

***THERE IS NO FRENDSHIP AMONG PRINCES BUT FOR THEIR OWNE
INTERESTS.
THE SPANISH FACTION AT JAMES I'S COURT, 1603-1625***

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In an anonymous pamphlet published in the 1640s and entitled *The anatomie of the French and Spanish faction*, the author stated that during James I's reign (1603-1625) «although hee was a most wise and knowing Prince, the Spanish faction found a greater power to act their designes.»¹ The writer continued by asserting that such a faction was so prevalent at court, that it induced King James to condescend to agreements and conditions that were detrimental not only to him but also to his progeny, to peace, and to the Protestant Religion.²

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century a common and broad hostility towards Spain was one of the few issues on which the English Parliament and political nation frequently agreed.³ Nevertheless, two Tudor monarchs had married a Spaniard, Henry VIII in 1509 and Mary Tudor in 1554. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was believed that a Spanish marriage was also decided for James I's successor. There was no precedent, however, for a Protestant heir to the throne to marry a Spanish Catholic as «there was never this case before, all in those times being papists.»⁴

Historians of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, among them Samuel R. Gardiner and J.R. Tanner, stressed the opposition between Crown and Parliament/Court and Country, and argued for a necessary

* I would like to thank Prof. Kenneth Fincham and Dr Glyn Redworth for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this contribution. I am very grateful for Dr Ruben Gonzalez Cuerva's invitation to participate in a panel on "Las facciones españolas: ¿quintacolumna o partido político en las cortes del Antiguo Régimen?" sponsored by IULCE. The panel was held at the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies's Conference in Modena in June 2014 where a shorter version of this paper was first presented. Abbreviations: AGS (Archivo General de Simancas); BL (British Library); BNE (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid); BPR (Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Madrid); E (Estado); FSL (Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC); ODNB (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1901, 63 vols.); SP (State Papers); TNA (The National Archives, Kew).

¹ [Anon.], *The anatomie of the French and Spanish faction* (London: 1644), 5.

² *Ibidem*, 6.

³ On the hostility towards the Church of Rome as one of the key factors holding the monarchy together, see Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church 1603-1642* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) and Robin Clifton, "Fear of Popery," in *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. Conrad Russell (London: Macmillan, 1973), 144-67. See also Peter Marshall, "The Other Black Legend: the Henrician Reformation and the Spanish People," *English Historical Review* 116 (2001): 31- 49. According to Marshall the Counter-Reformation in Spain and the Henrician Reformation in England represented «a prelude to decades, if not centuries, of mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.»

⁴ Sir Robert Phelps, 3 December 1621, "The Notes by Sir Thomas Barrington of the House of Commons in 1621," in *Commons Debates 1621*, ed. Wallace Notestein, Helen Relf, and Hartly Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), III, 493.

connection between the parliamentary clashes of the 1610s and 1620s and the outbreak of the Civil Wars.⁵ It is certainly not up to me, as many historians have already demonstrated, to reaffirm the futility of making teleological history that seeks in the past the causes of events that are known to have occurred in the future. From the 1970s, revisionist historiography was instead more interested in the presence of factions within the Parliament rather than the alleged manichean opposition between the King and his subjects, and demonstrated that the same MPs could change sides from one Parliament (or even from one session) to the other.⁶ This was very much the case when one looks in detail at those who could be defined as being part of the Spanish faction at during James's reign.

The traditional historiography on the Spanish faction and the complex association of the English Catholics with Spain during James's reign originates from Albert J. Loomie's seminal work on the subject. Loomie is still unsurpassed in his attention to detail and the significance of the sources he has collected. He analysed the figure of the Spanish ambassador Gondomar and his influence on King James and the hispanophiles at his court. By doing so, Loomie has shown the extent to which the loyalty of some members of the Spanish faction shifted in time and reflected the heterogeneous relationship between James and his House of Commons.⁷

As argued by other contributions in this volume with regard to various early modern European courts, the term 'Spanish faction' was used with a pejorative meaning at the English court as well.⁸ The most common accusations charged to the Spanish and 'Romish' faction were that they had tried to blow up the King and Parliament in 1605, and had *pretended* friendship with the King by signing a peace treaty with the only purpose of waging «a war [...] with the Protestants of Germany, to their utter overthrow».⁹ After the Treaty of London was signed between England and Spain in 1604, the Spanish faction at the English court had reasons to feel emboldened. King James, immediately following the peace, attempted to make the agreement binding by negotiating a dynastic marriage with the Spanish Habsburgs, initially for his son Henry, and then, after Henry's untimely death in 1612, for his son Charles. This was the one recurring *leitmotiv* in relations between England and Spain during James's reign: the protracted and eventually unsuccessful marriage negotiations for a union between King James's heir

⁵ For example, Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of England from the accession of James I to the outbreak of the civil war 1603-1642* (London: Longmans, Green, 1895).

