



# **Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450-1650 (Hispanisms)**

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The Mendoza family was one of Spain's most prominent Renaissance dynasties, and this collection, a groundbreaking overview of two hundred years of Spanish history, provides in-depth portraits of eight of its female members. These essays explore the lives of powerful women whose lineage gave them status within a patriarchal society designed to keep women from public life. Each of the influential and literary women discussed in this volume handled her status differently, and their concerns were not dissimilar from the concerns of feminists today: the blurring of the personal and the political, public versus private space, language and voice, and property. Spanning the two centuries between Juana Pimentel, a widow who manipulated the patronage system to her own ends, and Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, who rejected both convent and marriage in favor of missionary work, *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain* reveals a complex society in which women were limited by law, and yet their social status made those laws negotiable. These women found that their personal agendas had a broad societal impact, challenging the laws of the land and patriarchal assumptions about women's inferiority.

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