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## Judith Rebecca von Wrbna and Maria Sophia von Dietrichstein: Two Imperial Ambassadors from the Kingdom of Bohemia at the Court of Madrid (1653–1674)<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the diplomatic activity of two ambassadors's wives from the Kingdom of Bohemia at the court of Madrid between (1653–1674). In that time, the spouse of a diplomat was called “ambassador”. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the ambassadors acquired ceremonial, political and social functions. The Countess of Lamberg and the Countess of Pötting were ambassadors during a special period: during their ‘embassies’, the “Question of the Succession” marked the Hispanic monarchy relations with the Holy Roman Empire; and a Habsburg Queen, Mariana of Austria, was consort (and after regent) of Spain. Also, the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the consolidation of the role of the ambassadors at European courts. Judith Rebecca Wrbna and Maria Sophia von Dietrichstein paved the way for their successor, set precedents and made it easier for subsequent Imperial ambassadors to access the diplomatic areas of the Spanish court. At the same time, both ambassadors helped gain acceptance and legitimacy for the political actions of the ambassadors in court circles, established a good relation with the Queen Mariana of Austria, achieved their ceremonial and social duties (visiting), and acted as brokers at court. In short, these two ambassadors marked a turning point in the diplomatic life of the following Imperial ambassadors to Spain.

**Keywords:** Ambassadors – 17<sup>th</sup> century – diplomacy – courts of Madrid – Holy Roman Empire

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To Davide Van Vlijmen *in memoriam*<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Claire Gaunt has translated this article from Spanish to English. The research for this article was supported by the IEF Marie Skłodowska-Curie project (2014–2016) *Imperial Ambassadors: Diplomacy, Sociability and Culture*. During this time I have been also participated in this research project: *Servidores del rey, creadores de opinión: biografías y dinámicas políticas en la Monarquía española (1700–1830)*. Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad. Teresa Nava Rodríguez.
  - 2 This article is dedicated to my translator Davide Van Vlijmen, who died in December 2014. One of his last translations was the paper: “Ceremonial of the Imperial Ambassadors in the Court of Madrid (1650–1700): Conflict, Equilibrium and Diplomacy”, that I presented in the workshop *Ceremonial as a Key to understand Early Modern Diplomacy (1600–1800)*, celebrated in Prague in November 2014 and organized by Jiří Kubeš, head of the research project *Bohemian and Moravian Nobility in the Diplomatic Service of the Austrian Habsburgs (1640–1740)*, University of Pardubice.

In his work *L'ambassadrice et ses droits*, Charles Moser stated that it was Pope Sixtus V who first awarded the title of “ambadressess” to the wife of a diplomat. The lucky recipient was the Countess of Olivares, wife of the Spanish ambassador to Rome. The pontiff gave her the title of ambadressess when she had her first son in 1587.<sup>3</sup> The title, while meaning that she had not to hold office, came with a series of ceremonial privileges. Soon, giving the name of “ambadressess” to the ambassador’s wife became common practice at European courts. As their ceremonial power increased, ambadressesses became faithful political actors, helping their husbands to carry out their embassy duties.

The wives of the Imperial ambassadors to the court of Madrid in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are good examples for analysing this process of the politicisation and ceremonialization of this role. The unofficial functions of the ambadressesses included befriending the queen consort or regent at the court to which they were sent, creating a network of influence to help their husband’s diplomatic work, and complying with their representation responsibilities.

Between 1653 and 1701, seven imperial ambadressesses left their mark on the Spanish court: Judith Rebecca Lamberg, Maria Sophia Pötting, Johanna Theresia Harrach, Maria Elisabeth Trautson, Marie Luise Mansfeld, Maria Sophia Lobkowicz (Pötting’s widow) and Maria Cecilia Harrach, they were the respective wives of Johann Maximilian Lamberg, Franz Eusebius Pötting, Ferdinand Bonaventura Harrach, Paul Sixt V Trautson, Heinrich Franz Mansfeld, Wenzel Ferdinand Lobkowicz<sup>4</sup> and Aloisio Thomas Harrach. The second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is especially important to the history of the Hispanic monarchy as during this interim period, the “Question of the Succession” marked Spain’s external relations with the rest of Europe, especially with the Empire; this stage also coincided with the development and consolidation of the role of “ambadressess” at European courts, especially in Madrid, where the frantic diplomatic activity of ministers and ambassadors led to the dramatic entrance of new figures onto the political scene: given the need to use any means available for the success of their diplomatic missions, ambassadors resorted to their wives, which was how these women began to legitimately influence and take part in political negotiations between the various European powers.

In addition to an international context marked by the Succession, the Habsburg Queen Mariana of Austria was also in Madrid during these years, a fact that contributed

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3 Charles MOSER, *L'ambassadrice et ses Droits*, Berlin 1754, p. 8.

4 Michaela Buriánková is preparing a PhD about the embassy of Ferdinand Wenzel Lobkowicz in Spain. Her thesis director is Jiří Kubeš at the University of Pardubice. See her publication: Michaela BURIÁNKOVÁ, *La nobleza en servicios diplomáticos después del año 1648*, in: Félix Labrador Arroyo (ed.), *II Encuentro de jóvenes investigadores en Historia Moderna*, Madrid 2015, pp. 401–409.

to the arrival on the diplomatic scene of the seven ambassadors mentioned earlier. The sources available do not give a reliable or complete picture of all of their political activities, as these were not always registered given the unofficial nature of many of their movements. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct their political profiles, which were marked by intense social, ceremonial, and, in short, political activity.

The following article analyses the diplomatic activity of two imperial ambassadors from the Kingdom of Bohemia: Judith Rebecca Wrbna, Countess of Lamberg, was ambassador between 1653 and 1660, and Maria Sophia of Dietrichstein, Countess of Pötting, was in Madrid as ambassador between 1663 and 1674. I chose to examine this period, from 1653 to 1674, because Mariana of Austria was queen consort and regent of Spain (after 1665) during this time. In these years, both Judith Rebecca and Maria Sophia set ceremonial and political precedents, and paved the way for their successors, namely Johanna Theresia Lamberg, Countess of Harrach; daughter of the former and cousin of the second ambassador.

### **Judith Rebecca Wrbna, Countess of Lamberg: Information from the Infanta's Rooms and Struggles for Precedence (1653–1660)**

Judith Rebecca Wrbna was born in 1629. Daughter of Count Georg von Wrbna, a counsellor to Emperor Rudolf II, Judith Rebecca was brought up in the Protestant faith as a young girl. But in 1620, her father was condemned to death for defending Protestantism, an event that changed her life. Georg von Wrbna was pardoned but his goods were confiscated, and he died shortly afterwards, in 1625. His widow, Helena von Wrbna was able to recover some of her husband's property on condition that she would move to Vienna and raise their children as Catholics. So Judith Rebecca was re-converted to Catholicism. Later, her mother remarried, her brother became a Jesuit and after serving as Lady to the Archduchesses at the court of Vienna (1627–1635), she married Johann Maximilian von Lamberg (1635).<sup>5</sup>

When in 1653 Judith reached Madrid with her husband and children, she was a mature woman. Aged 41, she had acquired considerable diplomatic experience, having lived with her husband in Münster and Osnabrück, where he had served as the ambassador of Emperor Ferdinand III in negotiating the Peace of Westphalia (1648). Judith Rebecca had carried out intense social activities to support her husband's diplomatic work in

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5 Katrin KELLER, *Hofdamen. Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Wien 2005, p. 339.

these cities.<sup>6</sup> Johann Maximilian Lamberg established relationships with various Spanish ministers during his ambassadorship in Westphalia,<sup>7</sup> both he and his wife caught up with these connections in Madrid.

Lamberg's main diplomatic missions in Spain were to negotiate the marriage between Emperor Ferdinand III's son Ferdinand to the Infante<sup>8</sup> María Teresa, Philip IV's first born child,<sup>9</sup> and to secure subsidies for the war. An ambassador's tasks always included issues of matrimony and war. The emperor wanted to secure Philip IV's support for his wars on the empire's eastern borders, in addition to potential access to the Spanish throne – should the Spanish monarch continue without a son – through the marriage between Ferdinand IV, King of the Romans, and the Infante María Teresa. This marriage would allow Philip IV to obtain the resources he needed to continue his war against France.

