Imagery, Spirituality and Ideology in Baroque Spain and Latin America

Imagery, Spirituality and Ideology in Baroque Spain and Latin America

Edited by

Jeremy Roe and Marta Bustillo

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

Imagery, Spirituality and Ideology in Baroque Spain and Latin America,
Edited by Jeremy Roe and Marta Bustillo

This book first published 2010

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2010 by Jeremy Roe and Marta Bustillo and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-1913-1, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1913-8

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

CARLA RAHN PHILLIPS,
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The essays in this collection all deal with the complex nature of religious art in the context of the Atlantic world in the early modern period, especially the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. More specifically, the essays deal with the conceptualization, creation, and function of spiritual art in Spain and its overseas empire. Understanding the significance of holy individuals and events formed a crucial element in the artist's approach to a project. Formal elements such as composition and the use of color also played important roles in the quality and ultimate success of the finished product. The intellectual element was arguably more important, however, enabling an artist to convey spiritual truth to viewers at various levels of sophistication. Those viewers—ideally—would bring the process full circle. In contemplating a work of art as an aid to meditation and prayer, they would reach a deeper understanding of the holy individual or spiritual concept that had inspired the artist at the outset.

I joined this project as an admirer of artistic and literary production, and, although I have done some research in topics related to art history, I have no formal training in that field. Instead, I specialize in the general history of the early modern period, focusing on Europe and especially on Spain and its empire. When I read scholarship in the history of art or literature, I have questions in mind that relate to the broad historical context of artistic production. Why did an artist or writer choose a particular topic? What historical questions does the author pose about works of art and what sorts of evidence provide the basis for approaching answers to those questions? Does the analysis locate in time and space the people, events, works of art, written evidence, and other elements that feature in an argument—in other words, its historical context? Finally, does the author situate the argument with relation to prior work on the topic?

Historical scholarship designed to appeal to readers from a variety of disciplines faces the challenge of being clear, comprehensible, and relevant

to all those disciplines. Even within the various subfields of history—Art History, Military History, Women's History, and so on—specialists often assume that readers already know the context of their sub-field, and may not feel the need to make it explicit. The problem increases exponentially if a subfield requires a specialized vocabulary, or if its practitioners have chosen to adopt a specialized jargon.

Unfortunately, outsiders do not always know the intellectual context—much less the jargon—of a particular subfield. Yet without it they cannot easily follow an argument, much less evaluate it. For that reason, I think that authors should always make explicit the context of their argument, even to an audience of experts. That is the best way to ensure that readers will understand the argument and follow it to a logical conclusion. Generally, all it takes is a word or two, a few dates, or a sentence to remind even experts of dates or names that might have slipped their minds. Far from being insulted, they will appreciate the gesture and be more attentive to the argument because of it.

The authors of the essays collected here examine various aspects of imagery, spirituality, and ideology, a topic of far-reaching importance for the early modern world. They are dedicated to using visual and textual evidence as a powerful lens through which to examine broad questions about early modern society in Spain and its overseas empire. Whether they received training primarily in the history and theory of art or literature, they do not view their disciplines narrowly. Instead, they exemplify the re-discovered approach once called “art in context” and work hard to establish the context for their arguments.

All of the essays analyse both written and visual materials to examine spirituality and its artistic representation. Mindy Nancarrow’s essay focuses on representations of the Virgin in Spanish painting of the late sixteenth through the late seventeenth centuries, in particular El Greco’s *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*. Despite the painting’s title, at first glance it seems to depict the Virgin’s Assumption into heaven at the end of her life, rather than her miraculous conception, free from original sin. The belief in the Immaculate Conception was particularly strong in Spain from the Middle Ages onward, although it did not become dogma in the Roman Catholic Church until 1854. Standard iconography of the Immaculate Conception represented the Virgin as a passive recipient of the divine grace that defined her perfection. In El Greco’s *Oballe Virgin*, produced between 1608 and 1614, although the symbols of the Virgin’s perfection are prominent in the composition, she ascends toward heaven in the traditional representation of the Assumption, taking an active role in receiving grace from the Holy Spirit. Nancarrow finds textual support for

this new active posture in the theology of Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) , whose many treatises on the nature and perfection of the Virgin provided theological justification for the many "ascending Virgins" in the work of seventeenth-century Spanish artists.

