

2015

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Recommended Citation

Salas Almela, Luis (2015) "The Wedding Processions of the Dukes of Braganza (1633) and Medina Sidonia (1640): Power and Fiesta in Portugal and Spain," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 40 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.

<https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1137>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol40/iss1/3>

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The Wedding Processions of the Dukes of Braganza (1633) and Medina Sidonia (1640): Power and Fiesta in Portugal and Spain

Cover Page Footnote

This article is a result of the project HAR2010-17797 financed by the now defunct Spanish Ministry of Science and Education. Spanish version by Ruth MacKay.

**The Wedding Processions of the Dukes of Braganza (1633)
and Medina Sidonia (1640): Power and *Fiesta* in Portugal and
Spain**

Luis Sales Almela

As dawn broke on January 12, 1633, near the Portuguese-Castilian border not far from Badajoz and close to the spot where Charles V's (1500-1556) emissaries in 1526 had received the emperor's new wife, Elisabeth of Portugal (1503-1539),¹ the splendid entourage led by the most excellent duke John of Braganza (1604-1656) came to a halt. The reason was the delay in the arrival of Luisa Francisca de Guzmán (1613-1666), daughter of Manuel Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (1579-1636), duke of Medina Sidonia, to whom the Portuguese duke had been married by proxy. The bride's entourage took so long to arrive that at around nine in the morning, Braganza (fig. 1), by that time tired of waiting, decided to cross the border and travel a few leagues into Castile to meet Luisa and, with her, the most excellent Gaspar Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (1602-1664), the count of Niebla, the bride's brother. Crossing a border without express royal permission was not illegal but nor was it something commonly done by aristocrats. Seven years later, on Easter Sunday, that very same Gaspar, by then the new duke of Medina Sidonia (fig. 2), traveled to collect Juana Fernández de Córdoba (1611-1680) from her parents' home. The bride, whom he already had married by power of attorney in Madrid, was the daughter of the marquises of Priego.

Three chronicles of those two marriages and of the festivities with which they were celebrated constitute the basis for this article. The significance of the sources is the fact that they were carefully planned and displayed as acts of power by two outstanding noble families. This article explores the forms of symbolic expression used by the nobility during the vitally important ceremony of marriage. As I look at the festivities and pomp in both processions I will consider celebration as an illusory space or an ideal representation of a given social order displayed in a public space.² In that sense, though the language in these texts was full of references to the world of chivalric culture, as also was true with court fiestas, my hypothesis is that the rituals reflect a specifically seigneurial symbolic code. Above all I wish to point to a festive world in seigneurial courts parallel to that of the royal court, which has been nearly ignored in the historiography. This

¹ Antonio J. Morales, "Recibimiento y boda de Carlos V en Sevilla," in *La fiesta en la Europa de Carlos V* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2000), 27-47.

² Here I am using the term following Diogo R. Curto, *O discurso politico em Portugal (1600-1650)* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de História e Cultura Portuguesa, 1998), 143-155.

neglect is related to the scarce attention given to the Iberian festive tradition in general and to all that occurred away from the royal courts.³ My objective is not to study the “circulation of culture” — using Teófilo Ruiz’s words — but to concentrate on two significant case studies. My aim is to go beyond the general idea that all baroque festivities were more or less structured around royal court practices and that seigneurial festivities were simply imitations, on a smaller scale, of court ceremony.⁴ Though clearly I do not wish to deny the influence of courtly festivities or the power of the monarchy in the early modern period, I nonetheless do want to suggest that the central role of the crown did not eliminate all other festive events. In other words, I want to draw attention to other spaces and sites of power, albeit fragmented power, that wished to claim legitimacy and whose symbolic languages deserve historiographic attention.

The processions in our cases are manifestations of a specific legitimizing discourse rooted in two paradigmatic examples of noble power, each driven by desires and needs. With that in mind, I will examine four symbolic elements in the three texts, referring to wealth, the social justification of seigneurial power, recognition by other social powers, and magnanimity. The ritual served not only to distinguish one noble family from the rest in terms of opulence and splendor, it also presented a highly favorable image of the family itself vis-à-vis the only temporal power to which it was subservient, that is, the crown. From that perspective, it would be right to call the rituals ceremonies of state, albeit a seigneurial state, and not simply entertaining ceremonies.

As Richard Trexler pointed out, ritualized languages embody a tension between novelty and what already exists.⁵ Ceremonies as elaborate as these, programmed by two such outstanding, powerful families, must be understood as political actions in and of themselves that in turn could make political tensions manifest. Given the outstanding role of both dukes in their kingdoms, I suggest that an analysis of the concrete, ritualized language deployed by Braganza and Medina Sidonia should be linked to specific, political meaning. In other words, I am studying the ritual as an idealized construction of a social order seen through the prism of concrete seigneurial figures with very high aspirations. The social

³ Teófilo F. Ruiz, *A King Travels. Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), positions 249, 268 and 1553.

⁴ Four other recent works on fiestas in early modern Spain: María L. Lobato and Bernardo J. García García (eds.), *La fiesta cortesana en la época de los Austrias* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2003); José J. García Bernal, *El fasto público en la España de los Austrias* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2006); Bernardo J. García García and María L. Lobato (eds.), *Dramaturgia festiva y cultura nobiliaria en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2007); and Carmen Sanz Ayán (coord.), “Informe: Fiesta y poder (siglos XVI y XVII),” *Studia Histórica. Historia Moderna* 31 (2009): 11-152.

⁵ Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 331-364.

order is thus a reflection of those aspirations. Taking into account the events of 1640-1641, the ritual potentially could construct reality; at the very least, it could influence it.

The two seigneurial houses involved in these weddings were conspicuous examples of noble power. The ducal houses of Braganza and Medina Sidonia were at the apex of the social pyramid in their respective kingdoms, Portugal and Castile. Their ancient lineages and unquestioned prestige, along with their vast jurisdictional holdings, bestowed upon these titled aristocrats, simply for having inherited their ducal estates, a political role that went far beyond their local region, extending to the crown and even throughout Europe. There were additional similarities between the two noble houses, such as the proximity of their estates, on either side of the Guadiana River, and the family ties that had linked them since the early sixteenth century. Both houses formed part of the two monarchies whose overseas expansion in America, Asia, and Africa was the earliest and the most successful. And these two imperial structures, the Portuguese and the Castilian, were themselves integrated in one enormous, composite political body: the Hispanic Monarchy.

