

REVIEW ARTICLES

COURT STUDIES AND THE COURTS OF EARLY MODERN EUROPE

A court in exile: the Stuarts in France, 1689–1718. By Edward Corp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xvi + 386. ISBN 0-521-58462-0. £55.00.

Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550–1780. By Jeroen Duindam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xi + 349. ISBN 0-521-82262-9. £60.00.

Intrigue and treason: the Tudor court, 1547–1558. By David Loades. Harlow: Pearson, 2004. Pp. x + 326. ISBN 0-582-77226-5. £19.99.

Queenship in Europe, 1660–1815: the role of the consort. Edited by Clarissa Campbell Orr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xvii + 419. ISBN 0-521-81422-7. £60.00.

Court culture in Dresden: from Renaissance to Baroque. By Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. xv + 310. ISBN 0-333-98448-X. £47.50.

Over the last three decades, the royal or princely court has become an established feature of the historiographical landscape of early modern Europe. The subject of a forest of monographs and theses, the theme of a plethora of university undergraduate courses, it has even gained an Anglo-American academic society (and accompanying journal) dedicated to 'court studies'. While the first wave of Anglophone court historians, writing in the 1970s and 1980s, considered it necessary to state explicitly, as David Starkey did in his introduction to the seminal *The English court*, that the study of the early modern court was a legitimate historical activity, such a stance is no longer necessary.¹ Indeed, few political historians would now omit the court from their narratives, even if their principal focus was directed elsewhere. In *The English court*, Starkey presented his enterprise, and that of his co-contributors, as part of a broader process of historical revisionism. But, by the late 1990s, court studies had itself become subject to its own internal forces of revisionism. The books reviewed here not only illustrate the diversity of projects undertaken by scholars of the court; they also critique the interpretations and approaches of an earlier generation of court historians.

The earliest wave of court studies in Anglophone scholarship comprised two approaches. The first, as personified by G. R. Elton and his students, centred on the court as a political institution and examined its structure and personnel. In this sense it was akin to the prosopographical analyses of representative institutions undertaken by organizations such as the History of Parliament Trust.² The second approach focused on the visual and

¹ David Starkey, ed., *The English court: from the wars of the roses to the civil war* (1987; Harlow, 1996), pp. 1–2, 24.

² L. B. Namier and J. Brooke, eds., *The House of Commons, 1754–1790* (3 vols., London, 1964); R. R. Sedgwick, ed., *The House of Commons, 1715–1754* (2 vols., London, 1970); B. D. Henning, *The House of Commons, 1660–1690* (3 vols., London, 1983).

literary construction of the early modern monarch, and was most closely associated with the pioneering work of Roy Strong and Frances Yates on Elizabeth I and her court.³ These scholars, and their followers, not only decoded the elaborate allegories and symbols that they discerned in royal portraiture and celebratory verse. They also maintained that such images existed as an early form of royal ‘propaganda’, which consciously sought to manipulate the viewer or reader and were part of an organized effort to create, what Strong termed, a royal ‘cult’. There were, of course, tensions between the two approaches – one was, after all essentially quantitative, the other qualitative. Indeed Elton complained of the work being undertaken on ‘reveries on accession tilts and symbolism’ at the expense of studies of ‘Acatry and Pantry’.⁴ Such tensions linger, although it is increasingly rare for a court historian to focus solely on the household, without reference to the cultural contexts of the royal image, while literary researchers and history of art scholars are likewise beginning to pay closer attention to the political structures surrounding the institution of monarchy.

The most notable development over the last decade has, however, been the emergence of what has been termed ‘new court history’, a trend most strikingly represented in a collection of essays edited by John Adamson under the title *The princely courts of Europe*.⁵ One recurring theme of these essays was to show the importance of the deeply religious and sacral contexts to court routine. Another major preoccupation was the often complex relations that existed between the prince and the aristocracy outside the court, and consequently within the setting of the court itself. Challenging Norbert Elias’s thesis that, by the end of the seventeenth century, the nobility had been ‘tamed’ by court attendance into being relatively willing servants of royal power, Adamson and some of his contributors drew on revisionist histories of absolutism to highlight the extent to which royal power was hedged with limitations – even in its bastion, the court.⁶ They further suggest that royal power was curtailed by notions of custom and of royal and aristocratic honour, which lay at the root of the system upon which both princely and noble power was constructed.⁷

