

Faculty of Arts
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HABSBURG FEMALE REGENTS IN THE EARLY 16TH CENTURY

Tupu Ylä-Anttila

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

In this work, I examine the education of princesses and forms of female power in the 16th -century through three women of the Habsburg family – Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), Mary of Hungary (1505–58) and Juana of Austria (1535–73) – all of whom acted as regents for Emperor Charles V (1500–1558) either in the Netherlands or in Spain. Great hopes had been laid on Charles, in his youth, as the ruler who would unite Christendom and bring peace. Erasmus of Rotterdam dedicated his *Institutio principis Christiani* to Charles in 1516. My work asks, what happened when the Habsburg princes shared their power with their sisters and daughters?

I argue that female regency in the Habsburg family needs to be considered as a form of queenship. The three princesses studied in this work reflect the changes in the expanding empire of Charles V. At the same time, the image of an ideal queen was evolving. One aspect of the queen-like regency was their status as childless widows combined with a motherly role towards royal children in their care. This, I argue, reveals how they used the regency to resist marriage plans, and in turn, remained unmarried to maintain their regency.

This work gives a new interpretation to previous studies that have considered these women mainly as parts of the Habsburg imperial political machinery. Here, the means and limits of female political power are investigated by asking how they acquired the skills they needed for governing, persuading the emperor and arguing their viewpoint.

I want to challenge the view of the princesses as exceptionally cultivated women, and offer instead a more variable picture of how the regents, with inadequate education for ruling, faced the challenges of governing. The principle of hereditary rule gave the Habsburg princesses unforeseen possibilities as regents. However, all the dynasty's princesses were educated to become queen consorts. On the one hand, I study the influence of the regents' advisors. On the other hand, I consider the impact of the contemporary ideals on queenship, as well as the influence of humanist thought and religious reformers. Through a case study of these three regents, my work shows how and with what tools the Habsburg women were able to act as alter-egos of the emperor and to adjust to the changing political situations.

The princess regents' correspondence forms the central part of the sources used for this work. The regency formally required the princess only to represent the authority of the absent ruler. The crucial role of the princesses was, nevertheless, to use their correspondence as the ruler's connection to the region's government. The correspondence was also their channel for persuasion and influence.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	1
Abbreviations.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Princesses – the past and the new approach.....	3
Educated to marry, appointed to rule.....	9
Sources	17
Structure.....	22
Part I Education.....	26
1 Educating princesses	27
Daughters to keep the realms content	27
Ideal queenship and exemplary queens	32
Sophisticated angels and good Christian women.....	40
Music, Latin and libraries for women.....	46
Conclusion.....	55
2 Margaret of Austria 1480–1504	57
<i>Couronne Margaritique</i> – Margaret and her crown	57
Preparing for queenship, 1482–1500	59
Conclusion.....	65
3 Mary of Hungary 1505–1529	69
Princess of Burgundy in Austria	69
Imperial granddaughter, 1505–1521	71
Queen of Hungary and Christian widow, 1521–1530	78

	Conclusion.....	88
4	Juana of Austria 1535–1554	90
	Legacy of Isabel the Catholic	90
	The little sister (1535–1548)	94
	Princess of Portugal (1548–1554).....	101
	Conclusion.....	106
	PART II Regents	109
5	Regency in the reign of Charles V	110
	Princess regents in the service of the dynasty	110
	'I am only one and I can't be everywhere'	117
	The most suitable persons	123
	Consorts of an absent ruler.....	128
	Conclusion.....	131
6	Margaret — rather the regent than the queen consort	132
	Introduction	132
	Ready to serve her nephew, his country and his subjects	134
	Tutoring the novice regent.....	143
	From good daughter to dear aunt.....	151
	For peace and ladies' honour – Margaret as a diplomat.....	161
7	Mary of Hungary – counsel and consolation for the Emperor.....	171
	Introduction	171
	Madame ma bonne soeur – Mary and Charles, language and letters.....	174
	Mary on war, honour and regency.....	182
	The retired queen.....	188
8	Juana – Princess of Portugal as a prince in Spain	195
	Introduction	195
	Serenísima princesa – Juana, Philip and the emperor	198

