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The Harvest of a Celebration: What more do we need to know about Charles V after the year 2000?

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The Harvest of a Celebration:

What more do we need to know about Charles V after the year 2000?

The historiography on Charles V seems to be propelled by the commemorations of his birth, demise and death. The years 1955-1960 saw the emergence of a vast number of exhibition catalogues, monographs and conference volumes, after which few people had the courage to publish an extensive biography. Even the most up-to-date biography of that period, Manuel Fernández Álvarez' *Un hombre para Europa*, which was soon translated into English and German,¹ would be labelled today as a 'short biography'. After his very sizeable latest book,² the author would certainly agree to that qualification, although in private conversation he added that 'his view had remained unchanged'. The great exhibitions organised in Ghent in 1955 and in Vienna and Toledo in 1958, as well as the conferences held in 1957 and 1958 in Brussels, Paris and Cologne, were truly international acknowledgements of Charles's historical importance. In the heyday of economic growth after the Second World War historians had discovered a new and attractive dimension in the pursuit of study of an empire, an economic system and a cultural world which transcended purely national contexts.³

In 2000, a new wave of exhibitions, catalogues, biographies and conferences affected a number of countries, especially Spain⁴ and Belgium – in fact only Flanders – and to a much lesser extent Austria, Germany and at a later date also Italy. Various popular biographies appeared together with the more serious works by Alfred Kohler and Manuel Fernández Álvarez. Their books are based on decades of research in particular types of sources, respectively the Acts of the Imperial Diet (*Reichstagsakten*),⁵

¹ First published as *Charles V, Elected Emperor and Hereditary Ruler* (London 1975), later published in Spanish (Madrid 1976) and in German as *Imperator Mundi* (Stuttgart-Zurich 1977). Apart from Henri Lapeyre's very concise synthesis in the *Collection 'Que sais-je?'* (Paris 1973 and Barcelona 1972), the most voluminous biography worth mentioning is by Charles Terlinden (Brussels 1965), a book reflecting a political point of view which was rather traditional even at that time.

² *Carlos V. El César y el Hombre* (Madrid 1999) 887 pages.

³ Overviews of the historiography in Fernández Álvarez, *Carlos V*, 27-34 and in Alfred Kohler, *Karl V Eine Biographie* (Munich 1999) 18-22. Kohler's book was also published in Spanish (Madrid 2000), José Martínez Millán, 'Historiografía sobre Carlos V', in Idem, ed., *La Corte de Carlos V*, vol. I (Madrid 2000) 17-41.

⁴ See the contribution by Alfredo Alvar in this volume.

⁵ Heinrich Lutz – Alfred Kohler, eds., *Aus der Arbeit an den Reichstagen unter Kaiser Karl V* (Göttingen 1986).

and the Habsburg correspondence, to the publication of which both authors contributed considerably.⁶ Furthermore, two richly illustrated volumes containing contributions by authors of different nationalities were published in Spain and in Belgium; the latter in five languages.⁷ Of the five biographies that appeared some were new editions of older works, three of which concentrated on Spain, paying much less attention to other realms belonging to Charles's empire.⁸ The question arises in what way the approach to the Emperor's person and his epoch has changed during the long interval between the commemorations in the fifties and those around the year 2000. In what respect has the progressive availability of source materials expanded our knowledge? Did the formulation of new research problems lead to considerable shifts in our views?

An ample variety of new and detailed information has been the result of several major conferences and specialized volumes. It will take some time before their findings will be fully integrated into a coherent and fresh view of the subject. So far, however, these efforts have not led up to a truly innovative approach to understanding this exceptional epoch in European history – a period in which an extraordinary conglomerate of realms was ruled by a single prince during four decades.⁹ The most comprehensive research project based on sources was undoubtedly the one directed by José Martínez Millán. It focused on the structure of the various courts of the emperor and his family, taking into account courtiers and servants of every rank. The entire system of the central government was described and analysed at the level of its structural changes as well as at the level of the careers of the councillors and courtiers. The careers of all the councillors were thoroughly examined, and those of about four thousand courtiers serving at the courts of the different members of the dynasty were succinctly described. This prosopography will prove to be an invaluable instrument for further research, allowing new insights to develop concerning the functioning of the various councils and courts. Structures and processes such as the changing composition of these bodies in which allegiances to a particular clan or

⁶ Manuel Fernández Álvarez, ed., *Corpus documental de Carlos V*, 5 vols. (Salamanca 1971-81).