⁶ See Kevin Sharpe, ed., *Faction and Parliament. Essays on Early Stuart History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); J.F. Merritt, ed., *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621-1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁷ See Albert J. Loomie, ed., *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics, 1613-1624* (London: The Catholic Record Society, 1978).

⁸ In the Oxford English dictionary, the term 'faction' is defined as «a party in the state or in any community or association», and it conveys «the imputation of selfish or mischievous ends or turbulent or unscrupulous methods».

⁹ [Anon.], *To Xeiphos ton martyron, or, A brief narration of the mysteries of state carried on by the Spanish faction in England* (The Hague: 1651), 1.

and an Infanta of Spain.¹⁰ The very lack of a dynastic union between England and Spain merely exacerbated the growing tensions between the King and the political nation, leading to the decline of the Spanish faction at court and the outbreak of war between England and Spain in 1625. This essay aims to assess the extent to which the position of this faction shifted and its influence decreased from the beginning to the end of James I's reign.

Some of the most important names within the Spanish faction at James's court were people such as Queen Anne, Thomas Howard, Earl of Northampton, Robert Ker, Duke of Somerset, the Earl and Countess of Arundel, the Earl and Countess of Suffolk, members of the Villiers family, Sir John Digby, Endymion Porter, Thomas Lake, and to a certain extent his successor as Secretary of State George Calvert.¹¹ As the Spanish sympathisers, whose names were known as supporters of an alliance with the Catholic monarchy and criticised widely in contemporary pamphlets, have already been studied in quite some detail with regard to the English court, I avoid focusing on individual figures, and instead, I address specific periods in the reign of the first Stuart King of England when one can see clear alterations in the position of the Spanish faction. First, I will look at the beginning of James's rule, the period 1603-1605; second, I will discuss the absence of the Spanish ambassador Count of Gondomar from England in 1618-20; and lastly, I will consider the significant changes between the parliaments of 1621 and 1624 at the end of James's reign. The purpose of this contribution is to prove that the Spanish faction was more complex and heterogeneous than it is often recognised and it is misleading to believe that James was a weak ruler subservient to the hispanophiles at his court.

I. Peace and Marriage

Following his accession to the English throne, King James signed a peace with Philip III in 1604 that ended the long years of war between Queen Elizabeth and Philip II. A contemporary commentator strongly opposed to any alliance with the Spanish, Sir Walter Raleigh, considered the peace treaty with Spain as the greatest affair that any King of England ever had to deal with, because of its many and crucial consequences. Significantly, Raleigh stressed how the King would have been observed and judged not only by the whole of the nation but by «the eyes of all the world» in his choice to ally with the Catholic Monarchy.¹² The judgement of the Protestant nation on the Anglo-Spanish peace was not clement as they maintained that the agreement generated many disadvantages for England.¹³ Moreover, the Spaniards could not be trusted in their intentions since they had lied on previous occasions, for

¹⁰ See Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta. The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹¹ Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics*, XVII-XVIII.

¹² Walter Raleigh, "A Discourse Touching a War with Spain, and of the Protecting of the Netherlands," in *The Works of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. William Oldys and Thomas Birch (Oxford: The University Press, 1829), VIII, 314.