In Portugal not only were the Braganzas the only lords able to entitle other individuals, a truly exceptional power anywhere in Europe, but they had claimed the Portuguese throne in 1580 after the extinction of the house of Avis with the deaths of King Sebastian (1554-1578) and King Henry (1512-1580). As it turned out, the successful claimant to the throne of Portugal and its empire was Philip II (1527-1598), whose list of crowns, titles, and seigneurial lands already was immense. Though the Braganzas submitted to the sovereignty of the Hispanic Hapsburgs, the fact that they had legitimate claims to the throne made the Portuguese dukes very special vassals indeed.⁶

The dukes of Medina Sidonia, meanwhile, whose seigneurial power since around 1300 had been based in Andalusia, in the sixteenth century had managed to add what we might call an imperial aspect to their influence. In part this was the result of the Indies trade, a highly favorable historical circumstance for them being that the maritime and commercial routes tying Castile with its vast American possessions literally crossed the Medina Sidonia seigneurial lands (*señorío*). If one crossed the Atlantic and wanted to reach Seville —the theoretically exclusive seat of the commercial route — one had to sail up the Guadalquivir River, whose mouth was situated at the capital town of the Medina Sidonia *señorío*, Sanlúcar de Barrameda. As a result, the dukes constructed their own complex fiscal structure to take advantage of the trade, the benefits of which

⁶ Mafalda Soares da Cunha, *A casa de Bragança, 1560-1640. Práticas senhoriais e redes clientelares* (Lisbon: Stampa, 2000), 13-44; Leonor Freire Costa and Mafalda Soares da Cunha, *D. João IV* (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 2008), 50-57.

they largely invested in service to the monarchs through military protection of the ships as they crossed the ocean.⁷

Beyond these circumstances, however, the 1630s marked a key period in the struggle for European hegemony. The Hispanic Monarchy of Philip IV (1605-1665), whose prime minister was the Count Duke of Olivares (1587-1645), was trying desperately to hold on to its dominance throughout the succession of conflicts that became known as the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). After a series of victories in the early 1620s, the growing number of forces allied against the two branches of the Hapsburgs —the imperial house in Vienna and the Hispanic in Madrid—meant the king had to demand more and more of the territories that made up his dominion.⁸ Olivares resorted to authoritarian means to extract men, money, and supplies for the war, causing hostility even within the traditionally loyal crown of Castile.⁹ These efforts had a significant impact on the nobility. In the midst of these circumstances, France —whose chief minister was Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) — declared war on Spain in 1635, making a grave situation even worse for the Hispanic Hapsburgs.

Their positions at the apex of their respective social pyramids meant the dukes of Braganza and Medina Sidonia had to accept commitments and responsibilities to maintain order in accordance with their privileges. These obligations went beyond rhetoric; they were what was expected of such powerful lords. Not only were they expected to exercise power; it was assumed they also could influence how the court's dictates would be implemented in regions over which they had direct seigneurial authority. In this regard, both Medina Sidonia's and Braganza's relationship with the Olivares regime was smooth, at least on paper, until 1637-1638. At that point, a revolt in southern Portugal, which extended to the regions of Alentejo and the Algarve, forced Olivares to ask the two dukes for their assistance in putting down the protest movement, which threatened to quickly turn into a more general challenge to Philip IV's authority in Portugal. Both men, on either side of the Guadiana border, firmly supported the king.¹⁰

⁷ Luis Salas Almela, *Medina Sidonia: El poder de la aristocracia, 1580-1670* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2008), 143-150; Luis Salas Almela, *The Conspiracy of the Ninth Duke of Medina Sidonia (1641). An Aristocrat in the Crisis of the Spanish Empire* (Boston-Leiden: Brill, 2013), 11-26.

⁸ John H. Elliott, *Richelieu y Olivares* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1984), 151-187; John H. Elliott, *El conde-duque de Olivares. La pasión de mandar* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1991 [1985]), 489-581.

⁹ Beatriz Cárceles de Gea, *Fraude y administración fiscal en Castilla. La Comisión de Millones (1632-1658): Poder fiscal y privilegio jurídico-político* (Madrid: Banco de España, 1994); Juan E. Gelabert, *La bolsa del rey. Rey, reino y fisco en Castilla (1598-1648)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1997), 81-126; Juan E. Gelabert, *Castilla convulsa (1631-1652)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), 179-236.

¹⁰ Elliott, *El conde-duque*, op.cit, 508-519; Rafael Valladares, *Epistolario de Olivares y el conde de Basto* (Badajoz: Diputación de Badajoz, 1998), 67-90.

Nevertheless, it is also true that the two dukes were growing increasingly impatient with royal demands. Medina Sidonia in particular had complained for quite some time that his support for crown activities all along the Andalusian Atlantic coast and beyond, including in North Africa and the Indies route, had not been sufficiently recognized or compensated.¹¹ Moreover, he felt that his authority was being undermined by certain royal institutions, such as the Admiralty of Seville (created in 1625 with important jurisdiction in overseas trade which affected Sanlúcar), and by attempts by the house of Arcos to split apart Medina Sidonia's military district by creating another military jurisdiction in his estates. In reply, the duke was trying to shore up his authority and prestige through a series of initiatives that were beginning to bear fruit, including extensions of military competency and patronage over religious orders in Andalusia.¹² The young duke of Braganza, meanwhile, since the death of his father had moved his house in a decidedly imperial direction, probably motivated by signs that his family's political reputation had fallen off somewhat.¹³

But their dissatisfaction was not much different from that of other Castilian and Portuguese seigneurial lords whose responses to royal demands just made the wars longer, despite the resources they invested. In July 1640 the Revolt of the Catalans broke out, potentially opening the doors of Catalonia to France, which presented a serious threat to Castile, the political and strategic heart of Philip IV's monarchy. It was in this context that the more or less generic complaints turned concrete. Then, in December 1640, Portugal rebelled, putting the duke of Braganza on the Portuguese throne.¹⁴ Nine months later, in August 1641, Medina Sidonia led a failed coup d'état of August 1641 against his king, which ended up costing the Pérez de Guzmáns the jewel of their crown, the town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and an irreversible fall from their previous primacy among Castilian grandees.¹⁵ With Philip IV seriously weakened, political realignments took place in both very frustrated ducal lineages, with very different results.

Marriage between members of social forces as powerful as the families under discussion here was a matter of seigneurial estates but also, using the term as it was used then, a matter of state. Among the principal means with which monarchs tried to control their nobility was the obligation to obtain a ruler's

¹¹ Salas, *Medina Sidonia*, 273-348.

¹² Salas, *Medina Sidonia*, 309-348.

¹³ On the Braganza's change of direction see Costa and Cunha, *D. João*, 76-102; and Mafalda Soares da Cunha, "Estratégias matrimoniais da casa de Bragança e o casamento do duque D. João II," *Hispania* 216 (2004): 39-62.

¹⁴ Rafael Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal, 1640-1680. Guerra, conflicto y poderes en la Monarquía Hispánica* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1998), 19-110; Costa and Cunha, *D. João IV*.

¹⁵ Salas Almela, *Medina Sidonia*, 395-408; Salas Almela, *The Conspiracy*, 142-150.

consent for marriages. Monarchs wished to avoid the accumulation of too much power, resources, or territories by any one dynasty, and they also wished to ensure that marriages would not negatively affect the royal government. Marriage, the linkage between two lineages, was quite clearly a political act.

So the staging of these acts of marriage, with all that that implied regarding legitimation and propaganda, must have appeared appropriate to the noble hierarchy.¹⁶ Two elements stood out in both festivities: the new link between two seigneurial families, and the lay rite of the exaltation of power expressed through symbols of a certain political language. Dynastic union, in fact, constituted one of the most basic elements of traditional European celebrations.¹⁷ The deployment of a language of power with a family motif can be seen as the strategic self-affirmation of a lineage at a given moment, and in this article I will seek common characteristics as well as contrasts in the language of power and its meaning as it was deployed in both wedding celebrations. The very fact that the celebrations were commemorated in written, published documents makes the chronicles their last act. Their purpose was to empower and communicate the effects of the celebrations.¹⁸

Both seigneurial houses opted to celebrate the marriages with processions and a fiesta lasting several days. These entailed cycles including various subgenres of baroque festivities ranging from the procession per se to entrances into cities, and a wide array of secondary activities including bullfights, *cañas* (mock battles on horseback), masked balls, fireworks, festivals of lights, etc. The first set of texts describes the duke of Braganza's journey from Vila Viçosa to Elvas and then to the border with Spain. The accounts whose authors we know were by either Alonso Chirino Bermúdez (ca. 1600-ca. 1650), who at that point had worked for the dukes for at least seven years in various judicial and financial capacities, allowing him to be a close witness and a member of the procession; or

¹⁶ José M. Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza: Propaganda y legitimización en la Castilla Trastámara* (Madrid, Nerea, 1993), 15-26. This study does not distinguish between ceremonies of legitimation and propaganda, probably because it associates the concepts of ideology and propaganda, which does not make much sense for the medieval and early modern world.

