# The Elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the Early Modern Low Countries on the Eve of the Revolt[1]

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When in the *Comedy of Errors* Dromio of Syracuse compares the ghastly fat kitchen-wench, whom he's thinking of marrying, to 'a globe', on which he 'could find out countries in her', his master Antipholus demands particulars. Having asked him to locate on the anatomy of this female atlas Ireland, Scotland, France, England, Spain and the Americas, Antipholus concludes his inquisition by enquiring, 'Where stood Belgia, the *Nether*lands?' to which the slave replies, 'O sir! I did not look so low.'[2] Antipholus' question was, of course, mischievous, intended simply to produce a good belly laugh from the groundlings, yet it deserves more serious consideration for uncertainty enveloped the early modern Low Countries.[3] Erasmus once jested that because of where he was born, he did not know whether he was 'Gallus' or 'Germanus'; on that account he could be considered as two-headed, 'anceps',[4] and he was not alone in his agnosticism.

The obstacles to the construction of a durable and comprehensive national identity for the early modern Low Countries were formidable. In the first place, the Burgundian-Habsburg state was a dynastic state 'par excellence': the Burgundian dukes had put it together piecemeal and though they had created central institutions, the autonomy of the individual provinces was protected by extensive and distinctive privileges. Nor were the provinces themselves cohesive political units. It was, for example, only in the late fifteenth century that the States of Holland became a representative body with which the ruler could do business.[5] Moreover insofar as the prince owed fealty to the king of France and to the Empire and his subjects could appeal to 'foreign' courts, his position as the fount of justice was notionally compromised.

The identity of the Low Countries was also muddied by contemporary debates about the correspondence between 'Gallia' and France and between 'Germania' and

**2** *Comedy of Errors*, III, 2, 143-144; see E. Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy. A Literary and Psychological Essay and a Comprehensive Glossary* (London, 1945) 8, 158. I am most grateful to Mr Andrew Jarvis, a Southampton graduate, who first alerted me to this usage.

**3** 'Low Countries' is used here loosely to mean the lands ruled by the Burgundians and Habsburgs, minus the duchy and county of Burgundy.

**4** J. J. Poelhekke, 'Het naamloze vaderland van Erasmus', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, LXXXVI (1971) 95.

**5** J. G. Smit, *Vorst en onderdaan. Studies over Holland en Zeeland in de late Middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1995) 412-436, 483, 504-506.

'Deutschland'. In Antiquity the Rhine had separated Roman Gaul from 'Germania Magna', and the memory of that boundary survived into the sixteenth century, perpetuated by cartographers, who took Ptolemy as their guide. When French scholars claimed that the mantle of ancient Gaul had fallen on contemporary France,[6] patriotic German humanists riposted by defining 'Deutschland' in cultural terms, as the lands where the German language was spoken, thus staking a claim to those west of the Rhine. The blurring between the Holy Roman Empire and 'Deutschland' also had repercussions for the Low Countries. If the Dutch-speaking region could readily be reckoned to the 'deutsche Landen', the position of provinces like Namur and Hainaut, which indisputably belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, was far from clear. Language provided a plausible basis for the construction of nationality in late medieval England,[7] but it was especially unhelpful in the case of the Low Countries, which sat astride the Romance-Germanic linguistic fault line.

  It is then scarcely surprising that the Habsburg Low Countries failed to develop a robust national identity. Nevertheless the state-building of Charles V and the regency government in Brussels, in combination with a humanist patriotic rhetoric, ensured that by the eve of the Revolt the profile of the country and its inhabitants had become sharper, or at least less elusive. Ironically, one important element of Habsburg policy, namely the preservation of religious uniformity, provoked the first countrywide protest with the formation of the Compromise of the Nobility. At the same time, anxieties about the Spanish Inquisition, the misconduct of Spanish soldiers and sensitivities among the native high nobility, who felt excluded from the seat of power, sowed the seeds of mistrust between Spain and the Low Countries.

## I

The nomenclature for the Low Countries provides the most obvious sign of the region's relatively weak sense of identity. Instead of a single specific name for the country or its inhabitants, there was a surfeit of descriptions.[8] By the 1560s anyone wishing to refer to the Low Countries was apparently spoilt for choice, for the eight basic options might be supplemented by combining names.[9] Yet not one name was entirely

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**6**   G. Pounds, 'Origin of the Idea of Natural Frontiers in France', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, XLI (1951) 154-555.

**7**   A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (1997) 45-47; the French language also became one of the distinguishing marks of late medieval France, C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology. Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley, 1991) 273.

**8**   See the accompanying Table of names on page 38 below. Dr Andrew Sawyer kindly gave technical assistance with this Table.

**9**   Sometimes two names were combined as a 'belt-and-braces' exercise. So, the Dutch-speaking stranger church in London was known as the 'Duydsch-Nederlandischen Gemeine' or 'Ecclesia Belgiogermanica', and Viglius referred to the Low Countries as 'Belgium et (Inferior) Germania'. *Mémoires de Viglius et d'Hopperus sur le commencement des Troubles des Pays-Bas*, A. Wauters, ed. (Brussels, 1858) 15, 82.

satisfactory. Some only had a limited circulation, others were ambiguous, and yet others contentious. Nor were they easy to use. With few exceptions, they did not come trippingly off the tongue and occasionally the 'country name' failed to supply matching adjectives to describe the inhabitants or their cultures.

  Not surprisingly foreigners were baffled. So when the Leuven theologian Johannes Molanus (1533-1585) addressed his *Natales Sanctorum Belgii* to an international readership, he felt impelled to explain that 'Belgium' had become a synonym for 'Germania inferior', though Italians and other foreigners preferred 'Flandria'.[10] Likewise, when the Florentine Ludovico Guicciardini published his Italian chorography of the Low Countries in 1567, he tried in his introduction to dispel some of the semantic confusion.[11] The English shared this puzzlement. In the fifteenth and in the first half of the sixteenth century they lumped aliens from the Germanic lands indiscriminately together as 'Flemings', 'Theotonici', 'Doch' or 'Germani'.[12] In the later 1560s many hundreds of mainly Protestant immigrants from the Low Countries took refuge in south-east England, and in particular London.[13] This latest influx gave rise to several surveys of foreigners, who were classified on the basis of political allegiance, language and culture into nine or ten 'national' groupings. About three-quarters of all the strangers found in London in 1568 and 1571 were categorised as 'Dutch',[14] irrespective of whether they hailed from Antwerp, Königsberg, or Nuremberg.[15] Before 1560 more immigrants from the Low Countries had come from

**10**   B. de Groof, 'Natie en nationaliteit. Benamingsproblematiek in San Giuliano dei Fiamminghi te Rome (17e-18e eeuw)', *Bulletin de l'institut historique belge de Rome*, LVIII (1988) 90.

**11**   L. Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrementi detti Germania inferiore* (Antwerp, 1567). The passages in the introduction occur in the Dutch translation: *Beschrijvinghe van alle de Nederlanden: anderssins ghenoemt Neder-Duytslandt* (Amsterdam, 1612; facsimile ed. Haarlem, 1979) 1-3, 5.

**12**   J. L. Bolton, *The Alien Communities of London in the Fifteenth Century: the Subsidy Rolls of 1440 and 1483-4* (Stamford, 1998) 28-34. 'Doch' was the usual description in the reign of Henry VIII, see *Returns of Aliens dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I*, R. E. G. Kirk, Ernest F. Kirk, ed. (4 parts; Aberdeen, 1900-1904) I, *passim*; the Dutch-speaking church at Austin Friars established in 1550 was described in the foundation charter as the 'ecclesia Germanorum'. During a dispute in 1605 between the Dutch and French churches, the French argued that 'Germani' meant 'High Germans', but the Dutch denied this, saying that 'het woord Germani …begrijpt zo wel de nederduytsche, als die van de hooghe sprake.' *Geschiedenissen ende Handelingen die voornemelick aengaen de nederduytsche natie ende gemeynten …vergadert door Symeon Ruytinck, Caesar Calendrininus ende Aemilius van Culenborgh,* J. J. van Toorenenbergen, ed. (Utrecht, 1873) 203.

**13**   R. Fagel, 'The Netherlandish presence in England before the coming of the stranger churches, 1480-1560', in: R. Vigne, C. Littleton, ed., *From Strangers to Citizens. The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1555-1750* (Brighton-Portland, 2001) 10-11. L. B. Luu, 'Skills and Innovation: a Study of the Stranger Working Community in London, 1550-1600' (unpub. Ph.D. London, 1997) 85. Dr Andrew Spicer and Dr Lien Luu kindly advised me about immigration from the Low Countries.

**14**   Inconsistencies in the registration of aliens, under-recording and gaps in the sources make it impossible to give precise figures. According to L. H. Yungblut, *Strangers settled here amongst us. Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London, 1996) 21; 77% of the 9302 aliens registered in March 1568 in London and Westminster were returned as 'Dutch' and 18% as French.

**15**   *Returns of Aliens*, I, 437-440. In 1568 only 22 'Garmans' were identified in London as against 5225 'Dutch parsons,' see *Returns of Aliens*, III, 180-231, 439.

what was later to be the territories of the future United Provinces than from those of the subsequent Spanish Netherlands. This pattern changed in Elizabeth's reign when the immigrants came overwhelmingly from the southern provinces, and included a fair number of Walloons, who were usually also counted as 'Douch'.[16] Significantly, apart from a half-hearted attempt in May 1571 to classify strangers from the Habsburg Low Countries, whether Walloons or Dutch speakers, as 'Burgundians', the English officials did not treat the aliens from this region as a distinct 'nation'.[17] Whereas they recognised the border between France and the Low Countries, or rather between France and the Holy Roman Empire, aliens from, say, 'High Douch land', Friesland, and Cambrai were all seen as 'Douchemen' from the Holy Roman Empire.

*Official Names*

After the Burgundian dukes acquired lands in the Low Countries, they were forever travelling between their various territorial possessions and Paris. As feudal overlords the dukes naturally looked on all their lands as 'noz pays', and they therefore specified the region to which they wanted to send instructions by reference to where they were at the time of writing. If they were present in those territories, these became 'noz pays de par deçà' or, if they were outside, as 'noz pays de par delà' and the Habsburgs continued to use this colourless formula as they moved around their scattered possessions.[18] Though 'landen van herwarts over' eventually functioned as a synonym for the Low Countries,[19] it failed to generate names for either the inhabitants or their cultures and it fell into disuse in the later sixteenth century. And that other dynastic term, 'nos pays patrimoniaux', which also gave no clue to the country's identity, beyond the matter of lordship, was no less unwieldy.

**16** Fagel, 'The Netherlandish presence', 9-12, 15.

**17** In May 1571 over three hundred persons from Bishopsgate Ward were labelled as 'Burgundian': the majority came from the Walloon provinces, but a fair number also came from Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland, Holland and even Maastricht. In the November census that year, the individual ward returns found 3503 'Duche' and 143 'Burgundians,' but when the ward returns were added together, the 'Burgundians' were all re-classified as 'Duche', see *Returns of Aliens*, I, 426-427, II, 57-58, III, 330-440. In 1562 most of the members of the 'French' Church were called 'Burgundiones', here meaning Walloons, the others being French and Normans, *Returns of Aliens*, I, 292.

**18** When travelling westwards in 1513, Maximilian I referred in a letter to Margaret of Austria from Cochem (on the Moselle) to 'noz subgectz de par delà', but writing a week later from Namur, he mentioned 'noz pays de par deçà.' M. le Glay, ed., *Correspondance de l'empereur et Marguerite d'Autriche* (2 vols; Paris, 1839) II, 178, 183. The versatility of this formula appears from a letter of Philip II to Margaret of Parma. Writing from Spain in January 1560, he spoke of his desire to make known to the 'estatz de mes royaulmes de par deçà le bon et grand debvoir où ceulx de delà [i.e. the Low Countries] se sont tousjours mis de leur costel.' L.P. Gachard, ed., *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Parme avec Philippe II* (3 vols; Brussels, 1867-1888) I, 101.

**19** The States General was described as 'den staeten van den Landen van herwaertsover.' P. D. J. van Iterson, P. H. J. van der Laan, ed., *Resoluties van de vroedschap van Amsterdam 1490-1550* (Amsterdam, 1986) 64; the cartographer Jacob van Deventer was paid for making 'een caerte van alle de landen van herwaerts over met oock de frontieren vande zelve landen.' H. A. M. van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden, 1548-1794. Historische beschouwing, kaartbeschrijving, afbeelding, commentaar* (2 vols; Alphen aan den Rijn, 1998), I, 24. In the treaty of reconciliation between Nijmegen and Philip II in 1585, Parma was called 'gouverneur, lieutenant, ende capitaine generael vanden landen van herwaerts over.' P. Valkema Blouw, *Typographia Batava, 1541-1600* (2 vols; Nieuwkoop, 1998) no. 4926.

