

L'Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand dans les tapisseries au XVe siècle. Fortune iconographique dans les tapisseries et les manuscrits conservés. La tenture d'Alexandre de la collection Doria Pamphilj à Gênes. Edited by Françoise Barbe, Laura Stagno and Elisabetta Villari.

With contributions from Fabienne Joubert, Piero Boccardo, Laura Stagno, Elisabetta Villari, Claudia Cieri Via, Yvan Maes De Wit, Victor M. Schmidt, Marzia Cataldi Gallo, Franz Reitingner, Gabriella Moretti, Maud Pérez-Simon, Roberto Guerrini, Chrystèle Blondeau, Sandrine Hériché Pradeau, Françoise Barbe and Guy Delmarcel. 279 pp. incl. 29 tables of cols. ills. (Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout 2013), €110. ISBN 978-2-503-54745-9.

Reviewed by NELLO FORTI GRAZZINI

THE TWO MONUMENTAL tapestries in the Doria Pamphilj collection of the History of Alexander the Great – *Episodes from Alexander's youth* and *Alexander's Eastern campaigns* (Fig. 40) – the surviving pieces from a much larger series, are the most splendid Franco-Flemish late Gothic figured tapestries in Italy. First mentioned in 1858,¹ they were admired by Aby Warburg who, in an article of 1913, drew attention to Alexander's flight in a cage towed by griffons and to his subaqueous explorations in a glass barrel (illustrated in the second tapestry).² Until a few years ago they were hung in the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in Rome in a room that was not on the usual tourist route, and were only occasionally visible. Since 2008, when they and other works from the collection were transferred to Genoa, they have been on permanent display in the so-called Palazzo del Principe, built and decorated from the third decade of the sixteenth century for Andrea Doria, which was saved from ruin and opened as a museum in 1995. They were also restored by De Wit – Royal Manufacturers of Tapestry at Mechelen, and are now in an excellent legible condition.

The return of each tapestry to Genoa was celebrated with a conference, with the acts of the first published in 2006.³ The beautiful volume under review here, one of the series *Studies in Western Tapestry* edited by Guy Delmarcel for the Belgian publisher Brepols, gathers the acts of the conference held in February 2008. While the first conference was centred on the obscure origins and iconography of the tapestries, the second, which involved many more scholars, added to the usual studies other topics, such as the character and likeness of Alexander in ancient and medieval sources, in miniatures and medieval tapestries, and in paintings and tapestries of the Renaissance and Baroque ages; on Warburg and the historic role he gave to the Doria tapestries as consummate examples of the figurative transmission of classical subject-matter in a pre-humanistic cultural climate; and on the reborn fortunes of Gothic tapestries at the end of the nineteenth century and start

of the twentieth. The result is an ample and well co-ordinated series of studies that should stimulate a circle of scholars wider than those specialising in tapestries. The Doria tapestries are not the product of a 'minor' art form, but can be ranked as masterpieces.

The more rigorous the investigation of the Doria tapestries, the more 'certainties', established over the past decades, by Warburg included, crumble. It was believed that the two tapestries, made c.1460, were given sixty or seventy years later by the Emperor Charles V to Andrea Doria; instead, one discovers that they only arrived at the Doria's Roman palace in the first half of the nineteenth century, perhaps bought by Filippo Andrea V Doria Pamphilj, a passionate collector of paintings, including fifteenth-century Flemish works. It was believed that the two tapestries belonged to a large series on Alexander the Great sold in 1459 by the merchant Pasquier Grenier of Tournai to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, or otherwise to a replica set sold by the same Grenier to Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan; but now both hypotheses seem to be improbable, and even their origins in Tournai are in doubt. Then it seemed certain that there was a link with a group of small designs showing episodes from the History of Alexander (preparatory for cartoons or copies after them) now in Bern, London and Weimar, and it was confidently stated that these drawings showed the other scenes from the same cycle. Now these drawings are connected with a different, lost series of tapestries, of the same subject but slightly later (1470–80), perhaps a version of the precious set that belonged to Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (1444–83).⁴

The volume opens with Fabienne Joubert's essay, which wipes the slate clean of all erroneous beliefs about the tapestries, including the attribution of the cartoons to Jacques Daret (which she has suggested in the past). Jean Wauquelin's *Les Faictz et les conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand* (c.1440), that Warburg and others believed to be the literary source for the tapestries, also disappears, but Victor Schmidt's article outlines a new, credible textual and figurative genealogy of the scenes, including the thirteenth-century *Roman d'Alexandre en prose* and Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale* (or a Netherlandish *Historienbijbel* derived



40. Detail from *Alexander's Eastern campaigns*, showing Alexander ascending to heaven in a cage towed by four griffons. Tournai workshop? c.1460. Wool and silk with gold and silver thread tapestry, 415 by 985 cm. (Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, Genoa).

from it), genealogies that can be confirmed by comparison with the earlier figurative tradition for the episode of Alexander and Bucephalus illustrated on the first tapestry, as Pérez-Simon demonstrates. One theory, advanced by Franz Reitingner, is illustrated in the scene of the *Eastern campaigns* where, in the frenzy of the battle to take the city of King Ambyra one of Alexander's soldiers points an arrow towards God the Father who, in the same tapestry but in another scene, watches over Alexander's flight assisted by griffons: despite the learned argument, the archer's action seems to be wrongly interpreted, and this attack on God can be deleted from among the many historical and philological problems still to be resolved about the Doria tapestries.

