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GIFT AND DIPLOMACY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH ITALY*

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ABSTRACT. *This article explains how the concept and the practice of gift-making evolved in Spanish Italy in connection with power. Contemporary chronicles, avvisi (newsletters), and letters enable us to reflect upon how gifts were seen, given, and received in the period at the Spanish embassy in Rome and in the viceroyalty of Naples. It aims to establish how the exchange of presents affected the wielding of power and how it contributed to shaping the political culture of the Spanish in Italy. The seventeenth century and Italy were the time and place that witnessed the greatest experimentation in gift-making practices. This experimentation and the polysemic nature of gifts can also be explained as a result of the low level of professionalization that still characterized diplomacy in seventeenth-century Europe.*

Recent historiography of the gift has advanced the case that, in the early modern period, the expansion of a market economy based on the circulation of coinage failed to displace the global gift-exchange system characteristic of archaic societies. Contrary to the assumptions of Marcel Mauss in his influential 'Essai sur le don',[1] it has been argued that, in the early modern period, both systems continued to interact and complement each other. The increasing use of coinage deprived gifts of their initial function of acting in contracts between social groups, but at the same time endowed them with new functions, above all in connection with power. This article aims to explain how the concept and the practice of gift-making evolved in Spanish Italy as regards this relation to power, and more specifically as far as diplomacy is concerned. It is based on an analysis of its role at the Spanish embassy in Rome and in the viceroyalty of Naples, the two most decisive centres for Spain's rule in Italy, making use of contemporary chronicles,

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[1] Marcel Mauss, 'Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés arcaiques', *L'année sociologique*, n.s., 1 (1923–4), pp. 30–186. English trans. by Ian Cunnison in 1969, and superseded by Marcel Mauss, *The gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. W. D. Halls, foreword by Mary Douglas (New York, NY, and London, 1990). For a bibliographical assessment of this evolution, see the Introduction to the book: Natalie Zemon Davis, *The gift in sixteenth-century France* (Oxford, 2000).

avvisi (newsletters), and letters, with the aim of reflecting upon how gifts were seen, given, and received in the period.

Historians of diplomacy have only shown interest in gift exchange in order to list them as curiosities or as a way of considering the subject of corruption.[2] Art historians, for their part, have dealt with this subject with the aim of studying how the diplomats' artistic collections, or those of the rulers that they represented, were enriched.[3] Historians have more commonly studied gifts between rulers. Natalie Zemon Davis dedicated a chapter of her well-known work *The gift* to their connection with power.[4] A cultural analysis of gifts can lead to a better understanding of how diplomacy and government practices evolved in the seventeenth century. My aim, therefore, is to establish how the exchange of presents affected the wielding of power and how it contributed to shaping the ruler's political culture. In the Scriptures there are abundant references to spiritual gifts and to the gratitude that they require. Classical writers also theorized on the limits of liberality and generosity as a moral obligation. The temple of the Three Graces allowed Aristotle to reflect upon gift reciprocity in the *Ethics*. Seneca wrote about the naturalness of gratitude in his work *On Benefits*. These two texts, together with Cicero's *On duties*, inspired jurists of the medieval and early modern periods, who pointed out that generosity should never lead to extravagance, that indulgence should be extended to relatives, friends, and domestic servants, and that public presents for churches, hospitals, and fortifications were highly recommendable in order to achieve a suitable standard of magnificence.

Early modern European society, based on a patronage system, was thoroughly imbued with a highly codified rhetoric of gift-making, which depended on one's belonging to the circle of beneficiaries at court or in the family. This society paid great attention to the limits of the 'kingdom' of gifts, the delicate signs that differentiated a gift from a sale, an obligation or a coercive payment. While a favour paid for in money might put an end to a relationship of patronage, gift exchange continued to sustain it, since its incommensurability kept a feeling of obligation alive in the person receiving it. The history of gift-making practices in the early modern period is a complex one of obligations and expectations of extremely varied registers. A gift enabled one to start or strengthen a relationship of fidelity, by cultivating a feeling of dependence. It might also be the case that the language and meaning given to presents, and the way they were given and received, were different for the donor and the beneficiary as a result of their

[2] For the former approach: Matthew Smith Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450–1919* (London, New York, NY, 1993), pp. 49–52. Isabelle Richefort, 'Presents diplomatiques et diffusion de l'image de Louis XIV', in Lucien Bély, ed., *L'invention de la diplomatie: moyen âge – temps modernes* (Paris, 1998); for studies of the relationship between gifts and corruption, see, for example: Lucien Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1990), pp. 163–71.

[3] Alessandra Anselmi, 'Arte, politica e diplomazia: Tiziano, Correggio, Raffaello, l'investitura di Piombino e notizie su agenti spagnoli a Roma', in Elisabeth Cropper, ed., *The diplomacy of art: artistic creation and politics in seicento Italy* (Milan, 2000), pp. 101–20.

[4] See ch. 6: 'Gifts, bribes and kings', in Zemon Davis, *The gift*.

belonging to different cultures. Some rulers and diplomats were able to take advantage of this potential of gifts by efficient administration of the messages that were conveyed through them. Other less skilful ones could bring about more than one conflict by not foreseeing the consequences of handing over certain gifts. Nevertheless, gifts were not only used to create mutual obligations and to cultivate ties of fidelity. They might be made with the aim of representing a nation and they could be effective instruments of communication between rulers or nations. As Christian Windler has shown, a present could serve to demonstrate the technological superiority or dependence of one nation over or on another. Gifts such as clocks or atlases could have far-reaching political implications and serve similar purposes. Eighteenth-century Spanish diplomats were aware of how beneficial, effective, and inexpensive it was to make a gift of quinine, appreciated for its curative properties. Such a gift bore with it a message that was no less evident because it was hidden: European courts were dependent on Spain for provisions of this product from the Americas.[5]

The main conclusions that have been reached by recent studies of gift exchange in the early modern period can be summarized as follows. There had been an evolution from a focus on the economic value of the gift above all else (although this was always of importance) towards being more concerned with the ways in which gifts were made. Thus, ingenuity and imagination might supplant financial investment. This development had taken place as a result of growing awareness that ostentation might be synonymous with bad government. Excess led to a loss of prestige, with the result that, as from 1665, international treaties tended to discourage the obligation to hand over gifts. The formal abolition of this practice in, for example, Franco-Tunisian relations came about in the nineteenth century.[6] There was also a process by which it was sought to differentiate tribute-gifts which were presented on occasions established by protocol (such as entry processions or coronations) from voluntary gifts, made in unexpected circumstances, as signs of genuine friendship. New situations and reasons for making gifts, beyond the framework defined by protocol, had to be thought up in order to demonstrate the sincerity of gifts. This situation automatically led to great experimentation. In this context, the monetary value of the gift must have passed into the background, to the benefit of the suitability and ingeniousness of the choice of object, and the place and time when it was presented. In the evolution that has been outlined, there must have been a point of inflection, a key moment in the change of direction: it has hitherto been supposed that this occurred in the eighteenth century.

