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# MONOGRÁFICO · SPECIAL ISSUE

THE LAST COUNCILLORS OF STATE  
BEFORE THE DYNASTIC CHANGE (1699)

LOS ÚLTIMOS CONSEJEROS DE ESTADO  
ANTES DEL CAMBIO DINÁSTICO (1699)



# A DISTANT COUNCIL, NEARBY PROBLEMS. THE DUKE OF MEDINACELI, NAPLES, AND THE UNITY OF THE SPANISH MONARCHY, 1696-1702

## CONSEJO LEJANO, PROBLEMAS CERCANOS. EL DUQUE DE MEDINACELI, NÁPOLES Y LA UNIDAD DE LA MONARQUÍA HISPÁNICA, 1696-1702

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### Resumen

Este artículo analiza la posición del Duque de Medinaceli ante la crisis sucesoria española. Frente a las tentativas historiográficas por incluir al duque en un partido dinástico, el trabajo enfatiza la idea de fidelidad del duque hacia la Monarquía. Así, la defensa de la unidad de la Monarquía acometida por el virrey es entendida no sólo desde el punto de vista territorial sino, sobre todo, como pragmática salvaguarda de un modelo político: la *'aristomanzia'*. Gracias a él la nobleza española había sido tradicionalmente capaz de controlar al rey a través del Consejo de Estado y el consenso de los Grandes, una práctica que languidecía entrado el siglo XVIII y que Medinaceli defendió sin éxito.

### Palabras clave

Duque de Medinaceli; Nápoles; sucesión española; cultura política

### Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of the Duke of Medinaceli in the face of the Spanish succession crisis. By rejecting historiographical attempts to include the duke within a dynastic party, the essay emphasizes the idea of his loyalty to the Spanish Monarchy. In this way the defense of the unity of the Monarchy undertaken by Medinaceli is understood not only in a territorial viewpoint but as a pragmatic safeguard of a political model: the so-called *'aristomanzia'*. Thanks to it, the Spanish nobility

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had been traditionally able to control the King by way of the Council of State and the consensus of the Grandees, a practice that languished at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century and defended with no success by Medinaceli.

**Keywords**

Duke of Medinaceli; Naples; Spanish Succession; Political Culture

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## INTRODUCTION: THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPUTATIONS OF A DUKE

During the turbulent end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, those who lived the furthest away from the Council were, of all the State's councilors, perhaps the ones who lived the closest to their problems. The institution had filled its ranks with a batch of appointments in 1699, and quite a number of these new members had government responsibilities in Italy at the time<sup>2</sup>. Under their power, were kingdoms and states, some of which had already begun to contemplate the idea of being governed by independent sovereigns if Carlos II were to die without an heir – a possibility which seemed increasingly likely to happen. This, however, was not the only problem that afflicted the 'Italian' councilors. Dismembered from the Monarchy, their dominions also frequently cropped up as minor parts of the divisions envisaged during projects aimed at partitioning Catholic areas that circulated throughout Europe at the time. So, whether their territories were under direct threat or they were facing pressure from their own people, theirs was a difficult perspective to convey to Madrid. From Milan to Sicily, with the Prince of Vaudémont and the Duke of Veragua at the helm, problems with the issue of territorial integrity were borne out in some of the earliest plans. The same was happening in the threatened Viceroyalty of Naples, which the Duke of Medinaceli, Luis Francisco de la Cerda y Aragón, IX (1660-1711), ruled from 1696.

There, the Venetian resident Francesco Savioni affirmed that, albeit clandestinely, the possibility of «perhaps having an autonomous prince who rules directly, without the intermediary of an employed and pensioned viceroy» was attractive<sup>3</sup>. In the Naples of 1700, those hopes surfaced due to the last of the Monarchy's partition treaties. As had happened in 1698, the name of Naples had become a bargaining chip for the aspiring successor who had been left without the sway of inheritance – that is, without Spain and the Indies<sup>4</sup>. Many have taken this as unequivocal proof of the role that Southern Italy played in the power games that ensued while the inheritance of the Spanish Monarchy was being disputed. From this perspective, political marginalization evoked that of the Mediterranean. Not only had the continent's economic hub moved towards the center-west over the last century, but the peninsula had also seen the military move out of the limelight following the end of the great campaigns against the Turks<sup>5</sup>. Given this, a historical reading can

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2. Traditionally, the appointments of 1699 have been viewed as a readjustment of the Council of State planned by the Queen Maria Anna of Neuburg. Please see BARRIO, 1984: 169. Less interest has centered around the notable Italianization of the new councilors: the Prince of Vaudémont was, at that time, Governor of the State of Milan; the Duke of Veragua, Viceroy of Sicily; and the Duke of Medinaceli, Viceroy de Naples. In addition, the Count of Santisteban had been leading the Viceroys of Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily; meanwhile, the Neapolitan Cardinal Francesco del Giudice was engaged at the time in Rome with the affairs of the Spanish Monarchy during the hiatus between the death of the ambassador Count of Altamira and the installation of his successor, the Duke of Uceda. For more information on these individuals, please see the regarding papers on this special issue.

