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Memory wars in the Low Countries, 1566-1700

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Citation

Steen, J. A. van der. (2014, June 24). *Memory wars in the Low Countries, 1566-1700*. Brill.
Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/26493>

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Issue Date: 2014-06-24

CHAPTER 3

DYNASTIC IDENTITY AND THE REVOLT

Cultural historians such as Kevin Sharpe have argued that in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe the public ‘image’ of ruling dynasties became increasingly important.¹ A quintessential characteristic of early modern dynastic image-making was the creation of an appearance of permanence, of ‘having always been there’. Thus, the exercise of dynastic power, Sharpe demonstrates, was ‘inextricably connected to cultural memory’.² In the Southern Netherlands, however, memories of the Revolt seriously undermined Habsburg efforts of constructing an image of dynastic continuity. It was difficult to forget the Revolt because the conflict with the North was still going on and required an active response. And, as this chapter will argue, in order to forget a certain past, one first had to specify what needed to be forgotten.³ The study of dynastic memory-making in the Southern Netherlands is also interesting because the Archdukes Albert and Isabella in many ways set the example in Counter-Reformation Europe, using persuasion rather than violence to recatholicise the population. The Southern government was one of the first to successfully set straight the damage inflicted upon church and dynasty by the Reformation and the Revolt. Regions dealing with similar problems, such as Bohemia and south-western Germany, in later periods adopted strikingly similar solutions.⁴

Unlike the Habsburgs, members of the house of Orange in the North needed to celebrate the Revolt as a break with the past in order to justify their privileged status as stadholders. The cultivation of a popular image of William I as *pater patriae* and liberator from Spanish aggression provided subsequent princes of Orange with a narrative that could be used to justify their leading role in Dutch politics. Hence, the Oranges and their adherents became the most important and influential proponents of memories of the Dutch Revolt. Still, they faced two problems. Firstly, their ambitions for hereditary Orange rule

¹ Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³ A point also made by: Diane C. Margolf, ‘Adjudicating Memory: Law and Religious Difference in Early Seventeenth-Century France’, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27:2 (1996), pp. 399-404; and: Ross Poole, ‘Enacting Oblivion’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22:2 (2009), pp. 149-158.

⁴ Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*; Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

contradicted the way they had risen to power, namely by toppling another dynasty, and, secondly, these ambitions could seem at odds with the republican constitution of the United Provinces.⁵

This chapter will examine how the South Netherlandish branch of the Habsburg dynasty in the Royal Netherlands and the house of Orange in the Dutch Republic dealt with the problem of constructing an image of dynastic continuity in a time of political turmoil and how they to used memories of the Revolt to camouflage political reality.

Oblivion and dynastic reconstruction

One of the main grievances of the rebels in the 1560s had been the absence of their prince. Both nobles and urban elites resented being ruled by advisors, such as Granvelle and Alba, who lacked natural affection for the country.⁶ Philip II eventually came up with a dynastic solution to the problem by giving the Netherlands as a dowry to his daughter Infanta Isabella. From 1598, when the Cession took place, Isabella and her husband Archduke Albert ruled the Low Countries as joint sovereigns.⁷ In the following section I will explain how Habsburg princes and their supporters deployed memories of the past, first to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Cession of 1598, secondly to bind indigenous elites to their cause, and finally to restore the bonds between the dynasty and South Netherlandish Catholicism.

Cession of 1598

At the festivities in celebration of the Act of Cession on 21 August 1598 in Brussels, the chief-president of the Privy Council Jean Richardot gave a speech to the States General in the Great Hall of the Coudenberg Palace in which he stressed the historical significance of the Cession. The speech gives an interesting taste of how a high government official summarised the history of the Low Countries for a live audience. Richardot concentrated on transitions of power and especially the transition in 1555, when Philip II took over from his father, the emperor. ‘In two months and four days, it will be forty-three years ago,’ he reminded his audience, ‘that in this place where we are now, some of you have witnessed and others’ fathers or ancestors have witnessed, this great Emperor Charles V [...] cede

⁵ Jill Stern has already shown how supporters of the house of Orange could circumvent this problem with little difficulty: Stern, *Orangism*, pp. 201-204.

⁶ Groenveld et al., *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog*, pp. 73-101; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 145-146.

⁷ Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, pp. 36-56.

these lands to King Philip his son.’⁸ The chief-president thus drew a parallel between the abdication of Charles V in 1555 and the Cession of 1598. He told the States General that before Charles V left the country in 1555 he had ‘commended you to his son, and his son to you’, but ‘above all’, the emperor had recommended to Philip ‘the conservation of our holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion.’⁹ Philip took his task very seriously, and after the departure of his father he achieved two important successes in the war against France: the battles of St Quentin in 1557 and of Gravelines in 1558, which enabled him to conclude the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. That year, Philip II departed for Spain.

Although Philip II had made sure that he left his Low Countries in good order, Richardot claimed, soon after his departure ‘a tiny spark shot in our house, to which people did not pay attention and which unexpectedly produced a flame that laid all of us in ashes: I mean that cursed and lamentable civil war, which has sucked all the blood from our veins’.¹⁰ The king had planned to return to the Netherlands to restore order, but his advisors convinced him that the troubles were not so serious. ‘O counsels of men!’, Richardot called out, ‘what great evil you have done to us, by not considering what a kind wink from our master could have done for our conservation!’¹¹ When it did become apparent to King Philip that the troubles threatened Habsburg rule in the Low Countries, he did everything in his power to restore order. It was also for this reason, for the commonwealth, that the king ‘decided [...] to marry the Infanta his beloved daughter to the lord the archduke Albert, and to give her as a dowry these Low Countries’.¹² Richardot’s rhetorical strategy was obviously to focus on Charles V and on Philip following in his father’s footsteps, emphasising that the son was being driven by the same motives as his father, who had by 1598 acquired mythical status and who symbolised an idealised period of calm before the Revolt.¹³ Philip’s reign, between 1555 and 1598, was thus characterised by dynastic

⁸ Anonymous, ‘Relation des cérémonies célébrées à Bruxelles [...] pour la cession des Pays-Bas’, KBR manuscript 13485, f. 7v: ‘Deans deux mois et quatre jours, il y aura quarante trois ans, qu’en la mesme place où nous sommes, et où aulcuns de vous auront assisté, et les autres l’auront oy de leurs peres et devanchiers, ce grand Empereur Charles le quint [...] cede ces pays au roy don Philippe son filz’.

⁹ Ibid., f. 8r: ‘il vous recommanda à son filz, et luy à vous, mais sur tout [...] la conservation de nostre sainte Religion Catholique, Apostolique et Romaine’.

¹⁰ Ibid., f. 8v: ‘une petite estincelle qui s’elance en nostre maison, à laquelle l’on ne print garde, et de laquelle, à l’improviste, est sortie une flamme qui nous a tous reduict en cendres; je diz ceste maudicte et luctueuse guerre intestine, qui nous a succé tout le sang de nos vaines’.

¹¹ Ibid., ff. 8v-9r: ‘O conseilz des hommes! [...] quel grand mal nous avez vous faict, pour ne là bien considerer qu’une oeillade de nostre maistre nous pouvoit à tous conserver!’.

¹² Ibid., f. 9r: ‘marier la serenissime infante la tres chere fille avecq monsieur l’archiducq Albert, et luy donner en dot ces pays bas’.

¹³ Karel Degryse, ‘De Antwerpse nazomer’, in: Paul Janssens, ed., *België in de 17^{de} eeuw* (Gent: Snoeck, 2006), p. 132.

continuity, just like the succession by the Archdukes. A month after Richardot's speech, Philip II died. One of the funerary orations in his honour further illustrates how Habsburg propagandists sought to foster a semblance of dynastic continuity. The eulogy was pronounced by the French priest and exiled member of the Catholic League Jean Boucher (1548-1644) on 26 October in the Notre Dame church in Tournai. The loyalist printer Rutger Velpius printed the text in Brussels. Boucher addressed the archdukes and portrayed the father of Archduchess Isabella as 'the saviour of the Catholics, the enemy of the heretics, the terror of the infidels and the support of the afflicted'.¹⁴

Apologists for the dynasty, like Boucher, argued that Philip II had carried a great burden, protecting his subjects from foreign threats and, most importantly, from heretics and unbelievers. That was not a simple task in an empire where, as Boucher using a contemporary commonplace remarked, 'there is no hour neither in the day nor during the night that the sun does not radiate over these lands'.¹⁵ King Philip had to cope with religious deviants from all sides of the Habsburg lands: Muslims in the East, Moors in the South and Protestants in the North. One example was the victory – 'so memorable' – at Lepanto in 1571. In the previous chapter we have seen how this naval encounter between the Spanish, led by Don John of Austria, and the Ottomans became emblematic for the Habsburg defense of European Christendom. In this light, the Revolt was to be regretted all the more, argued Boucher, because it deprived Christians of the possibility to unite and fight against a common enemy such as the Turks. Despite being 'the best king of the earth', Philip was also 'the worst treated by all'.¹⁶ Boucher invoked the Revolt to make his point:

Above all [there was] the indignity of all insurrections, troubles and rebellions, the calumnies and disgraces, the blasphemes and outrages, the infidelities and the bad service [...] which the heresy, the atheism and the malice of those people (and God knows in how many sects) caused against him everywhere [...] Holland and Zeeland still show us the remains.¹⁷

¹⁴ Jean Boucher, *Oraison funebre, sur le trepas de tres-hault, tres grand et tres puissant Monarque don Philippe second de ce nom, Roy d'Espagne &c* (Brussels: Rutger Velpius, 1599), b1v: 'le secours des catholiques, l'enemy des heretiques, la terreur des infidelles, le support des affligez'.

¹⁵ Ibid., f. b4r: 'il n'y a heure ny du iour ny de la nuit, que le soleil ne rayonne sur les terres'.

