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ROYAL RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS AS POLITICAL
PROPAGANDA IN SPAIN UNDER CHARLES III (1759 - 1788)
ROYAL RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS AS POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN SPAIN UNDER CHARLES III (1759-1788)

Volume 1

Vol. 1- Text
Vol. 2- Illustrations

by

Xavier Immanuel Bray

Submitted to Trinity College Dublin
(Department of Art History)
In candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dublin, Ireland
October 1999
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the Library may lend or copy this thesis upon request.

Xavier Bray
SUMMARY

This thesis examines the development of religious painting in Spain in the second half of the 18th century as a tool of political propaganda in the hands of a royal patron, Charles III. The period under study begins with Charles's arrival in Madrid from Naples in 1759 and ends with his death in 1788. During the first decade of his reign, Charles embarked on an ambitious programme of political and religious reform. In the ecclesiastical sphere, he sought to assert his power and enhance his popularity by appointing bishops independently of the Papacy. He also sought Papal support for the elevation of the popular doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to the status of dogma. His policies, known collectively in Spanish under the term "regalismo", were welcomed by some people, notably intellectuals influenced by the theories of the French Enlightenment. But they encountered fierce opposition from other quarters, including the Jesuits and the Inquisition. Drawing on material in official and ecclesiastical archives, as well as on surviving visual material and published analysis, this thesis sheds light on the complex interplay between religious art and politics during the period, notably in the context of Spain's frequently tense relations with the Papacy.

Few of Charles's religious commissions have survived intact, and some have been completely dismantled or destroyed. By drawing on the evidence of surviving preparatory sketches, drawings and paintings, many of which are now kept in museums or set aside in churches and private collections, however, this thesis endeavours to reconstruct the appearance and content of some of the most important of these commissions. Using the evidence of contracts, bills, receipts and correspondence in the Royal Palace archive, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Archivo de Simancas and Archivo de Protocolos, it contributes to the general body of research in terms of dating works and identifying the artists involved. It also explores the roles of institutions such as the Royal Academy of San Fernando and of Charles III's first court painter, Mengs, in relation to the development of artistic taste in Spain and examines the contributions of contemporary artists such as Francisco Bayeu, Mariano Maella and José del Castillo, long overshadowed by their more prolific colleague, Francisco de Goya. As a counterweight to the Jesuits, Charles and his ministers and personal confessor, an Alcantarine Franciscan, sought to promote the Franciscan order as a force for ecclesiastical and spiritual reform. They also campaigned for the canonisation of the Venerable Palafox (1600-1659), a Spanish cleric who during his lifetime had been involved in religious and
political disputes similar to those that dominated the reign of Charles III. In initiatives such as the redecoration of San Isidro el Real in Madrid, the church of a former Jesuit college, and the construction of a chapel dedicated to Palafox at Burgo de Osma, this thesis shows, Charles and his advisors deliberately took religious art into the sphere of politics.

The first part of this thesis explains the context of Charles III’s reign in matters of ecclesiastical politics and relates this to his taste in the area of religious painting. It reviews Charles’s sponsorship of works in royal chapels left unfinished by his predecessors. It examines his own decorative projects in the chapels of royal palaces in Madrid and at Aranjuez and El Pardo, as well as artistic commissions undertaken in the more intimate context of palace life such as the private and portable oratories made for members of the royal family.

In the second part of this thesis, a detailed study of the iconography of the royal chapel at La Granja, near Segovia, involving themes relating to the Holy Trinity, the Immaculate Conception and Spanish hagiography, reveals its relevance in terms of political propaganda. Other chapters review the political aspects of the construction of the Palafox chapel in the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma and examine how Charles’s relationship with the Alcantarine Franciscans through his confessor led to commissions for the construction and decoration of two religious establishments, San Pascual Baylón and San Pedro de Alcántara, and to Charles’s involvement in the reconstruction of San Francisco el Grande in Madrid.

The conclusion of this thesis is that Charles and his advisors drew deliberately on the symbolic and didactic aspects of religious art to underpin a propaganda drive in support of his regalist policies. The complex iconography of Charles’s religious commissions evidences the importance of the visual arts in his campaign for ecclesiastical reform. The death of Charles III marked the close of an era, as he was the last Spanish king to attempt in any serious way to bring royalty and religion together as the main pillars of a stable structure of political rule.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the institutions that have supported me during my research, which was mainly carried out in Spain. Generous grants from the Thomas Damman Trust and the Trinity College Travel Grant enabled me to initiate my research in Madrid. A scholarship from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed me to extend my stay in Spain to a year and half, enabling me to carry out research in Spanish archives, churches, museums and private collections. I should also like to thank the French Ministry of Education, which also helped to finance my studies. The Casa de Velázquez in Madrid allowed me to use its excellent resources, especially its library, for a period of three months, making it possible for me to complete a major portion of my bibliographic research. A one-month scholarship at the Ecole Française de Rome allowed me to research the artistic activity of Spanish artists sent to Rome by the Spanish Royal Academy.

I am very grateful for the encouragement and support of my supervisor, Dr. Peter Cherry, whose extensive knowledge of Spanish painting in the 16th and 17th centuries have served as a guide and inspiration. Among the many people who have assisted me in various ways, inspired me and taught me, I should like to thank in particular: Arturo Ansón Navarro, Ramón Aparicio, Rocío Arzálate, Isabel Azcárate, Hugh Brigstocke, Jonathan Brown, Xanthe Brooke, José and Paloma Buces y Aguada, Duncan Bull, Marcus Burke, Enrique G. de Calderón, Antonio Correa, Marina Cano Cuesta, Irene Cioffi, Christina Conde, David Davies, Carmen Díaz Frias, Gabriele Finaldi, the late Sir Brinsley Ford, Jesús Fortea, Carmen Díaz Gallegos, Carmen Garrido, Pierre Géal, Véronique Gérard-Powell, Nigel Glendinning, Christopher González-Aller, Ismael Gutiérrez Pastor, Enriqueta Harris, Francis Haskell, William Jordan, Ronda Kasl, Juan José Luna, Alisa Luxenberg, José de la Mano, Pompeo Martin, Juan Martinez Cuesta, Manuela Mena y Marqués, Nicholas Morales, Luis & Catha Moreno, Rosemary Mulcahy, Juan Carrete Parrondo, Edmund Peel, Javier Portús, Claudie Ressort, Conchita Romero, Isadora Rose Wagner y de Viejo, Enrique Ruspoli, Luis Sagrera, Gabriel Sánchez, José Luis Sánchez, Elena María Santiago Paéz, Sarah Symmons, Nicholas Tromans, José Antonio de Urbina, Jesús Urrea Fernández, Jesús Vega, Elvira Villena, Carla Vitzthum, Aydn Weston-Lewis, Zahira Veliz, Catherine Whistler, Richard de Willermin and Juliet Wilson-Bareau.
Finally I should like to express my sincerest gratitude for the incredible patience and helpfulness of my parents, Josette and Nicholas Bray, to whom this thesis is dedicated.
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A. F. M.-- Archivo Franciscano de Madrid
A. G. P.-- Archivo General de Palacio
A. G. S.-- Archivo General de Simancas
A. H. N.-- Archivo Histórico Nacional
A. M. A. E.-- Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
A. O. P.-- Archivo de la Obra Pía
A. R. A. B. A. S. F.-- Archivo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando
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ROYAL RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS AS POLITICAL 
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INTRODUCTION

As a patron of the arts, Charles III (1759-1788) continued a process launched by his Bourbon predecessors of cultural renewal in Spain through the introduction of foreign tastes and practices. Like them, he also used the arts as a vehicle of propaganda to affirm his position as ruler and absolute monarch.

In Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, the period known as the Enlightenment saw the development of new ideas on the nature of kingship and the role of the “enlightened despot”. Like other absolute monarchs of this time, such as Joseph II of Austria, Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine the Great of Russia, Charles found himself constrained to reconcile his claim to kingship with the liberal ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau. These had found a wide audience in Spain, particularly among the intellectual classes and some of the aristocracy.¹

Charles's response was to embark on a programme of social and economic reforms, combined with reform of the Church, in order to reassert the power of the monarchy by appealing to both traditionalist and modernist ways of thinking. A fervent Catholic, he was conscious of the political dimensions of religion, which he did not hesitate to use to his advantage. In a drive to preserve monarchic ideals and demonstrate their utility for the public good, he created new institutions, such as the Hospital of St. Charles, in 1781, and the Bank of St. Charles, in 1782. In parallel, he undertook elaborate restoration and transformation works to modernise the palaces of the Hapsburgs in accordance with contemporary standards of style and decorum.

Many aspects of his reign have already been studied in depth, from his role as a patron of the arts to his introduction of liberal ideas and projects designed to improve Spain’s economic and political structures. In 1988, the bicentenary of his death was marked by the

publication of numerous articles and biographies, as well as by exhibitions in Madrid.\(^2\) Despite the importance of religious painting and architecture in Charles III’s patronage of the arts, however, his use of religious art as a medium of propaganda to aggrandize his position as monarch and support his political objectives has not, until now, been the object of detailed study.

My thesis looks at a group of Spanish painters active under Charles III, and in particular at their religious paintings produced for specific royal commissions. Rather than examining each painter’s work individually within a chronological structure, I have chosen a thematic approach that reviews a body of work within a broad aesthetic and political context. By highlighting the works of a number of Spanish court artists who have hitherto received only scant critical attention, I shall situate their output in the context of a series of commissions whose purpose was to support Charles III’s drive for political and religious reform. In this way, I aim to achieve a more complete understanding of the role and function of individual works, particularly with regard to their iconography and stylistic presentation.

Although contracts and lists of expenses made by painters are abundant in Spanish archives, particularly the royal archive, little documentary information has yet been found to explain the iconographical intricacies of such royal commissions or the identity of the individuals who devised them. Nor is there much in the way of informative comment by contemporary critics to assist the modern scholar. To overcome this gap, I have resorted to a detailed study of the actual paintings and their related preparatory drawings and oil sketches, with a view to constructing a visual lexicon of these commissions. Where individual paintings no longer survive, I have drawn on information gleaned from a variety of sources, including descriptions found in contemporary periodicals such as the Memorial Literario, to make deductions with regard to their appearance. The result has been an analysis of the iconography of the visual material that provides extensive evidence that the decorative programmes of these commissions were pre-planned and contained important theological ideas that related well to Charles’s religious and political ideas.

In analysing this aspect of Charles’s patronage of the arts, I build, in particular, upon the work of Dr. Catherine Whistler, whose doctoral thesis discussed the late religious paintings of Giambattista Tiepolo under Charles III. Concentrating on the decoration of the convent of San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez, she reviews the religious context in which

Tiepolo worked. However, her work covers only the first decade of Charles’s reign and his first official commission. San Pascual Baylón commenced in 1765 was followed by a series of building and decorative programmes culminating in the re-building of the Madrid church of San Francisco el Grande completed in 1784. By examining a number of these commissions in detail, I shed light on Charles’s taste in religious art. Through an analysis of the theological and political significance of their iconography, I demonstrate that these commissions fulfilled a specific function in relation to Charles’s political agenda.

I have also drawn on the work of Fernando Chueca and Carlos Sambricio concerning the development of neo-classicism in Spanish architecture under Charles III’s Italian architect, Francesco Sabatini. As I demonstrate, Sabatini’s sober and often austere religious architecture played an important role in the development of religious painting during Charles’s reign. While the design and ornament of his churches vary according to their function, paintings were very much part of the overall interior decoration. Personal and private royal commissions contain ornate and rich decorations recalling Roman baroque architecture. By contrast, the public commissions stand out for their quasi-Grecian starkness and sobriety. As a general rule, altarpieces destined for private interiors conformed to the overall preciousness and richness of the interior, usually painted on wood panel to assure an enameled finish. Those painted for a public environment reflected the severe architecture in their selection of simple compositions and accessibility.

The period that I study begins with Charles’s arrival in Madrid from Naples in 1759 and ends with his death in 1788. The first decade of his reign was a turbulent period, marked by opposition to his policies from interest groups such as the Jesuits and the Inquisition. To assert more power over the Church and at the same time enhance his popularity with the Spanish people, Charles sought to appoint bishops without interference from the Papacy and to elevate the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to the status of dogma. He and his confessor, the Alcantarine Franciscan Joaquin de Eleta y la Piedra, campaigned for the canonisation of Sor Maria de Agreda (1602-1665), the author of a book called La misteriosa Ciudad de Dios, which defended the Immaculate Conception. As a counterweight to the

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4 Francisco Sabatini 1727-1797. La Arquitectura como metáfora del poder, exh. cat, Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, 1993.
Jesuits, they sought to promote the Alcantarine Franciscans and to obtain the canonisation of the Venerable Palafox (1600-1659), who during his lifetime had been involved in religious and political disputes similar to those that occupied Charles III more than a century later. All these initiatives had political implications extending far beyond the sphere of religious beliefs.

In reaction, Charles's opponents sought to exploit sentiments of Spanish nationalism against a king who had come from abroad and who had appointed foreigners to high offices in government. The most prominent of these were the Marquis of Squillace, Charles's secretary of state for war and finance, and the Marquis of Grimaldi, who had previously served under Philip V and was Charles's secretary of state for foreign affairs. The loss of the Spanish-American colony of Florida to the British in 1763, rising food prices between 1763 and 1765 as a result of bad harvests, and high taxation introduced to finance innovations such as road building and street lighting all led to general discontent.

The climax came with the so-called Squillace riots of Palm Sunday 1766, when mobs protesting against a law forbidding men to wear broad-brimmed hats and long capes on the grounds that these made it easier for criminals to escape, sacked the house of Squillace and stoned Grimaldi's house. The king's ministers accused the Jesuits of inciting these riots, and although there is no historical proof to back up such accusations, they were made the scapegoats. In 1767, Charles ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits and the conversion of their properties into public institutions. Jesuit churches were closed or rededicated to other saints of popular appeal. The church attached to the Jesuit college in the Calle de Toledo was converted into the royal collegiate church of St. Isidro, patron saint of Madrid. The royal connection was stressed to demonstrate Charles's appreciation of local saints.

The Squillace riots impressed upon Charles the need to make his administration more clearly Spanish in character. One of his first steps was to replace Squillace as his main adviser by appointing the Count of Aranda as president of the Council of Castile. In 1769, the election to the Papacy of Clement XIV, a Franciscan, heralded the start of a period of optimism for Charles and his ministers. The newly elected Pope agreed to initiate proceedings with a view to Palafox's canonisation. In 1773, he announced the suppression of the Jesuit order.

With the support of Eleta, Charles had already embarked on decorative and building projects which reflected publicly his religious and political objectives and set new standards of aesthetics and decorum, and this activity now gathered pace. In a detailed analysis of Charles's religious commissions, I review his personal religious objectives and the significance of each commission in a wider political context. Some commissions, such as the convent church of San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez (1765-1770), the Chapel of San Pedro de Alcántara in Arenas de San Pedro (1769-1775), and the Chapel of the Venerable Palafox in Burgo de Osma (1770-1782), were new initiatives. Others, such as the decoration of the collegiate church of San Isidro in Madrid (1767-1769), and of the collegiate church and royal
chapel of San Ildefonso at La Granja (1769-1772) as well as the rebuilding of San Francisco el Grande in Madrid (1760-1784), involved the completion of existing projects. Antonio Ponz, in his guidebook Viaje de España, first published in 1775, extols the generosity of the King as a patron of the religious arts. 5

In all cases, these commissions were executed in accordance with a growing taste for the neo-classical style of architecture, which Charles promoted as a modern medium compatible with his desire for reform. In the sphere of painting, Charles favoured a conservative approach, based on a combination of neo-baroque and neo-classical examples that resulted in conventional religious images, recalling the mood of the Counter-Reformation. Following the example set by his predecessors, Philip V and Fernando VI, Charles employed foreign painters to lead these commissions, giving only a subsidiary role to Spanish artists.

Similarly to Fernando VI, one of Charles’s main projects was to continue the decoration of the ceilings in the royal apartments of the Royal Palace in Madrid. Tiepolo and Mengs were brought from Italy to paint the ceilings in the most important rooms of the palace in accordance with an intricate iconographical programme. Spanish painters such as Antonio González Velázquez, Mariano Maella and Francisco Bayeu were initially employed to assist them. Later, these painters were given commissions in their own right to decorate ceilings in the Royal Palace and in other palaces outside Madrid, such as those at La Granja, El Pardo and Aranjuez, filled with iconographic and mythological allusions to the Spanish monarchy, aggrandizing and eulogizing Charles and his reign.6

In many ways, Charles’s patronage of religious painting can be considered a counterpart to his ambitious fresco programme at the royal palaces. Both have similar propagandistic functions, dealing respectively with the temporal and the divine aspects of Charles’s position as absolute monarch. The same painters that worked on palace interiors were responsible for the decoration of private chapels, royal chapels and large public religious commissions. As a result, they were familiar with the artistic language needed to express these ideas coherently. While the frescos within palace apartments reflected the king’s magnificence with subjects taken from ancient mythology, classical history or Spanish history, such as Hercules, Hadrian or Christopher Columbus, those chosen for religious interiors exalted the monarchy’s role in supporting the Immaculate Conception, the Franciscan order and Spanish saints.

6 For a coherent list of the ceilings and their subject matter at the Royal Palace in Madrid see: Fabre, Francisco José, Descripción de las alegorías pintadas en las bóvedas del Real Palacio de Madrid, Madrid, 1829. See also Checa, F., “Los frescos del Palacio Real Nuevo de Madrid y el fin del lenguaje alegórico”, Archivo Español de Arte, 1992, no. 65, pp. 157-177.
Clement XIV’s death in 1774 and the election of Pius VI as his successor effectively blocked some of Charles’s objectives, particularly Palafox’s canonisation. This did not prevent Charles from continuing with his building and decorative projects, however. During the late 1770s and 1780s, Spain remained relatively united in terms of internal politics, as Charles successfully maintained an alliance between the monarchy and the Church. His celibacy after his wife’s death in 1760 and his frugality, particularly in his dislike of public display and extravagance, helped to bolster his image as Catholic king of Spain and ensure popular support for his rule. The war against England from 1779 to 1783 and Spain’s increased economic prosperity strengthened his subjects’ loyalty to him.

Commenting on the French revolution in 1789, the Count of Fernán Núñez, Spain’s ambassador in France and Charles’s biographer, observed that “none of the causes (for the revolution) that could have been observed here for many years exist in our country, where one finds religion, love for the king, devotion to the law....” By contrast, Charles was less successful in imposing a new and unified aesthetic style in Spanish art and architecture. On the contrary, the medley of different styles inherited from the various influences on Spanish artists during his reign resulted in a lack of homogeneity. This was clearly evident in his most ambitious commission, the reconstruction and redecoration of San Francisco el Grande, in which for the first time he used only Spanish painters.

Few of Charles’s religious commissions have survived intact. Some were subsequently altered or dismantled, while others suffered damage or destruction. However, attempts at reconstruction are possible, drawing on surviving preparatory sketches, drawings and paintings, many of which are now kept in museums or in ecclesiastical archives or storerooms. By drawing on the evidence of contracts, bills and receipts in the Royal Palace Archive, under the sections of “Obras de Palacio”, “Administración”, “Patronatos”, “Expedientes Personales” and the monthly accounts submitted from the various Royal residences, I contribute to the general body of research in terms of dating works and identifying the artists involved. My research in other official Spanish archives, such as the National Archives and the archives of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, helps to shed additional light on relations between Spain and the Papacy during this period. By bringing together the available visual evidence of works still in situ and others now in the Prado Museum, the National Library, the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand and in private collections, I contribute to a better understanding of the political and propagandistic nature of Charles’s religious commissions. With this wealth of information the question of who was responsible in deciding the format and the iconographical programmes behind these commissions forces itself upon the researcher. I conclude that Charles’s confessor, Eleta,

played a leading role in this respect. This implies that Eleta had a significantly greater degree of influence in Charles’s career than ascribed to him by Charles’s biographers to date. In this respect, I would note in passing that the author of one of the most recent biographies of Charles III, María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper, makes no mention of Eleta at all.8

The death of Charles III in 1788 marked in many ways the close of an era, as he was the last Spanish king to attempt in any serious way to bring royalty and religion together as the main pillars of the Ancien Régime. His son, Charles IV, conserved what Charles III had achieved, but apart from minor commissions in his palaces, as well as the decoration of the cloister of San Francisco el Grande and Francisco de Goya’s frescoes at San Antonio de la Florida, Charles IV undertook no significant new building or decorative projects. From 1789 onwards, the intellectual and political turmoil of the French Revolution prompted a reassessment of the monarchy’s role by politicians such as Jovellanos, whose liberal ideas aimed to complement monarchical rule with religious reform in a drive to educate and improve society within clearly defined ethical and social borders. These attempts were ended in 1808 by France’s invasion of Spain.

8 Pérez Samper, María de los Ángeles, La Vida y la Época de Carlos III, Barcelona, 1998.
CHAPTER I

THE BOURBONS AS PATRONS OF THE ARTS: CHARLES III’S PRECURSORS

The period between the death of Spain’s last Hapsburg king, Charles II, in 1700 and the arrival in Madrid in 1808 of Joseph Bonaparte is one of the most complex periods in Spanish art history. Like the Hapsburgs, the Bourbon dynasty that succeeded them provided a solid infrastructure for the arts to flourish within a framework of clearly defined rules of taste, decorum and aesthetics. Rather than employing Spanish artists as their First Court Painters, however, the Bourbons invited foreign painters with international reputations to fill this function, a practice that continued for most of the 18th century. Following the death in 1779 of Charles III’s First Court Painter, Anton Raphael Mengs, the post remained vacant until 1799, when Charles IV finally appointed Mariano Salvador Maella and Francisco Goya jointly as First Court Painters. They were the first Spaniards to hold the post since Juan Carreño de la Miranda and Claudio Coello under Charles II.

In parallel, the Bourbons also imported foreign artists for major decorative projects, following a tradition that had begun under the Hapsburgs. Philip II had employed Italian artists such as Federico Zuccaro and Luca Cambiaso at El Escorial for the decoration in fresco of ceilings and wall spaces, a skill in which Spanish painters were untrained. Philip IV contracted Colonna and Mitelli to decorate various rooms in the Alcázar palace in Madrid. The last Hapsburg, Charles II, employed the Neapolitan painter Luca Giordano in 1692 to paint frescoes for the Imperial Staircase at the Escorial. He was so pleased with Giordano’s work that he kept him employed decorating other royal palaces such as the Buen Retiro and churches in Madrid and producing easel paintings for the royal collection and for private collectors. Under Charles II, Giordano’s extensive store of pictorial rhetoric had provided an ideal propaganda tool for a king anxious to reinforce his position, particularly in the absence of a direct heir.

Philip V

In a similar vein, Charles’s III’s father, Philip V turned to Italian painters to bolster his position as ruler of Spain. One of Philip V’s first important construction projects was the building of a palace outside Madrid at San Ildefonso de La Granja near Segovia in 1720, with
a chapel intended to serve as a burial place for him and his second wife, Isabelle Farnese (fig. 1). Without going as far as Philip II’s combination of the temporal and the religious at El Escorial, Philip V’s palace/church at La Granja was the beginning of the Bourbons’ self-affirmation through architecture and art as rulers of Catholic Spain. As befitted a grandson of Louis XIV, the gardens and fountains of Philip’s new palace were modeled on those of Versailles. A succession of French painters, including Michelange Houasse, Jean Ranc and Jean-Michel Van Loo, were brought over as portrait painters and designers of tapestry cartoons.9

Under the supervision of Cardinal de Aquaviva, Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736), who had been brought to Spain as court architect from Turin, devised an iconographical programme for the Throne Room based on the life of Alexander the Great and drawing parallels with Philip V’s own virtues. To decorate it, he and Acquaviva contracted nine canvases from some of the best artists working in Italy at the time, including Francesco Solimena, Francesco Trevisani, Sebastiano Conca and Placido Costanzi.10 The artists chosen to decorate the altarpieces in the church were also mostly Italian. In 1724, the court painter Andrea Procaccini, a student of the Roman classical painter, Carlo Maratti, executed a large painting for the main altar of St. Philip, St. Elizabeth, St. Fernando, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Louis, St. Anne, St. Theresa and St. Anthony adoring the Virgin with Child.11 Each saint was the patron and namesake of a member of the Bourbon royal family. In 1739, correspondence between the Marquis of Villarias and the Marquis of Salas refers to a decision by Philip V to replace Procaccini’s painting for the main altar with a painting by the Neapolitan artist Francesco Solimena, showing the same saints but with the additional presence of the Virgin interceding with the Holy Trinity (fig. 2).12 The reasons for this decision are unclear, but the iconography of Solimena’s painting may have been regarded as more relevant to the context and role of the Collegiate church. In any case, Philip V’s interest in the commission is demonstrated by the fact that he was shown several sketches on paper depicting Solimena’s ideas of how he should position each saint within the overall composition.13 In Solimena’s

12 Procaccini’s painting was stored until 1752 when it was taken to the parish church of St. Maria del Rosario at La Granja, to occupy the main altar.
final painting, still in its original location, the saints are placed on a stage-like platform, looking up at the apparition of the Holy Trinity or out towards the viewer.

In 1734, the destruction by fire of the Alcázar palace set in train a building project whose ramifications were to stretch across the reigns not only of Philip V but of his successors Ferdinand VI and Charles III. Juvarra, who was commissioned in 1736 to rebuild a royal palace in a style more appropriate for the Bourbon dynasty, put forward an ambitious plan for a rusticated ground floor surmounted by a gigantic order of Corinthian pilasters and measuring 460 metres along both axes with 28 inner courtyards. However, his plan did not fit the proposed space and, soon after submitting it, he died. His successor was his disciple Sacchetti, who opted for a smaller, square-shaped edifice with four projecting corners and a large central courtyard, echoing the palace-fortress model of the old Alcázar.

One of the few Spanish court painters producing religious pictures during this period was Andrés de la Calleja (1705-1785). As court painter to the Bourbons, a post he kept until his death, Calleja was mainly occupied in restoring paintings in the royal collection, copying portraits of the royal family and painting tapestry cartoons after original paintings such as the hunting scenes by Snyders and Wouvermans. However he also became a respected painter of portable oratories, painting jewel-like miniatures of saints adoring the Virgin and Child. His delicate and precise technique is evident in the earliest surviving example of such a commission, dated 1734 and portraying St. Anthony, the Holy Family and St. Francis Xavier for the Prince of Asturias, the future Ferdinand VI (fig. 3 & 4). I shall be referring to this oratory later, when discussing the private devotional practices of the royal family.

The new Royal Palace was completed in 1751. But its interior decoration began well before that, with the installation in 1744 of a ceremonial double staircase designed by Sacchetti, linking the main south entrance to the royal apartments above. Padre Martin Sarmiento (1695-1772), a Benedictine monk, was charged with devising a decorative programme. Drawing his inspiration from the Bible and classical texts, he sought to convert the palace into a coherent monumental entity, linking the exterior with the interior through an elaborate programme of sculpture and painting. In particular, he planned to decorate the staircase with sculptures alluding to the virtues of the king and his royal consort.  


Ferdinand VI

Following the death of Philip V in 1746, Ferdinand VI took up Sarmiento's plans for the Royal Palace, adapting them to emphasise his own reign. The staircase was to act as the beginning of the iconographical itinerary, with sculptures alluding to the virtues of Philip V and his queen, Isabella of Farnese, on one side and to those of Ferdinand VI and his consort, Barbara of Braganza, on the other.

Parts of one of Sarmiento's surviving programmes, written in 1748 and entitled Libro de Adornos, survive in the British Museum. The book incorporates a detailed account of all aspects of kingship, including symbols alluding to monarchical magnificence. In accordance with these precepts, Sarmiento ordered 44 statues for the main staircase, while for the façade of the palace he persuaded Ferdinand VI to commission sculptures representing Spanish Kings and Queens from medieval times onwards, as well as various allegorical symbols.

Abroad, ambassadors and statesmen representing the Spanish crown were also involved in religious commissions that underlined Spain's image as a Catholic country. In 1749, the Spanish ambassador to the Court of St. James, Ricardo Wall, commissioned Giambattista Tiepolo to paint an altarpiece of the patron saint of Spain, St. James the Great, for the chapel of the Spanish Embassy (fig. 5). When the picture arrived from Italy in 1750, however, it was decided that Tiepolo's interpretation of the subject was not appropriate and likely to cause some scandal with an English audience. Tiepolo had represented St. James as a fearless Christian warrior mounted on a white stallion and converting a moor in the foreground, alluding to the triumph and glory of the Catholic Church. Wall and the Embassy chaplains particularly objected to the prominence of the horse in the foreground of the composition. Instead, the Spanish painter and academician Preciado de la Vega (1713-1789), resident in Rome since 1733, was called upon to supply an alternative composition. A drawing in the Prado for this now lost altarpiece shows the saint standing, dressed as a humble pilgrim, attended by angels holding his sword and flag (fig. 6).

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16 The manuscript is in the British Library, Ms., Egerton, 440, fols. 60-79 and was published in Cioffi, I., Corrado Giaquinto’s Studies for the Sculptural Decorations planned for the Staircases of the New Royal Palace in Madrid, Master Drawings, 1984, vol. 22, no.4, pp. 434-440.
Meanwhile, Ferdinand’s queen, Barbara de Braganza, was proving a significant patron of the arts in her own right, founding in 1747 a convent dedicated to the Visitation, better known as the Convent of the Salesas Reales after the order of nuns who were to inhabit it. Barbara intended the convent church to be the burial site for herself and her husband. Rather than Spanish painters, she employed some of Italy’s best contemporary artists to produce the altarpieces, which are still in situ. In 1753 Francesco de Mura sent the main altarpiece of the Visitation (fig. 7) and St. Barbara being adored by St. Francis Xavier from Naples, while Giambettino Cignarolli sent his Virgin and Child with the Holy Trinity from Venice in 1754. Foreign painters resident in Spain also took part in the commission. Charles-Joseph Flipart, a French disciple of Jacopo Amigoni, Ferdinand’s court painter between 1748 and 1752, painted St. Ferdinand receiving the keys of Seville, while Corrado Giaquinto provided an altarpiece of Saint Francis of Sales and Saint Joan Frances Fremiot. The only Spanish painters to participate were the brothers Alejandro, Luis and Antonio González Velázquez, who provided ceiling frescoes under the supervision of Giaquinto between 1757-1758.

In selecting foreign, rather than Spanish artists for significant religious commissions, the Bourbons were clearly influenced by taste at other European courts. In Portugal, for example, Joao V commissioned a group of painters trained under the Roman classical school of painting between 1721 and 1748 to decorate the altarpieces in his royal chapel at Mafra. These included artists such as Pompeo Batoni, Agostino Masucci, Giaquinto and students such as Guiseppe Chiari who had studied with Carlo Maratti. Rather than depicting violent scenes of martyrdom and saints in ecstasy, the iconography concentrated mainly on popular saints with royal connections conversing or kneeling before an apparition of the Virgin and Child. Most of these images were based on the well-structured compositions of the late Renaissance sacra conversazione, with figures types borrowed from models found in Raphael and Guido Reni.

The contrast between royal religious commissions and popular religious art

The elaborate iconographical programmes and rules of decorum favoured by Spanish royalty contrasted sharply with contemporary popular Spanish religious art, where a very different set of aesthetics ruled. Most churches and convents in Madrid and the provinces

19 For contracts and other document relating to the Salesas Reales see: Urrea (1977), pp 120-121, 140-141, 337-338 and 385-387.
21 Pier Paolo Quieto, Don Joao V de Portugal a sua influencia na arte italiana do sec. XVIII, 1990, Lisbon.
were decorated with ornately decorated and gilded wooden altarpieces, often containing polychrome sculptures. A print of 1721 depicting the altarpiece of the Virgen de la Novena in the church of St. Sebastian in Madrid shows how extreme the decoration of these altarpieces could be (fig. 8).\(^2\) In the central niche, a small sculpture of the Virgin and Child is surrounded by saints of different sizes, on various tiers, with pictures inserted in frames supported by angels and surrounded by garlands of fruits and leaves.

Polychrome sculptures often attracted an even stronger following in popular devotion than paintings. Images such as the dead Christ or the weeping Virgin, often deriving from seventeenth-century prototypes by Gregorio Fernández (1576-1636), were popular because of their visual and emotional impact. Local saints were also venerated, mainly through sculptures and devotional prints. These prints, very common in Spain at this period, represented original sculptures or paintings in churches in the form of cheap two-dimensional images that people could bring home and use for private devotion.\(^3\) Velázquez's Christ on the Cross, which was in the church of San Plácido in Madrid before being acquired by Manuel Godoy for his collection, was frequently reproduced in such engravings, its popularity reflecting the fact that it was painted to look like a sculpture (fig. 9).\(^4\)

**Giaquinto and the foundation of the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand**

Against this background, Ferdinand's most significant contribution to the development of painting in Spain was his decision, in 1753, to invite Giaquinto from Italy to Madrid to occupy the post of First Court Painter in succession to Amigoni, who died in 1752.\(^5\) Giaquinto had originally trained with Solimena in Naples in the 1720s. He had then spent 30 years in Rome, where his Rococo style was conditioned by the classical Baroque style of Maratta and his followers Sebastiano Conca, Pierre Subleyras and Pompeo Batoni. The idea of Roman classicism in painting consisted of graceful and academically correct figures and carefully studied drapery, based on prototypes by Raphael and Carracci. A number of Spanish painters had studied in Giaquinto's workshop in Rome, including Antonio González Velázquez and José del Castillo.\(^6\) González Velázquez worked with him in the

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\(^1\) Arte y Devoción: Estampas de imágenes y retablos de los siglos XVII y XVIII en iglesias madrileñas, Exh. Cat., Caligrafía Nacional & Museo Municipal, 1990, Madrid, cat. no. 41, p. 43.
\(^3\) Arte y Devoción (1990), cat. no. 122, p. 124.
\(^5\) In a forthcoming article entitled “Some unpublished drawings by Corrado Giaquinto’s closest followers: Antonio González Velázquez and José del Castillo” in Master Drawings, 2000. I will examine more closely the influence of Giaquinto on these painters.
decoration of churches such as Santa Trinità degli Spagnoli, painting the cupola in fresco between 1747-48 of the *Three angels appearing to Abraham* (fig. 10) while Giaquinto painted the main altarpiece (fig. 11). Similarly, Castillo was sponsored by the Minister of State José de Carvajal y Lancaster to go to Rome at the age of 14 to study under Giaquinto.

The arrival of Giaquinto followed soon after Ferdinand’s decision in 1752 to found the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand as a vehicle for the definition and promulgation of clear artistic precepts for royal commissions. Giaquinto’s rococo/Roman style was considered appropriate for teaching at the Academy in Madrid and in accordance with court taste. His swirling compositions that filled the palace ceilings, bringing together his rococo and Roman training, were very influential, dominating artistic aesthetics in the 1750s and early 1760s. His painted sketches also made a great impression on artists, and were kept in the royal collection where they could be imitated stylistically and even copied. As one of three directors of the Academy, alongside the sculptor Olivieri and the architect Sacchetti, Giaquinto influenced not only other artists working at the court, but those at the Academy as well.

One significant feature of his work was the use of preliminary drawings and bozzetti, or oil sketches, a practice that he was to transmit to many of his Spanish pupils. His drawings usually consisted of rapidly executed studies in red or black chalk of figures, groups and compositional problems. Drawings such as the *Martyrdom of Saint Ippolito, Taurino, and Ercolano*, executed in Rome in the early 1740s, or a series of sketches made in the 1750s for sculptural decorations in the Royal Palace of Madrid, show how he depicted each figure with schematic strokes to suggest form and outline. Eschewing descriptive detail and any sense of bodily mass, he portrayed hands and facial features through a series of dots and dashes. He often applied ink washes over these, in order to depict the light falling on areas such as drapery or faces.

Drawings presented for the annual competition at the Academy in 1756 by students such as Castillo, Isidro Carnicero and Francisco Díaz reveal the rapidity with which...
Giaquinto's style became accepted in Spain. The competition consisted of two types of drawings: for the “prueba de pensado”, the artist was allowed up to six months to plan his composition and research the subject given, while for the “prueba de repente”, the artist was given limited time to create a coherent composition. The winner that year was Castillo, whose “prueba de pensado” of King Hermengild being stripped of his kingship contains figure types similar to those found in Giaquinto’s oil sketches. To emphasize the theatricality of the scene and suggest receding space, Castillo centers the action in the foreground and defines the main figures with strong black chalk, while those in the background are lightly drawn, using a technique similar to that employed by Giaquinto in oils.

In his “prueba de repente” of Lot fleeing Sodom (fig. 12), Castillo draws on Giaquinto’s techniques of using red chalk and black ink for the highlights and simplifying his figures in almost abstract poses that express movement and ensure a coherent narrative. While copying after plaster casts was common practice at the Academy, we can deduce from two drawings in red chalk on either side of a single sheet of paper in the Prado museum, here attributed to Castillo, that he also drew after live models (figs. 13 & 14). These drawings show a male model in various guises, as a classical shepherd, a Roman soldier and nude in a declamatory position, all with the left foot on a pedestal.

Giaquinto’s characteristically sketchy technique is again apparent in the anatomical depiction of each figure, but Castillo has also taken pains to portray his models in a defined setting. For instance, behind the shepherd he has included sheep, while sitting on the side of the stage where the Roman soldier stands, an art student adjusts his spectacles as he copies the model. Castillo’s academic training did not prevent him from observing and recording his surroundings, a skill he was later to make use of when employed along with Francisco Goya to design cartoons for the Royal Tapestry Factory of Santa Barbara.

In 1756, Giaquinto resigned from his post as director of the Academy, as his tasks at court had become too demanding. In the sphere of religious painting, his most significant contribution to Spain’s patrimony was the frescoing, between November 1757 and March 1758, of eight areas in the chapel of the Royal Palace. The scene in the main cupola showed the Virgin Mary being welcomed into Heaven by the Holy Trinity, surrounded by prophets and saints taken from the Old and New Testaments. Four pendentives represented St.

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29 Azcárate Luxan, I., et al., Historia y Alegoria: Los Concursos de Pintura de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (1753-1808), Madrid, 1994, pp. 51-60.

30 Ibid, fig. 35, p. 51. Inv. No. 1517/P.

31 Inv. no. 1516/P, Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand.


Hermengild, St. Isidro, St. María de la Cabeza and St. Isidore. In the three vaults, St. James appearing at the Battle of Clavijo was painted above the entrance, while Faith, Hope and Charity were placed over the choir and the Holy Trinity over the presbytery. The cycle was imbued with a political, as well as a religious significance. In particular, it made clear Ferdinand’s support for the promotion of the Immaculate Conception to the status of a dogma and his acceptance as historical fact of St. James the Great’s apostolic mission to Spain and his miraculous support for the Reconquest.

Giaquinto’s resignation from the Academy did not mean an end to his influence among Spanish artists. His teaching work was continued by his former pupil, Antonio González Velázquez, to whom he gave on several occasions bozzetti for use as a guide when painting frescoes. Along with Castillo, Antonio and his brother Luis González Velázquez (1715-1764) and the brothers Francisco and Ramón Bayeu and Mariano Maella all show clear Giaquintesque characteristics in their works. When Giaquinto eventually left Spain in 1762, he specifically cited Antonio González Velázquez as capable of taking on any commission in fresco.

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34 Antonio González Velázquez was given a bozzetto by Giaquinto to use when painting the ceiling of the Salesas Reales in fresco. Pérez Sánchez, A. “Corrado Giaquinto’s Birth of the Virgin”, Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Art, 54, 1974, pp. 32-42.

CHAPTER II

CHARLES III AS PATRON OF THE ARTS

It was against this background of strong Italianate influence on Spanish court painting that Charles III assumed the Spanish throne in 1759 on the death of his brother Ferdinand. Although born in Spain in 1716, Charles had spent most his youth in Italy. His mother, Isabella Farnese, had installed him as Duke of Parma and Tuscany in 1731, and in 1734 he had become the King of the Two Sicilies, residing in Naples. Surrounded by architects and artists such as Luigi Vanvitelli, Solimena and Francesco Mura, he had sponsored the construction of palaces, hospitals and a theatre. In 1738, his interest in classical art prompted him to support archaeological excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. He subsequently sponsored the preparation and publication of illustrated volumes detailing what had been unearthed, in the form of catalogues incorporating decorative ornaments, architectural motifs and the ground plans of excavated buildings. This material, published at intervals between 1757 and 1792 as the Antichità di Ercolano esposte, was to have a great influence on contemporary architects and artists from both a theoretical and an artistic point of view.36

Charles's interest in aesthetic matters was to have a strong influence over the future course of Spanish art and architecture. While in Italy, his most ambitious project was the Palace of Caserta, designed by Luigi Vanvitelli in 1751. With its 1,200 rooms and simple but striking facade composed of giant pilasters, the palace was twice as large as the royal palace in Madrid.37 Before leaving Naples for Spain, he asked to be shown a model of the Madrid palace and on seeing Sacchetti's design he is said to have found it so distasteful that he considered using it for administrative offices rather than as a royal residence.38 Although he finally resolved to live in it, he determined to redesign its appearance. His first move on reaching Madrid was to replace Sacchetti as court architect with Vanvitelli's son-in-law, Francesco Sabatini, whose sober neo-classical architecture he preferred.

Charles III considered Sarmiento's decoration of the royal palace in Madrid as the epitome of bad taste, remarking in a letter to Bernardo Tanucci, his minister in Naples, "it is a pity what they have done here".39 Although favouring iconographical programmes that

36 Guerra de la Vega, Ramón, "Carlos III y el descubrimiento de la antigüedad clásica", Reales Sitios, no.96, Año XXV, 1988, pp. 21-29.
39 Ibid: "es una lastima lo que han hecho aquí".
exalted monarchical power, Charles had different ideas of how they should appear. The first part of his reign was dedicated to the removal of decorative elements regarded as too frivolous and their replacement with what he considered appropriate for the glorification of the monarchy. In 1760, ninety-four sculptures of the kings and queens of Spain that had decorated the façade were removed, restoring an air of dignity and austerity. Inside the palace, however, Charles III continued plans for a late baroque-rococo decorative schema of frescoes surrounded by stucco. This suggests a conscious effort to present a more severe public image on the outside facade, while the interior was to take on a regal aspect reflecting the king’s magnificence, in order to impress courtiers and visiting ambassadors.40

As a collector, Charles III cannot be compared with either the Infante don Luis, his brother, or with his son and heir, the Prince of Asturias, later Charles IV, both of whom were active buyers of Old Master paintings and patrons of contemporary artists such as Luis Paret and Luis Meléndez. Charles III was more of a practical-minded person. He was interested in building factories and public edifices that would be of utility to his subjects rather than in building palaces and casitas, a pursuit his son, as Prince of Asturias, took a delight in. Nonetheless, he was aware of the propagandistic powers of the visual arts, and he decorated his apartments with carefully selected Old Master paintings, mostly belonging to his Hapsburg predecessors but including some he acquired himself.41 He was also very much concerned with the architectural surroundings in which specific decorative programmes were to be housed.

Reflecting such concerns, his reign saw a flourishing of the arts, and his contemporaries did not hesitate to eulogise him as a great patron. In 1760, for example, the Italian traveller Joseph Baretti remarked that “His Majesty is not indifferent to the advancement of the arts, and much countenances his Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.”42 In a speech given at the Junta Pública of the Royal Academy in 1771, the Marquis of Santa Cruz claimed that “under the authority of the beneficent monarch whom the heavens have granted us will flourish the three noble arts...”43

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43 Ferrer del Rio, Antonio, Historia del Reinado de Carlos III en España, Madrid, 1856, vol. IV, p. 522, “bajo el imperio del benéfico Monarca que nos ha concedido el cielo, florecerán las tres nobles artes...”
Mengs as First Court Painter

As we shall see, Charles’s approach to the visual arts was largely dominated by his desire to bring order and decorum to Spanish painting in the service of a strategy to impose himself as Spain’s uncontested ruler at a time of religious and social ferment. In support of this strategy, his chosen ally was the German-born painter Anton Raphael Mengs, whom he had first encountered in August 1759, just before he left Naples to occupy the Spanish throne. In that year, Mengs had painted a picture of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple for the high altar of the royal chapel at Caserta, and in 1760 he painted a portrait of the Infante Ferdinand who was to become King of the Two Sicilies in succession to Charles. Two versions of this portrait were made, one remaining in Naples and the other being sent to Madrid. It was this portrait that prompted Charles to invite Mengs to Madrid, where he arrived on 7th October 1761 from Rome. As part of his plans for the palace’s redecoration, Charles commissioned a series of ceiling frescoes from Mengs. In addition, Mengs was commissioned to produce a number of religious paintings for the king. His duties as First Court Painter included supervising the royal collection, serving as artistic director of the Royal Tapestry Works and the training of Spanish artists.

Reflecting his interest in classical architecture in Naples, Charles and his ministers favoured the neo-classical style, and in particular neo-classical architecture, as the vehicle for their reforms. There are many definitions for the style we know as Neo-classicism, but its main tenet was a direct emulation of the antique through the careful selection of its best features in pursuit of perfection. In the Age of Reason, a simple classical structure built for a functional purpose was perceived as reflecting a monarch’s enlightened motives and as bringing modernity to his country through the promotion of truth, peace and justice. This can be seen in the majority of building projects embarked upon during Charles reign. Factories, town halls, hospitals and army barracks were all built in a style that reflected their function. His court architect, Sabatini, applied a rational and sobre approach to public architecture, allowing function and practicality to take preference. By contrast with Spain’s popular Churrigueraesque style, criticised by contemporary intellectuals as too frivolous and ornate, classical art was regarded as the key to the concept of “good taste” developed in the 1750s in Rome by the neo-classical theorist, J.J Winckelmann.

A friend of Mengs and a historian and specialist in ancient Greek art, Winckelmann believed that the only way to achieve great art was through the imitation of the ancients. Rather than encouraging artists and architects to slavishly copy antique sculpture and architecture, he advocated a return to the spirit of antiquity. In a much quoted phrase, he
summarized the outstanding qualities of antique art as “noble simplicity and calm grandeur”.

He disapproved of Baroque art, criticising the architecture of Bernini, Borromini and Guarini as extreme, ill proportioned and bizarre, and in his view the height of “bad taste”. Classicism, on the other hand, implied adherence to the laws of clarity, harmony and proportion, all considered to be “good taste”.

Such ideas and opinions proved influential in Spain, where intellectuals attempted to apply Winckelmann’s reasoning to their own culture by referring either to Spain’s own classical past or to classic architectural treatises such as that of Vitruvius, which were bought for the Royal Academy’s students to study and eventually translated in Spanish. Dissatisfied by the state and quality of Spanish contemporary arts, they dedicated much effort to re-introducing the neo-classical style in Spain. To achieve that objective, they sought both to eradicate what was considered to be in bad taste and to propose rules and methods by which good taste could be attained. Ponz, one of the leading arbiters of good taste during this period, used his Viaje de España to set out his ideas of what was desirable. Following the example of Winckelmann, Ponz was particularly critical of the neo-baroque Churrigueresque architecture widely used in Spanish churches, coming down firmly on the side of the neo-classical style as his preferred style for contemporary architecture.

In line with such views, architects and artists involved in Charles’s religious commissions were called upon to produce buildings and decorative works that would be both academically correct and in harmony with the prevailing religious doctrine, while at the same time conveying an image of modernity and bolstering the position of the monarchy.

Ironically, however, the very cosmopolitanism that had been the hallmark of the Spanish Bourbons’ patronage of the arts prior to Charles’s arrival and which continued under his rule contributed to undermining such an objective. Rather than producing a unified style, the fusion of influences as diverse as those of Giordano, Giaquinto and Mengs resulted in a variety of styles evident across the range of individual artists working at this time.

As has already been noted, polychromed sculptures of Christ and the Virgin, as well as of saints and angels, were a popular feature of Spanish devotional art throughout the 17th century and well into the 18th century. Charles III did not share this enthusiasm for sculpture, however, and although sculpted figures do feature in some of his religious commissions they are the exception rather than the rule. Instead, Charles preferred the two-dimensional quality of paintings and frescos, reserving three-dimensional ornament for stucco decorations, often

45 Several translations of architectural treatises were published between 1764 and 1797. For example Padre Miguel de Benavente translated from the Latin Charles de Rieger’s Elementos de arquitectura civil, 1768; & Ortiz y Sanz, J. Los diez libros de arquitectura de M. Vitruvio Polion, 1787. For more, see Bédat C. L’Académie des Beaux-Arts de Madrid 1744-1808, Toulouse, 1974, p. 204.
including angels or decorative vegetation, produced by Italian artists and Spanish court sculptors such as Manuel Álvarez or Francisco Gutiérrez for their surrounding frames and borders. Devotional paintings of saints, evoking the virtues of their subject in an exemplary way, were often located in individual chapels dedicated to the saint in question. Closely following the model used by the Jesuits in their churches, the decoration of each chapel was thus made easily accessible, didactic and clear to the devotee. Paintings were mostly executed on well-prepared canvases or panel, thereby assuring the slick enamelled finish that Charles preferred.

In cases where sculpture was used as the principal medium, marble or wood gessoed in imitation of marble was used in preference to more lifelike polychrome painting. In 1769, Juan Pascual de Mena produced a sculpture of St. Isidro, accompanied by two allegorical statues by Gutiérrez and Álvarez, gilded and painted to look like marble. In 1771, Gutiérrez produced a sculptured relief of St. Pedro of Alcántara for the Alcantarine Convent at Arenas de San Pedro of white gessoed wood. At about the same time, Álvarez produced a marble sculpture of the Immaculate Conception for the chapel of the Royal palace in Madrid.47

We may speculate that Charles probably considered marble or white gesso as a clean material more in tune with neo-classicism and Roman baroque religious art than the polychromed sculptures of traditional Spanish religious art. He may also have wanted to differentiate himself from popular religious cults based around such sculptures that were popular in Madrid churches and elsewhere in Spain. Polychromed sculptures did, however, feature in the Chapel of the Venerable Palafox in Burgo de Osma, where in 1785 Gutiérrez produced two polychromed sculptures of St. Peter Alcántara and St. Dominic for side niches. During this period, too, a number of sculptors who trained at the Royal Academy received commissions from Madrid parish churches to decorate altars or niches. Julian de San Martin (1762-1801), for example, studied at the Royal Academy in 1779 and was extremely productive in Madrid churches. His polychrome sculpture of the Beata Mariana in the Church of Santiago in Madrid proved so popular that an engraving of it was circulated as a devotional image in its own right.48

Charles III and the Academy

Building on what his half-brother Ferdinand had already accomplished, Charles III identified the Academy as an important component in his strategy of promulgating the neo-

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46 For main ideas on good taste see Ponz (1947), pp. 406-409.
classical style, particularly in architecture. Since its foundation on 13th April 1752, the Academy had attracted artists from all over Spain. It provided them with an artistic education and the opportunity to come into contact with court painters, to study the rich royal collection and to visit churches containing important works of art. In 1757, the Academy had instituted painting and drawing competitions, in which many of the set themes were taken from Spanish religious and political history, from saints and Christian kings conquering the Moors to the discovery of the New World.

In addition to illustrating the Academy’s efforts to exercise increased control over its painters, however, these competitions hint at a heightened sense of nationalism that may have been exacerbated by successive monarchs’ insistence on importing foreign painters and architects for their artistic and architectural projects. Following Giaquinto’s resignation from the Academy, Antonio González Velázquez and other Spanish artists, including Andrés de la Calleja (1705-1785), Antonio González Ruiz (1711-1788) and Pablo Penicharo, had increasingly come to dominate the Academy, with the result that it began to assume more independence from the court, revising its statutes and teaching procedures.

Most of the subjects chosen by the Academicians for painting and drawing competitions were taken from Spain’s political and religious history, from the Visigothic period to the discovery of the New World. Representations of the deeds of Spanish Catholic kings during the Reconquista were particularly popular, including battles won through divine intercession, acts of clemency and religious virtue. St. Ferdinand, as the Academy’s patron saint, was a frequent subject for competitions, emphasizing his virtues as king and liberator of the Spanish people. Other themes included obscure stories of Spanish Visigothic kings and early Spanish saints, such as King Freula I capturing the city of Setubal (1769). Detailed accounts of their acts could be found in Padre Juan de Mariana’s (1536-1624), Historia de Sagrada España, a text that had recently been re-edited and updated under the orders of the Count of Floridablanca and which was often quoted in the official announcement of the competition’s subject. Rather than portraying battles in full action, academic paintings mostly showed the moment of peace or the achievement of a diplomatic solution to conflict. Several surviving compositions kept at the Academy, such as Ginés de Aguirre’s St.

49 The Memorial Literario, January, 1785, p. 43: “Todas las artes correspondientes a las tres nobles artes han merecido siempre el mayor aprecio, pero como el uso de la Arquitectura es mas general, y de mayor extension, y mas patente a todos, por esta razón nos diletaremos mas en las descripciones de ésta. Por lo qual, y para que se vea quanto interesa nuestro Católico Monarca, que desde el principio de su reynado se declaro por verdadero mecenas de la tres nobles artes, en la perfeccion de la Arquitectura...”

50 Azcarate et al., Historia y Alegoría (1994).

Ferdinand receiving the Embassy of the King of Baeza (1760), show familiarity with the battle pictures commissioned in the 1630s by the Count of Olivares for the Salón de los Reinos from painters such as José Leonardo, Maino and Velázquez (fig. 15).53

Although these subjects were purely academic exercises and conceived as historical paintings rather than devotional images, their iconographical content sometimes proved influential in Charles’s religious commissions. Charles was keen to compare his reign with the reigns of his predecessors. In 1757, for example, the theme for the prueba de pensado was St. Leocadia appearing to King Recesvinto and St. Ildefonso, an eighth-century miracle which involves an intimate relationship between king and saint. Maella, who came second in this competition, was to paint the same subject in fresco between 1770-1772 for the main nave of the Collegiate church at La Granja, using a similar composition (fig. 16).54

Other themes selected for the Academy competitions were directly inspired by events at court. To commemorate the birth of an Infante, for example, an allegory was devised, using the child’s patron saints or mythological figures alluding to his or her virtues. The birth on 19th September 1771 of Charles’s first grandson, Carlos Clemente, coincided with the feast day of the king’s favourite saint, the Neapolitan St. Januarius, and prompted him to call for an allegorical treatment of the event in the academy’s next competition. In response, in the 1772 competition, painters such as Jacinto Gómez Pastor, Gregorio Ferro and Mariano Illa presented an Allegory of the Birth of Carlos Clemente, with God the Father, St. Januarius and St. Lawrence and angels in attendance (fig. 17).55

**Spanish artists in Rome**

One place where artists learned to paint in a style more in tune with Charles’s tastes for religious painting was Rome. In 1758, the Academy decided to award scholarships every three years for the study in Rome of painting, sculpture and architecture, under the direction of the painter Francisco Preciado de la Vega (1713-1789). Originally from Seville, Preciado had been in Rome since 1733, where he trained under Sebastiano Conca and became a prominent figure within the Accademia di San Luca.56 Castillo, Maella and Gabriele Durán,

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52 Mariana, Juan de Historia general de España: compuesta, enmendada y añadida por el P. Mariana, 3 vols., Madrid, 1780-1809.
53 Azcárate et al., Historia y Alegoria (1994), fig. 58, p. 78.
54 Ibid, fig. 47, p. 64.
56 Preciado de la Vega (1712-1789) was also the author of a treatise entitled Arcadia Pictórica en sueño: Alegoria o poema prosaico sobre la Teorica y Practica de la pintura escrita por Parraíso Tebano, Pastor
selected in 1758, were encouraged to copy after the antique and late baroque compositions. Three Italian sketchbooks by Castillo, dated 1762 and recently acquired by the Prado but unfortunately never photographed, making it difficult to study them carefully, contain sketches and copies after classical and baroque sculptures, fresco cycles and paintings in palaces and churches. In addition to copying works in such well-known locations as the Farnese Gallery, Castillo also studied and interpreted less well known paintings such as Lanfranco’s Ecstasy of St. Andrew Avellino in the church of San Andrea della Valle (fig. 18).

Maella, on his arrival in Rome, entered the Academy of St. Luke and came third in a second class competition known as the “Concurso Clementina” in 1758. The competition required the presentation of a highly finished drawing of the Agony in the Garden and a “prova ex-tempore” of the Creation of Adam. Only a mediocre red chalk drawing of the Creation by Maella has survived in the Academy (fig. 19). While in Rome, he also executed copies after famous compositions by Carlo Maratta, Pietro da Cortona, and Guido Reni, which he sent to the Madrid Academy for the consideration of the Academicians. As a result, Maella’s style took on a Roman baroque imprint, mixing influences from contemporary painters such as Pompeo Batoni and Sebastiano Conca.

These influences are apparent in his first official commission in 1762, when he was asked to paint the main altarpiece for the Alcantarine headquarters in Rome, the convent of I Santi Quaranta e San Pasquale Baylone in Trastevere. We learn from the Academy’s Junta Ordinaria of 27th June 1762 that Maella had asked for permission to accept the commission, and that the modello for the composition had been seen by Giaquinto, who was in Rome at the time and who, in response to a request for his comment, had “praised it highly.” The Academy gave its consent, providing it was given the modello to hang in its collection, where it remains today (fig. 20). The altarpiece shows St. Meliton and the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. Although reported as “destroyed” by Morales, it is still in situ with an attribution to Luigi Fussi (fig. 21). Maella’s Roman classical style based on the examples set by Maratta and Pompeo Batoni was to remain with him throughout his career, and is apparent particularly in his religious compositions.


Morales (1996), cat. no. 4, p. 251. See also Navarro, A, Santi Quaranta Semblanza Historico-Artistica, 1977, Rome, p. 53: This guide book attributes the picture to Luigi Fussi, but mentions that
Tensions between Spanish and foreign artists

As a centralising politician, Charles favoured the idea of bringing all the arts under one roof, with the Academy responsible for training a team of artists, architects and sculptors to produce works in accordance with neo-classical principles and "buen gusto". He hoped that rules based on neo-classical precepts would provide a stable and structured framework within which the arbiters of taste could judge and control what was being produced. In order to spread the message of reform through the introduction of the neo-classical style, he sponsored the establishment of provincial academies and drawing schools, such as the Academy of St. Charles in Valencia in 1768. The Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand remained the central reference point for academic teaching.

Nonetheless, the growing dichotomy between the court and the Academy led to disagreements with regard to the role that each should play in the propagation of the new style and the manner in which painting and architecture should be subjected to these reforms. As the main instrument of his efforts to promote an artistic renaissance in Spain, Charles III appointed Mengs in 1763 to the post of Honorary Director of the Academy, alongside the Galician-born court sculptor Felipe de Castro as director general. Two years earlier, however, Charles had invited the celebrated Venetian fresco painter, Giambattista Tiepolo, to Madrid along with his two sons, Domenico and Lorenzo, to paint the large ceiling of the Throne room in the Royal Palace of Madrid. Tiepolo came from a different pictorial tradition than Mengs, and his rapid and expressive technique in many ways represented the antithesis of Mengs's immaculate finish.

The reasons for Charles's decision to summon Tiepolo to Spain can only be guessed at. The Italian painter had recently completed his fresco cycle at Würzburg and his reputation was at its peak. Charles doubtless wanted the best fresco painter in Europe to decorate some of the most important rooms in his palace, which served to receive ambassadors and host important events. On completing the Throne room, he commissioned Tiepolo to paint two more ceilings, the Saleta or anteroom to the throne room and the Salón de Alabarderos (palace guards). In 1767, he instructed Tiepolo to produce a series of paintings for the convent church of San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez, his first Franciscan commission. In bringing Tiepolo to Spain, Charles helped to reinforce a clash between two different styles of painting which was not fully resolved until after Mengs's death.

according to the Diario Ordinario, published on 11th August 1764, the painting was cited as being by Maella. See also Cormudella I Carré, R. (1997), p. 109.

62 Bédat (1974), pp.353-368. Charles also founded academies in the Spanish colonies, such the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City in 1784.
Meanwhile, as already noted, the appointment of other foreigners to important posts in government, including the Marquis of Squillace as Minister of Finance and the Marquis of Grimaldi as Secretary of State, had prompted resentment and political tensions, eventually leading to the Squillace riots in March 1766. Similar tensions developed between the court and the Academy, where a xenophobic atmosphere discouraged the involvement in its activities of foreign artists. Neither Mengs nor Tiepolo, who could have filled the post of professor of colour, was invited to hold any teaching position at the Academy.

Antonio González Velázquez and his brother Luis were at the heart of tensions between established Spanish painters in Madrid and their newly arrived colleagues and rivals from Italy. The two brothers had spent the years between 1755 and 1758 executing frescoes for the church of the convent of the Salesas Reales under the supervision of Giaquinto. In 1761, confident of their abilities, they both petitioned to be given a part in the fresco programme of the Madrid royal palace. Luis died in 1764, but Antonio González Velázquez was commissioned to paint a fresco of Christopher Columbus being received in Barcelona by the Catholic Kings after the Discovery of America, which he completed in 1765 for the apartments of Isabel Farnese, the Queen mother. He received another four commissions for the ceilings of the Infante Don Luis's private apartments. One of these was for the Infante's Dressing room, which he decorated with Justice recompensing Fidelity and Benignity, for which a hitherto unacknowledged pen and ink wash drawing survives in the National Library of Madrid (fig. 22). Although Antonio González Velázquez was made one of the deputy directors (Teniente Director) of painting at the Academy in 1767, he never fully won Mengs's confidence. In 1776, Mengs, when asked to comment on González Velázquez's talent as an artist, declared: "He is a painter of spirit and facility, but even if he may have merit, I cannot consider him the equal of Francisco Bayeu or Don Mariano Maella."

At the royal palace, Mengs initially had to deal with Sarmiento, to whom he was directed for guidance in relation to the subjects he should paint for the palace decoration. Judging by subsequent accounts, this encounter was equally tense. Writing in 1795, Mengs's
friend and biographer, Nicolás de Azara, told Isidoro Bosarte, secretary of the Academy and an architectural historian, of Mengs’s first impression and his reaction to Sarmiento’s *Libro de Adornos*. According to Azara, Mengs was sent to Sarmiento for instructions concerning the subjects he should paint on the ceilings. Not only did neither understand the other but when Sarmiento lent him his book, Mengs could not make head or tail of it. On being told of the clash, the king took the side of Mengs, telling him that he was free to choose whatever subject he thought appropriate and that Sarmiento should not be consulted any more.

As First Court Painter, Mengs had total control over the manner in which Charles III’s official portraits were painted. His first portrait of Charles, executed in 1761, served as a prototype for subsequent portraits throughout his reign (fig. 23). The three-quarter length portrait, now in the Prado, shows Charles standing with a baton in his right hand and with his left hand pointing out of the picture, possibly towards Mengs’s pendant portrait of his wife, Maria-Amalia of Saxony, also painted at this time. Mengs sets the king in an architectural space in front of a pilaster whose bare sobriety contrasts with the detail of his costume and the reflection of light on the metal of the armour. Rather than as a patron of the arts, he is shown wearing armour and military attributes such as the cross and sash of the Order of the Saint-Isaure, the badge and sash of the Order of the Golden Fleece and the insignia of the Order of Saint Januarius. By slightly lengthening the king’s facial features, Mengs renders them more elegant than they would seem to have been in real life, judging, at least, by contemporary descriptions. In his idealised portrait, Mengs presents Charles III as a military commander, as well as a type of Christian knight defending his Catholic subjects. The close relationship between Mengs and his patron, similar in many respects to that between Philip IV and Velázquez, subsequently prompted comparisons with the classical prototype of Alexander the Great and Apelles.

