

*“Madrid vaut bien une guerre?”:  
Marriage Negotiations between the Habsburg Courts  
1653-1657*

Lothar Höbelt

*THE TREATY OF WESTPHALIA:  
SEPARATION – OR A WAY TO PREVENT ‘ALL SEPARATION’?*

The cohesion of the House of Habsburg was a salient feature of 17<sup>th</sup> century politics. In Philipp II’s era, relations with both his brother-in-law Maximilian and his nephew Rudolph had been notably lacking in warmth. When the Dutch rebellion erupted, the Emperor withdrew into what was at best benevolent neutrality. After 1619 all that changed – the Styrian cadet branch that took over was willing to acknowledge the senior position of its Madrid cousins. For many, then and now, Spanish influence (or the so-called “Spanish party” at the Vienna Court) was synonymous with religious intransigence. That may have been true in 1618, but in the long run there was a curious dialectic at work: Ferdinand II had to rely on Spanish help because he was challenged by the Protestants; but because he had to rely on Spain, the war that ensued turned from a conflict with strong religious overtones to a war of hegemony, with France as the “fountain of all evil”, and at least some of the Protestants increasingly seen as potential allies.

Coalition warfare is hardly ever free from tensions; especially when one of the two partners is clearly in the position of the junior partner. Tensions there were within the Habsburg “family compact”; but the basic solidarity was never called into question. During the later stages of the Thirty Years War, the conflict almost assumed the character of one family fighting against the rest of the world. It needed the combined power of France, Sweden and the Dutch Republic, with their very different types of strength, to fight the Habsburgs to

a standstill, and gain a certain degree of preponderance during the 1640's, after the Catalan *segadors* and the “tyrant” of Portugal had joined them.

Moreover, the assumption of Habsburg solidarity was probably one of the factors that made peace-making more difficult: The anti-Habsburg alliance might have been on its way to winning the war; but its members were afraid they were going to lose the peace. The anti-Habsburg alliance was a child of circumstance; once their partnership was dissolved, they would not meet again – and they knew it. They had differing priorities: Even before 1648, the Dutch had fought the Portuguese in Brazil and the Swedes the Danes in the Baltic, rather than coordinate and concentrate their efforts against the Habsburgs. But the Habsburgs would fight another day – and deal with their enemies separately, unless a formula could be found to prevent that backlash. “Spanish decadence”, whether reality or myth, was not something politicians were willing to take for granted in 1648<sup>1</sup>.

For the Habsburgs on the other hand, that degree of family solidarity was not just a foreign policy move, let alone a matter of sentiment; it gained its imperative character from the ever-present danger that one of them might die without male heirs. In such an eventuality, you had to be close enough to each other to prevent a hostile takeover. The German branch had come to rely on Spanish help to about the same extent Sweden relied on French subsidies. Dreams of grandeur apart, it simply could not afford to let the Spanish inheritance fall into different –and thus indifferent– hands. After all, it was only a combination of Turkish collapse and Anglo-Dutch money instead of the silver fleet that contrived to keep the German Habsburgs in the running for the first few decades after 1700.

The dreaded dynastic “window of vulnerability” opened with the death of Philip IV's heir, Balthasar Carlos, in October, 1646 that left his eight-year old sister Maria Teresa as the sole heiress of an Empire that spanned half the world. The looming threat was summed up by a loyal and acute observer: “God forbid the king should die before peace is concluded and ere the infanta is married”<sup>2</sup>. Apart from the Emperor's two sons, Ferdinand IV (born in 1633) and Leopold Ignaz (born in 1640), there simply were no safe contenders for the Spanish

<sup>1</sup> For a nuanced discussion of the decadence myth see Ch. STORRS: *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy 1665-1700*, Oxford 2006.

<sup>2</sup> HHStA, Kriegsakten 179, fol. 174, Schwarzenberg to Kurz, 8 October, 1648.

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crown – unless you counted either Leopold Wilhelm, the Emperor’s younger brother (even though, he happened to be a man of the Church) or as a last resort the Tyrolean branch of the family: Archdukes Ferdinand Karl and Sigismund, the sons of Claudia de Medici – a prospect that was viewed with misgivings by the Vienna court, however. (As a sort of consolation price, Ferdinand III married a Tyrolean archduchess as his second wife in 1648.)

The ancient motto, associated with the rise of the Habsburg dynasty to European prominence, had of course, always been: *“Tu, felix Austria, nube!”* The misleading part of that verse had always been the line before: *“Bella gerant alii”*. The Habsburg experience did not lend itself to a Beatles-style summing-up of “Make love not war”. On the contrary, starting with the Burgundian match of 1477 that unleashed their antagonism with France, the Habsburgs had usually been forced to fight for their inheritance. That remained true in 1646, too – the only difference was: In the old days marriage had come first, wars later. Now the order was reversed. The Emperor had to continue fighting at Spain’s side if he wanted one of his sons to be rewarded with the Infanta’s hand.

