

Military Rebellion and Reason of State

Pacification of Mutinies in the Habsburg Army of Flanders,
1599-1601¹

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The frequent mutinies in the Army of Flanders confronted the Spanish-Habsburg authorities with both military-strategic and political dilemmas. Although military rebellion violated moral and religious laws of authority, rulers depended on the army for the preservation of their state, or the power and dominion on which the integrity of their realms depended. This article focuses on the negotiations that the Spanish-Habsburg authorities conducted with their rebel soldiers in order to regain their support. One case, the negotiations during the great mutiny of Hamont (1599-1601), not only sheds new light on the practical solution to the dilemma of mutiny, but also provides insight into contemporary political discourse concerning civil and military rebellion applied to concrete moments of decision-making. Reactions of authorities were suffused with political realism and directed at the interest of the state.

Militaire opstand en raison d'état. Pacificatie van muiterijen in het Habsburgse leger in de Nederlanden, 1599-1601

De vele muiterijen in het Habsburgse leger in de Nederlanden plaatsten overheden zowel militair-strategisch als politiek in een lastige positie. Militaire opstand was in strijd met moreel-religieuze wetten van koninklijk gezag, maar tegelijkertijd waren autoriteiten afhankelijk van het leger bij het behoud van hun staat, oftewel de macht en heerschappij die de basis vormden voor de samenhang van de Spaanse monarchie. Dit artikel richt zich op de onderhandelingen die de Spaans-Habsburgse autoriteiten voerden met hun opstandige soldaten om van hun diensten gebruik te

kunnen blijven maken. Als casus biedt het onderhandelingsproces rond de mouterij van Hamont (1599-1601) niet alleen een uniek inzicht in de praktische uitweg uit het dilemma van mouterij, maar ook in het contemporaine politieke discours rondom militaire en civiele opstanden. De reacties van autoriteiten waren doordrongen van politiek realisme, en doordrongen van het belang van de staat.

On 2 July 1600 the Spanish general Francisco de Mendoza led his troops into battle in the dunes near Nieuwpoort. One of the regiments marching on the right wing however, was not officially under his command. A closer look at one of the many depictions of the battle tells us why: these were no regular soldiers, but ‘esquadrons des mutines’. Around Christmas 1599 in the village of Hamont, unpaid and discontented, these mercenary soldiers had declared mutiny. By the following summer they were still in open rebellion, yet they were persuaded to ride out to Nieuwpoort. Driven by desperate need, the Habsburg military and civil authorities had employed careful negotiations to convince their own soldiers, in the humble words of General Herman van den Bergh, to grant them ‘the tremendous favour of consenting to come to their assistance’.²

The Habsburg Army of Flanders, sent north to pacify the rebellious Low Countries, was itself a hotbed of sedition. Induced by arduous conditions and unreliable payment, mutiny broke out at least 45 times between 1572 and 1607.³ Ever since Geoffrey Parker’s ground-breaking *The Army of Flanders*

- 1 This article is based on a Master’s thesis completed in 2011 at the University of Amsterdam, under supervision of Henk van Nierop, Maartje van Gelder and Erik Swart. I am grateful to them for their guidance and support during the research, and also to my colleagues at the University of Amsterdam, the editors of *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this article.
- 2 ‘Me vouldrez faire la faveur (cest arde necessité) de me vouloir assister’. Herman van den Bergh to the mutineers of Diest (copy for Albert of Austria), Roermond, 27 June 1600. Archives générales du Royaume, Brussels (hereafter ARB) Audiëntie, inv.no. 626, f. 138.
- 3 Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries’ Wars* (1972; Cambridge 2004) 157. Case studies of mutinies in the Habsburg Army of Flanders include Leo

Kooperberg, ‘Een mouterij in den Spaanschen Tijd’, *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* 5:5 (1918) 113-172 and Gabriel Wymans, ‘Les mutineries militaires de 1596 à 1606’, *Standen en landen* 39 (1966) 105-121. Currently a NWO-funded research project on Spanish officers during the early years of the Dutch Revolt is being carried out at the University of Leiden, led by Raymond Fagel: ‘Facing the Enemy: Spanish Commanders during the First Decades of the Dutch Revolt’ (2014-2019). International research includes John Morrill, ‘Mutiny and Discontent in English Provincial Armies, 1645-1647’, *Past & Present* 56 (1972) 49-75 DOI 10.1093/past/56.1.49; Jane Hathaway (ed.), *Rebellion, Repression, Reinvention: Mutiny in Comparative Perspective* (London 2001); and the recent essay by Frank Tallett, ‘Soldiers in Western Europe, c. 1500-1790’, in: Erik-Jan Zürcher (ed.), *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour, 1500-2000* (Amsterdam 2013) 135-166. For the subgenre of maritime mutiny, see

and the Spanish Road, which introduced the ‘new military history’ into the historiography of the Dutch Revolt, early modern mutinies have been characterised as labour strikes.⁴ The question of what they meant politically, based on the authorities’ response rather than on the causes of the event and motives of the mutineers, was first raised by Gervase Phillips in an article on mutiny in sixteenth-century England. The process of negotiation during mutinies, Phillips argued, reflected the manner in which power and authority were exercised and negotiated within Tudor society as a whole.⁵ In the case of the Spanish monarchy, mutiny and civilian rebellion were likewise assimilated, both in practical response and in political discourse.

The army of Flanders reflected the multinational composition of the monarchy. Although the vast majority of the soldiers were mercenaries, as inhabitants of different lands of the Spanish monarchy they were also subjects of the Spanish king. On entering military service they took an oath of obedience, vowing not to leave service without permission and not to mutiny for their wages.⁶ According to traditional Catholic political theory, the authority of the Spanish kings flowed directly from God. A good king

the recent collection edited by Clare Anderson et al. (eds.), *Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey* (Cambridge 2013). Mutinies during the Great War, especially those of 1917, have received special attention: Guy Pedroncini, 1917: *Les Mutineries de l’Armée française* (Paris 1968); Leonard Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Chichester 1994); Nicolas Offenstadt, *Les fusillés de la Grande Guerre et la mémoire collective, 1914-1918* (Paris 1999) 43-46; André Loez and Nicolas Mariot, *Obéir-désobéir: Les mutineries de 1917 en perspective* (Paris 2008). Publications which treat military mutiny on an abstract level are less numerous, but see Elihu Rose, ‘The Anatomy of Mutiny’, *Armed Forces and Society* 8:4 (1982) 561-574 DOI 10.1177/0095327X8200800403.

