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How Spanish Colonialism
Affected Economic
Development in Europe
and in the World
(XVIth-XVIIIth cc.)

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**STORIA DELLA SOCIETÀ
DELL'ECONOMIA
E DELLE ISTITUZIONI**

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From Dukes to Kings. Particular Aspects of the Development of the House of Braganza within the Iberian Context (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)

Mafalda Soares da Cunha*

The many historical works about the main seigniorial houses of the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries unravel a particularly homogeneous social universe. This homogeneity concerns their models of social structure and reproduction, i.e. the source of their political and social power, their codes of behaviour, their cultural references and also the development of their relations with the monarchy. The fact that this universe is homogeneous does not mean it is identical. Particular features arise and they seem relevant to me, in as much as they lead to the understanding of the specific internal hierarchies within this group, its political practices and the delineating of precise situations. I'll elaborate on the hierarchy topic because it is essential in regard to the case I will present. When I say I will focus on the similarities among the main Iberian noble houses, I specifically mean the ones of the titled nobility in Portugal and the ones of the *Grandees* in Castile and in Aragon. Only these can be properly compared because, unlike in Portugal, the granting of titles in Castile was a much more common occurrence than in Portugal and for the most diversified reasons. Many titles were actually acquired with money unlike in Portugal, where this practice did not take place.

In this analytical context, I believe that the trajectory of the house of Braganza and its organisational and seigniorial management are not significantly different from other great Iberian houses. What makes it different is the question of size within Portugal's political frame and the model of the relations it established with the Royal House. In this context the peculiar strategies of distinction that the house of Braganza tried to impose are very revealing and they allow us to evaluate the effects of its articulation and non-articulation with the monarchic power throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as the leadership itself in the rupture with the Hispanic Monarchy in December 1st, 1640. Being heirs to a secular tradition able to offer dynastic legitimacy, the house of Braganza ended up being the protagonist in the revolt perhaps more as a consequence of being dragged into it, and less as the outcome of a definite and wilful desire to get the Portuguese crown.

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Towards the Comparison of a 'Common' Seigniorial Structure

The house of Braganza, like most of the great Iberian houses, owes its origins to the military services performed by its founder, Nuno Álvares Pereira, *o Condestavel* (the general-in-chief of the armed forces), who thus became a fundamental reference in regard to the identity of the lineage. His decisive military action during the 1383-85 dynastic crises was worth the granting of immense extensions of land, privilege and noble titles. The subsequent strategy pursued by the Braganzas in relation to family alliances allowed them to combine the close blood ties with the Royal House with the already existing dimension of their territorial domains. The bestowing of noble titles to members of the house of Braganza, at a time when the political dispositions in relation to the attribution of titles had not yet gone beyond members of the royal family, gave them the recognition of a social and political supremacy which continued to be strengthened through matrimony, allying both the reinforcement of the connections with the Royal House and the ties with medieval lineages of importance in the period prior to the 14th century dynastic crises. Such a strategy created a network of solidarities among the main noble houses and explains the systematic resort to matrimony of nearly all male and female descendants at a time when the adoption of primogeniture was already pushing the younger offspring into celibacy.

Despite the fact that the house of Braganza did adopt primogeniture as a succession system from the start, its social and family practices indicated the favouring of a type of alliance based on lineage. Such was also evident in their political positioning as a family. The perceived might of the Braganzas in the fifteenth century would only with difficulty distinguish the houses belonging to the second sons from a global political strategy headed by the duke. The chroniclers' comments show this perception clearly in several instances, chiefly on the accounts of the alleged nobility based conspiracies against the Royal House in 1483. The house of Braganza was perceived as, and was in reality, the centre of a network based on family ties which upheld baronial interests.

The formation and consolidation period of the house of Braganza coincided with a phase of intense participation of its titled members, both in the political and in the social space occupied by the elite nobility: leading military posts at home and in North Africa, significant presence in the royal court and in important posts in the kingdom's central administration. The wide variety of services rendered was rewarded by the monarchy with the extension of the jurisdictional areas and the granting of even more privileges and titles as signs of distinction. At the beginning of King Joao II's reign (1481-95), the four Braganzas (Fernando II, the duke, John, Marquis of Montemor-o-Novo, Afonso, Count of Faro and Alvaro) held jurisdictional power over territories which amounted to 17.3% of the Portuguese territory, and to over 18.3% of its population. Between them, they held the titles of dukes of Braganza and of Guimaraes, of marquises of Vila Viçosa and Montemor-o-Novo and six titles of count (Barcelos, Ourém, Arraiolos, Neiva,

Penafiel and Faro); the post of general-in-chief of the armed forces (*condestavel*); they were also in charge of the frontier regions of Entre Douro e Minho, Trás-os-Montes and Entre Tejo e Guadiana, as well as of another vital military post in the Algarve (*admirado-mor*); they held military and administrative power over all castles and their troops within their lands, and a myriad of rights of ecclesiastical patronage. The dimension of this seigniorial conglomerate within a Portuguese context becomes even more impressive if we add to it the solidarity of inter-nobility networks which were built up during the fourteen hundreds. These solidarities, although not aiming at any project to seize power, were strong enough to limit the monarchy's margin of manoeuvre, especially bearing in mind that, at the time, the crown resources had not yet escalated to the proportion they reached, following the exploitation of the overseas conquests and trade. Moreover, the geographical configuration of the Braganza territories, together with the administrative and military posts to which the house members were progressively appointed, could in truth threaten a military mobilisation both in the heart of the country and along its borders.

This whole political power was eventually the real cause for the seigniorial annihilation of the Braganzas by King Joao II, in 1483. The proof of any sort of conspiracy against the monarchy was practically non-existent and, therefore, the pronounced sentence must be understood from a political and not from a juridical stance. However, in 1496, King Manuel I (1495-1521) ordered the annulment of the provisos adopted by John II, in respect to all members and descendants of the house of Braganza, thus promoting their return from a Castilian exile. He gave them back all confiscated wealth and property as well as their lost honour. The official rehabilitation was complete.

