

1668: An *Annus Horribilis* for the Spanish Monarchy – The Lost European Hegemony, the International Situation, the Internal Crisis¹

By *Rafaella Pilo**

1668 seems to be a kind of annus horribilis for the Spanish Monarchy that had been able to lead European politics during an entire century. If it possible to consider the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis of 1559 - that ended with French-Spanish conflict in Italy - such as the apical moment for Habsburg power in Europe, in some way the peace of the Pyrenees, signed in 1659 between the same protagonists, can represent the final phase of such a hegemony ruled by Madrid. Indeed, 1668 represents the most crucial point of crisis for a lot of reasons clearly connected with international order and especially with the rise of France, but also with the complicated Spanish domestic situation.

Introduction

The biennium 1667-1669 represented the point of no return for Spanish monarchy involved in such complicated circumstances able to change forever its position in Europe.

Various foreign enemies' attitude became openly hostile and numerous false friends into the same court of Madrid showed, at last, their real nature and purposes.

Louis XIV declared the war of Devolution against Madrid in 1667, Portugal obtained the independence from Spain in 1668, marquis of Camarasa, viceroy of the Kingdom of Sardinia, was killed in Cagliari in that very same summer after a hard parliamentary struggle.²

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2. Revilla Canora J. (2018) Del pùlpito al destierro: las élites religiosas sardas en torno al asesinato del virrey Camarasa, *Tiempos modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna*, 36; Id., (2013) Tan gran maldad no ha de hallar clemencia ni en mi piedad: El asesinato del Marqués de Camarasa, Virrey de Cerdeña, 1668, *Revista Escuela de Historia*, 12, 1; Id., (2012) El asesinato del Virrey Marqués de Camarasa y el Pregón General del Duque de San Germán (1668-1669) in E. Serrano (coord.), *De la tierra al cielo: Líneas recientes de investigación en historia moderna*, vol. 2, Zaragoza, FEHM, Institución Fernando el Católico: 575-584. See also Pilo, R. (2018) Incapacità politica di un viceré o crisi della tradizione pattizia? Il caso del marchese di Camarasa nel Regno di Sardegna negli anni della reggenza di Mariana

Regent Queen on the Spanish throne, Emperor Leopold I's sister Mariana Habsburg, had to face with so many international problems in the more critical moment of her regency³: Don Juan José, the illegitimate son of Philip IV, moved with an army towards Madrid to drive out her favorite, the Jesuit Nithard.⁴

Mariana tried to avoid the internal crisis but, finally, the domestic problems added up to the exteriors: the decade of her regency (1665-1675) was complicated by so many problems but that kind of "crisis in the crisis" that occurred in 1668 needed a specific focus.

Why 1668 was such a year for the Spanish Monarchy ruled by the Habsburg-German regent Queen?⁵

Both in international and in internal policy, Queen Mariana of Habsburg had to face with a really complicated situation caused by the unstoppable rise of the France of Louis XIV.⁶ That rising was going to replace Spanish Monarchy with the French one in the European stage dominated by Madrid during almost a century.

If we consider, as already mentioned, the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis as the beginning of Habsburg hegemony over Europe, it is possible to suggest the peace of Pyrenees as the end of that hegemony and the beginning of French supremacy in Europe.

Cateau-Cambrésis was a treaty of peace signed between France and Spain in 1559. It marked the end of the wars in the Italian peninsula that had started in the end of the XVth century and it also represented the very beginning of Spanish-Habsburg hegemony in Europe. Instead, the treaty of peace called of Pyrenees signed by France and Spain in 1659 marked, in same way, the moment of the end of Spanish rise and the beginning of the French one. Indeed the war of Devolution against Spani started by Louis XIV in 1667 had its justification in the non-compliance of Pyrenees clause.

So, it is not possible to point at the unique date – 1668? – to deeply understand and explain such complex set of problems. The situation was connected with Habsburg Monarchy's crisis during the second half of the XVIIth century ready to

d'Austria, in J. S. Amelang, F. Andrés, R. Benítez, R. Franch, M. Galante (eds.), *Palacios, plazas, patíbulos. La sociedad española moderna entre el cambio y las resistencias*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch: 553-561; Id. (2020) *Il Regno di Sardegna nell'età Barocca. Crisi politica e istituzionale al tempo del viceré Camarasa (1665- 1668)*, New Digital Press, Palermo.