The retired princess	205
The Jesuit princess.....	210
Conclusion	214
Genealogy	220
Archival sources.....	221
Bibliography	222
Printed sources.....	222
Literature.....	228

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
ANL	Archives départementales du Nord Lille
CDCV	Corpus Documental de Carlos V
CK	Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V.
CMA	Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, avec ses amis, sur les affaires des Pays-Bas
CMCG	Correspondance de Marie de Hongrie avec Charles Quint et Nicolas de Granvelle
CMM	Correspondance de l'Empereur Maximilien Ier et de Marguerite d'Autriche, sa fille de 1507 à 1519
CODOIN	Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España
CSP Venice	Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice
CSP Spain	Calendar of State Papers, Spain
CWE	Collected Works of Erasmus
HHStA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien
KF	Korrespondenz Ferdinands I.
LP	Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII
RMC	Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint

INTRODUCTION

In his 1516 work, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, Erasmus of Rotterdam insisted it was necessary to ensure through education that the prince, who had inherited his power, was the most capable of using it. This was particularly important in a situation when the stability of a political system necessitated hereditary rule.¹ The work was exclusively addressed to a prince, without any consideration for the case of a female ruler. The man whom Erasmus dedicated his work to was Charles V. The Habsburg emperor ruled domains so extensive that he needed to appoint regents to assist him. Because his empire was based on hereditary rights, he chose to share some of his power with his family, not only with other Christian princes, but with princesses as well. These princess regents were the symbol of the Habsburg political system because their position reflected the immense importance of dynastic blood. However, I seek to show in this work that, although the female regencies seemed to be anomalies in the patriarchal system, the appointment of the princesses reflected traditional customs rather than change. Nevertheless, the realities of the composite monarchy gave the princesses ample opportunities to make novel interpretations of a woman's role as a member of the ruling dynasty. This work sets out to explore the limits and challenges to female regency, and how the princesses' upbringing and education had prepared them for their positions as regents.

PRINCESSES – THE PAST AND THE NEW APPROACH

The objective of my doctoral thesis is to explore female regency in the Habsburg dynasty through three regents: Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), Mary of Hungary (1505–58) and Juana of Austria (1535–73). I examine their regencies in the context of their dynastic roles as women, who were destined at the time of their births to become queens, but who eventually became regents for a ruler other than their husband. The three princess regents, Margaret, Mary and Juana, were from their early childhood engaged to be future queens of France, Hungary and Portugal, respectively, but after their husbands' deaths they became regents for their father, nephew and brother, the Emperors Maximilian I (1459–1519) and Charles V (1500–58) in their native lands of the Low Countries and Spain. I suggest that through their family ties with the ruler, they were seen more as his queen consorts than as independent rulers. Their family background, however, gave them an

¹ Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani* (Basel: Froben, 1516); edition, *The Education of a Christian Prince with the Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*, ed. Lisa Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

exceptional position. My overall aim is to provide new insights on the understanding of Habsburg female regency, thus making a significant contribution to queenship studies. The work is also a case study on humanist education and its application with respect to princesses.

