

The Twelve Years Truce (1609)

*Peace, Truce, War and Law in the Low Countries at
the Turn of the 17th Century*

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The Act of Cession, the 1598 and 1600 States General in Brussels and the Peace Negotiations during the Dutch Revolt

Bram De Ridder and Violet Soen

Introduction

On 10 September 1597, Philip II wrote a short letter to the loyal Estates, councils and nobles in the Low Countries, wherein he announced 'la benigne resolution qu'avons prise pour vostre propre bien'.¹ Without any prior consultation, the Habsburg King informed his subjects that he would cede the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella and her prospective husband Albert of Austria, the then serving Governor General in Brussels. The idea of a cession was certainly not new, the possibility of seceding the territories in the Netherlands had already been formulated under Emperor Charles V.² During the reign of Philip II, however, it was the first time that concrete steps towards an implementation were carried out: Isabella would receive the Low Countries and the Franche-Comté of Burgundy as a dowry. Amongst other things, the aim was to appease the rebellious United Provinces by meeting one of their most important complaints, namely the removal of Philip II himself. Still, in the end, the main goal was to restore Habsburg rule over the totality of the Seventeen Provinces.³

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- 1 Philip II to the loyal Estates, Councils and Nobles, 10 September 1598: Victor Brants (ed.), *Recueil des Ordonnances des Pays-Bas: deuxième série, 1506–1700: Règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle, 1598–1621* (Brussels, 1909), vol. 9, 4–5.
 - 2 Rafael Valladares, 'Decid adiós a Flandes. La Monarquía Hispánica y el problema de los Países Bajos', in Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (eds.), *Albert & Isabella 1598–1621, Essays* (Turnhout, 1998), 48–50; Jochen A. Fühner, *Die Kirchen- und die antireformatorische Religionspolitik Kaiser Karls V. in den siebzehn Provinzen der Niederlande 1515–1555* (Brill's Series in Church History 23; Leyden/Boston, 2004), 47–54.
 - 3 Valladares, 'Decid', 48–51; Alicia Esteban Estringana, 'Haciendo rostro a la fortuna. Guerra, paz y soberanía en los Países Bajos', in Bernardo J. García García (ed.), *Tiempo de Paces. La Pax Hispanica y la Tregua de los Doce Años* (Madrid, 2009), 82–84 and her contribution to this volume; Paul Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598–1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven/London, 2000), 17–18; Violet Soen, 'Philip II's Quest. The Appointment of Governors General during the Dutch Revolt (1559–1598)', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 126 (2011) 15–16.

Within this context, it is not so surprising that the Act of Cession provided a new stimulus for peace negotiations with the rebellious provinces. Time and again during the Dutch Revolt, contacts between Brussels and The Hague were made in order to proceed to more formal peace negotiations. What might come more to a surprise then, is that the Act of Cession led twice to the convocation of a States General in Brussels, once in 1598 and again in 1600. This was after all the same Spanish Habsburg Monarchy which had opposed time and again such convocation throughout the preceding conflict. Hence, this chapter ponders why this double gathering happened in a short time span of two years, and how this affected the peace negotiations during the Dutch Revolt.⁴ As will become clear, the developments within the 1598–1600 peace process decisively configured the political context for the conclusion of the Twelve Years Truce in 1609.

Convoking a States General?

To understand why the States General were convoked twice in 1598 and 1600, it is important to return to the medieval origins of this institution. The first States General in the Burgundian lands are traditionally considered to have been held on 9 January 1464, at the instigation of Duke Philip the Good (1419–1467). These first States General relied upon on an even older and wider parliamentary tradition of a representation of the governed, consisting of delegations by the provincial Estates, each organised in three groups comprehending the nobility, clergymen and commoners. This new institution enabled the Duke of Burgundy to negotiate directly with all of the provinces in his *pays par deça*, turning these States General into a centralising institution as well. Only the Duke of Burgundy had the right to convoke a meeting, but the Great Privilege issued by Mary of Burgundy in 1477 extended this prerogative to the provincial states. In practice though, the subsequent rulers never allowed this to happen.⁵

4 Hugo De Schepper, 'Los Países Bajos y la Monarquía Hispánica. Intentos de reconciliación hasta la tregua de los Doce años (1574–1609)', in Ana Crespo Solana and Manuel Herrero Sánchez (eds.), *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos. Una revisión historiográfica (XVI–XVIII)* (Cordoba, 2002), 329–330; Violet Soen, 'Estrategias tempranas de pacificación de los Países Bajos (1570–1598)', in García García, *Tiempo de Paces*, 75.

5 Marc Boone, "In den beginne was het woord". De vroege groei van "parlementen" in de middeleeuwse vorstendommen der Nederlanden', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 120 (2005) 338–361; Hugo De Schepper, 'Staatsgezag en macht

The States General soon turned into a crucial institution in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries. They provided the provincial delegations with the opportunity to discuss fiscal and political issues with their ruler. In theory, the assembly had little formal power, but as the States General had to consent to the subsidies (*beden*) demanded by the ruler, they were nevertheless in a position to exert considerable influence. As these taxes usually served to pay for war, their say in external affairs was not insignificant. Hence, until the reign of Philip II, the States General were frequently consulted to deliberate on matters of war and peace, even becoming crucial to the ratification of peace treaties.⁶ Moreover, they could and did intervene directly in attempts at making peace during governmental crises. In addition to their role in fiscal and foreign policies, the States General played an essential role in the acknowledgment of new rulers. New princes swore their oaths before the assembly, in return receiving the allegiance from their new subjects. Helmut Koenigsberger has identified these evolutions in the political government of the Low Countries as a *dominium politicum et regale*. This term – originally codified in *The Governance of England* written by Sir John Fortescue in the 1470s – described a form of constitutional monarchy based upon a sharing of power between rulers and representative institutions.⁷

in de Nederlanden. Verworvenheden en beperkingen in het Bourgondisch-Habsburgse systeem', in Jac Geurts and Hugo De Schepper (eds.), *Staatsvorming onder Bourgondiërs en Habsburgers. Theorie en Praktijk. Handelingen van het 7^{de} Colloquium van de Werkgroep 'Internationale Verhoudingen, 1350–1800' gehouden aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 2 November 2001* (Maastricht, 2006), 35–36; Robert Wellens, 'Staten-Generaal', in Erik Aerts et al. (eds.), *De centrale overheidsinstellingen van de Habsburgse Nederlanden (1482–1795)* (Algemeen Rijksarchief en Rijksarchief in de Provinciën, Studia 55; Brussels, 1994), vol. 1, 65–67, 69; Robert Wellens, *Les États-Généraux des Pays-Bas des origines à la fin du règne de Philippe le Beau (1464–1506)* (Standen en Landen 64; Heule, 1974), 92–97, 285–286; John Gilissen, 'Les États Généraux des pays de par deçà, 1464–1632', *Standen en Landen*, 33 (1965) 263–321.

