

# CROSSCURRENTS BETWEEN ITALY AND SPAIN: BISHOP ÁLVARO DE MENDOZA, AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY STATUS AND PIETY IN HIS POLITICAL, ECCLESIASTICAL AND FAMILY NETWORKS

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## ABSTRACT

In terms of the dissemination of the Italian Renaissance, on the Iberian Peninsula, the little-considered figure of Álvaro de Mendoza, Bishop of Ávila and then of Palencia, is crucial. This article will explore how Mendoza established his multiple ecclesiastical identities in Spain through his links to Rome, benefitting in the first instance from being brother-in-law to the powerful imperial secretary, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina. Mendoza played a fundamental role not only in the artistic dissemination, however, but also in the spiritual renewal of the post-Tridentine Spanish monarchy, where he was the key figure in first promoting the career of Saint Teresa of Ávila.

KEYWORDS: Álvaro de Mendoza, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina, Juan de Juni, Sebastiano del Piombo, Teresa of Ávila

Intrecci tra Italia e Spagna: il vescovo Álvaro de Mendoza e il ruolo giocato da status e pietà nei suoi network politici, ecclesiastici e familiari

## ABSTRACT

Per quanto riguarda la diffusione del Rinascimento italiano nella penisola iberica, la figura, finora poco considerata, di Álvaro de Mendoza, vescovo di Ávila e poi di Palencia, è cruciale. Questo articolo esplorerà come Mendoza abbia consolidato le sue molteplici identità ecclesiastiche in Spagna, attraverso i legami con Roma, traendo vantaggio, in primo luogo, dal suo essere cognato del potente segretario imperiale, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina. Mendoza ebbe un ruolo fondamentale, non solo nella disseminazione artistica, ma anche nel rinnovamento spirituale della monarchia spagnola post-tridentina, dove fu figura chiave nel promuovere per primo la carriera di Santa Teresa d'Ávila.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Álvaro de Mendoza, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina, Juan de Juni, Sebastiano del Piombo, Teresa d'Ávila

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Until recently, the area that is now Spain has been regarded as marginal for studies of the Italian Renaissance. By the mid-sixteenth century at the latest, however, that peninsula was from where power and influence in the Mediterranean radiated outwards and for its inhabitants, the states of the Italian peninsula had now become a cultural repository that could be picked over at leisure. A simplistic centre-periphery relationship model has therefore correctly been problematized recently in discussions of the cultural interactions between sixteenth-century Italy and Spain<sup>1</sup>. Works of art, and on occasion artists too, had begun to pour into Spain from all over Italy, either commissioned or off the peg, and ranging from small devotional items to large scale architectural projects<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> C.J. HERNANDO SÁNCHEZ (ed.), *Roma y España. Un Crisol de la Cultura Europea en la Edad Moderna*, Conference proceedings (Rome, Academia de España, 8-12 May 2007), 2 vols., Madrid, Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2007; J.S. AMELANG, *Exchanges between Italy and Spain: Culture and Religion*, in T.J. DANDELET, J.A. MARINO (eds.), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion*, Leiden; Boston, Brill, 2007; N. BOCK, *Patronage, Standards and Transfert Culture: Naples between Art History and Social Science Theory*, «Art History», 31, 4 (2008), pp. 574-597; M. COLE, *Towards an Art History of Spanish Italy*, «I Tatti Studies», 16, 1 (2013), pp. 37-46; S. CAMPBELL, *The Endless Periphery: Towards a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> P. BAKER-BATES, 'Graecia Capta Ferum Victorem Coepit': *Spanish Patrons and Italian Artists*, in P. BAKER-BATES, M.

Furthermore, this phenomenon extended all the way from major centres of government and population such as Toledo and Valladolid to the more obscure provincial backwaters, such as Ávila and Úbeda.

In line with the aims of this issue of *Intrecci*, the particular case of the artistic and religious patronage of Bishop Álvaro de Mendoza (?-1586) and its relationship to Italy will be discussed in the argument that follows. Bishop Mendoza should be seen as a more important figure than has been previously realized anyway and besides, throughout the reigns of Charles V and of his son, Philip II, in the dissemination of works of Italian culture, in what-ever form, in Castile, ecclesiastics such as he played a leading role<sup>3</sup>. Mendoza is not a unique example and various others of his ecclesiastical contemporaries and successors who engaged in similar activities of patronage will be discussed in passing in what follows. Nonetheless, it is through the microhistory of Mendoza's own wide field of activities as a patron that much broader methodological issues can be teased out. In particular Mendoza should be seen as a paradigm for the ecclesiastical functionary not only acting as an agent for the dissemination of Italian material culture in Iberia, but also for using such works of art, both local and from farther afield, to bolster his own local powerbase there. For both of his bishoprics, but in Ávila in particular, he formed religiously orthodox but culturally cosmopolitan spiritual centres that evoked the new spirit of post Tridentine Rome in miniature.

### *Álvaro de Mendoza's Career and Family Networks*

Who though was Mendoza and how did he become a significant figure? His rise to ecclesiastical influence had begun with a dynastic marriage. On October 19 1522, at Valladolid, Francisco de los Cobos y Molina, the rapidly ascending chief secretary of and financial adviser to the recently elected Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, at the age of about forty, entered into a formal agreement to marry. His intended bride was the fourteen-year old daughter of the Countess of Rivadavia, María de Mendoza<sup>4</sup>. The only surviving painted portrait of Cobos dates from some ten years later, into the early 1530's. This is a work by the Flemish artist, Jan Gossaert that is now in the J Paul Getty Museum [fig. 1]<sup>5</sup>.

Cobos has been identified as the sitter not only by the cross and jewel of the military order of Santiago he wears, of which order he had been made *Commendador Mayor*, the highest rank that was open to him, in 1529, but also by the resemblance to his portrait in a medal by the Augsburg based Christoph Weiditz<sup>6</sup>. By the early 1530's Cobos was at the apogee of his power. That he had himself portrayed at this point by a Fleming, a German and probably also by an Italian, Titian, demonstrates not only the international reach of his artistic patronage, but also his desire to establish

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PATTENDEN (eds.), *The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia*, Burlington, Vt and Farnham, Ashgate, 2015, pp. 127-151; K. HELMSTUTLER DI DIO, T. MOZZATI (eds.), *Artistic Circulation between Early Modern Spain and Italy*, New York; Abingdon, Routledge, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> For only recent studies see: C. CAVERO DE CARONDELET, *El Viaje a Roma de Luis de Oviedo, agente y coleccionista a principios del siglo XVII*, «Cuadernos de Historia Moderna», 45, 1 (2020), pp. 55-79; P. BAKER-BATES, *All Roads lead from Rome: The Transcultural Career of Francisco de Reynoso*, «Renaissance Studies», forthcoming, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> H. KENISTON, *Francisco de los Cobos, Secretary of the Emperor Charles V*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960; S. RAMIRO RAMÍREZ, *Francisco de los Cobos y las artes en la corte de Carlos V*, Madrid, CEEH, 2021, pp. 45-46.

