

SERVICE TO THE KING AND LOYALTY TO THE DUKE: THE CASTRO FAMILY IN THE FACTION OF THE DUKE OF LERMA *

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ABSTRACT

The Castro family, Counts of Lemos since the Middle Ages, reached the zenith of its power and prestige during the reign of Philip III. The political link generated by the marriage between the sixth Count of Lemos and one of the Duke of Lerma's sisters allowed the sons of the couple to play a leading role within the faction led by the favourite of the King. The article aims to compare the work of the seventh and the eighth Count of Lemos, especially during their viceregal mandates in the Italian lands, highlighting the way in which they were able to contribute to the faction's objectives and strategies. This comparison will show how, in the factions of early modern Europe, characters of very different abilities and ambitions could act together, being used each and every time according to their own skills and the needs of their families and allies.

KEYWORDS: Duke of Lerma, Favouritism, Counts of Lemos, Faction, Spanish Italy

SERVICIO AL REY Y LEALTAD AL DUQUE: LA FAMILIA CASTRO EN LA FACCIÓN DEL DUQUE DE LERMA

RESUMEN

Los Castro, condes de Lemos desde la Edad Media, tuvieron su época de mayor poder y prestigio durante el reinado de Felipe III. El vínculo político generado por el matrimonio entre el VI conde de Lemos y una de las hermanas del duque de Lerma permitió que los hijos de la pareja jugaran un papel importante dentro de la facción liderada por el favorito del rey. El artículo tiene como objetivo comparar el trabajo del VII y del VIII conde de Lemos, especialmente durante sus mandatos virreinales en tierras italianas, poniendo de relieve de qué manera fueron capaces de contribuir a los objetivos y estrategias de la facción. Esta comparación mostrará

* Abbreviations: ADA (Archivo Duques de Alba, Madrid); BNE (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid). I would like to thank Nicoletta Bazzano and her suggestions during our discussions about Francisco de Castro and his political career.

cómo, en las facciones de la Europa moderna, personajes de muy diferentes capacidades y ambiciones podían actuar juntos, siendo utilizados cada vez de acuerdo con sus propias habilidades y con las necesidades de sus familias y sus aliados.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Duque de Lerma, Valimiento, Condes de Lemos, Facción, Italia española

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The diplomatic and political careers of the two generations of the Castro family who served King Philip III of Habsburg are an ideal tool for understanding some of the mechanisms which governed factions in the European monarchies of the early modern age. Their ascent at court and the different stages of their careers in the Italian possessions of the Habsburg Monarchy can show how the sixth Count of Lemos, and after him his sons, the seventh and the eighth Count of Lemos, gave their service and loyalty to the Duke of Lerma in different ways. Through their example, this paper aims to explain the extent to which various levels of fidelity and independence towards the directives of the faction's leader and his closest associates could exist within a faction. Furthermore, when the faction almost completely coincided with one's family, even if powerful and prestigious, the need to use any human resource available meant that even men not so deserving could be repeatedly assigned complex and important tasks.

The branch of the Castro family who served the *Rey Piadoso* and his most important favourite was the only to survive after the crisis that the whole Castilian nobility had gone through in the second half of the Middle Ages.¹ In fact, both the Castilian branch of the family, settled in Castrojeriz, and the Galician one disappeared between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. The family inheritance was thus collected by the bastard branch, which was also located in Galicia. Organising their power around Monforte de Lemos and immediately standing by the nobility sided with the Trastámara, the Castros were at the service of the various Kings of Castile, participated in war efforts, and obtained titles and assignments. The genealogy of the family, rebuilt following the will of the Counts of Lemos of the seventeenth century and enriched, as frequently happened,² with mythical or entirely *invented*