To understand this volte-face, we should consider the importance of the weight of family pressure within the monarchy, but not disregard the newly arisen political reality, i.e. the progress of the Portuguese conquests and the different approach to the political relationship with the nobility, made possible by this new situation. In the sixteenth century, the capability for distributing resources, acquired by the crown as a result of the administrative and commercial exploitation of the colonial possessions, allowed for greater accordance between the central efforts for political intervention over the territory, as well as within the kingdom's social sphere. The monarchy did undoubtedly create a distance from all its potential internal competitors, thus ceasing to fear any excess of accumulation of power. It could even afford to allow some political poles to be reinforced and consolidated. This freedom of action, conferred upon the ones that had once been perceived as its more direct competitors, was the most evident proof of the existing differences in the areas of intervention, and of the already existing disparity of resources between the crown and the 'intermediary bodies'.

Within this new political reality, the house of Braganza opted for directing its efforts mainly towards the strengthening and the reinforcing of already acquired positions. Both socially and symbolically, it would be difficult to achieve greater

distinction than the one obtained by Jaime, the fourth duke of Braganza, when he was sworn heir to the throne of Portugal, before King D. Manuel had managed to guarantee a descendent. The Braganzas' main aims were then definitely directed towards maintaining and upholding the non-discussable pre-eminence, which was already recognised by the monarchy itself.

Even if analysed in isolation, i.e. without the inclusion of the houses belonging to the seconds in lineage, which from the sixteenth century onwards developed its autonomous trajectories, the house of Braganza was indisputably the first among the seigniorial Portuguese houses. Since their return to Portugal and until 1640, this position was due to multiple factors: firstly and foremost, to its close blood ties with the Portuguese and Castilian dynastic lines; secondly, to the noble titles held by the main branch (two dukedoms, one marquissate and four earldoms, as well as other titles held by secondary branches of the house); and thirdly, to the longevity of the exercised seigniorial dominance (the single titled house which had managed to maintain itself in Portugal, from the end of the fourteenth century, with the exception of a brief period of exile for a decade and a half), together with the geographical vastness of their domains (around 9.5% of the kingdom's land area, containing 9.4% of its total population). To all this, we must add the relative importance of the potential military capability and the huge amounts of collectable rents and taxes (between 40 and 50 'contos de reis' per annum, which placed Braganza by far as the house with the highest income in the kingdom of Portugal and the fourth in the Iberian Peninsula), and the innumerable rights and respective jurisdictional privileges.

In the sixteenth century and by comparison with the preceding period, the political standing of the house of Braganza changed. The almost constant participation in the main affairs of the realm was replaced by the almost permanent absence from Court (in almost 150 years, its titled members stayed there, all in all, a dozen years). They resided in Vila Viçosa, in the southern province of Alentejo, chosen as their main seat and centre for the nurturing of a network of patronage aimed almost exclusively at maintaining their social position.

Notwithstanding their physical distance from court, the dukes dedicated constant attention to the evolution and the maintenance of their political, social and symbolical power. Any innovations, by the monarchy, as far as organisational or representative models relating to the Royal House, or as far as manners of administrative management of resources were concerned, tended to be reproduced in the possible time and scale by the house of Braganza. By means of this constant eagerness to obtain and maintain privileges, the Braganzas managed both not to widen the gap between their house and the Crown and to keep the distinctions which stood them apart from the main noble houses in the kingdom. Some examples of this unusual kind of privileges are the transfer of rights of patronage regarding commanderies of the military Order of Christ; the maintenance of the privilege to bestow nobility; the opulence of their seigniorial court and the dimension and social quality of its members (between 500 to 800); the exceptional privileges en-

joyed by the ducal chapel; the progressive aggrandizement of the duke's seat; the gaining of commercial privileges in Portuguese possessions in the East. It should be added that some of these privileges were clearly unusual among the distinctions of nobility commonly granted by the Portuguese monarchy.

Such a wide set of extraordinary privileges and the confirmation of others previously granted during the fifteenth century ensured exceptional conditions for the house of Braganza and the administration of its seigniorial domains. The dukes chose to maintain and reinforce this set of instruments rather than to enlarge their territories. In fact the territory diminished slightly due, for instance, to the sale of jurisdictions that were part of marriage dowries. Seigniorial management was carried out by their own administrative agents in a manner that did not distinguish itself from the one pertaining to the Crown. The same formalities were used, based on similar premises. Many of the obtained privileges were, in fact, in the management sphere, dealing with post appointments, the dispensing of justice and the collecting of taxes, and followed very closely the model which was practiced by the Crown.

This amplitude of seigniorial powers guaranteed a high level of control over the communities under their tutelage. What is truly worth stressing, however, is the instrumental usage of the elites and of the local institutions as co-operators in the control of these territorial spaces, i.e., the political use of inter-personal networking which was structured in the shade of the resources of the house itself. The Braganzas, rather than confronting local powers, reinforced them and used them to their own advantages. The integration of members of local elites into the ducal court as household members was decisive. These people sped up the communication between the ducal court and its lands and helped to ease tensions. The different types of favour granted by the house were strategic as liberality was exercised in order to harmonise inter-personal relations through dealings in exchanges and negotiations in the face of different interests. In sum, the Braganza's seigniorial power was territorial and based on a paternalistic and negotiated management of the social and political spheres.

Cetera va sans dire that what has been said so far only allows for the establishment of analogies with the main houses of the Spanish Grandees, such as the Medina-Sidonia, the admirals of Castile and the Counts of Arcoos, all of which exercised also a territory based power, with significant control over economic resources and over military forces in strategic peripheral territories. Like the Braganzas, they also built seigniorial models of administrative organisation modelled on the Crown; they created and managed local networks of patronage based more on negotiation than on authority. They similarly favoured lineage memory and the establishment of signs of distinction from other houses by means of consuming certain types of cultural goods and of leading an opulent lifestyle in courts peripheral to the Crown. Like the Braganzas, they imposed marks of distinction over their domains through the building of palaces and the patronage of convents, chapels and social welfare institutions.

Towards an Explanation of a Particular Political Trajectory

Against this common ground, the singular space of the house of Braganza is filled essentially by the insistence in retaining some symbols and by the extraordinary nature of certain privileges which, in my view, do not apply to other Iberian houses. The Braganzas were perhaps more markedly peripheral to the royal court than the majority of the Castile Grandees. The case of the Medina-Sidonia or of the counts of Arcos may nevertheless offer some parallel features, as indeed they may also exist between others, such as is the case of the musical environment or the almost universal and obsessive predilection for hunting.

