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The Making of Rudolf II Habsburg as a Mad Monarch

Was he a melancholy madman or a princely prototype? Habsburg emperor Rudolf II (r.1576-1612) has long been portrayed as either epitome of the mad monarch, whose alembics and apathy directly precipitated the devastating Thirty Years' War (1618-48); or as archetypal Renaissance Maecenas upholding Habsburg imperial supremacy in a fractured Europe for almost four decades. Re-evaluating contemporary diplomatic reports, propaganda, and literary bestsellers as well as 1930s psychiatric diagnoses, Megan Williams explores here how the image of Rudolf's madness has been constructed and propagated through the centuries, and what purposes this image has served.

Among the many diplomatic dissections of Emperor Rudolf II Habsburg's mental state during his 1576-1612 reign, English agent Stephen Lesieur's 17 November 1610 dispatch must be among the most colorful and least diplomatic. Lesieur had been sent to Prague by King James I in a long-running commercial dispute between the Hanseatic League and English Merchant-Adventurers. Thanks to fat bribes and assiduously-sown dissension, Lesieur's mission succeeded.¹ Yet only a week later, Lesieur reported that Rudolf "ought to be walled up in a cloister with a necromancer, an alchemist, a painter, and a whore".² Such depictions of a sensuous, reclusive, mad emperor-alchemist have long dominated popular as well as scholarly literature on Rudolf and his thirty-five-year reign.

These clichés proved irresistible to nineteenth-century novelists and playwrights, who produced a stream of melodramas canonizing Rudolf's Bohemian capital as modern tourists' "Magic Prague".³ Retrospective historiographical bias further ingrained images of a melancholy, mad emperor. As Rudolf's most sympathetic biographer, Oxford historian R.J.W. Evans, noted, the era's political history has traditionally been written in terms

of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), with Rudolf's reign depicted as an "uneasy prelude to a holocaust of hitherto unparalleled violence and destruction".⁴ Older works focused on Rudolf's troubled final decade. Exemplary is Czech historian Antonín Gindely's *Rudolf II and his Age* (1862-65). Gindely argued that Rudolf's reign was "simply a prelude to the Thirty Years' War", charging Rudolf with a melancholic "inertia, which...was such a great violation...of his duty as ruler...that none grosser can be imagined".⁵ More even-handed is Bavarian historian Felix Stieve's 1880 study of the imperial succession crisis in 1600, though this too was profoundly informed by his editorship of the *Briefe und Acten zur Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Kriege*s.⁶ In such retrospective accounts Rudolf's descent into madness correlated neatly with Europe's descent into war.

By contrast, recent studies focus on Rudolf's sparkling late-humanist court early in his reign. Whereas Rudolf's court was long stereotyped as an eccentric nest of Central-European occultism largely peripheral to developments in European arts and sciences, the magisterial 1970s intellectual and art-historical studies of Evans and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann decisively demonstrated its tone-setting vitality. Their seminal essays illuminated the cosmopolitan, pan-Sophist striving which suffused Rudolf's court and fruitfully cross-pollinated not just arts and sciences, but also politics and religion.⁷ Subsequent revisions have integrated the court further into intercontinental webs of communication and cooperation.⁸ These cultural reinterpretations also inform a new wave of political historiography. Austrian historian Karl Vocelka emphasized the political uses of Rudolf's cultural patronage, while recent research on Rudolfine court factions highlights crucial networks of power, patronage, and informal politicking.⁹ Such revisions show Rudolf's person and court not as bizarre outliers but as leading exponents of widely-shared contemporary trends. As Evans noted, "much of what in isolation was merely perverse, falls into place" by comparison, concluding that "[t]o call a man mad is as meaningless as to call him sane; it acquires significance only when put in the context of intellectual attitudes at the time."¹⁰

The historian is thus faced with starkly-opposed images of Rudolf: mad emperor whose alembics and apathy precipitated devastating warfare; or archetypal Renaissance maecenas upholding Habsburg imperial supremacy in a fractured Europe for almost four decades. Since Rudolf's archives were lost in 1648, few sources have survived to provide direct insight into the emperor's state of mind.¹¹ This has left scholars with "a buzzing and chaotic

cloud of often ill-informed diplomatic rumors", on the one hand, or with the echo-chamber of retrospectively-biased literature on the other.¹² As this essay's initial survey of Rudolf's reign argues, an anachronistically-defined, *a priori* madness has too glibly been adopted as sufficient explanation for its failures. Untangling the contradictory images of melancholy madman or princely prototype therefore requires re-assessing two source-genres upon which most accounts rely: retrospective psychiatric diagnosis; and contemporary diplomatic reports (like Lesieur's) and propaganda issuing from the circle around Rudolf's ambitious younger brother Matthias. This essay treats each in turn, arguing that navigating the treacherous historiographical shoals around early modern rulers' madness requires careful contextualization.



Figure 1. Jan Matejko, Alchemist Sendivogius (1867). Oil on panel, 78x130cm, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi.

'Mundus furiosus' or Mad Monarch? Contextualizing Rudolf II and his Reign

Lesieur's derogatory 1610 dispatch mirrors similar reports from the emperor's 1608-1611 nadir. Generalized across his long reign, such citations make madness a monocausal explanation for its failings, and paper over the complexities of the "mad world" into which he was born.¹³

Rudolf (*1552) was the eldest of six surviving sons born to Emperor Maximilian II Habsburg (r.1564-76) and his cousin Maria of Spain. The politically-shrewd and staunchly-Catholic empress, though much-maligned

in older German and popular historiography as a depressed and morbidly-obese Spaniard, played an active role in Rudolf's upbringing.¹⁴ Though Maximilian has gone down in history as vacillating place-holder between the long reigns of his father and son, he too profoundly influenced Rudolf, displaying many qualities Rudolf shared: a quick, versatile intellect, bedeviled by information-overload; a good-natured, open manner, but oft-merited suspicion of interlocutors; pride and ambition, but insecurity and reluctance to delegate; passionate, discriminating patronage of the arts and sciences; and a profound sense of duty, despite chronic ill-health.¹⁵

Schooled from earliest childhood in the awesome weight of responsibility succeeding to the imperial dignity entailed, eleven-year-old Rudolf was dispatched to his uncle Philip II's Spanish court from 1563-71. The stay was partly tradition, and partly to guarantee the Spanish succession.¹⁶ Traditional historiography blamed Rudolf's seven years in Spain for the stiffness, pride, and sober dress which many (especially German Protestants wary of Spain) condemned in Rudolf. Yet Rudolf was equally a product of his father's late-humanist Vienna court, which he inherited when Maximilian died in 1576.¹⁷

His father, who repeatedly postponed the expense of marrying or providing for his sons, did ensure Rudolf's Hungarian (1572), Bohemian (1574), and imperial elections (1575), albeit at great political cost. Like the negotiations which brought him his titles, Rudolf's first appearance as emperor-in-waiting was hardly auspicious: Giuseppe Arcimboldo's coronation-portrait depicted an imperial crown far too large for Rudolf — suggesting his frailty vis-à-vis the office's enormous burdens [Fig. 2].