¹⁶ Ibid., f. d3r: 'Philip. le meilleur Roy de la terre, le plus mal traicté de tous'.

¹⁷ Ibid., ff. d3r, f1r: 'Mais sur tout l'indignité de tant de souleuements, de troubles & rebellions, de calomnies & opprobres, de blasphemes & oultrages, d'infidelitez & desservices [...] que l'heresie, l'atheisme, & la malice de ce monde (& Dieu sçait en combien de sortes) luy a suscité par tout [...] la Holande & la Zelande nous font encore veoir des reste'.

After Philip II had given the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella and her husband Albert, the new rulers of the Habsburg Netherlands toured the country to be formally inaugurated in the most important cities. The cities usually organized great festivities and spectacles for the sovereigns and the inhabitants to enjoy. These ceremonies marked the transition from one ruler to the next, and they demonstrate very well how the past could be deployed to convey political messages, both by the dynastic rulers and by their subjects. For the new Southern regime, the ideal way of coping with the painful past was to present an unbroken continuity of church and dynasty, and a population impervious to heresy and dissent. Margit Thøfner has rightly argued that the ‘right’ performance of the past in the Joyous Entries of 1599-1600 was an important means of lending legitimacy and authority to the new rulers.¹⁸ At the Joyous Entry of Brussels, which took place at the beginning of September 1599, one of the great celebratory arches was decorated with a revealing painting by Hendrik de Clerck, only a preparatory study of which survives to the present day (Figure 10). De Clerck’s work impressed Antwerp secretary Johannes Bochijs, who described it in his monumental account of the ceremonies.¹⁹ On the left hand, and recognisable by their coats of arms, ten virgins (personifying the Habsburg Netherlands) fight the seven rebellious provinces, also personified by virgins. Bochijs noted that in the middle, a personification of all provinces was shedding tears over the civil conflict. But the darkest hour is just before the dawn: from the sky God sends the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, holding olive branches, to the Low Countries to bring peace.

¹⁸ Thøfner, *A Common Art*, p. 199-225.

¹⁹ Johannes Bochijs, *Historica narratio profectionis et inavgvrationis serenissimorum Belgii principum Alberti et Isabellae, Austriae archiducum* (Antwerp: ex officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum, 1602), p. 116; Thanks to his account, scholars have been able to link the lost painting to the surviving preparatory drawing: Elizabeth McGrath, ‘An Allegory of the Netherlandish War by Hendrik de Clerck’, *Rubens and his World: Bijdragen – Etudes – Studies – Beiträge* (Antwerp: Het Gulden Cabinet, 1985), pp. 77-81.



Figure 10. Hendrik de Clerck, *An Allegory of the Netherlandish War* (c. 1599), Hermitage, St Petersburg, GE-15123.

Southern authorities reminded Albert and Isabella that they were inaugurated as rightful lords of the Netherlands in line with custom and tradition. In front of the ducal palace in Brussels, for example, a multi-storey arch portrayed the ancestors of Albert and Isabella, suggesting an unbroken dynastic succession. Bochiuſ provides us with a description of what the arch must have looked like. On the highest level stood the first Habsburg king of Castille, Philip the Fair, together with his wife Joanna of Castille. Beneath them, Philip’s parents Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy adorned the arch. The third storey featured Charles V and his wife Isabella of Portugal. Effigies of their child Philip II and his spouse Isabella of Valois were erected on the second level. On the ground level of the portal, on each side, stood Albert and Isabella.²⁰ The Joyous Entries were an opportunity for the local authorities to show that they considered the archdukes as lawful successors of the houses of Burgundy and Austria which had for centuries ruled important parts of the Netherlandish territories.

²⁰ Bochiuſ, *Historica narratio*, pp. 118-119; see for a more detailed description of Bochiuſ’ account: Thøfner, *A Common Art*, p. 204.

Yet, apart from extolling the virtues of the archdukes and stressing continuity, the Joyous Entries also served as the performance of a wish list, expressing the expectation that the archdukes would turn the tide in the war-stricken land.²¹ In February 1600, the archdukes attended a play during the festivities in Tournai, entitled ‘The Ancient Netherlandish Privileges Restored by Albert and Isabella of Austria’ [‘Antiqua Belgii Libertas per Austriacos Albertum et Isabellam restituta’]. Addressing Isabella as the daughter of the Philip II and Albert as the brother of Rudolf II, the Holy Roman Emperor, the performers voiced their expectation that the new sovereigns would restore local privileges and bring peace.²² Such an example reveals that the Joyous Entry was not a one-way communication but a reciprocal affair.²³ That the archdukes also understood this situation is evident from Isabella’s account of some of her experiences during the entries. Isabella kept a travel diary during the festivities to keep her brother Philip III of Spain informed. Along the route in between the cities, the population shouted ‘Long live the dukes of Brabant, who come among us!’.²⁴ Isabella noted that ‘even the old men and women wept with joy’.²⁵ Once the archducal couple reached Brussels they entered the city on two white jennets because, Isabella explained, ‘a very old prophesy told that as long as two sovereigns are not welcomed on white horses there will be no peace, and people attach much credence to it’.²⁶ Similarly, in Ghent – where the archdukes were inaugurated as count and countess of Flanders – the abbot of St Pierre offered the sword of the ninth-century count Baldwin I of Flanders not to Albert but to Isabella. About this scene, she wrote that ‘there was no other solution than to accept it and then, as I commanded him, he gave it to my cousin’.²⁷

This last example illustrates that the succession of Albert and Isabella was not so much an example of dynastic continuity as it was the product of a political intervention. Philip II ceded his Netherlands to the detriment of his son Philip III and as a dynastic re-adjustment to political reality. Albert was by birth not entitled to be the sovereign of the

²¹ Thøfner, *A Common Art*, pp. 56-57.

²² Andriessen, *De Jezuieten*, pp. 204-205: ‘Antiqua Belgii Libertas per Austriacos Albertum et Isabellam restituta’.

²³ As has been shown by Thøfner, *A Common Art*, pp. 216-217.

²⁴ Charles Terlinden, *l’Archiduchesse Isabelle* (Brussels: La renaissance du livre, 1943), p. 53; also cited in: Francis van Noten, ‘The horses of Albert and Isabella: historical background’, in: Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo, eds., *Albert & Isabella, 1598-1621: Essays* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), p. 344.

²⁵ Terlinden, *l’Archiduchesse*, p. 53: ‘même les vieux et les vieilles pleuraient de joie’.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55: ‘une prophétie fort ancienne disait que, tant que deux souverains ne seraient pas entrés à Bruxelles sur des chevaux blancs, on n’aurait pas la paix et l’on attache ici beaucoup de créance’.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57: ‘il n’y a avait d’autre remède que de l’accepter pour qu’ensuite, comme je le lui commandai, il la mît à mon cousin’.

Low Countries, something which Netherlanders knew quite well.²⁸ Antwerp publisher Johannes Moretus re-published Adrianus Barlandus' *Chronicle of the Dukes of Brabant* in 1600, in which he included Archdukes Albert and Isabella as Philip II's successors.²⁹ In the dedication to Albert and Isabella (in the French edition), the publisher Jean Baptiste Vrients explained the relevance of this work to the archdukes: 'Serene highnesses, he who will take away from women their mirrors and give to princes the mirror of history to study, in so doing will make a great difference in a short time'. According to Vrients, the princely use of the past as a source of examples would be 'very healthy for humankind'.³⁰ He did mention the extraordinary character of the succession: 'God has chosen you miraculously to command the Low Countries, and particularly the duchy of Brabant, and he expressly dismembered them from the crown of Spain, against all custom and expectation of men, to give them as a dowry to madame the most serene Infanta'.³¹ Vrients wrote that

he has thought that it would be his duty, as a humble recognition of your new principedom, to offer to you who are duke and duchess of Brabant, the history of Brabant, and representing to you the government of your predecessors [...] so that you can see the manner in which people have been ruled and governed in this province. And because Latin is not understood by all, I have found it a good thing to make a translation into French so that it may be understood by everyone.³²

Other South Netherlandish publications about the Habsburg lineage around 1600 demonstrate in a similar way the importance supporters of the dynasty attached to dynastic descent and how they camouflaged the discontinuity in the succession of the archdukes. New editions of previously published genealogy books, for instance, served to show that

²⁸ Thøfner, *A Common Art*, pp. 203-208.

²⁹ Hadrianus Barlandus, *Dvcm Brabantiae chronica* (Antwerp: in officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum, 1600), p. 179.

³⁰ Adrian Barlande, *Chroniques des ducs de Brabant* (Antwerp: Iean Baptist Vrints, 1603), f. *2r: 'Qui osteroit aux femmes leurs miroirs, Alteses Serenissimes, & donneroît aux Princes le miroir de l'Histoire pour l'estudier, cestuîlâ feroit de grands remuemens en peu de temps'; 'grandement salubre au genre human'.

³¹ Ibid., f. **3v: 'Dieu non sans mervueille vous avoit choisis pour commander aux Païs-bas, & particulièrement au Duché de Brabant, & qu'expressement il les avoit demembrez de la couronne d'Espagne, voire contre toute coustume & expectation des hommes, pour les donner en dot à Madame l'Infante Serenissime'.

