

## **A FLUCTUATING ASCENDANCY: THE “SPANISH PARTY” AT THE IMPERIAL COURT OF VIENNA (1631-1659)**

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Leaving aside the ongoing, complex and much interesting debate on the concept of Spanish "party" or "faction" at Early Modern courts,<sup>1</sup> I wish primarily to point out that, in the absence of a consolidated definition in current historiography, the use of those concepts here will be simply related to the group of influential individuals eager to provide services to the Spanish crown, either for free, or in exchange for favours of various types. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, these lobbyists were often a spearhead, which helped Catholic ambassadors to introduce the policies of the kings of Spain at the court of the other branch of the *Casa de Austria*. The Czech court researcher Pavel Marek has recently stressed the heterogeneity of the individuals belonging to these networks. In one of his latest studies, he highlighted the difficulty of standardizing within the same group the circumstances and manifold reasons of those involved in meeting the interests of the Catholic King.<sup>2</sup> Since the beginning of bilateral relations between the Habsburg branches, we can distinguish two main groups of actors influencing the emperor's advisory bodies on behalf of the Spanish king: on the one hand, his diplomats, and, on the other, clergymen or courtiers of varying rank. Exceptionally, there was a third circumstantial group within this rule. Whenever Austrian princes married a Spanish *infanta*, ambassadors did not only rely on individuals belonging to the abovementioned second group, but could count on the support of these female members of the dynasty. As a whole, individuals belonging to these two last groups were extremely heterogeneous and had very different motivations when it came to intercede for the Spanish crown.

### **I. A Golden Era? The “Spanish Party” under Empress Maria Anna and her Confessor**

The evolution and composition of the Spanish faction throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century was thus extremely heterogeneous. Its highly fickle nature was evident during the Thirty Years' War in virtue of its mutable composition, which was very liable to the epoch's capricious political-economic fluctuations. Faction members belonged mostly to the patronage networks of Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> On the current debate around the controversial concept of “Spanish faction”, see the leading studies of Rubén González Cuerva and Pavel Marek, whose conclusions have lately been presented at several European congresses and will soon appear within the Internet forum “La facción española”, <http://faccion.hypotheses.org/> (consulted on 26 April 2015), launched in 2013. The scholarly blog, focused on the last developments in this field of research, aims to boost and promote new methodological and thematic discussion on the idea of pro-Spanish lobbies at the Imperial court, as well as to function as a working database of bi-bibliographical notes.

<sup>2</sup> Pavel Marek, *La embajada española en la corte imperial (1558-1641). Figuras de los embajadores y estrategias clientelares* (Prague: Karolinum, 2013).

ambassadors. However, this was not the general rule as evidenced by the role of members of the dynasty within these lobbies. Their high condition undoubtedly placed them far above mere network members since their motivations were related to family solidarity rather than to a clientage relationship. This argument is consistent with the composition of the "Spanish party" at the imperial court in Vienna following the arrival of the *infanta* Maria Anna of Austria in 1631 to marry future Emperor Ferdinand III. As had happened with Maximilian II's consort, Empress Maria, the newcomer would emerge –with the enthronement of her husband in 1637– as the main agent of Philip IV's interests in Vienna. Maria Anna shared this function with her trustful confessor, the influential Capuchin friar Diego de Quiroga.<sup>3</sup> The cleric's wide experience in diplomatic missions, along with the relevance of Maria Anna, made it an unbeatable combination in the government of Ferdinand III and exerted its influence in favour of a strong link between the two lines of the House of Austria.<sup>4</sup>

The long-lasting conflict later known as Thirty Years' War generated a close military alliance between both courts eager to strengthen Habsburg authority and the Counter-Reformation in the Holy Roman Empire. Then the figure of the Catholic ambassador in Vienna had started to lose autonomy due to internal dissensions in the government of the Count-Duke of Olivares.<sup>5</sup> In such a context, Maria Anna and her confessor managed to steer skilfully – despite not always in agreement with the envoys– the wishes of Philip IV, either in the palace chapel or at the Imperial Privy Council. Nevertheless, their intervention alone was not enough to channel the crown's interests. The embassy undoubtedly relied on the invaluable assistance provided by the influential and extensive patronage network that the envoys were building-up since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Family names such as Eggenberg, Lobkowitz, Dietrichstein, Harrach or Trautson were among the various lineages of defenders of Catholic orthodoxy, and therefore were supporters of the self-proclaimed guarantor of the Roman confession, namely, the king of Spain. The Protestants had threatened the interests of these noblemen, who were deeply rooted in Bohemia and strongly tied to Habsburg loyalty. These bonds of clientele, encouraged by rewards of different kind, were reinforced through marriages with women belonging to the Spanish nobility. Furthermore, their descendants were also considered vassals of the Spanish crown.<sup>6</sup> This whole network became Madrid's outpost against any policy contrary to its schemes at the Viennese court. While some of these aristocrats held key influential

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<sup>3</sup> See, on this figure, Buenaventura de Carrocera, "El Padre Diego de Quiroga, diplomático y confesor de reyes (1574-1649)," *Estudios Franciscanos* 50 (1949): 71-100; Henar Pizarro Llorente, "La elección de confesor de la infanta Maria de Austria en 1628," in *La dinastía de los Austria. Las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, ed. José Martínez Millán and Rubén González Cuerva (Madrid: Polifemo, 2011), II, 759-800; John Reeve, "Quiroga's paper of 1631: A Missing Link in Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy during the Thirty Years War," *The English Historical Review* 401 (1986): 913-926.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hildegard Ernst, *Madrid und Wien 1632-1637. Politik und Finanzen in den Beziehungen zwischen Philipp IV. und Ferdinand II* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), ch. 2, and Mark Hengerer, *Kaiser Ferdinand III. (1608-1657). Eine Biographie* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), 91-92, 130-131.