At twenty-five, Rudolf found himself ruler of a vast, unwieldy conglomeration of fractious territories, his every move closely scrutinized. In 1583, to improve imperial communications and avoid the perennial Ottoman threat, he transferred his court to Prague. Contemporaries described early modern courts as hives of scheming ambition and dissimulation. Consistent with late-sixteenth-century Stoic revival and confessional reform-movements' renewed interiority, rulers were enjoined to rise above such perilous environments by practicing religious orthodoxy and continual self-mastery: only he who ruled his passions was worthy of ruling others.¹⁸ Similar trends also ascribed monarchy ever-greater majesty. Rulers' dignity and authority depended on increasing aloofness and detachment.¹⁹ The corollary was princes' constant insecurity and anxiety, and growing contradictions between humanist ideals of princely governance and its overwhelming practical demands.

In an age characterized by desperate striving for order, Rudolf's administration has been painted as disastrously disordered.²⁰ Recent research belies this impression: though Rudolf was not the workaholic his uncle was, evidence indicates that Rudolf ruled competently and even energetically up until 1600 — and he arguably retained his engagement and political cunning thereafter. As his earliest biographer noted, "one finds in many files and advices, which he took care to read over diligently, that he corrected, changed or improved many things in his own hand".²¹ Rudolf's was also far from the only contemporary court excoriated

for its "absence of government" — reflecting late-sixteenth-century rulers' prodigious workloads and reluctance to delegate. Even Philip II regularly despaired of incessant paperwork.²² Compounding matters, good, honest and loyal officials were hard to find and even harder, given irregular, low remuneration, to retain. This gravely affected Rudolf's administrative functioning.²³ For example, since intractable imperial politics left the vice-chancellorate unfilled after 1587, the delays in document-expedition which many ambassadors decried cannot be laid entirely at Rudolf's feet. Moreover, in a confessionally- and politically-fractious environment where every decision had profound repercussions, where information trickled in unreliably, and where finances were perpetually strapped, procrastination had its virtues: Rudolf was master of *weise Zögern*.²⁴

These administrative problems were exacerbated in contemporaries' eyes by Rudolf's increasing inaccessibility after 1600. Rudolf was the linchpin of a highly-fragmented administration; nearly all affairs required his attention and judgment. Initially Rudolf relied upon a moderate old-guard of relatively competent ministers like Paul Sixt Trautson or Wolfgang Rumpf, who had accompanied Rudolf to Spain.²⁵ Their less-aristocratic rivals, particularly privy-secretary and zealous Catholic Dr. Johann Anton Barvitius, worked on



Figure 2. Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Two portraits of Rudolf II with Crown (1575), detail. Pen on paper, 165mmx165mm, Národní Galerie, Prague.

Rudolf's suspicions to obtain their dismissals in 1599/1600.²⁶ Into this vacuum emerged a *Regiment aus der Kammer*, led by figures like Barvitius with one foot in the privy-council and another in the privy-chamber. Such underlings were viewed with near-universal execration by the aristocrats and jurists peopling the imperial administration's higher offices and later historical establishment, convinced they usurped aristocratic rights of consultation or bureaucratic prerogatives. Repeated complaints denounced their illegitimate pursuit of power by controlling access to the emperor and encouraging his alchemical, artistic, and scientific pursuits over state business.²⁷ In relying upon such intermediaries, however, Rudolf was not exceptional. His has been described as the "Age of the Favorite", in which privy-chamber camarillas supplanted court-councils and similarly cumbersome consultative organs as politics' chief locus.²⁸ Those excluded from the privy-chamber, however, painted Rudolf's inaccessibility as a symptom of incompetence, if not madness.

Rudolf's first life-threatening illness in early 1581 threw his administrative challenges and heirlessness into high-relief. The imperial crown's electoral nature in a confessionally-divided empire meant that without an heir, a Protestant interregnum would ensue, with the real possibility of non-Habsburg, even Protestant successors.²⁹ Rudolf equally loathed Catholic post-Tridentine militarism and Protestant sects' perpetual infighting.³⁰ Nonetheless his ability to rule and to defend Habsburg territories necessitated compromise with Catholic as well as Protestant powers, and with his largely-Protestant Estates. Rudolf was well-aware that succession-negotiations in Bohemia, Hungary, and the Empire would open him to years of political weakness, likely culminating in far-reaching political concessions--while any religious concessions would lose him the support of the pope and other Catholic princes. The more Rudolf's family badgered him on the succession, the more tensions rose, and the more recalcitrant Rudolf became.³¹

The simplest way to ensure the succession was to produce an heir. Yet although suitable marriages had been mooted for over a decade, chiefly a mutually-advantageous union with Spanish infanta Isabella (*1566), Rudolf repeatedly hesitated to commit.³² His mother worried that Rudolf found Isabella or her dowry unattractive, while Rudolf's ambassador in Spain was convinced that Rumpf, fearful of losing influence, encouraged Rudolf's doubts.³³ Others pointed to the emperor's reluctance to make consequential decisions, or fears of jeopardizing his political independence and imperial prerogatives.³⁴ Maria Rodriguez-Salgado has equally-plausibly suggested that

Rudolf used the marriage negotiations to hold the Spanish succession in check and defend his supremacy over Philip.³⁵ Ill-health was less-plausible, given the emperor's six acknowledged offspring by a series of well-born mistresses.³⁶ Whatever the reasons, the *Isabellafrage* was repeatedly revived and shelved for sixteen years, before the infanta finally wed Rudolf's brother Albrecht in 1598.³⁷ Rudolf was furious, wounded pride alternating with jealousy and despair. The pattern was repeated with his cousin Marie de'Medici. Rudolf again hesitated, yet was devastated by her August 1600 betrothal to Henry IV, severely straining relations with Tuscany and France for some time.³⁸

Rudolf's biographers have charged these marital blows and familial pressures with prompting a mental crisis, which culminated in Rudolf's dismissal of his old-guard ministers on 25 September 1600.³⁹ Yet explaining this incident as descending or deepening madness oversimplifies. In retrospect, these apparently-abrupt dismissals capped months, even years, of concerns about ministerial loyalties and policies, and constituted a broader shift towards the court's Catholic faction.⁴⁰ Rumpf and Trautson had also been among the most insistent voices reproaching Rudolf for his failure to anoint a successor in the months preceding their dismissal.⁴¹ Moreover, contemporaries recognized many additional stressors for Rudolf in summer 1600. Confessional factions had grown increasingly militant as the generation dedicated to upholding the 1555 Augsburg settlement died. By 1600, confessional disputes paralyzed both the Imperial Supreme Court and Aulic Council.⁴² Political challenges were exacerbated by agrarian crises, rapidly-accelerating inflation, and environmental instability: due to the eruption of Peru's Huaynaputina volcano, 1600 was a "year without summer".⁴³ Compounding matters, the treasury was empty. Philip's 1598 death, and Isabella's marriage soon after, altered Rudolf's relations with Spain and his brothers. The destructive Fifteen Year War (1591-1606) was unravelling a hard-won equilibrium between the dynasty and Hungarian aristocracy,⁴⁴ while bubonic and cattle-plague epidemics raged across Bohemia. Chiliastic fears of a new century may have contributed, as also personal fears of nearing the "threshold-age" at which Maximilian died. Having survived a 1590 attempt on his life, Rudolf was also wary of assassination.⁴⁵ Finally, Rudolf's spiritual doubts may have peaked around 1600 thanks to a zealous new confessor.⁴⁶ Whatever the causes, the repercussions of Rudolf's ministerial house-cleaning ricocheted across Europe. Outsiders played up the incident, hoping to finally precipitate a decision on the succession or empower the imperial vicars to depose Rudolf and establish a Protestant interregnum. By

contrast, Rudolf's privy council sought to hush matters, complaining that "the writings of the agents" spread "fake news".⁴⁷

