Glory and Tragedy in Spain: The Representation of War and Its Transformation in Velázquez and Goya's Painting

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1. Guiding Ideas

In the History of Art, there is always a spot for certain artists who marked their nations and became representatives of their culture and national identity. It's possible to observe this occurrence in many countries, such as Thomas Gainsborough in 18th century Great Britain, or Charles Le Brun at the court of Louis XIV, as well as the modern Tarsila do Amaral in Brazil during the 1920. However, when we think about Spain, certain names always come to mind, like Picasso or El Greco, but two artists that are impossible to ignore are the Sevillian Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) and the Aragonese Francisco de Goya (1746-1828). Goya was one of the artists who, in the 19th century, recovered the Sevillian school of Diego Velázquez for the production of portraits and other artistic genres. The Aragonese painter was recognized for this, and his reputation was also built through his inspiration and references of his predecessor at the Spanish court. His both study and disclosure works about the Sevillian master, titled *Cópias de Velázquez* (1778), demonstrate his admiration and interest rescuing Velázquez subjects, as well as his capacity of doing an unique interpretation of the works through engravings, with characteristics that emphasize his own vision of those characters, seemed particularly in the faces of many of the individuals depicted in the engravings.

Velázquez and Goya lived in a very specific period that gave them opportunities to explore definitive events which deeply changed the History of Spain. Their representations were often taken as symbols of what it means to be Spanish. The intention of this text is to provide a brief experimental analysis about each artist in their representations about wars in Spain between the 17th and 19th century, as well as their many iconographic facets, traditions and historiographic interpretations. Among these, we emphasize work analysis from Carl Justi and August l. Mayer and José López-Rey, respectively German and Spanish historians of art, the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, and the most recent interpretations of contemporaries and renowned historians Daniel Arasse, Albert Boenstein-Stengel, Juliet Wilson-Bareau and Janis A. Tomlinson. Three paintings will be used for this analysis: *La rendición de Breda* by Velázquez, produced in 1638, and *2 de mayo* and *3 de mayo* by Goya, produced in 1814.[1]

It is important to punctuate, before stepping into the main subject of the text, that the reader understands a little bit better how this idea was organized and developed. It originated from the current Doctoral research titled "Francisco de Goya na Argentina e Brasil: a formação das coleções de pintura do artista espanhol no MASP e no MNBA no século XX" which is in its third year of development by the author of this text. In this research, the paintings of the Aragonese artist that are part of the permanent collections of MASP (Museum of Art of São Paulo) and MNBA (National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires) are a total composition of nine works from Goya. Despite the collection of Goya's paintings at MASP consists exclusively of portraits, this does not apply to the MNBA collection, expressing a variety of themes present in the painting produced by the Aragonese artist and the necessity of a deeper analysis of these diverse genres present in the Buenos Aires Museum. This collection is constituted by a plurality of themes ranging from religious to popular festivities, composing five works. From this set, the paint that most caught attention and served as the basis for this text is the painting titled *Escena de guerra*. All of the elements suggest an inspired scene by the events of the peninsular war against napoleonic troops, especially given its dating between 1808 and 1814.This work was one of the last by Goya to join the Buenos Aires museum collection through the donation of the Acevedo brothers in 1958, and since then, it has been part of the main collection of the Aragonese artist in the Argentine museum.

2. Velázquez as a Court Artist

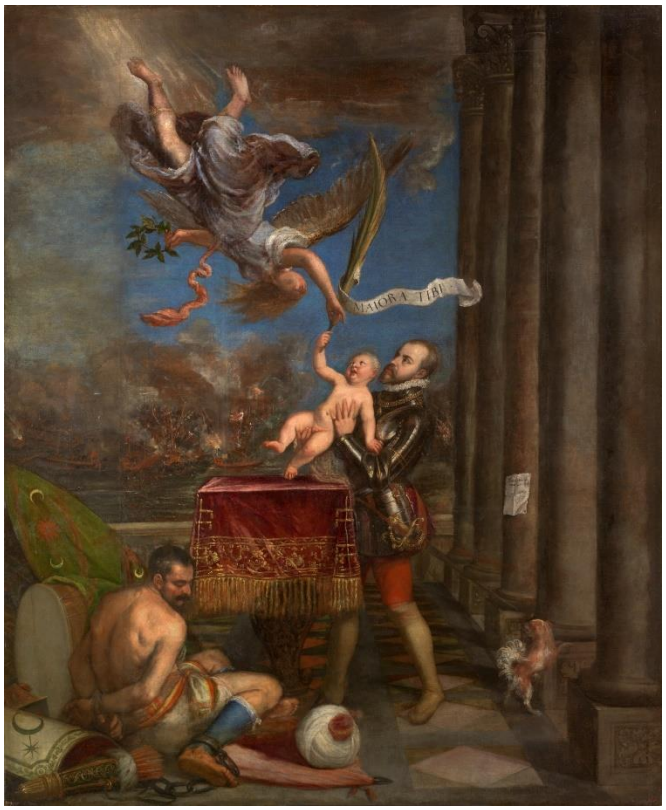

Image 1. Tiziano. *Felipe II ofreciendo al cielo al infante don Fernando* 1573 -1575. Oil on canvas, 335 x 274 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Velázquez became a special agent in the construction of the Habsburgs Spanish dynasty in the first half of the 15th century. It is important to remember that Spain was a state that had been developing under the rule of the Austrian family since the 16th century, when Charles V assumed the throne of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, after his grandparents had unified both kingdoms. Besides to the unification of the crowns and his simultaneous election as a Holy Roman Emperor, which already conferred him a great politician power in Europe, the Conquest of America granted him a greater strength in the European political game, with the annual shipments of silver and gold from the mines of Potosí and fueling the coffers of Spain and the Habsburg family on the continent, as well as expanding the workforce overseas and increasing prestige among all dynasties in Europe. Nevertheless, the Spanish Empire, despite all of its prosperity and its both modern military and bureaucratic machinery, had a series of problems and contradictions. The religious subject was always a problematic for the Spanish state and the Habsburgs, especially for Chales V's son, Philip II, who saw himself as a king defender of the Catholicism in Europe, while simultaneously fighting against Protestant within and outside his domains, and the Turks and their army threatening the Balkans and the Mediterranean Sea. This religious zeal granted that Philip II faced a series of wars and revolts that left the coffers and troops of the Spanish Empire in tatters, even though he won against the Turks in the Mediterranean. The monarch persecuted the Spanish population with the Inquisition, and his Catholic zeal granted the beginning of an insurgency in the Netherlands, leading to the creation of the United Provinces and the prolonged and costly Eighty Years' War. Beyond that, his war with Elizabeth I's England led him to launch the Great Armada in an attempt to invade the British Isles and reclaim them for Catholicism once again. The expedition was a disaster, costing the lives of thousands of Spaniards and draining the state's coffers, leading to bankruptcy. Despite this series of defeats and military and economic disasters that continued to haunt Spain, the Habsburg king wanted to register his celebration and victory against the Turks. Therefore, none other than the Venetian Tiziano was in charge to create the painting entitled *Felipe II ofreciendo ao cielo al infante don Fernando* (**image 1**), which is part of the collection at the Museo Nacional del Prado. In this historical painting, Tiziano depicts Philip II with his son, the Infante Don Fernando. The king is dressed in his battle armor, holding his son with both hands and lifting him up towards an altar covered with richly painted red fabric with golden details, while an angel descends from the heavens delivering a palm branch with the words "greater triumphs await you"

inscribed. In the lower left corner of the painting, it is possible to see a man chained and downcast, with a prominent mustache and various elements and clothing, such as a turban, identifying him as a Turk. The final piece of the composition is exactly what happens in the background at sea, where a series of ships are battling each other with explosions and smoke everywhere due to cannon fire, indicating that the battle was of titanic proportions. This is the representation of the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the main victory of Philip II during his reign. With it, the Holy League, led by Spain, blocked future incursions of the Turkish Empire in the Mediterranean Sea and ensured the protection of its southern borders, particularly in its Italian possessions. Tiziano was the great painter of his father figure, representing *Carlos V en la Batalla de Mühlberg* (**image 2**), a victory of the Emperor against the German princes. And now, the Venetian court artist would do the same for the son of his former patrons by representing the Battle of Lepanto. With this well-established tradition in Spanish court art and no lack of wars for this theme, it is no surprise that other artists were hired and received these commissions from their own Spanish princes. The most important thing to note here is the precedent set and how it will affect the task for future artists.