<sup>5</sup> Marek, *La embajada española*, 128-139.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, 40.

positions, however, none were equated to the then favourite of Ferdinand III, Count Maximilian von Trauttmansdorff, so-called “member” of the “Spanish party”.<sup>7</sup> Under his leadership, the unquestionable preponderance of this faction was assured until 1646, time when the first signs of fissures within the dynastic union emerged. In fact, the crisis that began to afflict the faction had its origins in the military defeats of the Imperial war coalition one year earlier. This reverse came as a turning point, which brought the emperor to a more serious stance at the negotiating table of Westphalia.<sup>8</sup>

The premature death of Empress Maria Anna in 1646 was a harsh blow to both courts. This misfortune was to undermine Spanish influence at the Imperial court in the long-term, not least due to the departure from Vienna of the bulky and influential Iberian entourage of the deceased sovereign. Thus, the arrival of the second Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to the embassy coincided with a slow –albeit progressive– decline of this ascendancy. In addition to these adverse events, the pro-Bavarian court party, under strong pressure by France, sought to force the emperor to give in.<sup>9</sup> The Spanish embassy had been unable to stop the course Ferdinand III was embarking on, which is to say towards the signing of the armistice with Sweden and France excluding Spain from the general peace in the Westphalian treaties.

The pressure of the Imperial States in favour of peace was not solely responsible for this decline in influence. The long-lasting conflict between the Spanish Monarchy and France was leaving the embassy coffers devoid of financial resources. The reduction of monetary remittances, to fund rewards necessary to grease the patronage network’s machinery or bribe recalcitrant ministers in advisory bodies, was seriously undermining the effective

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<sup>7</sup> Maximilian von Trauttmansdorff (1584-1650). For a long time, the Imperial court’s most influential minister had been identified by the Papal nuncio as a member of the «partito spagnuolo», a point of view shared by many contemporary observers. The count rather loyally followed the wishes of his master, inclined to the wishes of his brother-in-law Philip IV, for who his espouse interceded. Hengerer, *Kaiser Ferdinand III.*, 101. On Ferdinand III’s powerful favourite, see Brigitte Lernet, “Maximilian von Trauttmansdorff: Hofmann und Patron im 17. Jahrhundert” (unpublished thesis, University of Vienna, 2004) and Konrad Repgen, “Maximilien comte de Trauttmansdorff, négociateur en chef de l’empereur aux traités de Prague et de Westphalie,” in *L’Europe des traités de Westphalie. Esprit de la diplomatie et diplomatie de l’Esprit*, ed. Lucien Bély and Isabelle Richefort (Paris: Presses Paris Sorbonne, 2000), 347-361.

<sup>8</sup> Not only Cardinal Mazarin’s pressure on the Imperial States to exclude Spain from the peace, but negotiations held in 1646 between Trauttmansdorff and France –focused on the transfer of the occupied Habsburg territory of Alsace–, featured as the primary source of division between the Spanish and Imperial commissions. Jean Bérenger, “Ferdinand III et la France de Mazarin,” in Bély and Richefort, *L’Europe des traités de Westphalie*, 177; Konrad Repgen, “Über den Zusammenhang von Verhandlungstechnik und Vertragsbegriffen. Die kaiserlichen Elsaß-Angebote vom 28. März und 14. April 1646 an Frankreich,” in his *Dreißigjähriger Krieg und Westfälischer Friede. Studien und Quellen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), 643-676; Michael Rohrschneider, *Der gescheiterte Frieden von Münster. Spaniens Ringen mit Frankreich auf dem Westfälischen Friedenskongress (1643-1649)* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2006), 307-313.

<sup>9</sup> *Papel del duque de Terranova sobre la determinación de franceses y suedeses en procurar la vengança del Duque de Baviera separándole de S. M. C.*, Prague, 17 November 1647, BNE, Mss. 913, fos 216-217; Count of Peñaranda to Philip IV, Münster, 16 January 1648, in *CODOIN*, LXXXIV, 94-95; Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 25 February 1648, *ibidem*, p. 57.

functioning of pressure measures.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the envoys' negotiating skills were also important to attract support, and this was not the main merit of the conflicting embassy of the Duke of Terranova since 1646. Terranova's management had profound echoes in the following years. Despite being considered as one of the emperor's most valued councillors, his erratic performance, characterised by a controversial procedure and difficult temper, set him against the majority of the court while reaping discredit for Spanish interests among the ranks of Imperial nobility.<sup>11</sup> Although father Quiroga had continued "co-leading" the Spanish lobby as adviser to Ferdinand III, his return to Spain in 1648 –the year which saw the separation between both lines resulting of the Münster treaties– not only left the king's interests bereft of its main driver but revealed a lack of support to Spanish politics. Mainly, the pressure of the pro-Bavarian faction, which repeatedly sought to force the emperor to separate from his Spanish ally, successfully imposed the idea of claudication among Austrian councillors.

