Downloaded from UvA-DARE, the institutional repository of the University of Amsterdam (UvA)
http://dare.uva.nl/document/117239

File ID	117239
Filename	Summary

SOURCE (OR PART OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCE):

Type	Dissertation
Title	Gevallen vazallen : de integratie van Oranje, Egmont en Horn in de Spaans-Habsburgse monarchie (1559-1567)
Author	E.M. Geevers
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Year	2008
Pages	252
ISBN	978 90 8964 069 7

FULL BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS:
http://dare.uva.nl/record/284928

Copyright

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other then for strictly personal, individual use.

UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (http://dare.uva.nl)

Summary

In 1566 the Iconoclastic Fury washed over the Habsburg Netherlands. In response, Philip II, king of Spain and lord of the Netherlands, sent the Duke of Alba to restore order and punish the guilty. The Duke's iron regime, which lasted from 1567 to 1573, made many victims. Even if Alba managed to restore order, he forced thousands to flee the country while punishing many others. His policies eventually alienated the populace, which allowed Orange to make a return as the leader of the Dutch Revolt. The revolt would probably never have started in the first place if the country's nobility, especially the great lords William of Orange, Lamoral of Egmont and Philip of Horn who had seats on the Council of State, had not persistently resisted royal policies in the years between 1559 and 1567. In 1566 Philip II had come to believe that he could no longer trust his main Netherlandish vassals and he sent the Duke of Alba to quell unrest in his domains and punish the culprits – Egmont and Horn were decapitated, Orange fled.

This dissertation explores the contacts between these three noblemen and Philip's royal court. In what measure did they have access to policy making in Spain and how did the relationship between them and their contacts at court develop in these dramatic years? To investigate these issues I have researched the practical means of communication available to the lords; how was communication organised and who organised it? What does this tell us about the network at the lords' disposal? What was their position in this network? In short, in what measure were they integrated in courtly policy-making circles?

Because of the distance between Philip and Brussels, correspondence was really the only way the Netherlandish lords could gain access to him, apart from very costly and dangerous travels. Studying the practical aspects to the lords' communication, therefore, will uncover their ability to communicate directly with the monarch. A communication channel that could safely convey any sort of letter can be regarded as a means of access, albeit in writing, comparable to court office. It was a necessity for anyone far from Madrid, who wished to influence the king and the decision-making process of which he was the heart.

First of all, however, we must look at the two different contexts in which these contacts developed; Philip II's court on the one hand, and the Netherlands on the other. Philip's court was, like all Spanish royal courts since the late fifteenth century,

divided into factions. Although these groups consisted mainly of clients and family members who hoped to secure a living or a post at court, historians have identified some political issues that characterised factional struggles. The position of Castile in the greater Trastámara and later Habsburg monarchy always posed a problem. Should this large kingdom be given a dominant position in the composite monarchy, or should a federal model of government be employed? Should it be opened up for foreign officials and foreign ideas, or should 'Castilianness' be imposed? By the time Philip assumed the Iberian crowns these issues were espoused by two factions, one led by the Duke of Alba and the other by Ruy Gómez de Silva, prince of Eboli. It was Eboli, a native Portuguese, who advocated a federalist structure allowing local elites an important role in the governance of peripheral territories, and his second-in-command Francisco de Eraso, who became the natural allies to the Netherlandish lords.

The polarised situation at the Spanish court offered the lords the possibility to seek support for their position in Brussels. The situation in the Netherlands gave rise to several conflicts. First of all, all kinds of 'heresies' found fertile soil in these lands. The Habsburg rulers tried to stamp out all forms of Protestantism by publishing harsh placards. Because the efficacy of these placards seemed limited, many town magistrates and provincial governors objected to these laws. Philip, however, was adamant that they be executed to the letter, which caused considerable tension in the Netherlands. Apart from the religious issue, constitutional issues also divided the Netherlandish government. Charles V and his governess Mary of Hungary (ruled 1531-1555) had tried to limit the power of the great lords in the Council of State. At the accession of Philip, the country's magnates were therefore quite sceptical of the new ruler's offer to join his regency government. People like William of Orange were aware of the sway Cardinal Granvelle held in the Brussels Council of State and tried to exclude him to increase his own power. There was also the issue of the States-General. Traditionally, calling the States-General had been seen as a panacea for any trouble in the Netherlands, but due to financial difficulties, a meeting in 1557 had ended disastrously for Philip. After that, he specifically forbade his governess in Brussels to convene the States-General again, to the growing displeasure of the Netherlandish magnates.