The privy council was especially wary of encouraging Rudolf's ambitious brothers. Maximilian had made no provision for his five younger sons, Archdukes Ernst (1553-1595), Matthias (1557-1619), Maximilian (1558-1618), Albrecht (1559-1621), and Wenzel (1561-1578). To avoid dividing the Austrian patrimony, Rudolf grudgingly conceded them pensions in 1578. However, with Habsburg finances perpetually strained, Rudolf repeatedly failed to meet his obligations — perhaps deliberately. Though promoting a brother as King of the Romans would ensure the succession, Rudolf feared that doing so would establish a powerful rival, displace his own offspring, or even lead to his deposition. Throughout his reign, he cannily played his relations off against each other and did his utmost to stymie their development of independence.⁴⁸ Unfortunately for Rudolf, Philip II (deliberately or not) repeatedly foiled this strategy. Philip, who had an overabundance of territories and a shortage of offspring, established Ernst, Wenzel, and Albrecht, all of whom were raised at his court, in responsible regencies. Since Maximilian and Matthias were raised in Austria, Rudolf arranged a position for Maximilian — which, notably, removed him from the succession. Matthias had longer to wait. At Rudolf's 1576 coronation-diet the ambitious yet portionless twenty-year-old unwisely accepted a third-party regency in the Netherlands. This imprudent fiasco earned him Philip's enduring enmity and Rudolf's deep distrust. Only in 1594/95 was Matthias finally named commander in Hungary and regent in Austria. Inexperienced, he turned to advisor Melchior Khlesl (1552-1630) — a pugnacious proponent of Catholic Reformation and power-hungry tactician. As Matthias bungled the Hungarian military command and undermined Rudolf's careful confessional balancing, the emperor's distaste intensified. Further alienating the brothers was Matthias' relentless pressure, as putative heir, for a decision on the succession.⁴⁹

After 25 September, Matthias hurried to Prague. His letters painted an alarming portrait of Rudolf to his siblings: he described finding Rudolf "in a profound melancholy", paranoid and periodically enraged, his sleeping and eating gravely disordered, and believing himself bewitched.⁵⁰ Alarmed, archdukes Matthias, Maximilian, and Ferdinand II secretly agreed to support Matthias' succession, and, if necessary, force Rudolf's abdication.⁵¹ Fraternal relations degenerated into *Bruderzwist*.

This fraternal feud diminished the dynasty's prestige and political capital for decades. The first overtures played out in war-weary Hungary, where

Khlesl's Catholicization and Matthias' military failures prompted the 1604 Bocskái Uprising.⁵² Matthias spearheaded the subsequent peace negotiations. Believing, however, that Matthias ineptly "gave the rebels and Turks all they desired and more", Rudolf rejected the 1606 compromise-peaces of Vienna and Zsitva-Török.⁵³ Embittered, Matthias rallied the Hungarian, Moravian and Austrian estates to him by promising political concessions, religious freedoms and the peace-treaties' ratification.⁵⁴ In April 1608, Matthias' confederation marched on Prague. The crisis within the Habsburg Monarchy and dynasty unfolded alongside imperial crisis: following the confessionally-paralyzed Regensburg diet's April recess, the Elector-Palatine decisively rejected the 1555 Augsburg settlement by forming a defensive Protestant League. With Matthias' troops 25 kilometers from Prague, Rudolf humiliatingly relinquished his claims on Hungary, Austria, and Moravia to Matthias in June 1608. Matthias' actions, however, lost him the sympathy of the imperial electors. By conceding the Bohemian estates far-reaching political and religious freedoms, Rudolf salvaged Bohemia and the imperial dignity. That August, the new Spanish ambassador described Rudolf as a "human wreck"; reports of his withdrawal and neglect of affairs multiplied.⁵⁵

However, Rudolf was by no means apathetic. Determined to prevent Matthias' imperial election, he actively promoted his cousin Archduke Leopold (1586-1632) instead.⁵⁶ Backed by Leopold's army, in spring/summer 1610 Rudolf called a Prague diet-of-princes to restore his authority and titles. Though this diet affirmed his supremacy, it dissolved without restoring concord.⁵⁷ When in February 1611 Leopold's ill-paid troops plundered Prague, the Bohemian estates deposed Rudolf. By August, Rudolf retained only the imperial crown. Imprisoned in Prague castle, his health deteriorated markedly, and he died in January 1612.⁵⁸

Anatomizing Monarchical Melancholy

The dynastic, political and religious conflicts of Rudolf's reign, and his political engagement even to the end, suggest the insufficiency of madness as monocausal explanation for his failings — particularly since madness is a "notoriously imprecise" term, as Erik Midelfort, who devoted the pivotal chapter of his 1986 *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* to Rudolf and his son Don Giulio (ca.1585-1609), remarked.⁵⁹ Much hinges, therefore, on how Rudolf's biographers defined or diagnosed madness.

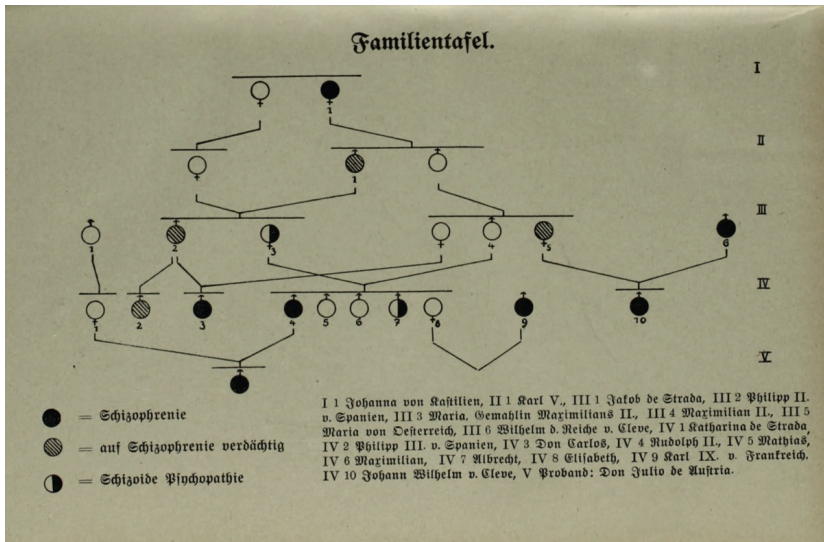


Figure 3. Hans Luxenburger, Schizophrenia pedigree for Rudolf II Habsburg (1932), in "Psychiatrisch-erbbiologisches Gutachten über Don Julio d'Austria", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 70 (1932): 43.

