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Changing Strategies of State and Urban Authorities in the Spanish Netherlands Towards Exiles and Returnees During the Dutch Revolt

Abstract: This article examines the policies that state and urban authorities within the Habsburg Netherlands adopted towards emigration during the Dutch Revolt. The Spanish Crown's repression after the Iconoclastic Fury in 1566–7 intensified the exodus during the first decade of the Revolt, as local or exceptional courts often sanctioned these retreats through judicial banishment and confiscation of property. Beginning in 1579–81, however, there was a change in policy towards refugees, as local authorities in Habsburg territories abandoned their initial attempts at repression in favour of reconciliation and reintegration. While the new governor-general and city magistrates in reconciled cities encouraged Protestants to leave, they also welcomed those seeking to permanently return, albeit if they both pledged loyalty to the Spanish Crown and reconciled with the Catholic Church. This policy, as shown in pardon letters, petitions, and inquiries concerning returnees, met with some success.

Résumé: Cet article montre les stratégies changeantes dans le traitement des fugitifs et des "revenants" par les pouvoirs centraux et municipaux des Pays-Bas espagnols pendant la Révolte. Il analyse les politiques que les autorités centrales et municipales des Pays-Bas espagnols ont adoptées vis-à-vis des migrations de départ et de retour pendant la Révolte. La répression immédiate menée par le roi d'Espagne après la furie iconoclaste de 1566 suscite une décennie d'exode massif, que les cours de justice sanctionnent alors du bannissement par contumace assorti de la confiscation des biens. Un tournant dans le traitement de ces réfugiés par les autorités des villes de départ s'opère à partir de 1579–1581, quand la répression cède le pas à une politique de réconciliation et de réintégration. Si le représentant

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du roi d'Espagne et les pouvoirs urbains des villes réconciliées encouragent cette fois le départ des protestants obstinés, ils accueillent volontiers ceux qui cherchent un retour définitif, à condition de jurer fidélité à la monarchie hispanique et d'accomplir les pénitences de réconciliation catholique. Les modalités et la délicate réussite de cette politique de retour se mesurent dans les lettres de pardon, les requêtes et les enquêtes judiciaires concernant ceux qui retournent.

This article examines the policies that state and urban authorities within the Habsburg Low Countries adopted towards emigration and exile during the Revolt, a prolonged episode of religious and civil war that spanned the last decades of the sixteenth century.[1] In this northernmost territory of the polycentric Spanish monarchy, the dynastic stance regarding Catholicism's place as the empire's sole religion initiated a protracted process of emigration.[2] Moreover,

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1 The Dutch Revolt is understood here as the period of "troubles", from the time of the Iconoclastic Fury in 1566 until the Twelve Years' Truce in 1609, and thus as the first episode of the larger Eighty Years' War until the Peace of Münster in 1648. Recent English narratives on the conflict are provided by Anton van der Lem, *Revolt in the Netherlands: The Eighty Years' War, 1568–1648* (London: Reaktion Books, 2018) and Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), while Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977; 1985²) still offers the most classic account. We will use the "Low Countries" to describe the region which gradually became a political union under the Burgundian Dukes and their Habsburg successors before the Dutch Revolt, and thus excluding the Prince-Bishopric of Liège. After the Transaction of Augsburg in 1548, these lands were often dubbed as the "Seventeen Provinces", see Alastair Duke, "The Elusive Netherlands", in *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, ed. Alastair Duke, Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 9–55. When speaking about the "Spanish" or "Habsburg" Netherlands, we refer to the ever changing set of territories over which the Habsburg dynasty and the Spanish King retained or regained control during the Revolt.
2 The diaspora from the Spanish Netherlands during the last four decades of the sixteenth century was never a collective expulsion, like the Spanish Expulsion of the Jews in 1492 or the Moriscos between 1609 and 1614, but rather a protracted series of pre-emptive and/or forced exiles caused by the Crown's blanket proscription of heterodoxy, and thus resulted from a decision from those who refused to live under the rule of a Catholic prince who wished to maintain Catholicism as the only permitted religion within his realm, see Isabelle Poutrin, "Éradication ou conversion forcée? Les expulsions ibériques en débat aux XVIᵉ et XVIIᵉ siècles," in *Les expulsions de minorités religieuses dans l'Europe latine (XIIIᵉ–XVIIᵉ s.)*, ed. Isabelle Poutrin and Alain Tallon (Pompignac: Éditions Bière, 2015), 45–67.

the Crown's harsh repression of those participating in the Iconoclastic Fury in 1566–7 and the ensuing unrest intensified this exodus during the first decade of the Revolt, as local and/or exceptional courts often sanctioned this emigration through judicial banishments and the confiscation of property. By expanding the scope of our study to encompass a four-decade period, however, this article argues that representatives at the central and urban levels of government eventually allowed the conditional departure of Protestants from reconciled towns, while also facilitating the return of particular emigrant groups. In this respect, the years between 1579 and 1581 likely marked a watershed in the Habsburg policy towards refugees, as local authorities abandoned their initial attempts at repression in favour of a policy of reconciliation and reintegration. As the new governor-general and city magistrates in reconciled cities encouraged Protestants to leave, they also welcomed those seeking to permanently return, albeit if they both pledged loyalty to the Spanish Crown, and reconciled with the Catholic Church. This changing policies met with some success, as shown in petitions, pardon letters, and inquiries concerning returnees.

As such, this article contributes to the ongoing reassessment of migration during the Dutch Revolt.[3] Until the 1980s, both Belgian and Dutch historians were equally fascinated by the large waves of emigration, and invariably referred to this emigration as a "Protestant exodus" towards the North. In many monographs and chapters, they documented a "brain drain" of intelligentsia, guildsmen and textile workers from the Southern to the Northern Netherlands, emancipating from Habsburg rule as the Republic of United Provinces. This traditional

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3 Gustaaf Janssens offers a review essay until 1994 on the question of the emigration of "Southern Netherlanders", "Verjaagd uit Nederland: Zuid–Nederlandse emigratie in de zestiende eeuw, een historiografisch overzicht, ca. 1968–1994," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 75 (1995): 102–119, and for the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, see Geert Janssen, "The Republic of the Refugees: Early Modern Migrations and the Dutch Experience", *The Historical Journal* 60 (2017): 233–252. For a wider reflection on religious migrants within the changing historiography on Calvinism and other confessions in the early modern Low Countries and the Dutch Republic, see Jesse Spohnholz and Miriam G.K. Van Veen, "The Disputed Origins of Dutch Calvinism: Religious Refugees in the Historiography of the Dutch Reformation," *Church History* 86 (2017): 398–426 and Violet Soen, "Which Religious History for the (two) Early Modern Netherlands before 1648? Questions, Trends and Perspectives," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 112 (2017): 758–788. For a discussion of the most recent contributions to the field concerning religious exile, see Alexander Soetaert, Violet Soen, Johan Verberckmoes and Wim François, "Crossing (Disciplinary) Borders: When Reformation Studies Meet Transregional History", in *Transregional Reformations: Crossing Borders in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Violet Soen et eid. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 9–22 (15–18) and the contributions in part III on "Mobility and Transfer".

historiography, focusing on facts and figures, estimated the number of people who fled at the outbreak of the conflict at between 30,000 and 60,000, and subsequently, as the result of the repressive measures taken by the third Duke of Alba and his notorious Council of Troubles, at between 100,000 and 150,000 over the remainder of the century.[4] Today, this paradigm of a unidirectional and continuous "Protestant exodus" towards the Dutch Republic has fallen apart, in particular by showing that the roads of refuge overlapped with those of labour migrations.[5] Social historians have shown that those fleeing and/or leaving for a better life made their way to destinations such as England (especially before the 1590s), Scotland, the Holy Roman Empire and only later to the provinces of the 1579 Union of Utrecht in the "North". For the Dutch Republic specifically, also other than Southern Netherlandish immigrations have been mapped and quantified.[6] More recently, there has been a lot of investigation into the corollary

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4 Interpretations are based on the classic study by Briels who proposed a high estimate of the number of refugees of about 150,000 persons only in the Dutch Republic, see Johannes Briels, *Zuid–Nederlanders in de Republiek 1572–1630: Een demografische en cultuurhistorische studie* (Sint Niklaas: Dante, 1985), 80, 213 and 220; Johannes Briels, "De emigratie uit de Zuidelijke Nederlanden omstreeks 1540–1621/30," 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: UGA, 1976), 185–219; Willem Frijhoff, "Migrations religieuses dans les Provinces–Unies avant le second Refuge," *Revue du Nord* 80, no. 326–327 (1998): 573–598, has summarized the critical appraisals of Briels; Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid–Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt, 1578–1630* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000); Gustaaf Asaert, *1585: De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2004); Geert Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3, most recently proposed a lower estimate of about 100,000 exiles between 1566 and 1590, both Catholics and Protestants. In this respect, the clandestine emigration of more than 150,000 French Protestants after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was to some extent similar to the first refugee crisis that affected the Low Countries in the previous century, although in the Habsburg Low Countries only very temporary and ambivalent concessions for Protestant worship had existed and Protestant communities would only flourish under insurgent regimes, see *La diaspora des Huguenots: Les réfugiés protestants de France et leur dispersion dans le monde, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Eckart Birnstiel (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001).
5 Leo Lucassen and Boudien de Vries, "The Rise and Fall of a Western European textile-worker migration system, Leiden, 1586–1700," in *Les ouvriers qualifiés de l'industrie (XVIe–XXe siècle). Formation, emploi, migrations*, ed. Gérard Gayot and Philippe Minard (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Université Charles de Gaulle–Lille 3, 2001), 23–42; Erika Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad: Immigratie en sociale verhoudingen in 17e-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2005); Jelle van Lottum, *Across The North Sea: The Impact of the Dutch Republic on International Labour Migration, c. 1550–1850* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007).
6 Rob van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten. Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Duitsland, 1550–1600* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1968); Heinz Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten im 16. Jahrhundert. Ihre Stellung*

phenomenon of Catholic exile. In his 2014 monograph on this theme, Geert Janssen estimated that during the Revolt between 10,000 and 15,000 native Catholics left home to either another area within the Low Countries or to an altogether different country, yet he preferred to dismiss the debate on whether they were refugees or exiles from Protestant regimes.[7] Other volumes and chapters on Catholic exile concern the contemporary influx of Scottish, Irish, English and French Catholic exiles to Habsburg territory, especially along its borders with France and around the newly founded University of Douai,[8] creating the necessary conditions for a flourishing transregional Catholic printing press "at the frontier".[9] Finally, religious and cultural historians have engaged with Heiko Oberman's classic thesis on the "Reformation of the Refugee" developing a distinct

