



“The Infanta will marry the person who provides the Peace or the one who gives us the means to continue the War”: The negotiations for the marriage between Infanta María Teresa of Austria and Emperor Leopold I (1654-1657)

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“The Infanta will marry the person who provides the Peace or the one who gives us the means to continue the War”:¹ The negotiations for the marriage between Infanta María Teresa of Austria and Emperor Leopold I (1654-1657)

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Abstract: Prince Baltasar Carlos’s death in 1646 turned his little sister, María Teresa, into the direct heiress of King Felipe IV of Spain. For this reason, her marriage became a key issue regarding the European politics of the central decades of the seventeenth century. Her marriage with the heir of Emperor Ferdinand III was the option chosen by Felipe IV as the most convenient for his territories as long as there was no male heir for his throne. But the negotiations to achieve that end were far from easy. In this essay, we will examine the negotiations conducted between Madrid and Vienna during the years 1654 and 1657, to arrange the marriage between Infanta María Teresa and the future emperor Leopold I, through the correspondence interchanged between King Felipe IV and his ambassadors in the imperial court.

Keywords: Felipe IV, Infanta María Teresa, succession, Empire, Spanish Monarchy, Leopold I.

Status of the issue: the underestimated project

The problem of the succession of the Spanish Monarchy is a topic that has attracted the attention of countless historians over the centuries. However, these efforts have not been directed towards the study of the two surviving sisters of the last king of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain, Infantas María Teresa and Margarita, and to the significant dynastic and political importance that they had regarding this conflict, even when their marriages were intrinsically linked to the succession crisis. In the last years, several works have emerged that have improved our knowledge of the life and influence of both infantas. Especially important in this area, for example, are the recent works published by Laura Oliván Santaliestra, particularly those

¹Quote from a letter written by Felipe IV to the Marquis of La Fuente, his ambassador in Vienna, on 22 March 1656. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado, libro 133, s/f. This article was originally published in Spanish in *Revista de Historia Moderna. Anales de la Universidad de Alicante*, 33 (2015), 79-99. It was translated to be published in the RSJ after it was awarded with the ERC and Young Researchers’ Article Prize 2016, given by the Royal Studies Journal and sponsored by Canterbury Christ Church University. I want to thank the Article Prize’s committee for this award and I also want to thank Elena Woodacre and Jitske Jasperse for their help with this translation and publication. This article presents part of the research for my Final Master Project, that was presented at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid as part of the Master in Advanced Studies in Early Modern History “Monarquía de España (siglos XVI-XVIII)”. This Final Master Project was directed by professor Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvarino and this research has been extended and improved during my doctoral studies at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), under the supervision of professor Luis Antonio Ribot García, linked to the researching project “Conservación de la Monarquía y equilibrio europeo entre los siglos XVII y XVIII” (HAR2012-37560-C02-01). I want to offer my most sincere thanks both to Luis Antonio Ribot García and to Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio for their patience, understanding and help through all my research.

focused on the childhood of both princesses,² on the life of Margarita as empress in Vienna³ and on the government of the Queen regent Maria Anna of Austria. But, despite Oliván Santaliestra's contributions and those made by other historians, much still remains to be done regarding the life of these two infantas, who attracted the attention of half Europe for many years regarding their position as potential heiresses of Felipe IV and Carlos II.

In the specific case of Infanta María Teresa, it is interesting to point out that the episode we are going to analyze in this article has attracted little attention amongst most historians, even though it ultimately determined the political relationship between the Spanish Monarchy and the Empire for years. The projected marriage of the Infanta María Teresa with the heirs of Ferdinand III, first with Ferdinand IV⁵ and, after his death, with the future emperor Leopold I, became a dominant feature in the diplomatic exchanges maintained between the courts of Madrid and Vienna in the first years following the Peace of Westphalia.

Overall, this marriage has gone mostly unnoticed, relegated to a simple anecdote in most of the works focused on the problem of the Spanish succession, the relationships between both branches of the Habsburg's dynasty in the central years of the seventeenth century or the last years of Felipe IV. Even in the biographies of most of the people directly involved with this marriage project, said marriage is usually briefly addressed, if it is mentioned at all. For example, in the reference work written by Ferdinand Opll and Karl Rudolf (focused on the political relationship between Spain and Austria), these negotiations, enormously relevant at the time, are hardly mentioned.⁶ The same is true of some of the most famous biographies dedicated to the study of Leopold I, such as the works written by John P. Spielman or Jean Bérenger, where this issue is regarded just a simple aspiration, with very little potential to become a reality as a result of the obvious interest that the power France showed to obtain the hand of María Teresa in marriage for the young king Louis XIV.⁷ Moreover, this French marriage has focused the attention of most of the specialists of this period, to the point that this previous Imperial marriage project has been virtually ignored and regarded as a vague possibility that was never translated into any concrete negotiation.

² L. Oliván Santaliestra, "My sister is growing up very healthy and beautiful, she loves me'. The childhood of the Infantas Maria Teresa and Margarita Maria at court", in *The Formation of the Child in Early Modern Spain*, ed. G. E. Coolidge (Dorchester, 2014), 165-188.

³ L. Oliván Santaliestra, "Giovane d'anni ma vecchia di giudizio". La emperatriz Margarita en la corte de Viena", in *La dinastía de los Austria: Las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, eds. J. Martínez Millán y R. González Cuerva, 3 vols. (Madrid, 2011), vol. 2, 837-908.

⁴ L. Oliván Santaliestra, *Mariana de Austria. Imagen, poder y diplomacia de una reina cortesana* (Madrid, 2006).

⁵ In this article, we will refer to Ferdinand IV as Archduke Ferdinand. He was appointed King of Bohemia in 1646 and King of Hungary in 1647 in conjunction with his father and he was later crowned King of the Romans in 1653. We are going to mention him especially during a chronological period in which, at times, Ferdinand would have already been named King and at other points he would not yet hold the title. So, to avoid having to change continuously his title depending on the months we are referring to, he is going to be known here as Archduke Ferdinand for continuity and to avoid confusion.

⁶ F. Opll and K. Rudolf, *España y Austria* (Madrid, 1997), 139-140.

⁷ J. P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (London, 1977), 45 and 52-54, and J. Bérenger, *Léopold I^{er} (1640-1705). Fondateur de la puissance autrichienne* (Paris, 2004), 242. In fact, Spielman says it was common knowledge both in Madrid and in Vienna that María Teresa would marry Ferdinand III's heir, but Mazarino's insistence that the only way to achieve peace was for Maria Teresa to marry Louis XIV ended any kind of arrangement which could have been formed between Felipe IV and Ferdinand III. For his part, Bérenger uses the interesting epithet of "s'imagina" when he remarks that Leopold thought he was going to marry María Teresa, as if the negotiation maintained regarding this issue had never been more than a vague desire, before saying that the peace negotiations initiated in 1658 crushed this desire of the young emperor.

German historiography has given back to this failed marriage project some of the attention it deserves. In a very successful attempt to revise the figure of Emperor Ferdinand III, studying his government beyond his involvement in the Thirty Years War, with which he had been traditionally associated, historians like Mark Hengerer⁸ and, especially, Lothar Höbelt, have shed considerable light on the difficult diplomatic relationship maintained between the Empire and the Spanish Monarchy after the Peace of Westphalia was signed. In that regard, the negotiations for the marriage between María Teresa and the heirs of Ferdinand III had a special importance because of the conflicts they raised between both branches of the Habsburg family. Höbelt, in his book about Ferdinand III published in 2008, and in his article called “‘Madrid vaut bien une guerre?’ Marriage negotiations between the Habsburg courts, 1653-1657”,⁹ made interesting progress in the study of this topic. In fact, I consider these two works of this reputed scholar as the direct predecessors of the article I present here. In the following lines, I want to present a contribution to the knowledge of this matrimonial project that was so important during the 1650s from the perspective of the Spanish Monarchy and to analyze the behavior of Felipe IV regarding this marriage, from his initial reluctance until the birth of Prince Felipe Próspero in November 1657, when a French marriage for the Infanta became a possibility and he put a stop to these Imperial negotiations that could have changed dramatically the destiny of the Spanish Monarchy, the Empire and, consequently, of all Europe, if it had taken place.