The most widely-cited modern assertion of Rudolf's madness illustrates many of the problematic assumptions underlying retrospective diagnosis of historical figures.⁶⁰ The confident diagnosis appeared in a 1932 article on Don Giulio, whose disturbed character was used to confirm his father's madness.⁶¹ This hereditarian argument's author was leading interwar eugenic psychiatrist Hans Luxenburger (1894-1976). Luxenburger, according to his affidavit at the 1947 Nuremberg Physicians' Trial, served from 1926-1941 as First Assistant in the German Psychiatric Research Institute's prestigious Genealogy Division [DFP].⁶² This division embodied late-nineteenth-century psychiatry's shift from individual or environmental to hereditary etiologies.⁶³ To demonstrate heritability, Luxenburger energetically constructed an enormous archive of schizophrenics' and manic-depressives' pedigrees, including archival material on "the psychopathology of European dynastic families".⁶⁴ His diagnosis of Rudolf involved a five-fold translation: (1) uncritically reading (2) translated excerpts of sources on Don Giulio, Luxenburger (3) extracted reported disease-symptoms which (4) he then interpreted as corresponding to modern-day disease-concepts — assuming thereby the reported symptoms'

reliability (in translation), and the timeless, biological character of both disease-symptoms and disease-concepts. Finally (5), Luxenburger wielded Don Giulio's pedigree to establish the inherited character (*Erbanlage*) of his madness, highlighting "double inheritance" from great-great-grandmother Juana "the Mad" (1479-1555), but also Emperor Charles V and Philip II ("suspected schizophrenics"), and grandmother Maria ("certainly...a schizoid psychopath").⁶⁵ Inserting Rudolf into this pedigree, and buttressing it with uncritical readings of reports from Matthias and papal nuncio Filippo Spinelli around 1600, Luxenburger concluded that "It is beyond doubt that... Emperor Rudolf II...suffered from a mental illness, which can with certainty be diagnosed as schizophrenia".⁶⁶ This diagnosis supported his hereditarian psychiatry (a premise his colleagues applied, with horrific consequences, from 1933-45) and his interpretation of German history.

Rejecting such sweeping, conceptually and methodologically-problematic diagnoses, historical study of madness emerged in the 1960s. Seminal in re-evaluating madness as historical concept was French scholar Michel Foucault's brilliant but empirically-imprecise *Folie et déraison* (1961), which as part of the era's broader critique of psychiatry traced evolving definitions of madness in early modern Europe.⁶⁷ From the often-passionate debates which followed, madness emerged as a constructed concept, contingent upon the socio-cultural structures within which it is used and interpreted.⁶⁸ Instead of retrospective diagnosis, scholars argued for attention to contemporary terms, categories and etiologies.

The term contemporaries most frequently applied to Rudolf was not "mad" but "melancholic".⁶⁹ Melancholy has attracted increasing interest in recent years, often premised on a dubious correspondence with modern-day depression. Yet melancholy, like madness, is a protean, unstable referent. Its origins lie in Galenic humoral medicine, where it indicates an excess of cold, dry black bile. This imbalance was believed to produce a species of madness characterized by fearfulness, prolonged and paralyzing sadness, spiritual crises (*acedia*), and withdrawal from society. Melancholy thus inflamed the passions — making it, in sixteenth-century political theory, reason's antithesis. Discussion of melancholy peaked ca.1600, reflecting the age's neo-Stoic revival, confessional reform-movements' increased self-examination, humanist and artistic elites' interest in creativity, seemingly-intractable factionalism and disharmony, and worsening socio-economic or even climactic conditions. Authorities across Europe agreed that "in these miserable times", melancholy was "most frequent".⁷⁰

While twentieth-century psychiatrists like Luxenburger believed madness inherited and inherent, sixteenth-century physicians manipulated the "non-naturals" (air, food/drink, movement, rest, excretions/retentions, passions) to restore humoral balance. This complicated any compartmentalization of patients' mental and physical states. From his earliest reign, Rudolf suffered chronic ill-health.⁷¹ Diplomats at his court competed to cultivate informants among his physicians, valets, and councillors. Their reports suggested melancholy as Rudolf's "natural complexion" (*suo male naturale*),⁷² but were ambivalent whether melancholy was cause or symptom of his general ill-health.

Further complicating assessment of Rudolf's mental state is the question of agency. Magdalena Sánchez has persuasively suggested in her biography of Rudolf's mother and sister — both alleged melancholics--that traditional accounts typically overlook sufferers' motives or manipulations. Sánchez argued that Empress Maria used melancholy "as a political ploy and a negotiating tool" at the Spanish court to which she retired in 1581, proposing that Maria's melancholy may have reflected her unexpected political marginalization after an active career in Vienna.⁷³ Maria herself explicitly linked her melancholy with failure to ensure Rudolf's Spanish marriage, an outcome in which she had invested considerable political capital.⁷⁴ Bouts of melancholy also coincided with her desire to see the king, who dutifully visited ill relatives--access otherwise denied Maria by hostile ministers. Her sons' diplomats likewise noted moodiness when she failed to receive post, since the resulting information-deficits hindered her customary mediation between Europe's Habsburg courts. Finally, diplomats' characterizations of Maria as irrationally melancholic, argued Sánchez, justified her "unwomanly" policy-objections. Maria emerges from Sánchez's re-evaluation as an active and shrewdly manipulative political player, whose melancholy was not paralyzing impediment but strategic asset.⁷⁵

Rhetoric of Reason

Sánchez's re-evaluation of a figure usually marginalized as depressive, and whose melancholy is frequently cited to confirm her son's, highlights many of the problems of retrospective diagnosis and uncritical source-use in Rudolfine historiography. Rudolf's early biographers repeatedly used decontextualized diplomatic dispatches to establish his madness. Dispatches specific to particular circumstances — such as a 1591 report that Rudolf was

"somewhat somber and ill-humored" — have been read as general evidence of Rudolf's "pathological tendencies", overlooking the immediately-preceding explanation: "because his majesty [grieved] the late Claudio Trivulzio [a close, long-time servitor]...who died a day before my arrival".⁷⁶ Likewise, dispatches from Rudolf's final years have been generalized across his entire reign, while the varying quality of their observations — manifesting embassies' different socio-political situations or degree of access — has not always been acknowledged. Nor have scholars consistently recognized dispatches' frequent reliance on second- or third-hand information, since diplomats at Rudolf's court typically lacked local knowledge.⁷⁷ This was particularly so for the frequently-cited dispatches of Venetian, Tuscan, or papal embassies.

Historians' reliance upon diplomatic dispatches reflects their enduring reputation as historical sources *par excellence*. As European archives opened in the early nineteenth century, empiricist historians such as Leopold von Ranke extolled the troves of diplomatic correspondence they uncovered as entirely reliable, disinterested, factual windows onto history "as it really happened".⁷⁸ Subsequent historians eagerly extracted details from such correspondence, frequently with insufficient attention to the context or act of reporting.

