy at the end of the decade, just as *Las Meninas* was suited to the private use of the summer office. The Hall of Mirrors was a site of representation assembled around the royal body, wherein royal portraits functioned as the axis around which the decorative program was organized; *Las Meninas* is a meditation on the internal working of the royal portrait, one that incorporates the royal body in its conceit. The Hall of Mirrors included a statement of authorial identity under the Habsburg dynasty; in *Las Meninas*, which contains the only confirmed self-portrait Velázquez executed in his entire career, Velázquez christens himself the architect of the royal image, sporting not only the red cross of the Order of Santiago, legendarily added to his chest by Philip IV himself, but also the keys to the royal palace that were his right as *apostentador*.<sup>34</sup> Like the Hall of Mirrors, *Las Meninas*

33 Stoichita 1997, pp. 184–85; Stoichita 2015, p. 215.

34 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342; see also Palomino 1947, p. 920; Palomino 1987, p. 165; and Palomino 2018, p. 145. Palomino's claim has proven controversial; one especially pointed counterargument appears in the fifth chapter of Brown 2014.

is an exercise in the representation of the Spanish monarchy, one in which paintings, mirrors, audience, artist, and sovereign body work together to create meaning that only emerges from their union. *Las Meninas* is thus as much a work of installation as it is a work of painting. How the painting works, where it is, and who is looking at it are mutually complementary parts of a larger structure of signification in a total work of art, one that comprehends far more than the contents of the painting alone.

Whatever impression the “Sala de las Meninas” might have made on Foucault and his fellow museumgoers in the twentieth century surely had its precedent here, where *Las Meninas* was first on view in sight not of one mirror but of many, and before an audience not of many but of just one. Writing three hundred years apart, Foucault and Palomino propose what seem to be superficially contradictory readings of *Las Meninas* in the site of its display. Nevertheless, both are right. One can only wonder at the visual effects that a room full of mirrors must have had, and at the potential therein for infinite regress, the king’s image replicated in endless *mise en abyme*. For Louis Marin, at stake in an object like a royal portrait is the representation of kingship but also, as we have seen, kingship itself as representation: “The whole of this endeavor,” he writes in the introduction to his book on this very subject, “attempts to sketch a portrait of the king (a representation of power) in this philosophical *frame* that would be the monarch himself (power as representation).”<sup>35</sup> Person, representation, reflection, refraction, replication—between the king’s body, *Las Meninas*, and the mirrors exhibited around them, all of these were surely present in this room. “King Philip IV of Spain”—whoever or whatever this ever meant—was likely to be found in the space between them, coming into being at the intersection and as a function of their mutually and perhaps infinitely reinforcing workings as figurations of a sovereign body. “To ‘represent,’” Marin earlier writes, “is to show, to intensify, to duplicate a presence.”<sup>36</sup> As royal portraitist, the representation of the Spanish king was Velázquez’s highest professional purpose. Here, in the king’s summer office and in the painting that he made for it, he demonstrates his profound understanding and absolute mastery of everything that such a task entailed.

All this is perhaps what is expressed in the omission of the image of the king and queen in the only known copy of *Las Meninas*, produced by Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, Velázquez’s son-in-law and principal assistant in the last decades of his career at the court (fig. 6.3).<sup>37</sup> Although the circumstances accounting for its production are entirely unknown, the painting contains a subtle nod of comprehension to Velázquez’s project. In this little copy, Mazo reproduces Velázquez’s painting nearly exactly. But Mazo

35 Marin 1988, p. 7.

36 Marin 1988, p. 5.

37 The authorship of this painting has remained one of the chief concerns debated in the secondary literature on this work, which was once thought to be a *boceto* by Velázquez himself thanks to the painting’s eighteenth-century collector, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. On Jovellanos’s ownership and attribution of the painting, see the third chapter of Álvarez-Valdés y Valdés 2006. On the ensuing debate concerning the painting’s attribution and provenance, see Pita Andrade 1952; Harris 1990; Díaz Padrón 2003, pp. 215–25; Carlos Varona 2004; and Brown 2008b. On these and related questions, see also Portús Pérez 2014b, pp. 126–29, cat. 17; and Kientz 2015, pp. 332–33, cat. 108.



FIGURE 6.3 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *Las Meninas*, 1656–77, oil on canvas, 142.2 × 121.9 cm, Kingston Lacy Estate, Dorset, National Trust, NT 1257140  
IMAGE © NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/JOHN HAMMOND

noticeably departs from Velázquez's model in one significant way: Mazo reproduces the mirror at the heart of Velázquez's work but omits the reflection of the royal pair within it. Mazo's copy thus registers his understanding of the ways that *Las Meninas* operated within and manipulated the laws of portraits of power. The image of the royal couple in the mirror is the site of *Las Meninas* that instantiates the careful relationship between Velázquez's painting, the mirror depicted at its center, and its audience, a relationship ostensibly guaranteed by the protocols governing the painting's exhibition space and

redoubled by that space's decorative program. The artwork is not limited to one or a few of these elements: They all work in concert with one another to produce the painting's meaning and cannot work without each other. Unlike *Las Meninas*, there is no evidence to suggest that the king and queen were ever the audience—intended or otherwise—to Mazo's copy. In fact, the reduced scale of the copy effectively prohibits any potential viewer from imaginatively including himself in the painting. The mirror in Mazo's copy of *Las Meninas*, divested of the image of the royal couple, thus registers an absence, and with it the collapse of Velázquez's carefully constructed system. Moreover, it registers Mazo's understanding that the reciprocity between the king's presence in front of *Las Meninas* and the mirror image within it is what lends the painting its power.

## 2 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo's *The Family of the Artist*

Of all the painters in the generation after Velázquez to see in him a model of professional success, none followed Velázquez's example so diligently as Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo. Mazo is first recorded in Velázquez's workshop as early as 1633, when he is documented as having married Velázquez's daughter Francisca, and worked for his father-in-law until Velázquez's death in 1660, after which he was promoted to *pintor de cámara* in 1661.<sup>38</sup> For approximately thirty years, Mazo worked as Velázquez's closest assistant, helping him produce the many portrait paintings that eventually came out of his workshop, learning his painting technique, and ultimately following so closely in his professional footsteps that Mazo has often disappeared in the historiography into Velázquez's shadow.<sup>39</sup> For Mazo, *Las Meninas* was a model for portraits that he made of members of the royal family that depicted monarchs in real spaces in the royal palace. The most celebrated of these is his *Queen Mariana of Spain in Mourning*, which contains a view of the Octagonal Room as Velázquez had decorated it (fig. 6.4).<sup>40</sup> In a painting like this one, we observe what is perhaps the most overt recognition on Mazo's part of the

38 The only monograph on the painter to date is Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004. On this painter and his work, see also Gaya Nuño 1960; López Navío 1960; Cherry 1990; Ayala Mallory 1991; Gutiérrez Pastor 2005; and Novero Plaza 2006–7; as well as the catalogue entries on the paintings by this artist included in Portús Pérez 2014b; Haag 2014; and Kientz 2015. A biography of the painter was included in Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 372–73 (see also Palomino 1947, pp. 961–62; Palomino 1987, pp. 210–11); and a small number of primary sources on this artist and his family can be found in *Corpus velazqueño* 2000, vols. 1–2. On Mazo's marriage to Francisca Velázquez, see López Navío 1960 and Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004, p. 34. On his promotion to *pintor de cámara*, see Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004, p. 75; and Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 359, table 6.

39 On this aspect of Mazo's historiography, see Morán Turina 2014b. On the question of attribution between Mazo and Velázquez, including that of Mazo's *The Family of the Artist* (to be discussed shortly), see Brown 2008c.

40 On this painting, see especially Bottineau 1955; Ackroyd et al. 2005; and Llórente 2006, pp. 211–28; see also Portús Pérez 2014b, pp. 144–46, cat. 25; and Kientz 2015, pp. 318–19, cat. 101, both of which include a more comprehensive bibliography for this painting.



FIGURE 6.4 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *Queen Mariana of Spain in Mourning*, 1666, oil on canvas, 196.8 × 146 cm, National Gallery, London, NG2926

IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

significance of both dimensions of Velázquez's courtly career. Like so many of the court painters that immediately followed Velázquez, however, Mazo's emulation of Velázquez was not limited to his painting practice: Mazo took on the position of *ayuda de la furriera* in 1657, directly reporting to Velázquez in his capacity as *apoyentador*.<sup>41</sup> Mazo aided him in the production of the many expense reports that the *furriera* generated, even assisting in the settlement of payments in the office of the *furriera* that remained outstanding at the time of Velázquez's death.<sup>42</sup> Although he himself never arrived at the position of *apoyentador mayor de palacio*, Mazo's holding of the office of *ayuda de la furriera* reveals his understanding of the importance of this aspect of Velázquez's professional identity at the Spanish court.

That a painter like Mazo held the position of *ayuda de la furriera* would come with at least one surprising consequence. The job of *ayuda de la furriera* put this little-studied painter in an extraordinary historiographical position in relation to his father-in-law. The description of *Las Meninas* published in the biography by Antonio Palomino is the longest and most thorough account of *Las Meninas* that dates to the early modern period, and as such it is easily the most famous and frequently cited. Nevertheless, it was not the first: as for so many of Velázquez's paintings, the first written commentary on *Las Meninas* takes the form of an entry in a palace inventory. In his position as *ayuda de la furriera*, Mazo was charged with authoring the portion of the 1666 inventory of the contents of the royal palace that included the paintings in the royal art collection; it was therefore Mazo who wrote the first written description of the most celebrated painting in the history of Spanish art.<sup>43</sup> If Velázquez meant the painting as a thesis on the representation of kingship, Mazo would find entirely different terms by which to make sense of Velázquez's opus, offering a significantly different picture of what *Las Meninas* might have looked like to those who happened not to be the king of Spain. He describes the painting as follows:

A painting, [measuring] four and a half *varas* tall and three and a half wide, with a frame of gilded wood, portraying [*retratando*] the Lady Empress with her ladies-in-waiting and a dwarf, by the hand of Diego Velázquez, [valued] at 1,500 silver ducats.<sup>44</sup>

41 See Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004, p. 66; and Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 359, table 6.

42 On the expense reports produced by the office of the *furriera*, see chapter 5 of this book. For documentation of Mazo's settling of outstanding bills in the *furriera* at the time of Velázquez's death, see Cordero and Hernández 2000, pp. 342–43.

43 For a useful introduction to the production and overview of the contents of the 1666 inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace, see Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, pp. 17–21. On the early descriptions of *Las Meninas*, see Knox 2009, pp. 120–23.

44 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 38, exp. 2, fol. 15r: "Una pintura de quatro baras y media de alto y tres y media de ancho con su marco de talla dorado, retratando a la senora enperatriz con sus damas y una enana, de mano de Diego Belazquez en mill y quinientos ducados de plata." This description of the painting persists into the inventory of the contents of the Alcázar palace taken in 1686 and the

The mirror at the center of *Las Meninas* remains the single most remarked-upon feature of the painting, but Mazo's description casts Velázquez's project unambiguously as a portrait of the Infanta Margarita.

Although seemingly difficult to reconcile with everything that has been said about the painting since its production, this description of *Las Meninas* reveals a painter's intelligence at work, and furthermore, that of a painter who inhabited Velázquez's studio and witnessed the production of *Las Meninas* in the workshop.<sup>45</sup> In the decade during which Velázquez painted *Las Meninas*, he and his workshop—including Mazo—were busy producing portraits of the queen Mariana and her daughters María Teresa and Margarita to satisfy a substantial demand for images of the royal family.<sup>46</sup> Among their number was the *Infanta Margarita in a White Dress*, thought to have been executed just before Velázquez painted *Las Meninas*, perhaps even in the very same year (fig. 6.5).<sup>47</sup> It is hardly surprising that a painter who had been present to witness the production of both simultaneously might read *Las Meninas* as a portrait of the infanta akin to the one eventually sent to Vienna; the infanta appears, between the two images, nearly identical. It is perhaps true that Velázquez enjoyed a privileged relationship to the king throughout his career and that in *Las Meninas* he meant to characterize himself as painter to the king. However, for those who were able to recognize his self-citation, Velázquez perhaps also unwittingly characterized himself as a painter of infantas, if not also of "meninas."

In certain respects, the description of *Las Meninas* that Mazo makes in the 1666 inventory recasts our understanding of Antonio Palomino's more famous account of the painting in his biography of Velázquez. It is easy to forget that Palomino was not a contemporary of Velázquez but rather a witness to the reign of Charles II and of the artists who followed in Velázquez's stead. Rereading Palomino's text with Mazo in mind, it

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testament of Charles II made in 1701 (the full history of the record of *Las Meninas* in inventories of the royal art collection can be found in Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 285, no. 182).