The beginning of the “Diplomatic War of Succession”. The death of Prince Baltasar Carlos in 1646

The Spanish Monarchy, in the absence of male succession, is in the danger of being transferred to the possession of alien or foreign princes. It is a predicament in which all the fortune of Spain is at risk, when the Monarchy is in such a peril of being passed either into the hands of Austrian princes (a situation that, in our misfortune, would be the happiest stance) or to French ones, completely strange to us.¹⁰

These words, addressed to Felipe IV by Luis de Haro in December 1646, reflect

⁸ M. Hengerer, *Kaiser Ferdinand III (1608-1657): Eine Biographie* (Vienna, 2012).

⁹ L. Höbelt, *Ferdinand III (1608-1657): Friedenskaiser wider Willen* (Granz, 2008) and L. Höbelt, “‘Madrid vaut bien une guerre?’ Marriage negotiations between the Habsburg courts, 1653-1657”, in *La dinastía de los Austrias*, vol. 3, 1421-1436. I heartily recommend this work of Lothar Höbelt, as it mentions more information regarding several aspects of the issue I will present here, especially regarding the Empire, as he uses primarily testimonies from the Imperial Archives.

¹⁰ Real Academia de la Historia, colección Salazar y Castro, K-9, fols. 53v. and 60. Quoted by R. Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal: Guerra, conflicto y poderes en la Monarquía Hispánica (1640-1680)* (Valladolid, 1998), 164. In order to aid the reader I have translated the original seventeenth-century Spanish documents into English as carefully as possible. Those who want to study the original extracts of these documents can read the Spanish version of this article here: <http://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/52698>.

clearly the fears of a monarchy that had just seen the only male child of the king, Prince Baltasar Carlos, die unexpectedly two months before in Zaragoza. In that moment, the young Infanta María Teresa, who was born on 20 September 1638, became the only heir-ess of the Spanish Monarchy.

Thus began the Spanish Monarchy's succession crisis; a process that would trigger, more than fifty years after this death, the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). This military conflict itself can be considered as the final act of a fight for the Spanish succession that had been taking place in the diplomatic arena for years before the beginning of the war. The succession problems of the Spanish crown directly influenced European diplomacy for half a century before the actual outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, conditioning not only the international relationships maintained by the most important parties directly involved in the succession problem (France, the Empire, Bavaria and the Spanish Monarchy itself), but on another scale, it also influenced the diplomatic policy of other European territories, such as England, the Dutch Republic and Savoy, amongst others. Treaties, peace accords and diplomatic negotiations of all kinds were influenced directly or indirectly by the succession crisis of the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty during the period from 1646 to 1700. We can speak of this period as an authentic diplomatic war of succession in which the claimants to the Spanish Monarchy used all the diplomatic resources at their disposal to put themselves at the head of the race for the Spanish succession long before Carlos II's death in 1700.

This does not mean that we can consider that this diplomatic fight had the same political importance throughout all this period. In fact, we can discern a sense of fluctuation related to this diplomatic confrontation that demonstrates a greater or lesser international importance of the Spanish succession crisis, depending on the events happening at a particular time. Thus, there were periods when the problem of Spanish succession had a huge weight on overall European policy, like the years immediately following the death of Prince Baltasar Carlos or the final years of Carlos II's life. Yet at other times this problem, without disappearing completely, had less importance, like in the years between 1657 and 1661, when the birth of several princes seemed to secure the male succession of Felipe IV, or when Carlos II reached adulthood and married for the first time in 1679.

Therefore, given the importance and the extension of this phenomenon, it deserves a distinctive nomenclature, instead of being conceived of as a mere preamble to the outbreak of the Spanish War of Succession. In the absence of a better name to designate this period, from 9 October 1646 (day of the death of Prince Baltasar Carlos) until 1 November 1700 (the date of Carlos II's death without issue), we can call it "diplomatic War of the Spanish Succession". In the following section, we will analyze one of the most prominent episodes of the aforementioned diplomatic War of the Spanish Succession: the marriage negotiations between King Felipe IV and the Emperors Ferdinand III and Leopold I to arrange the wedding of Infanta María Teresa with the heir of the imperial Habsburgs.

The concerns about Felipe IV's unstable succession began to emerge several years before the unexpected death of his heir, even if it was not considered as a major political problem until the first years of the 1640s.¹¹ Before Baltasar Carlos's death, the fragility of the offspring that Felipe IV had had from his first marriage with Isabel of Bourbon had

¹¹ Although Jean Bérenger even argued that the marriage between Ana of Austria and Louis XIII, agreed in 1612 and celebrated in 1615, had as one of its goals to give the inheritance of the Spanish Monarchy to the French crown, this is difficult to believe. We must remember that, when this marriage was negotiated, Felipe III already had three sons (Felipe, Carlos and Fernando) that made the possibility that Ana could become her father's heiress someday very unlikely. There was not a true alarm regarding the succession in the Span-

inspired some doubts regarding the future of the dynasty.¹² But the recurrent requests made to Felipe IV by his advisors in order for him to marry a second time were not well received by the King,¹³ who preferred to negotiate the marriage of his fifteen year-old son to reduce the risk of his unstable succession and to prevent the political problems that could arise if he remained much longer with only one male heir for his throne.

Amongst the different candidates that were considered for the Prince of Asturias, the most important were Isabel Clara of Habsburg, daughter of Leopold V of Tyrol and Claudia de Médicis; Ana María Luisa of Orleans, Louis XIII's niece;¹⁴ Leonor Gonzaga, daughter of Carlos and María Gonzaga and Archduchess Maria Anna, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III and María Ana of Austria, who would ultimately be the chosen one.¹⁵ There were many reasons for this selection. Amongst the most important ones were the death of Empress María Ana, Felipe IV's sister, on 13 May 1646, something that significantly weakened the Spanish influence in Vienna and, especially, the necessity to strengthen once again the ties between both branches of the dynasty in light of the growing signs that the Emperor was ready to sign a separate peace with France and Sweden, something that would leave the Spanish Monarchy practically alone in their fight against their powerful neighbor, France.¹⁶ At the same time, reviewing the pros and cons of this marriage, the shadow of the crisis of succession was also present, as it was indicated that it was of capital importance to count on the Emperor's assistance if Infanta Ana, Queen Mother of France, tried to claim any territories of the Spanish Monarchy despite her renunciation of

ish Monarchy at least until 1641, as previously, Felipe IV had always had at least two male heirs to his throne that could have inherited the throne if he had died unexpectedly. Between 1621 (the year in which Felipe IV ascended to the throne) and 1629, he had two heirs in the figures of his brothers Carlos and Fernando and, with the birth of Baltasar Carlos in 1629, he even had three at the same time. When Infante Don Carlos died in 1632, the King still had two possible successors in his son and his youngest brother, Cardinal-Infante Fernando. At the same time, during this period, Queen Isabel of Bourbon became pregnant regularly, so it seemed probable that Felipe IV could have more male children in a near future. But the death of Cardinal-Infante Fernando in 1641 and the fact that Queen Isabel of Bourbon had not become pregnant since the birth of Infanta María Teresa in 1638 began to raise some concerns regarding Felipe IV's succession, even when this would not become a major political problem until Baltasar Carlos' death in 1646. See J. Bérenger, "La question de la succession d'Espagne au XVII^e siècle", in *La présence des Bourbons en Europe, XVI-XVIII siècle*, dir. L. Bely (Paris, 2003), 75-77.

¹² "The enemies would use this subject to pass to their own designs and the French for sure will not forget the rights of the Most Christian King, without paying any mind to the renunciation made by his mother, excluding, by right and by force, the House of Austria from the succession, whose princes, even if they are natives, we can deny they lack of the practice of this territories and its inhabitants." Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, leg. 2.347, Junta de Estado, 8 January 1646. Quoted by Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal. Guerra, conflicto*, 96-97.

¹³ In a letter addressed to his sister, Empress María Ana, Felipe IV indicated clearly that he did not want to marry a second time. Letter of 21 April 1645. Quoted by Maura Gamazo, *Carlos II y su corte*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1911), vol. 1, 66.

¹⁴ She was the daughter of Gaston of Orleans and María of Bourbon.

¹⁵ We can see a brief summary of the points for and against each one of the candidates in the document titled *Papeles políticos tocantes al reinado de Felipe IV*, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Mss./2080, especially in the pages 83v.-87v.

