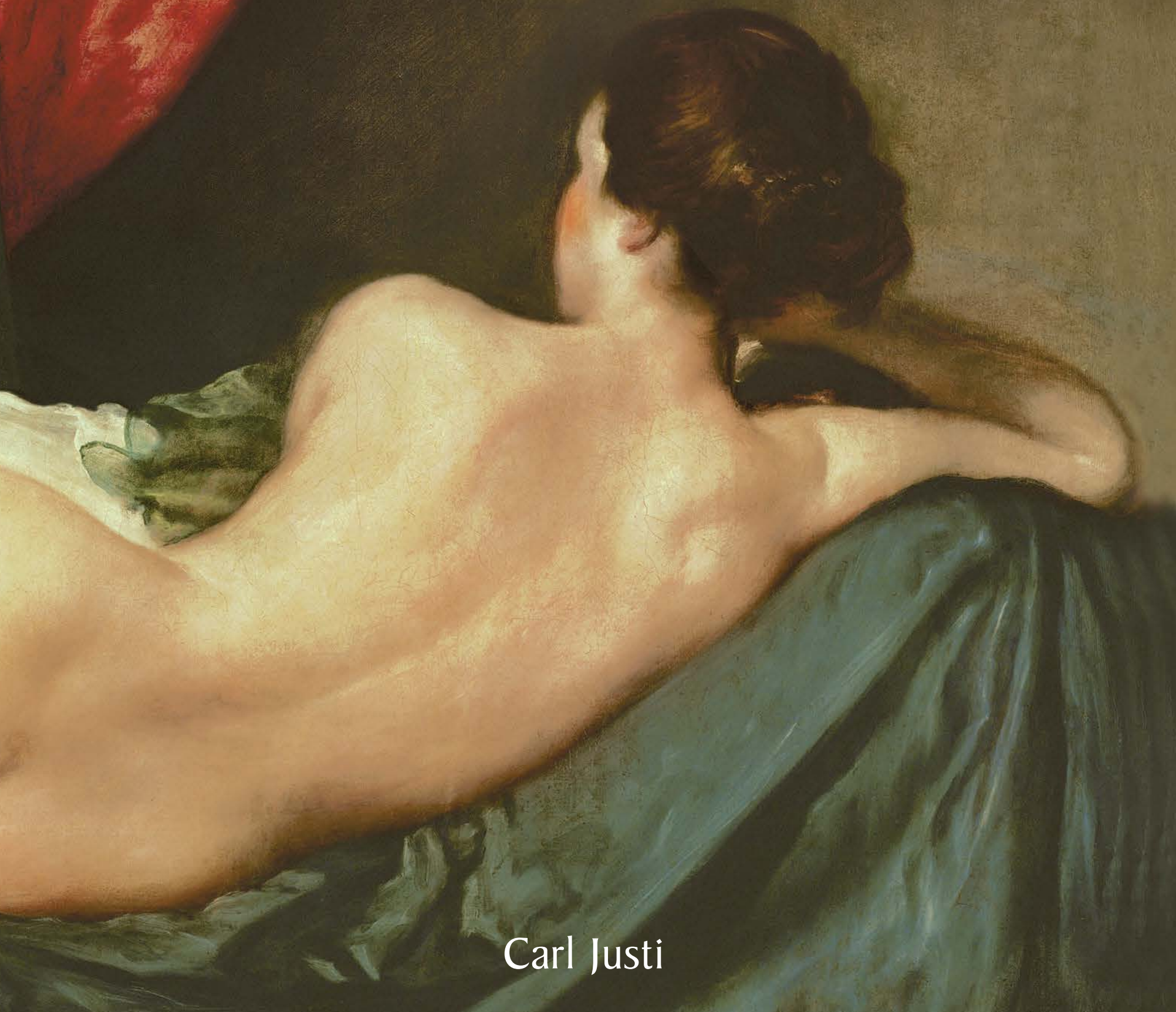


Velázquez

and his Times



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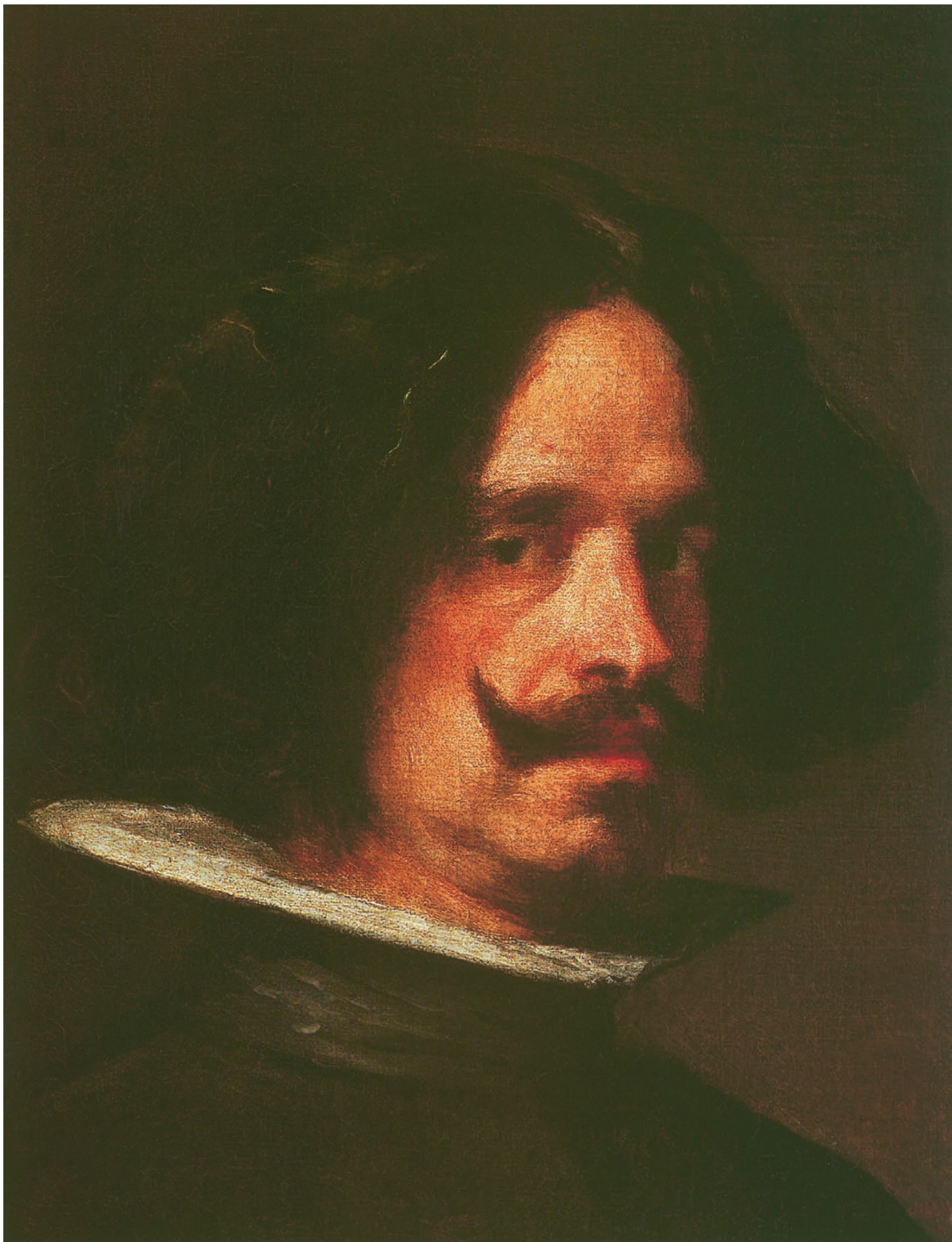
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VELÁZQUEZ

and his Times

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Introduction

Up until the late eighteenth century the name of Diego Velázquez was still very rarely known in most parts of Western Europe. The muster roll of the great painters seemed long closed, and no-one suspected that in the far west, in the palaces of Madrid and Buen Retiro, lay concealed the works of an artist who possessed a full claim to rank with the foremost of the great masters. It was thanks to a German painter named Raphael Mengs that Velázquez obtained his place in art history. Describing Velázquez's works as using a 'natural style', Mengs discovered him superior even to those whom he had hitherto regarded as the leaders in that field, artists such as Titian, Rembrandt, and Gerrit Dou.

"The best models of the natural style", Mengs wrote in 1776 to Antonio Ponz, the leader of Spanish art, "are the works of Diego Velázquez, in their knowledge of light and shade, in the play of aerial effect, which are the most important features of this style because they give a reflection of the truth". Velázquez is one of those individuals that brook no comparison with any others. All attempts to sum up such a person in a single sentence end only in platitudes or hyperbole. The Court painter of Charles III regarded him as the first of the naturalists. Piety and mysticism have been mentioned as the peculiar and dominant characteristics of Spanish art, and this may be true of its subject matter as well as of the strict religiosity of its exponents.