The Habsburg princess regents are widely known as exceptional princesses and have, as such, attracted a great deal of interest both in scholarly and popular history. This exceptionality, stemming from their imperial descent and high social status, was taken for granted. The notable position that the princess regents occupied in Charles V's empire drew scholarly attention to his reign already in the early 19th century. Especially in Belgium and the Netherlands historians were interested in their 'own' princesses, Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary, and were enthusiastic about their role in the Habsburg Empire. Margaret of Austria, besides being the regent of the Low Countries, was also the guardian of her nephew, Charles V, and, as such, as Theodore Juste wrote in 1858, an inseparable part of Charles's childhood and youth.² Charles's sister, Mary of Hungary, in turn, was recognised and appreciated as a regent devoted him. Juste introduced her in his 1855 study as a heroic woman with courage and constancy, whose 'superior intelligence equalled the energy of her soul'.³ Belgian archivist and historian Louis Prosper Gachard described Mary as brimming with 'activity, energy, and unparalleled foresight', highly appreciated by Charles, who acknowledged her skills and 'gave her all confidence, consulted her with all his plans and had no secrets from her'.⁴ Juana of Austria, after her relatively short regency, was more famous as the founder of the monastery of Descalzas Reales in Madrid than as a regent. She was, however, eulogized as one of the most admirable princesses of her dynasty. Her earliest biography, written already in 1616, depicted her as practically a saint, and an early biographer of her brother Philip II lauded her beauty as much as her righteous and virtuous character.⁵

The attention garnered by the princesses is easy to understand in light of the numerous sources that the eager 19th-century historians discovered in the archives. Margaret's correspondence had already formed a considerable part

² Theodore Juste, *Charles-Quint et Marguerite D'Autriche. Étude sur la minorité, l'émancipation et l'avènement de Charles-Quint à l'empire (1477-1521)* (Bruxelles: C. Muquardt, 1858), iv.

³ Théodore Juste, *Les Pays-Bas sous Charles-Quint. Vie de Marie de Hongrie* (Bruxelles: Decq, 1855), iii.

⁴ Louis Prosper Gachard, *Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint au Monastère de Yuste*, 1 (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1854), 101.

⁵ Juan Carrillo, *Relación histórica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças de S. Clara de la villa de Madrid con los frutos de santidad que ha dado y da al ciel cada día. De las vidas de la princesa de Portugal doña Juana de Austria, su fundadora y de la M. C. de la Emperatriz María su hermana, que vivió y acabó santamente allí su vida.* (Madrid: Sanchez, 1616); Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, *Historia de Felipe II rey de España* (Madrid: Aribau, 1876), II, 212.

of Jean Godefroy's *Lettres de Louis XII* in the 18th century.⁶ As early as 1833, Ernst Münch published, together with a short biography of Margaret in German, several documents connected to her, among them poet Jean Lemaire de Belges's allegorical work, *Couronne Margaritique*, as well as Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's funeral oration for Margaret.⁷ Margaret's role in the political history of her dynasty became further known, when her correspondence concerning Charles V's imperial election was published in 1836 and the letters exchanged with her father emperor Maximilian were published in 1839.⁸ Several other compilations followed.⁹ Although Mary of Hungary, Margaret's niece and successor as regent, was admired along with her aunt and her political activity was apparent from the correspondence and documents concerning Charles V and cardinal Granvelle,¹⁰ 19th-century historians remained ignorant of her correspondence preserved in Vienna.¹¹ It was not until the first part of the correspondence with her brother Ferdinand I was published in 1912 that Mary's political significance in Hungary was recognised.¹² Juana of Austria's considerably shorter regency attracted attention because it coincided with her father's abdication and retirement.¹³

⁶ Jean Godefroy, *Lettres du roy Louis XII et du cardinal George d'Amboise, avec plusieurs autres lettres, mémoires et instructions écrites depuis 1504 jusques et compris 1514*, 4 vols. (Bruxelles: François Foppens, 1712).

⁷ Ernst Munch, *Margaretha von Oesterreich, Oberstatthalterin der Niederlande : Biographie und Nachlass : nebst allerlei Beiträgen zur politischen und Literargeschichte des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig/Stuttgart: Scheible, 1833).

⁸ Franz Joseph Mone, 'Briefwechsel über die Kaiserwahl Karls V,' *Anzeiger für Kunde des deutschen Mittelalters* 5 (Karlsruhe: Christian Theodor Groos, 1836), 13-37, 118-136, 283-298, 396-411; *Correspondance de l'Empereur Maximilien Ier et de Marguerite d'Autriche, sa fille de 1507 à 1519*, 2 vols, ed. André Joseph Ghislain Le Glay (Paris: Renouard, 1839).

