

INTRODUCTORY STUDY*

**MATEO LISÓN Y VIEDMA AND
OLIVARES'S ECONOMIC REFORMS
(1621-1628)**

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1. MATEO LISÓN Y VIEDMA: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Even though none of Lisón y Viedma's writings were included among the 17th century texts published by Campomanes (1775-77) or Sempere y Guarinos (1801-21), we do know that copies were made at the time of some of them which were frequently quoted by the Reformists at the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th. However, aside from other subsequent and interesting references¹, the more recent studies undertaken by Ruiz Martín (1970) and Vilar (1971) are the ones which have truly revealed the "*veinticuatro granadino*" as one of the great men of the early years of the influence of the Count Duke of Olivares as the Royal Favourite. He appeared then as the great, incorruptible "republican", as the "constitutionalist" protective of the power of the Castilian cities before Olivares's absolutist plans, as the political writer who bravely exercised his responsibilities as a King's Proctor in the Cortes and as the Mayor of the city of Granada.

Lisón's lineage, of French origin, has been reconstructed by Soria Mesa (1992) and Burgos Lejonagoitia (2009)³. The oldest of his known ancestors was one Alonso de Lisón Quesada, a resident of Lorca (Murcia), knight commander of the town of Aledo (in the province of Murcia) and a knight of the Order of Santiago, of whom Ginés Pérez de Hita reports in his *Historia de los*

¹ His name appears, for example, in Nipho's *Correo* (Enciso, 1956). Among the academic references, Juan Sánchez Rivera, one of the translators of Say's *Tratado de Economía Política*, cited him in his edition of 1821 as one of the great Spanish economists, and Colmeiro (2005 [1861]) included him in his *Biblioteca de los economistas españoles de los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII*. More recently, in a not frequently cited work, Tapia (1964:213-216) once again highlighted his writings and work in the Cortes of 1621, "the most outstanding" of them.

² The expression belongs to Vilar (1971), but it had been used before by Henríquez de la Jorquera in his *Anales* (1987:1841) in the section which is transcribed farther on.

³ The private archives of the Lisón family are found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional of Toledo, Nobility Section, Luque Collection.

bandos Zegríes y Abencerrajes that he participated in the battle of the Alporchones in 1452. Born out of his marriage with Elvira de Soto were Jofré, Alonso, Pedro and Gonzalo de Lisón Soto. Thirty years after Alporchones, he was summoned by don Fernando, together with his sons, to conquer Granada, after which he was rewarded with a large amount of land for his family.

Gonzalo de Lisón Soto, magistrate of Aranda, continuation of Enrique IV and mayor of Lorca in 1485, married Mencía Fajardo Piñero, who gave birth to Gonzalo de Lisón Fajardo. He chose not to emulate his ancestors and occupy public positions. He eventually married Ginesa, one of the two daughters of Antón Saorín, the son and grandson of the mayors of Murcia, and he himself became the mayor from 1509 to 1549. This couple had four children: Juan, Alonso, Lucrecia and Francisco Lisón Saorín. All of them, except for the last one held important positions in the city of Murcia and enjoyed a very comfortable financial situation. Especially interesting in this story is Lucrecia, who married Juan de Verástegui, and gave birth to Francisco de Verástegui y Lisón, a knight of the Order of Santiago and first cousin to Mateo Lisón. Both of them would play an important role in the Cortes of 1621, as the King's Proctor for the city of Murcia.

Even though Soria as well as Burgos cast some shadows over the individual, there do not appear to be any doubts that Francisco Lisón Saorín was the father of don Mateo. Contrary to his brothers, Mateo decided to leave Murcia when he was very young to go to Granada, with sufficient fortune in order to be able to invest large sums of money in purchasing offices and land in the Montefrío region, among them the Algarinejo ranch, bought from the Inquisition in 1586, to which he would continue to add new land in Motril, which he dedicated to raising sugar cane. After his first marriage to Gregoria Armengol, don Francisco married Luisa de Viedma y León, the daughter of the paymaster of the Alhambra, in Granada with whom he had five children: Gonzalo, Mateo —our man—, Cipriano, Ginesa and Jerónimo Lisón y Viedma.

According to a copy of Mateo Lisón y Viedma's baptism certificate, signed by the local parish priest of Montefrío (Granada), he was baptised in this church on 10 November 1580. However, nothing is really known about his adolescence even though he himself states at the end of his *Desengaño del Rey y apuntamiento para su gobierno* that his speeches had been written by "an uneducated vassal". In 1601, at the age of twenty-one, he married

his first wife, Mariana de Contreras, the daughter of a rich patrician from Motril, a circumstance which obliged his father, Francisco Lisón, to make a major financial investment, because the marriage contract stipulated that he had to turn over as part of the inheritance one-third of that portion of free disposal and one-fifth of the special bequest, and he also had to include Algarinejo in the arrangement. The efforts made by the Lisón family paid off, for don Mateo ended up possessing in 1629, a total of 2,599 hectares of land in Motril and Salobreña, all of which he dedicated to raising sugar cane. From his first marriage, which did not last very long due to the premature death of his wife, he had two daughters, the oldest, Mariana Lisón y Contreras, who married Luis Fernández de Córdoba Bustamante, on 4 April 1622. She was able to channel to her descendents, the inheritance she received from her father and that of her own.

On 1 August 1601, don Mateo was received and sworn in by the Granada Town Council as *Veintiquatro* of the city of Granada⁴. We do not know very much about his first two decades as Mayor except that he regularly attended the Town Council's sessions and that he was generally entrusted with functions related to public works, the taking of the accounts of several loyal members of the Town Council, the control of the expenditure and the ceremonies of the local fiestas, of which he himself has left some reports⁵. At this time he also had to take active charge of his other responsibilities, such as his position as Mayor of Motril⁶ and the administration of his own property and patrimony, which he continually increased throughout his life. As of 1611, when his father died, he began to call himself the *señor* (lord) de Algarinejo.

⁴ Burgos (2009:39).

⁵ A copy is kept on file in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Mss. 2361) of Lisón's list of the Fiestas celebrated in Granada on the occasion of the birth of Prince Baltasar Carlos in 1629. The description he made of himself contained in this document is interesting, for there is no existing portrait of him. There was one in the Church of Algarinejo, in a position of prayer before the Inmaculada, but it disappeared some time ago, probably in the fire which broke out in the parish church in the 18th century. This was his description: "When the time came, close to mid-day, the windows, scaffoldings and roofs were filled with people anxious to see the fantastic and exultant fiestas and, at this point, the commissioners made their entrance. Mateo de Lisón with long trousers, a cape and lavishly decorated cap, with shiny diamonds, the fleeced sleeves of the cape and trouser linings embroidered with gold and silver on green, expensive embossing, as shiny as they were lavish and beautiful" (f549r).

⁶ After this introductory study was concluded, Rafael Girón informed me of Rodríguez Gálvez's doctoral thesis (2015), presented in the University of Granada, which contains several references to the positions held by Lisón in the Council of Motril. Of special interest among them is the fact that after he had been the Mayor in 1611, he was succeeded by Miguel Caxa de Leruela, the author of the *Restauración de la abundancia en España* (1631), with whom Lisón must surely have had contact during the years he spent in Motril.

In 1618, the illustrious political writer Gregorio López Madera, who had been the public prosecutor of the Granada Chancery between 1590 and 1602, arrived at Granada although we do not know with exactly what purpose. At that time, he had written his *Excelencias de la Monarquía y Reino de España*, which had made him extremely famous⁷. Soon after his arrival, Mateo Lisón married Lopez's daughter Baltasara, with whom he had two children. In November of 1618, he was appointed loyal executor of the City Council and shortly after, during the first months of 1619, the King's Proctor for the city in the Court⁸.

From 1619 to 1927, Lisón acted as the King's Senior Proctor in Madrid, in addition to him also being the King's Proctor for Granada in the Cortes of 1621⁹. These nine hectic years of his life are what are of most interest to us here and we will cover them in the next section. In June of 1627, due to his continuous disputes and confrontations with Olivares's politics, he was sent into exile to his estate in Algarinejo. The two children he had had with doña Baltasara, who had died by then, remained in Madrid: his son was in the convent of the Capuchinos and his daughter, in the care of his father-in-law, López Madera.

Back on his Algarinejo estate, in around 1630, don Mateo married his third and last wife Catalina Carvajal y de la Cueva, which linked him to an influential family of mayors and landowners of Guadix and enabled him to increase his sugar cane plantations along the coast¹⁰. Soon after, on 5 September 1633, he put an end to his political life by granting the "*veintiquatro*" position of Granada to his son-in-law Luis Fernández de Córdoba, according to the stipulations of his original marriage contract. Don Mateo

⁷ In a previous period, Gregorio López Madera had intervened in Granada in the famous matter of the relics of Sacromonte and in the expulsion of the Moors. In addition to his prestige as a political writer, among his titles were those of tax administrator, magistrate of Toledo, mayor of the Court and member of the Council of Justice. We can learn more about him from García Ballesteros and Martínez Torres (1998).

⁸ The King's Senior Proctor, whose role has still not been well studied, represented the general interests of the city in the Cortes. It was not an exclusive position of the Town Council of Granada, for other cities represented in the Cortes also had it.

⁹ Granada was in 1621 one of the eighteen cities with a vote in the Cortes. It had the right to two King's Proctors who were selected from among the members of the Town Council. The post was not incompatible with that of the King's Senior Proctor.

¹⁰ Doña Catalina was the widow of Rodrigo de la Fuente, who had founded the sugar factories (Viñes, 2008, vol. II:876)

died in Algarinejo in 1641. The chronicler of the city of Granada, Henríquez de la Jorquera (1987:888), wrote the following epitaph:

“In this year of 1641, in this city of Algarinejo, the prudent gentleman don Mateo de Lisón y Viedma died, the *cavallero veynte y quatro* of Granada and Mayor of the city of Loja and of the town of Motril, familiar to the Holy Office of this city and Kingdom, the King’s Senior Proctor in the Cortes which he was of this city. Due to his knowledge and dedication, many cities of the kingdom of Castile granted him power of representation in the Cortes. He was one of the best republicans that Spain ever had and a true defender of his country, and for this reason he was eventually exiled from the Court. His body was buried in the parochial church of the village of Algarinejo, of which he was the lord. His home and primogeniture were inherited by his eldest son. He was also survived by a daughter married to don Sebastián de Prados y Biberos, familiar to the Holy Office of this city and Kingdom and another married to don Luis Fernandez de Cordoba, the *veintiquatro* knight and familiar to the Holy Office.”

2. HIS NINE HECTIC YEARS OF IN THE CORTES (1619-1627)

Even though the financial decadence of Castile had been felt during the last years of Philip II's reign, González de Cellorigo, in his famous *Memo-rial* of 1600, was the first one to offer a detailed account of it and discuss in detail the causes and solutions for the crisis. Ever since, there have been many *arbitristas* who have studied the subject and identified the main problems of the Spanish economy: the mentality of the *rentistas* and the lack of desire to work on the part of most Spaniards; the poor functioning of the institutions; the debilitated status of the agricultural sector; the neglecting of the domestic industry to favour foreign merchandise; and an excessive tax burden.

During the final years of Philip III's reign, the Cortes of Castile of 1617 joined the general outcry for the adoption of the necessary reforms, with documents such as that written by the King's Proctor Baltasar de Cordoba, in which he provided a complete list of the problems which Castile was suffering¹¹. In June of 1618, Lerma himself addressed Acevedo, President of the Castile Council, asking him to remedy the situation. And, when the President was deposed on 1 February 1619, the Council issued its famous *Consulta*. This was the moment when Lisón arrived in the Court as the King's Senior Proctor from Granada.

The *Consulta*, a clearly mercantilist document that based the political and economic power of the kingdom on the population¹², established seven major steps for dealing with the growing depopulation of Castile: a

¹¹ Elliot (2004:128)

¹² There are several editions of the *Consulta* of 1619, the most accessible of which appears on pages 9-27 of Fernández Navarrete (1982). Among other analyses of it, you can consult that of Martín Rodríguez (1984: 98 and *passim*).

decrease in the tax burden and a better distribution of the taxes among the different areas of the kingdom and the different classes of vassals; moderation in the royal mercies and gifts, the reason in part for the lack of money and the debts affecting the financial resource; the repopulation of the deserted regions; a return to farming and the consumption of typically Spanish products, instead of importing expensive luxuries from abroad; an improvement in the situation of the peasantry, on whom not only the fruits of the kingdom but also the royal and aristocratic burdens depended; restrictions on the religious institutions and foundations; and putting a halt to the creation and sale of new official positions. The document lacked the depth found in the writings of commentators such as those of Fernández Navarrete (1621)¹³, Sancho de Moncada (1619)¹⁴ and others, but it helped to raise the debate on the country's financial decadence to the highest State jurisdictions.

Despite his sudden concern for the Spanish economy, Philip III could do little in the barely two years that remained of his reign before his death, which took place on 31 March 1621. Under this climate of reforms, the first step taken by the young Philip IV consisted of issuing the Royal Decree of 8 April 1621, by which a Reform Council was established, with the aim of restoring the "morality" in Castile, so that its economy would once again begin to prosper. Soon after, by the Royal Decree of 13 May of that same year, the Cortes de Castile was convened. Even though initially it was only intended on this occasion for voting on a new service of *millones* to cover the ambitious plans of Olivares and his uncle don Baltasar de Zúñiga, the

¹³ Fernández Navarrete discussed the *Consulta* of 1619 in his *Discursos Políticos* (1621), which he later expanded considerably in his *Conservación de Monarquías* (1626). Even though these writings did not have a great deal of analytical value, they were developed in great length, with a large number of references from the authorities on depopulation, taxes, sale of positions, sumptuary expenses and agriculture.

