

GENDER
AND
DIPLOMACY

WOMEN AND MEN
IN EUROPEAN EMBASSIES
FROM THE 15TH TO THE 18TH CENTURY



Edited by

ROBERTA ANDERSON · LAURA OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA · SUNA SUNER

HOLLITZER





DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN
DIPLOMATICA 2

Series Editors

REINHARD EISENDLE · SUNA SUNER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER



GENDER AND DIPLOMACY

WOMEN AND MEN
IN EUROPEAN EMBASSIES
FROM THE 15TH TO THE 18TH CENTURY



Edited by
ROBERTA ANDERSON · LAURA OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA · SUNA SUNER

HOLLITZER



The symposium was supported by

DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN
UNIVERSITÄT WIEN – INSTITUT FÜR GESCHICHTE
STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM

The publication was supported by

DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN – FORSCHUNGSVEREIN
FÜR THEATER- UND KULTURGESCHICHTE

Gender and Diplomacy:

Women and Men in European Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century.

Edited by

ROBERTA ANDERSON · LAURA OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA · SUNA SUNER

Vienna: HOLLITZER Verlag 2021

(= Diplomatica 2)

Editors of Diplomatica

REINHARD EISENDLE · SUNA SUNER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER

Cover-image

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

Caspar Netscher: *Nederlands buitengewoon ambassadeur, wordt in geheime audiëntie
ontvangen door de Spaanse koningin-regentes Maria-Anna van Oostenrijk, 2 maart 1671.*

Oil on canvas, 1672–1674.

Layout: GABRIEL FISCHER, Vienna

English proofreading: ROBERTA ANDERSON, Bath

Editorial Office and copy-editing: INGE PRAXL, Vienna

Index: MARIJA BOGDANOVIC, Belgrade

© HOLLITZER Verlag, Wien 2021

HOLLITZER Verlag

a division of

HOLLITZER Baustoffwerke Graz GmbH, Wien

www.hollitzer.at

All rights reserved.

ISSN 2707-8574

ISBN 978-3-99012-835-0

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- XIII Prologue: A Painting
LAURA OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA (GRANADA)
- XV Editorial to the Volume
ROBERTA ANDERSON (BATH) AND SUNA SUNER (VIENNA)

PART I

WOMEN AS DIPLOMATIC ACTORS

- 3 Splendid Women in the Diplomacy of Juan Antonio de Vera (1583–1658),
Ambassador of the Catholic King Philip IV
MARÍA CONCEPCIÓN GUTIÉRREZ REDONDO (MADRID)
- 21 Key Role Figures in the Diplomatic Network:
Women as Intermediaries for the Ambassador of Lucca at the Court
of the Queen *Gobernadora* Mariana of Austria (1662–1674)
ANNALISA BIAGIANTI (PISA)
- 45 Women's Place in Diplomacy through the French Diplomatic
Correspondences of the Early Seventeenth Century
CAMILLE DESENCLOS (MULHOUSE, UPPER ALSACE)
- 63 The Role of Women in Louis XIV's Relationship with
the Gonzaga-Nevers di Mantova between 1665 and 1691
JOHN CONDREN (OXFORD)

PART II
DIPLOMACY OF QUEENS

- 93 Sir Henry Unton (c.1558–1596), Elizabeth I (r.1558–1603)
and Chivalric Diplomacy
TRACEY A. SOWERBY (OXFORD)
- 115 A Bridegroom for Elizabeth:
Diplomatic Negotiations for the Marriage
of Princess Elizabeth, 1610–1613
ROBERTA ANDERSON (BATH)
- 149 Consequences of the Dynastic Crises of the Seventeenth Century
in the Matrimonial Market and Their Influence in the European
International Policy: The Case of Maria Anna of Neuburg (1667–1740)
ROCÍO MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ (MADRID)

PART III
THE BIRTH OF THE AMBASSADRESS

- 199 Who was the *Embajadora*?
Concept, Treatises and Examples (1580–1674)
LAURA OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA (GRANADA)
- 217 The Imperial Ambassador and His Spouse at the Theatre:
The Rhetoric of Diplomacy on Calderón's Stage and
in Count Pötting's Diary (1663–1674)
WOLFRAM AICHINGER (VIENNA)
- 233 Count Andrei Matveev and His Wives in Petrine
Diplomatic Practice (1682–1725)
EKATERINA DOMNINA (MOSCOW)
- 269 Ernestine Aloysia von Weissenwolff, contessa Durazzo (1732–1794):
Riflessioni per una ricostruzione biografica
ARMANDO FABIO IVALDI (GENEVA – PARIS)

- 329 A Spanish Ambassador in Rome:
Doña Leonor de Melo, Marchioness of Castel Rodrigo (1632–1641)
DAVID GARCÍA CUETO (GRANADA)
- 357 Court Lady – Ambassador – Vicereine:
The Life and Career of Maria Ernestine Countess Harrach
(Née Dietrichstein, Widowed Gallas, 1683–1745)
PIA WALLNIG (VIENNA)