It is very likely that Judith Rebecca assisted her husband with the marriage negotiations by providing confidential information from her discussions with the infante and Queen Mariana of Austria's ladies. As an imperial ambassador, Johann Maximilian Lamberg had the privilege of being able to enter the monarch's private quarters<sup>10</sup> and also the queen's

6 Herta HAGENEDER (ed.), *Diarium Lamberg 1645–1649*, Münster 1986.

7 Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (= OÖLA), Herrschaftsarchiv (= HA) Steyr, Familienarchiv (= FA) Lamberg, Kart. 1223, fasc. 12, Akt Nr. 212 and Kart. 1224, fasc. 13, Akt Nr. 213. I am preparing a publication with these documents.

8 The Spanish Habsburg family gave the title “Infante” to the first-born child. If there were not boys, the first-born girl had the title “Infante” (male) and not “Infanta” (feminine) until the birth of a boy. María Teresa was “Infante” between 1646 (death of his brother Baltasar Carlos) and 1657 (birth of his brother, the infante Felipe Próspero).

9 The negotiations had started in 1647–1648, see Lothar HÖBELT, “*Madrid vaut bien une guerre?*”: *Marriage Negotiations between the Habsburg Courts 1653–1657*, in: José Martínez Millán – Rubén González Cuerva (eds.), *La dinastía de los Austria: las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, Vol. III, Madrid 2011, pp. 1421–1436, see p. 1424. See also the letter of Ferdinand III to Philip IV, 20 November 1653, Archivo Histórico Nacional (= AHN), Estado, book 712. Another important article of these marriage negotiations: Rocío MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, «*La infanta se ha de casar con quien facilite la paz o disponga los medios para la guerra*». *Las negociaciones para la realización del matrimonio entre la infanta María Teresa y Leopoldo I (1654–1657)*, *Revista de Historia Moderna* 33, 2015, pp. 79–99. English version: “*The Infanta will marry the person who provides the Peace or the one who gives us the means to continue the War*”, *Royal Studies Journal* III, nº1, 2016, pp. 6–27. This article has received the prize RSJ/CCCU.

10 Luis TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”. *Conflictos de precedencia entre Madrid y Viena (1648–1659)*, *Obradoiro de Historia Moderna* 21, 2012, pp. 287–307, specially p. 298. Francesco Antonio del Carretto, marquis of Grana, had this privilege: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien (= ÖStA), Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv (= HHStA), *Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien*, Kart. 41, fasc. 4, Akt. Nr. 14: “*Un legaxito tocante a la precedencia del embajador cesáreo en los cuartos del rey y la reina*”, and probably Franz Christoph von Kevenhüller (predecessor of Grana) too.

quarters.<sup>11</sup> His wife held a similar prerogative but not only to enter the quarters of the queen consort, but also to go into the infante's private quarters. This privilege gave the Countess of Lamberg easily access to the information concerning the marriage discussed in the private chambers of María Teresa, the infante. Lamberg mentioned a conversation between one of the ladies in waiting and the Infante María Teresa in one of his regular letters to Auersperg, the *Obersthofmeister* of Ferdinand IV:<sup>12</sup> the lady had congratulated María Teresa on the fact that Queen Mariana of Austria was not pregnant, as she [María Teresa] therefore remained “*heiress and queen of Spain*”, to which the infante had angrily replied: “*Be quiet, you don't know what you're talking about. Let the queen get knocked up, otherwise I'll have to grow old here unmarried.*”<sup>13</sup> It seems as though the infante intended to marry, at least in July 1653. Previously, Lamberg had informed Auersperg that Philip IV didn't want to discuss the marriage for the time being. The ambassador quoted another conversation that his wife could well have overheard: the first lady of the Bedchamber had discussed the infante's marriage with the king and had asked if he planned to marry her to France (to obtain peace, as they were at war), and that he had angrily replied, “*Don't talk to me about France. I want to marry the infante as I see fit and will decide for myself.*”<sup>14</sup> Philip IV refused to discuss the matter, although only a few months earlier, that April, Don Luis de Haro, the king's favourite had raised the possibility of marrying the infante to Ferdinand IV's brother Leopold<sup>15</sup> (to avoid recreating the empire of Charles V if María Teresa inherited Spain and Ferdinand the Empire). According to Haro, Leopold could go to Spain, be educated there and marry the infante to inherit the Spanish throne on condition that he renounced his right to inherit the Empire. However, Ferdinand III wanted to marry María Teresa to his son Ferdinand IV.<sup>16</sup>

While Philip IV decided whether or not to marry his daughter to the Empire, Judith Rebecca Lamberg, supported by her husband, tried to become the queen's “*right hand*”<sup>17</sup>,

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11 The imperial ambassadors had this privilege since 1639, see Archivo General de Palacio (= AGP), Sec. Histórica, Caja 55, Etiquetas E, s. f. cited by Dalmiro de la VÁLGOMA, *Norma y ceremonia de las reinas de la Casa de Austria*, Madrid 1958, p. 47. The Marquis of Grana had to renounce to this privilege after the peace of Westphalia (1648), see L. TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”, p. 298. Probably, the imperial ambassador recovered this right in the *Etiquetas* of 1651, AGP, Sec. Histórica, Caja 51.

12 He was very close to the Spanish ambassador in Vienna, see L. HÖBELT, “*Madrid vaut bien une guerre?*”, p. 1426.

13 Lamberg to Auersperg, 11. 7. 1653. OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1226, fasc. 15, Akt Nr. 248.

14 Ibidem.

15 Auersperg to Lamberg, April 1653. Ibidem.

16 Philip IV to Ferdinand III, 24. 5. 1654. See AHN, Estado, book 712. See also L. TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”, p. 293.

17 About the meaning of precedence in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries see *ibidem*, p. 288.

i.e. tried to gain precedence over the first lady of Mariana of Austria's Bedchamber, in order to have the best possible court position.<sup>18</sup> This strategy would ensure that her husband's diplomatic petitions gained more respect and attention.<sup>19</sup> According to the Lambergs the infante's nuptial negotiations would progress if the ambassadress demonstrated the empire's power by sitting at the right hand of the queen consort on ceremonial occasions. In autumn of 1653, Judith Rebecca obtained the right hand during the representation of a comedy in the palace.<sup>20</sup> However, this privilege didn't last long: in winter 1653 the new First Lady of the Bedchamber, the Countess of Medellin, was given precedence over the Countess of Lamberg.<sup>21</sup> Humiliated, Judith Rebecca reported the incident to her husband who in the spring of 1654 issued a memorandum to Don Luis de Haro protesting against the treatment of his wife.<sup>22</sup> His letter dated June 1654 states that the first lady of the Bedchamber had never taken precedence over the ambassadress of Spain at the Viennese court in Empress Maria's time, and the imperial ambassadress to Spain should now be accorded the same treatment.<sup>23</sup> Lamberg added that his wife's predecessor at the court of Madrid, the Marchioness of Grana, had been given precedence over the then First Lady of the Bedchamber, the Countess Olivares, when Philip IV was absent due to the Reaper's War in Catalonia (1642–1643). This was affirmed in letters written by the deceased Marquis of Grana, in which he asserted that his wife had succeeded in achieving precedence under Queen Elisabeth of Bourbon.<sup>24</sup>

Lamberg's petitions were presented at a delicate moment: Philip IV was not convinced of the idea of marrying his daughter and sole heir to an imperial archduke.<sup>25</sup> Ferdinand IV's death in June 1654 made him rethink the issue of his daughter's marriage, this time to Ferdinand III's new heir: Leopold Ignaz. Meanwhile, perhaps in hope that Philip IV would finally decide to marry the infante to one of his sons, the emperor agreed that Spanish ambassadress, the Marchioness of Castelrodigo, could have precedence over

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18 A classic study about the political relevance of the ceremonial in Early Modern courts: William ROOSEN, *Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A System Approach*, *The Journal of Modern History* 1980, vol. 52, no 3, pp. 452–476.

19 About these conflicts between the first lady of the Bedchamber and the ambassadress see L. TERCERO CASADO, "*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*", p. 300.

20 Copy of a letter from Lamberg to Haro, Madrid, June 1654. ÖStA, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, Konv. 2b, file 5: Präzedenzstreit bei der Königin von Spanien zwischen ihrer Obersthofmeisterin und der Gemahlin des kaiserlichen Botschafters.