3. Mitchell S. (2019) *Queen, Mother & Stateswoman. Mariana of Austria and the Government of Spain*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press.

4. Pilo R. (2010) *Juan Everardo Nithard y sus "Causas no causas". Razones y pretextos para el fin de un valimiento*, Silex-Cajasur, Madrid-Córdoba.

5. See now Mitchell (2019).

6. Mansel Ph. (2021) *Il Re del mondo. La vita di Luigi XIV*, Mondadori, Milano: 213-230.

give rise to just between 1667 and 1669.⁷

But move forward in order. Considering international relationships is crucial to understand and guess, also, decisions taken in domestic policy's field.

Literature Review and Methodology

That renovated historiographic approach that, learned both lessons from *Nouvelle Histoire* and suggestions from that part of New World History nearer to Braudel's thought and teaching, is nowadays able to find its own way. I mean: to make history between traditional historiography of political-diplomatic history and the new global routes' temptations.

That kind of political history, improved by using new methodology and their achievements, can easily reach and improve institutional studies. The introduction of colored *nuances* into *élites'* knowledge should be helpful to describe a powerful class of ministers and courtiers that are far from a monolith, good only to produce an unambiguous political action. Indeed, political actions (but also all human actions) improbable are cohesive and easily to decode. Reality is so complicated and problematic to explain.

This way had found in Anglo-Saxon historian Christopher Storrs one of the most incisive representatives about Spanish Monarchy's recent studies between XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. Storrs' approach came, certainly, from Helmut Koenigsberger's pioneering research about Habsburg Sicily.⁸ Koenigsberger was, maybe, the first historian who considers Spanish viceroys action on the local stage with innovative instruments to studying the past. That innovation was useful in deconstructing political activities of Spanish king's ministers in Sicily and in giving back its complexity, variety and uniqueness.

From the new approach inaugurated by the Anglo-German historian, it started a vivid and rich historiographic trend especially concerning reinterpretation on courts dynamics.

It concerned the very same court of Madrid,⁹ but also Spanish dominion traditionally considered such as "peripheral" and, so, "marginal" like Italian kingdoms, Naples or Sicily.¹⁰

It seems to be particularly important to connect and interpret events

7. Storrs, Ch. (2006) *The resilience of the Spanish Monarchy 1665-1700*, Oxford University Press, New York and, now, Id. (2016) *The Spanish Resurgence 1713-1748*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London.

8. Koenigsberger, H. G. (1997 but or. ed 1969) *L'esercizio dell'impero*, Sellerio, Palermo.

9. Around the rich and recent historiographic activity concerning European Courts see <http://iulce.es/>; <http://web.tiscali.it/europadellecorti/>; <https://cour-de-france.fr/>.

10. Benigno F (1994) *Conflitto politico e conflitto sociale nell'Italia spagnola*, in *Nel sistema imperiale l'Italia spagnola*, coord. A. Musi, ESI, Napoli; Galasso G. (1975) *Mezzogiorno medievale e moderno*, Einaudi, Torino.

occurred in 1668 in a picture whose frame included both 1640's Catalan and Portuguese revolts¹¹ and that one took place in Messina in 1674.¹² And so, it is also important a way back towards Roger Bigelow Merriman's "six contemporaneous revolutions."¹³

Or, to better say, a renovated interpretation of them like that one made by Francesco Benigno. It is crucial to focalize if we are going to consider 1640 as the apical moment of a presumed crisis or, *viceversa*, if we can consider it like the end of an idyllic, rich and unique imperial experience.¹⁴

In both cases, 1640 can be assumed as a starting point to decipher the following events that were, in some way, been inspired by this important break moment.

Explaining, therefore, 1640's events in terms of large-period-crisis that started from the end of the XVIth century – such as Ribot García for Messina and Rosario Villari for Naples had pointed out – and finished in the decade of 1670.¹⁵

In particular, Villari chose to backdate rebellion's plot up to Duque of Osuna's government in Sicily in the first decade of the XVIIth century and he also proposed a significant range that started at the end of the XVIth century and lasted until 1648.