⁷ *CAROLUS IMPERATOR* (Madrid 2000); Hugo Soly, ed., *Charles V 1500-1558 and his time* (Antwerp 1999), with contributions by Wim Blockmans, Peter Burke, Fernando Checa Cremades, Geoffrey Parker, Mia J. Rodríguez-Salgado, Heinz Schilling, Henri Vanhulst, Immanuel Wallerstein.

⁸ Joseph Pérez, *Carlos V* (Madrid 1999); John Lynch, *Carlos V y su tiempo* (Barcelona 2000); Pierre Chaunu – Michèle Escamilla, *Charles Quint* (Paris 1999); Wim Blockmans, *Keizer Karel V. De utopie van het keizerschap* (Amsterdam-Louvain 2000), also published in Spanish (Madrid 2000) and in English as *Emperor Charles V 1500-1558* (London 2002); William S. Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V* (Basingstoke-New York 2002).

⁹ José Martínez Millán – Ignacio J. Esquerria Revilla, eds., *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)*, 4 vols. (Madrid 2001), Juan Luis Castellano Castellano – Francisco Sánchez-Montes Gonzáles, eds., *Carlos V. Europeísmo y Universalidad. Religión, cultura y mentalidad*, 5 vols. (Madrid 2001), Bernardo J. García García, ed., *El Imperio de Carlos V* (Madrid 2000); Alfred Kohler, ed., *Karl V – Carlos V* (Vienna-Madrid 2001); Jan Denolf – Barbara Simons, eds., *(Re)constructing the Past. Proceedings of the Colloquium on History and Legitimation* (Brussels 2000); a special issue of *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, LIV (Ghent 2000) deals mainly with the conflict between the town and the Emperor in 1537-1540 and with the architecture of the count's residences in Flanders.

nation played a part can now be analysed with great precision.¹⁰ Hopefully, this type of research will continue, analysing the courts of the various viceroys and governors general, in order to assess the functioning of personal bonds hidden behind political developments.

Compared to the situation around the commemorative year 1958 historians now dispose of a greater number of wide-ranging source publications including prosopographical information about power elites. The Emperor's entire correspondence was made accessible through the use of an electronic database.¹¹ Moreover, a huge number of monographs were published concerning particular aspects in a specific region or period, all contributing to a better understanding of a variety of details or even major aspects of the reign.

When organising the colloquium 'The World of Emperor Charles V' our key word was 'integration': how to integrate the recent results of international research, the impressive bulk of newly available publications and source materials, into an all-encompassing view of the Emperor and his reign? We were considering two levels of integration: 1. integration of the various research themes pursued by scholars in diverse countries; 2. interregional integration of data. Have results obtained by research focusing on particular territories any impact on research concerned with different regions? Is it possible and feasible to rephrase our questions while digesting the research achievements of scholars who concentrated on another territory? How should the most recent insights and data which were acquired at a regional or even local level be incorporated into general overviews and into approaches to the history of those regions of the realm which were deeply influenced by external developments? An international group of scholars met 4-6 October, 2000 in Amsterdam under the aegis of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in order to present and discuss results of recent or comparatively recent research and thus contribute to the ideal of integration which the organizers had in mind.

Alfred Kohler noted that, so far, two main historiographical approaches have prevailed: one centred on the Mediterranean and dominated by Spanish, French and Anglo-Saxon scholars; the other focusing on Central Europe, especially the Holy Roman Empire. His aim was to bridge the gap. One might raise the question whether he and Fernández Álvarez paid enough attention to a few other regions, for instance Italy and the Low Countries. For these two territories, most of the ongoing research takes place at a regional level, although several studies have been published about the central administration of the Low Countries. In this volume, Erik Aerts presents a comprehensive view of financial and economic developments in the Southern Netherlands during Charles's reign. The language problem regarding these and other countries often remains an obstacle for many scholars, as sources and specialized publications tend to be in native languages. Therefore, one of the aims of

¹⁰ José Martínez Millán, ed., *La Corte de Carlos V*, 5 vols. (Madrid 2000).

