



The Integration of Bohemian and Hungarian Aristocrats into the Spanish Habsburg System via Diplomatic Encounters, Cultural Exchange, and News Management (1608–1655)*

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The composite state of the Spanish Habsburgs had a fading military, financial and diplomatic predominance in Central Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Bohemian and Hungarian aristocracy was, to varying extents, integrated into the Spanish Habsburg system. This article presents three forms of integration and diplomatic relationship. First, it examines diplomatic and political encounters in the main governmental bodies and diets advising the emperor in decision-making, or more specifically, in the Imperial Privy Council in Vienna and during the diets of the kingdom of Hungary. Spanish Habsburg politicians and diplomats acted in many powerful ways to establish connections with Bohemian and Hungarian aristocrats so that they follow and adjust to their political agenda. Bohemian families (Slavata, Martiniz) had close relations and alliances with Spanish councilors in Vienna (who acted as ambassadors of the Spanish king), and several Hungarian aristocrats had interactions with them during the diets in order to secure the long-term interests of the dynasty in the Kingdom of Hungary. Second, the exchange, purchase, and influence of cultural goods and objects (e.g., books and gifts) and the ways in which these cultural goods were put to use, as well as the migration of people, show that the relationship went well beyond power politics and formal diplomatic relations. Personal and cultural influence and even early signs of acculturation can be clearly detected in several Bohemian and Hungarian families (e.g., the Forgách, Pázmány, and Zrínyi families), who ordered and read hundreds of books from Spanish Habsburg authors (including several books from Spanish Habsburg diplomats) and cities and exchanged diplomatic gifts with their Spanish counterparts. People, including influential figures (soldiers and nobles), also moved among Habsburg political centers, prompted by diplomatic or family relations between Spanish Habsburg politicians and Bohemian or Hungarian families. Third, information gathered in Vienna radiated to all Spanish Habsburg states in different layers of granularity, density, and confidentiality. Top Spanish diplomats could access and transmit classified documents and the texts of international contracts obtained from Central European aristocrats and events. They also sent thousands of reports to their superiors about general news in

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Bohemia and Hungary. At the same time, lower-ranking nobles often struggled to keep up with and understand international events and trends and failed to get information about the key results of wars and imperial diets, since they lacked access to the network and the seniority to exert adequate influence.

Keywords: Spanish Monarchy, early modern diplomacy, Habsburg Studies, Central European aristocracy, early modern Hungary, early modern Bohemia

Introduction

Scholars have made efforts to define the nature of the Spanish Habsburg Empire (as that of any other global empire) and its importance in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Is it best understood, they have asked, as a form of imperialism, a network, or a system?¹ The smaller, Central European branch of the dynasty has been treated as something resembling a satellite of Madrid or a little brother.² The intensity of relations between the center and this periphery gradually grew (though in a very uneven fashion and with setbacks) throughout the sixteenth century, reaching its peak during the Thirty Years' War, after which it gradually faded. There is growing evidence in recent Hungarian secondary literature that the kingdom of Hungary became a substantial element of the Spanish Habsburg system to a different extent in some areas: either in diplomacy, world trade, warfare, or European power politics in general or in more than one of these.³

Much has been written about the interactions between the two main branches of the Habsburg dynasty (the Spanish Monarchy and the Central European Habsburg Monarchy) in general and in the first half of the seventeenth century in particular.⁴ Relations between Madrid and the Kingdom of Bohemia and Hungary, respectively, have also been the subject of inquiry,⁵ including, specifically, case studies on diplomatic relations.⁶ However, historians have not

1 On imperialism, see Parker, *The Army*, 287; Bérenger, *Histoire*, 291, 307. On networks, see Edelmayer, “Die Spanische Monarchie.” On systems, see Brightwell, “The Spanish System”; Stradling, *Europe*; Muto, “The Spanish System.”

2 Bérenger, *Histoire*, 236, 251.

3 Monostori, “Hungaria Hispanica.”

4 Ernst, *Madrid und Wien*, 1991; Edelmayer, “Die Spanische Monarchie”; González Cuerva, “La mediación”; Tercero Casado, “Infelix Austria.”

5 On Bohemia e.g., Polišíenský, *Tragic Triangle*; on Hungary e.g., Martí and Quirós Rosado, “Dynastic links.”

6 On Bohemia: Marek, “Die Rolle”; Marek, “La red”; Marek, *La Embajada*. On Hungary: Martí and Monostori, “Oliveres”; Martí, “Datos.”

yet compared the impact of the global empire on the two states. What were the main differences and similarities? This is important, since if we look at hard metrics and the quantity and quality of relations and interactions, we can draw meaningful conclusions concerning cultural and diplomatic history. More precisely, historical patterns and human and social strategies can be detected and analyzed, as can the role and significance that the Bohemian and Hungarian aristocracy played in the Spanish Habsburg courts in Europe.

In the discussion below, I present three points. I offer a detailed comparison (the first to my knowledge in the secondary literature) of the two kingdoms when it comes to their general and diplomatic relations with the Spanish Monarchy, both in a quantitative and a qualitative fashion. I then examine the unique and *different* ways in which Bohemian and Hungarian aristocrats were integrated into the Spanish Habsburg system in diplomacy. Finally, I identify *similar* or *identical* patterns in the behaviors of the ruling elites of both lands. I put particular focus on diplomatic encounters, cultural exchange, and news management. I offer several cases in the course of this investigative journey based on archival sources or printed material, devoting somewhat more attention to cases from Hungary.

