The Kingdom of Spain as an allegory of Christ's Kingdom in five autos by Calderón

Abstract
El nuevo palacio del Retiro (1634), El cubo de la Almudena (1651), La devoción de la misa (1658), and El santo rey don Fernando (first and second parts, 1671) are works of a religious literary genre unique to Spain: the auto sacramental. Until recently, such plays have suffered a lack of critical attention, possibly due to their complicated theological focus. Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), the master of this genre, is the author of nearly eighty of these one-act works celebrating the Eucharist. Of these, the most studied are those using biblical and mythological characters. Calderón's autos which use Spanish historical figures, such as the above five, have been the object of extremely few studies. Most of these analyses remain at a superficial level, focusing on the works' historical contents, rather than their central spiritual elements. These works illustrate the cosmography of the time and place of their conception. To uncover these autos' full meaning, it is necessary to interpret all other theatrical components in light of these works' primary topic: the Eucharist. Throughout El nuevo palacio del Retiro, El cubo de la Almudena, La devoción de la misa, and both parts of El santo rey don Fernando, the historical elements are framed by the spiritual. In the first, a competition in which the king participates is presented as an image of the transformation of Christ into the Eucharist. In the second, a historical Muslim siege of Madrid is used to assert the victory of Spain against historical and spiritual foes through the Sacrament. The third presents the devotion of a legendary soldier to the Mass as the source of victory in a historical battle. The two autos written on the occasion of the canonization of the medieval King Fernando III combine historical, legendary, and fictitious events to illustrate temporal and eternal victories through the Sacrament. As is evident in a more than superficial study, in these five autos, Calderón modifies history in order to convey an eternal message.
Politically, kingdoms tended to be small and were ruled by powerful warlords commanding personal loyalty. The vast majority of Europeans lived in extreme poverty as serfs. Education was sparse, concentrated in the monastic hall; medical knowledge was mostly wrong, leaving peasants without recourse when plague struck. Farming served as the nearly universal occupation, with most families being but a single failed harvest away from starvation. This metaphor envisioned society as a body with each social class corresponding to hands, heart, feet, and so on. The king as the head (or heart depending on the theorist) provided unity and a focal point for loyalty. The Visigoth kingdom in Spain suffered from internal divisions and in the end it was easy prey for the Moors. Spain in the middle ages. However at the beginning of the 8th century the Visigoth realm was destroyed by a Muslim invasion. In 711 an army of Berbers from North Africa, led by Arabs invaded Spain and they utterly defeated the Visigoths at the Barbate River on 19 July 711. In 1700 King Carlos II died and in his will he left the kingdom of Spain to a Frenchman named Philip of Anjou. However other European powers would not accept this as it would mean a powerful alliance between France and Spain. In 1701 the War of the Spanish Succession began between Austria and France. Britain and the Netherlands joined Austria against France in 1702.