

Anette Bangert

Electoral Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria

Bavarian Imperial Politics during the Interregnum 1657–58



Herbert Utz Verlag · München

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Dieses Werk ist urheberrechtlich geschützt.

Die dadurch begründeten Rechte, insbesondere die der Übersetzung, des Nachdrucks, der Entnahme von Abbildungen, der Wiedergabe auf fotomechanischem oder ähnlichem Wege und der Speicherung in Datenverarbeitungsanlagen bleiben – auch bei nur auszugsweiser Verwendung – vorbehalten.

© 2008

Herbert Utz Verlag GmbH

ISBN 978-3-8316-0772-3 · Printed in Germany

Herbert Utz Verlag GmbH, München · 089-277791-00 · [www.utz.de](http://www.utz.de)

Preface	7
Abbreviations	9
Notes	9
Introduction	11
1. General	19
2. Bavaria	49
3. The Vicariate	95
4. The French Connection	131
5. Initial Negotiations with the Habsburgs	183
6. Preparations for the Election in Frankfurt	203
7. The Treaty of Waldmünchen and the <i>Wahltag</i> in Frankfurt	237
Conclusion	281
Bibliography	287

## Preface

The unexpected death of Emperor Ferdinand III in April 1657 left the Holy Roman Empire without a King of the Romans and consequently facing an interregnum prior to the election of a new Emperor. The result was an exceptionally long interregnum creating the first test the imperial institutions had to face since the constitutional changes introduced by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The choice of Habsburg candidate was not immediately clear. Some of the Electors were undecided and, under Cardinal Mazarin's influence, France used this opportunity to influence the election by proposing several candidates.

Recent historiographic research has focussed on the imperial institutions and how their function affected the Empire as a whole. This case study seeks to demonstrate how the Bavarian Electorate adapted to, manipulated and influenced imperial politics during the interregnum. There were two principal issues concerning Bavaria at this time: the imperial election and the imperial vicariate. Mazarin's most serious imperial candidate was Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria, whose wife Henriette Adelaide, a Sabaudian princess, was Mazarin's chief ally. However, the Bavarian Dowager Electress, in league with senior Bavarian courtiers, maintained a strong pro-Habsburg influence over the twenty-year-old elector. Ferdinand Maria's decision to support the Habsburg candidate Leopold, King of Bohemia, led to a mutual defence alliance. For Bavaria's benefit this was important because to the potential threat from Elector Karl Ludwig of the Palatinate, with whom Bavaria disputed the title of Imperial Vicar for the Bavarian, Rhenish, Swabian and Franconian Imperial Circles.

There has been no comprehensive research completed on Bavaria's overall position during the interregnum and this investigation looks

to rectify this situation. Moreover, an exploration of Bavarian policy during this crucial period casts light on the current debates over the pre-eminent status and oligarchical aspirations of the College of Electors as a whole.

This book evolved out of my doctoral thesis.

Anette Bangert  
February 2008

## Abbreviations

AAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
BA NF	Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, Neue Folge
BHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
Corr Pol	Correspondance poliiques
fl	Gulden
Kschw	Kasten schwarz
MD	Mémoires et Documents
Rt	Reichstaler
ZBLG	Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte
ZfB	Zeitschrift für Bayern und den angrenzenden Länder

## Notes

### Proper Names

All proper names have been kept in the original, unless there is a commonly used English version.

### Dates

I have used the Gregorian calendar mostly as Catholic states had already converted from the Julian calendar. Dates according to the Julian calendar have only been kept in the original in quotes.

### Money

There was no single currency in use within the Holy Roman Empire at this time. In Bavaria it was 1 Rt (Reichstaler) to 1.5 fl (Gulden). All amounts quoted from sources have not been altered.

The 1650's have been relatively neglected in recent debates by Early Modern European historians in contrast to the preceding Thirty Years' War and the emergence of Louis XIV's court onto the European political stage. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was to end the military conflict within the Holy Roman Empire, but the treaty's deficiencies soon became evident. In the particular case of the history of the Holy Roman Empire, one key area of neglect has been the Electoral College's first real test post-1648 – the interregnum of 1657–58. Using primarily contemporary correspondence from the Bavarian Chancery and drawing upon Axel Gotthard's study of the Electors as »pillars of the Empire« published in 1999, Bavaria is a suitable subject for a case study of the operation of medium-power politics as these developed in the political aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, specifically during the interregnum of 1657–58, by focussing on Bavaria's role and contribution to the Electors' collegiate power base and the political manipulation exercised at the highest levels within the Empire.<sup>1</sup> This can be aided by a revision of Bavaria's historiographical image during the interregnum by presenting Ferdinand Maria, the Elector of Bavaria, as an effective *Reichs-politiker* through his roles as Elector, Imperial Vicar and head of an Imperial Circle.