¹⁷ Edward Muir, *Fiesta y rito en la Europa moderna* (Madrid, Editorial Complutense, 2001), 30.

¹⁸ There are two copies of *Relassao do Cazamento do duque de Bragança, João Segundo*, in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE): ms 18.633, no. 53 and ms 2.364. The latter is credited to António de Oliveira de Cardonega. Two additional accounts of the fiesta can be found in the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP). The first, by Diego Ferreira, is called *Epítome das festas que se fizeram no casamento do Serenissimo Principe Dom João, deste nome Segundo*, published in Évora in 1633, BNP, RES 58 P. The second, *Templo da memoria. Peoma epithalamico*, by Manuel de Galhegos, BNP, RES 216 V, currently is unavailable to researchers. An additional account of the Medina Sidonia wedding was written by Alonso Chirino Bernárdez, *Panegírico nupcial. Viaje de D. Gaspar Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, duque de Medina Sidonia, en las bodas con Doña Juana Fernández de Córdoba*, published in Cádiz in 1640, BNM ms. 18.635, no. 18. Referred to hereafter as *Relassao*, *Epítome* and *Panegírico*.

Diego Ferreira, a servant of the Braganza family.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Chirino adopts an ambiguous position; at times he refers to himself as a member of the entourage while at others he presents himself as a mere spectator, making his account typical of the genre of *relaciones de fiestas*.²⁰ In so doing he gives up his privileged position in order to reinforce the idea of a spectacle open to general contemplation.

The inclusion of details in the three accounts that violated protocol would seem to reinforce the idea that they were reliable accounts. Stylistic usage also made them similar, perhaps giving the appearance that expressive forms were more stable than in fact they were. One element found in processional accounts from at least the mid-sixteenth century onward is the tendency toward atonal narrative,²¹ descriptions of people and objects with little mention of action as a way of making established social hierarchies visible.²² The authors' attention was focused on the splendor and the symbolic world displayed before them. But the lack of action also helped emphasize elements that were unusual, that is, exceptions to the expected formalism, such as Braganza's decision to cross the border.

Grandeur and pomp: the procession

One of the principal goals of a procession is to point to and visually demonstrate difference and hierarchy in a ceremonial space that is codified and symbolically concordant with the didactic function of the baroque fiesta.²³ The ability of visual symbols to transmit political messages had been recognized and consciously used for many years.²⁴ The choice of a procession as the anchor of a particular celebration thus meant an expensive outlay of resources and a large

¹⁹ Chirino says that he participated in the procession in the party of servants who "for reasons of age or impediment" rode in carriages. *Panegírico*, f. 149v. Ferreira is mentioned by Monique Vallance, *A rainha restauradora. Luísa de Gusmão* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2012), 36.

²⁰ See the introduction to José Simón Díaz, *Relaciones de actos públicos celebrados en Madrid de 1541 a 1650* (Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1982), VII-LIV.

²¹ José M. Díez Borque, "Los textos de la fiesta: ritualizaciones celebrativas de la relación del juego de cañas," in Pierre Córdoba *et al.* (eds.), *La fiesta, la ceremonia, el rito*, (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1990), 181-193, 186.

²² Da Cunha, *A casa de Bragança*, 153.

²³ John Chrosicki, "Ceremonial Space," in A. Ellenius, ed. *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 193-216, 193-194. On the importance of visual elements in Portuguese political discourse in the early seventeenth century see Curto, *O discurso*, 12-13.

²⁴ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Los Angeles-London: University of California, 1977), 118. This author cites a member of Henry VIII's court who recommended that the king break with Rome by using festivals and visual symbols: "Into the common people things are sooner enter by the eyes then by the ears; remembering more better that they see then that they hear."

audience that included the lower classes. The display of heraldic symbols, with the family's coat of arms visible everywhere, underlined to the audience that power was not simply a matter of estate but of family, or lineage. Both the protagonists and the audience were framed by this duality, which integrated the particular within the community. For Medina Sidonia and Braganza, public ostentation was something of a family tradition; the Andalusian nobleman wished to amaze a region, Andalusia, that was accustomed to being amazed by noble opulence, most notably by the Medina Sidonias themselves. Braganza's fiesta in 1603 to receive the new duchess, Ana de Velasco, mother of duke D. João, was still remembered in Portugal.²⁵

The image portrayed in the sources we are using is one of wealth beyond the wildest dreams of common people. Clothing played a key role.²⁶ The association of certain ornaments (precious stones, pearls, gold, and silver embroidery) with the wealthiest social groups was not just a symbol, it was the concrete and visible illustration of nearly unlimited economic means,²⁷ so much so that some accounts of festivities confined themselves almost entirely to describing these elements.²⁸ That is not the case with the texts we are analyzing, but they illustrate how personal adornment identified the distinction of the wearer.

Luxury was visible not only in one's clothing; one also was supposed to be accompanied by a certain number of retainers and servants who themselves exhibited their social standing and bestowed splendor upon the procession and, therefore, upon their lord. The fact that our chronicles note that many members of the dukes' retinues were dressed in their own clothing but that all were very elegant, rather than pointing to limits in the lord's generosity is a way of indicating the high social position of the members of the seigneurial household as an institution. This, along with the internal order of the procession itself, reflected, according to the chroniclers, the "majesty" of both dukes.

Certain elements of the processional organization are repeated in both cases. Both processions were led by that classic referent of Fama, musicians playing wind instruments²⁹. Pack animals followed, carrying the travelers'

²⁵ The reception for Philip IV and the count-duke of Olivares in Doñana in 1624 included an opulent little city that was built in the middle of a forest in just a few weeks. See Jesús Mercado Egea, *Felipe IV en las Andalucias* (Jaén: Gráficas Catena, 1980). On the Braganza fiesta in 1603, see Costa and Cunha, *D. João*, 58-59.

²⁶ Even when the occasion called for nobles to be dressed in mourning, descriptions always emphasized their accessories and trim (ribbons, chains, embroidery, and jewels). For example see Simón Díaz, *Relaciones*, 294-302.

²⁷ Díez Borque, "Los textos", 187-189; Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Palabra e imagen en la corte: Cultural oral y visual en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Abada, 2003), 69-88.

²⁸ For example, Anonymous, "Memoria de la ida de la condesa de Niebla a su Casa", 1555, BNE, ms 20.262, N. 28.

²⁹ Ferreira, *Epítome*, 14r.

BSPHS 40:1 (2015)

wardrobes, evidence of the lavish outlay and the lavish outlay to come. Chirino in his *Panegírico* refers to one hundred and fifty mules “carrying His Excellency’s dressing room, travel accessories, and servants’ clothing,” all covered with richly embroidered fabrics decorated with the Medina Sidonia arms. The presence of all this luggage was explained later on when he wrote that the duke’s servants “changed their clothes every day.” In contrast, the duke of Braganza’s six mules would appear paltry, but one must take into account that Elvas, where the wedding was to take place, and Vila Viçosa, the capital of the Braganza estate, were just a half-day’s journey from one another.