¹⁶ To illustrate this point, we can see, for example, how in 1646, Count Maximilian von Trauttmansdorf, envoy of Emperor Ferdinand III to Münster and one of the most influential men in the imperial government, had almost reached a peace agreement between the Empire, France and Sweden, representing the interests of an important imperial political faction that defended that the best for the Empire was to make peace with their enemies and separate themselves from the problems of the Spanish Monarchy, something that caused an enormous concern in the court of Madrid. See Hölbert, "Madrid vaut bien une guerre?", vol. 3, 1422-1424.

France, tried to claim any territories of the Spanish Monarchy despite her renunciation of her rights and the strongest right to the throne of the descendants of her younger sister María Ana had, if the two children of Felipe IV were to suffer any “accidents”.¹⁷ In July 1646, the marriage was already fixed.¹⁸ Then, they began to organize the Archduchess’s journey, so the new bride could arrive to Spain as quickly as possible.

But the negotiations regarding this marriage were not the only ones that were conducted at this time between both branches of the House of Habsburg. The Emperor also tried to fix the marriage of Archduke Ferdinand with Infanta María Teresa. But, given how young María Teresa was at the time and the possibility that the interests and necessities of the Spanish Monarchy might change before the Infanta’s marriage could take place, these negotiations never took any concrete form before the unexpected death of Baltasar Carlos changed dramatically Felipe IV’s plans.¹⁹

On 9 November 1646, Prince Baltasar Carlos’s death left the Monarchy in a very delicate position, afraid of any accident that could put Felipe IV’s health at risk. If the King were to die suddenly, not only would be his direct successor a woman, whose marriage could introduce a foreign dynasty in the government of the Spanish Monarchy, but also his heiress would be a little child and there were no adult members of the dynasty in Spain who could act as a regent during her minority. It was an especially difficult moment for a monarchy which was still immersed in the Thirty Years War and relentlessly beset by all kind of problems. The uncertainty regarding the succession became the most important problem of the Spanish Monarchy, like a shadow that would loom over it during

¹⁷ “... For the conservation of the Spanish Netherlands and Italy, these motives and the limited succession to this Kingdoms and the great risk that would result not only to them but also to all Christianity if the time comes (God forbids it) that the renunciation of the Queen could be disputed as invalid or if the rights that because of said renunciation has the Empress makes me put before any other the marriage the one of the Prince and the Infanta with the Emperor’s children, judging that, in this case, not only should His Majesty try to acquire more friends, but that His Majesty shouldn’t leave any door open through which our enemies could reduce our number of allies, or, at least, make them being indifferent or convince to set apart from this Crown those princes that, for their own nature, their relationship with His Majesty, or their friendship with us have always been loyal and have suffered the same fate as the forces of His Majesty ... and thus, considering how inseparable are the interests of His Majesty from the ones of the Most August House of Austria, I would wish for us to take advantage of the people that are in it, not to repeat kinships, as they are already linked with close family ties, but to interest with them other princes of His Majesty’s devotion.” *Papeles políticos tocantes al reinado de Felipe IV*, BNE, Mss./2080, fol. 82r.-83v.

¹⁸ Baltasar Carlos himself said so in a letter he wrote to Sor Ana Dorotea of Austria in 17 July 1646. Archivo General de Palacio, Patronatos de la Corona, Descalzas Reales, Original, Caja 6, exp. 31, fol. 36.

¹⁹ Regarding María Teresa’s imperial marriage, Luis Tercero Casado argues that the Duke of Terranova, who had been sent to Vienna by Felipe IV to negotiate the marriage of Prince Baltasar Carlos with Archduchess Maria Anna, was also entrusted with the mission of arranging a double marriage between his own children and the Emperor’s. But this project had never been fixed before Baltasar Carlos’ death and, at that time, there was also being considered the possibility of marrying María Teresa to Louis XIV as a way to make peace with France in several negotiations that took place until 1646. For example, it is said that Mazarino had offered Felipe IV the option of a separate peace through the marriage of Louis XIV with María Teresa. In this case, Felipe IV would give her the Spanish Netherlands as a dowry and, as compensation, France would give Catalonia back to the Spanish Monarchy. See L. Tercero Casado, “La jornada de la reina Mariana de Austria a España: Divergencias políticas y tensión protocolar en el seno de la casa de Austria (1648-1649)”, *Hispania. Revista española de Historia*, vol. LXXI, 239 (2011), 643; E. Solano Camón, “Una nueva aproximación en torno a las relaciones políticas entre la corte madrileña y Viena en el último cuarto del siglo XVII”, in *La dinastía de los Austria*, vol. 2, 1055-1056, and L. Oliván, “El fin de los Habsburgo: crisis dinástica y conflicto sucesorio en la Monarquía Hispánica (1615-1700)”, in *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis: Las quiebras dinásticas en el ámbito hispánico: 1250-1808*, eds. J. Manuel Nieto Soria and M. V. López-Cordón Cortezo (Madrid, 2008), 46.

the next fifty years of the seventeenth century.²⁰

“We don’t know if she will be just a good Infanta or something more” :²¹ The negotiations for the marriage between María Teresa and Archduke Leopold until Ferdinand III’s death

Immediately after the death of his son, Felipe IV tried to arrange a second marriage for himself that could give him a male heir as soon as possible. Prince Baltasar Carlos’s death had left Archduchess Maria Anna widowed even before she could meet her appointed husband and the Emperor, trying to preserve the new alliance that they were going to forge with this marriage, quickly offered his two children to the Spanish king, as spouses of Felipe IV and María Teresa respectively.²²

There were other candidates for the King’s hand. Especially important, besides Archduchess Maria Anna herself, were the archduchesses Isabel Clara and Maria Leopoldina of Tyrol, but the candidacy of archduchess Maria Anna was quickly accepted, for the same reasons that had encouraged the King to choose her as his daughter-in-law and also because the negotiations were so advanced already that the King was confident that the marriage could become a reality in a very short time.²³

Certainly, the marriage was fixed unusually quickly and on 9 January 1647, just three months after Baltasar Carlos’s death, the marriage was already set,²⁴ even if the new bride did not begin her journey from Vienna to Madrid until 18 November 1648.

With this marriage already fixed, the Emperor’s efforts to arrange the marriage between Archduke Ferdinand and Infanta María Teresa increased. But the pressure exerted by the Emperor to assure, with this marriage, that the Spanish inheritance would remain in the Habsburg dynasty, was only met with excuses and positive words on Felipe IV’s part. However, the signing of the peace of Westphalia on 24 October 1648, stopped these

²⁰ L. Ribot García, “La repercusión en España del tratado de reparto de la Monarquía de 1668” in *Tiempo de Cambios. Guerra, diplomacia y política internacional de la Monarquía Hispánica (1648-1700)*, coord. P. Sanz Camañes (Madrid, 2012), 55-96.

²¹ Letter written by Felipe IV to the Countess of Paredes, 22 December 1654. J. Pérez Villanueva, *Felipe IV, escritor de cartas. Un epistolario inédito con Velázquez al fondo* (Salamanca, 1986), 242.

²² W. Ramírez Villa-Urrutia, *Relaciones entre España y Austria durante el reinado de la Emperatriz doña Margarita, infanta de España y esposa del emperador Leopoldo I* (Madrid, 1905), 56-57. This offering is also reflected by J. de Mascareñas in his work *Viage de la Serenissima Reyna María Ana de Austria, Segunda Muger de Don Phelipe Quarto, deste nombre Rey Cathólico de Hespaña, hasta la Real Corte de Madrid, desde la Imperial de Viena* (Madrid, 1650), 8-9.

²³ The option of the archduchesses from Tyrol had a relative importance, because it was defended by those who opposed to the imperial marriage. Amongst the arguments that were used against the election of Archduchess Maria Ana, was the fact that she was still too young to conceive quickly the heir that the Spanish Monarchy so desperately needed and, also, there were news of her fragile health, something that could affect the couple’s progeny. All this, combined with the growing rumors that accused Ferdinand III of planning a separate peace with France and Sweden gave certain leverage to those members of the court opposed to the renovation of a marriage alliance with the Empire. In fact, the mother of the archduchesses, Claudia of France, even sent a man in her confidence to Madrid, the Jesuit Eustaquio Pagano, to encourage this proposal, even if he did not achieve any success. *Cotejo Phísico-Político de las cosas de Viena y de Inspruck para el mayor acierto en la elección de esposa de que oy necesita la Magestad Cathólica*, BNE, Mss./2080, 136v.-154r., 6 December 1646. Luis Tercero Casado, in his article about the journey of Queen Maria Anna to Spain, also says that Ferdinand III ordered his ambassador in Madrid, the Marquis of Grana, to tell Felipe IV about the fragile health of his daughter, because of the dangers this could mean for their descendants. Tercero Casado, “La jornada de la reina Mariana”, 642.