In line with court practice of the time, other painters, including Maella, Bayeu, Castillo and Francisco Javier Ramos (1746-1817), followed Mengs’s representation of Charles III in their own works, with only superficial variations in dress and background.

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68 Mengs, A. R., *The Works of Anthony Raphael Mengs First Painter to his Catholic Majesty Charles III translated from the Italian publication by the Cher Don Joseph Nicholas D’Azara Spanish Minister at Rome*, Vol. I, London, 1796, pp. 38-39. Mengs’s first biographer, Azara compares his unfinished painting of the Annunciation, painted in Rome before his death in 1779, with Apelles’ legendary unfinished picture of Venus. “The one and the other proposed to surpass all their anterior work, but both find themselves incapable of accomplishing.....All paintings left incomplete by their authors are according to Pliny more estimable than if they were finished.... this is not the only circumstance which renders similar these two painters: the first enjoyed the favour of Alexander and the latter that of Charles III.”

69 A.G.P., Bellas Artes, Seccion Administrativa, leg. 38: Razón de gastos que he echo yo Dn Antonio Rafael Mengs Primer Pintor de Camara de S M. por el Real Servizio, que son como sigue, drawn up by Mengs on 20th July 1767 in order to pay his assistants Castillo and Ramos: “A Dn Joseph del Castillo
1784, for example, Maella, by then an established portraitist, was commissioned to paint a full-length portrait of Charles III in ceremonial dress as the sovereign and patron of the Order of the Immaculate Conception. In Maella’s painting, the king wears different attire and is set in a more spacious room with a view over a seaport, possibly alluding to his dominions abroad. But the pose and facial features are exactly the same as in Mengs’s official portrait of 1761. Similarly, Goya, in his 1787 portrait of Charles III in hunting dress (fig. 24) made use of Mengs’s portrait or the engravings made after it by Salvador Carmona in 1783 (fig. 25), simply replacing the baton with a glove and slightly changing the hand holding the gun. However, Goya also ingeniously changes the backdrop, in a reference to Velázquez’s portraits of Philip IV in hunting dress, and applies a softer palette to create a pastoral atmosphere.

Similarly, Charles III initially employed Mengs for his religious commissions, which in the early 1760s were still on a personal and private scale. Mengs’s highly polished style and graceful compositions based on classical painters such as Raphael and Correggio proved ideal for the decoration of the king’s private oratories and his bedchamber. As we shall see, however, Mengs’s difficult relations with the Academy indicate that Charles III was less than fully successful in imposing a unified style and character in official religious art. On the contrary, the Academy embraced stylistic diversity, to the subsequent benefit of Spain’s artistic creativity but to the detriment of Mengs’s authority.

**The Influence of Mengs**

Rather than dominating the Academy during the 1760s and 1770s, transforming it into a centre of neo-classical theories and teaching, as commentators such as Bédat have suggested, Mengs seems to have had only limited influence over its activities. Significantly, he failed to win support for his proposals for a new curriculum to teach young students. His main influence on Spanish art was through loyal students such as Bayeu and Maella, who combined his ideas on polish and rigid preparatory techniques with other influences from painters as diverse as Maratta, Giaquinto and Tiepolo. Nonetheless, an understanding of the role played by Mengs, and in particular of his views on technique and composition, is vital for an appreciation of the development of painting in Spain under Charles III.

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Pintor de esta Corte por aber bosqueiado el retrato de la difunta Reyna d.a María Amalia, que se ha echo por orden de S.M. y retocado de mi mano para la serenissima Sta. Prinzesa... A Dn. Fran.co Xavier Ramos por una copia del retrato de la reyna Madre Nrs Sta (que Dios aya) echo por el mismo fin....Mas al dicho D. Fran.co Ramos por aber bosqueiado los Bestidos de los retratos de Prinzipe Nrs S or Sra Prinzesa retocados de mi mano que se embieron á Napoles...”


Mengs would have liked the Academy to become a functioning body reflecting the king’s authority and based on neo-classical precepts. In January 1765, at Mengs’s suggestion, Bayeu was made Deputy Director of Painting, and Maella joined him in that post in February 1771. The minutes of a Junta Particular held at the Academy on 27th February 1766 record his proposal for six new courses, in modeling, geometry and perspective, anatomy, copying after plaster casts, classes in colour and copying after prints. A letter from Grimaldi to the Marquis of Montealegre, dated 8th September 1766, indicates that the king was ready to make available his court painters, Mengs, Tiepolo, Carlos Casanova, and Maella, and his engravers, Salvador Carmona and Claude-Joseph Flipart, to improve the quality of teaching at the Academy. Although Mengs helped Castro to select plaster casts after antique reliefs recently found in Herculaneum for students to copy, however, his other proposals were ignored.

Bédat notes that Mengs, in his proposal, stated that the Academy’s professors, as well as its students, should follow the proposed courses. According to Bédat, this caused outrage among the professors, who thought Mengs was casting doubt on their artistic talent. In the event, only three directors of new courses were appointed. On 5th September 1766, Francisco Navarro, surgeon to the Duke of Alba, was made director of Anatomy, while on 7th November 1766 Alejandro González Velázquez was made director of Perspective. Nearly two years later, on 2nd October 1768, Benito Bails was appointed director of Geometry.

Mengs, understandably, was not satisfied with this arrangement. In a lengthy speech made to the Academy at about this time and published in 1780 by his biographer, Azara, he stated his belief that an Academy should be an “assembly of men, the most expert in science or art, their object being to investigate truth, and to find fixed rules always conducing to progress and perfection.” He reproached the Academy for lacking these qualities.

73 Ubeda de los Cobos, A., “Propuestas de reforma y planes de estudio: la influencia de Mengs en la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando” Archivo Español de Arte, 1987, p.451. A copy of the document is in the A.G.P. Sección Administrativa, legajo 38. “Para la Dirección de algunos nuevos estudios propuestos por la Academia de San Fernando al Rey y aprobados por halla que como muy útiles, se han ofrecido voluntariamente D.n Antonio Rafael Mengs y a su ejemplo otros Profesores zelosos que tienen sueldo del Real Erario. En consecuencia quiere el Rey que los profesores cuyos nombres expresa la adjunta lista asistan a la Dirección de los nuevos Estudios en la forma y segun el metodo que establezca la Academia; y me manda Su Magestad participarlo a V.E para que les dé la orden correspondie.nte a fin de que se presenten en la Academia y cumplan los Encargos que esta les diere, sirviendo asi a un tiempo al Rey y al público en la enseñanza de las Artes.”
76 Mengs (1796), Vol. II, p. 69. This English edition of Azara’s biography includes a paper Mengs delivered probably around 1768 at the Royal Academy. Unlike the Spanish version, which was translated from the Italian original, both published in 1780, the English title of the speech implies that he was talking about the Spanish academy: Discourse upon the Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. (In the Spanish version the title is: Carta de don Antonio Rafael Mengs a un amigo sobre la constitución de una Academia de las Bellas Artes.) In it Mengs criticizes the general structure and administration of the
particularly in its members' intellectual and philosophical approach to painting, which rather
than looking back at the antique and Greek models involved looking back at 17th century
Spanish painting. Mengs also criticized the general running of the Academy, which was
dominated by aristocrats with little knowledge of art and by artists of mediocre standards.77

Mengs's main emphasis was on a combination of art theory with practical studies
under the tutelage of professional artists and teachers. In parallel, he also encouraged students
to make detailed drawings of body parts such as hands, eyes and ears before drawing the body
as a whole, either copying it from a plaster model or from life. That his ideas had some
influence is shown by the minutes of a Junta Particular held on 2nd October 1768, which state
that Mengs had helped to select “fifteen academic figures by Mariano Maella, two heads by
Luis Velázquez and a sheet with studies of ears” for students to copy.78

In contrast to the loose Giaquintesque drawings made after live models as seen in the
two drawings attributed to Castillo, Bayeu's own drawings were determined by Mengs's
academic principles. Mainly consisting of black and white chalk drawings, they are generally
highly finished drawings of anatomical details of hands, arms and torsos, which he would
eventually put together and dress with meticulously drawn drapery (fig. 26). In addition,
Mengs encouraged artists to copy after plaster casts rather than after live models, so that they
could copy perfect models. Before leaving for Spain, Mengs donated his own collection of
casts to the Academy, where they remain today.79

Mengs's own preparations usually consisted of making first a quickly drawn sketch to
try out and revise his composition. Once he was satisfied with the general outline of the
composition, he would then make further drawings concentrating on details such as posture,
the folds of drapery covering his figures, and a study of hands and faces taking into account
the fall of light. These drawings, sometimes done on primed gessoed paper to obtain a
focused effect, are executed following strict academic principles in a search for perfection.
The drawings were then transferred into paint, and used for reference purposes as if they were
cartoons.

Mengs also painted oil sketches, although not many survive, with the intention of
bringing together his figures into a coherent coloured composition. A recently re-discovered
preparatory sketch on paper for the Apotheosis of Trajan, which Mengs painted between 1774

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78 "quince figuras de academia de Dn Mariano Maella, dos cabezas de Luis Velázquez y un papel de
orejas" Archivo de la Real Academia de San Fernando, Junta Particular, 2nd October 1768, p. 348.
79 Agueda Villar, “Mengs y la Academia de San Fernando”, Actas del Segundo Simposio sobre el
and 1776, demonstrates his working method (fig. 27). Using pen and ink to sketch out the already planned composition on squared-out paper, Mengs then applied oil paint to give his figures colour and volume. He seems to have particularly concentrated on a group of figures in the lower area of his composition, leaving the upper part of the sketch, containing the figure of Hercules, simply drawn but without colour. A comparison of this oil sketch and the unfinished ceiling in the theatre of Aranjuez of Pleasure overcome by Time suggests that Mengs used such sketches on site as a visual guide, filling in the colours as he went along (fig. 28 & 29).

In 1769, however, for reasons ranging from the Academy’s lack of cooperation, problems with salaries, students not turning up to the perspective classes and insults directed towards the director of the Anatomy, Mengs resigned from his position as honorary director. In the same year, the Academy decided to end the system of scholarships for artists to study in Rome. In his undated Fragmento de un discurso sobre los medios para hacer florecer las Bellas Artes en España, Mengs demonstrates his awareness of cultural differences between his Germanic manner of thinking and the hot temperament of the Spanish. Beneath his dispassionate sociological analysis, Mengs gives a glimpse of the frustrations he experienced when trying to impose his ideas on “buen gusto” on artists trained at the Academy.

Soon after his resignation, Mengs left Madrid for Rome, where he was to spend the following five years. During this period, he remained in contact with Charles III and sent a number of paintings back to Madrid, including an Adoration of the Magi for the king’s dressing room. He also continued to provide guidance and intellectual input into an ongoing debate within Spain concerning matters of taste and artistic decorum. His ideas and theories on the art of painting were published in the form of a letter to Ponz in the sixth volume of the latter’s Viaje de España, which appeared in 1776, the same year in which Ponz was made Secretary of the Royal Academy. Warning fellow-painters that pastiche and idle plagiarism could lead to decadence and the collapse of a national school, Mengs advocated an

82 “Sabemos por experiencia que el clima hace á los hombres diferentes unos de otros: pero tambien es cierto que las costumbres y la educacion hacen utiles o intuiles los efectos de la Naturaleza. Convendrá pues, examinar estos dos principios, para ver la influencia que pueden tener en el adelantamiento de las Bellas Artes en España. Este Reyno goza generalmente de un aire muy puro y elástico, que da mucho movimiento á los humores, e irrita facilmente el sistema nervioso. La aridez y sequedad ....y esta gran sensibilidad de fibra debe producir grandes talentos, de mucha agudeza y penetracion, capaces de aprender cualquiera cosa.....Tal vez esta sensibilidad de los Españoles es demasiada para el cultivo de las Bellas Artes; porque estas piden un sistema nervioso moderado, qual es el que produce naturalmente un clima medio entre el calor y el frio.....” Obras de D. Antonio Rafael Mengs, Primer pintor de cámara del Rey, publicadas por don Joseph Nicolas de Azara, Caballero de la Orden de Carlos III, del Consejo de S.M. en el de Hacienda, su agente y procurador general en la corte de Roma. 1780, Madrid, p. 183.
intellectual approach in the observation and interpretation of other artists' styles. In a wide-ranging art historical review, he discussed different painterly styles, classifying them into sections ranging from the "sublime style", as exemplified by Raphael, to the "easy style" which he condemned in the art of Pietro da Cortona and Giordano.

Mengs's letter takes the form of a guided tour of the paintings in the royal palace, beginning with an eulogistic description of the Spanish school. The Academy's decision in 1769 to cease awarding scholarships to study in Rome had revived the importance of the royal collection as an educational vehicle. Mengs begins by discussing Velázquez's paintings at length, from the Waterseller to the Forge of Vulcan and the Spinners, praising his use of space for the representation of perspective and his use of light, shadow and aerial perspective. Rather than the cold classicist that he is generally considered, Mengs reveals himself in such comments to have been sensitive to Velázquez's painterly achievements. Among other Spanish painters, he cites Murillo and Ribera before moving on to foreign painters such as Titian and Poussin, briefly assessing their achievements and faults. Finally, Mengs addresses his favourite artist, Raphael, praising his Christ Carrying the Cross, better known as the Pasmo de Sicilia, as the perfect work of art. Adopting a didactic tone, he dissects various aspects of Raphael's painting, discussing in detail the dramatic interpretation of his subject, his use of composition and colouring, his draughtsmanship and brushstrokes. In Mengs's view, if students wanted to achieve perfection in painting, they had to practise five fundamental disciplines: Drawing, Chiaroscuro, or the study of light, Colour, Composition and Invention. All of these, Mengs made clear, were to be found to perfection in Raphael's Pasmo de Sicilia.

By contrast, Mengs was critical of Giordano, whose paintings, displayed in the state apartments of the royal palaces, were much admired within court circles. Ramón Bayeu (1744-1793) made numerous copies after his work, while José del Castillo, praised as the best imitator of Giordano's style, copied his paintings with a view to turning some of them into tapestry cartoons and others such as the Hercules series in the Casón del Buen Retiro into engravings. Castillo also made etchings after two paintings by Giordano representing the Flight to Egypt and Christ and his disciples in a tempest (fig. 30), then in the King's oratory.

83 For Mengs's letter to Ponz on painting and the Royal collection see Ponz (1947), p. 570.
85 Ponz (1947), pp. 570 & 574.
of the Buen Retiro;\textsuperscript{88} in August 1777, he was commissioned by Charles III to restore Giordano's frescoes in the Buen Retiro palace.\textsuperscript{89}

Stating that Giordano never reached "perfection in anything", Mengs noted that even though Giordano's "fortune, praise and facility" as a painter had inspired a great many Spanish artists, they should be careful when copying him, as they had not received the same artistic education as Giordano, who had been able to see and imitate the masters of each of the best Italian schools.\textsuperscript{90} While noting that Giordano "never did anything badly, because one always finds good taste in his paintings," Mengs reproaches him for always leaving his ideas in an embryonic stage for a style that he described as an imitation of others rather than a harmonious blending of various styles. For these reasons, Mengs discouraged students from copying his work, arguing that this would distract them from discovering for themselves the essentials of precise preparation and the ideal of beauty.

Mengs disapproved of anything smacking of rushed or superficial work. In his letter to Ponz, Mengs discusses the importance of Invention, or the initial idea on which a work of art is based. Therein, he says, lies, "the most ample part of painting, in which one finds the ingenuity and talent" of the artist. "It is not enough for the painter to have a good idea, nor be able to fill his canvas with many figures, if these do not all serve to explain the initial idea."\textsuperscript{91} Instead, the painter had to pursue his idea through drawing or by making oil sketches and then faithfully reproduce these in his final picture, in order to attain the idea of perfection and the "sublime" which Mengs professed.

In the 14\textsuperscript{th} volume of his Viaje de España, Ponz includes a list of drawings, cartoons and paintings by Mengs acquired after his death by the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great. Ponz uses the opportunity to give some sort of inventory of Mengs's work in Spanish collections, including those of Don Juan Aguirre, an Intendant of the Royal Glass factory, Maella, and the architect Villanueva. He notes that they all owned cartoons which Mengs had prepared for his palace ceilings or paintings such as the Lamentation in the King's bedroom.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{88} Páez Ríos, Elena, Repertorio de Grabados Españoles, en la Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 1981, cat. no. 462-2, p. 222. Unfortunately these etchings are undated. However, they relate well technically to Goya’s etchings after Velázquez, executed between 1777-9. They were possibly executed in relation to a project to make the Royal collection better known outside Spain. Castillo’s etchings were definitely on sale by 1779. See Portus & Vega, La Estampa Religiosa en la España del Antiguo Regimen, 1998, Madrid, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{89} A.G.P. Expediente Personal 11.760/3. Addressed to Mathias López on 4\textsuperscript{th} August 1777: “Puede vm. disponer que le pintor Dn. José del Castillo retoque lo que se haya descascarado de la pintura que hizo Jordán en el Cásón; pero convendrá que lo execute al temple; pues al fresco sería mucha obra, y habría precision de quitar aún lo que no está enteramente descascarado, siendo forzoso q. para esta especie de pintura se hechase nuevo estuco. A caso irá por alla D.n Antonio Ponz a verlo, y dirá al Pintor lo que conviene hacer.”

\textsuperscript{90} Mengs (1780), p. 187.

\textsuperscript{91} Ponz (1947), p. 571.

\textsuperscript{92} Ponz (1947), pp. 1235-1237. This list of drawings and cartoons by Mengs sold to Catherine the Great has never been appropriately acknowledged and is not mentioned in Azara’s biography.
In 1791, Ceán Bermúdez wrote an analysis on the art of drawing, based on ideas similar to those of Mengs and Ponz. Although his treatise, entitled Discurso sobre el discernimiento de las pinturas, dibuxos y estampas originales de las copias, dealt mainly with connoisseurship, he devoted a small section to different types of drawings. Ceán Bermúdez identified five different techniques, possibly based on Mengs’s own preparatory proceedings. The first, “rasguños” or “pensamientos”, were quick sketches which “manifest the fire of the imagination, the genius and character of the artist.” The second, “estudios”, were detailed studies of body parts and drapery using a mannequin. Here Ceán Bermúdez adds that “Mengs did these very carefully on bluish paper with graphite highlighting them with crayon”. The third, “Academias”, were studies after live nude models. The fourth, “cartones”, were large format drawings for practical use when painting the final picture, especially for tapestries and frescoes. Finally, the fifth category, “diseños concluidos”, consisted of either highly finished drawings made for students to copy, or drawings after paintings, which were to be used as guides for engravers.

Reflecting the clash between different styles and approaches to painting that characterised Spain during the 1760s and 1770s, Mengs’s heritage among his contemporaries and the generation that followed them is significantly more limited than his talents and aspirations might have suggested. Both Giaquinto and Tiepolo had a profound influence on their Spanish contemporaries. We know that Francisco Bayeu owned at least nine sketches by Tiepolo, whose colouring and loose brushstrokes he echoed in his own work, particularly in his bozzetti for ceiling frescoes. Coupled with the lingering influence of Giordano on painters of Bayeu’s generation, the influence of these two painters provided a counterpoint to Mengs’s efforts to introduce a more formal, polished style of painting. The conflict between the two styles was to prove a significant obstacle to Charles’s efforts to develop a unified Spanish style in support of his reform objectives. It was only resolved after the deaths of both Mengs and his patron, when Goya established himself as the leading exponent of a Spanish "..."}

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95 Discurso sobre el discernimiento de las pinturas, dibuxos y estampas originales de las copias, in Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscrito Section, no. 21458(5), dated 7th October 1791, Seville & Carta de D. Juan Agustin Ceán Bermúdez a su amigo Philoultramarino sobre El discernimiento de las pinturas originales y de las copias, Ms. No. 21454/1, dated 22nd August 1805, Seville. This letter was re-published in Minerva, 21st January 1806 and El Arte en España, 2, 1863, pp. 148-163. See also Martín Abad, J., “Obras Manuscritas y Papeles de Ceán Bermúdez en la Biblioteca Nacional” in Boletín del Centro de Estudios del Siglo XVIII, Oviedo, 1991, no. 3 & 6, pp. 5-6.
96 Biblioteca Nacional, Ms. 21454/1, p. 27.
96 Biblioteca Nacional, Ms. 21.458(5).
school that rediscovered its links with its 17th century forebears, and in particular with Velázquez.

estampas de Tiepolo con su retrato grabado al aguafuerte”, “Veinte tres de Cavezas al agua fuerte por Tiepolo” & “nueve de ideas pintorescas de la fuga de Egipto.”
CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND POLITICS DURING THE REIGN OF CHARLES III

Charles III’s assumption of the Spanish throne marked an important new stage in the changing relationship between the Spanish monarchy and the Church. Throughout Europe, during the course of the 18th century, the institutional position of the Church was brought increasingly into question. Movements such as Gallicanism, Jansenism and Febronianism advocated a reduced role for the Papacy and a correspondingly greater role for temporal rulers in ecclesiastical matters. In Spain, where the Church had entered the 18th century still steeped in the ideas and attitudes of the Counter-Reformation, successive Bourbon monarchs endeavoured to expand their sovereignty in ecclesiastical matters. Charles III was to take this policy to an extreme with the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767.

Under the last Hapsburg, Charles II, the Papacy had taken advantage of the weakness of the Spanish crown to control patronage over church affairs. Two thirds of all appointments to senior Spanish ecclesiastical positions were made in Rome, and the Pope enjoyed a large income from vacant Spanish sees and from fees charged to Spaniards in ecclesiastical courts. During the Wars of the Spanish Succession, after Charles II’s death in 1700, the Papacy supported the Hapsburg Archduke Charles of Austria. Philip V, on his accession to the Spanish throne, seized on this as an excuse to distance himself from the papacy. Negotiations finally resulted in a Concordat between the Spanish crown and Pope Clement XII in 1737 which, though it pleased neither the regalists nor the clerics, represented a first step towards greater royal control over religious affairs. A second Concordat between Ferdinand VI and Benedict XIV in February 1753 gave the Spanish Crown control over the most important ecclesiastical benefices, hitherto shared with Rome. The Pope was forced to

97 Although Bishop Hontheim’s De Statu Ecclesiae (1763) was placed on the Index of prohibited books by the Inquisition, it was widely read in Spain. See Herr (1958), p. 26. A German movement adopted this treatise, also known as the Book of Justinus Febronius, whence the word Febronianism, to fight against the claims of the Papacy in the temporal sphere. It recommended the dispersal of Papal authority into general councils of Bishops, giving the right to the ruler to protect the Church in his own state. For a general discussion of religious politics in 18th century Spain see Historia de la Iglesia en España, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Vol. 19, Madrid, 1979 & Callahan, W. J., Church, Politics and Society in Spain, 1750-1874, Harvard, 1984 (Sp. Ed. 1989).


99 Ibid.
relinquish enormous political and financial power, in an agreement so favourable to the Spanish monarchy that when it was made public in Italy it provoked rioting.\textsuperscript{100}

Demonstrating a firm idea of what a “royal” church should be, in accordance with a pattern that he had already pursued as King of the Two Sicilies, Charles III set out to affirm his own independence of the Papacy with regard to ecclesiastical matters. The Church’s administration was corrupt, and popular cults and superstitions were rife. A deeply religious man, Charles set himself the objective of rendering the Church strong and pure, uncontaminated by external political strife or internal struggles for power.

\textbf{Charles III’s personal approach to religion}

From his earliest youth, Charles received from his father, Philip V, instruction regarding the role of monarch and ruler and the responsibility of a king to a higher, divine authority. When he was only eight, his father wrote to him in a letter as follows: “What you have to think of at present is to make yourself worthy of what you are destined one day to become, because it isn’t a question just of governing States, but of governing them well and in accordance with (the will of) God. Ask him therefore for those graces that are necessary, fear and love of Him.”\textsuperscript{101} Right from the beginning, Charles was taught to revere God and respect his subjects, qualities that were to accompany him when he ascended the Spanish throne.

In many regards, Charles’s personal approach to religion shared many of the attributes of popular Spanish piety. Despite the apparent contradiction between this and his commitment to reform, however, this was not a disadvantage, as his veneration for popular saints brought him closer to his subjects. As king of Naples he is known to have adopted a liberal approach towards members of other religions, particularly the Jewish community residing in Naples.\textsuperscript{102} He was himself known for his devotion to the city’s patron, St. Januarius, in whose honour he founded a military order.\textsuperscript{103} In Spain, he adapted his religious devotions to local traditions, stressing his belief in the Immaculate Conception and demonstrating his attachment to the patron saint of Madrid, St. Isidro. His support for St. Isidro was so well received that in 1760 the chapter of the church St. Isidro in Madrid commissioned an engraving from Juan Bernabé Palomino after the famous painting of St.


\textsuperscript{101} “En lo que deben pensar al presente es en haceros digno de lo que deben ser un día, porque no solo es gobernar los Estados, sino gobernarlos bien y según Dios. Pedídsle para esto las gracias que son necesarias, su temor y su amor.” Pérez Samper (1998), p. 13.

\textsuperscript{102} Fernán-Núñez, Conde de, \textit{Vida del Rey D. Carlos III}, ed. A. Morel-Fatio, Madrid, 1988, parte primera, capítulo II, p. 48: “en atraer á su reino á los extranjeros útiles, y aun á los judíos, con el libre uso de sus religiones respectivas.”
Isidro and miracle of the source by Carreño de la Miranda, and dedicated it to Charles (fig. 31).104

His daily routine began with prayer and meditation at 6.00 am for a quarter of an hour, followed by mass in his own oratory or in the royal chapel, where he was joined by other members of the royal family. After dealing with state affairs in the morning, he would see his confessor at 11.00 am followed by his First minister of State to discuss politics issues.105 He would pray again in the evening for a quarter of an hour before going to bed at 11.00 pm.106 According to his biographer, the Count of Fernán Núñez, he only took communion at Easter, the main feast days of the Lord and the Virgin, and other important feast days of saints such as St. Januarius. Fernán Núñez further informs us that Charles III “was prudent, religious without any affectation or superstition, and the sight of him attending mass, chapel and other acts of religion, edified everyone and gave an idea of his faith and of the truth of his religion.”107

His morality was such that even he felt obliged to confess even minor faults. “I do not know how anyone can deliberately commit even a venial sin. Every night I examine my conscience and if I were to find any sin in me I would not go to bed without first making my confession.”108 Henry Swinburne describes Charles III as being “rigid in his morals and strenuously attached to his religion; but he does not suffer his devotion to lay him open to enterprises of the Court of Rome, or the encroachments of his clergy; on the contrary, they have frequently met with rougher usage at his hands than they might have expected from a free-thinker.”109 His relationship with the Vatican was at times so delicate that the Papal Nuncio in Madrid between 1776-1784, Niccolò Stigliano di Colonna, was on various occasions prohibited from appearing in public and at services in the royal chapel.110 Nevertheless, Colonna did not doubt the king’s Catholicism, declaring that “it is clear that

104 The engraving is reproduced in Arte y Devoción (1990), cat. no. 82, p. 84.
107 Fernán Núñez (1988), p.52: “era prudente, religioso sin afectación ni superstición alguna, y el verle asistir a la misa, capilla y demás actos de religion, edificaba a todos y daba una idea de su fe y de la verdad de su religion.”
110 Sierra Nava, L., “Una década de Política Religiosa de Carlos III vista por los ojos de un Nuncio y un Abate Romanos (1776-1785)” in Cuadernos de Investigación Histórica, no. 8, 1984, p. 179.
solid religion reigns in the heart of Charles III" and expressing his confidence that he was a
“Prince of integrity and true religion.”

In addition to surrounding himself with religious images, Charles was a believer in
the efficacy of holy relics. He was wont to descend from his carriage to kneel in the dust
when the Eucharist was carried by in procession. Throughout the royal commissions that
we shall examine, the relics of saints are a recurrent theme, often placed in ornate neo-
classical urns as part of a decorative ensemble. When his wife, Queen Amalia, was on the
brink of death in 1760, he sent for the relics of St. Isidro, believed traditionally to cure sick
people. Charles observed a vow of complete chastity after the death of his wife, María
Amalia, demonstrating a degree of self-discipline that won the admiration of his
contemporaries, evident when his obituaries were written in 1789.

**Pressures for religious reform**

Such practices ironically contrasted with one of the main concerns of Spanish
intellectuals during this period: that of reforming popular religion in order to put an end to
superstitious practices that were an object of derision on the part of foreign visitors to Spain.
Contemporary foreign travellers are frequently found expressing their astonishment at what
they considered primitive forms of worship, likening them to Bacchanals and pagan festivals.
Edward Clarke, for example, writing about his visit to Spain in 1760-1761, records the
“absurdity of their Reliques” and the “multitude of shrines, crosses, and altars in the churches,
routes, hills, and high places, and particularly of images (i.e. sculptures), which have often
brought to my mind the satirical joke of PETRONIUS, who said he never walked the streets,
but that he could much more easily meet with a god than a man … and I am quite sure if you
spit out of a window in Spain ’tis ten to one but you spit upon a saint.”

Coming from a critical Protestant, such views were inevitably biased. However, they
were not without support from within the Spanish Church, where bishops and other
ecclesiastical figures also supported efforts to eradicate unorthodox religious practices and
superstition. And while Charles III favoured a popular type of piety that sought support in

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corazón de Carlos Tercero” and “un Príncipe de tanta probidad y verdadera religión”.
113 A.G.P. Reliquias, leg. 369: On his deathbed, Charles asked for specific relics to be brought to him:
“Para conseguir el Rey de la Divina Misericordia y piedad el beneficio de la mejoria en la enfermedad
que padece y restablecerse en su salud que tanto importa por la intercesion de S. Diego de Alcalá, ha
resuelto S.M. que el cuerpo de este Glorioso Santo se traiga a este R. Palacio inmediatamente en la
forma que otras veces se ha practicado; haciendo lo mismo con los cuerpos de S.n Isidro y Sta María
de la Cabeza y el Niño de Ntra del Sagrado de Toledo.” Signed Floridablanca, 13th December, 1788.
115 Fray Nicolás Porrerro, Oración Fúnebre pronunciada en el Monasterio de San Lorenzo, 1789.
images and relics, he was also keenly aware of the need to avoid excesses in this domain. Among ecclesiastical figures to speak out against such excesses, Bishop Felipe Bertrán of Salamanca commented that some of his colleagues misled their congregations by including unorthodox elements in the celebration of the mass, a practice which he held was "opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and would "suffocate the seed of true and healthy doctrine." Padre Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676-1764), a Benedictine monk from Galicia known as the Spanish Voltaire, wrote a series of papers published as the Teatro Crítico and Cartas Eruditas attacking the superstitious beliefs that become widespread in Spain. Reflecting his interest in science, philosophy and theology, Feijóo adopted a humanist approach, aimed at restoring Spain to its former state of intellectual activity during the 16th and 17th centuries, while at the same time bringing it to the same level as its neighbours within a broader context of European cultural progress. 

In parallel, many members of the Spanish aristocracy and circles of intellectuals were eager to present a modern form of Catholicism, based on moral and ethical doctrines. While Regalism and Jansenism were the traditional opponents of the Holy See in relation to the government of the Church, the group of intellectuals known in France as the Philosophes provided the intellectual backbone to such criticism of religious superstition. This was the party of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists, men of talent and education who in public, to avoid incurring the disapproval of their royal patrons, feigned Catholic belief, but who in private attacked the Church as l'Inflame and called for its extinction. Believing that the destruction of the Jesuits was the first step to be taken, they persuaded monarchs that the Jesuits remained the main obstacle to their Regalist pretensions and a danger to peace in their realms. As Voltaire claimed when writing to Helvetius in 1761, "when we have destroyed the Jesuits we shall have easy work with l'Inflame." 

Faced with the growing scepticism on religious matters of an increasingly vocal class of intellectuals, Charles launched reforms depriving the Church of its land holdings and control over the educational system. In attempting to impose such changes, however, he had to reckon with opposition from a segment of the clergy who maintained strong links with the Papacy, as well as from the Inquisition and the Jesuits. Among the critics of Charles's policies was the Bishop of Cuenca, Isidro Carvajal y Lancaster, who addressed a letter of complaint to Charles III's personal confessor. Carvajal's criticism elicited a sharp response from the king himself, in the form of a letter detailing and justifying the actions that he had taken.

116 Clarke (1763), pp. 12.
120 The original letters are published in Obras originales del Conde de Floridablanca y escritos referentes a su persona. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1867, Madrid, Vol. 59, pp. 1-3. See also:
The Inquisition had originally been founded in 1478 by Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile with a mission to seek out and convert or prosecute Jews and Moors. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries it maintained its authority, as demonstrated by the number of cases it judged. During the 18th century, however, the number of cases declined steadily, reflecting the monarchy's efforts to impose limits on its activities. Under Charles III, hard-line reformers argued that the Inquisition should be suppressed, on the grounds that its close links with the Papacy conferred on it a degree of autonomy unacceptable to a monarchy committed to the centralisation of power and religious reform.

As for the Jesuits, Charles III's opposition to that order was part of a broader movement in Europe. Created at the height of the Counter-Reformation to fight heresy, the Society of Jesus had by the mid-18th century acquired a position of great influence, not only in Spain but elsewhere in Europe. Backed by the Papacy, they had missions in the New World, China, India and Persia. Rather than seeking to establish small groups of ethical Christians, they made mass conversions, blending established pagan practices with Catholicism. They recruited their members among the Spanish nobility and their role as educators or the sons of the nobility ensured them contacts in high circles. In South America, they controlled most of the dioceses and tax revenues, while in Spain, in 1749, they administered 117 colleges, including such prestigious institutions as the Colegio Imperial and the Seminario de los Nobles in Madrid. Both Philip V and Ferdinand VI had Jesuit confessors, demonstrating the order's astuteness in placing its members in influential positions.

Although staunch defenders of Papal prerogatives and infallibility, the Jesuits were accused of laxity in theological matters, particularly in the Spanish colonies where they were criticised for their practice of adapting Catholic rites to indigenous pagan ritual. Historically, their main rivals on the reformist side of the Catholic church had been the Jansenists, followers of the 17th century Dutch figure Cornelis Jansen, who had opposed Pope Urban VIII on theological questions about predestination and the means by which one received Divine Grace. In the 17th century, Jansen's ideas were particularly adopted by a group of aristocratic intellectuals at Port Royal in France, who were keen to reform the hierarchical structure of the church.
church. The main impetus behind the 18th century interpretation of Jansenism was a desire to render the Church strong and pure, uncontaminated by temporal power and internal conflicts.

Modelling themselves on the ancient Church, and in particular on St. Augustine as a representative of a pure and austere type of Christianity, the Jansenists were characterised by their severity in matters of worship and access to God. On the practical side, they proposed reform of the Papal bureaucracy, with more executive power for bishops and an active role for priests as preachers, basing their sermons on Biblical texts. In urging liturgical reform, they sought to banish superstition and devotion to popular cults and miraculous images of the sort common in Spain at the time.

The conflict between the Jansenists and the Jesuits began in 1640 with the posthumous publication of Jansen's *Agustinus*, an interpretation of the writings of St. Augustine which stressed the theory of predestination to the detriment of free will. This was condemned both by the Sorbonne in Paris and by the Jesuits, who defended the doctrine of free will. The Jansenists, meanwhile, were particularly critical of the Jesuits for their promotion of cults such as that of the Sacred Heart and their encouragement of popular fervour, which distracted attention from the essentials of religion.

Opposition between the two camps persisted through most of the 18th century, affecting ecclesiastical politics in throughout Catholic Europe. Clement XIII's pontificate, from 1758 to 1769, was dominated by increasing pressures on the Jesuits in various European countries. In Spain, the conflict flared up in 1761, when the Inquisitor General, Manuel Quintano y Bonifaz, angered the king by publishing a Papal Bull in which Clement XIII, who had himself been educated by the Jesuits, condemned as Jansenist a catechism by the French Abbé François-Philippe Méseguy. As King of Naples he had allowed the circulation of this catechism, which among other things denied papal infallibility and opposed the Jesuits, and he had specifically prohibited publication of Clement's bull. When Bonifaz went ahead and published it despite the king's prohibition, he was exiled from Madrid to a monastery where he was confined until he begged forgiveness. Charles III declared that royal permission must henceforth be given for the publication of Papal bulls in Spain.

The same year, Portugal imprisoned and eventually expelled members of the Society of Jesus, accusing them of having conspired against the king. The Portuguese example was followed by demands in France for drastic changes in the constitution of the Society, which Clement XIII refused. In 1764, Louis XV abolished the order by law in France. In 1767, following civil disturbances in Spain that were blamed on the Jesuits, Charles III expelled

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127 Cross, F.L., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (1957) p. 299. Pope Clement XIII's reaction is recorded in a famous phrase: "Sint ut sunt aut non sint" ("They shall be as they are or not at all").
them from his dominions and joined the French in calling for the order's total extinction. Two years later, Charles also banned the cult of the Sacred Heart in Spain.

Charles III's confessor, Eleta, a loyal ally in reform

In his battle for reform of the church, Charles III had a loyal ally in the person of his confessor, the Alcantarine Franciscan Fray Joaquin de Eleta y la Piedra (1707-1788). Charles's involvement with the Alcantarine branch of the Franciscan order began while he was still in Naples, when as King of the Two Sicilies he had employed an Alcantarine Franciscan, Padre Bolanos, as his confessor. The Alcantarines were a reformed branch of the Franciscans founded in 1533 by the Spanish mystic St. Peter of Alcantara (1499-1562). As a mendicant order, the Alcantarines lived according to a rule of poverty and prayer, with a view to returning to the original teachings of St. Francis.

St. Peter was the author of a small handbook, Tratado de la Oracion y Meditacion (c.1556). This he designed to "be brief and compendious and clear, and of profit to all; for being of small bulk and price, it would advantage the poor who are not able to pay for costly books, and being written with clarity, it would profit the simple who have no great store of understanding." Possibly derived from Luis de Granada's similar work, it was translated into several European languages. In a manner similar to Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, St. Peter based his meditation exercises on the humanity of Christ, his Passion, the Eucharist and the intercession of the Virgin Mary. The handbook seems to have had a wide readership: it appears, among other places, in the inventory of books owned by Francisco Bayeu.

In 1753, Bolanos announced his intention of looking for a young friar to train as his successor. He sought "a religious of mature age, reader in Theology, prudent, virtuous and learned, so as to serve him as a companion." The friar chosen for this position was Eleta, at the time a reader in a convent in Almagro. Eleta went to Naples, and remained there with Bolanos until Charles III ascended the Spanish throne in 1759. When Bolanos retired in 1760, Eleta succeeded him as Charles's confessor. For the following 28 years, king and confessor shared a close relationship. Both died within months of each other in 1788.

The exact nature of Eleta’s influence on Charles III, both in spiritual matters and with regards to contemporary religious politics and the Franciscan commissions which the king sponsored, has been the subject of controversy and is difficult to define. A document in the Royal Palace Library, dated 1770, gives us a good idea of what Eleta’s responsibilities may have involved. Entitled Papel sobre la circunstancias que deben concurrir en la personas que exerza el delicado encargu de Confesor del Rey the “ideal” confessor is described as a man “of good intelligence and good comportment, knowledgeable in matters of the Church, and of appropriate learning, so as to understand the Scriptures and to assist the King in his devotions.”133 As we shall see, however, Eleta extended his responsibilities onto a wider arena, involving himself in important ecclesiastical issues. A half-length portrait by Mengs shows Eleta wearing a priest’s cassock and surplice, with an expression that combines severity with dignity (fig. 32).132 Some 19th century historians perceived Eleta as an austere and bigoted character with a strong influence over the king in spiritual matters.133

However, while the French traveller Jean-Francois Bourgoing, who visited Spain in the mid-1780s, portrays Eleta as influential on a spiritual level and in the naming of prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries, he also refers to an incident demonstrating that Charles had his own independent views on religious and social matters.134 When Eleta cited the burning down of the Saragossa theatre as a proof of divine intervention in support of his contention that all theatres in Spain should be closed because they were sites of profane activity, Charles lost patience and reproved him.135

A contemporary biography of Eleta relates that as a child he showed an early devotion for St. Paschal Baylon, wishing to take the habit and join “the austere religion of St. Peter of Alcántara.”136 Born in Burgo de Osma in 1707, he studied Philosophy and Latin before entering the Alcantarine convent of Santo Angel in Alcalá de Henares in 1724. Four years later, he moved to Madrid and joined the friars of San Bernardino. Taking a special interest in Theology, he attended the school of Teología Escolástica at the convent of San Buenaventura in Ocaña. Moving from one convent to another, he continued his studies in theology and developed a skill as a preacher, with the ambition of following in St. Francis’s footsteps and converting people. Several times, he turned down offers that would have given

131 Papel sobre la circunstancias que deben concurrir en la personas que exerza el delicado encargu de Confesor del Rey, 1770, p. 64: in Miscelenea, Tomo XXII 2831, Biblioteca del Palacio Real. “letrado, e de buen seso, e de buen vida, e savidor del uso de la Iglesia, e letrado a menester que sea, para que entienda bien las Escripuras, e la haga entender al Rey....”
132 Mengs’s portrait is in a private collection, but was exhibited at the Prado, Antonio Rafael Mengs, (1980), Cat. 31.
136 Loperraiz (1788), vol. 1, p. 635: “la religión austera de San Pedro de Alcántara.” Eleta’s dedication to St. Pascual may explain why the first convent Charles III built was dedicated to that saint.
him positions of responsibility, including that of general custodian of the convent at Arenas de San Pedro. The call to become an assistant to Bolaños changed his career, however.

On 8th December 1759, the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, Eleta heard the king’s confession at the Buen Retiro palace for the first time. He later also became responsible for hearing the confessions of Charles’s children. On 29th January 1760, he was made Custodian of the Franciscan order in Spain by the Commissioner General of the order, Juan de Molina. By April 1761, he was receiving a handsome salary of 60,000 reales per annum. As poverty was one of the main rules of the Franciscans, the money he earned was probably used by the order for general upkeep. Eleta is known to have supported charitable acts such as the building of hospitals in Franciscan convents and the restoration of Alcantarine convents in Priego (province of Cuenca) and Torre de Esteban de Ambran (province of Toledo).

On 14th February 1764, he was given the title of Inquisidor de la Suprema a post reflecting his growing influence as Charles’s ally and instrument in his efforts to control the Inquisition. In 1769, Clement XIV appointed him to the honorary post of Archbishop of Thebes in Egypt. Another of his responsibilities, noted by the papal Nuncio Colonna in a report of 1785, was to receive the prebends or revenues from Cathedrals and bishoprics in the Americas. This position was taken by the Count of Floridablanca when Eleta retired in 1785, and Fray Luis Consuegra a Alcantarine friar replaced him as confessor to the king. The last years of his life, during which he suffered from problems of asthma and gout, were spent in semi-retirement as Bishop of Burgo de Osma.

Correspondence between Eleta and Spain’s Ambassadors in Rome shows that he took an active interest in the proceedings for the suppression of the Jesuits, as well as in the campaigns in favour of the canonisation of Palafox and Sor María de Agreda and the petitions for the elevation to the status of dogma of the Immaculate Conception. His correspondence with the Count of Aranda in the 1760s shows him to have been an ardent anti-Jesuit, sharing Charles’s determination to expel the Jesuits from Spain.

In connection with the building works on Franciscan convents and the Palafox chapel in Burgo de Osma, he seems to have acted as an intermediary between the king and Sabatini.

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137 A.G.P. Real Capilla, leg. 2: 8th April 1761, “Por fallecimiento del Arzobispo de Nisibe, Frai Joseph Bolaños he nombrado por mi confesor a Frai Joaquin de Osma de la Orden de San Pedro de Alcántara. Y mando, que como a su Antecesor, se le asista con el sueldo de 60,000 reales anuales.”
138 Loperrález (1788), vol I, p. 644.
139 Sierra Nava (1984), p. 177.
140 Sierra Nava (1984), p. 175: “achques de asma y de gota”.
His erudition and awareness of religious affairs would seem to indicate that he may also have been responsible for the iconographical programmes of these commissions. Given his particular devotion to St. Pascual Baylón, it is significant that the convent in Aranjuez was dedicated to that saint. What is less clear is the extent of his influence on the decorative aspects of the commissions. As we shall see, paintings by Tiepolo that initially decorated the altars in Aranjuez were taken down and replaced with paintings by Mengs and his followers, Maella and Bayeu. Art historians have in the past suggested that Eleta may have been responsible for this sudden substitution. But there is no evidence to prove that Eleta had any preference for either Tiepolo or Mengs, apart from the portrait of him attributed to Mengs or indeed that he had any interest in the aesthetic side of the arts. Considering the type of religious paintings the king surrounded himself with in his bedroom, it is more likely that Charles himself was responsible for the replacements.

**Charles III’s defence of the Immaculate Conception**

Like his predecessors on the Spanish throne, Charles demonstrated himself to be a staunch supporter of the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception, or the belief that the Virgin Mary was conceived without the stain of Original Sin. For years, the debate over the doctrine had centred on the question of the exact moment at which Mary was freed from Original Sin. Some believed that she had been absolved from sin only at the moment of the Incarnation. Others, known as the Maculists and including the Dominicans argued that the Virgin was sanctified within the womb of her mother. A third group, known as the Immaculists and including Charles III and the Franciscans, believed that the Virgin had been sanctified from the beginning of creation without ever having been tainted by sin. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the Spanish Hapsburgs had upheld the latter doctrine, consistently entreat ing the Pope to acknowledge their belief.143

The Hapsburg commitment to obtaining the elevation of the Immaculate Conception to the status of a dogma was shared by the Bourbons, who viewed the task as a sacred obligation entrusted to the kings of Spain. Philip V, shortly after ascending the throne, described the campaign as a duty “contracted with the crown.”144 In 1732, he sent a delegation of emissaries to Rome to deliver over two hundred petitions to Clement XII requesting an immediate definition of the doctrine.145 In the 1750s, plans by the Benedictine friar Martin Sarmiento for the decoration of the Royal Chapel in the palace at Madrid included a large medallion of the Immaculate Conception on the main façade, on the grounds that “the

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143 Ibid.
Immaculate Conception of Mary is the object of the pious devotion of almost all the faithful, and of the repeated vows of all Spaniards, and more particularly of their monarchs. ... The King of Spain, his vassals ... and ... all those under Spanish dominion swear to venerate and defend the Most Pure Conception.\(^{146}\)

On 17\(^{th}\) July 1760, Charles II published a Royal Edict establishing the Immaculate Conception as universal patron of his kingdoms.\(^{147}\) At the same time, however, he was careful however to state that he did not wish to undermine St. James’s position as patron saint of Spain.\(^{148}\) In 1767, he obtained Papal approval to mark the feast day of the Immaculate Conception on 8\(^{th}\) December. It was traditionally believed that the Virgin Mary was born on 8\(^{th}\) September, and therefore that her conception took place nine months earlier.\(^{149}\)

On 19\(^{th}\) September 1771, Charles founded a royal order, “La Muy Distinguida Orden de Carlos III”, under the protection of the Immaculate Conception, further underlining his dedication to the cause. Approved by Clement XIV on 21\(^{st}\) February 1772, the order required its members, mainly nobles and politicians of high rank to swear that they would defend the Mystery as long as they lived and to observe complete political and spiritual allegiance to the king. As founder and “Jefe y Gran Maestre de la Orden”,\(^{150}\) Charles is shown in engravings and official portraits wearing a white silk costume and cape with a light blue bordering, on which were embroidered castles and lions, symbolising the provinces of Castille and León. Around his neck was the chain of the order, from which hung an eight-pointed star with the Virgin in the middle. An engraving by Manuel Salvador Carmona (1734-1820) of 1778, after a painting by González Velázquez, shows him standing on a pedestal in this costume (fig. 33). In 1784, Maella painted his official portrait for the Sala de Juntas of the Order in similar attire (fig. 34).

Pictures of the Immaculate Conception featured on altars in most of the royal chapels and in private oratories in palaces such as La Granja, Aranjuez and El Pardo. Maella and Bayeu, the painters most frequently commissioned to paint these, developed a neo-baroque


\(^{146}\) “La Inmaculada Concepción de María es el objeto de los piadosos cultos de casi todos los fieles, y de los repetidos votos de todos los españoles, y con más singularidad de sus Monarcas ... El Rey de España, sus vasallos ... y ... todos los del dominio de España hacen voto de venerar y defender la Purísima Concepción”. See manuscript in British Library, Manuscript Division, Ms. Eg. 440, September 23, 1750, fols. 96-103. See also Cioffi I., Corrado Giaquinto at the Spanish Court 1722-1762. The Fresco Cycles at the New Royal Palace in Madrid, Ph. D. diss., New York University, 1992, p. 197.

\(^{147}\) Rincón García, W., “Iconografía de la Real y Distinguida Orden de Carlos III,” Fragmentos, nos. 12, 13, 14, 1988, pp.148.


\(^{149}\) Tormo, Elias, “La Inmaculada y el arte español”, Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones, año XXII, 1914, note 2, p. 214.
model based mainly on early examples by Murillo, in which they adopted the traditional attributes established in seventeenth-century Seville, but simplifying them to make the iconography more accessible and direct. Painted on well-prepared canvases with barely perceptible brushstrokes applied to achieve a fine polished effect, these pictures took on a near-iconic character, providing in their stylistic perfection an ideal representation of a theological concept (fig. 35).

In parallel, while drawings for engravings and prints showed Charles III and his family in the act of adoring the Immaculate Conception (fig. 36), figures from Spain’s pre-Reconquest history with specific links to the Virgin, such as St. Ildefonsus, were introduced into the iconography of royal religious commissions. Eleta campaigned for the canonisation of the 17th century nun Sor Maria de Agreda, an ardent supporter of the Immaculate Conception who had acted as Philip IV’s confessor through an intimate correspondence. Describing her as “singular defender of the mystery of the Most Pure Conception, honour of my religion and indeed of all Spain” and drawing on her book La mysteriosa ciudad de Dios, in which she expresses her belief in the Immaculate Conception as proof of the Virgin’s sanctity, Eleta sought to muster all the theological material he could find to accelerate the process of establishing the doctrine as dogma.

Murillo’s representations of the Virgin were well known at the Bourbon court. Isabel Farnese had brought together a large collection of his paintings when Philip V’s court temporarily moved to Seville between 1729-1733. These include paintings such as the The Vision of St Bernard, St. Ildefonso Receiving the Chasuble from the Virgin and The Good Shepherd, all in the Prado today. When convents refused to sell, she was not discouraged and called upon Alonso de Tobar to copy them. Her example seems to have had an influence on Charles III, who in 1764, with the help of Mengs, acquired several paintings by Murillo, including an Adoration of the Shepherds (Prado Museum), from the collection of Philip V’s surgeon, Florencio Kelly. The Adoration of the Shepherds originally hung in Charles III’s Dressing Room, where it was seen and described by Mengs in his letter to Ponz, as having

153 “defensora singular del Misterio de la Purissima Concepcion honor de mi religion y al mio de toda España,” A.M.A.E. Embajada a la Santa Sede, legajo 428, letter from Eleta to Azpuru dated 4th October 1769.
156 Ibid, p. 393.
been painted with "courage, strength and respect to nature." More to the point, however, was a picture known as the Immaculate Conception of the Escorial, which according to the 1788 royal inventories hung in the Casa del Principe at the Escorial, owned by the future Charles IV (fig. 37). Murillo's depiction of the Virgin's beautiful and serene features and his disposition of angels in the lower part of the painting carrying the Marian symbols became the main prototype for paintings by Maella and Bayeu. The Immaculate Conception did not become a dogma until 1854 with the publication on 8th December of that year by Pius IX of the Bull Ineffabilis Deus.

St. Charles Borromeo, the king's patron saint

Charles III's patron saint was the 16th century bishop of Milan St. Charles Borromeo. Portrayed on altarpieces in a number of the king's religious commissions, including San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez, Soto de Roma near Granada and the royal parish church of Tres Casas near La Granja, he was also named protector of royal institutions such as the former Jesuit seminary in Salamanca, the Hospital of St. Charles in Madrid, which opened in 1781, and the Bank of St. Charles, founded the following year. Maella's painting of 1786 for the chapel of the Bank of St. Charles shows the saint giving alms to the plague-stricken people of Milan (fig. 38). Elsewhere, he is shown holding a crucifix before an altar, and meditating on the death of Christ, as in painting by Maella for one of the Oratories of the Hospital of St. Charles (fig. 39).

158 Ponz (1947), p. 574: "valentia, fuerza y arreglo al natural."
159 Murillo exh. cat., (1982-3), cat. no. 31, p. 172. Charles IV also seems to have had a passion for Murillo. In 1801 he commissioned the painter Francisco Navarro to copy eleven paintings by the master, so that the originals might be taken to Madrid, with the copies filling the empty spaces in the churches. See Archivo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, from now on referred to as A.R.A.B.A.S.F: Caja: 16-43/1: "Dn Ignacio Salva Discipulo de pintura sobre que se le confiriese por SM la comision de copiar los quadros originales de Murillo existentes en Sevilla, que se habia dado a Dn Francisco Agustín, difunto. Año 1801. Con fecha de 7 de Julio de este año se comunico de Real Orden al Pintor de Camara D. Francisco Navarro que pasase ala Ciudad de Sevilla con el encargo de sacar varias copias de quadros originales existentes en aquella ciudad, para ir remitiendo a SM cada uno de estos a medida que se vayan concluyendo las copias, y colocandose estas en los mismos parages que ahora ocupan las originales que son once del celebre pintor Murillo, y uno del Pintor Pedro de Campana que representa el descendimiento."
161 The picture is now in the Consejería de Salud, Hospital Gregorio Marañón, Calle Doctor Esquerdo 46, Madrid. The altarpiece formed part of a series of 16 paintings commissioned for the oratories of the Royal Hospital. In 1781, Maella was instructed by Sabatini to supervise the execution of the paintings. Painters such as José del Castillo, Ginés de Aguirre, and Antonio González Velázquez were involved. See Ponz (1947), p. 421, for subjects and other painters involved. See also Archivo de la Villa de Madrid, legajo 31 for the contracts & article in El País, 13th March 1996, where a picture by Maella of The Virgin and saints saving souls from Purgatory for this commission, was erroneously attributed to Goya. The latter is now in limbo in the Prado museum awaiting restoration. Two more pictures by
One of the leaders of the Counter-Reformation and a radical reformer who wanted to tighten up morals and manners of the clergy, St. Charles Borromeo founded a confraternity for teaching Christian Doctrine to children and took a personal interest in the sick and the poor. He lived in utmost simplicity in the archbishop’s palace in Milan, occupying sparsely furnished rooms decorated with scenes from the Passion of Christ. Parallels can be drawn between St. Charles and his royal namesake, particularly with regard to the decoration of their bedchambers. St. Charles was interested in the role of religious images, writing a chapter on Sacred Images and Painting in his architectural treatise, Instructiones fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae (1577). He was concerned that religious art should be decorous and incite piety, and that novelty, artistic license and false teaching should be avoided. Similarly, Charles III was to commission a series of Passion scenes from his court painter Mengs, painted in the most decorous manner to decorate his bedroom.

The intermingling of personal devotion with politics in Charles’s approach to religion is demonstrated by his response to the birth of his first grandson on 19th September 1771. Not only was this the date he chose for the foundation of the Real y Distinguida Orden de Carlos III dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, but also the feast day of St. Januarius, one of his favourite saints. Charles decided that the child should be called Carlos, after himself, and Clemente, after the pope, Clemente XIV, with whom he was trying to negotiate the recognition as dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In addition, he gave the child the names of his favourite saints: St. Anthony of Padua, St. Januarius, St. Pascual Baylón, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Louis of France, St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Raphael. In the Royal Academy’s tri-annual competition of 1772 artists were asked to paint the birth of the Infante attended by St. Januarius and angels.

**The enactment of Charles III’s reforms**

Prior to the expulsion of the Jesuits, Charles III and Eleta had already embarked on the first of what was to become a series of Franciscan commissions in support of their reformist objectives. This was an entirely new convent built between 1765 and 1770 at Aranjuez and dedicated to St. Paschal Baylón, a 16th century Alcantarine known for his devotion to the Eucharist. During the period of optimism that followed the expulsion of the

Ginés Aguirre’s of St. Louis of France (Colegio de la Paz, Calle O’Donnel, 52), and A. González Velázquez’s St. Gertrude (Consejera de Salud, Hospital Gregorio Marañón, Maternidad, Cuarto de Batería, Calle Doctor Esquerdo, 47) exist, but inventories compiled in the 1970s indicate that a majority of the pictures have survived. Those missing are Maella’s St. Hermengild, St. Francis on his deathbed and the Archangel Gabriel; Ginés de Aguirre’s Nuestra Señora de los Dolores and St. Ignatius of Loyola; José del Castillo’s Nuestra Señora de Madrid, Visitation and St. Eugenio Archbishop of Toledo; Antonio González Velázquez’s St. Judas Thaddeus, St. Matthew, and St. Peter of Alcántara; and José Beratón’s St. Raphael.
Jesuits, other plans for the construction and decoration of specific religious sites were initiated to reinforce the monarchy’s authority over religious Affairs.

The expulsion of the Jesuits left Charles in a stronger position to enact his reforms. Between 1767 and 1769, the Jesuit college in Madrid was turned into the Royal Collegiate church of St. Isidro. In parallel, Charles founded seminaries to educate young ordinands and appointed bishops with the academic credentials and practical experience needed to re-organise their dioceses. Figures such as Francisco Lorenzana, appointed Archbishop of Toledo in 1772 after a career that had taken him from a post as dean of the chapter of Toledo to Plasencia and then to Mexico City as its archbishop, were to play a key role in his campaign for reform. In addition to being a devout Catholic, Lorenzana was a great reformer and committed to economic progress, as demonstrated by his endeavours to revive the declining silk industry in Toledo.153

The election in September 1769 of Clement XIV as Pope in succession to Clement XIII was greeted with enthusiasm and relief at the Spanish court. The Bourbons had decided to recognise only a Pope who would be determined to suppress the Jesuits. What is more, the new Pope was a member of the Franciscan order, to which Charles III was particularly attached. Eleta reported the king’s gratification in a letter to Tomás Azpuru, Ambassador to the Holy See, on 9th January 1770, which bears witness to Charles’s special relationship with the Franciscan order.164

The main concern of the new Pope was to preserve peace with the Catholic monarchies of Western Europe in order to ensure their support against the spread of atheism. He inaugurated his pontificate with promises of concord, as seen in his instruction to strike a medal with the inscription “Fiat Pax in Virtute Tua”.165 He also promised Charles to concern

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164 A man of great culture and a bibliophile, he commissioned artists to redecorate and transform parts of the Cathedral, employing the court painters Mariano Maella and Francisco Bayeu between 1774 and 1790, with the King’s permission, to decorate the main cloister with scenes taken from the lives of Visigothic Toledan martyrs such as St. Eugenio, St. Leocadia and the Niño de la Guardia. They were also employed to decorate various altarpieces and ceilings in fresco. Maella painted the “octavo” next to the sacristy, replacing the original one painted by Rizi and Carreño in the 17th century. He also painted five altar paintings for the Capilla de los Reyes Nuevos. Bayeu decorated a newly built neoclassical altar in the Capilla de San Pedro with a canvas of St. Peter curing the lame man. For more see Datos Documentales para la Historia del Arte Español, Vol. II, Documentos de la Catedral de Toledo, Colección formada en los años 1869-74 y donada al centro en 1914, por D. Manuel R. Zarco del Valle, Madrid, 1916, pp. 402-421. & Gutiérrez Pastor, I., “Los frescos del Claustro de la Catedral de Toledo: Una Historia pintada de la iglesia primitiva Toledana”, in Francisco Bayeu, Exh. Cat., Zaragoza, 1996, pp. 77-100.
165 “Yo no sabre explicar el consuelo que tengo en ver que van viendo que este Santo Padre nos lo ha puesto Dios y que le asiste y asistirá para el mas oportuno gobierno de la christiandad. El Rey esta gozosisimo y aunque jama ha olvidado, diciendole yo: ve V.M como va saliendo lo mismo que V.M creia y esperaba, me respondia: Esto y todo lo demas que contenga para el bien de la Iglesia lo ha hecho, y lo hara nuestro Padre San Francisco.” A.M.A.E. leg. 430, letter from Eleta to Azpuru from El Pardo to Rome, 9th January 1770.
himself with the question of the canonization of Palafox and to define the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Between 1769 and 1772, coinciding with the start of his pontificate, the collegiate church at La Granja was decorated with an iconographical programme evoking themes relevant to Charles III’s theological objectives, such as the Immaculate Conception and the Holy Trinity. In 1770, the court architect Sabatini presented plans for a chapel dedicated to Palafox in the cathedral of Burgo de Osma, in preparation for his canonisation. In the early 1770s, Charles took over the construction of a chapel attached to the convent at Arenas de San Pedro, near Avila, built to house the body of the order’s founder. The chapel dedicated to the saint was consecrated in 1775.

Clement XIV proved slow to act against the Jesuits, however, and in 1772, Charles III sent José Moñino y Redondo, fiscal of the Council of Castile, to Rome as his ambassador in order to put pressure on the Pope. Just over a year after Moñino’s arrival in Rome, the Pope finally issued a brief entitled Dominus ac redemptor, on 21st July 1773, suppressing the Jesuits. Moñino was rewarded by Charles III with the title of Count of Floridablanca.

Unfortunately for Charles’s reform drive, Clement XIV died suddenly on 22nd September 1773. Fearful that the next Pope would re-establish the power of the Jesuits, Floridablanca contacted as many cardinals as he could to warn them that a schism between the great Catholic powers and the Church was inevitable if they elected a Pope favourable to the Jesuits. On 15th February 1775, Pius VI was elected, and in 1776, Floridablanca returned to Madrid to replace the Marquess of Grimaldi as Secretary of State. José Nicolás de Azara took his position as ambassador to the Holy See.

Azara’s main responsibility was to campaign for the canonisation of Palafox. Although Pius VI maintained a position of silence with regard to the suppression of the Jesuits, Azara, in a report dated 28th January 1777, commented that Palafox’s alleged miracles were not considered holy enough and that he was now being accused of being a Jansenist. In such a context, Charles III had to be careful where to draw the line in his reforms, using his diplomats to ease tensions while himself displaying an image of regal piety. As we shall see, he enlisted the plastic arts in his campaign, promoting not only specific ecclesiastic commissions but a new style of architecture and interior design in Spanish

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166 Hargreaves (1979), p. 121.

