

## THE WAR OF THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE (1718-20): THE «GREAT WAR» THAT NEVER WAS

### *La guerra de la Cuádruple Alianza (1718-1720): la «gran guerra» que nunca fue*

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Fecha de Recepción: 7 de septiembre de 2022  
Fecha de aprobación: 17 de noviembre de 2022

**ABSTRACT:** The peace settlement of Utrecht and Rastatt-Baden (1713-14) left unresolved many of the issues at stake in the War of the Spanish Succession and also created new problems. These, above all the fact that Philip V and his rival for the Spanish throne, the archduke Charles («Charles III») — from 1711 Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI — had not made peace in 1713-14, threatened to re-ignite a war which might involve the rest of Europe. British and French ministers sought to devise measures to settle these differences. In 1717 Philip's forces occupied the island of Sardinia and in 1718 invaded neighbouring Sicily, prompting the conclusion of the Quadruple Alliance (August 1718) to impose a solution on Spain (and Savoy). The English defeat of the Spanish fleet at Cape Passaro in August 1718 threatened to escalate into a more general war comparable to the War of the Spanish Succession. However, Philip V was unable to find allies or to incite revolt in Britain and France. The conflict was limited to a few theatres and participants and ended when Philip V joined the Quadruple Alliance in early 1720. The episode throws important light on Spanish priorities, on the «fiscal-military» state and on the working of the international system in the aftermath of the War of the Spanish Succession a period in which the revanchist aspirations of Philip V were among the most serious threats to peace in Europe. The experience suggests we should not be too dismissive of more traditional approaches to diplomatic history.

*Keywords:* quadruple alliance; war; diplomacy; Savoy; Spain.

RESUMEN: El acuerdo de paz de Utrecht y Rastatt-Baden (1713-14) dejó sin resolver muchas de las cuestiones en juego en la Guerra de Sucesión Española y también creó nuevos problemas. Estos, sobre todo el hecho de que Felipe V y su rival por el trono español, el archiduque Carlos («Carlos III») —desde 1711 emperador Carlos VI del Sacro Imperio Romano Germánico— no hubieran hecho las paces en 1713-14, amenazaban con volver a encender una guerra que podría implicar al resto de Europa. Los ministros británico y francés intentaron idear medidas para resolver estas diferencias. En 1717 las fuerzas de Felipe ocuparon la isla de Cerdeña y en 1718 invadieron la vecina Sicilia, lo que provocó la conclusión de la Cuádruple Alianza (agosto de 1718) para imponer una solución a España (y Saboya). La derrota inglesa de la flota española en Cabo Passaro en agosto de 1718 amenazó con convertirse en una guerra más general comparable a la Guerra de Sucesión española. Sin embargo, Felipe V no pudo encontrar aliados ni incitar a la revuelta en Gran Bretaña y Francia. El conflicto se limitó a unos pocos teatros y participantes y finalizó con la incorporación de Felipe V a la Cuádruple Alianza a principios de 1720. El episodio arroja importantes luces sobre las prioridades españolas, sobre el estado «fiscal-militar» y sobre el funcionamiento del sistema internacional en el secuelas de la Guerra de Sucesión española un período en el que las aspiraciones revanchistas de Felipe V se encontraban entre las más graves amenazas a la paz en Europa. La experiencia sugiere que no debemos desdeñar demasiado los enfoques más tradicionales de la historia diplomática.

*Palabras clave:* cuádruple alianza; guerra; diplomacia; Saboya; España.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Europe is punctuated by wars, threats of wars, and minor confrontations which threatened to escalate into the sort of major conflict, fought over many years in many theatres across a wide area and involving numerous powers often in opposing alliances or coalitions, exemplified by the War of the Spanish Succession, but which don't become what we might call «Great Wars». Exemplary is the cycle of war in western Europe between 1717 and 1720, generally designated the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20), although the Quadruple Alliance was only concluded in August 1718, by just three — not four — allies.<sup>1</sup> This essay

1. The quadruple alliance was so-called because although initially (August 1718) only Britain, France and the Emperor were signatories; the Dutch republic was expected to adhere to it but — and contrary to many accounts (Szechi, 2019: 187) — did not do so (Williams, 1930: 290; Hatton, 1950: 166-205).

seeks to explain why the War of the Quadruple Alliance — one of the most obscure of the wars fought in the eighteenth century, and omitted from many lists of those conflicts (Brewer, 1989: 30) — happened at all but also why it remained so limited in time and space — Sicily, northern Spain, and the highlands of Scotland — and in the number of combatants. The obvious contrast is with the War of the Spanish Succession, when rival alliances fought — inside and outside Europe — for over a decade. Historiographically, the episode has been interpreted as: an indication of the revival of Spain after the supposed decline of the late Habsburg era (Ozanam, 1985, 441-571; Storrs, 2016); in Britain as a stage on the road towards greater consultation of Parliament on foreign policy matters after the revolution of 1688 (Gibbs, 1962: 18-37); and on the international stage as marking both the rise of Britain and further progress toward a sense of «collective security» on the part of the major European powers, comparable to the Partition Treaties of 1698-1700 (Thomson, 1968 (a); Thomson, 1968 (b), posing the question why the Quadruple Alliance succeeded whereas those earlier agreements had failed.

But why should we expect the escalation of any conflict into a major European war 1718-20? The simple answer is that this was what had happened before. In the 25 years between 1688 and 1713 the major powers in western Europe (and some lesser ones) had fought two general wars, the Nine Years War, or War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13/14). The period of peace between these two wars was very brief; and one of the most remarkable efforts made by decision makers to avoid a major conflict, the Partition Treaties of 1698-1700, failed in the end to do so (Ribot and Inurritegui, 2016: *passim*). It was all too likely therefore, given the ambitions, resentments and tensions which the various sovereigns harboured at this time, that the Spanish conquest of Sardinia in 1717 and above all the invasion of Sicily in 1718 would mean that the interval of peace between one major war and the next would again be brief.

Contemporaries certainly thought so. In the summer of 1717 the English minister in Spain, George Bubb Dodington, reporting the departure from Barcelona of the expeditionary force destined for Sardinia wrote «the next spring Italy will be the theatre of a war perhaps as violent and bloody as the last», ie the War of the Spanish Succession<sup>2</sup>. A year later, in the spring of 1718 the French diplomat, the abbe Dubois, one of the architects of the Quadruple Alliance, told one of the leaders of the faction at the French Court which favoured Philip V and which opposed the idea of confronting him implied by the peace plan of the nascent Quadruple Alliance, that the only alternative to that plan was a general war (Williams, 1930: 297). At the same time, William Stanhope, Bubb's successor in Madrid, told Philip V's chief

2. National Archives, London [henceforth NAL], State Papers [SP] series 94 [Spain], volume 87, George Bubb to Addison, Madrid, 9 Aug. 1717.

minister, Giulio Alberoni that a general war was a real possibility if Spain rejected the peace plan.<sup>3</sup> Alberoni himself looked forward to a «good war» in August 1718 (Williams, 1930: 307-8). The Emperor Charles VI also hoped for a vigorous, general war (Michael, 1939: 99), while in December 1719, James Craggs, one of the English Secretaries of State told the marchese di Cortanze, the envoy in London of the king of Sicily, that even if England's war against Spain lasted ten years the English fleet would not leave the Mediterranean until the king was in possession of Sardinia, as in the peace plan.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, many expected — some even hoped for — a far more serious war to arise out of the events of 1717-18.

Such expectations were fueled in part by important developments in the war-making capacity of many states, including the emergence of what has been called the «fiscal-military» state, one better able to mobilise the funds needed to wage large-scale long-term war: to maintain large permanent armies and navies and to pay subsidies to foreign allies (Brewer, 1989; Torres Sanchez, 2007; Storrs, 2009; Yun Casalilla, O'Brien and Comin Comin, 2012).

In what follows I want to suggest that the failure of the war of the Quadruple Alliance to become something more serious was due to a combination of (1) structural factors — what *Annales* historians might call a conjuncture — a period of general weakness in which British superiority at sea was especially marked, but also a superiority exercised with notable restraint; (2) contingency; and (3) the role of a few key individuals, notably James Stanhope, the English Secretary of State for the South and the North at various times between 1714 and his death in 1721 and the chief English minister of George I at the time of the war (Williams, 1930), together with his French collaborator, the abbe Dubois, acting for the French Regent, the duke of Orleans (Shennan, 1979).

The success of the Quadruple Alliance in preventing a major war was also a triumph of diplomacy (Williams, 1930). Unfortunately, diplomatic history - or rather traditional or «old» diplomatic history, studies of bilateral or trilateral negotiations, has long been out of fashion, and the diplomacy of these decades dismissed as elitist, superficial, unsuccessful, and unworthy of study. Instead, there has emerged a «new» diplomatic history, one concerned less with the details of negotiation than with the broad «culture» of *ancien regime* diplomacy (Sowerby and Hennings, 2017). This essay seeks to suggest that diplomatic negotiation was important, not least in helping to ensure that western Europe survived frequent crises to enjoy twenty years of relative peace between 1713 and 1733.

3. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88, William Stanhope to Addison, Madrid, March 28 1718 NS.

4. Archivio di Stato, Turin [AST], Lettere di Ministri [LM], Inghilterra, mazzo 27. Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 10 Jan 1720.

