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«I AM STILL THE SAME AS I WAS AS QUEEN»: PORTRAITURE, NETWORKS, AND SELF-FASHIONING IN THE WIDOWHOOD OF MARIANA OF NEUBURG[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the self-representation of Mariana of Neuburg, the last Habsburg queen of Spain, as mediated through words, gifts, actions, and images, highlighting how she used art and material culture as vessels of self-fashioning during her widowhood. In the complicated political climate brought about by the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), Mariana was left with few allies and little power, forcing her to carefully manage her behaviour and her image. By studying Mariana's self-fashioning, in which her portraiture played a central role, it can be shown that the widowed queen continuously adapted her image to respond to changing circumstances. Mariana's commitment to fostering female networks of support is also investigated, demonstrating just how crucial female solidarity was to the maintenance of widowed or disenfranchised women.

KEY WORDS: Widowhood; self-fashioning; queenship; female networks; portraiture.

«I AM STILL THE SAME AS I WAS AS QUEEN»: RETRATO, REDES Y AUTOFIGURACIÓN EN LA VIUDEDAD DE MARIANA DE NEUBURGO

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina la autorrepresentación de Mariana de Neuburg, la última reina de España de los Habsburgo, a través de palabras, regalos, acciones e imágenes, destacando el modo en que utilizó el Arte y la cultura material como instrumentos de autofiguración durante su viudez. En el complicado clima político provocado por la Guerra de Sucesión española (1701-1714), Mariana se quedó con pocos aliados y poco poder, lo que la obligó a gestionar cuidadosamente su comportamiento y su imagen.

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El estudio de la creación de Mariana, en la que el retrato desempeñó un papel central, demuestra que la reina viuda adaptó continuamente su imagen a las circunstancias cambiantes. También se investiga el compromiso de Mariana con el fomento de redes femeninas de apoyo, lo que demuestra lo crucial que era la solidaridad femenina para el mantenimiento de las mujeres viudas o privadas de derechos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Viudedad; autofiguración; reinado; redes femeninas; retrato.

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The death of Carlos II in 1700 marked the beginning of a time of great change for Spain. As per the heirless king's last will and testament, a new Bourbon monarchy under Felipe V, the former Duke of Anjou, would be assuming control of the kingdom, ushering in new tastes, new policies, and a new approach to government[2]. However, this transition would not be a smooth one, with Carlos' relatives in Austria contesting the wishes of the last Habsburg king and asserting their own claim to the throne, beginning the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714)[3]. Caught in the middle of this struggle was Mariana of Neuburg, the second wife of Carlos II. Having survived her husband, the widowed queen Mariana remained as the last vestige of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. The pair had married in 1689, but despite the Neuburg family's known fecundity, the couple failed to produce an heir in the eleven years of their marriage[4]. Without a husband to protect her or children to support her, Mariana was left in a very vulnerable position and needed to quickly adapt to her new circumstances. The struggle to re-orient herself in a post-Habsburg environment was expressed in a variety of ways, including the networks she fostered, the portraiture she commissioned, and the gestures that she made to those around her. This article will examine the widowhood of Mariana of Neuburg as the last Habsburg queen, considering how she constructed and disseminated her image as a king's widow in the early eighteenth

[2] «… in case I die without issue; […] I declare the Duke of Anjou my Successor, and as such I call him to the Succession of all my Kingdoms, without any Exception», *The Last Will and Codicil of Charles II King of Spain Made the 2d. of October 1700 with the letters that have past betwixt the Most Christian King, and the Regency of Spain, on that Subject: Translated at large from the Authentick Copy, Printed at Paris in Spanish and French, on the French King's Authority* (London: John Porteous, 1701), 6. On the transition between the Habsburg and Bourbon monarchies see W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain 1700-1788: A Political, Diplomatic and Institutional History* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1979).

[3] On the relationship between Madrid and Vienna in the lead up to the death of Carlos II, see José Antonio López Anguita, "Madrid y Viena ante la sucesión de Carlos II: Mariana de Neoburgo, los condes de Harrach y la crisis del partido alemán en la corte española (1697-1700)" in José Martínez Millán and Rubén González Cuerva (eds), *La Dinastía de los Austria: Las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Polifemo, 2011), Vol. 2, 1111-53.

[4] For more rise of the Neuburgs in Europe and their reputation for fertility see Rocío Martínez López, "Consequences of the dynastic crises of the seventeenth century in the matrimonial market and their influence in the European international policy. The case of Maria Anna of Neuburg", in Roberta Anderson; Suna Suner, and Laura Oliván Santaliestra (eds) *Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European embassies from the 15th to the 18th centuries* (Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag, 2021), Vol. 2, 149-96.

century[5]. By studying the portraiture produced by Mariana and those within her familial network during her widowhood, it will reveal the complex legacy of her reign. Portraiture will be presented as a means by which Mariana could engage in international dialogues, allowing her to both react to, and influence, events on the wider European stage. As a study of the perils of queenship, the representation of widowhood, and solidarity within female networks, this article will hope to contribute to the rapidly-growing field of queenship studies[6].

SEARCHING FOR AN IDENTITY: MARIANA'S EARLY WIDOWHOOD

On 1 November 1700, Mariana of Neuburg became a widow having just turned thirty-three years' old a few days prior[7]. She was certainly not the first or youngest queen to suffer such a fate, with her own mother-in-law, Mariana of Austria, having lost her husband Felipe IV of Spain in 1665 when she was thirty[8]. In fact, a number of high-profile European queens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been widowed, forcing them to navigate the difficult terrain of regencies, the struggle to retain power, and, as other scholars have dubbed it, «the fight against invisibility[9]». With the king's death, a part of Mariana had died too. As Margarita García Barranco explains, during the Early Modern Period, kings lived a sort of double life: they possessed a physical body, which was susceptible to illness, and eventually, death,

[5] For more on this topic see, for instance, Gloria Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo, Última Reina de los Austrias: Vida y legado artístico* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2022); Gloria Martínez Leiva, "El exilio de la reina viuda Mariana de Neoburgo y la configuración de un nuevo retrato áulico" in Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos and Angel Rodríguez Rebollo (co-ords) *Carlos II y el arte de su tiempo* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2013), 219-56; Gloria Martínez Leiva, "Mariana de Neoburgo: Cartas de un Exilio" in *Congreso Internacional Espacios de Poder: Cortes, ciudades, y villas (C. XVI-XVIII)*, Volume 1 (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2002), 291-312; Carmen Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda Mariana de Neoburgo (1700-1706): Primeras batallas contra la invisibilidad" in José Martínez Millan and María Paula Marçal Lourenço (coords.), *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías hispana y portuguesa: las Casas de las Reinas (siglos XV-XIX)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2009), Vol. 1, 459-82.

[6] See for instance: Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.) *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Charles Beem, *Queenship in Early Modern Europe* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); Helen Matheson-Pollock, Joanne Paul, and Catherine Fletcher (eds) *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[7] Mariana was born in Dusseldorf on 28 October 1667. See Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo,* 33-34 for details on her familial background and early life.

[8] For more on the widowed queens of Spain and their differing experiences and posthumous reputations, see Margarita García Barranco, "La reina viuda o la muerte del cuerpo simbólico", *Chronica Nova* 34 (2008), 45-61.

[9] Martínez Leiva (*Mariana de Neoburgo,* 230) reiterates this phrase which derives from Sanz Ayán's essay titled "La reina viuda Mariana de Neoburgo (1700-1706): Primeras batallas contra la invisibilidad". There exist numerous studies which discuss the challenges faced by individual widowed queens of the Early Modern Period: see for example. Lorna G. Barrow, "Queenship and the Challenge of a Widowed Queen: Margaret Tudor Regent of Scotland 1513-1514", *The Sydney Society for Scottish History*, 16 (2016): 23-42; Paulo Marques, "Catherine of Braganza, A Widow" *The British Historical Society of Portugal* 8 (1981), 14-25; Jessica O'Leary, "Wife, Widow, Exiled Queen: Beatrice d'Aragona (1457-1508) and Kinship in Early Modern Europe" in Lisa Hopkins and Aidan Norrie (eds) *Women on the Edge in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 139-57.

but also an immortal, symbolic body which could never be destroyed[10]. The symbolic body of queen consorts, on the other hand, lacked this level of immortality as it had been born upon their marriage and would essentially die upon their husband's death, leaving the former queen in a sort of existential limbo[11]. Without the possibility of fashioning a new political body for herself as queen mother, Mariana's importance to her former kingdom had all but expired. Lacking an official role at court, she began to explore a variety of different modes of self-representation in word, paint, and deed to find for herself the most beneficial position she could. In the first six years of her widowhood, spent between Madrid and Toledo, Mariana attempted to cultivate associations with three main loci of power: her late husband, Carlos II, the new royal family of Spain led by Felipe V, and her natal family originating in Neuburg[12].

