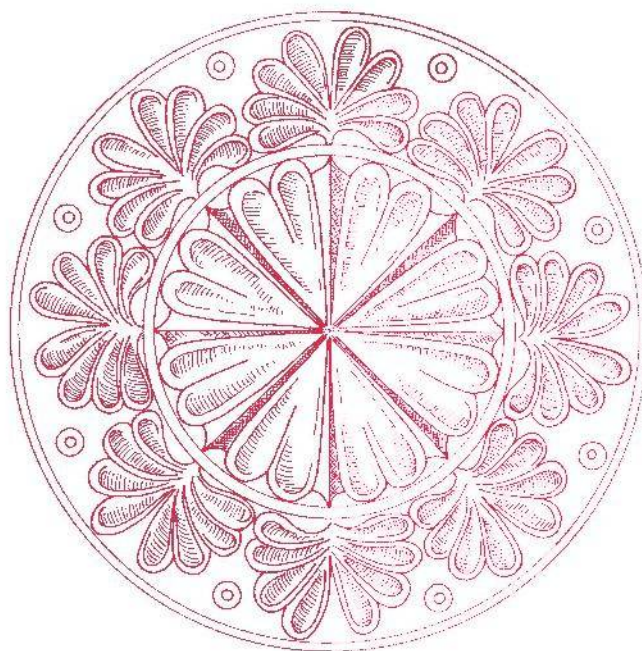


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RECENZII / BOOK REVIEWS

The Interior as an Embodiment of Power. The Image of the Princely Patron and its Spatial Setting (1400-1700), Stephan Hoppe, Stefan Breitling and Krista De Jonge (eds.) with the assistance of Andrea Gáldy, Palatium e-Publication, Volume 5, Heidelberg, 2018, 231 pp. + il., ISBN 978-90-8282-591-6

The court palaces have a long tradition of scholarly investigation, yet new approaches in research of the sources and chronology have revealed largely unexplored areas of research in the history of architecture. Themes concerning the architectural strategies of displaying the magnificence of the ruler, the rituals and etiquettes of power embodied in the distribution of internal spaces, the complex authorship of the architectural conception and the building construction, among others emphasised a complex set of influences on the palatial architecture, which needs to be addressed alongside the building history.¹ In the last twenty years a series of international scientific meetings and seminars have explored the methodological renewals and innovations in the field, among which the European Science Foundation's Research Network Programme – PALATIUM, developed between 2010 and 2015, represents one of the most complex and systematic initiatives in this field. It has been gathering scholars and institutions across all over Europe to tackle the interdisciplinary and international research on the late medieval and early modern court residences architecture.²

The book under discussion is the fifth publication in the series *Palatium e-Publication*, coming as a result of the international colloquium *The Interior as an Embodiment of Power. The Image of the Prince and its Spatial Setting, 1400-1700*, held in Bamberg on 4-6 October 2013 and organized by the editors. Similarly to the other four previous publications of the series, the volume is available in open access, on the programme website.³ It belongs thus to one of the Palatium's characteristics and aims, *i.e.* being open and raising the awareness of this

less investigated component of early modern residences. The volume comprises a collection of 10 articles, ordered chronologically, which explore the intentions behind the design and decoration of the interiors of late medieval and early modern courtly residences. The premise of the book relies on the fact that the European early modern court culture implied a conscious display of power with the help of spatial arrangements, interior decoration, ephemeral architecture, scenography, among others, meant to support the princely image and power and his entitlements. Moreover, as the editors resume “codified spatial settings together with traditions of etiquette and interaction have formed a long-lasting *topos* in people's minds over the centuries. The richly decorated and only partially accessible interior as an embodiment of power is a consistent part of our cultural memory.” (p. 13)