45 The scholars who have worked on the painting in recent decades have rarely interpreted *Las Meninas* with the Infanta Margarita as its protagonist. But early scholars consistently did so. Carl Justi claimed that the painting is "strictly speaking a portrait of Princess Margaret as the central figure in one of the daily recurring scenes of her palace life" (Justi 1889, p. 414). Yves Bottineau concluded that "the painting is the portrait of the empress, who, before her marriage, was the Infanta of Spain" (Bottineau 1998, p. 286: "la peinture est le portrait de l'impératrice, qui, avant son mariage, était infante d'Espagne"). And F. J. Sánchez Cantón would also identify the infanta as the painting's central figure in his enumeration of the painting's personages (Sánchez Cantón 1943, pp. 23–24). For competing interpretations of the painting that assume the primacy of the infanta (neither of which uses the 1666 inventory as its point of departure), see Vahlne 1982 and Mena Marqués 1997. Jonathan Brown offers a pointed response to Mena Marqués in Brown 1999.

46 For a focused treatment of this period of Velázquez's life and career, see especially Portús Pérez 2014a. For a brief history of the impact of this period of Velázquez's career on artists after him, see Portús Pérez 2008.

47 On the date of the *Infanta Margarita in a White Dress*, which was likely made for the purposes of negotiating a marriage for the infanta, see Portús Pérez 2014b, pp. 119–25, cat. 15; and Haag 2014, pp. 224–25 and 319–23, cat. 38. The date of *Las Meninas* is given in Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 343; see also Palomino 1947, p. 921; Palomino 1987, p. 166; and Palomino 2018, p. 149.



FIGURE 6.5 Diego Velázquez, *Infanta Margarita in a White Dress*, ca. 1656, oil on canvas, 105 × 88 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie 3691  
IMAGE © KHM-MUSEUMSVERBAND

becomes clear that he has a share in Mazo's viewpoint. As stated above, Palomino identifies the painting on which Velázquez is working in *Las Meninas* as a double portrait of the king and queen, thus identifying Velázquez in his role as their official portrait painter and situating *Las Meninas* within the category of royal portraiture. And yet, the Infanta Margarita appears everywhere in his description of *Las Meninas*. In the very first sentence of his prose, Palomino describes *Las Meninas* as a "large painting with the Portrait of the lady Empress (henceforth the Infanta of Spain) Miss Margarita María of Austria,"<sup>48</sup> categorizing the work twice more as a painting of the infanta in marginal annotations to his prose.<sup>49</sup> Palomino also provides a surprising practical justification for this reading: he makes an immediate comparison between *Las Meninas* and a self-portrait of Titian "holding in his hands another [portrait] with the Effigy of King Philip II."<sup>50</sup> Scholars, perhaps reading this comparison as a fantastic rhetorical flourish, have never closely analyzed this aspect of Palomino's text. Yet there is perhaps one especially good reason to do so: the painting in question, the self-portrait of Titian holding a portrait of Philip II, existed. It hung in the Pardo palace alongside series of portraits of Habsburg royals, where it remained until 1604, when a fire destroyed the portrait gallery and with it approximately fifty portraits.<sup>51</sup> Although it is lost, a record of the painting remains in the 1564 inventory of the Pardo palace, where it is described as "another [portrait] by the painter Titian."<sup>52</sup> More complete is the description of the painting in the account of Argote de Molina, whose 1582 inventory of the contents of the Pardo palace describes the work as a painting of "the Painter Titian, the greatest of his time, born in Venice, whose portrait one sees, holding in his hands another with the image of King Philip II."<sup>53</sup>

It is unclear precisely how Palomino could have known this work, given its disappearance approximately one hundred years prior. Nevertheless, his comparison reorders how we look at *Las Meninas* in a clear and simple way. This comparison comes within a larger lineage that Palomino traces from antiquity to Velázquez that serves to exalt Velázquez on the grounds of his relationship to a royal patron:

48 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342: "Quadro grande con el Retrato de la Señora Emperatriz (entonces Infanta de España) Doña Margarita María de Austria"; see also Palomino 1947, p. 920; Palomino 1987, p. 164; and Palomino 2018, p. 144.

49 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 342 and 343; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 920 and 921; and Palomino 1987, pp. 164 and 166.

50 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342: "teniendo en sus manos otro [retrato] con la Efigie del Señor Rey Don Phelipe Segundo"; see also Palomino 1947, p. 921; Palomino 1987, p. 165; and Palomino 2018, p. 148.

51 On the paintings galleries in the Pardo palace, see Kusche 1991a; Kusche 1991b; Kusche 1992; and Woodall 1995.

52 AGP, Administraciones Patrimoniales, El Pardo, Caja 9380, exp. 8: "Otro [retrato] de Tiziano pintor." This inventory has been published as Sánchez Cantón 1934 (for the portrait, see p. 71).

53 Cited in Roblot-Delondre 1910, p. 59: "Ticiano Pintor, el mas excelente de su tiempo, natural de Venecia, cuyo retrato se ve, teniendo en sus manos otro con la Ymagen del Rey don Phelippe nuestro señor."

I consider this Portrait by Velázquez [to have] no less artifice than that of Phidias, Sculptor and famous Painter, who put his Portrait in the Shield of the Statue that he made of the Goddess Minerva, making it with such artifice, that if it were to be removed from there, the Statue would also be undone entirely.

No less eternal did Titian make his name by portraying himself holding in his hands another [portrait] with the Effigy of King Philip II; and just as the name of Phidias was never erased, as long as the Statue of Minerva was whole, and that of Titian, as long as that of Philip II endured; so too will that of Velázquez endure from one century to another; as long as may endure that of the Excellent, [and] so precious Margarita; in whose shadow his image is immortalized with the kind influences of such a Sovereign Master.<sup>54</sup>

In this passage, Palomino employs a trope common to the literary genre of the artist's biography: "genealogization," in the terminology of Ernst Kriz and Otto Kurz, by which an artist's individual accomplishments and innovations are situated within a larger, connected history of artists succeeding one another.<sup>55</sup> What is surprising, however, is that this comparison between Titian's painting holding the portrait of Philip II and *Las Meninas* establishes a relationship of analogy between not Philip II and Philip IV, but Philip II and the Infanta Margarita, whose image at the center of this work so forcefully recalls the paintings of this same infanta that Velázquez produced in no small quantity at the end of his life. Although Titian's double portrait has been lost to history, it is survived by a portrait medal and a bronze medallion depicting Titian holding in his hands a portrait of his son Orazio; both of these are thought to have been modeled on the lost self-portrait (figs. 6.6–6.7).<sup>56</sup> Insofar as this is the case, they provide a sense of what that double portrait might have looked like. When either medal or medallion is positioned next to *Las Meninas*, Palomino's written analogy yields an immediate visual impact. The many figures in *Las Meninas* appear as a coherent, wholly integrated group. But Palomino's comparison invites the viewer to reduce the painting to two figures: Velázquez and the seemingly autonomous little figure in the center, who, for all her immersion in the scene

54 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342: "Con no menos artificio considero este Retrato de Velazquez, que el de Fidiás Escultor, y Pintor famoso, que puso su Retrato en el Escudo de la Estatua, que hizo de la Diosa Minerva, fabricandole con tal artificio, que si de alli se quitasse, se deshiziesse tambien de todo punto la Estatua. / No menos eterno hizo Ticiano su nombre, con averse retratado teniendo en sus manos otro con la Efigie del Señor Rey Don Phelipe Segundo; y assi como el nombre de Fidiás jamàs se borrò, en quanto estuvo entera la Estatua de Minerva, y el de Ticiano, en quanto durasse el de el Señor Phelipe Segundo; assi tambien el de Velazquez durarà de vnos siglos en otros, en quanio [*sic*] durare el de la Excelsa, quanto preciosa Margarita, à cuya sombra immortaliza su imagen con los benignos influxos de tan Soberano Dueño"; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 920–21; Palomino 1987, p. 165; and Palomino 2018, pp. 145–48.

55 Kris and Kurz 1979, p. 20.

56 See Hope 1990, p. 60; Woodall 1995, p. 57; Weston-Lewis 2004, p. 368–69, cat. 202; Rosand 2009, p. 66; and Nichols 2013, p. 168. For one approach to the question of Titian's self-portraits and his self-consciousness as an artist, see Cranston 2000, pp. 98–126.



FIGURE 6.6 Italian, *Titian and His Son*, ca. 1560–70, gold, wax, seed pearl, and wood, 13 × 12.9 × 2.3 cm, National Museums Scotland, K.2004.38

IMAGE © NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

coalescing around her, still emerges as its clear protagonist. We are invited to reconsider the possibility that, for audiences excluding King Philip IV of Spain, the relationship that animates this work is not that between Velázquez and the king but that between Velázquez and the infanta.

This raises the question of how to account for the rest of the painting's contents beyond this essential pairing. Once *Las Meninas* has been reoriented around these two figures, how can Palomino account for the dwarves, the dog, the ladies-in-waiting that surround them? Like Mazo, Palomino designates this painting a portrait, and the designation is not insignificant. Almost every iteration of the royal image that Velázquez produced over the course of his career at the Habsburg court consisted, as per the norms of the period,



FIGURE 6.7 Agostino Ardeni, *Titian* (1488/90–1576), ca. 1563, lead, 10.3 cm, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, gift of Amanda Marchesa Molinari, 1966.106.21a

IMAGE COURTESY OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART, BRUNSWICK, MAINE  
([WWW.BOWDOIN.EDU/ART-MUSEUM/](http://WWW.BOWDOIN.EDU/ART-MUSEUM/))

of lone figures presented in minimal or even entirely nondescript settings.<sup>57</sup> Here, however, Palomino introduces an important qualifier that permits the genre of portraiture to include the many figures beyond the central pair, and to accommodate the many ways in which *Las Meninas* seems to exceed the practical limits of its genre. His description of the painting begins, as mentioned above, with the figure of the infanta, and it ends with

57 On Velázquez's contribution to the history of portraiture under the Habsburgs, see Bodart 2011. On his early court portraits, see Portús Pérez 2012. On his late court portraits, see Portús Pérez 2014b. For a short, focused account only of the various iterations of the royal image that Velázquez produced over the course of his career, see Brown 1986a.

Velázquez, brush and palette in hand. But in between, Palomino offers what he refers to as a “description of the ‘historiado’ of this painting,” and it is here that he identifies and critiques the little collective attending the infanta.<sup>58</sup> Palomino not only addresses each figure by name but also analyzes their relative positioning within the painting, considering their placement in the foreground, background, and middle ground, and commenting on the little interactions between them that, in his phrasing, “make for the composition much harmony” and “make for the ‘historiado’ a marvelous effect.”<sup>59</sup> Palomino more pointedly defines the term “historiado” elsewhere in his writing, specifically using it to qualify portraiture of a certain complexity and compositional ambition:

And if the Painting, or Surface, where there are one or two independent single Figures, were organized of other supporting elements, such as some bit of Architecture, Landscape, Curtain, Table, etc, though it is a Portrait, in Pictorial terms, we also call it “historiated”; because although there is no more than one Figure, that Congress, organized of several parts, from whose harmonious composition results a perfect whole, we imagine to be “historiated”; since for its constitution one must observe the same graduation, and temperance, as in a History [painting]; and because the said supporting elements stand in for the place, and positioning of the Figures.<sup>60</sup>

It is true that Palomino never explicitly proposes extra figures among his list of possible “supporting elements.” However, in his commentary on *Las Meninas*, it is precisely these secondary figures populating the space around the figure of Velázquez and the Infanta Margarita in the painting that make up the “historiado” of this portrait, and it is their harmonious disposition within a larger composition that makes this a “historiated” portrait.<sup>61</sup>

58 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342: “Descripcion del Historiado de esta Pintura”; see also Palomino 1947, p. 920; and Palomino 1987, p. 165.

59 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 342: “haze à la composicion gran armonia”; “hazen à lo historiado maravilloso efecto”; see also Palomino 1947, p. 920; Palomino 1987, p. 165; and Palomino 2018, p. 145.

60 Palomino 1715, p. 49: “Y si el Quadro, ò Superficie, donde ay vna, ò dos Figuras solas independientes, estuviere organizado de otros adherentes, como algun trozo de Arquitectura, Pais, Cortina, Bufete, &c. aunque sea vn Retrato, en terminos Pictoricos, llamamos también historiado; porque aunque no aya mas que vna Figura, aquèl Congresso, organizado de varias partes, de cuya armoniosa composicion resulta vn todo perfecto, se imagina historiado; pues para su constitucion se hà de observar la misma graduacion, y templança, que en vna Historia; y porque los dichos adherentes substituyen el lugar, y colocacion de las Figuras.”