²⁴ Felipe informed Sor María de Ágreda of this circumstance in a letter dated on 9 January 1647. *Cartas de la venerable sor María de Ágreda y del Rey Felipe IV*, ed. F. Silvela, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1885-1886), vol. 1, 180.

diplomatic conversations on their tracks, despite the excuses presented by the Emperor to his cousin.²⁵

In public, Felipe IV considered this peace as a huge betrayal of his interests and the ones of their common dynasty, but in private he confessed that he understood the reasons that compelled his cousin to make this decision. Consequently, the political relationship between the Spanish Monarchy and the Empire went through a problematic period in the following months, but there was not a total break in the relationship between both branches of the Habsburg dynasty and the arranged marriage between Felipe IV and Archduchess Maria Anna, (who was still in Vienna at the moment the peace agreement was signed), was not annulled either.

However, something that the signing of the peace agreement did interrupt was the journey to Madrid that Archduke Ferdinand wanted to make under the pretext of accompanying his beloved sister to her new home. With this excuse, he could travel to the court of Madrid to personally negotiate his marriage to the prospective heiress of the Spanish Monarchy. Felipe IV, who viewed this journey as a move of political pressure, did not want it to become a reality, and used the possibility of forbidding his nephew access to his territories as another way to try to force the Emperor to delay the signing of the peace. When the peace agreement was announced, the orders that Felipe IV gave to his ambassador in Vienna were categorical: the Archduke should never set foot in the Spanish Monarchy's territories.²⁶

This issue did not discourage the Emperor, who wished for this marriage to become a reality, even when different sectors of the imperial government viewed with distrust both the possibility that the crowns might go to this hypothetical couple, and that another union with the Spanish Habsburgs could put the new peace at risk, fearing that the Emperor would try to keep helping the Spanish Monarchy against its enemies with resources that should be invested in issues dealing directly with the Empire's interests.²⁷ The Emperor not only wanted to secure the Spanish inheritance to his line with this marriage; he also wished to reinforce his political relationship with Madrid, which had been badly damaged by the Peace of Westphalia. In fact, Ferdinand III wrote to his cousin that if he refused to welcome his own nephew into his territories when his journey was already planned and announced, they would show their enemies that both branches of the House of Austria distrusted each other, something that their enemies would try to use against them. Also, he said that there was no reason for Felipe IV to act that way, because the Emperor had promised him that he was going to keep helping Spain militarily in his fight against France, despite the peace agreement.²⁸ While he tried to convince his reluctant cousin, Ferdinand III, sent his son to accompany Maria Anna in her journey through the Imperial territories, hoping that Felipe IV might reconsider his position and that, when

²⁵ Ferdinand III, through his ambassador in Madrid, sent his apologies to his cousin, saying that he was at risk of losing his territories if he did not make peace and he could even lose the imperial crown if he did not yield to the demands of the electors in this regard. But he also told his cousin that he would keep helping him through other means and would continue giving him troops under other flags so as to not violate the terms of the peace. Letter written by Ferdinand III to Felipe IV, 21 October 1648. AHN, Estado, libro 712, s/f. Quoted by Tercero Casado, "La jornada de la reina Mariana", 648. Lothar Höbelt also mentions this, saying that Ferdinand III tried to present the Peace in the most positive light possible for the interest of the House of Austria. Höbelt, "Madrid vaut bien une guerre?", vol. 3, 1423-1424.

²⁶ Felipe IV's secret instruction addressed to the Count of Lumières, 31 January 1648. AHN, Estado, leg. 1635.

²⁷ AHN, Estado, leg. 2353, Consultation to the Council of State, 6 December 1648. Quoted by Tercero Casado, "La jornada de la reina Mariana", 648.

²⁸ Letter written by Ferdinand III to Felipe IV, 21 October 1648. AHN, Estado, libro 712, s/f.

the Archduke arrived to Madrid, he could exercise enough pressure over the King to arrange the long-desired marriage once and for all.²⁹ But Felipe IV did not give in and the Archduke Ferdinand was not allowed to enter into the Spanish Monarchy so he had to go back to Vienna after leaving his sister in Rovereto, at the border of her new territories.

In the following years, when the court of Vienna tried to address the issue of María Teresa's marriage, Felipe IV's answers were always polite, without indicating a total refusal of this idea, but without giving a positive answer either. Meanwhile the King was waiting for the time to pass until he absolutely had to make a decision in this regard, hoping for the birth of a male heir. During the first years of his marriage to Maria Anna of Austria, the King used a double strategy with his imperial cousin. On one hand, he implied constantly in his letters to the Emperor that he was not thinking about finding a husband for his daughter outside his own family, but that he could not give him a more concrete answer for the moment than the promise of his love. But, on the other hand, he also used the recurring veiled threat that he was going to marry his daughter to the French king or to another powerful suitor if the Emperor did not give him the assistance Spain needed or if his political behavior did not agree with Spanish interests.³⁰

The long-awaited heir of Philip IV failed to arrive in the years following the birth of Infanta Margarita in 1651. As the time passed without the birth of a male heir, the fact that Infanta María Teresa reached an age appropriate for her marriage and his deteriorating health prompted Felipe IV in 1654 to finally make a decision regarding the Infanta's marriage to assure the future of the Spanish Monarchy, in the likelihood that he might die without a male heir.

First, Felipe IV decided to announce publicly that María Teresa was his legitimate heiress to all the territories of the Spanish Monarchy and to name her Princess of Asturias, something that, after his own words, he has refrained from doing before because it would upset the Queen, as it would show the world that he did not believe that she could

²⁹ The Marquis of Grana had even asked for a papal dispensation of age and kinship to the Pope, so the Archduke and the Infanta could marry immediately. Haus-, Hof- und Stadtarchiv, Spanien-Varia, Karton 13, fasz. 12. Letter written by Grana to Trauttmansdorff dated on 4 December 1648. Quoted by Tercero Casado, "La jornada de la reina Mariana", 652-653.

³⁰ Even before the Peace of Westphalia, Felipe IV had already tried to use the Infanta's marriage with the Archduke as a weapon to threaten the Emperor against this peace agreement, advising him that he should think that, if the peace came to be, Felipe would be forced to marry his daughter to France: "... and if the Emperor answered that I would never want to deny my succession to my nephews, if, God forbid it, I were to die without a male heir, you will answer that His Imperial Majesty should take this into account, because if he drifts away from me, I could be forced to try to marry my daughter to France, as Wisdom never advises men to refuse extreme remedies in the extreme dangers that my Brother would give great cause if he listens to those who ask him to conclude the peace with my exclusion, even with the obvious danger of losing our House in both lines" Letter written by Felipe IV to the Count of Lumiares. 31 January 1648. AHN, Estado, leg. 1635. This was a strategy that the Emperor also used, threatening his cousin with marrying his son with other candidate in light of the vague answers he received from Felipe IV regarding this issue. For example, in a letter written by Felipe IV to Ferdinand III dated in June 1654, he said the following: "... I have to add that, in the case that His Majesty, after considering this letter carefully, is still resolved to arrange the marriage of the King of Romans, my nephew, just as His Majesty had presented me all the damages that would cause for me to marry the Infanta, my daughter, outside our dynasty, I am very sure that His Majesty had not thought and would not think about marrying the King my nephew to France, being so many and so notorious and so mutual all the disadvantages that in the present situation would follow if it was seen for His Majesty to try to link himself by marriage with the enemies of this Crown." RAH, colección Salazar y Castro, A-92, fol. 3.

give him a male child.³¹ However, this plan that was interrupted by the announcement of the Queen's new pregnancy.³²

