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# On Velázquez and the Liberal Arts\*

Mary Crawford Volk

Among all of Velázquez's works, certainly the extraordinary picture now known as *Las Meninas* represents the artist's most personal statement about himself. The inclusion in it of his own portrait—the single secure example of a self-image in his entire production—would alone support the claim. The physical location of the depicted scene also projects a personal realm. Although perhaps not understandable as the artist's studio in a strict sense, the room shown nonetheless certainly refers to the palace interior in which Velázquez lived and worked (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Velázquez portrays himself in the act of painting; he stands behind a group of figures who are ranged around the Infanta Margarita, youngest daughter of Philip IV and first offspring of his second queen, Mariana of Austria (Fig. 2). The huge canvas on which Velázquez apparently works, angled at the left of the space and only incompletely visible, is turned away from the spectator. The subject of the painting in progress on its surface therefore remains undisclosed. A number of other paintings, two on the rear wall and at least six more on the right wall, constitute the only visible physical adornment of the high chamber containing the group. There is also a rectangular mirror hanging on the rear wall, but otherwise the room is unfurnished, without statuary or any kind of floor covering.

But as if in contradiction of its barrenness, the room is populated with very important people. Taken together, they are perhaps the most selective courtly gathering ever depicted. Their names have been known for some time.<sup>2</sup> In addition to Velázquez himself and the Infanta, seven other people are

present. All of them must be understood as intimate members of the palace retinue. Palomino, writing only several decades after Velázquez painted the picture in 1656, felt able with complete certainty to identify by name each of the figures but one. His identifications have rightly been honored by modern scholars without exception, based as they were on information from Juan de Alfaro, a pupil of Velázquez's, as well as probable personal acquaintance with at least some of the individuals portrayed.<sup>3</sup>

José Nieto, the *apostador*, or chamberlain, to the Queen, stands silhouetted in the open doorway at the very rear of the room (Fig. 3). Nieto had been in the intimate service of the Queen for more than twenty years by this time, having risen through a series of lesser palace appointments. His duties as *apostador* were augmented by those of *tapicero mayor* in 1666, and he remained in the post until his death in 1685.<sup>4</sup> His figure, poised watchfully on the stairs within the doorway, clearly is one of the secondary foci of the picture. The compositional emphasis is entirely appropriate: Nieto's high rank as a courtier deserved emphasis in a gathering where his duties as chamberlain were by no means symbolic. The personal comfort of the Queen as well as that of the Infanta were directly in his charge.

The luminous, enchanting Infanta Margarita, the principal compositional focus of the picture, stands gazing directly out from the center of the figural group (Fig. 4). Encompassed by the watchful gaze of Nieto, she is the object of graceful attention from the two beautiful young noblewomen who flank

\* Part of the material presented here was originally discovered in connection with research on my doctoral dissertation, "Vicencio Carducho and Seventeenth-Century Castilian Painting," Yale University, 1973. I wish to thank Professor George Kubler for his encouragement then, and also Professor Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who did much to inspire me to study 17th-century art. For their kindness in reading this study in an earlier draft form, I am indebted to Professors Kubler and Begemann, and also to Jonathan Brown, Juergen Schulz, Kermit Champa, and Alan Trueblood. My work abroad has been facilitated by too many people to list here, but special thanks must go to Don Miguel Bordonau, former Director of the Archivo de Protocolos in Madrid. He, and his staff, turned the tedious search for documents into a delightful adventure. I am grateful as well to the staff of the Archivo de la Villa and the Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, and the Archivio di Stato, Florence. The Director and staff of the Prado were also most generous with their time and facilities.

N.B. A bibliography of frequently cited sources appears at the end of this article.

<sup>1</sup> No exact identification of the room depicted in the picture with a specific chamber in the royal palace at Madrid can be made; cf. F. Iñiguez Almech, *Casas reales y jardines de Felipe II*, Madrid, 1952, 98; G. Kubler, "Three Remarks on the Meninas," *Art Bulletin*, XLVIII, 1966, 212. The content of the picture, however, surely implies a studio situation in the broad sense. Y. Bottineau, "L'Alcazar de Madrid et l'inventaire de 1686. Aspects de la court de Espagne au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Bulletin hispanique*, LVIII, 1958, 450–51, identifies the room with the *pieza principal del cuarto bajo del príncipe*, a chamber on the first floor of the palace originally part of the apartments of Prince Baltasar Carlos, but which was used as a workshop by the court painter after the Prince's death in 1646. The room was not where Velázquez actually lived in 1656, since he had been given a residence in August of 1655 in another part of the palace complex, the Casa del Tesoro; cf. Iñiguez Almech, "La Casa

del Tesoro, Velázquez y las obras reales," *Varia Velazqueña*, 1, Madrid, 1960, 654–660. A good case can be made for this identification, since the *cuarto del príncipe*, as shown in contemporary plans of the palace, possessed all the features of the chamber shown in *Las Meninas* except the doorway and short flight of stairs where Nieto stands. If this feature is admitted as a pictorial invention, the room in which Velázquez shows himself painting possessed strong associations with the royal family indeed, and the space carries profound implications for the content of the picture.

<sup>2</sup> F. J. Sánchez Cantón, *Las Meninas y sus personajes*, Barcelona, 1947, embellishes the original identifications made by Antonio Palomino y Velasco early in the 18th century. Palomino's *Museo pictórico*, where the discussion appears, although published only in 1715–1724, was by his own admission composed earlier (Palomino, ed. Aguilar, Madrid, 1947, 5).

<sup>3</sup> Alfaro was a Cordoban painter who worked with Velázquez at Madrid during the fifties, and is acknowledged by Palomino as one of his sources (p. 1002). J. A. Céan Bermúdez, *Diccionario histórico*, Madrid, 1800, IV, 30–31, indicates that Palomino himself was at court after 1680. Since, for example, José Nieto, the chamberlain who appears at the rear in *Las Meninas*, died in 1685, Palomino could have known him personally.

<sup>4</sup> Palomino identifies him by name and office (p. 921). His post of *apostador* to the Queen was vacated by his death on 27 July 1685; he had been promoted to the lesser office of *guarda de damas* on 2 June 1636, and later acquired duties of *tapicero mayor* to the Queen on 15 April 1666, while acting as *apostador* (Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Felipe IV, Casa, Legs. 624, 632). This corrects certain dates given in Sánchez Cantón, *Las Meninas*, 19, and also removes any connection between Nieto and the Queen's tapestry works in 1656, an alleged reason for his inclusion in the gathering; cf. M. Kahr, "Velázquez and *Las Meninas*," *Art Bulletin*, LVII, 1975, 242.

her. These *meninas*, or young handmaidens, were adolescent daughters of courtiers and members of a group of *meninas* in the Queen's retinue whose special duties included safeguarding the well-being of the royal princesses.<sup>5</sup> Doña Maria Agustina, daughter of Don Diego Sarmiento, appears kneeling, offering a vessel of water to the Princess. Gracefully inclined on Margarita's other side is Doña Isabel de Velasco, daughter of Don Bernardino López de Ayala y Velasco, Conde de Fuensalida.<sup>6</sup> Both girls are striking in their loveliness, especially so in the attitudes of gentle solicitude they have assumed toward the Infanta. Both older than she by perhaps some ten years, they are actually less her companions than her attendants, or devotees. Margarita appears as a little golden goddess, adorable and adored, perfect in her blonde radiance. Her figure combines at once the innocence and purity of young childhood with the dignified bearing of her royal station. Velázquez brilliantly invests her form with the promise of fullblown regality it will fulfill only a decade later.

To the extreme right and slightly in front of Margarita appear her only real playmates at court. The figure playfully touching the back of the drowsing mastiff, seemingly a little boy, is Nicolasito Pertusato, one of the several male dwarfs at court. Next to him stands the dramatically deformed figure of Mari Bárbola, one of the female dwarfs in the palace entourage. She too was a dependent in the Queen's household where she was fed, finely clothed, and cared for.<sup>7</sup> Together with the sleepy dog, this group might be understood as the "pets" of the Infanta. Another pair of figures, standing in the shadowy, middle ground at the right of the room, is also directly related to the Queen's retinue. An unnamed gentleman, in the role of a *guarda de damas*, stands as escort to Doña Marcela de Ulloa. Doña Marcela wears a nun's habit to denote her recent widowhood, but her actual position was that of lady-in-waiting to the Queen.<sup>8</sup> Her presence clearly implied that of the Queen's, and it also completes the roster of essential staff members in attendance upon her daughter.

As a group, then, all of these people are members of the

courtly household and they also form a very particular division of it: the Queen's most intimate entourage. They were appointed and maintained by her, and they are shown appropriately, engaged in one of the fundamental duties of her household: ministering to her offspring.<sup>9</sup>

From this standpoint the reflected images of Margarita's parents, Philip and Mariana, in the mirror on the rear wall assume a special significance (Fig. 5). Clearly implying the presence of the King and Queen in the space in front of the Infanta, the mirror images add a familial context to the gathering.<sup>10</sup> Velázquez has portrayed himself in the company of the royal family. And, although he clearly draws attention to his courtly office of *apostador mayor*, or head chamberlain, to the King by showing the great key that symbolized the office at his waist, he emphatically displays himself as a painter at work.

Recently, certain scholars have directed attention to the meaning of Velázquez's portrayal of himself in such illustrious company. Tolnay in 1949, Kubler in 1966, and Kahr in 1975 all have written from the conviction that *Las Meninas* includes a subtle proclamation of the nobility of painting.<sup>11</sup> Although supporting their arguments on different grounds, each author concluded that the picture represents Velázquez's assertion of painting as essentially a liberal art, as distinct from mere craftsmanship. Kubler first introduced into the discussion a possible pictorial source, a miniature done around 1570 by Hans Mielich of Munich. Conceding the unlikelihood that Velázquez had ever seen the miniature, Kubler offered it only as a type of precedent for the depiction of a courtly gathering in an interior: "The concert portrayed by Hans Mielich, and the act of painting performed by Velázquez, are both pictures of performances in progress. Both are court scenes, defined as such by the implied presence of the monarch facing several of his courtiers. In both the Netherlandish space of the room funnels into a diminutive perspective *échappée* at the rear."<sup>12</sup> Madlyn Kahr has recently adduced as Velázquez's chief inspiration a Flemish pictorial tradition emergent in Antwerp

<sup>5</sup> Sánchez Cantón, *Las Meninas*, discusses the meaning of the word, of Portuguese origin. The *meninas* of the Queen possessed a counterpart in the *meninos* of the King's household; both groups were maintained as regular, salaried members of the palace retinue throughout the century (Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Felipe IV, Casa, Leg. 646.)

<sup>6</sup> Typically, both girls were daughters of prominent Castilian aristocratic houses. Both *meninas* and *meninos* customarily, at the proper age, moved into the court positions of *damas* and *gentilhombres*, respectively.

<sup>7</sup> J. Moreno-Villa, *Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos*, Mexico, 1939, 66–67, 125–130. On the specific kinds of dwarfism these figures show, see E. Tietze-Conrat, *Dwarfs and Jesters in Art*, London, 1957, with refinements in Kahr, "Las Meninas," 242–43.

<sup>8</sup> Sánchez Cantón, *Las Meninas*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> The literature on the picture does not note that the palace retinue included two distinct staffs, that of the King and that of the Queen. Considerable documentation on the palace employees in the Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, and the Archivo General de Simancas, Simancas, demonstrates that two entirely distinct sets of retainers were maintained. The practice seems to have originated (in the Habsburg house) with Charles V, although it was apparently revised somewhat by Philip II in 1575 (Archivo de Palacio, Cajas 49, 50). The point is important for the content of *Las Meninas*. Velázquez himself is the only figure present who was not identified with the Queen's retinue. To anyone in the 17th century at Madrid, the courtly gathering would clearly have represented a very

particular group indeed, resonant with associations of the young Queen Mariana, Philip's second wife of only six years. On the etiquette governing the Queen's household, see D. de la Válgoma, *Norma y ceremonia de las reinas de la Casa de Austria*, Madrid, 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Much opinion has accumulated on the significance of the reflected images of the monarchs. Carl Justi's idea that Velázquez used a mirror to capture the image of himself painting a double portrait of the King and Queen, long an influential view that promoted notions of the picture's "impressionism," was challenged by J. A. Emmens, "Les Menines de Velázquez: Miroir des princes pour Philippe IV," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, XII, 1961, 52–53. It is one of the few of Emmens's points accepted by Kahr, "Las Meninas," who maintained that the mirror reflection was Velázquez's way of showing the presence of the King, in order that his ultimate goal in the picture, that of proclaiming the social status of the painter, could be given ". . . official ratification . . . evidence that the King himself sanctioned it" (p. 243). B. Mestre Fiol, in "El Espejo Referencial en la Pintura de Velázquez," *Traza y baza*, II, 1973, 15–36, and III, 1973, 75–100, has stressed Velázquez's penchant for such a pictorial device, already present in the early *bodegones*.