6 Randall Lesaffer, 'Peace Treaties from Lodi to Westphalia' in Randall Lesaffer (ed.), *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the End of the Middle Ages to World War One* (Cambridge, 2004), 19–21.

7 Koenigsberger has used the term as an analytical tool to coin evolutions in the relationship between rulers and parliamentary institutions in the Low Countries, and it is in this perspective that the concept will appear in this contribution too. Helmut G. Koenigsberger, 'Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe. *Dominium Regale* or *Dominium politicum et Regale?*', *Theory and Society*, 5 (1978) 191–217; idem, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments. The Netherlands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2001), 25, 220–340.

With the abdication of Charles V in Brussels in 1555, Philip II also started his rule over the Seventeen Provinces during a session of the States General.⁸ The relation between prince and provinces would soon turn problematic: already the prolonged States General between 1557 and 1559 was a clear political showdown, demonstrating once again that the deputies of the Estates could seriously impede royal policies. During the Dutch Revolt, this troubled relation took a turn for the worst, especially when the insurgents organised themselves from 1572 onwards through a 'Free Estates'.⁹ Despite the continued veto against a States General from Madrid – out of fear for religious change – local peace-making attempts often included parliamentary-like meetings. This tactic fitted into the overall strategy of 'ganar los corazones', as opposed to more violent approaches of subduing the rebellion.¹⁰ On the eve of the Iconoclastic Fury for example, Governess General Margaret of Parma convoked several provincial Estates separately for a consultation on a mitigated anti-heresy law.¹¹ Also in June 1574, Governor General Luis de Requesens appealed to the pacifying potential of the States General by convoking all fifteen 'loyal provinces' in Brussels and announcing them a new and broad general pardon.¹²

Things changed considerably when in the vacuum following the death of Governor Requesens, the States of Brabant convoked a States General on their own initiative in September 1576, extending the invitation to the 'Free Estates' of Holland and Zeeland. Later on, this initiative would be endorsed by the

8 Violet Soen, 'De troonsafstand van Karel V: Achter de schermen van een ceremonie' in *Keizer Karel en Eeklo. Verslag van een colloquium over Keizer Karel, Eeklo, 24 September 2005* (Eeklo, 2006), 67–76.

9 James Tracy, *The founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572–1588* (Oxford, 2008).

10 Bernardo J. García García, "'Ganar los corazones y obligar los vecinos". Estrategias de pacificación de los Países Bajos (1604–1610)', in Crespo Solana and Herrero Sanchez, *España y las 17 provincias*, 137–166.

11 Violet Soen, 'Between Dissent and Peacemaking. The Dutch Nobility on the Eve of the Revolt (1564–1567)', *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 86 (2008) 745–746.

12 See in particular: Guido Marnef, 'Resistance and the Celebration of Privileges in Sixteenth-Century Brabant', in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands. Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke* (Leyden, 2007), 125–140; Violet Soen, *Geen pardon zonder paus! Studie over de complementariteit van het koninklijk en pauselijk generaal pardon (1570–1574) en over inquisiteur-generaal Michael Baius (1560–1576)* (Verhandelingen Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, New Series 14; Brussels, 2007), 257–273.

Council of State, which was at that time serving as interim Governor General.¹³ The ensuing Pacification of Ghent of 8 November 1576 somehow conferred the political authority to this States General, especially when relations with the new Governor General Don Juan did neither normalise nor stabilise.¹⁴ Almost five years later, on 26 July 1581, the States General formally and famously abjured Philip II, even if they continued to seek for an appropriate substitute as ruler.¹⁵ Even so, these States General did no longer represent the former Seventeen Provinces brought together under the Emperor. Luxembourg had remained loyal, while Namur would forcefully follow after the seizure of its citadel by Don Juan in the summer of 1577. With the Treaty of Arras in May 1579 also Artois, Hainaut and Walloon-Flanders reconciled with Philip II.¹⁶ Likewise, the ensuing military campaigns of the new Governor Alexander Farnese reduced the territory over which the States General exerted power.¹⁷ After several failures to offer sovereignty to a new ruler, around 1588, the then insurgent 'seven provinces' considered themselves capable enough to maintain their powers and organised themselves in the Republic of the United Netherlands. For Koenigsberger, they continued the legacy of the *dominium politicum*, while leaving behind former monarchical tendencies.¹⁸

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- 13 Gustaaf Janssens, *Brabant in het verweer. Loyale oppositie tegen Spanje's bewind in de Nederlanden van Alva tot Farnese 1567–1578* (Standen en Landen 89; Kortrijk/Heule, 1989), 292–314.
- 14 Michel Baelde and Paul Van Peteghem, 'De Pacificatie van Gent', in *Opstand en pacificatie in de lage landen. Bijdrage tot de studie van de pacificatie van Gent. Verslagboek van het Tweedaags Colloquium bij de vierhonderdste verjaring van de Pacificatie van Gent* (Ghent, 1976), 16–17.
- 15 Paul Brood and Raymond Kubben (eds.), *The Act of Abjuration. Inspired and Inspirational. Twelve Authors on One of the Highlights of the Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands* (Nijmegen, 2011).
- 16 Gustaaf Janssens, 'Van de komst van Alva tot de Unies', in Michel Cloet et al. (eds.), *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 6. Nieuwe Tijd* (Haarlem, 1979), 230–243; De Schepper, 'Intentos de reconciliación', 330–333; Violet Soen, 'Les Malcontents au sein des États Généraux aux Pays-Bas (1578–1581): Défense du pouvoir de la noblesse ou défense de l'orthodoxie?', in Ariane Boltanski and Frank Mercier (eds.), *La noblesse et la défense de l'orthodoxie XIII-XVIII^e siècles* (Rennes, 2011), 135–149.
- 17 Krista de Jonge et al. (eds.), *Alexander Farnese and the Low Countries* (Turnhout, forthcoming); Violet Soen, 'Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt. The campaign of Alexander Farnese in the Dutch Revolt (1578–1592)', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 16 (2012) 1–22. For a broader interpretation, see: Marjolein 't Hart, 'De democratische paradox en de Opstand in Vlaanderen, Brabant en Holland', in Mario Damen en Louis Sicking (eds.), *Bourgondië voorbij. De Nederlanden 1250–1650* (Hilversum, 2010), 375–388.
- 18 Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 311–315.