I selected the chronological scope of the essay for several reasons. In 1608, Guillén de San Clemente, who had served as the Spanish ambassador at the imperial court since 1581, died, and his successors witnessed a gradually growing, then fading intensity in the intra-dynastic relations after a relatively less eventful stage during the reign of Emperor Rudolf II (1576–1612). The most important and influential ambassadors were Baltasar de Zúñiga y Fonseca (1608–17), Íñigo Vélez de Guevara, Count of Oñate (1617–24), Francisco de Moncada, Count of Osoña, Marquess of Aytona (1624–29), Sancho de Monroy y Zúniga, Marquess of Castañeda (1633–40), and Francisco de Moura Corterreal, Marquess of Castel Rodrigo and Count of Lumiares (1648–1656). At the same time, news about the conflicts and compromise between the Habsburg dynasty and the Hungarian estates started to spread across the lands of the Spanish Monarchy.

On the other hand, 1655 was the last year in which Spanish Habsburg diplomacy made an effort to have a real, tangible, and decisive influence on a kingdom-wide political and diplomatic event: the election and coronation of the new king of Hungary, Leopold I (1657–1705), and the new palatine of Hungary, Ferenc Wesselényi (1605–67), during the Hungarian diet organized in Pozsony/Pressburg/Bratislava.

The Case of Bohemia: Integration and the Early Stages of Acculturation

The multidimensional relationship of the Bohemian and Hungarian aristocracy and nobility with the Spanish Monarchy was defined first and foremost by their geopolitical situation and their material and human resources.

Bohemia was in a unique position. Its kings were prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire. Their votes were essential to elect the King of the Romans, who became *de facto* Holy Roman Emperor. For the rulers of the Spanish Monarchy after the reign of Charles V (1519–56), keeping that title in the hands of the Central European branch was of the utmost importance. At the same time, the capital of the Bohemian lands hosted the imperial court between 1578 and 1618, before its move to Vienna. These facts had several consequences.

First, Bohemian magnates were eligible for the most prestigious imperial councilor roles on the Imperial Privy Council or the War Council. In those political positions, they interacted with Spanish Habsburg envoys in a business-as-usual fashion. Vilém Slavata of Chlum and Georg Adam Martinitz, for instance, were among the privy councilors (in 1637–52 and 1638–51, respectively),⁷ and Václav Eusebius František, prince of Lobkowitz, held the presidency of the Imperial War Council (1652–65). They established intense relations with the representatives of the Spanish Embassy in Vienna when it came to joint decision-making between the two Habsburg branches. In addition, the Spanish ambassadors were councilors of state themselves, too, in Spain, and they were regularly invited to the sessions of the Imperial Privy Council. The Bohemian magnates attended most sessions during their membership. In contrast, no Hungarian aristocrat was granted such a significant role until 1646, when Pál Pálffy (1592–1653), future palatine of Hungary (1649–53), became privy councilor. That said, neither he nor his Hungarian successors enjoyed actual and regular influence on this political body advising the emperor in imperial decision-making since they lived far from the imperial court.

Second, the presence of people of Spanish origin and, in general, the Spanish cultural milieu were much more tangible and quantifiable in Bohemia than in Hungary. When the Spanish Monarchy intervened in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and the anti-Habsburg alliance of Protestant princes (which included Bohemian magnates) was defeated in 1620 (the Battle of White

⁷ Schwarz, *The Imperial Privy Council*, 299, 343. See also the database at <https://kaiserhof.geschichte.lmu.de/> (Last accessed on August 8, 2023).

Mountain), many of their confiscated lands in Bohemia were given *de iure* to nobles and military commanders from Spain or from the Spanish Netherlands. Baltasar de Marradas y Vic, for instance, received Hluboká and Vltavou. Charles Bonaventure de Longueval, Count of Buquoy, was given the lands of Nové Hradý, Rožmberk, and Vltavou. Martin de Höef Huerta was granted Velhartice. Guillermo Verdugo received Doupov. Nothing comparable happened in Hungary in these decades.⁸

Marriages also made the bonds between the Spanish and the Bohemian nobility closer. Members of the Pernstein, Dietrichstein, and Popel de Lobkowicz families married Spanish *damas*, and their descendants maintained strong relations with Spanish diplomats. In 1603, the High Chancellor of Bohemia, Zdenko Adalbert Popel de Lobkowitz (1568–1628),⁹ married Polisená, the daughter of Vratislav Pernstein (1530–82, High Chancellor of Bohemia from 1567 until his death) and María Manrique de Lara (1538–1608), a Spanish noblewoman. Zdenko Adalbert had a close friendship with Ambassador Zúñiga. His palace and that of the Pernstein family were social and political centers of the Spanish imperial party or faction¹⁰ in Bohemia, lasting well into the 1620s. Spanish ambassadors sometimes visited Hungarian aristocrats in Hungary. The marquess of Castañeda traveled to visit Palatine Miklós Esterházy (1583–1645) in person, for instance, in the 1630s. But these kinds of excursions were rare and individual cases.

