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DOCTORAL THESES

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**Changes in power relations between the Habsburg Monarchy and France
in the period of 1648–1697
on the basis of the Theatrum Europaeum**

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I.

In my dissertation I analysed the rivalry — manifested in both war–, diplomatic–and representative events — between the Habsburg Monarchy and France, the two leading powers of the 17th century, concentrating on international relations and power rearrangements.

Researching the image, shown in the publicity of the period, my investigation basis and main source material was one of the most significant work of the printed newspapers in the Early Modern Period, the *Theatrum Europaeum*, a series of twenty-one volumes. The volumes published between 1633 and 1738, describe the period between 1618 and 1718. Throughout my research, I tried to verify the historical authenticity of this monumental encyclopedic work, by means of archival sources from Vienna and from Paris, furthermore by the international and Hungarian special literature of the subject.

My other aim was to present for the readers a source material from the *Theatrum Europaeum*, not published in Hungarian before. The basic aim of my dissertation was however to present the changing in the Habsburg–French balance of power between the Peace of Westphalia and the Peace of Rijswijk, the two important peace treaties of the 17th century.

The *Theatrum Europaeum* served as unique source-basis to investigate this nearly fifty years period, by giving an almost daily full account in details about the everyday life, the representative events and ceremonies of the two courts (coronations, entries, weddings, births, funerals, celebrations, entertainments), furthermore about wars and diplomatic events of the period (different battlefields in details, deputy receptions, peace treaties). By editing the different volumes, the authors used nearly all types of printed sources of the age (leaflets, pamphlets, illustrated one-page prints, fair-publications, periodicals and — due to the „information revolution”of the 17th century — more and more newspapers), and after a careful selection, they arranged the information in volumes according to different points of view. Consequently, the historical events were not presented simply as a chronicle but even on the basis of their inner connections. Since the volumes were published several years after the events, it is supposed, that they were intended for educated readers, for the so called élite (for courtiers, citizens), who could use the information given in the newspaper to understand better the current events or who were just interested in history and used the *Theatrum Europaeum* as an encyclopedia to study historical events of the years and decades past. Otherwise, that was exactly Matthaeus Merian’s, the publisher’s main intention. At the same time, it also proves the high level of the international publicity and that of the important political news published in the Early Modern Period, also for people just interested in politics, but far from decisions. Also the mode of selection itself is remarkable: which events of the past years were considered by the authors as the most significant, having long-lasting effects, since only a few years passed between the given event and the publication itself.

The 17th century was not characterized only by the rise of the newspapers, but also by the development and meaning-changes of terms like: theatrum, universal monarchy, balance of power — to which I pay also a considerable attention in my dissertation.

Studying the volumes of the *Theatrum Europaeum*, even after several centuries, the reader has the feeling of being led by the authors behind the scenes of an already past world, reviving the events, characters and scenes of the age. In the course of my research, the *Theatrum Europaeum* proved to be an excellent source-basis for approaching in a new way the rivalry between the Habsburg Monarchy and France.

II.

Vienna and Versailles were quite different worlds, considerably due to the two rulers', I. Leopold's and Louis XIV's different personality.

The emperor — originally prepared for a prelacy profession — in accordance with his wavering and hesitating character, was surrounded by a number of consultative corporations (the Secret Conference) and advisers, among them there was always one or two actual „great personality” (Portia, Auersperg, Lobkowitz, Hocher, Kinsky) who could easily influence him, in addition, his confessors also influenced his decisions to a great extent. The Hofburg was a closed world — only a narrow circle of the elect were allowed to approach the emperor — imbued with formalities and religious ceremonies. The nobles lived not in the court-complex, but in their palaces in and around Vienna, surpassing in splendour the imperial residence itself.