3. NICOLINI, 1937: 34. Quoted in GALASSO, 1982: 522.

4. The treaties, along with the one signed between Emperor Leopold I and Louis XIV in 1668, have recently been transcribed. See RIBOT & IÑURRITEGUI, 2016: 291-338.

5. SPAGNOLETTI (2005): 267-268.

and must be made exactly in the opposite way: the *Mezzogiorno*, like the rest of Italy, would continue to be as important for the Monarchy and those who staked a claim to its patrimony to such an extent that, behind its tendency to compensate, a detrimental blow to the bases of the framework that supported Catholic policies in Europe. In the same vein, one could also add it was so fundamental for the functioning of the Hispanic structures in the Italian peninsula that three of the nine new State councilors would find themselves at the forefront of Hispanic domains in the Italian peninsula –with Cardinal Giudice, an additional fourth State councilor, residing in Rome– because it was so vital for maintaining the Spanish system.

Medinaceli, like many other ministers who had built their careers in Italy, was very well acquainted with the mix of networks, gifts, and pensions that tied Naples to the Spanish Monarchy. The importance that the Viceroyalty continued to have for Madrid was based on its patrimonialization, since it was also with its resources that business elsewhere was sustained. For example, the propaganda strategies deployed by the Embassy of Spain in Rome had always been funded by Naples; these subsidies even helped maintain and repair the Palace of Spain in the city<sup>6</sup>. In this sense, Naples was not just Naples, and there was no one better than Medinaceli, who had been ambassador to the Holy See (1687-1696)<sup>7</sup>, to be aware of the innumerable ways through which the Viceroyalty supported interests that were of utmost importance to the future of the Monarchy.

The figure of Medinaceli has customarily been judged from a certain teleological focus regarding the Monarchy's future and, therefore, the Spanish succession. Studying Medinaceli has traditionally been conditioned by the repression of the so-called 'Congiura di Macchia'<sup>8</sup>, which was the failed rebellion spurred by some patricians in September 1701 against the newly established House of Bourbon and which saw the city cry *Long live the Emperor*. However, his faithfulness to Felipe V at that moment should rather be understood from the angle that he was staying true to his commitment to preserving the unity of the Monarchy that he served from the Viceroyalty and not so much as proof of his affinity for the French. In the end, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the desire to box Medinaceli into one party, we run the risk of establishing rigid ascriptions that do not allow for a much more complex understanding. Medinaceli also did not behave much differently from most of the rest of the Spanish aristocracy regarding the matter of succession. As Luis Ribot has said, talking about parties as if they were specific political options in Spain at the end of the 1600s would be an oversimplification of the situation, whereas pragmatic indeterminacy and the desire to preserve the entirety of the Spanish territories were actually the predominant hallmarks of the Grandees<sup>9</sup>.

Texts that seek to box the Duke into one party or another are evidence enough to become aware of this. On the one hand, a pasquinade published in Rome in 1697 after the capture of Barcelona by the French during the Nine Years' War, said that,

6. MUÑOZ GONZÁLEZ (2000): 409. Please also see ANSELMI, 2001.

7. VILLARRUTIA, 1920.

8. PINTON, 2013: 231-240.

9. RIBOT, 2010: 135-136, 139.

if the ambassador of Louis XIV had not had such success, it was because the Duke of Medinaceli would have already had it for him in Naples<sup>10</sup>. On the other hand, in August 1700 the Duke's image could not be more different. With the news of the last partition treaty in the air, Medinaceli confessed to the Venetian ambassador that it mattered little to him whether the Archduke of Austria, a secondborn son of the Dauphin of France, or a scion of the Great Sultan would become Carlos II's heir<sup>11</sup>. This affirmation, which was surely exaggerated, has been interpreted to be the greatest piece of evidence of the Spanish aristocracy's pragmatism regarding the matter of succession<sup>12</sup> and accounts for many of the possibilities that could fit into their approaches for ensuring territorial integrity. In this respect, there also exists another testimony dated a month before from Medinaceli himself regarding the same treaty, in which he demanded – in apparent contrast – that he and Naples not become «voluntary slaves of France» and claimed to be prepared to lose «one thousand lives» before succumbing to their yoke<sup>13</sup>.

So, are these different stances? As for his relationship with France, beyond the Roman pasquinade, there is no doubt that they are. However, the same cannot be said of the Venetian ambassador's testimony and Medinaceli's own declaration regarding the attitude to be taken towards the partitions. In both cases, the principle that guided the Duke's thinking was no other than the aforementioned criterion of the unity of the Monarchy. He held two conflicting visions of France: a lifeline in the form of the grandson of Louis XIV versus a threat to maintaining territorial integrity, lest the House of Bourbon become its antithesis and jeopardize it. When Medinaceli warned in the last of his testimonies that he would only turn Naples over to whomever the king commanded him to «and had appointed as successor,» this does not mean that he would resist if the Duke of Anjou became the heir. He would reject the grandson of Louis XIV only if such were part of one of the Monarchy's partitions but would never do so if it was the only way to ensure the unity of the Monarchy was passed down in its entirety. The same could be said of any other candidate.

