

IX Congreso de historiadores
españoles, belgas y neerlandeses

**Instituciones de los
antiguos Países Bajos
(s. XVI-XVIII)**

Homenaje al profesor Hugo de Scheppe

IX Conference of Spanish,
Belgian and Dutch historians

**The Institutions of the
Habsburg Low
Countries (16th–18th c.)**

In honour of Professor Hugo de Schepper

Nijmegen, 26-27 May 2016

Since the 1970s the institutional history of the Habsburg Low Countries has regained the interest of historians, chief among them Professor Hugo de Schepper, whose dissertation on the ‘Collateral Councils’ in the period 1579-1609 has influenced a generation of younger scholars. Professor De Schepper was also one of the organizers of the first Hispanic-Dutch Conference in 1984, which was followed by six more editions and included Belgian historians in the last meeting of 2007. This conference intends to continue the tradition of the Hispanic-Dutch-Belgian meetings and will bring together a number of established and early-career researchers working in the field of the institutional history of the Habsburg Low Countries from the 16th to the 18th century. It aims to draw attention to a broad range of political, economic, religious and cultural institutions by focussing on the enriching approaches that have shaped historical research on institutional history in the past few decades. At the same time, it hopes to bring into the limelight some exciting new (and often interdisciplinary) perspectives that characterize current research in the field. The conference will be held in honour of Prof. De Schepper at his former home institution, the University of Nijmegen (currently Radboud University). Prof. De Schepper is currently in the process of revising and updating his doctoral dissertation, which will be published by the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium in 2016 and will be presented to the audience by the author himself.

ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS:

- Radboud University Nijmegen (The Netherlands)
- Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Spain)
- Instituto Universitario La Corte en Europa (Spain)

ORGANIZERS:

- Dries Raeymaekers (Radboud University Nijmegen)
- José Eloy Hortal Muñoz (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos)

ACADEMIC SECRETARIES:

- Gijs Versteegen (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos)
- Pierre-François Pirlet (Université de Liège)

FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

- Presentations of papers (20 mins.)

LANGUAGES

- English
- French
- Spanish

PERIOD OF REGISTRATION:

Proposals for papers should include the title, an abstract of maximum 300 words, and a short CV of the presenter, and should be sent by 15 December 2015 to d.raeymaekers@let.ru.nl, joseeloy.ortal@urjc.es; and gijs.versteegen@urjc.es. We especially encourage early-career researchers to present their work at the conference. Some financial assistance will be available.

Proposals are invited on the following topics:

- Political institutions
- Court institutions
- Religious institutions
- Legal institutions
- Cultural institutions
- Social institutions
- Commercial institutions
- Military institutions
- Royal Sites, palaces or buildings

Session Political Institutions I

El príncipe y su sucesión: la alternativa de separar o conservar los Países Bajos en el reinado de Felipe II

Alicia Esteban Estríngana (Universidad de Alcalá de Henares)

Los Países Bajos fueron separados de la herencia de Felipe III en 1598, pero su separación del resto de patrimonios que integraban esta herencia fue concebida por Carlos V. El proyecto del emperador –objetivado en diferentes testamentos, codicilos e instrucciones políticas dirigidas al futuro Felipe II–, experimentó diferentes versiones entre 1529 y 1555. En esta contribución se valorará en qué medida se tuvieron presentes durante el reinado de Felipe II y cómo el monarca fue presionado desde la Corte Imperial, la Corte de Francia y el propio Papado para efectuar la separación del patrimonio territorial borgoñón de la herencia española en forma de dote para una de sus hijas.

Legislation and decision-making process in the Spanish Low Countries (1580-1610)

Nicolas Simon (Université Saint-Louis)

The last two decades of the 16th Century and the early 17th Century are very important if one wants to understand the relationship between legislation and decision-making process in the Spanish Low Countries. In fact, this period is crucial regarding the political and economical context (Reconquista of Farnese in the Catholic Low Countries, Spanish Monarchy's bankruptcy, peace treaties with France, England and the United Provinces, etc.) but it is also a pivotal moment for the Spanish Monarchy as a whole (eg. the restructuring of the monarchical institutions in Madrid).

Studying the legislation doesn't mean a research focused on the final edicts enacted by the central government in Brussels. An analysis of the different « life steps » of an edict should be considered to understand whether the initiative came from the central government or from a lower instance (eg. provincial council) or whether there were important modifications between the original project and the final text. It is also necessary to know whether the edicts were well applied once published. In other words, a top-down approach is not sufficient because this kind of research requires to take into account the situation at lower jurisdictional levels (bottom-up). In this respect, the notion of empowering interactions promoted by André Holenstein seems relevant to study the relationship between rulers and subjects because each party was seeking some recognition while trying to achieve its own goal.

