A Constellation of Courts

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From Graz to Vienna: structures and careers in the Frauenzimmer between 1570 and 1657

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In August 1571, the wedding of archduke Charles, the youngest brother of emperor Maximilian II, and princess Maria Anna of Bavaria was celebrated in Vienna. The festivities lasted several weeks and were among the most magnificent of the second half of the sixteenth century. The reputation of their splendour was such that features of the celebrations were replicated for the wedding of emperor Franz Joseph I and princess Elisabeth of Bavaria. The marriage of the archduke to his cousin stood at the end of a whole series of failed marital plans that had been hatched for Charles. The union demonstrated and renewed the political and religious alliance between the two remaining great catholic dynasties of the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburgs and the Bavarian Wittelsbach.

At the same time the marriage was an important step in the development of the town of Graz into an archducal residence. The estates of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola had already recognized archduke Charles as their future ruler during the lifetime of his father, emperor Ferdinand I. In accordance with the emperor's will, these three territories and some minor possessions on the coasts of the Adriatic became the archduchy of Inner Austria in 1564. The young archduke established his residence in Graz, where he immediately began creating the necessary governmental institutions and a representative court. His two foremost political goals were to organize on effective defence against the Turks and to stem the rise of protestantism among the members


of the estates of Inner Austria. The wedding of 1571 offered the opportunity to expand and complete the existing structures of the court of Inner Austria with a Frauenzimmer, or household for the archduchess. The creation of households for the couple’s children followed soon thereafter. The marriage proved harmonious and produced 15 children, 12 of which survived their father. First as a spouse and subsequently as a regent during the minority of her eldest son Ferdinand, archduchess Maria Anna wielded considerable influence in political matters and played a determining role in the matrimonial alliances of her children.4

So far little is known about the life at court in the residence of Graz. The questions concerning the defence against the Turks and the beginnings of the Counter Reformation in Styria have until now dominated historical research.5 Older studies nevertheless suggest three principal characteristics determining the format of courtly culture in Graz. First of all, there was the continuation of the archducal collections, for which the emperors Frederick III and Maximilian I had laid the foundations in the fifteenth century. In frequent exchanges with Munich, but also in contact with Rudolf II’s court of the muses in Prague, the archducal couple acquired mainly precious arms and paintings, thereby gathering an extensive Kunstkammer.6 Secondly, between 1564 and 1619 the court could boast a court chapel that was


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strongly influenced by Venetian musical styles and counted Orlandus Lassus among its composers. As such, the court chapel played an important role in spreading Italian musical forms north of the Alps.\(^7\) Italian influences and the activities of the Jesuits moreover helped to foster a lively theatrical culture at court.\(^8\) Thirdly and finally, archduke Charles and his son Ferdinand engaged themselves in numerous building projects and showed a clear predilection for Italian architects and artists. The transformation of the castle of Graz to a worthy residence, the implementation of the programme of the Counter Reformation into the interiors of the churches of the capital and the elaboration of dynastic monuments were at the core of these activities. The last two aspects determined the construction of the archducal mausoleum in Seckau from 1587 onwards as well as Ferdinand's tomb in the cathedral of Graz from 1614.\(^9\)

Even less research has up to now been completed on the court of Graz as the centre of politics and administration of the newly constituted archduchy. Some older studies elucidate the structures of government.\(^10\) None of the questions of modern court studies, however, have been researched for the court of Graz. There are no systematic studies of the way in which the court integrated the nobilities of the different regions of Inner Austria, of the problems of patronage and client networks as elements of courtly politics, nor of the careers of dignitaries of the


\(^8\) Wastler, *Das Kunstleben*, 136-139; Reiner Puschnig, “Theaterleben in Graz, europäisches Theater am Hof,” in Pferschy (ed.), *Die Steiermark*, 271f.


This lack is not only to be regretted from the point of view of the court in Graz. The eldest son of the archducal couple would eventually succeed his cousins Rudolf II and Matthias as head of the House of Habsburg and as emperor Ferdinand II. In the wake of the transfer of the court of Graz to Vienna, followed the transfer of many structures and institutions that had progressed through their proper evolution between 1565 and 1619.