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im Sozialgefüge und im religiösen Leben deutscher und englischer Städte (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlag, 1972); E. Bütferighn, "Niederländische Exulanten in Frankenthal, Neu-Hanau und Altona. Herkunftsgebiete, Migrationswege und Ansiedlungsorte," in *Niederlande und Nordwestdeutschland. Studien zur Regional- und Stadtgeschichte Nordwestkontinentaleuropas im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, ed. Wilfried Ehbrecht and Heinz Schilling (Cologne: Böhlau, 1983), 347–417; Raingard Esser, *Niederländische Exulanten im England des späten 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhunderts: die Nordwicher Fremdengemeinden* (Berlin: Duncker&Humblot, 1996).

7 Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile* showed how Catholic exile developed in other ways and followed different patterns, and while it was certainly less impressive in numbers, it became particularly significant once Calvinist regimes popped up in cities of Holland and Zeeland from 1572 and then especially in Flanders, Brabant, Hainaut and Artois from 1576 onwards.

8 Yves Junot and Marie Kervyn, "Los Países Bajos como tierra de recepción de exiliados," in *Los exiliados del rey de España*, ed. Jose Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Igor Pérez Tostado (Madrid: FCE, Red Columnaria, 2015), 207–231; Violet Soen, "Exile Encounters and Cross–Border Mobility in Early Modern Borderlands: The Ecclesiastical Province of Cambrai as a Transregional Node, 1559–1600," *Belgeo. Revue Belge de Géographie – Belgian Journal of Geography* 2 (2015): 2–13; Violet Soen, "Containing Students and Scholars Within Borders? The Foundation of Universities in Reims and Douai and Transregional Transfers in Early Modern Catholicism," in *Transregional Reformations*, 267–294; Yves Junot and Violet Soen, "La Révolte dans les Pays-Bas habsbour-geois. Reconsidérations à partir du cas des provinces francophones (Hainaut, Artois, Flandre wallonne, 1566–1579)," in *Paradigmes rebelles: Pratiques et cultures de la désobéissance à l'époque moderne*, ed. Gregorio Salinero, Águeda García Garrido and Radu G. Paun (Brussels e.a.: Peter Lang, 2018), 203–234.

9 Alexander Soetaert, "Printing at the Frontier. The Emergence of a Transregional Book Production in the Ecclesiastical Province of Cambrai (*c.* 1560–1659)," *De Gulden Passer* 94 (2016): 137–63, and his online database *Impressa Catholica Cameracensia* (ICC); Id., "Transferring Catholic Literature to the British Isles: The Publication of English Translations in the Ecclesiastical Province of Cambrai, c. 1600–50," in *Transregional Reformations*, 157–186 mirroring what Andrew Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) mapped for Calvinist exiles on the eastern border of the Low Countries.

Exulantentheologie, by calling into question whether Dutch Reformed refugees radicalized necessarily when staying abroad or by examining the broader cross-generational narratives and memories of flight and persecution during the Dutch Revolt.[10]

This article changes the focus from the recent attention to the "experience" of exiles to the authorities concerned with their fate in order to elucidate the political and legal framework concerning an individual's decision to remain or to flee, avoiding persecution or searching for a better life.[11] While Janssen's work centres on the Catholic refugees returning after the Habsburg restoration of power after 1579,[12] his account belongs within the larger context of royal attempts at pacification, which, just as in France, date back to the beginning

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10 Jesse Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark: University of Delawere Press, 2011); Miriam van Veen and Jesse Spohnholz, "Calvinists vs. Libertines: A New Look at Religious Exile and the Origins of 'Dutch' Tolerance," in *Calvinism and the Making of the European Mind*, ed. Gijsbert Van den Brink and Harro Höpfl (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 76–99, and Spohnholz and Van Veen, "The Disputed Origins of Dutch Calvinism", 398–426 (more on their project website: https://labs.wsu.edu/religiousexiles); Johannes Müller, *Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt: The Narrated Diaspora, 1550–1750* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018) and Id., "'Exile Theology' Beyond Confessional Boundaries: The Example of Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert," in *Transregional Reformations*, 315–332, in response to Miriam van Veen, "Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert: Exile and Religious Coexistence," in *Exile and Religious Identity* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 67–80; Christiaan Ravensbergen, "Language Barriers to Confessional Migration: Reformed Ministers from the Palatinate in the East of the Netherlands (1578)," in *Transregional Reformations*, 333–361.

11 David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: an Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). The focus on state and urban authorities in this article stems from the authors' fields of expertise, and is not intended to rob refugees of their agency or to underestimate the socio-economic penuries behind these difficult decisions. These topics have already been addressed in Yves Junot, "Heresy, War, Vagrancy and Labour Needs: Dealing with Temporary Migrants in the Textile Towns of Flanders, Artois and Hainaut in the Wake of the Dutch Revolt, 1566–1609," in *Gated Communities? Regulating Migrations in Early Modern Cities*, ed. Bert de Munck and Anne Winter (Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2012) 61–80 and Id.,"Les migrants, un enjeu? Pacification religieuse et relance économique de part et d'autre de la frontière entre la France et les Pays-Bas espagnols (c.1580–c.1610)," in *Religione e istituzioni religiose nell'economia europea 1000–1800*, ed. Francesco Ammannati (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2012), 779–791.

12 Geert Janssen, "Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt," *History* 94 (2009): 36–52, which forms the substrate of chap. 6 in his *Catholic Exile*.

of the conflict.[13] Moreover, in this article, we show how more traditional Habsburg reconciliation strategies eventually became accompanied by measures directed at refugees from all confessional backgrounds in order to restore the political bonds broken by their flight, to reintegrate "repentant souls" back into a declining Catholic Church, and, as would become more and more important, to save local economies weakened by war and emigration. This article starts by unravelling the state and urban authorities' standard policy towards exile and refugees, framed in terms of punishment and pardon, which inspired groups of *pardonnistes* to return after a collective grace measure in 1574. To fully grasp the nature of policy changes around 1579–80, the second section discusses how the new governor-general, Alexander Farnese, adjusted existing strategies during his Reconquista of rebellious towns. The third section explores his cooperation with local and urban authorities in the newly reconciled towns and the moderate, yet significant, movement of returnees into the Spanish Netherlands. This article concludes with a "scandal story" from the city of Valenciennes in 1610 that unravelled the existence of a circle of returned exiles within a town trying to forget this element of its past.

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13 Hugo De Schepper, "Los Países Bajos y la Monarquía Hispánica. Intentos de reconciliación hasta la Tregua de los Doce Anos (1574–1609)," in *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos. Una revision historiográfica (siglo XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Ana Crespo Solana and Manuel Herrero Sánchez, 2 vols., (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2002), I:325–354. In earlier publications, we have argued that Philip II and his governor-generals tried to develop pacification and reconciliation strategies in order to bring the malcontent or insurgent subjects back under Spanish rule, rather than only resorting to violence and repression: Violet Soen, *Vredehandel Adellijke en Habsburgse verzoeningspogingen tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand, 1564–1581* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012); Violet Soen, "Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt: The Campaign of Governor-General Alexander Farnese, 1578–1592," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 1–22 and Yves Junot, "Pratiques et limites de la réconciliation après les guerres de religion dans les villes des Pays–Bas méridionaux, années 1570–années 1590," *Revue du Nord* 94, no. 395 (2012): 327–346. For royal pacification strategies in France: Jeremy Foa, *Le Tombeau de la paix. Une histoire des édits de pacification, 1560–1572* (Limoges: Presses Universitaires de Limoges, 2015); Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions, Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576–1585* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Penny Roberts, *Peace and Authority during the French Religious Wars, c. 1560–1600* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), and their urban contexts: *Lendemains de guerre civile. Réconciliations et restaurations en France sous Henri IV*, ed. Michel de Waele (Québec: Presses de l'université de Laval, 2011), 39–68 and *Guerres et paix civiles de l'Antiquité à nos jours: Les sociétés face à elles-mêmes*, ed. Olivia Carpi (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2018).