<sup>5</sup> M. W. AINSWORTH, *Man, Myth and Sensual Pleasure: Jan Gossaert's Renaissance*, New Haven; London, Yale University Press, 2010, pp. 300-302.

<sup>6</sup> J. G. POLLARD, *Renaissance Medals*, 2 vols., Washington; Oxford, National Gallery of Art; Oxford University Press, 2007, II, *France, Germany, The Netherlands, and England*, p. 696.

his lasting image<sup>7</sup>. True noble status lay beyond Cobos thanks to his humble and provincial birth in Úbeda, but his financial abilities in particular had enriched not only his master, the Emperor, but also himself.

In strong contrast to Cobos, despite their ancient lineage and noble title, his new wife María de Mendoza's branch of the pre-eminent Mendoza family was not at all wealthy or influential<sup>8</sup>. The marriage between the two, although it appears to have been a success, was initially entirely strategic on both sides. María had furthermore brought in her train a flotilla of no less than six brothers and four sisters whose careers, for the twenty-five years of her married life to Cobos, were advanced solely by the influence of their brother-in-law<sup>9</sup>. Of them all, María was closest to her fourth brother, Álvaro, and of all her siblings he was the only one who had the abilities to make a career and a position that lasted beyond Cobos' death in 1547, dying in post forty years later as Bishop of the important Castilian see of Palencia.

Álvaro de Mendoza has only the one known portrait, by an unknown artist, that has never been scientifically studied<sup>10</sup>. This is because it is now, among others of his art works, in the possession of the disalced Carmelite convent of San José at Ávila that he had founded in 1562, the so-called *Convento de las Madres* [fig. 2]. Here, Mendoza appears as still a young man of about thirty—although that is little help in dating the portrait as it is uncertain when exactly he was born. Unfortunately, and unlike for his brothers, it is even uncertain whether he was still a minor at his father's death in 1531<sup>11</sup>. He is shown with a stubbly chin and in ecclesiastical dress at three quarter length with a cross around his neck and holding a folded document in his hand; he appears already as the very mirror of the ideal sixteenth-century ecclesiastic. Mendoza did not first become a Bishop until 1560, however, and he would probably have been somewhere between forty and fifty years old by that date.

Nonetheless, from an early age, thanks to his brother-in-law he had occupied ecclesiastical positions that were not obviously of the highest rank, but had brought with them considerable prestige. He became Rector of Salamanca University in 1532, a chaplain of the recently re-founded *Capilla de los Reyes Nuevos* at Toledo Cathedral from 1544, as well as a Canon of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella from an unknown date. Unsurprisingly then, in 1538 Cobos wrote to his secretary and right-hand man, Juan Vázquez de Molina, that he couldn't do anything further for Álvaro at the present time<sup>12</sup>. Mendoza also, it would appear from the documentary evidence, began to occupy the important role of link man between his brother-in-law, Cobos, and the powerful Spanish episcopate, and became the clerical executor of Cobos' estate after his death<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> For a presumed portrait by Titian see KENISTON, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 356–357; J. PÉREZ GIL, *El Valor del Retrato: Francisco de los Cobos y la notoriedad del linaje*, in J. GARCÍA NISTAL (ed.), *Imagen y Documento: Materiales para conocer y construir una historia cultural*, León, Ediciones El Forastero, 2014, pp. 61–87 (70ff); RAMIRO RAMÍREZ, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> H. NADER, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350–1550*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1979; J. GARCÍA ORO, *La nobleza gallega en el reinado de Carlos V*, in A. EIRAS ROEL (ed.), *El Reino de Galicia en la Época del Emperador Carlos V*, Santiago de Compostela, Xunta de Galicia, 2000, pp. 99–134 (100–101).

<sup>9</sup> KENISTON, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 282–286.

<sup>10</sup> J.J. MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ, *El Convento de San José de Ávila (Patronos y Obras de Arte)*, «Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología», XLV (1979), pp. 349–376 (360): unfortunately, it is impossible to reproduce or even to view this portrait at all well under the current conditions of display so one is still compelled to rely on the poor reproduction in Martín González's article.

<sup>11</sup> M.A. FERNÁNDEZ DEL HOYO, *Los Mendoza Clientes de Juni*, «Boletín de la Museo Nacional de Escultura», 10 (2006), pp. 22–30 (p. 28, n. 2).

<sup>12</sup> ARCHIVO GENERAL DE SIMANCAS (AGS), Estado 25, fol. 66; noted in KENISTON, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., p. 285.

<sup>13</sup> Cobos' last will and testament is discussed in KENISTON, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 312–315.

At the same time, following in the steps of his brother-in-law, Cobos, Mendoza had begun pursuing an active patronage strategy of art that continued throughout his long ecclesiastical career, but that has never been examined holistically. Álvaro de Mendoza is perhaps only remembered today, however, if he is at all, not as a patron of art, but as arguably the most significant early supporter of the Carmelite reforms of Teresa of Ávila, of which city he had been Bishop from 1560–1577<sup>14</sup>. There he had immediately encouraged and supported the foundation of Teresa's new convent of discalced Carmelites of San José<sup>15</sup>. The future Saint therefore spoke of the Bishop highly in her *Camino de Perfección*, which was written for the nuns of San José between 1564 and 1567.

She describes him in the Valladolid manuscript of that text as: «Our present Bishop, Don Álvaro de Mendoza, under whose obedience we live (...), is greatly attached to holiness and the religious life, and, besides being of most noble extraction, is a great servant of God»<sup>16</sup>. While according to Teresa's chaplain and first biographer, Julián de Ávila, the foundation of San José had only been made possible in the first place because: «If the bishop of Ávila had not been so disposed towards the Mother, I do not doubt they would have closed down the convent that very first day»<sup>17</sup>. Álvaro de Mendoza had evidently begun with the changed ecclesiastical climate after the Council of Trent to develop from the shadow of his notoriously venal brother-in-law, Francisco de los Cobos, to become a paragon of the post-Tridentine prelate.

After his elevation to Ávila, Mendoza remained in that see until 1577 when he was transferred to that of Palencia, becoming thereby Count of Pernía as well as President of the *Real Chancillería de Valladolid*. Nonetheless, despite his illustrious connections, he was never made a Cardinal nor, unlike many of his Spanish contemporaries, did he ever travel to Italy, nor sought or received ecclesiastical promotion at Rome itself, but remained based in Spain throughout his career. Furthermore, there his interests stayed centred largely on and around Valladolid, the city that was for much of the sixteenth century both the capital of the country and the centre of court life<sup>18</sup>. Here Álvaro kept his own set of apartments in the magnificent palace that was occupied by his widowed sister, María, but that had been built for Francisco de los Cobos, and later became the *Palacio Real*, and it was here he died on 19 April 1586<sup>19</sup>. This was appropriate as his artistic patronage had often been carried out in tandem with that of his sister, indeed the artistic and religious interests of the two siblings should not be separated, showing how a female patron could act through the agency of her male relatives<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> J. BILINKOFF, *The Avila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City*, Ithaca; London, Cornell University Press, 1989, pp. 147–148 and 168.

