



Patronage and Power: The Vicereines at the Court of Naples in the Reign of Philip III of Spain

Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez

Volume 43, numéro 4, automne 2020

Spaces of Power of the Spanish Nobility (1480–1715)
Les espaces de pouvoir de la noblesse espagnole (1480–1715)

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1076830ar>
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36386>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Franganillo Álvarez, A. (2020). Patronage and Power: The Vicereines at the Court of Naples in the Reign of Philip III of Spain. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 43(4), 149–169. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36386>

Résumé de l'article

Plusieurs études ont récemment analysé les vice-rois de la monarchie espagnole, en particulier ceux du royaume de Naples. Cependant, les vice-reines de Naples n'ont pas reçu toute l'attention qu'elles méritent. L'objectif de cet article est d'étudier et de clarifier le rôle de ces femmes nobles dans l'une des cours vice-royales les plus importantes de la monarchie espagnole. La vice-reine étudiée dans cet article, Catalina de Zuñiga y Sandoval, sixième comtesse de Lemos et soeur du duc de Lerma (1599–1601), développa un important réseau politique par le truchement d'une vaste correspondance, en demandant et distribuant des faveurs (mercedes) auprès des membres de sa famille et de sa clientèle. La réévaluation du rôle des vice-reines à la cour de Naples, révèle que leur contribution politique est essentielle à la compréhension de l'ensemble des stratégies économiques et politiques déployées par la famille vice-royale.

Patronage and Power: The Vicereines at the Court of Naples in the Reign of Philip III of Spain

ALEJANDRA FRANGANILLO ÁLVAREZ*

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Recently, several studies have focused on the figure of the viceroy in the Spanish Monarchy, especially in the Kingdom of Naples. However, far less attention has been paid to the role of the vicereines of Naples. The goal of my study is to investigate and clarify the significant roles held by these noblewomen at one of the most important viceregal courts of the Spanish Monarchy. I will focus on one vicereine in particular, Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval, 6th Countess of Lemos and sister to the Duke of Lerma (1599–1601), who developed an extensive political network through copious correspondences, requesting and distributing mercedes (dignities and favours) among family members and her clientage. A revisionary analysis of the vicereines' roles at the Neapolitan court demonstrates how knowledge of their political contribution is essential for a deeper understanding of the economic and political strategies deployed by their families.

Plusieurs études ont récemment analysé les vice-rois de la monarchie espagnole, en particulier ceux du royaume de Naples. Cependant, les vice-reines de Naples n'ont pas reçu toute l'attention qu'elles méritent. L'objectif de cet article est d'étudier et de clarifier le rôle de ces femmes nobles dans l'une des cours vice-royales les plus importantes de la monarchie espagnole. La vice-reine étudiée dans cet article, Catalina de Zuñiga y Sandoval, sixième comtesse de Lemos et sœur du duc de Lerma (1599–1601), développa un important réseau politique par le truchement d'une vaste correspondance, en demandant et distribuant des faveurs (mercedes) auprès des membres de sa famille et de sa clientèle. La réévaluation du rôle des vice-reines à la cour de Naples, révèle que leur contribution politique est essentielle à la compréhension de l'ensemble des stratégies économiques et politiques déployées par la famille vice-royale.

The forgotten vicereines

The edited volume *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion, 1500–1700* contained just one contribution to the study of women's roles in the Italian peninsula during the early modern era. In that essay, Elizabeth Cohen criticized the lack of attention given to women and remarked on the potential of the field:

* This study has been carried out thanks to the research project *Adversa fortuna. Las élites ibéricas en la encrucijada (1516–1724). Desafíos, oportunidades y estrategias en la gestión del fracaso*, Ref. [PID2019-106575RB-I00]; and the research group *UCM Elites y agentes en la Monarquía Hispánica: formas de articulación política, negociación y patronazgo (1506–1725)*, Ref. [UCM-GR3/14 – 971683].

Future research on the women of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily and many other still shadowy regions will uncover much that resembles the lives of their contemporaries elsewhere in Italy and in Europe. The more we know, however, the more local variety will also appear. Spanish dominance may well turn out to have had some influence on women, but it is likely to have differed by place and by social class.¹

In the past few years, Spanish historians have written numerous works devoted to the various viceroalties of the Spanish Monarchy. Among them, those on Naples stand out,² complementing research carried out in prior decades by Italian historians.³ They focus on some of the most important viceroys of Naples: the Marquis of Villafranca, Pedro de Toledo (1532–53);⁴ the 6th and 7th Counts of Lemos (1599–1601 and 1606–10);⁵ and the 8th Count of Oñate (1648–53).⁶ While these earlier studies could be classified as political or diplomatic history, recent analyses have a more cultural slant, emphasizing the viceroys' artistic patronage. Among these latter studies are the volumes edited

1. Elizabeth Cohen, "Evolving the History of Women in Early Modern Italy: Subordination and Agency," in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion, 1500–1700*, ed. Thomas Dandeleet and John Marino (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 352–53, doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004154292.i-606.49.

2. Pedro Cardim and Joan-Luis Palos, eds., *El mundo de los virreyes en las Monarquías de España y Portugal* (Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuet, 2012), 14.

3. See G. Coniglio, *I vicerè spagnoli di Napoli* (Naples: Fausto Fiorentino, 1967); Benedetto Croce, *Teatri di Napoli: Secolo XV–XVIII* (Naples: Luigi Pierro, 1981); Carlos De Frede, *I vicerè spagnoli di Napoli* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1966); and Giuseppe Galasso, *Alla periferia dell'impero. Il Regno di Napoli nel periodo spagnolo (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1994), especially "Una capitale dell'impero," 335–69. See also Giuseppe Galasso and Carlos José Hernando Sánchez, eds., *El reino de Nápoles y la monarquía de España. Entre agregación y conquista* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2004).

4. Carlos José Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El virrey Pedro de Toledo: linaje, estado y cultura (1532–1533)* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1994).

5. Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, Poder y Mecenazgo en tiempos de Felipe III: Nápoles y el conde de Lemos* (Madrid: Actas, 2007). For a more recent study, see Valentina Favaro, *Gobernar con prudencia. Los Lemos, estrategias familiares y servicio al Rey (siglo XVII)* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2016).

