Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World
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Evolving families

Realities and images of stepfamilies, remarriage, and half-siblings in early modern Spain

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Abstract

‘Evolving Families’ examines remarriage and the stepfamily in Spain in the 1500s and 1600s. One in three children experienced the disruption of a parent’s death with the possibility of the surviving parent’s remarriage bringing a stepparent as well as stepsiblings or new half-siblings. The essay reviews how advice literature suggested strategies to cope with the bereavement and replacement phases of a stepfamily and analyzes archival records of births, marriages, testaments, estate inventories, and guardianship arrangements to reveal the gendered patterns of stepfamilies. Widowers were more likely to remarry and a younger first-time bride meant an extended fertility became a feature of many stepfamilies. Although family portraits were rare in Golden Age Spain, The Painter’s Family by Diego Velázquez’s son-in-law Juan Bautista del Mazo illustrates the half-siblings of two marriages to capture the expanded age range as well as the emotional connections, and disruptions imposed by death and remarriage.

Keywords: guardianship; stepfamily; remarriage; estate inventories; family portraits; Velázquez-del Mazo; half-siblings

Over the life cycle, an adult in early modern Europe could become a spouse, widow or widower, single parent, and then once again a spouse, with the possibility of repeating the cycle, as remarriage rates hovered between one-fifth to one-third of marriages.¹ If a child in early modern Castile lived

¹ Dupâquier et al., eds., Marriage and Remarriage; Casey, Early Modern Spain, p. 214: James Casey states that about a fifth of marriages in seventeenth-century Spain were remarriages for
past its first birthday, he or she had more than a one in three chance of losing at least one parent to death’s scythe before adulthood. By their very nature, families evolve over time as children are born, grow, and leave home, but the early modern stepfamily experienced further periods of change when a parent died and the surviving spouse entered into a union with a new partner. For the child, the introduction of a stepparent into the household meant the possibility of siblings (either stepbrothers and stepsisters or newborns) from the remarried couple. Stepfamilies literally ‘embodied time’, as their very existence resulted from the changes death and remarriage had created.

The stepfamily in early modern Spain had many configurations, first disrupted, then reassembled, enlarged, and diminished in a pattern that could be repeated over generations. The social connections, economic partnerships, and even emotional attachments between the family members that entered and exited the life of a child or adult can sometimes be glimpsed in the archival record as families struggled with inheritance and distribution of property. In Mediterranean Europe, the family’s evolution through a cycle of remarriage attracted criticism and controversy from secular authorities and the Tridentine church, and in the plots of popular stage dramas. Legal prohibitions, too, reflected the tensions that surrounded the issue of remarriage and the evolution of the family into a new form. Particular anxiety in more moneyed circles focused on property and the potential harm to the children of a first marriage when a parent, especially a widow, turned attention to a new spouse or to new younger siblings and displaced the members of the original family unit.

This chapter examines the elite stepfamily in Spain in the 1500s and 1600s through archival documents, advice literature, and a remarkable group portrait. The first part of the chapter focuses on archival records, which reveal the gendered and temporal patterns created by death and remarriage in early modern Spanish families in testaments, estate inventories, and guardianship arrangements. Advice literature demonstrates an early modern awareness of

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2 Vassberg, ‘Orphans and Adoption’, p. 441; in census data from 15 Castilian villages ranging from 1553 to 1664, 38.5 percent of children under 19 were orphaned or half-orphaned, 23 percent lost fathers, 12 percent lost mothers. The nobility, too, struggled with the results of parents’ early deaths. Coolidge, ‘Investing in the Lineage’, pp. 228–29.


4 See, for example, Burns, ed., Underworlds, partida VI, title XVI, law IV, 1285.

the evolution of a family through the disruption of the death of a parent to the integration of new family members into a stepfamily. Moving away from an examination of continuity and change between centuries, the chapter focuses instead on continuity and change within the life of the stepfamily. Writers such as Juan Luis de Vives and Luisa de Padilla attempted to control and manage the evolution of blended families through their advice. While Spanish concerns about remarriage and the blended family were similar to those in other parts of Europe, artistic patronage shows a markedly different pattern in Spain compared to northern Europe at a particular moment in time. Commissions for portraits of real or imagined moments in the life cycle of a Spanish family were scarce, which renders the choices in *The Painter’s Family* by Juan Bautista del Mazo all the more fascinating. Although this portrait is not representative of all blended families, a close reading of this painting and the archive documents surrounding the elite family it portrays captures the emotional connections and disruptions imposed by death and remarriage over the life course of the artist’s family. Thus the two sections of the essay, which investigate archival sources and provide an analysis of *The Painter’s Family* as a text, complement each other by revealing the financial, legal, and emotional complexities of an early modern Spanish stepfamily.

**Remarriages and the structure of stepfamilies**

Gender played an important part in the elite family’s experience of widowhood and the possibility of remarriage. The death of a husband gave a woman access to power she did not have as a wife. A widow in Castile was entitled to her dowry, half of the couple’s shared property, and the *arras* (her bride gift from her husband), and she was legally emancipated from parental control. If she was appointed guardian of her minor children by their father in his will or by a judge, she would also administer a deceased husband’s half of the community property on their behalf, earning the rights to one-tenth of the estate’s income. By law a widow lost access to the children’s financial assets if she remarried, although she could petition the king for a license to keep her guardianship after remarriage, using a legal mechanism called *gracias a sacar*?

