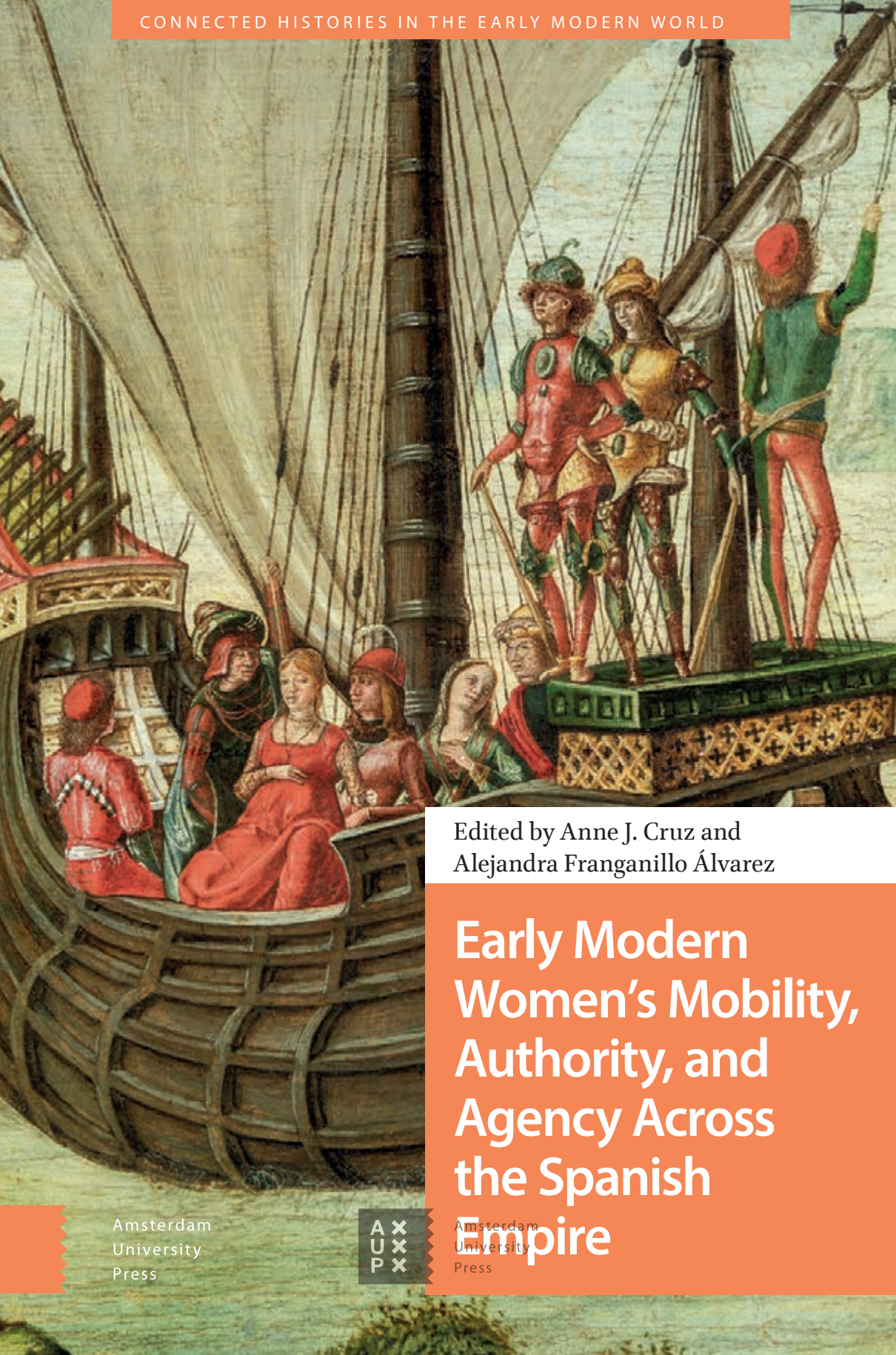


CONNECTED HISTORIES IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD



Edited by Anne J. Cruz and
Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez

Early Modern Women's Mobility, Authority, and Agency Across the Spanish Empire

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Dedicamos nuestro colectivo al pequeño Fabio Quevedo Franganillo, con nuestros deseos de que siempre encuentre abiertos todos los caminos que quiera emprender.



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Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez



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Introduction: Early Modern Women's Mobility

Anne J. Cruz and Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez

Abstract

The new parameters of a global world in the early modern period gave rise to spatial and social mobility for women of different social ranks. This volume investigates the journeys across the Spanish Empire of numerous women who assumed new and often unpredictable roles in distant environments. Breaking with traditional roles, noblewomen exercised political agency as ambassadors and diplomatic spies or fled to escape political or domestic oppression. Women financiers and merchants traversed the Mediterranean to command financial enterprises in different cities. Others risked transoceanic journeys to the New World, achieving positions of colonial power or cross-dressing as soldiers in support of imperial causes, while nuns founded convents throughout the Spanish Empire as far as Peru, Mexico, and the Philippine Islands.