It is possible that such a tone was used in the document –in which the Viceroy voiced his opposition to the «infamous [Bourbon] opinion» regarding the partitions– because the message had gotten confused. Likewise, the generally-referred-to copy of the same document that is conserved at the National Library of Madrid and is of very dubious attribution has aroused more doubts than certainties. However, in this article, the letter will be brought back into the debate but using a version that, while not as well known, is more illustrative and more reliable; this will be seen later on. The idea is more to juxtapose it and other documents with the Duke's endeavor to safeguard the integrity of the Spanish Monarchy and less to brandish it as a signal

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10. GALASSO, 1982: 479.

11. NICOLINI, 1937: 74.

12. RIBOT, 2010: 137.

13. Biblioteca Nacional de España [Bne], ms. 10910, ff. 91v-95v. 'Carta del Duque de Medinaceli sobre el mismo Particular, á León.' Naples, 11 July 1700. Quoted in BERNARDO ARES, 2008: 202. To contextualize this and other texts that have been written concerning these treaties, please see IÑURRITEGUI, 2016: 147-171.

of opposition to Austrians and Bourbons. This councilor and Viceroy of Naples will, in fact, be presented exactly for what he was –one of the *Grandeos* of Spain who also became an official of the bureaucratic-administrative apparatus not upon arrival to the Southern Italian city but from the very moment his *cursus honorum* began. This perspective will also allow for his Neapolitan period, which coincided with the dynastic crisis, to be better understood, as well as his attitudes regarding Carlos II's lack of heirs. In the same vein, this article will analyze his role of being the transmitter of Neapolitan monarchical patrimony between the deceased and his successor, Felipe V. Lastly, the ideological gap between the Duke and the new dynasty that preceded his fall into disgrace in 1710 will be explored in the form of an epilogue, taking into consideration the crisis of the poly-synodic government and the role the *Grandeos* played in it<sup>14</sup>.

### «LIKE A GOOD ITALIAN:» VICEROY AND COUNCILOR BEFORE THE SUCCESSION

As viceroy, Luis Francisco de la Cerda arrived at the city of Vesuvius in March 1696. However, it was not the first time he had seen the city. His eyes had already gazed upon the Viceroyalty's capital eleven years earlier. At that time, he was the Marquis of Cogolludo, as he was still just an heir to the house of Medinaceli, and had been called to serve as governor of the galleys of Naples at the behest of his father. By the early eighties, his father was a confidant of Carlos II, and it was in his father's shadow that the Marquis of Cogolludo would thrive and take the first steps of his career in public service<sup>15</sup>. Although he had already been captain of the Coasts and Galleys of Andalusia, his move to Italy, where his uncle (the Marquis of Carpio and then-Viceroy of Naples) awaited him, solidified a trajectory for his career that would go on to be closely linked to the Italian peninsula. Even though Luis Francisco left for Madrid in October 1686, he would again return to the coasts of Lazio only a year later as ambassador to Pope Innocent XII. All told, he completed up to eighteen years of service in Italy, extending into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

After more than fifteen years in Italy, there are episodes from his final years there that show pride for and attachment to his adopted land, acting and talking less like a Spaniard and more «like a good Italian»<sup>16</sup>, although identifying with the territory did not prove to always be easy for him. During his first time in Naples, there were some recurring criticisms, some spilling into libel, recorded against him. The most famous of these is that in which De la Cerda would get dizzy in the galleys and never managed to raise the spirits of those who were originally from the Spanish kingdom. According to the anonymous author of this text, the reasons mentioned above were the reasons why he was subsequently appointed

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14. KAMEN, 1974: 101-112.

15. ÁLAMO MARTELL, 2004: 547-571. SÁNCHEZ BELÉN (2011): 7-36.

16. NICOLINI, 1937: 260.

as Ambassador to the Holy See<sup>17</sup>. But, if anything can tell us something about the eccentric exaggerations of the libel, it is not the then-Marquis's time in and subsequent departure from Naples but rather his complicated reception in Rome and the reticence his appointment sparked in the Spanish community. This small tome would eventually appear in Rome in 1687 and would garner a certain level of disparagement for the Monarchy's new representative in the city. In addition to being too young for the position at 27 years of age, he was yet again receiving accusations of becoming pro-French<sup>18</sup>.

Perhaps much more interesting in trying to understand his first entrance into Italy, though, would be the extravagance demonstrated during his Neapolitan debut. His desire for notoriety led him to want to use a *felucca* that was more luxurious than that of the Viceroy during the traditional cruise to Posillipo, provoking not just his uncle's anger but the apparition of an explanatory note written by the latter: in Naples, during the ceremony, nobody could rival Carpio in terms of luxuries<sup>19</sup>. However, there is no trace during the event of the oddness that would be associated with a Castilian noble arriving in Italy for the first time –which may have to do with De la Cerda's formation and previous contacts with the continent. In fact, it has been pointed out that his own family environment (which Carpio is included in) might have contributed to this. In 1678, De la Cerda married María de las Nieves Téllez Girón, daughter of the Duke of Osuna, many of whose ancestors had held positions in Italy. Meanwhile, his sister, Lorenza, married Filippo Colonna, whose father had been the first constable to spend much of his time and energy on artistic patronage. Somehow, Italian cultural habits were not entirely alien to De la Cerda<sup>20</sup>, even though he was frequently at the center of misunderstandings.