6. Ana Minguito Palomares, *Nápoles y el virrey conde de Oñate. La estrategia del poder y el resurgir del reino (1648–1653)* (Madrid: Sílex, 2011).

by Attilio Antonelli⁷ and José Luis Colomer,⁸ along with research conducted by the Power and Representation group led by Joan-Lluís Palos⁹ concerning the Duke of Cardona (1664–72),¹⁰ the Counts of Peñaranda (1659–64),¹¹ the Count of Monterrey (1631–37), and the Duke of Medina de las Torres (1637–44).¹²

This surge of historiography marks a sharp contrast with the lack of interest among most historians in the vicereines of Naples.¹³ One exception is Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, who has provided a general perspective on the vicereines' function during seventeenth-century celebrations and festivities in Naples.¹⁴ But beyond these specific aspects, much remains unknown.

7. Attilio Antonelli, ed., *Ceremoniale del vicereyno spagnolo di Napoli 1503–1622* (Naples: Arte'm, 2015); *Ceremoniale del vicereyno spagnolo e austriaco di Napoli 1650–1717* (Naples: Rubbettino Editore, 2012); and *Ceremoniale del vicereyno austriaco di Napoli 1707–1734* (Naples: Arte'm, 2014).

8. José Luis Colomer, ed., *España y Nápoles. Coleccionismo y mecenazgo virreinales en el siglo XVII* (Madrid: CEEH, 2009).

9. Joan-Lluís Palos, *La mirada italiana. Un relato visual del imperio español en la corte de sus virreyes en Nápoles (1600–1700)* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2010); Ida Mauro, Milena Viceconte, and Joan-Lluís Palos, eds., *Visiones cruzadas. Los virreyes de Nápoles y la imagen de la Monarquía de España en el Barroco* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2018).

10. Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes: ceremonial y mecenazgo en la Italia española de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2008), dx.doi.org/10.31819/9783954872725.

11. Ida Mauro, “Il divotissimo signor conte di Pegnaranda, viceré con larghissime sovvenzioni: los fines políticos del mecenazgo religioso del conde de Peñaranda, virrey de Nápoles (1659–1664),” *Tiempos modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna* 5.15 (2007): 1–14.

12. Two recent PhD dissertations have been written on these viceroys: Ángel Rivas Albadalejo, “Entre Madrid, Roma y Nápoles. El VI conde de Monterrey y el gobierno de la Monarquía Hispánica (1621–1636)” (Universitat de Barcelona, 2015), and Filomena Viceconte, “Il duca de Medina de las Torres (1600–1668) tra Napoli e Madrid: mecenatismo artistico e decadenza della monarchia” (Universitat de Barcelona, 2013).

13. Manuel Rivero Rodríguez devotes a small portion of his book to the vicereines, despite the title: *La edad de oro de los virreyes. El virreinato en la Monarquía Hispánica durante los siglos XVI y XVII* (Tres Cantos: Akal, 2011), 165–73.

14. Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, “Il mecenatismo artistico e la vita culturale delle viceregine di Napoli nel Seicento” and “Le viceregine a Napoli nel Seicento,” in *Alla corte napoletana. Donne e potere dall'età aragonesa al vicereyno austriaco (1442–1734)*, ed. Mirella Mafri (Naples: Fridericiana Editrice Universitaria, 2012), 269–94 and 59–80; “Las virreinas en las fiestas y el ceremonial de la corte de Nápoles en el siglo XVII,” in *Fiesta y ceremonia en la corte virreinal de Nápoles (siglos XVI y XVII)*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso, José Vicente Quitante, and José Luis Colomer (Madrid: CEEH, 2013), 301–32.

This article intends to expand on current views of women's networks by examining the patronage mechanisms deployed by vicereines at the court of Naples. The court itself played a highly relevant role in the configuration of the Spanish Monarchy, defined as a polycentric structure made up of various territories that functioned as centres from which information and power were distributed.¹⁵ As such, Naples was the principal viceregal court during the early modern era, and the most desired posting for viceroys.¹⁶ In the early seventeenth century, under Philip III, the city had nearly three hundred thousand inhabitants, making it the second most populous city in Europe.¹⁷ Naples itself was the capital of an extensive territory that reached from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian seas, from Abruzzo in the north to the Strait of Messina in the south, essentially covering the entire southern half of the Italian peninsula. It also included the islands of Capri, Ischia, and Procida. The city's importance during the reign of the kings of Aragon had been such that throughout the period of Spanish Habsburg rule, local elites maintained a series of institutional and ceremonial mechanisms that continued to confirm the city's preeminence as capital.¹⁸

For a nobleman to be appointed viceroy of Naples represented an enormous privilege and a huge leap forward in his career. But what did such an appointment mean for a woman? What was being the vicereine like? Just as the viceroy represented the king in courts where the monarch was absent, the vicereine, as his wife, appears close to him. Was she assigned the role of a queen's alter ego? Did the vicereines claim an independent space that allowed them to develop the same strategies of patronage and clientage as the queens consort at the Spanish court?¹⁹ These are among the questions that this article will attempt to answer.

15. Tamar Herzog et al., eds., *Polycentric Monarchies: How Did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

16. José Hernando Sánchez, "Corte y ciudad en Nápoles durante el siglo XVI: la construcción de una capital virreinal," in *Las cortes virreinales de la Monarquía española: América e Italia*, ed. Francesca Cantù (Rome: Viella, 2008), 338.

17. Palos, *La mirada italiana*, 27–28.

18. Giovanni Muto, "Capital y Corte en la Nápoles española," *Reales Sitios* 158 (2003): 3–15, 6–7.

19. For an influential study of female patronage, see Sharon Kettering, "The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen," *The Historical Journal* 22:4 (1989): 817–41, dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00015727; also Ruth Kleinman, "Social Dynamics at the French Court: The Household

What were the functions of vicereines in Naples?

During Philip II's reign, the post of viceroy was consolidated. Given the territorial complexity of the Hispanic monarchy and the inability for any one person to be physically present in such spread-out territories, the government delegated power through viceroys and governors. Viceroys implemented the monarch's political decisions and presided over festivities and public acts, embodying the role corresponding to the king.

As Diana Carrió-Invernizzi has shown, of the twenty-five viceroys who governed Naples in the seventeenth century, only six arrived without a wife: three were ecclesiastics, two were bachelors, and one, the Marquis of Carpio, left his spouse behind.²⁰ Therefore, though there existed no requirement for a vicereine, as in the case of queens consort whom she represented, her presence was considered advantageous.²¹

Vicereines had no juridical standing, however, nor was theirs an official post. Those two facts, as well as the monarch's instructions to each incoming viceroy, which were in the nature of recommendations to deal with particular political situations rather than strict regulations,²² explain why there is no express mention of what activities the women should carry out.²³ Fittingly perhaps, with the sole exception of the instructions to the Marquis of Carpio

of Anne of Austria," *French Historical Studies* 16:3 (1990): 517–35, dx.doi.org/10.2307/286485. For examples of early modern Castilian aristocratic women exercising political agency, see Helen Nader, ed., *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450–1650* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), and Helen Reed and Trevor Dadson, *La Princesa de Éboli Cautiva del Rey: Vida de Ana de Mendoza y de la Cerda (1540–1592)* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2015).

