

King as father in Early Modern Spain

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Resumen: La imagen del rey como padre tuvo una importancia central en las discusiones sobre el ideal de la monarquía en la Edad Moderna en Europa. La recomendación de Maquiavelo al príncipe de preocuparse más por inspirar miedo que amor fue criticada por quienes defendían las virtudes paternas que exigían más amor que miedo. Estas discusiones coincidieron con los debates sobre las razones prácticas y políticas de limitar el acceso al gobernante. La metáfora paternal hizo posible que los escritores políticos españoles de la Edad Moderna pudieran discutir diversas opiniones sobre el acceso de los súbditos al rey español. Dichas opiniones tuvieron implicaciones importantes en relación a las obligaciones de los monarcas y el papel de los ministros y oficiales reales en el imperio español. Estos escritores compartieron la premisa que el rey debía actuar como un padre, cuidando a sus vasallos como hijos, quienes tenían el deber de amarlo y respetarlo. Las diferencias de opinión giraron en torno a la mejor manera de conseguir esta relación entre padres e hijos, especialmente dados los enormes retos y riesgos a los que se enfrentaron los monarcas españoles. Así pues la imagen paternal sirvió de modelo para juzgar a los reyes y sus políticas de gobierno.

Palabras clave: rey, monarquía, padre, amor, Maquiavelo.

Abstract: The image of the king as father lay at the heart of discussions about the ideal of monarchy in early modern Europe. Machiavelli's proposition that a prince should worry first about instilling fear than love met with critics who defended the paternal qualities that made love more important than fear. Tied to these discussions were debates over the practical and political merits of limiting access to the ruler. The paternal metaphor allowed early modern Spanish political writers to articulate competing opinions over the appropriate access of subjects to the Spanish king, which had important implications about the duties of the monarch and the role of his ministers and royal officials throughout the Spanish empire. Writers shared the premise that the king should be like a father, caring for his subjects like children, who had a duty to love and respect him. Differences revolved around how best to achieve this paternal-filial relationship, especially given the enormous challenges, and risks, faced by Spanish monarchs. The paternal image therefore provided a standard against which to measure particular rulers and their policies.

Keywords: king, kingship, father, love, Machiavelli.

On Sunday, 24 October 1599, Madrid celebrated the entry of King Philip III with his recently married Queen Margarita with a dazzling royal entry and festivities¹. For the occasion, Madrid authorities had torn down buildings to widen streets, replaced the old gate at the Puerta de Alcalá with a new one, and erected sculptures and three triumphant arches following a carefully planned artistic program². Royal entries provided a rare opportunity for subjects, great and humble, to come together before the Spanish king. In words and images, subjects hailed their monarch and declared their loyalty, as well as ascertained the ideals by which they hoped he would live and rule.

Following tradition, the king and queen entered Madrid separately. Much of the expectation centered on the new queen, who made her entrance in the afternoon. Philip entered at midday³. En route to the royal palace, Madrid authorities built at the intersection of the Carrera de San Jerónimo and Santa Clara street an enormous triple arch that was 110 feet high and just as wide⁴. The monument was decorated with sculptures and paintings accompanied by placards in Latin and Spanish that explained the symbols of royal power and majesty drawing on ancient mythology. Many of the images on the triumphant

¹ On Queen Margarita's entrance, see María José del RÍO BARREDO, *Urbs Regia: La capital ceremonial de la Monarquía Católica*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2000, pp. 84–5.

² Carmen CAYETANO MARTÍN and Pilar FLORES GUERRERO, "Nuevas aportaciones al recibimiento en Madrid de la Reina Doña Margarita de Austria (24 de octubre de 1599)", in *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, t. XXV, 1988, pp. 387–400.

³ Luis CABRERA DE CÓRDOBA, *Relaciones de las cosas sucedidas en la corte de España desde 1599 hasta 1614*, Madrid, J. Martín Alegría, 1857, p. 46; Antonio de LEÓN PINELO, *Anales de Madrid (desde el año 447 al de 1658)*, ed. Pedro Fernández Martín, Madrid, Instituto de Estudios Madrileños, 1970, p. 172.

⁴ Virginia TOVAR MARTÍN, "La entrada triunfal en Madrid de Doña Margarita de Austria (24 de octubre de 1599)", *Archivo Español de Arte*, 244, 1988, pp. 385–403, esp. p. 394.

arch extolled the ruler's military virtues⁵. But an emblem on the back of the archway with a different message impressed the Flemish courtier and Philip's tutor of French Jehan Lhermite⁶. The painting represented an elephant pushing aside a herd of sheep with its trunk. Lhermite recorded the accompanying verse, which spells out the meaning of the strange image:

What it exceeds in power, force, and greatness,
It has of love and softness.
Forgetting its courage and bravery,
It cares for the good of the humble sheep.
With this example, royal greatness
Promises loyal vassals
He will be father and shelter for all,
A shield for the child, and protection to the beggar⁷.

The elephant had long symbolized the king because of the power, greatness, and arrogance of an animal which "does not bend its knees"⁸. But the painting on the San Jerónimo arch drew instead upon the elephant's virtue of clemency, based on the ancient Roman Pliny the Elder's description in his *Natural History*. According to Pliny, the

⁵ Antonio FEROS, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598–1621*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 78–9.