<sup>15</sup> S. DE SANTA TERESA O.C.D., *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y América*, 15 vols., Burgos, Tipografía Burgalesa (El Monte Carmelo), 1935–52, II, 1935, *Santa Teresa en San José de Ávila (1562–1567)*, pp. 108–132; MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ, *El Convento*, cit.

<sup>16</sup> «El obispo que ahora temenos, debajo de cuya obediencia estamos (...), que es persona muy amiga de toda religión y santidad, y gran siervo de Dios (llámase don Álvaro de Mendoza, de gran nobleza de linaje y muy aficionado a favorecer esta casa de todas maneras)»: SAINT TERESA, *Camino de Perfección*, in E. ALLISON PEERS (ed. and trans.), *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesús*, 3 vols., London; New York, Sheed & Ward, 1946, I, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> «É si el Obispo de Ávila no estuviera tan de parte de la Madre, no dudo sino que de hecho la acabarán aquel día»: V. DE LA FUENTE (ed.), Maestro Julián de Ávila, *Vida de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, Madrid, D. Antonio Perez Dubrull, 1881, pp. 215–216.

<sup>18</sup> B. BENASSAR, *Valladolid au siècle d'or: une ville de Castille et sa campagne au XVIe siècle*, Paris, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1967; *Valladolid. La Muy Noble Villa*, Valladolid, Diputación de Valladolid, 1996; J.M. PARRADO DEL OLMO, *Las tendencias de la escultura vallisoletana a mediados del siglo XVI (1539–1562)*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2004, pp. 15–18.

<sup>19</sup> J. PÉREZ GIL, *El Palacio Real de Valladolid. Sede de la Corte de Felipe III (1601–1606)*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2006; RAMIRO RAMÍREZ, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 192–204 and 328–340.

<sup>20</sup> Studies of significant female patronage of the arts and literature in sixteenth-century Spain are on the increase; on those of the Mendoza family, although neither volume includes María, see: H. NADER (ed.), *Power and Gender in Renaissance*

Consequentially, Álvaro was reprimanded for absenteeism from his see in the early 1580's and fined 4,000 ducats, having been denounced by his own Canons<sup>21</sup>. Nonetheless, in both Ávila and Palencia he had proved otherwise to be a zealous propagator of the decrees of Trent. He founded the seminary of San Millán at Ávila on 24 November 1568, and that of San José at Palencia in 1584, while he held a diocesan synod at Palencia in 1582<sup>22</sup>. He also ensured the re-building of a number of parish churches in both dioceses at his own expense; he had already in the 1540's rebuilt the church at Sonseca, outside Toledo, when he held that living, alongside his chaplaincy at the Cathedral. Throughout his long ecclesiastical career, Mendoza's association with works of religious art remained consistent, in tandem with his developing role as a proponent of religious reform after Trent.

### *Artistic Crosscurrents between Italy and Spain*

As mentioned, in terms of his artistic patronage, Mendoza could be said to have enjoyed an inbuilt advantage over his contemporaries, thanks to his family relationship to Francisco de los Cobos. Cobos' immense wealth and his influence over Italian affairs had allowed him to be among the first Spaniards to take an interest in Italian cultural production and introduce it to the imperial court. He was, for example, among the earliest Spanish patrons of Titian from around 1530<sup>23</sup>. Mendoza's own early efforts therefore appear to have followed very much on those of his brother-in-law. Nonetheless as will become clear in what follows Mendoza's own interest in patronage is consistently turned to religious ends that were far different from the self-aggrandising intentions of a Cobos.

Very little is known in detail about Mendoza's early ecclesiastical career before his appointment to the see of Ávila in 1560, but precocious evidence can be provided instead of his first recorded interest in works of art. These are two Italian paintings, or copies of, that both bear the same inscription: «Alvari de Mea Abulensis», that is literally «Álvaro de Mendoza of Ávila», and which must therefore have been in his possession by at least the time of his episcopate, although one is dateable much earlier and the other stylistically has to be. The latter is a small painting of the *Penitent Magdalen*, that is still in the possession of Cobos's descendants, the Dukes of Medinaceli [fig. 3]. This painting has only been attributed to the Sienese artist, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, more commonly known as Il Sodoma, after the restoration earlier this century; it should be dated to around 1530 due to stylistic resemblance to other works by the artist of that date<sup>24</sup>.

Here, Mary Magdalen is alone in the landscape, her long hair and red shift her traditional attributes derived from the apocryphal Gospels and that indicated her position as a fallen woman. She is praying before a Crucifix as an angel swoops down from above, to whom she turns her head. According to Jacopo da Voragine at least, the Magdalen had retired to a cave in the south of France after the Crucifixion, where she prayed for thirty years being fed and watered by angels<sup>25</sup>. The painting comes

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*Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450-1650*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2004; E. ALEGRE CARVAJAL (ed.), *Damas de la casa de Mendoza Historia, leyendas y olvidos*, Madrid, Ediciones Polifemo, 2014; as will be discussed the two siblings collaborated at Ávila both on the works on the hermitage of San Segundo and the convent of San José.

<sup>21</sup> J.A. FUENTES CABALLERO, *Concilios y sinodos en la diócesis de Palencia. El sinodo de Don Álvaro de Mendoza de 1582. Su proceso interno y la publicación de sus constituciones*, «Memoria Ecclesiae», 40 (2015), pp. 421-445 (428).

<sup>22</sup> F. HERNÁNDEZ HERNÁNDEZ, *El convento cisterciense de Santa Ana en Ávila*, «Cistercium. Revista Monastica», XI, 63 (1959), pp. 136-144 (142-143); BILINKOFF, *The Avila*, cit., pp. 105-106, 170-171; FUENTES CABALLERO, *Concilios y sinodos en la diócesis de Palencia*, cit.

<sup>23</sup> RAMIRO RAMÍREZ, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 137-150.

<sup>24</sup> A. ATERIDO, *Santa María Magdalena Penitente*, in *Carlos V: Las armas y las letras*, exhibition catalogue (Granada), Madrid, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000, pp. 501-503.

<sup>25</sup> J. DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (trans. W. GRANGER RYAN), 2 vols., Princeton, Princeton

from the *Capilla del Salvador* in Úbeda, that had been founded in 1536 as the family pantheon for his immediate family and descendants by Francisco de los Cobos<sup>26</sup>. Álvaro de Mendoza had played a role in commissions elsewhere in this Chapel too; so, for example, he was responsible for the iron grill that surrounds the High Altar, which was intended as a gift for his sister, in 1555. This is the work of the architect and sculptor, Francisco de Villalpando, who may have travelled to Italy and had already wrought a grill for the most prestigious location, Toledo cathedral, which is where Álvaro may first have encountered him<sup>27</sup>.