PART IV

STAGES FOR MALE DIPLOMACY

- 375 “Cloth and Colour Makes an Honourable Man”:
The Role of Dress in the Identity Construction of the
French Ambassador François de Noailles in Venice (1557–1561)
LAURA MESOTTEN (LEUVEN)
- 405 A Turk at the Court of the Planet King:
Political and Sociocultural Controversies of an
Ottoman Embassy to Madrid (1649–1650)
LUIS TERCERO CASADO (VIENNA)
- 433 The Embassy of Seyyid Ali Efendi to France (1797–1802):
The Impressions of an Ottoman Diplomat on European Culture
through his *Sefâretnâme*
OSMAN NİHAT BİŞGİN (ISTANBUL)

APPENDIX

- 451 Names
465 Places
469 Curricula Vitae

ABBREVIATIONS

a.k.a.	also known as
b.	born
BC	Before Christ
c.	circa
cf.	confer (compare, see)
d.	died
ed.	edited by, editor
eds.	editors, editions
et al.	et alii/aliae (and others)
f.	and following (page etc.)
ff.	and following (pages etc.)
<i>fl.</i>	<i>floruit</i> (flourished)
fig.	figure
fol.	folio
fols.	folios
i.e.	id est (in other words)
ibidem	in the same place
idem	the same
no.	number
nos.	numbers
p.	page
pp.	pages
r.	reign(ed)
res.	residence
s.a.	sine anno (without year)
s.l.	sine loco (without location)
s.p.	sine pagina (without page)
s.n.	sine nomine (without name/author/editor)
s.typ.	sine typographus (without printer/publisher)
trans.	translated by, translator
vol.	volume
vols.	volumes

REMARKS

Translations, if not indicated otherwise, are by the authors of the contribution. Quotations are generally in the original language.

Double quotation marks are used for quotations in the continuous text; single quotation marks indicate translated words or sentences, as well as otherwise highlighted words or phrases.

HOLLITZER Verlag claims no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, nor does it guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

PICTURE CREDITS

Images are reproduced with the permission of the copyright owners. Credits are indicated in image captions. Responsibility for the contents of the various articles and for questions of copyright lies with the authors. In the case of outstanding, justified claims, we request to be notified by the rights owner.

INTRODUCTION

PROLOGUE: A PAINTING

Laura Oliván Santaliestra (Granada)

The book you are holding was published in Vienna, and it has its origins in another equally beautiful city: Florence. It was there that I met Roberta Anderson, Suna Suner and Hans Ernst Weidinger, the three colleagues with whom I worked on this publication. We were brought together by the conference *Splendid Encounters III: Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Early Modern World*, organised by Roberta Anderson and Anna Kalinowska of the Premodern Diplomats Network at the Villa Schifanoia, home to the European University Institute in Fiesole (Florence). I was there to present a paper on ambassadors' wives in *El Embaxador* (1620) by the Count of La Roca (Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa Ávila y Zúñiga). I was lucky enough to be seated beside Suna Suner, with whom I quickly established a profound friendship. The sojourn in Fiesole ended with an unforgettable invitation: with a dinner given by Hans Ernst Weidinger, the founder of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN, STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM and the publishing house HOLLITZER at the Castello di Sezzate for the conference's organisers and speakers.

Back in Vienna, I met Suna again and we quickly came up with the idea of organising a symposium on gender and diplomacy at the DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN, where Suna worked.

On the *ferragosto* of 2015 (15 August, Assumption Day), I met Hans Ernst Weidinger and Suna Suner again on a terrace in the Jodok Fink Square in the eighth Viennese district – together with Reinhard Eisendle and Matthias J. Pernerstorfer from DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN delving into conversations on the early modern history of diplomacy. The imposing baroque church of Maria Treu witnessed our conversations about seventeenth century perfumes, and seventeenth and eighteenth century diplomacy: there and then we began conceiving our conference to be devoted to the gender aspect(s) of early modern diplomacy. The heat of Viennese August reminded me of Granada, where I now live.

Suna Suner, Reinhard Eisendle and I started working on the content and organisation of our *Gender and Diplomacy* symposium that autumn. We soon decided on the image we would use for the symposium poster. I remembered a fascinating picture of Emperor Ferdinand's daughter Mariana of Austria (1634–1696), who married her uncle, the Spanish King Philip IV (b.1605, r.1621–1665) in 1649 at the age of fifteen. After the death of her husband in 1665 she was Queen Regent of Spain for ten years (1665–1675) due to the juvenility of her underage son Charles (II), the last male descendant of the Spanish Habsburg line (b.1661, r.1665–1700). The painting shows the queen regent receiving the Dutch ambassador, Hieronymus Beverningk (1614–1690) at the Royal Alcázar of Madrid on 2 March 1671. Held at

the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, I knew of it through the great cultural historian Fernando Bouza.¹