⁶ Santiago MARTÍNEZ HERNÁNDEZ, "La educación de Felipe III", in José MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN and Maria Antonietta VISCEGLIA, eds., *La monarquía de Felipe III: La Corte*, vol. III, Madrid, Fundación Mapfre, 2008, pp. 85–108, esp. pp. 96–8.

⁷ "Quanto excede en poder, fuerça y grandeza/ tanto tiene de amor y de blandura/ olvidado del ánimo y braveça/ de la bejuela humilde el bien procura/ con este exemplo la real grandeza/ a los fieles vazallos asegura/ que de todos será padre y abrigo/ del chico escudo, y amparo del mendigo"; Jehan LHERMITE, *Le Passetemps*, ed. C. Ruelens, Émile Ouverleaux, Jules Jean Petit, 2 vols., Antwerp, J.E. Buschmann, 1890, v. II, p. 258.

⁸ Sebastián de COVARRUBIAS OROZCO, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, ed. Felipe C. R. Maldonado, revised ed., Madrid, Castalia, 1995, p. 453. On the elephant in Spanish emblems, see Antonio BERNAT VISTARINI, John T. CULL, and Edward J. VODOKLYS, *Enciclopedia de emblemas españoles ilustrados*, Madrid, Akal, 1999, pp. 570–81.

elephant displays “such a merciful disposition towards animals that are weaker than itself, that, when it finds itself in a flock of sheep, it will remove with its trunk those that are in the way, lest it should unintentionally trample upon them”⁹. The elephant could therefore teach monarchs to be fierce against their enemies in the battlefield, but clement and merciful toward the weak.

In the emblem presented to Philip III during the royal entry the elephant’s clemency acquired a different meaning. The elephant represented a father moved by love and gentleness to care for his “loyal vassals” the way a shepherd cared for his sheep. The monarch should pay special attention to the weak by acting as “a shield for the child” and by protecting the beggar, but ultimately “he will be father and shelter for all subjects”. It was a lofty goal for the young king, who still did not have children of his own but whose father had been king. Given that Philip III’s education included the literature on “mirrors of princes”, he must have known well the paternal duties expected of kings¹⁰. Juan de Mariana’s *De rege et regis institutione*, published in 1599 with a dedication to Philip III, declared that the king must govern his subjects as if they were his children, not his slaves¹¹. How the mighty Philip III could accomplish this lofty goal over a herd of vassals grazing across the globe, the emblem on the archway did not tell, and Lhermite did not inquire either in his memoirs of the event.

Early modern Spanish writers devoted considerable effort to the theoretical and practical challenges of reconciling the paternal image of a ruler with the government of an empire. The paternal metaphor had a double appeal. On the one hand, its ancient pedigree and longs-

⁹ PLINY THE ELDER, *Natural History*, trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley, vol. 2, London, G. Bell, 1890, Book VIII, chapter 8, pp. 254–55.

¹⁰ FEROS, *Kingship and Favoritism*, pp. 17–26; MARTÍNEZ HERNÁNDEZ, “La educación de Felipe III,” pp. 100–1.

¹¹ Juan de MARIANA, *De rege et regis institutione*, Toledo, Pedro Rodríguez, 1599, p. 57; quoted in J. A. FERNÁNDEZ-SANTAMARÍA, *La formación de la sociedad y el origen del Estado: Ensayos sobre el pensamiento político del siglo de oro*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1997, p. 256.

tanding use in Spanish political thought gave it an aura of eternal truth. The thirteenth-century *Siete Partidas* commanded the king to “love, honor, and protect his people” by showing compassion for them: “When he acts in this way towards them, he will be to them as a father who brings up his children with love, and punishes them with mercy”. By protecting his people, “a union will be formed between them which cannot be broken”¹². On the other hand, the paternal metaphor turned the cold abstraction of legal arrangements between monarchs and subjects into a deeply personal relationship based on love and filial duty toward the monarch.

During the reign of Philip III, Spaniards looked back at their medieval monarchs as fulfilling this ideal of the king as the father of his people. Those monarchs had demonstrated their love and mercy toward their subjects above all by carrying out justice and accepting petitions in person, even from humble subjects. According to the *Siete Partidas*, only slaves should not present a petition in person to the king, and even then there were exceptions. Petitioners asking for the royal favor should approach the monarch “humbly, upon their knees, and in a few words”¹³. By allowing petitioners to approach them, monarchs demonstrated their charity, borne out of love for their people.

Lope de Vega presented these ideal medieval monarchs in his plays *Peribáñez* and *Fuenteovejuna*, written between 1609 and 1613¹⁴. In *Peribáñez*’s final scene, the eponymous villager and his wife have traveled to the royal court in Toledo, where he asks to speak before King Henry III of Castile (1379–1406). At first, Henry wants Peribá-

¹² ALFONSO, King of Castile and León, *Las Siete Partidas*, trans. Samuel Parsons Scott, ed. Robert I. Burns, 5 vols., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, v. 2, pp. 322–33 (part. 2, tit. 10, law 2).

¹³ *Siete Partidas*, v. 3, p. 811 (part. 3, tit. 24, law 2: “Who Those Are Who Can Ask Grace”).

¹⁴ Noël SALOMON, *Lo villano en el teatro del Siglo de Oro*, Madrid, Castalia, 1985 (French ed., 1965), p. 687. Salomon dates *Peribáñez* and *Fuenteovejuna* to around the same dates, 1609–1613. Francisco López Estrada dates *Fuenteovejuna*’s composition to 1612–1614; Lope de VEGA, *Fuente Ovejuna*, 7th ed., Madrid, 1996, p. 12.