## II. The Westphalian Turning Point: A Faction in Crisis

The era emerging from the treaties of Westphalia would inaugurate a marked fluctuation of Spanish influence, as the "party" related to these interests was to suffer a striking crisis of uneven level of impact from which it would never recover. It was a phenomenon taking simultaneously place at the Papal court.<sup>12</sup> As had been happening since the most immediate years, the decade following the 1650s, key period to the survival of the Spanish Monarchy, was mainly characterised by the concentration of the embassy's support on very few individuals –albeit very powerful. On the contrary, the exercise of this ascendancy had undergone a greater atomization in earlier times. This was an obvious consequence deriving from the sharp drop in resources to attract new supporters, as the ambassadors had to face a prioritisation of the allocation of scarce means in a few candidates. As a result, diplomats witnessed a significant reduction in the cohort of courtiers prowling around and seeking their favour. However, despite lacking monetary assets, they managed to use other effective channels to attract the collaboration of the most influential nobility.

During the first half of the 1650s, the Spanish ambassador, the third Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo,<sup>13</sup> mediated for granting several important positions

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<sup>10</sup> Count of Lumiares [later III Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo] to Count of Peñaranda, Vienna, n.d. (around October 1648), AHN-SN, Frías, C.54, D.1, fos 277-281; *Ibidem*, 6 January 1649, AHN-SN, Frías, C.56, D.1, fos 754-762.

<sup>11</sup> Count of Lumiares to Count of Peñaranda, Vienna, 10 June 1648, AHN-SN, Frías, C.50, D.2, fos 50-56; *Ibidem*, 23 September 1648, AHN-SN, Frías, C.49, D.1, fos 37-40.

<sup>12</sup> On the initial appointment by mid-1648 of the Count of Peñaranda as ambassador to Rome, the king's favourite Luis de Haro confessed: «I experience an overwhelming solitude with your absence in Rome, since much is at stake in matters of reputation and what happens in that court can neither be referred nor thought without great pain». Luis de Haro to Count of Peñaranda, Madrid, 5 October 1648, AHN-SN, Frías, C.52, D.1, fos 312-330.

<sup>13</sup> Francisco de Moura Corterreal y Melo (1610-1675) was 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Nocera, 2<sup>nd</sup> Count of Lumiares and –since 1651– 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo. At his father's urging, the

for his clients in the Imperial court.<sup>14</sup> But he also had an ace up his sleeve; he made use of an unbeatable although scarce prize: the Golden Fleece. The interest that the granting of this exclusive award woke among potential candidates had effectively contributed to stimulate or arouse inclination towards the cause of the Catholic king since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> This distinction not only symbolised a bond with the Habsburgs' counter-reformative ideals, but tied in theory the individual to the interests of the Spanish Monarchy and lined him up within the sovereign's sphere of power. Considering the reputation that the fleece offered, it is hardly surprising that Austrian noblemen insistently requested the admission to the order. But these requests, understandably, had to pass through the filter of the Spanish Council of State, which judged the candidate's eligibility according to their own merits in support of Spanish interests.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the tireless efforts related to these ingenious –albeit non-innovative– initiatives, not necessarily diagnosed a decrease in the pre-eminence of the envoys. The absence of Friar Diego de Quiroga undoubtedly stressed the ambassador's figure by restoring the leading role that the representative previously had to share with the confessor. However, this factor was not the primary reason behind the survival of Castel Rodrigo's preponderant position. Ferdinand III's great eagerness to reunite the two branches of the House of Austria by linking his son to the heiress of Philip IV –always with a view to the succession of the Spanish throne–, continued to promote the primacy of the Catholic resident at the Imperial seat. While this position was not enough by itself to attract new supporters, or pin ministers down, yet it significantly influenced the decisions of the emperor himself.

In either case, the inherited crisis from Terranova's controversial management required –since 1649– the reconstitution of the Spanish faction. The absence in the Imperial decision-making bodies of an ecclesiastical figure with broad ramifications of influence as Quiroga, was partially resolved by the

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influential royal councillor Manuel de Moura, the then Count of Lumiares was appointed Spanish ambassador to the emperor in 1648, a position he held until mid-1656.

<sup>14</sup> Among other cases, Castel-Rodrigo managed to obtain the post of President of the Imperial Council of War for Wenzel Eusebius von Lobkowitz in 1650. The ambassador fervently supported his candidacy in virtue of Lobkowitz's «affection serving the *Augustissima Casa*». Consultation of the Council of State, 14 May 1650, AGS, E, leg. 2355.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the embassy recommended winning through this award over the hostile councillor Maximilian von Wallenstein –nephew of the famous general– for the sake of the Spanish faction. In another case, the ambassadors used for many years the lure of the fleece to stimulate the continuous service of the ambiguous Count of Leslie. Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 30 April 1654, AGS, E, leg. 2362; Count of Lumiares to Philip IV, Vienna, 24 November 1649, AGS, E, leg. 2355; Count of Lamberg [Imperial ambassador] to Luis de Haro, Madrid, 18 September 1659, HHStA, SDK, 45/4, Nr. 3, fos 80-81. See, on the links of Holy Roman Empire nobility to the Burgundian order, Pere Molas Ribalta, "Austria en la orden del Toisón de Oro, siglos XVI-XVII," *Pedralbes* 26 (2006): 123-152; Lothar Höbelt, "Der Orden vom Goldenen Vlies als Klammer eines Weltreiches," in *Das Haus Österreich und der Orden vom Goldenen Vlies*, ed. Kanzlei des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies (Graz: Leopold Stocker, 2007), 37-52.