Keywords: women travelers, female financiers, transatlantic convent foundations, early modern ambassadors, colonial encomenderas

The vast polycentric territories known as the Spanish Monarchy, expanded through the dynastic policies of the Habsburgs and stretched across the European continent and overseas, gave its diverse subjects, bound by religion and a distant government apparatus, possibilities of movement that allowed for imminent personal and social changes, whether in pursuit of what they thought could lead to their well-being or as an escape from that which they perceived caused them harm. The geopolitical expansion of the early modern period, intrinsically linked to both the emergent humanist understanding of past cultures and the external world, in turn fomenting self-knowledge and interiority, opened increasing opportunities

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for men and women of all ranks to attain an unprecedented sense of intellectual and physical freedom. While most who traveled did so on account of concrete human needs, the awareness of new worlds so recently within reach nevertheless awakened many to the realization of their potential advancement and transformation.¹

One of the corollaries of increased mobilization was the consolidation of the Spanish Monarchy under the Habsburg emperor Charles V. With the European counterparts of Flanders and the Aragonese kingdoms of Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples already under his rule, the recently colonized territories further extended the empire's global reach.² Yet the human consequences of these migratory movements would weigh heavily on history, as they incited indigenous resistance, material exploitation, and the imposition of slavery, all the while spreading Christianity and promoting cultural transference.³ The multifarious conflicts and contradictions caused by territorial conquest were evident from the start, both for the indigenous inhabitants as well as for the migrants. If the Spanish Monarchy allowed for the movements of its subjects to advance its own geographical expansion, colonization, economic gain, and religious evangelization, early modern mobility also heralded the improved lives of immigrants—male and, increasingly, female—who previously had few or no options for change.⁴ Moreover, women immigrants,

1 Authorization for immigration, while strictly controlled, varied over time. Since 1509, the Casa de Contratación in Seville, founded in 1503 to handle navigational, commercial, tax, and migratory issues dealing with the New World, had been mandated to register all passengers to the Indies, restricting heretics, foreigners, and Roma, although many slipped through despite this legislation ("Real Cédula a los oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación," Valladolid, 1509-11-14, AGI, Contratación 5089, fols. 32v-33v; cited in Mira Caballos 1995, 37). In 1528 and 1531, a general license was given for emigration, most likely to increase settlement of the new territories (Mira Caballos 1995, 39; Konetzke 1984, 51). See Mira Caballos (1995) for the royal *cédulas* prohibiting different social groups from entering during various years in the sixteenth century.

2 See Elliott (1992); Cardim (2012); and Herrero Sánchez (2020). For writings on the debates about Spanish conquest and treatment of the indigenous inhabitants, see Adorno (2014).

3 Forced migration of Africans across the Atlantic was first organized and exploited by Portugal, followed by Spanish, French, Dutch, and English traders. Over 700,000 enslaved African men, women, and children were shipped to the Americas between 1580 and 1640 (Smallwood 2007, 16-18). See also Piqueras (2012), and Rediker (2008). Most, if not all the women who endured these journeys left no records of their personal experiences; for an in-depth account of slave ship experiences, see Mustakeem (2016).

4 For calculations of the legal and illegal immigrations from Spain in the sixteenth century, which he believes to be approximately 100,000, see Martínez Shaw (1994, 151-52), and Macías Domínguez (1999, 54-56). Female immigration numbers were considerably lower. Based on his two-volume *Índice geobiográfico de cuarenta mil pobladores españoles de América en el siglo XVI*, Peter Boyd-Bowman (1964-68) accounts for 10,118 women immigrants from 1509 to 1600,

although significantly fewer than their male counterparts, contributed greatly to the forging of settlement life.⁵

The chapters in this collection highlight the numerous advantages as well as the serious dangers that the Spanish Monarchy's geographical expanses posed for women travelers. As subjects of the crown, women could travel with few restrictions, yet they also confronted grave perils when voyaging to other, at times unknown and frequently enemy, territories. Their movements across European territories and from one court to another, often for political and economic reasons, were also provoked by declared wars and religious or political disturbances that at times resulted in their exile.⁶ Adding richly to the recent scholarship on early modern women's mobility, the contributors to this volume, an international group of literary scholars and social, diplomatic, economic, and cultural historians, recount the travel experiences of early modern women from a wide spectrum of social hierarchies: aristocrats, urban middle class, and peasants. Through the perspective of gender, they trace women's voyages to, within, and from the territories of the Spanish Empire.⁷ Focusing on overlooked or silenced sources such as newspapers, personal correspondence, and journals, and attentive to the narrative voices of multiple kinds of travel accounts, such as autobiographies, biographies, chronicles, novels, and plays, the authors thoroughly detail the multiple hazards that occurred onboard ships and on land roads. They investigate the sway of women's agency and autonomy in achieving or failing to achieve the potentially positive outcome of their travels. Moreover, the chapters in this volume stress the extent and kind

more than half from Andalucía. While "undesirable" women (such as conversas, moriscas, prostitutes, and criminals) were prohibited from emigrating, the decrees were easily violated (Angel 1997, 19).

5 In her study of female migration to New Spain, Amanda Patricia Angel contends that women were especially encouraged to petition to emigrate in order to foster Christian family models and to transmit Iberian cultural values (1997, 1, 6). For women in various colonial societies, see Lavrin (1978). For female migration to the Americas from Europe, see Wiesner-Hanks (2019).

