

THE END OF THE SPANISH MATCH

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ABSTRACT. *This article suggests an alternative explanation for the failure of the so-called Spanish match in 1623. The Spanish monarchy was not unanimously against the marriage of the Infanta María to Prince Charles, and the marquis (later duke) of Buckingham was not the brilliant negotiator who was able to expose elaborate attempts by the Spanish to hide their alleged mendacity. Analysis of archival materials from England, Spain, and Germany indicates that Charles decided to abandon the match when he realized that it would not guarantee the restoration of his dispossessed brother-in-law, Elector Palatine Friedrich V, who had done everything in his power to prevent the marriage. When Charles signed the treaty anyway, the Spanish then began to make preparations for the wedding, preferring to postpone serious discussion of a solution to the Palatine crisis indefinitely. For Charles, however, the two issues were inseparable. For him the match was as important for securing the restitution of the Palatinate as for designating his future royal spouse. When he left Spain, he had already devised and initiated a plan to dissolve the match. In many ways both sides were equally guilty of delay, dissimulation, and deception.*

In late February 1623, Prince Charles and the marquis of Buckingham, wearing false beards and claiming to be the Smith brothers, left England, rode across France, and reached Madrid on 17 March.¹ The fact that they had travelled incognito and without a retinue inspired amazement and wonder. Their ostensible purpose was to win the heart and hand of the Infanta María for the prince and thereby put an end to the preceding decade of negotiations for the so-called Spanish match. The journey exposed King James I's only son and heir to the usual hardships of early modern travel, many of them potentially life threatening. The apparent recklessness of the act is a testimony to the desperation of the situation. The flames of war, sparked by an uprising in Bohemia in 1618, had been spreading steadily across the face of Europe, particularly in Germany. Elector Palatine Friedrich V had supported the rebellion but failed in his attempt to wrest the Bohemian crown from Emperor Ferdinand II. Friedrich and his wife, Elizabeth Stuart, James I's only daughter, had fled Bohemia and taken refuge in The Hague, while Spanish and Imperial armies had overrun their ancestral estates in central Germany, the Upper and Lower Palatinate. To make matters worse, the twelve years' truce between Spain and the Dutch Republic had expired, and hostilities were widely expected to resume on a grand scale. All the while King James stood in the middle, pleading for peace. Charles and

¹ Dates are in the New Style, with the year beginning on the first of January.

Buckingham had gone to Spain to solidify an Anglo-Spanish alliance and to restore the Palatinate to Friedrich V, thereby returning peace to western Europe. Needless to say, these issues were much more convoluted than mere matrimonial arrangements. As it turned out, they failed on both counts, and the outcome was the opposite of what had been intended: England and Spain were set on the high road to renewed military conflict after nearly two decades of peace. What went wrong?

The question demands an up-to-date analysis. No major treatise has appeared since S. R. Gardiner's two volumes in 1869, in which he argues that the Spanish monarchy had never been serious about the match and, in a massive act of collective deception, had merely used it to manipulate the Stuarts.² One problem with relying on Gardiner's analysis is his blatant chauvinism. He denies that Spanish statesmen were 'governed by the rules which ordinarily influence human conduct'.³ Of the Spanish council of state, an assembly of some of the most powerful and experienced leaders of the Spanish monarchy, Gardiner wrote, 'It would be in vain to look for an original or statesmanlike view of affairs from any one of the members of that body.'⁴ Another problem is his conviction of total Stuart incompetence: '[Charles] did not know that Olivares, Spaniard though he was, had a clearer idea than himself of the place and functions of Parliament in the English Constitution.'⁵ Gardiner also gives full credence to the reports of the Venetian ambassador in Madrid, whose rumour-mongering was as relentlessly anti-Habsburg (and anti-papal, for that matter) as that of his colleagues in London, The Hague, and elsewhere. Furthermore, the Venetian ambassador was a figure of marginal importance for the Spanish monarchy and is almost totally invisible in the relevant Spanish government documents consulted in this study. Finally, Gardiner relies heavily on English documentation from the attacks on Buckingham and Bristol in the years following 1623. These investigations and trials were above all domestic political struggles in which opposing sides formulated their accounts of what had transpired in Spain in order to protect themselves and assault their enemies.⁶ Roger Lockyer's account of the visit to Spain basically reiterates Gardiner's interpretation.⁷ Both argue that the Spanish,

² S. R. Gardiner, *Prince Charles and the Spanish marriage, 1617–1623* (2 vols., London, 1869). These two volumes were later incorporated into the ten-volume series: idem, *History of England from the accession of James I to the outbreak of the civil war, 1603–1642* (10 vols., London, 1883).

³ Gardiner, *History*, iv, p. 398.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, v, p. 64.

⁶ Those attacking the earl of Bristol emphasized the attempt to convert Charles to Catholicism and Spanish deception (i.e. Olivares) in general. Those wanting war with Spain highlighted, or fabricated, the alleged Spanish threat to keep Charles as a prisoner if he did not convert or agree to the terms they wanted. Francisco de Jesús, *El hecho de los tratados del matrimonio*, ed. S. R. Gardiner, *Narrative of the Spanish marriage treaty* (Camden Society, vol. 101, London, 1869), an account written in the 1620s, similarly reflects prejudices produced in part by later events.

⁷ Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham* (London, 1981). From Spain there has been no significant study that challenges either Gardiner's or Lockyer's point of view. José Deleito y Piñuela, *El rey se divierte* (Madrid, 1955), focuses on the myriad festivities. Carlos Puyuelo y Salinas, *Carlos de Inglaterra en España* (Madrid, 1962), is a popular account based on secondary sources, including Gardiner.

from the beginning to the end, never intended to give up the infanta or the Palatinate, and the mastermind behind the fraud was King Felipe IV's favourite, Count Olivares.⁸ Lockyer, however, takes this interpretation one step further: for him it was Buckingham who managed to see through it all.

The last dozen years have seen a renewed interest in the subject. Thomas Cogswell analysed the English popular reaction to the match and assessed the domestic political fallout of its failure.⁹ Glyn Redworth's article, 'Of pimps and princes', has improved understanding of Stuart attitudes towards both the match and the crisis in the Palatinate in the years prior to 1623.¹⁰ W. B. Patterson has recast the topic in the light of James I's irenic religious policies: the king sought the match not only for its financial, political, and military advantages, but because, 'equally important', it would have assisted 'his long-term project of achieving a stable peace and a significant measure of religious conciliation in Europe'.¹¹

Relying heavily on contemporary sources from English, Spanish, and German archives, this article proposes that the members of the Spanish monarchy were not pathologically mendacious, but cautious, concerned, and, most importantly, divided in their preferences about the outcome of the Anglo-Spanish match. There was a diversity of opinion in the highest echelons of the Spanish monarchy which allowed the match a distinct possibility of success. In this account Buckingham's contribution to the process is more blindly destructive than keenly perceptive. His behaviour in Spain was every bit as damaging as was Olivares's resistance, perhaps more so. Particular attention will be paid to the constant, conscientious obstinacy of Elector Palatine Friedrich V, who did his utmost to stymie King James's schemes for peace and ensure that Prince Charles would value his sister's honour over the hand of a Spanish princess.¹² Finally, it will be argued here that the crux of the deal lay in its double-sided nature: due to the war in Germany, the marriage and the restoration of the Palatinate had become inexorably intertwined. The Spanish, however, were willing to negotiate as if the two were separate and preferred to settle them consecutively. James I agreed with this approach, but Charles ultimately did not. While in Spain, the prince decided to invest his allegiance not in the infanta and the Spanish monarchy but in Friedrich V and his supporters instead.

This match had been long in the making, and it was fraught with difficulties. The idea had first emerged after James's accession and the restoration of peace between England and Spain in 1604, but it had only become a serious issue

⁸ J. H. Elliott's magisterial *The count-duke of Olivares: the statesman in an age of decline* (New Haven, 1986) does not focus on the issue in depth.

⁹ Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹⁰ Glyn Redworth, 'Of pimps and princes: three unpublished letters from James I and the prince of Wales relating to the Spanish match', *Historical Journal*, 37 (1994), pp. 401–9.

¹¹ W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 315.

¹² For a full discussion of Friedrich's politics and personality, see Brennan C. Pursell, *The winter king* (forthcoming).

in Anglo-Spanish diplomacy in the years before the outbreak of war in the Empire in 1618. Thereafter, however, the complexity of the match had increased exponentially. The main point of contention in the negotiations had always been the proscribed status of Catholicism in England and the persecution of its adherents. The Spanish wanted to obtain freedom of worship for English Catholics but did not dare to demand it, because James had often said that he would break off negotiations in that event. Because of the Palatine crisis and the resumption of the war against the Dutch, the Spanish desperately needed English neutrality to allow Spanish arms to operate successfully in the Palatinate and against the United Provinces, and James had been willing to provide it. None the less Spanish negotiators continued to argue for the maximum advantages for English Catholics and to delay the conclusion of the treaty wherever possible. James, however, wanted an alliance with Spain, not a war, and he needed it immediately. Having a Spanish princess in London would have increased his influence with the most powerful dynasty in Europe, and her dowry would have relieved his government's debilitating lack of money. Above all he wanted the marriage alliance to lead to a resolution of the Palatine crisis, which would have slowed or even stopped the Thirty Years War in its tracks and improved the dismal relations between Christian confessions in Europe. Yet the contradiction remained: how could the English and Spanish monarchies arrange the union of Prince Charles and the Infanta María when Spanish and Austrian Habsburg arms had driven the Electress Palatine, Elizabeth Stuart, her husband, and her family into exile?

