



Introduction

The Iberian Queen's Households: Dynamics, Social Strategies, and Royal Power

Diana Pelaz Flores



Introduction:

The Iberian Queen's Households: Dynamics, Social Strategies, and Royal Power¹

Diana Pelaz Flores

UNIVERSITY OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Abstract: The study of royal households has undergone a remarkable development in recent years. Thanks to the appearance of works on their composition, family strategies, or specific people at the service of queens and *infantas*, it is possible to raise new analytical questions, or to focus on lesser-known stages, such as the queens' youth. The company and service of officers, ladies-in-waiting, maidens, or servants contributed to the creation of a "circle of security" for the *infanta* and later for the queen, but also of a political instrument, and even of a cultural agent if necessary. The examination of the royal environment of Iberian queens and *infantas* allows us to understand exchanges in court codes and etiquette, or the demonstration of royal authority over a bordering territory. The comparative study of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula reflects the ability of royal women when it comes to introducing changes in the composition of the household, as well as being key to understanding the motivations of the personnel at their service. Thus, the objectives of this monographic issue are vindication of queenly authority from the first demonstrations of her political capacity, and contextualization of the changes and decisions orchestrated within the queen's household through some previously unknown cases in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern eras.

Key Words: Queen's Households; Iberia; Queenship; Social Networks; Comparative Studies.

¹ This work was supported by "Espacios femeninos cortesanos: Ámbitos curiales, relaciones territoriales y prácticas políticas" [PI: Diana Pelaz Flores, PGC2018-099205-A-C22], a research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, the Agencia Estatal de Investigación, and the European Regional Development Fund.

Closely related to studies of the courtly space, the queen's household provides a platform to study the queen beyond her immediate person. In particular, studying the household stimulates a better understanding of the functioning and synergies of the court environment in a broader sense.² The household's constitution was ordered by the king after their marriage, a step taken automatically.³ The queen's household existed in Iberia since at least the beginning of the thirteenth century, although there is evidence of officers at the queen's service since the beginning of the High Middle Ages.⁴ The queens' and *infantas*' households have recently attracted increasing attention from scholars who specialise in the study of the monarchy.⁵ The household was a complex organism, made up of a very large group of people,

² Theresa Earenfight, "Introduction: Personal Relations, Political Agency, and Economic Clout in Medieval and early Modern Royal and Elite Households," in *Royal and Elite Households in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: More than Just a Castle*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 1–2.

³ Manuela Santos Silva, "The Portuguese Household of an English Queen," in *Royal and Elite Households in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: More than Just a Castle*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 273.

⁴ Jaime Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla y León en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000), 52–56. The earliest example for the Kingdom of Castile is the household of Leonor Plantagenet. Collaboration between the queen and the servants is described in José Manuel Cerda Costabal and Félix Martínez Llorente, "Un documento inédito y desconocido de la cancillería de la reina Leonor Plantagenet," *En la España Medieval* 42 (2019), 64–70.

⁵ Rita Costa Gomes, *A corte dos reis de Portugal no Final da Idade Média* (Lisboa: Livraria, 1995); María Narbona Cárceles, *La corte de Carlos III el Noble, rey de Navarra: espacio doméstico y escenario del poder, 1376-1415* (Barañáin: EUNSA, 2006); José Martínez Millán and Maria Paula Marçal Lourenço, eds., *Las Relaciones Discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las Casas de las Reinas (siglos XV-XIX)*, 2 vols., (Madrid: Polifemo, 2009); Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, *Burocracia y cancillería en la corte de Juan II de Castilla (1406-1454): estudio institucional y prosopográfico* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2012); Alexandra Beauchamp, ed., *Les entourage princiérs à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013); Diana Pelaz Flores, *La Casa de la reina en la Corona de Castilla (1418-1496)* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2017); Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, ed., *La corona y sus servidores: individualidades, instituciones y estructuras curiales en los reinos hispánicos durante la Baja Edad Media (ca. 1340-1516)* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2021); Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez and José Manuel Nieto Soria, eds., *Casa y corte: ámbitos de poder en los reinos hispánicos durante la Baja Edad Media (1230-1516)* (Madrid: La Ergástula, 2019); Caroline Zum Kolk and Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, eds., *Femmes à la cour de France: Charges et fonctions (XVe-XIXe siècle)* (Paris: Septentrion, 2022). There are also important contributions in relation to women of the high aristocracy, such as Louise J. Wilkinson, ed. & trans., *The Household Roll of Eleanor de Montfort, Countess of Leicester and Pembroke, 1265: British Library, Additional MS 8877* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press–Pipe Roll Society, 2020).

