

MATERNAL RULE. AFFECTION, POWER, AND PATRIMONY EXPRESSED THROUGH TESTAMENTARY WILLS (15TH-16TH CENTURIES)¹

EL MATERNAL IMPERIO. AFECTOS, PODER Y PATRIMONIO A TRAVÉS DE LA EXPRESIÓN TESTAMENTARIA (SIGLOS XV-XVI)

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Abstract

«Maternal rule» is the expression used by a Spanish noblewoman from the kingdom of Seville in her last will and testament, written in the 16th century, to justify the authority she holds over her children. Based on the hypothesis that this is not merely her own individual perception, but rather that it corresponds to her experiences living within a specific emotional community, this paper carries out a comparative analysis with the testaments of two other women from the same territory and social group, with a view to understanding their maternal affective experiences.

The documentation examined spans almost a century and includes information and instructions that characterise the lives and lifestyles of three women: María de Mendoza (+1493), Catalina de Ribera (+1505), and María Andrea Coronel de Guzmán y

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Sotomayor (+1589). However, they are written from the subjective perspective of a woman facing death, who wishes to retain her influence and at times control over her children even after she has disappeared from their lives, reflecting on her own soul.

The main conclusions reached would indicate that they belonged to the same emotional community: Christian, aristocratic, with a gender role assignment that did not prevent them from exercising rule in certain areas, especially when they became widowed and gained authority over their children. However, they experience motherhood differently depending on whether their children are adults or still minors as the mothers face death. But above all, the way in which they exercise their motherhood is influenced by their personalities and predisposition.

In any case, they use their last will and testament to give orders and advice to their descendants through a language that shows their motherly affections and disaffections. These are documents through which they can settle emotional scores through their legacies with a view to expressly leaving their children on the same or different footings. And, finally, beyond biological motherhood, we see how the caregiving role taken on by these women extends through affection or responsibility to other members of the social group.

Keywords: Motherhood; Maternal power; countess of Los Molares; María de Mendoza; Catalina de Ribera; marquise of Gibraleón; María Andrea Coronel de Guzmán.

Resumen

«Con maternal imperio» es la expresión que utiliza en su testamento una mujer de la élite castellana, más concretamente del reino de Sevilla en el siglo XVI, para justificar la autoridad que ejerce sobre sus hijos. Desde la hipótesis de que no se trata de una percepción individual, sino que responde a la vivencia de su comunidad emocional, en este texto se realiza un análisis comparativo con los testamentos de otras dos mujeres del mismo territorio y grupo social, con la finalidad de aproximarnos a sus vivencias afectivas maternas.

La documentación abarca casi un siglo e incluye información e instrucciones que caracterizan los modos de vida de estas tres mujeres: María de Mendoza (+1493), Catalina de Ribera (+1505) y María Andrea Coronel de Guzmán y Sotomayor (+1589). Pero están redactadas desde la subjetividad de la madre que se enfrenta a la muerte, desea mantener la influencia —y a veces control— sobre sus hijos cuando haya desaparecido de sus vidas, y reflexiona sobre su propia alma.

Las conclusiones principales determinan que pertenecen a la misma comunidad emocional: cristiana, aristocrática, con una asignación de roles de género que no les impide ejercer el gobierno en ciertos ámbitos, especialmente durante la viudez, y que desarrollan autoridad sobre sus hijos. Sin embargo, viven la maternidad de manera diferente, dependiendo de si los hijos son adultos o aún menores cuando las madres se

enfrentan a la muerte. Pero, sobre todo, influyen sus personalidades y predisposición en la manera de ejercer la maternidad.

En todo caso, utilizan sus testamentos para dar órdenes y consejos a sus descendientes a través de un lenguaje que muestra los afectos y desafectos maternos. Son documentos en los que pueden permitirse ajustar cuentas emocionales con ellos a través de legados que pretenden igualarlos o diferenciarlos expresamente. Y, por último, se observa cómo, más allá de la maternidad biológica, el papel asumido de cuidadoras se extiende a través del afecto o de la responsabilidad a otros miembros del grupo social.

Palabras clave: maternidad; poder maternal; condesa de Los Molares; María de Mendoza; Catalina de Ribera; marquesa de Gibraleón; María Andrea Coronel de Guzmán.

1. THE CONVENIENCE OF DOCUMENTING EMOTIONS

The power of mothers. Although this power has always had a strong public impact because those wielding this power have also been members of the ruling classes, we have rarely questioned the consistency of this power over the course of history. But when appropriate research strategies are applied to expand our understanding of particular cases, the forms taken by the authority exercised by mothers over their children become evident.

On this occasion, we will analyse the actions and emotions of three mothers who lived in the late 15th and 16th centuries in the former kingdom of Seville, members of aristocratic families and the urban patriarchy that exercised political and economic rule at the time. Their relationships with their children took on different forms, and they expressed their affections and also their disaffections through certain objects, recommendations, and gestures.

From the days of Antiquity up until the first half of the 20th century, there was a common way to reflect on feelings. Emotions were deemed to be an internal phenomenon of the human body, universal in nature, and whose functioning was not related to reason. Frequent metaphorical references were made to caged forces seeking to break free, and although the ideal of the sensible, intelligent, moderate person included the ability to control their feelings and especially the expression thereof, the difficulty of reining in irresistible loves, anger, or sadness from time to time was accepted.

However, this model began to decline in the 1960s. This was not accidental, coinciding with the rise of cognitive psychology and its interest in the emotions. The reason behind this was the new approach taken by researchers in this field, accepting the existence of certain basic emotions, such as fear. But they believed that affections were the result of the perception of an object or situation and its subsequent processing by the brain.

Therein lies the main difference, because through this new vision, emotions become rational reactions, a category that we tend to respect more, although these processes depend on each individual's predisposition in a given situation. At this point, we must take into account this idea of predisposition, because it refers not only to each person's way of being, but also to the circumstances in which that person has lived and the upbringing they have received.

As research continued, in the 1980s, in addition to psychology, another discipline begins to propose explanations about the nature of emotions. I am referring to anthropology, which offers the consideration that feelings are culturally shaped and defined, without a basic or universally shared repertoire. This means that they are generated and organised differently according to each culture.

So, until the end of the twentieth century, the approaches taken by different disciplines have furthered our knowledge of emotions and are complementary to each other. But there were still many guests missing from the table, and in the interceding years neuroscience has taken its seat to explain to us that emotional responses occur thanks to the ability of our brain to, for example, map what happens in our body, which we use as a reference for the explanations we give ourselves of the world.

