



THREE POWER PLAYS
FOR THE DUKE OF LERMA
BY LUIS VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA

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ABSTRACT:

For nearly fifty years critics and historians have explored the relationships that existed between the royal and aristocratic classes and the arts as instruments of power. The present study proposes to extend this line of enquiry by showing how the performances of *El alba y el sol* (1613), *El Conde don Pero Vélez y don Sancho el Deseado* (1615), and *El Caballero del Sol* (1617) forwarded the interests and reflected the aesthetic tastes of the Duke of Lerma (circa 1553-1625). In each instance the author was Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579-1644), who for generations has been regarded as a secondary playwright of Spain's Golden Age. This study draws heretofore unrecognized links to Luis de Góngora and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and implicitly suggests the need for a critical re-evaluation of Vélez de Guevara's place in the history of literature.

KEYWORDS:

Baroque; Golden Age; theater; Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, Duke of Lerma; Luis Vélez de Guevara; *El alba y el sol*; *El Conde don Pero Vélez*; *El Caballero del Sol*; Luis de Góngora; Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

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TRES COMEDIAS DE PODER DE LUIS VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA PARA EL DUQUE DE LERMA

RESUMEN:

Durante casi cincuenta años críticos e historiadores han explorado cómo las clases hegemónicas usaron las artes como instrumentos del poder. El presente estudio se propone entender esta línea de investigación demostrando cómo las representaciones de *El alba y el sol* (1613), *El Conde don Pero Vélez y don Sancho el Deseado* (1615) y *El Caballero del Sol* (1617) promovieron los intereses y reflejaron los gustos estéticos del Duque de Lerma (circa 1553-1625). En cada caso el autor fue Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579-1644), que durante generaciones ha sido calificado por la historiografía como un dramaturgo segundón. El estudio traza conexiones, hasta ahora desconocidas, entre Vélez y Luis de Góngora y Pedro Calderón de la Barca, e implícitamente postula la necesidad de una revaloración crítica del lugar de Vélez de Guevara en la historia de la literatura.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Barroco; Siglo de Oro; teatro; Francisco Gómez de Sandoval; duque de Lerma; Luis Vélez de Guevara; *El alba y el sol*; *El conde don Pero Vélez*; *El caballero del Sol*; Luis de Góngora; Pedro Calderón de la Barca.



Since the publication of José Antonio Maravall's *La cultura del Barroco*, in 1975, critics and historians have explored the relationships that existed between the royal and aristocratic classes and the arts as instruments of power. The present study proposes to extend this line of enquiry, but it will be inherently full of paradox, because its proofs are ephemera, the stagings of *El alba y el sol* (1613), *El Conde don Pero Vélez y don Sancho el Deseado* (1615), and *El Caballero del Sol* (1617). Appreciation for the traces of their performance is in an incipient stage, though the last-mentioned—*El Caballero del Sol*—has drawn critical interest because of its innovative stagecraft, and because it formed part of the spectacle that was, simultaneously, the Duke of Lerma's most glorious moment and the beginning of his retirement from public life. The three plays were written by Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579-1644), who for generations has been regarded as a secondary playwright of Lope de Vega's «school», capable of creating an occasional noteworthy work, but overall a mere epigone (cf. Peale, 2005, 2009). As will be seen in the following pages, the playwright's biography and artistry intersected with the Duke of Lerma's career in ways that until now have gone unrecognized. In fact, *El alba y el sol*, *El Conde don Pero Vélez* and *El Caballero del Sol*, are the only plays by Vélez whose composition can be linked with certainty to Lerma and his circumstances. Together they tell a story about power and art, and about art as an instrument of power—a story whose textual illustrations reveal heretofore unknown lines of influence between Vélez, Luis de Góngora, and Pedro Calderón de la Barca. It is, therefore, a story that inherently constitutes a call for critical re-evaluations in the historiography of Golden Age literature.

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On 13 September 1598, Philip II of Spain died in the palace of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, ending a forty-two-year reign. That same day his twenty-year-old son was crowned Philip III. His reign was marked by a revival of the royal favorite—the king's tutor, counselor, friend, confidante, and royal plenipotentiary, variously termed the *privado* or *valido*, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, twenty-five years older, and many times more ambitious, than the new king. The story of Sandoval's extraordinary and complicated career has been recounted and admirably interpreted by Luis Suárez Fernández and José Andrés-Gallego (1986) and, later, by Antonio Feros (2000) and Patrick Williams (2006). Their keen readings are like x-rays of power in court society, documenting circumstances and opportunities, and describing the resources and the tactics that Sandoval put into play to coalesce an unparalleled degree of personal power—over the king, his court, his treasury, his armies, and, indeed, his whole empire. He was even able to successfully wield power in the Church.¹

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¹ Until the aforementioned biographies, the Duke of Lerma's career had been interpreted in terms set by political and institutional treatises from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Tomás y Valiente (1963). Another strand of Lerma's biography has been based on his titles, his wealth and his monuments. The studies of Cervera Vera (1967; 1967a), Schroth (1990), Brooke (1983), and Tropé (2010) are outstanding examples in this regard.

Power is defined by position, wealth, and the freedom to act at will. Acquiring it is usually a long and slow process, so the speed of Lerma's ascent to power is nothing if not astounding.

A month before his death, Philip II appointed Francisco Gómez de Sandoval as his son's *Caballerizo Mayor*, or Master of the Horse. In practical terms, the appointment made Sandoval master of the palace, because the *Caballerizo Mayor* controlled access to the prince, who would soon be king. Three days after the young king's accession to the throne, he signed a decree stating that the *valido's* word would be synonymous with his (Feros, 2000: 93; Williams, 2006: 42-46). Three months later Philip added another duty to his favorite's portfolio, that of *Sumiller de Corps*, or Master of the Royal Chamber, in charge of all appointments and distributions of duties. And appoint and distribute he did, to consolidate his power and assure his absolute control over the king's movements and actions. Palace offices were honorific for the most part, but the privilege and prestige of serving the king and his family had always been avidly sought by Spanish nobility. The competition for court appointments could get rough, because a family's wealth and honor were at stake. With the new king's full backing, Sandoval appointed his sons, Cristóbal and Diego, as Gentlemen of the King's Chamber. Sandoval's wife, Doña Catalina de la Cerda, was appointed as the Queen's Head Lady-in-Waiting. Sandoval appointed his brother, Juan, not only as a Gentleman of the King's Chamber, but also as First Master of the Stable. Also receiving golden keys that opened all doors in the palace were his nephews, the Count of Denia, the Count of Lemos, the Marquis of San Germán and the Duke of Medinaceli. His brother-in-law the Count of Altamira and his uncle the Count of Ficalho and Mayalde were appointed, respectively, as Master of the Queen's Horse and Majordomo for the widowed empress María of Austria. Numerous women from Sandoval's household and extended family got appointments on the Queen's staff. And all this occurred in just the first six months of Philip III's reign. Eventually, all of the most important secretarial posts of the Crown's councils were held by the favorite's appointees.² As Patrick Williams wryly observes, Sandoval even had his own college of cardinals (Williams, 2006: 184). Cardinal Antonio Zapata was a member of his sister Catalina's circle; Cardinal Jerónimo de Xavierre was Sandoval's confessor before he was the king's; and Cardinal Gaspar de Borja was his great-nephew. Later, in 1615, they were joined by Cardinal Gabriel Trejo, a close friend of Sandoval's favorite, Rodrigo Calderón, and by Baltasar Moscoso, who was Sandoval's nephew. Sandoval's social and political power at the king's side was unprecedented after Philip made his *valido's* signature equivalent to his own. Practically speaking, in matters both temporal and spiritual, the royal favorite was king without a crown.

