

THE YOUNGEST SON ON A CAVALIER TRIP

Philipp Siegmund von Dietrichstein's Encounters with High Administrative Bodies
at Court During his Trip in the Second Half of the 17th Century

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The author of the present article deals with the fate of younger sons of noble families in the Habsburg monarchy in the second half of the 17th century and examines their career opportunities. For an example with which to work, he chose Prince Maximilian von Dietrichstein's youngest son Philipp Siegmund (1651-1716). First and foremost, the author traces Philipp Siegmund's education and his cavalier trip, then he devotes his attention to his position within the family (his father died when he was still an infant) and his relations to the persons who had the greatest influence on him during his junior years: the senior of his brothers, Prince Ferdinand, and the mother. The author then proceeds to reconstructing Philipp Siegmund's successful career at the Vienna court, culminating in his occupying the function of Emperor Charles VI.'s chief equerry. Finally, this particular Dietrichstein is compared to other known life trajectories of younger sons, and an explanation is given why it was that he, a younger son lacking his father's protection, enjoyed such remarkable success in the Habsburg monarchy.