In contrast to I. Leopold, after Mazarin's death (1661), Louis XIV practically governed all by himself, he made his most important decisions alone, whereas he also had his consultative corporations (the High Council) and advisers (Colbert), of course. Louis XIV's ruling method led to the creation of the absolute monarchy. This can be explained by his childhood, when the frightful events and the affronts he suffered during the French Civil War, the *Fronde* (1648–1654), made him realize the necessity of a strong and centralised monarchical power. First he got rid of his mother's, Anne of Austria's (Anne d'Autriche) power, and after Mazarin's death, he quickly started to create his absolute monarchical power. He appointed royal commissaries (intendants) as leaders of the provinces who were the local representatives of the royal power. He either removed people endangering his power (Fouquet, Retz), or made them surrender (Condé). Instead of Paris (Louvre) — hated because of the *Fronde* — he removed his residence to Versailles, where he made build a new lavish palace and where he actually forced his nobles to settle down, keeping his eye on them — so to say — in order to avoid a new revolt against him. In consequence, only that noble was important who lived in Versailles, and if a noble was ordered to go back to his provincial estate, it meant that he fell out of favour. In this way, a special court-atmosphere came to being, with its special rules, with the king in the centre all the times. Although there were everyday formalities, here too, but in comparison to Vienna, Versailles

was a much opener and more frivolous world, full of court-games, splendid celebrations, love affairs. The gates of Versailles were practically open to anybody, and in the morning a crowd of petitioners rushed into the palace.

Louis XIV „tamed” — so to say — the provincial nobility, and created a unified, centralised state power, while I. Leopold permanently struggled with the imperial orders (concerning tax, necessary money for the army and wars — often voted only after the campaign was already over —, constant lack of soldiers’ pay, Imperial Assembly). Although the French method seemed to be much more effective — namely they often made war all alone against almost the whole Europe, what I. Leopold was able to equalize only by concluding alliances (since Europe was afraid of the universal monarchy, a lots of states supported I. Leopold) — nevertheless, the two styles of reigning finally met in one point, and by the end of the 17th century evolved a balance of power between the two leading powers.

III.

The rivalry between the two courts appeared also in different forms of power representations, the most outstanding of them was the two monarch’s wedding ceremony with the daughters of the Spanish king, Philip IV.

Louis XIV married the Spanish infante, Mary Theresa in 1660, while I Leopold married Margaret Theresa in 1666. In the background of both marriages stood the question of the Spanish succession, namely both rulers tried to make this way a legal ground to gain the Spanish throne for themselves and their successors.

At Louis XIV’s wedding stood the ceremonial entry to Paris in the centre, whereas I. Leopold’s wedding became notable for the festive events following the ceremony (fireworks, horse-ballet, opera).

In my dissertation the two weddings are considered of outstanding importance, because I deem them as main events of the representation-rivalry.

IV.

The Peace of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years’ War, brought an epoch-marking victory of France over the Holy Roman Empire and Spain, by which the West-European dominance of Spain as leading power was ended and followed by the French hegemony. France acquired important territories in Alsace, and besides gained the strategically very significant Breisach and Philipsburg by the right banks of the Rhine and got Pinerolo in Piemont, furthermore was confirmed in possession of Metz, Toul and Verdun. By these territorial gains France acquired quite a good position to its expansion-

politics in the second half of the 17th century, for its Eastern boundaries passed at several points over the Rhine.

In contrast to this, the Holy Roman Empire lost its territories in Alsace, having been adjudicated to France. After 1648, the Holy Roman Empire was a union of more than three hundred autonomous or semi-autonomous territories, mostly governed by secular princes. Like an unorganised monster, the Holy Roman Empire was blended with old feudal ligaments, interweaving dynastic relationships and political client-relations.