¹¹ Horst Rabe, ed., *Karl V. Politische Korrespondenz. Brieflisten und Register* (Konstanz 1999).

our colloquium was to help overcome those barriers and contribute to a general accessibility of new research findings. James D. Tracy's recent book *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War* offers an admirable demonstration of the added value attained by studying the Kingdom of Naples and the Low Countries: he greatly contributes to an accurate understanding of the functioning of the empire as a whole.¹²

On the question of thematic integration, Kohler observed a low level of knowledge concerning finances and the links between economic and political systems.¹³ Although some published material on this issue does exist for Italy and the Low Countries,¹⁴ there is indeed a great need to have these data expressed in comparable value units, and to incorporate them into a comprehensive study of the imperial finances. Fortunately, Tracy has taken on this task, whilst Spanish as well as Italian scholars have collected more relevant material.¹⁵ Tracy has shown how Charles's almost continuous warfare brought about massive movements of tens of thousands of mercenaries from Spain, Naples, Lombardy and Southern Germany to various battle-grounds. He studied the constant worries regarding the provision of their payment in good time and at the place of action. The ever increasing amounts of money could only be supplied by the largest bankers in Augsburg, Genoa and Antwerp, who had their reliable agents in all major European centres and could make the required capital available. Under the government's increasing pressure to pile loans on loans, they became increasingly cautious and exacting.¹⁶ In the sphere of public finance, the political system became closely interwoven with the international economy. From the election of 1519 onwards, the imperial policy would have been inconceivable without the willingness and the increasing possibilities of the banking-houses to lend and to transfer large sums of money. The profits made by the big firms during these operations must have been considerable as they charged about 13% as exchange and transfer fees and interest rates of around 20 to 25 %, accounting for their real risks. Increasingly, however, they had the return on their loans funded on future tax income

¹² *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge 2002).

¹³ Kohler, *Karl V*, 19-22

¹⁴ Recent overviews. Giuseppe Felloni, 'Economie, finances et monnaie dans les possessions italiennes de Charles Quint', in: *L'escarcelle de Charles Quint Monnaies et finances au XVI^e siècle* (Brussels 2000) 235-263, see also Giorgio Chittolini's contribution to this volume, James D. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg Rule, 1506-1566* (Berkeley 1990) 74-89, 115-146, Idem, 'The taxation system of the county of Holland during the reigns of Charles V and Philip II', in *Economisch- en Sociaal-Historisch Jaarboek* 48 (1985) 71-117, Wim Blockmans, 'The Emperor's Subjects', in Soly, ed., *Charles V, 247-252*; Idem, 'The Low Countries in the Middle Ages', in Richard Bonney, ed., *The Rise of the Fiscal State, ca 1200-1815* (Oxford 1999) 281-308.

¹⁵ James D. Tracy, 'Charles V, his Bankers, and their Demands', in Denolf – Simons, *(Re)constructing the Past*, 119-143, in his contribution to this volume, the author refers to his recently published book *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War*; Carlos Javier de Carlos Morales, *Carlos V y el crédito de Castilla El tesorero general Francisco de Vargas y la Hacienda Real entre 1516 y 1524* (Madrid 2000), various contributions in Martínez Millán – Esquerro Revilla, *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político*, vol. IV, 363-473, Bernardo Hernández, *Fiscalidad de Reinos e Deuda Pública en la Monarquía Hispánica del siglo XVI* (Córdoba 2002)

¹⁶ Tracy, *Impresario of War*, 244-247

in various realms, mostly in Castile. In order to buttress their loan guarantees they dealt directly with the responsible agents of representative bodies rather than with government officials – a policy which has been called fiscal devolution.¹⁷ The decades of imperial warfare thus strongly contributed to the integration of the European financial market, as it mobilised the unskilled rural labour force for the army, raising the monthly wages of *Landsknechte* by 55 % between 1529 and 1553. This easily exceeded not only the rate of inflation but also the rise of other wages.¹⁸

