

The Spy and the Viceroy. The Espía Mayor Andrés de Velázquez and the trial against the Duke of Osuna.

Giuseppe Mrozek Eliszezynski - University of Teramo - Italy

The involvement of the Espía Mayor Andrés de Velázquez in the intricate story of the trial against the Duke of Osuna is an episode that can shed light on various issues. Velázquez was a central figure in the world of spies and agents in Baroque Europe, whose life and functions have left few traces in the documents of the time. He was implicated against his will in the climate of purificación which began soon after the death of Philip III of Habsburg.¹ The trials against the deceased ruler's validos and their allies and clients were the focus of a controversial and sensitive stage in the history of the Spanish Monarchy, becoming part of a political and intellectual debate on European scale regarding two themes: the presence of a powerful favourite at the side of the legitimate sovereign and the limits to be imposed on his power.²

1 John H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares. The statesman in an age of decline.* (New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1986); Francesco Benigno, *L'ombra del re. Ministri e lotta politica nella Spagna del Seicento.* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1992), 66-94; Giuseppe Mrozek Eliszezynski, *Bajo acusación. Procesos y discursos sobre el valimiento en el reinado de Felipe III.* (Madrid: Polifemo, forthcoming) chapter 5.

2 About this long and complex European debate on the favourites, many studies and research have been published, especially within the Spanish context. Some examples are: Francisco Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII.* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1963); Jean Bérenger, *Le problème du ministériat au XVIIe siècle.* In "Annales E.S.C.", 29 (1974), 166-192; Benigno, *L'ombra del re*; John H. Elliott, Lawrence W.B Brockliss, eds., *The World of the Favourite.* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1999); Antonio Feros, *Kingship and favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598-1621.*

Although important and influential spies were already detectable in the second half of the reign of Philip II (see the example of Sebastián de Arbizu, active especially in the years 1591-94 and involved in the resolution of the intricate affaire Antonio Pérez),³ the role of the Espía Mayor, that is Superintendente de las correspondencias secretas, was formalized only at the beginning of the reign of Philip III. Indeed, it was Juan de Velázquez the first to be officially awarded this position in 1605; even as early as January 1599 he had asked the new king to recognize and duly pay the role he had carried out since the last years of Philip II.⁴ After the death of Juan, his son Andrés de Velázquez became his successor in the same job: his title of Espía Mayor, granted on 11 June 1613⁵ and fully cited in a study, still considered fundamental, by Miguel Gómez del Campillo in 1946,⁶ is an essential source in getting to know the basic biographical data of this man and defining his functions. Like his father Juan, who had a long military career as Capitán de Infantería in Naples, capitán general de Guipúzcoa, alcalde de Fuenterrabía and who had also fought at Lepanto and in Portugal, Andrés de Velázquez also boasted a long series of military merits. Initially with his father, then alone in the fleet of the Adelantado Mayor de Castilla don Martín de Padilla (father-in-law of the Duke of Uceda) and in other various fleets and infantry troops in Spain, Milan and

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); José Antonio Escudero, ed., *Los validos*. (Madrid: Dykinson, 2004); Giovanni Muto, «Mutation di corte, novità di ordini, nova pratica di servitori»: la «privanza» nella trattatistica politica spagnola e napoletana della prima età moderna. In Stefano Levati, Marco Meriggi, eds., *Con la ragione e col cuore. Studi dedicati a Carlo Capra*. (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2008) 139-182; Le roi et son double. Le valimiento en Espagne au XVIIe siècle. In “XVIIe siècle”, 256 (2012).

- 3 Carlos J. Carnicer García, Javier Marcos Rivas, Sebastián de Arbizu espía de Felipe II. *La diplomacia secreta española y la intervención en Francia*. (Madrid: Nerea, 1998); Carlos J. Carnicer García, *Espías de Felipe II. Los servicios secretos del Imperio español*. (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2005).
- 4 Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Guerra, leg. 183, doc. 78, 28 January 1599.
- 5 Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), E, leg. 4828, 11 June 1613.
- 6 Miguel Gómez del Campillo, *El Espía Mayor y el conductor de embajadores*. In “Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia”, 119 (1946), 317-339. In more recent times, see José Luis Bernejo Cabrero, *Derecho y administración pública en la España del Antiguo Régimen*. (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1985), 27-33.

