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The Cover

Mariana of Austria (cover) became Queen of Spain in 1649 when she married King Philip IV. The painting has never been reproduced before, and little is known of its history or even the name of the artist.

Dr Frederick J. Cummings, Director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, has examined the painting and has indicated it is probably a product of the Austrian school. The style and costume suggest a formal court painting, dated about 1670 when Mariana was in her early 40s. One reason why the artist's name does not appear on the canvas is that there is a definite indication that the painting was originally larger and the portion containing the signature was removed. There is a possibility, as with many portraits of royalty, that this is a copy of another painting, although at this writing there is nothing to indicate it is anything other than a very fine original, painted directly from the subject. Mariana was also portrayed in several superb paintings by Velázquez, which now appear in some of the leading art museums of the world.

Mariana's facial features show the typical Habsburg characteristics, with the full lower lip and prognathous jaw. To preserve the "purity" of the Habsburg line, marriages between uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, and cousins were commonplace. As a consequence, genetic complexities developed and the famous "Habsburg jaw" and other noticeable traits were passed down to succeeding generations. Mariana was betrothed to her cousin, the Spanish Prince Baltazar Carlos, who died soon after of smallpox. His father, King Philip IV, was Mariana's uncle. Since his first wife had died several years earlier and there was no male heir to the throne, it was decided that the aging Philip should marry his niece in order to strengthen the political situation for Spain, and with the intention of producing a male heir. Producing a male heir proved to be no easy task. Of Mariana's nine children, six were born dead or died shortly after birth, another died at age 4, and a daughter, Margarita Teresa, became Empress of Austria after marrying her uncle, Leopold I. Finally Carlos II was born, and even though he was severely retarded, as the only surviving male heir to the Spanish throne, he became King in 1669.—GERALD P. HODGE

Mariana of Austria, c 1670. Oil on canvas. 57×71 cm. Courtesy, Prof and Mrs S. K. Gangwere, Ann Arbor, Mich.

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