Meanwhile, in the loyal provinces, the principle of monarchical rule was reiterated, although it was not the immediate emergence of the strong and univocal *dominium regale* ignoring the parliamentary tradition, as Koenigsberger has alleged.¹⁹ Due to the renewed war with England and France, there was a lot of discontent in border provinces like Artois and Hainaut. Still in 1595, some form of parliamentary representation was tried as a means to pacify the loyal provinces: Governor General Ernst of Austria then convoked a special *junta* of Bishops, Knights of the Golden Fleece and provincial states to find remedies for the ongoing troubles.²⁰ In the tense atmosphere of the last decade of the 16th century, a one-sided move like the Act of Cession could thus alienate the loyal provinces already in distress. Moreover, the abdication of a ruling sovereign had already been considered unusual in 1555, when Charles V had ceded Spain and the Low Countries to his son, but in 1598 both the King and his successor gave up their hereditary rights on conditions.²¹ Hence, it seemed that the cession Philip II intended would definitely benefit from the traditional legitimacy that a States General could offer. After all, the practice of convoking the States General was still considered to be the normal procedure for a transfer of power.²² By embodying the embattled *dominium politicum et regale*, these States General could moreover appeal to conciliation. It is therefore no surprise that Marc de Hertoghe, member of the Council of Flanders, stated after the announcement of the King's intention to cede the Low Countries that exactly the convocation of the States General would be a 'unicque remede pour pacifier ces troubles'.²³

19 Ibid., 315–321, 336.

20 'Avis donné à l'Archiduc Ernest, gouverneur des Pays-Bas, les 18 et 19 janvier 1595, par les archevêques, évêques, chevaliers de l'Ordre, gouverneurs des provinces, et par le conseil d'État, sur les mesures à prendre pour le rétablissement des affaires du pays, avec les apostilles de Philippe II, en date du 18 février 1596': Louis P. Gachard (ed.), *Les États Généraux de 1600* (Brussels, 1849), 415–450.

21 Philip II and his son never gave up all their rights. In order to preserve the Netherlands under all possible circumstances the public and secret clauses of the Act of Cession guaranteed a clear connection between these territories and the Spanish Habsburgs: See Werner Thomas, 'Andromeda Unbound. The Reign of Albert & Isabella in the Southern Netherlands, 1598–1621', in Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (eds.), *Albert & Isabella 1598–1621. Essays* (Turnhout, 1998), 1–14. See also Chapters 2 and 10 in this volume.

22 Karin Van Honacker, 'The Archdukes and Their Subjects: The Political Culture of the Citizens in the Netherlands', in Thomas and Duerloo, *Albert & Isabella*, 241.

23 Victor Brants, 'Avis sur les remèdes à la situation de Flandre adressé à l'Archiduc Albert en 1598 par Marc de Hertoghe, membre du Conseil de Flandre', *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, 81 (1912) 335–338. Marc de Hertoghe: Knight, born in a noble family

The Short States General of 1598

On 26 July 1598, Albert informed all provincial states of the Act of Cession. The official text argued that the transfer of power was meant to serve 'le bien et repos de nosdicts pays d'embas'. It clearly supported the dynastic and monarchical goals linked to a *dominium regale*, but the states were told that the whole plan would serve their interests more than those of the Spanish King. According to Philip II, the Cession would solve the old sore of royal absence by awarding the provinces the honour of 'se trouver régy et gouverné à la veue et par la présence de son prince et seigneur naturel'. Furthermore, the Act reminded the states to the fact that in their first responses to the planned cession they had voiced no clear objections against the decision or against the proposed new rulership.²⁴ Albert now invited all states to send delegates to Brussels on 14 August. Hence, this new States General was intended to serve as the formal inauguration of Isabella as sovereign, making it an expression of the old contract between rulers and subjects.²⁵

In order to quell any protest against the Act of Cession, the *mise-en-scène* of the States General contained numerous ceremonial references to its 1555 counterpart of the Abdication of Charles V. The meetings were held in the same place, the great hall of the Coudenberg Palace, and the delegates' sitting places and the phrasing of the harangues all echoed the time of the Abdication.²⁶ As the imperial rule was increasingly seen as a foregone 'Golden Age' in the loyal provinces, these references created the impression that the cession would

living in the region of Waasland and married with Lucie de Tegnagel. He was member of the Council of Flanders and became president of this institution in 1617.

- 24 The Act of Cession, 6 May 1598: Brants, *Règne*, vol. 9, 7–13; The Estates of Brabant to Philip II, 5 December 1597: Brants, *Règne*, vol. 9, 6–7; Different Estates to Philip II, 8 December 1597 to 3 February 1598: Brussels, Archives Générales du Royaume de Belgique (hereinafter AGR), *Audiëntie*, nr. 619, f. 103–125. On the problem of the absence of the King: Soen, 'The Quest', *passim*.
- 25 Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1555–1609* (London/New York, 1958), 241; Paul Janssens, 'De Spaanse en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden (1579–1780)', in Johannes C.H. Blom and Emiel Lamberts (eds.), *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (Baarn, 1993), 181.
- 26 Albert to Philip II, 17 February 1598: Joseph Lefèvre (ed.), *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas* (Académie royale de Belgique, Commission royale d'histoire, Collection de chroniques belges inédites 50; Brussels, 1940–1960), vol. 4, 450; *Relation des particularitez et ceremoins passées a Bruxelles lors de la publication des patentes royales e la cession des pays bas, au prouffit de la ser(enisi)me Infante, et de l'acceptation que les estatz g(e)n(er)aux ont fait d'icelle, ensemble de la presta(ti)on des sermens hinc inde ensuyviz les xxi et xxxiie d'aoust 1598*: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 2–8.

not only grant its supporters the benign return of the peace and prosperity of this past age, but that it would also revive the *dominium politicum et regale*, considered to be a core aspect of the Emperor's rule.²⁷ During the actual debates the message of expected compliance between rulers and subjects was voiced by Jean Richardot, President of the Secret Council and Albert's upcoming right hand.²⁸ His rhetorical style was intended to appeal both to emotional and rational reasoning: Richardot referred to the fatherlike nature of the Habsburg King and reminded his audience of the important financial, material, and above all personal efforts Charles V and his son had taken to guarantee the peace in the whole Netherlands. The King now even gave them 'la plus chere perle qui soit en ses tresors:' the fully qualified Infanta, who had aided her father in affairs of government and was 'la princesse la plus religieuse de monde, saintement nourrie en la maison du roy'. Furthermore, according to Richardot the government would further improve due to the Act, since instead of one ruler (the King of Spain) they now would have two rulers (the King of Spain and his daughter). For Richardot, the Netherlands were indebted to the Spanish-Habsburg dynasty, a debt which had to be repaid by agreeing to the cession.²⁹

Still, this convocation, although foreseen, took place sooner than expected: the peace with France signed in Vervins on 2 May 1598 had created a positive momentum, one which Philip II wanted to use to push through his plans for the cession. The sudden acceleration meant that not everything was fully prepared yet. Most importantly, the wedding around which the cession revolved had not yet taken place and the Infanta herself still resided in Spain. This situation generated an extra juridical complexity: Isabella sent her future husband

27 Helmut G. Koenigsberger, 'Republicanism, monarchism and liberty', in Robert Oresko et al. (eds.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe. Essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), 65.

