

Charlotte Backerra

IL DOVARIO DELLE LANGRAVIE D'ASSIA NEL XVI E XVII SECOLO

Abstract

The landgraviate of Hesse and its rulers faced various challenges during the 16th and 17th century, which also affected the female members of the ruling houses. This chapter analyses the normative bases of the Hessian landgravines' dowers and examines the challenges faced by these women in claiming, receiving, and keeping their dowery. Their examples show the dowers' moral and economic impetus, the dynastic expectations tied to these resources, as well as the individuality of the women in dealing with potential challenges. The chapter also contributes to our understanding of inner dynastic relations as well as the financial situation of the princely dynasties within the framework of the Holy Roman Empire.

Keyword

Assia – dovario – vedovanza – dinastia – Anna Elisabetta del Palatinato – Eleonora di Württemberg – Maria von Mansfeld-Hinterort

Elena Taddei

**«[...] PER IL CARICO CHE TENGO DI QUESTO GOVERNO [...]».
MARGHERITA E ANNA CATERINA: DUE VEDOVE AL
SERVIZIO DEI GONZAGA**

Abstract

This article takes a closer look at two case studies from the Upper Italian Gonzaga dynasty, which was intertwined with the House of Habsburg on several levels. These are Margherita (1564-1618) and Anna Caterina Gonzaga (1566-1621), both daughters of Guglielmo III Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua and Montferrat. While the first was married off to Tyrol and created a new religious sphere of action for herself as a young widow abroad, Margherita returned to her home court as the widowed Duchess of Ferrara and assumed a deputy regency in Montferrat. She also continued to pursue her various politically relevant agendas from her monastic retreat.

Keyword

Margherita Gonzaga – Anna Caterina Gonzaga – Mantova – Monferrato – Ferrara – Tirolo – devozione – vedovanza – economia – rappresentazione – memoria

B. Alice Raviola

«PRINCESA BIUDA, MADRE DE UNICA HIJA, TAN DEBOTA A ESTA CORONA».

Abstract

Already revealed in older and more recent studies, the strong-willed personality of Margherita di Savoia (1589-1655), duchess of Mantua and Monferrato, the first daughter of Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy and the Infanta Catalina Micaela of Habsburg, can be traced once again in a series of around forty letters addressed to Cardinal Infante Ferdinand of Habsburg (1609-1641) sent to the government of the State of Milan in the spring of 1633. Estranged from Mantua after the death of her husband Francesco IV Gonzaga (December 1612) and deprived of custody of her only daughter Maria, Margherita, who also aspired to the regency of the duchies of Mantua and Monferrato, remained in Turin for nineteen years, only to briefly return to Mantua in 1631. Rejected once again in the capital of the Gonzaga, she pleaded her case with Philip IV and his ministers, until she obtained the prestigious appointment as viceregina of Portugal in 1635. The unpublished correspondence found in the National Archives in Brussels proves her loyalty to the Spanish monarchy as well as to her extraordinary political tenacity.

Keyword Savoia – Mantova – vedovanza – Milano – Spagna – Margherita di Savoia – Cardinal Infante Ferdinando d'Asburgo

Matthias Schnettger

«AFFEZIONATISSIMA ET FEDELISSIMA MADRE SIN' A MORTE».

Abstract

Based on a collection of letters from Eleonora Gonzaga to her stepson Emperor Ferdinand III from the second half of 1647, which have been preserved in the Stockholm Riksarkivet, this article analyses the position of the empress dowager within the Imperial family and in particular her relation to the reigning emperor. The letters show an empress dowager who was well connected within the house of Habsburg, the court society and the imperial capital. During the absence of Ferdinand III and in lack of an empress consort, the empress dowager acted as custodian of the dynastic interests in Vienna and to some extent assumed the position of a *mater familias*. However, she was only able to fulfil this position to the extent that the reigning emperor allowed her to.

Keyword

Eleonora Gonzaga-Nevers – Ferdinando III – Sacro Romano Impero – epistolario – Asburgo – Vienna – corte – patronato – devozione – vedovanza

Marion Romberg

**STAMPE DELL'IMPERATRICE VEDOVA ELEONORA
GONZAGA-NEVERS AL SERVIZIO DELLA CURA
DELL'IMMAGINE IMPERIALE**

Abstract

This essay examines the presence of the Empress Dowager Eleonora Gonzaga-Nevers in visual mass media and her participation in «multiplying image cultivation» (Jutta Schumann). Three levels of investigation of printed graphic products are examined: (1) production, (2) message content and (3) reception. During the first nine years of the reign of her unmarried stepson Emperor Leopold I, the Dowager Empress acted as Empress of the Holy Roman Empire. Her depictions do not primarily emphasise widowly virtues, but underline her political engagement. This can be seen in the use of the sun-moon symbolism and the crown of the Holy Roman Empire in its real form. The extent to which the interpretation of these engravings is context-bound, is shown by the reception analysis of two engravings in the Fürstlich Waldecksche Hofbibliothek in Arolsen.

Keyword

Charlotte Amélie de la Trémoille – Anton I di Aldenburg – Oldenburg – Danimarca – dovario – autorappresentazione

Katrin Keller

L'IMPERATRICE ELEONORA MADDALENA NEL PERIODO DELLA VEDOVANZA

Abstract

Empress Eleonora Magdalena of Palatinate-Neuburg has often been portrayed in literature as a pious and faithful, but politically uninterested wife. However, her contemporaries held different views, with many attributing far-reaching political influence and a central dynastic role to her. A rediscovered collection of sources now allows completely new and fascinating insights into the life and actions of the empress: her handwritten letters to her father and brother, Philipp Wilhelm and Johann Wilhelm of the Palatinate. Based on these letters, the main interest of this analysis is whether there are any differences between Eleonora Magdalena's behaviour as a widow and her time as a wife, and how her relationship with her two sons, Emperors Joseph I and Charles VI, can be characterised.