In the public sphere, it was of great importance for Mariana to begin to fashion herself as the pious widow of Carlos II, foregrounding her devotion to God and her late husband. Widowed queens were expected to recognise the death of their political bodies by retiring their physical bodies from the world as much as possible, interacting with the outside world almost exclusively through acts of charity, piety, and remembrance[13]. Widowed queens were generally expected to remove themselves from court, a request which Mariana reluctantly acquiesced to on 2 February 1701, leaving her former seat of power to reside in the city of Toledo[14]. Just before she left Madrid, Mariana made a number of donations to local hospitals, an act that sought to help her retain her visibility and to build up her new image as a widow[15]. Upon her arrival in Toledo she had numerous masses said across the local convents and parishes in honour of her husband, as well as a particularly extravagant ceremony on the first anniversary of his death which lauded both the late king and Mariana herself[16]. She adopted the formal black garments of mourning, which included «a long veil that reached her feet», allowing her outward appearance to at all times express the inner movements of her grief[17]. Mariana's other physical manifestations of piety were praised, including her «tender sighs and loving tears» which were seen as a positive sign of her womanly affection; as Juan Luis Vives stated in *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*: «It

[10] García Barranco, "La reina viuda", esp. 47-50.

[11] García Barranco, "La reina viuda", esp. 50-53.

[12] On this period of the queen's widowhood see José Antonio López Anguita, "Espacios para una reina viuda. Gracia y desgracia de Mariana de Neoburgo en la corte di Felipe V (1700-1706)" in Bernardo J. García García (ed.) Felix Austria: Lazos familiares, cultura política y mecenazgo artístico entre las cortes de los Habsburgo (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2016), 303-25.

[13] García Barranco, "La reina viuda", 59.

[14] López Anguita, "Espacios", 309-10.

[15] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 470.

[16] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 474-77.

[17] "[La Reina] Tenía un aspecto majestuoso vestida de luto, con un velo largo que le llegaba hasta los pies", cited in Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 318, n. 21; On the social uses of clothing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. from the French by Jean Birrell (Cambridge Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1997); On the understanding of grief in the Early Modern Period, which was conceived as a sort of internal movement which could be made external, see Christopher Ocker, "The Motion of Another's Death: Grief and Mourning" in Philip Booth and Elizabeth Tingle (eds) *A Companion to Death, Burial, and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 368-92.

is the greatest token that can be of an hard heart and an unchast mind, a woman not to weepe for the death of her husbande[18]».

To bolster and disseminate her performance of grief, Mariana commissioned her first official portraits as a widow. Unlike her mother-in-law, Mariana of Austria, whose portraits during widowhood presented her in nun-like garb in a stately role as regent for her minor son, Mariana of Neuburg, without a child or a fixed role at court, chose instead to focus on her lasting relationship with Carlos II in her first portrait as a widow (Fig. 1)[19]. Gloria Martínez Leiva attributes this portrait to Jacques Courtilleau and posits that it was most likely painted during the months between the death of Carlos II and Mariana's departure from Madrid as it does not appear that Courtilleau travelled to Toledo with the widowed queen[20]. If this is the case, then this portrait gives an important glimpse into the mind-set of the newly-widowed queen at a time when her future was in the throes of being decided. Mariana is shown in three-quarter length standing within a stately interior, wearing a dress of rich red fabric embellished with fine gold embroidery featuring lace around the breast and sleeves, with a striking brooch ornamented with five baroque pearls dangling below it in the centre of her chest. Mariana's right arm rests proudly atop an oval portrait of the late Carlos II contained within a broad golden frame, while her left gently lifts a piece of black silk on which the portrait rests, signifying the state of mourning which she is now entering. The portrait of Carlos II depicts the king in fine armour, wrapped in rich red drapery, with both he and his wife meeting the gaze of the viewer. The queen's appearance in this portrait is not entirely dissimilar from that of John Closterman's *Portrait of Mariana of Neuburg in Hunting Attire* of only two or three years previous, featuring a similar red overcoat, lace cuffs, and voluminous powdered wig[21]. Mariana is not yet shown in mourning dress, but rather seems to be in the very moment of transition between the roles of queen and widow.

The inclusion of a portrait of a deceased spouse was not uncommon in representations of widows, with such notable figures as the Princess of Orange, Amalia van Solms, adopting this format for a portrait of hers by Gerard van Honthorst[22]. In everyday experience, portraits of deceased husbands played an important role in the early modern world. In his 1548 *Four Dialogues on Painting*, Francisco de Hollanda comments that a portrait within the home depicting a deceased husband and father:

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[18] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 477; Juan Luis Vives, *A Verie Fruitfull and Pleasant Booke, Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman. made First in Latin, by the Right Famous Cleark M. Lewes Viues, and Translated Out of Latine into Englishe, by Richard Hyrde* [De institutione foeminae Christianae.] (London: Robert Walde-graue, 1585), 365.

[19] On the portraiture of Mariana of Austria as regent, see Mercedes Llorente, "Imagen y autoridad en una regencia: Los retratos de Mariana de Austria y los límites del poder" *Studia histórica: Historia moderna* 28 (2006), 211-38; Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 219.

[20] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 219-21.

[21] John Closterman, *Mariana of Neuburg in Hunting Attire*, 1698-1699, oil on canvas, 207 x 107 cm, private collection. On this portrait see Gloria Martínez Leiva, "Art as diplomacy: John Closterman's portraits of Carlos II of Spain and his wife Queen Maria Anna of Neuburg", *The Burlington Magazine* 160, no. 1382 (2018), 380-86.

[22] Gerard van Honthorst and Workshop, *Amalia van Solms with a Portrait of her Late Husband Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange*, 1650, oil on panel, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

…prolongs for many years the life of one who dies, since his painted likeness remains; it consoles the widow, who sees the portrait of her dead husband daily before her, and the orphan children, when they grow up, are glad to have the presence and likeness of their father and are afraid to shame him[23].

Fig. 1. Jacques Courtilleau, *Mariana of Neuburg with the Portrait of her Deceased Husband Carlos II*, 1700-1701, oil on canvas, 127 x 104 cm, Museum of the Villa of Poggio a Caiano, © Gabinetto Fotografico delle Gallerie degli Uffizi.

[23] As quoted in Allison Levy, "Widow's Peek: Looking at Ritual and Representation" in Allison Levy (ed.) *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1-15, 8.

While the shaming aspect of portraiture here is invoked in relation to children, the impression given is that portraiture could inspire fealty long after a person had passed from mortal existence and would encourage those left behind to honour the deceased's wishes and preserve their memory. As such, this portrait acted as a reminder of the ongoing presence of Carlos' soul and Mariana's enduring bond with him, a bond that imbued her with influence and prestige. Vives likewise reminds readers of the power of remembering a loved one: «Wherefore a good widowe ought to suppose, that her husband is not utterly dead, but liveth, both with the life of his soule, which is the very life, and beside with her remembraunce[24]». Mariana's portrait therefore shows her ongoing devotion to the soul of her husband, and acknowledges her role as primary mourner and «site of memory» for his legacy on earth[25]. Her immortalisation in the act of remembering Carlos provided him with a perpetual mourner, while also providing her with a much-needed, clearly-defined role in a time of great turbulence[26].

