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Introduction: The Spanish Habsburg Court during the Reign of Carlos II (1665–1700)

BY SILVIA Z. MITCHELL

Carlos II inherited the Spanish throne on 17 September 1665, a few months short of his fourth birthday. His death in 1700 without descendants marked a major historical event: it brought a new ruling dynasty to Spain — the Bourbons — and triggered a new order in the European and global stages that consolidated at the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1713/4). The significance of his death cast a long shadow on the King and his reign, which was for nearly three centuries either depicted in very negative terms or, other than the important work by Gabriel Maura y Gamazo in the early twentieth century, essentially ignored.¹ Revisionist studies began to emerge in the 1980s,² but it was the publication of Luis Ribot's seminal essay in a special issue commemorating the third centenary of Carlos II's death, 'The Forgotten Centenary', that a new stage in the historiography of the reign was inaugurated.³ Christopher Storrs's 2006 monograph on the Spanish Empire opened up a new analytical paradigm to discuss his reign, moving the discussion from decline to resilience.⁴ We now understand that the well-known reforms of the Bourbon regime in the early eighteenth century, for example, in fact had already begun in the last decades of Carlos II's reign (1680–1700), that the Monarchy experienced a demographic boom in non-Castilian territories and that a number of military innovations, as well as fiscal reforms, were implemented during the period.⁵ These works as well as an edited volume by Luis Ribot in 2009 focusing on Carlos II's courtly environment have contributed to what is now a revisionist history in full force.⁶

This issue of *The Court Historian* contributes to, but also highlights and hopes to stimulate, the growing body of revisionist literature on Carlos's reign by focusing on the court. Covering chronologically the entirety of the reign, this special journal issue addresses familiar topics for readers of this journal: royal portraiture, rituals of kingship, royal minorities, queenship, royal

1 Gabriel Maura y Gamazo, *Carlos II y su corte. Ensayo de Reconstrucción biográfica*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1911 and 1915). The Boletín Oficial del Estado issued a facsimile edition in 2018, with an introduction by Luis Ribot and a special index of peoples, places, and authors by Rocio Martínez López.

2 Henry Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth-Century, 1665–1700* (London and New York, 1980); Carmen Sanz Ayans, *Los Banqueros de Carlos II* (Valladolid, 1989).

3 Luis Ribot, 'Carlos II: El centenario olvidado', *Studia histórica. Historia moderna* 20 (1999), pp. 19–44.

4 Christopher Storrs, *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy, 1665–1700* (Oxford, 2006).

5 On economic issues, besides Sanz Ayán cited above, see Juan Antonio Sánchez Belén, *La política fiscal en Castilla durante el reinado de Carlos II* (Mexico and Madrid, 1996); Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, 'Del centro a la periferia: la economía española en la época de Carlos II', *Studia histórica. Historia moderna* 20 (1999), pp. 45–76; Javier Santiago Fernández, *Política monetaria en Castilla durante el siglo XVII* (Valladolid, 2000); and Henry Kamen, *La España de Carlos II* (Barcelona, 2005). On the reforms, see Antonio Ramón Peña Izquierdo, *De Austrias a Borbones: España entre los siglos XVII y XVIII* (Leon, 2008); on science, see Marcelo Aranda, 'Instruments of Religion and Empire: Spanish Science in the Age of the Jesuits, 1628–1756,' Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2013, particularly chapter 2. On military history, see the ground breaking study by Antonio José Rodríguez Hernández, *España, Flandes y la Guerra de Devolución (1667–1668). Guerra, reclutamiento y movilización para el mantenimiento de los Países Bajos españoles* (Madrid, 2007). On diplomacy see the foundational work of Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la diplomacia española: La edad barroca, II* (Madrid, 2006).

6 Luis Ribot (ed.), *Carlos II: El rey y su entorno cortesano* (Madrid, 2009).

households, royal entries, politics and diplomacy. As the culmination of a century and half of developing organisational, institutional, and etiquette traditions that began when the Habsburgs succeeded the Trastámara dynasty in 1516, understanding Carlos II's court is essential for a full-fledged evaluation of the Spanish Habsburg court.