61 Palomino uses the term only twice more in his biography of Velázquez, to describe *The Surrender of Breda* (MNP, P001172; Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 335; see also Palomino 1947, p. 910; Palomino 1987, p. 156; Palomino 2018, p. 113) and *Prince Baltasar Carlos in the Riding School* (Wallace Collection, P6; Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 332; see also Palomino 1947, p. 907; Palomino 1987, p. 153; Palomino 2018, p. 101). On the latter, see Harris 1976. Palomino’s use of this term and the definition he provides for it recalls a broader conversation in the seventeenth century regarding how to make portraits that are as ambitious as history paintings. The French analogue to Palomino’s *historiado* was the *portrait*

What Palomino accomplishes in his piecemeal description of *Las Meninas* is thus the breakdown of its composition into its component parts, which altogether form a single, coherent whole. The work is essentially divided into two components: one the pairing of Velázquez himself and the Infanta Margarita at the center of the painting, the other what Palomino terms the “historiado” of the painting (that is, the scenography around them). The introduction of this qualifying term seems simple enough to account for the many figures containing the infanta and Velázquez in the painting. But there is still another aspect of the painting that is perhaps accounted for by Palomino’s choice of descriptors. Although Palomino uses the term as though it were a noun, “historiado” is a word that takes the form of a past participle, a verb that has been done to some unnamed, preexisting noun. There is one question that logically follows: What, exactly, has been “historiated”? If we reexamine the painting itself, the elements of the “historiado” all seem to converge upon the “menina” at its center: her ladies-in-waiting are clearly attending her, the dwarves and dog in the lower right-hand corner of the painting are all oriented toward her, and even Velázquez leans slightly backward in her direction. If we accept the notion that *Las Meninas* is in fact best understood as a “historiated” portrait, perhaps the portrait that has been “historiated” is hers. If so, then here we see Palomino taking up the viewpoint of Mazo when he wrote his entries in the inventory of 1666: it is a viewpoint that ultimately sees at the center of *Las Meninas* a portrait like the Vienna portrait and that assumes such a portrait as the starting point for a multi-figural scene that has been expanded around it.

This thought process finds its most compelling expression, perhaps unsurprisingly, in a painting that is itself a careful study of *Las Meninas* and especially of the pictorial elements out of which it is constructed: Mazo’s *The Family of the Artist*, likely produced in 1665 and therefore exactly contemporaneous with the inventory of 1666 (fig. 6.8).<sup>62</sup> It is universally acknowledged that *The Family of the Artist* is a translation of *Las Meninas* into the idiom of Mazo’s own life and career.<sup>63</sup> The foreground of the painting contains a series of figures identified as Mazo’s wife and children, presented right at the edge of the picture plane. The family crest appears in the upper left-hand corner in front of a curtain pulled back to reveal the space these figures occupy. The gallery within which

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*historié*, within which real personages were depicted in allegorical or historicizing dress, sometimes in the company of allegorical figures (Bajou et al. 1997, esp. pp. 91–104). In Italy Bellori’s lives of Andrea Sacchi and Carlo Maratta proposed comparable solutions to the question of how to make portraits that could rival history paintings. The first of these consisted of portraits of an individual figure enlivened with symbols or represented as an allegory, the second of portraits of figures in action (for a convenient English translation of the relevant chapters of this text, see Bellori 2005, pp. 373–440). Fernando Marias offers a different reading of *Las Meninas* as a “historiated” portrait in Marias 2000.

62 On the debate surrounding the date of this painting, see Novero Plaza 2006–7. The most ambitious interpretation of this painting can be found in Swoboda 2014. Informative introductions to the painting can also be found in Portús Pérez 2014b, pp. 140–42, cat. 23; Haag 2014, pp. 234–37 and 324–25, cat. 43; and Kientz 2015, pp. 334–45, cat. 109.

63 See especially Swoboda 2014; see also Novero Plaza 2006–7, pp. 179–80; Portús Pérez 2014b, p. 140, cat. 23; Haag 2014, pp. 236 and 325, cat. 43; and Kientz 2015, p. 334, cat. 109.



FIGURE 6.8 Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *The Family of the Artist*, 1664–65, oil on canvas, 149.5 × 174.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie 320

IMAGE © KHM-MUSEUMSVERBAND

they appear is decorated with paintings in simple black frames consistent with those that adorned paintings in the Alcázar, one of these a portrait of King Philip IV hanging on a wall behind a table strewn with papers, a floral bouquet, and a marble bust. In the upper right-hand corner, one sees a figure, presumably the artist himself, working on a painting of a royal infanta in the studio, as another woman and child watch. The coloring of the painting immediately recalls the palette of *Las Meninas*, the entire painting executed in browns, blacks, reds, and silvery whites. In 1734 *Las Meninas* was inventoried for the first time not as a painting of the Infanta Margarita but instead as a painting of “the family of Philip IV,” and this is how its title is now sometimes given.<sup>64</sup> Like this depiction of a courtly “family,” Mazo’s *Family of the Artist* is a kind of group portrait set in a gallery

64 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 285, cat. 182: “la familia del sr Phelipe quarto.” On the changeability of the titles of paintings in the history of Western art, see Ekserdjian 2010 and especially Yeazell 2015.

space, the collective of figures at its center radically reconfigured as the painting's author and his immediate family.

As a reworking of *Las Meninas*, *The Family of the Artist* offers a reading of *Las Meninas* that is consistent with Mazo's claim that Velázquez's painting is firstly a portrait of the infanta. The little collective of figures that make up the "historiado" in *Las Meninas* recurs in the foreground of *The Family of the Artist*. In lieu of Velázquez, the infanta, and her courtly entourage, one finds Mazo's children and wife, sharing the same little interactions and intimacy so praised in Palomino's account of *Las Meninas*.<sup>65</sup> In the center, one sees not a mirror reflecting Velázquez's royal patrons but a portrait of King Philip IV akin to those executed by Velázquez and his workshop at the end of his life. Most telling is the part of *The Family of the Artist* in which one sees Mazo at work on a painting.<sup>66</sup> The view into the studio offered in the upper-right-hand corner of this painting suggests a view of *Las Meninas* as it might have appeared from within the space on the other side of the picture plane.<sup>67</sup> Rather than seeing Velázquez from the front, with the canvas on which he is working occluded from view, the viewer is invited to see Mazo from the back. The canvas on which he works is revealed to be a portrait of an infanta, here recovering the image of the infanta at the center of *Las Meninas*. In revealing the recto of the canvas on which he works, Mazo dispels the mystery of *Las Meninas*. Without the mirror at its center, the metaphysical interplay between the body of king and his image that activates *Las Meninas* collapses in this version, which in no way implies the physical presence of the king within or outside the confines of the picture plane. Nonetheless, nearly every significant compositional element of *Las Meninas* finds a corollary in *The Family of the Artist*: from the self-portrait of the painter at work and the image of the royal infanta to the grouping of figures at the very foreground.

And yet, Mazo's reworking pulls these elements of the painting apart, isolating the Velázquez figure and the painting of the infanta from the rest of the work in the upper right-hand corner of *The Family of the Artist*. From a spatial standpoint, there is a conspicuous disjunction between this part of the painting and the rest of it. Perhaps it is meant to correspond compositionally to the doorway in the back of the room that is the setting of *Las Meninas*. But the hard edges that delimit this apparent studio space on its left-hand side and across its horizontal lower border give this aspect of the image a spatial autonomy not afforded the stairway barely visible beyond the frame of the doorway in *Las Meninas*, an autonomy that makes this space appear oddly discontinuous with the space of the foreground. The confusion arising from efforts to reconcile the two is easily dispelled, however, when one realizes that it only arises if the viewer assumes

65 The most complete study of the identities of the figures in the foreground of this painting can be found in Novero Plaza 2006–7.

66 The identification of this figure as Mazo is made in Novero Plaza 2006–7, pp. 186–87; Ayala Mallory 1991, p. 269; Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004, p. 81; Gutiérrez Pastor 2005, p. 310; Portús Pérez 2014b, p. 140, cat. 23; Haag 2014, pp. 236 and 325, cat. 43; and Kientz 2015, p. 334, cat. 109.

67 This part of the painting is organized according to the same system of orthogonal lines observable in *Las Meninas*. A diagram demonstrating this is included in Solano Oropesa and Solano Herranz 2004, p. 123.

spatial continuity between the foreground of the painting and its upper right-hand corner. Perhaps another framework entirely is in order here: one might consider, rather, the suggestion of Daniel Arasse that edges might be “edges, nothing more,” that “they don’t represent a thing.”<sup>68</sup> The edges that delineate this secondary image-within-the-image are not meant to operate at the level of spatial illusionism: they are operative at the level of the very “surface of the painting,” where they piece together two thematically related but representationally discrete zones.<sup>69</sup> The foreground of *The Family of the Artist* and the image-within-the-image in its upper right-hand corner are perhaps two such zones that were never meant to relate to one another in strictly spatial terms.

If we accept these as two contiguous—but not continuous—zones, then we see in *The Family of the Artist* the same careful breakdown of *Las Meninas* into its parts that could be observed in Palomino’s prose. In *Las Meninas*, the painter and his portrait, on the one hand, and the group of ancillary figures that make up the painting’s “historiado,” on the other hand, are seamlessly merged together into a single scene. If we read the foreground of *The Family of the Artist* as corresponding to the latter and the image-within-the-image in the upper right-hand corner as corresponding to the former, we see the dismantling of Velázquez’s careful “historiation.” Here again, we might consider the proposal of Daniel Arasse, borrowed from the writings of André Chastel. Arasse, offering a creative paraphrase of Chastel’s essay “Le tableau dans le tableau,” claims that “according to [Chastel], when a painter paints a ‘painting within a painting,’ the latter often presents the ‘production scenario’ of the painting in which it is.”<sup>70</sup> Taking the upper right-hand corner of Mazo’s *The Family of the Artist* as a painting-within-a-painting, so demarcated by the edges that divide this part of the painting from the rest, one might expect it to reflect on the conditions of production of *The Family of the Artist*, as a whole. But *The Family of the Artist* is not a freestanding artistic gesture: its subject is fundamentally *Las Meninas* itself, the model on which every part of *The Family of the Artist* depends. Mazo’s copy of *Las Meninas* reflects Mazo’s understanding of how Velázquez’s painting works as a representation of kingship; *The Family of the Artist*, by contrast, pulls apart the composition of *Las Meninas* to reflect on how the painting was made. As Velázquez’s assistant in the decade during which Velázquez executed both *Las Meninas* and the Vienna portrait of the Infanta Margarita, Mazo would have been in the best possible position to see *Las Meninas* as Palomino does—that is, as a portrait of the infanta around which a group portrait has been expanded. In other words: Mazo would have been in the best position to understand that one of the conditions of production of *Las Meninas* is the production, first, of the Vienna portrait. It is this condition that *The Family of the Artist* renders visible.

The description of *Las Meninas* as a portrait of the Infanta Margarita that Mazo includes in his portion of the 1666 inventory of the Alcázar palace has been almost completely neglected in the scholarship concerning Velázquez’s great painting. As *The Family of the Artist* reveals, however, Mazo’s claim that *Las Meninas* is a portrait of the

68 Arasse 2013b, p. 108.

69 Arasse 2013b, p. 108.

70 Arasse 2013b, p. 112; paraphrasing Chastel 1978.

infanta is deeply indicative of a painter's mind at work, one invested in determining the shape of *Las Meninas*, its basic structure as an image. The generation of artists postdating Velázquez was eager to join the ranks of the *furriera* in their master's stead. The description of *Las Meninas* that Mazo was positioned to author thanks to his role as *ayuda de la furriera*, like so much of Velázquez's own work for this office, is just one demonstration of what a painter's intelligence could bring to work executed away from the easel.

### 3 Juan Carreño de Miranda's *Charles II*

Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo's assumption of the post of *ayuda de la furriera* represents one way that artists after Velázquez reconceptualized what it meant to be an artist at the Spanish court in Velázquez's wake, his work as such demonstrating the consequences of this reconceptualization into Velázquez's afterlife; the work of painter Juan Carreño de Miranda represents another. Carreño entered the service of the Spanish monarchy at the height of Velázquez's career as *apostentador mayor de palacio*.<sup>71</sup> In 1659 Velázquez assigned Carreño the job of painting much of the fresco cycle decorating the ceiling of the Hall of Mirrors, including some of its most central scenes.<sup>72</sup> Carreño was therefore not only aware of Velázquez's career as curator of the royal art collection but intimately familiar with the climactic project that Velázquez executed as such. Like other painters after Velázquez, Carreño pursued the position of *ayuda de la furriera*, which he was granted in 1669, almost certainly the result of his work alongside Velázquez in the Hall of Mirrors, but this was not the only impact of this work on Carreño's career.<sup>73</sup> Following Mazo's death in 1667, the painter Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo was selected to take on the position of *pintor de cámara*. His tenure was short-lived; upon his death in 1671, Carreño was given the title, along with the responsibility for producing the official image of the newly christened King Charles II. Carreño was thus one of Velázquez's successors as the state portraitist to the Spanish king. It is no coincidence that his portraits of Charles II situate the monarch in Velázquez's Hall of Mirrors.