Although the emotional factor was introduced in the middle of the 20th century (Febvre, 1941), in 1985 it was taken even further, and the concept of Emotionology emerged, a term coined by Peter and Carol Stearns, with which they referred to the set of codes and rules that determined subjective experiences (Stearns & Stearns, 1985). They were no longer only interested in knowing the emotions and understanding their value for the development of psychological, anthropological, or neuroscientific events. Historians are now seeking to define the field of research, which is really a subfield of social history.

Stearns and Stearns have sought to differentiate experience—that is, how each person experiences emotions—from the social norms that make them possible. In fact, social norms became the subject of their research. They wanted to know the emotional standards of past societies. And therein lies the germ of what we consider to be the history of emotions, which naturally has its own method of investigation that will be partially applied to the study of the three cases selected here.

In this way, we can gain an increasingly detailed understanding of the complex emotional processes included in research on the Middle Ages. While we see how in our society an *emotional shift* develops in various aspects, not only in research on the past, but also for our understanding of present lives (Barrera & Sierra, 2020).

In a detailed historiographic analysis, researchers Zaragoza and Moscoso point out how several early 20th century publications seek to establish emotions as objects of study in themselves, not as an adjunct to other histories (Zaragoza & Moscoso, 2017). The new concept of emotional community created by medievalist Barbara Rosenwein (Dixon, 2003) is particularly relevant. This refers to a group of people who share a set of norms about emotions and a common assessment of emotions. Although the historian received some criticism, and she herself modified her initial premises, emotional communities have become the space that allows us to study shared emotions (Zaragoza & Moscoso, 2017, p. 4).

At the same time, these studies have affected research on the history of women. Although some work had been done prior to this, it was again in the 1960s when the development of social history and the history of mentalities, with their diverse theoretical proposals, such as the history of women, introduced into historiography a new category of analysis, gender, which has given rise to a highly productive dialogue with the history of emotions.

2. BELONGING TO AN EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY

To analyse the main features of the power that these three mothers developed over their children, all of them members of the same emotional community, it is helpful to describe the sources of information used, beyond other personal and literary documents generated in a specific chronological and

spatial framework, which allow us to detect in their language the emotional values of an era. It is by no means an easy task, for a number of reasons: traditionally the intentional focus of research has not been placed there; it is a novel approach and, moreover, we want to look at the lives of women, which have remained largely undocumented in history so far.

We have explored a wide number of different sources about the three people whose emotions and feelings we are going to examine here. We can approach them through the chronicles of the time, references in the biographies of other people, and studies of contemporaries. Let us not forget that they were members of the aristocratic elite, three rich women and, therefore, we are much more likely to find references to their existence, unlike women from the popular classes, because the poor often leave less of a mark on the archives. In addition, I have managed to consult a variety of documents about these three women, such as dowries, prenuptial agreements, all kinds of contracts and administrative letters, inventories of their property, and lawsuits.

However, for this study, I have preferred to use the same type of documentary source as the main reference for all, their last will and testament, because not only can such documents contain strictly procedural orders, for example, regarding their burial and the distribution of their properties, but they also leave room for reflections on the soul, on how life has passed, the imminence of death, and uncertainty regarding the well-being of loved ones they are leaving behind.

The oldest of these women was María de Mendoza, Countess of Los Molares, born in Guadalajara and died in Seville in 1493, at almost eighty years of age. Daughter of the Marquis of Santillana, Íñigo López de Mendoza, and wife of Per Afán de Ribera, governor of Andalusia, she was widowed at a very young age and raised five daughters by herself, albeit with the support of her powerful Mendoza lineage.

Doña María held economic power and even some political influence and faced difficult situations such as a confrontation with Henry IV who wanted to marry Beltrán de la Cueva to her eldest daughter, lady of the House of Ribera. Indeed, the main objective of her actions was to protect that legacy because she had no male heir, and so the marriage of her firstborn Beatriz became more important than usual. That is why she chose a son-in-law of a very prominent lineage—the Enríquez family, the governors of Castile—

but also with the idea that he would adapt to the Ribera lineage, an arrangement that did not work. In any case, Doña María managed to retain the position of governor from 1454 onwards, although without taking part in military actions, naturally, but in all other administrative matters, including the imparting of justice that corresponded to this position. At least until her daughter and heir married in 1460, and the post passed to her new son-in-law, Pedro Enríquez.

Francisco Enríquez de Ribera was born of that marriage, and, after the boy's mother died when he was just 10 years of age, his grandmother set out to exercise her firm guardianship over him, even intending to remove authority from the boy's father. In this instance, therefore, our analysis of the power of mothers extends to the power of grandmothers.

In this customary marriage policy that María de Mendoza also deployed with the rest of her daughters, three of them obeyed her authority and maintained a good relationship with their mother: the firstborn Beatriz, Leonor, who around the age of thirteen married the future Duke of Medina Sidonia, and Inés who married the Count of Medellin. However, the other two defied their mother's authority. The youngest, María, remained single and lived with the family of the second-born, Catalina, who is another of the mothers I have selected for this study. Thus, in the 1470s, conflict began between mother and child.

When María de Mendoza wrote her will in 1490, she wrapped white twine around the deed and impressed upon it «a seal that resembled the Mendoza coat of arms»². She then placed the document within a white canvas bag that she tied and stored in «a chest covered with a dark green cloth», kept under lock and key³. This was found by those who opened the chest three years later, a few days after her death.

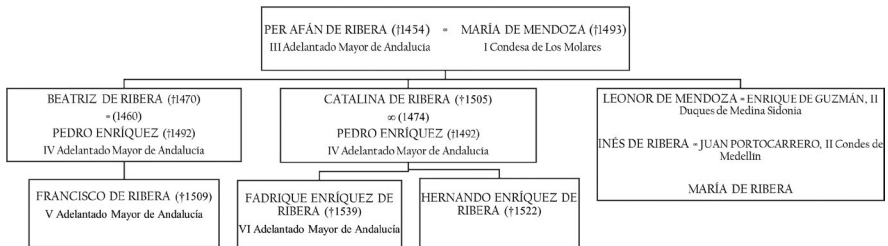
By then, two of her daughters had also died: Beatriz and María. But the complex emotional relationships she had with all her five daughters were reflected in the distribution of properties she bequeathed. They had

2. «Con un sello de masa que parecía de las armas de Mendoza». Own Translation. All primary source quotes have been translated by the author.