Barbara von Barghahn's article focuses on portraits of Carlos II as a child king, situating the analysis by comparing them to Carlos II's older brothers. Princes Baltasar Carlos (1629–1647) and Felipe Próspero (1657–1661) had been officially recognized as future kings in the traditional Spanish ceremony known as the *juramento* or swearing in, although both died before their father. There were continuities, but also innovations, as court painters were faced with the task of depicting a Habsburg child, but as von Barghahn rightfully indicates, one that was already king. Both portraits of Carlos and his presence in those of his sister, the Infanta Margarita of Austria, who was also Carlos II's universal heiress, and his mother, Queen Mariana of Austria, Carlos II's tutor and regent during his minority (1665–1675), reveal that key aspects of the portraiture were related to dynastic matters and the royal succession. Von Barghahn's piece contributes to a growing body of art historical scholarship centring on royal portraiture during the reign of Carlos II that deepens our knowledge of several important painters of the Spanish Golden Age: Juan Bautista del Mazo, Juan Carreño de Miranda, and Sebastián Herrera Barnuevo.⁷

Carlos II's reign is particularly important for the field of queenship and thus court studies.⁸ The Spanish Habsburg court has provided from its beginnings a visible institutional space for queens and women to exercise political influence. The Habsburgs established women's legitimate political authority in the laws of succession, the traditions of naming women as tutors and regents, and in the queen's royal household, which enjoyed an independent juridical status in the Spanish court.⁹ Although on a smaller scale than that exercised by men, who outnumbered women in court offices and political appointments, queens' households were the

7 Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, 'Retrato de Estado y propaganda política: Carlos II (en el tercer centenario de su muerte)', *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 12 (2000), pp. 93–109; Mercedes Llorente, 'Imagen y autoridad en una regencia: Los retratos de Mariana de Austria y los límites del poder', *Studia histórica. Historia moderna* 28 (2006), pp. 211–38; *Idem*, 'Mariana of Austria's Portraits as Ruler-Governor and Curadora by Juan Carreño de Miranda and Claudio Coello', in Anne J. Cruz and Maria Galli Stampino (eds), *Early Modern Habsburg Women: Transnational Contexts, Cultural Conflicts, Dynastic Continuities* (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT, 2013), pp. 197–222; Álvaro Pascual Chenel, *El retrato de estado durante el reinado de Carlos II. Imagen y propaganda* (Madrid, 2010); Gloria Martínez Leiva and Ángel Rodríguez Rebollo, *El inventario del Alcázar de Madrid de 1666: Felipe IV y su colección artística* (Madrid, 2015); Ángel Aterido, *El final del Siglo de Oro: La pintura en Madrid en el cambio dinástico, 1685–1726* (Madrid, 2015); and Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos (ed.) and Ángel Rodríguez Rebollo (coord.), *Carlos II y el arte de su tiempo* (Madrid, 2013); for additional bibliographic references see von Barghahn's article in this volume.

8 On the relationship between queenship and court studies, see Clarissa Campbell Orr, 'Introduction', in Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.), *Queenship in Europe, 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 1–15, pp. 1–4.

9 Charles V inherited four different dynastic lines largely from his female relatives, including his mother, Queen Juana of Castile and Aragon, and his two grandmothers, Isabel of Castile and Mary of Burgundy. For the laws of the succession that led to the Habsburg's succession, see, Bethany Aram, *Juana the Mad: Sovereignty and Dynasty in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore and London, 2005). On female governorships and queenship in early modern Spain, see Theresa Earenfight (ed.), *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT, 2005). Regents (or governors and early on lieutenants as they were titled in Spain), included Empress Isabel of Portugal (1503–1536), who ruled the Spanish Monarchy as lieutenant and governor during her husband Charles V's frequent absences. And later, Charles V's two daughters, Empress Maria of Austria (1527–1603), and Princess Juana of Portugal (1537–1573). Women ruled the Netherlands as regents uninterruptedly from 1507 to 1567. Isabel Clara Eugenia, Philip II's oldest daughter, became the sovereign ruler from 1598 to 1621 and then governor on behalf of her nephew Philip IV from 1621 to 1633; see Cordula Van Wyhe (ed.), *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels* (Madrid and London, 2011); and Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (eds), *Albert & Isabella, 1598–1621: Essays* (Turnhout, 1998).

most visible reminder that royal women had the means to exercise influence.¹⁰ This was the *modus operandi* of the Habsburgs, but during Carlos II's reign, the role of queens and women increased.¹¹ Carlos II succeeded to the throne as a child, which catapulted his mother — and the women of her household — to the centre of the court. Carlos II's court was unprecedented in the fact that from 1679 to 1696, there were two royal households associated with queens: one for the Queen Consort, the other for the Queen Mother. This is thus a critical period for the study of queens and aristocratic women in the Spanish court. Carlos's mother, Mariana of Austria, and his two consorts, Marie-Louise of Orleans (r. 1679–1689) and Maria Anna of Neuburg (r. 1689–1700) are the subject of three of the contributions in this volume.

