



**Private and Intellectual Conflicts and the Mysteries of the  
*Empresas Políticas* in the Unpublished Letters of Juan  
Antonio de Vera, Count of La Roca, to  
Diego Saavedra Fajardo (1634-1640)**

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**Resumen**

La correspondencia inédita entre los dos escritores y diplomáticos del Siglo de Oro refuerza la opinión de que intensas redes políticas y grupos eruditos rigieron en el cuerpo diplomático y en el medio cultural del siglo XVII. Juan Antonio de Vera, el conde de La Roca y Diego Saavedra Fajardo, escritor y diplomático murciano se necesitaron el uno al otro como centros de información, puntos de control intelectuales y transmisores de bienes culturales. Condujeron debates profesionales en cuanto a la política exterior de Madrid. La Roca trató a Saavedra con desdén y superioridad soberbia. Una nota sobre las *Empresas Políticas* hace una sombra y pone de relieve un misterio sobre su primera edición.

**Palabras clave**

Juan Antonio de Vera; Diego Saavedra Fajardo; Conflictos privados nobiliarios; Guerra de los Treinta años; Libro antiguo; *Empresas Políticas*

**Title**

Private and Intellectual Conflicts and the Unsolved Mysteries of the First Edition of the *Empresas Políticas* in the Unpublished Letters of Juan Antonio de Vera, Count of La Roca, to Diego Saavedra Fajardo (1634-1641)

**Abstract**

The unpublished correspondence between two renowned Golden Age writers and diplomats reinforces the view that intense political and intellectual networks and

circles reigned in the diplomatic corps and the cultural milieu in the seventeenth century. Juan Antonio de Vera, Count of La Roca, and Diego Saavedra Fajardo, a diplomat from Murcia, needed each other as information hubs, intellectual control points and transmitters of cultural goods. They engaged in professional debates about the foreign policy of Madrid. La Roca repeatedly treated the diplomat with disdain and condescending superiority. A note on the *Empresas Políticas* casts a shadow on its first edition and highlights a puzzle.

### Keywords

Juan Antonio de Vera; Diego Saavedra Fajardo; Private Aristocratic Conflicts; Thirty Years' War; History of Books; *Empresas Políticas*



## INTRODUCTION

New momentum has gathered recently in scholarly research into the life and works of the Murcian diplomat, statesman and writer, Diego Saavedra Fajardo, and propelled the writing of this article as well. Fresh waves of innovative, primary archival research have been conducted in a number of European archives and collections, and the paths of illustrious precursors have been followed: the *Complete Works (Obras completas)*, edited by González Palencia in 1946, and a biography by Fraga Iribarne, published in 1955, are the first in a long list of summaries that culminated in the 1970s and 1980s. Later, Saavedra's correspondence (*Correspondencia de Saavedra Fajardo*) were edited by Aldea Vaquero between 1986 and 2008.

Rohrschneider first uncovered significant, new sources and pioneered new investigations in the early 2000s. Though his masterpiece on the Westphalian peace negotiations (Rohrschneider, 2006) does not focus on Saavedra, the pages dedicated to the Murcian diplomat present a variety of unknown material from the archives of Toledo, Simancas, Vienna and Linz, among others. The book sheds new, more comprehensive light on his performance as a Spanish plenipotentiary and was thus a source of inspiration for this paper.

Discovering and interpreting dozens of manuscripts and copies of Saavedra's pamphlets and other writings in more than ten European archives and libraries, Boadas proved that scholarship has yet to determine many principal facets of the contemporary impact of the Spanish writer (Boadas,

2010, 2017a, 2017b, Boadas – Gernert 2010). In addition, Boadas explored fundamentally new sources in French, Italian and Spanish collections, editing more than 400 documents and further fine-tuning the evaluation of the Murcian's endeavours and literary production during the peace talks in Münster and, in general, during the 1630s and 1640s (the *Epistolario* of Boadas, 2015). As a consequence, Boadas began satisfactorily filling in the lacunae in the *Acta Pacis Westphalicae* (APW), thereby paying a long outstanding debt on behalf of Spanish and European historiography. Even now, in the APW, the Dutch, Venetian and Spanish correspondence is still unpublished, though this undertaking has been planned for more than fifty years. In contrast, almost all of the imperial, French and Swedish letters, diaries, protocols and other official papers have been edited. So far, most published diplomatic correspondence of the Spanish Monarchy have contained letters and documents exchanged by envoys and the decision-makers sitting in Madrid (*CoDoIn*), but not by the diplomats and other rulers of lower rank in the given dynasty (in this case, the House of Austria). This second category is equally, if not more, important, as proven by the already published volumes of APW.

The subsequent findings underscore again a principal feature of a crucial effort in the humanities: the closer we get to original texts, the deeper our connection is to the authors and the writings we have inherited.

The aforementioned authors investigated primarily the years 1643-46. A recent, new political biography of Saavedra Fajardo (Monostori, 2019) has extended the chronological, methodological and archival scope; focused on a forgotten, life-changing mission in 1640 in the imperial city of Regensburg in the Holy Roman Empire; and fundamentally re-evaluated Saavedra's performance as a diplomat, a propagandist and a biased political thinker in the years 1637-1646. It has painted a more accurate, realistic and authentic political and private portrait of the Murcian statesman, debunking century-old myths and legends about him. At the same time a new, global and interdisciplinary context and comparative approach is proposed for Saavedran studies.

These results have somewhat unexpectedly challenged and then shattered an overwhelmingly positive scholarly and popular consensus: namely, the outstanding historical status of 'one of the most highly and steadily valued authors to date' (Arredondo, 2011: 26) among Spanish Golden Age politicians and men of letters and, in a wider sense, in Spanish culture in general.

The presentation of this new profile, intellectual journey and socio-political context is far from complete. On the contrary, more avenues of research have been opened, and new, captivating fields of investigation have

emerged. This article explores some of these. One is the practicality and convenience of scrutinizing private correspondence (in this case, the letters of Juan Antonio de Vera, first count of La Roca, to Saavedra). The other includes the potential to unlock the mysteries around the first edition of the most popular work by Saavedra, the *Empresas Políticas* (1640, *Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano*, with ‘The Royal Politician’ and ‘The Idea of a Politico-Christian Prince Represented in One Hundred Emblems’ being the most widespread English translations of the title).

### THE PROTAGONISTS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS

Saavedra Fajardo (1584-1648) has a more researched profile than La Roca (1583-1658) in terms of his literary production, centred on his best-known *opus* (see López Poza, 1999) and his missions as a diplomat. For this second category, the major priorities, achievements and writings (propagandistic pamphlets, political essays and history books) of Saavedra during his service in Spanish colours in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire (1633-1646) during the Thirty Years’ War were established and produced during frequently overlapping assignments in four different geographic territories and political entities. Specifically, the court of the prince-elector duke of Bavaria, the head of the Catholic Union (1633-1640); the Swiss cantons and the neighbouring Franche-Comté, the affairs of which were interconnected (1638-1642); the imperial court in Vienna and Regensburg, the most significant being the imperial diet in Regensburg (1640-41), including the life-changing mission in 1640; and the peace negotiations in Westphalia (1643-1646).