Solving these religious and constitutional issues was difficult because of the great distances in the Spanish-Habsburg monarchy. These distances became even more problematic when Philip decided to establish his court permanently in Castile, first in Toledo and later in Madrid. This meant that, contrary to his travelling father, the king would not visit his subjects, but rather forced them to seek access to him through his court. Correspondence would play an increasingly important role in vassals' contacts with their liege lord, which was only enhanced by Philip's own predilection for the written word. This correspondence was predominantly conducted in Castilian, the only language Philip truly mastered. The use of Castilian was not necessarily a problem for his Netherlandish vassals.

The count of Horn and the marquis of Bergen had served at the prince's court since the late 1540s and were fluent in it.

After Philip left the Netherlands in 1559, he established channels of communication between himself and the Brussels regency government. He took two Flemish officials with him to Spain, the keeper of the seals Charles de Tisnacq and his first secretary Josse de Courtewille. They were in charge of processing the correspondence with Brussels, which was always handled in French. Tisnacq and Courtewille corresponded with the help of couriers provided by the Tassis family, which coordinated a large network of couriers for the Habsburg monarchs. Twice every month these couriers travelled between Brussels and Madrid.

Apart from these Flemish officials other contacts emerged between Spain and the Netherlands, supported by the Castilian financial bureaucracy headed by Francisco de Eraso, second-in-command of the Eboli faction. A few officials belonging to the Castilian financial bureaucracy were stationed in the Netherlands along with the 3.000 Castilian troops Philip had left behind to guard the French frontier. These troops were not welcome in the Netherlands and in order to dispel unease about them, Philip appointed count Lamoral of Egmont and prince William of Orange as their commanders. Because of these appointments, Egmont and Orange met the Spanish financial officials on a regular basis. Cristóbal de Castellanos, one of the troops' two *contadores*, offered his secretarial, translator's and postmaster's services to the two lords to enable them to correspond directly to his superior Eraso. The financial officials also used Tassis couriers, but they were employed independently from the 'State' couriers sent by Tisnacq. This meant that the 'State' and 'Financial' couriers never shared postal bags. Consequently, any correspondence sent through Castellanos would be concealed from the Brussels bureaucracy and from Tisnacq and Courtewille in Spain. This alternative communication channel would prove very important to the lords, as serious rivalries caused rifts in the Brussels regency government.

The first issues that caused friction in Brussels were connected to Philip's efforts to build a network of followers in the Holy Roman Empire. His father, the emperor Charles V, had tried to ensure Philip's succession as emperor, but these efforts had stranded on the lack of enthusiasm both of Charles' brother Ferdinand and his son archduke Maximilian who wanted to keep the Imperial dignity in their branch of the family, and of the German Electors, who did not appreciate being left out of such matters. This left Philip in 1558 empty handed: he missed out on the Empire and to make matters worse he had acquired a rather bad reputation amongst the Electors, whose Lutheran representatives feared a Franco-Spanish catholic conspiracy to root out Protestantism in the Empire. However, as lord of the Netherlands and duke of Milan, Philip was a member of the Empire and of course many connections between the Empire and the Netherlands still existed. Charles had stimulated for instance Egmont's marriage to a Bavarian princess as part of his alliance with the Duke of Bavaria against the

Schmalcaldic League in 1546. Also, Orange was born in the Empire. Apart from the ties between the two territories, the Empire was important to Philip because of its reservoir of soldiers and commanders. In 1559 his need to patch up relations with the German princes and create a reliable network was as great as ever.

The Netherlandish lords were excellently positioned to serve as ambassadors. Apart from Egmont, whose German brother-in-law became the Elector Palatine in 1559, Orange was also negotiating marriage in the Empire. More importantly, he was a native German. However, especially Orange had his own agenda in the Empire. Instead of easing the minds of many German princes about Philip's intentions, the prince tried to obtain pensions for his clients and relatives, creating a network for himself rather than for Philip. To make matters worse, Orange allied himself to Elector August of Saxony by his marriage to Anne of Saxony, while August advocated the candidature of the Lutheran king Frederik II of Denmark for the election of King of the Romans. Orange clearly used Philip's need for a German network to set himself up diplomatically as a quasi-independent power in the Netherlands and the Empire. He tried to conceal this from his rivals in Brussels, especially Granvelle, by corresponding mainly through the agency of Castellanos.