Therefore, the purpose of this contribution is to try to encompass these questions by using multiple examples. It will be the occasion to show that the legislation was not a creation of the

only King (or his agents) but was, in fact, an instrument of communication between rulers and subjects.

Passports as an institutionalized form of Habsburg-Dutch border control during the Eighty Years War

Bram De Ridder (University of Leuven)

As early as 1572, the Dutch Revolt involved the control of borders. By erecting trade barriers, either temporarily to prevent the supplying of hostile armies or permanently to hit the enemy's economy, the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Habsburgs tried to gain the upper hand. Throughout the rest of the Eighty Years War both sides frequently shifted between policies of open and closed frontiers, aided by means of the famous payment of licenten or the practice of verbodemen in places like Lillo and Sas van Gent. Yet, one important tool to open or close the border so far eluded historians. By focussing on the impact of border measures regarding trade, ergo the economic role played the above-mentioned licenten, the issuing of passports for persons has never been properly examined.

In this light the present paper provides a first analysis of these border-crossing documents, revealing the (legal) infrastructure through which they were created, the appeal they had to people in and around the frontier areas, and the way in which they became the subject of fierce discussions. In the first place, the paper will demonstrate how the physical infrastructure and legal institutions by which the frontier was managed merged into a borderland where passports did help many travellers cross the border – albeit not all the time. Secondly, the paper will discuss who used such tools, and how this wide range of people experienced the demands and opportunities provided by an increasingly institutionalized passport system. Finally, as a conclusion it will be highlighted how governments, city magistrates and legal councils all tried to influence the direction this refinement of border controls took, revealing the different border management options available to each of them.

Session Court Institutions

‘History and evolution of one Court of the Spanish monarchy: the creation of the Maison Royale de Bruxelles

José Eloy Hortal Muñoz (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos)

Following their incorporation into the Spanish monarchy, the Habsburg Netherlands were ruled by regents and governors-general, who had both the right and obligation to set up their own Courts in Brussels. The composition of the Court depended largely on the new governor’s personal insights, however he or she also had to reckon with the monarch’s wishes, as well as the interests of powerful individual and factions within the Madrilenian Court. However, this situation began to change in the mid-seventeenth century, as evidenced by the letters of appointment of various courtiers, who were no longer identified as members of this or that governor’s household, but rather as part of la Maison Royale de Bruxelles. The composition of this Maison remained the same regardless of who was governor, and the structure of this new form of Court took on a fixed character.

It is this institutional consolidation, from an ever-shifting body to a more permanent institution, that will be the focus of this presentation.

Decoro, ejemplaridad y persuasión: la identidad confesional de la real capilla española en La Haya (1648-1702)

Cristina Bravo Lozano (Universidad Pablo de Olavide)

La firma de la paz de Westfalia en 1648 significó el efectivo establecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas entre la monarquía de España y las Provincias Unidas con el envío del borgoñón Antoine Brun como representante de Felipe IV ante los Estados Generales. A partir de dicho momento, y con una marcada continuidad durante el resto de la centuria, las instrucciones remitidas a los distintos legados enfatizarían cómo habrían de aplicarse no sólo en el negociado político, sino también en el plano religioso. La ejemplaridad en sus actos y los de su familia, junto con el decoro, se convertían en aspectos cardinales que los ministros españoles debían asegurar en su capilla, espacio dependiente del embajador aunque autónomo en su funcionamiento. Pese a la falta de aproximaciones historiográficas, puede observarse cómo en este ámbito sacro se transmutaron dichas prácticas como medios de persuasión religiosa y política para la heterogénea feligresía católica, así como para con los reformados. El objeto de esta intervención es analizar la idiosincrasia de la Real Capilla, trasunto áulico de la del Palacio de Madrid, en el marco triangular de la estrategia confesional española en el Norte (Londres, La Haya, Hamburgo). Conforme a los parámetros de la mentalidad barroca, se pretende reflexionar en torno a la estructura interna de este entramado y el proselitismo católico y exaltación de la imagen regia en el debate de la esfera pública. Para ello, se abordarán cuestiones como la reputación política que se reflejaba a través de su mantenimiento, su progresiva

conversión en centro público de sociabilidad y de opinión, la iconografía del poder y la actitud de los representantes regios, sus capellanes en los oficios litúrgicos y sus relaciones con gobierno neerlandés.