Those responsible for this transformation would have been the great monarchies, such as France, Spain, or England, in order to differentiate themselves from the smaller European powers. However, in order to understand the start of

[5] Christian Windler, 'Tributes and presents in Franco-Tunisian diplomacy', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 4 (2000), pp. 168–99. See also for reflection on gifts: Craig Clunas, *Empire of great brightness: visual and material cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (London, 2007). [6] Christian Windler, 'Tributes'.

this change, we must go back to the 1660s and study gift-exchange habits in the small Italian states, which were of fundamental importance for the shaping of what the Spanish did. The seventeenth century and Italy were the time and place that witnessed the greatest experimentation in these practices. This experimentation and the polysemic nature of gifts can also be explained as a result of the low level of professionalization that still characterized diplomacy in seventeenth-century Europe.

The Spanish monarchy had ceased to be the leading European power after the signing of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. In 1661, Louis XIV took control over the reins of power in France, and Philip IV died in 1665, leaving a child barely four years old to inherit the Spanish throne. In such an unfavourable context, after the loss of Portugal in 1640 and the independence of the United Provinces in 1648, Spain also needed, more than ever, to remind the world of the legitimacy of the country's presence in the last Spanish stronghold in Europe: the kingdom of Naples. Alfonso the Magnanimous had conquered this kingdom in 1442. In 1503, his heir, Ferdinand II of Aragon, succeeded in reconquering Naples thanks to the victories of Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (the Great Captain). Naples was to remain united with Spain under the same sovereign until 1707. Because of its financial and military resources and as a consequence of the strategic location that it occupied in the Mediterranean, the kingdom of Naples was the keystone of Habsburg power in Italy. It is generally accepted that, after the Italian Wars (1494–1559) and the signing of the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis, Habsburg hegemony established a period of peace and stability in the Italian peninsula that was to last until the early eighteenth century. Spanish supremacy was based more on a policy of granting favours, aimed at attracting the Italian elites and maintaining a collective faithful to the dynasty, than on the use of arms. The historiographical idea that Naples under Spanish rule was a political dependency, often defined as an oppressed colony, has now been discarded. Following in Benedetto Croce's footsteps, Giuseppe Galasso's work defines the union of Naples with Spain as being indicative of the kingdom's integration within the early modern Europe of the time and prevailing royal absolutism.[7]

Under the Habsburgs, the Spanish viceroys applied a 'pactist' form of power in which the monarchy had to take into account the widespread feudal jurisdiction of the nobility, the fierce independence of the legal system, and considerable ecclesiastical jurisdiction in existence in Spanish lands in Italy.[8] Like the

[7] Manuel Rivero, co-ord., *Informe: Italia en la Monarquía Hispánica (siglos XVI–XVII), Studia historica, Historia moderna*, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 26 (Salamanca, 2004); Giuseppe Galasso, *Mezzogiorno spagnolo e austriaco (1622–1734)*, in his *Storia del Regno di Napoli*, XV (Turin, 2006).

[8] Giuseppe Galasso and Carlos José Hernando, co-ords., *El reino de Nápoles y la monarquía de España entre agregación y conquista, 1485–1535* (Madrid, 2004); Gaetano Sabatini, 'Gastos militares y finanzas públicas en el Reino de Nápoles en el siglo XVII', in Enrique García Hernán and Davide Maffi, co-ords., *Guerra y sociedad en la monarquía hispánica: política, estrategia y cultura en la Europa moderna (1500–1700)*, II (Madrid, 2006), pp. 257–92.

Aragonese monarchs, the Habsburgs encouraged the participation of the urban nobility (*baronaggio*) in the bureaucratic activity of the viceregal court. The Neapolitan town council was made up by five places or *seggi* for nobles and one *seggio* or place for the populace. This board of *eletti* (elected members) was an active, although at the same time conservative, civic entity, which, generally speaking, supported the maintenance of monarchic order as represented by the viceroy.

The viceroy had to maintain permanent contact with the Spanish ambassador in Rome since the kingdom of Naples was a fief of the Papal States. After the Council of Trent, the Holy See had taken on a central role in European policy-making, turning the court of Rome into a stage for the constant elaboration of the international order, where ceremonial acquired the role of supreme regulatory code and nations defined their position in the world. In Rome the Spanish ambassador had to seek to defend the monarchy's interests in international affairs and to ensure that as many cardinals as possible were favourable to Spain in conclaves.[9]

The cultural expenditure of the Spanish in Italy clearly increased in the 1660s. This is evident from the new pensions that the crown created for financing the Roman Congregation responsible for the construction of St Peter's and St John Lateran (the *Fabrica di San Pietro*), or the expenses arising from festivities in which the Spanish were involved for the first time, both in Rome and in Naples, as can be deduced by studying the embassy and the viceroyalty accounts.[10] In his book *Spain in Italy*, Thomas J. Dandelet suggested that Spanish financing of the work on the basilica of St Peter's was not accompanied by a rhetorical concern for making their patronage known, unlike that of the popes, who took pains to ensure the erection of large plaques and eye-catching tombs.[11] Everything would seem to indicate, however, that something started to change around 1660, when we seem to witness a transition towards a more rational use of ceremony and patronage in Spanish Italy. At this point in time, the Italians, Spanish, and French continued to be torn between faith and distrust in the usefulness of symbolic and rhetorical strategies for carrying out their political objectives. Change was slow. For instance, before leaving Italy in 1664, the viceroy of Naples, the count of Peñaranda, showed that he did not have much faith in ceremonies. On referring to Flavio Chigi's recent legation to France, he expressed the opinion that the honours, forms of address, and gifts that he was awarded in Paris did not affect

[9] Maria Antonietta Visceglia and Gianvittorio Signorotto, eds., *La Corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento '*teatro*' della politica europea* (Rome, 1998); Thomas J. Dandelet, *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2001); Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *La città rituale: Roma e le sue cerimonie in età moderna* (Rome, 2002).

[10] For more extensive analysis see Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes: ceremonial y mecenazgo en la Italia española de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 2008).

[11] Thomas J. Dandelet and John A. Marino, eds., *Spain in Italy: politics, society and religion, 1500–1700* (Leiden, 2007).

him at all.[12] An *avviso* from Paris, however, declared totally the opposite: the ceremonies had succeeded in converting Chigi to being 'completely French'.[13] In 1663 the ambassador Pascual de Aragón also exhibited certain doubts as regards the benefits that the embassy had obtained from renewed Spanish financing for construction of the basilica of St Peter's. Such doubts were multiplied with the increase in expenses for works of patronage, festivities, and public appearances, and reflected the changes that were imminent. Within this growth, this article will show the singular role played by extraordinary expenditure on gifts.

Ambassadorial treatises rarely mentioned gift-exchange practices and when they did so it was to warn against their pitfalls and to advise that they should not be accepted.[14] In this period, it might be admitted that an ambassador should spend the money of the monarch whom he represented, but to have paid for them out of his own pocket would have been an indecorous procedure that enslaved those involved. As he did not have sufficient means at his disposal, and since neither was his position professional and nor did he have a salary that endowed him with freedom to spend, an ambassador was faced with great difficulties to make gifts. All nations, not just Spain, obliged their diplomats to live on their own income, so that the ritual of gift exchange was often onerous. In order to provide an answer to these and other needs, as from the mid-seventeenth century, Spain, which had always stood out for having the best ambassadors in Europe,[15] started to regularize the situation of its diplomats in Rome, and probably at other courts, by means of making fixed monthly payments. Ambassadors, who already often received pensions on an individual basis, thus saw an improvement in their finances,[16] although such payments were still insufficient, to judge from the complaints that they sent to the king.[17] Be that as it may, these regular payments, started long before the diplomatic career was normalized in the eighteenth

[12] Letter of the Count of Peñaranda sent from Barcelona on 21 October, 1664: 'que el cardenal no vino francés ni lo seran el ni su tio; ni los favores que ha recivido en ceremonias borraran de su animo la memoria de los estrapazos de obra y de palabra que lo han hecho sentir franceses' ('the cardinal was not French on his arrival, and neither he nor his uncle will be so; neither will the favours that he has received in ceremonies erase from his soul the memory of the humiliation in word and deed that the French have made him feel'), Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Estado (E), 3287–111.