<sup>11</sup> C. de Tolnay, "Velázquez' *Las Hilanderas* and *Las Meninas*," 212–14; Kahr, "Las Meninas," 227 and 240–43. Jonathan Brown, in a paper delivered at the Detroit meeting of the College Art Association in January 1974, also advanced this idea.

<sup>12</sup> Kubler, "Three Remarks," 212.



1 Velázquez, *Las Meninas*. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Prado)

2 Detail of self-portrait in *Las Meninas*3 Detail of José Nieto in *Las Meninas*

early in the seventeenth century, in which galleries of collectors or *cabinets d'amateurs* are depicted:

It by no means detracts from our appreciation of *Las Meninas* to acknowledge that even in this masterpiece Velázquez conformed to artistic practice of the time in which he produced it. Always alert to existing art, he drew on and adapted a tradition that shared the aims he had in mind and provided a suitable compositional pattern for the picture he was planning. It was the precedent of Flemish gallery pictures that lay behind his conception.<sup>13</sup>

In a lengthy discussion of Flemish tradition, Kahr includes at least one example that Velázquez knew: David Teniers's little picture of *The Archduke Leopold William in His Picture Gallery in Brussels*, sent by the Archduke to Philip IV and in Madrid by 1653.<sup>14</sup> Teniers was a leading painter of the gallery picture genre. As Kahr points out, the picture sent to Madrid is typical of both Teniers's own approach to the gallery picture and the essential features that typified the genre in general. Chief among these is the praise of art collections, and their

collectors and curators, by making them the principal subject of a painting. Invariably, the collection is displayed lavishly on the walls throughout an interior in which—as in the Madrid picture—the figure of the collector and some of his advisors are often shown. And, an important point, just as often the figure of the court artist responsible for the collection is included. The Madrid picture is an excellent example of the genre: Teniers appears, holding a print, next to the figure of the Count of Fuensaldaña, one of his patrons at the Brussels court. The painter is shown as the intimate and even the social equal of the others in the room. When, as in this case, such pictures were given to relatives and friends of the collector, they served as advertisements of his cultivated taste as well as his prosperity. And surely, as Kahr argues, they also redounded to the credit of the court artist associated with the collection.<sup>15</sup>

It seems safe to assume that Velázquez was aware of the picture by Teniers, newly arrived from Brussels. Indeed, it might be argued that Velázquez was especially aware of it, since it probably arrived during or soon after his second sojourn in Italy, and almost exactly at the time he was appointed

<sup>13</sup> Kahr, "Las Meninas," 229. The author discusses examples of this tradition by Frans Francken II, Willem van Haecht II, and especially David Teniers II (pp. 230–39). The tradition itself was isolated by S. Speth-Holterhoff, *Les Peintres flamands de cabinets d'amateurs au XVIIe siècle*, Brussels, 1957. Its sources have been brilliantly discussed by Matthias

Winner, *Die Quellen der Pictura-Allegorien in gemalten Bildergalerien des 17. Jahrhunderts zu Antwerpen*, Ph.D. diss., Cologne, 1957.

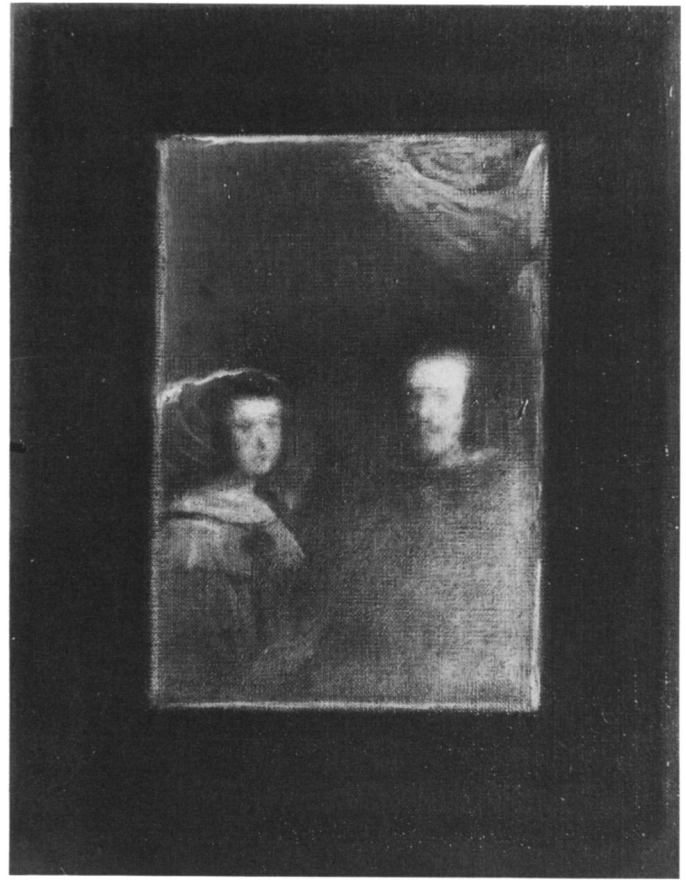
<sup>14</sup> Kahr, "Las Meninas," 238, fig. 13. The picture is now in the Prado.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.





4 Detail of Infanta Margarita in *Las Meninas*



5 Detail of King Philip and Queen Mariana in *Las Meninas*

*apostador mayor* to the King.<sup>16</sup> This post made the artist not only chief steward of the King's personal comfort, but also curator of all "objects of wood" in the palace, including the painting collection.<sup>17</sup> And yet, despite his perhaps even intimate familiarity with Teniers's picture, Velázquez produced a painting in 1656 that differs in essentials from the gallery picture tradition Teniers represented. *Las Meninas* certainly demonstrates the noble status and inspired talent of the painter and his profession, but the demonstration is presented in ways that substantially diverge from the Flemish tradition and, instead, bear eloquent and subtle testimony to Velázquez's own milieu at Madrid.

Perhaps the spatial situation of his masterpiece is Velázquez's

greatest debt to the Flemish tradition.<sup>18</sup> The high-vaulted interior, with its brilliant perspectival recession, is an environment wholly without precedent in Velázquez's *oeuvre* (Fig. 1). The window wall at the right, so important to a definition of the depth of the room, and even the open doorway at the rear are elements that recur in the Flemish gallery pictures. In a broad sense, Velázquez's notion of depicting a courtly assemblage in this kind of space may have been inspired by Teniers's little picture or a comparable example by another artist. But *Las Meninas* conspicuously lacks the central feature of the Flemish pictures—the extended, crowded display of works of art belonging to the collector. Although Velázquez does show a number of paintings

<sup>16</sup> The picture was seen in Madrid in 1653 by Lázaro Díaz del Valle (cited in *Maitres flamands du XVIIe siècle du Prado et de collections privées espagnoles*, exh. cat., Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, 1975, 140, No. 39), as Kahr points out (*Velázquez*, New York, Harper & Row, 1976, 158) in a reprint of her article cited above. Velázquez had returned to Madrid from his second Italian trip by June of 1651; he was named to the post of *apostador* on 16 February 1652 and sworn in on 8 March. The much-quoted documents of this appointment are in the Archivo de Palacio, Madrid; their texts are printed accurately in G. Cruzada Villamil, *Anales de la vida y de las obras de Velázquez*, Madrid, 1885, 182–83.

<sup>17</sup> Velázquez's office of *apostador*, or head chamberlain, was an important one in the palace staff and remained unchanged during the period in regard to its basic duties, which chiefly involved the personal well-being of the

King, both at Madrid and when travelling. The office was defined by Charles V as early as 1545, elaborated under Philip II in 1562, and examined although not changed during the extended reforms of palace etiquette ordered by Philip IV in 1647–1651. An official report written on 17 July 1817 conveniently surveys the history of the post and offers a "noticia de sus funciones" (Archivo de Palacio, Sección Administrativa, Leg. 631).

<sup>18</sup> Kubler, "Three Remarks," 212, called attention to the "... Netherlandish space of the room." Kahr argues for a much fuller dependence by Velázquez on the Flemish tradition, noting that "... the room setting as a whole is one of these features." Other features were the image of the sovereign, the visitors of high rank, and the presence of the artist himself (p. 240).

on the walls, they are with two exceptions so dimly revealed that they cannot be identified.<sup>19</sup> And by no means does their disposition in the room approximate the teeming profusion of objects invariably shown in the Flemish examples. In this regard, and the point is a central one, *Las Meninas* cannot be considered to fulfill the major condition of a gallery picture. And it might be added that Velázquez surely was in a position to paint such a picture had he chosen to: the collection of paintings in the royal palace at Madrid had been accumulating since Charles V had sponsored Titian, and was among the two or three richest in Europe at the time. Indeed, it might be contended that the very age and prestige of the Spanish collection minimized the need to extol it in the Flemish manner. In any event, it cannot be convincingly argued that, like Teniers, Velázquez intended *Las Meninas* primarily to promote the picture gallery of his monarch.

Velázquez concentrates the artistic brilliance of his mature style on the articulation of the figural group in space. As indicated above, they are not a random group of courtiers, but a highly select assemblage. Yet close scrutiny of the disposition of the attendant figures relative to the figure of the Infanta strongly suggests that the familial context is meant to recall traditional depictions of another exalted grouping, that of the Holy Family. The solicitous gestures and attitudes of the *meninas*, in particular, recall similarly disposed attendant figures in images of the sacred theme, especially those in an Adoration setting (Fig. 6).<sup>20</sup> Nor should this allusion be in any way surprising, since Philip and Mariana, like all monarchs in the seventeenth century, ruled by divine right. Unlike other heads of state during the period, however, the Spanish monarchs considered themselves the principal defenders of the true faith. And indeed they were: Spain was the only nation in Europe at the time to unite Church and State completely. Regardless of the unfavorable judgments history may have formed of their reign, the divine authority of the King and Queen was no romantic myth to the seventeenth-century

Spaniard. Their portraits were never given a monetary value during the official inventories of the period, for example, “. . . por ser de personas reales. . . .”<sup>21</sup>

Velázquez seems to have arranged the familial context to imply a conflation of it with another telling theme, in addition to that of the Adoration. Given the Infanta as the principal focus of the picture and her mother's presence implied in the space before her, the central elements of a mother and child theme are present. Velázquez's figure, with implements at hand and a picture in progress, contributes a secondary focus to this grouping. These motifs occur together in the sacred pictorial tradition, particularly rich during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of Saint Luke Painting the Virgin.<sup>22</sup> Although perhaps its most familiar example today is the picture of about 1435 associated with Rogier van der Weyden (Fig. 7), the subject was current in Spain and certainly known to Velázquez in at least a variant form produced at Madrid around 1630 (Fig. 8). Saint Luke, as the patron saint of painters, was the Christian contribution to the ancient tradition of Apelles.<sup>23</sup> From their medieval origins onward, painters' guilds invoked Luke's patronage. Velázquez became a member of such a guild in 1617 in Seville, and was also registered with the painters' guild in Madrid after 1623 when he took up residence in the capital. Saint Luke's aegis was also sought by most of the academies of painters that began to emerge in the sixteenth century in Italy.<sup>24</sup> Such an academic movement occurred in Madrid during the early seventeenth century, further supporting the contention that Velázquez was aware of the traditional associations of the theme.

It must be sharply underscored, however, that evocations of such sacred subjects in *Las Meninas* are implicit and highly inflected. They are contained but concealed by the apparent spontaneity and casualness of the courtly gathering. But their subtle presence seems identifiable on at least two levels, that of the purely pictorial, referring to a gestural vocabulary that carried certain associations and that appears earlier in

<sup>19</sup> The exceptions, as is well known, are the two pictures hanging on the rear wall above the mirror. Palomino first indicated that they were based on Rubensian models, depicting themes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (p. 921). Sánchez Cantón identified the two subjects as *Minerva Punishing Arachne*, on the left, and *Apollo's Victory over Marsyas*, on the right, and refined Palomino's observation: the pictures were actually painted by Juan Bautista del Mazo, Velázquez's son-in-law, and were part of a series of copies he had done after Rubens's compositions which the Fleming had been commissioned to do as a decorative ensemble for Philip IV's hunting lodge, the Torre de la Parada, in 1636–1640. The original oil sketches by Rubens are now in the Virginia Museum, Richmond, Virginia, and the Musée Royale des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; cf. Sánchez Cantón, *Las Meninas*, 2nd ed., Barcelona, 1952, 14.

