

“Meddling with Royal Hearts”: Interiority and *Privanza* (1598-1643)

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ABSTRACT: This paper studies how seventeenth-century writers in Spain elaborated different conceptions of interiority in connection with the intimacy they imagined between the king and his favorite or *privado*. Authors in the days of Lerma, Uceda and Olivares portrayed the relation between king and *privado* in terms that generally relied on inherited notions of ideal friendship, which nonetheless would clash with concerns about the ubiquity of deceit, simulation and dissimulation at the court. This seemed to set boundaries to the unlimited transparency and trust expected between friends. I will address three issues. First, the way writers imagine the favorite’s access to the king’s secrets, as well as the nature of these secrets. Second, the space of intimacy and shared loneliness in which they conceive the friendship of king and *privado* to materialize. Third, the transformations that take place in the favorite’s interiority as a result of his relation with the king and his position at the court.

KEYWORDS: Spanish Political Thought; Royal Favorites; Tacitism; Reason of State; Intimacy; Dissimulation; Virgilio Malvezzi

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RESUMEN: “*Manosear los corazones reales*”: *interioridad y privanza (1598-1643)*.-Este trabajo estudia la elaboración en el siglo XVII español de diferentes nociones de interioridad vinculadas a la intimidad que los contemporáneos imaginaron entre el rey y su favorito o privado. La relación entre rey y *privado* se describió a menudo, en tiempos de Lerma, Uceda y Olivares, en términos de amistad ideal, lo cual entraba en conflicto con inquietudes relacionadas con la omnipresencia en la corte del engaño, la simulación y la disimulación, poniendo límites a la transparencia y confianza ilimitadas esperables entre amigos. Trataré tres aspectos: primero, cómo se imagina en la literatura de la época el acceso del privado a los secretos del rey, así como la naturaleza de estos; segundo, el espacio de intimidad y soledad compartida en el que imaginan tener lugar la amistad entre monarca y privado; tercero, las transformaciones que ocurren en la interioridad del favorito como resultado de su relación con el rey y de su posición en la corte.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pensamiento Político Español; Privados; Tacitismo; Razón de Estado; Intimidad; Disimulación; Virgilio Malvezzi

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In 1598, the beginning of the reign of Philip III presented the court with a relative and remarkable novelty. One man, Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas (Marquis of Denia, and later Duke of Lerma) ruled by the side, and even in the stead, of the king. When Lerma was forced to leave the court twenty years later, his son, the Duke of Uceda, inherited his father's prerogatives, remaining as the king's favorite or *privado* until the death of the sovereign in 1621. For more than two decades, Gaspar de Guzmán (who later became Count-Duke of Olivares) occupied a similar position under Philip III's successor, Philip IV.

Changes in political realities are a likely cause for the irruption of a figure (that of the single royal favorite, called *privado* or *valido*) in the space between the synds or *Consejos* that governed the monarchy and the sovereign, who stood immediately above him (Feros, 1999: 300; Benigno, 1994: 11-14). While contemporaries of the events reacted to the new figure in different, and even opposite ways, all of them agreed that it was in the personal nature of the bond that tied king and *privado* that the authority of the favorite should be located (Bravo, 2012). Political treatises, biographies and pamphlets addressed "the issue" of the favorite from different angles, generally portraying the *privado*'s relation with the king as one of closeness, confidence and intimacy, in harmony with the framework of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century discourses on friendship.¹ Gladly or not (depending on each writer's position for or against the institution of *privanza* in general, and the current favorite in particular), writers generally agreed that the *privado* enjoyed unrivaled access to the king's interiority, as a friend of his.²

I will analyze how writings on *privanza* conceived the king's inner self as to some extent accessible by he who occupied the position of favorite. I will survey different opinions concerning the degree of acquaintance that *privados* were supposed to have with the king's political and private secrets, and the way in which the king and the favorite shared a space of loneliness and intimacy. Subsequently, I will inquire into the set of profound transformations that writers on *privanza* conceived for the favorite's interiority, insofar as these were directly connected with his position at the court and, therefore, his relationship with the king.³ Discourses on *privanza* remained relatively constant for the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV (Feros, 1999: 304). However, amidst such homogeneity, each author's approach becomes a window into understanding what his particular take on the topic may be.

The texts under consideration differ widely in nature. Pedro Maldonado, Matteo Renzi, Enrique de Mendoza and José Pellicer discussed *privanza* in general while addressing the current *privado* (Lerma in Maldonado's case, Olivares for the rest). Virgilio Malvezzi wrote a life of Olivares, while Vicente Mut, Mártir Rizo and José Láinez described famous favorites of the past, sometimes as forerunners of Olivares himself. To this, one should add a number of often anonymous pamphlets warning about the concentration of all the power in a man who could have absolute control over the king's will.

THE KING'S HYBRID INTERIORITY

In 1632, Francisco de Quevedo gave to the press his translation of Virgilio Malvezzi's best-selling biography *Il Romulo*. In his preface, Quevedo greeted Malvezzi's book, originally published in Bologna in 1629, as a milestone in the study of interiority. With a sharp and insightful wit, Malvezzi had penetrated "the unknown interior" of Rome's first king, deciphering intentions where earlier historians had seen only actions. "Those who came before were historians of his life, our author [is] a historian of his soul". Quevedo's conclusion is straightforward: "The Marquis writes of the prince, the others of the man" (Quevedo, 1993: 109; see Blanco, 2004; Delage, 2013).

Quevedo's preface performs as a manifesto of the genre of politically oriented biographies (or *vidas particulares*) for which Malvezzi's book opened a path. It equates the king's "unknown interior" with a space inhabited by intentions and policies that succeed as long as they remain concealed from the outside.

A few years later, a pamphlet usually attributed to Quevedo himself represented the interiority of Cardinal Richelieu, the favorite of Louis XIII of France, as a machine that unceasingly regurgitates sedition, plots and policies. *Visita y anatomía de la cabeza del eminentísimo cardenal Armando Richeleu* (published in Riandière La Roche, 2010) reports the exploration of the favorite's head by the famous anatomist Andrea Vesalio. To perform the dissection of Richelieu's mind, he "dismembers ... the mental processes that constitute the most intimate part of the individual" (Fernández, 2003: 216). Richelieu's "cavernous interiority" contains exclusively the works of the statesman (229). It is made up of a series of infernal chambers where all the humors have mounted to the head, releasing a chain of connected arguments, aimed at deposing the king and occupying the throne.

Quevedo's two examples make us wonder whether or not there is anything other than politics in the king's (or the favorite's) "unknown interior". In a majority of cases, the answer is affirmative, and the dual nature (that is, political and private) of king and favorite becomes central to seventeenth-century literature on *privanza*.

A manuscript of unknown author dating back to the early days of Philip IV's reign, entitled *Discurso sobre los privados y cómo ha de gobernarse el príncipe con ellos*, discerned two personae in the king, one public, the other private. The author (who witnessed with suspicion the preeminence of a single man by the king's side) pointed out that different kinds of *privados* existed according to whether they established friendship with the public or the private persona in the sovereign.⁴ The same distinction had been evoked some years earlier when Luis de Zapata differentiated Charles V's secretary and "friend of the king", Francisco de los Cobos, from "the man's friend", Luis de Ávila (Zapata, 1859: 185; also Feros, 1995: 32). As friends, both were "half of [the emperor's] heart", and had a part in his secrets. However, it seems plausible to think that the two of them had access to slightly different aspects of the emperor's interior, and

that his secrets were not the same for the one and for the other. In 1621, Philip IV started reigning with the same division of *privanza*. Baltasar de Zúñiga dispatched business, while his nephew, Olivares, held a more private stance, intent only, as Matías de Novoa scornfully laid it at the time, on dressing and undressing the king (Tomás y Valiente, 1982: 12). Upon Zúñiga’s death, which took place some months later, Olivares became a favorite of the two sorts.⁵ Olivares certainly portrayed himself as a minister and a facilitator of business (Vincent-Cassy, 2010: 40-41, 49). However, when the royal preacher and Jesuit Agustín de Castro encouraged Olivares’ nephew and future successor Luis Méndez de Haro to take the position of *privado* left vacant in 1643, he meant access “not only to [the position] of the minister, but to the grace and the personal favor with His Majesty” (Negredo del Cerro, 2006: 115).