The autumn of 1646 thus witnessed a tightening of dynastic bonds: Balthasar Carlos had been engaged to be married to the Emperor’s daughter Maria Ana; in a surprise move, Philipp IV decided to enter into that marriage contract himself. A few weeks earlier, in September 1646, he had offered the governorship of the Netherlands to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. While their advisors were still working out the details of the Archduke’s commission, Peñaranda managed to clinch the deal with the Dutch and sign an armistice in January, 1647: Once he arrived in Brussels, Leopold Wilhelm would no longer be faced with a war on two fronts<sup>3</sup>.

The truce with the Dutch gave hard-liners the upper hand: To Peñaranda’s dismay, Count Maximilian Trauttmansdorff, Ferdinand III’s chief minister, had come close to settling the Emperor’s disputes with both France and Sweden in 1646. A split had opened between the policy of the two Habsburg Courts, or at least between their representatives in Münster. Yet, family

<sup>3</sup> M. ROHRSCHEIDER: *Der gescheiterte Frieden von Münster. Spaniens Ringen mit Frankreich auf dem Westfälischen Friedenskongreß*, Münster 2007; P. SONNINO: *Mazarin’s Quest. The Congress of Westphalia and the Coming of the Fronde*, Cambridge (Mass.) 2008; O. VAN NIMWEGEN: *‘Deser landen crijchsvolck’. Het Staatse leger en de militaire revoluties 1588-1688*, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 231-238; on L. WILHELM in the Netherlands see also VERMEIR’s contribution in this volume.

solidarity called for a continuation of the war – unless Spain was willing to sign the peace treaty, too, the Emperor would not dare offend his Spanish cousins at such a critical juncture by parting ways with Madrid. In the summer of 1648 Philipp IV and Haro even suggested the Emperor should withdraw his plenipotentiaries from Münster altogether. The money saved, it was argued, could better be spent by raising new regiments<sup>4</sup>.

There might well have been no Westphalian peace if it had not been for another series of Swedish successes. The elite of the Vienna court was heavily hit when the Swedes surprised Prague and captured a number of their relatives, in July, 1648. Ferdinand was compelled to stop fighting, after all, for fear of further losses. The news of the Westphalian treaty arrived at a crucial moment, just as Philip IV's bride Maria Ana, now thirteen-and-a-half, was about to leave Vienna, with her elder brother Ferdinand eager to come along and establish himself as the heir apparent of the Spanish monarchy. The invitation extended to young Ferdinand (IV) had always been a half-hearted one even at the best of times: Madrid did want to retain the option of marrying the Infanta to a French prince, just in case. Even worse, in case the Emperor signed the peace, both the Spanish ambassadors in Vienna –Terranova, who was leaving, and Lumières, who had just arrived– had strict instructions to prevent Ferdinand's journey. At most, Ferdinand IV might have been allowed to accompany his sister across the Mediterranean but would have to turn back after a meeting with Philip IV in a port town, e.g. Malaga.

Madrid regarded the Westphalian treaty as a separation, a breach of trust, as the treaty expressly forbade the Emperor to support Spain any longer in its war with France. When he received the hapless Imperial ambassador, Caretto, Philip IV pretended he could not even believe the news of his cousin's desertion, at first. Ferdinand III, of course, tried to put things in a more favourable light: As he was unable to help his cousins right now, with the enemy at the gate, Spain had not lost anything materially; on the other hand, as soon as his position improved, he hinted, he could just as easily circumvent the neutrality clauses by donning another crown and offering help in his capacity as King of Hungary. Thus, he argued, as the peace was the shortest way to a recovery of Habsburg fortunes, it did not spell separation, but a way to prevent 'all separation'<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> HHStA, Spanien 35, folder 593, fols. 157-169, Caretto 29 July 1648.

<sup>5</sup> L. HÖBELT: *Ferdinand III. Friedenskaiser wider Willen*, Graz 2008, pp. 288-291.

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#### MARRIAGE PROPOSALS AT CROSS-PURPOSES

That tacit ‘agreement to differ’ is where matters rested for a surprisingly long period of almost five years: First of all, any definite decision about the infanta’s marriage could easily be postponed until she had reached an age of roughly fifteen. In the meantime, if the new Queen of Spain produced an heir, the matter would lose much of its urgency. (As it happened, Maria Ana gave birth to Margarita Teresa in 1651; she was much criticised for suffering a miscarriage allegedly brought on by too active a life in August 1653<sup>6</sup>; another daughter, born in December 1655, died after only a few weeks.) Secondly, thanks to the “Fronde”, the civil war in France, Spain did not need any extra help from the Emperor. 1652, in particular, proved to be an even more impressive *annus mirabilis* than 1625 (even if no equivalent cycle of paintings was commissioned to commemorate that year). Barcelona and Casale were taken; even more flamboyantly, the Duke of Lorraine staged a joyeuse entrée into Paris; not to forget the exploits of the British Commonwealth fleet that counted as a non-too-secret ally and helped Leopold Wilhelm reconquer Dunkirk<sup>7</sup>.

