5 "Sacred and Terrifying Gazes"

Languages and Images of Power in Early Modern Spain

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The Politics of Representation

In 1640 Diego de Saavedra y Fajardo, one of the most influential seventeenth-century Spanish writers, made a remarkably explicit reference to the effect that images of kings had upon their subjects as he recalled his own experience of viewing a royal portrait by Velázquez. In it Philip IV appeared "full of grace, august in his countenance . . . [and] I was overcome with such respect, [that] I knelt down and lowered my eyes."[1] The importance of the king's representation within a monarchy like Spain's, composed of a number of territories where the king was an "absent" ruler, is also evident in royal ceremonies celebrated in kingdoms distant from the monarchy's political center. In 1621, for example, the elites of the viceroyalty of Peru took oaths of loyalty to the new monarch, Philip IV, in a ceremony replete with symbols of obedience, loyalty, and adoration for the king. In the absence of the monarch himself, a portrait of Philip, framed in gold and "seated" on a throne beneath a canopy, presided over the ceremony.[2]

In this essay I do not seek to evaluate whether Saavedra y Fajardo and the Lima elites believed that the image of the king was the king or whether in the presence of the king or his image they truly experienced the intensity of feeling that their accounts suggest. Certainly, in Spain, as in the rest of early modern Europe, royal images were perceived as something more than simple representations of the monarch. Within Catholic tradition, an image of the king not only represented the king but "was" the king, just as the Holy Sacrament "was" the body of Christ rather than its representation.[3] The reactions of Saavedra y Fajardo and his contemporaries in Lima demonstrated that in the seventeenth-century Spanish empire the images of monarchs, like other images perceived as sacred, were imbued with a

symbolic force regardless of their aesthetic characteristics, qualities, and content. What mattered was the subject of the image, not its quality or technical characteristics.

And yet the ceremony in Lima and Saavedra's experience with Velázquez's portrait of Philip IV do call our attention to important questions concerning discourses of domination and political legitimization developed by the Spanish monarchs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they beheld these and other portraits, the subjects of Philip IV not only privileged an image but also recognized a series of ideas, discourses, and symbols that, as a whole, offered a certain vision of the monarch and his power. In other words, as inhabitants of a monarchical world, Saavedra and his contemporaries were prepared to go beyond the plain literal sense of images and to experience and analyze these images within specific ideological and discursive contexts.

Before turning to an analysis of the dimensions and vocabulary of the discourses of power in early modern Spain, it is important to recall that the Spanish rulers themselves sought to propagate royal images and symbols throughout the entire monarchy and that this process of propagation was very much centralized.[4] Images and representations of the monarch were indeed present in all corners of the empire, part of an attempt to encourage all the monarch's subjects "to idolize the king's omnipotence in all orders of everyday life . . . to live in fascinated astonishment."[5]

The intensity and efforts the Crown and its servants dedicated to design and propagate royal images confirm that the consolidation of royal power in early modern Spain also depended upon the ruler's capacity to demonstrate that his power – and thus the monarchical system itself – was not socially created but divinely ordered. In early modern Spain, as in the Balinese court described by Clifford Geertz, "the driving aim of higher politics was to construct a state by constructing a king . . . [and] a king was constructed by constructing a god."[6] The stability of a political system and of the power and authority of rulers, in Pierre Bourdieu's words, is best sustained when it "is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order."[7] Such an understanding of power and political authority required that the monarch himself be viewed as the architect of his own image, because the power of royal images and discourses was directly linked to their recognition as legitimate by the king's subjects.[8]

It is important to note, however, that royal discourses and images were not monolithic and that, indeed, in the early modern period there coexisted various views on how the monarchy should be ruled. A review of work on the early modern Spanish monarchy reveals that we have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the discourses, ideologies, and images that the Spanish monarchs used to legitimate their power and authority. Indeed, recent scholarship provides detailed discussion of the

initiatives, models, objects, ceremonies, gestures, and portraits that, it is argued, served to establish the dimensions of the Spanish monarchs' power over their subjects. Consequently, the most prominent impression that we have is of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty as one capable of imposing its dominion through images and ideologies that actually persuaded its subjects to obey. The Spanish Habsburgs' ability to create powerful political discourses and images, we are told, permitted them to maintain their empire more or less intact for almost three hundred years.