In addition to trying to emphasise the lasting relationship between the late king and herself, Mariana also tried to foster a positive relationship with the new monarch and those closest to him. Although the letters of Felipe V to the widowed queen were entirely respectful and cordial, promising that the queen would be «treated with all the considerations that are owed to [her]», at the same time he refused her requests to return to court and only paid her 50,000 ducats a year instead of the 400,000 which her husband had allocated to her as a pension in his will[27]. This left Mariana struggling to live to the standards expected for a queen, with her personal doctor, Geelen, writing to her brother Johann Wilhelm II, Elector Palatine, in May of 1701 to say that he had advised the queen to reduce her court since «it is more valuable to have a smaller entourage who is well paid, than a numerous one dead of hunger»[28]. Even so, Mariana continually tried to show the king her fealty, inviting him to visit her new residence in Toledo and sending him the extravagant gift of a coach filled with fine furniture and services of silver, as well as six horses which had originally been sent to her by her brother[29]. This gesture inspired the king to visit his predecessor on the 3 August 1701, with the queen doing her utmost to entertain and feed him to his satisfaction[30]. However, the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in this same year was destined to scupper her attempts at fostering a strong relationship with the new monarch[31].

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[24] Vives, *The Instruction,* 380.

[25] The term «site of memory» is used by J. S. W. Helt in his chapter "*Memento Mori*: Death, Widowhood and Remembering in Early Modern England" in Allison Levy (ed.) *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 39-53, 39.

[26] Allison Levy, "Framing Widows: Mourning Gender and Portraiture in Early Modern Florence" in Allison Levy (ed.) *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 211-31, 223; Funerary monuments sometimes featured sculpted mourners for this same reason: «…as a constant sign of the emotional participation of living survivors», Ocker, "The Motion", 391.

[27] Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 292, n. 9 and 293, also see n. 10.

[28] «…vale más séquito pequeño y bien pagado, que numeroso y muerto de hambre…» As quoted in López Anguita, "Espacios", 316.

[29] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 472-73.

[30] López Anguita, "Espacios", 312.

[31] Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 294.

Despite these setbacks and her worsening financial position, Mariana continued to try to remain tethered to the court. In the summer of 1703, she was invited to gardens of Aranjuez to meet the new queen, María Luisa Gabriela of Savoy, an event that saw the last remaining queen of the Habsburg dynasty meeting the first Bourbon consort. Mariana surely considered that making a good impression on the king's beloved queen, and the royal couple's highly-influential favourite, the Princess of Ursins, might help her in her pursuit of returning to court[32]. With her attempts at swaying Felipe having yielded few results in the past, Mariana likely hoped that the women who stood by his side could advocate for her if she could only inspire solidarity with them which she attempted to do through frequent missives to the Princess of Ursins and the giving of generous gifts to the two women upon their first meeting[33]. To the queen she gave a jewellery set of diamonds, and to the Princess of Ursins she presented her portrait encircled by gemstones[34]. Both women received items which highlighted Mariana's parity with them: to the queen, Mariana gifted queenly goods, a reminder that she had once occupied the same throne, while to the Princess of Ursins – a widow twice-over since 1698 – Mariana gave an image of herself, likely a portrait miniature as a widow similar to that which can be found today in the Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas in Madrid (Fig. 2).

This image, which was likely painted by Mariana's court portraitist Jan van Kessel II, shows the queen having fully assumed her role as widow, dressed entirely in black and without any of the trappings of wealth or status that were found in her previous depiction by Courtilleau[35]. This austerity is contrasted, however, with the intricately detailed frame, which is made up of gem-encrusted foliate motifs which seem to sprout organically from the central oval. Mariana does not look directly out at the viewer, but seems to stare into the middle-distance in contemplation. She appears to be shown in the act of remembering Carlos II in an introverted, meditative way, having fully assimilated her role as his primary mourner into her everyday deportment. Early modern writers such as Vives praised widows who could show their sorrow without extravagant expressions such as wailing and the beating of their bodies, recommending instead: «let her so mourne that shee remember sobernes and measure, that another may understand her sorow, without her owne bosting and utterance[36]». By presenting her own portrait in the guise of a widow to Ursins, Mariana likely hoped to remind the *camerera mayor* of the value of widows in circles of power – a value that she clearly knew well – offering herself as a peer and an ally. Indeed, Mariana's tactics

[32] On the interpersonal dynamics and changing identity of the monarchy during the first years of the Bourbon succession, see Pablo Vázquez Gestal, *Una Nueva Majestad: Felipe V, Isabel de Farnesio y la identidad de la monarquía (1700-1729)*, (Seville and Madrid: Fundación de Municipios Pablo de Olande and Marcial Pons Historia, 2013).

[33] López Anguita, "Espacios", 312.

[34] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 78.

[35] On Van Kessel II see Ángel Aterido, *El final del Siglo de Oro: La Pintura en Madrid en el cambio dinástico 1685-1726* (Madrid: Coll and Cortés, 2015), 80-83.

[36] Vives, *The Instruction,* 372.

seem to have had some effect, with Ursins being one of the few at court to show her some favour[37].

Fig. 2. Jan van Kessel II, *Miniature of Mariana of Neuburg as a Widow,* c. 1701-1706, oil on card, 6.2 x 4.8 cm, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid.

Unfortunately for Mariana, her familial ties to the House of Neuburg – and thus Felipe V's rival, Archduke Charles of Austria – were a large stumbling block in her efforts to ingratiate herself with the Bourbon court[38]. While relationships with natal

[37] López Anguita, "Espacios", 312.

[38] Mariana had a large family made up numerous important figures. Her father was Philipp Wilhelm, Count Palatinate of Neuburg and Elector Palatine (1615-1690) and her mother was Landgravine Elisabeth Amalie of Hesse-Darmstadt (1635-1709). She had sixteen brothers and sisters who lived to

families could be of great benefit to widowed queens and queens consort in general, they could also be sources of risk[39]. Mariana's blood ties fell much more securely on the side of Charles of Austria in the ongoing war, with the pretender to the throne being her nephew through her eldest sister Eleonore Magdalene of Neuburg. To make matters worse for Mariana's reputation among the Spanish, Portugal joined the war on the Austrian side in 1703 under King Pedro II, whose late wife happened to be another sister of Mariana's, Maria Sofia of Neuburg[40]. During these stressful times of war, Mariana's sister Dorotea Sofia, Duchess of Parma, maintained a constant correspondence with her, reassuring the widowed queen of her support[41]. The widowed queen reinforced the bonds between her natal family and herself in a letter which she wrote to her eldest brother Johann Wilhelm soon after the death of Carlos II in which she called herself the «obedient daughter of our incomparable father[42]». Although the maintenance of these relationships may have provided the queen some comfort on a personal level, they also led Felipe V and his advisors to question her loyalty to the new regime. The letters that she sent and received were confiscated and checked to ensure that she was not passing information to the Austrian side[43]. This greatly frustrated Mariana, as she conveyed in a letter to her mother: «They do not leave me in peace and they say of my letters a thousand things that are not in them; so I am forced not to write anymore[44].» That some members of court saw Mariana's familial bonds as threatening her loyalty to the crown demonstrates just how important familial relationships – especially those with other women – could be for queen consorts.

With the expulsion and isolation of those who were perceived as pro-Austrian underway in the areas controlled by Felipe V, Mariana's household drifted away from her, much to her dismay[45]. Without her networks of support, the queen was left in an even more desperate position, driving her to make a choice that would cement her image as a traitor to the new dynasty. When the forces of Charles of Austria arrived in Toledo at the end of June 1706 declaring him as Charles III of Spain, Mariana – now alone, impoverished, and mistrusted – showed her support for the Austrian takeover,

adulthood, the most important of whom for this discussion were Eleonore Magdalene, Holy Roman Empress (1655-1720), Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine (1658-1716) who married Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici (1667-1743) in 1691, Maria Sofia, Queen of Portugal (1666-1699), Dorotea Sofia, Duchess of Parma (1670-1748), and Hedwig Elisabeth, Princess of Poland (1673-1722). For more on these individuals see Josef Johannes Schmid, "Beau-père de l'Europe: les princesses dans la politique familiale et dynastique de Philippe-Guillame de Neubourg", *XVIIe siècle* 243 (2009), 267-79.

[39] On the complicated nature of the role of queen consort, see Louise J. Wilkinson and Sara J. Wolfson, "Introduction: pre-modern queenship and diplomacy", *Women's History Review*, 30 (2021), 713-22 and Clarissa Campbell Orr, 'Introduction' in Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.) *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-15.

