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‘The System of This Court’: Elizabeth Farnese, the Count of Santiesteban and the Monarchy of the Two Sicilies, 1734–1738

BY PABLO VAZQUEZ-GESTAL¹

The new kingdom of the Two Sicilies was set up in 1734 under the direct supervision of the Spanish crown, since the young Don Carlos, first-born son of Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese, was thought to be too young to rule it by himself. Before its conquest and subsequent independence in that year, the kingdom of Naples had belonged to the Spanish king for more than two centuries until 1707, when the vicerealty was conquered and ruled by the Emperor. However, the city of Naples was still one of the most significant capitals of eighteenth-century Europe and the new kingdom was a distinct political territory that was strategically important to both the Italian peninsula and the wider Mediterranean. This article analyses how the court culture promoted by the Spanish Queen and by the courtiers appointed to Don Carlos’s service contributed to the structure and character of the new Bourbon monarchy in the Italian South between 1734 and 1738.

L’haver voluto informarmi bene del sistema di questa corte e sincerarmi da me medesimo di molte cose è stata la causa d’haver ritardato fin’ora a rendere a Vostra Maestá un esatto conto, eseguendolo adesso, se bene con qualche repugnanza per il motivo di dover dir del male di taluni, solo a titolo d’ubidienza

The reason I delayed until now giving my exact report to Your Majesty is because I wished to be well informed of the system of this court [of the two Sicilies] and to see for myself many things. Thus I proceed now with my report, though with some disgust, because I must speak ill of some people, but I do so to obey Your Majesty.²

‘Il sistema di questa corte’ [the system of this court] was the expression that Domenico Acquaviva d’Aragona (1689–1745), the proud holder of the Neapolitan title of duke of Atri, devised to depict the rules and features which defined the political society and court politics of the new kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the

1 This article (which is dedicated to my sister Maica, a true lover of London who inspired me in my affection for all things English) summarises some of the ideas outlined in my PhD Dissertation entitled *Corte, poder y cultural política en el reino de las Dos Sicilias de Carlos de Borbón (1734–1759)*, presented in June 2008 at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid. I wish to thank Philip Mansel for his interest in this topic, his valuable suggestions and his encouragement. I am also grateful to Rocío G. Davis and Liliana Leopardi for their support, witty comments and editorial help and to Antony Edmonds, Assistant Editor of *The Court Historian*, for his invaluable assistance.

2 Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid (AHN), Estado, legajo 4823: the Duke of Atri to Queen Elizabeth Farnese, Naples 14 July 1738.

crucial year 1738. Despite the fact that the nobleman was officially sent to Naples to offer the jewels granted by the Spanish monarchs to Maria Amalia of Saxony, future spouse of their son, we know that he travelled to the Italian south for another reason. As one of the most important members of the Spanish Queen Elizabeth Farnese's web of political clientelism, Atri was secretly assigned to report in detail on the political situation of the Neapolitan court during the stormy summer of 1738, as he eventually did.³

In order to consolidate her role in the Spanish political sphere, the Farnese Queen had gradually created a powerful international legion of faithful court servants, public functionaries and influential noblemen after her arrival in Madrid in 1715.⁴ With a new Bourbon monarchy in the Italian south and an inexperienced young king to rule it in 1734, she had enough training in court politics to realise that Don Carlos must be guided. As indicated by the Venetian ambassador's official dispatches,⁵ Bernardo Tanucci's correspondence⁶ and, most important, the personal letters between Charles and his parents,⁷ the role played by Elizabeth

3 On the relationship between the Acquaviva lineage and the Spanish court, see Baldassare Storace, *Istoria della famiglia Acquaviva Reale d'Aragona: Con un discorso prodrómo della nobiltà, nomi, ed insegne degli antichi e de' moderni, ed un ristretto in fine di quanto ampiamente si è dimostrato per pruova della distinta Nobiltà della Chiarissima Casa Acquaviva scritta da Baldassarre Storace, Avvocato Romano, e Bibliotecario, ed Uditore dell'Emo Signor Cardinale D. Trojano d'Acquaviva Ministro in Roma di S. M. C. &c.* (Rome, 1738), pp. 86–119 and Giorgio Morelli, 'Gli Acquaviva d'Aragona duchi d'Atri in un manoscritto del secolo XVIII' in *Gli Acquaviva d'Aragona, Duchi di Atri e Conti di S. Flaviano*, Vol. I (Teramo, 1985), pp. 61–78. The Duke of Atri's brother, also in Naples at that time, was Trojano Acquaviva d'Aragona (1694–1747), Spanish cardinal protector in the Papal court. They were the patrons of the so-called 'partito d'Atri' [Atri party], as reported by Bernardo Tanucci in his letters from 1738 in *Epistolario*. Vol. 1: 1723–1746 (Rome, 1980). Atri's secret correspondence with Elizabeth Farnese is preserved, as indicated, in AHN, Estado, legajo 4823'. His official reports are instead in Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid (AGS), Estado, legajo 5824.

4 Biographies about the Farnese Queen do not seriously engage her political ideas and the model of political culture she tried to develop, which is my present research interest. See Edward Armstrong, *Elizabeth Farnese: 'The Termagant of Spain'* (London, 1892); Luciano de Taxonera, *Isabel de Farnesio: Retrato de una reina y perfil de una mujer (1692–1766)* (Barcelona, 1943); Mirella Mafrić, *Fascino e potere di una Regina: Elisabetta Farnese sulla scena europea (1715–1759)* (Naples, 1999); Teresa Lavalle-Cobo, *Isabel de Farnesio: La reina coleccionista* (Madrid, 2002) and María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper, *Isabel de Farnesio* (Barcelona, 2003). For interesting descriptions of her political significance, see Henry Kamen, Chapter Four, 'Elizabeth Farnese, 1715–1723' in *Philip V of Spain: The King Who Reigned Twice* (New Haven / London, 2001), pp. 103–138 and 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, 2004), pp. 155–85.

5 See Alvise IV Mocenigo, 'Relazione dell'Eccellentissimo signor Alvise IV Mocenigo cavalier e procuratore ritornato dall'ambasciata straordinaria al re delle Due Sicile: Presentata in Secreta li 17 dicembre 1739 e non letto ancora all'Eccellentissimo Senato' in Michele Fassina (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane da Napoli. Relazioni* (Rome, 1992), pp. 171–83. Also Mario Infelise (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane da Napoli. Dispacci*. Vol. XVI: 10 giugno 1732–4 luglio 1739 (Rome, 1992) and Eurigio Tonetti (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane da Napoli. Dispacci*. Vol. XVII: 30 giugno 1739–24 agosto 1751 (Rome, 1994).

6 Bernardo Tanucci, *Epistolario*, Vol. 1.

7 Inma Ascione (ed.), *Carlo di Borbone — Lettere ai sovrani di Spagna Vol. I: 1720–1734; Vol. II: 1735–1739 and Vol. III: 1740–1744* (Rome, 2001–2002).

Farnese in the political progress of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies was decisive at least until 1746.⁸ She not only supervised the development of the Neapolitan court, but also shaped the different models of political culture which were gradually adopted and defended by her son in Naples. This historical phenomenon, independent of old-fashioned nationalistic and male-centred historiographical prejudices, allows us to understand the complex yet fascinating changes which took place in some monarchies in mid-eighteenth-century Europe.⁹

The realm of the Two Sicilies has received little critical attention from scholars of early modern European history or from either old or recent Spanish historiography,¹⁰ but it may be usefully deployed in an analysis of the continuing evolution of court tradition and the public identity of majesty in Europe between the death of Louis XIV and the French Revolution.¹¹ The new kingdom, after more than two centuries of vice-regal status, became by far the largest state in the Italian peninsula and important to those wishing to dominate the Mediterranean, as Habsburgs and Bourbons had known since 1700.¹² In addition, Naples, 'la más rica y más viciosa ciudad que había en todo el universo mundo' [the richest and most luxurious city in the whole world], as Cervantes affirms through a character in *El Quijote*,¹³ was not only the third metropolis in Europe after

8 See also Elia Del Curatolo (ed.), *Niccolò Fraggianni: Lettere a B. Corsini (1739–1746)* (Naples, 1991).

9 An introduction to the court and political changes in eighteenth-century Spain can be found in my articles: "Non dialettica, non metafisica...": La corte y la cultura cortesana en la España del siglo XVIII, *Reales Sitios*, XLIII, 169 (2006), pp. 50–69 and "Dove dal nulla l'uomo s'innalza ai più sublimi onori". La Corte de Carlos IV y la reina María Luisa (1788–1808)' in Luis Miguel Enciso Recio (ed.), *La Nación recobrada: La España de 1808 y Castilla y León* (Valladolid, 2008), pp. 37–53.

10 In my opinion, the outstanding Neapolitan studies on Charles of Bourbon's reign are Michelangelo Schipa, *Il regno de Napoli al tempo di Carlo di Borbone, Vol. I–II* (Milano/Roma/Napoli, 1923 [originally 1903–4]) and Raffaele Ajello, 'La vita politica napoletana sotto Carlo di Borbone: "La fondazione ed il tempo eroico" della dinastia' in *Storia di Napoli, Vol. VII* (Naples, 1972), pp. 459–717 and 961–84. See also Anna Maria Rao, *Il Regno de Napoli nel Settecento* (Naples, 1983); Elvira Chiosi, 'Il Regno dal 1734 al 1799' in *Storia del Mezzogiorno, Vol. IV: Il Regno dagli Angioini ai Borboni* (Rome, 1986), pp. 372–467; Girolamo Imbruglia (ed.) *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and the Death of a Nation State* (Cambridge, 2000) and Giuseppe Galasso, *Storia d'Italia, Volume XV, Tomo IV, Il Regno di Napoli: Il Mezzogiorno borbonico e napoleonico (1734–1815)* (Turin, 2007). Harold Acton's classic work still remains the best introduction to the Neapolitan Settecento: *The Bourbons of Naples, 1734–1825* (London, 1998² [originally 1957]).

11 For an interesting assessment of this topic, see Michael Schaich (ed.), *Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 2006), especially Michael Schaich, 'Introduction', pp. 1–40 and J. C. D. Clark, 'The Re-Enchantment of the World? Religion and Monarchy in Eighteenth-Century Europe', pp. 41–75.