¹³ For example «no English were permitted to trade into the West Indies, and if any did adventure so to do, he was to be hanged and tortured with no mercy», [Anon.], *The anatomie*, 6-7.

example by covering the preparations for the Armada in 1588 with peace overtures.¹⁴

In 1605, shortly after the signing of the peace, a group of Catholics were charged with the Gunpowder plot. The Protestants could not believe that «such a desperate [...] a designe, upon King, Peers, Kingdome and people» had not resulted in «the execution of some Law, for the utter extirpation of all Papists, and their Iesuiticall adherents.» The author's reason for the absence in England of strong anti-Catholic laws was precisely «the interest with forraign Princes and the King of Spain».¹⁵ The political nation indeed created a link between the Spanish monarchy and the Catholics of England as the King of Spain was accused of wanting to create a «fifth monarchy to the universall disquiet and disturbance, not only of his bordering Neighbour, but of all the Christian Regions through Europe.»¹⁶ Any agreement with Spain was thus seen as giving leverage to the Pope in his efforts to restore Catholicism in England. James, however, tried to prevent such a connection being made mostly because of his essential dislike of persecution and war and his strong diplomatic awareness, as Wormald above all has shown.¹⁷ In fact, in a speech to Parliament following the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, the King stated that:

*For although it cannot be denied, That it was the onely blinde superstition of their errors in Religion, that led them to this desperate device; yet doth it not follow, That all professing that Romish religion were guiltie of the same.*¹⁸

II. Gondomar and the Spanish Faction

At the beginning of 1615, the Dominican Friar Diego de la Fuente reporting in Madrid concerning the situation in London focused on the strength and influence of the anti-Spanish faction. He argued that his efforts to prove to the English King that an alliance between Spain and England was more necessary and crucial for England than it was for Spain, had been in vain.¹⁹ Discussion concerning the pros and cons of the alliance was widespread and articulated through public debate as well as the written word, in both England and in Spain. In *Considerations vpon the Treaty of Marriage between England and Spain*, the anonymous author of the pamphlet pragmatically considers

¹⁴ See Robert Cross, "To Counterbalance the World. England, Spain, and Peace in the early 17th century" (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 2012), 86.

¹⁵ [Anon.], *The anatomie*, 6.

¹⁶ BL, Add. Ms. 34219: "A Discourse against the Peace with Spaine presented to the King in the first yeare of his Raigne over England," fos 1-10v.

¹⁷ Jenny Wormald, "James I," *ODNB*.

¹⁸ James I, "A Speach in the Parliament Hovse [9 November 1605]," in *King James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152.

¹⁹ Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics*, XVI.

that «the essential poynts seem to be the advantages, and disadvantages and whether both weighed in equall balance».²⁰

By 1616-17, however, both the English political nation and foreign observers were convinced that the Spanish match was nearing a successful conclusion, given that John Digby had been sent to Madrid with the purpose of agreeing on the conditions and concluding the negotiations. In a letter addressed to William Trumbull, John Beaulieu stated that the Spanish match was being strongly pursued by «the favorers of the same [i.e. the Spanish Faction], who are the most powerfull in credit and number that the opponents [who] are much discomforted in the hope of their endeavors.»²¹ And by 1618, before leaving England, Gondomar was optimistic concerning the possibility of an Anglo-Spanish match and convinced of the importance of such an alliance with England, which was to be cultivated according to Charles V's maxim «guerra con toda la tierra y paz con Inglaterra.»²² Indeed, at the time of his departure from England, Gondomar presented jewels as a gift to many of the people considered to be part of the Spanish faction: Buckingham, Hamilton, Lennox, Calvert, Endymion Porter, and the Countess of Arundel.²³

By the end of 1616 and early 1617, Gondomar had already asked the Spanish King for permission to return to Madrid due to his bad health.²⁴ However, Philip III had often ordered his departure from England to be postponed as the Spanish ambassador was a key intermediary in the marriage negotiations with England.²⁵ In fact, still at the end of 1617, although he was assigned the title he had requested, that of Count of Gondomar,²⁶ he was still not given permission to go back to Spain; he was only able to return in 1618. In his place, a special agent, Juan Sánchez de Ulloa, was at James's court for two years. The Spanish ambassador's absence from London between July 1618 and March 1620, however, did threaten the Spanish cause and the strength of the Spanish faction at James's court; as Ruiz Fernández has noted in his doctoral thesis, in this period the money sent from Spain to England - to be used for pensions and gifts from the Spanish envoy to members of the English court - was drastically reduced.²⁷ Shortly after Gondomar's arrival, Ulloa wrote to Madrid stating that there was urgent need for Gondomar to return to England in his place, since he was the only one who knew England well enough and the best placed to manage «these important negotiations» while maintaining the King of England's friendship.²⁸

²⁰ [Anon.], *Considerations vpon the Treaty of Marriage between England and Spain* (London: 1617). See also, for example, BNE, Ms. 10794; AGS, E, leg. 2518.