20. Carrió-Invernizzi, "Las virreinas en las fiestas," 308.

21. Rivero Rodríguez, *La edad de oro de los virreyes*, 169.

22. Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, "Doctrina y práctica política en la Monarquía hispana. Las instrucciones dadas a los virreyes y gobernadores de Italia en los siglos XVI y XVII," *Investigaciones Históricas* 9 (1989): 197–203, 205–06: "The function of the vicereine was assumed, it was inferred, and it cannot be found in instructions and orders, where it was rarely mentioned" (my translation). For the general perspective, see Rosario Villari, "España, Nápoles y Sicilia. Instrucciones y advertencias a virreyes," in *La política de Felipe II. Dos estudios*, ed. Rosario Villari and Geoffrey Parker (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1996), 45–51.

23. Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, "Como reinas: el virreinato en femenino (Apuntes sobre la Casa y Corte de las virreinas)," in *Las relaciones discretas entre la Monarquía Hispánica y Portugal: Las casas de las*

that viceroys should choose their family and servants well, there is no specific mention of wives.²⁴ Yet, as we shall see, when in August 1601 the Count of Lemos fell ill and died a few months later, his wife and their son assumed responsibility for viceregal matters.

Manuel Rivero Rodríguez has written that the vicereines' courts were perceived to be "a mirror of the queens' courts,"²⁵ given that they, too, were surrounded by women of the leading Neapolitan families who served as ladies-in-waiting and ladies of honour, along with commoners who provided domestic labour. But, as Giovanni Muto has pointed out, in quantitative terms the viceregal court was more like that of a nobleman than that of a monarch.²⁶ Often, vicereines had also served as ladies in the queen's household; such was the case of Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval, Countess of Lemos, who served Ana of Austria from 1572 to 1575 and later served as chief lady-in-waiting to Margaret of Austria, before moving to the Naples court.²⁷ Such women had prior social and political experience and knew perfectly well how female spaces at court worked.

Since we have no documentation describing the vicereines' duties, we must start with the descriptions that appear in contemporary works. The chronicler Domenico Antonio Parrino, in his *Teatro eroico e politico dei governi de' vicere del regno di Napoli* (1691), emphasized their role as perfect wife and mother, a model that entirely coincided with that of queens.²⁸ Precisely because they embodied the greatest example of femininity in the Kingdom of Naples, if they should exhibit a desire to exercise political influence—as was the case with the vicereines Catalina de Zúñiga and Leonor de Guzmán—they were perceived as masculine.²⁹ For example, the Portuguese chronicler Pinheiro da

reinas, siglos XV–XIX, ed. José Martínez Millán and M. Paula Marçal, vol. 2 (Madrid: Editorial Polifemo, 2009), 813.

24. Archivo Histórico Nacional [hereinafter AHN] Estado leg. 2010, no. 31, Instruction to the Marquis of Carpio, 31 October 1682.

25. Rivero Rodríguez, *Como reinas*, 807. All translations into English are mine unless otherwise noted.

26. Muto, 708.

27. Elisa García Prieto, *Una corte en femenino. Servicio áulico y carrera cortesana en tiempos de Felipe II* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018), 268–69, 286.

28. Carrió-Invernizzi, "Le viceregine a Napoli," 70.

29. Carrió-Invernizzi, "Le viceregine a Napoli," 73–74.

Veiga stated that Catalina was “ugly and not attractive, but quite masculine.”³⁰ Little if anything can be said about her physical appearance, however, given that, unlike viceroys, wives were not honoured in portrait galleries and there is no known portrait of her.³¹

Unlike with queens, maternity was not the primary function of vicereines; they did not have the duty of ensuring dynastic continuity, since the viceroy’s post was not hereditary. Many arrived in Naples beyond their child-bearing years, such as the 6th Countess of Lemos, who was forty-four when her husband took the post, or Mencía de Zúñiga, the 8th Countess of Benavente, who was nearly fifty.

Like queens, however, vicereines assumed a prominent role in public ceremonies such as entries into the various cities of the viceroyalty, commemorative acts, religious ceremonies, royal funerals, celebrations of the births of princes and princesses, and religious festivities such as Corpus. Though usually the viceroys would enter a place on their own, there were some vicereines, such as Leonor de Guzmán, 6th Countess of Monterrey, who also made triumphant entrances without their spouses,³² mirroring the entries of princesses from other dynasties who arrived in Madrid as the brides of crown princes.³³ Of all the various ceremonies they participated in, undoubtedly that of San Gennaro was the most important, given that he had been the patron saint of Naples since the year 472, when Vesuvius ceased erupting thanks to the saint’s intercession.³⁴

As might be expected, vicereines, who had to embody the current queen in her absence, made their religiosity known in a public way, frequently visiting

30. Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, Poder y Mecenazgo*, 745. Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga held posts at the courts of both Philip III and Philip IV; see his chronicle *Fastigina ou fastos geniaes* (1605).

31. Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, “Las galerías de retratos de virreyes de la Monarquía Hispánica, entre Italia y América (siglos XVI–XVII),” in *A la place du Roi. Vice-rois, gouverneurs et ambassadeurs dans les monarchies française et espagnole (XVI–XVIII siècles)*, ed. Daniel Aznar, Guillaume Hanotin, and Niels F. May (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014), 116–18, 126.

32. Carrió-Invernizzi, “Las virreinas en las fiestas,” 317.

33. See, for instance, David Sánchez Cano, “Festivities during Elizabeth of Bourbon’s Journey to Madrid,” in *Dynastic Marriages, 1612–1615: A Celebration of the Habsburg and Bourbon Unions*, ed. Margaret McGowan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 39–55.