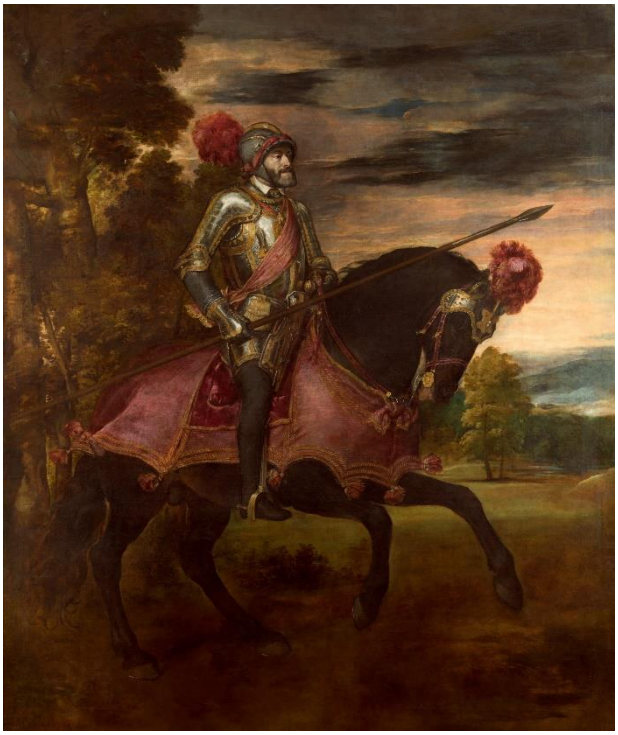

Image 2. Tiziano. *Carlos V en la batalla de Mühlberg* 1548. Oil on canvas, 335 x 283 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

In the 17th century, the Spanish court's demand for artists capable of creating these grand and impactful iconographies in the history painting of Spain's battles and wars remained in vogue. With the arrival of Philip II's son and grandson, Philip III and Philip IV, there was not only a renewal of artists at the court, led by the Flemish Peter Paul Rubens, but also a renewal of conflicts. Despite the victory against the Turks, Protestant states remained strong in northern Europe, especially England, the Scandinavian countries, and two regions that directly affected Habsburg interests: the Netherlands and the German principalities. While the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs was concerned with German princes who might receive assistance from their neighbors in the north and cause a rebellion, the Spanish branch was focused on fight the revolt that had taken on the tones of a war of independence under the leadership of the House of Orange in the United Provinces. Despite this situation, nothing could prepare Spain for the conflict with catastrophic proportions it would become involved in, the Thirty Years' War, which began at the end of Philip III's reign and continued for much of Philip IV's reign. At the same time, Diego Velázquez arrived at the Spanish court as a prodigious portraitist, trained under the guidance of his father-in-law, Francisco Pacheco. His meteoric rise in the Spanish court of Philip IV indicates precisely the synergy that the Sevillian artist had as a court artist, understanding both what his patrons desired from him and his work, while also possessing great freedom to execute his works, additionally, he was well-paid and frequented the royal palace. There is no one better than Martin Warnke

himself to describe this "entity" that was the court artist in 17th-century Spain, in an episode from Velázquez's trip to Italy in 1629:

> The emissary from Tuscany, on the other hand, gave detailed instructions on the behavior to be assumed: "I recommend that they welcome and assist him, and that all prominent people at the court address him with an emphatic 'vós,' as he and the people of the king and Duke of Olivares' favor. He himself is a 'ugier di camera,' and therefore an educated man. I would not want him to return and comment here, before the king and courtiers, that he received more courteous treatment from our sovereigns than they grant to a painter. I recommend that the Grand Duke have his portrait done by him and then present him with a chain and a medal with his effigy. But he should behave with the gravity of a king and treat him as is appropriate concerning those of his profession. For among the lowest Spaniards, one loses as much by showing too little respect as by showing too much respect." (Warnke, 2001, 179)

In this courtly context, with a high demand and extremely favorable conditions for the Sevillian artist, his works began to gain success in the court of Philip IV. Besides his education under his father-in-law, one cannot ignore the references Velázquez used in his work, as Tiziano with his portraits and historical paintings representing the deeds and figures of Charles V and Philip II, the taste for Italian painting was essential for the development of his painting. It is even possible to mention Caravaggio, who in his process to explore naturalism through models and human figures in his religious paintings, also left a significant legacy for the Sevillian painter, exploring these elements with much effort in his genre paintings, such as tavern scenes and *bodegones*, as seen in *El aguador de Sevilla*, completed in 1620 and now exposed in Apsley House, England. The influence of *caravaggismo*[2][3] can be seen in Velázquez's portraits, such as one of the earliest representations of the Count-Duke of Olivares in 1624, which is preserved in the São Paulo Museum of Art, in Brazil. Moreover, during his two trips to Italy, in 1629 and 1649, Velázquez not only learned but also produced some of his most iconic works, including the *portrait of Pope Inocencio X*, with characteristics that still remains extremely distinctive and has served as a model for a series of artists, including the Irish contemporary Francis Bacon with his enormous series of studies based on this portrait. Just like Peter Paul Rubens, who was looking to be a diplomatic agent of the Spanish court and not just its artist, Velázquez also aimed to fulfill the requests of Philip IV and the Count-Duke of Olivares by using his brush in diplomatic relations with other European states. The *portrait of Francesco I d'Este*, Duke of Modena, in the Gallerie

[2] "En tales obras y en sus retratos el discípulo de Pacheco alcanzó "la verdadera imitación de la naturaleza", siguiendo el camino de Caravaggio y Ribera. Velázquez, en realidad, fue uno de los primeros exponentes en España del nuevo naturalismo que procedía directa o indirectamente de Caravaggio y, por cierto, "El aguador de Sevilla" (h. 1619, Wellington Museum, Londres) fue atribuido al gran genio italiano al llegar a la capital inglesa en 1813." Excerpt taken from the online description of Velázquez's life and work on the Museo Nacional del Prado website. Link: https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/artista/velazquez-diego-rodriguez-de-silva-y/434337e9-77e4-4597-a962-ef47304d930d

[3] The heightened effect created by Velázquez can be explained by the material used in his pigments. Lola Gayo, head of the analysis laboratory at the Prado Museum, while investigating the work The Coronation of the Virgin by Velázquez, pointed out that cochineal insects were used in the composition of the pigments for the purple and red mantles of Jesus. These insects, which grow on cacti brought from Spanish colonies, provided this intense reddish coloration, known as "carmine from the Indies." Information available in a video on the official channel of the Museo Nacional del Prado: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7nZj6Da17Y

Estensi, is one of the greatest examples of his capability as a court artist. Between 1638 and 1639, the Duke did a diplomatic visit to the Spanish court to secure an alliance and cooperation between Modena and the Spanish Empire. Despite the empire still holding several territories in Italy, the devastating Thirty Years' War and the threat from France made the Spanish situation unsustainable without the guarantee of allies from the still-independent Italian states and, given this situation, it was necessary to please the potential Spanish ally on the Italian peninsula. Velázquez depicts the Duke in a half-profile, emphasizing his youthful features, his long hair, and distinctive mustache. He portrays him wearing armor, but covered by a large red sash, most likely made with cochineal-based, pigment, an extremely expensive and highly esteemed product in Spanish society and among artists, originating from the American colonies. The Sevillian artist uses this sash as a symbol, as many generals and nobles wore this type of garment to indicate their military status, but he also achieves a striking visual effect, making the Duke's chest appear even more pronounced, expanding within the very frame of the painting. It is also necessary to analyze the small golden jewel that appears on his chest, just below the sash, the Order of the Golden Fleece. This was a chivalric order created in the Late Middle Ages by the Dukes of Burgundy and had been passed on to the Spanish kings through Charles V. It was an extremely exclusive decoration and regalia, often limited to members of the royal family and the most fervent Catholic nobles associated with the Habsburg dynasty. By being represented with this order, the Duke, in a way, reaffirms his commitment to Spain, the royal family, and the Catholic faith. All these elements were essential to the composition of the portrait, which became a success and an example of Velázquez's skill, so much so that it pleased the duke, who, according to his biographer Antonio Palomino, gifted him a gold chain.[4]