6 Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, p. 112. For variations in widows’ rights across the regions of Spain, see Casey, *Early Modern Spain*, p. 28. For more on widowhood across Europe, see Warner and Cavallo, *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*.

Across early modern Europe and in Spain too, male remarriage was the most common pattern. Whether by choice or circumstance such as poverty, age, guardianship of children, or landholding patterns, many widows did not remarry. Thus lone widows were a high proportion (about 15 percent) of the heads of households across the villages of rural Castile in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. In the more urban setting of Toledo, widows were approximately 19.3 percent of the population in 1561. There were consistently more widows than widowers (4 to 12 times more) in sixteenth-century Castilian villages. In Spain across the early modern period as in other parts of Europe, widowers were more than twice as likely to remarry as widows. Isabel Beceiro Pita and Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave find that the rate of remarriage was 13 percent for men and 5 percent for women in fifteenth-century Seville, though the rate for the nobility was higher. Similarly in a study of 82 noble widows who were guardians of their children between 1400 and 1700, only 2 remarried. Across these sources some widows who did remarry might be hidden as wives in the records, but widowers were also hidden as heads of household with a new wife. Overall, male remarriage and wife substitution often defined the stepfamily experience, a pattern reflected in the archival documents surrounding Mazo's Painter's Family.

Among the urban elite in Spain as elsewhere in Europe, remarriage reconstructed an economic network and could also serve to build new networks and to enrich a spouse from one marital phase to the next. In sixteenth-century Madrid, a study of the town councillors reveals that in negotiating their second marriages, widowers were able to attract brides with larger dowries or more important social and political connections than their first wives had provided. Pedro del Arce's marital career demonstrates well this financial strategy of the urban elite. Born in 1607, Arce married in 1642 to doña María Tufiño de Vallejo, the widow of a jewel merchant who brought nearly a million maravedíes with her in dowry as well as two young sons from her first marriage. The boys' inheritance from their father was given to their stepfather Arce to hold in trust until the boys came of age. Arce's

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12 Coolidge, Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility, p. 111.
13 Guerrero Mayllo, Familia y vida cotidiana de una élite de poder, pp. 69–71.
marriage benefited him financially, which enabled him to rise professionally. In 1643 Arce purchased the lucrative post of montero de cámara, which cost him nearly a fifth of his estate but gave him a modest salary, significant tax exemptions, and, most importantly, proximity to the king through the right to attend the royal bedchamber. Arce also became an assayer and inspector in the Royal Mint (ensayador de la casa de la moneda) and an art collector of some note – The Fable of Arachne by Velázquez currently in the Prado Museum was owned by Arce.\textsuperscript{14} At the time of his first marriage to the widow Vallejo his estate had been worth about 5,000 ducados, but when his goods were inventoried for his second marriage in 1664 his estate was worth between 66,000 and 75,000 ducados. When Arce remarried in 1664 he chose another wealthy widow who brought a dowry that included numerous valuable paintings.\textsuperscript{15}

The evolution of Arce’s family through two marriages also brought him substantial responsibilities and throws light on the gendered aspects of remarriage. When his first wife died her will referred to the ‘great care and many expenses and personal oversight’ that the settling of her dowry property had cost Arce. In an unusually direct reference to the financial and personal aspects of the new family she had formed with her second marriage, doña María noted that, ‘if it had not been for his assistance, expense, and intelligence—having given in every way what he had to the common household—the [dowry] properties would have been lost’. Arce, then, had fulfilled his masculine responsibility of dealing with the financial aspects of his new marriage. Doña María’s will also referred to some of the difficulties that could arise when families evolved. She repeatedly admonished her sons from her first marriage to avoid lawsuits and come to a peaceful settlement with their stepfather, stating ‘Don Pedro will not defraud the aforesaid my sons in anything which would pertain to them and ought to be theirs’.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, it took more than 1000 pages (an entire protocol) of notarized documents to resolve the estate, and in the end Arce owed his wards over 1.3 million maravedíes.\textsuperscript{17}

The phrasing of doña María’s will implies trust and affection in her marriage, and Arce seems to have dealt fairly with his stepsons. However, Arce also demonstrated a shrewd understanding of how the financial advantages of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Burke and Cherry, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Madrid}, pt. I, inv. 75, item 22, pp. 587, 591.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pt. I, inv. 38, pp. 377–78.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Burke and Cherry, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Madrid}, pt. I, inv. 38, p. 379.
\end{itemize}
marriage accrued over time. Between the inventory of 1657 and the inventory of 1664, the value of the paintings in Arce’s collection increased sharply, suggesting that Arce had undervalued them at the time of his first wife’s death to reduce the cost of keeping his collection together when her belongings were liquidated. At the moment of his second marriage, however, it was in Arce’s interests to inflate the value of the goods he was bringing to the marriage (to strengthen the claim his son by his first marriage would eventually have on his estate) and to deflate the value of his new wife’s dowry (to lower the claim her heirs from a previous marriage would eventually have on his estate). Evidence suggests that in 1666 Arce did just that, deflating his second wife’s dowry by 33 percent between the settlement of her first husband’s estate and his acceptance of her dowry. This saga of a sequence of death, remarriage, dowries, and paintings reveals the complex interactions between the emotional and the financial that characterized the family’s evolution.

