Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010, 217 pp., ISBN: 978 0 7190 7822 4.

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This book aims to place the Kingdom of Naples during Spanish rule within the wider context of court society in early modern Europe. In particular, its author, Gabriel Guarino, aims to avoid the anti-Spanish stereotype of many Italian historians and to present instead the political messages communicated by Spanish viceroys through court ceremonial, ritual and display, and the reactions of the wider populace. Guarino is ideally suited to undertake such a study, with a comfortable grasp of Italian, Spanish and English, and focuses his attentions specifically on the seventeenth century, when the Spanish court was at its height in terms of baroque magnificence, but at the same time was experiencing serious political decline, measureable in the transition, as Guarino notes, of cultural dominance from Spain to France by the end of the century. He argues that, by looking at the visual aspects of viceregal rule—the 'politics of appearance' (p. 10)—we can see how, as decline sets in and a restive, volatile city strains against foreign rule, levels of pomp and festivity rise, and indeed are relatively successful at calming the turmoil.

In most senses Guarino's goals are achieved, in placing the visual court culture of Viceregal Naples in context of events and cultural shifts of the period, and in particular, by looking at the mostly positive reception of Spanish culture by the people of Naples (notably in festival events such as bullfighting, but also in fashion). But there is also something missing here, as the court of Spain itself is rarely looked at or, contrarily, the court of Louis XIV is used too much, as providing the only model for court culture (pp. 22-23), relying heavily on clichés provided in John Adamson's volume on the princely courts of Europe (even going as far as reintroducing the 'gilded cage' myth (pp. 48-49), mostly dismissed by court historians since the 1980s). Perhaps more importantly for this study, there is only brief mention of how viceroys and governors coped with similar situations in Milan, Brussels or the Americas, or even viceregal establishments within the Iberian peninsula, in Catalonia or Valencia, or Portugal before 1640. Was Naples unique,

for example in its investiture ceremonies? Or was it just one of several satellite courts of the Spanish monarchy, all struggling in similar fashion to keep the greatest of all 'composite monarchies' (Elliott) unified and loyal? Obviously such inclusion would require a much larger book, and would have delayed publication by many years. Perhaps a second volume should follow? Happily, further research in this area will be aided by a lengthy bibliography and detailed footnotes.

The title *Representing the King's Splendour* underlines the second main point made by Guarino's book: the ambiguity of the position of viceroy. He needed to represent the king in all his majesty and authority, but at the same time had to be careful to remain just a man, not the divinely appointed sovereign himself. Again and again, we see how viceroys find themselves undermined by this contradiction. Guarino uses multiple examples of viceroys from across the period (1503-1707) to demonstrate how individual choices were made to suit differing tastes and abilities. The book's five chapters are each devoted to a different aspect of presenting this viceregal visual culture.

The first chapter focuses on the role of the viceroy himself, and the ceremonial used to present him as a stand-in king. The second and third examine public events, firstly the cavalcade and religious processions, which represented the hierarchy of Neapolitan society (nobles, bourgeois and *pòpolo*), and secondly the festivals and games presented by the viceroys, notably those originally from Spain (such as bullfighting and the *juego de cañas*). These chapters in particular stress the subtitle of this book, in that much of the focus here is not on the viceroy's plans, but on their reception by elites and by ordinary people. The fourth and fifth chapters look at more intimate elements of visual culture, fashion and the *impresa*. The first of these asks whether or not viceroys were able to import fashion tastes and to enforce official Spanish policy on dress and sumptuary laws, concluding that in the end, they were unable to stop the tide of change from pro-Spanish to pro-French fashion—so much so, in fact, that they themselves adopted the new fashions in spite of their own decrees. The second of these final chapters presents a genre that is only recently re-emerging as a subject worthy of academic focus, the emblem or *impresa*. These were published in books or used to decorate buildings or monuments to convey a didactic or moralistic message—usually an image paired with a 'motto'. The conclusion here is that not only did the viceregal court adopt these for propaganda use, they in fact outdid most other royal courts, notably in their use in funeral obsequies. Here too a more rigorously comparative approach seems warranted: was the viceregal court's use of "unusually expensive and elaborated" (p. 173) *imprese* for its royal funeral ceremonies that much more so than those employed Brussels or in Milan, or even in Spain itself, where the bodies were actually present?