28 Jean Grusset or Richardot (1540–1609): Born in Champlite as son of Willem Grusset and Margaretha Richardot. He was a cousin of François Richardot, who later adopted him. As protégé of Cardinal Granvelle, he studied in Leuven, Rome, Milan and Padua and he became doctor in law in 1565. In 1568 he was appointed in the Great Council and in 1575 in the Privy Council. After his support for the States General in 1576–1577, he reconciled with Farnese in 1579. From then onwards, he built his further career in Habsburg service as a diplomat and member of the Council of State, ultimately becoming president of the Privy Council under Albert. He is best known for his central role in the Peace Treaties of Vervins (1598) and London (1604) and his involvement in the Twelve Year's Truce. Hugo de Schepper, 'Richardot', in *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek* (Brussels, 1964), vol. 1, 762–775.

29 *Relation des particularitez et ceremonies*: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 9–18, 31–3.

a letter which named him the proxy through which she would receive and give the necessary oaths during the States General. Simultaneously, she appointed him as Governor General in her name until she would have arrived.³⁰ This upcoming wedding would turn into a matter of great concern for the gathered States General. Philip II demanded that the ceremony would take place in Spain, which implied that Albert would have to leave the Low Countries and that yet another Governor General would be appointed *ad interim*.³¹ These objections were understandable, because Albert's leave would oblige the appointment of a new Governor General for the fourth time in less than ten years. Due to a range of difficulties (not in the least the deaths of his appointees), Philip II had not been able to form a stable government in Brussels.³² Hence, the spokesman of the States General, the Brabant Pensionary Philip Maes,³³ asked the Archduke not to leave or alternatively to return with his bride within a year. The Habsburg party responded that the voyage was demanded for by the King, and as such the Archduke, being a royal subject, had to comply.³⁴

Even so, the upcoming wedding in Spain was in fact the only worry expressed by the States General. The contrast between the 1557–1559 and 1598 assemblies could not be bigger: during the former it took the provinces two years to reach an agreement with the King, whilst the latter only lasted four days of which two were spent on elaborate meals and a mass.³⁵ Given these facts, it is not so surprising that both Robert Wellens and Helmut Koenigsberger have stated that from 1598 onwards the States General had lost all their political power to the ruler.³⁶ The compliant behaviour of the loyal provinces and their acceptance of the shaky juridical construction at first sight suggest that the

30 Esteban Estringana, 'Haciendo', 87; Isabella to Albert, 31 May 1598: Brants, *Règne*, vol. 9, 14–15.

31 *Relation des particularitez et ceremoins*: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1): f.1–5; Robert Wellens, 'Les États généraux de Bruxelles en 1598 et la cession des Pays-Bas aux Archiducs Albert et Isabelle', *Cahiers bruxellois*, 23 (1978) 24–25.

32 Soen, 'Quest', 3–29.

33 Philip Maes: son of Jacobus Maes and Alyde de Tassis and brother of the well-known Engelbert Maes, president of the Privy Council. He acted as *audiencier* for the Estates of Brabant and for the 1598 and 1600 States Generals. Gisela Jongbloet-Van Houtte (ed.), *Brieven en andere bescheiden betreffende Daniel Van der Meulen 1584–1600. Deel 1, augustus 1584–September 1585* (The Hague, 1986), 146, note 8.

34 'Relation des particularitez et ceremoins': AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 25–6, 31–3.

35 'Relation des particularitez et ceremoins': AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 42–5; Wellens, 'Cession', 28–29.

36 Wellens, 'Staten-Generaal', 68; Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 317–321.

harmonious collaboration behind the *dominium politicum et regale* had weakened significantly. Nevertheless, most likely, the states never really intended to make major political demands at this time. First and foremost, there was Albert's promise to organise a second States General upon his return, where more elaborate talks could be held. This also explains why the assembly demanded that the Governor General *ad interim* should not be allowed to issue new policies. In this way, the States General wanted to avoid further political manoeuvring before the next assembly gathered.³⁷ Second, there was the fact that one had to await Isabella's arrival before real decisions could be taken. Delaying Albert's departure would therefore only prolong the confused politico-juridical situation. Hence, both the Archduke and the loyal provinces realised the necessity of a speedy transfer of power, while sharing the same goal of stabilising policy rather than disrupting it. This danger, combined with Albert's guarantee, induced the States General to keep a low profile in expressing their concerns and objections, for other and better opportunities would arise. So despite the Habsburg emphasis on monarchical rule in speech and act, it is not clear from the events in 1598 whether or not the tradition of the *dominium politicum et regale* had already been replaced by a *dominium regale*, as Koenigsberger contended.

Peace Talks in 1598

The Act of Cession not only presented a new incentive to convoke a States General in Brussels, but also to revive contacts with the Dutch Republic in the hope of a reunification.³⁸ In January 1598, long before the States General gathered, preliminary talks with this aim were held in Brussels with the merchant Daniel Van der Meulen, based in Leyden but a former member of the Antwerp magistrate.³⁹ For the first time in a long while, proposals were made to solve

37 Commentary on the demands of the States General, 27 August 1598: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1); 'Extraict des poincts et articles remonstres par messieurs les etatz generaulx des pays bas a son Alteze': AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 619, f.469–84; Conditions of Brabant for the inauguration: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (3); 'Relation des particularitez et ceremoins': AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 28–9.

38 On earlier mediation attempts around 1592–1595, see: Violet Soen, 'Naturales del país o Españolizés? Agentes de la Corte como negociadores de paz durante la guerra de Flandes (1577–1595)', in René Vermeir, Maurits Ebben and Raymond Fagel (eds.), *Agentes y Identidades en movimiento. España y los Países Bajos, siglos XVI–XVIII* (Madrid, 2011), 171–193.