   If this clumsy terminology were largely confined to the prince and his administration,[20] a third dynastic description, 'Burgundy,' was more 'user-friendly'. Despite, or perhaps in compensation for, the loss of the duchy of Burgundy in 1477,[21] the first Habsburg rulers, including the young archduke Charles, continued to assert the links between the houses of Burgundy and Austria. But as Charles V became increasingly preoccupied with the defence of Catholic Christendom against the Turks and the Protestants, and with countering Valois ambitions in Italy, the recovery of the Burgundian homeland ceased to be a priority, and in 1544 the emperor allowed his territorial claim to the duchy to lapse.[22] The identification of 'Burgundy' with the Low Countries did not however immediately cease. Natives from these parts were, as we have observed, still occasionally known as 'Burgundians' in Elizabethan England,[23] while the membership of the Spanish Netherlands in the 'circulus Burgundicus' perpetuated the association for the duration of the Holy Roman Empire. Within the Low Countries the memory of 'Burgundy' survived most strongly in military circles: soldiers and civic militias continued to march behind banners incorporating motifs from the Burgundian flag, the red and white cross raguly of St. Andrew, well into the seventeenth century,[24] martial songs encouraged 'Bourgoensche herten',[25] while on the battlefield the cry remained 'Vive Bourgogne'. For this reason troops from the Low Countries were known to friend and foe alike as 'Burgundians'.[26]

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**20**   'Hierlantsch' and 'overlantsch' were used analogously, though 'overlantsch' came to mean the German lands.

**21**   J. Huizinga's observation that after 1477 the Low Countries became 'een Bourgondische staat zonder Bourgondië' ('Uit de voorgeschiedenis van ons nationaal gevoel', *Verzamelde Werken* (9 vols; Haarlem, 1948-53) II, 156-157) is only partially true; Franche-Comté was not finally ceded to France until 1678. I am indebted to Mr David Morgan of University College London for information on the usage of 'Burgundy'.

**22**   J. Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens* (8 vols; Amsterdam-The Hague, 1726-1731) IV (ii), 284. The Habsburgs retained the ducal title.

**23**   See also Huizinga, 'Leiden's Ontzet', *Verzamelde Werken*, II, 52-53.

**24**   The Dutch rebels only abandoned the Burgundian flag around 1582, see J. P. W. A. Smit, *De legervlaggen uit den aanvang van den 80-jarigen oorlog* (Assen, 1938) 39; banners in the loyal provinces retained Burgundian motifs, see *Albrecht & Isabella 1598-1621. Catalogus,* L. Duerloo, W. Thomas, ed. (Turnhout, 1998) nos. 284-285. These Burgundian symbols re-appeared in the twentieth century when they formed elements in the propaganda of the Belgian fascist parties led by Joris van Severen and Léon Degrelle.

**25**   R. von Liliencron, ed., *Historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (4 vols; Leipzig, 1865-1869) IV, 236; P. Fredericq, ed., *Onze historische volksliederen van vóór de godsdienstige beroerten der 16de eeuw* (Ghent, 1894) 79.

**26**   Estienne Pasquier (1529-1615) says that in his youth the enemies of France were always called 'Burgundians', wherever they came from, see *Le Journal d'un bourgeois de Mons, 1505-1536*, A. Louant, ed. (Brussels, 1969) xlix, n. 2. In the late sixteenth century the French still called the Spanish Low Countries 'Pays des Bourguignons'; for the survival of 'Bourguignon' and 'Bourgogne' see P. Bonenfant, 'Du *Belgium* de César à la Belgique de 1830', *Annales de la société d'archéologie de Bruxelles* (1958-1961) 49, n. 2 and J. M. Cauchies, 'L'idée et le mot de Bourgogne dans les Anciens Pays-Bas vers 1500 et au-delà', in: *Autour de l'Idée bourguignonne. De la Province à la Région et de la France à l'Europe. Actes du Colloque des 2 et 3 décembre 1989* (s. l., s. a.) 17-23. Burgundians proper, recruited in Franche-Comté, fought on the royalist side during the Revolt, see G. Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659* (Cambridge, 1972) 275, 277.

Elsewhere, however, 'Burgundy' slowly lost its relevance as the Low Countries drifted to the periphery of the Habsburg 'multiple monarchy'.[27] Not only was Charles a largely absentee ruler, but by admitting so many stranger knights to the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece, he diluted the special relationship between the ruling dynasty and the high nobility of the Low Countries.[28] Charles needed a cosmopolitan and imperial iconography to convey Gattinara's plans for a 'world monarchy' and his humanist emblem of the Pillars of Hercules with its ambitious yet faintly enigmatic 'Plus Ultra' motto better served his imperial purposes than the defiant Burgundian devices of the fire-steel and flint stone.[29] Margaret of Austria tried to resist these changes; shortly before her death she added a codicil to her will in which she pleaded that Franche-Comté and the Low Countries be united 'pour non abolir ce nom de la Maison de Bourgogne',[30] but it was in vain. An emperor who was crowned by the pope at Bologna and whose most famous victories were won as far afield as Pavia, Tunis and Mühlberg had clearly outgrown 'Burgundy'.[31]

*Literary Names*
For scholars and clerics who wrote in Latin 'Gallia Belgica', 'Germania inferior' and 'Belgium'/'Belgica' became the synonyms of choice for the Low Countries. In the early sixteenth century the maps from Ptolemy's much reprinted *Geography* still shaped the way contemporaries viewed Europe, though this was soon to change. The memory of 'Gallia Belgica', one of the three parts of Caesar's Gaul, survived the middle ages, though the defective and conflicting testimonies of writers from the fifth century onwards cast doubt as to its precise location.[32] According to the Ptolemaic tradition 'Gallia Belgica' was bounded by the Rhine, the Seine and the 'Britannicus

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**27**   For the term 'multiple monarchy' see H. G. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments. The Netherlands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2001) 13, 328-329.

**28**   Eight of the fourteen new knights admitted at Barcelona were Spaniards, see Thierry de Limburg Stirum in: *La Toison d'Or. Cinq siècles d'Art et d'Histoire*, exh. cat. Bruges 1962 (Tielt, 1962) 38-40. The chapter at Tournai in 1531 tried to renew the bar on the admission of foreigners, Henne, *Histoire du règne de Charles-Quint*, VI, 10.

**29**   E. E. Rosenthal, 'The Invention of the Columnar Device of Emperor Charles V at the Court of Burgundy in Flanders in 1516', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXXVI (1973) 198-230.

**30**   G. de Boom, *Marguerite d'Autriche* (Brussels, 1946) 59.

**31**   One can read too much into Charles V's wish, expressed in his testament of 1522, to be buried with his Burgundian predecessors at the charterhouse at Champnol near Dijon. In fact, the place of burial depended on where he was at the time of his death — had he died in the Low Countries he was to be buried at Bruges and in Spain at Grenada — and whether the duchy had returned to Habsburg control. In a codicil of 1539 Charles asked only to be buried in Grenada alongside Ferdinand and Isabella. Charles did not, however, forget his Burgundian forebears. In 1550 he had the body of Charles the Bold brought from Nancy to Luxemburg, pending final burial in Bruges, alongside Mary of Burgundy. *Papiers d'État du cardinal de Granvelle*, C. Weiss, ed. (9 vols; Paris, 1841-52) I, 523; II, 547; A. Henne, *Histoire du règne de Charles-Quint* (10 vols; Brussels, 1858-1860) VIII, 395-396.

**32**   The 'evidence' from the fourth century onwards is reviewed in Bonenfant, 'Du *Belgium* de César', 34-51.

Oceanus',[33] and in the fifteenth century this name was applied to the Burgundian lands. Yet the match between this 'Gallia Belgica' and the possessions of the Burgundian dukes was very imperfect for the former included a large slice of what was indubitably France. The late fifteenth-century Burgundian jurist, Jean d'Auffay, therefore redefined it as those 'parties de Gaule hors les metes du royaume de France.' This slimmed down 'Gallia Belgica' comprised the Lower Rhine and Lorraine as well as the Burgundian Low Countries; as such it recalled the ancient kingdom of Lotharingia.[34] Hopes of resurrecting the Middle Kingdom might have inspired Charles the Bold, but such fantasies lost their appeal after 1477. Ludovico Guicciardini tackled the question quite dispassionately. What had once been 'Gallia Belgica', he tells us, was now shared between Philip II, the king of France, and sundry dukes and prince-bishops in the Lower Rhine, though Philip, of course, ruled 'het edelste deel'.[35]

 If 'Gallia Belgica' associated the Low Countries with romanized 'Gallia', 'Germania inferior' potentially opened up quite different perspectives. During the middle ages the Church had given the name of the former Roman frontier province of 'Germania inferior', whose headquarters had been at Cologne, to the territories of the Low Countries. The name was confusing insofar as this Roman province had in fact belonged to 'Gallia': 'Germania Magna', as the non-Romanized part was known, began on the eastern side of the Rhine. But in the early modern period German humanists equated Germany with the entire Germanic-speaking Holy Roman Empire, the 'Heilige Römische Reich teutscher Nation'.[36] From within this 'Deutschland', as Ulrich von Hutten called the German lands, two ill-defined, yet culturally distinctive, regions emerged, known as 'Germania superior' or the 'Oberlandt' and 'Germania inferior', called according to the local vernacular, 'Nider teutschelant', 'Neder-duytslant' or 'Niderlant'.[37] In the Lower Rhine the notion of some such boundary, at

**33**  See reproduction of Ptolemy's map of 'France' in P. D. A. Harvey, *Medieval maps* (Toronto-Buffalo, 1991) 58; for Gallia Belgica see *Eenheid op papier. De Nederlanden in kaart van keizer Karel to Willem I*, J. Roegiers, B. van der Herten, ed. (Leuven, 1994) 14; P. Regan, 'The Construction of Patriotic Sentiment', 243-244.

**34**  Bonenfant, 'Du *Belgium* de César', 50 n. 5.

**35**  Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 1, 3; see also earlier account of  Gallia Belgica in *Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella, Le très-heureux Voyage fait par très-haut et très puissant prince Don Philippe, fils du grand empereur Charles-Quint depuis l'Espagne jusqu' à ses domaines de la Basse-Allemagne avec la description de tous les Etats de Brabant et de Flandre écrit en quatre livres*, J. Petit, trans. (5 vols; Brussels, 1873-1884) II, 1-3; III, 62-63.

**36**  See K. F. Werner, 'Volk/Nation als politischer Verband' and B. Schöneman, 'Frühe Neuzeit und 19. Jh.' in: 'Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse', in: O. Brunner, W. Conze, R. Koselleck, ed., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (8 vols; Stuttgart, 1972-1997) VII, 243, 284-288.

**37**  On this distinction see K. Meisen, 'Niederland und Oberland', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, XV-XVI (1950-51) 417-464. See E. Verwijs, J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* s.v. 'Nederduutschlant' and F. Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache,* W. Mitzka, ed. (18th edn; Berlin, 1960) s.v. 'niederdeutsch'. Both the extent of 'Lower Germany' and the relationship between 'Nider teutschelant' and 'Nederduytslant' remained uncertain. The anonymous 'Clerc uten Laghen landen', in the early fifteenth century, thought that 'Nederduutschlant', which included 'Walschlant', belonged to Charlemagne's Empire. The Franciscan who contributed the prologue to the 1567 edition of Anna Bijns poetry styled himself Minister provincial 'van deser Neder-duytslanden.' *Refereinen van Anna Bijns*, W. L. van Helten, ed. (Rotterdam, 1875) 193.

least on the west bank of the river, may have preserved the memory of the original Roman provinces, but even here opinions differed as to whether Cologne belonged to the 'over' or 'nederland'.[38] In their vernacular guise, these names drew attention to linguistic differences among Germanic speakers, to which we shall shortly return.

Guicciardini, like Erasmus, acknowledged that opinions differed as to whether the Low Countries formed part of 'Germania' or 'Gallia'. The Florentine knew the country he was describing was commonly called 'Germania inferiore o Alamagna Bassa' — indeed this alternative name appeared in the title of his chorography — but out of deference for the Ancients,[39] he preferred to assign the Low Countries, apart from Friesland, to 'Gallia'.[40] Yet, as he said, when he was writing in the 1560s, many of his contemporaries, including Gemma Frisius, thought of the Low Countries as belonging to 'Alamagna Bassa' because the language spoken by most of the inhabitants as well as their customs and laws closely resembled those of the High Germans.[41] In constructing the identity of their country these 'moderns' gave more weight to cultural factors than to the authority of Caesar and Ptolemy, and for that reason, they reckoned the Low Countries to the 'deutsche landen', even though this left the Walloon provinces in limbo.