After the pack animals came the military companies, followed by the carriage in which the dukes traveled. The carriage itself was an interesting element, as in both processions it marked the limits of courtly space, an ambulatory replica of the lord’s chamber inside of which rode the dukes. Braganza used a Roman-style carriage, which was recognized and admired for its luxury.³⁰ The inside of the carriage was thus the most honorable site in the processions. The space around the carriage was organized symbolically such that participants’ distance from the core of the procession reflected their importance or precedence according to the ducal organizational flowchart. For example, the fact that the duke of Braganza was accompanied in his carriage by his brothers Duarte and Alexander can be interpreted as a message that they were the people closest to him within the domestic hierarchy. So the functions assigned to each member of the court by protocol also reflected the political balance of power among the subgroups in each seigneurial estate.³¹

Nevertheless, at times lords had to make themselves more available to the public gaze. For those occasions, they rode beautiful horses from their famous stables, making themselves the vivid image of noble values. This can be understood as a sign of deference by noblemen toward those looking at them and part of a studied act of self-fashioning. This public show of nobility is at that moment directly expressed in their own image, the supreme form of personal honor. Thus the duke of Braganza and his brothers left their carriage a half-league away from Elvas to make their entrance into the town on horseback.³² There ensued a variation in the symbolic distribution of space, as the most distinguished spot was to the right of the duke, which corresponded to don Fernando da Silva, the city’s captain major, relegating the bishop of Elvas to the duke’s left³³. Similarly, Medina Sidonia entered Écija on horseback to the cheers of the crowd,

³⁰ Ferreira, *Epitome*, 12v.

³¹ This is similar to the royal court; see Fernando Bouza Álvarez, “El espacio en las fiestas y en las ceremonias de corte: Lo cortesano como dimensión” in Lobato and Bernado (eds), *La fiesta*, 155-173.

³² The same distance was the minimum in royal receptions. See Ruiz, *A King*, position 2.851.

³³ Anonymous, *Relassao*.

which had asked that he make himself seen. Chirino's combination of the concepts of majesty and pleasure indicates a symbolic world in which equestrian abilities were a metaphor for social discipline and the mastery of noble virtue, and the horse was the symbol of the irrationality of the disorderly commoners.³⁴

Following the dukes' carriages came the lords and hidalgos (*fidalgos*, in the Portuguese case), whose names, honors, and posts were all listed in the chronicles, which reinforced the entourages' ties to their lords.³⁵ The seigneurial *domus* comprised those who took personal and physical care of the duke, and their presence should be seen as a reflection of the symbolic value of the duke's body as both a man and a lord.³⁶

Along with them came many other servants. The description of the Braganza entourage in *the Relassão* is succinct, mentioning only twenty-four chamber servants for the duke and thirteen "young hidalgos," while Chirino's description is the most detailed. First, Medina Sidonia's carriage was followed by six more carriages carrying fifteen gentlemen and their servants who, for whatever reason, needed to be transported this way. Then came the bulk of the distinguished members of the entourage, on mule, accounting for a total of sixty-six servants. Additionally, we get an early glimpse of the future duchess's household.

Some of the personages were there because they were Medina Sidonia's clients or associates from the more important royal cities near the seigneurial estate. For example, we have don Agustín Adorno, a member of the Jerez city council, who was particularly favored by the Medina Sidonia. There was the Novela family, from Cádiz, several of whom appear listed in the account and who held financial posts for the ducal house. In the case of Braganza's entourage, those who came from outside the territories or the administrative structure of the house notably included members of the Elvas oligarchy. The case of the forty men who accompanied Braganza was similar, though the accounts offer no details about them.

³⁴ Pierangelo Schiera, "Socialità e disciplina: la metafora del cavallo nei trattati rinascimentali e barocchi di arte equestre," in *Il potere delle immagini. La metafora politica in prospettiva storica*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 143-182; Rafael Valladares, "El arte de la guerra y la imagen del rey: Siglos XVI-XVIII", in Salustiano Moreta et al. (eds), *La guerra en la Historia* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1997), 163-189.

³⁵ In Ruiz's words, it "served as important additional tools of rulership." Ruiz, *A King*, position 1.510.

³⁶ Braganza took with him his chief cup bearer, an inspector (*veedor*), chief steward, meat carver, and chamber secretary. From Sanlúcar, Luisa took with her ten ladies and eight maids. *Relassao*, passim. Medina Sidonia took his chief butler, chief steward, the count of Niebla's tutor, his chief accountant, master of rooms (*maestresalas*), a chaplain, an alms collector, chief stable groom, two "gentlemen of the golden key," a page, two accountants, and a treasurer assigned specifically to the journey. *Panegrico*, passim.

At the back of both processions we find the servants of the servants, pages, and lesser positions. Chirino speaks of “a multitude of pages ... numbering one hundred, and more than two hundred and fifty servants of servants.” Though the chronicler leaves some doubt as to the exact number of people in the retinue, it appears there were more than five hundred. At the duke of Braganza’s wedding, an occasion for both houses to show off, the duke of Medina Sidonia, the father of the bride, organized a retinue to accompany his son and heir as he went with his sister to the Portuguese border; this comprised two hundred and twenty-seven people, all itemized by the anonymous chronicler at the end of his description of the wedding, taking up one-third of the total text, [mientras Ferreira aporta una cifra de en torno a los 200 hombres y mujeres de acompañamiento]. In short, the orderly multitude of the retinue is hardly a minor matter. A large retinue reflected the social status of its protagonist; the message of power and influence was reinforced by the undeniable physical presence of the entourage.³⁷

The lord’s social function: judge and soldier

Along with images of wealth, the texts we are analyzing present a complete staging of these great jurisdictional lords’ social function. In both accounts, this is apparent in the inclusion of servants who held positions on the estates and who accompanied the dukes.

The appointment of the dukes of Medina Sidonia as Captain General of the Ocean and Coast of Andalusia since 1588 went far beyond mere decorative ceremony.³⁸ Chirino’s attention to the military components of the procession, starting at the front with the impressive armed guard of one hundred and forty horsemen with lances adorned with banners, shows the importance of this aspect. In front of the armed guard were three lancemen with bugles, yet another allusion to the duke’s fame, in this case military. After the guards, flanked by riflemen, came the company’s standard along with an image of the Archangel Saint Michael and a third banner displaying the coat of arms of the company’s captain, don Miguel Páez de la Cadena Ponce de León, a member of the military order of Calatrava. In the rear, Pedro Casabante carried another standard “among forty riflemen; it was embroidered with the royal arms, with gold ribbons along the sides and the bottom, with two lesser crests, and the arms of His Excellency were also embroidered in gold.” Clearly this standard was the most honored iconographic symbol in the entire procession, glorifying the duke as ruler.

The structure of military functions reflected here, with the ducal house holding a delegated post, raises the issue of the respective heraldic prominence of

³⁷ See the fabulous description of the “parade of Fortune” in Luis Vélez de Guevara, *El diablo Cojuelo*, (Madrid: Cátedra, [1641] 2001), 137-147.