3. «Un arca ensayalada con paño verde oscuro». Archivo Ducal de Medinaceli (A.D.M.), Sección Alcalá (S.A.), 1205, 347-385.

all reached adulthood, and it became clear that family relationships are not always easy. Doña María's personality was certainly not easy either.

Consequently, the two main beneficiaries of her will were: her grandson Francisco, the son of her eldest daughter Beatriz and to whom the grandmother had been the *de facto* guardian for years, also heir to the privileges of the Ribera lineage, mainly the governorship of Andalusia; and her daughter Leonor, with whom she had the closest relationship, something that goes beyond the bonds of affection and was strengthened by the pride she felt that her daughter became the duchess of Medina Sidonia, one of the most important titles in the kingdom. To Francisco she bequeathed one third of her property, and to Leonor one fifth.



Genealogy of the Ribera lineage

The second mother, Catalina de Ribera, spent her entire life in Seville and died in her fifties in 1505. She was the second wife of Pedro Enríquez, the widower of Catalina's older sister. She was an impressive businesswoman who apparently never aspired to political power. Although, as usual, she used her family influences, which now extended to the monarchs themselves, for King Ferdinand was Pedro Enríquez's nephew.

Doña Catalina had two sons whom she worshipped, called Fadrique and Hernando, as well as a daughter, Teresa, who died in childhood, although decades later Catalina still leaves money in her will to Teresa's nursemaid. She also raised one of her husband's nieces, Leonor de Acuña, whom she claimed to love as a daughter, making frequent references to her affectionate and empathetic nature. For example, in 1492, Isabel Ponce de León, sister

of the Marquis of Cadiz, refers to the quantity received in a sales document and indicates:

And I, looking to the love that exists between me and you Doña Catalina de Ribera, am pleased to receive the eleven thousand maravedis (...) for the many good deeds that I have received from you and each day I receive, so many and of such consideration, that they are worth much more.⁴

Her own sister María de Ribera, who in 1485 sold her father's inheritance to Doña Catalina and her husband in exchange for a lifetime income of 100,000 maravedis, notes:

It is my will to give it to you for the many honours and benefits and food and aid and other good deeds that I have received and which I receive from you [...], which are so numerous and of such consideration and so honourable and gratuitous to me.⁵

Indeed, even today she is still remembered in Seville precisely for some of the most important feminine values held by that emotional community, which are attributed to her: charity, care, and religious devotion, embodied in the founding of the Hospital de las Cinco Llagas. Although, a deeper reading might reveal other significant personal motivations for this agency.

Despite this, her relationship with her mother was conflictive. But what exactly sowed the seed of their discord? Simply put, Catalina refused to submit to the political machinations and matrimonial plans of her mother, having entered into a romantic relationship that was expressly forbidden: her brother-in-law, the widower of Beatriz, her elder sister (De la Pascua Sánchez, 2015). Although, it is true that here power is not limited to the authority of a mother over her daughters, because the other players at the table were politics, the war in Granada, and the fate of great fortunes and influences.

4. *E io mirando al debdo e amor que entre mi e vos D.^a Catalina de Ribera hay, me plogue e place de recibir los mrs que montan los dichos once mill mrs [...] por muchas honras e buenas obras que de vos he recibido e de cada un día recibo, tantas e tales que montan e valen mucho más que non el valor de la tal demasia si alguna oviese* (A.D.M., S.A. 1256, 515-546).

5. *«Es mi voluntad de vos lo dar y donar por muchas honras y beneficios y alimentos y ayudas y socorros y otras buenas obras que de continuo he recibido y recibo de vos [...], que son tantas y tales y a mí tan honrosas y gratuitas»* (A.D.M., S.A. 1188, 152-182).

María de Mendoza never forgave disobedience, and thirty years of litigation surrounding economic and jurisdictional matters ensued, which would be reflected in the way she treated her two rebel daughters—because María de Ribera supported her older sister—and the grandchildren she had through Catalina, as expressed in her last will and testament.

Over such a long period of time, there were internal episodes of the conflict. For example, Catalina and Pedro Enríquez wanted to move away from the Ribera lineage and begin the Ribera de Enríquez family name, one of the most expressive acts that, even though La Cartuja in Seville remained the family burial ground, meant that they and their heirs would be buried in the chapter house rather than the church.

For her part, María de Mendoza denounced in 1490 the marriage of her daughter as illegitimate, something about which she must have had a firm conviction, but she used an accusation that was refuted during the ensuing interrogation⁶. She said that Catalina had been named godmother at the christening of her niece María Enríquez, the youngest daughter of Beatriz and Pedro, after whose birth the mother died. The fact that she was godmother established a relationship with Pedro that would indeed have been a cause for marital annulment. However, the priest who officiated the christening declared that Catalina was not even present during the ceremony. It would seem that there was no limit to the grandmother's machinations, who would have condemned the children of Catalina and Pedro to illegitimacy if the false accusation had been accepted. Although, since Catalina knew her mother all too well, she had very wisely waited four years to marry, until the licence had arrived from Rome, an uncommon course of action.

That difficult relationship with her mother might have determined the maternal role that Catalina de Ribera herself wanted to play, and throughout her life she endeavoured to treat her children fairly and without preference.

The loving words and behaviour of her children after she died attest to this: they always got on well and fulfilled all their testamentary pledges, which was rare among this social group. In fact, when she was widowed

6. A.D.M., S.A. 1195, 424-428.

in 1492, one of her first actions was to sign a document of concord with Francisco de Ribera, her nephew and stepson, with whom she maintained a cordial and affectionate relationship until she died⁷.

One key example of her heirs' keenness to fulfil Catalina's wishes can be found in the construction of the Hospital de las Cinco Llagas, by the Puerta Macarena in the city of Seville. In 1500, Doña Catalina had founded the institution in a house of the area of Santiago, with the initial intention of providing assistance to poor and sick women⁸. In her will, she asked her children to continue that work and they did so in the same house, but in 1535 onwards, her son Fadrique, in memory of his mother, began work to construct a magnificent new building, which remained in use as a hospital until 1972, and today is the seat of the Parliament of Andalusia.

The last mother studied in this paper belonged to the next generation. María Andrea Coronel de Guzmán y Zúñiga was born in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and died in Gibralforte before the age of forty in 1589. Through her marriage to Francisco Diego López de Zúñiga Sotomayor y Mendoza, she became the Marquise of Gibralforte and Countess of Belalcázar. She was the granddaughter of the Dukes of Béjar, daughter of the Counts of Niebla, and sister of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, so the aforementioned María de Mendoza was one of her great grandmothers. She had eight children and the oldest had just turned twenty when she ordered her will and died three days later.