ñez immediately executed for the murder of the *Comendador*, the king's best soldier, but the queen intercedes, permitting the villager a hearing. Peribáñez explains that the murder was necessary to prevent his and his wife's dishonor. A weeping queen declares that no crime has taken place. The king not only agrees, he makes Peribáñez a captain and grants him the honor of bearing arms. "No wonder everyone calls you *Don Enrique el Justiciero*" –Henry the Just– declares Peribáñez as the play comes to an end¹⁵. Likewise, in *Fuenteovejuna*, a group of villagers, who endured torture during the judicial investigation of their lord's murder, come before Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to denounce their former lord, to seek clemency, and to secure royal protection. Ferdinand pardons the entire village and proclaims himself the new lord of Fuenteovejuna.

These monarchs from the past not only allowed their subjects to approach them, they also left the court to see their people. Isabella and Ferdinand were model peripatetic monarchs. Since the start of their reign, war forced the Catholic monarchs to travel constantly. Their success in returning their kingdoms to peace left an indelible association between good government and royal travel. After the conquest of the kingdom of Granada in 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand continued to move across their lands, and in doing so, they created the impression of establishing a constant presence in the lives of their diverse subjects. Charles V continued this peripatetic tradition, extending his travels to his far-flung territories in central and northern Europe. He lived most of his reign beyond his Spanish territories, traveling to Italy, across the Holy Roman Empire, and to the Netherlands. He spent one in four days traveling and may have slept in as many as 3,200 different beds.¹⁰ In 1548, as a young prince, Phillip II embarked on a three-year trip across many of his future territories beyond the Iberian Peninsula. In 1554, his marriage to Mary Tudor forced Philip once again to travel abroad. But on his return to Castile in 1558 after

¹⁵ Lope de VEGA, *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña/La Estrella de Sevilla*, 12th ed. Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1969, p. 116.

¹⁶ Patrick WILLIAMS, *Philip II*, Houndmills, U.K., Palgrave, 2001, pp. 9, 25.

his father's death, Philip II ceased traveling beyond the Iberian Peninsula, and even then significantly curtailed his visits to his Spanish territories.

In the sixteenth century, new political circumstances in the Spanish monarchy challenged the ideal of the peripatetic monarchy represented by Isabella and Ferdinand. Two developments in particular brought about this challenge: the establishment of a foreign dynasty and the formation of a world empire. Emperor Charles V introduced royal ceremonies and rules in the Spanish courtly etiquette that differed from those of the courts of Castile and Aragon by restricting access to the monarch¹⁷. Whereas contemporary European courts may have allowed greater public exposure as a way to foster their popularity at home, an increasingly restricted proximity to the Spanish sovereign became a hotly contested prize for the best subjects and an encouragement to others to strive for this exceptional favor. Habsburg monarchs also undertook wide-ranging institutional and political reforms necessary for the government of territories that now spanned the globe. To some, such changes were the inevitable consequence of the new political realities. The government of the relatively small medieval kingdoms would not work for the largest known empire. Likewise, the old ideal of kingship would need to be adapted to the greater dignity and reputation of a crown that had become the envy of the world. But others expressed serious concerns about these changes in the monarchy. The monarchs' quest for the love of their subjects might suffer as early modern Spanish kings tried to enhance their dignity and ensure the reverence of their people.

¹⁷ Helen NADER, "Habsburg Ceremony in Spain: The Reality of the Myth", *Historical Reflections*, 15, 1988, pp. 293–309; José MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN, "El control de las normas cortesanas y la elaboración de la pragmática de cortesías", *Edad de Oro*, 18, 1999, pp. 103–33; M. SÁNCHEZ SÁNCHEZ, "Etiquetas de corte: Estado actual de la cuestión," *Manuscrta.cao*, 3, 1990, pp. 61–77; and M. SÁNCHEZ SÁNCHEZ, "Poner casa: Problemas en el establecimiento de la etiqueta en la España de los Austrias", *Manuscrta.cao*, 5, 1992, pp. 103–9.

These changes coincided with a contentious political debate in early modern Europe over the relevance of the traditional ideals of kingship that emphasized the importance of love between rulers and subjects. Niccolò Machiavelli famously summed up the critical issue of this debate in *The Prince* by asking whether it is better for a ruler to be loved than to be feared. It was a question with a long history. Cicero's *De officiis* and Seneca's *De clementia* had addressed it. To them, the answer seemed clear enough: Love "shall most easily secure success both in private and in public life," declared Cicero¹⁸. Liberality, justice, and clemency would all foster subjects' love for their ruler. Here was, in its simplest expression, the traditional ideal of kingship. Medieval writers often returned to the same question, citing those ancient sources as well as biblical texts. Early modern writers continue to quote Cicero, among other authorities, to support the claim that love toward the prince would guarantee the subjects' loyalty and devotion, their willingness to meet his needs, and even to sacrifice their lives in his defense¹⁹. The monarchs in *Fuenteovejuna* and *Peribáñez* represented this ideal.