Beyond its territorial resolutions, the Peace of Westphalia had an outstanding importance concerning the Emperor's changed position within the Empire, namely it regulated the relation between the Emperor and the orders of the Empire as follows: the Emperor's main decisions concerning the foreign politics depended on the agreement of the Imperial Assembly, moreover he had to consult the imperial orders even in questions of legislation, imposing taxes, declarations of war, recruiting and lodging troops, fortification work, concluding peace and alliances. Consequently, the Peace of Westphalia considerably weakened the Emperor's position within the Holy Roman Empire, since his significant decisions depended on the agreement of the imperial orders and on the Imperial Assembly. However, as the ruler of the Austrian Hereditary Provinces and hereby as imperial order, the Emperor at the same time also benefitted from the reinforcement of the imperial orders. By taking the Austrian Hereditary Provinces and the Bohemian Kingdom out of the norm-year (1624) of the Peace of Westphalia and by its instruction prohibiting to re-establish the Bohemian rebels into their rights, the Emperor obtained such possibilities that considerably surpassed the rights guaranteed for the other imperial orders. Hereby, the Emperor weakened in his position within the Empire by the Peace of Westphalia, was reduced to the rule of his own Hereditary-Bohemian territories. The decades, following 1648 brought the Emperor's „come back” to the Holy Roman Empire. From 1654 the decree of the Imperial Court Council acknowledged the Emperor's principal juridical office, and by the Imperial Assembly, steady from 1663 onwards, all forms of side-government of the electoral princes and imperial orders were excluded. I. Leopold was able to take the sting out of the federation tendencies included in the Peace of Westphalia, also by creating the Alliance of Marienburg in 1671 under his presidency, and the Alliance of Laxenburg in 1682. The Imperial Constitution of War, established in 1681, also had a similar effect, according to which from this time on the Imperial Army was not composed of the already existing armies of the imperial orders, but was set up by the Imperial Circles.

The resolutions of religion of the Peace of Westphalia brought positive results after all, even if we can speak by no means of an absolute tolerance. From this time onwards, the inhabitants had to belong to that denomination, to which their ancestors belonged to at the given place before January 1st 1624 (the norm-year arrangement). The norm-year guaranteed for the Evangelicals the possession of all ecclesiastic territories, secularized in 1624. After the Peace of Westphalia had been concluded,

festivals were held all over Europe, since the peace was intended to be christian, general and permanent.

V.

However, the Peace of Westphalia did not end the recent Spanish–French war, lasting since 1635, this happened only by the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659).

The most significant point of the Treaty of the Pyrenees was the paragraph Nr.33., concluding a marriage contract between Louis XIV and Mary Theresa, the elder daughter of Philip IV. By this, the intention of the French Court was unambiguously to assure the Spanish succession, but in order to prevent this, the contract — on Spain's side — involved Mary Theresa's unconditional abdication of succession to the throne. However, on the proposition of the French under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, Hugues de Lionne, the Spanish agreed that the validity of Mary Theresa's all abdication concerning the whole parental inheritance should depend on the actual payment of her dowry within the stipulated time limit. Since the economically totally weakened Spain was not able to pay the dowry within the time limit, from this time onwards, Louis XIV had a legal pretext to the Spanish throne.

By this, practically started a problem which basically determined the second half of the 17th century, namely the question of the Spanish succession. Since Philip IV — after the death of the infant Philip Prosper — had only one son, the later Charles II, who being extremely sickly, seemed unfit for ruling, both Louis XIV and I. Leopold set up a claim — through their wives — to the Spanish throne. From this time on, nearly all measures of foreign affairs taken by the two rival leading powers were determined by this claim which finally led to the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701.

Due to other paragraphs of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, France acquired significant territories in Artois, in Rousillon, in Flanders and Hennegau, while Spain gained certain places in the Spanish-Netherlands, in Italy and Catalonia.

An important part of the Treaty of the Pyrenees concerns to Prince Condé who was fighting on the side of the Catholic King during the *Fronde* and the Spanish–French war, but now he wanted to return to the Most Christian King's service who forgave him on certain conditions. Furthermore, the Treaty re-established also Charles IV, the Prince of Lorraine to his rights, but with very hard restrictions, the most unacceptable among them was that the Prince had to assure a free march for the French troops to Alsace.

VI.