By the beginning of 1623, however, diplomatic efforts had produced some hopeful indications of success. James I had dispatched Sir John Digby to Spain in February 1622 to conclude the marriage treaty and restore the Palatinate. When he had finally reached Madrid at the end of June, he had received a warm welcome, and by August he had become persuaded that Felipe IV was dedicated to the restoration of the Palatinate. The council of state, under the influence of Count Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to England, recommended unanimously that Felipe should give James 'complete satisfaction' regarding his daughter and son-in-law.¹³ Digby had high hopes for success in this project and for the completion of the Anglo-Spanish match. At this point in time, as he observed, the two issues had become inseparable in Anglo-Spanish relations: '[the Spanish] would not make the match without resolving to restore the Palatinate, nor restore the Palatinate without resolving to make the match'.¹⁴ But the bond between the two issues was to become, ironically, the cause of the failure of both.

The negotiations for the match were near completion. Both sides had agreed on the temporal articles and were waiting for the pope to issue a dispensation on the spiritual terms. Gondomar had plied the council of state to accept Digby's adjustments to recent, new conditions issued by the pope. Digby was reassured

¹³ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 221–2.

¹⁴ Quoted in Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 125.

that the Spanish wanted to conclude the marriage quickly. Both sides saw that affairs in Germany were the main, immediate obstacle, and both sides took measures to assure each other that the fighting would be stopped and the grounds for the conflict resolved. James had promised that Friedrich would abide by the terms of a cease-fire and that English arms would be turned against any who broke them. James had asked Felipe to make the same commitment, and he and his council of state had complied. In October they had produced a document that stated that if Emperor Ferdinand II remained intransigent when it came time to restore the Palatinate to Friedrich by force, Felipe would order Spanish arms to support English forces in the effort.¹⁵ He had also called off the sieges at the Palatinate's two main fortress towns, Mannheim and Frankenthal, but Mannheim had already fallen when the order reached its destination. Frankenthal was spared, and later James would agree to sequester it into Spanish safe-keeping. Despite this mishap, Digby had said, 'I dare affirm it unto His Majesty [James] for truth that I do not think he hath so many great men and counsellors in all Christendom so heartily affected to him and his service as in this court.'¹⁶ Negotiations for the marriage had continued to make progress. By December 1622 the council of state had told Digby that they were satisfied with James's responses to their conditions and that the marriage would be concluded upon the issue of the papal dispensation, preferably by the following spring.¹⁷ By January 1623 word spread in England that the marriage was certain and that Gondomar would be sent to the emperor to arrange Friedrich's restitution. James rewarded Digby by making him the earl of Bristol.

Felipe IV's actions show that he was slowly coming to accept the Anglo-Spanish match and the restitution to the Palatinate in principle, though he was hesitant to do much about either. Negotiations had been allowed to proceed forward, though at a slow and unsteady pace. Despite the fact that he felt obligated to the king of England, he asked Count Olivares in late 1622 to find a way out of the Anglo-Spanish match and yet still content James I. Felipe disclosed that his father had advised him not to go through with it, and that his father's principal minister, Don Balthasar Zúñiga, Olivares's uncle, who had died in October, had tried to delay it perpetually.¹⁸ But Olivares did not find a way out, and instead Felipe IV seemed to be warming to the idea. By December 1622 things had reached the point where he could report to Bristol that the treaty was going forward in Rome and that the infanta would be ready to go to England the following spring, assuming all the necessary arrangements would be done. With regards to the restitution of the Palatinate, Felipe expressed his desire to satisfy James, maintain their friendship, and establish a union between them. Felipe

¹⁵ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 266–8. Even Gardiner thought that the promise of Spanish military support was sincere. *Ibid.*, p. 267. The promise was reiterated in January 1623, on the condition that Friedrich would submit himself to the emperor's mercy. Felipe IV to James I, 26 Dec./5 Jan. 1623, London, Public Record Office (PRO), State Papers (SP), 81/27, fos. 230–1.

¹⁶ Quoted in Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 133.

¹⁷ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 51.

¹⁸ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 276.

stated that he wanted peace and was working with the emperor on restoring it in Germany.¹⁹ In February 1623 the committee for the marriage met and named the persons who were to accompany the infanta on her journey to England.²⁰ In March Felipe wrote to the pope to expedite the delivery of the dispensation. For his reasons the king mentioned Charles's age and his need to produce an heir. Felipe explained that if Charles died without one, after he had become king, the crown of the British kingdoms would fall to the Elector and Electress Palatine, who were notorious for their antagonism toward Catholicism. The king added in his own hand, 'I entreat Your Holiness to please take a short resolution in this business, which is a matter of great importance to the good of Christendom'.²¹

The marriage appeared to be a foregone conclusion when Prince Charles and the marquis of Buckingham went to Spain. James had given his permission for this dangerous journey, moved in part perhaps by the fact that he had had to leave Scotland in order to procure his own wife and queen, Anne of Denmark, nearly twenty-five years before, as his father and grandfather had done before him.²² More importantly, however, it must have been obvious to the king that such a move would have to force the Spanish to fulfil their promises.²³ When considering the risks involved in such a venture, the sense of urgency or desperation in the decision becomes all the more palpable. The vicissitudes of seventeenth-century travel such as accidents, bandits, exhaustion, exposure to the elements, and disease, made Charles's death a distinct possibility. Still worse, perhaps, in James's estimation, was that if Charles did not survive the journey, then his sister, Elizabeth, would have been next in line to inherit the throne at James's passing, with Friedrich at her side. English participation in the wars in Germany would have been practically inevitable. Though these disasters did not come to pass, the secret voyage to Spain was a complete failure. Fundamental misunderstandings, compounded by diplomatic blunders, sharply reduced whatever trust had existed between the two monarchies. The result of the journey was that Charles decided to invest his allegiance not in the Spanish monarchy but in the Palatines instead.

It appears that Charles decided to go to Spain out of greater concern for his sister than for passionate love of the infanta whom he had never met. According to James, Charles made his decision '*partly* out of an earnest desire to see his mistress and *especially* to give a final end to that business that had distracted His Majesty's other affairs so long a time'.²⁴ One may assume that the king was

¹⁹ Felipe IV to Bristol, 13 Dec. 1622, Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Estado Inglaterra (EI), Libro 369, fo. 328.

²⁰ 4 Feb. 1623, AGS, EI, Libro 369, fo. 348.

²¹ 'Supp[lic]o a V.Sd. se sirva de tomar breve resolucion en este nego[cio] como cosa que tanto ymporta al bien de la cristiandad'. Felipe IV to Pope Gregory XV, 4 Mar. 1623, AGS, EI, Libro 369, fo. 374. The interpolated letters are mine.

²² Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 136–7.

²³ According to Francisco de Jesús, James thought of this plan as a way to effect marriage suddenly, in such haste that less attention would be paid to the facts as to the promises. Furthermore, the visit was regarded as the most effective way to finish the business that anyone could imagine. *El hecho*, p. 53.

²⁴ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 136. Lockyer observes that Charles 'had gone to Spain to conclude the marriage as a *prelude* to the restoration of the Elector Palatine'. *Ibid.*, p. 162. The italics are mine. Also see Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 253.

referring to the restoration of the Palatinate, because the match negotiations had not caused nearly as much distraction in James's other affairs as the plight of the Palatines. When James sent news of Friedrich's divestiture to Charles in Spain, he said, 'if my babies credit in Spaine mende not these things, I will bidde fair well to peace in Christendome, during oure tymes at least'.²⁵ James's decision to sequester Frankenthal probably increased Charles's desire to procure a settlement on his sister's and brother-in-law's behalf. The prince's many protestations of love for the infanta may well have been more for form's sake than heart-felt. Before he left England, while he was publicly adoring a portrait of the infanta, he supposedly turned to an attendant and added quietly, 'Were it not for the sin, it would be well if princes could have two wives; one for reason of state, the other to please themselves.'²⁶ While he was in Spain, the situation almost demanded a great show of love for the intended bride, though it is difficult to discern how much was meant to please his hosts and his father and how much was purely sincere. In general, however, it is reasonable to assume that his emotions, whatever they may have been at different junctures, were probably well diluted with political realism.

The Spanish actually expected Charles to come to Madrid, though not in the way in which he did. Before Gondomar had left England in May 1622, Charles had disclosed in the gravest secrecy that he would come to Spain at the ambassador's signal and put himself at the disposal of Felipe IV.²⁷ In January of that year Charles had already begun learning Spanish. In September, Gondomar had written to both James and Buckingham to assure them that the match would be concluded quickly and that the prince of Wales should come to Spain.²⁸ The ambassador wrote 'that the decision is already taken, and with much good will, that the prince of Wales should mount Spain, ... and furthermore it is desired that this be done as fast as possible, *por la posta!*'.²⁹ During the autumn and winter of 1622–3 preparations were made for Charles and Buckingham to sail to Spain to collect the infanta. Secret inquiries were made to determine how the prince of Wales would be treated during his stay. By February 1623 it had been bruited at court that Buckingham would go to Spain as soon as the papal dispensation had been issued. Despite these indications, the earl of Bristol was dumbfounded when the two appeared unannounced at his residence in Madrid on 17 March 1623.³⁰ Though the circumstances of their arrival were equally surprising to the Spanish, there was more cause for pleasure than panic. Gondomar learned of the pair's presence within two hours of their arrival, and with great satisfaction he told Olivares the news that evening, who immediately

²⁵ Godfrey Goodman, *The court of King James the First* (2 vols., London, 1839), II, pp. 257–8.

²⁶ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 253–4.

²⁷ Gondomar to Felipe IV, 16 May 1622, Madrid, Biblioteca Real (BR), MSS, II/2108, fo. 64; Don Wenceslao Ramirez de Villa-Urrutia, *La embajada del conde de Gondomar a Inglaterra en 1613* (Madrid, 1913), p. 63; Redworth, 'Pimps'.

²⁸ Goodman, *Court*, II, pp. 235–40.

²⁹ I am indebted to Glyn Redworth for this quotation.