³² Ibid., ff. **3v-**4r: 'il a pensé que ce seroit son devoir, pour une humble reconnoissance de vostre nouvelle principauté, à vous qui estes Duchesse & Duc de Brabant vous offrir l'histoire de Brabant, & vous representant le gouvernement de vos predecesseurs [...] où vous peussiez voir la maniere don't on a regi & gouverné ceste province. Et pour-ce que le Latin n'est de tous entendu, i'ay trouvé bon de le faire, traduire en François, à fin qu'il peut estre entendu de tous.'

the succession of Albert and Isabella was in line with tradition. In the 1598 edition of *Genealogies and Ancient Descents of the Forestiers and Counts of Flanders* [*Les genealogies et anciennes descentes des forestiers et comtes de Flandre*], the succession was traced from Lideric the first forestier of Flanders to the thirty-third count: Philip II of Spain.³³ A few years later, in 1608, a new edition included Albert and Isabella as the thirty-fourth (joint) counts of Flanders, with information on Albert's recent military victories against the rebels of the Dutch Republic, including the capture of Hulst and Ostend.³⁴ Also in Brabant, the dissemination of an image of dynastic continuity seems to confirm that the archdukes as well as the local population found ways to argue around the fact that the line of succession had been interrupted. The government of the city of Antwerp for instance ordered twenty-five portraits of past dukes of Brabant including Albert and Isabella as successors of Philip II.³⁵

Bonding with indigenous elites

The examples above show that the archdukes were both agents and objects of dynastic image-making around 1600. Once they were formally inaugurated, one strategy of making their reign successful was to bind Netherlandish elites to their cause. At the beginning of their reign, for instance, Albert and Isabella rewarded those who had remained loyal and 'constant' in times of trouble by ennobling them.³⁶ Loyal behaviour during the Revolt had been an important reason for ennoblement in the past. Philip II, for example, in 1589 had ennobled the brothers and sisters of Balthasar Gérard, the assassin of the outlawed prince William of Orange.³⁷ Ennoblement was rarely the automatic result of special loyal conduct, however, because aspiring nobles needed to make a formal request. Parma had written to Philip on 20 February 1586 that the Gérard family wanted to be recompensed and they wanted the people 'to honour the memory of the deceased [Balthasar Gérard]'.³⁸ He added that the family's request was 'very just and very equitable and deserves to be complied with

³³ Cornelis Martin and Pierre Balthasar, *Les genealogies et anciennes descentes des forestiers et comtes de Flandre, avec briefves descriptions de levrz vies et gestes. Le tovt receilly des plvs veritables, approuvees et anciennes croniques et annales qvi se trouvent* (Antwerp: Jean Baptist Vrints, 1598).

³⁴ Martin, De Costere and Vrients, *Les genealogies*, p. 120.

³⁵ Floris Prims, *Het stadhuis te Antwerpen. Geschiedenis en beschrijving* (Antwerp: Standaard-Boekhandel, 1930), pp. 34-35.

³⁶ See for instance: anonymous, *Cort |ende warachtich verhael vande incomste des eertshartoch Albertus, met de infante van Spaengien syn huysvrrouwe: ende hare huldinghe in diversche steden, als hertoghe ende hertoghinne van Brabant* (Delft: Jacob Cornelisz Vennecool, 1600), ff. 2r-v.

³⁷ Luc Duerloo, ed., *Wapenboek van de Belgische adel* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1992-1994), pp. 786-787.

³⁸ Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma to Philip II, 20 February 1586, in: *Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne VI*, edited by Gachard, p. 221: 'honorer la mémoire dudict feu'.

and satisfied for several reasons'.³⁹ The first of these was, simply, that Philip II had promised recompense when he outlawed William of Orange. Secondly, Gérard had assassinated the prince knowing full well he risked imprisonment and execution. A third consideration for Parma was that Gérard had 'undergone with such constancy his passion and death that it is known to all the world'.⁴⁰ Fourthly, a reward would console his 'poor and desolate mother'.⁴¹ On 4 March 1589, therefore, Philip II issued letters patent conferring nobility.⁴² The letters patent also conferred a coat of arms on the new noble house of Gérard, and it was described as a lion parted per bend sinister, a line going from the upper right hand corner to the lower left corner, thus breaking the shield – and the lion – in two. In his claw, the lion holds Jupiter's bolt of lightning. The separation of the lion might refer to the divided North and South, and no doubt the bolt of lightning stands for God's revenge.⁴³

An important consideration for the new rulers in rewarding local Netherlanders was that to favour Spaniards might alienate the indigenous population. This is probably why Albert, while still a cardinal-archbishop, at the time of his arrival as governor in 1596 made sure that in addition to his Spanish entourage he appointed major Netherlandish nobles as gentlemen of the chamber, such as the counts of Egmont and Ligne, and the prince-count of Arenberg.⁴⁴ Albert and Isabella devoted special attention to winning sympathy and respect from the indigenous nobility and were eager to show they did not hold grudges. Dries Raeymaekers studied archducal household appointments and discovered that although the archdukes favoured courtiers from a loyal background, they were also prepared to forgive people whose lineage was stained by heresy and insurgency. Count Karel of Egmont, the son of Lamoraal who was executed for treason, and Pieter de Melun, prince of Épinoy, whose father died a notorious rebel, were honoured with positions in the household.⁴⁵

Local officials, too, wanted to show their new rulers that they were trustworthy subjects. Several magistrates submitted requests in which they outlined why they should be

³⁹ Ibid., p. 221: 'très-juste et très-équitable, et digne d'estre furny et accomply, pour plusieurs respects'.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 'il a usé d'une telle constance en sa passion et mort, qu'elle est admirable à tout le monde'.

⁴¹ Ibid.: 'pauvre et désolée mère'.

⁴² 'Lettres patentes de Philippe II qui anoblissent les frères et soeurs de Balthazar Gérard et leurs enfants et descendants à perpétuité' in: ibid., pp. 226-231.

⁴³ Luc Duerloo, 'Het blazoën ontsmet. Adellijke heraldiek als toe-eigening van eer en deugd, 1550-1750', *BMGN* 123 (2008), pp. 647-648.

⁴⁴ Dries Raeymaeckers, "'Siempre un pie en palacio': Het hof en de hofhouding van de aartshertogen Albert en Isabella, 1598-1621' (Antwerp, 2009), unpublished PhD dissertation, pp. 186-188.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 207-208.

granted noble titles. The language of these requests shows what arguments petitioners expected their sovereigns would find valid. But something peculiar happened in this process of replicating the regime's viewpoints. One of the most important requirements for ennoblement was a record of faithful service to the dynasty and the church.⁴⁶ Petitioners therefore moulded their own story to the 'official' history, stressing their loyalty to Habsburg and to the Church of Rome. War invalid Henri de Pierrefontaine wrote that for the last hundred years and more he and his family 'had employed their goods and means for the defence of the dukes and counts of Burgundy in the wars of Italy, Germany and Flanders.'⁴⁷ Not only did he serve the Habsburgs in the war against the Dutch rebels, his family had also provided faithful service to the natural lords of the previous legitimate dynasty. Since all petitioners wanted to make clear they had been most loyal when others had failed to be so, and most Catholic when others had been tempted by heretics, the requests show that memories of the troubled past existed side-by-side with official policies of suppressing the history of the Revolt. Antwerp city counsellor Lancelot T'Serraerts, for example, championed his father's faithful service to Habsburg, 'having also acquitted himself well during the time of the lord the duke of Alba, then governor of the land'.⁴⁸ This was a period that the central government wished to forget but which offered T'Serraerts the opportunity of embellishing his family record. Even in the hardest of times he and his family had remained loyal. Another example is Leon de Harchies, who took pride in himself and his father, being 'always constant,' having defended the 'holy Roman Catholic faith and served the party of his majesty against his heretical and rebellious subjects.'⁴⁹ Petitioners were reluctant to detail the religious turmoil of the 1560s-80s, but they did not abstain from mentioning it when it strengthened their argument considerably. Another petitioner, for instance, bolstered his record of service to church and dynasty by claiming to have resisted the heretics 'during all the troubles since the year 1566.'⁵⁰ Exiles from the North also qualified for ennoblement. Pierre Vlaminck from Oudshoorn in Holland wrote in his request that due to the war, he was compelled to give up his commercial activities. The

⁴⁶ Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels (ARA), Raad van State en Audiëntie (RSA), inv. 883, f. 32r.

⁴⁷ Ibid, f. 193r: 'passes cent ans et plus ont employes leurs biens et leurs moyens a la deffence des ducs et contese de lady Bourgongne es guerres d'Italir d'Allemagne et de Flandre'.

⁴⁸ Ibid, f. 16r: 'le suppt qui s'en est aussy bien acquité du temps de seigneur le Duc d'Alve lors gouverneur du pays'.

⁴⁹ Ibid, f. 18r: 'servij la partie de Sa Ma(te) contre ses subjects heretiques et rebelles'.

⁵⁰ Ibid, f. 244r: 'durant tous les troubles depuis l'an 1566'.

apostille of his request states the ultimate reason for his ennoblement: that ‘he has chosen voluntarily to live in obedience to [the Roman Catholic Church and Habsburg]’.⁵¹

Dynastic piety

Apart from tying indigenous elites to the dynasty, the joint overlords of the Low Countries tried to consolidate and enlarge their power base by propagating what historians call a distinct *Pietas Austriaca*.⁵² The archdukes’ cultivation of an image of being pious rulers contributed to the Catholic Revival in the Southern Netherlands. It was both a reaction to dangers of heresy in the recent past as well as an old Habsburg tradition. Archducal piety, then, was a practice of memory. In his *Reason of State* (1589), Giovanni Botero explained why princes ought to be pious. He wrote that, generally,

The prince must prostrate himself in all humility before the divine majesty and acknowledge that from Him proceed the power of a ruler and the obedience of his subjects. The higher he is raised above his fellows, the lower he should abase himself in the face of God.⁵³

All early modern dynasties in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe interwove their dynastic and religious aspirations, but the Habsburgs developed a particularly strong tradition of piety that cadet branches used throughout the Habsburg world. They traced this tradition of dynastic piety back to the first Habsburg king of the Romans, Count Rudolf I of Habsburg (1218-1291). According to legend, Rudolf was hunting in the woods on a rainy day and met a priest carrying the viaticum – the last Eucharist – to a dying person. Botero ascribed the political successes of the Habsburg dynasty to this encounter:

The greatness of the ruling house of Austria has its origins in piety, for we read that one day Count Rudolf of Habsburg was hunting in a heavy rainstorm when he met a priest walking alone, and when he asked him where he was going and why he was travelling in such bad weather, the priest replied that he was taking the

⁵¹ ARA, RSA, inv. 886, 506r: ‘‘il a volontairement choisy pour vivre en l’obeissance’.