In 1991 Volker Press already argued that many of the roots of the seventeenth-century Imperial court were to be located in Graz. This argument is for instance clear in bureaucratic structures and in the influence that the Jesuits – who were invited to Graz and supported by archduke Charles, his wife and his son Ferdinand – had on the religious and political life of the residence. This has lately also been demonstrated for other elements of courtly life, not least of all for large sections of the written regulations of the Imperial court after 1619. Another such instance was the demise of the so called Diener von Adel, noble lords who did not hold a specific office and were a common feature in the households of the court of Vienna in the sixteenth century, but disappeared after the accession of the line of Inner Austria. Further research into the influence of the household of Graz on the court of Vienna is certainly needed.

We cannot fully address this question here, but wish to concentrate on two aspects that have a bearing on the relationship between the courts of Graz and Vienna and at the same time shed light on a part of the courtly structures that has until now received little attention,

11 A few exceptions are: Hans SturmiBerger, Adam Graf Herberstorff. Herrschaft und Freiheit im konfessionellen Zeitalter (Vienna, 1976); Wāther Ernst Heydendorff, Die Fürsten und Freiherren zu Eggenberg und ihre Vorfahren (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1965).
15 An exception is: Hilscher, Mit Leier und Schwert, 101f.
namely the female household. A first part will analyse the structures of the Frauenzimmer, in other words the composition of the entourage of the archduchess or empress. Thereafter the continuity between Graz and Vienna in terms of female office holders will be addressed.

Studying the archduchess’ or empress’ household proves an appropriate instrument for gauging the relevance of the court of Graz for the Imperial court in the seventeenth century: since emperor Rudolf II never married, there was no Frauenzimmer in either Vienna or Prague between 1576 and 1611. Furthermore, there was no immediate continuity between the household of empress Anna, the wife of emperor Matthias between 1611 and 1618, and that of empress Eleonora Gonzaga (the Elder), who was the second wife of emperor Ferdinand II and as such resided in Vienna between 1622 and 1655. The influence of the traditions of the court of Graz on the organization of the female household of the young empress in 1622 can be detected in three aspects: the structure of offices for noblemen and women, the fact that appointments to these offices were reserved for either spinsters or widows and lastly and most convincingly in the reuse and further elaboration of instructions for female members of the household.

The structure of offices and the size of the female household in Graz were for the first time codified in 1573 by an ordinance of the archduke for his spouse. It listed the Obersthofmeister, the only male noble officer of the archduchess’ household, the Obersthofmeisterin, the head of the female entourage, the Unterhofmeisterin, who was in charge of the noble Hoffräulein or ladies-in-waiting, and the six ladies-in-waiting themselves. All of these noble office holders received a salary. With the exception of the Obersthofmeister and the Obersthofmeisterin, they were also entitled to one ceremonial dress every year. The ordinance furthermore enumerates a Kammerfrau or lady of the bedchamber, three chambermaids, three servants for the Kammerfrau, the Unterhofmeisterin and the ladies-in-waiting, a washerwoman for the archduchess and one for the noble ladies, a nurse for the children, a washerwoman for the children and a female cook. The lower male staff consisted of two chamber servants, a doorkeeper, an apothecary, a surgeon and his servant, a doorkeeper for the Frauenzimmer, a table servant, a servant in charge of the fires and two boys. All told the household of the archduchess consisted of 20 women and 11 men.

