



Quirós Rosado, Roberto, *Monarquía de Oriente. La corte de Carlos III y el gobierno de Italia durante la Guerra de Sucesión Española*, Madrid, Marcial Pons Ediciones de Historia, 2017, 467 págs., ISBN: 9788416662166.

Between 1703 and 1708, the Grand Alliance secured for the Austrian Habsburg archduke Charles –“Charles III” to his supporters in the succession struggle triggered by the death of the last Spanish Habsburg– a substantial chunk of the European Spanish Habsburg empire or Monarchy: Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia and Gibraltar inside Spain, Spanish Flanders, the duchy of Milan, the Balearic Islands and Sardinia, and the kingdom of Naples outside Spain. In fact, Aragon and Valencia were already by 1708 being reconquered by the troops of Philip V following his victory at Almansa, but the other territories represented a substantial composite monarchy which Charles must seek to turn into a viable polity; his –broadly successful– efforts to create an effective central executive for that territorial ensemble between 1706 and 1714, by which time Charles had succeeded (1711) his elder brother Joseph as Holy Roman Emperor, and had removed his Court from Barcelona to Vienna, are the subject of Roberto Quirós’ book. In fact, Quirós focuses on Charles’ efforts to make his rule effective in Milan and Naples. This decision is well judged, since Italy has been relatively neglected by the historiography of the War of the Spanish Succession, as Quirós’s initial historiographical survey demonstrates. In addition, following the loss of Aragon and Valencia, with Flanders effectively occupied by his English and Dutch allies and with war pressing Catalonia hard, the Balearic Islands and Sardinia could not sustain Charles’s war effort. Charles must look to Milan and above all Naples if he was to have any resources of his own both to wage war and to reward those loyal to him.

Chapter One (which occupies half of the book, providing the narrative foundation for a more clearly analytical second half) charts the changing administrative structure of Charles’ composite monarchy, one which mirrored both the Spanish Habsburg governmental machine and to some extent that of Charles’ rival, Philip V. The conquest of Milan and then of Naples was accompanied by the appointment (1706-7) of two secretaries of the *Despacho Universal* (one for northern Europe, the other for Italy), a *Junta de Italia* (later the Council of Italy), and the whole panoply of councils –of Aragon, State, Orders and so on– operating under the last Spanish Habsburg. Following the removal of Charles and (later) his consort from Barcelona, in 1714 the Emperor created in Vienna the Supreme Council of Spain, with responsibility for the oversight of the former Spanish territories (Italy and Flanders) now ruled by Charles, and which survived until Philip V’s forces reconquered Naples and Sicily (1734-5) after which it was replaced by a new Council of Italy. These developments are already familiar to historians in their broad outlines from the work of Virginia Leon, but Quirós substantially enhances both our knowledge and understanding of the men, their manoeuvres and the processes involved and the workings of the developing executive machine.

In pursuing these objectives, Charles faced a number of challenges, or obstacles. These included the determination of his elder brother, Emperor Joseph I to assert his authority as Emperor in Milan and Naples. This, too, is familiar to us, from the work of Marcello Verga and Charles Ingrao, but here too Quirós fleshes out and adds substantially to our knowledge and understanding of Imperial policy in Milan and Naples and the response of Charles and his ministers. The other main challenge was the aspiration of the Milanese and Neapolitan elites to greater autonomy. In explaining Charles' success in this latter respect, Quirós takes issue with Paolo Mattia Doria's celebrated critical appraisal of Spanish policy in Italy as one of "divide and rule". As Quirós notes, a policy of divide and rule would surely have been counter-productive. Instead, and applying Antonio Hespanha's important insight regarding the importance of the economy of grace (*mercedes*), Quirós urges the importance of rewarding –buying– loyalty, the subject of Chapter 2. Charles made 30 grants of *grandeza* to Italians between 1707 and 1713, 8 grants of the prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece and bestowed more than 60 noble titles. There were, too, grants of fiefs, pensions, privileges to towns, of city status, confirmations of older privileges and so on. In this sense too, there was both continuity before and after 1700 and echoes of Philip's regime, the role of venality in some of these grants recalling the work of Francisco Andújar on policy and practice in the Bourbon camp during the War of Succession.

Charles' success in overcoming these challenges and establishing an effective executive regime (in a traditional Spanish mould) in his composite monarchy rested on a number of other factors. These included his ability to call on the services of many Spaniards and Italians with experience in the Monarchy's bureaucracy and who for whatever reason –principle or interest or a combination of both– opted to espouse his cause between 1700 and 1713. This group included men like Juan Antonio Romeo (later marques de Erendazu), the conde de Estella and the marques de Rialp who had enjoyed distinguished administrative careers and established invaluable networks before 1700. Such men provided an invaluable administrative cadre for the government structure which Charles established thereafter, suggesting a more positive aspect –in terms of long-term consequences– of the brief allied occupations of Madrid in 1706 and 1710 than is often acknowledged.

This book has many merits. It is an important contribution to our understanding of the experience of Italy in the War of the Spanish Succession, and the impact there of that conflict. It is also an invaluable study of the collection of Charles's tripartite "composite state" (his Spanish inheritance, his Austrian inheritance and his Imperial title before 1713). In addition, it enhances our knowledge and understanding of both "*austracismo*" outside Spain and the Crown of Aragon, and of how individual bureaucrats made the transition from Habsburg to Bourbon (and to Austrian Habsburg) Spain between 1700 and 1713. The book also offers food for thought on a number of recent debates, including recent work which urges not merely the composite character of the Spanish Monarchy but also its "polycentric" nature. Particularly interesting here is the argument of Francesco Moles, the Neapolitan of Catalan ancestry, who was sent by Joseph I as his ambassador to his brother's Court (and played a role recalling that of the French ambassador at the Court of Philip V) and who suggested to Charles in April 1707 that official correspondence should not be in Spanish (Castilian) as hitherto but in Italian or whatever other language (of the writer) in a true union of equal territories in Charles' new monarchy, implying that

what had prevailed before was indeed a more centralised, Spanish system and one less polycentric than is being suggested. Quirós' work is founded on an impressive command of the primary and secondary literature. Besides drawing on the obvious materials in the Archivo Histórico Nacional and at Simancas, Quirós has made very good use of the diplomatic correspondence now stored in various Italian archives, notably Florence and Modena. Indeed, the Archivi di Stato, many located in cities formerly the capitals of independent states and containing invaluable diplomatic materials remain a splendid resource for the history of early modern Spain. (The account of the partition proposals which give the books its title are drawn from the reports of the nuncio attending the abortive peace conferences of 1709, and which are now in the Vatican Archives). Surprisingly, Quirós makes less use of the material in the Turin archives, although the duke of Savoy was not only very interested in what was going on elsewhere in Italy –above all neighbouring Milan, to which he (as well as Emperor Joseph) aspired, causing the Milanese elite great concern– but was also a perceptive observer and interpreter of developments everywhere and expected regular and reliable intelligence from his ministers in Allied Courts (including that of “Charles III” in Barcelona between 1706 and 1712). Spanish historians of the War of the Spanish Succession might find a great deal of interest in Turin's Archivio di Stato. For his part, Roberto Quirós has already provided us with an analysis of the regime in Italy of Charles III between 1706 and 1713 which is rich in detail and implication.

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