

# The Political Rediscovery of the Dutch Revolt in the Seventeenth-Century Habsburg Netherlands

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## Abstract

Historiography of the Dutch Revolt has traditionally emphasised that it was painful and inopportune for seventeenth-century people in formerly rebellious South Netherlandish provinces to use memories of the rebellion in support of political arguments. More recently, scholars have turned this idea on its head by stressing the importance of memories of the Revolt in legitimating dynastic power as well as denigrating enemies around 1600. References to the conflict were often euphemistic, implicit and devoid of detailed discussions of events. Later in the seventeenth century, however, Southern propagandists publically deployed explicit references to the Revolt in political discussions. Asking how and why this shift occurred, this article shows that the (international) political context strongly influenced cultural memory politics in the Habsburg Netherlands. Count Henry van den Bergh's political use of war memories in opposition to the Habsburg overlord in 1632 prompted a reaction in kind from government officials, who deployed public references to the sixteenth-century rebellion more explicitly than ever before and thereby set a new standard for using historical narratives about the Revolt in support of the regime. Indeed, the politicisation of the Revolt in 1632 enabled political commentators during renewed Franco-Dutch military threats in 1635 and the War of Devolution in 1667-1668 to refer to the Revolt not as a painful memory but as a positive argument in favour of Habsburg rule.

*Keywords:* memory politics, Revolt of the Netherlands, conspiracy of the nobility (1632), Franco-Spanish War (1635-1659), War of Devolution (1667-1668)

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## *Introduction*

Early modern people derived authority, legitimacy and prestige from the past. Due to the importance of historical precedent as a source of political legitimacy, conflicts in the 'present' could result in conflicting interpretations of the past, and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> After civil conflict, authorities therefore often ordered the inhabitants to 'forget' the past, for instance in peace treaties, ceasefires, and capitulation agreements. With these 'acts of oblivion' governments sought to prevent litigation about troublesome episodes in history from re-igniting old conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Habsburg authorities in the Low Countries outlawed legal references to the past in this way during the Revolt of the Netherlands, which broke out in 1566.<sup>3</sup> This major rebellion against Philip II of Spain – who was overlord of the Netherlandish principalities as well – was a civil war that, in its first decades, led to the death of thousands of people and the displacement of about one hundred thousand inhabitants.<sup>4</sup> In the 1580s, Alexander Farnese, the governor general in Habsburg service, reconquered rebellious territories in the south and east of the Low Countries. Hoping to prevent recurrence of any civil conflict in these 'reconciled' lands, Farnese forbade references to the troublesome period of the Revolt. 'To remove and bar all cause for distrust and dissidence', article 2 of the reconciliation treaty for Antwerp therefore famously proclaimed in 1585 the memory of the city's rebellious and heretical past 'erased and undone like matters that have never happened, without them ever being allowed to be researched, inquired or reproached [...] on pain of being convicted as disturber and agitator of the communal peace'.<sup>5</sup> Apart from

1 Pollmann and Kuijpers, 'Introduction', 9-10; Pollmann, *Memory*. The author has used the material for this article also in Van der Steen, *Memory Wars*.

2 Margolf, 'Adjudicating Memory', 399-404; Poole, 'Enacting Oblivion', 149-158.

3 Soen, 'Reconquista and Reconciliation', 10-11.

4 Briels, *De Zuid-Nederlandse immigratie*, 11-12; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*; Asaert, 1585, 33-47; Buitendijk, *Het calvinisme*, 16.

5 *Articvlen ende conditien vanden tractate, aengegaen ende ghesloten tusschen de [...] prince van Parma [...] ende de stadt van Antwerpen*, article 2: 'om wech te nemen ende weeren alle oorsaken van mistrouwcheyt en difidentie', 'waer van de gedenckenisse wt ende te niete gedaen sal blijven/ als van saken die noyt geschiet en zijn / sonder dat sy deshalve oyt ondersocht / geinquiteert oft gereproceert sullen mogen worden [...] Op pene dat de overtreders ghestrafft sullen worden als verstoorders ende veroerders van de gemene ruste'.

this attempt in Antwerp—and also other cities—to restore Habsburg order, he allowed people to liquidise their assets and migrate to other parts of the world, which many of them did.<sup>6</sup>

The injunction to forget thus had a predominantly legal function. But before the rise of cultural memory studies in the 1980s and 1990s, scholars long assumed that more generally, too, it was not expedient in the new political situation of the reconciled Habsburg Netherlands to remember the civil war that was the Revolt and to use references to the conflict in support of political arguments. Maurits Sabbe contended in 1933 that seventeenth-century Southern people commemorated the Revolt ‘less ardently’ than in the North, where conversely a lively memory culture had emerged and the Revolt had become a very important stake in political discussions.<sup>7</sup> In his study of Catholic historiography about the Revolt, Bernard A. Vermaseren has pointed out that Habsburg authorities and Southern elites never succeeded in bringing an official government-endorsed history of the conflict on the market, despite their evident desire and attempts to do so.<sup>8</sup> And F.G. Scheelings has observed that the outpour of Southern exiles led to diminished literary activity, arguing that ‘those who stay do not write’, because they conformed to the restored Habsburg and Catholic regime.<sup>9</sup>

An important reason for this emphasis on oblivion in the Habsburg Netherlands is the traditional focus in studies of historical culture on ‘serious’ historiography and the neglect of other ways of interaction with the past, including the use of history in political propaganda and religious memory practices. More recently, however, scholars with a much broader source repertoire have uncovered the strong ties between religion, politics and memory. Luc Duerloo argued that the Archdukes Albert and Isabella in the first decades of the seventeenth century developed a type of piety that sacralised their dynastic power in the Low Countries. He has shown that their practices of piety were in many ways also practices of memory. The pious behaviour of the Archdukes was characterised by commemorations of Rudolf I of Habsburg’s act of devotion (the Viaticum legend), the anti-Semitic story of Jews stabbing sacred hosts in Brussels in 1370, the great Habsburg victory at Lepanto in 1571, and the Catholic martyrs who had given their lives during the Revolt, such as the Martyrs of Gorcum.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Annick Delfosse has linked the revival of the Marian devotion to Southern identity formation. She observes that accounts of intercessions by the Holy Virgin during the Revolt reminded the population of the verity of Catholicism and the mistaken belief of Protestants on the other side of the border with the North.<sup>11</sup> Southern people remembered the Revolt, but they did so differently than Northerners. When openly discussing the conflict, they generally used euphemisms, and emphasised the iniquity of

6 Soen, ‘Reconquista and Reconciliation’, 14-15; see also: *Articles et conditions, de par Monseigneur le Prince de Parme & Plaisance, &c. [...] accordez a la Ville de Gand*, article 1; *Articulen ende Conditien vanden Tractate aengegaen ende gesloten tusschen die [...] prince van Parma [...] ende de Stadt van Bruesele*, article 1; *Tractaet gemaect tusschen den prince van Parma [...] ende die stadt van Nymeghen*, article 1.