Spain has her solitary Murillo, whose intellectual calibre is comparable to that of devotional painters such as Guido, Carlo Dolce and Sassoferrato, but what places Velázquez far above these is the happy association of homely national types, local colouring and play of light seen through his naturalism and genial childlike character. What fascinates strangers about the Spanish religious paintings is not so much their wealth of feeling and depth of symbolism as a certain touch of earnestness, simplicity and downright honesty.

These artists were far from making religious subjects a pretext for introducing charming motives of a different order, but with medieval artlessness they never hesitated to transfer such subjects to a Spanish environment. In the fifteenth century we find the retablo painters of the provincial schools, under the influence of the Flemings, already showing similar tendencies, even within the narrow bounds of "Gothic" art. But the intruding Italian spirit soon arrested these beginnings of a genuine national school. For an entire century the Spaniards devoted themselves to idealism with the result that, for all their pains, they produced nothing but indifferent works.

Then followed the reaction in the opposite system but now with very different artistic powers. The invariable effect of this system was to give scope to individuality, pointing as it did to Nature as the true source of inspiration, and placing talent on an independent footing. But these very Spanish masters, of a pure and even rugged type, became known throughout the world and created the idea of what is called the Spanish School. Of this group, Velázquez was the most consistent in principle; he possessed the greatest technical skill, and the truest painter's eye. Hence, from the material standpoint, he may be accepted not only as the one almost purely secular Spanish painter, but the most Spanish of the Spanish painters.

Velázquez was often attracted by what was difficult to grasp and reproduce, but what at the same time was of daily occurrence, familiar as sunlight itself. Few others have given less free rein to the play of fancy, or turned to such little account the opportunities of immortalising beauty, and few also have shown less sympathy with the yearning of human nature for that unreal which consoles us in the realities of life. But his portraits, landscapes and hunting scenes, all that he ever did, may be taken as standards by which to measure the depth of the conventional in others. The medium though which he viewed Nature absorbed, to use a physical illustration, fewer colour elements than that of other artists. Compared with Velázquez, Titian's colouring seems conventional, Rembrandt fantastic, and Rubens infected

1. *Self-Portrait*, c.1640.
Oil on canvas, 45.8 x 38 cm.
Museo de Bellas Artes de San Pio V,
Valencia.

with a dash of unnatural mannerism. Whatever Velázquez saw he transferred to the canvas by methods of a constantly varying and even impromptu character, which are often a puzzle to painters. He impresses the great majority of those who handle the brush, especially by the outward display of those expedients, as the most ingenious of all artists, that is, one who can make the most out of the slenderest resources, and we often forget that for him this is merely a means to the end. Hence the never-failing attraction possessed by Velázquez' works. The lifelike charm that they exercise lies both in their outward and inward aspects, in the glow of the complexion and the revelation of the will, in the breathing, throbbing glance and the depth of character. Compared with the colourists of the Venetian and Dutch schools, Velázquez appears even prosaic and jejune; and we scarcely know an artist with fewer attractions for the uninitiated. In each individual work he is new and special, both as regards invention and technique. The interest and enthusiasm with which we contemplate art works of the past would appear to depend not only on a yearning after historic knowledge or on the practical utility of such studies; it must also be somewhat independent of our attitude in the idle discussion about the superiority of old or modern art.

Painters declare that, in regard to technique, they have nothing more to learn from the old masters. The times of Cervantes and Murillo in Spain, when special forms were created for special material, conditions and ways of thought, may also be taken as a special, if somewhat limited, phase of humanity, entitled to a niche in its pantheon, and not merely to a page in the records of historical finds. The *Museo Pictorio* was the only source of information regarding Velázquez and his associates outside Spain down to the twentieth century. The account of Velázquez' life contained in it was translated into English in 1739, into French in 1749, and into German (in Dresden) in 1781. D'Argenville's *Biography* (1745) is a mere summary of this account. Antonio Ponz introduced a few descriptions of paintings into his *Art Journey* (Madrid, 1772). But not until the nineteenth century was it possible for the name of Velázquez to take a prominent and clearly defined position in the history of art. The lead was taken by England, thanks to the general love of travel and to a preference for the Spanish School, which was already represented in private collections during the eighteenth century. The first readable biography of Velázquez we owe to a Scottish baronet, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell (1818-1878). It first appeared in the *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (London, 1848), and afterwards in a separate edition.

A better connoisseur than Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, although now regarded as somewhat optimistic, was Richard Ford (1796), the genial companion of all travellers in Spain. His *Handbook of Spain*, first issued in 1845, is altogether incomparable, the work of one deeply read in ancient and modern authors, seasoned with humour, sarcasm and sympathy, based on knowledge of the people, saturated with the very atmosphere of the land. His article on Velázquez in the *Penny Cyclopaedia* is the best in the English language. The greatest services, however, have been rendered by Don Gregorio Cruzada Villaamil (1832-1885). He republished the extremely rare books of Carducho and Pacheco, which are so important for the study of the Spanish painting of this period, and to him we owe the publication in 1874 of the documents on Velázquez' patent of nobility from the archives of the Order in Ucles. A book published in the late nineteenth century by Charles B. Curtis of New York is another remarkable record of Velázquez' work.