³⁰ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 135, 140.

informed the king.³¹ Felipe IV then said to Olivares, ‘Whatever the prince may want will be granted him in accordance with the obligation which his coming has placed on us.’³² Felipe called a meeting of several of his advisers for the next morning, during which he elevated Gondomar to the council of state.³³ The new member would continue to work vigorously in favour of the match during the next few months.³⁴

The Spanish monarchy was heavily obligated to James I for his peace-loving friendship, even in the face of the Palatine crisis, and Felipe wanted to show that appreciation to the prince of Wales. Public prayers were ordered to give thanks for the prince’s journey, and Felipe allowed him to lay eyes on the infanta before their first, official meeting. On Sunday, 19 March, Felipe paraded his queen, sister, and brothers through the Prado, passing three times before a carriage where Charles sat concealed.³⁵ Later that evening the king and the prince greeted each other in the open air, embraced, and talked in Felipe’s carriage for over an hour with Bristol translating.³⁶ The prince’s presence was well known in Madrid, and the ‘gallantry of the journey’ so impressed the populace that many exclaimed ‘that he deserv’d to have the infanta thrown into his arms the first night he came’.³⁷ Olivares supposedly declared that if the pope refused to grant a dispensation, they would give Charles the infanta ‘as his wench’.³⁸ Within one week, the prince had his splendid, public entry into Madrid, and then moved into the royal palace. To celebrate his arrival, Felipe suspended the recently passed sumptuary laws and freed all English prisoners that had been sentenced to the galleys. The festivities during the following weeks were some of the most splendid that Madrid had ever seen, and in ceremony Felipe treated Charles with the utmost honour.³⁹ Olivares, meanwhile, called a meeting of the council of state and met with Buckingham. The two favourites, attended by Bristol and the resident English ambassador, Sir Walter Aston, met in a private park and

³¹ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 306.

³² ‘quanto el Principe quisiere se concederá á la obligacion en que nos ha puestos su venida’. ‘Fragmentos historicos’, appendix of de Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 326.

³³ Francisco Javier Sanchez-Canton, *Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, conde de Gondomar, 1567–1626* (Madrid, 1935), p. 55. The date derives from James Howell, *Familiar letters* (London, 1645), section III, p. 71. When Gondomar was made councillor of state, he expressed his appreciation that ‘His Majesty would appoint an Englishman to his council of state.’ Andrés de Almansa y Mendoza, *Cartas de Andrés de Almansa, novedades de esta corte y avisos recibidos de otras partes, 1621–1626* (Madrid, 1886), p. 184.

³⁴ The Imperial ambassador identified him as ‘das Instrument, dadurch die Engelländer operiren, ... der ist verschlagener als alle die andern, und weiß das Rädcl gar wohl zu treiben’. Franz Christoph von Khevenhiller, *Annales Ferdinandi* (12 vols., Leipzig, 1716–26), X, p. 80.

³⁵ Philip Yorke, earl of Hardwicke, *Miscellaneous state papers* (2 vols., London, 1778), I, p. 402. Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, pp. 71–2. It was common knowledge that the prince of Wales was in Madrid. Dorothea Townshend, *Life and letters of Mr. Endymion Porter* (London, 1897), p. 48. The date derives from Martin Hume, *The court of Philip IV* (London, 1907), pp. 77–8.

³⁶ De Jesús, *El hecho*, pp. 54–5; Townshend, *Life and letters*, p. 49; Puyuelo, *Carlos*, p. 127.

³⁷ Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, pp. 72–3.

³⁸ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, p. 402.

³⁹ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 309, 311. For a description of the festivities during his visit, see Puyuelo, *Carlos*, pp. 133–54; Deleito, *El rey*, pp. 183–9.

exchanged expressions of joy at the visit and at the happy prospects of the conclusion of the match. Olivares said that he would write to the pope to speed the delivery of the dispensation. When Charles moved to the palace, Buckingham was given adjacent quarters.⁴⁰

Despite these favourable auspices, the euphoria was tempered when the Spanish realized that Charles had not come to Spain to convert to Catholicism in addition to procuring the infanta. In addition to Olivares, Gondomar, and many others in the Spanish monarchy, even Bristol suspected that conversion was part of the prince's plan, which would have obviated the need for a papal dispensation and removed much of the fear that James or Charles would renege on the concessions to English Catholics.⁴¹ Charles and Buckingham, however, made it clear that a conversion was unthinkable, and the Spanish 'put no question in bestowing their sister' none the less.⁴² The Spanish also hoped for Buckingham's conversion as well, but in this they were to be thoroughly and immediately disappointed. Converting to Catholicism had probably never occurred to the prince and the marquis, and the expectation that they should took them aback. But the pair remained sanguine none the less. Buckingham negotiated with Olivares and the papal nuncio about carrying out the marriage as planned, successfully parrying demands from the latter that a stronghold be handed to English Catholics to guarantee their safety. On 6 April Charles and Buckingham wrote to James that they 'never saw the business in a better way than now it is'.⁴³ There had been no new changes demanded for the spiritual and temporal articles, no pressure for Charles's conversion, and they were expecting the momentary arrival of the dispensation and a marriage ceremony thereafter.⁴⁴ While they waited during the Easter season, Charles and Buckingham defended the English Church in theological disputations with Spanish divines, and the prince was allowed to pay a formal visit to the infanta.⁴⁵

James, meanwhile, had deposited Frankenthal into the safe-keeping of the Infanta Isabella, the ruler of the Spanish Netherlands, and the king of Spain. He refused to encompass the emperor in the arrangement, because he had found it dishonourable to negotiate with Ferdinand any longer, 'he having thrice broken all his promises'.⁴⁶ James was aware that there were discussions in Spain regarding a restitution of the Palatinate through another marriage treaty involving Friedrich V's eldest son and Emperor Ferdinand's second daughter. Though James most likely did not know the details of the plan, he readily endorsed the idea. Most importantly, he wrote to Charles and Buckingham of the Palatine–Imperial match, 'if either that way, or any other, this business be brought to a good end'.⁴⁷ James insisted that the Spanish monarchy conduct the negotiations because of

⁴⁰ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 140–1.

⁴² Hardwicke, *Papers*, 1, p. 409.

⁴⁴ John Hackett, *Scrinia Reserata* (London, 1692), p. 120.

⁴⁵ For an account of these disputations, see de Jesús, *El hecho*, pp. 58–9. At the end of April Edymion Porter was also certain that the marriage would take place. Townshend, *Life and letters*, p. 52.

⁴⁶ Hardwicke, *Papers*, 1, p. 404.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143–4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

his refusal to deal directly with the emperor. Regarding Charles's marriage, James did not imagine that there would be any insuperable impediments at this stage. Nor did he worry much about his son's safety in Spanish hands. Indeed he expected that they would give into the marriage before the heat of the summer because of its potentially deleterious effect on Charles's health. 'I think they have reason there,' James wrote to his son, 'if they love themselves, to wish you and yours rather to succeed unto me, than my daughter and her children.'⁴⁸ He then sent his son and favourite a ship filled of retainers, servants, sumptuous robes, and heaps of jewels, so that they could impress their hosts with the splendour of the British monarchy.⁴⁹

The main problem for James was that the Elector and Electress Palatine would do nothing to give the current negotiations a chance of success. Friedrich V and Elizabeth looked at Charles's presence in Spain as a harbinger of their permanent dispossession rather than their ultimate restitution. In April, when news had reached The Hague that James had agreed to surrender Frankenthal to the Spanish, Friedrich was so incensed that he stormed out of his house and headed for Amsterdam without telling Elizabeth where he was going or what he would do. Rumours abounded that he had gone on campaign or that Elizabeth would next be relocated to Brussels and herself surrendered to the Spanish, but they were groundless.⁵⁰ Friedrich returned soon enough, and thereafter he instructed his new agent in England, Johannes Joachim von Rusdorf, to try to dissuade James from making such a treaty. Rusdorf was to persuade the king and his ministers that a peace treaty with the emperor would jeopardize the constitution of the Empire and never result in Friedrich's or his children's restoration. In a dubious legal proceeding in January 1623 Ferdinand had formally transferred Friedrich's electoral title to Maximilian, duke of Bavaria, effectively excluding the Palatine from his place in the Imperial constitution. Restitution appeared hopeless. In addition, Rusdorf was to ask for £20,000 per month, given in secret, so that his prince could act militarily on his own, without the help of the other Protestant Imperial electors.⁵¹ Friedrich would never have accepted a Palatine–Imperial match and certainly wished the worst for the Anglo-Spanish.

James, however, pressed on with his peace plans. His goal was first to negotiate a cease-fire in the Palatinate – the once failed negotiations had been resumed in London – and then to settle a general treaty in another peace conference.⁵²

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 406–8.

⁵⁰ Nethersole to Calvert, 26 Mar./5 Apr. 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fo. 166.

⁵¹ Friedrich V to Rusdorf, 6/16 Apr. 1623, Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BHStA), Kasten Blau (KB), 122/3a, fos. 5–7. Both the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg had invited James to join them and the king of Denmark 'in their opposition against the emperor and his proceedings'. Calvert to Conway, 26 Apr./6 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fo. 233. Friedrich was currently receiving from James £3,000 per month, from April to September, to cover his debts. Friedrich V to Rusdorf, 14/24 Apr. 1623, BHStA, KB, 122/3a, fo. 8.

⁵² James I to Friedrich V, 1 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fos. 243–5.

He requested that Friedrich be patient and advised him to trust in Felipe IV, whose honour, James said, would compel him to live up to his promises.⁵³ James told Friedrich bluntly that the Palatinate had been lost because of his provocations against Emperor Ferdinand and his supporters, not because of their aggressions.⁵⁴ The king's first goal was much easier to attain than the second. The Upper and Lower Palatinates had been completely overrun.⁵⁵ Frankenthal had been handed to the Spanish under James's orders. A cease-fire had been achieved in reality before it was approved on paper. On 1 May 1623, a treaty that restored peace to the Holy Roman Empire was finished in four days and signed by James I, the Infanta Isabella, the resident Spanish ambassador in England, and several English lords. The peace was to hold for fifteen months during which the infanta would oversee a peace conference in Cologne to establish a lasting settlement.⁵⁶ Under such circumstances, even the emperor ratified the document and proclaimed the cease-fire to all the princes of the empire.⁵⁷ Friedrich, however, made difficulties.