Turin, don Andrés had already asked Philip III, several times, to be rewarded for his services and considered for important positions.⁷ The office of Espía Mayor, although not properly paid as Andrés would complain in a memorandum of March 1616,⁸ was very important and delicate. Some of the main tasks were: coordinating, monitoring and managing the amount of secret information that came from various agents at the service of the king of Spain, at an intermediate level in the spy network among the various representatives of the King - ambassadors, general captains, viceroys - and the Secretaries of State.

In later years, other figures alternated in this role, such as the Marquis of Chanvela, Gaspar Bonifaz, the bullfighter and author of treaties on horsemanship and the art of torear, and Juan de Valencia, the trustworthy spy of the Count-Duke of Olivares.⁹ The allocation of the assignment was object of debate until the regency of Mariana de Austria. The last debate between the queen mother and the Council of State on the theme dates back to 1674.¹⁰ However, Juan and Andrés de Velázquez were often taken as an example par excellence of espías mayores.

The biography of the youngest of the Velázquez family had, however, an unhappy digression in 1621. The death of Philip III, on 31 March of that year, marked the beginning of a historical phase in which the new sovereign, the sixteen-year-old Philip IV, and especially his favourites, showed that they wanted to follow the advice of those who, since the last years of Philip III, had criticized the excessive power and the enormous enrichment that the Sandoval family and their clients and allies had obtained during the entire reign of the Rey Piadoso.¹¹ One

7 See, for example, AHN, E, leg. 4828, 22 September 1605.

8 Gómez del Campillo, *El Espía Mayor*, 321.

9 María del Carmen Pescador del Hoyo, *Don Juan de Valencia. Espía mayor de Felipe IV y torero*. (Madrid: Artes Gráficas Municipales, Área de Régimen Interior, 1987); José del Corral Raya, *Los espías mayores de su Majestad*. In "Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños", 46 (2006), 1043-1048.

10 AHN, E, leg. 4828, 11 and 18 March 1674.

11 Among many critics of the Sandoval government and of the excessive power of the king's favourite, the figure which stands out is that of Juan de Santa María, author of *Tratado de república y policía christiana. Para reyes y príncipes y para los que en el gobierno tienen sus veces* (Madrid, 1615). Santa María once again expressed his contrasting opinions against the *valimiento* in those chaotic days following the death of Philip III: AHN, E, lib. 832, *Lo que su Maj.d debe executar con toda brevedad, y*

of the first decisions of the new king was that of ordering the Duke of Uceda to hand in the papers of State and the keys, symbols of his office as *camarero mayor*, to Baltasar de Zúñiga, tutor (*ayo*) of the heir to the throne in the previous three years.¹² In the following days and weeks, a similar fate befell many other figures that had dominated court life under the Rey Piadoso, victims of the climate of *purificación* brought by the new group of rulers and that was designed to eliminate the abuses of the past and reform the monarchy according to the ideal model represented by the government of Philip II. In addition to various counsellors and secretaries, removed from their positions because of the well-known bond that linked them to the previous favourites (as in the cases of Pedro de Tapia, Antonio Bonal, Tomás de Angulo, Bernabé de Bibanco and Juan de Ciriza), also the members of the Sandoval clan and their closest allies were arrested or otherwise forced to defend themselves against serious accusations. The Count of Saldaña, the second son of Lerma, had to leave Madrid after losing the post of *caballerizo mayor*; the trial against Rodrigo Calderón, which had begun in 1619, set out again with renewed vigor on the express wish of Philip IV, up to his public execution in the Plaza Mayor of Madrid on 21 October;¹³ Fernando de Acevedo was deprived of the Presidency of the Council of Castile and forced to leave the court and live in his archdiocese of Burgos;¹⁴ Luis de Aliaga, personal confessor of Philip

las causas principales de la destrucción de la Monarquía, ff. 323-338. The criticism against the Duke of Lerma and his relatives had already been revealed years before through numerous satirical compositions and during the trials that had already implicated other important figures of the dominant faction: see Giuseppe Mrozek Eliszczynski, *Las culpas del Rey y de su Favorito. El proceso a Alonso Ramírez de Prado (1607-1608)*. In "Librosdelacorte.es", 6 (2013), 27-49; Josep Maria Torras i Ribé, *La "Visita" contra Pedro Franquesa (1607-1614): un proceso político en la monarquía hispánica de los Austrias*. In "Pedralbes", 17 (1997), 153-190; Bernardo José García García, *Pedro Franquesa, secretario de sí mismo. Proceso a una privanza y primera crisis del valimiento de Lerma (1607-1609)*. In "Annali di Storia moderna e contemporanea", 5 (1999), 21-42.