1 Running the Default Option: Punishing and Pardoning Emigrants

Since the Edict of Worms and its various implementation measures within the Low Countries from 1521 onwards, the "default option" of the representatives of the Habsburg dynasty when confronted with Protestantism sought to either punish the persistent and pardon the repentant, leaving inhabitants with sympathies for the Reformation few options other than dying for one's convictions, dissimulating, or fleeing the territory. Starting in 1545, Emperor Charles V and his regents embarked upon an a more coordinated policy that led to the harsher repression of Protestants in the Habsburg Netherlands. By 1550, this policy had transformed into an all-encompassing set of anti-heresy laws, soon nick-named the "Blood Placcard" due to its use of the death penalty for activities associated with heterodoxy even if performed by Catholics, although the Caroline legislation also included opportunities for clemency and pardoned those willing to reconcile with the Catholic Church.[14] Within this context of heightened persecutions, many decided to leave, creating the first significant wave of politico-religious emigration out of these territories at the crossroads of Europe.

With international and internal tensions at their peak in 1565–6, the central authorities in Brussels started to discuss a so-called "Moderation" of the harsh anti-Protestant legislation that was in force and considered allowing some relaxation, again based on the idea of royal clemency and Christian misericord. This inspired some local Calvinists to take the lead in advertising this "Moderation" as the "end of the Inquisition" through clandestine overnight broadsheets campaigns.[15] This new constellation made that some Protestant refugees steadily

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14 Aline Goosens, *Les Inquisitions modernes dans les Pays–Bas méridionaux, 1519–1633*, 2 vols., (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1997–98); Jean–Marie Cauchies and Hugo de Schepper, *Justice, grâce et legislation: Genèse de l'état et moyens juridiques dans les Pays–Bas, 1200–1600* (Brussels: Facultés universitaires Saint–Louis, 1994); Marjan Vrolijk and Hugo de Schepper, "The Other Face of Struggle against Violence: Peace or Order by Clemency in the Netherlands, 1500–1650," in *Janus at the Millennium. Perspectives on Time in the Culture of the Netherlands*, ed. Thomas Shannon and Johan P. Snapper (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), 279–295; Hugo de Schepper, "Repressie of clementie in de Nederlanden onder Karel V en Filips II," in *Een rijk gerecht: opstellen aangeboden aan P.L. Nève*, ed. Beatrix Jacobs, Edmond Coppens, and Paul Lucine Nève (Nijmegen: Gerard Noodt Instituut, 1998), 341–364.
15 Soen, *Vredehandel*, 59–65 discusses the genesis and outline of this 1566 project for a "Moderation" of the anti-heresy legislation, and the advice formulated by local provincial estates, governor-general Margaret of Parma and Brussels Councils and King Philip II and Madrid councilors; for its discussion in propaganda and public opinion, especially by a broadsheet campaign, see Johan Verberckmoes and Violet Soen, "Broadsheets Testing Moderation in

returned, sometimes sent on a clear mission from Geneva, while others still left Habsburg lands out of fear for persecution.[16] Some of the returning groups teamed with local Protestants in the hope that they could gain similar concessions from the Spanish Crown as the Huguenots did from the Valois monarchy in the contemporary *édits de pacification*, which granted rights for Protestant worship on a limited scale. From August 1566, natives and returnees alike ritualistically participated in a series of image-smashing events in the Low Countries, commonly known as the Iconoclastic Fury or the *Beeldenstorm*.[17] Afterwards, urban magistrates denounced these iconoclastic movements as acts perpetrated by "foreigners" who had come into the country (playing upon the stereotypes of Germans or French being heretics), masking the influx of former neighbours or acquaintances who had once fled their communities. In some cities, local magistrates granted Protestant churches conditional and provisional rights, which had undoubtedly inspired their collective action in the first place. Still, the destruction of images mainly surprised many local urban authorities, who then tried to restore peace and urban "concord" as soon as possible.[18]

Foremost, Philip II and the governor-general in charge, his half-sister Margaret of Parma, wanted to implement the decrees of the just endorsed Council of Trent in order to "eradicate" the "Protestant threat" from the northern territories of the Hispanic Monarchy, not to allow further concessions.[19] In the

the Nascent Dutch Revolt," in *Broadsheets. Single–Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2017), 271–294 and Arjan van Dixhoorn, "The Claim to Expertise and Doctrinal Authority in the Struggle for Anti-Heresy Policies in the Habsburg Netherlands (1520s–1560s)," in *Church, Censorship and Reform in the Early Modern Habsburg Netherlands*, ed. Violet Soen, Dries Vanysacker and Wim François (Turnhout/Leuven-Louvain: Brepols/Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 2017), 53–72.

16 Phyllis Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands 1544–1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

17 Solange Deyon and Alain Lottin, *Les "casseurs" de l'été 1566: l'iconoclasme dans le Nord* (Paris: Hachette, 1981); Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts & Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Guido Marnef, "The Dynamics of Reformed Militancy in the Low Countries: The Wonderyear," in *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. Scott N. Amos, Andrew Pettegree and Henk van Nierop (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 193–210. A recent interdisciplinary reappraisal of the 1566 *Beeldenstorm* is to be found in a thematic issue of the *Low Countries Historical Review* 131:1 (2016), edited by Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, Koenraad Jonckheere and Ruben Suykerbuyk.

18 Yves Junot, "La ville divisée par les violences confessionnelles: L'iconoclasme à Valenciennes en 1566," in *Divisions urbaines. Représentations, mémoires, réalités*, ed. Irène Cagneau, Pierre-Jacques Olagnier and Stephanie Schwerter (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2017), 123–144.

19 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 (Courtrai/Heule: UGA,

long term, the Spanish Habsburg reply towards the 1566–7 iconoclasm and the subsequent military mobilisation was conceived as a twin-track policy of a harsh repression to be followed by a Joyous Entry of the Forgiving King, demonstrating that the classic *clementia* was an innate virtue of the Habsburg dynasty.[20] The iconoclasts were declared outlaws, and, as the spring of 1567 approached, the governor's standing army defeated the voluntary but armed bands of Calvinists. Little by little, local and exceptional rights granted to Protestants were revoked by the governor. In particular, local leaders and the preachers who instigated the iconoclastic riots were executed as "exemplary punishments" to inspire terror in the masses, both by local and central courts. The pre-1565 harsh anti-heresy legislation was applied once again, and sentences included banishment or the death penalty (all involving the confiscation of property, but sometimes with mitigating circumstances). As a result, the resumption of the proscriptions against "rebels" in the autumn of 1566 triggered the second wave of religious emigration from the Low Countries, as considerable numbers of the most compromised speedily fled upon feeling threatened.

The arrival in the Low Countries of the Duke of Alba with his army intensified this already ongoing exodus for fear of persecution and repression. Indeed, when the Duke took over government in September 1567, he set up a special court to bring to trial all those who had been involved in the latest unrest or *troubles*. This extraordinary "Council of Troubles" or *Conseil des Troubles* never issued a blanket expulsion order, but proceeded on the basis of individual summonses with the intention of restoring "justice" and punishing every single one of those considered guilty of divine and temporal lèse-majesté. Those taken prisoner were most often sentenced to death and the numerous absentees to banishment; on each occasion, these penalties were combined with the confiscation of both movable and immovable property.[21] While the Council of Troubles took great care to prosecute the

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1989), 114; Violet Soen, "The Council of Trent and the Preconditions of the Dutch Revolt, 1564–1566," in *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond, 1545–1700*, ed. Wim François and Violet Soen, 3 vols., (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), II:255–278.
20 Violet Soen, "The *Beeldenstorm* and the Spanish Habsburg Response, 1566–1570," *The Low Countries Historical Review* 131 (2016): 99–120. See also for Alba's military campaign: Geoffrey Parker, "The Etiquette of Atrocity: The Laws of War in Early Modern Europe," in *Empire, War and Faith in Early Modern Europe* (London: Penguin, 2002), 144–168. On the discussion on what this *clementia (austriaca)* should mean in a Habsburg context and during the Wars of Religion: Violet Soen, "¿Cómo practicar la virtud? Protagonistas y pareceres en la querella sobre la virtud de la clemencia durante la Guerra de Flandes (1565–1585)," in *El gobierno de la virtud. Política y moral en la Monarquía Hispánica (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Juan Francisco Pardo Molero (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica/Red Columnaria, 2017), 115–142.
21 From the abundant literature on the the Council of Troubles, we cite the most recent studies: Gustaaf Janssens, "L'abolition du Conseil des Troubles du duc d'Albe, un conseil

leading actors of the events, the preachers and members of the Calvinist consistories, it is most famous, however, for executing two Knights of the Golden Fleece, Counts Egmont and Horn, in spite of their noble privileges to be heard before their confreres. The execution of two aristocrats dying Catholically on the scaffold, yet who according to the Habsburg version of their criminal record had not enough supported the Habsburg regime in prosecuting iconoclasts, showed that more than only convinced Protestants were unsafe. Between 1567 and 1573, the Council sentenced between 1,000 and 3,000 people in all to death, and some 10,000 fugitives were banished *in absentia*.[22] The most famous of this last category of *latitantes* was Prince William of Orange, who initially fled out of insecurity but who went on to lead the Revolt with troops raised abroad.[23] As it became painstakingly clear that the King would not be able to travel, in July 1570, the Duke of Alba promulgated a general pardon on behalf of Philip II, from which refugees or exiles were excluded. However, this inspired considerable numbers to obtain pardon letters within a three-month period of grace for people to seek reconciliation with the Catholic Church and with the King.[24]

« communément haï » aux Pays-Bas (1573–1576)," in *Légiférer, gouverner et juger. Mélanges d'histoire de droit et des institutions (IXe–XXIe siècle) offert à Jean-Marie Cauchies à l'occasion de ses 65 ans*, ed. Eric Bousmar, Philippe Desmette and Nicolas Simon (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Saint-Louis, 2016), 251–279; Carole Payen, *Aux confins du Hainaut, de la Flandre et du Brabant: Le Bailliage d'Enghien dans la tourmente iconoclaste. Étude de la répression des troubles religieux à la lumière des archives du conseil des troubles et des comptes de confiscation* (Courtrai/Heule: UGA, 2013). For a contextualisation within early modern Europe, *Confisquer, restituer, redistribuer: Punition matérielle et réconciliation en Europe (XVIe et XVIIe siècles)*, ed. Yves Junot and Violet Soen (Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, forthcoming), and the contributions in the second part "La confiscation comme enjeu politique de punition et de pacification dans les Pays-Bas espagnols".