Rethinking relations between the crown and the elites was one aspect of the ‘new court history’, but there was also another. Those working on the iconographical dimensions to princely power also began to challenge increasingly familiar assumptions. Recent studies of Tudor royal imagery by Sydney Anglo and Helen Hackett, for example, question whether the Tudors deliberately fashioned a royal image and debate the extent to which this was controlled by the prince.⁸ Indeed, from such researches, it appears that the royal image was

³ Roy Strong, *Portraits of Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963); Roy Strong, *The cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan portraiture and pageantry* (London, 1977); Frances Yates, *Astraea: the imperial theme in the sixteenth century* (London, 1975).

⁴ G. R. Elton, ‘Tudor government: the points of contact. III: the court’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 26 (1976), p. 225.

⁵ John Adamson, ed., *The princely courts of Europe, 1500–1750* (London, 1999).

⁶ Norbert Elias, *The court society* (Oxford, 1983).

⁷ For a recent analysis of relations between a prince and his subjects, see Brian Weiser’s useful, if somewhat narrowly focused, monograph on the Restoration era, a period which, in terms of the court, perhaps still merits the epithet of ‘understudied’. In *Charles II and the politics of access* (Woodbridge, 2003), Weiser explores how Charles II deliberately used access to his person as a political tool, and in doing so, reassesses the view of Charles as an approachable monarch.

⁸ Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor kingship* (London, 1992); Helen Hackett, *Virgin mother, maiden queen: Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1994).

appropriated by interest groups other than the crown, and for their own particular purposes, rather than to enhance royal authority *tout court*.⁹

Three key themes, then, particularly preoccupy current writing on the early modern court as reviewed here. First, there is a stress on the structural and cultural differences between courts. In an attempt to move away from Elias's monolithic interpretation of court dynamics, court historians are keen to explore how early modern courts varied from one another in organization and ethos, and the extent of certain types of cultural influence, especially that of France. Secondly, greater interest has evolved concerning the role played by religion in the routines of court life and how rulers created a religious, even a confessional, identity for themselves. And, thirdly, with the growth of gender studies, court historians have begun to examine more closely the presence of women at court and, moreover, to consider how gendered roles, or gender transgressions, might consolidate or jeopardize the success of a regime.

The female consort is the theme of a collection of fourteen essays edited by Clarissa Campbell Orr on queenship during the ancien régime, the companion volume to her earlier volume on queenship in Britain across the same period.¹⁰ *Queenship in Europe* is ambitious in the scope of its geographical coverage, encompassing consortship in France (Madame de Maintenon, Marie Leszczyńska), the Holy Roman Empire (Habsburg empresses, Prussian queens, Württemberg and Saxon princesses), Scandinavia (Swedish and Danish queens), Russia (Catherine I), Britain (Caroline of Ansbach and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz), Spain (Elizabeth Farnese and Barbara of Braganza), and Savoy (Maria Giovanna Battista). Thus the book not only includes well-known royal wives, but also the more obscure consorts of the era. While each essay provides much biographical information, a number of concurrent themes emerge from this illuminating gallery of royal portraits that speak both to court historians and historians of gender.

The importance of royal consorts as political hostesses par excellence is brought home in a number of contributions, such as Thomas Biskup's pioneering chapter on the 'hidden queen' of Prussia, Elisabeth Christine, who was married to an unwilling Crown Prince Frederick in 1733. However, although Elisabeth Christine was sidelined by her husband – she was, for example, never invited to Potsdam – she still played a significant role in shoring up support for Frederick's kingship. Frederick II was infamous for his contempt for court life and by the late 1740s had given up trying to create any semblance of courtly normality. Nevertheless, he realized the crucial importance of the court in terms of domestic and international politics. As Biskup shows, it was thus left to Elisabeth Christine in particular to fashion a court with a recognizably 'courtly' routine and, in his own way, Frederick relied on her to do so, lending tacit support to her endeavours in this area. It was, for instance, Elisabeth Christine who not only held regular weekly events at court but also became the public face of the dynasty during the Seven Years War, providing stability and a sense of normality at a time of crisis. Biskup's analysis of Elisabeth Christine's role not only sheds light on her significance as a consort and on the social and political importance

⁹ For example, Alastair Bellany, *The politics of court scandal in early modern England: news culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603–1660* (Cambridge, 2002). In this richly textured monograph, Bellany explores the public impact of the Overbury affair by decoding its literary and visual representations, and the effect it had on James VI and I's reputation and that of his court.