6 For women who fled to the Spanish Monarchy for religious or political reasons, such as the Bridgettine nuns and Jane Dormer, duchess of Feria, see Vallejo Cervantes, who states that the "kingdoms of the Catholic king were the spaces where [women] could develop their vocation or sustain their personal and familial projects [los reinos del rey católico eran el espacio donde desarrollar su vocación o sostener sus proyectos personales y familiares]" (2021, 112).

7 Studies on mobility have proliferated in the last decades; for early modern women's mobility and women's travel narratives, see especially Akhimie and Andrea (2019); Angel (1997); Wiesner-Hanks (2015); Meens and Sintobin (2019); and the "Forum: Early Modern Women's Mobilities" (2019).



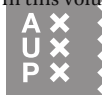
of travel that this agency permitted women, regardless of their social class, analyzing the very different reasons for their travel, from settling and defending newly discovered territory, and founding convents, to escaping from violent marriages and assuming various roles as political actors. By not ending solely with their travel but with its consequences, the chapters examine and weigh the women's experiences upon reaching and remaining at their destination.

Modes of Travel

The cartographic world, as Europe had known it from the early Middle Ages, changed irreversibly with the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries' expansion of horizons and contact with new cultures. As Fernand Braudel persuasively noted, traffic on the Mediterranean Sea, which had long served as conduit for war as well as for mercantile and cultural exchanges among the kingdoms surrounding its basin, also increased owing to their economic growth (1995, 660). The political and geographical parameters of the Spanish Monarchy gave rise to extensive mobilization efforts aimed, from the first, to colonize and settle newly conquered territories. The Iberian Peninsula was the first to propel migration to the Americas, starting with the Catholic monarchs' support of Columbus's voyages from Spain to the Caribbean, and Portugal's maritime excursions from the Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde to Brazil, and with Charles V's patronage of Magellan's voyages across the Pacific to the Moluccas, Guam, and the Philippines.⁸ In New Spain, the conquerors who followed Hernán Cortés were assigned native lords and their subjects, establishing the *encomiendas* as the social and economic base of the colonies.⁹ Conquest and colonization of the Philippines took a different—and later—turn. According to John Phelan, the limited colonial resources and the reactions of Filipinos themselves shaped the outcome in exceptional ways, resulting in a process of Hispanization wherein the native population played an important part. Recent scholarship, moreover, has extended early modern Philippine colonization to include Chinese and Japanese immigration and confrontations with Islam, thus

8 Studies of transatlantic voyages have been recently complemented by numerous transpacific studies; see, among them, Freeman (2020); and Lee and Padrón (2020).

9 The literature of Spanish colonization is vast; for a concise historical source, see Lockhart and Schwartz (1983). For *encomenderos*, see Himmerich y Valencia (1991); for the case of a female *encomendera*, see Pérez-Miguel in this volume.



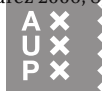
forming a complex web of connections that encompassed Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean Basin.¹⁰

Yet travel did not depend solely on new transoceanic routes with the purpose of colonizing territories. Whether through European kingdoms, via Mediterranean trade routes, or across oceans, opportunities to migrate attracted growing numbers of men and women who sought trade, social advancement, and economic betterment. Early modern mobilization, therefore, dramatically effectuated material, social, and cultural change, disrupting fixed notions of gender, race and ethnicity, and social rank. Although travelers benefited from the cartographic revolution that officially mapped Charles V's territorial sovereignty (Kagan and Schmidt 2007), they also took advantage of the established postal routes that transported passengers and were available to the public (Moreno Cabanillas 2019). Modes of travel varied widely, depending on social rank, wealth, family connections, and purpose of travel. Methods of transportation during this period had advanced considerably, from improvements in roadwork that allowed for better overland travel, uniting cities from one border to another, to more luxurious and commodious coaches, as well as to larger and armed oceangoing ships.

Land travel counted with horses, carriages, coaches, and litters, depending on distances and the riders' economic and social rank. Several of Philip II's decrees were meant to limit coach ownership to the nobility by requiring the coaches to be drawn by four horses. However, the decrees were suspended during Philip III's reign when lighter and better constructed coaches drawn by two horses became available. According to López Álvarez (2006), although men required royal licenses to ride in coaches, women who owned coaches of four could ride in them so long as they uncovered their heads so that they could be recognized as respectable women and not confused with prostitutes, who were not allowed to use any method of transportation. The court's intent was to regulate coach use; the result, however, was to increase the numbers of coach riders. By 1621, there were as many as 3,000 licensed coach riders in Castile alone (López Álvarez 2006, 889–92).¹¹ Still, as the chapters on the ambadress Anna Colonna and the Italian duchess

10 The cultural exchanges that took place along the Manila Galleon route that tenuously united the Americas to Spain's outpost in the Philippines reached much farther beyond Spain's control (Lee and Padrón 2020, 15–16).

11 Coach regulations contributed to social divisions; as of 1611, those excluded from obtaining licenses to ride in coaches included sheriffs, lower officials, merchants, professors, students, and prostitutes, as well as court judges and chief magistrates from Castile, although their wives were allowed licenses (López Álvarez 2006, 896).