In the years following the Treaty of the Pyrenees, Louis XIV wanted to acquire the economically very precious Spanish-Netherlands, under the pretext of the so called devolution right valid in successional cases on certain territories of the Spanish-Netherlands. This right declared that the children born of the first marriage — even if females — always succeed to the throne before the children born of the second marriage. Consequently, the lawyers of the French Court concluded that Louis XIV's wife, Mary Theresa, born of Philip IV's first marriage is a legal heiress of Brabant and of the whole Spanish-Netherlands.

The Sun King's whole foreign politics were determined by two main aims, closely connected to each other: namely the question of the Spanish succession and the acquisition of the Spanish-Netherlands. In May of 1667, French troops invaded the Spanish-Netherlands, starting this way the War of Devolution, in consequence of which the English–Dutch–Swedish Triple Alliance came to being in January 1668. In the Peace of Aix-la Chapelle (1668), ending the War of Devolution, France strove for moderation, by renouncing of Franche-Comté, and was contended with twelve fortresses in Flanders. The Peace of Aix-la Chapelle was not very significant, it meant just a short interval in the rivalry for the European hegemony, and by no means can be considered as a long-lasting peace-settlement.

VII.

With reference to the Turkish menace and to the avoidance of the two-fronts war, at the end of 1667, I. Leopold raised that a secret agreement should be concluded with France concerning the Spanish succession which was also accomplished by Grémonville, the French minister in Vienna, by Lobkowitz and Auersperg (what later caused Auersperg's fall).

The secret partitioning treaty was concluded on January 20th 1668, according to which France would have gained the Spanish-Netherlands, Franche-Comté and the Neapolitan-Sicilian Kingdom among others, whereas the Emperor would have acquired first of all Spain, the Principality of Milan, the West-Indies and the Canary Islands.

By this partitioning treaty I. Leopold acknowledged that Louis XIV had the same right to the Spanish succession as he had himself. He was ready to surrender the Spanish-Netherlands and Franche-Comté to France, in consequence of which France would have become considerably more powerful. In addition, the French would have pushed forward this way directly as far as Holland and the north-west German territories, by which the northern border of France would have enlarged with rich, flourishing and densely populated territories. The destiny of the Spanish-Netherlands and Franche-Comté, lying between Alsace and Lorraine, would have been irrevocably fulfilled this way. However, the secret partitioning treaty came to light, rising an enormous scandal, and fortunately for

I. Leopold, it had never been realized. It shows anyway the orientation of the Habsburg Monarchy and France in the second half of the 17th century: to what extent they subordinated almost everything to acquire the Spanish succession.

VIII.

In 1672 Louis XIV attacked Holland, starting the so called War of Holland (Franco–Dutch War), which was ended by the Peace of Nijmegen (1678/79). France gave up Philipsburg, but kept Freiburg, furthermore the acquired important territories in the Spanish-Netherlands and Franche-Comté. Lorraine was given to Prince Charles (Lorraine) V's possession on condition that he should cede Nancy to France and ensure four military routes for the French troops in his land. However, the Prince did not accept this, so Lorraine remained in French possession.

The Peace of Nijmegen is traditionally evaluated as Louis XIV's great triumph and I. Leopold's grave failure. It is a rightful opinion, considering that in Nijmegen France acquired considerable territorial gains, and in addition, with reference to historical rights, acquired also imperial territories near to the French border: the territories between the Mosel and the Rhine in the East and territories along the Schelde and the Maas in the Spanish-Netherlands in the North. The latter meant also the possession of the southern fortress system of the Spanish-Netherlands, which from this time onwards served as a military base for the French expansive ambitions as well.

After Nijmegen, Louis XIV reached the „zenith” of his realm, what is attested by the French royal decrees issued to celebrate the peace and by innumerable triumphal arches, monuments, inscriptions, reliefs, coins and also by the title „the Great” („le Grand”) given to the king by the city of Paris.