¹⁴ After the Comeiro's harsh criticism, due to the interventionism and prohibitionist policy, the *Restauración Política* (1619), by Sancho de Moncada, was praised by Larraz y Vilar, due to the clarity with which he put forth his ideas, his use of the statistics existing in his time and of certain instruments for economic analysis and for his capacity to present a general "system" for the Spanish economy, based on three proposals: a prohibitionist policy for stimulating the production of the products manufactured in Spain; a monetary policy based on the increase of the monetary value of the silver in order to avoid its "removal" from the country and on equating the silver/vellón parity in accordance with its metallic content; and a fiscal policy consisting of the suppression of the millones and on the concentration of the alcabalas in a single tax on cereal, on which both the rich and poor would have to pay. Recently, Fernández Delgado (2006), from a more liberal perspective, proposed a review of this evaluation, indicating once again his interventionism, his limited respect for private property and his disregard for the "doctrine of consent". This is of interest in regard to Lisón, with whom, we will find later on, he had had a confrontation.

events would unfold in a very different way, with Lisón y Viedma taking on special protagonism, following his appointment as King's Proctor for the city of Granada, together with the licentiate Alonso de Herrera Valenzuela, a sworn cavalier of Granada's Town Council¹⁵.

In fact, just a few days after the Cortes were convened, on 23 July 1621, the King's Proctor for the city of Murcia, Juan de Verástegui, Lisón's cousin, presented an unexpected initiative before his colleagues in which he asked to have a mixed Government-Cortes commission created, in order to examine the "possible remedies for alleviating the situation of the debilitated and suffering kingdoms". And five days later, Lisón y Viedma read a *proposition* before his colleagues in which he put forth the main trials and tribulations of Castile. He presented a complete list, although was not very original from the analytical point of view, because it was based on many precedents to which I have already referred: the depopulation; the harassment and poor treatment of the suffering taxpayers; the problems arising in the government stores; the entry of foreign merchandise into the country; the discontent on the part of the underpaid people waging the war because of the costs and incarcerations; the inept functioning of the ministers of justice; the lack of residential tax registration for the alcabalas in certain cities; the production of an excess of vellón coins and allowing the entry of this currency from other kingdoms; and still other reasons such as the founding of excessive chaplaincies, a lack of conservation of the forests, and the failure to appoint the most suitable people as governors, magistrates and judges.

However, there was something really new in Verástegui and Lisón's propositions¹⁶. What they both really wanted to propose when they presented them was that the Cortes, which up until then had been limited almost exclusively to the concession of taxes, would assume new functions. When the Cortes approved Verástegui's initiative they were very precise: in a situation of crisis like the one existing at the time, the Cortes-Government

¹⁵ The evolution of the Cortes of 1621 is well known. I coincide in this with Vilar, Ruiz Martín y Burgos. This latter party was an avid reader of the records in everything regarding Lisón and he followed closely the granadino's activities and conduct which reflected his clear determination for the King's Proctors not to be left at the mercy of the "gifts" which the King's Favorite would obtain and instead faithfully fulfill their obligations..

¹⁶ Juan de Verástegui Lisón was Mateo Lisón's first cousin, as we have said. This circumstance led us to think that his proposition may have been part of a plan previously concocted between the two of them.

Commission had to be presided over by the King himself. Furthermore, they wanted the service of the *millones* to be granted with the condition that this commission be created and supervised directly by the King. Never before had the process of political negotiations been presented along such terms.

After discussing Lisón's proposal, the Cortes agreed to appoint as councilmen the King's Proctors Pedro de Sanzores, from Burgos, Mateo Lisón, from Granada, Juan de Vargas, from Seville, Juan de Verástegui, from Murcia, the Count of Chinchón from Segovia and Pedro de Alarcón, from Guadalajara. These gentlemen met, in accordance with the task entrusted to them, and they drew up the Memorial requested of them, which they presented to his Majesty and they begged him to appoint the corresponding commissioners. The Court, however, did not respond, nor did they do so to a new request regarding the same matter which was presented shortly after.

From then on, Lisón heightened the tone of his rebellion, including actions taken against the privileges and mercies traditionally granted to the King's Proctors and to the swarm of interested parties who usually flocked around them. Without renouncing his proposal, he tried to openly break with the practice of *giving and receiving* of the King's Proctors and he asked, every time he had the opportunity to do so, that the King fulfil the conditions imposed by the Cortes on the granting of the *millones*. One of his victims would be Sancho de Moncada himself and the Cortes rejected, due to Lisón's firm opposition, the re-printing of Moncada's *Restauración de España* and the publication of his *Política de la Plata*, of which sadly there are no copies in existence today¹⁷. At this point, Lisón represented a serious threat, not only because of his attitude and for what he was requesting, but because he managed to convince a large number of the rest of the King's Proctors to support him. In view of this, Olivares and Zúñiga adjourned the session of the Cortes on 19 November 1621, barely five months after the commencement of its sessions. They needed money, a lot of money, for

¹⁷ Larraz (1943:174) says about this refusal: "This must have made the King's Proctor from Granada don Mateo de Lisón very angry for he had also raised a mercantilist flag, with Moncada's book, who must have fancied himself a powerful brethren, of those who cast a long shadow. Lisón's *Discursos y apuntamientos*, published in the year 1622, are not worth much". The analytic level of Moncada is, of course, greater than Lisón's, but Larraz errs when he imagines an attack of jealousy on the granadino's part, when his true plan was to merely win over allies, the more the better, as he had done with the King's own Proctors in Toledo, Isidoro del Cerro and Jerónimo de Figueroa, where Moncada had written his treatise.

their undertakings in Flanders and Italy and they had decided to devise a different scheme for obtaining it.

Lisón, however, was not obliged to return to Granada when the Cortes were adjourned, because he continued in Madrid as the King's Senior Proctor from the city. From then on, he decided to make the King listen to him, as a simple "vassal" and without any other reward than the "common good". He assumed that he had not received a response to the request from the Cortes because the King was ill informed. He felt that the King had to intervene directly in the matters of the kingdom and he was willing to do his best to achieve this, even though it would be an almost impossible task, especially since the Cortes were no longer in session and his determination could bring him serious problems personally.

The first thing he did was to print up his *Proposition*, adding to it a brief discourse in which he developed the main points of his program. He signed it and delivered it to the King "a day after the Corpus, Friday 27 June, of this year of sixteen hundred and twenty-two", according to what is added at the end of the document. It was the *First Part* of his *Discursos y Apuntamientos*. Lisón made a brief summary of the contents when he delivered it directly to the King. "His Majesty took it and said that he would look at it". However, there is no record that he received the "decree of promise" afterwards, in which, on the other hand, he was not actually interested¹⁸.

In the meantime, his powerful adversaries were meditating a strategy which would overcome the difficulties presented by the Cortes and open wide the doors to a way in which they thought they could find the financing they so urgently needed: the creation of a network of public funds and institutional pawnshops. For this purpose, a radical reform of Castile's tax system was required and it was necessary to weave a plan with great care but without his direct intervention, because Olivares was not even sure at this point that he could count on the King's unconditional support. Thus, soon after Lisón was able to deliver his *Discursos* to the King, in August of 1622, Olivares asked Philip IV to create a new Major Reform Council¹⁹, so

¹⁸ The promissory document committed the king with the arbitristas for the agreed upon retribution in the event that his proposals were in fact applied (Castellano, 2008:183).

¹⁹ A history of this royal initiative can be found in Ruiz Martín (1970:74 y ss.) and Elliot (2004:145 and ss.).

that it could implement the reforms and resolve other problems affecting Castile, which now included the most important men in the kingdom: the presidents of all the councils, the General Inquisitor Andrés Pacheco, the King's confessor Friar Antonio de Sotomayor and Olivares's own confessor, the Jesuit priest Hernando de Salazar²⁰, whose influence on political matters would increase after the death of Baltasar Zúñiga in October of 1622, when all of the power fell into the hands of his nephew, Olivares.

In barely two months' time, the Council had done its job and with its recommendations, the King signed in Valsáin a long *Charter* on 20 October 1622, addressed to the councils, mayors, knights, squires and good men of the eighteen cities making up the Cortes, in which a series of measures were proposed, which coincided to a great extent with those proposed by Lisón, together with the announcement of the establishment of two new taxes: the creation of the public funds²¹ and the payment of the 30,000 soldiers. The opinion and vote of the recipients were requested, with the highly likely intention of evading the approval of the Cortes, as was traditionally required by Castilian parliamentary tradition.

The proposals for the creation of the public funds in Castile dated from far back. Their creation had been presented for the last time in the Cortes of 1621, with some reluctance on Lisón's part²². What the Major Reform Council proposed to do at this point was based on many past experiences, but its fundamental goal was quite different, for it consisted mainly of reinforcing the government's control over the money in the kingdom and in taking advantage politically and financially of the eventual increase in trade and production, which they hoped would occur through the creation of a intermediary channel between the available

²⁰ Hernando de Salazar was the author of a document for the restructuring of the royal finances, recently studied by Negredo del Cerro (2002). He is also attributed direct participation in many documents emerging from Olivares's office, among them the *Chitón*, a document written anonymously by Quevedo in defense of his economic policy.

²¹ The proposals on the public funds had a long tradition dating back to Philip II's reign (*vid.*, among others, Ruiz Martín, 1970; Schwartz, 1996; and Dubet, 2003). With different variations, the proposals on its creation consisted always of a network of banks, distributed throughout the national territory, which had to be supplied by the funds coming from the taxes and from private parties, with which they could finance the royal treasury and the private investments.

²² The question had been raised by the King's Proctor for Córdoba, Pedro de Angulo (Ruiz Martín, 1970:73; Hamilton, 1947:144).

savings and the public and private investments. In order to do so, in addition to the “idle money of the republic” (mainly judicial deposits) and the royal revenue, the public funds would count on the *veintena*, or twentieth part of the personal patrimonies of more than 2,000 ducats, whose payment would be divided over five years, in exchange for which they would receive a perpetual lien of 3 per 100, to be paid after the fifth year. It was, then, a new coactive form of financing, that is, a new tax, established without the approval of the Cortes, which was levied basically on the more elite classes (Dubet, 2003:207).

The payment of the 30,000 soldiers was equivalent in reality to the old “*millones*”, but they were collected in a different way and without the intervention of the Cortes for their concession. If we estimate that there were about 15,000 hubs of population and if each one of them paid two soldiers, with a monthly wage of six ducats, they would obtain the two million ducats annually which was the annual amount of the *millones*, even though the pertinent adjustments would be made later on depending upon the wealth. The main innovation in regard to the *millones* lied in the fact that each community would be responsible for collecting the tax in the manner they wished and not necessarily with the “pilfering” on the basic products, such as wines, vinegars, oil and bread, surely at a lower price, a problem which the *arbitristas* had been denouncing for some time. In addition, the cities were authorized to use their own revenue for this purpose.

Despite all the pressure placed on the magistrates from Olivares’s group aimed at convincing the mayors and *veintiquatros*, the response from most of them was not favourable for either of the two new taxes²³. The response from the magistrate from Granada, García Bravo de Acuña, was negative, and we imagine that Lisón was behind it. Some of the cities, among them Granada, asked that the Cortes be convoked once again²⁴. As a result of all of this, Olivares had to agree but not before he convened the King’s Proctors and launched his reforms, and so, on 10 February 1623

²³ The responses, located by Domínguez Ortiz in the Simancas Archives (*Patronato Real*, Leg. 91, folios 8-13) and studied then by Ruiz Martín (1970:74 and ss.) and other researchers, show to perfection all the interests in play: the elders, aristocracy, merchants, landowners, religious orders. All of them, for different reasons, were against the Council’s proposals.

²⁴ Ruiz Martín (1970:93).

the famous Reform Articles were dictated with the status of a law and a pragmatic sanction, as if they had been approved by the Cortes. They contained the leading proposals of the Reform Council, including the twenty propositions on capital and revenue with which the public funds and the tribute of the 30,000 soldiers had to be financed.

Lisón wrote the *Second Part* of his *Discursos y Apuntamientos* while the cities with a vote in the Cortes responded to the Letter of Valsaín and so, it was, prior to the date on which issuance of the Reform Articles were approved. The fact that the king granted him a new audience, on 21 November 1622, so that he could deliver it in person, after learning of the Granada magistrate's negative response, reflects not only how much was at risk for the Monarchy with these extreme measures, but also the important role granted to the rebellious *veintiquatro* from Granada in the Court. This second part of his *Discursos* was even shorter than the first because his main goal was to deal with the public funds, the new *veintena* tax and the tax on the 30,000 soldiers, three measures which in his opinion would cause serious problems for the kingdom.

The Reform Articles of February of 1623 were submitted to the Cortes in everything regarding the tax reforms, including those which were related to the public funds. As was to be expected, the process of political negotiation was unusually long and arduous and the opposition from the Castilian cities represented a head-on clash, due in part to the great deal asked of them and also to the fear that the plans presented to them would put an end to Castile's constitutionalist tradition. However, in the meantime, as the military demands could not wait, in October of 1624, the king managed to obtain a new service of *millones* from the Cortes consisting of 12 million ducats over six years' time, which would overlap with the previous 18 million, whose formal documents would not be ready until February of 1626 due to the prolonged discussion of the conditions for the concession. According to the conditions finally agreed upon, the Cortes approved the tax in exchange for doing away with the creation of the public funds and the five per cent tax. However, other concessions were made, such as that of selling 20,000 vassals, a recourse which had been used at other times to obtain revenue and win favours. In addition, a new collection procedure was adopted, which involved the payment of 1 per cent of the products which paid the *alcabala* sales tax. For this approval, however, the cities were not

consulted and they immediately protested and expressed their disapproval²⁵.

Lisón y Viedma was the person in charge of protesting in the name of the city of Granada. In addition, on 11 June 1626, he referred to this matter in a new *Informe y Relación* (Report), this time adding his signature to that of four other mayors of different cities with a vote in the Cortes, asking that the King personally be the one to resolve the matter. The opposition from the different cities was reconstructed outside the Cortes and Lisón was chosen as its leader and spokesman²⁶.