¹ The history of the Counts of Lemos' family during the Middle Ages has been analysed in many chronicles and critical studies. In addition to the biographies, mentioned below, of some members of the clan, one can recall the research of José García Oro, *La nobleza gallega en la Baja Edad Media. Las casas nobles y sus relaciones estamentales* (Santiago de Compostela: Bibliófilos Gallegos, 1981); idem, *Galicia en los siglos XIV y XV* (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1987); Germán Vázquez, *Historia de Monforte y su tierra de Lemos* (León: Editorial Evergráficas, 1990); Ermelindo Portela Silva, *De Galicia en la Edad Media: sociedad, espacio y poder* (Santiago de Compostela: Consellería de Relacions Institucionais e Portavoz do Goberno, 1993); Eduardo Pardo de Guevara, *Los señores de Galicia. Tenentes y condes de Lemos en la Edad Media* (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 2000). Among the chroniclers, Felipe de la Gándara, *Historia de Galicia. Armas y triunfos de los hijos de Galicia* (Madrid: Pablo de Val, 1662); ADA, C-15: Malaquías de la Vega, *Cronología de los jueces de Castilla, antecesores de la familia de los Castro, conde de Lemos, Andrade y Villalba, marqueses de Sarriá*; Vasco de Aponte, *Relación de algunas casas y linajes del reino de Galicia* (Buenos Aires: Editorial nova, 1945).

² For an analysis of the phenomenon, typical of the early modern age, of the rewriting of family genealogies, often interwoven with mythical and fantastic elements, see the study of

elements, passed through the dynastic struggles of the fifteenth century, with the granting of the title of the first Count of Lemos to Pedro Álvarez Osorio, husband of Beatriz de Castro, the daughter of an illegitimate heir of the Galician Castros. The struggles at court and those to defend and enlarge the family heritage led the Castros to play an increasingly leading role in the political events of the Castilian, first, and then the Habsburg monarchy. Some members of the clan, such as the second Count of Lemos, made unwise choices by placing himself, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, on the side of Philip the Fair in the complicated years that followed the death of Isabella of Castile. Others, like the fourth Count of Lemos, were important players in the court competition: he was in fact *mayordomo mayor* of Princess Juana, sister of Philip II, an important member of the Prince of Eboli's faction and was rewarded for his service with the title of Marquis of Sarriá.

The real turning point in the destiny of the family, however, arrived with Pedro de Castro, the fifth Count of Lemos, and the careful marriage policy that he was able to arrange for himself and his heir. He organised his second marriage with the daughter of the Count of Chinchón,³ one of the most powerful men at court during the last years of the Philip II's reign and a protagonist, along with Cristóbal de Moura and Juan de Idiáquez, of the powerful juntas, especially the *Junta de Noche*, which effectively ruled the Spanish monarchy then.⁴ Those *juntas* anticipated some of the elements that were typical of the *validos'* government: the bypassing of the woolly system of the *consejos*, the loss of power of secretaries and counsellors, the trust placed by the King only on a small number of courtiers, always present in the various extraordinary committees created to address many and different issues.⁵ For his eldest son, born by his first marriage to the daughter of the Duke of Albuquerque, the fifth Count of Lemos opted instead for a union with Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval, sister of the fifth Marquis of Denia. Head of a family in financial difficulties and breathlessly in search of the titles and estates lost during the dynastic struggles of the fifteenth century, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, fifth Marquis of Denia, built the redemption of his entire clan in the same years, earning the affection and trust of the heir, the future

Roberto Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili. Scritti di storia nell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995).

³ Santiago Fernández Conti, "La Nobleza Cortesana: Don Diego de Cabrera y Bobadilla, Tercer Conde de Chinchón," in *La corte de Felipe II*, ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994), 229-270.

⁴ On Cristóbal de Moura, see Santiago Martínez Hernández, "«Ya no ay Rey sin Privado»: Cristóbal de Moura, un modelo de privanza en el Siglo de los Validos," *Librosdelacorte.es* 2 (2010): 21-37; on Juan de Idiáquez, the old study of Fidel Pérez Mínguez, *Don Juan de Idiáquez embajador y consejero de Felipe II* (San Sebastián: Imprenta de la Diputación de Guipúzcoa, 1935). More in general, on the court of the last years of Philip II, see the studies cited in the footnote 8.