José Láinez, Augustinian, royal preacher, and a panegyrist of Olivares, wrote in *El privado cristiano* (published in 1641, but probably written two decades earlier; see Negredo del Cerro, 2006: 180-181) that “the superior minister has to be one”, for friendship, much like love, cannot be shared (Láinez, 1641: 56; Malvezzi, 2013: 293 for the same point). The boundaries between public and private were far less distinct in early modern courts than they are today (Feros, 1995: 28). In the worlds of Lerma, Uceda and Olivares, the sovereign was not only the head of the body politic, but also the source of the chain of “dependence”, from which favor and rewards flowed down the pipes (*caños*) of different individuals, linked to one another by relations of clientelism (Sieber, 1998: *passim*). Seeking advancement (“pretender”) defined the path in politics’ *cursus honorum*, and this happened thanks to the familiarity or *privanza* with someone in a position of power, which involved becoming his or her dependent, hopefully finding someone who would in turn depend upon us. When in 1587 Alonso de Barros’ *Filosofía cortesana moralizada* transformed the court and “the matter of *pretender*” (Barros, 1588: 10) into a table game, the player falling in the square marked as “the death of the protector” was condemned to start anew (38; see also Feros, 1998: 24). If politics was played at a personal level, *privanza* took place “at the threshold of the private and the public sphere” (Bravo, 2012: n. p.). The intersection between personal attachment and interest accounts for the displacement from the ideal friendship conceptualized in Marcus T. Cicero’s *De amicitia* or Michel de Montaigne’s *De l’amitié* to “the common friendship” between patron and client described in Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* (Feros, 1995: 28-29).⁶ Blurring the distinction just evoked, the notion of *privanza* pervaded the entire spectrum of social relations. As noted in 1609 by Giulio Antonio Brancalasso’s book on courtly life, it might take place between husband and wife, between lord and vassal, or between God and the king (Brancalasso, 1609a: 83).

The foundation of public life on inherently private relations of *privanza* made it difficult for political writers to separate the ruler from the man. Despite their efforts to demarcate categories, when Lerma became *privado* of

Philip III, he was seen as a friend of both the king and the individual.⁷ Like Uceda and Olivares after him, Lerma appeared to many as someone who was admitted to secrets that escaped everyone else—and this at a time in which secrecy’s role in government was openly acknowledged (Stolleis, 1980: 5-6).

Despite the general agreement about the dual interiority of political agents, we hardly find two identical visions of the friendship between king and *privado*, and, consequently, of the access to one another’s interiority. The emphasis on political or on personal issues, and the critical or propagandistic position of each author are only some of the variables that define widely diverging conceptions of the intimacy that takes place at the peak of the pyramid of government. As a result, the inner self of both king and favorite becomes variably relevant, and differently imagined.

SPIES OF THE KING’S HEART AND SOUL

Celebrated as the king’s friend, the favorite appears to the eyes of some authors as fortunate in the possession of his heart. Yet, not everyone conceived for king and *privado* a relation of flawless sincerity, in the awareness that hybrid and composite individualities such as those in power did not easily lend themselves to act without precaution—not even among friends. In line with this, Fernando Rodríguez de la Flor branded claims of absolute transparency and trust among the hearts of individuals as characteristic of earlier days of “naïf humanism”, and utterly alien to the days of Lerma or Olivares (Rodríguez de la Flor, 2005: 23).

The varying degree of resistance signified by political writings when it comes to concede that the favorite may see into the heart of the king is worth consideration. It results, for the most part, from different ways of understanding the interplay of friendship and politics according to authors who hold conflicting ideas on the way human beings interrelate in a given community, especially when holding office.

The favorite or *privado* is “the one with the keys of [the king’s] heart”, asserted the Augustinian friar Pedro de Maldonado in his *Tratado del perfecto privado* (1609).⁸ Láinez, who partly plagiarized Maldonado’s treatise, used similar terms (Láinez, 1641: 9, 40), adding that the favorite is “a half of the king’s heart” (4; for the plagiarism, see Tomás y Valiente, 1982: 124).

Láinez claimed that favorites were sent by God (Láinez, 1619: ¶7^v). Relentless in his defense of Olivares, in *El privado cristiano* (1641) and *El Daniel cortesano* (1644) he described the biblical characters of Joseph and Daniel as paradigms of *privanza*. Never could a king rule without a favorite with whom he had “familiarity”, performing as “the key to his mysteries, and the archive of his secrets” (Láinez, 1641: 9). Láinez pictured a king who shared everything with his favorite. There were no barriers between him and the man whom he admitted to his mysteries—and who protected them, in turn, from the sight of others. Covarrubias’ 1611 dictionary defined

“misterio” as a secret. In origin, mysteries were secrets of a sacred kind (*sacrum arcanum*). However, they became soon a common way to refer to the secrets of the state, and appear defined, generally speaking, as “anything locked under a veil—of a factual kind, or made with words, or with another kind of signs” (Covarrubias, 1611: 551r).

Occasionally, a favorite might find no other way to the king’s mysteries than deciphering the signs he leaves behind. This was partially the case described in *Tratado del privado perfecto*, a work by Baltasar de Zúñiga’s chaplain Matteo Renzi, dated 1622 (for the attribution, see García García, 1997: 119). While for Laínez the king did not need to be seduced, ready as he was to simply welcome the favorite as a gift from God, Renzi was highly concerned about the unsteadiness of the favorite’s access to the king’s love and interiority. Renzi’s *privado* resembles that of Laínez when he is described as “a sort of treasury of [the king’s] secrets” and the one “whom always reaches the notice of [the king’s] soul and deliberations”. Yet, such stage represents only the instable end of a process that also involved, in a less optimistic tone, a fierce struggle to penetrate the king’s interior in search of his mood and feelings. The favorite, Renzi writes, obtains his lord’s affection by “carving [favor] into his soul and his heart” through sleepless nights in which he will relieve the king of business or concern. He will need to study the king’s psyche.⁹ It is as though the king opened his heart to the one who not only showed willingness to help, but who also had the ability to guess his inner thoughts and feelings from the outside in the first place. To obtain (and to maintain) the privilege of *privanza* and receive his confessions, a search into the king’s interiority has to come first.

The introspection of the king’s soul may be a source of anxiety for those aspiring to *privanza*. Renzi suggested that acuity and a keen eye were of no avail when the king was so voluble that, as it was the case with Perseus of Macedon, “not even himself could get a grasp of his thought”.¹⁰ Generally speaking, however, in order to know “the nature and habits of princes”, and grasp what they had in mind, there were some signs (*algunas señales*) that might allow the favorite to detect the inner motions of the soul.¹¹ The favorite does as physicians do. “Unable to see the secret humors that are inside the human body, they get to know them from the outside thanks to the heartbeats, the urine, and the effects that result from the illness”.¹² It was a method that (much like medicine) looked for causes in the light of symptoms or effects. Renzi’s program had precedents. It was reminiscent of Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos’ “contingency-based science” (*ciencia de contingentes*), offered to Lerma in Álamos’ *Tácito español*, a book partly written in the days of Philip II but only published in 1614. For Álamos (following Francesco Guicciardini and Justus Lipsius) the ability to infer intentions from actions and behavior (as with a doctor who *sees* the illness in the symptoms it produces) was the talent that made Tacitus the greatest historian. He wrote “with such great knowledge of human in-

clinations and nature” that “there is no effect or result originating in the soul that he fails to find out” (Álamos de Barrientos, 1614: †1r-†5v). Álamos’ method is fairly representative of the fashion of “Tacitism” popularized in late sixteenth-century European political and social theory, interested in looking “inside” political actors in search of answers. For Álamos, “psychological penetration is the key to prudence ... and Tacitus epitomizes it” (Davis, 2001: 70). Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga (a reader of Lipsius and Álamos, soon to become Olivares’ *hechura*, his friend and protégé) summarized the importance of studying the interior of others in his successful handbook for ambassadors, published in 1620, in which he stated that the world had always governed itself following the same principles and that, if one compared several cases separated by millennia, these would appear “different in times and names, but not in cunning” (Vera y Zúñiga, 1620: 94r). Seventeenth-century courts such as Madrid, or Valladolid for the period 1601-1606, were populated by what Jerónimo Alonso de Salas Barbadillo called in 1634 “judges”, “speculative wits who, stopping for contemplation of the exterior, and visible works, become curious spies of human hearts and souls”. For them, “every man is a book ... and the most insignificant movement in a face becomes eloquent speech” (Salas Barbadillo, 1753: 1-2).¹³