Above the level of the urban elite, families of the titled nobility evolved over time partly because of the pressure to provide a male heir who could inherit the family title, as well as the entailed property and wealth. Among the nobility the remarriage of a widowed title-holder who had no sons was almost guaranteed. The first duke of Arcos (d. 1530) provides an extreme example of this trend. His first marriage was to doña Isabel Pacheco who died childless in 1521. He remarried to doña Juana Girón, who gave birth to a daughter, Geronima, and then died shortly thereafter. He married a third time to his dead wife’s aunt, doña María Girón, who gave birth to a daughter and then, finally, to the son and heir that the duke needed so badly. Unfortunately, doña María died from the complications of her son’s birth in 1528. This family evolved rapidly from the death of the duke’s first wife in 1521 to the death of his third wife only seven years later. The family would metamorphose even further with the duke’s fourth marriage in quick succession to a woman who would become the stepmother to his surviving children, from the second and third marriage beds. The only constant in this evolving family was the remarrying duke, who himself died in 1530. The duke’s eldest daughter Geronima from his second marriage bed seems to have predeceased him, and his two surviving children from his third marriage bed went to the care of an aunt and an uncle. The duke’s will again hints at the emotional complications of

19 García Hernán, Los grandes de España en la época de Felipe II, pp. 351–52.
20 Ibid., p. 357; Archivo Histórico de la Nación, Madrid (AHN), Nobleza, legajo 121, no. 4, for the marriage capitulations.
21 AHN, Nobleza, Osuan, legajo 121, nos. 6 and 9.
his family's rapid evolution, as he begged his children to honor and esteem their stepmother (his fourth wife) and to allow her to live in his house for as long as she wanted to, 'as she deserves because of her character and lineage'.22 Many other families experienced this series of marriages, births, deaths, entrances, and exits that made and remade the family unit.

While the duke of Arcos' family evolved quite rapidly, other noble families experienced a slower evolution that could leave them with half-siblings who were of different generations. Inevitably, the evolution of titled families through marriages and remarriage and the years between siblings created tensions, which often focused on inheritance. When the fifth duke of Osuna's first wife died in 1671 (after 26 years of marriage) from complications of the birth of her fifth daughter, he was left grief-stricken, with a newborn to care for, and with no male heir. He was also in a difficult financial situation. His wife had been an heiress, and on her death her titles and estate went to their eldest daughter Isabel and Isabel's husband. The duke needed help caring for his youngest daughters, and he needed a male heir, as well as the financial relief that a new wife's dowry could bring. He promptly married again, finalizing his second marriage in 1672.23 Six years later, his second wife Antonia gave birth to a healthy male boy. The duke finally achieved a male heir after 33 cumulative years of marriage to a first then a second wife.24 The duke and duchess were undoubtedly delighted with the appearance of the long-awaited male heir, but the duke's eldest daughter from his first marriage bed was bitterly disappointed. Isabel had married her close cousin, the count of Puebla de Montalbán in 166725 and the couple had named their first-born son Gaspar after his grandfather, in the expectation that he would inherit the title of duke of Osuna since Isabel had only sisters at that point. Far from welcoming her new half-brother, Isabel sued her father for what she saw as her son's rightful share of the family wealth.26

Advice on remarriage and stepfamilies

The archival world of postmortem inventories, valuations of estates, remarriage contracts, and last wishes in testaments reveals the complex necessities

24 Ibid., p. 51.
25 Ibid., p. 43.
26 Ibid., p. 52. Isabel lost the lawsuit.
that might require guidance on how to conduct family life when a widowed parent chose to enter a second marriage. In his sixteenth-century conduct book, *Instrucción de la muger christiana*, published in Spanish in 1528, 1529, 1539, 1545, 1555, 1576, 1584, 1792, and 1793, Juan Luis Vives attempted to offer this guidance. Vives began by fulsomely praising the stoic widow who remained faithful to the memory of her deceased husband.\(^27\) He quoted Saint Jerome’s invocation that a remarrying widow invited ‘not a new father but an enemy’ into her home, ‘not a parent but a tyrant’.\(^28\) Vives continues with Saint Jerome’s passage on widows. The remarrying mother inflamed by lust (*encendida de luxuria*) ‘forgets the fruit of her womb’ by ‘putting aside her recent mourning and arrays herself as a new bride’.\(^29\) Yet Vives also recognized the necessity of remarriage, going as far as to say that it was a ‘heretical thing’ (*cosa herética*) to condemn second marriages altogether.\(^30\) Vives’ advice on ‘how to live’ (*como ha de uivir*) takes on a decidedly practical tone once the widow has plunged into a remarriage, pointing out the dangers of cherishing ‘the memory of a younger age’ and ‘comparing it with the present’ because it will feel like it ‘gets worse every hour’.\(^31\) Remembering and mourning a former husband needs to stop, he says, once the widow has a new one. Because she has accumulated life experience, the widow needs to learn to deal with the passage of time, especially when she might be irritated with her current husband. She must resist reflecting too often on the special qualities (*gracias*) of the previous one.\(^32\)