39 Daniel Van der Meulen (1554–1600): son of the Antwerp Merchant Jan Van der Meulen the younger and Elizabeth Zegers. He was sent to Cologne in 1572 because of the upcoming

religious disputes as well, although on a very moderate level. Still, Van der Meulen remained very pessimistic on the conditions offered within the context of the cession. By the time the States General were convoked in July, these first mediation attempts had failed.⁴⁰ During the opening speeches of the States General, then, the Pensionary of Brabant Philip Maes referred to a possible reunification, yet the Archduke kept the means of achieving this under tight control. He permitted the States General to draft a letter which would be sent to the United Provinces, but only after he had reviewed it himself. By postponing his review, the Estates were sidelined in the peace process.⁴¹

Still, the Archduke again explored the possibility of peace talks just before his departure for Spain. He now delegated Marie de Brimeu, Duchess of Aarschot, in his name to The Hague. She could act as a perfect go-between, as she was a Calvinist noblewoman who lived in Republic, while officially she was still married to her Catholic husband living in the loyal provinces.⁴² On 2 September 1598, she delivered to Oldenbarnevelt a package of letters, written by Albert and some of the most important loyal noblemen. Oldenbarnevelt brought the letters before the Dutch States General, who opened them but subsequently refused to write a reply. The United Netherlands considered the Archduke to be part of the faction of King Philip II, with whom they had sworn never to negotiate again.⁴³

revolt, but participated in his family's trading company from 1576 onwards. After the peace negotiations in Cologne, he returned in 1579 to Antwerp, where he became enrolled in the city government. In 1584 he participated in the States General and married around this time with the merchant daughter Hester de la Faille. After the fall of Antwerp he moved to Hamburg, Bremen and Leyden. Jongbloet-Van Houtte, *Daniel Van der Meulen*, 15–35, 62–83.

- 40 'Verbael oft journael van t'gepaseerde in Brabant anno 1598': Johannes H. Kernkamp (ed.), *'Vredehandel met Spanje in 1598', Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap, gevestigd te Utrecht*, 57 (1936) 341–382; also Thomas, 'Andromeda Unbound', 2–4.
- 41 Commentary on the demands of the States General, 27 August 1598: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1); 'Relation des particularitez et ceremonies': AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1), f. 37–38.
- 42 Marie de Brimeu (ca. 1550–1605): daughter of George de Brimeu and Anna von Walthausen. She married in 1572 with Lancelot of Berlaymont, and remarried after his death with Charles of Croÿ, Prince of Chimay and later Duke of Aarschot. Converted to Calvinism and supported the Revolt. In 1584, Charles of Croÿ reconciled with Philip II, after which he and the Duchess lived separately. She was also a regular guest in the salon of Daniel Van der Meulen. (www.biografischportaal.nl/persoon/71498005).
- 43 Secret resolution, 3 September 1598: Nicolas Japikse (ed.), *Resolutiën der Staten Generaal van 1576 tot 1609, tiende deel, 1598–1599* (Rijksgechiedskundige Publicatiën 71; The Hague, 1930), 41–42; 'Verbael oft journael': Kernkamp, 'Vredehandel', 358.

Due to this diplomatic silence, Albert sought an alternative in the letter promised to the already finished States General in Brussels, mentioned above. This tactic had the advantage that he seemingly adhered to the old peace- and policy-making function of the parliamentary institution, a major demand from The Hague.⁴⁴ Hence, at the beginning of October, William Maes arrived in the Republic, carrying a letter from the States General from Brussels anti-dated on 28 and 29 August.⁴⁵ The letter asserted that the Act of Cession offered a unique opportunity to end the disastrous war, claimed that the United Netherlands owed their allegiance to Isabella, and promised that Albert would be a residing ruler whose sole occupation would be the well-being of the Netherlands. It was signed by the States General in Brussels and the mentioned dates suggested that the letter had been written just after the end of the assembly. Still, the text was neither compiled before 11 September (after Albert had received the negative reply from The Hague), nor was it written by the loyal provinces. The proposition might have been drafted by the States General in Brussels, but it is almost certain that Richardot composed the final message.⁴⁶ By resorting to a false or falsified letter, the Archduke tried to compromise between the demand of the States General in The Hague to negotiate with its counterpart in Brussels and the veto of Philip II to these plans.⁴⁷

This time the States General in The Hague indeed responded to the letter of their ‘colleagues’, yet only after half a year: they acknowledged the need for peace, but they were also convinced that this would only be possible after the forceful removal of every Spaniard from the Low Countries. They therefore requested the loyal states to join them with arms; whatever the response they surely would continue the war themselves. They would, however, keep their military actions as moderate as possible, to avoid collateral damage.⁴⁸ In a way, it was

44 ‘Verbael oft journael’: Kernkamp, ‘Vredehandel’, 380.

45 It is not known who this person exactly was. Presumably he was an Antwerp merchant with connections to Daniel Van der Meulen, for there are documents referring to a certain Willem Maes who was at the time managing certain properties for the Van der Meulen family in Antwerp. Neither is it known whether or not he was related to the mentioned Philip Maes. See Hugo De Schepper, *De Kollaterale Raden in de katholieke Nederlanden van 1579 tot 1609* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Leuven, 1972), 1061–1064; Jongbloet-Van Houtte, *Daniel Van der Meulen*, 17, note 17.

46 The States General in Brussels to the States General in The Hague, 28–29 August 1598: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, cxxxvi–cxxxvii; Resolution of the Estates of Brabant, 11 September 1598: AGR, *Audiëntie*, nr. 1191/21, (1).

47 Philip II to Albert, 1 April 1597: Lefèvre, *Correspondance*, 405–406.

48 The States General in The Hague to the States General in Brussels, 22 March 1598: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, cxlii–cxliii.

only natural for the United Provinces to portray the Habsburgs as violent oppressors. Their young State had been formed during a war with a dynasty whose powers were supposed to have derived from God.⁴⁹ Any evidence of the maliciousness of Habsburgs would therefore legitimate the war and consequentially their state. Simultaneously, they also gave in print some pamphlets denouncing the supposedly sincere character of the Act of Cession. As the envoy Maes reported upon his return: the United Provinces alleged to have fought for their freedom and were not prepared to give this up for 'ung tel prétendu accord'.⁵⁰ Jonathan Israel interpreted the attitude of the early Republic as contributing to its own internal stability, and Laura Manzano Baena contended that this refusal was in fact an articulation of its own principles of future government.⁵¹

The response of the States General in The Hague to the supposed letter of their counterparts in Brussels bore witness to an increasing divide between the two centres of government. Now formally, the United Netherlands considered the loyal Netherlands to be occupied territory, tightly held in check by the 'devious' and 'forfeited' Habsburgs. They suspected that the Estates were weakened and silenced by their rulers, otherwise they already would have expressed their support for their countrymen in the United Provinces.⁵² They had found proof for their reasoning in the fact that the letter supposedly written by the States General in Brussels was vague, and that the envoy carrying it did not deliver a secret message. Therefore, the Republic concluded that the Habsburgs still remained oppressive tyrants, who showed their disregard for parliamentary deliberation by keeping the other provinces 'les bras et jambes lies'.⁵³ The States General of 1598 had thus not created common ground for peace talks, rather the contrary.