The cultural and practice turns from the 1970s-90s brought about a sea-change in how historians assessed sources. Drawing on these methods, New Diplomatic History has revitalized historical study of diplomacy over the past decade by demonstrating that diplomatic correspondence was not so disinterested after all. Diplomatic historians increasingly approach diplomats as self-interested, situated practitioners rather than impersonal institutions, seeking to better contextualize diplomatic activities and parse the rhetorical, highly-filtered quality of early modern diplomatic correspondence.⁷⁹

Illustrative of how new approaches to diplomatic sources problematize long-held assessments of Rudolf's mental state are papal nuncio Filippo Spinelli's weekly 1599-1603 dispatches. Czech archivist-historian Karel Stloukal (1887-1957) first connected Spinelli's dispatches with madness in an oft-cited 1930 *Festschrift*. Claiming that the unpublished dispatches were "completely reliable and disinterested", "a source of complete safety" from which to "conclusively" assess Rudolf's mental state, Stloukal highlighted Spinelli's reports of persecution-complexes, irrational outbursts, unhinged knife-waving, religious crisis, suicide attempts, and government which "stopped like an astronomical clock". However, Stloukal made no attempt to ascertain the sources of Spinelli's indirect information. Nor did his article

reproduce quotations or transcriptions, opening the possibility that he read expected pathology back into the nuncio's reports when concluding that "madness... is the key to understanding the enigma of Rudolf's personality, and all the problems of his reign".⁸⁰

However, as Stloukal's compatriot Jan Matoušek suggested, Spinelli's accounts could easily have been motivated or exaggerated by need to explain his nunciature's failures.⁸¹ A principal but secret reason for Spinelli's mission was persuading Rudolf to invest Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini's cardinal-nephews with disputed imperial fiefs in Northern Italy. Spinelli offered large bribes to Rudolf's ministers, and anti-Ottoman subsidies he believed the emperor would jump at — not recognizing Rudolf's profound unenthusiasm.⁸² Through the summer of 1600, Spinelli complained of Rudolf's inaccessibility. Such charges have frequently been read as indicating mental instability, but could as easily reflect politics: although Rudolf put off Spinelli and his unattractive proposal, other embassies were warmly received around the same time.⁸³ Moreover, dilation was common at great courts: Charles V infamously kept even high-ranking but unwelcome embassies waiting for months, for example.⁸⁴ Scholars have also overlooked that Rudolf's periods of greatest seclusion coincided with life-threatening illness (1580/81) or plague-outbreaks (1598/1599, 1599/1600). Plague particularly perturbed Rudolf, as his hasty evacuations of Prague, large collection of protective bezoars, and 1603 commissioning of the St.Roch/Strahov memorial-church suggest.⁸⁵ Given the grave dynastic and religious consequences his heirless death entailed, Rudolf's self-isolation could be considered highly rational. Finally, Rudolf's complicated relationship with the curia and deep distrust of Aldobrandini, stemming from Aldobrandini's pre-papal Polish nunciature, likely exacerbated his unwillingness to receive Spinelli.⁸⁶ Thus Spinelli may well misrepresent Rudolf's mental state in 1600. "In wider terms", concluded Evans, "there was no necessity for ascribing Rudolf's actions to mental breakdown; they could be construed in a purely political way".⁸⁷

Spinelli's dark dispatches helped sway the papacy to support Archduke Matthias' succession-claims after 1600.⁸⁸ Matthias' propaganda has formed a second major source for historians evaluating Rudolf's mental state. Even scholars rightly wary of the competing interests underlying diplomatic reporting have at times accepted diplomatic assessments of Rudolf because these were shared by his brothers.⁸⁹ Yet many of the same caveats applicable to diplomatic dispatches also apply to Rudolf's ambitious and alienated brothers. Excepting Ernst (†1595), Rudolf's brothers were not raised with

and rarely saw him. All, especially Matthias, had strong reason to resent Rudolf's procrastination on pensions, brides, or positions, and his playing them against each other in the succession-question. Fraternal rivalries initially peaked 1598-1600, as newly-wed Albrecht campaigned for Roman election. Furious, Rudolf dangled his support before Matthias, only to dash Matthias' hopes. Matthias' oft-cited 18 October 1600 letter immediately followed such disappointment. Though couched in terms of fraternal concern, it also positioned Matthias advantageously within imperial and Habsburg successions. Matthias painted Rudolf as alarmingly melancholic "owing to the heavy burdens of imperial office he has borne over many years". Arguing that Rudolf clearly needed a *Gehülff* [helpmeet], the letter — part, in fact, of a series — framed Matthias' election as both necessary and urgent.⁹⁰ Likewise, during the *Bruderzwist*, Matthias and his advisors vigorously publicized Matthias' princeliness vis-à-vis Rudolf for broad audiences within the Empire and Crownlands, such as a 1606 pamphlet subtitled *In summary [Matthias] received a far more stately reception than Emperor Rudolf, And there is such joy in Austria for [Matthias], such as not seen for many years* [Fig.4].⁹¹ Vocolka has argued that such propaganda effectively positioned Matthias as Rudolf's obvious successor, and helped legitimate Matthias' subsequent and for many, shocking, deposition of his brother. Vocolka concluded that many of the earliest references to Rudolf's madness thus "come from the circle around Matthias, who must have had a serious interest in portraying his ruling brother as an incompetent psychopath, thereby to improve his own position within his family and within the class of potential rulers".⁹²

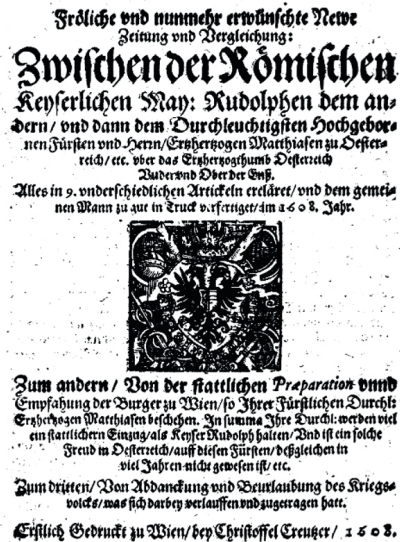


Figure 4. Fröliche vnd nunmehr erwünschte Newe / Zeitung... (Vienna, 1608 reprint).

A Mad Monarch?

Many such pamphlets were translated into English. Given England's early-seventeenth-century leadership of Protestant Europe, it is not surprising that some of the most piquant and enduring assertions of Rudolf's madness came from the English court, just as James I was aggressively expanding his interference in imperial affairs.⁹³ Lesieur's undiplomatic 1610 dispatch, for example, appeared at a moment when the Geneva-born agent was eager to rise in English diplomatic circles. Ridiculing Rudolf aligned Lesieur with James' anti-Habsburg policies, and positioned him advantageously with Matthias' supporters within Rudolf's administration and the empire. His cutting tone fit the moment well, for only two years later James' daughter Elizabeth wed the head of the Protestant Union, Elector-Palatine Frederick V.