Christopher Wilson focuses on the critical importance of the range of devotional images in the Carmelite convents reformed by Teresa of Ávila in late sixteenth-century Spain. Such images had long held a central place in Roman Catholic worship, helping the devout to focus their attention as they prayed. By the late sixteenth century, Protestantism had claimed the loyalty of many Europeans and rejected the importance of religious images to true belief. Thus, Wilson argues, the pervasive use of religious images in Teresa's reformed convents served not only as an aid to prayer, but also as an identifying characteristic of Catholicism against Protestantism. Moreover, Teresa's promotion of religious images presumably helped to mollify those who criticized her emphasis on interior prayer.

Teresa and the nuns under her care also devoted much prayer toward the conversion of natives in the Americas. Vanessa Davidson follows devotion toward the Virgin into the Spanish empire, where evangelization and spirituality relied even more heavily on images than in Spain. She focuses on the wooden image of the Virgin of Candelaria created by Tito Yupanqui, an Inca nobleman, in the late 1580s and the texts created by Augustinian chroniclers describing that image and its reception. By a close reading of Fray Alonso Ramos Gavilán's text, she examines how Tito Yupanqui came to exemplify Christian conversion, and how his crude sculpture transformed Copacabana from the center of Andean idolatry to the center of Marian devotion.

Jeremy Roe analyzes how the human body served as a vehicle for expressing both aesthetic and spiritual ideals in European culture. Using treatises from classical antiquity through the seventeenth century to set the context, he analyzes the depictions of Christ's body in two paintings by Diego de Velázquez, *The Flagellation of Christ* and *The Crucifixion*. Roe argues that Christ's body, in order to convey the correct theological meaning of divine perfection, had to exemplify the aesthetic ideal of perfection as well. The more lifelike and beautiful the body appeared, the more perfectly the painting could inspire the devotion of the faithful.

Marta Bustillo examines the devotion to images of the Crucified Christ in seventeenth-century Madrid, when the Count-Duke of Olivares served as the all-powerful minister of Philip IV. Many members of the social and political elite resented Olivares's power and faulted him, among other reasons, for favouring converted Christians of Jewish origin. In a notorious case of heresy in 1632, the Inquisition condemned several Portuguese

conversos to death for allegedly desecrating an image of the Crucified Christ. In the aftermath of their execution, a new devotional cult developed around the Christ of Patience (Cristo de la Paciencia), to commemorate and atone for the desecration. Devotees used diverse images of the Crucified Christ as part of the new cult, redefining their meaning in the new context. In addition to demonstrating a militant Catholic posture with regard to heresy, the new cult also served as a focus for sentiment against Olivares, who finally fell from power in 1643.

As Christ-centered devotion gained in popularity during the seventeenth century, devotion to saintly figures that had experienced replicas of Christ's wounds (*stigmata*) also rose. María Cruz de Carlos examines various representations of Saint Francis of Assisi, in particular the paintings by Francisco de Zurbarán from the 1640s to the 1660s, as well as texts that discussed how to depict the saint's body and the *stigmata*. These issues went beyond aesthetics and related to the contemporary debate about the validity of *stigmata* in general and to Franciscan claims that their founder was in fact another Christ, and thus elevated far above other saints.

The life of Christ, as well as his suffering and death, also inspired ordinary mortals, even the most exalted. Ariadna García-Bryce discusses how Christ served as a model for kingship in early modern Spain, in particular through the literary genre known as the "mirror of princes." Using textual evidence from Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, Francisco Quevedo, and others, as well as visual evidence from Titian, El Greco, Caravaggio, and the corpus of Habsburg emblems, she explores the connections and similarities between visual and written conceptions of the sacramental dimensions of monarchy in early modern Spain.

Other authors in this collection also look outward beyond the spiritual meaning of art to examine its social and political meaning. Carolyn Dean shifts our gaze to Perú, analyzing a series of paintings from the late seventeenth century showing processions in Cuzco for the religious feast of Corpus Christi. Indigenous artists created the paintings, which depict the diversity of local society. The descendants of Inca royalty in rich regalia, the Spanish colonial elite of church and state, and ordinary citizens along the spectrum from indigenes to Spaniards, all join in the same devotional procession. Yet, as Dean shows, the meaning of these paintings was not necessarily straightforward, then or now. Their original location was in the church of Santa Ana, which marked the border between indigenous and colonial parts of the city after the Spanish conquest, in an area that had served in Inca times as the entrance to the city. Dean argues

that interpretations of the paintings should therefore consider potential indigenous meanings along with meanings based on European iconography.

Taken together, the essays in this collection add to our understanding, not only of visual and textual descriptions of spirituality, but also of their context in the broader history of the early modern centuries.