In the meantime, Ferdinand III finally got rid of the Swedes who lived off his lands in 1650<sup>8</sup> and leisurely prepared for an imperial diet that was supposed to tie up a few loose ends. In the run up to the diet, on 31 May 1653, his son was also elected King of the Romans<sup>9</sup>. Ferdinand IV had now passed his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday; he was a king three times over (including the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia). It was time for the matchmakers to get busy again. In November 1653 the emperor raised the matter again in a letter to Philip IV. Rather disingenuously, he was careful to put the marriage proposal in purely domestic

<sup>6</sup> OÖLA, Archiv Steyr 1226/44, Lamberg to Auersperg, 30 August, 1653. On Maria Ana see C. HAM: *Die verkaufte Bräute. Studien zu den Hochzeiten zwischen österreichischen und spanischen Habsburgern im 17. Jahrhundert* (unpubl. PhD Vienna 1995), pp. 185 ff.

<sup>7</sup> B. CAPP: *Cromwell’s Navy*, Oxford 1992, p. 71; L. HÖBELT: *Ferdinand III...*, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

<sup>8</sup> A. OSCHMANN: *Der Nürnberger Exekutionstag 1649-50*, Münster 1991.

<sup>9</sup> K. O. VON ARETIN: *Das Alte Reich 1648-1806*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1993; A. MÜLLER: *Der Reichstag von 1653/54*, Frankfurt/M. 1992; B. STOLLBERG-RILINGER: *Des Kaisers alte Kleider. Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches*, Munich 2008, also devotes a chapter to the Ratisbon diet of 1653-1654.

terms. The Infanta simply happened to be the most suitable partner for a King of the Romans: “*allein damit der römische König seinem stand gemäß sein gemahl bekommen möge*”<sup>10</sup>. Yet, there was an element of truth in his plea. Ferdinand IV needed a wife. With the relentless ticking of the biological clock for such an incestuous dynasty, it was surely better to try and start producing heirs in both Vienna and Madrid as soon as possible: “*das beste mittel der vernunft nach...daß man auf zweien orthen der succession oblige*”<sup>11</sup>.

Foremost among the potential matchmakers ranked the new ‘prime minister’ at the Vienna Court, Prince Weikhard Auersperg who held the position of mayordomo or Lord High Steward not of the Emperor, but of the young king. Auersperg hankered after his predecessor Trauttmansdorff’s reputation as the real power behind the throne but did not enjoy such an unrivalled position, politically; nor did he have Trauttmansdorff’s easy humour or his nonchalance. If anything, though, he was even more pro-Spanish than Trauttmansdorff who had often fought with Peñaranda in his last years. For the first few years of his ascendancy, Auersperg’s closest ally at the Court of Vienna was the Spanish ambassador Francisco de Moura, Conde de Lumiares, who inherited his father’s title as Marquess of Castel-Rodrigo in 1651<sup>12</sup>.

The matchmakers faced two difficulties: One was the Vienna branch had done very little to earn the hand of the infanta by its behaviour over the last five years: True, they had transferred two of their surplus regiments into Spanish service by disbanding them so close to the Milanese border that soldiers had little choice<sup>13</sup>. But as long as Ferdinand III needed the electors’ votes for his son’s election, he had to take their sensibilities into account and could not openly flaunt his disregard of the Westphalian neutrality clauses. Thus, Count

<sup>10</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/20, Auersperg 15 Nov. 1653.

<sup>11</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/40, Auersperg 9 Oct. 1653.

<sup>12</sup> M. MECENSEFFY: „Im Dienste dreier Herren. Leben und Wirken des Fürsten Johann Weikhard Auersperg (1615-1677)“, in *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 114 (1938), pp. 297-508; Príncipe Pío, MARQUÉS DE CASTEL-RODRIGO (ed.): *La Elección de Fernando IV, rey de Romanos. Correspondencia del III Marques de Castel-Rodrigo (1648-1656)*, Madrid 1929, p. 370 (13 Feb. 1653).

<sup>13</sup> P. HOYOS: „Die kaiserliche Armee 1648-1650“, in *Schriften des Heeresgeschichtlichen Museums in Wien* 7 (1976), pp. 169-232; Castel-Rodrigo, *Correspondencia* 202, 351; see also the contribution by RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ (“Las limitaciones de la Paz...”) in this volume.