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churches, in place of the Churrigueresque style of heavily decorated altarpieces hitherto in fashion.\footnote{Swinburne (1779), p. 351, describes the interiors: “No mad architect ever dreamed of a distortion of members so capricious, of a twist of pillar, cornices, or pediments, so wild and fantastic...Their altars are piles of wooden ornaments heaped up to the ceiling, and stuck full of wax lights, which more than once have set fire to the whole church.”}

The Spanish art historian, Antonio Ponz, who in 1776 was made secretary of the Academy, typified the new approach to architecture. Describing the interiors of some of the churches he visited when gathering material for his book \textit{Viaje de España}, published in 18 volumes between 1772 and 1794, Ponz was shocked by the way people dressed sculptures and decorated the altars.\footnote{Ponz (1947), pp. 406-408. Ponz’s initial objective was to compile an inventory of the Jesuits’ artistic possessions in Andalusia. This eventually led him to write a concise guidebook to churches, palaces and private collections in Spain.} He particularly criticised sculptures of “the Christ Child dressed as a soldier” and images of Christ crucified “with false hair, petticoats and skirts.” Ponz lamented that even though the Church had repeatedly appealed for “decency and greater propriety in order to represent holy images without extravagances,” the ignorance of the faithful continued to provide support for such representations. The plastic and visual arts were particularly open to such failures of decorum, he noted, observing that “if anyone dared to write that Christ was shown like this on the cross, he would be condemned as foolish and impious.”\footnote{“si uno se atreviese a escribir que Jesucristo estuvo así en la cruz, se le condenaría como necio o impío.” Ponz (1947), p. 407.}

Ponz maintained that such a disorderly environment impeded worship and direct communication with God. He was particularly critical of wooden altarpieces, which he regarded as in bad taste because they were designed by artisans and an object of derision for the better-trained eyes of Italian observers.\footnote{“pero este maldito abuso es viejo en España, particularmente en Madrid, y es la causa que siendo los tallistas y ensambladores que hacen los retablos desnudos de los principales fundamentos de la buena arquitectura romana y desnudos particularmente del dibujo... con razón, los Italianos se ríen de un tan estrabagante abuso...” Bédat, C., “Un manuscrito del escultor Don Felipe de Castro: “Esbozo inédito de una parte del \textit{Viaje de España} de Don Antonio Ponz?””, Archivo Español de Arte, no. 162-163, 1968.} Ponz expressed the view that if a church interior contained “indecent images, absurd ornaments, it is impossible that these should prove pleasing to the Lord, to whom they are dedicated and whom they represent, and to his saints; inevitably, they become objects of mockery for the impious (who are) enemies of our ecclesiastical customs.”\footnote{“imágenes indecentes, ornatos disparatados, es imposible que agraden al Señor, a quien están dedicados, a quien representan, y a sus santos; necesariamente han de ser objetos de risa para los impíos, enemigos de nuestra costumbres eclesiásticas...”. Ponz (1947), p. 965.} In his attack on the abuse of religious practices, Ponz quoted various texts which recall the ideology of the counter-Reformation. He quotes a passage from the 16th century writer, Johanes Molanus’s \textit{Historia Sanctorum Imaginum et Picturarum}: “Whatever is prohibited in books should also be prohibited in pictures as they are the books of
the simple people.”\(^{173}\) Ponz also referred to Interián de Ayala, a celebrated ecclesiastical writer who wrote the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*. First published in 1737 and republished under the order of the Count of Floridablanca in 1782, Ayala was of the opinion that the causes of bad taste “are not born from impiety, but from ignorance.”\(^{174}\)

As part of a drive to counter the taste for Churrigueresque altarpieces, Floridablanca published on 23\(^{rd}\) November 1777 a royal edict addressed to all the archbishops and bishops of Spain ordering the replacement of wooden altarpieces by marble or stucco altarpieces.\(^{175}\) He justified this by warning that wooden altarpieces might catch fire, proposing marble and bronze as alternative materials to avoid such a risk. Although the risk of fire was a serious one, it was a perfect excuse to get rid of Churrigueresque altarpieces. By putting this into effect, he hoped to achieve “the reverence, seriousness and decorum appropriate for the houses of God.”\(^{176}\)

In order to assure that these precautions were followed, he stated that from then on all new designs relating to the architectural appearance of churches should be sent to the Secretary of the Academy where they would be examined and, if necessary, corrected.\(^{177}\) Floridablanca was also concerned with cost, in reaction to the extraordinary amounts often spent by the faithful on lavish decoration. If marble was not easily available, he conceded that gessoed wood or stone could be used for the construction of altars, providing the use of candles was avoided. In addition, he discouraged the use of gold leaf for decoration, both because of its cost and because the soot from candles would turn the gold black, making the overall effect ugly. In conclusion, Floridablanca mentions that not only architecture should to respect these orders, “but her two sister arts, Sculpture and Painting, should correspond to the sublime quality of Religion, and to the greater splendor and majesty of worship.”\(^{178}\) As an alternative to gessoed wood, until then the only visually similar substitute for real marble, a canon from Ciudad Rodrigo, Ramón Pascaual Diez, proposed a way of making stucco quickly and cheaply so that it would be strong enough to act as an architectural framework for decoration.\(^{179}\) That Floridablanca’s plans were put into effect is demonstrated at the Cathedral.


\(^{174}\) Ponz (1947), p. 407: “no nacen de la impiedad, sino de la ignorancia.”

\(^{175}\) This letter was published in Ponz’s 7th volume of the *Viaje de España* (1778): see Ponz (1947), pp. 585-586.

\(^{176}\) “la reverencia, seriedad y decoro debido á las casas de Dios.” Ponz (1947), p. 585.

\(^{177}\) Many of the plans and related correspondence survive in the Royal Academy archives.


\(^{179}\) Gabriel Navarro, J. “Pascual Diez, R. Arte de hacer el estuco, escrito en el siglo XVIII por don Ramón Pascual Diez, canónigo racionero de Ciudad Rodrigo”, *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología*, 1932, vol. no. 8, pp. 237-257.
of Valencia, where a great majority of the chapels were refurbished with neo-classical altarpieces in the late 1770s and 1780s.\textsuperscript{180}

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES III'S PRIVATE RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS

Before discussing the propagandistic functions of Charles III's public religious commissions, it is useful to examine his religious commissions in the more private context of palace life. Other than on important feast days, celebrated in the royal chapels, Charles usually heard mass in a private oratory with his confessor. In line with the royal family's itinerant existence, moving from one palace to another according to the seasons, such private oratories were to be found in a number of different palaces.181 Usually taking the form of an annexe to the royal bedchamber, they typically consisted of a small room with a richly decorated altar, sometimes accompanied by ceiling frescoes, a combination that Charles had favoured at the palace of Caserta in Naples.182

Charles inherited most of these private oratories from his predecessors but he had many of them re-designed, decorating them with altar paintings commissioned from court painters, as well as with 16th and 17th century religious paintings from the royal collection. The 1788-89 Royal inventory records that the king's oratory in the Royal palace of Madrid contained as many as twenty-four pictures, including a St. Francis by Guido Reni, a Crucifixion by Rubens and a St. Bartholomew by Pedro Orrente.183 Most of Charles's private oratories were later either altered or destroyed to make room for larger spaces in the 19th century. However, Charles's oratory at El Pardo survives as a cabinet room, with a fresco by Bayeu on the ceiling. In the middle are angels adoring the Trinity, while in each corner four lunettes contain symbols and Latin inscriptions alluding to the Virgin. These would have related to Francisco Bayeu's altar painting, now removed, of the Immaculate Conception.184 The oratory can be dated to around 1773-1774, when the decorative stucco work around the frames is known to have been executed.185

Richard Cumberland, who visited Charles at El Escorial in 1770, describes how he "surprised him in his bed chamber: the good man had been on his knees before his private altar, and upon the opening of the door, rose; when seeing me in the act of retiring, he bade

181 Fernán Núñez (1988), parte segunda, p. 43: El Pardo from 7th January to Palm Sunday; Madrid for ten days; Aranjuez until June; Madrid until mid-July; at El Escorial briefly before going to San Ildefonso where he remained until 8th October; returned to Madrid on 30th November.
184 Morales (1995), cat. no. 47, pp. 87-88. The picture is still in El Pardo but is not visible to the general public.
Cumberland also observes that “no monarch could well be more humbly lodged, for his state consisted in a small camp bed, miserably equipped with curtains of faded old damask... and a cushion...with a table, that held his crucifix and prayer book, and over that a three quarters picture of the Mater Dolorosa by Titian, which he always carried with him for his private altarpiece...”.\(^{186}\) We know that Charles also carried around with him images of the Immaculate Conception and of St. Anthony of Padua by Mengs when travelling from one palace to another. Cumberland’s reference to Titian’s Mater Dolorosa is interesting as the painting had probably belonged to Philip II and it is possible that Charles was deliberately seeking to associate himself with his pious predecessor.

**Charles III’s apartment in the Royal Palace in Madrid**

Mengs’s decoration of Charles III’s private oratory and other rooms in his apartments in the Royal Palace in Madrid gives a clear indication of the king’s taste in religious art. The king’s apartments, including the “Antecámara”, the “Saleta”, the “Cámara de Vestir”, the “dormitorio del Rey”, a private oratory and several cabinets, were decorated with a selection of some of the best pictures from the Hapsburg collection, accompanied by paintings by Mengs located in prominent positions. Drawing on precedents from art history, Mengs sought to infuse into his works what he called the “sublime” style of ideal beauty perfected by the Greeks and nearly matched, in his opinion, by artists such as Raphael, Correggio, Domenichino and Annibale Carracci. The familiarity of such images, like that of icons in the Orthodox Church, helped to convey a sense of security and incorruptibility. While Mengs’s paintings may have pleased the king, however, Cumberland described Mengs as “an artist who had seen much, and invented little”, noting a certain coldness and lack of spontaneity in his art.\(^{187}\)

Ponz, in the sixth volume of his *Viaje de España* describes each room in detail.\(^{188}\) The Saleta, between the antecámara and the throne room, had a ceiling fresco by Mengs of the Apotheosis of Trajan, and on its walls four pictures of Hercules by Rubens as well as portraits of Hapsburg and Bourbons kings by Titian, Velázquez, and Van Loo. The allusions in this room to Charles III’s mythical ancestors and Habsburg predecessors can be interpreted as forming part of a decorative programme to aggrandise the reigning monarch. Ambassadors

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\(^{185}\) Sancho (1989), p. 228, footnote 51.


and other foreign visitors had access to the royal palace, and occasionally they were allowed into the private apartments. Henry Swinburne, in Madrid between 1775 and 1776, comments that Mengs’s paintings, “even in this rare collection, do not seem intruders; most of them represent devout lugubrious events the most gloomy of which, such as the flagellation and crucifixion, have been chosen by the king to adorn his bedchamber.” By the mid-1770s, artists were allowed to visit and copy the best pictures in the collection. When Cumberland was there in 1780-1, he comments that the king even allowed him to take the pictures down and admire them on an easel.

Work on Charles III’s private oratory attached to his bedchamber began in 1762, when the woodcarver Miguel Rodríguez designed an altar consisting of columns and pilasters “and carvings with garlands of flowers, the whole made of pine wood.” In 1765, Mengs painted a canvas of the Adoration of the Shepherds for the altar, but this was subsequently removed and replaced with a fresco of identical size but with some compositional differences. The reason for the change appears to have been purely practical, as the reflection of light coming through the entrance of the chapel made the painting difficult to see. By contrast, a fresco would have been easier to see because of its coarser texture and lighter colours. In 1767, the sculptor Francisco Gutiérrez decorated the top of the altarpiece with “clouds and a group of seraphim heads made out of stucco.” Apparently a reliquary was also placed next to the altar.

Mengs’s fresco no longer survives, but his oil painting, now in the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, gives us some idea of his original intentions (fig. 40). The composition of this painting is simple and direct, composed of two halves, with the angels above and the Holy Family with the Shepherds below. The result is an intimate picture in

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188 However Ponz cautions us that although the paintings were often rehung, they might also be moved back to their original place. See Ponz (1947), p. 523.
189 Swinburne (1779), p. 359. The Crucifixion Swinburne refers to is most probably the Descent from the Cross. Twiss, R. Travels through Portugal and Spain, London, 1775, visited the palace between 1772 and 1773: “In the King’s bed-chamber, are six pictures by Mengs; the subjects of them are taken from Scriptures. Near his majesty’s bed, over the holy-water pot is a large head of Christ in Roman mosaic. In the small chapel adjoining, are two pictures by Mengs; one representing the Nativity, by the same hand; one in oil colours, and the other in fresco.”
190 Cumberland (1806), p. 256.
192 Sancho (1997), p. 521 & Appendix, excerpt 2: it measured nine by five pies. Merlo’s description gives an idea of the fresco’s original composition and its considerable differences with the Corcoran version. A drawing in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford has also been connected with this commission: Roettgen, S.: Anton Rafael Mengs and his British patrons, Exh. Cat., Kenwood House, London, (1993), cat. no. 36, p. 120.
which the divine light emanating from the Christ Child illuminates the scene, reflecting off and blending into the drapery of the figures. Warm colours accentuate the harmony and bring the two halves of the compositions together, with the red, yellow and green worn by the angel picked up in the figures below. To suggest depth and draw the viewer’s eye into the picture, Mengs foreshortens some of his figures, particularly that of the shepherd kneeling forwards, whose feet nearly come out into our space as he bows down in veneration. This gentle and intimate rendering contrasted sharply with the Passion series painted by Mengs at about the same time for Charles III’s bedroom.

For his bedroom, mid-way between a religious commission and a palace decorative ensemble, Charles III chose a series of potent and theatrical religious images. Between 1761 and 1769, Mengs painted four over doors -- the Agony in the Garden (fig. 41), Christ at the Column (fig. 42), Christ Carrying the Cross (fig. 43) and Noli me Tangere (fig. 44) -- as well as a painting on panel of The Lamentation for the north wall, with above it God the Father and the Holy Spirit (fig. 45), as a pendant to Raphael’s Poma de Sicilia next to it (fig. 46). On either side of a mirror over the fireplace hung two small paintings, one on copper and the other on panel, of St. John the Baptist and St. Mary Magdalene, both set in landscapes (fig. 47 & 48). By the king’s bed hung his favourite pictures, the Immaculate Conception and St. Anthony of Padua and the Christ Child, which he carried with him on his travels (fig. 49). Around these contemporary paintings, hung other religious works by artists such as Titian, Rubens, and Murillo.

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194 Oil on canvas, 264 x 152 cm, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington. The painting was transferred to the Prince of Asturias’s apartments, and eventually smuggled out of Spain by Joseph Bonaparte to America in 1812.
195 All in the Royal Palace in Madrid, but out of public sight.
196 The two pictures are now in the Palacio de Pedralbes, Barcelona. Both are painted on panel but no measurements have been published. Sancho (1997), p. 521, quotes Merlo on the original location of the painting within Charles III’s bedchamber: “en medio de la fachada del norte.”
198 Both of these are now in the Wellington collection at Stratfield Saye: Kauffinan, C.M. Catalogue of Paintings on the Wellington Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982, London, cat. no. 121 & 129. See also Sancho (1997) p. 522, who mentions that they were both painted in Rome, the St. John the Baptist before Mengs’s departure for Spain in 1761 and the St. Mary Magdalene while Mengs was in Rome between 1769-1774.
199 Ponz (1947), p. 242, describes the whole ensemble of the King’s bedroom, except for the Immaculate Conception and St. Anthony, which William Beckford described when visiting the palace in 1785: Beckford, W. Italy; with sketches of Spain and Portugal, London, 1834, Vol. II, pp. 339-345. The picture of St. Anthony is now in the Wellington Museum: Kauffinan (1982), cat. no. 106, pp.93-94. The Immaculate Conception remains lost, but a description by Merlo tells us that it was circular,
It is possible that Mengs's paintings served as a complement to spiritual exercises suggested to the king by Eleta, based on St. Peter of Alcántara's *Tratado de la Oración y Meditación*, which concentrates on the Passion of Christ and his Resurrection. His patron saint, St. Charles Borromeo, had similarly decorated his own bedroom with scenes taken from the Passion of Christ and it may be that Charles III intended to imitate them. One of the paintings that hung in St. Charles's bedroom and deeply moved him was a dark night scene of the *Agony in the Garden* by the Cremonese painter Antonio Campi. It showed Christ kneeling in prayer before a Cross, inviting the viewer to meditate on his Passion. Mengs's own version of this subject inspires a similarly spiritual and contemplative response. Christ, in the foreground, is being comforted by an angel, as if he had already experienced his forthcoming suffering, both physical and spiritual. Mengs goes further in his interpretation of this subject, fusing spirituality and intensity by painting droplets of blood as sweat, contrasting with the ivory polish of Christ's face, and the cool blue of his tunic, where each fold is executed to perfection. The idea of attaining an intimate relationship with Christ was one the Franciscans' main concerns, and must have had a great influence on Charles.

However, if one considers this room in the broader context of the king's apartments, one can also draw a link between the aesthetic and stylistic qualities of Mengs's paintings and the ideas that he was trying to introduce at the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand during this period. Each is a reflection of Mengs's theoretical ideas on painting, his well-rehearsed techniques and control of diverse styles and his in-depth knowledge of the royal collection. Mengs's *Lamentation*, for example, painted as a pendant to Raphael's *Passion*, recalls his insistence that students should look back to Raphael for perfection in design, composition, colouring and atmosphere. Emulating the work of the master, Mengs aims to surpass him in his effort to combine classical perfection with emotional force. Employing Raphael's theatrical composition, Mengs organises his figures around the dead Christ lying across the composition on a white cloth, with artificial lighting illuminating them amid the darkness. The facial expressions, taken straight from Raphael, express anguish in a nearly stereotypical manner. The cool and sober colours add to the general atmosphere of mourning. By combining these rules of aesthetics, with a philosophical approach to art and religious conviction, Mengs aimed to create an ideal religious image as well convey pathos and tragedy. This idea is also illustrated in his *Crucifixion*, painted for the King's bedroom in Aranjuez (fig. 50). A preparatory drawing shows a faultless academic study, concentrating on

2.5 pies in diameter, and that the Virgin was shown half length and life sized, dressed in blue mantle with a white veil: Sancho (1997), p. 521.
every anatomical detail. These are then transferred into paint, using meticulous glazing
techniques to obtain a dramatic effect of light on Christ’s corpse (fig. 51).

Raphael painted his Pasmo on wood, and Mengs makes a direct reference to the
master in likewise choosing a wooden support for his painting. The wooden base enabled him
to attain the polished effect which characterises many of his paintings. It also permitted him to
accentuate the effect of his carefully applied glazes, letting the light go through them and so
create a sense of depth in his drapery and figures. In discussing Raphael’s Pasmo, he remarks
that the brushstrokes “hide behind each other….in many places it seems that one can see into
the surface of the panel.”

The over doors are painted on canvas, primed with thick gesso to
echo the smooth surface of the wood panel used for the Lamentation. This polish and pristine
quality is probably what he aimed to achieve in his other paintings such as the Adoration of
the Shepherds, the Noli me Tangere (1771) commissioned for All Souls College, Oxford, and
his altarpiece of St. Paschal Baylon adoring the Eucharist (1774) for the Franciscan
convent in Aranjuez. Apart from being a reference to Renaissance masters, a wood panel gave
the painting an image of luxury and durability, resembling icons in their conventionality. As
we shall see later, Bayeu similarly painted his altarpieces for Arenas de San Pedro on wood
panels.

While the Lamentation can be paired with the Pasmo, Mengs’s over-doors pay tribute
to other artists and paintings in the royal collection. His Agony in the Garden, for example,
echoes Correggio’s painting of the same subject, which Mengs admired for its elaborate
lighting effects. In Correggio’s version, Mengs remarks that, at first sight, the light simply
focuses on the angel and Christ. However, as our eye accustoms itself to the obscurity behind,
we start to make out figures and exquisitely painted foliage in the background. Mengs

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201 Bourgoing, J. F., Tableau d’Espagne Moderne, 1789, tome I, p. 215, commented on the flesh tones:
“J’ai entendu critiquer souvent la couleur des chairs du Sauveur: Ce Christ semble être de pierre, disait-
on. Je l’avais cru jusqu’au jour où accompagnant des étrangers, qui adoptèrent cette critique, j’entendis
l’un d’eux s’exclamer sur la vérité de ces chairs mortes: Sans doute, disait-il à demi-voix, ce peintre a vu
beaucoup de cadavres pour avoir pu les imiter si bien. Nous nous retournâmes: l’auteur de la réflexion
était un habile Chirurgien.” A nod to academic requirements in the painting of a Crucifixion is visible
in Bayeu’s drawing (Prado F.A. 523), a preparatory work for a painting of the Crucifixion also painted
for the king, today at Granada University. Apart from its anatomical precision, Bayeu seems to be
drawing on lessons learnt from other predecessors, such as the realism of the sculptor Montañez in his
Crucifixion in the Seville Cathedral. Goya’s Crucifixion which he presented before the Academy in
1780 to be awarded the title of Academician of merit, bears in mind all these influences, but also looks
back at Velázquez’s version in the church of San Plácido, Madrid, attempting to fuse Mengs’s idealism
with Velázquez’s lighting effect and hazy painterly effect.

202 Ponz (1947), p. 581: “se van escondiendo uno detrás de otro....parece que en muchos lugares se ve
más dentro de la superficie de la tabla.”

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204 Ponz (1947), p. 577, “A la primera vista parece solamente el Cristo con el ángel y la claridad del
aire, quedando todo lo demás en sombras, como de noche; pero considerándole bien, se halla
divinamente expresado el ambiente del aire, y la degradación en el mismo modo que hace el natural a
poca luz, de modo que conocemos, los objetos vecinos cuando los distantes no pueden llegar a nuestra
introduces this visual trick into his own composition, using a similar lighting effect to intensify the scene, concentrating on Christ's agonising expression and the angel holding him up while in the background we notice the sleeping disciples and the foliage bathed in moonlight.

Mengs’s *Christ at the Column* demonstrates his skill in showing the human body from various angles, as in academic studies, and again reveals his understanding of the play of light and chiaroscuro. In this picture, Mengs has borrowed, with a few differences, two postures with similar lighting effects from two paintings by Velázquez, his *Forge of Vulcan*, which hung next door in the king’s dressing room, and his *Joseph’s brothers bringing back his bloody coat*, then in the Sala Capitular of El Escorial (figs. 52 & 53). The figure on the right of Mengs’s composition, shown in the act of thrashing Christ, is taken from one of Joseph’s brothers standing in a similar position with exactly the same light study on his back. The other figure tying up a bundle of sticks refers to one of Vulcan’s assistants beating a breastplate. As we have seen, Mengs admired Velázquez’s naturalism in the study of light and shade, commenting that the figures in the *Forge of Vulcan* were “a perfect imitation of nature.”

In his *Christ carrying the Cross*, Mengs again refers loosely to Raphael’s version, but concentrates on the suffering of Christ, inviting the viewer to share his agony. Finally, his *Noli Me Tangere* is a recreation of Carracci’s style, particularly in the anatomy of the standing figure of Christ, the rhetorical gestures and the intricate study of the drapery.

Possibly, Mengs was responsible for the hanging of both his own pictures and those by other Old Masters in the royal collection. In any case, notable additions were made to the collection, alongside the religious paintings selected to hang in the King’s apartments from the Habsburg collection, such as Ribera’s *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, during Mengs’s office. In 1769, Charles acquired several paintings from the collection of the Marquis of la Ensenada, including two significant religious paintings, Alonso Cano’s *Dead Christ supported by an angel* and Murillo’s *St. James the Apostle*. In the king’s dressing room, or “Cámara de Vestir”, the majority of the pictures were by Spanish painters. In addition to religious pictures by Murillo and Orrente, these included Velázquez’s *Waterseller*, *Forge of Vulcan*, *Mercury vista*. Los que fueron a prender al Señor no se distinguen, ni hay toque o pincelada sensible en los árboles hasta donde están los apostoles, y desde allí se empiezan a distinguir las hojas y ramas, hasta las hierbecillas, un tronco con la corona de espinas y la cruz en tierra, a medida que están más cerca de la luz o de la vista. El resplandor de la cara de Cristo ilumina a todo el cuadro; pero el mismo Salvador recibe la luz de lo alto, como del Cielo, reverberándola en el ángel; que la recibe de él.”

205 “una perfecta imitación del natural” Ponz (1947), p. 574.


207 Martínez Cuesta, J. R., “El Cuarto del Rey en el Palacio Real de Madrid”, *Carlos III y la Ilustración*, Exh. Cat., p. 68.
and Argus and Topers. But the pictures in this room also included Mengs's Adoration of the Shepherds (fig. 54), with his self-portrait among the figures, sent from Rome around 1771-1772, and later his Annunciation (fig. 55), not mentioned by Ponz as it was painted between 1778-1779 when Mengs had returned to Rome. Originally destined for the Royal Chapel of Aranjuez, the painting was left unfinished at Mengs's death. Both received widespread public acclaim when they were first shown, particularly the Annunciation, which was exhibited in the Sala de Juntas of the Royal Academy on 6th October 1780 before being taken to the palace. The Adoration, based on Correggio's Notte, was praised for the grace of its life-size figures, which recalled figures by Annibale Carracci, and for the sweetness of the Virgin and Child. The convincing foreshortening, the cool harmonious colours, the excellent design and the well-studied emotions of each shepherd, make up a conventional picture of almost timeless quality. A highly finished drawing for the head of the Virgin in the Chicago Museum of Fine Arts reveals Mengs's meticulous preparation and consistency in following his original idea right to the final moment of painting the picture. In this drawing, executed in graphite and white chalk on slightly gessoed blue coloured paper, the light emanating from the Child creates a splendidly soft texture on the Virgin's face (fig. 56).

Mengs's Annunciation, left unfinished like the Venus of Apelles, was hailed as his masterpiece. Azara, who visited Mengs while he was painting it, remarked that "we found him whistling and singing alone, and demanding the reason, he replied that he was practising a sonata of Corelli's, because he wished to finish this painting after the style of Music of that great composer." In response, Azara observed that the objective of music and painting "is

208 Now in the Prado Museum: Museo del Prado Catalogo de las Pinturas, Madrid, 1985, cat. no. 2264, oil on panel, 246 x 190 cm.
210 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., Secció Pintura, caja 49-4/1: Order from Floridablanca to Marqués de la Florida y Pimentel, Real Orden para que Dn. Andrés de la Calleja coloque interinamente en una de las salas de la Academia el cuadro enviado de Roma del insigne pintor Mengs. "Ha llegado de Roma, y se ha pasado a las salas de la Academia de San Fernando un cajón, que contiene la pintura de la Anunciacion de Nuestra Señora que por encargo del Rey hacia el difunto Dn Antonio Rafael para el altar mayor de la nueva capilla del Palacio de Aranjuez, y la tenia casi concluida quando fallecio. Siendo esta obra una de las mas excelente de aquel insigne artifice, por haber puesto en ella su mayor estudio, se ha encargado de orden del Rey al Pintor de camara Dn. Andrés de la Calleja que le ponga en bastidor, y despues la coloque en la Sala de Juntas de la Academia, para que la puedan ver los profesores, y demás personas, que quisieren, hasta que acercandose la vuelta de la corte a Madrid, se lleve a Palacio."
211 The original now in the Prado (no. 2204) was covered by a sheet of plate glass when it was sent over from Rome. Two other versions, or more likely good copies exist in the Patrimonio Nacional collection. One at the palace of Aranjuez (no. 10012905) and the other at Riofrio (no. 10010028). Cumberland (1782), pp. 208-210, saw the picture but was not particularly impressed remarking that "his Nativity though splendidly encased, and covered with such care that the very winds of heaven are not permitted to visit the face too roughly....discovers an abortive and puisny Bambino, which seems copied from a bottle:"
212 The Art Institute of Chicago, Acc. No. 1922. 3060, black chalk heightened with graphite and white chalk on gessoed paper, 30.6 x 22, 7 cm. Until now unattributed.
beauty, and their perfection is harmony.\textsuperscript{214} Mengs achieves this harmony by employing a simple composition, a kneeling angel facing the humble Virgin, with angels above. José Merlo, a member of the Furriera (place of keeper of the keys in the Royal Palace) of Charles III, writes in his description of Mengs’s work in the Royal Palace that, in this painting, “the Mystery is treated in the most philophical manner, revealing a beautiful and unknown idea, and this surpassing Corregio’s chiaroseuro in gracefulness, tenderness and force, to the point where Titian’s forceful and sublime colouring is comparable with the Glory of this (representation of the Virgin) and even Raphael…could not have painted the subject in a more expressive way.”\textsuperscript{215}

\textbf{The Royal Family’s Portable Oratories}

While the king had his private oratories in each palace and favourite pictures to contemplate, the rest of the royal family, including the Prince and Princess of Asturias and the Infantes, had to make do with portable oratories. These were contained in trunks that accompanied them on their travels from one palace to another according to the seasons.\textsuperscript{216} Judging by the number of portable oratories known to have existed, these seem to have played an essential part in the royal family’s daily devotional life. Typically, they contained an altar, consisting of a table with a hole in the middle for the altar stone, enabling mass to be said anywhere, and a triptych of paintings on copper, set in miniature frames and surrounded by rich red velvet embroidered with gold thread, which could be folded up for transport, usually representing single saints or the Holy Family, plus the patron saint of the owner. The altarpieces often represented royal saints such as St. Louis of France, shown in prayer in front of a crucifix or symbols of the passion, and St. Ferdinand, a king of Castille who recaptured Seville from the Moors in 1248, praying before the Virgin, as well as figures such as St. Joseph, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Charles Borromeo and the archangels Raphael and Gabriel.

One painter who specialised in such oratories was Andrés de la Calleja, whose delicate, precise technique was well suited for such commissions. His earliest example, created in 1734, portrayed St. Anthony, the Holy Family and St. Francis Xavier for the Prince

\textsuperscript{214} Mengs (1796), Vol. I, p. 33-39. Under Charles IV, the picture was moved to the Royal Chapel where it remains today. Correlli, or Courcelle, was court composer to Charles III. See his portrait by Servidori, in the Biblioteca Nacional.

\textsuperscript{215} Sancho (1997), p.528, who published this manuscript in the Royal Palace library known as the Descripción de las Obras de Pintura, assí Históricas como Alegóricas que S.M. (que Dios guarde) tiene en su Palacio Nuevo de Madrid, efectuadas por D. Antonio Rafael Menges, su primer Pintor de Cámara. Año de 1781, (M.S II-942): “trata el Misterio del modo más filosófico, que se descubre una idea hermosa y no conocida, y que se ve excedido el claro obscuro de Correggio en la gracia, gusto, ternura y fuerza, que el pastoso y sublime colorido del Tiziano es comparable con la Gloria de este, y que el mismo Rafael…no hubiera podido expresar más este asunto.”

\textsuperscript{216} Fernán Núñez (1988), p. 43.
of Asturias, the future Ferdinand VI (see figs. 3 & 4). Calleja became a successful painter under Ferdinand VI, providing copies after Van Loo’s portraits and becoming Director of Painting at the Royal Academy. When Mengs took over as First Court Painter under Charles III, Calleja reverted to his original task of restoring pictures damaged in the 1734 fire of the royal palace. However, documentary evidence shows that he continued to supply portable private oratories, painting two in 1765 for the Infantes Don Gabriel and Don Francisco Xavier, and in 1781, after Mengs’s death, he participated in the commission for San Francisco el Grande. In passing, it is interesting to note that these oratories were probably “recycled”, or adapted for other members of the royal family, especially if a previous owner had died. This may be the case with Calleja’s oratory for the Prince of Asturias, whose central panel of the Holy Family is signed and dated 1734, while the two side panels are undated and could have easily been painted later. Interestingly rather than showing St. Ferdinand, the oratory includes the patron saint of the Infante Don Francisco Xavier, which may suggest that indeed Calleja in 1765 re-used the central panel and added St. Francis Xavier specially for his new younger patron.

Documentary evidence reveals payments for miniatures for such oratories to a number of other painters, among them Mariano Sánchez, more famous for his port scenes commissioned by Charles IV when Prince of Asturias, and Diego Díaz, who painted an

218 For Calleja’s role as picture restorer see: Barreno Sevillano, Maria Luisa, “La restauración de pinturas de las Colecciones reales durante el siglo XVIII”, Archivo Español de Arte, 1980, no. 221, pp. 467-490.
219 A.G.P., Sección Reinos, Carlos IV, Príncipe, legajo 46: “De orden de el Excmo Señor Duque de Béjar, Mayordomo Mayor de los SS.mos SS.res Príncipe y Infantes comunicada por el S.or Dom Melchor Burruel Receptor, de la Real Capilla, he pintado tres laminas, la principal de la Sacra familia, y las dos laterales, que contienen el Arcangl. Sr. Gabriel, y Sn. Antonio de Padua para el oratorio que sirbe Al Smo. Sr. Ynfante Dn Gabriel. Las cuales como corresponde a su trabajo y coste ymportan Dos mil Rs a Vellón. Madrid 12 de Diziembre de 1765 Andrés de la Calleja.” The other bill is similarly phrased but includes St. Francis Xavier as the name saint of the Infante Francisco Javier.
221 A.G.P., Sección Reinos, Carlos IV, Príncipe, legajo 5: “Dn. Pedro Gascon Carrillo de Albornoz Contador pr S.M. de los R.s Alimentos consignadas a los pertenecientes al Príncipe n.ro Señor se servira Vmd mandar entregar a Dn Mariano Sánchez Pintor en esta corte Mil ochocientos Rs de Vellón por una pintura de S. Carlos Borromeo de Miniatura que ha hecho para un oratorio de S.A. Que en virtud de este libramiento paguese el Exmo Duque de Béjar Mayordomo mayor de S.A. tomada que sea la razón por esta contaduria de mi cargo y recibo del expressado D Mariano Sánchez, se le abonaron a Vmd en la quentas correspond.les al Príncipe nuestro señor. 20 Abril de 1767.”
222 Ibíd: “a Don Diego Díaz pintor en esta corte dos mil y quatrocientos de Reales de Vellón, por una pintura de San Luis Rey de Francia de miniatura que ha hecho para un oratorio de S.A…..”, 20th April 1767. “Se servirá a Vd entregado a Dn Celedoneo de Porce, escultor de la Real Academia de San Fernando en esta corte Dos Mil quatrocientos Rs de Vellón con que S.A. se ha dignado mandar gratificarle, por dos medallas de los santos S. Carlos y Sn Luis Rey de Francia, abiertos en marfil en bajo relieve que ha presentado a S. A.” 30th October 1767. In the same legajo is a receipt for a painting by Mengs of the Virgin, which could possibly be related to this oratory as the centrepiece. “Se servirá V.M entregarlo al Señor Mengs pintor de Cámara del Rey N.S. nueve mil reales de Vellón con que su
oratory for the prince in 1767 with miniatures of St. Charles Borromeo and St. Louis of France. This oratory still exists in the palace of Riofrio near Segovia, but was mistakenly catalogued in 1981 as by Andrés de la Calleja. The still-life painter Miguel Meléndez executed a miniature of the Holy Family for the Prince of Asturias in 1778, and Francisco Bayeu painted several oratories for various members of the royal family. While these have mostly been lost, two rediscovered painted sketches and three preparatory drawings of St. Charles Borromeo and St. Joseph for an oratory by Castillo, painted in 1772 for the Infante Don Carlos (figs. 57, 58, 59 & 60), and a recently exhibited oratory by Francisco Bayeu representing “María Santisima Dolorosa, San José, San Luis y San Rafael,” for the Prince of Asturias, indicate that the tradition set by Calleja had not changed (fig. 61). Castillo’s sketches, although loosely painted, show knowledge of Mengs’s preparatory techniques and his Roman training in composition and representation. Bayeu, in a note accepting his commission on 20th August 1785, states that he hopes to execute it as soon as possible, but observes that as “these paintings are delicate and small in size, they take more time than larger ones where the brush flows with greater dash.” The four small paintings on copper are exquisite in their execution, marshalling the different styles at his command. While Bayeu respects the well-defined Spanish royal taste for ornate and gem-like altarpieces established by Calleja, close examination of these paintings reveals a Tiepolesque looseness of technique and delight in the play of brushstrokes. This is particularly noticeable in the fir trees of the St. Joseph panel (fig. 62) which are reminiscent of those in Tiepolo’s modello of the same subject for the San Pascual Baylón commission. The slightly black outlines so characteristic of Tiepolo also recur in Bayeu’s angels, and the yellow and light blues are also borrowed from the Aranjuez oil sketch.

Alteza se sirve gratificarle por haverle presentado con un pintura de Nra Señora hecha de su mano. 1 de Septiembre 1768.”

223 Morales Piga (1981), pp. 67-68, claims it was painted in 1753 for Fernando VI. The St. Charles copper is actually signed by Mariano Sánchez, while the St. Louis is not signed but is definitely by another hand. The central panel is a copy after a Holy Family by Bernardo Luini, now in the Prado. See illustrations on page 66 in Piga’s article.


226 Castillo’s oratory is referred to by Sambricio, V., José del Castillo, Madrid, 1958, p. 14: “tres pequeños cuadros pintados en cobre para el Oratorio del Infante Don Carlos, en los que representara La Inmaculada Concepción, San José y San Carlos Borromeo, cuyo importe de dos mil cuatrocientos reales le fue abonado en 27 de octubre 1772.”

227 The oil sketch is in the Cerralbo Museum, catalogued as Anonymous 17th century, inv. no. 4570, oil on canvas, 40.5 x 54 cm. A squared-up drawing in the Biblioteca Nacional by Castillo survives, see Barta (1906), cat. no. 940, p. 168, black chalk with white highlights, 12 x 16 cm. Two rougher drawings attributed to Blas Amatller, cat. 65250, Museo Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona are here given to Castillo.

228 Morales (1995), p. 252, doc. 149: “estas pinturas son delicadas y chicas de tamaño, se llevan más tiempo que las grandes, donde corre con más bizarria el pincel....”
Royal Chapels

In addition to private oratories, the palaces which Charles and his family visited throughout the year also contained chapels which served as a focal point for religious ceremonies at the Bourbon court. Visible from the outside and accessible to the public on special occasions such as saints' feastdays and that of the Immaculate Conception, these chapels mostly fulfilled a dual function of royal chapel and parish church, allowing a select congregation of aristocrats, ministers and ambassadors to take part in the ceremonies celebrated there. Most were provided with elaborate iconographic programmes reflecting the king's religious beliefs and ideals for projection to a wider audience.

The first important chapel to be built and decorated under Bourbon rule was the royal chapel at La Granja, founded by Philip V in 1724. In 1738, Philip V renovated the royal chapel at El Pardo, originally built by the Hapsburgs. Architects such as François Carlier, Sacchetti and Ventura Rodriguez were employed to design the edifice, while two court painters, Pablo Penicharo and Juan Bautista Peña were commissioned to paint an Immaculate Conception for the main altar, and a St. Francis Xavier and St. Anthony for the side altars.229 Later Ferdinand VI decorated the royal chapel in Madrid between 1753 and 1757, while in the 1770s, Charles redecorated La Granja with an extensive iconographical programme and completely rebuilt and decorated the Capilla Nueva at Aranjuez.

It is worth mentioning briefly here how Philip V used his chapels, particularly the chapel at the Alcázar palace before it burnt down in 1734. The Duke of Saint Simon, French ambassador at the Spanish court in 1721, kept a diary in which he describes in detail the public ceremonies held in the chapels.230 The king and the Prince of Asturias would sit on the Gospel (left/North) side of the altar, facing the Cardinal Patriarch of the Indies, the Archbishop of Toledo and the Papal Nuncio, while the rest of the royal family would sit up in the gallery. After a sermon, normally given by the king's confessor, and before the Sanctus, pages would come in with candles and bow before the king. We can presume that Charles who had been brought up in Spain before becoming king of Naples, would have employed a similar hierarchy and liturgy in his religious ceremonies. Indeed we know that in Charles's reign, three important ecclesiastical figures resided at court and were often present at religious ceremonies.231 The Patriarch of the Indies was the Bishop at court as well as the Chaplain to

the Army and often baptised the royal children and officiated at mass. Other figures normally present included the Inquisitor General and the Archbishop of Toledo. The Papal Nuncio, who we have already mentioned, although often excluded from services probably due to political tensions between 1776 and 1784, was often called upon to replace the Patriarch to celebrate mass or baptise the Prince of Asturias’s children.232

**The Chapel of the Royal Palace in Madrid**

The royal chapel in the Royal Palace in Madrid was built in 1742 in the middle of the Infantes’ apartments at the north end of the palace. The main entrance to the chapel was situated on the gallery, the artery of the palace, allowing easy access for all who resided at court. The gallery was also an ideal space for processions. On 27th June 1753, Benedict XIV granted Ferdinand VI’s request to elevate the status of the chapel to that of a parochial church and allow access to the public. As we have seen in chapter I, Giaquinto had extensively decorated the chapel by the time Charles arrived. Apart from commissioning a main altarpiece of St. Michael in 1764, from Ramón Bayeu under the supervision of Mengs, and a sculpture of the Immaculate Conception from Manuel Alvarez, Charles made no significant changes.233

Rather than proposing an original composition for the main altarpiece, Mengs ordered Ramón Bayeu to copy a picture of St. Michael and the Rebel Angels by Giordano, now lost, but known through an oil sketch (fig. 63).234 This is quite surprising when one considers Mengs’s dislike for Giordano. However, to guide Bayeu, Mengs made a drawing after Giordano’s painting incorporating a semi-circle at the top to make space for the triangle of the Holy Trinity. Compared to other paintings by Giordano of this subject, Mengs had played down considerably the baroque aspect of the composition, editing the angels flying around the archangel who is shown standing on the devil. With Giordano’s composition and colour scheme at hand, Bayeu copied Mengs’s drawing faithfully, controlling his palette and brushstroke in accordance with the Mengsian approach and creating a solid and well-polished image of St. Michael (fig. 64).235

The sculpture of the Immaculate Conception was probably commissioned in the early 1770s, at the height of diplomatic tensions between Spain and the Papacy about the status of the doctrine. In a letter dated 16th January 1770, Eleta told the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Azpuru, that Charles “had commissioned the most beautiful Immaculate Conception possible

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234 Agueda M. “Noticia sobre el cuadro de San Miguel de la Capilla del Palacio Real de Madrid”, in Archivo Español de Arte, Varia, no. 143, 1983, pp. 78-82. The oil sketch’s location is unknown, but may still be in the Royal Palace, where a negative (no. A 159-2078) is kept in the files.
to be placed in the royal chapel, for which the Patriarch had presented necklaces made of pearls which have arrived from California." This is probably the sculpture by Manuel Alvarez which Ponz saw when visiting the Royal Chapel in 1775.

Above the royal chapel was a room known as the “Cámara de las Reliquias” or Chamber of Relics. Between 1765 and 1769, Maella painted its ceiling in fresco with a scene showing the Adoration of the Holy Lamb (fig. 65). Priest-like figures holding thuribles kneel before the Holy Lamb, placed on the Book of the Seven Seals on top of the Ark of the Covenant. Supporting the Ark are the four Evangelists in their animal attributes. Between the two groups of priests, an angel holding a trumpet, directly inspired by the angels in Mengs’s palace ceilings, breaks the picture plane, while two more hold a plaque with the inscription, taken from the Book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, Chapter V, verses xii-xiii: “Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem et divinitatem et sapientiam et fortitudinem et honorem et gloriam et benedictionem” (Worthy is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain, to receive all power and wealth, wisdom and might, honour and glory and praise.”) As we shall see a similar theme was chosen in the Royal Chapel of Aranjuez, where the subject was placed over the high altar, linking the sacrificial Lamb to the Eucharist.

The “Capilla Nueva” of the Royal Palace in Aranjuez (1772-1779)

Unlike the royal chapels in the palaces of Madrid, El Pardo and La Granja, which Charles III inherited from his predecessors as virtually complete projects, the palace in Aranjuez, first built under Philip II, was badly in need of restoration. In 1771, Charles III commissioned Sabatini to add two new wings to the palace. The eastern wing was to hold a theatre, with a ceiling decorated with Mengs’s fresco of Father Time and Pleasure (unfinished). At the end of the western wing, a new chapel was built to replace the earlier chapel built by Philip II, and serve as a counterpart to the chapels of Madrid and La Granja. Ponz informs us that Titian’s celebrated Annunciation, said to have been given to Charles V

235 The painting measures 500 x 260 cm. The file on the painting kept at the Royal palace contains a photograph after an old negative made in 1959 of an oil sketch (neg. no. A159-2078), possibly by Ramón in preparation for his painting.
236 A.M.A.E., leg. 430, El Pardo, 16 January, 1770. “Ha mandado hacer una Inmaculada Lamas preciosa q.e es posible para colocarla en la R/ capilla: y ha entregado ya al S Patriarca unos collares de las primeras perlas que le han llegado de California para que se pongan a la Madre Purissima.”
by the artist himself, hung on the main altar, while a painting of St. Anthony of Padua by Giaquinto was inserted in a contemporary altarpiece.238

The new chapel was not ready for decoration until 1778. Built on a central circular plan, with the area for main altar slightly jutting out, the general appearance recalls Roman baroque models. The Doric capitals of the pilasters give the main structure a sobre effect. In contrast, the altars and frames, made of veined marbles and ornate bronze work, give the interior a sense of richness and sumptuousness. A commission for the new decorative scheme, essentially following the iconography of the old chapel and involving an Annunciation for the main altar, a St. Anthony and the Child for the left altar and an Immaculate Conception for the right altar, was initially given to Mengs on 5th June 1777.239 Following Mengs’s death, however, the commission was passed on to Maella.240 A year later, on 16th May 1778, the king expressed his wish that the ceilings of the chapel should also be decorated by “his painters, and that....they should proceed by painting oil sketches of what they have been asked to execute.”241 Francisco Bayeu was chosen to complete this task. While the subjects of the altarpieces are relatively straightforward, the frescoes above the main altar and in the four compartments of the cupola contain a complex iconography, based on quotations from the Bible referring not only to the Virgin’s purity but also to the grace and power of God and the

238 Ponz (1947), p.99. See also a letter in A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, Aranjuez, caja 1469 from Floridablanca to Sabatini, written on 9th July 1778: “Respecto al quadro de la Anunciacion de Ticiano que hay en el Altar mayor de la Capilla vieja de este Palacio que se va a deshacer es tan grande que no se puede colocar y conservar aqui en parte alguna segun merece, dispondri VS que quando se quite se haga esta operacion con cuidado, y que se arrolle, encajone y lleve á Madrid, para que restaurandole si lo necesita, y ponidolos marco nuevo, se coloque en la Sacristia de la Capilla de aquel Palacio, como alhaja que es de mucha estimacion.”

The Royal Inventory made between 1788 and 1794, p. 77, records that Titian’s painting was still awaiting restoration in the Casa de Rebeque, which at the time was Francisco Bayeu’s studio.239 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio Aranjuez, caja 1469. Letter from Floridablanca to Sabatini, 5th June 1777. “El asunto del Altar mayor ha de ser el mismo que tiene la Capilla antigua, esto es, la Anunciacin de N a Señora: el del Colateral de la izquierda, San Antonio de Padua, que tambien hay ahora: y el del nuevo Colateral que se ha de añadir al lado del Evangelio, la Concepcion de N a Señora. Tendra S.M. mucho gusto en que sea su primer Pintor de Camara Dn. Antonio Rafael Mengs quien execute estos quadros en lienzo para su mas facil transporte desde Rome…” Mengs premature death meant that Charles III was left with an unfinished Annunciation. Judged his greatest achievement, it hung in the King’s Dressing Room along with Mengs’s Adoration of the Shepherds as pendant. See Inventarios Reales Carlos III, 1789-1790, 1988, Vol. I, p. 17.

240 Morales (1996), doc. 80, p. 282, quotes Maella’s Memorial of 25th July 1779: “los dos cuadros colaterales de la Real Capilla de el Palacio de Aranjuez y el del alto mayor de la misma: aquellos por encargo que desde luego se le hizo, y este porque no pudiendo Dn. Antonio Mengs concluir, por su quebrantada salud.”

241 “sus pintores, y que....vayan formando los borrornillos de lo que han de ejecutar.” A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, Aranjuez, caja 1469. Floridablanca to Sabatini, 16th May 1778. According to this letter, the king “quiere que se continue la obra de la Capilla de este Palacio de modo que pueda servir en la Jornada del ano proximo: a cuyo fin dispondra VS. que se hayan los transitos que han de comunicar á ella, incluso el soportal exterior continuando el antiguo por la parte de medio dia, y que vengan los estuquistas y demas artifices que sean necesarios.”
Sacrifice of Christ. The chapel was finally consecrated on 25th March 1779, the feast day of the Incarnation.242

Today, Bayeu’s ceilings remain in good condition, Maella’s Immaculate Conception (fig. 66) has been moved to the main altar and two works by unknown painters, apparently originally painted for a different location as neither has a semi-circular top, occupy the side altars. On the left-hand altar, a picture of St. Michael and the Rebel Angels (fig. 67), traditionally attributed to Giordano,243 is in fact a revised copy, probably dating from the 18th century, of the famous picture by Sebastiano Conca in the church of Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli (1721-25) in Rome (fig. 68). In style, it is close to Maella, particularly in the execution of the angels and the colouring. Maella is known to have painted a St. Michael defeating Lucifer for the Royal chapel of the Calle del Tesoro, now destroyed, and it is possible that this is that painting.244 The Deposition on the right altar, traditionally attributed to Mengs but not mentioned in the general literature on the artist, is painted on a Neapolitan canvas and conceived in a Roman baroque manner (fig. 69). While unlikely to be by Mengs himself, it does retain a Mengsian air, particularly in the execution of the figures of Mary Magdalene and St. John the Evangelist, whose facial features are close to those of the figures in Mengs’s Deposition, painted for the king’s bedroom. It is most likely to have been painted by an Italian artist well acquainted with the work of Mengs and Trevisani.

As for the iconography of the cupola, it is a relatively straightforward representation of Marian iconography. Each of the four compartments contains a figure holding attributes and supported by clouds and angels holding scrolls or tablets with Latin inscriptions referring either to a prophecy or a passage written by the respective figures. The compartment directly above the main altar shows God the Father and the Glory of the Holy Lamb (fig. 70) supported by angels holding the same verse from the Book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, (Chapter V, verses xii-xiii: “Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem; et divinitatem et sapientiam et fortitudinem et honorem et gloriam et benedictionem” Worthy is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain, to receive all power and wealth, wisdom and might, honour and glory and praise”) seen in the chamber of Relics in the Royal Palace in Madrid. Opposite, above the main entrance, is Faith with angels holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments (fig. 71). On the left facing the altar is St. Luke painting the Virgin (fig. 72), with a verse taken from St. Luke’s Gospel, Chapter I, verse xxviii-xxix “Et ingresus Angelus

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245 A.G.P. Carlos IV, leg. 14: Letter from Juan de Villanueva to the Marqués de Santa Cruz, dated 6th January 1802. “ha dado orden a D.n Mariano Maella para que poniéndose de acuerdo con V.S. hiciése por sí mismo una Pintura que representase la Ymagen de S.n Miguel, para colocar en el Altar principal de la R.I Capilla de la Calle de Tesoro.” The ‘Calle de Tesoro del Rey’ was originally located near the Royal palace, now the Plaza de Oriente.
ad eam dixit, Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus” (“The angel went in and said to her, “Greetings, most favoured one! The Lord is with you.”” On the right is the *Prophecy of Isaiah* (fig. 73), with the inscription from Isaiah Chapter 7, verses xiv-xv “Ecce Virgo Convipiet, et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel.” (A young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel.”) In the space above the main altar, are angels, sculpted in gesso, shown holding crosses. Bayeu frescoed the remaining space with angels adoring the cross, including the ceiling above the entrance door.

St. Luke paints the Virgin and the epithet tells the story of the Annunciation, while Isaiah prophesies her purity and the birth of Christ. God the Father and the Agnus Dei allude to the sacrifice of Christ enacted below on the altar, while the Allegory of Faith emphasises the idea of morality and adherence to the Ten Commandments. Below Maella’s altarpieces carried on with the Marian theme, dedicating the main altar to the Incarnation of Christ in her purified womb, which is crystallised in the right altar of the Immaculate Conception. St. Anthony opposite was one of Charles III favourite saints, a Franciscan, and shown adoring the Christ Child. Perhaps pictorially more advanced and more direct than previous commissions such as La Granja (1769-1772), which contains complex theological discussions, Aranjuez points towards the more eloquent and well-rehearsed iconography.
CHAPTER V

CHARLES III’S PUBLIC RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS: THE “ANTI-JESUIT” COMMISSIONS

The expulsion from Spain of the Jesuits between 31st March and 2nd April 1767 sparked off a series of re-building and re-decorative programmes. All Jesuit property was confiscated and Jesuit institutions were either closed or transformed into public buildings. Art works such as paintings and sculptures were stored in the ex-Jesuit Imperial College of Madrid. In 1774, most of these paintings were in poor condition and in need of curatorial attention. The Count of Baños, secretary of the Academy, proposed they should be handed over to the Academy, either to decorate its rooms or for students to copy. The court painters and Academicians Andrés de la Calleja, Antonio González Ruiz and Antonio González Velázquez were asked to draw up an inventory and evaluate the quality of these newly acquired works.246

In the meantime, two projects in particular, the refoundation of the Jesuit college as the Royal Collegiate Church of St. Isidro in Madrid (1767-1769) and the construction of the Chapel of the Venerable Palafox as an annex to the cathedral of Burgo de Osma (1770-1785) in the province of Soria, illustrate the way Charles took advantage of religious projects to pursue wider political objectives.

The act of taking over the church of St. Isidro from the Jesuits was particularly significant in view of the popularity of the saint and his connection with Madrid. St. Isidro is the patron saint of Madrid and his relics attracted a strong following. In addition, there was a strong royal connection, as previous Spanish monarchs had often used his relics to remedy cases of illnesses at court. These relics had been installed in the church of St. Andrew near St. Isidro’s birthplace, but Charles decided that they should be relocated in the newly re-consecrated church of St. Isidro. By transforming the church into a royal institution and placing it under royal patronage, Charles was making an important political move, designed to win him popularity and respect. In contrast, the Palafox chapel represented a more intellectual approach, reflecting Palafox’s reputation as a reformer in opposition to the Jesuits.

In embarking on these commissions, the king required the construction of buildings capable of fulfilling both practical and spiritual functions. His architect, Francisco Sabatini, supervised the works in both cases, intervening with expertise and advice when needed. In St.

Isidro, the main altarpiece was completely redesigned following neo-classical aesthetics and built specially to incorporate the relics of St. Isidro as well as a painting by Mengs to crown the main altarpiece. The Chapel of the Venerable Palafox in Burgo de Osma, built as an extension to the cathedral behind the main altar, was conceived in complete harmony with the neo-classical theories and taste of the period.

The Chapel of the Venerable Palafox never fulfilled its planned function as a shrine for his body, as Spain’s campaign for his canonisation proved unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the manner in which these two commissions were conceived and executed sheds interesting light on the role of the king as royal patron. Through their public character, these projects enabled Charles III to demonstrate his commitment as monarch to the Catholic faith. In parallel, they helped to fill the ideological vacuum left by the expulsion of the Jesuits.

The Royal Collegiate church of San Isidro

Built between 1622 and 1661, the Colegio Imperial in the Calle de Toledo in Madrid was originally used by the Jesuits as an educational institution to train and educate young nobles. Charles III transformed it into a secularized seminary, as part of his policy of creating new seminaries and improving the quality of religious education. The church attached to the College, a religious focal point for the citizens of Madrid, was converted into a royal parish church dedicated to the patron saint of Madrid, St. Isidro. Charles III’s minister, Manuel de Roda, masterminded the re-decoration and re-consecration of the College in 1769.

Known as El Labrador, St. Isidro (1070-1130) worked as a farm labourer outside Madrid for a landowner called Juan de Vargas. Every morning before going to work, so legend tells us, he was accustomed to hear mass at a small chapel outside Madrid. One day, his fellow workers complained to their master that he was always late for work. Upon investigation, the master found Isidro in prayer while angels were ploughing the field for him. As patron saint of Madrid, he was venerated especially by the local peasants. His wife, St. Maria de la Cabeza, also attracted a strong following, especially in times of drought when the relic of her head was carried in procession. St. Isidro also had a royal connection. He appeared to Alfonso of Castille, showing him the hidden path by which he surprised the Moors and won the battle of Navas de Tolosa in 1212. His relics were especially popular, as they were believed to have curative powers. They miraculously cured Philip III from a deadly disease, promoting him to seek St. Isidro’s canonisation by Pope Gregory XV. He was canonised on 12th March 1622 along with the two Jesuits St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier.

By the reign of Charles III, the relics of St. Isidro and St. Maria de la Cabeza were in two different places. St. Isidro’s relics were in a chapel in the church of San Andrés, while those of St. Maria de la Cabeza were housed in a chapel built on the site of their original house. As already noted, Charles III had a personal devotion for St. Isidro, whose relics he brought to his dying wife Maria Amalia, in the hope of a miraculous cure to her fatal illness. As part of Charles’s reform project, the relics of both St. Isidro and St. Maria de la Cabeza were placed in urns on the main altar of the church of San Isidro in January 1769. Now known as San Isidro el Real, the church became one of the city’s most important religious centres.

Ponz, who visited the church while compiling his volume on Madrid for his Viaje de España, published in 1776, observed with satisfaction that Ventura Rodríguez had made appropriate alterations to the interior. Although the main structure of the high altar was left unchanged, significant alterations were made to its iconographical contents and general appearance of the framework, with strong neo-classical undertones. Pedro de Avila mentions that “all the cumbersome carving and materials on the altarpiece have been removed and replaced with decorations that conform to the good taste of the antique and the Roman style, while the architecture imitates marble and bronze effects.” Originally a painting representing St. Francis Xavier baptising natives by Francisco Rizi decorated the altar.

248 Clarke (1763), p. 116-118. In 1760 he comments that the relics of St. Isidro were brought to the dying Queen Amalia. The accounts of the Royal Household in: A.G.P. Sección Administrativa, leg. 369, record the king’s orders to bring St. Isidro’s relic to her bedside.

249 For correspondence between don Pedro de Avila y Soto (Consejo de S. M. en el Supremo de Castilla and Manuel de Roda, concerning the re-organisation of the Jesuit college and its redecoration see Socorro González de Arribas, Maria del & Arribas Arranz, Filemon, ‘Noticias y Documentos para la Historia del Arte en España durante el siglo XVIII,’ in Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Valladolid, 1961, Valladolid, Tomo XXVII, doc. 178, p. 176 & Biblioteca Nacional Ms. Z/3859, doc. no. 178: Obras que se ejecutan para colocar a San Isidro en su nueva real Yglesia, enero 1769.

250 The king and his ministers were quite aware of the advantages the ex-Jesuit college offered. Its “situación en el centro de la Corte, y demás circunstancias de su disposición y fabrca, pudiese tener más logar y proporcion el gran concursos del Pueblo á exercitar su piedad y devoción, que siempre ha tenido a estos Santos, cuya intercesión implora en todas sus publicas necesidades.” Quote taken from Constituciones del Cavildo de Capellanes de S.M. en su Real Yglesia y capilla de San Isidro Labrador, y de Santa María de la Cabeza, en la Villa y Corte de Madrid. 1788. Bib. Nacional: Ms 8863.

251 Clarke (i 763), p. 116-118. In 1760 he comments that the relics of St. Isidro were brought to the dying Queen Amalia. The accounts of the Royal Household in: A.G.P. Sección Administrativa, leg. 369, record the king’s orders to bring St. Isidro’s relic to her bedside.

252 Torno, E., Iglesias de Madrid, 1927, Madrid, p. 111, specifies that Ventura Rodríguez worked on the presbytery between 1767-1769.

253 Ponz (1947), pp. 435-437: “En lugar del antiguo orden compuesto caprichoso, formó unas pilastras y entablamento de orden corintio; adorno con gusto la bóveda; coloco los órganos, también de arquitectura corintia, en dos tribunas; puso en medio la mesa del altar, y alrededor formé el coro de los capellanes.”

254 Socorro González de Arribas & Arribas Arranz (1961), Valladolid, Tomo XXVII, doc. 178, p. 177: “Se ha quitado mucha talla pesada y material del retablo y puesto otros adornos conforme al antiguo y buen gusto romano, quedando su arquitectura imitando a marmoles y broncees.”

255 Ibid p. 176: “segundo cuerpo del altar se allaba una pintura de 23 pies de alto y 13 y medio de ancho que representaba S.n Francisco Jabier hauitizando yndios…..”
According to Pedro de Avila, however, the painting was in poor condition and not of any particular artistic merit. As a result, he suggested that Mengs should paint a replacement.\textsuperscript{256} In the substitute painting by Mengs, the subject was changed to suit the altarpiece’s new function. Crowning the composition was the Holy Trinity accompanied by the Virgin and St. James, with St. Lawrence and St. Damasus below, ready to receive St. Isidro’s soul who was represented by the sculpture below.\textsuperscript{257} Commenting on the outcome, Pedro de Avila claimed that “the altarpiece attracted people’s attention by its magnificence and sobriety.”\textsuperscript{258}

Ponz provides a detailed account of the main altarpiece. The first level consisted of four columns, gilded in places, with the rest painted to look like marble. In a niche in the centre were urns containing the remains of the two saints and a sculpture, by Juan Pascual de Mena, of St. Isidro kneeling on a bank of clouds. On either side were two allegorical statues, by Francisco Gutiérrez and Manuel Alvarez. To complete the decorative ensemble, a painting by Mengs representing a “Gloria” of the Holy Trinity with Virgin and Sts. Damasus and Lawrence was placed on the second level of the altarpiece.\textsuperscript{259} According to Tormo in his Las Iglesias del Antiguo Madrid, 10 sculptures of “Santos Labradores” executed by Manuel Pereira in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century for a chapel in the original Jesuit church, dedicated to St. Isidro and St. Andrés, were painted white and placed as decoration on the altarpiece.\textsuperscript{260} While the two allegorical statues mentioned by Ponz represented Faith and Humility, Tormo also tells us that Gutiérrez sculpted another two in relief of Charity and Hope.\textsuperscript{261}

In his biography of Mengs, Azara describes his altar painting in San Isidro as representing “the Holy Trinity, with the Madonna, Saint Damasus, and other Spanish saints, which he did in figures much larger than nature, of the height of seventeen feet, and twelve in breadth.”\textsuperscript{262} Tormo supports Azara’s affirmation, saying it was painted for the attic but giving no further details.\textsuperscript{263} Today, a painting can be seen at the top of the altarpiece, representing the subject described by Azara. However it is poorly lit, and its position makes it very difficult to judge its quality and establish whether it is by Mengs or a copy of the lost original. Tormo

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid: “bastante ordinaria y ajada de los tiempos, y con el motivo de maniobrar en el retablo y colocar los andamios se maltrató tanto que….me pareció preciso que la biese Dn Antonio Mengs, y de acuerdo de este y Dn Ventura Rodriguez se declaró que no podia serbir asi por lo real tratado que estaba, como por la impopiedad y disonancia que hacía a lo demás del retablo y su significado.”

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid: “Con este motivo a sido preciso tome a su cuidado Mengs pintar otro que representa el Trono de la SS.ma Trinidad, y más abajo la Purissima a la derecha y al el otro lado Santiago, Sn Lorenzo y S.n Damaso que están como a recibir a el Sto que sube al cielo; y de a mi parecer muy oportuna.”

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid, p. 177: “y que el todo de la obra llame atencion de las gentes por su magnificencia y seriedad.”

\textsuperscript{259} Ponz (1947), pp. 436-437.

\textsuperscript{260} Tormo, E., Las Iglesias del antiguo Madrid, (1972), p. 111 “cuatro (Santos Alejandro y Eliseo, arriba; Eustaquio y Orencio, abajo) se pusieron en los intercolumnios del retablo, y seis en los de las pilasstras (a izquierda, Adán Santos Simeón y Esteban; a derecha Emeteiro, Lamberto y Galderico) al ingreso de la capilla mayor.”

\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{262} Mengs (1796), Vol. I, p.71.