12 See the classical works of Guido Quazza: *Il problema italiano e l'equilibrio europeo, 1720–1738* (Turin, 1965); 'La politica dell'equilibrio nel secolo XVIII' in *Nuove questioni di Storia Moderna. Vol. II* (Milano, 1966), pp. 1,181–1,215; *La decadenza italiana nella storia europea: Saggi sul Sei-Settecento* (Turin, 1971) and, finally, 'L'Italia e l'Europa durante le guerre di successione' in N. Valeri (ed.), *Storia d'Italia. Vol. II: Dalla Crisi della libertà agli albori dell'Illuminismo* (Turin, 19652), pp. 643–802. Also the works of Paolo Alatri: *L'Europa dopo Luigi XIV (1715–1731)* (Palermo, 1986) and *L'Europa delle successioni (1731–1748)* (Palermo, 1989).

13 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha* (Madrid, 1605), Chapter 51.

London and Paris in terms of population, but a cultural magnet for the European elite of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ A vice-royalty from the beginning of the sixteenth century, Naples had a lavish court and a complex system of public ceremonial promoted by the Spanish and Austrian viceroys to reinforce the authority of their respective monarchs.¹⁵

In this context, what were the actions of the young Don Carlos in creating a new independent monarchy? He was a Bourbon, but had come from Spain — so which model of household and court structure was applied in establishing a new sovereign regime in Naples after 1734? What was the role of the new court in defining the political society which permitted the King to maintain his authority and to display his power? What position was taken by the crown in the different power struggles that had arisen between court officials, local noblemen and civil servants since the birth of the new power structure? These are some of the questions I will try to answer in this article.¹⁶

I

As the first-born child of Elizabeth Farnese (1692–1766) and Philip V (1683–1746) of Spain, Don Carlos (1716–1788) was sent to Italy in 1731 to fulfil two important political goals: to take possession of his mother's dynastic inheritance and to

- 14 For the city of Naples in the eighteenth century see Franco Venturi, 'Napoli Capitale nel pensiero dei riformatori illuministi' in *Storia di Napoli, Vol. VIII: Arte, cultura e società nel '700* (Naples, 1973), pp. 1–73 and the respective chapter in Cesare De Seta, *Napoli: Le città nella storia d'Italia* (Rome / Bari, 2004). See also interesting works by Atanasio Mozzillo, *La sirena inquietante: Immagine e mito di Napoli nell'Europa del Settecento* (Naples, 1983), *La frontiera del Grand Tour. Viaggi e viaggiatori nel Mezzogiorno borbonico* (Naples, 1992) and *Passaggio a Mezzogiorno: Napoli e il Sud nell'immaginario barocco e illuminista europeo* (Milan, 1993). Finally, Melissa Calaresu, 'From the Street to Stereotype: Urban Space, Travel and the Picturesque in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples', *Italian Studies*, 62, 2 (2007), pp. 189–203.
- 15 See Carlos Hernando Sánchez's 'Virrey, Corte y Monarquía: Itinerarios del poder en Nápoles bajo Felipe II' in Luis Ribot García and Ernest Belenguier Cebriá (eds), *Las sociedades ibéricas y el mar a finales del siglo XVI, Tomo III: El área del Mediterráneo* (Madrid, 1998), pp. 343–90; 'Teatro del honor y ceremonial de la ausencia: La corte virreinal de Nápoles en el siglo XVII' in José Alcalá-Zamora and Ernest Belenguier Cebriá (eds), *Calderón de la Barca y la España del Barroco, Vol. I* (Madrid, 2001), pp. 591–674; and 'Los virreyes de la monarquía española en Italia. Evolución y práctica de un oficio de gobierno', *Studia historica: Historia moderna*, 26 (2004), pp. 43–73. Also Giovanni Muto, 'Capital y corte en la Nápoles española', *Reales Sitios*, XL, 158 (2003), pp. 2–15; Gabriel Guarino, 'Spanish Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples', *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 37, 1 (2006), pp. 25–41; John A. Marino, 'The Zodiac in the Streets: Inscribing "Buon Governo" in Baroque Naples' in Gary B. Cohen and Franz A. J. Szabo (eds), *Embodiments of Power: Building Baroque Cities in Europe* (New York / Oxford, 2008), pp. 203–290; and Pablo Vázquez-Gestal, 'Being a "King" in a Competitive Society: Viceroyal Ceremonies in Spanish Naples' in Matteo Casini and Marcello Fantoni (eds), *The "Majesty" of Power in Seventeenth-Century Italy: Ritual, Representation, Art* (forthcoming 2009).
- 16 Though recent Neapolitan historiography has produced articles on the eighteenth-century Neapolitan court, my aims and conclusions in this work are different from them. See Giovanni Montroni, 'The Court: Power Relations and Forms of Social Life' in Imbruglia (ed.), *Naples in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 22–43 and Paolo Macry, 'Carlo di Borbone e il progetto di una corte europea per la nuova monarchia' in Cesare De Seta (ed.), *Luigi Vanvitelli e la sua cerchia* (Naples, 2000), pp. 35–8.



Don Carlo di Borbone Re delle Due Sicilie XXXII Re di Napoli [Don Carlos of Bourbon, King of the Two Sicilies and Thirty-Second King of Naples]

(Anonymous engraving, 1737, from Bastian Biancardi, detto Domenico Lalli, Le vite de' Re di Napoli: Raccolte succintamente con ogni accuratezza, e distese per ordine cronologico da Bastian Biancardi napolitano chiamato Domenico Lalli, Venice, Francesco Pitteri, 1737, p. 451)

revitalise Italian ambitions for the Spanish crown.¹⁷ He was not only a Spanish *Infante* but also the Duke of Parma and the heir of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany when in October 1733 he was named *generalísimo* (commander-in-chief) of the Spanish army in Italy by his father,¹⁸ subsequently conquering the kingdom of Naples in his name.¹⁹ However, Philip V suddenly bestowed his new crown upon his son in order to satisfy the discreet yet insistent political demands of both the elite and the people of Naples.²⁰ Following the Spanish king's withdrawal of his claims on 15 May 1734, Naples became an independent kingdom after more than two centuries of vice-regal status and Don Carlos, eighteen years old at the time, became the most powerful sovereign in the Italian peninsula.²¹ His former Household — from when he was Duke of Parma — was not dismantled but, rather, was reshaped and extended.

- 17 After Duke Antonio of Parma (1679–1731) died without leaving an heir on February 1731, the Spanish crown rushed to defend Elizabeth Farnese's legitimate claims to the ducal throne of Parma and Piacenza by reassigning them in favour of her eldest son Charles, as agreed at the Treaty of Seville (1729). On the complex diplomatic history of Don Carlos's Italian inheritance, see Vicente Bacallar y Sanna, Marqués de San Felipe, *Comentarios de la guerra de España, e historia de su rey Phelipe V, El Animoso: Edición y estudio preliminar de Carlos Seco Serrano* (Madrid, 1957 [originally 1725]); Nicolás de Jesús Belando, *Historia civil de España. Sucessos de la guerra, y tratados de paz, desde el año de mil setecientos, hasta el de mil setecientos y treinta y tres, Parte Quarta* (Madrid, 1744) and Alejandro del Cantillo Jovellanos, *Tratados, convenios y declaraciones de paz y de comercio que han hecho con las potencias extranjeras los monarcas españoles de la Casa de Borbón: Desde el año de 1700 hasta el día [1842]: Puestos en orden e ilustrados muchos de ellos con la historia de sus respectivas negociaciones* (Madrid, 1843). For an English perspective, see *The Pretensions of Don Carlos Considered: with a View to the Treaty of Seville, and the Nature of Feudal Tenures: In a letter to ****** (London, 1730); *The Treaty of Peace, Union, Friendship, and Mutual Defence, between the Crowns of Great-Britain, France, and Spain, Concluded at Seville on the 9th of November, N.S. 1729* (London, 1729) and Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *Observations on the Publick Affairs of Great Britain: With some thoughts on the treaty concluded and signed (on what Terms God knows) at Seville in Spain between his Catholick Majesty and the King of Great Britain: In a letter from W. Raleigh to Caleb D'Anvers of Gray's-Inn, Esq. Second edition* (London, 1729). Also William Coxe, 'Chapter XL. 1728–1731' in *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon, from the accession of Philip the Fifth to the death of Charles the Third: 1700 to 1788: Drawn from original and unpublished documents. Vol. II* (London, 1813), pp. 412–31 and Alfred Baudrillart, *Philippe V et la cour de France. Vol. IV: Philippe V, Louis XV et le Cardinal de Fleury, 1729–1740* (Paris, 1890).
- 18 AHN, Estado, legajo 2453: Philip V to Don Carlos, El Escorial 26 October 1733 and AGS, Estado, legajo 7709: José Patiño to the Count of Santiesteban and the Count of Montemar, El Escorial 25 October 1733. See also Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone, Vol. I: 1720–1734*, p. 33 on the young Prince's reaction.
- 19 For Philip V's order to conquer Naples, personally addressed to his son, see AHN, Estado, legajo 2453: Philip V to Don Carlos, El Pardo 27 February 1734. This note was later published in Naples on 14 March 1734. For a direct and daily report of the military campaign from the Spanish side, see the archive section entitled 'Carte Montemar' at the Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Naples (ASNA). However, the best contemporary source still remains the detailed book of Giuseppe Senatore, *Giornale storico di quanto avvenne ne' due reami di Napoli, e di Sicilia l'anno 1734, e 1735 nella conquista che ne fecero le invitate Armie di Spagna sotto la condotta del glorioso nostro Re Carlo Borbone in qualità di generalissimo del gran Monarca cattolico, opera di Giuseppe Senatore giureconsulto napoletano divisa in due parti* (Naples, 1742).
- 20 AGS, Estado, legajo 7717: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Aversa 24 April 1734. See also Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples*, pp. 24–5 and Ajello, 'La vita politica napoletana', p. 486.
- 21 For Philip V's resignation upon his son, see AGS, Estado, legajo 7716. Also Letters 396 and 397 in Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone. Vol. I: 1720–1734*, pp. 383–4 and Senatore, *Giornale storico*, p. 102.

