



RES ET

NOCTI & VITAE
PREFESSIO

Scrutator Iniquus

Libertate Servus

Virequiescat Athleta

DELEGE POLITICA

P. Villafranca. sc.
1678.

PEDRO DE
VILLAFRANCA

Printmaker at the Court
of Philip IV

MARK McDONALD

TEMPLO DE .S. LORENCIO EL REAL DEL ESCVRIAL



Plano desta fabrica.

Introduction: Paths to Printmaking

After Madrid was established seat of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy in 1561, it developed into the major centre of book publishing and printmaking in Spain. Printmakers, mainly from Flanders and France, moved to Madrid in search of work, and other, native-born artists, trained and established careers there. In the seventeenth century, the Spaniard Pedro de Villafranca (c. 1615–1684) became the leading printmaker in Madrid. He was appointed printmaker to the king in 1654; a position that was unique in the reign of Philip IV (1605–1665; r. 1621–65). Villafranca created some 300 prints – mostly as book illustration – which are among the most distinctive of the period. Portraits represent some of his finest works and they compelled his success at court. In addition to printmaking, Villafranca worked as painter, art restorer, appraiser and project manager, activities for which today he is less well-known.

Madrid's development as an urban and cultural centre provides the foundations for the present study, wherein Villafranca's prints demonstrate their use and mobility – in all respects – within a specific cultural milieu. Villafranca elevated printmaking to a new level in Spain, and his technical proficiency, enabled by the significant commissions he received, was unmatched. Madrid's emergence as a hub of printmaking is a seventeenth-century phenomenon. However earlier printmaking practices, both in Spain and wider Europe, need briefly to be explored in order to understand the traditions from which Villafranca emerged.

Printmaking in Spain and wider Europe

The rapid and tenacious growth of printmaking in Europe during the sixteenth century had a profound effect on visual culture across the globe. Changes wrought by a medium that enabled images to be printed in multiple impressions, and potentially viewed simultaneously by people in different places, forever changed how information was disseminated and received. That which was remote or distant could be seen up close and studied repeatedly. Prints reduced the scale of subjects, places and objects, rendering them manageable, and creating alternative relationships between the viewer and what they were looking at.

The main centres of printmaking during the sixteenth century were Antwerp, Rome and Paris where publishers established highly organised and competitive operations. Among the most important were the Liefrinck family and Hieronymus Cock in Antwerp,



Calle del Espeso
XXXIII
Calle de la Carra

Calle de los Turmecos

Calle de las Fuentes

Calle de las Hileras

Calle de S. Gines

Placuela de Selenque

Calle de los P...
Calle del Aren...

Calle de S. Tiago

Calle de S. Salvador

Puerta de Guadalajara

Placuela de la Plaza

CALLE MAIOR IV

Placuela de la Villa

Plateria

PLAÇA MAIOR

Placuela del C. de Barajas

Placuela del Cordon

TOLEDO

Puerta Cerrada

Calle Luperiab

PROVINÇIA

Geronima

Calle del Nuncio

Peso del Arina

Calle de la Concepcion

Calle del Almendro

Calle de S. Francisco

Calle de la Compania

Calle Alta de S. Francisco

Biographical Outline

Pedro de Villafranca's career in Madrid spanned the middle five decades of the seventeenth century (1630–80). As such, he witnessed the proliferation of workshops and significant changes to artistic style. Reconstructing Villafranca's biography, however, is complicated by the fact that, like many artists working in Madrid in this period, he was professionally engaged in different activities for which surviving evidence is erratic.¹ Because Villafranca was the most successful printmaker – thanks largely to his appointment as engraver to the king in 1654 – we know more about his career than that of any of his contemporaries. Nonetheless our perceptions of Villafranca's practice, his particular historical moment, and our assessment of him as an artist, are shaped by his parallel complementary roles. Today he is best known as a printmaker, but in documentary sources he is consistently described as a painter. Occasionally, 'escultor' (engraver) appears after his name in documents, but always in conjunction with 'pintor' (painter). Little is known of Villafranca's activity as a painter and the attributions of works to him are uncertain.² It is easier to assess the career of artists with a more defined or traditional focus (painting, architecture, sculpture), since their principal occupation was not obscured by subsidiary activities. This situation is also revealing for the status of printmaking in Madrid, reflecting the vicissitudes of a developing practice and the sporadic nature of commissions that were generally for small, and presumably inexpensive, works.