Mariana of Austria is depicted sitting on a chair. Beverningk is kneeling before the queen, handing her a letter inscribed: 'For the queen regent'. The Dutch ambassador is wearing clothes in the Dutch and not the Spanish style. In the foreground on the right is Beverningk's wife, Johanna le Gillon (1635–1706), who would, in this case, be the ambassadress, although in fact she was not with him during his residency. She is placed in the foreground of the painting dressed in a French-Dutch style with a remarkable detail: she is showing us her shoe. At the Spanish court, women of the nobility could not show their ankles or feet. Court ladies wore platform-soled *chopines*. Chopines prevented anyone from seeing their feet, and so it was said the "Spanish queens did not have legs"; besides this, chopines made the women seem to float when they walked. This evidently is not the case with the Dutch ambassadress who, sharing the same carpet as the queen regent is cheekily showing the tip of her shoe and, therefore, her foot, a foot firmly set on the floor.

In the background on the left is a young woman whose identity is unknown. She cannot be the Beverningks' daughter because they had no children. Anyway, this painting is without doubt an enigma.

Seven years after this audience of the Dutch ambassador with Mariana of Austria (7, a magic number), Hieronymus van Beverningk took part in negotiating the Treaty of Nijmegen (1678). Due to his advanced age (sixty-four), he was called the Father of the Peace of Nijmegen; which means Beverningk should be considered as one of Europe's most important ambassadors in the mid-seventeenth century.

This book devotes a complete section to ambassadors' wives, a subject that I have spent the last years of my career researching. My favourite ambassadress is Johanna Theresa von Harrach, wife of Ferdinando Bonventura von Harrach, Holy Roman ambassador to Spain from 1673 to 1677. Johanna Theresa died in Vienna at the age of 77, but she's still alive to me. This book is an endeavour to revive other seventeenth century ambassadors' wives and to inspire new research about them.

1 CASPAR NETSCHER: *Nederlands buitengewoon ambassadeur, wordt in geheime audiëntie ontvangen door de Spaanse koningin-regentes Maria-Anna van Oostenrijk, 2 maart 1671* ('Reception of the Dutch ambassador Hieronymus van Beverningk by the Spanish Queen regent Mariana of Austria, 2 March 1671'). Oil on canvas, 1672–1674. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

EDITORIAL TO THE VOLUME

ROBERTA ANDERSON (BATH) AND SUNA SUNER (VIENNA)

Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century is the second volume of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN's new series *Diplomatica* which is mainly concerned with the cultural aspects of diplomacy up to the nineteenth century. This volume features the proceedings of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN's symposium organized in cooperation with the University of Vienna and STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM ON 11 and 12 March 2016, and introduces contributions which focus on and investigate "gender", a lesser-studied aspect in studies of diplomatic history. The term "gender" quintessentially is associated with and suggests at first hand "the female"; acknowledging this, the volume endeavours to provide a balance of both genders, and does this by looking at the culturally relevant aspects also of the male gender as well as considering both genders in their interwoven network of relationships; that is in marital, cultural, diplomatic contexts. The volume features the following chapters: WOMEN AS DIPLOMATIC ACTORS, DIPLOMACY OF QUEENS, THE BIRTH OF THE AMBASSADRESS and STAGES FOR MALE DIPLOMACY.

The volume addresses some fundamental questions about where men and women were positioned in diplomacy in the early modern period. Gender might not always be the first topic that comes to mind when discussing international relations, but it has a considerable bearing on diplomatic issues. Scholars have not left this field of research unexplored, with a widening corpus of texts discussing modern diplomacy and gender. But what was the situation in the early modern world? While ambassadorial positions were monopolised by men, women could and did perform diplomatic roles, both officially and unofficially. Women appear regularly in diplomatic contexts. Literary and artistic masterpieces celebrating the signing of peace treaties often demonstrate a prominent role to the female figure, thereby questioning the assumption that the world of diplomatic negotiation was entirely male-orientated. Studies in diplomatic history have primarily examined the active roles taken by women in European diplomacy. Some of these histories take the form of biographies, following individual women and their diplomatic activities over time, while others have studied developments that occurred in briefer temporal contexts. Since women often did not have formal access to diplomatic positions, much of the scholarship concerning this history takes as its point of departure the absence of women from formal diplomacy. Therefore, these studies have tended to show either that, elite women occasionally did serve formal diplomatic roles prior to the nineteenth century, or that women exercised significant informal influence on diplomatic interactions.