Lesieur had reason to exaggerate Rudolf's melancholy into full-blown madness. This is not to say that there was not a grain of truth in such representations, however. After all, contemporaries did deem melancholy a species of madness. Moreover, the sheer number and consistency of reports from all political factions after 1600 strongly suggests that the aging, overburdened, chronically-ill emperor increasingly avoided unpleasant or complicated affairs, increasingly lost control of the reins of government, and suffered repeated and increasingly severe melancholic episodes. Nonetheless, this essay has argued for more rigorous problematization and contextualization of such reports. Madness is not only tricky to retrospectively define, particularly when sufferers' agency is considered, but also presents an overly-glib, monocausal explanation for the complexities and failures of Rudolf's long reign. This is particularly so where Rudolf's biographers have uncritically relied on decontextualized diplomatic reports of varying quality, or on Matthias' propaganda. The symptoms of madness these observers reported were often politically-laden, and cannot be generalized across Rudolf's entire reign. Ultimately, the crucial question is not whether a mad Rudolf indeed required cloistering with a necromancer, alchemist, painter, and whore, as Lesieur advocated, but how Rudolf's madness has historically been constructed, and which purposes such constructions have served.

Notes

1. E.A. Beller, "The Negotiations of Sir Stephen Le Sieur, 1584-1613", *English Historical Review* 40 (1925): 25; R. Ehrenberg, *Hamburg und England im Zeitalter der Königin Elisabeth* (Jena: Fischer, 1896), 224-27.
2. (Decontextualized) in N. Neverova, "The Emperor and Diplomatic Relations: Rudolf II Through the Eyes of Foreign Ambassadors", in *The Image & Perception of Monarchy in Medieval&Early Modern Europe*, eds. S. McGlynn/E. Woodacre (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 133.
3. E.g., F. Grillparzer, *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* (Vienna, 1873); J.J. Kolár, *Magelóna* (Prague, 1852); V. Hálek, *Král Rudolf* (Prague, 1862); J. Karásek, *Král Rudolf* (Prague, 1916). Cf. A. Ripellino, *Magic Prague* (London: Picador, 1995).
4. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History, 1576-1612* (Oxford: OUP, [1973] 1984), 5-8.
5. Gindely, *Rudolf II und seine Zeit, 1600-1612* (Prague: Tempsky, 1868), 2:iii-iv, 332-33; J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl's...Leben* (Vienna: Raulfuss, 1846-47).
6. Stieve, "Die Verhandlungen über die Nachfolge Kaiser Rudolfs II. in den Jahren 1581-1602", *Abhandlungen der hist.Klasse der kö.Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 15 (1880):1-159.
7. I.a., Kaufmann, *Variations on the Imperial Theme in the Age of Maximilian II and Rudolf II* (New York: Garland, 1978); *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science and Humanism in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993). Cf. e.g. H.C. Bolton, *The Follies of Science at the Court of Rudolf II* (Milwaukee: Pharmaceutical-Review, 1904).
8. E.g., A. Grafton, "Humanism and Science in Rudolphine Prague: Kepler in Context," in *Defenders of the Text* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991), 178-203; *Rudolf II & Prague: The imperial court and residential city as the cultural and spiritual heart of Central Europe*, ed. E. Fučíková (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997); *Alchemy and Rudolf II: Exploring the Secrets of Nature in Central Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, eds. I. Purš/V. Karpenko (Prague: Artefactum, 2016).
9. Vocolka, *Die politische Propaganda Kaiser Rudolfs II.* (Vienna: ÖAW, 1981); i.a. A. Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions. *Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550-1700)*, eds. R. González-Cuerva/A. Koller (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
10. Evans, *Rudolf*, 47-48, 80-82.
11. L. Gross, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Reichshofkanzlei von 1559 bis 1806* (Vienna: HHStA, 1933), 286-92.
12. Quote: H.C.E. Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1994), 125.
13. R. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1632), 30.
14. P.S. Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), 106-18; M. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen and the Nun: Women & Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998); González-Cuerva, "From the Empress to the Ambassador: the 'Spanish Faction' in the Labyrinths of the Imperial Court of Prague, 1575-1585", *Libros de la corte* 2.7 (2015):11-25. Cf. "sinister maternal legacy":

- P. Marshall, *The Mercurial Emperor: The Magic Circle of Rudolf II in Renaissance Prague* (London:Pimlico, 2007), 13.
15. Fichtner, "To rule is not to govern: The Diary of Maximilian II", in *The Mirror of History*, ed. S.Wank (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1988), 255-64; Fichtner, *Maximilian*.
 16. Both father and grandfather were raised in Spain. Rudolf's stay followed Infante Don Carlos' near-fatal 1562 head-injury, lasting until his sister Anna bore Philip another male heir in 1571: E.Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, "Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzöge Rudolf und Ernst in Spanien", *Akademie der Wissenschaft in Wien, phil.-hist.Klasse, Sitzungsber.*206/5 (Vienna, 1927); M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado, "'I loved him as a father loves a son...Europe, damn me then, but I deserve his thanks': Philip II's relations with Rudolf II", in *La dinastía de los Austria: las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, eds. J. Martínez-Millán/R. González-Cuerva (Madrid: Polifemo, 2011), 1:348-51.
 17. Fichtner, *Maximilian*, 199; Evans, *Rudolf*, 12-13, 49-52; cf. Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved".
 18. E.g., "un naufragio di tutte le virtù": T. Garzoni, *La piazza universale* [1585] (Venice: Meghetti, 1605), 530; Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, in *Collected Works* 27, ed. A.H.T.Levi (Toronto: UTorontoP, 1986); P. Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 41.
 19. Kaufmann, *Variations*; D. Raeymaekers, *One Foot in the Palace: The Habsburg Court of Brussels and the Politics of Access* (Leuven: LeuvenUP, 2013).
 20. E.g., *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ed. E. Albèri, I:6 (Florence: Albèri, 1862), 243-45; Gross, *Reichshofkanzlei*, 22; Evans, *Rudolf*, 63-74.
 21. F.C. Khevenhüller, *Contrefet Kupfferstich...*(Leipzig: Weidmann, 1721), 1:30; Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:173; Stieve "Verhandlungen":77, 109.
 22. Sánchez, *Empress*, 2; G. Parker, *Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 29-31, 42-43; A.Brendecke, "'Diese Teufel, meine Papiere...': Philipp II. von Spanien und das Anwachsen administrativer Schriftlichkeit", *Avetinus nova* 5 (2006):24-28.
 23. Fichtner, "To rule"; O.vonGschliesser, *Der Reichshofrat* (Vienna: CNGÖ, 1942); Gross, *Reichshofkanzlei*, 20-25: vice-chancellorate unfilled 1587-1593/1594-1607.
 24. "Im weisen Zögern seh'nd die einz'ge Rettung": Grillparzer, *Bruderzwist*, iv.
 25. Khevenhüller, *Annales ferdinandeï* (Leipzig, 1721-6), 5:2221; Evans, *Rudolf*, 54n5, 72; H. Noflatscher, "Regiment aus der Kammer? Einflußreiche Kleingruppen am Hof Rudolfs II.," in *Der Fall des Günstlings*, eds. J. Hirschbiegel/W. Paravicini (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2004), 216-229; Noflatscher, "Monarchische Willkur? Zur Demission des Wolfs Rumpf und Paul Sixt Trautson am Hof Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1600)", in *Tirol-Österreich-Italien*, eds. K. Brandstätter/J. Hörmann (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2005), 493-516; F.Edelmayer, *Söldner und Pensionäre. Das Netzwerk Philips II von Spanien im Heiligen Römischen Reich* (München: Oldenbourg, 2002), 91ff.; Edelmayer, "Wolf Rumpf de Wielross y la España de Felipe II y III", *Pedralbes-Revista d'Historia moderna* 16 (1996): 133-63; González-Cuerva, "Empress":n11&n44.
 26. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":36-40, 49-51; Gross, *Reichshofkanzlei*, 30, 414ff; Gschliesser, *Reichshofrat*, 153-4; Gindely, *Rudolf*, 47.
 27. Evans, *Rudolf*, 72; Stieve, "Verhandlungen":78n255, 109; F. Hurter's heavily anti-