22 The numbers (11,130 banishments and 1,073 capital punishments), Johan Decavele, "Historiografie van het zestiende-eeuws Protestantisme in België," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 62 (1982), 1–27 (4–7), readjusting numbers proposed by Alphonse L. E. Verheyden, *Le Conseil des Troubles* (Flavion–Florennes: Editions Le Phare, 1981). In the city of Valenciennes, in 1566 dubbed the "Geneva of the Low Countries", 437 people (13 % of the 3,400 households in the last rebel town to be subdued in March 1567) had to answer to justice between 1567 and 1569, 233 of whom were banished and 121 executed in 1568–1569: Yves Junot, *Les bourgeois de Valenciennes. Anatomie d'une élite dans la ville, 1500–1630* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2009), 92–95.

23 Alistair C. Duke, "From 'Loyal Servant' to 'Irreconcilable Opponent' of Spain: Koenraad Swart's Interpretation of William of Orange, 1533–1572," in *William of Orange and the Revolt of the Netherlands 1572–1584*, Koenraad Swart, posthumously ed. Henk van Nierop et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2003), 8–27.

24 *Grâce et pardon general, (…) donne par le Roy (…) A Cause des troubles passez*, Brussels, Michel de Hamont, 1570. This general pardon, and new promulgations in 1572 and 1574 have been studied more in detail by Violet Soen, *Geen pardon zonder paus! Studie over de*

It is less known that already during the government of Don Luis de Requesens y Zúñiga, successor to the Duke of Alba, a timid change in policy towards the banished and the refugees occurred, providing the possibility of pardon instead of punishment. Before his arrival in Flanders late 1573, Requesens had already decided on the need for a new general pardon, more comprehensive than the previous one, which would only exclude the major instigators whose names appeared on an attached list. The new governor-general hoped that this policy would "win the hearts" of those subjects "only" hostile to Alba's regime and persuade the insurgents to show obedience to the King once more. Philip II thought it was a good idea, because it was similar to the general pardon issued by his father after the Revolt of the *Comuneros*, the uprising in Castile half a century earlier.[25] Promulgating the general pardon in Brussels on June 6, 1574, Requesens, however, had another purpose in mind: to find an answer to the now successful and ever expanding revolt of the Prince of Orange and his followers in Holland and Zeeland, and to find a way to meet the depopulation of city and countryside in the Habsburg Netherlands. He thought it only right, therefore that towns and cities in rebellion should also be able to benefit from the pardon, at least, if they would return to an exclusive position of

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complementariteit van het koninklijk en pauselijk generaal pardon, 1570–1574, en over inquisiteur–generaal Michael Baius, 1560–1576 (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2007), compiling a preliminary list of editions in appendix II, pp. XI–XVII), and an assessment of the *reconciliati* in the whole Low Countries, 215–223. For an earlier appreciation of the *reconciliati* in the city of Antwerp only, see Guido Marnef, "Protestant Conversions in an Age of Catholic Reformation: the Case of Sixteenth–Century Antwerp," in *Frontiers of Faith: Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400–1750*, ed. E. Andor et al. (Budapest: Central European University, 2001), 255–65; and reprinted in *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs*, ed. Arie-Jan Gelderblom, Jan de Jong, and Mark van Vaeck (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 49–64 (version cited here) deals explicitly with the 'middle groups' (14,128 persons reconciling on the terms of the 1570 pardon), and these decisions are further contextualized in Id., *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis, 1550–1577* (Baltimore-London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 127–129.

25 Philip II to Requesens: Archivo General de Simancas, *Secretaría de Estado* [henceforth AGS E] 561 fol. 139–140; cf. Gustaaf Janssens, "Van vader op zoon: Continuïteit in het beleid van Karel V en Filips II met betrekking tot de Nederlanden," in *Dos monarcas y una historia en común: España y Flandes bajo los reinados de Carlos V y Felipe II* (Madrid: Sociedad estatal para la conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1999), 89–102 (91) and Bernardo García García, "Ganar los corazones y obligar los vecinos: Estrategias de pacificación de los Países Bajos, 1604–1610," in *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos*, I:137–166; Violet Soen, "Estrategias de pacificación tempranas durante la guerra de Flandes (1570–1598)," in *Tiempo de*

Catholicism.[26] The pardon was a crucial gesture of conciliation, best shown by the official collectors' suspension of confiscations. The most significant clause from the 1574 general pardon, however, was the one that pardoned those fugitives previously banished (*proscritz et banni*) by the government, but who "had lived as good Catholics" abroad, and gave them the opportunity to recover their confiscated property. This policy represented a significant contrast from the Council of Troubles' attitude towards confiscations, which was still in force within Habsburg territories, although its activities had already been largely reduced to handling current affairs. Refugees appear to have returned and seized upon this possibility. While it is impossible to calculate their exact numbers, at least 500 cases of reconciliation and/or restitution of confiscated property have been identified through archival evidence. Yet, the importance of the 1574 general pardon becomes most evident when one notices that the rebels nicknamed the returnees *pardonnistes*, reproaching them for having taken advantage of this new legal situation to recover their property for pragmatic or opportunistic reasons.[27]

The politico-juridical framework became more confuse from the Fall of 1576 onwards as the States General convened without Philip II's approval and established their rule over most of the Low Countries on the basis of a treaty known as the "Pacification of Ghent" concluded on November 8, 1576.[28] This treaty opted for a kind of secular pardon and for a provisional end to religious persecution on both sides.

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paces. *La Pax Hispánica y la tregua de los doce años*, ed. Bernardo García García (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2009), 61–75.

26 *Exemplaire des lettres patentes du Roy par lesquelle sa Maiesté donne Grace absolute & pardon général, tant à Estatz, Pays, Villes & Communaultez, que tous particuliers voires proscriptz & banniz de ces Pays Bas & autres, ayans offense & fourfait, acause des Troubles, emotions & revoltes, tant passées que presentes, advenu es en iceulx Pays*, Brussels, Michel de Hamont, 1574, a preliminary list of editions in Soen, *Geen pardon zonder paus*, appendix III, pp. XXI–XXIII. A papal brief from Gregory XIII granting absolution for "repentant heretics" accompanied the pardon and granted another a grace period of three months after opening to act on this opportunity.

27 Soen, *Geen pardon zonder paus*, chapter X, 276–290 discusses the relationship between reconciliation and migration during the Dutch Revolt tied to the 1574 pardon. Appendix VI, XLIII–LXVII sketches a profile of 500 reconciled persons on the basis of "Declarations des noms et des surnoms", and similar lists dressed to reconstruct the individuals asking to be reconciled; additional information was found in individual requests to the Council of Troubles for the 'restitution' of property. The fact that many petitions post-1580 mention the return of refugees on the 1574 conditions, yet without us having found archival evidence to match this, shows that the estimate is on the lower side.

28 *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: UGA, 1976), 153–165.

This made it possible for Protestant refugees to return once more to their (home) provinces where Catholicism continued to be the public religion, and at the same time for Catholic refugees to return to now largely Calvinist Holland and Zeeland with the opportunity to recover property confiscated by the rebels.[29] It seems that it were mostly Protestant refugees which took the opportunity to return, and to help establish Protestant communities within Flanders and Brabant. Despite the conditions outlined in the Pacification of Ghent, the civil war developed in such a way that the possibility of a safe return became uncertain under any circumstances.[30]

On the side of the States General, now regrouped as opponents of the royal regime, the conditions of confessional co-existence looked uncertain. A newly promulgated religious peace in 1578, known as *Religions-vrede*, would have allowed the Catholics and Calvinists to live in peace with each other. However, this *via media* inspired by William of Orange, failed with the contemporary emergence of militant Calvinist Republics in Flanders, Brabant and Mechelen, which expelled clergymen and any Catholics "causing a scandal", i.e. causing discredit to religion.[31] As Janssen has shown, this created a new diaspora, this time of Catholic exile heading either for Cologne, a "neutral" city in the Holy Roman Empire, or for territory remaining Catholic, like the university city of Douai in Walloon Flanders, where also English, Scottish and Irish Catholic exiles had already found refuge, often with Habsburg patronage.

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29 Examples to be found in Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile*, 161–164.
30 Guido Marnef, "The Process of Political Change under the Calvinist Republic in Antwerp (1577–1585)", in *Des villes en révolte: les républiques urbaines aux Pays-Bas et en France pendant la deuxième moitié du 16e siècle*, ed. Monique Weis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 25–33.
31 Guido Marnef, "Multiconfessionalism in a Commercial Metropolis: the Case of 16th-Century Antwerp," in *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Thomas Safley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 75–97; P.J.H. Ubachs, "De Nederlandse Religievrede van 1578," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 77:1 (1997), 41–61. This *Religions-vrede* is currently being reassessed by Henning Jürgens and Christophe Schellekens at the IEG in Mainz in the framework of our joint H2020project RETOPEA on Religious Tolerance and Peace (http://heron-net.be/retopea/). A preliminary edition of the 1578 Religions-vrede is made available by Alexandra Schäfer-Griebel through www.religionsfrieden.de and http://tueditions.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/e000001/. A recent analysis of the variants for Bruges and Antwerp, and their repercussions on the burial of deceased by Tiffany Bousard, "Aan de rand van het graf. De transformatie van het funeraire leven en landschap in Antwerpen en Brugge tijdens de calvinistische republieken (1577/1578–1584/1585)," in *Sacrale ruimte in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, ed. Liesbeth Geevers and Violet Soen, Nieuwe Tijdingen 1 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 59–86.