Although the abundance of studies on the monarchy's initiatives is generally salutary, given previous inattention to these questions, such scholarship has presented a somehow distorted picture of the Spanish monarchy by insisting upon the monarchy's ideological hegemony. Within the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish monarchy there was a greater degree of disagreements and opposition than has been recognized. We know increasingly more about the numerous contemporary texts that criticized the actions of monarchs and the many more that criticized the actions of royal favorites; and we can now turn to the many satirical poems that present a dark view of the court and courtiers by ridiculing the images and ideas used by monarchs and their ministers in the attempt to legitimate their power.[9]

The existence of political disagreements and conflicts, however, did not preclude the creation in seventeenth-century Spain of what David Kertzer has called "a widely shared ideology of legitimacy,"[10] comprised of doctrines that, to our modern eyes, could be seen as paradoxical. Such ideology includes a defense of the monarchs' capacity for independent action as well as a belief in a theocratic concept of kingship in which the monarch "was seen as sanctified, ruling as a surrogate of God on earth."[11] Yet it also limits the exercise of this power and obligates the king to respect the jurisdiction and role of other members of the body politic. As Janet Coleman has noted,

> the office of kingship, being divinely instituted, had as its purpose the furthering of the divine will; hence the monarch was not to rule by absolute whim. . . . In Roman terms his was a tutorial role to his people, which in itself limited his freedom of action, as it required that he protect certain of their rights which were not necessarily derived as concessions from him.[12]

Ceremonies of power, the propagation of the king's image, and the praises offered in the theater therefore served not only the interests of the monarchy but also those of the political and social elites that controlled the institutions of government and retained important territorial jurisdictions. Thus, while the propagation of an image of the king as a "Catholic monarch" gave his policies a certain legitimacy, it also allowed the church and the Inquisition to retain power and influence. Presenting the monarch as a "public official" whose duty was to defend the commonwealth gave

him legitimation to design and implement dynastic policies but also allowed other institutions such as the Councils to express and exercise an active role in the process of defining the monarchy's policies, sometimes against the monarch's will. The ceremonialization of political life, particularly in those kingdoms from which the monarch was absent, permitted the propagation of a powerful and "sacralized" image of the king but also acknowledged the political elites' right to claim that the king was created to protect the commonwealth and the rights of the other members of the body politic. Many of the subjects of the Spanish monarch interpreted discourses and images that described the monarch as God's representative on earth, not as proof of the sacred nature of majesty but rather as proof that the king's legitimacy was based on his ability to protect the Church and his kingdoms. As Fray Aguilar de Terrones asserted in a funeral sermon for Philip II, "the King is a man" like any other; what differentiates him from other mortals, what makes him closer to God, is not his power and authority but his competence to defend religion and administer justice.[13]

How these contrasting views of kingship affected the creation of the king's image is the subject of this essay. Readers cannot expect to find here the proof that the Spanish Habsburgs promoted the construction of just one public royal image, or that public representations of the king and his power had the same meaning for every member of the body politic. Equally important, readers should not expect a study of Velázquez's views on political discourses and public images of the Spanish rulers. As *"pintor del rey"* Velázquez was, indeed, an important actor in the construction of his master's public image, but in doing so he was influenced by the existence of, first, fully developed patterns of pictorial royal representation, and, second, a political ideology that established limits to how the king could be represented. The aim in the following sections is to reconstruct royal discourses and images in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain in order to contextualize Velázquez's work as *pintor del rey* – his portraits of Philip III, Philip IV, and his favorite and chief minister, the count-duke of Olivares, as well as his works and designs for that paradigm of royal propaganda, the *"Salón de los Reinos"* (The Hall of the Realms) in the Palace of the Buen Retiro, built in Madrid by Philip IV in the 1630s.[14]

A Distant King: The Politics of the Royal Body

In his second letter (30 October 1520) to the Emperor Charles V, Hernán Cortés, in reporting the conquest of Mexico, carefully recorded the ceremonies and rituals of the Mexicas and their emperor Montezuma. "All the chiefs who entered his house went barefoot," Cortés wrote, "and those he called before him came with their heads bowed and their bodies in a humble posture, and when they spoke to him they did not look him in the face;

this was because they held him great respect and reverence." Beyond the boundaries of the palace such respect and reverence for their emperor was even more pronounced. "When Montezuma left the palace, which was not often," Cortés reported, "all those who went with him and those whom he met in the streets turned away their faces so that in no manner should they look at him; and all others prostrated themselves until he had passed." The respect and reverence with which the Mexicas beheld their lord stood in contrast to the behavior of Cortés's men toward their captain: a difference that, according to Cortés, was noted by members of the Mexica nobility. "[C]ertain of those chiefs reproved the Spaniards saying that when they spoke to me they did so openly without hiding their faces, which seemed to them disrespectful and lacking in modesty."[15]

The references of Cortés to the particular behavior of the Mexica and of the Spanish toward their superiors illustrate how political power was conceived in Spain at the beginning of the early modern period. Cortés described Montezuma as a ruler venerated by his servants and beheld as divine and sacred, whose subjects displayed absolute respect at times motivated by fear. In early sixteenth-century Spanish political culture, such gestures and behavior had a clear meaning: the political system of the Mexicas was based on the absolute power of a monarch who was publicly imagined to be a godlike man. More important, for Cortés's contemporaries these characteristics were associated with the political systems of "primitive peoples," who lived without rights, subjugated by an emperor who governed by his will and for his interests alone.