¹ X. Barbier de Montault: *La Cathédral d'Anagni*, Paris 1858, p.93, note 5.

² A. Warburg: 'Luftschiff und Tauchboot in der mittelalterlichen Vorstellungswelt', in *idem: Gesammelte Schriften. Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike. Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance*, Leipzig 1932, pp.241–49 and 386–88.

³ L. Stagno, ed.: *Le imprese di Alessandro Magno in Oriente*. *Collezione Doria Pamphilj. Presentazione dell'arazzo restaurato*, Genoa 2006.

⁴ See D.S. Chambers: *A Renaissance Cardinal and his Goods: the Will and inventory of Francesco Gonzaga (1444–1483)*, London 1992, pp.82 and 150, nos.198 and 199.

Spanish Fashion at the Courts of Early Modern Europe. Edited by José Luis Colomer and Amalia Descalzo. 2 vols. 288

pp. incl. 50 col. + 100 b. & w. ills. (Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, Madrid, 2014), £45. ISBN 978-84-15245-44-5.

Reviewed by LISA MONNAS

THIS STUDY OF Spanish fashion in the courts of Early Modern Europe arose from an international conference held in Madrid in 2007. The first volume concerns aspects of dress at the Spanish court, while the second considers the dissemination of Spanish fashion abroad. Twenty-nine articles by a distinguished group of international scholars consider such diverse topics as regal imagery, sumptuary legislation, clothing storage, dress in poetry, dress and diplomacy, as well as perceptions of Spain and Spanish dress abroad.

During the sixteenth century, largely due to the territorial and dynastic ubiquity of the Habsburgs, the austere, refined style of Spanish dress was widely admired and emulated. Amalia Descalzo reminds us that it was the Spanish who introduced the farthingale – round hoops that gave women's skirts their characteristic conical shape. By 1528, Baldassare Castiglione, in his *Libro del Cortegiano*, identified the wearing of black (or dark colours) as a typical, and desirable, expression of the restrained sobriety of Spanish dress. José Luis Colomer points out that the taste for wearing black came initially from Burgundy under Duke Philip the Good (reg.1419–67),



41. Empress Margarita Teresa, by an unknown painter. c.1662–64. Canvas, 80.2 by 55.5 cm. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

and was subsequently adopted by the Habsburg rulers of the Netherlands and Spain.

The introduction of Spanish styles into foreign courts is repeatedly, and justifiably, attributed to the effect of dynastic alliances and the arrival of a Spanish consort. A good example is Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand I and Isabella of Spain, who married Henry VIII in 1509. Following her marriage to Henry, according to Maria Hayward, Catherine ordered gowns with ‘Spanish sleeves’, wore farthingales and Spanish-style headdresses, and at her death in 1536, possessed seven pairs of Spanish-style slippers with cork soles. She gave Henry a Spanish cloak, and took pride in embroidering his shirts herself. At Henry’s death in 1547, he possessed several Spanish gowns and cloaks, not as a reminder of Catherine but simply because they had become essential items of fashion.

Following her marriage to Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici in 1539, Eleonora di Toledo (1522–62), daughter of the Spanish viceroy of Naples, is credited with introducing Spanish fashions to Florence – among other things, the adoption of the *zimarra*, a formal sleeveless overgown. In their discussion of her dress, Roberta Orsi Landini and Bruna Niccoli carefully unpick the various strands of external influence – such as the wearing of hats and berets, popular at both the Neapolitan and Austrian courts. Spanish styles seem to have reached the court of Milan before Florence. Citing the effect of marriage alliances between the houses of Sforza and Aragon, Paola Venturelli points to the 1490s for the adoption of Spanish styles such as the *trinzale*, a silk or gold sheath for the hair enclosing a long braid, seen in Giovanni Ambrogio da Predis’s portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza of 1493 (National Gallery of Art, Washington) and the *mongine*

described as ‘a long cloak with sleeves’. In fact, elements of Spanish attire had arrived substantially earlier, for in 1475 Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza (reg. 1466–76) already ordered *veste a la castigliana* (gowns in the Castilian style) for himself and several *mongine* for his stylish mistress, the Contessa di Melzo.¹

