

Changing Formats. Court and Household in the Habsburg Netherlands, 1598-1641.

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Since the 1980s courts and households have regained the interest of historians. A generation of researchers has demonstrated that at least until the middle of the seventeenth century the princely household exerted a lot of influence on the political process.¹ Having ‘access’ to the prince or belonging to his ‘entourage’ was of critical importance in a political framework that counted negotiation and reciprocity among its fundamental characteristics. Hence, insight in the political impact of courts can only be gained when studying the composition of the household in depth by means of prosopography and network-analysis. By comparison little study has been devoted to the court of Brussels. Yet it offers a unique case, particularly as regards to the first half of the seventeenth century. The residence of sovereign princes at the turn of the century, the court subsequently houses a governor-general of the blood royal and then becomes the seat of a grandee that serves as interim-governor-general.

Few historians have dealt with aspects of the court of Brussels during that period in time. In most cases they produced limited introductory articles, written on the basis of rather narrow archival research. Particularly Joseph Lefèvre proved active in this field.² The attention was focused mainly on two households: that of the archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598–1621) and that of governor-general archduke Leopold-Wilhelm (1647–1656). In 1998 a volume of essays was published in the course of the exhibition *Albert & Isabella* (Royal Museums for Art and History in Brussels), dealing with various topics relevant to the archducal court.³ In 2003 an exhibition was devoted to Leopold-Wilhelm (Landcommanderij Alden Biesen in Bilzen). The introductory chapters to the catalogue provide an overview of what is presently known of the household of this governor-

¹ For an overview, see ADAMSON, J. *The princely courts of Europe: ritual, politics and culture under the Ancien Régime, 1500-1750*. Londen, 1999; ASCH, R.G. & BIRKE, A.M., eds. *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: the Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650*. Oxford, 1991; and DICKENS, A.G., red. *The Courts of Europe. Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400-1800*. Londen, 1977.

² Examples include LEFÈVRE, J. “Le ministère espagnol de l’archiduc Albert 1598-1621.” *Bulletin de l’Académie Royale d’Archéologie de Belgique*, 1 (1929) 202-224; LEFÈVRE, J. “L’aumonerie militaire à l’époque de l’archiduc Albert, 1598-1621.” *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 7 (1928) 113-129; LEFÈVRE, J. “Les ambassadeurs d’Espagne à Bruxelles sous le règne de l’archiduc Albert (1598-1621).” *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 2 (1923) 61-80; LEFÈVRE, J. “Les chatelains militaires espagnols des Pays-Bas à l’époque de l’archiduc Albert (1598-1621).” *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 9 (1930) 831-852; LEFÈVRE, J. “Les livres de raison de l’archiduc Albert (1612-1618).” *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique*, 42 (1971 nr. 1-2) 156-163; LEFÈVRE, J. “L’intervention du duc de Lerne dans les affaires des Pays-Bas (1598-1618).” *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 18 (1939) 463-485 and LEFÈVRE, J. “La politique des Archiducs Albert et Isabelle, 1598-1633.” In: *Rubens Diplomate*. Exhibition catalogue. Elewijt, 1962, 9-22.

³ THOMAS, W. & DUERLOO, L., eds. *Albrecht en Isabella, 1598-1621: Essays*. Turnhout, 1998.

general.⁴ The household of the widowed infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia (1621–1633) has received little attention, while that of her successor the cardinal-infant don Fernando of Austria (1634–1641) remains almost entirely unexplored. No research whatsoever has been undertaken on the households of the interim-governors-general.

All in all no thorough study has so far been undertaken analysing the political – and to a certain level also social – significance of the Brussels’ household for this period. As a result the basic material for further investigation into the domains of intellectual history and history of art is equally lacking. The present research project wants to remedy this. It aims at pushing the existing, limited and fragmentary knowledge of the court of Brussels to an entirely different level. By unravelling the composition of the household during the reign of the archdukes and that of the cardinal-infant don Fernando, the political, social and cultural networks emanating from the dignitaries can also be mapped out, allowing for the first time to make a qualified assessment of how big the impact of the household really was on the political structures of the Southern Netherlands. Likewise the analysis of the relationship between the household in Brussels and the royal households in Spain – putting Brussels in its context as a sub-court of the Habsburg monarchy – has the potential of producing fundamentally new insights.

⁴ MERTENS, J., ed., et al. *Krijg en kunst: Leopold Willem (1614-1662), Habsburger, landvoogd en kunstverzamelaar*. Bilzen, 2003.

The Court and Household of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, 1598-1621.

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Introduction

In general, the historical debate on the political significance of the archducal reign has always been dominated by the issue of their degree of ‘sovereignty’. Many historians have tried to assess the (in)dependence enjoyed by the archdukes with regard to the Spanish crown, but none of them have ever succeeded in offering satisfactory answers. If anything, the solutions they came up with only raised more problems, leading other historians to try and re-assess what had already been assessed by their predecessors.⁵ Strangely however, this ongoing discussion has never paid much attention to the court and household of the archdukes. Given the fact that the ‘creation’ of the princely court in the Early Modern era is nowadays considered to have played a crucial part in the state-building process, this comes as a surprise. Admittedly, a lot has been written on the role of the archducal court as a centre of artistic maecenatism and cultural patronage, the establishment of which was also a highly effective means of emphasizing and intensifying the splendour of the princes, and hence, their authority.⁶ Paintings, to name but one art form, were used to convey a political message to the public, and several authors have already asserted that the archdukes knew very well how to use this strategy to their advantage.⁷

But the relationship between visual culture and politics does not end at the art of painting. As Malcolm Smuts has pointed out in an influential volume on court culture at the Stuart court in England, we need to shift the focus of study back to other, more ‘traditional’ forms of visual display that were used by the prince to project a certain ‘image of kingship’.⁸ According to Smuts, such traditional forms included showing off luxury and boasting a large household, both of which were far more important methods of impressing spectators and demonstrating magnificence than displaying court paintings.

⁵ Some of the most noteworthy views on the subject: BRANTS, V. *La Belgique au XVII^e siècle. Albert et Isabelle: Études d’histoire politique et sociale*. Louvain and Paris, 1910, pp. 5–28; LEFEVRE, J. “La souveraineté d’Albert et d’Isabelle.” *Revue générale belge*, 89 (1953) 967–983; and CARTER, C.H. “Belgian ‘Autonomy’ under the Archdukes, 1598–1621.” *The Journal of Modern History*, 36 (1964) 245–259.

⁶ The standard work on this subject is still DE MAEYER, M. *Albrecht en Isabella en de schilderkunst. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de XVII^e-eeuwse schilderkunst in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten, IX). Brussels, 1955. See also VERGARA, A. “Recorrido por Un Reino Imaginado. El Mecenazgo Pictórico de los Archiduques Alberto de Austria e Isabella Clara Eugenia.” *Reales Sitios*, 37 (2000) 8-15 and VERLINDEN, C. “Le mécénat de l’Archiduchesse-Infante Isabellale-Claire-Eugénie dans les Pays-Bas.” *Revue belge d’Archéologie et d’histoire de l’art*, 4 (1934) 211-223.

⁷ See for instance WELZEL, B. “The Sense of Touch from the Five Senses of Jan Breughel and Peter Paul Rubens.” In: THOMAS & DUERLOO, *Essays*, 99-106 and DUERLOO, L. “Boerenbruiloft met infante: Brueghels genrestukken tussen belering en propaganda.” In: BLONDÉ, B., DE MUNCK, B. & VERMEYLEN, F. , eds. *Doodgewoon: Mensen en hun dagelijks leven in de geschiedenis: Liber amicorum Alfons K.L. Thijs, Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 87 (2004) 255–267.

⁸ See his ‘Introduction’ in SMUTS, M., ed. *The Stuart Court and Europe. Essays in Politics and Political Culture*. Cambridge U.P., 1996.

After all, the latter “were mostly kept in rooms to which access was limited” and they “demanded a kind of sophistication few people as yet possessed”, whereas traditional luxury and grandeur were far more “accessible to large, heterogeneous audiences”.⁹ To clarify his point of view, the author reminds us of “the medieval principle that power and prestige must always be expressed through a large and impressive entourage, crowding into a great man’s house and pursuing his favour. (...) Royal majesty became visible chiefly through massive assemblages of gorgeously dressed people and showy luxury objects. What needs emphasis is the scale of this display, the impression it must have made on spectators and the enormous expenditures required to sustain it.”¹⁰ So the question is: how did this principle apply to the court of Albert and Isabella? It has been asserted that, next to being a centre of the arts, the archducal court was also a centre of *conspicuous consumption*. Luxury products were used in abundance to demonstrate wealth and splendour, thereby effectively spreading the message that the archdukes were, indeed, sovereign princes of the blood royal, and not to be underestimated. According to Brian Weiser, this was only logical: because of their “somewhat tenuous claims to sovereignty”, rulers of small territories had to put far more effort in (and were therefore far better at) displaying an image of splendour and magnificence than princes of larger territories.¹¹ Weiser refers to Milan and Burgundy to prove his point, but the Southern Netherlands were certainly qualified as well to serve as an example of his theory. So, Smuts’s ‘showy luxury objects’ definitely played an important part in emphasizing the grandeur of the archducal court. But what about the ‘large and impressive entourage’ and the ‘massive assemblages of gorgeously dressed people’?

The word ‘entourage’ literally refers to a party of people situated in the immediate surroundings of the prince. Obviously, this need not be restricted to the members and servants of the princely household: one did not necessarily have to belong to the prince’s domestical service in order to be a ‘courtier’.¹² Yet, being the one place where physical access to the prince was almost an absolute certainty, the household does seem a good place to start off with if we want to find out more about the archducal entourage. Did Albert and Isabella surround themselves with a magnificent household? And if so, what were the political implications and the financial consequences thereof? These questions

⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰ Ibid., 88 and 96. Werner Paravicini has expressed a similar point of view in his article on the Burgundian court model: “What impressed foreigners even more was quite simply the number of people who lived at the court at the duke’s expense”. See PARVICINI, W. “The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy. A Model for Europe?” In: ASCH, R.G. & BIRKE, A.M., eds. *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, 69-102.