Juan Antonio de Vera, the ‘megalomaniac’ (Carreira, 2016: 436) count of La Roca, authored several books including the highly popular *El Embaxador* (The Ambassador, 1620), a long, theoretical and practical discourse on the office of the permanent diplomat, translated into French and Italian. He formed part of the inner circle of intellectuals of the count-duke of Olivares, chief minister of Philip IV, king of Spain, which included the marquis Virgilio Malvezzi, a historian and diplomat, and Saavedra himself (for the relationship between Malvezzi and La Roca, see Colomer, 2005). La Roca wrote a biography of Olivares in the 1620s. Between 1632 and 1642, after a mission in Savoy, he served as ambassador to the Venetian court, a cultural centre with a flourishing printing environment. There, he published a number of his works. Later he filled several political positions in Milan and Madrid (Gutiérrez, 2016 is a recent summary of his life and works, while the longest and fullest biography to date is by Fernández-Daza Alvarez, 1995).

While their occasional interactions were noticed and addressed by many authors (Fraga Iribarne, 1955: 240; Cinti, 1966: *passim* and Fernández-Daza Álvarez, 1995: 238-278), the letters of La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo have not yet attracted interest or sparked analysis. For several reasons these letters have a special value and deserve attention.

First, Saavedra Fajardo, though he enjoyed a very diverse reputation among the agents, top diplomats and ministers of the Spanish Monarchy, was the subject of far more negative evaluations and condescending, derisive statements than positive assessments praising or honouring his soft and hard skills as a certified negotiator (Monostori, 2019). It is therefore essential to know where La Roca stood, especially because, as the next subchapter shows, he corresponded with almost all present, past and future peers and superiors of the Murcian. Consequently, the ambassador's view of him certainly must have been well-grounded.

Second, the two statesmen shared a lot in common during their lifetimes. They continuously sought the favour of the most powerful statesman in the Spanish monarchy: Olivares. Both had several diplomatic missions in a number of European courts and membership of at least one state council in Madrid. La Roca and Saavedra are celebrated for their prolific literary production and were known both in Spain and outside of their homeland for their strong stance against French influence in central and southern Europe. The two often struggled to get their writings in print. As a consequence, their interactions and conflicts reveal a lot about the nature of political, personal and intellectual divisions in general.

Third, their correspondence had a bizarre feature: Saavedra actively applied for La Roca's position as the future Spanish ambassador to Venice in 1640<sup>1</sup>. In April 1641, the Council of State in Madrid reviewed one of Saavedra's letters of December 1640, in which he shared his willingness to go to the Swiss cantons (a mission proposed by Francisco de Melo, ambassador extraordinary at the imperial court), only if there was no other option (namely, a position in Venice). The Swiss mission was reconfirmed<sup>2</sup>. In the end, the role was given to the marquis of La Fuente, one of the Murcian's competitors in the diplomatic corps. The decision on the successor of La Roca was made in October 1641 in Madrid; there were four candidates overall, and at least two of them were serving outside of Spain<sup>3</sup>. It

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<sup>1</sup> See the reports of the Venetian envoy at the imperial court in Regensburg about Fuente's and Saavedra's intentions in the Venetian State Archives: Vico to the Senate, Regensburg, 14 July 1640. ASV, Dispacci, Germania, filza 84, p. 34. and Vico to the Senate, Regensburg, 8 Dec 1640. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> Consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 20 Apr 1641. AGS, Est. leg. 2341/51, *sf.*

<sup>3</sup> See the letters of La Roca to La Fuente and Olivares from Venice, 28 Dec 1641: BNE MSS/7648, fol. 559r-560v and 561v-563r, respectively.

is unknown who La Fuente's rivals were at the time. La Roca was very well aware of the Murcian's application, which was probably supported in the Spanish capital by cardinal Borja<sup>4</sup>. Without a doubt, an ambassadorial role in Venice would have provided Saavedra with the prestigious diplomatic position he had long yearned for and access to one of the most important cultural and printing hubs in Europe. That promotion would have fulfilled a dream and could have unlocked some of his potential.

### THE LETTERS BOOK

The letters of La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo presented here are housed in the National Library of Spain, in two manuscript volumes. The MSS/7754 covers the years 1633-1634<sup>5</sup> and the MSS/7648 the years 1639-1642<sup>6</sup>. The two volumes contain the copies of his letters to dozens of recipients, including the king, Olivares, Malvezzi, secretaries of state in Madrid and ministers in Italy, Rome, the Holy Roman Empire and elsewhere. I did not find any correspondence between Saavedra and La Roca for the period 1635 to 1638.

The volumes contain hundreds of documents, all copies and not original letters. This said, there is no doubt that the letters are genuine and were indeed dispatched. Three control groups prove this statement with certainty. Some of the letters sent to Virgilio Malvezzi can be found in another, independent manuscript in Madrid<sup>7</sup>, many of those addressed to Philip IV are stored in Simancas<sup>8</sup> and those to Miguel de Salamanca, secretary of state and war for the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, the cardinal-infante Ferdinand, are archived in Brussels<sup>9</sup>. Further letters will

<sup>4</sup> '... y disfrutando prebendas y pensiones, que sea para algo el señor cardenal de Borja y saque a Vuestra Merced de Mónaco para Venecia ...' La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 22 Dec 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 7rv.

<sup>5</sup> Registro de cartas para Su Majestad, [Felipe IV] y sus ministros tocantes a la embajada de Venecia, 1633-1634, por el Conde de La Roca.

<sup>6</sup> Registro de cartas para Sus Majestades y ministros tocantes a la embajada de Venecia. Del año 1639 al 1642 [Conde de La Roca].

<sup>7</sup> E.g., the text of La Roca's letter to Malvezzi from Venice on 13 October 1640 in the registry book (MSS/7648, 218v-219r) is almost exactly the same in a copy of extracts (MSS/11146, 281v-282r). The fact that MSS/11146 includes letters of La Roca to Malvezzi is mentioned by Colomer (2005: 518, n. 7).

<sup>8</sup> His letters to Philip IV in the Simancas Archives appear to have been sent, received, acknowledged and deciphered. E.g., his letter sent from Venice on 12 Nov 1633, written in MSS/7754, 50r-52r can be read in AGS, Est. leg. 3592/15., sf.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., La Roca's letter sent in bulk from Venice on 8 Sep 1640 to his peer ministers (MSS/7648, fol. 205v.) can be read as a letter to Salamanca in NAB, SEG 448, fol. 41r.

certainly be found in other European archives<sup>10</sup>, as La Roca produced bulk letters; that is, he often sent exactly the same text to sometimes more than ten recipients, fine-tuning them, adding a few lines, for specific addressees. This further increases the value of the collections; they constitute the root directory of thousands of letters and reports produced by a key diplomatic role holder from a chief European hub of information.