⁵ For a more detailed description of this system of government, typical of the *validos*, see Antonio Feros, "Lerma y Olivares: la práctica del valimiento en la primera mitad del seiscientos," in *La España del Conde Duque de Olivares*, eds. John H. Elliott and Ángel García Sanz (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1990), 195-224; Francesco Benigno, *La sombra del rey. Validos y lucha política en la España del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994).

Philip III.⁶ After the death of the *Rey Prudente*, the government of the first *valido* in the Iberian history, universally known by his title of Duke of Lerma, granted in 1599, began. Within the Ministerial faction, made up of family members, allied aristocratic families and the different *hechuras* of Lerma, the Counts of Lemos played a leading role, becoming essential figures in strengthening the power of their patron, and being largely rewarded by the *valido* for their loyalty and their service.⁷

In the last two decades of the sixteenth century, the fifth Count of Lemos and his successor, Fernando Ruiz de Castro, were repeatedly called by Philip II, by virtue of the location of their Galician possessions, to intervene in Portugal – annexed to the Habsburg crown in 1580 – or to defend the peninsular coasts from English attacks.⁸ Fernando, who succeeded to his father in the 1590s as sixth Count of Lemos, was not very present at court until the succession to the throne, when the family relationship with Lerma opened the way to an important political and diplomatic assignment: the viceroyalty of Naples. Lemos replaced then the Count of Olivares, a man linked to the previous group of power under Philip II, at the head of the most important among the Italian possessions of the Monarchy, easy source of profit for the viceroys but also an insidious step in a personal political career, considering the presence of a heavy economic situation and an aristocracy increasingly difficult to control. Since 1599, the sixth Count of Lemos proved his loyalty to Lerma and the merits and prestige of his family and himself. He was also sent as extraordinary ambassador to Rome in order to pay obedience to Pope Clement VIII in the name of Philip III, a mission that gave him great prestige, but did not produce the desired political effects.⁹ This was indeed a period of great tension between the Holy See and Madrid dictated by international politics – for example the issues raised by the Peace of Vervins and the war of Saluzzo – and the defense of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the specific context of Naples. However, Lemos's government lasted very little: his death, in 1601,¹⁰ gave way to the rise of his sons and perhaps marked the start of the brightest phase, even if brief, of the family history.

⁶ On the rise of the fifth Marquis of Denia and first Duke of Lerma in the court of Philip II, I have already discussed it in my article «La hora de la mudanza». L'ascesa del marchese di Denia e il dibattito culturale sul favorito nella corte di Filippo II," *Società e Storia* 144 (2014): 219-247.

⁷ About Lerma and his government, see Bernardo J. García García, *La Pax Hispanica. Política exterior del duque de Lerma* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); Antonio Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598-1621* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Patrick Williams, *The great favourite. The Duke of Lerma and the court and government of Philip III of Spain, 1598-1621* (Manchester – Nueva York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, *El Duque de Lerma. Corrupción y desmoralización en la España del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2010).

⁸ Antonio Eiras Roel, ed., *El reino de Galicia en la Monarquía de Felipe II* (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 1998).

⁹ BNE, Mss. 6150: *Jornada a Roma de Fernando Ruiz de Castro, VI conde de Lemos y virrey de Nápoles*, fos 81r-96v; Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, "La embajada de obediencia del VI conde de Lemos: ceremonial diplomático y política virreinal," in *Roma y España. Un crisol de la cultura europea en la Edad Moderna*, ed. Carlos José Hernando Sánchez (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2007), I, 471-514.

¹⁰ For a general description of the sixth Count of Lemos's political career: Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, "Filiación cortesana y muerte en Nápoles: la trayectoria política del VI conde de Lemos," in *Felipe II y el Mediterráneo*, ed. Ernest Belenguer Cebrià (Madrid:

From the marriage to Catalina de Zúñiga y Sandoval were born three sons: Pedro, who inherited the title of seventh Count of Lemos, Francisco and Fernando, all born in Monforte de Lemos and equipped, thanks to their studies at the local Jesuit College,¹¹ with a fine cultural preparation and a keen sensitivity to the arts and letters. Leaving aside here the youngest of the brothers, to whose descendants is due the confluence of the titles of Lemos in the house of Berwick and Alba in the eighteenth century, here I address the careers of two older brothers, summarising their essential steps and comparing the different contributions that they were able to give to the faction and power of the Duke of Lerma.