⁵² See Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca: Österreichische Frömmigkeit im Barock* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1982); for the Habsburg Netherlands, see: Duerloo, ‘Pietas Albertina’.

⁵³ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, edited and translated by P.J. Waley and D.P. Waley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 63.

Sacrament to a sick man. Rudolf dismounted at once, and humbly making obeisance to Jesus Christ in the species and form of bread, he laid his cloak over the priest's shoulders to give him more protection against the rain and so that the Host should be carried with more dignity. The good priest, wondering at the courtesy and piety of the count, gave him eternal thanks and prayed that the divine majesty would reward him from the abundance of His grace. A miracle followed: soon afterwards Rudolf became emperor, and his descendants were archdukes of Austria, rulers of the Low Countries, kings of Spain and sovereigns of the New World, lords over innumerable states and immense territories.⁵⁴

On the basis of accounts such as Botero's, María José del Río Barredo has argued convincingly that the Viaticum myth gained new relevance from around 1600 onwards when Habsburg scions used it to demonstrate that religion was the basis for their authority.⁵⁵ Philip II used the legend in his instructions to Philip III and told his son that Rudolf actually gave his horse to the priest as a magnanimous demonstration of his devotion.⁵⁶ Pieter Paul Rubens and Jan Wildens painted *The Act of Devotion of Rudolf I of Habsburg* (1618-1620), which adorned the apartments of Philip IV in the Madrid Alcazar and is currently part of the Prado Museum's collection.⁵⁷ In a Netherlandish setting, the canon of the St Gudula Cathedral in Brussels, Etienne Ydens, in his history of the Sacrament of Miracle praised Isabella's piety 'in which your highness follows the traces of her very virtuous ancestors'.⁵⁸ Ydens continued by telling the story of Rudolf who waited for the Eucharist to be administered and then 'he brought back the same priest in similar fashion up to the church where he came from'.⁵⁹ The legend of the Viaticum illustrated a genealogy in celebration of the house of Habsburg by Théodore Piespordius published in Brussels in 1616 (Figure 11).⁶⁰ The legend was also part of the third centenary of the Holy

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁵⁵ María José del Río Barredo, 'Rituals of the Viaticum: Dynasty and Community in Habsburg Madrid', in: Melissa Calaresu et al., eds., *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 57.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁸ Ydens, *Histoire du Sacrement de miracle*, f. *6v: 'En quoy vostre Altesse suit les traces de ses vertueux Ancestres'.

⁵⁹ Ibid., f. 7r: 'il reconvoia le mesme Prestre en semblable façon jusques a l'Eglise, don't il estoit sorty'.

⁶⁰ Théodore Piespordius, *Serenissimorum Potentissimorumque Principum Habsburgi-Avstriacorum Stemma, Origo, Res Gestae: Quatuor Schematibus à Pharamvndo Francorum Rege ad haec usque tempora deductae; Iconibus, Emblematibus, Insignibus illustratae / Studio ac labore Theodorici Piespordii, Serenissimis Belgarum Principibus à Secretis ...* (Brussels, 1616), schema IIII.

Sacrament of Miracle in 1670. During the celebratory procession in Brussels, the scene was reenacted. It featured Count Rudolf as the pious founder of the Habsburg dynasty.⁶¹



Figure 11. Rudolf I of Habsburg worships the viaticum, from: Théodore Piespordius, *Serenissimorum Potentissimorumque Principum Habsburgi-Avstriacorum Stemma* (Brussels: s.n., 1616), Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Saxony-Anhalt.

As part of their public devotion, the archdukes carried out an extensive programme of religious and dynastic reconstruction, and pursued policies of healing the wounds of past upheaval. Jesuit Jean Chrysostome Bruslé de Montpleinchamp (1641-1724) published his biography of Albert in 1693 and noted about his protagonist that ‘he turned all his cares towards piety, which he made his distinctive feature. The Mother of God had kept him tenderly to Her heart.’⁶² Albert was protector of many religious orders. According to Montpleinchamp, he ‘re-established and enriched more than 300 churches destroyed or despoiled by heresy; he has laid the first stone of rich churches of Jesuits, Augustans, Discalced Carmelites, Minims, Annunciates and Carmelite Nuns in Brussels.’⁶³ Although

⁶¹ Jacques Stroobant, *Brusselsche eer-triumpfen [...] met de vvaerachtighe beschrijvinge [...] van het dry hondert jarigh jubilé van het [...] H. sacrament van mirakelen* (Brussels: Peeter de Dobbeleer, 1670), p. 125.

⁶² Bruslé de Montpleinchamp, *L'Histoire de l'Archiduc Albert*, p. 337: ‘il tourna tous ses soins vers la piété, qui a fait son caractère distinctif. La Mere de Dieu lui avoit tenu tendrement au Coeur.’

⁶³ Ibid, p. 357: ‘Il a retabli & enrichi plus de 300 Eglises détruites ou depouillées de l’heresie; il a pose la premiere Pierre aux riches Eglises des Jesuites, des Augustins, des Carmes Deschaux, des Minimes, des Annonciates & des Carmelites de Brusselle’.

Montpleinchamp wrote Albert's biography long after the archduke's death, he accurately described the reputation the archduke had acquired during his life. The Habsburg rulers in the Southern Netherlands attempted to revive Catholicism through the promotion of cults of saints, the patronage of new religious orders, and the veneration of relics.⁶⁴ This policy served to underline the sacredness, and therefore inherent legitimacy, of the monarchy. Furthermore, dynastic piety functioned as an example to the population of the way in which the true religion should be professed and was meant to contribute to the development of a religiously homogeneous society, which in turn would provide a broad base of support for the new regime of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella from 1598 onwards.⁶⁵

Luc Duerloo and Marc Wingens observed that outside Brussels, the archdukes rebuilt the Catholic landscape by reviving and further developing pilgrimage in the Low Countries.⁶⁶ As a 'spiritual medicine for heretical poison' – a phrase of the Bavarian theologian Daniel Baradinus in his overview of pilgrimage in Bavaria, published in 1600⁶⁷ – pilgrimage was an important way of fostering new Catholic zeal in the South, and it served to integrate subjects in their local Catholic landscape. Our Lady of Halle is one example that was very popular with the archdukes. The Virgin had personally protected the city of Halle against the Calvinist enemy during the siege of 1580. Jesuit Adriaan Poirter wrote a book about the Virgin of Halle's miracles, which he first published in 1657. He delighted in the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Halle and the efforts by previous Habsburg rulers such as Maximilian I, Charles V and Margaret of Parma to develop the cult. Philip II is conspicuously absent in Poirter's list.⁶⁸ Isabella was an avid pilgrim herself. Shortly after her Joyous Entry, she honoured the local shrine of Our Lady of Halle with a visit and gave a gown to the Virgin, something which she did more often on first visits to pilgrimage sites.⁶⁹ Archducal visits to Halle and Scherpenheuvel were an important part of the court calendar.⁷⁰

Dynastic piety was undoubtedly inspired by genuine religious conviction, but Albert and Isabella clearly exploited it for political purposes by exhibiting their religiosity.

⁶⁴ Duerloo, 'Pietas Albertina'.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 1-18.

⁶⁶ Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 28.

⁶⁷ Philip M. Soergel, 'Spiritual Medicine for Heretical Poison: The Propagandistic Uses of Legends in Counter-Reformation Bavaria', *Historical Reflections* 17 (1991), p. 127; Daniel Baradinus, *Geistlich Artzney für Ketzergeift vnd jetziger zeit böse Lüfft* (München: Nicolaum Henricum, 1600).

⁶⁸ Adrianus Poirter, *Den Pelgrim van Halle* (1714), pp. 71-74.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 75; Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 27; Delfosse, *La "Protectrice du Pais-Bas"*, p. 86.

⁷⁰ See for instance: Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, p. 405.

In the 1620s, Isabella ordered a series of tapestries – one of the most prestigious art forms at court – to be made with the central theme of the Triumph of the Eucharist. One of those tapestries, designed by Rubens and produced by Jan II Raes, was entitled *The Defenders of the Eucharist*. It depicted seven saints: Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Clare, Thomas Aquinas, Norbert and Jerome. The image of St Clare bears such a striking resemblance to the archduchess that it seems very unlikely to be mere coincidence.⁷¹ Isabella (whose second name was Clare) had joined the order of the Poor Clares a few years earlier and had herself depicted in the habit by several painters, including Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck. Artists, historians and others often portrayed her as a providential defender of Catholicism. In his manuscript biography of the Infanta, court chaplain Philippe Chifflet implied that Isabella's birth in 1566, the year of the iconoclastic furies, could not be a coincidence, suggesting that she was sent by God in order to restore Catholicism.⁷² In 1632, when a conspiracy against the regime by a number of prominent nobles threatened the South's internal stability, Chifflet wrote with admiration about Isabella's steadfast conviction and religiosity. He observed that 'all people here are in prayers, devotions, processions and fasts. The princess gives such an example that she provokes tears from her poor people, and she is indefatigable at work'.⁷³

The propagation of a Catholic Habsburg identity was accompanied by dynastic manipulation of the public memory. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, Anthonio de Succa contributed to the reconstruction of church and dynasty. An artist, he went around the country to make an inventory of neglected effigies of former dynastic rulers of the Low Countries.⁷⁴ De Succa also found a profitable niche in the production of portraits of former rulers of Brabant. He was for instance the artist who painted the twenty-five portraits of past rulers of the Low Countries which adorned the Antwerp town hall. He also provided some of the illustrations for Adrianus Barlandus' 1600 edition of *Ducum Brabantiae Chronica*.⁷⁵ In 1600, the archdukes issued letters patent (the originals are

⁷¹ Guy Delmarcel, *Het Vlaamse wandtapijt van de 15de tot de 18de eeuw* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1999), p. 220.