La Roca must have begun corresponding with Saavedra in 1633, as he received reports from Bavaria, too<sup>11</sup>. He communicated with almost all principal peers, senior colleagues and superiors (and therefore influencers and decision-makers) around Saavedra. Besides the king, Olivares and counsellors of state, he exchanged letters with the marquis of Castañeda, ambassador extraordinary at the imperial court in Vienna and the most determined detractor of Saavedra in the 1640s, whom he called friend and cousin (*amigo y primo*). La Roca corresponded with the marquis of La Fuente; the marquis of Castel Rodrigo, who served until 1641 in Rome; Miguel de Salamanca; the cardinal-infante Ferdinand; Antonio Sarmiento; Fadrique Enríquez, ambassador extraordinary in Innsbruck (Tirol, part of the Central European monarchy of the dynasty); and cardinal Borja, the former superior of Saavedra, among many others. Therefore, the ambassador was in an ideal situation to access multiple channels and draw multi-faceted conclusions on the performance and character of the Murcian. Though such evaluations are also always subject to personal tastes and bias, his view on Saavedra is perhaps the most revealing, since, unlike most of his associates and colleagues, he was a peer in the diplomatic corps *and* an intellectual peer as well.

It is unclear how many letters in the two collections were actually sent to Saavedra. Frequently, the texts in the margin say ‘to the ministers in Vienna’, ‘in Regensburg’, ‘in Rome’, or to the ministers in general or list six or seven individuals. Sometimes it is explicitly stated that Saavedra was among the many recipients. In those instances, the content of the letter is usually purely related to political news and does not provide any genuine material illuminating their relationship. In this article, I focus on the letters that were sent exclusively to Saavedra (or to him and to another person) and on those in which La Roca’s relationship with Saavedra and his thoughts and activities were specifically mentioned.

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<sup>10</sup> The Colección Salazar y Castro, like other archives in Spain, also houses letters sent by La Roca in 1639-1648.

<sup>11</sup> ‘De Viena escriben miserias, de Baviera, calamidades, ...’ La Roca to Galarreta, secretary of state in Brussels, Venice, 24 Jan 1634. BNE, MSS/7754, fol. 110r-111v, here: 111r.

Here La Roca, apparently always innovative and inspired when he needed to deal with the Murcian, conveyed messages with multiple semantic layers and narratives that go well beyond the business-as-usual diplomatic correspondence, giving his writing a significant literary value. I have edited most of those documents in the Appendix.

#### **‘SENT BY ANGELS’ OR ‘WORSE THAN THE DEVIL’? PERSONAL CONFLICTS**

As already pointed out, the positive judgements made by certain royal family members, diplomats and politicians about Saavedra’s professional and personal qualities were not the rule in the 1630s and 1640s, but rather the *exceptions* that proved it. And the rule was a mix of decent, but penetrating and piercing criticism; open hatred; and sarcastic, mocking or condescending condemnation (Monostori 2019). The safety net created by the sponsors of the Murcian was threatened by an army of detractors engaged in shaping a negative image, a ‘black legend’, of Saavedra.

The long list of humorous, ironic, sarcastic, mocking or condescending statements and remarks about Saavedra include the following: one of the worst possible choices to handle negotiations and perform secretarial roles in the entire monarchy (the count of Peñaranda); a liar who accused others of betrayal (the 2<sup>nd</sup> marquis of Castel Rodrigo); a writer of useless pamphlets and discourses (the 3<sup>rd</sup> marquis of Castel Rodrigo); a bad-tempered man with no sense of responsibility in financial matters (Melo); a wishful thinker, a wannabe policymaker and an ineffective influencer (from 1640 on, Olivares and the members of the Council of State that voted with him); a jealous, self-centred, vain and egotistical envoy (Antonio Sarmiento); and an astute, meddling, manipulative careerist (Sousa, an agent of the 2<sup>nd</sup> marquis of Castel Rodrigo), among others (Monostori 2019).

Balanced views such as those of Francisco de Melo and Peñaranda were rare, and even these two men clearly distinguished between the values they respected (his zeal and good intentions to serve the monarchy) and what they condemned (his professional skills, personal imperfections and ability to handle diplomatic affairs of grand scale and impact).

The first letter by La Roca to Saavedra (1634) found in the BNE collections set *in medias res* the tone of his correspondence, which prevailed until 1640, the date of the last important letters that have survived.

The ambassador joked about Saavedra’s request for a ciphered conversation (or for a new code), denying his requests:

‘... yo no sé hacer caracteres de hechicero que son solos los que agradarán a Vuestra Merced. Una cifra se deja olvidada, otra no le contenta. Yo



pienso que después de haber disfrutado mis claridades quiere Vuestra Merced maquinarme con mis cifras, ...<sup>12</sup>

In another exaggerated passage, he was probably mocking the (from his perspective) junior writer, who likely boasted about his own erudite knowledge, an assessment not endorsed by the senior writer. La Roca would print out his letters, one by one, in the hope of selling them to the public:

‘En llegando el mariscal de Criqui, habrá nuevas que avisar, que ahora todo pende de Vuestra Merced cuyas cartas trato de imprimir cada semana que valdrán dinero a que Vuestra Merced me pondrá una demanda en viéndose en su tribunal, o a lo menos con este pretexto de restitución intentará de mi cualquier cohecho.<sup>13</sup>

Five years later, he attacked several of Saavedra’s traits, with his censure echoed by many from Sarmiento to Melo. Namely, that the Murcian did not tolerate other opinions and views, refused to admit to his mistakes and blamed his colleagues or the outside world for his errors. La Roca alluded to Saavedra’s seat on the Supreme Council of the Indies in Madrid, a position granted by the king in 1635 but not assumed by Saavedra until 1646, in his remark that Saavedra blamed an Italian political event for his fiascos in the Swiss cantons and Bavaria, but felt that he would find solutions in Madrid, on a council that was absolutely incompetent in those areas:

‘... y habla mal de la tregua que se hizo en el Piemonte a que atribuye todo lo que no ha podido negociar en Esgúzaros, y va haciendo la cama a lo que no negociare en Mónaco, pero todo lo negociará en el Consejo de Indias si va como dice que tiene licencia.<sup>14</sup>

In another letter, three more characteristic features of Saavedra’s behaviour, perceived by his generation, are simultaneously mocked: his vast exaggerations, his constant complaints about his omnipresent competitors and his continuous requests to the court in Madrid for promotions and favours:

‘Caliente Vuestra Merced el frío de Mónaco y haga que su dueño desmienta lo que dicen sus émulos y acredite lo que cree de su bondad y fineza el Rey nuestro señor, y si no pudiese deshacer la junta de electores procure Vuestra Merced que le hagan Rey de Romanos, que maldita la duda hay de que por

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<sup>12</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 23 June 1634. BNE MSS/7754, fol. 238rv.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> La Roca to La Fuente, Venice, 26 Nov 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 1rv, here: 1v.

lo menos anda Vuestra Merced pretendiente de alguna dignidad entre palatino o landgrave.<sup>15</sup>

He mentioned one specific competitor, Antonio Sarmiento, who (many months later) played a key role in the blocking of Saavedra's proposed mission to the Swiss cantons in 1641 and subsequent weakening of his powers and credentials (Monostori 2019):