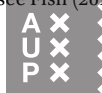


Hortense Mancini testify, women who rode in the more well-appointed and technically advanced coaches that became popular during Philip IV's reign were members of the aristocracy.

Improved shipbuilding in the sixteenth century produced the galleon, a lighter and cheaper vessel than the galley; one that could be armed for war and that facilitated transportation across the Mediterranean. Alongside the caravel, galleons were assigned for long-distance transatlantic and transpacific voyages.¹² Not everyone traveled on newer constructions, however, since oared ships, like the small felucca and the "galley subtle," remained in use, such as the one that transported the Genoese businesswoman Cassandra Grimaldo and her husband to Spain, as told in Carmen Sanz Ayán's chapter. More sizeable constructions, such as the famed Manila galleons, withstood longer voyages across oceans. Larger ships, like the larger coaches on land, provided more space and comfort, as well as more secure transportation for women voyagers. Yet, notwithstanding the size or comfort of the mode of travel, mobility necessitated considerable economic and, especially, psychological investment. As Susan Robertson notes even for today's female travelers, "women tend to experience travel and mobility differently than do men, in large part because of women's traditional ties to home, family and domesticity, and because of their sexual vulnerability and objectification at the hands of men" (2009, xii).

These experiences were definitely more pronounced for early modern women who undertook transoceanic voyages, as they risked constant sexual predation (Angel 1997, 41–43) and even more physical hardships: the rough seas, tempests, lack of provisions, and unhygienic conditions, together with the unbearable heat during the usual travel months of May and June, all contributed to constant seasickness, malnutrition, disease, and even death (Phillips 1986, 156). María Martos Pérez's chapter on the religious community of Poor Clares, who daringly traversed both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans to reach the Philippine Islands, remarks on their severe illnesses and one nun's death and burial at sea. Additionally, many women who risked the long voyage to the Indies, unfamiliar with any sort of seafaring, feared the ocean and bore the mental anxiety of what might await them once on land.

12 For shipbuilding and descriptions of ships, see Konstam (2004); Elbl and Phillips (1994). For a history of the Manila galleon, see Fish (2011).



Migrating Women

Nonetheless, despite the rigors of travel, over a thousand women emigrated to the Americas from the Iberian Peninsula between 1509 and 1538, according to Allyson Poska (2016, 2). Of the 845 women who traveled between 1519 and 1539, over half—457—were single or young girls, and fifty-one were widowed or of uncertain state, while 252 were married traveling with their husbands. The eighty-five wives who traveled to reunite with their husbands had waited until the men, who had left their places of residence either as soldiers, merchants, or administrators, could afford to send for them and any children they may have had (Martínez 2001, 162). In 1530, Charles V issued a decree prohibiting married men from traveling by themselves that remained in place as late as 1681 (Córdoba Toro 2015, 32).

Numerous husband's letters to their wives and sisters dated between 1540 and 1616 that gave explicit instructions on how to arrange their travel to America, however, belie the decree's effectiveness (Otte 1988, 14–21), and many women who traveled were single.¹³ Travel that included the married couple, plus parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, or uncles, was first allowed for those who lived in the kingdom of Seville, as Liliana Pérez-Miguel recounts of the early settler, Inés Muñoz de Ribera, who traveled with her husband, small daughters, and her brother-in-law, the conquistador Francisco Pizarro, to Peru. Encouraged by the crown in order to stabilize settlements with Iberian customs and values, by the first half of the sixteenth century this form of travel made up around 70 percent of those who left from Castile to the Americas (Córdoba Toro 2015, 33). Few European women traveled to Southeast Asian colonies; as late as 1621, of the total Spanish population of 4,000 in the Philippine capital, Manila, only approximately forty-four were women, half of whom joined the recently founded Franciscan Poor Clares.¹⁴

Women who crossed the Mediterranean were also susceptible to many dangers: storms were frequent, and pirates and corsairs abounded, whether Muslims with strongholds on the Barbary coast, or Christians based in Malta. These risks often evoked fearful images of captive sailors and passengers ransomed or sold as slaves, as reflected in the popular literature

13 In effect, of the 5,013 women registered during the period 1560–79, 1,980 (or 40 percent) were married or widowed, while 3,024 (60 percent) were single (Martínez 2001, 168). For the various means by which women's travel was financed and what kinds of material goods they brought with them, see Almorza Hidalgo (2022, 80–82).

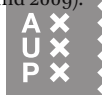
14 For the adaptation of Spanish women to Manila, see Doran (1993, 272–82).



of captivity.¹⁵ Travel by land across kingdoms and border crossings into enemy territories equally presented hazards, particularly to women, many of whom disguised themselves as men to protect themselves from robbers and sexual predators. Montserrat Pérez-Toribio relates how the Irish patriot Mary Stuart O'Donnell fled in male attire through the continent to Flanders. Cortney Benjamin aptly describes the autobiography of the Lieutenant Nun, Catalina de Erauso, and the play it inspired as “genre-bending,” paralleling her gender-bending experiences when outfitted as a soldier of empire across North and South America. As Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez explains, the duchess of Chevreuse furtively crossed the Pyrenees border on horseback and in male disguise. In the same fashion, J. Antonio López Anguita tells us, the noblewoman Hortense Mancini fled Paris to Milan seeking the freedom her husband denied her disguised in male clothing.