## 2. THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR OF THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE

The War of the Quadruple Alliance was the consequence — as so many wars were (and are) — of the fact that many of the issues at stake in the Spanish Succession struggle remained unresolved. The peace of Utrecht (1713), one largely imposed upon its allies by Queen Anne's Tory government, following secret negotiations with the French, and that of Rastatt-Baden (1714), between the Empire and France, ought to have ended the more than a decade of war triggered by the death of the last Spanish Habsburg, and the accession in Spain, of the first Bourbon, Philip V. But that was not the case, such that these two peace settlements were more a temporary interruption rather than a resolution of an enduring and complex dispute and had in fact further complicated the original quarrel.

England (Great Britain following the union with Scotland, 1707) has generally been regarded as the main beneficiary of the Utrecht settlement. Its gains included recognition by Spain of its possession of Gibraltar and Menorca, the acquisition of the *asiento*, ie the contract to supply Spanish America with African slaves, plus the so-called annual permission ship (the first significant breach of Spain's monopoly of trade with the Indies) (Delgado, 2015), and the grant of Sicily to Britain's *de facto* protégé, the duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus. However, the settlement was widely seen, even in Britain, as a «Tory» peace, (McKay, 1971) one which had betrayed Britain's allies, including the Catalan supporters of Philip V's rival for the Spanish succession, «Charles III», such that when Queen Anne died in 1714 there was a possibility that her successor, George I, and his Whig ministers might renew the war. Fears that the war might be renewed were also fueled by French delays in implementing the peace terms. Louis XIV had promised to respect the Protestant succession in Britain and to expel from France the Old Pretender, James Edward Stuart (son of James II, ousted in the «Glorious» Revolution of 1688), whose restoration was the goal of the Jacobite movement. James Edward had removed only to Lorraine and he and his supporters in France remained a threat to the new Protestant, Hanoverian regime in England. Louis had also agreed to dismantle the fortifications of Dunkirk, the base of the privateers who — following the collapse of the French navy — had successfully preyed on British shipping during the war of succession, but he delayed the demolition and sought to make good the loss of Dunkirk's facilities by developing others nearby (Frey and Frey, 1995). These issues confirmed a deep-rooted British hostility towards France and its absolute, Catholic king. England also had its difficulties with Bourbon Spain, not least Philip V's resentment of the concessions (above) forced on him in 1713 to secure peace and the defects of the commercial treaty of that same year. Nevertheless, George I and his Whig ministers preferred to resolve their difficulties with France and Spain by negotiation — including revised agreements with Spain regarding trade (December 1715) and the *asiento* (May 1716) — and did not renew the war as some had hoped and others had feared (Smith, 1987: 6-18; McLachlan, 1940: 46-77).

More disturbing was the fact that the Holy Roman Emperor, the Austrian Habsburg Charles VI, ruler of the extensive Habsburg territories in central Europe, was unhappy with the peace settlement. He had made significant territorial gains at Spain's expense in Italy and Flanders but resented his failure to secure Sicily — refusing to recognize Victor Amadeus as king — and the Savoyard's reversionary claim on the Spanish succession agreed in 1713<sup>5</sup>. But the fundamental source of instability was the continued rivalry for the Spanish throne of Charles VI and Philip V. Charles refused to recognise Philip as king of Spain (Hochedlinger, 2003: 197; León Sanz, 2003: 253). Indicative of Charles' determination to maintain his Spanish claims was the response of his minister, Pentenriedter towards the end of 1716 to an early version of what became the peace plan of the Quadruple Alliance, according to which Charles must renounce his Spanish claims, and agree to the installation of Don Carlos in Parma and Piacenza; Pentenriedter not only queried these concessions, but demanded Mexico and Peru for his master. A year later, in further discussions of the plan, Pentenriedter hoped George I's government would secure Majorca for Charles (Williams, 1930: 287; Michael, 1936: 341).

Philip V was also dissatisfied with many aspects of the peace settlement, not least in Italy. His revanchism ensured that Spain was the greatest threat to peace in western Europe between 1713 and 1748. His preoccupation with Italy pre-dated Philip's second marriage, in 1714, to Isabel Farnese, who has traditionally been identified as the main influence on Spanish policy in this period, driven by her desire for a refuge for herself should Philip die and for thrones in Italy for her sons, since Philip's sons from his first marriage were expected to succeed him in Spain (Storrs, 2016: 3). Philip's Italian ambitions — made very clear in the instructions to his plenipotentiaries at Utrecht before his second marriage — focused on the territories which had made up Spanish Habsburg Italy-Milan, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia and the Tuscan presidios and Siena (Martin, 1976: pp. 407-25; Storrs, 2016) — whereas Isabel's centred on the Farnese duchies of Parma and Piacenza and the (Medici) grand duchy of Tuscany, where she had claims should the Medici fail. In addition, Isabel's stepfather, the duke of Parma sought to use both her and his representative in Madrid, Giulio Alberoni to secure Spanish support for his own agenda in Italy, the «secret du Farnese» (Bourgeois, 1909). Here was more opportunity to quarrel with Charles VI who himself hoped to secure Parma, Piacenza and Tuscany on the extinction of their ruling families, thus tightening his grip on Italy. Philip V's Italian ambitions were driven in part by a conviction that, as Bubb noted in September

5. Charles also resented the presence of Dutch garrisons in the so-called «Barrier Fortresses» in his newly acquired Austrian Low Countries, formerly Spanish Flanders, and the fact that the Dutch were to receive a share of the revenues of Flanders to maintain those troops, which he considered an encroachment on his sovereignty (Hatton, 1950: 53-86).

1717, «while the Emperor is so powerful in Italy the King is not secure in Spain». <sup>6</sup> Philip and many of his ministers believed that unless restrained by Spain, Charles VI's extensive dominion in Italy threatened Italian liberty, which in turn threatened Philip's position in Spain. The mutual antagonism of Philip and Charles did not lack broader support; each was supported by exile communities in the territories of both monarchs who hoped for their own restoration and whose aspirations, along with those of other interested groups strengthened the possibility of the many minor confrontations which occurred after 1713 escalating into something more serious (León Sanz, 2008; León Sanz, 2015).

In many respects, Charles VI was the greater threat to the peace, especially in Italy where Victor Amadeus was seeking in 1713-14 to construct an Anglo-French-Savoyard alliance to contain the Emperor (Manno, Ferrero, and Vayra, 1886-91: 213-15). In September 1714, Victor Amadeus, having removed from Turin to Palermo, intending to make Sicily his permanent residence and capital, returned to Turin fearing attack by the Emperor's forces in Milan (Baraudon, 1896: 50; Symcox, 1983: 173). Subsequently, in early 1716 a crisis arose when Imperial troops seized the town of Novi in the territory of the Genoese republic, in breach of the neutrality of Italy agreed in 1713-14. According to Bubb, Philip V resolved to offer the Pope troops, ships and galleys under cover of defence against the Turks but with the intention of confronting the Emperor if he should persist. Bubb referred to an unknown friend [probably Alberoni] who hoped George I would support Philip in the crisis both as a prince he wished to live well with and as guarantor of the neutrality of Italy. Bubb also took the opportunity to outline a peace plan to reconcile Charles and Philip, one which included the future succession in Italy of the newly born Don Carlos, and which Bubb thought would benefit England at the expense of France; otherwise «we [the English] shall hardly maintain the interest we have got here at present». <sup>7</sup>

However, the crisis provoked by Imperial intervention in Italy did not escalate and war was avoided in the west in 1716. This was largely because of Charles VI's intervention in the war against the Ottomans in the east. In April 1716 Charles concluded an alliance with the republic of Venice, then fighting the Turks and himself joined that conflict. In order to secure his position in the west (including Italy) while engaged in the Balkans, Charles concluded a defensive alliance with George I in May 1716, each party guaranteeing the existing territories and any future acquisitions of the other. The treaty strengthened George I's position in Britain and anticipated his acquisition of Bremen and Verden in north Germany from Sweden

6. NAL/ SP 94, vol 87, Bubb to Addison, Madrid, 20 Sept. 1717.

7. NAL/ SP 94, vol 85, Bubb to Stanhope, Madrid, 19 Feb. 1716. This letter is cited at length in Coxe 1815, 2: 218-22.

in the Great Northern War (1700-21). (Williams: Stanhope, 209-11.) The treaty also had implications for the quarrel between Charles and Philip V and the latter's designs on the Emperor's position in Italy, implications of which the Spanish Court was well aware according to Bubb.<sup>8</sup> The war in the Balkans — where Charles' forces defeated the Turks at Peterwardein in August 1716 and in 1717 captured Belgrade (Hochedlinger, 2003: 195) — was an important factor in decisions for war and peace throughout western Europe between 1716 and 1718, the temporary redeployment of troops there from Italy offering Philip V a window of opportunity to act in Italy should he wish to seize it.