At this time, a new problem arose. The extensive amount of *vellones* minted during the first years of Philip IV's reign in order to finance the Monarchy's expenses, were causing a rise in the price of the *vellón* coin with an increasingly greater reward for the silver coin, which not only created a conflict of interests for the vassals, but also for the Royal Treasury itself, as the taxes were being collected in a depreciated currency that later had to be exchanged for the silver to be sent to the armies which were doing battle abroad. Thus, the minting of the *vellón* coin which had been an apparently harmless means for financing the Royal Treasury as long as the copper-silver parity remained constant, was becoming impossible to sustain during the first years of Philip IV's reign, when the silver reward reached more than 50 per 100 in 1626.

The taxes which the King's Favourite, the Council of Castile and the Cortes received to remedy this monetary situation "without harming the interests of the vassals nor the King" were innumerable²⁷. The method which had been used on previous occasions, when this same problem had arisen, consisted simply of a devaluation of the nominal value of the *vellón* currency, but now the *arbitristas*, who had become much more versed in mone-

²⁵In all, the service for all the concepts requested by Olivares from the Cortes totaled 58.8 million ducats over six years, which meant an annual contribution of almost 5 million ducats. See Andrés Ucendo (1999:142 and ss).

²⁶Ruiz Martín (1970:92 and ss.); Vilar (1971):279-280.

²⁷There is abundant literature on Philip IV's monetary policy, including works which contemplate it from the perspective of an economic analysis. As regards how the contemporaries saw the currency, the minting of the *vellón* and the different ways of "using" this currency when the problem of inflation arose in a dramatic manner, see, among others, García Guerra (2003), de Santiago (2000) and Ruiz Martín (1970). For an economic analysis both from the economic theory of the time as well as from the current monetary policy and theory, vid. García de Paso (2001).

tary matters, offered other more favourable solutions for the political plans of the King's Favourite, which were carefully studied in the Cortes²⁸.

As soon as a definitive decision was adopted, in May of 1626, the copper minting came to an abrupt halt and in February of 1627 fraudulent imports of the vellón were sent to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, which was thought to be the harshest of courts of justice²⁹. Neither of the measures proved effective because the merchants began to store the merchandise awaiting its anticipated devaluation, and the imports of the false foreign vellón currency did not cease, due to the pressing incentive of its high monetary value in Castile. It was at this point that in the light of the other alternatives, a royal pragmatic sanction was issued on 27 March 1627, by which the Council of Castile's proposal was finally accepted, based on the plan of the Milan-born *arbitrista* and copper importer Gerardo Basso. It was hoped that this measure would eliminate the surplus *vellones* "without any loss or detriment to anyone"³⁰.

In essence, Basso's plan was a solution of compromise between Olivares's politics, which extolled a traditional deflation without compensation for the holders of the currency, and the orientation of the Cortes and the Councils of the State and of Castile, which defended doing so by means of a compensation. It consisted of the creation of *deputations* for the use of the vellón. In reality, it would be a national network of banks which were established in ten cities of Castile, including Granada, the city which Lisón represented in Madrid, but which would be managed by a general deputation of the leading Genoa-based suppliers, submitted in the last instance to a central governing body made up of six members appointed by the Coun-

²⁸ Before adopting the definitive solution, two of the taxes which deserved a great deal of attention from the Castile Council and the Cortes were those of the sevillano Cardona and Father Márquez, both of great interest here but for different reasons. Cardona's proposal, which had been assumed in its entirety by Moncada in his *Restauración Política*, consisted of increasing the monetary value of the silver in order to avoid its removal by foreigners and in adjusting the value of the currency of the vellón to its metallic content. The proposal of doctor Francisco Márquez de Torres, chaplain of the Royal Chapel of Granada, without a date but surely after Lisón's *Memorial* of 1627 about the same subject, to which I will refer later on, relied on the support of the Town Council of Granada. It consisted of an "easy and gentle" means, by which the use of the vellón and the detriment for its holders would be limited, but it proved very complex and with little monetary foundation. On both proposals, see García Guerra (2003:94 and ss.).

²⁹ On this and other respective measures, see Santiago (2000:83-117).

³⁰ On the deputations for the use of the vellón, *vid.* Ruiz Martín (1970:104-105).

cils. These deputations would receive from the Crown as an advance or an operating fund, 100,000 ducats and they would accept from the private parties, on sight deposits, with a period of four years in vellón coins, at 5 per cent, of which 80 per 100 could be paid back in silver currency. For the consumption of the vellón, which they hoped would be 75 per 100 of the total of the *vellones* existing, the deputations could also rely on other funds: those which they could obtain from a lottery, which was entrusted to them; 2 per 100 of the revenue from the patrimonies and capitals; 20 per 100 of the ecclesiastic subsidies, and others. The *vellón* coin, which was obtained with all of these fiscal recourses and with one-fifth of the time deposits, would be earmarked and the deputations would receive a compensation in the form of the granting of a series of privileges, such as those of the property right brokers, to offer loans at 7 per 100, to corner the creation of the of property liens, to give silver as rewards and other measures³¹.

It is not dangerous to assume that the election of Basso's tax and the creation of the deputations were not adopted merely to instrument a relatively smooth monetary adjustment of the parity of the gold, silver and copper coins, which could have been accomplished in a much simpler way, with or without compensation to the holders of the vellón coin. There were surely two other reasons as well that were equally important for Olivares: on one hand, the idea was to finance the Royal Treasury, by means of a process to stall the inflation created by the vellón currency, by inverting the increases of the price of the silver rewards, with which they paid the royal debts in Europe, thus containing the depreciation of the vellón, which was the currency in which the taxes were collected; and, on the other, the creation of a network of banking institutions, which were now called "deputations" instead of public funds, but which in the end fulfilled exactly the same functions which the King's Favourite had in mind when

³¹ As the Crown maintained ownership of the currency produced in its mints, the deflationary operations usually consisted of withdrawing the amount of copper coins desired, without any compensation. In the light of the kingdom's growing resistance to this tax, the reduction or consumption of the vellón also became a deflationary operation by which the vellón was delivered to the deputations in exchange for a four-year title, payable in silver, with the release and reward stipulated. This was followed up afterwards by a reduction in its nominal value by means of its re-stamping or perforation, so that the operation would prove effective. The silver premium over the copper was the percentage of the increase in the real value of the silver coin in relation with its legal parity with the copper coin's face value. This could be due either to the inconvenience of having to effect transactions in the copper currency, with a much lower value/weight ratio, but above all to the growing degradation of the purity and weight of the vellón, a recourse used frequently to increase the Royal Treasury's income.

he resorted to this institution, which was none other than that of obtaining abundant financing at his disposal to cover his plans. The deceit, however, did not go unnoticed by the Cortes or by the cities and the end result was another period of public agitation and hostility towards the plans of the Count Duke.

The deputations came up against a dead end because of this opposition and so, on 13 September 1627, a new pragmatic sanction was enacted by which fees were imposed on the main consumer products, at slightly higher prices than those of 1624, and the prohibition was lifted on foreign products, which the cities with representation in the Cortes had initiated in 1623. The idea here was to offer a provisional alternative until they managed to overcome the resistance of the Cortes and avoid the continuous increase, in the prices of the vellón and the silver rewards. Nevertheless, none of this occurred because with the prices totally out of control³², on 8 July 1628, the cities managed to condition the delivery of the service of the *millones* to the dissolution of the deputations, which had already begun to function³³. It was then, on 7 August of that same year, in compliance with the threat made against the Cortes if they refused to accept the deputations, a new royal pragmatic sanction was issued by which they were eliminated, but it also reduced to half the nominal value of all the entire vellónes in circulation and it was left to the cities to decide how to compensate the holders of the vellón as each one felt suitable. This was equivalent in reality to not doing anything at all, in detriment to the holders of this type of currency and the holders of the property rights and other *rentistas* but beneficial to the holders of the sellable assets and the silver currency and also for the Royal Treasury³⁴.

³²In August of 1628, the silver reward had gone up to 80 per 100, the highest since the minting of the vellón was resumed in 1621. Those responsible for Philip IV's monetary policy could have foreseen that this would occur, because, by then, Father Mariana (1609:71) had already warned about what would happen after levying taxes to stop the high cost of the bad currency: "It would intensify the already festering sore because the people would not want to sell at higher prices and due to these high price, these people and the kingdom would be impoverished and there would be rebellions. In view of the fact that there was no other solution, they would do what is always done, so away with everything or lower the value of this currency".

³³The deputations were created, in fact, but with very little success. The reports from the Cortes were filled with complaints about their actions. See in particular Domínguez Ortiz (1960:256 and ss.).

³⁴Due to the fact that the demand for balances of vellón expressed in silver was reduced abruptly due to fear of ulterior devaluations, neither the level of prices of the vellón was reduced in the same proportion as the monetary value of the currency, nor was the silver reward entirely eliminated. A theoretical explanation for all of this, in García de Paso (2001).

Throughout this entire process of opposition to Olivares, the city of Granada and its *veintiquatro*, Lisón y Viedma, continued playing a very noteworthy role. In May of 1625 and June of 1626, the *veintiquatro granadino* had already been asked to raise a protest, in the name of the city against the tax on the sale of vassals³⁵. And in May of 1627, in the midst of the process for consulting the cities in relation with the pragmatic sanction on the creation of the deputations, he signed his *Memorial on the creation of public funds and the consumption of the vellón currency*, which he also managed to deliver to the King in a private audience on 31 of that same month. His prestige in the Court and the fear and respect felt for him in the midst of all this unrest continued to remain intact.

What happened to Lisón next has been magnificently reconstructed by Vilar (1971) from the *veintiquatro granadino*'s striking narration in which he reports on *What happened to the Count of Olivares* during the Audience granted to him in a hall of Madrid's Royal Palace on 1 June 1627, on the day after his private audience with the King in which he had related and delivered a Memorial, in the name of the city of Granada, on the misfortunes which could befall the kingdom as a result of the Pragmatic Sanctions on the vellón.

Olivares asked doctor Villegas, governor of the Archbishopric of Toledo, to accompany him, so that there would be witnesses to what was going to happen, once the three were inside, Olivares locked the door to the room. Olivares first insulted the *veintiquatro granadino*, making serious accusations about his conduct: he did not know nor did he understand anything; he was acting against the resolutions adopted by His Majesty; he was nothing more than a mere ant, and even less than an ant; he spoke in his own name and not in that of the city he represented, which had indeed asked him to draw up his memorial but he failed to consult with others and he did it in secret. Furthermore, he had breached the law when he had printed up and distributed it to many people, for he himself had received two copies; and he incited the other cities to go against His Majesty's resolutions. And then he made a very serious threat: His Majesty had ordered the gathering of all the documents which spoke out against him and the consultations that the Council and its President, don Francisco Contreras, had made in order to ban him from the Court.

³⁵ Vilar (1971:279).

Lisón replied to all of this with poise and gallantry; an ant like himself did not require so much care and attention, nor the need to assemble so many papers; it was not fair that those who defended the kingdoms and cities should be treated like this for then no-one would dare to speak out; in the eight years in which he was in the Court as the King's Senior Procurator, never had he spoken on his own behalf, but always in the name of the city he represented. Just as he requested in his memorials it was a matter which His Majesty himself did not have to resolve, but rather remit to the Council or to some commission where there were a number of judges and for this reason he had printed two dozen copies to give to them, aside from the fact that the print shops often printed several sheets of their own in order to sell them themselves; and if the harm lied in the fact that he had made these declarations, in order to avoid problems, he would go to his home and his city and send another person to whom His Excellency would much prefer to lend an ear.

The *veintiquatro granadino's* defence of himself and of the democratic guarantees for the cities of the kingdom served to no avail before the most powerful man in Europe. The next day he received the order to depart in exile for his lands in Algarinejo. Far from considering him a defender of the rights of the cities, in whose name he had acted, Olivares saw Lisón as a major threat, as the leader of a plot which prevented him from carrying out his economic reforms and even as a serious danger to the Monarchy itself. Lisón obeyed and left the Court forever.

Vilar (1971) prolonged Lisón's life in Madrid until after 1627, but in a clandestine manner and so he became the target of *El Chitón de las Tarabillas*, published anonymously by Quevedo at the beginning of 1630 in order to defend Olivares's economic policies during the first years of his royal favour and author of *Tapaboca*, also an anonymous reply to *El Chitón*. These attributions, however, lack grounds today, as we will explain briefly below, based on the views put forth by Urí Martín and Castro Ibaseta³⁶.

Without any need to refer to other previous studies, the last editor of *El Chitón*, Urí Martín (1998:22-25) considered it not at all likely that the

³⁶The relationship between Lisón y Viedma and some of the libel which led to the *El Chitón* had been established by Astrana Marín when he published the *Tapaboca* as an appendix to the *La vida turbulenta de Quevedo* (1945), attributing it to the *veintiquatro granadino*.

author of *Tapaboca* was also the author of *Tira la Piedra*, against which *El Chitón* wrote directly. In any event, he was totally convinced that the author was not Lisón y Viedma, but rather a monk from Olivares's circle in Seville, in view of certain explicit references contained within the document itself³⁷.

Castro Ibaseta (2008:406-415) offered a different point of view which helped to furnish a definitive clarification of the matter. Surely it was not a coincidence that a few days after Lisón's meeting with the Count Duke, on 13 June 1627, the King would decree a strong prohibition against the printing of books and documents of any kind without the corresponding license and printer's footnote. It was the custom up until then as Lisón himself had explained to the King's Favourite, that those who drew up presentations or memorials would have them printed at their own expense in order to facilitate their distribution among the judges who had to see them. It was also for some, a lavish way to present them, to impress others or a guarantee to make sure that their writings would not get lost in the piles of manuscripts which landed in the Councils and Assemblies. However, Lisón's manuscript set off alarms. What concerned the Court about his writings was not the "vulgarization" of politics, which was in a way somewhat justifiable due to the King-kingdom relationship, but the eventual creation of a literary market which might incite the people, who were becoming increasingly more interested in what was being discussed in the Cortes, in view of the existing inflationary situation, the agricultural crisis, the serious critical situation of the Monarchy and the protests against everything that went on. And this was really the goal of this royal decree: to radically prevent all this from happening³⁸.

