

## Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Journal of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

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Volume 45

Issue 1

Review 8

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2020

### Review of Silvia Z. Mitchell, ed., *The Spanish Habsburg Court during the Reign of Carlos II (1665-1700)*

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#### Recommended Citation

Mara DeSilva, Jennifer (2020) "Review of Silvia Z. Mitchell, ed., *The Spanish Habsburg Court during the Reign of Carlos II (1665-1700)*," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 45 : Iss. 1 , Review 8.

Available at:

<https://asphs.net/article/review-of-silvia-z-mitchell-ed-the-spanish-habsburg-court-during-the-reign-of-carlos-ii-1665-1700>

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**Mitchell, Silvia Z., ed. *The Spanish Habsburg Court during the Reign of Carlos II (1665-1700)*. *The Court Historian*. *The International Journal of Court Studies*. Vol. 23, no. 2 (December 2018). iv + 140pp + 13 fig.**

This special issue of *The Court Historian* is a fascinating and useful contribution to the ongoing investigation of the Spanish Monarchy in the late seventeenth century. Since the 1980s there has been a slow renewal of interest in the long reign of Carlos II (1665-1700), which has suffered from a widespread prejudice among scholars and the public as a period of decline and monarchic weakness. In his brief contribution to this issue, Luis Ribot (“Epilogue. Carlos II: A Reign under Revision”) described the earlier historiographical malaise and noted with pleasure the recently expanded perspectives on this period (215-218). These now include gender studies, art and theater history, intellectual and political history, as well as reconsiderations of banking, military, and diplomatic history. The past decade, in particular, has seen an explosion of conferences and publications focused on this period, making it today one of the most popular periods of Spanish historical research. Nevertheless, public perceptions are slow to change, especially when they are seen from a distance of three hundred years and are often separated by an ocean and a language barrier. Hence, the importance of this journal issue, which brings together six scholars from across Europe, North America, and South America, whose work offers a data-driven foundation for changing our understanding of Carlos II’s reign.

In keeping with this new and welcome perspective, the issue’s editor, Silvia Z. Mitchell solicited work from scholars who are revisionist in their approach to the period’s cultural, gender, political, and diplomatic history. As Mitchell writes in the introduction, the result is a collection of articles that explicitly focuses on the court, which for so long was considered the chief site of decline, weakness, and incapacity. By bringing together studies of queenship, rituals of kingship, royal portraiture, royal minorities, royal households, and royal entries, and situating them within a larger discussion of politics and diplomacy, Mitchell has shown how integral these topics are to a full understanding of Carlos’ court, how it was experienced by contemporaries, and how it interacted with other European courts (107). Mitchell’s own work on the Queen-Regent Mariana of Austria makes her especially well placed to draw together these conversations and rehabilitate the periods of the regency and Carlos’ independent reign. Considering the king’s minority and his mother’s curatorship, this period is particularly important for scholars of queenship and gendered monarchy, which currently is experiencing welcome popular recognition. Special journal issues move cutting-edge research from conference participation to the wider audience that print offers. Indeed, Mitchell notes that this volume was conceived at the *International Congress – Decadencia o Reconfiguración Las Monarquías de*

*España y Portugal en el Cambio de Siglo (1640-1721)* and graciously encouraged by *The Court Historian*.

The first article by art historian Barbara von Barghahn, entitled “The Duty to Display Princely Perfection: Portraits of Carlos II as Child-King,” follows the evolution of a new portrait style designed to elevate the *rey-niño*. Called the “palatine portrait,” initially it developed to present King Philip IV’s heirs, Princes Baltasar Carlos (1629-1646) and Felipe Próspero (1657-1661), as official representations of the Spanish monarchy’s future. While Velásquez’s portraits defined this style, particularly *Prince Baltasar Carlos in the Riding School of the Buen Retiro Palace* (c.1636), when the two princes both died young and four-year old Carlos succeeded his father in 1661, Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo and Juan Carreño de Miranda elaborated the style to accommodate the new situation. As von Barghahn shows, the portraits of the *rey-niño* construct a classical stage that reveals Carlos’ active training in both masculine sports (e.g., riding or hunting) and rulership (e.g., at his age of majority, dressed in armor, with the insignia of the Golden Fleece), but also surround the child-king with an aura of “monarchical splendour” (130). These portraits were crucial gifts sent to royal courts of adult-kings, with which Spain continued to deal and feared being seen by as weak. Perhaps not as clearly, von Barghahn also suggests how portraits were displayed in royal residences to define the nature of kingship within spaces linked to majesty and rulership. While this is a complex topic, it is important for understanding how contemporaries crafted solutions to political challenges that spanned sites and media.

The second article by Silvia Z. Mitchell, entitled “Women and Children First: Court Ceremonial during Carlos II’s Minority, 1665-1675,” nicely follows this discussion of pictorial accommodation and transitions to a discussion of court ceremonial. This is a good introduction to the complexities of Habsburg court ritual and royal households and lays bare the complexities posed by King Philip IV’s testament. Traditionally, royal children were raised within the queen’s household, and the late king’s testament named Queen Mariana of Austria as the child-king’s tutor and the monarchy’s governor. Thus, Carlos remained within his mother’s household until his emancipation at the age of fourteen, when he acquired his own household. The fact that there was a king without a household from 1665-1675 reduced the opportunities for noblemen to serve the crown and caused tension between the noblewomen who served the Queen Regent and the King. Squabbles over ceremonial precedence (between Mariana’s *camarera mayor* and Carlos’ *aya*), the absence of roles for elite men, and the preponderance of women surrounding the king all led to negotiations in court etiquette. Mitchell’s article shows how the traditional court hierarchy experienced meaningful changes that resulted in altering etiquette in concrete ways during Carlos II’s minority, and dispatches the concept of a monolithic ceremonial.