Before analysing the creation of the royal court of Naples, it is necessary to re-examine a common historical assumption. Spanish and Italian historiographical traditions notwithstanding, Don Carlos's different courts as Duke of Parma (1731–1734), King of the Two Sicilies (1734–1759) and Spanish monarch (1759–1788) were never Bourbon nor French in concept or style.²² The arrival of Philip V in Spain in 1701 had not led to a transformation in Spanish etiquette. The new Bourbon sovereign conserved the inherited court structure and ceremonial system of the former Spanish king Charles II (1661–1700), despite Louis XIV's advice and his ministers' attempts to change the whole organisation.²³ As Yves Bottineau made clear several decades ago, Philip V encouraged only superficial and relatively minor changes in his court service despite several attempts to reform it.²⁴ Consequently, Charles of Bourbon's original Household respected the traditional Austrian etiquette,²⁵ being divided into main four departments: *Casa* (Household), *Cámara* (Chamber), *Caballerizas* (Stables) and *Capilla* (Chapel).²⁶ Likewise, in accordance again with the Spanish style and Philip V's own royal service, every secular department was autonomously managed by a chief official: the *mayordomo mayor* (chief major-domo) for the Household, the *sumiller de corps* (first gentleman of the bed-chamber) for the Chamber and, finally, the *caballerizo mayor* (chief equerry) for the Stables.²⁷ Owing to their significance, they were simply called 'the three posts' at the Spanish court, as noted by Saint-Simon in the 1720's.²⁸

22 Despite Harold Acton's denials of this age-old misunderstanding some decades ago (*The Bourbons of Naples*, p. 31), modern historiography still accepts this hackneyed cliché. See, for example, Adele Fiadino, 'La residenza di Carlo di Borbone a Napoli: Fra tradizione spagnola e orientamenti culturali italiani e francesi' in Alfonso Gambardella (ed.), *Napoli-Spagna. Architettura e città nel XVIII secolo* (Naples, 2003), pp. 153–60.

23 See Jean Longnon (ed.), *Mémoires de Louis XIV: Suivi de Réflexions sur le métier de Roi; Instructions au duc d'Anjou; Projet de harangue* (Paris, 2001) and Alfred Morel-Fatio and M. H. Léonardon (eds), *Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France depuis les traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la Révolution Française publié sous les auspices de la commission des Archives diplomatiques au ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Vol. XII: Espagne. T. II (1701–1722)* (Paris, 1898). Also Coxe, *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain. Vol. I*, pp. 12–15.

24 Yves Bottineau, *L'art de cour dans l'Espagne de Philippe V, 1700–1746* (Bordeaux, 1960), pp. 153–196.

25 As his commander clearly asserted twice, the Count of Santisteban, in Archivo General de Palacio, Madrid (AGP), Histórica, caja 211: The Count of Santisteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731 and AGS, Estado, legajo 7720: The Count of Santisteban to José Patiño, Naples 20 July 1734.

26 On the general organisation of the Spanish royal Household under the Austrian etiquette, see Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas de la Casa de Austria* (Madrid, 1913 [originally 1875]).

27 Louis de Rouvroy, Duke of Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte de España en 1722* (Madrid, 1933), pp. 211–13. See also Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez and Juan Antonio Sánchez Belén, 'La Casa Real durante el siglo XVIII: Perspectivas para su estudio' in José Luis Castellano (ed.), *Sociedad, Administración y Poder en la España del Antiguo Régimen: Hacia una nueva historia institucional* (Granada, 1996), pp. 157–75 and Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, 'La corte de Felipe V: El ceremonial y las Casas Reales durante el reinado del primer borbón' in Eliseo Serrano (ed.), *Felipe V y su tiempo, Vol. I* (Zaragoza, 2004), pp. 879–914.

28 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 211 and 234.

As we know from original records, Don Carlos's entourage was chosen and approved before his departure from Seville in October 1731.²⁹ It was personally supervised by José Patiño, Spanish minister of War, Navy, West Indies and Treasury, under the direct surveillance of the Farnese Queen. In fact, she strategically chose the three noblemen that were appointed the chief officials in her son's entourage: the *sumiller de corps*, the *caballerizo mayor* and the *mayordomo mayor*. Employing the court as a social tool of political integration, she carefully selected the candidates in order to guarantee her authority in the inner circle of the future Duke of Parma, to engage the different Italian and Spanish nobilities in Don Carlos's dynastic projects, and to implement Spanish political goals in the Italian peninsula.

The Duke of Tursi (sometimes Tursis), Giovanni Andrea Doria del Carretto (1664–1749), was the first to be designated *sumiller de corps* of Don Carlos's *Cámara*.³⁰ As a Doria, he belonged to one of the most prominent Italian lineages, epitomising the wide influence of the Genovese nobility throughout the peninsula and particularly in the kingdom of Naples, where the Doria possessed fiefdoms and had economic interests.³¹ However, he was also chosen for two other reasons. First, he was an experienced military man, having been Chief Commander of the Genoa Squadron, responsible for supporting the Spanish army in the highly probable event of a war in the Italian peninsula between the crown of Spain and the House of Austria, as finally occurred in 1733.³² Second, he had met both the King and Queen of Spain, gaining their personal esteem when Philip V was visiting Italy in 1702³³ and Elizabeth Farnese was travelling from Parma to

29 The records of the creation of Don Carlos's Household are in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajos 159¹ and 295² and AHN, Estado, legajo 2601. See also Joseph del Campo-Raso, *Memorias políticas y militares para servir de continuación a los "comentarios" del marqués de San Felipe: Edición y estudio preliminar de Carlos Seco Serrano* (Madrid, 1957 [originally 1756]), p. 475; Baudrillart, *Philippe V et la cour de France*, Vol. IV, pp. 111–13 and Manuel Danvila y Collado, *Historia General de España: Reinado de Carlos III*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1891), pp. 48–50.

30 See *Relación general de los criados de todas clases [...] que fueron nombrados para ir sirviendo al Señor Infante Don Carlos [...]* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295². As *Sumiller*, Tursi's stipend was 2,000 reales de vellón.

31 Vid. Célestin Hippeau (ed.), *Avènement des Bourbons au trône d'Espagne. Correspondance inédite du Marquis d'Harcourt*, Vol. II (Paris, 1875), p. 143 and also M. L. Storch, *L'Archivio della famiglia Doria D'Angri: guida all'esame del materiale documentario. Tesi in Archivistica* (Naples, 1979–1980), p. 204 in ASNA, Sala Inventari, n° 574.

32 For the most accurate international account of Don Carlos's stay in Italy from 1731 to 1734, see Baudrillart, *Philippe V et la cour de France*, Vol. IV, pp. 118–259.

33 In fact, he was appointed *gentilhombre de cámara* by Philip V on 12 June 1702, as confirmed by Antonio Bulifon, *Giornale del viaggio d'Italia dell'invittissimo e gloriosissimo Monarca Filippo V re delle Spagne e di Napoli, &c. nel quale si da ragguaglio delle cose dalla M. S. in Italia adoperate dal di 16 d'Aprile, nel quale approdò in Napoli, infin' al di 16 di Novembre 1702 in cui s'imbarco in Genova per far ritorno in Ispagna* (Naples, 1703), p. 208. See also Antonio de Ubilla y Medina, *Marqués de Ribas, Succession de el Rey D. Phelipe V nuestro señor en la corona de España, diario de sus viages desde Versalles a Madrid, el que executó para su feliz casamiento, jornada a Napoles, a Milan y a su exercito, sucessos de la campaña y su buelta a Madrid* (Madrid, 1704), pp. 333, 636, 650 and 651.

Madrid in 1714.³⁴ The Duke of Tursi was, therefore, an appropriate candidate for the post, due not only to his public influence in Italian society but also to his firm loyalty to the Spanish Monarchs.

Moreover, the *Principe* Bartolomeo Corsini (1683–1752) was selected *caballerizo mayor* by the Farnese Queen in order to integrate the grand Roman-Florentine nobility into Don Carlos's entourage in an appropriately high-ranking manner.³⁵ It was a convenient decision, since Corsini had previously been appointed *cavallerizzo maggiore* of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1722, which had allowed him to learn the tasks of a similar office.³⁶ In addition, Corsini was the nephew of Lorenzo Corsini (1652–1740), better known as Clement XII after his election as pope in 1730, and the brother of Neri Corsini (1685–1770), a man of superb taste and one of the leading cardinals of eighteenth-century Rome.³⁷ In view of Corsini's position on the Italian public stage and Elizabeth Farnese's political plans, his election made much sense.³⁸ Bartolomeo Corsini's appointment, which was made in full awareness of the influence of the Corsini family in Florence and the still-significant role of the Holy See in Italian politics, seemed a good choice since it supported Charles's confirmation in 1731 as Duke of Parma and Piacenza and heir to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Indeed, as Campo-Raso asserted in his *Memorias*, 'este tan acertado paso de Su Majestad dulcificó el ánimo del Papa, quien resolvió desde luego reconocer al infante por legítimo duque de Parma y Plasencia' [such a brilliant step by His Majesty mellowed the Pope's temper, and he thenceforth decided to recognise the *Infante* as the rightful duke of Parma and Piacenza].³⁹

Finally, the most important of all the senior offices at Don Carlos's court, the *mayordomo mayor*, was given not to another Italian nobleman but rather to a Spaniard. Elizabeth Farnese decided to leave this key responsibility in the hands

34 See Jean Rousset de Missy, *Histoire publique et secrète de la cour de Madrid depuis l'avenement du roy Philippe V jusqu'au commencement de la Guerre avec la France. Seconde Edition. Revüe, corrigée & augmentée: Avec un discours sur l'état present de la Monarchie d'Espagne, Tome Second* (Liege, 1719), p. 202.

35 His stipend was 2,500 *escudos de vellón*. See AGP, Histórica, caja 211: The count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731 and *Relación de los criados que se ha de componer ahora la casa que Su Majestad ha mandado se forme para el servicio del Señor Infante Don Carlos con expresion del sueldo que ha tenido por conveniente goze al año cada uno de sus individuos*. Sevilla, 10 octubre 1731 in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 159¹.

36 See the works of Vittorio Sciuti Russi, 'Corsini, Bartolomeo' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 29: *Cordier-Corvo* (Rome, 1983), pp. 612–17 and 'Tanucci e Bartolomeo Corsini' in Raffaele Ajello and Mario D'Addio (eds), *Bernardo Tanucci. Statista, letterato, giurista*, Vol. I (Naples, 1986), pp. 181–201. Also the introduction in Curatolo, *Niccolò Fraggianni*.

37 For Pope Clement XII's reign, see the volume of Ludwig von Pastor's classic work on Papacy's history. About the Cardinal Corsini, see the M. Caffiero, 'Corsini, Neri' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 29: *Cordier-Corvo* (Rome, 1983), pp. 651–7 and also the *Sezione Corsiniana* at the Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Roma, for their private correspondences.