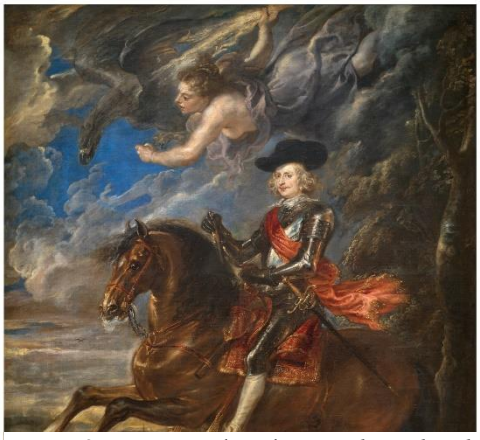

Image 3. Peter Paul Rubens. *El cardenal-infante Fernando de Austria, en la batalla de Nördlingen*, 1634 - 1635. Oil on canvas, 337,5 x 261 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

3. *La rendición de Breda*

All these elements, solid models and references from Tiziano and Caravaggio, the artistic education from Francisco Pacheco, the relationship with the members of the court, the understanding of the symbolic elements required by patrons, and the proximity to Olivares and Philip IV, made the Sevillian artist the most prepared for the task ahead: the project of the *Salón de los Reinos*. Despite the Thirty Years' War, Spain had achieved some important victories in the German theater stage of the war, as well as in the Netherlands, not only helping their Austrian cousins but also relieving their own front with the victories at Breda and Nördlingen, commanded respectively by Ambrosio Spinola and Philip IV's brother, Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, depicted by Rubens in his grandiose victory at Nördlingen (**image 3**). Furthermore, Philip IV felt

[4] "[...] retrató el Duque de Modena en Madrid, qui le dio una cadena de oro riquissima, que solia ponerse Velazquez algunas vezes al cuello, como era costumbre en los dias festivos de Palacio." (Palomino 1744, 79)
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secure in his dynastic and diplomatic position, with his marriage to the French Isabel de Bourbon and his son Don Baltasar Carlos prepared to succeed him. Between 1630 and 1635, the hall of realms was constructed as an annex to the Buen Retiro Palace in Madrid, which was named after the various coats of arms that adorned the ceiling, representing the many kingdoms that integrated Philip IV's empire, including the Kingdom of Portugal and the Duchy of Milan in Italy. This hall was to be dedicated to the important ceremonies of the Spanish court, at the center of the empire, and thus, a grand artistic program was conceived, featuring representations of major military victories, events, and myths, as well as portraits of members of the royal family, realized by the leading Spanish painters of the period, such as Vicente Carducho, Francisco de Zurbarán, and Velázquez himself. It is in the context of this titanic commission that the Sevillian artist, in addition to producing various portraits of the royal family for the hall, created *La Rendición de Breda* (**image 4**). The siege of Breda had ended nearly ten years before Velázquez painted his work in 1634 for the hall of realms. The siege had been initiated by the Spanish troops in August 1624, led by the Genoese general Ambrosio Spinola. Despite being one of the most successful military leaders under Spanish command, the Italian general had recently suffered a defeat in the Netherlands when he decided to besiege Bergen op Zoom in 1622, but under low morale circumstances and a rescue coming from Breda, Spinola had to retreat, tarnishing his reputation. This defeat must have provided extra motivation for him to achieve a victory against the United Provinces, with reports indicating that the italian general went against the recommendations of several of his counselors who opposed the siege of Breda (Van der Lem, 183) due to the financial cost of besieging a city that was extremely fortified, well-prepared, and stocked with a garrison and provisions capable of

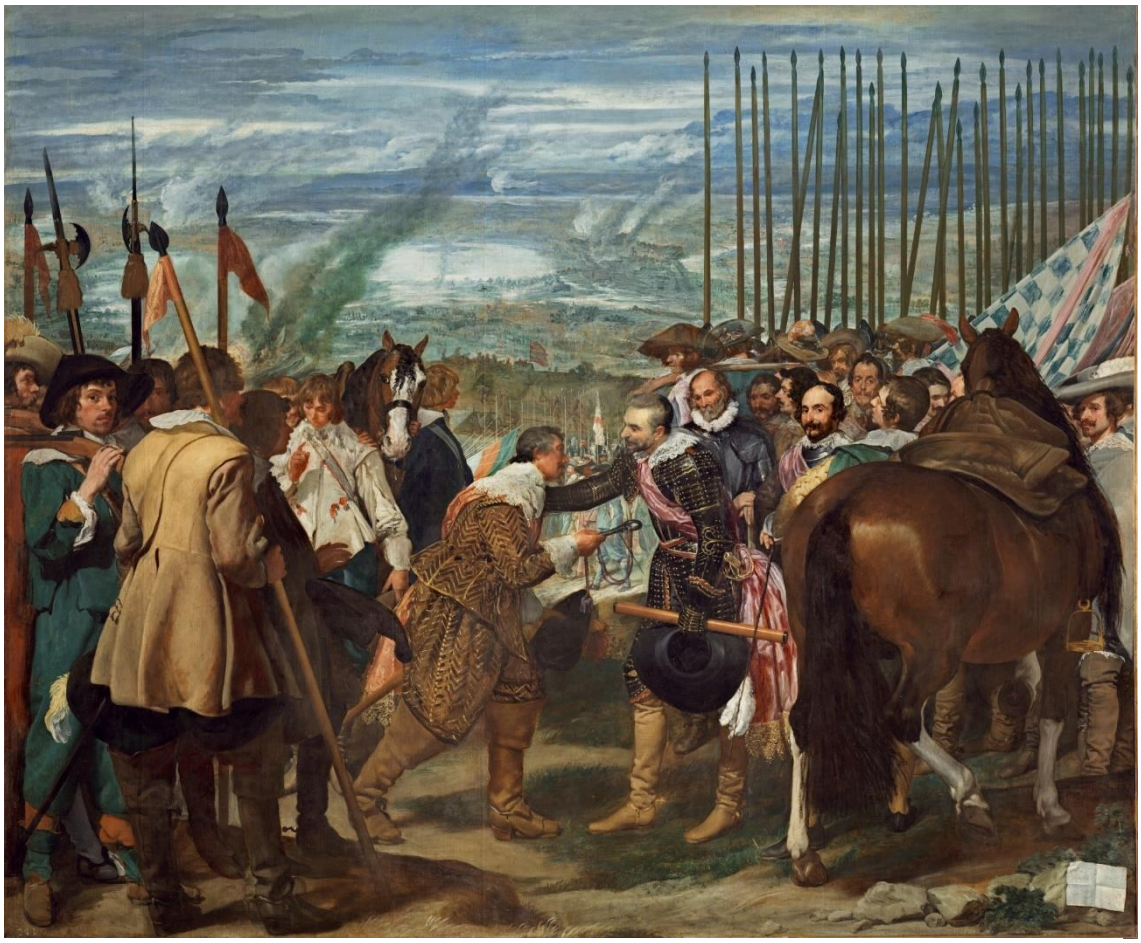

Image 4. Diego Velázquez. *Las lanzas o La rendición de Breda*, 1635. Oil on canvas, 307,3 x 371,5 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

withstanding a siege. However, Spinola also understood the strategic value of a city of this magnitude for Spain and its capacity to revitalize trade in the Spanish Netherlands, therefore, enabling to protect other cities under Spanish control on the northern border

Among the various events that occurred during the siege, the construction of an enormous circumvallation encompassing and isolating the city, the attempts by Maurice of Orange and his army to liberate the city by attacking Spinola's supply lines, and the visit to the siege by the heir to the Polish throne, Ladislaus, Velázquez chose not to depict the siege as it unfolded, but rather its conclusion: the act of surrender by the Breda garrison. In the foreground, the main scene unfolds between the two commanders, Ambrosio Spinola and Justinus of Nassau. The commander of the Dutch troops is dressed in gold and brown attire with an orange sash, representing the house of the princes of Orange and the stadtholders of the United Provinces. The commander looks directly at Spinola, while Velázquez portrays him with a lowered head and in a more submissive position, handing over the keys to the city of Breda, sealing the Spanish victory. The commander of the Spanish forces, the Italian Ambrosio Spinola, is dressed in black armor, richly detailed with gold, and covered by his red sash, a symbol of the captain generals of Spain, commanders of the armies of the Austrias. In his left hand, the Italian commander holds his command baton, as well as his cavalier hat, while with the other hand, he greets Justinus by placing it on his opponent's shoulder in a friendly gesture. It is interesting considering the significance of this choice by Velázquez, especially since this gesture is a topic of interest among various art historians, such as the French scholar André Chastel, who, in his essay *El Gesto en el Arte*, proposes a tool for analysis when discussing the gesture in Caravaggio's painting *San Matteo e l'angelo*:

> Este ejemplo nos encamina de imediato hacia dos grandes problemas que atañen al gesto en el arte. Uno es de orden epistemológico: cuando está claro, como aquí, que la interpretación de la obra pictórica puede y *debe* hacerse a partir de la «gestualidade», ¿hay que concluir – como hacen determinados autores contemporâneos – que, em el ámbito de la pintura como en todo lo que compete a la semiologia, el punto de vista propriamente artístico deba eclipsarse detrás del de la comunicación? Dicho de outro modo, los análisis que nos interesan ¿suponen una interpretación psicosociobilógica del arte, una Concepción reducionista de la representación? (Chastel 2004, 16 e 17)

When considering gestures, Chastel sees it as one of the determining elements to be analyzed in a work of art due to its communicative capacity and the transmission of intentions and ideas. This interpretation can and should start from the gestural aspect, and The Surrender of Breda is no exception, especially since the embrace between the two commanders is at the center of the composition. Another author who recognized the importance of this gestural proximity between the two commanders was Albert Boesten-Stengel. In his unavoidable text on Velázquez's work, which is part of a collection on the historian Carl Justi and his studies on Spanish art, the German author comments on the closeness of the two commanders and their friendly gesture. Boesten-Stengel seeks to recover some important sources from the period that may have served as references for the creation of the scene, such as the accounts of the Jesuit Herman Hugo about the siege—used as a source by Justi—as well as an important concept for describing the gesture between the two commanders, retrieved from Justi, the *relación*:

> Com la palaba r*elación* sólo puede referirse a la crónica latina *Obsidio Bredana* del jesuíta flamenco y capellán militar de las tropas españolas Herman Hugo, que

> fue publicada por primera vez em 1626, inmediatamente Después de la recuperación de la ciudad, y que luego tuvo numerosas ediciones. Justi se refere a ella como su «fuente» em el llamado relato de los «testigos oculares»: «Spinola saludó y abrazô al comandante con mirada amable (*humaniter salutans*) [...]». (Boesten-Stengel 2015, 160)

It is clear to the German author how Hugo's report and the literature of the period in general, with its various styles and genres, can help in the understanding of several elements of the painting, such as this friendly gesture between Justinus and Spinola, a construction not only of Velázquez's imaginative capacity but also one that is present in the mindset of the Spaniards of his time, who held an extremely idealized, almost chivalric, image of victory. Therefore, the terms *relación* and *humanita salutans* are crucial in Boesten-Stengel's interpretation. They convey to the German author this sense of cordiality and respect between the two, which is ultimately reflected in the very gesture itself.

Continuing with the analysis of Velázquez's painting, it is possible to see that both are part of two groups that divide the foreground of the painting: the group of Spanish soldiers and the group of Dutch soldiers. The group of Spanish soldiers is composed of at least fourteen identifiable figures. Some, positioned further back within the group's composition, cannot be identified, many shown in profile, with little space for details of their heads or backs. Nevertheless, there are prominent figures, such as the bald man with a large mustache and very dark hair, also wearing armor and a red sash, similar to Spinola's. He is most likely an important officer of the Spanish army, indicated by his proximity to the Italian commander in the composition and by the care Velázquez took in portraying him. It is important to remember that, despite Velázquez's naturalism and his careful attention in giving faces to many officers of both armies, only Justinus and Spinola are recognized. The other figures cannot be identified, or there is no consensus on this matter, not even concerning the officers, as stated by José López-Rey in his catalog on the Sevillian artist:

> It is possible that Velázquez painted from life some of the officers who had participated in the actual event some ten years before the painting was made. Yet, none of the Spaniards or Dutchman in the composition has been identified, except, of course, for Justinus of Nassau and Ambrosio Spinola. Some of the Spaniards resemble one another as if were variations of the same image. The same is the case of the two young Dutchmen seen in profile mentioned above. (López-Rey 2022, 144)

This is an important statement made by López-Rey, as there is this perception that the naturalism of the Sevillian painter was intended exclusively for the portraits of officers and soldiers who participated in the siege. However, based on the Spanish art historian's reading, it is revealed that the identification of the figures, at least on the Spanish side, may have been lost over time and could only have been recognizable to their contemporaries at the Spanish court. Furthermore, it is possible to consider that Velázquez may have worked with models without portraying an identifiable person or natural. However, there is one figure that can be identified, located just behind the horse in the left corner of the painting. It is an elegantly dressed man in gray clothing, wearing a cavalier hat with a plume, sporting a large, elegant goatee, as well as a full and pointed mustache. This could be a self-portrait of the Sevillian artist. But how is it possible to affirm that this is Velázquez himself? At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, there is a self-

portrait attributed to Velázquez (**image 5**) that bears several similarities to the figure depicted in The Surrender of Breda. Since the MET considers this a possibility of a self-portrait of the Sevillian artist[5], it is possible to connect his image to the gray-clad figure in The Surrender of Breda. It is also necessary to mention the other known self-portraits of the Sevillian master and the features of his face, such as his pointed nose and the characteristic goatee and mustache seen in these paintings.

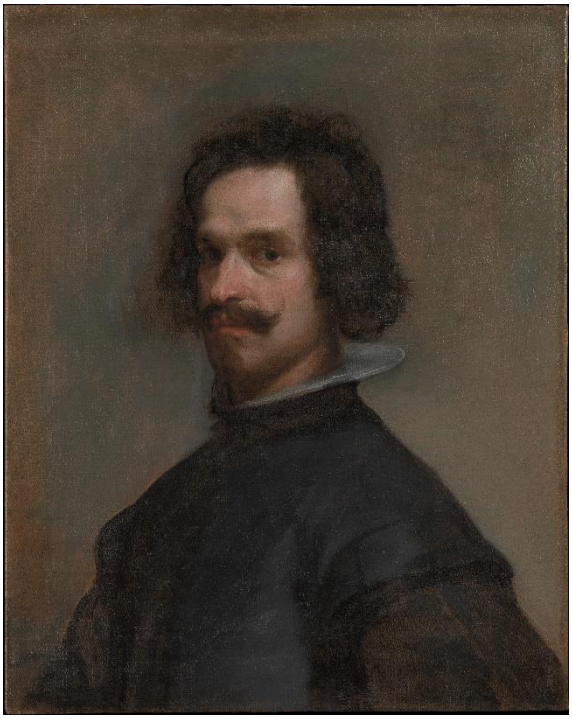

Image 5. Diego Velázquez. *Portrait of a Man, possibly a Self-Portrait*, ca. 1635. Oil on canvas, 68.6 x 55.2 cm. The MET, New York

When observing the Dutch group, one notices a smaller number of soldiers, eight of them, and like the Spanish group, it is not possible to identify any specific figure. Some of these soldiers stand out due to a series of singular characteristics, such as the youngest among them, who is near a horse and wears a white coat with red and floral details, who seems to be giving an order with one of his hands, although the observer cannot fully see what is happening. Perhaps the most prominent figure in the entire group is the soldier at the far right of the painting. The Dutch soldier is dressed in a green uniform, somewhat tattered, and unlike several figures in both groups, he is not wearing boots, not even a sign who could identify him as a knight or an officer. His shoes are also quite worn and tattered, as are his clothes, characterizing him more as a common infantryman than an officer of noble lineage with the resources to outfit and arm himself. On his legs, it is possible to observe two orange bandanas tied around his shins, most likely another reference to the House of Orange. This Dutch soldier also holds an arquebus with his right arm, resting it on his shoulder, indicating his role within the infantry. One of the most interesting elements is his face itself, as Velázquez seems to have paid great attention to the extremely detailed features and expressions of this soldier, who is looking directly at the viewer of the painting, with his tangled hair under a black hat and his goatee, which, as we can see, was a fashionable style for men in the 17th century. He becomes one of the most unsettling figures in the scene, precisely because Velázquez devoted such careful and naturalistic attention to portraying him, even though he represents the enemy, that is, the losing side. This time invested in this figure and in the Dutch group, in general, can be explained by a quote from López-Rey's catalogue:

> Later, Calderón de la Barca wrote a play, *The siege of Breda*, that was presented at the royal Alcázar in Madrid. It is likely that the young Velázquez, as king's painter, would have seen this performance at Court. The play closes with the handing-over of the keys by Justinus of Nassau who, in so doing, sees fortune

[5] The view that this painting is a self-portrait of Velázquez is so strong that, in addition to the curators and experts at the MET, one of the authorities on Spanish painting, Jonathan Brown, also recognizes this painting as such. All of this is discussed in a video made by the MET for its official YouTube channel. Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPsd9ZHY58E&ab_channel=TheMet

> turning even the most powerful monarchies into dust, while the same time Spinola tries to raise him from the gloom of defeat with the words, "the valour of the conquered makes the conqueror famous". With these words, in which there is self-regard though not self-complacency, the conqueror's stature is enhanced by that of the conquered and the banners of Spain are raised on the fortress to the accompaniment of victorious music and shouting. (López-Rey 2022, 143)

Despite depicting the defeat of the Dutch and the Spanish superiority in his painting, the Sevillian master seeks to balance this Spanish victory with a certain grandeur of the soldiers and commanders of the United Provinces, evidently following Calderón's interpretation in his play about the siege, including his own representation of the key delivery and the respectful atmosphere between the commanders as essential elements of the Spanish victory. This theme of the relationship between conqueror and conquered becomes even more evident in the symbolism created by Velázquez in the spears carried by each group. There are only five spears held by the Dutch group, with orange cloths tied to their tips, another clear reference to the House of Orange. These spears are relatively short and positioned diagonally, as if lowered and resting on the soldiers' shoulders. In contrast, the spears of the Spanish soldiers are much more numerous, numbering thirty. Furthermore, they are much taller, with a noticeable size difference compared to the Dutch spears. They are also organized differently, in a much more compact formation, giving the impression of a wall of spears, and are positioned vertically, demonstrating the readiness and triumph of the Spanish soldiers. These spears have become one of the most famous elements of this painting, if not the most emblematic aspect produced by Velázquez, even giving rise to the painting's alternative name, Las Lanzas. The spears are not just symbols of victory but also representations of the Tercios, the Spanish military units that used spears and arquebuses as their main weapons. The Tercios held enormous prestige, and many had their specific flags, such as the ones seen in this painting, featuring blue and white checkered patterns with the cross of Burgundy, symbols of the regiment commanded by Spinola. The spears are so significant as symbols of Spanish military power that the set painted by Velázquez has always received special attention, including from one of the great Spanish philosophers of the 20th century, José Ortega y Gasset:

> Estas «picas de Flandres», arma característica de los famosos tércios, eran entonces una obsesión para los españoles, tanto positiva como negativa. Ellas sostenían el Império de España y, la vez, costaban más dinero del que España podia gastar. Pocos años Después de pintarse este cuadro em uma batalla dada en Alemania, las picas se encendieron y las puntas eran llamitas. Referimos esto como ejemplode que esta arma había llegado a ser el símbolo del misticismo nacional. (Ortega y Gasset 2023, 441)

For the Spanish philosopher, this is not merely a sublime representation of victory, but the spears can also be seen as a great economic burden for the empire. Despite access to the silver and gold mines of the Americas, forced indigenous labor, trade facilitated by the maritime routes developed since the late 15th century, and the various European territories controlled by the Spanish kings, such as the Spanish Netherlands, the empire struggled to balance its accounts as early as the time of Charles V, the great-grandfather of Philip IV. His grandfather, Philip II, in order to achieve victory at Lepanto and pay for his military disasters in England and the United Provinces, was forced to declare state bankruptcy. It should not be forgotten that even after the success of the siege of Breda,

General Spinola himself was reluctant to return to the Netherlands, as he realized that any campaign would receive very few resources from the empire (Van der Lem, 187). By the end of the Eighty Years' War and the Thirty Years' War, Spain was bankrupt, and its power and prestige had categorically diminished, being downgraded on the stage of European colonial powers, particularly by Louis XIV's France, which would become the main force of Catholic absolutism on the continent.

Even with all the symbolic weight and emotional impact achieved by the Sevillian artist in the foreground, it is still possible to observe the background, which opens the scene to the vastness of the territory around the city of Breda, with several areas still on fire from the bombardments and battles, including the city itself. The entire backdrop has a bluish and grayish tone, very typical of Velázquez's landscapes, as seen in the equestrian portraits of the Spanish kings Philip III and Philip IV, all intended for the Salón de Reinos. Despite the expansive landscape dominating the background, one can still see, just behind where the commanders stand, the remaining Spanish and Dutch troops, with their flags and various spears, in a way threatening each other with their spears pointed, as if prepared for something to go wrong with the surrender, a spirit somewhat different from the troops in the foreground. When turning attention once again to the figures Velázquez chose to represent the soldiers, one cannot help but think of the Hispanic pride associated with this victory. Although this was a period still distant from modern nation-states and their elements, for the German art historian August Mayer, these figures possess characteristics that not only individualize them but also unite them as part of the same people and ethnicity:

> Junto a las cualidades de estos primeiros trabajos em general, nunca se acentuará como es debido al certo con que Velázquez logró expresar ya em sus primeras producciones la nota nacional. Y al decir esto, no nos referimos a la circunstancia de que tomara sus modelos del pueblo y reprodujera escenas puramente populares, sino a que supo describir em la forma el carácter de su raza que, a pesar de la fuerte individualización, estas personas adquieren uma importancia especial como expresión típica de la población en su conjunto. El elemento andaluz-africano, el tostado del sol, la altivez desenvuelta, todo esto adquiere ya um valor total em las obras primitivas de Velázquez. (Mayer 1926, 187)

This passage reveals how Mayer viewed Velázquez's works depicting human figures, even when referring to his early works: the Sevillian artist's ability to capture faces that embody very strong characteristics of the Spanish population from Andalusia, or as the German historian himself puts it, "the Andalusian-African element, sun-darkened." These strong features, born from the use of naturalistic models not necessarily drawn from Spanish nobility, can also be observed in The Surrender of Breda. In the painting, one can notice these various Castilian types on the Spanish side, such as Velázquez himself, while on the Dutch side, lighter-skinned individuals can be observed, contrasting with many of the Spaniards, particularly the figure of a Dutch soldier in green, who directs his gaze toward the viewer of the painting. Most likely, the figure was not a Dutch, but there would have been many foreigners from various parts of the Spanish Empire at the court of Philip IV. This included figures from Flanders, such as merchants or guild apprentices, who could have served as models for Velázquez to achieve, in some sense, this precise naturalism that involves the identities and characteristics of very distinct European peoples.

Despite the evident use of live models by the Sevillian artist to achieve the naturalism of the human body, one of the remarkable qualities in this history painting, it

is impossible to overlook Velázquez's imaginative capacity and how this characteristic is an essential part of the painting's construction. Velázquez's very choice to represent the handing over of the key by Justino de Nassau to General Spinola in an extremely friendly tone reveals the Sevillian artist's ability to create moments and imagine scenes based on dubious reports from distant lands, all with the purpose of further glorifying the Spanish victory. Why would the artist be so concerned with portraying common figures in such an individualized manner in a grand war painting? One of the keys to understanding this question lies in Daniel Arasse's work *Nada se vê*[6]. In the last essay of the book, the art historian dedicates a closer look at the painting Las Meninas and attempts to reinterpret it. In his effort to understand Velázquez's choices, Arasse offers the following explanation:

> Finally, it is clear that the king had commissioned from his painter a peculiar painting, a family portrait, and in his opinion, Palomino knew what he was talking about when he wrote that it was a *capricho*, a work of fantasy [...] And you add: the courtly brush. For if it was indeed the reflection in the mirror that sparked the meditations on the painting, including your own, it originally served as the pinnacle of a *capricho* to the glory of the monarch. (Arasse 2019, 140 and 142)