Gideon's Tribulation. The Order of the Golden Fleece between Symbolic Dissent and Institutional Reinvention (1559-1581)

Steven Thiry (Universiteit Antwerpen)

Founded back in 1430, the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece had grown by the first half of the sixteenth century into perhaps the most iconic dynastic institution in the Low Countries. As the most illustrious among aristocratic associations, it rallied a selective group of high noblemen around the sovereign, promoting shared values and loyalty. At the same time, its prestige resonated far beyond this exclusive company. Intricately linked to a long-established tradition of princely representation it was also a near inexhaustible storehouse of political imagery, operating on the crossroad of politics, courtly culture and the sacred. Although increasing in scope under the Habsburgs, a privileged relation to the Burgundian legacy of the Netherlands remained in place. The institutional development of the Order is usually described – independent of the sometimes erratic behaviour of individual members – as an isolated sequence of nominees and quiet integration in the larger ‘Spanish’ framework. However, interdisciplinary research into political culture has now unmasked such rigidly defined institutions as flexible practices in which opposed claims of validity could undermine consensual fiction, as well as construct it anew. As such, the political upheaval in the second half of the sixteenth century caused a serious disruption of the Order’s formal structure, being almost inactive between the late 1560s and 1581. Its officers became estranged, and original objectives were cast in doubt. Moreover, dissident voices sought to exploit the signs and prescriptions of old to criticize – and even redress – royal policy. In particular, the present paper has a twofold aim. First, it focusses on the impact of this confusion on the symbolic consecration of princely authority at large. Secondly, by analysing the subsequent revision of format and ideological value, it argues that the ‘revival’ of the Order in 1581 was in fact a careful reinvention which ensured the Netherlands’ status as ritualistic nerve centre.

Session Religious Institutions

La influencia de Isabel Clara Eugenia en la creación de la congregación Propaganda Fidei y la expansión pacífica del Cristianismo en Holanda

José Martínez Millán (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

La fundación de la Congregación Propaganda Fide (1622) constituyó la supresión de los derechos (la expansión y defensa del cristianismo) en que la Monarquía hispana justificaba su expansión territorial, que habían sido otorgados por los pontífices anteriores. A partir de entonces, la Iglesia de Roma asumió la expansión del catolicismo mediante la predicación y el diálogo con los pueblos suprimiendo toda violencia prestada por príncipes aliados. Como es fácil de deducir, tal creación resultó una tarea dificultosa para Roma (y su elaboración fue lenta), toda vez que semejante institución cercenaba los intereses en los que se había forjado la Monarquía de Felipe II. Sorprendentemente, en esta dura tarea, los Archidukes Alberto e Isabel (especialmente ésta última) jugaron un papel esencial en la construcción de la Congregación, lo que significa que practicó una política con Roma contraria a la seguida por su padre. Valiéndose de personajes relevantes y de apoyos económicos, la Gobernadora de Flandes se constituyó en mediadora entre el Papado y la Monarquía de Felipe III (su hermano) para limar asperezas diplomáticas y llevar a cabo la institucionalización de la Congregación Propaganda Fide. Las consecuencias que se deducen (y que no puedo estudiar aquí por el espacio permitido) resultan sorprendentes y dan pie a renovadoras investigaciones que se deben realizar en el futuro.

Entre Rome, Bruxelles et l'Espagne:

**une légation au service de la
Monarchie de Philippe II**

Julien Régibeau

**le confesseur du gouverneur
général, quelles loyautés?**

Pierre-François Pirlet

(Université de Liège)

Les Pays-Bas catholiques de la première moitié du XVIIe siècle constituent un ensemble politique placés sous la direction d'un gouverneur-général de sang royal ou issu de la haute noblesse hispanique. La cour de ce Prince est organisée sur le modèle madrilène : il est ainsi assisté par un confesseur particulier, choisi par le gouvernement royal pour ses qualités et pour son appartenance à l'un ou l'autre ordre religieux. Les religieux successifs qui occupent la charge font l'objet d'une attention soutenue de la part de différents acteurs politiques : le gouverneur-général lui-même, les courtisans bruxellois, le gouvernement royal, les ordres religieux et la papauté observent avec attention l'action de ces confesseurs.

La vision qu'a Rome de ces clercs est celle d'alliés objectifs. Il est entendu que ceux-ci doivent naturellement assister le nonce en toute occasion et contribuer à asseoir la politique romaine en terres habsbourgeoises. Pourtant, à Bruxelles, les principaux intéressés ne suivent pas assidûment cette ligne directrice.