So, on this basis we should consider how recent works portray women's involvement in the political and diplomatic sphere. James Daybell argues that female activities are too often viewed as nebulous and "intangible, distant from definitions of power as *formal* and *direct*, qualities connoted by office".¹ Cathy J. Cohen's work ties into this view by stating that women's involvement in early modern politics has proven to be "far more complex, unusual, and unprecedented than most reports have captured".² A slightly different opinion is voiced by Vicky Randall, who implies that although women and politics used to be defined as mutually exclusive, politics should be understood by looking at structural features of political life and by "recovering from oblivion a hidden history of women's involvement in political action".³ Danielle Clark, however, does not necessarily object to any of these views, but contends that rather than focusing on the negative effects of patriarchy in the early modern period, attention should be switched to "the extent to which women colluded with patriarchy, but also derived their power and influence from it".⁴ These accounts show several ways to approach the subject, but do not exclude each other. The chapters in this book therefore examine the differing ways in which women can and did involve themselves in diplomatic action in the period preceding the Peace of Westphalia (1648).

ACT I, WOMEN AS DIPLOMATIC ACTORS, serves as an introductory episode to the female aspect in the early modern European diplomacy, and features four studies by María Concepción Gutiérrez Redondo, Annalisa Biagiante, Camille Desenclos and John Condren, which designate together a locus for the female aspect and to place it into a context. María Concepción Gutiérrez Redondo opens the volume and the first act with her study on the diplomatic career of Juan Antonio de Vera, I Count of La Roca (1583–1658), ambassador of the Catholic King to Savoy and Venice during the Thirty Years War, and the author of one of the most influential treatises on the early modern diplomacy, *El Embaxador* (Sevilla, 1620). Gutiérrez Redondo takes a look at the three episodes of Vera's diplomatic career in Paris, the period around the publication of his treatise *El Embaxador*, and his embassy to Savoy, and takes the women involved in Vera's diplomatic career as her focus. The act continues with the study of Annalisa Biagiante on Queen Gobernadora Mariana of Austria and the

1 JAMES DAYBELL: "Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Networks in Elizabethan England", in: *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, ed. ROBYN ADAMS and ROSANNA COX. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 101–119, here p. 102.

2 CATHY J. COHEN, KATHLEEN B. JONES and JOAN C. TRONTO: "Introduction: Women Transforming U.S. Politics: Sites of Power/Resistance", in: *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader*, ed. IDEM. New York, London: New York University Press, 1997, pp. 1–12, here p. 1.

3 VICKY RANDALL: *Women and Politics. An International Perspective*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. IX.

4 DANIELLE CLARK: *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing*. London, New York: Routledge, 2013.

women key role figures as intermediaries at her court, by taking the Lucchese ambassadors to the Spanish court between the reigns of Philip IV and Charles II as a case study, the focus being on the long embassy of the ambassador Lorenzo Cenami between 1662 and 1674. Following this study, Camille Desenclos takes the reader to France and takes a look at women's status in the French diplomatic correspondences in the period of 1610 to 1633. The first chapter closes with John Condren's investigation of women's role in Louis XIV's relations with the Gonzaga-Nevers di Mantova between 1665 and 1691.

ACT II is titled DIPLOMACY OF QUEENS, and portrays three queens and their diplomacies revolving around marital affairs. Tracey Sowerby investigates the era of Elizabeth I and chivalric diplomacy with the case study of Elizabeth's diplomat Henry Unton. This is followed by a contribution by Roberta Anderson, our volume co-editor, where she looks at the era of James VI & I (1603–1625) with a focus on the diplomatic negotiations held, and the proposed candidates to wed his daughter Princess Elizabeth between 1610 and 1613, as well as the role of this marriage diplomacy on the political identity and status of James' and his court at the time. The third and the last study of this chapter is by Rocío Martínez López, examining the dynastic crises of the seventeenth century and their consequences in the royal "matrimonial market" and thus, in the European policies with the case study of Queen Maria Anna of Neuburg.

ACT III, the most extensive chapter of this volume featuring six studies, is titled THE BIRTH OF THE AMBASSADRESS, and is mainly devoted to the investigation of the concept of the "ambadress", the conditions that gave birth to the term, its emergence in the early modern diplomacy of Europe with selected case studies of Imperial, Spanish and Russian ambadresses, female key figures playing active roles in diplomacy as diplomats' spouses. The chapter opens with a proemial study by Laura Oliván Santaliestra, also co-editor of this volume, introducing the term "ambadress", examining the concept from its origination in a Spanish context (*Embajadora*) and investigating the evolution of the term through the period of 1580 and 1674 in diplomatic treatises and with examples of ambadresses. This is followed by a contribution by Wolfram Aichinger on the Madrid mission in 1663 and 1673 of the Imperial diplomat Count Franz von Pötting and his spouse Marie Sophie von Dietrichstein, focusing on the diplomat's diary he kept during his Madrid mission, where he described the plays he saw in detail, thus recorded praiseworthy information for theatre history. Aichinger discusses the different dimensions and usages of diplomatic and theatrical language, investigates the relations and links between "stage and social life", especially with regard to Calderon de la Barca's plays that Count Pötting attended during his years in Madrid.