4 Parker, *Army of Flanders*; idem, ‘Mutiny and Discontent in the Spanish Army of Flanders 1572-1607’, *Past & Present* 58 (1973) 38 DOI 10.1093/past/58.1.38. Building on Parkers conclusions, Charles Tilly presented military rebellion as part of a ‘repertoire of collective actions’ in his classic *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA 1978) 151-152.

Parker’s model was not substantially challenged until 2009, when Fernando González de León argued that social structures within the Army of Flanders were made up out of bonds of patronage cutting across rank, and that these patterns of loyalty played an important role in causing and shaping mutiny: Fernando González de León, *The Road to Rocroi: Class, Culture, and Command in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1567-1659* (Leiden 2009) 100-111, 114. Recently Parker’s model has been revived by Idan Sherer for the mutinies in the tercios during the Italian Wars: Idan Sherer, ‘“All of Us, in One Voice, Demand what’s owed Us”: Mutiny in the Spanish Infantry during the Italian Wars, 1525-1538’, *Journal of Military History* 78:3 (2014) 893-926. Classic works in new military history concentrating on the Spanish context are René Quatrefages, *Los tercios españoles, 1567-1577* (Madrid 1979) and Ian Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain, 1560-1620* (London 1976).

5 Gervase Phillips, ‘To cry “Home! Home!”: Mutiny, Morale, and Indiscipline in Tudor Armies’, *Journal of Military History* 65:2 (2001) 314.

6 González de León, *Road to Rocroi*, 34; Parker, *Army of Flanders*, 25, 30.

administered grace to the deserving and chastised those who acted contrary to the laws of morality inspired by divine justice, thus upholding the virtue and prosperity of the commonwealth.⁷ Authorities naturally condemned the military uprisings, but they were also forced to consider the political reality of the late sixteenth-century Spanish monarchy. In this global empire with subjects of endless diversity in nationalities, characters, traditions and customs, administering justice to one inevitably ran contrary to the interest of others. With the requirement of enforcing authority based on the moral laws of justice on the one hand, and the necessity to show leniency in order to secure the army's continued support on the other, responding to mutiny for the Habsburg authorities essentially signified dealing with the problem of uniting justice and good kingship and the practical needs of the state.

This article focuses on the negotiations by the Spanish-Habsburg authorities with their own rebel soldiers. With the use of envoys, written supplications and face to face negotiations, the mediation resembled the process of negotiations after a rebellion in the civilian realm, which Violet Soen recently characterised as '*vredehandel*'. Soen analysed the negotiations between malcontent nobles and their king after a rebellion in the civilian realm, arguing that vassals were driven by a concept of duty to seek reconciliation.⁸ Archduke Albert of Austria and his officers were conscious that their authority as employers had suffered from the structural failure to provide salaries, but by addressing the rebellious soldiers as subjects rather than as employees, they appealed to a similar '*dévoir de reconciliation*'. One case, the authorities' response to the great mutiny of Hamont (1599-1601), demonstrates the political significance of military rebellion. Moreover, I would like to suggest that the negotiations provide insight into the hybrid character of contemporary political discourse applied to concrete moments of decision-making. The language authorities employed in their reactions to the mutinies was suffused with political realism rather than with moral-religious ideas of justice, and directed at the interest of the state.

Negotiating *sustento*: from Hamont to Diest

In the autumn of 1599 General Francisco de Mendoza was stationed with his troops in the vicinity of Lothen, awaiting orders of Archduke Albert of Austria concerning their accommodation for the winter. By mid-December they were

7 See Robert Birely, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill 1990); Harro Höpfl, 'Orthodoxy and Reason of State', *History of Political Thought* 23:2 (2002) 211-237; Manuel

Rivero Rodríguez, *La España de Don Quijote: Un viaje al siglo de oro* (Madrid 2005) 48-59, 88-92.

8 Violet Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke en Habsburgse verzoeningspogingen tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam 2012) 27-33 and *passim*.

still waiting, and as the weather conditions deteriorated and resources ran out, both men and horses were suffering ‘the utmost misery and hunger’.⁹ Around Christmas Mendoza learned that a group of foot soldiers and cavalry had left the camp without permission and had taken refuge in Hamont, a minor village east of Weert.¹⁰ Their number increased daily and by New Year, in accordance with the usual patterns of mutiny in the Habsburg armies, they had named their leader or Electo.¹¹ The mutiny of Hamont was a fact.

During the first weeks of 1600 pressure increased on Archduke Albert of Austria, Captain-General and the highest military commander in the Netherlands, to provide a solution for the troubles caused by the mutiny of Hamont. However, conform with the 1598 Act of Cession by which Philip II had signed over sovereignty over the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her husband-to-be Albert, the highest authority of the army of Flanders lay with Philip III and his Council of State and War in Madrid. It was the king who, through his Council, ultimately decided on appointments and allocated resources for the soldier’s wages. Thus in military matters the Archdukes were highly dependent on the royal court.¹² Their main trouble was obtaining financial backing from the perpetually debt-ridden and regularly defaulting administration of the Spanish empire. Since the central treasury could never afford to pay the wages due to 60,000 to 70,000 soldiers at once, payment was irregular, which caused heavy competition between different companies and, ultimately, mutiny.¹³

9 ‘Miserias y extremos de la hambre de los soldados y caballos’. Francisco de Mendoza to Albert of Austria, Lothen (field), 15 December 1599, in: *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* (hereafter *CODOIN*) XLII (Madrid 1863) 61-64 (61).

10 Francisco de Mendoza to Albert of Austria, Heel (field), 29 December 1599, in: *CODOIN* XLII, 68-70.

11 According to Emanuel van Meteren, whose account of the Hamont mutiny is largely in accordance with the correspondence, the Electos were two Italians named Alonso Maiolichino and Giovanni Martines, representing the infantry and cavalry respectively. Emanuel van Meteren, *Historie der Nederlandscher ende haerder naburen oorlogen ende geschiedenissen, tot den lare MVIIXII* (The Hague 1622) 439. For the organization of mutinies, see Parker, ‘Mutiny and Discontent’, 39-41; Sherer, ‘Mutiny in the Spanish Infantry’, 909-911.