<sup>16</sup> See, i.e., the deliberations of the Council of State on the eligibility of the candidacy of diverse Austrian noblemen: Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 15 April 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2365; *Idem*, Madrid, 14 October 1659, AGS, E, leg. 2369.

employment of the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Harrach.<sup>17</sup> Although his influence was considerably smaller than that of the confessor, the relevance of his family at the Imperial court and his bonds with the Spanish clergy of Central Europe made him very useful to Philip IV. Harrach, which soon placed his services at Madrid's disposal and became a king's pensioner, played however a limited and specific role in Vienna, characterised by social mediation between the ambassadors and the Austrian nobility. Due to his influence in the Catholic clerical world, his services were yet more valuable at the College of Cardinals in Rome.<sup>18</sup>

### III. All Bets on a single Horse: Johann Weikhard von Auersperg

Notwithstanding, the best interlocutor that the Spanish ambassador could find was the young emperor's heir Ferdinand (IV)'s tutor, the Count Johann Weikhard von Auersperg.<sup>19</sup> Castel-Rodrigo found in this Trauttmansdorff's protégé an ambitious courtier versed in diplomatic affairs that showed a passionate inclination toward everything "Spanish".<sup>20</sup> At the time, no one questioned the certainty that the minister was well on track towards a meteoric career at the apex of political power within the House of Austria. Auersperg was undoubtedly a key person to consider since he retained almost absolute control over the emperor's son.<sup>21</sup>

Initially, the outcome of the Westphalian treaties seemed to foretell that the path towards a Spanish service would be hindered. After the crown's exclusion from the peace, the Council of State had seen no reason in allowing the son of Ferdinand III to accompany her sister –Philip IV's new spouse, Mariana of Austria– to Spain. Young Ferdinand, considering the occasion, could hardly conceal his intention to marry his cousin and royal heiress Maria Theresa. By striking to force the way of his pupil, Auersperg had inevitably confronted the Spaniards.<sup>22</sup> However, the embassy had no other alternative but to employ Auersperg as its main advocate in the Privy Council given the lack of support to Spain among courtiers after the separation. From the beginning of his diplomatic mission, Castel-Rodrigo relied on his support for most of the political issues. Initially, his assistance was urgently needed for the supply of Imperial troops to restrain French onslaught in the battlefields of

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<sup>17</sup> Ernst Adalbert von Harrach (1598-1667). On his links with the Spanish crown, see the recent published diaries: *Die Diarien und Tagzettel des Kardinals Ernst Adalbert von Harrach (1598-1667)*, ed. Katrin Keller and Alessandro Catalano (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), vols I-VII.

<sup>18</sup> Entry of 3 November 1647, Prague, in *ibidem*, III, 77.

<sup>19</sup> Johann Weikhard von Auersperg (1615-1677), later appointed first Prince of Auersperg, Imperial Prince of Tengen and Duke of Münsterberg. See on his figure, Grete Mecenseffy, "Im Dienste dreier Habsburger: Leben und Wirken des Fürsten Johann Weikhard Auersperg (1615 - 1677)," *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 114 (1938): 295-509.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 300, 329-330.

<sup>21</sup> Following the Venetian ambassador's words in 1654, Auersperg was regarded as «master of his master» («Padrone del suo Padrone») at the Court. Joseph Fiedler, ed. *Die Relationen der Botschafter Venedigs über Deutschland und Österreich im siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Aus der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1866), I, 401.

<sup>22</sup> Luis Tercero Casado, "La jornada de la reina Mariana de Austria a España: divergencias políticas y tensión protocolar en el seno de la Casa de Austria (1648-1649)," *Hispania* 239 (2011): 635-660.

the Spanish Netherlands and Milan. This emergency made him the best possible choice Madrid could have in Vienna. In the medium term, this confidence would prove very successful, but eventually revealed itself as a risky strategy, as the Austrian count was in very bad terms with much of the court nobility, due to an undisguised careerism. After some initial reluctance, the Council of State confirmed the trust placed upon Auersperg by awarding him in 1650 with the fleece.<sup>23</sup> The trigger behind this move was no other than the expectation of seeing the ambitious and influential nobleman occupy the position of favourite after the death, that same year, of Trauttmansdorff.<sup>24</sup> Although this prediction did not fully materialise, Auersperg increasingly began to be entrusted with key responsibilities at the government in view of the trust young Ferdinand granted him.<sup>25</sup> The now powerful pairing of influential minister and Spanish ambassador was respected and feared. This alliance, however, did not find a path free of obstacles. During the Imperial diet of 1653 to crown young Ferdinand as King of the Romans, their initiative was severely tested by Bavarian influence.<sup>26</sup> Even though Castel-Rodrigo significantly contributed in carrying out the coronation of the emperor's heir,<sup>27</sup> their opponents had succeeded to shake it by sweeping away the support of the Spanish sovereign's cause.<sup>28</sup> These critical circumstances left the ambassador no choice but to continue focusing his full support on Auersperg.<sup>29</sup> With Ferdinand IV's successful election, the ambitious tutor was appointed as Imperial prince in honour of his well-earned merits.<sup>30</sup> The Spanish government's forecasts seemed to be fulfilled.