\textsuperscript{263} Tormo (1972), p. 111: “Mengs pintó…. del ático.”
mentions that the interior of the church, and particularly the high altar, were badly damaged during the Spanish Civil War.

Preparatory drawings by Salvador Carmona for an engraving after the bottom part of the altarpiece with the sculpture of St. Isidro provide some information concerning its original aspect. The drawings, one in the Prado and two in the Biblioteca Nacional, show St. Isidro kneeling on some clouds above his urn (fig. 74). Although the engraving was never executed, the idea behind the project may have been to advertise the cult of the saint and commemorate the opening of the church in 1769. The engraving may have helped to propagate the idea of good taste, particularly as the altar was framed by two pilasters, with Corinthian capitals on either side, along with the two classical marble sculptures of Faith and Humility.

That Charles and his family maintained links with the cult of St. Isidro is demonstrated by a project dating from 1788 for the decoration of the Infantes' living quarters in the Palace at El Pardo, with tapestries based on popular scenes from Madrid life. The tapestries were never executed, due to Charles's death in December 1788, but Goya left several sketches including one known as the Meadow of St. Isidro now in the Prado museum. The scene represents the most popular festival in the Madrid calendar, the saint's feast day, which is celebrated on 15th May. Goya's viewpoint is from the Hermitage of San Isidro, the goal of the pilgrimage, on the spot where the saint is said to have struck a spring of water with healing powers. Apart from being an accurate topographical view of Madrid, showing clearly the royal palace and the immense structure of the newly built convent of San Francisco el Grande, Goya's sketch shows among the rapidly painted figures in the middle ground two royal guards and several carriages containing royal figures. Although Charles may not himself been present on such occasions, there is no doubt that members of the royal family would have made an appearance. The celebrations, as illustrated by Goya, were an occasion for social classes to mix and celebrate St. Isidro's feast day.

**The Chapel of the Venerable Palafox in the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma.**

Born in Fitero in 1600, Juan de Palafox acquired celebrity in the 1640s, as archbishop of Puebla de los Angeles in Mexico, for his attacks on the Jesuits' domination of local missions and misappropriation of tithes. On his return to Spain in 1653, he was made bishop of Burgo de Osma, where he died and was buried in 1659. His espousal of ecclesiastical

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reform and his opposition to the Jesuits made him a perfect parallel to the endeavours of Charles III and Eleta. In seeking his canonisation and in building a chapel in his honour in the cathedral of Burgo de Osma, they were pursuing their drive to counteract the influence of the Jesuits.

The see of Burgo de Osma is one of the oldest in Spain. The town is situated in the arid province of Soria, 250 kilometres north of Madrid. Its first bishop, Juan, held office between 591 and 606. St. Dominic of Guzmán was a canon of the cathedral in 1200, before founding the order of the Dominicans in 1216. A cathedral built in 1101 was replaced by a building begun in 1232 by Maestro Lope and Johan de Medina. By the 18th century, however, Burgo de Osma had lost much of its influence and become quite isolated. In 1754, the cathedral was close to ruin. The following year, Bishop Pedro Clemente de Aróstegui petitioned the Cámara de Castilla for assistance in restoring it. Their response was to send the architect Ventura Rodríguez to inspect the site and give his view on the situation. He proposed the demolition of the Gothic structure and the rebuilding of the cathedral on classical lines. His surviving plans show a solid classical structure, much influenced by Juan de Herrera's designs for the cathedral of Valladolid. In the event, however, only minor restoration works were carried out and the cathedral resumed its daily routine in 1759.

Palafox’s connections with Burgo de Osma explain why this provincial town was chosen for the site of such an important commission, rather than Madrid. Eleta had himself been born in Burgo de Osma, and in 1786 he was to become its bishop, a post he held until his death in 1788. In seeking papal support for Palafox’s canonisation, Charles III and Eleta hoped to make Burgo de Osma an important site for his cult. The title for the draft of the Real Cédula of 1781 clearly states the function of the chapel: “Foundation and establishment of the Royal Chapel built in the Cathedral of Osma for the purpose of housing the body of the

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265 From 1772 onwards various engravings of St. Isidro and St. María de la Cabeza were for sale and were advertised in the Gaceta de Madrid. See Portús, J. & Vega, J., La Estampa Religiosa en la España del Antiguo Régimen, Madrid, 1998, pp. 146-147.
266 Loperráz (1788), vol I, p. 42.
267 Ibid, p. 182.
271 A.M.A.E. leg. 430: On 27th November 1770 Eleta wrote to the Archbishop of Valencia informing him of the plans to build the chapel: “En la Cathedral de Osma esta proyectada, y aun empezada su extension: se lleva la mira de hacer en la nueva fabrica una capilla correspondiente para S. Dios fuese servido se vea Beatificado Ns.o Ven.e, colocar en ella su cuerpo. Esto no se considera sea prevenir el juicio de la Iglesia; pues no es mas que hacer lo material de una Capilla en la extension de la Cathedral para si Dios fuese servido que llega permiso Ns.o Ven.e al colocarle sobre los Altare.”

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Venerable Don Juan de Palafox on the hoped-for day of his Beatification. The incorporation of his relics and the royal coat of arms in a chapel decorated in a neo-classical style, reminiscent of the royal chapels, was intended not only to glorify Palafox's accomplishments but also to directly reflect Charles III's religious concerns (fig. 75 & 76).

According to accounts of Palafox's childhood, he was abandoned by his mother, who had conceived him out of wedlock, and brought up by a shepherd. Only later did his father, Jaime de Palafox y Rebolledo, Marquis of Ariza, recognize him as his son. Adopting the young Palafox, his father sent him to Alcalá to study theology and finally to Sigüenza University, where he was made a doctor of canon law. In 1626, he became a member of the Council of War and Council of the Indies at the Court of Madrid. Three years later, however, he renounced his position, in order to pursue a religious life. He began his spiritual training with an Alcantarine Franciscan, who taught him various spiritual exercises based on mystical writings. Following a pursuit of ascetic practices, such as dressing in the Franciscan habit, sleeping on hard wood and self-mortification, he finally decided to seek ordination. Philip IV named him almoner to his sister Princess Maria of Austria, whom he accompanied to Germany. On his return to Madrid he was made Bishop of Puebla de los Angeles on 27th December 1639 and also "visitador general" of Mexico.

As soon as Palafox arrived in Puebla in June 1640, he was involved in conflict over the behaviour of some of the religious orders already working in Mexico. Palafox disapproved of the exemptions and privileges which they enjoyed, and which he considered an encroachment on his episcopal jurisdiction. In May 1642, he was asked by the Spanish court to take over temporarily from the viceroy Villena who had been accused of financial mismanagement and of secret sympathy with Portuguese rebels. During his five months as viceroy, he corrected financial abuses and rooted out idolatry among the indigenous population, destroying many Aztec idols and other pre-Columbian antiquities collected by previous viceroys. During that time he was offered the post of Archbishop of Mexico, which he declined, preferring to concentrate further reforms in his own diocese. He completed the construction of the cathedral of Puebla and consecrated it on 18th April 1649. He also built the Episcopal palace and the three seminaries of San Pedro, San Pablo and San Juan, where he introduced courses on theology, philosophy and rhetoric, as well as a convent dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and some 40 churches. On his visits to surrounding parishes for the purpose of baptising and confirming native converts, he also inspected the activities of the monastic and religious orders.

272 "Fundación y Establecimiento de la Capilla Real fabricada en la Cathedral de Osma con el fin de colocar en ella el cuerpo del V.e Señor D.n Juan de Palafox en el dia que esperamos de su Beatificación." Archivo de la Embajada de España acerca la Santa Sede, in A.M.A.E., leg. 356, expediente 20. Real Cédula de 10 de diciembre de 1781. Loperráez (1788) Vol. 1, publishes this document in Colección Diplomática, documento CCXI, p. 505.
Palafox wrote various spiritual treatises, including his Confesión y confusión de un pobre y miserable pecador, as well as historical and documentary books, notably the Sitio y socorro de Fuenterrabía y sucesos del año 1638, and articles on his experiences in Mexico such as an anthropological study entitled De la Naturaleza del Indio. An engraving represented Charles with an allegory of faith presenting him with “Opera Ven Ioannis de Palatbx.” The first biography of Palafox was published soon after his death in 1666 by Antonio González de Rosende under the title Vida y virtudes de D. Juan de Palafox and others were published in the 18th century in French and Italian. In their accounts, some of these biographers include incidents of a quasi-miraculous nature in order to emphasise his saintliness. A complete edition of Palafox’s literary work was published in 1762, Obras del Ilustrissimo, Excelentissimo, y Venerable Siervo de Dios Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, and dedicated to Charles III.

Apart from his active and effective programmes of reform, similar to that which Charles III was later to try to implement, Palafox is best known today for his correspondence with Pope Innocent X on the role of episcopal jurisdiction and its relationship with religious orders present in Mexico. Palafox reported that orders such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and particularly the Jesuits were misusing their power and taking advantage of the natives by collecting tithes for themselves, rather than giving them to the diocese. Believing that serious action should be taken against them, he wrote on 15th October 1645 to Innocent X explaining the situation, and reporting that his enemies had begun to “accuse me of great outrages and spread popular libels and other goings-on.” The Pope answered with a

273 Palafox y Mendoza, De la Naturaleza del Indio al Rey. Tome X in Obras del Ilustrissimo...... 1762.
274 Obras del Ilustrissimo, Excelentissimo, y Venerable Siervo de Dios Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, de los supremos consejos de indias, y Aragón, Obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, y de Osma, Arzobispo electo de Mejico, Virrey, y Capitán General de Nueva-España, & c. 12 volumes, Madrid, 1762. A written dedication to Charles is as follows: “La Justicia, la Religion y la Piedad, virtudes propriamente regias con la mano de Dios adorno á V.M para bien de esta Monarquia, le han inspirado el saludable y santo designio de solicitar el feliz complemento de los piadoso y repetidos oficios, con que los Reales Progenitores de V.M especialmente el Señor Rey Don Fernando su Hermano, y ultimo Predecessor, solicitaron para mayor lustre de la Iglesia, y nueva gloria de la España, que se adorasse en los Altares al Venerable Siervo de Dios Don Palafox. Fue este insigne Varón un modelo excelente de virtudes Christianas, Episcopales, y Políticas....”
275 González de Rosende, La Vida del Ilustrissimo, y excelentissimo señor Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, de los Consejos de su Majestad en el Real de las Indias, y Supremo de Aragon, Obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, y Arzobispo electo de Mejico, Virrey que fue, Lugar Teniente del Rey nuestro Señor, su Gobernador, y Capitán General de la Nueva-España, Presidente de la Audiencia, Chancilleria Real que en ella reside, Visitador General de sus Tribunales, y Juez de Residencia de tres Virreyes, y ultimamente Obispo de la Santa Iglesia de Osma, Madrid, 1762
brief dated 14th May 1648 in which he supported Palafox in all disputed points of jurisdiction, but exhorted him to be more kind and lenient towards the Jesuits.

The Pope’s response did not reduce Palafox’s determination to expose the Jesuits’ abuses of their power in Mexico. In a letter dated 8th January 1649, he warned Pope Innocent X that “the power of the members of this Order within the Universal Church is so terrific, their wealth so extensive, the credit accorded to them so extraordinary, and the honours given them so absolute that if they are not reformed they will judge themselves superior to all the Ecclesiastical Dignitaries, Laws, Councils and Apostolic Constitutions.”278 In his long and complaining letter, he criticised the exemptions and privileges the Jesuits had enjoyed since the beginning of the 17th century and explained how they undermined his episcopal authority. Using China as a comparison, Palafox stressed that the Jesuit manner of indoctrinating natives led to idolatry: “If the church were to seek anew to instruct the Chinese in the true Articles of our Faith, they would complain with justification that they had been tricked. They would protest, without a doubt, that the Jesuits had not preached to them a Religion of fasting, weeping and penance; nor a religion that abhors nature, detests the flesh and whose heritage is the Cross, dangers and death; that they were not offered a Crucified Saviour; that they had embraced, not a Man/God pilloried, spat upon, scorned, crucified and killed, but rather a beautiful and glorious Saviour (apparelled, according to the descriptions and paintings of the Jesuits, after the fashion of the Chinese).”279

This letter was to have a tremendous effect on the Catholic Church in Europe, causing theological and jurisdictional disputes between the Jesuits, who were traditionally supported by the Papacy, and the Jansenists. In order to avoid further conflicts, it was decided to bring Palafox back to Spain and given him the Bishopric of Burgo de Osma as compensation. The arguments which he engendered, however, continued through much of the 18th century. In reaction to the accusations against them, the Jesuits retaliated by accusing their accusers of Jansenism to the point, in 1759, of instigating the people of Madrid to burn publicly.

278 Carta del Venerable Siervo de Dios el llustrísimo Señor Don Juan de Palafox al Sumo Pontifice Inocencio X. Traducida del Latin al Castellano por D. Salvador González. Tercera Edición, con superior permiso Madrid, 1768, pp. 47-48: Es tan terrible el poder de estos Religiosos en la Iglesia Universal, tan grandes sus riquezas, su credito tan extraordinario, y los honores que se les dan tan absolutos, que si no se les reforma, se juzgan superiores a todas las Dignidades Eclesiásticas, Leyes, Concilios, y Constituciones Apostólicas.

279 Ibid, p. 178: Si quisiera ahora la iglesia instruir de nuevo a los Chinos en los verdaderos Artículos de nuestra Fé, se quejarían con razón de que los havian engañado: protestarian, sin duda, que los Jesuitas no les havían predicado una Religion que ayuna, llora, y hace penitencia; ni una Religion honorosa à la naturaleza, enemiga de la carne, y cuya rherencia es la Cruz, los peligros, y la muerte: Que no les han propuesto un Salvador Crucificado: Que no un Hombre Dios azotado, escupido, despreciado, crucificado, y muerto, havian ellos abrazado; sino un Salvador hermoso, y glorioso (según, y como los Jesuitas se lo pintan vestido à la Chinesca.)"
Palafox’s writing. Charles III’s determination to redress the abuses of which Palafox had written made the king a butt of such attacks.

Like Charles III, the bishop of Burgo de Osma between 1764-1786, Bernardo Antonio Calderón, was a devotee of the cause of Palafox’s canonization and anxious to provide a proper burial place and shrine for the prospective saint. In 1768, Palafox’s body was exhumed and ready for transfer to its new location. Eleta was in continuous correspondence with the diocesan authorities with regard to the building works and administrative details. Charles III donated a thousand gold doblones towards the financing of the project, and also supplied his most able architects, sculptors, and artists to create a sanctuary fit for the future saint.

Until recently, it was thought that Villanueva had provided the initial plans for the Palafox chapel and that Sabatini had later taken it over and completed it. However, the recent publication of five designs by Sabatini in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, confirm that he was approached first by Eleta. An exchange of letters in November 1769 between Sabatini and Eleta’s secretary, Fray Vicente de Estremena, suggests that by then he was well advanced with the project and had even designed the urn that was to hold Palafox’s remains. Nevertheless, in 1770, Sabatini withdrew from the building works and handed the commission to Juan de Villanueva, who followed Sabatini in choosing a centralised plan, crowned with a cupola, with side and main altars breaking the space. Aged 31, Villanueva’s used the opportunity of his first important commission to demonstrate not only his creative talents but his knowledge of classical architecture, recently acquired in Rome whilst studying with a royal grant. The commission also included the replacement of the old sacristy with a more spacious neo-classical one. Villanueva’s designs for both commissions were approved on 12th July 1770 by the Chapter, and the sacristy was completed in 1775. The chapel, however, proved a more complex undertaking.

While the chapel was still being built, the figure of Palafox became the subject of a determined propaganda drive. In a bid to raise public awareness and prove Palafox’s saintliness and good works, two biographies and a compendium of his works were published, accompanied by engravings of his portrait. To magnify his intellectual capacity and his talents as a statesman, he was often represented as the ideal enlightened bishop, concerned to reform both the administrative and spiritual aspects of the church. In 1774, a series of five letters

284 Ibid, pp. 311-312. Other documents however suggest that the urn was not completed until 1784: Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Estado, Legajo 2861, Caja 1, letter from Sabatini to Padre Eleta dated 12th June 1784.
were published defending both the king and Palafox against allegations of Jansenism.\textsuperscript{285} Twelve volumes of his works entitled\textit{Obras del Ilustrissimo, Excelentissimo, y Venerable Siervo de Dios Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza}, (1762) contain a frontispiece by Antonio González Velázquez. It is an engraved portrait in a frame of Palafox as a clean-shaven young bishop receiving homage from allegorical feminine figures holding open books with the inscriptions: “Eruditio Canonica”, “Eruditio Ascetica”, “Eruditio Politica”, “Eruditio Civilis” (fig. 77).\textsuperscript{286} Ponz provided an engraved portrait of Palafox for Obregón’s biography published in 1780 (fig. 78).\textsuperscript{287}

While none of these representations touch on the issue of saintliness, a painting documented to have been placed in front of the entrance of the Palafox chapel and now in the sacristy shows him kneeling before the apparition of the Virgin Mary (fig. 79). This apparition was probably included in the list of miracles submitted on 12\textsuperscript{th} September 1767 to the Sagrada Congregación.\textsuperscript{288} The author of the painting is unknown, although it has been attributed to Maella, who also painted a fresco of a chorus of angels above the main altar in the Palafox chapel in 1781 (fig. 80).\textsuperscript{289} However, the painting is probably by or after Carlo Maratta. A version of a portrait of Palafox with the Virgin on a throne of clouds was recorded in the Madrid royal palace inventory of 1789, as by Carlo Maratta.\textsuperscript{290} Furthermore an engraving which faithfully reproduces the Burgo de Osma version, bears an inscription confirming that the original was indeed by Maratta. This either confirms that the Osma version is a copy of the engraving or the actual painting at the palace (fig. 81). Regarding the quality of the Osma painting, it is possible that either the royal palace painting was offered to the Cathedral at a later date, or that a court painter such Maella was commissioned to copy it. In any case, the representation, rather than making any allusion to Palafox’s possible sanctity, concentrates on his position as bishop, showing the bishop’s crook and mitre on the floor. Two young ordinands witness the scene in the background.

\textsuperscript{285} Correspondencia de Cinco Cartas entre N.N. Erudito Anti-Jesuita, y N.N. Teólogo imparcial: Sobre la Acusación de Jansenismo. Intempestivamente Hecha contra la Doctrina del Venerable Juan de Palafox, 1774, Madrid.
\textsuperscript{286} Palafox y Mendoza, J. de, \textit{Obras del...}, Madrid,1762.
\textsuperscript{287} Ignacio de Obregón, P., \textit{Breve Noticia de la Vida del Excelentíssimo Señor, y venerable siervo de Dios D. Juan Palafox y Mendoza, Obispo de la Puebla de Los Angeles y de Osma}, 1780, Madrid.
\textsuperscript{288} Unfortunately I have not been able to consult this document, which is being examined by the Vatican in response to the renewed petition for Palafox's canonisation made by the Mexican church.
\textsuperscript{289} Aranz Aranz, J., \textit{La Catedral de Burgo de Osma}, Guia Turistica, Almazán, 1981, Pamplona, p.133: attributes the painting to Maella. Various bills drawn up by Maella for his fresco exist: (A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, caja 18.231; Memoria de los generos que se han entregado a Dn. Mariano Maella Pintor de Camara de Sin para la obra del Venerable Palafox, 7\textsuperscript{th} October 1782.)
\textsuperscript{290} Inventarios Reales, (1988) p. 37. Segunda pieza verde: no. 305: Vara y media de alto, y mas de vara de ancho, Palafox con Maria Santísima en un Trono de nubes, con el B. Palafox en contemplación: Carlos Maratta 6000.” The painting at Osma measures 180 x 125 cm and is painted on canvas. It featured in an exhibition held in the Cathedral, \textit{La Ciudad de Seis Pisos. Las Edades del Hombre. El Burgo de Osma, Soria, 1997, cat. no. 219, pp. 341, where it was attributed to an anonymous court painter, between 1760-1780.}
As the chapel was built outside the main structure of the cathedral, behind the main altar, it assumed an identity of its own, emphasised by the contrast between the Gothic style of the main body of the cathedral and the neo-classical style of the chapel. Its construction is documented in an extensive contemporary account by Juan Corvala Loperráez, canon of the Cathedral of Cuenca and member of the Royal Academy of History. The first stone was laid on 4th September 1772, but it was not until 1783 that the interior was ready for worship. Payment slips, receipts for materials and letters relating to the project survive in the Royal Palace Archives and the National Archives. Most have been published in the Sabatini exhibition catalogue, giving a concise account of the development of works on the chapel.

In 1774, Villanueva assigned the task of completing the chapel to an architect from the Royal Academy, Angel Vicente Ubón. However, Ubón died in 1778, leaving the chapel’s main structure only partly finished up to the cornices and without its dome. Sabatini intervened in September 1778, redesigning the building, which according to him had been left in a deplorable state. He then entrusted his modifications to his closest disciple, Luis Bernasconi who completed the works in 1781.

In embarking on the construction of the Palafox chapel, Charles had taken both a political and a financial risk. In accordance with the Catholic tradition that a religious figure cannot be venerated in a chapel or altarpiece unless he or she has been canonised, the Palafox chapel could not include any representation or allusion to Palafox without a Papal bull confirming his sanctity. On 27th September 1783, Eleta travelled to Osma to say the first mass in the new chapel, dedicating it to the royal family but with no mention of Palafox. As an interim solution pending Palafox’s still hoped-for canonisation, plans were made to install “a picture of Our Lord Jesus Christ or of His Most Holy Mother for public and sole veneration and adoration in the completed chapel.” In 1785, however, these were dropped.
in favour of a marble sculpture of the Immaculate Conception by the French court sculptor Roberto Michel, to be placed on the main altar (fig. 82).295

In the central chamber of the chapel, four cardinal virtues, sculpted by Miguel Gutiérrez in wood but painted to imitate marble, were installed in small niches in the main pillars supporting the dome (figs. 83 & 84), while two larger polychrome sculptures of St. Peter of Alcántara and St. Dominic were located between these pillars (figs. 85 & 86).296 St. Dominic is shown in his vestments as canon of the Cathedral of Osma, and St. Peter is shown holding his pen and book under divine inspiration. The reasons for the choice of these two saints are clearly stated in an undated and unsigned report of the decorative aspects of the chapel, which recapitulates the history of the chapel’s construction up to and including the involvement of Luis Bernasconi.297 The document states that St. Dominic was chosen because he was born in the parish of Burgo de Osma, where he had been a canon before founding his order, and no altar had previously been dedicated to him in the cathedral. St. Peter of Alcántara was chosen because of Palafox’s admiration for him. Apparently Palafox “always had a particular regard for this saint and his reforms, on account of it having been a disciple of St. Peter de Alcántara who had converted him and released him from the snares of the world, directing him along the path of perfection.”298 The association between Palafox and St. Peter reinforces the relevance of both Palafox, as an anti-Jesuit, and the Alcantarine order for Charles’s reforms.

Like the decorative scheme of San Isidro, the Palafox chapel was meant to represent the climax of Charles III’s religious commissions and symbolise the success of his reforms. However, while building was still going on, the campaign for Palafox’s canonisation was weakened by the death of Clement XIV. His successor, Pius VI, did not share his predecessor’s openness towards the project, and it was never brought to fruition. Although decorative works continued until 1786, the failure of efforts to obtain Palafox’s canonisation meant that the chapel’s original purpose remained unfulfilled. In 1787, in partial

295 A.H.N. Estado, leg. 2861: a letter from Sabatini to Eleta, dated 4th August 1785 mentions that the sculpture and the urn where ready for transportation to Burgo de Osma: “ha parecido bien al Rey y V.S.S la disposicion que he dado para la conduccion de la Estatua de la Purissima, y de la Arca de Plata.... dos cajones para la estatua referida, y la Arca, se han hecho en los talleres de la obra de este RI Palacio”

296 Nuñez Marqués, V. Guía de la S. I. Catedral del Burgo de Osma y Breve Historia del Obispado de Osma, 1949, pp. 8-9. See also A.H.N. Estado, leg. 2861: a letter from Sabatini to Eleta dated 10th September 1785 in states that the two sculptures were nearly ready: “....el escultor me ha prometido que en todo el mes que viene estaran ambas perfectamente concluidas y pintadas a lo natural....”

297 A.H.N., Estado, leg. 2861, no. 18.

298 A.H.N., Estado, leg. 2861, no. 18: “tuvo siempre á este santo y a su reforma por haver sido un religioso hijo de Sn Pedro de Alcántara el que le convirtio, y saco de los lazos del mundo dirigiendole por el camino de la perfeccion.” An earlier edition of Rosende’s Vida de Don juan de Palafox y Mendoza, (1671), p. 30, mentions that he was taught by an Alcantarine monk from the royal convent of San Gil in Madrid, who was apparently a “Varon verdaderamente prodigioso, de cuio Instituto pobre,
compensation, Eleta managed to persuade Pope Pius VI to bestow a “perpetual privilege” on the altar of St. Peter Alcántara, enabling plenary indulgences to be received on his feast day.299

Nonetheless, although Charles failed to obtain Palafox’s canonization, the chapel does exemplify the approach common to other religious commissions on which Charles had embarked earlier in his reign. First of all, this commission focuses on Palafox as a figure of reform, an anti-Jesuit campaigner and a saint. Secondly, it underlines the king’s association with the Alcantarine Franciscans. Thirdly, it emphasises the importance of the Immaculate Conception, as represented by the statue which eventually occupied the altar instead of the Venerable Palafox. These are some of the main themes that I shall analyse in the following chapters, when looking at royal commissions within palace precincts and at Franciscan commissions under royal patronage.

rijido, i mortificado, fue siempre devotísimo, por arguir de su mismo natural, que para conseguir victoria de nuestra pasiones...”

CHAPTER VI

CHARLES III’S PUBLIC COMMISSIONS: THE ROYAL COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF LA GRANJA DE SAN ILDEFONSO (1769-1772)

In parallel with his building and decorative programmes to demonstrate his alliance with the Franciscan order and reflect his anti-Jesuit policies, Charles III also drew on architectural and pictorial devices of a religious nature to support his position as monarch. In doing so, he followed the examples of his Bourbon and Hapsburg predecessors, notably in his use of Trinitarian themes. The royal site of La Granja de San Ildefonso, in effect the seat of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain, offered Charles an ideal location for this purpose. Drawing on a complex set of allusions to the Holy Trinity, the Immaculate Conception, and the legends of St. James the Great and St. Ildefonsus, Charles embarked on a decorative project comparable on a smaller scale with the decorative schemes devised by Philip II for El Escorial.

Executed during Mengs’s absence in Rome by his closest disciples, Bayeu and Maella, this commission was the first undertaken by these painters without the supervision of their master. As such, it marked an important step in their careers. However the two painters differ in both their preparatory techniques and in the references that they made to artists of the past in terms of composition and style. Bayeu carefully follows Mengs’s meticulous preparatory techniques before painting his frescoes in the cupola, making detailed drawings of bodily parts, squared-up drawings of each composition, and painted sketches. Maella’s preparations, by contrast, are more experimental, seeking a solution for his composition as he worked on his drawings and painted sketches. Maella owes much to Giordano and Giaquinto in his attempts to create spatial effects in his compositions. Bayeu’s representations are more direct, simple and minimal, making their message more didactic.

Before analysing Charles III’s contributions to the artistic patrimony of San Ildefonso, it is useful to give a brief summary of the decorative scheme which he inherited from Philip V. Having acceded to the Spanish throne at the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1714, Philip V embarked on the construction of a palace at La Granja de San Ildefonso near Segovia between 1720-1723. His architect, Teodoro de Ardemans, designed a palace following the king’s French taste at the foot of the Guadarrama mountains surrounded by French-style gardens filled with ornate fountains resembling those at Versailles. As part of

300 Charles V commissioned from Titian the famous ‘Gloria’ (Adoration of the Holy Trinity) now in the Prado museum and his son Philip II ordered Luca Cambiaso to decorate the vaults of the choir stalls at the El Escorial with the same subject. For a full commentary on the iconography see: Mulcahy, R., The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 77-81.
an intricate palace complex, decorated with frescoes and paintings alluding to the king’s virtues, Ardemans designed a royal chapel on which building commenced in November 1720. From a central position in the main trunk of the palace, equidistant between its two lateral wings, the chapel jutted out into the main courtyard, allowing direct public access through doors set in each of the two side façades (see fig. 1). On 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 1723, the chapel was consecrated by Cardinal Borgia and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The royal family had access to the chapel from their private apartments and could witness the celebration of the mass from a royal box at the end of the nave. The chapel was also open to the inhabitants of the town.

The building of the palace and chapel was linked to Philip V’s desire eventually to renounce the crown, leaving his kingdom to his son, Luis I, in order to withdraw from political life and retire to a life of spiritual meditation.\textsuperscript{301} On 10\textsuperscript{th} January 1724, Philip announced to the Consejo de Castilla his intention of abdicating. In his will, in addition to stating that he wanted to be buried in the chapel, he explains how the chapel should be organised and its function perpetuated for his successors.\textsuperscript{302}

Philip V’s plans were shattered when the sudden death of his son Luis of smallpox on 31\textsuperscript{st} August 1724 obliged him to resume the throne. On 20\textsuperscript{th} September 1724, Pope Benedict XIII confirmed the palace chapel’s status as a Collegiate church, and on 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1724 the Pope issued the bull “Deum infatigabilem” making it the mother church of all the churches at La Granja de San Ildefonso and in the vicinity.\textsuperscript{303} The royal site of San Ildefonso and its surrounding parishes were given the status of a “royal” Diocese, separate from the cathedral of Segovia and its bishopric. The area retained this status until 1873, when all such jurisdictions were suppressed under the Papal Bull “Quae Diversa” by Pope Pius IX.\textsuperscript{304}

The decoration of the Collegiate church was to follow a theological programme of a complexity unprecedented in Spanish religious art. Philip V commissioned Ardemans to

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\textsuperscript{301} Lavalle-Cobo, T., “La fábrica de La Colegiata de La Granja: primera Capilla Real Borbónica”, in El Arte en las Cortes Europeas, 1987, pp. 352: “Nos prometemos el uno al otro dejar la Corona y retirarnos del mundo para pensar únicamente en nuestra salvación y servir a Dios infaliblemente antes del Dia de Todos los Santos de 1723 como muy tarde.”

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid, pp. 352-353: “Habiendo colocado en la Capilla que se ha fabricado en el referido sitio con la vocación de la Santísima Trinidad el augusto Sacramento, es igualmente mi ánimo por la mayor reverencia a su divina Majestad Sacramentado y para su mayor culto, que este sea asistido como debe y servido como es razón y se merece establecer en ella una Colegiata o Capilla Real, compuesta por un Deán, doce canónigos, seis racioneros y cuatro acólitos con la congrua que ha parecido señalar a cada uno, los cuales han de permanecer y subsistir no solo durante la vida mia y de la Reina sino perpetuamente para rogar a Dios por nuestras almas por las de nuestros hijos y por los de los demás ascendientes y descendientes.”


\textsuperscript{304} N. J de Bolando in his Historia Civil de España, 1744. The Royal territory included villages such as Valsain, Revenga, Navillas de Riofrio, Palazuelos, Tabanera del Monte, Trescasas and Sonsoto.
design the main altar, which is still in situ. On 20th December 1722, Ardemans presented his model, designed in the late Baroque style with a broken pediment supported by four pillars of precious green and red marbles, and ornate bronze work, within which a painting was to be contained. Originally, bronze sculptures of the three theological virtues and the four cardinal virtues were to decorate the architectural framework of the altarpiece, with the Bourbon coat of arms crowning the altar. This plan was abandoned, however, and the only decorative element placed on top of the altar was the triangle of the Holy Trinity with rays of light emanating from it and a chalice with the Eucharist above it (see fig. 2).

In 1724, the court painter Andrea Procaccini executed a large painting for the main altar of St. Philip, St. Elizabeth, St. Fernando, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Louis, St. Anne, St. Theresa and St. Anthony adoring the Virgin with Child. Each saint was the patron and namesake of a member of the Bourbon royal family. In 1733, Procaccini painted a side altarpiece of La Granja’s titular saint, St. Ildefonsus receiving the Chasuble from the Virgin (fig. 87), which is today is on the side-altar to the left of the main altar. Recently published documents reveal that Procaccini also painted an altarpiece for the other side altar, representing the patron saint of Segovia, St. Frutos. This picture was however taken down in the 1770 and replaced with Maella’s altarpiece of St. Frutos kneeling before the Immaculate Conception. As already mentioned, in 1739, Philip V decided to replace Procaccini’s painting for the main altar with a painting by the Neapolitan artist Francesco Solimena (still in situ), showing the same saints but with the additional presence of the Virgin interceding with the Holy Trinity (fig. 88).

On 9th July 1746, Philip died and his plans for the decoration of the church were suspended. On 17th July, his corpse was placed in a modest tomb in the ante-sacristy. In 1749, his widow, Isabella Farnese, commissioned two French sculptors, Pierre Puthois and Hubert Demandre, to create a proper mausoleum for the founder of Spain’s Bourbon dynasty. Philip V was re-interred on 18th June 1758 in a room next to the high altar of the church, raising the church to the status of official mausoleum of the Bourbon monarchy.

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306 Ibid.
308 Urrea (1977), doc. CXXXV, p. 516. Procaccini’s painting was stored until 1752 when it was taken to the parish church of St. Maria del Rosario at La Granja, to occupy the main altar.
310 A.G.P., Reales Sitio, San Ildefonso, caja 13599, 18th June 1758: “La Traslación del Real Cadaver de la Magestad del Rey Padre Nuestro Sor Dn Phelipe Quinto que esta en gloria... desde el paraje donde se hallaba depositado en el Ante-Sacristia de la Ynsignia Colegial Iglesia de la Santissima Trinidad de este Rl Sitio de San Ildefonso al regio Pantheon que el filial amor de S.M le mandó erigir en una piexa.
Philip V's successor, his son Ferdinand VI, bequeathed the royal site of San Ildefonso to his stepmother, Isabella Farnese, while he spent most of his time decorating the royal palace in Madrid. His Portuguese wife, Barbara de Braganza, embarked on her own personal project to build and decorate the Royal convent of the Salesas Reales in Madrid, where they eventually were both buried. As a result, it was not until the death of Isabella Farnese, on 10th July 1766, that San Ildefonso reverted to the crown in the person of her son Charles III. On that date, the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Grimaldi, informed the Chapter of Canons that the church would henceforth come under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Grace and Justice, a position then held by Manuel de Roda, and that the Canons could make no decisions without official permission. The Canons were eager to complete what they claimed was a longstanding project to rebuild or extend the church, and petitioned the king accordingly.

In a letter to Grimaldi of January 1768, the canon in charge of building works, Manuel Bueso, expressed his concern about the condition and future of the church. Noting that plans had been made in Philip's reign to paint the area above the main altar, he noted that, due to the "variety of events of that time (such as Philip's) renunciation and resumption of the Crown, journey to Seville, wars etc..." these works were never undertaken. He asked Grimaldi to appeal to the king for his support for the restoration works, noting that the church serves as his parents' mausoleum.

At the time, Charles III was busy with the construction of the Alcantarine convent of San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez, and so not in a position to spare his architects, painters and decorators for the decoration of the church of San Ildefonso. However, Charles III used La Granja as a royal residence from to July to October to escape the heat of Madrid, and the site had a personal significance for him as that the burial place of his parents and the centre of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty.

On 9th September 1769, the king ordered Giambattista Tiepolo, who had just completed his altarpieces for San Pascual Baylón, to contact his court architect, Francisco Sabatini, about the architectural framework for the cupola of the church of San Ildefonso, in which the frescoes were to be inserted. Under the designs for the cupola chosen by Charles III from those submitted by Sabatini, his court architect, it was to be partitioned into eight...
segments, each containing a painting. We know from a surviving bill for the stuccoes that each partition was crowned by a cherub’s head with wings. These were being installed during Tiepolo’s involvement with the project from September 1769 to March 1770. It is unclear how far Tiepolo advanced in his preparation for this commission, because his involvement was cut short by his sudden death on March 27th 1770. Nor is it clear whether he was asked to paint the nave and the transept ceilings as well. However, the churchwarden, Felipe Solano, explains on 26th August 1771 that he had received a bill from the stuccoists Domingo Brili and Juan Bola for the “sixteen cartoons which were made and sent to the painter Tiepolo, as recipient of his Majesty’s commission to execute the same paintings in our Royal church, whose cartoons were valued at the said amount, including paper of imperial standard, glue and the cost of transporting them to their respective locations, even though they served no purpose on account of the said Painter’s having died.” This implies that Tiepolo’s preparatory work was further advanced than has previously been supposed. The fact there were 16 cartoons also implies that Tiepolo was to paint the entire ceiling: the eight compartments of the cupola; the four pendentives; the three sections in the transept and above the altar; and finally the ceiling of nave. Today, the only surviving works to have been associated with Tiepolo’s commission are four pen-and-ink sketches of three Evangelists and a painted sketch of the Allegory of the Immaculate Conception (fig. 89).

On Tiepolo’s death, the commission for the frescoes was transferred to Francisco Bayeu and Maella. It was established practice that no work of this kind could go ahead without the king having personally approved the oil sketches. In his letter of 4th April 1770 to the Marquis of Grimaldi specifying how the work should be divided between them, Sabatini notes that Bayeu, who was to paint the cupola and the pendentives, was extremely busy with other royal commissions. Four days later, in a letter of 8th April 1770, Grimaldi responds to

316 Martín (1989), Doc. 93: diez y seis cartones que hicieron y se embieron al pintor Tiepolo, como encargado por Su Magestad para hazer las mismas pinturas en nuestra Real yglesia, cuyos cartones valian dicha cantidad, incluso el papel de marca imperial, cola y trabajo de havenirlos a sus respectivos lugares, que aunque no sirvieron de nada por haber fallecido dicho Pintor.”
318 It is interesting to note in passing that Tiepolo’s reputation does not seem to have been high at Court, for when the canons’ representative in Madrid reported the selection of these artists, he stated, “que vaian a pintar en lugar de uno dos, que son un aragones y un valenciano ambos celebres y mejores que el difunto” (Martín, (1989), document 86).
319 Martín (1989), document 84; and De la Mano, (1996), p. 52: “en la inteligencia de que Bayeu esta pintando y tiene todavia mucho que pintar al olio para uno cuadros del nuebo combento de Aranjuez, y que tiene que pintar al fresco para el señor ynfante don Luis en Boadilla; y que Maella tambien tiene todavia que pintar al olio para dicho nuebo combento.” See also Bayeu’s biography published in the Seminario Pintoresco Español, no. 46, 15th November 1842..which mentions that “En la ante-cámara
Sabatini that the king wished to see the two painters "to deal with and decide on the subject matter."

How fast things moved after that is not clear. Although Maella is recorded as having been at La Granja on 5th November 1770, it is not clear whether he began to work on his frescoes at that time or whether he was merely visiting the site for the purpose of inspecting it before setting down to work. It was not until the spring of 1771, while the court was at Aranjuez, that Bayeu was able to present his bozzetti for approval to the king. By the early summer of 1771, however, both painters were in residence and actively working on the commission.

By October, Bayeu had completed the cupola and was working on the pendentives. Maella, meanwhile, is known to have been provided with a carriage to take him back to Madrid on 26th October, with the intention of returning later to "retouch the large painting that he had completed". By 17th December 1771, the frescoes were finished, as a document of that date records the churchwarden, Solano, asking the canons how much should be paid to each painter as a "gratificación" (reward).

**Francisco Bayeu's decorative scheme for the cupola**

The commission for the cupola was Bayeu's most significant royal assignment to date, and his first for a series of religious paintings for a royal chapel. In 1918, most of Bayeu's work in the church was destroyed by fire, with only the four Evangelists in the pendentives escaping complete destruction (fig. 90). No detailed description or visual record of the completed cupola has survived, but as I have shown in an article published in the *Burlington Magazine*, details of the decorative scheme can be deduced from textual...
references, an incomplete set of Bayeu's bozzetti, and some related drawings. It is possible that the programme differed little, if at all, from that agreed with Tiepolo.

From a presentation by Bayeu to members of the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand on 2nd June 1795 to back his candidature for the post of Director General, we know that the commission included eight scenes "alluding to the Holy Trinity, four from the Old Testament and four from the Covenant of Grace (New Testament)." An inventory of 1796 of Bayeu's painting and drawings by Francisco Ramos, the court painter to Charles IV, lists the four bozzetti for the Old Testament scenes and four bozzetti for the Apostles in the pendentives. The four bozzetti for the New Testament scenes were not included and had possibly already been sold or given away by this time. However, eight surviving bozzetti by Bayeu, and some related drawings allow us to identify the eight biblical scenes as: The Creation (fig. 91); The Fall of Man (fig. 92); Abraham and the three angels (fig. 93); the Calling of Isaiah (fig. 94); The Baptism of Christ (fig. 95); Christ addressing St. Peter (fig. 96 & 97); the Transfiguration (fig. 98); and St. John the Evangelist pointing to the Trinity (fig. 99). The whole forms a rich and complex iconographic programme, charged with spiritual and political significance. Its main theme is the power of the Holy Trinity, to whom the church was dedicated.

In compositional terms, the scenes are linked by a complex system of cross-references. The cycle opens with the Creation of man and closes with St John the Evangelist pointing to the Trinity, accompanied by three cherubs holding a parchment on which is inscribed "Et y tres unum sunt" (y for hi: "And these three are one": I John 5:7). Through this statement in his first epistle, St. John identifies the Holy Spirit, water and blood as the three witnesses to Christ's divinity as Son of God. The references to water and blood provide clear links to the Baptism and the Eucharist.

The Creation of Adam would probably have been situated in the segment of the cupola above the arch leading from the nave of the church towards the altar. St John the Evangelist pointing to the Trinity would have been above the main altar, which contained the painting by Solimena, installed in 1741, showing the patron saints of Philip V and his family adoring the Trinity. This would have been particularly appropriate, given the associations between St. John's text and the Eucharist.

328 De la Mano (1996), p. 539 at note 53. It can also be inferred that the programme was devised at Court, without any input from the canons.
330 They appear in Bayeu's inventory as: "la creación de Adan, el matrimonio del dicho, Noe ofreciendo el sacrificio al Padre Eterno, Jacob y los tres angeles". See Saltillo (1952), pp. 68-80.
331 For full appendix of connected drawings and bozzetti see Bray (1997), p. 547.
Following the numbering visible at the base of most of the bozzetti, we can deduce that the cycle would have appeared like this when viewed from below, facing the main altar:

Creation

2. The Fall of Man

8. The Baptism of Christ

3. Abraham & Three Angels

7. The Transfiguration

4. Vocation of Isaiah

6. Christ addressing St. Peter

St. John the Evangelist
pointing to the Trinity

Main altar

As can be seen, the Old Testament and the New Testament scenes, rather than following a circular order, form two parallel arcs, each respecting a chronological biblical order that culminates in St. John's presentation of the Trinity. To the left of the Creation of Adam, the next Old Testament scene would have been the Fall of Man. Opposite it, the first New Testament scene would have been the Baptism, in which Christ is portrayed as the new Adam. All three members of the Trinity play a role in this scene. Above Christ, the Holy Spirit is portrayed as a Dove, while God the Father, although invisible, is present through his words heard as the baptism is performed: “This is my Son, my Beloved, on whom my favour rests” (Matthew 3:17).

In the next pair of scenes, Abraham and the three angels and the Transfiguration, we see once again the intermingling of the heavenly and earthly worlds. In the Old Testament scene, which foreshadows the New Testament Annunciation, three angelic figures appear to Abraham, one of them identified in the Old Testament as the Lord, announcing to him that his
wife Sarah will bear a son (Genesis 18:1-15). In the Transfiguration, Christ reveals his divine nature to his disciples. Links to the world of the Old Testament are provided by the ethereal figures of Moses and Elijah on either side of Christ (Matthew 17:1-80). God the Father is once again present, through his words heard by his disciples: “This is my Son, my Beloved, on whom my favour rests; listen to him”.

Finally, on either side of St. John the Evangelist pointing to the Trinity, the Calling of Isaiah and Christ addressing St. Peter draw a parallel between the heavenly instruction given to the Old Testament prophet who foretells the coming of the Messiah, and the divine commands of the risen Christ to Peter, the founder of his church. In the Calling of Isaiah, the prophet tells of his vision of the Lord, attended by seraphim singing the Triple Sanctus, one of whom touches his lips with a glowing coal that wipes away his sins (Isaiah 6:1-12). The scene of Christ addressing St. Peter represents the occasion recorded in John 21:15-18, pregnant with Trinitarian associations, where the risen Christ, in his third and final apparition to the apostles, subjects Peter to a threefold series of interrogation and injunction, mirroring Peter’s threefold denial of Christ. Subsidiary correlations link the Fall of Man with Christ’s command to Peter to “Feed my Sheep”, through the opposition between Man (Adam) as outcast sinner and Man (Peter) as agent for God’s work on earth, and the Baptism with the Calling of Isaiah, through their portrayal of the divine purification of human sins.

Each of the eight compositions presents a well-balanced triangular format, with one figure placed higher than a second who is usually portrayed in an act of veneration or receiving grace. Figures frequently come in threes, underscoring the Trinitarian theme. In the bozzetto of the Transfiguration, for example, Christ is shown accompanied by Moses and Elijah, appearing to three disciples, Peter, James and John. The Baptism fits perfectly in its compositional concordance with the adjacent Creation of Adam, which shows God in a similar posture to that of St. John the Baptist, while the seated figure of Adam harmonises with that of the kneeling Jesus. Through their interlocking relationships and their links with Maella’s frescoes and the other altarpieces in the church, most notably the main altar painting, the cupola frescoes would have formed an integral part of a complex decorative cycle.

In addition to echoing the initial dedication of the church to the Holy Trinity at the time of its consecration in 1723, the Trinitarian theme can also be linked to the continuing political struggle for control of Spain during the eighteenth century. Philip V’s initial invocation of the Holy Trinity at the church of La Granja can be seen as a statement of pious acceptance of the supreme power of God, under whom he reigned as king following his victory in 1714 over the Hapsburg Archduke Charles of Austria. Charles III, faced with a similar need to impose himself as ruler following the death of his half-brother, Ferdinand VI and his arrival from Naples, would have found the invocation of the Holy Trinity equally appropriate. By drawing on both the Old and the New Testaments, the cycle helped to
illustrate the ideological and theological basis for the Bourbon dynasty’s claim to the Spanish throne. In addition, Charles III faced similar struggles during his own reign, and would have found the invocation of the Holy Trinity equally appropriate. As we have seen, to reaffirm his own authority, he sought to diminish the temporal power of the Catholic church in Spain, expelling the Jesuits in 1767 and cutting down the church’s wealth and privileges. But he still needed spiritual support to uphold his position as Most Catholic Majesty: It is likely that he had such considerations in mind when he embarked on the restoration and decoration of his father’s royal church.
Maella at La Granja.

While Bayeu worked on the cupola, Maella completed the other half of Charles’s iconographic cycle, involving a complex Marian iconography combined with monarchic allusions. Just as Bayeu’s cycle draws on the Old and the New Testaments to affirm the ideological and theological basis for the Bourbons’ claim to the Spanish throne, Maella provided support for Charles’s political and religious objectives, in his treatment of such themes as the Immaculate Conception and miracles associated with St. Ildefonsus and St. James the Great.

Above the main altar, Maella painted a group of music-playing angels. Several drawings and bozzetti survive for the composition, including two rough drawings in the Royal Palace collection, another two more finished drawings in the Biblioteca Nacional, a rough “borrón” at the Museum of Saragossa and a more finished bozzetto in the collection of Luis Sagrera (fig. 100).

Maella’s main commission, however, was to decorate the ceiling of the nave with a scene from the life of St. Ildefonsus, the patron saint of the town of La Granja and titular saint of a chapel located in what was to become the park of the royal palace. He was also commissioned to produce frescoes for three other ceiling areas, two in the transept and one over the high altar. He received a further commission in September 1772 for an oil painting of St. Frutos kneeling before the Immaculate Conception replacing a lost Procaccini painting of St. Frutos for one of the side altars. Procaccini’s Imposition of the Chasuble on St. Ildefonsus was kept as part of the programme. A reconstruction of his frescoes can only be attempted by drawing on documentary evidence and on drawings and painted sketches, as the frescoes all suffered the same fate as Bayeu’s paintings in the cupola. His altarpiece survives on the side-altar to the right of the main altar, while Procaccini’s painting of the Imposition of the Chasuble on St. Ildefonsus is on the left. However, an unpublished reference by Ceán Bermúdez to Maella’s painting suggests that originally their locations were reversed.

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33 Barcia (1906), p. 218, cat. no.1364 and 1365.
34 The majority of the drawings and bozzetti by Maella have recently been published by De la Mano (1998), figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5.
35 Today the cupola has been whitewashed, but the ceiling of the main nave was repainted by Horacio Ferrer in 1954 using one of two bozzetti for The Apparition of Santa Leocadia to San Ildefonso by Maella as a guide, as well as two drawings of the Choir of Angels in the Biblioteca Nacional which Ferrer repeats in the two spaces in the transept and the presbytery.
36 “En los cruceros varios asuntos alusivos a la Concepcion y al apostol santiago, al fresco. Y al oleo el quadro del colateral del lado evangelio que representa a Na Sa de la Concepcion con angeles que tienen las insignias de la orden de Carlos III.” See Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscritos, 21455/8. According to De la Cruz Bahamonde, N., Conde de Maule, Viaje de España, Francia y Italia, Cadiz, 1812, Lib. XXI cap. I, Tomo XII, p. 5, Procaccini’s painting was on the “retablo de mano derecha.” De la Mano
The earliest description of Maella’s decorative cycle comes to us from Ponz, who visited La Granja around 1776 and wrote about it in his Viage de España. He tells us that Maella painted “the Apparition of the St. Leocadia to St. Ildefonsus, two subjects related to the Immaculate Conception and Santiago in the transept, and a painting of the Immaculate Conception with St. Frutos kneeling.”

There is no evidence to confirm on which sides were the “themes alluding to the (Immaculate) Conception and the apostle St. James.” Assuming, however, that the organisation of the decorative programme corresponded to its iconographical contents and that Maella’s altarpiece was originally planned for the left side-altar, we can postulate that his fresco of Santiago appearing to King Ramiro I was above it, bringing together Santiago and the Immaculate Conception as the patrons of Catholic Spain. On the other side, Maella’s fresco of the Allegory of the Immaculate Conception would have been situated directly above Procaccini’s altarpiece representing St. Ildefonsus, who among other things was the author of a well-known treatise on the Virgin’s purity entitled De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariæ daversus tres infideles. Originally directed at the Jews of Toledo, of which he was Archbishop, the treatise was republished in Valencia in 1556 to defend the cult of the Virgin against attacks by infidels and heretics. Its championship of the “glory of her perpetual and virginal purity against the Heretics, who wanted to minimise and challenged her position” was interpreted in the eighteenth-century as an early defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. In art, St. Ildefonsus is commonly represented with the Virgin appearing to him and giving him a chasuble in thanks for writing this treatise, and this is the subject of Procaccini’s painting. Maella’s fresco for the ceiling of the church, by contrast, showed an event less frequently represented in painting, said to have occurred on 9th December 660, the feast day of St. Leocadia, patron saint of Toledo (fig. 101).

(1998), p. 387, footnote 73, confirms that in May 1770 Procaccini’s pictures were taken down, and although his St. Ildefonso was eventually reinstalled, the other of St. Frutos was sent elsewhere and replaced by Maella.

337 “la Aparición de Santa Leocadia a San Ildefonso, en la bóveda de la iglesia; dos asuntos de la Concepción y Santiago, en el crucero, y el cuadro de la Concepción en su altar, con San Frutos de rodillas.”: Ponz (1947), p. 897. Martin (1989), p. 81, states without a source that “en el crucero, la Virgen María en el lado sur, y Santiago Mataró en el del norte.”


339 St. Ildefonsus (c. 607-667) was a Benedictine monk who was appointed Archbishop of Toledo by King Recesvinto in 657. He occupied this position until his death 667 and was canonised in 1622.

340 Ribadeneyra (1761), Vol. I, p.239, entitled “De la Descencion de Nuestra Señora, á 24 de Enero.”: “gloria de su perpetua, y virginal pureza contra los Hereges, que la querian obscurecer, e impugnar...”
St. Leocadia appearing to St. Ildefonsus and King Recesvinto

St. Leocadia, a native of Toledo, died in 304 after having suffered persecution under Emperor Diocletian. Her miraculous appearance to St. Ildefonsus is related by Archbishop Cixila, St. Ildefonsus’s successor as Archbishop of Toledo and his first biographer. According to Cixila, the saint was visiting St. Leocadia’s tomb on her feast day, accompanied by King Recesvinto and his courtiers, in order to venerate her relics. While they were praying in front of the tomb, its lid opened miraculously and the martyr emerged to express her thanks to St. Ildefonsus for his devotion to the Mother of God. As she emerged, those present exclaimed “Deo gratias in coelo, Deo gratias in terra” and she responded “O Ildefonso por ti vive la gloria de mi señora” or, in Cixila’s version, “Deos gratias vivit domina mea per vitam Hildefonsi.” St. Ildefonsus responded by appealing to St. Leocadia for her intercession on behalf of the king and the citizens of Toledo, saying “Oh glorious Virgin, worthy to reign in heaven with God, since you despised and gave your life for his love; blessed was this city, in which you were born and which you consecrated by your death, and which now you console with your presence. Look down upon it, Lady, from heaven and by your intercession defend your people and the King who with such devotion celebrates your Feast day.” At that moment, the king handed his sword to St. Ildefonsus so that he could cut a piece of cloth from her veil as a memento of the miracle.

Cixila’s account was popularised by Gautier de Coinci in the 12th century, in a poetic rendering entitled De Sainte Leocade: au tans que Sainz Hyldefons estoit arcevesques de Tholote cui Nostre Dame donna l’aube de prelaz that proved very influential for later texts in Spanish. Among the few visual representations of the miracle of St. Leocadia, an engraving in Salazar de Mendoza’s El Glorioso Doctor San Ildefonso (Toledo 1618) shows a rather archaic interpretation of the subject (fig. 102). Although Maella may have used this engraving, particularly when drawing the figure of St. Ildefonsus, which bears some

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342 Cixila was Archbishop of Toledo between 770 and 783, and the author of Vita S. Hildefonsi. He claims that St. Ildefonsus was a disciple of St. Isidore of Seville and recalls in particular two miracles; that of St. Leocadia and the Imposition of the Chasuble.
344 Ribadeneyra (1761), vol. I, p. 223, Life of St. Ildefonsus, Enero 23: “O gloriosa Virgen, y digna de reinar en el cielo con Dios, pues menos preciaste, y diste la vida por su amor; dichosa fue esta ciudad, pues naciste en ella, y la consagrasen tu muerte y agora la consuelas con tu presencia. Buelve señora los ojos desde el cielo sobre ella, y con tu intercesión defende tus naturales, y al Rey que con tanta devoción celebra tu Fiesta.”
similarities in pose, Pedro Orrente’s version painted for Toledo cathedral in 1617 would have been the most obvious precedent. 

Maella was already familiar with the subject matter of his fresco, as he had executed a version of the same theme as a “prueba de pensado” for a First class competition in 1757 at the Royal Academy, in which he was awarded second prize (see fig. 16).\footnote{347} For this competition, he had been told to interpret the account of the miracle in Padre Mariana’s Historia de España.\footnote{348} In response, Maella followed Mariana’s description with a clear narrative representation of the scene, in an open architectural space, using the device of steps to enhance the prominence of the main scene in the centre, surrounded by courtiers and soldiers. His drawing shows St. Ildefonsus in the act of cutting the cloth, while the king looks on from behind. Reflecting its academic context, Maella’s drawing has a rather posed format, lacking the spiritual drama which he was to infuse into his later compositions of the same subject.

In the context of the La Granja commission, Maella’s representation of the miracle of St. Leocadia complemented Procaccini’s painting of the Virgin giving the chasuble to St. Ildefonsus, but it also had a broader significance. The presence of the king, Recesvinto, provided a link with Charles and his devotion to the Immaculate Conception, drawing parallels between both monarchs’ devotion to the Virgin as intercessor and protector. However the allusion to Recesvinto also emphasises Charles’s role as a reformer of social legislation.

Recesvinto, a Visigothic king who ruled between 652 and 672, is today better remembered in Spanish history for supporting the Liber iudiciorum, also known as the Fuero Juzgo. This manuscript contained a list of laws, dealing with issues of rule and power, paying specific attention to the rights of the monarchy and its relationship with the Church. By means of these laws, the Visigothic monarchy sought a harmonious alliance with the Church in order to safeguard peace, defend the Catholic faith and Spain against infidels and heretics.\footnote{349} The Fuero Juzgo makes clear that the king is ruling with divine authority in the interests of his subjects: “Embracing with pleasure the divine orders, we give laws (that are) fair for us and for our subjects, to whom it is made clear that they must obey our exalted clemency and that

\footnote{347}Prueba de pensado, “San Ildefonso Arzobispo de Toledo cortando con la espada del Rey Recesvinto una parte del velo de Santa Leocadia, que se volvía a su Sepultura despues de haberse manifestado al Santo Arzobispado, al Rey, y toda la Corte en el dia, y al mismo tiempo que se estaba celebrando su fiesta. Año 660.” See Azcárate et al., Historia y Alegoría (1994), p.64.
of our successors...". In Maella's fresco, the king's action in proffering his sword to St. Ildefonsus to cut a piece of St. Leocadia's veil alluded to the alliance between temporal and spiritual power that was also an important plank in Charles III's campaign to establish his rule. By referring back into Spanish history, drawing on prestigious examples such as this, Charles III could both aggrandise his own position and claim similar authority for his reforms.

In his preparatory drawings and bozzetti for the ceiling at La Granja, Maella demonstrates his ability to turn an academic exercise into a fully-fledged baroque composition, responding to Sabatini's rather restrictive architectural framework by creating an illusionary space in his painting. Of the two preparatory drawings that survive, one is a red chalk study of St. Ildefonsus (fig. 103), whose monumentality reminds us of Salazar de Mendoza's engraving, which Maella may have consulted. The other is an overall sketch of the composition he planned to use for his bozzetti (fig. 104). In a strong pyramidal composition, a series of steps directs the viewer's eye upwards, heightening the drama of the event. The baroque feel of the composition is reminiscent of Giordano's *Imposition of the Chasuble to St. Ildefonsus* in the Sacristy of Toledo Cathedral, where he uses a staircase to give an impression of space. Maella sets the scene in an imagined church interior, with St. Leocadia's tomb as the focal point of the action. The staircase forms a stage around which Maella organises his figures. Leaving the central part empty, he shows St. Ildefonsus in the act of cutting a piece of St. Leocadia's veil, with the king just behind him on the right, as in his drawing for the Academy. On the left, soldiers and ecclesiastical figures stand or kneel in prayer. In the upper right hand part of the composition, an altar bears a sculpture of the Virgin. The rest of the upper part of the architectural space is filled with angels, some of whom hold an open book in an allusion to St. Ildefonsus's treatise on the Virgin's purity.

Two bozzetti for Maella's ceiling are known to exist in private collections. However, they can only be studied through old photographs, making it difficult to tell which was painted first or whether both were presented to the king with the hope that he would select one of them as the final version for the fresco. In these bozzetti, Maella keeps the general design of his preparatory composition but rearranges some elements, slightly changing the iconographical dynamics.

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350 "Abrazando con gusto los mandatos divinos, damos justas leyes para nosotros y para nuestros súbditos, a los cuales se establece que deben obedecer nuestra excelsa clemencia y la futura de nuestros sucesores y todos los súbditos de nuestro reino, y se establece esto con esta intención..." Fuero juzgo II, 1, 2, ed. Real Academia Española, Madrid 1815, p. 5.
352 Ibid: *Apparition of St. Leocadia to St. Ildefonsus*, (F.D. 1147), 43 x 28.8 cm, Black chalk with white highlights on grey paper.
The first bozzetto we shall examine, from the Viudes collection, was last exhibited in 1932 (fig. 105) and was used by Horacio Ferrer in 1954 to repaint Maella’s fresco. In this bozzetto, by comparison with his preparatory drawing, Maella has clarified his composition, defining his figures to give each a more specific role and providing more compositional diagonals to direct the viewer’s gaze. The foreground has become more complex, with additional features such as a smoking censer and a balustrade whose pillars lead the eye of the viewer up to the right of the composition, to focus on St. Ildefonsus as he seizes St. Leocadia’s veil. In contrast with the preparatory drawing, the king is placed on the left and just below St. Leocadia, kneeling on the staircase. This triangular format emphasizes the king’s role as a participant in the event, although he now assumes a more contemplative attitude. The most significant change, however, is the inclusion of the Virgin Mary, seated on a bank of cloud looking down on the scene and pointing at the open book which is now even more clearly an allusion to St. Ildefonsus’s treatise. St. Leocadia points upwards, linking the apparition of the Virgin to the temporal world of St. Ildefonsus and the king.

In the other bozzetto, also in a private collection but known through a photograph in the Archivo Mas, Maella attenuates the steepness of the staircase and the balustrade becomes more decorative than functional in the composition (fig. 106). The king, rather than being shown in prayer, spreads out his arms in wonder, in an attitude that makes him seem more directly involved in the miracle. In what may be a clue that this bozzetto was Maella’s final version, gold letters written on the canvas come out of St. Leocadia’s mouth with the words: “Per vitam Hildelfonsi vivit Domina mea.”

While Maella’s preparatory drawing closely follows the written sources, with its only pictorial reference to the Virgin taking the form of a small statue, his bozzetti appear to reflect the desire of his patrons to emphasize the Marian association within the general iconographical framework of the fresco cycle. The composition of Maella’s bozzetti suggests a clearly conceived hierarchical framework targeting specific political and theological themes. In addition to emphasizing the king’s personal devotion to St. Leocadia and the Virgin Mary, the bozzetti show him surrounded by both courtiers and ecclesiastical figures, in an allusion to his commitment to forging a common alliance between the monarchy and the church. This, in turn, can be seen as a reference to Charles III’s efforts to bolster his rule with ecclesiastical support. The most significant innovation, however, is Maella’s depiction of the apparition of the Virgin, alongside the miraculous appearance of St. Leocadia. This adaptation of the traditional account of the event illustrates the innovative lengths to which Charles III and his...

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354 Lafuente Ferrari, E., Antecedentes, coincidencias e influencias del arte de Goya, Catálogo Ilustrado de la Exposición celebrada en 1947, Madrid 1947: cat. no. 22 as by Maella. The bozzetto measures 105 x 54 cm and is said to have come from Antonio Viudes’s collection.
355 Archivo Mas no. E5773, 100 x 52 cm: Morales (1996, cat. no. 21, p. 106) illustrates this bozzetto, but his catalogue entry refers to the Viudes bozzetto rather than to the Archivo Mas version.
propagandists were prepared to go in promoting his own role as founder of his own Royal Order dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

**The Allegory of the Immaculate Conception.**

No preparatory drawings or bozzetti survive for Maella’s other fresco, depicting a subject described as alluding to the Immaculate Conception. As a result, it is hard to guess how Maella would have carried out this part of the commission. An oil sketch by Giambattista Tiepolo of the *Allegory of the Immaculate Conception* in the National Gallery of Ireland has in the past been associated with the La Granja commission. Catherine Whistler was the first to propose a connection with La Granja, suggesting that the sketch was Tiepolo’s “primo pensiero” for the Trinitarian cycle in the cupola. However, the recent identification of the *Baptism of Christ* as the missing scene in Bayeu’s cycle suggests that the sketch was unconnected with the cupola. Nonetheless, while there is no documentary evidence to link Tiepolo’s sketch with La Granja, its complex iconography has parallels with the overall programme for the church and it is possible that it was produced for another part of the decorative scheme. The sketch does not incorporate the framing of Sabatini’s architectural designs, which would have been imposed on Tiepolo at La Granja. The subject matter and composition have been carefully thought through, and the relative finish of the sketch suggests that it is not simply a *primo pensiero* or rough sketch but a modello for presentation to a patron.