¹¹ WEISNER, B. *Charles II and the Politics of Access*. Woodbridge, 2003. Weiser borrows this theory from John ELLIOTT, who, rather humorously, refers to it as the ‘Avis principle: “It is as if a form of ‘Avis principle’ operates in the world of political imagery and propaganda: those who are only second try harder”. See ELLIOTT, J. H. “Power and Propaganda in the Spain of Philip IV.” In: ELLIOTT, J. H., ed. *Spain and its world 1500-1700. Selected essays*. New Haven – London, 1989, 162-188. Weiser, in turn, argues that “The very smallness of these principalities encouraged rulers to concentrate on enhancing their image by splendor, distance, and decorum (...): second-rate monarchies had to try harder. The fact that the rulers of Burgundy and Milan had somewhat tenuous claims to sovereignty magnified the effect of the Avis principle. To counteract their questionable claims on the obedience of their subjects these princes emphasized their glory.”

¹² This raises the question of how exactly the ‘court’ should be defined: does it stretch beyond the borders of the palace walls? And if so, where does it end? Indeed, as Ronald Asch puts it, “if the whole state apparatus is identified with the court, the word ‘court’ becomes virtually meaningless. Any discussion of the role of the historical court has, therefore, to start with the problem how to define the court.” (See ASCH, R.G. & BIRKE, A.M., eds. *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, 7). In this paper, I do not claim to present a solution to this particular problem. I do think, however, that any reconstruction of the archducal court should at least start with an overview of its household, as it forms the very core of the archducal entourage.

have never been thoroughly dealt with. Indeed, anyone looking for more information on the structure and composition of the household will find surprisingly few answers to satisfy that curiosity.¹³ How big was the household in terms of size? Which financial resources were used to sustain it? How many of the servants were of noble birth? Where did they come from, who appointed them, and why? These may seem simple questions, but even the most basic one of them has seldom received an answer that did not involve a lot of guesswork. And yet, precisely those answers could ultimately shed more light on the ever-recurring 'sovereignty issue'. In order to fully grasp the political functioning of the Brussels' court in a European context, one should take into account that a clear understanding of the exact composition, scale, and structural organisation of its household is of the utmost importance: not only will it help us to evaluate the crucial question of whether or not the archducal court was little more than a 'sub-court' of the Spanish monarchy, but it will also teach us something about the ways in which political networks, patronage and clientism all played their parts in the political system of the Southern Low Countries at the time. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly discuss some important aspects concerning the household of the archdukes Albert and Isabella, and I will try to answer a few of the basic questions mentioned above.

The Creation of the Household

When in February 1595 the archduke Ernest of Austria, governor-general of the Low Countries, passed away, his entire household (which was organised according to Austrian custom and for the most part consisted of courtiers and servants originating from the Holy Roman Empire) was dissolved, and the palace on the Coudenberg was left empty.¹⁴ The arrival of his brother and successor Albert thus brought a whole new party of people to Brussels, a carefully selected group of servants who, for the next three decades, would form the core of the archducal household. Carefully selected indeed, as the appointment of a princely entourage was never taken lightly. Already in 1570, when the 11-year-old Albert and his youngest brother Wenceslas were sent to Madrid in order to receive a profound catholic education at the court of their uncle Philip II, the question of who was to serve in the young archdukes' household had been troublesome. Since both Albert's father – the emperor Maximilian II – and king Philip thought it of vital importance to be able to exert influence on the immediate surroundings of two possible future heirs to the imperial throne, they both wanted to have the final decision on the matter. In this particular case, it was Philip who won the argument, as he was able to provide the boys with a household that was run by (for the most part) Castilian servants, making it easier for the king to monitor and control the education and upbringing of his nephews. Maximilian, however, did manage to install a small contingent of imperial courtiers in the entourage of his sons as well, thereby making sure to be kept abreast of what was going on there.

¹³ Some preliminary findings can be found in LANOYE, D. "Structure and Composition of the Household of the Archdukes." In: THOMAS & DUERLOO, eds. *Essays*, 107-119.

¹⁴ On the composition of Ernest's household and the problems that occurred when the courtiers and servants received their discharge, see HORTAL MUÑOZ, J.E. "La casa del archiduque Ernesto durante su gobierno en los Países Bajos (1593-1595)." In: ÁLVAREZ-OSSORIO ALVARIÑO, A. & GARCÍA GARCÍA, B.J., eds. *La Monarquía de las naciones. Patria, nación y naturaleza en la Monarquía de España*. Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2004, pp. 192-213.

As the next of kin to the Holy Roman Emperor, both Albert and Wenceslas were important pawns on the political chessboard of the time, and needless to say the formation of their household was therefore subject to all kinds of factional intrigue. Indeed, from the very beginning, the archducal entourage became entangled in the clouded web of political factionalism that for some time had been seeping through to most (if not all) levels of public life in Spain – not in the least at the royal court itself. As this can hardly be the place for a thorough examination of this issue, suffice it to say that in the early 1570's, the so-called “ebolist” faction – named after one of its leading personalities, the prince of Éboli – held a firm grip on Spanish society, seeing that their members occupied some of the highest offices in nearly every notable sector of the public domain. They also took up important positions in the royal household, thereby ensuring frequent and unhindered access to the king, and hence, to power in general. Needless to say, the ebolists realized the importance of infiltrating in the archducal entourage as well. The fact that they easily managed to install one of their principal members, don Juan de Ayala, in the highest office in Albert's and Wenceslas' household – that of *mayordomo mayor* –, illustrates how powerful their faction had already become. On top of that, Ayala's good friend and fellow-ebolist, the secretary Martín de Gaztelu, was appointed by the king to organise the selection procedure of the archdukes' new courtiers and servants: this way, the ebolist faction could prevent anyone from entering the entourage without their preceding consent.¹⁵

Although we are still a long way from Albert's journey to the Netherlands some 25 years later, the argument made above is indispensable to understand two things that will prove to be of paramount importance in this story. To start with, it shows that the formation of Albert's household was never (and could never be) just a matter upon which the archduke decided on his own, according to personal taste or whatever other personal goal he might have had in mind. The entourage of a prince of his calibre, being the son to an emperor and the nephew to a king, had always been a matter of political concern, and thus not something that could be left to dangerous principles such as the prince's personal preference. Creating a household meant having to deal with conflicting interests; with (often long-lasting) preparatory negotiations, applications, claims and recommendations by all those who sought to participate in it, be it directly or indirectly. It meant taking into account the political situation of the day and settling for choices that may have not been the best ones, just to keep everyone happy. Albert's household was no exception to this unwritten law: it had been this way when the archduke was just a boy, and it would remain this way throughout his entire life.

Secondly, the fact that – already from the very beginning – Albert's entourage was affected by the factionalist struggle in Spain, is something we should keep in mind. Just like at any other royal or princely court in early modern European history, his household was a gathering place *par excellence* for all those who sought to gain or exercise a certain influence – be it with a political goal in mind or a more personal one. This meant that, when dealing with his courtiers, the archduke continuously had to watch his steps, as it was not easy to recognize friend from foe. The young Albert seems to have

¹⁵ On the household of the young archduke Albert and his brother Wenceslas, see MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN, J. “El archiduque Alberto en la corte de Felipe II (1570-1580).” In: THOMAS & DUERLOO, eds., *Essays*, 27-37. On the same subject and the subsequent period, HORTAL MUÑOZ, J.E. “La casa del archiduque Alberto desde su llegada a Madrid hasta su nombramiento como soberano de los Países Bajos (1570-1598).” (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Dr. Hortal Muñoz for kindly putting the first draft of his article, though still unpublished, at my disposal.

realized this rather well: according to J.E. Hortal Muñoz, both the ebolist faction and (in a later stage) the so-called ‘papist’ faction have exercised a major influence in the archducal household, but remarkably enough, the archduke never showed himself partial to the political opinions of either of these two. He did, however, develop some political ideas which were more or less supportive of the confessional ideology of the ‘castellanist’ faction at the Spanish court.¹⁶ This would seem to indicate that Albert was either intelligent enough to always be wary of the views expressed by his courtiers, and strong-headed enough not let himself become too dependent on their advice, or that the castellanist party was just better at passing their political convictions on to him. Whatever be the case, it would be interesting to see if and in what way the factional struggle would further develop in the years to come, and to assess Albert’s reactions to it.

In 1595, it was decided that Albert was to become the new governor-general of the Netherlands, and a so-called *bureo* (or office) was established in order to make the necessary preparations for a new household to join him. During the previous decades, the archducal entourage had already undergone several alterations: in 1577, Albert had been given his own household, separate from that of his brother Wenceslas, and in 1583, his appointment as viceroy of Portugal (and the subsequent transfer of the household to Lisbon) had been the incentive for the introduction of a group of Portuguese courtiers who came to join their Castilian colleagues. In 1593, having returned to Madrid, the archduke’s household again had to endure the interference of the papists and the castellanists. Both factions realized that Albert had become one of the most important personalities in the Spanish government, and so each of them tried to lure the archduke into their respective webs. The death of Juan de Ayala in 1594 offered them a welcomed opportunity to do so: the search for a new *mayordomo mayor* became entangled into all kinds of political intrigue, in which even Albert’s mother, the Empress Maria, and King Philip II himself took part. In the end, after a short interval during which the imperial ambassador Hans Khevenhüller occupied the office, the choice fell upon Francisco de Mendoza, the Admiral of Aragón. It was this man who would join Albert on his journey to the Low Countries and would remain in service until his fall from grace in 1602, when he was recalled to Spain. Together with the appointment of Mendoza, a whole range of people applied for a position in the household that was being formed to serve the archduke at his future court in Brussels. The *bureo* took care of the practical side of the matter: it had to determine the exact number of offices and servants needed for the job, sort out and evaluate all applications, and advise Albert on whom he should hire.

The outcome of this selection process has been thoroughly studied by Hortal Muñoz, and thus will not be dealt with here.¹⁷ Suffice it to say that its importance can hardly be overlooked: as I have mentioned before, this household, which – as one contemporary observer put it – “was in terms of splendour a close second to the household of the king himself”¹⁸, formed the core of what was to be Albert’s and Isabella’s *familia* for the next three decades to come.¹⁹ Indeed, here already, we can see

¹⁶ HORTAL MUÑOZ, “La casa del archiduque Alberto” (forthcoming).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Quoted in HORTAL MUÑOZ, “La casa del Archiduque Alberto” (forthcoming).