- 12 Rubén González Cuerva, *Baltasar de Zúñiga. Una encrucijada de la Monarquía Hispánica (1561-1622)*. (Madrid: Polifemo, 2012).
- 13 Santiago Martínez Hernández, *Rodrigo Calderón, la sombra del valido. Privanza, favor y corrupción en la corte de Felipe III*. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2009).
- 14 Mateo Escagedo Salmón, ed., *Los Acebedos*. In "Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo", V (1923) 142-157, 270-278, 361-366; VI (1924) 108-124, 224-241; VII

III, was replaced as Grand Inquisitor, exiled from court and became the target of a bitter defamatory campaign;¹⁵ the Duke of Lerma, who had become a cardinal, was subjected to judicial investigation on the many benefits (mercedes) received by the deceased sovereign.¹⁶

The Duke of Osuna was arrested on 7 April 1621. Viceroy of Sicily from 1611 to 1616, and then viceroy of Naples from 1616 to 1620, Osuna has been the focus of numerous Italian and Spanish studies, which have analyzed, in particular, his controversial conduct as viceroy and his aggressive foreign policy, especially against Venice.¹⁷ The work of the Duke, in fact, created strong social contrasts and divisions within the élites of the two kingdoms, producing demands and protests of an opposition, especially in Naples, by which Osuna could save his career and freedom only thanks to the protection of the Duke of Uceda, who in the meanwhile had become the favourite of the king instead of his father. The charges of a great part of the Neapolitan aristocracy mainly focused on the management of public finances, the high costs of war, the forced housing of thousands of soldiers in the city of Naples

(1925) 50-64, 181-188, 211-224; VIII (1926) 15-29, 156-162, 243-263, 333-342; IX (1927) 72-80, 144-192.

- 15 Aliaga was also subjected to an inquisitorial trial. About him, see Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), Ms. 2394, Memorial presentado a S.M. contra el Inquisidor general fr. Luis de Aliaga, ff. 1-9v; J. Navarro Latorre, *Aproximación a Fray Luis de Aliaga, confesor de Felipe III*. (Zaragoza: Estudios del Departamento de Historia Moderna de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1981); Bernardo José García García, *El confesor fray Luis Aliaga y la conciencia del Rey*. In Flavio Rurale, ed., *I Religiosi a Corte. Teologia, politica e diplomazia in Antico Regime*. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), 159-194.
- 16 Feros, Kingship and favoritism; Patrick Williams, *The great favourite: the Duke of Lerma and the court and government of Philip III of Spain, 1598-1621*. (Manchester - New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, *El Duque de Lerma. Corrupción y desmoralización en la España del siglo XVII*. (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2010); Bernardo José García García, "Fermosa gracia es la que el rey hace por merecimiento de servicio". Proceso y justificación de las mercedes otorgadas al valido (1618-1624). In A. Esteban Estringana, ed., *Servir al rey en la Monarquía de los Austrias. Medios, fines y logros del servicio al soberano en los siglos XVI y XVII*. (Madrid: Sílex, 2012), 321-359.
- 17 The most recent study on this figure: Luis M. Linde, *Don Pedro Girón, duque de Osuna: la hegemonía española en Europa a comienzos del siglo XVII*. (Madrid: Encuentro, 2005). See also Rosario Villari, *Un sogno di libertà. Napoli nel declino di un impero, 1585-1648*. (Milan: Mondadori, 2012) 87-161.

and various forms of illicit enrichment implemented by Osuna. Such accusations were expressed not only in numerous memorials sent to Madrid, but also by the emissaries who purposely arrived in the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy to discuss personally with the king. Exactly one week after the death of Philip III and the consequent end of the power of his patrons, Osuna was arrested and transferred to the fortress of Alameda, while his assets and his personal archive were impounded.