Pedro Fernández de Castro, born in 1576, could count from the beginning on a privileged relationship with the powerful uncle. This link was further strengthened by the marriage, in 1598, to his cousin Catalina de la Cerda, one of Lerma's daughters.¹² The seventh Count of Lemos was involved since young age in the government of the monarchy and the internal dynamics of the ruling faction, counting on the esteem of Lerma but also on the support of his mother. Widowed, the powerful Countess of Lemos had returned to Madrid, called by his brother to fill the delicate role of *camarera mayor* of the Queen, a big opponent of the Sandovals, left vacant after the death of the Duchess of Lerma. In 1603, just 27 years old, Pedro was appointed President of the Council of Indies and then, starting from 1610 and for two consecutive three-year terms, took the place that had been of his father as viceroy of Naples. Lemos returned to the court in 1616, at the end of his Neapolitan period, following the advice of his mother and of the Duke of Lerma, whose power was declining in favour of his son, the Duke of Uceda, and the King's confessor Luis de Aliaga. There, he took up the position of President of the Council of Italy, thanks to which he could take revenge on his opponents in Naples and try to counteract the action of the Duke of Osuna, his successor in Naples linked to the Uceda-Aliaga group. Furthermore, Pedro tried to secure his own and his family's future by approaching the heir to the throne, the future Philip IV. Their shared passions, especially the love for theatre, helped Lemos in gaining the confidence of the Prince and his young wife. However, the opposition of his cousin Uceda and the men connected with him in the *cámara* of the King's son – among them Gaspar de Guzmán, Count of Olivares – produced the so-called "revolution of the keys", one of the most famous and significant episodes in the period of decline of the Duke of Lerma and the rise of his opponents. Already alone and conscious of the imminent fall of his uncle – who in fact was soon dismissed from the court on Philip III's orders – Lemos retired to his estates in Galicia and remained there until his death without heirs in 1622.¹³

Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1999), III, 515-561.

¹¹ Evaristo Rivera Álvarez, *Galicia y los Jesuitas: sus colegios y enseñanzas en los siglos XVI al XVIII* (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1989).

¹² Manuel Hermida Balado, *La condesa de Lemos y la Corte de Felipe III* (Madrid: Paraninfo, 1950).

¹³ About the figure of the seventh Count of Lemos, many studies have been written. Among them, Alfonso Pardo Manuel de Villena, *Un mecenas español del siglo XVII. El conde de Lemos* (Madrid: Imprenta de J. Ratés Martín, 1911); Manuel Hermida Balado, *Vida del VII conde de Lemos (interpretación de un mecenazgo)* (Madrid: Editorial Nos, 1948); Eduardo

The political and personal path of the second brother, Francisco de Castro, was instead very different. Unlike Pedro, who remained at court near the Duke of Lerma and at the centre of power, Francisco followed his parents to Naples in 1599. After the death of his father, he was appointed viceroy *interino* by the *valido*, and was in charge of carrying out the mandate of his father until the appointment of a new viceroy. After the arrival of the Count of Benavente in Naples in 1603, Francisco returned only occasionally to the court of Madrid, preferring instead to spend long periods in Italy, at Rome and Gaeta. The choice of marriage seemed to follow such a predilection for Italy as he married Lucrezia Lignana Gattinara, a descendant of the Grand Chancellor Mercurino,¹⁴ related to some important families of the Italian Peninsula, such as the Colonna, the Acquaviva and the Caracciolo. The *cursus honorum* of Francisco continued with a number of prestigious positions: extraordinary ambassador to Venice in 1606, immediately after the Interdict launched against the Venetian Republic by Paul V; ordinary ambassador to the Holy See from 1609 to 1615; finally, viceroy of Sicily from 1616 – when his brother left Naples to take part in the political struggle at court – to 1622, for a total of two terms. After the death without heirs of Pedro in the same year, Francisco inherited the title of eighth Count of Lemos, but did not become a leading figure in the court of Philip IV. In fact, even being a member of the Council of State and the Council of War, he was for a long time an impalpable presence at court, upset by his wife's death in 1623, and perhaps unwilling to take a position in the changed factional balances. He waited the majority of his eldest son to leave him titles and assets and, in 1629, entered the Benedictine monastery of Sahagún, and died in Madrid in 1637.¹⁵