The terms of Philip IV's testament and the Habsburg tradition of raising royal children in queens' households led to a major institutional reconfiguration of the Spanish Habsburg court during Carlos II's minority, leading to the temporary elimination of the King's household and its replacement by the Queen's. This is the topic of the second article in the volume, which I authored. The fact that the Spanish Monarchy was governed through the Queen's household (Mariana of Austria's) distinguishes Carlos II's court from that of his predecessors. As we know, the Madrid court was the residence of the ruler and his family, in the upper floors, and the councils of government in the ground floors, with the king at the centre as the connecting element of government.¹² The king was the embodiment of sovereignty and the one who exercised it with the help of his councils.¹³ During Carlos II's minority, sovereignty was split: Carlos II embodied it, but was contained within his mother's political body — the royal household. My article discusses the impact of this unprecedented situation on the rituals of kingship while Carlos II resided in his mother's household, a situation that lasted to near the end of his minority. This contributed, I argue, to the perception of a king dominated by his mother and one of the reasons the court plunged into a crisis during the years immediately following his emancipation at the age of fourteen.

It would be interesting to know if a similar situation occurred in other courts during royal minorities or whether this was something that could only take place in the Spanish Habsburg court, which had a clear institutional separation between king's and queen's households. The Bourbons abolished the independence of the queen's household in 1761, several decades after the first time the idea was introduced in 1718.¹⁴ The Empress'

¹⁰ For the queen's royal household in the Spanish court, see the classic work of Dálmiro de Válgoma, *Norma y ceremonia de las reinas de la Casa de Austria* (Madrid, 1954); Magdalena S. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore, 1998), particularly Chapter 2, pp. 36-60; and the multi-volume edition by José Martínez Millán and Maria Paula Marçal Lourenço (eds), *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las casas de las reinas (siglos XV–XIX)*, 3 vols (Madrid, 2008). See additional bibliographic references and insights in the articles by Mitchell, Borgognoni, and Oliván-Santaliestra.

¹¹ María Victoria López-Cordón Cortezo, 'Las mujeres en la vida de Carlos II', in Ribot (ed.), *Carlos II: El Rey y su entorno*, pp. 109-39.

¹² John H. Elliott, 'The Court of the Spanish Habsburgs: A Peculiar Institution?' in *Spain and its World: 1500–1700. Selected Essays* (New Haven, 1989), pp. 142-61, p. 145.

¹³ John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain* (New York, 1964); and Feliciano Barrios, *La gobernación de la Monarquía de España: Consejos, Juntas y Secretarios de la Administración de la Corte (1556–1700)* (Madrid, 2015).

¹⁴ For this proposal to unify the king's and the queen's households, see, Marcelo Luzzi Traficante, 'La Casa de Borgoña ante el cambio dinástico y durante el siglo XVIII (1680–1761)', in José Eloy Hortal Muñoz and Félix Labrador Arroyo (eds), *La Casa de Borgoña: La Casa del Rey de España* (Leuven, 2014). This was part of the effort to do away also with the well-known practice of the Spanish Habsburgs of multiple royal houses representing different territories of the monarchy (i.e. Castilian, Portuguese, Aragonese, Burgundian, etc.); on the system of multiple royal houses, in which the Burgundian and the Castilian competed for precedence, see, Hortal Muñoz and Labrador Arroyo's 'Introduction' in *ibidem*, pp. 15-19.

Hofstaat among the Austrian Habsburgs, particularly after the Styrian cadet line succeeded as the main ruling branch, according to Katrin Keller, was ‘part of the larger Imperial *Hofstaat*’ in the court of Vienna.¹⁵ None of Carlos II’s Habsburg predecessors succeeded as minors and thus, this is the only instance in which the Spanish Monarchy was ruled through a household that did not belong to the titular ruler, but to his mother.