A comparison can be made on the basis of a list of the household of empress Eleonora that is dated 1629.\textsuperscript{17} It names the following staff: \textit{Obersthofmeister}, \textit{Oberhofmeisterin}, \textit{Frauenzimmerhofmeisterin} and 13 ladies-in-waiting, together with three ladies of the bedchamber and seven servants, a \textit{Kreserin} (a woman who deals with the collars and the laces of women’s wear) a female cook and two helpers, two fools of the bedchamber, two maids and seven servants for the ladies-in-waiting, a nurse for the children, a nurse for the sick with her helper, three female dwarfs, eight servants for certain women of the household and a dishwasher. On the male side, there were three chaplains, a secretary, a guardian of the wardrobe, a dancing master, a servant in charge of the fires and his boy, a doorkeeper and his boy, a servant of the table, together with two assistants and a boy, a doorkeeper of the hall, a doorkeeper of the Frauenzimmer and his boy, two Kammertrabanten, a gold embroiderer with his boy, as well as five servants, another servant of the table with his assistants and boy, two tailors for the ladies-in-waiting, a boy to care for the dogs and six additional valets. As such the household of the empress counted 55 women and 39 men, which made it considerably larger than that of the archduchess. The determining point, however, is the distribution of offices between noblemen and women. In both cases there was only one male officeholder, namely the \textit{Obersthofmeister}, while there were two positions of Hofmeisterin for noble widows and a greater or smaller number of ladies-in-waiting, who were by definition unmarried noblewomen.

Two examples will illustrate the difference of this court to the Imperial court of the sixteenth century. The only known list of the household of empress Maria of Austria dates from 1560.\textsuperscript{18} It limits itself to the offices reserved for the nobility, which in itself marks a certain difference. There were no less than four positions for noblemen: the \textit{Obersthofmeister}, the \textit{Oberststallmeister}, and two Mayordomos, alongside the \textit{Oberstkämmerin}, two Ehrenjungfrauen and 11 ladies-in-waiting and a further three ladies of the bedchamber. An overview of the members of the household of queen Anna, the wife of emperor Ferdinand I, gives a similar picture.\textsuperscript{19} Next to the \textit{Obersthofmeister}, there were the \textit{Oberstallmeister}, a Fürschneider and a secretary, whereby the latter office was at least for some time held by a royal counselor. Noble

\textsuperscript{17} Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung MS 10.100, f. 61r-73v.
\textsuperscript{18} Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Abt. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, OMeAl/SR 182, Nr. 40.
\textsuperscript{19} ÖStA, Abt. Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Familienarchiv Harrach HS 115.
ladies held the offices of Oberhofmeisterin and Unterhofmeisterin or served as one of the ten noble ladies. At the time of the queen’s death in 1547, two unmarried noble ladies moreover served as Leibwärterin for the archduchesses Eleonora and Magdalena, while four married noblewomen were reckoned to belong to the Frauenzimmer.

The two sets of lists demonstrate that the decrease of male officeholders in the household of the ruler’s consort – that also manifested itself in other courts in the Holy Roman Empire20 – was in the case of the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs linked to the accession of the line of Graz. The court of Graz led the way in reducing the number of male officers to one as well as in the exclusion of married noblewomen, two important characteristics of the Frauenzimmer in Vienna in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is interesting to note that Graz not only served as an example for the court of Vienna, but also for the court of Munich. Thus duchess Anna of Bavaria, who was an archduchess of Austria by birth and became the mother of the future archduchess Maria Anna, introduced the office of Unterhofmeisterin when she joined the court of Munich.21 Her son, duke William of Bavaria, entertained a lively correspondence with his sister Maria Anna, asking her to send him orders of precedence and instructions pertaining to the court of Graz. A list of the household of the archduchess was preserved in the archives of Munich.22 It is therefore hardly surprising that the household of the duchess of Bavaria bears the same characteristics in terms of structure and nominations as that of the archduchess or empress. Apart from the Hofmeister and Hofmeisterin, the latter a widowed noblewoman, it consisted of a (likewise widowed) Jungfrauenhofmeisterin, five to seven ladies-in-waiting and an additional 19 female and five male servants.23

Whereas the evidence regarding the influence of Graz on the female household in Vienna was only indirect as far as structures and office holding were concerned, Graz’s impact on the instructions for female

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23 Bayrisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abt. Geheimes Hausarchiv, Hofhaushaltsakten Nr. 232, unpag., 1586; Nr. 276, unpag., 1580.
officers of the court of Vienna was straightforward and significant.\textsuperscript{24}