38 The Spanish Queen's letters informing the Grand Duke of Tuscany Gian Gastone (1671–1737) and the Electress Palatine Anna Maria Luisa (1667–1743) of Don Carlos's plans to arrive in Italy and take possession of his dynastic inheritance as Tuscan heir are in AGS, Estado, Libro 564. The correspondence with the Spanish envoy in Florence, Father Ascanio, in 1731 on this matter is in AGS, Estado, legajos 7686–9.

39 Campo-Raso, *Memorias políticas y militares*, p. 475.

of Manuel Domingo de Benavides y Aragón (1682–1748), 10th Count of Santiesteban del Puerto and Don Carlos's former *ayo* (governor).⁴⁰ In the context of the Spanish court in 1731, his election as the main supervisor of Don Carlos's future Italian entourage was sensible. Manuel de Benavides was an outstanding member of an old and prestigious Castilian family.⁴¹ He was also a well-trained courtier with extensive experience of established Spanish etiquette and a reliable official deeply attached to the crown. His father, Francisco de Benavides Dávila Corella y de la Cueva (1645–1716), had been viceroy and *capitán general* of Sardinia (1675–1678), Sicily (1678–1687) and Naples (1687–1696), and had been appointed *grande de España* of third class, *consejero de Estado* and *consejero de Guerra* when he returned to Spain in 1696.⁴² However, the former Count of Santiesteban had gained Philip V's total favour when he supported the Bourbon claims to the Spanish throne.⁴³ In return, the new king chose him as one of the Spanish subjects that would sit in the *Consejo de Gabinete del rey* in 1701,⁴⁴ further promoting him to *mayordomo mayor* of the Spanish queen Marie-Louise Gabrielle of Savoy's Household in 1703.⁴⁵

After his father's death in 1716, the new Count of Santiesteban, as the heir of the Benavides lineage, preserved the Sovereign's favour and, more importantly, gained the new Farnese Queen's esteem. Consequently, he was one of the most prominent Spanish noblemen at court, as demonstrated by his nominations as *gentilhombre de Cámara del Rey*, *ministro plenipotenciario* of Spain to the Congress of Cambrai in 1720,⁴⁶ *caballerizo mayor* of the Prince of Asturias's Household in 1721⁴⁷ and *presidente del Consejo de Órdenes* in 1723.⁴⁸ Finally, he was one of the seven members to be seated at the state *Gabinete* composed to help the new young Spanish king Louis I (1707–1724), who was elevated to the Spanish throne following Philip V's abdication in 1724.⁴⁹

Due to the crucial public role played by the Count of Santiesteban in the early years of Don Carlos's Neapolitan reign, the terms and intentions of his selection

40 AGP, Personal, caja 977, expediente 21. He had been appointed *Ayo* on 1 September 1734, though he already began to hold the post on 6 August, as we know from an administrative report in AGP, Histórica, caja 211.

41 See Diego Vincencio De Vidania, *Al rey nuestro señor D. Francisco de Benavides Davila, Corella y de la Cueva, IV del nombre IX Conde de Santiesteban del Puerto, Grande de España [...] representa los servicios heredados, y Propios, y los de su [sic] Hijos Don Diego de Benavides y Aragon, III marques de Solera, y don Luis de Benavides y Aragon, IV marques de Solera, y la Antigüedad, y calidad de su casa, y de las Incorporadas en ella [...]* (Naples, 1696).

42 See AHN, Ordenes Militares, Santiago, Pruebas de Caballeros, expediente 974; AGP, Personal, caja 977, expediente 22 and AHN, Estado, legajo 6390¹.

43 The Count of Santiesteban del Puerto and the Marquis of Villena were two of the Spanish noblemen most supportive of the Bourbon cause, as confirmed by Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 9 and Morel-Fatio and Léonardon (eds), *Recueil des Instructions*, pp. 32–3.

44 Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 30.

45 AGP, Personal, caja 977, expediente 22 and Coxe, *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain. Vol. I*, p. 49. He retired in August 1714, according to the *Gazeta de Madrid*, 5 (28 August 1714), p. 140.

46 Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 329 and Belando, *Historia civil, Parte Cuarta*, p. 277.

47 AGP, Personal, caja 977, expediente 21. See also Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 340.

48 Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 353 and Didier Ozanam (ed.), *Les diplomates espagnols du XVIII^e siècle: Introduction et répertoire biographique (1700–1808)* (Madrid/Bordeaux, 1998), p. 182.

49 Bacallar, *Comentarios*, p. 353 and Coxe, *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain. Vol. II*, p. 299.



Carlo Re di Napoli Di Sicilia e Gerusalemme Infante di Spagna Duca di Parma Piacenza Castro Gran Principe Ered. Di Toscana [Charles King of Naples, of Sicily and Jerusalem, Infante of Spain, Duke of Parma, Piacenza, Castro, Grand Crown Prince of Tuscany]

(Engraving by Antonio Baldi, 1735, from Anon., *Descrizione delle feste celebrate dalla fedelissima Città di Napoli per lo glorioso ritorno dalla impresa di Sicilia della Sacra Maestà Carlo di Borbone*, Naples, Stamperia di Felice Mosca, 1735)

as *mayordomo mayor* should be analysed in detail. Defending the court political culture promoted and supported by the Spanish grand nobility for more than a century, Santiesteban was able to manage not only the Household of his Sovereign but also the political society and government agenda of the new kingdom of the Two Sicilies from May 1734 until his departure from Naples in August 1738.⁵⁰ As his father and other members of his family had done in the past, he took on the key function that the nobility could play in politics by using his court position and responsibilities to reinforce his privileged status in society.⁵¹ Accompanying the monarchs in their daily lives, they helped to define the political atmosphere of the king's inner circle, promoting their political clients as suitable candidates for any vacancies and influencing the politics of the government.⁵² A maxim by which Santiesteban lived, according to Bernardo Tanucci, was that 'il conte di S. Stefano introduce al servizio di Sua Altezza Reali i suoi stessi servidori, seguitando l'uso dei Grandi di Spagna di Carlo II e degli ultimi Filippi re di Spagna' [the Count of Santiesteban introduces his own servants into His Highness's service, following in this way the custom of the Grandees of Spain of Charles II and of the last Philips, Kings of Spain].⁵³

Elizabeth Farnese was conscious of the public ambitions of the high nobility in Spain in 1731. Because of Philip V's weakness, she had, from her arrival in Madrid in 1715, to struggle against the French, Spanish and Italian noblemen inside the Bourbon court in order to bolster the crown's authority, but she finally came to dominate Spanish political society. However, a court without proper control was worse than having just a single man to manage it, as the widowed

50 For the political ambitions of the high nobility in the seventeenth-century Spain, see Francisco Tomás y Valiente, 'El gobierno de la monarquía y la administración de los reinos en la España del siglo XVII' in *Historia de España fundada por Ramón Méneñdez Pidal. Tomo XXV: La España de Felipe IV — El Gobierno de la Monarquía, la crisis de 1640 y el fracaso de la hegemonía europea* (Madrid, 1982), pp. 1–213 and Antonio Feros, 'El duque de Lerma: Valimiento y construcción de un nuevo paradigma político' in José Antonio Escudero (ed.), *Los validos* (Madrid, 2004), pp. 63–80.

51 For a consideration of this as not only a Spanish, but also a European phenomenon, see H. M. Scott, and C. Storrs, 'Introduction: The Consolidation of Noble Power in Europe, c. 1600–1800' in H. M. Scott (ed.), *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century, Vol. I: Western Europe* (London/New York, 1995), pp. 1–52; John H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (eds), *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven, 1999) and Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition, 1550–1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London, 2004).

52 See the seminal works of Adolfo Carrasco Martínez, 'Los grandes, el poder y la cultura política de la nobleza en el reinado de Carlos II', *Studia Historica. Historia Moderna*, 20 (1999), pp. 77–136; 'Fisionomía de la virtud. Gestos, movimientos y palabras en la cultura cortesano-aristocrática del siglo XVII', *Reales Sitios*, XXXVIII, 147 (2001), pp. 26–37; 'El orden sagrado. Mitos sociales, legitimación teológica y teorías de la desigualdad en los siglos XVI y XVII', *Cuadernos de investigación histórica*, 18 (2001), pp. 267–80; 'Cultura política e identidad aristocráticas en la Europa de los reyes y los privados', *Cuadernos de historia de España*, 77 (2001–2002), pp. 165–86 and 'Los grandes castellanos ante el valimiento' in Francisco José Aranda Pérez (ed.), *La declinación de la monarquía hispánica en el siglo XVII* (Cuenca, 2004), pp. 607–16. Also Alistair Malcolm, 'La práctica informal del poder. La política de la Corte y el acceso a la Familia Real durante la segunda mitad del reinado de Felipe IV', *Reales Sitios*, XXXVIII, 147 (2001), pp. 38–48.

53 Letter 15; Bernardo Tanucci to the Countess Catanti, Parma 14 October 1773 in Inma Ascione, 'Al servizio dell'Infante Duca. Bernardo Tanucci alla corte di Carlo di Borbone nell'estate del 1733', *Frontiera d'Europa*, VI, I (2000), pp. 37–144, p. 113.

Spanish Queen Mariana of Neuburg and the future cardinal Alberoni had advised her some years before.⁵⁴ The Farnese Queen probably thought that to leave all the political responsibility in one courtier's hands would actually be better than to allow all the three chief officials to struggle to monopolise the court. This strategy was quite reasonable considering that Don Carlos was 'tuttavia innocente nell'arte di regnare' [still innocent in the art of government], as the Venetian envoy to Naples would declare in August 1737.⁵⁵ As a consequence, the Farnese Queen vigorously defended not only Santiesteban's personal authority inside the court but also his leading position in government until July 1738. Unnoticed by modern historiography, we actually know that Santiesteban was also for this reason designated Spanish *embajador extraordinario* (special ambassador) to Italy in September 1731.⁵⁶ In this role he was able to negotiate issues of state with the Tuscan and Parmesan ministers and to put into effect Don Carlos's political decisions in the Spanish monarchs' own names. However, as long as Santiesteban was required to report all his decisions to the Spanish secretary of State weekly and then wait for the sovereigns' final approval, Elizabeth Farnese essentially retained all control.⁵⁷

In August 1731, Santiesteban was finally promoted to *mayordomo mayor* with the aim of 'ejercer en la asistencia de S. A. quando pasara a Italia' [assisting His Highness when he goes to Italy].⁵⁸ As he explains in one of the early dispatches he addressed to the Minister Patiño on this matter, Elizabeth Farnese allowed him to organise all the different departments of the young Prince's new Household in September,⁵⁹ when it was decided that the Spanish Infante must be sent to Parma to take possession of its ducal throne.⁶⁰ He also proposed the candidates capable of carrying out the different court offices, except the senior posts of *sumiller de corps* and *caballerizo mayor*, already appointed by the Spanish Queen. Santiesteban was thus able to place his political clients in key positions in all sections of Don Carlos's domestic service, allowing him to play, over the next few years, the most important role in the government of Parma, Florence and, ultimately, Naples.