³⁸ Luis Salas Almela, *Colaboración y conflicto. La Capitanía General del Mar Océano y Costas de Andalucía* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2002), 211-216.

the Guzmán cauldrons and Castile's castles and lions (fig. 3). Though it is true that the company's standard was an insignia given by the king to the duke for him to take care of, it is also true that the protagonist of the procession was the seigneurial power of the duke of Medina Sidonia. The goal was to present the *señorío* as the bastion and protector of the kingdom of Seville. At the same time, the duke as military authority was accompanied by interesting religious references, including Saint Michael, associated with the company's standard, visually sacralizing the military procession and to some degree justifying the existence of the captaincy itself as an advance guard against Islam. Taken together, this underlined the two-way connection between monarch and duke; the king relied upon the opulent house of Medina Sidonia, allowing the duke to accumulate powers, in exchange for bestowing upon him great military responsibility.³⁹

Reinforcing these symbols in key parts of the procession were military officers attached to the captaincy and appointed by the duke. In the duke's own carriage there were three men with military posts. In addition, throughout the procession, we encounter around twenty men with military posts along with a large number of members of the military orders.⁴⁰ Although membership in the orders at this time was largely a social distinction with scarcely any military significance, the fact is that in a seigneurial estate that saw itself as the last border between Christendom and Islam, the latter being represented principally by North African pirates, the presence of these theoretical knights had definite symbolic value.⁴¹ Furthermore, in many cases membership in the orders was the result of favors (*mercedes*) by Medina Sidonia for military services performed under his command. Thus the duke displayed his identity as a soldier and as a promoter of the military careers of his subordinates.

In Braganza's case, military orders also had a notable presence, though the military aspect as such was far less, in part because the duke at that point had no specific military duties.⁴² So the presence of the knights of the military orders in his entourage was more a matter of social distinction, given that the *encomendas* awarded by the duke mostly concerned domestic service and access to ducal rents.⁴³ The difference lay in the way Medina Sidonia assumed and proclaimed

³⁹ Salas, *Medina Sidonia*, 133-150; José J. Ruiz Ibáñez, "Repúblicas en armas: huestes urbanas y ritual político en los siglos XVI y XVII", in Sanz Ayán (coord.), "Informe", 95-125, underlined the symbolic importance of the military presence in municipal festivities.

⁴⁰ There were eight from Santiago, four from Calatrava, one from Alcántara, and one from St. John. *Panegírico*, passim.

⁴¹ Salas, *Medina Sidonia*, 243-256.

⁴² According to the *Relação*, of the thirteen *fidalgos* accompanying Braganza, eleven were members (*comendadores*) of the Order of Christ. Ferreira mentions forty "fidalgos comendadores" appointed by the dukes of Braganza.

⁴³ Soares de Cunha, *A casa de Bragança*, 28-29 and 312-331.

his protective function, which finally was incorporated into the legitimizing ducal iconography. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the armed guards accompanying the Portuguese duke; he was flanked by “twenty-four *tedescos*” around his carriage.⁴⁴ The *tedescos* were a military body associated with Hapsburg ceremonies, and their use by the Braganzas was with the knowledge and consent of the crown; the guards’ presence was a clear sign of social distinction and symbolic proximity to the sovereign which, for a seigniorial house with claims to the throne, had particular significance. However, the most relevant idea that emerges from the presence of the *tedescos* is that, when necessary, the Braganza house was attached to military duties in the kingdom of Portugal, as it was the highest noble house in the realm, as the revolt in Elvas soon proved. Hence, both cases show that military symbols in the retinues were not simply rhetorical imitations of royalty but rather an appeal to the concrete duties of the dukes corresponding to their outstanding position among the nobility.

In order to present a complete portrait of the *señorío* as an institution of government, the jurisdictional functions of the lord of vassals had to be made apparent. The inclusion of several of the dukes’ personal councilors was a way of exhibiting that essential aspect of good government, the election of good advisers. The accounts of Braganza’s wedding make this element more implicit than explicit, in contrast to Chirino, who includes more detail. In Medina Sidonia’s wedding entourage in 1640, the most expressive moment of jurisdictional representation came when the dukes returned to Sanlúcar, where a new procession was assembled for the party’s solemn entry into the town. There, the original wedding party was joined by representatives of the ducal territories to reflect the towns’ obedience and respect for their new mistress.⁴⁵ Behind them came the duke’s council, the final piece of this jurisdictional array.

The processional route through Sanlúcar included going under a triumphal arch representing a pyramid with allusions to fame, rigged with fireworks, next to which there was a castle, all surrounded by musicians playing wind instruments.⁴⁶ Approaching the ducal palace there was another arch on whose crest was a

⁴⁴ *Tudescos* generally means Germans. Their use by Braganza was in imitation of Austrian protocol; Soares da Cunha, *A casa de Bragança*, 153, 266n. They appear only in the *Relassao*.

⁴⁵ The personification of the constitutive elements of a territory, associated with weddings, had a long tradition in Europe. In Florence, for example, we find an early example with the wedding between Cosimo I and Leonor of Toledo in 1539 in which the city and the towns ruled by the dukes were personified in the cycle of festivities in honor of the wedding. Bonner Mitchell, *Italian Civic Pageantry in the High Renaissance: A Descriptive Bibliography of Triumphal Entries and Selected Other Festivals for State Occasions* (Florence: Leo S. Olchki, 1979), 50-54.

⁴⁶ On this ephemeral art, see Alicia Cámara Muñoz, “La fiesta de corte y el arte efémero de la monarquía entre Felipe II y Felipe III”, in Luis Ribot Garcia and Ernest Belenguer Cebria, eds. *Las sociedades ibéricas y el mar a fines del siglo XVI, La corte: Centro e imagen del poder* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración, 1998, vol.4), 67-98.

portrait of the duke himself shown pacifying the Portuguese town of Évora three years earlier after it revolted. The painting (fig. 2) shows the duke on horseback receiving the Portuguese authorities, who are on their knees as they offer him the keys to their city. In this manner, the prestige and power exhibited throughout the entire journey reached a sort of climax with the representation of the duke fulfilling a military obligation which, in the case of the revolt of Évora, carried with it the message of imposing order.

Finally, the following morning, the festive cycle ended with the entry of groups whose participation until then had been minimal, including associations of foreign merchants who lived in Sanlúcar, organized by country of origin, and the principal religious orders, of which the dukes of Medina Sidonia were patrons and benefactors. Both accounts leave the reader with the impression that the festivities continued in subsequent days. Nevertheless, the fact that there are no details of these more ordinary celebrations suggests that such displays on the *señorío* itself were more frequent and not worthy of much attention.

Recognized power: reception and tribute

On February 28, 1624, the young Philip IV and his new first minister, the count of Olivares (not yet the count-duke), made their entry into Seville. Along with them came the marquis of Carpio (1598-1661) and the duke of the Infantado (1555-1624), the latter as chief steward. The city council, despite the king's request to keep reception expenses down, had made sure the streets were newly paved, the city clean, and the storehouses full. Certain sorts of festivities were considered essential when the king visited; buildings were decorated, fireworks were set off, and dance performances were held in his honor. Finally, there was the official reception by the local judicial and political authorities, who were followed by the militias of the city of Seville and of the province.⁴⁷ These celebratory elements of royal authority were considered the minimum necessary for receiving one's lord. Minimum, given that the account describing them continually laments the restrictions imposed by the king, as the city would have been happy to make the festivities more lavish.⁴⁸

It is no surprise that Seville, one of the monarchy's richest cities, would aspire to offer the young monarch a sumptuous reception. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that this celebration of royal power was not much different than the

⁴⁷ The order of the reception line was quite different when Philip II visited Seville in 1570, when the city council was only sixth. British Library *Add.*, 28.708, ff. 276r-280v.