49 Koenigsberger, 'Republicanism', 58; Hugh Dunthorne, 'Resisting monarchy: the Netherlands as Britain's school of revolution in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Oresko, *Royal and Republican Sovereignty*, 126; Laura Manzano Baena, 'Inventando al enemigo: Imágenes de "España" en las Provincias Unidas', in Crespo Solana and Herrero Sanchez, *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos*, 788; Simon Groenveld, *Het Twaalfjarig Bestand, 1609–1621. De jongelingsjaren van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (The Hague, 2009), 74–75.

50 Report of Willem Maes: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, cxl–cxli.

51 Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1998), 254–256; Laura Manzano Baena, *Conflicting Words. The Peace Treaty of Münster (1648) and the Political Culture of the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Monarchy* (Leuven, 2011), 13; Manzano Baena, 'Imágenes', 786.

52 The States General in The Hague to the States General in Brussels, 22 March 1598: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, cxlii–cxliii.

53 Report of Willem Maes: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, cxxxix.

The 1600 States General

As promised by Albert in 1598, a new States General was held in Brussels from April to November 1600. This was to be the long awaited forum to talk about war and peace with the Republic. In the previous months, the Joyous Entries of Albert and Isabella in the provinces had made clear that their new subjects had not yet given up the hope for an agreement with the uprising provinces: the decorations and festivities clearly referred to peace and reunification.⁵⁴ By letting the invitation letters hint at possible peace negotiations, the Habsburgs again provided lip service to the *dominium politicum et regale*. Nevertheless, the new States General were mainly intended to raise new taxes in time of war. As in 1598, Richardot defended the Habsburg strategy. On 28 April 1600, he opened the assembly with the declaration that the States were convoked to find a solution for the war and that they should try to restore peace and unity to the whole Low Countries. At the same time, he declared his confidence in the ability of the Spanish-Habsburg army to do so, yet it would not be funded by Philip III alone: payments from the provinces were expected for reaching final peace.⁵⁵

On 12 May, every province was asked to give their opinion on the matter of war and peace.⁵⁶ At this instance, the States General split over two issues, which demonstrated that even within the same Brussels assembly different opinions survived about the ideal relationship to the ruler. The first apple of discord concerned the means to achieve peace. Brabant, Hainaut, Lille, Douai and Orchies, Gelre, Limburg and Tournais were adherents of the 'soft approach' (traditionally described as the *voie de douceur*). The States General could organise peace talks, whilst the Archdukes could help with measures

54 Albert to different provincial governors, 31 March 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 8–9; 'Première relation, rédigée par Nicolas Du Bois, conseiller pensionnaire des états du Tournais': Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 215; 'Voyage de l'archiduc Albert en Espagne, en 1598': Louis P. Gachard et al. (eds.), *Collection des Voyages de Souverains des Pays-Bas* (Brussels, 1847–1882), vol. 4, 536–556; Margit Thøfner, 'Domina & Princeps proprietaria. The Ideal of Sovereignty in the Joyous Entries of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella', in Thomas and Duerloo, *Albert & Isabella*, 57–65; Margit Thøfner, 'Marrying the City, Mothering the Country: Gender and Visual Conventions in Johannes Bochiuss Account of the Joyous Entry of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp', *Oxford Art Journal*, 22 (1999) 20–21; Inge Van Bamis, *Een nieuw begin? Gratieverlening naar aanleiding van de Blijde Intrede van Albrecht en Isabella* (Ghent, 2012).

55 Proposition made by Richardot, 28 April 1600: Gachard, *Les États-Généraux*, 385–388.

56 Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 111–119; 'Mémoire de ce qui est passé aux Estatz Généraulx': *Ibid.*, 191.

such as providing information, restructuring the government or re-allowing trade with the United Provinces. Yet Artois, Valenciennes, Luxemburg and Tournai were opposed to this soft tactic. They had benefitted from the peace with France and therefore could take an offensive stance in opting for war and a reorganisation of the army. Furthermore, they considered war and peace a prerogative of the sovereign, so the Archdukes should take the initiative, not the States General.⁵⁷

The second dispute arose over the question whether a long or a short truce should be approved, an idea that already circulated in 1598.⁵⁸ This time, Brabant and Hainaut wanted that a six to twelve years truce should be negotiated, if peace was unachievable. This proposal met with the likely opposition from Artois, Tournai and Valenciennes. As could be expected from provinces which already opposed to possible peace talks, they declared that the States General had no mandate to discuss a truce. More significantly, some of the 'doves' joined their ranks for political reasons: they feared that once the Republic learned that a truce would be offered upon a failure of negotiations, it would never accept a permanent peace. For these provinces, only a truce of maximum one year was acceptable, that is, when it was meant to facilitate negotiations and not to prepare new war manoeuvres.⁵⁹

As the discussions dragged on, the States General decided to ask the advice of the Archdukes themselves. Time and again, Albert had reminded the delegations that any decision concerning the peace had to be taken in consultation with him.⁶⁰ In any case, he was more interested in his own negotiations: in order to raise pressure on the Republic he had sent Richardot to Boulogne to negotiate a peace with Elizabeth I, the last major ally of the United Provinces. Until as late as May 1600 these talks seemed an alternative for the attempt to negotiate through the States General in Brussels.⁶¹ The division in the assembly

57 Opinion of the Estates of Hainaut, 12 May 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 397; Summary of opinions of the different delegations, 12, 13, 15 May 1600: *Ibid.*, 399–402; Report of the States General of 1600: *Ibid.*, 121–122; 'Mémoire de ce qui est passé aux Estatz Généraux': *Ibid.*, 197–198, 200–202.

58 'Pointcz et articles pour redresser l'estat': Brants, 'Remèdes', 338.

59 'Première relation, rédigée par Nicolas Du Bois': Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 222; Opinion of Michel d'Esne, deputy of Tournaisis, 15 May 1600: *Ibid.*, 403–404.

60 'Première relation, rédigée par Nicolas Du Bois': Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 221; Report of the States General of 1600: *Ibid.* 149–150, 178–183, 675–676; Hugo De Schepper, 'De Nederlanden, 1560–1604: oppositie, opstand, oorlog', in Werner Thomas (ed.), *De val van het Nieuwe Troje. Het beleg van Oostende, 1601–1604* (Leuven, 2004), 30.