Third, the methods with which information was gathered and shared between Bohemian aristocrats and Spanish diplomatic envoys were also more direct and thorough, with many connections to the Spanish Habsburg information centers worldwide. After Cardinal Francis of Dietrichstein (1570–1636), who was born in Madrid and served as imperial privy councilor, returned to Moravia in the Bohemian lands, he maintained his wide network with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands through agents across Europe.¹¹ Other Bohemian-Spanish nobles held correspondence with members of the Spanish Habsburg courts. No similar case is known for Hungary, except for Martin Somogyi, whose role I discuss later.

Fourth, Bohemian aristocrats, with the indispensable support of Spanish envoys, applied for and were granted the honor of becoming members of the Spanish military and religious orders. Several members of the Kolowrat,

8 Marek, *La Embajada*, 42.

9 Marek, “Sdenco Adalberto.”

10 On the Spanish faction at the imperial court, see Gonzalez Cuerva and Tercero Casado, “The Imperial court.”

11 Luska, *Las redes*. On the Dietrichstein family in general, see Badura, *La casa de Dietrichstein*.

Beřkovský de Šebřřov, Pruskovský de Pruskov, and Popel de Lobkowitz families received the order of Santiago, including the aforementioned Georg Adam Martinitz and Joachim Slavata, the son of Vilém Slavata of Chlum. Ulrich Franz Libsteinský de Kolowrat received the order of Calatrava.¹² No Hungarian nobleman received this honor.

Fifth and last, many aristocrats and their family members were “hispaniolized.” They learned and used the Spanish language,¹³ and they deliberately dressed in Spanish clothing.¹⁴ Also, many books were printed in Spanish in Bohemian cities.¹⁵ Bohemian noblewomen entered the households of the queen consorts of Spanish origin at the imperial court.¹⁶ In Hungary, these ties were much less present, if at all. With very few exceptions (like that of Cardinal Péter Pázmány, archbishop of Esztergom¹⁷) the aristocrats did not speak, write, read, or understand Spanish.

In summary, the Bohemian aristocracy was tightly integrated into the Spanish Habsburg political and sociocultural system. Several family members born in Bohemia were partially assimilated. This was a significant change compared to the reign of Ferdinand I (1526–1664) when one in 14 members of the court came from the Spanish Habsburg lands.¹⁸ That is, imperial courtiers of Spanish Habsburg origins disappeared (except, of course, for the court of the Habsburg

12 Mur i Raurell, “La mancha roja.”

13 Binková, “Spanish in the Czech Lands”; Marek, “Las cartas españolas.”

14 In 1640, Pedro de Villa, a Spanish agent at the imperial court, described the privy councilor Vilem Slavata as an ardent hispanophile who had always dressed in Spanish clothing, following the fashion in the time of Philip II, king of Spain (1558–1598): “el conde Slavata, [...] Gran Canciller de Bohemia, hombre ya viejo, muy bien opinado de todos, que ha servido en puestos eminentes cuatro emperadores. Es uno de los echados de la ventana del Palacio de Praga cuando la rebelión del Palatino, tan celoso de todas las cosas de España que toda su vida no ha querido vestirse si no es al modo que se usaba en España y tiempo de Felipe Segundo.” The text makes a reference to the Defenestration of Prague, when one of the Bohemian magnates thrown out of the window was Slavata. AGRB, Secrétairerie d’État et de Guerre, 641. fol. 310r-311v, here: 311r. Spanish fashions reached the Hungarian nobility as well. See Tompos, “Magyar és spanyol” and Hajná, “Moda al servicio.”

15 Archer et al., *Bohemia Hispánica*.

16 Marek, “Las damas.”

17 Jacques Bruneau, Spanish envoy in Vienna sent a letter in Spanish to Péter Pázmány, Vienna, November 22, 1632. PLE, Archivum Ecclesiasticum Vetus 169, fol 7r-8v. They knew each other personally, and Bruneau was one of the diplomats who prepared the famous mission of Pázmány to Rome in 1631 and 1632. The letter contained information about a Spanish pension payment to the cardinal and news from Europe.

18 Laferl, *Die Kultur*, 281–87.

Empresses born in Spain). Instead, some members of the Central European aristocracy represented the interests of the Catholic King.

The Case of Hungary 1: Ottoman Wars and International Trade

In recent decades, historians have tended to take for granted that, compared to the Bohemian (and Polish) aristocracy, Hungary's relations with the Spanish monarchy were more sporadic and accidental.¹⁹ In reality, these relations were also strong and pointed to equally important and substantial connections and structures, even if they were expressed more indirectly, many times via the imperial court or in other fields of diplomatic activities.

The Kingdom of Hungary held a unique position from the perspective of Madrid. As an *antemurale Christianitatis*, it constituted a bastion against the Ottoman Empire. It possessed large Protestant lands and estates, which, together with the power politics of the Principality of Transylvania, led to delicate political negotiations between the dynasty and the Hungarian aristocracy throughout the seventeenth century. In addition, Hungary had plenty of material and human resources, including copper, slaves, horses, cattle, and light cavalry units (hussars). These facts also had several consequences.