Villafranca's professional roles were forged through necessity, revealing his different areas of expertise, most of which were connected with the court. His prints are generally signed and often dated, thereby defining a body of work. Paradoxically, what we know of Villafranca's work as a printmaker comes solely from the prints themselves:

¹ For the different positions held by artists, and activities in which they were involved, see Vizcaino Villanueva 2005, 'Las alternativas profesionales', pp. 273–361.

² The *Immaculate Conception* in the Monastery of San Pablo, Toledo has been attributed to Villafranca, but in the absence of clear evidence, and the fact that the painting is also very close to the work of Eugenio Cajés, no more can be said (Collar de Cáceres 1998, pp. 378–80, plate III, no. 2). Two other paintings, *Saint Paul* and *Saint Peter*, traditionally given to Juan Fernández de Navarrete el Mudo, have been attributed to Villafranca (Museo del Prado 1990, vol. I, nos 509, 511).



PERPETVITAS

REGINA

RERVM

AGISTRA

PRVDENTIA

LITERARVM

HOLICA

FIDES REGIA

ANOR REGIS

ANOR P

FESTINA LENTE

FESTINA LENTE

Printmaker to the King

In 1589, Philip II conferred on Pieter (Pedro) Perret the title ‘criado del rey’ (servant to the king), and six years later in 1595, ‘tallador de cámara de Su Majestad’ (engraver to His Majesty).¹ The first appointment was endorsement of the twelve prints on eleven plates of the Escorial that Perret engraved after designs by Juan de Herrera published in 1589 (see p. 21, fig. 4).² Perret’s later appointment – that guaranteed an annual salary of 100 ducats – specifically recognises his profession as a printmaker and with it, the importance of this activity within the realm.

Perret died around 1625. No further titles were conferred on printmakers until Villafranca was appointed ‘tallador de las obras reales’ (engraver of royal works [engraver to the king]) on 8 December 1654.³ Significantly, the document mentions Perret’s prints of the Escorial and the artist’s shared professional status, granting Villafranca the same annuity that was backdated to the first day of November that year.⁴ Villafranca was granted the title thirty years after Perret’s death. Given the growth of book publishing and printmaking in Madrid from the late sixteenth century, and the king’s interest in prints, the protracted absence of a court engraver is perhaps surprising. Villafranca’s appointment can be explained by a number of factors that reveal the renewed importance the position had within the court of Philip IV.

By 1650 Villafranca was producing striking and original designs to a high technical standard, the quality of which, with few exceptions, had not been seen since Perret.⁵ From early in his career, Villafranca distinguished himself as a portraitist,

¹ Ceán Bermúdez 1800, vol. IV, p. 87; López Serrano 1963, pp. 693, 696; McDonald 2000b, pp. 37–38.

² Blas, de Carlos Varona and Matilla 2011, pp. 23–24, for the engravings nos 21–32.

³ AGP, Libros y Registros, vol. 14, fol. 411v (López Serrano 1960, p. 508; Gallego Gallego 1979, n. 54, p. 172).

⁴ Villafranca is described as ‘tallador de las obras reales’ (engraver of royal works) in a letter of payment from 26 November of the same year (AGP, Sección General de Cajas, Caja 1095/23). Gallego Gallego 1979, p. 172.

⁵ Caveda 1867, p. 240.



