A Constellation of Courts

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Flemish elites under Philip III’s patronage (1598-1621): household, court and territory in the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy*

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The constitutional diversity of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy, the way in which it was managed, and how this was perceived by each of its constituent territories, generated political conflicts throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As time went by, these conflicts led the Crown to continually reconsider how best to approach such diversity in order to bring greater cohesion to the whole. This process of re-examination was necessary, if we bear in mind that some territorial components of the Monarchy, the “loyal provinces” of the Netherlands in particular, underwent significant jurisdictional changes between the last year of Philip II’s life (1598) and the first year of the reign of his grandson, Philip IV (1621).

The Monarchy of Philip IV (1621-1665) was even more diverse than that of his predecessor Philip III (1598–1621), because Philip IV, unlike his father, was also sovereign of the Southern Netherlands, a sovereignty recovered by him following the death of archduke Albert of Austria on July 13, 1621. Even though the expansion of the Crown’s patrimony by adding new territories was no novelty in 1621, the process represented a considerable political challenge for the monarch, because the incorporation of the Archducal Netherlands with the Spanish Monarchy involved incorporating its population into the “community of subjects” at the service of a common sovereign and

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dependent in common on his patronage.\textsuperscript{1} Smooth incorporation with the whole territory of the Monarchy required integration, understood in terms of volition and feeling, the consciousness of being a part of that community, and the Crown had to adopt an active role to encourage it. The subjects of the archdukes Albert and Isabella had received this encouragement from Philip III before Albert died, which paved the way for the Archdukes’ patrimony to be reincorporated in 1621.

Encouragement meant effective inclusion of the territorial elites in those areas where their service was being carried out, and always subject to the monarch’s patronage. The offices and honours that constituted that service formed part of the royal patrimony and royal patronage, and found expression in spheres of activity and political relations – administration and justice, religion and church, armies and navies, and the royal household – which, to a large extent, occupied the same space and were superimposed on each other within the specific framework of the court, since this was where the monarch sought to effectively centralize the overall management of each and every sphere of activity.

Within this framework, the Crown had taken pains to reflect the heterogeneous nature of the Monarchy. It had created a common representational space, shared and recognized by each one of the territories, given the Crown’s status as the head of the individual political communities that inhabited those territories.\textsuperscript{2} This space was the basis for numerous institutions and offices designed for the political, ecclesiastic and military government of the Monarchy, as well as the domestic government of the personal and family departments of the sovereign. For that very reason, it was a service space, constructed to employ, and therefore, welcome and reward the subjects that populated the Monarchy.\textsuperscript{3} In other words, its purpose was to generate (or increase) personal obligations, and win over (or confirm) equally personal wills, which could be used later by the Crown to secure its own particular interests (within an individual territory) or the general one of promoting the cohesion of the Monarchy as a whole.


\textsuperscript{3} Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, La España de Don Quijote: Un viaje al Siglo de Oro (Madrid, 2005), 241.
The efforts of Spanish historiography are currently directed towards demonstrating the role that the royal household played in the Crown’s policy of integrating the Monarchy’s territorial elites.\footnote{Especially, José Martínez Millán, “Las naciones en el servicio doméstico de los Austrias españoles (siglo XVI),” in La Monarquía de las naciones, 131–161; José Martínez Millán (ed.), La Corte de Carlos V, 5 vols. (Madrid, 2000); José Martínez Millán and Santiago Fernández Conti (eds.), La Monarquía de Felipe II: la Casa del Rey, 2 vols. (Madrid, 2005); José Martínez Millán and María Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), La Monarquía de Felipe III: la Casa del Rey, 2 vols. (Madrid, 2008); and José Martínez Millán and José Eloy Hortal Muñoz (eds.), La Monarquía de Felipe IV: La Casa del Rey, forthcoming.} Entering the royal domestic service enabled the members of these elites to distance themselves from their own, political communities of origin, by moving to the common court of the sovereign, where reserving palace offices for the natives of the various territories remained in force. It was the influential political thinker Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos who, at the beginning of Philip III’s reign, recommended to him the measure of having in his household “people of all the tongues of his monarchy, and that favour and admission be extended to native speakers of them.” By applying it, the young monarch would be able to “calm the humours” of some of his dynastic states, whose elites were discontented at the time, because they felt at a disadvantage by being excluded from the prince’s domestic service.\footnote{Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos, Discurso político al rey Felipe III al comienzo de su reinado (Madrid, 1990), 95 and 97.} This feeling was justified because of a change in policy during the Philip II’s reign towards the household of Burgundy. Whereas under Charles V this essential component of the king’s household, originally consisting of Flemish and Burgundian personnel, had become increasingly “international” as a result of incorporating servants from other territories under his sovereignty, once the court had finally settled in Madrid in 1561, in Philip II’s reign, it had become progressively more “Castilian”. The Castilian elites ended up monopolizing the palace offices, and hence displacing the elites from other territories, who were obliged to keep away from the court. At the end of the sixteenth century, this situation revealed the crisis in the policy of integration of territorial elites practised in the past.\footnote{Martínez Millán, “Las naciones en el servicio doméstico”, 135-156.} After the Aragonese rebellion of 1591, the decision taken by Philip II to increase the number of natives of the kingdom of Aragon in his domestic service demonstrates that the Crown’s confidence in the old policy had been restored. It continued to keep faith with the same policy in 1609, when it assessed the possibility of reinstating not only the nobility of the
kingdom in that service but also the municipal oligarchies of Saragossa and Teruel, in order, finally, to bring peace to the Aragonese territory and provide its elites with a tangible and continuing presence in the household and court of Philip III.

The reconsideration of this policy of integration should be linked to the recommendation made by Álamos de Barrientos, and also to another of his suggestions, namely to “bring, under any colours whatsoever, all the grandees and lords from them to your Court.” This obviously utilitarian intention contained several objectives. The first was “to become acquainted with their talent, their understanding, their inclinations, in order to use or employ them in different ministries”; the second was to prevent those who were dissatisfied from placing themselves at the head of groups of potential malcontents and leading any movement of opposition to the sovereign’s authority that might arise in their territories of origin, arguing that “removing the grandees and lords from their sight, without them, the common people will wish rather than do”; and the third objective was to ensure that the beneficiaries of this favourable treatment – which included the possibility of establishing family links (understood as the set of family members and servants) with the sovereign, of starting or consolidating personal relationships in the most influential court circles and, even, of influencing the decisions and distribution of royal favours by being at court – were transformed into a valuable publicity weapon aimed at promoting the image of the Crown in their regions of origin, since they would send them “the pleasure of their prince,” in other words, the satisfaction afforded them by their proximity to him and relationship with him.

7 Rivero, La España de Don Quijote, 95.
8 He is referring here to the states of Italy, but the suggestion must also apply to all the “far-flung states,” that is, the states of the Habsburg Netherlands, Italy and the Indies, as opposed to the “united states,” which are “those within the confines of Spain” (Castile, the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon, Navarre and Portugal), see Álamos de Barrientos, Discurso político, 9 and 96.
9 All quotations in the paragraph are from Álamos de Barrientos, Discurso político, 96.
Being invited to enter the royal domestic service was the perfect excuse for more or less outstanding members of the nobility from various states of the Monarchy to move to the court. Philip III, throughout his reign, also endeavoured to include subjects of the archdukes Albert and Isabella in his royal household, especially those belonging to the middling and high titled nobility of the Archducal Netherlands. The idea behind this measure was to establish bonds of personal obligation with a foreign sovereign’s subjects who could well become his own subjects in the not too distant future. Hence, the monarch tried to establish these ties with subjects of rank of the highest quality possible: social rank was an a priori determinant of the extent and importance of the parentela (the complete set of blood relations, dependants and kin forming an interrelated network of interests, friendship and kinship within a territory), and establishing bonds of obligation with the key members of the parentelas scattered across the hinterland of these states would multiply its effects.

Once it was assumed that sovereignty over the Archdukes’ territories would subsequently be returned to the Spanish monarch because they had no issue, some were quick to provide Philip III with precise instructions on how he should go about securing it. Particular importance was attached to the recommendations made in 1610 by Philippe de Croÿ, count of Solre (master of the horse to the Archdukes and gentleman of the chamber to Albert), and Felipe de Cardona, marquis of Guadaleste (the monarch’s ambassador in Brussels), who journeyed to Spain at the beginning of the year for personal reasons.

Each of them took advantage of the journey to hand the king a set of written observations aimed at successfully addressing the restitution issue, and they coincided in recommending the entry of the titled nobility of the Archducal Netherlands into the royal household. In Solre’s opinion, the monarch ought to facilitate this entry at once by assigning them posts of gentlemen of the chamber and gentlemen of the boca, that is, including them as soon as possible in the most select circle of his domestic service, “because in this way, they will see the love and good will that Your Majesty has towards them and the trust you place in them and […] seeing that Your Majesty has a mind to honour them, it would console and inspire
them and Your Majesty would have servants to employ when it were necessary.”

Guadaleste’s proposal was very similar: to offer the Flemish nobles, and not only titled ones “positions in the royal household in accordance with the quality of their persons, and not only to those who live at court, but also to those who live outside it.” The object was for the monarch to establish ties with the territorial nobility least attached to the court of the Archdukes, instead of confining himself to establishing them only with the court nobility integrated into the household of both sovereigns or tied to the central government institutions based in Brussels. However, among the measures proposed by the ambassador to win the hearts and minds of the Flemish elites in the lead-up to the restitution of sovereignty, he included awarding habits of the Spanish Military Orders (Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara) to some of its members.

Possession of the military habit carried with it the option of a lifetime income provided by the king in the form of an *encomienda*, or ‘commandery,’ the number of which was limited. It also connoted traditional, old-established nobility. It was, therefore, an indisputable guarantee that anyone who possessed one was of noble blood. From Guadaleste’s proposal, it can be deduced that the members of the Flemish elites would gladly accept the habits because possessing one could bring distinction and social recognition in their community of origin: a mark of honour, in addition to the customary ones, that could be esteemed for its rarity value within the Archducal Netherlands, quite apart from a second reason, namely, the fame that the favour obtained from Philip III would acquire there once the process of admission to any of these Orders was initiated. The fame went with the nature of the proceedings, explicitly involving many members of that same community.

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10 To Philip III, Valladolid, April 11, 1610, summing up the content of various short tracts presented by the count of Solre after his arrival at court, Archivo General de Simancas [hereafter, AGS], Estado [hereafter, E.], leg. 2868.

11 Guadaleste to Philip III, March? 1610, two copies in AGS, E. leg. 2026.

12 The majority of the commanderies used to have endowments of between 1,000 and 3,000 ducats a year; at the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were only one hundred and eighty-three commanderies: ninety-four of the Order of Santiago; fifty-one of the Order of Calatrava; thirty-eight of the Order of Alcántara, Lorraine Wright, “Las Órdenes Militares en la sociedad española de los siglos XVI y XVII: La encarnación institucional de una tradición histórica,” in John H. Elliott (ed.), *Poder y sociedad en la España de los Austrias*, (Barcelona, 1982), 28 and 30.
The prerequisite was for the habit to be authorized. Selection of the fortunate foreign recipients was made in the Council of State or in decision-making circles close to the monarch. It was the task of the secretaries of state, of the king’s chamber and, even of the favourite himself or his private secretaries, to inform the secretaries of the Council of Military Orders, via official note or decree, of the identities of those to be awarded habits. The secretaries issued the letters patent which made the awards official, and instructed the Council to set the procedure in motion; and this was done at the behest of the interested parties, who had to pay the corresponding secretarial dues. The procedure began when the letters patent, accompanied by the candidate’s genealogy, reached one of the two Clerk’s Offices of the Council Chamber (the Order of Santiago’s, or that of the Orders of Calatrava and Alcántara). After the presentation of both documents and the payment of further dues, the admission formalities proper began.