⁴⁸ Seville was notified of the king's arrival on February 5, less than a month ahead of time. Lucas García Picaño, *Breve relación de la venida y recibimiento en Sevilla de Su Majestad el rey don Felipe IV*, (Seville: 1627), in Real Biblioteca III/6466. In any case, complaints over the tight schedule may have been rhetorical, given that similar complaints were made in 1570 over Philip II's visit.

celebrations the dukes of Medina Sidonia and Braganza received as they passed through towns on their wedding journeys. They certainly were not much different in terms of the symbolic language deployed. Processional itineraries (fig. 4) reflected matters of courtesy and political relations with local authorities, and hosting a festive retinue of this sort turned into an expensive obligation.

In the case of the duke of Braganza's itinerary, there was not much choice once it was decided that the bride would be received at the border near Badajoz. The election of that site had a great deal to do with the comfort of the count of Niebla, who had traveled from Madrid to represent his father in handing over his sister. For Braganza, the route between his palace in Vila Viçosa and the border offered just one possible stopping-off point, the city of Elvas, which therefore was expected to receive the duke. As a first sign of recognition, one overlain with the personal relationship of patron and dependant, eight gentlemen from Elvas had gone first to Vila Viçosa to then turn around and form part of the ducal entourage along its way. Second, the city's political representatives, the city council, and the royal delegates also participated in the symbolic recognition of the kingdom of Portugal's highest vassal by ritually greeting him on the outskirts of the city, an act of perfectly choreographed protocol⁴⁹. The distance that appears to have been the most common for courtly receptions was half a league, which in this case coincided with a village called Mesa do Rey.

Elvas was also the seat of a bishopric, and it was the bishop who was to play the leading role. He offered His Excellency his cathedral for the wedding and said he himself would officiate. The gesture was an act of deference for both the duke and the bishop — the offer for the duke, the acceptance for the bishop — and the bishop took charge of hosting and feeding the ducal retinue the only night they spent in Elvas. The bishop also participated in the reception of the duke in Mesa do Rey, where he went with three of his nephews along with sixty other noblemen from the city.

The episcopal palace, whose lavish decorations for the occasion were carefully described by the anonymous chronicler, was the center of nearly all the wedding-related activities in Elvas, both when the duke stopped there previously as well as on the wedding day itself. Nevertheless, the bishop was indisposed on the wedding day and could not officiate. His illness, which perhaps was not entirely a matter of chance, given the relative snub he had received at being placed to the left of the duke as the latter entered Elvas, to some degree dampened the festivities, which in any case already had been dampened by rain. At six in the evening, the dukes returned to Vila Viçosa, where they and the inhabitants of the surrounding villages celebrated the marriage for eight days. The *Epitome* reserves

⁴⁹ Though there are small differences between them, the two chronicles of the Braganza wedding (*Relassao* and *Epitome*) coincide in emphasizing the city of Elvas's reception of the duke.

a leading role for the archbishop of Évora, whose presence in the Braganza palace can be explained by his longstanding ties to the ducal house.

Meanwhile, Medina Sidonia also was received by local authorities a half-league from the center of the royal towns he passed through. The ceremony was repeated with some variations as to the participants, though the nobility and the city councils were always represented, in part or in their entirety. The duke also received military salutes in the towns he passed through in recognition of his role as the region's highest military authority. These honors took the form of gun volleys and the formation of the local militia at the entrance to each town. The militia also took on the functions of guardsmen outside the buildings where the duke and his party were housed and in the various places throughout the towns where His Excellency attended festivities.

In Écija, the most important town along the journey's route, the reception was especially splendid, with the royal governor (*corregidor*) himself coming out to greet the duke. In return for this courtesy, the duke received him in his carriage along with another gentleman from the city. Masked balls, theater, and fireworks rounded out the evening's entertainment.⁵⁰ There were more festivities when the entourage returned to Sanlúcar. According to Chirino, the dukes observed the festivities from the balcony of city hall, in the main square. A "sovereign canopy" (*dosel soberano*) was installed to further delimit the space inhabited by the dukes.⁵¹ The canopy was a mark of honor typically reserved for the king, as the highest civil power, and thus this iconography to some degree challenged the crown by pushing the limits of the great Castilian seigneurial estates' political autonomy.⁵²

The Medina Sidonia procession was received in similar fashion in the seigneurial towns it passed through. Nevertheless, Chirino makes two interesting observations when describing the visit to Arahál, located in the lands belonging to the duke of Osuna (1598-1656). He points out, first, that the town council and nobility of the town went to receive Medina Sidonia as vassals of the duke of Osuna. Second, he comments that the guests "were housed with unusual affection by the town's inhabitants, showing they were servants and vassals of their duke." This would seem to indicate that the difference between seigneurial and royal towns was that, while in the latter it was the local authorities who were in charge

⁵⁰ A play (*comedia*) was performed, and a boat was festooned with "great fireworks." In addition, musicians were situated beneath the duke's balcony, and there were continual exhibitions and fireworks. *Panegírico*, passim.

⁵¹ Covarrubias, in 1611, defined canopy (*dosel*) as "a curtain used for monarchs and then nobles, and also in the ecclesiastical estate, among prelates." Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Barcelona: Alta Fulla, [1611] 1998).

⁵² José M. Nieto Soria, "Propaganda and Legitimation in Castile: Religion and Church, 1250-1500." In Allan Ellenius, ed., *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 105-119, 111.

of the reception, in the former either the duke gave the orders or his vassals behaved according to what they thought the duke of Osuna's wishes would be as lord of Arahal.

Recognition and treatment by equals was another essential part of the ceremony. When they arrived in the town of Osuna, once again there was a reception a half-league away, but this time it was the duke of Osuna himself, along with the duke of Lerma and the marquis of Peñafiel, who received Medina Sidonia. They greeted each other standing, and Medina Sidonia then entered Osuna's coach, with the latter duke ceding the best seat to the former. When they arrived at the ducal capital, the duchesses of Osuna and Lerma awaited them, and Medina Sidonia visited with them. Osuna's participation in the procession can be seen as purely representational; there was no reason for it other than showing an equal his friendship, economic power, and recognition. The chronicler also points to the "demonstrations of great affection" by the town as a whole. The next morning, Osuna offered to pay the salaries of the soldiers and the servants' servants, which Medina Sidonia would not permit. Finally, Osuna and Peñafiel accompanied the departing guests for a half-league.

Medina Sidonia at last met with the members of the house of Priego in the town of La Rambla. Attending the encounter were the marquis of Priego (1588-1645), the marquis of Montalbán (Priego's son and heir, 1623-1665), and Father Cañizares, rector of the Jesuit establishment in Sanlúcar, who had traveled to Montilla to oversee the wedding arrangements. As he did in Osuna, Medina Sidonia entered town in his hosts' carriage, and when he reached the Montilla palace the duke of Medina Sidonia greeted his host's family members. As for the wedding celebration itself, the chronicle is surprisingly brief and immediately moves on to the fireworks. The duke and duchess spent the next day, a day of rest, in the palace chapel. On the last day there was a masked ball, bullfights, jousting, and just about every other element typical of baroque festivities. For the farewells, there was a series of courtesies: the bride's mother was driven a short way out of Montilla, while the marquis of Priego went up to La Rambla. The bride's brother, the marquis of Montalbán, stayed on as host in La Rambla, where the retinue was received with much pomp and then spent the night. The following day, the marquis said his farewell, and Medina Sidonia traveled on to Écija.