Devoted to deciphering the king’s every thought and feeling, Renzi’s *privado* has been qualified of “Tacitist construct” (Elliott, 1999b: 11). In fact, he remained only a refined version of the spy of souls evoked by Salas Barbadillo. According to Renzi, the favorite is expected to peep into the soul of the king as he tries to know how to please him in order to secure his friendship. He reminds us of the individuals that Baltasar Gracián’s *Oráculo manual* (1647) portrayed as water diviners or *zahories*, who measure as though through a sounding line the depths of everyone else’s interiority (Gracián, 1995: 122, 129, 200). The instability of the king’s love for his favorite becomes evident when we see Renzi’s *privado*, who had been admitted to the secret of his lord, reminded some lines below that the price of *privanza* is to continuously attempt to please the one who loves us.¹⁴ Friendship, understood as a lack of barriers between hearts, was certainly the notion that helped seventeenth-century witnesses conceptualize in a positive light the relationship between king and *privado*; yet, even for Renzi, who appears ambiguous, but generally favorable to the figure of the favorite, friendship was a concept that revealed itself unable to encompass all the nuances present in the way the favorite and the king related to one another.

The uncertainty concerning the access to the king’s heart escalated even further in *El privado cristiano*, published in 1626 by the Augustinian Enrique de Mendoza with a dedication to Olivares. As with Renzi, Mendoza’s favorite was someone who, “as a friend, [is] able to read [the king’s] heart” (Mendoza, 1626: 23r) and who deserves respect “as the archive of the intention and the heart of the prince” (40r). However, for all the sweetness that the favorite parades to the eyes of others, when con-

sidered from within (“en lo interior”), the experience of *privanza* is reduced to “a study of the taste and the pleasure of someone else”, so as to “like whatever he likes, however painful” in order to conform to it (7r-v). In 1609, Brancalasso had offered a similar piece of advice (Brancalasso, 1609b: 4). In both cases, it might be objected, such pattern of behavior describes the friend as much as the flatterer. However, not even after the hardship endured to reach “the happy possession of the heart, and the will of the prince” (6v) will the favorite be able to rest, still afraid “lest the prince may have looked at [him] askance” (7r). It is the same idea that José de Pellicer would repeat in 1638 in a text that I will revisit later, where he stated that the favorite had to remain vigilant of the tyranny of the king’s demeanors (*semblantes*), watchful not to lose sight of his lord’s pleasure or disgust (Pellicer, 1638: 21v). Mendoza concluded his rant with a colorful etymology of the term “privado”: “One may infer that the etymology of ‘privado’ refers to the fact that one is perpetually deprived (*privado*) of his own will and taste” (Mendoza, 1626: 8r; for a precedent of Mendoza’s interpretation of the word, see Brancalasso, 1609a: 10). It seems that, even when it is taken seriously and not from the viewpoint of libel or satire, life at court made it difficult for the king and his *privado* to inhabit the realm of ideal friendship that, sometimes, had been projected for them.

As it might be expected, the emphasis on duplicity gets pride of place in authors who disapprove of a single man enjoying *privanza* with the sovereign. The diplomat Diego de Saavedra Fajardo exemplified the relation between the king and his favorite with the wiles of Lucius Aelius Sejanus under the emperor Tiberius (Saavedra Fajardo, 1999: 194-197). Sejanus was the example of the evil favorite and was anti-exemplary enough that José de Pellicer entitled precisely *El Seyano germánico* (1639) a biography of what he characterized as a contemporary traitor. Sejanus had been condemned in Tacitus’ *Annals*, and more recently in Pierre Mathieu’s *Histoire d’Aelius Séjanus* (1617), translated into Spanish by Vicencio Squarçafigo (1621) and, subsequently, by Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo (1625) with the title *Vida del dichoso desdichado*. Sejanus’ failure to qualify as a friend of the emperor becomes obvious in the latter. Matthieu, who writes that “Tiberius, who mistrusted everyone, did not mistrust Sejanus, nor did he have any secret for him” (Squarçafigo, 1621: 3), ends up concluding that the emperor and his alleged friend actually *did* entertain secrets –precisely *against* each other (Squarçafigo, 1621: 11). Sejanus practiced in a paradigmatic way the kind of introspection that, by penetrating anyone else’s feelings and tastes, makes it easy to simulate conformity in order to gain his or her affection. This was a principle of flattery that Renzi had left open for the favorite to exert, and which Mendoza considered expected. According to Matthieu, Sejanus “*knew* Tiberius’ temper so well, and *made himself so akin to it* that their hearts *seemed* to share the same beat” (Squarçafigo, 1621: 3). However different in his aims and ethics, Mendoza’s favorite undoubtedly borrowed from the evil

favorite’s technique, and despite a tradition stemming from Plutarch, and even earlier, which aimed at distinguishing the fiend from the flatterer, contiguity with power made it almost impossible to leave simulation and dissimulation out of sight even in the most positive and well-intentioned portraits of the relationship between king and *privado*.

ALONE WITH THE KING

The first question that the majority of writings on *privanza* seek to answer has to do with whether the king needs someone by his side in the first place. Under the weight of business waiting to be handled in a monarchy that stretched through all the continents, Habsburg monarchs certainly benefited from someone who might relieve them from part of the work. After all, this had been a task traditionally assigned to a body of counselors and secretaries. Some authors, however, depicted the favorite as someone who also addressed the needs of the king as a private, rather than a public person. When, for instance, Laínez referred to the *privado* as sharing the king’s “*cuidado*” (Laínez, 1641: 4), the term was ambiguous enough as to refer to the dispatch of business, while leaving the door open to the consideration of emotional needs.¹⁵ However, there were also instances in which the friendship between king and *privado* referred unambiguously to a relation that was not directly connected with politics.

In the days of Lerma, Maldonado’s influential *Tratado del perfecto privado* depicted the intimacy of the favorite and the king considered as a man. Maldonado played crucially in connecting friendship and *privanza*, and defined the latter as “paying love with love”.¹⁶ He declared:

We call *privado* a man with whom one communicates alone and in private (*a solas y particularmente*), with whom there is no secret, and who has been chosen from among everyone else in order to be with him in a certain sort of equality, founded on love and perfect friendship.¹⁷

The term “in private” designates a space for king and favorite to relate with one another at the level of the individual, far from the kingdom’s *consejos* and other institutions of government. Inspired or not by Maldonado, Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo also spoke of “comunicación particular” in *Norte de principes*, published in 1626 (Mártir Rizo, 1626b: 74r). A few months later, we find Rizo dissenting on friendship in a biography of Maecenas modeled after the genre epitomized by Matthieu’s life of Sejanus. If Sejanus exemplified the evil favorite, Maecenas, who had been counselor to emperor Augustus, was the good one. Rizo’s narrator stated that “it is not fair if I dissimulate (*que me recate*) with a friend. It is only fitting that, when we are together, I consider myself to be alone” (Mártir Rizo, 1626a: 8r). A friend is someone with whom the king remains, in private, as a man. This, in turn, accounts for the reference to transparency and absence of

secrecy in Maldonado's quote, in stark contrast to the doubts expressed by Renzi and, especially, by Mendoza.