<sup>20</sup> This pictorial tradition, especially showing the Adoration of the Magi, enjoyed particular favor in Spain during the period. Philip IV had acquired Rubens's highly influential example, for instance, painted about 1609 and now in the Prado, which had amplified the concept of adoring worshippers to include a great throng of men and animals. Velázquez's own treatment of the subject, datable to 1619, and now also in the Prado, also takes this form, although on a far more restrained scale. Velázquez's particular familiarity and pictorial fondness for the gestural vocabulary associated with courtly deference or adoration can be realized from the number of occasions on which he employed it: the *Adoration* of 1619 offers its earliest exposition, but it reappears, with changing inflections, in *Los Borrachos* of ca. 1629, and the

*Surrender of Breda* of 1634–35. In particular, it is the attitude so charmingly struck by the left-hand *menina* in 1656, a posture of genuflection, with all the attendant associations of obeisance, humility, solicitousness, and worship which are adumbrated in these earlier works. And certainly the meanings of the posture were deeply a part of Velázquez's own experience by 1656.

<sup>21</sup> This is the phrase employed consistently in the inventories of the royal collection of paintings of 1666, 1686, and 1700. See, e.g., G. Fernández Bayton, ed., *Inventarios reales: Testamentaria del Rey Carlos II, 1701–1703*, Madrid, 1975, 1.

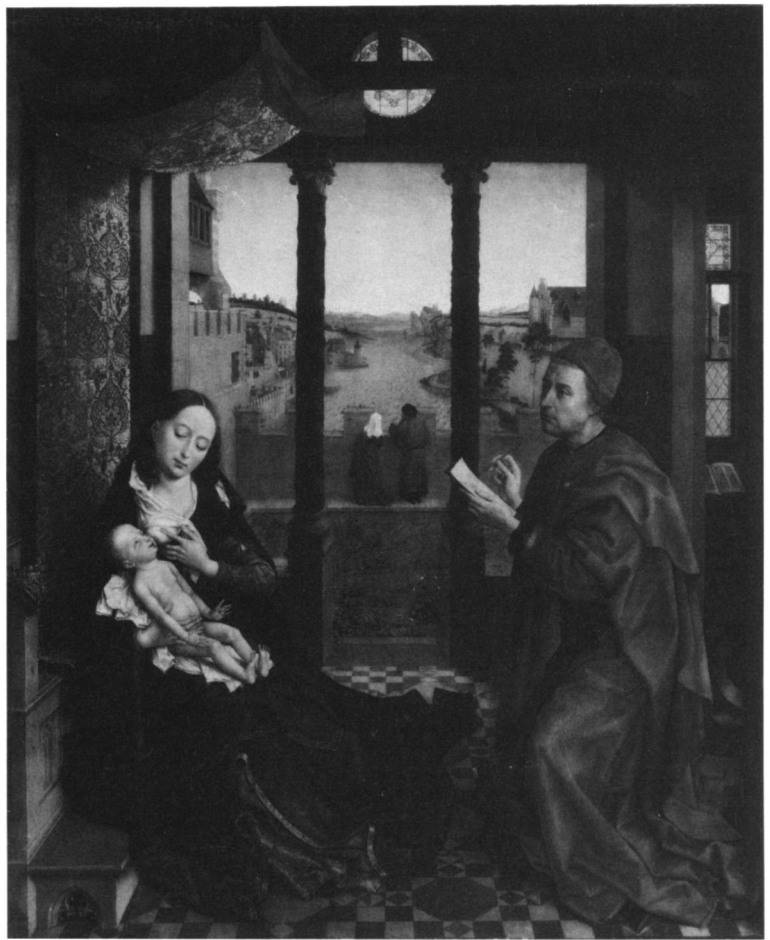
<sup>22</sup> D. Klein, *St. Lukas als Maler der Maria*, Berlin, 1935.

<sup>23</sup> He is specifically referred to as such by Lope de Vega, for example, in the *Rimas sacras*: “O soberano Apeles de Maria, pues retrató la virginal figura, adonde Dios mostró lo que sabía.” For this and other 17th-century literary references to the image in Spain, see M. Herrero García, *Contribución de la literatura a la historia del arte*, Madrid, 1943, 229–235. Vicencio Carducho included an engraved illustration of the theme among those that embellished the text of his *Diálogos de la pintura*, published in Madrid in 1633; see below, fig. 8. The iconography of these prints is discussed by G. Kubler, “Vicente Carducho's Allegories of Painting,” *Art Bulletin*, XLVII, 1965, 439–445.

<sup>24</sup> N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art Past and Present*, Cambridge, 1940; A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600*, Oxford, 1940, 48–57.



6 Velázquez, *Adoration of the Magi*. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Prado)



7 Roger van der Weyden (?), *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photo: Museum)



8 Francisco López, *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin and Christ*, from Carducho, *Diálogos de la Pintura*, Madrid, 1634 (photo: MAS)

Velázquez's art, and that of the conceptual, which conveyed the intermingling of divinity and royalty and sprang from the strenuous Catholicism of the ambience at Madrid.

Such religious inferences as the picture contains were probably much more readily recognized at Madrid in the seventeenth century than they are today. But perhaps less readily recognized was the message that *Las Meninas* conveyed, beneath the more representational level of its imagery, a deep concern with the professional status of painting. Of course depictions of *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* traditionally contained claims to the inspired character of painters, and alluded to their divine ordination.<sup>25</sup> And the point was sometimes made explicit when the painter's own features were given to Saint Luke.<sup>26</sup> But no contemporary account of *Las Meninas* survives to suggest that it was understood in these terms in 1656. A wealth of material from the years immediately preceding its creation, however, demonstrates that

<sup>25</sup> Klein, *St. Luke*; Kahr, *Velázquez*, N.Y., 1976, 186–190.

<sup>26</sup> This has been assumed in the famous Boston picture associated with Van der Weyden; cf. E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 4th ed., Cambridge, Mass., 1966, I, 252–54.



painters at Madrid were repeatedly concerned with the issue of the status of art. And it can be argued that Velázquez, by virtue of his courtly position, was more personally and particularly sensitive to it than most of his colleagues.

A movement to found an academy of painting was vividly alive during the first half of the seventeenth century in Madrid. For a number of reasons, painters felt inadequately recognized as professionals, and sought to alleviate the situation by establishing themselves as academicians. Their activities demonstrably spanned the period from shortly after 1600 to the late 1630s, and there is reason to believe that the issue remained alive as late as the early decades of the eighteenth century. Chronologically, the phenomenon arose in Castile somewhat later than in Florence, where painters' academies had been active for the preceding half-century, almost exactly contemporary with similar activities at Rome, and in advance of related developments at Milan and in the north of Europe.<sup>27</sup>

When Spanish painters began to seek a new professional identity at the turn of the century, they held no common bond except that of guild membership. Though its foundation date is unknown, the painters' guild in Madrid had functioned as an organized body throughout the sixteenth century, and it persisted during the subsequent century and a half at least.<sup>28</sup> The guild promoted typical practices such as apprenticeship, and functioned as a kind of organ of municipal government. Contemporary records reveal the widespread existence of individual workshops, into which apprentices were accepted for periods ranging from several months to six or seven years. This system remained the principal vehicle for the training of Spanish painters in Madrid throughout the period.<sup>29</sup>

An effort to move beyond this structure occurred in 1606, when a group of painters in Madrid signed an agreement with the Convent of St. Bartholomew to provide for the use of a portion of that building as an ". . . academia del arte de la pintura." The contract documents were witnessed on 16, 20,

and 24 November before one of the court notaries.<sup>30</sup> Three painters—Patricio Caxés, Juan de Soto, and Jerónimo de Mora—were delegated to negotiate the property on behalf of all painters resident in the city.

Regrettably, the documents fail to elaborate on the artists' reasons for seeking such an establishment, mentioning only that they had no place of their own to congregate and study. The records mainly concern legal matters, and nowhere set forth a program of actual instruction at the projected academy. The painters signing the agreement include both recognized personalities and names still known chiefly to their contemporaries.<sup>31</sup> But despite the lack of any stated program, the documents imply certain intentions on the part of the painters. For example, the agreement was composed on behalf of all painters resident in the capital, suggesting that the group represented the current guild membership and not a random number of progressives. As such, it seems to reflect an attempt to meet certain professional needs that the guild apparently did not satisfy.

Secondly, certain things about the character of artistic practice at the academy are implied. In the initial document of 16 November, the delegate painters are empowered to find a place where ". . . de noche y de dia y otras oras estudiemos y dibuxemos en el dicho arte de la pintura. . . ."<sup>32</sup> Specific mention of group study and especially of drawing suggests a procedure that might have involved working from casts and other objects, or perhaps even from the live model.

Additional records of the modest conventual academy projected in 1606 have not appeared, however. But another document, in the Biblioteca Nacional at Madrid, suggests that the desire for an academic foundation extended beyond the contractual agreements.<sup>33</sup> A *Memorial*, or working paper, it was written by the resident painters in the city. Although it bears no date, it must have been written sometime between 1599 and 1621, since it is addressed to Philip III. It elaborates in considerable detail a program for founding, organizing, and

<sup>27</sup> The Florentine academy was functioning in 1562; see N. Pevsner, "Einige Regesten . . ." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 1933, 128–131. I am indebted to George Kubler for calling my attention to this article. Activities in Rome date from at least 1577, and later became intimately involved with the ideas of Federigo Zuccaro. The clearest statement of his views appears in E. Panofsky, *Idea*, University of South Carolina, 1968, 85. D. Posner, *Annibale Carracci*, New York, 1971, 1, 62–65, surveys the material on the Bolognese academy. A group of painters in Milan sought an academic foundation in 1613, apparently modelled on the Carracci example in Bologna, and with the sanction of Cardinal Paleotti. An elaborate set of rules for its functioning, which runs to seventeen sections and includes sculpture and architecture as well as painting, is in the Ambrosiana, Milan: MS.H. 71 inf. R. 7395, fols. 60–79. Pevsner, *Academies*, 70, extracts passages from a governing document for the Milanese group that may be identifiable with the Ambrosiana paper.

<sup>28</sup> A brief set of guild regulations for painters from 1543 is in the Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, although nothing suggests them as founding documents. It should probably be assumed that in Castile, as elsewhere, the guild system was medieval in origin. Fifteenth-century guilds flourished in Barcelona and Seville, and it is unlikely that Castilian cities did not possess them at least as early. On the situation in Catalonia, see E. Capmany, *Memorias históricas sobre la marina, comercio, y arte de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona*, Madrid, 1789, 1, 111. J. Gestoso y Perez, *Ensayo*, Seville, 1899, xiv–xlix, treats the Andalusian city.

<sup>29</sup> Municipal archives in Madrid offer rich documentation on the practice throughout the century. The apprenticeship agreements are not unlike that

contracted between Velázquez and Pacheco in Seville in September 1611. The document is printed in F. Rodríguez Marín, *Francisco Pacheco, maestro de Velázquez*, Madrid, 1923, 48–50.

<sup>30</sup> Archivo de Protocolos, Madrid, leg. 2269, fols. 1094–1196v. Brief extractions appear in C. Pérez Pastor, "Noticias y documentos relativos a la historia y literatura española," *Memorias de la Real Academia Española*, xi, Madrid, 1914. The papers are printed in full in M. C. Volk, *Vicencio Carducho and Seventeenth-Century Castilian Painting*, New York, 1977.

<sup>31</sup> Twelve painters' names appear: Patricio and Eugenio Caxés, Vicencio Carducho, Juan de Soto, Bartolomé Gonzales, Bartolomé de Cardenas, Juan de Chirinos, Baltasar Lopez, Pedro de Orozco, Antonio de Monreal, Diego Rodríguez, and Gans Cobles. Most of them are cited in Céan Bermúdez, *Diccionario*, Madrid, 1800. See also D. Angulo and A. E. Pérez Sánchez, *La Escuela madrileña del primer tercio del siglo XVII*, Madrid, 1969.

<sup>32</sup> Archivo de Protocolos, Madrid, Leg. 2269, fol. 1100.