Looking only at the relevant specificities which may explain the political path of the house of Braganza and the outcome of 1640, I chose to place them in two big groups: a) Family alliances strategies/vertical political relationships; b) Patronage networks and control over territorial space.

Strategies of the House of Braganza within the Hispanic Monarchy

As far as the first group is concerned i.e. family alliances strategies, I must say that I believe that the family alliances must be understood as elements of political strategy of the noble houses. Further on, I will point out that the marriage alliances of the Braganzas were determined more in order to gain further distinction from other Portuguese noble houses than to obtain material gains - unlike many Iberian houses which greatly increased their patrimony through dowries and unions to wealthy heiresses. The Braganzas did not favour this practice. As already mentioned, their jurisdiction was at times actually reduced in payment of certain dowries. These dukes' logic of alliances was aimed at establishing closer family links with the Crown and with Castilian noble houses. As far as the latter are concerned, I must explain that if until 1580 they followed an explicit will of not mixing with Portuguese nobility, after Portugal's annexation, they were mainly due to pressure exercised by the Habsburgs (See Genealogical Table). From 1580, the dukes of Braganza were chiefly interested in pursuing external alliances, preferably with houses in Italy, such as Padua, Modena, Parma or Mantua, thus avoiding mixing with Iberian houses in order to allow for a separate social distance. Family pride, as it were. On the other hand, the Catholic monarchs had a totally inverse perspective: all they were interested in was to attenuate the specificities of their ducal house through the establishment of closer links with other similar houses¹.

In relation to the trait of the vertical political relations, I believe that these can be assessed, according to indicators which are associated to the participation of

the house in the monarchic policies, such as non-interested in direct involvement, i.e. in the presence of house members at court. This fact was however not new. Such attitude stemmed from the fifth duke (1532-1563) and was translated by his absence from court and from any post in the Portuguese 'polissinodia' (the specific and characteristic political and administrative organization of the Iberian monarchies). This means that, unlike other Iberian house of Grandees which actively sought services to the monarchy - top posts in the government of political units which were part of the Hispanic Monarchy, embassies or military commands in the European wars - the Braganzas kept their distance. Masters in their territory, they were remote, not only geographically, but also because they would not willingly mix with the other aristocrats.

This state of affairs did not however prevent the Braganzas to hold effective communication channels with the organs of the Portuguese 'polissinodia' and with the royal court. To this effect, they used their dependents or their relations. Before the aggregation of Portugal to the Hispanic Monarchy, the dukes appointed juridical trained agents to reside in the high courts of the Portuguese Crown and they continued to do this after 1580. They also had an agent in Rome to attend to the numerous matters pertaining to the ecclesiastical benefits they sought and to the privileges which had been granted to them by the Pope in relation to patronages, colleges, *comendas* (commanderies) and their ducal chapel. Besides, between 1580 and 1640 they maintained a permanent agent in Madrid. Therefore, although physically absent from the royal court and central law courts, the Braganzas employed officials whose express mission was to take care of the house affairs that touched those decision making bodies.

It has been referred by a well known historian that in the Council of Portugal, in Madrid, there were also persons connected to the ducal house, be it through patronage or due to family allegiance. It was also suggested that this ability to keep good personal connexions at the Council of Portugal meant a successful house policy, since those persons were both a means of conveyance of the interests of the house and a preferential channel for transfer of information². Notwithstanding the factuality of these statements, I think that they still do not demonstrate the effectiveness of those councillors' actions towards a favourable outcome of the Braganzas' affairs and towards the importance of the privileged information that might define their house political strategies.

It does not seem clear cut to me that the presence of people connected to the house of Braganza in the Council of Portugal guaranteed favourable decisions from that court; several instances can be listed, which the dukes thought to be very relevant, where the council's decisions directly opposed the submitted petitions or applications. Besides, in considering other networks of influence developed by other Portuguese family groups with similar connections with members

1. For the marriage strategy of the House of Braganza see. M. Soares da Cunha, "Estratégias matrimoniais da Casa de Bragança e o casamento do Duque D. João II", *Hispania*, 216 (2004), 1, pp. 39-62.

2. F. Bouza Alvarez, *Portugal no tempo dos Filipes. Política, cultura, representações (1580-1668)* (Lisboa: 2000).

of the Council of Portugal, this fact has not constituted an argument in the context of intentions of control mechanisms, nor has it been considered within the scope of a continued practice of influence on behalf of those houses and lineages over that same Council.

I believe that it is worth considering at length which may have been the political strategies pursued by the Braganzas. I've stated before and defended in other papers³ that the stream of documents of the house shows a clear polarisation in the defence of the lordly privileges, and that this practice did not undergo any disruption when Portugal was aggregated into de Hispanic Monarchy.

It is however true that when the Archduke Albert left the government of Portugal (1593), D. Catarina immediately sought to obtain the post of vice-roy for her son D. Teodósio II, the seventh Duke of Braganza, invoking that «Pois era cousa bem sabida, que sempre Portugal fora governado por huma só pessoa, e que esta fora sempre a que no Reyno havia mais chegada em sangue ao Rey delle, quando por algum motivo o não podia reger»⁴. These arguments were entirely in agreement with the terms of the *Carta Patente de 1581* (the 1581 Charter): the close parental link with the reigning house was invoked, which was in this case totally non-controversial, together with the traditional Portuguese custom in circumstances such as this one. Philip II did not, however, allow it, and I have found no contemporary justification for such adamant refusal. It seems thus clear that the reason was purely political. It was certainly not timely that the greatest seigniorial house in the kingdom which had, moreover, so soon before, presented a candidate to the Portuguese throne (1580), should be allowed to ascend to a political position of such evident importance in Portuguese governance. Even if disregarding the hypothesis of renewed claims to the throne, the risks of a constant arm wrestling between Madrid and Lisbon would be evident and politically untenable. The House of Braganza must have taken this on board for they retreated again into their estates and private matters, not having bothered the monarchy any further with such business.

As far as the Habsburgs are concerned, they took care not to involve the Braganzas more directly until the 1630s. In this respect, it must be said, that these monarchs' attitude towards the second and third Portuguese houses – respectively the dukes of Aveiro and the marquises/dukes of Vila Real – was similar. They were never called for the government of Portugal and, although suggested for govern-

ments in Italy, they never took office. Nor did any of these title holders ever go to Madrid.