George I's ministers were also improving relations with the French. The weakness of France which had forced Louis XIV to make peace in 1713-14 persisted after Louis' death in 1715 when a wholly new situation arose. Louis XIV was succeeded, following a fortuitous spate of deaths in the French royal family, by his great grandson, the five year old Louis XV. Ordinarily the contradicting the commonplace that the period 1688-1815 witnessed a «second Hundred Year War» between the two countries would have passed to Philip V, as the king's closest living male relative; only Philip's renunciation of his place in the French succession in 1713 deprived contradicting the commonplace that the period 1688-1815 witnessed a «second Hundred Year War» between the two countries contradicting the commonplace that the period 1688-1815 witnessed a «second Hundred Year War» between the two countries of the regency, which passed to the duke of Orleans. But Philip V did not feel bound by a renunciation which had been forced on him, a view shared by many in France (Baudrillart, 1890-1901:). To secure both France and his own position against Philip, Orleans was prepared to deal with the traditional enemy. In November 1716 James Stanhope and abbe Dubois concluded a remarkable alliance between their two Courts, which in view of the long hostility between the two (some historians seeing the period 1688-1815 as a «second Hundred Year War» between the two countries) has been dubbed a «diplomatic revolution» (Williams, 1930: 211-29; Shennan, 1979: 51-62)

But the alliance went further, proposing a general peace plan which not only confirmed the terms of the Utrecht settlement respecting the British and French successions, but also involved mutual recognition by Charles VI and Philip V, the cession by the Emperor to Victor Amadeus of Sardinia in return for Sicily — a striking revision of the Utrecht settlement — and recognition of Isabel Farnese's claims on the succession of Parma and Tuscany.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this plan was the requirement that Victor Amadeus pay the price of

8. NAL, SP 94/ 85: Bubb to Stanhope, 18 July 1716]

9. In January 1717 that agreement became the Triple Alliance, with the accession of the Dutch republic (Hatton, 1950: 142-3).

reconciling Charles and Philip. However, both Philip and the Emperor resented Victor Amadeus's possession of Sicily, while George I and the Whigs were not inclined to defend a key provision of the Tory peace of 1713. Furthermore, Victor Amadeus' wife was a granddaughter of Charles I of England, with a claim to the British throne, and had protested against the Act of Settlement (1701) whereby the English parliament had settled the succession on the protestant house of Hanover; she also made a point of receiving all distinguished English visitors to Turin, including in 1718, lady Mary Wortley Montagu who was accompanying her husband on his embassy to Constantinople (Wortley Montagu, 1994: 155-56). Significantly, no English minister was sent to Turin between 1714 and 1720. It is also possible that, as in 1698-1700 when a similar antipathy may have robbed Victor Amadeus of the Spanish succession in the partition treaty negotiations between William III and Louis XIV, many sovereigns resented his exploitation of the strategic value of his states to make gains at their expense since 1690 (Storrs, 1999; Williams, 1930: 275), and enjoyed his discomfiture. It was claimed by James Stanhope that Victor Amadeus had offered to surrender Sicily, early in 1716 (Williams, 1930: 277), although just what the king proposed is not wholly clear; his later actions suggest that he wished to keep Sicily and that if he must exchange it he wanted more than Sardinia.

Sicily was at the heart of the quarrel between Philip V and Charles VI in these years. For Philip, Sicily was valuable, not only in itself, but also for its strategic position, as the gateway to Naples and springboard for the recovery of the rest of Spanish Italy: as Alberoni observed in October 1718, without Sicily, Charles' hold on Naples and other parts of Italy was not secure (Bourgeois, 1892). Philip's act of cession of Sicily of June 1713 had provided that should the house of Savoy die out the island should revert to the Spanish crown, and that Victor Amadeus could not cede it to anybody but Philip or Spain (Cantillo, 1843: 110-12). Reversion was not such a distant prospect. Victor Amadeus had two sons but the eldest, the Prince of Piedmont — who remained in Turin when his father left for Sicily in 1713 — died in 1715, such that the Savoyard succession thereafter depended solely on the survival of the future Charles Emanuel III. Philip's reversionary interest in Sicily might also be advantageous to Victor Amadeus who was soon at odds with a Pope who claimed that he, as feudal overlord of Sicily, should have a say in any transfer of the island. Victor Amadeus sought Philip's support in Rome, arguing that the Spanish king should protect Sicily's privileges given his interest. Philip was responsive to this argument, he and his ministers taking a close interest in the spat between Victor Amadeus and the Roman Curia over Sicily's distinctive ecclesiastical status, the so-called «Sicilian Monarchy» (Symcox, 1983: 173-74). In January 1716 Philip V ordered his minister in Turin, the marques de Villamayor, to monitor any accord between the Courts of Turin and Rome respecting Sicily, and to oppose anything in it contrary to Philip's reversionary right (Garufi, 1914).

A more immediate and for Victor Amadeus irritating indicator of Philip's determination to interfere in Sicily was the provision in the act of cession that Philip would retain the estates of those of his subjects who had suffered confiscation during the succession struggle for supporting Charles VI. These territories — the largest being the county of Modica, confiscated from the Almirante de Castilla in 1703 — allowed Philip to maintain a substantial presence in Sicily after 1713 (Symcox, 1983: 173). Victor Amadeus resented Philip's infringement of his sovereignty but had preferred to accept it rather than delay his acquisition of the island, and with it the royal title long sought by the house of Savoy (Carutti, 1875-80, 3, 445-46; Oresko, 1997). Thereafter the Spanish Court created endless difficulties for the Savoyards in Sicily, where Philip and his ministers maintained a network of supporters and frequently intervened on behalf of Spanish subjects, to Savoyard annoyance.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately for James Stanhope, while Charles and Philip found attractive some features of the peace plan he had devised at the end of 1716, neither approved the whole package. In April 1717 Bubb reported the Spanish Court's rejection of the latest offers, for the succession of Isabel Farnese's children in Parma and Tuscany; according to Alberoni, the concessions scarcely affected the overall balance of power in Italy, and were not certain prospects since the failure of both Medici and Farnese was not inevitable, yet in return Philip must surrender all of his own claims against the Emperor- arguments which emphasise again that we should not allow the queen's Italian ambitions to obscure those of Philip himself.<sup>11</sup> Efforts to win over to the evolving plan both Charles and Philip were continuing when in the summer of 1717, the «cold» war between them exploded again into armed conflict, following the detention in Milan of the newly appointed Inquisitor General of Spain, Jose Molines, on his way from Rome to Spain. (Williams, 1930: 281; Ochoa Brun, 2002). A Spanish expeditionary force of 9,000 men invaded Sardinia, which was vulnerable to attack given the Emperor's lack of a fleet of his own and the fact that because of the war in the Balkans the island was relatively lightly garrisoned. The preparation of the expedition and its departure had been monitored closely by the British consuls in Spain, not least because of fears that it might be directed against the British presence in the Mediterranean.<sup>12</sup> This was not the case. The various documents whereby the Spanish Court sought to convince foreign governments and opinion of the justice of its action, and which were summarized in Daniel Defoe's contribution to the contemporary pamphlet debate in Britain in 1718 *The Case*

10. Archivo General de Simancas [AGS], Estado series, legajo, 1875, marchese Morozzo to Jose Grimaldo, Madrid, 2 Oct 1714.

11. NAL/ SP 94/ vol 86, Bubb to Methuen, Madrid, 12 Apr. 1717, cited in Coxe, 1815, 2: 265-67]

12. NAL/ SP 94, vol. 87. Consul Russell [?] to Bubb, Cadiz, 21 June 1717; Bubb to Addison, Madrid, 28 June 1717.

*of the War in Italy Stated*, made clear that the arrest of Molines was the last straw in a succession of provocations by Charles VI (Alonso Aguilera, 1977; Williams, 1930: 282).

The invasion and conquest of Sardinia was the first major breach of the settlement of 1713-14 and necessitated a response by the other powers, including George I whose alliance with the Emperor (1716) obliged him to defend Charles VI's territories; Bubb had already pointed this out to Alberoni on the eve of the departure of the expedition, following orders from London to do so.<sup>13</sup> The invasion — and a suspicion that, despite the statements of the Spanish Court that it had no further designs on Italy, Philip V was planning another descent for 1718 — led James Stanhope to renewed efforts to have his peace plan accepted, to be implemented — enforced — by English warships. Stanhope hoped to be able to go himself to Madrid to secure Philip's agreement to the plan but was obliged to send instead William Stanhope, a relation, who reached Madrid in October 1717. Charles and Philip were invited to send representatives to a conference at London, where their differences might finally be settled. Unfortunately, while the Emperor, still preoccupied by the war in the Balkans, accepted the invitation, Philip did not; according to Bubb, writing in September 1717, the Spanish Court «regard us, in respect of the expedition against Sardinia, as on the side of the Emperor».<sup>14</sup>

The conference thus opened at Hampton Court in November 1717 without any Spanish representative present, although Dubois pressed the Spanish case, Orleans hoping that the better terms Philip V was offered the more likely he was to co-operate. A peace plan was worked out by February 1718 (Williams, 1930: 288). Charles would renounce his claims to the Spanish throne, allow Don Carlos to succeed to Parma, Piacenza and Tuscany (which were to be recognized as Imperial fiefs), and give Sardinia to Victor Amadeus, receiving Sicily in exchange. A month later the House of Commons was asked for — and agreed to give — funding for a fleet which was promised Charles VI in order to ensure his adherence to the peace plan, but which looked to some — including sir Robert Walpole — like a declaration against Spain (Gibbs, 1968: 292-3).