Fig. 15. Diego Velázquez, *Philip IV*, c. 1653, oil on canvas, 69.3 × 56.5 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (P001185)



Fig. 16. Diego Velázquez, *Philip IV*, c. 1655, oil on canvas, 64.1 × 53.7 cm. National Gallery, London (NG745)

Two years later, in 1657, Villafranca engraved another portrait of the king for the *Descripción breve del monasterio de S. Lorenzo* (cat. 49b). Velázquez's London portrait provided the prototype. Villafranca reversed the image but reproduced the epaulettes, the collar and medallion. The print captures the solemnity of the ageing monarch, and the translation from paint to print has not diluted fidelity to the original. Villafranca employed a variety of burin marks to differentiate physiognomy and render areas of light and dark replicating the softness of the king's features.

Around the same time, Villafranca painted a full-length portrait of Philip IV, one of few works attributed to him with reasonable certainty (fig. 17).⁴¹ Dressed in black with some silver decorations, Philip wears the medallion of the Golden Fleece. In his left hand he holds a hat, and in his right a letter inscribed 'Señor D. Juan de Gongora'. A relative of the poet Luis de Góngora, Juan was appointed President of the Council of Finance in the mid 1640s, and in this capacity, Villafranca knew him personally (p. 47). It is one of several contemporary copies that show Philip IV full-length where the upper torso and head derive from the London portrait.⁴² Villafranca's version reveals his

⁴¹ The portrait is attributed to Villafranca in the 1700 and 1794 inventories of the Palace of the Buen Retiro. The painting belongs to the Museo del Prado (P001232). Since 1986, it has been on deposit at the Biblioteca Museo Víctor Balaguer in Villanueva y Geltrú, Barcelona: Museo del Prado 1990, no. 142, p. 57 (as Villafranca). López-Rey 1963, no. 288, p. 223, plate 272.

⁴² See those described by López-Rey 1963, plates 269–71, 274.



VIRES ADQVIRITEVNDQ

NOTICIA
DEL RECIBIMIENTO I ENTRADA
DE LA REYNA NUESTRA SEÑORA
DOÑA MARIA-ANA DE AVSTRIA

Collaboration

Process

Artists working in Madrid during the seventeenth century collaborated in myriad ways. Workshops, for example, provided the space for artists to meet and to establish professional and personal relationships. The increase in the number of workshops in the early decades of the century reflects the city's growth and the demand for work to decorate churches, royal residences, private homes and public places.¹ How artists collaborated is sometimes clear, for instance, when commissions involving different parties are documented. In such cases, coordinating the specific responsibilities of each person to bring a work to completion was agreed upon in advance. Evidence sometimes derives from artworks themselves. Signed and dated 1614, an imposing drawing by the architect Juan Gómez de Mora (1586–1648) for the high altar of the church of the Royal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe in Extremadura has a long inscription relating to the pictorial programme, the arrangement of the figures and those involved (fig. 35). The altar was designed by Gómez de Mora, while Vicente Carducho and Eugenio Cajés (1574–1634) executed the paintings.² For minor arts, collaborations are more difficult to trace and such is the case with Villafranca, who was engaged in different professional activities for which we have written documentation, unlike his work as a printmaker, for which we have none. To understand Villafranca's professional relationships and networks specific to printmaking, prints are the primary documents.

Nowhere are the processes of collaboration more clearly expressed than through printmaking. The creation of prints – single-leaf and book illustrations – required coordinating different skills.³ In its simplest form, what is known as the intaglio process can be broken down into three steps:

¹ Angulo Íñiguez and Pérez Sánchez 1969; Angulo Íñiguez and Pérez Sánchez 1983. For Madrid as growing urban centre, see Escobar 2022, pp. 21–45.

² McDonald 2012, pp. 85–86.

³ For aspects of the process, see Griffiths 2016, Part I, 'Print Production'.