7 Sabbe, *Brabant in ‘t verweer*, 6; Van der Steen, *Memory Wars*.

8 Vermaseren, *De katholieke Nederlandse geschiedschrijving*, 144, 208-209, 297.

9 Scheelings, ‘De geschiedschrijving’, 151-180.

10 Duerloo, ‘*Pietas Albertina*’.

11 Delfosse, ‘*La devotion mariale*’, 65-73.

heretics (characterised as evil foreigners), the innocence of the native South Netherlandish population, the providential support for the Habsburg cause, and – consequently – the ultimate triumph of Catholicism. Unlike Northern accounts of the Revolt, their narratives did not require elaborate chronologies of events. Monica Stensland has shown that these memory practices created a coherent narrative of the Revolt as an undesirable disruption of the ‘normal’ course of history. Other historians have shown that this attitude contributed to the divergence of North and South Netherlandish identities as well as the irreconcilability of rebel and loyalist interpretations of the past in peace negotiations.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this circumspect commemoration of the rebellion in the Habsburg Netherlands, later in the seventeenth century Southern people also began to publically deploy explicit references to the Revolt in political discussions, more openly than before. This, too, has been an understudied topic in historical research due to the influential assumption that the Southern Netherlands were only a plaything of foreign powers and did not develop a sense of national awareness that needed a national history to prop it up. Sébastien Dubois has convincingly rejected this idea and pointed out that Belgian identity did not appear *ex nihilo* in the modern age.<sup>13</sup> Narratives of the Revolt continued to focus on the ‘true’ Catholic religion and the legitimate Habsburg overlords. But political references to the conflict increasingly resembled the outspoken memory practices in the Dutch Republic. On the basis of three cases, this article asks how and why this shift occurred. The first case examines the conflicting political usage of war memories by Habsburg government authorities and Count Henry van den Bergh during the conspiracy of nobles against the regime in 1632. Secondly, I will focus on the Franco-Dutch invasion of 1635, when in a surge of anti-French and anti-Dutch publications anonymous pamphleteers and high government officials juxtaposed the 1635 ‘present’ with the sixteenth-century rebellion. Finally, this article will explore references to the Revolt during the War of Devolution in 1667, during which public debates revolved not only around the French king’s contested right to invade but also the historical virtues of Habsburg governance in the Southern Netherlands. The sources mostly consist of propagandistic literature published by and on behalf of key political figures during the three crises. I have measured these sources against anonymous pamphlet literature, correspondence, and handwritten chronicles.

### *The Conspiracy of the Nobility in 1632*

During the 1580s and 1590s, the Revolt of the Netherlands broke the Low Countries into a Northern and Southern part: the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg Netherlands, which remained at war until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Dutch Republic’s economy

<sup>12</sup> See: Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 105-107; Manzano Baena, *Conflicting Words*. See also the research project ‘Tales of the Revolt: Memory, Oblivion and Identity in the Low Countries, 1566-1700’, led by Judith Pollmann in the period 2008-2013; Pollmann, *Het oorlogsverleden*; Van der Steen, *Memory Wars*. Bram De Ridder has shown that, despite the separation of the Low Countries, a communal political-legal framework survived, enabling continued legal dialogues between North and South: De Ridder, ‘Benchmarking the Past’.

<sup>13</sup> Dubois, *L’invention de la Belgique*.

began to flourish in the seventeenth century, and the Habsburg Netherlands also partly recovered from the turmoil of the Revolt. Yet both states had serious political problems too. The Republic remained a confederation of independent states barely held together by the cultivation of a common enemy. And in the Southern Netherlands, support for the Habsburgs was not self-evident. The reign of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621) proved very successful compared to the early stages of the Revolt in the late sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The South Netherlandish capture of Breda in 1625 was a major victory, bolstering faith in the Habsburg regime. But, as René Vermeir has shown, already from 1621 – when Albert died and Philip IV of Spain degraded Isabella to the status of governor general of the Low Countries – there were growing fears of a Spanish domination in government.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, soon after the victory at Breda the tide turned. In 1628, following Philip IV's bankruptcy, Dutch Admiral Piet Hein in the Battle of the Bay of Matanzas near Cuba conquered the Spanish treasure fleet, which was supposed to provide the Spanish crown with a much-needed financial injection. And from 1629 the Southern Netherlands booked some spectacular losses, starting that year with the fall of Den Bosch to the States's Army.<sup>16</sup>

The loss of Den Bosch caused widespread concern for the stability of Habsburg rule and Roman Catholicism. Cardinal Alonso de la Cueva – Isabella's councillor in the Netherlands – and the supreme army commander in the Habsburg Netherlands, Carlos Coloma, in their correspondence with respectively Philip IV and the Count-Duke of Olivares compared the unrest to the beginning of the Revolt in 1566. Government anxiety was not limited to the Habsburg Netherlands. On December 21, 1629 the Spanish inquisitor-general Cardinal Antonio Zapata y Cisneros mentioned in a meeting of the Spanish Council of State the power vacuum of 1576 following the death of Governor General Luis de Requesens, as a reminder of the revolutionary potential of a discontent population.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the Archbishop of Mechelen Jacques Boonen, and the Duke of Aarschot, respectively the highest cleric and the premier noble of the Southern Netherlands, wrote a petition to Infanta Isabella in which they referred to the governorship of the Duke of Alba (1567-1573) as a negative example urging her to lobby the king for increased expenditure on the military.<sup>18</sup> The Dutch Revolt was much in the minds of elites in 1629.