Then there was the power of his wealth. The shower of gifts that King Philip bestowed on his friend was torrential (Pérez Bustamante, 1950: 53-64). On the way to Valencia for the double weddings of Philip and his sister Isabel Clara Eugenia in the spring of 1599, the king and his entourage spent several weeks in Sandoval's town, Denia. The *valido's* expenditures for receiving the royal party were huge, but they turned out to be a profitable investment. Philip reciprocated with

² Like Feros (2000: 94-98), most biographers view Lerma's appointments as evidence of an unbridled reach for power. Suárez Fernández and Andrés-Gallego (1986: 330-331), on the other hand, emphasize the deliberate care that Lerma, already in power, took in appointing members of his family and his friends to positions of influence.

an accountancy³ in Seville, which Sandoval sold for 173,000 ducats, with an appointment as Commander of Castile,⁴ which carried an annual income of 16,000 ducats, and with a new title, elevating his *valido* to the rank of Duke of Lerma, an appointment that conveyed extensive holdings in the heart of Castile.⁵ Philip's liberality during the Valencian wedding trip did not stop there. When the Duke brought his sovereign news of the fleet's safe arrival from the Indies, he asked for a token of thanks, as was the custom since the Middle Ages. The king's token was splendid indeed: 50,000 ducats in gold coin. One day when the Duke was slightly ill, Philip sent a gift to cheer him up: diamonds worth 5,000 ducats. And still Lerma wheedled for more: appointments and favors for each of his sons, and for himself the chief accountancy of Castile, possession of the town of Purroy, the notaryship of Alicante, and the wardenship of the Burgos castle. Three years later he purchased the village of Valdemoro from the Marquis of Auñón for 120,000 ducats and also purchased Carabanchel and Getafe. With these holdings Lerma was able to create an estate for his younger son, Diego, and arrange for his marriage to Luisa de Mendoza, the heiress of the title and properties of the Duchy of Infantado; by the middle of 1603 they were married.⁶ Patrick Williams estimates Lerma's income in that year at 170,227 ducats, and the capital value of his properties in 1607 at 802,301 ducats.⁷

In sum, Ciriaco Pérez Bustamante has calculated the value of all the titles, gifts, offices, and privileges given to Lerma along with his relatives and loyal followers at some 40,000,000 ducats, plus an annual income for the Duke alone of about 240,000 ducats. His expense ledger was no less awesome. Pérez Bustamante has figured more than 10,000,000 ducats spent by the Duke for building palaces, convents, churches, and gardens. How much he spent on parties and spectacles, on his daughters' dowries, on jewelry, art, and household furnishings is incalculable.⁸

* * *

³ An accountancy, or *escribanía*, was the office of royal tax collector, responsible for assessing tariffs on all commerce moving through the port(s) under its purview.

⁴ The Commander, or *Comendador Mayor*, was the supreme authority figure of a religious-military order—in Lerma's case, the Order of Calatrava—in the realm corresponding to his title—Castile in this instance—, with the responsibility of administering the territory on the Crown's behalf. A Commander's seat was always a fortress of strategic importance; in this case it was the Burgos castle.

⁵ The Lerma duchy stretched north and west from Aranda de Duero, to the north beyond Burgos, beyond Saldaña to the northwest, and beyond Siete Iglesias to the west. The principal cities of his territories were Valladolid, Burgos and Palencia, followed by Tordesillas and Aranda de Duero.

⁶ The wedding, celebrated in Valladolid, was conducted as an event of state in the presence of Their Royal Majesties and the entire Court; the officiants were the archbishops of Sevilla, Toledo, Valencia, and Zaragoza. See Cabrera de Córdoba (*Relaciones*, p. 188).

⁷ A perspective on Lerma's extraordinary wealth comes into focus when compared to other Castilian nobles. In 1591, for example, the annual income of several noble family fortunes ranged between 120,000 and 170,000 ducats (see Bennassar, 2015: 124), far less than the 240,000 ducats per year that Lerma would derive from his prebends and from royal sinecures and favors.

⁸ Suárez Fernández and Andrés-Gallego (1986: 430) calculate that by the end of his life Lerma had spent 1,152,283 ducats on ecclesiastical projects alone. See also Banner (2009). Lerma's personal art collection was legendary. According to Schroth (1990) Lerma was the first «non-royal mega-collector» of early modern times, with some 1,500 paintings acquired between 1599 and 1611, the most famous of which was his equestrian portrait by Peter Paul Rubens. See Feros (2000: 104), Williams (2006: 88-89), Tropé (2010: 168-171). His silver collection and servants' livery were the subject of envious gossip in courts far and wide across Europe. See Cervera Vera (1967: 16-19, 23-26).

Power must be displayed, and clearly, the Duke of Lerma's extravagances were materialist shows of power, that is, performances, so his power was most effectively displayed on festive occasions.⁹ It is here where Luis Vélez de Guevara the dramatist enters the scene.

For starters, he was an eyewitness to many of the events described above. Upon receiving his degree in Arts from the University of Osuna in 1596, at age seventeen, Vélez entered the service of Rodrigo de Castro, Seville's archbishop and Inquisitor of the Holy Office's Supreme Council.¹⁰ In his official capacities, and as Lerma's uncle, Castro rushed to Madrid ten days before Philip II's death to consult with the highest authorities of the Crown and of the Church, and to counsel his nephew. As a page in the Archbishop's retinue Luis Vélez was able to observe events in Madrid and, later, in Denia and Valencia, where he met and became friends with Lope de Vega.¹¹ With the royal party he continued on to Barcelona, returning to Seville with the Archbishop in the summer. Vélez then enlisted in the army¹² and served for a year in the northern Italian campaigns under the newly appointed governor of Milan, Pedro Enríquez de Acevedo, Count of Fuentes, and for another year with the Spanish fleet based in Naples under the command of Pedro de Toledo. He returned to Spain late 1602 or early 1603.