On the contrary to the Sun King, the Emperor felt gravely humiliated because of the Peace of Nijmegen, and the German historian, Aretin considers the Peace of Nijmegen plainly as „the second huge defeat, the Empire suffered since the Peace of Westphalia”. All this is proved by the considerable territorial acquisitions of France and furthermore by the fact that through individual peace treaties concluded in 1673 (Brandenburg, Saxon, Bavarian) Louis XIV broke up the alliances concluded by I. Leopold with the most important imperial orders. For these reasons, the Peace of Nijmegen can be evaluated as the nadir of I. Leopold's realm, manifested in the publicism of the period as well.

IX.

However, on contrary to this failure, the Emperor had a series of great successes against the Turkish, in consequence of which nearly all Hungary was delivered from the Ottoman rule between 1683 and 1699, indicated by victories of Vienna, Buda and Belgrade, culminating in the battle of Zenta (1697).

I. Leopold's whole realm was characterized by this duality: failure and humiliation in relation to Louis XIV in the West, while a series of victories in the East against the Turkish, what resulted after all that the Habsburg Monarchy became a great power, equal to France.

X.

However, by the Treaty of Nijmegen Louis XIV did not arrive yet to the zenith of his successes. In 1679 he started the War of Reunions, his disreputable reunions by which he annexed to France a lots of territories in the Holy Roman Empire, in Alsace and in the Spanish-Netherlands on different legal pretexts, and he occupied Strasbourg in 1681. In 1684 the Emperor and France concluded the armistice of Regensburg for twenty years which approved Louis XIV's occupations fulfilled before 1681, including Strasbourg too. However, the French monarch was not contented with this, and at the end of 1686 he demanded that on the basis of the armistice of Regensburg, the Holy Roman Empire should conclude a final peace within three months and should acknowledge all reunited territories, but I. Leopold rejected it. Furthermore, Louis XIV wanted to achieve that his adherent, Wilhelm Egon von Fürstenberg should be the archbishop and electoral prince in Cologne in order to keep his hand on this important gate to the Holy Roman Empire. The Sun King raised a succession claim also in Pfalz. After the Pfalz-Simmering line had died out, Philip William of Pfalz-Neuburg became the electoral prince of Pfalz who backed absolutely I. Leopold, after his daughter, Eleonora had been married by the Emperor in 1676. However, Louis XIV intended his younger brother, Philip of Orleans to be the electoral prince who was the husband of the last Simmering electoral prince's sister, Elisabeth Charlotte.

Nearly whole Europe combined to stop the French ambitions for hegemony, and in 1686 came to being the League of Augsburg, the basis of the so called Great League, established in 1689. The main members of the Great League were the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, England and Holland. In spite of this, the French started the siege of Philipsburg in 1688, what was the overture of the Nine Years War or the Pfalz Succession War (1688–1697). To the precedements of the Peace of Rijswijk, ending the Nine Years War, belonged the invading foreign politics that France gradually realized under Louis XIV's reign.

Under the Sun King's reign radical changes happened in the construction and in the functioning of France in respect of both the economy, the administration and the army. All these together made possible the initial military successes, the conquests and the reunions executed in an administrative way. However, when the Great League was established against France, the French economy was not able to suffer the war against them anymore. Although France military was not defeated, nevertheless was compelled to conclude peace because of the exhausted economy.

However, the hidden tension, caused by the Spanish succession was already well perceptible in the background, and it was only a question of time, when the new war will break out in order to

gain the Spanish crown. Both France and the allied countries wanted to gain time in order to prepare themselves for this huge conflict.

All these factors together contributed to end the Nine Years War and to conclude the Peace of Rijswijk. Before concluding the peace treaty, the anti-France coalition aimed to restore the borders existing before the Peace of Westphalia, while France considered the Peace of Nijmegen — its peak as leading power — as the basis of the negotiations, being absolutely favourable for them.

