

Preface

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At the root of this volume stands the PALATIUM colloquium ‘The Interior as an Embodiment of Power. The Image of the Prince and its Spatial Setting, 1400-1700’, organised in Bamberg from 4 to 6 October, 2013.

Founded in 2010 and financed for five years by the European Science Foundation, the PALATIUM research networking programme intended to create a forum for research on the late medieval and early modern European court residence or palace (palatium) in a multi- and trans-disciplinary perspective (www.courtresidences.eu). The world of the courts 1400–1700 constituted a network of truly European scale and international character. In the field of court studies PALATIUM’s focus on the residence stands out as a main defining characteristic, distinguishing it clearly from similar initiatives in Europe. Fourteen research institutions from eleven European countries supported the programme financially. Without the participation of our peers and without the ready support of local institutions, however, no PALATIUM event would have reached its audience or indeed have taken place. We sincerely thank Professor Stephan Hoppe (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München) and Professor Stefan Breitling (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg) for their unceasing efforts in making the Bamberg workshop a success and in developing the presentations into book chapters. In addition, special thanks are due, as always, to the members of the PALATIUM Steering Committee who helped to select contributors and to the PALATIUM coordinator Pieter Martens, who oversaw the organization of the event and who serves as co-editor to the present series.

The original aim of the Bamberg colloquium was to explore functional aspects of the court residence in conjunction with the formal layout and design of the interior, seen as an important medium of princely self-expression. In assembling papers and presenters, the convenors attempted, as always within the PALATIUM programme, to realize a broadly comparative perspective with case-studies ranging across early modern Europe. To quote from the call for papers, presenters were asked to embed into inter-regional and broader historical narratives diverse phenomena such as: the ceremonial approach of visitors; the calculated artistic effects on their route; ‘special effects’ of a spatial nature such as staircases and enfilades; and, of course, furnishings and furniture. Together, the ten selected chapters in this volume constitute an important stepping stone towards the synthesis the convenors called for. They combine the narrow focus and the micro-level of the dollhouse with the grandeur and monumental scale of the ballroom and long gallery, and in doing so prove yet again that the whole of this multidisciplinary mosaic is greater than the bare sum of its parts.

In publishing these papers under a creative commons licence in print and online we hope that they will reach a broad audience interested in this important and fragile part of our shared European heritage and will raise the level of awareness to its hidden meanings.