Maldonado imagined the king as a man in search of company: "It is out of question that a private person is allowed to have someone who is his *privado* and particular friend".¹⁸ To those who adduced the fifteenth-century precedent of Álvaro de Luna, favorite of John II of Castile, as a proof of the ruin inherent in *privanza*, Maldonado answered that friendship "is founded on human nature, of which kings cannot be ripped off. Why then should we deny the afflicted heart of a king the right to a particular friend?"¹⁹

To erase any ambiguity that Maldonado is speaking about someone with access not only to the ruler, but also the man within the king, he evokes the distinction between political and particular *privados* mentioned above, reminding his reader that Christ had Peter as his vicar, but it was John, the typical example of the favorite in the literature about *privanza*, who was "the one he privately loved" (*su querido en particular*).²⁰

As Maldonado's *privado* shares the loneliness of the king, he seems to enjoy access to a kind of interiority that went beyond the secrets of state.²¹ He certainly relieves his lord of "hardships", and administers advice about "doubts" of government, but he also makes him aware of "his faults" (*las faltas propias*).²² It is difficult to discern whether this expression points at a labor of introspection into the king's self or *just* to specific political actions. However, in contrast with Mendoza's *privado*, Maldonado's description conclusively separates the friend from the flatterer, transforming the favorite into the aid of the king as he learns to know himself. Examining one's interior was a central principle of Neo-Stoic philosophy, and one inherent to the wisdom related with the survival at the court, summarized by a swan that sings *nosce te ipsum* with a trumpet in the initial square of the table game contained in the aforementioned *Filosofía cortesana moralizada* by Alonso de Barros (1588: 20-21). Maldonado instructs the favorite to become for the king what glasses (*anteojos*) are for the sight, allowing him to see things (and, especially, his own actions) the way they actually are.²³ Before Maldonado turns to more practical and political considerations, his insistence on knowledge and acquaintance with the man *in* the king (his virtues and errors) seems to point to something intrinsic.²⁴

Mendoza suggests that it is of great help that the king and his favorite have "some sympathy in the condition" (Mendoza, 1626: 13v). While the abovementioned *Discurso sobre los privados y cómo ha de gobernarse el príncipe con ellos* underscored the affinity of character and habits as the characteristic of "familiar", as opposed to "political", favorites, Mendoza seems to consider, much like Maldonado and Renzi, that the distinction between the friend of the king and that of the man had become largely obsolete in the world he lived in. As Laínez would say, the one who was familiar with the king and was "of one heart" with him was expected to serve, too, as "his oracle" in deliberation (Laínez, 1641: 9). It was a friend, and not only a minister (but that *too*) that the king would choose as favorite (Mártir Rizo, 1626b: 77r).

Underlining the private and familiar side of *privanza*, the sergeant major of Mallorca Vicente Mut stated in his life of the emperor Justinian, published in 1640, that "lonely authority" is necessarily incomplete, and that (in a sort of gloss on Aristotle's *Politics*) only "civil company" is capable of "putting a remedy to the faults of nature" (Mut, 1640: 10). Mut's argument becomes more idiosyncratic when, in a digression on Justinian's favorite Belisarius, he praises friendship as a basis for the choice of *privado*:

What the common people call *privados*, I call friends: for *privados*, in fact, ought to be friends. And a prince may trust more easily, and will live safer with a friend than with someone who becomes *privado* just because of his merits. For he who has deserved to be a favorite will work for the common good, whereas the friend will look for that of the prince (Mut, 1640: 10).

In a context otherwise deprived of any irony, what seems to be a selfish, nonpolitical notion of *privanza* works as a reminder of the humanity of the king, who needs someone by his side. In fact, in a different passage Mut delves into the importance of friendship not as the alternative, but as the source of politics. Men did not seek company in order to find protection; rather, they became united after they started loving, and wanted to protect those they loved (Mut, 1640: 29-30). If it was the love of others that led to politics, it is to a certain extent paradoxical that Mut could think of friendship in terms of a force directed against the good of the community.

In fact, Mut's apparently inappropriate remark about prioritizing friendship over merit contested positions such as the one expressed by Maldonado, who had argued that the king never finds conflict between his desire and the common good. "For the king (according to Maldonado), temporal and spiritual wellness have the same boundaries, which are delimited by the common good; for the king is happy in the temporal world when all the kingdom thrives, and is in peace and ruled with justice". Maldonado's was, as he put it, "a saintly king", who loved his favorite and also the good of his kingdom, but was never tempted by desires of any other kind (for the conflicts between friendship and faithfulness to the state, see Feros, 1995: 30).²⁵ Mut's passage concerning friendship depicted a conception of *privanza* that problematized the psyche of the king. If he is a man, and if he is able to love (and, if he has a friend, he certainly is), he might also be able to love in ways that deviate from the common good. For Mut, the king needs to face the hardships of life in the company of "someone attached, devoted, loyal and faithful", for "even God, who suffices to himself, has different persons in His unity. He has communication, and undivided division" (1640: 10). Through the parallel between the union of king and favorite and the persons in God's Holy Trinity, Mut not only targeted the explanation of the existence of a favorite as a result of the king's inability. It suggested even more directly that at the head of the state there was unity despite the accusations (reported by

Matías de Novoa at the start of Lerma’s *privanza*, but repented in pamphlets well until the fall of Olivares) that there were too many kings, too many idols sharing the government (Tomás y Valiente, 1982: 120; see Feros, 1995: 39; and 1999: 299 for the criticism that, with more than one head, any government is monstrous or heretical).²⁶

The parallel with religion did not stop there. Christ, the mirror of all princes, “allowed one of his disciples to touch his side, and his chest. For in many respects it is helpful to let someone meddle with (*manosear*) royal hearts” (Mut, 1640: 10). As with the case of Christ, the existence of a favorite who attends by the king’s side and finds his heart open acts as a guarantee that the sovereign is a living human being. While it seems hyperbolic to claim that this needs proof, Mut’s emphasis is not entirely beside the point. Much ink has been spilled about the change of ceremonial and etiquette that resulted from the adoption, in the time of Charles V, of a model that was originally Burgundian. Antonio Feros has shown that the definition of *royal palace* found in Alphonse X’s thirteenth-century *Partidas*, as a place in which the king listens and speaks to his subjects, was inadequate to early seventeenth-century politics. A model of publicity and visibility had yielded to the notion that government takes place secretly in the ruler’s retreat or *retrate*. The retreat designated the king’s chamber, a space in which only those who were closest to him, and especially his favorite, could enter (Feros, 1995: 33-38; 2002: 160-165).²⁷ While the king still governed with the aid of the synods or *consejos*, the secretary Jerónimo de Ortega y Robles eloquently noted in his treatise *El despertador que avisa a un príncipe católico* (1647): “The prince might have undisclosed business that needs remedy. The *consejo* is a public place: it would be absurd to publicize there secrets like these” (Ortega y Robles, 1647: 12r).²⁸ Spain’s Habsburgs displayed a behavior that surprised foreigners as being marked by “invisibility” and “sheer inaccessibility” (Elliott, 1989: 148). Juan Fernández de Medrano stated that things rarely seen received greater respect and veneration; it was according to reason of state that the king’s isolation and retreat helped avoiding chances that he might show his faults to those who would idealize him while unable to see him (Fernández de Medrano, 1602: 32; see Feros, 2002: 165).²⁹ Mut’s recommendation seeks to nuance such policy of seclusion, and it does so through the suggestion that admitting someone to the secrets of the king might reassure those who still doubt whether or not he actually belongs to the same species as his subjects.