¹⁰ Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Britain, 1660–1837: royal patronage, court culture and dynastic politics* (Manchester, 2002). See Anne McLaren's review article of this volume in 'Queenship in early modern England and Scotland', *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), pp. 935–52.

of the court but tellingly also illuminates Frederick's ideas concerning kingship and the ideological compromises he had to make in order to reconcile his Enlightened ideals with the practicalities of successful governance.

Andrew Hanham's chapter on Caroline of Brandenburg-Ansbach, the queen of George II of Britain similarly underlines the importance of the consort as political hostess. Caroline's situation was as dissimilar to that of Elisabeth Christine's as was possible. Unlike the childless Elisabeth Christine, Caroline was the mother of seven surviving children and her husband's political confidante. She, too, was crucial as a political hostess from her arrival in England after her father-in-law George I's succession to the British crown in 1714. This was partly because George I, like his grandson Frederick II, disliked court life and thus in the early years of his reign, Caroline, and to some extent her husband, assumed the role of royal host. But she was also crucial for another reason. As Hanham convincingly argues, she made a concerted effort to appear anglicized unlike her Hanoverian father-in-law who was unable to speak English for some years after his succession. By projecting herself as an English royal consort, Caroline provided valuable assistance in consolidating the position of the Hanoverian dynasty in Britain.

Acting as political hostesses was one way in which royal wives could make their mark. Many also acted as cultural patrons, as nearly every chapter in this volume emphasizes. More strikingly, *Queenship in Europe* also underlines the potential political power a female consort might wield if the conditions were favourable, and her husband was weak-willed, as Charles C. Noel's chapter on Elizabeth Farnese, the politically and dynastically ambitious second wife of Philip V of Spain, shows. Timid and irresolute, Philip suffered from regular and savage attacks of depression, and was soon dependent upon his wife, both personally and politically. Consequently, Elizabeth Farnese became infamous – and hated – across Europe for the influence she was seen to wield over her husband. While the aggressive, expansionist foreign policies that she and her husband pursued undoubtedly contributed to her unpopularity, so, too, did her very public transgression of the submissive roles of both wife and subject. Noel helpfully contrasts Elizabeth Farnese with her step-daughter-in-law, Bárbara of Braganza, the wife of Ferdinand VI. Like his father, Philip V, Ferdinand was weak, unwell, a depressive, and, like his father, dependent on his wife for guidance and reassurance. However, although the French ambassador observed on Ferdinand's accession that 'it is rather Bárbara who succeeds Elizabeth than Ferdinand succeeding Phillipe' (p. 174), Bárbara dissembled her political influence and it is noteworthy that, perhaps as a result, she was not as unpopular as her step-mother-in-law.

Like most 'women's history', the lives of royal wives can make depressing reading, a catalogue of marital and gynaecological woes, of philandering, indifferent, or occasionally lunatic husbands, of existences spent accommodating capricious and selfish individuals and fighting sinister in-laws, ministers, and courtiers. Yet, as several contributors point out, although patriarchy, in its myriad of forms, might oppress, the existing order, in the form of dynastic links or political bodies, could help to ameliorate a consort's position. As Michael Bregnsbo shows in his chapter on Danish queens, the position of Juliana Maria, wife of Frederick V, was enhanced by her dynastic ties to Prussia and Russia, while Caroline Matilda, divorced from Christian VII, was saved from imprisonment in Jutland because she was the king of Britain's sister. Johanne Elisabethe, the wife of Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg, who is discussed in Peter H. Wilson's chapter on Württemberg consorts, was placed in an extraordinarily precarious position when her husband repudiated her and bigamously married his mistress. Her campaign to regain her position was arduous,

protracted, and only relatively successful, but she attracted political sympathy from within and without Württemberg. The Church and the estates heartily disapproved of the duke's actions, and when he stopped Johanne Elisabethe's allowance, the estates assisted her with a secret subsidy. Moreover, Eberhard Ludwig's diplomacy with the Imperial court was seriously affected by the affair, and an Imperial commission was set up to investigate it in 1708. While Johanne Elisabethe's position was, ultimately, not greatly restored by imperial intervention, it did, to some extent, hamper her husband's freedom of conduct. In sum, *Queenship in Europe* is a handsomely presented and scholarly book, which rises to the challenge of its ambition, not only in the scope of its geographical enquiry, but also in the questions and problems it explores and in the nuanced picture it paints of the lot of royal wives.