These formalities centred on judicial verification to check that the candidate complied with all the qualities and requirements for acceptance. In order to gather “the information about the qualities and purity” of the aspirant, two “informants,” commissioned by the Council of Military Orders by means of a royal provision, interrogated witnesses in his place of birth and that of his parents and grandparents. The testimonies of those who were summoned to testify – more than eighty witnesses in total in many cases – had to prove the following: the noble credentials of the aspirant, with the first degree of nobility through both the paternal and maternal lines for several generations, at the very least; his legitimacy, that he belonged to a specific family group, with a clearly defined lineage or ancestral line; the “purity of his blood,” free from the contamination of Moorish or Jewish forebears, or ancestors condemned by the Inquisition; and “purity of occupation,” meaning remoteness from professional activities or practices that were degrading, and apt to bring loss of honour or nobility in their wake. This “information,” subject to the approval or disapproval of the Council of Military Orders, acquired the status of legal proof, allaying any doubts that might be cast on the nobility and purity of anyone who had passed the “qualification tests” and the rigorous screening of the Council.

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The habit was synonymous with nobility, accredited before others and dignified by a third party, the Council of Military Orders, and could be a source of undeniable social prestige in any community. For this reason, there was no doubt about the esteem in which it was held in the heart of a community, like the Flemish one, which was relatively alien to its tradition. The commandery that could eventually accompany the habit would always be desirable, and this combination – of both habit and the expectation of revenue – would also bring the Flemish elites symbolic recognition in territories other than those of their origin, in this case, Spain and the whole of Philip III’s Monarchy. This necessarily expanded the horizons of political reference for elites who had seen their own shrink to the very local level when the Southern Netherlands ceased to form part of Philip II’s Monarchy in 1598. Thanks to such measures, the opening up of horizons could be more and more attractive as the time approached for their likely reincorporation into the Monarchy of Philip III.

**Philip III’s domestic service and the Spanish Military Orders**

The offer of military habits in the Archducal Netherlands in the years prior to the return of sovereignty to the Spanish Monarchy in 1621 would confirm the monarch’s intention to deliberately boost the appeal of reincorporation among the Flemish elites, but so too would the offer of posts in the royal household. And he formally implemented both in the spring of 1613, while Albert was still convalescing after the serious deterioration in his health at the end of the previous year.

In a letter addressed to Ambrogio Spinola, *maestre de campo general* of the Army of Flanders and superintendent of the military treasury on March 31, 1613, Philip III gave orders for habits and posts as pages, *meninos* and gentlemen of the *boca* to be offered in his name,


15 For the cession of the Low Countries to Albert and Isabella in 1598, see Alicia Esteban Estríngana, “Los estados de Flandes. Reversión territorial de las provincias leales (1598–1623),” in José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), *La Monarquía de Felipe III: los Reinos*, (Madrid, 2008), 593-682.
announcing his willingness to grant them to all those who aspired to them “in accordance with their quality” and also his wish to receive “some daughters of the principal gentlemen of the country” as ladies-in-waiting for his daughter-in-law, princess Isabella of Bourbon, the young betrothed of the prince, the future Philip IV. In the opening of the letter, the monarch admitted he was proceeding “in imitation” of his father, Philip II, former sovereign of the Low Countries, and emphasized his determination to “continue to do so henceforth, demonstrating this to a greater extent” by progressively including more Flemish in his domestic service.

Awarding habits of the Spanish Military Orders to the Flemish and inviting them to enter the royal household prior to 1613 might suggest that offers had been made at an earlier date, and also that members of the high and middling nobility of the Southern Netherlands had already shown an explicit interest in obtaining honours of this kind and had actually sought them with the approval and recommendation of the Archdukes. The count of Solre and the marquis of Guadaleste would have echoed this same interest before travelling to Spain in 1610. Whatever the case, the letter sent to Spinola at the end of March 1613 represents a decision taken after a process of due deliberation, and by reconstructing that process, it is possible to discover the true objective behind the royal offer.

In the spring of 1612, don Rodrigo Calderón, count of Oliva, had travelled to Brussels. One of the missions of his embassy was to draw up the necessary reports for implementing a new general reform (reformación) of the army of Flanders, as ambitious as the one undertaken in 1609–1610, after the signing of the Twelve Years’ Truce. The primary reason for the reform was to reduce military expenditure, which included discharging soldiers, dissolving units, and eliminating pensions, entertainments [monthly retainers] and salaries paid by the army’s paymaster-general which were funded by transfers from Philip III in the form of bills of exchange and known as “Spanish provisions”. Upon his return to Madrid in January 1613, Calderón brought with him numerous reports and proposals for cutbacks, as well as a large number of letters of recommendation in which archduke Albert interceded on behalf of private individuals petitioning Philip III. On the orders of the king, this pile of papers was organized and subjected to a preliminary evaluation by Calderón and the Knight Commander of Leon (of the

16 Philip III to Spinola, Madrid, March 23, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2228, 8.
Order of Santiago), don Juan de Idiáquez, who was president of the Council of Military Orders, and one of the longest-serving and most influential councillors of State. The papers were then examined further, this time by the Council of State, although not in every particular. The “things of private individuals” were discarded and, in February 1613, based entirely on the opinions of Calderón and Idiáquez, Philip III made his decisions.

Among the many claims from private individuals that don Rodrigo had to lend his support to in Madrid, were those of Hendrik van den Bergh, an outstanding cavalry officer in those days. The count aspired to a military habit because he was interested in exchanging the revenue of eight hundred ducats a year, assigned by the monarch in the kingdom of Sicily in 1602, that he was already receiving, for a commandery that would yield more. Calderón made it clear that it was advisable to favour van den Bergh in order to “win him over and secure him” in the service of the Archdukes and Philip III, but also so that the Dutch “would not trust […] this man to be of use to them.” He acknowledged, besides, that van den Bergh was not asking for this favour (habit and commandery) on his own initiative, but had been influenced by someone in Brussels.  

From don Rodrigo’s words, it would seem that by joining a Spanish Military Order, Hendrik van den Bergh (Maurice of Nassau’s first cousin) would be confirming his willingness to remain loyal to the service of the Catholic cause. It would confirm it, because acceptance of the military habit created a subjective moral obligation, committing the holder to the foundational objectives of the Order, which included the active defence of Catholic Christianity against the threat represented by the expansion of other religious creeds. It was a commitment voluntarily assumed and measured in terms of allegiance and personal obedience to the Grand Master of the corresponding Military Order, who was Philip III, which would not go unnoticed in the United Provinces. With the publicity that his membership would acquire there, the States-General would lose all hope of seeing count van den Bergh at their service.

Another commandery was claimed by Robert de Ligne-Arenberg, baron of Barbançon (younger brother of the prince-count of Arenberg, gentleman of the chamber to archduke Albert, captain of

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17 “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva,” Madrid, January 16, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027.
the Bodyguard of Archeros of the Archdukes and former colonel in the Walloon and German infantry), and Antoine Schetz de Grobbendonk (baron Grobbendonk; governor of Bois-le-Duc; son of the late Gaspard Schetz, treasurer general of the Council of Finance of Brussels between 1561 and 1580; brother of the deceased Jean-Charles Schetz, member of the, by then, extinct Supreme Council of Flanders and former chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece between 1588 and 1595). They made their claims on their own initiative, with no outside influence whatsoever, because they had both already obtained the habit: Barbançon in 1601 and Grobbendonk in 1612. Another habit was aspired to by Conrad Schetz de Grobbendonk (baron Hoboken; elder brother of baron Grobbendonk, member of the Council of Finance of Brussels and the Archdukes’ ambassador in London until 1609), and Guillaume Richardot (Lord Lembeek, son of the late president of the Privy Council, Jean Richardot and brother-in-law of Hoboken, who was married to Richardot’s eldest daughter).

According to Calderón, they all ought to receive a favourable response to their claims “for being people of standing in the country and sons of such well-known ministers.” The reply to baron Grobbendonk should be “that if he wishes, he will be able to send his son to be brought up in Spain, where Your Majesty will receive him as a page.” Don Rodrigo must have known whether the baron had expressed his wish to place one of his sons in the domestic service of Philip III, but did not clarify the point, confining himself to pointing out that the moment had arrived to encourage that same desire in other members of the Flemish nobility in order to secure the interests of the monarch within their territory.

Calderón warned that the reform was going to deprive many Flemish of quality of their pensions, salaries and posts enjoyed to date. For that reason, it was advisable to compensate them for the loss in some way: first of all by whetting their appetite for symbolic recognition in order to satisfy it later, by offering and awarding posts in the royal household, military habits, and collars of the Golden Fleece, one of the honours held in greatest esteem by the titled nobility in the

19 Albert to Philip III, Brussels, October 15, 1600 and Isabella to Philip III, Brussels, October 6, 1600, with a memorandum from Barbançon, AGS, E. leg. 617, fols. 69–72; Calderón had already interceded on his behalf from Brussels: Calderón to Philip III, Brussels, August 8, 1612, AGS, E. leg. 2294.
20 See below.
21 “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva,” Madrid, January 16, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027.
Southern Netherlands. To put it another way, it was advisable to offer the Flemish elites opportunities for advancement and improvement in rank because this would feed their expectations of promotion in the future, once sovereignty had been returned to the Spanish Monarchy when Albert disappeared from the political scene. As to what the return of sovereignty might hold in store for them, the aforementioned elites would safeguard their future on the information available to them before it took place. And those who benefited from royal patronage, making the most of the opportunities afforded in the present (those who saw their current expectations being fulfilled), would raise their expectations of the future, actively working, by mobilizing their kith and kin, so that the restitution of sovereignty was completed successfully. The resources of royal patronage enabled this strategy to be used without it costing Philip III’s royal exchequer anything. Increasing the symbolic capital of the Flemish elites required very little outlay and that was crucial for the Crown after the financial crises of 1610–1612, which were on the point of causing the second general suspension of consignations in the kingdom.22

With respect to admission to the Order of the Golden Fleece, there were three aspirants backed by archduke Albert in 1613, and all three obtained the prized collar of the Order: Frederick count van den Bergh, governor of the province of Guelders and captain of the Archdukes’ halberdiers; the Burgundian marquis of Marnay, Charles-Emmanuel de Gorrevod, gentleman of the chamber to Albert and maestre de campo [commander of a tercio] of the Walloon infantry in the army of Flanders; and the count of Hoogstraten, Antoine de Lalaing, head of the House of Lalaing. Calderón and Idiáquez recommended the award of the collars for weighty reasons.

The collar was the ideal means to reward Frederick count van den Bergh for his record of service, especially as his first cousin, Maurice of Nassau, aimed to win him over to the cause of the Republic by reminding him of the humiliations suffered in the service of Albert and Philip III, who had denied him the right to the two senior posts in the army high command (those of maestre de campo general and cavalry general) some years before, despite his unquestionable merit and proven capabilities.23

22 Bernardo J. García García, La Pax Hispanica: Política exterior del Duque de Lerma (Leuven, 1996), 223.
With regard to Marnay and Hoogstraten, admission to the Order of the Golden Fleece would serve to encourage subsequent services, ensuring that, with the collar, they would be “won over and obliged,” because, as Calderón and Idiáquez warned the monarch, “Your Majesty might have need of them one day,” an obvious reference to the imminent restitution of sovereignty over the Archdukes’ territories. This warning demonstrates that, by distributing certain resources of royal patronage, Philip III was trying to extend his relations among the Flemish elites and that he too was placing his hopes on this strategy. It was a question of relations that generated expectations for both parties, for the monarch and also the elites; and the moment to make use of these expectations in negotiations had arrived.