Ma communication proposera d'étudier, sur la base de sources issues des Archives générales du Royaume de Belgique et de l'Archivo General de Simancas, l'attitude d'une série de confesseurs princiers actifs dans la grande première moitié du XVIIe siècle face aux attentes de la papauté et de ses représentants dans le but de comprendre dans quelle mesure ce clerc contribua à – ou se tint éloigné de – la politique telle que voulue depuis Rome. Je tâcherai également de recenser et de comprendre les loyautés – à Madrid, à Bruxelles et à Rome – conditionnant l'action de ce religieux.

Session Political Institutions II

El entramado diplomático hispánico en las Provincias Unidas durante la embajada de Francisco Manuel de Lira (1671-1679)

Manuel Herrero Sánchez (Universidad Pablo de Olavide)

La presente ponencia, trata de analizar cuestiones institucionales relacionadas con la red de consulados, agentes y particulares al servicio del representante español en La Haya. Para ello, se centrará en el caso de Lira, no sólo, por ser uno de los embajadores más relevantes y con mayor proyección y ascendiente en la corte de Madrid, sino porque en su rica correspondencia ofrece un pormenorizado análisis del cambio de estatus que supuso el paso de los dos primeros embajadores ordinarios (Brun y Gamarra) al de mero enviado extraordinario. Situación que, sin embargo, no le restó capacidad de maniobra como acredita su protagonismo en la puesta en marcha de la alianza de La Haya de 1673.

La ponencia pretende asimismo señalar cómo el eje Bruselas-La Haya se convirtió durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVII en el centro de la toma de decisiones de la política septentrional de la Monarquía. Uno de los múltiples centros de esta monarquía policéntrica desde el que se adoptaron medidas al margen de las directrices de Madrid y, en ocasiones, en contra de las mismas.

Por último me gustaría subrayar el papel relevante que ejercían los distintos entramados que vertebraban la diplomacia de la Monarquía Hispánica en las Provincias Unidas: la embajada de La Haya (con su capilla que analizará Cristina Bravo), los consulados (en especial del de Ámsterdam) y toda una red de agentes particulares de entre los que destacaban las redes de hombres de negocios sefarditas y, en especial, Manuel Belmonte.

Institutions royales et autorités locales: les gouverneurs des villes et la construction de lieux de pouvoir impérial aux Pays-Bas espagnols du s.XVIe

José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (Universidad de Murcia)

Yves Junot (Université de Valenciennes)

Los gobernadores y tenientes de plazas y los castellanos representan un eje decisivo entre las burguesías urbanas y sus elites, el gobierno de Bruselas y sus consejeros, y el de Madrid y sus ministros. Con funciones diversas y no siempre coincidentes (elección del magistrado, jefatura de la guarnición, ejercicio de la justicia...) dependiendo del contexto político, de la presencia armada de los agentes del rey y de los privilegios de cada villa, los gobernadores debían cumplir una función de gestores de la dominación real, de mediadores con los poderes locales y de interlocutores entre ambos. Su origen (flamencos, borgoñones, españoles, italianos, franceses, portugueses...) muestra una diversidad muy interesante dado que fueron reclutados entre las

ramas menores de la alta nobleza, nobleza segunda, exiliados y súbditos naturales del rey que eran extranjeros a los Países Bajos. Muchos de ellos habían tenido experiencia militar y veían la gobernatura como un peldaño más en sus carreras militares, otros simplemente debían sus cargos a la prosapia social o al juego de intereses cortesanos. La capacidad de buscar sus propios intereses se debía tamizar con un ejercicio eficaz del gobierno, más aún en un periodo de guerra, y la mayor parte de los gobernadores salió generalmente bien parado de su función en las dos últimas décadas del siglo XVI. Esta institución tan plural y tan diversa fue expresión del cómo se construyó pero también del cómo se definía la propia Monarquía en los Países Bajos, de su carácter local y de su internacionalización; una autoridad regia se sostenía en un grupo de servidores de carreras diversas para los que se habría definido un espacio de mérito y promoción, un grupo sobre el que se asentaría el poder efectivo de un señor que lo era de Flandes, pero también de la Monarquías Hispánica. Esta comunicación los trata en su conjunto, en sus orígenes, funciones y prácticas, para definir cuál fue su significado político.