21 Ibidem.

22 L. TERCERO CASADO, "*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*", p. 301.

23 Ibidem.

24 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 15, fasc. a, Akt Nr. 127. Don Fernando de Fonseca Ruiz de Contreras to the Count of Lamberg, 23. 11. 1654.

25 L. TERCERO CASADO, "*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*", p. 302.

the first lady of the Empress' Bedchamber. At that time, the Marquis of Castrolodrigo was negotiating María Teresa's marriage, with the assistance of Auersperg, minister of Ferdinand III. This imperial concession was a warning to Philip IV. Auersperg reported the news to Castrolodrigo: his wife's precedence was accepted "*in the hope that they would henceforth attend to the Countess of Lamberg*".<sup>26</sup> The emperor clearly expected Philip IV to give precedence to the imperial ambassador to Madrid, as a gesture of friendship and grace, and probably also of the acceptance of the marriage between the infante and Leopold. Both Lamberg and the emperor awaited Philip IV's new answers to their petitions (to accept Leopold and grant the right hand position to the imperial ambassador in Spain). Meanwhile, Judith Rebecca and her daughters Helena and Johanna Theresia continued visiting the private quarters of the queen and the *infantas*.<sup>27</sup>

The Spanish monarch took almost a year to decide on both subjects. In April 1655 he agreed to marry María Teresa to Leopold Ignaz, on condition that he renounced his right to the imperial throne as the union of both dynasties could lead to the Spanish monarchy becoming an imperial appendix.<sup>28</sup> In May, on seeing that Philip IV had finally agreed to marry the infante to the emperor's son, Count Lamberg felt in a strong enough position to again claim his wife should have the right hand, and he submitted the original letters by the Marquis of Grana asserting that his wife had preceded the first lady of Queen Elisabeth of Bourbon's Bedchamber to the Spanish king.<sup>29</sup> Ferdinand III had sent these documents from Vienna to be delivered to Philip IV. Lamberg was convinced that if the king had conceded over the marriage of María Teresa, he would also grant his wife precedence. But he was mistaken. An unexpected turn of events ended his hopes and jeopardised María Teresa's imperial engagement. Queen Mariana of Austria was pregnant. If she produced a male heir, Philip IV would no longer be obliged to find an imperial suitor and would be able to marry María Teresa to another, potentially more beneficial candidate, for example, France.<sup>30</sup>

Mariana's pregnancy was confirmed in July, and at that moment Philip IV issued his opinion on the right of the imperial ambassador to have precedence at the Court

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26 Ibidem, p. 300. See also letter from Auersperg to Castrolodrigo, 26. 7. 1654, in ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 15, fasc. a, Akt Nr. 83.

27 Duke of Almazán's private archive, Transcriptions of the letters between the Countess of Salvatierra and the royal family, p. 207.

28 R. MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, «*La infanta se ha de casar con quien facilite la paz o disponga los medios para la guerra*», p. 89.

29 OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1229, fasc. 18, Akt Nr. 272. Original letters of Grana in: ibidem, Kart. 1229, fasc. 18, Akt Nr. 272 and copies of these original letters in: ÖStA, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, Konv. 2b, file 5.

30 R. MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, «*La infanta se ha de casar con quien facilite la paz o disponga los medios para la guerra*», pp. 92–93.

of Madrid.<sup>31</sup> The monarch concluded that the first lady of the Bedchamber must have precedence, as such proximity would allow her to better serve the queen. Philip IV recognised that the ambadress outranked the first lady, but this did not give her the right to have precedence because such a position was granted for service rather than the “*right of precedence*”.<sup>32</sup> Philip IV also added that the oldest ladies in the court testified that the Marchioness of Grana had never had precedence over the first lady of the Bedchamber, and repeated that unlike the first lady, the ambadress and the other grandee wives, had the right to attend the pillow.

This news (refusal to give the ambadress precedence and the suggestion that Leopold Ignaz renounced his rights to the imperial throne in order to marry María Teresa)<sup>33</sup> was received badly in Vienna. Ferdinand III showed his displeasure by refusing to send his son to Spain. Johann Maximilian Lamberg issued a forceful reply to Philip IV, asserting that, at a time when the “*Queen was the daughter of the Emperor it was a mistake to deprive a German ambadress of a privilege that had been granted by a Queen who had been the daughter of the king of France [Elisabeth of Bourbon]*”.<sup>34</sup> For Lamberg, the failure to recognize his wife’s precedence would have “*infinite consequences*”,<sup>35</sup> especially if the Marchioness of Castelrodrigo, Spanish ambadress to the Empire in Vienna, continued to enjoy this privilege – it would imply a great humiliation to imperial dignity and represent tremendous “*inequality*”.<sup>36</sup> The terrible disagreement between Philip IV and Ferdinand III over the management of the marriage of María Teresa to Leopold Ignaz in October 1655 was no doubt behind Lamberg’s fierce ceremonial demand.

Ferdinand III decided to suspend temporarily the Spanish ambadress to the Empire’s right of precedence.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the Marquis of Castelrodrigo threatened to leave Vienna if his wife’s right hand position was not maintained. Castelrodrigo decided that his wife wouldn’t set foot inside the *Hofburg* palace until her precedence was guaranteed. In December, in the middle of these diatribes, Queen Mariana of Austria gave birth to a baby girl who survived only a few days. Ferdinand III then decided to suspend permanently the precedence of the Spanish ambadress in Vienna until Philip IV recognise that of the

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31 L. TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”, p. 303.

32 Don Luis de Haro to Lamberg, 21. 7. 1655. OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1231, fasc. 20, Akt Nr. 310. See also L. TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”, p. 303.

33 R. MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, «*La infanta se ha de casar con quien facilite la paz o disponga los medios para la guerra*», p. 91.

34 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 15, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 44, *Copia del memorial presentado a Su Magestad Católica del excelentísimo señor conde de Lamberg*.

35 Ibidem.

36 OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1231, fasc. 29, Akt Nr. 310.

37 Ibidem.



imperial ambassadress. Ferdinand III believed that this ceremonial punishment would lead his cousin to renegotiate the marriage. Philip IV returned to discussions about the wedding, but would not give way on the ceremonial issue. Castelrodrigo and his wife abruptly left Vienna in the summer of 1656,<sup>38</sup> partly due to the issue of precedence.<sup>39</sup>

In July 1656, Lamberg recorded another conversation about the marriage involving the Infante María Teresa: Judith Rebecca had given María Teresa the portraits of Leopold and his younger brother, Archduke Charles. On seeing the infante examining the paintings, the ambassadress asked her what she thought, and María Teresa replied that she would prefer the Archduke Charles as her husband. The Countess of Lamberg then asked: “*What will become of the king of Hungary [Leopoldo]?*”, and María Teresa answered that he could have her sister, the Infanta Margarita.<sup>40</sup> María Teresa didn’t find Leopold attractive. Perhaps her father’s desire to marry her to an archduke not in line to inherit the Empire (Charles, Leopold’s brother) had influenced her way of seeing. Interestingly, this was not the first testimony regarding the ugliness of the infante’s suitors. Two years earlier, in April 1654, ladies who had served the Empress Maria in Vienna spread rumours in the infante’s quarters in the Royal Alcazar of Madrid that Ferdinand IV was unattractive. According to Lamberg, this view had affected María Teresa, who had taken the information provided by those women at face value.<sup>41</sup> Again, it was Judith Rebecca who provided her husband with this information. This confirmed that Philip IV, his ministers and favourites used the palace women to slander suitors who were not to their political liking.

In April 1657, the death of Ferdinand III relaunched negotiations. Rocío Martínez affirms that, unlike his father, Leopold Ignaz was prepared to renounce the imperial throne in order to marry María Teresa.<sup>42</sup> One of his first decisions after his father’s death was to inform his uncle Philip IV of this wish. But Philip suddenly changed his mind and decided that it was better for Leopold to stay in Vienna and inherit the Empire.<sup>43</sup> In his insightful article, Rocío Martínez also explains the reasons for this change: Philip IV stopped supporting Ferdinand III’s brother, Leopold Wilhelm’s candidacy to the imperial throne due to political disagreements. In addition, Mariana of Austria was pregnant again, and if she were to have a boy, the Spanish king believed that Leopold Ignaz (and

38 L. TERCERO CASADO, “*Un atto tanto pregiudiziale alla mia persona*”, p. 301.

39 He did not allow his wife to go to the *Hofburg* to say goodbye to the empress-dowager in order to avoid a ceremonial humiliation. ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 23, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 144.