By 1604 Vélez was secretary to Lerma's second son, Diego, the Count of Saldaña. It was a position that he held, though maybe not always enjoyed, for fifteen years. Vélez's post in count's household put him at the nucleus of cultural life, first in Valladolid, then in Madrid, because Saldaña's was the foremost salon of the Court. Its attendees were the brightest political, social and literary stars (see Pérez de Guzmán, 1892: 10-12; Pérez de Guzmán, 1894; King, 1960; Robbins, 1997: 24-25, 39-40, 51-52). Almost always in attendance were the Dukes of Cea and of Pastrana, the Count of Salinas, the Prince of Esquilache, and the Marquises of Alcañices, Povar, Peñafiel, Almazán, Velada and Orani. The Dukes of Híjar and of Medinaceli, and the Counts of Lemos, Olivares, Villamor, Rebolledo and Cantillana were frequent attendees who recited their own original verses, and practically the entire pantheon of Spain's poets passed through: Cervantes, Lope, Quevedo, Liñán de Riaza, Góngora, Salas Barbadillo, Andrés de Claramonte, Gaspar de Teves, Hernando de Biezna, Pedro de Mendoza, Francisco Vivanco, Francisco de Rioja, Antonio de Silveira, and the Argensola brothers. Then there were the eminent figures of Madrid's civic life, like Francisco de la Cueva y Silva, Julián de Armendáriz, and high-standing functionaries in the palace and municipal bureaucracies (see Martínez Hernández, 2010). For seven years the Count's salon was a vibrant center of Madrid's social, political and cultural life, and as Saldaña's secretary, Luis Vélez was a prominent creative presence. His witty manner and his poetic talents were always on display. No less than Cervantes celebrated him as the «lustre y alegría / y discreción del trato cortesano» (*Viaje del Parnaso*, ll. 394-395).

⁹ See, for example, Guillaume Alonso's analysis of Lerma's use of bullfights and jousting tournaments as projections of power (2011).

¹⁰ The circumstances of his entrance into the Archbishop's service are described in Martín Ojeda and Peale (2017: 89-90).

¹¹ Lope de Vega's panegyric, *Fiestas de Denia*, affords a colorful account of events during the Court's stay on the Mediterranean coast. It was the first display of magnificence and splendor that would characterize Philip's—and Lerma's—reign. In the preliminary essays and extensive notes to their critical edition Maria Grazia Profeti and Bernardo J. García clarify a multitude of political and cultural issues that surrounded and informed the festivities at Denia.

¹² It has long been thought that Vélez left for military service after Rodrigo de Castro died. Martín Ojeda and Peale (2017: 91) document how in reality he departed two months before the Cardinal's death.

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In 1613, the Duke of Lerma was at his peak of wealth and power. So was Vélez de Guevara, if not in wealth, for sure in creative power (cf. Vega García-Luengos, 2007: 307-322). Early that year he composed *La Serrana de la Vera*, a magnificent tragedy whose star, Jusepa Vaca, kept the work in the repertory for more than a decade (Peale, in Luis Vélez de Guevara, *La Serrana de la Vera*, p. 44; Reyes Peña, 1998; Boyle, 2014: 78-81, 94-97). Later that year he composed a similar play for Pedro de Valdés's theatrical company, *La montañesa de Asturias*, and also, in June or July, *Don Pedro Miago*, whose sultry Gongorism turned dramatic poetry in a new direction (Peale, 2016). Later in the summer, Vélez composed *El alba y el sol*, commissioned by the Count of Saldaña to celebrate his father's sixtieth birthday and exalt the Sandoval lineage (Profeti, in Luis Vélez de Guevara, *El alba y el sol*, pp. 20-23).

El alba y el sol is about King Pelayo's call from destiny to lead Spain's Christian Reconquest. It is a noteworthy play, because in Act III, which is textually short but theatrically long, Vélez actually stages the battle of Covadonga, using the entire theatrical space, onstage, offstage, behind and above the audience. *El alba y el sol* may be Spain's first instance of what is now called «total theater».

The Duke of Lerma was passionate about art as a medium to impress (Brooke, 1983: 32-36; Schroth, 1990: *passim*; Williams, 2006: 18-19, 88-89, 229). His appreciation for creative originality and execution can be seen in his construction projects, in his library and in his art collection, so when Luis de Góngora sent manuscripts of the *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea* and the *Soledades* to Madrid in mid-May of 1613, they were avidly received and read in Lerma's circle, though given their obscurity, probably not understood.

Creative originality and execution are evident from the very beginning of *El alba y el sol*, whose opening lines will seem strikingly familiar:

Sale el INFANTE PELAYO, de galán, con la espada desnuda.

PELAYO. ¡Oh, bruto desbocado,
con la indómita espalda mide el prado,
y en tu sangre teñido
a rojo trueca el alazán vestido!
¡Desjarretado muera
quien despeñar al mismo dueño espera,
aleve y enemigo,
que es justo, aunque en un bruto, el castigo
que, manchando estos llanos,
a quien sobran traiciones falten manos!
De aquí, sin duda, el Cielo
no permite que pase mi desvelo,
y ha hecho su caída
de mi fama instrumento, y de mi vida,

que este impulso que llevo
 en todo es prodigioso, en todo es nuevo.
 Estos valles y montes
 distritos son de Asturias, y horizontes
 de las montañas frías
 que llaman de León, y esas sombrías
 alamedas que bajan
 y de riscos y sendas se desgajan,
 ya ceñidas de hiedras,
 ya celando cristales que en las piedras
 se rompen despeñados
 de esos cabezos rudos a los prados
 de aquella verde falda
 del Esla son corona de esmeralda.
 Comience el Cielo agora
 a encaminar mis pasos, que la aurora,
 nácar vertiendo, y risa,
 de la mano del sol los campos pisa. (II. 1-32)¹³