¹⁹ The idea of the archdukes as both *pater familias* and *mater familias* is to be taken quite literally: according to tradition, princes were expected to think of their household as part of their extended family, and the archdukes seemed to hold that tradition in high esteem, or at least, they certainly claimed to see themselves as loving parents to the people in their service. In his will, written in January 1622, Albert declared that he loved his *criados* “as if they were his own

ties being forged between Albert and some of the principal courtiers of his entourage, who would later on in the archducal reign become political key figures. Examples include the afore-mentioned Admiral of Aragón; the archduke's confessor *fray* Iñigo de Brizuela; and Rodrigo Niño y Lasso, the future count of Añover, who started his career as Gentleman of the Bedchamber and eventually would move on to cumulate the three main offices in the household.²⁰ Without a doubt, these people would become some of Albert's most influential political and military advisors, and therefore could by no means be ignored by anyone who wanted to catch the archduke's attention. Even Philip III himself often tried to influence Albert's political decisions by using Brizuela or Añover as mediators, as becomes apparent in their lively correspondence. The point I would like to make here is that, rather than just the selection of a domestic staff, the formation of the household was, in the main, a political issue of state interest. Albert will have been well aware of the need to choose his courtiers wisely, for his choices would undoubtedly have a profound impact on his future reign. In that respect, it is important to study the final outcome of the selection process of 1595 (thereby enabling us to answer the question of who was appointed to which office), but it would be equally interesting to take a closer look at candidates whose applications were rejected. After all, applicants who were refused a position in the household did, for some reason, apparently not live up to certain expectations that had been set with respect to the establishment of an entourage for the new governor-general – and soon to be sovereign ruler – of the Southern Low Countries. Needless to say, it would certainly shed more light on the nature of the archducal reign if these expectations could eventually be unravelled. In that respect, the written proceedings of the *bureo*, which are preserved in the Réal Academia de la Historia in Madrid, offer a unique source of information to study these matters in detail.

According to one observer quoted by Hortal Muñoz, the entourage that followed Albert to the Netherlands in 1596 consisted of more than 230 people.²¹ This number seems to be more or less confirmed by a list kept in the Archives Générales du Royaume in Brussels and another one in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, in which an overview is given of the archduke's household before the arrival of the Infanta Isabella in 1599. The first list, which was drawn up in or just after 1595, mentions a total of 222 names, while the other one, probably compiled one or two years later, offers 216 names.²² The differences between these numbers are almost certainly due to the inaccuracy of the lists and therefore too small to attach any significance to them, and so it seems safe to estimate that during his reign as governor-general, Albert's household did indeed boast an average of 230 people.²³ A minority of these belonged to the nobility and served the archduke in such higher offices as, for example, the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber or the

children", and the countless letters of recommendation which he wrote for their benefit seem to indicate that he at least felt responsible for their financial well-being (although it has to be said that most of these letters were written for the higher household officials: as can be expected, the archduke mostly favoured those staff members whom he actually knew personally).

²⁰ Namely those of *mayordomo mayor*, *sumiller de corps* (Groom of the Stole) and *caballerizo mayor* (Master of the Stables).

²¹ HORTAL MUÑOZ, "La casa del Archiduque Alberto" (forthcoming).

²² Archives Générales du Royaume (henceforth AGR), *Audience*, n° 23/10 (ff. 61r°-65r°) and Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Fondo Borghese, Serie I, n° 913 (ff. 339r°-344v°).

²³ At this point, it is important to note that these figures did not include most members of the court chapel and the palace guard, as these were not regarded as part of the archduke's domestic service. If they had been, another 150 persons would have to be added to the general total.

so-called *ayudas de cámara* (chamberlains), but the non-noble majority was put to work in the several sub-divisions of the household, such as the kitchen, the wardrobe, and the stables.²⁴ Of course, most of these people were of Spanish origin, which does not mean that the archduke was not well aware of the importance of integrating South Netherlanders in his entourage. The decision to award the office of *caballerizo mayor* to Philippe de Croÿ, count of Solre, was certainly made with that thought in mind, although one could say that Albert played it safe, for Solre had already proven his loyalty to the crown by having served as captain of the king's own Flemish Guard in Madrid. Nevertheless, the number of noble Netherlanders at court would steadily increase over the years and, eventually, even come to surpass the number of noble Spaniards, which illustrates the fact that the archdukes did well understand the role of the princely household as a means of binding the local nobility closer to them. This integrational aspect, however, was less applicable when it came to the lower offices of the household. In most cases, these were occupied by Spanish servants, who were only replaced by locals when they died or, for some reason, resigned from duty.

Size matters

In the year 1598, the archduke travelled to Spain to get married to the Infanta Isabella, Philip II's eldest daughter and the official heiress of the Southern Netherlands. The wedding gave cause to one of the first major structural changes in Albert's household, because when the newlyweds returned to Brussels the following year, they were accompanied by a party of noblewomen that were assigned to serve the Infanta as her ladies-in-waiting. The introduction in the Coudenberg Palace of this *Frauenzimmer* must have caused great excitement at the court of the archduke. Its domestic service, which until then had been an all-male environment due to the fact that Albert had long carried a cardinal's hat, was now totally reorganised. The arrival of Isabella, who took up residence in the state apartments on the second floor of the palace, made a considerable increase of personnel and staff indispensable: next to her ladies-in-waiting, she needed servants to take care of her wardrobe and her jewellery, to clean her rooms, wash her linen, make her bed and guard the entrance to her quarters. Needless to say, all these people needed payment, food and lodging as well: the financial impact will have been profound. Due to the lack of historical sources, it is impossible to assess the exact increase in size of the household in or just after 1599. However, we do have two lists dating from 1605, both of which present us with an overview of the household at that time.²⁵ Again, there is a slight difference between both lists: the first one mentions a total of 297 servants, while the other one offers a total of 317. If we compare these numbers to the ones on the lists from around 1595, an increase of approximately 80 to 90, maybe even 100 servants becomes noticeable. Although part of this remarkable difference is due to the 'natural growth process' of the household, which – as we shall see – will continue to expand over the years, the introduction of the women at court has certainly been a significant factor as well. The first list of 1605, for example, indicates the presence of no less than 25 ladies-in-waiting, 5 servants of the wardrobe, 7 so-called '*reposteros de*

²⁴ For an overview of the different household departments, see LANOYE, "Structure and Composition", passim.

²⁵ Both lists are to be found in, respectively, AGR, *Audience*, n° 33/3 and AGR, *Audience*, n° 33/4.

cama de la Infanta’ (or makers of the bed), 1 ‘*guardadamas*’ (guard of the ladies), and so on, all of which do obviously not appear on the list of 1595. At the same time, people who were on the list in 1595 seem to have disappeared by 1605.

Although, due to the inaccurate nature of the lists, the totals mentioned here cannot be considered as absolute figures, they can at least give us an indication of the size of the household of the archdukes during the first half of their reign. For the second half, however, a far better overview can be derived from the so-called *Libros de la Razón* of the archduke Albert. These impressive ledgers, preserved in the Archives Générales du Royaume, contain the registers of payments that were made by the archducal treasurer for the upkeep of the household, over a period of no less than six years (1612-1618).²⁶ Every four months, they provide us with a list of courtiers and servants who were on the payroll during that particular period, making it possible for us to track the coming and going of the domestic staff. As such, they show that the household boasted exactly 344 paid servants during the first four months of 1612. Two years later, in the period January to April 1614, there were 364 servants, and again two years later, there were 376. The final list in the ledgers, covering the payments for the period January to April 1618, mentions 390 paid servants. If we add the members of the Court Chapel and the Palace Guard, we arrive at a total of no less than 566 people working in the archdukes’ service in 1618.²⁷

Needless to say, this was not in the least a modest household: in terms of size, the court of the archdukes could certainly compete with the other princely courts of Europe, with the exception perhaps of the grand royal courts of Madrid, Vienna or Paris.²⁸ Indeed, Albert and Isabella had well understood that, if they wanted to establish their status as sovereign princes, they had to boast a court of truly sovereign stature as well. In other words: size did matter, and it would certainly have mattered to Albert and Isabella, whose degree of sovereignty has always been questionable. Maintaining a big household offered several advantages to the archdukes: it projected a certain visual image of kingship, even though they were not kings, while at the same time providing them with the means to keep a firm grip on the nobility, by granting or refusing them access into the archducal entourage. In that respect, the arrival of the *Frauenzimmer* at the archducal court had an important political consequence as well: by allowing the unmarried sisters and daughters of noblemen to come to Brussels and attend on the Infanta, the archdukes presented the nobility with yet another opportunity to obtain a firm footing at court. After all, even though the role of women in the princely household has always been somewhat neglected in historiography, a few recent studies have shown that their ‘indirect’ power could definitely make a difference when it came to the distribution of favours to, for example, their brothers or fathers.²⁹ Therefore, a noble family would certainly find it an asset if it was able to install one of its female members into the archducal household.

²⁶ AGR, *Chambre des Comptes*, n° 1837 and n° 1838. For more information, see LEFEVRE, J. “Les livres de raison de l’archiduc Albert (1612-1618).” *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique*, 42 (1971 nr. 1-2) 156-163.

²⁷ I would like to stress the fact that this total only mentions people who were actually *on the payroll* at the time: it does not mention servants who received food and lodging instead of wages, nor does it include day labourers, temporary employees, and other servants who were in one way or another not officially considered as forming part of the princely household.

²⁸ For numbers and figures on other European princely households, see for instance DUINDAM, J. *Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe’s Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780*. Cambridge U.P., 2003 and KELLER, K. *Hofdamen. Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Vienna, 2005.