By comparing the careers and personal events of the two brothers, some elements in common certainly emerge. Both in fact enjoyed prestigious offices and a great power thanks to their adherence to the *lermista* faction, to whose leaders they were linked until the end of their careers. Another point in common was the passion for the arts and letters, and the ability to build around them flourishing intellectual circles which they protected and supported. The grand cultural politics promoted in Naples by Pedro, the seventh Count of Lemos, is well celebrated: in addition to surrounding himself of figures like the brothers Argensola, Villamediana, Lope de Vega, Góngora and Cervantes, he founded in 1611 the Academy of the *Oziosi* (idles) and was served by a writer of the caliber of Diego de Saavedra Fajardo as his agent in Rome.¹⁶ The activity in the same field of Francisco is less known, but

Pardo de Guevara, *Don Pedro Fernández de Castro, VII conde de Lemos (1576-1622)* (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 1997); Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, poder y mecenazgo en tiempos de Felipe III. Nápoles y el conde de Lemos* (Madrid: Actas, 2007).

¹⁴ Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *Gattinara. Carlos V y el sueño del Imperio* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2005).

¹⁵ On the eighth Count of Lemos, see the recent research of Valentina Favaro, *Carriere in movimento. Francisco Ruiz de Castro e la monarchia di Filippo III* (Palermo: Associazione Mediterranea, 2013).

¹⁶ Gaetano Sabatini, "Roma, Nápoles, Venecia, Milán: la etapa italiana de Saavedra Fajardo en el gran teatro de la diplomacia barroca (1610-1633)," in *Pensar Europa en el siglo de hierro. El mundo en tiempos de Saavedra Fajardo*, ed. José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (Murcia:

nevertheless significant: in Sicily, he favoured the creation, in 1621, of the Academy of the *Bell'ingegni e letterati palermitani* (great minds and writers of Palermo) and the Academy of *Notomia* (anatomy) at the Great Hospital of Palermo.¹⁷

The differences, however, in the contribution that the two men were able to give to the success of Lerma's faction and to the more general political competition that spread from the court to the Monarchy's Italian possessions were many and perhaps even more significant: firstly, the relationship that the two brothers had with the Duke of Lerma and the other members of the faction. Pedro enjoyed from an early age the esteem of the *valido* of Philip III, to the point that some of the contemporary witnesses indicated him, and not the first-born of Lerma, as the true heir in the favour of the sovereign and the head of the family. Considering this, it is easy to understand the aversion that the Duke of Uceda always showed towards his ambitious, sophisticated and brilliant cousin,¹⁸ which did not diminish even after Lemos's marriage to one of the sisters of Uceda. The good relationship that always bound him to the other son of Lerma, the Count of Saldaña, was not sufficient to ensure the political survival of don Pedro: Lemos's withdrawal from the *cámara* of the Prince and his subsequent departure from the court were indeed the decisive blows against the power of the Duke of Lerma, and until the death of Philip III, Uceda did not allow the return to court of his cousin. The behaviour towards Francisco was instead very different: his political rivals did not show the same fear and the same desire for revenge, as proved by the renewal of his viceregal mandate in Sicily in 1619, when Lerma and Lemos were already far away from the court.