⁹ André Ghislain Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche durant les trente premières années du XVI^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale 1845); *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, avec ses amis, sur les affaires des Pays-Bas*, 2 vols, ed. L. Ph. C. Van den Bergh (Leiden: S. et J. Luchtmans, 1845-47); Emmanuel de Quinsonas, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de Marguerite D'Autriche duchesse de Savoie, regente des Pays-Bas* 3 vols. (Paris: Delaroque, 1860).

¹⁰ *Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle*, 5 vols, ed. Charles Weiss (Paris: Impr. Royale, 1841-44); *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V.* 3 vols, ed. Karl Lanz (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1844-46).

¹¹ Most of the documents concerning this era were moved from the archives in Brussels to Vienna in 1794.

¹² *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I. Band I Familienkorrespondenz bis 1526*, ed. Wilhelm Bauer (Wien: Adolf Holzhausen, 1912); *Band II 1/2: Familienkorrespondenz 1527 und 1528*, ed. Wilhelm Bauer und Robert Lacroix (Wien: Adolf Holzhausen, 1937).

¹³ Louis Prosper Gachard, *Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint au Monastère de Yuste* 2 vols. (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1854-5); 'Cartas relativas á Ruy Gómez de Silva,' in *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, Tomo 97 (Madrid: Rafael Marco y Viñas, 1890), 285-356.

The meticulous editorial work in the Vienna archives has continued until the 21st century and the latest compilations are from the past decade.¹⁴

The factors behind the reception and evaluation of the princesses' regencies in the Low Countries were highlighted in 2012 by Jean Paul Hoyois, who analysed the comprehensive historiography on the two regents, Margaret and Mary, and how they vied for attention in the pages written by earlier historians.¹⁵ The way historians treated the princess regents clearly demonstrates that they took the competence of the princesses for governance as self-evident fact. While Margaret's obvious political significance was backed by abundant material evidence, such as the monastery of Brou that she had built in memory of her husband, the duke of Savoy, Mary's reputation was based on the 16th-century Venetian ambassadors' evaluations.¹⁶ They characterised her as hated by the people for her cruelty and emphasized her masculine interest in horses and hunting.¹⁷ According to Hoyois, the lack of appreciation for Mary's political significance in the older studies can partly be explained by the fact that significant sources had not yet been discovered. National research interests further guided the choices of topics. Also, the variety of languages used in scholarly studies on Mary limited their accessibility.¹⁸ Mary's importance was only fully acknowledged by scholars as recently as in the 1990s, such as Gernot Heiss and Laetitia Gorter-van Royen, who both worked with the sources in Vienna.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Correspondance de Marie de Hongrie avec Charles Quint et Nicolas de Granvelle. Vol. - 1. 1532 et années antérieures*, ed. Laetitia Gorter-Van Royen and Jean-Paul Hoyois (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); *Ibid. Vol - 2. 1533* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018); *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I. Band V. Familienkorrespondenz 1535 und 1536*, eds. Nicola Tschugmell, Judith Moser-Kroiss, Harald Kufner, Bernadette Hofinger and Christopher Laferl (Wien: Böhlau, 2015).

¹⁵ Jean-Paul Hoyois, 'Ideologie versus objectivite: Marguerite d'Autriche et Marie de Hongrie sous la plume des historiens du xix siècle a nos jours,' in *Mémoires conflictuelles et mythes concurrents dans les pays bourguignons (ca 1380 - 1580)*, ed. Jean-Marie Cauchies and Pit Péporté (Neuchâtel: Centre Européen d'Études Bourguignonnes, 2012), 267-81.

¹⁶ Jules Baux, *Histoire d'église de Brou* (Bourg-en-Bresse: Martin-Bottier, 1862).