Between the spring and the summer of 1718, in a remarkable example of Anglo-French collaboration, the marquis de Nancre and William Stanhope sought to secure Philip V's adherence to the peace plan, against a background of on the one hand continued preparations in Spain's ports for another expedition, about which Stanhope received frequent reports — and complaints of the detention of English

13. NAL/ SP 94, vol.87, Addison to Bubb, Whitehall, 30 July 1717.

14. NAL/ SP 94, vol. 87, Bubb to Addison, Madrid, 27 Sept. 1717; Bubb did not illuminate his house in October to celebrate the surrender of Cagliari, Bubb to Addison, Madrid, 18 Oct. 1717.

ships for use as transports — from the English consuls in those ports (Alberola-Roma, 1991: 263-83) and on the other hand growing concern at the Spanish Court, evident as early as November 1717, about British plans to send a fleet to the Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup> In response to Stanhope's request that no more Spanish troops be sent to Italy, Alberoni complained that the Emperor was free to send — and was sending — troops to Italy, but also noted — more positively — that there was still time before the Spaniards executed any designs in Italy to learn Charles VI's reply to the peace plan.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, the Spanish Court had no faith in any guarantee by the mediators, who had failed to fulfil promises made to Philip V in respect of the surrender of Catalonia and Majorca in 1714-15. Finally, Alberoni wanted any negotiations (assuming a positive response by the Imperial Court) to take place in Madrid rather than London— presumably to ensure his own direction of them and his personal triumph should they succeed<sup>17</sup>. A further complication was the attitude of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who clearly resented the assumption by the greater powers that they might simply dispose of the Tuscan succession, and who also objected to specific aspects of the plan (Jones, 1998: viii-ix)]. The Spanish Court also sought an explanation for the despatch of English warships to the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> Despite these problems, Stanhope hoped that the obvious unity of purpose of George I and the duke of Orleans, and of king, Parliament and nation in Britain would restrain the Spanish Court — which had apparently flattered itself that such unity did not exist, — as long as it saw its own advantage in the peace plan<sup>19</sup>.

The Emperor's agreement to the peace plan in April 1718 ought to have eased Nancre and Stanhope's task but did not. Alberoni objected to (1) giving Sicily to the Emperor, because it would give him the fleet he lacked (above), and make him more threatening, and not just to Italy; (2) giving Sardinia to the Duke of Savoy, who had no title to Sicily, which he had gained (claimed Alberoni) only by bribing English ministers, and so did not deserve an equivalent; and (3) what was proposed regarding Parma and Tuscany. Alberoni continued to claim to fear the impact of the plan on the balance of power. However, Alberoni's insistence that Philip V would not yield Sardinia to Victor Amadeus gave Stanhope hope; he thought that that if some alternative could be found regarding Sardinia, all might yet succeed. On the other hand, more worryingly, however, he thought the Spanish Court was plotting with the Jacobites<sup>20</sup>.

15. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Addison, Madrid, March 7 1718 NS.

16. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Addison, Madrid, March 28 1718 NS.

17. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Addison, Madrid, April 4<sup>th</sup> 1718 NS.

18. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to viscount Stanhope, Madrid, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1718 NS.

19. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 18 Apr. 1718 NS.

20. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to viscount Stanhope, Madrid, April 27 1718 NS.

At the start of May, Alberoni while again damning proposals which he claimed favoured the Emperor, rendering him master of Italy, nevertheless said that Philip V would accept the peace plan if he could keep Sardinia. Since Sardinia now appeared to be the only obstacle, and since the Emperor had reportedly offered Sardinia to the Genoese for 100,000 pistoles, Stanhope hoped that the peace plan would not now fail for want of money, if Victor Amadeus would accept a cash equivalent. Stanhope thought — hoped — that Alberoni's proposal might make clear to some that the Spanish Court was not really motivated by concern about the balance of power, and the liberty of Italy; he also wondered whether Philip's recent illness, and fears on the part of Isabel Farnese and Alberoni of the likely consequences for themselves of the king's death might explain the Spanish Court's change of tack.<sup>21</sup>

Securing the Spanish Court for the peace plan was complicated at this point by the intervention of the king of Sicily. In February 1718 Victor Amadeus, who so far had avoided acceding to the peace plan, sought to avoid the forced surrender of Sicily, sending count Lascaris di Castellar to Madrid to convince Alberoni that his master was not party to the peace plan and to offer himself as an ally to the Spanish Court in its efforts to independently establish Don Carlos in the duchies and restrain Charles VI in Italy. Thus began negotiations for an alliance in which Spain would conquer Naples and Victor Amadeus Milan. However, the project stalled over Victor Amadeus' desire for the sort of wartime subsidy he had received from his allies in the Nine Years War and the War of the Spanish Succession, and the Spanish Court's demand that Victor Amadeus «deposit» Sicily into Spanish hands until their war aims had been achieved. This was little better for Victor Amadeus than the peace plan and the negotiations hung fire (Carutti, 1861: 107-211), while the Spanish preparations continued and Victor Amadeus also sought to negotiate separately with the Emperor for the exchange of Sicily for compensation in central Italy (Williams, 1930: 290). Alberoni was aware of these negotiations, and not unduly anxious about them. In the spring of 1718, Villamayor informed Alberoni from Turin of reports of a proposed marriage between Victor Amadeus's son, the future Charles Emanuel III, and a daughter of Charles VI, but argued that Victor Amadeus was unlikely to join the Emperor against Philip V, because he risked losing Sicily, which Philip could recover without difficulty given the hispanophile sentiments of the Sicilians and the Emperor's lack of naval forces while those of Victor Amadeus himself were insufficient to oppose those of Philip V, whose superiority at sea was unquestionable.<sup>22</sup> Stanhope continued to believe that Sardinia was the key to Spanish acceptance of the peace plan but feared that Philip might

21. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to lord Stanhope, Madrid, May 3 1718.

22. AGS/ Estado, legajo 5278, Villamayor to Alberoni, Turin, 23 April 1718.

send the expedition to secure Sicily from Emperor, hoping then to invade Naples.<sup>23</sup> In the meantime the British consuls continued to monitor the progress of Spanish military preparations.<sup>24</sup> According to Nancre, Alberoni expected that the Spanish expeditionary force would act before the arrival of any British fleet; nor did he think that it would confront the Spanish fleet.<sup>25</sup>

The attitude of the Spanish Court was clearly influenced in part by its perception of opinion in England, believing that the opposition in Parliament, following the Whig split of 1717, along with the weight there of mercantile opinion, anxious about its trade with Old Spain and New Spain, would prevent George I's ministers from acting on their threats to force the peace plan on Spain. According to a memoire of Britain's trade prepared at the Jacobite Court that year, in May 1718 the South Sea Company made representations to James Stanhope against the dispatch of a fleet to the Mediterranean (Williams, 1930: 292). Stanhope's optimistic response and Monteleon's reports from London may have encouraged a view in Madrid that British ministers were reluctant to confront Spain, in large part because of their fears for the impact on British trade in and with Spain. Philip V had not yet issued the necessary cedula for the annual «permission ship» to sail from Spain to Spanish America, which reflecting both a general collapse in trade between Spain and Spanish America in the developing international crisis (Walker, 1979: 91-2) but which ought to be understood as an attempt to put pressure on George I's ministers. Whatever the reason, Alberoni clearly misunderstood the restraining influence on British policy of the parliamentary opposition and the commercial sector; the latter broadly accepted the ministerial arguments that war with Spain could not be worse than the current difficulties — i.e. the obstructive approach of Spanish officials since 1713, which had escalated from the end of 1717 (Gibbs, 1968: 296-7).

In a long conference with William Stanhope at the start of June. Alberoni again raged at the failure to agree to the Spanish condition (the retention of Sardinia) for adhering to the peace plan, Stanhope pointing out that it might be worse for Spain once Charles VI had made peace with the Turks, which the British were now mediating, and that Victor Amadeus was negotiating with the Emperor to Spain's disadvantage. Stanhope hoped that Philip V would not sacrifice the peace of Europe, the blood and treasure of his own people and the advantages promised his family for a war for Sardinia, to which Alberoni merely replied that Philip was determined to attack the Emperor, adding — a reference the Englishman was presumably expected to understand — that his master was not like don Quixote, going on

23. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, May 16 1718.

24. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Grimaldo, Madrid, May 16 1718; William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, May 30 NS 1718.

25. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88, marquis de Nancre to William Stanhope, Segovia, 29 May 1718.

to boast of Spain's power and resources. When Stanhope submitted a memorial on behalf of the South Sea Company, Alberoni observed that Philip V effectively regarded England as an enemy, such that Stanhope could not expect the treaties to be observed. Alberoni in typically bombastic style declared that either England or Spain must perish, and that Spain would aid the Pretender] Stanhope forwarded to London sent a list of Spanish warships which had left Cadiz for Barcelona, collecting transports and stores for the intended expedition in several ports en route. In the light of this discussion Stanhope contacted the English consuls in Spain's ports, to warn English merchants there to be on their guard.<sup>26</sup> A few weeks later, in another long encounter Alberoni again pressed Stanhope on Sardinia, but without success. Alberoni thereupon repeated the determination of his master — by now largely recovered — to reject the peace plan and to attack the Emperor, declaring that the fate of the English merchants in Spain was in the hands of the English fleet now on its way to the Mediterranean; if the latter attacked, those merchants would suffer.<sup>27</sup>

The Spanish expeditionary force left Barcelona on 18 June 1718. It was a response to the proposal to cede Sicily to Charles VI, which breached the Utrecht settlement — i.e. the provision which obliged Victor Amadeus to surrender the island only to Philip V — such that Philip believed himself to be justified in seeking to secure the island for himself.<sup>28</sup> Alberoni's correspondence with his colleague count Rocca in Parma makes clear that the preparation of the expedition to Sicily was also influenced by awareness in Madrid of the progress of the war in the Balkans and of the British mediation of a peace between the Emperor and the Turks (Bourgeois, 1892: 561-2, 564-5, 574-5). The Sicilian expedition was one of many combined land and sea operations mounted by Philip between 1713 and 1746 but is perhaps the most obscure. This is surprising given its size; it was larger in scale and more ambitious than the reconquest of Majorca in 1715 (Vidal, 2004; Pascual Ramos, 2016) and that of Sardinia in 1717 (Alonso Aguilera, 1977). It was Spain's most ambitious seaborne expedition since the Armada sent against England in 1588 (Fernandez Duro, 1895-1903) and an impressive example of this distinctive joint form of military operation (Harding, 1990). It reflected the remarkable rebuilding since 1713 of Spain's armed forces (Andujar Castillo, 2004; Muhlmann, 1975; Storrs, 2016). The expedition collected some of the Spanish troops in Sardinia, the island functioning in 1718 as a staging post between Spain and Spanish Italy, as it had under the Spanish Habsburgs (Alonso Aguilera, 1977). The invasion force, now totaling more than 30,000 men left Sardinia for Sicily at the end of June 1718.<sup>29</sup>

26. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 6 June 1718

27. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88 William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 20 June 1718

28. NAL, SP 94/ 88: William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 28 July 1718

29. NAL/SP 94, vol. 88, William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 6 June 1718, enclosing a list of the ships expected to participate in the expedition; NAL, SP 94/213: Shallett to Craggs, Barcelona, 24 July 1718.

Victor Amadeus' hopes of a Spanish alliance (above) reflected the fact that he could not prevent the Spanish expedition from reaching Sicily because — as Villamayor had observed (above) — he had no navy to speak of to oppose Spain's resurgent seapower (Manno, 1964). In 1713-14 British warships had carried him to and from Sicily. Hitherto, the defence of the Savoyard state rested on its army. Now it must depend on the British navy — withdrawn following the accession of George I (above) — or develop its independent naval strength. But this was not easy. With Sicily Victor Amadeus acquired the realm's galley squadron. But that squadron totaled just 4 galleys. Victor Amadeus sought to enhance that strength, by building a fifth galley and — in England — a frigate (Garufi, 1914: 417). But there was more to seapower than just ships and Victor Amadeus's quarrel with the Pope did not help. In 1716, following a request from Rome that Victor Amadeus contribute his galleys to an armada against the Turks, he excused himself on the grounds of the Pope's failure to grant him the Cruzada tax, whose yield funded the galleys (Stellardi, 1862-66, 3, 356-7). Victor Amadeus' Sicily was on the way to becoming a second or third rank naval power in the long-term but in 1718 it could not halt the Spanish expeditionary force, which weighed anchor on 1 July 1718 on Sicily's northern coast, close to Palermo. The disembarkation of men and munitions was virtually unopposed. The Spanish intention was to secure the island by seizing Palermo, Messina, and the other key strongpoints of Sicily, of whose importance they would be well aware (Ligresti, 2007: 811-12). For his part, Victor Amadeus' viceroy, count Maffei, abandoned Palermo, intending to defend the island from the interior (Stellardi, 1862-66, 3, pp; 337-40).<sup>30</sup> Palermo surrendered to the invaders on 5 July, Lede entering the city as Philip V's viceroy on 6 July, other cities promptly followed (Garufi, 1914: 393-407; Carutti, 1861, 191-3).

The Spanish Court ordered celebrations of these remarkable triumphs in Spain.<sup>31</sup> The initial Spanish success was striking. An effective Savoyard resistance was undermined by various factors, including the relative weakness of the Savoyard forces in Sicily. In 1713, Victor Amadeus had taken to Sicily about 7,000 of his regular troops. But many of those troops returned with him to the mainland in 1714 and although in 1716, Victor Amadeus sent infantry and cavalry reinforcements to Sicily, his forces — almost 10,000 — were far fewer than Philip V's 30,000 (Symcox, 1983: 172). More important, Victor Amadeus' forces could not hope to resist without allies and/or the support of the Sicilians. Unfortunately, neither of these was the case. Regarding the former, Victor Amadeus was initially — and understandably in view of Charles VI's own ambitions on Sicily — reluctant to call on Charles'

30. NAL/ SP, vol. 88, translation of Jose Patiño to Duran, Palermo, 5 July 1718.

31. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88, William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 26 Aug. 1718, enclosing manuscript newsletter dated Madrid, 22 Aug. 1718.

troops in neighbouring Naples — and only did so when he finally abandoned hope of retaining Sicily and joined the Quadruple Alliance (Symcox, 1983: 181).

Victor Amadeus was also the victim of a widespread enthusiasm in Sicily for the return of Spanish dominion, something of which Philip V and his ministers were well aware and surely counted on in 1718. There had been some support for the Austrian Habsburgs in Sicily before 1713, and some for the house of Savoy thereafter (Ligresti, 2007: 799-830). But Philip's cession of the island in 1713 was not popular, Campofiorito declaring in 1712 that any cession of the realm required the convocation of the Parliament of Sicily and that there would be significant opposition, (Alvarez Ossorio Alvariano, 2007: 888-9), while hispanophile sentiment was evident throughout Sicily in 1718, urban oligarchs and feudal barons writing to Philip V to express their joy at being once again his subjects (Bourgeois, 1892: 594; Garufi, 1914: 393-95, 407-8). Maffei informed Victor Amadeus that he faced revolt throughout the island. That revolt reflected the existence of powerful ties between the islanders and Spain which dated back to the Aragonese acquisition of Sicily following the Sicilian Vespers of 1282. Those centuries old ties — economic, familial, cultural and personal — were constantly being renewed; the island's senior nobleman, the prince of Butera had had his loyalty rewarded by Philip V as recently as 1709 during the Spanish succession struggle (Alvarez Ossorio Alvariano, 2007) and could not have been eroded in a few years.

But those ties might not have been so strong if Victor Amadeus had been more popular in Sicily. Victor Amadeus was the first resident sovereign for centuries, and welcomed by some in Sicily for that reason. But his return to Turin in 1714 dashed Sicilian hopes of having a resident prince. Besides being an absentee king, Victor Amadeus ruled Sicily with too heavy a hand. Before his coronation he had sworn to observe the *fueros* of the realm, in return receiving the homage of the three estates of the realm. However, his innovations, including a new enumeration of the population (for tax purposes) were widely resented. Last, but by no means least, commitment or loyalty to Victor Amadeus and the distant Court of Turin were undoubtedly weakened by rumours, circulating as early as 1715 that the island was to be given to another prince as part of the continuing efforts to establishing a lasting peace in Europe. In January 1716 Villamayor had suggested to Sicilians resident in Turin that the island might soon be restored to Philip V in accord with the terms of its cession in 1713 (Garufi, 1914: 269-71; De Nardi, 2017).

The initial Spanish success in Sicily triggered the conclusion at last in London of the Quadruple Alliance, on 2 August 1718 (Cantillo, 1843: 171-74). The Emperor was to get Sicily, Victor Amadeus to acquire Sardinia (and to retain the territories in North Italy that Charles VI had hoped to recover); Parma and Tuscany were to pass to Don Carlos, but as Imperial fiefs; Charles VI and Philip V were to recognize each other; and there were guarantees of the successions in Great Britain and France

as laid down in 1713. Secret articles provided for joint coercive action against Spain and Victor Amadeus if either refused to co-operate with the Quadruple Alliance within three months (Williams, 1930: 310), while failure to comply also meant that Don Carlos would forfeit Parma and Tuscany (Jones, 1998: 24, 27). Significantly, the Emperor's ministers had objected to the original preamble in which the mediators appeared to take it upon themselves to distribute states to ensure the peace, irrespective of dynastic legitimacy, the objections echoing the attitude of Charles' father, Emperor Leopold towards the Partition Treaties of 1698-1700; then, as now in 1718, the mediating powers were thought to display a shocking disregard for rightful dynastic claims (Michael, 1939: 310-11), in what might be thought of as another expression of post 1688 English «revolution» foreign policy (Storrs, 2014: 21-34). But, unlike his father in 1698-1700, Charles VI did sign up. Victor Amadeus was at last «admitted» to the alliance on 8 November 1718 (Solar de la Marguerite, 1836-61: 2), following an unsuccessful final attempt, by means of a separate deal with the Emperor, to avoid the exchange imposed by the Quadruple Alliance and secure Parma and Tuscany in return rather than Sardinia (Symcox, 1983: 181).