However, in regard to their particular business and, above all, to their privileges, the Braganzas were inflexible. The Austrias were well aware of this and both the monarchs themselves and their entourage took always special care in the management of their relationship with the dukes. D. Teodósio was honoured with that deference in several occasions, Madrid having always abided with all proceedings formalities, showing careful wisdom in the consideration of all matters. Philip IV, himself, did so in a decision relating to a request from the House of Braganza in 1625: «As it seems, having particular attention as to in words and other matters which will be addressed to the duke regarding his requests, it must be evident that I wish to keep him happy and with the satisfaction that such a great vassal deserves»⁵.

In fact, respect and consideration were always shown to this duke by the reigning house, especially in what pertained to pre-eminence and statutory privileges about which he was so intransigently zealous. Wise comments by Cristóvão de Moura about the hypothesis of awarding the treatment of Excellency to the primogenital of the house of Braganza, who had the title of duke of Barcelos, duly express this careful attitude. He advised that this demand should be refused «because it would give place to similar requests from the dukes of Aveiro and Vila Real, and the substance of such pre-eminence stemmed from the fact that it was only enjoyed by the duke of Braganza». He also added that the dispensation from the Law of Cursities requested by the duke of Aveiro should be denied, not to endanger the kingdom's smooth government by creating a dangerous precedent and also not to offend the duke of Braganza: «Because it is so clearly and notoriously against the pre-eminence and the prerogative that only the duke enjoys in that kingdom, which would lose its effect and substance if it ceased to be unique, which is the reason why it was awarded to him and why he appreciates it»⁶. This sensitive matter of address existed of old. It concerned a new request from the house of Aveiro about something that the Earl of Portalegre, D. João da Silva, had already discussed in the 15907. In this instance, the duke of Aveiro was asking to be dispensed from the Law of Cursities, soliciting for himself the treatment of Excellency, based on the argument that past kings had never treated him differently from the duke of Braganza. However, in the earl of Portalegre's understanding, this affirmation was doubtful: «I am not too sure that the Kings would have displayed exactly such an equality as referred to by the one of Aveiro, I think rather that in certain acts they were not competing»⁸. He added that the Braganza had acquired precedence long ago:

5. British Library (hereafter BL), Egerton, 1136, fl. 2-5.

6. Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (hereafter BNM), mss. 2347, 261-263v. Quotation from fl. 262.

7. BL, Add. 20929, fls. 97-102v.

8. lvi, fls 101v-102v.

3. M. Soares da Cunha, *A Casa de Bragança, 1560-1640. Práticas senhoriais e relações clientelares* (Lisboa: 2000), e Ead., «Relações de poder, patrocínio e conflitualidade. Senhores e municípios (século XVI-1640)», in Ead., T. Fonseca (eds), *Os Municípios no Portugal Moderno: dos forais manuelinos às reformas liberais* (Lisboa: 2005), pp. 87-108.

4. «For it was well known that Portugal had always been governed by one only person, and this person had always been the one who was the closest related by blood to its King, when he could not reign himself», A.C. de Sousa, *História Genealógica de Casa Real Portuguesa* (Coimbra: 1949 [orig. ed. 1739]), tome VI, p. 192.

When King D. João inherited [after 1495], it is said that the precedence between the Master of Santiago (illegitimate son of King D. João II and founder of the house of Aveiro) and the duke of Braganza D. Jayme was altered, and the fact of being son of a King did not prevail over the resolution of the doubt, in favour of the duke, since the latter was a first cousin of king D. Manuel, through their mothers and a kin who could succeed in the Crown, in the case of non legitimate descendant of King D. João II, and since then the Braganza has hold precedence, although when they are not in competition, this precedence does not show⁹.

Therefore it was his belief that the Aveiro had no justice in what he demanded, although he conceded that it would be excessive to introduce and state such inequality. And he ended by saying that, in the possibility that the king agree to the duke of Aveiro's requests, it would be difficult to persuade the title holder of the kingdom's third house, the marquis of Vila Real, to address both dukes as Excellency, i.e. a favourable decision to Aveiro would bring «something attached», since it would open a Pandora's box of precedents for the future¹⁰. Such understanding is good evidence of the decision in Madrid not to instigate ill feelings in Vila Viçosa. It was well and truly recognised that the house and the dukes of Braganza deserved a special treatment. As the Earl of Portalegre had said regarding the comparison with the duke of Aveiro, in accordance with the Portuguese nobility hierarchy, there was «between their Persons such a known difference»¹¹.

But while the Braganza's pre-eminences were at stake, reciprocity was perhaps not, as it was shown in the incident caused by D. Teodósio II during the visit he paid to the royal retinue in Elvas, in 1619. Conscious of the position he held, D. Teodósio prepared this visit carefully. In the account that was drawn relating to this event, it is said that

On the ninth of April the Duke D. Teodósio had had posted on the doors of his court room, in the presence of his *ouvidor* (magistrate) and judge and two clerks an announcement that read as follows I the Duke etc. make known to all who are in the obligation to serve me that they should all be present on the twenty seventh of this month of April to accompany me and to do as it is decided and ordered to them¹².

The people that obliged him were numerous and, since the house had obtained from the Pope the privilege to confiscate commanderies from those who did not serve him with their presence, he had enough coercing means to ensure the assistance of his esquires. So much so that the retinue he managed to assemble was ostentatious because, besides more than 50 minor officials (ostlers, trumpeters, chamber pages and stable grooms), he was accompanied by relatives, major officials of the ducal court and 24 *comendadores* (commandery holders), dressed in

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ivi*, fl. 100v.

12. *Bl*, Add. 15170, fl. 131-135v.

very expensive outfits, who were in turn followed by their own servants¹³. The rest of the episode is well known: in brief, the duke refused to accord the treatment of Excellency to several members of the royal accolade, in contradiction with the treatment they were given in Castile, making it clear that he was not prepared to allow the privilege he enjoyed to become banal. The offended nobles' reaction was, as can be imagined, of surprised irritation. We must not read, however, in D. Teodósio's supercilious gesture, any sign of opposition to the monarch, but only his conservative intransigence in matters of etiquette. He merely rejected the new fashions of the times in defence of what he perceived as the honour of his house and lineage.