It is hoped that Tracy's work will incite others to study the international transfer of tax money systematically and calculate the costs of this internationalisation of public finance for the various realms and their subjects. For the study of Charles's imperial policy it is essential to acquire an overall understanding of his financial possibilities and their limits. The question which is often raised in Spain, about the 'cost of empire' allegedly burdening its subjects in an inordinately heavy way, can only be answered if the scattered bits and pieces of information hailing from regional sources are brought together. Tracy took a big step forward in comparing, in his contribution to this volume and more extensively in his book, the well-documented and representative cases of Castile, the Kingdom of Naples, and the Low Countries' core provinces Flanders, Holland and, to a lesser degree, Brabant. Between 1529-1533 and 1549-1553, the nominal value of subsidies (corrected for inflation) increased by 73,5 % in Naples, 49% in Castile, and 42 % in Flanders and Holland. Much importance should be attached, however, to the initial level of taxation, which was much higher in the Low Countries than in Naples. The relative figures of increase have therefore to be complemented by absolute and per capita data. Expressed in Spanish ducats, the subsidies levied in the 35 years from 1519 to 1553 in the two provinces of Flanders and Holland yielded about 10.5 million; those in Castile 9.3 million, and in Naples 5.7 million. Per head of population this means respectively 10.2, 1.6 and 2.7 Spanish ducats. Taking into account that Flanders and Holland contributed only 47 % of all subsidies granted in the Low Countries, the contrast between the three realms becomes even more striking.¹⁹

Representative assemblies strongly objected to the export of income belonging to their domestic treasuries, but in this respect the estates in the Low Countries proved to be far more effective than the Naples Parlamento and the Castilian Cortes. Most of the Castilian financial exports, however, stemmed from sources outside the representative bodies' authority: transfers originating from Portugal and France, tributes from

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 129-130, 178, 308-311

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 248

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 249-253. The total population figure of 1,250,000 for Flanders and Holland given by Tracy (252) is evidently far too high; a more feasible figure is 1,030,000, calculated on the basis of 750,000 inhabitants of Flanders and 280,000 in Holland; see A.M. van der Woude, 'Demografische ontwikkeling van de Noordelijke Nederlanden 1500-1800', in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* vol V (Haarlem 1980) 131, H. Soly, 'La dominance du capitalisme commercial', in E. Witte, ed., *Histoire de Flandre* (Brussels 1983) 108

the Indies, and church revenues granted by the pope. The income from Charles's domain in the Low Countries produced 20 to 25% of the total income from this realm in the peace years 1534 and 1551, but in the years of war steep rises of the budget combined with alienation and mortgaging of property reduced this share to a mere 5% in 1545, when the costs of earlier wars were still strongly felt.²⁰ The Low Countries repeatedly suffered invasions and were, moreover, very vulnerable to disruptions of the economically important maritime trade and fishery; fleets had to be accompanied by armed convoys. The central government was especially eager to protect the maritime link between the Northern and Iberic parts of the empire against attacks by French galleys.²¹ These lands did contribute heavily, in their own way, to 'the cost of empire'. The way in which this happened was probably closer to the methods used in Milan than in Castile. Be that as it may, the financial contributions to warfare together with the enrolment of mercenaries from various realms did lead to a certain effective integration within the empire.

Once we are able to calculate 'the cost of empire', it will also be possible to raise a counterfactual question: would the subjects of the empire have saved a lot of money compared to the costs of rule generated by a greater number of smaller, but competitive, dynastic states? Or: did the Habsburg empire offer better protection against foreign aggression from France, the Ottoman empire or even England, than isolated rule of every single realm? The long-standing rivalry between the Emperor and the King of France, for instance, expressed itself unavoidably, so it seems, in warfare. In her contribution to this volume, M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado shows how Charles's notions of dynastic and personal honour and glory clashed with ideals of Christian morality and the ruler's supreme duty to maintain peace. If anything, Charles's personal union of realms facilitated and stimulated financial and commercial contacts between all its constituent parts, in war as in peace. This must have contributed to long-term growth, even if most of the money gained in such a way was bound to evaporate in transaction costs and negative production. Moreover, it can be assumed that conflicts would be more easily avoided in an empire which was held together by some form of political unity, although this did not bring domestic pacification per se, and indeed brought about internal war in Germany. However, Habsburg power did resist all invasions of Naples, Milan, Navarre and the Low Countries and thus offered a certain degree of protection, albeit at a very high price. This also may have contributed to the economic growth manifesting itself so clearly in the various parts of Charles's empire.

If the relations between the empire and its economic and financial preconditions and developments appear as one of the main fields in which innovative research has

²⁰ Tracy, *Impresario of War*, 102; the author ignores, however, the domain revenues and funding in the Low Countries, see Blockmans, *Emperor Charles*, 158.