Ekaterina Domnina contributes to the volume with a Russian aspect, and follows the traces of the females in the diplomatic practice in the Petrine era with the

case of Count Andrei Matveev and his spouses. This Russian aspect of the chapter devoted to the ambassadress also features the contribution by Armando Fabio Ivaldi on the figure and the persona of Ernestine Aloysia von Weissenwolff, Countess Durazzo, spouse of Count Giacomo Durazzo, a Genoese nobleman who, for two decades, was Imperial ambassador in Venice (1764–1784). Prior to his Venetian mission, he held the position of “Generalspektakeldirektor” of the Viennese imperial theatres between 1754 and 1764, being involved in the process of the Viennese reform of opera. Ivaldi, in his study, analyses the influence of Ernestine Durazzo, as ambassadress, especially on the cultural life of Venice during her years there. David García Cueto looks at the ambassadresses with a portrayal of a Spanish ambassadress in Rome, Doña Leonor de Melo, Marchioness of Castel Rodrigo in the first half of the seventeenth century. Pia Wallnig continues with an ambassadress in Rome, and completes this section with an illustration of the life and career of the Imperial ambassadress Maria Ernestine Countess Harrach.

The volume closes with ACT IV titled STAGES FOR MALE DIPLOMACY featuring three contributions focusing on three ambassadors. Laura Mesotten examines the role and meaning of clothes and clothing for male diplomats’ careers with the case study of François de Noailles, the French ambassador in Venice in mid-sixteenth century. Luis Tercero Casado takes a look at an Ottoman embassy to Madrid in the mid-seventeenth century, of Ahmed Ağa Müteferrika, focusing on the political and sociocultural controversies of this embassy. The Ottoman aspect continues with the third and the last study of this chapter – and of the volume – by Osman Nihat Bişgin on Moralı Seyyid Ali Efendi, the first Ottoman resident ambassador in Paris at the end of the eighteenth century, where Bişgin discusses Seyyid Ali Efendi’s travel to Paris and his embassy looking at aspects such as his quarantine period in Marseille, the entrance to Paris, his theatre visits, his encounters with the *Parisiennes*, his obligatory stay in Paris following the official end of his mission and his return to Istanbul.

The publication is completed with an APPENDIX containing the Indexes of names, works and places, as well as the authors’ and editors’ Curricula Vitae.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, the editors thank DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN – FORSCHUNGSVEREIN FÜR THEATER- UND KULTURGESCHICHTE for generously supporting the production of the book. We are grateful to the series editors of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN's *Diplomatica*, Reinhard Eisendle and Hans Ernst Weidinger, for their collaboration in the conception of the volume as well as for their insightful review of the contributions featured in this volume. Thanks are also due to our editorial collaborator Inge Praxl, who meticulously proofread the volume in the final phase of its editing process.

We also thank all the participants of the symposium “Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European and Ottoman Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century”, the primary event of DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN's new conference and publication series *Diplomatica*, held in cooperation with the University of Vienna's Institute of History and STVDIVM FÆSVLANVM on 11 and 12 March 2016 in DON JUAN ARCHIV's premises at Trautsongasse 6/6 in the eighth Viennese district. This symposium was the inspiration for the current volume with brilliant papers and intensive discussions.

PART I

WOMEN
AS DIPLOMATIC ACTORS

SPLENDID WOMEN IN THE DIPLOMACY OF JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA (1583–1658), AMBASSADOR OF THE CATHOLIC KING PHILIP IV*

MARÍA CONCEPCIÓN GUTIÉRREZ REDONDO (MADRID)

Juan Antonio de Vera, 1st Count of La Roca (1583–1658), ambassador of the Catholic king to Savoy and Venice during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), was involved in many official conversations and ceremonies involving only men. However, as we aim to demonstrate in this chapter, Vera took women very much into consideration throughout his diplomatic career, and this article will showcase the meaningful, though unofficial, influence of splendid women in the diplomatic career of Juan Antonio de Vera, Count of La Roca. More broadly speaking, it will point out the role of very conspicuous women who impacted the diplomatic developments of the early seventeenth century.

Here the three most important episodes in Vera's diplomatic career, up to 1632 will be covered: His mission to Paris in 1610, the publication of his treatise on diplomacy in 1620 and his mission to Savoy between 1630 and 1632. In each episode, the ways in which women influenced his learning and his diplomatic experience will be highlighted. The women we will be talking about were no ordinary women. Vera's diplomatic career was connected with royal marriages, long awaited royal dowries such as that of Margherita of Savoy (1589–1655) and illustrious wives supporting the anti-Spanish side such as Madama Cristina (1606–1663). Furthermore, Vera's career as an author featured one of the most celebrated treatises on the diplomacy of Early Modern Europe, *El Embaxador* (1620).¹ The treatise contained examples of women who embodied both desirable behaviour and conduct. Such examples were taken from influential texts, such as the Bible where we encounter remarkable women such as Judith, Abigail and Esther.