[40] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 478.

[41] Giulio Sodano, "Una contessa palatina a Parma. Dorotea Sofia e l'irruzione delle Neuburg nella política europea.", *Cheiron* 1 (2017), 118-46, 139-44.

[42] Sanz Ayán, "La reina viuda", 461.

[43] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 78.

[44] «No me dejan en paz y dicen de mis cartas mil cosas que no hay en ellas; así que me veo forzada a no escribir más.», as quoted in Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 78.

[45] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 77-78.

symbolically removing her mourning dress and flying the standard of Charles III from her home in the Alcázar[46]. Sadly for her, Charles' forces soon lost the ground that they had gained in the war and Felipe V returned to power[47]. Felipe's response to Mariana's betrayal was swift: he arranged for her immediate and secret banishment from Toledo to the city of Bayonne, just over the Spanish border into France, where she arrived on 20 September 1706[48].

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES: THE FIRST YEARS IN BAYONNE

In the years of her exile in Bayonne across various residences owned by the Duke of Gramont, Bishop Dreuilhet, and Marquis of Clermont, Mariana was served by a court of some two-hundred people[49]. Despite the fact that she was only receiving a fraction of her pension, among those in her service were her «clockmaker, silversmith, painters, and musicians[50]». Although she had been exiled from court, Mariana was still a representative of the crown of Spain living in the territory of one of Spain's greatest rivals: France. To publicise her limited means would be to admit defeat and bring shame to herself and the crown. Mariana's rank and her way of life were inextricable from one another: as Norbert Elias wrote in relation to those living under the contemporary *Ancien Régime*: «A duke who did not live as a duke ought to live, who could no longer properly fulfil the social duties of a duke, was hardly a duke any longer[51].» It is within this context that Mariana's activities and choices during her period of exile must be viewed. Her frequent supplications to obtain her full pension were not just attempts to have more money at her disposal, but rather represented a fight to retain ownership over her very rank and title.

Part of Mariana's continued self-fashioning as a queen was carried out through her commissioning of portraits, and to accomplish this she needed talented artists at her service. Between 1707 and 1713 she had the painter Jacques Courtilleau in her employ, the same that had worked for her during her time as queen, facilitating a social and visual continuity[52]. Upon his death, a new artist named Robert Gabriel Gence took charge of creating the widowed queen's image. Although biographic details are somewhat lacking, Gence is known to have been born in Paris circa 1670, working as an artist there and in Versailles around the turn of the century, later relocating to Bayonne where Mariana must have encountered him[53]. Gence's first portrait of the queen, signed and dated 1713, is currently in the possession of the collections of Versailles and marks a new departure for Mariana's image as a widow (Fig. 3). Mariana is shown seated within an opulent interior with a red curtain draped behind her. She

[46] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 80; López Anguita, "Espacios", 317.
[47] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 80.
[48] For details on Mariana's journey, see Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio".
[49] Martínez Leiva, "El exilio", 228; Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 299.
[50] Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 299.
[51] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006), 71.
[52] Martínez Leiva, "Cartas de un Exilio", 84-85.
[53] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 223-25.

no longer wears her simple black attire, but rather has visually returned to the role of queen, wearing a rich blue dress bedecked with jewels and lace, and wrapped in a red velvet cloak lined with ermine. A large Baroque pearl hangs above her left ear, while a string of pearls is woven elegantly through the length of a lock of her powdered hair. Her left hand holds this piece of hair aloft while the left sits on the armrest just in front of a table bearing the crown of Spain. Far from the meek, contemplative widow that her miniature portrait had styled her as, here Mariana meets the viewers' gaze, appearing self-assured and regal in her bearing, with not a single marker of her widowhood remaining.

Fig. 3. Robert Gabriel Gence, *Mariana of Neuburg*, 1713, oil on canvas, 138.5 x 109.5 cm, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

While some of this pictorial transformation can certainly be attributed to Gence's modern, French approach to portraiture which adopted similar models to his colleagues in Paris and Versailles, Nicolas de Largillière and Jean Ranc, it is not likely to be the sole reason for this complete change in the widowed queen's image[54]. It is possible that this more self-possessed, confident image of Mariana was sent to the court of France soon after its creation in an attempt to encourage King Louis XIV to advocate for the end of her exile as part of the ongoing negotiations surrounding the termination of the war[55]. As a central figure in the negotiations, an ally of Felipe V, and the ruler of the country in which Mariana was residing, the widowed queen likely realised the benefits inherent in reminding Louis XIV of her case at this crucial time, choosing pictorial means to do so[56]. Her brother Johann Wilhelm was advocating for the widowed queen with Europe's leaders during the negotiations of the peace treaties of Utrecht, Baden, and Rastatt between 1713 and 1715, insisting that the stipulations of the will of her late husband be honoured and validated as part of one of the treaties[57]. With important treaties having being signed between all the major powers involved in the war in March, April, and July of 1713, the specificity of the Latin inscription on Gence's first portrait of Mariana which translates to «Robert Gabriel Gence/Painted in the vicinity of Bayonne/Month of August 27 in the year 1713» begins to make more sense, placing the portrait formally within a precise temporal context relating to the determining of Mariana's fate[58]. Unfortunately, as the final treaties were signed and the war ended, the widowed queen's situation remained largely unchanged.

A NEW HOPE: THE ARRIVAL OF ISABEL FARNESIO

Mariana did not have too long to wait for a serendipitous turn of events which opened up new possibilities for her. With the death of María Luisa Gabriela of Savoy on 14 February 1714, Felipe V, now the undisputed King of Spain, was left a widower. Despite the fact that the late queen had birthed three male heirs who were still living at the time of her death, the king sought a new queen, mostly for personal reasons of companionship and support rather than dynastic ones[59]. To the surprise of many, a

[54] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 225.

[55] The exact date of this work's arrival in the French royal collections is unclear, although Martínez Leiva (*Mariana de Neoburgo*, 225) notes that it is first mentioned in the collections of Versailles during the reign of King Louis Philippe I. See also "Marie-Anne de Neubourg, reine d'Espagne (1667-1740)", Chateau de Versailles website, <https://collections.chateauversailles.fr/#82ff309b-732f-4fe6-b76c-902a59388449> [accessed 19 February 2024] which lists the work's provenance as unknown between 1713 and 1834.

[56] Rocío Martínez López, "La defensa de los intereses de la reina viuda Mariana de Neoburgo en el ámbito internacional: Las negociaciones de Juan Guillermo de Neoburgo con Ana I, Carlos VI y Felipe V a favor de la reina al final de la Guerra de Sucesión Española", *Chronica Nova* 44 (2018), 85-114, 95.

[57] For a thorough study of Johann Wilhelm's negotiations on behalf of Mariana see Martínez López, "La defensa" in its entirety.

[58] «Ro^{tus} Gabriel Gence/ad vicinum Pingebat Bayonae/M. de Augte 27^{o} anno 1713», as cited in Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 225, English translation by the present author.

[59] As various authors have pointed out, Felipe V was very reliant on his queen consort for support in ruling his kingdom and in maintaining his mental health. As Hargreaves-Mawdsley put it: «{…} Felipe V himself rarely governed but rather ruled through women, whether through his first consort, Maria

young princess from a small Italian duchy was chosen as Felipe's new bride: her name was Elisabetta Farnese, or Isabel Farnesio to the Spaniards, daughter of the Duke of Parma. Isabel, who was twenty-one years old when she married the King of Spain by proxy in Parma on 16 September 1714, was the only surviving child of Dorotea Sofia of Neuburg, Duchess of Parma and younger sister of Mariana. For the widowed queen, this meant another possible chance for her fortunes to change. Upon hearing the happy news, she sent her treasurer, Juan Tomás de Goyeneche, to Parma to congratulate her relatives and invite the new queen consort to visit her in France during her passage to Spain[60]. Isabel was happy to accept, setting up a meeting that would be important for the futures of both women. This momentous meeting between a former queen of Spain and a current one took place in the city of Pau, not far from the Spanish border. Mariana presented Isabel with a number of lavish gifts at different times throughout the visit, first giving her «a very rich jewellery set of diamonds and sapphires» and later presenting her with some *monillas*, a pearl necklace with matching earrings, and a magnificent carriage[61]. These gifts rivalled those presented to the new queen by the King of France himself who had sent the Duke of Saint-Aignan with his miniature and a mother-of-pearl snuff box received but a few days earlier[62]. Although Mariana's means were limited, she sought to show a queenly generosity and liberality with her niece. The two queens feasted, danced, and enjoyed each other's company from the 29 November until the 9 December when they parted ways at St. Jean Pied-de-Port, with Isabel Farnesio continuing her journey to meet her new husband and begin her reign as Queen of Spain[63].