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Johann Maximilian Lamberg, the new Imperial ambassador who arrived in Madrid in early 1653, probably rightly suspected that resentment at Vienna’s “desertion” in 1648 still lingered in Spain where *“etliche biß auf diße stund die exclusion Regis Hispaniae vom Münsterischen friden nit verkocht oder verschmerzt haben”*<sup>14</sup>. As a quid pro quo, any marriage proposal that wanted to be taken seriously, obviously had to include a tacit promise, at least, to improve the political and military cooperation between Vienna and Madrid.

On top of those atmospheric difficulties, both Auersperg and Lamberg also sensed a structural difficulty: If the marriage of Ferdinand IV and the infanta Maria Teresa went ahead, the couple might easily find itself in possession of Charles V’s ‘*monarchia universalis*’. Now, Germans might associate the golden days of Charles V with Titian’s painting of Charles triumphantly riding over the battlefields of Europe; Spanish memories of the man who for them was Carlos I were less happy, as Lamberg reminded his patrons: No one in Spain was keen to revive Charles V’s monarchy and reduce Spain to an appendix of the Holy Roman Empire: *“Man habe hier noch in frischem gedächtnuß, was für inconuenienzen tempore Caroli quinti entstanden”*<sup>15</sup>.

The Spanish Empire was a composite monarchy at least as much as the German and Hungarian holdings of the dynasty, with even more far flung possessions. Yet, it seems that in Castile, at least, there was a sense of statehood as distinct from dynastic interests that was totally lacking in the German lands. Maybe it was a polite excuse if Philip IV sometimes argued his ministers would not let him do certain things; but if so, it was a argument that seemed plausible enough to Lamberg. He feared the Spanish ministers wanted to delay the match as long as possible because once the king was dead, they would be able to do as they pleased and exclude the Vienna branch from the Spanish inheritance completely. As an alternative, they might work for a Portuguese marriage to reintegrate the Iberian kingdoms, or co-opt a Savoyan prince to push the French out of Italy; if it came to the worst the inheritance might simply be partitioned. As a stop-gap solution, Lamberg also feared that Spain might proclaim Juan Jose, Philip IV’s legalized bastard son, regent, if not king in his own name<sup>16</sup>. He

<sup>14</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/114, Lamberg to Auersperg, 28 Jan. 1654.

<sup>15</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/23, Lamberg to Auersperg, July 1653.

<sup>16</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/31, Lamberg to Auersperg, 13 Dec. 1653; in a similar vein 1226/77, 22 July 1654.

added, those ideas did not correspond to the thoughts of the king, maybe also not the plans of Don Luis de Haro but then he had no great opinion of the independence of mind of a man like Haro, who had never been abroad and never sat in a council<sup>17</sup>. As a result, the valido “*magis timet quam timeatur*”<sup>18</sup>.

The uncertain prospects of the succession first of all meant that Spain was unwilling to let its heiress leave the country. If anything was to come of the proposal, it was Ferdinand IV who would have to transfer his residence to Madrid. Even so, when Ferdinand insisted, Philipp IV finally replied on 13 June 1654 that he was unable to answer conclusively: He did not intend to overlook the claims of “our house”; he would make the appropriate preparations for the marriage (like asking for a Papal dispensation) but could not yet commit himself. Philip had tried to make his refusal as palatable as possible. His ambassador Castel-Rodrigo was blunter. When asked by Auersperg during the carnival season of 1654, he poured cold water on all these projects. After all, Spain was no vassal of the house of Austria. They would “marry the infanta to win land and people”. Such openness did not make him popular with Auersperg<sup>19</sup>. Their friendship was abruptly terminated. The axis, around which court life at Vienna had revolved, suddenly broke in two.

As a way out, Lamberg suggested Ferdinand’s second born son Leopold Ignaz should be sent to Madrid. Thus Charles V’s ghost could be laid to rest. Spain need have no fear of being reduced to a satellite of Vienna. „*Besser es falle dises königreich ad secundogenitum quam ad collateralem vel extranum*“<sup>20</sup>. But, of course, that option soon turned out to be illusory because Ferdinand IV –just like Balthasar Carlos a few years earlier– suddenly died of the smallpox on 9 July, 1654. For the time being, Leopold Ignatius was Ferdinand’s sole heir. The whole procedure of an Imperial election had to be repeated; but as he was only 14, many argued it should be postponed for a few years. In the meantime, hopes for a male heir to the Spanish throne had still not been fulfilled. With the king

<sup>17</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/94, Lamberg to Auersperg, 27 May 1654: „*furchtsam, nichts studirt, nicht geraist, auch niemalen in aintzig rhat gesessen*“. For a less prejudiced view of Haro see A. MALCOLM: *Don Luis de Haro and the Political Elite of the Spanish Monarchy in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, Ph. D. Oxford 1999.

<sup>18</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/157, Lamberg to Auersperg, 22 May 1655.

<sup>19</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/82, Auersperg to Lamberg, 23 Feb. 1654.

<sup>20</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/115, Lamberg to Auersperg, 10 Jan. 1654.