At the same time, Felipe IV told his cousin that he was going to ask the Pope for a dispensation to marry off his daughter with whomever he wanted in any circumstances, knowing that, independently of the suitor who was finally chosen for his daughter, he would had to be a relative of the bride in one degree or another.³³

The sudden death of Ferdinand IV on 9 July 1654 also encouraged Felipe IV to make a firm decision. A little after this death, Felipe IV decided to offer his daughter's hand in marriage to the new heir of the Emperor as he declared to his ambassador in Vienna in his letter of 5 April 1655.³⁴ Why did he wait so long to make such decision? In his letters both to the Emperor and to his ambassadors in Rome and Vienna, Felipe IV points out the necessity of assuring his daughter's future in the case she finally had a brother that could remove her from the throne, so, as he was unable to give her a dowry appropriate to her rank if she was not his heiress, he had to marry her off to the heir of another throne.³⁵ But, more importantly, only the marriage of the Infanta with a powerful heir or monarch would help Felipe IV in his confrontation with France, whether it was to put an end to the war, if she were to marry Louis XIV, or to obtain the necessary means

³¹ He told so to the Emperor in his letter of 13 June 1654. (AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.). This part of its content is practically identical to the one that can be read in a letter dated on the same month written by Felipe IV to Ferdinand III that is preserved in the RAH, colección Salazar y Castro, A-92, fols. 1v.-2v.

³² This was precisely the reason why said announcement was never made, as it was subsequently postponed by three pregnancies of the Queen in 1653, 1655 and 1657, until the birth of Prince Felipe Próspero ended this project definitely.

³³ "On one hand, I have to think that, given that God has not given me a son, that the Queen has not become pregnant as soon as I would like, considering that all of us are mortals and that I have two daughters and the eldest is old enough to be married, although she is not so old that she could not wait a year or so. On the other hand, I consider normal and natural that God will give us a male child and I should consider sincerely the marriage of the Infanta my daughter in case she becomes my heiress and also in case she finally has any brothers, and I have decided to suspend for the time being the issue of my daughter's marriage, still having some time to wait for what God will provide regarding my succession [and] I will govern myself in accordance with this disposition regarding the election of the husband I must choose for her, but as I will not be able to choose a candidate that is not a relative, her marriage will need a papal dispensation and, as I wish to be prevented and protected to be able to declare, in any circumstance, which is my wish and conduct my daughter's marriage ..., because of all the scandals and problems that could befall after it regarding this marriage." Letter written by Felipe IV to Pope Alejandro VII. Minute written by don Luis de Haro. RAH, colección Salazar y Castro, A-91, fols. 191r.-194r. The same information can be read in the letter that the King sent to Ferdinand III and that we have mentioned in the previous reference. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

³⁴ Letter written by Felipe IV on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

³⁵ Felipe IV explained this clearly to his ambassador in Rome with the following words: "And anyone can see that it is true that I cannot decide today the husband I must give to my daughter, because ... if I marry my daughter today with a prince that is not a heir or has already inherited because I believe that she will be my successor, and if next year she has a brother, I need to think about what situation she would be left in and how difficult it would be for me to give her a dowry that could assure her rank, her commodity and her decorum." Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Rome. AHN, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Santa Sede, leg. 70, fol. 284v. This document, whose date is illegible, is conserved with several other documents related to the wedding between emperor Leopold I and Infanta Margarita, and it has been linked to that event. But its content is not consistent with the circumstances of said marriage and it is very similar to other testimony that can be found in the correspondence interchanged between Felipe IV and his ambassador in Vienna and also in the King's letters to Ferdinand III. Therefore, we can clearly link this testimony with the context of the matrimonial negotiations of Infanta Maria Teresa before the Peace of the Pyrenees. However, we must point out that Rafael Valladares, who also mentions this document, connects it to Margarita and not to Maria Teresa. See Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal*, 194-195.

to continue it if the King were to marry her to the heir of Ferdinand III, so her marriage with a prince who could not give him these benefits was out of the question.³⁶ Finally, from Felipe IV's point of view, the Spanish Monarchy should remain linked to his own dynasty so, taking into account all of the aforementioned considerations, María Teresa's marriage with the heir of the Emperor was the only viable option while his daughter was his legitimate successor and was the option chosen by King when he thought he could not wait any longer for the birth of a male heir that may never come.

In the aforementioned letter of 5 April 1655, the King assured his ambassador in Vienna, without any doubt whatsoever, that he wanted to marry his daughter to his nephew, Archduke Leopold Ignaz, even when he realized the kind of problems that could arise if he were to link the destiny of his eldest daughter to the Emperor's heir.³⁷ It was considered to be impossible not only for the Empire and the Spanish Monarchy to be governed by the same person, but even the possibility that his son-in-law could ever being chosen as emperor, so Felipe IV presented to his ambassador the strategy he deemed as the most advantageous one for the Spanish Monarchy. This strategy was for his nephew Leopold Ignaz to not try to be elected as King of the Romans, but instead, his uncle, Archduke Leopold William, would be appointed as the imperial successor in his place.³⁸

Thus, Leopold Ignaz would be free to travel to Spain to marry the Infanta and the couple could live there and govern the Spanish territories *in situ* if Felipe were to die without a male heir and, at the same time, both branches of the House of Habsburg would remain separated. With this plan, he would address another of the most important worries that the King had regarding his daughter's marriage: for his heiress to remain within his territories' borders. At the same time, this option seemed convenient to assure his daughter's future, because if he finally had a male child, the couple could return to the Empire and Leopold could still be named King of the Romans, as Archduke Leopold William did

³⁶ Apart from Louis XIV and Ferdinand III's sons, the only candidate that was seriously considered by Felipe IV was the young Duke of Savoy, Carlos Manuel. In a document that can be seen in the Real Academia de la Historia, in Madrid, we can see how Cardinal Federico of Hesse presented to Luis de Haro an offer coming from the Duchess Regent, the Duke's mother, Cristina of Bourbon, which says that if a marriage between the young Duke and Maria Teresa takes place, Savoy would give the Spanish Monarchy back the cities occupied by them in Milan and would have their support in their war against France. However, this possibility, even considering amongst these advantages that could have unified the territories of Savoy and the Spanish Monarchy, lost force quickly in front of the Imperial and French offerings. RAH, colección Salazar y Castro, A-94, fols. 185-186.

³⁷ "Their marriage is considered to have many problems and difficulties that we must foresee and prevent, not only because I will not condemn my Kingdoms to the risk they faced in the time of my great-grandfather because of the recurrent absences that His Majesty made as a result of his obligations in the Empire, but also because facing today two wars in Spain which force me to invest more money and effort that anyone can consider, anyone can see how much the risks that I have pointed out would increase, how the means and the forces to help outsiders would diminish, so it is impossible for the one who has to govern them to be absent from these Kingdoms. And if we add to these considerations the repugnance of the French, Swedes and Germans, opponents and enemies of our House, when they see how we try to appoint as King of the Romans the same prince I have chosen as my son in law, when I do not have a male child, it seems that it would be impossible to made the election and, if we try to achieve it, it would be with evident risk of disturbing the peace of Germany." Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

³⁸ "... but to overcome these inconveniences, on the assumption that I do not have a male child, the way that this must be represented is that we should try with all our forces that Archduke Leopold William my Cousin will be elected as Emperor, so if I do not have a male heir, the successor of the Empire would be Archduke Leopold William and, in these Kingdoms, would be Archduke Leopold Ignaz." Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna in 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

not have any children of his own and it seemed like he would never have any, so his nephew could become his heir easily if the circumstances were to change. Also, if the couple formed by María Teresa and Leopold became the successors of Felipe IV, the youngest son of Ferdinand III, Charles Joseph, could be Leopold William's heir so, in any circumstances, all the territories would remain in the House of Habsburg.³⁹ It may even be possible, as the King said to his imperial cousin, for the couple to have children while both Felipe IV and Ferdinand III were still alive, and, in this case, the couple could go back to the Empire several years after their marriage leaving the Spanish succession guaranteed by their children.