In this sense, that kind of "crisis into the crisis" occurred in the triennium 1667-1669 can be reinterpreted in terms of a phase of larger path, inclined towards 1640's rebels kingdoms achievements' stabilization. Both Portuguese – with its conquer and formalization of the autonomy signed in 1668 by the treaty of Lisbon – and Catalan cases – tied with French influence since 1652 – are, indeed, especially relevant.¹⁶

Speaking about Catalonia is really important to connect the end of the French protectorate and the occupation of Barcelona by Don Juan José Habsburg - illegitimate Philip IV's son - happened in 1652, with the events occurred later and

11. Elliott, J. H. (1963) *The Revolt of the Catalans*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

12. Ribot García, L.A. (2002) *La monarquía de España y la guerra de Mesina: (1674-1678)*, *Actas*, Madrid and Id. (2004) "Las revueltas italianas del siglo XVII", en *Studia Historica, Italia en la Monarquía Hispánica*, vol. 26: 101-128.

13. Merriman, R.B. (1938) *Six contemporaneous revolutions*, New York, Oxford University Press. See now Benigno F (2012) *Ripensare le "sei rivoluzioni contemporanee"*. *Considerazioni sul conflitto politico nel Seicento* in "Nuova Rivista Storica" Volume XCVI – Fascicolo III, Numero Monografico *I labirinti del colpo di Stato*: 783-816.

14. Gruzinski S., (2004) *Les quare parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation*, Éditions de La Martinière, Paris, but, now, Schaub, J-F. (2016) *La unión de los imperios ibéricos a escala global (1578-1668)*, Madrid, Akal. Division into periods assumed by the A. don't correspond only with Portugal independence formalization but he points at 1668 as a crucial year for the common destiny of both Iberian empires.

15. Villari, R. (1967) *La rivolta antispagnola a Napoli. Le origini, 1585-1647*, Laterza, Bari.

16. Jané Checa O. (2006) *Catalunya i França al segle XVII: identitats, contraidentitats i ideologies a l'època moderna (1640-1700)*, Editorial Afers, Catarroja. See now Id. (2016), *Louis XIV at la Catalogne. De la politique au Sud de l'Europe au XVIIe siècle*, PUP, Perpignan.

able to threaten the regent Queen. In fact the parade from Barcelona towards Madrid led in autumn 1669 by the very same don Juan José was a clear *coup d'état* against the Queen in her favorite Nithard.

Results

It seems that the way towards rebellion opened by Barcelona in 1640 had to find, in same way, a kind of legitimate accomplishment in the military support of the Catalans against the Queen's favorite exiled after the events of so hot autumn 1669.

But any considerations cannot be fully understood if we do not put French into Spanish *affaires*. Why? Because French, after monarchical revolution occurred in 1661 at the death of cardinal Mazzarino, became a different country. So, Louis XIV started the construction of an absolute state corroborate by an efficient net of administrative body, following the route started by cardinal Richelieu and the king Louis XIII.

But Louis XIV surpassed them, especially for what concerning foreign policy, achieving the most relevant innovations for French monarchy:¹⁷ in 1662 Paris signed a treaty of coalition with Holland running against England and interrupted negotiations with Madrid on the French County and Luxembourg; in 1663 renewed French participation to the Rhine's alliance and the following year signed both treaty of coalition with Brandenburg and Saxony.¹⁸

In 1666 declared war to England and claimed in his wife's name, the succession on some Spanish territories in the Low Countries. In 1667, however, signed a secret treaty with the English king committing French to not participate against England in favor of Holland. Louis XIV succeeds so in avoiding English opposition against French annexation of Brabant. Then, in May 1667, he started the Devolution War that was going to end in 1668 with the peace of Aachen among Holland, England, and Sweden and that marked French acquisition of twelve cities in Spanish Low Countries.

Both secret treaties between Paris and London, such as that one between Paris and Wien – concerning Spanish territories' division – were not so secret, indeed. Information runs quickly among European courts. Both treaties were part of an ambitious project that would last until peace of Rijswijk in 1697. In fact, only with the presence on the English throne of William III of Orange after the *Glorious Revolution* of 1688-89, Louis found an opposition against his hegemonic will on Europe.

After all, the *siècle de Louis XIV* quoting the famous definition by Voltaire,

17. Ruocco, G., (2002), *Lo stato sono io. Luigi XIV e la «rivoluzione monarchica» del marzo 1661*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

18. Mansel Ph. (2019).

was so able in made forgotten so many significant political events of other European countries.