²⁹ For examples, see KELLER, *Hofdamen*, passim; RODRÍGUEZ SALGADO, M.J. “‘Una perfecta princesa’. Casa y vida de la reina Isabel de Valois (1559-1568).” In: GÓMEZ-CENTURIÓN, C., coord. *Monarquía y Corte en la*

It is interesting to note that the expansion of the household was not caused by an increase in the number of lower servants. The aforementioned lists of personnel and the *Libros de la Razón* clearly show that the number of lower household offices and their staff remained more or less the same throughout the entire archducal reign (with the exception of the arrival of the *Frauenzimmer* and its supporting departments). This means that for the most part, the increase was due to a rise of the number of higher offices, such as the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber or the Gentlemen of the Table. In 1595, for example, the household started out with 5 *Gentilishombres de la Cámara*, and 13 *Gentilishombres de la Boca*. By the first half of 1618, these numbers had risen to, respectively, 24 and 28 (not surprisingly, the real increase seems to have occurred after 1609, when the Twelve Years' Truce allowed for a period of revival in the Southern Netherlands). So, more and more local noblemen were awarded a position in the household. Obviously, the highest offices were given to members of the high nobility: one could say that important families such as, for example, d'Arenberg, de Ligne, de Lalaing, de Croÿ, and de Merode, were almost over-represented at the Brussels' court, because they each had several of their family members serving in the princely household. Relatively lower positions (such as the office of Gentleman of the House) were awarded to members of – what in French historiography has been styled – the ‘noblesse seconde’: noble families that were ranked on a lower level of the hierarchical pyramid (examples include the families de Courteville, de Spangen, de Bernemicourt, etc.).

In his influential book on the Spanish Road, Geoffrey Parker has already observed that a lot of these courtiers occupied leading positions in the army.³⁰ Others acted as governor to one of the provinces or chatelain to one of the military strongholds, or obtained a position in the central administration. Most of them had family members in the church. The Spanish courtiers, who despite the presence of more and more Netherlanders continued to keep hold of the most important offices in the household, obviously maintained good relationships with family and friends in the home country. So, by the looks of it, the archdukes were deliberately using their immediate entourage to create a network of allegiances, with courtiers acting as intermediaries or power-brokers. The archducal household, then, became the central node where all the branches of this ramified network of court patronage came together.

Despite all the advantages a large household could produce, however, it had one significant downside as well: the financial resources needed to sustain it were, in a word, tremendous. The wages of the household staff alone amounted to a staggering average total of 150,000 florins each year.³¹ Furthermore, the archducal treasurer had to pay for the ordinary household expenses such as food, candle wax, firewood, wine, medical services, maintenance, and so on, all of which cost an enormous amount of money. On top of that, there were the extraordinary expenses for jewellery, clothing, lavish gifts, tapestries, paintings, etc.: needless to say, the luxurious archducal lifestyle imposed a

España Moderna (Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, Anejo II), Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2003, pp. 39-96; and SÁNCHEZ, M. S. *The Empress, the Queen and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain*. John Hopkins U.P., 1998.

³⁰ PARKER, G. *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567-1659. the Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries wars*. Cambridge U.P., 1975, p. 108.

³¹ In 1614, for example, the archducal treasurer spent a total of 141,805 florins to pay for the wages of the members of the archducal household. In 1616, personnel's wages amounted to 153,395 fl., and in 1617, a total of 154,662 fl. was paid. These totals do not even include the wages of the members of the court chapel or the palace guard. Figures were taken from AGR, *Chambre des Comptes*, n° 1837 and n° 1838.

heavy burden on the treasury. How, then, did Albert and Isabella manage to pay for all this? At the beginning of their reign, the King of Spain had promised the archdukes a yearly aid of 100,000 *philippus* thalers (or 250,000 florins) for a period of two years, but this amount did hardly suffice to cover all the expenses.³² So, as was so often the case when money was involved, the provincial States had to come up with a solution. In 1600, the archdukes called upon the States-General to assemble in Brussels. During the opening session held on the 28th of April, the president of the Privy Council, Jean Richardot, confronted the assembly with the financial worries of the princes. According to Richardot, the revenue of the archducal domains could not even cope with the vast expenses required for warfare, let alone bear the costs for the upkeep of the household. He urged the States-General “...de trouver les moyens (...) pour l’entretienement de Leursdictes Altèzes, attendu que le domaine, duquel elles debvoient vivre, estoit tant chargé, qu’il en restoit bien peu ou riens de bon”.³³

In order to help the archdukes out, the assembly was asked to put in another 250,000 florins each year from its own pockets.³⁴ As might have been expected, the States-General was not very keen on meeting those wishes: the large amounts of money needed for the upkeep of the household, which – according to one deputy – “*estoit fort grande et excessive*”, seemed to make them wary.³⁵ They were, however, willing to pay, but only on the condition that the household would be downsized to a much more moderate level: “...accordent messieurs les prélatz et nobles, pour leurs deux premiers Estatz, et parmy le consentement du tiers Etat et des aultres provinces, la somme de deux centz cinquante mil florins demandez par Leurs Altèzes, pour le temps et terme d’ung an tant seullement, à condition, néantmoins, qu’ilz réformeront leur maison présentement de tous gens superfluz et inutiles, la remectront et maintiendront au pied comme ont faict les ducqz de Bourgoigne.”³⁶ It was a demand happily agreed to by the archdukes, but as we have seen, only to be quickly forgotten again after the payment had been made.

Court Culture

The reference to the Burgundian court in the aforementioned case was, of course, not a coincidence. By asking the archdukes to keep their household on the same footing as once the dukes of Burgundy had done, the States-General urged their princes to respect the country’s old customs and to sustain its old traditions. Despite the fact that they did not keep their initial promise in this particular case, Albert and Isabella were certainly not indifferent to these issues. The archdukes were well aware of the importance of incorporating traditions and stressing the dynastical continuity between former rulers, such as the dukes of Brabant and those Burgundy, and their own reign: after all, these were highly effective means of enhancing the legitimacy of their authority. The famous Joyous Entries, for example, were organised exactly for that purpose.³⁷ Nevertheless,

³² See GACHARD, L.-P., ed. *Actes des Etats-Généraux de 1600*. Brussels, 1849, p. 237.

³³ *Ibid.*, 822.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 237

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁷ See, for instance, THÖFNER, M. “The Ideal of Sovereignty in the Joyous Entries of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella”. In: THOMAS & DUERLOO, eds. *Essays*, 55-66.

Albert and Isabella were not opposed to novelties, especially when these could contribute to the display of grandeur and splendour. In 1598, for instance, Albert had a new court ceremonial introduced at the Brussels' court, very similar to the one that had always been in vogue at the court of Philip II. Although this was originally organised according to ancient Burgundian custom, it had undergone several modifications over the years, to the extent that one might speak of a typical 'Spanish' ceremonial rather than a Burgundian one. As such, the nobility of the Southern Netherlands found it hard to accept.³⁸ According to papal nuncio Ottavio Mirto, they considered it "a betrayal of ancient Brabantine traditions".³⁹ A more important reason for the discomfort of the nobles, however, was probably the fact that the new ceremonial rules restricted their access to the archduke. Along with a new and longer *enfilade* of rooms that was constructed inside the Coudenberg Palace, these new hierarchical rules rendered it far more difficult to seek the archduke's attention, let alone share some private thoughts with him. No doubt, the nobility will have found this a reason for concern.

The introduction of a new court ceremonial, however, could possibly have had other reasons as well. In a remarkable article on the ducal court of Savoy at the end of the sixteenth century, Maria del Rio Barredo has argued that, together with the increase in the number of servants and the integration of the local nobility, the establishment of a set of well-defined rules has contributed a lot to the revival of the court and, therefore, to the 'reconstruction' of the Savoy state after 1560.⁴⁰ She also points out that, after the wedding of duke Charles Emmanuel with the infanta Catalina Micaela (Isabella's younger sister), the introduction of the Spanish court ceremonial at the court in Turin was a measure which intensified this process, while emphasizing the dynastical aspirations of the Savoy family as well. Indeed, the Spanish model allowed Charles Emmanuel to display a certain image of kingship and sovereignty, while offering Catalina Micaela a chance to diminish the decline of her status from princess to duchess. At the same time however, Del Rio Barredo discusses the possibility that the "export" of the Spanish ceremonial was a political strategy, deliberately used by Philip II to tighten the alliance with Savoy, install a party of courtiers favourable towards the Spanish monarchy in Turin, and establish a form of Spanish cultural dominance in Italy. According to the author, the ceremonial thus might also have been used to confirm the dependence of the Turin court towards Madrid, and to extend the political hegemony of the Spanish monarchy. Whatever be the case, it is tempting to compare the situation in Savoy with the situation in the Southern Netherlands: both courts were struggling for independency and sovereignty, but they each had to endure a considerable influence from Spain. Although the political situation in both countries was quite different (which should make us cautious when making the comparison), it shows that court ceremonial was, at any rate, more than just a form of etiquette: it was a political instrument, the introduction or modification of which could yield far-reaching consequences.

³⁸ DE JONGE, K. "'t Hof van Brabant' als symbool van de Spaanse hofhouding in de Lage Landen." *Bulletin van de Nederlandse Oudheidkundige Bond*, 98 (1999) 183-197.

³⁹ Quoted in DE JONGE, 187.

⁴⁰ DEL RÍO BARREDO, M.J. "De Madrid a Turín: el ceremonial de las reinas españolas en la corte ducal de Catalina Micaela de Saboya." In : GÓMEZ-CENTURIÓN, C., coörd. *Monarquía y Corte en la España Moderna (Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, Anejo II)*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2003, pp. 97-122.

The Courts and Households of the Widowed Infanta Isabella and the Cardinal-Infant Don Fernando of Austria (1621-1641).