Already struggling with a similar amount of charges, Osuna's situation had become even worse due to his involvement in another trial. The Duke of Uceda, deprived of his office as *mayordomo mayor* in favour of Olivares, was exiled in his lands and also arrested, while his goods and private papers were seized. The accusations against the last favourite of Philip III were mainly concerned with the treatment reserved to Osuna, a relationship in which the primary objective of the faithful and disinterested service to the king had become a tool to enrich their family. In particular, the son of Lerma was accused of not having refused the offer of an army of 20,000 soldiers, faithful to the favourite but not to the king, and a sum of 40,000 ducats that the viceroy of Naples had proposed to strengthen their agreement and mutual support.¹⁸

In the remainder of the investigation, some of the closest collaborators of Osuna and Uceda were arrested and interrogated to provide useful information to investigators, but also to defend themselves against serious accusations. Among them, one can recall, the agent of Osuna in Madrid Sebastián de Aguirre,¹⁹ his historical adviser and secretary Francisco de Quevedo,²⁰ the secretaries Aparicio de Uribe

18 On the Duke of Uceda and the trial against him, see Benigno, *L'ombra del re*, 84-94; Regina M. Pérez Marcos, *El Duque de Uceda*. In Escudero, ed., *Los validos*, 177-241.

19 Real Academia de la Historia (RAH), 9-3683, Por Sebastián de Aguirre, agente del Duque de Osuna y preso su casa por cárcel, con el señor licenciado Don Juan Chumazero de Sotomayor, del ábito de Santiago y fiscal de la junta de los negocios del dicho Duque, ff. 474r-481v.

20 F. de Quevedo, *Grandes anales de quince días*. In *Semanario erudito*, t. I, Madrid 1787; P. Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645)*. (Madrid: Castalia, 1998). In addition to performing for years as secretary and adviser of the Duke of Osuna, Quevedo was also a prolific author of political treaties and theatrical works, in which he often meditated on the theme of *valimiento*, both during the reign of Philip III and that of his successor: *Discurso de las privanzas*, *Estudio preliminar*,

and Bernardo de Oñate, the counsellor of State don Sancho de la Cerda, Marquis de la Laguna (accused of having asked the former Viceroy of Naples for money in exchange for support in the Council of State) and the Espía mayor Andrés de Velázquez, a distant relative of Osuna.

Even though there are no traces of a memorial of the prosecution and the interrogatory to which Velázquez was submitted, his involvement in the trial and the nature of his relationship with Osuna can be explored through a memorial presented by the accused on 4 July 1621.²¹ With this document, Velázquez asked to be set free, strongly denying the charge of having used his office to promote the Duke of Osuna and lamenting the obstacles interposed to his lawyers, unable to see those same cards on which the insinuations of the public accusation were based. His long and distinguished career, as that of his father, made up of numerous unmasked enemy spies²² and poor remuneration, could testify how Velázquez had never had problems, if the job required it, to antagonize powerful men. At the same time, his past showed that nobody had ever complained of his work, nor had anyone ever suspected that he had illegally acquired money by virtue of his office. Such integrity had not been ruined, according to the accused, even by the well-known and well-established friendship that bound him to the Duke of Osuna, with whom, however, he had maintained an extensive correspondence only during his first thirteen months in Naples (1616-1617), and only on two issues: the marriage of the Marquis of Peñafiel, son and heir of the Duke, and the desire of Osuna to get back on the European battlefields with a starring role, assuming command of the army in Flanders.

Concerning the marriage, Velázquez had worked to mend the divisions born within the Sandoval clan, because the Duke of Lerma

edición y notas de Eva María Díaz Martínez. (Pamplona: EUNSA, 2000); Política de Dios, gobierno de Cristo, tiranía de Satanás. (Zaragoza 1626); Como ha de ser el privado, L. Gentili, ed. (Viareggio-Lucca: M. Baroni, 2004).

