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Vienna, the Spanish Ambassador and the Nuncio: The 3rd Marquis of Aytona and the Fading Catholic Alliance (1624–1629)

Abstract: *The papacy and the Spanish Monarchy were, by the decade of 1620, the most global powers in Europe and their dynastic and confessional priorities led to changing clashes and alliances around the world. Local contexts were decisive: in Rome, the creation of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide challenged Spanish control over missionaries beyond Europe, while in Madrid the royal favourite Olivares attempted to establish a major Catholic alliance with France and the papacy against the Protestants. In Vienna, the conflict between papal and Spanish diplomats was hard to dissimulate after 1623. The arrival of a new ambassador –the 3rd Marquis of Aytona– supposedly closer to the papacy, should reverse this situation. This article explores the causes of the distancing between two intrinsic allies. It examines their competing tactics of negotiation and communicative devices to voice their positions at the Imperial court, especially in the polarizing context of the War of the Mantuan Succession.*

Keywords: *House of Austria – diplomacy – papacy – Thirty Years' War*

The Imperial court constituted one of the most complex centres of power in early modern Europe due to its overlapping of roles and functions. Vienna in 1618 was firstly the seat of the Holy Roman Emperor, theoretic head of the Christian princes but member of a secondary branch of the powerful Habsburg dynasty. Secondly, it was the centre of a disaggregated Habsburg Monarchy including the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia and the archduchies of Austria. Thirdly, it was the capital of Lower Austria, a territory with broad traditional liberties and Protestant majority. Behind a brilliant and cosmopolite facade, the Viennese court was smaller and weaker than those of Rome, Madrid, Paris or London. It was relatively close to the frontier with the menacing Ottoman Empire and still assessing its position after the recent return from Prague in 1612–1615. The Imperial court was not yet the undisputed centre of patronage for imperial elites due to its limited resources and confessional specificities as a Catholic hub among a predominantly Protestant population.¹

1 Volker PRESS, *The Habsburg Court as Center of the Imperial Government*, *Journal of Modern History* 58, 1986, pp. 23–45; Jeroen DUINDAM, *Vienna and Versailles: the Courts of Europe's dynastic Rivals*,

For these reasons, the papal and Spanish diplomats held a comparatively high influence and had the ability to condition the decision-making process in the imperial entourage.² The Spanish kings were the closest relatives of the imperial family and their ties were continually reinforced through regular intra-dynastic marriages and the circulation of common servants. The Spanish Monarchy had the economic and social resources that the poorer imperial branch lacked for rewarding most of these servants. Meanwhile, the papacy targeted the Holy Empire as the goal of the Catholic reconquest and the Viennese nunciature concentrated on guaranteeing that the Emperor's policy would adhere to Catholic orthodoxy.³

While Maximilian II (1564–1576) had been a poorly committed Catholic far from papal positions and Rudolf II (1576–1612) developed a genuine obsession against the Spanish influence, Emperor Ferdinand II (1619–1637) both guaranteed an ardent Catholic faith and a doubtless devotion to his Spanish family. The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 exacerbated the tense court environment. It became a battleground for factions mediated by exterior factors. The Spanish Monarchy was an extremely committed ally, providing funds for the Imperial army. The papacy was expected to clarify the goals of a war fought in the name of the Catholic faith. The papal nunciature and the Spanish embassy had cooperated tightly for decades to impose their common confessional goals at the Imperial court. Paradoxically, the final acceptance of those general principles brought to light inner tensions and disagreements which had been relatively concealed until this time.⁴

Ambassador Oñate, dictator or statesman?

The Bohemian phase of the Thirty Years' War ended in 1620–1621 through the defeat of Frederick V (Elector Palatine and the disputed King of Bohemia) and his Calvinist allies

1550–1780, Cambridge 2003, pp. 248–258; Karin J. MACHARDY, *War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria: The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Political Interaction, 1521–1622*, New York 2003, pp. 4–7, 15–18, 125–133, 151–164; Rudolf SCHLÖGL, *Der frühneuzeitliche Hof als Kommunikationsraum. Interaktionstheoretische Perspektiven der Forschung*, in: Frank Becker (ed.), *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: Exemplarische Fallstudien*, Frankfurt am Main 2004, pp. 191, 205, 209–210.

2 Martin SCHEUTZ, "...hinter Ihrer Käyserlichen Majestät der Päbstliche Nuncius, Königl. Spanischer und Venetianischer Abgesandter." *Fronleichnamspzessionen im frühneuzeitlichen Wien*, in: Richard Bösel – Grete Klingenstein – Alexander Koller (edd.), *Kaiserhof – Papstthof (16.–18. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2006, pp. 173–205.

3 Alexander KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex. Forschungen zum Verhältnis von Kaiserhof und römischer Kurie im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung (1555–1648)*, Münster 2012.

4 Paolo PERIATI, *The Political Strategy of the Nuncio Antonio Caetani in the Maze of the Imperial Court (1607–1611)*, *Legatio. The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies* 1, 2017, pp. 33–62; Pavel MAREK, *La diplomacia española y la papal en la Corte Imperial de Fernando II*, *Studia historica. Historia moderna* 30, 2008, pp. 109–143.

in that kingdom. Once the rebellion and uprising had been suppressed, the goals of the Catholic allies diverged and they were faced with many questions. Should they declare a general war against the Protestant princes of the empire, as Pope Gregory XV seemed to desire? Should they follow the prosecution against the Elector Palatine until divesting him of his electoral title and lands to the benefit of the Catholic Duke of Bavaria, as the Duke proposed? Should they take advantage of the mobilization for defeating the other rebellious Protestant member of the empire, the United Provinces, as the Spanish Monarchy urged? After facing these constraints, should the reclamations of peaceful and moderate Protestant powers like England and Saxony be negotiated or ignored? Finally, who was entitled to set the objectives: the pope, the emperor or the Spanish king?⁵

The Spanish ambassador in Vienna was Íñigo Vélez de Guevara, Count of Oñate, who had arrived in 1617 and immediately signed the dynastic pact known as the Treaty of Oñate (*Oñatesvortrag*, 29 July 1617). This document implied a preponderance of the Spanish branch of the dynasty over the German branch. King Philip III (1598–1621) renounced his theoretical succession rights to the realms of the Habsburg Monarchy to benefit his brother-in-law Ferdinand II. In exchange, Ferdinand II would enfeoff Philip III every vacant imperial fief Philip desired as soon as Ferdinand became the emperor. The agreement was deliberately vague and its importance represented more of a written record than a binding agreement; it was never publicly acknowledged, and its enforcement was quite challenging.⁶

The Treaty of Oñate reinforced the progressive and decided implication of Philip III in imperial affairs by supporting his German relatives, a continuous and discreet trend of his reign since his participation in the Long War of Hungary (1592–1606) or the Catholic League of the Empire (1610–1611).⁷ In that context, both Philip III and Philip IV (1621–1665) had decisively supported Ferdinand II since the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in May 1618. The vague notion of dynastic solidarity became the central axis of Spanish diplomacy between 1618 and 1620, as part of the process of reordering their priorities. Among the ruling elite, those individuals advocating for the dynastic strategy dominated

5 Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA, *Baltasar de Zúñiga. Una encrucijada de la Monarquía hispana (1561–1622)*, Madrid 2012, pp. 505–520.