On the royal side, Don John of Austria, the new governor-general after the death of Requesens, ratified a "Catholic interpretation" of the Pacification of Ghent. Accordingly, he went ahead with authorizing temporary pardons for those willing to return to the Catholic fold as well as exemplary executions of Protestants. While he carefully helped to the *mise-en-scène* of peace and reconciliation during his Joyous Entries in the cities of Brabant and Mechelen, this must have been of little appeal to Protestant inhabitants.[32] To make matters more complicated than ever before, after he seized the citadel of Namur in July 1577, fifteen of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries rejected his rule, and Habsburg authority was only recognized in Luxemburg and Namur. In consequence, there were many doubts about the legal framework and the possibilities of punishment and pardon under the regime of the Spanish Habsburgs.

2 Changing Habsburg Strategies: Allowing Departure of Dissidents and Reconciling Returnees

While initially according to the King and his governor-general emigrants were to be punished or pardoned, Habsburg policies changed considerably after the turning point of 1579–81: for the next decade religious dissidents were mostly allowed to leave territory under Habsburg rule without financial or juridical punishments. Alexander Farnese, the prince of Parma who succeeded Don John in 1578, changed the policy of the Spanish Habsburgs significantly with a view to restoring the loyalty of inhabitants of the Low Countries. Being the governor who seemed to

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32 *Verclaeringhe vande meynunghe des ... Heeren Don Johan Van Oistenrycke ... al voor ende eer te trecken over die Maeze ende te versuecken den wech van wapenen, verweckende alle die ondersaeten om hun te bekeeren tot Godt ende Conincklycker Maiesteyt (...)* Luxembourg, Merten Marchant, 1578, [Act of 25 January of 1578], studied more in detail in Violet Soen, "La réitération de pardons collectifs à finalités politiques pendant la Révolte des Pays–Bas, 1565–1598: un cas d'espèce dans les rapports de force aux Temps Modernes?," in *Préférant miséricorde à rigueur de justice. Pratiques de la grâce, XIIIe–XVIIe siècles*, ed. Bernard Dauven and Xavier Rousseaux (Louvain: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2012), 97–123; Violet Soen and Elisa Masschelein, "Het Eeuwig Edict en de Intredes van Don Juan. Of de moeizame *mise-en-œuvre* en *mise-en-scène* van een vredesverdrag tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 129 (2016): 175–195.

have learned most from the mistakes of his predecessors, his main strategy was to distance himself from the Duke of Alba's policy, by in general, proposing another model of governance and military action, and in particular, a different way of reincorporating towns and provinces in order to restore royal control.[33] When his governorship started at the end of 1578, he initially found strong support among a significant number of the Walloon provinces, which had grown malcontent with the way in which Calvinists in Brabant and Flanders were interpreting the 1576 Pacification of Ghent. In the Treaty of Arras signed in May 1579 between the so-called "Walloon provinces" of the Union of Arras and Philip II, Farnese happily agreed to Catholicism as the exclusive religion, although it soon became necessary to clarify the terms under which the émigrés would return in later negotiations.[34] The rebuilding of a Catholic society was paramount. During the following decade of territorial conquest, Philip II, Farnese, and influential councillors, such as Cardinal Granvelle, shared the idea that, in order to achieve this objective, it was necessary to allow those who could not be reconciled to leave unhindered.[35] This inspired the third, and final, wave of emigration out of the Low Countries.

As a result, during his military reconquest of the Calvinist Republics from 1581 onwards, Farnese occasionally issued temporary authorizations allowing Protestants to emigrate.[36] In more specific terms, the capitulation treaties of

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33 Violet Soen, "Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt: The Campaign of Governor-General Alexander Farnese, 1578–1592," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 1–22.

34 Junot and Soen, "La Révolte dans les Pays-Bas habsbourgeois," 218–223; 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 *La noblesse et la défense de l'orthodoxie XIII–XVIIIme siècles*, ed. Ariane Boltanski and Frank Mercier (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 135–149. For a discussion of the 1579 Union and Peace of Arras as a prelude to the 1581 Act of Abjuration in Violet Soen, "Despairing of all means of reconciliation: The Act of Abjuration and the Peace Negotiations during the Dutch Revolt," in *The Act of Abjuration. Inspired and Inspirational*, ed. Paulus Brood and Raymond Kubben (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2011), 45–64; Monica Stensland, *Habsburg Communication in the Dutch Revolt* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 89–90.

35 Granvelle to Morillon, 26/5/1583: *Correspondance du cardinal de Granvelle, 1565–1586* [henceforth *CGr*], ed. Edmond Poullet and Charles Piot, 12 vols., (Brussels, Koninklijke commissie voor geschiedenis, 1877–1896), X:233–234: "que l'on laisse hardiment partir libres et sans empeschement ni charge ceulx qui, pour non voulloir laisser les hérésies, aymeront mieulx aller ailleurs par quelque bout que ce soit: il n'y aura mal d'en estre quicte", or "that we freely allow departure without let or hindrance to those who, because they do not want to give up their heresies, would prefer to go elsewhere by any means possible; there is no harm in letting them go".

36 Farnese to Philip II, 26/09/1583: Archives Générales du Royaume at Brussels, *Papiers de l'Etat et de l'Audience* [henceforth AGR PEA] 187 fol. 185–191 (minute); Farnese to Philip II,

approximately seventy large and small towns, which were taken by Alexander Farnese between 1581 and 1585 in Flanders and Brabant, included a clause that granted Protestants, as long as they did not cause any "scandal", the option of remaining for a specific period (from a few months to four years in the case of Antwerp, and without restrictions in Bruges).[37] If they decided to emigrate in the course of or at the end of the reconciliation period they were at liberty to sell their patrimony if they so wished. Sometimes, permission to sell their movable and immovable goods was even granted when they were already residing outside of Habsburg territory, using procurators. The origin of the *ius emigrandi* goes back to the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, a treaty granting inhabitants of the principalities and cities of the Holy Roman Empire a few months grace during which they had the right to emigrate freely before the new principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* entered in vigor. The Augsburg possibility of being able to leave also included the right to sell their possessions.[38] That this kind of *Auswanderungsrecht* was now also applied to the reconciled and capitulated towns within the Spanish Netherlands was remarkable, as, until that point, Philip II had always rejected any measures that were too similar to the Peace of Augsburg.

This form of *ius emigrandi* constituted a major political turning point compared to the confiscations and death penalties applied in the previous decades to subjects considered heretics or fugitives. First of all, it symbolized the break with the anti-heresy laws in force and the practice of the Council of Troubles. Under the earlier regime, religious dissidents and refugees faced imprisonment, banishment and death sentences combined with the confiscation of property, in

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21/05/1584: AGS E 588 fol. 32, further discussed by Soen, "Reconquista and Reconciliation," 1–22 and Gustaaf Janssens, "Pacification générale ou réconciliation particulière? Problèmes de guerre et de paix aux Pays–Bas au début du gouvernement d'Alexandre Farnèse, 1578–1579," *Bulletin de l'institut historique belge de Rome* 63 (1993): 251–278.

37 For example: *Articles et conditions dv Traicté faict et conclu entre l'Altesse du Prince de Parme, … d'une part; et la ville d'Anvers, d'aultre part, le XVIJ iour d'Aoust l'an M.D.LXXXV*, Antwerp, Christophe Plantin, 1585.

38 Matthias Asche, "Auswanderungsrecht und Migration aus Glaubensgründen: Kenntnisstand und Forschungsperspektiven zur *ius emigrandi* Regelung des Augsburger Religionsfriedens," in *Der Augsburger Religionsfrieden 1555: Wissenschaftliches Symposium aus Anlass des 450. Jahrestages des Friedensschlusses, Augsburg 21. Bis 25. September 2005*, ed. Heinz Schilling and Heribert Smolinsky (Münster: Aschendorff, 2007), 75–104; Violet Soen, "From the Interim of Augsburg until the Treaty of Augsburg (1548–1555)," in *Martin Luther. A Christian between Reforms and Modernity (1517–2017)*, ed. Alberto Melloni, 3 vols., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), I:548–564; Monique Weis, *Les Pays–Bas espagnols et les États du Saint Empire, 1559–1579: Priorités et enjeux de la diplomatie en temps de troubles* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2003), 91.

which those convicted had no possibility of being able to sell their patrimony. Secondly, and in contrast to the measures of general pardon issued between 1570 and 1577, reconciliation with the Catholic Church was no longer a prerequisite for declaring loyalty once more to Habsburg authority, and returning to the Church was only necessary at the end of the process. The *ius emigrandi* meant that the supposed threat of Protestants who feigned belief could be kept at a distance from the pacified territories, thus enabling society to be reunified under a "sincere Catholicism". The same system was used by Farnese's successors –a sign of its alleged effectiveness– when they took Cambrai from French Calvinists in 1595, and Hulst from the Dutch Republic the following year.[39]

For their part, many Protestants decided to take full advantage of the right "to be able" to leave with the chance of selling their patrimony before they went, which made exile easier; they could at least avoid confiscation and depart more or less honourably, though in the difficult circumstances that the decision to leave always constituted. This emigration policy represented a transition stage that –for the first time since the beginning of the civil war– met with the agreement of both parties. King Philip II repeatedly expressed his wish to force the rebel provinces into obedience and to "purge them of all heresy", in other words, to bring all his subjects back into the fold of the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Church. Hence, extending the *ius emigrandi* to the inhabitants of those cities that capitulated was to be understood as an interim measure towards reconstructing a Catholic society in which the Crown and the Church took charge of public space and affairs.[40] Hence, the process of reconciliation and the religious purging of society in the reconciled Low Countries temporarily justified the right to emigrate.