From the reign of archduke Charles and archduchess Maria Anna instructions have been preserved for the archduchess’s *Obersthofmeister* and the *Obersthofmeisterin* dating from 1571 and for the *Unter- or Fräuleinmeisterin* from 1589.\textsuperscript{25} No comparable instruction for the *Oberstmeisterin* is known for the court of Vienna, but there are instructions for the empress’s *Obersthofmeister* from the years 1616, 1631, 1652 and 1655.\textsuperscript{26} An even greater number of instructions survived for the *Frauleinhofmeisterin*, namely for the years 1627, 1648 and 1651, 1670, 1671, 1675 and 1740.\textsuperscript{27}

A formal comparison between the instructions that have been preserved makes clear how important the instructions from Graz were for the *Fräuleinhofmeisterin*. In content as well as in form the instructions of 1589 set a pattern for those made for the successive empresses, even up to the point that the instructions of 1627, 1648 and 1651, 1670, 1671, 1675 and 1740 repeat almost verbatim passages from those of 1589. Some of the points remain unaltered up until the very last instructions. This consistency concerned above all the first items regarding the relationship with the *Obersthofmeister* (and after 1648 also the *Obersthofmeisterin*), confessional conformity and the attendance at mass:

1589/2 “Secondly, as we want to be cautious that in the Frauenzimmer of our dearest only Catholic persons will be accepted, so will the *Unterhofmeisterin* give particular attention und orders that neither the ladies-in-waiting nor others that belong in whatever way to the Frauenzimmer will be allowed to bring new sectarian tracts und writings, whether printed or otherwise, to the Frauenzimmer or engage in some oral disputation in matters of faith or religion, but that such things shall at all times be prevented and forbidden”\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24} See the general remark by Hengerer, *Kaiserhof*, 280.
\textsuperscript{27} ÖStA, *Abt. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Ältere Zeremonialakten* Karton 2/11, 7.10.1627; ibidem, OMeA SR 73, 4 da), [1648] and 8.05.1651; ibidem, *Ältere Zeremonialakten* Karton 8, 24.09.1670; ibidem, *Familienakten* 101, 1.01.1671 and 3.01.1675; ibidem, OMeA SR 73, Nr. 4h, 1740.
\textsuperscript{28} “Zum anndern, wie wir darauf bedacht sein wellen, das in irer Lieb frawenzimmer, lauther catholische personnen angenomen, also solle auch die underhofmaisterin ir
1740/2 “Secondly, as we ourselves want to be cautious that in our Frauenzimmer only catholic persons will be accepted, so will the Hofmeisterin give particular attention und orders that the ladies, spinsters and others belonging to the Frauenzimmer, whoever they might be, will not be allowed to bring sectarian tracts und writings, whether in German or otherwise, to the Frauenzimmer nor to engage in some oral disputations in matters of faith or religion, but that such things shall at all times be prevented and forbidden with all severity and diligence and that the honour and fear of God will prevail”. 29

Similar continuities can be observed for the overall supervision by the Fräuleinhofmeisterin, when her custody of the keys of the Frauenzimmer and her direction of the care for sick ladies-in-waiting and servants are concerned.

1589/12 “Twelfth, the aforementioned Unterhofmeisterin will with diligence and in person lock the Frauenzimmer every night at the appropriate time, hold the key with her all night and unlock it in the morning at the appropriate time”. 30

1657/7 “Seventh, the aforementioned Hofmeisterin will have the Frauenzimmer locked every night at the appropriate time, hold the key with her during the night and have it unlocked in the morning at the appropriate time”. 31
Finally, the same held true for the essential rules regarding the ladies-in-waiting such as their fidelity to catholicism, their respect for the empress, fitting behaviour when they attended to her person in church or regarding the discipline at table and the cordial relations between them. The rules for going into the city, for visits by relatives to the Frauenzimmer or for contacts with artisans and tradesmen were likewise copied from the instructions of 1589 until the end of the seventeenth century.