Within this context, even though Olivares refused to believe it, Lisón's excuse that some worker at the print shop might have printed his memo-

³⁷Jauralde (2004:603), Quevedo's last biographer, without other arguments than those mentioned years ago by Astrana (1945:579-581), has sustained once again referring to *El Chitón* that "the most logical is to think ... of a commission entrusted to Quevedo so that he could defend the Privado's monetary policy against Lisón y Viedma". However, despite the book Uri published six years after that of Jauralde, we know that Uri was familiar with Jauralde's manuscript when he was writing his, and hence his declarations that Lisón was not the author.

³⁸It seems that Lisón also found himself involved in this clandestine literary market in a very different way. As Vilar already warned Vilar (1971:276), in a manuscript copy of the 18th century text *Voto y Proposición del Reino* (BNE, Mss. 11002), Lisón appears as a delegate of the King to refute his own writings. We can dismiss the idea of a recantation due to the personality of this individual and the only explanation would be that it was the government's counter-propaganda, like the *Chitón* itself.

rials, made real sense. Castro Ibaseta consulted a file of the Inquisition with the testimony of Matías Martínez, a bookseller, in February of 1631, in which he said that he had seen Frenchman Antonio Roquet working in Juan Flamenco's print shop on the preparation of Lisón y Viedma's book, a couple of years before, that is in 1629. Castro's explanation is believable: Lisón was interested during the entire period he spent in Madrid in compiling his writings for his own prestige and he could easily have collaborated with Roquet, a businessman who was only interested in taking advantage of the situation and publishing it if he saw that there was a demand for it.

But this does not mean that Lisón remained in hiding in Madrid, although it is possible that he occasionally travelled to the city because as we will recall his two children and father-in-law Madera lived there. It might not even have been his initiative to publish a complete edition of his works for sale, as he would only obtain an insignificant very small amount of money from doing so. Nor did he continue to actively exercise his opposition to Olivares, and less plausible still was that he was responsible for the lampoonist writings that Quevedo opposed, especially those of *Tapaboca*. Castro Ibaseta provided convincing proof to the contrary and denied these accusations categorically. I believe that neither *El Chitón* was the answer to a single text, nor Lisón's texts of 1627 were printed so that they could be put into circulation, nor was *Tapaboca* one of his works.

I feel that as *El Chitón* was dedicated mainly to the analysis of the monetary disruptions derived from the minting of the vellón and the defence of the devaluation of 7 August 1628, when the deputations had already failed and Lisón was living in exile in Algarinejo, I can add certain observations about the possible relationship between the monetary ideas found in his *Memorial* of 1627 and those of *El Chitón* and *Tapaboca*, which might also contribute to deciphering this literary enigma.

Above all, we have to insist upon the fact that Lisón was a political writer with direct access to the King and he was respectful of the monarch's power and not a lampoonist, nor a satirical writer, and so no matter how much his discourses and memorials bothered the Court, they had to know that he did not deserve a satire like the one they commissioned from Quevedo in order to deal with Olivares's critics and that this was not the most effective way to deal with him. This point is evidenced by the fact that at that time, they could have used a more expedient method against him, exi-

le and fiscal pressures on his properties. Even without a license and without a print shop footnote, his writings were always published without any attempt to conceal his authorship, surely at his own cost, and in order to make sure they reached a “council or assembly which were made up of a number of judges”³⁹. He also wanted to make sure that they came to the attention of the King and so he himself hand-delivered them in private audiences. If Lisón was the fearsome “republican” and the defender of the rights of the vassals and of the cities against the absolute power of the King, it would be difficult to imagine him “shooting off malicious jokes, satires, lampoons, *coplas* and folk songs, confusing puns (*si baja, no baja, y navaja* and other witticisms), motets and carols de “*entre jarro y boca de noche*”. This is what Quevedo said the author of *Tira la piedra* had been doing right before the devaluation of the currency on 7 August 1628.

In addition, according to the dates when *El Chitón* and *Tapaboca* were being published, Lisón, after having served as the King’s Senior Proctor opposing the deputations, was already far from Madrid, in exile for more than three years, and the solutions the city of Granada proposed now were handled by the two new Proctors of the King, Francisco Maldonado and Antonio de Camargo, even though we should not ignore the fact that Lisón from Algarinejo might still have exercised some indirect influence on them⁴⁰. After his exile, Lisón had a lot to lose with his many properties and there is no reason why we should think that he would do this in a direct manner, nor risk his situation with anonymous writings that could easily be discovered.

However, more important than the foregoing is to verify to what extent the arguments in *El Chitón* could be aimed at refuting the monetary policy proposed by Lisón. García de Paso (2001) has analyzed the limitations and contradictions of Quevedo in order to better understand the monetary measures adopted by Olivares on 7 August 1628. Despite the fact that these

³⁹ BNM, Ms. 10.599, fol. 31v.

⁴⁰ García Guerra (2003:214). In the replies to the letter from the Crown of 11 June 1628, requesting the opinion of the twenty-five cities on the use of the vellón which was being presented as an alternative to the deputations, Granada’s reply opposed this operation and was the only exception to the favorable vote of the rest of the cities. This opposition was based on Lisón’s idea that the increase in the price of the vellón was attributable to the rumors existing about it (Domínguez Ortiz, 1960:276 and Vilar, 1971:282).

contradictions makes any comparison between Quevedo's criticism and Lisón's ideas very difficult, it is possible to discover some sufficiently revealing paragraphs. Quevedo, almost at the beginning of his explanation, says: "The discourse frightened the shopkeepers, because the profit does not take into account the achievements and the usury; they feared they would be prejudiced by losing half; and it is indeed harmful because it is not a fair remedy to wait until everything is consumed and when there is nothing else: And we would find ourselves with a currency that no purse wants to hold; and they could become even angrier at having to go to jail and that the corners of the homes would have less garbage and less commotion. A currency with which the payer would feel cleansed and liberated, and the collector would feel dirty and confused. It is more trouble to deal with than it is worth" (1998:76). This is exactly the same analysis that Lisón made in his *Memorial* of 1627, not anonymously but publicly, as we will see when we analyze his work later on. In addition, the accusation would not easily affect Lisón, because it was aimed directly at someone who had first-hand information that could only have been obtained from those close to the power and in the middle of 1628, the *Granadino* had been in exile for some time: "This has been the harm caused with the solution of lowering or removing it, and this was your fault, for you published it to lapidate, and also the fault of those who envied the success of proposing it. You know who told it to you and I, those who were the ones who spoke about and revealed it" (1998:83).

Another point from which the monetary analysis of the devaluation carried out by Quevedo and by Lisón can be clearly analyzed is relative to the possible beneficial effects which could be derived from the simple fear that it might occur: "What dunghill would give you stones to throw against it? Only the voice the voice would lead to the restitution of more debts than at the time of death. How many loans lie between *I do not want to* and *I cannot* have been recognized!" (1998:82). The analytical coincidences between both are also evident here, although the goals of Quevedo and Lisón were totally different, given that, with this reasoning, Quevedo tried to justify the devaluation and Lisón tried to avoid it, by explaining how the circulation of the vellón, due to the fear of an eventual devaluation, produced positive effects.

My conclusion, then, is that the author of *El Chitón* and those who helped him write it, among others Hernando de Salazar himself, confessor of the

Count Duke⁴¹, were familiar with the numerous taxes on the currency which had been studied in the Council and in the Cortes before enacting the Pragmatic Sanction of 7 August 1628 on the devaluation of the vellón —including Lisón's *Memorial* of 1627 against the deputations— and they took part of his monetary analysis, which was something truly unique for the time. However, none of Lisón's writings could be the target for Quevedo's criticism, because Quevedo took his pen to defend Olivares' monetary policy, not those of the politicians present, whom he could convince with gifts or more expedient procedures, such as the one used against Lisón. Those who were considered more dangerous in the Court were the ones who hid their identity behind acidic pamphlets which denounced the fiascos of the Count Duke.

As regards the *Tapaboca*, aside from its anonymity, which does not fit at all with the personality of the veintiquatro granadino, it would be necessary to analyze in detail its contents, something which I will not do here, given that it is a document of a fundamentally economic nature and it is so noteworthy that it deserves its very own study. I will only comment on three unique questions in relation to the theory which is being supported here. First of all, we must say that it barely reflects the constitutionalist concerns, that Lisón was so fond of, and, on the other hand, there was a lot of data of an economic nature and detailed information on what was happening, which in his other known writings, except for the *Memorial* of 1627, he had never considered fundamental. Secondly, it is difficult to understand how, if there are so many coincidences between Quevedo's monetary analysis, the main subject of *El Chitón*, and Lisón's analysis, why did he receive such a harsh reply, especially when he was no longer in the Court and ceased to be involved in national politics. And finally, the tone and economic proposals of the *Tapaboca*, written along the harsh lines of Sancho de Moncada's "sole and general solution", are not among Lisón's "mildest" and more gradual proposals, despite the fact that he did coincide in essence with the common, fundamental trunk of Spanish mercantilism.

⁴¹ Hernando de Salazar, the Count Duke's confessor had sufficient knowledge of the royal finances and even wrote several interesting texts about them, which could also be associated with Lisón and, above all, with *El Chitón*, for Quevedo formed a part of the group of Olivares's followers for a period of several years. *Vid.* Negrodo (2002).

3.

LISÓN Y VIEDMA'S WRITINGS: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

3.1. LISÓN'S WRITINGS

In the period between 1622, one year after his public appearance in the Cortes of Castile, and May of 1627, a few weeks before his exile to Algarinejo, Lisón y Viedma wrote and published, with his signature, all the works we know by him, either as manuscripts, or as printed documents, but none of them bore a print shop footnote. These were crucial years for the Spanish Monarchy that Elliot (2004:161) has called a period of “reform and reputation”, in which the three great themes of Spanish mercantilism were debated: the decadence of Castile, its causes and its solutions; the tax reforms; and the monetary reforms. The Granada-born mayor gave his opinions on these three matters in his writings.

In 1622, Lisón wrote his *Discursos y Apuntamientos, Primera parte y Segunda Parte*, his text of a more general nature, in which he focused on all the problems affecting the kingdom and their solutions. In 1623, he wrote his *Desengaño del Rey y apuntamientos para su gobierno*, a text of a more political rather than economic content, in the form of a dialogue between three characters, the “Powerful King”, the “Troubled Kingdom” and the “Impartial Advisor”, in which the *veintiquatro granadino* took the role of the advisor who responds to the questions asked by the King. He discussed how the King’s Favourite should behave and how he should deal with the problems facing the government⁴². In 1626, he produced a shorter

⁴² *Desengaño del rey* is a very different document to Lisón’s other writings, as it shows certain characteristics corresponding to the literature on the education of the Christian Princes, which was very prolific in the first half of the 17th century: long, emotional speeches about the Holy Scriptures and those of classic antiquity, which served as valuable examples for him; the Prince as the leading member of the Court, privileged with divine gifts; a diversity of fields of interest, from politics to reli-

text, *Informe y relación*, which he hand-delivered to the King and which was signed by four other councillors from different cities with a vote in the Cortes on 11 June 1626, and he positioned himself against the sale of vassals and asked that the Royal Patrimony be maintained and not weakened by selling its prerogatives. And in 1627, he finally, wrote his Memorial on the use of the vellón and the founding of the public funds⁴³.

Together with these five major works, which are those which are included in this edition of his writings, Lisón published another three documents: his *Discurso y Práctica* of what happened to him in the Audience that the Count Duke granted him on 1 June 1627, after delivering his Memorial to the King on the use of the vellón and the founding of public funds, to which I have referred above; a request from the city of Granada to have them take away the carriages, a highly controversial matter at this time, in which nothing new was added to what he had written about it in the *Discursos* of 1622⁴⁴; and a chronicle of the fiestas which were held in Granada in 1629 to celebrate the birth of the Prince don Baltasar Carlos, also cited in this work⁴⁵.

Having covered in the foregoing paragraph the political vicissitudes in which Lisón y Viedma wrote each one of his five major works, I will focus

gion, including ethics, economics and law as well; and written in the form of a dialogue with carefully selected characters. This document differs, however, in relation with its most representative aspect, in that he strongly criticizes the Procter, with direct references to his actions, and, in addition, even though he conceives of politics as a human activity, the King is viewed as a divine reflection. The differences with his other writings, which are much more straightforward and direct, were so noteworthy, that we might think that Lisón relied on the help of someone else in order to cite his many examples from the Holy Scriptures. There is a note added to the margin of the copy of this document found in Berkeley University, USA, (BANC MS VCB 143 v. 92, Bancroft Library), which states: "It seems to be the product of someone more religious than D. Matheo Lysson". Might this clergyman be his confessor, to whom Lisón makes reference in his *Discurso y plática*, without wishing to reveal his name?

I did not discuss this document in the introductory study, in which a summary of his *Discursos y Apuntamientos* is made in the form of an epitome of his ideas. However, I thought it appropriate to include it in this edition, not only because it covers his three major works, but also because it reveals the true nature of the *Veinticuatro Granadino*, his deep religious beliefs, his firm ideas and the critical role he adopted during the initial period of influence of the Count-Duke, as the King's Favourite, in particular against his economic policy.

⁴³ Hereinafter, the quotes from the *Discursos* are taken from the publication 2/18162 and those of the *Memorial* of the Mss. 10599, both of the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid.