Evidently a labour of love and the result of some twenty years' industry, it aims at a classified description of everything that has borne the name of Velázquez, together with the history of the paintings, their prices, and an inventory of all the reproductions, of which Curtis himself apparently possessed the most complete collection. Although the study of archives and the like are for us mere intervals of repose in the midst of our proper labours spent on the works themselves, on the laws and technique of art, yet in the present case these intervals have been few and far between. Thus, for example, handwritten copies had to be made of the inventories of the royal palaces, from which conclusions could be formed regarding the industry displayed by Velázquez in the arrangement of collections. The archives of Venice, Naples, Florence, Modena, and elsewhere in Italy contain, besides some letters referring to the master, many items which often throw a surprising light on persons and circumstances mentioned in his biography. The history of an artist is, above all, the history of his works; these may with the greatest ease be determined, even where biographical evidence fails us.

2. *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, c.1625.
Oil on canvas, 209 x 110 cm.
Collection Varez-Fisa.





His Early Years

Artistic background of the Era

Mankind generally takes an interest in the outward circumstances and surroundings of those who have left a deep impression behind them. They may have been public benefactors, people of distinction, or simply objects of affection. We are curious about their birthplaces and early associations, the mountain air that they may have breathed, the graves where they found rest. We seek information regarding their forefathers, their teachers, and their companions in life, and biographies now usually take account of this natural tendency, especially in the case of those whose activity has been displayed in the realm of fancy. The following sentences will accordingly be devoted to the city of Seville and its society, to the changes of taste between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to the leading artists who flourished about the beginning of the latter. What Seville was in former times we do not yet need to discover in musty records, or to conjecture from ruined monuments.

There still survive Jaber's famous minaret and the orange court of the mosque, with the *puerta del perdon*, Don Pedro's *alcazar* and garden that used to serve as a royal residence, and lastly the stupendous cathedral, where, according to local tradition, the canons resolved during a vacancy in see to erect something in the spirit of the builders of the tower of Babel – a structure without founder or architect, a work of many generations of canons, deans and archbishops, aided by a colony of native and foreign artists. Seville had from of old prided herself on her wealth and devotion, on the elegance of her houses and the munificence of her benevolent institutions, on the beauty of her boys and the bravery of her nobles.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century wealth accumulated with unheard of rapidity when the city became the great and exclusive outlet of trade with the New World, and the Silver Fleet first entered and sailed from the port. The colonial trade was regulated by the *Casa de Contratación*, while the great merchants enjoyed a monopoly of the commerce of the seas. They controlled the markets of the old Mediterranean ports, and even those of the north, whose dealers brought their wares to this commercial metropolis of the Peninsula, at that time, of course, the centre of a world-wide empire.

Revenues and customs, the value of land, the population, all increased, and this universal commerce brought about quite new social groups. There were thus developed three sharply defined classes: (1) natives descended from colonists and remnants of the old inhabitants, nobles and people; sedate, brave, wealthy, living on their income or on their manual labour, never wandering abroad; (2) the foreign traders, whose colonies – German, Flemish, French, Italian – are still recalled by the corresponding street names; (3) the idlers, ne'er-do-wells, loafers and gamblers, who occasionally supplied trained bands for the wars against the Moriscos. With these elements the place was thronged to overflowing, and "as in China, the river itself became inhabited".

The reign of Philip III, coincident with the youth of Velázquez, is indicated by the chronicler as precisely the epoch when these changes set in. These were the times of great foundations, the high water mark of the spirit of enterprise. In the seventeenth century, church and change were still close neighbours. Before the *lonja* was finished the merchants used to assemble on the open space raised on steps before the cathedral. In the neighbouring streets auctions were held of silverware, slaves, fabrics, cabinet-work, paintings, all as in the temple of the goddess Libitina, says Rodrigo Caro. Seville was also a very Catholic city; after the conquest her Moorish palaces had been converted into convents. Yet despite all this, and despite the humanistic Italian culture and poetry, at that time all the rage, Seville had remained, as she still remains, an essentially Oriental city.