1589/9 “Ninth, the Unterhofmeisterin will not allow noble ladies, without the gracious permission of our beloved spouse, to go from the court into the city, but will always ask our dearest, as will the ladies-in-waiting, whether they want to go to the garden, to the young princess or to any such place at court, and will always inform the Unterhofmeisterin beforehand”. 32

1675/10 “Tenth, the Hofmeisterin will not allow ladies, without our gracious permission, to go from the court into the city; and when one or other lady goes, with our gracious consent and permission, in the abovementioned way, to visit a woman in the city and if that woman wants to take her further to churches, gardens or other company, it will not take place without us and the Hofmeisterin knowing of it beforehand, but we and our Hofmeisterin will always be asked in advance, unless it concerns the mother; so that one can always know where one or the other lady is and that every time she goes from the court to the city or elsewhere, she returns at the appointed time, particularly when there are public services at the court”. 33

32 “Zum neündten, soll die underhofmaisterin khainen jungfrawen vom adl, ausser unsnerer geliebten gmahel gnedigisten bewillung, von hof in die statt zu gehen, erlauben, sonnder alzeit ir Lieb darumb fragen, wie dann auch die jungfrawen, do sy etwo in garten, zu den jungen fürstin, oder an dergleichen orth zu hof gehen wellen, solchs allzeit mit der underhofmaisterin vorwissen thuen sollen.”

33 “Zum zehnten solle sie hofmeisterin keiner fräulen, außer unserer gnädigsten bewilligung, von hof in die stadt zu gehen erlauben, auch da eine oder die andere fräule dergestalt mit unserm gnädigsten willen und erlaubnuß zu einer frau auf die weis, wie oben vermeldet, in die stadt fahren thäte, dieselbe frau aber sie anderwärts in die kirchen, garten, oder andere gesellschaft weiters führen wollte, solches solle ohne unser und der hofmeisterin vorwissen, nicht beschehen, sondern wir und unsere hofmeisterin allezeit darum befragt werden, welche es ohne unser vorwissen nur allein den müttern zu erlauben haben wird, damit man allezeit wissen möge, wo ein oder die andere sey; zumahlen aber jedes mals, sonderlich, da sie etwa außer hofs in der stadt, oder anderwärts wären, sich wiederum zu rechter zeit, bevorab wann öffentliche dienste seynd, bey hof einfinden.”
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These instructions thereby illustrate in the clearest possible way that with the migration of the line of Inner Austria to Vienna many of the regulations of the daily activities at court were transferred from Graz to Vienna. No such close relationships in form or content can, on the contrary, be discerned in the three instructions for the Obersthofmeister, while the versions of 1652 and 1655 are almost identical. Interestingly enough, the draft for the instructions of the Obersthofmeister from 1616 relies heavily in its first three chapters on the instructions of the Hofmeisterin of 1589, with the items 1 to 3 being almost verbal copies. This relationship lacks in the following instructions of 1631, 1652 and 1655, nor is it present in those of 1571 either.

By and large, the Fräuleinhofmeisterin and the Obersthofmeisterin held considerable power in the female household. Their close contacts with the ruler’s consort and their station within the courtly representation gave them an important position in the hierarchy at court. However, the Oberhofmeister was their superior in precedence as well as in competence. The division of tasks between these offices stipulated that the Oberhofmeister could not direct the female members of the household, while the Oberhofmeisterin could not give orders to the male members.34 There was every indication that the areas where the attributions of the two offices overlapped were dwindling.35 In 1571 there were still 10 out of 17 points in the instructions of the Oberhofmeister, where the two officers shared duties. By 1616 these were reduced to 5 out of 10. In the longer run the Oberhofmeister saw his tasks reduced to controlling the finances of the empress, organizing audiences and in more general terms proffering advice. The direct intervention of the Oberhofmeisterin on the other hand, was by 1631 reduced to keeping and controlling the inventory of the Frauenzimmer and to exercising the general surveillance of the ladies-in-waiting. The instructions of 1652 and 1655 merely mention an overall task of surveillance. More concrete attributions towards the empress or the household were no longer mentioned.