Vives also recognized the more common phenomenon of male remarriage, devoting a section of his advice manual to stepmothers (*las madrastas*). He suggests that the substitute mother should be kind to the children in her care because of the fleeting nature of life and the frequency of remarriages. Vives points out to his female reader that her own children might eventually

28 Vives, *Instrucción de la muger christiana*, fols. 205v–206r: ‘Toma la madre (dixe el) para sus hijos, no ayo mas enemigo, no padre mas tirano.’ As Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, notes (pp. 34, 63), the theme of the ‘evil stepfather’ comes up repeatedly in Spanish literature, with Gaspar Astete, *Tratado del govierno de la familia* (1603), and Cristóbal de Castillejo, *Diálogo de las condiciones de las mugeres* (1544), also referring to this issue.
have a stepmother or substitute parent who cares for them, so whether she is dead or alive (si muere, ó bive), her treatment of other children will guide how others treat hers. He uses the vocabulary of motherhood with the stepmother to emphasize that any ‘good and honourable woman’ (buena y honrada muger) will be a mother (madre) to her children (hijos).33

In her seventeenth-century book Nobleza virtuosa, Luisa de Padilla, the countess of Aranda, echoes some of Vives’ practical lessons, but presents the theme more from the perspective of the child who must deal with a stepparent. Padilla advised widowed noblemen to remarry if they did not have descendants, guidance that her own husband followed with apparent reluctance after she died.34 Having given this advice, Luisa de Padilla’s text subtly predicts her own death, counseling her daughter that, as the eldest, she ‘should show the love of a mother’ (deveys tener amor de madre) to her younger sisters and welcome a possible stepmother (madrastra) even if the new wife and mother proves difficult.35 Implicitly recognizing the tensions that could disrupt sibling relationships, she counsels her daughter to love any new half-siblings that may result from the remarriage of the father to a stepmother, ‘giving pleasure with a happy face and behavior and being loving and giving to these new siblings you have in her without differentiating them from the ones you already have’.36 Padilla’s advice suggests that childhood could end early if a parent died. In this case, Luisa’s children predeceased her, which put pressure on her husband to make a second marriage.37 Her text provides an example of how the reality of the death and remarriage of parents might have shaped the psychology of the early modern family and the resulting pressure on the older children from a previous marriage.

**Visual images of stepfamilies**

Beyond the archival evidence of frequent remarriage and the advice dispensed to the men and women who ventured into it, the visual representations of stepfamilies in Spain reveal some of the ambivalence and emotional repercussions of serial remarriage and parenting and capture even more fully the stepfamily’s nature as having evolved over time. If we look across

33 Ibid., fols. 187v–188r.
34 Egido, *La nobleza virtuosa*, p. 15.
36 Padilla, *Nobleza virtuosa*, p. 262: ‘darla gusto con rendimiento y rostro alegre, amando, y regalando mucho los hermanque della tengays, sin diferenciar los de los primeros’.
northwestern Europe, many funerary monuments, triptychs, and family or group portraits displayed to the viewer the various phases of the family life cycle. These visual representations of real families necessitated a leap of the imagination as they often portrayed deceased siblings or parents alongside living ones to remind the viewer how the past continued into the present and to show how the survivors had forged ahead in a new permutation of the family.\textsuperscript{38} Northern European triptychs or funerary brasses celebrating the lineage of middling to wealthy families commemorated a husband, wife, and children, but also showed serial wives by remarriage and carefully noted the children of each marriage bed. In strongly Catholic regions from Flanders to Italy, the portrayal of family members, whether as donors in devotional triptychs or later as a family group in a domestic setting, provided artists with a steady source of commissions.

Golden Age Spanish culture shared many of the lineage concerns prevalent in the rest of Europe. For example, some of the illuminated patents of nobility provide details of bloodlines with families kneeling before the Virgin or namesake saints and the occasional funerary monument depicts a husband with his two wives.\textsuperscript{39} This did not become a general pattern, however, for despite a preference for Flemish and Italian painters among the Spanish collectors of the seventeenth century, the taste for family group portraits did not break through. As one historian has remarked, compared to other regions of Europe, ‘Spanish art seems to have been slower’ at developing a tradition of displaying the family as a group, with parents and children in a domestic setting. Instead art in Spain favored ‘dynastic continuity’ or used religious art to depict ‘the moral exemplar of the home’.\textsuperscript{40} Indeed as the Florentine ambassador commented in 1590 ‘in Spain they like devotional paintings with quiet attitudes and without elaboration’.\textsuperscript{41} Paintings of family members from the Golden Age tend to favor the individual full-length portrait. In a listing of 140 inventories by 130 collectors of thousands of Spanish paintings for the years 1601–1750 categorized according to the Iconclass classification