Keyword

Eleonora Maddalena del Palatinato-Neuburg – Filippo Guglielmo del Palatinato – Giovanni Guglielmo del Palatinato – Sacro Romano Impero – Austria – Palatinato – vedovanza – epistolario

Laura Rehmann

**LA VEDOVA E IL RE.
COPERTURA ECONOMICA VEDOVILE, RANGO
AMBIVALENTE E RAPPORTI DI POTERE ASIMMETRICI
SULL'ESEMPIO DI CHARLOTTE AMÉLIE DE LA
TRÉMOÏLLES**

Abstract

When the French high noble woman Charlotte Amélie de la Trémoille married Anton I of Aldenburg, illegitimate son of Anthon Günther of Oldenburg, it was inarguably an unequal match. The difference in rank between the two spouses not only influenced Charlotte Amélie's dower and her economic status as a widow but also how she was treated by her sovereign, Christian V of Denmark, Count of Oldenburg, while her son was still under guardianship after the untimely death of her husband. This case study is based on three kinds of sources: house laws, various documents from the German Chancellery in Copenhagen and the memoirs of Charlotte Amélie herself. Together these sources will show that financial security was no guarantee for Charlotte Amélie as a widow, which influenced her ability to counteract Christian V political schemes. However, the description as an impoverished widow devoid of a social network she offers in her memoirs, is not completely veracious either.

Keyword

Charlotte Amélie de la Trémoille – Anton I di Aldenburg – Oldenburg – Danimarca – d ovario – autorappresentazione

Cathleen Sarti

**VEDOVANZA COME COMPITO DI VITA
EDVIGE ELEONORA DI HOLSTEIN-GOTTORF COME
SOVRANA SVEDESE**

Abstract

Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp was Queen Consort of Sweden for six years (1654-60), followed by being queen dowager, and most influential woman at the royal court, for 55 years. Widowhood characterised her life. Based on the extensive landholdings and revenues she received as widow, Hedwig Eleonora wielded political and economic power, and supported her natal and in-law dynasties. She used patronage to represent the dynasty's power through art and architecture, and fostered relatives at her court. This chapter analyses her economic agency, and sets it further into context with her role as queen dowager, and her lifelong experience as widow.

Keyword

Edvige Eleonora di Holstein-Gottorf – Svezia – vedovanza – reggenza – dovario – autorappresentazione – economia – patronato – dinastia – memoria

Bettina Braun

DIALOGO FRA DUE VEDOVE: IL CARTEGGIO TRA SOFIA DI HANNOVER ED ELISABETTA CARLOTTA D'ORLÉANS

Abstract

Elisabeth Charlotte of Orléans and her aunt Electress Sophie of Hanover engaged in a sustained and prolific correspondence over several decades, yet only the letters written by Elisabeth Charlotte have survived to the present day. Among other subjects, they also discussed their widowhood after they were widowed in 1698 and 1701 respectively. This essay examines the two princesses' self-perception of their widowhood. How did they cope with the death of their husbands? How did they perceive the changes that widowhood entailed? What did they suffer from particularly and how may they have found comfort? How did they assess their financial situation and their position at court?

Keyword

Carlotta Elisabetta d'Orléans – Sofia di Hannover – Hannover – Versailles – vedovanza – epistolario – identità – cerimonia – autodeterminazione

Cathérine Ludwig-Ockenfels

**CONVIVENZA O CONCORRENZA?
LE TRE ULTIME VEDOVE MEDICI A FIRENZE E LE LORO
RISORSE ECONOMICHE**

Abstract

From 1711 until 1743 the grand ducal court in Florence was confronted with up to three widows of high nobility. Remarkably, there was no grand duchess, as the last two reigning princesses preferred not to live in matrimony with their husbands, the last Medici grand dukes. This vacancy of the highest female post at the Tuscan court made the widows' presences more visible in enabling options for female agency. This article traces the commonalities and differences between these three widows. The aim is to question how the bonds between them strengthened or loosed according to categories like space, age, generational hierarchy, or lineage when focussing on financial resources.

Keyword

Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici – Eleonora Luisa Gonzaga-Guastalla – finanze
– Granducato di Toscana – Violante Beatrice di Baviera – vedovanza

Pauline Puppel

**SOVRANE VEDOVE. SFIDE E SPAZI DI MANOVRA:
GUGLIELMINA DI NASSAU-ORANGE, NATA DI PRUSSIA (1751-
1820) E LUISA DI BRUNSWICK-WOLFENBÜTTEL, NATA DI
NASSAU-ORANGE (1770-1819)**

Abstract

From 1804 until 1813 Napoleon ruled over large parts of Europe. Many German princes joined the Confederation of the Rhine, but others lost their territories, their wealth and their ranks. Among these were Wilhelmine of Prussia (1751-1820), widow of the *stadthouder* of the Netherlands William V of Nassau-Orange, and her daughter Louise (1770-1819), widow of Karl Georg August of Brunswick. Together, they first fled to Denmark, then to Berlin. Since 1807, both widows lived at the Prussian court. In order to regain the dynasty's homeland, they maintained correspondence with many influential ministers, envoys and military men in Europe. In the end, Wilhelmine's oldest son and Louise's brother owed his acclamation as King William I of the Netherlands to their lifelong commitment. The dynasty's exile ended and the family members were rejoined.

Keyword

Guglielmina di Nassau-Orange – Luisa di Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel – Napoleone I – vedovanza – esilio – Olanda – Prussia