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in his mid-fifties, the question was debated who would preside over a regency in the case of his sudden death – the prince selected for that task would also be in a pole position to marry the Infanta. (The queen herself was not supposed to be in the running to head a regency unless she had given birth to a son. If not, she would simply be sent to a convent, as one of her ladies-in-waiting unkindly suggested)<sup>21</sup>.

Once again, Madrid and Vienna pursued two conflicting strategies. Ferdinand III still pushed for the Infanta to come to Vienna; as his brother Leopold Wilhelm was by now well-versed in the ways of Spanish administration, it was he who should go to Madrid. Lamberg was instructed to argue “ceaselessly” for Leopold Wilhelm as a regent-in-reserve<sup>22</sup>. Philip IV saw things the other way round. He favoured a clock-wise movement of princes: Young Leopold Ignaz should come to Madrid; if need be (i.e. if Ferdinand III was to die suddenly) his uncle Leopold Wilhelm could run for election as Emperor. Rumours were current that Leopold Wilhelm was unable to father children<sup>23</sup>. Even if true, such an impediment would not matter if he were to be elected Emperor – a position that could just as well go to his nephew after his death; whereas a childless couple would create havoc in a hereditary kingdom like Spain. Admittedly, opinions in Madrid seemed to be divided about that issue: A majority of ministers, Lamberg reported, favoured Leopold Ignatius but Peñaranda insisted on Leopold Wilhelm; in the end, though, he was afraid all these debates might just be pretexts *“ut sic regem et nos decipant”*<sup>24</sup>.

Ferdinand, however, was just as adamant that he would not let his heir leave the country, either. Before any such move was contemplated, he first had to succeed to the three crowns of Hungary, Bohemia and the Empire. Auersperg had in the meantime given up all hope of the Spanish marriage and was looking around for other options<sup>25</sup>. After all, a Spanish bride might even harm Leopold Ignatius’ chances with the German electors. Insult of insults, he even approved of an idea floating around to have young Leopold Ignatius marry a Portuguese

<sup>21</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/44, Lamberg to Auersperg, 30 August 1653.

<sup>22</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1229/140, Lamberg to Ferdinand III, 18 Nov. 1654.

<sup>23</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/274, Lamberg to Auersperg, 18 Dec. 1656; R. SCHREIBER: „*ein galeria nach meinem humor*“, *Erzherzog Leopold Wilhelm*, Vienna 2004, p. 41.

<sup>24</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/136 & 146, Lamberg to Auersperg, 27 Feb. 1655 & 1 May 1655.

<sup>25</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/192, Portia to Lamberg, 14 April 1655.

princess, if for no other reason than her expected rich dowry (in monetary terms, with no reunification intended.) With a few millions in cash, the Vienna branch could at least start redeeming pawned territories<sup>26</sup>. After all, as the exasperated Lamberg –who was anxious to leave Madrid and tend to his career back home– put it at the beginning of 1656: He had found it necessary to remind the Spaniards that these days it was they who were in need of assistance, not the other way round: “*daß wir heutigen tages nit ihre, sondern sie unsere hülff vonnöthen hätten*”<sup>27</sup>.

### DESPERATE COUNSELS?

Indeed, over the last two years, the strategic outlook had darkened considerably. The euphoric days of the reconquista of 1652 had ended. The death of Ferdinand IV in the summer of 1654 coincided with the first military setback when the siege of Arras had to be raised. In the summer of 1655, both Habsburg lines found themselves with an additional war on their hands. In the Baltic, Queen Christina of Sweden had left her crown to Carl X Gustav whose attack on Poland created fears that the resurgence of the Swedish war machine might have a spill-over effect on Germany, too<sup>28</sup>. In the Atlantic, Cromwell set his “Western Design” into motion: If Jamaica seemed a consolation prize; Blake’s ships hunting for the silver fleet were more than a nuisance. Moreover, the Fronde had finally been defeated. As a result the tide of war in Flanders fields turned once more in France’s favour. In Italy, Mazarin’s newly acquired in-laws, the Modena dynasty, turned on the Spanish and joined the former Spanish general, Thomas of Savoy, in attacking Milan<sup>29</sup>. For the first time since 1648, Spain actually needed help.

<sup>26</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/221 & 222, Auersperg to Lamberg, 27 May 1656.

<sup>27</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/269, Lamberg to Auersperg, 5 Jan. 1656.

<sup>28</sup> R. I. FROST: *After the Deluge. Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War 1655-1660*, Cambridge 1993; C.-G. ISACSON: *Karl X Gustavs Krig*, Lund 2004.

<sup>29</sup> T. VENNING: *Cromwellian Foreign Policy*, London 1995, pp. 59 ff.; R. QUAZZA: *Preponderanza Spagnuola (1559-1700)*, Milano 1938, p. 520; R. ORESKO: “The Marriages of the Nieces of Cardinal Mazarin. Public Policy and Private Strategy in Seventeenth Century Europe”, in R. BABEL (ed.): *Frankreich im europäischen Staatensystem der frühen Neuzeit*, Sigmaringen 1995, pp. 109-151.