By borrowing the interpretation of the French art historian, it is possible to apply his concept of *capricho*, which in turn was rescued from Palomino's writings[7] on the Sevillian artist. Contrary to what Arasse implies, this term was not used by the Spanish biographer solely in reference to *Las Meninas*, but to all of Velázquez's works. This observation opens a path for interpreting the painting and goes further in regard to the painter's choices, from the scene of the key's surrender to the careful individualization of the soldiers. Perhaps the "mirror reflection" of The Surrender of Breda is the peaceful handing over of the key, along with the prominent depiction of the soldiers and their individualization, something that suggests this *capricho velázqueño*. If in *Las Meninas*, Arasse sees Velázquez's imaginative capacity with an intention to create the glory of the monarch, it can be assumed that in his war painting, the figure glorified is Ambrosio Spinola. However, just as there is the group which composes the royal family's entourage alongside the Infanta Margarita, Spinola is accompanied by his sub-officers and Spanish soldiers who make up the tercios and who were responsible for the war effort during the siege and achieved victory. This attention to the faces of both the Spanish and Dutch soldiers is a demonstration of the inventive capacity of the Sevillian artist and how this *capricho* helped him achieve a goal: to glorify Spain, but also its soldiers and their struggle. Of course, one of the most whimsical elements present in the painting is the presence of Velázquez himself among the Spanish group, as the last figure on the far left of the canvas. The Sevillian artist never left Madrid to visit the Netherlands, much less participate in the fight, yet there he is, his figure with a powerful gaze directed at the viewer of the painting, fully adorned in luxurious gray clothing, leather boots, and a cavalier hat with an imposing plume. His figure appears more like that of a noble sub-officer than that of a painter living in the Madrid court of Philip IV, with non-contact to war.

4. The Tradition of War Paintings

[6] This is a Brazilian translation to Portuguese from the original work of Arasse, *On n'y voit rien: descriptions*.
[7] [...] inclinò se à pintar com singularissimo capricho y notable genio [...] (Palomino1744, p. 77)

At this point, it is also important to revisit other works that may have served as a foundation and reference for Velázquez to design his war painting. One of the earliest is the mosaic found in Pompeii depicting the Battle of Issus between Alexander the Great and Darius III, now preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (National Archaeological Museum of Naples). Dated between 200 BC and 90 BC, this Roman mosaic is most likely a copy of a Greek original. Some elements stand out and echo the spirit of Velázquez's painting, such as Darius's gesture, in which despite being frightened, the king of kings raises his hand and points toward Alexander himself in a gesture of respect and a battle between equals. Boesten-Stengel (168) notes in his analysis that this gesture may also contain an element of terror, as the king of kings realizes the battle is lost. We also cannot ignore the presence of horses, which are scattered throughout the composition and play essential roles in the narrative, trampling soldiers, fleeing the battle in fear, and serving as mounts for their masters. Perhaps the most important element in the entire composition is the presence of spears, creating an intrinsic connection to Velázquez's painting. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make more direct associations between the mosaic and Velázquez's painting, as the ancient work would not be discovered in Pompeii until 1832, long after it was available for study by 17th-century artists. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that the Greek spears served as a model for the Sevillian artist, as the Macedonian phalanx strategies, which consists in compacts formations and the use of long spears, were commonly known and likely influenced Velázquez's depiction of the Spanish tercios. Moreover, there is something interesting that foreshadows Goya's future works and sets Velázquez's war painting apart: the presence of the dead and the suffering inflicted on Darius's soldiers. In the medieval period, there are also several interesting works that establish precedents, such as the Bayeux Tapestry, now conserved in a museum dedicated to it in the city of Bayeux, in Normandy. Depicting the conquest of England by William the Conqueror, the tapestry performs a dual function: it represents the major events and exalts figures such as the Norman King William himself, and it also depicts a series of typical figures with recognizable characteristics of their peoples across its seventy meters of length, such as the English Saxons with their custom of wearing mustaches, and the Normans, who were known for shaving the back of their heads. There are also scenes of knights on horseback carrying spears, not just swords or axes, reinforcing the symbolism of the spear as one of the primary weapons used in military formations. Something else that distinguishes the tapestry from Velázquez's work and brings it closer to Goya's is the presence of the dead and the horrors of war inflicted on the Anglo-Saxon people of England, with depictions of dismemberments and plundering by the invading army, such as a mother fleeing with her young child from a house set on fire by two soldiers.

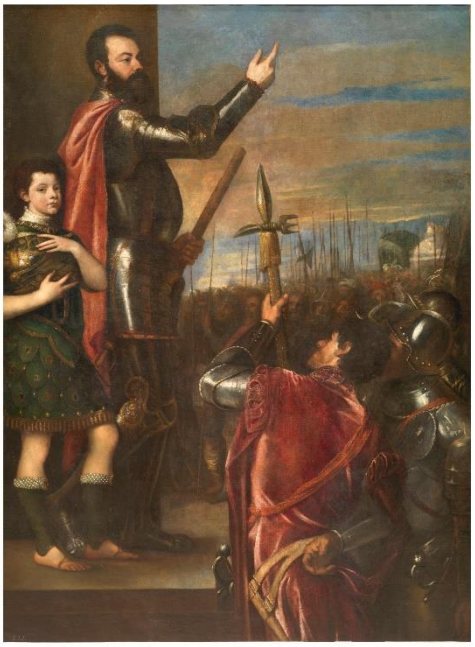

Image 6. Tiziano. *Alocución del marqués del Vasto a sus soldados*, 1540 - 1541. Oil on canvas, 223 x 165 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Piero della Francesca, in his frescoes at the Church of San Francesco in the city of Arezzo, depicted the Battle of the Milvian Bridge between the forces of the Christian

Roman Emperor Constantine and the pagan Maxentius. Once again, we see the separation of the rival groups, their colors and flags distinguishing them, and a aggregation of spears, particularly on the left side, where the numerous and lengthy weapons are densely packed, creating an effect reminiscent of a kind of wall, much like in Velázquez's painting. While it cannot be confirmed whether the Sevillian artist passed through Arezzo or encountered Piero's work during his two trips to Italy, it would have been available, and Velázquez might have heard reports about it or been familiar with it through some representation or drawing. Additionally, it is not possible to ignore the work of one of the main painters who had already passed through the Spanish court: Tiziano. Besides his previously mentioned works, Tiziano also produced the painting *Alocución del marqués del Vasto a sus soldados*, now conserved in the Museo Nacional del Prado (**Image 6**). This painting precisely refers to the most powerful traditions established for history paintings, which the Sevillian painter would use as a foundation: a laudatory representation of the military leader at a moment of triumph for his troops. In this scenario, it is not a military victory but rather a triumph of the speech. According to the report, the Marquis's troops were on the verge of rebellion in Italy due to a lack of payments and poor conditions. To calm the troops and prevent the worst, del Vasto gave a speech, positioning himself as a leader and raising the spirits of his soldiers, preventing a widespread mutiny. Despite a questionable military career, the nobleman is portrayed by Titian in all his splendor, with a red cloak and shining armor, delivering his speech to his troops with a gesture similar to a Roman emperor, raising one hand high while holding his command baton with the other. As Chastel writes (29), the Venetian artist is "the painter of princes and pontiffs." His capacity to elevate the Spanish commander to the level of a Roman emperor[8] through his posture and use of color is undeniable. Tiziano also manages to depict another element in the troops that would be employed by Velázquez: the spears, which were already an essential part of the Spanish army's weaponry and strategy.