which must be understood as a living entity in itself. In general terms, the compositional scheme of the queen's household was homogeneous both inside and outside the Iberian Peninsula. Beyond the nominal changes in trades, the households were concentrated around a limited set of departments in which their trades gradually diversified as the medieval period progressed. The existence of a common evolutionary framework across households reflects a process of growth and diversification of court trades, parallel to that experienced by the government institutions of the kingdom. The expansion of state structures and bureaucratic development had a positive impact on court growth.⁶

Service to the royal family allowed a system of social advancement and was therefore beneficial to noble and oligarchic families, as well as various religious groups. In the queen's household, this process was parallel to that experienced by the king's household. In fact, it is possible to distinguish a similar structure between both, thanks to the grouping of servants in the same departments. Each of them is made up of a varied set of categories of courtly service, according to their functions in relation to the king or queen. The departments are distributed around the palace service (the organisation of the household, the pantry, or the table service), the treasury (revenue of economic resources), the chancery, the chapel, and the chamber. However, in the former, the so-called "chamber system" fostered an extraordinary growth of this department within the courtly sphere from the thirteenth century onwards.⁷ The level of elaboration and specialisation oscillated from one kingdom to another. For example, the female entourage in the Crown of Aragon presents a complexity unmatched in the Iberian Peninsula. The composition of the household was subject to the incorporation of new trades, many of which were "imported" from the place of origin of the new queen. The "cobijeras," a type of maid of Muslim origin, present in the female entourages of the Crown of Castile, appeared in the Late Middle Ages in Navarre and Aragon: in the first case, due to the influence of Leonor of Trastámara (r. 1375-1416); in the second, by the hand of María

⁶ Jean-Philippe Genet, *La genèse de l'État moderne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003).

⁷ Rita Costa Gomes, "Para uma história do silêncio: o mundo do cortesão entre a Idade Média," in *A Arte da Cultura: Homenagem a Yvette Centeno*, eds. Alda Correia et al. (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2010), 490-491.

of Castile (r. 1416-1458).⁸ Similarly, “*continós*,” and “*continás*,” servants entrusted with special missions requested by the queen, joined the Court of Castile from Portugal after the celebration of the wedding of Juana of Portugal (r. 1455-1474) with Enrique IV of Castile.⁹

There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. On the one hand, the transference of trades and roles between kingdoms may have responded to the monarch's will to create a domestic (and familiar) environment typical of the bride's court of origin. On the other hand, it may have been in response to the ability of the paternal court to impose its particularities, perhaps also to influence the receiving court's etiquette and customs.¹⁰ In any case, it demonstrates the household's permeability as a living organism, subject to change, with the desire to stand out and create its own history and identity based on the people who lead it. In addition to the existence of a common language regarding courtly service, modern scholars have paid attention to the details that distinguish the royal houses. The monarchy managed to pay for an increasingly complex and numerous courtly network, which achieved a great visual impact on nobility, ambassadors, or other visitors.¹¹

One of the objectives of this monographic issue is to expand our knowledge of the exchanges produced between queenly servants. The formation of the *infantas'* households, before becoming queens, is very revealing in this regard. This is the first step in the creation of the *infanta's* identity, still particularly surrounded by the

⁸ Diana Pelaz Flores, “¿Minorías itinerantes? Su presencia, procedencia y relevancia en el servicio de la Casa de la reina en la Baja Edad Media peninsular,” in *Minorías ebooks. Caminos, espacios y territorios de las minorías en la España medieval y moderna (siglos XV-XVIII)*, ed. Rica Amram and Antonio Cortijo Ocaña (Santa Barbara: University of California, 2021), 47-48.