Their fears were not unjustified, for only a few years later, in what Paul Arblaster has called 'one of the worst years for news' from a Habsburg perspective – 1632 – two high-profile nobles turned against the regime.<sup>19</sup> Count Henry van den Bergh was one of these nobles (fig. 1). Appointed *maestro de campo general* in the Army of Flanders in 1628, as a temporary replacement for Ambrogio Spinola, senior government officials held Van den Bergh responsible for the loss of Den Bosch in 1629 and accused him of treachery.

14 Elias, *Kerk en staat*; Thomas and Duerloo, *Albert & Isabella*; Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*.

15 De Boer, *Die Friedensunterhandlungen*, 5-9; Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 12-13, 29.

16 Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 63.

17 Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 11-13.

18 Juste, *Conspiration*, 16-18.

19 Arblaster, *From Ghent to Aix*, 173. Important studies on the conspiracy of nobles in 1632 include: Juste, *Conspiration*; De Boer, 'Het verraad'; Janssens, 'L'échec des tentatives de soulèvement'; Vermeir, 'Le duc d'Arschot'. See also: Van der Essen, *Le Cardinal-Infant*, 21-32.



*Fig. 1 Anthony van Dyck, Count Henry van den Bergh, c.1627-1632, 114×100 cm, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo del Prado.*

Himself dissatisfied with the Habsburg administration in the South, he defected to the Dutch enemy. In doing so he worked together with René de Renesse, Count of Warfusée. As the former chairman of the Financial Council in the Southern Netherlands, Warfusée alleged that the Spanish king – who often borrowed from his officials – owed him arrears.<sup>20</sup> Both counts entered into secret negotiations with the States General of the Republic and Frederick Henry of Orange, the chief Dutch army commander. They agreed that Frederick Henry would substitute his already existing plans to march on Antwerp for a campaign along the Meuse River. Van den Bergh, who was then stadholder of Upper Guelders, would feign ignorance of these plans.<sup>21</sup> Frederick Henry and his cousin Ernest Casimir of Nassau-Diez, stadholder of Friesland, began their campaign at the beginning of June 1632 and within days took a string of cities including Venlo, Roermond and Sittard. The aim was Maastricht, which the States's Army began to besiege on June 9.

In the meantime, enemies of the Habsburgs as well as domestic political dissidents such as Van den Bergh used memories of the sixteenth-century Revolt to incite popular opposition against the regime in the Habsburg Netherlands. The States General of the Dutch Republic, for instance, had by the end of May 1632 published a declaration that

<sup>20</sup> De Boer, 'Het verraad', 22.

<sup>21</sup> Janssens, 'L'échec des tentatives de soulèvement', 112-113.

encouraged the South Netherlandish population to take the example of their predecessors and ‘to cast off the heavy and unbearable yoke of the Spaniards’.<sup>22</sup> In a publication appearing later that year they openly entertained the possibility ‘that the provinces may, just as they did fifty-six years ago, once more unite against Spain’.<sup>23</sup> Here they referred to 1576, when the rebellious provinces had agreed in the Pacification of Ghent to drive away the Spaniards. In 1632, the States General hoped that Southern elites would do so again.

As the army of Frederick Henry laid siege on Maastricht, Henry van den Bergh tried to organise an uprising against the Habsburg regime from the prince-bishopric of Liège. In June, he published open letters both to ‘Her Highness the Duchess of Brabant’ – by addressing Isabella as Duchess of Brabant, the author emphasised the autonomy of the duchy – and to ‘the lords, prelates, nobles and cities of the Netherlandish provinces’. He reminded the latter group that Spanish rulers and soldiers had ‘already spoilt matters before’.<sup>24</sup> This was a reference to the Revolt which, however implicit, Count Henry apparently assumed would be comprehensible to his audience and convince them to oppose the regime. His assumption that people would understand references to the Revolt is not surprising. Scholars have already shown that elites could access information about the Revolt in private libraries.<sup>25</sup> Within noble houses, interpretations of the Revolt, and the role of family members in it, were told and passed on to the next generation. Count Henry, for instance, defended himself in a manifesto against his opponents by making an emotional reference to his ‘faithful services, for the time of forty years’ and pointing out that he had six brothers loyally serving their Habsburg overlord.<sup>26</sup>

The letters of Philippe Chifflet – Archduchess Isabella’s chaplain – to the former papal nuncio in Brussels, Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, reveal that Van den Bergh’s actions caused consternation in Brussels. On June 8 the chaplain sighed: ‘if God does not do miracles, I do not know what will happen’.<sup>27</sup> On June 15, he informed Bagno that it was time to ‘open the eyes to see that by the overthrow of the house of Austria, the church would lose the most beautiful fleuron of its crown’, explaining that ‘it is the only and most powerful rampart against the infidel and the heretic and, should it fall, Christianity becomes prey’.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the diplomat Balthasar Gerbier informed the English secretary of state Sir John

22 *Verklaringen vande hooghe ende mog. Heeren Staten Generael*, f. a3v: ‘haer willen ontrecken van het beswaerlijck ende ondraechlijck Jock der Spaigniaerden’.

23 *Oude- nieuwe vverelt*, f. a3v: ‘dat de Provincien noch eens, ghelijck eenichsins voor ses een vijftich Jaeren haer met malckanderen teghen Spangien verbinden’.

24 Van den Bergh, *Coye van twee brieven*, f. 2v: ‘hebben teenmael de saken bedorven’.

25 Scheelings, ‘De geschiedschrijving’, 175.

26 Van den Bergh, *Declaration*, 4: ‘mes fidels sevinces, rendu l’espace de quarante ans’. René Vermeir gives a similar example about Jan de Montmorency, count of Estaires who in 1632 sought royal reconfirmation of his own and the nobility’s privileges by emphasizing that his father had died in battle in 1585; Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 31.

27 Philippe Chifflet to Cardinal Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 8 June 1632, in: ‘Texte integral des lettres’, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 435: ‘Si Dieu ne fait des miracles, je ne scay ce qu’en vera’.

28 Philippe Chifflet to Cardinal Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 15 June 1632, in: ‘Texte integral des lettres’, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 443: ‘Il est temps, Monseigneur, d’ouvrir les yeux et de veoir que, par l’abaissement de la maison d’Autriche, l’Eglise perd le plus beau fleuron de sa couronne [...] c’est le seul et le plus puissant rampart contre l’infidelle et l’heretique et, si le boulevard tombe, la chrestienté est en proye’.