Along with other paintings originating from the *Salvador*, the intended location of the Sodoma painting in the scheme for this chapel remains unknown while, like so many Italian works of material culture in Spain, it has been very little taken into account in the work of an artist who remains understudied anyway. What is interesting is the probable date of the painting, around 1530. At that date Cobos himself had barely begun to take an interest in Italian works of material culture, while Álvaro de Mendoza would have been a fairly young man still. Unfortunately, it is currently not possible to tell now whether the inscription on the painting is contemporary or not; indeed, too little remains known about this painting altogether. Sodoma had nonetheless recently proved of interest to Spaniards in Italy as in January 1530 he was commissioned to decorate the chapel of that “nation” in the Sienese church of Santo Spirito<sup>28</sup>.

Not as much, however, as had Sebastiano del Piombo: more interesting and telling us more still is a small panel of *Christ carrying the Cross* [fig. 4], that measures only 67 by 48 cm<sup>29</sup>. This too forms a bequest by Mendoza, this time to the Discalced Carmelite Convent in Ávila he had founded. In small letters at the bottom left of the picture surface itself is the inscription: «SEBASTIANUS VENETUS. INVENTOR RO... DIONISI. FACIEBAT. MDXXXIII». While on the base of the frame is the same inscription as on the Sodoma, identifying it as having once belonged to Bishop Álvaro de Mendoza: that is «Alvari de Mea Abulensis». This painting is indeed, as the inscription states an almost exact copy of the same image painted by Sebastiano del Piombo at Rome, which was a theme that Sebastiano returned to several times throughout his career<sup>30</sup>. The concentration on the sufferings of Christ's Passion and the almost photographic close up on them are typical of this Veneto-Roman artist in the years around 1530. The original is confined enough, but the compression of the figure of Christ here by the pressing weight of the Cross is extraordinary.

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University Press, 1993, I, p. 380.

<sup>26</sup> J. MONTES BARDÓ, *La Sacra Capilla de El Salvador: Arte, Mentalidad y Culto*, Úbeda, Editora y Distribuida El Olivo, 2002; RAMIRO RAMÍREZ, *Francisco de los Cobos*, cit., pp. 238-279.

<sup>27</sup> J.R. PANIAGUA SOTO, *Sobre el hipotético viaje de Francisco de Villalpando a Italia: Su visión de algunos de aquellos edificios antiguos y modernos*, «Anales de Historia del Arte», 6 (1996), pp. 141-152; J. DOMÍNGUEZ CUBRERO, *La rejería renacentista en Úbeda*, in A. MORENO MENDOZA AND J.M. ALMANSA MORENO (eds.), *Úbeda en el siglo XVI*, Úbeda, Editora y Distribuida El Olivo, 2002, pp. 527-544 (541-543).

<sup>28</sup> R. BARTALINI, A. ZOMBARDO, *Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, il Sodoma. Fonti documentarie e letterarie*, Vercelli, Società Storica Vercellese, 2012, pp. 54-55.

<sup>29</sup> M.J. REDONDO CANTERA, V. SERRÃO, *El pintor portugués Manuel Denis, al servicio de la Casa Real*, in M. CABAÑAS BRAVO (coord.), *El arte foráneo en España. Presencia e influencia*, Madrid, CSIC, 2005, pp. 61-78 (66-69); F. PEREDA, *Luis de Morales, Divine Painter*, in L. RUIZ GÓMEZ (ed.), *The Divine Morales*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid), Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 2015, pp. 45-57 (56-57); P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo's interpretations of Christ carrying the Cross*, in M. WIVEL (ed.), *Sebastiano del Piombo and Michelangelo: The Compass and the Mirror*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2021, pp. 51-74 (64); P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo: The Sacred Image between Italy and Spain*, in C. FRANCESCHINI (ed.), *Sacred Images and Normativity: Contested Forms in Early Modern Art*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2021, pp. 204-221 (210-211).

<sup>30</sup> P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo and the World of Spanish Rome*, New York; Abingdon, Routledge, 2016, pp. 107-114, 171-173; P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo's interpretations*, cit., pp. 51-74 (51-67); M. LIBINA, *Sebastiano del Piombo and the Sacred Image: Mediating the Divine in the Age of Reform*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2022, pp. 135-182.

There are besides a number of other fascinating details about this tiny image of Christ carrying the Cross that is necessary to unpick. It was first published by none other than Bernard Berenson in 1957, although with an annoying lack of additional information, but has since quickly attained a certain notoriety<sup>31</sup>. Dated 1544, this is therefore not only the first known copy of a work by Sebastiano del Piombo created in Spain, but also the first dated copy of his work anywhere. Furthermore, the copyist has noted his inspiration quite deliberately: «SEBASTIANUS VENETUS INVENTOR». Before going any further it should just be noted that recent research that has re-evaluated the role of not only copies of Italian, but also of Flemish art in the sixteenth century demonstrates that these enjoyed a far greater relative value for contemporaries, both aesthetic and devotional, than they would for us today<sup>32</sup>. None of this research, however, has yet drawn out the full importance and value that copies of Sebastiano del Piombo's religious art had for sixteenth-century Spain, or the role that such copies (or maybe multiples would be a better word) played in Sebastiano's practice more generally<sup>33</sup>.

Given all that it should be unsurprising that, given the date 1544, the Ávila painting had been copied within ten years of the original. This is a *Christ carrying the Cross* [fig. 5], painted for Juan de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, also an associate of Cobos who had been imperial Ambassador at Rome between 1533 and 1536<sup>34</sup>. The original painting bears in turn a damaged and unclear inscription on the arm of the cross, bottom right—although it is unclear whether this is original: «D Fern Sylv/Comte Cif ont/Oratore C/Flagit/F Sebas Faci/R M». It had eventually ended up in the Escorial, from where it was looted by the French Marshal Soult, and is now in the Hermitage. Francisco de los Cobos too had become interested in Sebastiano's work and among the possessions of the *Capilla del Salvador* was a *Pietà*, which was a gift to Cobos from the imperial military commander, Ferrante Gonzaga<sup>35</sup>.

That Álvaro de Mendoza was able to access Cifuentes *Christ carrying the Cross* is unsurprising, as he formed an integral part of that tight knit circle of court functionaries, allied to Cobos, and based at Valladolid. Cifuentes, like Mendoza himself a minor noble although much wealthier, had also made a career for himself in the shadow of Francisco de los Cobos. Cifuentes was first Ambassador at Rome and, after his return, *Mayordomo Mayor de las Casas de la Emperatriz*<sup>36</sup>. That is head of the Empress's household, and after her death, that of her daughters, the *Infantas*, until his

<sup>31</sup> B. BERENSON, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance Venetian School*, London, The Phaidon Press, 2 vols., 1957, I, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> C. MAZZARELLI, *Moltiplicare, tradurre, interpretare. Riflessioni in margine al ruolo delle copie tra prima età moderna e ricezione storiografica contemporanea*, in D. GARCÍA CUETO (ed.), *Las copias de obras maestras de la pintura en las colecciones de los Austrias y el Museo del Prado*, Madrid, Museo del Prado, 2021, pp. 17-33; A.M. HYMAN, *Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America*, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2021.