The literature on *privanza* generally agreed that the king shares with his favorite the loneliness of his retreat, where they communicated in private. However, there was some concern that, as the king opened himself to someone else, he might be left, so to speak, *altered* inside. The majority of writers saw such possibility with suspicion, as when the anonymous author of a series of *Apuntamientos políticos* addressed to Baltasar de Zúñiga in 1621 pondered on the mark or “impression” that the favorite might

leave on the king’s soul.³⁰ “The infection of such contagion” was a real danger in case he should become familiar with someone inadequate.³¹ If Mut was concerned lest the king might not appear human enough, at stake now seemed to be the fear that he might be too much so, and succumb to the spell of those who enjoy access to his thoughts and desires. The idea of a spell was hardly more than a metaphor when Rizo described flattery as a form of enchantment (Mártir Rizo, 1625: 21). However, it would become only too literal as the rumor disseminated through the court that Olivares had bewitched king Phillip IV in order to remain his *privado* (Elliott, 1999a: 165).³²

Some authors described the favorite as the body that the kingdom was allowed to see, while the king himself remained in his retreat. Admitted to the king’s interiority, the *privado* served as a threshold through which the outside world manifested itself to the sovereign. Mendoza’s treatise labeled the favorite the aqueduct (*el atañor y arcaduz*) conveying the king’s majesty to his vassals (Mendoza, 1626: 21v), while Maldonado described him as *un medianero* between kingdom and king, and cautiously warned that a pipe might alter the quality of the water flowing through it.³³ Malvezzi’s *Ritratto* of Olivares, which I will discuss below, asserted that “the notice of actions (even the great ones) does not arrive at the king. Distance disperses them, and, should they arrive, they do so by means of the favorite, and appear to belong to the one who tells them rather than to the agent” (Malvezzi, 2013: 291-292). Malvezzi’s account amplifies the king’s isolation, with the result that the *privado* became the ruler’s sight and hearing. Malvezzi seems to have had in mind something different from, and more radical than Maldonado’s aforementioned idea that the favorite performed as the glasses that corrected the king’s perceptions of his own actions altered by flattery.³⁴ Malvezzi’s Olivares appears as the means of communication for a blind and deaf king who apparently has no other means to speak to the world that lies outside his retreat. Francisco Fernández de Caso’s *Oración gratulatoria* in the celebration of Lerma’s cardinalship (1618) portrays the favorite as the senses of a sovereign who, in turn, is identified with the soul, as the exterior is to the interior. According to Caso, “the king, who is the soul of everything, functions according to the quality of the *privado*, who is the senses with which the king perceives things, and the hands he uses to perform them” (Caso, 1618: 1-2). Usage referred to someone’s soul and conscience as his or her retreat (see, for instance, Mut 1640: 33), and seventeenth-century political writers used language that was generally consistent with this, metaphorically referring as “the soul” to the part played by the king, as opposed to the favorite, who was “the body”.³⁵

The dynamics between in and outside the king regulated not only the flow of information that entered, but also that which left. Mendoza considered the king’s love for the favorite as a result of the latter’s ability to keep secrets, a behavior that sealed the reciprocity between one another. According to Mendoza, Alexander the Great told his favorite Epehestion: “As a friend, you can read the

heart, yet, also as one, whatever you read should be sealed in yours” (Mendoza, 1626: 22v-23r). Admission to the king’s retreat entailed a pledge, which in Mendoza’s terms reads as follows:

He who enters, and lives within the doors with the king, and has ears to hear, and eyes to see should have no tongue to speak with ... If the prince, *as a man*, should have a favored or private friend (since he will necessarily be only one), the latter should be such that he ... faithfully keeps secrets (Mendoza, 1626: 23v).

No one knew the king better than his favorite. Closeness and *asistencia*, or continuous presence and service at the king’s side, guaranteed, especially in pro-*privanza* literature, acquaintance with one another’s thoughts. “Thanks to his closeness to the king”, Laínez writes, the favorite is “aware of his mysteries” (Laínez, 1641: 13). However, the reverse was also true. When a retired Olivares replied in his *Nicandro* (1643) to the charges that Andrés de Mena had directed against him, he defended himself from the accusation that he had concealed some things from Philip IV by objecting that no one knew him better than the king with whom he had lived so closely together. The allegation that he might have acted without the king knowing it was therefore absurd (Elliott *et al.*, 2013: 402). The favorite’s *asistencia* resulted in “particular communication” with the king. For some supporters of *privanza*, this meant that *privado* and sovereign were respectively the exterior and the interior, the body and the soul of a composite individual, to speak with a metaphor that enjoyed great fortune. Yet, as some observers rapidly pointed out, this could entail, in turn, a transformation in the *privado*’s own self.

THE FAVORITE’S INTERIORITY

As a vessel for secrets, the favorite embodied the threshold that kept the king simultaneously connected to and separated from the world. Renzi describes him specifically as “a chest and a receptacle for the king’s sacraments”. As with the case of “mysteries”, discussed above, Renzi’s reference extended, once more, the parallel between politics and religion, and culminated the analogy, proposed by the same author, between the favorite and the monstrance or *custodia* that keeps the sacred host, here identified with the king’s soul and secrets. Needless to say, to guard the treasure it is necessary for the favorite to “punctually remain near the king’s presence as the shadow does to the body”.³⁶

However, in Renzi’s view this was clearly not enough. It was also necessary for the *privado* to abandon any feeling or will, so as to create a void in the self, capable of welcoming the king’s soul. To accept the interiority of the king, the favorite needed to start by renouncing to what he had inside. Renzi’s *privado*

needs to be like a body without feeling. He will lack desire, choice and freedom for any thing whatsoever, as well as any pleasure that might drive him to look for things and to pursue them ... His *privanza* constrains

him to perpetual attendance and retreat, and never to leave the presence of his prince. It is convenient that, with all his heart and a simple will, he renounces to himself on behalf of the will of his prince ... tempered according to the prince’s pleasure.³⁷

As mentioned above, what Renzi left ambiguous became disingenuous in Mendoza’s version. As the latter referred to the favorite’s “humility, and *apparent* surrender”, *privanza* plunged deep into the realms of dissimulation. The fabrication of appearances seems to accompany the process that makes the favorite suitable to welcome and subsequently protect the king’s secrets (Mendoza, 1626: 7v-8v, my emphasis). That friendship is a problematic paradigm in Mendoza’s theory obtains confirmation when he contrasts the favorite’s sweet language with “the bitter gall of impatience and rage that dwells in the most intimate part of [his] heart”. While the evils that assault the favorite have to do with the envy that other courtiers direct to him, rather than with anything related to the king (Mendoza, 1626: 7r-v), Mendoza’s insistence on the favorite’s mortification in the service of the kingdom and God contains a reference to duplicity as much as self-denial (40v).³⁸ Self-evidently, Mendoza insinuates, the favorite’s attitude should never be malicious. However, his relation with the king (allegedly a friend) is also affected by the need, more often than not, to simulate outward appearances that conceal his true state of mind from the view of the sovereign. He is expected to model himself after the image that the king would like to see in order to keep his love (7r-8v). Encircled by dissimulation and deeply enmeshed in it, Mendoza’s *privado* floated on more dangerous and unpleasant waters than the one depicted by Maldonado.

In the antipodes of Mendoza’s reticence, Virgilio Malvezzi described in *Ritratto del privato politico christiano* (1635) a favorite who emptied himself to become one with the soul of his lord and friend. Malvezzi’s narrative took as point of departure a set of notes handed to him by Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga, Philip IV’s ambassador in Venice. Mediating for Olivares, Vera commissioned from Malvezzi a work with obviously propagandistic ends, which earned the latter a position as royal chronicler in Madrid (for the correspondence between Vera and Malvezzi, see Colomer, 2005).