Although Machiavelli was not the first to do so, he presented one of the most powerful critiques of the assumption that love ensured the loyalty of subjects by pointing out that men are ungrateful and fickle: "While you benefit them they are all devoted to you: they would shed their blood for you; they offer their possessions, their lives, and their sons. [...] But when you are hard pressed, they turn away from you". "My view", he concluded, "is that it is desirable to be both loved and feared; but it is difficult to achieve both and, if one of them has to be lacking, it is much safer to be feared than loved"²⁰.

¹⁸ CICERO, *De officiis* (book 2, 7:24), trans. Walter Miller, London, Macmillan, 1913, pp. 192–93; see Quentin Skinner's introduction to Niccolò MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin SKINNER and Russell PRICE, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. xvii–xviii.

¹⁹ For example, see the citation of Cicero's *De officiis* 2, in Eugenio de NARBONA, *Doctrina política civil escrita en aforismos*, revised ed., Madrid, Viuda de Cosme Delgado, 1621, fol. 68v (aphorism 183).

²⁰ MACHIAVELLI, *Prince*, p. 59 (chap. 17).

Machiavelli advocated fear, but not because he thought that love was useless. In fact, he insisted that contempt and hatred should be avoided, for they would bring down a ruler. Yet fear represented a more effective means than love to preserve respect, the dignity of office, and even awe and reverence for the prince. In a letter to his friend Francesco Vettori, Machiavelli recommended that the ruler “should make himself loved and revered, rather than feared”²¹. This was love tempered by reverence, akin to the fear of God, as described by Aeneas Sylvius de’ Piccolomini (1405–1464), the poet and future Pope Pius II: “Kings wish to be loved and feared in the same way as do the gods. Nor do you love well unless you fear”²². Likewise, the English poet Philip Sidney’s (1554–1586) ideal good king, the fictional Eucharhus of Macedonia, was successful in making his subjects both love and revere him: “Then shined foorth indeed all love among them, when an awfull feare, ingendred by justice, did make that love most lovely”²³. Without respect, rulers would lose their authority. Machiavelli noted that the Roman Emperor Commodus (161–192) failed to uphold the dignity of his office by fighting with gladiators and doing other degrading things, which led to his downfall and death²⁴. Similarly, the prince should allow his secretaries to speak the truth, but allowing anyone to speak frankly would soon erode subjects’ respect for their ruler²⁵.

Political writers generally agreed on the merits of this paternal ideal of kingship, although they debated the practical difficulties of implementing it, as well as the possible dangers of doing so given the harsh realities of politics. The need to inspire fear was absolutely ne-

²¹ Quoted in Allan H. GILBERT, *Machiavelli’s Prince and Its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book de Regimine Principum*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1938, p. 110.

²² Aeneas Sylvius’s commentary on Panormita’s *De dictis et factis Alphonsi Aragoniae*, quoted in GILBERT, *Machiavelli’s Prince and Its Forerunners*, p. 106.

²³ Philip SYDNEY, *Arcadia*, 2.6.5, quoted in GILBERT, *Machiavelli’s Prince and Its Forerunners*, p. 100.

²⁴ MACHIAVELLI, *Prince*, p. 70 (chap. 19).

²⁵ MACHIAVELLI, *Prince*, p. 81 (chap. 23).

cessary for rulers living during the tumultuous world of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe²⁶. The threat of heresy posed a real danger to all monarchs. Religious schism had led to decades of war in central and western Europe, as well as in the British Isles. The strife between Catholics and Huguenots during the second half of the sixteenth century had brought France near a state of anarchy. Thousands of French men and women died as a result of sectarian violence, including Henry III and Henry IV, both assassinated by Catholic extremists, respectively in 1589 and in 1610. Although Spanish monarchs had contained the threat of heresy in their Iberian territories, “heretics” in the Netherlands had established an independent republic despite Philip II’s extraordinary efforts, which contributed to the bankruptcy of the Spanish royal treasury. Even in Catholic Spain, Philip faced internal revolts in Granada in the 1560s and in Aragon in 1591. Philip II’s successors to the Spanish throne would not face a safer world.

The ideal of the king as the father of his people had to be updated if it was to survive under these difficult political realities. The challenge for a Christian ruler lay in how to achieve the right mix of love and fear. To the Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira (1526–1611), Machiavelli’s proposition that a Christian ruler should imitate a tyrant in preferring to be feared than loved struck him as “poisonous” advice worthy of a man who was “impious and without a God”. Yet even Ribadeneira recommended that the Christian prince be sufficiently “forceful and valorous” to earn his people’s “respect and the fear of his opponents and enemies”²⁷. The Jesuit urged Spanish princes to seek models in classical and Christian authorities, including the Bible, Cicero, Se-

²⁶ For an overview of the European context of these political debates, see José María GARCÍA MARÍN, *Teoría política y gobierno en la Monarquía Hispánica*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 1998, pp. 287–91; Paul Kléber MONOD, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 81–93, 129–41; Richard TUCK, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 31–39, 65–82.

²⁷ Pedro de RIBADENEIRA, *Tratado de la Religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe cristiano*, Madrid, P. Madrigal, 1595, p. 556 (Book 2, chapter 44).

neca, and St. Thomas Aquinas. From these works, Ribadeneira drew a portrait of the ideal prince as a Christian warrior consumed with the serious task of battling God's enemies on earth –so much so that the prince would have little time for receiving villagers and listening to their comparatively minor concerns.