The same arrogant and zealous attitude manifested itself in other matters and in other manners. The law suit he brought against his Spanish wife's father, the *Condestável* (chief general)¹⁴ and other relations of hers, in 1610, regarding his children's inheritance rights to part of their mother's, D. Ana de Velasco, house, estate and *morgadio* (entitlement) of Tovos, and marquisate of Berlanga is an interesting example. The suit was obviously badly received and it was still running in 1614¹⁵. Given that the house archives do not provide information about it, we may assume the case was lost. It is however surprising that a man, so retired and so distant from the world such as was D. Teodósio, would initiate this dispute for the inheritance of titled estates in the Burgos region, well into the interior of Castela-a-Velha. It seems to me, though, that the explanation for such behaviour stemmed from his understanding that inalienable rights of his house were at stake, which he was, because of his position, forced to pursue. It can't however be disregarded that had the outcome been favourable, it would represent an enlargement of his house into lands of Castile and this temptation on behalf of the Braganzas had already manifested itself with the marriage of D. Duarte who eventually became marquis of Frechilla¹⁶.

Ultimately, this attempt for territorial expansion into other Iberian kingdoms coincides with the already mentioned marriage strategies which revealed the wish of the Braganzas to elevate their house to the first house of the Iberian Peninsula and to acquire among the Habsburgs the pre-eminence which had been awarded to them by the Avis dynasty. It is my belief that this was the main political aim carried out by the Braganzas during the period of the Habsburg's rule. Such designs were not, however, translated into doubts or intrigue about the legitimacy of the Austrias's dominion in Portugal; they did however justify the continuous claims for privileges.

13. *Ivi*, fl. 131-135v.

14. *Bnm*, Porcon 302, n. 32. Agradeço esta referência a Fernando Bouza Álvarez.

15. J.J. de Andrade e Silva, *Colecção Chronologica da Legislação Portuguesa* (Lisboa: 1855-1856), vol. 1623-27, p. 109, in www.iusultimariae.fch.unl.pt

16. F. Bouza Álvarez, "En la corte y en la aldea de D. Duarte de Braganza. Libros y pinturas del Marqués de Frechilla y Malagón", *Península. Revista de Estudos Ibéricos*, 0 (2003), pp. 261-88.

Once the December 1st events took place and given that the eighth duke headed the revolt, my present interpretation necessarily defers the explanation of such fracture to factors which were exogenous to the house of Braganza, i.e. to the specific conditions of the evolution of the whole Hispanic Monarchy and, more specifically to the decision making which affected the kingdom of Portugal. In the last three decades, this has been widely studied, by considering in detail and from several perspectives, the underlying reasons which led to the social unrest¹⁷. I will only try to explain here the process of change that turned the dukes of Braganza from contenders to the throne of Portugal into loyal and zealous vassals and, ultimately, into rebels with a cause. This clarification demands nevertheless a detailed account of the vertical policies of the monarchy towards the house of Braganza throughout a given period.

Strategies of the Hispanic Monarchy towards the House of Braganza

At the time of the dispute for the throne of Portugal in 1580, between Phillip II and D. Catarina, daughter of an Infante of Portugal and married to the sixth duke of Braganza (See Genealogical Table), Philip the Prudent found himself in the predicament of having to evaluate with precision and care, not only the rights to succession invoked by her, but also the political weight behind her candidature. Since at the level of the law of succession – where, from a perspective of principles, the choice should be have been made –, the matter could not be unquestionably settled, and thus the resolution ended up emerging as the product of both the conjugation of the multiple social interests that Phillip's candidature managed to trigger, and the perception of the political weakness of its opponents. On the contrary to other candidatures, the weakness of the Braganzas' did not rest on lack of legitimacy, for the set of legal experts gathered by them produced a tenable juridical argument. It must be remembered that the rights invoked by D. Catarina stemmed from the repeated marriage unions with the royal house of Avis during the 15th and 16th centuries, which placed the house of Braganza in a supreme position among the Iberian aristocracy. After all, there was no other house which put together being the greatest seigniorial house of one of the Hispanic

17. J.R. Magalhães, "1637: Motins da fome", *Bíblia*, 52 (1976), pp. 319-31; A. de Oliveira, *Poder e Oposição Política em Portugal no Período Filípino (1580-1640)* (Lisboa: 1991); F. Bouza Álvarez, *Portugal en la Monarquía Hispánica (1580-1640)*. *Filipe II, las Cortes de Tomar y la génesis del Portugal Católico* (Madrid: 1987), tome I; A. de Oliveira, *Movimentos Sociais e Poder em Portugal no século XVII* (Coimbra: 2002); A.M. Hespanha, "Portugal y la política de Olivares. Ensayo de análisis estructural", in J. Valdón Barquero and others (eds), *Revoluciones y revoluciones en la Historia* (Salamanca: 1994), pp. 59-82; J.-F. Schaub, *Le Portugal au temps du Comte-Duc d'Olivares (1621-1640)*. *Le conflit de juridictions comme exercice de la politique* (Madrid: 2001).

Monarchy's kingdoms and possessing both the juridical pertinence for a claim to its throne, and such close family ties with the reigning house of the Austrias.

These attributes were clearly recognised by Phillip II's political entourage who made a good effort to present the Braganzas with extremely honourable conditions for the abdication of their claim to the throne, taking nevertheless and simultaneously advantage of their weakness in terms of social support. The negotiations were delicate, plenty of subtleties and of parallel action.

The most satisfactory solution for the house of Braganza was to concert a marriage between one of D. Catarina's daughters and the heir to Phillip II. Such proposal was even suggested by the Cardinal-King (Henrique of Portugal), but this would create an impossible embarrassment¹⁸. As well pointed out by the duke of Ossuna in 1579, it would implicitly bring to the fore the recognition of D. Catarina's rights, for «foreign kingdoms should be acquired through marriage between kings». It was the opinion of this advisor that «in order to succeed in matters that god would look upon as appropriate, it is not reasonable to use this means, when there are many other which would suffice»¹⁹. The delicacy of the matter rested, therefore, in trying to persuade the house of Braganza to give up their claim without the use of force and without recognising them any rights which might be compromising for the future.