²¹ Louis Sicking, *Neptune and The Netherlands. State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance* (Leiden-Baltimore 2004) ch. 3, 4, 5.

taken place, the structure of Charles's political system can be identified as a second domain in which considerable progress has been made. How to organise communications was certainly one of the most pressing problems at the time, and for current research it is one of the most intriguing issues. Information about the functioning of the administrative apparatus was an imperative concern, and closely related to the need to keep many messages secret and undecipherable to political opponents. Horst Rabe and his team have done the excellent job of collecting about 120,000 letters (in photocopy) exchanged between Charles and his many correspondents. This collection, which is kept in Konstanz University Library, is made accessible by electronic means. This electronic access will, in turn, facilitate future systematic examination of the correspondence which will certainly yield considerably more detailed information about the way the empire was governed. It will, for instance, disclose how the imperial system functioned at its highest level: that of the Emperor and the King of the Romans themselves, the viceroys, regents, governors general and military commanders. Peter Marzahl's contribution to this volume illustrates the importance of the collection and the possibilities it offers to researchers by taking the Empress Isabella's first regency as an example. Paleographic examination will disclose more about the role and possible political influence of ministers, diplomats, and secretaries, following the example of a detailed study of Mary of Hungary's administration of the Low Countries.²²

More prosopographical studies about councillors, diplomats, and secretaries are needed in order to understand fully the expansion of bureaucratic government, without which the complicated empire might never have been able to withstand the heavy pressures to which it was subjected.²³ Martínez Millán's multi-volume prosopographical analysis of the court, which in his view was the most prominent central institution of the empire, is a milestone. He approaches the court as an amalgam of the various councils and the individual servants. The essence of court life appears to have been the interaction between the most influential personalities holding functions in various institutions simultaneously. A formal, one-by-one study of such institutions could never reveal how power was exercised in reality. The study of relations between the administrative centres and the peripheries, in terms of levying taxes, information, legislative regulation and mobility of state servants seems to be the logical next step on the research agenda. In fact, it appears as if research is moving

²² Laetitia V.G. Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden* (Hilversum 1995).

²³ For the diplomats see the huge prosopography by Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la diplomacia española*, 6 vols. (Madrid 1990-99); for the Spanish royal council, see Fritz Walser – Rainer Wohlfeil, *Die spanischen Zentralbehörden und der Staatsrat Karls V.* (Göttingen 1959); Pedro Gan Giménez, *El consejo real de Carlos V* (Granada 1988); José Martínez Millán, ed., *Instituciones y Elites de Poder en la Monarquía Hispánica durante el siglo XVI* (Madrid 1992); for the central councils of the Low Countries see Michel Baelde, *De collaterale raden onder Karel V en Filips II (1530-1578)* (Brussels 1965); for a provincial council see P.P.L. van Peteghem, *De Raad van Vlaanderen en staatsvorming onder Karel V (1515-1555)* (Nijmegen 1990); for the lower bureaucracy see Jean Houssiau, *Les secrétaires du Conseil Privé sous Charles Quint et Philippe II (c.1531-c.1567)* (Brussels 1998).

away from biography and *histoire événementielle* to an approach focusing on collective and institutional issues in which the political system itself is becoming the key concept.²⁴ And indeed, it may be argued that the real issue is the question why this patchwork empire, ruled by this particular Emperor, somehow remained intact for nearly forty years under far from ideal circumstances. For instance, part of our colloquium was devoted to Spanish rule in Italy, where the rulers had to come to terms with many problems: political, financial and economic. In his contribution about Genoa and Charles V, Arturo Pacini defends the view that the imperial system structurally involved Italian political elites. As Giovanni Muto argues in his contribution to this volume, the absence of the King was at times certainly deplored in Naples, but at other times it was welcomed, because viceregal power was integrated with the interests of the local political elites – which made for a political system which was not only functional but even favourable to both city and kingdom. In Milan the administrative and fiscal innovations introduced by the Spanish had a profound effect on the duchy as a whole, although, as Giorgio Chittolini reminds us in his article in this volume, they were, from the imperial point of view, slow in yielding the desired results. Studying relations between the core lands of Charles's Empire and the peripheries, Hungary is often regarded as a *terra incognita*. The country was, however, a very important part of the imperial political and military system because of the struggle against expansionist Ottoman power. Although, as Péter Sahin-Tóth shows in his contribution to this volume, there was a certain mental and real distance between the Hungarian high nobility and the Habsburg court, the Emperor and his brother King Ferdinand realised the importance of an integrated anti-Ottoman policy involving Habsburg presence in Hungary – a presence which may or may not have been benevolent to that country as a whole.