If Mazo was the artist in the generation just after Velázquez to imitate his example most closely, Carreño seems to have best understood the significance to royal representation of Velázquez's accomplishments in not one but two distinct fields of work. Carreño made over a dozen paintings of Charles II that all followed a single formula (fig. 6.9).<sup>74</sup>

71 On Carreño's life and work, see Berjano Escobar 1924; Baretini Fernández 1972; Pérez Sánchez 1985; Pérez Sánchez 1986, pp. 17–55; López Vizcaíno 2007; and Portús Pérez 2013. A biography of this painter is included in Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 415–20; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 1024–30; and Palomino 1987, pp. 274–80. For an introduction to Carreño's working relationship to Velázquez, see Hernández Perera 1960a.

72 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 344–45 and 416; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 924–25 and 1025–26; Palomino 1987, pp. 167–68 and 275; and Palomino 2018, pp. 154–57.

73 For the dates when Juan Carreño de Miranda took up the offices of *pintor de cámara* and *ayuda de la furriera*, see Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 359, table 6.

74 Portús Pérez 2014b, p. 146, cats. 26–27.



FIGURE 6.9 Juan Carreño de Miranda, *Charles II*, ca. 1675, oil on canvas, 201 × 141 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, P000642

IMAGE © ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO

Whether still a child or already the reigning king, Charles II always appears in these paintings standing in front of a table held up by a bronze lion with a porphyry globe under its paw. His left hand is often resting on a hat placed on the surface of the table, his right hand by his side, sometimes clutching a note of paper. Standing in three-quarter profile and dressed in the austere black costume that Philip IV so often wore in his own official portraits, Charles II faces his audience, meeting the gaze of the viewer. A rich red curtain in the upper left-hand corner is dramatically pulled back to reveal the mirrors hanging on the wall of the gallery behind him, framed by twinned eagles. The reflections in the mirrors reveal that Charles II is standing at the center of the Alcázar's great paintings gallery, a doorframe visible along with what appear to be paintings, framed in black and filling the walls from edge to edge. In this formula, Carreño recombines elements of Velázquez's crowning achievements as painter to the king and curator of the royal art collection—*Las Meninas* and the Hall of Mirrors, respectively—in a way that demonstrates the lasting legacy of both.<sup>75</sup>

It is little wonder that *Las Meninas* appealed to artists like Carreño as a model for portraits of Charles II. As a meditation on the nature of royal representation, it visualized the problematic that painters of his official image were forced to confront directly. Charles II, the product of four generations of inbreeding, was born with physical and mental disabilities that surpassed those of any Habsburg preceding him. His impotence would effectively end a dynasty already in decline by the time of his reign. Louis Marin's assertion that "the king is only truly king, that is, monarch, in images" would take on a special urgency in the face of the fragility of Charles II and his tenuous grip on the throne.<sup>76</sup> While the king remained hidden in the palace, out of sight of the scrutiny of ambassadors and diplomats, painters were charged with the veritable construction of their monarch in images, which were produced in greater number than those of nearly any Spanish monarch before him. The challenge to which Carreño's paintings were required to respond was that of producing images of power so convincing that they could compensate for the king's unimposing person, that could support the weight of his rule.<sup>77</sup> The mirror in *Las Meninas* emblemizes the equivalence between the Spanish monarchs and their painted image, the process of "transubstantiation" that makes of the royal image the incarnation of power.<sup>78</sup> The mirror in Carreño's portraits of Charles II thus evokes the motif in *Las Meninas* around which its meaning as a meditation on the art of

75 On these paintings, see Orso 1982; Pérez Sánchez 1986, pp. 218–19, cat. 38, and p. 222, cat. 42; Orso 1986, pp. 178–82; Sebastián López 1992; Rodríguez G. de Ceballos 2000, pp. 103–4; Morán Turina 2003; Pascual Chenel 2010, pp. 87–100; Bodart 2011, pp. 290–93; Mínguez 2013, pp. 160–62; and Portús Pérez 2014b, pp. 146–49, cats. 26–27.

76 Marin 1988, p. 8.

77 For a comprehensive treatment of the challenges posed to portrait painters by Charles II's physical and mental frailty, see Pascual Chenel 2010 and Mínguez 2013. For briefer overviews of the strategies of representation of Charles II from his ascension to the throne to his funeral rites, see Rodríguez G. de Ceballos 2000 and Sancho and Souto 2009. On art during the reign of Charles II more broadly considered, see Pérez Sánchez 1986; Ribot 2009; and Rodríguez G. de Ceballos and Rodríguez Rebollo 2013.

78 Marin 1988, p. 8.

royal portraiture turned, signaling the stakes of the problem to which Carreño's portraits were the intended solution.

But *Las Meninas* would serve Carreño as a model for another kind of royal portraiture entirely, one even more specific to the demands of a sitter like Charles II. The death of Philip IV left Spain, for the first time in the history of the Habsburg monarchy, in the hands of a child too young to take the throne, his mother Mariana required to serve as regent until his maturity in 1677.<sup>79</sup> When Carreño's portraits are directly compared with *Las Meninas*, the figure of Charles II less closely resembles the figure of King Philip IV reflected in the mirror in *Las Meninas* than it does the figure of the Infanta Margarita, who appears standing just to the side of it. One of the strategies utilized by Charles II's official portrait painters was to surround him with the images of the dynastic forebears who ostensibly guaranteed his right to rule.<sup>80</sup> The figure of the infanta in view of the mirror image of her parents in *Las Meninas* served them as a model for portraits of royal progeny, a portrait of the genealogical relationship that could substantiate and therefore sustain a prince's royal identity. Consider what a painter whose most pressing concern was the legitimation of a frail monarch might have seen when he looked at *Las Meninas*: taking the figure of the infanta as a starting point, he might have seen the mirror above her, with the images of her mother and father, as an expression of the lineage to which she belonged. In Carreño's portraits, the figure of the infanta and the image of her parents acting as proof of her dynastic legitimacy in *Las Meninas* are reworked into the figure of Charles II and the images of his own parents, the guarantors of his right to rule. That this is Carreño's intention is perhaps most readily corroborated by the portraits of Queen Mariana that Carreño produced as pendants to his portraits of Charles II until the prince's coming-of-age (fig. 6.10). The image of the queen that appears in the mirror in *Las Meninas*, mother to the infanta at its center, is externalized in these pendant paintings. Carreño's depiction of her in mourning dress but seated at a writing desk convey her twin identities as widow to one king and queen mother to another. For Carreño, *Las Meninas* was as much a portrait of royal offspring as it was a portrait of kingship. In his portraits of Charles II, Carreño reworks those elements of *Las Meninas* that permit him to refashion the portrait of a king into the portrait of the heir to a genealogy.

79 Useful starting points on images of children in early modern Spain might include Llórente 2011 and the relevant essays in Coolidge 2014 and Knox Averett 2015. The history of the image of Queen Mariana after the death of Philip IV has a kind of inverse relationship to that of the image of Charles II, starting out as the central figure in the representation of the Habsburg monarchy after the death of the king and receding in importance in representations of the Habsburgs upon Charles II's maturity. On Mariana of Austria and her image, see Oliván Santaliestra 2006; Llórente 2006; López-Cordón Cortezo 2009, pp. 109–16; Llórente 2010; Llórente 2012; and Mitchell 2019.

80 On this topic, see especially Mínguez 2013, pp. 59–81. This representational strategy is perhaps best exemplified by a painting like Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo's *Charles II with the Images of His Ancestors* (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid). On this painting, see Orso 1986, pp. 178–82; Young 1986; Mínguez 1991; Portús Pérez 2000c, pp. 17–18; Portús Pérez 2000d, pp. 217–19; Morán Turina 2003, pp. 71–72; Pascual Chenel 2010, pp. 56–57; Bodart 2011, pp. 290–93; and Mínguez 2013, pp. 67–72. For a broader introduction to Herrera Barnuevo's portraits of Charles II, see Sancho and Souto 2010.



FIGURE 6.10  
 Juan Carreño de  
 Miranda, *Queen Mariana  
 of Austria*, ca. 1670, oil  
 on canvas, 211 × 125 cm,  
 Museo Nacional del  
 Prado, P000644  
 IMAGE © ARCHIVO  
 FOTOGRÁFICO MUSEO  
 NACIONAL DEL PRADO

Essential to this reading is that Carreño set Charles II in the Hall of Mirrors, recorded in Carreño's paintings as Velázquez had redesigned it. Included in his portraits of Charles II are the bronze lions and eagles that emblemized the thematic axis of Velázquez's decorative program: the Habsburg dynasty itself, here serving as a reminder of the powerful legacy of rule to which Charles II was heir. Radically reducing *Las Meninas* to the grouping of the infanta with the image of her parents in the mirror behind her, Carreño's painting is composed primarily of the monarch and the mirror images before which he stands.

Visible in these mirror images, however, are not the parents of Charles II but in fact the paintings still hanging in the Hall of Mirrors during his reign. It is as though Carreño had in mind when composing this work the statement made in *L'idea de' pittori, scultori, et architetti* by Federico Zuccaro on the effect of mirrors on a gallery hang:

I say, that if a mirror of very fine crystal, that is large, is placed in a room decorated with exquisite paintings, and marvelous statues, it is clear, that fixing my eye on it, this [mirror] is not even the limit of what I can see; but also an object representing, clearly and distinctly, all of those paintings, and those statues according to their material, and their substance; but they only shine in it through their spiritual forms.<sup>81</sup>

Just as Zuccaro suggests, the mirrors that Carreño paints into his portraits of Charles II themselves replicate paintings from the remainder of the gallery that is their setting. Most readily visible, in particular, are two paintings in the right-hand corner: Rubens's equestrian portrait of Philip IV and Titian's *Tityus*.<sup>82</sup> The reigns of Philip IV and Charles II saw the publication of a number of texts specifically addressing the education of princes, many of which featured mirrors as metaphors for the ideals of kingship to which princes should aspire.<sup>83</sup> In his citation of real paintings included in Velázquez's decorative program for the Hall of Mirrors, Carreño invokes one such metaphor included in a book written by Rodrigo Méndez Silva, chronicler to King Philip IV, and titled *Breve, curiosa, y aivstada noticia, de los Ayos y Maestros, que hasta oy han tenido los Principes, Infantes y otras personas Reales de Castilla*. In this book, Méndez Silva recommends that a prince know his history, because in history he will find "the foremost, of his ancestors the kings; so that the memory of shining deeds may serve him as a crystalline mirror, and a glorious encouragement to overtake them with the splendors of greater progress. For in one's generous ancestors, one will find glory; in the disregarded, dishonor, and in the prudent,

81 Zuccaro 1607, vol. 1, p. 6: "Io dico, che se si pone vno specchio di finissimo cristallo, che sia gra[n]de in vna sala ornata di pitture eccellenti, & di statue marauigliose, chiara cosa è, che fissando io l'occhio in quello non pure egli è termine del mio vedere; ma anco oggetto rappresentante chiaramente, & distintamente tutte quelle pitture, e statue à gli occhi miei; & pure in quello non sono quelle pitture, e quelle statue secondo la materia, & sostanza loro; ma solo in lui rilucono col mezo delle lor forme spirituali."

82 These are identified as such in Orso 1982, p. 33; Pérez Sánchez 1986, p. 218, cat. 38; Orso 1986, p. 181; Sebastián López 1992, pp. 198–99; Rodríguez G. de Ceballos 2000, p. 104; Morán Turina 2003, p. 72; Sancho and Souto 2009, p. 173; Pascual Chenel 2010, p. 93; Bodart 2011, p. 293; and Portús Pérez 2014b, p. 147, cats. 26–27.

83 Perhaps the most famous of these was the metaphor of the *speculum sine macula*, the mirror without stain, according to which the prince acts as a mirror in which his subjects see themselves, and therefore should strive to embody those virtues he would wish for them to emulate. An interpretation of Carreño's portrait according to this metaphor is offered in Pascual Chenel 2010, pp. 91–92. On the proliferation of treatises addressing the education of princes during the reign of Charles II, see Castilla Soto 2009 and Mínguez 2013, pp. 31–43.

an exemplar.”<sup>84</sup> If the history of the Habsburg dynasty was visible on the walls of the Hall of Mirrors, Carreño narrowed this decorative program down to those two paintings that, read together, picture an allegory of the “shining deeds” of Philip IV. Paired with Titian’s *Tityus*, Rubens’s equestrian portrait imagines the king in his role as defender of the Christian faith over and against the forces of heresy and vice, the mythical mission of the Habsburg dynasty since the reign of Charles V. In their recombination of elements both from *Las Meninas* and from the Hall of Mirrors, Carreño’s portraits of Charles II thus marry a genealogical model of portraiture with a working metaphor for the education of princes.