When he heard of the completion of the suspension of arms and received a copy of the treaty, he resolved to resist the king's efforts as much as possible. As he read the repetition of his father-in-law's promise to restore him, he could only sigh deeply.⁵⁸ He was not willing to enter into any of James's negotiations, nor did he intend, he added, 'to let ourselves be bound through such slippery means'.⁵⁹ He was not prepared to forswear military tactics should they arise, being 'rather much more resolved to pay attention to and to use all good occasions that God may lay in our hands for the maintenance of our righteous causes'.⁶⁰ Elizabeth probably supported her husband's resistance to her father. Since the end of 1622 she had lost her faith in James's ability to help, 'for my father hither to', she had said, 'hath done us more hurt then good'.⁶¹ Friedrich did not sign the treaty. His reply expressed his amazement that James had asked him to accept the treaty at all. Friedrich said that his stance derived from 'the conservation of my honour,

⁵³ James I to Friedrich V, 18 Apr. 1623, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Kasten Schwarz (KS), 9254/2, fo. 162; James I to Friedrich V, 1 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fos. 243–5; James I to Electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, 2 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fos. 247–8.

⁵⁴ James I to Friedrich V, 1 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fo. 243.

⁵⁵ The forces of the Catholic League held the Upper Palatinate and the portion of the Lower that lay east of the Rhine, and Spanish forces occupied all of the western side of the Lower.

⁵⁶ 21 Apr./1 May 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fo. 240; Arthur W. White, 'Suspension of arms: Anglo-Spanish mediation in the Thirty Years' War, 1621–1625' (PhD thesis, Tulane, 1978), p. 550.

⁵⁷ 10 May 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fo. 248; White, 'Suspension', p. 554.

⁵⁸ Johann Michael Sörtl, *Der Religionskrieg in Deutschland* (3 vols., Hamburg, 1840–2), III, p. 179.

⁵⁹ 'uns durch solche schlupffrige mittel binden zulassen', Friedrich V to Achaz von Dohna, 11/21 May 1623, BHStA, KB, 122/3c, fo. 394.

⁶⁰ 'sondern vielmehr resolvirt, alle gute occasionen die Gott, zuerhaltung unserer gerechten sachen an die handt geben würde in acht zu nemmen undt zu brauchen'. Friedrich V to Achaz von Dohna, 11/21 May 1623, BHStA, KB, 122/3c, fo. 394.

⁶¹ Elizabeth to Roe, 25 Nov./5 Dec. 1622, PRO, SP, 81/27, fos. 192–3.

which I am and will remain until the last breath of my life'.⁶² Such intransigence would lead to the failure of all James's peace plans. While Charles was in Spain, Friedrich and Elizabeth dispatched two secretaries to persuade the prince of the justice of their cause, and their efforts were not to be in vain.

The storm broke in Madrid after the papal nuncio received the dispensation on 4 May. The document recognized the importance of the affair and its potential benefits for Catholics in England. It also acknowledged the grave danger to them if the pope refused to grant the dispensation. But since the Holy See had no security that the articles confirmed by James would indeed be carried out, the nuncio was required not to hand over the dispensation until Felipe swore 'to secure the observance of the articles by all the means in his power'.⁶³ The cardinals insisted on some minor changes to the articles and strongly objected to the fact that the financial penalties against English Catholics had not yet been abrogated, and it was recommended that the infanta should not be sent to England until the articles were fully executed. Moreover, they added a codicil demanding freedom of conscience and worship for English Catholics, and the pope ordered the dispensation to be withheld until the Spanish king obtained sufficient guarantees for both from England. If these were procured and the dispensation handed over, then the nuncio was to pursue Charles's conversion by all feasible means.⁶⁴ Felipe accepted this responsibility. After two weeks of failed efforts to persuade the English to accept the new conditions in full, he called a junta of divines, an assembly of theologians and spiritual authorities, to set the Spanish terms for the match which would satisfy his royal conscience with regard to the pope's demands.

The new conditions were gravely offensive to Charles and Buckingham, who had expected to encounter no significant resistance to the marriage after their arrival. They had recognized that new delays were a possibility, and they regarded them as 'the worst denial'.⁶⁵ Their methods of displaying their disappointment, however, could not have been more dissimilar. Charles took it in stride, but this is not to say that he was neither impatient nor indignant with the state of affairs. Shortly after he had first laid eyes on the infanta, he had said that 'all he ever yet saw, is nothing to her, and [swore] that if he want her, there shall be blows'.⁶⁶ Confidence tempered his reaction to the pope's demands. When he learned the details of the new conditions, he wrote to his father, 'we will not be long before we get forth of this labyrinth'.⁶⁷ His ready acceptance of some of the minor changes, such as extending the infanta's control of her children's education from ten to twelve years, can be explained by his private resolution not to adhere to the terms. He had disclosed to his father that he planned to accept

⁶² Friedrich V to James I, 10/20 May 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 258–9; 'la conservation de mon honneur, qui suis et demeureray iusques au dernier souspir de ma vie', Friedrich V to James I, 10/20 May 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fo. 252.

⁶³ *Calendar of state papers, Venetian (CSPV)*, xvii, p. 624.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 623–6.

⁶⁵ Hardwicke, *Papers*, 1, p. 409.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

the extension with a show of resistance, 'but, in a little time hereafter, [to] bring more years back again with the two'.⁶⁸ On 9 May he and Buckingham requested a full power from James to set binding terms for the match, assuring him, 'we will yield to nothing, but what you may perform, both with your honour and conscience'.⁶⁹ At the same time Charles believed that the papacy, and not the Spanish monarchy, was the author of the new delay. He asked his father to request his return, in case the Spanish should desire to make new grounds for delay, 'which yet he doth not discover'.⁷⁰ To add weight to his negotiations, he made it known on 21 May that he was considering leaving Spain, due to his disappointment with the new conditions, but his hosts' pleas quickly convinced him to stay. In general the Spanish were impressed with the prince's dignity and nobility, and his grave demeanour matched the tenor of their own courtly conduct.⁷¹ They suggested, however, that Buckingham return to England instead of the prince, leaving Bristol to negotiate as he had been commissioned to do.⁷²

Buckingham's reaction to the new conditions, on the other hand, did not encourage the Spanish to trust in the sincerity of English intentions. James had expected his 'sweet Gossip Steenie', if he encountered delay among the Spanish, to 'spur and gall them as fast as he did the post horses in France', and Buckingham acted accordingly.⁷³ In general the Spanish objected to the way he negotiated 'with much passion and choler, and not with prudence nor discretion'.⁷⁴ In early May during one of the few debates about Catholicism vs. Anglicanism at which Charles was present – James had given prior permission for his son's attendance at such discussions – Buckingham became enraged when the prince began to show some understanding or sympathy for the Catholic arguments in favour of papal supremacy. He rose from his seat, threw his hat on the ground, and trampled it.⁷⁵ Buckingham also developed an open, bitter enmity with the man whom he should have taken extraordinary measures to befriend, Felipe's favourite, Count Olivares. They argued for hours about the pope's new conditions, and by mid-May they were scarcely on speaking terms. Buckingham began to attack Olivares for keeping the prince waiting in Spain, and Olivares criticized the marquis for being against the marriage and partial to the French.⁷⁶ Buckingham's indiscretions were not confined to Olivares. During a formal dinner in state with Charles to commemorate St George's day, Buckingham lost his self-control and quarrelled angrily with Don Fernando Girón, a member of the council of state.⁷⁷ To make matters worse, Buckingham threatened the papal nuncio on more than one occasion that if the marriage did not go through, then what was left of Catholicism in England would be extirpated!⁷⁸ Blackmailing

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 415.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 416.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 418.

⁷¹ John Rushworth, *Historical collections* (8 vols., London, 1659–1701), I, p. 103.

⁷² Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 352–3.

⁷³ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, p. 404.

⁷⁴ Goodman, *Court*, II, pp. 315–16.

⁷⁵ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 59.

⁷⁶ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 148.

⁷⁷ CSPV, XVIII, p. 17.

⁷⁸ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 336; de Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 72.

the Spanish monarchy was the least effective way to persuade its members that the Infanta María would be safe in London, treated with respect, and obeyed.

Buckingham also showed little regard for Spanish courtly *mores*. He gave the impression that he felt himself entitled to honours and recognition equal to those of the prince, despite his common birth.⁷⁹ He was seen in Charles's private chamber eating at the same table, sometimes not fully dressed, other times lounging with one foot resting on another chair while the prince stood. In public Buckingham turned his back to Charles and would lean farther forward than the prince to gaze at the infanta. On one occasion Buckingham did not remove his hat when the prince did to show his respect to the infanta and the queen, who were standing in a palace window. Calling the prince 'ridiculous names' was also objectionable, not to mention making 'immodest gesticulations and wanton trickes with players in the presence of the prince'. At courtly entertainments the marquis took a place 'after the example of the kinges and princes', not accepting the 'honour which is ordenarilie given to the highe stewards or maior domo of the kinges howse'.⁸⁰ Though his manners had won him favour with the English royal family, they horrified the Spanish. When Buckingham would leave Spain, it was said among the king and his ministers that 'they will [r]ather putt the infanta headlong into a well, than into his hands'.⁸¹

Receiving word at the end of May or in early June that James had conferred a dukedom on Buckingham cannot have helped to improve his behaviour toward the Spanish. Apparently some of his political supporters in England sent him confidential advice to wreck the negotiations, either to 'work against the marriage or at least couple it with the restitution of the Palatinate', which presumably would have achieved the same effect.⁸² Thereafter Buckingham's behaviour became even more destructive. Buckingham offended Bristol openly and excluded him from all the dealings between Charles and the Spanish monarchy. The new duke purposefully irritated the Spanish, soured debates, and repeatedly threatened the prince's departure. In June, however, he appeared to have mollified his conduct, 'chiefly because', the Venetian ambassador in Madrid said, 'the prince ... has signified that such is his pleasure, and he has even blamed the duke for harshness in his methods'. Charles also returned Bristol to the negotiations.⁸³ Still, the duke's temper remained unsteady. When he heard that Olivares was trying to persuade Charles to stay in Spain and ignore Buckingham's self-interested advice, the duke nearly challenged the count to a

⁷⁹ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 85.