Coke that the treason of Van den Bergh prompted ‘seditious discourses’ in Brussels.<sup>29</sup> ‘All people here are in prayers, devotions, processions and fasts’, Chifflet described the general mood at the end of the month, and ‘the Princess [Isabella] gives such an example that she provokes tears from her poor people, and she is tirelessly at work’.<sup>30</sup>

Isabella had indeed reacted decisively on Van den Bergh’s defection and subsequent propaganda. She gave him a taste of his own medicine and from June 25 onwards wrote open letters to South Netherlandish elites, declaring to be disappointed in Count Henry and criticising him for ‘forgetting all the honours and benefactions that he has received’.<sup>31</sup> Throwing the usual commemorative cautions in public government communications to the wind, she referred directly to the most troublesome years of the Revolt, mentioning ‘the things which have happened in the past, in the years seventy-six, seven, eight and nine, which we expect the eldest of you still to hold memory of’.<sup>32</sup> She did not enter into much more detail, but probably because, just like Count Henry, she did not feel the need for more words to let her reference to the Revolt do its work, rather than due to any lack of interest or knowledge on the part of Southern elites. The invocation of the power vacuum of 1576 and the subsequent troubles served to persuade the population that support for Count Henry would lead to an undesirable return to the tumultuous and dangerous period of the Revolt.

The examples above demonstrate that a political conflict in the Southern Netherlands could apparently be fought using references to the early Revolt. The States General of the Dutch Republic and Count Henry used the example of the 1570s to show that there was an inspiring precedent for opposition against the regime, while Isabella used exactly the same historical episode to argue that no one should want to choose the chaos of the sixteenth-century past over the relative security of the present. So far, memories of the Revolt lacked elaborate chronologies and supporting material. This changed later in 1632, when the regime entered publically into a more detailed discussion of the Revolt in *La Flandre fidelle*. The text was ostensibly written by someone named Barthémely de Guret but, as René Vermeir has convincingly argued, this fictitious name of an unknown nobleman probably belied the government-endorsed nature of the publication.<sup>33</sup>

The author of *La Flandre fidelle* used references to the Revolt as a political weapon and, by publishing it, the Habsburg government broke with its past pledges not to rake up old troubles. First of all, successive Habsburg overlords, both during the Revolt and in the ‘present’, had long enjoyed a natural right to rule the Low Countries. What he called ‘nos malheurs’ could not be attributed to them, but to the nobles who were making common cause with the enemy. The author suggested that expressions of political

29 Balthasar Gerbier to Sir John Coke, 26 June 1632, TNA, SP 77/21, f. 274: ‘discours seditieux’.

30 Philippe Chifflet to Cardinal Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 28 June 1632, in: ‘Texte integral des lettres’, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 445r: ‘Tout le monde est icy en prières, en oraisons, en processions et en austerités. La princesse donne un exemple tel qu’elle provoque les larmes de son pauvre peuple et est infatigable au travail’.

31 *Lettres de la serenissime infante*, 3: ‘mettant en oubly tant d’honneurs & bienfaits qu’il avoit receuz’.

32 *Lettres de la serenissime infante*, 4-5: ‘les choses cy devant passées, mesme les années septante six, sept, huit, & noeuf, desquelles nous tenons les plus anciens d’entre vous bien memoratifs’.

33 Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 168-169.



dissatisfaction had always been allowed, pointing to the rebellious Walloon provinces which had reconciled to Philip II in the Union of Arras of 1579, thereby making a 'happy ending' to their opposition by remaining 'loyal malcontents'.<sup>34</sup> How different it was with Van den Bergh, who had already defected and caused damage to the regime before properly expressing his grievances.<sup>35</sup> Rebels had always consorted with the enemy, the author claimed. He explained how in the 1580s the rebels had colluded with foreign lords such as Francis of Anjou and the earl of Leicester and how little good could be expected from repeating such treachery: '[Anjou] set his mind to making us French, and the other [Leicester] to ruining and subjecting the party he commanded to the crown of England'.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from juxtaposing Count Henry with more honourable rebels from the past, on the one hand, and with equally malicious wrongdoers, on the other, *La Flandre fidelle* also reminded its audience of the hard-won restoration of Habsburg authority after the Revolt, pointing to the Reconquista of Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma, in the 1580s.<sup>37</sup> With these historical examples, the regime was for once—in opposition to its own policies of leaving the history of the Revolt behind—the most prolific commemorator of the conflict in the Habsburg Netherlands. The attempts of the Dutch States General and the noble conspirators failed: despite legitimate fears of rebellion and the loss of important cities along the Meuse, the summer of 1632 otherwise remained quite calm. One anonymous chronicler wrote that this was only to be expected: 'people would be very wicked indeed, if they let themselves be deceived for the second time', he observed.<sup>38</sup> The first time was, after all, 'fresh in the memory of the Catholics: how they had a net thrown around their head at the beginning of their rebellion against God and the king of Spain Philip II'.<sup>39</sup> There is some truth in this remark. Already on July 8, Count Henry wrote his brother-in-law Floris II of Culemborg that 'it pains me from the bottom of my heart that the manifesto does not have more of an impact than it has until now'.<sup>40</sup> The States General of the Republic, too, had clearly overestimated the Southern population's willingness to turn against the Habsburg regime. Isabella's resolute reaction to the first signs of unrest also played a role. In fact, she wrote herself to Philip IV to let him know that her actions had contrasted sharply to the unsuccessful attempts of the 'previous [governors]' to strike down the Revolt.<sup>41</sup>

34 De Guret, *La Flandre fidelle*, f. b3v: 'Ainsi eust une heureuse fin ceste entreprise de fideles malcontens'.

35 De Guret, *La Flandre fidelle*, f. b3v.

36 De Guret, *La Flandre fidelle*, f. b2v: 'l'un a employé toutes les pensées à nous rendre François, l'autre à ruiner & assubiettir le party auquel il commandoit à la couronne d'Angleterre'.

37 De Guret, *La Flandre fidelle*, f. b4v.

38 'Chronycke van Nederlant', f. 178v: 'sauden voorwaer wel groote slechte menschen moeten wesen / die hen sauden laten bedriegen voor den tweeden keer'.

39 'Chronycke van Nederlant', f. 178v: 'noch alte versch syn in de memorie vande catholijcken, hoe datse hun het net over het hoofd hadden getrocken int beginsel van hare rebelligheijt tegens godt en den koninck van spaegnien phillippus den tweeden'.