The unexpected death of the young Imperial successor of smallpox by 1654 came as an immeasurable blow to Auersperg, casting a shadow of uncertainty over his future: the main occupation of the Imperial heir's tutor had disappeared. The new juncture appeared to give way to a worsening of the minister's service following a consequent loss of relevance. The minister's leadership was jeopardised by the quandary of his future. Nevertheless, Ferdinand III's confidence in his son's most loyal servant did not quite seem to decline. As a means to protect him from his enemies, the emperor appointed Auersperg on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1655 as his *Obersthofmeister* (Lord Steward).<sup>31</sup> Contrary to expectations, the minister had reached a surprising high position

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<sup>23</sup> Secretary Ruiz de Contreras to Marquis of Grana [Imperial ambassador], El Pardo, 16 January 1650, HHStA, SDK, 38/8, Nr. 8, fos 3-4; Höbelt, "Der Orden vom Goldenen Vlies", 50.

<sup>24</sup> Consultation of the Junta de Estado, Madrid, 22 July 1650, AGS, E, leg. 2357.

<sup>25</sup> By autumn 1651, Auersperg was already attending regular consultations on the forthcoming Imperial diet. Mecenseffy, "Im Dienste dreier Habsburger", 368.

<sup>26</sup> Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to Philip IV, Regensburg, 30 January 1653, AGS, E, leg. 2361; *Ibidem*, 25 February 1653, AGS, E, leg. 2361.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Alfonso Falcó y de la Gándara, Príncipe Pío, *La elección de Fernando IV, Rey de romanos. Correspondencia del III marqués de Castel-Rodrigo, Don Francisco de Moura durante el tiempo de su embajada en Alemania (1648-1656)* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1929).

<sup>28</sup> Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to Philip IV, Regensburg, 15 February 1653, AGS, E, leg. 2361; *Idem*, 25 February 1653, AGS, E, leg. 2361; *Idem*, 15 May 1653, AGS, E, leg. 2361.

<sup>29</sup> Castel-Rodrigo confided to his agent in Madrid that Auersperg was the only member at the Imperial Court he could trust. Castel-Rodrigo to Tomás López de Andrada, Regensburg, 13 February 1653, in in Falcó y de La Gándara, *La elección de Fernando IV*, 368-370.

<sup>30</sup> Mecenseffy, "Im Dienste dreier Habsburger", 388.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, 399.

at court. Indeed, this quite considerable award, based on the trust placed in his undeniable skills and capability, should have sufficed to restrain his ambition, but instead it was not enough. In regards to Philip IV's interests, Auersperg truly believed that the Spanish government had not quite acknowledged his mediation. From 1654, a possible disaffection of Auersperg towards Spain loomed due to the embassy's limited means to reward his loyalty after the costly election of the emperor's deceased son.<sup>32</sup>

This underlying tension finally burst by the end of 1655 with the alienation between Auersperg and Castel-Rodrigo. The private cause behind the confrontation among former close friends was no longer disguisable. Auersperg's resentment had been triggered by a lack of endorsement from the Spanish envoy for his own claim as new tutor of the now Imperial heir Leopold Ignatius. Nevertheless, this post had already been received by the Count of Portia –former ambassador in Venice–<sup>33</sup> from the emperor in 1652.<sup>34</sup> Such collision could not come at a worse time. The position of a weakened Spanish Monarchy against a burgeoning France had worsened due to England's entry into the conflict. Madrid, more than ever, required a determined military cooperation to break the impasse, but Vienna showed hesitations and awaited a clear commitment concerning the marriage between Maria Theresa and Leopold Ignatius. This vacillation would indeed remain constant upon bilateral relations until the peace with France in 1659.<sup>35</sup>

Such stagnation could only be overcome with the arrival of a new ambassador to replace Castel-Rodrigo. The most urgent matter though, was to reactivate the channels to funnel levies to the fronts of Flanders and Milan.<sup>36</sup> The way to break this deadlock came from an unlikely candidate: the Marquis of La Fuente,<sup>37</sup> a certainly undervalued diplomat.<sup>38</sup> This replacement

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<sup>32</sup> Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to Tomás de Sarria [Spanish agent], Rothmühle, 28 October 1654, RAH, CSyC, K-9, fos 87-88; *Idem* to Philip IV, Vienna, 26 July 1655, AGS, E, leg. 2953.

<sup>33</sup> Johann Ferdinand von Portia (1605-1665). See on Leopold I's prime minister, Günther Probst-Ohstorff, *Die Porcia. Aufstieg und Wirken eines Fürstenhauses* (Klagenfurt: Geschichtsverein f. Kärnten, 1971), 123, and Stefan Sienell, "Die Ersten Minister Kaiser Leopolds I.: Johann Ferdinand von Portia und Wenzel Eusebius von Lobkowitz," in *Der zweite Mann im Staat. Oberste Amtsträger und Favoriten im Umkreis der Reichsfürsten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Kaiser and Andreas Pečar (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2003), 317-330.