First, Madrid needed to take the Hungarian front against the Ottomans into consideration when the court designed the yearly military strategy in the Netherlands or against the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean. If needed, they sent soldiers (thousands from the Spanish Netherlands during the Long Turkish War between 1591 and 1606).²⁰ Dozens of military engineers (many of them chief engineers) came from Spanish Italy (Milan and Naples) to be employed by the Habsburg Monarchy to strengthen the defense system. As stated constantly in the diplomatic reports in the Austrian State Archives and in the Simancas General Archives in Spain, the political situation in the east was a recurring subject. In 1639, the Marquess of Castañeda sent his language secretary, Marcos Putz, to

19 *De la Monarquía Universal*. The volume includes chapters dealing with relations between Central European states and the Spanish monarchy during the Thirty Years' War (including the Austrian lands, Bohemia, and Poland). Hungary is missing. On the other hand, the impact of the Spanish Monarchy on Hungary is also missing from most histories of Hungary.

20 Bagi, "Una carrera." During the reign of Charles V, there were much more: between 1526 and 1533, between 10,000 and 12,000 soldiers arrived from Spanish Habsburg lands to Hungary. Over the course of the following decades, in multiple waves, several thousand soldiers were sent there (in 1538, 1541, 1545, and 1548–52). Historiography knows more than 230 Spanish soldiers in Hungary by name. Korpás, *V. Károly*, 219–27, 264–95.

meet with Miklós Esterházy and get the latest updates on the Ottoman Empire and Transylvania. The palatine granted him a long audience.²¹

Second, Spain strategically needed material and human resources. The Spanish diplomatic corps was actively involved in speeding up and facilitating international and intra-dynastic trade. More than once, the ambassador Count of Oñate intervened in the exportation of Hungarian copper, a strategic resource for the military organization of the Spanish Monarchy. Copper was a vital material in the foundries of the Spanish Monarchy for the production of bronze cannons for the navy.²² It is clear from the data from multiple European archives that at least 30 percent of copper exports from Hungary went to the Spanish Monarchy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1622, the Count of Oñate described in detail the possible commercial routes, the status of the negotiations between the imperial court and the German merchants, and the payment alternatives.²³

Galley slaves were also in high demand, and the Spanish navy needed them in significant numbers. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, Spanish diplomats facilitated the transfer of slaves captured at the Ottoman-Hungarian border towards Italy²⁴ with the help of Hungarian aristocrats, such as Pál Pálffy.²⁵ On the other hand, Hungarian galley slaves (captured by Ottoman troops) also filled the Mediterranean. One of them, Ferenc Egri (Francisco Egri in the Spanish sources), managed to escape and spent decades in the Spanish military service in Naples. Once he had returned to Central Europe from Naples, Pálffy helped get him a yearly pension from the emperor. His papers and biography were read by several imperial privy councilors in Vienna.²⁶

The latter magnate, who was described and praised by Castel Rodrigo after his election to the role of palatine in 1649 as “very biased” towards both Austrian and Spanish services,²⁷ maintained excellent relations with multiple Spanish statesmen, such as Miguel de Salamanca, secretary of state in the Spanish

21 Marti and Monostori, “A Spanyol Monarchia.”

22 Monostori, “A besztercebányai réz.”

23 The Count of Oñate to Philip IV. Vienna, 22 Sep 1622. AGS, Est. leg. 2507/76. sf

24 *Botschafter di Santo Clemente, für Augustinus Zozius aus Genua um ca. 300 türkische Sklaven für den König, 1605.* ÖStA, HHStA, Reichshofrat, Passbriefe 7-2-30.

25 Tercero Casado, “Infelix Austria,” 57.

26 Monostori, “Eger várából.”

27 “muy austriaco y parzialisimo del servicio del Rey nro. Sr.” Tercero Casado, “Infelix Austria,” 56, n. 134.

Netherlands in 1647.²⁸ One decade earlier, the Count of Oñate had paid Pálffy 50,000 forints for 3,000 oxen for military purposes at the request of Heinrich von Schlick, president of the Imperial War Council.²⁹

In the 1630s, both Oñate and the Marquess of Castañeda held multiple talks in imperial circles (including with Miklós Esterházy) about the recruitment and regular payment of several thousand Croatian-Hungarian soldiers. The Spanish Embassy in Vienna paid for these troops and managed the end-to-end financial cash flow as well, including the negotiations with Spanish and Italian *asentistas* and bankers. It was Castañeda who in 1637 contracted Colonel Péter Forgách and his 1,100 hussars, who moved to the Spanish Netherlands and entered Spanish service. A Croatian-Hungarian unit (after many changes) remained there for the next few decades.³⁰

Hungarian horses were bought in significant quantities on the horse markets of Vienna and Raab/Győr in Hungary by Spanish diplomats, both for symbolic purposes as a sign of strength and for military purposes. In 1616, 30 horses were transferred to Brussels, 24 of which were for Archduke Albert, governor of the Spanish Netherlands (1598–1621).³¹ In 1634, at least 14 were purchased for the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, brother of Philip IV.³²

The Case of Hungary 2: News Management and Political Micromanagement

The strategic importance of the Ottoman wars and the exotic nature of the Ottoman Empire as subject filled the works of art and the regular news in Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands.³³ In the diplomatic corps, special focus needed to be

28 AHN, Est. libro 983, passim.

29 “En 19 de mayo de 1637 se libraron al conde Paolo Palfi, nombrado por el conde Schlick, presidente de guerra, para la compra de tres mil bueyes para los carros de la provianda del ejército en esta campaña, cinquenta mil florines.” ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Spanien, Varia, Kart. 9., fol. 4v.