61 Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 124–125; 'Mémoire de ce qui est passé aux Estatz Généraux': *Ibid.*, 199–200; Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, 42.

in Brussels thus suited Albert very well. In his final answer of 25 May to their request, he authorised the States to discuss a truce but did not say whether it should be short or long, and he allowed them to send an invitation to The Hague. At the same time, Albert declared that the enemy had never been further away from reconciliation. This answer was thus a carefully drafted compromise, and certainly not a *carte blanche* for negotiations.⁶²

Renewed Talks

As such, the Habsburg strategy for the States General in 1600 failed to some extent. The Archdukes were impatient over war and finances, while the States General persistently deliberated on the possibility of peace talks. In the end the Archdukes felt obliged to consent that the assembly took concrete diplomatic steps in that direction. Almost immediately, the States General delegated the Baron of Bassigny,⁶³ Pensionary Codt⁶⁴ and Colonel Bentinck⁶⁵ to the United Provinces, allowing them to start negotiations if possible.⁶⁶ Their invitation letter argued that the newly gathered assembly in Brussels demonstrated that the old form of *dominium politicum et regale* was restored, and that under these circumstances The Hague could not any longer remain adverse to peace talks. Even if the negotiation offer was modelled after the 1598 communications, it now called upon the rebellious provinces to forget past events by an 'eternal silence'.⁶⁷

In turn, the States General in The Hague debated a whole day on the question whether or not to open the letter because they believed it to be addressed

62 Act of the Archdukes allowing the States General in Brussels to contact the States General in the Hague, 24 May 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 453–454.

63 Gerard of Hoorn, baron of Bassigny: A rather unknown figure, he was the brother of Maximilian of Hoorn and reconciled in 1578 with Philip II (www.biografischportaal.nl/persoon/63102201).

64 Henri de Codt (1529–1606): Born in Ypres, where he started his career. He was awarded the symbolic title of 'Royal councillor for life' by Farnese, and participated later in both the 1598 and the 1600 States General. Jacques J.J. Vereecke, 'Codt (Henri de)', in *Biographie Nationale* (Brussels, 1866–1986), vol. 4, 247–251.

65 Philip of Bentinck, Lord of Obbicht and Papenhoven (died 1610/1611): son of Charles, Lord of Berrinckhuizen, and Catherine of Hakfort. In 1579 he was Governor of Stralen and in 1586 he became Governor of Venlo. (www.biografischportaal.nl/persoon/85090384).

66 Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 121–122, 126–133.

67 'd'beste te wesen allen voirleden saecken ende misverstanden te vergeten by een eeuwich geswygh'. The States General in Brussels to the States General in the Hague, 5 June 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 757–759.

incorrectly. Compared to the six months delay in 1598–1599 though, they would respond relatively swiftly. They now declared to be rejoiced because the States in the loyal provinces were again able to witness the restoration of their state. Still, they hoped that this recovery would soon enable them to oppose the Spanish tyrants. In their opinion, peace talks were impossible because Albert still dominated the States (to name but one example, the mandates of the envoys were issued in his name).⁶⁸ So, in contrast to the States General in Brussels, the States General in The Hague equalled Albrecht and Isabella with their ‘tyrannical’ predecessor. On 23 June, Bassigny returned with this answer to Brussels, where a deputy noted that the text resembled the response from 1599 and was so filled with self-complacency ‘que l’air en pue’. The content would not be dispersed beyond the assembly, but the feeling that the Republic behaved unreasonable was widely shared.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the communications were not suspended. Lobbying from the deputies of Brabant made that the envoys could continue their mission in their own name and had to appease the Republic by starting talks about the *brand-schattingen* by Habsburg troops and the presence of foreigners in the government.⁷⁰ Moreover, a coastal invasion and the subsequent victory of Nieuwpoort by Maurits of Nassau (2 July 1600) enhanced the urgency of diplomatic action.⁷¹ Even if in these circumstances the delegations in Brussels accorded some parts of the undecided tax grants in order to strike back, they also insisted on negotiations with the Republic. Provinces like Hainaut still believed in the potential

68 Secret resolution, 12 June 1600: Nicolas Japikse (ed.), *Resolutiën der Staten Generaal van 1576 tot 1609, elfde deel 1600–1601* (Rijksgechiedkundige Publicatiën 85; The Hague, 1941), 79; The States General in the Hague to the States General in Brussels, 17 June 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 763–765; ‘Première relation, rédigée par Nicolas Du Bois’: *Ibid.*, 230–231.

69 The deputies of Tournais to the Estates of Tournais, 23 June 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 305–308; *Beclach ende doleancie van den Pays* (Brussels, 1600); Willem P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (Utrecht, 1978), nr. 454/The Early Modern Pamphlets Online, nr. 1103 (tempo.idcpublishers.info/search.php).

70 ‘Mémoire de ce qui est passé aux Estatz Généraux’: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 210; ‘Avis des États Généraux assemblés à Bruxelles, sur la réponse à faire aux États Généraux des Provinces-Unies’: *Ibid.*, 768–769.

71 Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 149–150, 153; Project lettre of the Brussels States General to Philip III, 13–14 October 1600: *Ibid.*, 677–688; Albert to the Council of State, 4 July 1600: *Ibid.*, 561–562; ‘Mémoire de ce qui est passé aux Estatz Généraux’: *Ibid.*, 212–213; Ronald De Graaf, *Oorlog, mijn arme schapen. Een andere kijk op de Tachtigjarige Oorlog 1565–1648* (Franeker, 2004), 336–338; Leen Dorsman, *1600: slag bij*

success of the diplomatic efforts and refused to start discussions on new taxes before the peace ‘tombera par terre’.⁷² After the Nieuwpoort battle, Bassigny, Codt and Bentinck had received word that Oldenbarnevelt, who was still in Bergen-op Zoom, approved to hold a small peace conference. Albert reluctantly agreed, while requiring that the three envoys would not remain in Bergen-op-Zoom for too long, as this would only give the impression that he was seriously weakened and desperately needed peace.⁷³

As a result, new negotiations started in Bergen-op-Zoom on 20 July 1600. Hiding the annoyance expressed in Brussels over the past few months, the Habsburg envoys thanked Oldenbarnevelt and the other representatives for the ‘always’ constructive attitude of the Republic. Nevertheless, the delegation from the United Netherlands again criticised the misbehaviour of the Habsburgs, the loyalty of the ‘Hispanicised’ States General to Philip III and some of the clauses integrated in the Act of Cession. They alleged that a possible acceptance of the Act of Cession had been seriously deliberated in The Hague, but that the four-day States General in 1598 in Brussels had shown decisively that the Habsburg dynasty would not restore their vision of the desired *dominium politicum et regale*.⁷⁴ Most likely, Oldenbarnevelt only accepted the talks because the expected support for his military campaign in the loyal provinces never materialised, so he personally wanted to convince these provinces to join in arms.⁷⁵ He stated that the loyal provinces had missed a great opportunity to dispose of the Habsburg dynasty at the moment of Philip II’s death, but with Albert weakened after the battle they should try once again: by joining forces the Archdukes would have no other option than to accept the demands they would make. But just like two years earlier, the Habsburg States refused and continued to support the dynasty’s claims of rightful government.