PART I:

ICONOGRAPHY AND IDEOLOGY

CHAPTER ONE

FRANCISCO SUÁREZ'S BIENAVENTURADA VIRGEN AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MINDY NANCARROW,
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Produced between 1608-14 in Toledo, Spain, El Greco's (1541-1614) *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* altarpiece painting (Fig. 1-1) is the first and most dramatic instance of a phenomenon in Spanish art I will call the rising Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. In art, the Virgin only symbolizes and she does not represent her perfection in her Immaculate Conception; she neither rises nor descends, unlike the Virgin of the Assumption who rises to receive her eternal reward in heaven. Some scholars have tried to account for El Greco's contrary Oballe Virgin by referring to the artist's unique personal aesthetic, as when Stratton says, "It is style, rather than iconography, that distinguishes El Greco's rendering of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception from its predecessors [in Spanish art]."[1] But El Greco's surging Virgin is neither unique nor unusual, and she makes an emphatic reappearance in Spanish art after 1650 in innumerable paintings by Bartolomé Murillo (1617/18-82), Juan de Valdés Leal (1622-89), Antonio del Castillo (1616-68), Francisco Rizi (1614-85), Antonio Palomino (1655-1726), and many other Spanish artists. This paper interprets the Virgin's upward surging within the theological doctrine of her immaculate perfection that is El Greco's chosen subject. My goal is to try to understand the historical phenomenon of the rising

[1] Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63.

Virgin of the Immaculate Conception in Spanish art, beginning with El Greco's *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.*

El Greco's *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* decorated the funerary chapel of doña Isabel de Oballe in Toledo's parish church of San Vicente Mártir until 1965, when it was removed to the Museo de Santa Cruz for safekeeping.[2] According to documentation published by Fernando Marías, El Greco assumed the contract after the death of the Genoese artist Alessandro Semini; the patron for the commission was the Toledo town council.[3] El Greco agreed to fulfill all of the stipulations in the original contract and he proposed some of his own. In particular, he would increase the perpendicularity of the altar, "so that the architecture will be perfect and not stunted which is the worst that can happen to any structure," and he would contribute a painting of the *Visitation* in honor of the founder at his own expense.[4] In its intended original location in the Oballe chapel, El Greco's vertical *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* dramatized Mary's ascent to the third person of the Trinity. Light entering from the chapel's only window, located directly above the altarpiece-the altar pediment breaks to admit the window-, illuminated the picture so that the dove of the Holy Spirit seemed to descend, meeting Mary halfway. Not surprisingly, almost all who saw El Greco's artwork *in situ* (mis)identified it as an Assumption, or they interpreted it as the Virgin accompanied by music-making angels rising to heaven to her merited reward, the beatific vision. Opinion did not begin to shift until 1962, when Harold Wethey pointed out that the presence of the Virgin's traditional attributes of purity inserted in the landscape in the lower right—note the spotless mirror, fountain, well, ship, and star—means she can only be the Immaculate Conception. Marías subsequently confirmed this when he published the contract stipulating an Immaculate Conception.[5]

Yet her identity as the Immaculate Conception only complicates the perceptual problem posed by the rising Virgin, introducing new questions that are difficult to resolve, in particular, why did El Greco produce an

---

[2] On the Oballe chapel see especially José Álvarez Lopera, "El Greco en la Capilla Oballe," *El Greco y la Capilla Oballe* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2004), 11-39.

[3] Fernando Marías, "El Greco y el Punto de Vista: la Capilla Oballe de Toledo," *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 3 (1991): 83-92. Also see Álvarez Lopera, 13-26.

[4] Álvarez Lopera, 16-18.

[5] Harold E. Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 2: 60. Marías, 87-88.

Immaculate Conception that looks every bit like an Assumption? Gabriele Finaldi is most persuasive when he says that the artist at the height of his expressive powers deliberately conflated the two iconographies of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption in order to heighten the spiritual fervor of the scene.[6] However, there are consequences to this fusion that Finaldi neglects to consider. The two iconographies exist to mark the end points of Mary's life on earth: The Immaculate Conception symbolizes her exemption from sin at the first instant of conception, and the Assumption represents her rising to heaven after her death on earth. When El Greco fused the two iconographies, he fused the end points of her life so that the single image represents the entirety of her life on earth. Furthermore, and in contrast to the scholars who insist on seeing either the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption, I offer a third possibility: El Greco meant for us to see both. El Greco's intentions are revealed, I believe, by the symbols of Mary's purity placed at eye-level with the viewer in the chapel. Her symbols identify her as the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, before the upward thrust contradicts this by suggesting the Virgin of the Assumption. Thus, I believe we should ask for what purpose El Greco produced his comprehensive image and what exactly he meant for it to communicate about the Virgin.