In the middle ages the inhabitants of the Low Countries had often been called 'Belgii' or 'Belgae', but it was only towards the middle of the sixteenth century that 'Belgium' and 'Belgica' appeared as synonyms for 'Gallia Belgica'.[42] 'Belgica' marks a transitional stage in the metamorphosis of the region as it became slowly disentangled from 'Gallia' and 'Germania'. But scarcely had the 'Lady Belge', as the poet Edmund

**38**  Meisen, 'Niederland und Oberland', 450-451; L. de Grauwe, 'Emerging Mother-Tongue awareness. The special case of Dutch and German in the Middle Age and the Early Modern period', in: A. R. Linn, N. McLelland, ed., *Standardization. Studies from the Germanic Languages* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 2002) 100. My thanks to Professor Martin Durrell for this reference. An insignificant tributary of the Rhine,  the Vinxtbach, once marked the boundary between the two Roman provinces midway between Bonn and Koblenz. This small river continued to feature on maps in the Ptolemaic tradition as the 'Obrincas'.

**39**  Guicciardini does not name these, but presumably he was thinking of Caesar and Ptolemy.

**40**  Kiliaan's Dutch translation of Guicciardini's chorography here adds in the margin, 'Nederland wordt ghenoemt Nederduytsland t'onrecht.' *Beschrijvinghe*, 5.

**41**  'Chiamasi anco Germania inferiore o Alamagna Bassa, quantunq; fuor' delle constitioni delli antichi, I quali eccettuata Frigia, & poco altro, tutto il rimanente nella Gallia comprehendeuano. Ma è piaciuto cosi a moderni: perche come scriue Gemma Frisio eccellentissimo Cosmografo, ha ottenuto all' eta nostra di comprehendersi nella Bassa Alamagna: conciosia che il linguaggio della maggior'parte di costoro, I costumi, & le leggi non sieno molto differenti da gli altri Alamanni.' L. Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti I Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germanie Inferiore* (Antwerp, 1567) 4; see *Beschrijvinghe*, 5.

**42**  The Holland humanist Reinier Snoy used 'Belgium' for Low Countries in 1519. K. Tilmans, 'De ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip  in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden', in: N. C. F. van Sas, ed., *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam, 1999) 22. I am indebted to Dr Karel Bostoen who advised me that the earliest recorded usage of 'Belgica' occurs in a work of Van der Noot of 1540; see also De Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum' 1500-1650. Over integratie en desintegratie van het Nederland* (Antwerp, 1987) 6. For the identification of 'Gaul' with France see D. Nordman, 'Des limites d'état aux frontières nationales', in: P. Nora, ed., *La Nation* (3 vols; Paris, 1986) II, 35-36.

Spenser later called her, made her debut, than the slowly emerging national unity she represented began to disintegrate in the Revolt. Tutelary female figures had long personified the towns, and, more recently, the provinces, but visual representations of the national icon did not appear until the 1570s, and then only intermittently, when the rebel propagandists deployed 'Belgica' as the hapless victim of Spanish tyranny.[43]

 In the mid-1560s a new name — the 'XVII Nederlanden' — suddenly emerged.[44] Historians still argue whether the 'seventeen' here refers to the prince's feudal titles or the tally of individual provinces, for the two do not exactly coincide. Probably the titles came first, but the emphasis shifted over time to the territories.[45] Almost a century ago Huizinga pointed out that late medieval authors used the number seventeen when they wanted to signify any large, but credible number, and had indeed already applied it in this sense to the lands of the Burgundian dukes.[46] As 'seventeen' apparently retained this significance in the early modern period,[47] it seems reasonable to interpret the 'XVII Nederlanden' symbolically, rather than to expect a precise constitutional explanation.

 In 1548 a new Burgundian Circle was established, made up of five duchies, eight countships, one margraviate and nine lordships, in all twenty-three titles.[48] Five of these, however, concerned lands or titles, which were either clearly outside the Low Countries, or subsumed in larger entities.[49] Of the remaining eighteen, question marks

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**43**   See D. R. Horst, 'De opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566-1584' (2 vols; unpub. proefschrift, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2000)  I, 91 and afbeelding LIX; I, 121-23 and afbeelding LXXXVIII. An allegorical 'Gallia Belgica' did however welcome Philip to Douai in 1549. *Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella*, III, 33. For other early symbolic representations of the Burgundian Low Countries see R. W. Scheller, 'Representatie en realisme: de vormgeving van het laat-middeleeuwse identiteitsbesef', in: B. Kempers, ed., *Openbaring en bedrog. De afbeelding als historische bron in de Lage Landen* (Amsterdam, 1995) 29-59.

**44**   *De kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht over de troebelen van 1565 tot 1574 te Antwerpen en elders,* R. van Roosbroeck, ed. (2 vols; Antwerp, 1929-1930) I, 31, 51; J. M. B. C. Kervijn de Lettenhove, ed., *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe II* (11 vols; Brussels, 1882-1900) IV, 372. Godevaert van Haecht refers to a ban on the export of grain 'uyt den 17 Nederlanden' published in November 1565; this is apparently the earliest mention of the XVII Netherlands, though since Van Haecht revised his account, this may be a (slightly) later interpolation. Guicciardini who, as we shall see, popularised this description was gathering material for his chorography, which he completed in 1566, from 1560 onwards, H. H. Zwager, 'Inleiding' to facsimile reprint of 1612 edition of *Beschrijvinghe*, 7.

**45**   F. Doeleman, 'Oude en nieuwe problemen om de zeventien Nederlanden', *Tijdschrift voor rechts-geschiedenis,* XXXIII (1971) 273-287.

**46**   Huizinga, 'L'état bourguignon, ses rapports avec la France et les origines d'une nationalité néerlandaise', *Verzamelde Werken,* II, 213-215. A diptych of Philip the Handsome and Margaret of Austria c. 1493-1495 displayed seventeen 'Nederlands-Bourgondische' coats of arms counterbalanced by the same number of Austrian armorials. L. Devliegher, *De keizer-Karel-schouw van het Brugse Vrije* (Tielt, 1987) 75.

**47**   According to the English traveller Fynes Moryson 'seventeene Parishes' were drowned in the St Elizabeth flood of 1421. J. N. Jacobsen Jensen, 'Moryson's reis door en zijn karakteristiek van de Nederlanden', *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het historisch genootschap*, XXXIX (1918) 233.

**48**   See R. Lacroix, L. Gross, ed., *Urkunden und Aktenstücke des Reichsarchivs Wien zur reichsrechtliche Stellung des Burgundischen Kreises* (3 vols; Vienna, 1944-1945) I, 289, 356-357, 391-392;  II, 14.

**49**   On this basis the titles to Franche-Comté, Salins, Valkenburg, Dalhem, and Maastricht could be discarded.

hung over two, namely the honorific titles of the 'herzogtumb Lottrich' and the 'marggrafschat des heiligen Reichs'. If one or other of these were dropped, then the significant and memorable title of the 'XVII Nederlanden' could be justified. In an early enumeration of 'les 17 provinces,' made in 1569, 'Lotharinge' heads the list and the margraviate is conspicuously absent.[50] Guicciardini disagreed: he discarded Lotharingia because 'de staet ende de naem blyven waerachtichlijck in Lorreyne', replacing it with the shadowy margraviate of the Holy Roman Empire, presumably on the grounds that, unlike Lorraine, this fell within the boundaries of the Low Countries ruled by Philip II. By this means he arrived at seventeen 'oprechtighe Landt-schappen'.[51] Guicciardini's explanation quickly prevailed and the politically innocuous yet time-honoured margraviate became the makeweight title of choice.[52] Quite apart from the symbolic significance of the 'seventeen', its overt pluralism neatly reconciled the growing political unity of the country around the mid-sixteenth century with the continued strength of provincial loyalties. The idea of the 'XVII Nederlanden' survived long after the Revolt had rendered it politically obsolete. Stylistic convention and a reluctance to accept the division of the Low Countries perhaps explain why fine linen damask with armorials of the seventeen provinces was still being woven at Kortrijk in the early seventeenth century, but it was probably the interest in the continual wars, often fought in the Spanish Netherlands, that ensured the enduring topicality of maps of the 'XVII Nederlanden' throughout the seventeenth century and beyond.[53]

*Generic Names*

The English, in common with Italians and Spaniards, had long employed 'Flanders' and 'Fleming' as synonyms for the Low Countries and their inhabitants and Fynes Moryson who travelled extensively in the 1590s in the United Provinces still habitually

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[50]  See the list given in the French caption to the satirical print *De troon van de hertog van Alva*, published in 1569, see Horst, 'De opstand in zwart-wit', I, 61-68 and afbeeldingen XXIX-XXXIII.

[51]  Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 46. The German translation of Guicciardini, published in 1580, included an ornamental wood engraving captioned: 'General Tafel des ganzen Belgicae/ Innhaltende das Niderlandt/ sampt seinen xviij Ländern/ darunder Lothringen nur den blossen hertzogthumbs Tittel hat.' It then listed 'die xvij wesentliche Länder', including 'Die Marggraveschaft des Heiligen Röm. Reichs', see Van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden*, I, 73. Guicciardini treated the margraviate, which had no political significance, as part of Brabant. By the sixteenth century the only trace of the ancient margraviate was the exceptional sanctuary afforded to criminals. Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 109.

[52]  Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 47. Maps of the 'XVII Nederlanden' published after 1600 invariably displayed the arms of the margraviate, see Van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden*, I, 96.

[53]  For damask table linen with armorials of the XVII provinces, which always included those of the margraviate, see G. T. van Ysselsteyn, *White Figurated Linen Damask. From the 15th to the Beginning of the 19th Century* (The Hague, 1962) 60-61, 211. I am indebted to Dr David Mitchell of the Centre for Metropolitan History London for information about linen damask. 43 of the 77 maps published in the seventeenth century displayed the XVII provinces, as against only eleven for the United Provinces and one for the Spanish Low Countries. Van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden*, I, 98, 121; maps of the seventeen provinces may also have had superior aesthetic appeal.

used these terms.[54] Even among the inhabitants of the Low Countries 'Flamand' was used generically: the Hainaut-born Charles de Lalaing once told Mary of Hungary, 'Je ne suis, Madame, ne Ytalien, ne Espaignol, mais estimez moy le plus lourd Flameng qui soit.'[55] Yet this 'pars pro toto' usage was contested by none other than Erasmus, who gave 'Brabantia' this role.[56] The allodial status of the duchy, its famous charter of liberties, aptly described by one scholar as 'de gedroomde grondwet voor de Nederlanden',[57] and Antwerp's meteoric rise as the commercial metropolis of northern Europe conferred on Brabant the position of 'Hooft-provintie der Nederlanden'.[58] The Dutch spoken in Brabant — 'de gemeyne Brabantsche tale' — outshone the vernacular of Flanders,[59] and the duchy was eulogised in 1580 as 'thoofd en t'hert, der strijbaer Nederlanden.'[60] Yet 'Brabander' did not apparently challenge the supremacy of 'Vlaming' as a name for the Netherlanders. Foreigners certainly stood in awe of Antwerp, but perhaps its Golden Age faded too quickly for them to discard the traditional label of 'Fleming'.

Of all the names considered here, that of the 'Nederlanden' was, with Flanders, probably the most widely used. French-speakers spoke about the 'Pays-Bas', Italians 'Paesi Bassi', and Germans, the 'Niderlanden'. In German and Dutch both plural and singular forms vied with each other, while in French and English the plural predominated.[61] Yet this name too was far from straightforward. Whereas 'France'

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**54**  According to the Flemish antiquary Marcus van Vaernewijck, *Den Spieghel der Nederlandscher audtheyt inhoudende die constructie of vergaderinghe van Belgis* (Ghent, 1568) fo. 107v-108, some foreigners (Spaniards?) called the inhabitants 'Allemanos de Bassa', but, 'sy hebben veel meer inden mont dat woort Flamingos'; see also Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 5. Moryson may however have been influenced by what he had read in the works of the Flemish historian Jacobus Marchant (1537-1609) and Guicciardini, see 280-281, 304.