In contrast to the Mexica's "primitive servility," early sixteenth-century Spanish subjects understood the power of their rulers to be based on radically different principles. First, the Spanish prince was regarded as an individual with qualities and virtues that justified his elevated status but that did not transform his fundamentally human nature or his power. For sixteenth-century Spaniards, to use the language reserved for God to describe the monarch was a political aberration, if not a heresy. God alone was untouchable, invisible, an all-powerful being whom one could beg for help but whom no one could counsel or criticize, correct or resist. On the contrary, within the early sixteenth-century political paradigm, the monarch was recognized as open to the criticism, pleas, and counsel of his subjects. More important, according to the dominant political ideology, the monarch had to govern in collaboration with his ministers and the representatives of the kingdom, and, consequently, the monarch needed to be public, accessible to his subjects, and to the community of which he was an integral part.[16]

While such an understanding of monarchical authority was dominant at the beginning of the sixteenth century, less than a century later this authority had been dramatically reconfigured. Beginning in the 1580s, the Spanish monarch was described with language similar to that used by Cortés to describe Montezuma: a detached, inaccessible, untouchable, and almost invisible monarch, God's representative on earth whose sacred gaze was

terrifying. Although earlier scholarship has attributed this development to the "personality" of Philip II, recent work has shown it to be part of a concerted strategy to reinforce royal power sustained by both Philip II and his successors. Their primary goal was to consolidate royal authority and to transform the person of the monarch into a central and fundamental symbol of power without having to appeal to absolutist principles.

Although during the reign of Philip II some political theorists insisted on the need to "sacralize" not only the image of the king but his "body" as well, it was in the first decades of the seventeenth century when these ideas gained currency and resonance. The central element in these attempts to sacralize the king's body was not, as in other early modern monarchies, an emphasis upon the monarch's healing powers but his transformation into an untouchable, inaccessible, and "invisible" monarch.[17] Juan Fernández de Medrano provided the reason why the king should become inaccessible and invisible to a majority of his subjects: "[I]f great men are seen often they are less revered," he wrote, drawing his argument from Giovanni Botero's *Ragion di stato*.[18] While Medrano had recourse to many historical examples to support his claims, and indeed he settled on Emperor Tiberius, other authors preferred models and precepts taken from Christian doctrine and traditions, including the doctrine of the Holy Sacrament. Diego de Guzmán, Queen Margaret's biographer during the reign of Philip III, for example, suggested that the Holy Sacrament should not be displayed all day and visible to everyone at all times. Such exhibition, he feared, would result in a loss of "the respect, reverence, and love due to Him." Guzmán reminded his readers of God's commands: "Those who see me will die, our Lord said. In this way God imposed respect and fear among men." According to Guzmán, a monarch, God's representative on earth, should behave similarly, limiting his public exposure and prohibiting his subjects from attempting to see him apart from established, and increasingly exceptional, public ceremonies.[19]

The sacralization of the king's body and the steps taken to reduce the accessibility of the monarchy in practice deeply affected public perceptions of royal majesty in the seventeenth century.[20] Royal panegyrists claimed in the 1610s and 1620s that Philip II, like Christ himself, had performed miracles and that his status as God's representative made him godlike.[21] These special virtues imbued the *natural person* of the king with an aura that affected those who surrounded him in dramatic ways, often recalling passages from the Book of Exodus, where communication with God is forbidden to all "for fear that the Lord may break out against them."[22] Standing before Philip, his ministers and servants trembled and lost their composure. "With the first glimpse," Baltasar Porreño explained, "brave men who had faced thousands of dangers trembled in his presence and no one beheld him without being moved."[23]

This sacralized vision of the Spanish monarch acquired public dimensions in seventeenth-century theater. Indeed, in the first decades of the

seventeenth century, in works such as Lope de Vega's *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609),[24] the Spanish translation of Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* (1616),[25] and the Spanish translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* by Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo (1623),[26] theorists of poetics began to assert that poetry, and more particularly drama, should serve to promote the sacred image of the monarch. It was Lope de Vega who most aptly addressed the role of the poet in relation to royal power. In a poem written in 1605 to celebrate the birth of Prince Philip, the future Philip IV, Lope writes:

> Quien duda que naciendo humanos Príncipes
> Será justo alabarlos con los versos?
> [Pues] los reyes son Dioses de la tierra.[27]
>
> [Who may doubt that the birth of Princes
> Should be celebrated with verse?
> [For] Kings are gods on earth.]