Consortship was primarily a female business, and *Queenship in Europe* leaves for future consideration the few male royal consorts of this era. However, although male consorts were an anomaly, their role, and how contemporaries responded to their position, sheds much fascinating light on the expectations and perceptions of a society. Indeed, to what extent did male consortship differ from that of female consortship? It is such a discussion of male consortship, and in particular that of Mary I of England's husband, Philip of Spain, which arguably proves the most striking chapter of David Loades's survey of the mid-Tudor court, *Intrigue and treason*.

In *Intrigue and treason*, Loades explores how the English court in the sixteenth century adapted to the rule, first of a male minor, and then to that of two female adult rulers. Written by the leading expert in the field, the book is aimed at a general and student readership, but also contains much scholarly interest, combining some lively biographical detail with new themes in Tudor history. The work follows the established political narrative of mid-Tudor England, be it with a heavy focus on the monarch and the court. Beginning with the last years of Henry VIII's reign, Loades moves to that of his son, Edward VI and a lucid discussion of Edward's intellectual interests and style of kingship. In line with current scholarship, Loades presents the young king as a generally healthy child of limited priggishness with an enthusiastic absorption in martial matters, who participated in court festivities and who possessed a somewhat sardonic sense of humour.

Queenship, too, naturally comes under Loades's gaze and he examines the very different styles of queenship that the Tudor queens regnant pursued. That Mary I was unable – or refused – to project an elaborately Renaissance image of herself is well established. The most she could draw upon was her undoubted private and public piety, and Loades suggests that her aim was to be viewed in the mould of a royal consort and mother. Certainly, she rejected – or possibly never even considered – using her femininity to personal and political advantage. Not so, of course, her half-sister. Elizabeth I's vigorous endorsement of display and her charismatic and flirtatious bearing is also well known. But it is useful to reconsider both styles of queenship and it is salutatory to remember how much queenship (or kingship) depended on personality as well as circumstances or resources.

Philip of Spain was not a consort in a conventional sense. Not only was he heir apparent to other realms but, even in England, his position was more than that of a spouse. Mary was his wife, and thus the subordinate partner in their relationship. The extent to which Philip had a claim to the English throne, and especially by inheritance in the event that Mary predeceased him, was a problem with which contemporaries struggled. The result was a marriage treaty expressly stating that the inheritance of Mary's throne was subject to

English succession law, and the passing of new parliamentary legislation which included a statute stating that the authority of the English crown was not dependent upon the sex of its holder.

Since Mary's position as queen regnant was an entirely novel phenomenon, her marriage raised a whole set of questions about the nature of English sovereignty. But this was not Philip's only contribution to the English monarchy. Loades shows how he tried to fashion a new role for himself as a king and as a foreign consort to an English queen. In doing so, the Philip in Loades's account comes across as restrained, diplomatic, and sensible. He was sensitive to English sensibilities. He did not insist upon his honour, sitting without complaint on a throne some inches lower than Mary's. He attempted to mediate between his Spanish and English servants, ruling that the former would wait on him in private and the latter in public, a solution which naturally pleased neither. Xenophobic suspicion remained on both sides and at all social levels, which clearly made Philip's task all the harder. In contrast to his Spanish entourage – it was reported that two Spanish noblewomen did not join the court since 'English ladies are of evil conversation' (p. 181) – Philip tried to find common ground with the English nobility, distributing jewellery and pensions on a prodigious scale to courtiers. Unlike a female consort, Philip's sex legitimized his political participation, although this advantage was severely undercut by his being a foreigner.

King Philip supported and complemented Mary's queenship in another, crucial way – by underlining how Marian rule was both masculine and feminine. He organized martial contests in which he, and his English and Spanish followers, participated, which, as the Venetian ambassador reported, ensured that 'by such demonstrations he from day to day gains the goodwill of all' (p. 193). This was not only essential given Philip's initial unpopularity in England, but it also provided him with a forum to recruit potential soldiers amongst the English nobility. Moreover, it allowed him to show off his martial skills, the latter being especially important since the English aristocracy saw the office of the monarch as essentially that of a war leader, an office that Mary could never fulfil.