The constitutional changes brought about by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 placed all imperial institutions in an unfamiliar legal situation. The implicit concession of territorial sovereignty to the princes of the Empire could be seen as weakening the Emperor's

---

1 Gotthard, A., *Säulen des Reiches*, 2 Vols., Matthiesen, Husum, 1999, Vol. 1, p 21, where he presents the electors' dual role as defenders of the Emperor, whilst also defending the imperial institution against both the Emperor and foreign threats and see p 11, fn 1, for the origin of the term »pillars of the Empire« that had already been used in the Golden Bull in 1356.

position and, coupled with the lack of an obvious imperial candidate at the beginning of the first post-Westphalian interregnum in 1657, created an opportunity for the Electoral College. Both before and during the interregnum the unity of the Electoral College was already being tested by the diplomatic manoeuvrings and the extensive foreign involvement in the candidature proposals. As well as his electoral role, Ferdinand Maria was involved in another contentious issue as Imperial Vicar for the southern German circles; which brought a dynastic dispute between the Bavarian and Palatine Electors, both members of the House of Wittelsbach, into the heart of imperial politics.

The focus will be on the imperial election and Ferdinand Maria's role as a potential candidate. The death of Emperor Ferdinand III on 12 April 1657 had left his sixteen-year-old son Leopold, King of Bohemia, as a possible Habsburg successor.<sup>2</sup> Archduke Leopold Wilhelm's support of his nephew's claim left the Habsburg succession vulnerable either to a regency until Leopold's eighteenth birthday in June 1658 or an interregnum. This encouraged the search for alternative candidates and, from Bavaria's point of view, will be the main theme, looking especially at the efforts to secure the imperial crown for a preferred candidate by both Cardinal Mazarin and the Habsburgs.

The existing war between France and Spain both prior to and during the interregnum decisively influenced France's foreign policy. Mazarin's enduring aim to break Habsburg dominance encouraged a dialogue with what were considered key territories, such as Bavaria. As Derek Croxton has recently argued, during the 1640's Mazarin had courted Elector Maximilian I of Bavaria because firstly,

---

2 Leopold, King of Bohemia, will be referred to as Leopold and as Leopold I when referring to him after his election to Emperor.

his interests seemed in line with those of France for the peace negotiations and secondly, the Spanish appeared to defer to Maximilian I. In effect, Mazarin had made Maximilian I the centrepiece of his evolving strategy against Spain.<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand III's death brought the Franco-Spanish war to the forefront of France's European policy, hence Mazarin's keen interest in the imperial candidature, which led him once again in the direction of Bavaria. Following Maximilian I's death in 1651, his young son Ferdinand Maria was considered a malleable and suitable candidate. Mazarin's inclusion of Bavaria as a core part of his campaign to break the Habsburgs' dominance and support France's expansionist policy will be explored. Claude Badalo-Dulong argued in his book published in 1956 on France's dealings with the Elector of Mainz, that »the establishment of a great Catholic state centred on the heart of Europe« by the Peace of Westphalia, was regarded as a menace by the French.<sup>4</sup> The continuous stream of French visitors to the Bavarian court confirmed France's attentions towards Bavaria throughout the interregnum until the spring of 1658.

The extensive Habsburg correspondence with Munich at this time will be examined to reveal the Habsburgs' fear that war in Poland would spread into their patrimonial lands and their imperial territories. This would turn a Baltic conflict into an issue of direct concern to both the interests and territories of the Habsburgs and the wider Holy Roman Empire. The effect on Habsburg imperial policy

---

3 Croxton, D., *Peacemaking in Early Modern Europe, Cardinal Mazarin and the Congress of Westphalia, 1643–1648*, Associated University Presses Inc, London, 1999, p 113. For an account of Maximilian I's involvement in the peace negotiations see Immler, G., *Die Bewertung der Friedenspolitik des Kurfürsten Maximilian I. von Bayern 1639–1648 in der Historiographie*, Lassleben, Kallmünz, 1989.

4 Badalo-Dulong, C., *Trente Ans de Diplomatie française en Allemagne, Louis XIV et L'Électeur de Mayence (1648–1678)*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1956, p 12, »L'établissement d'un grand État catholique et centralisé au coeur de l'Europe eût été pour la France une menace permanente«.

was of consequence to Mazarin, who feared a new Austro-Spanish Habsburg alliance would be detrimental to France's position in its war with Spain and his own expansionist plans. Interestingly, however, for a figure whom historians have usually assumed was remarkably astute and well-informed about the diplomatic intentions of other powers, Mazarin was unaware of Ferdinand Maria's decision to support Leopold's candidacy, which involved a confidential negotiation that took place throughout the autumn of 1657.

This negotiation took place whilst the Elector of Mainz attempted to mediate peace between France and Spain. By seeking to broker peace in a foreign war at the *Wahltag* (a »voting« Electoral Diet), Mainz presented an example of an Elector's responsibility towards the welfare of the Empire, his personal »pre-eminence« and that of the Electoral College during an interregnum.<sup>5</sup> The conclusion of Ferdinand Maria's negotiations with the Habsburgs will be examined through the resulting Treaty of Waldmünchen in January 1658 and the Imperial Capitulation. The capitulation was beneficial in enabling the Electors to retain their position of influence over the Emperor and the princes of the Empire but, as Gotthard concludes, with the perpetual Imperial Diet from 1663, this would become limited by the move towards a permanent Imperial Capitulation and the legal requirement for the election of a successor during an *imperio vivante*.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the imperial election, an investigation of other aspects of the interregnum is necessary to establish how Ferdinand Maria's actions fitted into the wider context of the Empire and Europe.