The methodology promoted by the contributors moves from purely stylistic analysis to a more complex understanding of the architecture, where functional analysis complements the formal layout analysis and the decorative program of the interiors (including decoration and furnishings), drawing as well on a wealth of archival documentary evidence, as for example the interpretation of written sources regarding the ceremonies and the daily activities patterns. Most of the contributions use as their iconographical sources courtly architectural representations found in miniatures, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, and tapestry, *i.a.*, in comparison with fewer analysis using the architectural characteristics of the buildings as results from building history (floor plans, facades). Nevertheless, the analysis of the interior architecture in conjunction with the court society cultural would not be possible without a previous extensive research on the building architectural history including architectural research, archival inventories, historical reports, and archaeological findings. One of the main difficulties in this task is the profound transformations of the spaces over the past centuries (subsequent phases of construction, changing of function with the loss of material evidence of the original functional context, change of the original conception, fluctuation of rank and number of inhabitants, refurbishments and adaptation of style to a different historical period). Therefore, the virtual reconstructions and proposed models of the interiors prove to be valuable tools in recovering the meaning and the importance of numerous objects, otherwise lost in museums and deposits (furniture, paintings, and funerary monuments).

The volume opens with the article of Annamarie Ersek (*Between place and function: Notes on the Portrait Galleries in Charles IV's Residences of Karlstein and Prague*),

¹ M. Folin, *Court Architecture in Renaissance. Ongoing problems and trends in research*, in European Architectural History Network Newsletter 6, 2012, pp. 6-9.

² See more details about the program and its outcomes in: P. Martens, K. De Jonge, *PALATIUM: Court Residences as Places of Exchange in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe 1400-1700*, in European Architectural History Network Newsletter 6, 2012, pp. 16-25 and on the website: <http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/home/>.

³ <http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/publications/e-Publications/>.

who analyses an assemblage of 55 fresco portraits for Karlstein castle and 120 portraits on panel commissioned for the Prague castle by Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor. These galleries comprising royal ancestors' portraits and being commissioned at the beginning of his reign (soon after 1355), aim at legitimizing his position. Charles IV belonged to a family which only recently entered in the upper strata of society in Central Europe, therefore the use of history and the cult of ancestors and predecessors underscore his dynastic connections, also securing a royal crown for his heirs. The author identified and researched in the same time the architectural setting meant for their display, convincingly recreating a strategy of representation, in which the location and accessibility were revealed as important characteristics. In the case of Karlstein castle, the gallery was located on the castle's second floor, different from the Audience Hall, and reserved to a limited number of visitors, "the privileged few" (p. 18), while the Prague gallery was painted in the main Audience Hall of the sovereign.

The genealogical representation through heraldic portraits displayed in the great halls or in the special galleries by means of painting, full-size statues or heads of Roman emperors, etc. manifest a direct reference to the antique imperial tradition, cultivated by the court humanists.

Within the same theme of iconography of the interior (decoration, furnishings, paintings, works of art) and the way it underscores the power and status of a political ruler, we should mention here as well the article of Ingrid Halászová-Štibraná (*Aristocratic Interiors of the Kaisersaal Type from the Mid-seventeenth Century in the Kingdom of Hungary: A Case of Habsburg Imperial Iconography in the Lange Saal of the Pálffy Residence at Červený Kameň [Slovakia]*). She discusses a collection of sixteen limestone busts from 1654, representing Habsburg Holy Roman kings and emperors, fashioned in the *all'antica* way, which decorated the interior of the aristocratic residence belonging to the count Nicolaus (Miklós) IV Pálffy in Červený Kameň (Slovakia). The sculptures were positioned inside the niches of the Hall of the Staircase (*Langer Saal*), on the *piano nobile* of the castle and were inspired by the popular iconography of the 12 ancient *Caesars* according to Suetonius. The identification of Leopold I among the statues, who was not at that time elected king, being still in the period of his regency, gave the author arguments for interpreting his representation within this collection as an expression of political loyalty supporting Leopold's aspiration to the imperial throne. The iconographical representations of cycles of rulers and of members of ruling dynasties in the interiors of aristocratic residences from the Habsburg territories became a fashion during the seventeenth century, with a preference for antique references. Even in the situations when the political loyalty was directed to the

anti-Habsburg party, as is the case of Transylvania which the author mentions here as well to illustrate the spread of this custom. Therefore, during the anti-Habsburg uprisings, in some rebellious Hungarian aristocratic residences, temporary display of Transylvanian princes and kings descending from Johann (János) Zápolya have been cautiously exhibited by means of prints, drawings, or watercolour representations.⁴