Despite the grave risks of their journeys, therefore, the pressures on women, as much as the opportunities they may have envisioned, spurred them to leave their places of origin for unknown and often life-threatening territories. The material means of transportation, the length and time of the journeys, and the physical and psychological effects of travel itself were conditions that often went undocumented and are only recently being investigated; yet, when women's literary accounts, letters, and other biographical sources are mined, they shine new and welcome light on the gendered nature of mobilization. Thus, diplomatic correspondence and newspapers researched by Andrea Bergaz Álvarez reveal that Anna Colonna acted as a political agent in collaboration with her husband, and documents such as contracts and testaments show that when widowed, wives of bankers and merchants continued the family businesses, such as the Portuguese *conversa* widows studied by Cristina Hernández Casado. And travel narratives often disclose women's fraught relations with male relatives—whether fathers, brothers, nephews, or husbands—as we see in Cassandra Grimaldo's struggle to retain her inheritance and Hortense Mancini's despairing attempts to escape from her abusive husband. The unfolding of these women's voyages, what they managed to achieve in often unwelcome and life-threatening circumstances, all the while confronting the political, social, and economic limitations imposed by social and religious

15 There remains meager documentation for women kidnapped at sea; for British captives, see Colley (2002), and for histories of Muslim and Christian captives, see Hershenzon (2018). The most famous Spanish captive, Miguel de Cervantes, wrote three captivity plays that included both Christian and Muslim women as captives: *El trato de Argel*, *La gran sultana*, and *Los baños de Argel* (Cervantes 1996, 1998, and 2009).



norms—and even on various occasions, painfully failing to fulfill their desires and expectations—reveals the degree to which these women were determined not only to survive, but to carve out their own space in history.

Part I: Transoceanic Crossings

Divided into three parts, this volume addresses, through gender, power, and social rank, not only women's material means of travel and the historical specificity of their journeys, but also women's adaptation and agency within new historical contexts. The chapters investigate these women travelers not solely as individual case studies, but as paradigmatic examples of the political, social, and economic possibilities opened to women of varying social ranks by early modern global mobilization. Because royal women who typically crossed borders to marry for dynastic purposes, occasioning cultural transfers across courts, have already received much scholarly attention, we have opted not to include any of their examples. Neither have we included aristocratic women who mainly traveled to accompany these royal exchanges from one court to another.¹⁶ Instead, the aristocratic women whose travel experiences are analyzed in the volume are those who, in their journeys, acquired major political and social influence through their own agency in various courts and countries.¹⁷

This first part focuses on the travel accounts of women who left Spain to reach the farthest territories of the Spanish Monarchy. The chapters reflect on how contemporary narratives instrumentalized their lives, as their biographers endowed them with purportedly masculine virtues. Nonetheless, the women's experiences overwhelmingly involved gender concerns to a greater degree than those of men. In Chapter 1, "Inés Muñoz de Ribera: The Making of an Encomendera in Sixteenth-Century Peru," Liliana Pérez-Miguel rehearses women's difficult transoceanic crossings. The chapter relates how Inés Muñoz de Ribera, born in Seville of peasant stock, traveled to Peru with her husband and two daughters, accompanied by her brother-in-law, Francisco Pizarro. The family's transoceanic voyage proved tragic, as her two young daughters died on board the ship. Pérez-Miguel

16 Studies on royal marriages and entries comprise a rich bibliography; see, as a recent example, Palos and Sánchez (2016). For aristocratic women's service at courts, see the chapters in Akkerman and Houben (2014).

17 As Barbara J. Harris has written of aristocratic English wives, as Spanish wives moved through their uxorial cycle their spaces, responsibilities, and power increased accordingly (2001, 246–47).



stresses Muñoz's awareness of her achievements, despite her personal losses: heading to the viceroyalty after Seville's economic crisis, Muñoz boasted that she reached Peru as its "first married woman" (AGI, Patronato 192, N.1, R.32).¹⁸ Twice a widow, she established a textile factory, raised cattle, and founded a mercantile company in Panama with her son. Known as the Peruvian Ceres, goddess of the harvest, Muñoz diversified her holdings through cross-cultural trade, investing in growing wheat, flax, olive oil, and grapes and importing merchandise. Pérez-Miguel suggests that besides establishing her legacy, Muñoz's patronage and foundation of Lima's monastery of the Immaculate Conception was intended to offer protection to the women and girls who remained in unstable and vulnerable positions after the conquest and civil wars decimated the male population.

While foundation narratives proliferated as convents and monasteries were constructed across early modern Catholic Europe, with many of their accounts officially mandated by their orders, the histories of secular women such as Inés Muñoz typically must be pieced together from letters, legal documents, and other scattered archival documents.¹⁹ In Chapter 2, "Isabel Barreto, Navigator of the South Seas and Governor of the Isles of Salomon," Mercedes Camino investigates one such history, which draws from Barreto's last will and testament to challenge the disinformation that has continuously circulated about and against her. Believed to have been born in Pontevedra, Barreto traveled to and from Spain, to Peru, the South Pacific, Mexico, and the Philippines. She married Álvaro de Mendaña, an explorer twice her age and, like Inés Muñoz, traveled with him as an early settler, but on her husband's death, she left Peru to settle the Solomon Islands, which had been found by her husband earlier.