Early modern Spanish writers even found a model for the modern prince in the ruthless Roman Emperor Tiberius –described by Ribadeneira as “most vicious and abominable”– but who nonetheless could teach rulers important lessons about how to overcome revolts, court intrigue, and foreign enemies²⁸. The descriptions of Tiberius by the Roman historian Tacitus left a deep impression on modern political writers with great influence in Spain, such as the Italian Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) and the Flemish Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), who sought to establish a “reason of state,” or the rules governing politics²⁹. One Spanish author who found much of value in the works of Tacitus, Lipsius, and even Machiavelli was Eugenio de Narbona (d. 1624), a Spanish priest and Lope de Vega's friend. Narbona distilled the lessons drawn from his readings into aphorisms that could be easily memorized³⁰. Much of his advice repeats the familiar virtues associated with good kingship, but several aphorisms clearly defy the traditional ideal of the king as the father of his subjects. For instance,

²⁸ RIBADENEIRA, *Tratado de la Religión*, preface (“Al Christiano y piadoso Lector”), n.p.

²⁹ Beatriz ANTÓN MARTÍNEZ, *El Tacitismo en el siglo XVII en España: El proceso de receptio*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 1992, pp. 125–42; Xavier GIL PUJOL, “Las fuerzas del Rey: La generación que leyó a Botero,” in Mario RIZZO, José Javier RUIZ IBÁÑEZ, and Gaetano SABATINI, eds., *La force del Principe*, 2 vols., Murcia, Universidad de Murcia, 2004, v. 2, pp. 969–1022; TUCK, *Philosophy and Government*, pp. 65–82.

³⁰ When first published in 1604, the Inquisition found Narbona's aphorisms too close to Machiavelli's ideas. But as may be seen from the quotations that follow, the revised 1621 edition still contains advice that defied the traditional ideal of kingship. On Narbona's friendship with Lope de Vega, see Jean VILAR, “Intellectuels et Noblesse: Le *Doctor* Eugenio de Narbona (Une Admiration Politique de Lope de Vega),” in *Etudes Iberiques*, vol. 3, 1968, pp. 7–28.

aphorism 81 states that at times it might be necessary to carry out secret murders. Citing Tacitus' *Annals*, aphorism 81 warns that occasionally princes might be forced to act in deceitful ways for the public good, even though this was contrary to God's command³¹.

In sharp contrast to the "awesome rulers" praised in Philip Sidney's poem and other early modern political writings, the monarchs in *Fuenteovejuna* and *Peribáñez* could inspire the affections of even their humblest subjects. Greatness, majesty, and awe alone could not inspire love. True loyalty required the personal touch. When the present troubles appeared to make that difficult, if not impossible, Lope de Vega and many Spaniards looked back to a golden age, a simpler time that did not require a science of politics³². In that lost age, they could imagine Ferdinand and Isabella and other medieval kings personally handing down justice before their people. These rulers, enveloped in a mythical aura, had been transformed from historical figures into legends, whose sole concern had been to fight injustice in their lands and to work for the good of their subjects. It was, of course, a simplistic, even naive ideal. Yet for that very reason it enjoyed the powerful appeal of the simple and unadorned truth. Monarchs who ignored it did so at their own peril.

The tensions between competing ideals raised serious questions about the future of the Spanish monarchy. How could monarchs with so many territories fulfill the natural filial desire of subjects to see their rulers, to approach them, and to seek their charity and protection? Because those expectations were essential to fostering a sense of loyalty among all subjects, how could the crown nurture those sentiments, given the impossibility of a single person being present in terri-

³¹ NARBONA, *Doctrina*, fol. 38. For other early modern Spanish authors who also argued for the monarch's need to inspire fear, see José Antonio MARAVALL, *Teoría del Estado en España en el siglo XVII*, 2nd ed., Madrid, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1997, pp. 346–49.

³² J. H. ELLIOTT, "Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth Century Spain," in *Spain and Its World, 1500–1700: Selected Essays*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, p. 150.

tories that spanned the world? If it was inevitable that ministers, favorites, and other officials would have to stand in for the monarch, how could the king prevent men greedy for power from driving a wedge between him and his people?

An avalanche of writings that ranged from the practical to the esoteric proposed solutions to such questions, which all agreed were of vital importance to the future of the Spanish empire. As seen in the reiteration of the fatherly duties of the monarch during the 1599 royal entry in Madrid, Spaniards refused to dismiss the old ideal of kingship. To do so would have meant agreeing with Machiavelli and with what Ribadeneira and others called the “false reason of state”³³. Rather, Spanish writers sought to reinterpret and re-imagine that ideal taking into account the practical limitations of ruling vast territories, as well as the need for the monarchy to preserve its majesty and dignity by limiting access to the king. Taken together, these discussions among political writers, theologians, and poets demonstrate the plasticity of an ideal that retained its broad appeal.

In the prologue to his 1556 *Institución de un Rey Christiano*, dedicated to Philip II, Felipe de la Torre offers the readers two reasons why they will find personally relevant a book about Christian kings³⁴. First, it is relevant because every man is “a king in his house with his family”. Second, it is relevant because in each of us, the soul has the “empire of the king” over the body³⁵. King, father, and soul had a duty to provide for that which was under his authority: the people, the family, and the body. In all three cases, physical proximity underscores

³³ RIBADENEIRA, *Tratado de la Religión*, pp. 76 (book 1, chapter 14), 93 (book 1, chapter 16).