Through the *Theatrum Europaeum*, we can follow up what a lot of manoeuvres and deferring led from the demands and peace-propositions initially presented by the two parties until the peace treaties took their final shape. Besides, the newspaper gives an excellent description of the atmosphere and the scene of the negotiations, the arrangements of the building itself, the arrival and appearance of the diplomats, and furthermore the detailed rules of protocol and of conduct to be followed at the negotiations.

According to the Peace of Rijswijk, concluded by Swedish mediation on 20th September 1697. (and on 30th October with the Holy Roman Empire) Spain got back Luxemburg and Barcelona, because considering the Spanish succession, France made a gesture to Spain. Furthermore Louis XIV acknowledged William III (William of Orange) as the legal monarch of England, by this giving up the further support of the exiled (Stuart) James II. Holland got a lots of commercial allowances.

All along the negotiations of the Peace of Rijswijk, the question of the Spanish succession proved to be a taboo, as well as the Protestant complaints against the repeal of the Edict of Nantes (1685). On the other hand, the French registered a so called additional clause of religion, according to which the Catholic religion must be kept in its present state in the territories given back to the allied countries. A number of Protestant imperial orders did not sign the peace treaty because of this clause of religion.

There were a lots of debates about the evaluation of the Peace of Rijswijk, even among French historians, namely concerning the question, to what extent was the real military status reflected in the paragraphs of the treaty. The French hegemony was after all over by the Peace of Rijswijk. Louis XIV had to renounce all reunited territories beyond Alsace, while the Emperor acknowledged all reunited territories within Alsace, this way he accepted after all the Upper-Rhine border.

The Peace of Rijswijk is of great importance because by ceasing the French hegemony, a multiple balance of power evolved in Europe, as the Habsburg Monarchy gradually became a great power, while under the rule of William III. (William of Orange) England became a more and more important power in Europe, what was fully accomplished by the 18th century. England guarded over the maintenance of the Habsburg–French balance of power.

Throughout the peace negotiations, it was perceptible that the participant powers were already paying attention to the solution of another future problem, namely gaining the Spanish succession.

XI.

In my dissertation I presented the formation of the power relations between the Habsburg Monarchy and France from the middle of the 17th century to the end of the 17th century by the means of the *Teatrum Europaeum*, a source material of the period. I chose this period, because while a gradually growing French dominance can be observed in the relation of the two leading powers from the Peace of Westphalia (1648) onwards to the last third of the 17th century, by the Peace of Rijswijk (1697) however, this French dominance became equalized, and a relative balance of power evolved between the two countries. I chose the *Theatrum Europaeum* as my basic source material, because this newspaper leads the readers in a unique way behind the scenes of the historical events: the characters of the period come to life again, so to say, by revealing a three-fourhundred years old world to the reader. In addition to the lots of excellent works concerning this subject published up to the present, I intended to approach this extremely complex and complicated period from a new point of view based on the fascinating world of the *Theatrum Europaeum*.

The *Theatrum Europaeum* offers a unique information for the searchers to examine the historical events of different countries. It gives the fullest account in every details of wars, battles, peace treaties with their backgrounds, festivals and other events of royal courts and other curiosities of the given year. The classification according to years and countries considerably facilitates orientation in this enormous source material, made even more spectacular by engravings. The *Teatrum Europaeum* was often considered as a reference basis already during the 17th century. Compiling the different volumes, the authors of the *Theatrum Europaeum* made use of a great number of leaflets, illustrated one-page prints, pamphlets, weeklies, fair-publications or other periodicals. But unfortunately, it is impossible to track down their exact origin and title, because describing the events, the authors do not indicate the origin of their information. That is why it seems necessary to apply – as much as possible – also other control sources beside the *Theatrum Europaeum*, in order to eliminate the occasionally occurring material errors.

My publications

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- Jean Bérenger előadása Turenne marsallról a Hadtörténeti Intézetben. Hadtörténelmi Közlemények 120. (2007: 1. sz.), 381–383.
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