

Book Review

Almudena Pérez de Tudela Gabaldón, *Los Inventarios de Doña Juana de Austria, Princesa de Portugal (1535–1573)*. Jaén, Editorial Universidad de Jaén, 2017. ISBN 978-84-9159-094-1. 702 pp. €35.

The publication a few years ago of a compendium of inventories for leading members of the Habsburg dynasty in the sixteenth century gave an extraordinary insight into the tastes and collecting practices of what was, at this time, the world's most powerful family (see this Journal, 23 (2011), pp. 193–195). One surprising fact that emerged from the inventories was that the most imaginative and interesting collectors among the Habsburgs turned out not to be the men – certainly not the Emperor Charles V, too preoccupied with his struggles to hold together his vast and unwieldy empire. Instead it was the women, figures such as Charles's aunt Margaret of Austria (1480–1530) and his sisters Mary of Hungary, Regent of the Netherlands (1505–1558) and Catherine of Austria, Queen of Portugal (1507–1578), who emerge as real individuals with clearly defined collecting tastes.

In this new book, Almudena Pérez de Tudela publishes two inventories for another younger female member of the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs, Charles V and Isabella of Portugal's youngest daughter Joanna of Austria, Princess of Portugal (1535–1573). Joanna, who had a peripatetic childhood, was at an early age noted for her learning and her accomplishment as a musician. In 1552, at the age of seventeen, she married her cousin John Manuel, Prince of Portugal, and moved to Lisbon. However, after John Manuel's untimely death just two years later, Joanna returned to Spain where she spent the remainder of her life. After her return, she would never again see her son the future king Sebastian I of Portugal, although they remained in close contact. When Joanna's brother Philip departed for England in 1554 to marry Mary Tudor, Joanna was appointed regent, carrying out her duties efficiently and with considerable skill. Today, she is best remembered for her founding in 1554 of the Convent of Las Descalzas Reales in Madrid, housed in the palace in which she

was born, and the repository for some of the works of art from her collection (some remaining in the convent to this day). Her funerary monument by Pompeo Leoni in the convent, depicting the princess in prayer, exemplifies the strong piety that would guide her in her later decades.

The two inventories, here published in full for the first time, were taken at key moments in Joanna of Austria's life, the first in 1553, when the young princess set out for Lisbon for her wedding to John Manuel, the second and much longer document drawn up after her death in 1573. Also published is the list of goods offered for sale in Joanna's *almoneda*, the *post mortem* auction habitually held in Spain, even for the grandest estates, and intended often, as here, to fulfil the legacies and clear the debts of the deceased individual. Finally, an appendix publishes a list of objects bequeathed to Joanna and her sister Maria by their mother the Empress Isabella, who had died in 1539, just a few years after Joanna's birth.

A very useful preliminary essay discusses the princess's life and her collections, as they can be reconstructed from the inventories. Joanna is seen to have owned one of the most significant collections in sixteenth-century Spain, the inventories collectively providing an extraordinarily rich resource of information on her wide-ranging collections, from paintings through goldsmiths' work and jewellery, to furniture, ceramics, glass and textiles. Joanna is shown to have been a significant patron in her own right; her jewellery was the most refined of any member of the Habsburg court. Her inventories also reflect the custom among the members of the Habsburg dynasty of making and exchanging gifts. Her son Sebastian regularly sent his mother gifts, giving instructions to the customs authorities not to impede them, but many others came from female members of the family network, including her aunts Catherine of Portugal, and Eleanor of Austria, Queen of France, and her sister-in-law Mary Tudor. The inventories contain many interesting 'exotic' objects, reflecting the growth in trade with new worlds in America and Asia.

The usefulness of this volume for scholars is sadly severely compromised by the absence of any index, or even a glossary to help explain specialist and obsolete terms. Nevertheless, it is a valuable new resource for the study of Habsburg collecting. It should help with the identification of more surviving objects from Joanna's collection and also, it is to be hoped, provide a springboard for a more comprehensive study of the

taste and collecting practices of a discriminating and extremely interesting patron, whose collections once again demonstrate the particular importance as collectors of female members of the Habsburg dynasty.

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