5. Goya and His War Paintings: *2 de mayo* and *3 de mayo*

More than 160 years passed before Goya began experimenting with this type of history painting and the representation of war. However, at the beginning of his career, he focused on portraits of generals outside of war scenes, such as the portrait of the elderly and frail General Ricardos (**Image 7**). Despite his vibrant and elegant attire and decorations, the general's advanced age creates a sharp contrast for the viewer. This is no longer the case of the youthful Spinola dismounting his horse, but rather an aging Spanish general that requires a chair for rest. Another general portrayed by the Aragonese artist is José de Urrutia (**Image 8**), a veteran Spanish officer who is also elderly but depicted with more attributes of his role beyond his decorations, such as his command sword at his waist and a spyglass in his right hand, a tool for surveying the battlefield more broadly. Urrutia is also portrayed

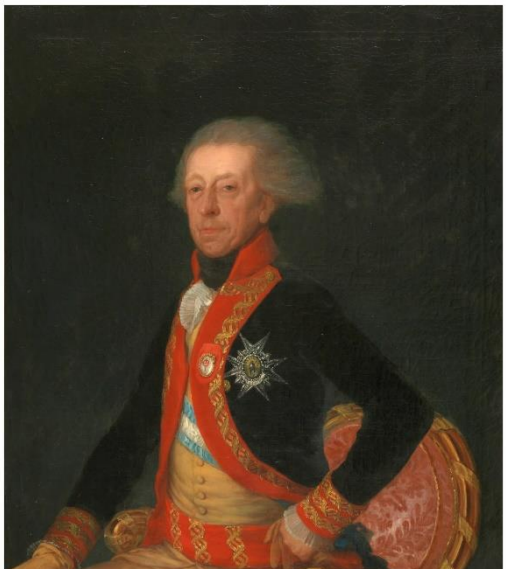

Image 7. Francisco de Goya. *El general Antonio Ricardos*, 1793. Oil on canvas, 112 x 84 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

[8] André Chastel refers to a very interesting painting by Tiziano, *Il Miracolo del Neonato*, from 1511, in which the Venetian artist already explores a Roman statue of Emperor Trajan with the same pose used years later for the Marquis of Vasto. (Chastel 2013, 52)

standing in an open environment, with a large mountainous landscape in the background, contrasting with the portrait of Ricardos. One example of Goya's painting that not only constructs the figure of the general but also shows the context of the struggle and the presence of the troops is the portrait of Manuel de Godoy, conserved at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Unlike the two generals, Godoy is depicted with a youthful appearance, with rosy cheeks and long brown hair, his uniform adorned with numerous decorations. He gazes intently at the flags in the painting's upper right corner, which bear the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Portugal, referencing the War of the Oranges, briefly fought between Portugal and Spain in 1801. Although it lasted only from May to June of that year, Godoy did not miss the opportunity to celebrate his involvement in the conflict as its main victorious commander, which Goya's portrayal, with troops and horses moving in the background of the painting, demonstrates this attempt to communicate to the observer Godoy's achievements and how the *Valido* of the Spanish kings possesses military value, not merely administrative. According to Xavier Bray (122), this is "an unprecedented scene of military history," which further highlights the singularity of the psychological study of the portrayed figure, who finds himself at the height of his power in the Spanish court and in the construction of Carlos IV's Valido as a general.

Despite all the care and effort of the Aragonese artist to depict a great victory, his representation of Spain was in a condition completely different from that of Velázquez's Spain. If, during the time of the Sevillian artist, there were already a series of financial, political, and military problems for Habsburg Spain, the Iberian nation during the 18th century and the early 19th was even worse. After undergoing a dynastic change during the War of Spanish Succession and a series of wars led by France that resulted in economic and political failures, the Spanish Empire began to face a number of problems and became an increasingly dependent state on its French Bourbon cousins. However, the event that changed the course of the country and, consequently, Francisco de Goya's painting, was the Napoleonic Invasion in 1808 and the Peninsular Wars, in the attempt by the Spaniards and their English allies to expel French troops. The Aragonese artist not only witnessed the horrors of war within his own country but also produced a series of works related to these events, such as his series of engravings *Los Desastres de la guerra*, and his paintings *2 de mayo* and *3 de mayo*, now exhibited at the Museo Nacional del Prado (**images 9 and 10**). Both paintings were created in a context following the French invasion, commissioned by the Spanish State upon Fernando VII's return to power. The scene depicted in 2 de mayo presents a large struggle in the streets of Madrid between various factions of the capital's population and Napoleon's French soldiers. The violence of the scene is evident, with several civilians stabbing the horses and soldiers with their own daggers, knocking down them from their mounts, while the majority of the population in

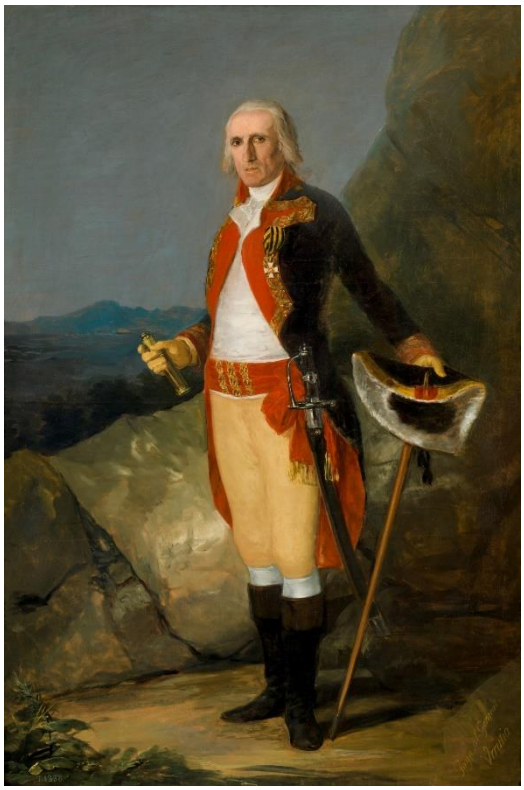

Image 8. Francisco de Goya. *El general don José de Urrutia*, 1798. Oil on canvas, 199,5 x 134,5 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

the painting's background approaches from behind the French soldiers and Mamelukes with muskets and more daggers, devastating the French lines. It is also noticeable that there are already several dead on the ground, with three bodies visible: one of a French soldier and two in very simple garments, most likely part of the Madrid combatants. Additionally, there is a Mameluke soldier who has just been stabbed by the dagger of a *madrileño* while being thrown off his horse. The violence is so pronounced in this painting that one can observe the amount of blood gushing from the already fallen bodies, soaking the clothing of the Mameluke soldiers, and in the foreground, a white horse belonging to one of Napoleon's soldiers is depicted being stabbed with a dagger by a *madrileño*, blood flowing from the equine.

If violence is already extremely present in this painting, Goya shows an even more horrific vision in his 3 de mayo. On the day following the revolt of the people in the city of Madrid, troops were called in to suppress the insurgents and restore order to the situation, particularly by using terror through the summary execution of the rebels. What the Aragonese artist depicts in this painting is precisely the moment before a summary

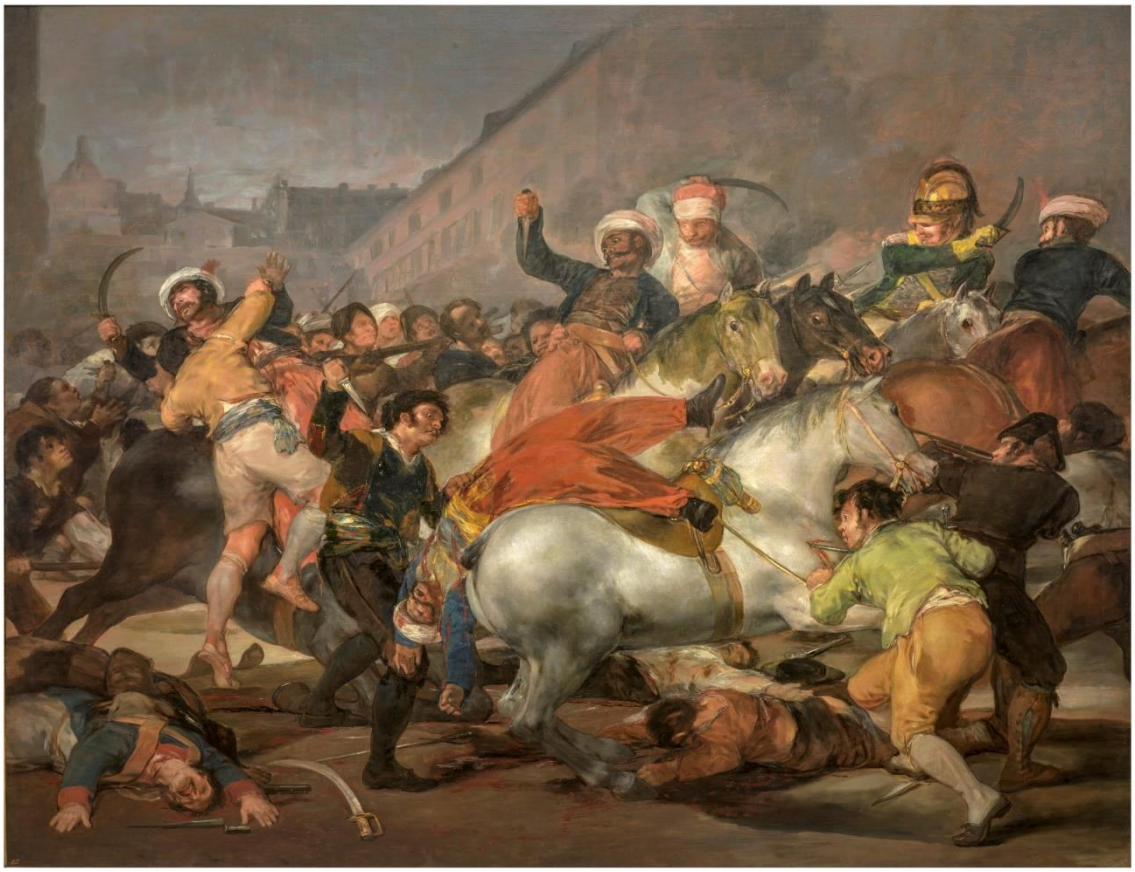

Image 9. Francisco de Goya. *El 2 de mayo de 1808 en Madrid o "La lucha con los mamelucos"*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 268,5 x 347,5 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