21 BNE, Mss. 18729, ff. 492r-516r.

22 «Entre otros fue de mucha consideracion el sacar a luz el trato doble del Conde Julio Cessar Santa Maura que por espia doble fue ahorcado en la plaza publica desta Corte, causa de grande importancia y que por ella se descubrio el gran engaño con que se gastava la hazienda de su Magestad con semejantes hombres en Napoles, en Sicilia y en Venecia y ademas de haverse castigado a muchos culpados a sido de grande ahorro a la Real hacienda y puestose en mejor introduçion aquellas inteligencias [...]»: *ivi*, f. 495r.

openly opposed the union of his niece, the daughter of the Duke of Uceda, with the heir of Osuna: a war between two great noble families would not have helped anybody, as specified by Velázquez, not even the king. At the same time, the desire never hidden by Osuna to return to fight in Northern Europe had been encouraged as much as possible, suggesting the viceroy to continue to prove his worth and to follow the directives coming from Madrid. In this way, he could take advantage of a situation objectively favourable for the race to the command of the army in Flanders, given the poor health of the Archduke Albert²³ and the commitment of Ambrogio Spinola²⁴ at the head of the troops operating in the German theatre of war. The command of the army in Flanders, when the end of the Twelve years' truce was imminent and expected by many, was, however, the only prominent place to which he could aspire. As Velázquez remembered, the command of the fleet was firmly in the hands of Prince Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy and the Duke of Medina Sidonia, while the government of Milan had already been allocated to the Marquis of Villafranca. The choice of an experienced and capable man like Osuna would certainly have conducted - Velázquez said - a better and more efficient service to the king, and this was the only reason that ever really drove his actions. Furthermore, the use of ciphers in the correspondence with the viceroy was solely for security purposes and not to hide secrets. The hypothesis that the *Espía mayor* had exerted his power to reveal the secrets discussed in the Councils of Italy and the State to Osuna, and that he had obtained an illicit financial gain in helping a friend, esteemed and honored by all, including the king, was firmly denied. The advice given to Osuna to consider the Duke of Uceda as his main interlocutor did not hide any deception, but only the awareness of the power and the privileged position of the son of Lerma.²⁵ However, in the period under review, Uceda was still

23 Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

24 Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Ambrosio Spínola, primer Marqués de los Balbases. Ensayo biográfico*. (Madrid, 1904); Leo Just, *Ambrogio Spinola*. (Düsseldorf, 1937); Joseph Lefèvre, *Spinola et la Belgique 1601-1627*. (Bruxelles: La Renaissance du Livre, 1947).

25 In addition to Uceda, Velázquez had advised Osuna to cultivate the relationship with the king's confessor, another figure very close to Philip III: *ivi*, f. 505v. In order to

a simple minister of the king, so nothing prevented Velázquez from bringing him gifts or money on behalf of Osuna. Also, such donations were solely intended to contribute to the preparations of the Marquis of Peñafiel's marriage, the rest wasn't used for fraud, but only for the customary exchange of courtesies and gifts among friends and relatives.

Between November 1622 and July 1623 all the trials against the allies and clients of Uceda and Osuna reached a sentence, which was rather mild compared to the predictions of the vigil. Andrés de Velázquez was condemned to a fine of 1.000 ducats and the expenses of the trials, and with the scarce documentation available it is not possible to know with certainty whether he continued in his role as *Espía mayor*, and we do not even know the date of his death. His name remains linked to a very significant institutional figure of Baroque Europe, when the international wars and the actions of foreign spies necessitated the creation of a *Superintendente de las correspondencias secretas*. Certainly, his role in the period of the trials that marked the early years of the reign of Philip IV was much less significant. Taking everything into consideration, the Duke of Uceda was condemned, after only a year of trial, to a temporary exile and given a non-expensive fine. The new rulers were also willing to appoint him Viceroy in Catalonia, but Uceda preferred to decline. Regarding the Duke of Osuna, not only was he not condemned to death, as Calderón, but he did not even know the verdict of his trial: the sentence, deliberately delayed, was never reached, even after his death in prison in 1624. Finally, being a cardinal saved Lerma from a more serious trial, allowing him to conclude his long life naturally, and in freedom. The revocation of his *mercedes* was the only defeat, albeit significant, which he had to stand, despite the solid and well-grounded arguments made by his lawyers to contest the proceedings. Behind the charges against him, there was actually a debate on the limits of the favourites' power and the responsibilities of the kings who allowed their rise: a theme destined to be repeated frequently in the history of baroque Europe.

mend the rift with Lerma, which initiated on the occasion of the discussed marriage, Velázquez had suggested Osuna to send a gift to the Duke, still defined, in 1617, "the supreme minister of the Monarchy": *ivi*, f. 512v.