3. *Portrait of a Man with a Goatee*
(Francisco Pacheco?), 1620-1622.
Oil on canvas, 41 x 36 cm.
Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Since the middle of the sixteenth century Italian culture had also permeated the educated classes of Seville. After the introduction of Latin studies by Antonio de Lebrija (1444-1522) the reading of old and contemporary Italian poets gave rise to a new world of sentiment and of literary forms within the rigid limits of Catholic tradition.

With the neglect which every epoch shows for its immediate precursor, earlier poetic creations were often overlooked, even those that alone now have any charm for us: writers became absorbed in the memories of old Roman times, and poetic tears were shed over their disappearance.

Hernando de Herrera, “the divine”, most famous of Seville’s poets (1534-97), followed closely in the steps of Boscan and Garcilaso, the latter in his opinion the greatest of Spanish poets. According to Pacheco, Herrera was the first to bring the language to its highest perfection. He considered the sonnet the most beautiful form both of Spanish and Italian poetry.

Pedro de Mexia (d. 1555), at one time the most formidable swordsman in Salamanca, in later years, when broken in health and suffering from long-standing headaches, composed one of those collections of favourite miscellanea, mostly from old writers and in the manner of Macrobius, the *Silva de Varia Leccion*, that was translated into many languages, and was universally read in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Unlike poets, painters had fortunately no opportunity to depict battles of giants and romances of the Psyche type. But even more completely than the poets they had renounced the hitherto current speech in favour of a foreign idiom. As Herando de Hozes held, since the introduction of the Tuscan measures, everything hitherto composed in the old Spanish metrical system had lost such favour that few any longer thought it worth reading. The leading artists and enlightened spirits now talked of the local Gothic barbarism swept away by the first visitors to Rome.

The paintings of the leaders of the new style in Seville are full of borrowings from and reminiscences of Italy. Herrera required all expression to be banished from lofty poetic effusions which could impart a familiar, commonplace tone to the thought; and in fact the Spanish of these poets became overladen with foreign idioms taken from the Latin and Italian languages.

In the same way the rich local colouring of medieval art vanished from the pictures of this period. We seek in vain for national types and characteristics, for distinctive local motives and tones in works which might just as well have been painted in Utrecht or Florence.

But in the childhood and youth of Diego Velázquez these stars of the Italian-Spanish firmament were already on the wane. Quite a new, yet fundamentally an older, national taste had been awakened. The Renaissance was ushered into Seville during the first decade of the sixteenth century.

At that time Niculoso Francisco, from Pisa, was turning out terracottas in the Robbia style. In 1519 Don Fadrique de Rivera erected in Genoa monuments to his parents, the richest example of the Italian sepulchral style in Spain. But in the third decade we meet the plateresque style of the Spaniard Diego de Riano and his associates, treated with perfect mastery and a stamp of individuality. To this period also belong those sumptuous buildings so richly decorated with sculptures, the town hall, the great sacristy, and the *Capella Real*, the royal chapel.

But not till the middle of the century do we meet with groups of painters of the pure Italian school, the Mannerists, who broke completely with the past. At about the same time the Jesuits made their first appearance in Seville (1554). The new era had dawned somewhat earlier in Castile, where Alonso Berruguete, who returned from Italy in 1520, and Gaspar Becerra are described as “the extraordinary men, who banished the barbarism that still held its ground there”. The last of the Arphe group broke with the picturesque style of Diego de Siloe and Covarrubias, of whom the latter, although said to have been inspired by Bramante and Alberti, could never quite forget the modern, or Gothic, style.

4. Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*,
1638-1640.
Oil on canvas, 109 x 85 cm.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

5. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), *Charles V*, 1548.
Oil on canvas, 205 x 122 cm.
Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

6. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), *Self-Portrait*,
1567.
Oil on canvas, 86 x 65 cm.
Museo del Prado, Madrid.









Thus these works, which certainly did not lack unity, came to be stigmatised as of a mixed style (*mezcla*) Arphe's statements regarding the changes of taste down to the Escorial style were accepted until the nineteenth century.

This "Spanish Cellini's" didactic poem, *Varia Comensuracion*, in three books (1585), became the gospel of the Spanish *cinquecento*, preaching rigorous regularity, the eschewing of the arbitrary and fantastic, and sobriety in ornamentation. He aspires to teach the right proportions, from the human figure and architectural works down to the sacred vessels of the Church, whose splendour culminated in the gigantic monstrances which were his family's best claim to fame.

The study of proportion and of the nude became the guiding star of painting; the beautiful became a function of numbers. Alonso Berruguete had brought from Italy the perfect proportions of the ancients – ten face-lengths to the whole figure. He at first met with opposition, but he was supported by Gaspar Becerra, who had worked with Vasari in the chapel of Trinita dei Monti in Rome, and who had also prepared in Rome the drawings for Dr Juan de Valaverde's *Anatomy* (1554). This was the time when Spanish artists flocked to Rome and Florence, where they spent a part of their life, and occasionally even settled permanently.