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The quest for Isabella's and don Fernando's court papers

The major problem I have encountered in carrying out this study is the absence of the household accounts, which form the base upon which further investigation of any court study is built. Neither the Belgian national Archives in Brussels – except for one account of Isabella for the first *tercio* of 1622 - nor the Archives of the Auditor's Office of Lille preserve these documents.⁴¹ As far as don Fernando's household accounts are concerned, it is almost certain that they were transported back to Spain after his death by his clerk Bernardo de Aldaña, as a document of March 14, 1647, ordered Juan de Criales – Aldaña's testamentary executor, who had continued his services as court clerk in the household of queen Marianna in Madrid after the cardinal-infant's death - to deliver don Fernando's *libros* (books) to the clerk of the infanta Margarita. It is practically certain that these *libros* are indeed his Brussels household accounts (*libros de razón*) as the court bureau of Philip IV needed them in order to give the cardinal-infant's old servants the certifications for their service they asked for. However, the same document reveals that these *libros* suffered great damage.⁴² As my search through the archives of the Madrilenian royal palace did not uncover these papers, one can conclude (1) that they did not survive their damage, (2) that they might have been wrongly inventoried or (3) that they perished in the 1734-fire of the Alcázar when a lot of royal documents went up in flames.⁴³ However the case may be, Bernardino Manuel Espinosa, the clerk of king Philip V (1683-1746) who was charged in 1736 with finding information in the royal archives about the household of don Fernando in order to create a similar household for one of the king's sons, also could not find anything more than a couple of documents and letters, most of them regarding don Fernando's Madrilenian court.⁴⁴ But it is worth considering the possibility that the accounts did not find their way into the royal archives at all, and instead are housed elsewhere in Spain. Although it is quite certain that the

Abbreviations: AAO: Archives of the Auditor's Office; ADNL: Archives Départementales du Nord Lille; AGP: Archivo General de Palacio Madrid; *Aud*: *Audience*; BMB: Bibliothèque Municipale de Besançon; BNAB: Belgian National Archives Brussels; c: caja; *CODOIN*: *Colección de Documentos inéditos para la historia de España*; *Col*: *Collection*; *CoS*: *Council of State*; ed.: editor(s); f.: folio; leg: legajo; ms.: manuscript; n.f.: not foliated; nr: number; p.: page; r: recto; RLB: Royal Library Brussels; *Sec Adm*: *Sección Administrativa*; *Sec His*: *Sección Histórica*; *Sec Per*: *Sección Personal*; s.l.: sine loco; *SSW*: *Secretary of State and War*; v: verso.

⁴¹ Household account of Isabella, first *tercio* of 1622 (BNAB, *Aud* 20); In 1725, Maria-Elisabeth – the governess-general of the Austrian Netherlands of that time – ordered a search for household accounts of the Archdukes, of Isabella after the death of Albert and of don Fernando in the Archives of the Auditor's Office of Lille. However, no more than three accounts of the archducal period could be found (BNAB, *CoS* 157, n.f.).

⁴² Document of the *bureo* of Philip IV, Madrid, March 14, 1647 (APR, *Sec His*, c 81/ 10, n.f.)

⁴³ J. BROWN and J.H. ELLIOTT, *A Palace for a King. The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV*, revised and expanded edition, New Haven and London, 2003, p. 251; H. KAMEN, *Philip V of Spain. The King who Reigned Twice*, New Haven and London, 2001, p. 198.

⁴⁴ Letter of the marquis of Viterro to Espinosa, January 18, 1736 (APR, *Sec His*, c 81/ 10, n.f.)

cardinal-infant's court papers are not preserved in the General Archive of Simancas, it would be interesting to take a closer look at the records of the *Contaduría Mayor*. In 1656, don Fernando's former secretary, Juan de España y Moncada was ordered to search in the "*libros de la contaduría mayor de hacienda de el señor Ynfante Don fernando*" for all the services a certain servant of don Fernando had rendered.⁴⁵ We can conclude from this document that the cardinal-infant's household papers were indeed transported from Brussels to Spain. Regarding Isabella on the other hand, it is not certain what happened to her accounts. Maybe they still have to be found in the Brussels archives, or maybe some of her court papers were joined with those of don Fernando, as they were to govern together. This eventually never happened, however, since Isabella died in 1633 when Fernando still was on his way to the Netherlands. In 1631, Isabella even asked the marquis of Aytona if she would have to share the same household with her nephew once he arrived in the Netherlands, or if they would receive separate ones.⁴⁶ Despite all these theories regarding the whereabouts of these documents, we still have to consider the possibility that they no longer exist.

Assuming that Isabella's and don Fernando's accounts will not be found, other sources have to be used to fill in the courtiers' names and data for both their households. Although it is without any doubt that these other documents are very useful and of great importance for court studies, they yield incomplete information when used as an alternative to household accounts. Correspondence, chronicles like the ones Diego de Aedo and Philippe Chifflet – respectively don Fernando's *ayuda de cámara* and chaplain of the oratory – wrote and the military reports of Jean-Antoine Vincart, for example, mention names of certain household members with their court function, and sometimes give information which the household accounts can not offer, but they fail to reveal when these courtiers took up office, how much they earned, if they fulfilled or will fulfil other offices within the same court, etc.⁴⁷ In 1632 - the year when the cardinal-infant left Madrid for the Netherlands - the *junta* which had to deal with the composition of his Brussels household was very busy with making preliminary lists of persons who were to fulfil certain court offices, and with examinations of don Fernando's Madrilenian courtiers, in order to select those who would go with him to Brussels. Unfortunately, no definitive lists are given.⁴⁸ Thus, it is impossible to know whether the persons reported by the *junta* actually went to serve don Fernando or not if other sources make no further mention of them. The same goes for the reports of the cardinal-infant's debts with regard to his courtiers and the latter's requests for all kinds of favours to Philip IV in the section 'Personnel' in the royal archives of Madrid.⁴⁹ Both sources date from after don Fernando's death and it is not specified whether these former courtiers belonged to his

⁴⁵ Letter from Gaspar de Fuensalida to Juan de España y Moncada, Madrid, September 12, 1656 and answer from the latter in the margin, Madrid, September 12, 1656 (APR, *Sec Per*, Ana Catalina Vizconti - enfermera de los pajes, c 2725/ 30, n.f.)

⁴⁶ Letter from Aytona to Olivares, Brussels, February 18, 1631 (RLB, ms. 16147, f. 76). So far, I have not found an answer to this question by Olivares or Philip IV.

⁴⁷ D. DE AEDO Y GALLART, *El viaje del infante cardenal Don Fernando de Austria...*, Antwerp, 1635; *Diaire des choses arrivées à la cour de Bruxelles... écrit par Messire Philippe Chifflet* (BMB, Col Chifflet 179); J.-A. VINCART, *Les relations militaires des années 1634 et 1635*, M. HUISMAN, J. DHONDT and L. VAN MEERBEECK ed., Brussels, 1958. His *relaciones de campaña* of 1636, 1637, 1642, 1643 and 1645 are edited in the *CODOIN*, 59, p. 1-111; 99, p. 1-78; 59, p. 113-204; 75, p. 413-469; 67, p. 459-586.

⁴⁸ The reports of this *junta* are to be found in: BNAB, SSW 2289, 2297, 2298, 2299, n.f.

⁴⁹ Debts of the cardinal-infant don Fernando, 1640-1645, n.f. (AGP, *Sec Adm-Deudas y diferentes Reinados*, leg 579); At least 100 different files of former courtiers of don Fernando requesting all kind of favours (AGP, *Sec Personal*).

Madrilean or his Brussels court. In short, the lack of household accounts will cause an incomplete reproduction of the organization and structure of Isabella's and don Fernando's courts. It will be impossible to trace all household members or to find all data concerning the ones that we will be able to trace.

Size, composition and continuity

As is to be expected, a *down-sizing* of the Brussels court occurred after the death of Albert in 1621. Since they were sovereigns – whether or not this was only in theory – Albert and Isabella had to create a court commensurate with their status which could withstand comparison with any other court of the same nature, but Isabella's and Fernando's courts had to be appropriate to the status of governor-general, and consequently could not compete with the courts of persons exceeding them in rank.⁵⁰ That is also the reason why the Brussels court of governor-general don Juan José de Austria (1656-1658) had to be less prestigious than that of don Fernando, since he was only the king's bastard son.⁵¹ In contrast to the archducal period, it also has to be considered that Isabella and her nephew both had households that attended just one person.⁵² So far, about 320 persons of Isabella's household staff can be identified and about 460 of the cardinal-infant's. But because of the source problem, these provisional data are almost meaningless. This certainly is true for don Fernando's household because regarding 200 of the 460 persons, it is impossible to say whether or not they actually served him in Brussels. Probably the scale of Isabella's and Fernando's households was more or less the same since they had the same stature; they both were governors-general of royal blood, of legitimate birth, and were siblings of respectively king Philip III and king Philip IV. Probably Isabella's and Fernando's households each contained from 400 to 450 members, since at least about 100 names have to be added to the 320 courtiers already found for Isabella.

Isabella's household remained more or less the same as the one she had shared with Albert in previous years; only about 30% (of the total number of courtiers found so far) of her household members were newcomers. Of course, the only radical change to her household was the decrease in the number of serving men. All who had been attached to Albert's Chamber lost their court appointments after his death,⁵³ since Isabella had her own and mainly female Chamber staff, which in its turn will disappear with the arrival of don Fernando. However, a couple of Albert's *gentilhombres de la cámara* - like the counts of Grimbergen and Izegem – were reemployed in Isabella's household as *mayordomos*. Also the *gentilhombres de la casa* seem to have been out of work after 1621, although this function is not typical for the court of a man. So far, only Pieter Paul Rubens has been detected in this post. He was appointed in 1627.⁵⁴ Strangely enough,

⁵⁰ On this topic see: N. ELIAS, *De hofsamenleving. Een sociologische studie van koningschap en hofaristocratie*, Amsterdam, new edition from 1997, p. 63-96.

⁵¹ Letter from Philip IV to the marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, Fraga, July 9, 1644 (BRL, ms. 16150, f. 34).

⁵² A. ESTEBAN ESTRÍNGANA, *Madrid y Bruselas. Relaciones de gobierno en la etapa postarchiducal (1621-1634)*, Leuven, 2005, p. 29.