<sup>33</sup> Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Sección de Manuscritos, MS 2350, fols. 272–281. The paper was printed by G. Cruzada Villamil in *El Arte en España*, 1867, vi, 167–172, 258–270, with little comment except that which raised a question of authorship: ". . . pero a decir verdad, estos memoriales no puedan haber sido escritos por ningun pintor de aquellos años, pues aun cuando entonces vivía Carducho . . . no están redactados con su estilo . . . creemos que estos memoriales sean hijos de pluma más docta y literaria . . . aunque siquiera las inspiraciones de artistas italianos, como los Caxés y Carducho . . ." (p. 171, n. 1).

governing an academy of painting. The introduction lauds the special properties of the art, particularly its effectiveness as an instrument of instruction and its ability to reproduce the natural world. There follows a passage reflecting Italian theories of painting of the sixteenth century, especially that of *idea*. Also cited is the importance of a concern for propriety and decorum in the execution of subjects in pictures. The introduction concludes with what was almost certainly one of the guiding motivations of the document: a petition for royal support. Examples cited to justify an academic foundation include those already existing in Rome, Florence, Venice, and Bologna.<sup>34</sup>

In the section on government, the purpose of the group is stated clearly. The projected "Academia de San Luca" was to be a place where draftmanship would be taught ". . . para que se crien hombres doctos en este arte . . . que por carecer del dibujo imperfectamente las obran, con mucho daño y poco adorno y autoridad desta Monarquía. . . ." <sup>35</sup> Provision is made for the organization of the government and the curriculum. After a life-drawing class, students would proceed to a term divided between study of perspective on the one hand and anatomy, symmetry, and physiognomy on the other. Highly recommended as well was at least an hour daily in mathematics. Candidates for the title of academician were considered only after completion of a curriculum of such required courses.<sup>36</sup>

No evidence has yet appeared to indicate the fate of the painters' petition after it reached the King, if it did in fact reach him. It has been written that Vicencio Carducho and Angelo Nardi, both court painters to the young Philip IV after he ascended the throne in 1621, were successful in founding an academy.<sup>37</sup> The assertion seems to derive from a document in the Royal Palace in Madrid, datable to 1637, that contains a royal decree exempting the two painters from paying certain taxes levied on members of the painters' guild.<sup>38</sup> The paper demonstrates that the guild continued to function as a recognized institution at that date, and it makes no mention at

all of the artists' membership in an academy. It introduces, however, the complex, integrally related issue of municipal taxation of guildsmen.

These efforts at academic foundation, then, included a desire to elevate and expand the nature of artistic training available in the Spanish capital. They also possessed an important social dimension. The academy would have introduced an elitist element into Madrid. The title of academician would have served as a kind of guarantee of professional status and a credential eventually required for an appointment as court painter. Whether or not an actual academy was firmly founded in the city between 1600 and 1620 is impossible to determine with complete certainty, but it seems unlikely since the issue was reopened at the end of the following decade. The character of the project, however, as well as the precedents justifying its foundation clearly indicate that its major sources of inspiration lay outside Castile. As is well known, in Italy in the sixteenth century and early in the seventeenth, painters were congregating in academic groups in Venice, Milan, Bologna, Florence, and Rome.<sup>39</sup> And although no precise connections between the group in Madrid and those in Italy can now be made, the influence of Italy, which the document makes clear, as well as the chronological correspondence, strongly suggest that more than historical coincidence lay behind their efforts.<sup>40</sup>

Another source of inspiration must be located within Castile, however, at the building and decorative campaigns of the Escorial. It was then that "Italianism" in Spain on a pervasive scale received official impetus under Philip II, and a colony of Italian artists—with national ideas and training—entered the mainstream of Castilian tradition.<sup>41</sup> This colony became active in Castilian artistic life during the final quarter of the sixteenth century, and it formed a first generation of expatriate artists whose training and artistic aims provided the matrix for the authors of the academic documents introduced here.

The efforts of the painters in Madrid can be characterized as

<sup>34</sup> "Y seria forcoso y agradable estímulo, para que se animassen otros a estudiar, a imitación de Roma, Florencia, Venecia, y Bolonia, donde ay semejantes Academias, y salen tan insignes hombres . . . En consideracion de lo qual suplican humilmente a V. Magestad se digne de honrarlos, dandoles de su Real mano algun Grande, o Senor q sea su Protector, o permita que ellos le nombren, para que con esto, y el nombre de Academia Real, se perpetue arte tan importante . . ."

<sup>35</sup> This passage opens the section entitled "Relacion del cuerpo y gobierno de la Academia, y sus officios."

<sup>36</sup> The paper concludes with the suggestion that all court painters, of which there were usually at least three on salary, be titled academicians, ". . . pues su Magestad tiene assalariados Pintores . . . que se supone sean los mas peritos en su facultad . . ."

<sup>37</sup> The notion that they were involved in the founding of an academy seems to occur first in Jusepe Martínez, *Discursos practicables del nobilísimo arte de la pintura*, Madrid, ed. 1866, 110–15; Martínez was probably writing in the 1670s. On the academy, he says that Carducho ". . . tuvo intento de formar una Academia para que los virtuosos y estudiosos lograsen sus estudios; mas la malicia pernicioso dio fin a su vida, no dando lugar a lograr tan nobles intentos."

<sup>38</sup> Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Expedientes personales (Carducho), C202/61; see below, Appendix of Documents, 1.

<sup>39</sup> See above, note 27.

<sup>40</sup> That is, no letter from Madrid has turned up comparable to that from the

Venetian painters to Florence on 20 October 1566, applying for membership in the Academy. See Pevsner, *Academies*, 49, on the importance of the Venetian position; the original letter is in the Archivio di Stato, Florence. Nevertheless, individual connections can be made. Vicencio Carducho was very proud of his own membership in the Florentine Academy, proclaiming it somewhat pretentiously on the title page of his *Dialogos* in 1633 and praising its merits in the first section of the text. He matriculated as a corresponding member on 16 April 1630: ". . . a di 16 di aprile 1630 . . . dal s<sup>r</sup> Vincenzo di Santi Carduzzi pittore dal r<sup>e</sup> di Spagna lire ventesette tre soldi e quatro per principio e resto di suo matricola porto claudio donsello—" (Archivio di Stato, Florence; Accademia del Disegno, Entrata e Uscita 1625–1632, Sign. 104-F, fol. 21v). In this action, he followed the example of his older brother Bartolome, who had applied from Spain on 2 May 1593 (Accademia del Disegno, Giornale di Negoci, partiti e ricordi del proveditore 1586–1594, Sign. 27-B, fol. 139). Typically, both artists became members in their maturity.

<sup>41</sup> F. J. Sánchez Cantón offers a brief essay on the Escorial decorators in the lavish publication by the Patrimonio Nacional, *El Escorial*, Madrid, 1968, II. Documents appear in J. Zarco Cuevas, *Los Pintores italianos en San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial*, Madrid, 1932. Perhaps Federigo Zuccaro, in Spain from 1583 to 1588, is the most familiar of these artists. Pellegrino Tibaldi was also a visitor, from 1586 to 1594. Italians who came, settled, and died in Castile include Patricio Caxés (d. 1611), Fabricio Castelo (d. 1619), and Bartolomé Carducho (d. 1608). Of importance as well was the Milanese sculptor Pompeo Leoni (d. 1608), who arrived in 1583.

a second-generation expression of ideas that were introduced into Spain thirty years before. At least eight of the sixteen artists signing the contracts of 1606 were involved in master-pupil relationships and had worked on commissions together. Even a cursory analysis shows clearly that a reasonably strong group identity existed among them, and that their knowledge of each other was in large part derived from associations with either Patricio Caxés or Bartolomé Carducho, both Italians whose Spanish careers had begun at the Escorial.<sup>42</sup> At the turn of the century, it was their activity as painters and teachers in Madrid that represented the “established” order and their studios to which younger artists attached themselves.

Eugenio Caxés and Vicencio Carducho, for example, signers of the contracts, were both members of the second generation whose artistic careers in the capital were only a few years old.<sup>43</sup> They had both grown up in the atmosphere at the Escorial as the son and brother, respectively, of the artists mentioned above, and their artistic formation had taken place on Castilian soil. But, as with all second-generation immigrants who have maintained strong family ties, their awareness of their foreign cultural heritage was very strong. It was an awareness strongly tempered, however, by the pride and affection they felt for their adopted country and their allegiance to a court that had been and would continue to be their source of support. Their future and that of their Spanish colleagues was the broader “subject” of the documents of 1606. And surely it was their hybrid artistic positions that accounted, at least in some degree, for the form taken by the projected academy, with its self-conscious awareness of Italian precedents.

Another element important for the developments at the turn of the century, which were rooted at the court of Philip II, was a religious zeal of epic proportions. The inheritor of his father's vast territorial dominions, Philip was sustaining a holy war in the name of Roman Catholicism and Habsburg imperialism, in which the chief objective was the defense of the Mediterranean against the Turks.<sup>44</sup> Spain's power in Rome at this time was great, and not the least of her assets was her national religion. Part of the nationalism that underlies the painters' *memorial* surely stems from this attitude, and derives

from the newly defined didactic role of art in the Catholic mission.

Both the contracts of 1606 and the *Memorial* make special mention of the importance of insuring standards of correctness and decorum in painted imagery. This concern, articulated at the final session of the Council of Trent and promoted in Italy especially through the writings of Cardinal Paleotti and Molanus, circulated during the final decades of the century.<sup>45</sup> To present knowledge, there were no texts comparable to these produced in Spain, but it is unquestionable that copies of the Italian works were known in Spanish court circles. In this regard, the specific references in the documents of 1606 to the writings of Cardinal Paleotti, however brief, have a special significance as the earliest known written evidence in the Peninsula of a direct reaction by painters to their role as servants of Catholicism.

Relative silence descended over the academic issue in the capital during the subsequent two decades. But then it was rearticulated in a more erudite, sophisticated form. In 1633 Vicencio Carducho published eight dialogues that discussed painting as a liberal art (Fig. 9). With them was bound a *Memorial* dedicated to the same purpose that had first appeared four years earlier, written by several prominent professional men at the court.<sup>46</sup> The art-historical significance of the publication is at least threefold: (1) it is the most elaborate written expression of the developing professional consciousness among painters in Castile; (2) it occupies an important position as one of the most fully conceived of similar efforts made by artists throughout the period in Europe; and (3) it fits directly within the tradition of such writings, which began in the fifteenth century in Italy and continued late into the eighteenth century in England.

In Castile, the earliest known example of a written plea arguing the nobility of painting appeared in 1600. Gaspar Gutiérrez de los Rios, a lawyer from Salamanca, published in Madrid a long, exhortatory book entitled *Noticia general para la estimación de las artes*.<sup>47</sup> Gutiérrez argued the cause of guildsmen in general, who were being conscripted in large numbers to fight in Spain's many foreign wars. His remarks are an impassioned plea to Castile's privileged classes to bear a

<sup>42</sup> Introductions to these painters' careers appear in D. Angulo, *La Pintura del siglo XVI*, Madrid, 1954, 257–265.

<sup>43</sup> Patricio and Eugenio Caxés were father and son; Patricio had first come to Spain in the 1580's to work at the Escorial. In the 1590's they were both active at Madrid as *retablo* painters. Vicencio Carducho was the brother and to some extent the pupil of Bartolomé Carducho, a friend of the Caxés and also employed at the Escorial. Vicencio had come to Spain as a boy of about nine; Eugenio Caxés was born in Madrid in about 1575, and died there in 1634.

<sup>44</sup> The classic study of this issue is F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée a l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, 1949.

<sup>45</sup> The recent edition of Paleotti's *Discorso* (ed. P. Barocchi, *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento fra manierismo e contrariforma*, Bari, 1961) regrettably offers little insight into the influence exerted by the work.

<sup>46</sup> Vicencio Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, Madrid, Francisco Martínez, 1634. The original edition is now relatively rare. A reprinted edition, with brief introductions, was published in Madrid in 1865 by Gregorio Cruzada Villamil. Extracted passages can be consulted in F. J. Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes literarias para la historia del arte español*, Madrid, 1933, II, 59–121, and

in J. Brown and R. Enggass, *Sources and Documents: Italy and Spain 1600–1750*, Prentice-Hall, 1970. On the occasion of a tercentennial tribute to the artist, the eighth dialogue was reprinted in *Anales de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando*, San Sebastian, 1939, III, 17–21 and 78–129. Scholarly awareness of the book began in 1914, when A. Fumagalli noted Carducho's sources to be heavily Italian; see her “I Trattatisti e gli artisti italiani in un trattato d'arte spagnuolo,” *Athenaeum. Studii periodici di litterature e storia*, II, 292–309. G. Kubler, “Carducho's Allegories of Painting,” 439–445, exposes the complex iconography of the eight engravings that accompanied the text. For a fuller treatment of Carducho's position generally in Castilian art, see also M.C. Volk, *Vicencio Carducho and Seventeenth-Century Castilian Painting*, New York, 1977.