²¹ Jean Beaulieu to William Trumbull, 31 January 1616-17, in *Papers of William Trumbull the Elder September 1616-December 1618*, ed. G. Dyfnallt Owen and Sonia P. Anderson (London: Historical Manuscript Commission, 1995), 103-4.

²² Count of Gondomar to Juan de Ciriza, Madrid, 28 March 1619, quot. in Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics*, XVII.

²³ BPR, 2108, fol. 68, quot. in Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics*, XV.

²⁴ AGS, E, leg. 2514, n. 69, 84.

²⁵ AGS, E, leg. 2514, n. 84: «importa tanto alli su asistencia para la platica de casamiento».

²⁶ BPR, II/2107, docs. 15-25, 27, 37, 38, 45, 46; II/2124, doc. 212; II/2134, doc. 126.

²⁷ Óscar Ruiz Fernández, "Las relaciones hispano-inglesas entre 1603 y 1625. Diplomacia, comercio, y guerra naval" (University of Valladolid, Unpublished PhD thesis), 184.

²⁸ AGS, E, Leg. 845, n. 131.

Upon Gondomar's return to London in 1620, the ambassador stated that only King James and John Digby were left as supporters of a Spanish alliance as the Puritan anti-Spanish faction, strongly opposing the Catholic cause, was growing in numbers and power.²⁹

III. War and Marriage

As Conrad Russell has argued, two elements dominated the political scene between 1621 and 1624: war and marriage.³⁰ In a letter addressed to Buckingham, written in the 1620s, Thomas Alured begged the Duke to reconsider the Spanish Match as no marriage between England and Spain had ever led to anything good in the previous 120 years. Moreover, according to the author, nothing useful was ever accomplished by trusting foreign enemies to solve the Crown's problems and needs.³¹ On 13 November 1621 Samuel Phillips, Minister of St. Mary, Staines, and Lecturer at St Paul's was examined for having preached against marriages between Protestants and Catholics. Not only did he defend his doctrine stating that in his sermon he proved it to be against the word of God, but also he did not deny that his preaching was not only referring to common people, but instead, «it was not lawful for any Protestant Prince to marry wth any of ye Romain Religion».³² In *Vox Populi*, a well-known satirical pamphlet set in Spain and written by Thomas Scott in 1620, the author made the Spanish ambassador Gondomar say that the greatest achievement in his role as envoy at the court of King James had been to worsen relations between the King and his House of Commons, to the point that the sovereign would not want to ever convene a Parliament again, even he were to be in need. According to Scott's Gondomar, because it was very unlikely that another parliamentary assembly would ever be summoned, the only possible way for the King of England to repay his debts was that of a Spanish marriage for his son, Prince Charles.³³

In 1619, however, Frederick V of the Palatinate, husband of James's daughter Elizabeth and therefore son-in-law of the King of England, accepted the Bohemian crown, despite James having warned him against it.³⁴ By 1620, Emperor Ferdinand's allies had invaded not only Bohemia but also Frederick's territories in the Palatinate. King James found himself in 1620-21 reluctantly forced to convene Parliament even though ambassador Gondomar was strongly against it because he feared that enemies of Spain would gather in the assembly. The reason behind the King convening the Parliament was that

²⁹ Ruiz Fernández, *Las relaciones hispano-inglesas*, 184.

³⁰ Conrad Russell, "What was New in the 1620s?," in *King James VI and His English Parliaments. The Trevelyan Lectures Delivered at the University of Cambridge 1995*, ed. Richard Cust and Andrew Thrush (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 177-88 (180).

³¹ [Thomas Alured], *The Coppie of a Letter written to the Duke of Buckingham concerning the match with Spaine* (London: 1642), 7-8.

³² TNA, SP, 14/123, fol. 158. In the State Papers there are many examples of examinations against those who touch upon matters of state, especially from the pulpit. See also Jeanne Shami, *John Donne and Conformity in Crisis in the Late Jacobean Pulpit* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), 42-45.

³³ Thomas Scott, *Vox Populi* (London: 1620).