Lope de Vega and other authors sought to adapt the theater to the doctrines and images of royal power that prevailed during the reign of Philip II and his successors. It was not important, contemporaries argued, whether the playwrights drew their models of monarchy from history. Rather, the duty of the playwright was "to introduce persons and represent them according to the customs of our times," and this included the representation of monarchs as inaccessible, untouchable, irresistible, almost invisible and possessing a divine aura.[28]

In accordance with contemporary political discourse and poetic theory, seventeenth-century playwrights presented monarchs to their subjects not in terms of the symbols and instruments of power, but rather by reference to their divine aura and the strength of their person. To mention just a few examples, in Lope de Vega's *Valor, fortuna y lealtad*, the peasant Sancho asks: "¿No es hombre la majestad?' Yes, responds his colleague Mendo, "Pero es hombre endiosado: / un rey es Dios en la tierra." ["Is not His Majesty a man?" Yes, But a godly man: / a king is God on earth."][29] Similarly, Sancho Ortiz, a character in Lope's *La Estrella de Sevilla,* explains to King Sancho that he is moved by his presence because to see the king is to see "an image of God."[30] In *El Rey Don Pedro en Madrid y el infanzón de Illescas,* Don Tello trembles before the presence of the monarch; the ruler is indeed a man, but his greatness as God's representative on earth, transforms him into a deity.[31]

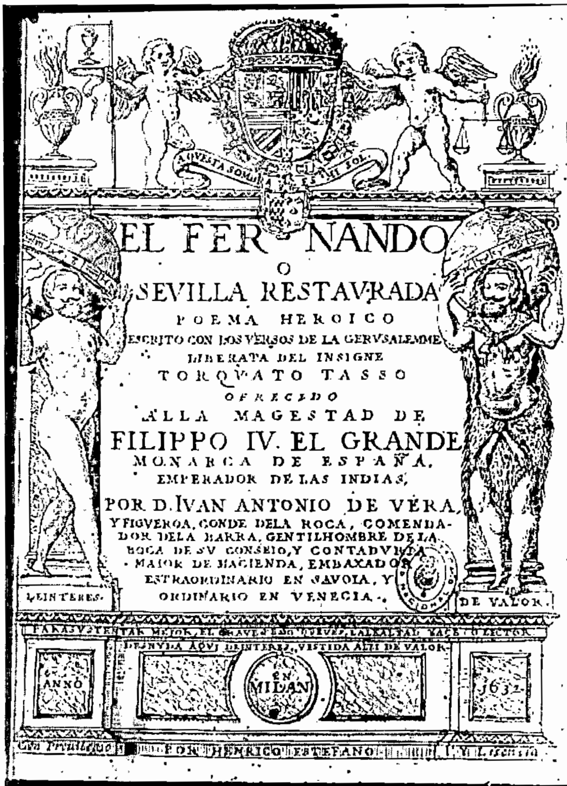
The efforts to sacralize the person of the monarch continued throughout the reign of Philip IV and, significantly, came to encompass all that the monarch touched: his possessions and personal effects came to be regarded as imbued with the "semi-divine substance that emanated from majesty."[32] It was precisely this idea of the extension of the king's essence to those objects and persons he blessed that allowed the royal favorites to present themselves as their masters' shadows, friends, and public

29. Juan Bautista Maino, *Recapture of Bahia*, 1635 (Madrid, Museo del Prado).

"images." As one seventeenth-century writer explained, favorites had to be perceived and accepted as "real incarnations of the prince," whom they represented in the ruling of the monarchy.[33] This perception affected the way many painters depicted royal favorites like the duke of Lerma, Philip III's favorite between 1598 and 1621, and the count-duke of Olivares, Philip IV's favorite between 1621 and 1643. This was the case in the *Recapture of Bahia* (1635) by Juan Bautista Maino, in which Olivares appears as Philip IV's twin image (Fig. 29), or in the title page of the Count of La Roca's *El Fernando* (1632), depicting Olivares as Atlas and Hercules, duplicating similar images employed to represent kings (Fig. 30).