If Philip's spheres of activity were wider than his female counterparts in early modern Europe, he also assumed a more conventionally feminine role too. Female consorts were often instrumental in initiating and participating in court festivities and theatricals, and so, too, was Philip. Gender issues did not stop there, as Loades indicates. The position of a female consort was never stable until she had produced a male heir to the throne. While Philip's position was not quite so precarious, his followers believed that he would enjoy greater political power if he was the father to the heir of the English crown which, of course, in the event of his wife's death, would also ensure that England stayed within Spain's orbit. And something of Philip's feminized status is also apparent in the fact that he was dependent upon his wife for much real political power. Despite her passionate affection for him, Mary never permitted him to undergo the coronation that he wanted to confirm his position, and was careful to limit his participation in the government of the realm.

While issues of gender and power underscore the narratives of *Queenship in Europe and Intrigue and treason*, the importance of religious ritual to court life and to the image of a prince is a motif that both books also share. But a court's religious expression was not only expressed through religious ritual; it might also take on more elaborately artistic turns. This is admirably demonstrated in Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly's illuminating *Court culture in Dresden*, a fascinating and extremely wide-ranging survey of the Wettin dynasty's artistic, intellectual, and spiritual patronage. As its author suggests, the work is an initial exploration,

designed to stimulate further debate and research work into a court whose eighteenth-century history under Augustus the Strong, Saxon elector and king of Poland is widely known, but whose earlier history is less so. In this aim, the book succeeds, highlighting the richness of the newly opened Saxon court archives for Anglophone readers, and placing Augustus the Strong's cultural achievements in their historical perspective, alongside the contributions made by Augustus's forebears.

Court culture in Dresden focuses on cultural production, rather than on the administrative history of the court. In a series of quasi-essays, Watanabe-O'Kelly explores the intellectual and collecting history of the Dresden court, particularly the origins of the celebrated Dresden *Kunstammer*. She also considers the Italian and French influences on the Wettins, the themes of Saxon theatre and ballet, and the elector's sponsorship of alchemical practices. The emphasis in these chapters is on the cultural preoccupations of the electors themselves and the 'court machine' that fashioned images of the dynasty. While *Court culture in Dresden* is, admittedly, something of an initial survey of the Saxon court, further analysis of the motives of the agents employed by the dynasty to enhance its image would have been another fruitful aspect to have explored, especially since the author highlights the intricate complexities of Saxon court culture elsewhere in the book.

Perhaps the most successful part of the work is the striking chapter on the specifically Lutheran culture of the court. As Watanabe-O'Kelly demonstrates, religious motifs formed an integral intellectual component of the Saxon court's cultural life. Lutheran musical forms were sponsored by the court, in particular the *historia* (a precursor of the oratorio). The elaborate processions which took place before court tournaments might have polemically religious overtones, with figures such as David and Goliath being represented. There were, of course, political and dynastic motivations behind the sponsorship of religiously derived art forms, and no more so than in the Biblical dramas that were staged on court festal occasions. In a fascinating section, Watanabe-O'Kelly explores the textural and performance history of the 'Joseph' plays, staged in the 1660s and 1670s by Johann Georg II to enhance his own dynastic claims within his immediate family. The 'Joseph' plays repeatedly retold the story of Joseph's virtuous struggle against his wicked brothers and his triumph over them. The moral of the series, as one play stated, was clear: 'No one is more filled with hatred than a blood brother when transfer of honour, rank or portion of an inheritance is at issue' (p. 32). The 'Joseph' plays were not only acted before Johann Georg and his court, but he also invited his brothers and their families to watch. His reasons for doing so, Watanabe-O'Kelly suggests, stemmed directly from the fraternal rivalry amongst the brothers, since Johann Georg's father had alienated some of his territory away from his eldest son to distribute amongst his other male offspring, but, due to legal complications, further agreements and resolutions were necessary. As Watanabe-O'Kelly observes, 'biblical drama is thus being used here not for edificatory purposes but in the service of family politics' (p. 34).