Tiepolo has built his composition on a strong diagonal which runs upwards from the bottom left-hand corner through the Virgin’s garment to God the Father sitting on a cloud with his arms open in the top right-hand corner. In this way, Tiepolo adopts a clear and simple composition to communicate complex religious ideas. The scene takes place in heaven, with clouds and putti supporting Tiepolo’s figures in a timeless atmosphere. As well as being an allegory of the Immaculate Conception, the painting touches on beliefs such as redemption and salvation. God the Father is shown sitting amid clouds surrounded by angels with a triangular halo behind his head, emphasizing his triune aspect. His open arms are ready to receive the Virgin and bless her. To the top left, the dove represents the Holy Spirit. The Virgin’s role can be interpreted on various levels. On the principle level she is humbly kneeling waiting to be blessed by the God, reminding one more of an apotheosis or glorification. Although Christ is not represented alongside God the Father, the triangle alludes

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356 Whistler (1985), pp. 172-173. It measures 58.7 x 45 cm.
358 If Tiepolo did prepare this sketch for the south transept, his composition functions in accordance with the setting. The strong diagonal leads the viewer’s eye towards the main altar. In addition, Tiepolo’s composition of the Virgin and God the Father echoes Solimena’s arrangement of the Virgin, God the Father and Christ in the top part of the painting.
to the Trinity. Interestingly the Virgin is represented as the Immaculate Conception, with the crown of twelve stars forming a halo above her and the crescent moon below her feet, details taken directly from the Woman of the Apocalypse. God the Father and the Trinity are receiving her into heaven and proving that she was conceived without original sin from the beginning of time. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, which falls directly on the Virgin’s head, she is purified and conceived without original sin.

Below her is a terrestrial globe on which crawls a serpent with the apple of original sin in its mouth. Lying on a cloud is a fallen palm tree, possibly a reference to fallen humanity. Significantly, the Virgin is not stamping on the serpent as she is traditionally shown doing. Instead, an angel is tilting a mirror towards the serpent, as if to chase him away or reflect his image and reverse it from evil to good. This underlines the Virgin’s role of “second Eve”, rescuing mankind from original sin. In reflecting the serpent with the apple, which refers to Eva, the mirror would reverse the name of Eva to Ave. The mirror also refers to the Virgin as “Speculum sine macula”, often interpreted as her being the “flawless mirror of the active power of God and the image of his goodness.” (Wisdom 7:26) The allegory of Redemption here is clear. Following the sin of Adam, the Lord said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.” (Genesis chapter 3 vs 15). The coming of the second Eve as the Immaculate Conception is a guarantee of mankind’s redemption and salvation. The scene also relates to Bayeu’s cupola, where scenes such as the Calling of Isaiah and the Baptism of Christ deal with renewal and the resurrection, which is glorified in the Eucharist.

Tiepolo scholars are in general agreement that stylistically the sketch belongs to the end of Tiepolo’s career. The loose brushstroke and the complex Marian iconography, which would have been more familiar to a Spanish audience than to an Italian one, help to support this assertion. However, because the sketch lacks a “sotto in su” perspective, it has been suggested that Tiepolo conceived the composition for an altarpiece rather than a ceiling fresco. Possibly, Charles III wanted to replace Solimena’s altarpiece with a more modern picture whose iconography would crown the programme. In Solimena’s picture, the top half shows the Trinity blessing the Virgin, which could be connected to Tiepolo’s subject both iconographically and compositionally. However Tiepolo has not included Christ next to God the Father, and the only suggestion that it is the Trinity blessing the Virgin is the triangle behind his head and the Holy Spirit on the top left. Furthermore, if a painting along these lines

559 Revelation. 12:1 “robed with the sun, beneath her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”
had been substituted for Solimena’s altarpiece, Charles III’s personal link with Philip V would have been lost.

Another possibility is that Tiepolo’s sketch was conceived for one of the side altarpieces, for which Maella received a commission in September 1772, well after the completion of the fresco cycle. Finally, it is possible that the sketch was a preparatory work for the fresco in the left transept. Having not received Sabatini’s designs for the architectural framework, Tiepolo may have planned the iconographical contents before having to take account of the practicalities of the commission. In any case, it is the contents which interest us and as the iconography bears many parallels with the rest of the cycle, we can assume that when Tiepolo died, Maella inherited a similar subject, therefore allowing us to imagine how his fresco may originally have looked.362

St. James appearing on horseback at the Battle of Clavijo

According to legend, St. James the Great preached Christianity in Spain in AD 40-44 before returning to the Holy Land where he was martyred. After his martyrdom his body is said to have been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Galicia in north-west Spain, where the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela now stands. When the tomb was rediscovered in AD 814, King Alfonso II declared St. James the heavenly protector of Spain. Two miracles were to bring him much popularity around Spain. The first relates to the apparition to St. James of the Virgin Mary and angels bearing a pillar, on the banks of the Ebro. She commanded him to build a church dedicated to herself on the site of the apparition. The basílica of Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Zaragoza was the result of that miracle. The other miracle, which concerns us here, relates to St. James’s miraculous appearance at the Battle of Clavijo, when he helped a Spanish army to win a decisive victory over the Moors in the 9th century. The battle broadly symbolises the triumph of Christianity over the infidel, but it also alluded to the sacred vow undertaken by the Spanish kings to defend the Catholic faith. The Bourbons apart from acknowledging the traditional link had a personal reason to associate themselves with him. Philip V had won his first battle against the Hapsburg Archduke

362 It is possible that Maella saw Tiepolo’s sketch or the cartoon before painting his own version. A painting by Maella of the Immaculate Conception in the Museum of Art at the University of Kansas uses a composition and iconography similar to Tiepolo’s version, but the composition is reversed. See Morales y Marin (1996), cat. no. 177.
Charles, on 25th July, the feast day of St. James, a fact which Philip later used to support his claim to the Spanish throne.\textsuperscript{363}

According to the legend, St. James appeared at Clavijo in the Rioja district near Logroño, during a battle between the Christians, led by King Ramiro I, and the Moors in 834. Ramiro actually wrote his own account of the battle and the apparition of St. James in order to justify the imposition of a universal tax on Spain. According to this account, Ramiro, having been ambushed by the Moors, took refuge in the fortress of Clavijo. When night fell, St. James appeared to the sleeping king in a dream and announced that he had been specially commissioned by Christ to take Spain under his protection and that the following day in battle he would appear and help him defeat the Moors. The next day, St. James’s presence was witnessed by all those fighting. Encouraged by his example in the front line, riding a horse and slaying the infidel, the Christians won conclusively, killing 70,000 Moors. Ramiro, to show his gratitude, ordered that all of Spain, both the already re-conquered territory and what was to be recovered in the future, should make an annual donation of part of each year’s harvest in the form of corn and wine to St. James’s church in Santiago de Compostela. Ramiro’s account of the battle was known as the Diploma of Ramiro and the tax as the Voto de Santiago.\textsuperscript{364}

This tax was to lead to very complex debates well until the 19th century. Throughout the centuries and particularly following the reunification of Spain under Isabella and Ferdinand, the monarchy found itself obliged to support this tax in order to show its alliance with the church. Those who objected to the tax sought to demonstrate its lack of validity by arguing that the miracle of St. James never actually happened. However, those who benefited from the tax were equally determined to defend it, even to the extent of faking the evidence to support the miracle’s veracity. The discovery of lead tablets in 1588 during excavations in what was believed to be an early Christian cemetery near the monastery of Sacromonte outside Granada by a group of local ecclesiastics brought the controversy to a head. Claiming that the lead tablets were written in a pseudo Arabic language and early Spanish, which they quickly deciphered and made public, the discoverers of the tablets declared that they had inscribed on them the names of disciples in Spain of St. James martyred around AD 70. This, they claimed, not only confirmed St. James’s visit to Spain but also established that these disciples had actually been in charge of early Spanish bishoprics before the arrival of the Moors. Some of the texts also described the apparition of St. James at the Battle of Clavijo, while others stated that the feast day of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated at the time, with the approval of the Apostles.

\textsuperscript{363} Painting in Spain in the Age of Enlightenment; Goya and his contemporaries. Exh. cat., Indianapolis, 1997, cat. no. 12, p. 160.
Although eventually declared to be fakes, after they had been sent to Rome for authentication, these tablets had strong repercussions on the Spanish monarchy’s relationship with the church, and eventually with the Papacy. They also caused a local controversy in Segovia, as one of the tablets identified as that city’s first bishop St. Hieroteo, a Greek who had been bishop of Athens and was said to have travelled to Spain in AD. 74. This news was greeted with delight by the bishops of Segovia, who seized on it to claim that their bishopric was one of the oldest foundations in Spain, installing a tablet commemorating the saint in Segovia cathedral in 1621.\(^{365}\) However, not everyone in Segovia was in favour of this new patron, who threatened to oust the 8th century St. Frutos as patron saint of the town.\(^{366}\) In 1666, the Marquis of Mondéjar, a renowned scholar and historian who believed in St. James’s mission to Spain because it was well established in ancient literature but who firmly rejected the contents of the chronicles, launched an attack on their veracity. In defence of St. Frutos, his Discurso histórico por el patronato de San Frutos, contra la supuesta Cathedra de San Hierotheo en Segovia, challenged the tablet’s authenticity as a historical document.

Nonetheless, the controversy did not die, and in 1754 another set of Arabic texts was found on Sacromonte. Ferdinand VI, who saw it as the ideal moment to confirm his religious beliefs, immediately supported research aimed at authenticating the texts. In 1761, however, Charles III dismissed them as forgeries on account of their evident lack of age.

Under Charles III, support for the Voto de Santiago waned further in the face of increasing critical scepticism and strong anti-clerical ideas. One figure, in particular, spoke out against the Voto de Santiago with authority. Captain of the Royal Bodyguard and a personal friend of Charles III, Antonio Ponce de León, the Duke de Arcos (1726-1780), who declared his rejection of the Voto in a book published in 1771.\(^{367}\) Written with the assistance of a lawyer, he treated the material and evidence from a legal point of view, taking in the various arguments for and against the tax. In the end, he concluded that the Voto de Santiago was illegal, on the grounds that in the Middle Ages the tax imposed by Ramiro had never had

\(^{365}\) Ibid, p. 126.
\(^{366}\) St. Frutos, also known as St. Fructuoso, was born to a noble family in Segovia in 642. He decided at an advanced stage in his life to become, along with his brother and sister, a hermit. Giving away their wealth, they retired to the wilderness near Sepúlveda, by the river Duratón. His virtue was such that many Christians persecuted by the Moors sought refuge with him. Miracles attributed to him include the appearance of a spring near the chapel which he built and dedicated to the Virgin. The chapel was placed on top of a gorge, and when he asked to borrow some oxen to carry the stones up, he trained them to be as agile as sheep. More famously, he is known to have saved fleeing Christians by making the gorge wider so that the Moors could not cross in pursuit of their prey. Atop this gorge, known as the “cuchillada” or “cortadura de San Frutos”, his church is still a place of pilgrimage. St. Frutos died in 715, aged 73. The bodies of the three saints were brought to Segovia in 1126, were eventually rediscovered in the Old Cathedral in 1461, and moved into the trascoro in 1558. On his feast day, 25th October, the relics are taken out for local festivities. They also occasionally feature in ceremonies to appeal for relief from drought.

\(^{367}\) Antonio Ponce de León, Duque de Arcos, Representación contra el pretendido Voto de Santiago que hace al Rey Nuestro Señor Carlos III, Madrid, 1771.
the express approval of the Popes or Kings of Spain. Although medieval taxes for the cathedral had sometimes been endorsed by royal power, they were restricted in nature and had nothing to do with Ramiro. The duke asserted that Ferdinand and Isabella, though they thought they were re-imposing an ancient tax, were in fact giving royal authority to a forgery. Wanting to defend impoverished small farmers of Spain, the duke asked the king to recognise this and to abolish the tax. In the introduction of his book, the duke states that his aim was not to “offend the recognition due to our Holy Apostle and great patron Santiago, whose Patronage is one of the greatest glories of the Nation,” but to “lay bare truth to the eyes of the world; to illuminate Justice with good deeds: to defend, as is his duty, the rights of his Lineage; and to procure by the example of Your Majesty the succour of his poor land-tilling vassals.”

In response to the Duke of Arcos’s attack, those supporting the evidence given in the tablets produced an account of the Battle of Clavijo, supposedly written by a Moorish eyewitness to the event who was converted as a result. This was quickly demonstrated to be a forgery and the civic authorities of Granada finally arrested the main perpetrators.

In the meantime, Segovia’s bishops continued to pursue the idea that the original patron was St. Hieroteo, and until this day a feast day is dedicated to him on 4th October. A chapel was dedicated to St. Hieroteo near the south entrance to the cathedral with an altarpiece built in 1771, sponsored by Bishop Juan José Martínez Esclazo, who was buried in the same chapel in 1773. In this controversy, the inclusion of St. Frutos in Maella’s altarpiece demonstrates that Charles III preferred to accept the more rationalist arguments presented in favour of St. Frutos, rather than taking the side of those relying on the evidence of the tablets. By supporting the traditional veneration of two popular patron saints, St. James and St. Frutos, but at the same time rejecting the spurious and fraudulent claims of those who sought to perpetuate the privileges of the Church, Charles could be seen as simultaneously defending tradition and striking a blow for reform.

Charles III had already lent his architect Sabatini in 1769 to design the main altar of the Cathedral of Segovia. Made of sumptuous marbles, the altarpiece was decorated with sculptures by the court sculptor Manuel Pacheco of the Virgen de la Paz flanked by St. Frutos and St. Geroteo. Above, in the second tier, stood St. Valentin and St. Engracia, brother and sister of St. Frutos. In 1782, Charles III donated an altarpiece for the trascoro (area behind the choir), originally designed by Ventura Rodriguez for the Royal palace at Riofrio and now

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368 Duque de Arcos (1771), p. 2: “ofender el reconocimiento debido a nuestro Santo Apostol, a gran patron Santiago, cuyo Patronato es una de las mayores glorias de la Nacion” but “descubrir la verdad a la vista del mundo; aclarar la justicia buenamente: defender, como debe, los derechos de su Casa, I procurar á exemplo de V.M. el alivio de sus pobres Vasallos Labradores…”


destined to house an urn holding the relics of St. Frutos. The urn had a curtain in front of it, only removed on the feast day of St. Frutos. On either side are sculptures of St. Philip and St. Elizabeth, directly alluding to Philip V and Isabella. Above appears the Holy Trinity, flanked by St. Peter and St. Paul.

In relation to La Granja, the presence of St. James is only superficially contradictory. The representation of St. James appearing at the Battle of Clavijo already featured in the Royal Chapel of the palace in Madrid (fig. 107). Though the chapel’s prime function was for Holy Mass and other religious ceremonies, Cioffi claims that St. James was central to its iconography, as the programme begins and ends with St. James. St. James also appears in the cupola where he is shown as one of the supplicants before the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. As at La Granja, St. James is identified with two fundamental concepts underlying Spanish Catholicism, that of the belief in the Immaculacy of the Virgin and the defence of the Catholic faith against heresy by the Spanish kings. St. James was recognised as patron saint of Spain and Ferdinand VI, while dealing with the Concordat with the Vatican had managed to get Benedict XIV to certify the Battle of Clavijo as a historical fact. Ferdinand’s skilful diplomacy was matched by that of Charles III, who in adopting this iconographical programme simultaneously affirmed his belief in St. James’s apparition and his rejection of the tablets and the Voto in support of his drive to purify the church.

Philosophically, his dual approach as ardent Catholic and meticulous historian was coherent. Theologians could argue that since ecclesiastical history was largely founded on matters of faith, precise scientific methodology could not be applied to this discipline. Instead, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the mission of St. James were matters of faith that needed not be proved by archaeological evidence.

Maella’s two surviving bozzetti, each significantly different from the other, come to our aid in defining the visual outcome of these complicated arguments. The first, at one time attributed to Giaquinto was in the Metropolitan Museum of New York in 1940 before it was de-accessioned (fig. 108). The second, in the Academy of San Jordi in Barcelona, has not hitherto been published (fig. 109). Although there is no evidence to confirm which of these two served as the basis for the final fresco, common sense points to the second. While the first shows a traditional rendering of the subject, closely following Giaquinto’s prototype in the Royal Chapel, with St. James riding over the infidel, his sword drawn and in the act of

371 Urrea (1977), p. 386: Originally the altarpiece was in the chapel at Riofrio, commissioned by Isabella Farnese in 1759, in which a painting by Giambettino Cignaroli of the Virgin and Child with Saints had been inserted. The painting was removed and brought to the Palace at La Granja, and today is in the Prado.

372 Wehle, Harry B., A catalogue of Italian, Spanish, and Byzantine Paintings, Metropolitan Museum, 1940, p.267, plate 122, cat. no. 07.225.300, as Unknown Italian Painter XVIII, Oil on canvas H.27.9 x 63.5 cm.
striking, the second depicts the dream of King Ramiro before the battle. In the first bozzetto, Maella concentrates on the action. St. James is assisted by angels, one of them bearing his lance, while the horse rears up showing his belly, a perspective that would have functioned well in a ceiling painting. The second bozzetto shows an unusual variation on the theme. Rather than the battle, Maella shows St. James appearing to Ramiro in a dream while he is asleep in his tent. On the left, a fence is used to lead the eye into the back, where a group of soldiers is seen chatting. St. James, on horseback, points to a flag held by an angel on which is painted the Cross of the Order of Santiago. In the background to the right, the battle is being fought with the castle of Clavijo in the distance. The scene here is more intimate, less violent and relates directly to the king. The Order of Santiago was originally founded in the 12th century as a lay religious order. Dedicated to Spain's liberation from Moorish rule, its members were restricted to those of noble Christian lineage untainted by Jewish or Moorish blood. As a royal order, it presents a perfect parallel to Charles III's newly created order dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Rather than depicting the violence of battle, as in his first bozzetto, Maella has represented the event in a more sensitive and personal way, through the indirect medium of a dream. In this way, the subject was less open to criticism, particularly from critics of the Spanish tendency to popularise miracles.

The Immaculate Conception with St. Frutos and Angels holding attributes of the Royal Order of Charles III.

Maella painted his altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception with St. Frutos and angels holding attributes of the Royal Order of Charles III (fig. 110) in September 1772 to replace Procaccini’s altarpiece also dedicated to St. Frutos. Surviving correspondence between Maella and his patrons indicates that the original plans of the painting’s iconographical format underwent dramatic changes as the commission proceeded. Maella’s original conception of the subject is known through detailed descriptions of his plans, as well as from two drawings and a finished presentation piece. As we shall see, the contents were slightly altered in order to meet various requirements which had specific political implications. As well as honouring the Immaculate Conception, the painting commemorates

573 Santiago on horseback appearing to King Ramiro in a dream, with battle in background, Academia de San Jordi, 34 x 94 cm, Archivo Mas E6433.
574 De la Mano (1998), p. 387, footnote 74. Although Procaccini’s altarpiece is now lost, it was recorded to have been moved to another church in La Granja (De la Mano, 1998, p. 390, footnote 77).
575 A.G.P. Reales Sitios, San Ildefonso La Granja, caja 13626. This correspondence was first referred to by Sancho in “Decoración interior de la real colegiata de la santísima Trinidad, en el Palacio de San Ildefonso,” Francisco Sabatini 1727-1797, Exh. cat., 1993, cat. no. 3.12, p. 338, but only recently fully published by De la Mano (1998), pp.386-387.
the king’s foundation of the Royal and Distinguished Order of Charles III on 24th October 1771. This knightly order, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, was approved by Pope Clement XIV in a bull issued at the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome on 21st February 1772.

On 21st August 1772, Maella received a letter announcing that “the King wants you to paint, for one of the side altars in the Collegiate Church, a painting of the Immaculate Conception” and adding that the required measurements would be promptly sent. The author of this letter is not known, but it was probably the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Grimaldi, to whom Maella wrote back on 22nd August expressing “how honoured he felt to be selected for the task and how anxious he was to respond with all the ability and skill at his command, asking for the measurements of the painting, and promising to prepare an oil sketch…. On the same day, Maella wrote to Grimaldi’s first secretary, Bernardo Iriarte asking him for measurements and promising that “once the size and proportions have been agreed, I will form the composition, making sure to place the Insignia of the Distinguished Order in the hands of Angels gracefully presenting them, or in the best way that my poor talent can achieve.” This letter indicates that Maella had been briefed about the symbols of the Order. On 26th August, he again writes to Iriarte thanking him for the measurements and details of the location for which the painting is destined and informing him that he is about to start work. On a piece of paper attached to the letter, Maella has sketched out his ideas of how he should represent this allegory of Spain. “The Virgin must look towards Spain. In place of the orb should be the half moon, as well as some clouds on which the Virgin should be shown standing. Spain should be shown in the best possible pose presenting the chain with the pendant Cross without the sash. Spain should be wearing a carmine coloured cape decorated with Castles and Lions. The shield and the lion should be removed.”

Between 22nd August and 3rd September, Maella was in correspondence with Bernardo Iriarte about the iconographical contents of the picture. The rarity of such letters

376 A.G.P. Reales Sitios, San Ildefonso La Granja, caja 13626: “El Rey quiere que V.m pinte para uno de los altares colaterales de la Iglesia Colegiata de este Sitio un Quadro de la Inmaculada Concepcion.”
377 Ibid: “singularísimo honor que en ella se me proporciona quedando con deseo de corresponder con todo mi conato y estudio: rogo que reciba la medida del tamaño, que V.E me ofrezca facilitarme, para el que formare un Borronzito…”
378 Ibid: “arreglado el tamaño y proporcion formare la composición, en que procurare atar las Insignias de la distinguida Orden en manos de Angeles en ademán graciosos de presentarlas, ó en la mejor forma, que alcance mi corto talento.”
379 Ibid: “He recibido la favorecida de V.m juntamente con las medidas del quadro de la Inmaculada y quedo echo cargo de la situación en donde se deve colocar, procurare poner todo el esmero que alcance mi limitado Ingenio para el desempeño, teniendo presente en la composicion las prevenciones con que V. me a favorecido y pondre mano a el Bozzeto in continente” Maella to Iriarte 26th August 1772.
380 Ibid: “La Virgen debe mirar a la España. En vez del mundo debe ponerse la medina luna substituyendo tambien algunas nubes sobre las cuales este Virgen. Conviene que la España tenga todo el mayor aire posible de ofrecer a la Virgen el collar solo con la cruz pendiente quitando la cinta.”
make the commission especially interesting, as we can see painter and minister working together to reach the desired effect, not only enhancing the interior decoration but also satisfying the king’s wishes. In a letter to Iriarte dated 2nd September 1772, Maella explains the contents of the picture he is planning to paint: “I send you my thoughts on the Immaculate Conception so that you may present them to His Excellency and tell me his views; my idea for displaying the Insignia of the Order has been to insert an allegorical figure representing Spain in the act of showing the chain and garter of the Order, as if imploring the aid of the Most Pure Conception as protectress of the said Order and Patron of Spain; and on the other side, I have put the cape accompanied by palm fronds alluding to the distinguished Order and on the cape will be placed the cipher (III) of Charles III.”381 Having done this, he asks Iriarte to find out from the king whether the commission is urgent, as he is currently busy finishing three pictures for Aranjuez.382 Following a letter to Grimaldi about the iconography, a letter dated 11th September concerns drawings which Maella made for the altarpiece and problems concerning the physical lighting of the church.383

One of the drawings is quickly sketched out in graphite and then reinforced in pen and ink washes (fig. 111).384 The allegory of Spain is placed to the left of the Virgin, while she stands on the crescent moon with the serpent below. The Virgin looks down, as quickly sketched-out angels fly around her, one holding a palm. The second drawing, which is significantly larger and executed solely in graphite, looks more accomplished, and contains the attributes of which Maella spoke to Iriarte (fig. 112).385 Again Spain is placed to the left, but the Virgin is now slightly higher, her feet level with the head of the allegory. Shown trampling on the serpent, she takes on a more definite role. On the floor is the gown on which was to be painted the cipher (III), alluding to Charles. The modello shows a similar

Debera la España tener el manto carmesí sembrado de Castillos y Leones. Deberá quitarse el Escudo de armas y el León.”

381 Ibid: “Remito a Vm el pensamiento de la Inmaculada a fin de que lo presente V.m a su Ex.a y me diga lo que aparesca, la ydea que he tomado para manifestar las Insignias de la Orden a sido poniendo una figura alegorica que manifieste ser la españa en acto de mostrar el collar y banda de la orden, como impetando ausilio de la purissima Conception, por protectora de la dicha orden y patrona de españa a el otro lado, es puesto el manto enlazado con unas palmas que manifiesta ser la Orden distinguida y en el manto se pondra la sífira de (III) Carlos tercero.”

382 Ibid: letter dated 2nd of September 1772: “estimare pregunte Vm a S.exla. si desea este quadro pronto pues ya save Vm tengo encargados tres quadros para el convento nubelo lo entonce lo de Aranjuez y si e de poner mano al quadro de la Concepcion sera menester dejar los otros para mas adelante.”. The three pictures in question are those for the convent of San Pascual Baylón, which were to replace Tiepolo’s altarpieces.

383 Ibid: “He recevido la favorecida de Vm y Juntamente los dibujos de la Inmaculada quedo echo cargo de la asertada eleccion de SE me pondre azer el Boronzito en continente, y por lo que mejor bien Vm de la Luz me parece que la mayor parte que recibe de luz el altar en donde se a de colocar es de la puerta y en estando zeradas las con puertas de fuera queda un poco escasa esto es segun lo que observe quando estaban puestos los andamios, pero me servira de mucho la prevencio de Vm.”

384 Diaz Callegos (1990), Vol. II, cat. no. 360, p. 460, catalogues the drawings as representing “Inmaculada Adorada por un personaje oriental.” The drawing measures 22.6 x 13.9 cm, black chalk with pen and ink washes.
composition but this time the allegory of Spain has been placed on the right side, and the
Virgin looks down to the right (fig. 113). Connected to this, a highly finished drawing in
the Biblioteca Nacional seems to be after the modello (fig. 114). Barcia attributes the drawing
to Vicente López, but does not mention any connection with Maella. Although it provides us
with an illustration of Maella’s original idea, the drawing in my view is neither by Maella or
López, and is rather by a follower of Maella.

Unfortunately the documentation does not specify where the painting was to be
located and why the painting now on the right-hand altar shows the patron saint of Segovia,
St. Frutos, rather than the allegory of Spain. The symbols alluding to the royal order are
now held by angels, while St. Frutos kneels, holding a shepherd’s crook, before the Virgin
who looks lovingly down on him. It possible that Charles III was wanting to respect his
father’s original intentions of having an altarpiece dedicated to St. Frutos. In any case, Maella
succeeded in bringing together all of Charles III’s religious preoccupations into one painting;
the Immaculate Conception, his royal order and St. Frutos. As we have already seen, the
appearance of St. Frutos in this painting is of political significance. It marked Charles’s
support for established tradition and his rejection of claims by the church in favour of
spurious privileges.

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385 Ibid, cat. no. 361, pp. 460-461. 28.1 x 19.5 cm, black chalk.
386 Morales (1996), cat. no. 23, p.107, claims that this painting is a variant of the one now in the church,
but suggests that it is for another commission and therefore not related. The picture’s size, 130 x 85 cm,
suggests that it was either for private use or, more likely, a finished modello to give his patrons an idea
of how the iconography could be visualised.
387 Barcia (1906), cat. no. 4125.
388 Cortón de las Heras, T., “San Frutos Patrón de la Diócesis de Segovia en la catedral”, in Cuadernos
de Arte y Iconografía, 1991, no.4 & Moya y Mungia, C. de, Vida y muerte y virtudes de San Frutos,
Segovia, 1649.
CHAPTER VII

CHARLES III’S PUBLIC RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS: SUPPORT FOR THE FRANCISCANS

This chapter concentrates on Charles III’s support for the Franciscan order and his endeavour to use his association with them to project an image of piety and commitment to ecclesiastical reform. Charles particularly admired St. Francis and shared his views on the value of simplicity and prayer. The Franciscans were also known for their devotion to the Immaculate Conception, stemming from the writings of the 13th century Franciscan, Dun Scotus, who defended the mystery as the perfect mediator between mankind and Christ. Consequently, Charles saw in the Franciscans a perfect ally in his campaign to raise the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the status of dogma. Significantly, the Franciscans were a mendicant order devoted to poverty, which meant that, unlike the Jesuits, their economic power was controllable. To fill the vacuum left by the Jesuits’ expulsion, Charles adopted the Franciscans as allies in pursuit of broader political objectives. His patronage of the Franciscans, like his support for the canonisation of Palafox, tied in well with his twin objectives of reforming the Spanish church and assuming more power over it.

As already noted, Charles especially favoured the Alcantarine branch of the Franciscan order. Assisted by Eleta, Charles involved himself in three commissions connected with the Alcantarines. The first, begun in 1765 and completed in 1770, was the construction of a convent church dedicated to the Alcantarine St. Paschal Baylón. Designed and built by Marcel Fonton under the direction of Sabatini and decorated with paintings by Giambattista Tiepolo, this convent was located at Aranjuez not far from the royal palace. The second concerned the completion of a chapel built to contain the relics of St. Peter of Alcántara, as an annex to the convent of St. Peter in Arenas de San Pedro, near Avila. The

389 St. Peter of Alcántara was canonised in 1670. Much of what we know about him comes to us from St. Teresa of Avila, whom he first met in 1560 and strongly encouraged in her efforts to reform the Carmelite order. In her diaries she writes that “he slept but one hour and a half in twenty-four hours for forty years together….He never put up his hood, however hot the sun or heavy the rain….It was usual for him to eat but once in three days. One of his companions told me that sometimes he ate nothing at all for eight days; but that perhaps might be when he was in prayer, for he used to have great raptures and vehement transports of divine love, of which I was once an eye witness….“ (Hugh Farmer, D. The Oxford Dictionary of Saints, Oxford, 2nd ed. 1987, pp. 346-347). St. Peter imposed a rule of strict austerity, prescribed complete abstinence from meat and discouraged the use of libraries, believing that
architect Ventura Rodríguez had presented his designs to the Alcantarines for a new chapel as early as 1755, but building works only began in 1772, when Charles took over the commission, and the chapel was not finally consecrated until 1775. The high altar was decorated with a sculptured stucco relief of the Apotheosis of St. Peter of Alcántara by Francisco Gutiérrez, while the two side altarpieces contained paintings of Alcantarine saints, here attributed to Francisco Bayeu. The third commission, never actually put into effect, was for a massive convent to be built in the heart of Madrid, dedicated to St. Peter of Alcántara. In 1786, Sabatini provided a series of architectural drawings for this convent, whose scale demonstrates the lengths to which Charles was prepared to go in his patronage of the order.

The nature of Eleta’s involvement in these commissions has been the subject of some discussion. Extensive correspondence between him and Sabatini shows both that he was kept informed and gave advice or expressed his point of view. While he often states that he was representing the king’s opinion and voicing his master’s wishes over important decisions, his biographer, Loperráez, tells us that he participated in the planning of various commissions, including some that did not involve the king as patron. There is no specific evidence to define Eleta’s taste in painting or to show whether he was responsible for devising the iconography in these commissions. However, one may speculate that he played an important role, including that of advising on the iconography of the commission.

These Alcantarine commissions are fundamental to Charles’s image as a religious reformer. By financing these projects, decorating them in accordance with his personal tastes, and selecting an iconographical programme that reflected his religious ideas on a wider basis, Charles put his alliance with the Franciscans firmly in the public eye. San Pascual Baylón was close to his palace at Aranjuez, allowing emphasis to be laid on the dualism of temporal and spiritual power. The burial shrine of St. Peter, although geographically isolated, was significant as the burial site of the founder of the Alcantarines. These commissions display the king’s determination to replace the Jesuits with the Franciscans.

The decoration of the church and convent of San Pascual Baylón in Aranjuez

In 1765, the Neapolitan architect Marcel Fonton was commissioned by Charles III to design and build a church and an adjoining convent to house Alcantarine friars and serve as a royal church in the town of Aranjuez. Charles followed the building works closely, visiting

knowledge was achieved through prayer. His exemplary observance of penitence and poverty was matched by his skill as a preacher.


Loperráez (1788), p. 644.
the convent in person. Eleta, in a letter to Sabatini, made clear that he was following the king’s orders when it came to making important decisions. The Deed of Foundation of June 1770 specified that details such as windows, doors, and altars could not be altered without the king’s consent. The decoration of the interior resembled that of the chapel in the royal palace of Madrid. Lavish amounts of money were spent on veined marbles, stucco and bronze works for the main altar. Newly discovered documents show that the frames of the altarpieces and the spaces around them were heavily decorated with festoons of flowers, garlands, cornets of fruit and palms leaves. Aware that it might seem inappropriate for an order dedicated to absolute poverty to be surrounded by such regal decoration, Eleta provided an Informe for the Ambassador to the Holy See, Azpuru, with a view to his obtaining a Papal dispensation granting the friars permission to live in the royal convent and releasing them from the

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393 Archivo General de Simancas, Sección Tribunal Mayor de Cuentas. Contaduría de la Razón de Obras y Bosques de S.M, p. 32-33. Leg. 1672-1673-1674 on the building of the convent of Aranjuez, San Pascual Baylón. Cuenta Ordenada con cargo y data que presenta Dn. Feliz Antonio Tocados Vt y Contador del Real Sitio de Aranjuez de la Obra del Nuevo Convento de San Pascual Baylón a expensas de SM y a la direccion y mando del Ilmno Sor Arzobispo de Tevas Confessor de SM desde Agosto 1765 ao August 1770
Leg 1672: Manuel Adeva, Pacheco escultor and León Lázaro Estucador: Cuenta y Razón de los estucos que se han ejecutado de Orn del Senor Sabatini: En el altar colateral del evangelio se han executado dos festones de flores que hayan en dos platillos con sus Zintas; y en dicho altar dos cartelas que reciven el marco: 660 reales
En el colateral de la Espistola imita lo mismo
Las capillas del cuerpo de la iglesia grandes una concha acompanada de dos cartones que desde arriba nazen dos festones de roble que estan rodeados con una zinta que guarnecen todo el remate del retablo, y sobre la mesa de Altar un golpe con dos palmas, y dos ramos de oliva hatados con una zinta: 660 De frente mismo
En los Altares de los pies de la Iglesia donde se havian de colocar los dos mancebos con dos Palmas (que no llenavan mas que la mitad del Obalo las dichas Palmas) se ha echo que llenen todo el Altar con quatro Palmas y dos basta Buelta. De Parra con sus ubas y hatados con unas zintas y arriba una mensula que no estava en diseno: 660 reales
En frente misma obra
En la capilla mayor los adornos de una tribuna que se compone de una cartela que recive la tribuna adornada con unas ojas u en el espejo obalado de la sobre puerta que esta bajo de dicha tribuna unos paños que estan atados con una zinta hacada lado: 600 reales
Otra correspondiente mismo trabajo
En la Tribuna de SM otro golpe que recibe la tribuna adornado con unas chorchas y sus cartones se ha donde nacen unas cornetas de habandancia de frutas, y ojas de todas clases 650 reales
En el nuevo disefio en el altar de Ssmo Christo, Cinco florones y las rafagas del nincho que tienen mas de siete pies de largo, y ha proporcion de su hancho: 900 reales. Whistler (1985) p. 324, published a document that describes the benediction of the church on 16th May 1770, in which she interprets the phrase “esquisitas flores de Italia y muchas naturales” as a high-flown reference to Tiepolo’s paintings. However this phrase may refer to the stucco decoration, considering the floral elements and the fact that their author, León Lázaro, was possibly of Italian origin.
The sculptor, Pacheco made the “escudos de armas de piedra de la Fachada de la Iglesia tres mil reales” as well as “dos angeles de estuco de estatura de nuebe pies sobre el frontispicios de el Altar mayor...un grupo en medio de nubes con sres cabezas de serafines sobre dichas nubes, diez cabezas de serafines de el mismo estuco en las capillas y colaterales de todo lo dicho en ymporte de 12,000 vellnon. Dos cabezas de serafines a el cuadro de el altar mayor, tambien estuco 400 reales.” Dated 11th May 1770.
obligation of depending on alms. Eleta notes that while St. Francis "founded his religion and established his order obliging followers not to possess any worldly belongings", Charles wanted to display his devotion to the Franciscan order by making his "royal seat of Aranjuez conform better to his (i.e. the King's) magnificence than to the straits of seraphic poverty." 

It was in this context that Charles decided in late March 1767 to give a commission to Giambattista Tiepolo for seven altarpieces for the convent. Why he chose Tiepolo instead of Mengs is not known. It is possible that he wanted to keep Mengs’s religious paintings within his private apartments only, using Tiepolo for more public commissions. In any case, Tiepolo had completed his assignments at the royal palace and was asking for more work, while Mengs was busy on his ceiling fresco of the Apotheosis of Hercules for the Antecámara, which he left unfinished on departing for Rome in 1769. In addition, the commission provided an opportunity to test Tiepolo’s skill as a painter of devotional subjects, with a view to his employment in other religious commissions. The decorative programme was as follows: for the main altar St. Paschal Kneeling before a Vision of the Eucharist (figs. 115 & 116); for the right and left transepts, the Stigmatization of St. Francis and the Immaculate Conception (fig. 117); for the second chapels on the right and left, St. Charles Borromeo Meditating before a Crucifix (fig. 118) and St. Joseph and the Christ Child (fig. 119); and for the first chapels on the right and left of the main entrance, two ovals of the Vision of the Christ Child to St. Anthony of Padua and St. Peter of ALCÁNTARA inspired by the Holy Spirit (fig. 120).

St. Paschal Baylón (1540-1592) was well known for his devotion to the Eucharist, and Tiepolo’s portrayal of him kneeling before a vision of the Eucharist relates well to the celebration of the mass at the high altar. His disciple and biographer Juan Ximénez recounts that as a boy St. Paschal worked as a shepherd, and although he could not attend mass, he followed the service by listening for the bells. One day, at the moment during the mass marking the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, St. Paschal experienced a vision of angels holding the Sacred Host above a Chalice. The vision that Tiepolo depicts is different, however, and he may have adapted his painting to the context of the commission. St. Paschal is shown as a young monk in the garden of a convent which bears some similarities with the convent at Aranjuez, experiencing a vision of an angel holding the Host encased in a monstrance.

Ibid, p. 228: “fundó su religion y estableció su regla obligando por ella a todos sus profesores a no poseer cosa alguna de los bienes temporales de la tierra” & “Real Sitio de Aranjuez más conforme a su magnificencia que a los estrechos de la pobreza seráfica...”
To enhance the convent's importance, Eleta informs us, Charles decided to procure a relic of St. Paschal from the royal Alcantarine convent at Villareal, near Valencia. The relic, "the right leg from the knee to the ankle", was to be placed in a specially designed reliquary. On 7th August 1770 Miguel de Múquiz wrote to Sabatini explaining that the king "desires that this relic be inserted perpendicular in a round or pyramidal crystal tube to be made at the Royal Factory of this Palace (San Ildefonso), and that this be placed on a pedestal with enough room for the King’s coat of arms and an inscription about the relic and where it came from, and that, above this be placed, as a final touch, the cross and crossed arms which are the symbols of the Order of St. Francis." The relic finally arrived at the Royal palace on 2nd May 1771, while Charles was having supper, and was taken to his private oratory before being dispatched to the convent. In February 1772, the reliquary was completed, and a relic of St. Diego de Alcalá was also acquired.

The other altarpieces reflect the general ethos and beliefs of the Alcantarine order. The Immaculate Conception demonstrates their role as advocates of the Virgin’s purity. St. Peter Alcántara, shown under divine inspiration probably writing his prayer book, represents the reformed rule under which the friars lived. St. Joseph’s presence is explained by the fact that St Peter had founded the province of St. Joseph as the first area of jurisdiction for the order. St. Charles Borromeo, as well as being Charles III's patron saint, was Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan order. The Stigmatization of St. Francis is a direct allusion to the founder of the Franciscan order and his imitation of Christ, while St. Anthony, also a member of that order, is shown with the Christ Child. Each saint represents a different aspect of contemplation and mystical union with God.

Tiepolo was not alone in working on this commission. Bayeu had been commissioned to paint four paintings of the Annunciation (fig. 121), the Nativity, the Ascension (fig. 122) and Pentecost (fig. 123), for two corners of the cloister, while Maella

598 Pou y Martí (1921), p. 230: Informe del Arzobispo de Tebas, “... por la grande y singular que su Magestad profesa a este Santo, deseo que sus veneraciones tenga objeto inmediato en sus cultos, pide y suplica a Su Santidad, que no obstante qualesquiera prohibiciones, aunque sean appostolicas, para extraer reliquia alguna del cuerpo de San Pasqual....”
599 Ibid: “la pierna derecha desde la rodilla hasta el tobillo.”
600 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, caja 1469: “quiere, que esta reliquia, se ponga perpendicular dentro de un tubo redondo, ó piramidal de cristal que se hara en las r.s fabricas de este Sitio (San Ildefonso), que tenga el pedestal con capacidad bastante para el excudo de las Armas de S.M. y la inscripcion de la reliquia, y de parage de donde se sacó, poniéndose en los remates, la cruz y los brazos cruzados, que son las señales de la Orden de S.n Francisco...”
601 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, caja 14244.
602 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, caja 14243.
604 Whistler (1984), p. 327-329; St. Carlos represents meditation of specific images such as the Crucifix which he is shown holding; St. Anthony is shown in ecstasy, and St. Pasqual in a more forceful state of rapture; the Stigmatization represents the perfect union with God and St. Peter as the fruit of mystical union.
had been commissioned to paint a Last Supper for the refectory and an Immaculate Conception for a staircase in the cloister. The exact dates when Bayeu and Maella were working on their pictures are not known. Bills for pigments used by Bayeu indicate, however, that he had started painting by 1769 and was still ordering carmine pigment on 3rd January 1770. In addition, Bayeu was asked to paint a small picture of the Virgin and Child for the choir stalls on 4th March 1770. When both painters were ordered to paint the frescoes at La Granja on 4th April 1770, they were still working on their paintings for San Pascual Baylón. These are reported to have been lost during the Civil War. Nevertheless a fragment, several bozzetti and drawings, including a painting in the storerooms of Aranjuez palace here attributed to Maella, enable us to reconstruct the commission.

Bayeu was initially asked by the king to paint his scenes in fresco, but the survival of a fragment of the top part of Christ’s body from Bayeu’s Ascension, painted on canvas, suggests that this plan was abandoned. Painted sketches of the Annunciation, Pentecost and the Ascension show Bayeu’s efforts to emulate Mengs’s classicism, particularly in his intricate studies of drapery and the conventional poses of his disciples. His paintings were certainly installed by 19th of June 1772, as a bill drawn up by Sabatini includes spending on measures to protect them from damp and dirt.

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405 Ponz visited the convent around 1772: Ponz (1947), p. 233. “Se esperan varios adornos para la iglesia y tienen encargos de hacer las pinturas los señores Tiepolo, Bayeu y Maella.” A footnote by Ponz completes his description by adding the location and subjects of Tiepolo’s paintings, but does not mention Bayeu or Maella’s pictures.


407 A.G.P., Obras de Palacio, caja 1469: From Fr. Vicente de Carabante to Sabatini: “de orden del rey puede V.S. mandar al Aragones obaunciano (? Al veneciano?), aq.n mejor parezca, hagan la madre de Dios, que se ha de colocar en el Choro, como del mismo modo al Sr Tiopolo, quede providencia de remitir los quadros a Aranjuez inmediatamente...” 1st March 1770.

408 Martin (1989), pp. 242-243, doc. 84: “...tiene todavía mucho que pintar al olio para unos d quadros nuevo convento de san Pasqual de Aranjuez, y que tiene que pintar al fresco para el Sor. Infante Dn. Luis en Boadilla; y que Maella tambien tiene todabia que pintar al olio para dicho nuevo combento.”


411 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, caja 14243: “Primeramente en los quatro Nichos de los dos angulos del Claustro en que van los quadros de los Misterios se han de poner sus cachas de madera aserrardiza, y sobre ellas su entablado todo el ancho, y alto de ellos, ha de llenar el correspondiente hueco el que se ha de llenar de lienzo, à fin de hibitar las humedades para que no las perciban los expresados quadros y se hechen a perder por ellas.....Asi mismo quatro cortinas de lienzo, olandilla de color con sus forros de lienzo regular para cubrir los citados quadros...”
Morales links a painted sketch of the *Last Supper* in the Museo Provincial de Córdoba to the San Pascual commission.\(^{412}\) There is no firm evidence to prove this, however, and the sketch's style, composition and horizontal format relate better to a painting of the same subject by Maella in 1794.\(^{413}\) A possible connection, however, is a painting of the *Last Supper* in the storerooms of Aranjuez Palace (fig. 124).\(^{414}\) Because the painting is in extremely bad condition and has been extensively repainted, it is hard to judge properly. However, the picture displays affinities with Maella's style, notably in its references to classical paintings in the facial types of the Apostles and the warmish tones of the colours. The compact verticality of the composition, framed by the two columns on either side with an open table in the middle around which are placed Christ's disciples, relates to two drawings by Maella in the Royal Palace and the Biblioteca Nacional (figs 125 & 126).\(^{415}\)

Meanwhile, Tiepolo had his modelli ready for presentation by 5th August 1767 when they were sent to the king for his approval.\(^{416}\) Tiepolo completed the paintings in August 1769, promptly receiving his next commission to paint the cupola of La Granja. However, his paintings for San Pascual Baylón remained in his studio and they were not seen by the king until the opening of the convent on 16th and 17th May 1770.\(^{417}\) More than a year later, a letter of 10th November 1771 from Eleta to Sabatini indicates that Tiepolo's paintings did not meet with Charles's approval, and he decided to replace them with paintings by Mengs and his followers, Maella and Bayeu.\(^{418}\) Mengs, who was in Italy, was given responsibility for providing a new painting for the main altar, which he delivered on his return to Spain in July

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\(^{412}\) Morales (1996), pp. 102-103, cat. no. 15.

\(^{413}\) Ibid, p. 164, cat. 153. Signed and dated, Maella P. ft. 1794. Three compositional drawings in the Royal Collection are loosely connected to both paintings.

\(^{414}\) Palacio de Aranjuez, inv. no. PI-18E1950P, oil on canvas, 294 x 185 cm without the frame, and 324 x 215 cm with the frame. Jose Manuel de la Mano (oral communication) has kindly informed me that the painting which Maella painted for the refectory measured 10 by 5 *pies*, which would roughly make it 280 x 140 cm.

\(^{415}\) The drawing in the Biblioteca Nacional (Barcia (1906), cat. no. 1338 as by Maella) has also been attributed to Zacarias Gonzalez Velázquez in connection with a lost high altarpiece for the church of the Oratorio de los Caballeros, Madrid. However there is no evidence for this. The drawing at the Royal Palace shows a similar composition in the upper half, while the bottom part indicates that Maella perhaps envisaged a tabernacle to be fitted in front of his composition. See Diaz Gallegos (1990), Vol. II, cat. no. 330, p. 439, 57.6 x 28.3 cm, black chalk, who believes that the drawing may be connected with an abandoned project for the decoration of the Sagrario at Jaen cathedral in 1794.

\(^{416}\) Whistler (1985), p.323. Six of Tiepolo's modelli (Immaculate Conception, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Pascual Baylón, St. Francis and St. Joseph and the Child) were owned by Francisco Bayeu, of which five are now in the Courtauld Gallery. See catalogue of the Princes Gate Collection, Courtauld Institute Gallery, 1981, London, cat. no. 111-116, p. 75.

\(^{417}\) Archivo del Instituto Valencia de Don Juan: Caja 170, envio 127. "Queda el Rey enterado por el papel de V.S. de ayer de que ha muerto el pintor Dn. Juan Baptista Tiepolo, y manda que V.S. recoja los quadros que tenía hechos el difunto para el convento de Sn Paschal de Aranjuez, y que V. S. se los hagan ver a S.M luego que se restituya a Madrid. Dios guarde a V.S.ma el Pardo 28 de Marzo 1770, Miguel Muzquiz to Sabatini."\(^{418}\)

\(^{418}\) The letter is quoted by Whistler, (1985), p.325-326, but with the wrong date of 10th November 1770. For correct date see De la Mano, "Tiepolo’s commission for the Collegiate church of the Holy Trinity
Maella was ordered to paint four paintings of the Stigmata, St. Peter, St. Anthony and St. Joseph as soon as possible, while Bayeu was to paint the Immaculate Conception. The altar previously dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo was replaced with an ivory sculpture of a Crucifixion given to Charles by Pope Clement XIV just after the opening of the church. Whistler explains that substitution in relation to the Jansenist associations which St. Charles had acquired during the 18th century. Another possible reason is Tiepolo’s representation of St. Charles’s facial features, with an exceedingly large nose, which may have offended Charles. The saint was known to have had a disproportionately large nose, as remarked by Ayala, in his Pintor Erudito Christiano, where he warns painters not to exaggerate the size of St. Charles’s nose. If one compares Tiepolo’s representation with others by Maella or Castillo, it is clear that the latter have somewhat toned down his facial features. However, the most logical explanation for this substitution relates to the fact that Clement XIV, a Franciscan himself, and so probably delighted by Charles’s patronage and efforts to build these convents, had just declared his support for the Immaculate Conception, to which Charles had responded by calling his grandson Carlos Clemente. In consequence, the ivory crucifix was considered a precious gift for which Charles was ready to sacrifice his name saint.

Why Charles decided to replace Tiepolo’s altar paintings is as much a mystery as his choice of the Venetian painter for the commission in the first place. In any case, the death of Tiepolo may have made Charles realise that if he wanted consistency in his commissions, he should employ Mengs and his pupils throughout. Neither the subjects nor the iconography were altered, suggesting that the change was more a question of taste and decorum. Tiepolo’s

Whistler (1985), p. 326, footnote 50: quotes a bill submitted by Sabatini on 1st August 1775 which mentions the collocation of Mengs’s painting on the main altar.  
Ponz visited Aranjuez in 1772, he saw Tiepolo’s pictures on the altars and they were probably not removed until 1775. Maella does not seem to have completed all his paintings until the end of 1772. See A.G.P. Reales Sitios, San Ildefonso La Granja, caja 13626. Letter dated 2nd of September 1772 from Maella to Bernardo Iriarte about an altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception for La Granja, adds that: “estimare pregunte Vm a S.exla. si desea este quadro pronto pues ya save Vm tengo encargados tres quadros para el con (convento?) lo entonce lo de Aranjuez y si e de poner mano al quadro de la Concepcion sera menester dejar los otros para mas adelante.”  
Ayala (1782), Madrid, Tomo II, p. 446: “teniendo este varon santisimo algo mas larga la nariz de lo que correspondia á su rostro, algunos pintores se la han alargado demasiado, y en estremo...”  
Sánchez Cantón believed that Eleta was responsible for the substitutions, preferring Mengs’s neoclassical style to Tiepolo’s rococo style. See Sánchez Cantón, in Ars Hispaniae, Vol. XVII: Escultura y Pintura del siglo XVIII, Madrid, 1965, Part I, p. 182. Also by the same author, “Tiepolo en Madrid”, in Arte Español, 1924, pp. 106-119; “Los Tiepolos de Aranjuez”, Archivo Español de Arte, 1927, pp. 1-17; “Bocetos y dibujos del Tiepolo”, Archivo Español de Arte, 1929, pp. 137-143, and Tiepolo en España, Madrid, 1953. Whistler (1996), cat. 40 a-b, pp. 242-246, gives a more balanced argument, suggesting that Eleta’s supervisory role had been greatly exaggerated. Using documentation, she concludes that the substitution reflected Charles’s taste for religious painting, rather than a general preference for Neoclassicism over Rococo, which was usually held to be the reason for the rejection.
visual interpretation of the Alcantarine saints, St. Paschal and St. Peter, may have been considered too literal. The spiritual intensity of his figures’ poses and facial expressions and his rough and expressive painterly style may have been considered too “poor” in the context of the sumptuous interior. By following too closely the Alcantarines’ ethos of poverty and rigid rules of contemplation, Tiepolo may have been viewed as distancing his style too far from the sumptuousness of the “royal” décor.

Only Mengs’s altarpiece, painted on a wooden panel that would have demanded extensive preparation, still survives in situ, as the other paintings were probably destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. Despite dirt and soot that make it difficult to see or photograph Mengs’s altarpiece, it is striking for its smooth finish.424 A squared-up preparatory drawing, closely related to the composition, gives us an idea of its composition and lighting effects (fig. 127).425 As in the Adoration of the Shepherds, the lighting comes from one specific source, in this case the host held by an effeminate angel that shines out illuminating the scene. St. Paschal looks straight at the angel. Rather than having just been interrupted in his gardening, as Tiepolo had shown him, he is portrayed in the act of fervent prayer, while a colleague digs in the background. In this way the viewer is transported from the world around him into a mystical experience. Instead of portraying the saint in a realistic space, as was the case in Tiepolo’s painting, Mengs presents an idealised, almost unrealistically serene scene.

The sense of timelessness created by such stylistic perfection is echoed in Maella’s drawing and painted sketch for the oval of St Peter Alcántara (fig. 128 & 129).426 While Tiepolo had portrayed St. Peter in a realistic manner, sitting in his cell writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with a wooden cross on the floor, Maella’s representation is more conventional, without such realistic elements. In Maella’s painting, two angels hold the cross and point to it, telling St. Peter to take inspiration directly from the Passion of Christ.

Another item that may help to shed light on Charles’s dissatisfaction with Tiepolo’s religious paintings is an etching of the Immaculate Conception after Francisco Bayeu by his younger brother Ramón (fig. 130). Ramón frequently copied his brother’s work and it is possible that he copied Francisco’s painting of the Immaculate Conception in the studio before it was taken to San Pascual Baylón to replace Tiepolo’s version. The etching, like Francisco Bayeu’s canvas incorporates the shape of the canvas cut to fit the frame specially designed for the altarpieces in the transept. Tiepolo’s oil sketch and final composition for the

424 Patrimonio Nacional, inv. no. Pl-18D2061P, oil on panel, 340 x 200 cm.
426 The drawing is in the Royal Collection in the Albumes de Dibujos de Fernando VII, Vol II, no. 209, measures 29 x 23.5 cm, black chalk on primed paper. Díaz Callegos, (1990), Vol. II, cat. no. 408, suggests that it could be connected with the commission, but makes no mention of the publication of
Immaculate Conception also incorporate this detail. Comparisons with the etching and Tiepolo’s final version are revealing (fig. 131). In Tiepolo’s version, the Virgin stands on the globe and treads on the serpent with an air of triumph and defiance. Although her eyes are looking down, her head is raised and she confronts the viewer with a majestic air. In contrast, Bayeu’s Virgin is humble and less domineering. Her head leans to one side as she looks meekly downwards. Her hands are folded against each other over her heart. It is possible that Charles and Eleta found Tiepolo’s imagery too militant, opting instead for a more modest and simple interpretation of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

Convent of Arenas de San Pedro

The Alcantarine convent outside the town of Arenas de San Pedro, at the foot of the Sierra de los Gredos, was founded by St. Peter in 1561, a year before his death. By the 18th century, the convent needed modernisation, and in 1755, the friars called upon Ventura Rodriguez to design a chapel as a burial chamber and shrine for St. Peter. The project was not completed, however, and in 1770 the friars petitioned Eleta to request royal support. On 18th April 1771 a royal decree declared the Chapel under royal patronage and in 1772, Charles provided funds to enable building to continue following Rodriguez’s designs. From what can be seen today, the chapel’s appearance is close to that of the Palafox chapel in Burgo de Osma. Its circular ground plan is crowned with a cupola, richly decorated with stucco supported by pilasters with Corinthian capitals. Breaking the circular format, black marble columns with gilded capitals open up the space into the main altar and the entrance. Ponz, who described it as “suntuosa”, seems to have been impressed by the overall good taste, remarking that “the building is beautiful in its form, and any rich decoration will suit it, as do the stones (used in its construction), which are utilized and placed with care and taste.”


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The most impressive feature of the chapel is the coloured marbles specially extracted from Spanish quarries, in accordance with contemporary ideas of “buen gusto” (fig.132).431

While Charles financed the architectural works, the decoration of the main altar was paid for by two nobles who presumably wished to show their support for the king’s patronage of the Alcantarines. A neo-classical urn on the main altar, specially designed to hold St. Peter’s remains, was paid for in 1771 by the king’s mayordomo, Don Pedro de Alcántara Fernández de Córdoba, Duke of Medinaceli.432 Above it, a stucco and marble relief showing the *Apotheosis of St. Peter* with an inscription held by angels “Ετ ΕρΙΤ ΣΕΠΥΛΚΡΟΜ ΕΙΟΥ ΓΛΟΙΩΣΟΝ” (Isaiah Cap. XI, verse x. “and his resting place shall be glorious”) by the court sculptor and Academician Francisco Gutiérrez was commissioned by the Duke of the Infantado (fig. 133).433 The ensemble is recorded in Salvador Carmona’s engraving, commissioned in 1773 by the Duke of Medinaceli and dedicated to Charles III (fig. 134).434 The chapel was not officially consecrated until 1775, however, and surviving documents indicate that St. Peter’s relics were not actually inserted into the urn until 22nd September 1776.435 In 1777, three keys to the urn were symbolically given to the king, the Duke of the Infantado and the convent.436

A manuscript by Eleta’s secretary, Fr. Vicente de Estremera (1716-1778), provides information about the construction of the chapel from 1750 to 1776.437 Written as a kind of

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431 According to Ponz, ibid: “El mármol negro de los montes de Toledo ha servido para las columnas, y es el llamado “de San Pablo”, con vetas blancas. Las pilastras son de otro mármol negruzco traído del Real de San Vicente, término de Garciotum, nueve leguas distante. Para las bases y otras partes de la arquitectura se ha usado el mármol de Montesclaros que dista tres leguas del convento. En las mesas de los altares, marcos y otros ornatos han servido el verde de Granada, el pajizo y morado de Cuenca y de Tortosa.”

432 On the urn is the following inscription: “A devoción del Excelentísimo señor d. Pedro de Alcántara Fernández de Córdoba, Moncada, y la Cerda, Duque de Medinaceli: MDCCLXXI”. Aside from the fact that St. Peter was the Duke of Medinaceli’s patron saint, the Duke seems to have been particularly devoted to the Franciscans. In 1786 he commissioned Goya to paint an *Incarnation* for the family church of San Antonio del Prado which was under Capuchin rule. Two lunettes over the neo-classical altar contained his coat of arms and that of St. Francis. See *Memorial Literario*, VII, February, 1786, no. XXVI.


435 An inscription above the main entrance of the chapel reads: “Divo Petro de Alcántara/ Sacellvm/ atque aram/ Carolv III. Hispan. Rex/ Et Christianvs popvlvs/ Piis svbsidiis collatis/ Anno MDCCLXXV posvere”.

436 The original manuscript is in the Archivo Diocesano de Avila, but a photocopy is kept in the Archivo Franciscano, signatura B7/26: *Sucesos acaecidos durante la obra de la Capilla de San Pedro de Alcántara a Fr. Vicente de Estremera*, Ms 212 fols. *Original De Fr. Vicente*. The manuscript was published by Obra Social y Cultural de la Caja Central de Ahorros y Prestamo de Avila in 1977, with a prologue by Antolin Abad Pérez.
logbook and diary, it contains details of the materials used, from lead sheeting to different types of marble. It also mentions that the relics of two martyrs, St. Vincent and St. Celestine, were brought from Rome and placed in urns above the paintings in the side altars. The paintings now above the side altars, probably those originally commissioned for the chapel, are of two Alcantarine saints, St. Paschal Kneeling before a Vision of the Eucharist (fig. 135) and the Apotheosis of St. Peter Baptist (fig. 136). Unfortunately Estremera only mentions the paintings when referring to the relics or the green marble and the columns that were to frame them, without commenting on their subject or authorship. In 1772, however, Estremera mentions that "the side altars will contain a painting each, which Valerio Aragonés is making."

No painter by the name of Valerio Aragonés is known. Ponz provides no help, as he says the pictures were not yet installed when he visited the church in 1778. An attribution to Maella has been suggested, but drawings and bozzetti not previously linked to this commission enable us to re-attribute these paintings to Francisco Bayeu. Bayeu was Aragonese, which could explain Estremera’s reference, although the reference to Valerio is still obscure. To complicate matters further, however, a document in the Royal Palace archive indicates that the interior decoration continued well until 1788, when Sabatini intervened, providing the final touches. A letter from Eleta to Sabatini of 11th July 1788 indicates that details such as the capitals and the bases of columns still remained to be completed and gilded. Eleta also mentions that the king wanted to see the two altar tables completed for the side altars, in preparation for the arrival of two paintings of St. Francis and St. Anthony, now lost or probably never installed.

With regard to the two paintings presently at Arenas, no record of Bayeu’s involvement in this commission survive, but it is possible that Bayeu painted them after 1788. The technique, the style and colouring, as well as the surviving preparatory works, all point to

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438 Ibid, p. 375 “sobre cada cuadro de los dos de los colaterales, queda el hueco de un arco, cuyo el poco sagita es de 6 pies y por la imposta 12, pensó Dn Ventura Rodriguez llenar aquel hueco con dos urnas.” St. Vincent Martyr was a deacon and protomartyr of Spain. According to tradition he was educated and ordained by the Bishop of Saragossa, Valerius. He was martyred under Diocletian’s persecution in 304. St. Celestine (1215-1296) was a monk and founder of the Celestine Order. He was also the only pope to resign voluntarily. Basing his ideas on Benedictine rule, he emphasized solitary life and had some contact with the Franciscan Spirituals, which may explain why his relics are here. Both are painted on oak panels. St. Paschal measures 257 x 157 cm and St. Peter 260 x 160 cm. Apart from superficial dirt, they are in good condition.

440 Sucesos (1977), p. 284: “Los colaterales han de llevar cada uno un cuadro que los está haciendo Valerio Aragonés.” The name Valerio may have been mistranscribed and could perhaps be read as Valleu, i.e. Bayeu.

441 Ponz (1947), p. 382: “en los que se han de poner pinturas.”

442 Navarro, A. Santi Quaranta semblanza histórico-artística, 1977, Rome, p. 53: The church of Santi Quaranta, also known as San Pasquale Baylone was the Alcantarine centre in Rome, built under Philip V in 1738, and consecrated in 1744.