In order to begin to address these questions we must first determine what Mary is doing, since her action in this comprehensive image represents all of her actions in her total perfection, beginning at the first instant of conception and always after that. In the painting, Mary surges towards the white dove hovering above assisted by the angel in yellow with the enormous fanlike wing. Her meeting with the dove is made the focus of the picture: the ascending spiral begins where the angel's feet dance in white lilies and pink roses and continues up Mary's elongated body, terminating at her pallid countenance turned towards the dove. The diagonals formed by the music-making angels located at either side of Mary, meanwhile, direct more attention to her. Mary looking at the dove is a marked departure from the traditional iconography as represented by Francisco Pacheco's (1564-1644) painting of 1610 (Fig. 1-2) and Diego Velázquez's (1599-1660) 1619 picture in the National Gallery, London. In the traditional iconography, Mary does not look, but she is looked upon by God, who is located outside of the picture space. In the altar painting, in contrast, Mary is both the subject and the object of the gaze as she looks directly at the dove and the dove, in its turn, looks at Mary. This exchange of gazes communicates something of crucial importance to our

[6] Gabriele Finaldi, et al, *El Greco,* exh. cat. (London: National Gallery, 2003), 200.

understanding of Mary's eternal purity: Mary is an active agent in receiving the privilege of the Immaculate Conception. Mary, who personifies her own soul during its Immaculate Conception, is not the passive recipient of God's grace imagined by other artists.

El Greco's interpretation of Mary in her Immaculate Conception is difficult to reconcile with the doctrine as it was defined by the theologians and believed by the faithful. In the Church doctrine, Mary is exempted from the burden and stain of original sin at the first instant of life, which the theologians make identical with the moment God creates the soul and infuses it into the foetus in the mother's womb.[7] It is solely when the foetus is animated, or consummately conceived, that a person comes into being; hence, the Immaculate Conception is the first time that we can speak of Mary as a person. What El Greco's painting proposes, then, is that Mary's soul was aware of the privilege it was receiving, and reacted and responded of its own free will (as confirmed by the upward thrust) *even as it was created*. Mary, by focusing intently on the dove, cooperates with God's (actual) grace, performing a willful act of *amor dei* or charity, for which God promises eternal life.[8] In terms of El Greco's comprehensive image, the picture tells us that Mary's acts or good works, performed in cooperation with God's grace, earned her the beatific vision, as indicated by the represented glory. The *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* also proposes that Mary's life of good works began at the first instant of conception, when she participated in her privileging with an act of ardent *amor dei*. Clearly, this second conclusion requires justifying and it is important that we understand the significance of her act, which is the reason for the upward thrust.

El Greco's Oballe altarpiece painting finds the required theological support in Francisco Suárez's (1548-1617) eighteen disputations on the Virgin included in his *De mysteriis vitae Christi*, a commentary on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* published in Alcalá in 1592. A Jesuit and a theologian, Suárez is the first to interpret the Virgin's perfection within the entirety of her life and not just in her role as mother of God. The father of modern scientific Mariology, Suárez declares that

[7] In theology, this moment is called passive conception to distinguish from active conception, which is the parents' generative act. See Aidan Carr and Germain Williams, "Mary's Immaculate Conception," *Mariology,* ed. Juniper B. Carol, 2 vols. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1955-57), 1: 328-94, 329.

[8] On the Church's position on acts see the Council of Trent in its sixth session held in 1547. *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent,* trans. H. J. Schroeder (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978), 41.

God, because he loved Mary more than all other creatures, and in order to prepare her for the role of mother of God for which she was predestined, filled her with grace, given that to be without sin is to be in a state of grace.[9] At the first instant of conception Mary received such a superfluity of unconsummated grace that there was no room left for more. Yet the *bienaventurada* or Blessed Virgin Mary had to have increased in grace because Mary in this life was a *viandante,* or pilgrim, and the essence of a pilgrim's grace is its limitless capacity to increase and augment.[10] Suárez says that Mary performed acts of charity constantly and continuously, in order to "merit for herself and for her cause the glory that was not hers co-naturally."[11] Suárez resolves the problem of her initial fullness of grace and her subsequent accumulation of it by stating that Mary did not grow in grace quantitatively, rather, her grace intensified with each act that she performed. In Suárez's calculations, Mary at the first instant of sanctification (identical with her Immaculate Conception) received more grace than any saint or angel and her grace intensified by her continuous acts performed of her own free will in cooperation with God's grace so that by the end of her life her grace was more intense than the consummated grace of all of the saints and angels combined.[12]