<sup>33</sup> J. DOMMERMUTH, *The Castle Ashby Holy Family: A Technical Investigation and Comparison with the Technique of Sebastiano del Piombo*, «Hamilton Kerr Institute Bulletin», 3 (2000), pp. 87-96; P. BAKER-BATES, *Two Portraits of a Lady by Sebastiano del Piombo and his Reputation in Great Britain*, «Artibus et Historiae», Special issue in honour of Paul Joannides, 74, XXXVIII (2016), pp. 103-118. (108); P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo's interpretations*, cit.

<sup>34</sup> F.B. DOMÉNECH, *Sebastiano del Piombo y España*, in M. MENA MARQUÉS (ed.) *Sebastiano del Piombo y España*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid), Madrid, Museo del Prado, 1995, pp. 41-79 (46-47); P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo and the World of Spanish Rome*, cit., pp. 171-173.

<sup>35</sup> E. CALVILLO, *Authoritative Copies and Divine Originals: Lucretian Metaphor, Painting on Stone and the Problem of Originality in Michelangelo's Rome*, «Renaissance Quarterly», 66, 2 (2013), pp. 453-508 (480-484); P. BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo and the World of Spanish Rome*, cit., pp. 164-192; P. BAKER-BATES, 'Un nuovo modo di colorire in pietra': *Technical Experimentation in the Art of Sebastiano del Piombo*, in P. BAKER-BATES, E. CALVILLO (eds.) *La pittura poco meno che eterna: Paintings on Stone and Material Innovation*, Leiden, Brill, 2018, pp. 47-73.

<sup>36</sup> M.B. RIESCO DE ITURRI, *Propiedades y fortuna de los condes de Cifuentes: la constitución de su patrimonio a lo largo del siglo XV*, «En la España Medieval», 15, (1992), pp. 137-59; J. MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN, *La Corte de Carlos V*, 3 vols., Madrid, Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000.

own death in 1545. More surprising, perhaps, although important for our purposes, is the recent identification from the second half of the inscription, «RO... DIONISI. FACIEBAT», of the artist of this *Christ carrying the Cross* as the Portuguese, Manuel Denis<sup>37</sup>.

Denis is an obscure figure, this would be his only identified work not as a miniaturist, and he is most famous today for having translated Francisco de Holanda's two treatises from Portuguese into Castilian<sup>38</sup>. Denis would, however, have been closely associated with Cifuentes as the artist had arrived originally at Valladolid in 1535 as a *mozo de capilla* (choir boy) in his fellow countrywoman, the late Empress, Isabella's household; he and Cifuentes are further linked by documentary evidence. Here is the case of a Portuguese artist copying a recent work by a Rome based artist and probably at the request of a Castilian ecclesiastic. It is an unusually early example but there are few clearer cases of the cultural circulation between Italy and Spain that was to become the norm in the second half of the century.

What should also be drawn attention to, however, is the heightened pathos of Mendoza's *Christ carrying the Cross*. This is a change that is to be found in virtually all Spanish copies of Sebastiano del Piombo's work. In the Ávila painting, for example, goutts of blood run from below the crown of thorns which are absent from the original. There is a Spanish version of Cobos' *Pietà*, now in Budapest, that illustrates this point starkly<sup>39</sup>. Nor did the example of Sebastiano fade from Valladolid itself. The Florentine artist, Benito Rabuyate, active in the city during the second half of the sixteenth century, was associated with Manuel Denis immediately before the latter's return to Portugal. Other *Christ carrying the Cross* in Valladolid derived from Sebastiano's example emerged from that particular nexus, such as that painted by Rabuyate in the church of San Miguel y San Agustín, formerly belonging to the Jesuits<sup>40</sup>.

Besides the evidence that is provided by these two images, however, too little is known about the early ecclesiastical career and artistic interests of Álvaro de Mendoza; he only steps truly into the clear light of history for the last twenty-five years of his life, with his arrival at the see of Ávila in 1560. Mendoza was translated to the more significant see of Palencia in 1577, but he seems to have retained a particular affection for Ávila, as did his people for their bishop. A manuscript in the convent of San José records his visit to Ávila in 1584 to view the work on the convent he had founded underway and describes in detail the elaborate ceremonial with which he was received both by the city authorities and by the Carmelite nuns: «as if it were the day of Corpus Christi».<sup>41</sup> And when Mendoza died in Valladolid in 1586, the chronicler of Ávila, Antonio de Cianca, writing in 1595, stated that: «the Chapter of the holy church of Ávila arranged most solemnly for his burial and obsequies, as if he had died as their own Bishop»<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> M.J. REDONDO CANTERA, V. SERRÃO, *El pintor Portugués Manuel Denis*, cit., p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> J.M. RIELLO, *Sobre Manuel Denis, Traductor de Francisco de Holanda*, in J.B. BURY (ed.), F. DE HOLANDA, *Del Sacar por el Natural*, Madrid, Ediciones Akal, 2008, pp. 94-98.

<sup>39</sup> E. NYERGES, *Spanish Paintings: The Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest*, Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts 2008, pp. 60-61; BAKER-BATES, *Sebastiano del Piombo and the World of Spanish Rome*, cit., pp. 180-181.

<sup>40</sup> M. ARIAS MARTÍNEZ, *El testamento de Benedito Rabuyate, un pintor florentino en el Valladolid de la segunda mitad del siglo XVI. Devociones y producción artística*, in *Valladolid. La Muy Noble Villa*, Valladolid, Diputación de Valladolid, 1996, pp. 41-47; J. REDONDO CANTERA, *Benedito Rabuyate (1527-1592), Un Pintor Florentino en Valladolid*, in J. REDONDO CANTERA (ed.), *El Modelo Italiano en las Artes Plásticas de la Península Ibérica durante el Renacimiento*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2004, pp. 341-375 (373).

<sup>41</sup> «que parecía día de Corpus Xi»: reprinted in J.L. ASTIGARRAGA, E. PACHO, O. RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Fuentes históricas sobre la muerte y el cuerpo de Santa Teresa de Jesús (1582-1596)*, Rome, Teresianum, 1982, pp. 585-587.

<sup>42</sup> «cuyo entierro y obsequias solenissimamente el Cabildo de la santa iglesia de Ávila hizo, como si muriera siendo su Perlado»: A. DE CIANCA, *Historia de la vida, invención, milagros y traslación de San Segundo, primero Obispo de Ávila y recopilación de los Obispos sucesores suyos, hasta D. Geronimo Manrique de Lara, Inquisidor general de España*, Madrid,



*Álvaro de Mendoza: Religious Reformer at Ávila and Beyond*

As with a number of other contemporary Spanish prelates upon becoming a Bishop, Don Álvaro became interested in the possibilities of charismatic holy men and women, both in the cause of religious reform, and in enhancing the prestige of their own episcopal office<sup>43</sup>. Hence his early interest perhaps in the career of Saint Teresa. Another excellent example of this same phenomenon is the career of Mendoza's younger contemporary, Juan de Ribera (1532-1611), who was first made Bishop of Badajoz in 1562, then became from 1568 Archbishop and Patriarch of Valencia<sup>44</sup>. Ribera rose rapidly to occupy more significant ecclesiastical offices than Álvaro de Mendoza ever held. He had much less success, however, in promoting the cult of the various local religious visionaries in whom he took an interest at Valencia, such as *Pare Simó*<sup>45</sup>.