<sup>34</sup> Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to Philip IV, Vienna, 15 December 1655, AGS, E, leg. 2365.

<sup>35</sup> Philip IV to Marquis of La Fuente, draft instruction, Madrid, 22 December 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2953; Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 18 April 1657, AHN, E, libro 125. On the marriage negotiations between Madrid and Vienna around Philip IV's daughter, see Lothar Höbelt, "«Madrid vaut bien une guerre? » Marriage Negotiations between the Habsburg Courts 1653-1657," in Martínez Millán and González Cuerva, *La dinastía de los Austria*, III, 1421-1436.

<sup>36</sup> Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 24 January 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2365.

<sup>37</sup> Gaspar Teves Tello de Guzmán (1608-1673), first Marquis of La Fuente de Torno, after a long term of service leading the diplomatic mission in Venice, was initially appointed ambassador in Poland but ended leading the embassy in Vienna between 1656 and 1661. On his subsequent career during the difficult embassy to Louis XIV, see Isabel Yetano Laguna, *Relaciones entre España y Francia desde la Paz de los Pirineos (1659) hasta la Guerra de Devolución (1667). La embajada del Marqués de La Fuente* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 31 May 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2365.



had partially been the result of Auersperg's scheming, which had managed to send a message to Haro with this aim.<sup>39</sup> His demand was soon satisfied. New envoy La Fuente avoided repeating the same mistake of his predecessor and thus managed to maintain a balance between Portia and a rehabilitated Auersperg,<sup>40</sup> while breathing some life into the dejected "Spanish party". Indeed, under the then seemingly close promise to give Leopold Ignatius the *infanta's* hand, he succeeded to propel the faction by obtaining the craved levies.<sup>41</sup> In his renewed prominence, the ambassador reinforced ties with the usual Bohemian-rooted clans of Lobkowitz, Harrach, Dietrichstein, Martinitz or Kolowrat.<sup>42</sup> Whereas several courtiers belonging to such prominent pro-Spanish families had previously shared the role of informal collaborators, they –as well as many clients– were now once again sidelined by the imposing figure of Auersperg. However, some of them, as the noble Wenzel Eusebius von Lobkowitz, would come to play a leading role in the Imperial government during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century thanks to their promotion by the Spaniards.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV. Crisis Reborn: A Faction amid Uncertainty

What seemed a promising future for the faction suddenly saw his reawakening cut short with the death in 1657 of Emperor Ferdinand III. A new government under the regency of his brother Archduke Leopold Wilhelm – back in Vienna after many turbulent years as Spanish governor in Flanders– was then established. There are no doubts that the archduke held bad memories of the Spaniards.<sup>44</sup> The Catholic king could barely replace the

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<sup>39</sup> Auersperg had entrusted this covert mission to Spanish sergeant major Jacinto de Vera. He had been sent to Madrid by the Imperial court with the official commission to inform the king on the emperor's need to rearm in light of dangers arising from the Polish-Swedish war. Höbelt, "Madrid vaut bien", 1431-1432; Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo to Philip IV, Rothmühle, 12 September 1655, AGS, E, leg. 2363; Jacinto de Vera to Philip IV, 6 November 1655, AGS, E, leg. 2363; Francisco López de Ulloa to Tomás López de Andrada, Rothmühle, 15 September 1655, in Falcó y de La Gándara, *La elección de Fernando IV*, 401-403.

<sup>40</sup> La Fuente had benefited from the advantage of knowing well Portia as a friend since his time as ambassador in Venice. He had also met Auersperg during Queen Mariana's crossing through Italy on her journey to Spain.

<sup>41</sup> Ferdinand III to Marquis of La Fuente, Vienna, 9 July 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2365; Marquis of La Fuente to Luis de Haro, Vienna, 11 July 1656, AGS, E, leg. 2365.

<sup>42</sup> La Fuente's frequent social gatherings with prominent members of these clans give a reliable account on these efforts. See, for instance, entries of 18 and 24 September 1656, Prague, and 21 May 1657, Vienna, in Keller and Catalano, *Die Diarien*, VI, 221, 223 and 319; Giuseppe Corte [Cardinal Harrach's steward] to Marquis of La Fuente, Prague, 26 October 1656, AVA, Familienarchiv Harrach, Kart. 139.

<sup>43</sup> Wenzel Eusebius von Lobkowitz (1609-1677), Prince of Lobkowitz and Duke of Sagan. Cf. footnote nr. 14; Stefan Sienell, *Die Geheime Konferenz unter Kaiser Leopold I. Personelle Strukturen und Methoden zur politischen Entscheidungsfindung am Wiener Hof* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2001), 91-93; Ivo Cerman, "«Kabal», «Parthey», «Faction» am Hofe Kaiser Leopolds I.," in *Der Fall des Günstlings. Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini (Ostfildern: J. Thorbecke, 2004), 244; Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la diplomacia española. La edad barroca II* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 2006), VIII, 92-93. See also on his figure, Sienell, "Die Ersten Minister Kaiser Leopolds I".