A Catholic King: The Politics of Religion

This "political deification of temporal rulers," to use Stuart Clark's words,[34] appeared to its promoters and opponents as central to the future of the political system. To supporters, the deification of the king and the acceptance of a monarchial authority derived from "supernatural qualities and powers" made it possible to eliminate alternative political discourses that attributed royal power to a "social contract" or based it upon "popular sovereignty."[35] To opponents like the English Jesuit Robert Parsons, who spent



EL FERNANDO
O
SEVILLA RESTAVRADA
POEMA HEROICO
ESCRITO CON LOS VERSOS DE LA GERVSALEMME
LIBERATA DEL INSIGNE
TORQVATO TASSO
OFRECIDO
ALLA MAGESTAD DE
FILIPPO IV. EL GRANDE
MONARCA DE ESPAÑA,
EMPERADOR DE LAS INDIAS,
POR D. IVAN ANTONIO DE VERA,
Y FIGVEROA, CONDE DELA ROCA, COMENDADOR DELA BARRA, GENTILHOMBRE DE LA BOCA DE SV CONSEIO, Y CONTADVRIA MAIOR DE HACIENDA, EMBAXADOR ESTRAORDINARIO EN SAVOIA, Y ORDINARIO EN VENECIA.
EN MILAN
ANNO 1632
POR HENRICO ESTEFANO

30. Title page representing Olivares as Atlas and Hercules from *El Fernando, o Sevilla restaurada* . . . by Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa, Count of La Roca, Milan, 1632 (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional).

part of his life in Spain, and the Catalan Franciscan Joan de Pineda, the deification of the rulers seriously endangered the freedom and rights of the kingdoms and the various members of the body politic. Pineda, for example, in a book published in 1594, recalls that the Egyptians "called their rulers gods . . . a practice followed today by an increasing number of writers who use divine names to address their king."[36] His knowledge of the political situation in Philip II's Spain made him believe that the use of "sacred" names to authorize the ruler, resulted not from the political writers' desire to flatter kings but was a clear attempt to increase royal power in order to destroy "the liberty of the kingdoms."[37] Despite Pineda's and others' criticism, the attempts to transform the Spanish king into a powerful godlike man gained momentum in the last years of Philip II's reign with the development of a "Catholic" perspective on royal majesty – one that presented the Spanish Habsburgs as the only defenders of the Catholic faith. Such a perception took shape during the reign of Philip II, for whom the most fundamental feature of ideology and politics, both

31. Hans Liefrinck and Hieronymus Wierix, *Christ and Philip II*, 1568 (Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, Brussels).

domestic and international, was the idea "that the Catholic King was always . . . to the right of the Priest" and thus stood as the defender of the Catholic faith.[38]

Thus, for example, in a print by Hans Liefrinck and Hieronymus Wierix, entitled *Christ and Philip II* (Fig. 31), the "realistic" rendering of Philip II does not preclude the display of "similarities" with the image of Christ. The symbolical dimensions of this image are further manifest in the accompanying text, which includes biblical references to the divine origin of royal power and the duty of absolute obedience to kings. Indeed, by the last decades of the sixteenth century, the Spanish Habsburgs were forcefully promoting the belief that the king was God's representative on earth and that his power and authority were divine. This principle was expressed, for example, by Fray Alonso de Cabrera in a sermon preached in honor of the late king Philip II:

The eminent power that the king has derives from God and is communicated by Him. . . . Those who resist and rebel against the king, resist God and destroy God's established order. The king's subjects have to obey their master who occupies the

place of God on earth. This is the order that will last in the world until the second coming of Christ when He will recover for himself the whole *potestas* and administration of this His realm.[39]

Others also represented the Spanish Habsburgs as members of a race of kings selected by God to rule over men. In the *Annunciation* (ca. 1605), for example, Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, a painter at the courts of Philip II and Philip III, offered an image of Queen Margaret (1598–1611) as the Virgin Mary, even as the queen herself was pregnant with the future Philip IV (Fig. 32).

This ideology became temporally controversial in the last years of Philip II's reign and throughout the 1610s. Although official propaganda continued to insist that the Spanish monarch was the greatest, if not the only, defender of the true faith, an important political debate arose dominated by two discourses. One advocated a "contractual" and Catholic view of government that emphasized the duties, rather than the powers, of the king. Its proponents defended an ascendant theory of political power, claiming that even if God had created power, the authority necessary to exercise it rested in the people who transfer their sovereignty to the king. This definition of sovereignty as "popular" produced a vision of the monarchy as a system in which the king was conceived as a "public official" who had to rule in collaboration with his counselors, themselves beheld as representatives of the commonwealth and defenders of its rights.