The second contribution of the volume following the chronological order belongs to one of the editors, Krista De Jonge, Professor of architectural history at the University of Leuven - KU Leuven, who has been playing a decidedly central role in the *Palatium* organisation over all. The article *Ceremonial 'Grey Areas': On the Placing and Decoration of Semi-Public and Semi-Private Spaces in Burgundian-Habsburg Court Residences in the Low Countries (1450-1550)* investigates the appearance, the location, and function of the spaces developed in between the major components of the spatial structures of the court residences, the so-called *ceremonial grey areas*. The author analyses various examples of *Salette*, *Grand Chambre (Chambre de Parement)*, *Antichambre (Antisale)*, *Chambre de Paal*, revealing a flexibility in the spatial and functional organization, but at the same time a *fluidity of terminology*. Nevertheless, the author interprets the multiplication of the spaces in between the public reception room and the private spaces of the monarch, clearly visible in the sixteenth century in Spain, as an indicator of the growing distance between the king and his court.

The layout typologies analysed in connection with the written sources disclose the symbolic value of a particular space in term of power representation. Two other articles from this volume are part of the same category of studies: Nicole Riegel (*Hospitality and Splendour: The Case of Schloss Neuburg am Inn, c.1530*) and Franciszek Skibiński (*The Court of the Sun God Revisited: Interiors of the Royal Villa in Wilanów in their Cultural and Political Context*). Nicole Riegel presents the case of the Neuburg am Inn residence following the transformation of the medieval castle in 1528 as an example of innovative palace building and interior decoration in Early-Renaissance Germany, built not for the owner's comfort and pleasure, but for the admiration of high-ranking guests. She identifies a complex system of spatial structure and decoration, suggesting that behind the "exorbitant" costs of the marble rooms lays the aim of creating an apartment for the sovereign himself.

Late seventeenth century architectural intervention in the suburbs of Warsaw under Jan III Sobieski's patronage is the subject of the analysis elaborated by F.

⁴ See more on G. Cennerné-Wilhelmb, *Utilisation de modèles iconographiques et stylistiques dans l'art du portrait en Hongrie au XVII. siècle*, Acta Historiae Artium 22, 1-2, 1976, pp. 117-133.

Skibiński. The author aims at deciphering the messages of the interior decoration, re-examining the decorative programme in the context of royal ceremonies and “self-expression” propaganda. The understanding of the decorative program within its spatial context reveals also its relation with the ceremonial route. What is especially interesting, is the observation concerning the gender distinction in the iconography of the architectural decoration, a symbol of the royal couple’s complementarity and their equal importance in the life of their kingdom. Deciphering an iconographical programme and a spatial distribution common within European courts, the author understands it as a statement of the King, who had a rather limited power among powerful and independent magnates, and who wished to dominate them by affirming his position in European politics.

