

Laura Fernandez-Gonzalez
The University of Edinburgh

Short Visit Grant
ESF activity entitled "Court Residences as Places of Exchange in Late
Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1400-1700)".

My visit to Vienna was to participate in **The Habsburgs and their Courts in Europe, 1400-1700. Between Cosmopolitanism and Regionalism** conference at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (7-10 Dec. 2011). My talk entitled *Historia Pro Patria: the Hall of Battles in El Escorial Monastery and the Fame of the Universal Monarch* explored how the battles frescoed in the gallery reflected a number of events and themes of importance for the Spanish House of Habsburg. Identified these topics, I exposed the initial results of my investigation in which I had cross examined how these themes were portrayed in a number of funeral chronicles, eulogies, sonnets, and other printed sources dedicated to mourn the death of Philip II of Spain.

The discussion established afterwards in the round of questions, and even later, with scholars was among the best I have had at any conference I had attended in the past. I am especially grateful for the comments from Krista de Jonge on the function of the space. Jonge's remarks instigated other conversations with speakers during the course of the conference concerning notions of commemoration, space, and redefinitions of the notions of 'private' and 'public' during the early modern period. I also enjoyed a discussion with Pieter Marteens concerning his investigation on European representation of battles. A long discussion with Catherine Wilkinson-Zerner was extremely enlightening regarding the style of the warfare representation deployed at the Hall. I am very grateful to all of them.

The conference was very impressive, not only for the high number of highly regarded academics participating, but most importantly for the cutting edge investigations they presented. I was especially captured by the re-examination Catherine Zerner-Wilkinson did on the assimilation of Mudéjar features in Castilian architecture in the sixteenth-century. This was also connected to other models I am studying in the Iberian peninsula, such as some spaces in the Simancas Archive in Valladolid. In a similar vein there were many talks regarding this idea of assimilation with the Ottoman Empire. This made me think also about this same situation in the Iberian peninsula.

Andrea Sommer-Mathis talk on festivals was also of my interest. I was especially captured by one of the representations of water festivals.

These are only some of the scholars I shared discussions with, although my line of research interest has links with many of the other speakers and participants at the conference, I shared fantastic discussions with many of them. The scholarly discussion fostered during the conference has pushed my own thinking and my investigation further. In fact, I have included some small additions to the final typescript of my doctoral thesis reflecting things I learned through these discussions mentioned above.

I plan to publish part of the research presented at the conference in the form of a paper, and other part forms part of a monograph based on my PhD thesis. I also had during the course of the conference an informal meeting with my fellow co-editor of a book length publication we are preparing. This book currently pre-contracted with Brill is entitled provisionally: *Court & Spaces of Power in Early Modern Lisbon (1581-1622)*. We were looking for an author to write one chapter, and we actually commissioned one from one of the participants at the conference.

In my view, this conference achieved one of the most important aims of any scholarly meeting, and this is to foster academic discussion and collaborations. As explained above, attending to this conference was a great opportunity. Thank you very much.

Laura Fernandez Gonzalez
The University of Edinburgh