Yet in the last decades of the sixteenth century, in Spain as elsewhere in Europe, the theory known as *ragion di stato* (reason of state) began to exert an increasing influence on political debates and governmental practices. Its promoters, as Bartolomé Clavero has noted,[40] did not entirely dismiss the more traditional views outlined earlier but rather tried to address explicitly the monarch's "specific needs and concrete interests." These authors were less interested than the "contractual" writers in debating the origins of political power and the duties of the various members of the body politic, including the monarch. Rather, their central concern was to delineate the steps necessary "to preserve the king as a head of the state at all costs." Although none of these authors denied that it was in the best interests of the monarch to respect the rights of his subjects, all believed that "if the preservation of a political order was at stake, then rules of justice or constitutional proprieties had to give way."[41]

Although both groups of writers believed that the Spanish monarch should be a staunch defender of the "true faith" during the first decades of the seventeenth century, they disagreed on many other questions, including the practical consequences of this vision of the prince as *Defensor Fidei.* Writers who supported more traditional views of the political order agreed with Cicero that truth and honesty were the principal elements of successful human activity;[42] consequently, they defined political virtue, in general,

32. Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Annunciation,* ca. 1605 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).

and prudence, in particular, as the monarch's capacity to distinguish good from evil and to follow just and honest policies.[43] The practical corollary of these principles – usually defined as the "real reason of state" or the "Catholic reason of state" – was that a prudent ruler had to defend Christian principles, the Catholic church, and Catholics everywhere at all costs and regardless of the consequences for his kingdoms and himself.[44]

Although the proponents of reason of state theories also believed that prudence was the most important virtue a ruler should possess, they applied their own definition to the term. To these writers prudence meant not the ability to distinguish good from evil but rather the capacity to distinguish what was "useful" from what was "harmful."[45] Accordingly, they emphasized that the king should take into consideration his "interests" when deciding what plan to follow and what causes to defend.[46] This interpretation implied continual assessment of the monarchy's strategic inter-

ests, of the strength of its enemy, and of the political consequences of the king's actions. Decisive action against rebels and heretics would depend on a given set of circumstances, and at times political prudence dictated a policy that early modern Spaniards defined as *política de medios:* compromise with the kingdom's enemies (regardless of their faith and the fate of Catholics living in their territories) when an aggressive policy could result in defeat or, even worse, the spread of conflict within the Spanish realms. While the Church had to be defended and so did Catholics within and without the territories controlled by the Spanish crown, the conservation of royal power had to become the king's highest priority. These views can be found, for example, in Botero's *Ragion di stato,* in which he discusses political prudence with emphasis on the importance of timing and opportunity, but without a single reference to religious or political orthodoxies.[47]

These were the ideas that dominated official discourse during the reign of Philip III. During this period both the monarch and his favorite, Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma, sought to end the conflicts in the Low Countries, to sign peace agreements with other polities, like England, considered "heretical," and to evade the emergence of new conflicts. At the same time, Philip III and Lerma asserted the role of the Spanish monarch as the defender of Christianity and, more generally, of Europe, against its common enemy: the Ottoman empire and its allies. Thus, they sought to avoid what had come to be regarded as the disastrous overexpansionist politics of Philip II that, it was argued, had led the monarchy into an unprecedented crisis.[48]

The mounting criticism of a policy of appeasement with "heretic" rulers, a strategy that many contemporaries of Philip III beheld as a policy of hesitation and weakness,[49] together with the beginning of the Thirty Years War (1618), the end of the truce with Holland (1621), and the increasing conflicts with France, reinforced the belief that the Spanish monarchy was the last bastion of Catholic orthodoxy and that this orthodoxy formed the basis for the monarchy's reputation and even its raison d'être. Indeed, it was during the reign of Philip IV that the king and his chief minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares, reasserted the need to "re-Catholicize" the image, policies, and ideological foundations of the monarchy. This quest to recover the Catholic essence of the monarch's authority was manifest in the emergence of a shared discourse enunciated by writers from opposing ideological positions. Thus, the anonymous author of a pamphlet published in 1638 defended reason of state principles and the absolute political preeminence of the king within the monarchy as well as the centrality of religion:

> Divine Faith provides the stability and strength of empires, such that as Faith grows, empires grow, and as Faith recedes, empires collapse. . . . Where Faith flourishes there is a sacred civility and where it is lacking good government crumbles, because the order of things is not disturbed when religion is made the ends and the means of the Empire; indeed the force of the Empire is best used to further the practice of religion.[50]