444 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, Caja 18.231.
Bayeu as their author. The painting of St. Paschal is reminiscent of Tiepolo’s final version for Aranjuez in the colouring and the pose taken by the angel holding the monstrance, while the barely perceptible brushstrokes remind us of Mengs. The folds in the drapery, the study and effect of the falling light, the use of glazes, the facial types, including those of the small putti, are all direct references to Mengs’s style. A drawing for the figure of St. Paschal shows how Bayeu transcribed faithfully each fold of the drapery into paint, leaving the hands out, probably a detail which he studied individually, using it as a kind of cartoon when painting the final picture (fig. 137). 446 Two painted sketches for this composition survive. In one, St. Paschal is shown with his arms outspread in ecstasy while the angel holding the monstrance is half-concealed by clouds (fig. 138). 447 The other, probably Bayeu’s modello considering how close it is to the final composition, shows St. Paschal in prayer concentrating on the host before him (fig. 139). 448

St. Peter Baptist is shown on a cloud in apotheosis, surrounded by the attributes of his martyrdom by crucifixion at Nagasaki on 5th February 1597. 449 The saint had been one of several Franciscans sent by the Governor of the Philippine Islands as ambassadors in 1593, while negotiations were pending between the Emperor of Japan and Spain. 450 They were well received by the emperor and able to establish convents, schools and hospitals and effect many conversions. However on 20th October 1596, a Spanish vessel, the “San Felipe” was stranded on the isle of Tosa, and according to Japanese law it became the Emperor’s property. The captain of the “San Felipe” foolishly extolled the power of the Spanish king and said that the missionaries in Japan had been sent to prepare for the conquest of the country. In fury, the Emperor imprisoned them, and then crucified them. Among the missionaries were six members of the First order of St. Francis, including Peter Baptist and Martin of the Ascension. St. Peter was beatified in 1627 and canonised on 8th June 1842 by Pius IX. As a missionary, he represented an Alcantarine parallel to the Jesuits, who similarly spread the word of God in China.

445 ibid.
446 Arnfiez (1975), cat. F.A. 343, p. 118: catalogued as Santo Franciscano and not related to the Arenas commission. Red chalk with white highlights, squared-up, 35.8 x 26 cm.
447 Museo del Prado, cat. 2900. Catalogued as anonymous.
448 Private collection, oil on canvas, 68 x 49 cm. The painting is only known through a photograph at the Archivo Mas, Barcelona, (P.2900). The modello is framed with in a miniature altarpiece, but bears no relation with the altarpiece at Arenas, and was more likely used later as a private oratory. A picture of the same subject in the inventory of Bayeu’s collection is recorded as “Un borrón, San Pascual adorando al Sacramento que sostiene un ángel, maltratado.” See Saltillo, Marqués de, (1952), no. 154, p. 77.
For his composition, Bayeu prepared a modello (fig. 140). A detailed drawing of St. Peter Baptist’s head shows Bayeu’s painstaking effort to achieve a life-like portrayal of the saint (fig. 141). Small incision marks around the nose and eyes show that he used it as a kind of cartoon.

Apart from complementing the main altar, dedicated to St. Peter Alcántara, these two pictures serve as perfect examples of the type of religious image that Charles favoured for his Alcantarine commissions, indicating the reason for Tiepolo’s lack of success at Aranjuez. Charles evidently preferred the polished, idealized products of Mengs and his disciples, whose faultless images evoked a promise of security, permanence and incorruptibility.

The decision to dedicate a commission solely to members of the Alcantarine order is new in the tradition of Alcantarine iconography. It seems that the original idea of representing other Franciscan saints such as St. Francis himself or St. Anthony, as had been done in the San Pascual commission, was abandoned, probably because Charles was now sufficiently confident to dedicate the entire programme to the Alcantarines. During Charles’s reign, various efforts were made to add more saints to the order. For example, Charles ordered a biography to be written of the Fray Sebastian de Jesús Sillero, whom he had encountered during his childhood in Seville. Although he eventually rejected the book for publication because it contained numerous preposterous accounts of unlikely miracles, a print was commissioned from Salvador Carmona after a painting by Ferro in 1782, showing Fray Sebastián de Jesús Sillero giving out bread as a charitable act. In 1788, Floridablanca wrote to Azara in Rome asking him to push forward the Beatification of another member of the Alcantarines, a certain Friar Andrés de Hibernon. Had the large convent of St. Peter Alcántara been built, Charles would have been able to demonstrate to the fullest extent his patronage of the Alcantarines. Instead, however, he got involved in an even more ambitious commission, which dealt with the Franciscan order as a whole rather than just the reformed branch of the Alcantarines.

451 Morales (1995), cat. no. 140, p. 108. Gives a random date of 1780, but does not connect it to the Arenas commission. Oil on canvas, 68 x 48 cm.
452 Arméz (1975), F.A. (621), p. 155: who catalogues it as by Ramón Bayeu in relation to St. Anthony’s head for the painting of Virgin with St. Francis and St. Anthony painted in 1787 for the convent/church of St. Ana y Joachin, Valladolid. However close comparisons with the St. Peter picture reveals that the drawing is connected with the Arenas commission.
454 Carrete (1989), cat. no. 197, p. 130.
455 A.H.N., leg. 2851(2) Copia de la carta escrita en 20 de Mayo de 1788 por Floridablanca to Azara. “Para que se promovieron la causa de Beatificacion del V Siervo de Dios F. Andrés de Hibernon. Religioso lego de los Descalzos de Sn Francisco, natural de Murcia y cuyo cuerpo se conserva en el convento de Sn Roque de Religiosos de la misma orden de la Ciudad de Gandia...”
CHAPTER VIII

CHARLES III’S PUBLIC RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS: SAN FRANCISCO EL GRANDE, THE CLIMAX OF CHARLES’S PATRONAGE OF THE FRANCISCANS

Charles’s most significant Franciscan commission, and indeed his most ambitious project in terms of religious patronage, was the re-construction of the convent-church of San Francisco el Grande in Madrid, on which work had been commenced in 1761. In taking charge of the project in 1772, with a view to rebuilding San Francisco el Grande as a Spanish counterpart to the Franciscans’ motherhouse in Assisi, Charles aimed to provide the Spanish branch of the order with a base from which to control their missions in the New World and the Holy Land. In addition, the immense church was intended to promote the order’s public visibility, capable of containing large crowds and acting as a focus for important processions. Like the transformation of the Jesuit College into San Isidro and the construction of the Palafox chapel in Burgo de Osma, San Francisco was part of Charles’s broader strategy of drawing on religion in pursuit of political objectives.

Charles’s support for the Franciscans in rebuilding San Francisco el Grande follows in a tradition of Spanish monarchs seeking to underpin their rule and authority through an alliance with a religious order, involving expenditure on ambitious building projects. Both Charles V and Philip II had associated themselves with the Hieronymites, for whom Philip II built the Escorial to reflect both their religious ideals and the power of the monarchy. Like the Hapsburgs, Charles III realised that he needed a strong and durable alliance with a religious order to promote and defend his religious ideals while maintaining good relations with the Holy See. San Francisco el Grande was designed as a public affirmation of Charles’s commitment to reform, backed by the harmonious alliance between the Spanish monarchy and the Franciscans.

The manner in which the San Francisco project was conceived and executed sheds interesting light both on the role of the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand as monitor and arbiter in matters of aesthetic taste and on the role of the king as royal patron. Extensive documentation survives relating to its various stages, making it one of the best-documented projects of the period. The Count of Floridablanca, as First minister and Protector of the

456 Barriuso García, P. San Francisco el Grande de Madrid-Aportación documental para su historia, Madrid, 1975, p.223.
Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand, was responsible for the decorative aspects, almost certainly assisted by Eleta on matters of iconography and decorum.

Reflecting contemporary enlightened thought on religious matters, Floridablanca, who also participated in the organisation of the San Francisco commission, was concerned that the iconography and decorum of the pictures should set an example for other churches in Madrid and elsewhere in Spain. In 1782, Floridablanca sponsored the translation of Interián de Ayala’s El Pintor Christiano y Erudito, originally published in Latin in 1730, with a view to broader awareness of the need for “correctness” in religious painting. Ayala (1657-1730) had written his book as a guide for painters and sculptors of religious images, drawing on his erudition and knowledge of the Bible with a view to combating the ignorance of both artists and patrons, and waging war on idolatrous exaggeration and misinterpretation. Along with the works of Pacheco and Palomino, his treatise was an important component of contemporary artists’ personal libraries.

The 1782 Spanish edition incorporates an introductory letter addressed to Floridablanca stating the objective of the Treatise: “This work which I present to Your Excellency is intended for the instruction of Painters and Sculptors with regard to the history, rites and customs of the Nations, and principally as regards Religion and Sacred and Ecclesiastical History, as represented in images of worship whose defects in this respect may induce harmful errors among the rude and ignorant.” The introductory letter adds that “given the current state of the noble arts of Painting and Sculpture, thanks to the Royal protection that they have received from our august monarch Charles III, no time could be more convenient than the present to publish a book in Spanish dealing in detail with the effects and absurdities frequently committed by painters when producing sacred images.”

457 Ayala, Interián de, El Pintor Christiano, y erudito & tratado de los errores que suelen cometerse frecuentemente en pintor, y esculpir las Imágenes Sagradas, 1782, Joaquin Ibarra, impresos de Camara S.M. Madrid. A theologian, philosopher and author of several treatises and sermons, Ayala was born in Madrid and studied at Alcalá de Henares, where he entered the Mercedarian order in 1672. Later, he studied philosophy in Huete and theology at the University of Salamanca, where he became Rector of the Colegio de la Vera Cruz. In 1714, he was appointed a member of the newly founded Royal Spanish Academy in Madrid, participating in the compilation of the Diccionario de Autoridades published under the patronage of Philip V.

458 For example the inventory of Bayeu’s possessions included a copy of Ayala’s treatise. See Morales (1996), Doc. 217, p. 277.

459 Ayala (1782), Dedicatoria, p. III: “Esta obra que presento a V.E se dirige á la instruccion de los Pintores, Escultores, en lo tocante á la historia, y á los ritos, y costumbres de las Naciones, y principalmente en lo que mira á la Religion, y a la Historia Sagrada, y Eclesiastica por Imágenes que se exponen a nuestro culto, cuyos defectos en esta parte pueden imbuir errores perjudiciales al pueblo rudo, e ignorante.”

460 Ayala (1782), Prologo, p. VI: “estando las nobles Artes de la Pintura, y Escultura por la Real proteccion que han logrado de nuestro Augusto Monarca Carlos III, en ningun tiempo como al presente podia ser mas conveniente el darse a luz en lengua vulgar un libro que trata con particularidad de los defectos, y absurdos que cometen frecuentemente Pintores y Escultores en las Imágenes Sagradas.”
As in the case of the Palafox chapel, it was to prove less than totally successful. At its opening in December 1784, San Francisco el Grande was attacked by critics such as Ponz, who considered its decorative programme an artistic failure. While the religious contents of the altar paintings were not contested, the style in which they were painted proved controversial, undermining their impact as instruments of religious and political propaganda.

A brief history

The origins of San Francisco el Grande date back to 1217, when St. Francis is said to have visited Madrid in the course of his travels through Spain. According to León Pinelo, in his Anales de Madrid, St. Francis was offered a plot of land to erect a hermitage outside the city walls to the southwest of Madrid near the Puerta de los Moros. On this land, his disciples built a convent dedicated to Jesus and Mary, which slowly grew in size thanks to donations from royal patrons and noble families. Near the hermitage, St. Francis is said to have drunk from a fountain that was later claimed to have miraculous powers. Although it apparently dried up very quickly, this enhanced the importance of the convent. Eventually, a new Franciscan convent was erected, dedicated initially to Santa Maria de los Angeles and later to St. Francis himself.

Throughout the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries the church was a popular destination for royal pilgrimages and a number of royal personages chose to be buried there, including Queen Juana who entered the convent as a nun in 1474. From 1615 onwards, the cult of the image of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, carved by an indigenous sculptor from the Americas and known as “la Indiana”, attracted a strong following. During this period, the convent served as the headquarters of the Obra Pia de los Santos Lugares, a survival from the Crusades that still controlled most of the Franciscan missions in the Holy Land and North Africa.

The Obra Pia, which still operates today under the auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, served as a secular organisation to provide the Franciscan missions with financial assistance. While members of the order performed spiritual works, the Obra Pia took care of their economic needs, reflecting the fact that the Franciscans, as a mendicant order, could not directly involve themselves in material issues. Initially, most of the donations came from merchants and pilgrims as a contribution towards the general upkeep and protection of holy sites such as the Holy Sepulchre. In 1477, Queen Isabella of Castile demonstrated her support by bestowing 300 florins a year. Royal support in France, England and Italy also contributed to raising funds. The tradition maintained by Charles I, Philip II and Philip IV, continued well into the 18th century. The Obra Pia’s financial power was such that in 1619...
Pope Paul V, in a Papal Brief entitled *Caelestis regis*, issued an order that money bestowed on it should be used only for the maintenance of holy sites and not be lent or invested. By the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, its immense wealth had made it a force to be reckoned with.

**The rebuilding of San Francisco el Grande**

The idea of rebuilding the convent initially stemmed from Padre Antonio Juan de Molina, Commissary General of the Francisco, and Padre Francisco Freile, Superior of the Convent, in 1760.\textsuperscript{462} Construction of the old convent had spanned a number of centuries, meaning that it lacked a unified style, although the Gothic style was predominant. Such a medley of styles was not appreciated at the time and both men wanted to give their convent a new and more up-to-date image. On 31\textsuperscript{st} August 1760, the Holy Sacrament was transferred from the old church to the neighbouring chapel of the Tertiary Order, and the building was razed to its foundations, with the destruction of sculptured tombs and chapel decorations.

The archive of the Obra Pía, now in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contains details of contracts and expenditure related to the re-building, ranging from payments to bricklayers to painters’ expenses in the final stages of decoration. As we shall see, controversy over the architectural plans and fears that the building might collapse prompted architects from the Academy and elsewhere to contribute lengthy discourses on theory and practicality. Kept in the Academy’s archive, they reveal affinities with the arguments that accompanied the 16\textsuperscript{th} century construction of St. Peter’s in Rome. Some of Spain’s best architects of the period participated in this debate, including Ventura Rodriguez, Diego de Villanueva and José de Hermosilla.

The first series of plans, dating from April 1761, were the work of Ventura Rodriguez (1717-1785), a member of the Academy and a celebrated architect. As a member of the Tertiary Order, or secular branch of the Franciscans and a friend of the Friars, Rodriguez drew up plans designed to “have a church suitable for the Community and Town that are to use it, giving it the location required by the lay of the terrain and streets to provide access to it.”\textsuperscript{463}

However, the friars rejected Rodriguez’s proposal, which included plans to pull down the Cuarto de Indias, a group of offices which they wanted to preserve, and to install the choir.

\textsuperscript{461} León Pinelo, A. *Anales de Madrid* (from 447 to 1658) Transcription in chronological order by Pedro Fernández Martín C.S.I.C. Instituto de Estudios Madrileños, Madrid, 1971, p.25.

\textsuperscript{462} The most complete accounts of the construction of San Francisco are to be found in: Barriuso (1975), p.116 & Ferrándiz, José, “San Francisco el Grande”, in *Revista de la Biblioteca, Archivo y Museo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid*, Año I, 1924, no.4, p.433.
stalls behind the Presbytery, rather than in front of the main altar as was customary in conventional monastic orders. Their rejection prompted a storm of criticism from contemporary men of letters and representatives of the new taste such as Jovellanos and Ceán Bermúdez. Jovellanos in his Elogio de don Ventura Rodriguez lamented that the designs “were robbed from the public, nay, even worse, from Rodríguez’s reputation.”

Ceán, although he never saw the designs, mentioned in his contribution to the Noticias de Arquitectos Españoles coordinated by Llaguno, that the Professors who had been able to study Rodríguez’s plans “still lament that the works were never put into effect, because as they say, it would have been a building that would have caused admiration and pleasure.”

Ponz, joining the lament, wrote in his description in Tome V, that “it could have been one of the best buildings in Madrid.”

In Rodríguez’s place, the friars decided to employ a Franciscan, Francisco de las Cabezas, who had built the convents of Alcoy and Alcira in his native province of Valencia and was strongly supported by Molina. Rather than drawing up his own design, however, he made use of designs by the Captain of the Corps of Engineers, José de Hermosilla. A document now in the Biblioteca Nacional, entitled Memoria sobre lo ocurrido con motivo de la obra de San Francisco llamado el Grande, compuesta de las noticias dadas por los mismos que han sido presentes a todos los lances que se esponen, explains in detail the vicissitudes of the building work. Although the date of the document is uncertain, it is thought to have been written by the architect Diego de Villanueva, whose name appears on its cover. It relates how Hermosilla, who had been in competition with Rodríguez for the contract to build San Francisco, was at the time busy building the General Royal Hospital, a project that included plans for a chapel. He gave his ideas for the design of this chapel to Cabezas, who presented them to the friars as his own plans for San Francisco.

The Friars presented the plans to the Vice-Protector of the Academy, Tiburcio Aguirre, and three professors of architecture, Ventura Rodríguez, Diego de Villanueva and

603 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., caja 32-3/2: “tener una Iglesia proporcionada a la Comunidad y Pueblo que le han de disfrutar, dándola el lugar que pide la disposición del terreno, y calles que han de servir de su uso.”

604 Jovellanos, Gaspar Melchor, in Obras, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo I, 1951, Elogio de Don Ventura Rodríguez, Archicitecto Mayor de esta Corte, pronunciado en la Sociedad Económica, y Adicionado con notas del mismo autor, pp. 372-373: “fueron robados al publico, más no a la reputación de Rodriguez.”

605 Llaguno y Amirola, E., Noticias de los Arquitectos y Arquitectura en España desde su restauración, con notas y documentos de D. Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, Madrid, 1829, Vol. IV, p. 243: “lloran todavía que no se hayan puesto por obra, porque según dicen, hubiera sido un edificio que causaría admiración y placer.”

606 Ponz (1782), p. 101: “pudo ser esta una de las fabricas mejores de Madrid.”

607 Biblioteca Nacional, Varios de Topografía Española, Ms. 18.226, doc 21, pp. 128-164: Memoria de lo ocurrido con motivo de las obras de San Francisco el Grande, compuesta de las noticias dadas por los mismos que han sido presentes a todos los lances que se esponen with the inscription “Villanueva” on the cover.
José Castañeda, who not only recognized the plans as Hermosilla’s, but discovered “shortcomings in the thickness and strength (of the walls) and various irregularities” in the designs. All agreed that the pillars supporting the dome should be strengthened in order to provide a safer structure. A description by Hermosilla of the plans tells us that the ground plan was circular, incorporating a main chapel that is “light (and) with an appropriate link to the sacristy”, and six side-chapels “of appropriate size, each with a different iconographic theme.” On 19th September 1761, a vague authorization from the Academy was given to proceed with the building works. The first stone was laid on 8th November 1761.

Initially, the Franciscans relied on donations to finance the rebuilding. However building costs rapidly became so high that in 1762, Freile, “without making a din”, applied for Papal permission to allow the Obra Pía to use their own financial resources to proceed with the construction. On 26th September 1762, Pope Clement XIII gave his authorization. But the building work was again interrupted in 1768. In that year, when the walls had reached 16 metres in height, the Academy declared the structure unsafe and not strong enough to hold any weight. Everything came to a halt. Apparently no effort had been made to fortify the buttresses and main pillars. This was to prove the occasion for Charles III to get involved, through his court architect, Sabatini. Cabezas resigned and left for Valencia, where he died in 1772.

According to the Memorial, Freile, now even more distressed, believed that only Sabatini could come up with a solution. Sabatini had examined Cabezas’s plans in 1761 and he now proposed to “give a new form to the church, removing the four pillars in the middle and forming a Greek cross.” However, the friars were against this as it meant that the work already done would have to be destroyed. The public, they feared, would be upset “to see the demolition of a work on which five and a half million reales had already been spent and which had been approved by the Academy.” Sabatini responded that he could not “continue a project that had been badly built with no stability, adding that each pillar was “a load of nuts” (costal de nueces).” What’s more, though he was willing to take up the commission, he said he needed permission to do so from the King.

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469 Barriuso (1975), p. 128: “fallos de grueso y fortificacion y varias irregularidades.”
470 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., 32-3/2 dated 13th September 1761: “despejada; comunicarse con oportunidad ala sacristía” & “de proporcionada magnitud, dispuestas entre si con diferente Iconografía.”
471 Eguren (1860), p.239: “sin meter ruido.”
472 Memorial, p. 7: “dar nueva forma a la Iglesia, deshaciendo los cuatro pilares del medio y formando una cruz griega.”
473 Ibid: “Al ver que se deshacia una obra en la que ya se habían invertido cinco millones y medio y que había sido aprobada por la Academia.”
474 Ibid: “continuar una obra mal construida y de ninguna firmeza, añadiendo la expresion de que cada pilar era un costal de nueces.”
While this discussion was going on, yet another architect, Antonio Pió, proposed a less costly solution. By lowering the height of the pillars and strengthening them, he said a safe structure could be guaranteed. Without the Academy’s consent, he set to work. The Academy, furious with his impertinence, fined him a sum of 100 ducats. He was later exonerated from the fine on 29th January 1769.475

After much debate, the Academy, at a Junta Ordinaria on 15th February 1769, finally accepted Sabatini’s plans as the most trustworthy.476 However this did not stop other architects from presenting their ideas, as is evidenced by a pamphlet published by Villanueva on 6th April 1769.477 In it, he claimed he could complete the project “without taking down anything that had already been built, giving the required stability needed to fragility that is justly and truly noted in its construction, making it more beautiful and magnificent.”478

Finally, the arguments between the Franciscans and the Academy left the Friars with no choice but to approach Charles III directly. His response, in addition to resolving the architectural controversy by permitting his architect Sabatini to take on the project, was to take over the Obra Pia itself and use its money to pay the costs without seeking Papal authorisation. From then on, although the Obra Pia pursued its traditional role, it effectively became a royal institution. In 1772, Charles III assumed complete patronage and sovereignty over San Francisco.479

In taking control of the Obra Pia, Charles III assumed spiritual authority over the Holy Land and the Franciscans, aggrandizing his position as Most Catholic Majesty. In doing so, he also placed himself in a long line of Catholic kings who had protected the Holy Land from infidels, beginning with the Angevin king of Sicily Roberto and Doña Sancha.480 In the final edict of 5 July 1785, Charles wrote: “And moved by the devotion that I have for St.

476 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., Junta Ordinaria, 12th February 1769, p. 535: “Reconocio la Academia su proyecto y lo halló perfecto porque corrige sus Errores cometidos en la obra, conserva todo lo que puede conservarse, mejora la forma interior y exterior del templo, lo hace mas capaz, enteramente firme y seguro, y al fin, es el remedio menos costoso que en el estado de la obra puede darse.”
477 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., caja 32-3/2. His plans, on display to the public in at Calle San Juan 1, displayed “una demonstración evidente, fundada en reglas, y autoridades de los grandes Maestros del Arte.”
478 Ibid: “sin deshacer nada de lo construido hasta el presente, dando la firmeza propia a la debilidad, que con justicia, y verdad se nota en su Construcción, haciéndola más hermosa, y magnífica.”
479 Real Cédula of 17th December 1772, Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, leg. 39/121: records Charles III’s decision to take charge of the Obra Pía, in view of “la irregularidad con que se procedía en la mudanza de los Religiosos, Comisarios de los Santos Lugares de Jerusalén en las Indias, la poca formalidad que había en la cuenta y razón de los caudales de esta Obra Pía, y otros abusos dignos de remedio. Y considerando que aun cuando no fuese Yo Patrono de ella, me obligan a reparar estos abusos y perjuicios las quantiosas limosnas con que han contribuido y contribuyen mis vasallos para la conservación, culto y decencia de aquellos Santos Lugares y sus Templos.” Specific conditions were laid out: “Que residan en mi Corte de Madrid un Comisario General de los Santos Lugares, un Procurador y un Lego de la Observancia de San Francisco, un Síndico y un Contador seculares, y que estos oficios sean siempre provistos a nominación mía y de los Reyes mis sucesores.”
480 In the Real Cédula, Charles declares himself heir to King Robert, and protector of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem.
Francis, by the attachment that I profess to his religious teachings and by the other motives stated: I declare, in conformity with the official text, that the new convent of San Francisco in Madrid, with all its living quarters, the Rooms of the Indies and of the Holy Places of Jerusalem and all other parts corresponding to the building and its dependencies, comes under the royal patronage of my Crown, and as such I appoint it to be under my direct protection and that of the Monarchs that shall succeed me.481

Once again, Eleta played a key role in this commission, which he saw as an opportunity to promote the king’s support of the Franciscans. When Charles III assumed control over San Francisco el Grande, Eleta was able to use his influence to full effect. His first target was Molina, whom he reproached for having abused a “patent laying down rules for the efficient administration of these assets” which Molina had actually devised in 1752.482 Since then, Eleta goes on to say, the Franciscan order had suffered “such an absolute despotism as could not be recalled on the part of any similar General of the Order.”483

On 9th October 1774, Sabatini wrote to Eleta stating his plans and the estimated cost of completing the works.484 With money from the Obra Pía’s coffers and additional Papal support specified in a bull issued by Pío VI on 30th January 1776 and with Sabatini as main architect, work on San Francisco finally resumed. Sabatini supervised the works, intervening at crucial moments with expertise and advice. The painters, sculptors, gilders and architects involved in the project were either salaried employees of the king who had previously worked on decorative programmes at San Pascual Baylén, Arenas de San Pedro and in the royal chapels in Aranjuez and El Pardo, or former pupils of the Royal Academy. In this way, it was hoped that Charles III could ensure the observance of his ideas on quality and correctness. Sabatini, having drawn up the plans, supervised the works from a distance, entrusting the practical side of the building to Miguel Fernández, one of the directors of architecture at the Academy. Although financial problems recurred in 1779 and 1781, leading to occasional standstills, Fernández managed to cover the foundations with a dome and provide the church with a facade. In December 1784, after total expenditure of 25,503,238 reales, nearly double

481 "Y movido por la devoción que tengo a San Francisco, del afecto que profeso a su religion, y las demás razones que quedan expresadas: declaro, en conformidad con la propia Escritura, que el nuevo convento de San Francisco, de Madrid, con todas sus habitaciones, Quartos de Indias, y de los Santos Lugares de Jerusalem, y todo lo demás correspondiente al edificio y accesorios, es del Real y efectivo Patronato de mi Corona, y como tal lo admito bajo mi inmediata protección y de los Reyes mis sucesores.” Taken from the Real Cédula, Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, leg. 39/122.
482 Barriuso (1975), p. 205-7, quoting Archivo de la Obra Pía, leg. 170, n.8: “Patente dando reglas en ella para la buena administración de estos caudales.”
483 Ibid: “un despotismo tan absoluto que no se tiene memoria le haya tenido semejante General alguno de la Orden.”
484 Ibid, “En este supuesto, he formado los planos y diseños de la compostura de la Iglesia y del Proyecto de el Nuevo convento, que paso a manos de V.I. y habiendo hecho el Abance del Coste por menor de uno y otro con separación, hallo que para concluir la Iglesia en los términos expresados son de menester quatro Millones de reales, y para ejecutar el Nuevo Convento se necesitaran ocho Millones.”

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the original estimate, the convent church of San Francisco el Grande was finally completed and ready to be opened to the public.

**The finished building**

In its external appearance and structure, San Francisco el Grande remains today very much as it was in the 18th century. Its cold and sober façade is built from the local dark grey granite. Its convex façade, facing eastwards, is composed of two levels with a pediment at the top bearing the Franciscan emblem of the two crossed arms, the symbols of the Obra Pia and the Crown on top. On the first level, three arches with Doric columns and pilasters contain three entrance doors. On the second, three rectangular windows are framed by columns of the Ionic order (fig. 142).

Originally, the friars had planned to have the façade decorated with six effigies of celebrated saints and members of the Franciscan order: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Buenaventura, St. Bernardino of Siena, St. Juan Capistrano, St. Diego of Alcalá and the Beato Salvador de Horta. These had been commissioned by the Franciscans in 1774 before Sabatini took over the project from the sculptor Francisco Martínez. Such exterior decoration, however, conflicted with Sabatini's idea of a clean and sober neoclassical façade and an engraving of 1784 shows the façade without the sculptures (fig. 143). Nevertheless, possibly after Sabatini's death in 1797, the sculptures were installed by the Franciscans, as shown by a bill drawn up in 1858 for their cleaning and restoration.

Inside the main entrance, a vestibule, 18 metres wide and 10 metres deep, has remained largely unchanged since the 18th century. The appearance of the main body of the church, however, was radically altered in 1885-6, when each of the six side-chapels was redecorated in a "pastiche" style of periods ranging from the Byzantine style to Mudejar, Italian Renaissance, Spanish Renaissance, Plateresque and Baroque. At the same time, artists such as Alejandro Moreno Carbonero and Casto Plasencia Domínguez were employed to paint the ceilings and walls with large religious and historical compositions. In the course of this re-modelling, the original main altarpiece was moved to a stairwell leading up to the choir-stalls, away from the main nave of the church, and cut down in size in order to fit it into

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488 For 19th century decoration, see Barriuso pp. 423-434. During the Spanish Civil War, the large cloister on the south side of the church was destroyed, while water infiltration damaged some of the 19th century frescos. Since the mid-1960s, the interior has been filled with scaffolding, set up originally to restore damage caused by damp.
its new location. The original side-altar paintings were relocated to the first two side chapels by the main entrance, where they still hang.\textsuperscript{489}

Contemporary descriptions allow us to reconstruct the original appearance of the church’s interior achieved by Sabatini and his assistant Fernández. Antonio Ponz was one of the first to write about the convent, in his second edition of the \textit{Viaje de Espana}, republished in 1782.\textsuperscript{490} Two issues of the \textit{Memorial Literario, Instructivo, y Curioso de la Corte de Madrid} published in December 1784 and April 1785 give an account of the church’s construction and decoration and narrate the inaugural ceremony. In 1860, Eguren published a recompilation of the events described in the \textit{Memorial Literario} in El Museo Universal, adding his own description of the interior and providing two engravings that show the original state of the church before the redecoration programme. These engravings show the open circular space, with three chapels on each side, and the high altar opposite the main entrance (fig. 144).

The decorative plans for the interior were less elaborate than those for the earlier royal interiors in which Charles III was directly involved. Rather than lavish expenditure on materials and ornamentation, as at San Pascual Baylón or Arenas de San Pedro, Eguren observed, the interior was characterised by “considerable meanness of the decoration.”\textsuperscript{491} He tells us that the “main altar was made out of plaster, as were those in the chapels, while on the facades of the convent they did not place even one single door post of granite”\textsuperscript{492} This, however, was in keeping with contemporary ideas on good taste and altarpieces, as expressed by Floridablanca in his letter to the Bishops of Spain in 1777.\textsuperscript{493}

The sheer size of the interior may also have influenced the type of decoration chosen. Details such as gilding and the use of expensive marbles would have been lost amid the

\textsuperscript{489} By that date the altarpieces were considered degenerate art as Manuel Mesonero Romanos remarks in his guide, San Francisco el Grande, Descripcion del Estado Actual del Templo precedida de una sumaria noticia de su historia, recuerdos y tradiciones, Madrid, 1889. He does however give an interesting description of the paintings, explaining their origins to 19th century viewers. “Llam6 el rey a competencia a sus profesores de c/ámara, que lo eran entonces los pintores de mayor fama, celebrandose con gran aplauso el éxito; pero la verdad es que el resultado de aquel certamen más patentiza la decadencia en que vivia el arte en aquel periodo, influido por el classicismo frio y falso de que Mengs era el corifeo, y fervorosos discípulos casi todos los autores de los lienzos. Ni uno solo de ellos alcanza valor extraordinario porque la idea o la factura aquella es de un artificio identico siempre y sumamente pobre; la ejecución, despreciando casi siempre las leyes de la perspectiva en la linea y el color.” Romanos, (1889), p. 65.

\textsuperscript{490} Ponz (1947), p. 441: “Es una rotunda, adornada de pilastras entre las capillas, tiene de diámetro sin contar el resalto de las pilastras, ni el fondo del presbiterio, 117 pies. Desde la línea de la fachada hasta el fondo del presbiterio hay la distancia de 225 pies, la del presbiterio es de 75 de fondo y 47 de ancho. Las seis capillas alrededor son de 35 pies en cuadrado. El pórtico tiene de ancho 67 pies y 37 de fondo y el coro que va encima, igual. La altura desde el pavimento hasta el anillo de la linterna es de 153 pies. La sacristía tiene 78 pies de larga y 26 y medio de ancho. La bóveda debajo de la Iglesia con gran numero de nichos para entierros, se extiende todo lo que es el ámbito de la Iglesia, Capillas y Presbiterio.”

\textsuperscript{491} Eguren (1860), p. 278: “mezquindad suma en el ornato.”

\textsuperscript{492} Ibíd: “retablo mayor se hizo de yeso y de no menos pobre materia los de las capillas y en las fachadas del convento no se puso una sola jamba de granito.”

\textsuperscript{493} Ponz (1947), pp. 352-353.
immense space and height of the dome. Cheaper stucco and plaster materials could also be set up relatively quickly. Within Sabatini's stark interior, the large altar-paintings would have compensated for the sobriety of the decoration. One may also speculate that a subtle, toned-down interior may have been regarded as more suitable for a church built for a mendicant order whose members based their relationship with God on poverty than the rich decoration chosen by the Jesuits for their church interiors. In contrast to the Jesuits, Sabatini and Floridablanca preferred to avoid extravagant use of gold leaf or architectural motifs with no particular function. Nonetheless, the layout of the chapels, each dedicated to a specific saint and organized in sequence, was reminiscent of the Jesuits' layout, which served both to facilitate worship and to communicate their didactic messages. In this way Charles and his artistic and architectural advisers drew on a formula that had already demonstrated its effectiveness in propagandistic terms in the hands of the Jesuits.

Other decorative features included a series of twelve sculpted angels situated, according to receipts kept in the Archivo de la Obra Pía, on each side of the six windows directly above the entrance to each side of the chapels. Sculpted in plaster by Alfonso Giraldo Vergaz (1744-1812), these angels measure 2.20 metres in height. According to Eguren, all are either holding a "gilded hieroglyph alluding to the life of one of the first saints of the order" or supporting the Franciscan emblem of a pair of crossed arms and St. Francis's stigmata.494

Over the main altar, another court sculptor, Manuel Adeva Pacheco (1732-1791), was paid on 27th June 1783 to sculpt a series of angels above and beneath the main altar and in each of the chapels above the altarpieces.495 The most prominent piece of sculpture, above the arch of the presbytery, showed two angels holding up a shield with the emblem of the five stigmata received by St. Francis and a sash on which is inscribed "Amoris Privilegia", said by Eguren to be by Francisco Gutiérrez.496 Otherwise, apart from the gilding of the stuccoed frames and the sculpted angels, 19th century engravings show the interior to have been empty of baroque extravagance (fig. 145).497

494 Eguren (1860) p. 288: "geroglífico dorado alusivo a la vida de uno de los primeros santos de la orden".
495 A.O.P. legajo 109e: "dos niños de siete pies y medio sobre el frontispicio del altar mayor, dos cabezas por bajo del cornisado del dicho altar, de media vara cada cabeza, que ocupan con las alas cinco pies y medio; otras dos cabezas semejantes a los lados del altar abajo separadas; seis cabezas en las seis capillas, una en cada capilla." For more information on Adeva Pacheco: see Urrea J. "El escultor Manuel Adeva Pacheco en Italia y España", IV Jornadas de Arte, C.S.I.C., El Arte en el Tiempo de Carlos III, 1989, pp.277-283.
496 Eguren (1860), p.288
The commissions for the main and side altarpieces

Recently published correspondence between Fray Manuel Bayeu, a Carthusian who was the brother of Francisco and Ramón Bayeu, and Martín Zapater, an Aragonese merchant and friend of both Goya and the Bayeu brothers, sheds light on the initial plans for the interior decoration of the church. The letter indicates that the architects originally had a different conception of the decorative aspects of the commission. In a letter dated 25th August 1781, we learn that, while it was always intended that the side chapels should be decorated with paintings, the main altar was initially to contain an effigy of St. Francis “sculpted on a bank of clouds, seraphim and bursts of gold leaf.” No records survive of who was to create this sculpture or of how St. Francis was to be represented. But the plan may have been to follow the formula used in 1775 in the chapel of San Peter of Alcántara in Arenas de San Pedro, where the main altar contained a white marble sculpture by Francisco Gutiérrez of the Apotheosis of St. Peter of Alcántara, supported by angels and floating on clouds. In the end, the project was abandoned, perhaps because of the size of the effigy that would have been required to fill the immense space. Instead, “the architects have decided that it should be a painting showing Christ at the moment when through the intercession of Our Lady he concedes to St. Francis the Jubilee of the Portiuncula.” The seven altar paintings, set in classical frames, thus became the most important decorative feature of the church’s interior.

The choice of seven exclusively Spanish painters for their execution marks a significant break in the practice of royal patrons in Spain during the preceding decades. Until this time, despite a tradition in Spain of religious painting, Bourbon rulers had made it a custom to employ foreign artists to decorate chapels and churches under their patronage, only rarely awarding contracts to Spanish artists. Although Charles III had employed Spanish painters in other contexts, he had done so until now only under the supervision of a non-Spanish artist such as Mengs, with the collaboration of his closest followers, Bayeu and Maella. Two years after Mengs’s death, Charles III now finally entrusted a major commission, to a group of exclusively Spanish painters. All had trained at the Royal Academy at one time or another and were in theory familiar with the neo-classical teachings of Mengs. The San Francisco commission represented an unprecedented opportunity for them to display their competence, and for art critics to assess their talent. In a sense the commission was

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497 The stucco was executed by Domingo Brili. On 15th August 1783, payment was made (A.O.P. leg. 109) for a “guirlanda de flores que tiene 15 pies de circunferencia y la del Alto del quadro dos festones de flores...” for the main altar. For the chapels “se han hecho doze conchas...”

498 Calvo Ruata, José Ignacio, Cartas de Fray Manuel Bayeu a Martín Zapater, Museo del Prado, doc. 52, pp. 133-135, 1996.

499 Ibid: “hecho de escultura sobre nubes, serafines y rafagas de oro.”

500 Ibid: “lo an dispuesto los arquitectos fuese cuadro en el que estara Christo cuando por intercesion de Nuestra Señora concede a San Francisco el jubileo de Portincula.”
considered an informal competition between them, in order to assess who was to be named Mengs’s successor as First Court Painter.

Interestingly, neither Francisco nor Ramón Bayeu were among the painters who received commissions for the side-altars. As Fray Manuel Bayeu informs us, both were in Zaragoza when these commissions were handed out. Francisco Bayeu had been supervising the decoration in fresco of the four domes of the cathedral of Zaragoza by his brother Ramón and their brother-in-law, Francisco Goya. This commission was to prove particularly frustrating for Goya, whose work was criticized by the canons of the cathedral for its sketchiness and lack of finish, and for the lack of decorum in his figure of Charity in the pendentives of the cupola which showed the Regina Martyrum. After a bitter row, Goya returned to Madrid, leaving Francisco and Ramón Bayeu to continue with the decoration.

Goya was fortunate to be present in Madrid in July 1781, when Floridablanca, as general supervisor of the decorative programme for San Francisco, was commissioning the altarpieces from various artists. His position as First Minister of State automatically made him “protector of the Academy” and he had “received the order from his Majesty and the responsibility of sharing them out a year from now…”

Three of the painters whom he chose -- Maella, Antonio González Velázquez, and Calleja -- were salaried court painters whom Charles III had agreed to make available at the request from Eleta. As Manuel Bayeu informs us: “Given that this church is being built thanks to charitable donation, the father confessor requested the King to order his painters to execute the paintings for the altarpiece, and such was granted. And there being six paintings, one was given to Maella, another to Don Antonio González Velázquez and another to Don Andrés de la Calleja, all three painting salaried from the royal purse.”

For the three remaining altarpieces, Floridablanca approached senior academicians for advice on whom to employ. They recommended Goya and two other painters, Ferro, who like Goya was not yet employed at the court but had just completed his studies at the Academy; and Castillo. According to Fray Manuel, “With regards to the other three paintings, Mr. Munío (Floridablanca) thought to award them to three youngsters from the Academy so that they demonstrate their ability, because those who are not painters to the King are to be offered a gratification, rather than a salary, and many would have liked to obtain these (commissions). By dint of trying hardest they were won by the following: one by Don José

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501 [Goya, F. de], Cartas a Martín Zapater, ed. M. Agueda and X. de Salas, Madrid, 1982, letter 20, p. 64.
503 Calvo (1996), doc. 52: “tenido la orden de Su Majestad y el cuidado de repartirlos ya de un año a esta parte.”
504 Ibid: “Como esta iglesia se aze de limosna, el padre confesor le suplico al Rey que mandase azer los cuadros de los retablos a sus pintores, y se le concedió..... Y siendo 6 cuadros, uno dieron a Maella, otro a don Antonio González Beláquez y otro a don Andrés Calleja, 3 pintores con renta por el Rey.”
del Castillo, thanks to the support of Ponz, secretary of the Academy; the second by Don Gregorio Ferro, thanks to the support of the Viceprotector of the Academy; and the third by Goya, thanks to Don Vicente Belmúdez, Munío’s personal assistant, to whom Goya had presented the drawings for Zaragoza.505

Finally, following the change of plan with regard to the decoration of the main altar, Francisco Bayeu, who like the first three artists was a salaried court painter, was awarded the commission to paint the main altarpiece. “As soon as he heard of the arrival of my brothers in Madrid, he gave Francho [i.e. Francisco] the commission to paint the main altar, which is three times larger than any one of the others.” 506 Fray Manuel also adds that if Ramón Bayeu “had not been busy with his work for the Pilar, he would have painted one of the six pictures.”507

A letter in the Palace archive gives more information about the allocation of the main altarpiece to Bayeu as well as Ponz’s concerns for keeping low the cost of putting up a decorative frame around his picture. Although it bears no signature or date, we know from a slip of paper attached to the letter and signed by Floridablanca that he must have read and acknowledged it. “In the light of Sabatini’s report, the secretary of the Academy of San Fernando is of the opinion that the latter should provide a decorative element in the main chapel equivalent to a retable (which would be expensive) which is one of the two things that he proposes for containing Bayeu’s picture which as he says will in effect have to be rectilinear: The decoration can consist of a well-conceived frame that embraces the picture, with above it some cherubs or something else, the whole made out of stucco, the material used for those of the church of San Francisco: And that once a decision has been taken regarding the height and the width of the painting, the measurements should be given to Bayeu so that he does not get delayed in his work.” 508

505 Ibid: Los otros tres restantes cuadros, penso el señor Munño (Floridablanca) darlos a 3 jobenes de la Academia para que se iiziessen onor, porque a los que no son pintores del Rey se les ofrezce una gratificación na gratificacion, y no paga, y an pretendido muchos el consigríos. Pero se los an llebado por mas enpeño los sigientes: don Jossef Castillo uno, por enpeno de Pons secretario de la Academia; otro don Gregorio Ferro, por enpeno del bizeprotector de la Academia; y el 3, por don Vicente Belmúdez, criado del senor Munño, a quien regalo los diseños de Zaragoza, Goya.”

506 Ibid: “Apenas supo [a llegada a Madrid de mis hermanos le dio a Francho el encargo que pintasse el del altar mayor, que es tres bezes mayor de uno de los dichos.”

507 Ibid: “no ubiesse estado ligado con lo del Pilar, ubiesse echo uno de los seis...”

508 A.G.P. Obras de Palacio, legajo 367, caja 18228 (1143): “El secretario de la Academia de S.n Fernando con vista del papel de Sabatini es de parecer que se le encargue a éste disponga en la Capilla mayor un adorno equivalente a Retablo / que podria ser muy costoso / que es una de las dos cosas que propone para colocar el cuadro de Bayeu que con efecto debe estar como dice rectilíneo: Que el adorno se puede reducir á un marco bien pensado que abrace la pintura poniendo encima algunos Niños u otra cosa todo de estuco / que es de cuya materia son los de la capilla de Aranjuez y las figuras que hay sobre la cornisa en la misma Iglesia de S.n Francisco: Y que establecido el alto y ancho que la pintura ha de tener conviene darle luego las medidas á Bayeu para que no se atrasa su obra.” Accompanying the document is a separate piece of paper, signed by Floridablanca and dated “12 Domingo”, “Paso a S. E. lo que dice el Sec.rio de la Academia para q.e remitido a Sabatini tome estos providencias sin perder tiempo y queda de V.S.J. sumas alto Serv.dor, Floridablanca.”
The Academy's role in promoting Spanish painters is illustrated by the manner in which its members served as intermediaries between Floridablanca and the three artists who were not at that point official court painters. Ponz recommended Castillo who had not hitherto benefited from significant royal patronage, despite his superior training. The vice-protector of the Academy, Pedro Pimentel, Marqués de la Florida, recommended Ferro, possibly in acknowledgement of his promising talent and ability to emulate Mengs's neo-classical style. Originally from Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Ferro had been noticed by the court sculptor Castro in 1759 and brought to Madrid to study at the Academy. Technically an accomplished artist, he seems to have been better at imitation than imaginative creation. Bourgoing, in his Tableau de l'Espagne moderne notes that Ferro "excels in the art of copying the best pictures by the great masters" Among the paintings listed in his "memorial" in support of an application for the post of Director of Painting at the Academy in 1794, Ferro cites a copy of Mengs's celebrated Annunciation for the church of the Real Sitio de Soto de Roma near Granada, a commission that we shall examine later, and "two large pictures of the Passion of Our Lord for the side altarpieces of the church of Alpajez at the Royal Site of Aranjuez; one of these being a Crucifixion of Our Lord of his own invention in which he follows the King's instruction to introduce figures, characters and draperies, similar to those found in Raphael's picture of Christ carrying the cross, of which the second altarpiece is a copy." No traces of these paintings have been found, but Ferro's painting of the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian, which he presented to the Academy in 1781 in order to become Academician of Merit, demonstrates his admiration for Mengs's smooth polish and anatomical perfection (fig. 146). Goya owed his commission to the recommendation of Floridablanca's personal assistant, Vicente Bermúdez, to whom Goya had given his diseños for the Pilar

509 Calvo (1996), doc. 52.
512 A.R.A.B.A.S.F., Expedientes personales, 1-41/1: "dos cuadros grandes de la Pasión de nuestro Redentor para el Real Sitio de Aranjuez, que existen en dos Altarese de la Iglesia de Alpajez: el uno de ellos es original de la Crucifixión del Señor, en el que represento por mandados del Rey los mismos individuos, caracteres, ropajes, que hay en el del Amargura de Rafael de Urbino, el que es copia del otro que hizo para servir de quadro pareja."
513 Ferro's drawings also reveal his admiration for Mengs. Two highly finished drawings in the Prado demonstrate this. One, catalogue by Pérez Sánchez, Museo del Prado: Catálogo de Dibujos, Vol. III, 1977, p. 34 of the Immaculate Conception (F.D 1834) shows Mengs's facial types and similar drapery. The second of St. Michael and Satan and here attributed to Ferro for the first time, (Anónimos, F.A 657, p. 132) is similar in execution and technique to the Immaculate Conception.
Little is known about Bermúdez, but his name crops up in letters written by Goya to Zapater.

An undated and unsigned document in the Obra Pia archive gives the location of the altarpieces by subject. Francisco Bayeu painted St. Francis requesting the Indulgence of the Portiuncula for the main altar, while Castillo and Maella provided altarpieces of the first chapels on the left and right, of the Meeting of St. Francis and St. Dominic and the Immaculate Conception. For the middle chapels, Calleja painted the Christ Child appearing to St. Anthony of Padua and Ferro a St. Joseph and Child. The last chapels flanking the main entrance contained Goya’s St. Bernardino of Siena on the left, and González Velázquez’s St. Buenaventura and the Relic of St. Anthony on the right.

Eguren’s article published in the Semanario Pintoresco Español in 1847 describes the pictures’ original setting and his view of how they were meant to be seen. He first describes the main altar: “The altarpiece and all its decoration consist merely of the said painting with its frame and a triangular pediment, plastered like the walls, giving this main chapel a shocking coldness and bareness.” Of the side chapels, he Remarks: “Each is of thirty-five feet square and covered symmetrically by a dome from which light comes in through a lantern.” He notes that although the side walls have been made into altars, only those in the centre of each chapel can be seen from the middle of the church, and that each of these is decorated by a painting “executed with particular care by one of the best painters of the time.”

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514 Calvo Ruata (1996), doc.52, p.134: “...por don Vicente Bermúdez, criado del señor Muñino, a quien regalo los diseños de Zaragoza, Goya.”
516 A.O.P, legajo 268, “En el Presbiterio esta el Altar Mayor; que es un lienzo grande, que contiene la pintura de San Francisco pidiendo la indulgencia de la Porciúncula a Cristo Nuestro Señor por la intercesión de su Señora Madre. En la primera de las tres Capillas del lado de la Epistola, el altar principal es un lienzo de bastante magnitud, que contiene la pintura de los Patriarcas Santo Domingo y San Francisco. En la segunda Capilla, es el Altar Principal un lienzo de igual magnitud al Primero, que contiene la Pintura de San Antonio de Padua. En la tercera Capilla es el Altar Principal un lienzo de la misma magnitud, que los dos antecedentes y contiene la pintura de Bernardino de Siena. En la primera de las tres capillas del lado del Evangelio es la del Altar principal un lienzo semejante a los antecedentes que contiene la Pintura de la Puríssima Concepción de María Señora Nuestra, en la segunda de San José y la tercera de San Buenaventura.”
517 Eguren (1847), p. 403: “Consiste unicamente el retablo y todo el adorno en dicho cuadro con su marco y un frontispicio triangular, enlucido como los paredes, de manera que choca la frialdad y desnudez de esta capilla mayor”.
518 Eguren (1847), p. 403: “Treinta y cinco pies en cuadro es el ambito de cada una, estando simetricamente cubiertas con cúpulas que reciben luces por las linternas. Aunque sus paredes laterales se han construido retablos, solamente los del testero, que se gozan a la vez desde el medio del templo, corresponde al plan general, y para cada uno ejecutó con particular esmero el cuadro que existe, uno de los mejores profesores de la época.” See also Madoz who gives an interesting description of the main altarpiece: Madrid Audiencia, provincia, intendencia, vicaría, partido y villa, Madrid, 1848, p. 206, “con un marco y frontón blanqueados como las paredes. Hay pilastras dóricas por toda la Iglesia y capilla mayor, y entre ésta y el vestíbulo se ven circundando la gran rotonda de que hablamos, seis capillas, tres a cada lado. Son simétricas, de planta cuadrada y están cubiertas por pequeñas cúpulas. En el testero de cada una hay un altar que se compone de un cuadro medio punto con mano sencillo...
According to these descriptions the original arrangement of the altarpieces would have looked something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main altar:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Francis in the Portiuncula</td>
<td>Bayeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel:</td>
<td>Epistle:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaculate Conception</td>
<td>Meeting of St Francis and St. Dominic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maella</td>
<td>Castillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph and Child</td>
<td>St. Anthony and Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferro</td>
<td>Calleja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Buenaventura &amp; relic of St. Anthony</td>
<td>St. Bernardino of Siena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>González Velázquez</td>
<td>Goya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entrance

The paintings in the chapels all measure 4.80 metres by 3.00 metres. The main altarpiece was described by Manuel Bayeu as being "three times larger" than the others, but the original size of Bayeu's altarpiece is unclear, as it was subsequently cut along the sides when it was relocated in a stairwell out of public view in 1887. As a result it now measures 8.00 metres by 3.20 metres. The engraving reproduced by Eguren in 1860, showing a close-
up view of the presbytery and the main altarpiece, enables us to place the painting in its original context (see fig. 145). Comparing the engraving and the picture as it survives today, one clearly sees how much it has suffered. The arched top and the bottom of the composition have been trimmed considerably, as have the left-hand side and at least one metre on the right-hand side of the painting, where the loss of part of a group of angels leaves the composition severely unbalanced.

Such vast proportions meant that the painters had to make lengthy preliminary preparations in order to clarify their thoughts and develop a composition that would fill the space in an appropriately balanced manner. Surviving drawings and bozzetti, in some cases only recently rediscovered, help to reconstruct the manner in which individual artists set about preparing their compositions, and the changes that they were called upon to make in the final version of their work. Though there is no evidence of who was responsible for choosing the subject matter for the paintings, it is likely that responsibility rested with Eleta, aided by Floridablanca. A comparison between surviving bozzetti and modelli and the final pictures suggests that substantial restrictions were imposed on the artists.

**Francisco Bayeu and the main altarpiece**

For the main altarpiece, Francisco Bayeu was asked to paint the Apparition of Christ and the Virgin to Saint Francis in the Portiuncula (fig. 147). Situated outside Assisi, the small village of Portiuncula was traditionally known as Santa Maria degli Angeli because it grew up around the ancient chapel of Our Lady of the Angels. It was there that, on 24th February 1208, St. Francis of Assisi recognized his vocation, set up his confraternity and eventually died in 1226. The chapel of Portiuncula became an important pilgrimage site, aided by the subsequent proclamation of an indulgence, known as the Portiuncula Indulgence, to whoever visited it on a specific date.

Despite its popularity through the centuries, the story of the apparition of Christ and the Virgin to St. Francis, on which the Portiuncula Indulgence was supposedly based, has remained controversial. Early written accounts of the life of St. Francis, such as Thomas de Celano’s *First life of St. Francis* published in 1228 and St. Bonaventura’s biography *Legendae Dorea* written in 1261, make no mention of this apparition. But this did not prevent various Popes and other ecclesiastical figures from supporting the legend, claiming a

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that Morales gives. Meanwhile, Eguren gives us yet another measurement: “Constituye el retablo mayor un cuadro de quince y medio pies de ancho y treinta y uno de alto con marco de madera, tallado y dorado en el centro, contramarco de yeso pintado de color gris y un fronton triangular de igual materia por coronamiento...” Using the Guía de Comerciantes’s measuring system, established in 1803: 1 pie=0.278 metres, the altarpiece may have originally measured 8.62 metres by 4.31 metres.

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Eguren (1847), p. 294.
miraculous status for it and using it as a tool for wielding power and influence through promises of plenary indulgence. Many theologians went out of their way to publish references to the legend in tracts, accompanied by allusions to St. Francis’s writings and those of his biographers. As a result, there has been much confusion in terms of dates.

The earliest known documents referring to the Indulgence date from 1277, but the earliest surviving document describing in detail the events on which the Indulgence was based is Fray Francis Bartholi of Assisi’s *Tractatus de Indulgentia de S. M. de Portiuncula* composed around 1332-1335. Fray Bartholi was Reader in Theology at the Portiuncula from 1320-1326 and presumably based his assertions on the testimony of contemporaries. According to Bartholi, the events occurred in 1216, when St. Francis’s chapel of the Portiuncula had just been consecrated. Bartholi describes how St. Francis, anxious to make his chapel a place of special sanctity where souls might be saved, was inspired by Christ to ask permission from Pope Honorius III, the newly elected Pope in 1216, for an Indulgence which should be without “alms or oblations” for those who visited his chapel. He therefore set off for Perugia, where Honorius was residing at the time, and made his request, which in spite of opposition from the Cardinals was eventually granted. However, the Pope restricted the Indulgence to one day yearly, and no specific date was fixed when the Indulgence should begin. This was resolved some months later, when St. Francis, assailed by sudden temptation, threw himself into a briar-bush in order to do penance, only to find his blood miraculously transformed into thornless roses. An angel stood by him bidding him to enter the chapel, where he experienced the vision of the Saviour and His Mother, and was directed to ask the Pope for a specific date for the Indulgence. Taking with him some of the miraculous roses as a proof of divine authority, he made his request to the Pope, who decreed that anybody who visited the chapel between the afternoon of 1st August and sunset on 2nd August would receive plenary indulgence. The story adds that St. Francis proclaimed it publicly in the presence of the seven bishops who planned to contradict him, but were miraculously compelled to echo the Saint’s words.

However, other references suggest that the occurrence on which the Indulgence was based took place at a later date in 1221. The Irish Franciscan Luke Wadding, in the first tome...
of his *Annales Minorum* published in 1625 in Lyon, situates the vision in October 1221, but omits the miracle of the roses, and situates Honorius’s consent in 1223.524

Whatever the case, though there was no Papal Bull to support its existence, the Indulgence became widely accepted. In 1480, Pope Sixtus IV extended it to all the churches of the first and second orders of St. Francis. It subsequently spread to cover all churches pertaining in any way to the Franciscan order. Its popularity is reflected in its frequent appearance in art, particularly during the Counter Reformation.525

In the 16th century, a number of visual images recording the scene served as models from which later artists were to borrow. Early engravings and woodcuts include the German illustration by Wolf Traut for *Die legend das Heyligen vatters Francisci. Nach der beschreybung des Engelischen levers Bonaventura*, published in Nuremberg in 1512,526 which shows the miracle of the roses, combined with the apparition of Christ holding a globe and the Virgin as intercessor. Christ’s words are recorded on a scroll: “Francisce, grosse ding hast du begert aber vil grosserer pist du werdt” (trans. Francis you have already achieved great things but you are worthy of even greater things.) Traut includes the scene at the end of the book, entitling it the “Rosary”. The scene of vision is framed in a garland of roses, outside which kings and bishops kneel in adoration.

In 1581, Federico Barocci painted a version of the theme for the Church of San Francesco in Urbino, called *Il perdono*, which deals only with the theme of indulgence rather than the miracle of the roses.527 Barocci situates St. Francis in the realistic physical space of the Portiuncula chapel, depicting above him the visionary scene of the standing Christ between the Virgin on his left and St. Nicholas, the patron saint of his patron Nicolo Ventura, on his right. Both the Virgin and St. Nicholas act as intercessors within the general theme of the indulgence. In Spain, Zurbarán treated the scene three times.528 His first and most impressive picture, now in the Cádiz museum, was executed in the late 1630s. Zurbarán divides the scene into two, combining the miracle of the roses, visible across the floor, with the apparition of Christ and the Virgin above. The piece of paper held by Christ may allude to one of the seven certificates confirming Pope Honorius III’s granting of the indulgence in 1223.529

524 Breve trattato istorico-teologico in cui si esamina cosa si debba giudicare della Indulgenza accordata come volgarmente si dice da Gesu’ cristo Medessimo a San Francesco Nella Chiesa, cappella della Beata Maria degli Angeli, detta della Porziuncula, 1789.
525 Early examples are rare. The vision, for example, does not appear in Giotto’s frescoed programme of the life of St. Francis in the convent at Assisi. However, the chapel of the Rose, in the church of the Portiuncula, have frescoes by Tiberio d’Assisi showing St. Francis in the chapel, with above the altar the Apparition of Christ and Mary surrounded by heavenly angels and roses scattered over the floor.526 Campbell Dogson, *German Woodcuts at the British Museum*, Catalogue 1, no 1.51, p. 502.
Other examples include an altarpiece by Valdés Leal in the parish church of Cabra, near Córdoba, and another by Francisco Caro in La Coruña museum of art. Both are typically Baroque compositions with highly dramatic diagonals and both emphasise the visionary nature of the event. They include such details as St. Anthony and St. Joseph, in Valdés Leal's painting, and a portrait of the patron and his wife in Caro’s painting.

In San Francisco el Grande, the choice of this subject for the main altarpiece forms part of a complex iconographical programme that also includes the altar paintings in the side chapels. Bayeu’s painting incorporates three levels of theological and spiritual significance. In the first, or terrestrial level, St. Francis kneels with his arms outstretched, looking upwards at the Virgin and Christ. His right hand is extended downwards towards the viewer as if in blessing, while his right hand is open upwards towards the scene above him. A skull lying beside him reminds the viewer of the brevity of life. Painted in a detailed and realistic manner, similar to a trompe l’oeil, the skull contrasts severely with the visionary and idealised figures above. As well as serving as a cue for the viewer to enter into the painting, the skull is a symbol of human mortality, reminding the viewer of the need for indulgence to avoid spending time in purgatory. Although there is no direct relation to the Alcantarine order, the skull and the fact that St. Francis is wearing a grey habit rather than the brown habit he is usually depicted wearing, suggests that Eleta wanted to stress the reformed branch of the Franciscans which St. Francis had instituted at the end of his life.

On a second level, St. Francis’s gaze directs us upwards towards the Virgin Mary, who acts as intercessor between St. Francis and the faithful, on the one hand, and Christ, on the other. Bayeu stresses the Marian theme and gives the Virgin more prominence than other earlier representations of the same subject. Her role as intercessor relates directly to Charles III’s desires to promote her as protectress of the Spain and its dominions, and as patron of the royal military order dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. This Marian theme, as we shall see, is brought up again in the subjects of Maella and Castillo’s altarpieces.

The third level, at the core of Bayeu’s altarpiece, is that of the Indulgence, which would have helped to enhance the importance of the church and bolster Charles in his drive to find a substitute for the Jesuits’ teaching concerning the remission of sins through the act of confession. The definition given by the Catholic encyclopedia for Indulgences demonstrates the importance the altarpiece had in relation to its original function and explains why San Francisco el Grande was expected to become an important religious site; “An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God’s justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of

530 Caro includes an inscription explaining what the scene is about: “Por intercessión de María Santíssima conce.de Xrto Sr Nro a San Francisco el espl.do y maravilloso Jubileo de la Porciúncula el año de 1221 y tuvo su efecto por beneplacito del Papa en solemne publicaron d’Obispos el año 1223.”
the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive." 531

Following the example of Mengs, Bayeu made extensive preparations before starting to paint the altarpiece. A number of drawings connected with the commission exist in the Prado Museum, while one of several documented bozzetti survives in the Meadows Museum in Dallas which may have been Bayeu’s first “pensiero” for the composition, and possibly his initial presentation piece (fig. 148). 532

The Dallas bozzetto shows St. Francis kneeling on a step at the bottom left-hand corner of the composition, with his arms opened in adoration before the apparition of Christ and the Virgin. Christ is shown standing, in the middle of the composition, among attendant angels and supported by clouds. The Virgin Mary is placed at a slightly lower level to his left, looking upwards in a position that echoes that of St. Francis while serving as intercessor between him and Christ. The composition bears resemblances to, and may have been inspired by, a popular etching by Barocci after his painting II Perdono mentioned earlier, which Bayeu may have seen or even possessed in his collection (fig. 149). 533

In Bayeu’s bozzetto, the composition is broader, so as to fill the larger picture surface, but follows Barocci’s legible and clear structure. Like Barocci, Bayeu concentrates specifically on the vision experienced by St. Francis, without any reference to the miracle of the roses. 534 Bayeu replaces the figure of St. Nicholas who appears in Barocci’s etching with


Evidence that Bayeu produced two more bozzetti is found in a letter dated 4th June 1842 from Julian Maria de Pinera to Queen Isabella II’s tutor, Agustín de Argüelles, discussing the possibility of buying for the royal collection 16 bozzetti by Francisco Bayeu and other 18th century painters. The majority of these were related to the palace frescoes and had until then been in the collection of the “sumiller de cortina de su Magestad”. In addition to preventing them from falling into “manos más desgraciadas” or being displayed in a foreign museum, Pinera wanted them for reference if the palace ceilings needed restoration. Among these were two bozzetti by Bayeu “que sirvieron a elección para el gran cuadro Nuestra Señora de los Angeles o de la Porciuncula existente en la iglesia de San Francisco desta Corte”. Letter is published in Morales (1996), doc 228. The same letter included references to two bozzetti by Maella and Gregorio Ferro for San Francisco el Grande. Morales (1995), p. 109, no. 142, refers to another bozzetto 73 x 38 cm in a private collection, but provides no illustration. Two bozzetti appear in the Bayeu inventory and may be connected to the commission: “otro representa la Virgen sostenida de Angeles y Sn Franco, en acto de adoracion (valued 300 reales)” and “otro a Claro y obscuro Christo en Trono de Nubes y Angeles y la Virgen con San Franco, en acto de adoracion. (120 reales)” See Lafuente Ferrari (1952), p. 77.
534 As we have already seen, there is less than full agreement among writers who have described the vision about the details of this miracle. Réau, L., L’Iconographie de l’art Chrétien (1958), T. III, p. 521, suggests that the miracle may have been borrowed from St. Benedict, who is said to have experienced a similar incident. Tempted by the devil, St. Benedict threw himself on a thorn bush, and exclaimed: “les blessures du corps guérissent les blessures de l’âme.” Réau (1958), Vol. III, p. 200.) Although he gives no source, Réau also states that representations of the miracle of the roses in relation to St. Francis first appeared in 1340, but it only became a popular subject much later in the Baroque period.
two conversing angels, but retains the Virgin in a similar position, echoing in particular the downward pointing gesture of her right hand, which leads the viewer’s eye to the figure of St. Francis. More significantly, Bayeu’s free interpretation of Barocci’s structure produces a late baroque composition in which, rather than imitating Barocci’s strong divide between the earthly and the divine, he links St. Francis’s earthly location with the visionary world by means of the clouds as a kind of connecting staircase. He also moves St. Francis from the centre to the lower left-hand corner, widening the composition and simultaneously creating a pyramidal structure. This format keeps the eye within the scene. Volume and depth are achieved by using the baroque device of dramatic chiaroscuro. The figure of Christ, in addition to acting as the central focal point, provides the main source of light, illuminating the composition from the centre. The classical facade positioned on the right of the scene at a receding angle provides a successful effect of depth and acts as a counterpoint and reference point contrasting the real with the visionary.