This new policy from the central authorities created two new categories of emigrants from the Habsburg lands. The first category, most of whom were Protestants, consisted of those who did not expect to return and liquidated their goods (rather than have them confiscated) in order to go and live in the United Provinces or England, with the implied but harsh decision that they severed their bonds permanently to their place of origin. The second category included those émigrés who kept their patrimony in the territories of the Hispanic Monarchy, yet chose to reside in the German cities, France or in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, choosing administrators or procurators to handle their

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39 AGS E 610 fol. 135 and 136: Treaty of Cambrai (reconciliation term of four months), E 611 fol. 111: Treaty of Hulst (term of one year).

40 Alain Lottin, *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme (1598–1668)?* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2013); Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, chaps. 5 and 6; Soen, "Reconquista", 1–22.

affairs. Those in this second category were often able to dissimulate their confessional identity thanks to the ambiguity afforded by mixed asylum towns, such as Cologne, where Catholics and Protestants lived together.[41] In such cases, the link with the Habsburg Low Countries was not (yet) broken and nothing prevented them from seeking individual reconciliation at a later stage, so that they could return to their place of origin, claiming that they had lived a Catholic life abroad on "neutral ground". In practice, when they did return at a later stage, these kind of émigrés faced much more inquiries into their background, beliefs and motivations than those returning immediately under the terms of reconciliation.

After the expiration of the terms of reconciliation from the capitulation treaties, the individual reconciliation that Farnese proposed to returnees was aimed at all "the good subjects" who wished to appeal for royal clemency. It derived from the sovereign's royal prerogative of pardon and was reminiscent of the collective pardons granted by the King with a promise to forget the past.[42] In exchange, beneficiaries promised to submit themselves to the Catholic Church (and fulfil the duties of confession, communion and to appear before the local bishop or his representative), not to join the factions of the Prince of Orange or the rebels, and to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. In order to comply with their reconciliation, beneficiaries henceforth had to reside in the reconciled territories, or at the very least, for a limited time in supposedly "neutral towns" like Calais or Cologne on the borders of the Low Countries. This was how Justus Lipsius, a professor at the 'Calvinist' University of Leiden, came to be reconciled with the Catholic Church and the King during a stay in Cologne in 1590, and following the intervention and mediation of the Jesuits. He only afterwards returned to Leuven where he spent the rest of his life.[43]

While the Privy Council attached to the governor-general played a central role in the procedure for individual reconciliation of future returnees, it also collaborated closely with the urban authorities. In this capacity, the Privy Council examined the initial petitions of applicants and led the formal enquiry

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41 Weis, *Les Pays–Bas espagnols et les États du Saint Empire*, 255–279.

42 Michel de Waele, "Entre concorde et intolérance: Alexandre Farnèse et la Pacification des Pays–Bas," in *De Michel de L'Hospital à l'édit de Nantes. Politique et religion face aux Églises*, ed. Thierry Wanegffelen (Clermont–Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2002), 51–70; to compare with his Michel de Waele, "Clémence royale et fidélités françaises à la fin des guerres de Religion," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques* 24 (1998): 231–252.

43 Violet Soen, "The Clementia Lipsiana: Between Political Analysis, Autobiography and Panegyric," in *(Un)masking the Realities of Power. Justus Lipsius's Monita and the dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erik de Bom et al. (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 207–231.

with the local officers, municipal magistrates and clergy of the town concerned. Together, they collected testimonies from fellow citizens to test the sincerity of the application.[44] The absence of a central administration responsible for dealing with individual reconciliations did not seem to be regarded as a lack of administrative rigor as far as Farnese and the central authorities were concerned: the earlier experience of an extraordinary jurisdiction like the Council of Troubles, which was both a court and a chamber for confiscations, had terrified both the litigants and the urban magistrates.[45] Here too Alexander Farnese treated the political culture of the society of the Low Countries with greater deference than the Duke of Alba had. In this process of facilitating reintegration for émigrés, Farnese privileged subsidiarity and judicial collaboration with the provincial and municipal authorities, often recognizing the importance of the local balance of power and political culture.

3 Reconstructing the Towns Reconciled: Facilitating the Reintegration of Returnees

Even so, the change in Habsburg strategies was not a single-handed decision by the strategic mastermind of Alexander Farnese only, as most often, he gave in to the continued weight of civic authorities in the highly urbanized Low Countries. Even the terms of the treaties of voluntary reconciliation or capitulation between the Spanish monarchy and the towns in the Low Countries were the result of direct negotiations between the governor-general and the municipal magistrates. The margin for debate of the latter was limited by the military context and the religious question, and expectations could diverge widely. During the siege of rebel and Calvinist Tournai by Farnese in 1581, for example, the magistrates explicitly set out the expectations of the local Calvinist community, namely: no judicial measures to be taken against their community (*ministres, anciens, diacres, relapz ou aultrement chergez*); the right to benefit from the Pacification of Ghent; the right to leave safely with their goods and chattels within three

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44 AGR Conseil Privé Espagnol 1420, 23/01/1583: The governor of Gravelines gave an assurance to the *Conseil Privé* concerning a certain Philippe de Landas, who was seeking reconciliation, in order "to testify to what he has deep inside him, to know well if there is some venom or hidden malice of heresy", or "pour meilleur tesmoignage de son intérieur (...) de bien cognoiste s'il y auroit quelque venin ou malice caché d'hérésie. See also Junot, "Pratiques et limites de la réconciliation," 336–340.

45 Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 129 suggests a lack of administrative rigor.

months in the event of their being refused such benefit, or if they refused to submit to the terms of the reconciliation treaties; and finally, the possibility of choosing to reside in a "neutral" location or one not hostile to the King, where the emigrants would be able to continue to enjoy their goods and chattels without having to sell them. As governor, Farnese would also need to grant those who refused to capitulate the opportunity to emigrate, and those who chose exile in a "neutral" country instead of an enemy one, the opportunity to keep their property, administered on their behalf by a third party.[46] The final treaty, however, was stripped of the vocabulary used during the negotiation phase and the final wording of the emigration clause never mentioned the Protestants as such; on the contrary, they were referred to in terms that concealed their confessional identity, as "those who did not wish to submit and live according to the ordinances" of the King or simply those "who wanted to withdraw", anticipating the recovery of Catholic unity.[47]

Farnese repeated this style of negotiation between governors and cities throughout his reconquest. When defending peace negotiations, Jan of Hembyze, the leader of Ghent, thought that Philip II would allow the same conditions as his father had done in the Treaty of Augsburg.[48] As for the treaty negotiated with Ghent, Farnese made no distinctions between the emigrants' destinations, since the agreement authorized both one's departure from the country and the enjoyment of all his or her possessions, whether he or she travelled with them, sold them off or allowed third parties to administer them.[49] Antwerp's burgomaster, Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, also tried to convince Farnese that "real clemency" consisted of permitting those principles that went against his own beliefs, such as freedom of religion.[50] Along with this top-down incentive, local urban communities pressured Protestants to abandon

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46 AGR PEA 1191/8 n°3: "concept de certains articles soubz lesquelz les consaux ... desireront entrer en réconciliation avecq Sa Majesté", article V.

47 AGR, PEA 591, f°36v–37: reconciliation treaty of Tournai: "ceulx qui ne vouldront se soubzmettre et vivre selon lesdictes ordonnances", or "les bourgeois de ladicte ville qui vouldront se retirer".

48 *Middelen ende conditien, door de welcke d'Inghesetenen der gheunieerde Provincien, met der Majestyt vanden Coninck van Spaignen (...) mits behoorlicke versekertheyt, zouden moghen accorderen*, s.l., s.n., 1584 (Knuttel 676); Refutation of: *Ondersoeckinghe ende examinatie vande middelen. Ende conditien, door de welcke de Inghesetene der geunieerde Provincien ... Van sommigen ghepretendeerde Vredemakers inde stadt van Ghendt voorghedraghen*, s.l., s.n., 1584 (Knuttel 677).

49 AGR PEA 1800/2: negotiations about the reconciliation treaty of Ghent; Farnese to Philip II about the reconciliation of Ghent, 12/12/1584: *Bulletins de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* (henceforth BCRH), Série III, 13, 111–113.

50 Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde to Richardot, 14/07/1585: AGR PEA 586 fol. 30.

their place within Catholic society. Signed in 1584, the Bruges capitulation treaty did not include a fixed term for reconciliation of its Protestant citizens; by 1587, however, the municipal magistrate had decided that everybody would either have to convert or leave.[51]

Janssen has recently shown that Farnese encouraged returning Catholic refugees to take over for the "purged" city magistrates of these capitulated towns, but the general Habsburg policy was broader in scope and also included socio-economic motivations.[52] Behind the Habsburgs' sudden desire to celebrate reconciliation, and the countless urban petitions that asked them to do so, including the return of migrants, lurked an economic dimension: what was at stake was economic recovery in a territory that had suffered the effects of war and emigration.[53] This was necessary as the *ius emigrandi* created considerable new waves of emigration in territories already shaken by troubles and war: Antwerp for example lost half of its inhabitants, some 40,000 people, during the four-year term granted by Farnese in 1585. The penury was exacerbated by the daily financial and commercial disputes between royal and republican territories, which added to the trade deficit of the Spanish Netherlands. As a result, the Habsburg *reconquista* was gradually accompanied by a policy of making reconciled cities attractive and flourishing again; the treaties signed between Farnese and the capitulated towns in Flanders and Brabant were printed and publicized and passed on to the magistrates of the towns already reconciled, as well as those still in revolt.[54] Urban festivities were organized to give thanks to the governor, the King and God, and to celebrate the positive dynamic of the pacification of the Catholic Low Countries.[55] In Antwerp, both Farnese and Bishop Torrentius encouraged the authorities to win back souls for

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51 Reconciliation treaty of Bruges and the Franc de Bruges, 20/05/1584: BCRH Série III, 4, 527–539. *Adjustment of the Bruges Treaty: citizens have to convert to Catholicism or leave*, 4/5/1587: BCRH Série III, 3, 422–423.

52 Geert Janssen, "Quo Vadis? Catholic Perceptions of Flight and the Revolt of the Low Countries, 1566–1609," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64–2 (2011): 472–499 (489–491), and the above mentioned, "Politics of Reintegration". The limitations and problems in this strategy are discussed by Yves Junot, "Réconciliation et réincorporation dans la monarchie hispanique: l'exemple de Dunkerque au temps d'Alexandre Farnèse," *Revue du Nord* 98–415 (2016): 242–246.

53 Junot, "Les migrants, un enjeu?", 779–791.

54 Archives municipales de Saint-Omer [henceforth AmSt-O] Correspondence of the city magistrate n° 5588: The provincial council of Artois to the governor-general and the city magistrate of Saint Omer, 29/10/1584, to announce the capitulation of Ghent "soubz les poinctz et articles dont copie va avecq cestes".

55 Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 108–112; Janssen, *Catholic Exile*, 154.

Catholicism, including those of the undecided and returnees, with the help of Jesuits.[56]

Against this background, individual refugees and exiles were encouraged to return. This policy differed from the collective context of a town's capitulation, as described above, since authorities directed it to persons displaced because of the war, as well as those who had fled or moved for a wider range of reasons (including judicial, familial or professional motivations).[57] For example, Peter Paul Rubens, who became the most famous Tridentine Baroque painter and lived in Antwerp, a city reconquered and reconciled by Farnese in 1585, lived through conditions that effectively illustrate this point: he had been born in a Protestant safe haven within the Holy Roman Empire, where his parents had lived in exile since 1567, but his father's death in Cologne in 1587 caused the family to return to and reintegrate into their city of origin, where they agreed to live Catholic lives.[58]

The practical implications of the return of exiles from different confessional backgrounds required the local authorities to perform a balancing act. In 1584, for example, the magistrate of Saint-Omer in Artois inquired of Farnese what should be done about some merchants, natives of the then rebel and Calvinist towns of Flanders and Brabant, who had withdrawn to Calais on the French side of the border but were now seeking to go to Habsburg Saint-Omer to be reconciled. In this case, the governor answered that it was not possible to admit them all indiscriminately, and that only "the good ones who [had] never joined the factions of the Prince of Orange and the depraved religion" could be accepted to reside from then on in Habsburg territory.[59] Nevertheless, on the eve of the military operations to reconquer Flanders and Brabant in 1581–5, Farnese had the foresight to grant similar letters of pardon to people who wished to keep their residence in the rebel zone, as a way of projecting and reasserting the

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56 Torrentius and the Papal nuncio anticipated that many returnees holding Protestant beliefs, at the end of their reconciliation term, would return from Protestant territory and convert to Catholicism, but the concrete archival evidence lacks to support their suggestions: Marie-Juliette Marinus, *Laevinus Torrentius als tweede bisschop van Antwerpen, 1587–1595* (Brussels: Paleis der Academien, 1989), 218–228.

57 Junot, "Heresy, War, Vagrancy and Labour Needs," 67–69 and 78–80, and Id., "Exiles-Migrants and Reconciliation in the Spanish Low Countries after the Peace of Arras (1579)," *Culture & History Digital Journal* 6–1 (2017): 1–9 (online) (6) shows how itinerant textile workers who frequented the Calvinist exile communities in England or in the Dutch Republic escaped the repressive legislation against rebels and non-reconciled people on their return; Janssen, *Catholic Exile*, 136.

58 Simon Schama, "The Siegen Affair," *The American Scholar* 68–4 (1999): 13–38.

59 AmSt-O Correspondence of the city magistrate, n°5585, Farnese to the city magistrate, March 28, 1584.

sovereignty of the Spanish monarchy beyond the territories under the effective control of Philip II.[60]

Hence, it should be noted that Farnese's policy enhanced the role of the towns in both the individual and the collective reconciliation processes. As for the urban magistrates, their responsibility was to strike a balance between the surveillance of returning émigrés and the ongoing mobility of merchants or weavers as they went back and forth between the Habsburg Low Countries and England or the United Provinces, or even around all three territories.[61] The fundamental fact that officially Catholic subjects of the King of Spain could leave manufacturing towns like Arras, Lille, Valenciennes or Tournai and work and live in similar towns abroad alongside exiles and "heretics" in Norwich or Leiden for a few months, and then cross the border again to return home, was not a matter of indifference to the municipal magistrates: while this circular migrations could create economic incentives, it could also lead to possible setbacks in the religious purging of the urban community. Through judicial questioning, the urban magistrates in the reconciled provinces made sure that they closely monitored the returns at least of those émigré craftsmen who had been reported to them. In particular, they investigated Calvinist and Anglican practices in the exile communities, the names and lifes of exiles encountered there, the possession and circulation of prohibited books or correspondence, and the existence of messengers who had forged links between the Protestant communities and the reconciled provinces.[62] As a result, these temporary economic migrations gradually took on a more clandestine nature that highlighted the fear of the contagion of ideas brought in from the Calvinist refuge communities abroad. Generally speaking, these enquiries did not lead to the itinerant weavers or merchants being convicted unless there was overt preaching of Calvinism or they caused a public "scandal", going against the clauses of oblivion and concord in the reconciliation treaties.[63]

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60 Junot, "Pratiques et limites de la reconciliation," 337–338; Janssen, *Catholic Exile*, 136–138.
61 Lucassen and de Vries, "The Rise and Fall of a Western European textile-worker migration system," 23–42.
62 Junot, "Exiles-Migrants and Reconciliation," 6; L. Van Acker, "Immigratie van Franstaligen in Westelijk Vlaanderen na 1585," *Biekorf – Westvlaams Archief* 86 (1986): 113–130.
63 Goosens, *Les inquisitions modernes* I:176–181 shows how not any longer "heresy" is persecuted, but the perturbation of "common good" by public "scandal".

4 *Damnatio memoriae*? Erasing the Memory of Protestant Exile in Habsburg Territory

Farnese gradually allowed for the insertion of *oubli du passé* into the reconciliation treaties as an important means of forgiving and forgetting what had happened. During the French Wars of Religion, this oblivion also provided a tool for political and confessional reconciliation. Recent scholars of the "turn" towards memory studies have shown that the insurgents' political culture of the post-war generations within either the Dutch Republic or the foreign refugee communities was very much founded upon the idea of spreading the tales of persecution and repression to keep their memory alive rather than to forget.[64] By contrast, fostering public opinion in the Catholic Netherlands focused indeed on forgetting exile while spreading the individual acts of reconciliation or participation in abjuration ceremonies as a sign of the successful "reconquest of souls" during the 1580s and the 1590s.[65] Rather than stressing the harsh verdict of heresy and its penal implications, public discourse now stressed the reparation of sin through reconciliation. The Catholic narrative of the Prodigal Son turned into a powerful visual image, especially when associated with young people returning home.[66]

Hence, silencing the memory of exile and return in Habsburg territory became a norm that could only be disrupted by a "scandal". This happened in Valenciennes in 1610, when the chief magistrate's past of being part of this Protestant exile abruptly surfaced.[67] It all started when the magistrate had a

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[64] For France: Penny Roberts, "The Languages of Peace during the French Religious Wars," *Cultural and Social History* 4 (2007): 293–311; Michel De Waele and Stephan Martens, *Mémoire et oubli – Controverses de la Rome antique à nos jours* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2015), esp. the chapters by François Pernot and Michel De Waele. For the Low Countries: Jasper van der Steen, "A Contested Past: Memory Wars during the Twelve Years' Truce, 1609–1621," in *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erika Kuijpers et al., Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 45–61 and Id., *Memory Wars in the Low Countries, 1566–1700* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015).
[65] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 129–131.
[66] Junot, "Exiles-Migrants and Reconciliation," 7; Barbara Haeger, "The Prodigal Son in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Art: Depictions of the Parable and the Evolution of a Catholic Image," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16 (1986): 128–138 and Jasper van der Steen, "The Political Rediscovery of the Dutch Revolt in the Seventeenth-Century Habsburg Netherlands," *Early Modern Low Countries* 1 (2017): 297–317.
[67] Yves Junot, "L'impossible survie: la clandestinité protestante à Valenciennes au début du XVIIᵉ siècle," *Mémoires du Cercle archéologique et historique de Valenciennes* 11 (2010): 175–183; the judicial questioning of the protagonists in Archives municipales de Valenciennes [henceforth AmV] FF1 13 fol. 114–133.