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But the diplomatic channels between Madrid and Vienna had almost dried up. After a brief reconciliation<sup>30</sup>, Castel Rodrigo and Auersperg were again at daggers drawn. When Castel-Rodrigo delivered his king’s appeal for help on 5 September 1655, he seems to have done so in a notably undiplomatic fashion<sup>31</sup>. Soon after, Leopold Wilhelm grew tired of leading an under-supplied army and resigned the governorship of the Netherlands – even though Philip IV seemed willing to listen to his complaints and replace his unloved second-in-command Fuensaldaña<sup>32</sup>. In terms of both regency and/or marriage, Leopold Wilhelm was now definitely out of the running; his controversial advisor Count Johann Adolf Schwarzenberg provided an ideal scapegoat for the failings of his master. In Madrid, as Lamberg put it, Schwarzenberg’s name was written “*im catalogo librorum prohibendo prima classis*”<sup>33</sup>. Even if people in Vienna commiserated with Leopold Wilhelm’s predicament they admitted he had chosen a most inopportune moment to resign<sup>34</sup>. Relations between Madrid and Vienna had reached a nadir. The two Empires seemed to be drifting apart.

Yet, all was not yet lost. Auersperg tried to establish a direct link with Haro behind Castel-Rodrigo’s back and remove the friend-turned-enemy from Vienna altogether. In late 1655 he sent Colonel Jacinto de Vera, a Spanish veteran of the Thirty Years War in Germany (and of Rocroi<sup>35</sup>), on a secret mission to Madrid. Vera admitted that relations between the two courts had cooled off recently, movingly described the Emperor’s plight and emphasized

<sup>30</sup> M. MECENSEFFY: „Im Dienste dreier Herren...”, *op. cit.*, p. 401, skips over the earlier break and dates the parting of the ways in the autumn of 1655, only.

<sup>31</sup> HHStA, Vorträge 2, Konvolut 5, fol. 41-59 (22 Sept. 1655).

<sup>32</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/172, 11 Nov. 1655; R. SCHREIBER: „ein galeria nach meinem humor“, *op. cit.*, 83 talks about Philipp’s “dismissal” of Leopold Wilhelm.

<sup>33</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/289, Lamberg to Portia, 1 August 1657; F. K. ZU SCHWARZENBERG: *Geschichte des reichsständischen Hauses Schwarzenberg*, Neustadt a.d. Aisch 1963, pp. 116-127.

<sup>34</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/238, Portia to Lamberg, 8 March 1656: “*hätte in der wahrheit zu keiner untauglicheren conjunctur alß bei diser nit vorgeomben werden khönnen*”.

<sup>35</sup> J. A. VINCART: “Relación de la Campaña del Año de 1643”, in *Coleccion de Documentos ineditos para la Historia de Espana (CODOIN)*, vol. 75, Madrid 1880, pp. 417-469; here: 433.

that the renewed dangers facing the Casa d'Austria called for united action<sup>36</sup>. Haro granted Auersperg's wish and agreed to Castel-Rodrigo's recall. As a *quid pro quo*, when de Vera returned to Vienna in the summer of 1656, Auersperg was willing to grant the Spanish wish for military help. The Emperor was not going to declare war on France but he was willing to fight France's Italian allies – in return for Spanish subsidies, as usual. Auersperg explained to the sceptical nuntio: If the disloyal Duke of Modena had attacked the Netherlands, he could have done so with impunity, as the Burgundian Circle had been explicitly declared off-limits by the Treaty of Münster. But Italy was a different matter. It belonged to the Empire – and the Emperor was entitled, nay obliged to support his vassals if they needed help. If people had become accustomed to treat the Emperor as a nonentity they would soon be disillusioned. "*Siamo vivi*", he added threateningly<sup>37</sup>.

There was a subtext to the Vienna initiative: Even if the news had probably not yet reached Auersperg at the time he authorized the expedition to Lombardy, reports soon spread about Lionne's visit to Madrid. At first, Lamberg had suspected the mysterious guest at the Buen Retiro might be the Duke of York (the future James II)<sup>38</sup>. But in November, at the latest, a letter reached Madrid from the Emperor complaining about the peace negotiations behind his back<sup>39</sup>. Even if they were in two minds about openly entering the war again, statesmen in Vienna were not at all in favour of a Franco-Spanish peace – as they expected the French to throw their forces against Germany in such a case, and subject the Empire to another two-pronged attack, together with Sweden. Such peace negotiations also raised the spectre of the infanta Maria Teresa pawned to France; those were the "desperate counsels" Vienna feared. Auersperg's controversial offer of an auxiliary army for Milan clearly contained a bid to corner the Spanish marriage market, after all.