12 Alicia Esteban Estríngana, ‘Administración militar y negocio de guerra en los Países Bajos católicos. siglo XVII’, in: Ana Crespo Solana (ed.), *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos: Una revisión historiográfica XVI-XVIII I* (2 vols; Córdoba 2002) 65-100; Bernardo García García, ‘Bruselas y Madrid: Isabel Clara Eugenia y el duque de Lerma’, in: Luc Duerloo and Werner Thomas (eds.), *Albert en Isabella. Essays* (Turnhout 1998) 67-69.

13 Etienne Rooms, ‘De materiële organisatie van het Koninklijke leger in de Nederlanden ten tijde van het beleg van Oostende’, in: Thomas Werner (ed.), *De val van het nieuwe Troje. Het beleg van Oostende 1601-1604* (Leuven 2004) 73-74; González de León, *Road to Rocroi*, 95; Parker, ‘Mutiny and Discontent’, 41-42. For a detailed account of the financial situation of the Spanish crown, see Mauricio Drelichman and Hans-Joachim Voth, *Lending to the Borrower from Hell: Debt, Taxes, and*

While Mendoza and his officers sent increasingly desperate dispatches to Albert of Austria, authorities of local municipalities called upon the Archduke to stop the mutineers from pillaging the area and threatening civilians.¹⁴ The magistrates of Bergen (or Mons), a town in Hainaut, forwarded a note to Albert in which the mutineers threatened them with ‘total destruction’ unless they would pay a considerable sum, calling upon their sovereign for protection.¹⁵ Although the Archdukes went to rhetorical extremes to press the *cosas de Flandes* with the Council of State and War and their most powerful contact at court, the young king’s *privado* the Duke of Lerma, they received cool replies.¹⁶ Their outcries were only a small portion of dispatches from all the empire’s peripheries, pressing local interest from a distance through dramatic exaggeration.¹⁷ The Council of State wrote that all available resources had already been sent, and that Philip III should tell his uncle to endeavour to ‘take the best measures possible to arrest and cure this evil over there’.¹⁸

Attempts to make the mutineers return to obedience by means of persuasion had failed, as envoys were refused access to Hamont. Only in late January did Mendoza receive word that the Electo and his Council were willing to negotiate, on the condition that they would treat directly with Albert through a plenipotentiary. The Archduke appointed the statesman and *maestre de campo* Juan de Texeda, but negotiations were troubled from the start. On 17 February Texeda complained that ‘the soldiers are not prepared to accept anything His Highness offers, but only what they themselves

Default in the Age of Philip II (Princeton, NJ 2014), especially chapter 8: ‘Tax, Empire, and the logic of Spanish Decline’.

- 14 Mendoza to Albert, Cortesen (field), 9 January 1600, in: CODOIN XLII, 77-81 (79); Anthonie van Grobbendonck to Albert, 's-Hertogenbosch, 31 December 1599. ARB Audiëntie 622:314; Charles-Philippe de Croÿ, Marquis of Havré to Albert, Brussels, 11 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:68; Havré to Albert, Brussels, 15 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:115; Grobbendonck to Albert, 's-Hertogenbosch, 17 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:150.
- 15 ‘Totale perdition’. Electo and Conseil to Albert, Hamont, 2 March 1600. ARB Audiëntie 623:61 (quote); Magistrates of Bergen to Albert, Bergen, 11 March 1600. ARB Audiëntie 623:79.
- 16 Four letters from Albert to the Duke of Lerma: Brussels, 10 January 1600; Ghent, 30 January 1600; Lille, 6 February 1600; Binche,

26 February 1600, in: CODOIN XLII, 327-328, 331-336; ‘Consulta sobre una carta del Archiduque Alberto de 30 Enero’, Madrid, 22 February 1600, in: Mariano Alcocer y Martínez (ed.), *Consultas del Consejo de Estado 1: Documentos procedentes del Archivo General de Simancas, 1600-1603* (Madrid 1930) 1-2 (1); Isabel Clara Eugenia to Lerma, Ghent, 29 January 1600, in: Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Correspondencia de la infanta archiduquesa doña Isabel Clara Eugenia de Austria con el duque de Lerma* (Madrid 1906) 8-10.

- 17 Mía Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II, and Habsburg Authority, 1551-1559* (Cambridge 1988) 219, 223.
- 18 ‘[...] que alla tome el mejor expediente que pudiese para atajar este daño y poner remedio en el’. Consulta sobre una carta del Archiduque Alberto de 30 Enero’, Madrid, 22 February 1600, in: Martínez, *Consultas* 1, 1-2 (2).

demand'.¹⁹ Texeda's mission boiled down to negotiating *sustento*, a system to neutralize and contain mutinies which had become especially popular in the Army of Flanders during the 1590s. While the mutinous soldiers awaited the payment of their full wages, a town or village was often appointed to them in order to carry the responsibility for their upkeep. Until the full payment was completed, the mutineers were in open rebellion and did not take orders from the high command, although they vowed to defend their enclave against the troops of the rebelling Low Countries.²⁰ To be able to agree to a *sustento* settlement however, Albert needed financial backing from Madrid. By mid-March he gratefully received a special dispatch from the Council of State, enabling him to set the mutineers up with *sustento* in the small town of Diest in Brabant.²¹ On 19 March 1600 Texeda escorted the train of about 1,000 cavalry, 2,000 infantry and their entourage into the town, where they would remain until February 1601.²²

For Diest, 19 March marked the beginning of a trying period, invariably referred to in local records as the *mutinatie* or mutiny.²³ Years of war had already taken their toll on this town of beer brewers, part of the Nassau fiefdom, which had been burdened with a garrison continuously since 1567.²⁴ According to an eye-witness, the total number of mutineers and their entourage amounted to about 6,000, which came down to 1.5 persons per inhabitant.²⁵ The presence of the mutineers meant the introduction of a new order within the city walls. Although civilians were still governed by the mayor and his magistrates, the numerous mutineers answered only to the Electo and his Council. Extraordinary taxes appear in the municipal accounts with the explicit mention that they had been imposed 'with consultation and consent of the Electo and his Council'.²⁶ The mutineers had the right

19 'Los soldados no quieren acetar lo que V.A. se les ofrece sino en la forma aquellos lo piden'. Havré to Albert, Brussels, 17 February 1600 (1). ARB Audiëntie 625:136 (quote); Charles-Alexandre de Croÿ, *Mémoires guerriers de ce qu'y c'est passé aux Pays-Bas, depuis le commencement de l'an 1600, jusques à la fin de l'année 1606* (Antwerp 1642) 9.