The Spanish Court, buoyed by its success in Sicily, took a very different view and finally rejected the peace plan. It had done so initially in June 1718 in response to the communication of his orders by admiral Byng, commander of the English ships, which had left England for the Mediterranean just days before the departure of the Spanish expeditionary force for Sicily, with instructions to maintain the neutrality of Italy and defend the Emperor's dominions against attack. The reply given was that he must act as he was ordered. A second and more important attempt to convince the Spanish Court of the need to adhere to the Quadruple Alliance and the peace plan was made by the architect of the latter, James Stanhope, who made a personal visit to the Spanish Court, arriving in Madrid on 12 August and leaving two weeks later. The granting of a passport to Stanhope by the Spanish Court suggested that a settlement was still possible,<sup>32</sup> but the mission failed. The Spanish Court rejected the plan and instead made wide-ranging demands regarding Sardinia, Sicily, the duchies and Italy. Alberoni, rejecting an offer by Stanhope of Gibraltar, anticipated the complete conquest of Sicily and more generous offers from the mediating powers in the winter, before another campaign in 1719 (Williams, 1930: 307, 334, 346).

The initial Spanish success in Sicily had depended not just upon the support of the local population but also upon the collaboration of Spain's land and sea forces, the latter ensuring communications with Sardinia and Spain. Unfortunately, however, for the invaders the Spanish strategy suffered a major blow when, on 11 August 1718 Byng's fleet destroyed most of the Spanish transports and their escort at cape Passaro, off Sicily's southern coast, in one of the most decisive naval

32. NAL/SP 94, vol. 88, Holzendorf to Schaub, Madrid, 1 Aug. 1718.

engagements ever fought between Spain and England. This was a major blow, one clearly welcome to those English ministers who feared Spain's reviving seapower (Williams, 1930: 305). In fact, and contrary to many accounts of the action, the disaster had not annihilated the Spanish fleet (Garufi, 1914; 423-24)<sup>33</sup> which had done enough before the disaster to ensure the presence on the island of a large Spanish force which continued to make progress towards the complete conquest of Sicily, aided by the local recruitment of new regiments.<sup>34</sup> In Spain, a month after the battle, Alberoni informed William Stanhope that the defeat would not mean a Spanish withdrawal from Sicily.<sup>35</sup> However, although he continued outwardly defiant, the defeat was a significant blow and in reality, Alberoni was less confident, lamenting the failure of the expeditionary force to complete the conquest of the island before the English arrived (Bourgeois, 1892: 586). Earlier, in June 1718 — before Cape Passaro — Alberoni had admitted to count Rocca that Spain would only succeed, in the much more ambitious bigger project of expelling the Germans from Italy, if it found allies. Now, in October 1718 Alberoni admitted further to his correspondent that Spain could not fight on alone (Bourgeois, 1892: 607-8). It remained to be seen whether the cardinal and his master could widen the war, opening up new fronts and finding allies to prevent Charles VI from switching troops from the Balkans to Italy following the conclusion of the peace of Passarowitz in July 1718, mediated by the English; the Emperor welcomed a settlement which freed him to respond more effectively than hitherto to the Spanish incursions in Italy (Michael, 1936: 359-70; Williams, 1930: 309; Hochedlinger, 195-96).

### 3. ENDING THE WAR

Alberoni may in fact have been inclined to settle with the Quadruple Alliance, but Isabel Farnese is widely thought to have ensured that Philip rejected the terms offered him by the allies on 20 October 1718 and broke off formal diplomatic relations (Smith, 1987: 159), William Stanhope leaving Madrid in mid November 1718, without being granted a farewell audience by the Spanish king. Britain declared war on Spain on 28 December 1718 (Smith, 1987: 299), followed soon after by France. In fact hostilities had already begun following the encounter at Cape Passaro, with reprisals against British property in Spain (Smith, 1987: 147-50). Given the blow to Spain's naval strength at Cape Passaro — which, as well as besides cutting links

33. According to *Relacion de los Navios...*, AGS, Seg Marina, leg 739, the 10 vessels which escaped carried a total of 430 guns; NAL/ SP 94, vol 88, consul Russell to Stanhope, Cadiz, 19 Sept. 1718, for ships returning to Cadiz under D. Baltasar de Guevara. All of the galleys (under D. Francisco de Grimau) managed to retreat to Palermo (Bourgeois, 1892: 604-5).

34. AGS/SG/Sup 235, *Relacion de los oficiales...* Barcelona, 1 Oct. 1720.

35. NAL/ SP 94, vol 88, William Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, Sept 12 1718.

between the Spanish forces in Sicily and both Sardinia and Spain, also prevented those forces from carrying the war into Naples and Italy — Philip depended largely on corsairs and others to pursue the war at sea (Garufi, 1914: 497-98). This had its advantages, in hitting Britain's trade but more must be done if Spain was to succeed against the Quadruple Alliance. Above all, Spain needed allies. The failure of Victor Amadeus' efforts to secure a Spanish alliance in the spring, the Spanish invasion of Sicily and Victor Amadeus's subsequent adherence to the Quadruple Alliance was a serious blow as it meant that the Spanish Court could not now hope for a Savoyard attack on Milan (as would occur in 1733) or incursion into France (as had happened in the Nine Years War, War of the Spanish Succession and War of the Austrian Succession), which might have distracted both powers and also have opened up the possibility of a more general war.

Philip V's most obvious ally ought to have been Bourbon France. Philip's grandfather, Louis XIV had been Philip's great support in the War of the Spanish Succession. But France was now much weaker, in every respect (Rowlands, 2012: 228-39). More important, Philip and Orleans were rivals, France an ally of Britain, with Orleans benefiting from the Quadruple Alliance's confirmation of the Utrecht settlement insofar as it addressed the question of the French succession (Dhondt, 2016). But war — especially one against a king of Spain of the house of Bourbon — might threaten Orleans' position in France such that he was as reluctant as George I's government to break with Philip V. The Spanish Court sought — through the Spanish ambassador to the French Court, Cellamare — to overthrow Orleans but the discovery of the Cellamare conspiracy only prompted Cellamare's expulsion from France in December 1718 and France's reluctant declaration of war against Spain early in January 1719, the reverse of what had been hoped for (Alonso Armengol, 2018: 135-57; Shennan, 1979, 66-68).

The Spanish Court sought to construct a substitute coalition, which included rebels against constituted governments. Alberoni hoped to incite renewed Protestant rebellion in the French Cevennes and in Charles VI's dominions, in Hungary (Carutti, 1875-80: 3, 513-14; Armstrong, 1892: 108; Salles, 2015: 296-307.) More seriously, Alberoni sought to exploit domestic discontent in Britain against the government of George I. He hoped to do so with the aid of Peter the Great of Russia, sending the Jacobite Patrick Laules (or Lawless) to St Petersburg in October 1718 (Salles, 2015: 307-9; Salles, 2016) and of Charles XII of Sweden, Peter's opponent in the Great Northern War being fought out in the Baltic and north Germany, building on abortive earlier Jacobite efforts to mobilise Spain and Sweden jointly in favour of the Old Pretender. Alberoni hoped that Charles XII and Peter the Great could be reconciled and then turn their arms against both the Emperor and against England, in support of the Pretender (Williams, 1930: 324). Whether Charles XII would have gone on to invade Scotland rather than Denmark and Germany is not

clear (Hatton, 1968: 677-78), but unfortunately for the Spanish Court and for the Jacobites, Charles was killed in December 1718, at the siege of Friederikshald in Norway. Charles' death triggered a Swedish succession crisis, since Charles had no children. The crisis, which ended with the proclamation as king in March 1720 of Frederick of Hesse Kassel, husband of Charles' sister Ulrika Eleonora ended any hopes of an invasion of Scotland from Norway, not least because the new monarchs wanted George I's friendship not his enmity (Williams, 1930: 325, 362-3; Salles, 2015: 299). In fact, prompted by the English declaration of war, and before they knew of Charles XII' death, Philip and Alberoni had already committed themselves fully to the Old Pretender and to a Spanish rather than a Russo-Swedish expedition to Scotland (Salles, 2016; Smith, 1987: 163-206).

The Spanish Court planned yet another seaborne invasion, this time of Britain, but on a smaller scale than the expeditions against Sardinia and Sicily: 4,000 men (infantry) and 1,000 horse would leave Cadiz, land in South West England and march on London (as William III had done in his successful invasion in 1688), while a smaller force would leave San Sebastian for Scotland. Unfortunately, the larger of these two forces was effectively halted by storms off Finisterre in March 1719 while the other expedition landed just 300 men in Scotland. More important, it found less support in Scotland than had been promised and the expedition came to grief in the Scottish Highlands at Glenshiel in June 1719 (Smith, 1987: 207-39; Szechi, 2019: 186-7).

The invasion had failed but it highlighted again the importance of the Jacobite threat, the most important restraint on Britain — and those reliant on Britain's fleet and subsidies — in these years. George I's ministers had mounted a very successful propaganda campaign inside and outside parliament in 1718 which had ensured domestic support inside and outside parliament for the Quadruple Alliance and war against Spain, contradicting the expectations of Alberoni (Gibbs, 1968). But ministers remained anxious about a war which might ensure foreign backing for domestic rebellion. In a debate on the army in parliament in January 1718, James Stanhope, asserted that should war break out in Europe «sooner or later we must have our share in it, and then the succession to the Crown of Britain might come to be disputed as well as that of Spain» (Williams, 1930: 291).