However, these were not the problems that Medinaceli had to deal with during his second stay in Naples. The magnificence he exhibited as a patron of art and music while Viceroy was, in fact, so renowned that, in the opinion of the chronicler Pietro Giannone, he even «overshadowed the fame of the theatres of Venice and other cities in Italy»<sup>21</sup>. For Medinaceli, though, the economic difficulties facing the kingdom did not allow him all the flexibility he wanted. «The strictness of the treasury does not allow me to bring to fruition all the hopes I had wanted in order for my zeal to shine,» he said on 28 March 1696. In the background, building ships, drafting of 200 Neapolitan soldiers for the galleys, and putting a stop to smuggling were, according to his reports, the issues that occupied the majority of his time as a politician who had recently gotten to Naples<sup>22</sup>. Again and again during the consultations between the State councilors and Italy which reviewed their actions in Madrid, these were

17. Bne, ms. 11261, n. 5, 'El embajador de España incógnito,| Conocido |En la más notoria ignorancia de su Rey, |Publicó |en el maior triumpho de el de Francia |Manifiesto |En los más engañosos tratados contra el señor emperador |el marqués de Cogolludo en Roma.'

18. ALTEA, 1972.

19. ANTONELLI, 2012: 225-226.

20. BARRIO GOZALO, 2013: 53.

21. GIANNONE, 1723: 477.

22. Archivo General de Simancas [AGS], Estado [E], leg. 3327, exp. 18. Duke of Medinaceli to Carlos II. Naples, 6 April 1696.

the topics, along with sending grains and oils to Spanish ports, that were studied and generally approved without much discussion. Medinaceli gave them the impression that he always knew what Naples was going through better than anyone else and even occasionally took the liberty to contravene and correct the king when any of the king's opinions did not seem appropriate to him. At the end of the day, he understood that, if he imposed a strict customs regime to rejuvenate the Viceroyalty's finances or insisted on demonstrating that the Spanish project was in good health by holding festivities for the people to enjoy, which –in Madrid's eyes– could thwart the image that he projected of the Monarchy, his opposition was well deserved.

Before he had been named a State Councilor, he received an order from the king to request a subsidy «to relieve present needs». Curiously, it was an excellent opportunity to voice his opposition. The letter explained that he would be at liberty to formulate the petition for the Neapolitans in whatever way suited him best, but, even so, his refusal to execute it was forthright. He argued in his response to Madrid that the city was not in a position to deal with the donation. In his opinion, though, that was the least of his problems. For the Viceroy, exposing in «such a positive act [...] the unfortunate state of these Kingdoms and the no better state of the Patrimony of Your Majesty therein to these Peoples» would constitute a terrible act of recklessness, «particularly at the present time». He also suspected that the city could come to find out about such an order, given the weakening that it would result in for the image of the Monarchy and the very monarch himself. He came to believe that whoever had advised Carlos II to make such requests had acted either out of ignorance or out of evil, since «they either do not know what Naples is or want to make a criminal out of me for not obeying Your Majesty», concluding that, on that occasion, his disobedience was of greater service to His Majesty than obeying his orders and taking out a donation worth millions to be used on wheat<sup>23</sup>.

Modern-day studies concerning the constraints of political communication have made manifest that there are many different agents involved both in decision making processes and the execution thereof<sup>24</sup>. Viceroys, while in a more prominent position than others, also are party to this phenomenon. However, given the usual formulas for revoking someone's mandate (e.g., simple disregard for an instruction, a delay in its execution, or any excuse more or less obfuscated by the then-current political state of affairs), the frankness and rigidity that Medinaceli articulates his arguments with is particularly surprising. The *pro rex* not only disobeyed the king but allowed himself to go so far as reprimanding whomever had advised the monarch to send an order; this signals an extraordinary security in his behavior and his ascendancy. The Council meeting held a month later, at which his reply would be read and approved, confirmed as much. In his response, not only did Medinaceli accept the representation of the inconveniences that he had created but he even also requested that he be given «particular thanks for them»<sup>25</sup>.

23. AGS, Secretarías Provinciales [SP], leg. 68, s. f. Duke of Medinaceli to Carlos II. Naples, 27 November 1699, included in the consultation with the Council of Italy. Madrid, 8 January 1700.

24. BRADDICK and WALTER, 2001. BLOCKMANS, HOLENSTEIN and MATHIEU, 2009.

25. AGS, SP, leg. 68, s. f. Consultation of the Council of Italy cit. Madrid, 8 January 1700.



A little before this happened, the appointment of new State councilors took place in December 1699, at which point the Austrian Ambassador Aloysius of Harrach wrote that only Medinaceli and the Count of Santisteban were worthy of the position<sup>26</sup>. Without delving into details when he examined the list of appointees, Harrach somehow validated the idea of influence and self-sufficiency that emanated from the Duke and was spreading throughout Europe. Of the «individual contenders to the Spanish Crown, none of them have come to my consciousness, save the Duke of Medinaceli», Andrew Fletcher wrote one year previous in his work *Discorso delle cose di Spagna*. As Fletcher is quick to assert, the possibility of the Viceroy occupying the throne of Spain or some part thereof was frankly remote, given the strong opposition that he aroused in the powers that were and the refusal of the «*privati*» to bow one of their own<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, simply singling him out was an indication of that very notion of authority.