⁵³ *Ibidem*

⁵⁴ M. ROOSES, Rubens (Pierre-Paul), in: *Biographie nationale*, part 20, p. 347; Mentioned as *gentilhomme de la casa* of Isabella in: year account of 1630 (ADNL, AAO B 2962, f. 627r).

also just one *gentilhombre de la casa* has been identified up to now at belonging to don Fernando's household. Maybe a drastic *down-sizing* occurred for certain functions because of the financial difficulties of the moment. The cardinal-infant had not yet arrived in the Netherlands, when his brother Philip IV wrote to him that his retinue had to be reduced and that he and his servants had to dress and eat more modestly because of "the inconveniences which are caused by the costs of war".⁵⁵ The king would write his brother at various times on the same topic and even proposed to look for other means to pay the household personnel.⁵⁶ The Brussels household of don Juan José of Austria (1656-1658) also had to be adjusted in 1658 because of the crown's serious financial problems. Then, only three men officiated as *gentilhombrs de la casa*.⁵⁷ As a cardinal and archbishop of Toledo, don Fernando had had his own household in Madrid from about 1621, which contained quite a number of courtiers who previously had served in the Madrilenian household of Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy (1588-1624).⁵⁸ Like Albert and Isabella, he took a significant share of his Spanish household with him to Brussels. One part accompanied and served him throughout the entire journey and another stayed behind to leave for Brussels later.⁵⁹ Another part of his Brussels household was formed by former courtiers of his brother Philip IV and his wife Isabella of Bourbon. Because of incomplete information it is difficult to say, but probably only 10 to 20% of Isabella's household staff was reemployed in that of her nephew. This percentage mainly included the *mayordomos* and the personnel of the Court Chapel.⁶⁰ This Chapel actually was a kind of continuum in contrast with the other Brussels court departments. Its personnel clearly was not connected to the person of the sovereign or the governor-general, since the majority of the Chapel servants of the archdukes retained their post under Isabella and even under don Fernando. This certainly was true for the musicians and singers of the *Capella Mayor* because they were praised for their talents and probably remained in function until their death.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the other household members created a sense of continuity too. It is clear that courtiers and servants moved from the service of one royal person to another by campaigning after their patron's death for a new court office.⁶² This is very obvious for Isabella's household after the death of Albert, but the same pattern is seen in that of her nephew. After the death of Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, many

⁵⁵ Letter of Philip IV to don Fernando, San Lorenzo el Real, October 29, 1634, (BNAB, *SSW* 211, f. 70).

⁵⁶ Letter of Philip IV to don Fernando, Madrid, March 25, 1635, (BNAB, *SSW* 212, f. 348-349).

⁵⁷ Reformation of the household of don Juan José of Austria, 1658 (BNAB, *Aud* 33/5).

⁵⁸ Emmanuel Philibert was as son of Charles Emmanuel I, duke of Savoy and Catalina Micaela (daughter of Philip II of Spain). He was given an education at the Madrilenian court and later became the Spanish viceroy of Sicily (1622-1624). He also had a famous younger brother, who will follow later in the text.

⁵⁹ AEDO, *El viaje*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Probably a lot of Isabella's guards also entered into the service of don Fernando, but so far, not a single name of the guards is found.

⁶¹ The Court Chapel consisted out of two parts: the *Capella Minor*, which took care of the religious services, and the *Capella Mayor*, which provided for the music. (On the music of the Court Chapel see: K. PROESMANS, Muziek aan het hof van Albrecht en Isabella (1598-1621), in: *Musica Antiqua* 6 (1989), p. 3-8, 82-86, 122-127 an 163-172; ID., The Key Role of the Archducal Court in Spreading a New Musical Style in the Low Countries, in: W. THOMAS and L. DUERLOO ed., *Albert & Isabella. Essays*, Brepols, 1998, p. 129-135; S. THIEFFRY, La Chapelle royale de Bruxelles de 1612 à 1618 d'après les *Libros de la Razon* de l'archiduc Albert, in: *Belgisch tijdschrift voor muziekwetenschap*, LV (2001), p. 103-125; R. WANGERMÉE, La musique à la chapelle royale des Pays-Bas, in: R. WANGERMÉE and Ph. MERCIER, ed., *La Musique en Wallonie et à Bruxelles*, part 1, Brussels, 1980, p. 201-211; S. CLERCX, La Chapelle Royale de Bruxelles sous l'Ancien Régime, in: *Annuaire du Conservatoire royale de Musique de Bruxelles*, 65 (1942), p. 159-179.

⁶² M.K. HOFFMAN-STROCK, "Carved on Rings and Painted in Pictures": *The Education and Formation of the Spanish Royal Family, 1601-1634* (unpublished ph.d. dissertation, Yale University), 1996, p. 397.

servants moved from his service to that of don Fernando, and when the latter arrived in Brussels, he also received a portion of Isabella's former courtiers. A couple of years after Fernando died in Brussels in November 1641, Philip IV ordered his household members to return there in service of his son don Juan José.⁶³ But this order was not carried out, as Juan José was not appointed governor-general of the Netherlands until 1656. Hence, many of Fernando's Spanish servants spread out over different households in Madrid (those of the Spanish king and queen, of prince Baltasar Carlos, and that of Juan José in Madrid).⁶⁴ It is most likely that his Southern Netherlandish courtiers stayed in Brussels and awaited the arrival of a new governor-general of royal blood, what happened in 1647 with Leopold-William of Austria (1647-1656). These patterns of continuity resulted in actual court careers of various household members. For example, Jean-Jacques Chifflet started as a physician of Isabella's Chamber in 1625 and stayed in the same office with the cardinal-infant, Leopold-William and don Juan José in Brussels. All this time he also was Philip IV's doctor.⁶⁵

Being a member of the Brussels household for the cardinal-infant was not a sinecure. Many servants of his Madrilenian court were not keen on leaving their home country and asked to be transferred to the king's or queen's household. Some did not want to leave behind wife and children, others did not wish to exchange the warm and sunny climate of Spain for the cold and rainy one in Flanders, or feared the risks of becoming ill during the long journey. It cost the central government a great deal of effort to persuade don Fernando's Spanish courtiers to go by granting them money for their travel expenses (*ayudas de costa*) and appointments in councils for high court dignitaries.⁶⁶

Although Philip IV had told his brother it was necessary to reduce his retinue, the latter wrote him only a few months later that he needed more servants.⁶⁷ The dangerous voyage from Spain to the Netherlands had cost him a lot of personnel: some of his household members became ill during the journey and had returned to Madrid (for example, the count of Cantillana, *gentilhombre de la cámara* and Juan de Aguirre, *entretenido de la cava*), others were needed elsewhere (the count of Oñate, who was Fernando's *mayordomo mayor* until he was appointed ambassador for Vienna), and some even died on the way (for example Antonio Moscoso, *gentilhombre de la cámara* and Cristóbal Triviño, *caballerizo*).⁶⁸ Also a large number of servants received permission to go back to Spain in the months after their arrival in Brussels.⁶⁹ In his letter from February 25, 1635, Philip presented a couple of candidates to his brother who had to fill the vacant

⁶³ Order of Philip IV, Madrid, May 20, 1644 and again from Fraga, June 8, 1644 (APR, *Sec His* c 81/10 and 81/15, n.f.).

⁶⁴ See the various files of don Fernando's former servants in: APR, *Sec Per*.

⁶⁵ See: A. DE TRUCHIS DE VARENNES, *Les Chifflets à l'imprimerie plantinienne. Trente-cinq lettres de leur correspondance avec les Moretus et le catalogue de leurs ouvrages*, Besançon, 1909; B. DE MEESTER DE RAVENSTEIN, *Lettres de Philippe et de Jean-Jacques Chifflet sur les affaires des Pays-Bas (1627-1639)*, Brussel, 1943; Letter from Isabella to Jules Chifflet, Brussels, December 29, 1629 and letter from Leopold-William to Jean-Jacques Chifflet, Brussels, October 25, 1650 (BMB, *Coll Chifflet* 25, n.f.)

⁶⁶ See different reports of the *junta* which dealt with the composition of don Fernando's household (BNAB, SSW 2297 and 2299) and HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 313-315.

⁶⁷ Letter from don Fernando to Philip IV, Brussels, February 5, 1635, (BNAB, SSW 212, f. 107).

⁶⁸ AEDO, *El viaje*, p. 5, 65, 95; Letter of recommendation for Juan de Aguirre, Brussels, March 12, 1635, (BNAB, SSW 212, f. 252); HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 319; Letter of recommendation for Manuel Triviño, brother of Cristóbal, Brussels, December, 1635, (BNAB, SSW 213, f. 514).

⁶⁹ See different permissions in the section of SSW (BNAB, SSW 212, 213, 214).

posts.⁷⁰ Though Philip knew very well that the Spanish Treasury could not pay for a highly luxurious and pompous Brussels court because of the enormous costs of war, he was also well aware of the fact that this court had to uphold the reputation of the king and the Spanish monarchy before the rest of the world. In a society where rank and status were of the utmost importance, expenses for prestige and splendour were a necessity to stand one's ground, both politically and socially. If money for this purpose was lacking, the *reputación* of the Spanish monarchy became endangered, a problem which Philip IV would struggle with his entire life.⁷¹

A mix of nationalities

Most of Isabella's and Fernando's courtiers were Spaniards and Southern-Netherlanders, but also minorities of Burgundian, Italian and Portuguese servants officiated in Brussels as a way of giving all territories of the Spanish *empire* their share. Also a few Irish, English (probably exiled Catholics) and German household members can be detected. Unfortunately, it is impossible to express the different *nations* present at court in percentages. However, a little bit more can be said about the highest court offices since the sources offer more details about them. It is clear that the cardinal-infant's household was more Spanish in nature than Isabella's. Isabella did not even have one Spaniard serving as *mayordomo mayor*, the highest household official. Don Fernando's *mayordomo mayor*, however, was always a Spanish nobleman.⁷² Considering the origins of the *mayordomos*, there was almost a fifty-fifty situation with Isabella, while about 70% of Fernando's *mayordomos* were Spanish. The only time a fifty-fifty situation between Spaniards and Southern Netherlanders occurred in the high household functions with don Fernando was with the *gentilhombres de la boca* – another household function which Isabella did not seem to have after 1621. This actually seems to have been according to the rules; on March 25, 1635, Philip IV wrote his brother that one half of the *gentilhombres de la boca* had to be *naturales* of the Southern Netherlands, and the other half Spaniards or Italians.⁷³ Furthermore, the difference between Isabella's and don Fernando's households concerning the origin of their members is also very clear for the service of the Stables. We see a mix of various *nationalities* in Isabella's Stables, while all the cardinal-infant's *caballerizos* – except for the *caballerizo mayor* – are again of Spanish origin. The Southern Netherlandish ladies of Isabella's Chamber even outnumbered the Spanish women, while with don Fernando's chamberlains it was the other way round. Only for the most important courtiers of the Chapel the situation was more or less the same for the two households. The function of personal confessor, who was considered to be the conscience of the man or woman he served, probably was too important to give to anyone other than a Spaniard (except for Pierre Paunet, Isabella's confessor from 1625 to 1631). The importance of court confessors is also shown by the

⁷⁰ Letter from Philip IV to don Fernando, (BNAB, SSW 212, f. 349-350).