A first set of letters designed to set the negotiations in motion and satisfy the aspirations of some individuals was sent off on March 31, 1613, although preceded by a dispatch to Albert, alerting him to a list of favourable resolutions from Philip III and authorizing him to announce the favours granted to the interested parties. This set included a letter to Spínola on March 31, 1613, requiring him to “let it be known that His Majesty will receive into his Household some noble people from the country” and offer military habits and specific posts in the domestic service of the princess of Asturias, Isabella of Bourbon. It also included the letter informing Albert that the aspirations to commanderies of the barons Barbançon and Grobbendonk would be borne in mind at a later date (when the moment arrived to provide some vacant commandery), and inviting Grobbendonk to “send his son to be brought up over here” so as to include him as a page in the royal household, and the letter announcing the award of the habit and future award of a commandery to Hendrik count van den Bergh. This future award was granted to him on condition that he would renounce the income that he already enjoyed in Sicily, but Philip III authorized Spínola to increase the value of this revenue as an inducement to him to accept the habit before obtaining the commandery.

24 “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva,” Madrid, January 16, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027.
25 Philip III to Albert, n.p., February 20, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2228, fol. 2.
26 AGS, E. leg. 2228, fol. 8.
27 Philip III to Albert, Madrid, March 31, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2228, fol. 9.
28 Philip III to Spínola, Madrid, March 31, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2228, fol. 1.
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The success of the negotiations mentioned earlier depended on van den Bergh’s acceptance, and on all the others benefiting from royal patronage during this period doing likewise. Success depended on their acceptance, because these favours were granted with the explicit purpose of winning them over and creating obligations, that is, winning their hearts and minds and pleasing and gratifying the beneficiaries. Moreover, the recipients were well aware of this purpose, since they had addressed specific petitions to Philip III, expressing in this way their willingness to develop a relationship of obligation born of mutual appreciation and confidence, that is confianza (understood as keeping faith with the other) that a favourable response from the beneficiaries (favourable to the interests of the monarch authorizing the favours to be accepted) would undoubtedly become stronger over time.

Flemish elites and Philip III’s patronage

Albert and Spínola undertook to pass on the responses of the beneficiaries to Philip III in letters that reached Madrid in the course of the summer of 1613. The first to show their satisfaction with the favour received from the monarch were the barons Hoboken and Grobbendonk. The former, because of his advanced age, expressed the wish to assign his habit to his heir. Philip III acceded to this as it seemed “perfectly reasonable that this be done, since the aim of it is to win over the country’s nobles,” and it was obvious that passing on the royal favour implied passing on the obligation to his descendants. Grobbendonk declared his intention to send one of his sons to Madrid as soon as he was old enough to serve as a page. Count van den Bergh was unable to voice his opinion at that time; Spínola and Albert had sound reasons for deciding to defer informing him of the terms in which the king had agreed to satisfy his aspirations to a habit and commandery. Van den Bergh had never been able to collect the revenue assigned to him in Sicily and he would be sceptical of being able to collect any other sum that was added to it. He would think that, once he had accepted it, the subject of the commandery would never be raised again, and that Philip III’s real objective was for him to be satisfied with the habit. So, it was better to wait until a commandery of the necessary standing became available before approaching the count; otherwise, they would have no bargaining counter. The reasoning was sound; nonetheless, Philip III issued the order to offer him the habit for its immediate acceptance.
“with which it becomes impossible for the rebels to look to him [for support],” and assuring him that the commandery associated with it would be awarded shortly.²⁹

These three selected examples show that the resources of patronage employed to negotiate with the Flemish elites in the final years of the Archdukes’ regime were welcomed by the middling nobility, made up of lords (holders of seigneuries, that is, jurisdictions, and many of whom were members of urban elites) who, in certain cases, had obtained the rank of baron and transformed their seigneuries into baronies with the object of stepping onto the lowest rung of the ladder of the titled nobility. This was the case of the barons Hoboken and Grobbendonk,³⁰ who accepted admission to a Spanish Military Order and responded favourably to the offer to send their sons to Madrid to enter the domestic service of Philip III.

These resources of patronage were not sufficient to negotiate with the high nobility, consisting of titled nobles at the top of the social hierarchy of the territory. For nobles like count van den Bergh, opportunities for advancement and improvement in rank did not always exist. Admission to the Order of the Golden Fleece was a legitimate resource when the noble to be favoured was not already a member of the Order; however, there was only a limited number of collars which meant that they were not always available. To award one, therefore, it was advisable to apply relatively strict criteria of eligibility, which not all candidates were in a position to meet. In general, only the first-born son of the most distinguished lineages normally obtained the collar, and this criterion, for the moment, closed the door to the Order on count van den Bergh (the youngest of seven brothers, although few were still alive in 1613), whose eldest brother, Frederick count van den Bergh, had just received one. Something similar also occurred at the time, and for the same reason, to Christoph von Emden (from East Frisia), who had served in Flanders at the head of a High-German infantry regiment. When he was told that he was to be favoured with the habit and future commandery awarded by Philip III in that same context, he showed

²⁹ For the whole paragraph, Spinola to Philip III, Mariemont, June 30, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2298 and “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliba, sobre particulares de Flandes,” Madrid, July 26, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027.
³⁰ They had obtained the title of baron in 1600 and 1602 respectively, Paul Janssens and Luc Duerloo, Armorial de la Noblesse Belge: Du XVe au XXe siècle, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1992-94), 3: 449.
his dissatisfaction and protested because he had not been able to collect the revenue that had already been assigned to him in the duchy of Milan. The possibility of awarding him the Golden Fleece was considered, since he had the quality to be admitted to the Order, but the view was that the habit, the future commandery and payment of the income were sufficient “because he was the third son in his household.”

To negotiate with the titled nobles of the Archducal Netherlands, Philip III also had to use resources from the royal exchequer, as Albert and Spínola confirmed in a number of letters to Madrid early in 1614. In these, they both admitted not having urged counts van den Bergh and Emden to accept the habits, because they knew only too well “that they do not want them without being given the commanderies at the same time.” This attitude was understandable because if the habit was not accompanied by a commandery, the cost of being admitted to a Military Order – defrayed entirely by the interested party in silver coins – could not be recovered. So, van den Bergh could only be given an increase in the value of the revenue that he possessed (another 600 ducats per year), while the count of Emden’s request was held in abeyance.

In those letters, Albert and Spínola also communicated the identities of other members of the middling nobility prepared to send their sons to Madrid to serve as pages in the household of Philip III: Lord Pierre-Ernest de Raville, a former captain of the Walloon infantry who governed the province of Luxembourg in the name of the titular governor (count Florent de Berlaymont), and baron Hoboken himself. They were both given permission to organize the journey of their sons, of twelve and thirteen years of age, to Spain. It was a journey that aroused great expectations in Madrid, as Idiáquez and Calderón made

31 “Sobre particulares de Flandes,” Madrid, July 26, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027; Spínola to Philip III, Mariemont, June 30, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2298.
32 For comment on the cost of habits, see Elena Postigo Castellanos, *Honor y privilegio en la Corona de Castilla: El Consejo de las Órdenes y los caballeros de hábito en el siglo XVII* (Almazán, 1988), 172–176. The monetary deposits stipulated by the Council of Military Orders for the Flemish analysed in this study fluctuated between 200 and 400 ducats. These deposits were used by the Council to finance the two “informants” who questioned witnesses in the places where the aspirants to a habit, and both sets of maternal and paternal parents and grandparents were from. See below.
33 “Sobre particulares de algunas personas de Flandes,” Madrid, April 16, 1614, AGS, E. leg. 2028; Albert to Philip III, Brussels, January 31, 1614 and Spínola to Philip III, Brussels, February 11, 1614, AGS, E. leg. 2296.
clear to the king after deliberating on the content of the letters from Brussels:

That Your Majesty receives as servants the sons of principal vassals of Flanders [...] is held to be beneficial and necessary so that they and their parents and relatives feel affection for, and are more inclined and obliged to Your Majesty’s service.34

This statement is very revealing. The physical transfer of young Flemish to Spain to be brought up at the court of Philip III was considered crucial to strengthening the relationship that they, their parents and all the members of their extended family network would maintain with the monarch in the future, because it would win their hearts and minds, encourage their interest in service to Philip III, in short, predispose them to place everything they had – their lives, wealth, offices, personal relations and social rank – at the monarch’s disposal whenever necessary. This was precisely what serving the king meant, and service became a sign of worth that deserved recompense. The recompense was effected within the framework of a bilateral political relationship which would benefit Philip III and those Flemish who decided to place themselves at his disposal. It was a relationship that even some who were not vassals of the Archdukes showed interest in strengthening at that point, paving the way for their sons to be sent to Madrid. The case of count Jean de (Johann von) Ritberg (brother of the count of Emden, from East Frisia in the Lower Rhine-Westphalia area, who had served in Flanders as a cavalry captain) is paradigmatic in this respect: in the spring of 1614, he requested, and obtained a post as menino to the prince (the future Philip IV) for one of his sons.35

This post attached to the service of the chamber rather than the stable – like that of the pages – and reserved for aspirants of greater social distinction, also aroused the interest of some members of the Flemish high nobility, such as count Florent de Berlaymont (Knight of the Golden Fleece, member of the Council of State in Brussels and governor of the province of Luxembourg-Chiny from 1604). He sought and obtained a post of menino to the prince and another of lady-in-waiting to the princess for two of his children in the summer of 1615,

34 “Sobre particulares de algunas personas de Flandes,” Madrid, April 16, 1614, AGS, E. leg. 2028.
35 “Sobre recibir por menino del príncipe nuestro señor a un hijo del conde de Ritberg,” Madrid, May 17, 1614, AGS, E. leg. 2028.
and authorization to send them to Spain in the company of Isabella of Bourbon herself.\(^{36}\) However, the impression is that Berlaymont was an exception.

**The high titled nobility**

The exceptional nature of Berlaymont can be explained by one significant fact, not commonly found among Flemish nobles of his rank: the count was not a member of the Archdukes’ household. This was rather unusual, because he did form part of the select minority of titled nobles who, from the beginning of the Archdukes’ sovereignty, received a pension paid out of the revenue from the embassy that Philip III maintained in Brussels.

These pensions started to be assigned in the time of ambassador don Baltasar de Zúñiga (1599–1603) to preserve ties with some members of the Flemish high nobility so that they would help secure the government regime of the Archdukes, which it was imperative to consolidate in order to negotiate the longed-for peace with the Republic, and which benefited Philip III as much as the Archdukes themselves.\(^{37}\) The pensions fluctuated between 600 and 3,000 ducats a year, but their payment was stopped during the costly Frisian campaign (1605). Although Philip III ordered the payments to be restored and the accumulated arrears owing to the pensioners (five in 1610,\(^{38}\) and visibly distressed by the lack of

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\(^{36}\) Council of State, Valladolid, September 3, 1615, “Por los condes de Barlamont,” AGS, E. leg. 2777; Philip IV to Albert, Burgos, November 21, 1615, Archives Générales du Royaume de Belgique (hereafter, AGRB), Secrétairerie d’État et de Guerre (hereafter, SEG), registre (hereafter, reg.) 178, fol. 301.

\(^{37}\) Esteban Estríngana, “Los estados de Flandes.”