It is the contribution of Astrid Lang (*Holbein’s Whitehall Mural for Henry VIII: Spacing a Place for the King*) that tackles another central theme of this volume, the cultural transfer of architectural and decorative patterns. Starting with 1536 York Palace became Whitehall Palace and the main residence of Henry the VIII (1491-1547), King of England, one of the most extravagant palaces in Europe. The author discusses the monumental wall painting *Whitehall Mural*, made by Hans Holbein the Younger intended “to promote the Tudor dynasty, its genealogy and succession” (p. 106). Searching to analyse the painting in its original spatial setting, for better understanding its meanings, the author suggests as a possible location the *privy chamber*. The new palace layout (apparently designed by the King himself) brought a significant modification of the traditional layout in that, among others, it separated the *privy chamber* and the *bedchamber*. During the reign of Henry VIII, by adopting the French tradition, the royal apartments became more accessible to the members of the court; nevertheless, the *privy chamber* preserved its private character where few selected members received access (the politics of intimacy). The commission of *Whitehall Mural* during a tumultuous period following the controversial actions of Henry VIII (*i.e.* declared himself head of Church of England, ordered the execution of five members of the *privy chamber*, and the beheading of Anne Boleyn) is deciphered as an act of authority of the king in the middle of his courtiers. Also, the author convincingly argues that besides the above stated meanings, the monumental *Whitehall Mural* is also a deliberate statement of the king in favour of a more distant relationship with his own courtiers, supported by his consequently retreat to his “secret lodgings”.

Another contribution which fits in the same theme of cultural transfer is Alexandra Nancy Johnson’s article (*Mary Stuart’s Inner Chamber at Holyrood*). A fascinating

study on the symbolic architectural interventions directed by Mary Stuart at the Holyrood palace in a vulnerable historical moment (after a rebellion of the Magnates had overthrown Queen Marie de Guise-Lorraine as Regent over Scotland) in order to seize control and attain the obedience and loyalty of the rebel magnates and reinforce her status as monarch. The author identified the change in location of the traditional Stewart audience chamber inside the monarch’s *bedchamber* as a strategic movement in her will to underscore the legitimacy of her monarchical power, imitating the Valois tradition which she knew intimately. Moreover, the author suggests that the arrangement of the *bedchamber* with Valois beds of estate and other furnishings (almost 200 items of her Valois dowry, specially shipped from France), together with the French court ceremonials have proved to be a success in gaining the obedience of the rebel magnates.

Practical aspects of the interior decoration can be significantly relevant in interpreting the embodiment of power in the interior decoration, as the contribution of Katherine Anne Wilson suggests (*Furnishing the Dukes with a Royal Reputation. The use of Chambers at the Burgundian Court*). On the basis of the inventories of moveable goods made with the occasion of the death of dukes and the daily expenditure of the households, the author investigates the Burgundian ducal residences at the end of the fifteenth century and their textile chambers and chapels of itinerant courts. This contribution reveals practical details of the work of decorating the spaces, identifying persons in charge of the furnishing the interiors, the quantity of the moveable objects of a court, the inventory of the textiles necessary to decorate a chamber, etc. For example five carts out of the total of 72 were necessary for the transport of the textiles in 1435 to move the court from Dijon to Arras and Lille. The article also reveals two less debated situations when the representational program is somehow ineffective, rejected by the visitors.

Ulrike Seeger’s contribution (*Vienna, Prague, Paris and Augsburg: The Provisioning of Interior Decoration in the Ludwigsburg Residence*), concentrates more on deciphering the set of influences in the architectural programme of the building, extension and decoration of Ludwigsburg Residence in Württemberg, commissioned by Duke Eberhard Ludwig at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The author investigates the sources of inspiration, the architects, artists and workers involved in building the palace, revealing numerous references to the highest contemporary examples, among which we mention: architectural engraving from Parisian Pierre Lepautre, engravings from Augsburg, northern Italian plasterers and stucco artists arriving from Prague, and a French engraving representing the ceiling decoration of the Palais Tessin from Stockholm. The author explains

these complex patterns of influences in the interior decoration as the wish of Duke Eberhard Ludwig to affirm himself at the level of Holy Roman Empire rulers.