While the article examines the restructuring of Carlos II’s court in order to understand the underlying reasons that may have led to the crisis of the court when the King was emancipated at the age of fourteen, we cannot ignore the role played by the King’s half-brother, don Juan José of Austria (1629–1679). Koldo Trápaga Monchet focuses on the household of don Juan at the beginning of the reign until 1669, encompassing roughly the first half of Carlos II’s minority and the regency of the King’s mother. The focus on this particular period and on the household makes this article particularly innovative and important to understand the politics of the court during one of the most convoluted periods, one that culminated with the dismissal of the Queen’s confessor, the Jesuit Johann Eberard Nithard (1607–1680) in 1669. Trápaga Monchet follows the tense negotiations between don Juan and the Queen Mother (as well as Emperor Leopold I) as he was seeking a permanent political position. Members of his household assisted don Juan because his illegitimate status prohibited him from being received publicly at court; they acted also as mediators with local officials in the Crown of Aragon when he escaped the Queen Regent’s order for his arrest in October 1668. Besides providing fresh perspectives on the conflicts between don Juan and the Queen Mother, the article highlights the significant role households played in the overall politics of the court even when these belonged to an illegitimate royal son who did not reside with the ruling family.

Don Juan became Carlos II’s principal minister in March 1677 and kept his position until his untimely death on 17 September 1679. While his actual ministry is not studied separately here, his impact on the court is brought to light in Ezequiel Borgognoni’s article on the household of Queen Marie-Louise of Orleans (1662, r. 1679–1689), which had been established during don Juan’s ministry and by him principally. The court has always been the ideal entry point to study queen consorts, particularly when sources are scarce, as is the case with Marie-Louise.¹⁶ Borgognoni circumvented the difficulties of his subject with a resourceful gathering of sources (from different archives in Spain and France) and by using the court as the framework of analysis. The fourth article of the volume thus contextualizes — from structural and political viewpoints — the dramatic changes that occurred in the executive offices in the royal household of Carlos II’s first queen consort.

In the fifth article of the volume, Félix Labrador Arroyo brings out new perspectives on the royal journey of Carlos II’s second consort, Maria Anna (or Mariana in Spain) of Neuburg (1667, r. 1689–1700). Maria Anna’s royal entry was a historic event because she travelled through Galicia; hers was the first royal visit in that area in more than a century. Royal entries are always highly symbolic events and such an enormous display of royal power that resulted in the construction of ephemeral architecture, sculpture, art, the production of lavish texts, and rituals, naturally have been the object of study of interdisciplinary scholars

15 Katrin Keller, ‘Ladies-in-Waiting at the Imperial Court of Vienna from 1550 to 1700: Structures, Responsibilities, and Career Patterns’, in Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (eds.), *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting Across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 77–97, pp. 77–8.

16 Campbell Orr, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1–15.

working on festivals.¹⁷ Labrador Arroyo, however, has taken a different approach, looking at Maria Anna's entry from an institutional/economic perspective. His analysis of the correspondence the Council of Castile maintained with local cities provides a critical and unprecedented view of how the central government in Madrid during Carlos II's reign dealt with peripheral territories.

The court, without a doubt, was the place that integrated various socio-political groups and this was advantageous for rulers and subjects alike. The level of investment of local elites, grantees, and different social and political groups in the Spanish Monarchy, as evidenced in Borgognoni's and Labrador Arroyo's articles, indicates that in spite of the financial problems the Monarchy faced and the lingering issue of the succession, Carlos II earned no less loyalty from his subjects than his predecessors. This is most evident in the struggles over the executive offices of Marie-Louise's royal household as in the royal entry of Maria Anna, where competition to be part of the court and its rituals became a constant issue.