Suárez argues that God enabled Mary's free will at the first instant of conception and he granted her the reason and understanding necessary for its exercise *because he wanted her sanctification to be perfect,* and a sanctification that includes the subject's consent is more perfect than one that does not.[13] Suárez supports his case with the example of the Baptist who knew God (Christ) in his mother's womb, according to Luke 1: 41. If the unborn Baptist in his mother's womb with his infused knowledge of God recognized the Savior of humanity, how can we attribute any less to the Virgin? Following from his own argument, whatever is attributed to the saints must also be attributed to the Virgin but in a greater degree, according to her dignity as mother of God.[14] Possessed of perfect

[9] Francisco Suárez, *Misterios de la Vida de Cristo, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, trans. and with an introduction by Romualdo Galdós, 2 vols. (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1948), 1: 119 (disp. 4, sec. 1, pt. 3). All translations are mine. On the Virgin's grace see Frank P. Calkins, "Mary's Fullness of Grace," *Mariology*, ed. Juniper B. Carol, 2 vols. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1955-57), 2: 297-312, 300-03.
[10] Suárez, 1: 118-19 (disp. 4, sec. 1, pt. 1).
[11] Suárez, 1: 118 (disp. 4, sec. 1, pt. 1).
[12] Suárez, 1: 119 (disp. 4, sec. 1, pt. 3).
[13] Suárez, 1: 161 (disp. 4, sec. 8, pt. 1)
[14] Suárez, 1: 154-56 (disp. 4, sec. 7, pt. 2)

knowledge of God at the first instant of conception, Mary had to have acted in her own behalf because it is not credible that this knowledge [of God in the form of rational understanding] should have been idle or as if dead. Thus, she had an act of free will [at the first instant of life] simultaneously toward God whom she loved above all things, because for this end principally she was given this knowledge.[15]

El Greco's Oballe altarpiece painting imagines the precise instant when Mary, infused with knowledge of God by the Holy Spirit, acts on that love, as indicated by her hand placed over her heart draped in the red color of charity. In the picture, Mary expresses her ardent love of God and the dove, in its turn, expresses God's love for Mary.

Suárez also accounts for Mary's last act on earth, the *terminus ad quem* of El Greco's comprehensive picture. In his disputation 21 the Spanish theologian declares unequivocally that Mary did not die of old age or infirmity; she expired of a most intense act of love, of a "very ardent desire and a very intense contemplation."[16] Mary's final act, the one that took her life, did not end with her death, because she continued to act all the way to heaven. Her soul, says Suárez, rose to heaven immediately after she expired and her body remained behind incorrupt in its sepulcher for three days, in perfect imitation of Christ. On its way to heaven, Mary's perfect soul continued to perform acts of divine love:

> "In her transit from her exile to her home [in heaven] the holy Virgin had no interruption nor discontinuance in her act of charity and divine love; rather, the identical act, that while she lived on earth, she exercised of her own free will up until the moment of her death, she continued all during her trajectory with a certain increased perfection and necessity, or at least the Virgin Mary passed from the act of exile to [the act] of her homeland [in heaven] immediately without any intermission."[17]

In the painting, Mary's personified soul rises to glory in heaven. Golden rays of light fan out from the dove, infusing Mary with perfect knowledge of God. The divine light touches Mary at the top of her head sending up tiny sparks of cooperative energy. Mary, as Suárez tells us, increased in love and knowledge of God throughout her lifetime by her own efforts, reading and studying Scripture assisted continually by the light and singular grace of the Holy Spirit, to the extent that she penetrated

[15] Suárez, 1: 161 (disp. 4, sec. 8, pt. 1)
[16] Suárez, 1: 574-75 (disp. 21, sec. 2, pt. 1)
[17] Suárez, 1: 575-56 (disp. 21, sec. 2, pt. 3)

the divine mysteries.[18] El Greco's painting confirms Suárez's conclusion, that the Virgin Mary "by the perfection of her vision of the blessed was superior to all of the angels and pure men, and also all of the perfections found in all of them."[19]