<sup>47</sup> The full title of this now extremely rare little book is *Noticia general para la estimación de las artes, y de la manera en que se conocen las liberales de las que son mecanicas y serviles, con una exhortación a la honra de la virtud y del trabajo contra los ociosos, y otras particulares para las personas de todos estados*, Madrid, Pedro Madrigal, 1600. The title page carried a laudatory dedication to Don Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma, the favorite of Philip III.



9 Francisco Fernández, title page from Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*. (photo: MAS)

greater share of the burden for the national defense, in order to balance the responsibilities too heavily carried by working men. His brief discussion of painting is of considerable importance as the earliest known published defense of it as a liberal pursuit in Spain.<sup>48</sup> Gutiérrez first distinguishes the liberal arts as those in which occur greater mental than physical activity, and then he gives a series of literary proofs,

<sup>48</sup> Book Three, chap. two: “. . . que estas artes no son mecánicas, y que sean liberales por trabajar en ellas mas el entendimiento que el cuerpo”; and chap. three: “. . . que estas artes son liberales conforme a la verdad, porque trabajando en ellas el entendimiento mas que el cuerpo, son tambien dignas de gloria y fama.” Interestingly, it can be suggested that Velázquez owned a copy of Gutiérrez; the inventory of his library made after his death in 1660 includes among his numerous other books on art theory a “Noticia de las artes liberales.” Cf. Archivo de Protocolos, Madrid, Leg. 8035, fol. 705.

<sup>49</sup> Book Two, where twelve chapters elaborately treat the distinctions between the liberal and mechanical arts. Book One comprises only five chapters, devoted chiefly to a discussion of the origin and basic character of the arts.

<sup>50</sup> Book Three, chap. nineteen: “A Rincón natural de Guadalaxara, por ser pintor famoso, sabido es que le dió un habito de Santiago, cosa que harta oy no se ha visto en algunas artes liberales. La Magestad Augusta del Emperador Carlos Quinto harto ocupado estuvo en guerras, pero tampoco se olvidó de honrar a estas artes . . . A Ticiano pintor famoso juntamente con Leon Leoni escultor assi mismo insigne, cosa notoria es que los armó cavalleros en el palacio de Brusselas en presencia del Santo Rey don Felipe que está en el cielo. . . .”

mainly drawn from classical sources, to illustrate the historical pedigree of painting's liberal stature. After establishing correspondences between painting and each of the traditional seven liberal arts, he concludes that painting should be considered the eighth.<sup>49</sup> Central to Gutiérrez's argument is the idea that the fame and prestige that artists have achieved historically through their works is proof of the greatness and nobility of their pursuits, and he enumerates as supporting evidence a list of personalities whose fame survived them. He adds that a second proof has been the associations of painters with nobility and, especially, royalty. This use of the old, prestigious idea of luster-by-association is its earliest articulation in the Spanish context.<sup>50</sup>

It is clear from Gutiérrez's text, however, that his own experience of works of art was very limited. A fuller and more learned case appeared in 1626 when a second lawyer, Juan Alonso de Butrón of Toledo, published in Madrid his *Discursos apologeticos en que se defiende la ingenuidad del arte de la pintura*.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Gutiérrez, Butrón concerned himself exclusively with the defense of painting. The *Discursos* are divided into fifteen sections, all elaborately maintaining painting to be equal to the liberal arts. Defining correspondences among the arts themselves, Butrón proceeds into an exposition of the presence of all of them in the proper practice of painting. Conversely, painting, by virtue of such central participation in each of the traditional liberal arts, itself must be considered liberal. In the final discourse Butrón offers an extended version of the earlier argument used by Gutiérrez, that painters' associations with royalty offer unquestionable historical proof of the elevated nature of their activities.<sup>52</sup>

Four years later, however, the case had obviously not yet been won, for Butrón appeared a second time for the defense, this time enlisting the aid of six of the most influential professional intellectuals at the court when he published the *Memorial informativo*.<sup>53</sup> The *Memorial* consists of seven separate defenses of painting's noble status, each argued by a member of a distinct profession. The most famous of these contributors today was Lope de Vega, whose *dicho y disposición* opened the presentation. Lope's remarks are organized around six questions. After observing that painting has enjoyed noble status since God, who was, after all, the first painter, had

<sup>51</sup> The edition of 1626 is now very rare. Extracts appear in Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes*, I, 319ff. Details of the biography of Butrón remain obscure; Nicolas Antonio, in *Bibliotheca hispana nova*, Madrid, 1783, 630, says only: “Johannes Alphonsus Butron: Naxarensis, Matriti in curia advocatus. Pro ingenuitate & immunitate artis pictoriae, in causa quae in supremo Castellae senatu vertebatur, co opere obtinuit, quod editum fuit hoc titulo: *Discursos apologeticos* (1626).”

<sup>52</sup> The first three discourses treat of the definition of painting, its chief inventors, and a description of the seven liberal arts, respectively. Discourses Four through Ten discuss various interrelations among painting and grammar, history, philosophy, rhetoric, geometry, and astronomy. In the last, Discourse Fifteen, Butrón moves into his version of the luster-by-association argument.

<sup>53</sup> The book's full title was *Memorial informativo por los pintores en el pleito que tratan con el señor fiscal de su magestad, en el real consejo de hacienda*, Madrid, 1629. No modern discussion of the text exists; extracts appear in Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes*, II.

created the universe, the poet moves into an extended discussion of painting's legacy of form and line to the other liberal arts. His third and fifth points assert that painters in Madrid have not had to pay taxes on their work, officially, since Isabel, second wife of Philip II, arrived in Castile, and they were likewise exempt elsewhere in Europe. Spain, according to Lope, risks barbarism by adopting a practice not exercised in civilized nations, and he concludes with an indictment of the taxation of painters.

The historian Antonio de Leon Pinelo contributed an essay, as did the theologian José de Valdivielso and the painter and poet Juan de Jáuregui; others appeared by Lorenzo van der Hamen and Juan Rodríguez de Leon. Butrón himself produced the fifth plea, in effect a legal brief he had been commissioned to write at the behest of the Consejo de Hacienda.<sup>54</sup> It is clear from his opening sentences that the major issue at hand was fiscal, turning on the proper civic status of painters and their liability to taxation. Butrón based his argument on four main points: (1) that taxes should be levied only in cases of buying and selling, and painters' works were not conceived as commercial products; (2) that there was no tradition in Castile for taxing painters; (3) that the Consejo had already decided favorably the earlier case of El Greco involving an attempted tax on paintings executed for a retablo at Illescas and that this case should be so regarded; (4) further appeals to traditional literary authorities in support of painting's nobility.<sup>55</sup>

The effect produced by the *Memorial* in 1629 is unclear, although Butrón's concluding remarks suggest the case was won at least provisionally, if subject to review at a later date.<sup>56</sup> The larger issue of a truly professional status for painters was apparently still debatable, however, since it provided the primary incentive behind the publication in 1633 of Carducho's *Diálogos de la pintura*. As a defense of painting the *Diálogos* is related to the issue in quite a distinct way from the publications of 1600, 1626, and 1629. Wholly lacking the legalistic contrivances and argumentative tone of Gutiérrez and Butrón, both its literary style and its content reveal that Carducho's response to the issue was by far the most subtly conceived of the period.<sup>57</sup>

Carducho adopted the form of dialogue between a master artist and his disciple, and thereby consciously gave his

remarks two advantages: the form itself was a literary one of acknowledged sophistication, readability, and easy charm, and it had strong associations with earlier prestigious authors, both ancient and Renaissance, which would have been familiar to any cultivated reader.<sup>58</sup> Carducho in effect borrowed the professional accoutrements of the cultured litterateur as his idiom, and his choice was perspicacious. By substituting persuasion for polemic, civilized conversation for passionate argument, he succeeded in transforming the debate itself into a proof of the cultured nobility of painters.

In content, the dialogues both draw upon the established material of the debate and introduce important new considerations. The first colloquy concerns a trip from which the young disciple has just returned, as part of his training. The second through seventh sessions then deal with discussion of the merits of painting as an undertaking and the particulars of its proper practice. Moving from painting's origins and first practitioners in the second dialogue, Carducho proceeds through the definition of painting in the third dialogue to theories of painting in the fourth and a discussion of drawing and color in the fifth. The sixth dialogue is given over to remarks on the different methods of painting, and the seventh considers the proper manner in which sacred subject matter should be treated. The eighth introduces a contemporary context again. The disciple recounts at length a series of visits he made to the most important collections of works of art in Madrid.<sup>59</sup>

Carducho captures his audience and heightens the vividness of his remarks by setting a contemporary scene in the first and final dialogues. The theoretical discussions that intervene are therefore firmly established in the real world instead of taking place as an abstract discourse, and the dialogues as a whole assume a position of direct relevance to the contemporary artistic milieu. Carducho wanted to direct his remarks to the art world in which he himself moved, the courtly one, so that the six dialogues that discuss the intrinsic greatness of painting would have an influential audience. In these sections, he tends to adhere to the main lines of the defenses of painting that had already appeared in 1626 and 1629.<sup>60</sup> But the first and eighth dialogues are wholly original and most important from an art-historical standpoint. Each represents a distinct aspect of

<sup>54</sup> *Memorial*, fol. 203v: "El Licenciado Don Juan Alonso de Butrón. . . que defendió los Pintores en el pleito que el Fiscal de su Magestad les puso en el Real Consejo de Hazienda, escribió por orden del dicho Consejo la Información en derecho por su exención. . . Y porque en la opinion de tan gran Tribunal este papel. . . tuvo y mereció las honras, estimación, y aplausos que es notorio en la Corta. . . pareció conveniente ponerla aqui. . ."

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 204–220.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 203v: "El licenciado Don Juan Alonso de Butrón, Abogado de los Consejos. . . escribió por orden del dicho Consejo la Información en derecho por su execución; deste tributo, y por ella, y por su defensa se venció el pleito, y le sacó la carta executoria con las sentencias de vista y revista. . ."

<sup>57</sup> With Pacheco's *Arte de la pintura*, in progress in these same years although it did not appear in Seville until 1649, it constitutes one of the two most important sources on painting written in Spain during the century, and the only one to discuss the situation at court.

<sup>58</sup> The literary form of the dialogue goes back to antiquity, and became a favorite with Italian writers during the Renaissance. From a long list, among the more significant examples are those by Paolo Pino, *Dialogo di*

*pittura*, Venice, 1548, and Ludovico Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l'aretino*, Venice, 1557, both of which Carducho drew upon heavily. On the Italian treatises generally, see J. von Schlosser, *La letteratura artistica*, Florence, 1935, 207–210, 341–43. The form continued well into the 18th century. See, for example, Roger de Piles's *Dialogue sur le coloris*, Paris, 1672, and Uvedale Price, *Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful*, London, 1801.

<sup>59</sup> A full scholarly discussion of the ideas and sources of the dialogues forms a separate study. The remarks here in no way pretend to edit the text, but only to relate it to the professional issue behind its appearance.

<sup>60</sup> His discussion is by far, however, the most sophisticated contribution to the issue in Castile. Carducho's personal understanding of the Italian precedents for the main lines of argument was broader and more direct than his Spanish colleagues, and his knowledge of artists and works of art in Italy was considerably more extensive. His possession of an Italian heritage and painter's training with a position of influence at court made him an unusually well-suited candidate for the authorship of a third literary plea for the profession.



the actual artistic situation in Madrid, and contributes a new dimension to the discussion. Each also reveals a distinct realm of Carducho's own erudition and experience, testifying to both the amplitude of his personal culture and the validity of his own example as a proof of the nobility of painters.

The young disciple reveals in the first dialogue the contents of a study trip abroad.<sup>61</sup> His itinerary began with a thorough visit to Rome, where considerable time was spent studying the works of Raphael and Michelangelo as well as classical statuary. Then he passed through Siena to see the dome by Beccafumi, and continued on to Florence for a second lengthy sojourn. After visiting the Pitti Palace in particular and recounting in detail the honors bestowed upon Michelangelo at S. Lorenzo, the student went to Pisa to see the tower. Then began a series of briefer "tourist" stops: first Bologna, then Loreto, and Venice—where he visited the Accademia and mentioned a court set aside especially to consider litigations on the fine arts—and then Padua, Parma, and Milan. Thence he went to Germany and Flanders, and he returned to Madrid by way of France, claiming fatigue for having failed to visit England.