6 Jesús M. USUNÁRIZ, *El tratado de Oñate y sus consecuencias*, in: José Martínez Millán – Rubén González Cuerva (edd.), *La dinastía de los Austria: la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio (siglo XVII)*, Madrid 2011, pp. 1279–1300; Luis TERCERO CASADO, *Infelix Austria: Relaciones entre Madrid y Viena desde la Paz de Westfalia hasta la Paz de los Pirineos (1648–1659)*, Wien 2017 (= Universität Wien, PhD thesis), pp. 127–129.

7 Magdalena S. SÁNCHEZ, *A House Divided: Spain, Austria, and the Bohemian and Hungarian Successions*, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, n. 4, 1994, pp. 887–903; Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA, *La mediación entre las dos cortes de la Casa de Austria: Baltasar de Zúñiga*, in: J. Martínez Millán – R. González Cuerva (edd.), *La dinastía de los Austria*, pp. 479–506.

over those more interested in Mediterranean concerns. Included in the first group were the Duke of Infantado (the most senior counsellor of State), Baltasar de Zúñiga (former ambassador at the Imperial court, 1608–1617), and Mother Margaret of the Cross. She was the aunt of Philip III, who had, throughout her fifty years of stay at the Descalzas Reales nunnery in Madrid, tirelessly favoured her German relatives before the successive Spanish kings.⁸ This dynastic priority was maintained for decades because Philip III devoted to it and his son Philip IV also attached his survival to the preservation of the dynasty.

During the 1620s, a permanent alliance was established between the courts of Madrid and Vienna. However, it did not correspond to the official dynastic version according to which the Spanish branch was just disinterestedly assisting their hounded relatives with troops and money. The Spanish circles of power followed their own agenda. The first objective was to block the ascent of the Duke of Bavaria to the rank of electoral prince because he could represent a fearsome Catholic rival in the empire. The second objective was to channel the dynastic war machine from the Palatinate to the Low Countries in order to defeat the Nederland rebels. At the same time, the Spanish Monarchy was forced to keep a courteous relationship with the moderate Protestant princes to prevent an escalation into a general and uncontrollable confessional war.⁹ Oñate was the key Spanish agent to maintain pleasant relationships in Vienna, continuing a tradition well-established by his predecessors Guillén de San Clemente (1581–1608) and Baltasar de Zúñiga (1608–1617). These men all enjoyed long terms as ambassadors, notable financing autonomy and remarkable closeness to the imperial family and their ministers. They benefitted from their ability to reward the common servants of the House of Austria when needed and had superior ceremonial advantages due to being considered family representatives rather than foreign diplomats.¹⁰

Many courtier observers regarded such a privileged position with a mixture of envy and mistrust. The Venetian ambassadors Erizzo and Contarini assured that “*il Conte d’Ognat Ambasciatore di quel Re fa conoscere, che in Hiermania posseggia più tosto il titolo di Dittatore, che d’Ambasciatore*”.¹¹ For his part, the papal nuncio Carafa blamed Oñate’s “*ostinata aversione*” for boycotting the awarding of Frederick V’s electoral title to the Duke

8 R. GONZÁLEZ CUERVA, *Baltasar de Zúñiga*, pp. 386–394, 411–433.

9 Eberhard STRAUB, *Pax et Imperium: Spaniens Kampf um seine Friedensordnung in Europa zwischen 1617 und 1635*, Paderborn 1980, pp. 109–130.

10 Pavel MAREK, *La embajada española en la corte imperial (1558–1641). Figuras de los embajadores y estrategias clientelares*, Praga 2013, pp. 111–127.

11 *Relazione* of Francesco Erizzo and Simon Contarini (1620), in: Joseph FIEDLER (ed.), *Die Relationen der Botschafter Venedigs über Deutschland und Österreich im siebzehnten Jahrhundert*, Wien 1866, vol. I, p. 117. An updated vision of the mechanics of Oñate’s embassy in Ulrich NAGEL, *Zwischen Dynastie und Staatsräson: Die habsburgischen Botschafter in Wien und Madrid am Beginn des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, Göttingen 2018, pp. 241–256, 379–409.

of Bavaria, a faithful ally of the pope.¹² After the death of Baltasar de Zúñiga on 7 October 1622, tensions increased. Zúñiga had been the first minister of Philip IV in Madrid and using his vast experience in the subtleties of imperial policy, had advocated for a balance between the many participants. Without him, Oñate threatened to interrupt the Spanish subsidies for the Imperial army and to foster a general peace agreement with the mediation of King James I of England.¹³ Oñate proved himself to be resourceful and expeditious. He was among the few able to simultaneously negotiate with the Duke of Neuburg, the Elector–Archbishops of Mainz and Trier and to take into consideration the positions of the Calvinist Elector Palatine and the Lutheran Duke of Saxony. According to nuncio Carafa, Oñate could deceive all his interlocutors at once, but his ability to “*tener sospeso il mondo*” could also show his para-imperial and insightful approach looking for more consensual and acceptable solutions than those of the militant emperor and his papal and Bavarian allies.¹⁴

On 23 February 1623, Maximilian I of Bavaria was awarded the electorate and conquered territories of the Upper Palatinate; Oñate’s resistance was futile, except for arousing the enduring suspicion of both the Nuncio Carafa and the Duke of Bavaria.¹⁵ The direct communication between Oñate and Carafa never ceased, however the sincerity and confidence between them was fractured.¹⁶ The Bavarian question was the first open quarrel between the Spanish embassy and the papal nunciature and it presented an opportunity to test their respective court allies and the efficiency of their strategies. Oñate was the broker of the Spanish king’s patronage and counted on a close alliance with the Prince of Eggenberg, the imperial favourite, and many other counsellors.¹⁷ According to Carafa, the Imperial Secret Council (*Geheimes Rat*) was a battlefield between the neutral ministers and

12 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 20 April 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fols. 43r–44r. P. MAREK, *La diplomacia española*, pp. 118–120.

13 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 28 August 1621 and Regensburg, 24 November 1622, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 16 and 148.

14 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Regensburg, 14 and 20 December 1622, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 160 and 163. For England, Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 27 October 1622 and Regensburg, 8 February 1623, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fol. 147v and 179. E. STRAUB, *Pax et Imperium*, pp. 163–204.

15 Carafa had “*sempre dubbitato delli Spagnoli [...], che loro in apparenza ci si mostrino indulgenti e ben volti al nostro fine, ma in segreto habbiano havuto diversa intelligenza.*” Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 13 August 1622, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fol. 120. For the Nuncio Carlo Carafa, see Pavel BALCÁREK, *Le nunziature di Carlo Caraffa degli anni 1621–1628 e la loro accessibilità in forma di edizione*, Bollettino dell’Istituto Storico Ceco di Roma 3 2002, pp. 71–90; Guido BRAUN, *Kaiserhof, Kaiser und Reich in der “Relazione” des Nuntius Carlo Carafa (1628)*, in: R. Bösel – G. Klingenstein – A. Koller (edd.), *Kaiserhof – Papsthof*, pp. 77–104; Alessandro CATALANO, *La politica della curia romana in Boemia dalla strategia del nunzio Carlo Carafa a quella del cappuccino Valeriano Magni*, in: R. Bösel – G. Klingenstein – A. Koller (edd.), *Kaiserhof – Papsthof*, pp. 105–121.

16 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 31 July 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 9–10.