⁹ Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, *Casa, corte y gobierno de la reina de Castilla. Estudios sobre oficiales y servidores de Isabel y Juana de Portugal (1447-1496)* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2022).

¹⁰ David Nogales Rincón, “Sobre la cultura ‘borgoñona’ y su recepción en Castilla en el siglo XV,” *La Casa de Borgoña. La Casa del rey de España*, ed. José Eloy Hortal Muñoz and Félix Labrador Arroyo (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 23-36.

¹¹ This is related to the concept of fashion and the need to constantly adapt to new times, as well as being able to be at the forefront and exercise cultural leadership. Juan Vicente García Mansilla, “La moda no es capricho. Mensajes y funciones del vestido en la Edad Media,” *Vínculos de Historia* 6 (2017), 71-88; Juan Vicente García Mansilla, “El lujo: ¿Motor del crecimiento o camino hacia la ruina? Percepciones y actitudes ante el gasto suntuario en la Historia,” *Ars & Renovatio* 7 (2019), 6-26.

maternal circle. From the configuration of the “Cot House,”¹² her courtly environment underwent changes, both to adapt to the needs of her age and status, and to reflect the political and cultural context. Just as the queen evolved, so did her household. However, the household did not function as a homogenous entity that developed in a single direction, but rather as an entity in which many interests converged.

The household consisted of people with personal and/or familial motivations and interests that, in turn, were juxtaposed against the interests of other household members. These people could be from different backgrounds and various social conditions. All these circumstances contributed to the creation of a singular identity for each female household. Officials from the queen's home court assisted her at the beginning of her reign. However, her marriage guaranteed the immediate introduction of men and women belonging to the secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy, as well as the urban oligarchy. Consequently, the household was a combination of disparate factors and wills at the service of a specific woman, but also at the service of her institutional status. This variable set of people experienced changes as time went by due to multiple circumstances: the need to replace an officer due to his death; mobility between the royal households (among other possible factors); promotion because of their interest in the religious policy of the kingdom, or their expert training; or even their temporary exchange with other royal houses. Although the household did not function as a body with a common goal shared by all its members, the personal realities of its personnel contributed to endow the queen's household of meaning and character, as well as contributing to its evolution.¹³

The Iberian Peninsula offers an added singularity. During the Late Middle Ages, royal marriages constantly intertwined the diverse Iberian royal families. Four Christian monarchies and the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada coexisted in a relatively small territorial space. Their fluid matrimonial contacts ran parallel to a deep knowledge of the neighbouring kingdoms and a close contact—harmonious or not—

¹² Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, *Catalina de Lancaster, reina regente de Castilla (1372-1418)* (Hondarribia: Nerea, 2002), 20–21.

¹³ Norbert Elias, *La sociedad cortesana* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).

in their diplomacy and international politics.¹⁴ For example, the border towns were always a matter of dispute that justified military confrontations, but also necessitated matrimonial alliances. The exchanges of princesses and *infantas* fuelled cultural connections, in addition to the strengthening of political ties. This was a process to which the staff of the royal houses contributed decisively.¹⁵

As the political experience of the *infanta* accumulated, so did the personnel at her service. The queen and her household built an intimate bond, and studying it helps to understand the role played by each. Through the people integrated into the household, the queen's authority could be undermined. For instance, periods of great political influence of a royal favourite (*privado*) over the king could be especially complex for the queen's authority. Thanks to his close friendship with the king, the royal favourite managed to reach an exceptional position at court and in the government of the kingdom. The king gave him responsibilities in making decisions that he deems appropriate and, consequently, he becomes an alter ego of the queen. The king does not act on her advice, but according to the dictates of his *privado*. The *privados* always waited to interfere in the queen's courtly framework to obtain control over her.¹⁶ Consequently, the queen's household could be a site of coercion and submission, not only of freedom and trust.