THE WIDOW, THE DUCHESS, AND THE QUEEN: MARIANA'S FAMILIAL NETWORKS OF SUPPORT AND EXCHANGE

Portraiture played a pivotal role in the building of bonds and expression of community between Mariana, Dorotea Sofia, and Isabel, particularly after the latter's

Luisa of Savoy, or his second, Isabel Farnese…», (*Eighteenth-Century Spain,* 3). For more on the influence of queen consorts in the ruling of Spain during the first half of the eighteenth century see also Charles C. Noel, '"Bárbara succeeds Elizabeth…" the feminisation and domestication of politics in the Spanish monarchy 1701-1759' in Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.) *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 155-85.

[60] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 86.

[61] «…regalándola un aderezo de Diamantes, y Zafiros muy rico.» and added to the end of the letter in another hand «Despues de aber escrito la Reyna a dado a su sobrina otro regalo de unas monillas y un collar y aracadas de perlas lindisimo.» AHN, Sección de Estado, Leg. 2692, letter of 1 December 1714. It is unclear what «monillas» refers to.; The gift of the carriage is mentioned in Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 86.

[62] The same letter that records the meeting of Mariana and Isabel also notes: «In Tarbe we met the Duke of Saint-Aignan who came on the part of His Most Christian Majesty to bring to the Queen our lady the gift contained in the attached note which I despatch to Your Lordship.», «En Tarbe encontramos al Duque de Santañan que venía de parte de Su Magestad Cristianisima à traer a la Reyna nuestra señora el regalo que contiene la adjunta nota que remito à Vuestra Señoría.», AHN, Sección de Estado, Leg. 2692, letter of 1 December 1714. Details of the gifts sent are recounted in Edward Armstrong, *Elisabeth Farnese: The Termagant of Spain* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1892), 22.

[63] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 86-87.

marriage. The three women all had a preference for the French style of portraiture, featuring elegant poses, harmonious colours, and the rendering of fine details in textiles. Their preferred court artists all worked in this style, with Mariana having Gence in her service, Dorotea Sofia employing Giovanni Maria delle Piane, also known as Il Mulinaretto, and Isabel settling on Jean Ranc in 1722, a former colleague of Gence. The three women's artistic preferences were so similar that they often wrote to each other on this topic, as in the year 1699 when Mariana personally recommended the portraitist John Closterman to her sister, encouraging her to hire him if possible, or when Isabel pleaded with her mother for a number of years at the beginning of her reign to send her portraitist Il Mulinaretto to the court of Madrid[64]. In dress and styling, the three also shared similar tastes, sporting powdered hair arranged in the fashionable *fontanges coiffure*, a hairstyle created and popularised at the court of Louis XIV by his mistress, the Duchess of Fontanges, who, after having her hair come undone during a hunt, resolved to fix it by tying her curls up with a garter or ribbon on the top of her head[65]. This hairstyle remained popular throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, with Dorotea Sofia and Mariana sporting it in a number of portraits and Isabel herself retaining this as her signature hairstyle, with variation, until the early 1720s[66]. By presenting themselves in similar fashionable styles of dress, the three women could visually attest to their closeness even at great physical distances. All three women knew that Isabel's reign would be pivotal in promoting the international image of their house, and, with all three now living in separate courts miles apart, the exchange of letters, gifts, and images would be a key way of maintaining contact and demonstrating their mutual affection to all of Europe.

The close relationship which existed between the widowed queen, the reigning queen, and the duchess is evinced by the contents of their surviving correspondence[67]. With Dorotea Sofia serving as the linking party between the current and former queen, much correspondence passed through her hands in Parma, with the duchess acting as a sort of intercessor between the courts of Bayonne and Madrid. As such, the Archivio di Stato di Parma (ASP) is a useful – and until now, relatively untapped – source of information regarding Mariana of Neuburg's experience of widowhood. Many letters

[64] Martínez Leiva, "Art as diplomacy", 386; Mercedes Simal López, 'Relaciones artisticas entre Isabel de Farnesio y la corte de Parma entre 1715 y 1723. Noticias sobre Muliaretto, el palacio de Colorno, La Granja de San Ildefonso y la Delizia farnesiana in Colorno' in J. Martínez Millan and Mª P. Marçal Lourenço (eds) *Las Relaciones Discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las Casas de las Reinas (Siglos XV-XIX)*, Vol. 3 (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2008), 1959-95.

[65] Richard Corson, *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years* (London: Peter Owen, 1980), 228.

[66] See Fig. 4 for a classic example of this hairstyle as worn by Dorotea Sofia.

[67] Correspondence between the three women can be found in a variety of archives. The Archivio di Stato di Parma (ASP) contains letters from Mariana and Isabel to Dorotea Sofia and some of her replies in Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132 and Casa e corte Farnesiana, serie II, Busta 41. See also Sodano, "Una contessa" and Mirella Mafrici, "Dorotea Sofia di Neoburgo: primi appunti sulla sua corrispondenza" *Aurea Parma. Rivista di Storia, Letteratura e arte* 74 (1990), 10-21. Some of the letters written by Dorotea Sofia and Mariana to Isabel in Spain are located in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, for instance in Sección de Estado, Leg. 2478, and Leg. 2980. For further correspondence penned by Mariana, see Príncipe Adalberto de Baviera, *Mariana de Neoburgo, Reina de España* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1938).

can be found there sent directly from Mariana in Bayonne to her sister, although they appear within the section related to correspondence with a Spanish origin rather than that deriving from France, attesting to Mariana's remaining under the dominion of the Spanish crown[68]. One such letter, sent from Bayonne on 7 January 1716, is signed «Yo la Reyna», the signature granted to the queens of Spain, and one which, despite her fall from grace, Mariana clearly still felt entitled to use[69]. Apart from those letters which came directly from Mariana, others can also be found in the archive which relate to her widowhood in the form of copies of letters sent by Dorotea Sofia to her sister, daughter, and agents about her situation, and their replies. These various letters reveal a complex interplay of relationships between the three women both on a political and a human level.

One particular minute of a letter sent by Dorotea Sofia to her agent, Marquis Annibale Scotti, on the 20 February 1716 perfectly demonstrates the intertwining themes of representation, advocacy, and solidarity that arise time and again between the women[70]. On the occasion of Scotti's first journey to Spain to join Isabel and serve her at the court of Madrid, Dorotea Sofia saw the opportunity for her agent to pay a visit to her sister as he passed through France[71]. This visit was to have two main objectives. The first was for Scotti to deliver personally to the widowed queen a painted portrait of Dorotea Sofia (Fig. 4). This portrait, which originated in the painting collection of Mariana of Neuburg but which is now present in the collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado, can for the first time be precisely dated thanks to the discovery of this letter[72]. The painting must have been completed in February 1716, very shortly before the date of the letter, as a note in the margin reads: «The said portrait is missing its glass which I have not put there to not do some kind of damage

[68] Unfortunately, many of the letters sent from Bayonne have degraded quite badly over time with ink bleeding through the page from both sides, making them quite difficult to read. This is not helped by the very tiny handwriting which Mariana uses in these letters. Although the decision to designate the letters as «Spanish» rather than «French» was likely the product of modern archival organisational choices, the sentiment was probably shared at the time the letters were received: Mariana did not write as a vassal of France, but of Spain. See ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132.

[69] The signature «Yo la Reyna» was in use by Spanish queens since at least the time of Isabel I of Castile, as is made clear by an order addressed to her steward Pancho de Paredes and dated 18 March 1501 which she signs in this way. For sale by Arader Galleries, New York, as of 11 July 2023, https://www.abebooks.com/signed/Document-signed-Queen-reyna-ISABELLA-CASTILE/1266301019/bd [accessed 11 July 2023]; ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1716,* folio 2, letter dated 7 January 1716 from Mariana in Bayonne to Dorotea Sofia.