[13] 'tutta francese', *avviso* from París of 8 Aug. 1664, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), Segreteria di Stato (SS), *avvisi*, MS 29, fo. 353.

[14] For example, Jean Hotman, 'De la charge et dignité de l'ambassadeur', in *Opuscles françoises* (Paris, 1617), p. 499, qu. by Zemon Davis, *The gift*, p. 264. Trans. into English, *The ambassador* (London, 1603).

[15] Charles Carter, 'The ambassadors of early modern Europe', in Charles Carter, ed., *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: essays in honor of Garrett Mattingly* (New York, NY, 1965), pp. 276–7. On Spanish diplomacy, see the fundamental work by Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la diplomacia española* (Madrid, 1990–2007). See also: Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *Diplomacia y relaciones exteriores en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid, 2000).

[16] From early December 1662 onwards, the Spanish ambassador Pascual de Aragón was assigned 22,264 silver *escudos* a year from the income of the viceroyalty of Naples as long as he lived in Rome. AGS, E-R, 3132.

[17] In 1662, Pascual de Aragón wrote a letter to the king to explain the hardship in which he lived. AGS, E-R, 3035.

century, were a fundamental reason why the changes that have been described started to be undertaken within the Spanish orbit at this point in the seventeenth century.

If we examine the accounts, it can be understood which practices were considered to be most important, in accordance with the financing that they received. The amount spent by the Spanish embassy in Rome on gifts between 1662 and 1664 totalled 3,500 *escudos*, a similar sum to that required for the salaries of all the embassy secretaries[18] in the two years that Pedro Antonio de Aragón's ambassadorship was to last. In his accounts, this ambassador stated that he had destined this sum to gifts for 'confidant subjects',[19] without including the standard *rinfreschi* that the embassy used to give to those attending a party or a commemoration.[20] The size of this figure is further emphasized if it is compared with the expenditure that the embassy itself dedicated to work on its palace. The total cost of the restoration work on the palace undertaken by Pedro Antonio amounted to 1,562 *escudos*, not even half the sum spent on gifts. Such a comparison, far from being superfluous, enables us to reflect on the importance that should be attributed to each aspect of diplomats' cultural and symbolic activity. Thus, gift exchange occupied a higher position on the scale of importance than the embassy building proper, and, consequently, the ambassador had to put the need to make a suitable gift before redecorating his palace within his strategy of representation. In the meantime, what was happening in Naples? Large sums of money were also reserved for gifts in the viceroy's accounts. As in Rome, they were foreseeable transactions within the institutional framework and a defined ceremonial context, such as a reception or a legation. The variety of possible gifts was considerable, ranging from institutional ones between nations, such as the twelve falcons that the Republic of Ragusa (modern-day Dubrovnik) gave the crown every year to demonstrate its political alliance, to the sending of horses, carriages, and paintings to Philip IV and Charles II. The most frequent tribute gifts between nations, and the ones that were welcomed with greatest institutional appreciation, were animals. Other presents might be dispensed with, but never horses, mules, or falcons, depending on the case. These were official or state gifts which were presented at regular intervals. Tradition obliged the viceroy of Naples to send horses regularly to the king of France, to Queen Christina of Sweden, and, of course, to the king of

[18] 3,680 *escudos*.

[19] 'Mas doy en data 3.500 escudos que en diferentes ocasiones se han gastado en regalos y ayudas de costa que a diferente sujetos confidentes se han dado por mi mano' ('Furthermore, I confirm 3,500 *escudos* that have been spent by my hand on gifts and financial costs to different confidant subjects on different occasions'), AGS, E-R, 3040.

[20] 'Mas doy en data 2.560 escudos que han importado los gastos que se han hecho en las Audiencias de mi tiempo como son en bevidas, chocolates y dulces que se estilan dar a todos los que concurren al cortejo en que se incluyen las primeras visitas de los cardenales y las que ellos hacen al embajador' ('Furthermore, I confirm 2,560 *escudos* that the expenses made in the Audiences of my time amounted to, on such commodities as beverages, chocolates and sweetmeats that it is customary to give to all that attend the retinue, among which are included the first visits to the cardinals and those that the latter make to the ambassador'), ibid.

Spain. The obligatory protagonist of the *chinea* festival was also an animal, a white a mare.[21]

The abundant correspondence between the ambassador Pascual de Aragón and Flavio Chigi reveals the extent to which he was concerned to control how his gifts were interpreted in the Papal Curia. Before leaving Italy, he sent the pope and his courtiers various gifts with his written farewell. This letter, together with another one to Flavio, was a statement on the part of the ambassador of the meaning that he attributed to the presentation of gifts.[22] Many years after Pascual de Aragón's departure, some writings by Abbot Pignotti came to light in the curia, in which he had recorded the gifts and the *mancie*, in other words the gratuities and presents that the Spanish cardinal had offered the pontiff's court on that occasion: rings, clocks, and silverwork to the value of 500 *doppie*, distributed among his courtiers, grooms, and masters of ceremony.[23] The economic value of all these gifts was thoroughly analysed in Pagnotti's text.

> The other service that I performed Your Eminence concerning the horses that I dispatched with Monsignor Nuncio of Naples constantly and agreeably reminds me of Your Eminence; thus I interest myself in your person most affectionately. The performance and observance of my wishes obliges me to offer Your Eminence the services rendered once again in view of the pleasure that you have expressed as regards this trifling gift which I presented you.[24]

While the Spanish and the pope seem to have copied earlier practices and customs such as the ones that have just been referred to, Ferdinando II de'Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, sought to stand out by modifying the accustomed habits concerning receptions and leave-taking. A chronicle of the life of the ambassador

[21] Martine Boiteaux, 'L'hommage de la Chinea: Madrid–Naples–Rome', in Carlos José Hernando, dir., *Roma y España: un crisol de la cultura europea en la edad moderna* (Madrid, 2008), II, pp. 831–45. See also for the seventeenth-century *chinea*: Marcello Fagiolo dell'Arco and Silvia Carandini, *L'effimero barocco: strutture della festa nella Roma del '600* (2 vols., Rome, 1977–8).

[22] Pascual wrote to Flavio Chigi again from Toledo in March 1666 and once again reminded him of the importance that he attached to the gift of horses that he had made him before leaving: 'El obsequio que tan de corazon le rindo en la que acompaña a esta, suplicando a Vuestra Eminencia supla por mi con la merced que me hace lo que yo no savre desempeñarme de otra suerte, y tambien devo decir a Vuestra Eminencia que me falta el alivio de poder repetir mas de cerca de Vuestra Eminencia mi obsequio y asegurarle lo que muchas veces ha oydo de mi sincera voluntad' ('The gift that I sincerely make you that accompanies this, begging Your Eminence that you should supply for me the favour that you do me which I will not know how to perform in any other way, and I must also tell Your Eminence that I lack the relief of being able to repeat my gift closer to Your Eminence and to ensure you (as regards) what you have often heard concerning my sincere will'), ASV, SS, Cardinali, vol. 30, fo. 27, Naples, 20 Mar.