Orange's almost anti-Habsburg attitude caused a conflict with Cardinal Granvelle, who was more sensitive to Philip's position. Granvelle felt the German pensioners were too greedy and Orange's marriage bordered on treason. His undermining of Orange's credit with Philip was undoubtedly one of the reasons Orange started a campaign to oust Granvelle from the regency government. In 1561, again with help from Castellanos, Orange composed a letter to the king, co-signed by Egmont, asking for Granvelle's congé from the Council of State. Castellanos' superior Eraso was involved in the enterprise. Orange and Egmont fed him additional ammunition to slur the Cardinal in Spain. Although Eraso was happy to bad-mouth Granvelle at court, with whom he had a long-standing feud, he asked for the lords' cooperation on Philip's much contested religious policy in return.

This *quid pro quo* pattern was to emerge frequently during the 1560s. It exposed the great differences between the Eboli faction and the Netherlandish lords. By the time Orange and Egmont, along with Horn, wrote a second letter asking for Granvelle's dismissal in 1563, they sidestepped Castellanos and Eraso. Maybe this was because Castellanos' colleague as *contador*, Alonso del Canto, was discovered to be an inquisitorial investigator, seeking out Spanish religious dissidents in the Netherlands. Del Canto obviously worked with Eraso's approval. Nothing could be less agreeable to the Netherlandish lords, who felt that repression was not an appropriate answer to the surge of Protestantism. Still, Granvelle was forced to leave the Netherlands in 1564. This was due to the lords' pressure, but also because Margaret of Parma refused to support the Cardinal any longer. This triumph for the Netherlandish lords warranted a cooperative attitude in other matters, or so the Eboli faction believed.

After Granvelle's departure from the Netherlands, Philip lacked a confidant in Brussels. In order to gauge whether the Cardinal could possibly return, he sent the ambassador Diego Guzmán de Silva, who was affiliated to the Eboli faction. The Netherlandish lords lobbied Guzmán de Silva intensively to have a replacement for Granvelle appointed to the Council of State: Simon Renard, a one-time Habsburg diplomat who had fallen from grace after he fell out with Granvelle. Following the Eboli pattern, Guzmán de Silva allowed them to convince him and he duly advised the regent to appoint Renard to the Council. However, he expected the lords to be more accommodating on religious policy in return. But even if the lords had converted Guzmán de Silva to their cause, neither the regent nor the king would even consider Renard's appointment to Granvelle's vacant seat.

Guzmán de Silva did not succeed in rallying all the Netherlandish nobles behind the king's banner. Instead, differences on policy continued to divide the Council, while the number of Protestants grew. The count of Egmont managed to fulfil a long-cherished ambition to travel to court, to ask the king for clear instructions. The Council of State was divided on what exactly Egmont should ask for. Orange wanted him to ask for leniency for Protestants, while Viglius proposed only to state the problems and wait for the king's response, without offering any solutions. Egmont set of to Spain with this last, rather bland, instruction, but in a private audience he suggested far-reaching concessions to the Protestants and an increase in power of the Council of State. As this was only the Count's personal opinion, Philip could easily brush these suggestions aside. Instead, he showered financial favours on his loyal vassal while avoiding taking any decisions. Egmont proved himself to be a rather mediocre diplomat and returned to the Netherlands without pushing Philip on the subject. Feeling supported by the King's favour, however, he immediately presented himself in the Netherlands as the King's new confidant – a role in which the Eboli faction was undoubtedly happy to see him. However, Egmont's new-found confidence led to Orange's considerable chagrin, when it became clear that Philip did not intend to follow any of Egmont's suggestions regarding the Council or the Protestants.

In the autumn of 1565 Guzmán de Silva returned to the Netherlands to represent Philip at the wedding of Alexander Farnese, Margaret's son. He used the occasion to speak with the lords again. After Egmont's triumphant return from Spain, Philip's lack of concessions contrasted sharply enough with Egmont's reading of the situation for accusations of double play to surface. Margaret had difficulty controlling the lords' tempers. Guzmán de Silva tried to calm things down, but it became clear that the Eboli faction's patience with the lords was running out. The Spaniards had hoped that the lords would fill the void Granvelle had left, by dutifully carrying out Philip's wishes. Guzmán de Silva all but threatened Egmont and Orange that if they continued to push Philip to follow policies he did not wish to adopt, the King would lose his temper with them.