‘Por acá ha estado cerca de hacer gran falta su señor de Vuestra Merced Don Antonio Sarmiento, pero Dios se ha compadecido de los humildes y pobres de espíritu.’<sup>16</sup>

Careerism, jealousy and dissimulation were constant topics of his reproaches to the Murcian, highlighting Saavedra's presumed pleasure at the end of 1639 because La Fuente had also performed poorly in Munich:

‘Juzgo a Vuestra Merced aún más dolorido de lo que me da a entender del mal negociado que ahí tuvo el marqués de La Fuente, porque la política de Vuestra Merced no atiende tanto a lo particular como a lo público.’<sup>17</sup>

Saavedra appeared diabolical to the ambassador in two different instances:

‘Más dificultoso es librarse de Vuestra Merced que del Diablo, porque este huye de la cruz en palo y rame (sic), y Vuestra Merced las entalega en oro y plata.’<sup>18</sup>

‘El Saavedra me saca la correspondencia contra el firme propósito de acortarla con todos los meros ministros por no atreverme a sustentarla con tanta falta de salud, pero él es demonio, y sus maldades obligan tal vez a los buenos como pudieran a los malos.’<sup>19</sup>

Those remarks clearly demonstrate how differently his performance was assessed by the ruling elite of the monarchy. Presenting an even sharper contrast was Olivares' assertion in 1634 that an angel must have inspired Philip IV to send Saavedra to Bavaria, because he served so well there<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 26 Nov 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 1v-2r.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 22 Dec 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 7rv.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> La Roca to Fadrique Enríquez, Venice, 24 Dec 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 6rv.

<sup>20</sup> ‘... Don Diego sirve, y sirve muy bien, y parece que algún ángel inspiró a Vuestra Majestad que enviase este ministro al Duque de Baviera, ...’ Olivares' view during the consultation of the Council of State, Madrid, 6 Nov 1634. *Correspondencia de Saavedra Fajardo*, III/2., p. 677-679, here 679.

Sometimes Don Diego was ridiculed merely for amusement, as in the passage below, in which his soft skills and objectives in diplomacy are likened to those of the Calvinist church, founded by Jean Calvin in Geneva (in Spanish, *Ginebra*), which was hostile to Catholicism, religion of the Spanish Monarchy:

‘Salses aún no se ha tomado, y cuando lo esté no lo avisarán de Ginebra por no dar gusto. Señor Don Diego, sean las inteligencias de Vuestra Merced con las truchas de aquel lago y no con los predicantes de aquella escuela.’<sup>21</sup>

Some letters contain misguided and malicious fault-finding, such as the intentional misinterpretation of the Murcian’s zeal to achieve a better military situation for the Franche-Comté. Saavedra had proposed during the imperial diet in Regensburg that the Burgundian Circle of the empire (headed by the king of Spain) pay its yearly contribution to the empire in exchange for imperial assistance in the Franche-Comté. La Roca viewed this as an illogical proposal, since the Spanish Monarchy needed to pay to defend its territory regardless of the circumstances:

‘La consideración que obligó al ofrecimiento de contribuir por el Círculo de Borgoña me parece muy buena y tomaría, que fuere tan cierto el socorro que el Imperio diese por esta razón a aquella provincia, como lo será el pagar nosotros lo que ofreciéremos, pero ahí se queda la buena maña de Vuestra Señoría.’<sup>22</sup>

It seems there was a group of Spanish nobles, who, exploiting the imperfections and unattractive personal traits of Saavedra, deliberately and unconditionally mocked his character, his supposed achievements and his ways of working, almost bullying him. This *ensemble* did not follow a rule that was observed by the others, who, regardless of their sympathies or criticisms, wrote about Saavedra respectfully. Sarmiento; the count of Trauttmansdorff, who was the chief minister of Emperor Ferdinand III; Melo; the cardinal-infante and his secretary of state, Salamanca; Peñaranda and a few others admitted that he was capable of serving well in at least certain diplomatic positions or even promoted his appointment. In contrast, the members of the *ensemble* (Castel Rodrigo, the younger Castel Rodrigo, Castañeda, La Roca and others) could not and did not hide their mixture of disdain, amusement, condescension and sarcasm.

La Roca’s judgements expressed in his letters to Saavedra reveal a view of the Murcian that conforms perfectly to the overwhelming consensus

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<sup>21</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 22 Dec 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 7rv.

<sup>22</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 8 Dec 1640. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 231v.

of the detractors. Nevertheless, the ambassador wrote what were probably the most thoughtful, genuine and sophisticated reproaches and criticisms that had ever been expressed about the Murcian. This is equally apparent when La Roca attacked his political ideas, perceptions and intuitions.

**‘SOMETHING NEW HAS TO BE PROPOSED, DON DIEGO.’ INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS**

Notably, the detractors and in particular the *ensemble*, including La Roca, in this vein indirectly or directly criticized Saavedra’s current and former supporters as well: the king and other royal family members, Olivares or Borja. La Roca did indeed censure Borja:

‘... y disfrutando prebendas y pensiones, que sea para algo el señor cardenal de Borja y saque a Vuestra Merced de Mónaco para Venecia ...’<sup>23</sup>

He likewise reproved the king elegantly, and Saavedra more vehemently, when recalling that he had already notified them two years earlier that the prince of Bavaria, a principal ally of the dynasty, was close to breaking ties with the House of Austria, a reality that was recognized openly by the Murcian only later:

‘He leído con particular gusto la carta que Vuestra Señoría escribe al Saavedra, y creo que le estará muy bien tomarla por carta de su navegación, porque si he de decir a Vuestra Señoría lo que de ella siento, le han engañado y él a otros. Y así, habiendo yo escrito al Rey más ha de dos años que aquí se entendía que el Bávaro no caminaba de buen pie, me respondió Su Majestad que ¿cómo era posible y que qué conveniencias podía tener para despegarse de la Casa de Austria? Como si las de todos los hombres no se cambiasen en mudando el designio. Yo temo que el pretexto que no tiene para quejarse de nosotros se le ha de dar algún tratado de Don Diego, porque el solo que pudiera ser útil de una liga como Vuestra Señoría apunta no le aceptará él, ni aun nos convendría hacerla, porque para nada es bueno un achacoso que se ha de servir de nosotros y nunca mejorar máximas. Don Diego me escribe que está el elector ofendido, y odiando a la Casa de Austria, y que no sabe la novedad, pero que la hay, de que infiero que tira a dos blancos: mantener las alabanzas que hasta cierto tiempo le dio y buscar causa nueva para los malos efectos que hoy no puede negar.’<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 22 Dec 1639. BNE MSS/7648, fol. 7rv. See also n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> La Roca to Fadrique Enríquez, Venice, 18 Feb 1640. BNE, MSS/7648, fol. 60r-61r.