Beatrix Bastl and José Luis Colomer trace the fortunes of the Infanta Mariana (1634–96), daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III and of Maria, the sister of Philip IV, who married her uncle Philip IV of Spain in 1649, and of their daughter Infanta Margarita Teresa (1651–73), who married Emperor Leopold I in 1666. In her portrait by Velázquez of c.1652, Mariana of Austria, with stiff, beribboned hair, wears a magnificent, typically Spanish, outfit of black velvet stretched over a wide farthingale (*guardainfante*) lavishly trimmed with silver lace (Museo del Prado, Madrid). After her marriage, Margarita Teresa continued to dress in the style of her parents’ court – looking in her portraits every inch a Spanish princess (Fig. 41). These images form a stark contrast to the nun-like appearance of Mariana portrayed in her widowhood by Claudio Coello c.1687 (Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle). Cordula van Wyhe’s discussion of the adoption of monastic habits by Habsburg rulers in their later life forms a sobering contrast to the other studies of luxury and excess.

Volume Two not only explores the dominance of Spanish fashions during the sixteenth century, but also their eventual eclipse by styles emanating from France. Whereas Sylvène Edouard discusses the ‘Hispanicisation’ of Elisabeth de Valois, who became Philip II of Spain’s third wife in 1559, Corinne Thépaucabasset examines the introduction of French fashion to the Spanish court just over a century later through the marriage in 1679 of Charles II of Spain to Marie-Louise d’Orléans. Finally, we are reminded that the perception of Spain and its fashions was not always benevolent in Aileen Ribeiro’s discussion of reactions to Spain and Spanish dress in seventeenth-century England, while Véronique Meyer offers a sharp view of Spanish fashions ‘Between Satire and Reality’ seen through French eyes between 1630 and 1715.

This detailed, wide-ranging group of essays would have greatly benefited from a proper historical introduction and one or more genealogical tables, together with a general bibliography. Although the terminology of dress is carefully explained in individual articles, the textiles are, in some cases, treated with less precision. In their introduction, the editors refer to the mammoth task of producing a bilingual edition of this multi-authored work. On the whole, it is a task in which both they and Jenny Dodman, who produced the English translation, have succeeded admirably. This is undoubtedly an essential reference tool for anyone interested in courtly dress in Early Modern Europe.

¹ G. Porro di Lambertenghi: ‘Lettere di Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duca di Milano’, *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, 1st ser., 5 (1878), pp.254–74, esp. pp.261 and 274.

Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550–1750. Edited by Gail Feigenbaum with Francesco Freddolini. 484 pp. incl. 44 col. + 108 b. & w. ills. (Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2014), \$100 (HB). ISBN 978-1-60606-2.

Reviewed by HELEN LANGDON

THIS BOOK, THE RESULT of an international collaborative research project run by the Getty Research Institute over five years, presents a wealth of new research into the concept and practice of display in the Early Modern Roman palace. The authors break with the traditional literature on individual artists, and with the abundant literature on individual palaces, to take a wider view of ‘living with art’, one deeply rooted in social and cultural history; they explore the political and artistic messages that the unified interiors of Roman palaces could convey. Easel painting is demoted from its conventional pre-eminence, and the multitude of objects, furniture, beds, bronzes, marble sculptures, stucco, textiles, mirrors and frescos, which so splendidly created an immersive environment, are given a fresh importance. In a clear and highly theoretical introduction, Gail Feigenbaum defines display as ‘a gesture of unfolding’; it is ‘an action, a metaphorical gesture enacting possession’. A concept of change and flexibility underpins the entire book, for display is dynamic and, as opposed to collecting, assumes movement; it is both performative and interactive. Art objects ‘have a lively existence in space and time’, and are constantly adapted to different public and social activities, and even to different seasons. And the viewer, too, was on the move. Putti lift curtains over grand doorways to draw him or her forward, and objects are embedded in decorative displays that direct ritual and ceremony. In the Roman gallery and *quadreria*, the display encouraged visitors to seek out connections and surprises; they might themselves appear in the grand mirrors that line some of the most sumptuous galleries, moving among reflections that blurred the distinctions between art and life.

The book is divided into five sections, each framed by useful survey articles, by such scholars as Patricia Waddy, Francesca Cappelletti, Renata Ago and Tracey Ehrlich, whose work has long established how the art and architecture of palace and villa created ceremonial settings for aristocratic life. A section on Rank and Display, underpinned by a discussion of the concepts of magnificence and splendour, descends, as it were, from the Pope to Costanza Scultora, the mistress of Bernini, who, intriguingly, displayed terracottas by Bernini and, in a witty comment on the *sala* of a noblewoman, showed her own portrait with paintings of Venus, Susanna and Mary Magdalene. The most unexpected article here is perhaps Patrizia Cavazzini’s ‘Lesser Nobility and Other People of Means’. Cavazzini has made an exhaustive study of very numerous inventories, many of them from the GRI’s Provenance Index databases, so essential to