17 P. MAREK, *La embajada española*, pp. 117–123.

those closer to Oñate or to the nunciature. However, at the moments of truth during the Bavaria's electoral negotiations, Carafa found he could only rely on the counsellor Johann of Hohenzollern–Sigmaringen, who was the brother of Cardinal Hohenzollern and a close friend of the Duke of Bavaria.¹⁸ Apart from Hohenzollern, Carafa considered the Secret Council a hostile body that changed the righteous decisions of the Emperor because those counsellors were “*guadagnati dai Spagnuoli*”.¹⁹

Unable to match the Spanish structure of patronage, the nuncio resorted to more discreet strategies. Ferdinand II was a very pious prince; he was educated by the Jesuits and was promoted as an example of sanctity. Carafa emphatically considered him “*così devoto e bene affetto verso la Sede Apostolica, che credo che da Costantino in qua non habbiamo havuto simile a lui.*”²⁰ Based on this, Carafa exploited the moral scruples of the Emperor, the “*via di coscienza*” versus the traditional “*via di consiglio*”, to revert those decisions considered sinful.²¹ The nuncio was escorted by Martin Becan, the Jesuit imperial confessor between 1620 and 1624. Additionally, other charismatic clergy passing through Vienna, such as Capuchin Giacinto da Casale and the Discalced Carmelite Domingo de Jesús María accompanied him.²² Becan was a rather passive figure of unquestionable loyalty to nuncio Carafa,²³ in contrast to the impulsive and independent Wilhelm Lamormaini, the subsequent imperial confessor. Carafa reported to a small board of theologians arranged by Ferdinand II to consult on specific issues; it was always presided over by Becan and aligned with papal policies to a certain extent.²⁴ The Emperor was less receptive to undesired

18 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 14, 21 and 28 August 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 13–18; Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Regensburg, 20 December 1622, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fol. 160. For the Hohenzollern–Sigmaringen, see Wolfgang NEUGEBAUER, *Die Hohenzollern: Anfänge, Landesstaat und monarchische Autokratie bis 1740*, Stuttgart 1996, pp. 120–124.

19 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 28 August 1621, and Regensburg, 8 February 1623, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 16 and 179.

20 Josef Godehard MÜLLER (ed.), *Carlo Caraffa Vescovo d’Aversa, Relatione dello stato dell’imperio e della Germania fatta dopo il ritorno della sua nuntiatura appresso l’imperatore 1628*, Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen 23, 1860, p. 201. Robert BIRELEY, *The image of emperor Ferdinand (1619–1637) in William Lamormaini, S.J., ‘Ferdinandi II Imperatoris Romanorum Virtutes’ (1638)*, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 155, 2009, pp. 121–140.

21 Giacinto da Casale OFMCap to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 14 August 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6792, fol. 8.

22 Robert BIRELEY, *Ferdinand II. Counter–Reformation Emperor, 1578–1637*, Cambridge 2014, p. 105; Dieter ALBRECHT, *Die Auswärtige Politik Maximilians von Bayern, 1618–1635*, Göttingen 1962, pp. 66–78; Silvano GIORDANO, *Domenico di Gesù Maria, Ruzola (1559–1630). Un carmelitano scalzo tra politica e riforma nella chiesa posttridentina*, Roma 1991, pp. 188–191, 249–256.

23 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 4 September 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fol. 20–21v; Giacinto da Casale OFMCap to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 20 August 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6792, fol. 10; Hermann Questenberg to Franz Christoph Khevenhüller, Prague, 12 July 1623, HHStA, SDK, 18/1, p. 206.

24 *Votum P. Becani & Lamormaini*, Vienna, 23 November 1623, HHStA, Spanien Varia, 5/5, fol. 529.

advice by scheming friars like Capuchin Casale – who had a well-deserved reputation of “*frate seditioso*” and whom Carafa never fully trusted.²⁵

New ambassador, new hopes

The changing circumstances of the Thirty Years’ War provoked a tentative Spanish–papal rapprochement around 1624. At the same time, England and France were negotiating a matrimonial alliance (the wedding of Prince Charles of Wales and Henrietta of France) and there were rumours of a French military campaign which supported German Protestants. Carafa found it difficult to ascertain which reports were actual threats or merely Spanish propaganda, thus highlighting his information limitations.²⁶ In any case, Rivero assesses that Olivares was opening a new political line in 1624, which meant neglecting Zúñiga’s approach based on the reason of state and exploring a Catholic alliance with France under papal protection. The friendly composition for overcoming the Valtellina crisis through the Peace of Monzón (10 May 1626) represented the most evident accomplishment of this oncoming alliance. It continued in 1627, with the joint strategy to invade England and Spanish naval support for the French siege of La Rochelle.²⁷ Unfortunately, subsequent hostilities between the two major Catholic monarchies and an estrangement with the papacy overshadowed this chapter of relative confessional entente between France and Spain.

In the Viennese embassy, the substitute for Oñate had to fill a very different profile. Due to the general change of priorities, it was required a loyal person to Olivares and not a proud and independent dignitary as Oñate was. Moreover, it was preferable a diplomat in good terms with the papacy and able to restore the trust with the nunciature and the Duke of Bavaria. Francisco de Moncada (1586–1635) was chosen: he was the Count of Osona and son of the Marquis of Aytona – a title he inherited in 1626. His father Gastón de Moncada was a reputable Catalan aristocrat with a distinguished career serving the monarchy. Gastón was the Viceroy of Sardinia (1590–1595), then Aragon (1609–1612) and notably was the ambassador to Rome (1606–1609), where he had an excellent reputation in the curia of Paul V.²⁸

25 Giacinto da Casale OFM Cap to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 20 August 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6792, fol. 10.

26 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 22 April 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 46.

27 Manuel RIVERO RODRÍGUEZ, *El conde duque de Olivares. La búsqueda de la privanza perfecta*, Madrid 2018, pp. 152–154.

28 Silvano GIORDANO, *Istruzioni di Filippo III ai suoi ambasciatori a Roma 1598–1621*, Roma 2006, pp. lxiv–lxv, 43–67; Hillard von THIESEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage. Die spanisch–römischen Beziehungen 1605–1621 in akteurszentrierter Perspektive*, Epfendorf 2010, pp. 159–168.

Francisco had accompanied his father to Rome and Naples; he was acquainted with the curial milieu and had forged a good relationship with the Neapolitan nuncio Carafa.²⁹ His positive reputation with the papacy was strengthened by his uncle Juan de Moncada, Archbishop of Tarragona (1613–1622), who was well connected in Rome.³⁰ Before being appointed ambassador to the empire, Francisco had led two minor missions in the Low Countries (1622) and Catalonia (1623) under the protection of Olivares.³¹ By then, he was better known as a well-educated nobleman, historian and dilettante in stoic philosophy.³² Due to his excellent artistic taste, Francisco is a very recognizable figure, as the painter Van Dyck portrayed him twice, on horseback (1634, Louvre Museum) and standing (1633, Kunsthistorisches Museum).³³

Carafa cautiously saluted the appointment of Aytona, because “*è cavaliero di buon tratto, e credo sarà sincero, e almeno non così cupo, com'è stato Ognati*”.³⁴ The nuncio accurately identified the political change in Madrid after the rupture of relations with England; thus, the schemes of Oñate were no longer required. In Vienna, Carafa suspiciously watched the ongoing matrimonial negotiations between France and England. He anticipated this changing scenario would move the Spanish Monarchy towards a confessional strategy with the emperor and Bavaria under the papal benediction.³⁵

Aytona met the expectations of a better relationship with the papal representatives since the first day. He indirectly assured that Philip IV had not approved the autonomous policy of Oñate, but the royal will was that Aytona had to agree with the nunciature and to procure peace at all costs.³⁶ Cardinal *nipote* Barberini ordered nuncio Carafa to keep the “good correspondence” with Aytona, as Carafa attempted to dispel any doubts. In one instance this was done by assuring that Father Casale’s schemes in Paris, representing Bavaria, were

29 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 13 July 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 92r.