40 Lamberg to the Empress Eleonora, 19. 7. 1656. OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1231, fasc. 20, Akt Nr. 291.

41 Lamberg to Auersperg, 12. 4. 1654. Ibidem, Kart. 1226, fasc. 15, Akt Nr. 248.

42 R. MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, «*La infanta se ha de casar con quien facilite la paz o disponga los medios para la guerra*», p. 94.

43 Ibidem, p. 95.

not Leopold Wilhelm) should accept the imperial crown and abandon his plans to marry María Teresa.<sup>44</sup>

A few months later, the birth of the Infante Philip Próspero (November 1657) finally led Philip IV to take the decision to marry María Teresa (now infanta) to France, and not to the Empire.<sup>45</sup> Marrying her to the French suitor allowed him to secure the much desired peace with France. Leopold had to renounce María Teresa and accept the Empire. He was crowned emperor in July 1658. However, angry at his uncle's affront over the marriage, Leopold withdrew his ambassador, the Count of Lamberg, from the court of Madrid to show his displeasure at his uncle's change of plans. In 1660, Lamberg and his wife left Madrid, reaching Vienna that August.<sup>46</sup> Leopold I felt that marrying María Teresa to France to seal the peace was not only a personal betrayal, but also a betrayal to the Austrian branch of the Habsburg family. To calm him down, Philip IV offered him the Infanta Margarita María, sending him letters that demonstrated her affection.<sup>47</sup> The emperor felt forced to accept his new suitor, Margarita, but left the marriage hanging for months.

The Countess of Lamberg was never given precedence, but this was not due to a lack of effort or disagreements with the queen consort – it was a result of the tense diplomatic relationships between Spain and the Empire. Beyond the issue of precedence, Judith Rebecca Lamberg was an excellent ambassadress, who earned the trust of Mariana of Austria, as we can see in the letters that the queen sent to Vienna after the ambassadors left Madrid. Judith Rebecca also achieved the title of Lady-in-waiting for her daughters (Helena and Johanna) in 1660, and they were given the privilege of not having to live at the palace (the Royal Alcázar in Madrid).<sup>48</sup> In time, Johanna Theresia would become an imperial ambassadress to Spain, just like her mother had been.<sup>49</sup>

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44 Ibidem, p. 96.

45 Ibidem, p. 97.

46 ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien, Kart. 44, fasc. 5, Akt Nr. 65.

47 OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1234, fasc. 23. Akt Nr. 392: "*Copia de la respuesta que dio la reina nuestra señora a la carta del emperador mi señor sobre el casamiento de la infanta Margarita*", 1660.

48 Ibidem, Kart. 1228, fasc. 17, Akt Nr. 259, Lamberg to Cardinal Harrach, 16. 2. 1660.

49 About Johanna Theresia Harrach: Susanne Claudine PILS, *Schreiben über Stadt. Das Wien der Johanna Theresia Harrach 1639–1716*, Wien 2002; Laura OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA, "*La condesa ya se ha vestido a la española y de incógnito ha ido a visitar a la reina*": Johanna Theresia Harrach, *valida y "embajadora" de Mariana de Austria*, in: María de los Ángeles Pérez Sámper – Gloria Franco Rubio (eds.), *Homenaje a María Victoria López-Cordón Cortezo*, Sevilla 2014, pp. 391–404; EADEM, *The Countess of Harrach and the Cultivation of the Body between Madrid and Vienna*, in: Joan Lluís Palos – Magdalena Sánchez (eds.), *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages and Cultural Transfer*, Ashgate 2016, pp. 213–234.

Leopold's displeasure meant that there was no imperial ambassador to Madrid from 1660 to 1662. This did not mean that diplomatic relations were completely cut off as the emperor had a network of agents who supported him at the court of Philip IV. Several people stood in for the lack of an official Imperial ambassador in Madrid: Johanna Theresia Lamberg, the mentioned daughter of Johann Maximilian Lamberg and Judith Rebecca, sent numerous letters to her father between May 1660 and October 1661,<sup>50</sup> when she married Ferdinand Bonaventura von Harrach, and returned to the Empire. The Marquis of Mortara and the Duke of Medina de las Torres maintained regular correspondence with Portia,<sup>51</sup> Leopold I's *Obersthofmeister* throughout 1662.<sup>52</sup> The Marquis of Mortara and Portia were relatives and shared political strategies.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Miguel García Romero, Lamberg's steward in Madrid, regularly informed the secretary Bernardo Smith, who was in Vienna, of events in Madrid during that time.<sup>54</sup> Some authors believe that Mariana's Jesuit confessor Nithard was the interim representative of the imperial court in Madrid during these years<sup>55</sup> but I have found no letters from him to Vienna dated between 1660 and 1662.

Finally, in 1662, Leopold I decided to send an ambassador to Spain. The man he chose was Franz Eusebius von Pötting. In order to receive the post, the emperor asked him to marry Maria Sophia of Dietrichstein.<sup>56</sup>

### **Maria Rosina Sophia of Dietrichstein, Countess of Pötting: Conquering the Queen, Managing Wars and Peaces, and Acting as a Broker (1663–1674)**

Maria Rosina Sophia was the daughter of Maximilian of Dietrichstein and Sophia Agnes von Mansfeld. She was only 16 when she was offered to Pötting as his wife. Why Leopold (advised by his stepmother, the Dowager Empress Eleonora of Mantua and her favourite minister Portia) 'suggested' Pötting marry Maria Sophia is unclear, but it is quite possible that it was due to her kinship with some of the important Spanish families: Aragon,

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50 I am preparing an article about these letters.

51 ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien, Kart. 44, fasc. 5, Akt Nr. 95.

52 Franz von KRONES, *Porzia, M. Johann Ferdinand Fürst von*, in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Band 26, Leipzig 1888, pp. 450–452.

53 They had a common ancestor, a woman: Victoria de Portia.

54 ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien, Kart. 44, fasc. 2, Akt Nr. 263.

55 Miguel NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting, embajador del Sacro Imperio en Madrid (1664–1674)*, Madrid 1990, Vol I, p. XL. Original manuscript of the diary in: ÖStA, HHStA, Große Korrespondenz, Kart. 35.

56 Archivo General de Simancas (= AGS), Estado, leg. 2374. I am very grateful to Rocío Martínez López (UNED) for this reference.

Cardona, Mortara and Velasco. Maria's great grandfather was no less than Adam of Dietrichstein, Imperial ambassador to Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> Adam had married Margarita of Cardona, Spanish Lady in Waiting to the Empress Maria.<sup>58</sup> Their children had married into Spanish and Imperial families, and young Maria Rosina Sophia was one of their descendants. Maria Sophia's brother Ferdinand of Dietrichstein was the *Obersthofmeister* to the dowager empress at the court of Vienna, and Portia, her favourite, was also a relative.

Franz Eusebius von Pötting married Maria Sophia of Dietrichstein on 14 April 1662.<sup>59</sup> During the first months of their marriage young Maria Sophia met the Marquises of Mancera, Antonio Sebastian Álvarez of Toledo Molina and Salazar and Leonor del Carretto, at the court of Vienna before leaving for Spain. Antonio Álvarez de Toledo served as Spanish ambassador to the Empire, and his wife acted as the ambassadress of Spain in Vienna. Leonor del Carretto was the daughter of Francesco Antonio del Carretto, Marquis of Grana,<sup>60</sup> who had been the Imperial ambassador to Spain from 1641 until his death in 1651. In her youth, Leonor had been Maid in Waiting to the Infanta María Teresa and Lady in Waiting to Queen Mariana of Austria. Now she had returned to the Imperial court as Spanish ambassadress. Leopold I rescinded her precedence at the request of the dowager empress, who did not want Leonor to come before her first lady of the Bedchamber. Leonor del Carretto angrily protested about this treatment at the court of Vienna and even wrote a letter to Mariana of Austria describing the affronts she had received:<sup>61</sup> the Spanish ambassadress asked the queen to intercede on her behalf, arguing that the offense she received was an insult to the queen herself, as ambassadress she considered herself to be Mariana of Austria's representative at the imperial court. Maria Sophia Pötting was able to witness the nature of the struggles for precedence between the

57 Friedrich EDELMAYER, *Honor y Dinero. Adam de Dietrichstein al servicio de la Casa de Austria*, *Studia Historica: Historia Moderna* 10, 1992, pp. 89–116; Bohumil BAĎURA, *La casa de Dietrichstein y España*, *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* 33, 1999, pp. 47–67.