Vera’s notes or *Fragmentos históricos* described his protector Olivares as God’s attempt at creating a minister “free of any passion”. According to him, Olivares became “perfect” as a result of “having gone through the ultimate misfortune of being neither dead nor of the number of the living”. Vera’s reference is to the death of Olivares’ daughter in 1626, which caused the favorite to achieve the absence of that desire and that feeling that mark one as a human being. He compared the event with the sacrifice of Iphigenia, which relieved the Greeks in the same way that the death of the favorite’s daughter would save the monarchy of Spain by making Olivares reach the perfection of *privanza*.³⁹

In Malvezzi’s version of Vera’s notes, the death of Olivares’ daughter becomes a turning point in the fa-

favorite’s career: “the Count-Duke (and may he excuse me for this) did not embody the *privado*’s perfect idea until the death of his daughter”. This is so because “he who has children loves them ... and he who loves his things fails to satisfy the obligations of the true *privado*”. Malvezzi explains that the love that is due to a king is a complex one, composed of every good feeling variously experienced by human beings, including “the tenderness that we feel for children, the reverence that is due to a father, the cordiality with which we love a friend and the nature with which we love ourselves”. It follows that a favorite should have no children, no father, no friend, and, ultimately (to be consistent) no himself: “He who is not himself transformed into his lord is unworthy of having his lord’s heart” (Malvezzi, 2013: 314).⁴⁰

Malvezzi concludes with a striking version of Mendoza’s etymology of *privado*, now engrafted into a new and decidedly partisan conception of *privanza* in terms of unconditional love and friendship to the king. Reflecting on the anxiety experienced by Olivares at Philip IV’s illness in 1627, Malvezzi wrote:

The favorite is called *privado* because he needs to be deprived of his own will, of all of his feelings and passions, and to be transformed into the service of God and of his lord ... I am positive that, should the king had died, the Count-Duke would have died with him as well—if not in the world, at least he would die to the world ... God wanted to form in him a minister without feeling (Malvezzi, 2013: 315).

Malvezzi repurposed the transformation of one’s soul into that of the friend, typical of Ciceronian ideas of *amicitia*. In doing so, he replied to the concern that the abyss separating the social status of king and *privado* made friendship impossible for them. Malvezzi’s solution was to suggest that only the favorite freed himself from any content that might hinder his soul from admitting, or being transformed into, that of the king.⁴¹ The notion of ideal friendship between particulars yielded to one of unbalance and perfect obedience. If Maldonado had modeled “a saintly king”, Malvezzi’s *privado* appears to us scarcely less saintly.

Malvezzi’s program seems a variant of Neo-Stoic injunctions to get rid of anything that might affect the soul from the outside. If Francisco Sánchez’s famous and often reprinted commentary of Epictetus’ *Encheiridion*, first published in 1600, recommended “getting naked from feelings and passions” as a method to happiness (Sánchez de las Brozas, 1612: ¶4^r, 62), the same advice became, for Malvezzi, a path towards service and submission to the king.⁴²

José de Pellicer had questioned in his panegyric of Olivares, *Templo de la fama*, that friendship, a relation among peers, might bridge the distance between king and *privado* (Tomás y Valiente, 1982: 121). Pellicer’s *La constancia christiana*, also dedicated to Olivares in 1638, provided the favorite with a perspective to help him manage the relation between his inside and outside. For him,

getting naked of feelings and passions is no longer a requirement in order to adopt the king’s affections (as it was for Malvezzi), but the key lesson in a handbook intended for the survival of *privados* in the labyrinth of the court. Adolfo Carrasco has described Pellicer’s Neo-Stoic treatise in terms of a version of Justus Lipsius’ *De Constantia* for *privados* (Carrasco, 2015: 254), in which (transforming Malvezzi’s reference to emptiness, and bringing Mendoza’s mistrust one step further) renunciation to one’s interiority becomes a political skill rather than a consequence of love and friendship.⁴³ The application of Neo-Stoicism to the ideas on *privanza* that we find in Pellicer had a precedent in 1627, when Pedro Fernández Navarrete described Olivares as a sort of “new Christian Seneca”, and complimented him for overcoming desire through the use of reason. Olivares reached, as a result, and in Carrasco’s formulation, “a state of freedom of action that allow[ed] him to concentrate all his strengths in the good of the state” (Carrasco, 2015: 254).

Pellicer depicted the favorite threatened by the three-headed monster of envy, slander and gossip, escorted by a woman who responded to the names of “irony, dissimulation and duplicity” (Pellicer, 1638: 19r-20r). Such bestiary has taught courtiers to move away from the perfection of simplicity and instead embrace the chameleon’s example (20r-21r). Embodying flattery, the chameleon puts on the aspect that he deems convenient, regardless of what he holds inside. This reminds of the favorite of Mendoza’s treatise, who tries to show himself suitable for the mood and will of the king (for more on the chameleon, see, for instance, Mártir Rizo, 1626a: 64).⁴⁴

When Pellicer depicted the favorite incessantly pending on the king’s looks and mood, “guessing mysteries in some actions, presuming sacraments in others” (Pellicer, 1638: 21v), it was hard not to see there a relation of exteriority in which the favorite, rather than admitted to the king’s heart, remained eternally hunting for signs. These, of course, are not related to the secrets of state, of which the favorite was the master. They are of a rather personal and emotional nature. For Pellicer, *constancy* is the antidote or *contrayerba* that the favorite should use (21r).⁴⁵ Instead of the absolute transparency suggested by friendship, the favorite encounters, between the king and himself, a wall built with bricks of the same material of mistrust and instability that separates him from competitors for the king’s favor. Pellicer never recommends that the favorite use duplicity as a weapon, and implies that he should not keep inside the bitter gall, as Mendoza’s *privado* did, but rather get over it.⁴⁶

If Pellicer, and especially Mendoza, evoke to us a world in which the tools of flattery are difficult to avoid even from the perspective of well-intentioned and virtuous behavior, they also present the favorite’s interiority as a locus where one might imagine some degree of dissidence to become possible. If Malvezzi depicts a favorite who transforms himself into the king by creating a void within his soul for his sovereign to occupy, the model of *Ritratto* seems to have been rather exceptional. For one thing, it differs widely from Pellicer’s, even though both

share Neo-Stoic overtones. Similar to Torquato Accetto's treatise *Della dissimulazione onesta*, published in Naples in 1641, Pellicer's program rejects Malvezzi's focus on submission to the king and emphasizes instead the hardships of the court, responding to concerns that were perceptible between the lines in Renzi's treatise, and even more in Mendoza's. Rosario Villari has argued for the significance of dissimulation as a weapon in seventeenth-century politics (Villari, 1987: *passim*). Pellicer's Neo-Stoic view of *privanza* provides a valuable alternative to Malvezzi's proposal of a favorite who replaces his humanity with that of the king. Pellicer's favorite keeps the commitments of friendship with the king at a distance. He does not seek the self-annihilation that results from Malvezzi's story. Free of feelings and passions, Pellicer's favorite transforms his heart, now cleaned of the distress of Mendoza's "bitter gall", into a place from which he can perform his duty while holding for, and within himself, what he actually thinks of the world he can see before his eyes. This coincides with a deep and intense reflection on the possibility of withholding opinions and perspectives, which some identified with the natural way of politics, as Martínez de Herrera did in Naples in 1631. The people (much like the favorite devised by Mendoza and then by Pellicer) often judge "in secret", and "in the heart's retreat". Without hope or fear of the result, "the silence of the soul", Herrera writes, performs as "a supreme court, where human judgment condemns, or approves of the actions of princes with greater discretion" (Martínez de Herrera, 1631: 2-3).

The preceding survey of literature on *privanza* illuminates the complexities inherent in the views on interiority characteristic of a crucial province of seventeenth-century Spanish political thought. The paradigm of friendship between king and *privado* reveals itself useful yet insufficient in order to account for the way different authors understood the intimacy that actually existed between the parts. The intersection of friendship with dissimulation and forms of duplicity that were ultimately unavoidable at the court is clearly a topic in need of further investigation, for it was there that writers on *privanza* located, explicitly or not, a spot of tightest tension.