⁷¹ ELIAS, *De hofsamenleving*, p. 92-95; For Philip IV's struggle for the *reputación* see: R. VERMEIR, *In staat van oorlog. Philips IV en de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1629-1648*, Maastricht, 2001, p. !!!!

⁷² Except for the Italian Carlo Doria Carreto, duke of Tursis, who served don Fernando in this function during his voyage after the count of Oñate was made ambassador and before the marquis of Aytona was appointed *mayordomo mayor*, see: AEDO, *El viaje*, p. 65.

⁷³ Letter from Philip IV to don Fernando, Madrid, March 25, 1635, (BNAB, SSW 212, f. 349v)

fact that many of them undertook tasks which do not immediately correspond to their religious office. In various cases, they acted as political advisors, as diplomats, or were members of a certain council.⁷⁴ This was certainly true for Juan de San Agustín: he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Madrid in 1632 by don Fernando, he was made councillor of the Council of State in the Netherlands, and he also was a member of the *junta* which dealt with the composition of the cardinal-infant's Brussels household. In an abundance of letters fray Juan is portrayed as don Fernando's closest political advisor. It is more than likely that fray Juan was replaced by Gonzalo Pacheco because he meddled too much in Fernando's household and economic affairs.⁷⁵

Because don Fernando's household only existed for seven years and mainly consisted of his Madrilenian courtiers, it was more Spanish in nature than Isabella's. She and Albert also had taken a large part of Spanish servants with them in 1599, but by the 1620s many of them were deceased and most of the lower court functions – which were not worth the costs of sending somebody from Spain – had been given to Southern Netherlanders.⁷⁶ But after the death of the count of Añover - who had accumulated the three most prestigious household offices at the archducal court – in 1620, the most important functions also went to people of non-Spanish origin.⁷⁷ It is more than likely that Albert and Isabella felt a growing pressure of the Southern Netherlandish nobility which was very keen on improving its position in courtly spheres now the end of the archducal regime was getting very obvious. Defying and thwarting the plans of this powerful elite probably was not very wise when the restitution of the Southern Netherlands to Spain was coming. Anyhow, the Brussels court had to be reformed after the death of one of the archdukes, and that is why one did not see any problem or risk in appointing non-Spanish noblemen. Nevertheless, after Albert's death, not a single Spaniard occupied one of the most important offices in Isabella's household, and it remained this way until her death in 1633. Because of cardinal de la Cueva's⁷⁸ warnings not to irritate the South Netherlands nobility by sending Spanish ministers *en masse* to Brussels, Spain chose for continuity in the post-archducal period as the best way to secure a restitution without conflicts.⁷⁹ That is probably also the reason why Isabella's court remained free from a Spanish 'flood' after 1621. But with the arrival of new and young governor-general in 1634, Madrid saw its chance to *hispanizise* the Brussels court. The treason of the Southern Netherlandish nobility earlier in 1632, certainly must have played a part in this decision. Because of this treason, Philip IV also was not very generous in handing out appointments to the Council of State, the Golden Fleece, or any other title on behalf of the Southern Netherlandish noblemen between 1632 and 1645.

⁷⁴ HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 157-158 and 189-190.

⁷⁵ Letter from Stravius to Barberini, Brussels, August 7, 1636 (W. BRULEZ ed., *Correspondance de Richard Pauli-Stravius (1634-1642)*, Brussels and Rome, 1655, nr. 339).

⁷⁶ D. LANOYE, Structure and Composition of the Household of the Archdukes, in: THOMAS and DUELOO ed., *Albert & Isabella. Essays*, p. 118.

⁷⁷ ESTEBAN, *Madrid y Bruselas*, p. 28.

⁷⁸ Alonso de la Cueva (1574-1655), marquis of Bédmar; ambassador in Venice (1608-1618) and Brussels (1619-1629); became cardinal in 1622; appointed bishop of Palastrina in 1644 and bishop of Málaga in 1648; member of the Spanish Council of State.

⁷⁹ ESTEBAN, *Madrid y Bruselas*, p. 27-31.

The very few that did receive such a royal favour in that period, were the most loyal of the loyal.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, it is difficult to interpret the origins of the courtiers because of the lack of thorough studies of the Brussels court. Hopefully, in a couple of years this study will clarify the differences among the courtly *nations* and will shed some light on court factions. Did these exist in Isabella's and don Fernando's courts, and did they arise because of quarrels between courtiers of different origins? It will also be interesting to look closer at the minorities of Italians and Burgundians; were they indeed – as Diederik Lanoye claims – an extension of respectively the Spaniards and Southern Netherlanders,⁸¹ or did they have their own ideas and demands?

Besides all these courtiers of various geographical backgrounds, the courts of Isabella and don Fernando housed a lot of foreigners of noble birth who did not belong to the household staff. In the 1630s the Brussels court was seen as a refuge for exiled royalty and nobility. The French queen-mother Marie de Médicis and her younger son, Gaston d'Orléans, fled to the Brussels court with a large part of their retinue, irritated by the pressure and power of Richelieu. The duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, who was driven from his land by the French, took up refuge at the same place with his two sisters. Also Emmanuel of Portugal, who stayed in the Republic, had to do the same in the 1620s when he publicly renounced his rights on the throne of Portugal in favour of the Spanish king and thus agitated the Dutch.⁸² Two commanders of the Spanish army, Jan of Nassau and prince Thomas of Savoy, also resided at the Brussels court in more or less the same period, but in contrast to the others mentioned above, they were not refugees; they did however belong to families hostile towards Spain.⁸³ This study will try to define the positions all these persons occupied in the Brussels court and how they interacted with Isabella and don Fernando. No doubt, the presence of this group caused a lot of tension at court, not only because they quarrelled among themselves, but also because the governor-general could never fully trust them. Probably the relationship between don Fernando and prince Thomas of Savoy is the most interesting of all. Since they were cousins, prince Thomas also seems to have enjoyed high esteem. The rules of precedence and ceremony prove this: he almost rode next to don Fernando during his Joyous Entry into Brussels and Antwerp, they occasionally dined together, and even sat together beneath the canopy in the Court Chapel.⁸⁴ He even received one of don Fernando's *mayordomos* as *sumiller de corps* in his Brussels household, but this seems more to have been out of distrust with

⁸⁰ R. VERMEIR, "L'ambition du pouvoir. La noblesse des Pays-Bas méridionaux et Philippe IV, 1621-1648," in: *Revue du Nord*, 87-359 (2005), p. 104-107.

⁸¹ LANOYE, *Structure*, p. 107.

⁸² See: E. GOSSART, *L'auberge des princes en exile. Anecdotes de la cour de Bruxelles au XVIIe siècle*, Brussels, 1905; P. HENRARD, *Marie de Médicis dans les Pays-Bas (1631-1638)*, Brussels, 1876; G. DETHAN, *Gaston d'Orléans. Conspirateur et prince Charmant*, Paris, 1959.

⁸³ Thomas of Savoy (1596 -1656) was a younger brother of the pro-French duke Victor Amadeus I of Savoy. Their mother was Catalina Micaela, Philip II's daughter and hence Isabella's sister. By his marriage to Marie de Bourbon, princess of Carignan and sister of the count of Soissons, Thomas had gone over to the group of French *malcontents* and had offered Philip IV his services (VERMEIR, *In staat van oorlog*, p. 109). Count Jan of Nassau-Siegen (1583-1638) was a greatnephew of Philip-William and the elder brother of Maurits of Naussau-Siegen. He had a successful military career and ended up as general. In 1612 he converted to Catholicism and six years later he settled down in the Southern Netherlands and married princess Ernestine de Ligne. He took an active part in the war against the Republic (K. OTTENHEYM, *The Catholic Nassaus in Brussels and Their Buildings*, in: THOMAS and DUERLOO ed., *Albert & Isabella. Essays*, p. 186).

⁸⁴ AEDO, *El viaje*, p. 194; GOSSART, *L'auberge*, p. 54; G. GEVAERTS, *Pompa introitus honoris serenissimi principis Ferdinandi...*, Antwerp, 1641, p. 5; *Diaire des choses arrivées*, f. 47r.

regard to the Savoyard influence than out of respect for Thomas's person.⁸⁵ The French presence of Marie de Médicis and her retinue even had a certain cultural influence on Isabella's court. The latter's French mother and education in the 'French way' at the Madrilénian court probably had made this easier.⁸⁶ But the coming French war and Gaston d'Orléans's reconciliation with his brother Louis XIII just a few weeks before don Fernando's arrival in Brussels in November 1634 meant the ruthless oppression of this French influence. Because the count of Salazar wore French clothes during don Fernando's first audience, the latter showed his discontent by presenting his hand very low so that the count had to bend down very deeply in order to kiss it. When the son of the marquis of Aytona entered the audience wearing a French moustache and his hair in a French cut, don Fernando ordered him to shave himself immediately in the Spanish way. The man obeyed, but broke down in tears.⁸⁷ Despite the problems and tensions caused by these foreigners at court, their presence was an interesting means of political propaganda. It is very likely that Spain used them to uphold morale and the belief in the monarchy's power by showing that there were allies among their enemies.

Networks and patronage

Of course, not only the geographical origins of the household members are an interesting issue, but also the career-paths of the high court dignitaries have to be investigated. By means of prosopographic research, we will try to figure out whether or not these dignitaries had the prospects of gaining a high function in the administration, in diplomacy, the army or the church by having access to Isabella and don Fernando. Investigating this form of patronage will make it possible to link the personal service of the governor-general to the wider court with all its councils. This manner of patronage proves that household and government still were linked to one another, although certain scholars claim that the process of 'going out of court' (the process in which the courtly life separated itself from government and its councils) was already completed during Maria of Hungary's government.⁸⁸ For example, Isabella provided her chaplain, Karel van den Bosch, with the office of canon of the chapter of Sint-Baafs. In 1630 he became dean of the Sint-Donaas chapter in Bruges, where he was appointed bishop in 1651 by Philip IV. Also her confessor, Pierre Paunet, was made bishop of Sint-Omaars in 1628, after Isabella had recommended him to Philip the year before.⁸⁹ Henry Teller, who had been Isabella's agent in London, later became a priest and a chaplain of don Fernando's Court Chapel in 1636. Teller already had enjoyed Isabella's patronage, and in 1640 he also had the support of the cardinal-infant, who recommended him as the best candidate for the vacant post of canon of the chapter of Sint-Goedele in Brussels. In June 14, 1640, his patent arrived from Madrid. Teller also became master of ceremonies in the Court Chapel of Leopold-William and don Juan José. In 1658, he was appointed dean of

⁸⁵ Letter from Philip IV to don Fernando, Madrid, April 9, 1636 (BNAB, SSW 214, f. 224).