30 Monostori, “Egy magyar arisztokrata.”

31 AGRB, Secrétairerie d’État et de Guerre, 518/3, sd, sf.

32 Among the diplomatic letters of the Count of Oñate, sent from Vienna in 1634. AGRB, Secrétairerie d’État et de Guerre, 332, passim.

33 There were many reasons for this hunger for news from Hungary and the Ottoman lands: the concept of the *Antemurale Christianitatis*, that is, the notion of a land that was a bastion in the fight against the common enemy, the Ottoman Empire, the exotic nature of the different (from a Spanish and Catholic point of view) “heretic” religions in Transylvania, and the medieval history of Hungary in general. Lope de Vega, an illustrious writer of the Spanish Golden Age and author of many works with themes from Hungarian history, was an eager reader of Antonio Bonfini’s *Decades*, a major book on Hungary in the early modern age in Europe. Korpás, “Húngaros”; González Cuerva, “El prodigioso príncipe.”

put on the translations, since the texts of international treaties and alliances and the intercepted enemy letters had to be translated too.

It is not a coincidence that the aforementioned Jacques Bruneau, who at the beginning of the 1620s served as Archduke Albert's diplomatic envoy in Vienna, sent to Brussels a copy of two Central European treaties and detailed some of their linguistic aspects. Both the Peace of Nikolsburg, between the prince of Transylvania, Gábor Bethlen (1613–29), and Emperor Ferdinand II (1619–37), and the Treaty of Khotyn, between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, were signed at the end of 1621.

Brussels and the ruling elite of the Spanish Netherlands had been eager to receive news from the eastern branch of the dynasty since the Twelve Years' Truce between Spain and the Dutch United Provinces had expired in April 1621, and the parties resumed hostilities at full speed. The emperor's willingness to assist the Spanish Netherlands depended heavily on whether he remained engaged in war with the prince of Transylvania. Bruneau, like others in the Spanish Habsburg diplomatic corps, started his career as a translator (*secretario de lenguas*)³⁴ and then moved up the ladder and held many prestigious positions. Since the translation activities in Brussels were less structured and sophisticated than in Madrid, he wanted to make sure that the secretariat in Brussels did not spend time unnecessarily translating texts. He sent the first text in Spanish (translated from the original Latin by the Count of Oñate), but he kept the original version in Latin to avoid any misunderstandings. Bruneau sent the text of the second treaty in Italian a bit later since the councilor of the emperor who possessed it was absent.³⁵

Envío los artículos de la paz en Hungría así los que tocan a los estados del reino en general, como al Betlen Gabor en particular. El señor conde de Oñate los ha hecho traducir en español, [...] pienso convenir tenerlos también en latín como originalmente se han concebido y concluido. Falta en ellos la entrada y remate, que el embajador mismo no los ha alcanzado de otra manera. [...] Y también espero de tener los de la paz de Polonia con el Turco, y un consejero del emperador que los tiene está ausente algunos días ha.³⁶

34 Reiter, "In Habsburgs sprachlichem," 172–73.

35 AGRB, Secrétairerie d'Etat Allemand, 430, fol. 234r.

36 Bruneau to Antonio Suárez de Arguello, Secretary of State, Vienna, Jan. 12, 1622. AGRB, Secrétairerie d'Etat Allemand 430, fol. 193rv.

In the kingdom of Bohemia, the local elite corresponded frequently in German with the emperor and his councilors and oftentimes in Spanish with the actors of the Catholic monarchy. In contrast, in Hungary, aristocrats like Palatine Miklós Esterházy exchanged letters in Latin with the Spanish ambassadors in Vienna³⁷ and with imperial politicians and councilors.³⁸

Even further to the east, knowledge of Latin remained crucial in relations with the Ottoman Empire. It is not a coincidence that the most formal translation service in Vienna belonged to the Imperial War Council and was responsible for the relationship with Constantinople (*Hofkriegsratsdolmetscher*).³⁹ Often, double translations were needed, as was the case with a letter, a copy of which is kept in Brussels, the former capital of the Spanish Netherlands, sent by a diplomatic envoy to the archdukes, signed by the Ottoman governor of Budin (Buda), Karakaş Mehmed Pasha, to Gábor Bethlen, prince of Transylvania in 1620. It was translated first from “Turkish” into Hungarian and then from Hungarian into Latin, word for word: “ex Turcico in Ungaricum, et ex Ungarico in Latinum, de verbo ad verbum translata.”⁴⁰

In 1644, the Spanish ambassador reported to his king that the archbishop of Esztergom, György Lippay (1600–1666, who served as archbishop in 1642–66) had brought some intercepted letters to Vienna which shed light on the diplomatic activities of France in Constantinople. The French, he claimed, aimed to convince the Ottomans to give license to the prince of Transylvania to attack the lands of the emperor:

Estos días ha venido aquí el arzobispo de Estrigonia con algunos otros cavalleros úngaros sin el palatino [Miklós Esterházy] por su poca salud haciendo gran ruido de que Rákóczi armaba y se entendía con Torstenson comprobándose esto con cartas intercetas deste en que ofrecia facilitar la licencia del Turco para acometer los Estados del Emperador por medio de los ministros de Francia que están en aquella Corte.⁴¹

37 Hiller, *Palatin Nikolaus*, passim.

38 Between 1625 and 1627, with the Count of Collalto (Janáček et al, *Documenta Bohemica*, vol. 4, 46) and between 1627 and 1631, with Francis von Dietrichstein (ibid., 175).