But the succession was not the only issue restraining George I and his ministers. The English mercantile community may have been brought to accept the government's arguments for confronting Spain, but it remained anxious about the impact of a wider war on trade. This meant not only the damage done by Spanish privateers, the failure to send the permission ship and interruption of the *asiento* but also the possibility that the Dutch would remain neutral and reap commercial benefits from any conflict between Britain and Spain. The Dutch republic, after having played a leading role in the struggle to contain Louis XIV before 1713, found the cost in

terms of men and money too great and from 1713 preferred to pursue a policy of strict neutrality, which should aid economic recovery (Aalbers, 1979; Israel, 1995); it resisted the efforts of the other signatories to attract (even to coerce) it into joining the Quadruple Alliance, and into war with Spain.

British ministers were therefore reluctant to escalate the war, which might be the result of putting British seapower wholly at Charles VI's disposal. Byng's ships enabled the Emperor to transport troops from Naples to Sicily and Sardinia but would not allow him to press further his quarrel with Philip V. In addition, exploiting problems in securing Dutch accession to the alliance, Britain and France extended the period allowed Spain to accede to the treaty before hostilities would begin, against the opposition of the Emperor, who hoped the Spanish refusal to collaborate and the consequent forfeiture of what was promised Don Carlos by the Quadruple Alliance would benefit his own proteges in Italy, the dukes of Lorraine and Modena. Only after much pressure did they set a final deadline for Spain's accession to the Quadruple Alliance of 18 November 1719 (Williams, 1930: 318).

But other influences were also at work, including a distinctive *Annales* type mentalite in a distinctive conjuncture, the generation which had experienced the War of the Spanish Succession, the «Great War» of the first half of the eighteenth century and like many of that generation — others included sir Robert Walpole and cardinal Fleury — sought to prevent another conflict on that scale. Some have sought to connect Stanhope's peace plan with broader contemporary intellectual currents, especially Samuel Pufendorf's view that peace not war was the natural state of man (Hatton, 2001: 224). In January 1717 Stanhope observed to Dubois that the latter's journey to the Hague, to conclude the Triple Alliance (above), had «saved much human blood....» (Williams, 1930: 227.) Philip V, a monarch often thought as most at home when at war, articulated similar views in conversation with William Stanhope in January 1718 (Mahon, 1858, 2: lix-lxi). Such statements might appear as little more than commonplaces, but the recent war — and the casualty lists accompanying encounters like the battle of Malplaquet (1709), perhaps the bloodiest battle fought in Europe in the eighteenth century (Gregg, 1980: 289; Lynn, 1999: 334-5), and one fought by the larger armies underpinned by the «fiscal-military state» — may indeed have inspired a greater reluctance on the part of some policy-makers to resort to war, suggesting that the peace projects of men like the abbe de Saint Pierre (Hatton, 1969: 7) were not so isolated from the diplomatic reality of the day as is often suggested.

This reluctance to resort to war so soon after the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession might also be the result of other factors. While the development of the «fiscal-military state» did facilitate major war (above), monarchs, ministers and subjects in the states concerned were often appalled by the scale of public debt accumulated after almost 25 years of war (1688-1713) and their anxiety may have

acted as a restraint in 1718. It did so in the case of the Dutch (above) and may also have held back Britain and France and those dependent on them, including Charles VI. In 1716, James Stanhope admitted to Dubois that England needed peace to restore its finances, and in March 1718 Robert Walpole, then in opposition, and attacking in parliament the despatch of a fleet to the Mediterranean to contain Spain, urged the need to avoid war, pointing to the dangerously high level of the National Debt and the political dangers of high wartime taxation (Black, 1986: 150). Daniel Defoe argued against such anxiety in his contribution (before the expedition to Sicily) to the public debate on war against Spain (Defoe, 1718: 25-28), but that he felt the need to address it at all is significant.

Important general influences shaped English policy in 1718, but its success and the avoidance of war was also the achievement of individuals, most notably James Stanhope, Secretary of State for both the South and the North at various times between 1714 and 1721, responsible in effect for policy in the Mediterranean, and to all intents and purposes George I's chief English minister (Williams, 1930; Hanham, 2004). Stanhope, although a fierce Whig, was determined to preserve the Tory peace of 1713, believing that it was a good one for England. Stanhope knew Spain and its people well. He was the son of Alexander Stanhope, the English envoy in Madrid between 1691 and 1700, and had lived with him there briefly, before travelling to Lombardy in 1691, and later to Flanders to join the allied (including Spanish) forces fighting those of Louis XIV. In the War of the Spanish Succession, Stanhope was briefly commander of the English forces fighting those of Philip V in Spain itself, and led the conquest of Menorca in 1708 (later becoming viscount Stanhope of Mahon) (Williams, 1930: 56-85). In 1710 he was among those allied troops captured by the Bourbon forces at the battle of Brihuega, spending almost two years (1710-12) as a prisoner of war in Spain, first in Valladolid, later at Zaragoza (Williams, 1930:86-120). These experiences gave Stanhope an invaluable insight into Spain, its language and culture<sup>36</sup>; he was often addressed by his fellow Secretary of State, Townshend, as «Don» (Williams, 1930). It was while a prisoner of war in Spain that Stanhope had met Alberoni, which facilitated later personal contacts: in April 1718, for example Stanhope wrote to Alberoni explaining that the duchies to be given Don Carlos according to the peace were Imperial fiefs, under the protection of the Empire, rather than subject to Charles VI as a Habsburg dominion (Williams, 1930: 302).

Stanhope not only believed in the need to uphold the peace settlement of 1713, he was also unusually energetic in doing what was needed to maintain it, negotiating personally with foreign diplomats like Dubois and even — to the surprise of many contemporaries — visiting foreign capitals to deal face to face with those making the key decisions. The most striking example of this approach was Stanhope's visit

36. NAL/ SP 94, vol 85, Bubb to Stanhope, Madrid, 24 May 1716

to Spain in August 1718 (following the conclusion of the Quadruple Alliance) on the eve of the confrontation at Cape Passaro in hopes of convincing Alberoni and the Spanish Court of England's seriousness and thus winning it to the peace plan without war, — at the same time suggesting alternative spheres of military activity, ie. north Africa. These efforts may — paradoxically — have sent out the wrong message, encouraging Spanish recalcitrance and making war more likely (Smith, 1987: 140-41; Williams, 1930: 297-305), but Stanhope's energy impressed his contemporaries. In November 1718, Sir Robert Walpole, then in opposition derided Stanhope in a Parliamentary debate in which the government sought support for war with Spain, as Charles VI's «knight-errant» (Michael, 1939: 78). Stanhope continued, throughout the War of the Quadruple Alliance, to make great personal efforts to secure a settlement by negotiation, making the case for the Quadruple Alliance at home (in the House of Lords, his colleagues making it in the house of Commons) and negotiating both there and abroad.<sup>37</sup> Stanhope may have believed in negotiation but he was far from complaisant or indulgent; he was very direct even blunt, making sure that allies and potential opponents were clear about what they could — or could not — expect of England (Williams, 1930: 286-87; Michael, 1936). He was equally forthright and vehement in his defence of the Quadruple Alliance and of Cape Passaro in Parliament (Williams, 1930: 321). The avoidance of war was not the achievement solely of Stanhope; it also owed much to the abbe Dubois, who was far more isolated at the French Court in his support of the peace plan. But Stanhope's was the more important role in view of the importance of English seapower. Contemporaries clearly recognized Stanhope's unique role<sup>38</sup>.

While the Spanish Court failed to find allies and to incite domestic rebellion in the territories of its opponents, those enemies were threatening the outcome in Spain of the War of the Spanish Succession, i.e. of Philip V's «conquest» of the territories of the crown of Aragon and the «nueva planta». In the summer of 1717 Victor Amadeus had remarked that Philip's Sardinian expedition left undefended the disaffected provinces of Catalonia and Valencia (Carutti, 1875-80, 3: 510-11). James Stanhope, in a memoire for Dubois of March 1719 stressed the need for the allies to attract support in Spain by offering to restore the former privileges of Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia, Navarre and Vizcaya, saying the allies should commit themselves not to make peace with Philip V without a promise by the latter to confirm those privileges (Michael, 1939: 312-18.)<sup>39</sup> An English expedition invaded

37. Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 20 Jan 1720, AST/LM, Inghilterra m. 27.

38. AST, Negoziazioni, Inghilterra, mazzo 1/ 6, Instructions for marchese di Cortanze, Rivoli, 7 Aug. 1719.

39. Stanhope, apart from a general awareness of the importance of the fueros traditionally enjoyed by these territories would also have been aware of the recent «matxinada» in Vizcaya.

Galicia (Meijide Pardo, 1970; Saavedra Vazquez, 2020), while French forces invaded Navarre and the Basque country (Alvarez Palomino, 2019) where they destroyed a number of ships under construction for Philip. Potentially more dangerous was the French incursion into Catalonia, accompanied by William Stanhope and the attempt to encourage a Catalan insurgency against Philip V. Just how important this effort to reverse the *nueva planta* was is unclear, as it did not really get off the ground (Gimenez Lopez, 2000; Gimenez Lopez, 2005; Michael, 1939: 107; Salles, 2015: 309-12). Nevertheless it should be considered part of a mix of factors — Philip's failure to find allies, the promised settlement in Italy for Don Carlos, and the restraint of Britain and France in not pushing matters to extremes and declaring that their quarrel was not with Philip or his subjects but with Alberoni — which determined Philip to yield to the inevitable, dismissing Alberoni in December 1719 and adhering to the Quadruple Alliance in February 1720. Once again, as in 1713-14, the Catalans and other «Austrians» in Spain were abandoned by Philip's enemies, but on this occasion they — and Charles VI — were betrayed not by the Tories but by the Whigs and Orleans.