³⁴ On the author, see José Antonio MARAVALL, “La oposición político-religiosa del siglo XVI: El erasmismo tardío de Felipe de la Torre”, in *La oposición política bajo los Austrias*, 2nd ed., Esplugues de Llobregat, Ariel, 1974, pp. 53–92; and R. W. Truman’s introduction to his edition of Felipe de la TORRE, *Institución de un Rey Christiano*, Exeter, University of Exeter, 1979.

³⁵ Felipe de la TORRE, *Institución de un Rey Christiano*, Antwerp, Martín Nuncio, 1556, “Al Lector.”

the importance of that duty. Just as the soul responds to physical pain, seeing the tears of children and subjects and hearing their cries moved fathers and kings to action. In addition, physical proximity offers a concrete expression of love. Gaspar de Astete's 1597 book on the government of the family affirms that the father in the midst of his family was like the king in his army, the shepherd among his sheep, or Christ among his disciples³⁶. The Bible compares Christ's protection of the Hebrew people to a chicken cuddling her chicks under her wings. Quoting Plato, Astete declared that "children are never loved more by their fathers than when fathers carry them on their arms and mothers on their breasts"³⁷. Astete claimed that "God gave parents of the flesh [*padres carnales*] such strong and excessive love toward their children so no difficulty would stand in their way... to provide for them... and even give the blood from their veins for them"³⁸. The king must know about these matters "in person, and not through a third party," as do some kings³⁹. De la Torre did not explain how the ruler of the vast Spanish Empire would accomplish such duties in person.

Philip II sought to recreate the fatherly duties outlined by Felipe de la Torre in new ways more attuned to the realities of his monarchy. As he now limited his travels, Philip looked beyond royal visits as the principal means to establish the physical contact between fathers and children. A solution had to guarantee subjects' trust that he had not forsaken his duties. Increasingly, the king encouraged subjects to approach him in writing. Philip did not agree to every request for an audience, but he insisted on personally reading all correspondence intended for him⁴⁰.

³⁶ Gaspar de ASTETE, *Del gobierno de la familia y estado de las viudas y doncellas*, Burgos, Varesio, 1597, fol. 18.

³⁷ ASTETE, *Del gobierno de la familia*, fol. 294 bis.

³⁸ ASTETE, *Del gobierno de la familia*, fol. 42.

³⁹ ASTETE, *Del gobierno de la familia*, fol. 77v.

⁴⁰ Geoffrey PARKER, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 27.

Philip's Herculean performance of his royal duties of caring, providing, and protecting his subjects established a different kind of physical bond than a father's physical proximity to his children. The king's hard work made him present among *all* subjects, not simply before those who in close proximity to him. A medal commemorating Charles V's abdication showed the global burden of government passing from Charles to Philip II, represented respectively as Atlas and Hercules. Philip, like Hercules, carried this burden on his shoulders out of the sight of his subjects, who still felt his presence as the size of his government, and the demands it made on them, grew⁴¹.

This interpretation of the king's duties must be seen in relation to contemporary interpretations of Christ as a father and king. In 1583, Fray Luis de León, the author of *The Perfect Wife*, offered a portrait of Christ as perfect father and king in *Los nombres de Cristo*. Christ's example demonstrated that the *sacrifice* of carrying the burden of empire –rather than simply physical proximity– could bind together king and subjects. Here empire stands, not for the power of one over another, but for the duty to care for others. Citing the ancient Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco stated that “empire is nothing else but the care of the safety of others” (*Imperium nihil aliud est quam cura salutis alienae*)⁴². In this sense, Fray Luis de León pointed to the example of the parable of the lost sheep, the good shepherd's act of carrying the sheep on his shoulders stood for the empire that king and father had over subjects and chil-

⁴¹ Adam MOSLEY, *Bearing the Heavens: Tycho Brahe and the Astronomical Community of the Late Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 24. The theme of the royal burden of government continued into the seventeenth century; see J. H. ELLIOTT, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986, p. 47.

⁴² COVARRUBIAS OROZCO, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 663–64. The quotation is slightly different from the original in Ammianus Marcellinus: “nihil aliud esse imperium, ut sapientes definiunt, nisi curam salutis alienae”; *Rerum gestarum libri*, en *Ammianus Marcellinus*, trans. John C. Rolfe, rev. ed., 3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1982, v. 3, p. 224 (book 29, chapter 2, no. 18).

dren. Similarly, Aeneas, in an act widely seen as a manifestation of charity, carried on his back his old and frail father when they fled from the burning Troy. Once more, it is worth citing Astete's book on the family, who cited as a symbol of paternal care the swan carrying its chicks on its "shoulders" to teach them how to fly⁴³. Whereas for Felipe de la Torre the performance of royal obligations required ruler and ruled to come face to face, for Fray Luis that physical proximity was not as essential. Instead, a king who carried out his duties with great effort, aware of the grave responsibility that rested on his shoulders, established a bond –the empire– between him and his subjects. That spiritual bondage between ruler and ruled made superfluous any physical contact. So too with Christ and humanity: We are in physical bondage to Christ, Fray Luis explains, "by a secret force, as father to children and the members to the body"⁴⁴.