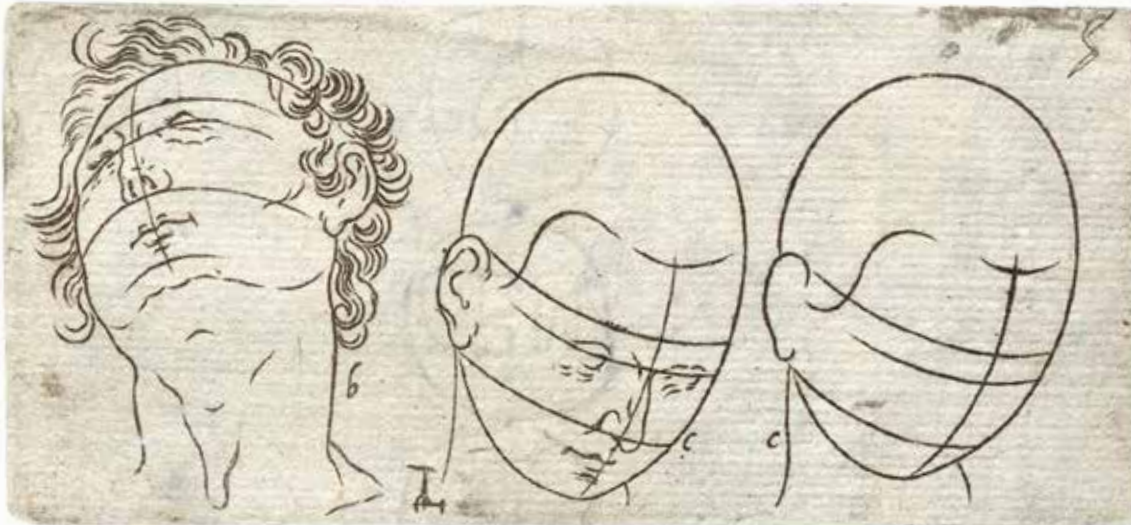
11b. *One Upturned and Two Downturned Schematic Heads*

c. 1637–38

Etching and engraving, 52 × 110 mm

Lettered: 5 // L // [heads inscribed from L to R] b c c

BNE: ER/2564 (56)



Cat. 11b

11c. *Three Schematic Downturned Heads of a Child*

c. 1637–38

Etching and engraving, 51 × 115 mm

Lettered: 9 // C

BNE: ER/2564 (56)



Cat. 11c

27. *Jerónimo de Mascarenhas*

1649

Engraving, 275 × 186 mm

Lettered: Pedro de Villafranca sculp. // En Madrid 1649 // Don Jeronimo Mascareñas
Cauallero de la Orden de Calatraua del Consejo de su Mag.^d / en el Supremo de las
Ordenes Militares, su Sumiller de Cortina, Gran Prior de / Guimaraẽs, Obispo electo
de Leyria, Capellan Mayor y Limosnero Mayor de la Reyna N.^a S.^a

Private Collection, Barcelona

Ref: Bassegoda i Hugas 1996

Jerónimo de Mascarenhas (c. 1611–1671), historian, councillor of Portugal, bishop of Leiria, prior of Guimaraes and bishop of Segovia (DBE). For discussion of this print, see p. 71. See also cat. 58a.



Cat. 27



Cat. 44a



ICON GENEROSÆ STIRPIS MONCATÆ. QVÆ OLIM ABAVARIS
ORTA REGIBVS, ET REGINAS GENVIT, ET REGNO-
RVM PEPERIT ASSERTORES.

B

P. de Villafranca sculptor Regius delineavit et sculpsit Matrini. 1657.

Cat. 48a

64. *Saint Teresa of Ávila*

1662

Manual de las Religiosas Descalzas del Convento de Nuestra Señora de la Natividad, y S. Joseph que fundó la Baronesa Doña Beatriz de Silveira en esta villa ...