\(^{38}\) According to a report by the marquis of Guadaleste, Philip III’s ambassador in Brussels at the time, two were of the House of Croÿ: Charles de Croÿ, duke of Arschot (Knight of the Golden Fleece, member of the Council of State in Brussels and governor of Hainaut), and Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, marquis of Havré (Knight of the Golden Fleece, member of the Council of State and the first head of the Council of Finance in Brussels), nephew and uncle respectively, and both gentlemen of the chamber to Albert. Another was of the House of Berlaymont: count Florent de Berlaymont, and there was also Frederick count van den Bergh (governor of Artois until 1610 and subsequently of Guelders), and Philippe de Rubempré, Lord Vertaing (gentleman of the chamber to Albert and master of the hunt of Brabant), “Del marqués de Guadaleste: Los que tienen renta sobre la embaxada de Flandes,” 1610, AGS, E. leg. 2026.
payments) to be reimbursed by the paymaster-general of the army in 1611. the arrears were still unpaid when don Rodrigo Calderón arrived in Brussels in 1612.

On his return to Madrid in 1613, Calderón passed on to the monarch the request of Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, marquis of Havré – one of only, by then, four pensioners, to be paid his arrears (assessed at 15,000 ducats, at the rate of 2,000 a year), and also the wish of Charles de Ligne, prince-count of Arenberg (gentleman of the chamber to Albert and member of the Council of State in Brussels), to benefit from a pension of 3,000 ducats per year, the same one that had remained in abeyance after the death of his brother-in-law, Charles de Croÿ, duke of Arschot in June 1612. He was granted a pension on account of “his great quality and services and the other considerations that there are for it,” although duly reduced to 2,000 ducats a year (the same amount as the marquis of Havré was receiving) and a personal title, suggesting that the number of pensioners was not fixed, but depended entirely on the will of Philip III, who assigned pensions according to the merits and qualities of each person. This implied admitting that the assignment of a pension was not subject to any condition and that the monarch used the allocation of one sum or another to establish a hierarchy of rank between all the pensioners.

These pensions were not affected by the reform carried out in the summer of 1613, in the sense that they did not disappear nor was their value reduced to save costs. There were, in fact, cases where their value increased, such as the prince-count of Arenberg’s, whose wife, Anne de Croÿ, inherited part of her brother Charles de Croÿ’s estate and the title of duke of Arschot as the result of a judicial ruling issued in July 1614. After assuming the title of duke of Arschot, Arenberg asked for

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39 Don Rodrigo Niño de Lasso, count of Añover, to Philip III, Brussels, June 2, 1610, AGS, E. leg. 2292.
40 Guadaleste to Philip III, Brussels, October 2, 1611, AGS, E. leg. 2293; CE, Madrid, February 11, 1612, and Lerma to Antonio de Aróztegui, from the palace, February 16, 1612, AGS, E. leg. 2026.
41 In 1603, the initial value of his pension had been raised to 2,000 ducats a year, according to the testimony of two memoranda addressed by the marquis of Havré to Philip III in 1608 and 1610, and a letter from Albert to Philip III, Brussels, August 7, 1608, in AGS, E. legs. 1750 and 1751. For the 15,000 ducats in arrears, see Albert to Philip III and to the duke of Lerma, Mariemont, November 30, 1612, AGRB, SEG, reg. 177, fols. 124–125.
42 “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva,” Madrid, January 16, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027; Philip III to Albert, Madrid, March 31, 1613, and Philip III to Albert, n.p., February 20, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2228, fol. 28 and 2, respectively.
his pension to be raised to the level of the late duke which exceeded his own by 1,000 ducats a year. His request was granted in 1615.\textsuperscript{43}

The reform, however, did affect the entertainments enjoyed by some members of the high nobility who were part of the domestic service of the Archdukes, headed provincial governments, or did both things at the same time. Many of these entertainments, paid by the paymaster-general of the army, had been assigned within the framework of the earlier reform, after the titled nobles had lost their military commands when their units disappeared and it was considered opportune, in 1613, to eliminate them, since their beneficiaries were already receiving a provincial governor’s salary, a wage as a servant to the Archdukes, or both incomes at the same time. But from the beginning, the will existed to reintroduce the provincial governors’ entertainments after a decent interval, and they were reintroduced, unofficially, in June 1614. From this date they were paid out of secret expenses so as not to publicly contravene or compromise the policy of austerity and restraint in military expenditure imposed from Madrid. They were also restored because it was a good idea to have the governors in a position of being “very grateful for what was offered and, in particular, for the question of the succession of those states.”\textsuperscript{44} Succession was understood in terms of the future restitution to the Spanish Monarchy of sovereignty over the territories of the Archdukes as well as recognition in advance of Philip III’s right to succeed to that patrimony. The idea was for this recognition to be confirmed by swearing a reciprocal oath of allegiance with the various assemblies of the States-Provincial. The ceremonies, in fact, took place in the middle months of 1616, with the consent and backing of Albert, who swore the oath and took it in the monarch’s name.\textsuperscript{45}

After the oath-swearing, two of the principal titled nobles of the Southern Netherlands, the duke of Arschot-prince/count of Arenberg and the marquis of Havré, both gentlemen of the chamber to the archduke, were honoured with the collar of the Golden Fleece for their

\textsuperscript{43} Council of State, Madrid, October 7, 1614, and February 11, 1615, with a memorandum from Arenberg to Philip III, AGS, E. leg. 2029.
\textsuperscript{44} “Sobre particulares de Flandes,” Madrid, July 26, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 2027; “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliba [...] sobre aclarar los sueldos a los gobernadores de provincias en Flandes,” Madrid, April 27, 1614, AGS, E. 2028; Alicia Esteban Estríngana, \textit{Guerra y finanzas en los Países Bajos católicos: De Farnesio a Spínola, 1592–1630} (Madrid, 2002), 161.
\textsuperscript{45} For this oath and its preparations, begun in 1614, see Esteban Estríngana, “Los estados de Flandes,” 656-674.
memorable contribution to the success of the oath ceremony. The duke of Arschot’s contribution was especially valuable, as Spínola testified to Philip III when he praised the roles of two provincial governors: the governor of Artois, prince Lamoral de Ligne, and the governor of Tournai-Tournaisis, Charles de Lalaing, who had succeeded his nephew, Antoine de Lalaing, at the head of the county of Hoogstraten at the end of 1613.

Arschot proposed the oath in the province of Hainaut, which his uncle Charles de Croÿ had governed, since the then titular governor, Charles de Longueval, count of Bucquoy, was away on an embassy to Madrid (to congratulate the monarch on the occasion of the prince’s recent marriage to Isabella of Bourbon); he also played a crucial role in Brabant province, as one of the members of the States-Provincial. The actual admission of Arschot and Havré into the Order of the Golden Fleece was delayed till 1618, but Philip III was in a position to use this resource of patronage with them at that juncture, because they had both just succeeded their fathers as heads of their estates (Charles-Alexandre de Croÿ, marquis of Havré, at the end of 1613 and Philippe-Charles d’Arenberg, duke of Arschot, at the beginning of 1616) and neither of them was a member of the Order. Not surprisingly, most provincial governors were already members, and although there were some who had not been awarded a collar, their pre-eminent rank justified the award of those honoured in 1616, and which would stay in the memory of other titled nobles, predisposing them to work to obtain the collar when sovereignty over of Flanders was restored to the Spanish Monarchy after Albert’s death.

47 Spínola to Philip III, Brussels, May 14, 1616, AGS, E. leg. 2299.
48 One who did not have the collar was the governor of Limburg-OutreMeuse and lord steward to the Archdukes, count Maximilien of Sainte-Aldegonde, but simply baron Noirarmes until 1605, Janssens and Duerloo, Armorial, 3, 419; nor did the governor of Tournai-Tournaisis and gentleman of the chamber to Albert, Charles de Lalaing, count of Hoogstraten, but simply baron Achicourt until the end of 1613, when he succeeded his nephew Antoine de Lalaing, who left no legitimate issue, Albert to Philip III, Brussels, March 8, 1616, AGRB, SEG, reg. 179, fol. 107, and AGS, E. leg. 2299.
The case of Charles de Lalaing, count of Hoogstraten, gentleman of the chamber to the archduke, is paradigmatic in this respect. A few months before the oath ceremony was held, he had been refused admission to the Order of the Golden Fleece, requested on his behalf by Albert in March 1616; nevertheless, just after the oath was sworn, Philip III granted him an entertainment of eighty escudos a month, charged to the “Spanish provisions.” The award was justified on the grounds that Charles de Lalaing had been governor since January 1615 and probably was not in receipt of any entertainment. Philip IV granted him the collar of the Golden Fleece in April 1621, a few months before Albert’s death, albeit in the context of the extravagance that marked the opening of the reign of the king who held the right of succession to the Archdukes.

The way Philip III managed the resources of patronage at his disposal with the high-titled nobility – resources from his royal exchequer and offers of the rank of Knight of the Golden Fleece, which implied an increase of rank within the internal hierarchy of the nobility itself – produced the desired effects, since that same nobility showed its enthusiasm for serving the monarch, that is, a readiness to defend his interests when these were at stake. This occurred in the year 1616, the start, to some extent, of the process of reincorporating the Archducal Netherlands into the Spanish Monarchy.

MIDDLING NOBILITY

The middling nobility were also represented in the States-Provincial and their determination to support the monarch’s interests in the same context, the reincorporation of the Archducal Netherlands into the Spanish Monarchy, seems beyond question. Following the offer made by Philip III in 1613, their desire to obtain military habits and posts in the monarch’s domestic service confirms the success of the negotiations entered into with them and explains their resolve in defending those interests. Even so, it is worth considering whether the expectations negotiated at the time with the middling nobility were created by the

49 Albert to Philip III, Brussels, March 8, 1616, “Que se omita la respuesta,” AGS, E. leg. 2299; and Philip III to Albert, San Lorenzo, September 10, 1616, AGS, E. leg. 1853.
monarch, or merely encouraged by him. The admission of Flemish into the Spanish Military Orders and royal household prior to 1613 might suggest that the expectations already existed and that Philip III confined himself to encouraging them whenever it would clearly benefit him to do so, that is, the monarch retained certain ties and bonds with the former Flemish subjects of his father after 1598 but decided to increase and strengthen those bonds from 1613 onwards. Bearing in mind that admission to Philip III’s service meant voluntarily and publicly embracing the ideological values that inspired and defined it, sharing them with all those who formed part of the community of subjects placed at his service throughout the Monarchy, it is worth finding out whether he had sparked off interest among the Flemish elites before 1613.

In the summer of 1601, don Rodrigo Niño de Lasso (future count of Añover and, at the time, lord steward to the Archdukes, gentleman of the chamber to Albert and commander of the two companies of light cavalry of the personal guard that attended him in his capacity as captain general of the army of Flanders) travelled to Valladolid to explain the financial problems being experienced by the army, which was partially deployed around Ostend. The official purpose of the journey was to request an increase in the monetary remittances that Philip III sent to the provinces, but, just as with don Rodrigo Calderón in 1613, Niño de Lasso arrived at the monarch’s court with the task of supporting a host of claims by private individuals in Albert’s name. Among them, were those of baron Barbançon (habit and commandery); lord Grobbendonk (habit); Philippe de Croÿ, count of Solre (habit and commandery for one of his sons); Philippe de Rubempré, Lord Everberghe – gentleman of the chamber to Albert, master of the hunt of Brabant and first-born of baron Vertaing, Antoine de Rubempré – (habit); and the marquis of Havré (post of honorary gentleman of the chamber to the king).  