Philip V's formal accession to the Quadruple Alliance and the ceasefire agreement concluded at The Hague in April 1720 signalled the end of the fighting (Cantillo, 1843: 171-74) but as in 1713-14 ending the war was more complicated. The Quadruple Alliance had prevented the escalation of the conflict which had begun in 1717 in part by the promise of a congress — like those of Nijmegen, Ryswick, Utrecht, Baden and Rastatt — which would resolve any outstanding issues and turn Stanhope's peace plan into a binding settlement agreed by all parties. But just when and where the congress would meet was itself uncertain: only in July 1720 did Victor Amadeus learn that the congress was to open at Cambrai (France) in October of that year.<sup>40</sup> Paradoxically, these delays facilitated the peacemaking in some respects. Victor Amadeus had feared that he might surrender Sicily and not gain Sardinia and wanted to be in possession of Sardinia before the congress met.<sup>41</sup> Thus, on 4 August 1720 Victor Amadeus's viceroy, Saint Remy, reached Cagliari to take possession of Sardinia; two days later, the first Spanish troops being evacuated from Sardinia and Sicily left for Spain, escorted by Byng's ships (Mattone, 1992: 5-89).

But matters remained tense in the summer of 1720, the Spanish Court's preparations for yet another expedition, to Ceuta, prompting new anxieties about its destination, including on the part of Victor Amadeus, given the defenceless state

40. Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 27 July 1720, AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27.

41. AST, Negoziazioni, Inghilterra, mazzo 1/ 6, Instructions for marchese di Cortanze, Rivoli, 7 Aug. 1719; AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27., Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 15 and 24 Feb 1720.

of Sardinia.<sup>42</sup> William Stanhope, who had returned to Madrid in June 1720 doubted that the expedition was intended against England but thought it odd that troops intended for Africa should be marching towards Cadiz, justifying those who feared an attack on Gibraltar; he also suspected renewed intrigues between the Spanish ministers and the Jacobite Court.<sup>43</sup> The Spanish Court sought to reassure Stanhope regarding its preparations,<sup>44</sup> but Stanhope continued to monitor the build-up, which at one point he said would involve 35,000 men, and be directed by Patiño «in the manner he has been employed on those to Sardinia and Sicily.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, these anxieties about Spanish designs were shared by others, including Victor Amadeus,<sup>46</sup> and in September 1720 the preparations were given as the reason for postponing the opening of the congress. But the delay was also fueled by other issues, including disagreement about the renunciations necessitated by the peace plan. Charles VI wanted confirmation by the Cortes of Philip's renunciations of all the territories which had passed to him, as had happened in 1713 (Storrs, 2016). Philip would only agree if the Emperor reciprocated. William Stanhope sought to convince Philip that the situations were not same, that Charles's title was personal whereas the states to be given up by Philip were formerly annexed to the Crown of Aragon or Castile. In reality, Stanhope thought the main objection of the Spanish Court to assembling the Cortes was the expense at a time when money was short, Grimaldo estimating the cost at more than 1,000,000 ecus; as for the argument that the territories were annexed to the Crown of Aragon, Stanhope was told that only the Italian territories were regarded in this light, that they belonged to Aragon, that that kingdom had no Cortes, and was regarded as a conquest.<sup>47</sup> There was still some hope in December 1720 that the congress might convene that month.<sup>48</sup> In fact, however, the congress did not meet until January 1724, and lasted only until August, when it was overtaken by new developments, culminating in the Vienna alliance (1725) and the «cold war» which followed between the rival alliances of Hanover and Vienna, necessitating the calling of another congress, that of Soissons in the late 1720s.

42. AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27, Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 12 Oct. 1720

43. NAL, SP 94, vol 89, Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 5 and 12 Aug. 1720

44. NAL, SP 94, vol 89, Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 9 Sept. 1720 (NS):

45. NAL, SP 94, vol 89, Stanhope to Craggs, Escorial, 16 Sept. 1720 (NS) and Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, 28 Oct. 1720, NS:

46. AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27., Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 28 September, 12 Oct and 14 Dec. 1720

47. NAL, SP 94, vol 89, Stanhope to Craggs, Escorial, 16 Sept. 1720 (NS) and Stanhope to baron de Pentenriedter, Madrid, 30 Sept. 1720

48. AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27., Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 7 Dec. 1720

As on other occasions, the delay in the formal opening of the congress at Cambrai did not prevent some progress being made in preparatory negotiations, including Victor Amadeus's recovery of artillery and munitions removed by the Spanish troops from Sardinia, in breach of the terms of the Quadruple Alliance<sup>49</sup> Philip V having agreed — as a peace preliminary — to leave the island in the state in which he had found it and to replace any artillery removed by his forces before the congress met (Mattone, 1992: 36-7, 75-6). The vizconde del Puerto remained in Cagliari (and later Turin) as a hostage for the artillery,<sup>50</sup> but Victor Amadeus's representative in Cambrai, count Provana was still pressing the Spanish plenipotentiaries on this matter — and urging both Philip and Charles VI to stop using the title of King of Sardinia — in 1723.<sup>51</sup> Only in 1724 did Philip indemnify Victor Amadeus with 100,000 scudi (not the 150,000 demanded by Turin) for what had been carried off (Mattone, 1992: 82).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The War of the Quadruple Alliance might easily have triggered a general conflict but did not. The reasons for this were various. Clearly, Spain was bought off with a peace plan which, while broadly restoring the settlement of 1713-14 was clearly revisionist in the exchange of Sicily for Sardinia, and had also interfered in the successions of Parma, Piacenza and Tuscany; there was also some suggestion that Philip might recover Gibraltar (Gibbs, 1968: 295). The war, and the manner of its resolution — including the confirmation of British trading privileges within Spain and its empire (Kuethe, 2005) — suggests that while trade and the Atlantic were important considerations which policy-makers could not afford to ignore, essentially European issues — primarily Italy, but also the Baltic (Salles, 2015: 299) — were arguably of even greater importance to more monarchs and ministers, above all because they loomed so large for Charles VI and Philip V. The revision revealed the extent to which a reinvigorated Spain was playing a new role in Europe, driven by the revanchist aspirations of Philip V as well as the ambitions of his second consort, Isabel Farnese. But the short-lived war was also testimony to the temporary eclipse of France, still recovering from the War of the Spanish Succession, and weakened by internal political division (not least respecting relations with Philip V). The war

49. AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27., Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 13 Jsn 1720, 10 Apr, 24 Aug. and 12 Oct. 1720.

50. AST/ LM Inghilterra, m. 27., Victor Amadeus to marchese di Cortanze, Turin, 30 Nov. 1720. Sta Cruz del Marcenado, removed to Turin, and took the opportunity to write his *Reflexiones Militares*, published in Turin in 10 vols 1724-27.

51. AST/ LM Francia, mazzo 156, count Provana to marchese di Cortanze, Cambrai, 15 May 1723

also exposed the weakness of both the Dutch republic and of the Savoyard state, the Court of Turin for long after being traumatised by its treatment at the hands of the Quadruple Alliance, treatment which demonstrated its status as a second rank power in a Europe of emerging Great Powers. But most important of all in preventing the escalation was the role of Great Britain, and above all of English seapower. None of the other powers — not least the Emperor, along with Philip V the greatest threat to the peace — could even think of matching Britain and its fleet, or of acting without them in a situation in which strength at sea was crucial. And yet the Hanoverian regime and the Whigs in Great Britain were also vulnerable, and aware of their vulnerability; this was one very good reason to use England's fleet in a restrained manner. But Britain was not alone; in a community — society — of what were primarily hereditary princely states, most of the actors were vulnerable, and looking for reassurance. The Spanish invasion of Sicily showed that with sufficient force an invasion could succeed, inspiring local supporters. The Jacobites failed to achieve this in Britain in 1715 or 1719, but George I and his ministers welcomed the guarantee of the Hanoverian succession given by the signatories of the Quadruple Alliance. For his part, Philip V was threatened, if he persisted, with the unravelling of his recent remaking of Spain. The war also throws interesting light on the «fiscal-military state, suggesting that contemporaries were often more anxious about the burden it represented than are historians. Seen in that light, the war may have shaped both the politics but also the economic and financial initiatives pursued in the 1720s by the combatants. The relatively great cost of the little war for Sicily obliged Victor Amadeus to various revenue raising devices including the sale of fiefs to create the so-called «nobility of 1722» (Storrs, 1999: 261). On the other hand Victor Amadeus and his successor, Charles Emanuel III were reluctant to fully embrace — and reform — Sardinia, fearing that another Spanish expedition might mean the loss of that island also; the Court of Turin only turned its attention to the island following the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748. Finally, the revision between 1718 and 1720 of the treaties of 1713-14 without a major war suggests that the diplomacy of the era was more successful than is often suggested. The diplomacy of the Spanish Court had failed to connect the Great Northern War and the War of the Quadruple Alliance and the dispute between Philip V and Charles VI was certainly not resolved in 1720, but diplomacy had ensured that at least in the short-term their continuing quarrel did not trigger another long, costly, multi-theatre war.

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