<sup>36</sup> AGS, Estado, leg. 2363, 6 Nov. 1655. I am grateful to Alistair Malcolm for sending me a copy of these documents.

<sup>37</sup> ASV, Germania 157, fol. 389, 395 (23 Sept. 1656).

<sup>38</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/220, Lamberg to Auersperg, 12 July 1656; D. SERE: *La Paix des Pyrennes. Vingt-quatre ans de negociations entre la France et l'Espagne (1635-1659)*, Paris 2007, pp. 218-266.

<sup>39</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/255, Lamberg to Auersperg, 29 Nov. 1656.

*“Madrid, vaut bien une guerre?”...*

Controversial it was. Ministers in Vienna had always been afraid their Spanish counterparts wanted to sabotage the family reunion; Auersperg’s decision made it obvious there were different opinions in Vienna, too. Leopold Ignatius’ mayordomo Count Johann Ferdinand Portia and Imperial Vice-Chancellor Count Ferdinand Kurz, the man in charge of relations with the Empire, strongly disagreed with Auersperg’s strategy. They held Auersperg would provoke France without materially helping Spain. Instead, the Emperor would do better to concentrate on Poland that had been overrun by the Swedes in 1655, an event that was even then likened to the deluge (“potop” in Polish)<sup>40</sup>. Portia propagated a domino-theory: Once Poland went down, the Emperor’s hereditary lands would be next. However, if the House of Austria helped to save Poland she might be rewarded with the Polish crown – after all, that was another elective office, with no obvious contender in sight, since the last Vasa king Jan Kasimir – a former priest married to his brother’s middle-aged widow – was without an heir and unlikely to produce one. When in the autumn of 1656, a mutiny broke out among a regiment destined to cross the Alps, his Majesty’s most loyal opposition greeted the news in surprisingly gleeful terms – as a sign of divine guidance preventing Austria from starting a war in the wrong direction<sup>41</sup>.

Interestingly enough, to give a complicated story another twist, Spain did not regard the Polish bait as a diversion from the real problems of the Casa d’Austria. Both Haro and Peñaranda, in fact, encouraged the Emperor to start a war on two fronts at the same time<sup>42</sup>. Maybe they were driven by the hope that in such a case the Dutch and the Danish could be persuaded to join the war effort. If that were the case, the premature case of “*mourir pour Danzig*” might open a backdoor for the Empire to re-enter the war in the West, too – only this time with the Dutch bankrolling the Habsburgs rather than their enemies. However, both Auersperg and Ferdinand III were unenthusiastic about the Polish option. They just wanted to prevent Poland from surrendering and thus freeing Swedish troops for operations elsewhere. That is why they did their best to persuade the Russians (and their Cossack or Tartar allies) to switch sides and help Poland, but did not want to commit themselves to fight. As so

<sup>40</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/165, Lamberg to Portia, 10 November 1655.

<sup>41</sup> L. HÖBELT: *Ferdinand III...*, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

<sup>42</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/239 & 298, Lamberg to Auersperg, 27 Sept. 1656, 17 Jan. 1657; 1229/380, Lamberg to Ferdinand III, 6 Sept. 1656.

often in 17<sup>th</sup> century warfare, not confrontation, but diversion of the enemy's resources was the name of the game.

In the meantime, Auersperg's gamble had succeeded only too well. The marriage question resurfaced with a vengeance, triggered by two non-events in the late summer of 1656: On the one hand, Lionne's negotiations in Madrid did not produce any tangible results; on the other hand, Queen Maria Ana did not turn out to be pregnant, as had been hoped. As a result, almost immediately after Lionne's departure Philipp IV played his last card: Leopold Ignatius should come to Madrid – but this time not just as a regent-in-reserve but clearly as the infanta's husband. That was not just an offer but an ultimatum. He would brook no delay. If Vienna rejected the deal, the Infanta would be married elsewhere. The looming threat was that if the Vienna court tried any delaying tactics, the Spanish would immediately send for the Duke of Savoy – thus buying out at least one enemy and stabilizing the Italian front<sup>43</sup>.

Lamberg had reported this bombshell message as early as 20 September 1656<sup>44</sup>. Rumours about the plan spread in Vienna around the turn of the year; but Philipp's official letter to Ferdinand III only arrived in Vienna in late March, 1657<sup>45</sup>. Faced with such a categorical proposal, even the sceptics among the Portia and Kurz faction held that such an offer simply could not be rejected. It was not advisable to watch passively as all these kingdoms and lands were transferred to a foreign dynasty (*„gar nit rathsamb zuzusehen, wie dise königreiche und länder in ein fremdes hauß transferirt werden sollen“*). It would not do to risk certain gains of hereditary kingdoms for the uncertain prospects of elective crowns (*„gewisse nit wegen des ungewissen auslassen“*)<sup>46</sup>.