30 Archbishop Volpiano Volpi to the Marquis of Aytona, Rome, 7 August 1627, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 5/1, n. 48; H. von THIESSSEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage*, p. 142.

31 Jesús GUTIÉRREZ, *Don Francisco de Moncada, el hombre y el embajador, Selección de textos inéditos*, Boletín de la biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo 56, 1980, pp. 7–9.

32 His *Expedición de Catalanes y Aragoneses contra turcos y griegos* (Barcelona, 1623) is a landmark of early modern Catalan historiography: Xavier BARÓ I QUERALT, *La historiografía catalana en el siglo del Barroc (1585–1709)*, Barcelona 2009, pp. 125–153. For his philosophical texts, see Rafael GONZÁLEZ CAÑAL: *La “Vida de Boecio” de Francisco de Moncada y el Conde de Rebolledo*, *Silva: Estudios de humanismo y tradición clásica* 2, 2003, pp. 131–146; Xavier BARÓ I QUERALT, *El neostoicismo en la Vida de Boecio (1642) de Don Francisco de Montcada: una propuesta ético-histórica en tiempos de declinación*, *Pedralbes: revista d’història moderna* 27, 2007, pp. 113–130.

33 Jahel SANZSALAZAR, *Van Dyck: noticias sobre los retratos ecuestres de Francisco de Moncada, marqués de Aytona, y su procedencia en el siglo XVII*, *Archivo Español de Arte* 315, 2006, pp. 320–332.

34 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 13 July 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 92r–92v.

35 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 10 August 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 102r–103r.

36 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 18 July 1624, BL, Add. Mss. 28473, fols. 66v–68v; P. MAREK, *La diplomacia española*, pp. 121–123.

without papal knowledge.³⁷ On the Spanish side, Olivares sent a personal agent to Munich to assist with the relations with the Duke of Bavaria and nuncio Carafa received a copy of the documentation. The appointed representative was Matteo Renzi, a Roman priest whom Olivares used for special missions abroad misinforming the ambassadors. At first, Carafa was better informed than Aytona on Renzi's Bavarian mission, but afterwards Renzi also offered his services to Aytona in Vienna.³⁸

Another simultaneous negotiation tested the rapport of the German and Spanish Habsburgs with the papacy. The correspondence of Alvise Valaresso, the Venetian ambassador in London, was intercepted by Archduke Leopold of Tyrol (brother of Ferdinand II) in the autumn of 1624. The contents of these private letters were as scandalous as they were predictable: Venice was negotiating a league with England and other Protestant powers “*contro la Religione, Imperio e Casa d’Austria*”.³⁹ Ferdinand II, Eggenberg and Aytona were the only people to know the exact content of those documents and nuncio Carafa struggled to overcome being marginalized. One of Eggenberg's chamberlains partially informed him about this issue in December 1624. A month later, Carafa managed to secretly borrow the correspondence for one night, by way of a “*ministro mio amico*”, who was most likely the chancellor Johann Baptist Verda von Werdenberg. Aytona visited Carafa, perhaps suspecting this situation, assuring him that he had remained absolutely silent on the Valaresso question following Ferdinand II's strict orders.⁴⁰ Only after three months did Eggenberg grant Carafa legal access to the sources, in part to justify the Imperial–Spanish plans to attack the Venetian frontier in Friuli.⁴¹ That operation would imply invading Italy,

37 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 24/08 and 19 October 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fols. 108r–v, 132r–v.

38 *Ambasciata che Olivares manda a Bav. ra p. il Renzi, ante* 31 August 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fols. 116–117; the Count Duke of Olivares to the Marquis of Aytona, Madrid, 11 October 1624, ADM, AH, 61, ramo 5, s. fol.; the Marquis of Aytona to the Count Duke of Olivares, Vienna, 18 November 1624, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 4, n. 1, fol. 4. Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA, *Un agente discreto: Mateo Renzi y el servicio a la Casa de Austria*, Librosdelacorte.es 6, 2013, pp. 50–57.

39 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 15 March 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 47v. Antonella BARZAZI, «*Si quid e Gallia afferatur, avido lego*». *Reti intellettuali, libri e politica tra Venezia e la Francia nella prima metà del Seicento*, in: Gigliola Fragnito – Alain Tallon (edd.) *Hétérodoxies croisées. Catholicismes pluriels entre France et Italie, XVI^e–XVII^e siècles*, Roma 2015, p. 407, n. 116.

40 The leaker angrily demanded back the papers because, in case they were published in Rome, he was the most obvious suspect. Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 18 and 28 January 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fols. 10–12. Carafa had defined Verda as “*amiciss^o mio et che all’occorenze mi riesce di tanta ingenuità che non ho che piu desiderare*”. Nuncio Carafa, *Relatione della Corte Imperiale*, 1621, BAV, Barb. Lat., 6929, fol. 93v. Henry F. SCHWARZ, *The Imperial Privy Council in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge Mass. 1943, pp. 121–122, 384–385.

41 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 21 December 1624 and 15 March 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 156 and 6948, fol. 47v. The Duke of Bavaria, who was suspiciously implicated in the papers, also solicited and received a copy of the correspondence in April 1625. Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal

a very serious breach of the status quo for which papal benevolence was required. The dynastic entente was positively tested because Pastrana and Savelli, Philip IV and Ferdinand II's ambassadors in Rome, were well coordinated with the ministers in Vienna to pose the question to Pope Urban VIII. This aggressive plan seemed to be a diplomatic manoeuvre to halt Venetian machinations; it was discussed and postponed for more than one year. Nuncio Carafa deliberated that the Imperial court would likely react only if Philip IV ordered them to do so.⁴² Despite the personal rapport between Carafa and Aytona, their missions and goals were separating.

Aytona did not attempt to develop strong ties with Roman authorities. His personal correspondence offers a detailed look at his network of friends and "*obligados*" in Germany and Italy, of which the Milanese correspondents constituted the majority. There were merely two contacts in Rome: the Archbishop Volpi (Aytona's father old ally) and the Cardinal *nipote* Barberini.⁴³ There is just one letter from nuncio Carafa registered among Aytona's papers and only once did Aytona recommend an individual on behalf of Carafa to Philip IV: Marcello Luciffano. He was Carafa's servant and Aytona clearly stated that he was writing it at the behest of Eggenberg.⁴⁴

Aytona's relation with his distant relative Cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein was clarifying. Dietrichstein declared himself to be his uncle (Dietrichstein's mother, Beatriz de Cardona, was a relative of the Moncada family), however Aytona refused to establish a familiar relationship with Dietrichstein. This indifference was justified by Dietrichstein's excessive patronage demands. After almost a year as ambassador, Aytona asked Dietrichstein for his first favour and the cardinal immediately began to request honours and offices on behalf of his relatives, friends and servants. Neither Italian policies nor papal questions appeared in their correspondence; they were more devoted to micropolitical concerns than to state negotiations. In one letter, Dietrichstein urged Aytona to protect Baron Magno, one of Dietrichstein's "*criaturas*", against the Imperial General Pappenheim and Aytona yet again

Barberini, Vienna, 19 April 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 69. D. ALBRECHT, *Die Auswärtige Politik*, pp. 114–117.

42 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 1 March and 12 April 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fols. 33 and 62; the Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 18 November 1625, BL, Add. Mss. 28473, fols. 175v–176r; Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 4 March 1626, BAV, Barb. lat., 6949, fol. 22r–v.

43 Archbishop Volpiano Volpi to the Marquis of Aytona, Rome, 7 August 1627, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 5/1, n. 48; Cardinal Barberini to the Marquis of Aytona, Rome, 21 August 1627, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 5/1, n. 49.