Furthermore, the two brothers did not react in the same way to the solicitations and requests from the court and the leading figures of the faction. While remaining faithful to Lerma, Lemos claimed, as his father had done, his independence of action and judgment. For example when he complained about the work of the *juntas* wanted by his powerful uncle, which made the proceedings of the Councils he presided more difficult.¹⁹ In 1616 he listened

Ediciones del Año Saavedra Fajardo, 2008), 41-74. On the cultural politics of the seventh Count of Lemos see, among others, the studies of José María Asensio, *El conde de Lemos, protector de Cervantes* (Madrid: Imprenta Hispano-Filipina, 1880); Vittor Ivo Comparato, "Società civile e società letteraria nel primo Seicento: l'Accademia degli Oziosi," *Quaderni storici* 23 (1973): 359-388; Amedeo Quondam, "La politica culturale del conte di Lemos," in id., *La parola nel labirinto. Società e scrittura del Manierismo a Napoli* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1975), 247-269; Girolamo de Miranda, *Una quiete operosa. Forme e pratica dell'Accademia napoletana degli Oziosi, 1611-1645* (Naples: Fridericiana Editrice Universitaria, 2000); Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, "Política y cultura en Nápoles," in *La monarquía de Felipe III*, eds. José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, Instituto de Cultura, 2008), IV, 466-518.

¹⁷ Favarò, *Carriere in movimento*, 142-144.

¹⁸ On this rivalry between Uceda and Lemos, see Bernardo J. García García, "Honra, desengaño y condena de una privanza. La retirada de la corte del cardenal duque de Lerma," in *Actas de la IV Reunión Científica de la Asociación Española de Historia Moderna*, ed. Pablo Fernández Albaladejo et al. (Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, 1997), 679-695; Regina M. Pérez Marcos, "El Duque de Uceda," in *Los validos*, ed. José Antonio Escudero (Madrid: Dykinson, 2004), 177-241.

¹⁹ Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, poder y mecenazgo*, 227-231.

to the directions of Lerma and his mother who called him back to the court in order to fight to become heir of the family and head of the faction. His brother behaved in an opposite way: at the end of the period in Naples, in 1603, Francisco was in fact encouraged by Lerma and his mother to return to Madrid, in order to consolidate his position at court and act on the side of his brother in the service of the King and the royal family. The repeated denials of Francisco forced the *valido* to use him in other ways, leaving him in the Italian context that he always showed to prefer. The six years in Naples were only one step in the career of Pedro, who pointed to the power at court; Francisco, instead, spent his entire career in the Italian peninsula, never giving the impression, both to the contemporaries and to the scholars of later ages, to be able or willing to aspire to more prestigious goals.

Another difference is in the concrete results they obtained during their governments and also the motivation behind the subsequent appointments. The excellent account of himself he had given in the previous years at the Council of Indies, motivated the choice of sending Lemos to Naples. This vicerealty was in a serious economic crisis but Madrid demanded it a substantial contribution to cover the costs of the monarchy. In the six years he spent at the feet of Vesuvius, Lemos carried on a vigorous program of government, which caused him the enmity of an important part of the Neapolitan aristocracy, led by Carlo Caracciolo, Marino Caracciolo, Prince of Avellino, and his son, the Duke of Bovino, the Princes of the Riccia and Conca. To stop them, the Viceroy tried to prevent the departure to Madrid of an ambassador of the *Seggi*, Jerónimo de Guevara. Once arrived in Spain, Lemos denied Guevara a mediator who could introduce him in the Council of State. While one has to avoid the misleading dichotomy proposed with insistence by the Neapolitan historiography between the period of reform desired by Lemos and the season of revolt and almost revolution coincided with the vicerealty of the Duke of Osuna,²⁰ there is no doubt that the Lemos's period of government was an important stage in the evolution of the history of the kingdom.²¹ The leading role played in the political struggle at court in the years 1616-1618, when the Duke of Lerma showed to be nearing the end of his power, confirms the importance of Lemos in the general political situation of those years and his ability to consistently and conscientiously pursue his goal, then failed, to become the new King's *valido*.

The motivations behind the personal choices of Francisco de Castro and the decisions made for him by his referents in Madrid are instead less clear. The brief period of government in Naples following the death of his father should probably be read in the light of the young age and inexperience of the

²⁰ See for example Giuseppe Galasso, "Il Regno di Napoli. Il Mezzogiorno spagnolo (1494-1622)," in *Storia d'Italia UTET*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso (Turin: UTET, 2006), XV, 932-1025.