Thus, while gathering armies on Portugal's borders, summoning *cortes* and negotiating separately with the people and the nobility, Phillip II saw as to prevent a concerted action between the house of Braganza and another Portuguese candidate – D. António, Prior do Crato – by stalling it with favours and concessions to the Braganzas. Phillip and his advisors managed thus to confront the house of Braganza with the evidence that they could take the kingdom of Portugal by force, be it against their house, or against D. António, or against both of them in case of an alliance between the two. The greater irony was that while Phillip's position was shaken by the rights presented by D. Catarina, he knew nevertheless that she had no sustainable social support. As a matter of fact, the house never even tried to raise troops. In a letter to Phillip, D. Catarina threatened she would be able to do so and even insinuated that she might join efforts with the Prior do Crato, while at the same time explaining to the monarch how important the support in her territories would be for the success of a *prise de pouvoir* in Portugal. In reality, she was only trying to negotiate the best conditions for a vassal of a new king. And her preference was clearly for Phillip II and not for D. António, to whom she did not recognise any succession rights.

The frailty of the Braganza's position was quickly obvious to the Castilians and soon followed by the refusal of all pretensions that might be admissible to a legitimate claimer to the throne, but unthinkable to any of Madrid's vassal house.

18. J.M. de Queirós Veloso, *O Interregno dos Governadores e o Breve Reinado de D. António* (Lisboa: Academia Portuguesa de História, 1953), p. 211.
19. *Ivi*, p. 213.

Thus being, any marriage between Braganzas and the royal family was discarded in order to prevent any new possible future claim, which would be even trickier to avoid if the parental lineage was to be joined again. Mistrust was still abundant and one of Philip's counsellors wrote that

I am of the opinion that Your Majesty with some fair entitlement should make her divide the estate among her children, and by marrying them in Castile, withdraw them bit by bit from Portugal, discouraging them to marry in the kingdom, and in the same way outside Spain, being essential to discourage correspondence, dealings and family ties from Foreign Nations and Princes²⁰.

The current opinion among the Prudent's main counsellors was that such house should not be too much favoured since this would please neither the Castilian nor the Portuguese nobilities, in view of the general feeling that «the grandeur and vanity of the house of Braganza is extremely hateful to them and enlarging it would become intolerable to them»²¹. It was in such climate of mistrust (or prudence) that Philip II subjected the Braganzas to successive marriage arrangements with houses of Castile Grandees and prevented them from any active political practice. In doing so, Philip II attenuated the statutory differences sought by the Braganzas, re-positioning them among the other aristocrats, which did not provoke any major reactions in Vila Viçosa.

In the time of Olivares, thirty years on, and within a new political reality in the Hispanic Monarchy, this mistrust vanished into an increasingly active will to include the Braganzas in the general politics of the Habsburg. The difficult situation at the time demanded everyone's participation, especially in military terms. Therefore, from the 1620s onwards, there were recurrent appeals for the ducal participation in collective matters, almost always concerning war needs. Thus, when troops had to be raised in 1625, the monarch accepted a request from the duke that

Nobody had to meddle in military matters in places belonging to the duke, their defense and their sea coast, for all this is his affair. And that he can buy with his money powder and ammunition from ships willing to sell them to him, given the general lack of these things in Portugal²².

He was still granted with the power «to provide shotguns of flint to his infantry people, and pistols to his cavalry»²³. The nature of this concession clearly reveals how safe a vassal D. Teodósio II was considered in Madrid. Equally dur-

20. Anonymous advice, 27th of August, 1580 in Sousa, *História Genealógica*, p.116.

21. Letter of the Earl of Portalegre in "Apêndice Documental" in Queirós Veloso, *O Inter-regno dos Governadores*, p. 239.

22. B1, Egerton, 1136, fls. 2-5.

23. Silva, *Colecção Chronologica da Legislação*, vol. 1623-1627, p. 154.

ing the known episodes of popular uprisings against the Madrid policies in the 1630s, the good offices from the then duke D. João II (future king D. João IV) were requested to appease the unrests in Évora and in the Alentejo. The duke's action was truly effective, in mediating the contacts between the government of the Monarchy and the uprising stages with remarkable skill. «I spend all these days here occupied in answering His Majesty's dispatches which come in pairs», D. João wrote to Évora, to his cousins, the marquis of Ferreira, at the beginning of November 1637²⁴. As the problems were taking time to settle, the monarch's impatience was clear and with it came the orders to employ military force. D. João craftily lengthened the preparations, keeping in contact with his marquis cousin for further news about Évora's insurgent citizens: «A great service is being done by Your Lordship to His Majesty in having made way in order not to lose that city, and for the love of it, all the kingdom, such is the risk» and when

His Majesty ordered me to intervene with my artillery, I thought better to let him know how Your Lordship had handled the situation, and that this practice should be kept since if it was seen that I was handling the matter with my people of arms this would cause great alarm throughout the kingdom, and that for this purpose I would await a second order from His Majesty²⁵.

As a matter of fact, what ended up wiping out the conflicts for good was the threat caused by the Madrid armies, led by Castilian commanders, which were gathering on the borders of Badajoz and Ayamonte, under the general supervision (more apparent than real) of the duke of Braganza²⁶.

History studies have already clearly described the actions headed by the duke D. João to pacify the lands in revolt in the Alentejo. Besides the mediation work between the king and his envoys to Évora and the aristocracy which resided there²⁷, they point out the efforts undertaken by the duke in his domains, making sure that messages were received by local pro-eminent figures, inciting them to appease the spirits in those lands, by using their networks of influence²⁸. He also sent letters to some other neighbouring regions, trying to bring them to their senses and abandon the rebellious attitude²⁹. He managed to succeed and to demonstrate clearly in Madrid the authority he held in those regions, together with his zealous love in serving the monarchy. Philip IV was in fact truly pleased with the

24. C. da Silva Tarouca, "A preparação do 1º de Dezembro de 1640 nas Cartas Reais do Arquivo Cadaval", *Brotéria*, 37 (1943), 4, pp. 246-7.

25. *Ivi*, p. 247.

26. Oliveira, *Movimentos Sociais e Poder*, pp. 504-6.

27. Tarouca, "A preparação do 1º de Dezembro de 1640", pp. 248-9; R. Valladares, *Epistolario de Olivares y el Conde de Basto (Portugal, 1637-1638)* (s.l., Diputación de Badajoz: 1998), pp. 158, 175.

28. *Ibid*.