¹⁷ *Relazione di Bernardo Navagero Ritornato Ambasciatore da Carlo V 1546, Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato. I –I*, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Firenze: Clio, 1839), 204-5; *Relazione de Marino Cavalli ritornato ambasciatore da Carlo V l'anno 1551, Relazioni I – II*. (Firenze, Clio, 1840), 299. They were cited in, for example, in Alexandre Henne, *Histoire du Règne de Charles-Quint en Belgique* Tome V (Bruxelles et Leipzig: Flatau, 1859), 159.

¹⁸ Gernot Heiss and Orsolya Réthelyi, 'Maria, Königin von Ungarn und Böhmen (1505-1558), als Thema der Forschung,' in *Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558): Eine Renaissancefürstin*, ed. Martina Fuchs and Orsolya Réthelyi (Münster: Aschendorff, 2007), 23, which mentions French, German and English, as well as Dutch, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak.

¹⁹ Gernot Heiss, *Königin Maria von Ungarn und Böhmen <1505-1558>. Ihr Leben u. ihre wirtschaftlichen Interessen in Österreich, Ungarn u. Böhmen* (PhD diss., Wien, 1971); Gernot Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber der Königin Maria von Ungarn,' *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 82 (1974): 119-80; Laetitia Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes*

The 19th-century scholarship had studied the princess regents in the context of their role in the political events of the era, as well as their influence on arts and architecture. The detailed events of the princesses' lives became a point of focus in biographical studies of the next century.²⁰ The biographies tended to romanticise the princesses, to both idealise them and dramatised their fate as child brides of foreign princes. Nevertheless, many biographical studies from the 20th century have to this day served as the basic accounts of the events of the princess regents' lives, although their perception of the princesses' education, for example, tends to be more idealised than realistic if considered in light of the sources. The biographers paid considerable attention to the princesses' youth and marriages. The royal daughters were described as helpless pawns in the great game of politics that their fathers and brothers were playing on the European stage. Royal children were, as Margaret's biographer put it, 'invaluable material for this purpose, and used with complete indifference to their happiness'.²¹ However, the marriages resulting from those political schemes were generally seen in a romantic light. A Hungarian biography of Mary, for example, devoted several pages to assuring readers that, despite the negative reports of the Venetians and some rumours, Mary and her husband, King Louis, were indeed a beautiful couple, which testified to their flawless characters.²² The biographies dramatised the deaths of the princesses' husbands and the tragic widowhood that refined and brightened the character of the princesses, who were then pictured as devoting the rest of their lives to the service of their dynasty. The tangible means by which the cultivated princesses could step from the female sphere into the male world of government were almost completely ignored.

In his recent biography of Charles V, Geoffrey Parker admits that Margaret was 'a skilled administrator and a subtle diplomat', but he gives the credit for preserving the Low Countries in Charles's dominions to her father,

der Nederlanden: een politieke analyse op basis van haaregentschapsordonnanties en haar correspondentie met Karel (Hilversum: Verloren, 1995).

²⁰ Eleanor E. Tremayne, *The First Governess of the Netherlands: Margaret of Austria* (London: Methuen, 1908); Max Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Savoie* (Lille: L.Danel, 1927); André Chagny and F. Girard, *Marguerite d'Autriche-Bourgogne, fondatrice de l'église de Brou (1480-1530)* (Chambery: M.Dardel, 1929); Ghislaine De Boom, *Marguerite d'Autriche* (Bruxelles; La Renaissance de livre, 1946); Luis Fernández de Retana, *Doña Juana de Austria: gobernadora de España, hermana de Felipe II, madre de don Sebastián el Africano, Rey de Portugal, fundadora de las Descalzas Reales de Madrid, 1535-1573* (Madrid: Editorial El Perpetuo Socorro, 1955); Ghislaine De Boom, *Marie de Hongrie* (Bruxelles; La Renaissance de livre, 1956); Jane de Iongh, *Mary of Hungary, second regent of the Netherlands* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959).

²¹ Jane de Iongh, *Margaret of Austria, Regent of the Netherlands* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), 65.

²² Tidavar Ortway, *Mária II. