A Constellation of Courts

Published by Leuven University Press

Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/39247.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/39247

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1494471
“Vous estez les premiers vassaux que j’aye et que j’aime le plus.” Burgundians in the Brussels courts of the widowed Isabella and of the Cardinal-Infant don Ferdinand (1621-1641)"

Birgit Houben

Introduction

The Spanish Monarchy was a composite state made up of various principalities and territories, each with its own languages, customs, economies and legal systems. The only thing that all these different lands had in common was the person of the ruler. Within the Monarchy, personal origins depended not only on one’s place of birth, but also on the system of legal rules and privileges that defined that place. This makes the term ‘nation’ highly problematic, not only because the word had little exact definition at the time, but also because we now use it in a very different sense. A subject of the Spanish Monarchy might be Spanish, Italian, Portuguese or Netherlandish, but one could also speak of Castile and Aragon, or Brabant and Flanders, as distinct nations. Indeed, contemporaries sometimes went so far as to speak of the naciones of Seville, Lisbon and Florence. Somebody from Barcelona might, all at the same time, be of the Spanish, Aragonese, Catalan and Barcelona nations.1 The ‘nation’ to which a subject of the king of Spain belonged could be reducible to the most local unit of government. This makes it

1 I would like to thank Karine Klein, conservator at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Besançon, Paul Delsalle, Peter De Cauwer and René Vermeir for their help and advice. Abbreviations: AGS: Archivo General de Simancas; AGR: Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels; BMB: Bibliothèque municipale de Besançon; KB: Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels; RAH: Real Academia de Historia; CC: Collection Chifflet; CSC: Colección Salazar y Castro; E: estado; GR: Geheime Raad; SSO: Secretariat of State and War; ms: manuscript.
clear that in the territories of the king of Spain, the term ‘nation’ had layers of signification rather than a uniform meaning. At a local level, the people of the time undoubtedly felt their closest loyalty to be to their native province, giving the term a regional meaning. But in an international context, whether through contacts between the various realms within the Spanish Monarchy, or contacts with subjects of other monarchs, the geographical concept of the homeland broadened, so that a subject of the Spanish monarch would consider himself or herself primarily as a Spaniard, Southern Netherlander or Italian. For the purposes of the present study, this wider use of the term ‘nation’ seems most appropriate. We will be discussing Spaniards, Southern Netherlanders and Burgundians, although this last group was, again, a more regional designation. But as the Franche-Comté of Burgundy was comparatively isolated from all the other Spanish-Habsburg possessions, no broader geographical term can be applied to this province.²

The Franche-Comté or Free County of Burgundy, just to the east of the duchy of Burgundy, was one part of the Spanish-Habsburg composite state. The Franche-Comté had been among the dower lands of Margaret of Male (1350-1405), heiress of the count of Flanders, at her marriage to Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1342-1404). This couple laid the basis for a brand new dynasty that systematically acquired considerable territory. After the death of duke Charles the Bold in 1477 his only child Mary of Burgundy inherited this complex of states. The lack of a male heir meant that Louis XI of France laid claim to the duchy of Burgundy. Philip the Bold had, after all, only been enfeoffed with the duchy in 1364 as an apanage from his father, France’s king John the Good. Louis, however, not only occupied the duchy, but also invaded the Franche-Comté. The free county resisted this annexation and in 1493 France was forced to return it to Mary’s son, Philip the Fair. Thus the Franche-Comté was to remain a possession of the Spanish-Habsburg heirs to the Burgundian inheritance until the Peace of Nijmegen in 1678. After the loss of the ancestral duchy of Burgundy – a fact from 1477, but only officially accepted at the Peace of Cambrai in 1529 – the title of Burgundy passed to the Franche-Comté, as “le plus antique patrimoine de la maison de Bourgogne,” and henceforth ‘Burgundians’ meant the Franc-Comtois. In 1548 Charles

² John H. Elliott also takes the view that “loyalties were overwhelmingly reserved for the province of origin” but that “growing contacts with the outer world did something to give the natives of the peninsula a feeling of being Spaniards.” See Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (London, 1965), 7.
V brought together his territories in the Low Countries, or pays de par-deça, and the Franche-Comté of Burgundy, or pays de par-delà, in a new unity, the Burgundian Circle of the Holy Roman Empire. But the Franche-Comté, a fifteen-day ride from Brussels and lying like an island in a sea of non-Habsburg territories, by no means felt united with the Low Countries. The Burgundian dukes had given the Comtois their own Parlement, university and administrative institutions, so that the Franche-Comté had little in common with the Netherlandish territories. The only tie, apart from the person of the prince, was the fact that from 1531 the Franche-Comté was to be ruled from Brussels. Charles V formally provided for Burgundians to be called to Brussels to advise on matters affecting the distant county. In the following decades, people from the Franche-Comté were prominent among those active in the central organs of government in Brussels. Figures such as Nicolas and Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, Jean Richardot, Jean-Froissard de Broissia, and Nicolas Damant, a Southern Netherlander of Burgundian ancestry, had spectacular careers. The “plus antique patrimoine” enjoyed considerable autonomy through its involvement in central government, with the stipulation that the Privy Council in Brussels could only consider an affaire comtoise if it was allocated to a Burgundian councilor, and through the juridical sovereignty of the Franche-Comté, reflected in the powers of the Parlement of Dole, and the fact that this last institution, like all other administrative bodies within the Franche-Comté itself, was staffed entirely by Franc-Comtois. This autonomy was reinforced both by the remoteness of the Franche-Comté and by the absence of a court or other seat of central government in the county. Lucien Febvre was probably right in speaking of a “nationalisme naissant” in the 16th-century Franche-Comté. This was the period in which the first descriptions, maps and histories of the area were published.\(^3\)

The pronounced geographic diversity of the Spanish Monarchy was highly visible in, for instance, the administrative cadres and the army, where men of various backgrounds were employed. This diversity was equally apparent in the entourage of the sovereign. The court, and specifically the royal household, was, after all, one of the most important places in which the ruler could attempt to integrate the various territorial elites of his empire. It is no surprise that the household was truly multinational. A number of studies have shown that the same remarkable geographical diversity was also a characteristic of the courts of the governors-general of the Low Countries. Furthermore, after the gradual *castellanización* of the Madrid court under Philip II, the court policy of *naciones* probably became even more pronounced in Brussels. The geographical origins of members of the Brussels court, how these changed over time, the relative strength of the different groups, and the degree and types of interaction between them, are therefore important issues to study. There are a number of indications that these various groups brought their own norms and values with them, which could give rise to tensions. We do have to ask ourselves in how far the elites of the disparate Spanish-Habsburg possessions were interchangeable, and whether they formed closed groups at the Brussels court or, on the contrary, forged trans-national alliances.

4 José Eloy Hortal, “La casa del archiduque Ernesto durante su gobierno en los Países Bajos (1593-1595),” in Alvarez-Ossorio Alvariño and García García [see n. 1], 193.
5 José Martínez Millán, “Las naciones en el servicio doméstico de los Austrias españoles (siglo XVI),” in Alvarez-Ossorio Alvariño and García García [see n. 1], 131-161; Santiago Fernández Contri and Félix Labrador Arroyo, “Entre Madrid y Lisboa: El servicio de la nación portuguesa a través de la Casa Real, 1581-1598,” in idem, 163-191.
7 On this *castellanización*, see Martínez Millán, “Las naciones,” 142-143.
8 See e.g. Eloy Hortal, “La casa”, passim.
This article will attempt to clarify the position of the Burgundians in the successive Brussels courts of the widowed Isabella (1621-1633) and of the Cardinal-Infant don Ferdinand (1634-1641). This topic was not chosen at random. Examination of the sources relating to these two households shows that there was extremely close contact between the court office-holders from the Franche-Comté, and that despite their small numbers they played a leading role. This finding is in stark contrast to the assertions of other historians that the Burgundians at the Brussels court formed a tiny group of little importance, and simply count them as an adjunct to the Southern Netherlanders. Are these assertions correct? Or should we go by the sources? In other words, did the Burgundian court dignitaries really play a prominent role in Brussels? And if so, how can this be explained? First we will give an overview of the court servants with Burgundian backgrounds, before studying their mutual relations and contacts. Could they count on one another to get ahead in this competitive environment, and if so, did this make them a close-knit group? Their relations with Isabella and with the Cardinal-Infant will then be illuminated, to see whether they had influence with their rulers, as will the relations between these Burgundians and their home base, the Franche-Comté. Were they able to turn their position at the Brussels court to the profit of their homeland, and did they become real power brokers who mediated between the central authorities and the regional and civic elites of the Franche-Comté? Finally, this case study will be used to provide an answer to the question of whether there was any kind of nationalities policy at court. This article seeks to contribute not just to the history of the Brussels court, but also to the history of the Free County, which Marc Jacobs has diagnosed as suffering undue neglect in the historical study of the Spanish Netherlands. He indicates, quite rightly, that the Franche-Comté needs to be given a higher profile in Belgian historical studies in order to emphasize that this apparent ‘appendage’ has to be taken into account in writing the history of the Southern Netherlands.

---

9 Lanoye, “Structure”, 107; Roegis, Het hof; 79.
10 Jacobs, Parateksten, 4.
BIRGIT HOUBEN

THE BURGUNDIANS IN THE HOUSEHOLDS OF ISABELLA AND OF THE CARDINAL-INFANT: AN INTRODUCTION

Our subject here will be five Burgundian families who held high court office between 1621 and 1641. We will see that these families were very closely linked to one another, either through marriage or through patron-client relationships. It has to be emphasized that there were other Franc-Comtois serving in both households, but that they will not be considered here because they were among the lower office-holders of the court, such as the staff of the kitchens or the stables. It is not that these figures are of any less interest, but that the sources seldom go beyond their name and position. For many of the holders of lower places at court, the sources do not even provide evidence of their origins.11

The families d’Andelot, de Rye and de la Baume

Ferdinand le Blanc d’Andelot, Lord of Olans, Mignot and Myon, served as mayordomo in Brussels for at least thirty years. He is mentioned in this position at the court of the Archdukes as early as 1608. After the archduke Albert’s death he continued to serve under Isabella – and later under her nephew Ferdinand – as primer mayordomo. He died in office in 1638.12 He clearly belonged to a family with a strong record of service at Habsburg courts, for his father, Jean-Baptist, had been a gentilhomme de la casa to Philip II, and his grandfather caballerizo mayor to Charles V. One of Ferdinand’s sons, Nicolas-Antoine, was a chaplain in the archducal oratory. Other members of the family also entered the service of the court. George d’Andelot, Ferdinand’s uncle, had been a kämmerer to the emperor, and his grandson Adrien d’Andelot, Lord of Reusmes, became gentilhomme de la boca to the Archdukes. Ferdinand’s other uncle, Gaspar, married Antoinette de Rye, and one of Ferdinand’s daughters, Barbe, married Alexander, baron of Wiltz. Alexander’s brother, Jean, gentilhomme de la boca to Albert, married first Madeleine

11 It is often impossible to determine origins on the basis of surnames. French-sounding names could as easily be Southern Netherlandish as Burgundian, and much the same is true of Spanish-sounding names borne by Portuguese or Italians, as the sources (often written by Spaniards) tend to Hispanicize the names.
de Rye and then her sister, Eléonore de Rye. Madeleine and Eléonore were Antoinette’s nieces.\textsuperscript{13}

Philibert de Rye, count of Varax, and Claudine de Tournon had at least six children, including the Antoinette already mentioned. Their second son, François de Rye, became \textit{sumiller de cortina} of the Archdukes in 1606 and later their grand chaplain and grand almoner, positions he continued to hold under the widowed Isabella and under don Ferdinand.\textsuperscript{14} His brother Claude de Rye, baron of Balançon, was appointed \textit{gentilhomme de la cámara} to the Cardinal-Infant on 2 May 1635.\textsuperscript{15} The sisters Madeleine and Eléonore, already mentioned above, were Claude’s daughters. Eléonore was one of Isabella’s ladies in waiting.\textsuperscript{16} Alexandrine de Rye, sister of François and Claude, seems not to have held any position at court, but was a frequent visitor. She married Leonard II, count of Tassis, head of the famous Tassis postal service and a \textit{kämmerer} of emperor Ferdinand II.\textsuperscript{17} Yet another sister, Anne-Marguerite de Rye, was a lady in waiting to Isabella under the archducal regime and married Guillaume de Richardot, baron of Lembeek and later count of Galmaarden.\textsuperscript{18} One of their sons became a chaplain of the oratory of the Cardinal-Infant on 1 January 1636.\textsuperscript{19} Through a marriage with a de Rye, the Richardot family renewed their ties with their Burgundian roots.\textsuperscript{20} This was another clan in which service at court seems to have run in the family. Gérard de Rye, Lord of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Jules Chifflet, \textit{Traité de la maison de Rye}, n.d., KB, ms. 1510, 21.
\textsuperscript{15} Philippe Chifflet, \textit{Diaire des choses arrivées à la cour de Bruxelles, depuis la fin de l’an 1633 après la mort de l’infante Isabel, jusques à l’an 1636}, BMB, CC 179, fo. 106r.
\textsuperscript{16} Mersch, “L’infante”, 538.
\textsuperscript{17} Chifflet, \textit{Traité}, 24.
\textsuperscript{19} Chifflet, \textit{Diaire}, fo. 161r.
\textsuperscript{20} Born in the Southern Netherlands, the Richardots after the famous Jean Richardot were no longer considered Burgundians.
\end{flushright}
BIRGIT HOUBEN

Balançon, and his brother Joachim, Lord of Rye, the father and uncle (respectively) of Philibert, had both been *sumilleres de corps* to Charles V, one of the highest positions at court.  

Claude de Rye, baron of Balançon, married Claudine-Prospère de la Baume, sister of Jean-Baptiste de la Baume, marquis of Saint-Martin, who on 2 July 1636 became don Ferdinand’s captain of the guard in succession to Christophe Gretsil, count of Emden, who had died a few months previously. Jeanne, the sister of Guillaume de Richardot, married Antoine de la Baume, a son of the count of Saint-Amour, a relative of Jean-Baptist.

The Perrenot de Granvelle-d’Oiselay family

Eugène-Léopold de Perrenot de Granvelle-d’Oiselay, margrave of the Holy Roman Empire and count of Cantecroix, became one of Isabella’s *meninos* on 14 October 1630. He went on to become a chamberlain, councilor of state, and a favorite of emperor Ferdinand II, who knighted him in person. He was the son of François-Thomas d’Oiselay, who inherited the fortune and titles of his uncle, François Perrenot de Granvelle, grandson of the famous Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle. François-Thomas was a knight of the Golden Fleece, gentilhomme de la cámara of the archduke Albert and ambassador to emperor Rudolf II in Prague. Rudolf II, Albert’s brother, granted François-Thomas the titles of margrave of the Holy Roman Empire and count of Cantecroix. On 5 December 1607 he also gave him the hand of his legitimized daughter Carolina, marchioness of Austria. On 6 March 1635 their son, Eugène-Léopold, married the renowned Béatrix de Cusance, the baron of Belvoir’s eldest daughter, in Brussels. Béatrix achieved notoriety after Eugène-Léopold’s death through her second marriage, to Charles IV, duke of Lorraine, which caused scandal due to Charles still being married to his first wife, Nicole of Lorraine.

The Chifflet family

The brothers Philippe and Jean-Jacques Chifflet, respectively chaplain of the oratory and physician of the body to both Isabella and the Cardinal-Infant, came from a respectable Bisontin family, in the lower reaches of the aristocracy. Their father, Jean Chifflet, Lord of Palente, was physician to the city of Besançon and a member of the city council. His wife, Marguerite Pouthier, was the sister of a professor at the university in Dole, capital of the Franche-Comté. Jean-Jacques himself married Jeanne-Baptiste de Maubouhans, daughter of the mayor of Vesoul. They had twelve children, eight of whom survived infancy. Three of their offspring were to have careers at court. From 1648 Jules resided at the court in Madrid, where he had earlier been granted the titles of chancellor of the Golden Fleece and chaplain of the oratory of Philip IV. He returned to the Franche-Comté only in 1659, to take up the offices of abbot of Balerne and conseiller-clerc in the Parlement of Dole. Jean Chifflet was first appointed at the Brussels court as confessor to the governor-general, archduke Leopold-Wilhelm, and later as a chaplain of the oratory of Leopold-Wilhelm’s successor, don Juan José. Henri-Thomas became almoner to queen Christina of Sweden. Philippe and Jean-Jacques themselves continued to serve in the Brussels households of Leopold-Wilhelm and don Juan José after the Cardinal-Infant’s death in 1641. The Chifflets were a very scholarly family who produced

25 The grandfather of Philippe and Jean-Jacques, Laurent Chifflet, was ennobled by Charles V on 5 November 1552, in recognition of his services. See Jacobs, Parateksten, 262.


27 Jacobs, Parateksten, 350-351.

28 Prevost, Dictionnaire, 1145-1146; Roegis, Het hof, 70-71; Jules’ appointment as chaplain of Philip IV, 13 June 1656, BMB, CC 25, unnumbered; De Meester, Lettres, 26-27.

29 Appointment of Philippe as second almoner to Leopold-Wilhelm, 26 November 1649, and as second almoner to don Juan José, 16 May 1656, BMB, CC 30, fo. 252; Appointment of Jean-Jacques as physician of the body to Leopold-Wilhelm, 25 October 1650, BMB, CC 25, unnumbered.
a tremendous number of learned works, ranging from heraldry and genealogy to antiquarian researches and theological speculations. They were active citizens of the Republic of Letters, and corresponded with an enormous number of artists, scientists, prelates and members of the high nobility.\textsuperscript{30}

The Burgundian network at the Brussels court

In the first half of 1621, Jean-Jacques Chifflet got in touch with his fellow Bisontin the count of Cantecroix, \textit{gentilhombre de la cámara} to the archduke Albert, as well as with Cantecroix’s wife, Carolina of Austria, and with Andreas Trevisius, archducal physician of the body, to try to bag an interesting position for his younger brother Philippe. Philippe had just graduated from the University of Leuven and had moved to Brussels. Jean-Jacques also contacted Aubertus Miraeus, chaplain of the oratory of Isabella, Pieter Peckius, Chancellor of the Council of Brabant, and Erycius Puteanus, a prominent professor at Leuven University. Puteanus in turn contacted Philip IV’s ambassador in Brussels, Alonso de la Cueva, marquis of Bedmar, setting out the young cleric’s qualifications for the post. So Puteanus, a friend of the Chifflet family, tried to use his influence on behalf of a former student, Philippe, to obtain an appointment as chaplain in Isabella’s oratory. But ultimately it was François de Rye, grand almoner and grand chaplain to Isabella, who could fix things for Philippe, getting him appointed in May 1624.\textsuperscript{31} It is more than likely that the Chifflets had called on the assistance of François’ uncle, Ferdinand de Rye, archbishop of Besançon. When the archbishop died in 1636, François succeeded him and made Philippe his right-hand man by naming him his vicar.

\textsuperscript{30} The Republic of Letters can (very generally) be described as the ensemble of literati, scholars, or intellectuals active in science and learning in the Early Modern period. It arose in the 15th century, flourished, roughly speaking, between 1550 and 1750, and declined in the later 18th century. See Hans Bots and Françoise Waquet, \textit{La République des Lettres}, Europe & Histoire (Paris and Brussels, 1997), 18, 29-34, 59-61. On the Chifflets as citizens of this Republic, see Jacobs, \textit{Parateksten}.

general. Jean-Jacques had to wait until October 1625 to obtain a place at court. He was appointed one of Isabella’s physicians of the body. So François de Rye became a patron of the Chifflet brothers, having mediated for them to the infanta Isabella. The same was true of Ferdinand d’Andelot, the infanta’s primer mayordomo. Andelot knew all about the affairs of the Chifflet family before they came to court, because his sister, Anne-Nicole d’Andelot, Madame de Chateauroillard, a nun in the monastery of Salins, had been in frequent correspondence with the two brothers for some time. The mayordomo could also have been informed of the activities of the Chifflets by the Cantecroix-Austria couple. He was well acquainted with his compatriot the count of Cantecroix from when he had been gentilhomme de la cámara to Albert. After the archduke’s death the couple retired to their residence in Besançon, but Carolina of Austria’s letters to Jean-Jacques show that she knew very well who d’Andelot was. Ferdinand d’Andelot not only gave the brothers his active support in the early 1620s, he also became Jean-Jacques’ landlord, making a dwelling available near the palace. At the head of Isabella’s household, d’Andelot was able to arrange all sorts of matters for the Chifflets and kept them abreast of the latest gossip. In return, Jean-Jacques regularly provided medical assistance, or spoke to other influential people on behalf of the d’Andelot family. In June 1627, Philippe approached his other great patron, the papal nuncio Guidi di Bagno, for a dispensation for one of d’Andelot’s sons, who wished to retain clerical benefices while taking up a commission as captain in the army of the king of Spain. When d’Andelot had a Latin inscription made for the altarpiece of the chapel of San Ildefonso in the church of St. James on the Coudenberg in Brussels, he wanted to have the text corrected by Puteanus, and asked the Chifflets to arrange this. Puteanus was glad to oblige. Together with Philippe the renowned Leuven professor also worked on the funerary inscriptions of d’Andelot’s second wife and some of his sons. Not long after being appointed prior of Bellefontaine near Besançon, Philippe Chifflet began writing a book about the priory as a place of devotion, dedicating the work to Ferdinand d’Andelot and his family to reinforce the bonds between the

---

32 François de Rye died before the appointment could be finalized, but the nomination was confirmed by his successor as archbishop, Claude d’Achey. See Jacobs, Parateksten, 634, 697.

33 Various letters from Carolina of Austria to J.-J Chifflet in BMB, CC 24.

two Burgundian families. All in all, d’Andelot became one of the most important networkers for the Chifflet brothers.\(^{35}\)

The brothers more than once made use of book dedications as a way of thanking friends, patrons or others who had supported their careers. When Philippe translated Herman Hugo’s Latin account of the siege of Breda into French, he dedicated the translation to François de Rye, his patron and superior in the court chapel in Brussels. Furthermore, Philippe found an interesting link between the book itself and the dedication: the baron of Balançon, François’ brother, had been one of the heroes of the siege. In the introduction Philippe praised his military achievements by quoting Spinola, who had reportedly said that “if the king had five or six servants with the same qualities as Balançon, he could conquer the whole world.” Philippe sent a copy to the baron, who responded by pledging his future support to the Chifflet brothers.\(^{36}\) This brought the baron of Balançon – who in 1635 became gentilhombre de la cámara to the Cardinal-Infant – into the Burgundian court network. Jules Chifflet, one of Jean-Jacques’ sons, later honored the de Rye and d’Andelot families by compiling their genealogies.\(^{37}\) Jules dedicated his Traité de la maison de Rye to Alexandrine de Rye, the widow of the count of Tassis and the acting head of the famous post office during the minority of her son, Lamoral III. In the 1640s the Chifflets were also able to build up good relations with the house of Tassis. Jean-Jacques had found a powerful patron in Alexandrine, who wrote to Madrid on his behalf to get his royal pension paid, while her son Lamoral became the patron of Jules.\(^{38}\) When Jean-Baptiste de la Baume – captain of the guard to don Ferdinand – became governor of the Franche-Comté in 1637, Jean-Jacques managed to establish friendly relations with him too. The physician offered him news from Brussels and information on the governor-general’s state of health, while the marquis reciprocated

---


\(^{37}\) Chifflet, *Traité*; parts of the d’Andelot genealogy were published in Castan, “Les origines,” 57-60.

BURGUNDIANS IN THE BRUSSELS COURTS

by reporting on the course of the war against France and the military strategies being pursued.  

Bonds of affection: Isabella and Burgundian servants at court

What made these Burgundians so remarkable is that they played prominent roles in the Brussels court. Isabella in particular seems to have been unusually fond of them, to judge by the favors and important missions she gave them, clear indications of trust. François de Rye, Ferdinand d’Andelot and Jean-Jacques Chifflet were each remembered by name in her will. This underlines the close bond they had with the infanta, especially considering that de Rye and d’Andelot received the two largest monetary bequests.

Isabella showed her special bond with these Burgundians on numerous occasions. When François de Rye’s uncle, the archbishop of Besançon, was getting on in life, he suggested his nephew as coadjutor with right of succession. Isabella seized the first opportunity to recommend her grand chaplain and grand almoner to the Pope, who a few weeks later acceded to her request that the appointment be made. When it became apparent that de Rye would have to pay a hefty fee to have the papal bulls issued that would confirm his appointment, the governess-general intervened to request a dispensation. She ordered Juan-Baptista Vives – her agent in Rome – to negotiate with the Pope. She also asked the nuncio in Brussels to support the cause, when it became evident that de Rye and Vives were not in sympathy with one another. The nuncio knew that obtaining such a dispensation was no easy matter, but in the event recommended to Rome that this favor be granted because de Rye “is much loved by the infanta, and nothing else could give her more pleasure.” On later occasions the governess-general again attested to a special relationship with de Rye, when he obtained the title of archbishop of Caesarea in 1626. The investiture took place in the court chapel, with Isabella and her full household in

39 Various letters exchanged between them are in BMB, CC 107; Jacobs, 631.
attendance. During the ceremony the infanta made him a gift of the miter that her deceased husband, archduke Albert, had received from his brother, emperor Rudolf II, on the occasion of his nomination to the archbishopric of Toledo. Isabella also ensured that François’ brother, Claude, was well provided for. Albert had earlier rewarded him for his loyal service and courage on the battlefield by recommending him for a knighthood in the Order of Santiago, an honor that was bestowed by Philip III. In 1624-25 Balançon again proved his military skill during the siege of Breda. Isabella rewarded him by appointing him governor of the town on 21 June 1625.\textsuperscript{42} During the siege of ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1629 the infanta reinforced Claude’s garrison at Breda with soldiers from the prince of Barbançon’s units, something the prince was by no means pleased with. Balançon in any case rose rapidly: in 1630 Philip IV, at Isabella’s recommendation, granted him the honorable title of councilor in the Madrid Consejo de guerra, and in 1631 he became general of the artillery in the Southern Netherlands. He declined Philip IV’s offer in 1633 to appoint him governor of the Franche-Comté. He later became gentilhombre de la cámara to the Cardinal-Infant (1635), a member of the Brussels Council of State (1638), and governor of the province of Namur (1645).

Isabella was also close to d’Andelot. In 1629 she made him head of the prestigious fraternity of San Ildefonso, refounded in Brussels by the Archdukes in 1604. Together with Isabella he made plans for a magnificent altarpiece to adorn the fraternity’s chapel in the church of St. James on the Coudenberg. As “l’inspirateur habituel des commandes artistiques de l’infante,” d’Andelot was frequently in touch with influential artists who enjoyed the governess-general’s approval.\textsuperscript{43} So the mayordomo could recruit to his project another figure favored by Isabella, Peter-Paul Rubens, who a few years before had been appointed gentilhombre de la casa in the Brussels court.\textsuperscript{44} When Isabella’s mayor, Ambrogio Spínola, left the Netherlands in 1628, his duties at court were temporarily undertaken by the most senior mayor d’Andelot. But when Spínola died in Italy, at Castelnuovo, in September 1630, one of the most important positions at the Brussels court fell vacant. Competition broke out between the

\textsuperscript{42} Georges Baurin, Les Gouverneurs du Comté de Namur, 1430-1794 (Namur, 1984), 194; Jacobs, Parateksten, 410.
\textsuperscript{44} Max Rooses and Charles Ruelens (eds.), Correspondance de Rubens et documents épistolaires concernant sa vie et ses œuvres (Antwerp, 1904), 4:287.
BURGUNDIANS IN THE BRUSSELS COURTS

marquis of Aytona, the marquis of Mirabel, the duke of Aarschot, and Ottavio Visconti, count of Gamalerio. Here, again, Isabella showed a special affection for d’Andelot, defending his position at the Brussels court. A few months before Spinola’s death, Philip IV had already written to his aunt to say that Aytona would be the best candidate to succeed him. The governess-general, however, replied that “in the absence of the mayordomo mayor, the most senior mayordomo replaces him, and to act otherwise would be an insult.” Naturally, this was not the only reason. Isabella feared that appointing Aytona – one of the most valued clients of the Count-Duke of Olivares – would give Madrid too much influence in her household; but nor would she appoint anyone else, leaving d’Andelot to do the honors. Although never officially given the title of mayordomo mayor, he in effect became so, with both contemporary and 18th-century writers naming him as such. In the same year d’Andelot helped Isabella develop a plan to prevent the rich inheritance of the Burgundian baron of Ray from falling into French hands. This again shows his closeness to the governess-general.

45 Ph. Chifflet to Guidi di Bagno, Brussels, 18 October 1630, KB, ms. II 7277, fo. 383. Aytona was a confident of the Count-Duke Olivares in Brussels. After the death of Isabella he became governor-general ad interim. About Aytona, see René Vermeir, “Power elites and royal government in the Spanish Netherlands during the last phase of the Eighty Years’ War (1621-1648),” in Ausma Cimdina (ed.), Religion and political change in Europe: past and present (Pisa, 2004) 87-103.

46 Isabella to Philip IV, Brussels, 24 January 1630, AGR, SSO 202, fo. 56; Aytona to Philip IV, Brussels, 18 January 1630, KB, ms 16.149, fo. 7v.

47 Isabella to Philip IV, Brussels, 24 January 1630, AGR, SSO 202, fo. 56; Diego de Aedo y Gallart, El viaje del infante cardenal Don Fernando de Austria ... (Antwerp, 1635), 162; Christophe Butkens, Suplement aux Trophées tant sacrés que profanes du Duché de Brabant (The Hague, 1726), 1:141; Testimony of Miguel de Olivares in the suit of Ana d’Oyenbrugghge against the executors of Isabella’s will, 1641, AGR, GR layette R no. 16, unnumbered. With thanks to Michel Oosterbosch for his assistance with these trial bundles.

48 The de Ray family was one of the oldest and wealthiest connections of the Franche-Comté. When Claude-François, baron of Ray, died in 1630, his seven-year-old daughter Marie was the sole heir to his fortune. Her mother Béatrix – a daughter of d’Andelot’s second wife by an earlier marriage – retired to a convent in Dole, taking the religious name Maria-Victoria. The little baroness was entrusted to her godfather, Cleriadus de Vergy, count of Champlitte, the governor of the Franche-Comté. When he died, just a few months later, his wife, Madeleine de Bauffremont, acquired custody of the girl. This was a development of significant concern to d’Andelot, as Madeleine was very close to her sister-in-law, the marchioness of Sennecey, who resided at the court of Louis XIII and had two eligible sons. Isabella and d’Andelot insisted that the girl be brought to Brussels, where she could be raised among Isabella’s meninas. Philippe Chifflet was sent to the Franche-Comté to make the necessary arrangements. In the event, Marie de Ray
The Chifflet brothers were also entrusted with delicate missions. In early April 1626 Jean-Jacques left for Madrid, at Isabella’s request, to propose relocating the Parlement of Dole – the Franche-Comté’s highest law court – to Besançon. This project was initially proposed by the magistrates and notables of Besançon, who wished to bring one of the most important institutions of the Franche-Comté to their city. As a true Bisontin, Jean-Jacques lobbied for the relocation and set his network of highly-placed figures in Brussels to work to convince the governess-general. Thanks to his good contacts with the governor of the Franche-Comté, the Cantecroix couple, Pieter Peckijs, and Ferdinand de Boisschot, all of whom came out in favor of the project, Jean-Jacques was successful in the first phase of his mission. Ultimately the project failed, and the Parlement remained where it was, but for Jean-Jacques the journey to Madrid was fruitful in perhaps unforeseen ways. He met various influential men, and favorably impressed the most powerful of them all, the Count-Duke of Olivares, who was amazed at his diplomatic abilities and well-spokenness. At Olivares’ suggestion, Jean-Jacques was appointed one of Philip IV’s physicians of the body. In October 1626 he was back in Brussels and had started work on a book the king himself had asked for: a history of the knights of the Golden Fleece. Philippe was repeatedly honored by the infanta with important jobs, usually in the Franche-Comté. Besides his commission concerning Marie de Ray, in December 1628 he was given the task of reporting on a particular ceremony in the Franche-Comté. Philippe was able to combine it with his official installation as the new prior of Bellefontaine, a position he owed to the infanta’s favor. It was also Philippe who accompanied his sister-in-law and her children during their move from Besançon to Brussels in the winter of 1629-1630. In the mean time Isabella had arranged an annual pension and a chaplaincy in Besançon for Jean Chifflet, Jean-Jacques’ second son. Isabella gave was raised in the convent that her mother had joined, and in 1636 married the Southern Netherlander Albert de Mérode, marquis of Trelon. See Emile Longin, “Un mariage au dix-septième siècle: Marie de Ray,” Mémoires de la Société d’Emulation du Jura 4 (1920): 3-50; Chifflet, Journal historique, BMB, CC 96, fo. 85.

49 Isabella to Iñigo de Brizuela, Brussels, 18 October 1626, AGS, E 8344, unnumbered; Jacobs, Parateksten, 431-451; Castan, “Les origines,” 75; Prevost, “Chifflet (Jean-Jacques),” in Dictionnaire, 43: 1145.


51 Jacobs, Parateksten, 486-487.
her physician’s wife and children a warm reception. She asked them for the details of their journey, but was particularly curious about Jeanne-Baptiste, Jean-Jacques’ spouse, who was honored with a tête-à-tête with the governess-general in her private apartments. Within the year, Jeanne and Jacques were blessed with a new son. This child perfectly symbolized how tightly the Chifflet family was tied to the very center of the court. He was named Philippe-Eugène, after his godparents Philip IV and Isabella Clara Eugenia. At the christening, the godparents were represented by Ferdinand d’Andelot and by Anna-Maria Camudio, wife of the chancellor of Brabant.\footnote{Chifflet, \textit{Journal historique}, BMB, \textit{CC} 96, fos. 174-175, 183v; J.-J. Chifflet to Guidi di Bagno, Brussels, 2 May 1629, in De Meester, \textit{Lettres}, no. 120; Jacobs, \textit{Parateksten}, 522.}

**Changes under the Cardinal-Infant don Ferdinand**

Under the governor-generalship of the Cardinal-Infant there appears to have been a discontinuity with the pattern of earlier years. The king’s new representative did not share the infanta’s special bond with the Franc-Comtois. This can be explained by the fact that as a young and inexperienced Spanish prince he had been invested with rule over a place he did not know. Don Ferdinand had not left the peninsula since his birth and had always been surrounded by Spanish noblemen. During his few years in the Southern Netherlands, this barely changed. It was due not only to don Ferdinand’s personal preferences, but also to directives from Madrid, that the Brussels court took on a more Spanish look between 1634 and 1641. Towards the end of the sovereign reign of the Archdukes a tendency had already been apparent for vacant positions at court, formerly held by Spaniards, to pass to Southern Netherlanders. After her husband’s death, Isabella firmly continued this policy as governess-general. Although the Southern Netherlands had reverted to Spain, the ministers in Madrid considered it prudent to maintain some continuity of regime and not to interfere with Isabella’s appointments. This decision followed the advice of the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, Alonso de la Cueva, who warned that sending a crowd of Spanish ministers to Brussels would irritate the local nobility, needlessly complicating the reversion to Spain.\footnote{Alonso de la Cueva, marquis of Bedmar, to Philip IV, Brussels, 23 July 1621, AGS, \textit{E} 2035, unnumbered; Alicia Esteban Estringana, \textit{Madrid y Bruselas: Relaciones de gobierno en la etapa postarchiducal, 1621-1634} (Leuven, 2005), 28-32.} But after the
conspiracy of a number of South-Netherlandish aristocrats in 1632, and the infanta’s death the following year, Philip IV decided to make a clean sweep of the gubernatorial household. Under the Cardinal-Infant there were not only more Spaniards appointed to the court than there had been under Isabella, there were also several new appointments hand-picked by Madrid for a clear record of loyal service to the Spanish crown. The marquises of Aytona, Este and Orani obtained, respectively, the three top positions at court of _mayordomo mayor_, _caballerizo mayor_ and _sumiller de corps_. The key positions in the chapel went to Emanuel de Guzmán (grand almoner) and Fray Juan de San Agustín (confessor).

The Cardinal-Infant had received instructions, before leaving for the Netherlands, to treat Isabella’s Burgundian former courtiers with all respect, as she had held them in high regard. During the brand new governor-general’s first audience in Tervuren on 3 November 1634, he received many of Isabella’s former servants who came to offer him their services. He told François de Rye that he need not kneel before him, and went on to say, “qu’il le cognoissait desia par rapport, et estait bien informé de luy et des biens services qu’il avait rendu, a son oncle et tante, et qu’il aurait toujours souvenance particulier de sa personne.” Although de Rye declined to do so, the governor-general did him the signal honor of granting permission for him to remain covered in his presence. At this first audience the Cardinal-Infant also made it clear to the Chifflet brothers that he had heard nothing but good of them. He had met Jean-Jacques before, in Madrid, when the physician had been sent there by Isabella to negotiate the relocation of the Parlement of Dole. The Chifflets were by this time past masters of the art of networking and were not adversely affected by the transition of power. They had already established good relations with the marquis of Aytona in 1630. They were also able to make satisfactory contacts with the rest of the new power elite, by praising them in the introduction to

54 Chifflet, *Diaire*, BMB, CC 179, fo. 46v. Although this gracious gesture by the Cardinal-Infant suggests the granting of a grandeeship – the highest honorific that a nobleman could receive from the king of Spain – it by no means went so far. The favor of being allowed to stand in the royal presence with one’s head covered, could only be granted by the king and not by other members of the royal family. This fragment does, however, indicate that they could grant a somewhat comparable favor, which without doubt was also a great honor.

55 Chifflet, *Diaire*, BMB, CC 179, fos. 38v, 44r.


57 Jacobs, *Parateksten*, 600.
The correspondence surviving in the Chifflet family archive shows that they were able to come to an understanding with the marquis of Este and with the marquis of Mirabel, Aytona’s successor as *mayordomo mayor*. The brothers also advanced their careers through good contacts with prince Thomas of Savoy (brother of the duke of Savoy and Aytona’s successor as *gobernador de las armas* in the Southern Netherlands) and with Henriette of Lorraine (sister of duke Charles IV of Lorraine). These two princely figures became the godparents of Jean-Jacques’ youngest son, Henri-Thomas. Prince Thomas and Henriette went on to help Jean-Jacques’ children’s prospects by personally writing letters of recommendation to the king. Don Ferdinand also declared to his brother that Jean-Jacques was the only non-Spanish physician in whom he had any confidence.

Ferdinand d’Andelot was the only Burgundian to suffer a serious reverse by the death of his powerful patroness, Isabella. As has already been mentioned, he unofficially held the position of *mayordomo mayor* in her household, a position that brought with it a beautiful apartment in the palace on the Coudenberg. When Aytona was named the Cardinal-Infant’s *mayordomo mayor*, d’Andelot had to pack up and move out to a house beyond the palace gates. He was allowed to retain the rank of *primer mayordomo*, despite the maneuverings of his fellow *mayordomos* (see below), but was forced to share it with don Luis Lasso de la Vega, viscount of Puertollano, who was more frequently remarked in don Ferdinand’s presence than was d’Andelot. In 1635 the Cardinal-Infant appointed d’Andelot jailer of the abducted French-leaning Elector of Trier, Philip Christoph von Sötern, who was held in Ghent. This was a sign of how much confidence the ruler reposed in him, but it also kept him from attendance at court. He hated being away

---

58 Don Diego de Aedo y Gallart traveled with don Ferdinand from Madrid to the Netherlands in the capacity of *ayuda de cámara*. He wrote a detailed report of the journey, published first in Antwerp in 1635 as *El viaje del infante cardenal don Fernando de Austria ...*, and subsequently in Madrid, in 1637, as *Viaje, sucesos y guerras del infante cardenal don Fernando de Austria ...*. The work was translated by Jules Chifflet, Jean-Jacques’ son, as *Le voyage du prince Don Fernande infant d’Espagne, cardinal ...* (Antwerp, 1635).

59 Series of letters from the marquis of Mirabel, the marquis of Este, prince Thomas, and Henriette of Lorraine, BMB, CC 24.


62 Cardinal-Infant to Philip IV, Arras, 10 October 1636, AGR, SSO 215, fos. 323-324.

63 Chifflet, *Diaire*, BMB, CC 179, fos. 42-43.
BIRGIT HOUBEN

from the center of power, where all important news was to be heard first, and lamented this isolation to his loyal client Philippe Chifflet. Two Burgundian newcomers at the court of the Cardinal-Infant were Claude de Rye, baron of Balançon, and Jean-Baptiste de la Baume, marquis of Saint-Martin, both already referred to above. Balançon’s career blossomed under don Ferdinand’s governor-generalship. In 1635 Philip IV appointed him gentilhombre de la cámara of don Ferdinand and in a letter of 16 January 1638 the king informed his brother that he wanted to appoint Balançon as governor of Luxemburg. But this letter to Brussels crossed with one that don Ferdinand had written to Madrid on 2 January, strongly recommending Claude de Lannoy, count de la Motterie, for the same position, to which Ferdinand had already provisionally appointed him in expectation of a positive response from Madrid. The Cardinal-Infant took the view that Balançon “está ya bastantemente proveído.” Philip IV was furious and demanded that Pieter Roose account for what had happened. The president of the Privy Council hedged, explaining that Lannoy’s appointment was only provisional and would expire in March. In the end Balançon was not appointed, but was recompensed with a prestigious appointment as councilor of state. He ultimately became governor of the province of Namur in 1645. We know little about the marquis of Saint-Martin, appointed captain of the Cardinal-Infant’s guards in July 1636. He belonged to one of the oldest families in Bresse, became governor of Dole in 1633, and took up arms in the service of the king of Spain and the emperor. He saw service in Flanders, Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Franche-Comté, and was imperial general of artillery. When the archbishop of Besançon died in 1636, Philip IV desperately needed a new provincial governor for the Franche-Comté. The county was going through a nadir of French plundering and hostilities (the so-called Ten Years’ War, 1633-1644). Although Balançon was again the king’s first choice, he turned the position down for a second time. Ultimately the governorship went to his brother-in-law, the marquis of Saint-Martin.

64 Ferdinand d’Andelot to Ph. Chifflet, Ghent, 20 November 1635, BMB, CC 25; Chifflet, Diaire, BMB, CC 179, fos. 42v-43v.
65 Baurin, Les Gouverneurs, 186-187; Roose to Philip IV and Olivares, Brussels, 3 December 1637, AGR, GR 1500, fo. 195.
Although the Cardinal-Infant distanced himself from his aunt’s Burgundian servants and preferred to surround himself with Spaniards, this did not result in any outward loss of prestige or career prospects for the Burgundian office-holders at court. It is clear from his first audience that don Ferdinand had been very thoroughly briefed in advance on the good and loyal service that Isabella’s Burgundian courtiers had demonstrated, and that they were to be treated with all respect. The Cardinal-Infant was not close to them, as Isabella had been, but they received support from Madrid, as can be seen in the case of the baron of Balançon. The Franc-Comtois in Brussels were not to be treated cavalierly.

“Ceux de nostre nation”: origins and envy

The previous sections indicate the prominence of Franc-Comtois at the Brussels court. The positions that they held were largely key posts that granted direct access, otherwise strictly controlled, to the person of the governess-general. In the 1630s Isabella made this access, if anything, more exclusive for men, it having come to her attention that “on se donnoit licence d’entrer dans la pièce voisine de sa chambre et de se mesler parmi les Dames, contre l’usage et les ordonnances de sa maison.” Jean-Jacques Chifflet wrote to Guidi di Bagno that the new measures meant that in future the infanta’s door would be closed to men while she was eating, with exceptions made for the mayordomo mayor, the mayordomo in waiting, and the physicians of the body. All others, even the grandes and knights of the Golden Fleece, were to wait in the antechamber.67 Ferdinand d’Andelot, Jean-Jacques Chifflet and, naturally, the lady in waiting Eléonore de Rye – the baron of Balançon’s daughter – were therefore all assured of access. Not much later an ordinance was issued stipulating “qu’auncun Menine dez l’age de douze ans n’eust a entrer dans la chambre de Son Altesse.” Only one page was exempted from this restriction, the young Burgundian count of Cantecroix.68 This will have been due to his mother having been related to Albert, rather than to his Burgundian patrimony, but the fact remains that it was a Franc-Comtois who was favored. As the

67 J.-J. Chifflet to Guidi di Bagno, Brussels, 10 January 1630, KB, ms. II 7277, 296-297; Jacobs, Parateksten, 521.
68 Chifflet, Journal historique, BMB, CC 96, fo. 200r.
head of the court chapel, François de Rye also had access to the infanta’s presence.\textsuperscript{69}

The envy with which these Burgundians were regarded by other courtiers shows how exceptional their good standing with the governess-general was. After Jean-Jacques’ return from Spain, he repeatedly complained that he was still not treated with the same honours as Isabella’s other physicians, and was considering retiring from court. According to his brother part of the fault lay with Spínola, “qu’il n’est pas grand amis de ceux de nostre nation.”\textsuperscript{70} But Philippe was convinced that Dr Andreas Trevisius, another of Isabella’s physicians of the body, was working against his brother. A Florentine, Trevisius had gone from being one of the Chifflets’ first contacts at court, a friend and patron, to being a jealous rival. Trevisius resented the affection that the governess-general showed Jean-Jacques, and tried to keep him away from her as much as possible. Trevisius even tried to prevent Philippe being awarded the priory of Bellefontaine. When Isabella heard of Trevisius’ hostility towards the Chifflet brothers, “Son Altesse ne luy donne plus d’escoute et ne parle de luy que avec indignation.” Trevisius fell from Isabella’s favor and Jean-Jacques became one of the leading physicians in her chamber.\textsuperscript{71} Furthermore, the Franc-Comtois resented Trevisius, an outsider, having been given control of the rich salt mines of Salins. When he died in June 1633, Carolina of Austria admitted to Jean-Jacques “que ie suis ayssé de ce que le docteur André est mort car il traversat toutjours aux affaires de Bourgogne.”\textsuperscript{72} That d’Andelot’s position was also enviable is shown by the behavior of his Southern Netherlandish fellow mayordomos, the counts of Noyelles, Grimbergen and Roeulx, when the new governor-general, the Cardinal-Infant, arrived at Jülich in October 1634. On 22 October d’Andelot welcomed the new governor-general, but he returned to Brussels shortly afterwards. In his absence the other three mayordomos of the late infanta – the counts of Roeulx, Noyelles and Grimbergen – strove to get ahead of the

\textsuperscript{69} The functions of the grand almoner and grand chaplain are explained in Alfred De Ridder, “Les Règlements de la cour de Charles-Quint,” \textit{Messager des sciences historiques ou archives des arts et de la bibliographie de Belgique}, 1893, 395-398; and Antonio Rodríguez Villa (ed.), \textit{Etiquetas de la casa de Austria} (Madrid, 1913), 49.

\textsuperscript{70} Ph. Chifflet to Guidi di Bagno, Brussels, 21 January 1628, KB, ms. II 7277, 121.


\textsuperscript{72} Carolina of Austria to J.-J. Chifflet, Besançon, 26 August 1633, BMB, CC 24, fo. 309; Longin, “Jean Boyvin” (1912): 153.
more senior d’Andelot by being the first to be reappointed to their old posts at court. These three former *mayordomos* of Isabella were indeed able to take up their positions again under don Ferdinand, but a few days later d’Andelot was also reinstated at his former rank of *primer mayordomo*. This did not, however, keep the Southern Netherlandish *mayordomos* from disputing d’Andelot’s precedence. Balançon’s success also made him a hate figure for the South Netherlandish nobility, “pour avoir trop affecté les façons & recerché la faveur des Hespagnolz.” The prince of Barbançon, as we have seen, was furious when Isabella added his men to the baron of Balançon’s command during the siege of ’s-Hertogenbosch. During the Cardinal-Infant’s governorship he again offended the Southern Netherlandish nobility in his new position as councilor of state. After Pieter Roose’s fearsome efforts to remove the nobility from the Council of State by introducing new rules of precedence, there were by 1639 only three aristocrats left in the council. These were the count of Vertaing, who refused to recognize Roose’s new rules, retired to Lille, and died there the same year; the duke of Aarschot, who had been imprisoned in Madrid in the aftermath of the 1632 conspiracy, so could not take part in council business; and the baron of Balançon. He too refused to attend, as a protest against Roose, but eventually did arrive at a session of the Council with the fig-leaf that “respeto de ser Borgoñon no podia la nobleza del pais quejarse de que se huviesse allando a lo que los demas nobles rehusavan.”

Envy and hostility towards Burgundians as such indicates that they were a recognizable group. It also demonstrates that descent, and being of a particular nation, came out more clearly in situations of conflict or competition. It was, and is, therefore impossible to lump the Franc-Comtois together with the Southern Netherlands.

73 Chifflet, *Diaire*, BMB, CC 179, fo. 42v.
74 Chifflet, *Diaire*, BMB, CC 179, fo. 57r.
75 Peter De Cauwer, *‘Tranen van bloed:’ Het beleg van ’s-Hertogenbosch en de oorlog in de Nederlan den*, 1629 (Amsterdam, 2008), 130. Daniel Heinsius, *Histoire du Siege de Bolduc…* (Leiden, 1631), 146-147.
The Burgundian courtiers as power brokers

In the introduction to *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility*, Ronald Asch states that patronage could be a crucial instrument for the extension of the authority of central government in previously autonomous provinces and sections of society. For royal patronage the court was the great market-place where all kinds of grants, privileges, and offices were haggled over. For the many 'provincial brokers' of patronage the ministers and court nobility were the patrons upon whom they were dependent, whilst courtiers and office-holders themselves played the role of brokers in relation to the king.77

Nothing could be truer of the Franc-Comtois at the Brussels court in general, and of the Chifflet brothers in particular.

The Burgundians at the Brussels court were bombarded with requests for support and information by their co-nationals in the province. The count of Saint-Amour often contacted Jean-Jacques Chifflet to ask for his mediation on behalf of relatives seeking all sorts of appointments and promotions. The provincial governor of the Franche-Comté in the 1620s, the count of Champlitte, carried on a voluminous correspondence with Isabella's physician in which the count was continually asking for information about decisions being taken in Brussels. As has already been said, the Cantecroix couple also exchanged numerous letters with the brothers. Philippe was their contact on the Brussels art market, while Jean-Jacques was regarded as a privileged channel to the infanta herself. In 1628 the count of Cantecroix explained to the physician that his wife's half-brother, Charles, margrave of Austria, had died intestate in Vienna. He took the view that the inheritance should pass to his wife and that this could be arranged with the emperor, but that some help would be appreciated. The countess of Cantecroix had therefore written a letter to Isabella, asking her to mediate with the emperor. The countess wanted Jean-Jacques to deliver the letter to the infanta with his own hand, being confident that she would not refuse him. The countess also relied on Jean-Jacques in private matters, asking

him to write to Juan Oswaldo Brito, Secretary of the *Consejo Supremo de Flandes y Borgoña*, to find out whether she would be entitled to a pension after her husband’s death. She even called on the help of the brothers to find a suitable wife for her son. And indeed, Jean-Jacques and Philippe brokered the marriage between her son and the famed Béatrix de Cusance in 1635. The brothers also helped obtain noble titles and ecclesiastical preferment for their compatriots. In 1637 Jean-Jacques recommended Claude d’Achey to prince Thomas for the vacant archiepiscopal see of Besançon. In return he asked that his brother, Philippe, be appointed vicar general. Claude d’Achey was consecrated on 12 December 1638. He kept his word, naming Philippe as his vicar general.78

Those seeking a place in the Parlement of Dole, the provincial council of the Franche-Comté, made sure to get in touch with their compatriots in Brussels. When Jean-Jacques and Philippe’s father got married for a second time, to Isabelle Dard, this gave a connection to Antoine Brun, Isabelle’s nephew. Antoine and Philippe became good friends, and lived together during their student days in Bourges. When Antoine’s father, a councilor of the Parlement of Dole, died in 1621, Antoine got Philippe, already in Brussels, to pull strings for him. He asked his friend to recommend him for the vacant seat in the Parlement, but unfortunately for Antoine the appointment went to somebody else. In April 1630 the position of premier maitre of Dole’s Chamber of Accounts fell vacant, and again Antoine turned to his friends in Brussels. He asked them to get the backing of Isabella’s intimate circle, among whom he counted Ferdinand d’Andelot. The campaign on Brun’s behalf was again unsuccessful, this time because powerful patrons were supporting the ambitions of a certain Henri Mathot, whose goal was to be a councilor of the Parlement. By making councilor Grivel premier maitre, an opening was created for Mathot. Towards the end of the year Antoine made yet another attempt, when councilor Berreur died. He asked Philippe to recommend a certain Menou for this position, so that Antoine himself could succeed to Menou’s lucrative job as lieutenant-general of the bailiwick of Amont. But the Chifflets were backing Berreur’s son, who obtained the position. Antoine finally became the Parlement’s advocate-general.79 He began angling for a seat on the Brussels Privy Council, but was thwarted by the fierce opposition of

Pieter Roose, who according to Jules Chifflet had “peu d’inclination ... pour la Bourgogne.” It is likely that Antonio Sarmiento, the count of Gondomar’s son and a *gentilhombre de la cámara* of the Cardinal-Infant, also had something to do with Antoine’s reverses. The two could not stand one another, and don Antonio had pull in Madrid as well as in Brussels. Antoine, however, found a new patron in the marquis of Saint-Martin, another opponent of don Antonio. In 1640 the marquis insisted that Brun be given a seat on the Privy Council, but again Roose vetoed the appointment. In 1642, Antoine Brun did manage to acquire a seat on the *Consejo Supremo de Flandes y Borgoña* in Madrid.

In Antoine Brun’s case, the Chifflets seem to have been unable, or unwilling, to use their influence to good effect. Things were somewhat different when they recommended Jean Boyvin as president of the Parlement of Dole in 1631. Boyvin’s most important supporters at the Brussels court were François de Rye and Jean-Jacques Chifflet. But this time the brothers were unable to mobilize d’Andelot, as he was supporting the candidacies of Jean-Baptist Gollut and Girardot Nozeroy. There was also yet another strong contender, Froissard-Broissia, who had the support of Olivares’ cousin, the marquis of Leganés. Matters were further complicated when Roose expressed a lack of sympathy for Boyvin. The situation became so complex that an appointment was postponed indefinitely. Thanks to intensive lobbying by the Chifflets, however, Boyvin was finally appointed president of the Parlement in 1639.

**Purposefully placing Burgundians at court?**

The allocation of positions at court was clearly carefully dosed to bring in figures from each of the various territories in the Spanish-Habsburg ‘composite state.’ That this was the result of deliberate policy is demonstrated by a letter from Philip IV to don Ferdinand, in which he advises his brother to appoint only “naturales del pays” as *gentilhombres de la cámara*, and that half of his *gentilhombres de la boca* should be

---

BURGUNDIANS IN THE BRUSSELS COURTS

Southern Netherlanders, the other half Spaniards and Italians. Nor were the subjects unaware of this conscious sharing out of important positions between different nationalities. On 8 April 1639 the *Consejo de Estado* considered the request of the baron of Laubespin-Dramelay, a Burgundian, to be appointed *mayordomo* of the Cardinal-Infant in succession to the recently deceased d’Andelot, another natural de la dicha provincia. We do not know whether he obtained the post, but in later years he is listed as *mayordomo* of two governors-general in turn, Leopold-Wilhelm and don Juan José de Austria. By a careful distribution of the various nationalities at court, the central authorities encouraged the role of office-holders as power brokers, whose clientage networks with their homeland would reinforce the crown’s authority and control over the far-flung territories of the Spanish Monarchy.

The Burgundians were an essential part of such calculations because the Franche-Comté was important to the Spanish Habsburgs in three ways. It was, in the first place, the last remaining fragment of the ancestral homeland of the dukes of Burgundy, the territory to which the Spanish branch of the dynasty had the longest-standing title. This gave the county a tremendously important symbolic resonance as the mark of continuity with the dynasty’s Burgundian forefathers. Burgundian descent was important, among other reasons, because it underlay the claim to headship of the prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece. The sovereignty of the order passed by heredity to the head of the House of Burgundy – the duke of Burgundy – and not territorially with the Burgundian state. When, in 1529, Charles V definitively renounced his claim to the duchy of Burgundy in favor of the king of France, he retained the honorary title of duke of Burgundy, to safeguard his power over the order. Philip IV and Charles II of Spain, in their turn,

---

85 Petition of the baron of Laubespin, Madrid, 8 April 1639, AGS, E 2054, unnumbered.
86 Roegis, *Het hof*, 84.
continued to bear the title of duke of Burgundy. This important dynastic and symbolic tie can also be seen in the letters of the kings of Spain. Philip IV spoke of his Burgundian subjects as “vasallos mejores que yo más precie,” or as “les premiers vassaux que j’aye et que j’aime le plus.”

Secondly, the Franche-Comté had high strategic value, as the ‘Spanish Road’, the overland route for the movement of Spanish troops between Italy and the Netherlands, ran right through the province. When the Cardinal-Infant failed to eject the French forces of occupation from Lorraine in 1634, and when France declared war on Spain in May 1635, it meant the loss of this strategic overland connection with the Netherlands. These events further isolated the already remote Franche-Comté still further from the rest of the Spanish Monarchy. As a result of Charles V’s decision in 1531 that Burgundians were henceforth to advise in Brussels on matters touching the Franche-Comté, and of the already mentioned *castellanización* of Philip II’s household and his definitive withdrawal to Madrid, where subsequent kings of Spain were to remain, the Burgundians at the Brussels court became the center’s only link with their symbolically and strategically important county.