For the Spanish Monarchy, this was the ideal solution at the time, and that was the reason why the Spanish ambassador at Vienna should "do your best to persuade the Emperor (if he has any aversion) that this remedy is the only solution that could avoid greater inconveniences, enabling the declaration he wishes for me to make. Assuming his judgment agrees with my own, my daughter's marriage can take place very soon."⁴⁰ The ambassador should also overcome any opposition to this marriage that could come from the Emperor's own surroundings,⁴¹ "because for me to finally decide to marry my daughter right now, it is necessary for it [the marriage] to be with Archduke Leopold Ygnaz."⁴²

But Ferdinand III was not happy with this proposal. We may ask ourselves why, as he had tried so hard before for the marriage between Felipe IV's eldest daughter and his heir to be finally arranged. But for the Emperor, this idea meant to push his heir away from the succession of his own territories and to put the needs of the Spanish Monarchy before that of the Empire and his patrimonial lands. As little inclined as his cousin seemed to be to let his heir go to live in another territories, Ferdinand III told Felipe IV why he thought his strategy was not convenient for the House of Habsburg. Amongst other considerations, he thought that it was not convenient for him to name his brother as his heir,

Because the Emperor, being almost the same age as his brother, does not need to govern jointly, the paternal provisions would be altered and the law of primogeniture too and, even when it seems that this could be remedied giving him only the right of usufruct of some assets, giving him only narrow, returnable powers [and] putting at his side ministers of the Emperor's total trust, even when he depends on his brother (and they love each other dearly), the memory of what happened between Emperor Rudolf and his brother Mathias is still fresh in their memory and he [Mathias] had lesser occasions than the ones he [Archduke Leopold William] now has.⁴³

Also, there was also the problem of what would happen if Leopold William and Ferdinand III were to die at the same time, given that their ages and health problems were similar, as Archduke Charles Joseph was still way too young both to be elected as emperor

³⁹ Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna, dated on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴⁰ Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna, dated on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴¹ Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna, dated on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴² Letter written by Felipe IV to his ambassador in Vienna, dated on 5 April 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴³ Letter written by Emperor Ferdinand III to Felipe IV on 24 July 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

and to govern the patrimonial territories of the Habsburgs in Central Europe, so they were at risk of losing the Empire for the House of Habsburg and putting his patrimonial states at risk with a dangerous regency. Finally, the electors, when they saw that he was more concerned about the interests of the Spanish Monarchy than about the Empire's own affairs, "could think about the total omission of the House of Austria."⁴⁴ Because of all this, according to the Emperor, the best thing to do was for Felipe IV to arrange María Teresa's marriage not with Archduke Leopold Ignaz, but with other member of the Habsburg dynasty, Archduke Segismund Franz of Tyrol, who was then the heir of his brother, Archduke Ferdinand Charles of Tyrol.⁴⁵ This way, the inheritance of the Spanish Monarchy would remain within the dynasty, María Teresa and her husband could remain in Madrid without any problem and his son Leopold Ignaz could take his place in the Empire and in his patrimonial territories when the time came.

But this was not Felipe IV's plan. He did not want to marry his daughter to a member of a secondary line of the House of Habsburg who could neither help him in the war nor could they offer the Infanta a respectable position if she did not become the heiress. But Felipe IV's pressure over his cousin didn't change the Emperor's opinion on this matter.⁴⁶ As the Marquis of Castel Rodrigo wrote, what the Emperor wanted was for the time to pass without giving his cousin a direct refusal, but without agreeing to a plan he didn't like. At the same time, the Emperor was negotiating with the prince electors the designation of his son Leopold Ignaz as King of the Romans. This way, with his eldest son elected as heir of the Empire, Felipe IV would find himself in the obligation of accepting Archduke Sigismund as his son-in-law, as he himself had said that both crowns were absolutely incompatible.⁴⁷

The announcement of the Queen's new pregnancy in 1655 interrupted the negotiations at this point, as Felipe IV was hoping that the birth of a male heir would resolve the situation.⁴⁸ But the birth and death of Infanta María Ambrosia in December of that same year left everything as it was before and Felipe IV resumed with renewed vigor the marriage negotiations through his new ambassador in Vienna, the Marquis of La Fuente. Felipe IV wrote to this ambassador that, even though the French option would be the most promising one if he had any male children,⁴⁹ they needed to arrange the marriage of the Infanta with the newly appointed King of Hungary as soon as possible and in the most

⁴⁴ Letter written by Emperor Ferdinand III to Felipe IV on 24 July 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴⁵ Letter written by Emperor Ferdinand III to Felipe IV on 24 July 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴⁶ See "Leopold Ignaz –ein neuer Karl V.?" in L. Höbelt *Ferdinand III (1608-1657)*, 382-387, where the author indicates that the Emperor would never allow his heir to leave his territories and that the strategies in this issue between Ferdinand III and Felipe IV conflicted in several key points. We can see this, for example, in the instructions that Ferdinand III wrote to his ambassador in Madrid, the Count of Lamberg, in 18 November 1654. Lothar Höbelt also points out that the Emperor presented other candidates to the Infanta's hand in the course of the negotiations. For example, before Ferdinand IV's death, he presented the possibility for Leopold Ignaz to be sent to Madrid and he even argued that his brother Leopold Wilhelm could be a candidate, being also able to act as a regent if Felipe IV died before Maria Teresa reached adulthood. But both possibilities were soon disregarded by Felipe IV. See Höbelt, "Madrid vaut bien une guerre?", vol. 3, 1428-1432.

⁴⁷ Letter written by the Marquis of Castel Rodrigo, ambassador in Vienna, to Felipe IV, in 16 July 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴⁸ Letter written by Felipe IV to the Emperor and also to his ambassador in Vienna, in 16 September 1655. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁴⁹ "It is said that with this Monarchy being threatened by so many strong enemies and with such a lack of means after our numerous expenses and forced by the duration of the War, the laws of the prudence advise us to take the best path to overcome such dangerous inconveniences, even if we have to risk something and a lot in the future, to escape from the present danger ... giving us God male heirs, there is no doubt that

advantageous way for the Spanish Monarchy. So the first mission for the Marquis of La Fuente was, in Felipe IV's own words, "to procure that the answer to this dispatch will be to tell me that my brother, the Emperor, will send me my nephew as soon as possible because anything less would not pay for the courtesy of my good will."⁵⁰

Leopold had to travel as soon as possible to Madrid⁵¹ and, at the moment that the Emperor gave him a positive answer, the King would send the appropriate orders to the viceroys so they could have ready the necessary preparations for his journey to Spain.⁵² Felipe IV would not accept any other decision and the ambassador must overcome all the reluctance that the Emperor had already shown regarding this plan in the past, reminding him that the King could find himself forced to marry off his daughter to the French king if the Emperor did not send him his nephew.⁵³ Ultimately however, the ambassador did not achieve his goals as death surprised Ferdinand III on 2 April 1657, without giving his consent for his son and heir to leave his territories to marry María Teresa.

1657: A pivotal year

Days after Emperor Ferdinand III's death, his son and heir already showed that his opinions regarding his marriage to the heiress of the Spanish Monarchy were quite different from those expressed by his father, as he quickly told his uncle that he was ready to depart for Spain at the earliest convenience, even if this plan came into direct conflict with his possibility to become his father's successor in the imperial throne.⁵⁴ Thus, the Marquis of La Fuente wrote to Felipe IV that the King of Hungary had said to him the following: "... that, for his part, he only wanted to arrive as soon as possible to kiss the feet of His Maj-

this marriage [between María Teresa and Louis XIV] would be the most convenient." Letter written by Felipe IV to the Marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁵⁰ Letter written by Felipe IV to the Marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁵¹ "The election of the King of the Romans and the utility of assuring it in the King my nephew, the firstborn of the Emperor, does not seem to be an inconvenience that could delay this marriage, moreover it should encourage the Emperor's spirit to try to hasten it, because there are many contingencies that could occur, any of which could allow my nephew to return to Germany without me needing him, because if God gives me a male child or, if He does not condescend in giving me one but He does give me a grandson, my nephew could return to Germany in two years or even less, and we can naturally expect one thing or the other or even both; see then if for this brief absence should we avoid the execution of this marriage and if the importance of these negotiations is worth delaying the King of the Romans' desire or for the necessary negotiations to be made in the absence of the King." Letter written by Felipe IV for the Marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁵² "The most convenient form for his journey is left to the prudent disposition of the Emperor to decide, what it is said here regarding this matter is that promptness and diligence, not expected in these cases, are usually a safer option to prevent unwanted force from public knowledge of this journey. So it is judged that the King, my nephew, should travel incognito and with only just 6 or 8 servants, to the part where he deemed convenient to embark and the necessary galleys will be prepared from the squadrons of Italy and that when he arrives to these Kingdoms, he would find his household ready for him and everything deemed necessary for his service and indulgence, with the decorum and authority that he deserves for so many reasons, being who he is and for the reasons he has to come here." Letter written by Felipe IV to the Marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁵³ Letter written by Felipe IV to the marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁵⁴ In a paper that the Prince of Auersperg gave to the Marquis of La Fuente, he presented the reasons that the young King of Hungary had to prefer the journey to the Spanish Monarchy to the possibility of being Emperor: "The true reasons why His Majesty the King of Hungary prefers to go to Spain and the marriage with the Infanta to any other hope are that it is more important for both branches of the dynasty to remain united through this marriage, even if the imperial dignity were to go to other of the archdukes this time; it

esty, leaving the decisions regarding the way, the time and anything else that might be needed to achieve this goal in His Majesty's hands."⁵⁵