[23] Archivo de la Obra Pia, Archivo de la Embajada de España ante la Santa Sede, Códices, Catálogo de José Olarra. Códice 478, fos. 134–6, gifts made by Cardinal Aragón to the papal entourage before leaving for Naples in Aug. 1664.

[24] 'El otro servicio que hice a Vuestra Eminencia de los cavallos que consigne en mano de monseñor nuncio de Nápoles me logran repetidas y sumamente agradable para mi la memoria de Vuestra Eminencia en que yo me intereso afectuosísimamente con que aquella significación y observancia de mi voluntad vuelve con toda estimacion mia a obligar mi rendimiento a Vuestra Eminencia viendo el gusto que muestra en esta menudencia con que le servi', ibid., fo. 62.

Pascual de Aragón explains the game that the grand duke invented to receive him. He had given instructions to one of his gentlemen that he should secretly follow the ambassador closely during his journey in the duchy, and that he should provide him with lavish honours and gifts wherever he went. Without being seen or identified, this gentleman was to make sure that the Spaniard did not want for anything, neither food nor gifts, at any inn that he might stay at.[25] These circumstances attracted the chronicler's attention and are a clear example of the period of experimentation that gift-making practices were going through in Italy. The grand duke was aware of the value of gifts and knew that their price was not everything. At one and the same time, it was possible to be ingenious and to make sure that you were remembered as a generous ruler. A witness of the visit by another ambassador, Pedro Antonio de Aragón, to Prince Camillo Pamphili's villa in 1665 recorded the guests' behaviour in a letter. Pamphili had brought about unaccompanied encounters with the ambassador's wife, Ana Fernández de Córdoba, in order to present her with various surprise gifts, as if it were part of a game. However, he failed to achieve the desired effect and considered that these presents were poorly repaid as he saw that in the course of the day the ambassador took certain liberties as regards protocol, establishing certain precedents that were not right and proper for him to do so.

They were given several compliments by Prince Pamphili, who chose and created the most appropriate occasions to present such gifts; for example, after giving his arm to the ambassadress and imploring frequently, for fear of any false step, leading her some distance from His Excellency, thereby preventing her from acting according to what would have been right, [he ordered] that she should be provided with a cane, and no sooner had he said so, he had one covered with jewels fetched and gave it unto the aforesaid ambassadress; and shortly afterwards, asking what hour it was, and not finding anyone who answered, he made two most beautiful watches appear, and likewise he gave the ambassadress the same; but it seemed to the prince that in return these gifts were poorly paid. The ambassador, wanting to go to see the aqueduct of the Villa Alobrandina and having invited the prince to go with him, had his own carriage come and His Excellency quickly placed himself in the first place, thereby obliging the other [his host], to his mortification, to show himself in public in the last position; although he [the prince] did not consider himself to be greatly prejudiced for it was his villa even though the carriage was the ambassador's.[26]

[25] Cristobal Ruiz Franco de Pedrosa, *Crónica del eminentísimo señor don Pascual de Aragón y Córdova, cardenal de la Santa Iglesia de Roma del título de la Santa Balbina, protector de España, Embajador en Roma, virrey de Nápoles, Ynquisidor General, Arzobispo de Toledo …* (Madrid, 1689), Real Biblioteca, Palacio Real de Madrid, II 1088.

[26] 'Furono regalati di diverse galanterie dal Signor Principe Pamphilio, il quale per fare regali a tempo e a proposito fece nascere le occasioni opportune, poi che dando egli il braccio alla signora ambasciatrice e convenendogli bene spesso, in riguardo di qualche passo cattivo, allontanarsi un po da Sua Eccellenza, e privarla in conseguenza di quel che sarebbe stato bene, che ella si fusse proveduta di un bastoncillo, en el cosìdire ne feci egli venire uno coperto di gioie, e lo dono alla sudetta ambasciatrice, e poco dopo domandando che ora era, ne trovando chi lo sapesse, fece comparire speditamente due bellissimi orologi, e ne regalòparimente la signora ambasciatrice medessima, ma questi regali parve poi al signor Principe, che gli fusseo mal pagati, perche essendo voluto andare il signor

There is a long history of poorly reciprocated gifts or failed presents. In 1664, the French ambassador, the duke of Crequi, was received at the port of Civitavecchia with splendid gifts sent by the pope.[27] A papal agent maintained that the pontiff had limited himself to exercising 'his natural generosity of address towards this Royal Minister',[28] hoping that the French ambassador would know how to respond to such magnificence.[29] If he hoped to calm Louis XIV's ambitions in Italy and to tone down his pretensions by means of this welcome, he soon came face to face with the reality of having to listen to real threats of invasion if the French monarch's demands were not accepted.[30]

One lesson remains in the air: gifts were uncertain, incommensurable, and unforeseeable but were they only exchanged between friends? Historians have often been more interested in the gifts exchanged between friendly countries as a sign of their alliance.

There are numerous examples of gifts between friends: within the sphere of the embassy, presents to those 'sympathetic towards His Majesty' were frequent. The Spanish ambassador, Pascual de Aragón, who on his arrival in Italy had brought gifts with a 'national' identity (which he called 'curiosities of Spain') to project a certain image of the monarchy in Italy, stated that he had presented Father Master Hilarion with a gift worth 1,550 *reales*, 'during an illness that he had, as a gift to him, in view of how sympathetic he was to the service of His Majesty'.[31] The ambassador Pedro Antonio de Aragón revealed that the Portuguese envoy in Rome received 'curiosities from Lisbon', which he planned to 'give to friends'. Aragón came to attribute such importance to the political implications of this type of presents on the part of a 'rebel' against the Spanish crown that he declared to Philip IV: 'I shall discover who receives such gifts and inform Your Honour who they are'[32].

Ambasciatore a vedere gli Acquedotti della Villa Aldobrandina et havendo invitato il signor Principe a andar seco, fece venire la propria lettiga e se messe subito Sua Eccellenza nel primo luogo, onde convenne all'altro di farsi vedere in pubblico nel secondo con la sua mortificazione; se bene egli crede di non essersi progiudicato perche era nella villa sua, ancorche la lettiga fusse del Signor Ambasciatore', Archivio di Stato di Firenze, MP, 3388. Letter from Carlo Rinucci to Bali Gondi in 1665.

[27] 'egli non volse … se non a lodarmi il regalo et magnificenze con le quali Nostro Signore l'ha fatto trattare a Civitavecchia et a Polidoro' (he praised the gift and the magnificence with which he was treated by Our Lord in Civitavecchia and Polidoro'). ASV, SS, Francia, MS 123, fo. 348, from Paris, 30 June, 1662.

[28] '*la sua natural generosità ne trattamenti verso questo Regio Ministro*', ibid.

[29] 'era da credere che ancor egli dal canto suo debba corrispondere' ('it was to be expected that he, on his part, should correspond'), ibid.

[30] ASV, SS, Francia, MS 123, fo. 348, from Paris, 30 June 1662.