29. See letter of duke Braganza of 9 December 1637, in Oliveira, *Movimentos Sociais e Poder*, p. 503.

duke's undertakings. He commented in the beginning of December 1637 how «satisfied he felt with the providence used by the duke of Braganza in partly repairing the situation in Vila Viçosa and others in his lands, and being contented with everything, I gave him great thanks for in this instance, as ever, his blood prevailed»³⁰.

Madrid was so much convinced of the Braganza's loyalty that in February 1638, the king alerted the newly appointed Évora *corregedor* – Jerónimo Ribeiro who, in fact, was a man trusted by Vila Viçosa – to the duke's availability in helping to appease hypothetical further revolts, placing him, in this way, on the same footing as the Castilian council in Badajoz:

If there is any disquiet in the said city to which you cannot attend to, let the duke of Braganza know, so that he may remedy, and let both me and my council in Badajoz know of all developments³¹.

A similar sign of the royal trust can be detected through the rumours that circulated in Lisbon, in April, about the possible replacement of Margarida, Duchess of Mantua, by the Duke of Braganza, as the next Vice-Roy of Portugal³².

The reward for the good services was soon to arrive in the shape of a significant number of favours, together with a general pardon for his mutinous vassals, which much contrasted with the severe punishments to which other insurgents were submitted.

D. João IV, in a mere six months, acquired thus six charters where rights and privileges were confirmed to him, in matters which the monarchy's general policies tended to examine very closely in order to restrain them, as a rule³³. The bitter remark regarding these favours, made in March 1641 by the chief-chronicler of the Habsburgs, D. José Pellicer, was fully justified: «they may have made richer who beforehand was not so rich, and grateful who was less impetuous to disobey»³⁴. Or, as an irritated Portuguese follower of Philip IV put it, immediately after 1640, the duke's ungratefulness was not foreseeable, for he was «zealous of his royal service, putting himself punctually out to quieten some places in his lands during the popular revolts in the Alentejo, in the year of 1637, willingly advising His Majesty of his deeds and feelings in regard to that matter»³⁵.

The representation of good vassal that the Braganza had gained in Madrid and, most particularly, in the Earl-duke of Olivares' judgement, explains the latter's

apprehension in relation to the ever critical faction of the 'populares' and his non-concernment in regard to the duke's role in Portuguese politics. For Olivares, the house of Braganza was an ever growing accomplice of the monarchic interests. Moreover, he was aware that D. João's pleasure was basically restricted to Vila Viçosa, where he remained satisfied with the favours that had been granted to him by Madrid. This expected gratitude kept, in fact, being mirrored by demonstrations of loyalty which, according to the quoted Philip partisan, explained the confidence shown by Philip IV in 1639, appointing the duke to the government-general of arms in Portugal, his benevolence in the face on the non-compliance in the required number of recruits within the duchy (instead of 1,000, he only sent 450), and his decision to exceptionally excuse him from the contribution of one fourth of the revenues, which was demanded from all landowners (*donatários*) and commandary holders³⁶. Nothing in the duke's behaviour made Madrid think that he might be tempted with sedition.

Regarding the patronage network and the control of their territorial control, enough examples have been offered in other papers³⁷. What is left to emphasise is the importance which the connections held by the Braganzas in the South of Portugal seemed to have had in the unfolding of the revolt in 1640. It has recently been demonstrated how relevant the Alentejo origins of the first minute participants were, as well as the number of relatives and servants of the Braganzas, in the plotting, execution and future consolidation of the rebellion³⁸. We must not however confuse the issues. This data shows, above all, the capacity there was to exert pressure from bottom to top and not the other way round. If this directional movement of the political pressure places the duke of Braganza as marginal in the initial planning of the conspiracy, it also indicates the density of his networks of dependents. And it has also to be recognised that, once the decision for the coup go-ahead was taken, these social networks proved strategically indispensable in the consolidation of his *prise de pouvoir*.

Evidently, although admitting the importance of this type of pressure in the emergence of the revolt, this does not explain the conditions of its genesis, namely the social, economic and political reasons for the discontentment that reigned in the kingdom of Portugal in the 1630s. And, besides, that is not my purpose. What I want to say is that the then duke D. João, in view of his particular blood heritage, which resulted from a secular marriage policy practised by his house, was the only possible holder of a dynastic legitimacy which embodied an alternative to the Habsburgs. The will for change that existed across Portugal towards the end of the 1630s was unthinkable outside a monarchic framework, even if the hesitations and delays, in which the duke of Braganza indulged, gave place to

36. *Ibid.*

37. Cunha, *A Casa de Bragança, 1560-1640*, and Ead., «Relações de poder, patrocínio e confidencialidade».

38. L.F. Costa, M. Soares da Cunha, *D. João IV (Lisboa: 2006)*.

30. Tarouca, *A preparação do 1º de Dezembro de 1640*, p. 246.

31. Biblioteca Pública de Évora, CIV/2-6, nº 29.

32. Letter of the Papal Official to Rome, 10 of April 1638, in F. Rodrigues, «A Companhia de Jesus e a Restauração de Portugal. 1640», in *Academia Portuguesa de História. Anais. 'Ciclo da Restauração de Portugal'* (Lisboa: 1942), vol. VI, p. 339, note 6.

33. See documents in Silva, *Coleção Chronologica da Legislação*, vol. 1623-1627, p. 154.

34. Oliveira, *Poder e Oposição Política em Portugal*, p. 207.

35. *Bm*, mss. 2373, fs. 289v-290.

suggestions among the plotters of some sort of republican alternative. The duke had to be the only viable option.