Finally, the brilliance of the baroque fiesta required that the audience be both moved and attracted by the displays and performances in honor of the visitor. Despite the scant attention paid to commoners in the three texts, the heterogeneous and scarcely-mentioned public —whose absence from the text marks a sharp contrast to the detail and categorization devoted to the noble authorities —was the ultimate object, after the personages immediately involved,

of the entire celebration.⁵³ The chronicles use commoners as a symbolic counterpoint of the ideal entourage — an illusory image of harmonious political order — contrasting the ideal to the formless, varied, tumultuous, and unorganized masses who nonetheless were admiring as the entourage passed by.⁵⁴ This admiration, which the chroniclers take as a given, assumes an elementary form of assimilation of the processions' didactic message. According to Chirino, Medina Sidonia's journey attracted huge crowds that scrambled everywhere to get a glimpse of the opulence going by, even on rainy days like the one when the duke left Lebrija.

According to some historians, ritual entrances into cities by monarchs implied a sort of mutual appropriation in which the king made the city his own through his presence and through acts such as receiving the keys to the city, and at the same time the city made the king its own, recognizing him and obeying him as sovereign.⁵⁵ Obviously, in the cases I am presenting here, this rhetoric of vassalage and sovereignty did not exist. But there was a sort of emotional appropriation through the reinforced connections between the nobleman who was solemnly received and the cities and towns that celebrated. The whole range of possible connections that a nobleman might have with a place — military dependence, patronage, commercial relations, etc. — were strengthened. One should not forget that festivities in the towns were paid for by the towns themselves, so the fiesta became a sort of common space shared by government entities, in this case seigneurial and urban. This reinforcement gives meaning to the elements shared with royal entrances in cities such as the reception at a given distance from downtown, the gun salutes, the crowd, and the triumphal arches. Yet there was greater flexibility in noble festive language, which was far less ritualized than royal language and lacked uniform political meaning.

The fiesta: the magnanimous lord

Magnanimity is one of the qualities most commonly mentioned in descriptions of nobility. Generosity, beyond the images of superfluous and irrational spending that one finds in certain historical accounts, increasingly has come to be interpreted as a sign of social distinction. Thus it is not surprising that the image the great nobles offered of themselves during festivities included elements showing that the honored lord was also fundamentally generous.

⁵³ Years ago Roger Chartier —in *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 13-31- described the transition in France from the sixteenth century, with celebrations in which royal processions interacted with the crowd, to the seventeenth century, when the masses were reduced to passive spectators. See also Ruiz, *A King*, position 338.

⁵⁴ Muir, *Fiesta*, 288.

⁵⁵ María A. Pérez Samper, “Barcelona, corte: las fiestas reales en la época de los Austrias,” in García (ed.), *La fiesta*, 139-192, 143; Ruiz, *A King*, positions 1.795 and 2.958.

BSPHS 40:1 (2015)

Let us consider for a moment to whom this generosity manifested itself and what the hierarchy of magnanimity was. To begin with, protocol for the handing over of brides called for the groom to give something of importance and value to his future wife, and the present usually was somehow integrated into the festivities. Thus the duke of Bragança sent Luisa an elaborate carriage in which the future duchess would make her entrance into Portugal with her brother⁵⁶. Similarly, Medina Sidonia assumed the cost of the bride's wedding dress during the ceremony of the veil.

Generosity also was reinforced with presents for people beyond the immediate family circle. In these cases, gifts could be seen almost as recompense, albeit symbolic, for the recipient having participated in the festivities, according to a careful protocol of gratitude. In the case of a churchman, the present might be a valuable jewel, with no discredit to his position, and the jewel might even come with the price mentioned. The social respectability of presents could be increased by drawing attention to their symbolic value, such as their historical significance or sentimental value to the lineage making the present, which transformed that meaning into a present in and of itself. Thus the duke of Braganza's greatest show of generosity, despite some tension, was with the bishop of Elvas, to whom he gave a gold chain that the duke himself had worn on his wedding day.⁵⁷ The anonymous chronicler refers not only to the great workmanship and value of the gold but he also said the chain's symbolic importance was infinitely greater to the Braganzas being that it had been a present from King Manoel (1469-1521) to one of his sons when he married a Braganza.

However, equals in nobility and standing could not compensate each other with jewels or money. The means of mutual recognition and gratitude had to be more subtle and indirect, such as shifting generosity onto members of the seigneurial household. One option was simply to give money or objects of value to servants, as Braganza tried to do with the bishop of Elvas's servants, according to the *Relassão*. With similar intentions, Medina Sidonia, on his second day in Montilla, asked for a list of the marquis of Priego's servants, and to each one he gave "a great number of thick and expensive gold chains and coins [*reales de a ocho*] and even the lowest servants were given dazzling evidence of his grandeur." The dance of gestures could be reciprocated, as when Priego paid the salaries of some of Medina Sidonia's servants, the ones who had formed the guards company and a host of lesser servants. Similarly, the duke of Osuna

⁵⁶ This is highlighted in the *Epitome*.

⁵⁷ Costa and Cunha point out that the two men's disagreements were used by some chroniclers to explain the bishop's participation in the plot against D. João in the summer of 1641 after the bishop had become an archbishop and João was king of Portugal. In Costa and Cunha, *D. João*, 84.

offered, though the offer was not accepted, to pay Medina Sidonia's servants' salaries during his stay on the Osuna estate.

Another level of gifting can be seen with the musicians, actors, and other active participants in the festivities who received signs of seigneurial gratitude. In this case, direct payment reflected the nobleman's taste, as he rewarded musicians or bullfighters according to his artistic taste or the performer's skills or bravery.⁵⁸ In some sense, the last layer of this sequence of gratitude lay in the general enjoyment offered to everyone, including the common people, with the celebrations, fiestas, and performances. Bullfights, dances, and fireworks were open to anyone able to see them. Thus the multitude was allowed into the concrete act of matrimony, showing once again that the lord of vassals understood that he and his activities were both personal and public.

Particular note should be taken of the compensation given to two individuals in gratitude for their efforts on behalf of Medina Sidonia: the duke gave habits of military orders to don Diego de Guzmán, the *corregidor* of Écija, and to Alonso de Zayas.⁵⁹ Such generosity was possible only because the king had allowed the duke to make an occasional gift of these honors. Medina Sidonia's use of the privilege entirely undermined the purpose, which was to reward military services performed under his command that were, by definition, services rendered unto the king. In this case, however, the only thing justifying the duke's gift, which implied nothing less than the elevation of the recipients' social status, was collaboration in the exaltation of the duke's own glory. Though the habits of military orders had lost considerable value by 1640, they were still the first step on the road to tax exemption (enjoyed by the nobility). In any case, by appropriating these sovereign symbols, Medina Sidonia was indicating he was an essential site of power in Lower Andalusia.

Conclusion

At the end of his account, Chirino says he was unable to figure out how much Medina Sidonia's display had cost, "because even those of us who were there throughout it all cannot believe what we saw, such are the feats of this great house, and even more those of this lord, beyond all belief and possibility." This way of impressing, of causing amazement in the reading public, was part of a very concrete political sense of how to celebrate a marriage, which was, of course, the

⁵⁸ The musicians who performed for Medina Sidonia in Écija, where the duke requested encores, received coins thrown off his balcony. Marking a certain hierarchy in the duke's estimation, the bullfighter in Écija did better, being the recipient of a large quantity of *reales* for his skill and bravery. Braganza gave generous monetary compensation to each of the dancers who performed in Vila Viçosa during the week following the wedding. *Panagórico* and *Relassao*, passim.