⁴⁴ Biblioteca Nacional de España: Mss. 18.400. On carriages and luxuries, see López Álvarez (2007)

⁴⁵ Biblioteca Nacional de España: Mss. 2.361.

more extensively below on the three of greatest economic content, the *Discursos* of 1622, *Primera y Segunda Parte*, and the *Memorial* of 1627.

32. *LOS DISCURSOS Y APUNTAMIENTOS DE 1622*

As we have already stated, the true novelty found in Lisón's *Proposition* to the Cortes of 1621 lied not in his description of the harmful consequences he described therein, which had been mentioned by others before, but that he asked the King to appoint advisors and ministers so that, together with the commissioners appointed by the Cortes, they could propose the appropriate solutions to the problems. He asked in the end for greater protagonism to be given to the Cortes in regard to the more serious matters facing the Monarchy. In order to surely avoid this, the Cortes were disbanded without his having received any reply. In clear defiance of Olivares, Lisón wrote the *Primera Parte* of his *Discursos y apuntamientos*, in June of 1622, on the same matters contained in his proposition, although he presented them in a slightly different order to that of his *Proposition* to the Cortes⁴⁶ and with the intention of giving them to the King in his own hand, as he did in fact do⁴⁷.

The main purpose proposed by Lisón in his *Discursos* was that of giving His Majesty the means by which to run the Royal Treasury, "without charging taxes, which are cause for the depopulation of the towns, the loss of vassals and the general harassment they suffer" (fol. 1v). His main idea was, then, not to levy new taxes on the vassals, who were the main source of many of the taxes which reached the Court, but to carry out a major

⁴⁶The main differences in regard to his *Proposition* to the Cortes were: the inclusion of a first chapter on the activities of the Royal Treasury, discussed from the perspective which most interested Lisón, the balance of powers; the inclusion of a final chapter on the *millones*, treated as well from the perspective of the consent of the Cortes; and the suppression of everything relative to the vellón currency, which would be discussed much more extensively in the second part, when this question was presented by the Count Duke as an alternative to his previous proposals for tax reform.

⁴⁷At the end of this first part of the *Discursos*, after recalling that the Cortes had asked the King to appoint ministers to discuss the matters of the proposition and that this was not done because the Cortes was ordered to be disbanded, Lisón said: "And even though this is the case, as the King's Proctor in the Cortes that my powers have now disappeared, my obligations as a loyal vassal never cease and so I must look out for causes of service to V. Magestad, and as the town councilor, I must look out for the public good" (fol. 14v).

reform of the institutions of the Monarchy, so that the sources from which they originated could flow abundantly. In order to do so, beginning with the *Proposition* which he had presented to the Cortes in 1621, he stated in successive chapters each one of the problems which he had observed and how they could be resolved.

In the first chapter, Lisón pointed directly to his *intention of the Royal Treasury*, but he focused more under this point not on the lack of resources for the missions which Olivares began to undertake, but on the many vassals who had loyally served the King, both inside and outside Spain, and who could not even collect enough money for what they needed to survive. This could be remedied by saving on the many advisors, secretaries, captains and mayors, and trying not to give out favours of perpetual rights, rents or money and “not charging new taxes to the vassals, who do not have anything, nor can they pay”⁴⁸.

In the second chapter, he denounced the *depopulation*, due, according to Lisón, to the payments of the “taxes of the *millones*, *alcabalas* and other services” and “the costs and harassment of the collectors”, with which “the few who were left had, to pay what the many from before had paid.” What the King did not know was that “in the midst of so much wealth, so much disrespect in the manners, so many parties, grandiose gala affairs, lavish clothing, pretensions and confusion, as there is in this Court, there is no place for necessity, nor its knowledge thereof” (fol. 3v). The solution for all of this consisted of sending having the Prelates, Titles, owners of the villages and entailed estates who did not have obligations and occupations in the Court, to their towns and having them spend their resources among their vassals. They should grant them the right to plant some of the fields and fallow land and they should head the payment of the *alcabalas* in all the cities so that the vassals were not the object of harassment; and that certain franchises be granted to the towns which had suffered depopulation and which, due to their characteristics, had a better disposition for their repopulation.

⁴⁸This point had not been discussed in the *Proposición* to the Cortes, which had begun with the depopulation as the main subject and of most concern for the Spanish mercantilism in general (Martín Rodríguez, 1984: 51-72). Lisón wanted above all a greater balance between the powers of the State, with a lesser weight for the Councils and a greater protagonism for the cities, and so he began with this point: “Because they only serve for need and for confusion in the Councils, and dilation in the chambers, which can be rewarded with governments, small towns, court offices, commissions, habits, commissions”.

In the third chapter, he insisted on the harm caused by the *collection of the services and taxes*, because the collectors enjoyed their own jurisdiction. There were so many expenses, salaries, costs and harassment incurred by the vassals, which very often exceeded the principal amount they received. Furthermore, the executors who came to collect, went so far as to sell the clothing of the poor people, leaving them without what to eat and where to sleep. As a solution, he proposed that the collections be submitted to the ordinary justices, each one in its own his jurisdiction, giving them a period of time in which to do so, and, if they did not do it by then, they could send the collectors at their own cost, so that each justice would do what corresponded to them.

In the fourth chapter, he pointed out the poor use made of the *Oidores y Jueces, Magistrados y Gobernadores*, as important as these positions were for the good government, peace and tranquillity of the republics. To resolve this problem, he proposed that the Councils, Universities, Official Associations, Audiencias, Chanceries, Prelates and Town Councils be duly informed of the corresponding appointments according to each case.

In the fifth chapter, he made a brief but precise analysis of the harm caused by the *entry of foreign merchandise*, “because they took away the silver and gold currencies [...] impoverishing the resources of the vassals, and depriving them of the arts, exercises and crafts from which they earned their living [...] and so the foreign provinces were being populated while those of His Majesty became depopulated and impoverished” (fol. 7v). The solution for this problem was the prohibition of merchandise elaborated and manufactured abroad “by the mildest means and modes possible”, and so if, on one hand, the currency is not taken out of the kingdom, and on the other, we will bring in each year a certain amount of treasury such as that brought from the Indies and so the wealth would be that much greater” (fol. 8).

In the sixth chapter, he denounced the *estancos* (government stores) for different things, such as gunpowder, mercury, pepper and other items, and that each one of them had its own judge and ministers, with the inhibition of the Audiencias, Magistrates and ordinary judges, with whom the vassals found themselves continuously humiliated by the calumnies launched against them, falling victim to them over and over again and spending their own limited resources on the costs. His solution was that the harshest ones be removed and that the rest be submitted to ordinary courts.

In the seventh chapter, he denounced that the *jurisdiction of the royal rents* was given to the landlords themselves, with the inhibition of the Cortes and ordinary judges, which led to serious detriment, because most of the landlords were greedy people, who did not take advantage of the rents in order to do justice to the farm earnings. In order to remedy this situation, he also proposed that the jurisdictions of these rents were not given to the landlords, but that they be delivered to the ordinary judges of the towns for the better defence of the vassals.

In the eighth chapter, he pointed out the problems which were derived from the many chaplaincies which were being founded and that the *purchase of root assets by the Ecclesiastic communities, Convents, Priests and Fathers of the Company of Jesus*, stopped the circulation of these assets and the payment of the corresponding alcabalas, and so the vassals were left to pay what was missing. The solution for this problem was that these acquisitions could only be made with a license received from the King.

In the ninth chapter, he warned about the *pledge and scope of the own resources and revenue of the cities and towns*, due to the excessive costs which were issued to the mayors, for the leasing of public revenue from the councils who would then pretend to be bankrupt in order to not pay and also to the expenses of the magistrates, governors and judges to leave reports and signs of their names and other unnecessary expenses, and as a result, “it is not possible to cover the cost of the public works, to fix the roads, digs, bridges, fountains, sewers and pavements, nor to stock up on weapons and munitions in the event of war” (fol. 9v). The solution also lied in making sure that none of this could be done without a royal license and so the revenue could be relieved, in order to cover other needs.

In the tenth chapter, Lisón argued against *suits, collars, carriages* and luxury in general, not only for reasons of public morality, which he insisted was important, but also because with these expenses, the revenue of the vassals was considerably reduced and they could not manage to pay what they owed. As a solution, he proposed the prohibition of all these expenses, to a different extent in each case. In particular, he asked H.M. to order that the right to travel in a carriage be limited to archbishops, bishops, nobles, council members and several ministers.

In the eleventh chapter, he denounced the *negligence, carelessness, ignorance and maliciousness of the Scribes* in the drawing up of their documents, which resulted in a lot of harm and legal disputes. As a remedy for this, he asked H.M. to order that the deeds of obligations, sales, property liens, letters of payment, leases, dowry letters, commitments, deposits and other similar documents be assembled and that a law be made for each one, carefully organized by duly capacitated people.

And in the twelfth chapter, he expressed his concern for the *distribution of the service of the millones, subsidies and exemptions?*, mainly from the perspective of the conditions imposed for their concession by the kingdom. Under this point, with which he was highly familiar due to his position as mayor of a city with a vote in the Cortes, he wrote more about this subject than the foregoing ones, but he resisted making a complete list of all those who did not comply. The solution was that they comply for the better conservation of the kingdom.

The *veintiquatro granadino* concluded his discourse reminding the King of his proposition made in the last Cortes, as one of the King's Proctors. The Cortes had requested that ministers be appointed who would solve, together with the Proctors, the problems which were being observed all over. However, after the sudden order to disband the Cortes, nothing had been done about it. He humbly asked once again, as these matters were so important for the public good, that His Majesty decide to deal with them and appoint people with experience to do so. He added now: "And even though I no longer have the power of a King's Proctor in the Cortes, I still have my obligations as a loyal vassal to look out for the causes of service of his V. Magestad and as a councilman for those of the public good".

As you will recall, Lisón wrote the *Second Part* of his *Discursos y Apuntamientos* while the cities with a vote in the Cortes responded to Letter of Valsáin of 1622, in which the King proposed a major reform of Castile's tax system with three new taxes to replace the service of the *millones*: the payment of the thirty thousand soldiers, the payment of five per cent of the haciendas and revenue, and the charges which were derived from the creation of the public funds. The new discourse developed around these three reforms.

As regards the tax for the thirty thousand soldiers, Lisón did not add anything really new to his previous considerations about the excessive burden which weighed upon the vassals and about the need to count in any event on the approval of the Cortes for the granting of the taxes. On this occasion, however, he cited Granada, Seville and Toledo as three of the cities on which the burden was far too great because their revenue did not even cover the payment of their own obligations. He himself, as the King's Senior Proctor in the Cortes, was owed "a lot of ducats". And if these cities were the most "substantial" of the kingdom, what would be the case for the others? Furthermore, if the vassals, burdened with the taxes of the *millones*, *alcabalas*, *almojarifazgos*, services and *montazgos* and other contributions, were also deprived of the support of the revenue from the Councils, the aid from the public granaries and the use of the pastures, mountains and fallow lands, with which they would have to pay the new tax and how would they be able to live?⁴⁹.

The payment of five per cent of the haciendas and revenue would represent a radical change in Castile's tax system and Lisón saw series problems and difficulties in this measure, of a similar nature to what we would attribute to the tax on capital today: i) The investigation of the assets would cause innumerable problems and perjury, if it had to be done by means of sworn lists; ii) making payment on the root assets would be difficult, for many of them were not "advantageous", which would make it necessary to sell for "four" what was worth "six", in order to be able to pay or set up property liens on the public funds. As a result, the revenue would be consumed in countless legal disputes, "turning the men into litigants rather than farmers or traders" (fol. 20); and iii) It should also be considered that the five percent of the revenue which would be obtained from the prelates and ecclesiastics who were already highly taxed and had to support the obligations of their houses, would result in "their making use of the alms which they should give to the poor and to those who really need it [which] would make God indignant" (fol. 20v).

⁴⁹The complaints about the excessive taxation were common and were entirely justified. Lisón did not furnish statistical data, except for the debt of the cities and towns for the taxes which they found themselves obliged to pay. However, recent studies like that of Marcos Martín (2006), have proven that in fact even though the effective tax pressure was not greater than 10 or 15 per 100 of the wealth, due to the characteristics of the tax system and due to the end use of the income, placed at the service of the political interests of the Crown more than the needs of the vassals, it constituted an important factor in the economic crisis of Castile in the 17th century.

And as regards the public funds, even if we admit the advantages which could be derived from them, “because they will be the cause for a lot of “good” and would avoid a lot of “bad” and the vassals would find help for their needs, in order to farm the land and gather the crops, and the communications from the cities would be more continuous in their correspondences”, Lisón saw what Olivares wanted with his foundation, which was none other than that of obtaining a lot of money for his own purposes, and he warned about the problems which would follow, if the vassals were deprived of their revenue and they would also become “like clay buckets to be baked, that a lot of water would remain in them, and it would be the same in these public funds with the salaries of the ministers, the costs and the administrative expenses” (fol. 21).

After making this brief summary of the contents of the *Discursos y Apuntamientos*, it is interesting to compare this first document by Lisón with others of a similar nature which appeared at this time, in order to determine its level of originality, its analytical depth and the way in which he confronted the Spanish Monarchy’s major economic problems at the beginning of Philip IV’s reign. For the *Primera Parte*, our reference will be the *Consulta* of the Council of Castile of 1619, of which the leading author was Diego de Corral y Arellano, and the *Restauración Política de España*, by Sancho de Moncada, also dated in 1619, two texts which the granadino surely had to be familiar with, despite the fact that he does not cite them in his own work⁵⁰. For the *Segunda Parte*, the replies from the cities to the Letter of Valsaín could help us, for they contain all the interests in play, as well as the arguments used in their defence. In any event, the *Discursos*, Part One and Part Two, should be considered together, for Lisón himself sent them to be bound together, as if the Second Part was intended to complete the first with the analysis of the tax reform proposed by Olivares in 1622, which also entailed a monetary reform.