Vélez appropriated Góngora's *silvas*, convoluted syntax and lush nature imagery to describe Pelayo's frenzied mount running wild in a meadow, where he throws his rider. The imagery with which Vélez describes the surrounding mountains and valley was clearly inspired by Góngora's new masterpieces. *El alba y el sol* is not the first play to open with *silvas*—that honor, if it is one, is Lope's libretto to *Venus y Adonis* (1595-1603)—, but there is no earlier play that opens with paired *silvas de consonantes*, whose dramatic and structural function became a poetic convention of Spanish theater: from Vélez onward the paired *silva de consonantes*, with its nearly free verse prosody, was used to introduce chaotic situations of high intensity.¹⁴

The impact of Luis de Góngora's *Polifemo* and *Soledades* was sensational, because they introduced new ways of spatializing poetic meaning by fusing Castilian with Greek and Latin etymologies and syntax, thereby expanding poetry's denotative and connotative range.¹⁵ Vélez de Guevara's experiment with lexical Gongorism earlier in the summer, in *Don Pedro Miago*, seems modest in comparison to *El alba y el sol*, where he amplifies the poetic language used in the *Polifemo* and *Soledades* by appropriating Góngora's *culto* lexicon and concentrating it to a degree that was, until then, unprecedented in the theater.¹⁶ Vélez's use of *cultismos* was not in itself new—the items

¹³ Cf. Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*, II. 1-16. See Samonà (1990: 19-108). (All citations of Vélez's texts are from the critical and annotated editions by William R. Manson and C. George Peale.)

¹⁴ The studies of Fernández Guillermo (2008, 2008a, 2010) refer to Lope and Calderón, but her observations on the structural functions of the *silva* apply as well to Vélez de Guevara.

¹⁵ Góngora's *Polifemo* and *Soledades* unleashed a critical debate that has occupied scholars up through the present. Cf. Orozco (1961), Martínez Arancón (1978), Osuna Cabezas (2006, 2008, 2009). Martínez Arancón's anthology is a handy source for accessing the primary texts on the controversy surrounding Góngora and *culteranismo*. The historical and critical contextualization that is lacking in the Arancón anthology can be found in Thomas (1909: 78-154), Collard (1967: 53-112), Roses Lozano (1994), and, more summarily, in Quintero (1991: 58-67, 73-80). Also see Soufás (1986).

¹⁶ In the textual study of the Manson-Peale edition (p. 73) I have listed 145 *cultismos* that had been catalogued by Dámaso Alonso in *La lengua poética de Góngora* (1950).

of his lexicon figure discretely throughout the poetry of Garcilaso and Herrera, and in plays composed before 1613—, but in no drama by any playwright prior to *El alba y el sol* is there a concentration of *culto* word-stock such as this. Vélez clearly was experimenting with a new dramatic language, and with the same ease as Góngora, his experiment produced neologisms like *arquilope* and *siéneco*. *Arquilope* is composed from *arqui-*, or *archi-*, and *lopex*. In its context *arquilope* means ‘supremely, or beautifully, hairy,’ as opposed to *alopecia*, baldness. The occurrence in *El alba y el sol* appears to be a unique case, since *arquilope* is not documented in any manual, historical dictionary or digital data base. Likewise, *siéneco* is a neologism derived from the stylized conventions of *fabla antigua*: by apheresis, *arsé* > *sié*, and by phonetic vocalism *-ni-* > *-ne-*, hence *arsénico* > *siéneco*.

From the standpoint of poetic technique, Vélez de Guevara’s lexical innovation would likely have delighted the Duke of Lerma; so would his fanciful and original plotting.

In the seventeenth century, as now, the battle of Covadonga was a cipher substantiated by myth, by legend, by cultural agendas, and, to a lesser extent, by history (Boyd, 2002; Grieve, 2009). In *El alba y el sol* Vélez fused them all. A cultural agenda is enunciated explicitly in Act I by the demigod, Spain, who exhorts Pelayo to rise and defend her against infidels;¹⁷ Vélez portrays the legendary Florinda la Cava as a vamp; the historical Arab general Alcama is curt and pragmatic, and his Christian collaborator, the Sevillian archbishop don Orpas, is a diplomatic intercessor; Alba is a mountain girl of extraordinary beauty and strength who embodies Asturian myth;¹⁸ Pelayo is duly heroic in all ways—a strong, but vulnerable warrior who will inspire and lead, a devout Christian, and a faithful husband who will start the long line of Spanish kings. Pelayo, Alcama, don Orpas, Alba and Florinda are all onstage during the long battle scene in Act III. The mostly male audience no doubt enjoyed the titillating incursion on theatrical decorum, with the actresses dressed as men and tussling onstage—a seventeenth-century precursor of the twentieth-century’s catfights on movie and television screens.

Then there is Sando, called Sando Cuervo in some versions of the battle of Covadonga, who felled a large pine across the trail rising to the Asturian stronghold, thereby making it impossible for the Arabs to mount a frontal attack, and easy for the Christians to pick them off. A tree trunk is an unwieldy stage prop, so Vélez cut it down to a beam, which Sando carries each time he is on stage; during the third-act battle Sando mows down two or three Arab attackers with each swing of his beam. At the end he is decorated for valor.

¹⁷ An undeniable source for the patriotic clarion call is Cervantes’s *La Numancia* (circa 1585), which has inspired a wide range of social, political and poetic commentary too extensive to cite. Vélez de Guevara used the technique in a number of plays. Interestingly, in *El jenzaro de Albania* (circa 1606) he «doubled» the motif with two dreamers, Escanderbey and Amurates, and two national spirits, Albania and Asia (stage direction P-line 684)

¹⁸ According to Benjamin B. Ashcom (1962), Vélez was the Golden Age *comedia*’s foremost exponent of the manly woman, or *mujer varonil*. Besides the obvious cases of *La Serrana de la Vera* and *La montañesa de Asturias*, Ashcom comments briefly on *El Caballero del Sol*, *La romera de Santiago* and *El amor en vizcaíno*, and in a long note he cites fifteen other plays in which Vélez introduces the type: *El Águila del Agua*, *El cerco del Peñón de Vélez*, *La corte del demonio*, *Los disparates del Rey don Alfonso*, *El Hércules de Ocaña*, *Los hijos de la Barbuda*, *La Luna de la Sierra*, *El Marqués del Vasto*, *La niña de Gómez Arias*, *El niño diablo*, *La nueva ira de Dios*, *El rey en su imaginación*, *El Rey naciendo mujer*, *Los sucesos en Orán* and *El Verdugo de Málaga*. More titles could be added to Ashcom’s list: *Amor es naturaleza*, *Correr por amor fortuna*, *El Conde don Sancho Niño*, *Más pesa el Rey que la sangre*, *El mejor rey en rehenes*, *Las palabras a los reyes*, y *Gloria de los Pizarros*, and *La rosa de Alejandría*, and *La cristianísima lis*. For a complete and current bibliography on the *mujer varonil*, see *El alba y el sol*, pp. 275-276, note d.