[31] '*en una enfermedad que tuvo, para su regalo, en atención a lo afecto que era al servicio de Su Majestad*', AGS, E-R, 3040, list of the expenditure of Pascual de Aragón's ambassadorship.

[32] 'sabré quienes son los regalados y os lo avisaré', AGS, E-R, 3037, letter from Pedro Antonio de Aragón dated 26 July 1664, 'hanle venido ahora algunas curiosidades de Lisboa con que dize ha de regalar a sus amigos, sabre quienes son los regalados, y los avisare a V S' ('some curiosities have now reached him from Lisbon which he says he has to give to his friends, I shall discover who receives such gifts and inform Your Honour who they are').

Sometimes historians overlook the fact that gifts were on occasions exchanged between enemies in order to achieve certain political aims. Diplomacy is carried out in a context of peace, in which resorting to force is unnecessary, and it might reasonably be expected that diplomatic gifts should be exchanged to overcome obstacles.[33] However, it is surprising to discover that on many occasions in the seventeenth century certain presents were delivered, in diplomatic contexts, in order to complicate negotiations, or to rarefy the political atmosphere.

It is surprising that the ambassador himself should recognize, in his statement of accounts, that he had handed over three hundred *escudos* 'to two persons whom I sent from this court as a gift for the duke of Crequi and Francisco Manuel when they left this court'.[34] In addition, this same Portuguese envoy agreed to receive a pension from the Catholic monarch.[35] This is an example of how frequent gifts from the Spanish to individuals who were enemies of the crown came to be. In June 1665, Pedro Antonio presented 'six most beautiful, small Andalusian horses all of different hues'[36] to the dauphin of France on behalf of Philip IV. As has already been noticed, gifts of horses were very commonplace in international relations at this time.[37] On his part, Pascual de Aragón also recognized, in a statement of accounts, that he had made a gift to the French ambassador, the duke of Crequi.[38] In the years prior to the signing of the Peace of Pisa in 1664, which put an end to the conflict between Louis XIV and Pope Alexander VII, many poisoned gifts, a subject which we will deal with below, circulated in Rome. The implications of certain gifts alerted figures such as Pascual de Aragón, who warned his intimates of the risks that they involved. Both Greek and Latin classical works and the Holy Scriptures were full of examples of gifts from enemies or 'poisoned' presents, such as those involving Ajax and Hector or Jacob and

[33] For diplomatic gifts as peace presents: Maija Jansson, 'Measured reciprocity: English ambassadorial gift exchange in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9 (2005), pp. 348–70.

[34] 'a dos personas que imbie desta corte en aguimento del Duque de Crequí y Francisco Manuel [nombres cifrados] quando salieron desta corte', AGS, E-R, 3040, list of the expenditure of Pascual de Aragón's ambassadorship.

[35] Pascual de Aragón, as viceroy, paid this pension from the Naples treasury: 'Don Luis Gomez Borges, gentleman of Pascual de Aragón awards Don Manuel de Portugal, knight of the Order of Calatrava, 3,733 *escudos*', Archivio Capitolino di Roma (ACR), Juan Cavallero, vol. 203. Subsequently, Pedro Antonio de Aragón increased the pension, sending Francisco Manuel 500 *escudos* 'per conto della regia corte' ('at the expense of the royal court'), ACR, Jaime Redontay, vol. 630.

[36] 'sei picciol bellíssimi Gianetti tuti di diversi colori', ASV, SS, *avvisi*, MS 122, from Paris dated 3 June 1665.

[37] In other circumstances, Pedro Antonio made the same gift to Philip IV and to Charles II. In November 1662 the *avvisi* recorded a gift of eight horses from Cardenal Antonio Barberini to Louis XIV.

[38] '1185 reales que se enviaron por el mes de enero de 1663 a Antonio Borgi, cónsul de la nación española e Liorna por los mismos que importó un regalo que se le ordenó hiciesse al embajador de Francia quando llegó a aquel puerto, de buelta de París' ('1185 *reales* that were sent in the month of January 1663 to Antonio Borgi, consul of the Spanish nation in Livorno, for the same amount that cost a gift that he was ordered to make to the ambassador of France when he arrived in that port, on his return from Paris'), AGS, E-R, 3036.

Esau. In the same way that the gift of a golden apple sparked off the Trojan War, poor control of the system of gifts in Rome at this time might lead to serious diplomatic conflicts. The most distrustful will have followed the dictates of Montaigne, who, in his essay on vanity (1588), had expressed his wish to remain under the rule of law before succumbing to the rule of gifts, handing over one's own destiny to the hands of others. But the diplomatic scene in Baroque-period Rome imposed other rules that had to be accepted if one wanted to take part.

In April 1663, Queen Christina of Sweden made a request to the Spanish ambassador in Rome that aroused suspicion among the councillors of state in Madrid. She demanded that Philip IV should make an annual gift of twelve ponies from the royal stables in Naples. After lengthy deliberation, the ambassador and the council of state decided that it was opportune to accede to the Queen's request 'for the way in which it might influence reasons of state',[39] but they imposed certain conditions. The donation was not to be in perpetuity; it was only to be made on one occasion and it was not to be considered to be a gift on the part of Philip IV, but rather a donation by the Viceroy of Naples. The Spanish monarch could not make gifts in this way 'because it was not decent for his Royal Highness'.[40] As a result, in October 1663, both Viceroy Peñaranda and Pedro Antonio de Aragón from Gaeta gave Queen Christina 'two teams of six most beautiful steeds which are most agreeeable to Her Majesty'.[41] The case revealed the subtelty of gifts and the usefulness of the viceregal institution, since it was possible to make a gift in its name that it would have been unworthy of the King of Spain in Italy.[42] The Swedish Queen was probably trying to alter the relationship of pre-eminence between the two monarchs and even Philip IV's reputation in Italy. Far from being an isolated case, it was to be a gesture laden with meaning imitated by other monarchs.

After the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668), Crequi demanded that Spain should make a gift of several horses from the kingdom of Naples. The Spanish, including the viceroy Pedro Antonio de Aragón, had felt the signing of this Treaty to be humiliating as they understood it to have been more beneficial to France. On their part, the French had celebrated the Peace in Piazza Farnese with fireworks organized by Gianlorenzo Bernini.[43] It is logical that the festivities organized by the ambassador in Rome, the marquis of Astorga, could not express any jubilation on the part of the Spanish. Astorga wrote to the queen to explain that the festivities had been held in Piazza di Spagna with greater brilliance than the French ones, a clear declaration of his high concept of rivalry as regards display

[39] 'por lo que puede influir a la razón de estado', AGS, E-R, 3036, consultation of the Council of State of 15 Apr. 1663.

[40] 'por no ser dezente a su real grandeza', ibid.

[41] 'due mute di sei bellissimi cavalli corsieri del regno quali sono stati molto graditi dalla maestà-sua', ASV, SS, *avvisi di Roma*, 20 Oct. 1663.

[42] AGS, E-R, 3036, consultation of the Council of State of 15 Apr. 1663.