34. Catalina referred to the miracle of the liquification of the saint’s blood in a letter to Cardinal Aldobrandini; see Archivio Segreto Vaticano [hereinafter ASV] Segreteria Stato (SS), Principi, leg. 55, fols. 42–43, Countess of Lemos to Cardinal Aldobrandini, 9 May 1600.

convents and founding churches and monasteries in the city.³⁵ The Countess of Monterrey, for example, founded the monastery of María Magdalena, while some vicereines participated in the establishment of other important, non-religious buildings in the city. The chroniclers Domenico Antonio Parrino and Pietro Giannone both credited Catalina de Zúñiga with the new viceregal palace that her husband, the 6th Count of Lemos, commissioned to architect Domenico Fontana, who dedicated his *Libro Secondo in cui si ragiona alcune fabbriche fatte in Roma, et in Napoli*, to Catalina.³⁶ In the Palazzo Vecchio built by Viceroy Pedro de Toledo there was no space set aside for serving the vicereine separately from the viceroy. In addition to the palace, therefore, the countess designed a larger project to improve the maritime image of the city, constructing a new port and a promenade adorned with trees and fountains. Catalina's inscriptions and symbols in the palace, along with the coat of arms of the Count of Lemos, clearly reveal her intention to leave a permanent mark of her influence.³⁷

Female patronage at the court of Naples

While the best-known aspects of the vicereines have centred on their public visibility at festivities, celebrations, and religious acts, they were equally notable for their patronage strategies during the years they spent in Naples.³⁸ Their epistolary networks both in Italy and beyond were crucial in that regard,

35. Carrió-Invernizzi, "Las virreinas en las fiestas," 321.

36. Palos, *La mirada italiana*, 46–50. Parrino was the author of *Teatro Eroico etc.*, a work commissioned in 1692 by the current viceroy of Naples, the Count of Santiesteban, which today is considered one of the key sources of information regarding the Spanish viceroys. Giannone also wrote an important work about Naples, though a century later. The two men are among the very few who even mentioned the vicereines in their writings.

37. For the Countess of Lemos as an outstanding collector of books and paintings, see Carrió-Invernizzi, "Il mecenatismo artistico," 279–80; and M. I. Barbeito Carneiro, "La biblioteca de la VI Condesa de Lemos," *Varia Bibliographica: homenaje a José Simón Díaz* (Zaragoza: Kassel Edition Reichenberger, 1987), 67–85. Her case was not exceptional; the magnificent painting collection that Viceroy Medina de las Torres brought to Spain was due chiefly to his wife, Anna Carafa, who was vicereine from 1637 to 1644; see Fernando Bouza, "De Rafael a Ribera y de Nápoles a Madrid: Nuevos inventarios de la colección Medina de las Torres-Stigliano (1641–1656)," *Boletín del Museo del Prado* 72 (2009): 44–71.

38. Rivero Rodríguez, *Como reinas*, 790.

yielding favours and advantages for themselves, their relatives, and members of their clientage systems.³⁹

Toward the end of his reign, Philip II curtailed the ability of the Neapolitan viceroys to provide posts and benefices. The measure in turn limited the vicereines' ability to act as intermediaries for their husbands, ensuring the granting of favours, just as queens consort continued doing.⁴⁰ But that does not mean that they did not develop clientage techniques; the fact that Madrid was far away worked in their favour, giving viceroys and their wives considerable latitude, and women's circles functioned in ways complementary to those of their husbands. Indeed, although vicereines had no role in assigning positions in the Kingdom of Naples, they solicited ecclesiastical positions from the papal curia.

One of the most important of the vicereines, Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval, 6th Countess of Lemos, was sister to the Duke of Lerma, Philip III's favourite.⁴¹ During the years that the Countess of Lemos lived in Naples, from 1599 to 1601, she corresponded often with Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1601), nephew of Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605) and himself a cardinal starting in 1593.⁴² When Pietro's uncle, Ippolito Aldobrandini, became pope in 1592,

39. On women's correspondence in early modern Europe, see Nieves Baranda and Anne J. Cruz, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Early Modern Spanish Women Writers* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Meredith K. Ray, *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: Toronto Italian Studies, 2009), dx.doi.org/10.3138/9781442697836; Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen, eds., *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (New York: Routledge, 2009), doi.org/10.4324/9781315257211; and María Martos and Julio Neira, eds., *Identidad autorial femenina y comunicación epistolar* (Madrid: Editorial UNED, 2018).

40. Rivero Rodríguez, *Doctrina y práctica política*, 203.

41. She was comparable in status to her successors, Mencía de Mendoza y Requesens and Leonor de Guzmán, the latter of whom was the preferred sister of the Count-Duke of Olivares, Philip IV's minister and royal favourite. On Lerma, see Antonio Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598–1621* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Bernardo J. García García, *La Pax Hispanica: política exterior del duque de Lerma* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); and Patrick Williams, *The Great Favourite: The Duke of Lerma and the Court and Government of Philip III of Spain, 1598–1621* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

42. The ASV has an important collection of letters from various Spanish noblewomen who served in Naples as vicereines; see Vanessa De Cruz Medina, "Cartas, mujeres y corte en el Siglo de Oro" (PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2010). I am grateful to the author for facilitating this text.

Pietro—the family’s only male descendant—was appointed secretary of state by Clement VIII; he thus became in charge of affairs with France, Spain, and Savoy. The complex international politics that existed during Philip II’s reign and Clement VIII’s papacy changed when Philip III (1598–1621) assumed the throne, thanks to the relations established by the pope’s nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, with the Duke of Sessa, the Spanish ambassador in Rome, as well as with the Duke of Lerma and the Count of Lemos.⁴³ Given that the Aldobrandini family did not side with the Spaniards but favoured the interests of France, their correspondence sheds new light on the countess’s crucial role in Italian affairs once she became vicereine.⁴⁴

After she returned to Spain, Catalina did not sever her relations with the pope’s Roman relatives. In 1613, she even corresponded with Cardinal Scipione Borghese, nephew of Pope Paul V (1605–21) and Aldobrandini’s rival.⁴⁵ This was a surprising move, since Paul and his nephew had attempted to remove her son Francisco as ambassador in Rome.⁴⁶ Catalina was not the only member of the Sandoval family to correspond with Cardinal Borghese; her sister, Leonor de Sandoval y Rojas, Countess of Altamira and governess to the king’s children at the Madrid court, wrote in 1608 to thank him for having bestowed upon one of her sons the deanship of Santiago.⁴⁷ That was not the only favour she received from the pope; in 1614 she asked that the deanship of Toledo, which had been granted to her son Melchor, now be given to Melchor’s brother Baltasar.⁴⁸

43. On Pietro Aldobrandini, see his biography by Elena Fasano Guarini in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 2 (Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960). Aldobrandini’s political negotiations with Spain at the start of the seventeenth century have been analyzed by Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Roma papale e Spagna. Diplomatici, nobili e religiosi tra due corti* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2010).

44. Visceglia, 40, 61, 105–12.

45. Catalina asked the cardinal to intercede with the pope in both her and her brother the Duke of Lerma’s names to favour the Augustinian Luis de los Ríos, who represented the Spanish Crown in the order’s general chapter; ASV SS Principi leg. 57, fol. 93, Countess of Lemos to Cardinal Borghese, 26 October 1613.