20 Wymans, 'Les mutineries militaires', 114-119; Parker, 'Mutiny and Discontent'.

21 Albert to Lerma, Brussels, 18 March 1600, in: CODOIN XLII, 336. The stipend amounted to 14 stuivers per diem for infantry and 28 for cavalry. The numbers are mentioned in Antonio Carnero, *Historia de las guerras civiles que ha avido en los estados de Flandes desde el año 1559 hasta el de 1609* (Brussels 1625) 469-470 and Van Meteren, *Historie*, 442. See also Geoffrey Parker, *Army of Flanders*,

255. For background on Diest, see Michiel van der Eycken, *Geschiedenis van Diest* (Diest 1980).

22 Three letters from Albert to Lerma: Brussels, 3 April 1600; Brussels, 27 May 1600; Brussels, 17 June 1600, in: CODOIN XLII, 337-339, 345-347, 349-352; 'Consulta sobre las cartas del Sr. Archiduque de 12 y 28 de Mayo', Madrid, 22 June 1600, in: Alcocer, *Consultas* I, 13-17 (14).

23 Stadsarchief Diest (hereafter SAD), inv.no. 219: Rekeningen 1599/1600, f. 17v.

24 For details about the garrisons, see Rooms, 'De materiële organisatie', 76-77.

25 Algemeen Rijksarchief, Leuven (hereafter ARL), Juridisch archief Diest, inv.no. 170: 'Rol van de maandag', title page (1).

26 'By deliberatie ende consent vanden Elettio ende Raedt'. SAD 219:26r. (quote); SAD 221:30r.



Battle of Nieuwpoort, 2 July 1600, with under caption 3: 'Esquadrans des mutines de Diest' (upper right in the image).

Charles-Alexandre de Croÿ, *Mémoires guerriers de ce qu'y c'est passé aux Pays-Bas, depuis le commencement de l'an 1600, jusques à la fin de l'année 1606* (Antwerp 1642) 11.

Special Collections, University of Amsterdam, OTM:
 OG 63-6373.

to purchase wine and beer free of tax, while beer tax revenues usually constituted over fifty per cent of the city's annual income.²⁷ Scraps of evidence in local records provide glimpses of what the mutineers' presence must have meant for the inhabitants of Diest. In some cases the magistrates temporarily lowered the rent of a dwelling 'since the mutineers have taken possession of the tenant's parlour, having placed their horses in it, and have otherwise obstructed his rights'.²⁸ The local sergeant was made redundant during the mutiny.²⁹ And on the title page of the civilian court registry, between notes of measurements and small reminders, an anonymous clerk scribbled his small complaint: 'What a mutiny is/those who have tasted it, know for sure'.³⁰

Punishment or diplomacy?

In the authorities' reactions to the mutiny of Hamont, both in Madrid and in the fields around Zaltbommel, two main themes dominated: the necessity of acting with haste and the paramount importance of warding off a full rebellion or *alteración general*. The first reflex of officers when confronted with a sign of mutiny was to suppress it and quickly apprehend the culprits. Punishing lack of discipline and disobedience was a matter of principle, but generally it was also an effective way to prevent a minor uprising from turning into an *alteración general*.³¹ As Mendoza wrote to Archduke Albert,

His Highness needs to consider the inconvenience we would suffer if a full rebellion broke out, and that what he can cure today with little, will later cost a lot.³²

The main objection to swift punishment however, was that it forced soldiers to take up arms against their own colleagues. Officers greatly feared that

27 SAD 219:17v., 6r. Van der Eycken, *Geschiedenis van Diest*, 157-158.

28 'Overmits den gemutineerden, der den pachter d Inhuys hebben affgenomen als hebbende die soldaeten hunne peerden daer inne gestelt, ende anderssins belets gedaen in zijn gerechticheyt'. SAD 219:2v.

29 'Gemerckt dat den dienst vande voersz. Ghysbrecht Elinck heeft stille gestaen gedurende der mutinatie, soo is geordineert den selven alleenlyck te betaelen naer Rate vande tyden, ende alsoe de gemutineerde zyn Innecomen op 19 maert 1600 ende alhier gebleven tot 25 februaris 1601, soe coempt hier alleenen te

betaelen van Dionys (Day of Saint Dionysius, the patron saint of Diest, 9 October; L.K.) 1599 totte voersz 19 marty 1600.' SAD 219:85v., 86r.

30 'Wat een mutinatie is/Die t geproeft hebben, weten t gewis'. ARL Juridisch archief Diest, 170: 'Rol van de maandag', title page (2).

31 Two letters from Mendoza to Albert: Bommel (field), 11 October 1599; Heel (field), 29 December 1599, in: CODDIN XLII, 34-35, 68-70.

32 'V.A. se sirva de considerar el inconveniente que seria si hubiese una alteracion general, y que lo que agora se puede remediar con poco, costará despues mucho'. Mendoza to Albert, Bommel (field), 21 September 1599, in: CODDIN XLII, 26-27.

their soldiers would join forces with the mutineers, as Mendoza knew had happened during the time of the Duke of Alva. Frustrated, he explained to Albert that to his great disappointment it was impossible to punish the mutineers ‘by way of arms, as I would like to do, for there is nobody to do it without causing even more troubles’.³³ The Infanta Isabella likewise declared that the behaviour of the mutineers was unacceptable, either on the basis of conscience or reason, but feared that ‘if one were to punish one man, everybody would be dragged in, and the entire camp would rebel’.³⁴

The alternative to swift punishment was a diplomatic offensive, which was initiated during the early stages of the Hamont mutiny. It was customary to send an ‘honourable person’ (*persona de respeto*) to convince the mutineers to return to obedience, or in a later stage, to inquire after their terms and negotiate. Immediately after dismissing a violent response to the nascent mutiny as undesirable, Mendoza sent his sergeant-major Baltasar López to Hamont, but to no avail. The second envoy, *maestre de campo* Gaspar Zapena, was not even allowed to enter Hamont, and Captain Conradino, Governor of Weert, was likewise unsuccessful early in the new year.³⁵ The mutineers were only prepared to treat with Juan de Texeda. His first task was to contain the rebellion and ensure that the mutineers would not actively seek to increase their number, and consequently to negotiate *sustento*.³⁶ Soldiers were well acquainted with the terms of previous *sustento*-settlements. In fact, only months after the rebels of Hamont had settled in Diest, a fresh group of mutineers demanded ‘contributions like those of Diest’, and by August 1600 they had been assigned the town of Weert.³⁷

The attempts at reconciliation from the side of the Habsburg authorities did not end with the containment of the mutiny within the walls

33 ‘Por fuerza de armas estoy desengañado (con harto sentimiento mio) que no pueden castigarse, como yo quisiera hacerlo, porque no hay con quien intentarlo que no sea de mayor inconveniente’. Mendoza to Albert, Cortesen (field), 9 January 1600, in: *CODOIN XLII*, 77-81 (79); Mendoza to Albert, Heel (field), 29 December 1599, in: *CODOIN XLII*, 68-70.