58 Vanessa De CRUZ MEDINA, "In service to my Lady, the Empress, as I have done every other day of my life": *Margarita de Cardona, Baroness of Dietrichstein and Lady-in-Waiting of Maria of Austria*, in: Nadine Akkerman – Brigit Houben (eds.), *The Politics of Female Households. Ladies-In-Waiting Across Early Modern Europe*, Leiden – Boston 2009, pp. 99–122; EADEM, *Margarita de Cardona y sus hijas, damas entre Madrid y el Imperio*, in: José Martínez Millán – Maria Paula Marçal Lourenço (eds.), *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las Casas de las Reinas (siglos XV–XIX)*, Madrid 2009, vol II, pp. 1267–1300.

59 Moravský zemský archiv v Brně (= MZA), Rodinný archiv Ditrichštejnů Mikulov, Kart. 322, inv. Nr. 457.

60 Henri PIQUER, *Francesco Antonio del Carretto marquis de Grana, ambassadeur impérial en Espagne et conseiller de Philippe IV*, doctoral thesis, Université de Paris X, Paris 1998.

61 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 15, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 111. Letter of Leonor del Carretto to Mariana of Austria, 4. 11. 1661. And about ceremonial problems of Mancera and his wife in 1661–1662, see *ibidem*, *Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien*, Kart. 44.

ambassadors and the first lady of the Bedchamber first-hand. The Countess of Pötting probably received advice from Leonor. Having become friends in Vienna, their friendship continued in Madrid. The Pöttings set out for Spain at the end of 1662 and the Manceras returned to Madrid in 1663. As a result, the Spanish embassy in Vienna remained empty. Until 1666, this absence was covered by the presence in Vienna of a *chargé d'affaires*, the efficient Diego de Prado.<sup>62</sup>

The Pöttings arrived at the court of Madrid in June 1663. Philip IV held an audience with the count while Mariana of Austria received the ambassador. Either at the wish of the queen consort, or because the king wished to demonstrate his goodwill towards the marriage negotiations concerning Infanta Margarita that Pötting had come to discuss, the countess was given the queen consort's right hand at their first public audience. To achieve this, Mariana's First Lady of the Bedchamber, the Marchioness of Villanueva de la Balduenza, was ordered to fake a cold. Despite some discomfort from her first pregnancy and the hoop petticoat (*guardainfante*) that all ambassadors were obliged to wear on arriving at the court of Madrid, the Countess of Pötting successfully accomplished her first representation.<sup>63</sup> In the words of a courtier, the ambassador was "*very well received at the palace*".<sup>64</sup>

Eight months later, in August 1663, Miguel Romero, the former steward of Count Lamberg in Madrid, criticised the way in which the Countess of Pötting performed her ambassadorial duties. His letter referred not to her ceremonial behaviour, but more specifically to the way in which she socialised and mediated. Romero wrote that the Countess of Pötting was "*very reserved*" and received no more visits than her relatives the Marchioness of Mortara or Andrea de Velasco, although he admitted that the ambassador frequently visited the palace to see the queen. Romero went on to boast that his former mistress, the Countess of Lamberg, mother of the recipient of his letter, had been a good ambassador and had left such an impression in Madrid that "*many cognoscente say that they had never seen such an effective ambassador when it came to fulfilling her role*".<sup>65</sup> It is true that this comment was not particularly objective as Miguel Romero considered himself the Lamberg's servant and their relationship with the Pöttings was not particularly smooth. However, despite the fact that they are biased, Romero's criticisms reveal one of the functions a good ambassador had to perform: visits. A perfect Imperial ambassador

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62 Miguel Ángel OCHOA BRUN, Prólogo, in: M. Nieto Nuño (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, p. XXIX.

63 ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (= AVA), FA Harrach, Kart. 321, Mariana de Austria to Johanna Theresia Harrach, 23. 4. 1663.

64 Ibidem, Pater Michael Codella to the Countess of Harrach, 5. 6. 1663.

65 Ibidem, Romero to the Countess of Harrach, 1. 8. 1663.

had to visit regularly the queen and the wives of both nobles working for the Empire and of key ministers, as well as other ambassadresses whose husbands supported Imperial policy. The ambassadress also had to be a good hostess and receive visits at home, not only from the aforementioned women, but also from men. If the ambassadress failed to perform the art of visiting and being visited, then she wasn't a true ambassadress.

The new Imperial ambassadress' lack of visiting talent was also echoed by Queen Mariana of Austria. In 1663, she stated in a letter to the Countess of Harrach that the Countess of Pötting was very young, and hardly said a word,<sup>66</sup> which to a certain degree was logical as she had arrived in Madrid speaking barely any Spanish.<sup>67</sup> The consort also reiterated that the previous ambassadress, the Countess of Lamberg, was dearer to her. However, two years later in written response dated 1st July 1665 (two months before becoming queen regent on the death of Philip IV in September 1665), Mariana of Austria qualified her opinion, noting that it was true that the Countess of Pötting barely went out, but that she did visit her frequently and was very kind.<sup>68</sup> In August 1667, the queen, by that time regent, stated that the Countess of Pötting had carved out her niche at the court of Madrid: the ambassadress visited her more often than before and was better known.<sup>69</sup> Queen Mariana's opinion of the ambassadress seemed to have changed between 1663 and 1667. Knowing the queen's fondness of Maria Sophia's predecessor, it is not surprising that she wrote such unflattering opinions, and these must also be understood in the context of the competition between the Pöttings-Dietrichsteins and the Lamberg-Harrach clan.<sup>70</sup> Seen in this light, Mariana's criticisms lose some of their force, although they must be taken into account; as it is very possible that Countess of Pötting was none too popular in her first year at court.

Other testimonies suggest that Maria Sophia was not as isolated as Mariana had suggested, and that she started fitting into court circles as early as 1664. Her main hostesses were Isabel Manrique de Lara y Luján and Catalina de Guzmán, the respective wives of the two ministers of the Council of State (the marquis of Mortara and the duke of Medina de las Torres), who had covered for the lack of an Imperial ambassador in Madrid from 1660 to 1663, acting as the Empire's agents in Madrid.

66 Ibidem, Mariana de Austria to the Countess of Lamberg, 18. 7. 1663.

67 Laura OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA, *Juana o Johanna?: cultura mixta, doble identidad y bilingüismo de las embajadoras imperiales en la corte de Madrid (1663–1676)*, in: Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (ed.), *Embajadores culturales. Transferencias y lealtades de la diplomacia española de la Edad Moderna*, Madrid 2016, pp. 397–422.

68 ÖStA, AVA, FA Harrach, Kart. 321, Mariana de Austria to the Countess of Lamberg, 1. 7. 1665.

69 Ibidem, 15. 8. 1667.

70 I would like to thank Petr Mařa (University of Vienna) for this information.

Pötting's diary and correspondence with Leopold also demonstrate that she assisted her husband in two important negotiations during those initial years (1663–1668): the marriage of the Infanta Margarita to Leopold and obtaining the peace between Spain and Portugal. Both missions were completed successfully, suggesting that Maria Sophia wasn't such a bad ambassador. On 25 April 1666, the Infanta Margarita was married by proxy to Emperor Leopold I, and in March 1668 peace was signed with Portugal, mediated by the English ambassador and sponsored by the Empire.<sup>71</sup> The Count of Pötting and his wife had assisted in securing the peace in the hope that the resources used against Portugal would be sent to help the emperor fight the frontiers of France,<sup>72</sup> and the Turks.<sup>73</sup> The fact that Queen Mariana of Austria had become regent on the death of Philip IV in September 1665,<sup>74</sup> gave the ambassador greater protagonism at court. Being close to a regent was more politically productive than standing next to a consort. Both the marriage between Margarita and Leopold and the peace with Portugal were signed during this female regency and under the watchful eye of the ambassador, one of the queen's regular visitors during this period.