\textsuperscript{39} Bass, \textit{Drama of the Portrait}, p. 65, figs. 29 and 30, shows seventeenth-century examples from Hispanic Society of America, New York. Noble tombs also occasionally contain sculptures of married couples, but not of families. Per Afán de Ribera (d. 1454) is represented on his tomb in the Monasterio de la Cartuja de Santa María de las Cuevas in Seville with his first wife, Teresa de Córdoba and his second wife, María de Mendoza. María, who survived him, is dressed in the religious habit of the order she joined towards the end of her long widowhood, Romero Medina, ‘María de Mendoza’, 165.
\textsuperscript{40} Casey, \textit{Early Modern Spain}, p. 213.
\textsuperscript{41} Cherry, ‘Seventeenth-Century Spanish Taste’, p. 18.
system of subjects, the large category of 61B, ‘historical persons, portraits and scenes from life’, shows this emphasis on the commemoration of many hundreds of individuals within the comfortable to noble families of the Spanish Golden Age.42 By contrast, Iconclass category 42, ‘family and descendence’, is virtually nonexistent.43

The art historian Raquel Novero Plaza has observed that there are only three group portraits in seventeenth-century Spanish art.44 In 1662 José Antolínez painted the Danish ambassador to Spain, Cornelius Pedersen Lerche, with his staff and friends seated around a table, while a child and a dog run across the foreground.45 The two other group portraits—the celebrated Las Meninas and The Painter’s Family, discussed below—each illustrate a family created through male remarriage, not a nuclear family.

Nineteenth-century interpretations of The Painter’s Family (Figure 10.1) attributed the picture to Diego Velázquez, the seventeenth-century court painter known for Las Meninas (1656), in which Velázquez appears in self-portrait with brush and palette in his studio with the Spanish king Philip IV and his second wife Mariana of Austria reflected in a mirror while their daughter the Infanta Margarita is attended to by courtiers or maidservants (meninas). According to the 1800s museum catalogue description of The Painter’s Family, Velázquez was the artist busy in the studio space in the background in an echo of his composition in Las Meninas.46 It was thought

42 ‘Index of Subjects’, Burke and Cherry, Collections of Paintings in Madrid, 61B, pp. 1436–53, details all the portraits whose male sitters are unknown, 61BB details all the unknown female sitters, 1493–1501, further categories within 61B and 61BB show male and female sitters in portraits whose identities are known and some double or group portraits by Italian artists. Some of course might be generic scenes.

43 ‘Index of Subjects’, Burke and Cherry, Collections of Paintings in Madrid, p. 1402: in this Family category there are four paintings of a mother and child nursing, one painting of a father with son(s) by the Italian painter Moroni, a painting of a mother with son(s) by an anonymous artist, and six paintings of a mother or woman with children. Of these six, one was by a Flemish painter, and two others by the Italian artists Tintoretto and Titian. See, for example, the matching individual portraits of a man and wife by Velázquez. The wife is also depicted with her son, but the trio is not portrayed as one family. Diego Velázquez, Don Diego del Corral y Arellano, c. 1632, oil on canvas, 215 × 110 cm, Museo del Prado, www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/don-diego-del-corral-y-arellano/2ad754e0-eaad2-4d55-942e-6b24d7c3531d; and Diego Velázquez, Doña Antonia de Ipeñarrieta y Galdós and her Son, don Luis, c. 1632, oil on canvas, 215 × 110 cm, Museo del Prado, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/ doa-antonia-de-ipearrieta-y-galdos-and-her-son/9d815be7-49bc-46be-aa41-ce882f0368a1.45


45 José Antolínez, Ambassador C. Pedersen Lerche with his Staff, 1662, 172.5 cm × 202 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KMS1646, http://collection.smk.dk/#/en/detail/KMS1646.

that in *The Painter’s Family* Velázquez portrayed his wife Juana seated in the right foreground with her billowing skirts and children and grandchildren around her, while her daughter Francisca stood in the left foreground alongside brothers, living and dead.

Archival scholarship on the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths of the Velázquez–del Mazo family gradually divulged a different narrative for the painting, however, which shifted the attribution to Velázquez’s son-in-law, Juan Bautista del Mazo, whose coat of arms is visible in the upper left-hand corner of the painting. In the later nineteenth century a second interpretation suggested that Mazo portrayed his nuclear family in the foreground in the early 1650s, to feature his wife Francisca Velázquez and their children, while paying tribute to his in-laws Velázquez and Juana Pacheco in the background scene of the painter’s studio.47

47 Cruzada Villaamil, *Anales de la vida y de las obras de Diego de Silva Velázquez*, pp. 287–89.
When the painter Velázquez died in August 1660, Juan Bautista del Mazo, a long-time presence in Velázquez's workshop, succeeded to his royal court position as 'pintor de cámara' in 1661. Francisca de Velázquez predeceased her father by seven years, leaving Mazo a widower with five surviving children ranging in age from about eleven months to fifteen years. Like most widower fathers with young children in early modern Europe, Mazo did remarry. Francisca Velázquez's death, before that of her father, is particularly poignant, as she seems to have dictated her testament while she died from complications of childbirth, 'con dolores de parto'. The interval between the death of his first wife and Mazo's second marriage is not yet known. At least four more children were born of the second marriage, and documents about their inheritance, guardianship and timing of baptisms allow some precision in understanding the life cycle of the Velázquez–del Mazo family.