34 ‘Y estas cosas se ha de disimular con ellas; porque si se castigase un hombre por ello, se undiria el mundo y se levantaría el campo’. Isabella to Lerma, Brussels, 25 January 1607, in: Villa, *Correspondencia*, 161-164 (163).

35 Three letters from Mendoza to Albert: Heel (field), 29 December 1599; Heel and Recken, 1 and

2 January 1600; Cortesen (field), 9 January 1600, in: *CODOIN XLII*, 68-74.

36 Two letters from Juan de Texeda to Albert, both on 21 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:188 en 192. Also Texeda to Havré, Diest, 18 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:159; Havré to Albrecht, Brussels, 19 February 1600. ARB Audiëntie 625:173.

37 ‘Contrebutions segond ceux de Dist’. Electo and Conseil of Hamont (2) to Albert, Hamont, 18 June 1600. ARB Audiëntie 623:131. See for the assigning of Weert: Council of State Brussels to the mutineers of Hamont (2), Brussels, 6 August 1600. ARB Audiëntie 627:98 (minute) and 109 (copy); two letters from Havré to Albert: Brussels, 8 August 1600 and 9 August 1600. Respectively ARB Audiëntie 627:127 and 140.

of Diest. When in June 1600 it became clear that General Maurits van Nassau was planning a campaign in West Flanders, officers embarked on an internal diplomatic offensive to persuade the rebel soldiers to join their troops on the road to Nieuwpoort. Pressed by his officers, Archduke Albert instructed General Herman van den Bergh to beg the assistance of the mutineers of Diest in his name. Van den Bergh phrased his request in the most humble terms. With the assistance of God and the mutineers the Habsburg forces would be able to stop the enemy, he wrote, so would they please do His Highness 'the tremendous favour of consenting to come to their assistance'?³⁸ Meanwhile the Count of Solre, *caballerizo mayor* and Albert's personal assistant, solicited the support of the recently rebelled soldiers of Hamont. He begged them to follow the example of the mutineers of Diest, who had just agreed to fight for Albert, the king of Spain and the Catholic faith, despite their general dissatisfaction.³⁹ Days before the battle of Nieuwpoort he tried again, beseeching them

[...] to truly love your reputation, honour and the service of Their Highnesses, and to consent to make a decision worthy of yourselves, and demonstrate [...] that you are not inferior to those of Diest in audacity and affection for the service of Their Highnesses.⁴⁰

Although the 'new' mutineers of Hamont did not respond to the authorities' plea, those of Diest were part of the vanguard of the troops that left Ghent on 29 June, around 1,400 foot and 600 horse strong.⁴¹

After the defeat at Nieuwpoort the regiment of 'mutines' returned to Diest, and there they remained until the authorities had assembled the means to settle the final payment. With a total cost of 27,873 *escudos* paid as *sustento*

38 H. van den Bergh to the mutineers of Diest (copy for Albert of Austria), Roermond, 27 June 1600, see note 2. One of the officers pressing Albert to turn to the mutineers was Anthonie van Grobbendonck, in a letter written in Ghent on 24 June 1600. ARB Audiëntie 626:95.

39 'Si bien vous estes mal en satisfaitz, je m'asseure que vous n'estes pas moins fidels pour ceulx ny moins desireux du service de Dieu et de leurs Altezes, et de la ruine de leurs ennemis'. Philippe de Croÿ, Count of Solre to the mutineers of Hamont (2) (copy for Albert of Austria), Kaldekercke (field), 20 June 1600. ARB Audiëntie 626:76.

40 'Je vous supplie sur aultant que vous aymez vrement propre reputation et honneur et le

service de leurs Altezes, que vouillez prendre une resolution digne de vous aultres et monstrez que [...] nestes pour ceder a ceulx de Diest en gaillardise de coeur et d'affection pour rendre une service signale a leurs Altezes.' Solre to the mutineers of Hamont (2) (copy for Albert of Austria), Brussels, 1 July 1600. ARB Audiëntie 626:196.

41 Sources differ with regard to the exact number. B. Cox, *Van den tocht in Vlaenderen. De logistiek van Nieuwpoort 1600* (Zutphen 1986) 72, 126-127; Guido Bentivoglio, *Historie der Nederlantsche oorloghen, sedert het vertrek van Filippus de Tweede, koning van Spanje, uit de Nederlanden, tot het Twaalf Jarig Bestant*, translation J.H. Glazemaker (1632-1639; Leeuwarden 1674) 668.

in addition to the final settlement of 518,000 *escudos*, the great mutiny turned out to be the most expensive in the Army of Flanders so far. According to receipts of the Spanish royal treasury, the amount of money sent from Madrid to fund the Army of Flanders during the three years between 1599 and 1601 averaged 3.4 million *escudos* a year. The total cost of the mutiny thus amounted to sixteen per cent of a yearly contribution.⁴² On 22 April 1601 the Spanish Council of State and War convened in Valladolid to evaluate the pacification of the great mutiny of Hamont. The Council was keenly aware of the offence of the rebellious soldiers who, by openly defying royal authority, had violated the laws of justice and deserved to be punished. However, the counsellors advised King Philip III to extend a full pardon to the mutineers:

Since the usual thing to do in similar cases is to pardon everything that happened without limitation of time or place, the Council proposes that the same will be done with these. In the privileged realm of conscience there would be little to doubt because of the violence and bad disposition of the mutineers, the insolence and notorious injustice of their pretensions, and the marked disdain for the service and obedience they owe His Majesty and those who rule as vassals in his royal name. However, reason of state demands different considerations.⁴³

Outside the privileged realm of conscience, in the sphere in which precedent and necessity ruled, a king sometimes needed to bow to his rebels in the interest of preserving his state.

