***La princesa de* Éboli*: Cautiva del rey. Vida de Ana de Mendoza y de la Cerda (1540–1592).* Helen H. Reed and Trevor J. Dadson. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica y Marcial Pons Historia, 2015. 534 pp. $31.74. ISBN 978-84-15963-60-8.**

This book is a biographical account of the life and deeds of Ana de Mendoza y de la Cerda (1540–92), Countess of Melito, Duchess of Pastrana, and Princess of Eboli. She is an interesting and controversial figure whose actual life has been mixed with legend, and who is easily identified in artwork from the period because of the patch she wore over her right eye – notably in the pastoral portrait by Sofonisba Anguissola that appears on the book cover. Ana was born during the reign of Emperor Carlos V (r. 1516–56), but her entire adult life, including her rise at court, political disgrace, and imprisonment, took place during the reign of Felipe II (1527; r. 1556–98). During her time at the royal court she was immersed in a vibrant culture and in the politics of the empire, and she witnessed or participated in some of the most important events of her time. This study is the result of the collaborative effort of two well-known Hispanists, Helen H. Reed and Trevor J. Dadson, who bring their erudition and deep knowledge of the culture of early modern Spain to this comprehensive and well-researched project. They cite archival documentation, letters, inventories, and a wide range of published material to bring the Princess of Eboli to life. Many of the letters they discuss and quote bring the voice of the sixteenth century to the reader. Most of these documents come from their previous collaborative work, the *Epistolario e historia documental de Ana de Mendoza y de la Cerda, princesa de Éboli* (Madrid, 2013) – an edition containing four hundred and twenty-eight documents and letters related to Ana de Mendoza dating from 1553 to 1592.

At 534 pages, *La Princesa de Eboli* is a very long book. After a prologue and introduction, the study is divided into ten chapters contained in four sections: "La heredera" (the heiress), "La esposa" (the wife), "La viuda" (the widow), and "La cautiva" (the captive), plus an epilogue that also serves as a conclusion. The first half of the book (including the prologue, introduction, and first two parts)

addresses Ana's birth, upbringing, marriage, motherhood, and life at court while married. Ana belonged to an important aristocratic family; she was the only child and heiress of the unhappy marriage formed by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza y de Cerda and Catalina de Silva Cifuentes. In 1552, by the time she reached age twelve, Carlos V had betrothed her to Ruy Gomes da Silva (1516–73), then already thirty-six years old. He was a Portuguese nobleman who arrived in Spain as part of the contingent of courtiers that accompanied Isabel of Portugal when she married Carlos V. Ruy was known as "King Ruy" because he was Felipe II's most trusted advisor and secretary (first as prince and then as king). Obviously, this position gave him great influence in politics — Reed and Dadson consider him Felipe's "favorite" and "friend." For her part, Ana got very close to Felipe II's queen, Isabel of Valois (r. 1560–68) — the monarch's third wife and the mother of his two daughters, Isabel Clara Eugenia and Caterina Micaela. This closeness to the king and queen made Ana and Ruy the power couple at court. Reed and Dadson do a very good job of reconstructing the networks at court and underlining Ana's relationships and correspondence not only with local figures such as family members, Prince Carlos, or Teresa de Ávila, but also with the international elite, including Catherine de Medici, the queen of France and Isabel of Valois's mother. Unlike that of Ana's parents, her marriage to Ruy seems to have been very happy. They had ten children together, most of whom reached adulthood, marrying well or joining religious orders.

The remaining parts of the book are more extensive and address Ana's most intriguing and traditionally romanticized period: her widowhood and captivity, which inspired the subtitle of this study, *La cautiva del Rey* (The King's Captive). When her husband died in 1573, Ana was thirty-three years old. She was so devastated that she decided to take refuge in a convent. Nevertheless, her obligations as a wealthy noblewoman with an important patrimony to administer, and with children to raise, educate, and provide for, prompted her family, friends, and even Felipe II to encourage her to rejoin the world. She did, and after the death of her own mother in 1576, Ana landed in Madrid once more. Her problems really started during this period, when she came in close contact with a royal secretary, Antonio Pérez, whom she knew from her time with Ruy. Reed and Dadson, contrary to Gregorio Marañón, believe that Ana and Antonio Pérez were lovers and allies who participated in the political intrigues at court, including the assassination of Juan of Austria's secretary, Juan de Escobedo. In 1578, after three failed attempts, Escobedo, was murdered in Madrid. It appears that Pérez led Felipe II,

who was probably involved in the crime, to approve Escobedo's murder because he represented Juan of Austria's interests at the court. He did so by exaggerating the political intentions that Felipe's illegitimate half-brother, Juan of Austria, had in Flanders and the political impact of his potential marriage to Mary of Scotland. Reed and Dadson suggest that Pérez exploited Felipe's jealousies and insecurities, and when he realized that he had been tricked, reacted by imprisoning Pérez and Ana in 1579. She would never recover his trust. Ana spent the first six months confined at the Castillo de Pinto, a harsh prison that took a toll on her health. In 1580, she was transferred to San Torcaz; by 1581, she had been placed under "house arrest" in her own castle in Pastrana, initially with limited mobility and finally in full confinement. Even so, Ana's fate was tied to Pérez. Consequently, when he escaped captivity, taking refuge abroad, and started writing against Felipe II (and, thus, contributing to the king's bad reputation), she was deprived of privileges. It was at this point that she was confined to her room in the castle, a "cárcel escura [*sic*]" (a dark prison) (455). In their analysis of this episode, Reed and Dadson skillfully untangle the relationships that Ana had with her children as *mater familias*, contrasting her tense relationship with her heir, Rodrigo, with the very personal and protective relationship she had with her favorite child, Diego. The most remarkable aspect of Ana's life in this period is her strength and how she relentlessly fought to achieve her two main goals: to maintain her family's patrimony and to liberate herself, using the law, her social standing, her family connections, and her networks. If Ana de Mendoza did not succeed in the end, it was definitely not for lack of trying. She died in her "dark prison" in 1592. The book concludes with an epilogue that discusses the future and success of her lineage, starting with her children. For instance, one of her great-granddaughters, Luisa María de Guzmán y Sandoval (1613–66), became queen of Portugal as consort of Joao IV of Braganza. If her line succeeded, it was in part because Ana de Mendoza fought for and protected their patrimony.

In sum, this book is much more than a biographical account of the life of Ana de Mendoza. It is a detailed and painstakingly researched reconstruction of her world, including her family of origin, her life, and that of her husband and her children, as well as the reign of Felipe II, and his queens. It moves far beyond constructing a historical narrative, and delves into the myriad challenges, controversies, and intrigues that characterized them and the networks within which they moved — a "total history" that weaves together themes as diverse as artistic production, literary culture and library collections, entertainment, high culture,

and the Moriscos. While at times these many digressions are welcome and truly illuminate the period, there are so many deviations from the main narrative that the centrality of Ana de Mendoza in her own biography is sometimes obscured. Indeed, many of these thematic detours would have worked better as footnotes. This, however, is a reflection of the depth of knowledge the authors have and their long experience in researching this period. They see how everything is connected, and in teasing this out, present a dizzying swirl of action that happens to have Ana in the middle. For her part, she appears as an educated noblewoman engaged in the politics and world of her time, exercising agency and projecting a strong voice (as evidenced in the many excerpts from her letters). This book will be of interest to any specialist on early modern Spain (as well as Portugal and Europe), particularly those working on politics, networks, court culture, gender, and women and power.

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