The first introduction of the new style saw more foreigners, certainly Dutchmen, appear on the scene in Seville. The northern stonecutters, glass painters and carvers of the Gothic period were now followed by a stream of painters from the same region. But even before this invasion some painters on glass had already adopted the Italian manner.

For many years, from 1534, Arnao de Flandes and Arnao de Vergara had supplied the great church windows, pompous compositions full of figures after Italian models; in the Lazarus, for instance, may be detected the influence of Sebastián del Piombo. But for variety of subjects and styles, as well as execution, all were eclipsed by the artist Peeter de Kempeneer, known as Maese Pedro Campana in Seville, where, according to Pacheco, he died in his ninety-eighth year, in 1588.

7. Anonymous, *View of Seville* (detail), 1607.
Lithograph.



He was one of those who, after passing through their native schools, developed during their Italian travels an individual style, constantly modified according to circumstances. He first appeared as a decorative painter of the triumphal arch at the entry of Charles V into Bologna in 1530.

Then he studied the antique, and Pacheco still possesses many of his “learned pen-and-ink drawings”. None of his successors adhered so closely, especially in the draperies, to the old statues. But in his masterpiece, *The Reredos of the Mariscal* (1553), we recognise a deep study of Raphael, to whose lines few of that school approached so near.

The reader can already surmise what kind of masters are here in question. General regular forms, indifferent meaningless faces, postures disposed with a view to display anatomical knowledge, foreshortenings, the arrangement in space calculated to provide difficult problems in perspective, and complete subordination of the colouring.

In Italy and the Low Countries many of these works would fail to attract attention, and it is difficult to understand what their contemporaries found to admire in these “restorers” of painting.

It is further noteworthy that almost every important new work was based on an Italian original, or on the copper plate by which its composition was transplanted to Spain. The engravings of Marc Antonio and the Ghisi were well known and popular; Pacheco mentions the works of the Wierix, Egidius Sadeler and Lucas Kilian, while Céspedes, tells us that plates after Spranger were spread abroad. A somewhat later and remarkable artist was the Cordovan prebendary, Pablo de Céspedes (1538-1618.)

He was twice in Rome, the first time for seven years in close intimacy with Cesar de Arbasia, an Italian who later executed frescoes in Malaga and Cordova, works displaying far more invention and character, especially in the broad effects of space and light, than those of his Spanish contemporaries. To this period belong other names which have become as famous for some imperishable works as for eccentricities never before seen in the history of art.

8. Matthäus Merian, the Elder, *View of Seville from Triana*, undated.
Lithograph.
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.



Berruguete's grimaces and convulsions in the Saint Benito *reredos*, Juan de Juni's uncouth distortions, Maroles' frightful vampire figures, El Greco's ghost and caoutchouc forms – these last in countless repetitions – show how rapidly their stock of acquired knowledge and taste was exhausted, and how readily they could trade upon the simplicity of their public.

They may possibly also have tried by powerful oddities of this sort to overcome the indifference shown to their learned style. But while under the depressing influence of the Italians they lost all sense of the national spirit, a reaction was sure sooner or later to set in, and this led in the seventeenth century to a revival of Spanish feeling. Felipe de Guevara, a contemporary of Charles V, had already mentioned imitation as the bane of Spanish talent.

At the close of the sixteenth century this vapid art rested only on the weak shoulders of a few laggards such as Pacheco and Alonso Vázquez. The last achievement of the period was the tomb of Philip II, in which the best features of the three arts were displayed jointly with poetry. In this ambitious structure the best statues were executed by Martínez Montañés, a young sculptor who was destined to transmit under another form the spirit of the moribund school to the next century.

His groups and figures, breathing a classical sense of form and a pensive earnestness, while still somewhat monotonous, still exhibited a new and national charm foreign to the Italian style through the application of bright painting in oil colours combined with gold. The chief energy of this not yet sufficiently appreciated painter, Juand de la Roelas (ca. 1558- 1625), who, according to Palomino, was born in Seville of Flemish parents, was displayed in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.

He gave Cean Bermudez the impression that he “understood the laws of draughtsmanship and composition better than any other Andalusian”. It would be more to the point to say that he was the first real painter that the sixteenth century had given birth to in that region. His beginnings and early development are obscure, and some works of his that survive were conceived in the characterless, frosty style of the Mannerists.