It is not just a coincidence if other European king's names of the XVIIth century are less known then the name of the king of France. Less known or, sometimes, really out from European memory.

Spanish monarchy had become, in addition, subject of division for the hunger of both sovereigns, in Paris and in Wien. And yet the effects of secret treaty between Louis XIV and emperor Leopold I – well known, as already said, in courtesan and diplomatic contexts - were very relevant because of the setting off the end of the traditional strategic axis Madrid-Wien. Actually, Emperor's ambiguous policy and his ministers' lacking of confidence towards Queen Regent Mariana had already weakened the friendly relationship between Habsburgs family's two branches. Indeed, the treaty was able to produce an unexpected effect into the court of Madrid, a destabilizing effect for the court equilibrium and, especially, for the authority of the Queen.

The moment to devise a *coupe d'état*, which outcome would extremely favorable to French, could not have been better than that.¹⁹

In autumn 1669 Don Juan José tried to end with the regency of the German Queen marching towards the court of Madrid with an army of 300 soldiers under his command. Troopers, left from Catalonia, had the main aim in expelling the Austrian Jesuit Nithard, confessor and favorite of the Queen, far from Madrid.²⁰

Dynamics of crisis goes inserted in the context of the French Fronde and, also, widespread hostility towards favorite ministers all over Europe.²¹

In the opinion of an expert of Charles II of Spain, Gabriel Maura y Gamazo, the tragic events of 1668-1669 well represented the situation of common uncertainty fluttering above Europe: an *ultimatum* that it suppose be able to determine no crisis, was able, in those years, to “dar en tierra con todo un Inquisidor general” (obtain the fall of a general Inquisitor).²²

Maura was speaking about the effects of Don Juan José's threat against Nithard. And finally, Juan José's plot ended with an event that Henry Kamen defined “the first military pronouncement of Early Modern Spanish History” that

19. Ribot García, L.A. (2010) *Orígenes políticos del testamento de Carlos II. La gestación del cambio dinástico en España. Discurso leído el día 17 de Octubre de 2010*, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.

20. Maura y Gamazo G. (1942) *Vida y reinado de Carlos II*, 3 Vol.s., Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, I: 83-85. See also *Los jesuitas en España y en el mundo hispánico*, (2004) coord. E. Teófanos, Marcial Pons Historia, Madrid: 162, 169-171.

21. On the historiographic debate on the Fronde see Benigno, F. (1999) *Specchi della rivoluzione. Conflitto e identità politica nell'Europa moderna*, Donzelli, Roma: 3-59; 105-198.

22. Maura y Gamazo, G. (1911-1915), *Carlos II y su corte*, 2 Vol.s, Librería de F. Beltran, Madrid, I: 9.

had, among its protagonists, few of the most influent ministers of the Monarchy during the regency of Mariana.²³

As already said, the imminent French threat, Leopold's ambiguous anti-Spanish policy, Portuguese's war aftermath and the urgent need of reformulate diplomatic relationship with the after-Cromwell England were the main topics in the international agenda of the Spanish monarchy during the second half of XVIIth century.

Internal difficulties easily linked with foreign policy disaster and as French, so England, meant to take advantage of Spanish monarchy's fragility.

On May the 17th 1667, French ambassador in Madrid delivered a letter of the king of France to Mariana: Louis XIV claimed his intention of take possession of Brabant. Any attempt from Madrid to obstruct that project would be considered such as an act of war.

The situation had become critical on both matters, internal and international. But the election of the Pope Clement IX, who had been ambassador in Madrid from 1644 to 1652, was received with "vivísimas y muy gratas esperancias" ("great hope").²⁴

That hope had not disappointed Madrid because the Pope tried to maintain the peace between Spanish and French, sending in Madrid a Nuncio of great confidence such as Cardinal Federico Borromeo. Roman involvement in Spanish *affaires* seemed to confirm traditional Saint Siege influence on European equilibrium.

Rome managed, once again, to avoid European conflicts arbitrating between competitors' interests.²⁵

But just in few months' time the situation was more complicated for the Spanish monarchy: French army threat to Brabant; the *Junta de Gobierno* was divided and so unable to give a collegial and uniform direction to Spanish policy; Queen regent was deeply conditioned by her favorite and confessor; in the *Consejo de Estado* discontent ruled.