⁸⁰ British Library (BL), Harleian Manuscripts (HMSS), 1/318/444/78; Goodman, *Court*, II, pp. 315–16.

⁸¹ BL, HMSS, II/135, 136/1580/126.

⁸² Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 154–6. This was ostensibly the advice of the 'cabinet men at Wallingford House', but Lockyer suggests that James issued the advice to link the marriage to the restitution of the Palatinate. It is improbable, however, that the king would have advised his favourite to ruin the marriage at this point.

⁸³ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 161.

duel.⁸⁴ Not without good cause did Olivares curtly note to himself, 'Buckingham and the devil have their seat in England.'⁸⁵

Buckingham targeted Olivares, because he was decidedly against the marriage, and he readily reciprocated the duke's loathing. Olivares's actions were likewise counterproductive to the match, but they never involved breaching court protocol or sinking to the level of crude threats. His was also not the only significant voice at the Spanish court. Though he held more sway over the young king of Spain than any other royal councillor, his age – he was thirty-five at the time – and his lack of experience and knowledge of the world outside Spain significantly reduced his influence over the more senior and widely experienced members of the council of state, such as Don Pedro de Toledo and the Marquis of Villafraña.⁸⁶ In December 1622 the council had rejected Olivares's suggestion that Charles should marry not the Infanta María but a daughter of the emperor.⁸⁷ After the prince's arrival, the majority of the council of state had agreed to follow Gondomar's recommendation to let Charles meet the infanta, against Olivares's will.⁸⁸ Soon they were in favour of concluding the marriage immediately and were content to trust that James would fulfil his promises.⁸⁹ Olivares failed again when he urged the council of state to forbid the infanta to leave Spain until James had suspended the penal laws against Catholics; this plea was rejected on 17 May.⁹⁰ The new papal conditions had come as a boon to Olivares and others who did not trust the English and wanted to delay the match indefinitely. The count was determined to obstruct it until either the prince converted to Catholicism or his father granted freedom of worship to English Catholics, or until the project was abandoned altogether. But he was unable to persuade the Spanish king.

Charles negotiated the spiritual articles for the marriage through June, keeping Buckingham out of the main discussions, and working more closely with Bristol.⁹¹ Felipe's newly assembled junta of divines determined that the infanta should stay in Spain, giving James one year to enact his promises. Charles made it clear that his honour was at stake and asked the Spaniards to trust his solemn oath, to let him leave Spain with the infanta, instead of keeping her behind as a bond for the satisfaction of the treaty conditions. The junta, however, would not revoke their demands. By the end June Charles's frustration with the negotiations had reached such a point that he sought his father's permission to leave Madrid in secrecy, just as he had come. James, however, disapproved of such a dishonourable style of departure and advised his son to have patience. Nevertheless Lord Keeper John

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163. Buckingham was indeed under political pressure to return to England. His enemies in the English government were taking advantage of his absence and Bristol's reports to raise the antipathy against the favourite. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁸⁵ Elliott, *Olivares*, p. 209.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3. Under Felipe III, the council was the 'chief policy-making body'. Paul C. Allen, *Philip III and the pax hispanica, 1598–1621: the failure of grand strategy* (New Haven, 2000), p. ix.

⁸⁷ Elliott, *Olivares*, p. 207.

⁸⁸ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 145.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁹⁰ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 335.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 352–3.

Williams persuaded the king to send Charles an undated command to return, to be used only when the situation demanded.⁹²

When all seemed hopeless, the Spanish mollified their demands in early July, after word arrived of James's promise to consent to the new articles, accompanied by a demand that Charles return to England at once. It was announced that the wedding could take place in September and the infanta would be sent to England in March of the following year. Though Charles strenuously objected to the infanta's delayed departure and repeatedly threatened to leave, the brinkmanship came to an end on 17 July, when he accepted the latest terms. Felipe 'embraced [Charles] as a brother', and the Spanish monarchy was finally satisfied. When the president of the treasury spoke against the marriage, he was dismissed from his post.⁹³ Bonfires lit Madrid for several nights of celebration, and the prince began to attend plays in public with the infanta, who was then styled 'princess of England'.⁹⁴ Even Olivares was forced to accept the reality of the match, and his confessor spoke in its favour and wrote in its defence.⁹⁵ The count tried to persuade the infanta to accept, if not embrace, her divine charge of bringing England back into the Catholic fold. He sent his wife to speak with her – the conversation reduced her to tears – and he appointed her a new confessor to help the process.⁹⁶ On 25 July Buckingham and Charles asked James to carry out his promises regarding the English Catholics, and they still hoped to head for England in September, bringing the infanta with them if the junta's ruling could be circumvented.⁹⁷

Just days afterwards, King James and his privy council solemnly swore to uphold the marriage treaty, and in private James promised to abide by other articles that Charles had accepted. The king promised never to execute the penal laws against Catholics, to effect toleration in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to pass no new anti-Catholic legislation, to make no attempt to alter the infanta's religion, to try to persuade parliament to abrogate the current anti-Catholic laws, to allow the infanta to control her children's education for twelve years, and not to prevent her from giving Charles instruction in Catholicism as often as she liked.⁹⁸ James sent with this oath a commission for Charles and Buckingham to negotiate about the restoration of the Palatinate and a possible Anglo-Spanish campaign against the Dutch.

The king's relations with Spain were actually in a better state than those with the Elector Palatine. Throughout June and July James had conducted a war of words with his son-in-law in an attempt to browbeat him into signing the cease-fire. James had parried Friedrich's objections point for point and had repeated the

⁹² Hackett, *Scrinia*, pp. 136–7.

⁹³ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 357.

⁹⁴ Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, p. 89. Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, p. 427.

⁹⁵ Khevenhiller, *Annales*, X, p. 276.

⁹⁶ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, p. 384.

⁹⁷ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, p. 426.

⁹⁸ Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, I, pp. 86–9.

old threat to abandon him to his own fate if he did not sign.⁹⁹ Friedrich, however, had been resolute; he was ready 'to bear rather the worst extremity than something dishonourable'.¹⁰⁰ He had insisted that the enemy was not obeying the suspension of arms and never intended to, and he had argued that renouncing all alliances would cast upon him 'an immortal hatred, to reach the summit of his misfortunes'.¹⁰¹ He and his people, he had said, could not bear fifteen months of abuse till the enemy settled a general peace treaty to their own advantage. Yet he had insisted that his refusal to comply this time was not directed against the treaty per se, but was meant to protect him from the conditions that would almost certainly guarantee his destruction.¹⁰² He had sent James a copy of the emperor's secret promise to the papal nuncio, Fabricio Verospo, given in February 1622, that Friedrich would lose his electoral dignity, the king of England's negotiations and treaties notwithstanding.¹⁰³ But James, having just signed the articles for the Anglo-Spanish match, retorted that he trusted not only the emperor but the king of Spain and the Infanta Isabella as well. He said that, on his honour, he would make good his promise to restore Friedrich and Elizabeth, whether by means of a treaty or force of arms.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile Friedrich had not ceased to exhort his agents in Istanbul and his associates, Prince Bethlen Gábor of Transylvania and the margrave of Jägerndorf, to resume hostilities against Emperor Ferdinand in the eastern regions of the Empire.¹⁰⁵

In Spain, meanwhile, there was yet another delay in the marriage, but it was due to an act of God. Pope Gregory XV had died on 8 July, and the dispensation expired with him. Charles had signed the marriage treaty on 4 August none the less and accepted that a new dispensation would have to be issued by the new pope, Urban VIII, who was elected two days later. On 7 August the Spanish monarchy received the news that James had made the necessary promises to carry out the conditions for the marriage, but they still would not allow the infanta to leave before the following spring. Felipe had issued a written promise that the marriage could be consummated in Spain if Charles agreed to stay on till Christmas, but even this did not sway the prince.¹⁰⁶ By 8 August Charles was fully resolved to return home in early September, with or without the infanta. For the rest of the month he and Buckingham tried to persuade Felipe and Olivares to let María accompany them, so that they would not be dishonoured by returning to

⁹⁹ James I to Friedrich V, June 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 252, 256; James's response, 27 June/7 July 1623, PRO, SP, 81/28, fos. 336–8. Also see James I to Friedrich V, 27 June/7 July 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fo. 261.

¹⁰⁰ 'scheint lieber das Äußerste als Unwürdiges ertragen zu wollen'. Sötl, *Der Religionskrieg*, III, p. 181.

¹⁰¹ 'une hayne immortelle, pour achever le comble de mes malheurs'. Friedrich V to James I, 10/20 June 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 265–6. Also see PRO, SP, 81/28, fo. 309.

¹⁰² Friedrich V to James I, 12/22 July 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 269–270.

¹⁰³ BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fo. 271. For a summary of this letter, see PRO, 81/28, fo. 350.

¹⁰⁴ James I to Friedrich V, 31 July 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 272–3.

¹⁰⁵ For a list of Friedrich's letters to Jägerndorf and Gábor, see BHStA, KB, 122/3c, fo. 603.

¹⁰⁶ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 82.