Allusions to her mother and brother indicate that María Andrea Coronel was also loving to her family, without any glimmer of emotional shortcomings. Nor did she have a conflictive relationship with her husband and cousin, who was not known to have any illegitimate children, nor did he remarry during the 12 years he remained a widow, as the Duke of Béjar.

At the age of 20 and 19, respectively, they had married to undertake a complex family project, setting up their home in Gibralforte, building a new palace, becoming patrons of a monastery, and giving birth to all of their children there (Aranda Bernal, 2019).

7. A.D.M., S.A. 1188, 364-380.

8. Archive of the Provincial Council of Seville. Hospital de las Cinco Llagas, leg. 1B, n.º1.

3. AND IN THE COMMUNITY, EVERY WOMAN, A MOTHERHOOD

These three women were educated in the same emotional standards, i.e. the rules governing the expression of feelings that allowed them to define with equal parameters their own emotions and those of the people with whom they interacted, the bonds of affection they had created, and the way they were formulated. In other words, they were linked by a system of feelings and were part of the emotional community shared by the families of the Andalusian elite of the time.

Obviously, the basis of this community was a Christian experience which, beyond a spiritual belief and a philosophy of life, shaped at this time a political identity that bestowed upon them a situation of superiority, because these women lived in the context of the war in Granada and Las Alpujarras. In other words, they occupied the frontier of the Christian community of the kingdom of Castile, bordering the Muslim Nazari kingdom of Granada during the 15th century, already in military decline. And after the conquest of Granada from the end of the century onwards, they lived in close proximity with the *Moriscos*, Muslims who converted to Christianity voluntarily or by force, many of whom were slaves in their homes, along with others of African or Canarian origin.

The correspondence written by the women of the Hispanic court during the 16th century has been studied, but unfortunately in the Spanish archives there are very few personal letters from this century and the previous one (Cruz Medina, 2003-2004). Although such letters were written, they were not saved because family archives gave preference to administrative correspondence. Fortunately, beyond letters, we can also glimpse the nature of relationships between mothers and children in other kinds of documents, such as contemporary literature as well as artistic representations that show us some of their characteristics through iconography and gestural language.

Despite this, not all historians felt it was worth collating such minor details from the archival documentation, which were considered anecdotal because they describe people and situations that do not seem to affect major political and military events. This does not mean that when a woman, under exceptional circumstances, did lead a public life she has not been

subject to scrutiny. The most significant example is that of Queen Isabella herself, contemporary and related to the first two women studied in this article.

However, these other details, often treated as marginal, provide a glimpse into the emotional situation and are often highly evocative. I am referring to the explanations given by a dying woman to justify how she is sharing out her belongings, regardless of whether she had much or little, among the members of her family; to whom she entrusts her young children; or the advice and orders she gives to those who are already adults.

And so we discover mothers with authority; affectionate, worried, protective of the bodies and souls of their descendants, but also selfish, controlling mothers. Women who were all too aware of the fragility of life and the constant closeness of death, who sought refuge in the hope of eternal life. They have been educated in the importance of family, where they are links in the chain of lineage, and in turn convey that concept of alliance as an element of social and emotional articulation. Because the family is the mental space in which their lives unfold, where respect for elders and parental authority is one of the main values of the community.

Once they marry, they reproduce the model, and everything happens in a relatively short space of time, because lifespans are short. Let us bear in mind that life expectancy was around forty years. And when the time of death comes, children may already be young adults, but all too often they are still in childhood.

Summarising greatly, that is the emotional community in which María, Catalina, and María Andrea lived. It should be noted that, although the affectivity of men is not addressed in this text, this is not because it is considered simpler in contrast to the greater emotional capacity of women, something that has often been used to characterise women in terms of their irrational passions to the detriment of rational consideration. What interests me is using this methodology to expand our knowledge of the history of women, considering that we should not continue to interpret historical reality without assuming the significance of the emotional variable and forgetting the fundamental role of gender in human behaviour.

3.1. Bequests, advice, and language as a sign of maternal affection/ disaffection

María de Mendoza, who wrote her will when she was an old lady and when her daughters were already over the age of 40, shows no interest in influencing her heirs with advice or opinions. Of course, she expresses her interests through the distribution of her legacy, but only in the way she alludes to the two daughters who had died by then do we glimpse her consideration of each one. She refers to her first-born, the heir and conveyor of the Ribera line, who died in childbirth in her 20s and was always obedient to the tutelage of the mother, as «Doña Beatriz, may she rest in peace»⁹. On the other hand, when referring to her youngest, who supported her sister Catalina when she clashed with her mother, and even preferred to remain single, living with her sister and brother-in-law, she spoke of her as «Doña María, may God forgive her»¹⁰.

The demonstrations of love shown by Catalina de Ribera and Andrea Coronel towards their children are very different. On the one hand, they frequently use expressions such as «beloved children» or «my beloved daughter doña Guiomar ...» respectively¹¹. But they also try to convey a philosophy of life to them, or rather leave in writing the advice that they would have otherwise passed onto them.

Doña Andrea warns that «with maternal authority [...] I urge and command you to have much love and agreement with one other»¹². Meanwhile, Doña Catalina goes further. Her two children are in their 20s and she shows through her bequests and orders that she is a reflective woman and accustomed to guiding them. Of course, she had been a widow and managing a large economic estate for many years, so she does not doubt the authority she wields beyond motherhood. That is why she writes: «since it was the will of our Lord that I should command; accept it and my will is this»¹³. In other

9. «Doña Beatriz, mi hija que santa gloria aya». A.D.M., S.A. 1205, 347-385.

10. «Doña María, que Dios perdone». A.D.M., S.A. 1205, 347-385.

11. «Amados hijos», «mi amada hija doña Guiomar».

12. «Con imperio maternal [...] encarecidamente les encargo y mando tengan mucho amor y conformidad unos con otros». National Historical Archive (A.H.N), Nobility Section (S.N.) Osuna, C.228, D.5-7. 19-11-1589.

13. «Mas pues nuestro señor le plugo de me dar que pueda mandar, avedlo por bien y mi voluntad es esta» A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483.

words, in an effort not to violate gender norms, she attributes her capabilities and the opportunities she has enjoyed to God's plan. And so she instructs:

Beloved children, you already know how I have worked in every way I can to be able to increase the estate that I leave to you, which I hope in the piety of Our Lord that, as your father's children, you will spend doing any good that you can [...]. What I beg of you for the sake of Our Lord is that you should remember the good lineage whence you come and serve God and safeguard your honour and turn away from vices so that you do not lose your honour, I shall say no more.¹⁴

Such expressive final words. She says so much without saying anything at all. We might interpret this as: I will not repeat something you already know because you have heard me say it for years. She goes on to give orders that sound like advice she has been giving to her two children aged 26 and 28 since they were little. She refers to the ethics of work, honour and lineage, love, empathy, and the expression of affection.

3.2. Settling of emotional scores through the bequeathing of assets: equality/inequality

The fact that María de Mendoza intended to settle scores with her daughters through her will was something they all saw coming. In fact, the will was not read at her home, as was customary, but at the home of the Count of Cifuentes who, as well as being her nephew-in-law, in the year 1493 was assistant to the monarchy in Seville, so his home would have been considered neutral territory. In attendance were the servants of her grandson Francisco and daughter Leonor, who benefitted the most from her will, inheriting one third and one fifth, respectively, but there were no representatives of her daughters Inés and Catalina. Although, interestingly, Inés lived with her husband in her mother's house, as shown by the inventory of Doña María's property that took place in the following

14. «Amados hijos ya sabéis cómo he trabajado en todo lo que he podido por vos acrecentar esa hacienda que os queda, la cual espero en la piedad de Nuestro Señor que como hijos de vuestro padre la gastaréis en hacer el bien que podréis [...]. Lo que les ruego por amor de nuestro señor os acordéis del buen linaje donde venís y sirbais a Dios y mireis por vuestras honras y os apartéis de vicios porque no perdáis vuestras honras, no quiero deciros más» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

days: «In an attic of the aforementioned houses, where the Countess of Medellín was staying [...]. In another attic, where his Lordship the Count of Medellín resided»¹⁵.

However, like her sister Catalina, she receives no legacy except in the hypothetical case that Francisco had no legitimate children, in which case his part would revert to Leonor and Inés. Indeed, when Francisco died in 1509 he had no offspring, but by then his two aunts had already been dead for years. And it should be noted that this inequality in the distribution of her legacy was not due to Doña María's attempt to improve the economic conditions of those who were less fortunate, because everyone enjoyed considerable fortunes. Nor did she have any problem lying to achieve her goals, as she did in a lawsuit filed against Pedro Enríquez about the aristocratic title of Olivares. And we know this from her own statement in the will, for, to discharge my conscience, I say that I did it to help my grandson's fortune¹⁶. Of course, given the circumstances, it makes us wonder whether she is not now trying to deceive so that her son-in-law does not inherit the title of Olivares.

Her daughter, Catalina, on the other hand, had a generous, carefully considered, and even a poetic way of expressing her wishes in her last will and testament, for example, when she warns her children that «the little that I am leaving you should be shared out with much peace»¹⁷. However, we must take that final expression with a pinch of salt because it is false modesty; these 'paltry' 25 million maravedis would today amount to around €400 million.

For years, she had worked to equalise her children, probably pursuing that intention from the time they were born, but she did the most to ensure it once she was widowed. Trying to ensure they both lived in very similar palaces and multiplying their fortune so that, when the time came, their inheritance would be considerable:

15. «En un soberado de las dichas casas, donde se aposentaba la señora condesa de Medellín [...]. En otro soberado, donde estaba aposentado el señor conde de Medellín» (A.D.M., S.A. 1205, 347-385).

16. «Por descargo de mi conciencia digo que lo hice por ayudar al dicho mi nieto» (A.D.M., S.A. 1205, 347-385).

17. «Con mucha paz se parta eso poquito que os dejo [...] veynte é cinco cuentos que os dexo en heredades» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

To equalise my children so that, when my days are done, there is no anger, I hereby issue this, my last will and testament [...], and I command that all that I say herein be done [...]. Pray my children that you will be good to one another, for you know that I have always raised you equally, so there should be no envy and you should get on well together, so I beg of you now as well, for the sake of our Lord [...]. For the valuation of the goods let the executors take charge, because it is not appropriate for there to be disagreements between siblings. Between siblings there should be no quarrels regarding their distribution.¹⁸

As noted previously, despite the different ages at which Doña María and Doña Catalina died, one almost eighty years old and the other in her fifties, close to the general life expectancy at the time in this latter case, they both felt they had lived full lives. Moreover, they are both widows with grown-up children, and so they are looking to tie up all their legacies in their last will and testament. María Andrea Coronel also accepts death, even if she is 38 years old and has young children, as she has been instructed by the Church. But there are clear signs of haste in her will written two days before her death, whereas the other two ladies wrote their wills over several years. That is why there are different nuances. María Andrea is concerned about her moral debts, leaves it up to her husband to resolve the economic issues surrounding her legacy, and leaves the care of her children to her sister-in-law Teresa de Zúñiga, who was married to the 3rd Duke of Arcos¹⁹.

Some sentences in the will indicate her confidence that the Marquis of Gibraleón will know what to do. It even fell to him to decide where she would be buried. And, regarding the future of her servants: «I beg his Lordship the Marquis to protect them and to grant them mercy, placing where they will

18. «Por el igualar de mis hijos que después de mis días no haya enojo ordeno este testamento [...], e ordeno que se haga todo lo que aquí yo diré [...]. Ruegoos hijos míos que seáis buenos hermanos pues sabéis que siempre os crié igualmente por vos hacer que no tuviesedes envidia y os quisiédeses bien, así os lo ruego agora por amor de nuestro señor [...]. Para lo apreciado que no entienda otro en ello sino los albaceas, porque no es razón que entre hermanos parezca que ay alguna diferencia. Entre hermanos no riñan sobre el partir» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

19. A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7.

fare well and act in his honour»²⁰. With regard to one of them who wishes to become a nun:

I appeal to his Lordship the Marquis to help her fulfil her goodly desire by seeking a place for her in the convent of Our Lady of El Vado, or elsewhere should his Lordship so desire. And to the poor women that I used to help through charitable acts, that his Lordship should treat them equally, so that they do not miss me. And I also recommend to his Lordship the dwarf Domingo and María Gonçalez who nursed our son Don Manuel for some months.²¹

However, she is very specific about the fate of certain objects that hold a very high emotional value. She does not share them equally among her children, but rather prioritises the criteria of gender and age. Explicit legacies are both material and symbolic. Her firstborn, destined to inherit and pass on the family tradition, should possess those objects related to primogeniture and the lineage, even though some of the jewels, such as the gift María Andrea received at her wedding, held a personal emotional value:

And the golden cross we have, where there are many precious relics, I bequeath to my son Don Alonso de Zúñiga y Sotomayor. And the very precious sword and rich golden dagger of his illustrious lordship, whom I beg to give it to him to become part of the rights of primogeniture... So that the cross, sword and dagger will be inherited in perpetuity. And may his illustrious lordship also incorporate into the primogeniture of his great house the rich and ancient gold chariot that we have.

I command that my son Don Alonso de Zúñiga y Sotomayor, or whomever succeeds him in our house instead, be given a diamond that was given to me by his Lordship the Marquis the night of his marriage to me, so that

20. «*Suplico al marqués mi señor las ampare y les haga merced poniéndolas donde estén bien y a su honor*» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

21. «*Suplico al marqués mi señor socorra en el cumplimiento de su buen deseo procurando que la reçiban en este monasterio de monjas de nuestra señora del Bado o en otra parte que su señoría fuere servido, y a las pobres que yo solía regalar y acudirles con alguna caridad su señoría las trate con la misma, de manera que no me echen de menos, y también encomiendo a su señoría al enano Domingo y a María Gonçalez que dio algunos meses leche a nuestro hijo don Manuel*» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7)..

my son and heir may give it in turn to his wife when God grants him the holy state of marriage.²²

To her eldest daughter she bequeaths another kind of legacy composed of those objects that sustain the image of a great lady of the Castilian nobility, so that her daughter —about eighteen years old— can succeed her in the representation of that role. Thus she explains: «To my beloved daughter Guiomar de Aragón Mendoza I command that she receive all my jewels and writing chest and trunks»²³.

But there are other objects associated with the feminine role among her social group, which add a religious meaning in line with the community in which they all live, to which is added a certain mystical or magical value, that is, they are endowed with the power to perform miracles. Doña María Andrea hopes to be remembered by her daughter as she readies herself for prayer, keeping her in mind at times of meditation, and she also wants to protect her when she is no longer present:

I bequeath to my daughter Guiomar de Aragón Mendoça the rosary with which I pray and the beads of indulgence it contains, because it is a piece I hold in great esteem, and so I ask her to appreciate it and make good use of it, because through its proper use, great indulgences and pardons may be gained, as explained in the memorials on it that lay on my desk.²⁴

22. «Y la cruz de oro que tenemos en que están muchas y preçiosas reliquias la haya mi hijo don Alonso de Çuñiga y Sotomayor y la muy preçiosa espada y daga de oro rica de su señoría ilustrísima a quien suplico se la mande dar con cargo de que se yncorpore en el mayorazgo y vaya la cruz, espada y daga dichas sucediendo de uno en otro perpetuamente y que así mismo su señoría ilustrísima yncorpore en el mayorazgo de su gran casa el carro de oro rico y antiguo que tenemos.

Mando que a mi hijo don Alonso de Çuñiga y Sotomayor o al que en su lugar sucediere en nuestra casa se le de un diamante que me dio el marqués mi señor la noche que conmigo se desposó para que el dicho mi hijo heredero lo de a su esposa llegándole Dios al estado santo del matrimonio» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

23. «A mi amada hija doña Guiomar de Aragón Mendoça mando se le den todas mis joyas y mis escritorios y arquilla» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

24. «Mando a mi hija doña Guiomar de Aragón Mendoça, se le de el mi rosario en que yo reço y las quantas de perdones que del están pendientes porque es joya que yo en mucho estimo y así le encargo las preçie y se aproveche de ellas porque con el buen uso de ellas se ganan grandes indulgencias y perdones, como parecerá por los memoriales que de ello hay en mi escritorio» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7)..

So, did she forget about the rest? When she wrote her will, her children Francisco, Teresa, and Juana had already embarked upon a religious path, so they had received certain amounts. Manuel had died at a young age, and her youngest daughters also became nuns after a while, although their mother could not have guessed that. Rather, she knows that the future of her children is uncertain and leaves responsibility for that part of the inheritance to her husband: «And his Lordship the Marquis will share among his children the holy relics that lie in our chapel, in the order that his Lordship wishes»²⁵.

Incidentally, when they married and built a new palace to live in Gibraleón, Andrea and her husband dedicated the chapel to their guardian angel and filled it with protective relics of childhood, which was highly appropriate considering all the children who were born in their home over such a short period of time (Aranda Bernal, 2019).

Doña Catalina has only two children but is guided by similar criteria in the bequeathing of specific possessions, in addition to her insistence that both children receive a similar inheritance. The first also has to do with the construction of identity and the demonstration of power, highlighting the residences she leaves each one in Seville. For the firstborn Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, Pedro Enríquez had already included in the rights of primogeniture the half of the house that the couple had begun to build in the area of San Esteban in 1483, and begs his wife in his 1491 will to leave the other half to him on her death. Indeed, this was the case with the palace that we know today as the Casa de Pilatos, the initial phase of which was built in the Mudéjar architectural style and was finished by Don Fadrique in the Renaissance style. As a counterpart, in 1493 Doña Catalina buys another estate in the area of San Juan de la Palma, to erect a similar building that is now called the Palacio de las Dueñas, always with a view to making things equal for Don Hernando, her second son.

For the rest of the properties that make up both legacies, she specifies the cost that each one involved, so that there is no doubt about their similar

25. «Y el marqués mi señor hará merced a sus hijos de repartir entre ellos las santas reliquias que están en nuestra capilla, por el orden que a su señoría diere más contento» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

values. In addition, they were each left sumptuous bed furnishings, highly luxurious fabrics that represented their wealth and status, and which were worth more than one million maravedis. To Don Fadrique: «I bequeath him a canopy of crimson brocade and the bed of green velvet and another oak bed of silk and four green pillows with crimson brocade and three purple velvet ones»²⁶. Similarly, Don Hernando received:

The yellow velvet bed and the white and green damask bed, the Moorish brocade bedspread with purple decoration and a canvas bed with white and burgundy ribbons and a white canopy with crimson brocade and four green velvet pillows and two brocade ones.²⁷

Interestingly, the second criterion governing distribution is gender, although both her children were male, which needs to be clarified. Because in an effort to equalise them, she also wants the wives of her sons to receive the same treatment, but through possessions related to personal attire and ornament. Don Fadrique had married Elvira Fernández de Córdoba in 1494, but we know little about the trajectory of that marriage, which was annulled. In fact, his two daughters were born of later extramarital relationships. That is why Catalina dictates: «That Don Hernando be given for his wife all the gold things that are in my chests and shirts and silk, because I gave such to Don Fadrique for Doña Elvira without telling Don Hernando»²⁸, who had married Inés Portocarrero y Cárdenas. And in this same regard, she bequeaths a necklace to Leonor de Acuña, the niece of Pedro Enríquez, whom they had raised from when she was a child.