³⁴ TNA, SP, 94/24, fos 46-52.

he needed to be able, in the eyes of his subjects and those of other European monarchs, to finance a war. Despite not wanting to intervene in what it was soon becoming a war of religion, James also realised he could not remain a spectator. To make himself credible as a mediator, and persuade the other European powers that he was going to intervene in favour of his son-in-law if his possessions were not restored, he needed the promise of financial support from his Parliament. Therefore, in November 1620 James issued a summons for Parliament to meet the following January in order to obtain subsidies for a potential war against the Habsburgs, if diplomatic means, which he still preferred and hoped to employ, were to fail. On 6 January 1622 King James issued a proclamation to dissolve that very same Parliament. The reasons for the dissolution, as stated by the King's Proclamation, were that he had needed subsidies to solve the difficult situation of Christianity in Europe and restore his children, Frederick V and Elizabeth, to what was rightfully theirs.³⁵ Some MPs, however, had instead taken the liberty not only to discuss issues that were a matter of royal prerogative but also «to speake with less respect of foreign princes our allies than were fit for any subject to do of any anointed King.»³⁶

Instances of discussions within the political nation involving the role of the Parliament combined with notions of foreign policy and royal marriages were by no means isolated cases and indeed they intensified strongly in the early 1620s, despite James's proclamations in December 1620 and again in July 1621. The King wrote against «excesse of Lavish and Licentious speech of matters of State» and protested that

*Wee are given to understand, that notwithstanding the strictnesse of Our commandement, the inordinate libertie of unreverent speech, touching matters of high nature, unfit for vulgar discourse.*³⁷

As heir to the throne, Charles's marriage was of fundamental interest and concern for the entire commonwealth.³⁸ These proclamations were therefore meant to send to Parliament and the political nation a clear message about what they were allowed to discuss and what was instead «matter above their reach and calling». Indeed, both the Commons in Parliament and the wide political nation believed that royal marriage was an issue on which they could express their opinions through the written word. Some MPs were convinced that the King needed advice on certain matters to prevent him from being misleadingly influenced by the Spanish faction at court. For example, Thomas Wentworth stated in that «for the marriage, wee are the members of

³⁵ Joseph Robson Tanner, *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 289-295; James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations. Vol. I. Royal Proclamations of King James I 1603-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 527-34. On «this time of miserable distraction throughout Christendom» as defined by James in his proclamation, see also FSL, ms.V.b.207 "Mirabilia Huius Anni".

³⁶ Tanner, *Constitutional Documents*, 293.

³⁷ Larkin and Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 495-96 and 519-20 (520).

³⁸ Peter Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and the Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *The Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 805-25 (815).

the bodie, the kinge the head; wee must take care to keepe the head from hurt.»³⁹ James, however, thought it necessary to control the «lavish and licentious speech», as he considered the marriage of his heir to fall within the *arcana imperii* and therefore his royal prerogative. In the early 1620s, when the political nation seemed to be more opposed than ever to the Spanish marriage, King James and the Hispanophiles at his court continued to pursue a policy in favour of an alliance with the Habsburgs. Those who spoke ill of the King of Spain, or of his ambassadors, were severely punished.⁴⁰

Another important item in James's list of priorities was religion. The King was eager to demonstrate to his subjects that he would neither abandon his own nor his kingdom's religion for the sake of a union with Spain nor he would allow English Catholics or the Spanish faction at court to grow powerful in the hope for a marriage with the Catholic power. Despite King James's assurance that he would only agree to a marriage for the Prince if the union promoted the glory of God and the welfare of the kingdom, the MPs and the political nation remained doubtful, as they felt that there was «no Security at Home, whiles the Papists, half Subjects, increase so much in Number and Confidence.»⁴¹ Indeed, in the words of Edward Gyles in one of the most animated foreign policy debates in November 1621:

*Our King the Chief of true Religion, the King of Spayne of the other. Either of these will do his best for their Religion. How can these two great Kings agree in Peace, and yet have Wars?*⁴²