These last two chapters are well illustrated, with an elegant series of viceregal portraits and funereal *imprese*. It might have been useful to have further illus-

trations in other sections, notably in the section describing the routes chosen through the city neighbourhoods for cavalcades and processions, as those unfamiliar with Naples will not have much to go on without a map of the city. In a similar vein, as this book has been written in English, many readers will be approaching Neapolitan history for the first time, so a bit more narrative in the introduction would have been useful: which viceroys were successful, which were not? What were the events of the Masaniello revolt, referred to frequently in the text? Some things are thus left unclear: for example, the book seems to focus exclusively on the city of Naples, as if the vast hinterland of the kingdom of Naples did not exist. Did the viceroys have different relationships with other cities and communities in the region? This seems particularly pertinent when discussing the great nobles—Carafas, Caracciolos, Pignatellis—and the fact that Naples (the kingdom) had a higher per capita percentage of ducal and princely titles than anywhere else in Europe (almost insanely so), reflecting an important point that a court without a resident monarch has to work extra hard to maintain the loyalty of his grandest subjects (as pointed out by Rao in *Power Elites and State Building* [1996]). Did these overly titled landowners simply play lip service to the viceregal court in the city during its cavalcades and court ritual, then return to their domains with their local authority untouched? It would also be useful to examine how many of the great Neapolitan court magnates were in fact of Spanish origin (for example, the Principe di Paternò, a Neapolitan title, was a member of the mixed Catalan-Sicilian house of Moncada). Not only were Spaniards occupying dominant positions at Italian courts, Neapolitan nobles were serving in various capacities all across the Spanish monarchy, a point only thinly alluded to here (p. 90).

One of the chief strengths of this book is its clarity. Guarino is adept at setting up each chapter, and linking from section to section, though sometimes the wording of these passages is a bit old fashioned—with phrases like "without further delay, let us examine…" (161). The author's use of English is quite good, with just a few slip ups (the 'lowly' instead of lower nobility, p. 43; in fact much of his language in describing the nobility ('haughty', 'excessive') reveals a minor lapse in objectivity particularly pertinent in a study of the court), and with some curious choices of name usage: it is probably MUP policy to use Charles II rather than Carlos II, but is it really necessary to write 'Mary of Orléans', for his queen, Marie-Louise d'Orléans (p. 81; and this varies, as sometimes she is called Marie, though on p. 158, she is Marie-Louis [sic], and in the footnote, Maria Luysa)? On the other side of this issue, as this book is most likely to be read by specialists, it is perhaps detrimental that all titles without exception were translated into English, leaving those familiar with Italian wondering what is exactly meant by household offices like the 'head servant' (p. 24).

Representing the King's Splendour is a useful and deeply thought through study, making use of an impressive variety of printed sources, and in particular successfully redressing the balance between previous historiographies, which, as Guarino tells us, have been either too pro-Spain or too anti-Spain. Any criticisms I have made above are done very much with the awareness that any study has its limitations in terms of time and space. Gabriel Guarino has produced detailed synthesis of visual and political cultures to help us remember a very important point for comprehending the early modern world: that huge displays of magnificence and rigid ceremonial were not an indication of strength, but rather of the fragility of the regime. And although Spain should no longer be seen as purely 'decadent' and 'oppressive' in this period—one of the author's unexpected discoveries was in fact how very popular much of the Spanish ceremonies and entertainments were—neither should it be seen as the unassailable cultural arbiter for its satellite courts and associated elites.