María de Mendoza, on the other hand, does not indicate any concrete items that her heirs should receive, although in her inventory of assets, multiple pieces are listed that would have been of great monetary and emotional

26. «Mandóle mas vn doçer de brocado carmesi y la cama de terciopelo verde y otra cama de seda de vnas enzinas y quatro almohadas de carmesi brocado verdes y tres moradas de terciopelo, y vna caravaca de lienzo con cintas coloradas» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

27. «La cama de terciopelo amarillo y la cama de damasco blanco y verde, la colcha de brocado morisco con las apañaduras moradas y una cama de lienzo con cintas de grana y blancas y vn doçer de brocado carmesi blanco y quatro almohadas de terciopelo verde y dos de brocado» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

28. «Dense a don Hernando para su mujer todas las cosas de oro que se hallaren en mis arcas y camisas y seda porque a don Fadrique di para doña Elvira sin contárselo a don Hernando» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

worth. However, she does specify which pieces are destined for the religious institutions with which she was involved during her lifetime, which she also asks to pray for her soul.

3.3. Other mothers and other children

Beyond biological motherhood, two issues should be highlighted. That these women delegated some of their maternal duties to other people and feel more grateful for that service than for any other. Catalina de Ribera more than two decades later, still recognises the nursemaids that raised her children: «I bequeath [...] to Doña Teresa's nursemaid the sum of three thousand [...], to Don Fadrique's nursemaid, I bequeath two thousand [...] and to Don Hernando's nursemaid, an equal sum»²⁹. And María Andrea Coronel bequeaths to:

Gómez de Corral, my servant, for the love with which he has served and serves my children, one hundred ducats, and I ask him to take care of them as he has done thus far and with the love he has always shown [...]. To María de Rueda who raised me a son, I command that she be paid from my estate one hundred ducats that are still owed to her from the dowry we promised on the event of her marriage³⁰.

The other matter is that both women took on the assigned female role of caregivers and guardians for the people assigned to their charge. So it is helpful to examine their relationships with those other children. However, in the will of María de Mendoza there are no allusions to this matter.

Perhaps Doña Catalina raised Leonor de Acuña, her husband's niece and the seventh of thirteen siblings, because she had lost a young daughter named Teresa. When Catalina wrote her will, Leonor had already become lady-in-waiting to the Queen and was married to Rodrigo de Guzmán, III Lord of La Algaba. But she nonetheless makes constant affectionate references to Leonor:

29. «Mando [...] a la ama de doña Teresa tres mil [...], a la ama de don Fadrique mando dos mil [...] y a la ama de don Hernando id» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

30. «A Gómez de Corral, mi criado, por el amor con que ha acudido y acude a mis hijos, cien ducados y le pido que tenga de ellos el cuidado que hasta aquí con el amor de siempre [...]. A María de Rueda que me crió un hijo, mando que se le paguen de mis bienes cien ducados que se le restan deviendo de la ayuda que le prometimos para su casamiento» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

And the last thing I charge you is that you should love and visit Señora Doña Leonor, because I know for certain that she will feel both my death and that of her mother and the first thing to be paid is her five hundred thousand maravedis.³¹

She says she loves her like a daughter, but obviously when it comes to distributing her inheritance, lineage is more important, and she does not treat her as she does her biological children.

So to Señora Doña Leonor de Acuña, whom I esteem as my own daughter, I leave five hundred thousand maravedis, which, according to the affection I have for her, I should leave her more than you³².

For her part, María Andrea Coronel also takes into her charge two girls, but under very different circumstances and with much less affection. The first was a *Morisca* (converted Muslim) girl, deported during the War of the Alpujarras (1568-1571). She was called María de la Cruz, and in the house she was treated as a servant, but the Marquise nonetheless feels responsible for her:

I declare that María de la Cruz entered my house at the age of four and is one of the *Moriscas* of Granada. And she came with her mother, who is now deceased. And having already fulfilled the twenty years of service that the King our Lord commanded of the *Moriscos*, I declare that she is now free according to this commandment. And if this girl wishes to marry, she is to be given bed furnishings [...] And I want Francisca de Santo Domingo and her husband Gabriel de la Cruz to be freed for raising this girl and having proved both of them to be good and loyal³³.

31. «Y lo postrimero que os encargo es que querais y visitéis á la señora doña Leonor que se yo cierto que siente tanto mi muerte como de la señora condesa su madre y lo primero que se pague sea sus quinientas mil mrs» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

32. «Que se de a la señora doña Leonor de acuña que la tengo por propia hija quinientas mil mrs., que según el cargo que le tengo, más que a vosotros le había de dejar» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).

33. «Declaro que María de la Cruz entró en mi casa de edad de cuatro años, la cual es de las moriscas de Granada. Y vino con su madre que es ya difunta. Y por haber cumplido ya los veinte años de servicio que el Rey ntro Sor mandó a las tales, declaro que es ya libre por la provisión de su magestad, que de esto trata. Y si esta muchacha quisiere casarse, se le de una cama de ropa. [...] Y quiero que Francisca de Santo domingo y su marido Gabriel de la cruz sean libres por haber criado ya esta muchacha y haber salido ambos buenos y fieles» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

Years later she took another girl into her charge, and in this case her words reveal a greater sense of detachment. She shows a custom among the ladies of the elite understood as charity, but with little emotional involvement:

I have a girl whom the brother superior of La Misericordia gave to my charge because La Misericordia could not raise her. And I have raised her so far. And she is called Magdalena de San Agustín, I wish her to be raised in the house where she has been living up to now and that the nursemaid who raises her continue to be paid as she has so far, and I beg that his Lordship, the Marquis, collect her from our house when she is of age and take her to the Convent of Our Lady of El Vado so that she may serve as a lay sister if she is suited to it, because if she is not suited, I do not wish for her to be taken there so as not to burden the convent with useless people³⁴.