A crucial question, which admitted no easy solution, was placed in front of the Parliament: how could King James continue to pursue a Spanish marriage at a time when the Habsburgs were imperilling Frederick V and Elizabeth's territories?⁴³ As part of a broader petition that asked James to write to the King of Spain not to help the Emperor either directly or indirectly because if he did, the King of England would declare war against Spain, there was one more issue raised by the House in the second session that deserves attention. James was petitioned by the Commons for his son and heir to be «timely married to one of our own religion».⁴⁴ On hearing news of such a petition, the King was enraged: not only was the marriage of his heir exclusively a matter of royal prerogative, but also it was not in the power of the MPs to speak concerning against whom the King were to declare war. Among the *arcana imperii* not to be touched upon, James mentioned in his answer to the Commons, were the Spanish match, the conduct of the war, the King of Spain or any other foreign Prince. Concerning the war, they had been called to grant supplies, not to usurp his powers, and regarding the Match with

³⁹ «The Belasyse Diary», December 3, 1621, in *Commons Debates in 1621*, V, 229.

⁴⁰ TNA, SP, 94/24, fol. 160.

⁴¹ Sir Robert Phelps, «House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 26 November 1621,» *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), 644-647.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ Tim Harris, *Rebellion. Britain's First Stuart Kings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 187.

⁴⁴ *Commons Debates in 1621*, IV, 440 and III, 457.

Spain, «yt was so far proceded in on his part, that yf those conditions and covenantes he hath propounded may be accepted and kept, there is no more speach to be used in yt» and it was therefore purposeless that «they should busie themselves and entermeddle so much in this mariage».⁴⁵ At the end of 1621, before James dissolved the Parliament, in reporting to Philip IV in Madrid on the adjourning of the assembly before Christmas, Gondomar said that despite the fact that the King of England had assured the MPs that Parliament would meet again on 8 February 1622, he was convinced that he «would never summon the Parliament again in his life, and especially with such people as those ones»,⁴⁶ which is to say strongly opposed to any alliance with Spain.

In 1623, Charles and Buckingham went to Madrid and stayed there for several months without reaching any conclusions with the marriage negotiations. In England, the House of Commons complained that the Spaniards abroad and the Spanish faction at home was growing insolent and «[they] call us the Protestant faction». After the failure of the mission that was supposed to bring about Charles's marriage to the Infanta and their return from Madrid in October 1623, the Prince and the Duke of Buckingham pushed for the convening of Parliament as soon as possible.⁴⁷ The Parliament met in February 1624 and James, in his opening speech, invited the two Houses to advise him on the issue of breaking off the marriage negotiations. Yet, although the King had given Parliament permission to address his son's match, the Commons, mindful of the rough debate of 1621, were reluctant to discuss the matter. The Lords instead followed promptly the appeal of the King and declared themselves in favour of a Spanish war.⁴⁸ I believe that although the topics discussed were almost the same, there was a noticeable difference between 1621 and 1624: the Lords had not addressed at all the question of foreign policy in 1621 yet in 1624 they were the first to do so. When the Commons began debating relations with Spain, Charles and Buckingham pushed to obtain the subsidies to support a war that in their opinion had already been decided «by your entreaties, your engagements».⁴⁹ What made the Parliament of 1624 different from the previous one was the internal conflict between members of the royal family: Charles and indeed his father's favourite, Buckingham, were hoping for a rapid declaration of war against Spain, while James was seeking an assurance that he would receive the necessary financial support were such war to be declared.

In fact, when the Prince and the Duke had returned to London without bringing with them the Infanta, they had decided it was time to reverse

⁴⁵ Chamberlain to Carleton, 15 December 1621, TNA, SP, 14/124, fos. 92-93.

⁴⁶ Count of Gondomar to Philip IV, 2 Jan. 1622, AGS, E, leg. 2558, n. 6.: «este Rey no le juntará mas en su vida, a los menos con tal gente como la que havía». For an excellent discussion concerning «tal gente» whom Gondomar often defined as «Puritanos», see Glyn Redworth, *Gondomar and Parliaments* (forthcoming, 2016), 4-7.

⁴⁷ Wormald, «James I», *ODNB*.

⁴⁸ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 163.

⁴⁹ Quoted in G. L. Harriss, «Medieval Doctrines in the Debates on Supply, 1610-1629», in *Faction and Parliament. Essays on Early Stuart History*, ed. Kevin Sharpe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 73-103 (95).

