

Festival Culture in the World of the Spanish Habsburgs.

Fernando Checa Cremades and Laura Fernández-González, eds.

Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xxii + 300 pp. \$134.95.

In recent years festivals, rituals, and related arts have been established as among the most refined productions of early modern culture. Their definition not as a performance of power, but as part of the structure of the early modern state, has multiplied the number of scholars devoted to the study of festivals from a multidisciplinary approach. In this volume Fernando Checa Cremades and Laura Fernández-González propose a mosaic of papers focused on one of the more complex political structures of the early modern era:

the Spanish empire of the Habsburgs. The twelve papers demonstrate how the court of Madrid employed festivals and ceremonies throughout their immense empire to unify a conglomerate of kingdoms that included many different races and languages but shared not only the same prince, but the same concept of the state. The different nationalities and training of the authors provides a wide sample of Habsburg festivals and opens promising paths for future research, even as the complexity of the topic prevents the book from conveying a deep study of the diverse manifestations of Habsburg ceremonials.

The essays are organized in four sections focused on the ritual use of tapestries at court, triumphal entries in the Habsburgs' world, religious ceremonies, and the use of arts and music to extol the monarchs. Teófilo F. Ruiz prefaces the book by underlining the importance of festivals as a transnational product that was constructed by the ruling dynasty in Spain and was able to create a common cultural identity across the empire. This point of view is reinforced by the editors through the introduction, where they assess the hybridity of that body politic called Spain and its cultural manifestations. The first two chapters analyze the visual codes of tapestries and their use in Habsburg ceremonies. Fernando Checa underlines the importance of the series *The Conquest of Tunis* for the construction of the image of Emperor Charles V, while Miguel Ángel Zalama focuses his essay on the prominence of tapestries at the Habsburg court and their use in ceremonies such as the Golden Fleece.

The second section of the volume offers different approaches to the development of the triumphal entry in the Habsburg domains. Maria Ines Aliverti and Franca Varallo analyze the progress of Margaret of Austria through Spanish Lombardy, and Víctor Mínguez narrates some examples in the American viceroyalties. David Sánchez Cano provides a fine interpretation on the configuration of Madrid as capital for the composite monarchy of the Habsburgs and the relevance of rituals for the creation of a "festival space" within the urban planning of the city. Laura Fernández-González, through the study of the royal entry of Philip II in Lisbon, assesses the importance of festivals to perform the agreement between the prince and his subjects. The primary role of religion in the government of the immense Habsburg empire is exemplified by the papers by Juan Luis González García on Madrid and Sabina de Cavi on Palermo, while Alejandra B. Osorio uses America as a case study and Kantorowicz as a methodological framework to delve into the importance of kings' simulacra. The last section of the book provides a brief approach to the importance of arts for the configuration of Habsburg festivals. Noel O'Regan presents a documented study on music and musicians promoted by the Spanish church of San Giacomo in Rome, while Ida Mauro analyzes the festive image of the Spanish kings in viceregal Naples and the artists involved in its fabrication.

With this book Fernando Checa Cremades and Laura Fernández-González follow the task initiated by scholars such as Jean Jacquot, Roy Strong, J. R. Mulryne, or Margaret McGowan. Significantly, the volume not only narrates processions, theatrical performances, or ephemeral architectures and goes beyond the well-established point about the significance of festivals and their specific configurations. Rather, the essays here point to the pivotal character of festivals to articulate the relationship between the

princely house of Habsburg and their subjects, independent yet loyal. This is the main achievement of the volume: to overcome geographical approaches, traditionally limited to contemporary realities such as Italy or the Americas, and to propose a much broader framework on the complex world of the Spanish Habsburgs.

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