It is evident, then, that the interest of the Flemish in military habits had arisen before 1613. After 1598, it looks as if some of the Archdukes’ vassals still remembered the prince who, had the right of succession been followed, would have been their legitimate sovereign on the death of Philip II, and that Philip III had not forgotten them. The marquis of Havré, who did not have a key to Albert’s chamber, obtained the

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51 Council of State, Valladolid, September 20, 1601, “Por las personas encomendadas del señor archiduque Alberto;” “Los encomendados del señor Archiduque,” n.d; also “Relación de las personas que ha encomendado don Rodrigo Niño de Lasso en nombre de Su Alteza para ávitos y encomiendas,” all in AGS, E. leg. 2764.
rank of gentleman of the chamber to Philip III. To the list of aspirants to a habit must be added Charles de Lalaing, baron Achicourt (future count of Hoogstraten, but uncle of the titular head of the county at the time, Antoine de Lalaing), who requested and was granted a habit of Santiago in 1601. As we will see below, the list was made up of members of the untitled middling nobility, and second and third sons of titled nobles. The overall number of those recommended for habits and commanderies in 1601 was very high, and there was a risk that favours of honour of this kind would become devalued if they were handed out without applying rigorous criteria. Philip III opted, therefore, to favour the sons of titled nobles first.

—Baron Barbançon processed his admission to the Order of Calatrava between September 1606 and May 1607, after depositing 300 ducats with the Council of Military Orders. He processed it without having obtained the commandery, which Albert requested again on his behalf, but without success, in 1606 and 1609.

—Baron Achicourt (gentleman of the chamber to Albert and first, colonel, then maestre de campo of the Walloon infantry) was admitted to the Order of Santiago in 1612, seven years after depositing 400 ducats to initiate the admission process.

—The count of Solré’s son, Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, honoured with a habit of the Order of Calatrava, was a third son (the second of his second marriage); his identity was revealed to the Council of Military Orders in June 1605, although the admission procedure was delayed until June 1607. At that point, the young Croÿ informed the Council

52 Philip III to don Baltasar de Zúñiga, Valladolid, June 10, 1601, AGS, E. leg. 2224/2, 174.
53 Ibidem.
54 Philip III to Albert, n.p., March 16, 1602, “Relación de las personas que ha encomendado don Rodrigo Niño de Lasso,” AGS, E. leg. 2764.
55 Archivo Histórico Nacional de España (hereafter, AHNE), Órdenes Militares, expedientillo 9572. His file has not been preserved. Albert to Philip III, Brussels, December 10, 1606 and September 28, 1609, AGRB, SEG, reg. 176, fols. 91, 207; Janssens and Duerloo, Armorial, 2, 601.
56 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, exp. 4283, expedientillo 97, and lib.125, fols. 15r, 38v.
that Philip III had authorized him to change his Calatrava habit for one of the Order of Santiago. A new award certificate was dispatched in August 1607, shortly before his deposit was fixed at 300 ducats. The qualification evidence for admission to the Order of Santiago was assembled in the second semester of 1608, when he was about fifteen years old; he inherited the title of marquis of Renty on the death of his mother, Anne de Croÿ, when he was in Madrid serving as a page to queen Margaret of Austria. The evidence was approved in February 1609, when his title to a habit of a Knight of Santiago was dispatched.  

With respect to the other aspirants in 1601:

—Baron Grobbendonk requested the habit of one of the three Military Orders yet again in 1610. Despite the favourable opinion of the Council of State, Philip III was reluctant to grant it at that time. The letters patent that made the award of a habit of Santiago official are dated November 1612. In February 1613, Grobbendonk’s deposit was fixed at 200 ducats to pay for the qualification evidence. His title was dispatched in July 1615.

—Lord Everbergh obtained the habit in September 1603, thanks to the persistence of the archduke, who had requested it again on his behalf, once he had become baron Vertaing in August of the same year. He obtained it at the same time as the annual pension of 600 ducats, payable through the royal embassy in Brussels, for being “one of the principal and most qualified” gentlemen without title in the Archducal Netherlands, head of the House of Rubempré (holder of the hereditary title of master of the hunt of Brabant) and “a man of great power and influence” throughout the States of Brabant. The letters patent authorizing a habit of Santiago are dated November 1604. The Council of Military Orders received, along with his genealogy, a memorandum from Philippe de Rubempré requesting Philip III “to obtain the information on his qualities with the least cost and deposit

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57 Andrés de Prada to Francisco González de Heredia, Valladolid, June 15, 1605, and Pedro de Gamboa to the same, from his home, June 25, 1605, with the genealogy of Charles Philippe de Croÿ, AHNE, Ordenes Militares, leg. 1396/1, Santiago, exp. 2225, expedientillo 175 and lib.125, fols. 15r, 37v, and lib.126, fol. 54v; Georges Martin, Histoire et généalogie de la Maison de Croÿ (Lyon, 2001), 102.

58 Council of State, Madrid, November 24, 1610, AGS, E. leg. 2782; AHNE, Ordenes Militares, expedientillo 316 and lib.125, fols. 181v, 205v, 211v and 261v. His file has not been preserved.

59 Council of State, Valladolid, September 20, 1603, AGS, E. leg. 2765.
possible” since he was serving “close to the person of the [...] Most Serene Archduke and on the occasions of war occurring in the Low States spending his wealth there, and as he has lost it, so he is suffering need.” The deposit amounted to 300 ducats. His qualification evidence was processed between January and May 1609, but the Council of Military Orders ordered it to be repeated in 1610 because each and every one of “the places of origin of his parents and grandparents given by the aspirant” had not been visited. The second investigation, to fill in the gaps of the first one, was carried out in April 1614 and his title dispatched in October of the same year. By then, Philippe of Rubéempré had obtained the title of count Vertaing (in February 1614).\(^6\)

But there were more Flemish who joined one or other of the three Spanish Military Orders before Philip III had offered military habits to subjects of the Archdukes at the end of March 1613:

—Richard de Mérode, Lord of Ognies and younger brother of Philippe de Mérode, baron Frentzen (governor of Bruges and grand master of the hunt in the county of Flanders from 1615, count of Middelbourg from 1617 and later, lord steward to the Archdukes). Richard de Mérode had served as an infantry and cavalry captain, as governor of a stronghold and as lieutenant colonel of a regiment of fifteen companies of Walloon infantry. He obtained the habit in 1602 and was admitted to the Order of Calatrava in 1604, after making a deposit of 300 ducats. At that date, he was a gentleman of the boca and lieutenant in the Bodyguard of Archeros of Philip III, a post he held between 1598 and 1612, when he returned to Flanders to serve as governor of Bapaume.\(^6\)

—Jean Pyramus, page to archduke Albert and a native of Antwerp. He had German ancestors on his father’s side. His father, Conrad Pyramus, captain of the German infantry and a native of Brussels, was the son of don John of Austria’s mother, Barbara Blomberg, originally


\(^6\) AHNE, *Ordenes Militares*, expedientillo 9518. His file has not been preserved; Council of State, Valladolid, October 11, 1603, AGS, E. leg. 2765; a memorandum from Mérode to Francisco de Idiáquez, n.p., January 11, 1600, AGS, E. leg. 1743; another memorandum from Mérode, seen in February 1612, AGS, E. leg. 1757; Janssens and Duerloo, *Armorial*, 2, 752.
from the Imperial city of Regensberg, and Hieronymous Pyramus Kegel, a native of Villach, in the archduchy of Carinthia. On his mother’s side, his roots were in the provinces of Hainaut and Tournai, since he was a nephew of Charles de Cottrel, baron Saint-Martin and Lord of Bois-de-Lessines, and grandson of Nicolas de Cottrel and Louise Rubempré, sister of Antoine de Rubempré, baron Vertaing. He obtained the habit of Santiago in October 1607. To join the Order, he paid a deposit of 200 ducats and his qualification evidence was gathered between January and April 1609, when he was about eighteen years old. His title was dispatched in June 1609. In the spring of 1608, Philip III had assigned him an entertainment of fifty ducats a month, to be received in Antwerp Castle and, in the autumn of 1612, the monarch sent a letter of recommendation to Albert in support of Pyramus’s aspiration to obtain a post as gentleman of the *boca* in his household “as he was of an age to stop being a page.”

—Charles-Albert de Longueval, son of the artillery general of the army of Flanders, Charles-Bonaventure de Longueval, count of Bucquoy, and gentleman of the chamber to Albert. He obtained the habit of Calatrava in 1612 and processed his admission to the Order between July 1612 and 1614, after depositing 200 ducats.

—Antoine de Beaufort and Goignies, son of the late Louis de Beaufort, Lord of Boisleux and Walincourt, governor of Quesnoy, captain of the lancers and “lieutenant general of the mounted gendarmes of the country of Artois.” He obtained the habit of Santiago in March 1613 and began the process of admission to the Order that same month, paying a deposit of 200 ducats. In December 1612, he had replaced Richard de Mérode as lieutenant of the Bodyguard of *Archeros* and obtained a post as gentleman of the *boca* to the king. At that time, he was about twenty and had been in Madrid for several years, having entered the royal household as a page in December 1611. He was one

62 AHNE, *Ordenes Militares*, Santiago, exp. 6516, expedientillo 178 and lib.125, fol. 102r; Philip III to Albert, Madrid, May 17, 1608, AGRB, SEG, reg. 176, fol. 174; memorandum from “Don Juan de Piramus, sobrino del Serenísimo don Juan de Austria,” May 24, 1613, AGS, E. leg. 1770.

63 Antonio de Aróztegui to the duke of Lerma, with a reply from the duke in the margin, n.p., March 2, 1612, AGS, E. leg. 2294; AHNE, *Ordenes Militares*, expedientillo 9618. His file has not been preserved.

64 AHNE, *Ordenes Militares*, Santiago, exp. 925, expedientillo 328, and lib.125, fols.19r, 184v and 192r, and lib.126, fols. 19r, 38r, 79v and 141r; Archivo General del Palacio Real (hereafter, AGPR), reg. 5730 (no pagination).
of the few Flemish who did so before Philip III offered specific posts in his domestic service for subjects of the Archdukes, also at the end of March 1613.\footnote{Martínez Millán and Visceglia, \textit{La Monarquía de Felipe III}, 2: 735.}

Antoine de Beaufort’s habit ought to be considered the first to be awarded to a Flemish after the offer was formalized; the royal provision designating the informants, whose responsibility was to gather the qualification evidence, is dated April 1613. The evidence was assembled between July and August of the same year and his title was dispatched the following December. The speed with which it was processed leads us to think that Philip III may have used it as an incentive for possible aspirants to a knight’s habit in a Military Order, especially for well-placed aspirants like young Beaufort. The testimonies included in his evidence identify him as a relative of the count of Solre’s first wife, daughter of baron Philippe de Beaufort, an ordinary general deputy of the corps of nobility in the States of Artois, and head of the House of Beaufort, the first family of Arras and one of the most important in the county of Artois. According to several witnesses questioned in the city of Arras, this was a House of knights-bannerets, “which means that they have privileges to raise levies in the service of their prince and there are other knights and gentlemen who follow them.”\footnote{AHNE, \textit{Órdenes Militares}, Santiago, exp. 925.} In fact, Antoine’s father, Louis de Beaufort, had been the lieutenant of one of the fifteen companies of mounted gendarmes assembled in 1602 to prevent the relief of Ostend, the company captained by the count of Solre.\footnote{Henri Louis Gustave Guillaume, “Lettre sur les bandes d’ordonnances adressée à l’Académie,” \textit{Bulletin de l’Académie des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique}, vol. 8, no. 1 (1851), 101 and 112.}

The number of aspirants to a habit who were natives of the Archducal Netherlands identified between mid-1613 and Albert’s death, in July 1621, indicates that Philip III’s incentive was not in vain. Two of those aspirants were sons of baron Hoboken, and there were also twelve others.