As first written, *El alba y el sol* could not have been performed in any ordinary venue, because the stage directions call for extraordinary degrees of movement throughout the theatrical space, first offstage, then onstage, above and below:

Tocan caja, y voces dentro.

ORPAS. ¡Guerra! ¡Viva África, viva!
 PELAYO. ¡España viva mil veces!
 ALCAMA. ¡Alá parece que intenta
 darles su amparo, Florinda!

Bajando del monte al tablado tras PELAYO, SANDO, con la bandera, y ASTURIANOS, con espadas desnudas, ALBA, con rodela y espada, MARRUCA, con un chuzo, CHAMORRO tocando el atambor, y al son de cajas y clarín dan batalla a los MOROS, quienes se retiran y se entran, y queda solo CHAMORRO.

[...]

Tocan cajas. Esto es habiendo bajado tras PELAYO, SANDO, con la bandera y las espadas desnudas, y ALBA, con rodela y espada, y MARRUCA, con un chuzo, y CHAMORRO, tocando el atambor, y pelean con los MOROS que están abajo en el tablado, y vanse retirando los MOROS, menos CHAMORRO.

The action moves backstage and then onstage again, with a turban rolling down to the comic character's feet:

Ruido de batalla dentro.

[...]

(Cae un turbante a los pies de CHAMORRO.)

The pitched battle offstage intensifies, and for a moment Pelayo finds himself surrounded, but then he comes back onstage with Sando, and together they chase the enemy away:

Suena ruido de batalla, y hablan dentro PELAYO y SANDO.

PELAYO. ¡Sando, válgame tu brazo!
 SANDO. ¡Solo ese apellido quiero
 para mi sangre, Pelayo!
 ¡Muera esta canalla!

Salen los MOROS retirándose de PELAYO, y SANDO, que trae la bandera, ALBA y LOS ASTURIANOS, y los meten dentro.

PELAYO. ¡A ellos!
 ALBA. ¡Recado tendrán también
 por de zaga, pues los piechos
 yan fñncan también guaridos!
 PELAYO. ¡Mueran, Alba!
 ALBA. ¡Non atiendo
 a dejar de estos paganos,
 Pelayo, pelo ni güeso!
 (stage direction YY-line 2679)

With directions specifying sound effects and simultaneous actions on and offstage Vélez expands the performance space by moving the battle out of the audience's sight, but not out of its auditory field, and by involving the audience in the victory parade at the play's end with a simple stage direction: «Sale ALBA por el patio a caballo». The protagonist and, we can suppose, other Asturians enter from the back of the theater and parade through the audience—the dramatic realm of the quasi-historical past gets fused with the audience's empirical realm in the present. It is a technique that Vélez used earlier in *El cerco de Roma por el rey Desiderio* (1604-05), *El mejor rey en rehenes* (1606), *Los hijos de la Barbuda* (circa 1608), and *La Serrana de la Vera* (1613), and which he continued to use years later.¹⁹

Antonio Feros (2000: 101-103) has called attention to the fact that Lerma commissioned a number of projects to enhance his social cachet and honor by embellishing and even fancifully inventing his family's genealogy. One author, Diego Matute de Peñafiel Contreras, went so far as to trace Lerma's ancestors back to Adam and Eve, Hercules and Aeneas.²⁰ In *El alba y el sol* Vélez de Guevara's version of the Sandoval lineage is more plausible, though still fanciful. He would have us believe that the Sandovals were present at the dawn of the Reconquest, and that the Duke's ancestors embodied the origins and essence of Spain:

SANDO. Mi nombre es Sando,
 mi sangre del mejor tronco
 que montañeses solares
 entre peñascos, abortos
 de su aspereza, a Castilla
 dieron ramas y pimpollos
 animados. Desde niño
 fui inclinado a vitoriosos

¹⁹ «Sale LEONCIO a caballo, todo armado de punta en blanco, al patio» (*El cerco de Roma por el rey Desiderio*, stage direction OO); «Sale la BARBUDA, con lanza, a caballo por el patio, acompañada de MUDARRA y ESPAÑOLES» (*Los hijos de la Barbuda*, stage direction bb); «Suenen relinchos de LABRADORES, y vayan entrando por el patio cantando TODA LA COMPAÑIA, . . . con coronas de flores, y UNO con un palo largo y en él metido un pellejo de un lobo con su cabeza, y OTRO con otro de oso de la misma suerte, y OTRO con otro de jabalí. Y luego, detrás, a caballo, GILA, la Serrana de la Vera, vestida a lo serrano, de mujer, con sayuelo y muchas patenas, el cabello tendido, y una montera con plumas, un cuchillo de monte al lado, botín argentado, y puesta una escopeta debajo del caparazón del caballo, . . . » (*La Serrana de la Vera*, stage direction C). Similar stage directions can be found in *La mesa redonda*, *La rosa de Alejandría*, *Las palabras a los reyes*, y *Gloria de los Pizarros*, *La cristianísima lis*, and *Las tres edades del mundo*.

²⁰ The work in question is *Prosapia de Christo . . . , donde se expone la genealogía del Rey Phelippe III, y la de Don Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, Duque de Lerma* (Baza, Martín Fernández Zambrano, 1614).

progresos. Servi de paje
 a Rodrigo, y cuando el bozo
 apenas bordó mis labios,
 me ciñó la espada él propio,
 armándome caballero,
 uso antiguo de los godos.
 En los reencuentros que tuvo
 con Witiza y con otros
 tiranos que pretendieron
 quitarle el reino, yo solo
 fui causa de darle, Infante,
 más victorias, más despojos,
 sin arrogancia, Pelayo,
 que sus capitanes todos.
 Pero, cuando el Cielo quiere
 castigar un reino, poco
 ningún valor aprovecha,
 que a su brazo poderoso
 no hay acero que resista
 ni muro que le haga estorbo.
 Y así, del furor alarbe,
 mil veces sangriento y roto,
 guardándome para ti
 la vida el destino, hoy tomo
 puerto a tus pies, y en el pecho
 esta bandera atesoro,
 que con las armas de España
 alcé entre los pies furiosos
 de las yeguas berberiscas
 y los andaluces potros,
 así pudiera a mi rey,
 mas éste, como más propio
 retrato suyo, será
 a tu lado contra el moro,
 a pesar de la fortuna,
 haciendo testigos sordos
 esos peñascos, gigantes
 de los celestiales globos,
 iris de nuestras tormentas,
 de tu valor testimonio,
 laurel de nuestras hazañas
 y escudo del nombre godos. (ll. 240-289)