Until late 1565 frictions had been confined to the council chambers in Brussels

and Madrid. But from 1566 onwards, a growing group of discontented nobles – Protestants as well as Catholics – became involved in the discussion on the toleration of Protestantism. On 5 April a large group of the lower nobility called the Compromise offered a Petition to the regent, which asked for greater toleration. The great lords kept aloof, but Orange's younger brother and Egmont's secretary were prominent members of the Compromise. The Petition caused a stir both in Brussels and in Madrid. The Netherlandish Council of State decided to send a delegation to Spain, consisting of Horn's brother Montigny and the marquis of Bergen. Their main objectives would be to persuade Philip to sanction the concessions Margaret had been forced to make to the Compromise and to publicly place his trust in the lords of the Council; otherwise they threatened to leave government.

In Madrid, the two ambassadors tried to win the support of the Netherlandish bureaucrats there, Tisnacq, Courtewille and Joachim Hopperus. Hopperus, however, had only recently arrived from Brussels and prepared a lengthy memorandum in which he connected Orange, Egmont and Horn directly to the Compromise and blamed them for the upheavals in the Netherlands. Many in Madrid were prepared to believe him. However, several persons connected to the lords and the Eboli faction – notably Cristóbal de Castellanos and Simon Renard – tried to persuade the King that the lords were not involved with the Compromise and were, indeed, his best hope to re-establish order in the Netherlands.

Philip was prepared to listen to these *ebolistas*. At least he did not immediately accept Hopperus' point of view, but as Horn's secretary Laloo warned his master, in order for the lords to be regarded the main pillars of the Habsburg regime in the Netherlands, they must be seen to distance themselves from the Compromise and the religious toleration it advocated. But after the Iconoclasm occurred in August 1566, the three lords each granted concessions to the Protestants far beyond what Philip thought acceptable. Conversely, rival nobles such as the duke of Aerschot were applauded at court for supposedly handling the aftermath of the Iconoclasm more in accordance with royal wishes. The concessions the three great lords made in their stadholderates further contrasted with the efforts of other stadholders, who acted more in line with Margaret's directives. The position of Orange, Egmont and Horn suffered because other nobles did seem prepared to follow Margaret's and Philip's policies. When the Protestants had been defeated militarily, Viglius advised Margaret to ask all office-holders to take a new oath of loyalty to Philip. Egmont and Horn hesitated before finally taking the oath, but Orange flatly refused. It was too late. By this time, Philip had decided to send the Duke of Alba to the Netherlands to punish those responsible for the Iconoclasm. He brought arrest warrants for the three great lords of the Council. The Netherlandish lords' contacts with the Eboli faction would not save them from exile or even execution.

These contacts must be characterised as established by the Spanish financial bureaucracy in order to control the Netherlandish aristocratic elite. The Spanish officials provided the entire infrastructure necessary to provide the lords with reliable channels of communication with Philip's court. The Eboli faction to which these financial officials belonged was perfectly ready to support the lords' claims to power, whether they wanted to oust Granvelle from the Council, appoint Renard to it, or elevate it above the other Collateral Councils. To bind the lords to them, they provided them with many favours. But this support came at a price. In return for their local power, the *ebolistas* insisted that the lords support some of Philip's pet policies, especially regarding religion. Religion seemed to matter more to the *ebolistas* than to the lords. The nobles' insistence on the unfeasibility of the laws against heresy was in fact a reaction to the pressure the Spaniards put on them regarding religion. However, the lords were not satisfied with these conditions, because it gave them too little independence on the Brussels stage.

Orange, Egmont and Horn all had their own relationship with Philip. Egmont was quite amenable to the incentives offered by the king. His wish was to serve Philip in Italy, rather like so many Castilian magnates did. Philip would not even consider this, because he needed Egmont to serve loyally in Brussels, but the Count's pliability and ambitions were useful as bargaining chips. Horn, on the other hand, was a typical discontented courtier, who lost out on the fight over patronage. His family's status was slightly lower than Egmont's or Orange's and his marriage had not been quite as brilliant. He still had to make his family's fortunes, hoping for advancement and riches at court. His failure to do this caused him to be quite bitter towards Philip. Orange was the most independent of all three. Through his marriage with Anne of Saxony and his meddling in German affaires, he presented himself as the equal of any *Reichsfürst*. He seemed to covet the same independence from Philip in Brussels as the German princes had in their territories from the emperor, despite the faulty analogy. Therefore, he was quite immune to the *quid pro quo* suggested by the Eboli faction.

Rather than any specific social, political or religious problem, it was the incongruity between the Spanish court's offer of patronage and the lords' wishes for patronage, that ultimately lead to the breakdown of contacts between the Eboli faction and the lords, rendering the Netherlandish lords uncontrollable to Philip II. This discrepancy, therefore, proved to be fatal flaw in the Spanish Habsburg fabric.