This declaration could be considered as a true renunciation of the imperial throne on Leopold Ignaz's part, because it was well known that the prince electors would never choose the prospective heir of the Spanish Monarchy as emperor. The Prince of Auesperg and the Counts of Porcia, Schwarzenberg and Pötting said as much to the Marquis of La Fuente, to whom they assured that they had to accelerate the journey of Leopold Ignaz to Madrid, in order for him not to be in the Imperial territories when the election took place.⁵⁶ After this meeting, the Marquis of La Fuente wrote to Felipe IV that "... it seems convenient for me to give His Majesty the information that we have discussed and, firstly, I have recognized, because of what they have told me regarding the journey of His Majesty, that he would not present his candidacy for the election."⁵⁷

This reflected the wishes expressed by Felipe IV in the previous years. This is why, even if the ambassador warned his imperial associates that it would be reckless for them to completely remove Leopold Ignaz from the equation of the imperial succession, he was ready to support Archduke Leopold William's candidacy and to work to assure the imperial crown for another member of the House of Habsburg.⁵⁸ The Marquis of La Fuente was so sure that his strategy was in line with Felipe IV's wishes that he even began to discuss with the count of Porcia the best form of government that Leopold Ignaz could leave in

was worse for the King of Hungary to become emperor and for the Spanish Monarchy to separate with a marriage with France or Savoy or any other outside this dynasty. And also uniting the Empire with the Spanish Monarchy in one head was not practical under Emperor Carlos V and it does not seem to be easier now, and even the mere intent of doing so could put many things at risk and also our Crowns and our enemies would take this chance to convince the electors, under this pretext, to choose any other person outside of the Most August House [of Habsburg] and for all of these reasons the King wants to begin his journey as soon as possible, at the end of August at the latest, so at the time of the Election he would not be in Germany so the Electors would not be forced, with his presence, to take his candidacy into consideration and present to him as an essential consideration for his election that he must renounce to his marriage with the Infanta and to force him to promise them that he would not give more assistance to the Spanish Monarchy, and this would disturb the election of another member of his House and even if the Imperial Crown falls into his head, if the Spanish Monarchy separates itself, it would be the total undoing of both of them and the triumph of their enemies." Copy of the paper that the Prince of Auesperg gave to the Marquis of La Fuente. Included in the letter that the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, sent to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, págs. 101v.-102v.

⁵⁵ Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 95r.

⁵⁶ "...To not lose time, it would be convenient for His Majesty to write to his ministers in Italy who would have to help in the journey's dispositions so they could begin them ..., it would be convenient for him to not be on the sea in October, although with the little household that will accompany him there will be enough with a few galleys, for everything else it would be convenient that the number would be such that His Majesty considered sufficient for the decorum and safety of the King, if not of an Army formed to oppose the journey, at least for it to not be exposed to the embarrassment and risks that could cause the ships of our enemies, that in a very considerable number sail as pirates ..., and regarding the ministers I said that it just seemed necessary to tell something to the Viceroy of Naples so in the case that some squadron arrived on his coast, he would not involve it in other issues that could occupy it at the time to execute His Majesty's orders, because to halt the Galleys the war on Lombardy was a credible enough excuse." Letter of the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, written to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 96r-97v.

⁵⁷ Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 97v.

⁵⁸ Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 97v.-98r.

his patrimonial territories in his absence, so he could still control them despite the distance, in the same manner that the Catholic King did with his most remote territories.⁵⁹

But, in the moment that everything seemed to follow Felipe IV's wishes regarding his daughter's marriage, after years of failed negotiations with Ferdinand III, it was the Spanish monarch who changed his mind and, instead of encouraging his nephew's trip to Spain, he told his ambassador that he must try, through all possible means, for Leopold Ignaz to be chosen as emperor in his uncle Leopold William's place.⁶⁰ In the correspondence he interchanged with his ambassador, the King does not explain why he changed his strategy regarding this issue. The confirmation of Queen Maria Anna's new pregnancy, whose result would be the birth of the long-awaited male heir, Prince Felipe Próspero, cannot be considered as a solid reason for this change, given that nobody knew what would be its result when the King decided to support his nephew's candidacy to the Empire and the previous pregnancies of the Queen had resulted in the suspension of further negotiations regarding the marriage, rather than in a visible change of mind on the King's part.

It seems more probable to argue that the problematic relationship that Felipe IV had with Archduke Leopold William after his years as governor of the Spanish Netherlands,⁶¹ would have made him reconsider the situation at hand. There would be little point for the marriage between Leopold Ignaz and María Teresa to take place if the head of the Empire was not willing to give him the help he needed to continue the war against France and the news that the Marquis of La Fuente gave him regarding the archduke Leopold William's attitude towards the Spanish Monarchy was not very promising.⁶² The increasingly complicated relationship between Felipe IV and Leopold William and the risks that his ascent to the imperial throne could imply for the interests of the Spanish Monarchy could have forced Felipe IV to change a tactic he had maintained for years, while he hoped for the birth of a son that could become his legitimate heir.

⁵⁹ "About the second point, he talked to the Count of Porcia, asking him (if His Majesty would leave here when expected) to try for the government to be adjusted in such way that even being in Spain the King could dispose of his provinces in the same way that His Majesty control all the ones that are at a remote distance and even in the case that a brother would govern them, I thought it was better to prevent this, especially when there are a lot of circumstances in which, even if the marriage takes place, His Majesty would have to come back here and to not have more than what he has now, so it is necessary to preserve everything united without giving any chance for the primogeniture to be altered." Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente, ambassador in Vienna, to Felipe IV in 20 April 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 99r-100v.

⁶⁰ Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 15 June 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 168v.-168r.

⁶¹ About Leopold William see the works of R. Schreiber, "Entre dos frentes: el archiduque Leopoldo Guillermo como gobernador de Bruselas", in *La dinastía de los Austria*, vol. 1, 609-630. and, in the same publication and volume, see the research by R. Vermeir, "Un austriaco en Flandes. El archiduque Leopoldo Guillermo, gobernador general de los Países Bajos meridionales (1647-1656)", vol. 1, 583-608.

⁶² For example, when the Marquis of La Fuente presents to Felipe IV some inconveniences that had the possibility of choosing the King of Hungary as Emperor, he said that one of the obstacles that the elector of Cologne presented were that if Leopold Ignaz was chosen, he would remain offering help and assistance to the Spanish Monarchy. The ambassador answered quickly to the elector saying that "they were making a huge mistake if they really believed that if he [Archduke Leopold William] was chosen as the Emperor, he wouldn't help the territories of His Majesty with the same kindness as the King". (Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 15 June 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 169r.-170v). But the rumors or possible displays of estrangement between Archduke Leopold William and the interests of the Spanish Monarchy were continuously present in the diplomatic correspondence of these years, to the extent that in 1659 the Marquis of La Fuente wrote that "... In the Archduke has His Majesty's service a great opposition." Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 23 April 1659. AHN, Estado, libro 126, 136v.