The first thing to point out is that even though they have very different lengths⁵¹, the formal structure of the three texts we are comparing is very

⁵⁰There is no doubt about his familiarity with Moncada, because, as we have already seen, he had addressed the Cortes of Castile of 1621, requesting assistance for the re-printing of his work, which was opposed by Lisón. And we are almost convinced that he was familiar with the first edition of the *Conservación de Monarquías* (1626), by Fernández Navarrete, a comment on the *Consulta* of the Council of Castile, published by Sebastián de Comellas in Barcelona in 1621 (Fernández Navarrete, 1982:XXX)

⁵¹The *Consulta* contains approximately 7,000 words, the *Discursos* practically double and the *Restauración* is much longer and is carefully divided into discourses and chapters, compared with the running text of the first and the simple headings of Lisón’s work.

similar. There is an introduction in them with a presentation of the main reason why their respective authors took pen in hand, in which one of their main differences is clearly evidenced⁵², but from here there is a great coincidence in their construction, as they successively list the main problems which the kingdom is suffering and then offer the solutions for each one of them. This was the common practice in the writings of this type, both in those of a professorial nature, such as Moncada's, as well as the jurisprudential consultations and the Meetings of the Kingdom, as is the case of the *Consulta* and those of the *arbitristas*. Lisón y Viedma was not a professor, he had not studied and was not an *arbitrista*, but he had belonged to the Cortes of 1621 and he was the mayor of Granada, and so he knew the uses well⁵³.

These differences in training and profession are clearly noted in the presentation of the problems and the solutions. While Lisón does it with very few readings and based above all on his personal experience as Mayor, the King's Senior Proctor and a landowner, and barely citing authorities and references to what had occurred in the past to support his arguments, these references do abound in the *Consulta* and in Moncada's work. And they are also noted in the selection of the contents. Even though the three take into account foreign trade, the demographic crisis, the fiscal crisis, the monetary crisis, that of the root assets of the Church and of the opulence, the six major problems of the Monarchy, there are considerable differences between them on the remaining matters. Lisón focuses more on what he knows best: scribes, tax management, jurisdictions of the *estancos* (government stores) and the royal revenue, and the adjudicators, judges and magistrates.

And finally, the different professions and different goals of the authors are reflected in the three texts. The *Consulta* is a report from a Council of the Kingdom at the request of the King and it avoids offering an extreme view on the serious problems affecting the kingdom, being excessively critical of the institutions and offering radical and miraculous solutions. Mon-

⁵² Even though there were major coincidences in the matters discussed, the main goal of each one of the three texts was: the conservation of the Monarchy in the *Consultation*, the activities of the Treasury in Lisón and the political restoration of Spain in Moncada. Please note the differences in the degree between the execution, conservation and restoration, about which those who have studied the Spanish *Siglo de Oro* (Century of Gold) have been repeatedly demanding attention. See, for example, Michael D. Gordon's Preliminary Study of the *Conservación de Monarquías* by Fernández Navarrete (1982)

⁵³ This common way of conceiving the writings was already indicated by Vilar in his Introductory Study to Moncada's *Restauración Política* (1974:10)

cada's *Restauración* is the work of an *arbitrista*, even though it has reached us with a certain amount of prestige, due to his familiarity with the reality and his greater analytical level, in which the problems of the Monarchy are dramatized and a single and universal solution is offered: the prohibition of the entry of foreign merchandise. And Lisón's *Discursos* are those of a politician in the opposition, who participates in the political process and does not become intimidated when it comes time to denounce the problems and propose the right solutions to each one of them, while always trying to remain respectful of the King and the government and avoid proposing a single problem and a single and universal solution, but rather the concentration on a set of problems related to one another but which require different solutions⁵⁴. Furthermore, as the documents of almost all the mercantilists, are drawn up along the note of power, as is evidenced from the very beginning when he states: "Because carelessness leads to danger and harm, and with the procrastination, H.M.'s powers will be dissipated and that of his enemies will increase, with their daring threats and they will take spirit and encouragement in order to conquer this Monarchy" (fol. 2). Lisón is not only concerned with the problems of the Monarchy but also with trying to avoid its decadence and the loss of its power into the hands of its enemies.

Lisón's document might not have been on the same literary level as Moncada's, Martínez de Mata, Álvarez de Toledo or other 17th century Spanish economists who today enjoy greater fame as analysts of the economic decadence and as authors of the general "systems" for conserving and/or restoring the Monarchy, but his analysis, at a greater or lesser level in each one of his writings, hardly differed from those of the others: before the generalized feeling of the depopulation in Castile, he was a *poblacionista*⁵⁵; before the continuous complaints which came from all over as to the excessive tax burden, he advocated decreasing the taxes in order to increase consumption and private investment; in the light of the monetary disorders, he defended stability; and before the "disloyal" competition from the foreign merchants, he believed that the prohibition would return the old way of life

⁵⁴Maravall (1974) was one of the first to study the protesting manifestations between the King and the kingdom and the total lack of conformity between the people and their rulers. Afterwards, this became one of the leading themes for studying the literature on Spanish arbitristo until we come to Dubet (2003a, 2003b), who placed a great deal of emphasis on all of it. I will return to this matter in the next section.

⁵⁵See Martín Rodríguez (1984), especially pp. 72-123.

to the locals. However, as has been said repeatedly, Lisón's greatest value does not lie here but in a different point. A politician for more than thirty years, a good part of them as the King's Senior Proctor and the King's Proctor in the Cortes, he decided to oppose in writing Olivares's economic reforms during the first years of his position as the Royal Favourite. And, in this opposition, his view of the Spanish economy was that of a Mayor who is fighting for the cities to share in the political power in the Cortes. He is resolutely against the abuses committed by the King's Favourite, exercised through the inextricable networks of councils and meetings, which sought a thousand different ways to obtain more money for the kingdom, in order to cover the cost of its exaggerated bellicose enterprises. This was in serious detriment to the vassals, who lacked "the royal support and strength to contribute".

In the next paragraph of this section, we will discover the true level of his economic analysis when we study the monetary theory of his *Memo-rial* of 1627, his best work in this sense. Now, given his condition as political mediator of the kingdom, I am interested in highlighting how his interests as Mayor and landowner could affect his criticism of the functioning of the Monarchy's institutions and his confrontation with the tax reforms sought by Olivares with the Letter of Valsaín and the Reform Articles approved in 1623.

Some time ago, Ruiz Martín (1970;1990) studied the responses of the town councils to the Letter of Valsaín in relation with the royal proposal to create the taxes of the thirty thousand soldiers and the *veintena*, to replace the *millones*. Afterwards, Gelabert (1997) studied the amount and composition of the public revenue under the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV and the way in which they were collected. And afterwards, Andrés Ucendo (1999) has focussed, in particular, on the services of the *millones* in the 17th century and the way in which this tax was managed by the *Comisión de los Millones* and the delegated commissions of the cities with a vote in the Cortes. These three texts, to which I will refer below, will reveal the institutional framework in which Olivares's tax reforms were carried out and which were so highly criticized by Lisón.

Contemplated from today's point of view, Olivares's reforms were considered very positive. With the old revenue and taxes that had been created over a period of time (traffic of official positions, *alcabalas*, privileges

of *villazgos*, sales of jurisdictions and noble titles, and others) now exhausted, mortgaged or sold and without being able to mint any more money, which had been another important recourse since the times of Philip III, because it had already reached the limit of the kingdom's needs, what Olivares wanted to do was replace this precarious tax system with another one which would be far more just and offer a greater collective capacity. In other words, it would tax more directly the wealth of the richest people and grant to the cities and towns, the possibility of contributing with new sources without the control imposed on the kingdom's administration by the cities represented and with a vote in the Cortes. They established the conditions for the granting of the *millones* and administered with absolute autonomy the tax, the only one which was really free, without the revenue deposits, for the needs of the Empire.

Even though the service of the *millones* on the consumption of spices, wine, vinegar, meats and oil had appeared in 1590 after the disaster of the Invincible Armada, which led Philip II to request assistance from the kingdom of 10 million ducats, payable over six years. The new tax was not really institutionalized until Philip III's reign. This king asked the Cortes of 1601 for his first service of *millones*. As a remuneration for the new tax, they managed to obtain from the King certain conditions which they would then reflect with minor variations in each new concession, in the so-called documents of the *millones*, of whose contents I am only interested in pointing out the following: The Cortes reserved the administration of the tax through the so-called *Comisión de los Millones*, made up of four King's Proctors or commissioners, two secretaries and two accountants; this central commission had its corresponding replicas in the Commissions of the cities represented in the Cortes, which acted in their respective territorial fields, appointed by the town council, which in turn delegated their powers to the commissions of the towns and villages; the collection functions as such were exercised by the so-called "receptor", a person in charge of receiving the funds and accepting the issues which were made by a scribe and an accountant. The jurisdiction in the first instance for any legal confrontations arising in the course of the collections fell upon the city commissions themselves, which in turn were in charge of appointing the executors and issuing the corresponding orders of execution. All of this allowed the cities to appoint a large number of positions, with the most important ones falling generally on the mayors, and to use their prerogative to favour the powerful; and, on occasions, even the receptors could

even use the treasury for temporary loans to private parties, from which juicy profits were obtained.

All of this meant that the King would not only lose the direct handling of the new tax, but he would also have to accept all the criticism made of the abuses being committed as a result of it. For the Cortes and the cities, on the other hand, it meant an extraordinary increase in the power which they already had and which was growing to the extent that the importance of the tax increased throughout the first half of the 17th century.

As the mayor of a city with a vote in the Cortes, Lisón was clearly one of those who profited from this tax and its form of administration. However, in the *Primera Parte* of his *Discursos*, he put more emphasis on his staunch determination to put an end to the poor functioning of certain institutions of the Monarchy. He did not point out the negative economic effects of the *millones* tax, but he complained that in the collection of the taxes there was too many “expenses, salaries, costs and harassment” and, above all, that there were special jurisdictions entrusted to the lessors themselves in order to resolve the legal disputes with the inhibition of the Audiencias and ordinary judges, as a result of which they became both the “judge and the jury” for the same cases. In addition, he denounced that the *propios* and revenue of the cities were very needy and in debt, and so they could not attend to the other needs such as public works, nor the payment of any distributions and not even the payment of the legal disputes, which he felt was due to three main reasons: That the *veintiquatros* and mayors issued excessively generous assistance to one another and established very high salaries; that they leased the public revenue from the councils and that there was a great deal of fraud taking place; and that the magistrates, governors and judges spent too much on luxury services. In order to correct this situation, he proposed solutions which actually went against his own interests as a mayor.

In the *Parte Segunda* of his *Discursos*, Lisón’s arguments against Olivares’s tax reforms were of a different nature. I have already said how in his replies to the Letter of Valsain, all the dominant interests of the cities had joined forces, each one for different reasons, in order to directly oppose it. It was natural for the mayors not to want to renounce a tax like the *millones*, which furnished them with so many privileges. Nor did the aristocracy, landowners and merchants want the reforms, which if approved, would have to contribute with a *veintena* (one-twentieth) of their revenue,

by means of a perpetual tax dependent upon the Treasury Council and the Deputation of the Cortes⁵⁶, which would affect them directly. Lisón's interests were clearly aligned with those of all these groups. In his opposition, however, even though the foregoing was very much taken into account, there were once again other reasons which were related to the rights of the cities, the burden of the contributions with characteristics of the new taxes and institutions they were going to create.

Lisón used three types of arguments against the payment of the thirty thousand soldiers: If, as it seemed according to the initial plans, the ecclesiastic branch would be excluded from the new tax and they had paid the *millones* tax before because they were the ones who consumed the wine, vinegar, meat and oil, there would be fewer people who would have to contribute and so they would have to pay more than what they did before; if the cities and villages, responsible for the quota, paid with the revenue of their own, many of the poor who benefitted from them, would be left totally defenceless and the advantages foreseen, such as the planting of fields and fallow lands, would not be a solution; and the taxes and contributions of the kingdom were nothing more than plagues which consumed it all and so the King should permit the creation of other new ones. In addition, Lisón resorted to the well-known mercantile argument: riches did not consist so much of collecting but rather saving and spending little, and so the King would do better to amass treasures, making it possible to triumph over his enemies and expand his kingdom by conquering his adversaries, with which it would not be necessary to tax his vassals with so many contributions.

In his opposition to the payment of the five per cent of the haciendas or revenue, even though he was also looking out for his own interests as well, Lisón was once again a realist at some points: If the investigations of the haciendas and revenue had to be done through sworn lists, there would be innumerable sins of perjury and a great deal of confusion about the haciendas. As the majority would only have to have root assets without use, in order to pay they would be obliged to sell at a low price and even

⁵⁶The Deputation of the Cortes was the body in charge of managing the *alcabalas*. As it was more centralized and highly controlled by the government, it also raised serious conflicts with the *Comisión de los Millones*. Above all, see Tomás y Valiente (1982:40 y ss.), Fortea (1989:29 y ss.) and Andrés Ucendo (1999:34 y ss).

though the same public funds could give loans to buy, this would lead the market of property lien to a highly confused situation, in detriment to the royal revenue. Thus, a new way of living more comfortably would be created from this official position at the expense of their stopping the ploughing of the fields or building new properties. As the Prelates and Ecclesiastics were already highly burdened, the five per cent they were obliged to pay, would have to be taken away from the alms which they gave to the poor. Furthermore, the Titles and Entailed Estates would stop paying what they owed and serious problems would result.

And finally, Lisón was clearly in favour of the creation of public funds, because many assets would be derived from them and many problems would be avoided. The vassals would find help to farm their lands and the communications between the cities would be better in their correspondences. However, it would be necessary to find a better way in which to fund them, so that they would not take away the little that was left to the vassals: "This is a great undertaking, well founded, but a great loss if it is not well designed". However, in addition, he saw in this institution a dangerous threat that was not at all far from Olivares's true intentions. If the Royal Treasury was in such dire straits, as stated in the Royal Decree, too many mercies and aid were provided to cover the costs, with increases in the number of ministers, offices, expenses and salaries. What would such a generous spender not do with so much money?