The three episodes will be approached one by one. First is Vera's mission in Paris in 1610 as the ambassador's assistant when he was twenty-seven years old. Originally from Extremadura in Spain, and known as an erudite poet, in Seville, his city of residence, he was connected with the high nobility of Spain mainly

* The research for this article has been supported by the Research and Development project “Poder y representaciones culturales en la época moderna: agentes diplomáticos como mediadores culturales de la Edad Moderna (siglos XVI–XVIII)” – (HAR2016-78304-C2-2-P) of the Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades of Spain. The English version of this text has been reviewed by Wayman English International S.L.

1 JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *El Embaxador*. Sevilla: Francisco de Lyra, 1620.

through his grandparents the Marquises of Mirabel.² Gómez IV Suárez de Figueroa (1587–1634), IIIrd Duke of Feria was also from Extremadura. The duke and Juan de Vera most likely met at the court in Madrid. The Duke of Feria already stood out as a statesman. Vera was selected to assist Feria during his extraordinary embassy to offer condolences on the death of Henry IV (r.1589–1610), the French king. This must have been quite a short but intense training course in diplomacy for Vera. France was experiencing turbulent times, looking to regenerate its political and civic life after the Wars of Religion (1562–1598). Although it was not the official goal of Feria’s embassy, he would use this mission to make some progress in the ongoing conversations for the double, Spanish–French marriages that finally took place in 1615 between Isabelle of France (1602–1644) and Philip IV (r.1621–1665) and Louis XIII (r.1610–1643) and Anne of Spain (1601–1666). In all probability Vera did not take part in the negotiations directly. However, this was seen as a major political theme in both Spain and France and he would certainly have learnt from the ongoing discussions. In Vera’s personal documentation, contained in a manuscript of the Hispanic Society of America, we can read some arguments supporting the convenience of ‘uniting the two Crowns [of Spain and France] together’.³ Vera made a mention of his participation in this diplomatic mission in his treatise on the office of the ambassador, *El Embaxador* (1620).⁴ One should note that the Paris embassy took place ten years before the publication of this treatise, which was to become a European reference regarding diplomatic theory. Vera’s mission in Paris was his first and only direct diplomatic experience before publishing his treaty, which explains why it is a major highlight of his diplomatic career.

2 The most recent biography of Juan Antonio de Vera is CARMEN FERNÁNDEZ-DAZA ALVAREZ: *El primer conde de la Roca*. Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 1995. For an updated summary of his biography, see CARMEN FERNÁNDEZ-DAZA: introductory chapter to *Al Pío, Al Grande, al Beatísimo Papa Urbano VIII*, by JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA Y ZÚÑIGA. Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2014. On the 1630–1632 Savoyard mission of Vera, see VENTURA GINARTE GONZÁLEZ: *El conde de la Roca en la diplomacia española de la guerra de los Treinta Años: la misión saboyana (1630–1632)*. Madrid: Colegio Santa María del Bosque, 1990. Also PIERRE BIOTEAU: *Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa, comte de la Roca, examen d’une ambition littéraire et édition d’une correspondance (1630–1633)*. PhD diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003. For Vera’s Venetian stay, BRUNA CINTI: *Letteratura e politica in Juan Antonio de Vera ambasciatore spagnolo a Venezia, 1632–1642*. Venice: Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1966.

3 New York, Hispanic Society of America (HSA), Mss. B2467, *Cartas escritas a Juan Antonio de Vera y Vargas*, f. 292r, s.n. (written in 1610 according to the text in it).

4 VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *El Embaxador*, Discurso Primero, f. 48r. The original Spanish texts have been modernised to the twenty-first century orthography.

The second episode is the publication of Vera's treatise on the ambassador in 1620.⁵ It was extensively read, both in and outside Spain, even before being translated into other languages. In fact, his book was widely known and used in Europe until the beginning of the eighteenth century, – which can be seen from its six editions in French and Italian, all published between 1635 and 1709.⁶ *El Enbaxador*, which can be translated simply as 'The Ambassador', is an extensive handbook on the office of the ambassador, the first of its kind written in Spanish, and addressed to Philip III of Spain (r.1598–1621). Vera takes a very practical stance in his book: regarding diplomatic missions, he examines what could be achieved and how, and then engages in the moral discussion around it.

Vera definitely takes women into consideration in his book. In the summary of the *Discurso Segundo* (second chapter) we read that Vera intended to discuss "supuesto que es parte del oficio del Enbaxador penetrar, e inquirir, si es decente valerse para ello del ingenio de algunas mujeres" ('assuming part of the job of the ambassador is that discovering and asking as to whether it is decent for the ambassador to use the wit of women to such an end').⁷ In the book, we can see that two different roles are assigned to women: informers and mediators. Unfortunately the role of ambassadress, as understood by Vera, is not among them.