Bayeu’s bozzetto is remarkable for its painterly quality and sensitive understanding of the play of light and shade on the figures and the drapery. The Virgin’s blue mantle is subtly reflected on the cloud below her, while attention has been paid to the shadow created by her left arm pointing at St. Francis. As noted earlier, Bayeu’s painting was commissioned in place of an earlier idea of having a sculpture as the altarpiece. Bayeu may have taken this into account, explaining why the overall effect in terms of lighting is so well observed. The standing Christ is firmly positioned on a pedestal made of clouds, while both figures of the Virgin and St. Francis are in penumbra.535

In his completed painting, in contrast to the Dallas bozzetto, the classically ordered composition and idealised full-length figure of Christ at the top are lost. Instead, Bayeu plays down the figure of Christ, in order to provide more space for the figure of the Virgin enthroned on a bank of clouds at the centre. The Virgin looks down on Saint Francis in the bottom left-hand corner, instead of upwards towards Christ, while her arms are extended wide open, with her right hand pointing towards Christ, in a gesture that no longer has any affinity with Barroci’s etching. The reasons behind Bayeu’s change in composition for the final altarpiece are not documented. Bayeu was probably trying to find a composition, which would cope with the immense picture surface required of him. However the essential difference is the more dominant position taken on by the Virgin as intercessor between St. Francis and Christ. Rather than shown in a kneeling position, she now assumes a more

535 For related drawings to the Dallas bozzetto see Arnaez (1976), p. 348. Three of these survive, one each for the principal figures of St. Francis (F.A 524), the Virgin (F.A 607) and the standing figure of Christ (F.A 603). Using the bluish ground of the paper, Bayeu builds up tonal gradations that are finished off with highlights in white chalk. This drawing may have been kept in Bayeu’s studio for his students to copy, as the figure was later directly quoted by his brother Ramón Bayeu in an altarpiece of
affirmative role, sitting triumphant on a bank of clouds with angels supporting her and with her arm pointing upwards. In this way the Marian undertones are emphasized and relate to the other altarpieces in the programme.

**Maella and the Immaculate Conception**

With Bayeu’s altarpiece crowning the iconographic programme, Maella’s Immaculate Conception (fig. 150) and Castillo’s Meeting of St. Francis and St. Dominic in Rome, set in the two first side altars, follow up on one of the main themes already picked out. As noted already, Charles III was devoted to the Virgin and the Immaculate Conception, and this was a subject that Maella had already treated successfully on a number of occasions. In the Meeting of St. Francis and St. Dominic, the Virgin is not physically present, but she is indirectly involved in a vision experienced by St. Dominic the evening before both saints met.

Maella had already painted three representations of the Immaculate Conception for Charles III, and was well versed in the iconography of the subject, as we have seen with his picture at La Granja painted in 1772. In his altarpiece for San Francisco el Grande, he drew on the 17th century tradition typified by Murillo, particularly the so-called Immaculate Conception of the Escorial, in which the Virgin is accompanied by a number of attributes including a lily, a mirror, a serpent and a crescent moon. To these he added a specific allusion to Charles III in the form of a chain held by one of the angels in the bottom right hand corner, a reference to the royal military order founded in 1771 by Charles III, in honour of the Immaculate Conception. A close examination reveals the chain to be made up of links in the form of castles, lions, and the king’s cipher, the Roman numeral III. The castles and lions refer to the kingdoms of Castilla y León, while the eight-pointed star hanging from the end of the chain refers to the badge of the royal order of the Immaculate Conception.536

Two bozzetti and a modello survive to illustrate Maella’s working methods. The earlier of the two bozzetti, in the collection of the Patrimonio Nacional, has a simple and straightforward structure, closely based on an earlier altarpiece for the private oratory at the Palace of Aranjuez in 1778, in which the Virgin is shown standing on a globe with the Holy Spirit above (fig. 151).537 The composition is divided into two halves: in the lower half, several angels hold the attributes of the Virgin and the chain of the Royal Order of Charles III, while in the upper half a chorus of angels surround the Holy Spirit in the centre. The full-

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536 Rincón García (1988), pp.145-161. The badge is decorated with the fleur-de-lys symbol of the Bourbons and with an image of the Immaculate Conception and the inscription “Virtuti et Merito”.

537 Oil on canvas, 64 cm by 31 cm. See Exh. Cat. Painting in Spain in the Age of the Enlightenment: Goya and his Contemporaries, Indianapolis, 1997, cat. no. 28, pp.203-205.
length figure of the Virgin acts as the compositional link between the two halves. Maella softens the transition between them by gradually lightening his palette as the eye moves upwards.

Even though Maella’s first idea was well composed and its simplicity made it accessible, either he or his patrons were not satisfied with the structure proposed. In a subsequent version, he re-organized his composition, filling the upper part of the painting with a figure of God the Father, rather than the Holy Spirit (fig. 152). The result is to break the overall structure into three sections: the lower part with angels holding the Virgin’s attributes, the middle part with her serving as a central axis, and the top part with God the Father.

A drawing in the Prado here attributed to Maella and related to this commission shows Maella’s initial thoughts on the opening up of the composition so that he could incorporate the figure of God the Father (fig. 153). Typical of Maella’s drawing technique is the way in which he first rapidly sketches the structure and organisation of figures in graphite, a medium that had the advantage of keeping up with his imagination. He then worked up the depth and planes with object of studying the fall of light and shade, employing black ink and thin washes for the effect. In this drawing, the figure of God the Father is not yet centrally placed, and Maella dallies with the idea of having an angel striking a dragon with lightning.

The modello on which the finished painting is directly based, now in the Prado, is at least twice as large as the bozzetto (fig. 154). Compared to his earlier attempts, Maella here has brightened up his palette, opening up the composition to provide an impression of deeper space and clarifying the structure by trimming details such as the extra putti so that the spectator is not overwhelmed and that the altarpiece can be better interpreted from a distance. The Virgin now stands firmly on a cloud above the globe on which the serpent lies. Following the elegant curve of her figure, enhanced by the flowing drapery, her gaze looks up at God the Father above. Maella’s brushstrokes are now more controlled. Rather than using rapid abbreviations for the facial features and hands he softens the contours, adding a Murillo-esque

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538 This previously unpublished bozzetto is in a private collection and only known through a photograph in the Archivo Mas in Barcelona (E7245).
539 (F.A 641), 323mm by 260 mm, Museo del Prado. In its conception, the drawing has affinities with the Mas bozzetto The Virgin is in practically the same position, with the tips of her fingers gently joined in prayer, but looking downwards. Above her, Maella inserts the figure of God the Father, supported by two angels, opening his arms to embrace her heavenly apotheosis. Maella also reorganizes the bottom part of the composition. As we shall see in the final modello, however, he subsequently reverted to his original idea as seen in the first bozzetto.
540 Últimas Adquisiciones, Exh. cat., Museo del Prado, 1995, cat. no. 18, pp. 52-53. Oil on canvas, 142 x 74 cm. Its proportions correspond to the other modelli presented by Goya and Castillo to Floridablanca for approval.
touch. Even the loaded white brushstrokes that served as highlights are now subdued, as he works up gradual intonations.

José del Castillo’s St. Francis meeting St. Dominic in Rome

José del Castillo’s altarpiece of the Meeting of St. Dominic and St. Francis (fig. 155) was situated directly opposite Maella’s, on the epistle side. Although not commonly represented in Spain, the subject appears often in both Franciscan and Dominican fresco cycles, such as Fra Angelico’s paintings in Cortona and Florence. At first sight, the inclusion of St. Dominic in a Franciscan church may seem out of place. However, it fits appropriately into the iconographical scheme if the historical and theological dimensions of the subject are taken into account.

The 13th century witnessed a new development in the ideal of Christian perfection. Monastic orders, rather than living in seclusion, were now more mobile and believed that through preaching they would spread the Lord’s word. The two saints are linked together in this painting as the founders of the most important and influential mendicant orders of the Middle Ages. It portrays an incident when both saints in 1216, travelled to Rome in order to obtain sanction and recognition for their orders from Pope Innocent III. Though they had never met before, St. Dominic automatically embraced St. Francis, vowing that “You are my companion; with me you will travel the world. Let us establish between us a pact of collaboration. If we are faithful to it, no adversary shall defeat us.” This union meant that there was between them “one soul and one heart in the Lord.” Their sanctity and profound loyalty to the Church and to Rome made their new orders an integral part of 13th century Catholicism. Such figures would have been applicable to Charles III’s ideas on reform and creating a new church.

Their role as reformers is further emphasised in a dream Pope Innocent III had when the two saints were present in Rome. He dreamt that the church of St. John Lateran, which is the Pope’s church in his capacity as Bishop of Rome, was about to collapse but was saved by St. Dominic who symbolically leaned against it to prevent it from falling. Thomas of Celano in his Vita secunda de San Francesci and St. Buenaventura took up this idea and claimed that St. Francis too had appeared in the Pope’s dream and similarly prevented the church from falling into ruins. As a result the Pope gave full support to Dominic and Francis in their zeal for reform of the church and sanctioned their orders. A predella panel by Fra Angelico for the altarpiece of San Domenico in Cortona not only shows St. Dominic holding the church but

541 Voragine, Santiago de., La Leyenda Dorada, Madrid, 1982, p. 444: “Tú eres mi compañero; conmigo recorrerás el mundo. Establezcamos entre nosotros un compromiso de colaboración, seamos fieles a él y no habrá adversario que pueda vencernos.”
includes the scene of his meeting with St. Francis.543 Even though Castillo only depicts the meeting, the full significance of the scene must be understood in a wider context, including both the Pope’s dream and a vision, which St. Dominic experienced the night before his meeting with St. Francis.544

The vision is told in various sources particularly by two Dominicans monks, Gerard de Frachet (1205-1271) and Theodoric of Appoldia (dates unknown).545 Voragine in his Golden Legend also mentions the vision when recounting the life of St. Dominic, but no mention of it is made in St. Francis’s life.546 This is perhaps because Voragine was a Dominican and preferred to attach the legend to his founder. Only Luke Wadding relates the vision with St. Francis’s life. The best account, however, is provided by Theodoric of Appoldia in his Vita S. Dominici, Acta Sanctorum:

"As was his wont Dominic was keeping vigil in the church at night, when he saw God the Son rising in his wrath at the right hand of the Father, to slay all the sinners on the earth and to destroy the workers of iniquity. And he stood in the air, terrible to behold, and shook three lances which he held poised to strike the world: one to transfix the lofty necks of the proud, another to rip out the entrails of the covetous, the third to thrust them through that gave themselves to fleshly lusts. And when none could resist His anger, there came to Him the merciful Virgin Mother, who embraced His feet and begged Him to spare those whom He had redeemed, and to temper His justice with mercy. To whom her Son replied: "Dost thou not see with what outrages they assail Me? Such evils My justice will not suffer to go unpunished."

Then His Mother said, “Thou, who knowest all things, knowest that this is the way by which Thou mayest bring them back to Thee: I have a faithful servant. Thy word to them and convert them to Thee, the Saviour of all. And I have another servant too, whom I will give him as a helper that he may do the same.” The Son said: "Lo, I am appeased, for dost design for this great work." Then our Lady Mother presented blessed Dominic to Jesus Christ. And the Lord said to His Mother: "He will do well and diligently what thou hast said.” She offered Him also the Holy Francis, whom in like manner the Lord praised. Saint Dominic,

543 Ibid: “una sola alma y un solo corazon en el Señor.”
545 The Memorial Literario (April 1785, p. 428), describes what is visible and does not go deeper into the spiritual significance of the subject: “los Patriarcas S. Francisco y Santo Domingo, que en las gradas del atrio de la Iglesia de S. Pedro de la Ciudad de Rome se abrazan; a la derecha del quadro se ven las figuras de un viejo, una muger y un nifio en accion de pedir limosna; al lado de Santo Domingo se ve un perro con hacha encendida en la boca, y al de San Francisco un nifio con una cruz, libro, calabera y un ramo de flores; a lo dexos se manifiestan varios edificios de Roma, y en la parte superior un globo de luz en cuyo centro esta el Espiritu Santo, y en derredor varios mancebos y querubines.”
therefore, carefully beholding in the vision his companion whom he did not know before, on
the morrow found him in church and knew him from those things that he had seen in the
night; he ran to him with holy kisses and heartfelt embraces,...” 547

The way in which the Virgin prays to her Son on behalf of mankind, acting as
intermediary, reminds us of the role she played in Bayeu’s painting. Furthermore the fact that
she invokes the two saints as savours and as the mortal reformers on earth who will transcend
Christ’s message to mankind, places Castillo’s painting in an intricate iconographical schema.
Even though the Virgin is not physically visible in Castillo’s altarpiece, her presence is
alluded to in the lilies over the cross, a symbol of purity normally associated with the Virgin.
Perhaps due to the lack of space or for fear of confusing the viewer, Castillo preferred not to
include the vision as well as the meeting. Some Italian artists combined the two subjects, such
as Fra Angelico when painting for San Marco, where he shows the two saints in the
foreground, while the scene of the Virgin interceding with Christ is placed over a landscape in
mid-air.

Various sources suggest that the two saints performed a miracle together when they
met. Simon Martin in his Vie des Saints drawing on sources that he unfortunately does not
identify, mentions in his life of St. Francis that the two saints “s’entretinrent longtemps de
moyens de terrasser le demon et de ruiner l’empire du peché; ils se firent mutuellement diverses
predictions, selon la revelation qu’ils en avaient reçue du S. Esprit; ils lierent ensemble une
étroite amitié qui ne s’est jamais refroidie; enfin, avant de se séparer ils firent conjointement
un même miracle, qui fut la guérison d’un lépreux.” 548 This description bears much
resemblance to the scene Castillo depicted. For example, he includes the presence of the Holy
Spirit that inspired them to think alike in methods of reform. Equally, the story of the miracle
of the leper may explain the presence of the old man with a walking stick in the right hand
corner of Castillo’s composition.

Even though both men had different ways of achieving their objectives, both believed
in the reform of the church and the spreading of Christ’s message on earth. Such ideas would
have coincided with Charles III’s ideas on religion and his role as reformer. In the vision
experienced by St. Dominic, the three lances that He held are explained by Theodoric as
being aimed at the three vices: Pride, Avarice, and Lust. However in medieval times it was
thought that St. Dominic and St. Francis in their unity would turn these vices into virtues, that
is to say: Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. The three steps that stand out prominently in the
composition could be an echo of the three virtues.

Castillo painted two bozzetti for his altarpiece. The first is in the collection of the
Marchioness of Santa Cruz (fig. 156). The second was presented by Castillo at the Academy

when petitioning for the post of Academician of Merit in March 1785 (fig. 157). His presentation modello, now in a private collection and published here for the first time, is significantly larger, measuring 161 by 86 cm (fig. 158). Although no drawings for his composition survive, Castillo was a competent draughtsman, and it is conceivable that he first drew the composition before embarking on the bozzetti. The fact that there are few changes between the first bozzetto and the final painting suggests that Castillo had a clear conception right from the initial stages of how he was going to interpret the subject.

Castillo consciously discards his Giaquintesque training, in favour of Mengs’s technique and style. In the Academy bozzetto, he applied a thick layer of gesso to prime the canvas, in order to assure a smooth ground and eliminate the weave of the canvas. Above this he painted a reddish-brown ground, which either shows through in the darker areas of the composition, or is used for shadowing. Following a technique used by Mengs in his bozzetti, Castillo skillfully uses the oil medium to make his colours appear translucent, sometimes using the ground to build up tonal graduations. The effect, particularly in the lighting and the soft modelling of the angels in the upper part of Castillo’s composition, bears stylistic similarities to Mengs’s figures in his ceiling sketch for the Apotheosis of Trajan.

The main figures of St. Francis and St. Dominic are placed on a triple staircase, thus elevating them on to a higher plain. This pedestal also enables Castillo to position them standing in the centre of the composition. The meeting is expressed through an emotional embrace and handshake. Between the two figures a black and white dog holds a lighted torch in its mouth, alluding to a dream experienced by St. Dominic’s mother, Juana de Aza, before he was born. As recounted by Theodoric de Appoldia, his mother Juana de Aza dreamt that while she was praying before the relic of St. Dominic of Silos, she saw “a puppy emerging from her entrails, holding in his mouth a lighted torch.” Her dream was interpreted to mean that she would bear a son who would become a celebrated preacher and like the torch would “set the whole world afire with the flames from its mouth,” lighting in men the love of God. The story resulted in a pun on St. Dominic’s name, Canis Domini (the Lord’s dog).

549 A.R.A.B.A.S.F, 2nd March 1785, Memorial, Doc. 1/6, file 42, 174: “por orden del rey N.S uno de los cuadros p.a los altares de la Nueva Iglesia de San Francisco cuyo primer borron presento a V.E en atencion a lo expuesto.” Four days later. (Junta Ordinarias 84/3 1776-1785, 6th March 1785), Ponz mentions Castillo’s petition: “Dí cuenta de un memorial de Don Jose Castillo profesor de Pintura, en que solicitaba la graduacion de Academico de Merito, alegando ser de los discipulos mas antiguos de la Academia: los premios que en ella habia obtenido: haber logrado por posicion la plaza de pensionado en Rome, de donde remito varias obras, que esta en las salas: haber servido al publico, y al rey Nsto Snor en diferente ocasiones, y ultimamente en el cuadro que hizo p.a la nueva Iglesia de S Fransco cuyo primer borron presentó. Constando a todos ser asi quanto exponia, y en atencion a otras circunstancias le propuso el S.or Vice Protector para Academico de Merito y fue creado por aclamacion.” An inscription on the back of the canvas reads: “D. Joseph del Castillo en 6 de Marzo de 1785.” Both oil sketches measure 63 x 32 cm.
550 Fernández Álvarez, J., El Suefio de Juliana de Aza, Palencia, 1965
Above St. Francis and St. Dominic, the Holy Spirit is centered, crowning the composition and emanating divine light onto the figures below, creating a triangular format. The upper part is filled with a chorus of angels, painted in the manner of Mengs. The seated figures in the lower left corner, an old beggar man and a woman with her child, serve to invite viewers into the scene. In the background one can admire an imagined classical view of Rome. Castillo’s interpretation is clear and didactic, respecting the simple, classical way of structuring a composition.

Between the bozzetti, the modello and altarpiece, significant alterations were made to the two angels holding St. Francis’s attributes. In the first bozzetto, the angel embraces a bare cross, with no figure of Christ on it, and the other has an open book placed on his lap and holds a cloth-like shape, which is difficult to perceive. In the second bozzetto, the cross is moved from the right to the left of the angel and rests on the floor, while no changes are made to the other angel. In the modello, however, Castillo inserts the body of Christ on the crucifix, and the other angel has placed the book, now closed, on the floor and holds what looks like a piece of rope, perhaps the cord which St. Dominic is said to have begged from St. Francis and to have worn thereafter in memory of him (Mirror of Perfection, ch. xliii) or an instrument of flagellation relating to the passion of Christ. Finally, in the altarpiece, Castillo kept the crucifix but instead of showing the dead Christ placed a bunch of white lilies over the cross. Such a sudden alteration seems likely to reflect iconographical concerns, with the lilies referring to the purity of the Virgin, whose role in this scene, as we have seen, is significant.

Gregorio Ferro’s St. Joseph and Andrés de la Calleja's St. Anthony

The next two altarpieces function as a pair, as both paintings deal with intimate relationships between a specific saint and the Infant Christ. Ferro painted St. Joseph holding the Christ Child with the Virgin in the background (fig. 159) on the left altar, while on the right altar Calleja depicted St. Anthony with the apparition of the Christ Child and the Virgin (fig. 160). Their spiritual relationship to the Infant Jesus made both saints popular devotional subjects in Spain.

These subjects also appear in the San Pascual Baylón cycle, and they were especially common in the decoration of the small portable oratories painted for the Royal family. Charles III was particularly devoted to St. Anthony, as exemplified by his decision to have an altar dedicated to him in the royal chapel of the palace of Aranjuez. One of Mengs’s first devotional paintings for Charles III was an Infant Christ appearing to St. Anthony of 1765, a pendant to an Immaculate Conception now lost.552

552 Honisch, A.R Mengs, 1965, no.63, p.82.
Calleja, the oldest of the painters involved in the commission, had worked as court painter under Philip V. Rather an old-fashioned painter, still using the late Baroque manner and more accustomed to painting in the small format of his jewel-like private oratories, he struggles to fill the required space, adopting a Murilloesque visionary scene to depict The Christ Child appearing to Saint Anthony of Padua among clouds and a host of angels.

As a Franciscan, St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) plays an obvious role in the iconographical programme. Born in Lisbon, he became a famous preacher in Morocco, France and Italy. He spent the last years of his life, in Padua where his popularity was such that a church and shrine were built soon after his death. The popular legend of the Infant Christ appearing to him developed in the 14th century and is recorded in the Liber Miraculum. One day, St. Anthony’s landlord passed by his room and noticed a bright light shining through the crack of the door. Looking in, he saw the Infant Jesus before St. Anthony. This vision was to become a very popular image during the Counter Reformation. Initially, St. Anthony and the Infant were represented alone in spiritual conversation, but it later became a custom to include the Virgin presenting her child to St. Anthony. Calleja, in his interpretation, places the Virgin in a prominent position.

The inclusion of St. Joseph in the San Francisco cycle, also reflects his links with the Franciscans. The Franciscan preacher St. Bernardino of Siena, portrayed in Goya’s altarpiece, is known to have been a strong devotee of St. Joseph. He encouraged his followers to pray to the saint and stressed his role as foster-father to Jesus. St. Bernardino actually wrote a sermon on St. Joseph, known in Spanish as the Excelencias del Glorioso Patriarca San José, Esposo de María Santísima y Patrono de la Iglesia Universal. In this sermon he explains that one of the holy sites defended by the Franciscans while in the Holy Land in the 13th century was the town of Nazareth where the Holy Family had lived. The Franciscans developed a special devotion towards St. Joseph, regarding him as the “Jefe de la Santa Casa”. In the context of this commission, as St. Francisco el Grande was directly connected with the Santos Lugares de Obra Pia, it would seem appropriate to have St. Joseph present in the iconographical scheme. Ferro places St. Joseph in a semi-tropical setting with the palm tree as an allusion to the Holy Land. St. Joseph’s fatherly relationship with the Infant Christ is stressed as he is brought forwards standing on the steps having left his work behind, while the Virgin is placed in the background.

San Peter of Alcántara is also known to have had a special devotion for St. Joseph, as he demonstrated by naming the first province which he founded under the reformed branch of Franciscans after this saint. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the popularity of the saint’s cult in

553 Fr. Mariano Fernández García wrote a small pamphlet summarising St. Bernardino’s ideas on St Joseph, Excelencias del Glorioso Patriarca San José, Esposo de Maria Santísima y Patrono de la Iglesia Universal, Barcelona, 1897.
Spain was revived by St. Theresa of Avila, who dedicated the motherhouse of her reformed Carmelite order at Avila to him and recommended devotion to him in her writings.

Tiepolo's altarpiece of St. Joseph and the Christ Child, for San Pascual Baylón, which survives in fragments, shows the saint kneeling and holding the Child placed on a white cloth, almost as if he were offering his adopted son to be sacrificed. Whistler notes that Tiepolo may have been familiar with contemporary devotional literature explaining the complexity of the emotions that St. Joseph had to endure. He was faced with mingled sadness and joy at the thought of the Passion: sadness because of the pain Christ was to suffer and happiness because of Redemption.554 Ferro, by contrast, idealises the scene, making St. Joseph look tall, young and handsome. The angels on the left offer garlands of flowers, while the Virgin at the back prepares Jesus's bed, attended by angels.

Goya's St. Bernardino of Siena

Goya was given the task of painting an altarpiece of St. Bernardino of Siena preaching before a King and his courtiers (fig. 161) for the first chapel on the right side of the main entrance. It is evident from his letters to his friend Zapater, that Goya took the commission extremely seriously. Referring to it as a “formal competition”, he makes clear that he regarded it as both a prestigious artistic project and a way to bolster his own career.555 His thoughts on the commission survive in a letter he wrote to the Count de Floridablanca on 22nd September 1781.556 This letter not only throws light on the compositional problems that Goya faced but also raises questions about the identity of the king represented kneeling before St. Bernardino of Siena. Most published sources identify the monarch as Alfonso V of Aragon, known as “El Magnánimo”. However, in his letter to Floridablanca, Goya identifies him as René of Anjou, suggesting that the initial stages of planning the picture’s iconography

555 Salas and Agueda, op. cit, letter 21, “una competencia formal.”
556 Lafuente Ferrari, E., “Sobre el cuadro de San Francisco el Grande y las ideas estéticas de Goya “, Revista de Ideas Estéticas, Vol. IV, pp. 36-46, 1946: “Con la puntualidad que exigía la Respectable orn de S.M que me comunicó V.E en 20 de Julio del corr.te nombrándome para que pintase uno de los siete Quadros del nuevo Templo de S.n Fran.co de Asís de esta Corte, dejando a mi arvitrío representar el Subceso, que me pareciese mas a proposito de los de la vida de San Bernardino de Sena, hé pintado en el borroncito de la medida que se me dió (como a lo demas) el Milagro, de quando predicando el Santo en una espaciosa llanura (a causa de no caber el concurso en Calles, ni Plazas) inmediata a la Ciudad Aquilina en presencia de Renato Rey de Sicilia, y de numeroso concurso; encareciendo la coronacion de la Reyna de los Angeles, se vio con m.r asombro por ag.l admirable Auditorio, descender de el Cielo una lucidisima estrella la que fijandose sre Su Cabeza, le bañó de Resplandor Divino. Asumpto que dá bastante campo para enriquecer la composicion, a no limitarla en parte a lo extrecho de la proporcion del Quadro, pues bien notará la ilustrada comprehencion de Vuestra Excelencia, que mediante haver de Ser piramidal la executión, teniendo que serpeán con sus términos para su mejor decoración, se hace forzoso, faltar en algun modo a la espaciosa demonstration del Campo, que dejo insignuada: V. E. se dignará decirme si hé de entregár aqui el nominado Borroncito ó a quien le hé de dirigir á ese Real Sitio. Nuesto Señor prospere la importante vida de Vuestra Excelencia los dilatados á que le apetece la Nación.”

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were marked by a controversy over which of these two royal personages should feature in it. The identification of the King as Alfonso of Aragon, though it does not concur with historical sources, may reflect the desire of Charles III and his advisers to extol the glory of the Spanish monarchy. This is of particular interest in the context of a study of royal patronage of religious paintings, as it demonstrates that political, as well as theological concerns underlay the choice of subject matter.

The choice of St. Bernardino is significant for a number of reasons. A friar minor of the Franciscan order, he was known during his lifetime as a preacher whose zeal for social reform and moral regeneration provided inspiration for leaders of the church and state. He first preached in Milan and eventually traveled all over Italy, always on foot, sometimes speaking for hours to crowds of thousands from a pulpit in the open air. Most of his surviving sermons preach the need for penance and voluntary poverty, but he also denounced vices such as gambling, usury, witchcraft and superstition, and the strife of the power-politics of Italy’s city-states. His sermons were lively and emotional, drawing on a repertory of anecdotes, mimicry, acting, clowning and denunciation. He moved his audiences from laughter to tears and accomplished numerous conversions. Penitents apparently flocked to confession and in several cities reforms urged by the saint were embodied in laws under the name of Riformazioni di frate Bernardino. His popularity was such that it earned him the title of “Apostle of Italy”. Following St. Francis's footsteps, he laid special emphasis on peace and reconciliation. Six years after his death on 20th May 1444, he was canonized in 1450 by Pope Nicholas V. His association in this picture with the Virgin, on whose virtues he was preaching in the scene portrayed by Goya made him an ideal subject for the cycle of paintings decorating San Francisco el Grande, given their emphasis on the twin themes of the Franciscans and the Immaculate Conception.

In his letter to Floridablanca, Goya comments first on the subject, which he claims to have chosen himself, and then discusses the difficulty of creating a successful composition, given the narrow format of the altarpiece. In his first borrón, or preliminary painted sketch, Goya organizes his composition rather loosely, placing the figure of St. Bernardino on a rock surrounded by an audience including the king, shown sitting among the crowd (fig. 162). The composition is tightened in a second borrón, which Goya sent, accompanied by his letter setting out his thoughts on the commission, to the Conde de Floridablanca on 22nd September 1781. “In spite of the limitations imposed by the narrow format of the picture,” he observes, “Your Excellency’s enlightened understanding will appreciate that, given the necessity for a pyramidal construction that must follow a serpentine pattern in order to achieve the best
decorative effect, it is inevitable that the representation of the plain will to some extent lack
the spaciousness to which I have alluded."  

In his second borrón, Goya uses a serpentine vertical structure to bring together the
various key elements of the painting, including the figure of the king (fig. 163). His finished
painting was composed in such a way as to fit perfectly into the physical space of the chapel
for which it was destined. The fall of natural light from the lantern above, corresponding to
the light in the painting itself, would have helped his audience to fuse artifice with reality.
With their gestures and glances, Goya’s figures lead us into the composition, focusing on St.
Bernardino and the monarch kneeling before him. In a further move to break down the
barriers between art and reality, Goya includes a self-portrait, a form of signature borrowed
directly from Velázquez’s Surrender of Breda which Goya would have seen in the Prince of
Asturias’s “pieza de comer” at the royal palace in Madrid (fig. 164). This and other
allusions to Velázquez, including the 17th century style of clothing that the king and his
courtiers are wearing, are significant: Velázquez had been court painter to Philip IV, and
Goya, drawing on Spanish art-historical references, is putting himself forward as the new
Velázquez to Charles III.

While Goya refers to the king in his painting as the French King René of Anjou, the
Memorial Literario published in April 1785, identifies him as Alfonso V of Aragon. One
possible explanation for this discrepancy could be that the Memorial Literario either
misinterpreted the iconographical contents of Goya’s picture or was simply misinformed.
Another, put forward by Lafuente Ferrari, suggests that Goya got it wrong and was told to
correct his mistake. However, when one considers the context of the commission and its
importance, it is unlikely that such a mistake would be made. More likely, the change reflects
a conscious manipulation of historical events to fit the political and religious objectives of
Charles III and the Franciscan order. Unfortunately, no contemporary documentary evidence
survives to explain how and why this was done, but an analysis of historical and theological
sources may help to clarify this idea.

557 Lafuente Ferrari (1946), pp. 36-46.
558 Ponz (1947), pp. 249-250.
un peñasco con un Crucifixo en la mano, y sobre la cabeza una estrella resplandeciente, predicando al
Rey D. Alfonso de Aragon, y á otros grandes Señores que forman un numeroso auditorio
manifestándose todos admirados y llenos de júbilo.”
560 Ferrari concluded that Goya had either been misled or had failed to understand the historical context
of the scene. He suggests that Goya consulted Père Jean Croiset’s Año Cristian, which recounts the
story: “Hizo asombroso fruto en el Reyno de Nápoles, donde su Monarca Renato le quería detener,
cuando recibió un mandato del Papa para que volviese á Toscana, y se hallase presente en el Concilio
que se havia trasladado de Ferrara á Florencia.” Goya in the end had been advised to change the
identity of the French king because it suited the nature of the commission, in Ferrari’s words, “un
cuadro encargado por el rey de España, descendiente y heredero de Alfonso V, y nacido, como era el
caso de Carlos IV, en el propio reino de Nápoles.”
In his letter to Floridablanca, Goya claims to have chosen the subject himself. However, considering the complexity of the underlying theme and rarity of the subject, it is safe to assume that he either consulted someone of theological erudition or was assigned the subject by someone with influence over the general decorative programme of San Francisco el Grande. In his letter, Goya seems more pre-occupied with the composition and structure he was to give to his painting than with its subject. However, the choice of this incident from St. Bernardino’s life mirrors themes already apparent in the other altarpieces. Considering the rarity of the representation of the subject, even in decorative cycles dedicated to the life of St. Bernardino, one can understand why Goya was anxious to receive Floridablanca’s approval.

A study of early sources that may have served Goya in his representation of the scene sheds light on the reasons that may have prompted its selection. One may surmise that Charles III, or more probably his confessor, Eleta, selected the incident in which St. Bernardino preaches to an audience including René of Anjou in order to represent certain ideas on kingship and links between the Monarchy and the Church with particular reference to the Franciscans. Taking Goya’s reference to René of Anjou at face value, the altarpiece can be seen to contain multiple layers of theological and spiritual meaning. St. Bernardino is shown standing on a rock preaching to a multitude of people including a king and his courtiers, all dressed in lavish costumes. The star above St. Bernardino’s head is the only phenomenon indicating that we are witnessing a supernatural occurrence. But it is precisely this supernatural occurrence that gives relevance to the scene within the context of the overall cycle.

Using contemporary accounts of St. Bernardino’s life, it is possible to reconstruct the scene recorded by Goya. St Bernardino was preaching on the subject of the Virgin Mary and her virtues, using as his text a passage from St. John the Evangelist’s book of Revelation. (Chapter xii, verses 1-4 to 14.)562. “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a women

561 Tomlinson, J. Francisco Goya. The Tapestry Cartoons and Early Career at the Court of Madrid, Cambridge, 1989, p. 129. So far, only one comparative picture has been located, in the Church of St. Bernardino in Orvieto, by an unknown Tuscan master, in which no king is depicted, but the vision described by St. Bernardino appears in the top left corner. See Pavone, M.A and Pacelli, V., Iconografia. Enciclopedia Bernardiana, Vol. 2, p. 152, 1982.

clothed with the sun, and the moon at her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars...."

Taking this text as his point of departure, St. Bernardino discussed the relationship between the Virgin Mary and the Woman of the Apocalypse, linking the crown of twelve stars with the Virgin’s twelve virtues. While he was describing each star individually, associating the first with the noble character of Virgin, a star suddenly appeared above his head, shining so brightly that the sun was overshadowed. While those present exclaimed in astonishment, a voice was heard, “Udite quibus, seguitatelo, e siate di lui fedeli imitatori....”

The twelfth apocalyptic vision was often used by those defending the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, particularly in the second half of the 17th century, as it was considered proof of the Virgin’s conception without original sin. The twelve stars that crown the Woman of the Apocalypse became an integral part of the iconography of the Immaculate Conception. Stratton notes that the motif had a special significance for the supporters of the doctrine as it was also a form of prayer linked to a head-roll prayer cycle known as the “Stellarium”, adopted by the Franciscans in response to the Dominicans’ devotion to the rosary. St. Bernardino was not the first to identify the Apocalyptic Woman as the Virgin and the stars as symbols of her virtues. St. Bernard, in his “Sermo. Dominica intra octavan assumptionis”, identified the stars as symbols of her prerogatives. The Franciscans took up this idea, establishing a popular prayer of twelve Aves dedicated to the crown of twelve stars, which were interpreted as her joys. The parallel between the stars and her virtues drawn by St. Bernardino in his sermon seems to have been later incorporated in Jesuit devotion, as Stratton mentions that the Jesuits were instrumental in popularizing such a prayer in the 16th and 17th century. An essay known as the Crown of XII Shining Stars or Virtues of the God-bearing Virgin Mary by the Jesuit Theodorus Rosmer, published in 1614 in Valladolid, employed similar analogies. In choosing this specific scene from St. Bernardino’s life, it is seems likely that the Franciscans wanted to demonstrate their association with the Virgin and with such forms of prayer. When Charles III expelled the Jesuits in 1767, the Franciscans were called upon to fill the vacuum that they left. One way of doing that and at the same time bolstering their popularity was to demonstrate their respect for Marian ideology.

In his letter, Goya shows a desire to locate the event in a historical and topographical context. As the site for the occurrence, he mentions an open space outside the city of Aquila, and although his painting is not exactly a topographical view, the city walls and a temple-like edifice can be seen in the background. Aquila is a town in the Abruzzi, a region which was at

the time part of the Kingdom of Naples. Contemporary sources provide us with exact details of the site. The miracle occurred on the Piazza di S. Maria Collemaggio, a square outside the city of Aquila on which were located a church and mausoleum built in 1287 by Pope Celestino V. These may be the buildings visible in the background of Goya's painting.

If Goya's inclusion of the buildings was designed to suggest historical accuracy, he also took pains over the appearance of the king and his courtiers, providing each with an elaborate costume of cape, long boots and a sword. The king is shown kneeling with a crown on his head, having laid his plumed hat on the ground in the middle of the composition. His collar is of ermine, possibly a reference to the traditional finery of French kings, while round his neck hangs a gold chain with a medal. On close inspection, one can make out a lightly sketched image in relief on this medal which, although not perfectly clear, could be interpreted as a rider on horseback. René's wax seals, particularly those dating from 1436-1437, show him on one side dressed in armour riding with his sword drawn and on the other side sitting on his throne with his coats of arms on either side. Whether Goya took these images as a source for his medal must remain open to question. However, Goya did make an effort to give his picture a historical air, by dressing the king and his knights in splendid costumes. Though they bear more resemblance to the costumes of the soldiers in Velázquez's painting of the The Surrender of Breda than to early 15th century dress, they would have been enough to give an 18th century public a sense of looking back into the past.

René of Anjou has remained an important and exemplary king in French history. A man of letters and extensive culture, he is remembered as a patron of the arts, particularly of the Van Eyck brothers, and of university studies. Born in Angers in 1409, he was the second son of Louis II, Duke of Anjou and, by right of inheritance, King of Naples and Jerusalem. His mother, Yolanda, was the daughter of Juan II of Aragón. On the death of his father in 1417, René inherited the title of Count of Guise, and soon after, in 1419, following the death of his great uncle on his mother's side, that of Duke de Bar. Marrying in 1420 Isabel of Lorraine, daughter of Charles II, Duke de Lorraine, who had no sons, he acquired rights to the kingdom of Lorraine. When his father-in law died, he was made Duke de Lorraine in

565 Ibid. p. 126.
566 Alessio (1899), p.361. Alessio does not cite his source, but he may have used sermons by St. James of the Marches (1391-1476) who often quoted and referred to St. Bernardino and his miracles. See "Le Prediche Autografe di S. Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476) con un saggio delle medesime." Codicographia, in Archivum Franciscanum Historicum, Annus XXXVI, Tome XXXVI, p. 81, 1943.
567 "Dum iste angelus predicabat ante S. Mariam Collis Madii Aquile, eccedit stella de caelo in medio populi, vidente omni populo; et dixit S. Bernardinus, quod hoc est naturale. Sed in veritate ipse erat illa stella, que deebat habitare cum illo populo. Ideo sequitur: Et exclamavit in voce forti: Cecidit Babilon magna; id est confusio demonum et confusio peccatorum, quia ipse fuit lux mundi, qui non potuit abscondi."
1431, but his title was contested by the Count of Vaudemont and the Duke of Burgundy. René was eventually defeated at the battle of Bulgnéville in July 1431 and imprisoned in Dijon.

In 1434, René’s brother, Louis III, died and René, who was still held captive, inherited the kingdom of Anjou. On 2nd February 1435, he received news that Jeanne II of Naples, a distant relative, had named him heir to her kingdom, which in addition to Naples included Hungary, Jerusalem and Sicily, having gone back on an earlier plan to leave it to Alfonso V of Aragon. Arranging a ransom of 400,000 écus, René obtained his release on 11th February 1437, and set off immediately for Naples to join his wife who had been sent to rule Naples while he was kept captive. René received the support of both Pope Eugene IV and the Genoese republic. The Pope faced a delicate situation at the Council of Basle, where without Angevin support he was likely to lose his influence, while the Genoese, wanting to dominate the Mediterranean, particularly against their traditional enemies, the Catalans, recognized the House of Anjou as an important ally. However, René’s claim to the Kingdom of Naples was contested by Alfonso V, who made clear his intention of fighting to establish his own right to Jeanne II’s inheritance.

Arriving in Naples on 19th of May 1438, René entrusted Jacques Caldera with the task of fending off Alfonso V’s forces, which had already captured the castles of Castel-Nuovo and Castel del Ovo in the Puglia region. René himself seems initially to have been more concerned with the installation of an efficient administrative system in Naples and with re-opening its University on 8th of July. However, he soon realised that Alfonso’s attacks were to be taken seriously and so decided to assist Caldera, who was by now in the Abruzzi. This was the occasion that led to René’s presence in Aquila, coinciding with St. Bernardino’s visit to the town. According to Alessio, René was in Aquila for twelve days in 1438 preparing for battle against the Aragonese army. The main purpose of his visit was to seek an alliance with the barons of Aquila in order to defend the Kingdom of Naples from Alfonso’s attacks. Having heard of St. Bernardino’s reputation as a preacher, he asked him to preach before his courtiers and soldiers on the Piazza di S. Maria di Collemaggio just outside Aquila. Although Alessio states that he preached on the feast day of the birth of the Virgin, which according to the Christian calendar is 8th of September, other sources believe that the miracle occurred on the feast of the Assumption, on 15th of August. In any case, Alessio claims

Note: The numbers in superscript correspond to the sources listed at the end of the text.

570 Alessio (1899), pp. 360-361.
571 Lecoy de la Marche, (1875), Vol. I, p. 173, says that René managed to bring together 7000 “gaillards” to help him fight Alfonso V.
572 According to Lecoy de la Marche, (1875, Vol. II, p. 442), René was in Aquila on 10th September 1438, but not in August, which supports Alessio’s suggestion that he preached on the feast day of the Virgin’s birth.
that King René and his courtiers were present, along with a large crowd of Christians and Jews.\footnote{Alessio (1899), p. 361.} Interestingly de la Marche’s biography of René, although it makes no mention of the incident, includes an itinerary of René’s life. Drawn up following documentary sources, he affirms that on 14\textsuperscript{th} August he was “au camp” with his army somewhere between Naples and Aquila, but that by the 10\textsuperscript{th} of September he was definitely present in Aquila.\footnote{Ibid.}

Having mustered his troops, which by now amounted to 18,000, René was ready to fight. In accordance with his chivalric upbringing, he sent Alfonso V his glove to warn him that he was ready to attack and that he should choose the site of battle. Taking advantage of this offer, Alfonso chose the lands of Lavoro, located closer to Naples, and decided that the battle should happen on the last day of September. René did not turn up and Alfonso was able to initiate a siege of the city of Naples. The death of his brother, Pedro, meant that he had to retreat to Gaeta in December 1438, but René was left defending with his kingdom slowly collapsing around him. By November 1441, Naples was surrounded and Capri fell to the Aragonese. Finally in July 1442, Alfonso V entered Naples, while René escaped back to France. Alfonso was to rule Naples until his death in 1455, when his bastard son, Ferdinand, ascended the throne.

Although René’s military exploits are not impressive, his relationship with St. Bernardino is significant in the context of the San Francisco commission. Lecoy de la Marche, mentions on various occasions that St. Bernardino had been René’s personal confessor.\footnote{Lecoy de la Marche (1875), Vol. I, p.218, footnote 2, states that those who travelled back with René when fleeing Naples in 1442, was St. Bernardino as his confessor.} In addition, he also provides documentary proof to demonstrate that René had a strong spiritual connection with St. Bernardino. Documents in the French National Archives confirm that René was especially devoted to the Franciscan order and in particular to St. Bernardino.\footnote{Lecoy de la Marche, A. Extraits des Comptes et Mémoriaux du Roi René pour servir à l’histoire des Arts au XVème siècle, Paris, 1873, doc. 178 & 179, pp. 62-64. See also Lecoy de la Marche, (1875), Vol.1, p. 547.} René apparently favoured the Franciscan order because it was a mendicant order. After St. Bernardino’s death in 1444, René was instrumental in his canonization. In 1453, René embarked on the construction of a chapel dedicated to St. Bernardino, built as an annex to the church of the Cordeliers, a Franciscan convent in Angers, to house a reliquary that contained the relics of St. Bernardino.\footnote{Lecoy de la Marche (1873), doc. 178, pp. 62-63, 17\textsuperscript{th} May 1453, “Comme hault et puissant prince le roy de Jherusalem et de Sicile, duc d’Anjou, ait eu affection et voulené de fonder et faire edifier une chappelle en ceste ville d’Angiers, joignant l’église des frères Mineurs, en l’onneur et réverence de Saint Bernardino, laquelle chappelle est já commancée à faire...”} Behind the altar, stained glass windows depicted portraits of René and his family and scenes from the life of St. Bernardino. René was also particularly devoted to the Passion of Christ, and the walls were decorated with eight angels

573 Alessio (1899), p. 361.
574 Ibid.
575 Lecoy de la Marche (1875), Vol. I, p.218, footnote 2, states that those who travelled back with René when fleeing Naples in 1442, was St. Bernardino as his confessor.
577 Lecoy de la Marche (1873), doc. 178, pp. 62-63, 17\textsuperscript{th} May 1453, “Comme hault et puissant prince le roy de Jherusalem et de Sicile, duc d’Anjou, ait eu affection et voulené de fonder et faire edifier une chappelle en ceste ville d’Angiers, joignant l’église des frères Mineurs, en l’onneur et réverence de Saint Bernardino, laquelle chappelle est já commancée à faire...”.
holding instruments of the Passion, said to follow designs conceived by René himself. Evidence of René’s devotion towards St. Bernardino is also demonstrated by his desire in 1456 that, on his death, his heart should be placed in the chapel. In addition, those present at the ceremony were to receive a special indulgence.

Such an intimate relation between confessor and king is paralleled in the relationship between Charles III and Eleta. San Bernardino was without a doubt an inspiring religious figure for someone like Eleta, particular in relation to his ideas on reform and morality. Charles III may also have wanted to associate himself with René of Anjou, because of their common dynastic lineage. Charles III’s father, Philip V, before he ascended the Spanish throne, bore the title of Duke d’Anjou, and although the family became known as the Spanish Bourbons, their French connections were always strong. In terms of devotion, apart from a preference for the Franciscan order and the choice of St. Bernardino, Charles III shared René’s devotion towards the Passion of Christ, as shown by the series of Passion scenes which he commissioned from Mengs to decorate his bedroom.

Historical evidence also supports Goya’s initial reference to René of Anjou. The B. Bernardini Aquilani Chronica fratum minorum contains a description of St. Bernardino’s activities when in Aquila and his encounter with René of Anjou. "Hunc (S. Bernardinum) audivi Aquilae praedicare 12 praedicationes tempore quo erat Aquilae rex Renatus. Et quando in die Assumptionis Dominae nostrae praedicavit ante faciem ecclesiae S. Mariae de Collemadio et assimilavit beatam Virginem Stella, et completa praedicatione stella quaedam in aere apparuit intra horam tertiam et sextam, et totus populus vidit et miratus est, et ego vidi.” This account is also recorded in St. John of Capestrano’s Vita S. Bernardini.

Due to the early date of these sources, one can safely suppose that indeed it was René of Anjou who was historically present during St. Bernardino’s sermon. However those responsible for planning the painting iconography may also have consulted other sources that were ready available. Interián de Ayala’s Pintor Cristiano y Erudito for example, even though it does not mention the sermon, provides a bibliographical reference to a 17th century Spanish text by Fray Damian Cornejo. Published in 1698, the Chronica Seraphica del Glorioso Patriarcha S. Francisco de Assis contains a volume dedicated to the “Vida Maravillosa de el Glorioso S. Bernardino de Sena” which was perhaps the most concise biography in Spanish.

easily consultable. Cornejo’s description of the event may help to explain the confusion over the king’s identity. He tells us that in “the city of Aquila, in the area of Santa Cruz, in the church of Santa Maria, he preached one day in praise of his Sovereign Queen before an audience of grand nobles who were accompanying the King of Aragon and Sicily, Alfonso, and Prince Penato Andegabo.”584 Assuming that the “Principe Penato Andegabo” is Renato Angevin (René of Anjou), Cornejo seems be unaware of the military conflict between the two kings. Tomlinson, meanwhile had proposed that Goya used Pedro de Rivadeyneyra’s description from St. Bernardino’s life in his Flos Sanctorum as a source for his altarpiece.585

However, neither the Latin version of Rivadeyneyra’s Flos Sanctorum seu Vitae et Res Gestae Sanctorum ex Probatis, printed in 1630, nor the 1761 Spanish edition mention which king was present, while a 17th century English version names the king as Alfonsus King of Aragon and Sicily.586 Such discrepancies are confusing, but indicate that the matter was not entirely settled in the 17th century leaving room for varying interpretations in the 18th century.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the initial decision was to represent René of Anjou as witness to St. Bernardino’s sermon. As the son of Philip V, who had been Duc of Anjou before ascending the Spanish throne, Charles could claim dynastic descent from René. Secondly, the personal relationship between René and St. Bernardino could be interpreted as a direct parallel to that between Charles III and Eleta. Both St. Bernardino and Eleta were Franciscans, who believed in the reform of society in general, and Eleta would benefit from such a comparison. Goya interestingly represents St. Bernardino barefoot, which could be a connection with the Barefoot Franciscans founded by St. Peter of Alcántara, the order to which Eleta belonged. Thirdly and most significantly, the subject of St. Bernardino’s sermon would have been in tune with Charles III’s religious and political objectives. A sermon on the purity of the Virgin, accompanied by references to the “Woman of the Apocalypse”, would

584 Cornejo, Fray Damian, Chronica Seraphica del Glorioso Patriarcha S. Francisco de Assis, Madrid, 1698, p. 495: “la Ciudad de Aquila, en el Arrabal de Santa Cruz, en la Iglesia de Santa Maria, predicaba (St. Bernardino) un dia en alabanças de esta Soberana Reyna, teniendo en su Auditorio grandes Señores que asistian al Rey de Aragon, y Sicilia Alfonso, y al Principe Penato Andegabo, con numerosa, y nobilissima comotiva.”

585 Tomlinson (1989), p. 129: “In the city of Aquila there is a street which taketh its name from the Holy Crosse, where our blessed lady is particularly honored: here St. Bernardino had a sermon in praise of that ever glorious virgin: at which was present Alfonsus King of Aragon and Sicily, with many great princes and Dukes, and an infinite multitude of people... His text was out of the twelf of the Apocalypse (sic): a great signe appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sunne and the moone under her feet: and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Which words he did fitly apply to the Queen of heaven, and interpreted the twelve stars to be as many virtues wherewith she was honored: And when he was explicating the first starre, there appears over his head, whilst the sun was shining brightest, a most fair and beautiful starre, blazing out its brightness even above the sunne, the beams where of did so environ the Saint that he seemed to be in glorie. This happened not long before his...death and certainly did foretell it.”

naturally remind a learned 18th century audience of the Immaculate Conception. As the main theme of the San Francisco commission is the Marian ideology and the Franciscans’ strong connection with it, supported by Charles III, the decision to portray René alongside St. Bernardino would have fitted perfectly into an intricate and sophisticated programme.

Between the date of Goya’s letter and the opening of San Francisco on 6th December 1784, however, the identification of the king as René was dropped in favour of Alfonso of Aragon. The change may have been connected to René’s French nationality, a detail perhaps considered inappropriate given the nature of the commission, aimed at a Spanish audience. The citizens of Madrid were known for their sensitivity toward foreign influence in political matters. The Esquilache riots in 1766 had been sparked off by general discontent at the number of foreigners in Charles’s court, and there was strong resentment towards the “afrancesados” who dominated court fashions. It is also possible that the parallels between king and confessor were interpreted as being too personal for a public commission.

Given the confusion of some of the sources and the king’s power over the commission, a re-interpretation of the event and of the identity of the king shown in the picture would not have been difficult. Alfonso of Aragon had demonstrated his military prowess by defeating René of Anjou, four years after the miracle. More importantly however, by conquering the Kingdom of Naples, Alfonso united with it the Kingdom of Sicily, resulting in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Such direct associations between Charles III and Alfonso cannot be overlooked. Charles III had ruled over the kingdom of Naples and Sicily before ascending the Spanish throne in 1759, and had similarly united the two kingdoms with the aid of his ambitious mother Isabelle of Farnese to protect them from Austrian invasion. So the reference to Charles III’s Aragonese precursor would have been appropriate and commemorative of his royal Spanish heritage. Interestingly, Cornejo informs us that after San Bernardino’s death in 1444, Alfonso was instrumental in his canonization, and even donated ten thousand florins towards the building of a chapel and shrine at Aquila.587 Again, it is possible to make a connection between Alfonso and Charles, who also paid for the construction of religious edifices and who was a strong supporter of a campaign to canonize the Venerable Palafox.

One of the disadvantages of changing the king’s identity is that the sermon that St. Bernardino is shown preaching loses its significance in relation to the Immaculate

587 Cornejo (1698), p. 519: “Siendo tan muchos, y continuos los milagros despues de la muerte de Bernardino, y siendo cada uno un pregon clamoroso de su santidad, movieron la piedad, y devocion de Don Alonso Rey de Aragon, y de Sicilia, y de las Ciudades de Sena, Milán, y Aquila, para que con apretadas instancias pidiesen al Summo Pontifice Eugenio IV, expidiesse el Rotulo, y diesse providencia para que se tratasse el negocio de la Canonizacion.” See also p. 521: “Los gastos, que fueron magnificos, y excessivos se devieron á la generosidad de el Rey Alfonso de Aragon, Sicilia, y á las ciudades de Sena y Aquila.” For the chapel see p. 523: “avia dexado diez mil florines de oro, que ofrecio de contado el Rey Alfonso de Aragon, y Sicilia...”
Conception. This may explain why the scene remained so enigmatic in visual terms. Another curious discrepancy between Goya’s initial plans for the painting and the final work is visible in his preparatory bozzetti, which show St. Bernardino holding a plaque with the monogram of Christ engraved on it.

St. Bernardino was famous for his propagation of the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He persuaded towns to take down the arms of their warring factions from churches and palaces, and replace them with the initials I.H.S. In 1424, while preaching at Volterra, he made a plaque on which he wrote the letter IHS, surrounded by rays, which he presented to his audience at the end of his sermons for their veneration. So popular did these plaques become that a card maker, whose previous activity producing playing cards had been undermined by St. Bernardino’s denunciation of gambling, was encouraged by the saint to make a living by designing these tablets for sale. St. Bernardino is often represented in paintings, holding a plaque while preaching to a crowd. A predella panel painted by the Master of Fucecchio in the Birmingham Museum of Art shows him on a pulpit with the crowd below listening.588

In the final modello and the altarpiece, however, the plaque that features in the bozzetti is replaced by a crucifix. A passage that may shed light on the reasons for the change in the iconography can be found in Villegas’s Flos Sanctorum. This relates that while St. Bernardino was “preaching one day in front of many people, saying great things about the Holy Name of Jesus, for which he had much devotion, a ball of fire appeared above him in the air from which shone rays of light, and on which was inscribed the Holy Name. There was no lack of people to criticise such goings on, accusing him before Pope Martin V on the grounds that many people, without having respect for the significance of that Name, worshipped the tablet on which the monogram was written. The Pope summoned him and, having taken counsel, ordered him in place of the letters, to paint a Crucifix so as to avoid providing an occasion for error on the part of the ignorant.”589

The event described in Villegas’s text is interesting as it encompasses several themes that relate to Goya’s painting. It includes the ball of fire or the star, which is often depicted above St. Bernardino’s head in medieval altarpieces and is visible in Goya’s painting.

588 Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, Kress collection, 1937-cat. no. K.1108 B.
589 Alonso de Villegas, Capellan de la Capilla Mozarabe de la Santa Iglesia de Toledo, Flos Sanctorum vida, y hechos de Jesu-Christo, Dios, y señor nuestro, y de todos los santos, de que reza la iglesia catholic. Conforme al breviario romano, reformado por decreto del santo Concilio Tridentino. Junto con las Vidas de los Santos Proprios de España. 1787, p 373: “predicando una vez delante de mucha gente, diziendo grandes cosas del Santísimo Nombre de Jesus, con quien tenia suma devociion, apareció sobre él, en el ayre, una bola de fuego, que echava de si rayos, y tenia aquel nombre Santisimo escrito en si. No faltó á quien le pareciese mal, acusandole delante del Papa Martino V, diciendo, que muchos, sin tener respeto á lo que significava aquel Nombre, adoravan la tabla donde estavan las letras. El Papa le llamó, y haciendo consejo sobre ello, le mando, que en las letras pintase un Crucifixo, para quitar ocasion de errar al Pueblo ignorante....."
However, it also demonstrates the respect St. Bernardino had for the Pope and his humility in accepting the Pope’s authority, which is perhaps an aspect that Charles III wanted to emphasise. This relates well to the situation of Charles III and the Franciscans in 18th century Spain, who were both anxious to safeguard their delicate relationship with the Papacy, particularly in view of the Jesuits’ previous influence with the Pope.

The reasons behind Goya’s iconographical alteration are not clear, but one may speculate that Goya was specifically asked by someone in authority to make this change. Despite St. Bernardino’s popularity, he was accused during his lifetime of heresy in the way he used his plaques to promote devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. In particular, a Dominican friar, Manfred of Vercelli, accused St. Bernardino was exposing people to the danger of idolatry. In 1427, he was summoned to appear before Pope Martin V, who forbade him to preach or exhibit the tablets until his conduct had been examined. A trial took place at St. Peter’s on 8th June 1427. His defender and Franciscan colleague, St. John of Capistran, was instrumental in demonstrating that St. Bernardino was an innocent and ideal servant of God. In the end, the malice and futility of the charges were demonstrated to such an extent that the Pope fully acknowledged his teachings and asked him to preach in Rome.

The debate on the significance of the tablets is explained in Interián de Ayala’s treatise, El Pintor Cristiano and it is possible that Goya read it to clarify his ideas on St. Bernardino. The section Sobre la Pintura del Nombre de Jesus, resplandeciente en medio de los rayos del Sol, examines the problems of representing Christ’s name in paint. While Ayala was in favor of representing the name of Christ through the monogram, he was aware of the problems it could lead to and observed that “some in the 15th century condemned the painting of the Name of Jesus amid the rays of the sun as mistaken and truly idolatrous.” Using St. Bernardino as an example, Ayala emphasizes his efforts to reinstate respect for Christ’s name, which had been used in blasphemous acts such as swearing. Ayala then credits St. Bernardino with having invented the plaque inscribed with the monogram to “get rid of so great an abuse and inspire in the people an idea of the reverence due to his Holy Name....”

Although Pope Martin V allowed St. Bernardino to continue using the plaques for devotional purposes, he was clearly aware of the danger that such cults might lead to “superstition or scandal within the Church.” Figures such as Ayala, who through their writings were hoping to reform religious painting and combat idolatry, were also conscious of the problem these plaques could pose. Ayala does not seek to dissuade painters from

590 Ayala (1782), Volume III, Ch.2, p.205.
591 Ibid: “Hubo algunos en el siglo XV, que condenaron por erronea, y verdaderamente idolátrica la Pintura de dicho Nombre resplandeciente en medio de los rayos del sol.”
592 Ibid: “exterminar un abuso tan grande, é infundir al pueblo una idea de la reverencia debida a este Santíssimo Nombre.”
593 Ayala (1782), Volume III, Ch. 2, p. 208: “alguna supersticion, ó escandalo en la Iglesia.”
depicting this tablet, remarking that the problems were of the past, and that now “pious and sensible men do not suggest there be in the sole letters of the Name of Jesus some kind of power, virtue or divinity....” Nonetheless, one may speculate that Goya’s patrons may not have been prepared to risk portraying the plaque for fear that it would re-ignite devotion for the cult. A Crucifix was perhaps a safer symbol to depict and its austere aspect would have inspired more pious ideas in the minds of the public. Such a decision may also have reflected the fact that the Jesuits were celebrated for their devotion to the Name of Christ and therefore the Franciscans wanted to avoid any association.

**Antonio González Velázquez’s St. Bonaventura**

Antonio González Velázquez, with help from his son Zacarias, painted the altarpiece of St. Bonaventura Witnessing the Translation of the Relics of St. Anthony of Padua (fig. 165) for the third chapel on the gospel side, facing Goya’s painting. The Memorial Literario gives a contemporary explanation: “representa á S. Buenaventura vestido de Cardenal, que acompañado del Prete, Diácono y demás asistentes asiste en el Templo de Padua á la traslacion de las cenizas y reliquia de S. Antonio, cuyo sepulcro se vé á la derecha ya descubierto, y un Personage vestido de secular que está inclinado sobre él con un hacha encendida en la mano en accion de admirar lo que contiene.” Although the event is rarely depicted in painting, it is well documented and often recorded in Franciscan literature. The miracle is said to have occurred in 1263, when St. Anthony’s relics were being transferred to a newly erected temple built after twenty years of hard labour by the people of Padua. As general of the Franciscan order, St. Bonaventura (1221-1274) was required to witness the exhumation, which was to reveal an extraordinary phenomenon. Although St. Anthony’s body had disintegrated to ashes, his tongue was left unconsumed. On seeing this, St. Bonaventura immediately took the tongue into his hands and exclaimed, “O blessed Tongue, that always

594 Ibid: “no dan á entender los hombres pios, y cuerdos, que en solas las letras del Nombre de Jesus, haya algun poder, virtud, ó divinidad....”

595 A.O.P, Cuentas de la Obra Pia, legajo 108, section Pintura: 21º December 1785 “Dn Antonio González Velázquez, Profesor de Pintura del Rey. He recivido del S.or Dn Tomas de Carranza, Depositario de los Caudales consignados a las obras que se executan de orden de S.M. vajo la direccion del Sr Dn Francisco Sabatini, para la fabrica de la nueva iglesia que se construye para los Religiosos observantes de N.P.S Francisco de Asis en esta corte. Dos mil setecientos diez y seis reales de vellon importe del lienzo, bastidor, andamio, y mozos, materiales e imprimirado, y por haberme ayudado dn Zacarias Joaquim mi hijo, ha executar la Pintura de Sn. Buenaventura, que esta colocada en una de las Capillas de la citada Iglesia....”