It will be remembered that at the end of the play King Pelayo recognizes Sando's valor. He honors his compatriot not only with a titled office, that of Royal Master at Arms, but also with a

new name, Sandoval—*¡Sando, válgame tu brazo!* > *Sando, val* > *Sandoval*—and a royally sanctioned coat-of-arms, a gold field crossed by a black band to commemorate his heroic acts with the beam:

PELAYO. Y así, pues del embarazo
 en que cercado del moro
 se vio mi real decoro,
 «¡Sando, válgame tu brazo!»
 diciendo, me defendisteis,
 un rey por armas os doy,
 y el apellido, desde hoy,
 que de mi voz merecisteis
 escuchar, con una banda
 atravesada que diga
 la proeza de la viga
 de Covadonga en demanda
 de la vitoria que el Cielo
 hoy nos ha dado. (ll. 3088-3101)



Fig. 1. Sandoval coat-of-arms

In 1613, such a vigorous defense of Lerma probably would not have been well received in the public theaters, because the subject of royal favoritism was a stormy issue of current events (Gutiérrez, 1973: 21-26, 91-94; MacCurdy, 1978: 38-68; Feros, 2000: 230-239; Peale, 2004: 127-128), but within the sheltered recesses of the court, where Lerma's authority mattered the most, the spectacle, poetic originality, and textual and subtextual messages of *El alba y el sol* would have been appreciated by the play's principal spectators, King Philip and his *valido*, and clearly understood and warmly received by the guests who depended on their favor.²¹

²¹ In the textual essay of the Manson-Peale edition (pp. 73-74), I proposed that *El alba y el sol* was first performed in the corral of the Casa del Tesoro; although the space was much smaller, a production in the patio of the ducal palace in Lerma would have been another plausible venue for a private performance for royalty and nobility. There are documented private palace performances of *El alba y el sol* in the Queen's chamber by Simón Aguado's company on January 18, 1675, and again on January 6, 1688, and also by

Lerma's ambitions in 1613 were urging him in a new direction: he sincerely wanted to be a prince of the Church, a cardinal. Coincidentally, he was beginning to feel pushback from his enemies. All the same, the royal favorite was at the peak of his power and unassailable; he could do whatever he wanted—even nothing, which in a sense is what he did in 1615, by removing himself from Madrid, first to El Escorial in May, and then, in July, to Valladolid and Lerma (Williams, 2006: 197). All the same, no one doubted for a moment that the Duke was in charge.

* * *

In 1613, 1614 and 1615, King Philip's, that is, Lerma's, agents secretly conducted negotiations with the French Crown for a double marriage, of Prince Philip and Elizabeth of Bourbon, and Louis XIII and Ana of Austria. Final arrangements were concluded in June, 1615, not in Madrid, nor in Paris, but in Lerma, because for months the Duke of Lerma had refused to return to Madrid. It was the king who had to go to Lerma. To celebrate the successful conclusion of the complex terms for the double wedding, the Count of Saldaña again commissioned Vélez de Guevara for a play. The work, entitled *El Conde don Pero Vélez y don Sancho el Deseado*, was a double celebration—a celebration of love and, simultaneously, a celebratory endorsement of Saldaña's countship and of his father's power. The play was performed on June 23, St. John's Eve, in the outdoor dining room of the famed park that stretched three kilometers along the bank of the Arlanza River, below the Duke's palace.²²

Vélez made clever use of the occasion, of the site, of the Duke's service staff, and even of the lunar cycle to create an after-dinner entertainment that showcased the Duke's wealth. Love, of course, is the theme, and in Act II a wedding banquet is staged, with sumptuous and visually stunning entrées served with the Duke's famed silverware by the palace staff. After the banquet the theatrical company and palace staff, decked out in their best livery, with ornamental silver buttons on their jackets and silver buckles on their shoes, perform songs and dances for the royal couple of the drama, and for Spain's royal party, the king and queen, the Duke, and his French guests. Vélez's script alludes to the park's flora, to its fountains and streams, to its fauna—the park was stocked with rabbits for hunting—and even to the lunar phase, which he likens to a slice of watermelon, doubtlessly served earlier that evening (Peale, *El Conde don Pero Vélez*, pp. 41, 242, n. 2548-2549).

El Conde don Pero Vélez was a mobile play that was successful when Cristóbal de Avendaño's company performed it later in traditional venues, but its initial performance at Lerma, fusing drama and reality, poetry and politics, performance and power, surely must have been a memorable

the Carlos Vallejo company, on October 13, 1697. The Francisca López company performed the play for the general public in Córdoba's Casa de las Comedias and in La Montería de Sevilla in the autumn of 1660, and again the following year. For all documented productions after 1728—in Madrid, Barcelona, Toledo, Seville, Palma de Mallorca, and San Juan, Puerto Rico—*El alba y el sol* was adapted for performance in proscenium theaters. See Peale, *El alba y el sol*, pp. 41-55; Ferrer (2017).

²² There has been a question about where the premiere performance took place. In my introduction to *El Conde don Pero Vélez* I assumed that the play premiered in Lerma (pp. 41-45). Stefano Arata, on the other hand, placed the performance in the garden of Lerma's palace in Madrid (2002: 21-29). At Olmedo Clásico in 2008 I suggested that the question remain open pending further evidence (2009: 77, n. 8). Now that the Duke's absence from Madrid from May 30 to December 15 is established as fact, it can be stated with certainty that *El Conde don Pero Vélez*'s first performance took place in Lerma.

one for its tiny audience—an audience who could not have been more exclusive, nor more powerful.²³

* * *

The third play of this study is *El Caballero del Sol*, which Vélez de Guevara composed for one of the most storied events in the history of Spanish court life: the Lerma Festival of 1617. The work's performance is well-known, but the actual play has been seldom read.²⁴

Recounting the main story: the festival of 1617 lasted three weeks—October 3-25—, ostensibly to celebrate the transfer of the Holy Sacrament to the newly-built collegiate church of Saint Peter.²⁵ The king and queen, loyal grandees and secretaries from all the Crown's councils, nearly the entire foreign diplomatic corps, the papal nuncio, and the Duke's own college of cardinals were his guests. Every day there were liturgical religious services, followed by chivalric games, banquets, plays and other entertainments, and, like every year, the festivities were attended by large crowds who came from Valladolid, Segovia, Burgos and other towns (Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, leg. 8800, fol. 265). In the words of Pedro de Herrera, it was «la más feliz, más famosa y bien alabada fiesta que ha visto el mundo» (*Traslación*, fol. 373v).