42 'Relación del dinero remitido a Flandes', 13 September 1598-1520 June 1609, in: CODDIN XXXVI (Madrid 1860) 509-543; Parker, *Army of Flanders*, 248 (amounts are converted from *maravedís* to *escudos* (350 *maravedís*), see for the different currencies Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire*, xv-xvi). To indicate the burden on the Madrid treasury, a comparison can be made with the year 1620, when Spanish contribution for the Low Countries constituted 3,393,527 *escudos*, while revenue from the Low Countries in the form of taxes or *bedes* amounted to no more than 722,400 *escudos* (448,000 from Flanders, 170,400 from Brabant, 104,000 from Artois). René Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog. Filips IV en de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1629-1648* (Maastricht 2001) 327-330 (amounts are converted from florins (20 *pattards*) to *escudos* (50 *pattards*), see E. Stols, *De Spaanse*

Brabanders of de handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische Wereld 1598-1648 (Brussels 1971) 219-221, 238).

43 'Porque lo ordinario en semejantes casos es perdonarles todo lo pasado sin limitación de tiempo ni lugar, presupone el Consejo que lo mismo se habra hecho con estos, y que aunque en el fuero de la conciencia abria poco que dudar por la violencia y mal animo de los amotinados por la insolencia y notaria injusticia de muchas de sus pretensiones, y el notable desacato contra el servicio y obediencia que deven a Vuestra Magestad como vasallos y a los ministros que en su real nombre los governavan, todavia la razon de Estado pide diferente consideracion.' 'Consulta sobre cartas del Archiduque Alberto de 22 de Marzo', Valladolid, 22 April 1601, in: Alcocer, *Consultas* 1, 123-129 (127-128).

The tension underlying the negotiations and *sustento*-arrangement touched the very core of the concept of good government. Shortly upon his arrival as the new sovereign of the Netherlands, Archduke Albert was presented with the memorial *Discursos al archiduque Alberto, año 1600*, in which the anonymous author introduced mutinies as one of the four major problems in Albert's new state.⁴⁴ Continuing the practice of negotiating with the mutineers was as ineffective as 'cutting off a head of this hellish hydra', which grew seven new ones in its place.⁴⁵ His main objection, following Christian-humanist conceptions of good government, was that treating with mutineers was in conflict with the laws of justice, 'the soul of the state'. A good prince secured his authority by binding his subjects to the laws of justice, making sure he 'encourages the good ones with grace [...] and makes the bad ones tremble with the fear of punishment'. It was obviously unjust that during the recent mutinies only rebellious soldiers had received payment, and the obedient ones had been left utterly destitute.⁴⁶

A central arbiter in both the military and civilian realm, Albert of Austria received pleas for justice from at least three different quarters, all supplicants presenting themselves as loyal subjects and servants. In the first place, the mutineers demanded justice in the form of payment. The Archdukes and officers were conscious of the legitimacy of this appeal, knowing that they had failed in their obligation to deliver the soldiers from their desperate plight. After all, 'it is impossible to live without eating'.⁴⁷ Second, the States of Brabant and local municipalities complained to their 'natural lord, and sovereign prince' that the pay of *sustento* drained the province's resources, for what kind of justice was it to 'encumber good vassals and subjects [...] to satisfy the mutineers'?⁴⁸ Third, there were the inhabitants of Diest, burdened with the lengthy presence of mutineers. To be assigned a regular garrison was already a strain on a town, but it was considered a necessary evil, since

44 Anonymous, 'Discursos al archiduque Alberto, año 1600', in: *CODOIN XLII*, 242-276. Although the document is not dated, references to the Crèvecoeur and Sint Andries mutinies on the one hand, and rumours of Diest going to be assigned to the mutineers of Hamont on the other, indicate that it must have been written between 17 February and 19 March 1600.

45 'Cortar una cabeza á esta hidra infernal á quien produzga otras siete'. Anonymous, 'Discursos al archiduque', 252.

46 'Ánima de un Estado', 'Á los buenos con las mercedes se dé mayor ánimo, mesurando sus acciones con sus obligaciones, y que los malos tiemblen del temor del castigo'. *Ibid.*, 251.

47 'Sin comer es imposible vivir'. Mendoza to Albert, Rees, 20 February 1599, in: *CODOIN XLI* (Madrid 1862) 536-555 (539).

48 'Seigneur naturel, et prince souverain'; 'Surcharger leurs bons vassaulx et subiects [...] pour contenter les mutinez'. States of Brabant to Albert and Isabella, Brussels, 18 October 1600. ARB Audiëntie 624:401.

‘the obligation to preserve the army is paramount, and the preservation and contentment of the country are (also, L. K.) imperative, and to combine the one with the other is immensely difficult’.⁴⁹ This time however, the inhabitants of Diest knew that the soldiers who took over their town were rebels, and that it was their sovereign who had voluntarily placed the burden on their shoulders. At every mention of the mutineers in municipal records, it is made explicit that they had entered the town ‘by ordre van Zyn Hoochheyt’, at the orders of His Highness.⁵⁰

Acting contrary to the laws of justice, Albert came close to risking his state, for advisers warned him that ‘the natural love of his poor vassals is growing cold’.⁵¹ Yet with a large number of interpretations and conflicting interests, justice in absolute terms was clearly not suited to direct the confrontation of a military rebellion. For Archduke Albert and King Philip III, *sustento* proved an effective escape out of the deadlock, but its moral legitimacy was highly questionable. How could the authorities legitimise their concessions to the mutineers, and the system that was not only humiliating, but downright unjust?

Appearance and reason of state

An alternative to the unmanageable ideal of pure justice was to make use of calculated deceit and the appearance of justice in political rhetoric and practice. Justus Lipsius, whose *Six Books on Politics* (1589) were a crucial influence on Spanish political discourse from the late sixteenth century onwards⁵², had explored the various gradations of legitimate deceit, but the notion of separating the ‘*utile*’ from the ‘*honestum*’ was ultimately based on the historical works of Tacitus.⁵³ Given his central concern with the

49 ‘Porque la obligacion y necesidad que hay de conservar el ejército es muy precisa, y la que hay de conservar y contentar al país muy necesaria, y en cumplir con lo uno y con lo otro hay harta dificultad.’ Mendoza to Albert, Bommel (field), 6 October 1599, in: CODDIN XLII, 31-34 (31).

50 Full quotes: ‘By ordre van Zyn Hoocheyt op 19 marty 1600 alhier zijn innecomen’, ‘alhier by ordre van Zyn Hoochheyt zyn gelegert geweest’. Respectively SAD 219:26r., 6v.

51 ‘Se ha resfriado mucho el amor natural destos sus pobres vasallos’. Anonymous, ‘Discursos al archiduque’, 257-258 (257).