44 Nuncio Carafa to the Marquis of Aytona, Vienna, 5 August 1625, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 5/1, n. 42; the Marquis of Aytona to the Count Duke of Olivares, Vienna, 26 August 1628, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 4/1, n. 76.

chose the other side.⁴⁵ Perhaps the ambassador shared a poor opinion of Dietrichstein stated by another confidant, the Duke of Guastalla: the Cardinal is “*a good lord but neither too acute nor in good concept, he professes to be Spaniard but his resolution and ability are not reliable.*”⁴⁶ Therefore, being related to a Cardinal did not imply necessarily more closeness to the Curia nor a fruitful ally for high politics.⁴⁷

Margarita de Castro, Aytona’s wife, remained in Spain with their children, suggesting that the embassy neither had a familiar atmosphere nor attracted other Spanish aristocrats to stay in Vienna as embassy’s gentlemen.⁴⁸ That is the impression given in Aytona’s personal correspondence, where only Flemish bureaucrats are mentioned as having sent their children to be raised in the embassy.⁴⁹ Aytona personal networks could be weak, but in any case the Spanish embassy seemed a giant with feet of clay. The war constraints directly affected the ability of the ambassador to reward the imperial clients of the Monarchy, especially in the delicate field of paying pensions. Aytona’s letters reflect his anxiety and his deceptions to handle these outraged and dissatisfied individuals, whose disappointments deteriorated the quality of Spanish communicative networks.⁵⁰ The ambassador prayed to restructure such an untenable system of patronage, but the Spanish court was not receptive to Aytona’s financial requests and this led to his own salary being unpaid.⁵¹

Outwardly, the powerful Spanish image endured and the ambassador of Tuscany assured that among the imperial counsellors “*tutti sono comperi da’ Spagnuoli, alcuni con pensioni ordinarie et altri con donativi*”.⁵² Nuncio Carafa was among the few agents aware of the

45 Cardinal Dietrichstein to the Marquis of Aytona, Mikulov, 22 June 1626, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 6, c. 22–3, fol. 149; the Marquis of Aytona to the Count Duke of Olivares, Prague, 13 June 1628 and 16 May 1629, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 4/1, fols. 73 and 102–5.

46 He is “*buen señor, no muy agudo, ni en gran conçeto, haze proffission de español, pero no se ha de hazer fundamento de su ressoluzion ni habilidad*”. *Parecer de Guastalla a los puntos de la Dieta de Ratisbona*, AGS, E, 2331, n. 50, fol. 22r.

47 *Correspondence between Cardinal Dietrichstein and the Marquis of Aytona, 1623–1627*, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 6, c. 22–3, fols. 112–178. For Dietrichstein’s good opinion in Madrid and his familiar context, see P. MAREK, *La diplomacia española*, pp. 134–135.

48 By contrast, Oñate resorted to his own son, Íñigo Vélez de Guevara, for different missions in the empire. U. NAGEL, *Zwischen Dynastie und Staatsräson*, pp. 142–143.

49 They were René de Vos, son of the Master of the Chamber of Accounts of Lille, and the son of the counsellor Engelbert de la Neuforge. The correspondence between both fathers and Aytona is in ADM, AH, 59, ramo 5/1, n. 31–37.

50 The monothematic correspondence between Konrad XII von Bemelberg und Hohenburg and Aytona (1624–1627) offers an excellent catalogue of tactics to obtain the payment of his pension. ADM, AH, 59, ramo 6, fols. 223–241.

51 Étienne BOURDEU, «Le premier prince de l’Empire». *Les archevêques de Mayence et la présence espagnole dans le Saint Empire (milieu du XVIe siècle – milieu du XVIIe siècle)*, Madrid 2015, pp. 196–203. J. GUTIÉRREZ, *Don Francisco de Moncada*, pp. 10 and 31.

52 The Tuscan ambassador to Ferdinand II de Medici, Vienna, 22 March 1628, ASFi, MP, 4379, s. fol.

reality; neither Aytona had the funds Oñate lacked and by 1625 the Spanish pensions had not been paid for two and half years.⁵³ Nevertheless, Aytona was able to retain key allies at the Imperial court who informed him about the ongoing negotiations. The most important allies were the Prince of Eggenberg and the Duke of Guastalla, a North Italian prince. He had shared interests in Milan and Vienna and his support during the War of the Mantuan Succession proved to be crucial.⁵⁴

Carafa's strategy was very different from Aytona's: lacking resources to gratify the imperial ministers, he threatened the Emperor with spiritual condemnation through the "*via di coscienza*". The nuncio had few and unreliable allies: a charismatic clergyman like Father Casale was much discredited in the eyes of the Emperor for his meddling character and his undisclosed Bavarian sympathies.⁵⁵ A key figure was the imperial confessor, Wilhelm Lamormaini (in office 1624–1637). A determined and unmanageable Jesuit, he was out of the nuncio's control, in contrast with his predecessor Becan. Lamormaini assured that only his advice, unlike those by the imperial ministers, was free from material interests and Ferdinand II sometimes paid him great attention.⁵⁶ Carafa begged him to voice the papal positions whenever "*questo neg.o tocante la coscienza, di gratia operasse quanto potesse con S. M.tà e suoi ministri.*"⁵⁷ Lamormaini revealed several secrets to Carafa about imperial policy and assisted him with Italian matters. However, both men clashed in several other topics and Carafa attempted to avoid negotiating with him controversial issues.⁵⁸ The nuncio acknowledged his inability to control the "*via di coscienza*", which was in the hands of Lamormaini ("*poco ben affetto alla Corte di Roma*")⁵⁹ and his Jesuit brothers. Ferdinand II was advised by a board of these Jesuits without Carafa's say,⁶⁰ even for ecclesiastical topics such as the Patriarchy of Aquileia's jurisdiction.

53 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 2 July 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 113.

54 The Duke of Guastalla to the Marquis of Aytona, Vienna, 1628, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 7, n. 62r–69v; the Count Duke of Olivares to the Marquis of Aytona, Madrid, 6 October 1628, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 3, s. n.; Alessandro BIANCHI, „*Un baluardo al di là da Po*”. *Il principato di Correggio tra i ducati padani, l'Impero e la Monarchia cattolica*, in: Blythe Alice Raviola (ed.), *Corti e diplomazia nell'Europa del Seicento: Correggio e Ottavio Bolognesi (1580–1646)*, Mantova 2014, pp. 67–72.

55 Casale was “troppo bavarista” and Ferdinand II stopped his negotiations stating that “*i frati doviano stare nella cella, e lasciar trattare i negotii di prencipi grandi agli amb.ri et ministri di autorità*”. Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Edenburg, 2 December 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 200; Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Ludovisi, Vienna, 28 August 1621, BAV, Barb. lat., 6946, fols. 18r–18v.

56 Robert BIRELEY, *Religion and politics in the age of the counterreformation: Emperor Ferdinand II, William Lamormaini, S.J., and the formation of imperial policy*, Chapel Hill 1981, p. 181.

57 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 1 March 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fol. 49v.

58 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 12 April and 10 May 1625, 3 February and 4 September 1627, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fols. 62 and 86 and 6950, fols. 9v and 90r–91r. R. BIRELEY, *Religion*, pp. 41–61.

59 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 25 November 1626, BAV, Barb. lat., 6949, fol. 118.

60 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 16 February and 1 March 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fols. 30 and 49.