40 Henry van den Bergh to Floris II of Culemborg, 8 July 1632, Gelders Archief, archief Heren en graven van Culemborg, inv. 458, f. 59: 'das es mir wol aus grunt mines hertzens let dot dat dat manifest nit mer operit als es bist nue zu gedan hefft'. See also De Boer, 'Het verraad', 95.

41 Cited in Poelhekke, *Frederik Hendrik*, 391: 'los passados'. De Boer agrees with Isabella that the failure of the conspiracy was in part owing to the archduchess: De Boer, *Die Friedensunterhandlungen*, 4.



Fig. 2 Depiction of the capture of Tienen: Den Hollantschen iavv en de Fransche kravvvey, 1635, London, The British Library.

She compared her own performance to the earlier governors general and concluded that through her attempts to remain in the population's favour, she had prevented history from repeating itself.

### *The Franco Dutch Invasion of 1635*

The conspiracy of nobles in 1632 was unsuccessful but Count Henry van den Bergh's evocation of the Revolt and the regime's reaction in kind opened up new possibilities for other opinion-makers in the South to use the Revolt in support of political arguments. Following the disastrous loss of cities along the Meuse, Isabella convened the States General in 1632-1633 to initiate peace negotiations. In this context, Erycius Puteanus, a professor at the University of Leuven who had once been a royal historiographer to Philip III, now openly balanced the virtues of war and peace in his *Statera belli & pacis* (1633).<sup>42</sup> He came from Venlo in Upper Guelders, located in a dangerous border zone.<sup>43</sup> This background may explain why he thought that the war was 'antiquated' and, without any expectation of victory, 'has lost its bloom'.<sup>44</sup> Puteanus took a pacifistic approach to the war, which he had also done earlier, in 1617, in his *De Induciis Belgicis dissertatio politica*. 'People have dubiously fought against the king, and for the king', he wrote in 1633, suggesting that both

<sup>42</sup> Puteanus, *Statera belli & pacis*. This article will cite the Dutch translation.

<sup>43</sup> Roegiers, 'De universiteiten', 226.

<sup>44</sup> Puteanus, *Des Oorlogs ende Vredes Waeg-schale*, f. a3v: 'veroudert / en sonder vrucht van victorie, heeft sijne bloeme verloren'.

sides were at fault.<sup>45</sup> He reached the conclusion that the Habsburg government had better cede its claim over the Northern Netherlands.<sup>46</sup> Government officials could not appreciate what they considered to be a defeatist attitude to the war.

The peace negotiations led to nothing. On the contrary, both the Eighty Years' War and the Thirty Years' War were in full swing in the 1630s. Due to the victory at Nördlingen of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Austria – on his way to the Low Countries to succeed Isabella who had died in 1633 – France was totally surrounded by Habsburg territories. In reaction to this tightening net of the enemy, France negotiated a treaty of mutual assistance with the Dutch, in which they agreed to invade the Habsburg Netherlands and split up the conquered lands. In May and June 1635 French and Dutch troops invaded the Southern Netherlands, ravaging the countryside and violently sacking the Brabant city of Tienen in July.<sup>47</sup> They subsequently made preparations for besieging Leuven.

The attempted capture of Leuven was unsuccessful, however, and strong opposition to Franco-Dutch aggressions led to a surge of anti-French and anti-Dutch propaganda. South Netherlandish propagandists, spurred on by and sometimes consisting of government authorities, condemned the excesses in Tienen and in their writings tried to encourage popular hatred of the enemies.<sup>48</sup> The authors of these pamphlets had a relatively broad readership in mind as they wrote exclusively in the vernacular Dutch or French rather than Latin. Some of the pamphlets, such as *Den Hollantschen iavv en de Fransche kravvvey*, visualised the cruelties of French and Dutch soldiers in the city of Tienen (fig. 2).<sup>49</sup> We see the church ablaze, a soldier shooting at an image of the Holy Virgin, about to be torn down by another one, troops threatening a scared woman with a young child, and other sacrileges and cruelties.

Apart from the horrific and newsworthy events of 1635, the more distant history of the early Revolt, too, appeared as an important frame of reference, reflecting the conflict's continuing and even growing importance in South Netherlandish political discussions. In 1632, references to the sixteenth-century troubles had served primarily to pacify the population, disarm the noble troublemakers and limit the damage they had inflicted on the political stability of the South. Yet by subsequently allowing and even engaging in the public usage of the Revolt in political discussions, the regime set a new example. Propagandists in 1635 were inspired by the events of 1632 (fig. 3) and deployed similar appeals to the public memory more radically: to actively stir up people against the invading enemies. In these comparisons between past and present, patriotism was one of the most important themes and closely linked to South Netherlandish interpretations of the Revolt. One critic of the collaboration between Louis XIII and the United Provinces referred to 1582, when the French king Henry III had sent his younger brother Francis, duke of Anjou to assume

45 Puteanus, *Des Oorlogs ende Vredes Waeg-schale*, f. a3r: 'Twijffelachtigh heeft men gheoorlogt tegen den koninck / en voor den koninck'.

46 Puteanus, *Des Oorlogs ende Vredes Waeg-schale*, f. a4v.

47 Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 111–113.

48 Approximately fifty satirical pamphlets about the 1635 invasion in the Royal Library in Brussels are collated in the 'Recueil des pièces relatives aux Pays-Bas', KBR, II 5.060.

49 See also: Sabbe, *Brabant in 't verweer*, 235–236.



Fig. 3 Count Henry van den Bergh conspires with fellow nobles in a cave, a reference to the conspiracy three years earlier. Detail from: T'Geusen Rou-Mael en Fransche-Courante, 1635, Leiden, University Library.

lordship over the rebellious Netherlands and help Prince William of Orange in the insurrection against his rightful overlord. In 1635, Louis XIII followed his predecessor's example by joining forces with the 'rebels' and deploying an army to the Low Countries. The author showed that 'now', in 1635, the French king and the Northern 'Hollanders' continued their customary subversion of Habsburg rule.<sup>50</sup>

Pro-Habsburg authors presented the collaboration between Netherlandish rebels and the French during the sixteenth-century Revolt as foreshadowing the events of 1635. *Rhyme in Honour of the Virgin of Leuven* [*Rym-dicht ter eeren die maecht Loven*], for instance, celebrated the city of Leuven's record of loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty in the face of past enemy threats. The printed marginalia recalled the early 1580s, when Antwerp, Mechelen, Brussels and Tienen had been Calvinist republics, and implicitly emphasised the fact that Leuven had not fallen to the Calvinists. In 1583, Francis of Anjou and his soldiers had tried to take Antwerp by force, an event about which 'one reads in books' and which was also known as the French Fury.<sup>51</sup> This was an apt episode to evoke in 1635 because the cooperation between the rebels and France during Anjou's governorship mirrored the joint

<sup>50</sup> *Den Nederlantschen Phaeton*, f. a4r.