The variations and similarities between early modern European courts are themes that preoccupy current court history writing, and Edward Corp's *A court in exile: the Stuarts in France* and Jeroen Duindam's *Vienna and Versailles* exemplify this trend to a respectively lesser and greater extent. Corp takes as his subject the exiled Jacobite court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. When James II and his queen, Mary of Modena, fled England after the Glorious Revolution, they sought shelter from James's cousin, Louis XIV, who allowed them the use of the château of Saint-Germain. Here the exiled Stuarts set up a court, until the departure of James's son, 'James III', in 1712 and the death of Mary of Modena

in 1718. Corp's glossily produced and substantially illustrated study of this court includes contributions by Howard Erskine-Hill, Edward Gregg, and Geoffrey Scott, and explores the exiled court from a wealth of angles, including the structure of the household and the physical layout of the palace, the court's artistic, musical, and religious patronage, the education of the young 'James III', and the eighteenth-century history of the palace.

As such, *A court in exile* is a comprehensive – possibly exhaustive – work on this period of Jacobite history. Occasionally a partisan tone emerges, most notably when it comes to the question of James II's piety or 'James III's' education; and some might quibble at the practice (and indeed the rationale) of describing the uncrowned and exiled Prince James Francis Edward Stuart as James III. Moreover, although the range of experts and topics provides a scholarly depth that would be hard for a single-authored book to match, such a compilation gives the book a certain structural unevenness, from which no real clear thesis emerges, beyond the sense that the Jacobite court at Saint-Germain was more dynamic than previously supposed. Nevertheless, *A court in exile* represents a valuable addition to Jacobite historiography, and to the recent emphasis on the cultural and intellectual background to the Jacobite movement. The work has much for court historians too, and not only in terms of how a court in exile might function, but also how it attempted to retain a cultural identity distinct from that of its host nation.

Corp argues that the popular perception of it as poverty-stricken and furiously Francophile is misplaced. Of course, the Jacobite court could not remain impervious to the problems and demands of its host nation. While some courtiers at Saint-Germain could survive so insularly that they never had need to learn to speak French, even they could not ignore the severe financial problems which beset France during the War of the Spanish Succession. The Jacobite court had been bankrolled by Louis XIV who had provided James II with an annual pension of 600,000 *livres*, but by 1709, this pension fell into arrears, and consequently the salaries of those employed by the court followed suit. Equally problematic were the demands of the French king concerning religion. Although Louis XIV had eventually permitted Protestant Jacobites to follow James II to France, they were not allowed to hold Protestant services. While the number of Jacobite Protestants employed at Saint-Germain was few (sixteen out of one hundred in the king's household in 1693), Louis's dictate appears to have deeply perturbed James II and his queen, and they, effectively, had to turn a blind eye.

If this gives the impression that relations between the exiled Stuarts and the Bourbons were edgy, Corp provides much evidence to suggest closeness between the two royal houses, including an analysis of the frequency with which they met, either at Saint-Germain or Versailles. Louis XIV enjoyed a particularly close relationship with 'James III' as a type of mentor, and the relations between the younger Stuarts and the younger Bourbons seem to have been equally warm, leading Corp to argue that the view that Louis XIV was never fully committed to supporting 'James III' is erroneous.

Despite tensions and despite intimacy, however, the court at Saint-Germain retained a distinct cultural – and regal – identity. The exiled royal household was smaller than the one James II had enjoyed in England. Pressures on royal finances were combined with a lack of space at Saint-Germain, derived from the fact that most royal servants had to be kept in continuous employment since they could not retire to their estates, as had been the case in England. It was thus, structurally, different to the late Stuart court in England, the Bedchamber being elided with the Chamber in a throwback to the pre-1603 Stuart court. But it was still a recognizably royal English and Scottish court, underlining James II

(and VII)'s claim that he remained the rightful king of England and Scotland. Accordingly, James and his queen dined in public as they had when at Whitehall, and James commissioned an extensive amount of goldware and silverware for this very purpose. Moreover, it is clear that although the Stuart court was now on French soil it retained a degree of independence as an institution, as indicated by its cultural and religious patronage. In terms of artistic patronage, the exiled court's taste was markedly French, but in musical terms, the court was decidedly Italianate. Indeed, Corp argues, consequently, that the Jacobite court thus exerted a 'decisive influence' (p. 202) on introducing Italian religious and domestic music into France.