The Pöttings also fought for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle which Mariana of Austria signed as regent in May 1668. This treaty ended the "War of Devolution" that had pitted France against Spain for nine months.<sup>75</sup> The conflict progressed as follows: in May 1667, Louis XIV invaded the Spanish Netherlands under the pretext that he had not received the dowry for his wife María Teresa, Philip IV's oldest daughter. Mariana of Austria took three months to declare war on France after several attempts at negotiation failed. The regent tried to secure support from England, the United Provinces, Sweden, and naturally, she also asked her brother, the emperor, for assistance.<sup>76</sup> But Leopold remained neutral. The

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71 About Portugal in this period see Rafael VALLADARES, *La rebelión de Portugal: guerra, conflicto y poderes en la Monarquía Hispánica (1640–1680)*, Valladolid 1998. About the peace negotiations see the papers of Lisola: ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien, Kart. 50, fasc. 3, Akt Nr. 103: *Artículos de paz entre los reyes de las coronas católica y portuguesa a mediación del serenísimo y muy poderoso rey de Inglaterra, hermano del uno y aliado muy antiguo de ambos*, 20. 2 1666.

72 Juan Antonio SÁNCHEZ BELÉN, *Las relaciones internacionales de la Monarquía Hispánica durante la regencia de doña Mariana de Austria*, *Studia historica. Historia moderna* 20, 1999, p. 142.

73 Moritz LANDWEHR von PRAGENAU – Alfred Francis PRIBRAM (eds.), *Privatbriefe Kaiser Leopold I. an den Grafen F. E. Pötting: 1662–1673*, Wien 1904, letter from 25. 2. 1668.

74 About the regency of Mariana de Austria see Laura OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA, *Mariana de Austria en la encrucijada política del siglo XVII*, Madrid, Dissertation, Universidad Complutense 2006. And Silvia MITCHELL, *Mariana of Austria and Imperial Spain: Court, Dynastic, and International Politics in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, Dissertation, University of Miami 2013.

75 Lucien BÉLY, *Louis XIV: le plus grand roi du monde*, Paris 2005, p. 115.

76 Laura OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA, *El fin de los Habsburgo: crisis dinástica y conflicto sucesorio en la Monarquía Hispánica (1615–1700)*, in: María Victoria López-Cordón – José Manuel Nieto Soria (eds.),

emperor's position was heavily criticized in Spain. Given her isolation, the queen regent decided to seek Papal mediation for a peace that could be signed in Aix-la-Chapelle. The emperor refused to help his sister, partly because he was about to sign a secret treaty to share the territories belonging to the Spanish monarchy with France should the king-child Charles II (Mariana's son) die. This treaty was signed in Vienna on 19 January, 1668.<sup>77</sup> The main architects of this first agreement to share out Spain's dominions were the French ambassador to Vienna, Gremonville, and Auersperg, Leopold's leading minister. Naturally, this was all performed behind Mariana of Austria's back.

To secure peace between Spain and France as soon as possible, Leopold sent Otto Enrico del Carretto, Marquis of Grana, to Spain as an Imperial envoy with one official and one secret mission.<sup>78</sup> His official mission was to promise imperial subsidies to maintain the fight against France in Flanders (to dissipate Spanish resentment towards the Empire for its neutrality) and his secret mission was to persuade Spanish ministers of the need to sign peace with France. The emperor believed that Grana's mission would be easy as Mariana of Austria seemed inclined to find a rapid solution to the conflict, having failed to secure allies for the war. The emperor didn't count on the fact that England, Sweden and Holland would form the Triple Alliance of The Hague to halt Louis XIV's expansionist plans. News of this alliance reached the emperor at the beginning of February, when Grana had already left for Madrid. The formation of the Triple Alliance meant that Mariana of Austria hesitated over continuing with the peace negotiations. However, another turn of events helped the emperor: France invaded Franche-Comté on 4<sup>th</sup> February, conquering Besançon, a city that belonged to the Spanish crown. On seeing France's military strength, England and Holland were inclined to peace. Mariana of Austria was again racked with doubt as she believed she could count on the emperor's support against the French offensive into Franche-Comté.

Grana arrived in Madrid on 27<sup>th</sup> February, where he was to act "*with complete discretion and dependence* [on Pötting]".<sup>79</sup> The Count of Pötting tried to impose his authority and highlight his superior rank over a person he deemed to be a simple envoy. However, beyond the standard and fairly normal arguments between envoys and ambassadors, the Count of Pötting and Maria Sophia adapted their movements to those of de Grana to allow him to complete his mission. We don't know whether Maria Rosina Sophia was

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Gobernar en tiempos de crisis. Las quiebras dinásticas en el ámbito hispánico (1250–1808), Madrid 2010, pp. 45–64.

77 Manuel de MARLLANI, *Reseña de las relaciones diplomáticas de España desde Carlos I hasta nuestros días*, Madrid 1841, pp. 20–22. See also: Luis RIBOT – José María IÑURRITEGUI (eds.), *Europa y los tratados de reparto de la monarquía de España 1668–1700*, Madrid 2016.

78 Otto del Carretto was the son of Francesco del Carretto.

79 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol I, p. 360, 27. 2. 1668.



aware of de Grana's secret mission, but she does seem to have done everything possible to help him. He was Leonor del Carretto's brother. This former Spanish ambassador to the Empire was now Vicereine of Mexico. Maria Sophia corresponded with the Marquis del Carretto's sister, despite the fact that letters were slow to arrive as they journeyed with the fleet and had to cross a whole ocean.

Grana, Pötting and Maria Sophia were a perfect team: the count informed Nithard (the regent's favourite and confessor) of the Marquis of Grana's arrival as soon as he reached Madrid, as Maria Sophia headed to the palace (surely to inform the queen of the Imperial envoy's arrival).<sup>80</sup> Grana moved into the Pötting household in the street of *La Luna* on the following day.<sup>81</sup> On the twenty ninth, Pötting accompanied Grana to the palace for his first audience with the queen and her son Charles II.<sup>82</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> March, the count and the marquis discussed Grana's instructions at the Pötting house.<sup>83</sup> Maria Sophia was not present for this conversation but she knew it had taken place. The following morning, Grana and the ambassador went to see Nithard. Two days later, Pötting took Grana to the audience with the queen regent. On the same day Pötting wrote to the emperor, informing him that Grana's arrival had caused a great deal of speculation at court.<sup>84</sup> On the fourth, Pötting visited the Dutch ambassador (the United Provinces were a member of the Triple Alliance, and one of the powers considering signing the peace agreement), while Grana went to see Nithard. On the fifth, Pötting gave the queen a paper on the Marquis of Grana's brief instructions.<sup>85</sup> On the following days he wrote to inform the emperor that the Duke of Medina de las Torres was suspicious of Grana, noting that he answered to Auersperg (who was known to support France), and suggesting that he had been sent with a secret mission. On 13<sup>th</sup> March, Pötting and Grana were summoned to the palace to meet the Count of Peñaranda and the Marquis of La Fuente, who were both ministers of the Council of State.<sup>86</sup> Peñaranda was also a member of Mariana's regency council.

At this meeting, La Fuente and Peñaranda criticised Pötting and Grana for the emperor's failure to intervene in the War of Devolution<sup>87</sup>. They asked the Marquis of Grana why he had arrived in Madrid to ask what the queen needed for the war now. Grana had to answer

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80 Ibidem.

81 Ibidem, p. 360, 28. 2. 1668

82 Ibidem, p. 360, 29. 2. 1668.

83 Ibidem, p. 361, 1. 3. 1668.

84 Ibidem, p. 361, note 586, 3. 3. 1668.

85 Ibidem, p. 361.

86 Ibidem, pp. 363–364, 13. 3. 1668.

87 About the War of Devolution see: Antonio José RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ, *España, Flandes y la Guerra de Devolución (1667–1668): guerra, reclutamiento y movilización para el mantenimiento de los Países Bajos españoles*, Madrid 2007.

two questions. The first concerned Louis XIV's invasion of Franche-Comté: the queen regent wanted to know what the Empire would do about France's invasion of Besançon as the emperor was responsible for defending that Spanish city. The second concerned the English and Dutch proposal to end the war. Both events had occurred during Grana's voyage to Spain, and so he had no instructions from the emperor on these subjects. So the Marquis gave evasive answers, affirming that he "*supposed*" that the Empire was willing to assist Franche-Comté as he was raising levies and that he "*believed*" that the Empire would attend to the "*common cause*".<sup>88</sup> The suspicions of the Spanish ministers increased as a result of Grana's unclear answers, and even more when they learned that Grana came with no official order to offer military support. Nothing was resolved at this first meeting.