<sup>51</sup> *Rym-dicht ter eeren die maecht Loven*, f. a1r: 'leestmen in boecken'.

Franco-Dutch attack of 1635. A contemporary chronicler copied a triumphalist song that was allegedly sung in 1635: 'hey there, monsieur, you are going too far, just like you did in the year eighty-three. But then, too, you missed your target'.<sup>52</sup>

Authors not only denigrated the foreigners who, in past and present, had meddled with Netherlandish affairs, but they also exhibited their patriotism by evoking the memory of what they considered good Habsburg rule during the Revolt. A case in point is the governorship of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba in 1567-1573. Northerners commemorated Alba enthusiastically as the ultimate villain because he had persecuted political dissidents and executed more than a thousand of them.<sup>53</sup> In a pamphlet that justified the South's past loyalty to Habsburg, an anonymous author compared Alba's cruelties with those of the States's Army. 'The duke of Alba', he wrote, 'rightfully took the scourge in his hand somewhat, for he was sent to punish the land'. He subsequently claimed that Alba was justified in his violent repression of dissidents 'because we had acted against justice and reason'.<sup>54</sup> In the author's view, the actions of Alba, as representative of Philip II, had not exactly been praiseworthy but at least he had received a royal mandate to act as he did.

Habsburg authorities also engaged with the war propaganda of the French king. In June 1635, Louis XIII and Richelieu publically argued that the Habsburg advance in the Thirty Years War, and the threat it posed to France, justified drastic action.<sup>55</sup> In reaction to these excuses for violence, the President of the Privy Council in the Habsburg Netherlands Pieter Roose, condemned the political opportunism of his enemies. Together with the theologian Cornelius Jansenius he wrote a tract denouncing the French participation in the Protestant alliance during the Thirty Years' War.<sup>56</sup> Such government-orchestrated propaganda resembled *La Flandre fidelle* of 1632 and was not exceptional. Around 1635 the regime also mobilised other professors, including Nicolaus Vernulaeus and Erycius Puteanus, to discredit the French and Dutch enemies.<sup>57</sup> Jansenius and Roose published the text in September 1635, and it was spread in the Habsburg Netherlands but also in England and the Dutch Republic.<sup>58</sup> The *Mars Gallicus* criticised the French government's loose religious moral in its attempts to justify the malicious alliance with the Protestant Dutch. The authors accused the French and Dutch of deceitfully representing both the Revolt and the Thirty Years War as revolving 'only about some difficulties concerning the governance, and the state'.<sup>59</sup> On the contrary, Roose and Jansenius argued, 'the entire war of the States [the Dutch Republic] against the king of Spain is a war of religion, in its

52 'Chronycke van Nederlant', f. 161v: 'holla monsieur holla, ghy maecket al te groff Ghelijck ghy hebt gedaen, int iaer tachtentigh drij Maer gy sloecht daer oock mis'.

53 Pollmann and Stensland, 'Alba's Reputation', 321-322.

54 *Afbeeldinghe van den courtoisen Franschen*, 6: 'Duc d'Alve namp met recht de roey wat inde handt / Want hy ghe-sonden was tot straffe van het landt. / [. . .] want tegen recht en reden / [. . .] soo waren wy ghetreden'.

55 *Declaration dv Roy, svr l'ouverture de la Guerre, contre le Roy d'Espagne*.

56 Roose and Jansenius, *Mars Gallicus*. The French edition will be cited: Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars francois*. For more information about the authorship, see Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 168-169 note 293.

57 Arblaster, *From Ghent to Aix*, 178.

58 Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, 169.

59 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars francois*, 244-245: 'qu'il s'y agit seulement de quelques difficultés touchant la Police, & l'Estat'.

beginning, progress and in its end'.<sup>60</sup> This conclusion enabled them to argue that no true Catholic should side with the Machiavellian French and Dutch enemies of Philip IV, 'who make religion serve the state, the spirit serve the body, and eternity serve temporality'.<sup>61</sup>

Roose and Jansenius gave a brief history of the Revolt in chapter 10 of the *Mars Gallicus* to show that the ongoing struggles with the Dutch Republic had always been primarily about religion. They drew extensively from the work of two historians, well-known in the Habsburg Netherlands, whose Catholic and pro-Habsburg credentials were untarnished, Florentius van der Haer and Franciscus Haraeus.<sup>62</sup> But even Emanuel van Meteren – a Protestant historian in the North, originally from Antwerp – was apparently a useful source. The authors referred to Van Meteren in a brief discussion of the Iconoclastic Furies of 1566 in Antwerp, during which Calvinist zealots had destroyed Catholic imagery of the Church of Our Lady, notably images of the Holy Virgin and Jesus Christ, and also violated sacred hosts. Furthermore, 'the masterworks of the most famous painters of Europe were spoilt. The sepulchres of the dead violated, and all ornaments of the church pillaged'.<sup>63</sup> The idea behind citing a Protestant historian, who had written 'without interest of religion' and disapproved of the Iconoclasm, was probably that the authors could thus show that it must really by all standards be considered a wicked crime.<sup>64</sup> They claimed, furthermore, that Dutch Calvinists have 'tended to no other thing than to [...] mocking the contracts by which they pledged themselves to tolerate the ancient religion'.<sup>65</sup> Despite concluding the Pacification of Ghent in 1576, even in that very city Dutch heretics subsequently 'chased ecclesiastics, pillaged monasteries and counteracted multiple articles of that peace'.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the Dutch and French invaders were in many ways alike. 'The Huguenots and those of Rochelle [referring to the Protestant rebellions in that city]', they wrote, 'are rebels to their king; the Hollanders, too, rebel against their king; they have obeyed without difficulty his grandfather and great-grandfather [Philip II and Charles V]; they have not denied that he [Philip IV] succeeded legitimately'.<sup>67</sup> Like the critics of the 1635 invasion discussed earlier in this section, Roose and Jansenius tarred the French and Dutch with the same brush and used the history of the Revolt to reinforce the parallels between both enemies.