There were two parties: the Queen and her favorite on one side, the main part of aristocracy on the other side: on the 13th of October 1668 was discovered a plot finalized to banish Austrian Jesuit.

And so, in the meanwhile Madrid was paralyzed into intrigues and factional fights, the international situation got worst and worst: on the 23rd of January 1668 Holland, England and Sweden signed an alliance against France. This alliance was ineffective until 1689 when the new king of England, William III Orange, became the leader. Starting from that moment Louis XIV had an enemy that was able to lead France towards the peace of Rijswijk in 1697. Only that date can be

23. Kamen, H., *La España de Carlos II* (1987) Crítica, Barcelona: 532.

24. De Estenaga y Echevarría, N. (1929-1930): 279.

25. Menniti Ippolito, A. (1999) *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista. Papi, nipoti e burocrazia curiale tra XVI e XVII secolo*, Viella, Roma and Visceglia M.A. (2010) *Roma papale e Spagna. Diplomatici, nobili e religiosi tra due corti*, Bulzoni, Roma.

considered, in some way, a halt for the French rise, started in 1659 (peace of Pirenees with Spanish monarchy) and that would have continued until the end of the Seven Years war in 1763.

Going back to 1668, a year of crisis for the Spanish monarchy but certainly an *annus mirabilis* for the French, few days before was signed, as already mentioned, the secret French-imperial treaty concerned the division of Spanish dominions. Spanish monarchy was not the greatest power in Europe so both Spanish colonies, such as Spanish European territories had become nothing more than desirable spoils to share.

Thanks to Charles II of England's mediation, Madrid signed in Lisbon a peace with Portugal. In the meanwhile the war against France in the Low Countries turned against the Spanish crown even if it ended with the peace of Aachen that was going to introduce no news in the *status quo*.

At the court of Madrid, in the meanwhile, had developed a mood of increasing hostility towards Nithard by the *Junta de Gobierno* and the *Consejo de Estado*: the Jesuit was considered guilty of all the problems of the monarchy, from the fragility in foreign policy to the domestic situation.

All carefulness was taken to avoid public demonstrations of discontent. Nevertheless, there were a lot of publications, from satire to any kind of offensive pamphlets against the favorite of the Queen.²⁶ That kind of manuscripts widely circulated and we can find exemplar of them nowadays in almost all European libraries. Although authors were, in the majority of the cases, anonymous, it is not so hard to guess the instigators: before all, the ministers involved in the plot and members of that "intelectualidad murmuradora, incapaz de manejar otras armas que el pasquín y el libelo" (grumbled intelligentsia, able only in using writings).²⁷

There were two simultaneous fights: one in manipulating information and the other in creating consent. A military reaction from Juan José and his own army was, so, expected since January-February 1669.

The Nuncio Federico Borromeo wrote to Rome that the situation was really critical: the Queen would not give up and so there were no work possible to avoid the crisis:

lusinghati la Regina e il Confessore in creder don Giovanni privo egualmente di forze e di ragione non admetteranno introduttione di trattato alcuno né consiglio di Sua Beatitudine se non quando non sarà più in tempo.²⁸

26. Benigno (1999): 134-140. For Spanish satires of that period see now Hermant H. (2012), *Guerre de plumes. Publicité et cutlutres politiques dans l'Espagne du XVIIe siècle*, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid.

27. Maura (1942) I: 158.

28. ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO, Segr. Stato, Spagna, Vol. 133, ff. 337r-338r, *Letter from Apostolic Nuncio*, Madrid, 23 February 1669.

In the following weeks the mediation of the Nuncio to avoid the institutional crisis had uselessly continued.

On the 25th of February 1669 Don Juan José declared the *ultimatum* from Torrejón de Ardoz: Nithard had to leave Madrid immediately. Jesuit, finally, run away from the Court towards Rome.²⁹

What had happened in Madrid court – I mean the difficulties of pro-Wien party and the victory of the pro-French one grown even before 1668 – were able to project Spanish crisis even beyond courtesan's borders, up to the farther kingdoms. Not only, but also, the alliances' reconstruction cannot be connected with the only interests of Wien or Paris. There was a multi-colored and complex political situation in which were deeply involved so *donjuanistas* such as *nithardistas*.³⁰

This was the situation that don Agustín de Castelví, *síndico* (delegate) del los *Stamenti* (ranks) of Sardinian Parliament, run into when he arrived in Madrid to present Sardinian *élite's* requests to the Queen and the *Consejo de Aragón*.