39 Reiter, “In Habsburgs sprachlichem,” 179.

40 Buda, July 18, 1620. AGRB, Secrétairerie d’Etat Allemand 433, fols. 252r–253r.

41 The Marquess of Castel Rodrigo to Philip IV. Vienna, Jan. 24, 1644. AGS, Estado, leg. 2345, s.f. It should be noted that this Marquess (II) of Castel Rodrigo was the father of the Marquess (III) of Castel Rodrigo, who served in Vienna from 1648.

These letters were probably the ones that another Spanish diplomat used in an anti-French pamphlet in Münster during the Westphalian peace congress the same year.⁴²

Hungarian diets and internal politics constituted a much more complex political environment than those of Bohemia (after 1620). Both the election and coronation of the new Hungarian king and the faction politics were closely monitored by the Spanish Embassy.⁴³

Several archival sources from Spain, Hungary, and Vienna show that a light form of political and diplomatic micromanagement on behalf of the representatives of the Catholic king still existed in 1655.

Over the course of 1654 and 1655, the Marquess of Castel Rodrigo focused on the election of the new Hungarian king, Leopold I, and the election of the new palatine. Though the secondary literature does not yet offer a nuanced picture of the full scope of his activities in Pozsony, it is evident from the sources that he made an effort to intervene decisively in the outcomes of the diet. The variety of sources across Europe also shows the nature of such interventions and the ways in which the study of the primary sources can shed light on the motivations of the principal actors from a Spanish Habsburg perspective.

Prince of Auersperg Johann Weikhard (1615–1677) was one of the most influential politicians of Leopold I. Once a privy councilor and the grand steward of the emperor and also a holder of the Order of the Golden Fleece (the most prestigious Habsburg chivalric order, granted by the king of Spain), he fell from grace in 1669. That year, he wrote an essay against the Marquess of Castel Rodrigo, his archenemy.⁴⁴ He listed several points against the Spanish ambassador, starting with his aggressive interventions in Hungarian politics. Castel Rodrigo wanted Ban of Croatia Miklós Zrínyi (1620–64) to be the palatine:

Als er arbitrium in Hungaricis rebus agiren wollen, und procuriert, dass Nicolaus Sarinius Palatinus in Ungarn werden solle, da doch schon damahls suspectus de infidelitate gewest ist,⁴⁵ [...] [and when he learned that Ferenc Wesselényi was elected palatine of Hungary, it caused him great pain:], sumo dolore illius.

42 Monostori, “Transilvania,” 361–62.

43 For 1625, the most important sources have recently been edited: Martí, “Az 1625. évi.”

44 Brief an den Kaiser, “Die wahren Ursachen, warum und wie mich Castel Rodrigo verfolgt hat, bis in seinen Tod, kürzlichen.” ÖStA, HHStA, Sonderbestände, Auersperg I-A-21-5a-9, s.f. 1669. I would like to thank the Auersperg family for granting me the permission to read this document.

45 Reference to the Magnate Conspiracy of 1664 in Hungary (alternative names: Zrinski-Frankopan or Wesselényi conspiracy).

While laying the groundwork for his presence at the Hungarian diet in Pozsony, Castel Rodrigo wrote letters to Hungarian magnates⁴⁶ and spent significant amounts of money on buying weapons to strengthen his household on his journey to the diet.⁴⁷ He also requested and received from the Spanish Council of State around 20 thousand *escudos* for his extraordinary costs,⁴⁸ and he wrote multiple letters and treatises about Hungarian politics, e.g., about György Lippay.⁴⁹ Castel Rodrigo often played the mediator role between the Hungarian magnates and the imperial ministers to decrease the number of political and confessional conflicts at a time when Madrid desperately needed a peaceful and stable Vienna during the last years of the Spanish-French War (1635–59).

In summary, in Hungary, for geopolitical reasons, the aristocrats were physically less integrated into the Spanish Habsburg circle of news and the Spanish cultural milieu, which meant that they had less access to political favors, patronage, and political sponsorship. In other areas, however, cooperation was equally important or sometimes more important from the perspective of Spanish Habsburg strategical goals, even if this cooperation was less interpersonal and relied less on physical presence. These goals included the assurance of accessible material and human resources, reliable political allies and diplomatic contacts in the ongoing fight against the Ottoman Empire, and reliable ties to figures with influence in the Hungarian diets.

Common Patterns: Representation, Legal Matters, and Book Culture

Alongside the substantial differences between the two kingdoms in terms of their relationship with the Spanish monarchy in diplomacy, however, many common patterns can also be seen. In these cases, the ruling elites of both states performed similar activities and were engaged in these endeavors in a similar fashion.