A similar argument was advanced by Fray Marcos Salmerón, one of the most ardent defenders of a traditional political ideology on the grounds that there was indeed only one reason of state: "the Catholic [one] . . . in which God and his law is privileged above all other [notions] of political utility."[51]

It was after 1619 and, especially, during the reign of Philip IV that the Crown organized campaigns of propaganda to advertise that, after a period of deviation and paralysis, the Spanish monarchy was again leading the struggle against the enemies of Christianity (Turks), and those battling against Catholicism and Spain's legitimate authority upon territories that were viewed as inalienable parts of the monarchy (the Low Countries, the Americas, various polities in Italy, and Portugal). This renewed insistence on the Catholic credentials of the monarchy and the Spanish ruler strongly influenced the iconographic motives in the royal representations during this period. The image of the king as *Defensor Fidei,* for example, was used

33. Engraving depicting Philip II as the defender of the faith, from Luis Cabrera de Córdoba's *Felipe Segundo Rey de España,* Madrid, 1619 (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional).

to identify Philip II, who became the model for Philip IV's and Olivares's views on royal majesty, in the frontispiece of the first part of Philip II's biography published by Cabrera de Córdoba in 1619 (Fig. 33).[52] Velázquez himself participated as *pintor del rey* in this promotion of Philip IV as the only true Catholic king. His first public accomplishment, for example, was winning a competition sponsored by Philip IV to celebrate the expulsion of the Moriscos (converted Muslims living in Spain) from the Iberian peninsula (1609–14), a deed heralded by the official propaganda as the final act of the sacred reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Islamic "invaders," and the only of Philip III's decisions acclaimed as truly royal and Catholic by Philip IV and his government.[53] These ideological motives figured prominently in the iconographic programs included in the "Hall of the Realms" in the Palace of the Buen Retiro in Madrid, a hall that Velázquez helped to design as well as to decorate by painting some of its most well-known pictures. The "Hall of the Realms," magnificently studied by Jonathan Brown and Sir John Elliott, housed paintings celebrating the Habsburg dynasty, the power of the royal favorite, and representations celebrating the Spanish monarchy's victories during the 1620s and 1630s against its enemies in Europe (England, the Dutch Republic, France, German protestant princes, and Savoy), including the depiction of the rendition of Breda in the Low Countries by Velázquez himself.[54]

A Virtuous King: The Politics of Portraiture

As both Saavedra y Fajardo's recollection of his experience with Philip IV's portrait and the ceremony in Lima reveal, however, it was the royal portrait that played a crucial role in the propagation of the official conceptualization of the qualities and power of the monarch. There is no doubt that during the early modern period royal portraits were viewed as the most important means of monarchical propaganda, because it was believed that, first, the "message" enclosed in the royal portraits was easily understood by the rulers' subjects, and, second, because royal portraits seemed to be imbued with the same "sacredness and untouchableness" of the king's person. Royal portraits are also central in modern analyses of royal representation, if only because, in Jonathan Brown's words, they allow us to penetrate into the monarchs's "aspirations, ideals, pretensions . . . and self-concepts."[55] At the same time, through royal portraits modern scholars can study the contributions of painters like Velázquez made to the creation of the king's image without making references to the ideologies of the painter's contemporaries. It is important, however, to distinguish our "sight perspective" from the one that Philip IV's subjects had. In our own times, when we see one of Velázquez's portraits of Philip IV, our interest usually centers on the "artistic" contribution of Velázquez. In contrast, during the seventeenth century when someone observed a royal portrait

his or her attention centered upon the sitter, his power and authority. It is of course true that some painters were better than others in translating into canvas the monarchs' views regarding their public representation, but even a painter such as Velázquez was constrained by ideas, models, and concepts (political and pictorial) developed during previous decades and accepted by his master as the models to be followed.

A fundamental peculiarity of Spanish Habsburg royal portraits, from the time of Philip II until the death of Philip IV (almost one hundred years of royal portraiture), is the extreme simplicity of presentation manifest in the absence of explicit regal symbols and in the "realistic" rendering of the king's facial and physical features. As Jonathan Brown has observed of Velázquez's portraits of Philip IV, in "not a single work does [the king] display an attribute which could not have been worn by a high-ranking nobleman."[56] And yet, it was one of these portraits that provoked such a deep reaction from Diego Saavedra y Fajardo. Understanding such reactions and, more important, the longevity and stability of this particular model of the court portrait, demands an analysis that goes beyond the portrait's surface and its ostensibly simple and realistic images, to the more profound nature of the allegories and symbols it contains.[57]