He was the first to combine naturalism with mysticism, the two elements whose fusion imparted its special character to the Sevillian painting of the next generation. But this style he appears to have acquired later in life and, of course, in Italy. Yet in his forms, in his sentiment and technique there is a peculiar blend of the Spanish and Flemish style, and to this foreign ingredient may perhaps be due his lack of full recognition.

He handled all the popular elements of Spanish devotion with rare invention and great success, almost every piece showing him in a new aspect. He gives us sturdy, at times coarse, figures and broad well-nurtured faces, some of an Andalusian but some also of a Teutonic cast. His subjects are full of life, pervaded by an irrepressible cheerfulness, displayed alike in the solemn events of Scripture, the familiar scenes of the Holy Family, and even in paintings of martyrs. The often grim asceticism of his precursors, as well as the sober, timid earnestness of successors such as Zurbarán and other laymen, pale before the thoroughly Rubens-like cheerfulness of de las Roelas.

But, what is most important, Roelas was the first Sevillian painter in *chiaroscuro*, which he even made the characteristic feature of his art. His system is quite peculiar: he banishes the grey, brown, and black shades, and models the chief figures in a warm tone, either yellowish or reddish, with vivid, saturated, transparent colours, such as orange, deep crimson, blue or violet, now in direct play of light, now as a silhouette in a warm half-tone. Then he breaks through the scene with a broad sunlit middle distance, over against a flood of heavenly light bursting through the clouds.

In his *chiaroscuro*, in the grand cast of his figures, which are crowded forward as if in too confined a space, in his simple dignified draperies, in the softness of the flesh tints, he recalls rather the school of Parma, Schidone for instance. Only his genial, national, unaffected simplicity is somewhat akin to the northern spirit. Roelas' *Pentecost* in the Hospital de la Sangre is unrivalled in Seville as a representation of an assembly of apostolic dignity, but under the guise of the most genuine national types.

9. *Democritus*, 1628-1629.
Oil on canvas, 101 x 81 cm.
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen.



No oratorical gestures, no forced ecstasy, nothing but that almost cheerful sensation which accompanies true elevation of the spiritual faculty. Here warm light from a radiant sun falls on the semi-circular group in the foreground, while those behind remain buried in gloom.

But Roelas' masterpiece, and the best painting produced in Seville before Murillo, was the central piece in the great *rearedos* of the Jesuits' church. It would be perfect but for its complex character, for it is really comprised of five separate subjects rolled into one. Still, the Virgin is a delightful embodiment of tender, dignified womanhood, in a liquid golden tone suggestive more of some of Rembrandt's female portraits than of Titian's.

In 1615 Roelas went to Madrid and competed for the vacant post of Painter to the King. He was sadly passed over in favour of the wretched portraitist Bartolome Gonzalez, portraiture being at that time the chief occupation of the Court painters. No portraits by Roelas are known to exist. The Spaniards regard Francisco De Herrera (1576-1636) as the creator of their national style, a role which seems to have been first mentioned in the time of Raphael Mengs. Hence his portrait in the Biblioteca Colombiana bears the legend : *Formo un nuevo estilo proprio del genio nacional* ("He created a new style adapted to the national genius").

10. *Three Musicians (Musical Trio)*,
1617-1618.
Oil on canvas, 87 x 110 cm.
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

11. Bartolomé Esteban Perez Murillo,
Boy with a Dog, c.1655.
Oil on canvas, 78 x 62 cm.
The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg.

In his youth a wild misanthropist, he educated himself in solitude, a pure naturalist from the first, full of scorn for the narrow, petty theories of the school of Vargas. In the latest history of the school, terms like titanic, genius, marvel and Michelangelo are still freely bandied about. According to Palomino, he was so stern, harsh and ruthless that his own children fled from the paternal roof as from a hell on earth.

His daughter entered a convent, and his son Francis went to Italy, taking with him 60,000 pesos. His skill at engraving he misapplied to forging coins, and escaped from justice by taking refuge in the Jesuits' College of Saint Hermenegild, for which he painted the altar-piece.







When Philip IV visited this church in 1624 he heard of the occurrence and sending for the delinquent addressed him; “The man who possesses so much skill should not misapply it. What need is there of gold and silver? Go! You are free: only beware of a relapse”.

We come now to what is thought of as his greatest work, *The Last Judgment* in the parish church of Saint Bernardo. Although in a subject of this sort he must have been entirely in his element, we feel ourselves disenchanted. Cean Bermudez praises “the art of the composition, the contrasts of the figures, the well-balanced groups, the elevated, philosophic expressions”.