By 1960, some of this archival work on Mazo's second marriage, the string of births and eventual death of the second wife and stepmother allowed López Navio to offer a third interpretation that the new wife took her place in the painting surrounded by her children as her older stepchildren stood to the left. As late as the 1990s, interpretations of the painting continued along these lines that the Velázquez grandchildren of Mazo's first marriage, several male youths in black and a daughter, stood on the left of the painting while 'Mazo's second wife with her four children' occupied the right side, with a tribute to Mazo's father-in-law as the Spanish court painter evident in the 'Velázquez portrait of Philip IV of Spain' at the center of the painting.

A fourth variation on the same theme argues that the beautiful seated woman on the right is young, yet old enough to be a mother (and indeed she probably was), so she must be a young, third wife; and the baby who clings to her skirts is a new baby of the third marriage. This fourth analysis of The Painter's Family shares the assumption that the beautiful seated woman was a new wife. Such a remarriage represented a typical pattern in early modern European families, when a widower chose a young, never-married bride as a stepmother to his children.

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49 Cherry, ‘Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo’, pp. 511, 521, apendice documental, documento 1, 1653.
51 Prohaska, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, p. 113.
52 Gutiérrez Pastor, ‘El Retrato de la última hija de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo’, p. 312.
The cumulative sequence of archival documents on baptisms, marriages, death, and guardianship now published together in the *Corpus Velázqueño* allows scholars to trace the prolonged nature of the reproductive cycle of Mazo’s serial marriages that is manifest in *The Painter’s Family*, but not in quite the way previous generations of art historians understood, as they substituted wife for even younger wife in foreground, moving from nuclear family to stepfamily to complex stepfamily in the process. Mazo might have been paying tribute to his mentor Velázquez, the father of his first wife, Francisca Velázquez, but Mazo also told the story of the life course of his own family, capturing its evolution over time.

The seated woman in the foreground surrounded by children was indeed a wife and mother, but it was as Mazo’s daughter that she fulfilled her role in the *Painter’s Family*. Thus the painting does not focus on a marital relationship between the painter and one of his wives but highlights relationships among his children of two marriage beds as Novero Plaza contends in a recent (fifth) interpretation. Moreover, this rare Spanish family portrait depicts the continuation of the family after the death of a wife, with the sequence of younger siblings who often follow a father’s remarriage. The half-siblings in the portrait reflect, too, the remarried families of the dukes of Arcos and Osuna mentioned earlier and in this sense *The Painter’s Family* represents a gendered temporality typical of male remarriage among the Spanish elite.

Raquel Novero Plaza argues that the eldest surviving child of Mazo’s first marriage with Francisca Velázquez, Inés Manuela, born in 1638, sits in the vivid, voluminous red skirt, a full generation older than the youngest surviving child of Mazo’s second marriage. The little boy, Francisco, in a white outfit with red accents to match his older half-sister’s skirt, leans into Inés’ body in a gesture of familiarity so typical of a young child comfortable with an intimate. The boy’s closeness to his older half-sister captures and intensifies the generation gap so frequent in stepfamilies and serial marriages. In this case as father Mazo might have used his family portrait to prescribe to his children the affectionate relationship he hoped for between the two marriage beds, because these half-sibling relationships spread out over a generation had the potential to be fraught with tensions. As we saw above, Isabel, eldest daughter of the duke of Osuna, had to watch the replacement of her own son as the heir to the Osuna title by her newborn half-brother.

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Moreover, Mazo’s eldest surviving daughter, doña Inés del Mazo de Silva y Velázquez, was already a remarried widow. Her first husband and the son of her first marriage had both predeceased her, and she entered her second nuptials in her 23rd year in February 1661 and became a mother again.\textsuperscript{55} Between Mazo’s eldest surviving child and youngest living child stands Mazo’s granddaughter, an infant gripping onto the red skirts of her mother, Inés, to stay upright. The grandchild is only a few years younger in age than her uncle Francisco, the youngest surviving child of the second marriage. Mazo’s eldest surviving son Gaspar, depicted in profile on the left of the portrait, had already married in January of 1659 and by the time of the painting had fathered at least four children.\textsuperscript{56} Baltasar, the second son on the left of the painting, had also married and fathered at least one child.\textsuperscript{57} The youngest son of the group of brothers from the first marriage bed, Melchor, also in black, entered the seminary at age twelve, six months after his stepmother Francesca de la Vega died.\textsuperscript{58}

With \textit{The Painter’s Family} highlighting the trio of Inés, Francisco, and a chubby-cheeked grandchild, Mazo represents clearly the extended span of childbearing when a widower introduced a younger wife and stepmother. The eldest children of the first marriage were old enough to be the biological parents of children of subsequent marriage beds. Mazo was a grandfather at least seven times over by the time he witnessed the birth of his last child, while Francisca Velázquez had not lived to see any of her grandchildren. Gaspar’s eldest son, Bruno, born in November 1659, had the privilege of having his great-grandfather Diego Velázquez named as his godfather.\textsuperscript{59} This eldest known grandchild (and great-grandchild) was roughly the same age as his little uncle Francisco while Gaspar’s fourth child, and Mazo’s last son were both born in November 1663.\textsuperscript{60} Between his first two wives, both named Francesca, Mazo’s fatherhood spanned almost 30 years of fertility.