The supremacy of the "individual virtues" of each monarch over the "symbols" of power and the degree to which court portraits were intended to emphasize the "person" of the king rather than the symbols of the king's "office" was established by Erasmus of Rotterdam in *The Education of a Christian Prince,* a book written to provide a political education for Prince Charles, the future emperor, which, in turn, also provided a basis for the education of his successors. In *The Education,* Erasmus presented a vision of the monarch as one who served and defended the community. A stable and happy kingdom could only be created by a monarch with the capacity to inspire the love, respect, and obedience of his subjects. The king's inner virtues, not the symbols of power and authority, were what made a truly good king. "If all that makes a king is a chain, a scepter, robes of royal purple, and a train of attendants," Erasmus wrote, "what after all is to prevent the actors in a drama who come on the stage decked with all the pomp of state from being regarded as real kings?" On the contrary, he explained, "a prince's prestige, his greatness, his regal dignity must not be established and preserved by noisy displays of privileged rank but by wisdom, integrity, and right action."[58]

The Spanish Habsburgs sought to cultivate this Erasmian iconographic model of the ideal monarch,[59] privileging a pictorial representation that focused upon the person of the ruler and not the symbols of power. Essential to this model was the portrayal of the king as an individual who embodied the virtues of a good ruler, virtues that would help him to serve as "model" for his subjects in all the kingdoms.[60] In visual terms, this paradigm of majesty required the court painter to reproduce the king's facial and physical features with as much realism as possible, as was the case in Spain. Yet, as Julián Gállego has argued, the ostensibly forthright simplicity of these images belies an

allegorical and symbolic program of great proportions, in which "realism" is a subtle reference to "the deeper and secret dimensions of idealism."[61]

Such understanding of the representation of royal majesty was not unique to painters working in the Spanish courts. In early modern Europe, the "court portrait was characterized by an interplay between personality and general propriety, protecting the ruler both from realistic portrayal as an individual and from depersonalized depiction as a type." The resulting images were intended to show "the ruler as a figure who existed at once on a real and an ideal plane . . . to portray the prince's person in a recognizable form, but to invest him with a supra-personal aura."[62] In Spain, the construction of this "supra-personal aura" was based upon a certain understanding of royal beauty, marked by the idealization of the physical characteristics of the Habsburgs themselves: "long faces, fallen noses, prognathic jaws, large lips"[63] (Fig. 34). In a book published in 1575, Juan Huarte de San Juan attempted to glorify the physical features of the Spanish Habsburgs by proposing that kings, in contrast to common mortals, have their various humors in ideal balance and, thus, their constitution

34. Sofonisba Anguisciola, *Portrait of Philip II,* 1580s (Madrid, Museo del Prado).

35. Diego Velázquez, *Portrait of Philip IV,* ca. 1625–28 (Madrid, Museo del Prado).

achieves "supreme perfection." Their exterior appearance reflected special interior qualities: perfect beauty of the face (to attract the love of his subjects), blond hair (the middle of two extremes, black and white), and medium height. Making his adulatory intentions even clearer, Huarte attributed such qualities only to the Spanish Habsburgs and three other figures: Adam (the first human created in God's image), King David (God's favorite monarch), and Jesus (the son of God).[64]

In addition, art historians who study early modern Spanish court portraiture, especially portraits from the last years of Philip II's reign, have noted what seems an important feature in some of the king's portraits. Fernando Checa Cremades, for example, recently argued that some of the portraits of Philip II show clear "traces of hieraticism, dignity and distance."[65] While scholars have associated this model of representation with Philip II, the portraits of his descendants exhibit similar features.[66] The work of Velázquez as portraitist of Philip IV confirms this analysis. We know, for example, that Philip IV himself actively participated in defining the final "aesthetical" characteristics of his portraits, especially in those painted by Velázquez – a total of eight portraits between 1623 and 1655, all certified by the king himself, sometimes after asking Velázquez to make certain changes that would make the royal facial features more "realistic."[67] Velázquez's rendering of Philip IV (Fig. 35), indeed, followed models ("artistic" and "political") already well established and did not change substantially in his thirty years of service as court painter, not even after the artist's trip to Italy (1629–31), which resulted in certain changes in technique evident in other work but not in his royal portraits.[68]

It is precisely the stability of the Spanish model of royal portrait and that it lacked any symbol that would depict the Spanish king as an absolute and all-powerful ruler that gave enormous authority to this form of royal representation. Velázquez, as previous *pintores del rey,* depicted the Spanish Habsburgs as virtuous, paternalistic, and benevolent rulers, thus helping to create among the king's subjects a "habitus" of seeing the royal image in assigned ways, as the one beheld by Saavedra y Fajardo in front of Velázquez's portrait of Philip IV.[69]