On many occasions, Aytona did not perceive these divisions between Carafa and Lamormaini and equated their initiatives as “*pretexts of piety*”.⁶¹ The progressive lack of understanding between the Spanish embassy and the papal nunciature magnified the other’s influence and quality of information; it is accurate that Aytona participated in several negotiations whose existence Carafa ignored. The nuncio did not regard the Spanish ambassador as a potential ally, but as a deceptive strategist who imposed his own principles over the imperial policy in many issues.⁶²

The War of Mantua: the end of the world as they knew it

After the failure of Oñate in the instance of the “electoral translation” from Palatinate to Bavaria, the Spanish diplomacy abandoned the previous dissimulated attitude. The disputes with the papacy escalated and were made public with the major crisis of the War of the Mantuan Succession (1627–1629). This conflict was a turning point in the Thirty Years’ War, beyond confessional considerations, as all of the parties involved were Catholic and the papacy was clearly aligned against the House of Austria. The war outcome was as chaotic as violent: Duke Vincenzo II of Mantua died in Christmas Day 1627 without an undisputed heir, but the most obvious option was Charles de Gonzague, Duke of Nevers and a French courtier. Such a French prince ruling in the hinterland of the Spanish possessions of Lombardy was intolerable for Philip IV, who consequently was obliged to support the candidacy of his client Cesare Gonzaga (Duke of Guastalla) and urged Ferdinand II to impose his authority over those imperial fiefs. The premature death of Vincenzo II precipitated the plans and the Spanish Governor of Milan, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, invaded Monferrato supported by the Duke of Savoy. Olivares accepted this *fait accompli* and acted as stubbornly as duplicitously, without a long-term plan. He was dragged down by the events in Milan and Mantua and was not successful in deescalating this perilous and futile war.⁶³

61 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 9 September 1629, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 125v.

62 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 21 December 1624, BAV, Barb. lat., 6947, fol. 156; Wiener Neustadt, 24 September 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 146; Edenburg, 26 November 1625, BAV, Barb. lat., 6948, fol. 188; Mark HENGERER, *Kaiser Ferdinand III. (1608–1657). Eine Biographie*, Wien 2012, pp. 57–63.

63 Robert A. STRADLING, *Prelude to Disaster; the Precipitation of the War of the Mantuan Succession, 1627–29*, *The Historical Journal* 33, n. 4, 1990, pp. 769–785; Silvano GIORDANO, *Urbano VIII, la Casa d’Austria e la libertà d’Italia*, in: Irene Fosi – Alexander Koller (edd.), *Papato e Impero nel pontificato di Urbano VIII (1623–1644)*, Città del Vaticano 2013, pp. 74–80; M. RIVERO RODRÍGUEZ, *El conde duque de Olivares*, pp. 204–205, 219–221.

In Vienna, the Mantuan conflict polarized the courtier positions and new alliances were established beyond traditional factions, but instead around the candidacies to the Dukedom of Mantua by Nevers and Guastalla. Once the news of Vincenzo II's death arrived in the Imperial court, duplicitous incidents transpired. Aytona spared the confusing information he was receiving from Madrid and Milan and simultaneously pressed Ferdinand II to authorize Gonzalo de Córdoba's invasion of Monferrato.⁶⁴

In March of 1628, Aytona and Guastalla were successful in negotiating with Eggenberg and the other ministers for the declaration of *kaiserliche Beschlagnahme* ("imperial seizure") for Mantua. According to the declaration, an administrator must be appointed until the Emperor decided on the righteous heir of Vincenzo II. Nevers was suspected of not accepting this resolution while Córdoba was openly preparing for the invasion of Monferrato. When the scandalous news of the Spanish attack arrived in Vienna in March of 1628, Aytona did his best to make this unilateral manoeuvre, which ignored imperial authority, acceptable. The seizure of Mantua was finally declared, so as to avoid the worst. Aytona was very reluctant to endorse Córdoba's plans and inadvisable Savoyan alliance.⁶⁵ Carafa did not suspect these machinations and was simultaneously discussing with Imperial Generalissimo Wallenstein a unrealistic plan of crusade against the Turks.⁶⁶ Carafa was understandably disappointed at being unaware of this process of decision-making, which he was only able to reconstruct in hindsight.⁶⁷

The Spanish diplomats opportunistically used their political resources close at hand; far from their absolutist image, they sponsored a legal tactic through the slow procedures of imperial justice. Consequently, experts in imperial law were sent to Vienna to aid Aytona: the Milanese Ottavio Villani and the Flemish Jacques Bruneau.⁶⁸ In contrast to this "*via di giustizia*" and the institutional support of imperial councils, the opposition did not control the discussion framework and seemed guided by partisanship and its effects. The main

64 Philip IV to Isabel Clara Eugenia, El Pardo, 12 February 1628, in: Joseph CUVÉLIER (ed.), *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les Affaires des Pays-Bas au XVIIe siècle*, Bruxelles 1927, vol. II., p. 368 (hereinafter referred to as CCE, II).

65 Manuel FERNÁNDEZ ÁLVAREZ, *Don Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba y la guerra de sucesión de Mantua y del Monferrato (1627-1629)*, Madrid 1955, pp. 67-70.

66 *Traslado de memorial del marqués de Aytona a ministro de Fernando II*, 9 January 1628, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 1, fol. 11; Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 19 January and 23 February 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fols. 3r-6v and 45r-46r.

67 The Marquis of Aytona to Ferdinand II, Prague, 3 March 1628, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 1, fol. 12; the Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Prague, 23 March 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 51v-56v; Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 22 March 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fol. 66-72r.

68 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 23 March 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 51v; the Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 9 June 1629, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 106r. A profile of Bruneau and Villani in Quintín ALDEA VAQUERO (ed.), *España y Europa en el siglo XVII. Correspondencia de Saavedra Fajardo*, vol. II., Madrid 1986, pp. lii-liv and lxiii-lxiv.

supporters of Nevers were the nuncio and Lamormaini who exploited the moral scruples of Ferdinand II and Empress Leonora Gonzaga. She was the sister of the late Vincenzo II and defender of the rights of Maria Gonzaga – her only niece and the wife of Nevers. The Empress had not made a remarkable political contribution but this dynastic issue revealed her as a very combative and firm patroness because “*si tratta della sua patria, della sua casa e del suo interesse*”. She was fully aware of her position. Although she enjoyed a strong influence over her husband Ferdinand II, she had to appear impartial and instead guided by affection.⁶⁹

Despite Aytona’s concept, the supporters of Nevers did not constitute an organised group. Nuncio Carafa was neither on good terms with the imperial confessor Lamormaini nor had easy access to the Empress; Carafa only knew her dealings with the Mantuan agent Marbioli through two covert mediators.⁷⁰ Beginning in April 1628, Urban VIII de facto had supported Nevers and disregarded the imperial jurisdiction; Carafa immediately felt the indifference and dissimulation from most of the imperial ministers towards him. The Count of Trauttmansdorff was one of the rare important counsellors out of the Eggenberg circle who operated as an informant to Carafa in this critical circumstance.⁷¹

Aytona realized it was impossible to expel Nevers from Italy due to the Empress’s protection and the papal and Tuscan support, but this insightful admonition by Aytona was not attended in Madrid.⁷² Aytona regained Carafa’s confidence to some extent as the nuncio was convinced of the ambassador’s good will towards achieving a peaceful agreement. According to the nunciature, Aytona even implicitly acknowledged the injustice of the Mantuan War to Lamormaini, who pleaded with him to inform Philip IV on this injustice. Lamormaini felt that if Aytona did not, the sin would stain the Spanish king and his ministers.⁷³

Carafa took advantage of a fortunate situation and of his lack of time. His replacement, the nuncio Pallotto, arrived in May 1628 and Carafa needed to finish his mission with palpable success. Accordingly, he arranged a banquet with Aytona, Guastalla and Count Orso (ambassador of Tuscany) to reach an agreement. The outcome was the Treaty of

69 Bishop Vincenzo Suardi to the Duke of Nevers, Vienna, 20 March 1628, in: Hans KIEWNING (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Pallotto. 1628–1630*, Bd. 1: 1628, [= NBD IV, vol. 1], Berlin 1895, pp. liii–liv.