But there was a shadowy storyline behind the Lerma festival.

²³ A parenthetical note: As in *El alba y el sol* and, as will be seen below, in *El Caballero del Sol*, there are, again, lines in *El Conde don Pero Vélez* that prefigure Calderón's masterpiece. Cf. ll. 299-310:

CONDE.	No quiero que vuestra Alteza por tan rudo me imagine, que en esta edad no me incline a amar alguna belleza, sino por la obligación de dar, ya que el tiempo pasa, herederos a mi casa, por la natural pasión que en brutos, aves y peces la naturaleza puso, cuando me faltara el uso de la razón.
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La vida es sueño, ll. 167-172 (quoted from Fausta Antonucci's edition):

[SEGISMUNDO.]	¿Qué ley, justicia, o razón negar a los hombres sabe, privilegio tan suave, excepción tan principal, que Dios le ha dado a un cristal, a un pez, a un bruto y a un ave?
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²⁴ See Shergold (1967: 255-259); Ferrer (1991: 178-196; 1993: 265-269); García García (2007: 229-232); Chaves Montoya (2007: 341-342); Lobato (2010: 275-294). To date the only literary commentaries on the play are those of Valbuena Briones, Lundelius, Arellano, and Lobato's introduction to the critical edition.

²⁵ See Williams (2006: 226-230); Lobato (2007: 103-108; 2010). The official published account of the 1617 Lerma festival was Pedro de Herrera's *Traslación del Santísimo Sacramento, á la iglesia colegial de San Pedro de la villa de Lerma; con la Solemnidad, y Fiestas, que tuuo para celebrarla el Excellentissimo Señor don Francisco Gomez de Sandoual, y Roxas* (Madrid, 1618). According to Manuel Cornejo, Lope de Vega's *Lo que pasa en una tarde* gives a tangential account of the festivities.

As mentioned earlier, Lerma aspired to be a cardinal. His motives were not altogether spiritual, since a cardinal's cap would put him and his estate beyond his enemies' reach.²⁶ By October of 1617, the Duke of Lerma knew that his time as royal favorite was coming to its end. The Crown's financial situation had deteriorated under the stewardship of Lerma's loyalists, and powerful nobles were conspiring with his first son, the Duke of Uceda, to turn King Philip's favor in another direction. The air at court was full of bile; in some quarters there was an outright desire for vengeance. Lerma was embittered and had bouts of depression, but ever the astute and resourceful political tactician, he was calculating his moves and courting the Church's favor for a safe and comfortable retirement as a prince of God's kingdom. So while his signature 'good work' was the magnificent building project in Lerma, designed by the foremost architects of the time, with seven convents and six churches built and endowed by the Duke, it was also an awesome show of wealth and power. For example, his palace, designed by no less than the king's architect, Juan Gómez de Mora, had not two towers, but four, a privilege reserved for Spain's monarch.²⁷

Like *El alba y el sol* and *El Conde don Pero Vélez, El Caballero del Sol* was commissioned by Vélez's boss, the Count of Saldaña;²⁸ the production was managed by Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza and performed outdoors, in the Duke's park, on large platforms that projected from each bank over the Arlanza River. The play was staged on one side, the audience was seated on the opposite side. The scripted special effects marked a significant advance in the stagecraft of court theater, with global scene changes, e.g., mountains that became a city whose buildings then turned into a forest; thunder storms with hail and lightning flashes; a galley that sailed down the river from «Naples», on one side of the huge set, to «Plymouth», on the other. The play's scenography has been studied thoroughly by Teresa Ferrer and by María Luisa Lobato,²⁹ so it is not necessary to repeat their superb analyses here, but two passages not mentioned by Ferrer or Lobato deserve attention, because they would have been particularly resonant on the occasion.

During the Lerma festival the Duke's guests lived, worshipped and played in a magnificent complex of design, architecture and art comparable with royal venues most anywhere in Europe. The Duke got a lot for the 646,377 ducats that he had spent in his hometown by 1617 (Williams, 2006: 19). As if eyes were not enough to appreciate the Duke's ambitious project, Vélez de Guevara reminded his audience with comedy and a technique that he had used a few years earlier in *La Serrana de la Vera*, evoking the festival's circumstances and surroundings in a way that is almost antipoetic. The second male lead, Paris, recounts his recitation in a burlesque poetic academy on «la casa confusa de los celos», enumerating its construction with a straightforward list of architectural terms:

DIANA. ¿Qué le cupo a vuestra Alteza
 en la academia pasada

²⁶ In June and July of 1617 Lerma wrote his will, stipulating the dispensation of his estate. Without clerical immunity his properties and possessions would have been susceptible to royal claim and civil litigation. See Williams (2006: 221-226).

²⁷ Williams (2006: 192). In his chronicle of the 1617 Lerma festival, Pedro de Herrera (*Traslación*, fol. 2) offered a credulous justification for the design: the royal family would occasionally be staying there.

²⁸ In fact, Pedro de Herrera refers to the production as «una Comedia del Conde de Saldaña» (*Traslación*, fol. 29r).

²⁹ See their respective studies of 1991, 1995, and 2010, cited in n. 24.

por sujeto?
 PARIS. De los celos
 pintar la confusa casa.
 DIANA. ¡Vaya la casa confusa
 de los celos!
 [...]

[PARIS.] No estriba su arquitectura
 en arquitrabes ni basas,
 boceles, linteles, plintes,
 metopas, lágrimas, tambas,
 en dóricos, ni en corintas
 columnas, ni en las doradas
 cornisas, molduras, frisos,
 triglifos, necelas, aguas,
 paticefalas, triglifas,
 murecillos, atrabrasas,
 balaústres, chapiteles,
 grutas, pórticos, fachadas,
 sino en lóbregas cavernas,
 de nocturnas aves jaulas,
 cuya música es gemido,
 porque nunca al sol aguardan.
 (ll. 997-1102, 1117-1132)³⁰

The second passage occurs exactly halfway through the play. To understand its resonance it is important to remember the backstory cited above.