Inheriting his property and the title of governor of the islands, Barreto had no need of being assigned masculine qualities: on her brother's death, she became de facto admiral of his fleet and captain of its flagship—the only woman to lead an early modern fleet—and sailed to the Philippines. Camino scrutinizes a chronicle on the discovery of the southern regions (*regiones austriales*) by the Portuguese navigator Pedro Fernández de Quirós in order to rectify its errors, observing its censorship of Barreto's actions. By contrast, the few accounts of her life at sea portray her actions in masculine terms: putting down mutinies along with Mendaña, attempting to cure the

18 See Pérez-Miguel in this volume.

19 Rocío Quispe-Agnoli notes that letters and documents of the wives and daughters of Spanish conquistadors have remained unmentioned in colonial literary studies based on Spanish American archives (2018, 330).



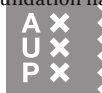
ill on board, and commanding the flagship on which almost half died of scurvy, malaria, hunger, and thirst. Nonetheless, Barreto married again, Camino tells us, and again like Inés Muñoz, she inherited an *encomienda* and participated in a colonial economy benefiting from indigenous labor and African slaves.

In Chapter 3, “Founding a Convent in the Philippines: Discursive Keys to Travel Narratives of Early Modern Female Religious Communities,” María D. Martos Pérez examines the key elements stressed in the discursive narratives of female religious.²⁰ Martos analyzes the travel narratives of the community of Poor Clares led by the sixty-four-year-old nun, Sor Jerónima de la Asunción, who left Toledo to found the first convent in the Philippine Islands. After navigating the Atlantic and crossing Mexico on mule-drawn carriages from Veracruz to Acapulco, the nuns followed the Manila Galleon route established by 1565 for commercial travel, sailing from Acapulco to Manila. One main key to their narrative is the miseries suffered by the nuns on the lengthy voyage, which are thoroughly detailed by Sor Jerónima’s confessor, based on the nuns’ autobiographies and another priest’s biography, who met the nuns in Manila. Martos teases out another significant discursive key: the nuns’ consistent attribution of masculine qualities by her male biographers. The nuns believed their voyage was justified because of its evangelizing mission, yet this task was typically assigned to the male Franciscan order. Rather than criticizing women’s weaker physical and moral qualities, Sor Jerónima’s biographer praises her instead, deploying religio-military metaphors to laud her as a virile “heroine” who leads a “squadron of sacred virgins,” a spiritual army sent to convert the infidel.

Part II. Gender Transactions

Concentrating on women who journeyed with their husbands, the chapters show how they nevertheless acted independently to protect and sustain their own financial gains. Carmen Sanz Ayán and Cristina Hernández Casado trace the transnational routes of merchant-businessmen’s wives and daughters who ended by taking over their family business. Commercial interests between the Spanish Monarchy and Genoa had always been strong.

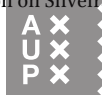
20 St. Teresa of Ávila’s *Libro de las fundaciones* (Book of the Foundations) (Teresa de Jesús 2015) was the first example of foundation narratives, narrating the reformer’s travels up and down the Iberian Peninsula. For later foundation narratives, see Donahue (2018).



In Chapter 4, “Cassandra Grimaldo’s Voyage of No Return: A Genoese Businesswoman in Habsburg Spain,” Carmen Sanz Ayán explains the business experiences of Cassandra Grimaldo, the daughter of Philip II’s principal banker, Nicolao Grimaldo. Married to a Genoese merchant, Cassandra and her husband traversed the Mediterranean and traveled by land to Madrid to join her father. Comparing her to other Genoese widows, Sanz Ayán remarks that on her husband’s death, Cassandra rejected the widows’ usual custom of returning to their homeland, but instead, she united with her brothers-in-law in their commercial enterprise and fought to keep her husband’s inheritance, establishing a chapel in a Madrid convent as a symbol of her own legacy.

Genoese bankers were not the only businessmen who played a central role in Spanish finances and in the monarchy’s military ventures. Drawn by the economic possibilities Spain offered, numerous Portuguese financiers and merchants of Jewish descent also arrived, accompanied by their wives, sisters, and daughters, their families often intermarrying. In Chapter 5, “Trade, Credit, and Marriage: The Mobility of Portuguese Conversa Merchants and Financiers,” Cristina Hernández Casado highlights the period when Portugal formed part of the Spanish Monarchy, 1580–1640, to study the Portuguese women’s constant mobility, in what Francesca Trivellato (2009) has called a “Sephardic diaspora.” These women, such as Beatriz de Silveira, born into one of Portugal’s renowned merchant and financial families, who together with her husband and cousin, Jorge de Paz Silveira, left Lisbon to live in Seville, Madrid, and Rome, continued the vast financial activities of the Portuguese converso networks at the service of the Spanish economy. Usually remaining in the last city in which they had lived with their husbands, Portuguese widows crossed often between Lisbon and Madrid, Seville, Cadiz, and Antwerp to ensure the continuity of their family businesses. Some women lent their own money, advancing funds to where most needed by the crown, and deploying instruments of credit. Beatriz de Silveira’s early financial counsel to her husband no doubt contributed to his economic success; she herself became the era’s most prominent woman banker, adding a barony to her name. In what might be termed as yet another example of cultural hybridity, the Portuguese conversa Beatriz de Silveira, like Cassandra Grimaldo before her, founded a convent in Madrid. Called the “convent of the Baronesses [convento de las Baronessas]” in her honor, it admitted the daughters of Genoese bankers along with those of aristocrats.²¹