Focusing on the mother and the wife of two imperial ambassadors, Johanna Theresia von Lamberg, countess of Harrach, or rather her long-distance role in the embassy of her son, Aloys von Harrach (1669–1742), Laura Oliván-Santaliestra takes us through the last and most dramatic years of Carlos II's reign, when the question of the Spanish succession dominated European affairs. The author has examined about eighty letters written by Johanna Theresia during this convoluted period when the Partition Treaties were signed and the King drafted his final testament.¹⁸ Oliván-Santaliestra focuses on the phenomenon she terms the 'diplomacies of motherhood' — small-scale strategies women like Johanna Theresia utilized to achieve diplomatic outcomes — derived from the author's extensive experience with the roles of ambassadresses.¹⁹ Johanna Theresia was the daughter, wife and mother of diplomats and had been an influential figure at the court of Madrid during the embassies of her father in the 1650s, and her husband in the 1670s, becoming very close to Mariana of Austria, Carlos II's mother. Her children — Aloys included — had known Carlos II during the last of her embassies and had been part of his household and that of the Queen Mother. When Aloys was called by Emperor Leopold I to replace his father in the embassy in Madrid and was entrusted with a mighty task of tilting the succession of the Spanish monarchy towards the children of the Emperor — one that in the end he could not fulfil — Johanna mustered the experience accumulated during a lifetime of service in Vienna and Madrid to help her son. The Harrachs were a diplomatic family in the same way that the Habsburgs were a ruling family and Oliván-Santaliestra reminds us how critical it is for diplomatic and political historians to understand the court as part of networks that were gendered, familial, and transnational. Johanna's role is an eloquent example of the protagonist role of women in Carlos II's reign.

The first three articles in this issue take us through the minority period, from the transition of Philip IV's reign to that of a child king (von Barghahn), the adaptation of the court to a child

17 For example, see Margaret McGowan, *Dynastic Marriages 1612/1615: A Celebration of the Habsburg and Bourbon Unions* (London, 2016); Marie-Louise's entry, for example, has been splendidly studied by Teresa Zapata Fernández de la Hoz, *La entrada en la Corte de María Luisa de Orleans* (Madrid, 2000).

18 On this phase of the reign, see Luis Ribot, *Orígenes políticos del testamento de Carlos II. La gestación del cambio dinástico en España* (Madrid, 2010); Luis Ribot and José María Iñurritegui (eds), *Europa y los tratados de reparto de la Monarquía de España, 1668–1700* (Madrid, 2016).

19 Laura Oliván-Santaliestra, 'Lady Anne Fanshawe, Ambassadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664–1666)' in *Women, Diplomacy, and International Politics*, 68–85; and *Idem*, 'Gender, Work and Diplomacy in Baroque Spain: The Ambassadorial Couples of the Holy Roman Empire as *Arbeitspaare*', *Gender & History* 29 (2017), pp. 423–45.

king (Mitchell), and the conflicts provoked by the presence of an illegitimate royal son during the King's minority (Trápaga Monchet). The second half begins with the transformation of his court at the beginning of what should be considered his actual reign as an adult, as marked by the arrival of his first queen consort (Borgognoni), the inauguration of the last decade of his reign marked with the arrival of his second queen (Labrador Arroyo), and the last years of the reign, when the question of the succession dominated the international diplomatic community (Oliván-Santaliestra). Within the institutional framework of the court that was in place when Carlos came to power, we can see how gender, power systems, networks, representation of sovereignty and negotiation of power played out within the specific historical junctures of the reign, which had also a strong international component.

In a piece for *El Mundo*, the widely-read Spanish newspaper, Luis Ribot summarized recent scholarly findings for the general public indicating that Carlos II was neither the 'bewitched' nor the 'decadent' king that traditionally he has been made to be.²⁰ While the focus of this volume has been on the court and not the King, I am sure that I speak for myself and the contributors of this volume that it is our hope that we can eventually more fully flesh out a revisionist portrait of Carlos II.

The idea for this volume came out of a conversation with Jonathan Spangler and several attendees and participants of the International Congress — *Decadencia o Reconfiguración: Las Monarquías de España y Portugal en el Cambio de Siglo (1640–1721)* — organized jointly by the Instituto Universitario la Corte en Europa-Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua Camões (Madrid, December 1–3, 2015). I am very grateful to Jonathan for supporting my idea of focusing on the Spanish Habsburg Court during the reign of Carlos II. His knowledge of the court has been incredibly useful to me and to the authors. I am very grateful to authors and anonymous readers for their patience and generosity. Liesbeth Geevers's expertise became a wonderful asset to all contributors; she deserves all of our thanks. Last but not least, I am very grateful to Professor Luis Ribot — a pioneer and the most important specialist on the reign of Carlos II — for graciously agreeing to write the epilogue for this volume.

Silvia Z. Mitchell

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20 Luis Ribot, 'Carlos II, ni hechizado ni tan decadente', *El Mundo*, 15 September 2015. <http://www.elmundo.es/la-aventura-de-la-historia/2015/10/30/56333e0d2260rd37688b45b5.html>.