²¹ About the Neapolitan government of Lemos, see the studies of Giuseppe Galasso, "Le riforme del conte di Lemos e le finanze napoletane nella prima metà del Seicento," in id., *Mezzogiorno medievale e moderno* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), 199-231; Giuseppe Coniglio, *I vicerè spagnoli di Napoli* (Naples: Fausto Fiorentino, 1967), 173-192; Raffaele Colapietra, *Il governo spagnolo nell'Italia meridionale. Napoli dal 1580 al 1640* (Naples: Storia di Napoli, 1972); Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, poder y mecenazgo*, 278-550. About the book by Enciso, see also the reflections expressed by Francesco Benigno in his review in *Hispania* 232 (2009): 583-586.

viceroys *interino*, unable to deal effectively with the many problems that his office presented. His appointment as extraordinary ambassador to Venice, just after the Interdict, took him to a diplomatic-political situation of great tension, which he did not appear to have either the experience nor the knowledge to solve. The intricate situation was in fact overcome with difficulty, primarily thanks to the initiative of the French Cardinal François de Joyeuse, representative of Henry IV.²² However, despite this and the lack of satisfaction shown by Pope Paul V towards him, Francisco was then appointed as ambassador to the Holy See. In the six years he spent in Rome, the nephew of Lerma once again showed his inability to influence the diplomatic games and to intervene in events of great importance, such as the expulsion of the *Moriscos* from Spain (1609) and the outbreak of the War of Monferrato (1613).²³ After the clash with the Cardinal Gaspar de Borja y Velasco, who replaced him in the embassy *ad interim*, however, another appointment followed for Francisco. According to a quite common process among Spanish diplomats and soldiers who served the Catholic King in Italy, the embassy in Rome was usually followed by the viceroyalty of Naples. The Duke of Osuna was preferred for that position, left vacant by the Count of Lemos, a clear sign of how the faction led by Uceda and Aliaga had got the upper hand at court and in the favour of the King.²⁴ Francisco, certainly supported by Lerma and the Countess of Lemos for the post, was instead chosen for the viceroyalty of Sicily, vacated by Osuna: an assignment that was certainly prestigious but relegated him in a region of marginal importance within the Habsburg Monarchy, certainly not comparable to the government of Naples. As a further confirmation of the secondary role of Francisco de Castro during his years in Sicily (1616-1622), he observed as a spectator the moves of other Spanish governors in Italy, especially the Marquis of Villafranca in Milan and the Duke of Osuna in Naples, who overturned the anti-war foreign policy orchestrated by Lerma until then, setting the stage for the imminent outbreak of the Thirty Years' War.²⁵ Moreover, Osuna had brought with him to Naples the galleys which he had set up during his years in Sicily, leaving the new viceroy, despite his protests, devoid of most of the fleet. As for the government of the island, Francisco tried in vain to give Madrid the contribution of men and money required for the battlefields of Europe, trying at the same time to return to normality a political and institutional situation became precarious after the six agitated years of Osuna's rule.²⁶

²² Favarò, *Carriere in movimento*, 46-56.

²³ *Ibidem*, 57-96.

²⁴ Giovanni Muto, "Dal Lemos all'Osuna: strategie e stili di governo di due viceré," in *Cultura della guerra e arti della pace. Il III duca di Osuna in Sicilia e a Napoli (1611-1620)*, ed. Encarnación Sánchez García (Naples: Tullio Pironti Editore, 2012), 169-195. On the figure of the third Duke of Osuna, an excellent soldier, a faithful ally of the Duke of Uceda and a fundamental protagonist of the political struggle during the second half of the reign of Philip III, a vast bibliography can be consulted. For a good synthesis, see Luis M. Linde, *Don Pedro Girón, duque de Osuna: la hegemonía española en Europa a comienzos del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2005).

²⁵ García García, *La pax hispanica*; Feros, *Kingship and favoritism*; Paul Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598-1621. The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Williams, *The great favourite*.