Sardinian cetual reunion had opened in 1666 and was suddenly interrupted in May 1668 without the acceptance of the *donativo* (gift) from the kingdom in favor of the crown. In two months' time were be killed in Cagliari don Agustín de Castelví (June 1668) and the very same viceroy maquis of Camarasa (July 1668). The central crisis, in some way, could arrive also in the marginal context: from the 1640's crisis to Sicilian rebellion of 1674, what had happened in the biennium 1667-1668 can be considered part of that crisis' path.³¹

Discussion

There would be a lot to say about XVII century crisis and also about the new political model originated during the baroque age. With respect to international relationships, to shaping new national model and, especially, with the revolutionary changes in politics due to the presence of favorite ministers in all the main European courts.

However, there are two main discussion fields on which I would like to focus. The first one concerns if it is possible – necessary, maybe – seriously start re-thinking those so called “six contemporary revolutions” and the entire crisis of

29. BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL ESPAÑOLA, Madrid, Ms. 5742, C. CRESPI, *Diario*, unpublished, almost 1671, f. 413r: “Lunes a 25 (mine: de febrero) salió de Madrid el Inquisidor general de la Reyna para salir de estos reynos respecto de los clamores de los pueblos de que le gobernase un alemán, y el odio que le tenían concebido y también por la persecución del señor don Juan de Austria que había emprendido esta salida con todo conato y peligro del movimiento que hoy se conoce en Madrid”. See also Maura (1942) I: 155-156.

30. Hermant (2012).

31. Ribot García (1982); Id. (2002).

the XVIIth century on political, economic (so called “re-feudalization”) and also climatic (so called “little glaciation”) ranges.³²

This approach considers economical and social aspects in their *longue durée* and the plural influences between them in the terms of natural evolutions and mutual involvement. So: facts or events able to produce effects that become facts or events related to them but interpreted like part of the same process. Process becomes the object of investigation.

The second one concerns the opportunity for political history to have once again something more to say in historiographic discourses. The *focus* on a specific year – 1668 - is able to lead the narration far in time, so earlier and later. It occurred because it was the purpose of who is writing this paper to demonstrate the deep and strong connections between the so called *histoire événementielle* and the so called *longue durée*. Both definitions were coined in the first half of the XXth century but nowadays historiography can easily carry on without them. Or, to better say, make them finally conciliate.

I am convinced the day to release from that antinomy had come: we can stop to consider *longue durée* against *histoire événementielle*. I think that a new political history approach should learn *Annales'* lesson and start moving their steps far away from that strict distinction.

Conclusion

In conclusion: a case study on a single year is able to push the narration well beyond, even if it concerns only European sphere and analyze just only two among a lot of protagonists.³³ Studying events occurred during only a year pushes inevitable historian to find causes and consequences of those events. And so historian has to start with a chain of facts and persons and places linked one to each other. Only following that chain towards previous (but linked) events and towards successive (but linked) events it is possible to understand anything about that single year. It still is one year but it is not alien from others. It is in the middle of the chain. Who wrote had the clear objective in narrating Spanish monarchy's crisis; or, to better say, the end of the Spanish hegemony in Europe.

So, 1668 was a great year for Portugal that had reached, finally, the independence from Spanish crown. It was, also, a lucky year for France that is going to replace Spanish hegemony. In the same way, we can consider XVI century in terms of a *siglo de oro* for Spanish monarchy ruled by Charles V, so we can give the very same tag to XVIIth century Holland. And so on.

32. Benigno (2012).

33. Schilling, H. (2017) *1517. Storia mondiale di un anno*, Keller, Rovereto and the classical study Le Roy Ladurie E. (1977) *Storia di un paese: Montailou, un villaggio occitanico durante l'inquisizione, 1294-1324*, Rizzoli, Milano.

The objective of this paper was to consider the concurrence of a lot of events, facts and situations that contributed in Spanish decline and positioned Madrid's court in a marginal role respect to the European equilibrium.

Certainly studying the radical change of Spanish role in the second half of XVIIth century, pushed me in involving in the narration others European actors. This approach allowed me to consider the Spanish fall into the European relationships and to connect falling and rising into the early modern Europe political settlement.

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