

**Ambassadors in Golden-Age Madrid: The Court of Philip IV through Foreign Eyes.** Edited by Jorge Fernández-Santos and José Luis Colomer. Prologue by John H. Elliott, epilogue by Miguel-Ángel Ochoa Brun. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2020. Pp. 608 + 287 colour illustrations. €57.70 (hardback). ISBN 9788415245940.

As stated by John Elliott in the Prologue, “Madrid, the seat of the Spanish court since 1561, was a great, and perhaps the greatest, European centre for the exchange of diplomatic gifts during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” As the title of the present volume makes clear, the eighteen contributions deal with embassies from various nationalities and their accounts of the Court of Philip IV, king from 1621 to 1665, with a special interest in the performative and material aspects of the visits; the reports are characterized by successes and failures, information and misinformation, understanding and misunderstanding, traditional stereotypes and ideological overtones, but they also provide a wealth of first-hand observations. The book begins with a long wide-ranging study by Jorge Fernández-Santos on the Madrid of the ambassadors and their links with the Spanish court; top in the hierarchy were the “Chapel” ambassadors restricted to the Papal nuncio, the Imperial ambassador, those representing crowned Catholic rulers, and the representative of Venice. This chapter is followed by José Luis Colomer’s study of the exchange of diplomatic gifts, in which he surveys the protocol and covers its wide range including among other cash, jewels, portraits, paintings, and precious objects, but also horses and delicacies such as chocolate. The gifts included Albrecht Dürer’s large *Adam and Eve* (1507) now in the Prado, a present from Queen Christina of Sweden to Philip IV. The famous *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* manuscript, written in Spanish and Quechua by an Indigenous Peruvian, Felipe Guamán

Poma de Ayala, and dedicated to King Philip III, was acquired, either by purchase or as a gift, by the Danish envoy Cornelius Lerche during his visits to Madrid in 1650–55 or 1658–62 (Copenhagen, Royal Library).

This solid introduction precedes the three main sections of the book: respectively on the “Chapel” ambassadors; those from North European countries; and finally those from the smaller Italian states as well as the Ottoman Empire. The first of these sections, by Gino Benzoni, begins with the Venetian ambassador Giacomo Querini in Madrid from 1652 to 1656 and again from 1659 to 1661; he later became *bailo* (Venetian resident ambassador) in Constantinople. The next article by Luis Tercero Casado deals with Francesco Antonio del Carretto y Argote, Second Marques of Grana, Imperial representative in Madrid during the Dynastic crisis (1641–51). Then Bertrand Haan studies the impressive 1659 Reception of Louis XIV’s ambassador, Antoine de Gramont. This is followed by Jan Kieniewicz and Matylda Urjasz-Raczko who deal with the Polish ambassador Stanisław Mąkowski’s visit (1638–47) and his unsuccessful attempt to recover the arrears of a Neapolitan debt, going back to the marriage contract of Bona Sforza to Zygmunt I Jagiellon signed in September 1517; the article provides a rich insight into the delicate power structure, both consultative and executive, of the Spanish court and Mąkowski’s failure to understand it. Finally Lisa Beaven and José Luis Colomer discuss the papal *nuncio* Camillo Massimo’s stay in Spain, and his later ties with the country (1655–62); they deal, among other things, with the gifts he brought, his role as a transmitter of culture and his important art patronage, including his purchase of medals, coins, and other curiosities from the widow of Lorenzo Ramírez de Prado in exchange for a lapdog from Bologna and no fewer than twenty-nine paintings to be done by contemporary Roman artists. The ensuing dismay and dissatisfaction of Doña Lorenza, as clearly shown in the documents transcribed in the Appendix, illustrate the discrepancies of taste between the Italians and the Spaniards at the time.

The second section of the book deals with the embassies from the North-European, mainly Protestant nations. Maurits Ebben deals with various cross-confessional and diplomatic incidents relative to the Dutch ambassadors in Madrid, including Hendrick van Reede van Renswoude’s conversion to Catholicism. This contribution is completed by an Appendix providing appraisals of his goods, as well as inventories of his library and picture collection completed after his death in 1669. Thereupon Piers Baker-Bates and Alistair Malcolm study Sir Richard Fanshawe, the English diplomat but also poet and translator, sent as an emissary to Lisbon and to Madrid (from 1664 to 1665; the latter was quite an unsuccessful embassy); this chapter includes an assessment of Fanshawe’s artistic patronage, mainly focused on portraiture. This is followed by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan’s account of Sir Arthur Hopton, secretary of Sir Francis Cottington’s 1629 embassy. He stayed in Madrid as resident agent until 1635, purchasing there paintings for Cottington, but also for the English Royal collection and Thomas Howard, Second Earl of Arundel, among others; the article focusses more on his portraits, however. Next comes a study of Cornelius Lerche’s Danish missions (1650–55 and 1658–62) by Enrique Corredera Nilsson who focuses on the art of negotiations, the paper trials and the delay tactics, not to mention the administrative silences; the chapter also covers his purchase of books, manuscripts (his library was sold in 1682) and works of art. The last chapter of this section, by Hans Helander and Martin Olin, deals with Mathias Palbitzki, Christina of Sweden’s envoy to Spain (1651–52), and with his five surviving letters to the Queen, the latter including a detailed account of the land and the people of Spain (*De regimine—De terra et gente*, published in the Appendix). It concludes with a study of Christina’s peregrinations and negotiations throughout Europe after her abdication and conversion to Catholicism.

The final section of the book deals with the emissaries from smaller Italian cities and from Ottoman Turkey. It begins with Piero Boccoardo's study of the embassy of Anton Giulio Brignole-Sale who represented the Republic of Genoa, including first-hand accounts of the complexities of the negotiations with the Spanish court. Next, Paola Volpini covers the translatability of scientific discoveries through Galileo and Medicean diplomacy from 1612 to 1632; the original idea was to share Galileo's discoveries, including the measurement of longitude, in exchange for the right for Florentine vessels to commerce with the New World without passing through Seville. This is followed by Jorge Fernández-Santos and Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu's account of the visit of Ahmed Agha in 1649–50, discussing the ensuing unsuccessful negotiations as well as disreputable behavior of the envoy and his servants. Finally Mercedes Simal López deals with Fulvio Testi, a Modenese poet and envoy to Madrid in 1636, and his return in 1638 with Francesco I d'Este, Duke of Modena, on his official visit to Madrid.

The book concludes with Miguel-Ángel Ochoa Brun's Epilogue, a scholarly assessment and synthesis of Philip's own ambassadors, of which Peter Paul Rubens is probably the most famous. The volume ends with a list of foreign diplomatic representatives sent to Philip IV by the principal European powers.

This important and interesting book, written by twenty-one scholars from twelve countries, is a major achievement, forming a significant contribution to Spanish and wider European diplomatic studies, court interactions, and art patronage, both through the scope and rich use of sources, manuscript and printed. It is very beautifully produced and enriched by 287 colour illustrations introducing whenever possible portraits of the protagonists, for example Diego Velázquez's *Francesco I d'Este* of 1638 (Modena, Galleria Estense) and *Camillo Massimo* of 1649–50 (Kingston Lacey, National Trust).

Jean Michel Massing  
King's College, University of Cambridge  
 [jmm1001@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmm1001@cam.ac.uk)

© 2022 Jean Michel Massing  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14682737.2022.2061802>