Obviously, the first intention of the dialogue is that of education. Carducho is advocating the experience of wide travel to original monuments, especially in Italy, as a necessary prerequisite to the training of a young painter. But he also uses the disciple's education as a means of exposing the privileged status enjoyed by the art in Italy, and to give particulars on academic organizations in Rome, Venice, and especially Florence, his own native city.<sup>62</sup> Though nowhere explicitly stated, the comparison with the less advantageous situation in Spain is eloquently inferred.

In the final dialogue an even stronger contemporary milieu is introduced. The disciple's report of visits made to the most outstanding collectors in Madrid is quite detailed, mentioning not only paintings and sculpture but also important libraries, collections of mathematical instruments, and even weapons

and armor.<sup>63</sup> Then, in response to the disciple's request for knowledge of the collections in the Royal Palace, the *maestro* provides a full survey of the glories of its contents, giving details of artists and works of art, and their locations within the palace interior. This section of the dialogue reads like a personal inventory of the royal collections, and offers a clear tribute to the Spanish monarchs as collectors and patrons.<sup>64</sup> The conversation then turns to the subject of the foundation of an academy in Madrid, which the disciple recalls was being discussed when he departed for Italy. The master relates that the proposal had not borne fruit, even though it had been supported by many of the most influential figures at court. Carducho then summarizes the litigation before the Consejo de Hacienda, noting the favorable review of the case in January of 1633.<sup>65</sup> After praising the efforts of the authors of the *Memorial*, the *Diálogos* ends with an appeal to the young artist to read their pleas and take up the continuing defense of the profession of painting.

Carducho accomplishes several interrelated purposes in the final dialogue. His most explicit concern is once again the instruction of the young artist, but he also demonstrates the prestige of the Spanish capital as an artistic center. Third, he offers contemporary evidence of the esteem in which the arts, especially painting, are held by influential members of the court. In this regard the entire dialogue is an extended version of the powerful argument of luster-by-association that was already a standard element in defenses of painting. It forms a natural complement to the opening colloquy by adding contemporary Spanish examples to the historical instances of courtly favor bestowed upon the art. Finally, Carducho's concluding recommendation to the disciple to read the *Memorial* is an artful introduction to the essays of 1629 actually included with the eight dialogues. It might be suggested that the very number of the dialogues, eight, is yet a further contrivance, particularly appropriate to a literary celebration of what Carducho considered to be the eighth liberal art. He

<sup>61</sup> *Diálogos*, fols. 3v–21v.

<sup>62</sup> These passages are most conspicuous, and make clear that the disciple's purpose in the trip was partly the study of original monuments, and partly the introduction to professional institutions and prominent patrons. On the Roman academy, he notes (fol. 7): "Lleváronme a la Academia de San Lucas, adonde se estudia el Arte, y salen sujetos ingeniosos, y admirables; efetos de obras unicas, como las que he contado. Holgueme ver una quadra, adonde van poniendo los retratos de todos los que se adelantan en esta facultad; y vi muchos con el Abito de Christo, honrados de los Pontífices por eminentes; digna facción para animar a los demas que van sucediendo."

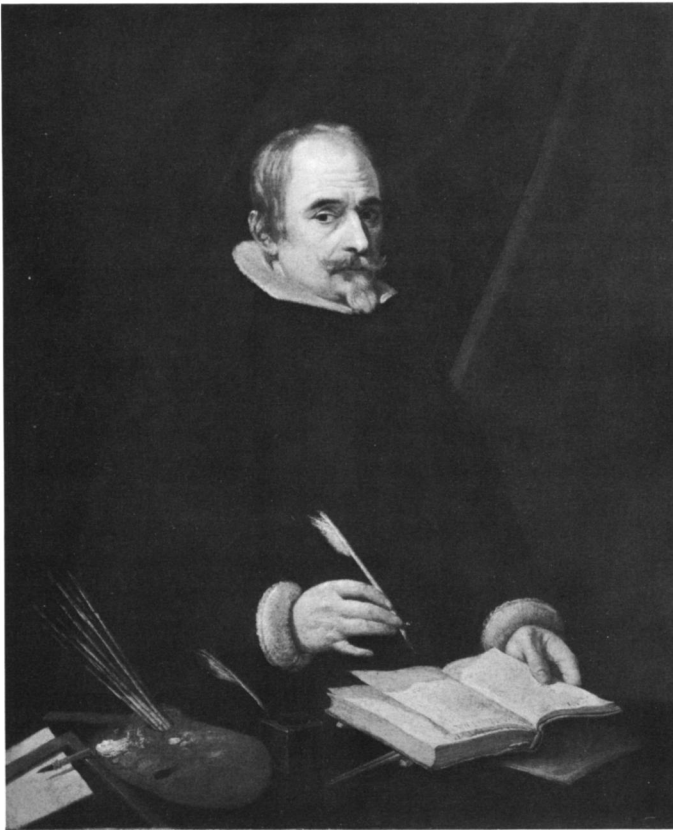
In Florence, similarly (fol. 19v): ". . . y un ministro del gran Duque . . . me llevó a la Academia del Disegno, de cuya fabrica hizo la traca un famoso Arquitecto . . . Celébrase aquel dia con gran solemnidad la fiesta del Santo Evangelista, y Pintor, Patron de aquella Academia: Hiziérome la honra y acogimiento que se puede juzgar de tan ilustre ayuntamiento, no tanto por la persona q me apadrinava, ni por el privilegio que gozan los forasteros, quanto por ser discípulo de un hijo de aquella Ciudad, y con la ocasion lograron su deseo: y como te dixé, juntava la Academia, con la ocasion logran su deseo: y como te dixé, juntava la Academia, con la solemnidad, y ceremonias que manda el estatuto dispensando en la ausencia, te nombraron, y escribieron por Academico digno . . . Ensenaronme una quadra donde están los retratos de todos los Hombres Eminentés desta facultad, adonde vi muchos dibujos, cartones, modelos . . . En otra quadra vi una Catedra, adonde se leen liciones desta facultad, que la adornan grande copia de estatuas, libros, globos, esferas, y otros instrumentos Matematicos. En esta Catedra leen lecciones, no solo Pintores, mas tambien Escultores, Arquitectos, e Ingenieros; hazense anatomias, dibujase del natural. . . ."

Here a proposal for an approximate date for the writing of the first dialogue can be advanced. The disciple refers to having witnessed the acceptance of the master into the Florentine Academy; Carducho's matriculation took place on 16 April 1630 (see above, note 40). Hence, a date later in 1630 or perhaps early the next year could be suggested. It seems likely that each of the eight dialogues was first conceived separately during the several years previous to their publication together in 1633.

<sup>63</sup> These include those of, especially, the upper aristocracy in Castile, such as the Marquis de Leganés (d. 1655), the Count of Monterrey, the Count of Benavente (1584–1652), and the Prince of Esquilache (1582–1658), as well as lesser figures who had been appointed to court posts of importance like Don Rodrigo de Tapia Alarcón y Luna and the expatriate Roman Giovanni Battista Crescenzi (1577–1635). Most of these collections had been substantially formed when the men were abroad in the capacity of ambassadors, especially in Italy. The inventory of the Leganés Collection appears in J. López Navio, "La Gran Colección de pinturas del Marqués de Leganés," *Revista calasancia*, 1962, Nos. 7–8, 261–330. The round of visits by the young artist appears in *Diálogos*, fols. 147v–152.

<sup>64</sup> *Diálogos*, fols. 152–57. The passage is a significant contemporary account of the interior decoration of the palace. Official inventories of the royal collections exist from 1636, 1666, and 1686. See Y. Bottineau, "L'Alcazar de Madrid et l'inventaire de 1686. Aspects de la court de Espagne au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Bulletin hispanique*, 1956, LVI; 1958, LVIII; and 1959, LX.

<sup>65</sup> *Diálogos*, fol. 161.



10 Carducho, *Self-Portrait*. Glasgow, Pollak House (photo: Annan, Glasgow)

alludes to the authors of the *Memorial* as equivalent to the ancient Greeks who wrote on the seven liberal arts. The reader is left to surmise that Carducho's own contribution is the necessary eighth testimony, that of a noble painter himself, which makes the case complete (Fig. 10).<sup>66</sup>

Importantly, the final dialogue clearly was written after the January 1633 decision in favor of tax exemption for painters. This implies that Carducho, unlike Gutiérrez and Butrón, was not concerned chiefly with protesting artists' civic liabilities. But it also suggests that he used the litigious circumstances surrounding the issue to promote a somewhat more ambitious point of view. No mention is made anywhere in the *Diálogos*, for example, of a guild system for painters. Their proper training is described quite differently. In the first and final colloquies the disciple is exposed to the greatest works of art by

both past and contemporary artists, as well as to the world of collecting and connoisseurship. He moves in cultivated social circles, and participates as an equal in his company. The model toward which he is encouraged to aspire is aristocratic. His wide travel, study of the artistic past, and familiarity with the contemporary art world are all attributes possessed by any noble courtier, and it is this which the fledgling is urged to become.

In the intervening dialogues, Carducho discusses the nature of painting itself. But of these six discussions, only two, the fifth and sixth, concern to any degree practical aspects of the art, and even here his remarks never approach a prescriptive recommendation. Carducho distinguishes sharply between the theoretical and practical dimensions of artistic creation, and overwhelmingly stresses the former. It is the elevated realm of the mind that should be cultivated by the young artist. His practical skills are only servants of his inspiration, and can never, however prodigious, save an ill-conceived idea from mediocrity.<sup>67</sup>

The *Diálogos*, taken together, present an academic, or scholarly, picture of the development of a painter. It can be suggested that they reflect Carducho's desire for an alternative to the Castilian guild system. They permit the conjecture that the idea of founding an academy of painting was alive again in court circles during 1628–1633.

In 1606 Carducho, then a young man, had been directly involved in the plans to found an academy. The *Diálogos*, written during his maturity when he had been a court painter for a quarter of a century, should be read as an expression of a continuing interest in achieving the same goal for his profession, a goal still unrealized.<sup>68</sup>

A complex of social and economic forces involving Castilian craftsmen and tradesmen was intimately interwoven with the written defenses of painting. Spain's constant participation in new and crushingly costly wars lay directly behind the situation.<sup>69</sup> As mentioned, Gutiérrez wrote in 1600 in polemical protest against a central feature of this defensive national position: the exhaustive conscription of workingmen. He belonged to a class of public-spirited writers at the turn of the century whose purpose was to focus attention on Castile's social ills. These projectors of social problems—*arbitristas*—were really persuasive pamphleteers, whose heated exhortations give to the opening decades of seventeenth-century Castilian history an unusually analytic cast. They also provide a firm illustration, one of many that could be adduced, of the serious cleavage that marked the social organization of the

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 161–61v. Carducho's self-portrait, now in Pollak House, Glasgow, clearly directs attention to his dual identity as painter and writer, with his brushes to one side and his pen poised above a copy of the *Diálogos*.

<sup>67</sup> This stress on the mental realm of artistic creation connects Carducho directly with certain late 16th-century Italian writings about art, particularly Zuccaro, and also seems to reflect a reading of Alberti's *Della pittura*. He owned copies of both these books; cf. the inventory of his library in M. L. Caturla, "Documentos en torno a Vicencio Carducho," *Arte español*, III, 1968–69, 190–97.

<sup>68</sup> There is no clear evidence after the publication of the *Diálogos* that a renewed effort to found an academy occurred during the subsequent years. Renewed efforts to tax painters, however, did occur repeatedly during the

following years, and since the two issues appear to be directly related, it might be suggested that the presence of one implies the other's absence.

<sup>69</sup> Spain's constant militarism during the first half of the 17th century is well known. It is important to note, however, that it was not the fact of involvement in war itself that seemed to be the source of dissension to Castilians, but the methods by which the wars were maintained. The ancient sense of nationalism was perhaps even greater since the annexation of Portugal by Philip II had created the first completely unified peninsula, geographically, since medieval times. On the military history of the period, see J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469–1716*, London, 1963, 321–360, and J. Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, Oxford, 1969, II.

province during the reigns of Philip III and especially Philip IV.<sup>70</sup>

Gutiérrez's remarks focus on the fact that only workingmen were drafted. He decried the inequity of a system that exempted the upper social ranks from active military service. The farmers who worked the land, sold its produce in the markets, who in turn bought from craftsmen and tradesmen like the shoemakers, or tailors, or pastrycooks—these were the sources of the reconstituted and expanded Castilian armies. It was they also who paid, by increasingly heavy and frequent taxes, for the cost of equipping and transporting the troops to the areas of conflict and maintaining them there during tours of duty.