There is yet another way that Carreño’s painting evidences his understanding of the significance of Velázquez’s projects, and of the ways that both *Las Meninas* and the Hall of Mirrors functioned under Velázquez’s hand as sites of representation of Habsburg power. *Las Meninas* depends on the interaction between the actual bodies of the Spanish monarchs and the mirror image Velázquez produced of them. This interaction was problematized by the person of Charles II when Carreño took the painting as his model, but so too was the Hall of Mirrors, the significance of which would also bend in response to the new monarch. It is possible to speak of the reception of *Las Meninas* by painters responding to the needs of a new sovereign, one who was in so many respects very different from the sovereign for which the painting was intended; it is just as possible to consider the reception of Velázquez’s redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors, and of the decorative program that remained on its walls unchanged for decades after the death of Philip IV, in the reign of Charles II. To phrase the matter a bit differently, it is possible to consider how the perceived meaning of this room and its decoration was transformed by the same problems that the death of one king and the rise of another posed to royal portraiture. The redecoration of the Hall of Mirrors at the end of the reign of Philip IV served him a particular purpose: it visualized a glorious history of the Habsburg dynasty for an international audience, and thanks to Rubens’s equestrian portrait, it was a history in which the reigning monarch was already included. As with Philip IV before him, the few royal audiences that Charles II entertained were staged in this very room, but, one imagines, to very different effect. No artistic interventions were made to the decorative program of the Hall of Mirrors until the very end of the reign of Charles II: as the living image of the monarchy, the ascension of Charles II to the Habsburg throne was itself the intervention. The strategies of genealogical reconstruction employed in Carreño’s portraits of Charles II likely found a real-world equivalent in the sudden presence of Charles II in this room, seated on a dais or standing next to a table like a living tableau.<sup>85</sup> If King Charles II was figured in his state portraits in view of paintings of his

84 Méndez Silva 1654, fol. 31v: “sean las principales, de los Reyes sus progenitores; para que la memoria de los claros hechos, le sirva de cristalino espejo, y glorioso estímulo à adelantarlos con realces de mayores progressos. Pues en sus Ascendientes generosos, hallará la gloria; en los omissos el deshonor, y en los prudentes el exemplo.”

85 One firsthand account of such an audience can be found in Domínguez Ortiz 1978.

ancestors, he would have appeared to foreign dignitaries surrounded by them as well. With Charles II physically present in their midst, the paintings of Charles V, Philip II, Philip III, and Philip IV envisioned the same genealogy on which Carreño's portraits of Charles II depended.

This is perhaps what is registered in the part of Carreño's formulation that reorients our attention away from the infanta in *Las Meninas* and back toward the image of the Spanish monarchs in the mirror at its heart. It is not one but two kings that appear in the reflections in the mirrors in Carreño's portraits: Philip IV appears as an equestrian portrait, hanging on the walls of the gallery surrounding the figure of Charles II, and the face of Charles II himself appears in these mirrors in profile, seeming to gaze up at those same walls. There is an aspirational element here, whereby Charles II appears to take the advice offered to him in Méndez Silva's handbook and to study the great deeds of his ancestors. But it also prefigures the eventual inclusion of Charles II's own image on the walls of the gallery, an event perhaps already foreshadowed whenever the face of Charles II, standing in the Hall of Mirrors, was reflected in the mirrors that Velázquez had installed therein a decade prior. The mirrors hanging on the walls of the Hall of Mirrors appear framed in black wood like so many of the paintings listed in the inventories of this period, and like so many of the paintings appearing in their reflections. The mirrors in the Hall of Mirrors might have replicated the image of the king standing before them in flesh and blood, framing it under the paintings already present on the walls. Likewise, the reflection of Charles II that Carreño paints into the mirror in his portraits imagines his absorption into the series of kings hanging above him, Velázquez's bronze eagles seeming at once to deliver to Charles II the images of his ancestors and invite him to join their ranks. In this reflection of the face of Charles II in the mirror behind him, Carreño merges elements of the Hall of Mirrors and *Las Meninas* to visualize the eventual inclusion of Charles II in the line of monarchs before him, the crisis of Charles II's royal identity finding its resolution in another mirror image.

Carreño's portraits of Charles II thus demonstrate Carreño's profound understanding of Velázquez's accomplishments in two distinct professional arenas: that of painter to the king and that of curator of his art collection. Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and his decorative program for the Hall of Mirrors, simultaneous tour de forces in these respective fields, both function as sites of royal representation that depend for their efficacy on the dynamics between royal bodies, paintings, and physical spaces. In his portraits of Charles II, Carreño recombines elements from each, activating these same dynamics in the service of a new sovereign. That Carreño followed Velázquez's example in his pursuit of employment in the *furriera* indicates that Carreño recognized the importance of Velázquez's position as *apostador mayor de palacio*. But it is Carreño's use of the Hall of Mirrors and *Las Meninas* in his painted portraits of Charles II of Spain that reveal his appreciation of what Velázquez achieved in each. For the painters that came after him, Velázquez left two legacies; Carreño's paintings suggest that to make art in the wake of Velázquez was to acknowledge both.

## Conclusion(s)

On Christmas Eve of 1734, the Alcázar palace caught fire. At midnight the guards were alerted to the blaze and began evacuating the building. The fire persisted for several days, as palace officials did what they could to spare its many treasures from destruction. Trying to save the royal art collection, they cut paintings from their frames, flinging them out of the burning building through the windows.<sup>1</sup> In spite of their efforts, around 500 of the over 1,500 paintings then on view in the royal palace were lost in this fire, in addition to countless art objects of other kinds.<sup>2</sup> The Alcázar itself was burned nearly to the ground, and what remained was ultimately razed and replaced by the existing Royal Palace of Madrid, on the Plaza de Oriente. The salvaged paintings were taken to convents, churches, and the houses of noblemen for safekeeping. On December 28, the Marquis of Villena, *mayordomo mayor* (head steward of the royal house) to King Philip v, ordered an inventory of the surviving works, which was undertaken by several court painters, to assess the total damages.<sup>3</sup> In the succeeding decades, Philip v oversaw a comprehensive campaign to restore the royal art collection and, at the behest of court painter Jean Ranc, to bring the surviving paintings to an even better state than they had been in before the palace was engulfed in flames.<sup>4</sup> However successful this campaign, the losses to the Habsburg art collection were unredeemable. What is preserved in the present-day Museo Nacional del Prado—whose founding collection included paintings by Bosch, Titian, Velázquez, Rubens, Dürer, and other early modern masters originally commissioned or collected by the Habsburgs—represents only a fraction of what was once the richest art collection in the Western world.

At the time of the palace fire, the Hall of Mirrors was almost exactly as Velázquez had left it, the hang virtually untouched since Charles II came to power. The destruction of the palace saw the irretrievable disappearance of Velázquez's project, which can never be properly reconstituted. Although some of the most important paintings on view in the Hall of Mirrors were recovered, the losses to this gallery were too significant to ever bring it back to life. *Emperor Charles v at Mühlberg* was saved; Rubens's portrait of Philip IV was not. Titian's *Tityus* and *Sisyphus* were saved; the remaining *furias* were not. Half the paintings in the gallery, including four out of the five paintings that Velázquez had made for it, were completely destroyed. For all the damage that it inflicted on the historical record, however, the fire had one poetic consequence in that it tethered the Hall of Mirrors to Velázquez's name. The start of Velázquez's career as court painter coincided with this gallery's beginnings, and his transformation of the New Room into the Hall of Mirrors

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1 That paintings were cut from their frames and thrown from windows is attested in Véliz 1998, p. 43; and Aterido Fernández and Véliz 2016, p. 452. For a detailed period account of the fire, see Salabert 1994.

2 Martínez Leiva and Rodríguez Rebollo 2015, p. 19.

3 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 13, fol. 1r.

4 On the restoration of the royal art collection in the wake of the palace fire, see Véliz 1998; and Aterido Fernández and Véliz 2016.

was the apex both of his work as curator to the king and of the lifespan of the gallery that had helped to secure him his fame. Only truly dismantled in the fire of 1734, his hang persisted even past the extinguishing of the Habsburg dynasty in 1700, when Charles II died without an heir. Velázquez's ghost inhabited this gallery until it met its end, his life at the Spanish court and the first chapter of his afterlife thus roughly coterminous with the existence of this single room.

Between 1660 and 1734, only one change had been made to the decorative program of this gallery, so admired as one of Velázquez's greatest contributions to the history of art at the Spanish court. Sometime during the last few years of the reign of Charles II, an equestrian portrait made by Luca Giordano was inserted into the gallery hang. It is definitively recorded on the walls of the Hall of Mirrors in the 1701–3 inventory of the palace, where it hung alongside the existing portraits of Charles V, Philip II, Philip III, and Philip IV made by Titian, Rubens, and Velázquez. It is described very simply as “a portrait of our King Charles II on horseback by the hand of Giordano.”<sup>5</sup> A marginal annotation in a copy of the inventory of the paintings in the Alcázar palace from 1686 indicates that Giordano's portrait replaced Rubens's *Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau* (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, no. inv. 1302) above the central door of the north wall.<sup>6</sup> No other change to the decorative program of this gallery between 1686 and 1700 is recorded. Although it would disrupt the careful timeline running across the walls from east to west, the display of Giordano's equestrian portrait above this door ensured that a portrait of a Habsburg king hung over every door and that the dynasty's last monarch was finally represented on the gallery walls. In the process, the name of Luca Giordano was also inserted into the gallery hang, the only artist since the death of Velázquez to see his paintings appear in the Hall of Mirrors.

A Neapolitan painter by origin, Luca Giordano was renowned across the Italian peninsula by the time he was invited to the Spanish court in May 1692, where he remained in the service of Charles II until just after the monarch's death.<sup>7</sup> Giordano's biographers wax effusive on the lavish praise and prodigious honors that greeted him in Madrid, as well as the enormous fresco cycles that he executed for royal sites such as the monastery at El Escorial and the Casón del Buen Retiro and the paintings that he made in convincing imitation of the styles of other painters to the delight and amazement of onlookers.<sup>8</sup> Most importantly, like Titian and Velázquez before him, Giordano was also awarded the exclusive privilege of painting the king's likeness upon arriving in Spain.<sup>9</sup> He was therefore the last in a line of painters with a privileged relationship to his Habsburg patron, the

5 Fernández Bayton 1975, p. 18: “Un retratto del Rey nuestro Señor Don Carlos segundo a Cavallo de mano de Jordan.” On Luca Giordano and royal inventories, see Rodríguez Rebollo 2013.

6 AGP, Administración General, Legajo 768, exp. 15, unpaginated.

7 On the career of Luca Giordano under Charles II, see especially Úbeda de los Cobos 2003; Úbeda de los Cobos 2008; and Úbeda de los Cobos 2019.

8 Among the most complete are Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 465–80 (see also Palomino 1947, pp. 1093–114; Palomino 2018, pp. 342–61); de Dominici 1742, pp. 394–456; and Ferrari 1966.

9 Úbeda de los Cobos 2008, p. 45. According to Ángel Aterido Fernández, Luca Giordano was never officially named to the position of *pintor de cámara* but received this honor only unofficially in 1694, when he was given the keys to the workshop of the *pintor de cámara* (Aterido Fernández 2015, p. 359).

final “painter to the king.” In Francesco Saverio Baldinucci’s biography of the artist from sometime between 1710 and 1721, Luca Giordano is said to have met a “Diego Valasco, primo Pittore del Re” at the Spanish court. Baldinucci writes of the astonishment felt by Velázquez and the king of Spain as they watched Giordano paint, even crediting the king with turning to the incredulous Spaniard and saying, “Look, man, this is the best painter in Naples and in Spain and in the whole world, this is a Painter for the King.”<sup>10</sup> Given that Velázquez died thirty years before the arrival of Giordano to the Spanish court, it seems unlikely that the painters ever met. Nevertheless, this fiction perhaps reflects the reality that of all the painters ever to paint for Charles II, Giordano was Velázquez’s readiest match, if not his heir apparent.