The two Bishops were already acquainted at an early date in Ribera's ecclesiastical career; and in 1565 Mendoza had praised Saint Teresa before Ribera at the provincial council of Santiago held in Salamanca. According to Ribera himself writing at a later date of his own first discussions with Saint Teresa about founding a house in Valencia:

She had already heard something of me, by way of the Most Reverend Álvaro de Mendoza, ([...]), who was very devoted to her, and a friend of mine, and we spoke many times of her in the year 64 in the provincial synod of Compostela held at Salamanca<sup>46</sup>.

While in the May of 1566 Ribera paid Luis de Morales, the artist whose career he had launched on his arrival at Badajoz, twenty ducats for a painting of Our Lady to send to the Bishop of Ávila<sup>47</sup>. Morales had been very influenced by the art of Sebastiano del Piombo and it is plausible to assume that the two ecclesiastics also shared a similar aesthetic taste<sup>48</sup>.

Don Álvaro's own interest in holy men and women did not though include only the living, nor only Saint Teresa, but also the dead; his interest in local cults to bolster his ecclesiastical status became all encompassing. He was the ultimate progenitor of an extraordinary statue of San Segundo, legendarily the first bishop of Ávila, that was installed with solemn ceremony in the very centre of the nave of the small hermitage dedicated to the Saint outside the city walls on 25 April 1573 [figs. 6-7]. Segundo's supposed remains had been re-discovered during the demolition of a wall here in 1519 and this hermitage was therefore declared to have been the first cathedral of the city<sup>49</sup>. Segundo

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Luiz Sanchez, 1595, f. 135v.

<sup>43</sup> J. BILINKOFF, *The Avila of Saint Teresa*, cit., pp. 96-107.

<sup>44</sup> R. ROBRES LLUCH, *San Juan de Ribera*, Barcelona, J. Flors, 1960; B. EHLERS, *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia 1568-1614*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Francisco Jerónimo Simó Villafranca (1578-1612). P. BAKER-BATES, *Francisco Ribalta's Vision of Father Simó: British taste and the legacy of Sebastiano del Piombo in Spanish painting*, «Colnaghi Studies Journal», 2 (March 2018), pp. 29-46.

<sup>46</sup> «que ya tenia algunas noticias de mí, por medio del reverendisimo don Álvaro de Mendoza, (...), el qual era muy devoto suya, y amigo mío, y avíamos hablado muchas veces en ella el año de sesenta y quatro en el Synodo Provincial Compestelana que se celebró en Salamanca»: quoted but without indication of the original source in ROBRES LLUCH, *San Juan de Ribera*, p. 440.

<sup>47</sup> I. BACKSBACKA, *Luis de Morales*, Helsinki, 1962, p. 103; L. RUIZ GÓMEZ (ed.), *The Divine Morales*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid), Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 2015, pp. 186-211.

<sup>48</sup> EB. DOMÉNECH, *Sebastiano del Piombo y España*, cit., pp. 41-79 (73-78); F. PEREDA, *Luis de Morales, Divine Painter*, cit., pp. 45-57.

<sup>49</sup> CIANCA, *Historia de la Vida*, cit., f. 101r. ff.

had been one of the *Siete Varones Apostólicos*, the seven holy men, who had supposedly been sent to evangelise Spain from Rome in 44AD by Saints Peter and Paul themselves, and the only one who was to penetrate beyond Andalusia<sup>50</sup>. Segundo's mythical story is detailed on the reliefs of the alabaster retablo attached to one of the crossing piers of the cathedral that was contracted by the Chapter in 1546<sup>51</sup>.

While we owe much of our written information about the life and activities of Segundo to the notary, Antonio de Cianca, who had been an eyewitness to many of the more recent events and in 1595 provided a complete life for the Saint in his *Historia de la Vida, Invención, Milagros y Traslación de San Segundo*<sup>52</sup>. Cianca considered Segundo to have been converted by Santiago himself, while also detailing minutely Bishop Álvaro de Mendoza's later interactions with his relics. Illustrating how the cult of the *Siete Varones Apostólicos* is very much a live tradition today, Saint John Paul II in his first speech on landing in Madrid to begin his first papal visit to Spain in October 1982 referred to how Spain was: «conquered for the faith by the missionary zeal of the Seven Apostolic Men»<sup>53</sup>.

The transfer of Segundo's relics to the actual cathedral was approved by Pope Leo X the very year after their discovery, in 1520. Forty years later, however, by the time of Álvaro de Mendoza's episcopate, little had been done towards that translation, or even to mark the relics actual resting place. Although in 1546 the Chapter had contracted Isidro Villoldo and Juan de Frías to sculpt a retablo dedicated to the Saint, which consists of a cult image surrounded by elegant *stiacciato* reliefs of his life [fig. 8]. This situation changed in the reign of Philip II, however, when the hunt for relics was avid in the flood tide of the Catholic Reformation immediately after Trent. To possess relics of such proven, venerable antiquity as those of Segundo had become a source of pride to be marked and a cult to be encouraged. Other ancient cults like that of San Julián at Cuenca were revived as: «numerous older Spanish miracle workers were called up from reserve and put on active duty in the defence of their cities»<sup>54</sup>. In 1572 María de Mendoza, gave 200 ducats for an alabaster statue to be sculpted and placed over the supposed tomb of San Segundo in the hermitage<sup>55</sup>.

The chosen sculptor of this statue was Juan de Juni, based in Valladolid, although he was originally from Joigny in Burgundy, as his name implies<sup>56</sup>. Juni could well have been Italian trained in the formative years of his career, between around 1525 and 1530 when he is supposed by some scholars to have travelled between Bologna, Modena, Florence and Rome, although any such Italian sojourn remains disputed<sup>57</sup>. An Italian influence becomes apparent from his sculpture but unfortunately, so far, it is not accompanied by documentary evidence of his presence there. Juni would then have

<sup>50</sup> J. LÓPEZ MARTÍN, *Los siete varones apostólicos y sus sedes*, «Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Almerienses Letras», 3 (1983), pp. 111-120; W. RINCÓN GARCÍA, *Los varones apóstolicos, evangelizadores de España*, «Memoria Ecclesiae», 28 (2006), pp. 737-784; A.K. HARRIS, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> J.M. PARRADO DEL OLMO, *Los Escultores seguidores de Berruguete en Ávila*, Ávila, Obra Social y Cultural de la Caja Central de Ahorros y Prestamos de Ávila, 1981, pp. 213-215, 581-583.