When Castañeda was removed from the Spanish embassy in the imperial court in 1640 and replaced by Saavedra (Monostori, 2019), La Roca, in a letter sent to the ministers in Rome, did not consider it a good solution and did not deem Saavedra and La Fuente sufficiently competent replacements:

‘No sé si el buen afecto con el de Castañeda, o no tal con los que le sustituyen en Ratisbona [Regensburg; namely, La Fuente and Saavedra] hace que se oiga decir con descrédito que los mayores negocios de la Monarquía están sin dueño cuando no fueran sobrados con los que los tratan Castañeda y Melo y el conde de Oñate.’<sup>25</sup>

There was at least one fundamental difference in Saavedra’s and La Roca’s approaches to the foreign policy strategy of the Spanish Monarchy. Saavedra never gave up the idea and the dream of a unified Holy Roman Empire under the strong monarchical rule of the dynasty, in his opinion a mandatory requirement for the House of Austria to maintain power in Europe. Also, he never stopped thinking that the estates of the empire had real and tangible reasons to fear the dynasty and the alliance between its two main branches. La Roca had a somewhat less black-and-white, more realistic vision. In his view, the estates were fine with the dynasty’s strong presence in the empire, as it offered multiple benefits; for example, the dynasty’s power could be exploited in the event of an Ottoman attack against Hungary. As long as the estates’ constitutional rights and liberties were secured and protected, they did not want to see a significant decrease in power of the House of Austria. The same applied to Venice:

‘Vuestra Señoría no crea que la mayor parte de los miembros del Imperio le desean fuera de la Casa de Austria. Con cierta limitación, sí. Y tampoco se persuada que toman tan mal el pulso a las cosas corrientes que dure en sus ánimos el temor que los émulos de Carlo Quinto y los herejes esparcieron de que quería destruir las provincias para hacerlas hereditarias, porque yo sé que alguien introducido en la puridad de la parte contraria escribe que lo que se desea es repartir la autoridad y útiles entre muchos, y mantener parte de ella en el Rey de Hungría. Y así crea Vuestra Señoría que para conseguir esto harán apariencia de otros intentos, y también crea que viven tan satisfechos de la ocasión presente que no tienen duda de lograr mucho. Y yo no sé cuál es, pero cosa nueva falta que proponer.’<sup>26</sup>

‘Esté Vuestra Merced cierto que la pérdida de Arrás no la ha tenido la República [de Venecia] por ganancia suya y que de la dieta de Ratisbona como quien sabe los humores que allí se juntan tiene mucho cuidado,

<sup>25</sup> La Roca to the ministers in Rome, Venice, 8 Sep 1640. BNE, MSS/7648, fol. 205v.

<sup>26</sup> La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo, Venice, 10 Nov 1640. BNE Mss/7648, fol. 222v-223r.

porque desea que el Imperio no salga de la Casa de Austria, porque sea más poderoso contra el Turco, ni que en Flandes estemos tan escasamente sobre la defensiva que puedan los franceses sin temor de aquel lado echar sus ejércitos en Italia, no obstante osaré asegurar que no harán demostración grande de este concepto, ...<sup>27</sup>

Both diplomats had sophisticated understandings and visions of Spanish foreign policy, even if La Roca exaggerated those of Saavedra when replying to his letters. Although an in-depth analysis of all their works cannot be made here, some passages show that the two men had genuine, professional clashes of opinion that reflected similar disagreements and splits among the decision-makers in the Madrid court.

### THE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES OF THE *EMPRESAS POLÍTICAS*

New discoveries and questions about the first edition of the *Empresas Políticas* have proliferated in recent times. Three different front pages have been discovered, showing that Saavedra was constantly polishing his brand and image in order to strengthen and fortify it: he made numerous changes to the *portada*, while his positions, assignments and accolades were continually changing and accumulating in the years 1640-1641 (Monostori, 2019). A large manuscript, the *Antineutralidad* (Against Neutrality) was attributed to the Murcian, substantiating the claim that this previously unknown and unpublished work and the *Empresas* were twin books, written by the same author, produced for a slightly different audience and for a different purpose, but serving similar, overarching political and personal objectives (Monostori, 2018).

One reason for the close interrelationship between the two books is their similar dates of creation. A possible explanation for why the *Antineutralidad* was not printed and circulated is that it had become outdated once historical developments (namely, the imminent threat of an Ottoman attack against Hungary and, in Europe in general, and the potential impacts on French policy making of the revolt of the *Va-nu-pieds* in Normandy, France; both ceased to exist by then) had rendered some of its main themes and smaller arguments obsolete by early March 1640. Another possible reason is that the manuscript did not receive much attention or positive feedback from the readers, including Olivares, to whom it was dedicated.

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<sup>27</sup> La Roca's letter sent in bulk from Venice on 8 Sep 1640 to his peer ministers (MSS/7648, fol. 205v.) can be read also as a letter to Salamanca in NAB, SEG 448, fol. 41r. (See n. 9.)

The principal enigma concerning the creation and publication of the *Empresas* lies here: with questions of when it was written and how it was received. Though its writer finished the preface to the book in July 1640 in Vienna and distributed the first issues in the same month to his friends, colleagues and superiors, the front cover displays a publication date of 1 March 1640 in all versions, that is, 4-5 months earlier. This strengthens the hypothesis that both the *Antineutralidad* and the *Empresas* were ready for printing by January or February 1640 at the latest. What could have happened?

Is it possible that only the *portada* was printed in March? Or, did Saavedra prepare some test versions? Did he face technical difficulties or have contractual obligations that made changing the date from that of the very first printing impossible? Were there competing authors, preparing books with similar content, and Saavedra needed to ensure the anteriority of his work to avoid any suspicions of plagiarism? Or, did he face challenges when it came to the authorisation of the book on behalf of the Spanish and Catholic institutions, since we know that he changed a large portion of the content between the first and second editions, significantly decreasing the number of quotations from some ancient and modern authors and increasing the number of verses from the Bible?

Three considerations (an obvious void in the book, a letter from La Roca to Saavedra and an almost complete reversal by Olivares in his evaluation of Saavedra) render the very last assumption likely.

Unlike the second, 1642 edition, which had received the authorisation of both the Council of the Spanish Inquisition and its branch in Milan, the *editio princeps* two years earlier lacks any legal validation and official approval (*aprobación, licencia, privilegio*), a mandatory feature of any early modern Spanish printed book (*libro antiguo*) (Reyes Gómez, 2010).

A note from La Roca in November 1640 strengthens the assumption that Saavedra had his book printed without authorisations or *in spite of* a rejection or delayed scrutiny. The ambassador to Venice wrote that ‘great sin or great fear is locked up in the book of emblems, since your Lordship has been so badly obeyed by your commissioners’:

‘La semana pasada envié a Vuestra Señoría un libro muy a propósito para lo que desea. Espero que me traigan otro, pero también espero los retratos y Vuestra Señoría los ponga en poder del señor don Fadrique Enríquez adonde yo remitiré el libro segundo con orden de que pase a Ratisbona, sin esperar el recíproco contrato, porque ya sé cuál he de salir de los de Vuestra

Señoría. Gran pecado o gran miedo hay encerrado en el libro de los Emblemas, pues es Vuestra Señoría tan mal obedecido de sus comisarios.<sup>28</sup>

As La Roca was one of the most experienced Spanish writers in publishing books outside of the Spanish Monarchy (Gutiérrez, 2016), these phrases must be taken seriously. To what officers the *comisarios*, in this specific instance, might refer is unclear. There are at least two possibilities.