While Hungarian noblemen did not enjoy the benefits of most of the Spanish military orders, the most influential aristocrats received yearly pensions (Péter Pázmány and members of the Forgách family, for instance), and several

46 See e.g., his letter to Count Ádám Forgách, captain of Kassa/Košice. Vienna, January 10, 1655. MNL OL P 287, Fasc. CC/6, fol. 17rv.

47 AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 3a época, 3148 (Cuentas de Nicolás Vicente Escorza, pagador general de Alemania, años 1643–1656), s.f.

48 See, AGS, Est. 2363 passim.

49 AGS, Est. 2362 and 2363, passim. See also Tercero Casado, “Infelix Austria,” 57.

of them were members of the most prestigious Habsburg order, the Order of the Golden Fleece. Miklós Esterházy (1628) and Pál Pálffy (1650), for instance, were granted this honor, as was Miklós Zrínyi (though after the timeframe of the present essay, in 1664). In comparison, between 1608 and 1655, six Bohemian noblemen received it: two members of the Lobkowitz and the Dietrichstein families, one member of the Martinitz family, and one of the Slavata family.

Coronations and rights to the Hungarian and Bohemian crowns constituted common subjects. The most outstanding case was that of the Oñate treaty (1617), signed by both branches of the dynasty. By signing this document, the Spanish king waived his right to inherit the kingdom of Hungary and Bohemia in a political situation when he could have argued that (due to the childless status of several Austrian heirs) it would be logical and even beneficial if the Spanish monarch were to take over these kingdoms. The feasibility of such a claim would nevertheless have been questionable, since it failed to consider, for example, the Kingdom of Hungary's status as an elective monarchy.⁵⁰ Also, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several Spanish princes and princesses waived their rights formally, in writing, to the line of succession of Hungary. These events show and highlight the dynastic unity of the Habsburg family and testify to the fact that, theoretically, there was always a possibility for a reunion of all Habsburg territories under one dynastic ruler.

In several instances, the fate of Bohemian and Hungarian aristocrats and nobles intersected. Margarita de Cardona, the confidante of Empress and Queen Consort Maria (1528–1603), daughter of Charles V, forged a strong relationship with Martin Somogyi, a to-be *gentilhomme* in the court in Brussels.⁵¹ An orphan, Martin got into the household of the Dietrichstein family in Moravia, and he moved to Brussels as a page in the 1590s, where he started his career as the vice-captain of the bodyguard of the governors of the Spanish Netherlands (Archduke Albert and his wife, the Spanish *infanta* Isabel). Cardona (the wife of Adam von Dietrichstein and the mother of Franzis von Dietrichstein) even requested a Spanish knighthood for Somogyi, a request Archduke Albert repeated some years later, though without success. Instead, Somogyi continued to build his career in the Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands. He undertook diplomatic missions and remained in close touch with Franz von Dietrichstein,

50 Sánchez, "A House Divided."

51 AGRB, Secrétairerie d'État et de Guerre 533, fols. 137r–156v, *passim*. After the death of Archduke Ernest (the former governor), Cardona pushed him into Albert's household: AGRB, Secrétairerie d'État et de Guerre, 687, unfol., *Memoria de los criados del serenísimo archiduque Ernesto*, Brussels, Mar. 5, 1595.

and he became one of his principal informers from Brussels⁵² In 1620, he became a baron.⁵³ By the 1630s, he had become a landlord (of Bothey in the province of Namur in the Spanish Netherlands and of Štáblovice in Opava/Troppau/Opawa in Moravia) and a tenant of a castle (Vichenet in Namur). Martin Somogyi made several contributions to cultural relations. In 1620, he sent a copy of the second part of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* from Brussels to Franz von Dietrichstein.⁵⁴ A few years later, Diego Muxet de Solís, a local writer in the Spanish Netherlands, dedicated his plays and poems to Dietrichstein at Somogyi's suggestion.⁵⁵

Instances of cooperation between Bohemian and Hungarian magnates occurred, naturally, among the Catholic prelates during the Catholic revival. As has been noted in the secondary literature in Hungarian, Philip IV and his ministers kept an eye on Péter Pázmány, archbishop of Esztergom, and later paid even more attention when Pázmány became cardinal. The literature has dealt extensively with the history of Pázmány's most important diplomatic mission to Rome in 1632 (which has most recently been strongly linked to the Spanish Cardinal Borja's famous protest the same year).⁵⁶ New sources revealed that the aim of the Pázmány's travels, which was to advance the establishment of a league between the Spanish king, the emperor, and the Catholic estates of the Holy Roman Empire, was a cornerstone in the foreign policy of the Count-Duke of Olivares. In 1629, Spanish Habsburg diplomacy conducted in Vienna by the Count of Castro, the Duke of Tursi, Jacques Bruneau, and the Marquis of Cadereyta had begun carefully to pave the way for the mission.⁵⁷

Although no thorough comparison of Bohemian and Hungarian aristocratic libraries has been conducted yet, the first results show clearly that both groups of magnates wanted to equip themselves with knowledge of the best of Spanish Habsburg culture.