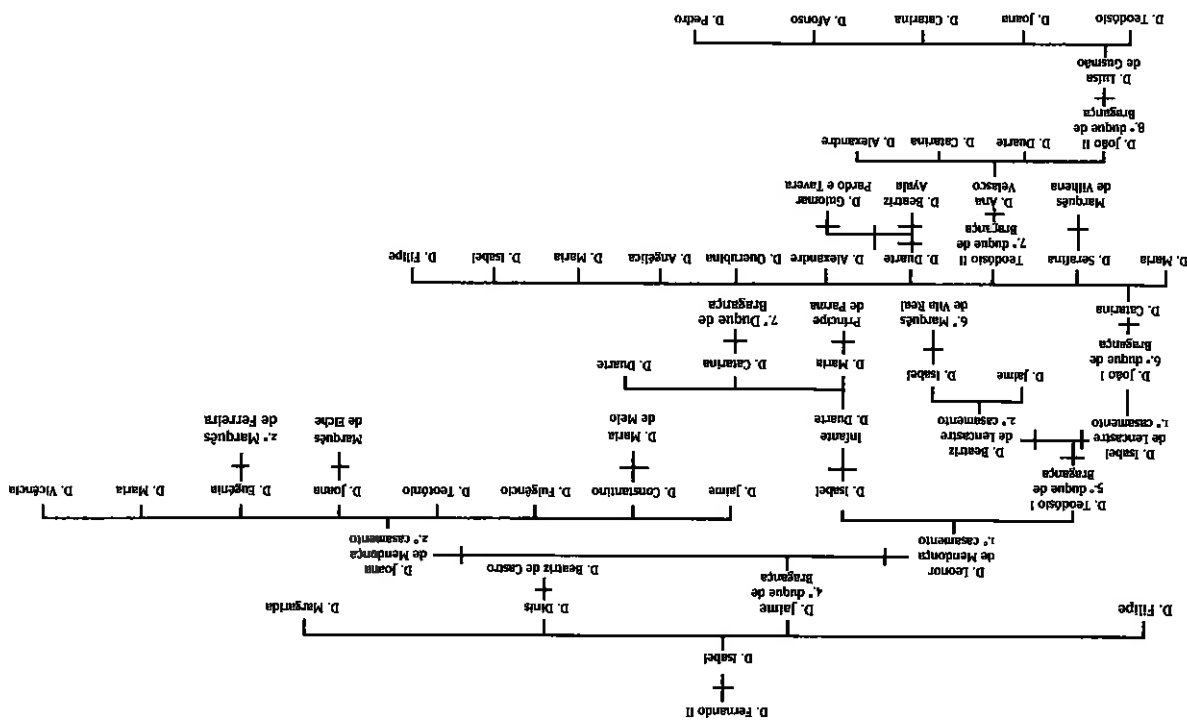
Conclusion

In sum, the strategic interests of the house of Braganza in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not intercept but very slightly with the macro-policy of the monarchies, be it the one in Lisbon or the one in Madrid. After a brief uproar around 1580, the house behaved towards the Austria dynasty monarchs in a similar fashion as they had behaved towards the kings of the Portuguese Avis dynasty: demanding in respect and consideration for their pre-eminence, albeit zealous servants.

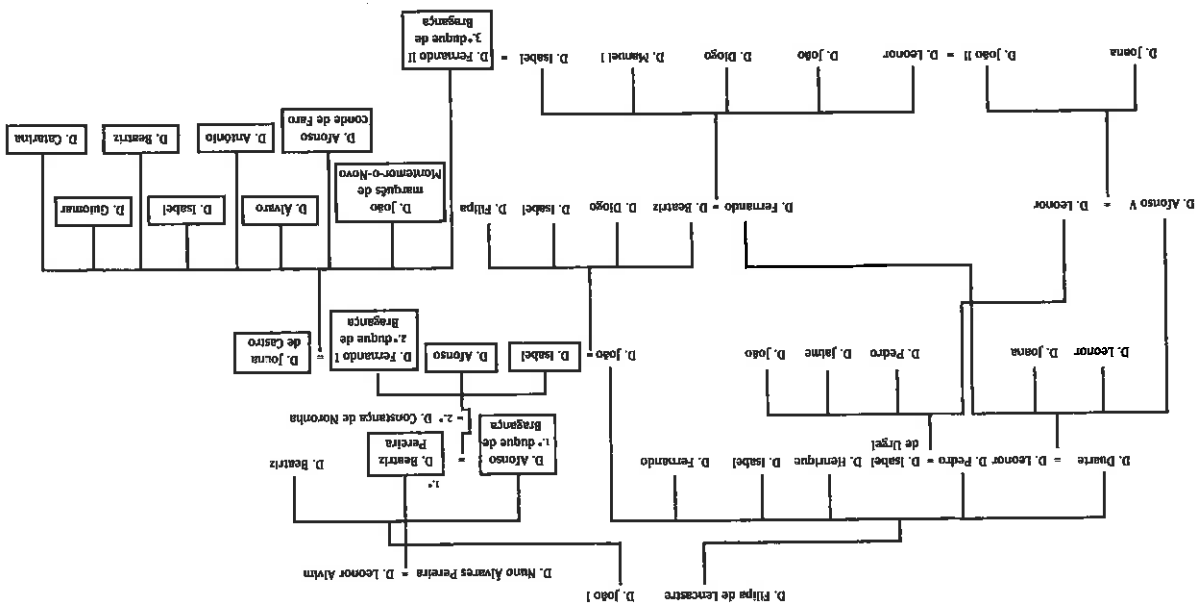
The leadership of the 1640 revolt must, thus, be understood as the result of the interception of the secular trajectory of the Braganza's house and lineage with the general unrest that took place in Portugal in the 1630s. It is this phenomenon that explains the fact that the position of the Duke throughout this period has been so much written about in the autonomist literature, for it was not easy to conciliate his new situation as liberator of the kingdom with his submissive attitude as a faithfully vassal to Philip IV, of which he had given proof a mere three years before his acclamation. This was still the reason why an important part of the effort to consolidate the rupture, both in the country and abroad, was directed towards providing grounds for the illegitimate *prise de pouvoir* by the Habsburg in 1580.

To be able to claim succession legitimacy was, as a matter of course, the main singularity of the house. The propaganda developed then onwards by the new dynasty understood this well and made it its business to enlarge these grounds by demonstrating that it was only fair that Portugal had been returned to the succession line which had been usurped in 1580, and also to show the grandeurs of the house of Braganza since its genesis, as if pre-destined to the throne that the future would come to offer.

QUADRO GENEALÓGICO II - A CASA DE BRAGANÇA - SÉCULOS XVI/XVII



QUADRO GENEALÓGICO I - A CASA DE BRAGANÇA E A FAMÍLIA REAL PORTUGUESA, SÉCULO XV



(*) 56 exatos referenciados nos casamentos da família real e dos Bragança essenciais para a elaboração da árvore genealógica dos Bragança até à segunda metade do século XV. Legenda -- [D. Afonso] - mestres da Casa de Bragança e cônjuge