60 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 244: 'Toute la guerre des Estats contre le Roi d'Espagne, est une guerre de Religion, en son commencement en son progrès, & en sa fin'.

61 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 244: 'qui font servir la Religion à l'Etat, l'ame au corps, & l'éternité au temps'.

62 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 247.

63 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 248-249: 'Les ouvrages des plus celebres peintres de l'Europe, furent gastés. Les sepulchres des morts furent violés, & tous les ornements de l'Eglise pillés'.

64 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 249: 'sans interest de Religion'.

65 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 357: 'ne tend à autre chose [...] qu'à se mocquer des contracts, par lesquels ils s'obligeoient de souffrir l'ancienne Religion'.

66 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*: 'ils chasserent les Ecclesiastiques, ils pillerent les Monasteres, & firent contre plusieurs articles de cette Paix'.

67 Roose and Jansenius, *Le mars françois*, 314: 'les Huguenots & les Rochelois sont rebelles à leur Roi: les Hollandois le sont aussi au leur; ils ont obei sans difficulté à son aieul & bisaieul; ils n'ont jamais nié, qu'il ne leur ait succédé legitimately'.

### *The 1667 War of Devolution*

The Franco-Dutch invasion in 1635 was the beginning of the Franco-Spanish War that would last until 1659 and which betrayed the Habsburg dynasty's inability to defend the South against its enemies.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, the Southern population's war experiences and pessimistic outlook on the future did not result in strong anti-Habsburg sentiments. Robert Muchembled has shown that local elites valued Counter-Reformation ideology, local privileges and opposition to undesirable foreign influences such as Dutch Calvinism and Gallican Catholicism.<sup>69</sup> Such positive considerations and negative assessment of the available alternatives coexisted with, and softened, concerns about Philip IV and Charles II's failure to defend their Low Countries. The remainder of this article will illustrate how a pro-Habsburg commentator in 1667 picked up the rhetoric developed in 1635 and praised the track record of Habsburg rule in the Low Countries.

In 1667, Louis XIV and his Marshal General Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne, invaded large parts of the Walloon provinces and also managed to capture some Flemish cities.<sup>70</sup> To justify the invasion, he used an ancient common law in the duchy of Brabant and county of Flanders.<sup>71</sup> According to this law of devolution, 'the children by the first marriage go away with the whole inheritance of their father' – as Pierre Dalicourt, a pro-French chronicler of the war, explained – while 'the children of the same father, by a second marriage, [are] excluded'.<sup>72</sup> On June 9, 1660, Louis XIV had married Infanta Maria Theresa, who was the only surviving child of Philip IV of Spain's first marriage to Elisabeth of France. The French king's legal approach enabled him to claim lordship over the lands where the law of devolution applied.<sup>73</sup> Among the paintings of Charles Le Brun, glorifying Louis XIV in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, is the painting of the 'War against Spain', subtitled 'Rights of the Queen' (fig. 4).

The French army of twenty-five thousand men met with little resistance, despite the Habsburg regime's command on May 29, 1667 that its inhabitants 'oppose with all their utmost force' the hostility of the French invaders.<sup>74</sup> French troops captured the cities of Charleroi, Douai, Kortrijk, and Lille. At the city of Dendermonde, between Ghent and Brussels, the army met its first opposition but by then the campaign was already a French success. Only the intervention of the Triple Alliance of 1668 between England, the Dutch Republic and Sweden, could prevent France from conquering more parts of the Southern Netherlands.<sup>75</sup> Both sides ended the war with the Treaty of Aachen (1668), in which the Habsburgs yielded twelve cities to France. The South Netherlandish chronicler Joannes Jacquinet from Tienen had a more optimistic, though rather less realistic, explanation for the aborted invasion. He believed that Louis XIV, 'hearing that the Brabanters were much

<sup>68</sup> Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain*, 145.

<sup>69</sup> Muchembled, 'Koningstrouw', 185-188.

<sup>70</sup> Levillain, *Vaincre Louis XIV*, 135-141.

<sup>71</sup> Van Malssen, *Louis XIV*, 14; Laurillard, *Het devolutie-regt*, 4-5.

<sup>72</sup> Dalicourt, *A relation of the French kings late expedition*, ff. a3v-a4r.

<sup>73</sup> Sonnino, *Louis XIV*, 9.

<sup>74</sup> *Placcaten tegens het intrecken van 't Fransche leger*, 4: 'met alle haere uytterste macht daer teghen stellen'.

<sup>75</sup> Israel, 'De Franse opmars', 43.



Fig. 4 Charles Le Brun, War against Spain. Rights of the Queen, 1667, c. 1678-1685, canvas, Versailles, Château de Versailles.

resolved to bravely defend themselves and remain loyal to their young duke Charles of Brabant [Charles II of Spain], [...] changed his mind of invading Brabant, thinking that it would cost blood and people'.<sup>76</sup>

The War of Devolution also occasioned a fierce discussion between pro-French and pro-Habsburg interpreters of the law of devolution. Habsburg officials and supporters of the regime could easily rebut Louis XIV's legal justification for his invasion. Privy councillor of Brabant Petrus Stockmans, demonstrated that devolution had never been practiced in the Habsburg successions. He used the historical example of the Cession of 1598, when Philip II had given the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella to solve the problem of not having a natural Habsburg overlord resident in his Netherlandish territories. In organising

<sup>76</sup> Jacquinet, 'Historie der Nederlanden', ff. 348v–349r: 'hoorende dat de Brabanders seer wel geresolveert waren om hun vromelyck te verweren ende hunnen iongen hartoghe Carolus van Brabant getrauw te blyven, [...] heeft den Fransen koninck Lodewyck syn voor nemen verandert van in Brabant inte vallen, wel denckende dat het bloet ende volck saude moeten kosten'.



the princely succession in the Low Countries during his lifetime, the Spanish king had not even considered the law of devolution as a potential impediment.<sup>77</sup>