<sup>52</sup> CIANCA, *Historia de la Vida*, cit.; RINCÓN GARCÍA, *Los varones apóstolicos*, cit., pp. 769-774.

<sup>53</sup> «que fue conquistada para la fe por el afán misionero de los siete varones apóstolicos»: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1982/october/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19821031\\_arrivo-spagna.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1982/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19821031_arrivo-spagna.html) [accessed December 4, 2023].

<sup>54</sup> S.T. NALLE, *A Saint for All Seasons: The Cult of San Julián*, in A.J. CRUZ, M.E. PERRY (eds.), *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*, Minneapolis; Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1992, pp. 25-50 (26).

<sup>55</sup> M.A. FERNÁNDEZ DEL HOYO, *Los Mendoza*, cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>56</sup> C. PELTIER, *De Jean de Joigny (1507-1533) à Juan de Juni (1533-1577)*, in J. LUGAND (ed.), *Les échanges artistiques entre la France et l'Espagne: (XVe-fin XIXe siècles)*, Perpignan, Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2012, pp. 183-200.

<sup>57</sup> X. DE SALAS, *The Origins of the Sculptor Juan de Juni*, in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art presented to Anthony Blunt on his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, London; New York, Phaidon Press, 1967, pp. 75-77; M.A. FERNÁNDEZ DEL HOYO, *Juan de Juni, Escultor*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2012, pp. 19-22.

returned briefly to his native France before being summoned to Spain where he remained for the rest of his career. Furthermore, in 1548, during the controversy that arose between Juni and Francisco Giralte regarding the execution of the *retablo* for the collegiate church of Santa María La Antigua at Valladolid, one of the adjudicators, Pierre Picart, also a French sculptor domiciled in Spain, did judge Juni's design to be superior as it was «mas tocada en arte Romano»<sup>58</sup>. Although what precisely was understood by that frequently used term in sixteenth-century Spain is not only open to discussion, but also too complex to discuss here<sup>59</sup>.

Juni had become without dispute the leading sculptor working in Valladolid after the death of the indubitably Italian trained Alonso Berruguete in 1561. Juni did also associate with Italian artists based there, within that same Italian oriented cultural nexus mentioned earlier. Notable among them was Benito Rabuyate, with whom Juni's relations were intimate: the two men collaborated and Rabuyate became Godfather to Juni's daughter in 1562<sup>60</sup>. María de Mendoza's connections to this same courtly milieu had therefore secured her the services of an exceptional sculptor, and one who rarely worked outside the immediate ambit of Valladolid. As Sebastiano del Piombo is for painting, so Juni is a paradigmatic example of the transcultural sixteenth-century sculptor's practice; throughout his career in Spain he remained influenced by his experiences in France, and possibly also in Italy.

Among Juni's very last works, just before his own death in 1577, is this sculpture of San Segundo, which is especially remarkable bearing in mind that work in alabaster was not his usual *métier*. The statue is almost life-size, and bears a remarkable resemblance to contemporary tomb sculpture in that same pose. Segundo is kneeling, he wears a mitre, is cloaked with an episcopal cape sealed with a fine brooch, while a book lies open on the lectern in front of him. The most extraordinary aspect of all is the remarkable lifelikeness of the face and the serene expression it bears which seems almost alive. Indeed, clad as he is in contemporary episcopal dress and representing the power of the Spanish church, Segundo and Álvaro de Mendoza, appear almost to have become one, as if in a sacred circuit linking the body of the dead saint to that of the living bishop.

Nor is this statue of San Segundo only an inanimate work of material culture, as it became the model for saint's effigy that is carried in procession through the city each year on his feast day, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May. While the reverence for Segundo's cult locally remains such that as well, on his feast each year, which marks the day that his remains were finally removed to the Cathedral in 1594, the residents of Ávila come to leave their wishes in a cavity in the base of the plinth<sup>61</sup>. It is as if in his own hermitage and over his tomb this statue of the saint has now come to take the place of his absent relics.

Álvaro de Mendoza's own major work at Ávila consisted in the rebuilding of the choir of the convent of San José, the earliest house founded by Saint Teresa in 1562; this convent Mendoza had consistently supported ever since the foundation. Indeed, the staunch support of the extended Mendoza clan had been crucial to several of Teresa's early foundations and her relationship with both Álvaro and María de Mendoza over many years is recorded throughout her surviving correspondence. It was Álvaro's brother, Bernardino de Mendoza, who had first gifted the land for the construction of the fourth house of Teresa's new order in Valladolid in 1568, although later on

<sup>58</sup> J. MARTÍ Y MONSÓ, *Estudios histórico-artísticos relativos principalmente á Valladolid*, Valladolid; Madrid, L. Miñon, 1898-1901, pp. 326-350 (336); PARRADO DEL OLMO, *Las Tendencias*, pp. 57-60; FERNÁNDEZ DEL HOYO, *Juan de Juni*, pp. 62-66.

<sup>59</sup> F. MARÍAS, F. PEREDA (eds.), D. DE SAGREDO, *Medidas del Romano*, 2 vols., Toledo, Antonio Pareja, 2000; P. BAKER-BATES, 'Graecia Capta Ferum Victorem Coepit', cit., p. 131.

<sup>60</sup> J. MARTÍ Y MONSÓ, *Estudios histórico-artísticos*, cit., p. 363.

<sup>61</sup> J. ARRIBAS, *Historia, Literatura y Fiesta en torno a San Segundo (Ávila, 1519-1594)*, Ávila, Institución "Gran Duque de Alba", 2002.

María moved the nuns to a more salubrious site<sup>62</sup>. Álvaro himself encouraged the foundation of the house in Palencia in 1580, while only a couple of years earlier, in 1578, he had written to King Philip II that he held Teresa to be a «buena mujer».

The wider Mendoza clan are intimately linked to one of the earliest supposed proofs of Teresa's sanctity, soon after Álvaro and Maria's brother, Bernardino, had given the future Saint land for her convent in Valladolid in 1568. Bernardino died in Úbeda later the same year, unshriven as he had been struck dumb by a paralytic stroke in his last illness, but Teresa is supposed to have interceded for him directly in Purgatory<sup>63</sup>. She was assured by the Lord that the very day that the first Mass was sung in the new house at Valladolid Bernardino's soul would be released from Purgatory. This miracle is commemorated in Rubens depiction of this episode painted, appropriately enough for the Discalced Carmelite convent at Antwerp in the early 1630's [fig. 9]. Here, as Saint Teresa prays to the right, Bernardino de Mendoza is raised up to the left, and an image which was then further disseminated widely in print<sup>64</sup>.