James's policy and look for a war instead of a marriage with the Spanish Habsburgs. This was easier said than done as the Spanish match, which continued to be viewed negatively by the political nation, was instead still supported by the majority of the King's privy councillors. From the end of 1623 till 1625 Charles and Buckingham worked tirelessly to create a 'patriot' coalition that would work for a common cause against the Spanish faction: the support of the Dutch and the restoration of Elizabeth and Frederick. In 1621 James had asked for supply, but in 1624 it was the Prince who needed the support of Parliament to finance a war against Spain. The difference was that in 1624, as in 1621, King James was still hoping to solve the intricate situation of central Europe without bloodshed, while Prince Charles was, from the time of his return from Madrid, trying to radically change the course of foreign policy by declaring a war against the Habsburgs.⁵⁰

In constructing this 'patriot' and anti-Spanish coalition at court and in Parliament, Charles and Buckingham eliminated those who were pro-Spanish and therefore against declaring a war on the Catholic Monarchy. For example, the Earl of Bristol, the English ambassador in Madrid, was accused of giving false hope to King James concerning the development of the proceedings for the match with Spain. Bristol was therefore recalled from Madrid on 22 January 1624. Upon his return to England, Buckingham made sure to keep him as far away from the King as possible to prevent the Earl from convincing the sovereign that he had acted in the best English interest and always followed his orders.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Prince and the Duke encouraged the Commons to impeach the pro-Spanish Lord Treasurer Lionel Cranfield on charges of bribery when he expressed his opinion that a war would undermine all his efforts to reform the royal finances.⁵² The same fate (i.e. impeachment) would befall the Earl of Bristol two years later. In 1625, the patriot anti-Spanish coalition included, but was by no means limited to, Essex, Southampton, Oxford, Pembroke, Warwick, Coke, Eliot, Phelips, and Sandys; what was uniting them was shared anti-popish and Hispanophobic sentiments.⁵³

According to the House of Commons in 1621 and 1624, King James's position had been inconsistent since, though the King had repeatedly emphasised the benefits of peace, he also admitted not only that «warres upon iust quarrels are lawful» but also that a «iust warre is more tollerable then a dishonourable and dis-advantageous peace».⁵⁴ Therefore, some of the MPs encouraged a Spanish war not only out of fear that English Catholics could act as fifth column for a potential foreign invasion, but also because they

⁵⁰ See Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution. English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 78.

⁵¹ Samuel R. Gardiner, ed., "The Earl of Bristol Defence of his Negotiations in Spain," in *The Camden Miscellany*, VI (London: Camden Society, 1871), V-VI.

⁵² On Lionel Cranfield and his relationship with Buckingham in the 1620s, see John Cramsie, *Kingship and Crown. Finance under James VI and I, 1603-1625* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 195-202.

⁵³ Harris, *Rebellion*, 220-22.

⁵⁴ James I, "Basilikon Doron," in Sommerville, *King James VI*, 32-33 and idem, "A Speach [1603]," 134.

considered unacceptable that it appeared as if «King James feares Spaine».⁵⁵ From an analysis of the pamphlets and books printed between 1623 and 1624, including numerous demonstrations of joy for Charles's return from Madrid without the Infanta, one can see that after 1623 political debate in the public sphere had strongly turned anti-Spanish. This, however, did not mean that the majority of the population agreed with Sir Edward Coke, according to whom «England never prospered so well as when at war with Spain».⁵⁶ Certainly there was a part of the political nation which considered Spain as the natural enemy of England as the elected Protestant nation. To these subjects James's diplomatic choices were deeply unpopular while Charles's new-found animosity against Spain aroused admiration. Yet it appears from the Commons' debates and from a careful reading of widespread pamphlets such as *Vox Coeli* or popular plays such as Middleton's *A Game at Chesse* that the attitude towards an anti-Spanish policy, while always entailing a breakdown of the marriage negotiations, rarely meant an unconditional support for a war against Spain.⁵⁷ Charles and Buckingham were victims of this contradiction as, in a sense, was James in 1621. As James had failed that year to convince the nation to pursue a Spanish match for Charles at a time when the majority was pushing for a war, so Charles and Buckingham failed in 1624 to pursue a war against Spain when the majority simply asked for the breaking of the marriage treaties.