In summary, Lisón y Viedma was in his *Discursos y Apuntamiento*, a mayor not at all disloyal to the interests of the Castilian cities, nor with those of his colleagues; he was the urban patrician. However, Lisón's opposition to Olivares's tax reforms was also inspired by more sensible economic ideas. It is very possible that he did so as well in defence of these interests, but in any case he clearly saw the difficulties of replacing the old indirect Castilian tax with a direct tax and with a tax administration which lacked the necessary means to function, as proved in reality to be the case⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ The idea of a single tax on sales to simplify the tax system and facilitate its management, by unifying all of the already existing revenue, was put forth by, among others, Juan de Morales, *alcabalala* manager in 1618, and by Jerónimo Ceballos, in his *Arte Real* of 1623. Olivares was sympathetic to the idea but he did not believe it would furnish more revenue and so he opted, with a great deal of risk, for a direct tax on haciendas and revenue. For more information on the history of the single direct tax in Spain and the difficulties involved in its implantation, see López Castellano (1995)

He rejected the tributary absolutism which Olivares sought and which completely ignored the Castilian parliamentary tradition; and he opposed the public funds which even though in and of themselves might prove to be very useful for preventing the fall of the Castilian economy, just as they had been conceived, they were nothing more than a public banking system at the service of the imperialist interests of the King's Favourite, with very negative effects for its proper functioning.

3.2 THE *MEMORIAL* ON THE FOUNDING OF THE PUBLIC FUNDS, CALLED "NEGOTIATION HOUSES", AND ON THE USE OF THE VELLÓN COIN OF 1627

We will ignore for the moment the protests made by Lisón in this *Memorial* of 1627 due to the breach in the contracts of the *millones*, as a result of the minting of vellón coins during the first years of Philip IV's reign above the authorized amount and for having created public funds without consulting the Cortes. These questions fall within the scope of the political relationship between the King and the kingdom, together with his accusation of the flagrant contradiction which existed between these mintings and the immediate use of the vellón which was sought. In this section, I will focus exclusively on his monetary theory.

Lisón began his discourse by stating the consequences resulting from the mining of vellón coins in excessive amounts: "As a result, these kingdoms have been filled with them and according to the calculations and verified accounts which were made, approximately 40 million had been produced and the majority of the silver coins which existed, which is the true substance, had been taken and this vellón has been left as the basic substance for the kingdom, which is very bad for its support and so, Y.M. is being paid the *millones*, *alcabalas* and as many contributions as are established and supplied by the vassals" (fol. 6v). The explanation of the *veintiquatro granadino* for the removal of the "largest part" of the silver coins was correct: Philip IV's inflationary minting of the vellón during the period 1621-26, of about 20 million ducats, had been like a modern operation of an open market for purchasing silver coins, but, as the silver was disappearing and its reward on the vellón increased, the vellón coin had been con-

verted into the real currency of Castile, with which the taxes were paid and the vassals were valued, without them having suffered any detriment at all up until then⁵⁸.

Lisón argued then that up until the moment when the minting was suspended, at the beginning of 1626, the prices had not been increased in excess and that the increases as of that date had been due to other causes: “The harm and high prices in the maintenance and markets which have led to this consumption and reduction, do not only come from the vellón currency, because during a 6 year period when they were being produced, things did not become more expensive. This increase has taken place over the past year and it coincides with the same period during which its production was halted. As this was the case, it could be said that that increase in prices had been caused by the halting of production of the vellón” (fol. 10v). Consequently, he did not feel that there was any need to stop the use of the vellón, compared with what was argued in almost all of the proposals for resolving the monetary problem by means of the use of the vellón, with or without compensation⁵⁹.

Now, aside from the fact that the inflationary process had begun shortly before the mintings were cancelled in 1626, or immediately after, what then were the reasons why prices had accelerated in such a short period of time? Lisón’s explanation was impeccable: “The truth is that the damage was caused when they began to talk about lowering this currency, because as the rumour spread about this depreciation, anyone involved in trade, livestock and the rest, considered it better to hang on to their assets rather than sell them for a currency without knowing the decrease it would have and a great deal of confusion arose from the delay. Thus, the cause

⁵⁸ During Philip III’s reign, the minting of the vellón, in part with foreign copper, made it possible to buy silver to pay the companies abroad, by simply displacing silver for copper domestically, without causing any inflation. However, during the first years of Philip IV’s reign, as more copper was being minted, the profit of the minting was reduced and the inflation of the vellón, with growing significance in the monetary circulation, increased. It thus became necessary to correct the process, for aside from other economic consequences of the inflation, the silver reward increased, making it necessary to either collect more taxes in copper to obtain the same amount of silver, or reduce the Crown’s expenditure.

⁵⁹ Moncada had proposed an increase in the nominal value of the silver in order to avoid its removal by foreigners. Lisón, on the other hand, thought that until there was a more suitable occasion, the vellón could continue in circulation domestically as the fractionary currency at the fixed price. Naturally, even though he did not contemplate it, this meant renouncing a strong silver currency to finance the Monarchy’s enterprises abroad, which was not Olivares’s idea.

of the harm was not just having a lot of vellón currency in circulation, nor that its reduction was requested so quickly and in such a rapid, sensitive and prejudicial way. And so if special care was not taken with its consumption, it was feared that in a few years, it would be necessary to make more” (fol. 11). These were the expectations of a depreciation of the vellón for purely fiscal reasons, which had determined the increase in the silver reward and the price levels. The holders of the vellón, fearful of an immediate depreciation, wanted to dispose of them and so this would have increased the rapid rate of its circulation without increasing its demand in the royal balances, and all of this would have resulted in the inflation. If this had not been the case, the prices would have been maintained, the amount of the vellón currency would not have been excessive for the needs of the Castilian economy and its use would not have been necessary either, nor its subsequent devaluation in 1628⁶⁰.

The *granadino mayor* completed his monetary theory with political and social elements, no less important in his analysis. In the first place, he focused especially on the distribution of the tendencies of the vellón among the different social groups and on the consequences its consumption would have on each one of them. After complaining that, according to the plan of the deputations, the consumption of 30 million (75 per 100 of the existing vellón currency) over four years would be made with “the substance of the vassals”, taking it out of their assets and revenue, he said: “And please persuade Y.M. that the vellón currency is not so prejudicial as they say, because the money which falls into the hands of the poor and what they have is not hoarded by them, and they are always looking for ways to spend it and even despite the fear of a reduction which might occur, the rich usually pay the poor what they owe and this would not happen if this currency did not exist. In other words, they would not pay,

⁶⁰The data on the prices and amounts of the vellón currency in circulation used by Lisón in his *Memorial* were significantly correct. According to Domínguez Ortiz (1960:242 y ss.), during the period 1599-1606 22 million were minted; during the period 1617-1619, 1.8 million and in 1621-1626, 19.7, that is, more or less Lisón's 40 million. According to Hamilton (1975:229), the evolution of the price index for the merchandise in Andalusia was the following: 1622, 90.8; 1624, 88.78; 1625, 96.38; 1626, 113.39; and 1627, 113.04. And according to Álvarez Nogal (2001), the silver reward went up from 4.60 in 1621, to 16.11 in 1624 and 54.76 in 1626, dropping then in 1629, after the devaluation of the previous year, to 14.68. Consequently, as Lisón argued, the prices had not been “accelerated” in the years in which a greater amount of vellones had been produced, but rather when its production ceased. On the other hand, as has already been said, the maintenance of the price level until 1626 was compatible with the increase in the silver reward which took place during those years, due to the silver purchased and exported in exchange for the vellón.

nor would the poor collect, and it would also result in active dealings and contractings with whomever necessary. Furthermore, they would pay the royal taxes and they would also use it to pay the poor day labourers, all of which would result in the handling and distribution of this currency” (fol. 12). There was herein a triple reasoning: In the first place it was his conviction that there was not an excess of vellón currency in circulation for the dealings and financial activity and if the currency in circulation was reduced by three quarters by means of the monetary arrangement which was proposed, the economy would not be able to function and also the taxes could not be paid. Secondly, the idea existed that the inflationary tendencies favoured the monetary circulation and the expenditure, and so there was no reason for concern and finally he cited the fact that the small coins were used the most by the poor, and so they would be the most affected by its consumption, while the landowners and *rentistas* would profit in relative terms.

From the apparent contradiction between his goal of price stability and abundant money in order to stimulate the aggregated demand, we can assume that Lisón was not very familiar with the quantitative theory of money, put forth then by Azpilcueta and the entire *Escuela de Salamanca*⁶¹. However, it is necessary to take into account his protest because the Royal Decree of 7 May 1627 would have derogated the foregoing one of 1623, by which it was only permitted to bring in foreign merchandise in exchange for other Spanish ones of the same amount. This was of a very different nature to the prohibition which Moncada proposed as the sole remedy for Spain’s economic decadency, which could lead to an inflationary process without any possibility of automatic adjustment. What Lisón did not think was a good idea was that the removal of gold and silver which would result from the entry of foreign merchandise, would also entail the consumption of the vellón currency, and so the kingdom would be left without currency: “... And as it is blood that gives life to the body, it is money that gives life to the kingdom, and if it is removed, the kingdom will be destined to perish” (fol. 13). Naturally, it cannot be inferred from this that he was reasoning in terms of quantitative theory, but at least he did not incur in the error of believing that they could alter the amount of money without there being any consequences for the economy.

⁶¹ Grice-Hutchinson (1982).

Consequently, as Colmeiro saw in his day, in this *Memorial* by Lisón: “There are some very good doctrines and wise observations regarding the nature and value of money”. The *veintiquatro granadino* was not perhaps on a par with the monetary theory of the theologians of the *Escuela de Salamanca*, but like Mariana before, he had the courage to confront the King and Olivares for their use of the money for tax purposes and in detriment to the proper functioning of the economy. The use of the vellón at the service of the fiscality⁶², through the deputations ruled by the Genoa bankers, was not aimed at putting the Castilian monetary system in good order, but in setting up a network of banks at the service of the Royal Treasury. Lisón opposed this and aside from his arguments of a political nature, this time he did so with correct empirical information and with a very acceptable monetary theory. We can say then that in his *Memorial* of 1627 he raised considerably the analytical level of his previous *Discursos* of 1622⁶³.

⁶² García Guerra (1998).

⁶³ In his work on Olivares’s monetary policy, García de Paso (2001), using statistical data similar to those of Lisón, reached the conclusion that Philip III’s massive mintings of vellón and, above all, Philip IV’s, to buy silver with which to finance his bellicose enterprises abroad, led the Castilian economy to an “unmanageable” situation when the silver disappeared entirely from circulation, resulting in a galloping inflation of the vellón currency in circulation. This “forced” the Crown to devalue it in 1628, by reducing the value of this coin to half. I feel that Lisón’s explanation in his *Memorial* of 1627, written 15 months before the devaluation in August of 1628, when the sellers had not yet panicked as a result of the continuous rumors being spread that the King’s favourite would take advantage of this situation as a new means for reverse monetary collections, is more precise. On the other hand, he agreed totally with Lisón as to who were the losers and who were the winners of this measure.

4. LISÓN Y VIEDMA IN THE NEW ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF SPANISH ARBITRISMO

Lisón y Viedma was a unique figure among the analysts of the 17th century Spanish decadence. As I have already said, he was not an *arbitrista*, he was not a political writer like his father-in-law Madera and he was not perhaps an economist of the category which Campomanes reflected in his *Apéndice a la Educación Popular* (1775). What was he then? In everything which I have written up until now, it has been made clear that he was a politician in the opposition, with good judgment, with an acceptable level of understanding of the different areas of knowledge existing in the epoch, especially the economy, and that rather than limit himself to receiving privileges as a result of the political positions he held, he preferred to pick up his pen to contribute to the improvement of the institutions of the Monarchy and to oppose a policy—that of Olivares—that he believed was not going to favour the interests of the kingdom and would threaten the old Castilian parliamentary system.

All of this leads to this last section, in which I will try to place the *veintiquatro granadino* within the current analytical framework of Spanish arbitristo.

Up until now, the opinions of the only two economic historians who had judged Lisón as an *arbitrista* had not coincided: the severe Colmeiro (1861:224), surely influenced by the anti-absolutist “constitutionalism” of the *granadino*, with whom he was obliged to sympathize, said of his *Memorial* of 1627: “That it contained very good doctrines and wise observations regarding the nature and value of the money”. On the other hand, Larraz, (1943:-174) had a very different analytical perspective of his *Discursos y apuntamientos* of 1622. “They were not great”⁶⁴. However, even though we take

⁶⁴Perdices and Reeder (1998:60) do not include Lisón on their list of the twenty-three most important Spanish arbitristas, which includes Alcázar de Arriaza, Alvarez Osorio, Álvarez de Toledo,

into account these discrepancies, which in any case have to be played down because they referred to two different writings of the *veintiquatro granadino*, what is truly important here is that both had a very different opinion of the *arbitrista* to what is held today of this figure, and so their judgments should at least be completed.

The formation of the concept of *arbitrista* has a long history which I am not going to cover here in its entirety. In the introduction to his *Apéndice a la Educación Popular* (1775, Part One: X), Campomanes, referred to the *arbitristas* and distinguished between “those who study how to tax the general public with exquisite manners; or use flattery so that they can make their own fortunes, while ruining those of others”. Their projects are only worthy of hatred and public censure, because their authors preferred their private interests to the good of the nation, while the “*economic writers* lack personal interests and they do not ask anything for themselves, but rather they advocate the good for the rest”. For the Asturian statesman and economist there was, then, bad people and bad *arbitristas*, but no other possible figures different to them.