Knowledge of the people in the queen's service is essential to examine her reign and the networks built both at court and in the kingdom. The female entourages are particularly interesting because they evidence the creation of strategies, alliances, and mutual care between women. It was one of the clearest distinctions between the queen's and the king's household. The queen needed the presence of secular and ecclesiastical women, who were also influential and

¹⁴ Lledó Ruiz Domingo, "Efectividad política y actividad diplomática: los embajadores al servicio de la reina María de Luna en el tránsito del siglo XIV al XV," in *Diplomacia y desarrollo del estado en la Corona de Aragón (siglos XIV-XVI)*, ed. Concepción Villanueva Morte (Gijón: Trea, 2020), 165–185.

¹⁵ Alexandra Beauchamp and María Narbona Cárceles, "Des bureaucraties au service des cours. Administrateurs et gestion des affaires curiales dans la Péninsule ibérique aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge. Présentation," *e-Spania: Revue électronique d'études hispaniques médiévales* 20 (2015): <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.24196>

¹⁶ Pelaz Flores, *La Casa de la reina*, 29–31.

powerful people.¹⁷ Their scarcity contrasts with their representation of the whole of the queenly service. Ladies and maidens were part of the imagery that configures the “large Queen’s body.” Despite their symbolic relevance, their individual identities were not clearly specified in, for instance, the chronicles or other historiographic texts. While other male officials are alluded to individually, and their trades indicated, the female entourage was included only to represent the queen’s company, i.e., the queen’s absence of solitude. The constant accompaniment of virtuous women dispelled any suspicion of risking her honour. Through non-specific but recurring allusions to the queen’s entourage, the transmission of that idea was reinforced. Her body and virtue had to be protected, hence the non-specific allusion to her ladies in trips, royal entrances, ceremonies or urban celebrations. As Alfonso X pointed out in the *Espéculo*, the protection of the queen’s body necessitated the introduction into the court of ladies-in-waiting and maidens of irreproachable virtue.¹⁸ Other texts promoted by Alfonso X, such as the *Partidas*, assimilated the queen’s household to the queen’s chamber exclusively.¹⁹ This mutual protection and exemplary mechanism guaranteed the safeguarding of female honour and the legitimacy of her offspring, becoming a literary *topos*.²⁰

¹⁷ Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, “Redes femeninas en la corte castellana: María de Portugal (1313-1357),” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 45, no. 2 (2017), 165–189.

¹⁸ Alfonso X, *El Espéculo. Leyes de Alfonso X*, ed. Gonzalo Martínez Díez and José Manuel Martínez Asencio (Ávila: Fundación Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, 1985), Libro II, Título XV, 60. The queen makes possible the incorporation of the group of ladies-in-waiting and of maidens to the courtly circuit, and enables their participation in the ins and outs of power. Ángela Muñoz Fernández, “La casa delle regine. Uno spazio político nella Castiglia del Quattrocento,” *Genesis: Rivista della Società Italiana delle Storie* 1, no. 2 (2002), 71–95. The prolonged absence of a woman occupying the status of the queen consort left the noblewomen in an uncomfortable place, given the impossibility of incorporating them into any department of the King’s Household and their reluctance to leave the court, as would have happened during the first years of the reign of Fernão I and the first two years of the government of João I of Portugal: Silva, “The Portuguese Household of an English Queen,” 277.

¹⁹ Alfonso X, *Las Partidas* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1807), vol. II, Segunda Partida, Título XIV, Ley III, 129.