Observing Medinaceli, the concept of ‘conservation’, which had been so dear to Spanish political thought since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, was not exclusively theoretical. We know that the maxim had been present in the day-to-day operations of the Monarchy’s government and that it was a reality that was not alien to the Viceroy. It was a part of the operative professional class in several contiguous areas, and a good part of the cohesion of the Spanish framework can be attributed to it. As some authors have pointed out, the promise (and often the granting) of greater social, economic, cultural and political opportunities to local populations was one of the basis of the unity of the Spanish Monarchy<sup>28</sup>. In all, with a king so far away, the resources of expressing loyalty that the provincial governors knew how to activate turned out to be a decisive instrument in the Monarchy’s unity<sup>29</sup>, and that was precisely the asset that Medinaceli could bring to the issue of succession.

‘Conservation’ could be achieved using moderation, taking the political environment into account. So, when the news of the partition treaty signed by France, England, and the Netherlands in March 1700 reached Naples in early June of that year, the Duke opted to not announce it until after a few weeks had passed<sup>30</sup>. It was a way of organizing the public space before the news was divulged and could also be the way in which his own opinions could, with time, be transferred to Madrid. In the Naples in which the jurist Francesco d’Andrea used ‘*aristomanzia*’ in his work *Discorso politico intorno alla futura successione della Monarchia della Spagna* to refer to the form of government in which the Castilian aristocracy limited the king’s actions by way of his Council and the consensus of his Grandees<sup>31</sup>, Councilor Medinaceli, however, did not limit himself to using only official channels to ensure his opinions regarding ‘conservation’ reached the monarch. On 11 July, in the same letter mentioned above in which he avowed that he would not submit to «the yoke of France»

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26. BAVIERA and GAMAZO, 1935: 137.

27. [FLETCHER], 1698.

28. CARDIM, HERZOG, IBÁÑEZ & SABATINI, 2012: 4.

29. GIL PUJOL, 2016: 249-250.

30. GALASSO, 1982: 520.

31. MASTELLONE, 1969: 183-199.

regarding the partition treaty, Medinaceli asked his interlocutor to communicate his arguments to Queen Maria Anna (and thereby to the king) through her confessor, Father Gabriel, despite having previously written a communiqué.

Thanks to a copy preserved by the Lázaro Galdiano Foundation, we know that the addressee of that letter was Juan Vélez de León, his agent in Madrid, which clears up some unknowns and largely validates the document<sup>32</sup>. «We are in a mess with the treaty brokered in the North», Medinaceli commented to his agent in the document. For the Duke, it was the queen who, in recovering the spirit of Isabel of Castile, had to oppose the partition, even with weaponry; in the Court of Madrid, he even said, «I doubt that the best course of action is being considered». Maria Anna had to make the other princes of Italy (and of Europe) understand, through prudent negotiations and not with pompous embassies, the drawbacks that the dismemberment of the Spanish domains on the Italian peninsula would entail and that they would end up in the hands of Louis XIV, winning them over as allies. According to Medinaceli, partitions, in addition to disturbing the existing equilibrium, meant that she «[did] not love the glory of her husband» nor that of «their vassals». Thus, Medinaceli, in directly addressing the queen through her confessor, humanizing the issue, and entirely avoiding the Council, used a formula which seemed more direct and less exposed yet which also validated the limits that *homines politici* had on Madrid.

In contrast to them, «everyone knows of the great hand and authority that Her Majesty has with the King [...] and it is necessary to use it now in persuading her royal spouse [to make] the strongest resolutions», he said, revealing both his misunderstanding of the government apparatus and the reason why he preferred going the way of the confessional to deal with the matter<sup>33</sup>. Not only did Medinaceli thus limit the reach of the Statesmen's opinions in the decision-making process but also rendered an entire ruling class unnecessary, which he had already called into question on other occasions, such as with the donation from Naples.

In a piece of his correspondence with the Count of Santisteban, Medinaceli, in fact, did not go much beyond applauding his assistance in Madrid with regard to the threat of the partition treaty. In response to a letter from the Count at the beginning of July, he merely underscored that the king would have to make «the most convenient arrangements and that we should desire from the reaction of the state that our things and the understanding we lack outside of them be reduced»<sup>34</sup>. This was concern and vigilance without going into the details that he had, nevertheless, already sent to his agent with the goal of influencing the «arrangements» that Carlos II would have to adopt. Medinaceli's stance was one option, but it is no less certain, however, that that path could only go so far, for, by the time when Medinaceli's opinion would have reached Madrid, the king should have already had a rather

32. Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, Papeles Varios, 477, XV, t. II, ff. 368v-371r. Copia de un papel que se esparció en nombre del Señor Duque de Medinaceli dirigido a don Juan de León, su agente. Naples, 11 July 1700. For Juan Vélez de León, see URRÁ RÍOS, 2016. We don't know, however, who was the interested party in the dissemination of the letter in Madrid.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Archivo Ducal de Medinaceli [Adm], Fondo Santisteban, leg. 23-6. Duke of Medinaceli to the Count of Santisteban (containing the response of the former). Madrid, 8 July 1700.



developed opinion on how to avoid breaking up the Monarchy. During a consultation held on 8 June, the majority of the councilors argued that a second or third son of the Dauphin of France should succeed Carlos II as King of the Spanish Monarchy in order to ensure its territorial integrity<sup>35</sup>. A month later, the Council would again declare the same thing, if anything with more force<sup>36</sup>. As Medinaceli later explained during the month of August, maintaining unity had little to do with who succeeded Carlos II<sup>37</sup>. He would be amenable to whatever would be agreed upon, provided that the fundamental principle of maintaining monarchical unity would be guaranteed.