Three days after this failed meeting, the Countess of Pötting went to the palace to visit the queen, and then visited again on the 19<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>89</sup> Only Maria Sophia (not Pötting or Grana) spoke to the regent during those days. Meanwhile, Mariana submitted the items discussed at the meeting to the Council of State. Possibly influenced by Maria Sophia and by her ministers' response, Mariana summoned Pötting and Grana to a new meeting at the palace. They met the Marquis de la Fuente on 25<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>90</sup> La Fuente explained that the queen was inclined to accept the English and Dutch offer to mediate peace negotiations with France, with some reservations: if the Empire decided to carry out military intervention to support her in Franche-Comté, she would be prepared to continue fighting. Grana swiftly replied that Leopold could do "*little or nothing*" in the face of the Triple Alliance's decision to sign peace and that he would "*support the Dutch and the English in everything that was desirable for the Spanish crown and that would best serve the queen*".<sup>91</sup> La Fuente interpreted these words as a promise to help pressure France in the peace negotiations. Mariana was informed immediately of arguments given by Grana and Pötting, and that they had both spoken in favour of peace with France and of the Empire's potential support to help Spain secure better terms (more territorial gains) from the peace treaty. Presumably satisfied with the results of the meeting, the queen gave the Countess of Pötting, who happened to be at the palace on the same day, "*a mink muff that the ambassador of Moscow had given her during his recent visit*".<sup>92</sup>

The third and final meeting was held between the same triumvirate on 28<sup>th</sup> March – Mariana decided to summon Grana, Pötting and the Marquis of La Fuente once more.<sup>93</sup>

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88 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol I, p. 363–364.

89 *Ibidem*, pp. 365–366, 16. and 19. 3. 1668.

90 *Ibidem*, p. 365.

91 *Ibidem*, p. 369, note 597.

92 *Ibidem*, p. 368, 25. 3. 1668.

93 *Ibidem*, pp. 370–371.

This meeting ended with Grana promise that Leopold I would end relations with France if it failed to respect peace terms favourable to Spain. The Countess of Pötting went to the palace to see the queen on that same day, returning two days later to watch an Easter procession. Her husband was watching from a private household, while she had the privilege of a view from a window of the Alcazar palace. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April, Easter Sunday, Pötting and his wife went to the palace together, and Maria Sophia went to visit the Queen. Mariana of Austria gave the Marquis of Grana a jewel worth six thousand ducats as a farewell gift. Grana left Madrid on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The Count and Countess of Pötting bade him farewell “*with great affection*”.<sup>94</sup>

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle ending the War of Devolution was signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1668. France returned Franche-Comté (and the city of Besançon) as well as Cambrai, Aire and Saint Omer; but it retained Charleroi, Courtrai, Douai, Furnes, Lille, Oudenarde and Tournai.<sup>95</sup> As she wished, Mariana of Austria recovered Franche-Comté, and the emperor was not obliged to enter the fighting. Grana, Pötting and his wife had been successful.

Towards the end of 1668, the Countess of Pötting received a long letter from her friend Leonor del Carretto (Grana’s sister) dating from August. Leonor, who had been Spanish ambassador to the Empire until 1663 becoming Vicereine of Mexico in 1664, thanked Maria Sophia for “*the favours she and Count Pötting had given [her brother]*”.<sup>96</sup> She also sent a precious gift from the Indies: a box full of chocolate, probably in return for the ambassador’s assistance to her brother. Leonor’s letter and valuable gift (cacao was exorbitantly expensive at that time),<sup>97</sup> demonstrate Maria Sophia’s political support for Grana’s diplomatic mission. Leonor also yearned to return to Madrid, and continued to send her “*friend and servant*” chocolate over the following months.

As of 1669, coinciding with a period of stable foreign affairs during the regency,<sup>98</sup> the ambassador acted as a broker,<sup>99</sup> focusing on mediations that she and her husband carried out together. One of her most assiduous clients was Friar Thomas of Sarria, Archbishop of Taranto (Naples).<sup>100</sup> His main demands were to obtain a bishopric in Sicily or, if possible, to return to Spain,<sup>101</sup> and to receive a salary for his services to Austria, which

94 Ibidem, p. 373, 7. 4. 1668.

95 Coleman PHILLIPSON, *Termination of War and Treaties of Peace*, New York 1916, p. 222.

96 ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien Varia, Kart. 22, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 67, Leonor del Carretto to the Countess of Pötting, 1. 8. 1668.

97 Bianca LINDORFER, *Discovering taste: Spain, Austria, and the spread of chocolate consumption among the Austrian aristocracy, 1650–1700*, Food and History 7, n° 1, 2009, pp. 35–51.

98 S. MITCHELL, *Mariana of Austria and Imperial Spain*, p. 265.

99 Sharon KETTERING, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-century France*, Oxford 1986.

100 José FILGUEIRA VALVERDE, *Fray Tomás de Sarria, arzobispo de Tarento, teólogo, diplomático, mecenas bienhechor de Pontevedra*, Pontevedra 1975, p. 7.

101 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 23, fasc. f, Akt Nr. 56, Sarria to the Count of Pötting, 29. 4. 1670.

included his decisive role in the election of Ferdinand IV and Leopold I as candidates to the Empire.<sup>102</sup> Throughout 1670, Sarria sent the Countess of Pötting numerous gifts to persuade her to intercede on his behalf to the queen regent. In January 1670, he wrote to the Count of Pötting to enquire about the countess' tastes, as he wished to send her gloves, herbal essences or votive items.<sup>103</sup> A few months later, the archbishop sent Maria Sophia several pairs of gloves in different sizes and in June he sent her a dress from Naples, a dozen pairs of gloves, four rosaries and several indulgences.<sup>104</sup> In July he sent gloves and fans and promised to send other gifts from Rome,<sup>105</sup> and in August he sent Maria Sophia "*things for winter*". In October, the Count of Pötting received another case of "*good presents and gifts*",<sup>106</sup> and he answered Sarria, informing him that his wife, the ambadress, had spoken to the wife of the man who managed the endowment gifts (*el administrador de las rentas dotales*) and had given her some of the presents that Maria Sophia had received from Sarria to see if she [the wife of the *administrador*] would be able to "*assist her husband*" and secure repayment of the amounts requested as a result of this "*bribery*".<sup>107</sup>

Friar Thomas of Sarria thanked them for this gesture, hoping to achieve "*through the hand of my lady the countess [the ambadress]*" the endowments he requested from the queen's treasury, and he promised to send more gifts for Maria Sophia and the wife of the manager "*whose favour*" he so needed.<sup>108</sup> Sarria's gifts comprising an indulgence for a gold medallion that "*the countess wanted*", arrived in December. He also promised to send four silver medals with the indulgence "*in articulo mortis*"<sup>109</sup> for Pötting's friends and debtors, and at the end of December he sent another box containing "*weapons against the cold*".<sup>110</sup> In January 1671, Pötting again spoke to the queen "*about the interests of the Archbishop of Taranto*".<sup>111</sup> He sent more gifts to the ambadress throughout 1671: *agnus dei* to hang

102 J. FILGUEIRA VALVERDE, *Fray Tomás de Sarria*, pp. 5–6. See also: Lamberg to Auersperg, 13. 5. 1654 in OÖLA, HA Steyr, FA Lamberg, Kart. 1226, fasc. 15, Akt Nr. 248, and ÖStA, HHStA, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Spanien, Kart. 44, fasc. 5, Akt Nr. 5. Ferdinand IV to Johann Maximilian Lamberg, 29. 5. 1653.

103 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 23, Sarria to the Count of Pötting, 18. 1. 1670.