70 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 9 April 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fol. 108r–109r, 113r, 116r.

71 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 19 April 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fols. 126, 129r–134v. For Trauttmansdorff’s alliance, Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 26 January and 26 April 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6951, fols. 20v–23v and 143r–144v.

72 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Prague, 3 June 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 65v–66r.

73 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 10 May 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fol. 13–16r; Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 10 June 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 90.

Prague, on 24 May 1628. It stated that Nevers would be acceptable as Duke of Mantua if he granted several fiefs to Guastalla and exchanged Monferrato for Cremonese with Spain.⁷⁴

Pallotto began his mission by dealing with this delicate situation.⁷⁵ His arrival did not modify the existing mistrust between the nunciature and the Spanish embassy; from day one he regarded the “Spaniards” as his enemies.⁷⁶ Aytona was not singled out as his opponent but instead regarded as an obedient and overwhelmed minister with whom he spoke freely on the Mantuan question and received conciliatory and well-intentioned messages.⁷⁷ Pallotto instead blamed the Spaniards in a depersonalized way, referring to Philip IV’s numerous ministers in Italy and the empire. These individuals were often Flemish or Lombardi, as the label ‘Spaniard’ did not identify a national origin as much as a political style of deceit and arrogance.⁷⁸

The Treaty of Prague, whose negotiation Aytona tentatively accepted until receiving orders from Madrid, was fiercely rejected by Gonzalo de Córdoba as a disservice to the Spanish king. That outcome provided Aytona with a reputation as a peaceful but powerless agent among Nevers supporters.⁷⁹ For his part, Aytona pressured Ferdinand II against Nevers and discredited Bishop Suardi, one of Nevers agents in Vienna, as an unreliable negotiator. Aytona changed his mind (or perhaps was overruled by the ministers in Madrid) and dispensed the previous pact.⁸⁰

Throughout the summer of 1628, the conflict worsened. Córdoba besieged Casale Monferrato, Nevers was officially deprived of Mantua by the Emperor and the imperial ministers cooperated with Aytona to establish a joint position. The supporters of Nevers (the Empress, the nuncios and Lamormaini) felt cheated by the imperial entourage and attempted to circumvent the situation in an uncoordinated way. Nuncio Carafa, who was still coexisting with his successor Pallotto, attempted the typical “*via di coscienza*” through

74 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Prague, 24 May 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fols. 44r–49v; Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 27 May 1628, NBD, IV.1, pp. 58–59.

75 Hans KIEWNING (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Pallotto. 1628–1630*, [= NBD IV, vol. 1], Berlin 1895, pp. xxxvi–cvi.; Robert BIRELEY, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War: Kings, Courts, and Confessors*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 94–95; Antonio D’AMICO, *Giovanni Battista Maria Pallotta*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 80, Roma 2014 ([http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-pallotta_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-pallotta_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)).

76 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 10 June 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 87.

77 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 8 July 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 117; Bishop Vincenzo Suardi to the Duke of Nevers, Vienna, 11 March 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 22.

78 In contrast, the Duke of Tursi, Aytona’s Italian successor, assured that he “*non vuole fare spagnolate, ma cedere al servizio del Re con modo, et con maniera italiana*”. Niccolò Sacchetti to Andrea Cioli, Vienna, 31 May 1630, ASFi, MP, 4385, s. fol.

79 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Znam, 1 July 1628, NBD, IV.1, pp. 105–106.

80 The Marquis of Aytona to Ferdinand II, Znojmo, 24 and 29 June and Vienna, 25 July 1628, ADM, AH, 59, ramo 1, fols. 20r–20v, 22, and 27r.

Lamormaini. However, this time their opponents – especially Eggenberg and Aytona – were not accepting that “*si vogli intrigare in negotii di Stato*”.⁸¹ This incident tested the information networks that both nuncios had in Vienna. Carafa was able to offer a very insightful explanation of the process through his close ally, the chancellor Verda, while Pallotto still trusted Aytona and spread his more limited version of the events leading to the severance of relations with Nevers.⁸²

Once the “*via di coscienza*” had failed, the supporters of Nevers changed their strategy to convince the Duke of Guastalla, the other candidate for Mantua, to accept an agreement. By linking the nuncios and the Empress, Verda was yet again the key player, until he realized that the entire operation was futile. Guastalla could not be convinced because he depended directly on Philip IV. For his part, Aytona had no powers to conduct negotiations but the Spanish ministers in Italy. Finally, Ferdinand II and Eggenberg were decided to keep the dynastic entente and not making a pact with Nevers.⁸³ Out of desperation, Carafa ordered a clergyman to spy Eggenberg unsuccessfully looking for insubordinations towards the Holy See.⁸⁴ Pallotto followed with more moderate tactics and he spoke frankly with Aytona. He appreciated both the Spanish inability to stop the war once it had begun and how counterproductive the emotional interventions of the Empress were.⁸⁵

The Spanish and papal diplomacies were in different positions during the crisis of August 1628. While the nuncios’ messages look chaotic and unbalanced, Aytona had better control of the situation. He feared a powerful court alliance supporting Nevers, so he tried to disrupt the thought of it by curtailing their unwarranted access to political communication.⁸⁶ Aytona informed Ferdinand II that Lamormaini was spreading the idea that the Mantuan conflict was an unjust war, so the Emperor ordered Eggenberg to reprimand the confessor because “*un cleriguillo haveva da rezar y no metterse en estas cosas*.”⁸⁷ Thereafter, Lamormaini kept silent.

81 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 22 July 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fol. 89. See also *ibidem*, 8 July 1628, fol. 86r–v.

82 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 22 July 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fol. 89–93; Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 19 July 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 135.

83 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 10 and 19 August and 9 September 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fols. 102–106r, 111–114v and 125v.

84 Nuncio Carafa to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 19 August 1628, BAV, Barb. lat., 6952, fol. 120.

85 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 6 September 1628, NBD, IV.1, pp. 215–218.

86 In general, Mark HENGERER, *Access at the Court of the Austrian Habsburg Dynasty (Mid–Sixteenth to Mid–Eighteenth Century): A Highway from Presence to Politics?*, in: Dries Raeymaekers – Sebastiaan Derks (edd.), *The key to power? The culture of access in princely courts, 1400–1750*, Leiden 2016, pp. 125, 137–150.

87 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 19 July 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 135; the Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 23 August 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 69r–v.

