

Theses of the doctoral dissertation

Diego Saavedra Fajardo and the unity of the House of Habsburg (1633-1646)

Tibor Monostori

Introduction

When I present a Spanish diplomat's life and works who lived in the 17th century, I need to provide a new image of Europe, that is, a new model that serves as the framework of the historical description of reality.

In many of the models set by the Hungarian historiography the Holy Roman Empire stands for the center of the historical Solar System, that is, the system of states in Early Modern Christian Europe. The great European powers and their capitals (Vienna, Stockholm, Paris, Madrid, Rome etc.) are the planets that move around the one and only star. Based on the historical analysis, *I moved the axis of modern Europe to the coast of the Atlantic Ocean*, including Spain, France, the Low Countries and England. Once done, the Empire itself becomes a planet and the position of the Vienna-based Habsburg Monarchy needs to be redefined. My model regards the lands of the Eastern branch of the dynasty as (though not integral, but) organic part of the political system of the House of Austria, dominated by the Spanish branch. One of the main consequence of this model is that all influences, stronger than that of the other contemporary western powers, but hardly known, which the Spanish Monarchy exerted upon the historical evolution of the Habsburg Monarchy must be carefully investigated and taken into consideration.

The other parts of the dissertation are about politics, wars and diplomacy regarding a Spanish statesman who travelled across Europe between 1633 and 1646. The writings of the main actors of these chapters (Spanish princes, writers, politicians, diplomats) help providing Madrid's view on the weakening hegemony of Spain in Europe.

Diego Saavedra Fajardo's biography can serve as a magnifying glass. The Spanish imperial foreign affairs are analyzed in full details, with all the possibilities and limitations. The Murcian diplomat worked in all key Habsburg territories (Italy, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Low Countries, Spain) and in Switzerland, Bavaria and other German regions as well. Due to the scope of his travels and the time he spent with continuous negotiations (almost 35 years, between 1612 and 1646), to *the diversity of issues he faced as a diplomat* and to *the diversity of genres he was excellent at as a writer* (reports, political treatises, pamphlets), it becomes possible to draw broader, more precise and complete conclusions.

Methods

The thousands of folios and pages Saavedra Fajardo wrote offer a vivid picture about policy making and diplomacy in Early Modern Europe. His correspondance with the other Spanish diplomats in Vienna, Brussels and Madrid, with the count-duke of Olivares (the royal favourite of Philip IV of Spain, 1621-1665), with the king himself and, more importantly, with the cardinal infante Ferdando of Austria (governor of the Spanish Netherlands) are pieced together with his pamphlets and political writings (including the masterpiece *Empresas Políticas*, written in 1640) and analysed in one. In the dissertation this basic pattern is associated and aligned with the views of the policy makers themselves and with the dynamic changes of the European balance of power during the Thirty Years' War.

The unpublished sources can be found in the Belgian, Austrian, Spanish, British and Czech state archives and libraries. The most relevant is the *Archives Générales du Royaume* in Brussels (Belgium), where most of the unpublished reports of Saavedra Fajardo are located (*Secrétairerie d'Etat et de Guerre* and *Secrétairerie d'Etat*

allemande), including three *discursos* of the Murcian statesman. The *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv* hid at least four unpublished letters (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Staatenabteilung, Spanien, Hofkorrespondenz, Diplomatische Korrespondenz and Varia*), three of them were edited by the author. Sources in the *British Library (Manuscripts)* in London (United Kingdom), the *Moravsky Zemsky Archive (Dietrichstein Family Archives)* in Brno (Czech Republic) and the *Archivo General de Simancas (Estado, Alemania)* in Simancas (Spain) were also put to use.

In the dissertation the aim is to provide the complete view of Don Diego regarding the *Casa de Austria*. Not only the past, the present and the future of the dynasty and the political relations between the two branches of the Habsburgs were studied, but also his opinion and judgement about political and military structures, sustainability, and Spanish and Austrian decision makers.

Analysis

The PhD thesis consists of three major parts. In the first part the basic definitions and an overall view of the history of the dynasty are presented, including the historiography, the nature of the Spanish hegemony in Europe and the controversial alliance between the two Habsburg branches, with special attention to Péter Pázmány's (archbishop of Esztergom) mission in Rome (1632), the Spanish foreign policy and the political thinking and public relations.

In the second part Saavedra Fajardo's travels and missions are shown (Italy, Bavaria, Burgundy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria) and all his writings are summarized in a nutshell, and a chapter about the reception of his works is presented as well.

The last part is the one that is based most on the sources. In their mirror all relevant aspects of the diplomat's view on the House of Habsburg can be seen: dispatches, diplomatic rituals, intelligence, the relation between the guns (military actions) and the words (diplomacy), the financial and military connections, public relations, propaganda and political writings.

Outcome

Conservación, remedios and *reputación*: these were the key words that a Seventeenth century statesman in Spain kept in mind when was thinking about sustaining and upholding the military and political power of the Spanish Monarchy, selecting the right reason of state to use, writing about the weakening economy and commerce of the world empire and about the ways of how to keep in one body the many parts of the Monarchy.

Saavedra Fajardo managed to invent a valid reasoning and a theoretical structure in order to defend and justify the Spanish and Catholic cause during the turbulent and intense years of the Thirty Years' War. It was aligned with the real Spanish foreign policy and aimed at convincing the imperial states and princes of the Holy Roman Empire to support Spain and the dynasty in their fight against France, the Dutch and to maintain the *peaceful* hegemony of the Casa de Austria in Europe.

In the mature works of Saavedra Fajardo (those written in 1640, in the imperial diet in Regensburg) all main arguments appeared. The two branches of the dynasty must move forward to the same direction and must have common objectives in the reasoning of Don Diego, because:

(1) It is the divine providence that established the power of the dynasty and wants them to hold together.

(2) The history of the dynasty shows clearly that in the Sixteenth century Spain supplied enormous financial, military and political support to the Empire and to Vienna in their fight against the Protestants, France and the Ottoman Empire.

(3) In the present days, Spain is still providing troops and money to the common cause, even if these aids menace its own political integrity and peaceful development.

(4) The reason of state of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy is to have stronger ties with Spain.

(5) The two branches of the dynasty have the strongest link that can be: they share the same blood.

(6) The Spanish monarch was the leader of the Burgundian Circle in the Empire (that included the Free County of Burgundy, the Low Countries and other territories in present day France), and as a consequence, a German prince. The Emperor was a German prince as well and both were obliged to help each other in any case of need.

The weak points of the reasoning is that Saavedra Fajardo could not accept that in Europe, the dynamic new political balance of powers the religious patterns were no longer crucial. In addition, the practical thinkings of the diplomat were often violated by strict theoretical considerations. Finally, the sustainability of a possible European peace (the ultimate objective of the Empire and Spain) wouldn't have been guaranteed if it had been established by Habsburg control, guidance and principles.

Publications

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