—Jean Charles de Grobbendonk, Hoboken’s eldest son. Born in 1590, he obtained the habit in 1613, passed on by his father. He began the admission process to the Order of Santiago in December 1616, with a deposit of 300 ducats. His title was dispatched in October 1618. In 1621, he served in Flanders as a cavalry captain.\footnote{AHNE, \textit{Órdenes Militares}, Santiago, exp. 3625, expedientillo 461 and lib. 80, fol. 27v; lib.125, fol. 271v; lib. 126, fols. 64r and 257r.}
—Charles d’Oignies, son of Eustache d’Oignies, Lord Gruzon, maestre de campo of the Walloon infantry, acting governor of Ostend between 1605 and 1617, and governor of Hesdin after 1617. Charles processed his admission to the Order of Calatrava between May 1614 and December 1616, after paying a deposit of 300 ducats. According to the testimonies included in his qualification evidence, he was twenty-one years old and a soldier in the Spanish infantry tercio under the command of the maestre de campo, Simón Antúnez.69

—Jean Moulert, gentleman of the boca to the Archdukes and lieutenant in the Bodyguard of Archeros. He obtained the habit in July 1614. The letters patent that made the award of the Order of Calatrava official were issued in October of that year and his genealogy was presented in May 1615. The deposit was fixed at 300 ducats and his qualification evidence, gathered in the course of 1616, was approved in April 1617. His title was dispatched in August 1617.70 He died at the end of 1625 as the count of Hautrepe.

—Ferdinand van Boisschot, auditor general of the army of Flanders, member of the Privy Council of Brussels and baron Hoboken’s replacement at the head of the Archdukes’ embassy in London, a position he held until 1615. He requested the habit of one of the three Military Orders that same year and processed his admission to the Order of Santiago between May and October 1616,71 at the same time as he was starting his period as ordinary ambassador of the Archdukes in Paris (1616–1621), with an entertainment of forty escudos a month assigned by Philip III.72 In 1622, he obtained a judge’s position on the Council of State in Brussels and, in 1626, the post of Chancellor of Brabant.

69 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Calatrava, exp. 782, expedientillo 9646 and lib. 356, fols. 502r–504r. For the inclusion of Flemish soldiers in the Spanish infantry, see Alicia Esteban Estríngana, “Las provincias de Flandes y la Monarquía de España: Instrumentos y fines de la política regia en el contexto de la restitución de soberanía de 1621,” in La Monarquía de las naciones, 237.

70 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Calatrava, exp. 1745, expedientillo 9647 and lib. 204, fols. 136v, 298v and 301r; and lib. 357, fols. 87r, 374v–375r and 449r.

71 Council of State, Madrid, August 20, 1615, AGS, E. leg. 2777; AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, exp. 1123, expedientillo 15396 and lib. 125, fols. 241v and 263r; and lib. 126, fol. 7r.

—Philippe de Laloo, gentleman of the household to Albert and son of Alonso de Laloo, secretary of the former Supreme Council of Flanders and grefier of the Order of the Golden Fleece between 1580 and 1598. The letters patent awarding the habit are dated September 1616 and the admission procedure to the Order of Santiago, once the deposit of 300 ducats had been paid, continued until April 1618, when his title was dispatched.\footnote{73}{AHNE, \textit{Órdenes Militares}, Santiago, exp. 4284, expedientillo 15398 and lib. 125, fol. 261r; lib. 126, fols. 38v, 39v, 123r and 167r.}

—Maximilien de Houchin, Lord Gulzin or Goelzin, sargento mayor of a Walloon infantry tercio (from 1611) and the count of Bucquoy’s cousin. He had laid claim to a habit at the beginning of 1613 and obtained it at the end of 1616, having become by then maestre de campo of his own tercio (he was promoted in July 1614).\footnote{74}{“El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva,” Madrid, January 16, 1613; “Mos de Gulsin, sobrino del conde de Bucoy, que pretende otro ábito. Al conde [de la Oliva] le parece que lo podría acordar adelante. Al comendador mayor de León [Juan de Idiáquez] le parece lo mismo,” AGS, E. leg. 2027; Spínola to Philip III, Brussels, January 29, 1613; AHNE, \textit{Diversos} [Miscellaneous], Autógrafos [Autograph] collection, 10, n. 820; Albert to Philip III, Brussels, January 27, 1617, AGS, E. leg. 2301. He was a cousin and not a nephew of the then (second) count of Bucquoy, Charles-Bonaventure de Longueval, because he was the son of Éléonore de Longueval, the younger sister of the first count of Bucquoy, Maximilien de Longueval, the father of Charles-Bonaventure, see Louis de Haynin, seigneur du Cornet, \textit{Histoire générale des guerres de Savoie, de Bohême, du Palatinat et des Pays-Bas, 1616–1627}, ed. Aimé Louis Philémon de Robaulex de Soumoy, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1868), 2: 90.}

A note addressed to the secretary of the Council of Military Orders in November 1618 showed that it was a Calatrava habit. The letters patent awarding the habit are dated in March 1619.\footnote{75}{AHNE, \textit{Órdenes Militares}, lib. 205, fol. 67v. His file has not been preserved. There is however, a note from the duke of Uceda to the secretary, Alonso Núñez de Valdivia, from el Pardo, 8-11-1618, in the same section, Calatrava, exp., n. c. 95 (this catalogue number is provisional).}

He distinguished himself in the Palatine expedition in 1620 and Spínola entrusted him with the government of the town of Oppenheim on the Rhine.\footnote{76}{Philip IV to Albert, Madrid, August 11, 1621, AGS, E. leg. 1781.}

—Pierre de Gomiécourt, Lord Lagnicourt and gentleman of the boca to the Archdukes. He obtained a habit early in 1617 and his qualification evidence to gain admission to the Order of Santiago was gathered in the course of 1618 when he was thirty years old. It was approved in December of that year and his title to a knight’s habit was
dispatched in March 1619. His father, Adrien de Gomiécourt, had been governor of Maastricht and Hesdin, a gentleman of the boca to Philip II and also a knight of the Order of Santiago (from 1582).

—Jean Alegambe, son of Jean d’Alegambe, Lord Vertbois, and grandson of the councillor of the Great Council of Mechlin (or Malines), Jean du Bois. He obtained the habit of the Order of Calatrava in May 1617. The letters patent making the award official were dated August of that year and the admission procedure to the Order, once the deposit of 300 ducats had been paid, lasted till August 1618, when the title was dispatched.

—François de Mérode, eldest son of Richard de Mérode (a knight of Calatrava since 1604) and menino to the infanta Isabella. He obtained the habit in July 1619 at the age of ten. The letters patent granting the Calatrava habit are dated October 1620. He paid a deposit of 300 ducats and the title was dispatched in September 1621.

—Pierre de Grobbendonk, baron Hoboken’s son. Born in 1601, he obtained the Order of Calatrava habit in September 1620. The royal letters patent granting it are dated the same month. He paid a deposit of 200 ducats, his qualification evidence was approved in April 1621, and his title dispatched in the following May. By then, he had spent several years in Madrid serving as a page in the royal household, but he had been careful to prepare for his return to Flanders; late in 1619, he was granted a vantage of twelve escudos a month to be paid there once he had decided to serve as an infantryman in his national army.

77 Albert to Philip III, Brussels, March 29, 1617, AGS, E. leg. 2301; AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, exp. 3493 and lib. 125, fol. 311v; lib. 126, fols. 82v, 106r–v. His expedientillo has not been preserved. In 1633, when he was governor of Béthune (Artois), he obtained from Philip IV the title of count of Gomiécourt. For this Artois seigneurie, see Janssens and Duerloo, Armorial, 2, 203. In 1635, he was appointed governor of the province of Artois.

78 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, exp. 3494.

79 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, exp. 3493 and lib. 125, fol. 311v; lib. 126, fols. 30r, 31r, 82v, 102r, 105r and 193r; lib. 357, fol. 368r; lib. 358, fols. 39v, 127r–128r and 380v. His file (Calatrava, 78bis) has not been preserved; Jean Charles Joseph de Vegiano and Jacques S. de Herckenrode, Nobiliaire des Pays-Bas et du comte de Bourgogne 4 vols. (Ghent, 1865-1868), 1: 23-24.


81 AHNE, Órdenes Militares, Calatrava, exp. 1117, expedientillo 9706 and lib. 205, fols. 141r, 183v; lib. 206, fols. 20v, 99r; lib. 358, fols. 350r–352r, 359r–v. For the
—Florent de Noyelles, baron Rossignol, gentleman of the chamber to Albert, captain of the Walloon infantry, captain of the lancers, and son of Adrien de Noyelles, Lord Marles, lord steward to the Archdukes, chief of the Council of Finance in Brussels and governor of Arras. Early in 1620, he applied for a pension using two supporting letters of recommendation from archdukes Albert and Isabella. In the spring, Philip III finally agreed to grant him a pension of 600 escudos in the kingdom of Naples, which he asked to collect from the paymaster-general of the army of Flanders, “in the same form and manner as is done with the other knights of his nation who enjoy similar pensions there.” His aspirations were satisfied in December of that same year and communicated to Albert in February 1621. By then, he had already obtained the habit of Santiago with no expectation of receiving a commandery. He obtained it in the summer of 1620, a year before inheriting the title of the count of Marles, which Adrien de Noyelles obtained in January 1621. In his case, the Council of State emphasized the advisability of mixing favours of honour with those of revenue, that “he might feel very confident,” but no documentation has come to light to vouchsafe his admission to the Order.

—Charles de Bourgogne, baron Wacken, captain of the Walloon infantry, captain of the lancers and haut-bailli in the city of Ghent. He was the son of the Vice-Admiral of the Sea, Antoine de Bourgogne, Lord Wacken, and grandson of Jean de Bonnieres, Lord Vichte, hereditary marshal of the county of Flanders and governor of Termonde. In 1620, he applied for the post that his father had held and a pension while he obtained promotion. He was granted a habit of Santiago in April 1621 and, in December of the same year, a standard letter of recommendation in his favour was sent to Isabella. After depositing 200 ducats, he processed his admission to the Order between August 1621 and January 1623, the date when his title was dispatched.

favour of the habit, see Órdenes Militares, leg. 99/1, 28; letters patent of Philip III, Madrid, December 31, 1619, “Doze escudos de ventaja a don Pedro de Grobendoncq,” AGS, E. leg. 1782.

82 Council of State, Madrid, February 20, 1620, April 9, 1620 and December 24, 1620, AGS, E. leg. 2782; Philip III to Albert, Madrid, February 5, 1621, AGS, E. leg. 1781; Juan de Ciriza to Alonso Núñez de Valdivia, San Lorenzo, August 24, 1620; AHNE, Órdenes Militares, leg. 99/1, 50; Janssens and Duerloo, Armorial, 3, 77.

83 Philip III to Albert, n.p., January 1, 1621, and Aranjuez, May 18, 1622, AGS, E. legs. 1781 and 1782; Philip IV to Isabella, Madrid, December 16, 1621, idem, leg.
—Charles-Philippe de Liedekerke, Lord of Ackeren and Nieuwerkerken, viscount of Baillul and gentleman of the *boca* to the Archdukes. He was the son of Antoine de Liedekerke, baron Heule, Lord of Moorsele, Axel and Gracht and lieutenant of one of the fifteen companies of mounted gendarmes assembled to prevent the relief of Ostend in 1602, the one captained by the marquis of Havré. He obtained the habit in June 1621 and began to process his admission to the Order of Santiago in April 1622, having paid a deposit of 300 ducats. His qualification evidence, gathered between June 1622 and June 1623, was approved by the Council of Military Orders in September 1623 and his title dispatched in the following October.\(^\text{84}\)

—Charles de Courteville, Lord Sasbroek (perhaps Assebroek), gentleman of the household to the Archdukes. Albert requested a military habit for him early in May 1621, appealing to the services inherited from his forebears, his own and to provide an incentive to future services.\(^\text{85}\) There is no record of the habit being granted nor any record of his being admitted to any Military Order.