young craftsman arrested for trying to convert one of his companions in the civic militia by giving him a copy of Calvin's *Catechism*, one of the many pieces of Calvinist literature that officials regularly seized in reconciled towns.[68] Investigations quickly revealed a micro-network of another four or five crypto-Calvinists who sung psalms at home, although there was not a preacher to form or lead a structured community or congregation. This local case in Valenciennes became a very uncomfortable matter for the civic and central authorities, as it could potentially jeopardize the Truce with the Dutch, a lukewarm Spanish recognition of the incipient Republic in 1609. It documented a fear shared by officials within the reconciled Low Countries that Calvinist proselytism would take advantage of the Truce to disrupt its ongoing restoration of Catholicism from pacified cities.[69]

This case-study underlines that exiles indeed returned into the heart of reconciled towns. The crypto-Calvinist ringleaders arrested in this case, Hugues de Bray and his father Éverard, belonged to the family of Guy de Bray, the Calvinist minister of Valenciennes during the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566, and author of the *Confessio Belgica* or Belgic Confession that was used to organize the structure of the Reformed Church.[70] Interrogations of the son and father (who was the preacher's nephew) centred on the family's past. While the son, who was born in Valenciennes around 1588, had no experience of exile at all, his father had emigrated as a child at the time of the Council of Troubles to a Calvinist refuge community in the Holy Roman Empire where he received confessional instruction, since "what he knew of religion, he had learned in Germany".[71] Like many others, the family returned to Valenciennes taking advantage of the earlier mentioned general pardon of 1574, but without subsequently drawing attention to themselves.[72] When interrogated in 1610, the son started making compromising statements about the mayor of the town, Jean Vivien, lord of Salmonsart. He declared that the mayor had been one of their own, that he would have celebrated

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68 Lottin, *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme*, 209–210.

69 Id., *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme*, 149.

70 Emile Braekman, *Guy de Brès, Un réformateur en Belgique et dans le Nord de la France, 1522–1567* (Mons: Cercle archéologique de Mons, Publication extraordinaire, nouvelle série n°3, 2015); Charles Paillard, "Notes sur la famille de Guy De Bray et sur les poursuites exercées contre les membres de cette famille," *Bulletin historique et littéraire de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français* (1877): 364–372 and 414–426.

71 AmV FF1 13 fol. 125r: "ce qu'il avoit sceu de la religion, il l'avoit appris en Allemaigne".

72 AmV FF1 13 fol. 118v–119r: Éverard de Bray began his apprenticeship after his return in Valenciennes, where he then married. His former master's daughter testified she did not know he had been in Germany before.

the Last Supper in the Holy Roman Empire and sworn that he would never have abandoned the Reformed religion, but would have betrayed his oath in order to be reconciled and recover his confiscated property, and that since then, he had been acting "against his faith by banishing those of that Religion".

The young de Bray's accusations against the leading magistrate of his town did not appear to be without foundation. Nichole and Nicholas Vivien, the mayor's father and grandfather respectively had been committed collaborators of the Calvinist consistory during the 1566 iconoclasm.[73] This wealthy bourgeois business family fled to the Empire where they lived between 1567 and 1574, and their entire patrimony was confiscated until the general pardon of 1574. Nichole Vivien returned to Valenciennes and his property was restored under the terms of the pardon. He did not support the attempted Calvinist coup against the town council during the troubles in 1579, just before the town joined the Union of Arras. It was obvious to all that the reconciliation of the Viviens to the Catholic faith seemed sincere and successful. In fact, the family, who had been members of the municipal council until the events of 1566, suffered in the purges that followed the repression, affecting about 80% of the local political class.[74] Finally, after almost thirty years of ostracism on account of his Calvinist past, Nichole Vivien was appointed to the town council in 1595, 1598 and 1601 and his son Jean followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a councillor in his turn in 1596, 1599, 1602, and chief magistrate in 1605 and 1609. The "scandal story" arose at the end of Jean Vivien's mandate and forced the mayor-magistrate to face the fact that he had experience of being Calvinist refugees returning to the Spanish Netherlands where Catholicism had been restored as the sole religion.

The judicial investigation of 1610 raises the issue of how exile was perceived by each of the successive civil war and post-war generations, as well as by people who had returned and reintegrated under the rule of the King and Church.[75] The public denunciation of the mayor's past as a Calvinist exile in his youth did not come from an exile of the same generation fleeing the earliest troubles like Éverard de Bray, but from a young man of twenty-eight who was

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73 AmV FF1 13 fol. 115r.: "le prévost moderne avroit faict serment de ne quicter leur religion lequel néantmoins il avroit faulsé pour recevoir ses biens, et que maintenant icelluy prévost alloit contre sa foy en bannissant ceulx de ladicte religion".

74 Junot, *Les bourgeois de Valenciennes*, 85 and 103.

75 Johannes M. Müller, "From diaspora to 'imagined minority'. Memories of persecution and the cross-generational transformation of Protestant migrant networks in early modern Europe," *Diasporas* 31:1 (2018): 21–34.

born and educated in a society already reconciled. This attracted the attention of the judges, who asked the young Hugues de Bray for the source of his information. Strikingly, at least according to the testimony of the young man, it had not been passed down in the form of family memory on his father's side, but came from an external source, in this case, exiles in the Protestant refuge of the Dutch Republic that de Bray had recently encountered during a business trip he made in 1609 under the protection of the Truce. Those exiles had stopped off for a time in Valenciennes on their way back to Germany from England. Hence, the Truce had created new information channels about the former bonds that Calvinist refugees had established during the early phases of the Revolt half a century before. And while the young man did not want to harm the good reputation of his father for passing on the information, it is clear that he was referring to the new increased constellation of mobility between the royal and republican Low Countries.

The trial had two outcomes. The arrested de Brays and their associates were banished for a period of three to six years and sentenced to burn those of their books that were deemed to be heretical, but what is most striking here, is that this exile occurred without the penalties being publicized and without publicized ceremonies of abjuration or reconciliation. Still, Hugues de Bray was forced to retract his words on his knees, so that Mayor Vivien benefited from the moral reparation with respect to the accusations of his exile past. Even so, Vivien's political career came to an abrupt end at the time of the municipal council rotations in 1610 and his name disappeared from the lists of magistrates for good, even though he did not die until some years later, in 1618.[76] It was clear that the new Catholic urban elite could no longer be associated with the searing memory of the troubles of 1566 and the Calvinist refuge. Vivien's public re-emergence and alleged role in Calvinist emigration and return no longer seemed acceptable to the local community: his actions strained the established social and political model within reconciled cities of the Habsburg Low Countries, and represented a mirror-image of the Protestant rebels, who had gained legitimacy through their exile and returned in triumph to Holland and its associated territories beginning in 1572. From this time on, the newly pacified society required the silence of those Protestants who had returned and it asked the erasure of the memory of their exile, while the Catholic exiles were able to boast of their time abroad to climb the social ladder.

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76 Junot, *Les bourgeois de Valenciennes*, 274.

5 Conclusions

To summarize, this article focused on the changing nature of the decisions made by the Spanish King and his representatives at various critical stages during the Dutch Revolt, and on the urban authorities' subsequent involvement in the reconstruction of a Catholic society after 1579. At the start of the Revolt, the Spanish monarchy asked its representatives, and mainly the Duke of Alba, to pursue acts of particularly harsh judicial and military repression against those participating in the 1566–7 troubles, which sparked an unprecedented wave of exile, banishment and confiscation. The almost immediate failure of this approach led the Monarchy to devise other strategies to re-establish connections with its subjects, including those in exile. Gradually, a rhetoric of pacification and reconciliation was translated into a variety of performative measures, such as pardons, amnesty, and the possible recovery of confiscated possessions. Starting from 1579–81, the new Habsburg policy carried out by the Prince of Parma towards newly capitulated towns also included the legal possibility that Protestant could leave, selling their goods, an approach reminiscent to the *jus emigrandi* from the 1555 Treaty of Augsburg. Also, the Spanish monarchy now outlined the conditions and legal premises for the possible return of former subjects, demonstrating its intention to offer refugees and the repentant the possibility of returning to the Spanish Netherlands and reconciliation with King and Church. The conditions established for the reintegration of exiles centred on a *damnatio memoriae* of their possible Protestant past, which sealed the new pact between the elites and the Spanish monarchy, and became an enshrined part of the emerging Tridentine Catholicism in the Habsburg Low Countries.

From the point of view of the refugees, the advantages of exile had to be weighed against their desire to "return home" to the Low Countries and Habsburg rule. Those who fled persecution in 1566 usually considered their departure as a temporary measure caused by the unpredictability of events. In cases where they sought authorization to return to Philip II's territories, the migrants actively used the whole range of the arguments and rhetoric central to the idea of reconciliation. Nevertheless, the conditions necessary for reintegration into Habsburg society changed radically over the course of the conflict. The aforementioned cases of returning individuals or groups prove that not only Catholics did often return but also members of other religious groups also migrated back to the Habsburg Low Countries, where town officials generally welcomed them as long as they were willing to live under a Catholic regime. At this stage of the research, a quantitative analysis remains impossible but other case studies show the repetition of this phenomenon until the middle of the

seventeenth century, at least within the context of professional and mobile textile workers who could be hosted by relatives and find their a job and a marriage partners within Protestant places like England or in the Dutch Republic before "going home" in a Tridentine society. Since the current historiography is in a process of abandoning the black-and-white assessments of a primarily Protestant diaspora, it should now turn to all the migration flows of both immigrants and emigrants in and around the Habsburg Low Countries.