The third major field which saw innovative research is that of relations between rulers, printers-publishers and artists. This theme is now tackled from the viewpoint of communication between ruler and subject concentrating on the way a given image of the ruler was disseminated and a broader public informed about his glorious deeds. In Renaissance Italy, political propaganda had increasingly become bound up with patronage of the arts and was making ample use of the new printing techniques enabling mass distribution of publications. Charles's grandfather Emperor Maximilian I had introduced these communication techniques in the Empire. Owing to the large exhibitions and concerts which were programmed for the commemorations around 2000 in various countries, this theme has been studied in depth, not only at the level of individual patronage but also taking into account the use of new subjects and the emergence of new forms in great works of art as well as in ephemeral art forms used for public ceremonies such as *joyeuses entrées*.²⁵ The mobility of artists and

²⁴ Horst Rabe, ed., *Karl V. Politik und politisches System* (Konstanz 1996).

²⁵ See the revised and lavishly illustrated book by Fernando Checa Cremades, *Carlos V. La imagen del poder en el renacimiento* (Madrid 1999) and the catalogue *Carlos V. Las armas y las letras* (Madrid-Granada 2000).

the dissemination of new subjects and forms seems to be reasonably well documented as far as visual arts are concerned, thanks to the special attention given to the topic in 1958-60. In recent times, the study of the role of musicians and music itself in these respects is receiving a strong impulse.²⁶ One of the new themes of study is political propaganda, with special focus on the series of images executed by court artists such as Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen, Maarten van Heemskerck and Antoon van den Wijngaerde.²⁷ So far their work has been studied mainly for the factual information it conveys, but exactly how they created a kind of legitimisation of imperial policy is a question yet to be answered. Here, Peter Burke has made the first important move.²⁸ Barbara Ullrich's contribution to this volume deals with another interesting case in point: the iconographic programme of the San Petronio cathedral in Bologna. The Emperor, moreover, employed about a dozen historiographers for similar tasks.

Charles was not the kind of patron who collected beautiful or exotic and extravagant objects, as did his aunt Margaret, his sister Mary and his rival Francis as well as the majority of the Italian princes. However, a turning point was reached about 1547, when he began to commission Titian and the Leoni's with very personal portraits and devotional works. By then he had reached the summit of his *reputación* but was increasingly suffering from poor health. In this volume, Ulrike Becker pays attention to the imperial image captured in the two well-known full-length portraits of Charles V with a dog, by Jakob Seisenegger and Titian respectively. Especially the Leoni sculptures seem to offer compensation for the rapid deterioration of Charles's political situation and physical condition by glorifying him in the shape of a classical hero. Charles himself had paid little attention to his image building until his imperial coronation. He simply conformed to the tradition of his Burgundian dynasty which was mainly kept alive by his aunt Margaret. She had commissioned her court painter Bernard van Orley with the designs for a series of eight tapestries representing the battle of Pavia, which was possibly hung in 1530 in the palace at Brussels. It was she who sent from Brussels to Bologna, along with 2000 cavaliers, her engraver Robert Péril whose mission was to immortalize the glorious event of the imperial coronation.²⁹ It had been Charles's grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara who had advised his master to have his hair cut short and to grow a beard for this occasion in order to look more like a classical emperor, an image familiar to the Italian Renaissance.

Exhibitions have been organised in Flanders and in Spain around specific themes pertaining to Charles. Three of them consisted solely of tapestries. The most important

²⁶ Eugeen Schreurs, ed., *De schatkamer van Alamure Muziek en miniaturen uit keizer Karels tijd (1500-1535)* (Louvain 1999); Herbert Kellmann, ed., *The treasure of Petrus Alamure Music and arts in Flemish court manuscripts 1500-1535* (Ghent-Amsterdam-Chicago 1999), Francis Maes, ed., *De klanken van de keizer Karel V en de polyfonie* (Louvain 1999).

²⁷ Montserrat Galera i Monegal, *Antoon van den Wijngaerde, pintor de ciudades y de hechos de armas en la Europa del Quinientos* (Madrid-Barcelona 1998).

²⁸ 'Presenting and Re-presenting Charles V', in Soly, ed., *Charles V*, 393-475.