⁸⁶ GOSSART, *L'auberge*, p. 54; HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 99-100.

⁸⁷ GOSSART, *L'auberge*, p. 53-54.

⁸⁸ J.A.M. KERKHOFF, *Maria van Hongarije en haar hof, 1505-1558* (unpublished ph.d. dissertation – University of Amsterdam), 2005.

⁸⁹ D. PASSCHYN, *Het episcopaat in de Spaanse en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden (1559-1801). Een vergelijkende studie naar de afkomst, sociale status, studies en pre-episcopale loopbaan* (unpublished term paper – Catholic University of Leuven), 1998, p. 201 and 208.

Antwerp.⁹⁰ Without any doubt, Isabella and Fernando not only undertook ecclesiastical promotion for their courtiers. The duke of Havré, one of the cardinal-infant's *gentilhombres de la cámara* and former *caballerizo mayor* of Isabella, was made head of the Council of Finances in 1639 by don Fernando, although this had not been easy because of the firm resistance of Pieter Roose, head of the *Geheime Raad*. Roose had tried to get his own and less prominent nobleman named to this position since Havré's appointment meant a threat to Roose's power monopoly over Home Affairs. Roose was not happy either when in 1645 Hughues de Noyelles, the archdukes' and don Fernando's former *mayordomo*, was appointed as councillor in the Council of State.⁹¹ Be that as it may, a court career must have been an important element in the prospect of gaining a high position, whether in the army, the church or the administration. But Roose's monopoly over the Collateral Councils and his own patronage and networks there have to be kept in mind, as they probably formed an obstacle for the governor-general's patronage in the administrative area.

The court dignitaries acted as power-brokers, since their access to, for instance, Isabella and don Fernando made them natural intermediaries between seekers of favour and the governor-general's grace. Hence, these middlemen were also patrons and built their own networks of dependence, which enhanced their own political status.⁹² Thus, knowing a court dignitary also could lead to an appointment on the *national*, regional or local level. This made the court also a link to the provincial and local power-holders. A strong connection to a power-broker also could lead to a household function itself. After the death of high almoner and *camarero eclesiastico* Emmanuel de Guzmán in 1637, *mayordomo mayor* Mirabel suggested to don Fernando his nephew, Antonio de Benavides, as his replacement. No sooner said than done. Fernando even became so fond of Benavides that he provided him with a benefice of canon of the church of Toledo and asked the pope in his testament to give him his cardinal's hat.⁹³

The far reaching influence of the count-duke of Olivares, the favourite of Philip IV, also has to be taken into consideration when investigating patronage and networks in and around the Brussels court. Like his predecessor, the duke Lerma (Philip III's favourite), Olivares had to build up his own power base by a network of family, friends and clients who received high offices in order to secure his power monopoly. But when Philip IV ascended the Spanish throne in 1621, a special problem arose which contained potential political dangers. For the first time in the history of the Spanish Habsburgs a king, who was still childless, had two adult brothers present in Castile who were next in line of succession. Medieval examples of destabilizing actions by the king's younger brothers during crises of succession, disturbed Olivares more than a little. Moreover, it was well known that the infants don Carlos and don Fernando were the first to resent the count-duke's dominance over their eldest brother. Olivares was well aware that these two royal brothers were magnets for dissident elements. As long as the Sandoval-faction of

⁹⁰ J. LEFÈVRE, Henri Teller, Doyen d'Anvers et diplomate (1598-1662), in: *Archives, Bibliothèques et Musées*, XIII-2 (1936), p. 91, 94, 99, 102-103.

⁹¹ VERMEIR, *In staat van oorlog*, p. 214-215: ID., L'ambition du pouvoir, p. 107-108.

⁹² W. MACCAFFREY, Patronage and Politics under the Tudors, in: L. LEVY PECK ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, Cambridge a.o., 1991, p. 24.

⁹³ Letter from Stravius to Barberini, Brussels, November 16, 1641 (BRULEZ ed., *Correspondance*, nr. 1117); Testament of don Fernando, Brussels, November 4, 1641 (BMB, *Coll Chifflet* 78, n.f.; BNAB, *Mercy-Argenteau* 125, n.f.)

the former favourite Lerma was not entirely removed from the royal environment, Olivares had to watch his back. It is no wonder that he engineered the exit of don Melchor de Moscoso - Lerma's nephew and don Fernando's closest intimate - from don Fernando's Madrilenian household in 1627 by securing his elevation to the bishopric of Segovia. To avoid irritating the cardinal-infant, he replaced don Melchor with his brother Antonio de Moscoso, whom Olivares thought he could trust, a decision he came to regret as Antonio became don Fernando's own favourite. But through his spies – like the marquis of Camarasa, the cardinal-infant's *caballerizo mayor* – Olivares kept a close watch on the doings of the most spirited of the infantes. The count-duke's idea to send don Carlos to Portugal and don Fernando to the Netherlands came more and more to his liking. In doing so, he could kill two birds with one stone: removing the brothers from each other and from their favourites. By April 1631, Philip IV eventually decided that don Fernando was to govern the Netherlands jointly with the aging Isabella. When Antonio de Moscoso was denied an office in the cardinal-infant's Brussels household, don Fernando refused to believe that it was the king's decision and took out his anger on the count-duke.⁹⁴ On April 12, 1632, the cardinal-infant left Madrid to begin his voyage. Antonio's death at Rothenburg in June 1634 indicates that Olivares had not been able to separate the two friends.⁹⁵ It is to be expected that the suspicious count-duke also would send members of his entourage to the Brussels court, and indeed, all of don Fernando's *mayordomos mayores* were clients of Philip IV's favourite. When don Fernando wrote his brother that he was lacking servants (see above), Philip replied that Antonio Carnero would fill the vacant office of *ayuda de cámara*.⁹⁶ Carnero was the son of Olivares's personal secretary and friend.⁹⁷ Also the marquis of Léganes, who did not have a household office but assisted the cardinal-infant in Brussels as a personal advisor, was the count-duke's cousin.⁹⁸ Not to speak of the head of the *Geheime Raad*, Pieter Roose, who was one of Olivares' most loyal clients.⁹⁹ This shifts the attention to who was actually responsible for the composition and appointments for don Fernando's Brussels household. Although Olivares claimed to be a man without intercessions (*que no soy hombre de interzessiones*) when the cardinal-infant asked for a new *ayuda de cámara* in 1639¹⁰⁰, the reality was quite different.

⁹⁴ On the problem of the infantes and the Moscoso-brothers see: HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 285-290 and 304-311; J.H. ELLIOTT, *The Count-Duke of Olivares. The Statesman in an Age of Decline*, New Haven and London, p. 185-186 and 308-310.

⁹⁵ HOFFMAN, "Carved on Rings", p. 319; AEDO, *El viaje*, p. 79 and 95. According to Hoffman, Antonio de Moscoso died in August 1634 at Innsbruck.

⁹⁶ Letter from Philip IV to don Fernando, March 25, 1635 (BNAB, SSW 212, f. 349v).

⁹⁷ On Olivares's personal secretary see: ELLIOTT, *The Count-Duke*, p. 67, 285-286, 560 and 663.

⁹⁸ ELLIOTT, *The Count-Duke*, p. 140.

⁹⁹ VERMEIR, *In staat van oorlog*, p. 91-96.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Olivares to don Fernando, s.l., October 9, 1639 (H. LONCHAY, J. CUVELIER and J. LEFÈVRE ed., *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVIIe siècle*, part 3, Brussels, 1930, nr. 999).

General Conclusion

Without any doubt, these provisional research results already prove the great political significance of the Brussels court and household in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. A court function was not just given to anybody, since access to someone of royal blood meant power, influence and prestige. Therefore an appointment to the household was a matter of the utmost importance and even of state interest. It is clear that both in the archducal period as in the 'governor-general period' after, the household members were not only chosen very carefully, but they also operated as intermediaries between seekers of favour and the court. Through this *power-brokerage*, they could help others in getting a position in the army, the church, the administration, etc., which means that the court was indeed a centre where all these networks came together and thus served as a meetingplace between the central authority and the local and provincial elites. Whether or not the *down-sizing* of the household after the archducal period affected these relationships, still has to be investigated. Also, the courtiers themselves had the prospect of interesting rewards after years of loyal household service. Most of them already occupied important positions in the army, in a province or in the ecclesiastical environment, but having a court career could obviously be an asset if one wanted to receive an even higher office.

At the court of the archdukes and at Isabella's and don Fernando's courts, the household dignitaries originated from almost every part of the Habsburg monarchy. In the archducal period and under don Fernando, the Spaniards and Southern Netherlanders formed the majority, but the former occupied the most important offices. In Isabella's household, however, the Southern Netherlanders pulled the strings; a shift which began when it was getting clear that the archducal regime was coming to an end. No doubt, the distribution of the highest court positions must have caused a strong tension between the different 'nations', which probably also grouped together in court factions.

External pressure from Madrid regarding the appointments of household members certainly was present at the Brussels court. Both the Spanish king and the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire wanted to exert influence by trying to put their own people in the archdukes' household. In don Fernando's *casa*, the influence of the powerful Olivares was unmistakably present. It is most likely that the cardinal-infant – being only a governor-general – could not do anything more than suggesting someone for a high court office and awaiting the king's response (or need we say Olivares?). However, the widowed Isabella seems to have been free of this Spanish influence, but it has to be considered that after Albert's death the pressure probably came from the Southern Netherlandish nobility themselves, who wanted to assert their rights in the new political situation that had arisen.