²⁶ Vincenzo Auria, *Historia cronologica delli signori viceré di Sicilia, dal tempo che mancò la personale assistenza de' serenissimi re di quella, cioè dall'anno 1409 sino al 1697 presente* (Palermo: Per Pietro Coppola, 1697); Giovanni E. Di Blasi, *Storia cronologica dei viceré*,

As mentioned, the end of the Duke of Lerma's government did not prevent Francisco to complete his two terms, probably because he was not particularly feared or unwelcomed by his cousin Uceda. But in the same way, even after the death of Philip III and the end of power of the entire Sandoval faction, while the leading figures of the previous kingdom were put on trial and, as in the famous case of Rodrigo Calderón, executed,²⁷ Francisco de Castro continued his career at court, even if in a minor role, as had always happened throughout his life. Inheriting the title from his brother, he passed it to his eldest son, surviving also to his mother, the powerful Countess of Lemos, who died in 1628.

In conclusion, the political and personal trajectories of the seventh and eighth Count of Lemos suggest that in the factions of early modern Europe figures with very different skills, ambitions and personalities could live together. Pedro, the seventh Count of Lemos, clearly emerges as a more important protagonist of the period, but Francisco, the eighth Count, was also able to build a political and diplomatic curriculum, passing unscathed two momentous changes in the court of Madrid, as the departure of the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma from the court and, in 1621, the end of the Sandoval government. In his case, the family relationship with the *valido* was more decisive than the modest results achieved in his various positions and the lack of ability to manage the dynamics of the court and power. Francisco was a part of a faction that, especially in the second half of the reign of Philip III, lost some key pillars²⁸ and increasingly ended up coinciding with the Sandovals and their immediate relatives. Into the faction Francisco became a pawn moved where it was needed, where an office was vacant or where nobody

luogotenenti e presidenti del regno di Sicilia (Palermo: dalla Stamp. Oreteta, 1842); Favaro, *Carriere in movimento*, 97-177. For a more general idea of Sicily during the reign of Philip III, see Francesco Benigno, "Aristocrazia e Stato in Sicilia nell'epoca di Filippo III," in *Signori, patrizi, cavalieri nell'età moderna*, ed. Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992), 76-93; Idem, "Tensiones sociales y dialéctica política en Sicilia: de Felipe II a Felipe III," in *Las sociedades ibéricas y el mar a finales del siglo XVI*, eds. Luis Antonio Ribot García and Ernest Belenguier Cebrià (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Lisboa '98, 1998), III, 445-466; Lina Scalisi, *La Sicilia dei Moncada. Le corti, l'arte e la cultura nei secoli XVI-XVII* (Catania: Domenico Sanfilippo Editore, 2006); Vittorio Sciuti Russi, "Sicilia: noblezza, magistratura, inquisición y parlamentos," in Martínez Millán and Visceglia, *La monarquía de Felipe III*, IV, 538-563; Domenico Ligresti, "Sicilia", in *ibidem*, IV, 564-592.

²⁷ Santiago Martínez Hernández, *Rodrigo Calderón, la sombra del valido. Privanza, favor y corrupción en la corte de Felipe III* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2009). On the trials held immediately after the death of Philip III against the main members of the Sandoval government, I would like to indicate my book *Bajo acusación. Procesos y discursos sobre el valimiento en el reinado de Felipe III* (Madrid: Polifemo, forthcoming).

²⁸ The reference is to some expert ministers and counsellors who, after the death of Philip II, had been able to adapt themselves to the change of government and to enter the power system of Lerma: it is the case of Juan de Zúñiga, Count of Miranda, dead in 1608, or Juan de Idiáquez, dead in 1614. Furthermore, other *Iermistas* had aligned themselves with Uceda and Aliaga, such as Juan de Acuña and Fernando Carrillo, who were both President of the *Consejo de Hacienda*. Still others instead had left the political scene because of some controversial trials, as in the case of the secretaries Alonso Ramírez de Prado and Pedro Franqueza. On everything, see the bibliography already cited. About the last two trials, more details are in my article "Las culpas del Rey y de su Favorito. El proceso a Alonso Ramírez de Prado (1607-1608)", *Librosdelacorte.es* 6 (2013): 27-49.

else wanted to go. His limits permitted not only his career within the faction of Lerma but also his political survival under other Kings and other *validos*.