²⁰ The search for courtly normality and domestic harmony also requires the presence of the queen consort, who justifies the incorporation of noblewomen of the receiving court. This is reflected in the provisions of Juan I of Castile after agreeing to his second marriage with Beatriz of Portugal. In addition to summoning the main lay and ecclesiastical of the kingdom, they were ordered to travel to the court of ladies of Castile to accompany the queen: “Otro sí envió por muchas nobles Dueñas de Castilla, que viniesen á Badajoz, para acompañar á la Reyna Doña Beatriz su muger que avía de ser.” Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica*

The non-specific mentions of this female presence in the chronicles invite us to reflect on their meaning. The female entourage—in its entirety or, when required, in a small representation—was its own entity, protecting the queen's honour. The female collective was valued, but its members were not individualised, as was frequently the case for men in the service of royal houses. Nevertheless, the closeness to the queen and the demonstration of that link should be understood as a sign of the importance acquired by certain women in the courtly network. Both chronicles and legal texts—such as the *Partidas* in the Crown of Castile—share the image of the queen's entourage as a symbolic space that surrounds the queen, inside and outside the palace.²¹ Consequently, the queen's body is presented as a plural feminine construction, which requires a precise apparatus in order to represent her.²² The genre makes it an “antagonistic body” to that of the king, but also to that of the authors of the chronicles.²³ While men are often singled out individually, women are cited as a group.²⁴ The genre supposes a key difference with respect to

de Juan I. *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, ed. Eugenio de Llaguno e Amirola (Madrid: Imprenta de Antonio de Sancha, 1780), año 1382, cap. V, 163.

²¹ Zita E. Rohr, “Rocking the Cradle and Ruling the World: Queens' Households in Late Medieval and Early Modern Aragon and France,” in *Royal and Elite Households in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: More than Just a Castle*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 310.

²² The entourage of Queen Juana Manuel de Villena, in the festivities that took place in Burgos on the occasion of the coronation in 1367 of Enrique II of Castile, Count of Trastámara, provides an example of the feminine contribution to the dignity of the ceremonial of the monarchy. Diana Pelaz Flores, “La reina Juana Manuel de Villena (1339-1381). La legitimación de la Casa Trastámara,” in *En la Europa medieval. Mujeres con historia, mujeres de leyenda. Siglos XIII-XVI*, ed. Manuel García-Fernández (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2019), 175–176. The protection of the queen's body is also indicated in the Aragonese setting, during the War of the Union. King Pedro IV and his wife, Queen Maria of Navarre, were confined on their way to Valencia, leaving them practically isolated from the staff of their households. According to the autobiographical chronicle of Pedro IV, just two ladies-in-waiting and four knights accompanied Queen Maria: “Luego, sin detenernos ni una hora siquiera, cabalgámos en un palafrén, y acompañado solamente de tres cabalgadores y con la reina nuestra esposa, que tampoco iba acompañada mas que de dos damas y cuatro cabalgadores, nos fuimos á Torres tomando el camino de Teruel.” King Pere IV, *Crónica del Rey d'Aragó en Pere IV lo Ceremoniós ó del Punyalet*, ed. Joseph Coroleu (Barcelona: Imprenta “La Renaixensa”, 1885), 279.

²³ There is no extant record of any female chronicler in the Iberian courts, unlike Christine de Pizan in the reign of Charles V of France. Christine de Pizan, *La vita e buoni costumi del Saggio Re Carlo V*, ed. V. Rossini (Roma: Carocci, 2010).

²⁴ Didier Lett, *Hommes et femmes au Moyen Âge: Histoire du genre XIIe-XVe siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2013), 5–22.

the chronicler and the precepts of the patriarchal system, and in relation to the government of the kingdom. The chronicles of the reigns of Fernando I of Portugal, Pedro IV of Aragon, or the Trastámara kings (in which the weight of ritual and, consequently, the characterisation of the queen through her household, was substantially less important) manifest this. This same idea was also present in later narratives, as can be seen in the Castilian or Portuguese spheres of the fifteenth century.