execution by firing squad. A group of men on the right side of the painting huddles together, embracing each other in terror and begging for mercy, with several bloodied bodies at their feet, shot all over. Among them, one figure stands out: a man in a white shirt and yellow pants with his arms spread wide, and in the palm of his right hand, a kind of hole or wound can be identified. This man dominates the composition, drawing the viewer’s gaze to him. One can also observe a line of people extending into the background of the painting, waiting in desperation with expressions of horror on their faces for the inevitable execution. In contrast, approximately five French soldiers, turned away from

the viewer, with their faces hidden, have their weapons aimed at the group of Spaniards to be executed, using a lantern on the ground to illuminate their victims.

These are two brutal images, representing not just a street fight, devoid of the chivalry and honor of the past, with blood spilling everywhere, but also followed by the representation of a defeat, with catastrophic consequences for the population that rises up against the French invaders. These two paintings are entirely different from The Surrender of Breda from Velázquez, both in style and historical context, distancing themselves from the work of his Sevillian predecessor. Certainly, these paintings are not only different when compared to Velázquez's style from a century and a half earlier, but they are also very unique compared to other contemporary history and war paintings created between

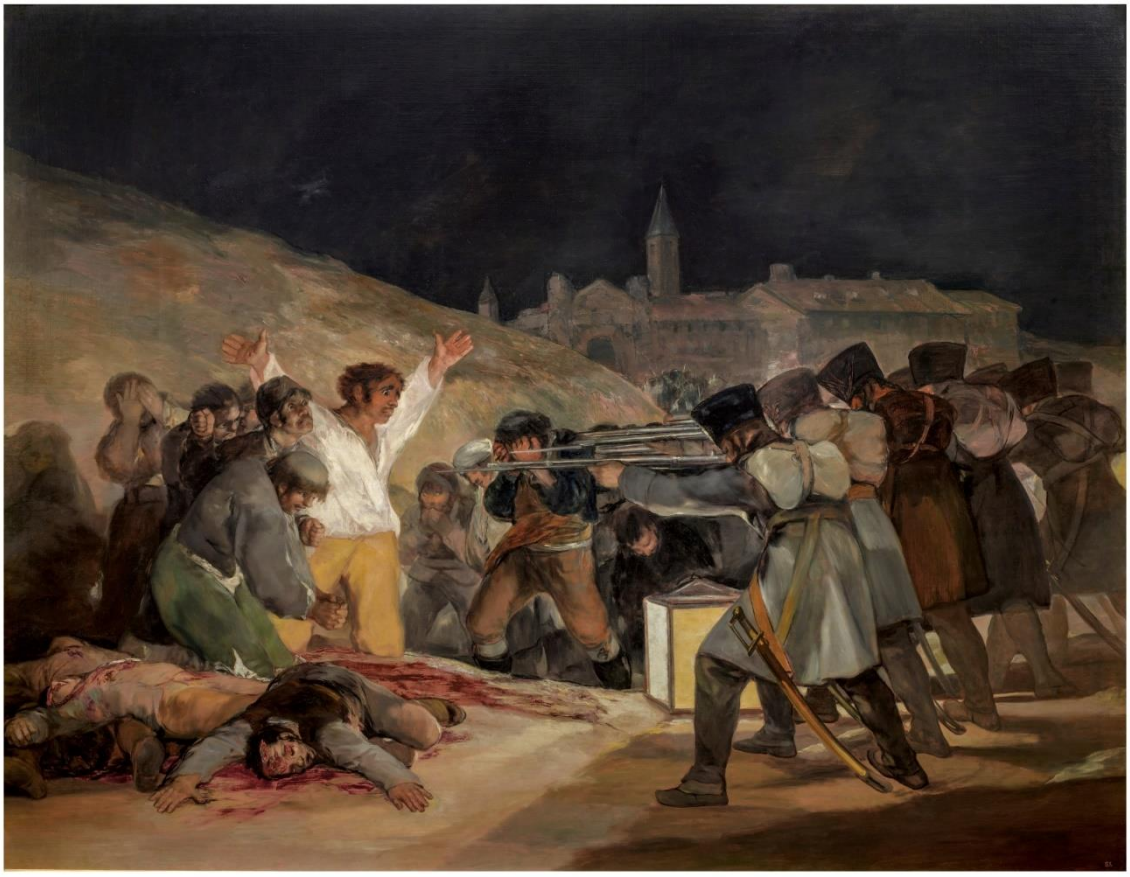

Image 10. Francisco de Goya. *El 3 de mayo en Madrid o "Los fusilamientos"*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 268 x 347 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

the 18th and 19th centuries. One only needs to observe the death of General Wolfe, painted by Benjamin West and now conserved in the National Gallery of Canada. There is practically no blood visible on the body of the British general, but rather a solemn fainting, his body posed in a manner modeled after Christian martyr paintings. Just as the death of General Wolfe is idealized and does not necessarily represent the events as they occurred, as already demonstrated with The Surrender of Breda, Goya also incorporates idealized elements into the event, such as the lantern and the outstretched arms, coinciding with the return of Ferdinand VII and justifying his reign against the terror of the French invasion. According to Janis A. Tomlinson (217), these paintings are propaganda for a Catholic Spanish observer, rather than a historical document reported by the Aragonese artist. For the author, a specialist in the life and work of the Aragonese artist:

> Goya crystalized atrocity in an iconic image of good versus evil, juxtaposing the fear and disorder of the prisoners, illuminated by a lantern and trapped by the hillside behind, with the merciless precision of guns raised by anonymous figures in greatcoats and shakoes. Religious differences again play a role, as the modern-day martyr in a white shirt raises his arms in futile surrender, to reveal the stigmata that mark his hands. (Tomlinson 2020, 217)

The wound on the hand of the figure in 3 de mayo is a communication with this Catholic Spain, completely traumatized and trying to rise from the ruins of a war fought on its territory, where, often, the population was forced to choose sides, submitting at times to the invader, at times to the guerrillas. Frequently, they faced reprisals, especially from the French, who plundered churches and towns and, as depicted in *los fusilamientos*, killed indiscriminately those who might have been involved with the resistance. This was a way for Goya to communicate with an audience that understood these images and was aware of their significance within those events. The Aragonese artist was not a complete hero of the resistance in this situation, as pointed out by Juliet Wilson-Bareau and Pierre Gassier (223), particularly since he accepted commissions from French Bonapartist collaborators, even though he had been the court painter for the Spanish royal family. It is as if Goya also searches to erase any doubt that he might have collaborated with or been complicit in the French regime. For a time, this worked, as shown in the document preserved in the Archivo General de Palacio, in Madrid, cited in the catalog produced by Gassier and Wilson-Bareau about the commission of the two paintings in 1814, in which Goya expresses his "burning desire to perpetuate by means of the brush the most notable and heroic actions and scenes of four glorious insurrections [...]" (Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, 223). The works of Velázquez and Goya have enormous differences, whether in style, choices, or historical context, yet it cannot be denied that these paintings are part of the history of Spanish art, due to both artists' interest in their common subjects and the vividness with which these characters are represented amidst the brutal events of Spanish history. These paintings represent the various tones and possibilities of the agents of Spanish history, not just its generals and kings.

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