That sense of responsibility towards the people awarded to the care of these ladies is also manifested toward weaker groups. As always, Catalina de Ribera expresses it with great empathy:

I order my sons Don Fadrique and Don Fernando to feed the people that I indicate herein, because they are so poor that they cannot fend for themselves [...] and for the sake of our Lord, for as long as they live, I want them to give the people I indicate herein food and money, and half a bushel of wheat every month. And my two children are to pay for it between them. And I beg of Don Fadrique that he should let them be in his house because they are people who aided me, and he shall need them to accompany his wife when God grants him one. And I beg that they are treated with all the love they deserve. Thus they will have God's blessing and mine as well. And because I have given them food and money every year and now, until they die I order them to give what I stipulate herein, I leave them no more. I pray that they will forgive me and pray to God for my soul and as they will no longer have anyone to help them, dress them in mourning, and to

34. «Tengo una niña que me encargó el hermano mayor de la Misericordia para que la hiciese criar; porque la Misericordia no podía criarla. Y yo la he hecho criar hasta agora. Y se llama Magdalena de San Agustín, quiero que se vaya criando en la casa donde hasta agora está y que se le pague a la ama que la cría como hasta aquí, y suplico al marqués mi señor, que siendo mayorcilla la mande recoger en nuestra casa, y después la lleven al monasterio de Ntra Sra del Vado pa que sirva de lega si fuere para ello, porque no lo siendo, no quiero que la lleven por que no sea cargada la casa de personas inútiles» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

the men give smocks and hoods, and I shall not order it so that they should wear these garments for me, but that they should keep their clothing³⁵.

In this regard, María Andrea Coronel makes two very interesting clarifications. The first is on the importance of attire in sociability and awareness of this need in women when she says:

I order that my assets be used to buy thirty-three women's cloaks that they be shared out among the poor in my village and in the village of Cartaya where they do not even have the opportunity to buy them, so that they should not stop going to church and hearing mass and sermons during the year due to a lack thereof». ³⁶

The second is about the importance of protecting the honour of women as early as the last third of the 16th century, which is not so evident in the previous documents:

I command that all my servants who are living at the time of my death and wish to be in the service of his Lordship the Marquis and my eldest daughter, Doña Guiomar de Aragón y Mendoza, be given and paid their salary as they have until now. And if they do not wish to be in their service, they are given their ration and salary for a year wherever they may be. And I beg all my servants to forgive me for not doing them all the good I wanted and would have done them if God our Lord had given me life according to the love I had for them and the good service that all of

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35. «Mando que mis hijos don fadrique e don femando sean obligados de dar de comer a las personas que de mi mano señalare en esta hoja porque ellas son tan pobres que no se podran valer [...] y por amor de dios mientras biuieren quiero que les den de comer a las que yo aqui señalar e dinero y á cada vna den media fanega de trigo cada mes. Y entre ambos mis hijos lo hayan de pagar así dinero como pan. Y a don fadrique rruego que les dex e estar en el aposentamiento de acá dentro y no salgan de su casa porque son personas de quien yo me serui y para acompañar a su muger quando dios se la diere las avia menester y Ruegole que con mucho amor las traten como ellas merescen así dios le de su bendicion y aya la mia y porque yo les he dado de comer y dineros cada año y agora, hasta que mueran les mando dar lo que aqui digo no les dexo mas. Ruegoles que me perdonen y rruegen a dios por mi anima y porque ya no tendran quien les ayude vistanlas de luto y a los hombres den sayos y capuzes, no lo mando porque lo traygan por mi, mas porque guarden su rropa» (A.D.M., S.A. 188, 459-483).
36. «Mando que de mis bienes se compren treinta y tres mantos de mujeres de anascote y se repartan por las pobres de mi villa y de la de Cartaya que no los tuvieren ni posibilidad para comprarlos, porque por falta de ellos no dejen de ir a la iglesia y oir misa y sermón entre año» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

them have done to me and I beg of His Lordship, the Marquis, to protect them and have mercy on them, placing them where they shall live well and with honour.³⁷

4. CONCLUSIONS

As indicated previously, the general aim of this text has been to expand our knowledge of the history of women, considering that we should not continue to interpret historical reality without assuming the significance of the emotional variable and forgetting the fundamental role of gender in human behaviour. Of course, the small sample size in this study, limited to just three cases, all belonging to the same emotional community, prevents us from extrapolating our conclusions to other times, territories, and socio-economic groups.

Despite this, it is possible to explore the mechanisms of affective control that they exercised throughout their lives, and which were common among their peers. This is where real power is exercised because the emotionality learned in a certain affective style contributes to shaping personalities. Mothers who are responsible for the upbringing of their children do just that, for better or for worse, from the moment their children are born. These women exercised this power naturally, albeit differently, because of course they had different personalities, and life put particular circumstances in their path that provoked different reactions. That is the interesting thing about these cases which, although they belong to the same emotional community, represent three ways of deploying what was known at the time as *maternal authority*.

37. «Mando que a todas mis criadas, las que vivieren al tiempo de mi fallecimiento que quisieren estar en el servicio del marqués mi señor y de mi hija mayor doña Guiomar de Aragón y Mendoza, se les de y pague su salario que hasta aquí y que no queriendo ellas estar en su servicio se les de por un año su ración y salario donde quiera que estuvieren. Y ruego a todas las dichas y las demás mis criadas me perdonen por no hacerles todo el bien y merced que yo deseaba y que les hiciera si Dios nuestro señor me diera vida conforme al amor que yo les tenía y el buen servicio que todas ellas me an hecho y suplico al marqués mi señor las ampare y las haga merced poniéndolas donde estén bien y a su honor» (A.H.N., S.N. Osuna, C. 228, D. 5-7).

María de Mendoza shows a controlling approach to motherhood that takes advantage of her will to settle scores with her daughters and grandchildren. In Catalina de Ribera, we can see the love and generosity expressed towards her children who are already adults, who do not need her care, but they do need her advice and example. María Andrea Coronel, on the other hand, feels that her motherhood is still unfinished. She is young and has not yet finished raising and protecting her children, is afraid to leave them alone because they are only children or adolescents. She believes that in order to fulfil her instructions, she requires the complicity of her husband and the protection of a «Guardian Angel», an advocacion chosen as the patron of her new palace in Gibraleon where she has raised them and the main figure of worship in the altarpiece of the chapel there.

All three women developed mechanisms of affective control in their wills, mainly through privileging certain heirs over others or by equalising them, and according to the way they bequeathed certain objects that have known emotional value and are important to them.

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