54 See ASNA, Archivio Farnesiano, buste 54, 55, 56(I) and 56(II) and Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome (BAV), Fondo Boncompagni-Ludovisi, F 40. Also see E. Bourgeois (ed.), *Lettres intimes de J. M. Alberoni, adressées au comte I. Rocca, ministre des finances du duc de Parme* (Paris, 1893); Armstrong, *Elisabeth Farnese*, p. 16; Marie René Roussel, Marquis de Courcy, *L'Espagne après la paix d'Utrecht, 1713–1715: La princesse des Ursins et le marquis de Brancas, un grand inquisiteur d'Espagne à la cour de France, les débuts d'une nouvelle reine* (Paris, 1891), p. 275 and Mafrić, *Fascino e potere di una Regina*, p. 35.

55 Dispatch 768: Cesare Vignola to the Venetian Senate, Naples 6 August 1737 in Infelise (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane*, p. 467.

56 See AGS, Estado, legajo 5806, folio 25 and Campo-Raso, *Memorias políticas y militares*, p. 475.

57 This colossal and well-organised correspondence is preserved by the AGS and is an invaluable source for eighteenth-century Neapolitan history. See the catalogues developed by Ricardo Magdaleno Redondo, *Catálogo XXI del Archivo de Simancas: Secretaría de Estado: Reino de las dos Sicilias (siglo XVIII)* (Valladolid, 1956) and *Catálogo XXVII del Archivo de Simancas: Estados pequeños de Italia (siglos XVI–XVIII)* (Valladolid, 1978).

58 ASNA, Segreteria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1 in Schipa, *Il regno di Napoli. Vol. I*, p. 80, note 4.

59 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: the Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731.

60 See Belando, *Historia civil. Parte Cuarta*, pp. 510–513.

II

As required by traditional Spanish etiquette, Don Carlos's *Casa* embraced all the general services of a royal Household in 1731. Its head was the *mayordomo mayor*, the person responsible for the King's Household and the most visible member of the court after the monarchs.⁶¹ His tasks included supervising the financial administration, keeping the royal palaces in perfect condition and controlling the performance of ceremonial occasions. He was assisted in these tasks by one of the *mayordomos de semana* (major-domos on duty each week).⁶²

In order to promote Elizabeth Farnese's politics of aristocratic integration, Santiesteban proposed to divide the main posts of all court departments among the three nobilities under Don Carlos's authority — Spanish, Tuscan and Parmesan — as she had already done, to some extent, with the chief officials.⁶³ For this reason, two Spanish and one Italian nobleman were nominated as *mayordomos de semana*: first Joseph Bak y Cartella, then the Marquis of Villafuerte and, finally, the Marquis Justiniani.⁶⁴ All of them were very close to Santiesteban, who consequently reinforced his power inside the most extensive part of the royal Household. The rest of the *Casa*'s sections, such as the *Cocina* (Kitchen), the *Furriera* (Quartermaster's Office), the *Cerería* (Candle Office) and the *Tapicería* (Upholstery Office), were organised according to the Spanish tradition, as can be seen from the complete list of the posts.⁶⁵

The second department, the royal *Cámara* (Chamber), controlled the King's private lodgings. Its head, the *sumiller de corps*, had two main responsibilities: to ensure the efficient functioning of the *Cámara*'s etiquette and to attend to the monarch's health. He therefore slept in the sovereign's bedroom, helped him to dress and undress every day and attended to him during public suppers, among other duties.⁶⁶ Because of the amount of time he spent with the King, the *sumiller* traditionally played a significant role in Spanish political society, this post being, in Saint-Simon words, 'the safest path and that one which has produced the greatest fortunes and prime ministers'.⁶⁷ Since Philip V did not change the administrative structure of the Spanish royal Household, a *sumiller de corps* was always appointed during his reign.⁶⁸ However, it was a post of declining

61 See Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 213–16 and Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas*, pp. 29–33.

62 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 216–20.

63 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: the Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731 and Francesco Becattini, *Storia del Regno di Carlo III di Borbone re cattolico delle Spagne e dell'Indie corredata degli opportuni documenti dell'abate Francesco Becattini* (Venezia, 1790), p. 36.

64 AGP, Histórica, caja 211.

65 See *Relación general de los criados de todas clases* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, leg. 295².

66 Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas*, pp. 48–9.

67 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, p. 212. On the role of the *sumiller* in seventeenth-century Spanish politics, see John H. Elliott, 'The Court of the Spanish Habsburgs: A Peculiar Institution?' in Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob (eds), *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honour of H. G. Koenigsberger* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 5–24.

68 Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, 'Al cuidado del cuerpo del rey: Los sumilleres de corps en el siglo XVIII', *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna. Anejos*, II (2003), pp. 199–239.

importance in those years, as the King began to retire to the Queen's apartments every day, limiting in practice the *sumiller's* ability to monopolise the royal will.⁶⁹

As already indicated, the Genovese Duke of Tursi was Don Carlos's first *sumiller de corps* after October 1731. As the young *Infante* was still unmarried, this situation allowed the Italian nobleman to exercise a very personal and profitable influence upon the new Duke of Parma. In order to prevent Tursi's ambitions, Santiesteban placed some of his most significant political clients among the *gentilishombres de Cámara* (gentlemen-in-waiting), the *sumiller's* main assistants. These positions were usually occupied by prominent members of the kingdom's noble families, and were used by Philip V to confer social distinction.⁷⁰ In September 1731, Santiesteban proposed to make twelve appointments and in doing so, 'guardando el mismo orden que en los Gefes, que quatro sean españoles, quatro Florentines, y quatro Parmesanos' [maintaining the same principle as for the main posts, four are to be Spanish, four Florentine and four Parmesan].⁷¹ The four Spanish *gentilishombres* were: Antonio Benavides de la Cueva, Marquis of Solera and Santiesteban's first-born son;⁷² Francisco Pimentel y Zúñiga, Duke of Arión and Santiesteban's son-in-law;⁷³ José Fernández Miranda y Ponce de León, son of the Marquis of Valdecarzana; and, finally, Pedro Gasca, son of the Marquis of the Revilla.⁷⁴ As Patiño confirmed to Santiesteban some days later, the remaining eight *gentilishombres* would be selected from among the Parmesan and Florentine nobilities after Don Carlos's arrival in Italy.⁷⁵

Finally, the *Caballeriza* (Stables), under the *caballerizo mayor*, was responsible for organising all the outings of the King and his court outside the main royal palace,⁷⁶ especially the hunting parties on which the members of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty went almost daily.⁷⁷ The *Caballerizo* managed his division independently of the household structure: he functioned under the King's direct supervision, receiving orders only from the monarch.⁷⁸ For these reasons and because of the opportunity it gave to spend much time with the sovereign, the post was coveted by courtiers, particularly in the case of Don Carlos, a keen and expert huntsman.⁷⁹ Santiesteban was aware of this risk to his own influence and took on himself the responsibility of selecting the second-ranking official in the Royal Stables, the *primer caballerizo* (first equerry). As in Philip V's court, this

69 See Contesse Della Rocca (ed.), *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et de la Reine d'Espagne, petites-filles de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1865); Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 229–30 and Coxe, *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain*, Vol. I, pp. 56–7.

70 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 234–8.

71 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: the count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731.

72 AGP, Personal, caja 1007, expediente 34.

73 AGP, Personal, caja 1341, expedientes 13–15.

74 AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, leg. 295².

75 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: José Patiño to the Count of Santiesteban, Seville 5 October 1731.

76 See Miguel Ángel Gacho Santamaría, 'Las Reales Caballerizas: Una institución al servicio de la corona, a través de la Historia' in *Historia del carruaje en España* (Madrid, 2005), pp. 274–99.

77 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 31–4.

78 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, p. 225–7 and Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas*, pp. 50–51.

79 See Jesús Urrea, *Carlos III: Soberano y cazador* (Madrid, 1989).

office was vital in the monarch's daily life, since he took the *caballerizo mayor's* responsibilities when he was not able to assume them.⁸⁰ In order to monitor Prince Corsini's movements, Santiesteban did not allow him to select the candidate, as was required by traditional etiquette, but placed a member of his own faction close to the young Don Carlos. His first appointment, in September 1731, was Francisco Scotti Fernández de Cordoba, Marquis Scotti di Vigolino,⁸¹ who was replaced when he returned to Spain in February 1732 by José Fernández Miranda y Ponce de León, also one of the *gentileshombres* and a well-known member of Santiesteban's political network.⁸²

In addition, Santiesteban suggested that all officials' original positions in the Spanish court be retained during absences in Italy. Santiesteban thought that it would be easier to persuade his preferred candidates to take the jobs offered to them if he could guarantee their employment in the event of a failure in Don Carlos's dynastic plans. This request was also granted.⁸³

III

When, after seizing Naples from the Austrian viceroy Visconti, Don Carlos arrived in the territory in May 1734 as *generalísimo* of the Spanish army, he was immediately proclaimed King of Naples, based on the principle of his father's renunciation, as explained above.⁸⁴ As a logical consequence, Don Carlos's own entourage as Duke of Parma, part of which had travelled with him from the north to the south, was retained. Both its high officials and regular employees were appointed to the same offices they had previously held.⁸⁵ On 9 May 1734, a day before the Spanish *Infante's* public entrance into the metropolis, a dispatch was sent to Parma ordering the remaining royal servants to move to their new destination as soon as the command was received.⁸⁶ As it was unnecessary to integrate the former Neapolitan court which had served the Austrian Viceroys,

80 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, p. 227.

81 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 2 October 1731 and *Relación de los criados* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 159¹.

82 AGS, Estado, legajo 7693: The Count of Santiesteban to the Marquis de la Paz, Liorna 6 February 1732 and *Relacion puntual de los criados de todas clases* [...] in AHN, Estado, legajo 2601.

83 AGP, Histórica, caja 211: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Seville 29 September 1731.

84 As Philip V conquered the territories of Naples and Sicily in his own right, they belonged to him as Philippe Duc d'Anjou, not as king of Spain. His resignation in favour of his son Don Carlos was therefore not only politically reasonable, but perfectly legal.