Beyond the rhetorical or symbolic capacity of the entourage, and of the queen's household as a whole, its maintenance required significant financial²⁵ and logistical efforts.²⁶ The need to situate a very large group of people in the courtly context should lead us to ask how they were paid, and from where these resources were obtained.²⁷ But it is not that simple. The queen's household, like that of the *infantas*, was often made up of people who also served in the king's household, or in the court, in the widest sense.²⁸ At the same time, they were well-connected in the urban setting, and with other bureaucratic functions relevant to political life. This leads us to wonder which time these people actually devoted to the service of the queen, and whether this was done during shorter periods of time between other obligations. The "*système de tour*," detected by Monique Somme for the household of the Duchess of Burgundy Isabel of Portugal (r. 1397-1471), could explain this

²⁵ Lledó Ruiz Domingo, "Crédito, deuda y finanzas de la Casa de la reina: los capítulos entre la reina Violante de Bar y su nuevo tesorero, Berenguer de Cortilles," *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos* 45 (2018): 353–376.

²⁶ "Queens Resources: Examining the Resources & Revenues of Royal Women in Premodern Europe" is an initiative of great scientific value to answer all these questions. See: <https://www.queensresources.org/>

²⁷ Lledó Ruiz Domingo, *El Trésor de la Reina. Recursos i gestió económica de les reines consorts a la Corona d'Aragó (segles XIV-XV)* (Barcelona: CSIC, 2022); Michele Seah and Katia Wright, "The Medieval English Queen as Landholder: Some Reflections on Sources and Methodology," in *Women and Economic Power in Premodern Royal Courts*, ed. Cathleen Sarti (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2020), 9–34.

²⁸ For instance, Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo, Bishop of Oviedo, was Senior Chancellor and confessor to Queen Juana Manuel de Villena and he carried out diplomatic tasks on behalf of the Kings of Castile, as his direct participation in the signing of the Peace of Almazán (1375) indicates. José Antonio Chelle Ortega, "Conflicto y comunicación en la Castilla bajomedieval: cartas de Juan I al obispo de Oviedo ruante la guerra con Portugal (1384-1385)," in *Comunicación y conflicto en la cultura política peninsular (siglos XIII al XV)*, eds. José Manuel Nieto Soria and Óscar Villarroel González (Madrid: Sílex, 2018), 493.

question, but the lack of serial data for Castile or Portugal prevents us from asserting it categorically.²⁹

Itinerancy and mobility are also key issues that we ponder in this issue: as assets of the medieval system of government, but also as determining factors in the provision of royal households. As Rita Costa Gomes pointed out, a distinction must be made between the court "*en andata*" (when it moved from one place to another), and the court "*en estada*" (when it settles with a more stable character in a specific place).³⁰ The Castilian case is illustrative in this respect. As in Portugal, in the queen's chamber objects "on the way" ("*de camino*") were key liturgical objects, essential for the maintenance of religious worship, regardless of where the queen was. In the Castilian documentation we could find the name of the "very little chapel" belongings ("*capilla pequenuela*").³¹ Similarly, officials and servants of the queen's household could be part of the essential staff, while many others were secondaries, due to the expenses and difficulties in lodging. Undoubtedly, this is another of the questions that will have to be dealt with in the future. In the Iberian Peninsula, kings and queens not only lodged in palaces, but also in monasteries and aristocratic residences. In the smaller town halls, the settlers had to find accommodation for the people who made up the court, which entailed numerous difficulties, such as conflicts with the neighbours, and the availability and conditions of the houses in which they were located. The study of settlement systems will be key to establishing the distance between their personnel and the body of the king and queen. It will allow us to know which departments, such as the chancellery,³² had greater autonomy and contributed to unfolding the queenly

²⁹ Monique Somme, *Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne. Une femme de pouvoir au XV^e siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1988), 252.