The third article by Koldo Trapaga Monchet, focuses on the best-known challenge that the Queen Regent faced and the events leading to her exile from court and Carlos' emancipation. "Members of Don Juan's Household and the Politics of Carlo II's Court during the Early Years of his Minority (1665-1669)" explores the difficulty faced by Philip IV's illegitimate (but recognized) son, Don Juan José of Austria (1629-1679). As the leader of the failed campaign to reconquer Portugal, Philip had exiled his son from court and provided no role for him in Carlos II's government. This article explores Don Juan's attempts to return to court and acquire a position of power through the lens of his household. Because he could not easily approach or negotiate with the Queen Regent and ambassadors, reliable household retainers were essential intermediaries. When finally he received an appointment as the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Don Juan expanded his household without any intention of departing for Flanders. Using these new men to lobby grandees against the Queen Regent, he successfully forced the fall of Fernando Valenzuela as *valido* and his own promotion upon Carlos' emancipation. Using the household of comparatively peripheral figures as a tool for greater political analysis is a welcome and revealing development.

The fourth article by Ezequiel Borgognoni continues to explore conflict, but now within the space of the new queen's household. "The Royal Household of Marie-Louise of Orleans, 1679-1689: The Struggle over Executive Offices" analyzes the effect of political change and Franco-Spanish tension on the household of Carlos II's first queen. Not only does this article reveal how sharp competition was among Spanish nobles for positions within royal households, but it also reveals how the queen's body and lifestyle were considered a site for waging national or diplomatic conflicts. Amid these tensions, Borgognoni identifies powerful officeholders, who often expected to hold their positions for life, and Queen Marie-Louise's growing authority to lobby the king for controversial changes. Successful strategies that resulted in removing unobliging office-holders often required the collaboration of Marie-Louis and Mariana. This article offers another opportunity to consider female authority and cooperation, and it identifies clearly how royal households were considered opportunities to access and exert individual political power.

The fifth article follows Carlos' second queen as she departed home in Bavaria and traveled to meet her new husband and subjects in Spain. Felix Labrador Arroyo carefully examines the period of 6 April to 22 May 1690 during which the queen traveled from Galicia to Madrid in "Preparing for a Queen: Maria Anna of Neuberg's Royal Entry into Spain." Rather than investigating the specific artistic *apparati* or theatrical events that celebrated the queen's progress, this study identifies the ceremonial and political tensions that resulted from a change in sea route, conflicting personalities, and a desire to conserve funds

without diminishing grandeur. Rough seas forced the queen and her entourage to arrive at Ferrol in Galicia, prompting a recalculation of her route to Valladolid where she met Carlos, and together they journeyed to Madrid. A desire to observe rigidly defined protocol kept the queen on-board the ship for a week before the *entregas* ceremony (the handing over of the queen) and made progress over poor roads in nasty weather even more unpleasant. However, this article contributes usefully to festival studies by showing the strictures placed on cities celebrating the queen's arrival with fireworks, gun salutes, flag displays, carriage races, bullfights, dances, theatricals, Masses and relic displays. The most interesting discussions involve the Crown's attempts to limit spending, which cities saw as a way to prove their loyalty, and the urban tax strategies conceded, along with the threat of fines for citizens who did not decorate their streets.

Finally, the sixth article offers a related discussion of female involvement in diplomacy from several angles at the court in Madrid. Using the eighty letters preserved in Vienna's Österreichisches Staatsarchiv that Johanna Theresia von Lamberg, countess of Harrach, wrote to her son Aloys von Harrach while he served as Imperial ambassador in Madrid, Laura Olivan-Santaliestra explores a detailed example of how an experienced older woman conveyed her knowledge and pitched advice to her less experienced son. This article, entitled "'Mein lieber lüß': Aloys von Harrach and the Diplomacies of Motherhood during the Last Years of Carlos II's Reign (1698-1701)," highlights the roles that women played in embassies, as wives, daughters, and mothers to ambassadors, as well as how they offered multifaceted support. As this article shows, the court of Carlos, both in his minority and afterward provided many opportunities for elite women to develop networks and diplomatic skills. Even considering the high likelihood that Aloys' embassy would fail, his mother's advice reveals how micropolitical successes (*e.g.*, recommendations and daily judgements) kept him afloat.

In sum, this issue is exemplary for focusing on ignored groups—women, children, regents and the world of their supporters and lesser office-holders—as equally important subjects of study. For a long time scholars of court studies have struggled to open up these groups to meaningful analysis, yet this issue has succeeded admirably. Not only should it contribute to a more accurate vision of Carlos II's reign, but it demonstrates how to investigate the royal court as a full community in useful and innovative ways.

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