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Review of Richard Meyer Forsting, *Raising Heirs to the Throne in Nineteenth-Century Spain: The Education of the Constitutional Monarch*

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Forsting, Richard Meyer. *Raising Heirs to the Throne in Nineteenth-Century Spain: The Education of the Constitutional Monarch*. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2018. xv + 261pp. + 10 ill.

Part of the Palgrave Studies in Modern Monarchy, this monograph investigates the education of royal heirs either before they became rulers or during their royal minorities in order to shed light on Spain's transition into a constitutional monarchy during the nineteenth century. It is based on the education of three heirs/rulers: Isabel II (b. 1830, r. 1833-1868, d. 1904), Alfonso XII (b. 1857, r. 1874-1885), and Alfonso XIII (b. and r. 1886-1931, d. 1941). Focusing on the high stakes put on the education of a monarch "that reigns but does not govern" (2), Forsting makes a strong case for connecting the education of heirs with the political upheavals and transformations of the century.

The book is organized thematically. After an introductory chapter, the author analyzes their education in the context of the court (Chapter 2), the military (Chapter 3), and the public sphere (Chapter 4). A lucid concluding chapter reiterates the need for scholars to consider the relevance of the institution of monarchy and the importance of Spain in European monarchical studies.

Two of the heirs (Isabel II and Alfonso XIII) succeeded to the throne very young; the other (Alfonso XII) was educated while his family was in exile. In each case, their education intersected with political upheaval that dominated their reigns or that of their parents. Isabel II's birth near the end of Ferdinand VII's reign set the stage for the first of the Carlist Wars (1833-1840) that challenged her right to the succession. The king's younger brother, who had been waiting for years on the sidelines to become king, was displaced by a three-year old girl. Because Isabel was a female monarch and under the regency of another woman, Maria Cristina of the Two Sicilies, at the time when Spain was struggling to transition into a constitutional monarchy and facing a contested succession, her education became a battleground. The appointment of Juana de Vega, Countess de Espoz y Mina, by Espartero who took over the regency in 1841, as *aya* (the court officer in charge of the royal child's education), a highly qualified woman but not a member of the upper aristocracy, marked this significant shift. Isabel II became the one in charge of the next heir's education conscious that it was a critical political matter. The adopted changes were short-lived, however, since Alfonso XII began his education at court, but ended up spending his childhood and youth outside of Spain since the 1868 revolution or Gloriosa led to his mother's deposition from the throne and the subsequent exile of the royal family. He was thus the only heir educated not by private tutors but at institutions—first at the Collège Stànislav in Paris, then at the Theresianum in Vienna—his

education finishing with a stay in England. These innovations were carefully planned for strategic political reasons. Yet, despite this very specific context, the principles on the education of heirs were not lost on the next generation. Alfonso XIII, who was born a few months after his father's death, was educated at court and not as heir but as king: Two *Jefes de Estudio* and two teachers were part of his entourage since he was sixteen months old. But his education paralleled that of his father in several regards. Both were treated as other pupils and given real feedback on their performances. Records of their marks are available, indicating that they were not given special or preferential treatment.

The choice of teachers, environment, and curriculum chosen for each heir illuminates how those in charge of their education viewed it as an element of change. In Isabel's case, the debate, which was bitterly contested in the Cortes, at court, and in the public sphere, was over the appointment of teachers and tutors. Deliberations over Alfonso's education revolved around the curriculum and his environment (i.e. schools he attended and where). His education emphasized Spanish culture, considered critical to show his connection to the monarchy while outside the country. Yet, it did not neglect the traditional physical, moral, and academic schooling that was typical in royal and aristocratic circles at the time. His mother abdicated in his favor in 1870; this fact and his education helped facilitate the Bourbon Restoration in 1874. With Alfonso XIII, education returned to the realm of the court with the principles of training constitutional monarchs fully in place. For him, the curriculum emphasized science, law, and politics as well as foreign languages (he achieved high proficiency in English, German, French, and Italian), indicating that the principle role of the monarch was in the realm of foreign policy. Forsting advances a nuanced analysis of the role of the military in the education of all of the heirs, and its particular importance to understanding Alfonso XIII's reign. However, he cautions against seeing a straight line between his military education and support for Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.

This book will be of interest to a wide range of scholars besides those of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spanish and European history. Early modernists working on political and gender history as well as royal studies will recognize many continuities, particularly during the first half of the century. But the arguments would have been stronger had Forsting engaged not only with the medieval traditions of royal education, but with the important work that some of our colleagues have produced in the past decade on the early modern period. The analysis (specially of court conflicts) would have been a lot richer if analyzed in light of Martha Hoffman's seminal study of royal education at court (2011) as

well as studies by Rachael Ball and Geoffrey Parker on the education of a Habsburg ruler (2014) and the entire section of Grace E. Coolidge's edited volume dedicated to royal childhood (2014). The study has a proprietary queen, two female regents, and several important female figures, all of whom were at the center of the debates as pupils, educators, and parents, but the role of women and gender is not fully fleshed out.

Despite these criticisms, this is a valuable study. The education of royal heirs allows the author to show the adaptive and flexible nature of the institution of monarchy, critical to understanding its persistence. He also places Spain's transformation into a constitutional monarchy in line with political, cultural, and social changes across Europe. As such, this study deepens current understandings of the institution of monarchy and contributes to the revisionist history of nineteenth-century Spain.

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