<sup>44</sup> See on this Renate Schreiber, „ein Galeria nach meinem Humor“. *Erzherzog Leopold Wilhelm* (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2004), 67-87; *Idem*, "Entre dos frentes. El

absence of a superior authority and a discretionary power following the emperor's death. By virtue of his position as head of the dynasty, the Catholic king set himself up as counterweight to the Viennese court's decisions.<sup>45</sup> The clash of factions led by the archduke, his *Hofmeister* Schwarzenberg and the pro-Bavarian minister Kurz,<sup>46</sup> on one hand, and the other led by the heir Leopold Ignatius, Portia and Auersperg, in no way promised a harmonious regency. Both uncle and nephew showed manifest differences deriving from divergent expectations for his own candidacy in the next election to the Imperial throne.<sup>47</sup>

The faction that supported Spanish interests received a particularly severe jolt by the ambitious secretary Schwarzenberg, through whose hands passed now all state affairs.<sup>48</sup> This assault on the union of the two branches had also an impact on the network of Spanish ecclesiastics in charge of important abbeys located in the Austrian hereditary provinces. Leopold Wilhelm, knowing about the influence of these clerical agents subject to Philip IV's guidelines, tried fruitlessly to prevent the occupation of vacancies by Spanish subjects.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, this hostile faction was fully supported by the Dowager-Empress Eleonora Gonzaga Nevers, opponent of Madrid's plans.<sup>50</sup> The seriousness of the Spanish position for the next Imperial election urgently required an astute and fearless diplomat to channel all support to Philip IV's nephew, as it was suspected that the Habsburg patrimonial lands could be divided if the crown fell into the hands of Leopold Wilhelm.<sup>51</sup> The Count of Peñaranda, leading signatory of the 1648 peace treaty between Spain and the Netherlands, would be in charge of placing the crown on the young Leopold

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archiduque Leopoldo Guillermo como gobernador en Bruselas," in Martínez Millán and González Cuerva, *La dinastía de los Austria*, I, 609-630, and René Vermeir, "Un austriaco en Flandes. El archiduque Leopoldo Guillermo, gobernador general de los Países Bajos meridionales (1647-1656)," in *Ibidem*, 583-608.

<sup>45</sup> Archduke Leopold Wilhelm to Philip IV, Vienna, 9 April 1657, AHN, E, libro 713.

<sup>46</sup> Johann Adolph von Schwarzenberg (1615–1683) and Ferdinand Sigismund Kurz von Senftenau (1592-1659), Leopold Wilhelm's high steward and the Imperial Vice-Chancellor respectively. See on them Henry Frederick Schwarz's classic work, *The imperial Privy Council in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1943).

<sup>47</sup> All signs point to the archduke's devious secretary Schwarzenberg as the primary driver of his master's candidacy and being largely responsible for inducing him to that opportunity. It seems that Leopold Wilhelm could count on the approval of a large part of the Electoral College and the invaluable support of the influential minister Ferdinand Kurz, pro-Bavarian minister opposed to Spain's designs. Marquis of La Fuente to Luis de Haro, Vienna, 9 May 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2366; *Idem* to Philip IV, Vienna, 30 May 1657, AHN, E, libro 125; *Idem* to Luis de Haro, Vienna, 13 June 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2367; (?) to Luis de Haro, Vienna, 28 July 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2367.

<sup>48</sup> Schwarzenberg decidedly endeavoured to boost his master's candidacy by building on ties with the Rhenish and Cologne prince-electors, fierce opponents of the Spanish-Austrian alliance. Mecenseffy, "Im Dienste dreier Habsburger", 419-420.

<sup>49</sup> Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 23 June 1657, AHN, E, libro 125.

<sup>50</sup> In the words of La Fuente, the «triumvirate» composed by Empress Eleonora, the archduke and his secretary offered a «tough opposition» reinforced by «increasing streams which will be nearly impossible to divert». Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 23 April 1659, AHN, E, libro 126.

<sup>51</sup> Marquis of La Fuente to Luis de Haro, Vienna, 13 June 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2367; Count of Portia to Philip IV, Vienna, 11 July 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2367; Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 4 November 1657, AGS, E, leg. 2367.

Ignatius.<sup>52</sup> The articulation and joint efforts around Peñaranda's person to achieve this goal certainly provided a temporary cohesion to the Spanish party. Nevertheless, it was not exempted from suffering a grievous isolation within the decision-making bodies led by the archduke, a situation that was unprecedented concerning the consideration of Spanish interests.<sup>53</sup>