**55**  P. Rosenfeld, *The Provincial Governors from the Minority of Charles V to the Revolt* (Leuven, 1959) 15.

**56**  Poelhekke, 'Het naamloze vaderland', 118-123.

**57**  J. L. Nève, *Driewerf Rome* (Tilburg, 1992) 4 as cited by J. H. J. Geurts, *'Onsser stadt in sulken dranghe': Maastricht en het Rijk, 1500-1550* (Nijmegen, 1993) 6.

**58**  De Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum'*, 7; Junius used the expression in 1574, P. Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlandsche oorlogen* (4 vols; Amsterdam, 1679-1684) I, 539. In an engraving in Guicciardini's *Beschrijvinghe*, *6v showing all the provincial shields, Brabant's occupies pride of place at the centre.

**59**  L. de Grauwe, 'Quelle langue Charles-Quint parlait-il?', in: M. Boone, M. Demoor, ed., *Charles V in Context. The Making of a European Identity* (Brussels, 2003) 157-161. The preference for 'brabants' may reflect the concentration of the printing industry in Antwerp. Approximately 2250 of the 4000 titles printed in the Low Countries in the period 1500-1540 came from Antwerp presses, of which half were in Latin and a third were in Dutch, J. G. C. A. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers en boekverkopers in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden omstreeks 1570-1630* (Nieuwkoop, 1974) 4-5.

**60**  See K. Bostoen, 'Nation und Literatur in den Niederlanden der Frühen Neuzeit', in: K. Garber, ed., *Nation und Literatur in Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tubingen, 1989) 558 n. 20; 566 n. 51. Jan van der Noot spoke of Brabant in this way, see P. Avonds, 'Beschouwingen over het ontstaan en de evolutie van het samenhorigheidsbesef in de Nederlanden (14de-19de eeuw)', in: A. Keersmaekers, P. Lenders, ed., *Cultuurgeschiedenis in de Nederlanden van de Renaissance naar de Romantiek. Liber amicorum J. Andriessen* (Leuven-Amersfoort, 1986) 45.

**61**  De Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum'*, 5-6; the forms 'Deutschland' and 'deutsche landen' also co-existed.

'England 'and arguably even 'Germany' had ethnic origins, 'Nederlanden' was a rather bland geographical term, and as such was shared with other low-lying regions across the Germanic-speaking world.[62] Besides, the 'Nederlanden' embraced the entire region of the Schelde, Maas and Rhine estuaries including the Lower Rhineland, and could indeed be applied wherever 'niederdeutsch', or as it was occasionally called 'nedderlendesch,' were spoken.[63] The three 'lantsheeren … geboren uut nederlant,' whose pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1450 was commemorated in song, came from 'Cleve, Hoorne ende Batenborch.'[64] And the Westphalian circle, created in 1512 and which included Jülich-Cleves and 'die Niderlande hinab bis an die Maß' (as viewed from the east), was also known as the 'Nederlandich kreys'.[65] For Thomas Murner (1475-1537) the Rhine entered 'Niderland' downstream from Bingen, some hundred and twenty kilometres as the crow flies from the borders of Luxemburg.[66] And this perception was shared by scholars in the Low Countries. The full title of Van Vaernewijck's *Den Spieghel der Nederlandscher audheyt*, published in 1568, explicitly reckoned Westphalia and Jülich and Cleves to 'die Nederlanden'.[67] To avoid confusion, the 'Nederlanden' in question had to be qualified and people therefore referred to 'die Erfnederlanden,' 'dese Nederlanden toebehoorende Coninck Philips,' or 'die kaiserliche Nidererbland.'[68]

  Although 'Nederland'/'Niderland' long retained, as a paper published at Cologne in the early seventeenth century with the title of *Wochentliche Niderländische Post* reminds us,[69] its original sense, the name was slowly but surely monopolised by the

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**62**  On the use of 'Ober/Nederland' elsewhere in the German-speaking world see appendix in Meisen, 'Niederland und Oberland', 459-464.

**63**  I am indebted to Professor Durrell and Dr T. Francis for guidance on the meaning of Niederdeutschland in the early modern period. In 1519 the second edition of the Low German version of *Das Narrenschiff* was described as having been translated 'vth hochdüdescher jn nedderlendescher sprake.' T. A. Francis, ''Vnse Sassische sprake': Evidence for the Status and Use of Low German in the period of decline 1500-1650' (unpub. Ph. D London, 2003) 175, 177 n 127. I am grateful to Mr P. Stevenson of the School of Modern Languages at Southampton for facilitating consultation with the German Studies Discussion List and for guidance on the linguistic situation in the early modern Germanic world.

**64**  F. van Duyse, ed., *Het oude Nederlandsche lied. Wereldlijke en geestelijke liederen uit vroegeren tijd. Teksten en melodieën* (4 vols; The Hague-Antwerp, 1903-1908) II, 1545.

**65**  *Urkunden und Aktenstücke,* I, 62, 67, 167.

**66**  J. Grimm, W. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. 'Niederland' col. 771.

**67**  Full title in E. O. G. Haitsma Mulier, G. A. C. van der Lem, ed., *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland 1500-1800* (The Hague, 1990) 411. Pontus de Huiter's Dutch orthography, published in 1581, drew on the vernaculars of Gelders and Cleves as well those of Brabant, Holland and Flanders. R. Willemyns, *Het verhaal van het Vlaams. De geschiedenis van het Nederlands in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Antwerp, 2003) 124.

**68**  See J. Nanninga Uitterdijk, ed., *Historie van Overijssel door W. Nagge* (2 vols; Zwolle, 1915; repr. 1975) II, 182, 193, 211; *Urkunden und Aktenstücke*, I, 208.

**69**  P. Arblaster, 'London, Antwerp and Amsterdam: Journalistic relations in the first half of the seventeenth century', in: L. Hellinga, e. a, ed., *The Bookshop of the World. The Role of the Low Countries in the Book-Trade, 1473-1941* (Houten, 2001) 146. The late eighteenth-century regulations for the hatters' guild at Bonn described the town as being the last place 'im Niederlande.' Meisen, 'Niederland und Oberland', 426.

Burgundian-Habsburg state, which was by far the strongest regional power. As that state gradually became more integrated, Dutch chroniclers, without abandoning their local patriotisms, required a supra-provincial vocabulary to reflect the political realities, and from around 1490 they began to employ 'Nederlanden' to describe the dynastic state to which they belonged.[70] At the same time the Maas, which had separated the original Burgundian and Westphalian circles, began to assume the function of a national boundary, as the Habsburg state grew more sturdily independent of the Empire.[71] 'Nederlanden' in turn spawned 'Nederlander,'[72] which evolved in tandem: originally used of anyone from the Low Countries and the Lower Rhine (or from even further afield), it pertained particularly (though by means exclusively) to those inhabitants of the Habsburg state,[73] who spoke 'Nederlantsch'. Yet this supra-provincial identity remained frail. Significantly neither 'Nederlander' nor its French equivalent 'Belge' supplanted 'Vlaming', or later, 'Hollander' as comprehensive names for the inhabitants of the Low Countries.[74] In English the proper noun 'the Netherlands' co-existed with the older 'Low Countries' and 'Flanders', and while 'Netherlandish' has led a sickly existence, the neologistic 'Netherlandian' was stillborn.[75]

  In all this assortment of names scarcely one was universally serviceable. Burgundians proper had a superior claim to 'Burgundy,' which was at any rate going out of fashion in the Habsburg Netherlands. The problematic Latin synonyms only ever served a limited public and much the same could be said of the 'XVII Nederlanden', while the metonymic use of 'Flanders' was under threat from Brabant. Yet these semantic difficulties are significant, for they attest to the fluid and elusive identity of the early modern Low Countries.

<div align="center">II</div>

According to Anthony Smith, pre-industrial societies could develop 'durable cultural communities' or 'ethnic cores', before becoming full-blown nations, but to do so

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**70**　Tilmans, 'Ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip', 32.

**71**　'Over de Mase' for Germany, see Van Duyse, *Het oude Nederlandsche lied*, II, 1528; when Maximilian I wrote in April 1509 to take leave of Margaret of Austria, he did so 'car nous passuns demain la Moese.' Le Glay, *Correspondance*, I, 130.

**72**　*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, s.v. 'Nederlander'.

**73**　In February 1557 the Reformed minister Petrus Dathenus wrote from Frankfurt to the church at Emden: '…ick zoude tot voorderinge der Nederlanders wat schryven ter grote begeerte van vele uit den Nederlanden.' A. A. van Schelven, *De Nederduitsche vluchtelingenkerken der XVIe eeuw in Engeland en Duitschland* (The Hague, 1909) 406. The term 'Netherlander' was rarely used in mid-sixteenth century England. Only two of the 3160 'Dutch' immigrants listed in November 1571 were so described, and one of these had been returned a few months earlier as Italian! *Returns of Aliens*, II, 39; cf. I, 442. In 1567 the bishop of Winchester made a plea on behalf of the 'banyshed Netherlanders', in this case Walloons. *Relations politiques*, V, 721.

**74**　No adjective emerged from 'Pays-Bas'. De Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum'*, 22; francophone immigrants to England did however sometimes describe themselves as 'Walloons', see *Returns of Aliens*, I, 434, 452; II, 29, 52, 53.

**75**　*The Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. 'Netherlandish' and 'Netherlandian'; art historians and language specialists coined 'Netherlandic' in the early twentieth century.

they had to satisfy certain criteria, one of which was the possession of a common 'historic territory' or 'homeland'.[76] This was a condition the early modern Low Countries could not easily fulfil because the territorial make up of the country kept changing. Most early modern states, England apart, had uncertain borders, but the configuration of the Low Countries was exceptionally protean. No sooner had Charles the Bold died, than Louis XI recovered the duchy of Burgundy and the Somme towns, core regions of the Burgundian lands, and Gelre regained its independence. After this period of drastic contraction, the Habsburg state then expanded, but in an entirely different direction. Apart from Tournai, the territories added under Charles V all lay to the north and east. This expansion transformed the Low Countries: the Walloon region shrank in significance, while the Zuiderzee, once a dangerous maritime frontier became a 'Habsburgse binnenzee'.[77] While it is true that the north-eastern border changed remarkably little after 1548,[78] no one could be sure the period of expansion had indeed come to end. There was, after all, nothing particularly 'natural' about the boundaries of the Habsburg Low Countries. At one time or another, Charles V and the Brussels government eyed up the bishopric of Münster and even Bremen,[79] and at the very end of the sixteenth century East Friesland might have become the eighth member of the United Provinces.[80]

This instability was disconcerting enough, but a more fundamental threat to its identity came from the relationship of the Low Countries to France and the Holy Roman Empire. Under the Valois dukes of Burgundy, the ruler of the Low Countries had been a prince of the French blood royal: as late as 1468 the French States General reminded the duke that as an offshoot of the 'tronc royal', he could yet inherit the kingdom.[81] Philip the Good might be saluted in the late sixteenth century as 'imperii Belgii conditor,'[82] yet he, like his father and grandfather, had seen himself as a French prince, as 'bon et enthier Franchois.'[83] There was then no contradiction between George Chastellain's position as ducal 'indiciaire' and his desire to write 'pour gloire et exaltation de ce très-chrestien royaume [France].'[84] Of course, the dukes wanted, like other French peers, to administer their territories more efficiently, and they therefore forged the necessary military and political instruments. As a result the Burgundian Low Countries began to function more like a state,[85] but until the 1460s, the dukes

**76**  Anthony D. Smith, 'The Origins of Nations' (1989), in: *Becoming National. A Reader*, G. Eley, R. G. Suny, ed. (New York-Oxford, 1996) 109.

**77**  L. Sicking, 'De Zuiderzee en de territoriale afronding van de Nederlanden onder Karel V', *Holland*, XXX (1998) 127-141, esp. 136.

**78**  E. Verhees, 'Het ontstaan van de politieke en nationale oostgrens van Nederland: Oost-Friesland als casestudie' (unpub. 'doctoraalscriptie', Nijmegen University, 2000) 18-20. Professor dr. H. de Schepper kindly arranged for me to consult this excellent 'doctoraalscriptie'.

**79**  F. Postma, *Viglius als humanist en diplomaat 1507-1549* (Zutphen, 1983) 142-146, 152-153.

**80**  Verhees, 'Het ontstaan', 37-42.

**81**  Small, *George Chastelain*, 171.

**82**  W. Prevenier, W. Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1986) 207.

**83**  Huizinga, 'L'état bourguignon', 172.

**84**  Small, *George Chastelain*, 226.

**85**  Prevenier, Blockmans, *Burgundian Netherlands*, 207-210.

and their courtiers assumed that their destiny lay within France and Burgundian political culture was strongly 'francocentric', which is not to say that it was always 'francophile'.[86] And since the dynasty provided the only supra-provincial focus of loyalty within the Burgundian territories, the prolonged and intimate involvement of the latter with the French monarchy inhibited the growth of a distinctive and common identity for the Low Countries.

That identity was also complicated in a quite different way by a ghost from the past, namely the ancient boundary between Lotharingia and West Francia, which ran through the Low Countries. Five centuries after the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire that ghost had not been completely exorcised. Following the incorporation of Lotharingia into the Holy Roman Empire in the tenth century, the boundary between the Empire and 'West Francia' ran along the Schelde; as a result Artois and Flanders west of the river acknowledged the king of France as overlord. Charles V finally ended this dependency in 1529 and in 1548 these officially entered the Empire as members of the new Burgundian Circle. In daily life such ties made little difference, but Charles V, like his Burgundian predecessors, took exception when their subjects sought justice in the 'Parlement' of Paris or the 'Reichskammergericht', for such actions detracted from the prince's 'preeminence et haulteur.'[87]

In the early modern period, language did not arouse the passions familiar to historians of modern nationalism. Yet the possession of a common and distinctive vernacular did provide an index of nationality, and medieval student corporations and religious congregations were often divided on linguistic grounds.[88] Sometimes indeed the linguistic criterion was quite strict: membership of the 'German Nation' at Bologna was confined to those 'qui nativam Alemanicam habent linguam.'[89] But in the case of the Low Countries this linguistic marker was conspicuously absent. The inhabitants of Artois, Namur, Hainaut, Tournai, French Flanders and 'Rommanbrabant', the so-called Walloon provinces, spoke the traditional 'langue d'oïl' vernaculars also in

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**86**   G. Small typified Burgundian identity as 'francocentric' in an unpublished paper entitled 'The Construction of Burgundian Identity' read to the Medieval Studies Seminar at Reading on 23 November 2000.

**87**   *Urkunden und Aktenstücke*, I, 81, 293; see also Geurts, *'Onsser stadt in sulken dranghe'*. Ties with the Empire may also have inhibited the application of the concepts of 'maeistas' and 'sovereignty' to the princes in the Low Countries and promoted the use of euphemisms such as 'hoogheydt ende heerlijckhedyt', 'hoocheyt ende gerechticheyt' and 'opperste heer', see W. van Iterson on 'hoogheid en heerlijkheid', *Geschiedenis der confiscatie in Nederland* (Utrecht, 1957) 183.

**88**   To Commines a nation was composed of people 'd'un habit et d'une langaige.' Huizinga, 'L'état bourguignon', 168. The Knights of St John were divided into eight 'langues' or 'nations'. W. Nolet, P. C. Boeren, *Kerkelijke instellingen in de Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1951) 420. Sebastian Munster reckoned 'Gaul', and therefore Gallia Belgica, to France, but he acknowledged that the 'nations' of Alsace, Brabant and Holland were 'allemandes' on the basis of language; the Flemish were treated as part of 'Gaul' partly because in his view the majority spoke French, Nordman, 'Des limites d'état aux frontières nationales', 35-36.

**89**   Werner, 'Volk/Nation als politischer Verband', 232 n. 173.

colloquial use among their neighbours in Liège and the adjacent French territories.[90]
Since however the written language of the Habsburg-Burgundian central administration
approximated to the French of the Ile-de-France, a diglossic situation existed in the
francophone region. Despite the prevalence of French culture among the high nobility
and in the upper reaches of the central government, neither the dukes nor their Habsburg
successors made any sustained attempt to impose that language on their Dutch subjects.
All the dukes after Philip the Bold learned Dutch and even Charles V was supposedly
brought up to speak 'thiois',[91] while the business of government with, and in, both the
Walloon and Dutch-speaking regions was customarily conducted in the appropriate
language.[92]

  In 1538 Sebastian Franck anticipated the nineteenth-century German nationalist Ernst
Moritz Arndt when he declared, 'Teutsch landt … so weit gerechnet, so weit Teutsch
zung …geredt würt.'[93] But just how far westwards did 'Teutsch landt' stretch? What
was the relationship between 'Deutschland' and the Holy Roman Empire? And did
the 'Teutsch zung' embrace the Dutch language? These were questions to which the
answers were far from certain. The treatment of the Low Countries in early modern
maps of 'Germania' varied: those faithful to the Ptolemaic tradition restricted
'Germania' to the lands east of the Rhine, whereas others, which interpreted
'Deutschland' as co-extensive with the Empire, included the southern Low Countries
with the Walloon provinces.[94] Within the 'Reichstag' it sometimes suited the 'Burgun-
dian' delegates to present the Low Countries as 'die slüssel deutscher nacion' or 'ein

**90**   Jean Lemaire de Belges, writing around 1510, differentiated between 'François' and 'Vualon' or
'Rommand'. He characterised the former as 'plus moderne, et plus gaillart', see A. Henry, *Histoire des
mots Wallon et Wallonie* (3rd ed.; Mont-sur-Marchienne, 1990) 37. Another name given to the French
vernacular in the Low Countries was 'la langue bourguignonne.' The statutes of the Golden Fleece were
supposedly drawn up in this language, which was considered more dignified than French 'comme estant
plus ancienne et moins suspecte aux changements.' *La Toison d'or*, 23. Confusingly, the term 'wallon'
when applied to the language was also used as a synonym in the Low Countries for standard French,
perhaps out of a desire, born of longstanding antipathy towards France, to conceal the connection. According
to Henry, *Histoire des mots,* 32, the term 'Walloon' first emerged in the period 1465-1477, when France
became the archenemy of Burgundy. I am grateful to Dr R.V. Ball of the School of Modern Languages at
Southampton for guidance on the linguistic situation in the francophone region.
**91**   De Grauwe, 'Quelle langue Charles-Quint parlait-il?', 147, 158.
**92**   The privileges granted in 1477 specified that the members of the central government should be able to
conduct business in both languages, and that the provinces should be governed and justice administered in
the local language, see W. P. Blockmans, 'De 'constitutionele' betekenis van de privilegiën van Maria van
Bourgondië' in: W. P. Blockmans, ed., *Le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de
Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas 1477* (Kortrijk-Heule, 1985) 486.
**93**   A. Demandt, 'Die Grenzen in der Geschichte Deutschlands', in: *Deutschlands Grenzen in der
Geschichte*, A. Demandt, ed. (Munich, 1990) 15-16; in 1813 Arndt longed for the day when the whole of
Germany would be united 'so weit die deutsche Zunge reicht.'
**94**   B. Schmidt, '*Mappae Germanae*. Das Alte Reich in der kartographischen Überlieferung der frühen
Neuzeit', in: M. Schnettger, ed., *Imperium Romanum irregulare corpus-Teutscher Reichs-Staat: Das Alte
Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und der Historiographie.* Maps of 1482 (Tafel 1) and 1513 (Tafel
4) and another made in the first half of the sixteenth century (Tafel 2) followed Ptolemy.

schild und vormauer der teutschen nation.'[95] In his *'Brevis Germanie Descriptio'*, published in 1512, the German humanist historian, Johannes Cochlaeus, treated Zeeland and Flanders as the western outposts of the German lands.[96] For the Antwerp poet Anna Bijns 'Duytschlandt' stretched alliteratively from the 'Rije' to Reval in Estonia.[97] Yet there are signs that even before the Revolt gave the United Provinces a destiny outside the Empire and 'Deutschland', the two Germanic languages were drawing apart.

In the early modern period contemporaries distinguished, as they had in the time of the fourteenth-century Brabant historian Jan van Boendale, between the 'German-speaking lands' and the Romance, or 'welsch' countries, a division which significantly passed through the Low Countries.[98] Differences within these regions, between say Castilian and Portuguese, or German and Dutch, might easily be overlooked by outsiders.[99] For much the same reason the English were, as we have seen, inclined to classify all Germanic speakers as 'Douchemen'.

Though Dutch and German are now recognised as independent languages, this was less self-evident in the early sixteenth century, when both were described as 'lingua teutonica' and 'neder duutsche' might mean either Low German or Dutch.[100] When the German cosmographer Johann Rauw travelled in his imagination round 'the circumference of Germany, as far as the German language is spoken', his journey took him past Brussels, Ghent, Maastricht and Groningen.[101] Yet no one supposed that Dutch and German were mutually intelligible: High German texts had to be translated to be fully understood in the Dutch region, and this even applied to texts in the Gelders vernacular.[102] That 'averlens duysch' differed from 'nederlands duytsch'

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**95** *Urkunden und Aktenstücke*, I, 106, 202, 357; a school history, used throughout the lifetime of the Dutch Republic, reckoned the inhabitants of 'Batavia' to the 'duytscher nation'. Tilmans, 'Ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip', 31.

**96** Johannes Cochlaeus*, Brevis Germanie Descriptio (1512) mit der Deutschlandkarte des Erhard Etzlaub von 1512*, K. Langosch, ed. (Darmstadt, 1960) 151-153; H. Lutz, 'Die deutsche Nation zu Beginn der Neuzeit. Fragen nach dem Gelingen und Scheitern deutscher Einheit im 16. Jahrhundert', *Historische Zeitschrift,* CCXXXIV (1982) 536. Johannes Stumpf also thought the 'Teutsche Nation' stretched 'über den Rhyn biß an die Schelde.' Schmidt, 'Mappae Germaniae', 15.

**97** *Refereinen van Anna Bijns,* 283 (Bk. III, 19, c). 'Rije' = region between Maas and Schelde.

**98** Jan van Boendale saw Christendom as being divided between 'die Walsche tongen' and those who spoke 'Dietsch', see De Grauwe, 'Emerging Mother-Tongue Awareness', 101; German Protestants in the 1540s lumped all their enemies together (i.e. Italians, Spaniards, the papacy and the Catholic clergy) as 'welschen'. J. Pollmann, 'Een naturelicke vijantschap' (unpub. 'doctoraalscriptie', Amsterdam University, 1990) 17-18; Liliencron, *Historischen Volkslieder*, II, no. 520, 522, 524, 529, 530.

**99** De Grauwe, 'Quelle langue Charles-Quint parlait-il?', 151; De Groof, 'Natie en nationaliteit', 98; Spaniards also found difficulty in distinguishing between 'tudescos', 'alemánes' and 'flamencos', e.g. R. Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders 1496-1555* (Brussels-Nijmegen, 1996) 258 n. 218, 440.

**100** See De Grauwe, 'Emerging Mother-Tongue Awareness', 99-100.

**101** G. Strauss, *Sixteenth-Century Germany. Its Topography and Topographers* (Madison, 1959) 41.

**102** Anastasius Veluanus, *Kort bericht ...der Leken Wechwyser*, first published in 1554, was reprinted in Dutch in 1555; for another Dutch translation of a 'Low German' publication see A. Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt. Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford, 1992) Appendix, nos. 46 and 60.

was then a fact of life,[103] but these differences became more obvious as High German (and in the case of Overijssel 'Brabants' Dutch) asserted itself in the Low German, or Low Saxon, linguistic zone.[104] The spread of a print culture among the laity contributed to the greater differentiation between High German and Dutch. The Reformation in particular created an appetite for German Protestant literature in the Dutch-speaking world which could only be satisfied by translations.[105] During the second half of the sixteenth century both the Dutch and High German vernaculars were slowly codified and standardised, thanks to the cumulative endeavours of countless editors of religious texts, printers, schoolmasters and lexicographers.[106]

  This heightened linguistic sensitivity may have strengthened the consciousness of Dutch-speakers that they shared a common culture. But there is scant evidence of any general antipathy towards the culture of the 'Bovenlanders'.[107] Most writers still supposed the Low Countries belonged to 'Germania' rather than to 'Gallia', yet politically and confessionally the ties with the 'deutsche Landen' were weakening. Charles V had no intention in 1548 of severing the ties between the Empire and his

**103** See *Typographia Batava*, no. 5167. It concerns a German treaty translated into 'Low Saxon' and printed in Deventer. For 'nederlands duytsch' see the preface to the 'Deventer' New Testament (1525), in C. C. de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers* (Leiden, 1937) 154; also 'nederlandtsch duidtsch', Van Schelven, *Nederduitsche vluchtelingenkerken*, 406.

**104** Francis, "Vnse Sassiche sprake", ch. 3. An incident in 1571 reveals that a text in Low Saxon might have to be modified to conform to the Dutch of Brabant. Before delegates from Overijssel presented their petition in Brussels, they took their text to a clerk who, we are told, produced a fair copy 'doch daerin ettlicke worden verandert op brabans.' *Uittreksels uit het dagboek van Arent toe Boecop* (Deventer, 1862) 176-77.