That Giordano was an admirer of Velázquez is without question. Like so many painters at the Habsburg court in the generation just after Velázquez, Giordano took *Las Meninas* as the obvious point of departure for at least one of his canvases: his *Homage to Velázquez* (fig. 7.1).<sup>11</sup> In his biography of Velázquez, Palomino describes a scene in which Charles II takes Luca Giordano to the Alcázar’s summer apartments to see *Las Meninas* and to ask him what he thought of it. His response is now as famous in the secondary literature on this work as it is enigmatic: “Sir, this is the Theology of Painting.” Palomino understood this to mean that insofar as theology is the highest of the sciences, so too could *Las Meninas* be considered the greatest of paintings.<sup>12</sup> Whatever Giordano’s meaning, his reverence for *Las Meninas* appears everywhere in his *Homage to Velázquez*, which, with Giordano’s characteristic virtuosity in the imitation of other artists’ painting styles, immediately evokes *Las Meninas* in its palette and brushwork. The figures at center have been identified as Francisco de Benavides, the ninth Count of Santisteban del Puerto and enthusiastic collector of Giordano’s work, and his daughter, surrounded by members of their household.<sup>13</sup> For decades, however, the man in the dark robes with the red cross of the Order of Santiago on his sleeve was thought to be Diego Velázquez, the girl in a red and silvery dress the Infanta Margarita. Just as *Las Meninas* includes Velázquez’s self-portrait, Giordano’s own self-portrait appears in his *Homage* at lower right, where the artist seems to gesture in admiration toward the figures just in front of him. Although the title of this painting is not original to the work, it is certainly true.

Luca Giordano’s equestrian portrait of Charles II is an expression of admiration and emulation of Velázquez too, albeit on very different terms. Little is known about the circumstances surrounding the production of this painting or even its final appearance, which seems to go unmentioned in Giordano’s biographies.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, its ambitions

10 Ferrari 1966, p. 133: “Mira Hombre esto es il mecor Pintor y de Napoles y de Spagna y de todo el Mondo, esto è un Pintore por el Rey.”

11 On this painting, see Ferrari and Scavizzi 2000, p. 335, no. A531, and the related Ferrari and Scavizzi 2003, p. 83, no. A0228; Luca Giordano 2001, pp. 318–21, cat. 107; Pérez Sánchez 2002, pp. 152–58, cat. 26; Úbeda de los Cobos 2008, p. 38; and Scavizzi 2017, pp. 234–35.

12 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, p. 343: “Señor, esta es la Theologia de la Pintura”; see also Palomino 1947, p. 922; Palomino 1987, p. 166; and Palomino 2018, p. 150.

13 Aterido Fernández 1994. On Giordano’s relationship to Francisco de Benavides, see Cerezo 1986.

14 No trace of the original equestrian portrait survives; however, this was not the only equestrian portrait that Giordano executed while in the service of Charles II. Regarding the lost equestrian portrait for



FIGURE 7.1 Luca Giordano, *Homage to Velázquez*, ca. 1692–1700, oil on canvas, 205.2 × 182.2 cm, National Gallery, London, NG1434

IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

are clear. From the start of Velázquez's career, this gallery had functioned as a literal and figurative kingmaker. It was the site where Philip IV constructed his identity as the reigning sovereign in the Habsburg monarchy and where Velázquez, in tandem, was challenged to assert himself as his painter. The painting that Charles II commissioned from Giordano reflects the same conjoined objectives. According to Andrés Úbeda de los Cobos, the relationship established between Charles II and Luca Giordano mirrored that

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the Hall of Mirrors, of particular interest is a pair of supposed *bocetti* that Giordano made of equestrian portraits of Charles II and Maria Anna of Neuburg, currently in the Museo Nacional del Prado (MNP,

of Philip IV and Velázquez, which in turn had mirrored that of Charles V and Titian.<sup>15</sup> Like those that came before it, this relationship between patron and painter sealed itself with a major painting, and history yet again repeating. That the painting was an equestrian portrait testifies to the continuing power of *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*, still the most overt symbol of Habsburg patronage, but it also testifies to the efficacy of what Velázquez had done with the gallery, uniting the history of Spanish art and the history of Spanish politics so convincingly in a single decorative program.

By the time Giordano arrived at the Spanish court, Velázquez's own equestrian portrait of Philip IV had long since been removed from this gallery, but what it represented was not totally forgotten. Likely without ever seeing it, Antonio Palomino was able to claim in his biography of Velázquez that his first portrait of Philip IV was an equestrian portrait made on a visit to the court in Madrid, and that the painting won him, like Apelles before him, the exclusive privilege of painting the portrait of his sovereign.<sup>16</sup> In Palomino's writing, Velázquez's lost portrait thus found a new life. Perhaps this equestrian portrait by then existed nowhere beyond the pages of Palomino's text, a mere rhetorical device like so many of the portraits of Charles V chronicled in the biographies of Titian. Either way, it gives form in a single canvas to what Velázquez had built in the Hall of Mirrors with many: For Charles II, the Hall of Mirrors was the space within which to claim his place in a lineage of Spanish kings. For Giordano, it was the site wherein to make his name in the history of Spanish painters, not least because Velázquez had established it as such with its definitive gallery hang.

The New Room was inaugurated with the installation of Titian's *Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg*; the Hall of Mirrors closed with the installation of Giordano's equestrian portrait of Charles II. They were the bookends to the story of the site where Velázquez was tested, stumbled, and eventually triumphed. Velázquez's own equestrian portrait for the Hall of Mirrors should have fast-tracked his success at the Spanish court, immediately defining him as the Apelles to Philip IV's Alexander, the Titian to his Charles V. The equestrian portrait was ultimately sidelined, but Velázquez nevertheless found another means entirely by which to use the Hall of Mirrors to stake out his art historical reputation. The history of the Hall of Mirrors, like the story of Velázquez's career at the Habsburg court, began with an equestrian portrait. How fitting that it would end with another.

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P000197 and P000198, respectively). It is often thought that the *boceto* of the portrait of Charles II served as a preparatory study for the equestrian portrait for the Hall of Mirrors; others have suggested instead that it might have resembled still another equestrian portrait in the collection of the Prado (MNP, P002761). However, because of the lack of surviving documentation of the equestrian portrait for the Hall of Mirrors, it is difficult to evaluate either hypothesis. On these paintings, see Ferrari and Scavizzi 2000, p. 335, no. A532, and the related Ferrari and Scavizzi 2003, p. 83, nos. A0229 and A0231; Pérez Sánchez 2002, pp. 195–99, cats. 43 and 44; Úbeda de los Cobos 2003, p. 77; Pérez Sánchez and Spinosa 2004, pp. 112–17, cats. 32 and 33; Hermoso Cuesta 2008, pp. 246–47; Pascual Chenel 2010, pp. 260–63 and 448–53, nos. PC56 and PC57; Úbeda de los Cobos 2017, pp. 158–65, cats. 26 and 27, and pp. 308–9, cat. 67; and Scavizzi 2017, pp. 225–27.

15 See Úbeda de los Cobos 2003, p. 77; and Úbeda de los Cobos 2008, p. 15.

16 Palomino 1724, vol. 3, pp. 325–26; see also Palomino 1947, pp. 896–97; Palomino 1987, pp. 144–45; and Palomino 2018, pp. 65–68.

# Appendix

Archivo General de Palacio, Administración General, Caja 939, expediente 7

Año de 1598.

Etiqueta de lo que deve observar el Aposentador mayor en lo tocante à su oficio.

Lo que se hordena al Aposentador de Palacio es lo siguiente.

que se haga cargo de todas las llaves de palacio advirtiendole que las ha de tener con la distincion y buena custodia que al presente estan en el almario del retrete y otras partes y que en su poder no ha de haver llave maestra porque estas las reserva Su M<sup>d</sup> para si solo y que a las personas que fuere menester dar llaves senzillas tome conocimiento de ellas para que se las buelvan.

que se le haga cargo de todas las sillas bufetes mesas y bancos y de las demas cosas que han de estar a su cargo para el servicio de su mag<sup>d</sup> tocante al dhô oficio de aposentador de palacio exçpto las sillas que son conforme a los camas y doseles que estan a cargo del tapiçero.

que assimismo se le haga cargo de todas las pinturas y retratos que estubieren colgados y puestas en las galerias y aposentos de su mag<sup>d</sup> pues a de tener las llaues de ellos en las ausençias que su mag<sup>d</sup> hiziere de madrid\_\_ a Voto se le haga este cargo y Voto a el todo en presençia del contralor y greffier. [*marginal annotation*: Voto fue Guardajoyas del s<sup>r</sup> Rey d<sup>n</sup> Ph<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>o</sup>]

que todas las cosas que se hubieren de hazer de nuebo tocantes a su oficio para el servicio de su mag<sup>d</sup> no las pueda hazer ni haga sin orden y licençia del bureo no mandando su mag<sup>d</sup> expresamente otra cosa y que despues de hechas se le bayan cargando con las demas que tubiere a su cargo.

que de los cançeles ni atajos de tablas y madera que se hizieren para el servicio de su mag<sup>d</sup> en sus aposentos ni fuera de ellos no pueda tomar por derechos suyos ninguna cosa dellos ni de las puertas herrage y çerraduras que en ellos se pusieren sino guardarlo todo ello quando se deshiziere para lo que despues se offreçiere del servicio de su mag<sup>d</sup> y lo mismo se ha de entender de los angeos y ençerados que se hizieren para las bentanas y otras partes donde fuere menester y que como esta dhô no pueda hazer nada de nuevo sin horden de los mayordomos o mayordomo semanero o en sus ausençias sin la del contralor.

que de toda la leña y carbon que comprare para las chimineas de su mag<sup>d</sup> y para sus estados de quenta del dinero que se librare para la compra della y de las arrobas de leña y carbon que hubiere comprado con ello y al bureo para que en el se bea por menudo la leña y carbon que se comprare y tenga cuidado de ver como se gasta.

que no pueda llevar ni lleve ningun aprovechamiento ni otra cosa ninguna de las tiendas de palacio ni sus ayudas ni otra persona de este officio sino la persona a quien su mag<sup>d</sup> nombrare para ello lo tenga a su cargo y en su poder el dinero que esto montare para hazer dello lo que Su M<sup>d</sup> mandare y esto entre tanto alli hubiere tiendas.

quando hubiere algunas fiestas en la plaça de palacio, o dentro en los patios del con acuerdo y consulta del bureo ha de señalar los sitios a las personas que se hubieren de dar y que en esta forma los reparta el aposentador de palacio si su mag<sup>d</sup> no fuere servido de otra cosa sin que pueda llevar a los dueños ni carpinteros que hizieren los tablados ninguna cosa por ellos.

que tenga mucho cuidado de la limpieça de toda esta casa y las donde su mag<sup>d</sup> estubiere asi de los patios de dentro como de fuera y la plaça o calles donde cayeren puertas o bentanas de palacio.

que todos los barrenderos y guardas que se ponen para la limpieça desta casa Real de madrid y para las demas cassas Reales de su mag<sup>d</sup> no las puedan poner ni reçevir el aposentador de palacio ni sus ayudas sino fuere dando quenta a los mayordomos de su mag<sup>d</sup> o mayordomo semanero y en su ausençia no estando donde su mag<sup>d</sup> con orden y liçençia del contralor no mandando su mag<sup>d</sup> otra cosa.

En bureo a onze de hebrero de 1598 años.

