

13 APRIL 2026

START: 6 PM

IHB, AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

GEORG-COCH-PLATZ 2

1010 VIENNA

3RD FLOOR, ROOM 1+2

Jean-Marc Nattier, Marie-Anne de Bourbon-Condé, Mademoiselle de Clermont
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INVITATION TO A LECTURE

UNATTACHED ROYAL WOMEN

AT THE COURT OF VERSAILLES: THE ROLES PLAYED IN ASPECTS OF CEREMONY, ETIQUETTE AND DYNASTIC HEALTH OF THE BOURBONS BETWEEN LOUIS XIV AND LOUIS XVI.

As historians of European court cultures begin to look more closely at the extended members of ruling dynasties, it is useful to examine some of the most often overlooked members in any royal family: a monarch's unmarried sisters or cousins. In this talk, Jonathan Spangler will present a survey of single royal women at the French court, from 'La Grande Mademoiselle' in the reign of Louis XIV to 'Madame Elisabeth' in the reign of Louis XVI, but also including Louis XV's 'spinster' cousins Mlle de Clermont and Mlle de Charolais, who both played a rather significant, if mostly forgotten, role in the social and ceremonial aspects of Versailles in the middle of the eighteenth century. Other 'unattached' women in this period include various dowagers: the famous Liselotte von der Pfalz as a widow, a confusion of three widowed princesses of Conti, and a 'rejected' dowager queen of Spain (Louise-Elisabeth d'Orléans), whose exalted rank presented a complicated etiquette issue at court. For comparison, this talk will also examine some of the unmarried women of the Habsburg court in Vienna in this period: Charles VI's sisters Maria Elisabeth and Maria Magdalena, and Francis Stephen's sister, Anne-Charlotte of Lorraine.

Dr Jonathan Spangler is a specialist in the courts and ruling dynasties of Early Modern Europe, and teaches history at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. His research focus is on the courts of France and Lorraine and the changing dynamic of 'dynastic extensions' (brothers, sisters, cousins) in both the Bourbon and Lorraine families. Recent publications include a monograph about France's second sons (*Monsieur*, 2021), and articles about Liselotte, the restored ducal court of Lorraine, and the uses of published genealogies by some of France's princely houses. His latest book, *The Bourbons: The Sons of Saint-Louis*, will appear later in 2026.