To accentuate, and perhaps encourage, the affectionate bonds between the children of the first marriage and the younger set from the second shown in the figures at the right, Mazo links the two marriage beds in his portrayal of the half-siblings. As we have already seen, the painter father

\textsuperscript{55} Novero Plaza, ‘La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo’, n. 41; \textit{Corpus Velazqueño}, doc. 449, p. 511.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Corpus Velazqueño}, doc. 457, p. 514.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Corpus Velazqueño}, doc. 464, 466, pp. 517-18.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Corpus Velazqueño}, Anexo doc. A10, p. 844.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Corpus Velazqueño}, docs. 458–59, pp. 514–15.
grouped together his eldest and youngest surviving children—Inès and Francisco—with the older sister acting as a maternal figure to the little boy so effectively that generations of art historians assumed she was his mother. Similarly, Teresa, Mazo’s daughter by his first marriage depicted as the young woman in gray standing beside her full brothers clad in black, gently caresses the head of her younger half-brother Luis, the eldest son of Mazo’s second wife Francisca de la Vega. Luis in turn touches his little brother Juan Antonio. As was typical of widower fathers in comfortable socioeconomic circumstances, Mazo raised his children together in a household, with a strategy of wife replacement.

The figures in the foreground are all half-siblings or step-grandchildren, but the background scene on the right shows a woman and a toddler with arms outstretched hoping to be picked up by the painter in his studio. A catalogue description of the painting in the 1990s remarked, ‘The studio scene in the background with a portrait of Infanta Margarita Teresa and a genre scene has not been clarified.’ We can use archival documentation about Mazo’s family to speculate about who these figures are, however, and help date and understand the painting that Novero Plaza dates to 1665. Francisca de la Vega, Mazo’s second wife, died in 1665. Fernando, her youngest child born in November 1663, had predeceased his mother, because he is not named among her heirs. Thus we notice that a curtain to the left of the painting is ready to be pulled across to separate Mazo’s family in the foreground from the figures in the studio. What has separated the family members? Death. The mother and child in the studio are dead rather than among the living.

The woman and the toddling boy, who raises his arms to be noticed by the artist in the studio, might commemorate Mazo’s second wife Francesca and their little son Fernando. The figure of the painter in the studio could represent Mazo and nod an acknowledgment to his deceased father-in-law Velázquez, too, as the artist at the canvas in *The Painter’s Family* evokes the court painter of *Las Meninas* from a decade earlier. In the court atelier, Velázquez and Mazo, as master and apprentice and later father-in-law and son-in-law, collaborated on many royal portraits. The artist in the studio works on a royal commission of Infanta Margarita of Austria dating to 1665,
roughly the same time frame as *The Painter’s Family* itself. Mazo was careful to pay homage to his royal patrons, too, in the portrait underway in the studio and the 1650s framed portrait of the king by Velázquez. There may be gestures or commemorative objects within *The Painter’s Family* that point to Mazo’s first wife Francisca and mother of the five of the children—whether it is the bust of a woman directly below a royal portrait by Velázquez or in the brooch that Teresa touches. Some of these intimate meanings are probably lost to us.

When Francisca de la Vega died, she left Mazo again a widower with young children. He had four living children under the age of fourteen, Melchor from the first marriage and three living sons from his second marriage with de la Vega, Luis, Juan Antonio and Francisco as well as the older, already married and settled children discussed above. Again, another wife arrived on the scene or perhaps she was already present. Ana de la Vega, the third wife, had already acted as godmother to the last child of Francisca de la Vega and Mazo in November 1663. Although there is no direct archival link yet discovered to show that Anna and Francisca were kin, the godparent connection provides strong circumstantial evidence that Ana de la Vega was most probably an aunt, the sister of Francisca de la Vega, as typical of seventeenth-century Spanish practice. Moreover, the practice of marrying a deceased wife’s sister was common throughout Catholic areas of Europe despite the canon law prohibition requiring a dispensation from the diocese or the pope. Such a marriage between close affinal kin or in-laws was considered to be incestuous by the Catholic Church, but this pattern of remarriage served to keep the family patrimony intact as well as attempting to ensure a loving, caring relationship between the stepmother-aunt and the children in her care. Remarriage to a deceased wife’s sister, the children’s aunt, intensifies in the late eighteenth century and into the early 1900s but can be found intermittently before then.

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65 Novero Plaza suggests that the portrait of the *Infanta Margarita* was started by Velázquez before his death and finished by Mazo, but the Prado Museum attributes the painting entirely to Mazo dated c. 1665; Novero Plaza, ‘La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo’, p. 18; Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *The Infanta Margarita de Austria*, c. 1632, 215 × 110 cm, *Museo del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-infanta-margarita-de-austria/88462bf7-a4f2-4238-901e-8541105293d5.


67 *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 459, p. 515.