*Juan Sigoney.*

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# Index

- Aerssen van Sommelsdijck, Cornelis van 148n60
- Alberti, Leon Battista 152, 153–155
- Alcázar *passim*
- Casa del Tesoro 28, 35n42
  - Chamber of the Prince 97, 104, 200
  - despacho de verano* (“summer apartments”) 203–206
  - escalera del Rubinejo* 43, 96–97, 104, 203
  - Galería del Cierzo 175n41
  - Hall of Mirrors (former “New Room”) 143, 168, 176–183, 185, 192–194, 195–196, 204, 205–206, 222–224, 226–229, 230–231, 232n14–234n14 234
  - New Room (eventual “Hall of Mirrors”) 18–20, 21–26, 30, 33, 34, 37–38, 40–42, 43, 58, 62, 95, 168, 176, 183n66–184n66, 230–231, 234
  - Octagonal Room 42–54, 57–58, 61–62, 63–68, 73–74, 78, 93–95, 96, 104, 143, 203, 208
  - Vaults of Titian 97–98, 99–110, 111, 112–113, 116, 119, 120, 122–123, 125, 194, 203
- Aldrovandi, Ulisse 71
- Alexander the Great 28–33, 36–38, 234
- Anguissola, Sofonisba 30
- aparejador* 66
- Apelles 28–33, 36–38, 234
- apostador de camino* 168n12–169n12
- apostador de casa* 168n12–169n12
- apostador mayor de palacio* 35n42, 166–175, 176, 180, 194, 195, 203–204, 205, 210, 222, 229, 235–236
- Arce, Francisco de 65
- Arce, Melchor de 65n41
- Arce, Pedro de 187n71
- Ardemans, Theodoro 43–44
- Arenas Ruiz, Sebastián de 121
- Ardenti, Agostino
- Titian* (1488/90–1576) (BCMA, 1966.106.21a) 214, 216
- Ávila y Zúñiga, Luis de 26
- ayuda de cámara* 144n57, 172–173
- Baglioni, Giovanni 20n4
- Baldinucci, Filippo 150–151
- Baldinucci, Francesco Saverio 232
- Balthasar Carlos, Prince of Asturias 40
- Barberini, Francesco 34
- Bassano, Jacopo
- Vulcan's Forge* (MNP, P005263) 180–181
- Bellori, Giovanni Pietro 151, 218n61
- Benavides, Felipe de 170, 172
- Benavides, Francisco de 232
- Bertaut, Francisco 148n60
- Bonuccelli, Matteo
- Lion* (MNP, O000453) 177–178, 177
  - Lion* (MNP, O002939) 177–178, 177
  - Lion* (MNP, O002940) 177–178, 177
  - Lion* (MNP, O002943) 177–178, 177
- Borghini, Raffaello 28–30
- Bosch, Hieronymus 127, 136, 230
- Boschini, Marco 181n61
- Botticelli, Sandro
- Annunciation* (GU, inv. 1890, no. 1608) 153–155, 154, 158
- Braganza, Francisco de 114n37
- Brunel, Antonio de 148n60
- Buonarroti, Michelangelo
- Moses* (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome) 71n67, 78
- Butrón, Juan de 118n53–119n53
- Cajés, Eugenio
- copy of Correggio's *The Fable of Leda* (MNP, P000120) 105–107
  - painting of Agamemnon (lost) 21
- Cambiaso, Luca 139
- Cano, Alonso 107–110
- The Martyrdom of Saint John* (LACMA, M.77.54.2) 163–165, 164
- Canova, Antonio 10
- Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (MMA, 67.110.1) 12
- Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da 151, 152n75, 158n93
- Judith Beheading Holofernes* (GNAA-PB, 2533) 159, 160
- Carbonel, Alonso 137n33, 175, 178n49
- Cárdenas, Alonso de 67n46, 130, 134, 142
- Carducho, Vicente 113n32, 114n34, 149
- painting of Scipio Africanus (lost) 21
- Carracci, Annibale 141
- Carreño de Miranda, Juan 178–179, 195–196
- Charles II* (MNP, P000642) 222–229, 223
  - Queen Mariana of Austria* (MNP, P000644) 225, 226

- Castillo, Francisco de 137
- Cerrano, Juan 44
- Charles I, King of England 67n46, 68, 130, 135, 142, 162
- Charles II, King of Spain 195, 201, 211, 222–229, 230–234
- Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain 18, 26–38, 44, 55, 60–61, 176, 178, 201, 228, 234
- Château de Versailles 3, 178n49
- Chifflet, Julio 130, 134, 136n29, 142, 144
- Coello, Claudio 195  
*King Charles II of Spain Adoring the Host* (El Escorial) 148
- Colonna, Angelo Michele 179, 204
- Copia de los pareceres* (1632) 114–119
- Córdoba, Francisco de 44
- Córdoba, Juan de 70, 72n70, 74
- Correggio, Antonio da 203  
*The Fable of Leda* (MNP, P000120) 105–107  
*Venus with Mercury and Cupid* (“*The School of Love*”) (NG, London, NG10) 130, 130n17–134n17, 131
- Cortile del Belvedere 70
- Cortona, Pietro da 179
- Council of Trent 113, 113n33–114n33
- Courbet, Gustave 10
- Cueva, Cardinal de la 69
- David, Jacques-Louis  
*Farewell of Telemachus and Eucharis* (JPGM, 87.PA.27) 155n85
- Degas, Edgar 10
- Díaz del Valle, Lázaro 166, 180n55, 195
- Diderot, Denis 156
- Dolce, Ludovico 28–30
- Dominici, Bernardo de 150–151
- Dubos, Jean-Baptiste 155–156
- Duca, Giovanni Pietro del  
*Discus-Thrower* (PN, Madrid, 10003154) 68, 73–74, 77, 83–94  
*Germanicus* (PN, Madrid, 10010390) 68, 73–74, 75, 83–94  
*Satyr in Repose* (PN, Madrid, 10010391) 68, 73–74, 76, 83–94
- Duchamp, Marcel 10–11
- Dürer, Albrecht 230
- Dyck, Anthony van 139, 140, 203  
*Christ and the Adulteress* (Hospital de la Venerable Orden Tercera, Madrid) 148n61
- Espejo, Hernando de 66
- d’Este, Alfonso I 111
- Etiquetas de Palacio* 168–169, 173
- Félibien, André 150
- Ferdinand, Cardinal-Infante of Spain and Archduke of Austria 41, 67n46
- Ferrer, Girolamo 177
- Fontana, Lavinia 136
- Francis I, King of France 67
- Fréart de Chantelou, Paul 149–150
- Fuente, Marquis de la 69n56–69n57
- furriera* 169–170, 171n19–171n21, 174–175, 210, 222, 229  
*ayuda de la furriera* 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 195, 210, 222  
*sotoayuda de la furriera* 169  
*mozo de la furriera* 169, 174
- Gallegos, Manuel de 184n66
- Gallerie degli Uffizi 3, 9, 70, 159n94
- García, Alonso 43
- Gentileschi, Orazio  
*The Finding of Moses* (MNP, P000147) 181n59
- Giordano, Luca 195  
*Charles II, King of Spain, on Horseback* (MNP, P000197) 232n14–234n14 (circle of) *Charles II on Horseback* (MNP, P002761) 232n14–234n14  
equestrian portrait of Charles II of Spain (lost) 231, 232–234  
*Homage to Velázquez* (NG, London, NG1434) 232, 233  
*Queen Maria Anna of Neuburg on Horseback* (MNP, P000198) 232n14–234n14
- Giovane, Jacopo Palma il 139, 140
- Giustiniani, Vincenzo 71–72
- Gómez, Alonso 43
- Gómez de Mora, Juan 21, 43–44, 65, 137n33, 171n19, 172n27, 173, 174n33
- Gonzaga, Vincenzo I 67–68
- González Dávila, Gil 171n19, 175
- Gramont, Antoine de 148n60, 179n54, 180n55  
*guardajoyas* 66, 173, 235
- Guercino (Barbieri, Giovanni Francesco) 203
- Guerra Coronel, Domingo 120–121
- Guevara, Felipe de 2
- Gutiérrez de los Ríos, Gaspar 20n4
- Guzmán y Pimental, Gaspar de (Count-Duke of Olivares) 18, 40–41

- Haro y Guzmán, Luis Méndez de 67n46, 130, 134  
Haro y Guzmán, Gaspar de (Marquis of Carpio and Marquis of Heliche) 120–121  
Herrera Barnuevo, Sebastián de 137, 174, 195, 222  
*Charles II with the Images of His Ancestors*  
(MLG, Madrid) 35n42, 225n80  
Herrera, Juan de 170, 172
- Jesús María, José de 118n53–119n53  
Jonghelinck, Jacques  
*Bacchus* (Jardín de la Isla, Aranjuez) 52n23  
the *Planets* 44–52, 58–59, 62, 67n46, 74, 80n87,  
93–94  
*Jupiter* (PN, Madrid, 10010387) 44–52, 47  
*Luna* (PN, Madrid, 10003152) 44–52, 50  
*Mars* (PN, Madrid, 10010389) 44–52, 49  
*Mercury* (PN, Madrid, 10010388) 44–52, 47  
*Saturn* (PN, Madrid, 10010386) 44–52, 48  
*Sol* (PN, Madrid, 10003151) 44–52, 45  
*Venus* (PN, Madrid, 10003153) 44–52, 46  
Jordaens, Jacob  
*The Love of Cupid and Psyche* (MNP, P001548)  
106–107  
Jovellanos, Gaspar Melchor de 206n37  
Junta Real de Obras y Bosques 66
- Klein, Yves 11
- Lancharte, Antonio de 43  
La Tour, Maurice-Quentin de  
*Portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux*  
(JPGM, 94.PC.39) 156–158, 157  
Legasa, Bartolomé de 63–64  
Leoni, Leone and Pompeo 43n17  
*Emperor Charles V and the Fury* (MNP, E000273)  
52–53, 52, 54–55, 58–60, 60, 66n44, 73, 80n87,  
83–94  
*Empress Isabel of Portugal* (MNP, E000274)  
55n27  
*Philip II* (MNP, E000272) 52–53, 53, 58–59,  
66n44, 73, 80n87, 83–94  
*Mary of Hungary* (MNP, E000263) 52–53, 54,  
58–59, 66n44, 73, 80n87, 83–94  
Leopold Wilhelm, Archduke of Austria 10  
Le Sueur, Hubert 68  
Louis XIV, King of France 3, 176, 178n49  
Ludovisi, Niccolò I 106
- Madrid, Nicolás de 134n18  
*maestro mayor* 43–44, 63–65  
Malpica, Marquis de 65n38
- Malvasia, Carlo Cesare 179n52  
Mancini, Giulio 103n13–104n13, 140–142, 151–152  
Marañón, Juan Francisco de 172, 172n28–173n28  
Maratta, Carlo 218n61  
“Carlo Maratta” frame 151, 158, 161–162  
Marban, García 172  
Marban, Juan 171, 172  
Margarita Teresa, Infanta of Spain 210–218, 219,  
220, 221–222, 225, 232  
Mariana of Austria, Queen of Spain 69, 124, 196,  
200, 201–208, 211, 213, 225  
María Teresa, Infanta of Spain 176, 179, 211  
Martinelli, Fioravente 70–71  
Martínez, Jusepe 149, 166, 166n4–167n4, 185–186,  
195  
Martínez del Mazo, Juan Bautista 96n1, 137, 174,  
195, 208–213, 215  
*The Family of the Artist* (KHM, Gemäldegalerie  
320) 208n39, 218–222, 219  
*Las Meninas* (KLE, Dorset, NT 1257140)  
206–208, 207  
*Queen Mariana of Spain in Mourning*  
(NG, London, NG2926) 208, 209  
Martínez Montañés, Juan 163  
Mary of Hungary 26, 30n32, 33, 55  
Mauro, Lucio 71  
*mayordomo mayor* 172, 230, 235–236  
Mazo Velázquez, Gaspar del 175  
Medici, Cosimo de’ 148n60  
Medici, Giovan Carlo de’ 159n94  
Medici, Leopoldo de’ 159n94  
Méndez Silva, Rodrigo 227–228  
Mitelli, Agostino 179, 180, 204  
Molina, Argote de 213  
Montalvan, Maria de 171n23–172n23  
Mora, Francisco de 170, 170n18–171n18, 172  
Mor, Anthonis 26, 30  
Moscow, Grand Duke of 180  
Museo Nacional del Prado 40n5–41n5, 62, 119, 230  
“Sala de las Meninas” 198, 199, 206
- Navarrete, Juan Fernández de (“El Mudo”) 34,  
35n41, 139–140, 142  
Núñez de Castro, Alonso de 175n40
- Pacheco, Francisco 2, 20n4, 23n12, 35n42, 36–37,  
113n32, 129, 149, 183n64  
Pacheco, Joseph 172, 174  
*pagador* 44, 63–65  
Palacio del Buen Retiro 35n42, 44, 184n66, 231  
Hall of Realms 40–41