²⁹ *Carolus Keizer Karel V 1500-1558* (Catalogue Ghent 1999, also available in a French translation) nr 144

of those was held in Mechelen showing the complete series of nine tapestries called *Los Honores* which were designed by Bernard van Orley and Jan Gossaert, again on the insistence of Margaret of Austria, in order to celebrate Charles's coronation as King of the Romans in Aachen in 1520. The nine pieces measuring 5 to 10 metres each, represent the ruler's virtues, a visual variation on the theme of the mirror-of-princes. This series of tapestries, which is kept in Madrid, was restored for the occasion and was shown outside Spain for the first time since Charles regularly took them along on his various journeys.³⁰

The Emperor developed a keen interest in the arts only in so far as they contributed to the glorification of his deeds. Still following Burgundian tradition he appointed historiographers, but he also took a new initiative. On his so-called crusade to Tunis in 1535 he was accompanied by the painter Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen, whose task it was to make sketches of the events for a series of tapestries and engravings. These were realised only after 1548.³¹ Similarly, Maarten van Heemskerck made drawings of the Emperor's victories which were used for engravings published in 1556 and 1558.³² This suggests that even when Charles paid attention to his personal reputation he did not really encourage artists to deliver their final products so that these could be shown to the world. We have to describe Charles's attitude to the arts until around 1547 as purely instrumental for political propaganda and self-glorification, but nevertheless he was evidently not making the best use of his investments. It was only in his later years, from the very brief moment of his quasi hegemonic imperial power onwards, that the mature Emperor initiated and developed artistic patronage in a systematic way. It should be noted that exhibitions such as those held in 2000 are approaching Charles's reign by showing many objects which were closely related to imperial propaganda. This may seem obvious to scholars specializing in iconology and rhetoric, but not to the innocent beholder. In a time in which communication was revolutionized – and in this respect the sixteenth century is similar to our own days – the manipulative effects of images become more apparent. Art should therefore not only be exhibited for its intrinsic quality, but also with an eye on its communicative potential.

Religious and intellectual aspects of the world of Charles V were the subjects of a few specialized exhibitions and volumes in or around the year 2000 and, naturally,

³⁰ Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores* (Catalogue Mechelen 2000) in Dutch, French, and English. The town of Oudenaarde commemorated its local tradition of tapestry weaving by putting on an exhibition which covered the art from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Ingrid De Meûter – Martine Vanwelden, eds., *Oudenaardse wandtapijten van de 16e tot de 18e eeuw* (Catalogue Oudenaarde 1999, Tielt 1999). A number of Flemish tapestries from Spanish royal collections have been shown in Brussels cathedral.

³¹ *Kaiser Karl V Macht und Ohnmacht Europas* (Catalogue Bonn-Vienna 2000) nrs. 153-164; *Der Kriegszug Kaiser Karls V gegen Tunis Kartons und Tapissereien* (Milan-Vienna 2000).

³² *Carolus*, nr. 227; *Kaiser Karl V*, nrs. 423-434, 416.

made their appearance in other exhibitions and publications as well.³³ In his contribution to this volume, José Martínez Millán discusses the problem of heterodoxy in Spain, focusing on spiritual currents at the court of Charles V, while Aline Goosens presents her new findings, based on truly herculean labours in the archives, on the persecution of heretics in the Southern Netherlands. Last but not least, Martina Fuchs draws attention to an original theme: the image of Charles V in nineteenth and twentieth century German literature, reminding us that Emperors and their Empires have an interesting afterlife.

It is obvious that the study of various aspects of Charles's life and Empire has been greatly stimulated by the commemorations around the year 2000. International scholarly exchange has never been so intensive and fruitful as it is now and has helped to deepen our understanding of the interdependencies between the various parts of the Empire. It is safe to conclude that the general studies and biographies about Charles V and his world which were published in 2000 have already become slightly obsolete because of the huge amount of new and detailed source material published at the same time. One hopes that we will not have to wait until 2058 for the publication of a new synthesis.

³³ Heinz Schilling, 'Charles V and Religion. The Struggle for the Integrity and Unity of Christendom', in Soly, ed., *Charles V*, 285-363; Tineke Padmos – Geert Vanpaemel, eds., *De geleerde wereld van Keizer Karel* (Catalogue Louvain 2000), Geert Vanpaemel – Tineke Padmos, eds., *Wereldwijd Wetenschappers rond keizer Karel* (Louvain 2000).