104 Ibidem, Sarria to Pötting, 25. 6. 1670.

105 Ibidem, Sarria to Pötting, June 1670.

106 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol I, p. 149, 3. 10. 1670.

107 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 24, fasc. e, Akt Nr. 68, Pötting to Sarria, 8. 10. 1670.

108 Ibidem, Kart. 23, fasc. f, Akt Nr. 94, Sarria to Pötting, 8. 11. 1670.

109 Ibidem, Akt Nr. 98, Sarria to Pötting, 6. 12. 1670.

110 Ibidem, Kart. 23, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 101, Sarria to Pötting, 20. 12. 1670.

111 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol I, p. 174, 27. 1. 1671 and 9. 8. 1671.

on the bedhead,<sup>112</sup> a medal bearing the image of five saints<sup>113</sup> and more indulgences.<sup>114</sup> The Pöttings tried to satisfy the demands of Thomas of Sarria but all was in vain. The Council of Italy rejected his petition to retire to Sicily for the third time and refused to pay the money that he was owed by the kingdom of Naples.<sup>115</sup> In a letter dated July 1671, the Archbishop of Taranto again petitioned Pötting and Maria Sophia for their help, arguing that the only lady he knew at the palace was the “*lady countess*”, as “*all of the other ladies*” he had known in Madrid had died.<sup>116</sup> The Count of Pötting and Maria Sophia continued to help Sarria, leaning on the manager of the endowments and his wife.<sup>117</sup> The last letter we have from Sarria to Pötting mentions the ambassador’s work to promote the aims of the unfortunate archbishop of Taranto to the queen regent.<sup>118</sup> Thomas of Sarria died in 1682,<sup>119</sup> without fulfilling his desire to be sent to Sicily.

Again in 1671, Maria Sophia and her husband also tried to secure the position of ambassador to Rome for the Count of Albadeliste. Manuel Enríquez de Guzmán was related to the ambassador through their great grandfather Adam of Dietrichstein, which was one of the reasons why Maria Sophia wanted to support his political aspirations. The Count of Albadeliste visited the Count of Pötting on 15<sup>th</sup> September and that afternoon Pötting went to the palace to ask the queen to appoint Albadeliste to the Roman embassy as “*I believe he would be very suitable*” for the position.<sup>120</sup> Six days later, the Countess of Pötting went to “*speak to the Queen in support of the Count of Alba*”.<sup>121</sup> But the queen named the Marquis of Liche as ambassador to Rome.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, the Counts of Albadeliste rewarded the ambassadors’ efforts with a gift: a baby Jesus of Naples that the Countess of Albadeliste gave to her cousin, the ambassador, during one of her regular visits to the Pötting household in the street of *La Luna*.<sup>123</sup> They had better luck with the candidacy of the Marquis of Castelrodrigo for the Presidency of the Council of Flanders. In his diary of August 1671, Pötting noted that the Marquis had secured the position

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112 ÖStA, HHStA, Spanien Varia, Kart. 25, fasc. c, Akt Nr. 56, Sarria to Pötting, 11. 4. 1671.

113 Ibidem, Akt Nr. 68, Sarria to Pötting, 20. 6. 1671.

114 Ibidem, Akt Nr. 75, Sarria to Pötting, 18. 7. 1671.

115 Ibidem.

116 Ibidem.

117 Ibidem, Akt Nr. 81, Sarria to Pötting, 15. 8. 1671 and Akt Nr. 79, Sarria to Pötting, 1. 8. 1671.

118 Ibidem, Akt Nr. 87, Sarria to Pötting, 26. 9. 1671.

119 J. FILGUEIRA VALVERDE, *Fray Tomás de Sarria*, p. 7.

120 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol II, p. 218, 5. 9. 1671.

121 Ibidem, vol II, p. 219, 21. 9. 1671.

122 About the marquis of Liche (Marquis del Carpio): Leticia De FRUTOS, *El Templo de la Fama. Alegoría del marqués del Carpio*, Madrid 2009.

123 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed.), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol II, p. 220, 25. 9. 1671.

through his intervention.<sup>124</sup> There is no documentary evidence that Maria Sophia was involved in the negotiations, but it is likely that she played a part as Pötting recorded his wife's visits to the Marchioness of Castelrodrigo in his papers.

Maria Rosina Sophia of Dietrichstein, Countess of Pötting, and her husband returned to Vienna in 1674. In spite of her youth, the ambassadress tried to perform her duties with dignity, and she did so with some failure, and some success. Maria Sophia was to return as ambassadress to Madrid with her second husband Ferdinand Wenzel Lobkowitz, the Imperial ambassador to Spain from 1690 to 1697. Maria Sophia was by his side, returning to the role of ambassadress. Mariana of Austria was no longer queen regent, but was now the queen mother, inaugurating a new period for the Imperial ambassadors to Madrid.

## Conclusions

Judith Rebecca Wrba, the Countess of Lamberg and Maria Sophia von Dietrichstein, Countess of Pötting, were two ambassadresses who paved the way for their successors. They both set precedents and made it easier for subsequent Imperial ambassadresses to access the diplomatic areas of the Spanish court.

Judith Rebecca consolidated the imperial ambassadresses' right to enter the queen's private quarters. Secured by her predecessor, the Marchioness of Grana, this privilege was probably granted to the Countess of Lamberg thanks to the influence of the young queen consort Mariana of Austria, who wanted to have a mature woman from the Hapsburg Empire, and who spoke German, close to her. Access to the Infanta María Teresa's most private rooms allowed her to overhear conversations of great political interest, which she faithfully conveyed to her husband. We can find scraps of what she 'overheard' in the diplomatic letters of Johann Maximilian Lamberg. She tried and failed to secure the queen's right hand, in a context of tense diplomatic relations between Spain and the Empire over the negotiations regarding María Teresa's marriage. However, Judith Rebecca established a good relationship with Mariana of Austria, gracefully achieved her social duties, and received visits. Judith Rebecca's efforts were rewarded when her daughter Johanna Theresia, became the queen's favourite lady between 1660 and 1661, and an Imperial ambassadress with the privilege of precedence between 1673 and 1676.

Maria Sophia Rosina of Dietrichstein, Countess of Pötting, worked closely with her husband in both his diplomatic negotiations and mediation activities in the first years of their embassy (1663–1669), which coincided with the beginning of Mariana of Austria's regency (1665 onwards). The Pöttings were faced with resolving two wars, with Portugal

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124 Ibidem, vol II, p. 136.

and France. Maria Sophia contributed to the success of both missions, supporting her husband's visits and attending the palace to see the queen regent. The Countess of Pötting did not achieve precedence during the initial years of Mariana's regency as the right hand was given to the governess of the king-child Charles II, and not to the first lady of the Bedchamber.<sup>125</sup> The exceptional circumstances of the regency led to such changes in protocol. While Maria Sophia did not obtain the right hand, she was ambassador during a female regency, doubling her influence. Her husband, the Count of Pötting, played this situation to his advantage, using his wife to send papers to the queen. He once noted in his diary that, "I wrote the Queen a paper in German, and had the countess deliver it. Pray God she [the Queen] make use of it so we can open our eyes."<sup>126</sup> Maria Sophia also worked as a mediator and, although she didn't achieve the desired results, she consolidated a practice that was continued by her successors; obtaining incomes and positions through ambassadors' wives, became standard practice in the following decades.

The Bohemian ambassadors helped gain acceptance and legitimacy for the political actions of their husbands in court circles. Judith Rebecca and Maria Sophia marked a turning point in the diplomatic life of the Imperial ambassadors to the court of Madrid.

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125 G. MAURA Y GAMAZO (1879–1963), *Vida y reinado de Carlos II*, Madrid 1990, p. 88; L. OLIVÁN SANTALIESTRA, *La dama, el aya y la camarera. Perfiles políticos de tres mujeres de la casa de Mariana de Austria*, in: J. Martínez Millán – M<sup>a</sup> P. Marçal Lourenço (coords.), *Las relaciones discretas entre las monarquías hispana y portuguesa: las Casas de las reinas (siglos XV–XIX)*, vol. II, Madrid 2008, pp. 1301–1355, p. 1318.

126 M. NIETO NUÑO (ed), *Diario del conde de Pötting*, vol II, p. 135, 7. 8. 1670.