46. Paolo Periat, “Una mujer temida: Estrategia familiar y autoridad política de Catalina de Zúñiga, condesa de Lemos,” in *III Encuentro de Jóvenes Investigadores en Historia Moderna*, ed. Máximo García Fernández (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2015), 1019–22.

47. ASV SS Principi leg. 56, fol. 9, Countess of Altamira to Cardinal Borghese, 8 December 1608; Cruz Medina, 245.

48. Visceglia, 142–43.

The Sandoval lineage in Naples: Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval

Born in 1555, the future Countess of Lemos and vicereine of Naples was the daughter of Fernando Sandoval y Rojas, 4th Marquis of Denia and 3rd Count of Lerma. Her mother was Isabel de Borja y Castro, the daughter of Francisco de Borja, 4th Duke of Gandía and 1st Marquis of Lombay, general of the Company of Jesus and master of the stables to Empress Isabel, wife of Charles V, who would profess and become general of the Jesuit order and canonized in 1670. When Catalina was nineteen, she married Fernando Ruiz de Castro Andrade y Portugal (1548–1601), who became 6th Count of Lemos after his father's death in 1590. He had already begun his political career in 1577, when Philip II appointed him extraordinary ambassador to Portugal, and he had participated, along with his father, in the war to join the kingdom of Portugal to that of Spain.⁴⁹ But his political career truly took off when his brother-in-law Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, who would soon inherit his father's titles as Marquis of Denia and Duke of Lerma, became Philip III's favourite. Lerma's confidence in his sister would favour the appointment first of her husband, Fernando, and later of two of their sons to posts of great responsibility. Catalina and Fernando had three sons: Pedro Fernández de Castro (1576–1622), 7th Count of Lemos; Francisco de Castro (1579–1637), Count of Castro, Duke of Taurisano, and 8th Count of Lemos; and Fernando, about whom little is known.⁵⁰

The relationship between the Count and Countess of Lemos and the Duke of Lerma was consolidated with the marriage in 1598 of Pedro to Lerma's daughter, Catalina de la Cerda y Sandoval, who was also the niece of Catalina de Zúñiga. Like her aunt, the young Catalina would become Countess of Lemos and vicereine of Naples from 1610 to 1616. Soon after Pedro's marriage, the 6th Duke of Lemos was appointed to take over the government of the Kingdom of

49. Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, "Filiación cortesana y muerte en Nápoles: la trayectoria política del VI conde de Lemos," in *Felipe II y el Mediterráneo: La monarquía y los reinos (I)*, vol. 3, ed. Ernest Belenguer Cebrià (Barcelona: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1998), 525–39.

50. Fernando became Count of Gelves thanks to his marriage with Leonor of Portugal, 4th Countess of Gelves; see Joseph Manuel Trelles, *Asturias ilustrada, origen de la nobleza de España, su antigüedad y diferencias. Tomo segundo que trata de la aronía y origen de las principales familias de España* (Madrid: Imprenta de Joaquín Sánchez, 1739), 720.

Naples from the current viceroy.⁵¹ Catalina de Zúñiga and Fernando and their three sons accompanied the royal family to Valencia to celebrate the double weddings of Philip III and Margaret of Austria and of Philip's sister, the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, with Archduke Albert of Austria.⁵² After the event, the count and countess travelled with the royal entourage to Barcelona,⁵³ whence they sailed with their second son, Francisco de Castro, to Genoa, arriving in Naples in the summer of 1599.⁵⁴ There are many documents referencing Catalina's activities during her three-year residence as vicereine, and as we have seen, she quickly made contact with important figures in Rome, among them Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini.

I have consulted close to thirty letters from Catalina and forty-five from her husband to Aldobrandini. Both sets of letters should be studied together to avert a partial and decontextualized perspective. Of the twenty-eight letters from her that I discuss below, thirteen are holograph and the remaining fifteen are partially handwritten by her, generally the last paragraph. In all, the signature and the formulaic closing salutation, "I kiss Your Illustrious Holiness's hands, your servant, the Countess of Lemos,"⁵⁵ are in her handwriting. In all her letters, the countess interceded on behalf of persons to whom the cardinal was asking the pope to grant a particular benefice or favour. In their letters to Aldobrandini, the count and countess often mentioned Alonso Manrique, an agent who worked for them. He was in charge of hand-delivering the letters in both directions, and he used these occasions to speak about certain matters that do not appear in writing. Thus we know that the countess asked the cardinal, through Alonso Manrique, to favour a "great friend" (*un grande amigo*), a "man whose writings and great prudence merit" (*un hombre cuyas letras y mucha prudencia la merecen*)

51. Archivo General de Simancas [hereinafter AGS] Estado, leg. 1096, no. 14, Olivares to Philip III, Naples, 5 February 1599.

52. Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, *Relación de las cosas sucedidas en la corte de España (desde 1500 hasta 1614)* (Madrid: Imprenta de J. Martín Alegría, 1857), 4.

53. Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Filiación cortesana*, 541.

54. For Francisco de Castro's government service before becoming 8th Count of Lemos, see Valentina Favaro, "Un hombre al servicio del rey: Francisco de Lemos, conde de Castro (1601–1620)," *Saitabi: revista de la Facultat de Geografia i Història* 60/61 (2010–11): 189–202.

55. "Beso las manos a V[uestra] S[antidad] I[lustrisima] su servidora la condesa de Lemos."

the post she was asking for him. Although his name was not mentioned in the correspondence, presumably Alonso revealed it in person.⁵⁶

In the first extant letter from when she was vicereine, dated 4 July 1599, the countess linked her loyalty to the cardinal with “my great desire that [...] I be received as your most devoted servant in Spain and in Italy,” and at the same time mentioning her powerful brother. That same day, her husband also wrote to the cardinal alluding to instructions that his brother-in-law had received: “I wish to serve you with all my heart both for what I owe and because the lord Marquis of Denia has so ordered.”⁵⁷ The countess’s reference to her brother and to her husband are everywhere in the correspondence, making it clear that the three were part of the same political faction in which the Duke of Lerma knew how to take advantage of his sister’s privileged position: “[Your Illustrious Holiness] has ample proof of the favour shown to me and to my lord the count and to my brother the marquis.” She continued by begging him to return the gesture and ask a favour of them, a way of further cementing their relationship.⁵⁸

We have not found any letter from July or August 1599, but during that period the countess was ill. In late September she once again wrote the cardinal, asking for a favour for one Diego de Sosa, administrator of a place called Acre. The letter repeated one written that day by her husband, who had asked for the same favour in August.⁵⁹ The same situation occurred in February 1600, when the countess wrote to the cardinal to grant a favour that had been requested

56. Cruz Medina, 160. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 44, Count of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 22 May 1600.