Published Madrid, Plácido Barco López, 1786

Engraving, 112 × 81 mm

Lettered: P. V. F. f. 1662 // Recando lo que tuuieren deuocion a esta estampa de la S. M.^a /Teressa de Jesus su Eminencia concede cien dias de Indulg.^a

BNE: 2/26667*; CN: AC 10764 (AC 02557)

Refs: Barcia 1901, no. 1820–6; Páez Ríos 1966–70, vol. IV, no. 9207–12; Páez Ríos 1981–83, vol. III, no. 2252–35; Sánchez Lillo 1984, no. 56; Rome 1992, no. 79

Teresa of Ávila (Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada, 1515–1582), mystic, writer, religious reformer and founder of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. Villafranca's portrait ultimately derives from the much-copied prototype created in 1576 by Juan de la Miseria (p. 116). Originally produced as an indulgence (100 days) in 1662, this print was later included in the *Manual* that relates to the convent of the Nativity and Saint Joseph in Madrid founded by Beatriz de Silveira (see cat. 122).



Cat. 64



Cat. 77

79b. Title page, *Commentaria theologica in Primam partem Divi Thomae* (volume IV),
Diego de Silva y Pacheco

1665

Engraving, 272 × 171 mm

Lettered: COMMENTARIA / IN PRIMAM / PARTEM / D. THOMÆ / AD EX.^{mmo}
D. / D. GARCIAM / DE AVELLANEDA / et Aro / Comitem de Castrillo / Præsulem /
Castellæ / &.^c // AVTHORE / R.^{mo} P. M. / F DIDACO / DE SYLVA / & PACHECO /
OLIM / BENEDI- / ctinæ / Religionis Generali / & nunc S. Martini / Matritensis /
Abbate &.^c // P. a Villafranca sculptor Regius sculp. Matriti. 1665
BNE: 3/76222

Ref: Páez Ríos 1981–83, vol. III, no. 2252–47

For discussion of this print, see p. 71.



Cat. 79b

82nn. *Hieroglyph 35*

c. 1666

Engraving, 182 × 132 mm

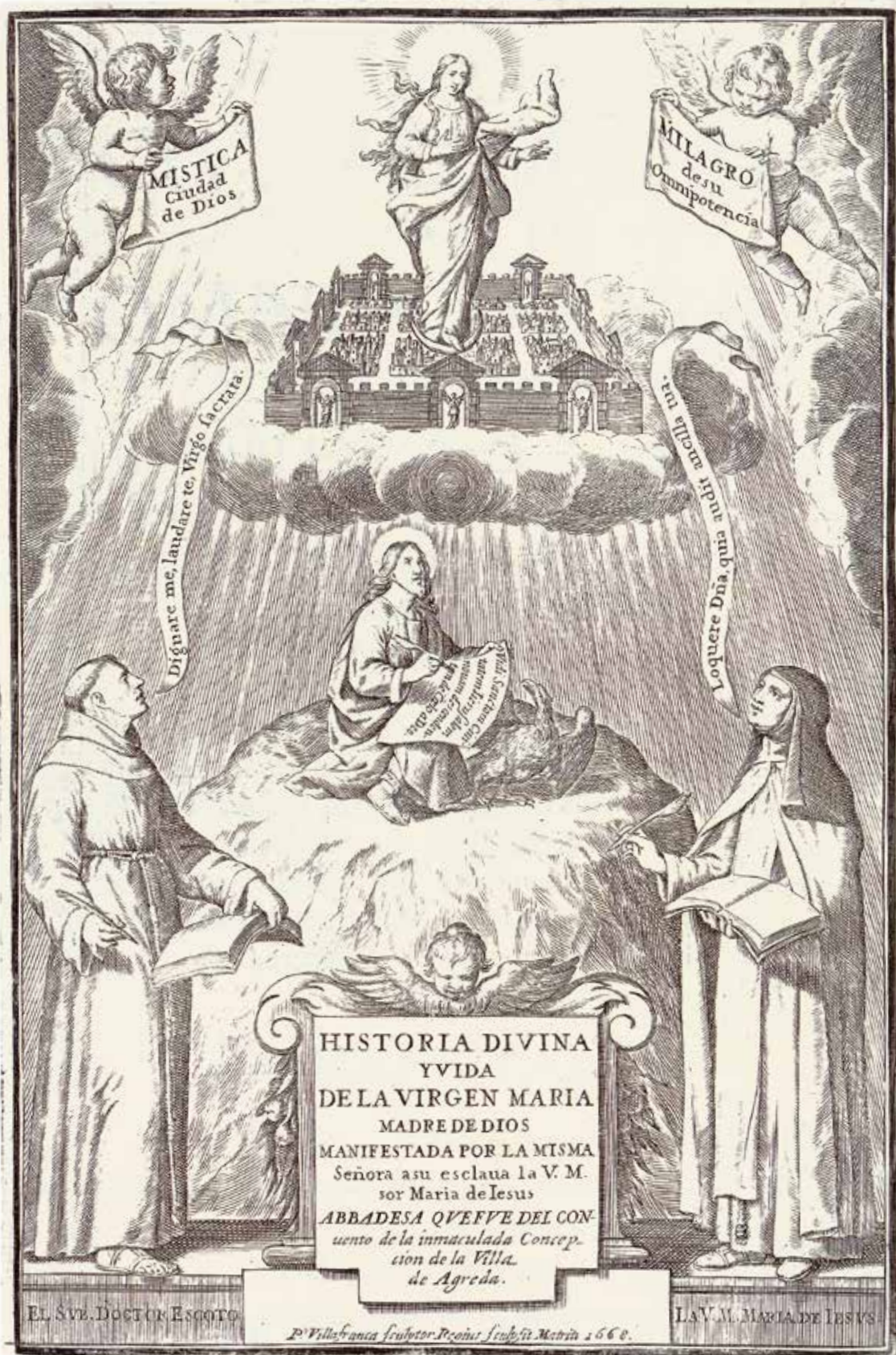
Lettered: LIGNVM HABET SPEM SI PRECISVM FVERIT, RAMI EIVS PVL-
LYLANT. Iob. 14 // Que importará tu rrigor / Si aunque la rama cortaste / Los renue-
bos nos dejaste.