596 Memorial Literario, 1785, p. 428.

praised the Lord and made others bless him, now it is evident what great merit thou hast before God."

González Velázquez’s altarpiece can be interpreted on various levels. Firstly, the miracle provides an opportunity to focus on St. Bonaventura, the Franciscan order’s most important political and ecclesiastical figure after St. Francis. He is shown wearing his Cardinal’s vestments, a reference to his position as Cardinal Bishop of Albano. St. Bonaventura was also the author of the official biography of St. Francis, *Legenda S. Francisci*, which was officially approved in 1263. This life of St. Francis was to supersede those then in circulation and become the authoritative version. In relation to the San Francisco commission it is also interesting to note his devotion to the Virgin. According to Wadding, Bonaventura instituted a special feast day dedicated to the Virgin in 1263. Five years later, during a general chapter meeting at Assisi in 1268, he ordered that on every Saturday a special mass should be said in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Wadding, in his *Annales Minorum*, interpreted this as a celebration of the Immaculate Conception, but this is disputed by other Franciscan historians.

In González Velázquez’s first bozzetto St. Bonaventura is shown in the centre of the composition, standing on a staircase, and holding up the holy tongue while his audience watches (fig. 166). A banner with an image of the Immaculate Conception appears to the right of the composition, perhaps alluding to St. Bonaventura’s efforts to promote the cult of the Virgin’s holiness. In González Velázquez’s final bozzetto, which corresponds to the altarpiece, the Marian connection is eliminated (fig. 167). While the first bozzetto represented a devotional type of image focusing on St. Bonaventura holding the tongue, González Velázquez eventually decided to interpret the miracle as a historical event rather than just concentrating on the spiritual contents. He inserts a monumental sepulchre to emphasize the archaeological nature of the miracle, and heightens the drama by gathering the crowd round St. Anthony’s skull from which the tongue sticks out.

In his new version, González Velázquez made an extra effort to structure his composition in accordance with the physical setting of the chapel and respond to Goya’s picture opposite. The sepulchre is positioned on a diagonal so that the eye is led towards the...
back, where large crowds are gathered. González Velázquez also makes use of the natural light from the lantern to illuminate his scene from above.

Even though St. Bonaventura holds the title role in the altarpiece it is his connection with St. Anthony that is fundamental. St. Anthony’s relics are central to the iconography of González Velázquez’s altarpiece. The tongue naturally refers to his extraordinary eloquence, his power to convince and communicate the word of God. In addition, a scene from St. Anthony’s life is represented on the side of the sarcophagus, showing the Miracle of the kneeling mule before the Eucharist which alludes to St. Anthony’s extraordinary gift for miracles and illustrates his devotion to the Eucharist.

Interián de Ayala relates the miracle of St. Bonaventura finding St. Anthony’s tongue in his Pintor Christiano, which one may assume González Velázquez consulted prior to painting his altarpiece. Ayala remarks that he knows of no pictorial representation of the scene, even though he considers it an ideal subject for popular devotion. Ayala’s eloquent praise of the relic indicates its importance in the context of the San Francisco cycle: “Because it was the (tongue) that countered Heretics; that corrected and reprehended tyrants with authority; that brought back the sinful to piety and penance; that, preaching before the Pope, won from his Holiness the name of Ark of the Testament; that, inspired and moved by the prophetic spirit, predicted and prophesized the future.” Like St. Bernardino, represented in Goya’s St. Bernardino preaching before a crowd, St. Anthony was a great preacher, as is demonstrated by the incorrupt tongue which St Bonaventura is responsible for revealing.

The overall iconographical programme

Such an intricate and complex iconographical programme is unusual in Franciscan imagery, which normally dedicated decorative cycles to the life of St. Francis, raising the question of who was responsible for its organization. One possible candidate is clearly Eleta,
who was sufficiently well versed in Franciscan iconography to be able to conceive an intricate programme that not only uplifted the Franciscans as a modern and active order, capable of replacing the Jesuits, but also emphasized their close association with the Spanish monarchy.

So far, each painting has been examined individually in attempt to define its iconographical contents. However it is more profitable to bring them together and study their overall effect, bearing in mind the relationship between each of them and their function as a mirror of Charles III's religious ideals and his alliance to the Franciscan order. A contemporary viewer standing in the middle of San Francisco's circular ground plan would have been able to appreciate all seven altarpieces simultaneously. In the same way as in the collegiate church of San Ildefonso at La Granja, thematic links can be made between the paintings, with regard to their theological contents and religious imagery.

The programme as a whole was crowned by Bayeu's St. Francis's vision at the Porciúncula, which shows the titular saint and founder of the order and focuses on the Virgin's role as intercessor. The Portiúncula indulgence is the central theme of the altarpiece, assuring the faithful of Divine Grace and forgiveness for their sins. The remaining altarpieces either reiterate the Marian theme or deal with Franciscan saintliness.

In order to reinforce the Marian ideology presented in the main altar, Maella's Immaculate Conception was positioned on the immediate left-hand side. On the other side of the main altar, Castillo's, Meeting of St. Dominic and St. Francis showed the founders of the mendicant orders promising to fight heresy together. The painting recalls the Virgin's intercessory role, in pleading with Christ to allow St. Francis and St. Dominic to reform society on earth, rather than punishing it.

The next pair of paintings, showing St. Anthony and St. Joseph, concentrates on two extremely popular saints in Spain and their particular affection for the Infant Christ. In choosing these two subjects, the Franciscans consciously aimed to attract popular devotion to their church, in a counterpart to the Jesuits' crowd pulling Sacred Heart. The Virgin is portrayed in both of these paintings.

Finally, the notion of the Franciscans as a militant force is reflected in the two altarpieces on either side of the main entrance. These two paintings recall three important public figures from the Franciscan order: St. Bonaventura, who spent his life trying to unite the Franciscans as a strong ecclesiastical force; St. Anthony of Padua, whose uncorrupted tongue has assured the immortality of his message of religious reform; and St. Bernardino of Siena, who similarly was a preacher of reform, and whose sermon is here being graced by the presence of King Alfonso V of Aragon.

del Sumo Pontifice, le grangeó del mismo Papa, el nombre de Arca del Testamento; la que inspirada, y movida por espíritu profético, predixo, y vaticinó lo Futuro.”
The altarpieces not only converse as pairs, but also relate to each other in diagonals. St. Bernardino’s sermon deals with the purity of the Virgin, alluding to her Immaculate Conception, which is directly taken up in Maella’s painting, situated diagonally across from it. Clear royal allusions are to be found in the presence of the Aragonese king who pays homage to the Franciscan order in Goya’s painting, and in the attributes of the Royal Order of Charles III in Maella’s painting, referring to Charles III’s devotion to the mystery. St. Bonaventura and St. Anthony of Padua are parallel figures to St. Francis and St. Dominic, in their zeal to fight heresy and reform society. A Franciscan equivalent of the Jesuits saints, St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Bonaventura and St. Anthony demonstrate the strength and continuity of the Franciscan order.

**The Opening of San Francisco el Grande**

The ceremonies to mark the official opening of San Francisco el Grande began on 6th December 1784. The December issue of the *Memorial Literario* provides a detailed account of the various ceremonies and processions that took place. At nine o’clock in the morning of 6th December, the Guardian of the convent, Fr. Luis de Buitrago, accompanied by various religious officials, blessed the interior of the church, including both the main altar and the side chapels. The prayer before the main altar, “Ut Ecclesiam hanc ad honorem tuum, & nomen S. Mariae Angelorum, & S.P.N Francisci benedicere digneris”, emphasized the twin roles of the Virgin Mary and St. Francis as protectors of the convent. The next day, a procession organized by the monks and various grandees and knights bore the sculpture of the Virgin of the Aurora into the presbytery.

On the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, 8th December, mass was said at six in the morning. The king was not present at this point, but his portrait was placed on the Gospel side of the presbytery. It was later removed at half past one in the afternoon, when the King and the Prince of Asturias made their official entrance in person. The King was greeted by the Padre Provincial, Francisco de Villanueva, and Fr. Luis de Buitrago, who expressed their gratitude “in the name of the whole Province for the singular support and affection that

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605 Bills indicate that the Virgin of the Aurora was to be installed in the chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception where Maella’s painting was. See bill (A.O.P. leg. 109) paid to the carpenters Manuel Blanco and Francisco Ortiz for the work done on the tabernacles of the altars dedicated to “la Púrissima y nra Sra de la Aurora...”
606 *Memorial* (1784), p.109, “Despues de haber quitado el dossel y retrato del Rey nuestro Señor que por la mañana había ocupado el lado del Evangelio del mismo Presbiterio, se colocaron en él un reclinatorio y almohadon para S.M., y una almohada para el Príncipe nuestro Señor, cubierto todo de un Damasco Carmesi...”
he had always shown in relation to the increases (in the cost) of this project."\textsuperscript{667} Perhaps the most splendid arrival that afternoon, however, was Eleta’s. Emerging from his carriage, "appeared the Illustrious Archbishop of Thebes dressed in Pontifical attire (and) accompanied by a Deacon and a Subdeacon, two capes for the Mitre and the Crosier, processional candlesticks and two thuribles, and each bowing before the King and Prince, they occupied the centre of the Altar without turning round."\textsuperscript{668} This occasion was of great importance for Eleta, as it represented the climax of his endeavours and of his personal career. From modest beginnings as an austere barefoot Franciscan, he had become an influential figure. The pomp and ceremony surrounding his arrival demonstrated the extent to which Royalty and Franciscans had joined forces in a united endeavour.

Nevertheless, the political implications of San Francisco are hard to judge. While it may have had an impact on a Spanish audience, demonstrating the piety of their king, his dedication to the Franciscans and his devotion to the Immaculate Conception, it seems on a broader political plain, to have gone largely unnoticed. Since Clement XIV’s death in 1773, his successor Pius VI, who had been educated by the Jesuits, had quietly ignored Spain’s demands for their suppression, concentrating more on his struggle against the rising tide of atheism and secularism in other European kingdoms. Pius had become involved in the campaign against the rise of Febronianism, which sought to challenge the Pope’s accretions of temporal power. Such ideas had had practical results in Austria where Joseph II had prevented Austrian bishops from applying for dispensations to Rome, and had even secularized several monasteries. Pius was obliged to visit Vienna in 1782, in the hope of achieving some kind of agreement. While Charles III had displayed his power as Catholic king by appointing his own bishops, expelling the Jesuits, and going ahead with religious constructions such as the Palafox chapel, he represented less of a threat to the Papacy than Austria. Against this background, Charles’s receding prospects of having Palafox canonised help to explain why he attached such importance to San Francisco. His patronage of the Franciscans was another way of filling the vacuum left by the Jesuits, demonstrating that he was a worthy ally of the Papacy and giving him the perfect image of a Spanish Catholic king.

The reaction of the “inteligentes” to the aesthetics of San Francisco el Grande

Given the status of San Francisco el Grande as Madrid’s largest Franciscan church and convent under Royal patronage, its inauguration was expected to attract a large crowd of

\textsuperscript{667} Memorial, (1784), p. 110: “en nombre de toda la Provincia por la singular proteccion y afecto con que siempre ha mirado los aumentos de esta obra.”

\textsuperscript{668} Ibid: “salio el Ilmo. Señor Arzobispo de Tebas vestido de medio Pontifical acompañado de Diácono y Subdiácono, dos capas para Mitra y Báculo, Ciriales y dos Incensarios, y haciendo todos una media inclinacion ó reverencia al Rey y Principe, ocuparon el centro del Altar sin volver la espalda.”

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worshippers. While the presence of the King ensured the magnificence of the occasion, however, the paintings inside the church became an immediate focus of criticism. Although no objections were raised to them on religious grounds, the arbiters of good taste, including such prominent members of the Academy as Ponz and Eugenio Llaguno, as well as Floridablanca, rapidly decided that the decorative schema of San Francisco was an embarrassment to the Spanish school of painting. Their criticisms circulated within a small circle of friends, amount to a clear rejection of the paintings on the grounds of taste.

Recently published correspondence between Ponz and Llaguno, Oficial primero de la Secretaria de Estado, reveals both men’s disapproval of the performances of the artists involved in the San Francisco commission. The main subject of this correspondence was José Ortiz, an architectural historian who was translating Vitruvius’s Ten books of Architecture into Spanish. Voicing reservations about his ability as a translator, which was of importance given the role of Vitruvius’s work for use by aspiring architects, they draw parallels between his undertaking and the San Francisco commission. A month after the official opening of San Francisco, on 11th January 1785, Llaguno tells Ponz, referring to Ortiz’s translation, that “this is an exercise that either has to be done well so as to bring us honour or be left alone so that others can do it later. When something is left undone, one wonders if it is due to laziness or lack of ability; but when it is done, and generally agreed to have been done badly, the latter must be assumed. I wish the pictures for San Francisco had never been painted, as without them we would have been spared a public proof of our great ignorance of the Art of Painting. The worst, however, isn’t this, but rather that one of those that have messed up these paintings thinks he has attained the sublime and proclaims as much, putting himself forward for the post of Director General. In any case, I have decided to have no truck with shoddiness: and so either Vitruvius has to come out well, or I will let it be dumped and forgotten.”

In this letter, Llaguno alludes to the post of Director General of the Royal Academy of St. Ferdinand, which had just fallen vacant as a result of Calleja’s death on 2nd January 1785, who had occupied it since 18th January 1778. Llaguno expresses his disgust at the fact that one of the painters who had “emporcado” (“ messed up”) their canvases, had in addition

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610 Ibid, p. 101: “esta es una obra que ó se ha de hacer bien de modo que nos haya honor, ó se debe dejar para que la hagan otros mas adelante. Cuando no se hace una cosa queda en duda si es pereza, ó falta de habilidad; pero cuando se hace, y con gran satisfaccion se hace mala, se califica lo segundo. Ojalá que no se hubiesen hecho los quadros de Sn. Fran.co, pues sin ellos faltaría una prueba publica de nra grande ignorancia del Arte de la Pintura. Lo peor no es esto, sino que alguno de los que han emporcado aquellos lienzos cree que ha llegado á lo sublime, y así lo dá á entender solicitando le hagan Director General. En todo caso, yo he resuelto no tener para en chapucerias: y así, ó el Vitruvio ha de salir bueno, ó le dejaré caer y olvidar.”
the cheek to apply for this post. He does not make clear to whom he is referring, but the only painters in an appropriate position to make such an application were the court painters Francisco Bayeu, Maella and Antonio González Velázquez. Goya and Ferro had only just graduated from the Academy, in 1780 and 1781 respectively, so they would have had little chance of selection, while Castillo was not yet an Academician of Merit, so he was not eligible.

Bayeu’s painting, in particular, encountered sharp criticism from his contemporaries. Prior to its installation in San Francisco el Grande, Bayeu took it to the Royal Palace, to hear the opinions of his royal patrons, Charles III and the Prince of Asturias. According to Goya, who recounts this incident to his friend Zapater in a letter of January 1783, the King said “Fine, fine, fine” as he usually did. But the Prince reacted strongly against it. He asked his architect, Juan de Villanueva, what he thought of the picture. Villanueva answered that “It seems all right”, but the Prince contradicted him with the words, “You are an animal (bestia), …for this painting has no chiaroscuro, no effect, is trite and no merit. Tell Bayeu he is an animal.” While the King was probably more concerned by content than by style, the Prince’s response demonstrates his concern with aesthetic matters, such as the lack of chiaroscuro, causing the picture to lose its effect.

It was perhaps unfair to judge Bayeu’s painting outside its original context, especially if it was to be placed in an immense interior, dependent on natural lighting. So large a painting, seen outside the context for which it was painted, would inevitably lose much of its impact. While Bayeu’s method of preparation emulated Mengs’s painstaking efforts, however, he failed to reach a harmonious and balanced composition. It is possible that his concentration on each detail was such that he failed to take account of the overall effect of the composition. The size of the canvas did not help and although he applies bright pastel colours and employs contorted figures, he crowds the composition without any clear purpose. Bayeu’s baroque allusions would have been regarded as particularly tasteless by staunch supporters of the neo-classical style. A poem by the Augustinian Friar Diego Tadeo González (1733-1794), A una pintura confusa de la Gloria, quoted by Tomlinson, summarises perfectly the appearance of Bayeu’s painting:

Una rara visión, que representa

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611 Ibid.
613 Tomlinson (1992), p.204, footnote no.10. González was an Augustinian friar and poet, who belonged to a group of so-called neo-classical writers. He is famous for his love poems with erotic undertones, particularly the Murcielago alevoso.
Un conjunto de varias confusiones
En color de azafrán y de pimienta,
Donde, a costa de muchas atenciones
Sola nota la vista mas atenta
Manos, patas, cabezas, pies y alones,
Por que motivo se ha de llamar gloria?
No será mejor llamarla pepitoría?  

In the event, the French sculptor Roberto Michel was elected Director General of the Academy on 14th March 1785. Bayeu, meanwhile, was appointed Director of painting by the King on 7th June 1788. Nevertheless, when Charles IV succeeded to the throne that same year, he rejected Bayeu’s petition for the post of First Court Painter. Only in 1795 did Bayeu’s talents receive full recognition when he was made Director General of the Academy, two months before his death.  

As for Maella, after an unsuccessful attempt to become director of painting in 1787, he finally reached the position of “hombres director” in 1792 and eventually the full position of Director in 1794, replacing González Velázquez who had died that year. He also eventually replaced Bayeu on the latter’s death as Director General in 1795 and was appointed First Court Painter along with Goya in 1799.  

In payment for the three altarpieces by Ferro, Goya and Castillo, Floridablanca awarded them 4,000 reales on 25th June 1785, “although the pictures did not add up to much, those of these (painters) are the least bad.” Their relative success perhaps reflected their response to the challenge posed in compositional terms by the space in which they were to be exhibited and the restrictions that this imposed in terms of height and narrowness. All three painters realised that by using a pyramidal structure they could give their composition more presence and a clearer effect.  

In Castillo’s case, the San Francisco commission had provided an unprecedented opportunity to display his talent in the hope of attracting the attention of the king and other patrons. In his altarpiece he took care to reflect his experience and show his ability to tackle the sheer size of the canvas and construct a composition that could be easily read and appeal visually. More importantly, however he also made sure his painterly style was highly defined and that every technical and stylistic detail was controlled and irreproachable. By emulating Mengs’s smooth finish, using figure types that evoked the classical past and employing a  

614 To anybody who has eaten a “pepitoria”, which is a sort of omelette or fricassee made with peppers and chicken, the visual pun is very accurate. In Spanish, the word is more commonly used to mean a “jumble.”  

615 Francisco Bayeu was elected on 19th June 1795 and he died on 4th August 1795.
logical and comprehensive composition, Castillo hoped to advance his career. The fact that he was made Academician of Merit in 1785 and Deputy Director of painting along with Ferro in 1788 indicates that he was well regarded at the Academy. Floridablanca seems to have taken him under his wing, awarding him a monthly salary of 1,500 reales, and commissioning him and Ferro, in around 1788-1789, to paint the ceilings of the Casa del Rey, where Floridablanca lived. In addition, around the same date he painted four rooms in the Duke of Alcudia’s palace, which show that he was finally respected as a frescoist. In 1790 he was approached by Cardinal Lorenzana to paint the main altarpiece of the church of St. Justo and St. Pastor, in Madrid. The surviving bozzetto for the now destroyed altarpiece, in the Museo Lázaro Galdiano, demonstrates his confidence in composition, anatomy and lighting effects. However, in 1792, Floridablanca was replaced by the Count of Aranda as First Minister of State, leaving Castillo without his monthly salary of 1,500 reales. He failed in an attempt in 1793 to replace Ramón Bayeu as Director of the Tapestry works, a position that was taken up by Cosme de Acuña, and he finally died in poverty on 5th October 1793.

Ferro, for his composition, similarly placed his St. Joseph and Child in the centre of the composition, slightly raised on some steps. He balanced the composition with two Mengsian angels on the left and a stool on the right. Although he clutters the interior with details of St. Joseph’s tools and the Virgin behind attended by angels, the main protagonists are clearly depicted. In relation to the execution, Ponz seems to have kept a close eye on Ferro’s progress while painting the picture. Writing to Llaguno on 24th January 1784 he comments that “Ferro will change the angel in the large picture, and give you satisfaction in everything. He is making new life-size studies for the purpose, as is necessary and as I wish.” Such instructions may seem an encroachment on artistic expression, but presumably that was the kind of power that Ponz and the Academy wanted to exert. Ferro became Deputy director of painting in 1788, as already mentioned, and although he competed unsuccessfully with Goya for the post of Director of painting in 1795, he was made Director General of the

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616 Muñoz y Manzano, Cipriano (Conde De Viñaza), Goya: su Tiempo, su Vida, sus Obras, 1887, Madrid, p. 181: “aunque los Quadros no han sido gran cosa, bien que los de estos son los menos malos.”
618 See Castillo’s Memorial in A.G.P., Reinado Carlos III, legajo 3957: entitled Razón de la obras de Pintura ejecutadas pr Dn Josefdel Castillo ten.te Director Honorario de la RI Academia de Sn Fernando para el RI Servicio: “En la Casa del Rey que aora posée el Duque de Alcudia, a pintado a el fresco los techos de quatro piezas.”
620 Lázaro Galdiano, no. inventario 1915. The bozzetto is signed, dated and dedicated to Lorenzana on the back, “Borrornillo del quadro del Altar mayor de la Yglesia Parroq.l de San Justo y Pastor de Madrid, pintado por D. Jph. del Castillo año de 1790. Quien lo dedica al Em.o y Ex.o Señor D.n Francisco de Lorenzana Arzob.o de Toledo.”
In 1804, this time beating Goya, reflecting the growing preference within the Academy for classical aesthetics, Ferro’s reputation grew with the Academy.

Perhaps the most successful painting of the commission was Goya’s, at least judging by the commissions that he received as a result. When the paintings were unveiled to the general public, Goya did not hesitate to boast in a letter to his friend Zapater of December 1784 that his work had won favour public and the “ynteligentes.”

The finished altarpiece is painted with strong and simplified brushstrokes, and every element serves to highlight the devotion of the kneeling monarch. Goya, too employed a pyramidal composition, centring the figure of St. Bernadino on a rock with all the figures surrounding him. He even paid attention to the fall of natural light from the lantern above, which corresponds to the artificial light in the painting itself. However, rather than looking to Mengs as a source of inspiration, Goya turned to Velázquez. The execution of the drapery, the rich contrasting colours and the 17th century figures types, particularly the way in which their heads are superimposed against each other, create the crowded atmosphere which one finds in Velázquez’s Surrender at Breda.

Goya’s strong and decisive brushstrokes are also direct references to Velázquez. It seems that Goya understood Velázquez’s idea that to obtain a good effect on a large scale, one had to use a simple composition and adapt one’s brushstrokes to the space around it, meaning that, while from afar it looked perfect, from close up the brushstrokes could be perceived.

In 1786, Goya’s success led him to be named deputy director of painting at the Academy and a salaried “pintor del rey”, with the main duty of providing tapestry cartoons. In 1787, he and Ramón Bayeu, who had received similar honours at court, were commissioned to decorate three altars each for the Royal convent of St. Anne and St. Joachim in Valladolid, which we will examine in the next chapter. Goya was promoted to court painter in 1789, Director of painting in 1795 and eventually First Court Painter in 1799.

Although the San Francisco commission was heavily criticised by Spanish intellectuals, the Frenchman Jean-Francois Bourgoing who visited Madrid just after the opening of San Francisco while researching his book Nouveau Voyage en Espagne was less vehement. He observes that the church “était déjà décorée de grands tableaux, dont plusieurs ne pourront qu’étendre la réputation de l’Ecole Espagnole. Les principaux soutiens de l’Ecole sont, en ce moment, M.M Maella & Bayeux, dont le coloris et le goût de dessin rappellent la manière de Mengs, & consolent en quelque sorte l’Espagne de la perte de ce grand Peintre. Un de leurs confrères, Don Francisco Goya, mérite aussi une mention honorable par son talent, pour rendre avec fidélité & agrément les moeurs, les costumes, les jeux de sa patrie.”

622 [Goya, F. de], Cartas a Martin Zapater, ed.X. de Salas and M. Agueda, Madrid, 1982, letter 61: “Es cierto que he tenido fortuna para el concepto de ynteligentes y para todo el público con el quadro de San Francisco, pues todos están por mí, sin ninguna disputa.”

Bourgoing may have been told that Bayeu and Maella were considered Mengs’s followers and stylistic heirs, but his opinion suggests that critics such as Ponz may have been excessive in their strictures. Even though Bayeu and Maella may not have reached the philosophical idea of the “sublime” upheld by the intellectuals of the Academy, their art was evidently satisfactory for viewers such as Bourgoing.

Nevertheless, San Francisco demonstrated that Spanish artists were a long way from forming a unified school under the neo-classical teachings of Mengs. Although prizewinning students at the Academy during the 1780s, such as Zacarias González Velázquez, Cosme de Acuña, Juan Navarro and José Lopez Enguidanos, were applying Mengs’s classicism to their historical paintings, a degree of awkwardness and mediocrity was still apparent.624

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624 Azcárate et al., Historia y Alegoría (1994), pp. 141-152.
CHAPTER IX

THE QUEST FOR AN IDEAL SOLUTION IN ROYAL RELIGIOUS COMMISSIONS: THE ROYAL CHURCH OF SOTO DE ROMA, NEAR GRANADA AND THE CONVENT OF ST. ANA Y JOACHIM IN VALLADOLID

In 1783, while the San Francisco commission was well under way, Floridablanca, Ponz and Llaguno were simultaneously involved in a smaller royal religious commission on behalf of Charles III, which can be interpreted as their attempt to remedy the apparent failure of San Francisco and introduce Mengsian principles. This was a plan to decorate the royal parish church of Soto de Roma, near Granada, with paintings specially selected as a counter-weight to the vaguely neo-baroque altarpieces of San Francisco. The Royal Site of Soto de Roma was a fertile piece of land in the province of Granada, near the town of Fuente Vaqueros. Originally cultivated by the Moors, the land was taken over by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 and used as the site of a small palace and park. In 1776, Charles III decided to offer it to his minister Ricardo Wall, in reward for his services and as a place for retirement. On his death in 1779, the property returned to Charles III until it passed on to his son, Charles IV, who eventually gave it in reward to Godoy. A small palace and chapel is known to have existed during Charles’s reign and, although he probably never set foot there Charles decided to provide the local inhabitants with a parish church.

Possibly conceived as the demonstration of what its organizers considered a tasteful commission, with a view to repeating such a prototype elsewhere, the church was to be decorated by three altarpieces, by José del Castillo, Gregorio Ferro and Mengs’s star pupil, Francisco Javier Ramos. Surviving contracts indicate that Castillo was to paint St. Charles Borromeo for the left-hand altar, while Ferro provided a copy of Mengs’s Annunciation for the main altar. For the right-hand altar, Ramos sent his painting of St. Peter and St John curing a lame man before the gates of the Temple from Rome via the Academy where it was received with great acclaim and copied so that the original could be kept in Madrid.

The earliest references to the commission appear in a letter from Castillo to Llaguno explaining his financial difficulties. Dated 24th October 1783, he tells us that he had

completed the painting for San Francisco (el Grande), on the extensive work has left me without any money and I do not dare bother His Excellency over payment as I am sure he will satisfy the other Professors at the same time. The St. Charles which you were so good as to order from me is well advanced and next week I will continue work on it with a view of having it finished..."

Castillo was finally paid 7500 reales on 24th May 1784 by the Conde de Floridablanca.

Ferro was given permission on 21st January 1783 to go to the Royal palace to copy Mengs’s Annunciation in the King’s private apartments, for which he was paid 7500 reales on 25th May 1784. Although we do not know what Castillo’s picture looked like, we may venture to suggest that he attempted to assimilate the palette and classical composition of Mengs’s faithful followers: Ferro, in his copy of Mengs’s celebrated Annunciation, and Ramos’s neo-classical “history” painting.

Ramos’s picture arrived in Madrid in February 1784 and was soon after exhibited at the Royal Academy. The picture is mentioned on 17th July 1784 in the catalogue of the Distribución de los Premios, as well as citing the 10th issue of the Italian Giornale delle Belle Arti which had been published earlier in January: “the said work is referred to with most honourable and deserved admiration, but with no description, as the public has seen the work with pleasure and satisfaction. The said Diary concludes that, if the great Mengs were alive, ...”


Castillo was finally paid 7500 reales on 24th May 1784 by the Conde de Floridablanca. Letter from Floridablanca to Medinaceli, “Sirvase Ve de mandar a los que cuidan del Palacio de Madrid, que permitan al Pintor Dn Gregorio Ferro sacar una copia del cuadro de la Anunciacion de Mengs que necesita para el Altarmayor de la nueva parroquia del Real Sitio del Soto de Roma, facilitandola para que pueda ejecutarlo bien la posible comodidad.”
he would be proud of a disciple such as Ramos." Céan Bermúdez also notes that the picture "merited the pleasure of the King and the approval of the Academy, where it was exhibited to the learned for some days; and following orders from above, instructions were given for the picture to be copied so that (the copy) could be sent to the said location, leaving the original in Madrid." Until recently the picture itself was considered lost and only a small autograph version made for Azara in the collection of Azara's heirs gave us some idea of Ramos' original version (fig. 168). However, Ramos's original version recently appeared for sale when the Ca'n Puig y Castillo de Bendinat collection was sold in Mallorca in May 1999 (fig. 169).

The discovery of this picture gives a clear idea of the ideal style desired by intellectuals such as Ponz, Jovellanos, Floridablanca and Azara by the 1780s, particularly after the fiasco of the San Francisco el Grande commission. Ramos transforms a religious subject into a history painting. Bourgoing noted that historical painting was his forte, and here he displays the lessons learnt from Mengs in a very convincing manner. Ramos sets the scene in a neo-classical interior, placing his figures in front of a classical doorway with a pediment in the most sober style. A deeper perspective is achieved by leading the eye through the space into what appears a courtyard supported with Doric columns. The interpretation of the miracle is straightforward, as he has concentrated on the bare essentials, reducing the spectators to a woman holding a child and young man behind her, and rejecting any baroque elements such as putti or vaporous clouds. St. John and St. Peter perform the miracle in the simplest manner, standing side by side in classical dress, executed to perfection, with St. Peter holding the lame man's hand and pointing up to heaven in a rhetorical manner. In style and technique, the painting is faultless. The brushstrokes blend into each other and the use of colouring is clear and direct in its purity. Ramos succeeds in instilling a neo-classical mood into a religious representation of the miracle of St. John and St. Peter in the cura of the lame man in the temple of Jerusalem, called Especiosa.

Distribución de los premios concebidos por el Rey nuestro Señor a los discípulos de la Tres Nobles Artes. Hecha por la Real Academia de San Fernando en la Junta Pública, 1784, July 1784, p. 83. See also Urries de Jordán (1996), p. 103, footnote 77, who cites the quote in the Italian version of Azara (1787), p. 160, note a: "se hace mencion de dicha obra con honrosísimos, y debido elogio, cuya descripción se omite, porque el Publico ha visto la obra con gusto y satisfacccion. Concluye el expresado Diario, que si el gran Mengs viviese, se gloriaría de un discipulo como el Señor Ramos."

Céan Bermúdez, Biblioteca Nacional, Ms, caja 21455/8: "merecio el agrado del Rey y la aprobacion de la academia, en donde estuvo expuesto á la vista de los inteligentes por algunos dias; y de orden superior se mando copiar este cuadro, para embiar al citado destino, quedandose en Madrid el original."

Urries de Jordán (1996), p. 103, footnote 79. This version was exhibited as by Mengs in: Sánchez Cantón, Antonio Rafael Mengs, 1728-1779. Noticia de su vida y de sus obras con un catálogo de la exposición celebrada mayo de 1929, Madrid, 1929, Museo del Prado, p. 6, n. 7, plate II.

Ca'n Puig y Castillo de Bendinat, Mallorca, Christie's, Lunes 24 y Martes 25 de Mayo 1999, lot. No. 790, p. 381. It measures 273 x 167 cm and is signed and dated "Franco. Ramos en Roma/ año 1783 on the base of the right pilaster.

According to Bédat (1974), p. 186, Ramos was given a position to teach colour in 1794. Bédat also mentions that the Marqués d'Espeja apparently said "On dit que la fondation de cette chaire a eu pour objet de conserver á l'Académie le style de l'Ecole de Rome."
painting to the extent that it becomes more of an intellectual dissertation on style than a religious experience. It must be said that if the paintings for San Francisco had been painted in such a style, they might have pleased people like Ponz, but would have meant little to a broader audience. The division between the intellectual appreciation of art and its function is here perfectly demonstrated.

The influence of neo-classical architecture on religious painting

As an isolated commission, the artistic impact of the Soto de Roma ensemble was probably limited. However Ramos's original, which was kept at the Academy in Madrid, and Mengs's Annunciation, which had also been exhibited at the Academy before entering the royal palace, must have had some impact on contemporary painters. Whatever the case, the completion of the San Francisco commission marked a notable turning point in the decorative appearance of royal commissions. Although San Francisco el Grande represented the apex of Charles and Eleta's religious and political ambitions, subsequent commissions embarked upon between 1785 and 1787 took on a different appearance. A new unity in stylistic terms in the pictures that decorated the altars reflected not so much the effect of Mengs's ideas as the fact that paintings were increasingly viewed in the context of their architectural surroundings.

When Joseph Townsend visited San Francisco el Grande in 1786 he remarked that the building "is admired by the best judges; but to me the vast dome and the Grecian order, wholly destitute of ornaments, appeared unfinished, naked, cold and void of taste." While the church's bare interior did not appeal to Townsend, his remarks demonstrate that Charles III and the Academy had been successful in imposing the tenets of neo-classicism in architecture. Following the critical reception accorded to the paintings that decorated San Francisco el Grande, the next step was to be the development of a new style of painting bringing visual art to the same level as architecture. An important contribution to this process was an influential treatise published in 1785 and dedicated to the Academy, the Reflexiones sobre la arquitectura, ornato, y música del templo of the Marquis of Ureña which concentrates on the need to bring architecture and painting together in a harmonious whole, in order to create an ideal temple for the worship of God.

The trend led by Sabatini was to build stark neo-classical interiors, with the idea of raising the quality of painting by conditioning it to its architectural surroundings. The result

was severe editing of artists’ compositions, making them more structured, simpler and direct. It is in this context that I want to discuss the last royal commission of this thesis: the building and interior decoration of the royal Bernardine convent of San Joaquín y Santa Ana in Valladolid. Despite its small size and relatively minor role in religious politics, compared with San Francisco el Grande or the Palafox chapel, it serves as a perfect example of the new vogue for the "architectonic" style.

In 1778, the Bernardine nuns approached Charles III, reminding him that their convent had been under Royal patronage since the Middle Ages and was now in need of urgent restoration. On 2nd February 1778, Sabatini, who had been sent by the king to Valladolid, reported that "it is necessary to proceed with the rebuilding of the monastery of the Cloistered Recolet Bernardine nuns of St. Joachim and St. Anne in the City of Valladolid so as to avoid the danger of collapse which currently threatens the said monastery." With his assistant, Francisco Valenzia, Sabatini embarked on one of his most successful architectural designs, which with San Francisco el Grande exemplifies his ability to recreate the purity of line and eloquence of space that he found in Greek examples. Sabatini was also responsible for the interior decoration, designing the altars and choosing painters to decorate them. In 1787, he selected Goya and Ramón Bayeu to decorate three altars each.

Before analysing the commission, it is important to take into account Ureña’s recommendations in favour of the neo-classical style as best suited for reform of religion and worship. Rarely mentioned in connection with interior decoration, Ureña’s treatise explains the advantages of the neo-classical style in architecture, and discusses the importance of visual images, giving practical indications of how paintings should be installed in such interiors. Sabatini doubtless knew this treatise and may even have inspired Ureña to write it. It is possible that contemporary painters were also familiar with Ureña’s view that the architectural context should be taken into account when creating a religious painting.

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635 Ureña, Marqués de., Reflexiones sobre la arquitectura, ornato, y música del templo: contra los procedimientos arbitrarios sin consulta de las Escritura Santa, de la disciplina rigorosa y de la crítica facultativa, Madrid, Ibarra, 1785.

636 Archivo de Simancas, Dirección del Real Tesoro, Secretaría y superintendencia de Hacienda legajo 955: Expediente de la Obra del Convento de Bernardas de San Joaquín y Sta Ana de Valladolid, que se hizo a expensas de la Real Hacienda con motivo de haver cedido un credito corresponde al mismo convento. Empezo este asunto en el año de 1777 y 1788. This legajo was published in: Alcocer, M., “Real Monasterio de San Joaquín y Sta. Ana”, Boletín de la Comisión de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de la Provincia de Valladolid, no. 3, 1926, pp. 5-44 & Fernández Martín, Juan José, El Monasterio y el Arquitecto del Rey. La iglesia y convento de San Joaquín y Santa Ana en Valladolid, obra de Francisco Sabatini, 1996, Valladolid. (Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos en Valladolid, Calle Santiago, 9, 47001): “Se necesitan ejecutar en la redención del monasterio de Recoletas Bernardas de San Joachín y Sta Ana de la Ciudad de Valladolid para evitar la ruina peligrosa que amenaza el citado monasterio.”

In any case, the treatise is yet another illustration of the extent to which architecture was a matter of intellectual concern in the 1780s. Born in Cadiz, Ureña was a widely travelled man who had studied in Paris and was a member of the Academy. He was well versed in architectural theory and in touch with contemporary ideas on how to improve the arts. Taking as his starting point Mengs’s ideas on ideal beauty and the perfection of classical architecture, Ureña examined the relationship between the aesthetics of church architecture and the liturgical function of the building. He looked back to Greek models of architecture for their purity, linking this with the ideology of the early Christian church, to argue that the architecture of a church could enhance devotion and respect. Like his contemporaries he disapproved of the rich interiors of both the Gothic and the Churrigueresque styles, on the grounds that they confused the minds of the faithful. His aim was to create an interior that abided by the classical rules of beauty and reason, so that “one feels one’s soul moved to cry out like Jacob: truly God is here, this is His house, this the door to heaven.”

In this context, Ureña discusses the importance of lighting, open spaces, and the overall harmony of the architecture in the creation of an adequate space for worship. He claims that “the soul becomes circumscribed and distressed” if the space is too narrow or “expands itself” if it is too spacious. By contrast, he suggests, “that much clarity, much harmony, much concord, spaciousness and few shadows arouse a certain peacefulness,” while if the architecture is too “dark, opaque and monotonous….simple masses and half tones” will provoke melancholy. He concludes that “a warm light, which helps to moderate the strong contrast between light and dark, brings everything together without saddening the effect.”

With regard to the interior decoration of the church, which serves as a backdrop for the paintings on the altars, he advises against the use of pure white, suggesting instead a pearl white or white with a slightly bluish tint, as it does not “it does not trouble one’s view, and brings out well the outlines and details of the architecture, without destroying the effect of the paintings.”

With regard to paintings, he firmly states: “They are useful, necessary and indispensable. Whoever is responsible for the building of a church, taking charge of all its

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642 Ureña (1785), pp. 100-101, quotes Mengs’s ideas on architecture.
643 Ibid, pp. 237-238:
644 Ibid, p. 235: “se sienta el alma movida á exclamar como Jacob: verdaderamente Dios está aqui, ésta es su casa, ésta es la puerta del Cielo.”
645 Ibid, p. 239: “el alma se circunscribe y angustia”, “se dilata”.
646 Ibid, p. 239: “muchá claridad, mucha armonia, mucho concierto, amplitud y pocas sombras proyectas, excitán una cierta alegria apacible,” & “sombrio, poco diafano y monotonó...las masas simples y las medias tintsas.”
647 Ibid, p. 241: “una luz templada, que contribuye á moderar el contraste fuerte de los claros y obscuros, recoge sin entristecer...”
aspects, should aspire like any good orator to convey pleasure, instruction and emotion.”

Ureña was particularly concerned with the didactic role of paintings, remarking that “There are the learned, the ignorant and the stupid. The house of God does not exclude either the wise or the foolish; there is room for everyone and each must find pleasure, instruction and emotion, according to his capacity.”

Illiterate people, he suggested, could understand “the mysteries of the Faith...and Sacred and Ecclesiastical History, the teachings of Religion, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, tradition and revelation” by looking up into the cupolas or the pendentives in a church.

The Convent church of San Joaquin y Santa Ana in Valladolid.

Sabatini’s façade for the convent clearly demonstrates his intention of keeping his designs as simple and straightforward as possible. Verging on abstraction in his architectural motifs, Sabatini employed a classic pediment supported by pilasters, leaving out decorative details such as capitals and bases. The only decorative element is a statue of the Virgin and Child in a niche above the main entrance, and the coat of arms of the Kings of Castille in the pediment, which Sabatini placed on 29th July 1785 (fig. 168).

For the main structure of the church, Sabatini adopted an oval ground plan for the nave, adding a squared area for the main altar. Three altars were placed on either side of the oval, inserted in shallow arches, with the idea that they would not break the eloquence of the architecture, but form an integral whole within the space. Doric pilasters framed each arch, and above them, Sabatini crowned the oval shape of the nave with a dome and a lantern.

While plenty of natural light poured in through the lantern, Sabatini added three windows on each side of the base of the dome, responding to the location of the paintings, and providing individual illumination for each one (fig. 171). The result was an open, well-lit space, devoid

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648 Ibid, p. 243: “molesta la vista, y manifiesta bien los contornos y dintornos de la arquitectura, sin destruir el efecto de las pinturas.”

649 Ibid, p. 251: “Son útiles, son necesarias, son indispensables. El que dirije la fábrica de un templo, y se hace cargo de todas sus partes, debe aspirar como todo buen orador, al agrado, á la enseñanza y á la emocion.”

650 Ibid, p. 251: “Hay doctos, hay indoctos, y hay estupidos. La casa de Dios no excluye á sus hijos por sabios, ni por necios: á todos los recibe, y debe cada uno hallar atractivo, enseñanza y moción, según su capacidad.” To support his opinion, Ureña quotes M. de Fleuri on the role of religious images in the 8th century under the Papacy of Gregory II: “Las pinturas se hacían especialmente para los ignorantes, á quienes servían de libros, como dice el Papa Gregorio II escribiendo al Emperador Leon, Autor de los Iconomacos. Los hombres y las mugeres tienen en sus brazos los niños recién bautizados, y les señalan con el dedo las historias: á los jóvenes, á los Gentiles los edifican y elevan su entendimiento y su corazón hacia Dios.”

651 Ibid, p. 252: “los Misterios de Fe...también á la Historia Sagrada y Eclesiástica, al conocimiento de la Religion, del Evangelio, Hechos Apostólicos, tradición y revelación...”

652 A. G. S., leg. 955: “Esta comunidad ha solicitado con Sabatini que se coloque en el frontis del edificio el escudo de la Rs Armas respecto ser, y haver estado siempre vajo la proteccion y Patronato de los señores Reyes de Castilla.”
of any extra decoration apart from the altars, within a completely white interior and a light blue cupola. With such architectural perfection he hoped to inspire his audience to seek perfect unity with God.

In this setting, the marble and jasper neo-classical main altar stands out. Rather than a painting, a polychrome sculpture-group of St. Joachim and St. Anne with the Virgin was chosen for the main altar. The side-altars followed a similar neo-classical décor but were made from cheaper materials, mainly gesso and wood painted to look like marble. On 22nd March 1787, the interior was ready, but the nuns were worried that “the paintings which were meant to fill the altarpieces were missing, and that these were a very important part of the overall decoration: they say that they have repeatedly petitioned Sabatini to do something about it as he is the person you have put in charge of this project, and that they haven’t seen the slightest indication that these paintings had been commenced.” It seems that Sabatini at first denied responsibility for dealing with the installation of the paintings. However, a month later after trying in vain to fit the old paintings that had formerly decorated the church into the altarpieces, Sabatini asked the king to lend his court painters. On 12th April, Sabatini informed an architect colleague, Pedro de Lerena of the appointment of the painters Ramon Bayeu and Francisco Goya, in whose ability he expresses his confidence, noting that they are to be given details of the “dimensions and information that they need to carry out the work.”

Both artists had been named court painters to the king in June 1786. In addition to providing cartoons for the Tapestry factory, such religious commissions were part of their work. After San Francisco el Grande, this was Goya’s first royal religious commission. Ramón Bayeu had just painted six altarpieces for the royal parish church of Tres Casas, near La Granja.

In a letter of 6th June 1787 to Zapater, Goya remarks that he had not yet started work on the commission and that the paintings had to be ready for the feast day of St. Anne. Ramón Bayeu was to paint St. Scholastica, St. Benedict and the Virgin appearing to St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua. The iconography is not as complex as that of other royal commissions previously studied, mainly because the convent did not have the same political

653 The cupola is painted light blue today, and this, according to Fernández Martín (1996), p. 228, is how it originally appeared.
654 A. G. S., leg. 955, “faltan las pinturas que deven colocarse en los claros de los retablos, o Altares de la Iglesia, que es una parte muy principal de la misma: Dicen que han instado repetidas veces a Sabatini para que diese providencias sobre esto, como encargado por V.M de esta obra, y que no han visto siquiera la menor señal de darse principio a este articulo de pinturas.”
655 Ibid: “las dimensiones, y noticias que necesiten para su desempeño.”
657 Agueda & Salas (1982), letter 97: “Para el día de S.ta Ana an de estar tres quadros de figuras del natural colocados en su sitios, y de composición, el uno el transito de S.n Josef otro de S.n Bernardo, y
implications. Instead, each altar concentrates on specific saints, incorporating little in the way of narrative or movement (fig. 172 & 173).

The paintings, set in classical frames, are still in their original positions. Bayeu’s to the left of the main altar and Goya’s to the right. Although the pictures differ from each other in style, execution and concept, both artists made an effort to keep their composition as simple as possible, perhaps in response to the sobre architectural surrounding. Each use life-sized figures, maintaining a balance with the other’s paintings and the architecture. We do not know if either actually went to Valladolid to see the church, but it is possible that Sabatini showed them his architectural plans, indicating the light sources, which Goya seems to have taken into account. While both painters created images that fit harmoniously in the architectural setting, the juxtaposition provides an excellent opportunity to observe the differences in each painter’s style and approach to composition, colouring and light. While Ramón Bayeu uses typical Baroque motifs in academic fashion to produce compositions that are technically perfect but lacking in vigour, Goya’s less flowery and more realistic approach gives his paintings a sense of immediacy and conviction.

The two paintings that decorated the middle altarpieces on either side of the church, Ramón Bayeu’s Virgin appearing to St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua (fig. 174) and Goya’s Death of St. Joseph (fig. 175), are particularly interesting to compare. Ramón gives a traditional representation of his scene, following in the Italian tradition of the “Sacra Conversazione” by placing the two Franciscans on either side of the Virgin. Goya, by contrast, interprets his subject in a more personal way, constructing an original composition designed to achieve a striking visual effect. The standing figure of Christ is shown in profile, facing a shaft of light, while behind him St. Joseph lies on a bed with his eyes slightly open, seemingly on the brink of death, while the Virgin watches over her dying husband. While Ramón’s figures are shown in typical Baroque postures taken from other sources and stuck together like cardboard cut-outs, Goya’s figures are placed one behind the other in such a way as to give added depth to his painting.

The academic training of both painters is reflected in their treatment of drapery in these paintings. Both Ramón Bayeu and Goya had trained under Francisco Bayeu in his Madrid studio in the 1770s, and we know that he encouraged painters to make studies of falling drapery using a mannequin. Nevertheless, Goya and Ramón differ in their execution. Ramón, in his determination to paint every fold to perfection, loses sight of the overall effect, with the result that his drapery appears starchy and stiff. In contrast, Goya pays special attention to the fall of light on the folds of the cloth, in such a way as to heighten the

"...otro de S.ta Ludgarda, y aun no tengo empezado nada p.a tal obra y se á de acer por.e lo ha mandado el Rey."
visual drama of his paintings. A bill charged to Goya for “22 rods of blue crimson Holland Cloth to make a tunic and cloak” suggests that he may have made studies from draped mannequins for the figures, using artificial lighting to reach the best effect. While Ramón’s painting is lit from the back, emphasising the sanctity of the Virgin, Goya uses a painted ray of light to illuminate his figures against a dark background in a theatrical manner that carries much greater conviction than Ramón’s decorative and archaic rendition.

Where the two painters differ most is in their surviving preliminary preparations. Ramón follows the academic training received from his brother Francisco and ultimately derived from Mengs, who was known for his insistence that an artist should work out every detail, including facial features and studies of drapery, before painting the final picture. Rather than trying out his ideas in a bozzetto, Ramón makes preparatory drawings for the final painting. A squared-up drawing previously attributed to Pietro di Pietri shows not only the disciplined manner in which he prepared his Virgin appearing to St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua but also his use of source material from other artists (fig. 176). The figure of St. Francis is copied from a drawing by his brother Francisco, executed as a preparatory work for the main altarpiece in San Francisco el Grande, while the figure of the Virgin is almost as direct a quotation from another drawing by Francisco Bayeu.

Such plagiarism contrasts sharply with Goya’s approach to artistic creation. Although he may have made preparatory drawings, the only known surviving preparatory work relating to this commission is his sketch for the Death of St. Joseph (fig. 177). A vivid example of the way in which Goya developed his compositions, this combines drawing and paint in an electrifying manner. While the dying St. Joseph lies on his bed in agony, Jesus is shown sitting at his side, affectionately holding his head and his hand in an effort to soothe him. Mary looks on while the cherubs watch innocently. In the finished painting, clouds and cherubs have disappeared, and the composition has been reversed and restructured. Rather

659 This was common practice at the Royal Academy and Francisco Bayeu is known to have donated his personal mannequin in January 1794 for the same purpose. See Morales (1996), p.26.
663 Arnáez (1975), Vol. II, p. 154, F.A. 219. Here Arnáez attributes the drawing to Ramón and relates it to the Santa Ana altarpiece. On closer inspection however, I believe that the drawing is directly connected to an altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception by Francisco Bayeu for the king’s private oratory at the palace of El Pardo, outside Madrid. Although Ramón adopts the pose used by his
than facing death with fearful anticipation, St. Joseph is shown in a more peaceful attitude.
The Virgin, in the centre of the painting, is given a more prominent role. The colour scheme
changes radically, from warm and light tones, including lemon yellow, light grey and orange,
to darker, cooler tones. The Virgin’s robe is changed from light orange to blue, and Christ’s
vestment becomes a darker, more metallic blue-grey. The background is also much darker,
alleviated only by a shaft of light that illuminates the face of the Virgin and the body of the
dying St. Joseph.

One may speculate that these changes were the result of a request to Goya for a more
sober rendering of the subject, given the reverence in which St. Joseph was held in Spain as
the Saint of the Good Death, because he died in presence of the most distinguished company.
But they may also reflect Goya’s sensitivity to the painting’s architectural environment. In the
same letter of 1787 to Zapater quoted above, Goya responded to a question posed by Zapater
on behalf of Goicoechea, stressing that here in Madrid, “what is practised now here is the
Architectonic style”,” perhaps an allusion to the neo-classical style in which the convent was
built and that his paintings had to reflect this new style. In his final painting, the monumental
figure of Christ harmonises perfectly with the simple classical form of the altars, creating an
atmosphere of spiritualism that Ramón is far from matching. Goya’s concern to concentrate
on the essential, ridding himself of baroque additives, and aiming to reach a sense of sober
classicism, particularly when painting drapery, using subtle tonal graduations, may derive
from French 18th century classicist painters such as Pierre Subleyras (1699-1749) whose
paintings Goya would have seen in Roman churches. One painting in particular, St. Benedict
resuscitating a Child by Subleyras, executed for the church of Santa Francesca Romana, may
have had an influence on Goya’s St. Bernard and St. Robert attending a sick man (fig. 178).
This is especially visible in the study of the falling light on the drapery and the figure types
used.”664 Another source for Goya’s paintings may have been the monastic cycles by Zurbarán,
which can be clearly seen in his picture of St. Ludgarde, (fig. 179) particularly in the study of
light-fall on the drapery and the stillness of his figure.

Bayeu, by contrast, follows the decorative mode which his brother Francisco had
taught him. Ramón’s dependency on Francisco is evidenced in a reference Francisco wrote in

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663 Agueda & Salas, (1982), letter 97, “lo que se estila aqui aora es estilo Arquitectónico.”
664 Subleyras 1699-1749, Exh. Cat., Paris, 1987, cat. no. 91, p. 286, plate XIV. It has been suggested by
Sánchez-Cantón and Lafuente Ferrari that Goya may have drawn inspiration from French artists
resident in Spain such as Michel-Ange Houasse when painting some of his religious pictures. The
specific examples quoted are the St. Francis Regis series by Houasse painted in 1722 for the Jesuit
seminary called Novicios in Madrid, which influenced both Goya’s St. Bernardino of Siena and the
scene of St. Francisco Borgia exorcising a dying impenitent. See Sánchez-Cantón F.J, “Goya: pintor
religioso”, Revista de Ideas Estéticas, no. 4, 1946, p.294. See also Pérez Sánchez, A.E, “La cultura
order to gain him an appointment as court painter on 21st April 1786, which emphasised that “he has always been and is under my supervision and instruction; Anton Rafael Mengs asked me to help him in his work, which he carried out following his wise advice, both in frescoing the Royal Palace and in his oil paintings....My brother is capable of serving the King in any type of painting, whether in oils, history painting, portraiture or fresco, with singular success.”

On close inspection, we are once again faced with stylistic disunity, whereby each artist seems to have concentrated on his own work, not taking note of each other’s style. Ironically, while both artists adhere to Mengsian principles, particularly in their preparation, they interpret these differently. Bayeu’s meticulous preparations and laborious approach renders his figures stiff, and although Goya’s sketch is the only surviving evidence of his preparatory work, he most surely made detailed drapery studies and drawings for his figures. It is however in their final work where they differ. Goya’s smooth polish, attention to light and shade, reminds us of Mengs’s Passion series for the King’s bedroom, while Bayeu’s laboured workmanship is unable to match such effects, and is obliged to fall back on late Roman baroque examples which are easier to reproduce.

Possibly the idea behind Bayeu’s old-fashioned baroque compositions was to visually transport his viewers into another world, that of the visionary, while Goya returned to the realism and earthiness of the religious paintings of Zurbarán. Perhaps Goya was looking for religious truth, aiming to humanise sacred stories and bring them down to our level for the purpose of better understanding. In this context Goya seems to have understood the idea behind neo-classicism in relation to religious painting. While in architecture, neo-classicism entailed the idea of going back to basics, in search of rationality and truth, which could be found in the antique, the same can be applied to religion, whereby it was the essence and truth that should be portrayed and made accessible in painting. Goya applied these concepts to his painting, not only in style but in the interpretation and representation of his subjects.

visual de Goya”, De pintura y Pintores, La configuración de los modelos visuales en la pintura española, Madrid, 1993, pp. 147-158.  
663 Cruzada Villamil, F., Los Tapices de Goya, Madrid, 1870, p. 15 & Morales y Marín, Los Bayeu, 1979, p. 132: “siempre ha estado y está bajo de mi corrección y enseñanza: don Antonio Rafael Mengs me lo pidió para ayudarle en sus obras, lo que ejecutó de su sabios consejos, tanto al fresco en las obras
CONCLUSION

Charles III’s involvement in grandiose projects of religious art and architecture, notably at San Ildefonso and San Francisco el Grande, can be compared in some respects with Philip II’s building and decoration of El Escorial. Both monarchs shared a concern with spiritual matters that coloured their temporal rule. Charles’s links with the Franciscans, and in particular with the Alcantarine branch of that order, supported him in his drive to reduce the power of the Jesuits, who had previously dominated Spanish church politics. His defence of religious themes dear to the Spanish people, such as the Immaculate Conception, and his support for the restoration of churches containing the relics of important saints such as San Isidro, helped to bring him popularity among his subjects.

Charles’s death in December 1788 was marked by the publication on the part of statesmen such as Francisco Cabarrús, Manuel de Roda, Jovellanos and Nicolás de Azara of “Elogios,” or speeches eulogising his qualities as king and ruler and the successes of his reign. As these eulogies show, Charles III, during a period of turbulence at European level in both temporal and ecclesiastical politics, successfully established himself as unchallenged ruler of his kingdom. Among other things, the authors of these eulogies stressed Charles’s sympathy for the needs of his subjects and his support for the ideals of the Enlightenment. Despite what today may appear to be a contradiction between two seemingly opposed modes of thought, Charles was sincere in seeking to combine conservative ideas on religion and a
traditional alliance between the Crown and the Church with modern enlightened ideas about good governance. In his lifetime, he succeeded in establishing a harmonious link between the monarchy and the Spanish church.

Beneath this image of an all-powerful Catholic monarch, however, lay a disarming straightforward man who had suffered considerably after his wife’s death in 1760. Like his father, Philip V, and his half-brother, Ferdinand VI, Charles was susceptible to depression. Although hunting brought some relief to his melancholy, his Christian faith was undoubtedly another source of support. His choice of scenes from Christ’s Passion for his bedroom by his favourite painter, Mengs, and his support for the construction of the convent of San Pascual Baylón, close to his palace at Aranjuez, were two examples among many of how he sought solace in religion and religious meditation.

As a complement to his enlightened policies in the economic and educational spheres, Charles’s religious commissions in the realms of art and architecture formed part of a strategy to enforce ecclesiastical reforms and bolster his status as Spain’s ruler. In support of this strategy, Charles attempted to reinvigorate Spanish painting by employing foreign painters, notably Mengs, whose style and technique he particularly favoured. There are few contemporary examples of similar attempts by monarchical rulers to use religious art in such a way, and none that can be compared with Charles’s projects in the complexity of their iconography. That he enjoyed the backing of at least some influential members of the Spanish aristocracy is demonstrated by the participation in the decoration of the convent of San Pedro de Alcántara of the Duke of Medinaceli and the Duke of El Infantado.

While Charles’s ministers sought to create an image of a king with enlightened ideals, on the model of the perfect enlightened despot, their influence was paralleled on the religious front by that of his confessor, Eleta. In the privacy of the confessional, Eleta was privy both to Charles’s spiritual concerns and his worries about ecclesiastical politics. Correspondence between Eleta and Sabatini demonstrates Eleta’s involvement in the construction of the two convents at Aranjuez and Arenas de San Pedro. It is reasonable to deduce that he also played a role in their decoration, as well as in the decorative programmes of Charles’s other major religious commissions.

There is evidence that Eleta enjoyed an influential position at court. He sat to Mengs for his portrait, indicating that he had close personal contact with Charles’s favourite painter. A declared enemy of the Jesuits, as his correspondence with Spanish ambassadors to the Holy See reveals, he was closely involved in the conception of the Palafox chapel in his home town, Burgo de Osma. His grandiose arrival at the opening of San Francisco el Grande in 1784 points to his importance in the sphere of palace politics. Loperráez’s biography of Eleta, published soon after his death in 1788, describes a man of great theological learning and intellect, devoted to the Alcantarine order. As such, he would have been fully capable of
conceiving and planning the complex iconography that characterises many of Charles's religious commissions.

As we have seen in an analysis of Goya's altarpiece for San Francisco el Grande, Eleta may have used the subject of St. Bernardino of Siena preaching to Alfonso V to aggrandise his own position as confessor to the king. The final reward of his career was his appointment in 1785 to the post of Bishop of Burgo de Osma, a position that had been occupied by Palafox one century earlier.

But while Eleta successfully combined pursuit of his own career with a drive to raise Charles's royal support for the Franciscans from the relatively private level of San Pascual Baylón to the more public scale of San Francisco el Grande, it is hard to argue that these or Charles's other religious commissions were particularly successful in either political or artistic terms. Apart from San Isidro and San Francisco el Grande, both of which drew on a formula involving individual side-chapels dedicated to specific saints which had already demonstrated its effectiveness in propagandist terms in the hands of the Jesuits, few of the churches in whose construction or decoration Charles was involved played a major role in public devotions. A grandiose project for the construction of a convent dedicated to St. Peter of Alcántara in the heart of Madrid got no further than the planning stage. The churches of San Pascual Baylón and Arenas de San Pedro, although open to the public, were somewhat removed from the mainstream of Madrid politics. None of these churches rose to the artistic levels of similar projects being undertaken at this time in Rome.

Nor did Charles's commissions have any lasting influence on the subsequent development of Spanish painting. As we have seen, it took time for Mengs's style to be accepted among Spanish artists. In Charles's first significant religious commissions, the only Spanish painters to be employed were Mengs's close associates, Maella and Bayeu. When other Spanish painters were contracted for religious commissions in the 1780s, notably at San Francisco el Grande, their work prompted an uproar of critical disparagement. The decoration of San Francisco el Grande was transformed soon after its opening, in the early 19th century.

Outside court circles and the work of painters such as Maella, Ramón Bayeu and Goya who provided altarpieces for the Cathedral of Valencia, Jaen and a convent in Valladolid, Charles's religious commissions had no significant influence on Spanish religious art. Sculpture and religious prints continued to be popular throughout Spain. None of Charles's commissions became important targets of pilgrimage comparable to the Virgin of Atocha in Madrid and the Christ of El Pardo.

The Royal Academy's role in these commissions seems to have been limited. The painters it supplied for the San Francisco el Grande, for example, did not prove totally satisfactory. The range of approaches that they typified demonstrates clearly that no unified style was taught at the Academy. Only after Charles's death, in the 1790s, did the Academy
go through a period of reflection and transformation, paving the way for new techniques and styles of painting. That the shift in approaches was gradual, rather than sudden, can be seen in the responses received in 1792 by the Academy’s new Vice-Protector, Bernardo de Iriarte, when requested an assessment of its teaching practices from artists such as Goya, Francisco Bayeu, Maella, Luis Paret and Cosme de Acuña. Most of the artists’ responses revealed an adherence to Mengs’s ideas, including a commitment to the antique, to copying after Raphael, Michelangelo and Carracci, and the reintroduction of trips to Rome. In contrast, Goya rejected such courses as Geometry and Perspective, and argued against the idea that Greek sculpture was superior to nature. He believed that if the art of painting was to progress, the artist should be given the freedom to follow his own instinct, without having imposed upon him methods that would deter him from his natural inclinations. There were no set rules in painting, he argued, and only through the imitation of nature could young artists achieve perfection.

 Nonetheless, the fact that Charles’s religious commissions can be analysed and interpreted as a coherent ensemble is a reflection of the care that went into their planning and execution. As such, they form a significant feature of a period of Spanish art that is only now coming under detailed scrutiny. While San Francisco el Grande was Charles III’s last religious commission of importance, the church of San Joaquin y Santa Ana in Valladolid marks an interesting watershed, combining elements of Charles III’s favoured neo-classical style with works that are the product of Goya’s more adventurous brush.

 In this commission, Ureña’s theories on architecture were put into practice through Sabatini’s designs, in the expectation that painting would condition itself to the new environment. The impact on artistic style of the new architecture proved only fleeting, however. More than anything else, San Joaquín y Santa Ana is emblematic of a turning point in Spanish painting. In this church, Ramón Bayeu represents the past, the end of Charles III’s reign and the Ancien Régime while Goya points towards a new enlightened philosophy and novel interpretation of religious themes. The 1790s were to see entirely different religious projects, such as Goya’s Oratorio de la Santa Cueva in Cádiz and San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid, based on Christian morality and humanity.

1. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

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