If the actual physical proximity between king and subjects was therefore not as important as it had seemed to Felipe de la Torre, both authors agreed that the king must perform his prescribed duties himself. According to Fray Luis de León: "If the king, whose duty is to judge, giving to each what he deserves... does not learn the truth for himself, he will forgo justice. The information about his kingdom a king gets from the reports and investigations of others will blind him rather than illuminate him"⁴⁵. Christ's subjects do not face this predicament. Fray Luis, paraphrasing Isaiah 65:24, has Christ declare, "Before they raise their voice, I will receive their plea, and as the tongue moves, I will hear them"⁴⁶. Philip's insistence that subjects communicate with him in writing rather than through royal audiences put him closer to Christ than to other kings. Christ, who was close to the person pleading without being physically close, provided a fitting model for a king who believed he could perform his duties without the need for physical proximity to his subjects.

⁴³ ASTETE, *Del gobierno de la familia*, fols. 298–99.

⁴⁴ Fray Luis de LEÓN, *Los nombres de Cristo*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas, 6th ed., Madrid, Cátedra, 1997, p. 286.

⁴⁵ LEÓN, *Nombres de Cristo*, p. 373.

⁴⁶ LEÓN, *Nombres de Cristo*, p. 403.

Philip III brought his father's principles of inaccessibility and invisibility to new heights. He sharply curtailed daily access to his person to nearly everyone except for the royal favorite, the duke of Lerma, who handled most audiences in order to preserve the king's invisibility. According to a memorandum given to Lerma, Philip II "was obeyed and feared even when he had locked himself in his rooms"⁴⁷. Juan Fernández de Medrano advised Philip III that it was "a certain kind of religion" to retire from subjects. The king's limited visibility was akin to the adoration of the consecrated Eucharist⁴⁸. Diego de Guzmán explained that, just as exposing the Eucharist publicly all day would lose "the respect, reverence, and love due to Him [God]", so would the king's invisibility heighten the respect, reverence, and love due to him⁴⁹.

But not everyone agreed that distance alone fulfilled the ideal of monarchy. Critics of the Duke of Lerma feared that the favorite had taken over the monarch's duties, leaving his subjects neglected and abused. According to Fray Juan de Santa María, poor fellows who brought their pleas to the king instead found themselves in a ball game, thrown from one minister to another⁵⁰. This was the opposite of the direct communication with Christ that Fray Luis de León had described. Santa María also contrasted the neglect of the king's subjects with God's rapid response: when a pleading soul cries, he sends God a petition written with tears that immediately reaches the heavens. Clamors become memoranda that come before God's council of war, asking God to raise squadrons on earth and heaven to avenge

⁴⁷ Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, mss. 18275, "Memorial que dieron al Duque de Lerma, cuando entró en el valimiento del sr. Rey Felipe III," fol. 2r; quoted in FEROS, *Kingship and Favoritism*, p. 85.

⁴⁸ Juan FERNÁNDEZ DE MEDRANO, *República Mixta*, Madrid, 1602, p. 32; quoted in FEROS, *Kingship and Favoritism*, p. 84.

⁴⁹ Diego de GUZMÁN, *Vida y muerte de doña Margarita de Austria, reina de España*, Madrid, 1617, fols. 229v–234; quoted in FEROS, *Kingship and Favoritism*, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Juan de SANTA MARÍA, *Tratado de república y policía cristiana para reyes y príncipes y para los que en el gobierno tienen sus veces*, Barcelona, Lorenzo Deu, 1617 (1st ed. 1615), fols. 75v–76.

their grievances⁵¹. But a king is not God, and cannot do everything himself or be everywhere in his kingdom⁵². Rather than propose a return to a peripatetic monarchy, Santa María argued the king could be in physical contact with his subjects, not just through a single, all-powerful favorite, but through the many royal ministers and royal councils, which acted as an extension of the king's body. Collectively, these ministers and officials stood in for the king's senses, allowing him to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch everything. The king could thus become omnipresent and all-knowing. Santa María also recommended that the king appoint ministers from the empire's different kingdoms because "it is the great unhappiness of a Kingdom not to have a son near the king, with which natives will communicate better". Only then would the king act as their true father, rather than as a stepfather⁵³.

In 1618, the fall of the duke of Lerma, followed in 1621 by Philip III's death, provided an opportunity to implement Santa María's recommendations. For example, Philip IV's favorite, Olivares, urged the young king to give greater participation in the government to men from different kingdoms⁵⁴. Yet others hoped that the new favorite would avoid the Duke of Lerma's pitfalls by assisting the king in his duties, rather than attempt to usurp them. Francisco de Quevedo became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Olivares. In his play on the perfect favorite, *Cómo ha de ser el privado* (What the favorite should be), Quevedo portrayed a thinly disguised Olivares as the antithesis of Lerma⁵⁵. Rather than usurp the king's duties, the perfect favorite insisted petitioners bring their pleas in person to the king at royal audiences. As the king remained the sole focus of subjects' love, the favorite took responsibility for failures in the prompt respon-

⁵¹ SANTA MARÍA, *Tratado de república*, fols. 85v–86v.

⁵² SANTA MARÍA, *Tratado de república*, fols. 20–20v.

⁵³ SANTA MARÍA, *Tratado de república*, fols. 140v–41.

⁵⁴ ELLIOTT, *Count-Duke of Olivares*, p. 193.

⁵⁵ FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO VILLEGAS, *Cómo ha de ser el privado*, in *Teatro inédito de Francisco de Quevedo*, Madrid, Tipografía de la "Revista de Archivos," 1927.

se to pleas or in the execution of royal orders. But this was too good to be true. Quevedo eventually became disillusioned with Olivares, who like Lerma before him, appeared to be the greatest threat to the king's fatherly duties toward his people.