85 On Don Carlos's arrival in Naples, the best accounts are *Avviso di Napoli*, Num. 22 (18 May 1734) in Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli 'Vittorio Emanuele III', Naples (BNN), Sez. Nap., Periodici 12; Senatore, *Giornale storico*, pp. 93–8 and Sebastiano Biancardi (detto Domenico Lalli), *Continuazione delle vite de're di Napoli nella glorioso persona di d. Carlo di Borbone e Farnese re delle Due Sicilie felicemente regnante XXXII re di Napoli* (Venezia, 1739), pp. I–VI. See, in addition, *Relazione della solennità celebrata a' 23 maggio 1734 nella Real Chiesa di S. Lorenzo Maggiore dagli eccellentiss. signori eletti per lo felice ingresso di sua maestà, che dio guardi, D. Carlo Borbone nostro re in questa fedeliss. città, e per la sua dichiarazione a re di Napoli* (Naples, 1734) and Annibale Marchese, *Stanze del duca Annibale Marchese per la venuta al regno della maestà di Carlo di Borbone re di Napoli, dedicate alla maestà d'Elisabetta Farnese regina delle Spagne* (Naples, 1734).

86 ASNA, Archivio Amministrativo di Casa Reale, III Inventario, Maggioromia Maggiore e Soprintendenza Generale di Casa Reale, fascio 2721, dated in Aversa on 9 May 1734.

Naples received a new and independent royal Household without any political conflict.

However, Naples was not Parma. The settlement of a new system of royal government was an ‘opera grande e che potrebbe dar utile grandissimo a questo Regno, ma nel medesimo tempo difficile e da spaventar chi si sia, soprattutto quando si deve edificar sopra il vecchio edificio, che sembra più difficile che non sarebbe il far tutto di nuovo’ [great operation that could prove very useful to this Kingdom, but at the same time difficult because it could frighten some people, particularly when one must build over an old structure, which seems more difficult than starting a whole new one], as the Florentine agent Bartolomeo Intieri stated in May 1734.⁸⁷ For this reason, several changes were crucial in order to allow the court to contribute to the new kingdom’s political and social requirements, particularly after Don Carlos’s return from Palermo in July 1735.⁸⁸ Becoming sovereign not only of Naples but also of Sicily, he was crowned at the cathedral as ‘Charles of Bourbon, King of the Two Sicilies’,⁸⁹ as confirmed by several works published that year.⁹⁰

As the controlling force within Don Carlos’s entourage, Santiesteban led the reorganisation of the royal Household and promoted the reform of the government structure in a drastic and decisive manner from 1734 to 1738.⁹¹ He sent detailed reports to Madrid, analysing the organisation of the Neapolitan institutions and describing the different dynastic preferences of the civil servants in charge of them.⁹² As Harold Acton wrote, ‘Santo Stefano was omnipotent at Court as chief councillor of state and chief major-domo, who interpreted the

87 Quoted by Ajello, ‘La vita politica napoletana’, p. 489.

88 See *Descrizione delle feste celebrate dalla fedelissima Città di Napoli per lo glorioso ritorno dalla impresa di Sicilia della Sacra Maestà Carlo di Borbone* (Napoli, 1735).

89 According to Biancardi (*Continuazione delle vite*, pp. 454–5), ‘a dì 2. Settembre del medesimo anno 1734, fu il Principe D. Carlo proclamato Re delle due Sicilie, stante la cessione fattagli da suo Gran Padre Filippo V dell’una, e l’altra Sicilia’ [on September 2 of that same year, 1734, the prince D. Carlo was proclaimed King of the Two Sicilies, according to the donation of his great father Philip V of both Sicilies]. See also *Avviso di Napoli*, Num. 38 (7 September 1734) in BNN, Sez. Nap., Periodici 120. He was entitled sovereign of the Two Sicilies because, as reported by Belando in his *Historia Civil: Parte Segunda y Tercera* (Madrid, 1740), p. 16, the ‘fructifero, y delicioso Reyno de Nápoles’ [the fruitful and lovely kingdom of Naples] had been ‘apellidado tambien en los tiempos passados *Sicilia de esta parte del Faro*, à distincion de la Isla, y Reyno de este nombre, que por diferenciarla se llamaba *Sicilia de la otra parte del Faro*. . .’ [also called in the past *Sicily from this part of the Lighthouse*, as differentiated from the isle and kingdom of this name, which was called *Sicily from the other part of the Lighthouse*].

90 See *Relazione del maestoso e solenne ingresso fatto il dì 10 Marzo 1735 nella città di Messina dalla Maestà del Re delle Due Sicilie* (Messina, 1735); *Relación de la solemne entrada y aclamación del Serenissimo Señor Don Carlos Rey de las Dos Sicilias y de Jerusalem, Infante de las Españas, Duque de Parma, Plasencia, y Castro, Gran Príncipe Hereditario de Toscana, Generalissimo de las Armas de S. M. Catholica en Italia. Hecha el 30 de junio de 1735* (Palermo, 1735) and *Relazione della coronazione di Carlo infante di Spagna, re delle due Sicilie, di Gerusalemme &c., Duca di Parma, Piacenza, e Castro &c. Gran Principe Ereditario di Toscana &c. e Generalissimo dell’Arme di S. M. C. in Italia celebrata in Palermo Capitale del Regno il 3 Luglio 1735* (Palermo, 1735).

91 See Raffaele Ajello, ‘La vita politica napoletana’, pp. 619–641 and his ‘La parabola settecentesca’ in Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (ed.), *Storia e civiltà della Campania. Il Settecento* (Napoli, 1994), pp. 7–79.

92 See AGS, Estado, legajo 7729.

Queen Mother's wishes.⁹³ He was thereby able to strengthen his authority within the regenerated Neapolitan political society and to succeed in leading the transition from a kingdom governed by a viceroy to a new independent monarchy. His strategy merits close attention.

In the context of the Neapolitan Royal Household, Santiesteban's first aim was to establish its autonomy and define its structure, while maintaining his full control over it. From 26 June 1734, the administrative link between the Spanish court and Don Carlos's entourage was complete.⁹⁴ Members of his entourage now had a choice: they could either return to the Spanish King's service or remain in Naples to pursue an uncertain yet promising career, as Santiesteban reminded Patiño on the occasion of the conquest of Sicily several months later.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the original design of Don Carlos's Household was not changed when it was transformed into the new court of the Two Sicilies. All the departments kept the original functions assigned to them in 1731 by Santiesteban, who only began to amplify them after June 1734.⁹⁶

The *Casa*, the largest section of the royal Household, had been partially put in place before Don Carlos's entourage's arrival in Naples. Two new *mayordomos de semana* were appointed when the court was established in Parma and Florence between 1732 and 1734. A former *mayordomo*, the Marquis Justiniani, had died early in 1732⁹⁷ and Santiesteban decided to nominate the Florentine *don* Fernando Narvaez and the Parmesan Count Raffaello Tarasconi Esmeraldi, both of whom were close associates, to these posts.⁹⁸ The previously chosen Marquis of Villafuerte and *don* Joseph Bak y Cartella were the other two of the four *mayordomos* required by Spanish etiquette to serve the new Neapolitan Monarch.⁹⁹

Once all the appointments to Don Carlos's Household in Naples had been settled, the other sections of the *Casa* were finalised, starting with the main official of the *Furriera*, the so-called *apostentador mayor*. He was responsible for maintaining the condition of the physical structure of the royal palaces, with the assistance of a numerous employees, such as *ayudas*, *sotoayudas* and *mozos*.¹⁰⁰ Santiesteban selected the Spanish Diego Merlo for this position. Merlo, an experienced former servant in the Spanish royal Household's *Furriera*, looked after the Neapolitan palace according to the Spanish ceremonial system under Santiesteban's supervision.¹⁰¹ After May 1734 other appointments were made to

93 Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples*, p. 31.

94 See the report *Criados que fueron a Italia. Aranjuez 10 de abril de 1736* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295².

95 AGS, Estado, leg. 7731: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Palermo 24 May 1735.

96 *Relación o estado general y individual de los criados de todas clases de la Real Capilla, Casa, Camara y Cavalleriza de que presentemente esta formada y se compone la Real Casa de Su Majestad [de las Dos Sicilias]* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295².

97 Letter 105: Don Carlos to his parents, Livorno 8 February 1732 in Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone. Vol. I: 1720–1734*, p. 180 and AGS, Estado, leg. 7694: José Joaquín de Montealegre to the Marquis de la Paz, Florence 23 March 1732.

98 *Relación o estado general* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295², pliego 1, folios 3 and 4. On Tarasconi and Narvaez, see Ajello, 'La vita politica napoletana', pp. 695–96.

99 Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, p. 216.

100 Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas*, pp. 36–7.

101 *Relación o estado general* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295², pliego 2, folios 3 y 4.

specialised posts, such as the clockmaker Joseph Molinard, the carpenter Tomas Salucci and the painters Giuseppe Pini, Giovanni Caselli and Antonio Sebastiani.¹⁰²

The *Real Caballeriza* was largely reformed after 1735 in order to provide the horses, coaches and servants needed to serve the rapidly growing court, although its original structure and design remained the same. The Secretary of State José Joaquín de Montealegre ordered the purchase of a large number of fine horses in March 1736.¹⁰³ In addition, the Royal Palace of Naples, designed by Domenico Fontana and built by the Spanish viceroys at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was too small for all the new court's requirements and a new location for the royal stables was considered.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, in June 1737, the new monarch acquired some buildings at the Prince of Calabritto's palace at Chiaia, which was close to the royal palace.¹⁰⁵ Numerous *caballerizos de campo* and secondary staff, such a *cocheros* (coachmen), *sobreestantes* (foremen) and *mozos* (stable boys) were also appointed from 1735 onwards.¹⁰⁶

Prince Corsini was confirmed *caballerizo mayor*, the head of the royal stables, in May 1734 but was then nominated viceroy of Sicily in May 1736. His promotion was a well-chosen political strategy to gain the Pope's consent, since the king of Naples was still considered the Holy See's feudal vassal.¹⁰⁷ When the appointment was confirmed, Corsini left the Neapolitan court in February 1737.¹⁰⁸ Santiesteban, who had written to the Spanish Monarchs in support of Corsini's candidacy in the previous weeks, astutely delayed the selection of the new *caballerizo mayor*.¹⁰⁹ His constant absence from the capital notwithstanding, Corsini nominally retained the post until August 1738, when the Neapolitan Prince of Stigliano was appointed.¹¹⁰ Santiesteban thus managed both to eliminate a

102 *Relación o estado general* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295², pliego 3, folios 2 y 3. Casella was appointed on 18 May 1734, Sebastiani on 22 November 1734 and Pini on 30 August 1735 (Schipa, *Il regno di Napoli*. Vol. I, p. 252, note 3). See also *ad indicem* Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone* and Jesús Urrea (ed.), *Itinerario italiano de un monarca español: Carlos III en Italia, 1731–1759* (Madrid, 1989). On the miniaturist Giuseppe Caselli (1698–1752), who had previously worked at Francesco I Farnese's court, see *Civiltà del '700 a Napoli, 1734–1799*, Vol. II (Florence, 1980), pp. 428–29.