This explains in part why the Franche-Comté was so autonomous and relatively independent in internal matters, as already mentioned in the introduction, but also why the Burgundians played such a prominent role in Brussels. It was tremendously important that the Franc-Comtois be kept happy, so that they did not end up as part of a group of Spanish malcontents. France was very close and easily reached. Politically, the county was enormously important in the struggle against France, which is the third reason why this province was so important to the crown. It was also desirable to have reliable and loyal councilors, and who better than the “tan buenos y fieles vasallos” of *par-delà*? Brussels already had a strong *tradition pepinière*, attested by the successful careers of high-flying jurists and councilors from the Franche-Comté such as the two Granvelles, Jean Richardot, and Froissard-Broissia. Between 1621 and 1641 there were no really important Burgundians in the Brussels councils, but their prominence as courtiers shows that this

---

90 Philip IV to Charles IV of Lorraine, Madrid, 31 March 1638, AGS, E 2245, unnumbered; Philip IV to the Parlement of Dole, Madrid, 1638, in Francisco Elías de Tejada, *La Franche-Comté hispanique* (Dole, 1977), 79.


BURGUNDIANS IN THE BRUSSELS COURTS

tradition was maintained over the long term, albeit arguably at a lower rank.

It is noticeable that the Burgundians in the Brussels court all came from families with key positions in the Franche-Comté, making them perfect power brokers and network providers. It is therefore possible that the central authorities made this one of their criteria in selecting and appointing office-holders at court. The eldest brother of Claude and François de Rye, for example, was grand bailiff of Dole, and their uncle was archbishop of Besançon. Before they were appointed to the court, Ferdinand d’Andelot was colonel of the regiment of Amont and governor of Gray, while Jean-Baptiste de la Baume was governor of Dole. Jean-Jacques and Philippe Chifflet’s father was a member of Besançon’s city council and a respected physician, their uncle was a professor at the University of Dole, and Jean-Jacques’ father-in-law was mayor of Vesoul. Both brothers furthermore already had very good contacts with the Burgundian nobility and the Bisontin urban elite before they were appointed to Isabella’s household. The Franc-Comtois Charles-Emmanuel de Gorrevod, marquis of Marnay, grand bailiff of Amont and a member of the Parlement of Dole, had been one of archduke Albert’s gentilhombres de la cámara. He no longer held office at court under the infanta, but his Southern Netherlandish wife Isabelle de Bourgogne and her sister Marguerite were both among Isabella’s dueñas de honor. When Charles-Emmanuel died in 1625, his eldest son succeeded him as grand bailiff and his second son was appointed sumiller de cortina of governors-general Leopold-Wilhelm and don Juan José de Austria. He also became archbishop of Besançon, in succession to Claude d’Achey. A document from 1622 preserved in the archive of the Audience in the General State Archives, Brussels, mentions a certain Benito de Thomasin as a chaplain in Isabella’s oratory. This individual is not mentioned in any of the other sources relevant to this study, nor has further information about him been found. But if this Benito can be identified as Benoît de Thomassin, then this chaplain of the oratory was also a perfect power broker, and furthermore an excellent choice to maintain contacts with the free county of Burgundy. For Benoit was

93 Brun, La Franche-Comté, 29-30; Goethals, Dictionnaire, 59; Chifflet, Traité, 17-21.
94 Guidi di Bagno to F. Barberini, Brussels, 9 November 1624 and Guidi di Bagno to Spada, Ghent, 11 December 1625, in De Meester, Correspondance, nos. 1164, 1442; Chifflet, Nobiliaire de Franche-Comté, BMB, CC 185, fo. 71v; Brun, La Franche-Comté, 29; Herckenrode, Nobiliaire, 1:281-282; Roegis, Het hof, 67; Castan, “Les origines,” 70.
the son of Adrien, President of the Parlement of Dole from 1605 to 1631.\textsuperscript{95}

It has already been indicated that once appointed to the household, the career of these Franc-Comtois went from strength to strength. They received knighthoods in prestigious orders of chivalry, pensions, important positions in the army, in the Church or in one of the central organs of government, they were able to obtain remunerative positions for their children or to marry them into influential families. So we have to ask ourselves whether these favors were showered on them solely in recognition of services already rendered and because of their personal access to the king’s deputy in Brussels, or because this also suited the purposes of the crown. When the position of court office-holders was boosted, this increased their value as power brokers, whose ability to grant access to the wellsprings of princely patronage guaranteed the loyalty and support of their province. The Burgundian court dignitaries helped to maintain and extend the authority of the central powers in out-of-the-way Franche-Comté. This is probably why, for example, Philippe Chifflet was named abbot of Balerne in 1639. It suited Philippe, but it also suited the central powers, as the abbacy put their creature in a position to make present or recommend candidates for important ecclesiastical benefices in the Franche-Comté.\textsuperscript{96} Furthermore, because Philippe resided at the Brussels court and not in his Burgundian abbey, his decisions could be influenced. Philip IV’s attempts to appoint the baron of Balançon as provincial governor of the Franche-Comté, and the ultimate appointment of his brother-in-law, the marquis of Saint-Martin, should probably be seen in the same light. Since the second half of the 16th century the governors of the Franche-Comté had barely left the province and had held no positions at court.\textsuperscript{97} But when the governorship fell vacant at the death of Ferdinand de Rye in 1636, Philip IV was clearly looking for a replacement within his brother’s household. After Balançon had declined the post at least twice, the king reluctantly appointed the marquis of Saint-Martin.\textsuperscript{98} He could just as well have sought out a candidate he would have liked better and who lived in the province itself, as had been done in the past, but now

\textsuperscript{95} Incomplete household list of Isabella, 1622, AGR, Audience 20, fo. 16v; Mesmay, Dictionnaire, 327; Brun, La Franche-Comté, 29.
\textsuperscript{96} Jacobs, Parateksten, 634-637.
\textsuperscript{98} Roose to Philip IV and Olivares, Brussels, 3 December 1637, AGR, GR 1500, fo. 195v.
that the loss of the Spanish Road had made the Franche-Comté even more inaccessible, somebody with connections to the Brussels court must have seemed a better choice. Furthermore, in 1640 Saint-Martin married Lambertine de Ligne, further ensuring contact between the Franche-Comté and the Southern Netherlands.99

Conclusion

The Burgundians at the Brussels court were clearly very aware of their origins and identity. They were closely connected by marriage and by patron-client relations. We can, without doubt, speak of a Burgundian network and of a Franc-Comtois nation at the Brussels court. To some extent this made them a closed group, but there was still room for friendly relations or alliances with other groups at court. There were a few marriages between Burgundians and Southern Netherlanders, and the Chifflets also had excellent contacts with people from outside the Franche-Comté. The Chifflet brothers not only had Burgundian patrons, but also obtained patronage from Thomas of Savoy, the Italian Guidi di Bagno, and the Portuguese marquis of Castel-Rodrigo. The Chifflets actively defended the interests of the Franche-Comté and intensively mediated between their compatriots and the Brussels court, but more than once they did the same for non-Burgundian friends and acquaintances, such as, for instance, the Moretus family.100 In brief, there was a clear Franc-Comtois group at the Brussels court, but it was one that was open to non-Burgundian contacts and relationships. Only by studying this Burgundian group does it become clear that the allocation of positions at the Brussels court resulted from deliberate policy and careful planning. This allocation was dual: the central authorities consciously shared offices out between the different nations of the Spanish Monarchy, and at the same time, while only appointing those with a track record of loyal service, also had an eye to who was a potential power broker. This was a smart political move, as the monarchy was highly dependent on patronage as a crucial element in extending and maintaining control over its disparate territories. All the nations at court provided the central authorities with clients in their homeland, bringing these regions closer to the crown and furthering the political integration of the Spanish Monarchy. For this particular

100 See Jacobs, Parateksten, passim.
purpose the crown probably looked to Burgundian courtiers rather more than to others, because they were one of the few ties that still bound the distant and isolated Franche-Comté to the rest of the monarchy. This was not only a strategically and politically important province, but also of immense symbolic value, as the oldest territory of the Burgundian inheritance. For this reason the Burgundians played a highly significant role in the court, which could often provoke envy and mistrust. being appointed to a lucrative position at court generally went hand in hand with moving up the social ladder, which also increased an individual’s value as a power broker. It is possible that the central authorities rewarded useful servants at court with offices and other favors precisely to increase their prestige and value as a patron. However that may be, between 1621 and 1641 the Brussels court was a significant locus for the integration of elites from the numerous Spanish-Habsburg territories, and a lively point of contact between the political center and the provincial and local notables.