⁷² Cordula van Wyhe, 'Piety and Politics in the Royal Convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Brussels, 1607-1646', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 100 (2005), p. 462.

⁷³ Philippe Chifflet to Cardinal Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 28 June 1632, in: 'Texte intégral des lettres', edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 445r: 'Tout le monde est icy en prières, en oraisons, en processions et en austerités. La princesse donne un exemple tel qu'elle provoque les larmes de son pauvre peuple et est infatigable au travail.'

⁷⁴ Christiane Van den Bergen-Pantens, 'Biografie van Anthonio de Succa', in: *Memoriën van Anthonio de Succa, Band I: Inleidingen, Catalogus*, edited by Michelle Comblen-Sonkes and Christiane Van den Bergen-Pantens (Brussels: KBR, 1977), pp. 1-4.

⁷⁵ Barlandus, *Dvcm Brabantiae chronica*, f. *2r; Prims, *Het stadhuis te Antwerpen*, p. 35.

missing) authorizing him ‘to do research on the genealogical effigies of the princes and princesses of the very illustrious houses of Austria, of Burgundy, of Brabant, Flanders etc’.⁷⁶ The extent to which the archdukes in fact instigated De Succa’s campaign is unclear, but it is known that they endorsed it, which must have opened doors for De Succa that would otherwise have remained closed. They also acted upon his reports. Many of the effigies De Succa visited had suffered over time; some of them had been damaged deliberately during the Revolt, including that of Duchess Joanna of Brabant (1322-1406) in the Carmelite church in Brussels, where the grave had been violated by Calvinists between 1578 and 1584. After De Succa’s description of the grave’s condition, the archdukes began making efforts to restore it to its former glory in order to make invisible the damage inflicted upon it by the Calvinist heretics.⁷⁷ They thus engaged in a material cleansing of the tainted past.

This material cleansing involved not only the dynastic rulers of the Low Countries but also included the graves of local saints, like Saint Hubert, the first bishop of Liège, who was the patron saint of hunting. He died in the Brabant town of Tervuren and was venerated throughout the region. The devotion of Saint Hubert blossomed in the seventeenth century. In 1605, the parish priest Gerardus Goosens established the Brotherhood of Saint Hubert in Tervuren. In the subsequent decades Archduchess Isabella and a number of prominent nobles became members, elevating the local cult to one of national importance.⁷⁸ Archdukes Albert and Isabella ordered a chapel to be built on the spot where St Hubert had died, and in 1617 the archbishop of Mechelen, Matthias Hovius, consecrated the new church. At first sight, these actions seem unrelated to the Revolt until we consider the archdukes’ attention for the restoration of the Catholic landscape as a reaction against the destructive effects of heresy and rebellion.

Further evidence of the dynastic importance of the veneration of St Hubert is the fact that Tervuren was not only the place where Hubert died; it was also an old retreat for the dukes of Brabant, notably Henry I, John II, Anthony I, John IV and Philip I, and several

⁷⁶ Van den Bergen-Pantens, ‘Biografie’, in: Comblen-Sonkes and Van den Bergen-Pantens, eds., *Memoriën*, p. 5; A.-M. Bonenfant-Feytmans, ‘Anthonio de Succa en de toenmalige geschiedschrijving’, in *Memoriën*, edited by Comblen-Sonkes and Van den Bergen-Pantens, p. 20: ‘commis et autorisé pour faire la recherche des généalogies effigionaires des princes et princesses des tres illustres maisons d’Autrice, de Bourgogne, du Brabant, Flandre, etc.’. The drawings are in the collection of the Royal Library in Brussels.

⁷⁷ *Archives des arts, sciences et lettres: documents inédits*, edited by Alexandre Pinchart (Ghent: L. Hebbelynck, 1860), p. 128; *Memoriën*, edited by Comblen-Sonkes and Van den Bergen-Pantens, p. 220; Lorne Campbell, ‘The Tomb of Joanna, Duchess of Brabant’, *Renaissance Studies* 2:2 (1988), pp. 163-172.

⁷⁸ Maurice Wynants, *De Sint-Hubertuskerk en de Sint-Hubertusverering te Tervuren* (Tervuren: Heemkundige Kring Sint-Hubertus, 1995), pp. 30-34.

of them were buried there.⁷⁹ The archdukes rebuilt the old and dilapidated castle, thereby underlining their position as successors of the old sovereigns, the dynastic presence of the house of Habsburg in the Low Countries, and their close connection to the local St Hubert.⁸⁰ In 1617, Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder painted a portrait of Archduke Albert with Tervuren in the background.⁸¹ The dynastic identification of the archdukes with their land appears also from other manifestations of Habsburg identity spread by Albert and Isabella. The painting of Albert with Tervuren in the background, for instance, was part of a set together with a portrait of Isabella with the country retreat Mariemont in Hainault in the background. It is not a coincidence that Mariemont and its environs were also the setting for many of Brueghel's paintings of Albert and Isabella's attendance at peasant weddings.⁸² These examples illustrate the variety of ways in which the archdukes reinforced their ties to the land and emphasised their proximity to their subjects. Again, the pretense of continuity camouflaged discontinuity. After all, the permanent presence of the Habsburg overlords in the Low Countries at the time of the archdukes was a novelty.

In the 1600s and 1610s, Archdukes Albert and Isabella managed to do what Philip II had proved incapable of: bringing stability and Catholicism back to these lands.⁸³ They did not succeed, however, in rooting their own branch of the dynasty in the Low Countries. Despite their attempts, they failed to give birth to an heir. Historians have suggested that their many visits to Our Lady of Laken (renowned for curing fertility problems) were motivated by their wish to solve their dynastic problems, but these visits proved to no avail.⁸⁴ In 1621 both Philip III and Archduke Albert, lord of the Netherlands, died. The Act of Cession stipulated that sovereignty over the Low Countries was conditional upon Albert fathering a son. Since he had failed to do so, and the Act prevented Archduchess Isabella from ruling on her own, Philip IV succeeded Albert in 1621 as overlord of the Netherlands provinces. Claude Chappuisot pronounced a funerary oration in Brussels in which he praised Albert's life and the house of Habsburg, which, he explained, descended

⁷⁹ Bruslé de Montpleinchamp, *L'Histoire de l'Archiduc*, p. 340.

⁸⁰ 'Chronycke der Nederlanden, 1500-1693', KBR manuscript 21769, ff. 61r-v.

⁸¹ Anne Woollett and Ariane van Suchtelen, eds., *Rubens & Brueghel: A Working Friendship* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), pp. 101-106.

⁸² Cordula Schumann, 'Jan Brueghel's Peasant Weddings as Images of Social Unity under Archducal Sovereignty', in: Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo, eds., *Albert and Isabella, 1598-1621: Essays* (Brussels: Brepols, 1998), pp.151-160.

⁸³ Andriessen, *De Jezuiten*, p. 60.

⁸⁴ Duerloo, *Scherpenheuvel*, p. 13.

from the ancient Roman *gens* the Anicii: ‘that family has given us the Alberts, the Leopolds, the Ernests, the Fredericks, the Maximiliens, the Philips, the Ferdinands’, and of course the great Charles V.⁸⁵ Just like the funerary oration for Philip II, which also extolled the life of the king, this one for Albert focused on his qualities as a ruler, as defender of the faith, and as bearer of peace and prosperity. In fact, Chapuissot first praised Philip II, and only after that did he start discussing Albert’s life. By focusing on Philip’s life first, he forged an artificial sense of dynastic continuity.⁸⁶

Building a new dynasty

The war inspired one of the most important foundation narratives of the fledgling Dutch Republic and of the house of Orange-Nassau as a stadholderly family. An important German noble family, the Nassaus prided themselves on their forefather Adolf, who had been elected king of the Romans in 1292, enabling the dynasty to claim that it stemmed from royal and imperial blood.⁸⁷ As rulers of the principality of Orange, an enclave in the kingdom of France, they also enjoyed the status of sovereign prince. Yet, despite claims of ancient descent or sovereignty, dynastic representations of the house of Orange in the Dutch Republic did not so much rely on the dynasty’s real or imaginary ancient lineage but rather on the active contributions to the war effort of Prince William of Orange and his sons Maurice and Frederick Henry.⁸⁸ William of Orange had been keen to link the fate of his

⁸⁵ Claude Chappuisot, *Oraison funebre sur la mort de ce tres haut, tres puissante & tres catholique Prince Albert Archiduc d’Autriche* (Brussels: Jean Pepermans, 1621), pp. 21-22: ‘Ceste famille nous a produict les Alberts, les Leopolds, les Ernests, les Fredericks, les Maximiliens, les Philippes, les Ferdinands’.

⁸⁶ The deaths of Habsburg monarchs in 1621 saw an increasing interest in other funerary ceremonies of former natural lords. Archduke Albert’s death inspired Adriaan van Meerbeeck to write his *Theatre Funebre*, a compendium of several Habsburg funerals from Don Ferdinand of Austria’s in 1515 to Albert’s in 1621: Van Meerbeeck, ed., *Theatre Fvnbre*.