[70] ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1716,* folio 8, minute of a letter dated 20 February 1716 from Dorotea Sofia in Piacenza to Annibale Scotti.

[71] Scotti first travelled to Spain in 1716 later leaving and returning to serve permanently in 1719. He became a close ally and agent of Isabel Farnesio. Henry Kamen, *Philip V of Spain: The King who Reigned Twice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 131.

[72] Martínez Leiva estimates a date of c. 1700 for the same portrait (*Mariana de Neoburgo*, 330) while the Museo del Prado's own website currently lists the painting's date as c. 1715 ("Dorotea Sofía de Neoborgo", https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/dorotea-sofia-de-neoburgo-duquesa-de-parma/96d2e170-9018-4635-9b4e-01f931ab4adf [accessed 11 July 2023]).

to the painting which was still fresh[73]…». The portrait seems to have been painted with some urgency so that the Marquis could indeed bring it with him, necessitating the painting and its glass to be stored separately for the journey.

Fig. 4. Giovanni Maria delle Piane, called Il Mulinaretto, *Dorotea Sofia of Neuburg*, 1716, oil on canvas, 121 x 91 cm, © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

[73] ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1716,* folio 8, minute of a letter dated 20 February 1716 from Dorotea Sofia in Piacenza to Annibale Scotti.

Not only does this letter allow the painting to be dated, but it also elucidates the circumstances of its creation, giving valuable insight into the role that portraiture played in early-eighteenth-century court culture. It is worth quoting Dorotea Sofia's words at length:

> Below My Lord will also find there an envelope, and separately my portrait, that you do me the honour of sending it to Her Majesty so that she can always have present in the copy from the original a sign of the deep respect that is professed to her sublime merit, since it is not possible to achieve such a fate in person even though she has ardently desired it, and still desires it[74].

Dorotea Sofia's designation of the painting as a «copy from the original» has two possible meanings which are not mutually exclusive: she may be communicating that the painting itself is a copy after an original portrait of hers, while also referring to herself as «the original» from which the portrait, «the copy», was made. Support for this latter usage of the term «original» in a similar context can be found in a letter of 1707 from her husband, Duke Francesco, to his representative in Vienna, Carlo Anguissola, regarding a portrait of Isabel Farnesio sent there, which advised Anguissola that he only show the portrait to those that he the Duke had requested «so as not to give rise to discussion and not to prejudice the original», that is, Isabel herself[75]. The portrait of Dorotea Sofia seems to be based on a prototype by Il Mulinaretto as is implied by a print of uncertain date, of which a number of copies survive, showing this exact composition with the inscription «Gio. M. delle Piane Pin. [76]». On the basis of this engraving, the Prado attributes their painting to Il Mulinaretto, however this version is likely a copy of an established composition given the rapidity of its execution[77]. Nevertheless, in all likelihood the Prado version is an autograph copy painted by Il Mulinaretto after his own work, expressly for the purpose of sending it to the widowed queen[78]. Dorotea Sofia also gives an insight into how the portrait was intended to function in its new home: it was to both serve as a reminder of Dorotea Sofia's great respect for her sister, and also stand in as proxy in place of her physical person – just as the copy stood in for the original painting – allowing the two to be symbolically reunited, if not in person as Mariana wished. The portrait, thus, was

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] «per non dar materia di discorsi e non far pregiudizio all'originale», as quoted in Giuseppe Bertini, 'L'educazione artistica di Elisabetta Farnese alla corte di Parma' in Gigliola Fragnito (ed.) *Elisabetta Farnese, principessa di Parma e regina di Spagna* (Rome: Viella, 2009), 31-51, 39.

[76] Unknown engraver, *Dorotea Sofia of Neuburg*, first half of the eighteenth century, engraving, Austrian National Library, Austria.

[77] «A print is known, by an anonymous engraver, which gives proof of authorship for the painter of this portrait», «Se conoce una estampa, de grabador anónimo, que deja constancia de la autoría del pintor en este retrato.», Website of the Museo Nacional del Prado, "Dorotea Sofía de Neoborgo".

[78] As the Prado website notes, there are numerous versions of this official portrait across various collections, with their version being the best quality ("Dorotea Sofía de Neoborgo"). The careful rendering of textures and colours within the work is consistent with other works by Il Mulinaretto of the period. It also would stand to reason that Dorotea Sofia would employ the artist who had composed the original version of this portrait to copy it as she was sending it personally to her beloved sister as a token of esteem.

intended to quell Mariana's fears and distress about her ongoing exile, to help her feel closer to her loved ones and to remember that she had people fighting for her rights.

Indeed, the rest of Dorotea Sofia's letter makes this latter point all the clearer and reveals the second objective of Scotti's visit. She tells Scotti that she has attached to the letter for his perusal «…a copy of one of the chapters which further concern the other interests of Her Majesty, of the provisions made by her Royal consort in the last of his wills and the subsequent codicil…» and asks him that if her sister raises the subject, he might talk frankly but respectfully with Mariana about the options available to her and those which had expired[79]. Dorotea Sofia's desperation and exasperation at her sister's ongoing situation is clear as she writes:

> If it pleased Her Majesty that Your Lordship would talk of some of her other pretensions that she has with the same Crown of Spain I will beg Her Majesty to do it by giving some instruction, such that I might know how I can obey her, signifying to her precisely that she has orders not only from me but from my own Lord Duke, two extremely passionate people of her conveniences and satisfactions[80]…

Dorotea Sofia then finishes her letter by saying that she will leave in Scotti's hands the task of helping and guiding her sister through the challenges she is facing, wishing him «a happy journey and success[81]». Dorotea Sofia's letter forms part of a larger system of women's political and interpersonal engagement focused on solidarity and the lending of aid in times of crisis to other women in their network. As Jennifer A. Cavalli wrote in a recent article:

> Women gathered and transmitted information, intervened directly and indirectly in pressing diplomatic matters, and supported one another practically in moments of political strain, offering counsel and places of refuge. They guided one another on how to proceed at critical political junctures, and they also – through their long-term interpersonal relationships – contributed to one another's emotional stability[82].

While the interventions made by Mariana's brother, Johann Wilhelm, in relation to the reassertion of her rights have been explored, far less attention has been paid to Dorotea Sofia's attempts to improve Mariana's situation and lend her comfort[83]. Numerous letters from Annibale Scotti sent directly to Dorotea Sofia report on the progression of her sister's fight to have her rights restored, such as a letter of 16 October 1720 reporting that Mariana's pension had been raised to 100,000 ducats a year, and another of 28 April 1721 which he begins «Finally, I would believe the affair of the Widowed Queen finished…» as the king had granted her her full pension and

[79] ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1716,* folio 8, minute of a letter dated 20 February 1716 from Dorotea Sofia of Neuburg in Piacenza to Annibale Scotti.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] Jennifer A. Cavalli, "Crisis Management: Women's Letters of Assistance and Commiseration in Sixteenth-Century Northern Italy" *Early Modern Women* 16 (2021), 36-59, 37.

[83] On Johann Wilhelm's interventions see Martínez López, "La defensa".

ruled on the eight points of contention put forward by Mariana[84]. Indeed, Dorotea Sofia also supplicated her own daughter directly on Mariana's behalf, citing the «loving heart» which Isabel had for her aunt and «Maternal affection» which she held for Dorotea Sofia as reasons why her request should be heeded[85].

Mariana did her best to return this familial affection by lending her own wisdom and solidarity, gained from personal experience, to her niece through Dorotea Sofia. In a short letter of 1 July 1720 which seems to be written in her own hand, signed simply «Marianna», the widowed queen writes to her sister advising that she be a cautionary tale for her niece:

> I believed at least, that this, my example, might serve the Queen as a result, because I once found myself in the same rank where she is now, and even though I have become unhappy with my most distressing widowhood, I am still the same as I was as Queen and as that which I was born[86].