## DEALING WITH A DISPUTED INHERITANCE

When Carlos II passed away without an heir and left his vast inheritance to the Duke of Anjou, Medinaceli did not delay in making sure that this did not necessarily entail a safeguard for the tranquility and integrity of Naples. Although he had the support of the *ceto civile* (literally, the *civil class*, which was composed of the bureaucratic-intellectual elite who had extensive juridical training), the Viceroyalty was formally a fief of the Church, a status which allowed people to freely speculate about its future. As proof of this, the nuncio of Acquaviva published a note in Madrid on 8 November 1700, just a week after the death of the king, in which he reminded people of the rights that the Holy See held over the *Mezzogiorno*. Naples and Sicily, he said, were to come under the control of Rome, since Carlos II had no direct descendants<sup>38</sup>. The nuncio's declaration supported an old pontifical aspiration to place the Papacy in a preponderant political position in Italy, and, although it did not place the newly installed King Felipe V's future dominion of the territory in jeopardy, it indirectly ended up giving rise to similar arguments in Naples against the legitimacy of the new monarch. So, when the news of Carlos II's death arrived on 20 November, many voices expressed questions about the heir and Madrid's interim government with similar arguments. Monsignor Casoni, Acquaviva's counterpart in Naples, explained that there was «some evil disposition [present] in some people, who had expressed their discontent with the present Government, almost as if the powers that had been granted to those who govern would be cut off after the death of the king»<sup>39</sup>.

Faced with these doubts, Medinaceli was very explicit in staging the new power. First, he summoned his ministers and members of the Collateral to his palace and informed them of the succession. He then arranged with them the measures necessary to ensure tranquility both in the capital and throughout the kingdom and, a day later, informed the rest of the barons and knights of the same news in

35. Archivo Histórico Nacional [Ahn], E, leg. 2780, s. f. Consultation of the Council of State. Madrid, 8 June 1700.

36. Ahn, E, leg. 673.1, s. f. Consultation of the Council of State. Madrid, 8 July 1700.

37. NICOLINI, 1937: 74.

38. Archivio Segreto Vaticano [Asv], Segreteria di Stato [Segr. Stato], Spagna, 182, ff. 453-454. Public note from the nuncio Acquaviva on the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. Madrid, 8 November 1700.

39. Asv, Segr. Stato, Napoli, 126, ff. 385-386. Announcement from the nuncio Casoni. Naples, 26 November 1700.

the antechamber of his residence, which then spread quickly throughout the city. When Medinaceli found out on 27 November 1700 that Louis XIV had accepted Carlos II's will in favor of his grandson, the Viceroy ordered all the castles in the city to fire commemorative cannon shots, which were followed by the celebratory ringing of church bells<sup>40</sup>. To reinforce the ceremonial events, Medinaceli also developed a clever typographic program with which to argue the legitimacy of the Bourbons as well as that of the government that awaited the former's arrival in Madrid. To calm things down, Medinaceli ordered the clauses of Carlos II's will that designated the Duke of Anjou as his successor and specified the formation of an interim junta during the interregnum be published, as well as the queen's communiqué that had accompanied these documents<sup>41</sup>. Naples had a new king, and there was nothing better than spreading the good news to each and every corner of the kingdom in order to consolidate his authority.

Medinaceli, thus, took essential steps to ensure that the small piece of inheritance that was Naples was handed over to its rightful owner along with the rest of the Monarchy's territories, and he did so while waiting for movements that did not take long to arrive. In mid-December, several posters placed in various parts of the city confirmed the message that rumors had already put forth: with the death of King Carlos II, the jurisdiction and faculties of those in power had been terminated. These posters also said that the tributes and taxes that had been established in the Viceroyalty, which also affected the price of food, had been imposed without pontifical consent, and, as such, they were not valid. The pamphlets were signed by the «*Difensori de' Privileggi del Popolo Napoletano*» («Defenders of the Privileges of the People of Naples») and were subsequently ripped down and brought to the Viceroy. According to the nuncio, he did not make a big deal out of it, but they were premonitory hints of the problems that awaited the Viceroyalty the following year<sup>42</sup>.