52 Jan Waszink, ‘Nawoord’, in: idem (ed.), *Hugo de Groot, Kroniek van de Nederlandse Oorlog. De*

Opstand 1559-1588 (Nijmegen 2014) 221-225; Mark Morford, ‘Tacitean *prudencia* and the Doctrines of Justus Lipsius’, in: Torrey Luce and Anthony Woodman (eds.), *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (Princeton 1993) 129-151. For the reception of Lipsius in seventeenth-century Spain, see Carmen Peraita, ‘Typographical Translations: Spanish Refashioning of Lipsius’s *Politicorum Libri Sex*’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 64:4 (2011) 1106-1047 DOI 10.1086/664086; Theodore Corbett, ‘The Cult of Lipsius: A Leading Source of Early Modern Spanish Statecraft’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1975) 139-152 DOI 10.2307/2709016.

53 Peter Burke, ‘Tacitism, Skepticism and Reason of State’, in: James Burns and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The*

consequences of rebellion and the dynamics between centre and periphery of a large empire, studying Tacitus, in the words of Michel de Montaigne, was ‘proper in a sick and troubled state’.⁵⁴ The first Spanish translation of Tacitus’ oeuvre, by the lawyer and statesman Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos, included printed marginalia with a large number of aphorisms or lessons in statecraft drawn from the text.⁵⁵ In both the main text and marginalia the body politic and body military were conflated to a high degree, and generic terms to denominate political disturbances like *rebelión*, *sedición* or *alboroto* were interchangeable with *motín*, which normally applied to mutiny alone; both were political occurrences to which, from the perspective of the prince, the same rules applied.⁵⁶

Antonio Pérez, a close friend and collaborator of Álamos, included Tacitus’ account of the response of Emperor Tiberius to the Pannonian and German mutinies of the year 14 AD in a political manual dedicated to Philip III.⁵⁷ For Pérez, the account illustrated the political expediency of gaining the love of subjects by avoiding the appearance of cruelty.⁵⁸ The rule of justice required severity and punishment, but since the reputation of cruelty caused the hatred of subjects and eventually the loss of the state, a prudent prince made sure he was not perceived as the actor. Pérez pointed out

Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700 (Cambridge 1991) 485; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651* (Cambridge 1993) 39-80.

54 Quote obtained from Alexandra Gajda, ‘Tacitus and Political Thought in Early Modern Europe, c. 1530-c. 1640’, in: Anthony Woodman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus* (Cambridge 2009) DOI 10.1017/ccol9780521874601.019.

55 The collection of aphorisms as a genre, although professedly pragmatic, has long been perceived as problematic when it comes to application in practical politics. John Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion 111: The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge 2003) 272; Vera Keller, ‘Mining Tacitus: Secrets of Empire, Nature and Art in the Reason of State’, *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45:2 (2012) 191-192, 203. David Martin Jones, ‘Aphorism and the Counsel of Prudence in Early Modern Statecraft: The Curious Case of Justus Lipsius’, *Parergon* 28:2 (2011) 56.

56 In the index, under the header ‘*motín*’ Álamos referred to civil rebellion (‘*vease rebeldes y rebelión*’). Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos, *Tacito*

Español, ilustrado con aforismos (Madrid 1614) 20-31. Álamos de Barrientos (1556-1644) completed the translations of the *Annals*, *Histories* and *Agricola* in the years between 1590 and 1598, which he spent in prison following the fall from grace of his patron Antonio Pérez. The work circulated in manuscript version before being published in 1614.

57 The account of the two mutinies in Book 1 of the *Annals* takes up more than half the narrative of the year 14 AD. The mutiny in Pannonia (*Annals* 1:16-30) occurred among the troops of Drusus, and the mutiny in Germany (*Annals* 1:31-49) among those of Germanicus, both sons of Emperor Tiberius. See Anthony Woodman, ‘Mutiny and Madness: Tacitus *Annals* 1:16-49’, *Arethusa* 39:2 (2006) 303 DOI 10.1353/are.2006.0019.

58 Antonio Pérez and Baltasar Alamos de Barrientos, *Suma de preceptos justos, necesarios y provechosos en consejo de estado al rey Felipe III, siendo príncipe*, Modesto Santos (ed.) (Barcelona 1991) 32-39. A slightly revised version of *Suma de preceptos* was included as a preliminary discourse in the

that by ensuring that the mutinous soldiers in Germany punished their own ringleaders, Germanicus had effectively avoided the role of a cruel general. He concluded that

[...] what Tacitus wanted to teach every prince with regard to the soldiers of Pannonia, was that, to gain the love of his subjects and avoid their hatred – the first being the essence of his preservation, the second of his reduction – only he presides over the rewards, only he will be held for lord and distributor of grace, and only in his trials and punishment one acknowledges the power and necessity of administering justice.⁵⁹

From the sixteenth century onwards, political writers concerned with the state inevitably dealt with the influence of Machiavelli, either by denouncing him or by adopting (parts of) his ‘doctrine’.⁶⁰ In the political theory of Counter-Reformation Spain, it was common and obligatory to depict Machiavelli as an evil man whose tenets originated from the devil himself.⁶¹ Spanish Tacitist discourse certainly did not abandon Christian-humanist traditions or discard the value of justice in a ‘Machiavellian’ manner, but as a virtue justice was not primarily treated as a political objective in itself. As a means to achieve an aim beyond its intrinsic value, the appearance of justice could be as effective as the

Tácito Español as ‘Discurso para inteligencia de los aforismos, uso, y provecho dellos’. For the authorship and the collaboration between Pérez and Álamos, see Javier Peña Echevarria (ed.), *La razón de estado en España, siglos XVI-XVII. Antología de textos* (Madrid 1998) 40-41.

59 ‘Y así concluyo con que lo quiso dar a entender Tácito a todos los príncipes en aquella razón de los soldados de Pannonia, y fue que, para poseer éstos el amor de sus vasallos y excusar su aborrecimiento, principio de su conservación y causa de su disminución, sólo ellos dispusiesen de los premios, sólo ellos se tuviesen por señores y dispensadores de las mercedes, y de ellos sólo reconociesen en las penas y castigos la fuerza y necesidad de administrar justicia.’ *Ibid.*, 33, 36.