21 For biographical information on Silveira, see Hernández Casado in this volume.



Early modern mobility allowed travelers the freedom to create their own projected image, and nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the legendary Lieutenant Nun, Catalina de Erauso, the subject of Chapter 6, "Travel and the Illegible Body in the *Historia de la Monja Alférez*," by Cortney Benjamin. The text relates the transformation of Catalina, a cloistered young Basque girl, into Antonio, a violent soldier who fought for the empire in Chile and Peru and was rewarded by Philip IV and Urban VIII. Escaping from the convent cross-dressed in male clothing she herself had sewn, Catalina navigated the transatlantic route from Spain to Mexico, and then to the Andean coast outfitted as a soldier. Benjamin proposes that the journeys allowed Erauso to create a symbolically multigendered body, both masculine and feminine, which in turn transgressively opened many possibilities to act as either gender or to remain "illegible" when it suited the occasion. Accordingly, she employs the gender-neutral pronouns "they/them" instead of gendered third-person singular pronouns when referring to Erauso. Deconstructing the narrative of Erauso's "traveling body" as it is narrated in autobiographical form and in the Golden Age comedia, *La Monja Alférez*, Benjamin substantiates the Lieutenant Nun's transformation as having emanated from the liberty Erauso gained from her travels, yet that same liberty was constantly shadowed by male violence.

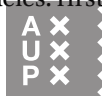
More often than not, however, cross-dressing obeyed the need to disguise women's sexual vulnerability when traveling unprotected in the open. Hortense Mancini, one of the famed Italian sisters and Cardinal Mazarin's favorite niece, dressed in male attire on her flight from Paris to Milan seeking freedom from a controlling and violent husband. In Chapter 7, "Hortense Mancini: A Life on the Run," J. Antonio López Anguita explores Mancini's controversial life, beset with accusations of infidelities that she attempted to suppress by publishing her memoirs. When her efforts to separate from her husband failed, she fled with her maid, both dressed as men to avert discovery, traveling with a small entourage in carriages drawn by six horses, in *chaises roulantes*, and on horseback. In Milan, she remained in seclusion, pregnant by a lover and still litigating her separation case in France. López Anguita relates that Mancini revisited her birthplace, Rome, and stayed to reside there, leading a libertine life until 1669, when she returned to France to regain favor at the French court. After her uncle, Cardinal Mazarin, died in 1661, Mancini was forced to depend economically on a series of powerful men: Louis XIV; her previous lover, Charles II of England; and an old suitor, the duke of Savoy. After many years of itinerant travel, at times pursued by her husband's agents, and forbidden entry into Paris, Mancini's extravagant

lifestyle ended in poverty, as she lost her inheritance, her pension, and her residence at Whitehall. Seeking a final escape, Mancini committed suicide. This last act of freedom, however, did not put an end to her estranged husband's pursuit: claiming her corpse, he brought Marie back with him to Paris, where he buried her remains next to the cardinal and where he himself would be buried a year later.

Part III. Transnational Politics

Although, as we have seen, women's experiences often involved their mobilization with husbands or fathers, after whose death they established their own economic stability and autonomy, in other cases, such as the sisters Mancini, women fled from their places of origin, frequently to escape male dominance. In Chapter 8, "Seeking Support from the Spanish Monarchy: The Manly Flight of Mary Stuart O'Donnell, Countess of Tyrconnell," Montserrat Pérez-Toribio studies the history of the courageous young Irish patriot, Mary Stuart O'Donnell, countess of Tyrconnell, as it was propagandized and mythologized in contemporary Catholic newspapers and chronicles. Born in England, O'Donnell inherited her strong will from her late father, Rory O'Donnell, first earl of Tyrconnell, one of the Irish nobles who took part in the "Flight of the Earls." Destitute at seventeen years of age, she nevertheless refused to marry a Protestant and fled cross-dressed to the Catholic Netherlands seeking the support of Archduchess Isabel Clara Eugenia. Analyzing a male-authored hagiographical narrative that attributes to her the archduchess's courage and strength, Pérez-Toribio likens O'Donnell instead to Catalina de Erauso. She considers how this "manly" Irish patriot, whose male persona is mythologized by another male-authored fictional narrative of high adventure, nonetheless struggled to sustain herself and her family, marrying twice, yet having to escape from London to the Netherlands, Genoa, and the Spanish Empire once Philip IV abandoned the notion of an Irish invasion of England.