England without her, but the junta of divines would not alter their ruling. The young king did not budge.¹⁰⁷

Throughout August relations between the English and Spanish deteriorated rather than improved. The king apparently refused to negotiate with Buckingham any longer, preferring instead the English ambassadors, because they had 'a more plenary commission and understand the business better'.¹⁰⁸ Later there was a brawl when a mortally ill Englishman called for an English Jesuit. Sir Edmund Verney, supposedly on the prince's orders, prevented the priest from entering and punched him in the face. Gondomar arrived in time to prevent the ensuing struggle with the Spanish authorities from leading to bloodshed. During the same week a Protestant catechism written in Spanish was found in the prince's suite in the royal palace.¹⁰⁹ These incidents raised new qualms among the Spanish about the prince's actual intentions regarding the toleration of Catholic worship, and they bolstered the intransigence of the junta of divines.¹¹⁰

For Charles, the final straw was not having to leave without his designated bride, but learning about the Spanish opposition to the restoration of Friedrich V. This issue above all poisoned Anglo-Spanish relations during the prince's visit. In July, just before the marriage treaty had been settled, Charles had asked for another treaty to restore the Palatinate to Friedrich and Elizabeth, and Felipe had refused to negotiate on that affair until the marriage was done, at which time, he had said, the Palatines would be fully restored without a treaty.¹¹¹ Charles had remained content with this response for some time. But the storm broke in August, after the council of state passed, after much discussion and by a majority of one, Olivares's formal proposal to pursue a resolution to the Palatine crisis through a Palatine–Imperial marriage. If Friedrich paid a fine of 6 million Reichsthaler and sent his eldest son to be raised in Vienna – where he undoubtedly would receive a Catholic education – then, when the boy came of age, he could be restored to his lands, receive the electoral dignity, and also marry a daughter of the emperor.¹¹² On 20 August the English accepted the Palatine–Imperial marriage in principle and said that James would make Friedrich and his generals obey. They asked Felipe if he would promise to effect the restoration, using force if necessary, if the emperor would not comply. While some Spanish councillors found the request legitimate, Olivares did not.¹¹³ When Charles pressed for Friedrich's restoration and for assistance from the king of Spain if the emperor proved recalcitrant, Olivares replied that in Spain there was no

¹⁰⁷ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, pp. 434–6, 448.

¹⁰⁸ Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 83; Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, p. 79.

¹¹⁰ De Jesús, *El hecho*, pp. 83–4.

¹¹¹ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 158. This testimony came from the earl of Kellie, who, Lockyer asserts, heard it from James I.

¹¹² Don Pedro de Toledo had first proposed this solution in late 1621. Eberhard Straub, *Pax et Imperium: Spaniens Kampf um seine Friedensordnung in Europa zwischen 1617 und 1635*, vol. 31, Neue Folge, *Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft* (Paderborn, 1980), pp. 175–7.

¹¹³ Khevenhiller, *Annales*, x, p. 91.

authorized negotiation for the restitution of the Palatinate; they certainly had no commission from the emperor to do so. 'And thirdly', the count added, 'you should not think that His Royal Majesty is willing to leave His Imperial Majesty helpless in all incidental occasions, due to his sister's marriage.'¹¹⁴ Charles then looked visibly upset 'and said nothing more in reply than this alone: Buckingham and Digby will negotiate further about this'.¹¹⁵

By pressuring the Spanish Charles found that they had no real intention of fully restoring Friedrich V and Elizabeth to their lands and titles, the Anglo-Spanish match notwithstanding. Moreover, any restitution was at that point contingent upon Friedrich's sending his eldest son to Vienna, something which he never would have agreed to do. Charles had found the Spanish willing to restore Friedrich to some of his lands and perhaps his son to the electoral dignity, but the prince seriously doubted that the Spanish would carry out either.¹¹⁶ It has been argued that this realization induced Charles to leave Spain at last.¹¹⁷ According to Buckingham, the pair finally resolved to leave Madrid when they 'saw there was no more to be gained here'.¹¹⁸ Charles might well have asked himself what the point of the match was if there was no hope for his sister's restitution without involving England in a major war on the continent. For Charles the benefit of an Anglo-Spanish alliance must have been sharply reduced if its maintenance required controversial policies in England and humiliation in Germany.

In Olivares's point of view, however, he was not in fact reneging on any promises that the Spanish had made before. Felipe's promise to use his arms to recover the Palatinate had been contingent first upon Friedrich's submission to the emperor and breaking off all alliances, neither of which had taken place, and secondly upon the failure of all other forms of mediation between the emperor and the king of England.¹¹⁹ If Friedrich had ever applied for mercy, then the emperor would have been obligated to restore him as he had declared and promised repeatedly. If, in that event, the duke of Bavaria, who had helped to conquer the Upper and Lower Palatinate, had then refused the emperor's order to relinquish the region, then Spanish forces, armed with an imperial commission, could have mobilized alongside an English force against the Bavarian forces to

¹¹⁴ 'und zum Dritten, daß Sie nicht gedencken wollen, daß Ihre Königl. Maj. durch die Heyrath seiner Schwester Ihre Kayserl. Maj. in allen vorfallenden [sic] Occasionen Hülfloß zu lassen gesinnet seyn'. Khevenhiller, *Annales*, x, p. 96.

¹¹⁵ 'und nicht mehrers darauf geantwortet, denn allein: hierüber werde der Buggingam und Digbi weiter tractiren'. Khevenhiller, *Annales*, x, pp. 96–7. After Charles returned to England, it was reported that he had admonished Olivares, 'Look to it Sir, for if you hold yourself to that, there is an end of all; for without this you may not rely upon either marriage or friendship'. Rushworth, *Historical collections*, p. 123. Such vehemence, however, does not match Charles's characteristically reserved manner.

¹¹⁶ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, pp. 449–50.

¹¹⁷ Anton Gindely, *Friedrich V von der Pfalz, der ehemalige Winterkönig von Böhmen seit dem Regensburger Deputationstag vom Jahre 1622 bis zu seinem Tode*, vol. 12, *Abhandlungen der königlichen böhmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften – VI. Folge* (Prague, 1885), pp. 5–8; Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 398–400.

¹¹⁸ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, p. 451.

¹¹⁹ Felipe IV to James I, 26 Dec./5 Jan. 1623, PRO, SP, 81/27, fos. 230–1.

effect the emperor's will. The scenario, though highly improbable, was not totally impossible. Charles, however, seemed to understand that the king of Spain's armies should attack Imperial forces in order to retake the Palatinate for the dispossessed Friedrich without his having made any amends for his prior transgressions against the emperor. In that case Olivares was right to disabuse the prince.

The Spanish did not realize the extent to which the prince of Wales had, in his own mind, made the marriage contingent upon the restitution of the Palatinate. Charles and Buckingham had been reticent on the issue at first. James's initial instructions to his favourite had warned him not to couple the marriage negotiations with those concerning the resolution of the Palatine crisis, and in April the king allowed Buckingham to discuss the issue, only after the marriage was concluded.¹²⁰ For the Spanish the marriage and the Palatine crisis were distinct, though obviously intertwined, and best solved not in tandem but in succession. The Palatine crisis was not a matter pertaining to Anglo-Spanish interests alone; there were other parties involved, namely the combatants, the emperor, the duke of Bavaria, and the Elector Palatine, without whose agreement no settlement could be made. The Spanish were highly interested in ending the war in Germany as soon as possible, out of concern for the safety of Habsburg lands against their traditional enemies. They had no interest in acquiring the Lower Palatinate and instead desired a lasting peace among religious confessions and the various imperial estates to guarantee the security of the Spanish Netherlands and Milan.¹²¹ The majority of the Spanish council of state – Don Pedro de Toledo, the count of Aytona, the duke of Monteleón, the count of Montesclaros, and Don Agustín Mexía – had favoured a restoration of Friedrich V since late 1621, but the Palatine's unrelenting recalcitrance had made that option less and less practicable.¹²²

Charles insisted on leaving even when, on 23 August, he was informed of Urban VIII's election to the Holy See and that the dispensation would be confirmed without obstacles in a short time.¹²³ By September there had been reports that James was ill and that the fleet to retrieve the prince and the duke was already on the way. For the security of the English monarchy, Charles could not stay in Spain till Christmas. On 7 September he and Felipe IV vowed to abide by the marriage contract as it stood. After lavish gifts traded hands, Felipe accompanied the prince and his party to the Escorial, where Charles authorized proxies for the king and his brother, Don Carlos, to complete the marriage when the dispensation arrived. During Charles's last two days at the Escorial, he asked Felipe one last time to restore the Palatinate. The king promised to try to obtain it from the emperor for Charles as a wedding present, but this answer was not satisfactory.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 156.

¹²¹ It was important to the Spanish, however, to hold on to parts of the Lower Palatinate to keep them away from the Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, with the goal of limiting the emperor's dependence on him.

¹²² Straub, *Pax et Imperium*, pp. 175–8, 189.

¹²³ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 84.

¹²⁴ Gardiner, *Prince Charles*, II, pp. 408–9.

The prince and his entourage left the Escorial for the northern coast, never to return. On the way, they were met by Sir Francis Nethersole, Elizabeth's secretary, who delivered her plea to Charles: he should not go through with the marriage until he had obtained adequate promises for her and her husband's full restoration. Nethersole also communicated his masters' rejection of the Palatine–Imperial match.¹²⁵ His mission appeared to have the desired effect. From Segovia the prince wrote a letter commanding Bristol not to conclude the marriage until he received formal assurance that the infanta would not enter a convent after the wedding in order to escape her obligations. These new terms, though seemingly absurd, were not entirely unfounded. Olivares may have been in part responsible for putting this fear into Charles's head.¹²⁶ It was common knowledge that, before Charles came to Spain, the infanta had said that she would rather become a religious than queen of a kingdom where Catholicism was outlawed.¹²⁷ Her statement implies that she should have no objection to the marriage, because liberty of conscience had been granted as a part of the treaty articles. Moreover, it is doubtful that such personal wishes could have transcended her brother's needs of state. Charles's letter to Bristol was calculated to procure delay without transgressing the prince's oath. Bristol could not have communicated the request without damaging the state of the affair as it stood, so he was forced to write to Charles to ask for further instructions and a new order to conduct the marriage by proxy. The prince sent a servant to wait at Bristol's residence and produce the letter when the papal dispensation arrived. Charles planned to be long gone from Spain by that time.