103 See the dispatches by Montealegre from 24 March 1736 to 10 July 1737 in ASNA, Segreteria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1099.

104 On the Royal Palace of Naples, see Felice De Filippis, *Il Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 1960); M. Causa Picone; A. Porzio and A. Borrelli, *Il Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 1986); *Il Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 1987); *Il Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 1995) and Alfredo Buccaro (ed.), *Storia e immagini del Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 2001).

105 On the royal stables' project at Chiaia after June 1737, see the royal command in ASNA, Segreteria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1102: José Joaquín de Montealegre to Giovanni Brancaccio, Naples 3 June 1737. See also ASNA, Real Camera di Santa Chiara, Provvisioni, II Serie, 173 and ASNA, Real Camera di Santa Chiara, Consulte, vol. 15, n. 78 on the problems with the future property. I would like to thank the archivist Fausto de Mattia for allowing me access to these records.

106 *Relación o estado general* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295², pliego 24 and onwards.

107 See Ajello, 'La vita politica napoletana'.

108 The approval for the nomination arrived from Madrid in May 1736, but was not officially endorsed until 10 February 1737. Corsini arrived in Palermo on 7 March: see Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone*. Vol. II: 1735–1739 and Sciuti Russi, 'Corsini, Bartolomeo'.

109 AGS, Estado, legajo 7742: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Naples 24 April 1736.

110 ASNA, Segreteria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1103: José Joaquín de Montealegre to the Prince of Stigliano, Naples 23 August 1738.

potential political opponent and to retain control over the royal stables. Corsini was a respectable and powerful nobleman, able to challenge Santiesteban's authority at the Neapolitan court. By promoting Corsini's nomination as viceroy of Sicily, Santiesteban effectively banished him and, at the same time, achieved control over his department. José Fernández Miranda y Ponce de León, *primer caballerizo* and a member of Santiesteban's faction, became in practice responsible for the department, allowing Santiesteban to supervise all the King's movements outside the palace.¹¹¹

In addition, another important position was that of *cazador mayor* (chief hunter), head of the so-called *Real Ballestería*. This sub-department of the *Caballeriza* was responsible for preparing the royal hunting parties.¹¹² From 1732 the post had been held by Duke Salviati, who was in a position to arrange the most suitable places for the *Infante's* hunts in Parma and Florence.¹¹³ He resigned in 1736, despite Don Carlos's insistence on his remaining in charge even after more than a year and a half of absence.¹¹⁴ The Duke of Bovino succeeded him.¹¹⁵ As the first Neapolitan nobleman to be selected for one of the main court positions, Bovino was, in Santiesteban's words, 'de los primeros señores de este Reyno' [among the leading gentlemen of this kingdom].¹¹⁶ However, he was chosen due to the hunting skills he had demonstrated when the court visited his feudal domain on its route to Sicily in January 1735.¹¹⁷ Other minor offices, such as *Montero*, *Ballesteros* and *Halconeros*, were also filled after 1734.¹¹⁸

IV

Despite the fact that transition of the court from Parma to Naples after the conquest of the two states in 1734 and 1735 was a success, Santiesteban soon realised that he faced a serious challenge. He had planned, with the Farnese Queen's tacit approval, that the great Neapolitan and Sicilian nobility would not be appointed to the main offices of the new king's court, at least at the beginning of his reign. Ever since the revolt of Masaniello in 1647, Naples had a reputation throughout Europe as a dangerous and difficult domain to rule.¹¹⁹ As the Spanish historian Belando asserted in the eighteenth century, Naples was seen as a realm 'donde parece que predomina algun mal influxo, que precipita à sus Naturales, porque

111 Miranda had already managed the department due to Corsini's previous absences, as confirmed by ASNA, Segretaria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1100: José Joaquín de Montealegre to José Fernández Miranda, Naples 18 January 1736.

112 Rodríguez Villa, *Etiquetas*, pp 163–5.

113 He had previously held this post at the Florentin court. See AGS, Estado, legajo 7692: The Count of Santiesteban to the Marquis de la Paz, Livorno 2 January 1732.

114 AGS, Estado, 7748: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Naples 23 October 1736.

115 On his duties, see ASNA, Segretaria di Stato di Casa Reale, fascio 1101: José Joaquín de Montealegre to the Count of Santiesteban, Naples 23 October 1736 and Schipa, *Il regno de Napoli*, Vol. I, p. 229, note 2.

116 AGS, Estado, 7748: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Nápoles 23 octubre 1736.

117 Senatore, *Giornale storico*, p. 276–7.

118 *Relación o estado general* in AGP, Reinados, Felipe V, legajo 295².

119 See Peter Burke, 'The Virgin of the Carmine and the Revolt of Masaniello', *Past and Present*, 99 (1983), pp. 3–21.



Charles of Bourbon being allegorically crowned King of Sicily

(Engraving by Antonio Bova, 1735, from Antonio Mongitore, *Discorso Istorico su l'antico titolo di Regno concesso all'Isola di Sicilia di D. Antonio Mongitore palermitano, canonico della metropolitana chiesa di Palermo, consultore, e qualificatore del Tribunale del Sant'Ufficio offerito alla Real Maestà di Carlo III infante di Spagna, re di Sicilia, e Napoli, Duca di Parma, e Piacenza, etc. da Pietro Bentivegna, Palermo, Per il Felicella, 1735*)

son varias las veces, que se ha visto en èl la rebelion contra los Soberanos' [where some bad influence seems to predominate, inciting its natives, because several revolts against the Monarchs have taken place there].¹²⁰

The Neapolitan nobility was said to have played a crucial role in these insurrections.¹²¹ Philip V vividly remembered the so-called *rivolta di Macchia*, an aristocratic plot against him in 1701 by some of the most notorious members of the Neapolitan nobility.¹²² During Austrian rule (1707–1734), they continued to

120 Belando, *Historia Civil: Parte Segunda y Tercera*, p. 16.

121 For the complex relationship between the Neapolitan nobility and the Spanish crown along the seventeenth century, see Angelantonio Spagnoletti, *Principi italiani e Spagna nell'età barocca* (Milan, 1996).

122 On this topic, see Alonso de Olivares y Baldés, *Ferías hemorroidales, y oziosidades de un hipocondrio, alterado los dias 23. y 24. de Septiembre, del año 1701: Dedicadas a su medico el doliente: Retirado en una Alqueria de las Colinas a Chaya à digerir, y expeler, sin prejuicio del proximo, sus flatos* ([Naples, 1701]) and Belando 'Capitulo IV. Refierese la maliciosa conjura que se descubrió en el Reyno de Napoles, y la conclusion de la Campaña del año de 1701 en la Lombardia', in *Historia Civil: Parte Segunda y Tercera*, pp. 16–22. See also Giuseppe Galasso, *Napoli spagnola dopo Masaniello: Politica, cultura, società* (Naples, 1972), pp. 583–608.

promote social conflict by demanding a more powerful political position.¹²³ Santiesteban, whose father had been a viceroy of both Sicily and Naples, was quite aware of the excessive ambitions of the grand nobility in the first years of Don Carlos's reign.¹²⁴

After 1734, the noblemen revived their political ambitions, although they rapidly became aware that their role in the political arena would be limited by Santiesteban's plans for the court.¹²⁵ However, it was not advisable to ignore them too pointedly, as they might begin to conspire against the recently created Bourbon monarchy. It was therefore decided to employ the posts of *gentilhombre de Cámara* as a strategy to bring the local nobility into Don Carlos's political orbit, as Philip V had already done in Spain at the beginning of his own reign.

Santiesteban was once more in charge of supervising the plan and, as Acton asserted, 'while he organised the royal Household in accordance with Spanish etiquette, he had the good sense to conciliate the Neapolitan nobility by distributing coveted posts among them'.¹²⁶ In fact, he reorganised the young King's *Cámara* in July 1734, in spite of the fact that the Duke of Tursi was its administrator as *sumiller de corps*. He resolved to divide the office of *gentilhombre* into two distinct parts and increase the number of local nobles appointed, as he declared in a note dated 20 July 1734 to the Spanish secretary of State Patiño.¹²⁷ He had already sent a list of the candidates to Madrid, emphasising the socio-political goal of this court strategy. Accordingly, he advised against the election of the Marquis of Pescara 'por averse considerado maduramente y con informes de personas de juicio y celosas del R.l servicio, el que no conviene incluirle en este numero, asi por lo declarado que a sido por el Partido del Emperador como por lo mal que pareciera aqui' [having given the matter careful thought, alongside reports by people in the royal service who are of good judgement and conscientious, it is not suitable to include him in this list, due to his support of the Emperor's party and also because of the negative impression it would cause here].¹²⁸

123 See Giuseppe Ricuperati, 'Napoli e i Vicerè Austriaci, 1707-1734' in *Storia di Napoli. Vol. VII* (Naples, 1972), pp. 347-457 and Raffaele Ajello's works: 'Gli "afrancesados" a Napoli nella prima metà del Settecento: Idee e progetti di sviluppo' in Mario Di Pinto (ed.), *I borbone di Napoli e I borbone di Spagna: Un bilancio storiografico, Vol. I* (Naples, 1985), pp. 115-192; *Il problema storico del Mezzogiorno: L'anomalia socioistituzionale napoletana dal Cinquecento al Settecento* (Naples, 1994); 'La parabola settecentesca' and, finally, *Una società anomala: Il programma e la sconfitta della nobiltà napoletana in due memoriali cinquecenteschi* (Naples, 1996). In addition, see the memoirs of Tiberio Carafa (1669-1742), Prince of Chiusano and one of the leaders of the aristocratic party under Austrian ruler: *Memorie* (Naples, 2005 [originally 1734]).