- Palacio Real de El Pardo 24, 26–28, 30, 32, 33, 213
- Palazzo Medici 153
- Palazzo Pitti 153, 159n94
- Palomino de Castro y Velasco, Antonio 2, 35n42, 43–44, 68n52–69n52, 70n61, 72, 124n71, 126, 129, 135, 149, 166–168, 170, 171n20, 171n22, 179, 180n55, 181n61, 194, 195, 198–201, 206, 208n38, 210–218, 220, 221, 222n71, 231n8, 232, 234
- Pantoja de la Cruz, Juan  
*The Emperor Charles V* (MNP, P001033) 27n20, 27
- paragone* 80n87, 122
- Paravicino y Arteaga, Hortensio Félix 115
- Patinir, Joachim 127
- Peace of the Pyrenees 148n60, 176
- Penni, Giovanni Francesco 141
- Pérez de Moya, Juan 184n66
- Pernety, Antoine-Joseph 156
- Perrenot de Granvelle, Antoine 43n17
- Perrier, François  
*Segmenta nobilium* (1638) 71–94, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93
- Philip II, King of Spain 26, 55, 111, 126, 127, 135–136, 139, 161, 194, 214, 235
- Philip III, King of Spain 129, 173
- Philip IV, King of Spain *passim*
- Philip V, King of Spain 230
- pintor de cámara* 35n42, 144n57, 174, 195, 208, 222, 231n9
- Piombo, Sebastiano del 127
- Pisanello  
*Virgin and Child with Saints Anthony Abbot and George* (NG, London, NG776) 143n53
- Poussin, Nicolas 152, 158  
*Manna* (ML, INV 7275) 149  
*Self-Portrait* (ML, INV 7302) 150
- Pozzo, Cassiano dal 34–35, 37, 69, 127–129
- Primaticcio, Francesco 67
- Ranc, Jean 230
- Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) 141, 148n60  
*The Holy Family, or "The Pearl"* (MNP, P000301) 130, 132, 134, 142
- Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial 3, 8, 126–148, 165, 181, 231  
ante-sacristy 134–142, 144, 148n60, 165  
chapter room of the prior 136–142, 138, 144–145, 165  
chapter room of the vicar 136–139, 144–145  
Hall of Moral Theology 134–142, 165
- Pantheon of Kings 129–130, 134, 138  
bronze and marble crucifixions for 133–134, 138  
sacristy 134–142, 144, 148, 165  
Old Church 136n29, 138n37
- Reni, Guido 141, 203
- Ribera, José de 139, 140, 142, 203  
*Tityus* (MNP, P001113) 61, 62  
*Ixion* (MNP, P001114) 62, 62
- Ricciardi, Giovan Battista 151
- Ridolfi, Carlo 32
- Rioja, Domingo de 177–178
- Rioja, Francisco de 41
- Rizi, Francisco 178–179
- Rodríguez, Simon 174
- Rojas, Francisco de 171, 172
- Romano, Giulio 141  
*The Visitation* (MNP, P000300) 148n61
- Rosa, Salvator  
"Salvator Rosa" frame 150–151, 158, 159, 161–162
- Rospigliosi, Giulio 69
- Rubens, Peter Paul 9–10, 41–42, 67–68, 97, 112, 129, 135, 139, 140, 180–183, 185, 186, 193–194, 203  
*Achilles Discovered by Ulysses and Diomedes* (MNP, P001661) 180n58  
*Cupid and Psyche* (sketch) (MBH, CM 2) 188–192, 191  
*Democritus, the Laughing Philosopher* (MNP, P001682) 42  
*Heraclitus, the Crying Philosopher* (MNP, P001680) 42  
*Hercules and Antaeus* (lost) 180n58  
*Holy Family with Saint Anne* (MNP, P001639) 144  
"Labors of Hercules" series 44n20  
*The Love of Cupid and Psyche* (MNP, P001548).  
See Jordaens, Jacob  
(and workshop) *Mercury and Argus* (MNP, P001673) 186, 187  
*Mucius Scaevola before Lars Porsenna* (lost) 180n58  
*Pallas and Arachne* (sketch) (VMFA, Richmond, 58.18) 187–188, 189  
*Perseus Freeing Andromeda* (MNP, P001663) 180n58  
*Philip IV of Spain on Horseback* (lost) 38, 39, 176–180, 180n58, 227–229, 230–231  
*The Rape of Europa* (sketch) (MNP, P002457) 187–188, 190  
*The Rape of the Sabine Women* (lost) 180n58

- Rubens, Peter Paul (*cont.*)  
*The Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau* (BS, no. inv. 1302) 180n58, 231  
*The Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines* (lost) 180n58  
*Satyr and Tigress* (SK, Dresden, Gal.-Nr. 974) 180n58  
*The Sense of Sight* (MNP, P001394) 10  
*The Three Graces* (MNP, P001670) 105–107, 109, 112–113  
*Three Nymphs with a Cornucopia* (MNP, P001664) 180n58
- Saavedra Fajardo, Diego de 57n29
- Sacchi, Andrea 218n61
- Salazar, Carlos de 175n41
- Sánchez Coello, Alonso 30, 182n63
- Santos, Francisco de los 126, 134–137, 139, 141, 144–145
- Sarto, Andrea del 141  
*Virgin and Child between Saint Matthew and an Angel* (MNP, P000334) 130, 133, 134n17
- Sebastiani, Cesare  
*Discus-Thrower* (PN, Madrid, 10003154) 68, 73–74, 77, 83–94  
*Germanicus* (PN, Madrid, 10010390) 68, 73–74, 75, 83–94  
*Satyr in Repose* (PN, Madrid, 10010391) 68, 73–74, 76, 83–94  
*secretario de cámara* 171n20
- Seghers, Daniel 137
- Sigoney, Juan 173, 235–236
- Sigüenza, José de 161n98
- Sleeping Hermaphrodite* (ML, Ma231.1) 122
- Snyders, Frans 203
- Sota, Pedro de la 177–178  
*superintendente de obras reales* 64, 65n38
- tenedor de materiales* 63–66
- Teniers, David, the Younger 10  
*The Archduke Leopold William in His Picture Gallery in Brussels* (MNP, P001813) 11
- Tiel, Justus  
*Allegory of the Education of Philip III* (MNP, P001846) 28
- Tintoretto, Domenico  
*Judith and Holofernes* (MNP, P000390) 180–181  
*Penitent Magdalene* (PN, Madrid, 10014558) 144, 146, 160n97, 161, 162, 163
- Tintoretto, Jacopo Robusti 105, 129, 139, 140–142, 180–181, 203
- The Abduction of Helen* (MNP, P000399) 180–181
- Joseph and the Wife of Putiphar* (MNP, P000395) 110n22
- Purification of the Midianite Virgins* (MNP, P000393) 110n22
- Susanna and the Elders* (MNP, P000386) 110n22
- The Washing of the Feet* (MNP, P002824) 130–134, 130, 148n61
- Titian *passim*  
*Adam and Eve* (MNP, P000429) 99–103, 100  
*The Agony in the Garden* (MNP, P000436) 148n61  
*The Andrians* (MNP, P000418) 105–106, 111  
*Christ on the Cross* (PN, Madrid, 10014803) 144, 145, 163  
*Danaë* (MNP, P000425) 99n12  
*Emperor Charles V at Mühlberg* (MNP, P000410) 18–38, 19, 62, 176–180, 229, 230–231, 234  
*The Flaying of Marsyas* (AP, Kroměříž, KE 2370, O 107) 192, 193  
*the furias* 21, 37, 59–60, 182n63, 185, 230  
*Sisyphus* (MNP, P000426) 21, 25, 62, 230  
*Tityus* (MNP, P000427) 21, 24, 62, 227–228, 230  
*The Glory* (MNP, P000432) 127, 128  
*Madonna and Child in an Evening Landscape* (AP, 464) 127, 148n61  
*Philip II Offering the Infante Fernando to Victory* (MNP, P000431) 21, 22, 28, 176–180, 229, 231  
*the poesie* 99n12, 110–113, 116, 119, 122, 186–194  
*Danaë* (AH, London, 256.B) 99–103, 102, 105, 111, 122  
*Diana and Actaeon* (NG, London, and NGS, NG6611) 99–103, 105, 106  
*Diana and Callisto* (NG, London, and NGS, NG6616) 99–103, 105, 105  
*Perseus and Andromeda* (WC, P11) 99–103, 105, 107, 111  
*The Rape of Europa* (ISGM, P26e1) 99–103, 104, 105  
*Venus and Adonis* (MNP, P000422) 99–103, 103, 105, 111, 122, 186  
*Religion Assisted by Spain* (MNP, P000430) 21, 23  
*self-portrait with the effigy of Philip II* (lost) 213–214  
*Tarquin and Lucretia* (FM, PDP 914) 99–103, 101  
*Venus with a Mirror* (NGA, 1937.1.34) 105–107, 108, 122

Titian (*cont.*)

- Venus with an Organist and Cupid* (MNP, P000421) 99–103, 102, 122
- Virgin and Child between Saints Anthony of Padua and Roch* (MNP, P000288) 148n61
- The Worship of Venus* (MNP, P000419) 105–106, 111
- Titian and His Son* (NMS, K.2004.38) 214, 215
- Torre de la Parada 40–42, 97, 186–194
- Torre, Pedro and José de la 165n101
- Torres, Christobal de 114n35
- Torres, Pedro de 171, 172, 174
- Valdes, Luis de 172n26
- Vasari, Giorgio 9, 20n4, 28–30
- Portrait of Alessandro de' Medici* (GU, inv. 1890, no. 1563) 5
- veedor y contador* 42, 44, 54, 63–68
- Vega, Diego de la 113n32
- Velázquez, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y *passim*
- copies in plaster and bronze of ancient sculptures
- Apollo Belvedere* (lost) 72, 72n72–73n72
- The Boy with the Thorn (Spinario)* (MNP, E000163) 78, 94, 95
- Discus-Thrower* (PN, Madrid, 10003154). See Duca, Giovanni Pietro del, and Sebastiani, Cesare
- Dying Gaul* (lost) 72, 78n84
- Germanicus* (PN, Madrid, 10010390). See Duca, Giovanni Pietro del, and Sebastiani, Cesare
- Gladiator* (RABASF, V-023) 72, 72n72–73n72
- Hercules* (RABASF, V-001) 72, 72n72–73n72, 78n85
- Hermaphrodite* (MNP, E000223) 72, 72n72–73n72, 78n83, 122n64
- Laocoön* (RABASF, V-012) 72, 72n72–73n72, 78
- Lion* (MNP, O000453). See Bonuccelli, Matteo
- Lion* (MNP, O002939). See Bonuccelli, Matteo
- Lion* (MNP, O002940). See Bonuccelli, Matteo
- Lion* (MNP, O002943). See Bonuccelli, Matteo
- Mars* (lost) 72, 72n72–73n72
- Moses* (lost) 78
- Nile* (lost) 78n84
- Satyr in Repose* (PN, Madrid, 10010391). See Duca, Giovanni Pietro del, and Sebastiani, Cesare
- Silenus with the Infant Dionysus* (RABASF, V-026) 72, 72n72–73n72, 78n85–80n85

*Sleeping Ariadne* (RABASF, V-011) 78n83

*Venus* (lost) 78n85–80n85

*Venus with a Shell, or Nymph* (MNP, E000169) 78n83

frames 142–148, 145, 146, 147, 159–165, 161, 162

*Memoria* 135

## paintings

*Aesop* (MNP, P001206) 42

*Apollo and Marsyas* (lost) 181–194, 230

*Camillo Astalli, known as Cardinal Pamphili* (HSM&L, A101) 140

*Cupid and Psyche* (lost) 96n2, 181–194, 230

equestrian portrait of Philip IV of Spain

(lost) 20, 34–38, 234

*Infanta Margarita in a White Dress* (KHM, Gemäldegalerie 3691) 211, 212, 218, 221

*Mars* (MNP, P001208) 42

*Las Meninas* (MNP, P001174) 3, 123–125, 167, 196–208, 197, 210–229, 232

*Menippus* (MNP, P001207) 42

*Mercury and Argus* (MNP, P001175) 181–194, 182

*Philip III and the Expulsion of the Moriscos* (lost) 21, 176–180, 229, 230–231

*Portrait of Innocent X Pamphilij* (GDP, FC 289) 140

*Prince Baltasar Carlos in the Riding School* (WC, P6) 217n61

*The Spinners, or the Fable of Arachne*

(MNP, P001173) 186–188, 188

*The Surrender of Breda* (MNP, P001172) 40, 217n61

*The Toilet of Venus* (“*The Rokeby Venus*”)

(NG, London, NG2057) 96–99, 97, 98, 104–105, 110, 119–125, 126

*Venus and Adonis* (lost) 96n2, 181–194, 230

Velázquez, Francisca 208

Veronese, Paolo 112, 129, 139, 140–142, 203

*Christ among the Doctors in the Temple*

(MNP, P000491) 180–181

*The Judgment of Paris* (lost) 105, 110, 112–113

*The Rape of Europa* (lost) 105, 110

*Venus and Adonis* (MNP, P005204) 105, 110

Villalta, Diego de

*Tratado de las Antiquedades* (1590) 54–59, 56, 57, 58, 59, 78

*Tratado de estatuas antiguas* (S. XVIII) 54–59, 78

Villanueva, Francisco de 65

Villegas, Bernardino de 118n53–119n53

Villena, Marquis de 230

- Vinci, Leonardo da 136
- Viti, Timoteo 141
- Weyden, Rogier van der 127
- Yermo, Pedro de 171, 172, 174/33
- Zelotti, Gian Battista  
*Rebecca and Eliezer* (MNP, P000512) 181n60
- Zuccaro, Federico 20n4, 28–30, 227
- Zurbarán, Francisco de  
*The Defense of Cadiz against the English*  
(MNP, P000656) 41  
“Hercules Hispanicus” series 41

This book is first to address the curatorial career of Diego Velázquez, painter to King Philip IV of Spain and chamberlain of his royal palace. It investigates the role that Velázquez played in overseeing the display of the Habsburg art collection, then the richest in the western world, and the role, in turn, that this practice played in his creative trajectory between his arrival at the Spanish court in the 1623 and his death in 1660. This book thus recasts Velázquez's career as an episode in the history of the curator.

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