This continual drain on manpower and finances through the annual levies, or *repartimientos*, on the municipal level made the guilds particularly uncomfortable, and in part spawned a desire among guildsmen for alternative allegiances. It was the guilds—of which some hundred existed on the municipal level—through which the *repartimientos* were administered, with assessments based on the relative size and wealth of the individual memberships.<sup>71</sup> Major guilds, those composed of, for example, tradesmen dealing in clothing and foodstuffs, received the heaviest levies since they were larger and relatively more prosperous than their colleagues. But the painters, architects, sculptors, joiners, silversmiths, printers, and even apothecaries, among all other skilled craftsmen, were also included. Archival material in Madrid indicates that there were intermittent levies after 1609, when the standing militia was re-established by Philip III, and until 1625. Then annual and occasionally biannual demands from the guilds were made without cease through the end of the century.<sup>72</sup>

The levies varied considerably in scale, depending on the exigencies of the particular emergency. From the beginning, an alternative to actual service was the monetary equivalent of the manpower designated. As the successive levies took their debilitating toll, complaints and extended delays in compliance led to stopgap measures. A dramatic instance of this

was Philip IV's liquidation in 1663 of the guilds' overdue debts from his demand of 1659 for sixty thousand ducats in emergency aid to the army defending the Portuguese border.<sup>73</sup> Apparently from the beginning, petitions for exemption were lodged before the municipal authorities. Legal exemptions could be claimed, for example, for old age or infirmity as well as poverty, and a father could be relieved of service if he had sons to offer instead. Excusal from active duty was, moreover, automatic after twenty years of service.<sup>74</sup>

But beyond these instances, there were certain particularly privileged grounds for exemption. First among them was employment in the royal palace. The most special group here were the palace staffs of both the King and Queen. These *criados de las casas reales* included the personal servants of the royal family as well as the maintenance staff of the palace itself.<sup>75</sup>

When the Consejo de Hacienda ruled in 1633 in favor of tax exemption for painters, it was freedom from the ruthless sales tax, the *alcábala*, that was granted. This legal victory can hardly be overestimated in the artists' strivings for recognition as practitioners of a liberal art, since the *alcábala* identified its constituents as members of a mercantile class. But although the *alcábala* was administered through the guild system, it was an entirely separate revenue from the annual *servicios*, or emergency taxes, which were imposed in connection with the military levies.<sup>76</sup> In short, the successful litigation pursued by the painters in 1628–1633, though a significant advance, did not remove them from liability to guildsmen's conscription. They were listed in a special category with other guilds exempt from the *alcábala*, but the painters appear on the rolls, without interruption, during the annual levies from 1630 to 1700.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, in the early forties the entire guild was inventoried by the municipal authorities, with the age, and physical and financial circumstances of individual members noted where they had any bearing on the suitability of the man for military service.<sup>78</sup>

As is well known, the years in Castile's history just after 1637

<sup>70</sup> Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 303–03, singles out the importance of the *arbitristas*. Gutiérrez's identification as a member of this group is my own. To an extent the vicissitudinous issue of the painters' struggle can be seen as an *arbitrio llevado a cabo*.

<sup>71</sup> This is not to imply that the nobility was wholly without obligation to military service, but only to maintain the distinction in kind and degree of participation. As earlier, it was the practice of Habsburg monarchs during this period to remove the higher nobility from court via ambassadorial duties at foreign courts, military commands, vice-regencies, and so forth. Financially, of course, the aristocratic class was the principal source of a major revenue, the *tercia*, which together with the *alcábala*, or general sales tax, constituted the major source of the Crown's tax income during the period; cf. Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 202–03. On the complexities of Spanish finances see especially A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Política y hacienda de Felipe IV*, Madrid, 1960.

<sup>72</sup> On the activities up to 1625, see Signs. 1–454, 2–418, and 3–417 in the Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Philip III signed a *cédula* in Segovia, 15 August 1609, which provided for the re-establishment of a general militia in Madrid and its dependent provinces (Sign. 2-418-8). On 25 January of the following year, another *cédula* created a corps of sergeants to maintain organization and discipline (Sign. 3-417-7).

<sup>73</sup> This particularly heavy demand created a considerable strain between the guildsmen, city officials, and King, to judge from the extensive documentation concerned with its collection, which dragged on into the sixties. The liquidation of 1663 was followed in November of 1665 by an

inventory of the guilds' actual contributions, a total of some 787,908 *reales* (Archivo de la Villa, Sign. 2-314 and 2-315, especially).

<sup>74</sup> Philip IV was at pains in September of 1625 to enumerate in detail these "standard" exemptions (Archivo de la Villa, Sign. 2-388-10).

<sup>75</sup> When exactly during the period these special categories of exemptions first were established is unclear; they may even antedate these years. But documents in the Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, indicate clearly that the issue was repeatedly discussed from the 1640's through the subsequent fifteen years at least. In 1640, 1643, and 1650 *consultas* were submitted to the King from the bureau of palace superintendents indicating continuous molestation from the guilds, and in each case, the King reaffirmed their exempt status (Archivo de Palacio, Felipe IV, Legs. 651, 849). Certain cases of imprisonment of palace officials for lack of compliance with the guild restrictions seem to have prompted the King to issue a *cédula* in 1650 which stated specifically the privileges accorded the palace staff.

<sup>76</sup> The Consejo de Hacienda, or Council of Finance, was one of the major councils first established by Charles V and charged with advising the King on affairs of the realm. It had absorbed the financial departments of Castile in 1523 (Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 170–79).

<sup>77</sup> The documents are too numerous to admit an easy summary. See especially, in the Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Signs. 3-416, 3-417 and consecutively through 3-429

<sup>78</sup> Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Sign. 3-420.

were particularly turbulent. The revolt in Catalonia in 1640 was a contributing factor, and there was the increasing menace from France at the borders.<sup>79</sup> In February of 1641, the King called for a particularly heavy response from the city: 1800 men—more than had been demanded for a decade. Complaints came thick and fast during the next several months. The official for the painters' guild, a certain Francisco Barrero, petitioned in November for a reduction in the levy. At the end of December, he listed the assessments levied on the individual guild members, totalling 3,476 *reales*. The list included some ninety men, and it was headed by the names of Diego Velázquez and his son-in-law Juan Bautista del Mazo, assessed 150 and 50 *reales* respectively.<sup>80</sup> Shortly later, apparently in response to difficulties in collecting the sum, an inventory of the entire painters' membership was drawn by Barrero and the other guild official, Diego Rodríguez. The third, fifth, and sixth names on the list were Angelo Nardi, Diego Velázquez, and Juan Bautista del Mazo, all in the palace service, and so described: "angelo nardi no paga Por pintor de su mg<sup>d</sup> que se a notificado a los repartidores de estar libre de ningun repartimiento lo qual esta por cedula de su mg<sup>d</sup>/diego belazquez es alluda de camara y Paga por criado del rey y esta libre de repartimiento alguno Por cedula de su mg<sup>d</sup>."<sup>81</sup> Clearly the royal *cédulas* required for such privilege had been duly entered in the guild records and their dry script transformed into vivid reality. Clear also from another paper dating from 1643, was the desire for such privilege among painters in general:

Geronimo de uzeda en n<sup>be</sup> de los pintores de esta corte como mejor aya lugar digo que ha llegado a noticia de mis partes como U S<sup>a</sup> trata de quintar para quintar para conducir infantes—y respecto de que los pintores por la noblez de su arte tienen exempcion de alcabalas y de todo genero de repartim<sup>to</sup> y se hallan en possession de no ser quintados para ir a servir por sus personas pues en otras ocaiones en que se han quintado los gremios an sido reservados y exceptuados de este genero de servicio de que sien<sup>do</sup> necess<sup>o</sup> ofrezco informacion a U S<sup>a</sup> pido y supp<sup>co</sup>. . . que el quinto no se entienda con ellos. Y de lo contrario hablando debidam<sup>te</sup> para ante el Rey nro s<sup>r</sup> y los senores de su consejo de guerra y para ante quien puedo y debo. . . .

[signed] Uzeda<sup>82</sup>

Despite such petitions in their behalf, however, the painters

never secured exemption from the guildsmen's levies. In 1644 they were assessed again, and in 1645, 1647, and later. What did free them—but only in individual instances—was the hierarchic structure of privilege, and its conjunction to royal favor.

Two royal documents from 1648 and 1650 illustrate the situation as Velázquez entered the final decade of his career. In the first, the King decreed that all men occupying posts at court and formerly considered automatically exempt from military service and taxation were to be reviewed with their guilds and assessed according to the ". . . quality of their affairs."<sup>83</sup> Royal employment was not of itself sufficient any longer to guarantee exemption; the critical factor had become the quality and character of the courtly duties discharged. The privileged air became rarefied. In April of 1650, Philip IV signed a *cédula* that in effect reserved exemption for only a very small group of court positions, the *criados de manos*, or personal servants of himself and the Queen.<sup>84</sup>

This protection endured during the subsequent decade, although it was beleaguered.<sup>85</sup> A list of the inner palace staff was drawn up in 1658 and submitted to the city authorities, upon their request. It gives dramatic testimony to the significance of the royal prerogative. In the enumeration of all intimate servants of the royal house, the name of Diego Velázquez stands eleventh. At the end of the section on *oficiales de manos de la cassa del rey* appear the names of the four other court painters: Juan Bautista del Mazo, Angelo Nardi, Francisco Ricci, and Juan de Haro.<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, obtaining improved professional status continued as an especially important goal for painters in Madrid during the middle decades of the century. From the extensive unpublished documentation, of which only a small portion is introduced here, a clear picture emerges of painters invoking lustrous associations in their efforts to gain freedom from a guildsman's identity and the responsibilities that accompanied it. In this context the royal *cédula* became the only certain guarantee of freedom. It can now be realized that Velázquez's appointment in 1623 as the King's painter did not in itself remove him from the civic responsibilities expected of all members of the painters' guild. Indeed, his subsequent success and favor at court seem only to have increased his liability: his assessment of 150 *reales* in the levy of 1641, for example, was higher than that of any other painter in the capital. His

<sup>79</sup> J. H. Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans*, Cambridge, 1963.

<sup>80</sup> Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Leg. 3-420-2.

<sup>81</sup> I.e., ". . . Angelo Nardi does not pay because of his post as painter to his majesty; he has been identified to the *repartidores* as being free of any levy; this was stated in a *cédula* from his majesty. . . . Diego Velazquez is *ayuda de cámara* and pays as a servant to the King; he is exempt also from any levies by virtue of his majesty's *cédula*. . . ."

The guild officials responsible for the inventory, Francisco Barrero and Diego Rodríguez, are both painters about whom we know practically nothing. Céan, *Diccionario*, 1800, I, 93, was aware of Barrero's position as a guild official, and noted that he was a successful protagonist in the painters' struggle for freedom from municipal forms of taxation in a plea entered in July of 1640. Although Céan does not mention Diego Rodríguez, it is interesting to note that he had been involved in the "liberation" issue since the turn of the century, since he was among the signers of the academic foundation documents in 1606.

<sup>82</sup> Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Sign. 3-420-2. Uzeda directed the plea to the city officials, obviously in response to complaints lodged first with him by the painters themselves. It was of course unsuccessful, and the levies continued. The petition, in its way, is an example of a less prestigious alternative to the royal *cédula*, used for similar ends but with less successful results.

<sup>83</sup> Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Sign. 3-426.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, Sign. 2-388-17.

<sup>85</sup> Further consultations and royal *cédulas* were issued in 1653 and 1655 to maintain the position (Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Felipe IV, Leg. 651).

<sup>86</sup> Archivo de la Villa, Madrid, Sign. 2-388-18; below, Appendix of Documents, 10.

continued registration, throughout his career, with the guild membership throws into meaningful relief the significance of his rise in stature in the palace.<sup>87</sup> Surely it is this very position, with both its personal and professional implications, which is celebrated in Velázquez's masterpiece in 1656.