François Paul de Lisola, a lawyer and diplomat in Imperial service, also fiercely criticised what he considered to be a deliberate and opportunistic misinterpretation of the law. Opposing the French lawyer Antoine Bilain's attempts to legitimate Louis XIV's claims, in 1667 he wrote *The Buckler of State and Justice*, originally published in Brussels.<sup>78</sup> Six editions appeared, and the text was part of many libraries including those of John Locke, John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. The latter thought 'the whole body of the book very good and solid'.<sup>79</sup> Just like Stockmans, Lisola argued that the law of devolution was wholly unrelated to the laws of succession in the Low Countries. According to him, 'it was never heard of in the empire that any sovereign fief should be regulated by the local customs'.<sup>80</sup> One of his supporting arguments relied on Charles V's Pragmatic Sanction of 1549, in which the old emperor had decreed that all Seventeen Provinces were to be passed to the next generations undivided. There could hence be no variation in the rules of public succession in the Netherlandish provinces.<sup>81</sup> In the given circumstances, the Pragmatic Sanction also disqualified Infanta Maria Theresa because daughters could succeed only in default of male heirs. Since Charles II was the male heir from Philip IV's second marriage, the French king's claim on behalf of his wife was void.<sup>82</sup>

Lisola could have left it at that, yet he was probably aware that legal arguments alone were by no means going to convince his Netherlandish audience. He therefore bolstered his argument by contending that, apart from having no right to claim dominion over the Low Countries, Louis XIV would not be a suitable overlord of the Netherlandish provinces. Lisola used historical references to the Revolt to support his implied view that the Southern population had Charles II as their sovereign not only because he had the right to rule but also by popular demand. Enumerating the characteristics of Spanish 'great princes' as opposed to the French 'conquerors', he argued that the former had always prioritised religion over reason of state, 'which is directly contrary to the rule of conquerors, who do dexterously make use of all sorts of sects to compass their own ends'.<sup>83</sup> Louis XIV had loose Catholic morals and no concern for the salvation of his people. Conversely, faced with the emerging Protestant movements in the Netherlands, Charles V decided to actively fight heresy. And his son Philip II 'had no inclination at all to arms, nor ever took them up but for his defence, or out of necessitie to humble those who fomented rebellions within his kingdomes'.<sup>84</sup>

Lisola presented 'the glorious reigns of Charles the vth and Philip the 11d' as examples of the total selflessness of the Spanish monarchy. Neither Charles V nor Philip II ever 'applied any one of their conquests to their own particular benefit, except what did belong to them

77 Stockmans, *Deductie*, 11.

78 Bilain, *Samenspraak*. The original French edition of François Paul de Lisola's text is *Bouclier d'estat*. I cite here from the English edition for purposes of readability: Lisola, *The buckler of state*.

79 Levillain, 'The Intellectual Origins'; Pepys, *The diary*, 314.

80 Lisola, *The buckler*, 213.

81 Lisola, *The buckler*, 196.

82 Lisola, *The buckler*, 206.

83 Lisola, *The buckler*, 284.

84 Lisola, *The buckler*, 282.

by just successions'.<sup>85</sup> Again, the Habsburg selflessness and devotion to the Southerners's cause was juxtaposed to the opportunism, religious desolation and urge for conquest of the French and Dutch. Here, Lisola reacted to accusations voiced mostly by Dutch authors against the supposed cruelties committed by Philip II during the Revolt. The author turned the table on these Northerners and argued that although the Revolt had been a great disaster, the king had chosen to protect Catholicism rather than only pursue his temporal interests, as was the French and Dutch custom.<sup>86</sup>

### *Conclusions*

It has long been a prevailing assumption that, after the reconciliation of formerly rebellious territories in the Southern Netherlands, the remaining population had no reason to commemorate the troubled past. Historians have recently turned this assumption on its head, pointing out the mistake of interpreting perceived post-conflict 'silences' simply as oblivion and demonstrating that especially in a Southern context it is more helpful to consider the interplay between memory, religion and politics. In doing so they have demonstrated that already by 1600, Southern opinion makers had developed an established repertoire of arguments to excuse the harsh repression of rebels by the Habsburg authorities during the early stages of the Revolt. It is striking that in later seventeenth-century political discussions, loyalists began to present the Habsburg response to the rebellion not only in a justificatory manner but also more positively, as an argument in favour of Habsburg rule. During the conspiracy of nobles in 1632, the Franco-Dutch invasion in 1635 and the War of Devolution in 1667-1668, government authorities and influential loyalists focused their political arguments more than before on the troubled history of the Revolt.

Opposition to the regime in 1632 significantly accelerated this new politicisation of the Revolt. Count Henry van den Bergh – having defected to the Dutch Republic – in his public writings used memories of past Spanish misdeeds during the Revolt to sway potential sympathisers to his cause. Yet, spurred on by the Dutch States General, Count Henry had miscalculated Southern enthusiasm for a new rebellion and, as a reaction to his treason, Archduchess Isabella and the Habsburg administration in the South beat him at his own game. Habsburg authorities openly defied their own policies of letting the Revolt's bygones be bygones and appealed to the public memory of the conflict to convince the South Netherlandish population of the undesirability of returning to the chaos of the sixteenth-century troubles.

The South Netherlandish government thereby set a new standard for considering the Revolt not as a painful memory that needed to be explained away, but as a useful political frame of reference in new conflicts. Indeed, this frame of reference was picked up during the crisis of 1635, when French and Dutch forces invaded the South. The chronicler Jacquinet, cited earlier, wrote that although the cruelty of the enemies was terrible, it 'benefitted the land, because the Hollanders and French could now for a long time be

<sup>85</sup> Lisola, *The buckler*, 279.

<sup>86</sup> Lisola, *The buckler*, 281.

slandered'<sup>87</sup> Authors such as Roose and Jansenius did so, when they combined references to the Revolt with an antagonistic narrative about the events of 1635 to contrast the virtues of Habsburg rule to the vices of the French and Dutch. Lisola adopted this strategy as well in his treatise against the French 'conquerors' in 1667.

Far from being forgotten, the Revolt hence became an important element of the political arguments deployed in support of Habsburg rule during the seventeenth century. While the early stages of the Revolt were becoming an increasingly distant past and the rebellion's character had shifted from a civil war to an armed conflict between two states, memories of the sixteenth-century troubles remained relevant to elites in the Habsburg Netherlands and continued to evolve.

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<sup>87</sup> Jacquinet, 'Historie der Nederlanden', f. 49v: 'twas de welvaert vant lant, want de Hollanders en Francoisen sauden langen tyt daerby hebben konnen gespyts worden'.

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