Aytona's second target was Empress Leonora. He was aware that, despite Ferdinand II forbidding it, she was covertly acting in support of Nevers. In time, she was discredited for overstepping her duties and for her "*descompuesto*" style.⁸⁸ When Aytona was summoned to her presence at the beginning of September 1628, they had a strong argument in which her frustration met his determination.⁸⁹ That audience had been authorized by Ferdinand II, however after this, Empress Leonora was prevented to speak on this topic. She confessed this to nuncio Pallotto on a rare occasion when they discreetly met alone in a pavilion, during a hunting party.⁹⁰

Though Aytona acknowledged the nuncios legitimacy to negotiate, he realised they were attempting to unite the imperial ministers favourable to Nevers – such as Trauttmandorff and Verda – and the Catholic diplomats in Vienna. However, there was one key factor that Aytona could depend on: Guastalla was almost impossible to bribe or influence because the survival of his Italian fiefs depended on Philip IV's support. The motivation of Guastalla's tremendous service to the Catholic king was because he was simultaneously serving himself, the same combination of loyalty and self-service of Eggenberg's relationship with the Catholic king.⁹¹ These personal ties were very strong but also implied a serious weakness for the Spanish system, because the dependence on the human factor was too high and in the absence of Eggenberg the entire structure of patronage could fall. This caused Aytona to urge Olivares to send money for rewarding the imperial ministers and retain the powerful image of the Spanish Monarchy.⁹²

The direct communication between Pallotto and Aytona never ended but they came to the realisation that their positions were irreconcilable. The dynastic alliance was reinforced in the summer of 1629 as the imperial troops entered in Italy to support the Spanish army against the recent French invasion.⁹³ Eggenberg advocated this aggressive line at the Secret Council without opposition, apart from the doubts raised by the Imperial Vice-chancellor Stralendorf. Nevers had not lost his supporters but the latter lacked opportunities and leadership to voice that position. As Lamormaini was a maverick, the only legitimised

88 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 23 August 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fol. 69v.

89 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 6 September 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fols. 73r–74r.

90 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 29 September 1629, in: Hans KIEWNING (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Pallotto. 1628–1630*, Bd. 2: 1629, [= NBD IV, vol. 2] Berlin 1897, p. 341.

91 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 23 August 1628, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fols. 69v–72v.

92 The Marquis of Aytona to the Count Duke of Olivares, Vienna, 23 August 1628, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 4/1, fol. 75.

93 Toby OSBORNE, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political Culture and the Thirty Years' War*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 163–169; R. BIRELEY, *Ferdinand II*, pp. 192–193.

representative of those supporting Nevers was nuncio Pallotto. Aytona identified him as the “guide” of that group and his “enemy and emulus”.⁹⁴

In September 1629, Aytona left Vienna for Brussels, where his services were required as ambassador extraordinary and adviser of the governess Isabel Clara Eugenia, aunt of Philip IV.⁹⁵ The Viennese embassy remained in an interim situation and major decisions were suspended until the arrival of his successor, the Count of Castro–Daire. Castro–Daire was a Portuguese statesman without any previous experience in Central European affairs, so Secretary Jacques Bruneau was permitted considerable influence during negotiations.⁹⁶ Pallotto had known Castro–Daire in Portugal and the men quickly renewed their earlier friendship and the nuncio commended Castro–Daire’s good will towards a peace in Mantua.⁹⁷ The replacement of the ambassador provided some optimism for diplomatic changes, as it had five years previously with the arrival of Aytona.

Final remarks

As Marek called attention to in his book *La diplomacia española*, the separation of the Spanish and papal policy in 1620s Vienna provoked the local Catholic elites to choose a side; most of them preferred the social and economic advantages offered by the Spanish patronage.⁹⁸ Therefore, the previous situation was just clarified: the papacy had traditionally depended on Spanish clients and had not equivalent communicative and economical resources on its own.⁹⁹ At the same time, the structure of Spanish patronage was collapsing due to the economic constraints caused by the Thirty Years’ War and a deeper reason: as soon as strict Catholicism and the defence of the House of Austria were no more indissoluble messages, as Spanish diplomats found more difficult to impose their views, especially against the “*via di coscienza*”. Emperor Ferdinand II was somewhat receptive

94 The Marquis of Aytona to Philip IV, Vienna, 19 September 1629, BL, Add. Mss. 28474, fols. 126v–127v; the Marquis of Aytona to the Count Duke of Olivares, 9 June 1629, ADM, AH, 60, ramo 4/1, fols. 108–109.

95 René VERMEIR, *En estado de guerra: Felipe IV y Flandes*, Córdoba 2006, pp. 23–26.

96 Philip IV to Isabel Clara Eugenia, Madrid, 17 May 1629, CCE, II, p. 445; Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 11 November 1628, NBD, IV.1, p. 296.

97 Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 3 March 1629, NBD, IV.2, p. 83; Nuncio Pallotto to Cardinal Barberini, Vienna, 25 August 1629, NBD, IV.2, p. 303.

98 P. MAREK, *La diplomacia española*, pp. 139 and 143.

99 For example, during the crisis of the Letter of Majesty (1609), the Nuncio Caetani found very difficult to communicate at court and practically depended on ambassador Zúñiga’s help. Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, *Die päpstliche Politik in Mitteleuropa vor und nach dem Majestätsbrief: Wandel oder Kontinuität?*, in: Jaroslava Hausenblasová – Jiří Mikulec – Martina Thomsen (edd.), *Religion und Politik im frühneuzeitlichen Böhmen: der Majestätsbrief Kaiser Rudolfs II. von 1609*, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 55–61.

to this influence, as it was more economical and efficient than the Spanish patronage. Although the nuncios did not control the “*via di coscienza*” but the imperial confessors, it was difficult to reverse tactics.

According to the principles set by Schlögl, the human factor was decisive in early modern society, defined as a *Anwesenheitsgesellschaft* (“face to face society”). Moreover, the personal trust between the different actors who negotiated and acceded to information and influence was also crucial.¹⁰⁰ Applying this model to Aytona, he had a very limited ability to develop his own policy. He was a victim of the authoritative turn of Olivares, who wanted to influence and develop imperial policy from Madrid. Therefore, Olivares attempted to limit Aytona’s role to executing decisions previously taken in Madrid and poorly adapted to the specificities of the Viennese situation.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba was deciding the strategy for the War of the Mantuan Succession from Milan without consulting Aytona. Córdoba’s adventurous and imprudent character was not very adaptable to this situation. As a result of his failure in Casale Monferrato, a secret investigation was organised against him in Madrid.¹⁰²

Facing this situation, the Spanish and papal diplomats were destined to clash and distrust on another, regardless of the efforts to retain open communication. Spanish diplomats proved to be very resourceful and tried to benefit from every opportunity. They usually resorted to juridical solutions at convenience as the most rightful course of action. However, after the departure of Aytona, the efficient and cheaper moral pressure on the Emperor through the “*via di coscienza*” was also explored. In 1631, Maria Ana of Austria, sister of Philip IV, arrived to marry the imperial heir Ferdinand (III). After criticising Empress Leonora and confessor Lamormaini’s illegitimate access to political communication, Philip IV used the same weapons. Maria Ana was relatively influential on her husband and her father-in-law, while her confessor Diego de Quiroga successfully replicated the charismatic style of the theological advice advocated by Lamormaini.¹⁰³ Finally, the Spanish authorities had at their disposal and used the domestic and theological channels of communication they had missed during Aytona’s embassy.¹⁰⁴

100 Rudolf SCHLÖGL, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, Konstanz 2014, pp. 11–16; M. HENGERER, *Access at the Court*, pp. 140–149.

101 M. RIVERO RODRÍGUEZ, *El conde duque de Olivares*, pp. 169, 247–48. Even Ferdinand II requested Philip IV to authorise Aytona to reach agreements, because the dependence on Madrid’s decisions was dispiriting and contrasted with the previous practices. P. MAREK, *La embajada española*, pp. 135–136.

102 M. FERNÁNDEZ ÁLVAREZ, *Don Gonzalo*, pp. 101–113.

103 *Consulta* by the Council of State, Madrid, 6 July 1630, AGS, E, 2331, n. 42, fols. 2v y 1r; R. BIRELEY, *Ferdinand II*, pp. 278–282.

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