All those aspirants before and after 1613\(^\text{86}\) were members of the middling nobility or second sons of titled houses with links to the administrative bureaucracy, the army or the domestic service of the Archdukes, with one exception: Charles-Bonaventure de Longueval’s son and heir, who would inherit the title of count of Bucquoy on the death of his father in 1621. His admission to the Order of Calatrava can be explained by

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\(^\text{84}\) Guillaume, “Lettre sur les bandes d’ordonnances”; AHNE, *Ordenes Militares*, leg. 99/1, 65; lib. 80, fols. 351v–354r; lib. 84, fol. 20v; lib.126, fol. 238v; lib. 127, fols. 45v, 46v, 193v; Santiago, exp. 1162 and expedientillo 628; Janssens and Duerloo, *Armorial*, 1 [see n. 30], 361; Du Cornet, *Histoire générale des guerres de Savoie*, 2: 100.

\(^\text{85}\) Albert to Philip IV, Brussels, May 8, 1621, AGRB, SEG, reg. 185, fol. 215.

the fact that his father had been a member the same Order, and with a commandery, since 1586. In the spring of 1611, he accompanied Spínola to Madrid to pursue his claim at the court of Philip III; during that journey, he obtained a collar of the Golden Fleece for himself and authorization to cede the commandery to his son, since membership of two orders of chivalry was not permitted.

Admission of the middling nobility from the Southern Netherlands to the Orders of Santiago (which brought together the military nobility and nobility associated with local power and urban patricians) and Calatrava (which drew together the administrative nobility with political and courtly careers) but not to Alcántara (reserved for traditional nobles of the blood), is quite revealing. The examples subsequent to 1613 confirm that the greatest interest of the middling nobility in military habits was at this time, meaning that Philip III’s incentive policy had been a notable success. He had been able to convert the favour of a habit into an honour both sought after and highly-esteemed by the elites of a territory soon to be added to his Monarchy. It was a policy that could be regarded as profitable if one considers the apparent approval and acquiescence with which the same elites accepted the return of sovereignty to the Spanish Monarchy in 1621.

Posts in the royal household

Certain posts in the royal household (pages, meninos, ladies-in-waiting and gentlemen of the boca) were offered by Philip III in 1613 to attract young Flemish to come and live temporarily at the court in Madrid. It is worth recording who eventually did occupy them, or simply felt tempted to do so, in order to evaluate whether the attempt to convert admission to the royal household into a desirable and highly-prized honour for the Flemish elites was equally profitable for the king.

The post of gentleman of the boca was associated with the post of captain of the Bodyguard of Archeros; for this reason, it is not necessary to comment on the cases of Richard de Mérode (from 1598) and Antoine de Beaufort (from the end of 1612), or on the entry of anybody

87 Antonio de Aróztegui to the duke of Lerma, n.p., March 2, 1612, with response from Lerma in the margin, from the palace, March 1612, “La merced que S. M. ha hecho al conde de Bucoy del Tusón,” AGS, E. leg. 2294.
88 Postigo, Honor y privilegio en la Corona de Castilla, 189–196.
89 Esteban Estríngana, Madrid y Bruselas, 22.
into the royal household prior to 1613. There is one significant case, however: Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, marquis of Renty, the third son of the count of Solre, which goes a long way to clarifying the reasons that led the monarch to offer those posts.

When the evidence qualifying him for admission to the Order of Santiago was being collected, in the second half of 1608, the young Croÿ was living in Madrid. The date of his arrival at the court of Philip III is uncertain. He might have arrived with his father in the autumn of 1604, because, in May 1605, he entered as a page in the queen’s household. Two years later he was still at court in the care of his uncle, Jacques de Croÿ, marquis of Falces, captain of the Bodyguard of Archeros.

In a memorandum addressed to the duke of Lerma in March 1607, Falces sought the payment of a pension of 12,000 escudos a year that the count of Solre had been assigned in Sicily since 1599, and confessed his concern at his nephew Charles’s ill health. He did not want to see him “die in his care, and so, because he did not have the wherewithal to make him appear in the palace and court like the son of whom he is, he would wish to send him to his parents this spring.” The marquis communicated to the favourite his decision to return the boy to Flanders and asked Lerma to intercede with Philip III on his behalf to obtain permission, and also “some favour from his royal hand that might oblige the count, his father, always to take great pains in his royal service.” The memorandum was passed on to a Board that understood that it was impossible for Falces to support his nephew in accordance with his quality but stated it was not advisable to authorize the return of the young Croÿ. The reason was that his father had:

great influence and credit […] in Flanders, and having sent his son here to be brought up in the Palace, and it being convenient to the service of Your Majesty that it be done thus, it seems that in no manner is it meet to occasion his departure, but that since Your Majesty has done him the favour of a habit, it may please you to give him a commandery with which to maintain himself, because with this the marquis of Falces will be relieved

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90 For this journey by Solre, see Bernardo J. García García, “Ganar los corazones y obligar a los vecinos: Estrategias de pacificación en los Países Bajos (1604–1610),” in España y las 17 provincias, 1: 150–156.
91 Martínez Millán and Visceglia, La Monarquía de Felipe III, 2: 815.
92 “A Su excelencia el duque de Lerma. El marqués de Falces por su hermano el conde de Solre y su sobrino el marquesillo de Renty,” March 1607, AGS, E. leg. 1939, 17.
of the need to send him away, [and] he will be brought up in the devotion and service of Your Majesty and his father will be obliged.\textsuperscript{93}

He was not awarded the commandery, but Philip III ordered the Council of State to look into the payment of Solre’s pension to ensure that the young Croý had suitable means of support to keep him in Madrid. Keeping him in Madrid had a twofold objective: to provide him with an upbringing that would promote affection and obedience towards Philip III, and strengthen the obligation that his father already had towards the monarch.

The count of Solre’s decision to have one of his sons brought up at Philip III’s court is understandable because he himself had been attached to Philip II’s domestic service as the titular captain of the Bodyguard of Archeros between 1588 and 1596\textsuperscript{94} and formed part of a family branch of the House of Croý that had openly supported maintaining links with Philip III after 1598. But for other nobles of his rank to do the same during the Archdukes’ lifetime, as the monarch was trying to persuade them to do when he issued his offer in 1613, was not so easy, because a post in the royal household in Brussels could satisfy any expectations the high and middling nobility might have of obtaining a post in royal domestic service. And the impression is that neither body of nobles showed much interest in taking up posts in Philip III’s royal household between 1613 and 1621.

As far as the titled nobility is concerned, only the count of Berlaymont’s petition has been located. This was for a post of menino and another of lady-in-waiting to the prince and princess of Asturias for a son and daughter, in 1615. His request may be explained by the fact that he himself had not managed to obtain a post in the royal household in Brussels, although the count did not in the end send his children to Madrid: the two males died young and the surname Berlaymont does not appear among Isabella of Bourbon’s ladies-in-

\textsuperscript{93} Board of Two, Madrid, March 18, 1607, AGS, E. leg. 1938, 16.

\textsuperscript{94} For the designation of Philippe de Croý to occupy this post and his management at the head of the guard, see Alicia Esteban Estríngana, “¿El ejército en Palacio? La jurisdicción de la guardia flamenco-borgoñona de corps entre los siglos XVI y XVII,” in Antonio Jiménez Estrella and Francisco Andujar Castillo (eds.), ‘Los nervios de la guerra: estudios sociales sobre el ejército de la Monarquía Hispánica, siglos XVI-XVIII’ (Granada, 2007), 195–228.
Neither lord Raville’s son – the young Hartard of Raville, according to a letter of recommendation in his support addressed by Albert to Philip III in October 1615 – nor baron Grobbendonk’s are listed among the pages of the royal household. This leads us to suppose that the middling nobility did not respond to Philip III’s appeal either, in spite of the fact that some of them sought posts for their offspring in his domestic service after 1613. Two more examples support this view:

—Maximilien de Mérode, son of baron Philippe de Mérode, Lord Petersheim. In 1615, the baron requested and obtained a position of page for his son, who was fourteen years old, although there is no record of his having entered the royal household.

—Alexandre de Beaufort, younger brother of Antoine de Beaufort. He obtained a post as page to Philip III before 1618. When he was old enough to serve, he opted to stay in Flanders and join the Spanish infantry as a soldier. In 1620, he had been in the army for a year and a half and asked for an entertainment or vantage to pursue his military service in the Palatinate campaign. He was granted a vantage of twelve escudos a month to serve in his national infantry (the Walloon).

There is, in fact, only one recorded entry of a page of Flemish origin in the royal household of Philip III after 1613: baron Hoboken’s son, Pierre de Grobbendonk, who served in 1618, and was sworn in as a constillier [who accompanied the king to chapel or church or on journeys] in May 1622. He left Spain in the course of that same year, for in March 1623, he was serving in the army of Flanders, and in January 1624, he was placed on reserve with the rank of captain of the Walloon infantry in the tercio of the maestre de campo, Paul-Bernard de Fontaine.

As for the post of gentleman of the boca, one entry is recorded in 1614: Charles de Bonnières, baron Auchy, first son of the former baron Auchy, Jean de Bonnières, governor of Lens and Hénin. The Twelve Years’ Truce obliged him to abandon the Southern Netherlands and

96 Albert to Philip III, Brussels, October, no day, 1615, “Por Hartardo de Raville, su paje,” AGRB, SEG, reg. 518, fol. 80r.
97 Albert to Philip III, Brussels, September 17, 1615, AGRB, SEG, reg. 178, fol. 251.
98 Council of State, Madrid, August 2, 1620, AGS, E. leg. 2782.
move to the duchy of Milan, where he began his military service by recruiting an infantry company with a captain's commission issued, in 1609, by don Pedro Enríquez de Acevedo, count of Fuentes, governor and captain general of the duchy of Milan between 1600 and 1610. He travelled from Milan to Spain in the spring of 1611 with a letter of recommendation from Fuentes's successor, the constable of Castile, don Juan Fernández de Velasco, duke of Frías, to further his claims. At that time, he expressed his wish to continue to serve in the army of Flanders with an entertainment, but he aspired to the post of lieutenant in the Bodyguard of Archeros, left vacant by Richard de Mérode when he returned to the Southern Netherlands in 1612. When he did not obtain this post, he sought a position as gentleman of the boca to the king, which Philip III granted in February 1614, with the approval of the Archdukes. When his father died that same year, he was attached to the royal household in Madrid and he informed the monarch of his decision to return to Flanders to serve in the Spanish infantry. He returned in late 1614 with letters of recommendation from Philip III and high hopes of occupying the governorships that his father had just left vacant. Archduke Albert did not comply with his wishes, however, and so his ambitions turned towards securing a command in a cavalry company. He obtained one in 1616, the same year he married Ursula de Mancisidor, daughter of the archduke's secretary of State and War, Juan de Mancisidor. He took part in the Palatinate campaign at the head of a company of cuirassiers, and in the Flanders campaigns of 1621 and 1622, distinguishing himself in the failed siege of Bergen-op-Zoom.\footnote{Memorandum from baron Auchy, Carlos de Bonyeres [Charles de Bonnières] (to Juan de Ciriza), September 28, 1612, with a list of his own services and those of his forebears and a dispatch from Philip III to Albert, no day, no month, end of 1612, AGS, E. leg. 1770; Albert to Philip III, Brussels, May 2, 1611 and May 15, 1613; Isabella to Philip III, n.d. [1611]; Albert to Lerma, Brussels, May 18, 1613; memorandum from Carlos de Bonyeres (to Juan de Ciriza), August 9, 1614; “Relación de los serviçios de don Carlos de Boyeres, barón de Auchy” [1614]; Memorandum from baron Auchy (to Antonio de Aróztegui), April 10, 1615, all in AGS, E. leg. 1772; “El comendador mayor de León y el conde de la Oliva: Por don Carlos de Bonieres, barón Dauchi,” AGS, E. leg. 2028; Philip III to Albert, Madrid, June 20, 1615 and Albert to Philip III, Brussels, August 5, 1615, AGRB, SEG, reg. 178, fols. 144, 191–192; Albert to Philip IV and don Baltasar de Zúñiga, Brussels, May 17, 1621; idem., reg. 185, fol. 241; Isabella to Philip IV, Brussels, March 11, 1622; idem., reg. 187, fol. 114; Joseph Lefèvre, “Charles de Bonnières, baron d’Auchy,” Biographie Nationale de Belgique (Brussels, 1956–1957), 29: 317–319.}
As for the position of menino, Nicolas de Montmorency is a case in point. He was the eldest son of the count of Estaires, Jean de Montmorency, lord steward to the Archdukes and governor of the town of Aire, who improved his status considerably between 1617 and 1619 when he came into the estate of his elder brother, the Jesuit, François de Montmorency, and that of his uncle, Nicolas Montmorency, count of Estaires, chef of the Council of Finance (1603–1617) and member of the Council of State in Brussels (1609–1617).