³⁰ Gomes, *A Corte dos reis de Portugal*, 255 and 285.

³¹ Archivo del Real Monasterio de Guadalupe, Leg. 3, carp. R-VI-4, doc. 15-e. Santa María la Real de Nieva. [1445], march, 18. The name of "very little chapel" appears uniquely to date in the list of belongings of Queen Maria of Aragon. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know which objects were in this type of chapel throughout the time, or what changes it would experience from one reign to another.

³² Diana Pelaz Flores and Lledó Ruiz Domingo, "El ruego del rey, el amparo del reino: La mediación en la Cancillería de la reina Blanca de Anjou," in *Rogar al rey, suplicar a la reina: El gobierno por la gracia en la Corona de Aragón, siglos XIII-XV*, ed. Guillermo Tomás Faci y Carlos Laliena Corbera (Zaragoza: Pressas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2021), 143-166.

authority, and which people continued to maintain a close relationship with the queen after leaving the court.

Reflecting on the design and distribution of the infrastructures that sheltered the queen and her closest circle will help to appreciate court etiquette and its singularities. It will also be possible to assess how the dimensions of the royal houses and the court as a whole conditioned the architecture of the great palatine complexes, some of which emerged at the end of the Middle Ages and others developed in the Modern Age.³³ The Royal Palaces of Barcelona (Palau Mayor and Palau Menor),³⁴ or of Olite in Navarra,³⁵ describe a reality similar to that of Portugal, where the palatial infrastructure of Lisbon and Sintra allowed the distribution of the royal family and royal officials.³⁶

The Iberian Queen's Households: Dynamics, Social Strategies, and Royal Power issue does not intend to exhaust the study possibilities of the queen's household, something beyond its scope. Instead, this issue offers new insights into a research topic that will continue to advance in the coming years. The studies presented by Paula Del Val Vales, Stefano Cingolani, Lledó Ruiz Domingo, Martina del Popolo, Concepción Villanueva Morte, Óscar Jiménez, and myself aim to draw attention to the enormous possibilities of study of these Households, some of them very unknown. In addition to these aforementioned articles, a study by Bárbara Boloix Gallardo, which delves into the knowledge of the space of feminine power in the Nasrid court of Granada, will be published in a subsequent issue of the *Royal Studies Journal*. Boloix's work initiates an important dialogue between the Christian and Muslim Iberian courts that, without a doubt, should continue in the future.

³³ The French court had fortresses such as Vincennes, Amboise, Blois, or the Louvre palace complex to house the court. In all of them there is evidence of the existence of specific rooms for the queen's household, with kitchens and rooms for the bathroom, as well as other chambers. Murielle Gaude-Ferragu, *La reine au Moyen Âge. Le pouvoir au féminin XIV^e-XV^e siècle* (Paris: Tallandier, 2013), 197–198.

³⁴ Francesca Español Bertrán and Ramón Banent, *Els esceanris del rei: art i monarquia a la Corona d'Aragó* (Manresa: Fundació Caixa Manresa, 2001).

³⁵ Javier Martínez de Aguirre, *Arte y monarquía en Navarra, 1328-1425* (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1987).

³⁶ Rita Costa Gomes, "Separation and distinction: How the Court experienced the city," in *Acoger, abastecer y financiar la corte: las relaciones entre las Cortes Ibéricas y las sociedades urbanas a finales de la Edad Media*, ed. Alexandra Beauchamp, Antoni Furió, Germán Gamero, and María Narbona Cárceles (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2019), 53–64.

From the consignment of offices at the service of the queen in the thirteenth century to the first households organised around the daughters of Isabella the Catholic, three centuries of exchanges and transformations passed. The courtly service specialised, and reached unquestionable levels of sophistication, marked by the creation of the identities of the kingdoms and, at the same time, by a desire to demonstrate their level of refinement and power. Consequently, the households of the Iberian queens become an active setting for this dialogue, marked by their own mobility between the borders of the kingdoms.