[43] See also C. Dati, *Dice ed Irene gemelle della Dea Temide Selva per la nuova concordia delle Corone di Francia e di Spagna. All'ill ecc sig Gio Batt Colbert ministro di stato e intendente generale delle finanze della maesta cristianissima* (Florence, 1668).

and ceremony.[44] Reality took other paths and even the viceroy in Naples had decided to delay publication of the peace treaty. The French soon displayed signs of not wanting to tone down their show of strength in ceremonial matters, nor in the diplomatic realm of gifts. For this reason, and after the peace, as Queen Christina of Sweden had done in her day, the French ambassador demanded that Pedro Antonio de Aragón should make a gift of horses from Naples. It is interesting to read the neutral evidence of the nuncio of Naples, Bernardino Rocci, when he judged the French request to be malicious ('for every other reason than for the horses that were requested in it').[45] The French ambassador's demand for this gift might reflect an attempt to demonstrate that some Spaniards, like the viceroy, did not want to recognize the peace treaty. No donation of horses, or any other gift to the French crown, would have been made from Naples in times of war between France and Spain.

As has been mentioned, the few references that diplomatic treatises made to gifts were in order to warn of the dangers. From the middle of the century onwards, the Spanish ambassador began to dispose of more resources to make gifts at the crown's expense, but this did not put an end to his concern about exchanging them. Treatise writers suggested that gifts should be rejected on certain occasions. Plutarch, in his *Parallel Lives*, to be more precise his life of Cato (the Elder), had told how Manius Curius had rejected the gifts offered to him by the Samnites' ambassadors. A painting by Govaert Flinck representing this subject was to be seen on the walls of the Town Hall of Amsterdam in the same period as is being described.[46] It was to have decorated a building constructed to demonstrate the central position of Amsterdam in the world after the independence of the United Provinces from the Spanish in 1648. However, two such opposing powers as Spain and the Netherlands seemed to share similar suspicions as regards gifts. Gift exchange was governed by strict codes of conduct, the breach of which led to great controversy, recorded with care by dedicated masters of ceremony. Receiving or making gifts gave Spanish ambassadors and viceroys, who were poorly accustomed to the levels of subtlety that such practices attained in Italy, more than one crisis of conscience. When he arrived in Naples as viceroy,

[44] José Luis Colomer, 'Paz política y rivalidad suntuaria: Francia y España en la Isla de los Faisanes', in José Luis Colomer, ed., *Arte y diplomacia de la Monarquía Hispánica del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 2003), pp. 61–89.

[45] 'Il signor ambasciatore di Francia che risiede appresso la Santità di nostro signore ha richiesto in due lettere particolari questo signore vicere d'un estratione di cavalli parte per servitio di sua maesta cristianisima e parte per suo proprio. Posta questa lettera in consulta e giudicatosi scritta per ogn'altro fine che per l'estrattione che si dimanda' ('The Lord Ambassador of France who resides [in Rome] close to the Holiness of Our Lord has made, in two private letters to the viceroy, a petition for horses, in part for the service of His Most Christian Majesty [the King of France] and in part for his own use. This letter was read carefully, and it was judged to have been written for any other reason than for obtaining the horses requested in it'), ASV, SS, Nápoles, MS 70, fo. 555, 30 June 1668.

[46] Ivan Gaskell, 'El Ayuntamiento de Ámsterdam ¿Poder político o poder del arte?', in Juan Luis Palos and Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, dirs., *La historia imaginada: construcciones visuales del pasado en la edad Moderna* (Madrid, 2008).

Pascual de Aragón forbade his entourage to accept gifts.[47] He wanted to put an end to the custom that many Neapolitans had of asking favours of the viceroy by means of gifts.[48] Nevertheless, Pascual resorted to making suitable gifts when he considered it necessary ('from the beginning of his rule, his eminence used his esteemed pledges to honour, and his liberality, with the result that he attracted the goodwill of all').[49] What would seem to be clear is that Pascual de Aragón reconsidered the behaviour that had been standard among the Spanish throne's representatives in Italy. His chronicler demonstrated the great distance that separated the viceroy's view and that of the Neapolitans as regards the value of gifts. In short, there was an *encounter*[50] of different cultural concepts in Italy. Viceroy Pascual de Aragón's call for austerity responded to the idea, very common in the period, that periods of crisis were a consequence of the loss of morality on the part of governments. The crisis of the Spanish crown, which was deeply felt by Pascual de Aragón, led him to reconsider values such as generosity. Pascual de Aragón's confessor and chronicler, Cristóbal Ruiz Franco de Pedrosa, explained in various passages of his work how Pascual understood the practices of honouring or gift exchange. In practice, on arriving in Naples, and having learned his lesson from the experience of his ambassadorship in Rome, he instructed his servants as regards what they were to do if they received a gift.

> [Pascual de Aragón] sought to govern his entourage by admonishing his servants that they should act unselfishly with each one doing as corresponded him, just as his eminence intended to do; and his eminence had also issued this warning in Rome before his departure, telling them of the lack of self-interest that he planned to act with in the viceroyalty of Naples, with the help of God, and that all his ministers and servants had to do likewise, warning them with great severity that he who should receive as much as a saucer of figs or

[47] Pascual had witnessed the gifts that the count of Peñaranda had received from the prince of Tarsia before leaving Naples: 'Tra l'altri donativo avuti da particolari, il Principe di Tarsia, don Vincenzo Spinello, li mandó più gabbie pittate con infiniti faggiani pernici, starne e salami preggiatissimi; ma prima li mandó una gran tazza di cristallo di rocca, lavorata di gran freggi intagliati a bolino e altro ferro, cosa digna di un re, ch'era stata da suoi antenati più di cent'anni in sua casa' ('After the other donations received from private individuals, the Prince of Tarsia, Don Vincenzo Spinello, sent him more painted cages with an infinite number of most appreciated pheasants, partridges, grouse and prepared meats; but first he had sent him a great cup of rock crystal, decorated with rich materials, an object worthy of a king, which had belonged to his ancestors and had been in his line for more than one hundred years'), Innocenzo Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli dal 1660 al 1680* (4 vols., Naples, 1934–43), I, ed. F. Schlizer (Naples, 1934), p. 245.

[48] Pascual displayed signs of being aware of the standard practices of his predecessors as far as gifts were concerned and 'los disgustos que padecían con los napolitanos que estavan enseñados a negociar de otra suerte en las cortes de los virreyes' ('the displeasure that they suffered with the Neapolitans, who had been educated to negotiate in another way in the Viceroys' courts'), Ruiz Franco de Pedrosa, *Crónica*.

[49] 'desde el principio del gobierno, usó su eminencia de sus estimables prendas de agasaxar, y de su liberalidad, con que atraia asi las voluntades de todos', ibid.