At the convent of San José, Álvaro ordered the constructed of a new *Capilla Mayor*, built from the costliest materials; this was to contain not only his own tomb but also facing it that of the future Saint Teresa herself, who had died in 1582 [fig. 10]. The agreement for the work was finalised in late 1584, and work began in early 1585<sup>65</sup>. Mendoza's letters of the last eighteen months of his life to the Prioress of the Convent stress the urgent concern of both he and his sister for the prosecution of the building works<sup>66</sup>. Similar conjunctions on an even grander scale were common practice in the second half of the sixteenth century in Spain. One needs only to think of the example of the royal foundation of the Escorial, or that of Cardinal Rodrigo de Castro at the Jesuit college he had founded at his native, Monforte de Lemos<sup>67</sup>. Here the Cardinal's tomb faces an image of the *Virgen de la Antigua*, the patron saint of Seville of which city he had been Archbishop.

In spite of these precedents, and despite the modest size of the space, Mendoza's intention to have himself commemorated in a discalced Carmelite convent in the same space as a holy woman whose sanctity was not yet officially authenticated was unprecedented. By now Juan de Juni was dead, but Mendoza was able to turn to his successor at Valladolid, Esteban Jordán, for the sculptural elements of his tomb [fig. 11]. Furthermore, Jordán was the natural heir to the sculptural Romanism of Berruguete and Juni, with the latter of whom he had collaborated closely<sup>68</sup>. The unflattering, kneeling image of Mendoza that Jordán sculpted in alabaster here looks very different from the earlier painted portrait of the bishop that is kept in the same convent. Ironically too, Saint Teresa had

<sup>62</sup> SAINT TERESA, *Libro de las Fundaciones*, in E. ALLISON PEERS (ed. and trans.), *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesús*, 3 vols., London; New York, Sheed & Ward, 1946, III, pp. 1-206 (46-52, 165-166); J. AGAPITO Y REVILA, *Estancia Provisional de Santa Teresa de Jesús en el palacio del secretario Cobos en Valladolid*, «Boletín de la Sociedad Castellana de Excursiones», XII, 143 (Noviembre 1914), pp. 529-532; S. DE SANTA TERESA O.C.D., *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y America*, cit., III, *La Reforma se extiende (1567-1576)*, 1936, pp. 169-190; J.L. RODRÍGUEZ, J. URREA (eds.), *Santa Teresa en Valladolid y Medina del Campo*, Valladolid, Caja de Ahorros Popular de Valladolid, 1982.

<sup>63</sup> SAINT TERESA, *Libro de las Fundaciones*, cit., pp. 46-52.

<sup>64</sup> C. GÖTTLER, *Securing Space in a Foreign Place: Peter Paul Rubens's 'Saint Teresa' for the Portuguese Merchant-Bankers in Antwerp*, «The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery», 57 (1999), pp. 133-151; W. SAUERLÄNDER, *The Catholic Rubens Saints and Martyrs* (trans. D. DOLLENMAYER), Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014, pp. 108-111.

<sup>65</sup> S. DE SANTA TERESA O.C.D., *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España*, II, *Santa Teresa de Jesús en San José de Ávila*, cit., pp. 736-773; J.J. MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ, *Esteban Jordán*, Valladolid, Sever Cuesta, 1952, p. 74; J.J. MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ, *El convento de San José de Ávila*, cit., pp. 212-215.

<sup>66</sup> ASTIGARRAGA, PACHO, RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Fuentes históricas sobre la muerte*, cit., pp. 219-243.

<sup>67</sup> A. COTARELO VALLEDOR, *El cardenal don Rodrigo de Castro y su fundación en Monforte de Lemos*, 2 vols., Madrid, Instituto de España, 1945, II, 71-81; R. MULCAHY, *The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

<sup>68</sup> PARRADO DEL OLMO, *Las Tendencias*, pp. 77-82.

meanwhile died at Alba de los Tormes, and the Carmelite Sisters there were determined to keep her body. At Mendoza's instigation, however, the body of Saint Teresa was seized at night from the convent in Alba in October 1585 and returned to Ávila<sup>69</sup>.

His secretary, Canon Juan Carillo, wrote him an exultant letter a month later on 27 November:

God be praised for having brought such a guest to your chapel, through whose intercession Your Holiness can be certain to be granted a full and perfected life to enjoy her presence here, and later to join her in heaven<sup>70</sup>.

Mendoza's triumph, however was short lived. His opponent for possession of the body was none other than the omnipotent Duke of Alba, whose duchy centred on Alba de Tormes. In the face of such an influential opponent at court, even the well-connected Bishop stood little chance and the niche opposite his own tomb still stands empty today. While he was lying on his deathbed in Valladolid, Teresa's body had already been returned to Alba de Tormes, but Álvaro de Mendoza was still stressing the sanctity and efficacy of the future Saint. On 26 March, he sought from the Prioress at Ávila some scraps of cloth, known as *Pañitos*, that had come into contact with the body of the Saint to soothe his fever<sup>71</sup>. He died less than a month later on the 19 of April; his beloved sister, María, survived him by less than a year, dying early in 1587.

### *Conclusion*

Like many of his Spanish ecclesiastical contemporaries, too little is still known about the impact of the life and career of Álvaro de Mendoza. He should be studied in fact as a significant figure not only for Spanish religious history, but also when it comes to the dissemination of Italian art in Castile. Initially launched by his influential family connections, he later forged a career for himself in the competitive world of the church under Philip II. His career as a whole demonstrates not only how the patronage of the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy metamorphosed throughout the course of the sixteenth century, but also how throughout this period the material culture of Italy, what-ever form it took remained a significant point of reference for their commissions. Figures such as Álvaro de Mendoza should matter to scholars of the Early Modern Mediterranean as they demonstrate just how entwined the cultural worlds of Italy and Spain had become during the reigns of Charles V and Philip II.

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<sup>69</sup> C. EIRE, *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 425-445.

<sup>70</sup> «El sea benedito, que ha trahido a V. Sa. un tal huésped a su capilla, por cuya intercesión puede V. Sa estar cierto que le dará acá visa para gozarla acabada y perfeccionada, y después le acompañará en a eterna»: ASTIGARRAGA, PACHO, RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Fuentes históricas sobre la muerte*, cit., pp. 235-238.

<sup>71</sup> ASTIGARRAGA, PACHO, RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Fuentes históricas sobre la muerte*, cit., pp. 242-243; EIRE, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, cit., pp. 461-468.



1. Jan Gossaert: *Portrait of Francisco de los Cobos y Molina*  
Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum



2. Ávila, Convento de San José, Façade, Francisco de Mora



3. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, Il Sodoma: *Penitent Magdalen*  
Toledo, Fundación Casa Ducal de Medinaceli





4. Manuel Denis: *Christ carrying the Cross*  
Ávila, Convento de San José



5. Sebastiano del Piombo: *Christ carrying the Cross*  
Saint Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum



6. Ávila, Hermitage of San Segundo



7. Juan de Juni: *San Segundo*  
Ávila, Ermita de San Segundo



8. Isidro Villoldo and Juan de Frías: *Altar de San Segundo*  
Ávila, Cathedral



9. Peter Paul Rubens: *Saint Teresa interceding for Bernardino de Mendoza*  
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts



10. Ávila, Convento de San José, Presbytery



11. Esteban Jordán: *Álvaro de Mendoza*  
Ávila, Convento de San José