Nieuwpoort (Verloren Verleden. Gedenkwaardige momenten en figuren uit de vaderlandse geschiedenis 10; Hilversum, 2000); Vibeke Roeper en Wilfried Uitterhoeve (eds.), *De slag bij Nieuwpoort. Journaal van de tocht naar Vlaanderen in 1600* (Nijmegen, 2000).

72 ‘Avis des députés du Hainaut sur la dernière déclaration des Archiducs’, 3 July 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 545–547.

73 The States General in Brussels to the States General in the Hague, July 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 770–771; The States General in The Hague to the States General in Brussels, 16 July 1600: *Ibid.*, 772–773; Report of the States General of 1600: *Ibid.*, 149–150, 157–158; The deputies of Tournaisis to the Estates of Tournaisis, 19 July 1600: *Ibid.*, 327–328.

74 Report of the conference held in Bergen-op-Zoom: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 778–780.

75 Oldenbarnevelt to Willem-Lodewijk of Nassau, 19 July 1600: Sikko P. Haak (ed.), *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt: bescheiden betreffende zijn staatkundig beleid en zijn familie, eerste deel 1570–1601* (Rijksgeschiedkundige publicatiën 80; The Hague, 1934), 562–563.

Bassigny, Codt and Bentinck could do nothing more than to ask the United Provinces to forget their past quarrels with the Habsburgs according with the projected 'eternal silence', but no breakthrough was made.⁷⁶

In the end, the talks in Bergen-op-Zoom ended the peace attempts in both of the States General of the formerly Seventeen Provinces.⁷⁷ A last proposal to resume contacts was rejected by Albert: he declared that the United Provinces knew very well what their obligations were, and that a new letter would only increase their self-complacency.⁷⁸ For some loyal observers, the peace talks 'ne semble avoir apportée autre effect, hors qu'elle servira de justification a tout le monde de la bonne volonté de noz princes et des Etatz généraux, leurs subjects, au bien de la paix'. The only positive aspect of the failure was that they now could start thinking about themselves.⁷⁹ Hence, the Brussels deputies resumed their gatherings over new tax grants after a break of one and a halve month, intended to have some feedback from their respective provincial Estates. With their failure to achieve some success in the peace talks of Bergen-op-Zoom and in the renewed theatre of war, the States General in Brussels depended on the money and troops of the Habsburg dynasty. The assembly tried to obtain some compensations in return for the acceptance of new taxes, but internal discord and external pressure rendered these attempts rather futile. The Archdukes received the money they originally demanded, without giving any serious compensation.⁸⁰ So the long awaited States General on peace and war turned out to be an anti-climax on both a political and diplomatic level. The assembly in Brussels had not convinced its counterpart in The Hague and the peace talks were aborted prematurely. Moreover, the subsidies to the Archdukes had made the necessity of new States General redundant. In the Habsburg realm, they would not be organised again until 1632.

76 Report of the conference held in Bergen-op-Zoom: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 779–780.

77 The in Nieuwpoort captured military commander Mendoza would still be used to mediate, but these talks were managed by the Habsburg dynasty themselves and not by the States General. See De Schepper, 'De Nederlanden, 1560–1604', 31 and Chapter 2 in this volume.

78 Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 149–150, 168–170; 'Deuxième relation, rédigée par Nicolas Du Bois': *Ibid.*, 253–255.

79 The deputies of Tournaisis to the Estates of Tournaisis, 28 July 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 331–334.

80 Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 319–320; Report of the States General of 1600: Gachard, *Les États Généraux*, 149–150, 161–168, 178–185.

A Prelude to 1609

To conclude, then, the peace talks in the context of the Act of Cession in fact contributed to the growing divergence between the Habsburg Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. In the end, it were precisely the States General held in Brussels in 1598 and 1600 which served as a catalyst for this increasing separation in political culture. With these double States General, the loyal provinces eventually linked themselves even more closely to the Habsburg dynasty and acted in accord with the policy set out by the Archdukes and the Spanish-Habsburg King. They claimed that they were the real defenders of order and stability, because at least they still had sovereigns, which were even ostensibly prepared to revive the practice of gathering the States General. For their part, the United Provinces asserted that they were opposing 'Spanish tyrants' who had nothing but contempt for provincial representation and privileges, as the assemblies in Brussels in 1598 and 1600 had demonstrated once more. They considered themselves the last line of defence against the Habsburg centralising government, fighting for the survival of old privileges, the practices of shared power and freedom. This renewed conviction resulted in new military campaigns in order to liberate the loyal Low Countries. So by 1600, both negotiating parties could claim that they were the true supporters of the traditional 'good' form of government. Similar parliamentary institutions, born out of the same tradition of a *dominium politicum et regale*, now embodied different political theories.⁸¹

Hence, the same clash of political cultures returned during the negotiations leading to the Twelve Years Truce some nine years later.⁸² The demands made by the Republic in 1607–1609 on sovereignty and republicanism and the subsequent objections phrased by the Habsburg party were not so different from those in 1600: only had the above discussed peace process clarified once again the differences in state building, allowing the positions taken in 1607–1609 to be more explicit. By then, the discussions on sovereignty also extended to the religious realm, which stands in contrast to the peace talks on the Act of Cession, where religious issues were only very briefly addressed in January 1598.⁸³ However, through the Act of Cession, it became clear that even

81 See also M. Van Gelderen, 'Contested Kingship. Conceptions of Monarchy and Civil Power in Spanish and Dutch Political Thought, 1555–1598', in José Martínez Millán (ed.), *Felipe II (1527–1598). Europa y la Monarquía Católica* (Madrid, 1998), 365–377.

82 Groenveld, *jongelingsjaren*, 15–20, 59–60.

83 Vincent van Zuilen has also noted this fact for the ensuing period 1600–1604. See Vincent Van Zuilen, 'Bronnen van identiteit. Het algemeen Nederlands samenhorighheidsgevoel in

reciprocal talks between the States General in The Hague and in Brussels forced no breakthrough in the peace process, despite the longstanding platitude that such negotiations would be able to finally end the conflict. The brief conference in Bergen-op-Zoom in 1600 made this painfully clear. From this point of view, the 1598 and 1600 States Generals and the ensuing peace talks were both a demonstration and a reinforcement of the different political theories which accounted for the problems of the Antwerp Truce in 1609 and which would be only solved by the Treaty of Munster in 1648. Nevertheless, until that time the myth survived that as soon as the States General of the Republic and those of the loyal provinces would negotiate without delegates of the Habsburg dynasty, a peace and a reunification of the Low Countries would take place.

enkele pamfletten over de Nederlandse Opstand', José De Kruif et al. (eds.), *Het lange leven van het pamflet. Boekhistorische, iconografische, literaire en politieke aspecten van pamfletten 1600–1900* (Hilversum, 2006), 79.