Upon comparison with the previous instructions – in particular with those of 1631 – a final and clear evolution concerned the much more explicit definition of the empress’s or queen’s power to issue regulations. In 1652, on the other hand, the Oberhofmeister is designated as the keeper of ceremonial traditions concerning the empress.36 Apart from

34 ÖStA, Abt. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Hofverwaltungen Bd. 1, f. 166v.
35 For the instructions, see n. 25 and 26.
the overall surveillance, the instructions specify the duties of the
Obersthofmeister as ensuring that the empress and her ladies-in-waiting
were treated with respect, being present during audiences accorded
by the empress, regulating the entrance to the antechamber and
accompanying the empress when she left the palace or undertook a
journey. It was also his task to coordinate travel arrangements with the
Obersthofmeister and the Oberststallmeister of the emperor and to swear
in new members of the empress’s household, two functions that were still
exercised jointly with the Obersthofmeisterin in 1571.37 Furthermore,
he had to control the accounts of the treasurer of the empress and
to pass on orders to the kitchen of the court. Finally, he needed to
ensure that the empress’s outgoing mail respected all conventions
of protocol and propriety.38 What was in any case lacking from the
seventeenth-century instructions was an explicit ruling on the duty of
the empress’s Obersthofmeister to attend to the meetings of the Aulic
Council or to the presentation of accounts by other leading officers at
court.39

As regards to the duties of the Obersthofmeister a clear evolution
could therefore be discerned between 1571 and the middle of the
seventeenth century, an evolution that was detrimental to the tasks
and competence of the Obersthofmeisterin. The principal attributions
of the office of the Fräuleinhofmeisterin, however, remained unaltered
during the entire seventeenth century and as such reflected the clearest
continuity between Graz and Vienna.

When turning to the continuity between Graz and Vienna in
terms of female office holders, it is important to take into account the
hardly surprising fact that the area of recruitment for ladies-in-waiting
and Hofmeisterinnen differed greatly between the two courts. In Graz
women from families of Styria shared positions in the household with
women from Carinthia, Carniola and Gorizia, but also with some from
Tyrol.40 In Vienna on the other hand, Tyrol played little if any part
after the transfer from Inner Austria. Whereas the same could be said
for Carinthia, Carniola and Goriza, Styria gained in importance as
compared to the sixteenth century. Upper and Lower Austria as well

38 For the duties, see Hengerer, Kaiserhof, f. 267f.
40 The basis of this statement is a provisional analysis from ÖStA, Abt. Finanz- und
Hofkammerarchiv, Niederösterreichische Herrschaftsakten W 61/A/9-B, Bl. 665v-666v; W
61/A/36-B, Bl. 702r-861r.
as Bohemia and Moravia were in any case more important for the recruitment of noblewomen for the court.\textsuperscript{41}

Ladies from the Styrian nobility were of lasting importance among the \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} in Vienna until at least the 1650s, well beyond the move from Graz to Vienna. Above all they were prominent among the \textit{Fräuleinhofmeisterinnen} and the \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} of the imperial children. Of the 31 \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} in office between 1611 and 1657, 14 or almost 50\% belonged to families hailing from Styria or Gorizia.\textsuperscript{42} The importance of women of the Styrian nobility has not yet received a satisfactory explanation, but may be a survival of the longstanding relations between the imperial house and the Styrian nobility. The appointment of widowed ladies from these families was an act of regal grace, supporting the families and strengthening their ties to the Imperial court. At the same time there was little continuity on a personal level before and after 1619 as regards to \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} from Inner Austria, a marked difference with the male officers of the household.\textsuperscript{43} At the time of the transfer from Graz to Vienna, emperor Ferdinand II was a widower and the households of his daughters, the archduchesses Maria Anna and Cecilia Renata, and their \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} did not move permanently to Vienna until 1624.\textsuperscript{44} A certain measure of continuity could, however, be noted among the \textit{Hofmeisterinnen} of the 1620s and 1630s who had often served as ladies-in-waiting in Graz before they married and returned to take up office at the court of Vienna after they became widows.