A century and a half later, Colmeiro dedicated a brief chapter of his well-known *Historia de la Economía Política* (1863:1177-1186) to the figure of the *arbitrista*, so reviled in the satirical literature of the Century of Gold⁶⁵ He felt that there had been three *lineages* of *arbitristas*, none of them worthy of being taken into consideration: “The honourable ones of good faith, who were inspired by an indiscrete zeal, presumed to give outlandish advice to the government; the flatterers, who wanted to win over the good graces of the Court by promising wonders, as if they had all the gold and silver in the world under lock and key; and the friends of swindlers and “fishermen of conveniences”, that, under the guise of reforming abuses or alleviating the situation of the tax-payers, aimed their memorials and dis-

Barbon, Basso, Cardona, Carranza, Caxa de Leruela, Centani, Dávila, Lope de Deza, Dormer, González de Cellorigo, Mariana, Martínez de Mata, Moncada, Oña, Luis Ortiz, Antolín de la Cerda, Somoza y Quiroga, Struzzi, Pedro de Valencia and Valle de la Serna.

⁶⁵ The literature existing on Spanish arbitristismo and its meaning in the history of Economy Policy in Spain is very extensive and finds its best years in the last half of the century, as a result of the work carried out by Hamilton, Larraz, Elliot, Pierre and Jean Vilar and, above all, the modern editions by González de Cellorigo (1600), Sancho de Moncada (1619), Lope de Deza (1618), Fernández Navarrete (1621), Pérez de Herrera (1598), Martínez de Mata (1650-1660), Caxa de Leruela, López Bravo (1616) and others, all of them with important introductory studies. See in particular Perdices and Reeder (1998) and Martín Rodríguez (1999). Regarding the figure of the *arbitrista* Vilar (1973).

courses, filled with sophistry, at receiving a reward for their evil inventions". When the Asturian historian and economist wrote his *Historia*, he was devoted to the triumph of the liberal revolution in Spain, not only with his economic writings but actively in politics and he could not agree with the benevolence with which Campomanes had treated them in support of his own economic reforms.

Afterwards, Colmeiro's prestige among the Spanish economists, the influence of the satirical literature of the Century of Gold against the *arbitristas*, and the reluctance to undertake new studies with new focuses, determined that this negative view of the Spanish *arbitristas* would prevail until the middle of the 20th century, when the works of Hamilton (1934), Larraz (1943), Sureda (1949) and others appeared. Together with hundreds of *arbitristas* of little interest, these historians also discovered others with a solid academic formation, intellectuals interested in the common good and intelligent witnesses of Spanish decadence, who had known how to construct an economic model to explain its causes and propose adequate measures for economic policy. This brought about the return of Campomanes's idea to "separate the wheat from the chaff", distinguishing a group of valid economists from the hundreds who were opportunist *arbitristas* and who had merely offered ridiculous solutions to the problems of the last monarchs of the House of Austria, especially Philip III and Philip IV.

Both currents, Campomanes's and Colmeiro's, constitute two extreme and not very functional views which were out of touch with reality, given that neither of them is capable of explaining the true nature of Spanish *arbitrismo*, beyond distinguishing between good and bad in terms of certain criteria or condemning all of them. Among the reasons which might explain the long existence of these two very different views, some are common to both: an insufficient knowledge of the biographies of the *arbitristas*, which has led to studying them in a de-contextualized manner and isolating them from the political and social life, thus offering a very limited vision of them than what they really represented at their time; a certain anachronistic analysis of their writings, which have generally been viewed from the economic theory in force at each moment or as simple predecessors of this or that economist; an excessive link of their writings to the Spanish decadence, without considering that there could be other causes, such as a coincidence with the periods of succession to the Crown, that a better

and more complete cataloguing has evidenced all of them; and an incomplete knowledge of the process of creation and handling of these writings.

However, as these limitations were being overcome, at least in part, a new view of the *arbitristas* as direct participants in the political and economic process in the Spain of the House of Austrias is being considered as especially relevant by authors such as Ruiz Martín (1970), Vilar (1971, 1973, 1974) Elliot (1986) and Dubet (2003*a*, 2003*b*). Vilar contributed to confirming the idea of the *arbitristas* as people in search of personal benefits in a large number of cases, perseverant and insistent about the need for secrecy, on the brevity of the solution proposed, on the facility of its application and the certainty of its easy acceptance by the subjects. However, this is not an impediment for him to view many of them as major players in the political process, with highly brilliant contributions. And, more recently, Dubet (2003*b*:10) has gone still further in this direction, when he stated that if the *arbitrista* literature had been so successful for so many years, despite its overall mediocrity, it was because it fulfilled an important political function in an absolutist system, in which personal relationships with the King or with some of his closest men predominated, and these writings contributed to facilitate the more complex political decisions.

In this new methodological and analytical framework, much more fruitful than those of Campomanes and Colmeiro, there would be room for the “wheat and the chaff”, the good and the bad analysts, those farther away from the power and those closer, and those who thought more about their personal interests than in the collective whole, and vice versa. According to him, we can assume that when these writings appeared, not all of them deserved the same interest; the interest depended above all on those which came from the King’s Proctors in the Cortes, confessors of leading personalities, members of the different and special Councils or other individuals close to the circles of political power, rather than writing by the strange and irrelevant people who swarmed around the Court in search of mercies and personal rewards. And it can be understood as well that the satirical writers of the Century of Gold would reserve the derogatory term of *arbitrista* only for these latter parties, for those who “became involved in matters which did not affect them” and without any apparent legitimacy and for those who wrote about the situation without being asked to do so by any of the State bodies (Vilar, 1973:255-257).

Recently, after having seen hundreds of writings by *arbitristas* in the Spanish archives, Castellano (2008, II:181-204) and García Guerra (2003) have been able to establish with precision the autocratic procedure that followed from the pen of the authors under the king or other positions of power, thus reaffirming Dubet's concept of the *arbitrista*. Even though Castellano has preferred to highlight as the main conclusion of his work the need to "reserve the arbitrista term for those of that epoch, with good reason, they were considered as such and clearly reserve for the history of world economic thought, the published and unpublished texts of so many other Spanish writers who contributed as much or more than their contemporaries to the construction of this thought". The political role of the *arbitrista*⁶⁶ is clearly inferred from his investigations. García Guerra's works are even more conclusive on behalf of this same point of view.

The historians of economic thought were often interested above all, in the quality of the mercantilist writings, appreciated in the light of the different patterns which had been succeeding one another throughout history, but this should not in any way make us forget the goals they pursued and the service at which these authors worked. If this analytical framework had been adopted in the study of Spanish arbitristismo, López Bravo would not have been called "a 17th century Spanish socialist" (Mecholuan), or Caja de Leruela (Le Flem) would not have been seen as a predecessor of the formulation of the Law of Decreasing Performance, or Martínez de Mata considered as a precursor of Mandeville, Malthus or Keynes (Anes).

It is within this analytic framework that I have tried to present here Lisón y Viedma's work as an economist. He never considered himself as one of the *arbitristas*, whom he deeply detested, as the King's Proctors in the Cortes and the other councilmen generally did. In order to differentiate his writings from those of the *arbitristas* and defend himself from Olivares's accusations of sedition, he said this to his face: "And as they rewarded the basilisks and hangmen of the Republics, who are the ones who establish taxes to obtain money and "puff out their chests", if they had listened to those who spoke truths or lies, or they did not become discouraged when they took away the

⁶⁶This conclusion also evokes Campomanes-Larraz's point of view. What is really important from this tendency, says Castellano, are their true contributions to economic thought, and he concludes: "Then why the misunderstandings?" (Castellano, 2008: 204). Without a doubt, he offers a correct focus for the historians of the economic analysis and I wish to insist that it is not incompatible with Dubet's position.

rewards they deserved, nor did they become afraid when threatened with exile and punishment, for with just this, His Majesty would be the most powerful monarch that existed in the world”⁶⁷.

Lisón y Viedma wrote that he opposed Olivares’s policy, not as an arbitrator, but in the exercise of his functions as King’s Proctor. He himself made it clear as well as that it was a matter of the payment of five per cent in the *Segunda Parte* of his *Discursos*: “And it is a pleasure that on similar occasions we all serve with our wealth, for with the ravages of the warnings which are often of greater services and of more use and value when deceits are involved and without flattery. And those who are most owed consider because he offers arbitrios is the inventor of ways to obtain some amount. He that has a price but *not good will and is often moved by interest and ambition and the other one shows signs* of good intention and so it is necessary to favour and reward him, although he does not do it for a reward because he will receive his just reward from God”.

And in order not to be blamed for doing it for any other reason, at the end of this same *Segunda Parte* of his *Discursos*, which he delivered to the King when he ceased to be the King’s Proctor in the Cortes, he argued three reasons, the three of a political nature, for which he had written them: the first, because having been the King’s Proctor in the Cortes of 1621, he had the right to continue defending the positions which he had maintained in them, and “he should be permitted to support, direct and defend what I had proposed and believed in”. Second, “because Y.M. has served to communicate these matters with the cities”, in which he had a job as the *veintiquatro* of Granada. And third, because as the voyageurs and travellers, making a trip, even though they were not sailors, pilots or soldiers, they were obliged to help, so “the vassals without offices in the Councils and Cortes”, were voyageurs and travellers in the Monarchy, and if they should see a torment, they should “help with warnings, lives and fortunes and by speaking the truth”. Henríquez de la Jorquera had created a very correct epitaph of what had been the life in the Court of the *veintiquatro granadino*.

⁶⁷ Lisón: *Discurso y Práctica entre cierto ministro favorecido y un veintiquatro sobre la concesión de millones*, BN, 2/18162, fol. 74.

5. THE PRESENT EDITION

According to the explanations which Lisón gave to Olivares when he accused him of inciting the kingdom by distributing copies of his writings, as what he asked in his Memorials was matters which His Majesty did not have to resolve, but rather it had to be sent to the council or to an assembly where there had been a number of judges, he had two dozen copies printed to give them to all of them. Furthermore, the print shops used to take several sheets to make their own copies of Lisón's briefs on their own, which they later sold. We know from Castro Ibaseta (2008), as we have already said, that copies were printed clandestinely after his exile in Juan Flamenco's print shop. All of this explains the many copies of those existing in the national and foreign archives, manuscripts and printed copies, as well as the slight differences existing between them, due to the fact that some came from printers and others from copiers and others with minor corrections made by the author, and that none of those printed bore the print shop footnote nor the publishing date⁶⁸.

For the present edition of Lisón's writings, the printed document 2/18162 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España has been used as the basic text, which while lacking the less significant writings cited in this introductory study, it is possible to say that it contains the complete works of the *veintiquatro granadino*, for under the general title of *Discursos y Apuntamientos*, the following documents are included: 1) "The Proposition which Mateo Lisón y Viedma made to the King's Proctors in the Cortes of the Kingdom on 28 June 1621"; 2) "Primera Parte de estos Discursos y Apuntamientos", dated 25 June 1622; 3) "Segunda Parte de estos Discursos y Apuntamientos"; 4) "Desengaño de Rey, y apuntamientos para su gobierno", dated 13 June 1623; 5) "Discurso y práctica entre cierto Ministro favorecido y un

⁶⁸ At the Biblioteca Nacional de España, I have seen the following copies: Mss/10508, Mss/10599, Mss/10913, Mss/10329, Mss/10861, Mss/11002, Mss/6754, Mss/2352, 2/18162, R/13174), R/21031. And at the University of Granada, I have seen the publication R/11827. Vilar (1971) has seen other copies in the foreign archives and no differences were noted with the previous ones.

Veintiquatro sobre la concesión de los millones”; 6) “Report and list which Mateo Lisón y Viedma, *Veintiquatro* of the city of Granada, drew up for His Majesty for the Audience, on Friday 11 June 1926, on the contradiction of the sale of vassals, together with Benito Suarez de Molina, *Veintiquatro* of said city, and Antonio Terrones de Robles, Juan de Perona Montoya, Miguel Ayala, Mayors of other cities; and 7) “[Memorial] on the founding of the public funds”, dated 28 May 1927.

Certain differences are noted in the diverse copies existing of Lison’s writings. They are particularly significant in the “*Memorial sobre la fundación de erarios y sobre el consumo de la moneda vellón*” of 1627, from which in the printed copy 2/18162 several important paragraphs were deleted or modified in relation with the manuscript copy signed by the author, included in manuscript Mss. 10599 found in the Biblioteca Nacional de España. As this last one is the best of Lisón’s writings from the economic and analytical point of view, we thought it necessary to also include this manuscript and the two documents it contains: 1) “*Memorial sobre la fundación de erarios y sobre el consumo de la moneda de vellón*”, dated 28 May 1627, followed by the report he presented to the King in his audience of 31 May, and 2) “*Lo que pasó con el señor Conde de Olivares*” in his audience several days later. This latter document, which is not found in the printed document 2/18162, is of exceptional interest because it reflects to perfection the true personality of the *veinticuatro granadino* and the role he played during the first years of Philip IV’s reign.

According to the most common criteria of the *Clásicos del pensamiento económico español*, in order to introduce Lisón’s writings to today’s readers, its spelling has been modernized: differentiations have been made between the b and v, v and u, i and y, c and q, s and x, x and j, j and g, and ç and z; the double consonants (ss) have been limited and the simple ones extended (c to cc); “h”s have been added; capital letters have been eliminated according to current uses; abbreviations have been clarified or replaced with those more commonly used today; certain archaic constructions have been updated such as “destas” with “estas” or “dellos” with “de ellos”; and punctuation marks and accents have been modified. In order to make it easier to consult the original texts, the corresponding pages have been placed between quotation marks. The transcription was carried out by Rafael Girón Pascual, of the University of Granada, to whom I am most grateful for the fine work he has done, as well as for adding footnotes to Lisón’s text and for the information he gave me on his biography.