124 See AGS, Estado, legajo 5806, folio 25: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Nápoles 3 April 1736.

125 For the aristocrat aspirations in 1734, see Ajello, 'La vita politica napoletana', p. 525 and Chiosi, 'Il Regno dal 1734 al 1799', p. 377.

126 Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples*, p. 31.

127 AGS, Estado, legajo 7720: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Naples 20 July 1734.

128 AGS, Estado, legajo 7719: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Naples 8 June 1734. The list is included in this dispatch.

As at the Spanish court, the *gentilshombres* were therefore separated into two groups.¹²⁹ On the one hand, the *gentilshombres de Cámara con ejercicio* [on active duty] would assist the *sumiller de corps* with all the formal tasks inside the King's *Cámara*, according to the demands of etiquette. On the other, the *gentilshombres de Cámara con entrada* [with rights of access] would hold the post only nominally, without any practical task to perform in the daily life of the court, as Santiesteban clearly explained to Madrid.¹³⁰ On 20 July 1734, the list of the twelve Neapolitan noblemen to be awarded with the post of *gentilhombre de Cámara con ejercicio* was published. This included the Princes of Torella, Colubrano and Santobuono, the Dukes of Maddaloni, Andria, Gravina and Sora, the Princes of Stigliano and Montemiletto, the Dukes of Laurenzana and Castropignano and, finally, the Prince of Rocella.¹³¹ All were members of the most highly respected Neapolitan families.¹³²

The decision not to create a separate court in Sicily meant that there was much promotion of Sicilian noblemen in 1735 during the conquest of this kingdom. Despite the fact that Santiesteban recognised that the number of *gentilshombres* was increasing rapidly, he insisted on this plan in order to 'ganar con ellas a la principal nobleza del reyno' [win through them the favour of the kingdom's nobility].¹³³ In according with this plan, several noblemen were nominated on 29 April¹³⁴ and on 3 June 1735, the date of Don Carlos's coronation at Palermo.¹³⁵

129 As perfectly explained by Saint-Simon, *Cuadro de la corte*, pp. 236–8.

130 AGS, Estado, legajo 7720: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Naples 20 July 1734.

131 See *Avviso di Napoli*, Num. 31 (20 Luglio 1734) in BNN, Sez. Nap., Periodici 120; Senatore, *Giornale storico*, p. 153 and Schipa, *Il regno de Napoli. Vol. I*, pp. 228–9. All of them had previously been proposed by Santiesteban to the Spanish monarch, who endorsed the whole list.

132 A full list of all Neapolitan noble titles just before Don Carlos's arriving in Naples can be seen in Francesco Ricciardo (ed.), *Discorso storico o sia notiziario dell'anno MDCCXXXIV con l'Almanacco del Commendatore di Urania, o sia Segretario delle Zifre Celesti* (Napoli, 1734), pp. 85–107.

133 AGS, Estado, legajo 7732: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Palermo 4 June 1735.

134 They were the Prince Corsini, the Prince of Francavilla and the Duke of Laurenzana, all of them members of the Council of State, and the Sicilian Princes of Calvaruso, Alcontres, Scaletta and Spadafora. See Senatore, *Giornale storico*, pp. 319–20 and Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone. Vol. II: 1735–1739*, p. 61, note 56.

135 AGS, Estado, legajo 7732: The Count of Santiesteban to José Patiño, Palermo 4 June 1735. The Sicilian noblemen who became *Gentilshombres de Cámara con Ejercicio* were the Princes of Butera and Camporreale, the Count of Ventimiglia, the Marquis of Francofonte, the Duque of Montalbano, the Prince of Iacci, the Count of San Marco, the Princes of Villafranca, Spaccaforno and Belmonte, the Duke d'Angiò, the Prince of Raffadale, the Marquis of Regiovanni, the Prince of Monteleone, the Duque of Villareale and the Prince of Benetico; and those who became *Gentilshombres de Cámara con Entrada* were the Marquis of Gerace, the Prince of Palagonia, the Duke of San Giovanni, the Princes of Cattolica, Poggioreale and Montevago, the Count of Prade and the Princes of Valguarnera, Pantelleria, Aragona, Monteforte, the Trabia, Cassaro and Belvedere (see also Pietro La Placa, *La reggia in trionfo per l'acclamazione e coronazione della sacra real maestà di Carlo infante di Spagna, re di Sicilia, Napoli e Gerusalemme ordinata dall'eccellentissimo senato parmelitano, data in luce in tempo dell'ecc. Senato (composto di altri membri) e descritta da Don Pietro La Placa cancelliere della città* (Palermo, 1736), pp. 164–5). In order to put the number of Neapolitan *gentilshombres* on a level with the Sicilian ones, new Neapolitan appointments were also made at this time: the Marquis of Fuscaldò, the Count of Buccino and the Counts of Savignano and Sinopoli as *de entrada*; and the Duke of Caybano, the Princes of Cassano, Centola and Scano and the Dukes of Bovino and Fragnito as *de ejercicio*.

Given the success of this brilliant method of social integration, many members of the Neapolitan and Sicilian nobility began to apply for the position of *gentil-hombre* at the new court of the Two Sicilies after 1735, as demonstrated by administrative records.¹³⁶

After 1735, Naples was rapidly transformed into a fascinating capital with a lavish court and a lively political society, as the renowned French traveller the *Président de Brosses* confirmed in 1739.¹³⁷ Spanish, French, Parmesan, Florentine, Roman and, finally, Neapolitan and Sicilian noblemen joined the service of the new Bourbon monarchy. Santiesteban was undisputedly the man who was behind this political metamorphosis and who guaranteed the social acceptance of the young sovereign, as the Venetian ambassador and the civil servant Tanucci asserted several times in their respective correspondence.¹³⁸ He succeeded not only in imposing his personal opinion on the government but also in controlling the entire social life of the court; all its ceremonial events were his sole creation.¹³⁹ The young King's entire life was under his surveillance, as his reports to Madrid seem to confirm.¹⁴⁰ He or his agents were always with the King, selecting his companions and supervising his conversations. As the British Consul Edward Allen reported to the Duke of Newcastle in July 1734, 'the Count of St Stefano never leaves the Prince one moment, and seems as if his whole thought and attention was engaged and occupied about his person. None ever speaks to him unless the said Prime Minister be present, and the Prince hardly ever answers anything, and never but in general terms.'¹⁴¹

Defending court etiquette and social hierarchy, Santiesteban was thereby the first well-bred nobleman to control the government during Charles of Bourbon's reign. He was also the last. No member of the traditional nobility was ever allowed to control Don Carlos's life again after things changed dramatically in 1738. At that point, the new Bourbon dynasty was already settled in Naples after four years of intense political activity and the engagement that year of the King to Princess Maria Amalia of Saxony. With the new Neapolitan Queen's presence and the creation of her own Household, many noblemen were persuaded that new opportunities to achieve political influence inside the court would be available.¹⁴² In the summer of 1738 all the Spanish envoys to Naples joined the local

136 See, for instance, ASNA, Segreteria di Stato di Casa Reale, fasci 1100–1102.

137 See Charles de Brosses, *Le président de Brosses en Italie: Lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739 et 1740 par Charles de Brosses. Tome I* (Paris, 1858), pp. 361–3.

138 See Infelise (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane* and Bernardo Tanucci, *Epistolario. Vol. 1*.

139 AHN, Estado, legajo 4823¹: The Duke of Atri to the Spanish Queen Elizabeth Farnese, Naples 14 July 1738.

140 As indicated, in AGS, Estado, Reino de las Dos Sicilias.

141 Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples*, p. 34. Some comments on Don Carlos's esteem for Santiesteban can be found *ad indicem* in Ascione, *Carlo di Borbone, Vol. II: 1735–1739*.

142 Infelise (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane*, pp. 514 and 522.

noblemen and the chief court officials in plotting against the Castilian *Mayordomo*.¹⁴³ Cardinal Trojano Acquaviva (the Spanish cardinal protector in Rome, who was in Naples at that time), the Duke of Berwick (who had recently been nominated Spanish ambassador), the Count of Fuenclara (the Spanish ambassador in Vienna who arrived from Dresden with the new Queen) and the Duke of Atri (ambassador extraordinary of the Spanish monarchs), lobbied insistently for the removal of Santiesteban and for a real political change.¹⁴⁴

Elizabeth Farnese decided not to support Santiesteban's demands. When he did not obtain all the posts he had wanted for himself and his family in the Neapolitan Queen's Household,¹⁴⁵ he realised that his time was past and, consequently, returned to Spain in August 1738.¹⁴⁶ The grand nobility bade farewell to the former favourite and expected that they would now control the monarchy's destiny.¹⁴⁷

However, the nobility did not take into consideration the Spanish Queen's plans. The political culture identified with court values was now under suspicion. She resolved to change direction and no longer support the court nobility's aspirations. As she had done in Spain more than two decades before, Elizabeth Farnese saw civil servants and secretaries of State not only as members of the government but also as the figures who would organise political society. José Joaquín de Montealegre, the Neapolitan prime minister and a member of her own web of political clientelism, was promoted after Santiesteban's defeat and from August 1738 onwards began to guide the monarchy in a new direction.¹⁴⁸ The kingdom of the Two Sicilies entered a period when court culture would be completely reshaped and its importance greatly reduced.

Pablo Vázquez-Gestal

Dr Pablo Vázquez-Gestal, whose speciality is the culture of the Spanish and Neapolitan courts, has recently been appointed Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow at the European University Institute, Florence. His book, *El Espacio del Poder: La corte en la historiografía modernista española y europea*, was published in 2005, and he is currently working on a study of the way the monarchy functioned during Charles of Bourbon's reign in Naples (1734–1759).

143 See Tanucci, *Epistolario*. Vol. 1: 1723–1746, especially p. 301.

144 See, for instance, Berwick's complaints against Santiesteban due to his haughty attitude in AGS, Estado, legajo 5894, folio 16: The Duke of Berwick to Sebastián de la Cuadra, Naples 7 January 1738.

145 AGS, Estado, legajo 5816, folio 182.

146 AGS, Estado, legajo 5817, folios 4, 61, 62, 65, 70 and 71.

147 See again Infelise (ed.), *Corrispondenze diplomatiche veneziane* and Bernardo Tanucci, *Epistolario*, Vol. 1.

148 See Mocenigo, 'Relazione'. In the absence of a proper biography of Montealegre, Ajello's works still remain the best account on his leadership from 1738 to 1746.