As her political influence waned, O'Donnell's fighting spirit in support of the Catholic monarchy resulted in a life of poverty that forced her to petition economic aid from the king. Across the French–Spanish border, Marie de Rohan, duchess of Chevreuse, would also receive financial support from Philip IV, but as his agent instead. In Chapter 9, "Marie de Rohan, Duchess of Chevreuse: Schemer, Spy, and Wartime Fugitive at the European Courts," Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez scrutinizes the duchess's participation in numerous failed conspiracies: first against Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII's



prime minister, and later, against Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister of the queen regent, Anne of Austria. The consequences of her political interventions forced the duchess to flee continuously from Paris to the provinces. At times, she resided in enemy territories, such as the Duchy of Lorraine, the Spanish Netherlands, England, and Spain, where Philip IV exchanged her activities in his favor for a pension. As she mobilized from court to court, the grave dangers she faced led her to cross the Pyrenees on horseback and in male attire.

Noblewomen's power as social and political operators expanded through their capacity to travel to various courts. Gertrude, countess of Berlepsch, began her court career as confidant to Carlos II's second wife, Mariana of Neuburg, after she widowed. While at the Madrid court, she soon created networks among Austrian courtiers and garnered many favors for herself and her sons. In Chapter 10, "Mobilizing Female Relatives: The Countess of Berlepsch's Strategies at the Habsburg Courts," Valentina Marguerite Kozák elucidates how the countess of Berlepsch strategized to obtain the queen's favor in order to improve her sister and her sister's two daughter's social standing. By means of her influence on the queen, and through her, on the emperor and the elector palatine, the countess was able to plan and organize the long move by land of her German niece, Catherine von Cramm, to Vienna and Augsburg. There, the girl received an education in court manners and converted to Catholicism so she could be placed in the queen's service at the Madrid court, a strategic move the countess intended to deploy also for her other niece's benefit. The countess's alliance with the Austrian and Palatine factions, however, led her and her niece to abandon Spain after the king's death and the queen's exile.

In contrast to the countess of Berlepsch, Anna Colonna, marquise of Los Balbases, developed an early active role as an informal diplomatic agent. This occurred in—and at times beyond—what Andrea Bergaz Álvarez, in Chapter 11, "A Cosmopolitan Ambassadors on the Road: Anna Colonna, Marquise of Los Balbases," designates as the feminine spaces of the courts where her husband functioned as Carlos II's ambassador. Born to an ancient noble Roman family, Colonna journeyed indefatigably, accompanying her husband and daughters from Milan to the imperial court in Vienna, and to Nijmegen and Paris, and working in equal partnership with her husband. Bergaz Álvarez shows how, thanks to Colonna's cultural capital based on her family's nobility and cosmopolitanism, the couple jointly designed and patronized theatrical and musical programs as part of a diplomatic program that socially benefited them while serving the crown.



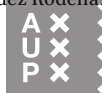
Women Travelers: A Revisionary Reading

The cases of women travelers dealt with in this volume, from those who retraced well-worn European roads and waterways connecting courts and cities to those who embarked on recent transoceanic routes across the vast expanse of the Spanish Monarchy, highlight the many gender-defying types of roles women undertook as they attempted to occupy new social spaces. Their unprecedented activities have confounded numerous contemporary and even recent historians, who have interpreted early modern women's exploits and ordeals solely as either successful or failed imitations of men's prowess.²² Several of the early modern women discussed in this collection, such as Isabel Barreto, Catalina de Erauso, Hortense Mancini, and the duchess of Chevreuse, were negatively portrayed and stereotyped by male chroniclers, and their characters denigrated or eroticized in the subsequent historiography. Others have been touted and mythologized as women endowed with heroic male qualities, like Sor Jerónima and her community of Poor Clares, Inés Muñoz, and Mary Stuart O'Donnell. Still others, such as the wives of the Genoese bankers and Portuguese financiers, have often gone unremarked altogether or their efforts attributed to the male members of their family.

That the breadth of the known world not only expanded in so brief a time but actually came within reach of women for their own purposes, fragmented the social controls previously enforced by gendered rules of conduct and containment. Women's newly acquired sense of freedom created a heightened sense of anxiety evident in the need to restrain women's activities within male-authorized parameters, as in the cases of Anna Colonna's "unofficial" diplomatic achievements, or the political successes of the countess of Berlepsch, which still depended to some degree on male networks. The constraints, which nevertheless could not be fully imposed on women's agency—that is, on their transgressive actions in the real world, regardless of their final outcome—shifted to symbolic discursive displays through male-construed ethical and moral categorizations.

In focusing on the gendered differences in women travelers' status and power, the chapters in this collection propose a revisionary approach to their histories by deconstructing the "official versions," instead featuring the central importance of women's experiences in and contributions

22 The many women travelers from the eighteenth century to today have received much more attention, mostly from women scholars. See, for example, Akhimie and Andrea (2019); Imbarrato (2006); Krueger (2021); and Méndez Rodenas (2014).



to the territories traveled. They emphasize women's important role in creating specifically female social structures within traditionally male centers of power, founding convents and schools, mentoring young women, and establishing social networks and family relations. Reading against the grain of male-authored narratives, the chapters highlight how women's mobilization furthered their autonomous sense of self, not by emulating masculine models, as their biographers proposed, but by confronting the multiple challenges, choices, risks, and possibilities of early modern travel.

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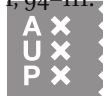
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