The colouring and *chiaroscuro* are those of Roelas, only somewhat more vigorous. The light penetrating from the left divides the vast tableau and gives a sharper outline to the figures; the colouring is more pasty, less softened, eked out by brown touches. The truth would therefore seem to be that Herrera derived his style from Roelas, who came to Seville, and attained perfection when Herrera was in his thirtieth year (1607).

Doubtless no-one calls them teacher and pupil; but how far they agree is shown by the fact that Roelas’ *Pentecost* was assigned to Herrera by such an experienced critic as Bermudez. There is nothing special in Herrera except his temperament.

From Palomino it is known that at first Herrera painted genre subjects, a taste in his case associated with a characteristic tendency towards tavern and gypsy life. Such profane scenes are no longer to be found in Spain, where they have disappeared into the region of the unknown.

12. Juan de las Roelas, *The Martyrdom of Saint Andrew*, c.1610.
Oil on canvas, 520 x 346 cm.
Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville.

13. Francisco Pacheco, *Christ attended to by Angels*, 1616.
Oil on canvas, 286 x 418 cm.
Musée Goya, Castres.

In his seventieth year (1646) he executed his most comprehensive pieces, formerly in the Archbishop's palace – the *Manna*, the *Water springing from the Rock*, the *Marriage in Cana* and the *Miracle of Loaves and Fishes*. Here we see that his changed but still powerful hand can give motion only to the colossal, to the assembled multitudes. Towards the close of his career he was again drawn to Madrid, where he died in 1656.

While Roelas and Herrera were seeking new paths, Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654), a fellow-student of Herrera under Luis Fernandez, but a very differently constituted man, was still defending the moribund times in his teachings, writings, and, as he fancied, in his practice. This was not, however, without a foreboding that he was preaching to deaf ears, nor even without concessions to the new order of things.

Of all the names on the muster-roll of Spanish art, few were probably less handsomely endowed by the genius of painting, however many-sided his talents may otherwise have been: he was variously a poet, a biographer, an archaeologist and art theorist. At times Pacheco gives one the impression more of a reflecting amateur, who by nature seemed exclusively formed to use the pen rather than the brush in his treatment of art topics.

But his abstract studies appear to have awakened in him a creative impulse which was as irresistible as the instrument was defective. A stubborn will undertook an endless struggle with the obstacles presented by Nature, and his methodical efforts produced nothing but an obstinate self-reliance fostered by his frequent public controversies, and which emboldened him, in emulation of his betters and unconscious of the risk, to undertake the most reckless enterprises.

His unimaginative, slow and petty spirit might have rendered him competent to execute small portraits or still-life and genre pieces, but he possessed nothing of that self-critical knowledge which enabled others to recognise their natural limitations and confine their efforts to a narrower, less ambitious field.

Brought up amid the local monuments and memories (his very name is Old Iberian) and having never travelled abroad, Pacheco eagerly devoted himself in a warm patriotic spirit to antiquarian researches, to artistic and decorative productions, such as the very unclassical polychromatic treatment of wood-carvings.

This brought him into collision with his friend Montañes, against whom he defended his painting of statues by specialists instead of by the sculptors themselves. But in the exclusion of gold and in the use of the rather lustreless colours which he intended to introduce, his reformed polychromy ran counter to popular taste. The earliest specimens of his technique were Nunez Delgado's *John the Baptist* in Saint Clement's, and such productions of Montañes as the *Saint Dominic* for Portacoeli, the Crucifix of the Carthusian Monastery (in the small sacristy of the cathedral) and the *Saint Jerome* in Santiponce.

Historical painting he began with the life of *Saint Ramon Nonnatus* of the Calceate Friars for their cloisters. On this he worked jointly with his friend Ildefonso Vazquez, one of the last of the Vargas and Mohedano school, who drew and composed more freely and more skilfully than Pacheco. To both the subject was congenial enough – scenes from the stirring life of this heroic rescuer of Christian slaves.

In 1616 Pacheco painted for the hospital of Alcalá de Guadaira a *Saint Sebastian*, now in the parish church dedicated to that saint. The scene where the Christian soldier after his agony is rescued under cover of the darkness and tended by the matron, Irene, has several times been treated by distinguished painters.

Pacheco's youth was in the period when efforts were being made to conform to the Roman-Florentine school. The great Italians he honoured from afar with a glowing homage: he declared that "by virtue of a secret natural impulse he had had from his tenth year, he always imitated Raphael, under the influence of his glorious inventions, and especially of an Indian ink drawing," of which he was the fortunate possessor. His special prototype was Pablo de Cespedes, like himself, poet, artist, and archaeologist.

14. Francisco de Herrera, the Younger,
The Triumph of Saint Hermenegildus,
1654.
Oil on canvas, 328 x 229 cm.
Museo del Prado, Madrid.