57. “El deseo grande que tengo de que [...] me reciba por la mayor servidora que tendrá en España ni en Italia,” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 10, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 4 July 1599. “Desseo servirle muy de corazón assi por lo que le devo como por habérmelo mandado el señor marqués de Denia,” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 3, Count of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 4 July 1599.

58. Visceglia, 106. “VSI tiene también probada la merced que nos haze al conde mi señor a mi y al marqués mi hermano [...] pero con todo sabe VSI obligar de manera que nos tiene cargados de grillos y deseosos en extremo de que se ofrezcan muy grandes cosas en que mostrar,” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fols. 26–27 and 69–71, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 12 November 1599; 5 and 10 April 1601.

59. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 19, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 1 October 1599. In August, the viceroy wrote the cardinal asking him to help Diego with a lawsuit in Rome over the encomienda of the Vera Cruz so as to put an end to the litigation, which had been very costly, and because he was sick with gout; ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 3, Count of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 3 August 1599. In the letters that followed, the count and countess repeated their request, as Sosa was returning to Rome; ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fols. 13–14, Count and Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, 22 September 1599.

by Doctor Castillo, a canon from Palencia. Thanks to another letter from the viceroy two months later, we know that this favour concerned an office that would allow the canon to repay more than two thousand ducats he owed to various banks in Rome.⁶⁰ In late May 1601, after returning from a trip with her husband to Rome where they represented Philip III, the countess wrote to the cardinal through Castillo himself, reiterating that he should grant the favour “because of how important he [Doctor Castillo] is to me, and I am so grateful for everything VSI has done for him and will do until he is able to return to Spain.”⁶¹ Another example is their request to Aldobrandini to grant a vacant canonry to Rodrigo de Anaya, a gentleman from Valladolid, to whom, Catalina wrote, “the two of us owe a great deal.”⁶² As an additional indication of the clientage network instituted by the viceroy and vicereine, in a letter dated 2 June 1601, Catalina petitioned the cardinal for a post for Doctor Francisco de Valcarce, a distinguished hidalgo living in Rome, writing as husband and wife: “my lord and I would be much obliged.”⁶³

Catalina’s petitions were not always written to favour the same persons as her husband’s; sometimes they petitioned posts for different individuals. There may be several reasons for this. The letters from the viceroy might not have been preserved, although it would be a coincidence for so many cases to be missing. If we reject that hypothesis, two options remain: either the couple divided up the favours they would request between them, with the two insisting only on the most important cases, or the countess had her own network of clients that only partially coincided with that of her husband. The latter would allow the vicereines greater autonomy from their husbands, a possibility that has not been explored. Such a situation seems to have occurred, for example, in May 1600 when Catalina wrote to Aldobrandini after learning that the deanship of

60. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 41, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 20 February 1600, and fol. 44, Count of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 22 May 1600.

61. “Por lo mucho que él me toca que grande merced recibo yo en toda la que VSI le ha hecho y hará hasta poder volver a España.” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 84, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 31 May 1601.

62. “Los dos tenemos mucha obligación.” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fols. 61 and 62, Count and Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 4 July 1600.

63. “Mi señor y yo tenemos particular obligación.” ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 87, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 2 June 1601.

Calahorra was vacant, reminding him that the best candidate was Doctor Juan Ruiz Villoslada. A year later, she mediated on behalf of Monsignor Adorno, who wanted to have the post of alms collector then held by Monsignor Carafa in Portugal.⁶⁴ The fact that Viceroy Lemos did not write to ask favours for them makes us think that these men were closer to Catalina.

In addition to exercising patronage by requesting favours for others, Catalina was also involved in wedding negotiations that would benefit the Spanish Crown. Thus, in May 1600 she wrote to Aldobrandini regarding the marriage of the young Countess of Castro with the Italian Duke of Zagarolo's son, who had gone to Spain in the 1580s to participate in the Armada against England.⁶⁵ The duke had a close relationship with Aldobrandini, having taken part in the expedition led by the cardinal in 1597 against Cesar d'Este to annex Ferrara, and in 1601 the duke would be inducted into the Order of the Golden Fleece. The vicereine regretted she was unable to speed the marriage negotiations along, since the girl's tutors and her mother opposed the marriage. Although the initiative did not move forward, Catalina went in person to meet the duke, who passed on information from the cardinal.⁶⁶ The young Countess of Castro was none other than Lucrezia Gattinara di Legnano, only child and therefore heir of Alessandro Gattinara de Legnano and Vittoria Caracciolo, and a descendant of Charles V's grand chancellor, Mercurino Arborio Gattinara. Three years later, Lucrezia married Francisco de Castro, Catalina's second son.

Catalina also wrote to the cardinal to ask Pope Clement VIII to favour other Spanish noblemen in need of help. In July 1601, she wrote to him regarding Pedro de Toledo, 5th Marquis of Villafranca, who had requested that the pope prevent his daughter María from professing as a nun without his consent. When María's mother died in 1594, the marquis had entrusted his daughter to his

64. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fols. 42–43, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 9 May 1600 and fol. 89, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 12 June 1601.

65. Pompeo Litta, *Famiglie celebri d'Italia, Colonna di Roma*, table 6, n.p. (Milano: Ferrario, 1837).

66. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fols. 57 and 71, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples, 1 June and 10 April 1601. A similar case would take place three decades later, when another vicereine, Leonor de Guzmán, Countess of Monterrey, would also be involved, with her husband, in marriage negotiations that would unite the families of the Duke of Medina de las Torres and the young Neapolitan noblewoman Anna Carafa. See Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez, "Negociando con mujeres. Tensiones familiares e intereses políticos en torno a la sucesión del principado de Stigliano," in Carmen Sanz Ayán et al., eds., *Identità nobiliare tra Monarchia Ispanica e Italia. Linaggi, potere e istituzioni (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2019), 219–23.

widowed sister, María de Toledo y Colonna, 4th Duchess of Alba. On turning eighteen, María announced she wished to enter a convent while the marquis was negotiating her marriage. He ordered his daughter be taken to Corullón Castle, where she was watched over by his oldest son, but to no avail. María escaped one night and entered the convent of La Laura, founded by her aunt, the widowed duchess. The marquis turned to the pope to see if he could remove his daughter from the convent, though the girl's aunt defended her choice. It was in this context that Catalina intervened by writing to the cardinal. She had no doubts about helping the marquis, "for the favours and friendship we in our house have with him." In her holograph letter, she reiterated, "I beg something unconditionally from VSI, and that is that when the duchess increases the pressure you do not consent to change anything until don Pedro returns," so that he could plead with the pope regarding his sister's responses. There was a happy ending to this story: Pedro de Toledo in the end accepted his daughter's decision and in 1604 began building the convent of the Anunciada for Franciscan nuns in Villafranca del Bierzo (León, Spain), where María finally professed and resided.⁶⁷