\textsuperscript{42} Short biographies in Keller, \textit{Hofdamen}, for: Susanna Elisabeth von Althann, Maria Salome von Ernau, Margarita von Herberstein, Margarethe von Mörsberg, Franziska Quiroga von Paar, Katharina Eleonora von Paar, Anna Barbara von Stüibich, Maria Sidonia Stürgkh von Planckenwarth, Anna Maria Barbara von Urschenbeck, Maria Elisabeth von Wagensperg, Maria Katharina von Wängen; Ursula von Attems, Anna Maria Formentini, Anna Julia Valmarana.
\textsuperscript{43} Johann Andritsch, “Landesfürstliche Berater am Grazer Hof (1564-1619),” in Alexander Novotny and Berthold Sutter (eds.), \textit{Innerösterreich 1564-1619} (Graz 1967), 85-87.
\textsuperscript{44} Renate Schreiber, “\textit{Ein galeria nach meinem humor}. Erzherzog Leopold Wilhelm” (Vienna, 2004), 14.
The case of Anna Maria Formentini (died 1629) offers an example of such a career. She was first appointed *Frauleinhofmeisterin* of empress Eleonora Gonzaga the Elder in 1622, but exchanged that position for the office of *Obersthofmeisterin* in the household of the archduchesses in 1624. Anna Maria Formentini was born a von Rohrbach and had entered the household of archduchess Maria of Inner Austria as a lady-in-waiting in 1600. There she married Carl Formentini in September 1602, an archducal chamberlain and counselor, who served in the army of Ferdinand II and would later become Captain of Gradisca. He descended of a noble family from Gorizia. Lady Formentini was probably already a widow when she was appointed *Fräuleinhofmeisterin* in 1622. The following year she, her brother-in-law Caspar Formentini and her surviving children Ludwig, Aurora and Elisabeth were granted letters patent raising them to baronial rank with the honorific suffix *zu Tulmein*. At festivities at court she would often appear as an actress. She died in office in 1629 and the empress had her corpse embalmed and sent to Gorizia at her expense. In turn, the two daughters Aurora and Elisabeth Formentini became ladies-in-waiting, serving from 1627 to 1632 and from 1627 to 1634 respectively, the former in the entourage of the empress, the latter in that of the archduchesses. Their brother Ludwig Formentini (1604-1650) was an imperial chamberlain.

Another example is the career of Margarita von Herberstein (1580-1644), who was from 1630 until 1637 the *Obersthofmeisterin* of the archduchesses and from then until her death the *Obersthofmeisterin* of the empress-widow Eleonora Gonzaga the Elder. Margarita was born countess Valmarana and descended from a leading family of Vicenza that had contacts with the Habsburgs since the sixteenth century. In 1596 she became a lady-in-waiting of the sisters of Ferdinand II in Graz, where her brother Ascanio Valmarana (1576-1623) was also serving in the household and would marry a lady-in-waiting. Two years later, Margarita married baron Bernhardin von Herberstein (1566-1624). He had served at the Bavarian court, before becoming the *Oberststallmeister* of archduke Ferdinand II in 1595 and would exercise that office until 1622. Due to his obligations, Margarita von Herberstein would have


come to the court of Graz more or less regularly. After her husband’s
death, she made an agreement with her four sons that allowed her to
continue the administration of the family estate for the next three years.
Her eldest son was Johann Maximilian (1601-1680), the future member
of the Privy Council and Landeshauptmann of Styria, who was at that
stage a gentleman carver of Ferdinand II. The deed furthermore called
Johann Georg (died 1641), who would become commander of Triest and
Oberstsilberkämmerer of the empress-widow, a seneschal in Vienna
and his brother Johann Bernhard (died 1630) a canon of the cathedral
chapters of Salzburg and Olomouc. Hans Ferdinand and Hans Karl
were still minors. Out of the previous marriage of Bernhardin with a
countess Fugger, she moreover had a stepson Johann Wilhelm, who was
an imperial chamberlain at the time.