Mariana's letter implies the ease with which one can fall from grace and shows concern that Isabel might have the same fate befall her. She laments her «most distressing widowhood» in which «misfortune truly afflicts me, and from which I find myself utterly dejected[87]». At the same time, Mariana shows a certain pride and resilience in the assertion that she is still the same woman who was born of the Elector Palatine and who ruled alongside the King of Spain – it is her situation which has changed, not her innate importance. She reinforces the parity between herself and her niece in terms of rank, while also alluding to the rank she obtained at birth as a member of the house of Neuburg, one which Dorotea Sofia shared, drawing the three of them into a triangle of solidarity. She finishes the letter on a relatively positive note, asking God to shower her sister with «all of your divine graces and blessings, and prosperity» although her final allusion to herself notes that she is «constantly 'at the tomb' it is said» either in reference to her lonely exile or her suffering health[88].

It was Mariana's enduring sense of pride, rather than her feelings of abandonment and dejection, that she channelled into her portraiture of this time, literally painting a very different picture of her experience of widowhood than that which she was enduring in reality. Gence's portrait of Mariana in the guise of Diana, dating from around 1715, shows her as an eternally young and powerful goddess, far

[84] «Finalmente crederei terminato l'affare la Regina Vedova…», ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1720,* folio 32, letter of 16 October 1720 from Annibale Scotti in Valsaín to Dorotea Sofia. ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1721,* folio 9, letter of 28 April 1721 from Annibale Scotti in Madrid to Dorotea Sofia (not signed).

[85] «amorevole cuore», «l'affetto Materno», AHN, Sección de Estado, Leg. 2478, Letter of 3 January 1726 from Dorotea Sofia in Piacenza to Isabel.

[86] ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero, 'Spagna 1703-1725', Busta 132, *Spagna 1720*, folio 34, letter of 1 July 1720 from Mariana in Bayonne to Dorotea Sofia in Parma. This letter seems to be an "applico" in Mariana's own hand without the formalities of usual letter writing.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

from the «utterly dejected» widow which she described herself as but a few years later[89]. While she felt comfortable revealing her true circumstances to her sister, it seems that Mariana refused to allow others to know the true scope of her difficulties, using portraiture as a means of re-writing her narrative and fictionalising her situation. That being said, portraiture was not solely a means of covering up that which she lamented, but another way for Mariana to draw herself closer to her female relatives. Mariana's letters textually reinforced the bonds she shared with her kin, an act that was augmented visually through her portraiture, and which they would reciprocate in kind.

One congruence in portraiture between these family members which has already been noted by other authors is that between one of the first images of Isabel Farnesio made in Spain (Fig. 5) and a contemporaneous portrait by Gence of Mariana (Fig. 6)[90]. Both images date from 1715 and show the women in full length wearing hunting attire in a country landscape, although Mariana is accompanied by a Black servant and Isabel stands before a portrait of her new husband Felipe[91]. Made in the same year as Mariana's portrait as Diana, here she is shown again as a huntress, reinforcing her prowess in this field through simultaneous allegorical and literal representations[92]. Both Mariana and Isabel hold their rifles at their sides, resting the butt of the gun on the ground and holding the barrel near the muzzle, tilting it elegantly away from their bodies at an acute angle. This particular pose may derive from a print of c. 1692-1700 by the French printmaker Robert Bonnart whose depiction of a «Girl of quality in hunting attire» shows a young woman in similar dress holding her rifle in a comparable fashion[93]. However, the increased extension of Isabel's and Mariana's arms coupled with the slight contrapposto and added movement in their drapery brings the aunt and niece's images closer to each other than to the French print. Another family resemblance, which has not yet been noted, can be found in a portrait of Mariana's sister-in-law, Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici (Fig. 7), who was married to Johann Wilhelm until his death in 1716. This depiction of Anna Maria Luisa in hunting attire by Jan Frans van Douven – of which at least one copy exists in a German private collection – aligns very closely with that of Mariana and Isabel, with the same characteristic pose, clothing, and manner of holding the rifle. Whether this painting dates from its supposed period of 1690 to 1710, or whether its date aligns more closely with those of Mariana and Isabel, it would seem to imply that particular poses and formats of portraiture were transmitted and imitated between courts that shared familial links, particularly those of close female family members. By depicting herself in this way, Mariana could remind those around her not just of her newly-crowned

[89] Robert Gabriel Gence, *Mariana of Neuburg as Diana the Huntress*, c. 1715, oil on canvas, 121 x 92 cm, private collection.

[90] These portraits are compared in a number of places. See, most recently, Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 226, images 224-25.

[91] Martínez Leiva posits that this Black servant may be «Juanito el Negro» who is mentioned a number of times in documentation (*Mariana de Neoburgo*, 226).

[92] Further images of Mariana as a hunter can also be found dating from the time of her reign such as the Closterman portrait mentioned above. See Martínez Leiva, "Art as diplomacy".

[93] Robert Bonnart, *Fille de qualité en habit de chasse*, c. 1692-1700, engraving, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Oa 65-pet fol, f. 47.

niece, but also of her powerful brother and sister-in-law, in a visual manifestation of her familial network.

Fig. 5. Designed by Matias de Irala and engraved by Diego de Costa, *Isabel Farnesio in Hunting Attire*, 1715, engraving, 31.3 x 21.5 cm, image from the collections of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

Other instances of these 'visual echoes' can be found across the portraits of Mariana, Isabel, and Dorotea Sofia from the period 1714 onward. For instance, a portrait of Isabel Farnesio owned by the Prado seems to reference earlier portraits of both Mariana and Dorotea Sofia (Fig. 8). This full-length portrait of the queen is currently unattributed, but its style signals that it was likely painted by a Spanish artist

in response to the rise of the French portrait painters at the court of Madrid from around 1719 onwards. The portrait, which shows Isabel in full length in a rich blue satin gown with gold detailing and lace accents, bears a resemblance in its overall composition to two portraits of Mariana by Jacques Courtilleau which are also present in the Prado collections and may have at the time been displayed in the Buen Retiro palace[94]. In the portrait securely dated to 1700, Mariana's dress of blue and gold is rendered in quite a similar fashion to Isabel's, while in the undated portrait, the queen's overall stance and bearing, in particular the positioning of her left hand which grasps at an ermine mantle, seem to have been recalled in Isabel's portrait[95]. It would appear that the new queen and her Spanish court artists working in Madrid were looking to earlier works of portraiture for inspiration in developing the image of Bourbon queenship, turning to her aunt's own portrait as a template. Dorotea Sofia's official portrait seems to have also been influential (see Fig. 4) with the upper halves of the two women almost mirroring each other, featuring similar hairstyles – including an untethered piece of hair which seems to fly backwards – clothing of a similar colour and style, similar positioning of the hands – in particular that which reaches towards the chest – and a curtain whose outline is almost identical, passing behind the women at almost the exact same point[96]. In this instance, it was Isabel who sought to reinforce links between her female relatives and herself, reminding viewers of their power, past and present, and thus bolstering her own.

In the final selection of works to be discussed, it was Dorotea Sofia who sought to mimic her sister and daughter. On 26 February 1727 Dorotea Sofia, Duchess of Parma, found herself widowed for the second time, when her husband – and brother-in-law from her first marriage – Francesco Farnese, died. With Isabel being her only living child, it was unclear who would assume the title of Duke of Parma, and as such, Dorotea Sofia's own role going forward was yet to be determined. Given the circumstances, she did not delay in fashioning for herself a new image as a widow, just as her mother, sisters Eleonore Magdalene and Mariana, and sister-in-law Anna Maria Luisa had done before her. Each of these widows in her family circle had chosen a different approach to their representation of widowhood, with her mother choosing to be fashionably but soberly dressed for a bust-length portrait, her sister Eleonore choosing to be shown in black nun-like garb covering her completely, and her sister-in-law Anna Maria Luisa choosing similar attire to Eleonore, but shown standing next to a portrait of the lying-in-state of her husband[97]. When it came time for Dorotea

[94] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 209-11

[95] Jacques Courtilleau, *Mariana of Neuburg, Queen of Spain*, 1700, oil on canvas, 224 x 125 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid Inv: P005384; Jacques Courtilleau, *Mariana of Neuburg, Queen of Spain*, end of the 17th Century, oil on canvas, 206 x 110 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Inv: P006193.

[96] These portraits also show a marked resemblance to a portrait of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici attributed to the painter Cassana Niccolò which is held in the collections of the Gallerie degli Uffizi (c. 1690, oil on canvas, 115 x 85 cm, Inv: 2584 / 1890).