In *Política de Dios*, the first part of which Quevedo published in 1626 with a dedication to Philip IV, once again Christ's perfect government depends on His physical proximity to His subjects. Just as Christ insisted widows, children, and the miserable all be allowed to approach Him, the Spanish king alone must hold audiences with his subjects. Audiences allowed kings to exercise in person their sovereignty –the empire, in Felipe de la Torre's and Fray Luis de León's words. Of course, as Fray Juan de Santa María had stated, kings could not be everywhere⁵⁶. They depended on their ministers. But whereas Santa María argued ministers could act as the king's five senses, Quevedo warned that bad ministers stifle the senses because they were "blind to government, dumb to truth, deaf to merit". "Christ informed himself about the persons and matters he dealt with," Quevedo added, because "he did not believe in reports"⁵⁷. The king must therefore keep constant watch over his ministers, the way Christ repeatedly rebuked his disciples for trying to keep him away from the multitudes or children. Nonetheless, Quevedo warned that some kings became indulgent with their ministers and slept with their eyes closed, instead of keeping them open, as the vigilant shepherd.

Quevedo's warning seemed to become a reality. During the 1630s and early 1640s, as the Spanish monarchy teetered on the verge of collapse, critics accused Philip IV of losing contact with his subjects. Philip was asleep at the helm of the ship, which threatened to sink as a result of Olivares' failed policies. Catalan and Portuguese rebels disowned their king, who they claimed would not listen to their

⁵⁶ SANTA MARÍA, *Tratado de república*, fol. 63.

⁵⁷ FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO VILLEGAS, *Política de Dios, gobierno de Christo*, ed. James O. Crosby, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1966, pp. 106–7.

cries⁵⁸. Olivares and other evil ministers bore much of the blame, but Philip was guilty of omission. The last hope for Quevedo and many others lay in the king dismissing Olivares and taking charge of the government of the monarchy. In his *Padre Nuestro Glosado* (Our Father glossed), the people prayed Our Father to Philip, pleading with him to open his ears and eyes. If he could bring himself to do so, his people said, “your empire and love you will make you lord in wealth and in souls”⁵⁹.

At last, in January 1643, Philip IV listened to the people and dismissed Olivares, declaring that from now on, he alone would govern. The move followed the king’s growing awareness that his people expected him to take a more active role in government⁶⁰. Philip’s new style of government in many ways looked back to his forbears. For the first time in nearly a century, in 1642 the king had become a soldier in the battlefields, as Charles V and Ferdinand the Catholic had done. Philip IV also made a point of traveling more often to his territories in the Crown of Aragon. It was a belated effort, but one that may have averted further revolts in the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia⁶¹.

⁵⁸ This was the central argument behind the publication in 1641 of correspondence between Philip IV, Olivares, and the viceroy of Catalonia, the Count of Santa Coloma, by Gaspar Sala, one of the most important Catalan authors defending the Catalan revolt of 1640; see **¡Error! Sólo el documento principal.** Gaspar SALA, *Se-crets Públics, de Gaspar Sala, i altres textos*, in Eva SERRA, ed., *Escrips polítics del segle XVII*, vol. 2, Vic, Eumo, 1995.

⁵⁹ Francisco de QUEVEDO, *El Padre Nuestro glosado*, in *Sátiras políticas de la España Moderna*, ed. Teófanés EGIDO, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1973, verse 24, p. 122.

⁶⁰ ELLIOTT, *Count-Duke of Olivares*, pp. 622–23, 651.

⁶¹ Xavier GIL, “‘Conservación’ y ‘defensa’ como factores de estabilidad en tiempos de crisis: Aragón y Valencia en la década de 1640,” in *1640: La monarquía hispánica en crisis*, Barcelona, Centre d’Estudis d’Història Moderna “Pierre Vilar”, Curial, 1992, pp. 44–101, esp. pp. 63–64, 71, 89.

In the end, then, Spanish kings could not escape their subjects' desire for their proximity, both in spirit and in person. But with the age of peripatetic monarchs over, they faced the danger that subjects might misjudge their inability to travel everywhere they were needed as a failure to execute their royal duties. As Antonio de la Torre, Fray Luis de León, Juan de Santa María, and Francisco de Quevedo acknowledged, there was no replacing the sense of paternal love and care conveyed by proximity between father and children. In order to recreate that relationship, they recommended concrete actions, although for one reason or another they eventually proved insufficient.

Ultimately, the paternal metaphor allowed early modern Spanish political writers to work out the multiple concerns and issues involving the ideal monarchy⁶². In particular, the metaphor provided a means to articulate competing opinions over the appropriate access subjects should have to the Spanish king, which had important implications about the duties of the monarch and the role of his ministers and officials throughout the empire. Spanish authors generally shared the premise that the king should be like a father, caring for his subjects like children, who had a duty to love and respect him. Differences revolved around how best to achieve this paternal-filial relationship, especially given the enormous challenges, and risks, faced by Spanish monarchs. The paternal image therefore provided a standard against which to measure a particular ruler and policies.

⁶² On the analysis of metaphorical language to establish links between a text and its historical context, see José M. GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, *Metáforas del poder*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1998, p. 188.