El Greco's painting is informed by Suárez's scholastic argument for the Virgin's eternal perfection. Seen within the Oballe chapel with the other three paintings that formed the decorative ensemble, *The Visitation, Saint Peter,* and *Saint Ildefonsus,* however, El Greco's *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* is Suárez's scholastic *quaestio* presented as truth, supported by the weight of Scripture, tradition, and human reason in the other three pictures. El Greco's *Visitation* (Fig. 1-3) for the ceiling above the altar offers Suárez's own example from Scripture of the unborn Baptist leaping for joy in his mother's womb when he recognized Christ. The painting now in Dumbarton Oaks focuses our total attention on the greeting exchanged between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth before the doorway to Elizabeth's house, projected as a temple front. Dressed identically in voluminous blue robes the two cousins are mirror images that stress the parallelism between the Baptist's first act and Mary's act. El Greco has supported the Virgin's initial act by focusing on Elizabeth's startled expression, which Camón once upon a time likened to the "spectral horror of a resuscitated Lazarus."[20] The classical portico framing the figures reproduces in miniature the altar architecture helping the viewer make the connection to the Virgin's act of *amor dei* represented in the altar painting below.

The larger-than-life figures of Saint Ildefonsus, bishop of Toledo between 657 and 667, and Saint Peter for the chapel's flanking walls, meanwhile, support Mary's perfection with the weight of tradition and human reason.[21] An early advocate of the Virgin and author of a treatise on her perpetual virginity, Ildefonsus on the right wall appears in full ecclesiastical garb; his beautiful chasuble embroidered with floral arabesques and lined with pink silk is probably the one he received from the Virgin in

[18] Suárez, 1: 535 (disp. 19, sec. 2, pt. 4)
[19] Suárez, 1: 589 (disp. 21, sec. 3, pt. 7)
[20] Jose Camón Aznar, *Dominico Greco* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1950), 940, n. 33.
[21] El Greco's son, Jorge Manuel, substituted workshop copies for the originals at the time of installation, perhaps because the expenses incurred by the artist were greater than what the council was willing to pay for the ensemble. El Greco's paintings *St. Peter* and *St. Ildefonsus* are recorded in the inventory of the Escorial uninterruptedly beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century. See Álvarez Lopera, 22-26.

reward for his devotion on the feast day of the Assumption in Toledo Cathedral. Absorbed in a holy book, Toledo's patron saint Ildefonsus stresses the unbroken tradition of Marian devotion in Toledo represented in the landscape in the altar painting. Peter, for the opposite flanking wall, appears dressed in his traditional yellow robe and with the keys to heaven and earth that are his attribute. Peter, the first pope, represents the institution of the Church with its unmet duty to confirm Mary's purity (Fig. 1-4). His index finger pointing in Mary's direction indicates the truth of her immaculacy to the believing viewer. His distraught expression may be criticism of his successors in the papal see, none that had seen fit to confirm the doctrine of her immaculate perfection despite overwhelming evidence in its favor.

Published for the first time in 1592 and republished repeatedly in 1594, 1596, 1598, and 1602, Suárez's theology transformed pious devotion into a rigorous argument that could be marshaled in defense of Mary's purity. His scholastic disputation proved Mary's perfection from the first instant of conception in preparation for the confirmation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (and also the Assumption). The urgency of this Marian agenda in Spain, and especially Toledo, Spain's spiritual center and the seat of the Spanish primate, probably accounts for El Greco's paintings.[22] His design may have originated in discussions maintained with his learned friends on the council, in particular, Gregorio de Angulo. A trained lawyer and a poet, Gregorio de Angulo had represented the town council in the negotiations with the painter that culminated in the contract signed on 11 December 1607.[23] Yet El Greco's dissembling statement, that he would paint a *Visitation* in honor of the founder whose name saint was Elizabeth, might indicate some council members were not convinced. Their hesitation is easy to understand: El Greco's painting, by departing from the traditional iconography of the Immaculate Conception, fails to meet the viewer's horizon of experience, which is formed from images seen previously. El Greco and Angulo may have persuaded the council with the argument that the *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* corrects a misconception promoted by the existing (traditional) iconography, that Mary received the privilege of the Immaculate Conception passively. They may have argued that El Greco's painting on a public altar in Toledo

[22] Richard L. Kagan, "The Toledo of El Greco," *El Greco of Toledo,* exh. cat. (Toledo: Toledo Museum of Art, 1982), 35-73, 53-61.

[23] The son of a respected physician, Angulo had received his doctorate in law from Toledo. He wrote poems, attended literary meetings, and submitted poems to poetry competitions. Álvarez Lopera, 14-15, and Kagan, 52.

could be expected to transform the existing iconography in such a manner that it would be the first of many rising Virgins in Spanish art. Thus, the council may have agreed to support the artist's design on the optimistic prediction that an audience for the painting would be created where one did not yet exist.