The Annette C. Cremer contribution investigating The Dollhouse Collection *Mon Plaisir* in Arnstadt (Germany), a genuine collection from the first half of eighteenth century, marks the end of the volume [*The Model of a Régence Palace Interior: The Dollhouse Collection Mon Plaisir in Arnstadt/Germany (1690–1750)*]. Collecting dolls has been one of the central occupations of the Princess Auguste Dorothea of Schwarzburg, over her entire life span. The dollhouse collection began in the 1690s and the latest accounts have been recorded in her death year 1751. For almost 60 years of collecting, the final collection amounted to 82 scenes in 17 dollhouse ensembles with more than 2000 miniatures and over 400 figurines. The collection was set in the gallery of her private *maison de la plaisance*, called Augustenburg (built around 1710 near Arnstadt). The cabinets followed a real sequence of spaces, being equipped with doors and windows, dolls populating the spaces inside and outside, describing a “lively community of every social status” (p. 212). Aside from the scenes depicting court related themes, facilities of the real court (stables, buttery, wine cellar, etc.), a number of scenes also depicts travels and shopping tours, while two cabinets display her conversion to Catholicism (1715). As the author concludes, the collection portrays “a condensed microcosmos of early eighteenth-century life in a middle-German residential city”, providing a portrait of the court of Princess Auguste of Schwarzburg, together with several details from her own biography, a certain “object-based court-diary”. Examining the architectural details of the houses, their construction principles and interior decoration, the author also discerns several elements of reception the French Régence in Germany, as a “three-dimensional model-catalogue for up-to-date interior decoration”.

Finally, the overall content of the volume brings an important contribution to the subject and helpfully complements the didactic aims of the *Palatium* events. It is also impressive the great number and the high quality of the publications *Palatium* had produced, either by themselves⁵ or in collaboration.⁶ We must though notice the difference in publishing quality of the e-Publications series compared to the printed books, published otherwise at prestigious publishing houses. The choice of placing the foot-notes at the end, after the bibliography, the list of sources, and the list of illustrations, for example, creates a discomfort in browsing the critical apparatus. Nevertheless, the collection of studies offer a stimulating panoply of situations and conditions in which interior decoration and architecture reflect the social realities of power and prestige in the courtly milieu. As one of the aims of this European scale overview was to surpass the modern national boundaries research when evaluating the cosmopolitan early modern aristocratic culture and society, I reckon the volume successfully argues in favour of this direction of investigation.

Letitia Cosnean Nistor

⁵ Besides this volume, under review, see also: *Looking for Leisure. Court Residences and their Satellites, 1400–1700*, S. Dobalová, I. P. Muchka (eds.), 2017; *Virtual Palaces, Part II – Lost Palaces and their Afterlife. Virtual Reconstruction between Science and Media*, S. Hoppe, S. Breitling (eds.), 2016; *Virtual Palaces, Part I – Digitizing and Modelling Palaces*, P. Martens (ed.), 2016; *The Habsburgs and their Courts in Europe, 1400–1700. Between Cosmopolitanism and Regionalism*, H. Karner, I. Ciulisová, B. J. García García (eds.), 2014.

⁶ *Occasions of State. Early Modern European Festivals and the Negotiation of Power*, J.R. Mulryne, K. De Jonge, R.L.M. Morris, P. Martens (eds.), Abingdon: Routledge, 2019; *Architectures of Festival in Early Modern Europe. Fashioning and Re-fashioning Urban and Courtly Space*, J.R. Mulryne, K. De Jonge, P. Martens, R.L.M. Morris (eds.), Abingdon: Routledge, 2017; *Felix Austria. Family Ties, Political Culture and Artistic Patronage between the Habsburg Courts Networks*, B. J. García García (ed.), Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2016; *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400–1750*, Dries Raeymaekers, Sebastiaan Derks (eds.), Leiden: Brill, 2016; *Beyond Scylla and Charybdis. European Courts and Court Residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon Territories 1500–1700*, B. Bøggild Johannsen, K. Ottenheim (eds.), The National Museum of Denmark/ University Press of Southern Denmark, 2015; *Le prince, la princesse et leurs logis. Manières d’habiter dans l’élite aristocratique européenne (1400–1700)*, M. Chatenet, K. De Jonge, Editions Picard, Paris, 2014.