60 Friedrich Meinecke first identified reason of state as a doctrine in his classic and influential *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d’État and its Place in Modern History* (1954; London 1984). Important works on (early modern) reason of state published since then include Étienne

Thuaud, *Raison d’état et pensée politique à l’époque de Richelieu* (Paris 1966); William Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton 1972); Rodolfo de Mattei, *Il problema della ragion di stato nell’età della controriforma* (Milan, Naples 1979); Noel Malcolm, *Reason of State, Propaganda and the Thirty Years’ War* (Cambridge 2007); Conal Condren, ‘Reason of State and Sovereignty in Early Modern England: A Question of Ideology?’, *Parergon* 28:2 (2011) 5-27 DOI 10.1353/pgn.2011.0105.

61 This does not negate Machiavelli’s *de facto* influence on Spanish political thought. As Keith Howard recently argued, the fact that authors by engaging with his writings adopted elements of the Machiavellian vocabulary demands serious reconsideration of the terms ‘Machiavellian’ and ‘anti-Machiavellian’. Keith Howard, *The Reception of Machiavelli in Early Modern Spain* (Woodbridge 2014); idem, ‘The anti-Machiavellians of the Spanish Baroque: A Reassessment’, *LATCH* 5 (2012) 106-119.

pure form in political theory but also in the realm of practical politics. During the early stages of the first Hamont mutiny, Albert and Mendoza explicitly ordered *maestre de campo* Zapena to pretend that he had no knowledge of their rebellion. This way he would be able to treat the rebels as obedient soldiers whose only crime had been to abandon the camp, and who could legitimately be allowed to return without severe punishment being demanded.⁶² In March 1600, worrying about the wave of mutinies in the Netherlands, the Council of State in Madrid advised Philip III to seek money to pay off his soldiers but if this turned out to be impossible, he could ‘answer the Archduke with nice words without promising nor assuring anything certain, and that meanwhile he should attempt to make do with the money sent to him’.⁶³ Crucial was not whether the expressions were sincere, but how they would be perceived, and the real effect this would have in the political realm.

With virtue subordinated to political expediency, the legitimising power for controversial measures lay in the ultimate objective. This objective was present at every stage of the decision-making process for Philip III and his Council of State – maintaining dominion, or the state.⁶⁴ The interest of state was frequently referred to as a justification, for example when the Council proposed to impose an extraordinary tax on flour in Castile in order to gather resources for the war effort in Flanders. A *consulta* assured the king that in case the plan would meet resistance, ‘his Majesty can very legitimately command that it be executed anyway’ since ‘the preservation and expansion of his kingdoms’ were at stake.⁶⁵ As is clear in the earlier quote, eventually the counsellors employed the same rhetoric when they advised the king to extend a full pardon to the rebels of Hamont. In the final analysis, the ‘privileged realm of conscience’, where justice was absolute and clear, was separated from the real world of politics, where it was instrumental to the interest of the state. In only a few words, the concise line which decided the fate of the 3,000 mutineers of Hamont thus contained the justification of the *sustento*-arrangement and the concessions the mighty king had made to his rebels – ‘reason of state demands different considerations’.⁶⁶

62 Mendoza to Albert, Heel (field), 29 December 1599, in: *CODOIN XLII*, 68-70 (69).

63 ‘Se podra responder al Sr. Archiduque con buenas palabras sin prometer ni asegurar cosa çierta y que entre tanto procure con el dinero que se le ha embiado acomodar’. ‘Consulta sobre lo que escribe el Archiduque Alberto’, Madrid, 21 March 1600, in: Martínez, *Consultas* 1, 6-7 (7).

64 See for example Höpfl, ‘Orthodoxy and Reason of State’, 211-237.

65 ‘Podra Vuestra Magestad con mucha justificación mandar que se execute lo que conviniere a su servicio’, ‘la conservación y aumento de sus Reynos’. ‘Consulta sobre lo que se escribe de Flande referente a los motines y neçesidades de aquellos estados’, Madrid, 4 July 1600, in: Martínez, *Consultas* 1, 25-27 (26).

66 See n. 43; ‘Consulta sobre cartas del Archiduque Alberto de 22 de Marzo’, Valladolid, 22 April 1601, in: Martínez, *Consultas* 1, 128.

Conclusion

The practice of negotiating power and authority with mutineers was not new, as the cases of the Italian *tercios* and Tudor mutinies of the early sixteenth century clearly demonstrate. Likewise, many sovereigns had preceded Philip III in making concessions to their civilian rebels. Yet by the end of the sixteenth century, statesmen and theorists of the Catholic Spanish monarchy openly contrasted the ideals of moral justice with political reality. In fact it was precisely during this period that in most of Western Europe the humanist concept of moral politics was gradually being replaced by an essentially pragmatic way of thinking about politics, directed at the interest and preservation of the state. This transition has been firmly localised in the period of civil wars and religious violence during the late Renaissance by Maurizio Viroli and others, although they largely limited themselves to analysing intellectual and discursive contexts.⁶⁷

Political vocabulary adapted itself to the challenges of ruling a composite monarchy, but this dynamic worked both ways.⁶⁸ Openly using the demands of the state as a means to legitimise behaviour had a direct impact on historical events. The response to the great mutiny at the threshold of the seventeenth century shows that within the Spanish monarchy, in political writing and in governmental circles alike, a hybrid political discourse had appeared – still very much engaged with defining and observing the laws of justice, but clearly suffused with political realism and directed at the interest of the state. This article does not claim that the mutiny of Hamont played an active part in bringing about this transformation. The negotiations and rhetoric surrounding the mutiny however, do constitute a unique account of how the tension between justice and reason of state played out and on the level of practical politics.

How far statesmen and theorists could go in allowing power to prevail over morality of course depended on the context in which they acted and wrote. In the intimacy of a private meeting, the Council of State might openly contrast the ‘privileged realm of conscience’ with reason of state, but theorists writing for a public audience or aspiring a career at court needed to be careful to avoid the stain of Machiavellianism. The thin and fluctuating line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy lies beyond the scope of this article. What is clear is that political behaviour and its legitimising ideas and rhetoric were intimately connected with the complications of ruling an empire of

67 Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge 1992) 3; Burke, ‘Tacitism’, 498; José Fernández-Santamaría, *Reason of State and Statecraft in Spanish Political Thought*

1595-1640 (Lanham 1983) 157-197; Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, 73-75.

68 Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1: *Regarding Method* (Cambridge 2002) 156.

unprecedented scale. Whether theory followed practice or the other way around is a wider question which deserves further exploration. The dynamic between words and action at any point in history is a complex topic, but we can at least observe a concrete outcome of it when we look at images of the battle of Nieuwpoort, and see the Electo and mutineers of Diest riding out.

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