The agreement over the administration of the estate enabled
the eldest son to finish his education and prepare for a career as an
officeholder. After the agreement had run its course, Margarita von
Herberstein returned to court in 1630 as the Obersthofmeisterin of the
archduchesses Maria Anna and Cecilia Renata. Her services must have
been appreciated, because she was promoted to Obersthofmeisterin of
the empress-widow when Ursula von Attems (1568-1641) resigned
from that office in 1637. When the empress-widow resided in Graz for
a few months in the summer of the same year, Margarita’s eldest son
was appointed her Hofmeister, a title that he would continue to bear
even though he stopped exercising the office once the empress left the
town. This and other cases make it clear that Margarita von Herberstein
used her office and her access to the empress to the benefit of her family.
She was explicitly mentioned in the letters patent raising the family
von Herberstein to the rank of Austrian counts in 1644, yet another
sign that successful holding of office by women served the interests of
a family. That her only daughter, Maria Elisabeth – by marriage – von
Wagensperg (1599/1600-1681) became the Obersthofmeisterin of the
third spouse of emperor Ferdinand III in 1651, further demonstrates
the enduring influence of her mother’s tenure of office and at the same
time highlights another lady from the nobility of Styria holding an
important office at the court of Vienna.

The often neglected example of the female households provides a
number of interesting answers to the rarely studied question of the
influence of the court of Graz on the life of the court of Vienna in the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After the children of emperor
Ferdinand II left Graz in 1624, the town would only rarely serve as
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a residence. It did so for some time during the stay of the empress-widow Eleonora Gonzaga the Elder in 1637 and again in 1645, when the children of the emperor were brought to safety from the advancing Swedish troops. In all, the town hosted a Habsburg court for just a few decades in the early modern period. Due to dynastic developments that led the line of Inner Austria to occupy the imperial throne and settle in Vienna, these decades nevertheless had a profound influence on the structures and the representation of the imperial court. The Habsburg imperial court reconstituted itself after 1619, combining elements taken from the Rudolfine court of Prague, the Inner Austrian court of Graz and certain contemporary innovations.

As far as the female household was concerned, the time in Graz concluded the development from a medieval peripatetic to an early modern residential court. When the court was still moving around frequently, the ruler and his spouse were often apart for longer periods of time. As it had to be self-supporting, the household of the empress was larger and had a number of men holding offices. Parallel with the emergence of the fixed residence, the relationship between the male and the female household began to shift at the end of the fifteenth century. The stable common residence of the ruler and his spouse resulted in a closer connection between their households, which was internally accompanied by a compartmentalization. On the one hand the female household became part of the overall imperial household. This was codified when the testament of Ferdinand II of 1621 stipulated that the unity of the House of Habsburg entailed the unity of the dynasty’s households, meaning that the head of the dynasty – in other words the ruling archduke or emperor – would hold supreme authority over all dependant households of the members of the dynasty. At the same time the household of the archduchess and later of the empress was increasingly set apart, resulting in stricter controls on who gained entry to the Frauenzimmer and in measures to ensure the moral and honourable conduct of the ladies attached to it. The latter has to be interpreted in a more general evolution of noble norms of behaviour to courtly standards. Both developments were clearly reflected in the instructions of 1589 for the Fräuleinhofmeisterin of the court of

48 Keller, Hofdamen, 25.
49 Istvan von Žolger, Der Hofstaat des Hauses Österreich (Vienna-Leipzig, 1917), 171, 192f. That the court consisted of several households of members of the dynasty, was also the rule in France, Italy and Spain.
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Graz. These would later be partially copied word by word or otherwise quarried for the instructions governing the female household of the court of Vienna.

A third avenue of influence from the court of Graz to that of Vienna sprung from continuity in personnel. It can be detected among the officers of the household of the empress as well as in the entourage of the emperor, where, it should be said, it was clearer still. Taken together our findings will hopefully inspire the growing number of studies concerning the court of Vienna to consider its links with the court of Graz more systematically.