[50] In the sense put forward by Peter Burke in his *Varieties of cultural history* (Cambridge, 1997); see also Gabriel Guarino, 'The politics of appearances: state representations and images of power in Spanish Naples during the seventeenth century' (D.Phil. thesis, Cambridge, 2004).

of grapes (which was the object of least value that he could consider) would not be accepted in his service.[51]

During some visits in the kingdom of Naples, the viceroy rejected several gifts. In Amalfi, the archbishop, Stefano Quaranta, wanted to make him a gift: 'a gift of the manna that is accustomed to spring forth from the body of St Andrew and of many bottles of sweet-smelling water … which were embroidered with silver and gold thread, and which greatly pleased him'.[52] Pascual de Aragón accepted his gift, but rejected those that Giulio Cesare Bonito wished to make in the name of the city.[53] On the occasion of his visit to Salerno, he once again rejected the presents of the towns of Massa, Sorrento, and Castellamare. A year later, in November 1666, the death of Pope Alexander VII was imminent. Queen Mariana of Austria made the viceroy, Pedro Antonio de Aragón, responsible for finding out the appropriate value for the gifts that would be made to the cardinals during the conclave to be held in 1667, leaving 'such a sensitive matter'[54] to his conscience. Pedro Antonio wanted to limit the abuses which, in his opinion, previous conclaves had given rise to, making use of an interesting argument: '[I, Pedro Antonio] did not find any expenditure necessary other than that of the cells of the cardinals of the faction and those that the trifling gifts that are distributed among these individuals might amount to.'[55] He demanded an in-depth reform of a widespread Spanish custom, that of making gifts to cardinals, which had resulted in disproportionate wasteful expenses:

> With the knowledge that I have of the court of Rome and of the cardinals, I found it advisable in the service of God and of Your Majesty to reform a most scandalous and simoniacal abuse, which has given the heretics much to reflect on, with little that is edifying for our holy religion and for the holy Catholic zeal of Your Majesty.[56]

In spite of Pedro Antonio de Aragón's denouncement of extravagant waste, the cardinals were won over with something more than gifts. The viceroy's foreign

[51] '[Pascual de Aragón] quiso gobernar su familia amonestando a todos sus criados obrasen con desinterés executando cada uno en los que tocaba, lo mesmo que tenia intención de obrar su eminencia; y esta prebención la havia echado tambien su eminencia en Roma antes de partir diciéndoles el desinteres con que pensaba obrar en el virreinato de Nápoles con la aiuda de Dios y que lo mismo abian de hazer todos sus Ministros y criados, advirtiéndoles con gran severidad que al que recibiese aunque fuera un platillo de igos o de ubas (que es la cosa de menor valor que podia ponderar) no le permitiria en su servicio', Ruiz Franco de Pedrosa, *Crónica*.

[52] 'un donativo della manna che suole scaturire dal corpo di San Andrea e di molti fiaschi di acque odorifere … li quali erano ricamati di argento et oro filato, i quali gradi assai'. Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli*, II, pp. 278–9.

[53] Ibid., pp. 278–9.

[54] 'esta materia tan escrupulosa', AGS, E-R, 3040.

[55] 'Que [yo, Pedro Antonio] no hallava gastos precisos mas que el de las celdas de los cardenales de la facción y de los que podrían importar las cortas dadivas que se reparten en aquellos sujetos', ibid.

[56] 'Con el conocimiento que tengo de la corte de Roma y de los cardenales, tuve por conveniente al servicio de Dios y de Vuestra Majestad, reformar un abusso tan escandalosisimo y simoniaco que ha dado bien que discurrir a los herejes, con poco decoro de nuestra sagrada religión y del santo y catolico celo de Vuestra majestad', ibid.

correspondence reveals that Italian cardinals constantly recommended relatives of theirs for key posts in the administration of the kingdom. By satisfying their demands or interceding in legal matters in which cardinals were involved in any of the Spanish lands in Italy, the viceroy guaranteed their fidelity in conclaves.[57] In December 1666, the archbishop of Naples, Cardinal Caracciolo, had to leave Naples to attend the conclave in Rome. The viceroy prepared a farewell for him, and Ana Fernández de Córdoba, the viceroy's wife or *virreina*,[58] gave him a present that made her the butt of the chroniclers' mockery: a small bar of chocolate. '[A bar of chocolate] weighing one pound, the lady *virreina*'s meanness was much commented upon, which made her husband, who is more parsimonious than her, fearful'.[59]

Pedro Antonio had advised cutting down on the gifts made to cardinals during conclaves, but he did not relinquish the possibility of receiving presents from them. Thus, Cardinal Ottavio Acquaviva presented him with two similar paintings, one of which depicted the Archangel Michael with the Devil and the other a holy bishop. Cardinal Í'fiigo Caracciolo, to whom the *virreina* had made a gift of chocolate, also presented Pedro Antonio de Aragón with works of art. In January 1668, Cardinal Caraffa arrived in Naples from Vienna in order to visit his mother before taking up his legateship in Bologna; he presented the viceroy with a splendid mirror, 'decorated with a noble design and made with singular craftsmanship of mountain crystal'.[60] Fuidoro maintained that Cardinal Caraffa had reused this gift of a mirror after having originally received it from the Republic of Venice during his nunciature. This was a fascinating example of the flow in reused gifts in Italian courts. The viceroy remained unperturbed and responded to Caraffa's present with another gift consisting of seven horses.[61] Cardinal Caraffa had several lawsuits against Cardinal Francesco Barberini pending in the courts of Naples.[62] After Caraffa had departed, Francesco Barberini quickly asked for the viceroy's favour towards his case. This interest on the part of Barberini might explain why he presented the viceroy with a painting of Saint *Guglielmo* by Giacinto Brandi, valued at 3,300 ducats in 1680.[63]

Vincenzo Rospigliosi, nephew of Pope Clement IX, arrived in Naples in May 1668 laden with gifts for the *virreina*, among them a statue of a lady, a clock, and

[57] Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASN), Segreterie del Vicerè (SV), Correspondenza estera (CE), vol. 1297 (1666–70).

[58] Contemporary chroniclers used the term 'virreina' although the viceroy's wife did not receive this title. It is not an established term in the historical bibliography.

[59] '[tableta de chocolate] di peso d'una libra, fu assai comentata l'avarizia di questa signora viceregnia, che fa tremare il marito, ch'è più avaro di lei', Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli*, II, p. 129.

[60] 'guarnito con nobil disegno e vaghezza singolare fatto a lavori di cristalo di montagna', ASV, SS, N, MS 70, letter from the nuncio Bernardino Rocci, fo. 26, Naples, 14 Jan. 1668.

[61] Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli*, II, p. 65.

[62] ASN, SV, CE, vol. 1297 (1666–70). Letter from Pedro Antonio de Aragón in Naples, 18 Dec. 1666.

[63] ASN, Consiglio Collaterale, Segreteria IV n° 36 Risoluzioni e Proposte n° 17 (1668), fo. 67, 2 May 1668, Melchor de Navarra.

several pairs of perfumed gloves.[64] The *virreina* had to reciprocate and on the first evening that he spent in the palace sent him 'a shirt with diamond buttons on a tray of gilded silver and six pairs of amber-coloured gloves covered with taffeta'.[65] The Viceroy of Naples also received the Pontiff's nephew with several gifts, but, in Fuidoro's opinion, echoing the comments made by the inhabitants of the city, the gifts made by Pedro Antonio de Aragón, and in general by all his court, failed to attain the same standard as Rospigliosi's presents, which would once again seem to confirm the proverbial meanness of the Spanish in Italy in this period.