Conclusion

At the end of the 1970s Russell pointed out that circumstances in Madrid, Brussels, and elsewhere in Europe «did more to determine the course of English foreign policy than events on the floor of either House of Parliament.»⁵⁸ Indeed, the events happening on the Continent in the period following 1618 were the motivating factors behind James's summoning of the Parliament in 1621, and certainly events in the Palatinate exacerbated the anti-Catholicism of the lower house and, in general, of the English political nation. Consequently, the Spanish faction found itself in an increasingly unpopular position. The idea, however, of a rigid dichotomy between on the one hand King James and the Spanish faction opposed to a conflict against the Catholic Monarchy, and on the other hand the Commons in favour of war is oversimplistic and misleading. In the 1624 House of Commons there was not a cohesive majority in favour of war. Not only many MPs were against military expenditure but also there were pragmatic considerations that bound England to Spain on the European trade chessboard.

Before Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham's trip to Madrid, it was not yet decided that the enemy had to be Spain. With France powerful again after the end of the competition between Maria de Medici and Louis XIII, and with the growing economic power of the Dutch it was not at all

⁵⁵ John Reynolds, *Vox Coeli* (London: 1624), 34 and Russell, *Parliaments*, 82. See BPR, II/2108, docs. 98, 102 and 106.

⁵⁶ Russell, *Parliaments*, 80.

⁵⁷ See Queen Anne [of Denmark] character in Reynolds, *Vox Coeli*, 41: «I could neuer accept the match of Spaine [...], well fore-seeing they would proue fatall and ruinous to England.»

⁵⁸ Russell, *Parliaments*, 1.

obvious that English interest was in alliance with one or the other. Following Charles's failed trip to Spain, however, those MPs against the Spanish Match and the Spanish faction and in favour of war strengthened their position. In fact, upon the return of the Prince and the Duke in October 1623, James's foreign policy was questioned by the overwhelming majority of the political nation.

King James was a king whose greatest pride was to have kept his country at peace during most of his reign, and his attitude towards war against Spain or any other country was always a pragmatic one: the King was not afraid of Spain as he was accused of by the MPs when he continued pursuing the Spanish Match, but was rather concerned about war itself. During the sermon for the King's funeral Bishop John Williams said that «like King Salomon, he died in peace».⁵⁹ His decision not to intervene against Spain at the end of the 1610s and up to his death in 1625 and to continue instead pursuing a diplomatic route was consistent with the policy he had followed up to that point. James therefore was guided by his own priorities, at times shared and at times conflicting with the Spanish (and the Spanish faction's) agenda. Not recognising this means to equivocate James's actions as subservient to Spanish interest embodied by the Spanish ambassador in London or by the Spanish faction at court, even when such actions were instead simply following his long-term policy. The English King was playing a mediating role between the pro- and the anti-Spanish faction both within his court and Parliament at home, and within Europe by positioning himself as equidistant from continental conflicts.⁶⁰

At James I's court, factions were concentrated in the two major directions that were guiding the King's foreign policy: either a pro-Habsburg or a pan-Protestant policy. From the beginning of his reign, the King of England was regarded as favouring a pro-Spanish foreign policy and accused of wanting to pursue an alliance with the Habsburgs and being indifferent to the needs of European Protestantism. James, however, unlike the factions in his own court, did not consider the two positions as self-excluding and instead hoped to use the dynastic marriages of his children to obtain peace in Europe. It is misleading to characterise the Spanish faction as a static phenomenon at the beginning of the 17th century, as much as it is challenging to trace the membership of such a faction with absolute certainty, due to the fact that some MPs and courtiers changed side from the beginning to the end of James's reign. The Duke of Buckingham is only the most obvious example of inconsistency. As with any political party in our own times, the Spanish faction during the reign of James I went through alternate fortunes between 1603 and 1625: it was strong and influential in 1603-5 when it was in the interest of Spain and England to obtain a peace agreement that was convenient to both. The faction lost most of its power between 1618 and 1620 due to ambassador

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 203.

⁶⁰ Richard C. McCoy, "Old English honour in an evil time: aristocratic principle in the 1620s," in *The Stuart Court and Europe. Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 133-155 (133).

Gondomar's absence from England, but again obtained significant influence between 1621 and 1623. The pro-Spanish returned to being in a minority when Charles and Buckingham returned empty-handed from Spain at the end of 1623 and remained so until the accession of Charles I, just as hostilities with Spain which King James had spent most of his reign trying to avoid were breaking out.