The Spanish, unaware of this arrangement, saw the marriage as said and done, which Felipe was to execute within ten days of the dispensation's arrival. The infanta had mourned Charles's departure and ordered a mass sung daily for the safety of his voyage. He had left 'without the least ombrage of discontent', and 'the Spaniards themselves confesse[d] there was never [a] princesse so bravely wooed'.¹²⁸ When the infanta heard that some royal councillors were considering another engagement for her, should the prince of Wales not fulfil his promise, she referred to them as 'maxaderos' (idiots). She had no intention of entering a convent and even 'reproved those that have presumed to speak that kind of language'.¹²⁹ She was studying English daily, and the bishop of Segovia and other clergymen were instructing her in the duties of her marriage that pertained to her faith, trying to increase her missionary zeal and sense of obligation.¹³⁰ She was busily preparing rich clothes to give to Charles, and many of her ladies and servants were already selected for her court in England. She also took an active interest in the Palatine crisis, and, according to Olivares, was 'mak[ing] it now

¹²⁵ Rushworth, *Historical collections*, I, p. 102. Elizabeth also asked Buckingham to be the godfather for her new-born son, 'a signal honor as well as a mark of confidence'. Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 164.

¹²⁶ Elliott, *Olivares*, pp. 213–14.

¹²⁷ De Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 48.

¹²⁸ Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, pp. 89–91.

¹²⁹ Gardiner, *History of England*, v, pp. 121–2.

¹³⁰ Goodman, *Court*, II, p. 318; de Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 88; Gardiner, *History*, v, pp. 123–4.

her own businessse'. Bristol said, 'there could not be a better pawn for the surrendry of the Palatinat, then the infanta in the prince his [sic] arms, who would never rest till she did the work to merit love of our nation'.¹³¹ Olivares also said that Felipe guaranteed full satisfaction for James with regard to the Palatinate, 'for it was a firm peace and amity (which he confest could never be without the accomodation of things in Germany) as much as an alliance which his Catholic Majesty aims at'.¹³² In October Bristol and Aston were treated as members of the royal household, because Felipe considered Charles to be his brother; the honour was without precedent.¹³³ The wide array of expensive preparations made for the wedding festivities led even the Imperial ambassador, against his inclinations, to believe that the Spanish were serious about carrying out the marriage as promised.¹³⁴

In September, while Charles was on his way to England, his sister, Elizabeth, expressed her disappointment with her father's policies to the English secretary of state, Sir Edward Conway. 'I hope his majesty will one day see the falsood of our enemies, but I pray God send my dear brother safe in England againe and then I shall be more quiet in my minde.'¹³⁵ The Palatines could only hope that when Charles reached England, there would be a shift in James's foreign policy. After a short time Friedrich and Elizabeth would learn that Charles had 'resolved to make warre with Spayne, when he not onely was in peace with Spayne but was in Spayne, rather then he would not see them honourably repayed'.¹³⁶

When Charles returned in October 1623, it was clear that he was determined to turn England's allegiance toward the Palatine cause and attack Palatine enemies when the opportunity presented itself. His experience in Spain had been inordinately frustrating. Never in his life had he been surrounded by people looking on him as an outsider, as a predatory prince unworthy of trust, as a heretic. He had certainly never felt more humiliated and exasperated. The transgressions against his pride and his honour made him all the more resolute in his desire for a war against Spain on behalf of his sister and brother-in-law in the Palatinate.¹³⁷ When he entered London on a rainy day in October, people at all levels of society celebrated euphorically, despite the dismal weather. London and its environs blazed with bonfires, and church bells tolled all day long. People drank deeply to the prince's health till five or six o'clock in the morning, creating 'an infinity of drunkards'.¹³⁸ On the same day Friedrich's agent, Johannes Joachim von

¹³¹ Howell, *Familiar letters*, section III, pp. 94–5.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 92–3.

¹³³ Hardwicke, *Papers*, I, pp. 474–5.

¹³⁴ Khevenhiller, *Annales*, X, p. 275.
¹³⁵ Johann Christoph Freiherr von Aretin, ed., 'Sammlung noch ungedruckter Briefe des Churfürsten Friderich V. von der Pfalz, nachherigen Königs von Böhmen; von den Jahren 1612–1632', in *Beyträge zur Geschichte und Literatur* (9 vols., Munich, 1806), VII, p. 194; Elizabeth to Conway, 6/16 Sept. 1623, PRO, SP, 81/29, fos. 120–1.

¹³⁶ Nethersole to Carleton?, 11/21 Sept. 1626, PRO, SP, 81/34, fo. 115.

¹³⁷ Simon Adams, 'Spain or the Netherlands? The dilemmas of early Stuart foreign policy', in Howard Tomlinson, ed., *Before the English civil war* (London, 1983), p. 89.

¹³⁸ Rusdorf to Maurice, 12/22 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 16.

Rusdorf, immediately acquired the secret information that the prince had left orders to delay the marriage indefinitely as he departed from Spain.¹³⁹

Rusdorf's first contact with Charles and Buckingham demonstrated their new regard for the Palatines and their cause. When all foreign ambassadors gathered at York House to welcome the prince, Charles received only Rusdorf, who congratulated the prince on his safe return but not on his marriage.¹⁴⁰ Charles greeted only a few lords of the council and some of his own servants and then set off for Royston to meet his father. Rusdorf noticed that the other ambassadors were envious of the honour the prince had given him, and they all followed the prince to Royston to deliver their compliments. Two days later Charles repeated his show of favour to the Palatine ambassador, receiving Rusdorf before all the others.¹⁴¹ Buckingham assured Rusdorf that the voyage to Spain, despite all suppositions to the contrary, would in no way result in any harm to the affairs of the Palatine pair. The duke said 'that the prince had proved in all his actions, how much he would be their good brother, never wanting to make, nor having made, any conclusion, without wanting to be first assured of the well-being of his sister and brother'.¹⁴²

King James, however, remained committed to his usual allegiances. After speaking with Buckingham, Rusdorf asked for permission to be admitted to the king. When Secretary of State Conway informed Rusdorf that he and the other courtiers and ambassadors would be permitted to attend James's formal reception of his son, Rusdorf asked if the same privilege to attend could be bestowed on the king's other son, Friedrich V. Rusdorf hoped that James would lift his ban against Friedrich's and Elizabeth's coming to England. Conway replied this would be too difficult to arrange. After the feasting was done, when James was about to go on a hunt, he called to Rusdorf to receive the honour of kissing his hands. Rusdorf extended congratulations and best wishes from the king and queen of Bohemia. James accepted the compliment with a cheerful smile, then removed his hat, and said, 'Bon, bon.'¹⁴³ More from James was not forthcoming, for the time being.

After the happy receptions the weather went from bad to worse, and the euphoria soon wore off at court.¹⁴⁴ Rusdorf observed that the diplomatic atmosphere at court had changed. Charles appeared to have aged during his journey, perhaps due to the fact that his beard had grown some more and made his expression more grave and masculine. Rusdorf could detect no exterior

¹³⁹ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 6/16 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 8, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Friedrich knew that Charles and Buckingham were returning to England ten days before they reached Portsmouth. Friedrich had ordered Rusdorf to go to the prince as soon as possible and deliver congratulations from the Palatine pair. Friedrich V to Rusdorf, 26 Sept./5 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KB, 122/3a, fo. 30.

¹⁴¹ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 11/21 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 14.

¹⁴² 'que le Prince avoit tesmoigné en toutes ses actions, combien il estoit leur bon frere, ne voulant prendre iamais, ni ayant pris, aucune conclusion, sans vouloir estre premierement assureé du bien de sa soeur & de son frere'. Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 11/21 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 14.

¹⁴³ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 11/21 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Rusdorf to Maurice, 12/22 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 16.

change in Buckingham, but it was obvious that the duke held inside a serious grudge against the Spanish. Rusdorf suspected that the same was true of King James. All those who returned from Spain and the courtiers in general were speaking scornfully of that country.¹⁴⁵ Rusdorf was soon told that £3,000 would be sent to The Hague along with the usual allowance for the Palatine pair.

None the less, it appeared that James still preferred Spanish interests over those of the Palatines. Rusdorf warned Friedrich that Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to the Dutch Republic, would be dispatched to The Hague to present Friedrich with terms for the Palatine–Imperial marriage, the preferred Spanish solution to the Palatine crisis.¹⁴⁶ For James this match was the best way for his son-in-law to regain the emperor's favour and confidence, and he asked for Friedrich's compliance before committing to negotiations with the emperor and the king of Spain about the matter. James wanted to be able to negotiate in Friedrich's name, and it was guaranteed that his son would not become a Catholic. The king added that the impending marriage of Charles and the Infanta María made the times ripe for a settlement. James had lately received a courteous letter from the emperor which offered his congratulations on the Anglo-Spanish match.¹⁴⁷ With this report, Rusdorf advised Friedrich to refrain from making the usual objections based on his honour and conscience at this early stage of the negotiations; he could always break off negotiations at a later date if a single condition prejudicial to his honour, conscience, and full restitution arose. Conway guaranteed Rusdorf that no 'impossible or incompatible' conditions were to be accepted.¹⁴⁸ Friedrich, however, demurred. He said that he would graciously follow the king's advice if it advanced the glory of God and benefited the public good and the Palatine dynasty. He added that he would accept the proposed marriage but only after his full restitution to his lands and titles.¹⁴⁹ James interpreted this declaration as 'a polite refusal'.¹⁵⁰

As autumn wore into winter, the Palatines watched the confused demise of the Anglo-Spanish match. In late October James amply expressed his displeasure with Spain's failure to restore the Palatinate, but though he appeared to be losing his patience with Spain, he continued to negotiate with her ambassadors about delivering the Infanta María to his son.¹⁵¹ At the same time his ambassadors in Spain were pressing Felipe IV for full satisfaction in the Palatine crisis immediately. They said that James had tried everything with the emperor.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Even Emperor Ferdinand II and Count Khevenhiller welcomed this proposal, but because the Spanish did not earnestly take up the requisite negotiations with James, Vienna delayed getting actively involved. Straub, *Pax et Imperium*, p. 192.