Regarding women's role as informers, on the one hand they were useful when it came to discovering secrets, or *penetrar secretos* ('penetrating secrets'):

"[...] y si los más notables negocios, también por notables caminos los alcanzan a saber antes que otros, las mujeres, no debe el Embaxador desdeñarse de alcanzar por mano de cualquier mujer la noticia de un negocio, tan bien, como por la mano del más advertido cortesano, y aún mejor."⁸

5 For a recent discussion on *El Enbaxador* see MARÍA VICTORIA LÓPEZ-CORDÓN: "Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga (1583–1658). Modello di ambasciatori o specchio di trattatisti?", in: *De l'ambassadeur: Les écrits relatifs à l'ambassadeur et à l'art de négocier du Moyen Âge au début du XIXe siècle*, ed. STEFANO ANDRETTA, STÉPHANE PÉQUIGNOT, and JEAN CLAUDE WAQUET. Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2015, and Manfredi Merluzzi: "Juan de Vera e l'Italia. Dall'ispirazione letteraria alla pratica diplomatica" in the same volume.

6 The six editions are: JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *Le Parfait Ambassadeur*. Paris: Antoine de Somerville, 1635. – *Le Parfait Ambassadeur*. Paris: Elzevier, Bonaventura, 1642. – *Il perfetto ambasciatore*. Venezia: Giusto Wiffeldick, 1649. – *Idea del perfetto ambasciatore*. Venezia: Gio. Giorgio Hertz, 1654. – DESIDERIO CASTIGLIONE: *Dialoghi storici e politici contenenti le vere massime della Politica et L'idea d'un perfetto ambasciatore*. Venezia, Hertz, 1674. – ANTONIO DE VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *Le Parfait Ambassadeur*. Leiden: Theodore Haak, 1709.

7 VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *El Enbaxador*, *Discurso Segundo*, fol. 85v.

8 '[...] and if the most notable matters, by notable means women get to know before others do, the Ambassador should consider learning about matters through women, just as he would do through the most learned courtier, or even better'. *Ibidem*, f. 103v.

Vera uses the example of an unidentified woman who was the first person to know about a conspiracy against Henry I, third Duke of Guise (1563–1588), founder of the Catholic League, during the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598). Unfortunately, she was too late to inform the Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, the ambassador in Paris between 1584 and 1590, and Guise was assassinated by a body-guard of Henry III in 1588.⁹ On the other hand, Vera reflects on the controversy among other authors about whether the ambassador should talk about state affairs with his wife, although he does not show any strong position about it.¹⁰ Keeping secrets – state secrets –, is a major theme in Vera's treatise.

In the treatise, women are acknowledged as having a sharp wit, as seen in this anecdote:

“[...] muy digno de este lugar es aquel dicho de una mujer a quien le preguntaron, que cuál era mejor en el hombre, ser rico o sabio? y respondió: que más veces veía ella ir los sabios a la casa de los ricos que los ricos a la de los sabios.”¹¹

If we now examine women's role as mediators, Vera uses numerous examples of this in his treatise. For example, the Roman Cornelia (96–69 BC), managed to secure peace between the rivals Julius Caesar and Pompey (her husband and son-in-law respectively) while she lived.¹² Referring again to the Bible, Abigail wisely appeased David, stopping him from taking revenge.¹³ In general, Vera considers that a daughter asking, or begging a male relative (that is, her father, brother or husband) would be difficult to resist. We shall see the effectiveness of this tactic later in the chapter. Unfortunately, all the merits of women as informers and mediators do not suffice to qualify them as ambassadors.¹⁴ Vera makes it very clear:

⁹ Ibidem, f. 104r.

¹⁰ Ibidem, Discurso Tercero, f. 70r.

¹¹ ‘[...] it is very appropriate to mention here what a woman said when she was asked whether being rich or being wise was better in a man, and she answered that she saw the wise going to visit the rich more often than she saw the rich going to visit the wise’. Ibidem, Discurso Segundo, f. 127r.

¹² Ibidem, f. 104v. Caesar and Pompey were rivals. Pompey had married Caesar's and Cornelia's daughter, Julia.

¹³ Ibidem, f. 105v. Nabal, Abigail's husband, had greatly offended David and his men. David promises to take revenge on him. Abigail asks David to forgive Nabal and saves him from death. Eventually, when Nabal died, Abigail became one of King David's wives.

¹⁴ That is, a woman could not become an ambassador. Please note sometimes ambassadors' wives were called ambassadors but this is not the case here.

“pero así como al principio fui tan de parte de este sexo, en concederle capacidad para penetrar con agudeza, o con ruego, un secreto, y decirlo, o guardarlo, conforme se determina, así le niego, que ni aun puesto en disputa debe ser, que merezca, ni deba conseguir el título de la embajada [...] y es sin duda que harán más poderosos efectos las lágrimas de la hija, y la preferencia de los nietos con el padre, y abuelo, que la oración de Demóstenes con Filapa (sic), pero será como hija, no como Embajador.”¹⁵

The position of women as ambassadors was discussed by the most famous theorists of diplomacy. One such example is Carlo Pasquale (1547–1625), who is cited considerably in Vera’s book. Pasquale took a slightly different position, more favourable towards women as ambassadors, which appeared most surprising to Vera.¹⁶ The author of the prologue to the 1947 reprint of *El Embaxador* highlights the fact that Vera tackles women’s influence in his book, which suggests that it was not something really common or expected in a book of such a nature.¹⁷