⁸⁷ See for example the tableaux vivants in Amsterdam on the occasion of Amalia, princess of Orange’s entry in 1649: D.P. Snoep, *Praal en propaganda: triumphalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1975), pp. 83-85; or the interest of Prince Frederick Henry and Amalia in the Nassau forbear Adolf of Nassau and the past princes and counts of Orange: Laura Manzano Baena, *Conflicting Words: The Peace Treaty of Münster (1648) and the Political Culture of the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Monarchy* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011), p. 138; Marika Koblusek, ‘Boeken aan het stadhouderlijk hof’, in: Marika Koblusek and Jori Zijlmans, eds., *Vorstelijk Vertoon: Aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), p. 143.

⁸⁸ See for instance William Frederick of Nassau who on 20 November 1644 sent Louise Henriette of Orange a copy of Baudartius’ *Wars of Nassau [De Nassausche Oorloghen]* (1615), see: Marika Koblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad. Haagse boekcultuur in de gouden Eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), p. 191; members of the Orange dynasty also considered the long-term Orange succession important, see for example: Joseph de la Pise, *Tableau de l’histoire des princes et principavté d’Orange* (The Hague: Dirk Maire, 1639); Marika Koblusek has shown that Frederick Henry covered all costs of this publication. She also found that the Court of Audit ordered copies for all of its members. The book was also read at court. Princess Maria, the daughter of Frederick Henry, borrowed it from the stadholderly library in 1662. So did William III and his wife Mary in 1687, see: Koblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 187-189.

dynasty to that of the Low Countries. He even named four of his six daughters after the lands for which he fought: Catharina Belgica (born in 1578), Charlotte Flandrina (1579), Charlotte Brabantina (1580) and Emilia Antwerpiana (1581).⁸⁹ These four daughters were godchildren of, respectively, the States General, the States of Flanders, the States of Brabant and the city of Antwerp. By making these authorities godparents of his daughters, William of Orange forced upon them some responsibility for his children's uncertain financial future – he himself was permanently strapped for cash. Antwerp, for instance, promised her goddaughter Emilia Antwerpiana an annuity of two thousand guilders, a pledge which due to the turbulent political situation the city never fulfilled.⁹⁰

The Orange dynasty's reliance on its active role in the recent past was a relatively new phenomenon in early modern Europe, where dynastic legitimacy generally relied on custom and continuity, although as we could see in the previous section even in such instances emphases on continuity served to disguise discontinuity. More so than with the Habsburgs in the South, however, the constitutional position of the Oranges was not based on any age-old customs, and since William of Orange had not managed to make the position of his house hereditary, the dynasty required non-traditional ways of dynastic self-representation. These methods still leaned on history, but rather than choosing a long-term historical perspective, scions and supporters of the Orange dynasty in the Dutch Republic focused on the recent past. The next part of this chapter will explain how members of the Orange dynasty, and their supporters, used the history of the Revolt to build up a strong dynastic presence in the Dutch Republic. This section will demonstrate that the strong dynastic position that the princes of Orange came to occupy in the Republic in the seventeenth century should not be seen as the automatic result of their role in the Revolt. I will explain how they deployed memories of the Revolt to acquire such a position.

Dynastic uncertainty

In the seventeenth century, many inhabitants of the Republic remembered Prince William as a popular prince and as their *pater patriae*. Louis Aubery, born in 1609, mentioned in his 1687 history of Holland that tourists visited the Prinsenhof where William had been murdered: 'in the city of Delft in Holland, strangers are still shown the marks of the bullets that entered the stone of the doorway after having pierced the body of the prince: and it was

⁸⁹ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, p. 272.

⁹⁰ Asaert, 1585, p. 170.

shown to me in my youth.’⁹¹ William of Orange’s heroic reputation in the seventeenth century distorts our image of the prince at the time of his death in 1584, when there had been little reason for celebrating his life. In the 1580s Alexander Farnese was busy reconquering the Southern provinces, and although the prince received a splendid state funeral, the time was not propitious for elaborate, expensive commemorations.⁹² The Revolt was not going well at all and had left the Orange family virtually destitute. Furthermore, many people including his own brother Jan of Nassau blamed Prince William for the Anjou debacle in the 1580s.⁹³ The prince’s lack of popularity meant that after his death his legacy was initially not used to support a political argument. Authorities in neither the provincial States or the States General made much effort to commemorate and celebrate his life.⁹⁴ As Olaf Mörke has rightly observed, the fact that the Orange family became a European princely dynasty in the seventeenth century was, at least in the 1580s, an unforeseen development.⁹⁵

In dynastic terms, Maurice was in a particularly uncomfortable situation in 1584. He was left virtually penniless, depended on the States of Holland for his income, and conflicts about his father’s estate lingered on until 1609.⁹⁶ The stadholderate to which the young count was appointed in Holland and Zeeland in 1585 remained non-hereditary. Two years later Holland appointed him captain-general, the highest army post.⁹⁷ He owed this appointment to his birth, but Maurice could not claim the office as a birth-right. Under the tutelage of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, Maurice trained as an army commander and statesman. Count Maurice derived his military and political claims from his status as successor of his father, but in fact he was not his father’s heir to the princely title. William of Orange’s eldest son from his first marriage to Anna of Egmont was Philip William.

⁹¹ Louis Aubery, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de Hollande et des autres Provinces-Unis* (Paris: Jean Vilette, 1687), p. 151: ‘On montre encore au Etrangers dans la Ville de Delft en Hollande, les marques de ces balles qui entrerent dans la pierre de taille d’une porte, après avoir percé le corps du Prince: & on me les a fait voir en ma jeunesse.’; the bullet holes are still a popular attraction in the Prinsenhof Museum, see: <http://www.prinsenhof-delft.nl/nl/wat-is-er-te-doen/tentoonstellingen/willem-van-oranje> (accessed 12 February 2013).

⁹² See for William of Orange’s funeral: Geert H. Janssen, ‘Dynastieke transfer in de Republiek. De politieke en religieuze betekenis van de stadhouderlijke begrafenisstoet’, *BMGN* 122:2 (2007); Geert H. Janssen, ‘Political Ambiguity and Confessional Diversity in the Funeral Processions of Stadholders in the Dutch Republic’, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 40:2 (2009), pp. 283-291.

⁹³ Swart, *Willem van Oranje*, p. 48.

⁹⁴ Olaf Mörke, *Willem van Oranje (1533-1584): Vorst en ‘vader’ van de Republiek* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2010), p. 263.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁹⁶ P. Scherft, *Het sterfhuis van Willem van Oranje* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1966), pp. 60-61, 273-276.

⁹⁷ Harm Stevens, *Shades of Orange: A History of the Royal House of the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2001), p. 3.

Philip II had ordered the kidnapping of this young prince in 1568 when he was still a student at the University of Leuven. Philip William became the rightful prince of Orange on his father's death in 1584. He was raised a Catholic in Spain only to return to the Southern Netherlands in 1596, where he eventually became a courtier of Albert and Isabella.

To solve the problem that he was only second to his brother Philip William, the States of Holland decided to confer upon Maurice the peculiar and unprecedented title 'born prince of Orange' when they charged him with high offices of state in 1585. The conferral was only partly in recognition of the services done by William I.⁹⁸ The States also had an important political motivation to place Maurice in the line of legitimate successors of William I. That year, the States General appointed Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, as governor-general, which gave him precedence over Count Maurice. As a prince, which accorded him the same position in the order of precedence, Maurice was better able to counterbalance Leicester.⁹⁹ The dubious conferral of the princely title shows that the government of the United Provinces wanted to have their cake and eat it too. In their struggle against Spain they needed a foreign protector, but with the experience of Anjou in mind they did not want him to become too meddlesome. Reinforcing the ties with Maurice, upgrading his position, and having him do their bidding served as a potential insurance against Leicester.¹⁰⁰

Around 1600, after Maurice had gained a reputation on the battlefield, his father's reputation, too, improved. Jan Bloemendal has demonstrated, for instance, that most of the existing plays about William of Orange were published and performed around 1600.¹⁰¹ In 1599, Casper Ens published *William of Orange or the Protection of Liberty* [*Princeps Avriacvs; siue Libertas defensa*], in 1602 Heinsius finished his *William of Orange and the Wounded Freedom* [*Avriacvs, siue Libertas savcia*], which was performed at the University of Leiden, and in 1606 Jacob Duyjm published *The Murderous Act of Balthasar Gérard*

⁹⁸ Van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau*, p. 28.

⁹⁹ Simon Groenveld, 'De man met de loden schoenen', in: Kees Zandvliet, ed., *Maurits, Prins van Oranje* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), p. 19; Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt I. Opgang, 1547-1588* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1960), pp. 243-244; see also: Joop Koopmans, *De Staten van Holland en de Opstand. De ontwikkeling van hun functies en organisatie in de periode 1544-1588* (The Hague: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1990), p. 132.

¹⁰⁰ Fruin, *Tien jaren*, p. 39; Olaf Mörke, 'The Orange Court as Centre of Political and Social Life During the Republic', in: Marika Keblusek and Jori Zijlmans, eds., *Princely Display: The Court of Frederik Hendrik of Orange and Amalia van Solms* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), pp. 70-71.

¹⁰¹ Jan Bloemendal, 'De dramatische moord op de Vader des Vaderlands. De verhouding tussen vier typen toneel in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 23 (2007), pp. 99-117, there p. 99; see also: Jan Bloemendal, 'Willem van Oranje: een Hercules op Leidse planken', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 10 (1994).