El patronazgo real y La gestión de la gracia a flamencos y borgoñones en tiempos de Felipe III (1598-1621)

Bernardo García García (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

La presente ponencia tratará sobre la gestión de la gracia en favor de flamencos y borgoñones durante el reinado de Felipe III cuando se había suprimido en la corte española el Consejo Supremo de Flandes y Borgoña (1598-1621). Sobre todo, a través de los memoriales consultados a través del Consejo de Flandes y de otras mercedes que pretendían compensar la limitación en la circulación de flamencos y borgoñones entre la corte real y el territorio, que se hallaba ahora más condicionada a las necesidades de los propios Archiduques.

Instituciones y gobierno extraordinario: Flandes en tiempos del Grand Condé (1651-1659)

Lourdes Amigo Vázquez (Universidad de Murcia)

El 6 de noviembre de 1651, tenía lugar la firma del tratado de alianza entre Felipe IV y Luis II de Borbón-Condé. Un año después, el que era primer príncipe de sangre francés, entonces “malcontento” de Luis XIV, buscaba refugio en Flandes. Ambas circunstancias, que se prolongarían hasta la Paz de los Pirineos, traerían consigo importantes alteraciones en el gobierno de este territorio de la Monarquía Hispánica. No en vano, el héroe de Rocroi, amparado en su dignidad y prestigio y en el apoyo inquebrantable del rey católico, siempre defendió el estatus que consideraba corresponderle tanto a él como a su clientela más fiel, que le había seguido en la revuelta y el exilio. De esta forma, a la autoridad de los principales representantes de Felipe IV (primero el archiduque Leopoldo Guillermo y el conde de Fuensaldaña; después don Juan José de Austria y el marqués de Caracena; y, desde 1658, este

último también como gobernador general interino) se añadió y, en muchas ocasiones, se opuso, el poder del Príncipe francés, y no únicamente en el campo de batalla.

Este es el objeto de la presente comunicación. Se tratará de analizar el impacto que tuvo, en la política de Flandes, la presencia del Grand Condé y de sus partidarios. Hasta qué punto las decisiones y actuaciones se supeditaron al Príncipe, cuáles fueron los mecanismos utilizados y cuáles las reacciones y consecuencias que esta situación provocó, tanto en los Países Bajos españoles como en la toda la Monarquía. En definitiva, este caso permite comprobar la complejidad del ejercicio del poder en la Edad Moderna. Enriquece la reflexión y el debate sobre el peso de las instituciones en la práctica cotidiana de la dominación, al profundizar en realidades que se superponían a estas, como eran las autoridades “informales” y sus propias clientelas.

Session Legal Institutions

Los privilegios: justificación para la oposición leal y para los rebeldes en sus acciones contra la política de Felipe II en Flandes (1559-1581)

Gustaaf Janssens (KU Leuven)

Durante la guerra de Flandes, tanto la oposición leal como los rebeldes justificaron su acción política invocando los "antiguos privilegios". Este ponencia focaliza sobre la "Joyeuse Entrée - Blijde Inkomst" de Brabante como recurso contra la política de Felipe II y de sus gobernadores en Flandes en la época 1564-1581.

E pluribus unum? The provincial estates and their role in the seventeenth-century Habsburg Netherlands

René Vermeir (Universiteit Gent)

One Professor Hugo De Schepper's many scientific achievements is the mapping of the processes of centralization and professionalization of the state system in the Habsburg Netherlands. With his pioneering work on princely institutions, he became one of the architects of a new manner of looking at the way in which the Netherlands were governed from Brussels and Madrid. His vigorous research and numerous publications have greatly informed our current views, and, among other things, fostered the creation of the remarkably important *De centrale overheidsinstellingen in de Habsburgse Nederlanden*, a reference work that we use almost daily in our own research.

Yet this emphasis on the political importance of princely institutions at the central and supra-central levels, has somewhat diverted attention from other powers in the Habsburg Netherlands, whose importance should not be underestimated. In my paper, I intend to discuss these powers, and in particular – and perhaps most importantly – the provincial estates. On the basis of an analysis of the role of the Estates of Flanders and the composition of the deputations from the Four Members and the Clergy, I seek to demonstrate that the government was simply incapable of functioning without them, and that the contrast between prince's central institutions on the one hand, and the inhabitants' provincial institutions on the other, was perhaps much smaller than has previously been assumed.