This emphasis on the differences between the courts of Europe in terms of practice, structure, and organization is the theme of Duindam's *Vienna and Versailles*. This, too, is a handsomely produced and illustrated study, based on extensive research in French and Imperial archives. Like the author's earlier work on Norbert Elias, his latest is a considerable contribution to the literature on the early modern court.¹¹ Duindam takes his cue from recent re-interpretations of absolutism, aristocracy, and state-building, seeking to write a *longue durée* comparative history of the courts of France and Austria, and thus to 'establish an outline of the development of these two courts, and ... to contribute to a general framework of questions allowing us to reappraise the essential features of the early modern court' (p. 20). In particular, Duindam seeks to provide 'concrete answers' (p. 19) to questions such as who went to court and why, what the daily activities of court officers comprised and how ceremony shaped their days, and the political importance of the royal household. This is a valuable undertaking. There has been much theoretical speculation (chiefly by Elias) concerning how the French court operated and an empirical assessment of the workings of the court is thus much needed.

Duindam begins by calculating the numerical size and cost of the households of the Habsburgs and Bourbons, before examining the court's ritual year and the role of ceremony and the nature of power at court. In doing so, he points to a number of differences between the two courts, although he is careful to stress that the sources for tracing the history of the French court are much richer than those available for its Austrian counterpart. For a start, the Habsburg court was less costly. Moreover, the architecture of the Habsburgs was spatially more modest, and more pious in tone, than that of the French. Unsurprisingly, then, although the liturgical year was important in shaping the calendar of both courts, the Habsburgs were more piously ostentatious than Bourbons (more frequent religious observances, fewer mistresses), and it was only at the end of the period under scrutiny, in Joseph II's reign, that the famed Habsburg piety started to wane. The French monarchy was celebrated for its openness of access, with the Bedchamber accessible to all. This was typical of a bustling court that formed the locus of entertainment for the elites in a way in which the Habsburg court never really did. By contrast, access to the emperor was limited and the nobility attended the court because they were entitled to do so rather than as frequent social callers. It was only in the mid-eighteenth century that a 'salon-style' culture developed at the Hofburg. It is telling that the Habsburg princess, Queen Marie Antoinette, who provided a bridge between both courts, was criticized by the French for rejecting the 'public' role expected of a queen of France when she pursued a more private 'Habsburg' style of queenship.

¹¹ Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1995).

What do we learn from this comparative history? Certainly, it provides telling confirmation that there was not just one universal type of court. Moreover, by placing both courts in the context of early modern state formation, and using them as case studies to explore this broader theme, Duindam illuminates how local nobilities were 'integrated' into the activities of central government, rather than being merely 'domesticated' by court service. *Vienna and Versailles* is an ambitious work, fleshing out earlier conjectures about court life with empirical material. There are times, though, when the threads of this broad analysis become difficult to follow in the welter of analytical detail and the shift from one court to another across two centuries. This reader, at least, longed for an occasional extended case study of a particular individual or moment. Moreover, its focus is relatively traditional in terms of content. This is a story about households, expenditure, ceremony, and power brokering. It is a shame that the author, while gesturing towards other more original aspects of enquiry, such as the role of royal palaces as tourist attractions, the dynamics between the court and the capital city, or indeed the lives and routines of lesser court servants, does not follow through these fascinating lines of enquiry.

The works reviewed here reaffirm the political, social, and cultural power of the court in this period. Putting religion back into court politics is a welcome trend that carries court history into the mainstream of current historical writing and persuasively explains how and why early modern rulers were understood to be semi-divine beings with a confessionalized mandate to rule. The moves to differentiate between court cultures is also welcome to our understanding of the era, especially since retaining a distinct cultural identity was a vital way in which a prince could stress his own political independence and status. But, arguably, the most revealing development of all has been the marriage of court and gender history. Through analysing the role of women at court, court historians have illuminated how courts might operate as spaces where politics and sociability were entwined, thus shedding further light on who participated in early modern high politics; for although most royal and aristocratic women had no formal political role, the court and its cultural patronage gave them opportunities for informal political involvement. Moreover, developments in gender history, in particular the growing interest in masculinity, have provided court historians with further invaluable perspectives, especially since kingly power and reputation was overwhelmingly constructed in gendered terms. Early modern court studies, then, remains a lively and expanding field of historical enquiry.

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