Diana, the Princess of Naples, is the object of royal suitors from Thrace, Syria, Dalmatia, and Hungary, who are all pompous, arrogant, self-absorbed and, of course, self-interested. Then a Spaniard comes on the scene, Don Roque, a foppish buffoon whose ridiculous airs reach extremes of hilarity. In theater as in life, the truth is often told by children, drunks and fools. When Princess Diana first meets Don Roque, she asks about life in Spain. His answer is a comical set piece that closes with the *tempus fugit* topos:

DIANA. ¿En España,
 qué hay de nuevo?
 ROQUE. Muchos usos,
 poco amor, mucha ignorancia,
 la nobleza desvalida
 y la Fortuna muy falsa
 con los que más merecemos,
 querer la gente ordinaria
 igualarse con nosotros,

³⁰ Cf. *La Serrana de la Vera*, ll. 1693-1720, where a secondary character, after citing the classic and modern styles of ornamentation—Doric, Corinthian, Ionic, and Tuscan—, enumerates thirty-seven architectural elements.

muy acabadas las casas,
 muy presumidos los necios,
 los discretos sin sustancia,
 los que nos sirven, quejosos.
 [.....]
 Ninguno verdad nos dice,
 todos lisonjas nos tratan,
 quien nos busca nos respeta,
 quien nos pide nos engaña.
 Todo está acabado, en fin,
 que el tiempo todo lo acaba. (ll. 1466-1484)

Don Roque's delivery was funny, but his words were true.³¹ The Duke of Lerma's career had brought him to the lavishly glorious moment of the 1617 festival, with his power and wealth on full display to the Court, to the Church and to the world, but in reality, Fortune's shadow was darkening the Duke's life, and his regime was unravelling rapidly. For Lerma it was time for negotiation and manipulation (Williams, 2006: 198), but it was also the Duke's time for reflection, which is why the *décimas* that Vélez composed toward the end of *El Caballero del Sol*, and that Calderón appropriated a decade later, resonate so strongly:

FEBO. Si en un corazón villano
 cabe tan grande hidalguía
 de amor, no estarás, Sol mía,
 del mío quejosa en vano.
 Siente un pájaro el tirano
 golpe de la muerte dura
 cuando roballe procura
 el dulce esposo que amó,
 y con más sentidos yo,
 ¿no lloro más hermosura?
 Celebra una tortolilla
 el ausencia de su amante,
 y despreciando constante
 verde rama, alegre orilla,
 siendo una simple avecilla,
 obliga con su dolor
 los ecos y el resplandor
 del sol, huye al seco nido,
 y teniendo más sentido,
 ¿tengo yo menos amor?

³¹ The audience understood Don Roque's speech as a key moment, not so much because of its content, as because of the actor who delivered it. Cf. Herrera, *Traslación*, fol. 32r: «Representó este papel Mateo Montero con tan estremada gracia, que se tuvo por el primer hombre de ella [*i.e.*, the play], cosa más estimable por ser un hidalgo principal cortesano, conocido por sus buenas calidades».

Sécase una verde hiedra
 cuando el que cultiva o caza
 del olmo le desenlaza,
 y más en verdor no medra,
 enternécese una piedra
 con el más blando elemento,
 responde en ecos el viento,
 dase un diamante a partido,
 y teniendo yo sentido,
 ¿tengo menos sentimiento? (ll. 2453-2482)³²

The celebrative atmosphere of the Lerma festival determined a horizon of expectations in which the audience would have understood the quoted rhetorical commonplaces as comedy (*cf.* Jauss, 1982: 22-30), but in critical retrospect it is clear that they masked the dark realities of the Duke's life. Five months after the Lerma festival, the Duke received a cardinal's appointment from the Pope and retired to his palace with a substantial income. He died in 1625 and was buried beside his wife in their chapel in Saint Paul's Church, in Valladolid. As Don Roque said, all was finished, time brings everything to an end.

* * *

The Duke of Lerma fell from power in 1618 (Feros, 2000: ch. 11; Williams, 2006: chs. 9-11), but Luis Vélez went on to thrive both as a playwright and as a courtier. With the succession of Philip IV and the rise of a new *valido* in the person of Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, Vélez continued to be a prominent figure of the theater and of Madrid's poetic academies,³³ a prestigious courtier who served as an usher in the king's royal chamber for eighteen years, and a prolific theatrical apologist for the Hapsburg dynasty³⁴ and its loyal adherents as well as for the royal favorite, the Count-Duke of Olivares.³⁵ Although the tenor of Vélez's dramatic vindications after 1621 were generally brighter and never lacked for touches of ironic humor and satire, the poetry and

³² *Cf.* Segismundo's first speech in *La vida es sueño*, ll. 102-162.

³³ *Cf.* Francisco de Quevedo, who in his *Perinola* reproached Juan Pérez de Montalbán's theatrical pretensions, recommending that he emulate Lope, Vélez and Calderón (p. 458a). Vélez's important role in the Academia Burlesca of 1637 is documented in Julio (2007: *passim*).

³⁴ *Cf.* *El hijo del águila* (1621), about Don Juan de Austria's youth; *El mejor rey en rehenes (a quo 1621)*, about Philip IV's and Isabel de Borbón's common ancestor, Louis IX of France; *La mayor desgracia de Carlos Quinto* (1623), about the battle of Algiers; and *El Águila del Agua* (1632-33), about Don Juan de Austria at the battle of Lepanto. Similarly, *El rey naciendo mujer* (1623), *El rey en su imaginación* (1625), and *Celos, amor y venganza (circa 1625)*, all revolving around the theme of Salic Law, no doubt reflected the interests of Queen Isabel.

³⁵ *Cf.* *Si el caballo vos han muerto, y Blasón de los Mendozas* (1621), about the legend of Pedro González de Mendoza at the battle of Aljubarrota; *El Hércules de Ocaña* (1621), about Don Alonso de Céspedes's extraordinary feats of strength and his sister María; *Más pesa el Rey que la sangre, y Blasón de los Guzmanes* (1621-22), about the defense of Tarifa by Olivares's ancestor, don Pedro de Guzmán el Bueno; *El asombro de Turquía y valiente toledano* (1624), about the naval hero Don Francisco de Ribera; *Las palabras a los reyes, y Gloria de los Pizarros* (1625-26), about the conquest of Peru and a vindication of the family's name as Marquises of La Conquista; *La corte del demonio*, a transparent defense of the Count-Duke set in the court of Semiramis, with close textual analogies with the anonymous screed *El Nicandro (post quem 1643)*; and Tranco VIII of *El Diablo Cojuelo* (composed in 1637-38, published in 1641), where the cream of Spain's nobility parades down Madrid's Calle Mayor.

production values of his earlier works continued to reflect, whether explicitly or implicitly, the moral and esthetic standards and vested interests held by powerful court figures, so it is safe to say that some, perhaps many, of his later dramas, like the three plays of this study written for the Duke of Lerma, can be similarly viewed as performances of power.

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