Mazo’s complex family went on evolving after his own death in February of 1667. His sons with his second wife, Francisca de la Vega, were still young enough to need care and a guardian when he died in February. In June 1667 all three boys were living (perhaps for educational purposes) with don Jorge de Lima in Madrid. By 1668 Mazo’s third wife had remarried, and she and her new husband were responsible for the care and education of her stepson-nephews. It isn’t clear who held their formal guardianship at that point, but the fact that they were still in Ana de la Vega’s care strongly suggests that she was their mother’s sister in addition to being their stepmother. In November of 1668 Ana de la Vega submitted a petition asking for don José de Vera to be appointed the formal guardian of her three stepsons, a responsibility which he accepted and subsequently carried out, collecting rents on the boys’ behalf. As a remarried stepmother, even with her probable link as maternal aunt Ana de la Vega was very unlikely to receive the long-term formal guardianship that would include control of their considerable property, but it is quite possible that she retained a close relationship with the boys as they grew older and may even have shared custody of them.

In his painting, Mazo points the viewer in multiple ways to the passage of time and the evolution of a family through first marriage, death, second marriage, death, and into the future of the next generation. The Painter’s Family shows the continuation of the family in a new generation, portrayed by a granddaughter clinging to the skirts of her mother. This infant girl in the foreground perhaps represents the others of her generation too, and emphasizes how women (even if short-lived) shaped the future through their reproductive capacities. If the curtain separates the dead from the living, the woman in the studio could represent both of Mazo’s dead wives, and the toddler could represent the numerous children who died. By the time of the composition of the painting Mazo had suffered the loss of at least eight of his immediate family members, two wives and at least six children. His surviving children would continue to move through the cycle of an evolving family, having lost both their parents and several siblings and half-siblings, but secure in the care of their stepmother-aunt and her new husband.

The fate of the painting of the blended Velázquez–del Mazo-de la Vega family, forged through numerous remarriages over several generations, takes on a life of its own. By 1744, the painting was in the estate of the husband of Velázquez’s great-granddaughter Catalina, born in December 1677 and of the

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70 Corpus Velazqueño, doc. 473, p. 526.
71 Coolidge, Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility, pp. 67–68; Corpus Velazqueño, docs. 476, 478, 479, pp. 527–28.
same generation as her cousin the baby girl on the right of the painting.\textsuperscript{72} Identified in the documents as ‘Catalina del Mazo Velázquez’, she seems to have inherited the family painting from her father Baltasar, who enjoyed several prominent positions at the Spanish royal court.\textsuperscript{73} Catalina was the first wife of her husband, Joseph Spino y Navarro, dying at about age 30, leaving three sons with her husband as heirs and writing her will in 1707, with her goods inventoried in 1708. After her death, one of her sons died and her husband married again to Geronima, a widow who had a son and daughter from her first marriage. Joseph and Geronima subsequently had a daughter together. By 1744 the painting, described as ‘de la familia de los Velázquez y Mazos’ and valued at 4000 reales, was part of an estate that was about to be divided between Catalina’s sons Francisco and Bernardino (who had already lost his wife), their stepbrother and stepsister, and their half-sister and her husband.\textsuperscript{74} The evolving family in the painting, with its living and dead members grouped so affectionately together, might have resonated with the people who stood to inherit it almost a hundred years later as their own families evolved into the future.

\section*{Conclusions}

Remarriage was common enough in early modern Spain for the dying to make provisions for stepfamilies in testaments, for the survivors to establish guardianship arrangements for half-orphaned children, and for inventories to carefully document the parts of an estate for any heirs from first or subsequent marriage beds. Advice literature acknowledged the phenomenon of frequent Spanish remarriages, despite concerns about its morality. The intensely Catholic culture of Counter-Reformation Spain heightened concern over the role of women and sexuality at the same time that a far-flung empire shattered families, only to reconstruct them in new and challenging ways.\textsuperscript{75} A history of religious tension, forced conversions, and forced expulsions further complicated the formation of the family in early modern Spain, with moralists creating a rhetoric that contradicted itself, condemning, while also acknowledging, the reality of remarriage. Ironically, while much of the

\textsuperscript{72} Corpus Velazqueño, doc. 493, p. 537.
\textsuperscript{73} Burke and Cherry, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Madrid}, p. 1023; Novero Plaza, ‘La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo’, pp. 182–83.
\textsuperscript{74} Burke and Cherry, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Madrid}, doc. 132, l. 40, pp. 1026, 1029, n. 1.
moral concern centered on women’s remarriage, men were the ones most likely to remarry. This remarriage pattern cut across the social spectrum, but the more abundant sources for the elite make it possible to integrate archival, prescriptive, and visual sources about their lives, and analyze how a family’s evolution over time affected its financial and emotional life in a way that is not possible for the less privileged.

Although remarriage was a reality among the comfortable classes who could afford to commission a commemorative family portrait to a lost era, to a deceased spouse, and to their continuing family, few patrons in early modern Spain chose the domestic family grouping so popular in other regions of Europe. One of the few family portraits that does exist, Juan Bautista del Mazo’s *The Painter’s Family*, managed to capture the gendered temporality of the stepfamily created by male remarriage. Mazo portrayed the long course of life and death in his own family in seventeenth-century Spain while he visually expressed the bonds he hoped would link his children and grandchildren from various marriages. In the portrait, Mazo’s children embody the lengthened expanse of fatherhood as death, remarriage, and birth recreated family units and changed the family roles and relationships of both adults and children.76

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