It is surprising that Catalina's correspondence never included requests for favours for her own immediate family, marking a stark contrast from what occurred with her successor, the Countess of Benavente Mencía de Requesens y Zúñiga (1557–1618), the vicereine from 1603 to 1610.⁶⁸ Mencía also had an extensive correspondence with Cardinal Aldobrandini, though not quite as abundant as Catalina's. She wrote a holograph letter to him in April 1603 requesting favours for three of her twelve children from her second marriage to Juan Alfonso Pimentel, 8th Count of Benavente (1553–1621). The three children were all studying for the priesthood in Salamanca; the oldest was fifteen, the middle boy, twelve, and the youngest nine years old, "and all of them have a good future."⁶⁹ Mencía's wishes were granted, and a year later she thanked the cardinal for the deanship and canon in Salamanca that the pope had given

67. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 90, Countess of Lemos to Aldobrandini, Naples 13 July 1601. Ángela Atienza López, *Tiempo de conventos: una historia social de las fundaciones en la España moderna* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018), 294 and 341.

68. Mercedes Simal and Manuel Fernández del Hoyo, "Donna Mencía de Requesens: dama catalana, contessa castigliana e viceregina napoletana (fra l'altros)," in *Alla corte napoletana. Donne e potere dall'età aragonesa al vicereame austriaco (1442–1734)*, ed. Mirella Mafrici (Naples: Fridericiana Editrice Universitaria, 2012), 155–78.

69. ASV SS Principi leg. 54, fol. 293, Countess of Benavente to Aldobrandini, Naples, 28 April 1603.

to one of the three sons. Two months earlier, her husband had written to the cardinal that he was similarly pleased with the canonry in Seville that had been granted to their son Francisco.⁷⁰

Catalina's importance was noticed also by Italian agents who served at other courts, such as the Grand Duke of Tuscany's envoy, Giulio Battaglini, with whom she and her husband had a close relationship, often visiting his villa in Posillipo to hunt, one of Catalina's favourite pastimes.⁷¹ As early as 1599, when she travelled to Valencia for the double royal wedding, she had received a box of perfumed oils and a small painting from the Florentine court. Once she had settled in Naples she was sent glassware (*crystalli ribolliti*), an elegant straw hat, and purses of multi-coloured silk, referenced as a Turkish gift, of which she was very fond. In October 1599 she was given three black slaves, who arrived in a Tuscan galley ship.⁷²

The Tuscan agent early on had recognized that the gifts were meant to ensure the vicereine's great regard for the grand dukes of Tuscany, and he was aware of her political influence.⁷³ But if the relationship began because of political interests, it appears that the viceroy and his wife shared a true friendship with Battaglini, and they spent enjoyable leisure time together. Perhaps that intimacy prompted the countess to ask him for several things, among them cosmetics (*acqua da denti*), marzolino cheese, small paintings, small wooden dolls (*bambocci*), and relics for her chapel. Gifts continued arriving after Catalina returned to Spain, and not only from Florence.⁷⁴ In 1603, she received presents from Archduchess Isabel Clara Eugenia's famous diplomat, the artist Rubens, sent via the Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo I Gonzaga.⁷⁵ The motive

70. ASV SS Principi leg. 55, fol. 143, Countess of Benavente to Aldobrandini, Naples, 10 August 1604 and fol. 140, Count of Benavente to Aldobrandini, Naples, 22 June 1604.

71. Archivio di Stato di Firenze [hereinafter ASF], Mediceo del Principato [MdP] filza 4087, fol. 659, Giulio Battaglini to Lorenzo di Francesco Usimbardi, Naples, 26 September 1600; Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, Poder y Mecenazgo*, 256–57.

72. ASF MdP filza 4087, fol. 58, Giulio Battaglini to Lorenzo di Francesco Usimbardi, Valencia, 29 March 1599; fol. 278, 24 August 1599 and fol. 429, 19 October 1599.

73. ASF MdP filza 4087, fol. 262, Naples, 25 August 1599.

74. ASF MdP filza 4087, fol. 388, Naples, 24 May 1600 and fols. 209 and 247, Naples, 27 July and 27 September 1599. See Edward Goldberg, "Artistic Relations between the Medici and the Spanish Courts, 1587–1621," part 2, *The Burlington Magazine* 138.1121 (August 1996): 532.

75. Edward Goldberg, "Artistic Relations between the Medici and the Spanish Courts, 1587–1621," part 1, *The Burlington Magazine* 138.1115 (February 1996): 111.

was clear: Catalina de Zúñiga was a prime source of information, given her membership in the group closest to the crown and the Duke of Lerma, over whom she exercised enormous influence, as Orazio della Rena noted in his *Relazione segreta delle cose della corte di Spagna*.⁷⁶

The vicereine alone (1601–02)

When, in August 1601, the Count of Lemos fell ill, Catalina and her son Francisco de Castro made certain to inform Philip of the viceroy's illness;⁷⁷ a few months later, the count died. Francisco had already governed in the spring of 1600, when he was appointed as deputy (*lugarteniente*) of the Kingdom of Naples while his parents went to Rome.⁷⁸ The day after his father's death on October 19, Francisco de Castro took possession as interim viceroy in Naples. Catalina was key in obtaining approval for this from the Neapolitan Collateral Council, which instead had been in favour of the dean.⁷⁹ Catalina, who remained vicereine, wrote personally to the king thanking him for her son's appointment, reminding him that the count had devoted his life to serving the crown and that she and her children were "servants of Your Majesty, both because of who he is and for our obligation to Your Majesty for so many favours and honours."⁸⁰ Catalina played an important role at her husband's funeral ceremonies, an occasion when, according to Isabel Enciso, both the widowed countess and her son took advantage of the situation to consolidate their power in the kingdom. According to the chronicler José Raneó, Catalina showed character in opposing

76. See Edward Goldberg, "State Gifts from the Medici to the Court of Philip III: The *Relazione segreta* of Orazio della Rena," in *Arte y diplomacia de la Monarquía Hispánica en el siglo XVII*, ed. José Luis Colomer (Madrid: Centro de Estudios de Europa Hispánica, 2003), 124.

77. AGS Estado leg. 1097, no. 185, Count of Lemos to Philip III, Naples, 13 October 1601.

78. Favarò, "Un hombre al servicio," 191. ASF MdP filza 4087, fol. 612, Giulio Battaglini to Lorenzo di Francesco Usimbardi, Naples, 28 July 1600.