The libraries of Hungarian Catholic aristocrats were full of *hispanica*, mostly in Italian and Latin translations.⁵⁸ In 1614, Cardinal Ferenc Forgách ordered and received 206 books from Frankfurt, 30 percent of which were by Spanish

52 For Somogyi's letters from Brussels to Franzis von Dietrichstein in 1617–31, see MZA, Rodinný Archiv Ditrichštejnů (Dietrichstein Family Archive), 1909.

53 ÖStA, Allgemeine Verwaltungsgeschichte, Reichsadelsakten 398.32

54 Polišínský, "Hispania de 1614."

55 Muxet de Solís, *Comedias humanas*.

56 Becker and Tusor, "Negozio."

57 Martí and Monostori, "Olivares."

58 Monostori, "Az aranykori," 425–32.

authors or writers from the Spanish Monarchy.⁵⁹ In Pázmány's private library, a similar proportion of books by Spanish authors can be found.⁶⁰ The book catalogue of the Zrínyi family in 1662 included at least 91 items in the same category (out of 731).⁶¹

Studies of the Bohemian libraries have been more thorough.⁶² A logical next step in the research in both countries might be to attempt to grasp the influence that the wide variety of military, scientific, ecclesiastical, legal, historical, etc. treatises had on the readers and their political and private activities.

Although the interests of Bohemian and Hungarian aristocrats seemed to differ (e.g., the former group included more volumes for pure entertainment in their libraries), the most popular authors were present in the book collections of both territories: Pedro de Mejía, Luis de Granada, Antonio de Guevara, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Diego de Saavedra Fajardo (a diplomat himself who spent several months in Vienna between 1634 and 1641), Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa (the count of La Roca, ambassador of Madrid in Venice between 1632 and 1642, and author of the famous 1620 treatise *The Ambassador*), and many others. One might reasonably assume that when Bohemian and Hungarian magnates discussed their lectures, actual political events, or their encounters with Spanish culture and persons, they could easily refer to a similar corpus of experiences and perceptions.

In conclusion, from the perspective of Hungary's relevance to the Spanish Habsburg system, money and strategic geopolitical interests were the primary factors. Hungary was important for the Spanish Empire because of its material and human resources (copper, horses, slaves, and soldiers). As a consequence, a peace between the Ottoman Empire, the Principality of Transylvania, and the Central European branch of the dynasty helped Madrid focus on its fight against France and the Netherlands and strengthen the position of Catholicism.

59 The catalogue can be found in *Magyarországi magánkönyvtárak*, 96–101. The authors were Luis de Granada, Domingo de Soto, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Jean de la Haye, Jerónimo Osório da Fonseca, Luca Pinelli, Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, Aubert Le Mire, Antonio de Guevara, Johannes Goropius Becanus, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Francisco de Vitoria, Francesco Maurolico, Giambattista della Porta, among many others.

60 Martín Doyza, Diego de la Vega, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Erycius Puteanus, Daniele Fedele, among others.

61 *A Bibliotheca Zriniana*. The *hispanica* included works by humanists (Pedro Mexía, Antonio de Nebrija), cartographers (Abraham Ortelius, Cornelius Wytfliet), diplomats and politicians (Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos, the Count of La Roca), and a poet (Giambattista Marino), as well as military treatises (Francisco de Valdés, Diego Ufano, Luis Collado) and textbooks on rhetoric and grammar (Cipriano Suárez, Manuel Álvares).

62 Eg., Polišíenský, "Hispania de 1614"; Zbudilová, *La literatura española*; Archer et al., *Bohemia Hispanica*.

Since Hungary was not part of the Holy Roman Empire and the integration of Hungary's aristocracy into the Habsburg central government organs and councils was far less advanced than in Bohemia, Spanish diplomacy made fewer efforts to build more meaningful and deep connections and interactions with them through, for instance, marriages, the migration of Hungarian noblemen to the Spanish Netherlands or Spain, or the granting of memberships in religious and military orders. Patronage, favors, and political sponsorship, as a consequence, played a smaller role. Spanish Habsburg diplomats in Prague and Vienna were well aware of the details of all these connections, and they made decisions, intervened, or facilitated solutions whenever necessary.

In contrast, Bohemia constituted a strategic land for Madrid for different reasons. As part of the Holy Roman Empire and as a territory that was historically more integrated into the Central European Habsburg lands, Bohemia needed to be more closely linked to the Spanish Habsburg system of diplomacy and favors. In addition, the Thirty Years' War created a very specific opportunity for the Spanish Habsburg elite. The defeat of the Protestant nobility in Bohemia freed up a huge amount of land for the Catholic aristocracy, and the emperor distributed some of these lands to Spanish noblemen who were fighting and living in Central Europe. Cultural assimilation, family ties (including marriages), and joint political decision-making in the central government organs in Vienna made relations between Madrid, Spanish Habsburg diplomats, and the Bohemian elite much closer in these areas than Spanish Habsburg relations with the Hungarian aristocracy.

As Bohemia and Hungary were neighboring lands with shared interests and common goals, many similar patterns can be detected as well, however, first and foremost in matters of cultural assimilation (book culture and cooperation in the Catholic revival) and questions of dynastic inheritance (coronations and the rights to the Hungarian and Bohemian crowns).

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