Once again, death intervened. On 2 April 1657, Ferdinand III died after a brief illness. As a sort of divine compensation, his daughter Maria Ana turned out to be pregnant again – in December she actually gave birth to a son, Philip Prosper. In the meantime, plans actually went ahead for Ferdinand II's heir Leopold Ignatius to go to Spain. Portia was the new guiding spirit at Court where he succeeded in playing off the pro-Spanish Auersperg against the anti-

<sup>43</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/295, Lamberg to Auersperg, 7 Feb. 1657.

<sup>44</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1226/237, Lamberg to Auersperg, 20 Sept. 1656.

<sup>45</sup> HHStA, Spanien, Hofkorrespondenz 6, folder 3, fol. 78-9, Philip IV to Ferdinand III, 22 December, 1656; OÖLA, Steyr 1225/212, Lamberg to Portia, 18 December 1656.

<sup>46</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/249, Portia to Lamberg, 24 Jan. 1657.

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Spanish Schwarzenberg. Portia would have preferred to send another archduke to what he termed a “foreign continent” but if Madrid insisted on Leopold Ignatius as the only way of saving the Spanish inheritance from falling into the wrong hands, he would advise his master to comply with his uncle’s wishes. If one had to choose, Portia was even willing to have Spain rather than the crown of the Holy Roman Empire: It was “*besser die römische cron gehen zu lassen als das haus zu zertrümmern*”<sup>47</sup>. But then Madrid had changed its mind after Ferdinand’s death. It was Spain that all of a sudden followed a “Germany First” policy and gave priority to the Empire. After all, the support of the Viennese cousins only seemed worthwhile if rulers in Vienna retained some authority over the Rhineland that provided a hinterland for the Spanish Netherlands and a corridor to Italy, as Peñaranda had always emphasized<sup>48</sup>.

However, winning the contest for the Imperial crown meant re-affirming Leopold’s vows of chastity – in military terms, as he had to repeat the promise not to help Spain; in another sense, too, because as the military situation deteriorated in the summer of 1658, Philipp IV started to have second thoughts about offering the hand of the Infanta to him. Maria Teresa’s marriage to Louis XIV was the prize to be paid for a tolerable peace with France<sup>49</sup>. As Philipp did have a male heir, by now, this was a risk he was willing to take (maybe also a prize worth less, as the French argued). France in return made an offer rather similar to the clauses imposed on the Emperor at Münster; she promised not to help Portugal any longer. In the end, Leopold Ignatius, by now Emperor Leopold I, still got his Spanish bride in 1665<sup>50</sup>, but it turned out to be his niece Margarita Teresa, rather than her elder sister who was destined for the less than brilliant role as consort of the Sun King.

The two main branches of the Casa d’Austria certainly did enjoy a ‘special relationship’, with all their ups and downs. In general, if the going was good,

<sup>47</sup> OÖLA, Steyr 1225/292, Portia to Lamberg, 11 July 1657.

<sup>48</sup> *Correspondencia Diplomática de los Plenipotenciarios españoles en el Congreso de Münster 1643 a 1648* (= CODON 84), Madrid 1885, p. 245, 261.

<sup>49</sup> D. SERE: *La Paix des Pyrennes...*, *op. cit.*, 313 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Z. RÖHSNER, „Die Reise des Ferdinand Bonaventura von Harrach nach Madrid 1665“, in G. BRETTNER-MESSLER *et alii* (eds.): *Von Ferdinand III. bis Jörg Haider. Festschrift für Lothar Höbelt zum 50. Geburtstag*, Vienna 2006, pp. 37-48; A. F. PRIBRAM: „Die Heirat Kaiser Leopolds I. mit Margarethe Theresia von Spanien“, in *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 77 (1891), pp. 319-375.

both branches were tempted to pursue a fairly independent course and follow a policy of “*fara da se*”; if disaster threatened, solidarity might be endangered as “*sauve qui peut*” became the motto. But in the grey area in between those two extremes, mutual assistance, “union”, seemed the obvious solution to overcome any difficulties. Even when extra adventures beckoned in the East, the Court of Vienna never lost sight of the main chance, “the inheritance of half the world”<sup>51</sup>. To prevent that inheritance from slipping through their fingers, the German Habsburgs had even been prepared to re-enter the war in 1656. To use a variation of Henri IV’s famous slogan, their conviction could be summed up: “*Madrid vaut bien une guerre*”. (And Madrid of course included Mexico and Milan and Manila, too.) Even if Leopold I in the beginning maybe seemed less wedded to that concept than his father, in the long run, even he, except for a few years around 1670, did not flinch from that prospect.

<sup>51</sup> That is the way Trauttmansdorff saw it; *Acta Pacis Westphalicae*, Series III A, vol. 3, Münster 1985, p. 725 (17 Feb. 1647).