Finally, we come to Vera’s embassy to Savoy from 1630 to 1632. From the moment he received the instructions for this embassy at the end of 1630, Vera knew well the task would not be an easy one:

“Murió en este tiempo el Serenísimo Señor Conde Duque de Saboya Carlo Emanuel, las cosas del Piemonte y Monferrato estaban en su mayor turbación, el sitio de Casal pendiente, Mantua ocupada por los imperiales, ardientes las instancias del Abad Escalla Embajador de Saboya en Madrid, a fin de que S. M. enviase otro extraordinario a Turín que asistiese en los peligrosos accidentes que se esperaban.”¹⁸

15 ‘Though at first I was very much in favour of this gender, and I have admitted their ability to sharply penetrate secrets, and tell them, or keep them, I deny them the right to embassy, and this should not even be disputed [...] no doubt that both the preference of the father and grandfather towards the grandchildren and the daughter’s tears will be more effective than Demosthenes discourse to Philip, but it will be as a daughter, not as Ambassador’, *El Embaxador*, II, f. 105v. The discourse of Demosthenes to Philip mentioned in this citation would come from Lucian’s dialogue *The Encomium of Demosthenes*.

16 VERA Y ZÚÑIGA: *El Embaxador*, Discurso Segundo, f. 104r-v.

17 JOSÉ MANUEL LÓPEZ BALBOA: *Introducción to El Embaxador*, by JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA Y FIGUEROA. Madrid: Artes Gráficas Arges, 1947.

18 ‘The Most Serene Lord Count Duke of Savoy Carlo Emanuel died at this time, things in Piemonte and Monferrato were most troubled, the siege of Casal was pending, Mantua was occupied by the imperial troops, there was the burning request by Abbot Escalla, Ambassador of Savoy in Madrid, that Your Majesty should send another extraordinary to Turin that should serve in the dangerous accidents that were expected’, JUAN ANTONIO DE VERA: *Manifiesto para que lo sea una verdad indubitable*. Milano: G. B. é G. C. Malatesti, 1644, pp. 12–14.

Vera was chosen for the job because of his special talents and previous knowledge of the Savoyard court. He had already visited the court in 1625 as extraordinary ambassador in order to give condolences on the death of the King of Spain's cousin, Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy (1588–1624), a son of the Duke Carlo Emanuele (1562–1630). Five years after that, the official goal of Vera's new embassy to Savoy was to give condolences on the death of Duke Carlo Emanuele himself. However, Vera's true mission was to establish a permanent Spanish embassy in Savoy as clearly stated in his embassy instructions.¹⁹ If he succeeded, it would technically mean that no French ambassador could be accepted at the Savoyard court. That was at least what Alessandro Scaglia (1592–1641), the Savoyard ambassador to the Spanish king, was saying in Madrid.²⁰ The question of the precedence of Spain over France and vice versa was one of the key diplomatic topics of the whole seventeenth century.

Besides fighting the battle for precedence, during his embassy to Savoy, Vera was to play a key role in the finalisation of the two Cherasco Peace Treaties in 1631. The first was signed on 6 April and the second on 19 June. The two Cherasco Treaties were aimed at pacifying the north of Italy and putting an end to the War of the Mantuan Succession that had begun in 1628, after Vincenzo II, Duke of Mantua and Monferrato (1594–1627), died with no male heir. Charles de Gonzaga-Nevers (1580–1637), the French candidate, was the natural successor. He was the head of the cadet branch of the House of Gonzaga. However, Spain had a strong desire that a French presence would not consolidate in northern Italy: Spain's priority was securing Milan and the passages towards the Low Countries in the north and the Empire to the east. Maria Gonzaga (1609–1660), the daughter of Duke Francesco IV (1586–1612), could not inherit Mantua since she was a woman but she held her rights as the sovereign of Monferrato which, in contrast, could be ruled by a woman. In December 1627, the same day as Vincenzo II's death, the marriage of his niece Maria Gonzaga with Charles de Nevers' son (1609–1631), also named Charles, was celebrated without any previous consent by neither Savoy nor the House of Austria. The ensuing war led to serious consequences, as reflected in the quotation above. Vera had to act as negotiator in these very important conversations for which he had no explicit power or authorisation. Indeed, this was not reflected in his instructions at all and he regularly complained in his letters about not having enough authority to negotiate, which made his life very difficult.

19 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), *Estado*, leg. 3457, no. 4, *Instrucción para la embajada de Turín al conde de la Roca*, 28 October 1630. See Ventura Ginarte's analysis of the whole instructions in VENTURA GINARTE: "Instrucciones al Conde de la Roca para la embajada extraordinaria en Saboya y ordinaria en Venecia", in: *Hispania: Revista española de historia* 49/172 (1989), pp. 733–752, here p. 739.

20 *Ibidem*.