The rise to the Imperial throne of Ferdinand III's son as Leopold I in 1658, despite its promising echo did not bring continuing stability to this faction. If Portia's assignment as Leopold's *Obersthofmeister* by mid-1657 had thrown cold water on Auersperg's expectations,<sup>54</sup> now his consolidated role as "favourite" had widened more acutely the differences between both ministers. However, there was also room for improvement within the Spanish "sphere": in view of his merits and efforts, La Fuente's reputation had earned him the incidental designation of ambassador ordinary. In any event, the election's euphoria had proven again short-lived since it was no longer a secret that the two courts were pursuing different goals. While Madrid was pleading for military cooperation in exchange for Spanish aid given during the Imperial election, newly crowned Leopold I persisted on demanding Maria Theresa's hand before violating the ban on the assistance to Spain, as it had been stipulated within the election's capitulation.<sup>55</sup> King Philip certainly knew about this impossibility and hoped only to make his already assumed decision –of giving Maria Theresa to Louis XIV– seem fair given the Imperial Privy Council's hesitancy.<sup>56</sup> To the perpetuation of this status quo had contributed the work of Schwarzenberg, Kurz and Empress Leonor, but also were involved the highly influential Jesuits, who wished to see Leopold married to the Elector of Saxony's daughter as a means to reintroduce Catholicism in that State.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, the time factor ended up bringing Madrid and Paris' stances closer before resulting in the 1659 treaty of the Pyrenees and an engagement between the French king and Maria Theresa.

The Spanish court had kept such peace negotiations secret not only to the impatient Leopold I, but also to La Fuente himself, whose management the Council of State still did not fully trust.<sup>58</sup> The frustration with which the young emperor received the disappointing news, which reached him shortly after deciding in favour of a significant reinforcement of the levies, led the

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<sup>52</sup> Gaspar de Bracamonte y Guzmán (1595-1676), Count of Peñaranda, had been in charge of peace negotiations in Münster between 1645 and 1648. See on the mission related to Leopold's election, Alastair Malcolm, "La embajada del conde de Peñaranda a Praga y a Fráncfort del Meno en 1657-1658," in Martínez Millán and González Cuerva, *La dinastía de los Austria*, III, 1437-1462.

<sup>53</sup> Fiedler, *Die Relationen der Botschafter Venedigs*, II, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Mecenseffy, "Im Dienste dreier Habsburger", 416.

<sup>55</sup> Count of Lamberg to Philip IV, Madrid, 8 October 1658, OÖLA, Herrschaft Steyr, Familienarchiv Lamberg, Kart. 1223, Fasz. 22, Nr. 370; Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 6 November 1658, AHN, E, libro 713; *Idem* to Philip IV, Vienna, 8 January 1659, AHN, E, libro 126; *Idem* to Philip IV, Wiener Neudorf, 14 May 1659, AHN, E, libro 126.

<sup>56</sup> Alfred Franz Pribram, "Die Heirat Kaiser Leopold I. mit Margaretha Theresia von Spanien," *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 77 (1892): 332-333.

<sup>57</sup> Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 9 July 1659, AHN, E, libro 126; Pribram, "Die Heirat", 338-339.

<sup>58</sup> Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 15 July 1659, AGS, E, leg. 2369.

Spanish faction to hang by a thread.<sup>59</sup> However, the succession to the Spanish Monarchy was a lure too strong to ignore. It was not therefore long before Leopold I gave head and accepted Philip IV's new offer to marry the then child *infanta* Margarita.<sup>60</sup> Although the acceptance of the proposal contributed to appease the emperor's clique, the upheavals suffered throughout the decade by the pro-Spanish lobby consolidated a situation of instability that would set the tone for the following decades. These marked fluctuations constituted the general trend until the twilight of dynastic relations between both lines.

## V. Conclusion

This current study aimed to stress the influence fluctuation of the so-called "Spanish party" at the Imperial court in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, several key points have tried to provide answers to this group's twist and turns. The members of this lobby, of highly mutable structural nature, shared as common denominator a privileged close proximity to the sovereign, either as members of the dynasty or as first-rank courtiers. In the case of the latter, their initiative had to be frequently boosted by motivating means of varying kinds. Hence, there is no doubt that the crisis of the Spanish faction from the end of the 1640s was closely linked to the sharp drop in remittances from Madrid to the Viennese embassy to meet this need, owing to emergencies arising from the long-lasting war with France. Nevertheless, the prominence of the Spanish ambassador was kept alive and his strong influence in Imperial state affairs was ensured thanks to the expectation of the Imperial family with regard to the succession of the Spanish Monarchy. More specifically, Vienna sought to bring this aim to life through a marriage bond between one of Ferdinand III's sons and Philip IV's heiress. However, the ambassadors' use of this outstanding ascendancy had to be partially channelled through the support of reliable confidants close to the emperor. The fragmentation in earlier times of the distribution of Spanish influence at the Imperial court, gave way from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards to a concentration in a very few individuals. Besides, in the absence of financial means to strengthen the Spanish faction within a hostile environment, ambassadors used their initiative to introduce other means to reward their clients, as was the case from 1648 with Imperial posts or the effective lure of the Golden Fleece. Thus, the strong fluctuations that characterised the influence of the Spanish party during the analysed decade of the 1650s would set the general tone until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century revealing an unprecedented crisis of the ambassadors' authority. This, however, did not lead to a replacement in their supremacy at the Imperial court as long as Vienna's hope of inheriting the Spanish Monarchy was kept alive.

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<sup>59</sup> Marquis of La Fuente to Philip IV, Vienna, 31 May 1659, AHN, E, libro 126.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, 2 July 1659, AHN, E, libro 126; Philip IV to Marquis of La Fuente, Madrid, 27 August 1659, AGS, E, leg. 2993. The proposition was not only blessed by the Spanish party, but also by the Papal nuncio. Pribram, "Die Heirat", 339.