[*Het moordadich stvck van Balthasar Gerards*].¹⁰² Several reasons may account for the sudden interest in the life and death of the prince, but the most important one was that Maurice had grown into a competent army commander and was increasingly credited with the successful conduct of the war. After the disastrous 1580s, in the 1590s Maurice and his uncle William Louis managed – facilitated by Johan van Oldenbarnevelt’s statecraft – to recapture important cities in the east of the Union.¹⁰³ In the meantime, the real prince of Orange, Philip William, had moved to the Southern Netherlands in 1596, and this endangered Maurice’s dynastic status.¹⁰⁴ In his opposition to the negotiations for a ceasefire, Maurice acquired supporters who portrayed him and his half-brother Frederick Henry as the real heirs of their father. In the preamble of his play, Jacob Duyum – a Reformed clergyman, anti-peace propagandist and supporter of Maurice – wrote:

As the old and innate hatred of the Spanish has been kindled more and more and has become greater and greater, without a doubt it has also been fired against the princes and lords who, as leaders of these our said Netherlands, have taken care of the protection and liberation of these lands: among them the most notable and the best has been the prince of Orange.¹⁰⁵

Popular devotion to the house of Orange, such as Duyum proposed, was not self-evident at the beginning of the seventeenth century. William of Orange’s unimpressive grave may illustrate this point. Some foreign observers initially wondered at this lack of public recognition of the services rendered to the Republic by the late prince of Orange. After his visit to Delft in 1593, traveller and author of the *Itinerary* Fynes Moryson noted in his diary: ‘In the New Church is a monument of the prince of Orange, the poorest that ever I saw for such a person, being onely of rough stones and mortar, with posts of wood,

¹⁰² Casper Ens, *Princeps Avriacvs; siue Libertas defensa: tragoedia nova* (Delft: B. Schinckelii, 1599); Daniel Heinsius, *Avriacvs, siue Libertas savcia* (Leiden: Andries Clouck, 1602); Jacob Duyum, *Het moordadich stvck van Balthasar Gerards, begaen aen den doorluchtighen prince van Oraingnen* (Leiden: Henrick Lodewijcxsoon van Haestens, 1606).

¹⁰³ Fruin, *Tien jaren*, pp. 336, 371-372; Van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau*, pp. 117-164; Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt II. Oorlog 1588-1609* (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1962), pp. 129-161; Jan Bloemendal argues that this was not an important motivation because in Heinsius’ play Maurice hardly appears. Yet I think that Maurice’s appearance is not so important and that he would in any case profit from glorifications of his father.

¹⁰⁴ Scherft, *Het sterfhuys*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁰⁵ Duyum, *Het moordadich stvck*, f. a2r: ‘Alsoo den ouden ende ingheboren haed van die van Spaingnen meer en meer ontsteken, en grooter geworden is, soo is hy sonder twijfel ooc te meer ontsteken teghen die Princen ende Heeren, de welcke als Voorstanders van dese onse bedroefde Nederlanden, de beschuttinghe en de verlossinge der selver beherticht hebben: Onder dese is de voornaemste ende meeste gheweest de Prince van Oraingnen’.

coloured over with black, and very little erected from the ground.¹⁰⁶ (Figure 12). While William of Orange was still lying in his nondescript grave, in 1607 the States General commissioned an ornamental grave designed by Hendrick de Keyser in Delft's Old Church for Vice-admiral Jacob van Heemskerck, who died at the Battle of Gibraltar (1607).¹⁰⁷ This battle had been an important victory for the Republic against the Habsburg overlord, which explains why the States General sought to commemorate Van Heemskerck as a national hero. It is telling that no such honour had yet been extended to Prince William of Orange.



Figure 12. William of Orange's grave in Delft's New Church, before the completion of Hendrick de Keyser's ornate tomb, Leiden University.

Princely aspirations

The eventual glorification of the house of Orange came from three sides: urban, regional and national government authorities, supporters of the dynasty and, of course, from the family itself. A good example of renewed government interest in William of Orange is the new memorial the States General commissioned during the Twelve Years' Truce. The Truce changed the position of the Oranges in two ways. Firstly, hostilities were temporarily deferred, which lessened financial strains and implied de facto recognition of the Republic

¹⁰⁶ 'Morysons reis door en zijn karakteristiek van de Nederlanden', edited by J.N. Jacobsen Jensen, *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 39 (1918), p. 229.

¹⁰⁷ Frits Scholten, *Sumptuous Memories: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Tomb Sculpture* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2003), p. 73.

but which also lessened the influence of Maurice as captain-general.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, although the peace was only provisional, it left Northerners without a common enemy, and the States General worried that a lack of identification with the Republic among the different states might endanger the future war effort.¹⁰⁹

Artist and architect Salomon de Bray remarked in 1631 on the long period between the prince's death and the construction of an ornate tomb:

The making of this grave [was] embarked upon by the high and mighty Lords States General, about 32 years after the death of [...] Prince William, prince of Orange and was in 1616 contracted out to our architect [...] and has been in the hands of our architect until the year 1621.¹¹⁰

It is not entirely clear when they decided that there should be a more worthy monument for the late prince. The first concrete evidence of any such plans is from 1613, when the States General received and discussed draft designs by several artists. William of Orange's widow and mother of Frederick Henry, Louise de Coligny, urged the States in 1614 to speed up the process of building 'an honourable sepulture' for Prince William. Yet the commission ultimately came from the States General.¹¹¹

From multiple designs, the States General chose Hendrick de Keyser's. In his design different ways of communicating knowledge about the past came to the fore. Frits Scholten has observed in his study of Dutch tomb sculpture that the artist needed to bridge the desire for a splendid sepulcher and the necessity to make it suitable for a Protestant prince in a republic. In terms of splendour the monument, Scholten explains, 'was to yield to no princely tomb abroad, but without borrowing their predominantly Roman Catholic

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan I. Israel, 'The Courts of the House of Orange, c. 1580-1795' in: John Adamson, ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture Under the Ancien Régime, 1500-1750* (London: Seven Dials, 2000), p. 122.

¹⁰⁹ A point made by Almut Pollmer, 'Der Kirchenraum in der holländische Malerei um 1650', unpublished PhD dissertation (Leiden, 2011), pp. 88-89.

¹¹⁰ Salomon de Bray, *Architectvra moderna ofte bouwinge van onsen tyt [...] alle gedaen by [...] Hendrick de Keyser* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Dankerts van Seevenhoven, 1631), p. 24: 'de maeckinghe van dit Graf is bij de H.M. Heeren Staten by der handt ghenomen, ontrent 32 jaer naer 't over-lyden van [...] Vorst Willem Prince van Orangien, en is inden jare 1616. onsen Bouw-meester by de H. ghemelde H. Staten aen besteeft gheweest: En is by onsen Bouw-meester onderhanden gheweest tot den jare 1621.'; see also: Elisabeth Neurdenburg, *Hendrick de Keyser: beeldhouwer en bouwmeester van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Scheltema en Holkema, 1930), p. 115.

¹¹¹ C. Gijsberti Hodenpijl, 'De oprichting van het mausoleum der Oranjes', *Elsevier* 10 (1900), p. 155: 'een eerlijke Sepulture'.

iconography.¹¹² De Keyser designed a canopied free-standing tomb, reminiscent of late sixteenth-century princely tombs in England, France and Flanders.¹¹³ William featured in two different poses, lying dead in the middle and sitting enthroned at the front. Scholten clarifies that this latter pose was chosen to avoid the more traditional representation of a kneeling prince, praying to God. De Keyser, probably feeling that this kneeling figure was not an appropriate example to follow, chose an alternative pose.¹¹⁴ The seated figure of the prince is dressed as an army commander to place emphasis on his primary achievement of defending the Republic against its enemies. Personifications of virtues stand in each corner pillar niche: justice, freedom, religion and fortitude.¹¹⁵

An epitaph that mirrored the official state view of William of Orange's legacy was placed above the canopy. The States General made an effort to select the right epitaph. They chose carefully from three alternatives, each by a renowned and prominent member of literary society: Hugo Grotius, Daniël Heinsius and Constantijn Huygens. Huygens' work was eventually selected, and he made no attempt to disguise his feeling of triumph. He even wrote a poem about it, sneering at Grotius and Heinsius who lost out: 'The golden inscription, which the art cut from marble, / In which by favour or art at least I succeeded happily, / While it was more pleasing than that of Heins or of De Groot.'¹¹⁶ The epitaph Huygens wrote in Latin focused on William's selfless efforts in the war, presenting him as the

Pater Patriae, who privileged the welfare of the Netherlands above his own interest [...], who twice led his army into war; who recalled and restored the true religion and the old laws; who finally left the virtually ensured freedom to Prince Maurice, his son and heir of his father's virtues to have him confirm them; the truly pious, skilful and invincible hero, whom Philip II, king of Spain, terror of Europe, feared.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Scholten, *Sumptuous Memories*, p. 74.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁵ Gijsberti Hodenpijl, 'De oprichting', p. 161.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 157: 'Het gouden opschrift, dat de kunst uit marmer sneed, / Waarin 'k door gunst of kunst althans gelukkig slaagde, / Wijn 't meer dan dat van Heins of van de Groot behaagde.'