Young Nicolas, who was born in 1603 and died during the 1629 campaign, must have been attached to prince Philip’s service of the chamber, first as a menino, and later, as an honorary gentleman, a rank with which, in the course of the 1620s, he must have returned to Flanders, in possession of the symbolic key to the chamber.

The future reconstruction of the household of the heir to the throne, established in 1615 after the celebration of his marriage to Isabella of Bourbon, might hold a few surprises and confirm the inclusion of more members of the Flemish elites in the domestic service of the family of Philip III; it is quite possible that the sons of Raville, Grobbendonk and Petersheim entered it. After all, the establishment of his household and the princess’s generated a demand for domestic servants which Philip III doubtless intended to satisfy through the offer of posts that he made in Flanders in 1613, that is, with a view to the subsequent establishment of the two households. But the presence of Flemish in two of the three royal households that coexisted in Madrid between 1615 and 1621 was negligible, if the members of the monarch’s Bodyguard of Archeros are discounted, since their posts were reserved specifically for natives of the Southern Netherlands and of the Franche-Comté. This enables us

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103 Detlev Schwennicke, Europäische Stammtafeln: Stammtafeln zur Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten, Neue Folge (Marburg, 1991), 14: table 129.

104 Two memoranda addressed to Philip IV by the count of Estaires, Jean de Montmorency, in 1630: “Lo que el conde de Esteres [...] representa con toda humildad” and “El segundo memorial del conde de Esterres […].” Also a letter from Isabella to Philip IV, n.p., n.d. [1630], AGS, E. leg. 2044, fols. 84, 86 and 87; Martínez Millán and Visceglia, La Monarquía de Felipe III, 1: 551–552.

105 Until 2013, the research group led by prof. José Martínez Millán has reconstructed two of these three households: that of the king Philip III and that of the princess Isabella of Bourbon, but not that of the prince Philip, also formed under a logic of the reign of Philip III, Martínez Millán and Visceglia, La Monarquía de Felipe III.
to state that, unlike the situation with the habits of the Spanish Military Orders, the success of the policy of patronage practised by Philip III in the sphere of his domestic service was moderate. And the reason was the fierce competition offered by the household of the Archdukes during that period: the Flemish elites increased their presence there after 1615, and not so much because of the additional number of posts in the service – which certainly increased slightly in all departments – as because of the proportional increase of Flemish among the total number of domestic servants.¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

After analysing two key moments in the reign of Philip III – which coincide with the beginning of the sovereignty of the Archdukes (1601) and the early part of the final phase (1613), after the halfway point of this period – and reconstructing the main lines of patronage policy implemented by the monarch to maintain and boost his relations with the Flemish elites, it is possible to draw certain conclusions.

Between Philip III and the Flemish elites, personal ties survived which the Archdukes consciously and deliberately helped to preserve from 1599 to 1621. From the outset of the Archdukes’ sovereignty, Albert and Isabella adopted the role of inevitable intermediaries on behalf of the Flemish elites, who constantly used their own sovereigns to seek favours from Philip III, basing their requests on their own service and merits, with the endorsement of the Archdukes expressed in the customary letters of recommendation addressed to the monarch. By the same token, Albert and Isabella always undertook to make their subjects aware of the graces and favours conferred by Philip III, since only with their approval or leave could they receive rewards or gifts from a foreign sovereign.

The patronage resources that Philip III employed with the Archdukes’ subjects were of two types, honour and wealth, because the offices that provided legal and institutional means of action within the territory were at Albert’s entire disposal and also because, in his position as captain general of the army of Flanders, Albert also controlled the

advancement and military promotion of his vassals. Ennobling his subjects and promoting members of the Flemish nobility in rank were likewise exclusive prerogatives of Albert as sovereign prince, although Philip III was prepared to grant certain honours which would enhance the prestige of the Flemish elites. Such honours could be used to advance positions in the rank hierarchy in the Southern Netherlands: the accolade of Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece among the high titled nobility; the honour of Knight of any of the three Spanish Military Orders (Santiago, Calatrava or Alcántara) among the middling and lower nobility; and the privileged status of domestic servant to the monarch, through the admission of these three types of nobility into the royal household (or royal households, as there were three between 1615 and 1621) in Madrid.

As for the Order of the Golden Fleece, Albert was always commissioned by Philip III to present the collars to his vassals, because, with respect to this Order, the monarch had delegated to Albert the power to carry out and fulfil the favours he had granted in 1599. Delegation occurred when those Knights of the Golden Fleece who were vassals of Albert requested of Philip III exemption from the oath of allegiance that they owed him as sovereign of the Order, since now they owed allegiance to their own territorial sovereign, archduke Albert. The resolution, taken by Philip III in 1599, astutely resolved the conflicting or competing loyalties that had arisen in the context of the cession of sovereignty of the territory: the loyalties were given a hierarchical structure. The allegiance due to Philip III was the direct consequence of a prior, more fundamental one: that due to archduke Albert.

In the case of the Spanish Military Orders, delegation was not necessary, since the Grand Master of the Order did not take part directly in the induction ceremony of the new knights of the military habit. But the bond of personal allegiance also operated in these Orders since their members owed allegiance and obedience to the monarch as the administrator in perpetuity of the offices of Grand Master and swore an oath to this effect during the induction ceremony. In addition,

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107 In the aforementioned army, Philip II and Philip III only reserved for themselves the appointment of the two most senior posts in the military organization chart (the maestre de campo general and the cavalry general), the appointment of the governors and castellans of Antwerp, Ghent, Cambrai, Ostend and two or three other (indeterminate) towns, and the superintendent of military justice, Esteban Estríngana, Madrid y Bruselas, 38–39.

108 Esteban Estríngana, Madrid y Bruselas, 58, n. 121.
knights of the habit who were not natives of the kingdoms of Spain did not only have to swear the oath; the certificate granting the habit and the title itself of knight of the habit included an ordinary clause which established a prerequisite for admission. This was the signing, before a notary, of a deed of obligation stating that the new knights were committed to “remaining subject and obedient” to the “establishments and definitions of the Order” (their statutes and chapter laws) and to their perpetual administrator. It can be said that they contractually obliged their persons and all their possessions, goods and revenues, both present and future, to the maintenance of obedience due to the Grand Master, in other words, to maintaining an attitude of permanent willingness to defend with deeds the causes of the service of Philip III. These causes could be defended in several ways; the military way was one, but it was not the only one that interested the monarch, as is demonstrated by the award of the favour of a habit to Flemish with no experience, either personal or among their ancestors, of military service.

For the Flemish, this obligation did not take precedence over any other, since Philip III was not their natural sovereign. Therefore, it did not serve to strengthen any other obligation with a prior claim on them but to establish a new one. Using the offer and award of habits, Philip III invited the Flemish elites to enter into this obligation in 1613. The Flemish who joined the Spanish Military Orders established it voluntarily and consciously, although some did so before this offer was officially formalized in 1613. This shows that they were confident of profiting in some way from the rank of knight of the habit much earlier, even, than when it began to look likely that Philip III would be the Archdukes’ successor because they had no issue. The offer boosted this confidence when it became clear that Philip III was the indisputable successor.

The Flemish who became members of the Spanish Military Orders after 1613 were from the middling nobility. Seemingly, the offer of favours enabled these nobles to negotiate their expectations directly with the monarch, with the Archdukes acting as intermediaries, but dispensing with other mediators traditionally used in the territory, such as the high titled nobility, who acted as heads of the principal kinship groups, in other words, as patrons of client networks that coexisted throughout all the provinces. These were patrons who acted as intermediaries between their network of dependants and the territorial sovereign and who, to a certain extent, Philip III was concerned to identify and classify hierarchically by assigning pensions payable
out of the Spanish provisions during the period of the Archdukes’ sovereignty.

The favours of honour offered in 1613 were not only military habits, but also posts in the royal households in Madrid. Occupying these posts served to establish and strengthen bonds of allegiance and personal obedience with the monarch—entry into the household also demanded an oath of loyalty—and responsibility for making the offer in the name of Philip III, was given to Spínola. This shows that the policy of moving closer to the Flemish elites, set in train by Philip III with a view to the future recovery of sovereignty over the Southern Netherlands, required the traditional mediation by the Archdukes to be reduced and the obligation to Philip III to become a priority rather than a subsidiary reference for those elites. For those Flemish who responded to the offer, the journey to Madrid and service in the royal households would allow them to establish a direct relationship with Philip III, without mediation on the part of the Archdukes. From this point of view, the “assault” by Flemish elites on the household of the Archdukes after 1615 cannot only be interpreted as Albert yielding to pressure from his subjects because he was committed to rewarding all those who had contributed to the success of the 1616 oath. It can also be interpreted as a conscious gesture of resistance to a policy of patronage that appeared to harm his interests as a sovereign prince. Albert did not object to his subjects entering Philip III’s domestic service and interceded on behalf of all those who showed interest in it, but he tried to ensure that as few as possible were seduced by the idea.

Some of the Flemish who had joined the Spanish Military Orders before 1621 had obtained posts in the royal households in Madrid. Therefore, an attempt was made to deliberately reinforce the bonds of allegiance and personal obedience in certain cases and the example of the pages is the most revealing. Flemish pages in the kingdom of Philip III received habits (Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, Antoine de Beaufort and Pierre de Grobbendonk). It would appear that an upbringing suited to the interests and aims of the service of Philip III was rounded off by taking up the ideological values of the Military Orders. These values revolved round the enhancement and defence of a religious cause and specific policy, identified with the Catholic monarch, that the young sons of prominent members of the Flemish elites would have to put into practice when they returned to the Southern Netherlands and

109 Thomas, “La fiesta como estrategia de pacificación”.

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occupied political and military posts. There, they would make public display of their status as “crusading knights,” wearing the emblem of their Order – the red cross of Santiago, the vermilion of Calatrava or green of Alcántara – on their chests, which distinguished both them and their lineage as noble and limpios (here, untainted by dealings with heretics and rebels). Membership of the Order was an element of social distinction, and also of ideological and political identification: the crusading knight shared and represented the interests, ways of life and ideals of the Catholic Nobility.\textsuperscript{110} They formed an outstanding and exemplary elite of a “community of combatants” committed to actively fighting for the same causes. They were, in other words, “a community of servants” at the disposal of the Catholic monarch and voluntarily defending, with deeds, the causes of his service.

\textsuperscript{110} Postigo Castellanos, “Caballeros del Rey Católico”, 196–204.