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Between Dissent and Peacemaking. The Dutch Nobility on the Eve of the Revolt (1564-1567)

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On 18 August 1566, after service in the St. Gudule Church and on her way to the Brussels Court, the Duchess of Parma had an argument with the Count of Egmont, one of the highest ranking nobles of the Seventeen Provinces. She still felt uncomfortable when reporting the incident that same evening to her half-brother Philip II, King of Spain (unsurprisingly in a private letter in Italian). It was not so much the difference in opinion that put her in an awkward position, as she had faced the resistance of nobles on a wide range of topics since her appointment as Governor General of the Low Countries, it was that this time the disagreement concerned the urgent response to the emerging iconoclasm in Flanders. As provincial governor of Flanders and Artois, Egmont had been negotiating with city magistrates to prevent disorder and image-breaking. Margaret thus once again urged the Count to act decisively against heresy and defend the Catholic religion. To her surprise and discontent, Egmont replied that given the circumstances one first had to 'preserve the State' and only then religion. When Margaret argued that the loss of religion was a greater evil than the loss of a state, Egmont replied that only 'those who had nothing to lose' thought like her ⁽¹⁾.

(1) Margaret of Parma to Philip II, 18 August 1566: AGS E 530 s.f. (autograph, Italian), summary in GACHARD, *CPhII* I, p. 449-450 (453). *List of abbreviations:* Archivo General de Simancas, *Secretaría de Estado* [AGS E]; Archivo General de Simancas, *Secretarías Provinciales* [AGS SP]; Archives Générales du Royaume, *Papiers de l'État et de l'Audience* [AGR PEA], Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque Royale à Bruxelles [KBR]; Text editions: L. P. GACHARD and J. LEFÈVRE, eds., *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas publiée d'après les originaux conservés dans les Archives royales de Simancas* (Archives générales du Royaume et archives de l'État dans les provinces, Studia, 18), Brussels, 6 vol., 1848-1936 [GACHARD or LEFÈVRE, *CPhII*]; Charles WEISS, ed., *Papiers d'état du cardinal de Granvelle d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Besançon*, Paris, 1841-1852 (Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France. Série 1: Histoire politique) [WEISS, PEGC]; Edmond POULLET and C. PIOT, eds., *Correspondance du cardinal de Granvelle (1565-1585)*, 1877-1896 [POULLET or PIOT, CGr]; J.S. THEISSEN, ed., *Correspondance française de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Parme, avec Philippe II: I: février 1565 - fin 1567*, Utrecht, 1925 [THEISSEN, CMag], Baron de REIFFENBERG, ed., *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Parme, avec Philippe II, suivie des interrogatoires du Comte d'Egmont et de quelques autres pièces* (Société des Bibliophiles de Belgique) [REIFFENBERG, CMag], Louis-Prospér GACHARD, *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Parme, avec Philippe II*, 3 vol., Brussels, 1867-1870 [GACHARD, CMag]. G. GROEN VAN PRINSTERER, ed., *Archives ou correspondance inédite*

This episode has been repeated time and again in Egmont's biography, mostly in order to define his religious opinions⁽²⁾. Immediately after the Belgian Revolution in 1830, Egmont and the Count of Horn, his fellow on the scaffold on 6 June 1568, came to incarnate the 'Belgian' and 'Catholic' position, in the fight against 'Spanish domination' opposed to the 'Dutch Protestantism' of William of Orange⁽³⁾. Later on, Egmont's Catholicism was put under closer scrutiny, particularly because of the political confrontations between Catholics and Liberals. The Catholic Baron Etienne Constantin de Gerlache (1785-1871) for example regretted that the Count allowed protestant worship to continue after the iconoclast riots in 1566. For him, Egmont could only be seen as a hero because of his 'unjustified' end on a scaffold on the Brussels' Market Square⁽⁴⁾.

In the last decade, historiography has reoriented these outdated views of the Count of Egmont in particular and of the role of the nobility in general. Aline Goossens has provided an admirable biography of Egmont as a representative of the high nobility in a particularly troubled époque (unfortunately, the Dutch translation has chosen to make him once more the 'victim of treason and intrigue')⁽⁵⁾. Goossens showed that Egmont's political career after 1559 stood in sharp contrast with his previous military successes on battlefields as scattered as Algiers, Brabant-Gelre, Metz, Saint-Quentin and Gravelines. His widespread possessions – in Holland, Flanders, Hainaut, Artois and Luxemburg – made him not only a rich but also an emblematic member of Burgundian-Habsburg aristocracy⁽⁶⁾. Finally, in his religious politics, Egmont acted according to Goossens both 'hypocritically and wisely': he perhaps preferred (especially in 1566) the harmonious co-existence of different beliefs, but he understood that this was treason to royal orders. The quarrel with the Duchess of Parma demonstrated for her how Egmont after all deliberately tried to decrease the repressive policy towards

de la maison d'Orange-Nassau, Leiden, 1832-1847 [GROEN, *Archives*]; online database: De correspondentie van Willem van Oranje: <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/WVO> [WvO and number of letter]; Repertorium: G. GLORIEUX, B. OP DE BEECK and E. COCKX-INDESTEGE, *Belgica Typografica 1541-1600: Catalogus librorum impressorum ab anno MDXLI ad annum MDC in regionibus quae nunc Regni Belgicarum partes sunt* (Nationaal centrum voor de archeologie en de geschiedenis van het boek), 4 vol., Nieuwkoop, 1968-1994 [B1].

(2) For example: Théodore JUSTE, *Le comte d'Egmont et le comte de Hornes, d'après les documents authentiques et inédits*, Brussels, 1862, p. 181.

(3) Evert PEETERS, *Het labirynth van het verleden: Natie, vrijheid en geweld in de Belgische geschiedschrijving, 1787-1850*, Leuven, University Press Leuven, 2003, 121-122.

(4) Example cited in Herman VAN NUFFEL, *Lamoraal van Egmond in de geschiedenis, literatuur en beeldende kunst en legende*, Leuven, University Press Leuven, 1968, p. 103 and 105-107.

(5) Aline GOOSENS, *Le Comte Lamoral d'Egmont (1522-1568): les aléas du pouvoir de la haute noblesse à l'aube de la Révolution des Pays-Bas*, Brussels, 2003, and in translation: Aline GOOSENS and Herman VANDORMAEL, *De graaf van Egmond, Slachtoffer van intrige en verraad*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2007.

(6) Aline GOOSENS, 'La fortune du comte Lamoral d'Egmont vers 1567-1568', in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, vol. 70, 1992, p. 357-380.

religious dissidents⁽⁷⁾. Liesbeth Geevers has only just provided a kind of collective biography of Egmont, Horn and Orange within the framework of the Spanish-Habsburg composite monarchy⁽⁸⁾.

In a deliberate move to overcome Marxist interpretations and the general underestimate of the power of the nobility, Henk van Nierop, about a decade ago, concisely summarized the position of the nobility in the Dutch Revolt as one 'between Church and King, and Protestantism and Privileges'. For different reasons, nobles perceived that the 'ancient constitution' – and thus their privileged status as first vassals to the King – was violated. They also felt uncomfortable with the manner in which Philip II decided to tackle religious division, again not taking into account their *auxilium et consilium*. For the period under scrutiny until 1567, this discontent did not lead to protestant conversions on the part of the grandees, even if some of them were quite positive towards a *tolérance-indulgence* or even freedom of conscience. However, in order to explicitly defy Habsburg religious policy, in the autumn of 1565 a group of nobles with no direct access to the Brussels' Court and bureaucracy, set up the so-called Compromise of the Nobility (*Compromis des Nobles, Eedverbond der Edelen*) which rallied support from both Reformed and Catholic lesser nobility and city elites⁽⁹⁾.

This article argues that Egmont's statement on the need to 'preserve the state rather than religion' is more his judgement on the role of the nobility in early modern society than an expression of his faith. Looked at this way, it points to a much lesser known aspect of the role of the nobility on the eve of the Revolt. With his answer, Egmont made clear that above all the Governor General had to entrust the nobility with the task of peacemaking. The former war hero knew well enough that the nobility also risked losing with a general revolt in the Netherlands. Civil unrest and possible military mobilisation would disrupt agriculture and commerce and therefore have a serious impact on noble revenues and incomes. Particularly because of his widespread possessions in the Low Countries (Margaret of Parma possessed family patrimony only in *lo stato farnesiano*), the Count felt he had a lot to lose with a general revolt. These acknowledgements add thus another 'between' to Van Nierop's outline on the position of the nobility quoted above: between dissent and peacemaking. By combining sixteenth-century

(7) Aline GOOSENS, 'Les hésitations du comte Lamoral d'Egmont concernant la politique religieuse des Pays-Bas dans les années 1560', in Alain DIERCKENS, ed., *Le penseur, la violence, la religion*, Brussels, 1996, p. 63-70 (Problèmes d'histoire des religions 7), here p. 67.

(8) Liesbeth GEEVERS, *Gevalen vazallen. De integratie van Oranje, Egmont en Horn in de Spaans-Habsburgse monarchie (1559-1567)*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2008.

(9) Henk VAN NIEROP, 'The Nobility and the Revolt of the Netherlands: Between Church and King, and Protestantism and Privileges', in Philip BENEDICT, Guido MARNEF and Henk VAN NIEROP e.a., eds, *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585*, Amsterdam, 1999, p. 83-98 (Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, Verhandelingen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks 176) and see also his article Henk VAN NIEROP, 'A Beggars' Banquet: The Compromise of the Nobility and the Politics of Inversion', in *European History Quarterly*, vol. 21, 1991, p. 419-443.

archival and printed sources from Spanish and Belgian archives and libraries, this article sheds a new light on a reportedly well-known period.

After an historiographical outline of noble dissent on the eve of the Dutch Revolt, the analysis takes into account three attempts at peacemaking over religious division in the same period. Not coincidentally, Egmont and the other high nobles played a major role in all three of these. First, in January 1565, Egmont was sent to the Spanish Court in order to obtain concessions from Philip II. On his return he set up a commission with councillors, theologians, bishops and the Council of State to discuss the punishment of heretics. Second, one year later, in May and June 1566, the Governor General and several provincial governors – one of whom was again Egmont – tried to convoke the Provincial Estates on a moderation of the heresy laws in order to appease rising tensions. Third, immediately after the outburst of iconoclasm in August 1566, Egmont and other Knights of the Golden Fleece tried to mediate in negotiating for *letters d'assurance* for the Golden Fleece to the Nobility. On the 23 (25) (16) of August, *lettres d'assurance* were indeed issued in which reformed preaching was allowed to continue, but only where it had taken place before that date and only if the Compromise of the Nobility would disband.

On various occasions Juliaan Wolter, a prominent scholar of the Dutch Revolt, described this last agreement as the 'first victory' of the 'moderates' or the 'peacemakers' (*vrede-makers*). These substantially sized 'middle groups' demanded concessions for Protestants, either out of political, humane and economic considerations or out of fear of disorder. Hard-line Catholics on the contrary supported the unconditional fight against heresy while Reformers struggled for the free (if not exclusive) worship of their religion (11). Above all, Wolter's well-known thesis helped to bypass nationalist and ideological historiography after 1960 and led to the acknowledgement of the presence of large moderate groups in the society of the Low Countries before and during the Revolt (12). However, his model tends to suggest too great a harmony and consistency on the part of the 'peacemakers'. This article argues that the actual *peacemaking* was a hard job of negotiating and finding coalitions on concrete proposals, rather than the expression of moderate views.

Dissent among the nobility on the eve of the Revolt (1559-1564)

In 1859 the Leiden professor of 'national history' (*vaderlandsche geschiedenis*) Robert Fruin published an essay on the eve of the Eighty Years'

(10) On the 25th, as explained further on, the Compromise of the Nobility pledged an oath on the agreement, through which it became binding.

(11) Juliaan WOLTER, *Friesland in Hervormings tijd*, Leiden, 1962, p. 90-104 and above all *Id.*, "De vrede-makers", in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 89, 1976, p. 229-321 and the revised summary in: *Id.*, "Political Moderates and Religious Moderates in the Revolt of the Netherlands", in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*, *op. cit.*, p. 185-200.

(12) Guido DE BRUIN, "De geschiedschrijving over de Opstand", in W.W. MINHARDT, ed., *Kantelend geschiedbeeld: Nederlandse historiografie sinds 1945*, Utrecht, 1983, p. 48-82, 68 and Philip BENEDICT, "Introduction", in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

War (*Voorspel van den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog*). If until then the first invasion of William of Orange in 1568 had been taken as the start of the 'national struggle' leading to independence in 1648, Fruin showed that tensions arose from 1559, and particularly from 1565 onwards, culminating in the iconoclastic fury of 1566. In addition, he demonstrated that dissent among the nobility too started before 1568, through the high nobility's League against Granvelle in 1563 and the Compromise in 1565-1566 (13). Later on, in the 1920s and 1930s, Enno Van Gelder provided path-breaking studies which showed that nobles had a predominant role in the Revolt – until then regarded largely as a struggle of the 'Dutch people' – and that even in regions where the nobility was considered to be relatively unimportant (14).

Modern scholars are still divided on the categorization of high nobility in the Low Countries, as official titles similar to *pair* in France or *Grande* in Spain did not exist for the overall territory (nonetheless, for the sake of elegance, I will sometimes use the term *grandee*) (15). Yet Hans Cools has provided a very useful scheme of classification by looking not only at titles and properties, but also at the different "noble functions" or "aristocratic institutions" (*adelijke ambten/aristocratische instellingen*) in the Burgundian-Habsburg state complex: Knight of the Golden Fleece, courtier, councillor (after 1530 in the so-called 'collateral councils' adjunct to the governor), provincial governor (*lieutenant, stadhouder*) and captain of the *bandes d'ordonnance* (troops provided by the landlord). (16)

Nobles like Egmont and Orange easily accumulated all these functions. As courtier and captain of Charles V, Egmont was in 1544 rewarded with a *bande d'ordonnance* (on the occasion of his marriage to the German princess Sabina of Bavaria) and in 1546 he was elected to the Order of the Golden Fleece. After a short interim governorship of Luxembourg, he was appointed Councillor of State in 1555 and governor of Flanders and Artois in 1559. William of Orange followed a similar *cursus honorum*, culminating in 1559 with the prestigious statholdership of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht. In 1559, Philip of Montmorency-Nivelle, Count of Horn, had to give up his Gelre governorship on accompanying the King to Spain as his Captain of the *archers de corps (guardia flamenca)*. At the same time his younger brother, Floris of Montmorency, baron of Montigny and also Knight of the Golden Fleece, received the governorship of Tournai and the Tournaisis. As Horn only re-entered the Council of State, but not a provincial governorship, on

(13) Robert FRUIN, "Het voorspel van den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog", in *De Gids*, 1859, p. 741-798.

(14) Enno VAN GELDER, "Friesche en Groningsche edelen in de tijd van de opstand tegen Spanje", in *Historische opstellen opgedragen aan prof. dr. H. Brugmans*, Amsterdam, 1929, p. 78-94 and other reprints in: Enno VAN GELDER, "Bailleul, Bronckhorst, Brederode", in *Id.*, ed., *Van Beeldenstorm tot Pacificatie*, Amsterdam/Brussels, 1964, p. 40-79.

(15) See concluding remarks of Frederik BUYLAERT and Jan DUMOLYN, "L'importance sociale, politique et culturelle de la haute noblesse dans les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et Habsbourgeois (1475-1525): un état de la question", in Jelle HAEMERS, Céline VAN HOOREBECK and Henno WUSMAN, eds., *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état: Philippe de Clèves (1456-1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2008, p. 279-294.

(16) Hans COOLS, *Mannen met macht. Edellieden en de Moderne Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen (1475-1530)*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2001, chp. II.

his return to the Netherlands in 1561, he complained that 'even his brother earned more than him' (17).

Egmont, Orange and Horn, who had previously expressed their discontent about Cardinal Granvelle only in letters to Philip II, led the League against Granvelle, although it is uncertain which of the three took the initiative (18). Montigny, who in 1562 had already been on a mission to the Spanish Court regarding the discontent, joined together with the Gelre governor Charles of Brimeu, Count of Meghen and the Hainaut *grand bailli* (grand bailiff) Jan of Glymes, Marquis of Berghes. Yet the League divided the Dutch Knights of the Golden Fleece. Despite his problems with Granvelle, the Frisian governor Jan of Ligne, Duke of Arenberg declined to join, as did Hachicourt, Councillor of State. Equally Philip of Croÿ, Duke of Aerschot pointed out his loyalty and rank in his refusal to join – although he did not hold an appointment in the Council of State nor a provincial governorship. Yet the League, particularly when it had adopted clear signs of confederacy by December 1563, prompted the fear at the Spanish Court that one of the grandees might take up a similar role to that of Coligny and Condé in France.

The oldest but still the accepted interpretation identifies the League as a rather traditional noble resistance to the newly developing bureaucratic and technocratic state, of which a polyglot administrator such as Granvelle was a representative. After the departure of the King in 1559, Antoine Perrenot was regarded as the key figure in the Brussels' bureaucracy, assisted by the jurist Viglius, president of the Council of State and the Privy Council, and by Lord Charles of Berlaymont, president of the Finance Council (who despite his membership of the Order of the Golden Fleece did not possess high ranking noble titles). When Granvelle became Cardinal in 1561 and therefore pre-eminent in the Council of State, this was seen as a defeat for the 'old nobility'. The League thus pleaded for a reform of these so-called 'collateral councils', making the Privy Council and the Finance Council accessory to the Council of State. The Lord of Berlaymont considered this an attempt to have a 'Republic with the King *en tutèle*' (19).

More recently María Rodríguez-Salgado identified the clash as a competition for patronage, brokerage and nominations (20). Whereas the high nobility felt the loss of its grip on Brussels' patronage, Granvelle was successful in positioning himself both as a broker at the Brussels Court and in the Habsburg composite monarchy. The new ecclesiastical division of

(17) For a detailed outline on their integration in the Spanish-Habsburg composite monarchy: GEEVERS, *Gevallen vazallen*, op. cit.

(18) Liesbeth GEEVERS, "Hoe toegankelijk was de 'papieren koning'? Een informeel communicatiekanaal tussen Lamoraal van Egmont en Willem van Oranje en de Spaanse centrale besluitvorming in de jaren 1559-1564", in *Tijdschrift voor Sociaal-Economische Geschiedenis*, vol. 4, 2007, p. 31-60.

(19) Berlaymont to Philip II, 30 August 1564: AGS E 525 f° 98 (copy) and f° 97 (Spanish translation), cf. summary in GACHARD, *CPHil* I, p. 314.

(20) María José RODRÍGUEZ-SALGADO, "King, Bishop, Pawn? Philip II and Granvelle in the 1550s and 1560s", in Krista DE JONGE and Gustaaf JANSSENS, eds., *Les Granvelles et les anciens Pays-Bas. Liber doctori Maurício van Durme dedicatus*, Leuven University Press, Louvain, 2000, p. 105-134, p. 134.

1559 (21), and Granvelle's subsequent appointment as archbishop of Malines and metropole of the Dutch church, reinforced him in his position as a broker of patronage, while the nobility felt themselves prejudiced against, thanks to the new stringent demand of university degrees for bishops and canons.

The 1559 bishopric reform plan, however, caused much more distress than manoeuvres over patronage and brokerage. First of all, this was concluded in the royal entourage in utter secrecy, deliberately leaving the Brussels' Council of State out of the deliberations. Second, it aimed at reshuffling the power base of Brabantine prelates, who in the first half of the century had opposed imperial policy with powerful confederacies. Through the stipulated incorporation of important abbeys into the Episcopal *mensa*, the first Estate of Brabant would count three bishops, one of which was the archbishop of Malines (again Granvelle). Clerical resistance pointed to the famous Brabantine privilege, the 'Joyous Entry', on which Philip II swore in 1549. Nobles of the Brabant Estates, in particular Orange and Glymes-Bergen embarked upon this resistance, calling for a States-General. There were even suggestions that Orange be appointed as a *ruwaerd* of Brabant (as eventually happened in 1577) with Berghes as his lieutenant.

However, resistance to bishopric reform quickly became coupled with opposition to the harsh Habsburg heresy policy. Helmut Koenigsberger stated the opportunism with which the nobility seized on the religious issue to gain more power, as at that stage the grandees did not convert to the Reformation and their position as nobles as such was not at stake (22). Yet most nobles perceived a personal and material threat in any increase in the persecution of heresy. In the first Spanish *autos de fe* of 1559 important noblemen were convicted, losing their titles and properties (23). All noble households included gentry tempted by the Reformation. Moreover, Orange, Horn and Lord Henry of Brederode (an important 'Holland' noble and later named as the *Grote Geus* or 'Big Beggar') had Lutheran wives, and thus shared a personal interest in moderate policies (24).

Nonetheless specifically in their tasks as provincial governors, nobles encountered increasing problems in maintaining public order. In border regions close to France, Calvinists clearly provoked royal policy with public sermons and the singing of Psalms from 1561 onwards. Moreover, bringing convicted heretics to trial seemed to cause even more public disorder than order. If public execution at the stake was based on the pious idea that this could preserve orthodoxy by reducing evil to ashes, as in France, this type of execution gave a platform for 'martyrs', begging for mercy from the 'true

(21) Michel DIERICKX, *De oprichting der nieuwe bisdommen in de Nederlanden onder Philips II (1559-1570)*, Antwerp, 1950.

(22) Helmut KOENIGSBERGER, "The States-General of the Netherlands before the Revolt", in *Estates and Revolutions. Essays in Early Modern European History*, New York and London, 1971, p. 125-143.

(23) Henry KAMEN, "Toleration and Dissent in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alternative Tradition", in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 19, 1988, p. 3-23, p. 18 en Werner THOMAS, "De mythe van de Spaanse inquisitie in de Nederlanden in de zestiende eeuw", in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 105, 1990, p. 325-353.

(24) VAN NIEROP, "The Nobility and the Revolt", op. cit., p. 90.

God' (²⁵). Therefore, Montigny and Berghes dispensed with public executions and proposed that on the basis of the growing number of Protestants it was impossible to do justice according to existing laws. Within their territories of *haute justice*, nobles experimented with degrees of toleration. Brederode did this for example in Vianen, William in his principality of Orange and Horn's wife in Weert, the principal city in the county of Horn. Two royal 'spies', Alonso de Canto and Lorenzo de Villavicencio, informed the King about this which was, in their opinion, clear *lèse-majesté* (²⁶).

Beemon argued that this opposition was fed by the fear of a possible introduction of the Spanish Inquisition, rather than of existing religious persecution (²⁷). However, the conviction in 1565 by the Louvain inquisitors of a member of the household of the noble Maximilian of Melun, denounced by his mother-in-law, showed that inquisition was a real threat, even for the privileged nobility protected by law (²⁸). Therefore, discontented nobles revived the fear of a Spanish Inquisition in their propaganda, as this also aured their unhappiness with the growing 'hispanisation' of policy-making (²⁹). In fact, inquisition was a hybrid term, used for the heresy law, the Episcopal inquisition, the Papal inquisition and the inquisitors with a papal commission but appointed by the landlord (only the last category will appear hereafter as 'inquisition'). Moreover, the bishopric reform with plans for visitations, and the Tridentine decrees with the obligation for priests to register baptisms, also provoked the fear of persecution and 'inquisition' (³⁰).

Particularly before the end of the Council of Trent in December 1563, Dutch nobles looked for a *via media*. The Marquis of Berghes was in favour of a national Council to settle differences in belief. He regularly expressed the idea that faith did not justify the spilling of blood or the possible loss of innocent souls (³¹). Moreover, Orange and Egmont contacted humanists like Cassander and Balduino who had participated in the drafts of moderate positions in France (³²). In other Habsburg territories, opposition towards anti-heresy measures had succeeded. In Naples, the city government had opposed inquisition in 1509, and turmoil in 1547 prevented new plans in that direction. Similar civil discontent in 1563 impeded the introduction

(25) David NICHOLLS, "The Theatre of Martyrdom in the French Reformation", in *Past and Present*, vol. 121, 1988, p. 49-73, p. 65 and Brad S. GREGORY, *Salvation at Stake. Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 7 and p. 78.

(26) Gabriëlle DORREN, "Lorenzo de Villavicencio en Alonso del Canto. Twee Spaanse informanten over de Nederlandse elite (1564-1566)", in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 111, 1998, p. 352-376.

(27) F. F. BEEMON, "The Myth of the Spanish Inquisition and the Preconditions for the Dutch Revolt", in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, vol. 85, 1994, p. 246-264.

(28) Violet SOEN, *Geen pardon zonder paus! Studie over de complementariteit tussen het koninklijke en het pauselijk generaal pardon (1570-1574) en inquisiteur-generaal Michael Baius (1560-1576)*, Brussels, 2007, p. 127.

(29) VAN NIEROP, "The Nobility and the Revolt", op. cit., p. 91-92.

(30) SOEN, *Geen pardon zonder paus*, op. cit., p. 23-26.

(31) Letter of Maximilien Morillon to Granvelle, 22 June 1565: cf. WEISS, PEGG IX, p. 338-344 (LXXXVI).

(32) Robert FRUIN, *Het hoorspel van de 80-jarige Oorlog*, Utrecht, s.d., p. 105-111.

of a Spanish-style inquisition in Milan (³³). By then the French monarchy had found an alternative legal solution by first decriminalizing Calvinism (1560) and later conferring limited rights of worship by the Edicts (*Édits de Pacification*) of January (1562) and of Amboise (1563) (³⁴).

I. Egmont's mission (January-June 1565)

Egmont's mission to the Spanish Court in 1565 is usually described as an unfortunate climax to his biography. The Count left Brussels in January 1565 and returned at the end of May; at the Royal Court from February to April he was treated with respect, receiving honours and financial rewards (³⁵). For biographers (and others), the mission usually offers an ideal occasion in which to comment on the character and diplomatic skills of the Dutch grandee: Egmont then appears as a somewhat vain nobleman, with high military but low political abilities, looking for personal favours rather than *le bien public* (³⁶).

Félix Rachfahl, the first 'modern' biographer of Orange and familiar with the archival sources, saw the mission as Egmont's own stratagem to play a pivotal role in politics and leave William of Orange behind. This view has recently been supported by Liesbeth Geevers, who also carried out archival research on the same period (³⁷). Both scholars point to the fact that the King had already tried to make Egmont travel to Court in 1563, in the hope of dividing the League against Granvelle. Without the consent of Orange and Horn, Egmont had then written to the King that he would be honoured to travel on royal orders (³⁸). Rachfahl and Geevers see Egmont's hesitation at the end of 1564 as a way of masking his intrigues. The Governor General's invitation to Egmont for the mission, however, reveals a point crucial to the argument of this article. She pointed to the fact that 'he had gained so much honour in war, while now he could show his ability for the welfare of his *patria* in times of peace' (³⁹).

(33) Jean-Pierre DEDIEU, "La Inquisición en la época de Carlos V (1516-1556)", in José Luis CASTELLANO CASTELLANO and F. SÁNCHEZ-MONTES GONZÁLEZ, eds., *Carlos V: Europeísmo y Universalidad. II: La organización del poder*, Madrid, 2001, p. 141-154, p. 149-150.

(34) Olivier CHRISTIN, "From Repression to Pacification: French Royal Policy in the Face of Protestantism", in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*, p. 201-214 and Mario TURCHETTI, "Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France", in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 22, 1991, p. 15-25.

(35) Léon VAN DER ESSEN, *Alexandre Farnèse, Prince de Parme, Gouverneur Général des Pays-Bas (1545-1592)*, 5 vols., Brussel, 1933-1937, vol. I, p. 103-104.

(36) Bernard DE TROEYER, *Lamoraal van Egmont: een kritische studie over zijn rol in de jaren 1559-1564 in verband met het schuldvraagstuk*, Brussels, 1961, p. 142-143 and p. 171-174.

(37) RACHFAHL, *Wilhelm von Oranien*, 3 vols., Halle/Den Haag, 1906-1924, vol. II, p. 472 and GEEVERS, *Gevalen vazallen*, p. 128-129.

(38) DE TROEYER, *Egmont*, op. cit., p. 142-143 and p. 171-174.

(39) VIGLIUS, "Mémoires", in A. WAUTERS, ed., *Mémoires de Viglius et d'Hopperus sur le commencement des troubles des Pays-Bas* (Société de l'Histoire de Belgique II), Brussels, 1858, p. 87-88.

It has often been alleged that Egmont's mission was a complete failure⁽⁴⁰⁾. However, he returned to Brussels with substantial funding which the Governor General had asked for in order to lessen government debt towards cities and soldiers. When hearing about this financial aid, the Prince of Orange admitted to his brother Louis that Egmont had somehow come away successful, but *la fin démonstrerat le tout*⁽⁴¹⁾. The financial aid served as a temporary alleviation, as long as the King could not come to the Netherlands; this was in Egmont's instruction (and long after) seen as the miracle solution to all problems in the Netherlands. It is uncertain whether the nobles really wanted the King to come, as this would reduce their recently acquired influence. As Geoffrey Parker and Fernando González de León have shown, the nobility saw the Ottoman forces and the siege of Malta as a means to put pressure on the King⁽⁴²⁾. And indeed, in the end Egmont secured neither the reform of the 'collateral councils' nor the appointment of new councillors, which seemed to be the most concrete demand on the part of the grandees.

Yet the poor results of Egmont's mission have been mostly related to the religious question. In the Council of State on the feast of New Year's Eve 1564, Orange had defended the need for some toleration for religious dissidents: surrounded as it was by countries in which settlements had been agreed to allow for Protestant worship, it was vital for commerce that there was a similar outcome in the Netherlands. This led Paul David Lagomarsino to suppose that Egmont left Brussels with a 'strong programme for religious toleration'⁽⁴³⁾. However, if Egmont's instructions were indeed redrafted after Orange's 'toleration speech', there were only vague references made to the need to reform 'religion, justice and police'⁽⁴⁴⁾. Philip II's scribbles in the margins reveal that Egmont tackled the ineffectiveness of public executions in which obstinate heretics died as 'martyrs', thereby creating propaganda for the Reformation. Therefore, they had discussed the possibility of executing heretics *secretly* so as to cause less disorder. To his secretary Gonzalo Pérez, however, the King admitted that he had not spoken straightforwardly on the subject⁽⁴⁵⁾. Yet on the basis of his rather fuzzy instructions, Egmont actually

obtained the concession to set up a discussion on the religious situation in the Low Countries⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Philip II had framed the permitted consultation in terms of the execution of the Council of Trent, the instruction of lay people, the education of children and the reform of the clergy, but he also conceded that the *punishment* of heretics could be discussed there. The above mentioned 'spy' Alonso de Canto could not convince himself that this consultation happened with royal consent⁽⁴⁷⁾. Based on the account of the Jesuit Farniano Strada, Henry Kamen claimed incorrectly that this consultation was a deliberation of *Spanish* theologians on the *liberty of conscience*⁽⁴⁸⁾. Yet Philip certainly did not allow the meeting to go in that direction, but as he did not want to be responsible at the Last Judgement for the loss of innocent lives and souls, he only wanted to 'prevent them [heretics] from dying in their evilness', while the instruction of lay people had to stop 'people falling into errors through lack of doctrine'⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Apparently Egmont had suggested a substantially sized consultation⁽⁵⁰⁾, but Philip II limited the discussion to 'two or three bishops' and some councillors 'in small numbers' but indisputably with zeal for the Catholic religion. This decision was tied up with strategic and religious considerations and the role of the nobility. If Philip was 'certain' that Egmont had suggested the discussion 'with good intentions', others could have malign motives⁽⁵¹⁾. It is uncertain whether the Count hinted at a States-General, as Orange would probably have wanted him to. On this point, the King consciously expressed the sentiment that he did not want 'anything to happen as in France'. Since 1561, when he considered military intervention in the first French civil war, Philip II had sustained that any concessions to reformers would in the end lead to freedom of conscience or worship⁽⁵²⁾. Moreover, precisely at the time of Egmont's visit, the King was trying to coordinate a conference in Bayonne with Charles IX and Caterina de Medici to convince the latter of a

(46) *Instrukcion de lo que Vos el Príncipe de Gavres... aveys de dezir y declarar de mi parte à la Duquesa de Parma mi hermana*, 2/4/1565: AGS E 527 f° 4, cf. GACHARD, *CPHII*, vol. I, p. 346-347 (274).

(47) Alonso de Canto to Cardinal Granvelle, 26 July 1565: WEISS, *PECG* IX, 405-410 (CIII).

(48) KAMEN, "Toleration and dissent in Spain", op. cit., p. 19. Consequently according to Kamen, Egmont had come to the Netherlands with very confused ideas, as the Spanish theologians would have said the King could permit liberty of conscience. None of this is true, of course. The discussion that confused Egmont only concerned the *execution* of heretics.

(49) *Instrukcion de lo que Vos el Príncipe de Gavres... aveys de dezir y declarar de mi parte à la Duquesa de Parma mi hermana*, 2/4/1565: AGS E 527 f° 4, cf. GACHARD, *CPHII*, vol. I, p. 346-347 (274).

(50) *Minutes of the instruction for Egmont*, end March 1565: AGS E 527 f° 8 (with notes of Philip II): '[Egmont] me proponia juntar mucho mas personas por esto', but he did not approve the idea out of fear that they 'moviessen algo como en Francia'; LAGOMARSINO, *Court Factions*, op. cit., p. 110-112.

(51) *Minutes of the instruction for Egmont*, end March 1565: AGS E 527 f° 8 (with notes of Philip II): 'aunque creo cierto que el las dice con buena intencion, podria que algunos que no la tuviessen tal le pusiessen en ello quiza con no buen fin'.

(52) Valentín VAZQUEZ DE PRADA, *Felipe II y Francia (1559-1598)*. *Política, Religión y Puntos de Vista de Fernando*. Pamplona. Ediciones de la Universidad de Pamplona, 2004, p. 131.

(40) DE TROEYER, *Lamoraal van Egmont*, p. 140-147; JUSTE, *Egmont*, op. cit., p. 114-142; R. AVERMAETE, *Lamoraal d'Egmont 1523-1568*, Brussels, 1943, p. 157-164 and W.C. MEES, *Lamoraal van Egmont*, Assen, 1963, p. 138-144; VIGLIUS, A. *Mémoires*, in A. WAUTERS, ed., *Mémoires de Viglius et d'Hopperus sur le commencement des troubles des Pays-Bas* (Société de l'Histoire de Belgique II), Brussels, 1858.

(41) William of Orange to his brother Louis of Nassau, 3 April 1565: GROEN, *Archives* I, 244-245, WvO 4464.

(42) Geoffrey PARKER and Fernando GONZÁLEZ DE LEÓN, "The Grand Strategy of Philip II and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1559-1584", in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*, p. 215-232, p. 221-223.

(43) Paul David LAGOMARSINO, *Court Factions and Formulation of Spanish Policy towards the Netherlands*, University of Cambridge, PhD, 1974, p. 126.

(44) *Instrukcion et memoire de ce que vous mon bon cousin le Prince de Gavres... auez de ma part a negocier en Espagne devers le Roy Monseigneur*, 23 January 1565 (n.s.); AGS E 533 s.f., cf. GACHARD, *CMog*, 539-552 (CCCXLVII).

(45) *Puntos que resultan de las cartas de Flandes*, s.d.: AGS E 527 f° 14, *Estos puntos se han errado de las comunicaciones s.d.* AGS E 577 f° 14 (with notes of Philip II).

more stringent policy towards Calvinism. For the King, 'Religion is the only thing in which I do not permit change' and before conceding 'he would rather lose a hundred lives if he had them', in the final version by Gonzalo Pérez even 'a hundred thousand lives'. If this was his personal motivation, Geoffrey Parker showed that he also drew on the greater 'domino theory', that the loss of religion in one state would eventually lead to the Habsburg monarchy's loss of many states⁽⁵³⁾.

Although the space for negotiating religious problems was limited, Margaret of Parma and Egmont immediately seized the opportunity as 'being one of the most important matters of the instruction'. Within two weeks of Egmont's return, invitations had been sent out, even before Orange had returned to Brussels, for the occasion on which the Count had promised to reveal the outcome of his mission⁽⁵⁴⁾. Three installed bishops, three Louvain professors (a law professor and two theologians, one of whom was an elect-bishop) and three magistrates were selected. The nine men attended the Council of State on 31 May and 1, 5 and 6 June, signing the final summary on 8 June⁽⁵⁵⁾. In his meticulous annotation of the Latin original of this account of the meeting Philip II expressed his satisfaction with the format and the composition in which the consultation was held⁽⁵⁶⁾.

The discussion gives a very tangible illustration of the point made by Judith Pollmann on Catholic leadership in the Netherlands^(56bis). Surprisingly, the perceived need for a crisis policy was countered by a penitential interpretation of the problems of the Catholic faith: the present malaise was a just punishment from God. The clergy and the government had to organize public supplications in order to solicit God's help. If only the government would display more zeal for the reformed Catholic faith the will to persecute heresy would follow, as people were scared to carry out executions. Reform measures in the Tridentine spirit were necessary, though most evil arose because designated bishops were unable to take possession of their Sees. All installed bishops were prepared to take the lead in Reform, but they expected royal help.

If the reform measures in accordance with the Council of Trent met with general approval, the discussion on the punishment of heretics seemed more

(53) 'menos yo tengo que consentir que aya mudança en ella' 'en que no tendre en nada perder cien vidas si antes tuviese que consentirla': *Minutes of the instruction for Egmont*, end March 1565: AGS E 527 f° 8 (with notes of Philip II). Geoffrey PARKER, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, New Haven, 1998.

(54) *Report on the committee on religion in Brussels*, 8 June 1565: AGS E 529 f° 46 (Spanish translation): 'Siendo uno de las cosas principales de la instruccion de Egmont' and Letter from Egmont to Philip II, 15/5/1565: AGS E 530 s.f.

(55) *Original account of the commission*, 8 June 1565: AGS E 529 f° 44-45 (Latin). cf. the French summary of Louis-Prospér GACHARD, *Don Carlos et Philippe II*, Brussels, 1863, I, 319-320. *Minutes of the Council of State*: ARG PEA 779 f° 165, f° 169, f° 170.

(56) *Brevis narratio eorum que jussu Regiae Maiestatis ab Ducessa Parmensi... cum aliis quibus adhuc evocatis super religione, tractata sunt*: AGS E 527 f° 1 (with annotations by Philip II).

(56bis) Judith POLLMANN, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence, 1560-1585', in *Past and Present*, vol. 190, 2006, p. 83-120.

problematic⁽⁵⁷⁾. Probably, the drafting of a new religious law was proposed, 'as the *Huguenots* were expecting', wrote Maximilien Morillon⁽⁵⁸⁾, vicar-general of Granvelle and his main informant in the Low Countries. Although the account did not make specific reference to the French situation, the vicar-general meant that French *liberté de conscience* was seen as disadvantageous during the meeting⁽⁵⁹⁾. In the end, the account argued that since antiquity, fear had been found necessary to support religion, and that past and recent experience had shown that concessions to Protestants led to greater evil. The nine men thus made no changes to the heresy law set up by Charles V, 'which had been accepted for thirty years, also by the States-General'⁽⁶⁰⁾.

The nine men still agreed upon the need for a change in the law, taking into account the age, sex and 'sect' of offenders, and a conscious application of executions by fire or sword, if necessary in secret. It is exactly within this context that Hippolytus Persijn declared that for his part, the death sentence could be abolished⁽⁶¹⁾. Wolfert repeatedly showed with this example the general acceptance of moderate views, even by those such as Persijn who before had zealously pursued heretics⁽⁶²⁾. Yet Egmont, Horn and Orange seemed ill at ease with this solely legal suggestion, complaining that the 'bloody' theologians would suffer the consequences of their views and first themselves. The grandees of the Council of State refused to give their approbation to the account of the meeting, claiming that the King had not asked for it⁽⁶³⁾. Brederode could see that this consultation would not bring about much alleviation of the situation⁽⁶⁴⁾ as indeed on the streets there was already a virulent anticlericalism⁽⁶⁵⁾.

The question of mercy and the mitigation of capital punishment became immediately very urgent when the King pressed for the execution of eight repentant Anabaptists, even though he had shown mercy towards two of their companions⁽⁶⁶⁾. This personally offended Egmont – to the great surprise of Philip II⁽⁶⁷⁾ – and the Count now publicly declared that the King had said 'different things' during his visit. Nor did Margaret of Parma want to go on with the execution, because the 'junta' had advised leniency for repentant

(57) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 6/6/1565: AGR PEA 779 fol. 170.

(58) V. HEYNDRIKX, *Maximiliaan Morillon (1517-1586), medewerker van kardinaal Granvelle*, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, unedited master paper, 1993.

(59) Morillon to Granvelle, 29 June 1565: Weiss, *CGr IX*, p. 338-344 (LXXXVI): 'qu'est bien ce à quoy se attendoit les hugenotz'.

(60) *Original account of the Commission*, 8 June 1565: AGS E 529 f° 44-45 (Latin).

(61) Morillon to Granvelle, 22 June 1565: Weiss, *PECG IX*, p. 338-344 (LXXXVI).

(62) WOLFFER, *Friesland in Hervormingstijd*, op. cit., 110-121.

(63) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 22 and 25 June 1565: AGR PEA 779 fol. 174-176.

(64) Viglius to Granvelle, 14/06/1565: Weiss, *CGr IX*, 279-280 (XVIII) and Brederode to Orange, 21 June 1565, Groen, *Archives I.I.*, p. 249-251.

(65) In May, inquisitor Lindanus had decided to quit his function as inquisitor and in the summer Tiletanus would follow, together with his colleague Michael Bais. V. SOEN, *Geen pardon zonder paus*, p. 135.

(66) Philip II to Margaret of Parma, 13 May 1565: THEISSEN, *CMag I*, p. 48-49 (CCCLXXXII).

(67) *Puntos que resultan de las cartas de Flandes*, s.d.: AGS E 527 f° 14, *Estos puntos se han sacado de los apuntamientos*, s.d.: AGS E 527 f° 14 (with notes of Philip II).

heretics just as so many other 'good Catholics' did daily⁽⁶⁸⁾. Yet, in the October letters written in his palace in Valsain, known as the letters of the Segovia Woods (*el bosque de Segovia*), Philip II denied even the suggested reform of the law and urged everybody to help the inquisitors (who had in protest resigned). The King also rejected the possibility of reforming the 'collateral councils'.

Provincial governors such as Egmont, Orange and Montigny threatened to resign and returned to their properties, while Berghes concretely offered to withdraw. Over the summer Calvinist sympathisers and Louis of Nassau had agreed upon openly defying Habsburg religious policy. The letters of the Segovia Woods enabled them to immediately rally support. Brederode and Floris of Pallant, Lord of Culemborg – both without direct access to Brussels' bureaucracy or policy-making – took the initiative during the wedding festivities of Alexander Farnese in November 1565. Bonnevie-Noël's research showed that half of the Compromise actually consisted of Catholics⁽⁶⁹⁾. Van Nierop demonstrated that the nobles of Holland were really split on the issue⁽⁷⁰⁾.

II. The Moderation: recruitment of Catholic nobles?

The Compromise of the nobles showed foremost that a possible military escalation of discontent was possible, as had occurred in the Holy Roman Empire in the first half of the century and in France in the preceding years. Louis of Nassau indeed rallied support in the Empire (with military means if eventually necessary) for the cause of the protestant church in the Low Countries. The persistent rumour that Erik of Braunschweig had already recruited soldiers to introduce the Spanish Inquisition helped to increase a favourable attitude towards military resistance.

On the one hand, Egmont and Orange, who did not formally join but still sent gentry of their household to meetings of the Compromise, tried to appease too radical stances within the Confederacy. On the other hand, Egmont and Meghen advised the Governor General to opt for concessions instead of military repression. This was the beginning of a very substantial school of thought throughout the Dutch Revolt: a military response on the part of the monarchy would decrease support for the royal cause, while conciliatory measures would lead to greater profit.

The acknowledgement that the Council of State and the Privy Council were discussing concessions led to wild assumptions: Morillon wrote that they

were already deliberating the acceptance of the Augsburg Confession⁽⁷¹⁾. The Privy Council was indeed working on a juridical inquiry on the legal base of the inquisition in Brabant and other provinces. Further, even jurists tried to moderate the heresy law, on the basis of Roman and Canon Law.⁽⁷²⁾ However, these proposals no longer had intrinsic value, as they now appeared to have the deliberate intention 'to gain supporters for the royal party' and spread division within the ranks of the Compromise.⁽⁷³⁾ Those who had 'only' supported the Compromise for the moderation of heresy laws could be convinced to confirm their loyalty and Meghen and Egmont suggested that this could be formalised by means of a general pardon. However, jurists had more problems with applying a pardon, a royal privilege, to the Confederacy.

In order to find an adequate response to the Compromise, especially as it was clear the nobles would come to Brussels, Margaret of Parma summoned an exceptional crisis meeting to Brussels, including all members of the Council of State and the Privy Council, all Knights of the Golden Fleece and the provincial governors. Yet this happened under 'the maxim that the Catholic religion was kept and conserved in the *pays de par deça* without change or innovation'⁽⁷⁴⁾. At the start of the meeting, members of the Privy Council paved the way for a compromise solution by pointing out the differences in religious persecution, because in Viglius' words 'there were two inquisitions, of which 'the Papal' met with complaints while the Episcopal had been accepted for a thousand years'. The so-called 'papal' inquisition could be suppressed and the penalties for heresy could be differentiated⁽⁷⁵⁾. The suppression of the function of inquisitors met with the broad approval of the assembled nobles, as it had done before, but now the proposition had to be supported with thorough argument in order to convince the King.

Unlike the *junta* in 1565, the crisis meeting now seemed convinced of the necessity for a new law on heresy. Already on 30 March 1566, the lawyer Christoffel d'Assonleville⁽⁷⁶⁾ (Viglius' main assistant), read out the draft of a new edict prepared in the Privy Council. The most innovative clause of this *Moderation*, already drafted in the name of Philip II, stipulated that obstinate heretics were to be banished, with the extraordinary possibility that their goods could be administered by a person of their choice. This clause met the criticisms of executions, confiscations and possible economic ruin at one and the same time. Only *dogmatiseurs*, Anabaptists and obstinate *relapsed* heretics deserved capital punishment, by decapitation rather than the stake. Repentant heretics were invited to a 'solemn abjuration of their errors and

(71) Morillon to Granvelle, 31 March 1566: POUCKET, *CGr* I, 190-196 (XLVIII).

(72) SOEN, *Geen pardon zonder paus*, 2007, p. 147.

(73) Margaret of Parma to Philip II, 24 March 1566: THEISSEN, *CMag* I, 128-132 (CDXVII).

(74) Margaret of Parma to Philip II, 3 April 1566: THEISSEN, *CMag* I, 132-138 (CDXIX), cf. GACHARD, *CPhl* I, 403-406 (366): 'tenant pour une maxime que la religion catholique fut entretenue et conservée es pays de par deça sans changement ou innovation quelconque'.

(75) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 28/10/1566: AGR PEA 780 fol. 53-57.

(76) J. BRITZ, "D'Assonleville (Christophe) 1528-1607", in *Message des Sciences historiques*, 1865, p. 77-118 and Léon VAN DER ESSEN, "De raadshere d'Assonleville en zijn houding betreffende vrede en vredehandel met de Nederlandse "Rebellen" in de jaren 1578 en 1579", in *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 7, 1953, p. 183-197.

(68) Margaret of Parma to Philip II, 22 July 1565: THEISSEN, *CMag* I, p. 53-60 (CCCLXXV), cf. GACHARD, *CPhl* I, p. 360-362 (301).

(69) G. BONNEVIE-NOËL, "Les tendances religieuses des signataires du Compromis des Nobles", in *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire du protestantisme belge*, 5^{de} série, vol. 8, 1971, p. 241-252 and p. 279-293; vol. 9, 1972, p. 279-298; vol. 11, 1974, p. 305-319; 6^{de} série, vol. 1, 1974, p. 8-22; vol. 2, 1974, p. 46-56 and G. BONNEVIE-NOËL, "Liste critique des signataires du Compromis des Nobles", in *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire du protestantisme belge*, 5^{de} série III, 1968, 80-110.

(70) Henk VAN NIEROP, *The Nobility from Holland: From Knights to Regents, 1500-1650*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

a public testimony of their faith before the bishop or his representative'. Innocents and *gens simples* thus received mercy, presented as the Christian duty of the King. However, magistrates had to support public order and the Catholic faith, risking the death penalty if they failed to do so. Whoever was caught in Bible readings or teachings, without the required academic qualification, was liable to correction by the judges. The Council of State read the proposal and compared it to existing laws. The actual march on Brussels of the Compromise and their Petition did not much alter the discussion; yet because of this preliminary work, the Governor General could respond quickly to the Petition. She promised to suppress the papal inquisition and propose a change in the heresy laws, 'gentler than what ordinary law prescribes' (77). In the meantime, the Governor General promised to send delegates to the King, and Montigny and Berghes were nominated (probably in order to neutralize their influence over their territories).

The Petition had explicitly asked that remedies for the religious problem be brought to a States-General, thereby perhaps advocating a central role for this representative body. Koenigsberger claimed that Margaret of Parma simply rejected the suggestion, while Philip II advised her to pretend to be waiting for his consent (78). However, the scholar did not see that peacemaking actually took the suggestion into account (although it failed by July 1566). At the plenary crisis meeting, after the Petition, Assonleville proposed (perhaps on a hint from the Governor General or the nobles) a moderate solution between the convocation of a States-General and immediate publication. This would be under the condition 'that one should sometimes obey circumstances and choose the lesser evil of two bad things' (79); he suggested that the Governor General should write to the provincial Councils and the provincial governors to summon the provincial Estates to discuss the Moderation. The King could publish this Moderation, already dispensing with all required advice, or bring this point to a States-General. This project had considerable disadvantages, the foremost being that the reaction of the King would possibly be negative and that it would not satisfy those tending to Protestantism. The Duke of Arenberg proposed that if the King withdrew the moderation, it would give rise to new *arrière pensée*. (80) Only on 28 April did the Council of State finally approve the plan.

The possible recruitment of Catholic noblemen for the royal cause, in order to prevent further disorder, seemed to outweigh the disadvantages of the plan. Margaret stressed to the provincial governors that although technically the convocation was not necessary, it aimed at support for the new heresy law, necessary to defy the mobilisation of the Compromise (81).

(77) *Copia de la instruction dada a los gobernadores particulares sobre la moderación*, 18 April 1566: AGS E 529 f° 106-112.

(78) Helmut KOENIGSBERGER, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments. The Netherlands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 210-211.

(79) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 10 April 1566: AGR PEA 780 fol. 73: 'Il fault quelque fois oïr au temps et de deulx maux choisir le moindre'.

(80) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 10 April 1566: AGR PEA 780 fol. 73.

(81) *Copia de la instruction dada a los gobernadores particulares sobre la moderación*, 18 April 1566: AGS E 529 f° 106-112: 'por tenerlos mas propiçios, y inclinados para la observación destos placartes'.

Vigilius believed that the convocation of Provincial Estates formed an ideal juncture to forge the royal cause (82). Even Granvelle – although still arguing for a visit to the country by the king – decided that the tactic was worth a try. He recommended that the King accept the Moderation, because the nobles had explicitly promised to accept the Catholic faith and the authority of the King afterwards (83). Also Egmont wrote to Philip II that the Moderation was the only means to give 'un gran golpe a los sectarios' and 'give content to the good'. However, the King wrote *ojo* (watch out!) in the margin where the Count declared that he *then* would rally to royal power (84).

This compromise solution of the Moderation caused concern within reformed circles, which countered it with a very effective pun, calling the Moderation a *Moorderatie* (a murdering). At least three 'Admonitions' to this project appeared in print, accusing the Moderation of being the 'real inquisition'. One *Advertissement* recognised that the government was trying to spread division among the 'illegality' of the convocations 'contre of the nobles itself criticized the 'illegality' of the convocations 'contre l'ordinaire' (86). The Four Members of Flanders argued that the preliminary convocation of the States-General was necessary.

From May until July meetings of different Provincial Estates took place, starting in Artois and Hainaut, Tournai, Namur, Valenciennes, and Lille, Douai-Orchies, then Flanders and finally Brabant. The States of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelre and Overijssel had received no instruction by the outbreak of iconoclasm (87). Under the guidance of Egmont, the Artois Estate accepted the plan readily (88), as did Hainaut under the direction of Aerschot (as substitute to Berghes away on a mission), Namur under Berlaymont, and Lille-Douai-Orchies under Maximilien Vilain, lord of Rassenghien. The loyalists felt that the Moderation had had favourable effects (89), and that the immediate acceptance of the Estate of Artois had considerably diminished the chances that a States-General would decide upon freedom of conscience or

(82) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 10 April 1566: AGR PEA 780 fol. 73.

(83) Granvelle to Philip II, 20 May 1566: AGS E 903 s.f., cf. Poullet, *CGr* I, 265-271 (LXXIV) and summary in GACHARD, *CPhil* I, p. 416-417 (389).

(84) Egmont to Philip II, 3/05/1566: AGS E 530 s.f. (autograph with Spanish translation and notes of Philip II), cf. GACHARD, *CPhil* I, 411-412 (376).

(85) *Advertissement que sont les bons et loiaux suiets & habitants du Pais Bas, aux Gouverneurs et Estats diceluy pais, de ce quilz entendent et requierent estre ordonne sur le fait de la religion*, s.l., 1566: KBR VB 10 204 II A 12 and AGS E 903 f° 33 (with annotations of Assonleville).

(86) *Response de la noblesse à la duchesse de Parme... sur les articles proposez par les... prince d'Orange & conte d'Egmont à l'assemblée... à Saint-trom. Avec la declaration de ladite response... Et la requeste du peuple... de ces pays bas advouans la requeste... de la noblesse & confederer*, s.l., 1566 [BT 4144, BT 6630], KBR VB 10 204 II A 13, cf. nr. 4144 and 6630.

(87) Philip II to Margaret of Parma, 2 August 1566: GACHARD, *CMag* II, LXXIV-LXXVI (IX) and GACHARD, *CPhil* I, 439-439 (427).

(88) Assonleville to Granvelle, 30 June 1566: AGS E 903 fol. 34, cf. Poullet, *CGr* I, p. 341-345 (LXXXVII): 'ont promptement consenti'.

(89) *Minutes of the Council of State*, 27 May 1566: AGR PEA 780 fol. 97 and Morillon to Granvelle, 26/05/1566: Poullet, *CGr* I, p. 272-281 (LXXVI).

worship⁽⁹⁰⁾. However, acceptance was lukewarm in the already troublesome Tournai and Valenciennes areas. Also the Four Members of Flanders and the Estates of Brabant expressed many doubts on the reasoning and format of the Moderation and its approval by provincial Estates.

It was somehow a paradox that the Catholic nobility had to be convinced into a moderation of the anti-heresy law, though it seemed to work. At the Estates of Artois, Jean of Saint-Omer, lord of Morbecque and captain of Aire, expressed on the part of the Second Estate that they did not fear 'even the inquisition' and those who did, should accept the consequences. After this speech, Jean of Croÿ, lord of Le Rœulx reacted enthusiastically, putting his hand on his sword and claiming that one should fight 'the *Gueulx* who did not have law, rather than the Turks which had'⁽⁹¹⁾. Berlaymont stated that neither the nobility nor the clergy of Namur was infected by heresy and all wanted to defend the Catholic case⁽⁹²⁾. It seemed as if the provincial governors had received a chance to use their provincial *clientele*⁽⁹³⁾.

Members of the Compromise seemed to have been isolated during the meeting of these provincial Estates⁽⁹⁴⁾. In Artois, a petition of three *Gueulx* for a States-General was countered with the question of where were other states to be found in Artois?⁽⁹⁵⁾ Berlaymont faced the opposition of a prominent leader in the Compromise, Philippe de Marbais, lord of Louvreval. On the question of which religion Louvreval wanted to follow, he answered Catholic while advocating the right to read prohibited books. Berlaymont replied that 'he had better read the right books instead' and the audience approved of his answer⁽⁹⁶⁾. Even the bishop of Namur, Antoine Havet, had to admit that most gatherings on the Moderation had served well as a '*pierre de touche* to discover who had signed and pledged the Compromise'⁽⁹⁷⁾.

III. The *lettres d'assurance*: mediation by the Knights of the Golden Fleece

The March Petition on the one hand, and developing Calvinist militancy on the other, made many reformed refugees and banned protestants seize

(90) Granvelle to Philip II, 19 June 1566: AGS E 903 f° 50, cf. POULLET, *CGr* I, p. 314-321 (LXXXII).

(91) Morillon to Granvelle, 26 June 1566: POULLET, *CGr* I, p. 272-281 (LXXVI).

(92) Berlaymont to Margaret of Parma, 27 May 1566: AGR PEA 244/1 fol. 20 (original).

(93) Margaret of Parma to Berlaymont, 30 May 1566: AGR PEA 244/1 fol. 22.

(94) Maximilien Vilain, Lord of Rassenghien and Governor of Lille-Douai-Orchies to Egmont, 14/06/1566: AGS E 529 f° 149 (Spanish translation with notes of Philip II): 'sin algun protesto de tal manera'.

(95) Morillon to Granvelle, 26 May 1566: POULLET, *CGr* I, p. 272-281 (LXXVI).

(96) Berlaymont to Margaret of Parma, 27 May 1566: AGR PEA 244/1 fol. 20 (original) and Spanish summary of a letter of Berlaymont to Margaret of Parma, 29 June 1566: AGS E 530 s.f.

(97) Antoine Havet, bishop of Namur to Granvelle, 30 June 1566: AGS E 903 f° 25 (original). 'servy de pierre de touche en plusieurs lieux pour descouvrir ceulx qui ont signe et jure la ligue'.

the opportunity to return to their homeland. So-called 'hedge preachings' (*hagepreken*) and open gatherings (*conventicles*) attracted a steadily growing audience, according to some reports amounting to three or four thousand people. Often, petty nobility offered accommodation on their property, and sometimes even military protection.

Margaret of Parma and the Privy Council reacted in the beginning of July 1566 by newly prohibiting banned people from return but without much effect. Therefore, she sent Assonleville to the Prince of Orange and the Count of Horn to find out what concrete means they suggested to stop reformed preaching and the return of banned Protestants. Both pleaded for a States-General, a religious settlement and that greater power be given to the provincial governor. Assonleville thought their suggestions were too radical, but the *grand seigneurs* threatened yet again to withdraw from their duties. The Governor General could only hope that Montigny and Berghes, who had finally started negotiating at the Spanish Court, would get a clear-cut answer from the King.

If the Governor General thought that the States-General aimed at freedom of conscience, she seemed inclined to consider pardon for Compromise members, in return for their unconditional loyalty to the Crown. She allowed both Orange and Egmont to negotiate a pardon with the leaders of the Compromise, to which end Brederode and Culemborg visited the grandees in Duffel (close to Antwerp). At his trial before the Council of Troubles (*Conseil des Troubles*), Egmont was accused of having broken his instructions in promising the Compromise his assistance if anything happened to them. Yet the gathering of the Compromise in Saint-Trond reacted by stating that they did not need a pardon as they had not done anything against the King – they preferred *assurance* of life and property⁽⁹⁸⁾.

On 30 July 1566 twelve delegates – 'the apostles' – of the Compromise, this time under the guidance of Louis of Nassau (and no longer Brederode) – came to present a second Petition to the Governor General. They refused to take responsibility for the *conventicles* and took their distance from the open Calvinist mobilisation. The Compromise nobles offered themselves as allies to the Spanish Crown, if they obtained *assurance*, a States-General and the definitive end to the inquisition. These nobles alleged that the *assurance* was necessary, as they now had a bad reputation and some Knights of the Golden Fleece treated them as if they had committed *lèse majesté*⁽⁹⁹⁾.

Negotiations between these representatives and the Governor General between 30 July and 6 August were difficult⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Most councillors recognized that an *assurance* would not be the remedy for the civil unrest, but it could be a means 'not to lose the nobles for the royal cause' and to 'contain them until there was a resolution on a States General' while

(98) *Response de la noblesse à la duchesse de Parme... sur les articles proposez par les... prince d'Orange & conte d'Egmont à l'assemblée... à Saint-trom. Avec la déclaration de ladicte response... Et la requeste du peuple... de ces pays bas advouans la requeste... de la noblesse & confedererz*, 1566 [BT 4144, BT 6630], KBR VB 10 204 II A 13.

(99) *Ibid.*

(100) *Report on the negotiations between the Compromise and the Governor General from 30 July until 6 August 1566*: AGS SP 2604 s.f.

stopping foreign mobilisation⁽¹⁰¹⁾. Finally, the Count of Egmont came up with a compromise solution: if the Compromise wanted the 'assurance' of the Knights of the Golden Fleece they should be summoned and temporarily given this reassurance. So the 'Twelve Apostles' left Brussels with a temporary twenty-day *assurance*, while the Governor General agreed to summon the Golden Fleece for 20 August. In 1483, the Golden Fleece had similarly taken a mediating stance in the conflict between Maximilian of Austria and the Flemish Nobility⁽¹⁰²⁾.

Yet in this short time up to 20 August, two events changed the agenda of the meeting of the Golden Fleece: the arrival of the King's official answer to the mission of Montigny and Berghes and the start of the Iconoclastic Fury on 12 August. The King had – under restrictions – decided that the function of inquisitor could be abolished, if the inquisitorial tasks were taken over by the bishops, but he was clearly opposed to the Moderation. He was also opposed to a general pardon for heretics, but seemed to hint at a possible political pardon for nobles. The Governor General expressed her intention to escape from Brussels to Mons, but the nobles 'convinced' her to stay.

In the light of these circumstances, Horn, Orange and Egmont were now frankly in favour of broad concessions, tending towards the solutions of the Holy Roman Empire or France, in order not to *mescontenter ni la noblesse ni le peuple*. All, however, were convinced that iconoclastic rioters deserved punishment and to that end, the Compromise nobles should be asked to support a search for order against iconoclasm. The three decided to take up the decision of the King that the inquisition should be abolished and a pardon given. Even Berlaymont tried to convince the King that all means had to be tried before starting military mobilisation⁽¹⁰³⁾.

The Governor General however refused to negotiate with the Compromise and delegated the power to do so to the Knights of the Golden Fleece. On the night of 23 August, they received a secret instruction from Margaret of Parma that she would agree with an *assurance*, albeit only until the King decided on this point with the advice of a States-General and only if the Compromise 'would in no way prevent the worship of Catholicism'. Shortly after, the *chevaliers de l'ordre* agreed with the Compromise on *lettres d'assurance* in which the inquisition was abolished and a moderation of the anti-heresy laws would take effect. According to the text, the King was also willing to see the Compromise members as loyal vassals, if they did not contravene royal sovereignty or the Catholic religion. To this end, they had to prevent disorder (*tumults et émotions*) and disarm their League and the people. They had to circumvent preachings in places where they had not been take place before 23 August and, under any circumstance, stop preachers who caused scandal or public disorder. So thus, only preaching *outside* city walls could

(101) Report on the negotiations between the Compromise and the Governor General from 30 July until 6 August 1566, AGS SP 2604 s.f. and Margaret of Parma to Philip II, 08/08/1566: REIFFENBERG, *CMag*, p. 141-152 (XXV).

(102) Wim BLOCKMANS, 'Régime autocratique ou régime communautaire? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre de 1482 à 1492', in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire*, vol. 140, 1974, p. 257-368.

(103) Berlaymont to Philip II, 28 August 1566: AGS E 530 s.f. (Spanish translation).

continue in places where it had already taken place⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. Margaret of Parma immediately declared that the last clause had been issued without her consent and on the night of 24 August all preaching with military protection was also prohibited in the text of the Agreement.

On 25 July, the delegates of the Compromise were invited to swear on this document, in the presence of Egmont, Horn, Hachicourt and Assonleville, to observe this treaty and to dissolve their Confederation⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. At the same time, an edict of 25 July prescribed the punishments for iconoclasts. Everybody received permission to kill iconoclasts 'as you would an enemy of the *Patria*'. Those who took up weapons during rioting were to be put to death like rebels and their property confiscated⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.

This Agreement was indeed a very strange outcome, as it related to neither French nor German settlements. Discussions in the *Hofrat* of Maximilian II pointed out that Margaret had accepted publicly that some preaching took place and this would offend the King and the Pope. On the other hand, the *confessionnaires* were also harmed because the *Religionsfrid* only permitted the Catholic and Lutheran faiths, whereas this agreement arranged for a *certain* convivance of different confessions. More importantly, the *Religionsfrid* permitted the choice of religion by the princes and this agreement had harmed this principle⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

Should this Agreement then, as Woltjer did, be identified as the 'first victory of the Moderates'? It can, although Woltjer was probably too favourable on this point, because it technically did not really allow for the *worship* of two religions as he described, as it only allowed preaching, nor did it permit this on the whole territory of the Seventeen Provinces but only outside city walls in places where preaching had taken place before without military protection. Yet this article argues that one should add another perspective to this conventional interpretation. For the royal party, it was a means to rally the (at least formal) support of the Compromise, and in the end, allowances were so small that they almost amounted to a prohibition. However, for the Knights of the Golden Fleece, it was a way of noble *Selbstbehauptung* and a way of being seen as peace makers.

(104) A minute of the text in AGR PEA 244/1 fol. 112. *Copie des lettres patentes en forme d'assurance que la dicesse de Parme... a donné aux gentilshommes conféderez... Ensemble des reversalles... et... des lettres closes... aux consaulx & villes de pardeça, 25/8/1566, Michel de Hamont, Brussels [BT 2490], KBR LP 1433 A, Copie des lettres d'assurance aux conféderez, 23/8/1566: AGS SP 2604 s.f. A Dutch translation in P.C. Bor, *Oorsprong, begin, en vervolg der Nederlandsche oorlogen, beroerten, en burgerlyke oneenigheden; beginnende met d'opdracht der selve landen, gedaen by Keyser Karel den Vijftiden, aen sijnen soon Konink Philippus van Spanjen, en eindigende ... 't jaer MDC, 4 vol, Amsterdam, 1679-1684, vol. 1, p. 96.**

(105) Serment solennel faict par les conféderez le 25 d'août 1566 d'entretenir les points icy declarez, 25 August 1566: AGS SP 2604 s.f.

(106) Placcart et ordonnance du roy... pour remédier aux saccagemens, pilleries & ruynes des temples, eglises, cloistres & monastères. Et donner ordre à l'Emotion populaire, en ces pays d'embas, 25/08/1566, Michel de Hamont, Brussels [BT 2491]: KBR LP 1434 A and VH 24 478.

(107) Thomas de Perrenot, seigneur de Chantonay to Margaret of Parma, 20 September 1566: AGS E 654 f° 80 and *Ibid.*, 28/09/1566: AGS E 654 f° 68.

The execution of this agreement moreover depended on the policy of the provincial governors. In Antwerp William of Orange allowed for the 'exercise of the Religion', and the permission to Calvinists and Lutherans to build churches within the city walls (108). Margaret did not give consent to this agreement and warned others not to imitate this solution (109). Hornes, replacing his brother, allowed worship inside Tournai, which led the Governor General to comment that Tournai was not like Antwerp. Egmont equally allowed worship in Ypres, Bruges and Ghent (in the latter city also inside the city walls). People like Brederode (who had not sworn the Agreement) and Nassau (who had) opted for military resistance.

From September onwards, it became clear that the King had started mobilizing troops and would possibly come by next spring. A new extraordinary Council of State opted for negotiations in order to enforce the 'right' interpretation of the Agreement of 23 August. The strategy was to start in places where preaching had not taken place, leaving the more 'difficult' cases for the King. On 4 December 1566, Margaret issued a new interpretation on the Agreement with the Compromise repeating the prohibition of worship (*exercice de religion*) and preachings protected by force of arms (110). Beginning November, Horn was already given permission to leave Tournai, where he felt pressure to withdraw his concessions. Egmont and Orange had however to negotiate again with the Calvinists in order to make the regional negotiations more appropriate to the overall Agreement. Near Antwerp, Orange defeated Calvinist troops led by Brederode as late as March 1567.

The point of division was now the new oath of fidelity called for by the Governor General at the beginning of 1567. Egmont and Horn long hesitated but in the end conceded, while Orange refused and fled to the Holy Roman Empire. However, Egmont and Hornes were still both arrested in September 1567 and summoned to the extraordinary *Conseil des Troubles*. Convicted of *lèse-majesté*, they were executed on 6 June 1568. That was exactly the other point of debate in the biography of Egmont (next to the discussion on his true religion in the introduction to this article): had the Count really committed *lèse-majesté* and was capital punishment thus lawful? Or did Philip II disregard existing law and legal traditions by putting Egmont to death?

These questions have been answered in different ways by historians. In 1854 Procurator-general Charles-Victor De Bavay came to the conclusion, based on archival research, that Philip II had committed an unlawful act, as the Count of Egmont was foremost an innocent moderate (111). This was an even more surprising conclusion if one knows that in public the same

(108) *Commande & publié de la puye de la maison de la ville, par Thieri vander Meere... le III iour de Septembre MDLXVI*, 1566, Antwerp: AGS E 903 f° 31 and KBR VB 3344 C2.

(109) Margaret of Parma to Egmont, 11 September 1566: AGR PEA 244/2 fol. 52.

(110) Official interpretation on the letters d'assurance of 23 August 1566, 4 December 1566: AGR PEA 244/2 fol. 49 (minute).

(111) Charles-Victor DE BAVAY, *Le procès du comte d'Egmont, avec pièces justificatives, d'après les manuscrits originaux trouvés à Mons*, Brussels, 1854, p. 88-89.

Procurator pursued antiroyalism by qualifying it as *lèse-majesté* (112). In 1961, De Troeyer however arrived at the totally opposite conclusion (113). According to him, Egmont had already committed treason before 1564 by opposing the military and political decisions made by Philip II. He used the incident described at the beginning of this article to prove that the Count was not a deeply religious man: 'Also here, the Count is not deeply reflective: he fails to notice the principal hierarchy of values'. After him, Michel Dierckx refuted the alleged illegality of the decisions by Philip II and the Duke of Alba: contemporary sixteenth-century law prescribed the death penalty for worldly and divine *lèse-majesté*.

Juliaan Wolter rightly considered the debates on the religion or the execution of the Count of Egmont fruitless. Instead, he pointed at the divided consciousness of the law in sixteenth-century society: the Habsburg position was in his model a 'medieval conception' of doing justice as a Vicar of God (*vicarius Dei*), while the nobles acted according to the more 'modern' insight that men should act upon conscience. According to Wolter, the nobles expressed the more moderate political stance, for which they could be identified as peacemakers; yet he also touched on the sore spot of the resemblance in the claims of the 'political centre' and the dissident or rebel party (114). Egmont and Horn were beheaded shortly after the new invasion of Louis of Nassau, which was followed by another assault by Orange in October. The Revolt had then clearly started; or better, ambivalence had ended.

Conclusion

Rather than thinking in terms of a divided consciousness of law, this article has developed in-depth the ambivalence between dissent and peacemaking, from the nobles' perspective. William of Orange pointed to that ambivalence, declaring to Assonleville 'that he did so much for the pacification of the troubles, while in Spain he was seen as the chief instigator'. Peacemaking embraced more than the expression of the moderate views of 'public opinion': it aimed at reconciling the different stances and finding coalitions on concrete proposals during organised crisis meetings. Every suggestion at reconciliation described in this paper was discussed on a larger platform, which was not part of day to day Brussels policy-making. After Egmont's mission, the King permitted an enlarged Council of State meeting with bishops, theologians and magistrates. In relation to the Compromise of the Nobles, the Governor General summoned all Knights of the Golden Fleece and provincial governors twice to Brussels, in March and August. Moreover, she allowed the provincial

(112) Gita DENECKERE and Greta DONCKERS, 'Een publiek geheim voor de rechtbank. Paradoxen in de censuur op 'majesteitsschennis' in een liberale constitutionele monarchie. België, 1846-1847', in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, vol. 85, 2007, p. 339-360, especially p. 345-346.

(113) Bernard DE TROEYER, *Lamoraal van Egmont*, p. 28: 'Hier ook is Egmont geen diependkend mens: de principiële rangorde der waarden ontgaat hem'; proving him a rebel committing *lèse-majesté*: p. 122 and p. 193.

(114) WOLTER, 'Political Moderates and Religious Moderates', op. cit., p. 188.

governors to summon the provincial Estates. If indeed the King did not allow a States-General in 1566, this acknowledgement goes against Koenigsberger's argument that the peacemaking potential of the parliamentary tradition was denied by Margaret of Parma.

The overall moderate stance on persecution of heretics, as described by Woltjer, was translated to different proposals, and it were these that proved to be the real issue. The 'nine men' advocated only a change of jurisprudence, taking into account age, sex and 'sect'. The high nobility and even the Privy Council wanted to see the function of inquisitor abolished and the heresy law effectively changed. The Compromise wanted all religious persecution abolished. Yet under all circumstances, the bargaining base was considerably narrower than in France. The arrival of the Duke of Alba in 1567 made it (at least temporarily) vanish.

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