The various and even opposite ways in which different authors appropriated Neo-Stoic principles provides another strand that might help us to gain a fuller grasp of the conflicts and doubts that seventeenth-century authors projected into the conscience of royal favorites. In a majority of writings, the range of behaviors associated with *privanza* cannot be reduced to either mere flattery or submission. They embody, in contrast, a series of ideas and desires covering the entire spectrum between the devotion characteristic of ideal friendship and the exploitation of one's interiority as a space to resist the evils of a world populated by power and deceit.

NOTES

1 Feros (1995) has proposed that the study of seventeenth-century *privanza* needs to contemplate essentially political relations

as imbricated with notions like friendship or love, which today are generally reduced to the private sphere. See also Goodman (1992). As stated in a text that for the rest is rather unsympathetic towards the idea of a single favorite governing by the side of the king, counselors had always deserved the name of "friends" of the king. *Discurso sobre los privados y cómo ha de gobernarse el príncipe con ellos*, Biblioteca Nacional de España [BNE], Ms. 17772, 151r. The new emphasis and connotations of the term after the rise of seventeenth-century *privados* or *validos* is worth attention.

- 2 The royal confessor is perhaps the only figure in a position able to compete with the *privado* (See Poutrin, 2006: *passim*).
- 3 The phenomenon of *privanza* or *valimiento* has been made the object of countless studies since the 1963 publication of Francisco Tomás y Valiente's *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII*. This was a book that reversed the tendency to disregard a figure whom most considered responsible for the end of Spanish hegemony in Europe, as well as for a devastating and unprecedented economic crisis. Tomás y Valiente treated the favorites as embodying a crucial step in the institutionalization of the figure of the prime minister. Scholars have since paid increasing attention to a series of discourses that illuminate the conception that contemporaries had of the relation between the king and his favorite. The most important of these is probably that of friendship, studied in Feros (1995) and García García (1997). The latest attempt at writing a comprehensive history of *privanza* is Escudero (2004), while Feros (2002) and Elliott (1986) remain the studies of reference for, respectively, Lerma and Olivares.
- 4 *Discurso sobre los privados y cómo ha de gobernarse el príncipe con ellos*, BNE, Ms. 17772, 151v-152r; see (Feros, 1995: 43-44 and García García, 1997: 116). At the fall of Olivares in 1643 Andrés de Mena distinguished likewise "lo rey" and "lo hombre" within the king (Elliott *et al.*, 2013: 393). The idea of the king's two personae was already present in Fadrique Furió Ceriol's *El concejo, i consejeros del príncipe* (Furió Ceriol, 1559: Aⁱⁱⁱ-Aⁱⁱⁱⁱ; also Feros, 1995: 30).
- 5 For rumors about a conflict opposing Zúñiga and Olivares, see *Carta de un amigo servidor del Exmo. Señor. Conde de Olivares, en que le da algunos avisos importantes a la conservación de su valimiento. Año de 1623*. BNE, Ms. 18197, ff. 50r-57v.
- 6 Friendship was a central trait in the characterization of the position of early modern royal secretary (Escudero, 1969: 465-483). In 1620, the jurist Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza melancholically acknowledged in *El secretario del rey*, a text that betrays acquaintance with Furió Ceriol's 1559 treatise, that *privados* had replaced secretaries in the prerogative of being the king's "friends", and therefore of standing continuously by his side.
- 7 The difficulty in tearing the politician apart from the man became a topic of satire in a pamphlet that accused the Jesuit Francisco Aguado of lenience as a confessor of Olivares. The anonymous author argued that since the politician and the man shared the same soul, the confessor had entire jurisdiction over the two of them. *Discurso sobre las confesiones del Conde de Olivares, absoluto valido de Phelipe 4º al padre Francisco Aguado ... su confesor el P.e Pedro González Galindo...* BNE, Ms. 18197, ff. 168-207, f. 186r.
- 8 Pedro de Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 2v-3r. Maldonado's treatise, never printed in the seventeenth century, was extremely influential in shaping subsequent treatments of the *privado* (Feros, 1999: 303). It has been preserved in several copies, some of which (such as the one in BNE, Ms. 6778) make it *Discurso* instead of *Tratado* (Durand, 1980: 314; for Durand's hypothesis that the text was written in 1603, see 313).
- 9 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 29r. There are numerous exemplars of Renzi's treatise, including BNE, Mss. 2394, 5873, 18197; Bodleian Library, Ms. Add. A 140; and Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Barberino Latino 3568.
- 10 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 4r.

- 11 In a memorandum addressed to Philip III, his father Philip II advised that the king should appear in public “with a saturnine face, enigmatic and deprived of feeling” (Feros, 2002: 73). Impenetrability was certainly a virtue for a king, and the favorite had to respect it sometimes, as when Renzi recommends dissimulation about things that the favorite may have noticed but which his lord may want to keep for himself. Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 2v; see also Saavedra Fajardo (1999: 602). Mendoza warns that the mere attempt at learning about things that the king wants to keep silent may be dangerous (Mendoza, 1626: 12v-13r; see also Pintacuda, 2010: 26-28).
- 12 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*, BNE, Ms. 10633, 4v.
- 13 Láinez also evoked the court as a theater in which the spectacle was for everyone to judge each other’s interior (Láinez, 1641: 43). However, the art of peeping into souls was not circumscribed to the court. Felipe Ruan has demonstrated that seventeenth-century readers were used to see the shoals of picaresque and the glitter of kings and ministers equally involved in the process of figuring out the meaning of looks, gestures and countenances (Ruan, 2011: *passim*). Even the discipline of Optics suggested poets a series of conceits that envisioned devices, such as glasses and telescopes, enabling human beings to penetrate intentions and stratagems behind the silence of others (García Santo-Tomás, 2015, *passim*).
- 14 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 33v.
- 15 The reference to “cuidado” in the context of *privanza* was originally political. The scholastic tradition inspired in Aristotle’s *Politics* defined counselors as friends who are “participes curarum” (Feros, 1995: 30). Francisco de Quevedo’s *Discurso de las privanzas* portrays the moon as sharing the sun’s “cuidado” (qtd. Bravo 2012, n. p.).
- 16 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 3r.
- 17 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 1v. Francis Bacon too pointed out that the name *privado* contained a reference to “conversation” in a text contemporaneous with Maldonado’s (Feros, 1995: 27).
- 18 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 1v.
- 19 The argument that a king should not be denied what he is entitled to as a man reappears in Pedro Martínez de Herrera’s *Príncipe advertido* (1631), a political treatise that describes friendship in terms of “unavoidable necessity of the prince’s own nature”. Even if we imagine a king that needed no help in business, at least he would need to *share with someone* (Martínez de Herrera, 1631: 83); see also Ortega y Robles’s *El despertador que avisa a un príncipe católico*: “the prince is naturally able to desire, as everyone else, and he chooses (as everyone else does) the one towards whom his temperament and nature make him incline. After all, why should one deny him that which is granted to everyone?” (Ortega y Robles, 1647: 12r). In general, see Feros (1995) and García García (1997).
- 20 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 1v-2v. In 1641, Láinez plagiarized all the preceding in *El privado cristiano*. Feros points out that the jurist Claude de Seyssel had also mentioned John the Evangelist as the one “to whom Christ revealed most secrets” (Feros, 1999: 294), something that Francisco de Quevedo rejected this in *Política de Dios*. Arguing against *privanza*, Quevedo asserted that Christ loved all equally, and had disciples, not favorites (Feros, 1995: 43).
- 21 Claude de Seyssel, who opposed the confluence of all the power in a single favorite, nonetheless granted that the king was allowed to have by his side someone with whom he might be able to share “private affairs, and secrets that do not belong to the state” (qtd. in Feros, 1999: 297-298). For the need to “spend time” with the king as a key factor to approaching his private person, see (Feros, 1995: 31).
- 22 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 1v.
- 23 The idea that the favorite should open the king’s eyes makes the criticism of Olivares found in Andrés de Mena’s accusation of 1643 all the more relevant. Mena claimed that Olivares actually concealed from the sight of the king all the troubles of the monarchy. This was a behavior that Mena saw as paradigmatic of tyranny (Elliott *et al.*, 2013: 394).
- 24 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 20v-21r. Rizo took up the notion of the favorite as a pair of glasses. However, while Maldonado was concerned with self-knowledge, Rizo had in mind issues of reputation, using the *privado* to learn about any ills that circulated about the king, so as to tell him and find a correction for them (Mártir Rizo, 1626b: 74r).
- 25 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 4v-5r. The idea that the king’s wellness and that of the kingdom coincide reappears in 1621, in “Memorial que dieron al duque de Lerma cuando entró en el valimiento del señor rey Felipe III”, BNE, Ms. 18275, 3r-v.
- 26 For the analogy between the interior organization of God in three personae and governmental duties, see (Láinez, 1641: 9-10).
- 27 Both Lerma and Olivares occupied the position of *sumiller de corps* in crucial moments of their path towards *privanza*, a charge that in Habsburg etiquette entailed continuous presence by the side of the king (Feros, 1995: 37; 2002: 176-177). “Physical intimacy with the monarch became ... a political commodity that favorites ... used to their own advantage” (Feros, 1995: 36).
- 28 Ortega y Robles was certainly aware of contemporary discussions about the delicate issue of how to deal with *arcana imperii* or secrets of state in the context of government. Scipion Duplex protested in 1635 that many decisions were such that had to be taken by the king and his minister alone, so as to avoid that any revelation of secrets might waste the plan (Feros, 1999: 308). In 1639, Gabriel Naudé mentioned the assassination of the Duke of Guise or the massacre of Saint Bartholemew to exemplify a kind of acts so intimately connected with secrecy that would be unsuitable for traditional modes of government (Villari, 1987: 24).
- 29 The anonymous writer of a memorandum addressed to Lerma at the beginning of Philip III’s reign encouraged maintaining the policy of retreat that was allegedly responsible for Philip II’s success. “Locked in a room”, he writes, the late king “has been obeyed and feared” for many years. *Memorial que dieron al duque de Lerma cuando entró en el valimiento del señor rey Felipe III*. BNE, Ms. 18275, 2r.
- 30 Láinez made a different use of the metaphor of “impression”. The favorite is the copy that the king makes of himself. He transfers to him his virtues and habits, which the favorite welcomes as matter does form, much like a coin on which the face of the king is stamped (Láinez, 1641: 98).
- 31 *Apuntamientos políticos reducidos a quatro respectos que el privado o ministro superior ha de guardar*. BNE, Ms. 18721, 251v.
- 32 BNE, Mss. 10659 and 28197 are only two examples of compilations containing texts that connected Olivares with magic. In the first years of the latter’s *privanza*, the writer of fiction Rodrigo Fernández de Ribera’s *Los antojos de mejor vista* made a connection between alchemy and the seduction exerted by *privados* (Fernández de Ribera, 1979: 65). In a more conclusive way, we find in Cervantes’ *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (1617) a curious treatment of the link between the figure of the counselor and the arts of magic in the character of Cenotia, who is simultaneously a witch and the adviser of king Policarpo (Cervantes, 1969: 206).
- 33 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 3r, 6v.
- 34 Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 20v-21r.
- 35 Relying especially on the work of the Jesuit Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, Cécile Vincent-Cassy (2010) has demonstrated that the