- Semitic *Philipp Lang, Kammerdiener Rudolfs II, eine Criminal-Geschichte...* (Schaffhausen: Hurterschen, 1851); Noflatscher, "Regiment"; V. Bůžek, "Konfessionaler Pluralität in der kaiserlichen Leibkammer zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts", in *Konfessionelle Pluralität als Herausforderung...*, ed. J. Bahlcke (Leipzig: Leipziger-Universitätsverlag, 2006), 381-95. Barvitijs & Lang deserve new attention.
28. *World of the Favourite*, eds. J.H. Elliott/L.W.B. Brockliss (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999); J. Duindam, *Vienna & Versailles* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003); Raeymaekers, *Access*, 193-230; González-Cuerva/Koller, *Europe of Courts*.
29. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":App.III, VIII, X; Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:no.133.
30. Evans, *Rudolf*, 84-115.
31. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":3-12; S.Ehrenpreis, "Rudolf II.-Ein defizitäres Kaisertum?", in *Defizitäre Souveräne: Herrscherlegitimationen im Konflikt*, eds. L.Öetzel/K.Weiland (Vienna: Campus, 2018), 152-61; Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved".
32. Stieve, "Verhandlungen"; Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved":352-89; Ehrenpreis, "Defizitäre".
33. Khevenhüller, *Annales*, 5:376-77, 2221; Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:173-79; Ehrenpreis, "Defizitäre", 150; cf. Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved":367.
34. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":10; Vocolka, *Propaganda*, 175; L. Duerloo, *Dynasty & Piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) & Habsburg Political Culture in the Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham: Routledge, 2012), 247.
35. Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved": 388.
36. Including two — but not Don Giulio — by Anna Maria (not Katharina) Strada, court antiquary Jacopo Strada's natural granddaughter, maitresse-en-titre 1592-1603: Sapper, "Kinder" 30-44; D.-J.Jansen, *Jacopo Strada & Cultural Patronage at the Imperial Court* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 1:21-24, 2:271n6.
37. Duerloo, *Dynasty & Piety*, 235-82; Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved":368, 382-86.
38. Evans, *Rudolf*, 57; Stieve, "Verhandlungen":46.
39. Evans, *Rudolf*, 72; Gindely, *Rudolf*, 1:44.
40. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":33-56, 79, 96, App.II, VII; Duerloo, *Dynasty & Piety*, 252; González-Cuerva, "El ascenso del partido católico en la corte imperial de Praga" (2012), at faccion.hypotheses.org/materiales/articulos [15.4.2020]; Ehrenpreis, "Rudolfs II. Ratgeber zur Zeit des Bruderzwists", in *Ein Bruderzwist im Hause Habsburg (1608–1611)*, ed. V. Bůžek (České Budějovice: JUCB, 2010), 91-101.
41. Edelmayer, "Rumpf", 153; Duerloo, *Dynasty & Piety*, 252.
42. Ehrenpreis, "Die Tätigkeit des Reichshofrats um 1600 in der protestantischen Kritik", in *Reichshofrat und Reichskammergericht. Ein Konkurrenzverhältnis*, ed. W.Sellert (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), 27-46; Ehrenpreis, *Kaiserliche Gerichtsbarkeit und Konfessionskonflikt. Der Reichshofrat unter Rudolf II.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).
43. Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2013); *Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*, ed. S. White (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2018), 265-96; J. deVries, *Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976), 1-29.
44. J.P. Niederkorn, *Die europäische Mächte und der "Lange Türkenkrieg" Kaiser Rudolfs II (1593–1606)* (Vienna: ÖAW, 1993); C. Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*.

- The Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary 1593–1606* (Vienna: VWGÖ, 1988); M.Arens, *Habsburg und Siebenburgen 1600-1605* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 41-51; G. Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century* (Boulder: SSM, 2009), 209-33.
45. Barvitijs explained Rudolf's 1600 Capuchin expulsion — often seen as madness — as the convent's bells keeping him awake: Stieve, "Verhandlungen":58n181. Fear of plague-contagion may also have contributed.
 46. Evans, *Rudolf*, 90-91.
 47. "damit nit die zwei vicarn des reichs daher ursach nemmen, auff die privation zu gedenken": Stieve, "Verhandlungen":134; "falsche Zeitungen": *ibid.*:138.
 48. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":12-18, 24; G. Turba, *Geschichte des Thronfolgerechts in alle habsburgischen Ländern...* (Vienna: K.u.K. Hof-Buchdruckerei, 1903), 179-99; Duerloo, *Dynasty*, ch.6; Rodriguez-Salgado, "Loved":365-88.
 49. E.g. Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1: no.133.
 50. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":133.
 51. Stieve, "Verhandlungen": 62-65, App.VIII-IX; Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:no.140, cf.nos.132-4, 137. L.Gross, "Zur Geschichte des wiener Vertrags vom 25. April 1606", *MiÖG*, Ergänzungsbd.9 (1929):574-75; Duerloo, *Dynasty*, ch.6.
 52. 'Frigy és békesség legyen...': *A bécsi és a zsitvatöröki béke*, eds. K.Papp/A.Jeney-Tóth (Debrecen: Történelmi-Intézet, 2006); Arens, *Siebenburgen*; Pálffy, *Hungary*, 209-33; Gross, "Geschichte".
 53. Vöclka, "Matthias contra Rudolf: Zur politischen Propaganda in der Zeit des Bruderzwistes", *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 10.3 (1983):343-45; Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:no.177.
 54. Pálffy, *Hungary*, 229-32.
 55. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":108-111. E.g., Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:no.271; D. Eremita, *Iter Germanicum* [1609], in *Status particularis Regiminis S.C. Majestatis Ferdinandi II* (s.l.:Elzevier, 1637), 305-06.
 56. C. Pecho, *Fürstbischof, Putschist, Landesherr* (Munich: LIT, 2017), 148-66.
 57. Vöclka, "Matthias": 346; Gindely, *Rudolf*, 2:179.
 58. V. Bůžek/P. Marek, "Krankheiten, Sterben und Tod Kaiser Rudolfs II. in Prag", *MiÖG* 125.1 (2017):54-66.
 59. Midelfort, *Mad Princes*, 3; Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford:UCAP, 1999), 11ff.
 60. A. Cunningham, "Identifying Disease in the Past" and J. Arrizabalaga, "Problematising Retrospective Diagnosis in the History of Disease", *Asclepio* 54.1 (2002):13-34, 51-70. Cf. Bůžek/Marek, "Krankheiten".
 61. Luxenburger, "Psychiatrisch-erbbiologisches Gutachten über Don Julio d'Austria", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 70 (1932):41-54. Don Giulio: Sapper, "Kinder":9-20.
 62. NMT1: Transcript, Nuremberg Trials Project, at <https://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/transcripts/1-transcript-for-nmt-1-medical-case> [15.3.2020]. Forced from DFP (1941) as devoutly-Catholic opponent of compulsory sterilization/euthanasia: P.Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism 1870-*