> His Excellency has presented him with amounts of sweetmeats, prepared meats, veal, capons and other refreshments for the grand prince's journey, in addition to many other things of consideration. It is generally accepted that, as far as making gifts is concerned, the viceroy's court is very parsimonious, quite unlike what might be expected from one of his station.[66]

Nevertheless, gifts in Naples did not only pass between cardinals and the viceroy. The city's chronicles are full of references to sycophantic gifts from magistrates to the viceroy. In July 1669, the *virreina*'s birthday was celebrated with a great feast in the royal palace: 'the magistrates bringing Her Excellency gifts of great value, both of silver and of other similar substances'.[67] In October 1669, Fuidoro went to the extreme of describing the power that the magistrates had attained at the viceregal court: 'nowadays the magistrates govern everything, and it seems that this republic of magistrates, who are like gods, governs itself well with the errors of poor litigants'.[68] However, there were also destined to be differences of opinion with them.[69]

In 1680, in an inventory sworn before a notary in Madrid, Pedro Antonio de Aragón declared the origin of 329 works of art in his collection, including paintings, engravings, medals, and sculptures. In a subsequent trial concerning the division of the property of his late wife, Ana Fernández de Córdoba, he defended before the judge the position that they belonged to him because they were gifts

[64] 'Li regali ch'ha portato alla viceregina sono: una statua di una dama che si fa vento, ch'è un orologio; una gran spasa di guante di Roma, diversi profumati con fettuccie o galani d'oro; medaglie papali ed altre de santi, così d'oro come d'argento; un corpo intiero di santo' ('The gifts that he has brought the vicereine are: a clock that is a statue of a lady fanning herself; gloves from Rome, several perfumed, with gold ribbons or bows; papal medals and others of saints, both of gold and of silver; the entire body of a saint. All to the value of about 2000 ducats'). Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli*, II, p. 77.

[65] 'camisa con botones de diamantes en Acafate de plata dorada y seis pares de guantes de ambar cubiertos con un tafetán', AGS, E, 3290–201, *Venida del Nepote del Papa Clemente Nono en esta ciudad de Nápoles*, 20 May 1668.

[66] 'Sua Eccellenza l'ha rigalto di gran copia di cose di zuccaro, salami, vitelle, castrati ed altri rinfreescamenti per il viaggio del gran principe, oltre molte cose di conto. Vogliono communemente che, in regalare la corte del vicerè sia stato assai scarso al paragone di quello che convenida ad un suo pari', Fuidoro, *Giornali di Napoli*, II, p. 77.

[67] 'si portano da ministri togati regali a Sua Eccellenza di molta considerazione, così d'argento come d'altre simili materia', ibid., p. 77.

[68] 'le toghe oggi comandano il tutto, e pare che questa reppublica di togati si gobernano bene con li errori de poveri litiganti e sono tanti dei', ibid., II, p. 120.

[69] Ibid., p. 172.

that he had received as viceroy in Italy. The judge had to deliberate whether he considered these gifts as a legitimate source of property and, in this case, separate such works from the division of his wife's property, as Pedro Antonio requested. In principle, patrimonial property could not be sold in early modern society; instead, it could only pass by means of inheritance or donations *inter vivos*, in other words by means of a contract before a notary to testify to a donation without constriction in return for services rendered. In the case of presents, the donation had to be accepted with humble gratitude and it would have been an insult to talk openly of an ordinary payment for a service rendered.

Analysis of these documents reveals the levels at which gifts circulated at the court of Naples. Many members of the Naples law-courts figured in this inventory sworn on the Spanish viceroy's oath. Fernando Mocoso, regent of the Tribunal of the Vicariate (the *Vicaria*) and later member of the Royal Council of Naples, gave Pedro Alonso one of the most important paintings in his collection: Luca Giordano's *Doctors in the Temple*, valued at 3,000 ducats. Pedro Cortés, judge of the Tribunal of the Vicariate, gave him an engraving of the *Descent from the Cross*, a copy of a work by Michelangelo and valued at 700 ducats. Sebastián López Hierro de Castro, marquis of Castelfort, gave Pedro Antonio a painting by Giordano, *The Holy Family with Saint John imitating Raphael*, which must have been a high-quality original in view of Castelfort's close relationship with Giordano. Diego de Ulloa, president of the Regia Camera della Sommaria (the Financial Tribunal), gave the viceroy a set of six paintings by Vaccaro depicting the story of Tobias, which should be related to the picture of the story of Tobias that Cosme Mazarredo presented to the viceroy before he returned with him to Spain. Antonio de Gaeta, marquis of Montepagano, also occupied the presidency of the Sommaria of Naples.[70] On 4 June 1669, Pedro Antonio wrote a letter to the count of Oropesa to tell him that he had undertaken all the tasks necessary to fulfil what he and the Council of Orders had asked him to do in connection with the appointment of Antonio de Gaeta as knight of the Order of Calatrava.[71] In the same year of 1669 that Antonio de Gaeta acquired the Calatrava habit, he replaced the recently deceased Sebastián Hierro de Castro as president of the Sommaria. This double appointment should probably be related to the two paintings that Antonio de Gaeta gave Pedro Antonio de Aragón. Melchor de Navarra y Rocafull (1629–91) was appointed regent of the Collateral Council of Naples in 1660, a position from which he ascended to the post of public prosecutor (*fiscalía*) of the Council of Italy. Of all the paintings that Melchor presented to Pedro Antonio de Aragón, only the last four, according to the inventory, were given when the donor was regent of the Collateral Council. Esteban Carrillo was regent of the royal

[70] For twelve years he was the lieutenant of the Sommaria until he retired in 1689. Between 1676 and 1677 he acted as regent in Madrid. Giuseppe Galasso, *Napoli spagnola dopo Masaniello. Politica, cultura e società* (Florence, 1982), p. 245.

[71] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Nobleza, Frías, 1384, letter from Pedro Antonio de Aragón in Naples, 4 June 1669.

chancery of Naples and regent of the Collateral Council. According to De Dominici, Carrillo commissioned Micco Spadaro to paint some canvases depicting the eruption of Vesuvius, Masaniello's revolt, and a 'triumph of Caesar', and, on his arrival in Spain, he achieved 'infinite gratitude from the Regent whose mandate he had exercised'.[72] According to De Dominici, Carrillo sent these paintings 'to gain favour at the court of Spain'.[73] The same author reveals that Carrillo managed to persuade Pedro Antonio de Aragón to show clemency to Micco Spadaro for having taken part in the company of death during Masaniello's revolt. Between 1663 and 1665 he presented Pedro Antonio with a work by Andrea Vaccaro, the most valued picture in his collection.

Analysis of the realm of gifts leads us to consider that there were certain specific Spanish customs different from Italian habits in the seventeenth century. It is interesting to detect that awareness of this difference was used by the Spanish in Italy to achieve their political aims. The viceroys' wives played an important role in defining gift exchange as a government practice. In conclusion, we can put forward the hypothesis that it was not the great monarchies that brought about changes in gift-making practices in the early modern period. The customs of the Spanish changed thanks to their careful observation of the practices of Italian princes, such as those of the grand duke of Tuscany. The Spanish succeeded in understanding gifts as part of diplomacy and the act of government in Italy. Similarly, it can be concluded that the beginning of the process of experimentation and the appearance of new meanings given to presents should be backdated to at least the 1660s and not assigned to the eighteenth century as has usually been the case until now.

[72] 'infiniti ringraziamenti al Reggente che mandato l'aveva', according to Renato Ruotolo, 'Collezioni e mecenati napoletani del XVII secolo', *Napoli Nobilissima*, 12 (May–June 1973), fasc. III, p. 146.

[73] 'per farsi merito nella corte di Spagna', Domenico de Dominici, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti napoletani*, (Naples, 1979 [1742]), III, p. 194, according to Renato Ruotolo, ibid., p. 148 n. 23. In spite of these anecdotes related by De Dominici, Renato Ruotolo believes that Carrillo's patronage was not only a result of political aims.