- role of angels in God's government helped seventeenth-century writers conceptualize the king's *privado* as a means to communicate by proxy through one who has been admitted to the secret, while making it possible for the king to remain invisible.
- 36 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 18v. As evoked by Feros, texts such as Diego de Guzmán's *Vida y muerte de doña Margarita de Austria* (1617) argued that the king was similar to the sacred host in the fact that concealment augments the reverence, while nothing is more contrary to the respect due to either of them than continuous sight (Feros, 2002: 166).
 - 37 Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 18v-19r.
 - 38 Paolo Pintacuda has noted that a variant in Mendoza's text preserved in BNE, Ms. 8512 uses the term *simulation*, making even more explicit the need for the favorite to use duplicity (Pintacuda, 2010: 28). Mendoza's advice is framed as a letter that a certain "Antenodoro polaco" addresses to a friend who had just become *privado* to his king. It might be argued that fiction made it easier to evoke the hardships connected with the submission to the king's will and pleasure.
 - 39 Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga, *Fragmentos históricos de la vida de Don Gaspar de Guzmán, Conde de Olivares*, BNE, Ms. 2087, 66r-v.
 - 40 The transformation, here connected with friendship, became juridical in a 1622 text written in defense of Uceda bearing the title of *Memorial del pleito contra el duque de Uceda*. We read there that "when [the favorite] leaves the prince's retreat to order or execute something on his behalf, the prince is transformed into him". When the favorite embodies the king, he does nothing out of his judgment (*no usa de su arbitrio*), but (as the author disingenuously affirms, in the spirit of *pro-privanza* literature), speaks for the king's will (qtd. in Feros, 2002: 227-228). A creature or *hechura* of Lerma such as Lorenzo Ramírez de Prado stated in *Consejo, i consejero de príncipes* (printed in 1617 and containing a translation and a commentary of Jean de Chokier's aphorisms of 1610) that counselors and ambassadors were similar to actors who performed live representations ("al vivo") of the king (Ramírez de Prado, 1617: 47).
 - 41 Countless authors, from Jean Bodin to Francis Bacon, showed concern with the elevation of a subject to the status of the king by virtue of friendship (Feros, 1995: 27, 31-32; 1999: 311), and often tried to add caveats and correctives to what seemed to them excessive familiarity. Antonio López de Vega warned that it was dangerous to transform *privanza* with the king into more than "good correspondence" united with "a certain subordination" (López de Vega, 1652: 31). Diego Saavedra Fajardo reminded the favorite that he remained the king's vassal and *hechura*, and was not his equal (Saavedra Fajardo, 1999: 603).
 - 42 Unless we concede that, since the king embodied the common good, the favorite emptied himself to better fulfill his duty in society. But this was hardly in harmony with the emphasis on the king's individuality that permeated Malvezzi's account—witness the passage, evoked earlier, about Olivares' reaction to the illness of the king. Maldonado had already warned against extreme devotion to the king. Pedro Maldonado, *Tratado del perfecto Privado*. BNE, Ms. 18335, 15r. Concerning the great popularity of Epictetus' manual, it is worth mentioning that it made the object of translations other than the one by Francisco Sánchez, such as those by Gonzalo Correas (a disciple of Sánchez) and Francisco de Quevedo.
 - 43 It should be noted that even Malvezzi's *Ritratto* (following also here Vera y Zúñiga's notes) showed Olivares resorting to stratagems that deserved a comparison with those of the emperor Tiberius, which served in the tradition of Tacitism as a common embodiment of duplicity. While Tiberius had pretended to refuse the empire only to be sure of what the senators actually thought of him (so as to be reassured once they insisted in the offer), Olivares feigned likewise that he did not want to become *privado* of Philip IV, only to see what the latter had in his heart (Malvezzi, 2013: 296-297).
 - 44 The criticism of courtly ethics as fostering protean patterns of behavior dates back, at least, to sixteenth-century attacks on Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the courtier* (first printed in 1528). See, for instance, the arguments of Philibert de Vienne (Snyder, 2009: 81).
 - 45 For Renzi's praise of constancy, see Matteo Renzi, *Tratado del privado perfecto*. BNE, Ms. 10633, 19v.
 - 46 Paolo Pintacuda has made prominent use of Mendoza's 1626 treatise in a work that keenly illuminates the component of theatricality that literature on *privanza* imagined for the favorite's behavior. However, Pintacuda takes Malvezzi's assertion that *privanza* is based on love as taking as point of departure to rule out the possibility that discourses on reason of state be involved in seventeenth-century opinions concerning the relation between king and *privado* (Pintacuda, 2010: 28). Given the exceptionality of Malvezzi's position, it would be more productive to see the literature on *privanza* as a privileged site to study the tensions between different discourses on friendship and the emphasis on duplicity that was characteristic of contemporary political debate.

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