**105** More editions of Luther's writings were translated into Dutch before 1546 than into any other language. B. Moeller, 'Luther in Europe: his works in translation', in: E. I. Kouri, T. Scott, ed., *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe* (Basingstoke, 1987) 236; see also A. G. Johnston, 'L'imprimerie et la Réforme aux Pays-Bas 1520-c.1555', in: J-F. Gilmont, ed., *La Réforme et le livre. L'Europe de l'imprimerie (1517-v.1570)* (Paris, 1990) 172. The great majority of these translations were made from High rather than Low German originals.

**106** Luther used 'gemeinen deutschen, daß mich beide, Ober und Niederländer verstehen mogen,' cited Lutz, 'Die deutsche Nation', 538. The absence of a standard form of written Dutch posed a problem for those seeking to translate the Bible into the vernacular. The translator of the Deventer New Testament of 1525 tried to find 'een gemeyn spraeck' between 'Hollants' and 'Brabants' and Jan Utenhove produced a New Testament in 1556 in a vernacular that he hoped would be accessible to all speakers of regional Dutch dialects, but both ventures proved to be commercial failures. De Bruin, *De Statenbijbel*, 154, 231-232; Willemyns, *Het verhaal van het Vlaams*, 127-128. The first German and Dutch grammars did not appear until 1573 and 1584 respectively, though Johan Radermacher had made a start on a Dutch grammar in 1568. M. J. van der Wal, *De moedertaal centraal. Standaardisatie-aspekten in de Nederlanden omstreeks 1650* (The Hague, 1995) 17, 26, 110; Willemyns, *Het verhaal van het Vlaams,* 125.

**107** When making the 'Deventer' New Testament of 1525, the translator explicitly borrowed from the German, because 'die overlantsche spraeck rechter, rycksinniger ende fyner is.' Bruin, *De Statenbijbel*, 154; in his forward to Jan der Werve's *Tresoor der Duytscher talen* the Antwerp printer Hans de Laet also saw the 'Overlantsche duytsche tale' as a resource on which writers in the Dutch vernacular might draw 'wanneer in de selve onse moedertale yet gebreect.' Willemyns, *Het verhaal van het Vlaams*, 120. The Flemish Calvinist Jan van Utenhove had no compunction about borrowing German case endings for his ill-fated translation of the New Testament. Bruin, *De Statenbijbel,* 230-232. Pontus de Huiter was then unusual when in 1581 he warned against Germanisms, Van der Wal, *Moedertaal*, 29.

hereditary lands to the west. Indeed he hoped by the Transaction of Augsburg to have secured a promise of German support against the French, but for all that the Low Countries' involvement in the Empire, never particularly strong, diminished as the sixteenth century wore on. Occasionally, the Dutch rebels petitioned the 'Reichstag', but as far as the United Provinces were concerned the Empire itself had by the early seventeenth century become a foreign country. Religious differences further drove a wedge between the Reformed Protestants in the Low Countries and Lutheran Germany. The repressive policies of the Habsburgs hindered the formation of Protestant churches in the Low Countries, and when the Reformation did eventually break through in the 1560s, its leaders looked to London, Emden, the French Protestants and ultimately Geneva, not Wittenberg, and the high priests of Luther's legacy. Mutual suspicions between the Protestant confessions later bedevilled the efforts of William of Orange and others to forge a pan-Protestant alliance against Spanish rule. Nevertheless, although German itinerants and soldiers might be abused as 'moffen' in the Low Countries, Germans as such were not generalised objects of hatred.[108]

<div align="center">III</div>

In the summer of 1574 Granvelle's youngest brother, Champagney, indignantly rejected proposals from the States of Holland for the ending of hostilities. He was especially outraged by a demand that the King should establish a form of government, with the advice of the States General, conducive to unity and harmony. This struck him as absurd for it would, in effect, subordinate the King to the States General. In his eyes the States were less an institution than a venue, where the King could conveniently obtain advice if he so chose, while the Low Countries were merely a collection of contiguous lordships [heerlijkheden] with miscellaneous powers, laws and customs; they had nothing in common with one another 'dan alleenlijck gebuerschap onder eenen Landes-heere.'[109] Johan Junius de Jonge, the rebel governor of Veere, to whom the States of Holland entrusted the refutation of Champagney, disagreed profoundly. Since the time of Charlemagne, he claimed, 'dit Land en dese Provincien, in een lichame te samen gevoegt zijn geweest' and, despite being subsequently divided between various rulers, these had remained in close correspondence with one another until Philip the Good 'de selfde wederom onverscheidelijk in een lichaem heeft te samen gevoegt,' binding these together with laws and privileges. Duke Philip had also convoked the States General whenever necessary and when Charles the Bold did

**108** H. Lademacher, 'Deutschland und die Niederlanden. Über Wandel und Kontinuität des Bildes vom anderen', in: H. Süssmuth, ed., *Deutschlandbilder in Dänemark und England, in Frankreich und den Niederlanden* (Baden-Baden, 1996) 392-393.
**109** Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 535.

try to alter the constitution, turning the Low Countries into a kingdom, this body helped to frustrate his scheme. Charles V had then incorporated all the provinces, with the support of the 'Reichstag', into 'eenen Rijk-Creits', in order to forestall mischievous persons who might sow mistrust among the provinces on the pretext 'dat sy niet gemeins met den anderen en hadden.' These territories were not only united politically; they also shared a common name and culture, though not, of course, a single language,[110] and the assemblies of the 'schutterijen' and 'rederijkers', which Junius likened to the Olympic Games among the ancient Greeks, expressed this solidarity. The unity of the country and the widespread concern aroused by the religious edicts made it more than ever essential, not least for the restoration of the King's dignity, that the States General should be part of the solution.[111]

  The argument between Champagney and Junius as to whether the Low Countries were a confederation or a unified and indivisible body essentially continued a discussion about the constitutional nature of the Habsburg state that had been rumbling in the background for some time, but with this significant difference. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the confederalist position championed by Champagney more often found support among the provincial States, whereas Junius' emphasis on the unity of the Low Countries chimed with the outlook of the central government, which was forever lecturing the States on the need to behave as loyal subjects and 'voisins …estans sous l'obéissance d'ung seul prince.'[112]

  Charles V and his regents were, of course, not in the business of nation building; they set out to strengthen princely authority by whatever means they could.[113] According to Gattinara justice was 'la royenne de toutes vertuz pour [par] laquelles les empereurs, roys et princes règnent et dominent,'[114] and by radically reforming the administration of justice, the government in Brussels accomplished the 'l'unification juridique' of the patrimonial lands.[115] The right of appeal to 'foreign' courts was finally abolished, the provincial courts concentrated on providing justice to the exclusion of other political functions, and increasingly suitors looked to the 'Grote Raad' in Mechelen for authoritative judgements; at the same time a start was made on the

**110**   Junius tried to make light of the language issue, on which he was vulnerable, by stressing the degree of bi-lingualism in the towns.

**111**   Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 536-544. For a partial translation see E. H. Kossmann, A. F. Mellink, ed., *Texts concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1974) 120-124.

**112**   L. van der Essen, 'Les États-Généraux de 1534-1535 et le projet de conféderation defensive des provinces des Pays-Bas présenté par Marie de Hongrie au nom de Charles-Quint', in: *Mélanges d'histoire offerts Charles Moeller* (2 vols; Leuven, 1914) II, 125.

**113**   For recent work on Habsburg state-building see De Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum'*; P. P J. L. van Peteghem, *De Raad van Vlaanderen en staatsvorming onder Karel V (1515-1555). Een publiekrechtelijk onderzoek naar centralisatiestreven in de XVII Provinciën* (Nijmegen, 1990); Geurts, *'Onsser stadt in sulken gedranghe'*; H. de Schepper, J.-M. Cauchies, 'Justice, grâce et législation. Genèse de l'état et moyens juridiques dans les Pays-Bas, 1200-1600', *Centre de recherches en histoire du droit et des institutions. Cahier No 2* ( Brussels, 1994); F. Postma, *Viglius van Aytta als humanist en diplomaat; idem, Viglius van Aytta. De jaren met Granvelle, 1549-1564* (Zutphen, 2000).

**114**   Van Peteghem, *Raad van Vlaanderen*, 43.

**115**   The expression comes from De Schepper, Cauchies, 'Justice, grâce et législation', 51.

codification of custom laws. Law making, too, was perceived as the very particular concern of the prince; the central government assumed legislative roles hitherto performed at a more local level and published general edicts on heresy, censorship, coinage and the conduct of trade.[116] Ecclesiastical structures, too, were slowly aligned with those of the state. In the early sixteenth century monastic congregations specific to the Low Countries were created, the jurisdiction of 'foreign' church courts was excluded and, with the new bishoprics in 1559, a major step was taken towards the creation of a 'nationaal Nederlandse kerk',[117] with its own metropolitan and with diocesan boundaries that corresponded more closely with those of the Habsburg Low Countries. At the same time, the prince maintained his grip on the appointment of bishops, abbots and inquisitors. The creation in 1548 of the 'Burgundian Circle' marked, as Junius recognised, a further important stage in the process of state-building, and this was carried further a year later when all the provinces, reluctantly in the case of Friesland, ratified the Pragmatic Sanction. Henceforth one and the same prince was to inherit all seventeen provinces, which he would hold 'en une masse.'[118] Even when one allows for the enhanced powers of the provincial states of Holland and Flanders in the matter of finance,[119] there can be little doubt that the 'core' provinces more closely resembled a 'bondstaat' in 1555 than had been the case when Charles succeeded as Archduke forty years earlier.[120]

Because Champagney, like his brother, regarded the States General, as a threat to the King's authority, he belittled their importance,[121] yet earlier that century the central government, though wary of the States as a potential focus of opposition, seems to have tried to harness them in the task of state-building. Addressing the States General in 1522 Gattinara invoked, not for the first time, the familiar image of the bundle of arrows tied together to make it stronger, in effect reminding his audience that indeed

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[116] De Schepper, Cauchies, 'Justice, grâce et législation', 73-76. In fact, the anti-heresy legislation often proved highly controversial.

[117] Postma, *Viglius van Aytta. De jaren met Granvelle*, 85.

[118] For the Pragmatic Sanction see A. S. de Blécourt, N. Japikse, ed., *Klein Plakkaatboek van Nederland* (Groningen-The Hague, 1919) 77-79.

[119] See N. Maddens, 'De invoering van de 'nieuwe middelen' in het graafschaap Vlaanderen tijdens de regering van keizer Karel V', *Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis*, LVII (1979) 342-363; 861-898; J. D. Tracy, *A Financial Revolution in the Habsburg Netherlands: Renten and Renteniers in the County of Holland, 1515-1565* (Berkeley, 1985).

[120] For the invaluable distinction between 'core' and 'peripheral' regions see H. de Schepper, '*Belgium Nostrum*'; recently the author has distinguished three zones: an economically and politically integrated 'bondstaat' round the Rhine, Maas and Schelde estuaries, a peripheral zone whose members belonged only loosely to the Low Countries (Groningen, Overijssel, Luxemburg), and an intermediate group of provinces such as Artois, Utrecht and Gelre which, while still aloof, were becoming more closely associated with the 'core' provinces. See De Schepper, 'De eenheid van de Nederlanden onder Karel V. Mythe of werkelijkheid?', in: N. S. van der Wal, V. F. Marcha, ed., *Jaime Saleh: Excellerende Excellentie. Liber amicorum aangeboden aan de gouverneur van de Nederlandse Antillen* (Amsterdam, 2002) 184.

[121] For Granvelle's misgivings see *Papiers d'État du cardinal de Granvelle*, V, 596-601; VII, 184-185, 373-375, 492-494, 591.