79. Verónica Gallego Manzanares, "Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval en Nápoles, el nuevo papel de las virreinas a principios del siglo XVII," in *Nuevas perspectivas de investigación en Historia Moderna: Economía, Sociedad, Política y Cultura en el Mundo Hispánico*, ed. M. Ángeles Pérez Samper and J. Luis Betrán Moya (Madrid: FEHM, 2018) 280.

80. "Quedamos por esclavos de V[uestra] M[agestad] tanto por cosas suyas como por la obligación en que V[uestra] M[agestad] nos tiene puestos con tantos favores y honras." AGS Estado leg. 1097, no. 181, Countess of Lemos to Philip III, Naples, 24 October 1601.

representatives of the high nobility of Naples who wished to take over her late husband's post.⁸¹

The widowed countess took seven months to leave Naples because, so the rumours went, she was waiting for her son to be named viceroy. Nevertheless, despite the chronicler Cabrera de Córdoba's repeating the rumours in January 1602 that the king might appoint Catalina's son, in the end, the Count of Benavente was named the new viceroy.⁸² Catalina finally left the Kingdom of Naples's capital on 14 May 1602 along with her son Pedro de Castro and the Count of Gelves, who had travelled there to accompany her.⁸³ The following day they reached Gaeta, the city where the viceroy and the vicereine had first entered the kingdom, fittingly ending her time there.⁸⁴ Five days later, they sailed to the port of Civitavecchia (Rome), where the countess was received by her friend Cardinal Aldobrandini and Antonio Fernández de Córdoba Folch de Cardona, 5th Duke of Sessa.⁸⁵ That would be the last time the countess and the cardinal saw one another. An anonymous missive to the Florentine court reported that when at the port, Catalina refused to disembark, so Aldobrandini must have gone on board to visit her, an indication of her importance. According to the same source, when the ship reached Livorno, the countess behaved in the same manner with the grand duke's emissary, "this lady truly deserves everything good and all the honours."⁸⁶

81. Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Filiación cortesana*, 551–52. Raneo was the author of *Libro donde se trata de los virreyes lugartenientes del reino de Nápoles y de las cosas tocantes a su grandeza, año de 1634*, in Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tomo XXIII, (Madrid 1853).

82. Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, poder y mecenazgo*, 253. Cabrera de Córdoba, 129. AGS Estado leg. 1098, no. 60, Francisco de Castro to Philip III, Naples, 18 April 1602; AGS Estado leg. 1099, no. 43, Count of Benavente to Philip III, Naples, 30 April 1603.

83. AGS Estado leg. 1098, no. 75, Francisco de Castro to Philip III, Naples, 14 May 1602; Cabrera de Córdoba, 139.

84. Diego Sola, "En la corte de los virreyes. Maestros de ceremonias y virreinato en el Nápoles del Seicento," *Tiempos modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna* 31 (2015), 257.

85. AGS Estado leg. 1098, no. 83, Francisco de Castro to Philip III, Naples, 27 May 1602.

86. "certo questa signora merita ogni bene, et ogni honore" ASF MdP filza 4148, fol. 537, 1602.

Conclusion

In early July 1602, the countess moved to Valladolid, at the time the capital city and site of Philip III's court, where she resided next to the palace of her brother, the Duke of Lerma.⁸⁷ In March 1603 she was appointed chief lady-in-waiting to the queen, Margaret of Austria, replacing Lerma's wife, Catalina de la Cerda. Until the queen's death in October 1611, Catalina occupied the most important post in the queen's household, one that allowed her continued involvement in political affairs and an ideal site to follow all the news at court. The former vicereine took good advantage of her privileged position to favour her children's interests, requesting posts for them even after her brother's fall from grace.⁸⁸ Her oldest son, Pedro Fernández de Castro, who became the 7th Count of Lemos, was appointed president of the Councils of Indies (1603–09) and Italy (1616–18) and viceroy of Naples from 1610 to 1616. The second son, Francisco, became the Spanish ambassador to Venice and Rome, appointments in which his mother was very much involved. In 1616, he was appointed viceroy of Sicily, where he remained until 1622. After Pedro's death that same year with no heirs, Francisco inherited the title of 8th Count of Lemos. However, the Duke of Lerma's fall and the subsequent rise of the disgraced duke's son, the Duke of Uceda and the king's confessor, Fray Luis de Aliaga, halted the political advance of Catalina's sons.

As her experience as vicereine demonstrates, Catalina de Zúñiga exercised great power in Italy. Her strong personality and great intelligence, as the papal agent Vicenzio Cicala recognized in 1602, were valued by all her contemporaries.⁸⁹ In his *Apparato funerale nell'esequie celebrate in morte del conte di Lemos vicere del regno di Napoli* (1601), Giulio Cesare Carpaccio emphasized Catalina's prudence and wisdom in governmental matters.⁹⁰ Those around her were keenly aware of the great influence she had on her brother, the powerful Duke of Lerma, and her key role as intermediary in Italian affairs. She herself was aware of all this and knew how to take advantage of her position to

87. Cabrera de Córdoba, 151.

88. Magdalena Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 43–44.

89. Visceglia, 105.

90. Carrió-Invernizzi, "Le viceregine a Napoli," 73.

obtain further benefits for her family and her closest allies. She held on to her influence until her death, which came in 1628 when she was seventy-three.

Catalina de Zúñiga was not an exception. Her successor, Mencía de Requesens, also established a correspondence with Cardinal Aldobrandini, though her influence waned after her uncle, Pope Clement VIII, died in 1605. Even so, the cardinal continued his relationship with the Spanish Monarchy, as evidenced by his using the viceroy in 1606, the Count of Benavente, to transmit his willingness to serve the crown.⁹¹

Thirty years after Catalina de Zúñiga left Naples, the sister of the Count-Duke of Olivares, Leonor María de Guzmán, 6th Countess of Monterrey, became vicereine in 1631. From then until the end of her tenure, in 1637, she corresponded with Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, nephew of the man who had so closely worked with Catalina, Pietro Aldobrandini, who had died in 1621.⁹² These influential men knew that the post of vicereine allowed women to wield considerable power. The cases I have presented in this article offer examples of women who assumed their privileged positions in the court of the Kingdom of Naples. Future studies will surely shed more light on the political as well as social roles played by vicereines in other courts of the Spanish Monarchy.

91. AGS Estado leg. 1103, no. 207, Count of Benavente to King, Naples, 19 December 1606.

92. ASV SS Principi leg. 58, fol. 119, Countess of Monterrey to Cardinal Aldobrandini, Naples, 24 November 1633.