Since the *Empresas* was first printed in Munich, Bavaria, this reference is possibly to the officials in the Imperial Book Commission (*Kaiserliche Bücherkommission*), headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, which was the official organ charged by the Holy Roman Empire with supervising the approvals and printing of books and manuscripts (Eisenhardt, 1970). However, I did not come across any traces of this edition in the archives of Frankfurt<sup>29</sup> and Munich, where the *editio princeps* of the *Empresas* was printed at the press of Nicolaus Henricus<sup>30</sup>. Henricus' requests for privileges can be found in high volumes in Vienna, but none of them refer to Saavedra's book<sup>31</sup>. The reason for this may be the scarcity of sources; thus it is possible the Commission had debated and made decisions about the approval or printing of the book.

Alternatively and most likely, the term *comisario* stood for an official in the Spanish Inquisition, an assistant to the inquisitor who had a wide range of functions including matters of books and printing (Juanto Jiménez, 2014).

Last, but not least, the dramatic shift in Olivares's evaluation of the Murcian between the 1630s and 1640, which was clearly visible in the minutes of the consultations of the Council of State (Monostori, 2019), might have been triggered or escalated by the unauthorized preparation and printing of the *Empresas*, a book dedicated to a royal family member (Prince Baltasar Charles) with highly sensitive political and diplomatic content, which the count-duke might have disliked for many reasons.

<sup>28</sup> La Roca to Saavedra, Venice, 10 Nov 1640. BNE Mss/7648, fol. 222v-223r, here: 223r.

<sup>29</sup> In the Frankfurt Archives (*Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Altes Archiv – Städtische Überlieferung bis 1868*), there are no such records between 1630 and 1650 in the relevant documents about printing and censorship (*Buchdruck und Zensur* [Repertorium 142]). I am indebted to Roman Fischer for this important information.

<sup>30</sup> In the Bavarian State Archives in Munich (*Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv*), there are no such records. I am indebted to Manfred Hörner for this valuable information.

<sup>31</sup> ÖStA, HHStA, Reichshofrat, Gratialia et Feudalia (Lehensakten), Impressorien 27 and 29. Other records related to the Imperial Book Commission during the 1630s and 1640s can be found in ÖStA, HHStA, Reichshofrat, Bücherkommission im Reich 2 (1628-1669) and ÖStA, HHStA, Mainzer Erzkanzlerarchiv, Bücherkommissariat 1-1, Bücherkommissariat zu Frankfurt (1642-1647).



The enigma will likely be solved by delving into Spanish and Italian archives and examining the private correspondence of Saavedra and his peers, investigations which have already begun. After all, it would not be at all unusual if it turned out that the *Empresas* had been censored or rejected by the Inquisition. This happened even to illustrious authors like Quevedo (Ettinghausen, 2009).

All of this and further, not yet discovered, documents will shed more light on the difficult, laboured, and sometimes awkward, but from a historian's and philologist's perspective, thrilling relationship between the two statesmen, diplomats and writers, who, while different in many ways, possessed very similar ambitions, artistic and scholarly skills and motivations.

## APPENDIX

### LETTERS BY LA ROCA TO SAAVEDRA FAJARDO AND OTHERS

#### *1. La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 23 June 1634.

BNE MSS/7754, fol. 238rv.

De 14 de junio es la carta que he recibido de Vuestra Merced esta semana y yo no sé hacer caracteres de hechicero que son solos los que agradarán a Vuestra Merced. Una cifra se deja olvidada, otra no le contenta.

Yo pienso que después de haber disfrutado mis claridades, quiere Vuestra Merced maquinarme con mis cifras. El Zeno<sup>32</sup>, si no es bueno para confesor, lo es para hacer retratos, porque en la relación que dio a la República de su embajada retrata muy bien al agente de España en Roma desde el rejalgar de la barba hasta el veneno del corazón<sup>33</sup>.

Pero viniendo a lo que más conviene: Weimar<sup>34</sup> no aguardó para ir a socorrer a Ratisbona<sup>35</sup> que caminase adelante la acémila con su cama, y Vuestra Merced, para ir a apretar la plaza espera que Jerjes<sup>36</sup> venga con su ejército a convoyarle.

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<sup>32</sup> Unclear reference. It might be addressing Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism (Greece, 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC), and the popularity of neostoicism in early modern Europe, an important influence in the works of Saavedra.

<sup>33</sup> Reference to an unidentified report.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard of Saxe-Weimar (1604-1639), military officer.

<sup>35</sup> Regensburg, Holy Roman Empire.

<sup>36</sup> Xerxes I, king of Persia (519-465 BC).

Razonablemente entiende Vuestra Merced la música, pues ha tomado a su cargo el de las provisiones. No quisiera yo al cabo de la jornada mi alma como la de Vuestra Merced, pero mi bolsa sí. Esta es la plaza adonde todo lo mal ganado se salva. Si Vuestra Merced quisiere ver meter a ella el espolio de las tristes provincias que ven sus ojos, tendrá Vuestra Merced en mí la administración de Florentín<sup>37</sup> con el apoyo de embajador.

En llegando el mariscal de Criqui<sup>38</sup>, habrá nuevas que avisar. Que ahora todo pende de Vuestra Merced, cuyas cartas trato de imprimir cada semana, que valdrán dinero, a que Vuestra Merced me pondrá una demanda en viéndose en su tribunal, o a lo menos, con este pretexto de restitución intentará de mí cualquier cohecho.

Guarde Dios a Vuestra Merced como deseo.

En Venecia, junio 23 1634

El Conde de la Roca

### 2. *La Roca to La Fuente*

Venice, 26 Nov 1639.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 1rv, here: 1v.

[...]

Del Saavedra he tenido carta a que respondo y suplico a Vuestra Señoría [que] se la remita. Está de muy mala lengua y habla mal de la tregua que se hizo en el Piemonte<sup>39</sup>, a que atribuye todo lo que no ha podido negociar en Esgúzaros<sup>40</sup>, y va haciendo la cama a lo que no negociare en Mónaco. Pero todo lo negociará en el Consejo de Indias si va como dice que tiene licencia.

[...]

### 3. *La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 26 Nov 1639.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 1v-2r.

Si Vuestra Merced no ha hablado mal de la tregua de Piemonte sino conmigo, no le hará daño, pero si lo sabe mi primo, el de Castañeda, con cuyo parecer [unreadable] que se ejecutó, su menor pedazo será el dedo.

<sup>37</sup> It might be a reference to Florence, Italy.

<sup>38</sup> Charles de Créquy (1571-1638), French military officer.

<sup>39</sup> Truce during the Piedmontese War, Italy, from August to October 1639.

<sup>40</sup> The Swiss cantons.

Conténtese con que le sirve de excusa para la negociación de Esguizaros que Vuestra Merced es tartana que navega con todos vientos.