In order for this prediction to be realized Suárez's theology had first to be disseminated to a larger public than just the elites, however. This goal was already underway in 1608 as El Greco began painting, in Diego Murillo's *Vida y excelencias de la Madre de Dios*, published in two volumes between 1610 and 1614. Murillo's purpose, as stated in his introduction, was to blend history and doctrine to provide a model of virtue for his readers to imitate and fashion their own lives after.[24] Murillo's *Vida y Excelencias de la Madre de Dios*, and the many Spanish language Mariologies published in quick succession, including Alonso Ezquerra's *Pasos de la Virgen Santissima María Madre de Dios Nuestra Señora* (Alcalá, 1629), Alonso de Andrade's *Libro de la Guía de la Virtud y de la Imitación de Nuestra Señora para todos los estados* (Madrid, 1642), José de Jesús María Quiroga's *Historia de la Vida y Excelencias de la Sacratissima Virgen María Nuestra Señora* (Antwerp, 1652), and María de Jesús de Ágreda's *Mística Ciudad de Dios* (Madrid, 1688), created what Bengoechea has called a seventeenth-century golden age of Spanish Mariology.[25] The books popularized Suárez's theology with the real-life Virgin mother of God, whose perfection was meant to be a model for all Christians, but especially women.

The ubiquitous rising Virgin of post-1650 Spanish art, for example, Murillo's 1678 *Virgin of the Venerables* (Fig. 1-5), takes her cue from the Mariologies and she is only indirectly related to El Greco's painting. In Murillo's canvas, Mary in blue and white is accompanied by adoring cherubs rather than the adult angels imagined by El Greco. These tumbling figures stress Mary's femininity and her female virtues of charity and humility. In the post-1650 Spanish pictures Mary's attitude has changed from one of active agent participating in her own perfection to one of gratitude, fear, and even terrified awe of the invisible God in heaven. In Rizi's 1651 *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* (Madrid, Prado) Mary is static; the glory of God shines down upon her but Mary only receives and she does not rise to meet her maker in heaven. In Valdés Leal's turbulent

[24] Diego Murillo, *Vida y Excelencias de la Madre de Dios*, 2 vols. (Zaragoza, 1610-14), 1: Prologue, n.p.

[25] Ismael Bengoechea, "Vidas de la Virgen María en la España del Siglo XVII," *Estudios Marianos* 49 (1984): 59-103.

painting in the Seville Museo de Bellas Artes Mary with her arms held in protectively close to her chest seems to cringe before the power emanating from heaven. The angels battling the demon beneath her feet interpret her perfection in larger terms of God's plan for human redemption. In Palomino's circa 1695-1700 *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* (Dallas, Texas, Meadows Museum) Mary's gaze does not quite meet the impassive gaze of the tiny dove hovering above; her dazed doll-like appearance indicates she is not the full participant in her perfection imagined by El Greco.

Murillo's painting clarifies Mary's status vis-à-vis Christ, which Suárez and El Greco, by extension, might be accused of blurring. In *De mysteriis* Mary's learned advocate states that the mother of God was predestined and thus, since Christ would have existed even had Adam not sinned, so too the Virgin in her perfection in her Immaculate Conception.[26] Mary possessed the unconsummated grace of a *viandante*, unlike Christ, who had a clear vision of God, yet she received the beatific vision at the Incarnation and during other moments in her life. Mary's loss of stature in Murillo's painting has an art historical as well as a theological explanation. In El Greco's time it was still possible to fuse the iconography of the Immaculate Conception with the Assumption, since both borrow symbols from the Apocalyptic Woman in Revelations. This option ended after Pacheco codified the Virgin's colors in his 1649 *Arte de la Pintura*.[27] After that, Mary in blue and white is the Immaculate Conception, even when she appears accompanied by the disciples that are more proper to her Assumption, as in Valdés Leal's circa 1655 *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception with Saint Philip and the Lesser Saint James* (Paris, Louvre). Within this fixed format there was still room for innovation—witness, for example, the popularity of the infant Virgin of the Immaculate Conception in post-1650 Spanish art—but it was no longer possible to blur the distinction with the Assumption. El Greco, who died in 1614 before his *Oballe* painting was installed in its chapel, had to have known his audience would see an Assumption, but he must have hoped they would also see an Immaculate Conception. In the final reckoning, though, it

[26] Suárez, 1: 26-32 (disp. 1, sec. 3).