Without any doubt, the prince electors and influential members of the Viennese court that were opposed the Imperial policy of helping and supporting the Spanish Monarchy thought that the candidacy of Archduke Leopold William was safer for their interests than his nephew's. Thus, the Marquis of La Fuente wrote to the King that the Elector of Cologne told him the following:

The imperial crown should not leave the House of Austria, but they could not think about the King [Leopold Ignaz] because he was too young, because the government he would hold, because he was negotiating his marriage with the Infanta, because of the damage the Empire would receive and the risk that they could expose themselves to regarding the assistance they give to the provinces of His Majesty, because if the King was to reign as Emperor, they would continue as before, and everything would be fixed giving preference to His Highness [Archduke Leopold William].⁶³

According to the Marquis of La Fuente, Archduke Leopold William was trying to present himself as the best candidate of the House of Habsburg to the imperial throne and the King of Hungary did not seem to be doing anything to prevent this, because he wanted to go to Madrid to marry the Infanta.⁶⁴

Felipe IV was still supporting his nephew Leopold Ignaz's candidacy to the Empire when, on 28 November 1657, the political situation of the Spanish Monarchy changed completely once more, because that day, Prince Felipe Próspero of Austria was born. Felipe IV finally had a male heir for his throne and Infanta María Teresa, after being her father's direct successor for eleven years, found herself relegated from her previous position as heiress of the Spanish Monarchy. This fact had several direct consequences, of which we are going to emphasize two of them as the most important for the topic we are discussing here. The first one was that Leopold Ignaz did not have to choose between the imperial throne and the Spanish Monarchy, as his prospective bride was not her father's heiress anymore. María Teresa could travel to Vienna and live there, so nobody talked about Leopold Ignaz's journey to Madrid or about his possible renunciation of the imperial throne ever again. But, on the other hand, this also meant that Felipe IV had more freedom to decide his daughter's future. And it was precisely this reason which placed another marriage prospect on the map again that Felipe IV had not let himself really consider while María Teresa was his direct successor: her marriage to the French king Louis XIV.

As previously mentioned, Felipe IV himself told the Marquis of La Fuente years before that his daughter's marriage to the French king would be the most advantageous option for the Spanish Monarchy if he had a male heir. In fact, in 1656, in the same instructions in which Felipe IV ordered his ambassador in Vienna to convince Ferdinand III to send his son to Madrid to marry the Infanta as soon as possible, the King also said the following:

⁶³ Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 15 June 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 169v.-169r.

⁶⁴ "... I went to Laxseburg, where I found them [King Leopold and his uncle Leopold William] together and used most of an hour and a half to talk to them about the Election and I acknowledged in His Highness' every word how much he desired to put his person before his nephew ... In all that time, the King (may God protect him) said nothing except that he would never venture the happiness of becoming the son of His Majesty even if he was to lose two empires, something that I answered saying that I confided in God and in His Highness that he would obtain both of them." Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 30 May 1657. AHN, Estado, libro 125, 152v.-152r.

Amidst all these difficulties, God had given us as a singular providence in the subterfuge of this remedy, given that He is delaying in giving us male children. This way, being greater the hopes of the French [of achieving the hand of María Teresa in marriage], they would be more generous with us and more ready to talk about peace.⁶⁵

In this moment, for the first time since 1646, Felipe IV was in position to consider this possibility, especially when another pregnancy of the Queen was confirmed and she gave birth to the Infante Fernando Tomás a year after Felipe Próspero's birth. The marriage that Leopold I considered already arranged suddenly became something uncertain, so he multiplied his efforts during the year 1658 in order to force his uncle to make this marriage official, especially after his election as emperor on 18 July of that same year. During that year, all the conversations about the marriage stopped; it was not confirmed by the signing of the marriage settlement nor it was made public. But, at the same time, Felipe IV did not take back the promise he already made to his nephew. In the Empire it was well known that the marriage would never be secure until the Infanta arrived in Vienna or, at least, until the publication and announcement of the settlement, so Leopold I redoubled his efforts to finally get his promised bride, the bride for whom he had been willing to renounce to the crown of the Empire without having the security of becoming one day the king of the Spanish Monarchy.

After Leopold I's election as emperor, the question of the Infanta's marriage seemed linked almost exclusively to the problem of the assistance for the war against France. Felipe IV insinuated that he would not give a direct answer (or the hand of the Infanta) to his nephew if Leopold did not give him the necessary means to defend his territories.⁶⁶ If he did not receive the help he needed, Felipe IV claimed that he would try to assure the integrity of his territories in a different way. On the other hand, Leopold I and his advisors told the King that they would not make a decision regarding this assistance until Felipe IV made a public announcement of the marriage. The negotiations on both sides remained a constant horse-trading in which neither side was ready to give in. But, in any case, the King considered that the marriage commitment he made two years before was not applicable to the current circumstances and that he was free to choose another husband for his daughter, even if he was still trying to get as much help as possible from the Empire, in case the negotiations he began with France did not yield the desired results. On 21 December 1658, Felipe IV celebrated the birth of a second son and now, with two possible male heirs between María Teresa and his inheritance, the King decided

⁶⁵ Letter written by Felipe IV to the Marquis of La Fuente in 22 March 1656. AHN, Estado, libro 133, s/f.

⁶⁶ "Yesterday evening came the Count of Porcia, who was sent by the Emperor. He suggested me the necessity and convenience of marrying His Imperial Majesty as soon as possible and also the wish that the Emperor had to marry the Infanta ... and I added that His Majesty had already shown how much he loved his nephew, as he put him before everyone else when he tried to marry his daughter without having a male heir, so he couldn't and shouldn't forget the affection His Majesty showed him in this circumstance and that, as far as I knew, only the Emperor himself and his ministers could force His Majesty to change his opinion and to take another path, because I had seen myself how they were letting them loose his territories in Flanders with little or no consideration whatsoever; in all this, the union between both lines of the House of Austria was just good words, but the true separation was made of actions, that His Majesty will be forced to make peace following his enemies' desires if he doesn't have the means to make war with any probability or hope to defend himself. They answered me that the Emperor wanted to help His Majesty, but that he was threatened by the troops of the Turks and the Swedish, and I answered back saying that this was an old tale." Letter written by the Marquis of La Fuente to Felipe IV in 19 November 1658. AHN, Estado, libro 134, 15v.-15r.

to send Don Antonio Pimentel to France to begin peace negotiations,⁶⁷ using the only leverage he had to achieve a honorable peace: the Infanta María Teresa's hand in marriage, leaving his nephew Leopold waiting and, finally, without his intended bride after more than twelve years of fruitless negotiation between both courts.

Conclusions

As previously noted, the problem of succession to the Spanish Monarchy's had a great influence on European diplomacy in the second half of the seventeenth century. From the death of Prince Baltasar Carlos in 1646 until the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession after Carlos II's death in 1700, the unstable succession conditioned the foreign policy of the Spanish Monarchy and of most European territories, who tried to benefit as much as possible from the Spanish crisis. This circumstance was so important in the European political landscape in the fifty years before the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession that, far from considering it just an prelude to the eventual military conflict, we can see the development of a true diplomatic War of the Spanish Succession between the years 1646 and 1700.

The negotiations for the marriage of Infanta María Teresa with the future Emperor Leopold I clearly show the influence that the Spanish succession crisis had in the political evolution of Europe from the 1650s onwards. As we have discussed in this article, far from the traditional belief that Felipe IV never made a firm decision regarding his daughter's marriage before Prince Felipe Próspero's birth, the diplomatic documentation reflects that the King had already made a decision favoring the marriage between María Teresa and Leopold as early as the first months of 1655 and that only Ferdinand III's objections to letting his son and heir out of his territories (the same worry that his cousin shared), risking the imperial succession in his line, prevented its celebration while Ferdinand III was alive, even when the Emperor has been presented traditionally in Spanish historiography as the most interested party in this negotiation.

Finally, the correspondence interchanged between Felipe IV and his ambassador in Vienna, the Marquis of La Fuente, in 1657, shows that the new young emperor Leopold I did accept the terms presented by Felipe IV and that he was willing to sacrifice his succession to the Empire to become the prospective heir of the Spanish Monarchy. The growing distrust of Felipe IV towards Archduke Leopold William and, especially, the birth of a male heir for the Spanish Monarchy that many thought that would never come, stopped in its tracks and eventually ended, a matrimonial project that could have completely changed the history of Europe.

⁶⁷ See M. del Saltillo, "Don Antonio de Pimentel de Prado y la paz de los Pirineos", *Hispania: revista española de Historia*, 26 (1947), 24-124.

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