Caliente Vuestra Merced el frío de Mónaco y haga que su dueño desmienta lo que dicen sus émulos y acredite lo que cree de su bondad y fineza el Rey nuestro señor. Y si no pudiere deshacer la junta de electores<sup>41</sup>, procure Vuestra Merced que le hagan Rey de Romanos, que maldita la duda hay de que por lo menos anda Vuestra Merced pretendiente de alguna dignidad entre palatino o landgrave.

Mire lo que hace merced, Don Diego, que me ha loado Vuestra Merced tantas veces los altos pensamientos de Richelieu<sup>42</sup> y de Friedland<sup>43</sup>, que temo de Vuestra Merced lo que un santo de la delineación de Juliano<sup>44</sup> un día que le vio.

Por acá ha estado cerca de hacer gran falta su señor de Vuestra Merced Don Antonio Sarmiento, pero Dios se ha compadecido de los humildes y pobres de espíritu<sup>45</sup>.

Muy buenos días habrá tenido Vuestra Merced con el señor marqués de La Fuente. Esto le escribo en este pliego, porque le estimo ya fuera de Mónaco.

Vuestra Merced me responda a todo confiado, y mire que estoy ya viejo, y que Vuestra Merced me dicen que está viejecillo<sup>46</sup>.

Guarde Dios etc.

El Conde de la Roca

#### 4. La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo

Venice, 22 Dec 1639.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 7rv.

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<sup>41</sup> The Electors' Diet in Nuremberg, which began in early 1640.

<sup>42</sup> Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister (1624-1642) of Louis XIII, king of France.

<sup>43</sup> Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634), military commander of emperor Ferdinand II.

<sup>44</sup> There were several statesmen in the Roman Empire with this name. It is unclear whom La Roca is referring to, but maybe to the illustrious family of Julia in ancient Rome (and to the 'pagan' Roman Empire in general).

<sup>45</sup> Reference to the *Beautitudes* (*bienaventuranzas*) in the Bible: 'Dichosos los pobres en espíritu, porque el reino de los cielos les pertenece. Dichosos los que lloran, porque serán consolados. Dichosos los humildes, porque recibirán la tierra como herencia.' Matthew 5:3-5 (Nueva Versión Internacional). In English: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.' (New Revised Standard Version).

<sup>46</sup> Saavedra Fajardo was born in 1584, one year after La Roca (1583).

Más dificultoso es librarse de Vuestra Merced que del Diablo, porque este huye de la cruz en palo y rame (sic), y Vuestra Merced las entalega en oro y plata.

Juzgo a Vuestra Merced aún más dolorido de lo que me da a entender del mal negociado que ahí tuvo el marqués de La Fuente, porque la política de Vuestra Merced no atiende tanto a lo particular como a lo público. Consuélese Vuestra Merced con que negoció peor el marqués de Fuentes<sup>47</sup>. Pero saque ejemplo de ello para no estimarse eterno por el mucho tesoro, aunque sea tan bien adquirido como el suyo, robando a holandeses<sup>48</sup>, y el de Vuestra Merced a herejes invasores de la Borgoña y Alsacia<sup>49</sup>, y disfrutando prebendas y pensiones que sea para algo el señor cardenal de Borja y saque a Vuestra Merced de Mónaco para Venecia que [unreadable] fuere aumento para el cuerpo, será alivio para el alma, pues tendrá menos que penar en el purgatorio.

[...]

Salses<sup>50</sup> aún no se ha tomado, y cuando lo esté no lo avisarán de Ginebra<sup>51</sup> por no dar gusto. Señor Don Diego, sean las inteligencias de Vuestra Merced con las truchas de aquel lago<sup>52</sup> y no con los predicantes de aquella escuela<sup>53</sup>.

Quiérole bien, y así no puedo dejar de hablar en lo que temo.

Guarde Dios a Vuestra Merced.

El Conde de la Roca

##### 5. *La Roca to Fadrique Enríquez*

Venice, 24 Dec 1639.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 6rv.

Vuestra Señoría me ha hecho muy gran merced con su carta de 18 de diciembre que me ha alegrado mucho, aunque me hallo en la cama con no sé cuál o cuántos de mis achaques, que no son fáciles de distinguir, aunque

<sup>47</sup> Juan Claros de Guzmán, 2<sup>nd</sup> marquis of Fuentes, military officer in the Spanish Armada. He died in 1639.

<sup>48</sup> The troops of the marquis fought successfully against the Dutch navy.

<sup>49</sup> References to Saavedra's past and present missions in the Franche-Comté and the neighbouring territories.

<sup>50</sup> The Siege of Salses (present-day South France) ended with Spanish victory on 6 January 1640.

<sup>51</sup> Geneva, present-day Switzerland.

<sup>52</sup> Lake Geneva.

<sup>53</sup> Within the Reformed church, Calvinism had one of its most powerful strongholds in Geneva, where Jean Calvin was active in the first half of the sixteenth century.

ninguno es del espíritu como lo cree el Saavedra a quien juzgo muy contento con que el marqués de La Fuente no haya negociado nada en Mónaco y con la consecuencia que de esto se saca, de que se debe a Vuestra Señoría lo que negoció en Innsbruck, que de todo sacará fruto Don Diego, o a lo menos disculpa de lo mudado de aire que dice ha hallado a su neblí.

[...]

El Saavedra me saca la correspondencia contra el firme propósito de acortarla con todos los meros ministros por no atreverme a sustentarla con tanta falta de salud, pero él es demonio, y sus maldades obligan tal vez a los buenos como pudieran a los malos.

[...]

*6. La Roca to Fadrique Enríquez*

Venice, 18 Feb 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 60r-61r.

He leído con particular gusto la carta que Vuestra Señoría escribe al Saavedra, y creo que le estará muy bien tomarla por carta de su navegación, porque si he de decir a Vuestra Señoría lo que de ella siento, le han engañado y él a otros. Y así, habiendo yo escrito al Rey más ha de dos años que aquí se entendía que el Bávaro<sup>54</sup> no caminaba de buen pie, me respondió Su Majestad que ¿cómo era posible y que qué conveniencias podía tener para despegarse de la Casa de Austria? Como si las de todos los hombres no se cambiasen en mudando el designio. Yo temo que el pretexto que no tiene para quejarse de nosotros se le ha de dar algún tratado de Don Diego, porque el solo que pudiera ser útil de una liga como Vuestra Señoría apunta no le aceptará él, ni aun nos convendría hacerla, porque para nada es bueno un achacoso que se ha de servir de nosotros y nunca mejorar máximas.

Don Diego me escribe que está el elector ofendido, y odiando a la Casa de Austria, y que no sabe la novedad, pero que la hay, de que infiero que tira a dos blancos: mantener las alabanzas que hasta cierto tiempo le dio y buscar causa nueva para los malos efectos que hoy no puede negar. Al cabo se echarán la culpa unos a otros los ministros germánicos.

*7. La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 18 Feb 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 61r.

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<sup>54</sup> Maximilian I, duke of Bavaria and prince-elect of the Holy Roman Empire (1573-1651).

[...]