At the onset of 1701, the Duke did not tire of mentioning that, in the midst of the calm that prevailed throughout the city, «malignity did not lack its exercise» and that he would remain vigilant<sup>43</sup>. Thanks to information from the Prince of Vaudémont sent from Milan, he knew that knights from Naples had been sent to the kingdom who had until then served the emperor under the pretext of wanting to swear allegiance to Philip V. They assured him that their ultimate intention was to encourage insurrections<sup>44</sup>. Surely, the imperial troops' movements in northern Italy strengthened the disaffected, but they also fed reservations held by the rest of the population. Not surprisingly, Medinaceli lamented that there were hardly any

40. Asv, Segr. Stato, Napoli, 126, ff. 375-376 and 390-391. Announcement from the nuncio Casoni. Naples, 23 and 27 November 1700.

41. *Copia di Clausole del Testamento fatto dal Rè Nostro Signore D. Carlo Secondo, che sia in Gloria, appartenenti alla Successione di tutti li Regni, e Dominij nel giorno 2 d'Ottobre 1700*, Carlo Porsile, Naples, 1700. These accompanied the clauses of the printed *Copia del despaccio originale che si conserva in questa Secretaria di Stato, e Guerra in questo Regno di Napoli, 25 Nouembro 1700. D. Diego Cabrerros*, Carlo Porsile, Naples, 1700. Copies of both prints at Asv, Segr. Stato, Napoli, 126, ff. 399-403.

42. Asv, Segr. Stato, Napoli, 126, ff. 442-443. Nuncio Casoni to Cardinal Paulucci. Naples, 21 December 1700.

43. Bibliothèque National de France [Bnf], Lorraine 799, ff. 13-14. Duke of Medinaceli to the Prince of Vaudémont. Naples, 11 February 1701.

44. Bnf, Lorraine 799, ff. 24-25. Duke of Medinaceli to the Prince of Vaudémont. Naples, 8 March 1701.

sales of the Viceroyalty's patrimony, the proceeds of which could fund its defense; he said again that «malignity spreads rumors that this Kingdom has not been able to obtain investments from any sale that is made, it can later be void»<sup>45</sup>.

In any case, Medinaceli's desire was to involve as many of Italy's, and thereby the Viceroyalty's, security agents as possible and convince them that he would address not only the Empire with a collaborative attitude but also the French presence in the peninsula. The idea of preserving the Monarchy that had been wielded before the succession meant independence for it and for Italy, he thought, and, from there, he began his pursuit to unify all Italians. This way, it would not be necessary to tell the French to go to the State of Milan, Monsignor Casoni explained, «for fear that they will not be able to then make them leave so easily»<sup>46</sup>. However, in Naples, opera was the most effective means through which the Viceroy communicated the message of autonomy that he wanted for the Monarchy, giving people a glimpse of how necessary a quick 'Hispanization' of Felipe V was. On 1 May 1701, in commemoration of the feast day of the new King's patron saint, the play *Laodicea e Berenice* was shown in the theatre of San Bartolomeo, whose script begins with the following enlightening words: «Antiochus King of Asia only thought about the enlargement of his own Kingdom». In her introductory aria, the character of Berenice was even more suggestive, with a thinly veiled allusion to the Emperor and to Louis XIV: «Between two Tyrants | Stands my poor little heart»<sup>47</sup>.

By the time 23 and 24 September rolled around, the *coniuratio* and Medinaceli had repressed the insurrectionists authoritatively. This would thus not be a 'dynastic' but 'monarchical' defense, and it is from this perspective that some of the accusations previously made against the figure of the Duke by Francesco Spinelli, exiled in Vienna after the failed coup, make more sense. According to him, the acclamation of the people of Naples would have been more important for the legitimacy of the new king than the investiture of the Pope as feudal lord. If this had been lacking, then Felipe V would have simply been an illegitimate king. For Spinelli, Medinaceli's attitude toward the proclamation of the new king had not only been an attack on Neapolitan tradition but had also sought a change in the relationship model between Naples and the Spanish Monarchy. Somehow, Medinaceli personified an attack on the voluntarism that had made a contract and the exploration of an alternative model of government in which the prince ruled without the consent of his people possible<sup>48</sup>.

It is curious that the accusations of authoritarianism that the imperial propaganda made against the Viceroy accompanied the motives that Madrid ended up shuffling around in order to separate him from the office. Despite having been confirmed for a third triennium in July 1701, his harsh repression of the revolt, which resulted in the death of some of its protagonists, lent itself to the arguments of some who had accused the Viceroy of being an oppressor who wanted to put an end to the idea of establishing pacts. There were many kinsmen to the conspirators throughout

45. Bnf, Lorraine 799, ff. 78-79. Duke of Medinaceli to the Prince of Vaudémont. Naples, 19 August 1701.

46. Asv, Segr. Stato, Napoli, 129, f. 7. Nuncio Casoni to Cardinal Paulucci. Naples, 28 December 1700.

47. DOMÍNGUEZ RODRÍGUEZ, 2013: 220-221.

48. COLAPIETRA, 1961: 152. NADDEO; 2011: 44-45.

the kingdom, and an excessively punitive attitude could have consequences for the mindsets of those who had remained on the very far periphery of the revolt. While the Viceroy's zeal in defending the new monarch had triumphed, it seemed, paradoxically, counterproductive to the Monarchy's interests, which is why news arrived in December of that year of the Duke of Escalona's substitution of Medinaceli<sup>49</sup>. The position of president of the Council of the Indies awaited him in Madrid as well as a number of penalties; in Naples, he left an only seemingly pacified place and memories of an alliance with the *ceto civile*.