¹¹⁷ R.F.P. de Beaufort, *Het Mausoleum der Oranje's te Delft* (Delft: Waltman Jr., 1931), p. 35: 'Patris Patriae / Qui Belgii Fortunis / Suas Post Habuit Et Suorum: / Validissimos Exercitus Aere Plurimum Privato / Bis Conscriptis, Bis Induxit / Ordinum Auspiciis: Hispaniae Tyrannidem / Propulit: Verae Religiones / Cultum, Avitas Patriae Leges / Revocavit, Restituit: / Ipsam Denique Libertatem / Tantum Non Assertam / Mauritio Principi / Paternae

The Orange family itself also became a very active propagator of dynastic identity and an enthusiastic commemorator of the dynasty's illustrious past. Some historians have argued that Maurice's itinerant life precluded efforts at dynastic display.¹¹⁸ But despite this limitation he and his supporters were very concerned with the dynasty's status in the Republic.¹¹⁹ From the time Maurice was about seventeen or eighteen years old (shortly after William of Orange's death), his awareness grew of the opportunities his father's legacy offered for the future. From that moment onwards he adopted his motto: 'tandem fit surculus arbor'. 'That is to say', historian Emanuel van Meteren explained, 'ultimately the scion will become a tree aiming to point out that with the cut-down tree or his father's death not all was won'.¹²⁰ The maxim connected past, present, and future of the house of Orange-Nassau.¹²¹ More specifically, Maurice's adoption of this motto after the death of William of Orange reveals that he intended the Orange dynasty to flourish once more. Indeed, the Orange court reproduced the motto in a variety of ways, for example when, in January 1613, James I admitted the prince into the Order of the Garter. The award was a prestigious recognition of Maurice's international status as a European prince even though he was strictly speaking a mere count. Maurice and his supporters took advantage of this important event, and it was made much of in Netherlandish media.¹²² A damask napkin in honour of Maurice's investiture as Garter knight and made for the prince's use, featured his coat of arms, surrounded by heraldic symbols of Maurice's ancestors.¹²³ The coat of arms is placed on a cut-down tree under which the Latin motto explained the significance of this symbol. The artist, Passchier Lammertijn, had Maurice approve the design before he started

Virtutis Heredi Filio / Stabiliendam Reliquit:/ Herois Vere Pii, Prudentis, Invicti / Quem / Philippus II Hispan: Rex / Ille Europae Timor Timuit.'

¹¹⁸ Peter van der Ploeg and Carola Vermeeren, 'De Prinsen van Oranje en de kunst, tot 1625', in: Peter van der Ploeg and Carola Vermeeren, eds., *Vorstelijk Verzameld: De Kunstcollectie van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁹ See Van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau*, pp. 215-225.

¹²⁰ Theodorik, 'Tandem fit surculus arbor', *De Navorscher* 4 (1854), p. 373; P.C. Ritsema van Eck, 'Drie glazen uit het museum van het Koninklijk Huisarchief', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 31 (1981), p. 163; for Emanuel van Meteren's explanation, see: Van Meteren, *Belgische ofte Nederlantsche Historie* (1614), f. 228v: 'dat is / dat ten lesten een spruyte eenen Boom wort / willende aenwijzen / dat het met den afgehewouwen Boom / ofte dootd sijns Vaders / niet al gewonnen was'.

¹²¹ 1600: *Slag bij Nieuwpoort, catalogus* (Nieuwpoort: stadsbestuur Nieuwpoort, 2000), p. 105

¹²² Anonymous, *Eerste instelling des vermaerden ridderlicken ordes vande Covsebant, in Engelandt: Waer mede zyn Pr. Excell. Graef Mauris van Nassau, &c. vereert is...* (Leiden: Govert Basson, 1613); anonymous, *Warachtich verhael van de ceremonien gheschiet in Engelandt in't installeren van zijne princelijcke excellentie, nevens sijne hoocheyt den cheurfurst Paltz in de coninghlijcke ordre van den Cousebant* (The Hague: Hillebrandt Jacobsz van Wouw, 1613); after Simon Frisius, 'De investituur van Maurits met de Orde van de Kouseband, 1613' (1613-1615), engraving, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-52.301.

¹²³ Kees Zandvliet, ed., *Maurits, Prins van Oranje* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), p. 322.

weaving. Not only Maurice himself ordered damask from Lammertijn. The States General and local government authorities in the Republic commissioned similar work featuring the Nassau coat of arms.¹²⁴ Another example is a small collection of glasses in the collection of the Royal House Archives in The Hague. On one of the glasses, probably also produced on the occasion of the 1613 Garter investiture, Maurice's personal motto is engraved together with the dynasty's motto: 'Je maintiendray Nassau.'¹²⁵ Maurice's pride in becoming a Garter knight is reflected also by his order to embellish the coat of arms on his book covers with the Garter.¹²⁶

On 20 February 1618, the childless prince Philip William died, and, finally, Maurice became the rightful prince of Orange. Despite the fact that Maurice and his supporters had built up an image of the prince as a successful army commander and protector of the Netherlandish people, they were well aware that until 1618 he had not been the real prince of Orange. From the reactions to Maurice's succession to the title we can see clearly that both the prince and his supporters attached importance to his new status. Just as in 1613, when Maurice had become a Garter knight, the prince ordered a new book plate to be made, this time reflecting his status as the true prince of Orange.¹²⁷ As we will see in the next chapter, during the 1610s Maurice not only succeeded to the princely title, he also got embroiled in a political and religious disagreement with Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. The prince triumphed over Oldenbarnevelt, after which he wielded unprecedented political power. Furthermore, Maurice emerged from the conflict as the true protector of the inhabitants of the Republic and as defender of the faith.

We see this triangle of God, the Republic and Orange featuring prominently during Maurice's entry as prince of Orange in Amsterdam in 1618.¹²⁸ In the anonymous pamphlet *Triumph in Amsterdam about the Entry of the High-Born Prince Maurice Prince of Orange* [*Triumphe tot Amsterdam, over het incomen vanden hooch-gebornen vorst Mauritius prince van Oranjen*], the author remarked on some of the spectacles and pageants organised by the town government and the local chambers of rhetoric (local literary societies) on 23, 24 and 25 May. In anticipation of the prince, the mayors of Amsterdam had ordered the officers of the militia to welcome him in style. Many spectators

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 322.

¹²⁵ Ritsema van Eck, 'Drie glazen', pp. 161-162.

¹²⁶ Koblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, p. 176; see also: Storm van Leeuwen, 'Boekbanden in de Oranje-Nassaubilothek', p. 62.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, pp. 36-37.

wore Orange feathers and veils, and trumpeters performed the ‘Wilhelmus’ song in honour of the prince’s late father William of Orange.¹²⁹ The ‘Wilhelmus’ had originally been one of many rebel ‘Beggar songs’ but grew into a kind of popular anthem for supporters of the Orange family. The Nederduytsche Academie, a local chamber of rhetoric, rented ten barges to welcome Prince Maurice. They were connected one to another by an Orange rope. The second barge had ‘war’ as its theme. Mars featured prominently and was accompanied by the female personifications of the true religion and of worldly justice. The two figures each held an Orange ribbon attached to the coat of arms of the prince.¹³⁰ When the prince was welcomed by the city magistrates on the Dam square, he saw the Old Chamber’s triumphal arch featuring the words ‘Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini’. ‘That is to say’, the author translated from Latin, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’.¹³¹ Among other performances, members of the Old Chamber performed Jupiter’s acceptance of the prince’s succession to the principality of Orange. Amsterdam’s magistrates took a keen interest in the proceedings. They organised the theatrical performance of ‘what evil the Spaniards did during the war and what service the house of Nassau has rendered to these lands’.¹³² Part of the performance was a reenactment of Alba tyrannizing the land and how William of Orange had come to the rescue. One of the booklets in commemoration of Maurice’s spectacular 1618 entry ended with the ‘genuine title of his princely excellency’, which began with ‘Maurice, by the grace of God, prince of Orange’.¹³³

Conclusion

The past was an important element of early modern dynastic image-making. Subjects accepted the authority of ‘natural’ rulers because these rulers stemmed from a line of successive legitimate princes. As I have shown, however, the Revolt broke this line of legitimate succession in the Low Countries. In the reconquered provinces, Philip II planted his daughter Isabella and her husband Archduke Albert as the new sovereigns to the

¹²⁹ Anonymous, *Triumphe tot Amsterdam, over het incomen vanden hooch-gheboren vorst Mauritius prince van Orangien* (Leiden: Uldrick Cornelissz Honthorst, 1618), f. a2v.

¹³⁰ Samuel Coster, *Vertoninghen, tot Amsterdam ghedaan, op den inkomste van Maurits, prince van Orangen* (Amsterdam: Nicolaes Biestkens, 1618), ff. a2r-v.

¹³¹ Anonymous, *Triumphe*, f. a3r: ‘Dat is te segghen: Ghesegent is hy die daer comt inden name des Heeren’.

¹³² Coster, *Vertoninghen, tot Amsterdam*, ff. a4v-b1r: ‘wat quaedt ghedurende den Oorlogh, de Spangaerts ende wat dienst het Huys van Nassau deze Landen ghedaan heeft’.

¹³³ Anonymous, *Triumphe*, f. a4v: ‘Den oprechten tittel van zijn Princelicke Excellentie, als volcht. Mauritius, by der gratie Godts, Prince van Orangen [...]’.

detriment of his eldest son Philip III. In the Dutch Republic, the Habsburg dynasty was abjured and replaced by a new princely dynasty, although the Orange family did not attain sovereignty over the provinces.

The Habsburg and Orange dynasties occupied very different positions in their respective political contexts. The Habsburg princes Albert and Isabella were sovereigns of the Netherlands whereas the princes of Orange enjoyed only a privileged status as the Republic's most prestigious family. Although the comparison is hence a bit skewed, there is sufficient common ground to make some general observations. Both the houses of Habsburg in the South and Orange in the North used memories of the past to legitimate their political ambitions, but they did so in very different ways. For the Habsburgs, long-term lineage was the key to success, and they and their supporters saw the Revolt at most as a brief intermezzo in Habsburg dynastic history. For the Oranges it was the other way round. Lacking any real long-term claims for their position as stadholders in the newly established Republic and given the non-hereditary character of the stadholderate, they turned to short-term history and the deeds of their forebear William of Orange. So for the one dynasty, the Revolt was a problem while for the other it was its best claim to power.

Still, in many ways the Orange and the Habsburg dynasties operated with a similar dynastic logic. Albert and Isabella's succession was definitely an unusual dynastic transition of power; yet they acted as if it was the most natural thing. Their propagandists generally did so too. Similarly, dynastic propaganda for the house of Orange in the Republic ignored the rightful place of Philip William as prince of Orange until 1618, and in the memory cultures of the family, he played hardly any role. Both dynasties thus tried to camouflage discontinuity.