

RESEARCH NETWORKING PROGRAMME  
PALATIUM. COURT RESIDENCES AS PLACES OF EXCHANGE IN LATE  
MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE (1400-1700)

FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

ONLINE SHORT SCIENTIFIC REPORT  
for ESF granted participants

### 1. Purpose of the visit

Thanks to the funding of the European Science Foundation I have attended as a speaker to the conference *The Habsburgs and their Courts in Europe, 1400-1700. Between Cosmopolitanism and Regionalism* held in the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Theatersaal, in Vienna, from 7 to 10 December 2011. The event was organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

### 2. Description of the work carried out during the visit

My paper, entitled *Stairways to Heaven Dynastic Symbolism and Illusionistic Painting in the Spanish Habsburgs' Palace-Monasteries (1665-1692)* was included in the first session, dedicated to the presentations by Early-Career Researchers, where six more speakers contributed with different topics related to the Habsburg Dynasty members, their residences, collecting habits, and their role as patrons of the arts. I particularly enjoyed the paper presented by Laura Fernandez Gonzalez (University of Edinburgh): *'Historia Pro Patria': the Hall of Battles in El Escorial Monastery and the fame of the Universal Monarch* which explained the use given to the frescoes mentioned in the title, and the one lectured by Milton Pedro Dias Pacheco (Universidade Nova de Lisboa): *Palaces on the edge of the Atlantic: the architectural reformation and the space ritualization of the Portuguese royal residences during the reign of Philip I of Habsburg (1580-1598)*, about the habitational and representative solutions adopted by Phillip II in the surroundings of Lisbon.

When my turn arrived, the last paper of a chronologically ordered panel, I analysed the specific representative use given to the decoration of stairways in the Spanish Habsburg's palace-convent architecture. I focused my discussion on a comparison between two stairways, which at first glance seem disparate. The first is that in the Royal Convent of Discalced Franciscan Nuns in Madrid, known as the *Descalzas Reales* and the second is that in the cloister of the Evangelists in the Monastery of El Escorial. Although they were built at different times in the sixteenth century, they were decorated at the end of the seventeenth century, and they both use illusionistic architecture to create a lifelike setting for the portraits of the king and his family.

The academic meeting was articulated in five sessions, that were very balanced in quality and interest. In my opinion, the first one about *'Repraesentatio Majestatis' And Residency* comprised some of the more interesting topics in discussion, and included one of the best lectures of the Congress, an outstanding contribution by Renate Holzschuh-Hofer (Bundesdenkmalamt, Wien) entitled *Multiple identities of Casa Austria during the 16th century: the function of 'Residence Architecture' designed as an enduring component within the culture of presence, 'Präsenzkultur', of the early modern time.* The next thematic unit, *Imperial, Royal Or Princely Identity And Regional Patriotism* was a heterogenic panel that included Baltic, Czech, Bohemian and Hungarian subjects. The Imperial city of Vienna was an especially appropriated dwell to house the academic debate about the *Habsburg Rulers And Muslims' Courts*, taking account of the dynamic relationship carried by ambassadors, delegates and merchants that travelled between the two poles of attraction.

*Religious Practices And The Court - I & II.* Two sessions were needed to fulfil one of the principal research topics of Habsburg culture: the dynastic devotional tradition which might be called "Pietas Austriaca" (Adoration of the Eucharist, of the Holy Virgin, the Holy Cross, and the Saints). Almost every approach presented during the sessions delves on this theme, as long as their image as virtuous and

pious rulers formed an integral part of their dynastic legitimacy, testifying to the origin of sovereignty and the obedience owed to it.

### **3. Description of the main results obtained**

First of all, I had the opportunity to work again with Dr. Herbert Karner, who I have had the great honor and pleasure to meet in some academic events in the past. This conference also offered me the chance to get in touch with such important figures as Prof. Larry Silver, Prof. Catherine Wilkinson, Dr. Annemarie Jordan, Dr. Andrea Somer-Mathis, and Prof. Bernardo García. In the same way, I met some other very interesting and highly valuable colleagues, such as Laura Fernandez and Vanessa de la Cruz, who I am looking forward to seeing again in future seminars.

In terms of academic progress, I think that the discussions held during this four days have been very enlightening, fruitful and encouraging for me as an early career scholar.

### **4. Projected publications resulting or to result from the grant**

A collection of papers will be published in English after evaluating the conference's results, and I hope mine is chosen among those.

### **5. Other comments**

The whole organization of the event, with the excursions, catering, additional presentations, together with the exceptional places where the sessions and other activities were held, constituted an extra motivation for attending the meeting. The first day, after a delightful Opening Concert given at the *Hofburgmusikkapelle* by the Baroque Music Group "Le Carillon", a remarkable moment came when Professor Larry Silver (University of Pennsylvania) delivered the Opening Lecture with the title *Europe's Turkish Nemesis*, displaying an incisive analysis on the war of images fought between the Ottoman Empire and the Catholic World in the sixteenth century.