[97] Jan Frans van Douven, *Landgravine Elisabeth Amalie of Hesse-Darmstadt as a Widow*, c. 1705, oil on canvas, Historical Museum of the Palatinate, Speyer; Christoph Weigel the Elder, *Eleonore Magdalene of Neuburg as a Widow*, c. 1705-1720, engraving, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig; Jan Frans van Douven, *Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici as a Widow*, 1717, oil on canvas, Museo di San Matteo, Pisa.

Sofia to design an image for herself, she did not turn to these precedents, but that of her sister Mariana.

Fig. 6. Robert Gabriel Gence, *Mariana of Neuburg in Hunting Attire*, 1715, oil on canvas, 257 x 175 cm, private collection.

In particular, Dorotea Sofia seems to have looked to one portrait by Gence – which was itself an adaptation of his 1713 work (see Fig. 3) – dated by Martínez Leiva to c. 1719 (Fig. 9)[98]. Mariana is shown with a long black veil draped down her hair – styled yet again in the 'fontanges coiffure' – wearing clothing of sombre black accented with horizontal rows of pearls. Three tear-drop pearls hang from each of these rows. The outfit is completed by a black velvet mantle with ermine lining. Not only does Dorotea Sofia show herself sporting the same hairstyle with integrated veil, dress

[98] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 227.

featuring tear-drop-shaped Baroque pearls in threes hanging from horizontal lines of ornamentation, and a similar plain but palatial interior, she also positions her body in the same three-quarter pose as Mariana, with her head turned slightly to her right and body angled to her left (Fig. 10). This pose did not just link Dorotea Sofia to her sister, but also to her daughter, whose engagement portrait, painted by the same artist, positions her in this exact stance[99]. While these elegant poses were prevalent during the early-eighteenth century among artists working in the French style, the congruences between these three portraits are so precise that they were surely meant to converse with one another. All three of these images were widely disseminated via prints and copies allowing for broad consumption and comparison[100]. That this pose and style of widowhood portrait became particularly associated with the Neuburg line can perhaps be supported by a posthumous portrait of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici as a widow, which, rather than following the depiction that she herself laid out in 1717, adheres more closely to the format popularised by Mariana in showing her standing, in elegant black clothing, with a long black veil, in this characteristic three-quarter pose[101]. Mariana of Neuburg, as one of the highest-profile widows in Europe, seems to have been a touchstone for the representation of queenship, and later, widowhood, amongst her closest relatives.

CONCLUSION: A WIDOWED QUEEN RETURNED

Although Dorotea Sofia and Isabel both sought to rectify Mariana's situation over the many years of her widowhood, it was not until the end of her life that she would finally be allowed to return to Spain. In September of 1738, in failing health, Mariana left Bayonne for the final time, travelling to Pamplona and later Guadalajara where she would spend the last days of her life[102]. The influence of Isabel Farnesio in the granting of this final wish was clear to all, with histories of the time such as *Memorias de las Reynas Catholicas*… by Henrique Flórez reporting in 1761 that Mariana remained in Bayonne «…until the matters of the war were diffused, our Court restored her to Spain by the influence and benignity of the Catholic Queen Lady Isabel Farnesio, our

[99] Giovanni Maria delle Piane, called Il Mulinaretto, *Isabel Farnesio, Queen of Spain*, 1714, oil on canvas, 135 x 105 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Inv: P002439.

[100] Mariana's portrait was copied with slight variation in both paint and print, with a painted copy making its way to the Palace of Schleissheim in Bavaria, and a print having been engraved by Jean-François Cars in 1719. See Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 229-31. Dorotea Sofia's widowhood portrait was recorded in a print by Anton Fritz sometime between 1727 and the end of his period of activity around 1755, a copy of which can be found in the Biblioteca Histórica Marqués de Valdecilla, Madrid (BH GRA 24). The engagement portrait of Isabel Farnesio has many known copies in addition to that in the Prado, including ones in the palace of Caserta and the Galleria Nazionale di Parma, with the published volume by Giuseppe Maggiali, *Ragguaglio delle nozze delle Maestà di Filippo Quinto, e di Elisabetta Farnese nata Principessa di Parma Re Cattolici delle Spagne* (Parma: 1717), featuring a smaller and slightly adapted version of the portrait on the frontispiece.

[101] Unknown artist, *Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici as a Widow,* 1745, oil on canvas, property of the city of Florence.

[102] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 90-91.

lady, her niece[103].» Unacknowledged in this account was the tireless work of Dorotea Sofia who fought for years to achieve this result. Mariana and Isabel had the pleasure of one last reunion before the widowed queen's passing, with Isabel this time able to bring her husband and a number of her children to visit[104]. Isabel did not forget her aunt's generosity towards her, and decided to return the gesture by gifting her a patent leather box containing some one-hundred and forty-four fans, sharing once more in her aunt's love of luxury goods[105]. It was only about one year after this visit, on 16 July 1740, that these fans, along with a plethora of other items, would become Isabel's property once more upon the death of Mariana of Neuburg in Guadalajara. Mariana's will of 1737 named Isabel as her universal heir, leaving to her «all my goods, be they moveable or immoveable, gold, silver, jewellery, pearls, crockery, credits, rights fulfilled or unfulfilled, and pretensions» calling her «my very dear and much loved niece[106]». Beyond their initial meeting in 1714, the pair managed to remain in contact through word and image via their kinship networks such that Isabel remained one of the closest people to Mariana at the time of her death.

As this study has shown, Mariana of Neuburg's influence on the European stage did not end at the point when her widowhood began, rather it shifted in line with her circumstances. By exploring Mariana's changing modes of self-representation, a clearer picture can be seen of her personal understanding of the concept of queenship. Mariana saw it as her duty to continue to fashion herself as the queen she always was, despite her personal difficulties, and to keep the memory of her husband and her rule alive. The world around Mariana did not remain static after her husband's death, but rather shifted like the surface of an unforgiving sea, necessitating an extreme level of adaptability and ingenuity on the former queen's part in order to keep afloat. Mariana worked hard to fashion an identity and a network of support which would carry her through the rough waters of widowhood, allowing her, in her final years, to return to the safe harbour of her former kingdom as a Spanish queen once more.

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[103] "Hizo su residencia en Bayona desde el año 1706, donde estuvo con su familia, hasta que apaciguadas las cosas de la guerra, la restituyó à España nuestra Corte por influjo y benignidad de la Cathólica Reyna Doña Isabel Farnesio, nuestra señora, su sobrina.", Henrique Flórez, *Memorias de las Reynas Catholicas, Historia Genealogica de la Casa Real de Castilla y de Leon, todos los infantes: trages de las Reynas en estampas: y nuevo aspecto de la historia de España*, 2 Volumes, (Madrid: Antonio Marin, 1761), Vol. 2, 979.

[104] Florez, *Memorias de las Reynas*, Vol. 2, 979.

[105] Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 92.

[106] «… instituyo y nombro por mi universal heredera de todos mis bienes, sean muebles o inmuebles; oro; plata; joyas; perlas; vajillas; créditos; derechos cumplidos o por cumplir, y pretensiones, a la Reina católica doña Isabel Farnesio, mi muy cara y muy amada sobrina.», as quoted in Martínez Leiva, *Mariana de Neoburgo*, 312.

Fig. 7. Jan Frans van Douven, *Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici in Hunting Attire*, c. 1690-1710, oil on canvas, 48.3 x 37 cm Galleria Palatina, Florence, © Gabinetto Fotografico delle Gallerie degli Uffizi.

Fig. 8. Anonymous artist, *Isabel Farnesio*, c. 1719-1730, oil on canvas, 206 x 130 cm, © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Fig. 9. Robert Gabriel Gence, *Mariana of Neuburg as a Widow*, c. 1719, oil on canvas, 91.5 x 73 cm, Collection Musée Basque et de l'histoire de Bayonne.

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Fig. 10. Giovanni Maria delle Piane, called Il Mulinaretto, *Dorotea Sofia of Neuburg as a Widow*, c. 1727-1732, oil on canvas, 116 x 92 cm, Collezioni d'Arte Fondazione Cariparma, Parma.

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