'eendracht maakt macht.'[122] The Low Countries faced a particularly anxious time in 1534-1535 with the prospect of a hostile Anglo-French alliance, continued turmoil in the Baltic and Anabaptist unrest at home. Mary of Hungary therefore pressed the provinces to establish a defensive union and a standing army, paid for by regular contributions from the provinces. Her proposal was, however, coolly received by the States General. Some saw this as a covert form of permanent taxation, a sort of *taille*, and knowing this had been the undoing of the States General in France, they had no wish to make the same mistake.[123]

But more prosaically the provinces were simply unconvinced of the benefits of a closer union. The circumstances were quite different from those in the United Provinces where Holland was so very clearly top dog in the Union; in the time of Charles V political and economic power was relatively evenly distributed between the 'core' provinces and, within them, among perhaps a dozen large towns.[124] Nor did these provinces recognise a common enemy. While Flanders and the Walloon provinces lived in fear of incursions from France, the threat to Holland and northern Brabant came from the east, from the Geldersen. Again, though their economies were broadly compatible, even complementary, their commercial interests were disparate and dissimilar.[125] For this reason the provinces were suspicious of closer cooperation, even in matters of security. In 1532 Holland proposed, with the support of Mary of Hungary, that the provinces should equip a joint fleet to force the re-opening of the Sound, yet even Zeeland, Holland's closest ally, refused to join an enterprise, which seemed only to serve the interests of Holland.[126] When therefore the Regent proposed the creation of a common defence force, Holland reverted to the confederalist position held by the other provinces and objected that under such an arrangement the enemy of a single province would become the enemy of all.[127] Unity between the provinces, apparently, remained an aspiration, something to be advertised during state entries by troupes of maidens sporting provincial shields in tableaux-vivants,[128] but such pious hopes did not long survive the political hardball.

Mary of Hungary seems to have thought of the States General as representative of the Low Countries — at least she called the provincial delegations meeting in 1534,

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**122** Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 115; Van Peteghem, *Raad van Vlaanderen*, 181; Henne, *Histoire de Charles-Quint* , III, 249-250.

**123** Van der Essen, 'Les États-Généraux de 1534-1535', 135-138; Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 132; Henne, *Histoire de Charles-Quint*, VI, 87.

**124** Flanders paid 33.8% of the taxes levied in the 1540s in the Habsburg Netherlands as against Holland's contribution of 58% in the seventeenth century. J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995) 55, 286.

**125** Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 116-119.

**126** W. P. Blockmans, J. van Herwaarden, 'De Nederlanden van 1493 tot 1555: binnenlandse en buitenlandse politiek', in: D. P. Blok, e. a., ed., *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (15 vols; Haarlem, 1977-1983) V, 466; L. Sicking, 'Een landvoogdes in zeezaken', in: B. C. van der Boogert, J. Kerkhoff, ed., *Maria van Hongarije 1505-1558. Een koningin tussen keizers en kunstenaars* (Zwolle, 1993) 131.

**127** Van der Essen, 'Les États-Généraux de 1534-1535', 129.

**128** For such displays see *Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella*, II, 81, 123, III, 50.

'messieurs representans les estats de pardecha',[129] — but whereas town corporations and the provincial states did represent self-conscious communities,[130] the same could not be said of the States General. Under Charles V the provincial states were too jealous of their own powers to give their delegates to the States General 'pleine puissance' to make binding agreements with Brussels. The doubt that hangs over the representative nature of the States General is in fact symptomatic of a deeper diffidence about the cohesiveness of the Habsburg state.

  Such enthusiasm as the central government had for the States General — and it was always tempered — vanished after the meeting in 1557, when the provincial delegations broached matters of state in their joint discussions. In the event the King and his closest advisors, especially Granvelle, regarded the experiment of allowing such discussions as one which should not be repeated.[131] Yet at the very time when those close to the King had became thoroughly disenchanted with the States General, some of those most opposed to Habsburg anti-heresy policy began to nourish hopes that this body just might after all have a part to play in working out a more appropriate religious policy for the country as a whole.

  As a result of Habsburg state-building, the profile of the Low Countries loomed larger in the lives of the inhabitants. But reactions to unpopular dynastic policies also stimulated supra-provincial cooperation and so indirectly strengthened the national identity of the country. The cost of the continual wars led to the belief among some nobles by 1550's that the Low Countries bore a disproportionate share of the financial burdens, even though these were 'guerre du roy', not 'guerre de Flandre'. So when in 1557 it looked as if Philip might be asked to support Mary Tudor in Scotland, he was warned to wage any such war 'non comme seigneur de pardecà, mais comme roi d'Angleterre.'[132] The aggressive wars of Charles the Bold and Maximilian had in the past led to complaints that the interests of the Low Countries were being sacrificed on the altar of dynastic ambitions, but in the case of Philip those anxieties were aggravated by the conviction that his repressive religious policy was singularly ill-suited to the needs of the country.

  The Caroline anti-heresy legislation had always been controversial because the edicts overrode privileges which safeguarded the judicial process and forbade the total confiscation of property. In 1550 Antwerp, supported discreetly by the Regent, had persuaded Charles to remove some of the most objectionable aspects of the 'blood'

**129**  R. von Häpke, ed., *Niederländische Akten und Urkunden zur Geschichte der Hanse und zur deutsche Seegeschichte* (2 vols; Munich, 1913-1923) I, 232.
**130**  J. D. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg Rule 1506-1556. The Formation of a Body Politic* (Berkeley, 1990) 34-36; A. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London, 1990) 172-173.
**131**  Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 184-192; *Papiers d'état du cardinal de Granvelle*, VII, 373-375; in 1566 Margaret of Parma was careful to consult the 'Estatz de chascune province à part', beginning with the most biddable provinces. *Mémoires de Jacques de Wesenbeke*, C. Rahlenbeck, ed. (Brussels, 1859) 206.
**132**  A. Louant, 'Charles de Lalaing et les remonstrances d'Emmanuel-Philibert de Savoie (juillet et novembre 1556)', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke commissie voor geschiedenis,* XCVII (1933) 255-269; *Relations politiques*, I, 102.

edict lest these deter foreign merchants. These concessions, however, proved insufficient to allay anxieties. Measures grudgingly accepted to keep heresy at bay in the 1520s and 1530s seemed increasingly irksome and irrelevant in a country that lived by commerce, several of whose trading-partners had by the 1560s either adopted Protestantism or, as in the Empire and France, reached compromises of one sort or another. In 1564 Count Egmont argued in the Council of State that a policy of procrustean orthodoxy might be all very well in the Spanish kingdoms, 'fermez de mer et montaignes' but it was plainly impractical in the Low Countries, 'qui estoient petits et environnez de toutes pars de ceulx qui s'estoient aliénez et séparez de l'Église romaine.'[133] The King's stubborn refusal to contemplate any sort of modus vivendi with Protestantism seemed only to confirm how little he and his Spanish Council understood that, as Mary of Hungary once told her brother, 'lesdits pays sont totalement fondez à la marchandise.'[134]

Though Charles V was the architect of this repressive policy, the emperor, unlike his son, was at least a 'natuerlijcke prince'.[135] Philip, unable to speak either Dutch or French, was a Spaniard born and bred, and his household while in the Low Countries consisted overwhelmingly of Spaniards; moreover, he succeeded his father at a time when anti-Spanish sentiment was growing apace in northern Europe. This contagion apparently infected the Low Countries from Germany, where Spanish troops, commanded by Alva, had helped to bring about the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League.[136] In the Low Countries, as in Germany, the alleged arrogance of Spanish soldiers alienated the townsmen, among whom they were billeted.[137] When the States General got wind of plans to retain Spanish troops after Cateau-Cambrésis and to appoint Spaniards to the Council of State, they immediately demanded that these be scrapped and insisted that the country be governed and defended by natives.[138] Even after the troops had been withdrawn in 1561, anti-Spanish feeling persisted; a poster attached to the town gates of Antwerp in March 1562 accused Granvelle of wanting to make Brabanters 'esclaves aux porceaux de Spaigne.'[139]

**133** *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche*, III, 462.

**134** Von Häpke, ed., *Niederländische Akten*, I, 316.

**135** Prevenier, Blockmans, *Burgundian Netherlands*, 200.

**136** Liliencron, *Historischen Volkslieder*, IV, nr. 519-520, 522, 526, 530, 570; J. Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft: Ursprung und Funktion der Schwarzen Legende über Spanien in den Niederlanden, 1560-1581', in: F. Bosbach, ed., *Feindbilder. Die Darstellung des gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Cologne, 1992) 78-81; A. Duke, 'A Legend in the Making. News of the 'Spanish Inquisition' in the Low Countries in German evangelical Pamphlets, 1546-1550', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis*, LXXI (1997) 125-144.

**137** G. A. Bergenroth, e. a., *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish* (15 vols; London, 1862-1954) XI, 228, 338. Spanish soldiers had fought in the Low Countries in large numbers since the early sixteenth century. It was, however, only in the early 1550s that their presence came to be resented, especially in the towns of Brabant, as a result of mutinies, see Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld,* 382-407. For the alienating effects of Spanish pride see *Vicente Alvarez. Relation du Beau Voyage que fit aux Pays-Bas en 1548 le prince Philippe d'Espagne, Notre Seigneur*, M.-T. Dovillée, ed. (Brussels, 1964) 126, 134.

**138** Postma, *Viglius van Aytta. De jaren met Granvelle, 1549-1564,* 175.

**139** *Relations politiques*, II, 675.

  Anxiety about the Spanish Inquisition had first surfaced at Antwerp in 1550; it then faded only to be re-ignited in 1559, when lurid rumours began to circulate about concerted plans to extirpate Protestantism from France and the Low Countries.[140] There may have been no substance in these reports, but they came on the heels of the publication of a Spanish Protestant's denunciation of the Inquisition and coincided with well-advertised 'autos-da-fé' in Seville and Valladolid, news of which soon reached the Low Countries and images of which circulated in German engravings.[141] Fears about the Spanish Inquisition also coincided with the establishment of an effective local inquisition in Flanders and the controversial re-organisation of the bishoprics. By 1566 the term 'Inquisition' was bandied about so loosely that it came to be equated in some circles with the anti-heresy legislation itself.[142] In this paranoid climate Philip II's declarations that he had no intention of introducing the Holy Office into the Low Countries cut no ice.

  During the Revolt the conviction grew that a 'een naturelicke vijantschap' existed between Spaniards and Netherlanders and hatred of Spaniards eventually became a defining characteristic of the rebel Dutch. But even before the outbreak of hostilities, anti-Spanish feeling focused the disparate opponents of the King's religious policy. Fear of the French haunted Margaret of Parma and in Artois and Flanders they certainly posed a real military threat; here too the inhabitants reserved a visceral hatred for them — after the French had been defeated at Grevelingen local women allegedly ran about the battlefield stabbing the wounded enemy with pitchforks[143] — but the French posed no direct threat to Holland. Spain, by contrast, cast a sinister shadow across the whole country and one which because it was intangible, could be more easily manipulated.


IV


In the early modern period the concept of the *patria* was elastic. For the Cologne patrician Hermann von Weinsberg, the 'heimat' resembled a Russian doll; at the centre was his household, and from there the 'heimat' extended outwards to include Cologne,

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**140** In June 1562 Granvelle complained that Orange and Egmont were forever discussing the Spanish Inquisition as a result of information they had heard from Alva in Paris before Henri II died in 1559. According to the Cardinal, these stories had no basis in fact. *Papiers d'État du cardinal de Granvelle,* VI, 569-570.

**141** W. Thomas, 'De mythe van de Spaanse inquisitie in de Nederlanden van de zestiende eeuw', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, CV (1990) 336-341.

**142** *Correspondance du Cardinal de Granvelle, 1565-1586*, E. Poullet, ed. (12 vols; Brussels, 1877-96) I, 112.

**143** C. Piot, ed., *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre* (Brussels, 1879) 329.

the prince-bishopric, 'Deutzlant', Christendom, and finally heaven itself.[144] The anonymous lexicographer of the *Dictionarium Tetraglotton* was more down-to-earth. He defined 'Vaderlant' as '[d]e stede, het dorp, ghehucht of ander plaetse daermen gheboren is,'[145] but for him too the 'patria' was pluriform. How one defined the *patria* depended on one's own horizons. It was relatively easy for the great nobles — the members of the Golden Fleece — to conceive of the Low Countries as their 'patrie': they shared the outlook of the prince and as captains of the ordinance companies it fell to them to defend the country, while their lands were often scattered across several provinces. The artisans, on the other hand, still felt a keen sense of loyalty to their native city, whose privileges protected their employment and property. Despite these glaring differences, the notion of the *patria* underwent a slow and subtle expansion. By the end of the fifteenth century Holland had come to be seen as a single political entity represented by its provincial states,[146] while the humanists' discovery of 'Batavia' directed attention beyond the boundaries of Holland to Utrecht and even Gelre.[147] Habsburg state-building had also contributed to the enlargement of the notion of patria, most notably with the creation of the new Burgundian Circle and the Pragmatic Sanction.