## THE DECLINE OF A MODEL: A CONCLUSION

The Palatine Academy that operated in Naples between 1698 and 1701 through an initiative of Medinaceli's was the greatest display of communion between intellectuals and those in power<sup>50</sup>. Through a reading ritual, the institution placed value on a professional group facing off with the patriciate and was given space for learning exercises that dealt with key policies, which also served as a springboard for the survival of the Monarchy. Seated in a circle and in the presence of the Viceroy, its members debated any number of different disciplines, although always with a preponderance for History and the Empires of Antiquity<sup>51</sup>. There existed in it the Ciceronian conviction that the study of history was an essential instrument with which one could extract lessons for empires like Spain's which had come under serious threat. As Medinaceli understood before long, the War of Succession, just like the Barbarian Invasions during the decline of Rome, could be a point of no return for a Monarchy that was diminishing and giving way to other powers at its own expense. Such powers were namely Austria, which was pouncing on Italy where he had lived for so many years, and France, which put the *aristomanzia* that Francesco d'Andrea had talked about when introducing strange government men in Madrid at risk. «Every new Empire, just like the Roman Empire, is violent and hateful» was uttered during one of the Academy's lessons, and, back in Spain, Medinaceli could see how true those words were<sup>52</sup>.

In Madrid, Medinaceli was, in effect, a witness to not only the virulence with which the war struck the Iberian Peninsula but also to how the environment surrounding Felipe V could, through courtesan and government practices, threaten the constitutional imaginary of the Monarchy that had elevated nobles like him. For example, the issue of the so-called 'bench,' where a captain of the Corps Guard came to occupy the seat that separated Felipe V from Medinaceli and the other grandees in the royal chapel in 1705, was good proof of this. The indignation that the new precedence provoked among the nobles had to do with more than just the

49. GALASSO, 1982: 629.

50. Giambattista Vico, one such intellectuals, said that, with the Academy, the Viceroy had restored literature to a level of glory not seen in the city since the time of Alfonso de Aragón. VICO, 1975: 137.

51. RAK, 2000-2005.

52. DANDELET, 2015: 155.

ceremonial courtier. The gesture was seen as an attack «on the mystical body of the Monarchy». If the king disregarded the nobles and brought new members into his body of government, then, it was said, he risked turning it into a deformed organ<sup>53</sup>.

The Spanish Monarchy was thus ever more difficult to recognize for those who, like Medinaceli, advocated for and championed its defense. In 1706, taking another step in the direction of constitutional subversion, Felipe V implemented a Junta of Incorporations through which he could avail himself of offices and powers that had been removed and segregated from the Crown both during and before his reign. With this formula, the King controlled income from royal contributions, jurisdictions, and offices donated or sold from the Middle Ages in order to pay for the war's expenses, but Medinaceli's voice rose again in the form of a manifesto in which his repudiation for the junta was juxtaposed with a reminder that he belonged to the royal lineage<sup>54</sup>. Ultimately, the unity he had fought for at the end of the reign of Carlos II had not been solely territorial in nature. It had also been based on safeguarding a model which had little to do with the practices being implemented in Madrid that left the councilors languishing.

This must have given Medinaceli the sensation that a contract had been broken –one whose terms were the same as the contract that the Duke had been accused of breaking in Naples. Perhaps paradoxically, there lies the key to understanding the 'Italian' Medinaceli, the 'Spanish' Medinaceli, and the sum of both together, which regained some political centrality in 1709. Not surprisingly, when Louis XIV abandoned Felipe V to his fate that year in full search of an advantageous peace, recovering monarchist ideology must have been the reason why Medinaceli continued to lead the government in pursuit of Felipe V's Hispanization<sup>55</sup>. What is certain, though, is that that period did not last long, as the Duke ended up in disgrace, but he must have understood well how much things had already changed. He, who had defended *his* Monarchy so much, only saw apathy and horror around him. He told his confidant, «Here, people live without taking charge of anything, [...] and, in the end, live totally irregularly, with nothing normal but the annihilation of the people, the destruction of vassals, and generally displeasing everyone»<sup>56</sup>. His universe had already disappeared, as the bitterness of his commentary attests to, and, with it, the battalion of champions of 'conservation' who, like Medinaceli himself, had been faithful to the Monarchy and did not hesitate in doing so.

53. TERRASA LOZANO (2013): 163-197.

54. VICENT LÓPEZ, 1995: 365-377.

55. GARCÍA-BADELL ARIAS (2005): 125-149.

56. AGS, Gracia y Justicia, leg. 1021. [Duke of Medinaceli to the Marquis of Rinuccini.] 7 April 1710. Little is known about the circumstances that led to the incarceration of the Duke of Medinaceli and what ended up causing his death while in prison. He might have considered the threat his persona represented for the princess des Ursins. Part of the documentation seized from the Duke is held today in the Gracia y Justicia section of the General Archive of Simancas, including his correspondence with the Marquis of Rinuccini, sent by the Duke of Toscana. On his captivity, see PEÑALOSA ESTEBAN-DRAKE, 2001.



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