Painted when Velázquez had just been named *apostentador mayor* and during the decade when the privileges of such offices were under particular attack, *Las Meninas* records a relationship between painter and royal household resonant with special meaning for the court at Madrid. Surely a central meaning of the picture involves a proclamation of Velázquez's own personal status. But the artist chose to frame his statement in a particular set of terms. Unlike his depiction of Nieto, he does not present himself merely as an aristocratic courtier.<sup>88</sup> He clearly asserts his identity as that of royal portraitist. This had been his first responsibility at court, and certainly *Las Meninas* demonstrates that it was—at least in his view—his foremost. It is in this light that the associations in the picture with imagery of Saint Luke are revealing. That tradition offered a vocabulary that reflected the Catholic values at the Spanish court, and also circumvented the implication of unseemly personal hubris.<sup>89</sup> And evocations of the sacred family were even more resonant. It was this royal group, and his service to it, that had provided the source and sustainment of Velázquez's professional salvation. The picture could also have included Velázquez's artistic testimony of his merit for knighthood, an honor that he finally was awarded three years later.<sup>90</sup> But if so, this testimony was understood as such only by the royal patrons to whom he paid such brilliant pictorial tribute. Ironically, it was his very profession as a painter, with the craftsmanly associations clinging to it, that nearly prevented the ultimate honor he so ardently sought.<sup>91</sup>

Velázquez finally received the habit of the Order of Saint James in 1659 through a papal dispensation obtained by Philip IV. His artistic career and his life ended a few months later. But by the end of the century he, and *Las Meninas*, joined the historic instances of the nobility of painting when Palomino, writing in continuing defense of the art, characterized him as the Castilian Apelles “. . . para ejemplo de los futuros siglos, y enseñanza de la posteridad.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> See below, Appendix of Documents. It is in this light, especially, that Velázquez's steady rise in the palace hierarchy should be seen. His was a course generally comparable to those of several leading artists in Europe during the period, yet unlike theirs in regard to its particular circumstances: his courtly career was the only one governed by duties as resident portraitist to an imperial monarchy.

<sup>88</sup> And unlike, say, Rubens, in his marvelous late self-portrait, or even David Teniers, in the picture discussed above. Velázquez does present himself in the costume appropriate to a gentleman of the King's chamber. But he also clearly emphasizes his identity as a painter, in the process of painting. Ironically appropriate, the image may also indicate that painting itself, as a profession, was in process—which reveals, perhaps, a dimension of Velázquez's “realism.”

<sup>89</sup> Kahr, “Las Meninas,” 244–45, suggests that the subjects of the two paintings on the rear wall, *Minerva Punishing Arachne* and *Apollo's Victory over Marsyas*, both treating the results of mortal challenge of the gods, revealed Velázquez's unease at advancing his claim to noble status. On the other hand, perhaps he chose pictorial allusions that bespoke, with a certain subtlety, his ultimate humility rather than any hubris, within the context of the meaning of that posture at the 17th-century Spanish court.

## Appendix

The documents extracted below offer a brief synopsis of the major forms of intercourse between city, court, and King relative to the questions of professional status for painters introduced in the text. Effort has been made to choose the most revelatory examples during the period of 1630–1660, especially in regard to Velázquez's position. They appear in chronological order.

**Document One:** *Cédula real* exempting Vicencio Carducho and Angelo Nardi, painters at court, from guild assessment because of their positions in the royal service. In Madrid, 8 September 1637. Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Expedientes personales (Carducho), C 202/61.

“El Rey Porquanto por parte de Vicencio carduchi y Angelo nardi mis pintores se me ha hecho relation que en todas las ocasiones que sean ofrecido de Donatibos y otros servicios siempre se les an pedido por el Tribunal de la junta de mis obras y bosques como criados que son mios y subordinados a ella . . . el corregidor desta villa de Madrid ha querido y quiere ponerlos en el gremio de los pintores y como tales llamarlos para las contribuciones que se les hechan y donatibos que se les piden sup<sup>me</sup> fuese servido demandar no se diese lugar a ello ni que sobre esta razon sean molestados observandoles los prerogativas de criados mios. . . es mi voluntad fechan en madrid a ocho de septiembre de mil y seiscientos y treinta y siete anos yo el Rey. . . .

Yo el Rey”

**Document Two:** *Consulta* of palace *bureo* advising that the Queen's palace staff be exempt from guild assessment in *repartimientos*. In Madrid, 6 September 1640. Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Felipe IV, Casa, Leg. 651.

“. . . aviendo visto este memorial en el Bureo que se tubo a dos deste parece que V. Mag<sup>d</sup> deve servirse de mandar que los oficiales de manos de la Reina nuestra s<sup>ta</sup> sean libres de q sus gremios los puedan quintar y que si alguno de ellos Huviere caido en suerte quede libre por que todos estan ocupados personalmente cada Uno en su officio. . . .”

On flyleaf: “assi lo he mandado. . . . Yo el Rey”

**Document Three:** *Cédula real* ordering the *repartimiento* of 1,800 soldiers to the city of Madrid and its provinces. In Madrid, 13 February 1641. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 3-420-2.

“Concejo Justicia regidores cavalleros escuderos oficiales y hombres buenos de la noble v<sup>a</sup> de Madrid. Por carta mia del mes passado deste ano os encargue asistiesedes con particular desbello y ciudadano a las lébas de los 1U800 Infantes de que el Reyno se ha encargado. . . que son necesarios para los Presidios destos Reynos y el socorro del exercito de cataluña. . . en Madrid a 13 de febrero de 1641. . . .”

Yo el Rey”

**Document Four:** *Relación* from painters' guild reporting response to *repartimiento* of 1641. In Madrid, 29 December 1641. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 3-420-2.

“En la v<sup>a</sup> de madrid a v<sup>te</sup> y nuebe de dixiembre de mill yseiscientos y

Rather than as symbols of fear, the paintings can be understood as a kind of tribute to Rubens, Velázquez's immediate predecessor at Madrid in regard to claims to noble status. Rubens had petitioned Philip IV for a patent of nobility in 1631; his request was ultimately granted. The pictures in *Las Meninas* are clearly based on Rubens's models; they were among the large group of paintings done by him and his assistants between 1636 and 1640 for Philip IV's hunting lodge. On this project as a whole, see S. Alpers, *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*, London, 1971. In a lecture in 1973, Jonathan Brown called attention also to the possibility of a tribute to Rubens in *Las Meninas*. As in *Las Hilanderas* slightly later, Velázquez included a homage to a great painter whom he admired and was influenced by, as an important dimension of a larger pictorial statement concerning the nobility of painting. A full consideration of *Las Hilanderas* forms a separate study beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>90</sup> After prolonged negotiations, Velázquez was inducted into the Order of Santiago (incidentally, the same Order petitioned by Rubens) in November of 1659.

<sup>91</sup> D. de la Válgoma, “Una Injusticia con Velázquez: sus probanzas de ingreso en la Orden de Santiago,” *Archivo Español de Arte*, xxxiii, 1960, 191–214.

<sup>92</sup> Palomino, *El Museo pictórico*, 936.



cuarenta y un años. . . parecieron presentes diego Rs y fran<sup>co</sup> barero pintores. . . y repartidores de su arte y dixeron que p<sup>a</sup> la paga de los quatro. . . soldados de milizia que al año arte se repartio este presente año an hecho repartim<sup>to</sup> de tres mill quatrocientos y setenta y seis reales los tres mill y duzientos p<sup>a</sup> la paga de los dhos quatro soldados y los duzientos y setenta y seis p<sup>a</sup> la cobranza deste repartim<sup>to</sup>. . . el qual dho repartim<sup>to</sup> hizieron a cada un la cant<sup>d</sup> y en la forma siguiente. . .

—diego Velazquez Pintor del rrey nuestro s<sup>r</sup> se le rreparten ciento y cinquenta R<sup>s</sup> —————U150Rs

—A Juan bautista su yerno ansimismo pintor se le rreparten cinq<sup>ta</sup> R<sup>s</sup> viven entrambos a espaldas de la carcel de corte antes de llegar a la concep<sup>on</sup> Germ<sup>a</sup> —————UO50Rs

**Document Five:** Response of *repartidores* of painters' guild to *auto* concerning Diego Velázquez's liability to *repartimiento*. In Madrid, 22 April 1642. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 1-461.

"Diego Rodriquez e fran<sup>co</sup> barrera vezinos desta villa y rrepartidores del arte de los pintores della—Dezimos q oy Veintidos deste pres<sup>te</sup> mes de abril se nos a notificado un auto. . . en q<sup>e</sup> manda Informemos si Diego belazquez Debe pag<sup>r</sup> El rrepartim<sup>to</sup> de ziento y cinq<sup>ta</sup> R<sup>s</sup> que se le rrepartieron p<sup>a</sup> la rrecluta de los soldados de milicia—y rrespondiendo a el Dezimos q Es pintor y que tira gaxes de su mag<sup>d</sup> por tal y que es obrador en su casa con oficiales y aprendizas y que pagandose aze qualesq<sup>e</sup> obras q se le manda az<sup>r</sup> de lo q<sup>i</sup> ofrecemos ynformaz<sup>on</sup> como es notorio entre todos los del dho arte—assi suplicamos mande no se le buelvan las dhas prendas sin aber pag<sup>do</sup> El dho Repartim<sup>to</sup> como lo a echo en otros Repartim<sup>tos</sup> En q Recivieremos merced. . . ."

Fran<sup>o</sup> berrera"

**Document Six:** *Consulta* from palace *bureo* advising royal intervention because of continued molestation of palace staff by guilds, including imprisonment of one of Queen's glaziers. In Madrid, 14 February 1646. Archivo de Palacio, Madrid, Felipe IV, Casa, Leg. 651.

"Bureo de la Reyna N Sra: Dize q tiene V Mag<sup>d</sup> resuelto por. . . consultas q los oficiales de manos de la casa de la Reyna nra S<sup>a</sup> Sean exentos de pagar. . . aora por parte del corejidor les estan molestando y tienen preso Al bidriero de la furiera por decir no paga lo que le tiene repartido por su gremio. . . podria V Mag<sup>d</sup> serbirse de mandar al presidente de castilla de horden para que se guarden las que V. Mg<sup>d</sup> tiene dadas. . . ."

**Document Seven:** Palace report to the city reaffirming exemptions for palace staff. In Madrid, February 1646. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 2-388-14.

". . . q<sup>e</sup> U M<sup>d</sup> Dios le g<sup>de</sup> por tres consultas la una de 6 de Setiembre de 1640. otra de 16 de Agosto de 1641. y la otra de 30 de Set<sup>r</sup> 1643 tiene resuelto que todos los criados off<sup>tes</sup> de manos y proveedores que son y fueren de la casa de la Reyna nra s<sup>a</sup>. . . no puedan ser quintados ni repartidos por sus gremios. . . ."

**Document Eight:** *Memorial* from Mayordomo Mayor the Marqués de Castelrodrigo, to the King, advising exemptions for the King's staff like those already given the Queen's staff. In Madrid, 30 March 1650. Archivo de Palacio, Felipe IV, Casa, Leg. 651.

". . . q parece conven<sup>te</sup> el mandar conservar a los oficiales de manos de la casa de V. Mg<sup>d</sup> en la exempcion de no ser quintados, ni repartidos por gremios q es lo mismo q V Mg<sup>d</sup> ha ordenado expressam<sup>te</sup> en razon de los de la Reyna. . . ." below: "assi lo he mandado" and the King's rubric.

**Document Nine:** Official copy of the *cédula real* ordering exemptions for the King's *oficiales de manos*. In Madrid, 24 April 1650. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 2-388-17.

". . . habiendo me suplicado los oficiales de manos tengo por bien de mandar hacer en su favor la misma declaracion q hice por los de la Reyna mi mujer. . . les hago merced que en ningun tiempo puedan ser quintados ni repartidos i que sucediere caeren suerte no tenga fuerca alguna sino que queden libres i exentos por racon de sus oficios i de ser criados mios. . . ."

Yo el Rey"

**Document Ten:** *Relación* listing offices and their occupants in the palace enjoying exemption from guild assessment in *repartimientos*. In Madrid, 1658. Archivo de la Villa, Madrid. Sign. 2-388-18.

"Exemciones de repartim<sup>os</sup> a diferentes personas de la Casa Real el año de 1658

Guarda espanola	17U255R <sup>s</sup>
Guarda alemana	1U470
Archeros	7U324
Cacadores	U260

Monteros	U585
Criados de la casa del Rey	2U544
Criados de la casa Reina	1U365
Monederos	1U504
Cien Continuos	3U197
Boticarios	3U—
Barberos y cirux <sup>os</sup>	2U—
	4OU504 R <sup>s</sup>

Soldados de la g<sup>da</sup> espanola. . . .

11 — Diego Velazquez soldado de la g<sup>da</sup> —————U016

Criados y oficiales de manos de la cassa del Rey N S<sup>r</sup>. . . .

Ju<sup>o</sup> Bap<sup>ta</sup> del maco por el gremio de los pintores —————U050

Angelo nardi por dho gremio —————U050

Fran<sup>co</sup> Ricci por dho gremio —————U050

Ju<sup>o</sup> de haro por dho gremio —————U020

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