  The publication in 1557 of the very first maps of the Habsburg Low Countries both reflected and promoted those broader horizons. These displayed the political integration achieved under Charles V in a pictorial form so that the Low Countries could at last be visualised as a single entity, standing apart from the rest of Low Germany. As well as being decorative and informative, these may also have encouraged a sense of 'national' pride: Hieronymus Cock, who produced one of the earliest maps claims to have been impelled by patriotic motives.[148] Though relatively expensive — the cheapest map cost a couple of stuivers, the ceiling price for pamphlets and ephemera in 1566 — there was evidently a market for such maps to judge from the accounts of Christopher Plantin for 1557-1559.[149] Within ten years 'nederlantsche caerten' adorned the houses of Brederode, a Ghent brewer, a burgomaster of Hoorn and a graduate priest from Niedorp in North Holland.[150]  In 1568 Guicciardini's chorography was

**144**  Hermann von Weinsberg, *Das Buch Weinsberg. Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert,* K. Höhlbaum, F. Lau, J. Stein, ed. (5 vols; Leipzig-Bonn, 1886-1926) V, 217-219.
**145**  S. Groenveld, ''Natie' en 'patria' bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders' in: N. C. F. van Sas, ed., *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam, 1999) 59.
**146**  Smit, *Vorst en onderdaan*, 504-506.
**147**  Tilmans, 'Ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip', 26-33.
**148**  Van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden*, I, 57-66; II, 142-143.
**149**  Van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden*, I, 126 n. 72-73 and 77; for information on the price of pamphlets and prints see A. Duke, ', Posters, Pamphlets and Prints: the ways and means of disseminating dissident opinions on the eve of the Dutch Revolt', *Dutch Crossing*, XXVII (2003) 23-44.
**150**  Information based on house inventories drawn up in 1567-1568 for Ghent and the Noorderkwartier of Holland. The 41 inventories of houses in Ghent with movables yielded six maps, only one of which was specifically of the Low Countries; the 112 inventories for the Noorderkwartier mentioned 22 maps, two (possibly three) of which were of the Low Countries. In some cases maps were listed but not described. Sources: for Brederode see J. J. Salverda de Grave, 'Twee inventarissen van het huis Brederode', *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het historisch genootschap*, XXXIX (1918) 65, 90; J. Scheerder, 'Documenten in

translated into French. Readers could now make an armchair journey through 'dese edele ende heerlijcke Nederlanden,'[151] whose inhabitants were praised for their inventiveness and linguistic skills and whose mixed constitution the Florentine so much admired. Though Guicciardini still regarded the province as the fundamental unit, his strict adherence to the country's borders reinforced the impression that 'Belgica' now formed a coherent and cohesive state.[152]

The perception of the Low Countries as the common fatherland also began at this time to take root among those who were politically and religiously disaffected, in particular among the Calvinist émigrés. While these often bickered among themselves as to the legitimacy of resisting the civil powers, their circumstances, living as they did in a culturally alien, and sometimes confessionally hostile, environment, encouraged them to draw together. Van Roosbroeck detected a growing inclination among Germans to describe the Calvinist exiles in their midst as 'de niderlendern.'[153] The Low Countries as a whole were also the focus of their religious life: they longed to see their country delivered from the tyranny of the 'Roomschen Pharonis'. Their experience in exile naturally encouraged their leaders to draw parallels between God's dealings with the children of Israel in the past and His treatment of the Low Countries in the here and now. In the preface to his church order, written in 1554, Marten Micron, deplored what he called the 'Aegyptische slavernie des Nederlandts.' He lamented that among the countries still living under the domination of Rome was 'onse Vaderlandt, dat gansche Nederlandt' but he saw the stranger church as an instrument 'om het lucht des Evangeliums over onse gansche Nederlanden … metter tijdt te moghen bringhen.'[154] His colleague Jan Utenhove shared his broad patriotism. In 1561 he invited those better able than himself to translate the psalms of their obligation to serve God's people in this way 'in onsen Nederlandschen Vaderlande.'[155]

During the winter of 1565/1566 a small group of Calvinist gentry — the leaders of the Compromise of the Nobility — launched a carefully orchestrated campaign,

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verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke commissie voor geschiedenis*, CLVII (1991) 125-242 and Nationaal Archief 's-Gravenhage, Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer 683*.

151    Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe*, 396. Strangely there was no Dutch translation until 1612, though German and English translations had appeared in 1580 and 1593.

152    Guicciardini appended entries for Liège and Aachen because of their 'goede ghebuerschap, vriendtschap ende gheduerighe bondtgenootschap' with the Low Countries, *Beschrijvinghe*, 376.

153    R. van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten. Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Duitsland (1550-1600)* (Leuven, 1968) 349; see also note 73. The Dutch art historian G. J. Hoogewerff noticed that Netherlanders in Italy began around 1570 to describe themselves as 'Fiamingi', irrespective of their provincial origins and he took this as a sign of 'een gezamelijk Nederlandschap.' L. van der Essen, *De historische gebondenheid der Nederlanden* (Brussels, 1944) 41.

154    M. Micron, *De christlicke ordinancien der Nederlantscher ghemeinten te Londen (1554)*, W. F. Dankbaar, ed. (The Hague, 1956) 35-37.

155    S. J. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse psalmberijmingen van de Souterliedekens tot Datheen* (Assen, 1959) 370, 515.

recruiting support from almost every province.[156] Early in April 1566 some two hundred gentry presented their petition to the Regent in Brussels, in which they asked Philip II to frame a new religious policy, 'par l'advis et consentement de tous les estats-généraux assemblés,'[157] including the abolition of the inquisition. It was a remarkable demonstration of political solidarity across the country: urban revolts had been common enough in the early sixteenth century, but these had been confined to a single town. With the Compromise there emerged a supra-provincial protest movement. The great nobles had long seen themselves as serving both the King and the *patrie*, but this rhetoric was gaining currency outside these circles by the 'Wonderjaar'. The Reformed minister Guy de Brès echoed it in his despairing remonstrance, addressed in January 1567 to the Knights of the Golden Fleece, in which he explained that the Calvinists wished to be regarded as 'fideles et loyaus serviteurs de sa M[ajesté] et amateurs de la patrie.'[158] Of course, the unity of the Beggars was fragile and short-lived, but the very attempt to organise a pan-Netherlands movement suggests that the disaffected political community of the Low Countries was beginning to find its voice.

When therefore William of Orange and the rebel publicists larded their propaganda after 1568 with calls for the deliverance of the 'lieve Vaderlant' from foreign tyrants, they were addressing a constituency that had, for one reason or another, already begun to think, albeit with difficulty, of the Low Countries as their 'communis patria', one that could stand alongside their provincial 'patriae'. To that extent the Low Countries had acquired a national identity; it may not have been very robust, but the concept of the Netherlands was rather less elusive than it had been fifty years earlier when Charles had succeeded.

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**156** Gentry from all seventeen provinces except Groningen signed, though only four gentry from Zeeland and initially only one Frisian put their names to the Compromise. A. Duke, 'Dissident Propaganda and Political Organization at the Outbreak of the Revolt of the Netherlands', in: P. Benedict, e. a., ed. *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Low Countries, 1555-1585* (Amsterdam, 1999) 120-121. Junius emphasised the breadth of support for the Compromise. Bor, *Oorsprongk,* I, 541.
**157** *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d'Orange-Nassau Ière Série* (8 vols; Leiden, 1835-1847) II, 83.
**158** L. A. van Langeraad, *Guido de Bray. Zijn leven en werken* (Zierikzee, 1884) cviii.

# Nomenclature for the Early Modern Low Countries

| Typology Usage | Latin | Dutch | German | French | English | Inhabitant | Adjective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Dynastic *Official* | - - - | landen van her/ derwaerts-over | - - - | pays de par deçà/delà | - - - | - - - | - - - |
| 2 Dynastic *Official* | - - - | (neder) erfneder-landen | unser erblanden Erb-nederlan-denn | pays patri-moniaux | lands of the emperor/ king Philip | subject of the emperor/ king Philip | - - - |
| 3 Dynastic *Generic* | - - - | Borgoen-gen landen | unser nider-burgun-discher landen | Basse Bourgogne | (Lower) Burgundy | Bourguignon Burgundian | bourguignon bourgoense Burgundian |
| 4 Classical *Literary Usage* | Gallia Belgica Belgica Belgium Belgium inferior | - - - | - - - | La Gaule Belgique | Belgia Belge | Belgi(ae) Belge | Belgica belgicque |
| 5 Classical *Literary Usage* | Germania/ Alemania inferior | neder-duytslandt/ landen | Nider Teutsch-landt | Basse-Allemagne Germanie Inferieure | Inferior/ Low(er)/ Nether Germany | Nederduitscher Nider dütsch Doch/ Doucheman Germanus inferior Teuto/ T(h)eutonicus | duuts/diets nederduytsch bas allemand Dutch/ Low German |
| 6 Political *Literary Usage* | - - - | seventien landen | XVII Nie-derland-schen Provintzen | XVII provinces belges/ païs belgique | xvii landes | - - - | - - - |
| 7 Pars pro toto *Generic* | Flandria [Braban-tia] | Vlaen-deren | Flandern | Flandre | Flanders | Vlaming Flamand/ Flameng Fleming | vlaemsch Flemish |
| 8 Geo-graphical *Generic* | patriae inferiores partes inferiores Alemanie | Nederlant Neder-landen | Niderlen-dische land Niderland/ Nederlandt Nyderlanden Unterlandt | Les/le Pays Bas Ces pays embas | Netherlands Low Countries/ Country | Nederlander Niderlander Netherlander Lowlander | Nederlantsch Netherlandish |

# De dominante staat. De Gentse opstand (1449-1453) in de negentiende- en twintigste-eeuwse historiografie[1]

JELLE HAEMERS

Op 29 september 1839 hield agitator Jacob Kats te Gent een opruiende toespraak voor de verzamelde Gentse katoenarbeiders waarin hij hen opriep op te treden tegen het stijgende sociale onrecht in de arbeidersmilieus. Het was de aanzet tot het Gentse katoenoproer van 1839.[2] De rumoerige opstand werd weliswaar na enkele dagen hevig onderdrukt, maar de Gentse — en de hele Belgische — elite raakte door de losgeweekte krachten van de collectieve actie danig gechoqueerd. Jacob Kats beroerde namelijk niet alleen de geesten van de katoenarbeiders, ook de Vlaamse edelman Philippe Blommaert (1808-1871), een vroeg voorvechter van de nog jonge Vlaamse beweging, raakte overtuigd van de noodzaak van actie, zij het voor een andere zaak. Deze liberale intellectueel streefde naar het behoud van de Nederlandse taal in België en droeg op zijn manier een steentje bij tot de opwaardering van het 'Diets'.[3] In 1832 publiceerde hij bijvoorbeeld de *Aenmerkingen over de verwaerloozing der Nederduitsche tael*, een polemisch geschrift waarin hij ijverde voor een terugkeer naar de bronnen van het Nederlands. Ter bevordering van de kennis van de oudste vormen van zijn moedertaal, met name het Middelnederlands, en om de uitgeefwoede van geestverwanten te kanaliseren, richtte Blommaert 1839, samen met een ander lid uit zijn Vlaamsgezinde netwerk, de hoogleraar geschiedenis Constant Serrure (1805-1872), de 'Maetschappy der Vlaamsche Bibliophilen' op.[4] Het katoenoproer attendeerde Blommaert ongetwijfeld op de Gentse opstandigheid door de eeuwen heen. Tijdens het Gentse katoenoproer snuffelde hij namelijk in de onontgonnen reeks manuscripten van de Gentse universiteitsbibliotheek en trof er de *Kronyk van Vlaenderen* aan, één van de voornaamste bronnen van de Gentse opstand van 1449-1453. Het resultaat was zijn artikel 'Causes de la guerre de la ville de Gand contre le duc de Bourgogne', een korte historische schets over de context van de Gentse opstand van

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**2**   Het katoenoproer vond plaats van 29 september tot 4 oktober 1839, zie hierover: G. Deneckere, *Het katoenoproer van Gent in 1839. Collectieve actie en sociale geschiedenis* (Nijmegen, 1998); idem, 'Burgerrechten, collectieve actie en staatsvorming. Gent 1830-1839', *BMGN*, CX (1995) 182-204 en J. Kuypers, *Jacob Kats, agitator* (Brussel, 1930).
**3**   A. Deprez, 'Blommaert (jonkheer Philip M.)', *NEVB*, I, 515-516.
**4**   J. Deschamps, 'Blommaert (jonkheer Philip Marie)', *NBW*, II (Brussel, 1966) 63-68. Over Serrure: A. Deprez, 'Serrure (Constant P.)', *NEVB*, II, 2734-2735. Beiden waren bovendien bevriend met Jan Frans Willems en waren betrokken bij de oprichting van het Vlaamsgezinde en liberale Willemsfonds.