Vuestra Señoría ha asegurado con tanta constancia y buena mente de su duque que, aunque no está obligado a que no se mude, holgaré por lo que le soy servicio que averigüe la causa nueva [de] por qué aborrece hoy tanto a la Casa de Austria, que con dar el matador saldrá Vuestra Señoría de la fianza.

[...]

8. *La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 19 May 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 145r.

Sin carta de Vuestra Señoría se vino el ordinario de esta semana, y si no ha sido falta de salud, me daré más presto por satisfecho. Yo pudiera dejar de escribir, porque de Roma sabrá Vuestra Señoría cómo se recibió la nueva de Casal<sup>55</sup>, y aquí fue en la misma imprenta. También sabrá Vuestra Señoría de Milán el desaliento con que se hallan, y cuán bien lo conoce el enemigo, pues intenta lo que quiere y lo conseguirá todo. Estoy reventando de coraje de ver el que nos falta, que tengo a Vuestra Señoría tan honrado caballero que se hallará en el mismo estado. Si el señor marqués de Castañeda no participa las nuevas, téngalo Vuestra Señoría por dicha en este tiempo.

Guarde Dios etc.

El Conde de la Roca

9. *La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 10 Nov 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 222v-223r.

Vuestra Señoría no crea que la mayor parte de los miembros del Imperio le desean fuera de la Casa de Austria. Con cierta limitación, sí. Y tampoco se persuada que toman tan mal el pulso a las cosas corrientes que dure en sus ánimos el temor que los émulos de Carlo Quinto y los herejes esparcieron de que quería destruir las provincias para hacerlas hereditarias, porque yo sé que alguien introducido en la puridad de la parte contraria escribe que lo que se desea es repartir la autoridad y útiles entre muchos, y

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<sup>55</sup> French victory against the Spanish troops at Casale, Italy, 29 April 1640.

mantener parte de ella en el Rey de Hungría<sup>56</sup>. Y así crea Vuestra Señoría que para conseguir esto harán apariencia de otros intentos, y también crea que viven tan satisfechos de la ocasión presente que no tienen duda de lograr mucho. Y yo no sé cuál es, pero cosa nueva falta que proponer.

La semana pasada envié a Vuestra Señoría un libro muy a propósito<sup>57</sup> para lo que desea. Espero que me traigan otro, pero también espero los retratos y Vuestra Señoría los ponga en poder del señor Don Fadrique Enríquez adonde yo remitiré el libro segundo<sup>58</sup> con orden de que pase a Ratisbona, sin esperar el recíproco contrato, porque ya sé cuál he de salir de los de Vuestra Señoría. Gran pecado o gran miedo hay encerrado en el libro de los emblemas, pues es Vuestra Señoría tan mal obedecido de sus comisarios.

*10. La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo and to La Fuente*

Venice, 17 Nov 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 224rv.

Yo me alegro de que la prevención de Vuestra Señoría (y del señor Don Diego) asegure cualquier engaño, esta como cosa que debe reservarse oculta la debió de ignorar el que escribe acá y juntamente saber la buena disposición de nuestros enemigos para hacer de las suyas, y a lo menos no fui engañado en creerlo, porque no lo hice conociendo la prudencia de Vuestra Señoría, pero avisele lo que oía.

Quiera Dios que todo corra como Vuestra Señoría espera, mas doble la hoja y verá que la dieta no se disuelva<sup>59</sup> sin muchas novedades que hoy no se descubren, porque no quieren gastar la munición desde lejos los que de la necesidad del Emperador, del Rey nuestro señor y de las mismas ciudades herejes piensan sacar fruto.

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<sup>56</sup> For any future emperor destined to that role as dictated in the dynasty's line of succession, the role of 'king of Hungary' was the most prestigious one, mostly because that kingdom (unlike the hereditary lands) did not form part of the Holy Roman Empire.

<sup>57</sup> If La Roca sent his own book to Saavedra, it might have been a version of his work on Emperor Charles V: *Epítome de la vida y hechos del invicto emperador Carlos V*, Madrid, Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1622, since La Roca had previously mentioned the name of the emperor in the same letter.

<sup>58</sup> If La Roca sent another of his own books to Saavedra, it might have been *Il miglior giglio de Francia*, Lione, Per gli heredi di Benoist Rigaut, 1640.

<sup>59</sup> A primary goal of Spanish policy, and of Saavedra in August and September 1640, was to block or dissolve (if it had already begun) the imperial diet in Regensburg (Monostori, 2019).

*11. La Roca to Saavedra Fajardo*

Venice, 8 Dec 1640.

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 231v.

[...]

La consideración que obligó al ofrecimiento de contribuir por el Círculo de Borgoña me parece muy buena y tomaría, que fuese tan cierto el socorro que el Imperio diese por esta razón a aquella provincia, como lo será el pagar nosotros lo que ofreciéremos, pero ahí se queda la buena maña de Vuestra Señoría. Etc.

*12. La Roca to Fadrique Enríquez*

Venice, 8 Dec 1640

BNE MSS/7648, fol. 231v.

Escribeme Saavedra que ha ofrecido contribuir para el sustento del ejército del Imperio lo que tocara a Su Majestad, como príncipe de Borgoña, porque con esto asegura que defiendan esta provincia las armas cesáreas.

Yo le respondo que la consideración es muy pía, y que me contentara, con que fuera tan cierta la asistencia de estas armas como lo será pagar nosotros lo que nos obligaremos para su sustento.

Confieso a Vuestra Señoría que no he osado emblemarme (sic), porque la cabeza no pide cosa tan seria, y porque he leído en otra carta de un hombre de garbo casi lo mismo que Vuestra Señoría dice. Pero dígaselo a el Saavedra el Banier<sup>60</sup>, que yo no osaré. Etc.

El Conde de la Roca

## CRITERIA OF THE EDITION

All texts have been modernized, including geographical locations and personal names. Capitalization and punctuation have been standardized, and spellings have been corrected. I used modern punctuation symbols (commas, colons, semi-colons and other marks, like question marks) based on my assumptions, following textual analyses, about the authors' original trains of thought. Regarding the specifics of the Spanish language, I removed the typical contractions between articles, prepositions and pronouns (della, del, desta etc.). Texts that were underlined and therefore were probably meant to be ciphered are not explicitly noted.

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<sup>60</sup> Johan Banér (1596-1641), Swedish military officer.



## ABBREVIATIONS

- AGS = España. Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. Archivo General de Simancas (Simancas, Spain)  
APW = Acta Pacis Westphalicae  
ASV = Archivio di Stato di Venezia (Venice, Italy) (I used the copies housed in ÖStA)  
BNE = Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid, Spain)  
Est = Estado  
fol = folio(s)  
HHStA = Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (in ÖStA)  
Ibid = Ibidem  
leg = legajo  
n = note  
NAB = National Archives of Belgium (also known as Archives Générales du Royaume) (Brussels, Belgium)  
ÖStA = Österreichische Staatsarchiv (Vienna, Austria)  
p = page(s)  
r = recto  
SEG = Secrétairerie d'Etat et de Guerre (in NAB)  
sf = sin folio (without folio number)  
v = verso



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