BNE: ER/2931*, ER/2930; BL: 605.e.30 (2)

Refs: Orso 1989, pp. 105–07; Rome 1992, no. 33; Madrid 1993b, p. 232



Cat. 82nn



Cat. 94



VERA EFIGIES
V. M. MARIAE AIESV
ABBATISÆ CONVENTVS
IMMAC. CONCEPT. VILLÆ
DE AGREDA.

P. Villafraña Sculpit. Regius.

Publ. in Matr. 1669.

Cat. 95

122. *Beatriz de Silveira*

After 1654

Engraving, 215 × 158 mm

Lettered: LA ILLVSTRE SEÑORA VARONESA DONA BEATRIZ DE SILVEIRA,
/ MVGER QUE FVE DE EL VARON IORGE DE PAZ DE SILVEIRA. LA QVAL
DEXO TO / DA SV HACIENDA PARA POBRES, Y OBRAS PIAS. // P' de Villafranca,
sculptor Regius. sculp.

BNE: IH/8918

Refs: Ceán Bermúdez 1800, vol. V, p. 248; Barcia 1901, no. 1755; Páez Ríos 1966–70,
vol. IV, no. 8918; Páez Ríos 1981–83, vol. III, no. 2252–73; Sánchez Lillo 1984, no. 53

Beatriz de Silveira (d. 1660), Baroness of Silveira, is identified as founder of the convent of the Nativity and Saint Joseph in Madrid on the title page of the *Manual de las Religiosas Descalzas del Convento de Nuestra Señora de la Natividad ...* (cat. 64). Villafranca must have created this engraving after 1654, the year he was appointed printmaker to the king ('sculptor Regius' bottom right).



Cat. 122

THIS BOOK WAS PRINTED IN 2025,
371 YEARS AFTER PEDRO DE VILLAFRANCA
WAS APPOINTED PRINTMAKER TO THE KING