- 1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 538; *Rassenforschung an Kaiser-Wilhelm-Instituten vor und nach 1933*, ed. H.-W. Schmuhl (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 333.
63. Weindling, *Health*; S. Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany", *Osiris* 3 (1987): 193-236; P. Mazumdar, "Blood Grouping and Psychiatry in Germany between the Two World Wars", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 70.4 (1996):644-45.
64. Luxenburger, "Psychiatrisch-erbbiologisches": 41-42; Luxenburger, "Ziele und Wege einer erbbiologisch-pragmatischen Geschichtsbetrachtung", *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 116.1 (1928): 327-47(Rudolf: 338-43).
65. (Retrospectively diagnosed) madness of these figures highly debatable: e.g., G. Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy & Conflict in Sixteenth-Century Castile* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2018).
66. Luxenburger, "Psychiatrisch-erbbiologisches":42-45, 51-53.
67. Foucault, *Folie et déraison:L'Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris:Gallimard, 1961).
68. E.g., Midelfort, "Madness and Civilization in Early Modern Europe: A Reappraisal of Michel Foucault", in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J.H.Hexter*, ed. B.Malament (Philadelphia: Univ.of PA Press, 1980), 247-66; R. Porter, *A Social History of Madness* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987); *Rewriting the History of Madness*, eds. Still/Velody (Farnham: Routledge, 1992).
69. Bůžek/Marek, "Krankheiten":47-50.
70. G. Mercuriale, *Medicina practica* (1601), cited in A. Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 1. Classically: Burton, *Anatomy*; E. Panofsky/F. Saxl/R. Klibansky, *Saturn & Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson & Sons, 1964); H.-G. Schmitz, "Das Melancholieproblem", *Südhoffs-Archiv* 60 (1976):135-62; N. Brann, "Alchemy and Melancholy in Mediaeval and Renaissance Thought", *Ambix* 32.3 (1985):127-48; J. Delumeau, *Sin and Fear* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), 168-186; Midelfort, *History*, 182-227; Gowland, "The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy", *Past & Present* 191 (2006): 77-120; Midelfort "Melancholische Eiszeit?", in *Kulturelle Konsequenzen der 'Kleinen Eiszeit'*, eds. W. Behringer/H. Lehmann/C. Pfister (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 239-54.
71. Bůžek/Marek, "Krankheiten":44-54.
72. E.g., Venetian ambassador Piero Duodo, 20.3.1600, in Stieve, "Verhandlungen":129.
73. Sánchez, *Empress*, 157-59.
74. Khevenhüller, *Annales*, III:862, V:2225.
75. Sánchez, *Empress*, 87-88, 157-63. See Khlesl's many dispatches to her: Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, passim.
76. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":33n93.
77. E.g., P. Marek, "Patronagepolitik der spanischen Könige Philips II. und III. am Prager Kaiserhof", in *Schlaglichter auf die Geschichte der böhmischen Länder*, ed. D. Schriffel (Münster: LIT, 2011), 37-44; T. Černušák, "The relationship network of nuncios...at the court of Rudolf II (1576-1612)", *Theatrum historiae* 23 (2018):64-65; P. Periat, "The Political Strategy of Nuncio Antonio Caetani in the Maze of the Imperial Court (1607-1611)", *Legatio* 1 (2017):42-44; Ehrenpreis, "Defizitäre", 141.

78. Ranke, *The Popes of Rome* (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1846-7), 2:36; K. Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn", *Modern Intellectual History* 5.3 (2008): 425-53; G. Benzoni, "Ranke's Favorite Source: The Relazioni of Venetian Ambassadors", *Syracuse Library Courier* 22.1 (1987):11-26; F. deVivo, "How to Read Venetian Relazioni", *Renaissance & Reformation* 34.1-2 (2011):25-59; M.K. Williams, "'Ad regem': Diplomatic Documents as Artifacts" in *Medieval Documents as Artefacts, 1100-1600*, ed. E. Dijkhoff (Hilversum: Verloren, 2020), 189-206.
79. J. Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe", *Journal of Medieval & Early Modern Studies* 38.1 (2008): 1-14.
80. "Nový pramen je naprosto spolehlivý a vůči Rudolfovi nezaújatý": Stloukal, "Portrét Rudolfa II. z roku 1600", in *Od Právěku k dnešku* (Prague: Politika, 1930), 2:2, 6. Sources: Černušák, "Network"; Marek, "Patronagepolitik":37-44.
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82. Niederkorn, "Die Geheimhandlungen des Prager Nuntius Spinelli über die Abtretung von Modena und Reggio an den Heiligen Stuhl (1600/1601)", in *Kaiserhof-Papsthoft*, eds. G. Klingenstein et al. (Vienna: Historischen Instituts-Rom, 2006), 38, 42-43.
83. Evans, *Rudolf*, 43; Vocolka, *Rudolf*, 10; Černušák, "Network":65.
84. Williams, "Immobile Ambassadors", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 47.4 (2016):940-70.
85. I. Horacek, *Alchemy of the Gift: Things and Material Transformations at the Court of Rudolf II*, PhD dissertation (UBritish Columbia, 2015), 165; I. Muchka, "Die Architektur unter Rudolf II", in Fučíková, *Prague*, 185-93.
86. Evans, *Rudolf*, 78n5, 86-87, 112-114; Černušák, "Network": 63-65; A.Koller, *Imperator et pontifex. Forschungen zur Verhaltnis von Kaiserhof und römischer Kurie im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung (1555-1648)* (Münster: LIT, 2012), 88-102; Niederkorn, "Papst, Kaiser und Reich während des letzten Regierungsjahre Kaiser Rudolfs II.", in *Die Aussenbeziehungen der römische Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605-1621)*, ed. Koller (Tübingen:DeGruyter, 2008), 88-89.
87. Evans, *Rudolf*, 46, 295.
88. Černušák, "Papal Policy and Development of the 'Brothers Crisis' in Nuncio Antonio Caetani's Correspondence", in *Bruderzwist*, 211-24.
89. E.g., Ehrenpreis, "Defizite", 141-42; Midelfort, *Mad Princes*.
90. Stieve, "Verhandlungen":App.VIII. Cf. Hammer-Purgstall, *Khlesl*, 1:nos.123, 132-34, 140, 177.
91. *Fröliche vnd nunmehr erwünschte Newe/Zeitung...*(Vienna: Chr. Creutzer, 1606).
92. Vocolka, "Matthias contra Rudolf", 350; Vocolka, *Rudolf*, 10.
93. Especially J. Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusini Satyricon* (Paris, 1607), 2:ch.26-28, transl. D. Fleming (Hague: Nieuwkoop/de Graaf, 1973), 318-33: 28+ Latin, 3 French editions. Barclay deliberately mingled fact and fiction: Barclay, *Apologia* (1610), 3v; Fleming, xxix.