⁵⁹ Alonso de Zayas offered his house to the duke to spend the night on his return, paid the cost of the bullfight and the horses used in the *rejoneo* (bullfights on horseback), and even organized a poetry competition to celebrate the marriage. *Panagórico*, 256r-257r.

first step toward perpetuating the lineage. In this regard, the two weddings were different. It was Braganza's first marriage, so he had no direct heirs other than his brothers. But Medina Sidonia did have a direct heir — the count of Niebla, the son of his first wife (who was his father's sister, and thus his own aunt). But it was a risky proposition to trust in the survival of just one heir, as the great noble families knew all too well. After several failed attempts, perhaps to ensure the support of the king, Medina Sidonia chose as his best men to sign the wedding documents and represent him at the wedding in Madrid two outstanding courtiers and relatives: the Count-Duke of Olivares and don Luis de Haro.⁶⁰

The choice of a procession, a ritual festivity with centuries of royal tradition, as the means of mythologizing the duke's power shows the linkages between a complex event such as a wedding — in essence the realization of ties between noble families and the guarantee of their biological continuation — and political language.⁶¹ In the cases I have analyzed, there were no traces of contestation.⁶² But, particularly in the case of Medina Sidonia, the objective of the lavish display most probably was to reinforce a sense of attachment toward the person (himself) in charge of defending and protecting the community, in this case the border of Lower Andalusia.⁶³ While in the early modern era there was concrete political meaning attached to the act of appearing in public with great pomp and a large entourage, at the same time, appearing with such a personage to some degree implied taking sides. The support shown to Medina Sidonia along his itinerary therefore can be interpreted as part of his consolidation of power in the face of attempts to diminish his influence. If, on the one hand, being seen to have more authority than was wise, as the Braganzas apparently were in Portugal, affected a noble house's capacity for political action, the Braganza procession was at the same time a form of seigneurial reaffirmation.⁶⁴

At the same time, the use of terms such as majesty to describe processions is part of the same code as that manifested in the images of the fiesta — for example, the “sovereign canopy” — whose ultimate aim was to sublimate the

⁶⁰ Archivo General Casa de Medina Sidonia (AGCMS) leg. 993, October 10, 1639; and AGCMS leg. 994, August 3, 1640.

⁶¹ Ruiz, *A King*, chap. II, “Festive traditions in Spain: Recording Festivals” and position 2.778. On the political use of public fiestas and their reflection in writing, see, on the papal court, Laurie Nussdorfer, “Print and Pageantry in Baroque Rome”, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29/2 (1998), 439-464 and 439-464. See also Ruiz, *A King*, chap. IX, “Reading a princely wedding feast.”

⁶² On the festive space, especially in the case of urban receptions, as a channel for expressing discontent see Ruiz, *A King*, ch. 1.

⁶³ Referring to royal power and citing Saavedra Fajardo, Carmen Sanz Ayán –in Sanz Ayán (coord), “Informe”, 11-34-, has written about spiritual movements linking the lord and his subjects.

⁶⁴ Fernando Bouza, *Portugal no tempo dos Felipes* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 2000), 216.

image of seigneurial authority.⁶⁵ Those terms and symbols acquire a very different meaning when used by a nobleman instead of by a sovereign and might even be regarded as a challenge.⁶⁶ Thus we can see how great lords of vassals regarded themselves as focal points of power able to mobilize loyalty on a grand scale and devise policies to strengthen their positions. Their vital rites were conceived of as public, to the degree that the term makes sense in the early modern era.⁶⁷ The ideal image of social order consciously reflected throughout these acts of visual didactics placed lords in a sphere that transcended a simple private celebration. The array and order of the procession and the use of royal symbols lent a certain sacral tone to the public appearance of the great nobility.

The use of military symbols in the visual discourse of the nobility added legitimacy to the mission of the nobleman as judge.⁶⁸ Unlike some noblemen who abandoned their weapons, certain great lords, especially those living on the frontier of the Hispanic Monarchy, continued acting as *padres de la patria*, an expression used by chroniclers in baroque Seville to refer, precisely, to the dukes of Medina Sidonia.⁶⁹ Noblemen wielded these two traditional sources of legitimacy — jurisdiction and military might — in reply to the monarchy's efforts to establish itself as the sole arbiter of nobility. Seen from this perspective, our protagonists' wedding processions can certainly enlighten us as to the political aspirations of these two outstanding sites of power.

Given this state of affairs, it is tempting to connect the iconographic display I have described with the plots organized by the two dukes: Braganza, who in December 1640 would declare himself to be king of Portugal, and Medina Sidonia, whose conspiracy was aborted in August 1641, putting an end to his dynasty's seigneurial primacy in Castile.⁷⁰ In the latter case, given the concrete itinerary of the entourage, how close the two events were in time (March 1640 and August 1641), and the nature of the festivities, one can conclude that Medina Sidonia planned his conspiracy with a clear idea in mind, thanks to the

⁶⁵ On the relationship between sovereign powers and image, see M. Fantoni, "El potree delle imagini. Reflessioni su iconografia e potere nell' Italia del Rinascimento," *Storica* 1 (1995): 43-72.

⁶⁶ A somehow different opinion in Ruiz, *A King*, position 6.941.

⁶⁷ Following the classic analysis of royal ritual by Eric Kantarowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1957] 1997).

⁶⁸ Regarding the deliverance of justice as a source of royal legitimation, see Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and Evolution of Society* (Boston: Bacon Press, 1979), 178-205.

⁶⁹ Vélez praises Medina Sidonia saying "the waters and the lands obey him, securing the whole monarchy for his king." In Vélez de Guevara, *El Diablo*, 147.

⁷⁰ On the Portuguese revolt see Costa and Cunha, *D. João IV*; Vallance, *A rainha*; and Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal*. On the conspiracy of Medina Sidonia, see Luisa Isabel Álvarez de Toledo, *Historia de una conjura (La supuesta rebelión de Andalucía en el marco de las conspiraciones de Felipe IV y la independencia de Portugal)*, (Cádiz: Diputación de Cádiz, 1985), and Salas Almela, *The Conspiracy*.

BSPHS 40:1 (2015)

procession, of the support he enjoyed among wide sectors of the common people and the elites of Lower Andalusia, whom he hoped would follow him. In Braganza's case, however, the fact that there were seven years between the wedding and the rebellion makes it impossible to assume even any indirect utility in testing the political waters of the time through the fiesta, as his Andalusian brother-in-law did.

We have focused more on political language than on truly iconographic elements, but it would be useful to compare the visual aspects in the two ceremonies, particularly taking into account that the ninth duke of Medina Sidonia had attended Braganza's 1633 gathering as the brother of the bride. It is possible that the idea of a great procession aimed at collecting his bride might have been planted when the duke attended the Vila Viçosa festivities, though he would add a much longer itinerary. In any case, iconographic innovations might be more than a simple copy of the royal models often described in the historiography. Great lords visually deployed their own political discourse and could take models from elsewhere in Europe — such as the Roman-style coach that drew so much attention at Braganza's wedding — and adapt these symbolic utensils to their own needs. After all, the narrative accounts of the fiestas, when effusively describing their various elements, could find no better praise than to say they were things that had "never before been seen."