Superior court or just the Sovereign's court? The Great Council of Malines and the Privy Council in the Austrian Netherlands

An Verscuren (KU Leuven)

The position the Great Council held towards the Privy Council has been the subject of regular dispute, both in the remote past given the countless conflicts of jurisdiction between the two institutions, and in the very recent past, considering the divergent opinions of historians on the relations between the two councils. As the Privy and Great Council shared common origins – they can both be traced back to the Burgundian *curia ducis* – and their jurisdictions were rather ill-defined, this is hardly surprising.

In theory, the Privy Council was competent to deal with matters of 'grace, justice and police'. As far as justice was concerned, it was responsible for organizing the princely courts and was therefore closely involved in the appointment of councilors and fiscals on the central, provincial and local level. In addition, it has been argued that the ordinances of 1531 and 1540, which explicitly removed the administration of justice from the responsibilities of the Privy Council, remained dead letter. Throughout the 16th century, the Privy Council presumably dealt with ever more cases which had originally been reserved for the Great Council, while it could also revise the arrests of sovereign tribunals.

The proposed study will argue that, while the Privy Council did step on the Great Council's territory, the assertion that it was the highest tribunal of the Netherlands is not tenable, at least not for the 18th century. In addition, I will investigate the relations between both councils in other areas to demonstrate that the Privy Council effectively tried to maintain control over the Great Council, even if its interference in matters of justice was rather limited. As literature on the 18th century Privy Council and its relations with the Great Council is almost non-existent, my analysis will be mainly based on the actual practice of the 18th century administration of justice.

Session Military Institutions

The successful career of Galvano Anguissola in the Netherlands at the court and in the army of Alessandro Farnese

Giuseppe Bertini (Università di Parma)

Born into a feudal family from Piacenza, whose members had fought in many wars on the Spanish side, Galvano Anguissola joined Alessandro Farnese in the Netherlands as a page in 1579 during the siege of Maastricht. He took part in all the following military actions next to the general and in 1589 was granted by him the command of the light cavalry unit which had previously belonged to Camillo Del Monte. He was at the side of Alessandro in 1591 when he was wounded in France at Caudebec and accompanied in 1593 with his unit the duke's corpse to Italy. He returned thereafter to the Netherlands where he remained until 1599, having been gravely wounded twice. Back in Piacenza he was not rewarded with prestigious charges by duke Ranuccio as other distinguished followers of his father, but had to wait until 1623 to be named head-hunter by his brother cardinal Odoardo Farnese.

The presence of a large number of Italian military men in the war in Flanders has been until few years ago mostly neglected. Due to the prevailing nationalistic ideology, historians in Italy looked at them with contempt because they were serving in the army of a foreign power. There is, therefore, at present need to proceed in investigations into the careers of these soldiers in order to assess their contribution to the military operations, the motivation for their fighting and their attitude to the Spaniards and to the sovereigns of the states from which they originated. The biographical data of Galvano Anguissola offer interesting material for considering all these aspects.

‘Volghende het out herkomen van den huysse van Bourgoingen’.

Continuity and discontinuity in military institutions between the Habsburgs Netherlands and the rebellious provinces, ca. 1550-ca. 1600

Erik Swart (Universiteit Utrecht)

In many ways the revolt that began in the Habsburg northern territories in the 1560s provided a clear historical break for the rebellious provinces. For one thing, it ended the rule of the Habsburgs over them. But with regard to military institutions and organisation as well, there is the suggestion and appearance of a clear break. The ‘military reforms’ of stadholder Maurice of Nassau seem to come from nowhere and provide a ‘zero hour’ for the rebel United Provinces. Recent research however has reduced the reforms to somewhat of a Chimaera. Most of them quite simply never took place. Maurice inherited an army and institutions and did not change them fundamentally.

The idea of a clean break and new beginning probably supported the construction of a separate identity amongst the rebels vis-à-vis the ‘Spanish’ enemy. In the nineteenth century these notions seamlessly fitted into a nationalistic Dutch agenda. Research along national lines thereafter maintained the status quo. Some ten years ago, as an early-career researcher working on my doctoral dissertation I quickly discovered there was next to no serious scholarly work dealing with ‘Dutch’ military institutions in the period before Maurice. At the same time it became immediately apparent I could not interpret rebel military institutions without recourse to their Habsburg counterparts. Perhaps not surprisingly, the rebels in fact used and built on what they knew and what was customary in the Low Countries. Explicitly (see the title) or implicitly the Habsburg military institutions formed the frame of reference and starting point for the Dutch rebels.

In my paper I propose to deal with the matters outlined above and especially how Habsburg military institutions were used, transformed, changed or relinquished by the rebellious provinces.
