



*À la place du roi. Vice-rois, gouverneurs et ambassadeurs dans les monarchies française et espagnole (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles),*

Daniel Aznar, Guillaume Hanotin,  
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The French and Spanish courts were two of the most powerful cultural and political institutions in seventeenth-century Europe. Both rivals and allies, the French and Spanish crowns were bound by disputes and diplomacy. This anthology examines the Gallic and Iberian court systems from a comparative approach, filling an important lacuna in early modern political studies and diplomatic history. It is based on the proceedings of a seminar held at the Casa de Velázquez, Madrid in June 2010. Edited by Daniel Aznar, Guillaume Hanotin and Niels F. May, *À la place du roi. Vice-rois, gouverneurs et ambassadeurs dans les monarchies française et espagnole (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)* unites ten essays by leading scholars of seventeenth-century French and Spanish history.

The book's nuanced methodology distinguishes the similarities, differences, and idiosyncrasies of the French and Spanish court systems and draws on a wealth of archival research and primary sources. All the essays engage the concept of representation as a theoretical paradigm and practical strategy, specifically focusing on the viceroys, ambassadors and governors who ruled as proxies for either an itinerant or absent monarch. In the case of the Spanish Habsburgs, these rulers never visited the very lands which they claimed and possessed as dominions. These grandees, whether it was the viceroy, ambassador or the governor-general, occupied a precarious subject-position. They were deemed as "embodiments" or the "portraits of the king" and exercised rule on his behalf, yet somehow had to assert and exercise their own autonomy and sovereignty, often during very short tenures in office.

Written in collaboration by the three editors of the volume, the introduction identifies the complex role of the viceroy as a representative of the regent. The authors also locate the distinct functions of the French and Spanish court respectively. French ambassadors and governors tended to manage local political affairs and often served as "honorable spies" in international matters. By virtue of Spain's extensive empire in the New World and Asia and its dominions in Europe, the responsibilities of its viceroyalties were manifold in function and context.

In taking on this ambitious project, the book's three sections are methodically organized around the controlling concept of "representation". Part

It deals with structures of representation. It begins with René Vermeir's "Les gouverneurs-généraux aux Pays-Bas habsbourgeois", which emphasizes the vital role played by the Habsburg governors-general in the Low Countries as a result of the prolonged absence of the Spanish sovereign. Niels F. May's "Le cérémonial diplomatique et les transformations du concept de représentation au XVIIe siècle" offers a close reading of seventeenth-century political tracts and treatises in light of the challenging diplomatic negotiations at Westphalia that ended the 'Thirty Years' War, and, in turn, transformed early modern European politics. In examining the problematic aspects of representation in retrospect, May selectively surveys the cultural history of these political structures in his examination of their medieval origins and further looks back at Roman legal constructs such as *dignitas* and *potestas* that still shaped European ceremony and diplomacy. Nicoletta Bazzano's "Ascanio Colonna à la cour de Philippe II (1582-1583). Pouvoirs presumés et réels du vice-roi de Sicilie" is a case study of the tenure of the viceroy of Sicily that highlights two aspects of his identity as a virtual proxy for the king and an actual administrator, underscoring the challenges the viceroy encountered as he exercised power in his own right.

Part II concentrates on the distinct instruments or means by which these grandees established and asserted their authority, power, and dignity. Étienne Bourdeu's "Le souverain, l'argent et l'ambassadeur. Représenter le Roi Catholique dans le Saint-Empire (1610-1620)" examines how money or currency acted as an agent of representation, thus redressing a neglected chapter in the cultural history of the seventeenth century and delving into the theoretical and practical aspects of early modern material culture. Coins circulated the king's portrait in wide-flung areas of his territories and more practically as payment to his clients and troops. Paola Volpini's "*Ho eletta ... la persona di Vostra Eccellenza come un altro me stesso. El mandato de los embajadores mediceos enviados a España (siglos XVI-XVII)*" focuses on the role of Tuscan ambassadors who acted as envoys of the Medici and represented the Grand-Duke of Tuscany himself. Ángel Rivas Albaladejo's "La embajada extraordinaria del VI conde de Monterrey en Roma (1628-1631). Instrumentos de delegación de poder real y líneas generales de su actuación política" centers on the count of Monterrey's shrewd political strategies in maintaining Spain's embassy in Rome, and, by extension, affirming the Catholic King's presence there during the most difficult years of the Thirty Years' War.

The essays comprising Part III focus on the ways in which these rulers' powers were depicted in the art of the period and promise to be of special interest to art historians. Diana Carrío-Invernizzi's "Las galerías de retratos de

virreyes de la Monarquía Hispánica, entre Italia y América (siglos XVI-XVII)” analyzes the likeness of the Spanish viceroy in the Americas and Italy. Her erudite study of five portrait galleries of the Spanish viceroys traces their development in Mexico City, Lima, Milan, Naples, and Palermo and relates these distinct portrait types to political ideologies. This paper thus provides useful background for understanding formulas of vice-regal portraiture and how these ensembles visibly promoted both change and continuity. Guillaume Hanotin’s “Représenter le roi de France à la cour de Madrid. Entre confiance, ‘majesté’ et liens familiaux” considers varied portrayals of French ambassadors in Spain in the early eighteenth century. Daniel Aznar’s “*Un morceau de roi. La imagen del gobernador de provincial en la Francia barroca*” highlights how ceremonial portraits such as equestrian monuments and potent political symbols conferred dignity and majesty to French provincial governors who assumed the trappings of a “sub-altern majesty.” Alejandro Cañeque’s insightful “El simulacro del rey” centers on how the concept of the viceroy in New Spain was cultivated as a powerful agent for an absent king through text and image.

In sum, this compilation makes a significant contribution to royal studies. The book concludes with a substantive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources that identifies the varied references cited in each essay. Black-and-white photographs illustrate relevant works of art throughout the volume. While the essays are written in French and Spanish, they are eloquent and accessible to both students and specialists alike. More importantly, this anthology’s interdisciplinary method integrates art history, literature, court studies and political history in novel ways that will appeal to scholars of different fields. The balanced approach taken up by these papers allows readers to visualize the complex nature of rulership in early modern France and Spain. The complementary methodologies of these authors do not merely underscore the antagonism and conflicts between France and Spain in the mid- to late seventeenth-century in analyzing what are seemingly irreconcilable and incompatible models of governance but rather offer a corrective in examining these models of power and authority from a nuanced transnational and transcultural perspective.

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