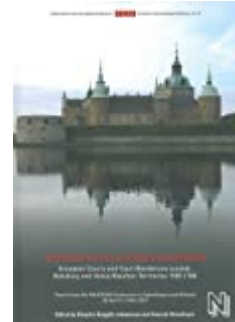


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Birgitte Bogild Johannsen, Konrad Ottenheim, eds. *Beyond Scylla and Charybdis: European Courts and Court Residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon Territories 1500-1700*. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2015. 358 pp. \$36.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-87-7602-322-5.



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This ambitious collection of essays publishes the proceedings of an international conference about court residences outside the Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon domains held in Copenhagen and Hillerod in 2012. The volume is presented as one of the results of the Palattium research network directed by Professor Krista de Yonge that investigates early modern European court architecture. The twenty-three chapters of the book are gathered in four different sections focused on rituals within sovereignty's space, court and courtly festivals beyond the formal spaces, the power of the past in princely fabrications, and the material construction of royal residences.

The first section, "Sovereignty's Space and Its Rituals," provides a wide sample of the different systems of distributing space within court residences. This group of essays analyzes the way monarchs were presented to the world through the use of etiquette. Nuno Senos presents King Manuel of Avis's attempt in Lisbon to transform the city into the capital of an Atlantic empire. Senos shows how the Royal Palace da Ribeira, by the river Tagus, was conceived according to a court ceremonial that mixed the Burgundian model with a new oceanic vocation. Lee Prosser and Tracey A. Sowerby focus their interest on the English Tudors. While Prosser provides a sharp analy-

sis of the palaces wanted by Henry VIII and their particular aesthetics, Sowerby investigates the use of court spaces during the Muscovite embassies to queens Mary I and Elizabeth I. The interpretation of the royal residences provided by Prosser as in between foreign seduction and English identity is particularly convincing. Jan Henings studies the different uses of space within the early modern Muscovite court from the point of view of the English ambassadors. Through his essay Charles McKean interprets Scotland's court culture as it was materialized in the palaces of Linlithgow, Holyrod, and, mainly, Stirling. The court of Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau in Salzburg is the theme presented by Gerhard Ammerer and Ingonda Hanneschl-Äger. The two scholars demonstrate a deep knowledge of the cultural background of the prince-archbishop and they show how he used it in order to strengthen the image of his principality. Giulio Girondi demonstrates how a private palace such as the one owned by Giovanni Battista Guerrieri Gonzaga in Mantua could become a mirror image of a princely residence. Juliette Roding uses Spanish and Dutch embassies to investigate diplomacy at the Danish court and the way foreign ambassadors perceived local protocol. Early modern Sweden and the way its court ceremonial was assembled in order to define the nation's position in-

side Europe's hierarchy is the topic researched by Fabian Persson. The first section of the book concludes with the contribution of Elisabeth WÄ½nsche-Werdehausen, who analyzes the royal residence of Vittorio Amedeo II in Turin. She explains the architectural and ceremonial articulation of the palace as a result of the situation of the House of Savoy in the European political middle between the two superpowers of the continent.

The second group of essays, entitled "Beyond the Formal Spaces," focuses on conscious informality as an essential part of a court residence. Gardens or chapels, as well as festive situations such as weddings or hunts, provided spaces for diverse, informal relationships and were as necessary as formal ones. Throughout the first contribution, Jennifer Halton studies the meaning of music and the visual arts as staged for the marriage between Cosimo I de' Medici and Eleonora of Toledo and their ability to transform the ducal palace. John Robert Christianson investigates King Frederik II and the use of the royal hunt in Denmark as a theater for monarchic representation. Research undertaken by Poul Grønder-Hansen focuses on private spaces within Danish royal palaces. The scholar, using documentary and visual sources, reconstructs these informal spaces and provides a clear image of their connection with nature. Mara R. Wade examines the influence of Princess Magdalena Sibylle on Altemburg's dynastic projects. As Mara R. Wade demonstrates, Magdalena Sibylle not only became a cultural force within the German court but also expanded the court space for female representation. The last chapter of this section, authored by Rikke Garfield Lagersted-Olsen, deals with the performativity of garden planning within the Swedish court. The scholar investigates Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's plans as well as the iconographic contents of the fountains that decorated the royal residences and interprets them as part of the construction of Sweden's identity.

The third section, "The Power of the Past," deals with a traditional field of research in European historiography: the iconography of power. From the studies of Peter Burke on Louis XIV to the more recent ones on Maximilian I of Habsburg by Larry Silver, scholars have underlined the main role of antiquity in early modern royal fabrications. Here, essays broaden the approach to the topic including less evident, but equally interesting, princely houses and the way they used the past to reinforce their assertion of majesty. Stephen Hoppe opens this section of the book with a study on the architecture promoted by Cardinal Albert of Mainz during the first decades of the sixteenth century in Halle.

Through his fascinating essay, Stephan Hoppe provides a clear image of how pre-Gothic antiquity was recovered in northern alpine Europe by mixing Italian influences with the local Romanesque past. Sally Rush faces the dynastic construction of James V of Scotland by the display of an ensemble of carved heads in Stirling Palace and interprets it as an expression of his political ambition. The contribution of Birgitte Boggild Johannsen reconstructs the destroyed Copenhagen Royal Castle and underlines the maintenance of its peculiar structure during the early modern period as a sign of Danish identity. Barbara Uppenkamp investigates the iconographic sources of the frescoes depicted 1657 in the Gustrow Castle's cabinet. Through a very well-researched argument, the scholar interprets the ensemble as a Protestant act of propaganda that uses biblical sources such as Daniel's prophecy. Charles Wemyss focuses his essay on the use of lineage among the Scottish aristocracy by analyzing the architectural plan of several noble residences. To conclude this section, Herbert Karner studies the claims for royal dignity among the princes of the Holy Roman Empire. He investigates the adoption of a concrete architectural model of royal residence in order to reinforce their kingly aspirations.

The last group of essays, "From Invention to Construction," studies some examples of princely residences built during the early modern period outside the Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon territories. Merlijn Hurx's research studies the increasing centralization of building administration within the early modern Burgundian courts and links the development of rationalized planning by rulers such as Emperor Charles V to the Brabantine model of management. The last essay of the volume, written by Franciszek Skibinski, investigates architecture and sculpture promoted by Sigismund III Vasa of Poland-Lithuania. Sigismund Vasa created an efficient building organization that included Italian and Flemish artists as well as Polish supervisors in order to undertake construction in very distant cities such as Vilnius, Warsaw, and Cracow.

As the suggestive title stages, the target of this compilation is to provide a different point of view on the early modern European construction of the prince's image. Traditionally, this research has been undertaken always with an eye on what the editors call the two "superpowers" of the continent: France and the Habsburgs. Their dominant courts were, undoubtedly, influential over the rest of lineages of Europe but, as the authors try to demonstrate, palaces and court ceremonies in countries such as Sweden or England tried to construct a

different concept of sovereignty and of the relationship between the prince and the world that surrounded him. The second methodological framework that unifies the contents of the volume, as the editors assess throughout their introduction, is a particular sensitivity towards the relationship between the real constructions and the rituals that took place within them. The symbolic use of space and the way ceremonies determined the structure

of the court in order to perform hierarchy, disputes, or friendship are clearly explained by Birgitte Boggild Johannsen and Konrad Ottenheim using the peace treaty signed in 1697 in the palace of Rijswijk. And this seductive approach to architecture guides the research of the rest of contributors and constitutes the main achievement of the book.

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