

1. Purpose of the visit

I was one of four early career researchers selected to present a paper entitled *Distinguished Guests, Diplomacy and Foreign Policy at the Caroline Court, 1638-1641* at the colloquium - The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Early Modern Courts, 1400–1700. Ideas of access, intimacy and favour discussed throughout the colloquium - in particular by the key note speaker, Prof. Ronald G. Asch – relate directly to my own research and forthcoming publications. Indeed, papers on elite women’s history, Caroline diplomatic relations and ceremonial encounters are themes which are all embedded within my forthcoming monograph on Caroline court women. The visit enabled me to circulate my ideas on female policy-making, access, favour and diplomacy, as well as gain vital feedback from specialists in my field before submitting this article for consideration with a leading academic journal.

Moreover, the opportunity to network at the colloquium was crucial at this post-doctoral stage, as I seek to develop my international profile, make key contacts in the field of European court history and apply for European postdoctoral funding. This was successful as I have been invited by Dr Anna Kalinowska to present my research at her conference entitled *Splendid Encounters: diplomats and diplomacy in Europe, 1550 – 1750* to be held in Warsaw in 2013.

2. Description of the work carried out during the visit

My presentation examined how the favour and influence enjoyed by Marie de Médicis and Marie de Rohan, duchesse de Chevreuse, as distinguished guests at the court of Charles I, impacted directly on Caroline diplomatic relations with both France and Spain in the late 1630s. It explored how historiographical understandings of the residency of Marie de Médicis and the duchesse de Chevreuse in England are based traditionally upon the works of Caroline Hibbard and Malcolm Smuts. Hibbard's seminal work *Charles I and the Popish Plot* has placed the aims and intrigues of the duchesse and the queen mother within the papal agent, George Con's efforts to create a *dévo*t or Catholic court party around Henrietta Maria. However, in contrast to Hibbard, Smuts argues that there was a continued crossover of factions between pro-French and pro-Spanish courtiers by the calling of the Long Parliament in 1640. My presentation consciously built upon Smuts's analysis of a more complicated story of the pro-Spanish foreign policy of Henrietta Maria's court from 1638 onwards, while also exploring the exact truth behind Hibbard's assessment of the political intrigue surrounding the French malcontents in London.

My presentation emphasised a more socially derived understanding of politics focused on the court and social networks, as key to the process of governance in the early modern period. The paper explored how the close personal relationship of Charles I and Henrietta Maria from 1628 onwards and the regular interaction of their respective establishments provided members of their respective courts with vital access to the royal couple. This was particularly important when the absence of Parliament from 1629-1640 increasingly directed the focus of national and international politics onto the Caroline court. By building upon Sharon Kettering's definition of French noble women's power as 'indirect', I examined how Marie de Médicis and the duchesse de Chevreuse influenced Caroline diplomatic relations

and policy-making during their residencies in London and on account of the privileged access they enjoyed to Charles I and Henrietta Maria

My presentation highlighted additionally how aristocratic court women were vital in forging and sustaining ties with other European powers, such as Spain and Holland. Key questions about the transnational nature of Caroline court politics and the relationship between access, intimacy, gender and political power were explored. Though Queen Henrietta Maria's court is traditionally looked upon as pro-Spanish by the calling of the Long Parliament in 1640, my presentation suggested that the presence of the queen mother helped to link the Caroline court to a pro-Protestant policy in Europe. In doing so, I argued that this new interpretation of Henrietta Maria's court in balancing links with Catholics and Protestants as late as 1641 questioned the traditional impression of the queen's entourage as a centre of Catholicism from 1637.

3. Description of the main results obtained

The paper received generally positive feedback, particularly in relation to its analysis of female diplomacy and the extent to which female favour and access could affect mainstream policy-making. I was reminded by Christina Antenhofer that marriage negotiations are a traditional female occupation in the early modern period, which I will address and reflect upon in the publication of this work. The question of gender roles and female submission to traditional patriarchal structures was also raised and again will be considered prior to publication.

Presentations on female access were of particular relevance to my forthcoming chapter in an edited collection with Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben entitled *The Politics of*

Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe, which will be published by Brill next year. Christiana Antenhofer's discussion of the female bedchamber as a private and public space emphasised the important role that rights of entry, architecture and court ceremonial played in negotiations of power structures in early modern Italian city states. My forthcoming monograph on Caroline court women will attempt to incorporate these points in wider discussions of the female bedchamber. Neil Murphy's analysis of civic and monarchical negotiations in France during the 15th and 16th centuries provided further insight into an article that I am submitting for consideration with *English Historical Review* on Anglo-French relations and La Rochelle in the seventeenth century. Finally, Anna Kalinowska's analysis of Sir Thomas Roe's diplomatic negotiations at the Polish court relates directly to the emphasis on foreign policy and the Palatinate within my own research on the Caroline court. The cross-over in our research areas resulted in an invitation to present my research at Dr Kalinowska's conference *Splendid Encounters: diplomats and diplomacy in Europe, 1550 – 1750* to be held in Warsaw next year.

4. Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)

Not applicable

5. Projected publications / articles resulting or to result from the grant (ESF must be acknowledged in publications resulting from the grantee's work in relation with the grant)

I intend to submit this paper for consideration with a leading academic journal and to include part of this research in my monograph on Caroline court women.

6. Other comments (if any).

I am very grateful to Palatium for facilitating my access to a conference that was of such relevance to my own work as a court and political historian.