[27] Francisco Pacheco, *El Arte de la Pintura*, ed. with an introduction and notes by Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990), 576. Odile Delenda, "L'Art au Service du Dogme. Contribution de l'École Sévillane et de Zurbarán a l'Iconographie de l'Immaculée Conception," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 111 (1988): 239-48, credits Zurbarán with introducing Mary's blue and white costume into Spanish art.

matters little whether the viewer sees one or the other or both. In theology, Mary's ideal perfection exists from the first instant of conception and always after that. El Greco's *Oballe Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*, like Suárez's innovating Mariology, is both comprehensive and systematic in its elaboration of Mary's eternal perfection.

CHAPTER TWO

ENVISIONING THE BODY POLITIC: ICONOGRAPHIES OF CHRISTIAN RULERSHIP

ARIADNA GARCÍA-BRYCE,
REED COLLEGE

The issue of how precisely worldly politics and Christian principle could be consolidated was under constant revision and debate in early modern Spain. In the framework of anti-Machiavellian doctrinarianism we encounter a varied spectrum of thought. Among its ideologues—Pedro de Rivadeneira, Juan de Santa María, Juan de Mariana, Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, Sebastián de Ucedo, to mention but some—we find various different postures vis-à-vis key problems, such as the practice of dissimulation, tyrannicide, the idea of a "science of government" autonomous from moral absolutes, and the worth of Tacitus' writings.[1]. Similarly, a cursory glance at the vast corpus of iconographical representations of the king reveals the extent to which ideas about his appearance and demeanour were very much in flux. From the printed emblems of Philip II, globe in hand and clad as *miles gloriosus*, to the illustrations depicting the crown next to a skull and bones, to Velázquez's portrait of a melancholic Philip IV in dark dress, devoid of all regalia, the

[1] There is still a dearth of studies on the Spanish mirrors of princes. See María Angeles Galino Carrillo, *Los Tratados sobre Educación de Príncipes, Siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1948). For more current perspectives see J.A. Fernández-Santamaría, *Razón de Estado y Política en el Pensamiento Español del Barroco (1595-1640)* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1986); Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Jean Meyer, *L'Éducation desPrinces du XVe au XIXe Siècle*, (Perrin, 2004).

symbolic function of the king in early modern Spain is anything but homogeneous. Sacramental conceptions of power to be associated with dynastic ideals of blood and lineage coexist with republican views of the king as public servant, cosmic icons of eternal *imperium* with portrayals that accentuate the mortal nature of the monarch. Departing, then, from the premise that the Counter-Reformation political imaginary responds to emergent modernization and bureaucratization,– or what Pierre Bourdieu has called the "division of the labour of domination"[2]—in disparate ways, I shall focus on the contrasts between two canonical anti-Machiavellian royal advice books: Francisco de Quevedo's *Política de Dios, Govierno de Christo* (the first volume published in 1621 and the second between 1632 and 1635) and Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's *Empresas Políticas* (1640).

While in Saavedra Fajardo's treatise there is a reconciliation between sacramental conceptions of kingship and pragmatic statesmanship, in Quevedo's work we perceive a more radical messianism which tends to separate worldly from divine politics. The difference has been explained in terms of the particular roles that each author played in his own time: Saavedra Fajardo (1584-1648) is a career diplomat who spends his life negotiating foreign policy with other European powers, whereas Quevedo (1580-1645) is involved in politics, above all as a man of letters.[3] Jorge García López, for example, concludes that, in contrast to the stylistic virtuosity of his contemporary, the diplomat's prose is trite, but that his political thought is innovative.[4] However, as the question that concerns me has to do with the symbolic aspects of the works, I would prefer, for methodological reasons, to avoid opposing them on these grounds. Rather than finding one to be of lesser interest politically and the other aesthetically, I shall approach the texts as deliberately adopted and distinct positions on the relationship between politics and spectacle.

---

[2] Bourdieu, Pierre, "From the King's House to the Reason of State: A Model of the Genesis of the Bureaucratic Field", In *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: the Mystery of Ministry*. Loïc Wacquant, ed., (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.), 29-54, 42.

[3] On the nature and trajectory of Quevedo's political career, J.H. Elliott's well-known article continues to be an indispensable reference. "Quevedo and the Count-Duke of Olivares," in *Quevedo in Perspective*, James Iffland, ed. (Newark: Juan de La Cuesta, 1980), 227-250.

[4] Jorge García López, "Quevedo y Saavedra: Dos Contornos del Seiscientos," *La Perinola* 2 (1998): 237-260, 260. See also María Soledad Arredondo, "La Espada y la Pluma contra Francia en el Siglo XVII: Cartas de Quevedo y Saavedra Fajardo," *Criticón* 56 (1992): 103-115.