---

5 Gotthard, *Säulen des Reichs*, Vol. 2, p 785, where he also refers to the instigation of negotiations between Sweden and Poland. The subject of »pre-eminence« will be examined further in Chapter One.

6 Gotthard, *Säulen des Reichs*, Vol. 2, p 849.

Why did he act as he did when offered the imperial throne? Was his indecisive behaviour one of the reasons the interregnum was so long? How did he deal with the first Vicariate following the Peace of Westphalia? The politics of mid-seventeenth-century Bavaria operated on a number of different levels, generating different types of dynastic or political links; at the highest level there was the relationship between Leopold as imperial candidate and Ferdinand Maria as Elector. Another equally important link existed between the Emperor and Ferdinand Maria in his role as head of the Bavarian Imperial Circle, since imperial proclamations, enforcement of imperial decrees and implementation of the Imperial Diet's resolutions were disseminated via the head of an Imperial Circle, not via a territorial prince.<sup>7</sup> The Imperial Circles played an important part in relation to vicariate issues during the interregnum.

Dynasties were also a key political element in the seventeenth century, especially with the power brokerage available through marriages. Both Leopold and Ferdinand Maria's status as ruling members of their respective dynasties and their family connection as cousins, provided a further layer in an already complicated constitutional system. It was not a question of sovereignty, but of exploiting the imperial institutions and using compromises for the benefit of dependent territories. The imperial institutions were not necessarily and inevitably a hindrance to the ambitions of territories of the Empire, and Bavaria's skilful manipulation of the imperial constitution, and its institutional structures, provided support in disputes with other territories of the Empire and strengthened Bavaria as a territorial power.

---

7 Hartmann, P. C., *Der Bayerische Reichskreis (1500 bis 1803)*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 1997, p 498.

The Vicariate was an important imperial institution, whose operations and effectiveness were to be tested during the interregnum. The Vicariate comprised three Electors who took the place of an Emperor during an interregnum; as Imperial Vicars they took control of three defined zones of the Holy Roman Empire: the northern German Imperial Circles, the southern German Imperial Circles and *Reichsitalien*, the Emperor's fiefs in the Italian peninsula. There was no dispute regarding the Elector of Saxony overseeing the northern German Imperial Circles, but in the other two areas the situation was uncertain. The disputed claim over the southern German Imperial Circles between the Electors of Bavaria and the Palatinate proved unresolved during the interregnum.

In 1657 the dispute became part of a narrower power struggle between Bavaria and the Palatinate in the Upper Palatinate territories of Parkstein and Weiden. Ferdinand Maria had been involved as head of the Bavarian Circle but, at the request of Count Christian August von Pfalz-Sulzbach, Ferdinand Maria then became involved as Imperial Vicar and they signed a defensive alliance. The struggle also prompted Ferdinand Maria to sign such an alliance with the Imperial Arch chancellor, the Elector of Mainz, who could thus secure Bavarian military aid against a Palatine attack that might have been prompted by a rivalry over trading tariff privileges on the Rhine. The theatrical incident of the flying inkpot at the *Wahltag* in 1658 between the Palatine Elector and Dr. Johann Oexl, the Bavarian delegate, demonstrates the volatile nature of a political conflict which was heavily determined by the personal characters of the rulers involved.

The interesting parallels offered by Savoy's dispute with Mantua for control over the Italian Vicariate is also addressed as a counterpoint to Bavaria's struggle to assert control over the Southern German Vicariate. Ferdinand Maria's wife Henriette Adelaide was a Sabaudian

princess who maintained close connections with her family in Turin through regular correspondence with her mother and brother, Carlo Emanuele, the Duke of Savoy.<sup>8</sup> Her intention was to use Ferdinand Maria's own position as Imperial Vicar to Savoy's advantage. The interregnum following Ferdinand III's death presented Ferdinand Maria with a challenging period and, historically, one that he can be judged to have overcome successfully. In January 1659 Bavaria's vicariate court proceedings would be accepted and confirmed by the elected Emperor Leopold I, which left the Palatinate's vicariate court proceedings legally invalid.

During the interregnum, dynasty, territory and piety were the basis of Bavarian politics, as they would be for Ferdinand Maria's entire reign. Dynastically, there were two levels: firstly, between several branches of the Wittelsbach family and, secondly, the interactions with other ruling families. There were three territorial levels: Bavaria was in competition with other territories of the Empire, the Emperor and foreign states. Although Bavaria was an electoral territory within the Holy Roman Empire, its politics were intertwined at all levels of the imperial hierarchy, thus inviting an investigation of Bavarian politics during the Empire's first post-Westphalian interregnum.

---

8 Henceforth Henriette Adelaide will be referred to as Adelaide.