¹⁴⁷ James I to Friedrich V, 8/18 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 9254/2, fos. 160–1. For the emperor's letter of congratulation, see Ferdinand II to James I, 27 Aug./6 Sept. 1623, PRO, SP, 80/6, fo. 44.

¹⁴⁸ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 12/22 Oct. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 12.

¹⁴⁹ Friedrich V to James I, 20/30 Oct. 1623, PRO, SP, 81/29, fo. 232.

¹⁵⁰ 'un civile refus', Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 22 Nov./2 Dec. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 36.

¹⁵¹ Rusdorf to Maurice, 29 Oct./8 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 18–19.

¹⁵² Memo from English ambassadors to Felipe IV, 29 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 31–3.

In early November James took sick. His son's and his favourite's recent debacle in foreign affairs induced a sulky, petulant gloom in the king that intensified his ill health. One of Rusdorf's informers told him that James had been blaming Charles and Buckingham as well as Bristol for the fact that affairs with Spain were not as advanced as they should have been.¹⁵³ Charles, however, was bent on restoring the Palatinate, on which he wanted a final resolution before Christmas. He was already searching for supporters, and Sir Robert Anstruther was commissioned to go on an embassy to Denmark, according to Charles, for that purpose alone.¹⁵⁴

The condition of the restoration of the Palatinate was inserted into the marriage articles just in time to prevent Charles's proxies from being used to seal his marriage with the infanta. Rusdorf summed up the situation as follows:

one will finally take advantage of the plausible excuse of the restitution of the Palatinate in the affair of the marriage in case it does not proceed as desired, that is, as if the king of England, the prince of England, and the negotiators had not wanted to advance the said marriage at all, without being assured of the restitution.¹⁵⁵

This resolution could not have been better timed. In November James received a guarantee from Bristol that the Anglo-Spanish marriage would go forward provided that no one impeded its progress in England, but his efforts were in vain.¹⁵⁶ In late November Pope Urban VIII's dispensation arrived in Madrid, and Felipe IV named 9 December the day on which his sister would be married to Charles by proxy. Just three days prior to that date, Bristol received orders to make the marriage contingent upon an agreement about the Palatinate, and he immediately informed the council of state. The marriage was postponed indefinitely, but at the court in Madrid, it was taken as a rejection. It was too late to recall invitations to the ceremony, and the stage built for the event was taken down. The infanta dropped her title as 'princess of England', discontinued her lessons in English, and accepted no more letters from Charles.¹⁵⁷ Many were shocked, while others claimed they had expected it all along.

The negotiations wore on none the less, but they were for form's sake. The Spanish ambassador in England wanted James to exclude the restitution of the Palatinate from the articles of the marriage treaty. This had been the normal line since the Palatine crisis first imposed itself on European politics. The Spanish ambassador, Don Carlos Coloma, now joined by the marquis of Hinojosa and Don Pedro de Mexias, told James that those who were trying to conjoin the

¹⁵³ Rusdorf to Maurice, 12/22 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 39. The king, prince, and privy council had discussed the marriage for four hours at a single session.

¹⁵⁴ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 1/11 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 26–7.

¹⁵⁵ 'lon se prevalera en fin de la plausible excuse de la Restitution du Palatinat en l'affaire du mariage en cas qu'elle ne procedera à souhait, assavoir, comme si le R. d'Anglt, le Prince d'Angl & tous les negociateurs n'avoient point voulu avancer le dit mariage sans estre assureé de la restitution'. Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 1/11 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 26–7.

¹⁵⁶ Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 12/22 Nov. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 22–3.

¹⁵⁷ Gardiner, *History*, v, p. 153.

Palatine crisis with the Anglo-Spanish marriage were pursuing private interests; they were merely using the Palatine crisis to prevent the marriage and to destroy the amity between England and Spain. The Spanish warned James that they would not be the first to break off negotiations. Through these tactics the Spanish continued to keep the peace, because James was unwilling to start a war with the most powerful monarchy in Europe chiefly for the benefit of his obstreperous son-in-law.¹⁵⁸

James did not abandon the Anglo-Spanish marriage negotiations readily, because he knew that an end to the discussions would make the pressure to declare a war in the Palatinate irresistible. The archbishop of Canterbury disclosed to Rusdorf that the council continued to debate the match, that Buckingham and Charles were pushing James to break with Spain, and that James was as confused, troubled, and vexed as ever. It was still possible at that time that he might remove the restitution of the Palatinate as a condition for the marriage as easily as he had inserted it. The greatest fear for the Palatine party was that he might declare himself satisfied with merely a promise of restitution, instead of its actual execution, as a condition for the marriage treaty. According to Rusdorf, 'by such an evasion, the king hopes, as I understand from good sources, to break the resolutions of the prince and the duke of Buckingham and to give himself the leisure to be able to continue his proceedings'.¹⁵⁹ Fundamentally James preferred peace with the Habsburgs over a war on behalf of his son-in-law. As long as Friedrich was unwilling to submit to any peace treaties or negotiated settlements, James was content to maintain his peaceable relationship with Spain. Charles, meanwhile, was beginning to lose patience with his father. He told James that he had to declare in no uncertain terms that Spain had deluded him. The king replied that this was still not the time to make such a declaration, 'until one sees if Spain wanted to comply with her promise'.¹⁶⁰ In the following year, however, Charles and Buckingham, with the help of parliament, won their battle, effecting a revolution in Jacobean foreign policy.¹⁶¹ After roughly two decades of peace, England and Spain returned to their old enmity. War had become inevitable.

The bulk of the evidence demonstrates that the main cause of Prince Charles's departure from Spain and the dissolution of the match was the fact that no agreement could be reached about restoring the Palatinate to the dispossessed, obstructive Friedrich V. The restitution of the Elector Palatine was, for Charles, ultimately more important than the success of the Anglo-Spanish match, but, for

¹⁵⁸ Rusdorf to Maurice, 26 Nov./6 Dec. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fos. 57–8.

¹⁵⁹ 'Par tel eschappatoire le Roy espere, comme i'entends de tres bons lieu, de rompre les resolutions du Prince & du Duc de Buquingham, et se donner loisir de pouvoir continuer en ses procedures.' Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 30 Nov./10 Dec. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 45.

¹⁶⁰ 'iusques à ce que lon voye, si Espagne vouloit complir avec sa promesse'. Rusdorf to Friedrich V, 26 Nov./6 Dec. 1623, BHStA, KS, 7552, fo. 55.

¹⁶¹ See Cogswell, *Blessed revolution*.

the Spanish, and for James I as well, the restoration was a consideration of merely secondary importance. Charles's failure to procure his bride was deeply frustrating, but it was not the straw that broke the camel's back. When exactly he made his decision, we will probably never know, but it almost certainly happened while he was in Spain. He had left England with the same aspirations as his father: to obtain a more secure Anglo-Spanish alliance with the hand of a Spanish princess and to bring an end to the war in Germany by restoring the Elector and Electress Palatine to their ancestral lands and dignities. He soon learned that the Spanish would commit to the former but not to the latter. His actions after his return show the extent to which he had made up his mind on the matter.

It is very difficult to assess the sincerity of the other major players, probably because it varied from statement to statement. James I promised religious toleration for Catholics in his own lands most likely without much intention of effecting it, given the tremendous domestic political resistance to the idea. What is certain is that he preferred to have a Spanish princess for his son and a Spanish dowry for his treasury regardless of the fate of the Elector Palatine. For James, Friedrich V fully deserved his punishment and had done little to deserve the financial and diplomatic assistance that his father-in-law had bestowed. Friedrich and Elizabeth, for their part, were dead set against the match and any peace that James could arrange between them and their enemies without first providing for their full, untrammelled restitution. Friedrich was so convinced of the righteousness of his position that he objected to the idea of asking for mercy, receiving a pardon, and even admitting to any wrong-doing. Buckingham was nearly as destructive. It did not take long before he decided that the Spanish were not to be trusted or respected, and he acted accordingly.

It will probably never be known what was said in private between Olivares and Felipe IV, though we are entitled to guess. The count seems to have been against the idea except during the brief period of time when he thought that Charles might be willing to convert to Catholicism. Buckingham appalled Olivares and confirmed numerous prejudices against the English. It was not a combination for success. Felipe IV and several of his councillors appear to have taken Charles at his word, just so long as they maintained the upper hand, either by holding on to the infanta or by refusing to hand over parts of the Palatinate. The Habsburgs had built their empires as much through successful marriage as military conquest, and the long-term prospect of returning England to the Catholic fold by installing Habsburg blood in the royal line was worth the cost of a Spanish princess, but they were not going to hand over María for a pittance. They wanted real, visible assurances that she and her retinue would be respected, protected, and prominent in the public arena. What few in the Spanish monarchy wanted was a war with England added to Spanish military obligations throughout the rest of Europe. The Spanish desire for peace was another factor that made the marriage more palatable, but they would not be convinced by threats of any kind. Regarding the Palatinate, they read James correctly but not Charles. It appears that the Spanish were willing to wed the infanta by proxy and send her to England the following

spring, provided the necessary conditions were met. The junta of divines, however, remains a problem. Only further research will be able to establish whether it was actually able to restrict Felipe's alternatives or if it was a mere smoke screen for delay.

Both the English and the Spanish made exaggerated promises that they had little intention of keeping and exorbitant demands that they knew were unacceptable, but both would have preferred in principle to have the marriage and the peace it would have helped to perpetuate over the bloodshed that was certain to follow a failure. Neither side, however, was able to persuade the other. The Spanish negotiated from the stronger position, employing a well-known slowness which did not harmoniously complement the almost cavalier approach of the English. Buckingham's antics may have sunk the already flimsy ship. Charles and Bristol probably would have fared much better without him. The historical record shows that it was Charles who called it off. When he abandoned the match, he turned his father's pacific foreign policy on its head and, despite the king's resistance, drove England into the continent's wars. This decision would prove disastrous for the Stuart monarchy.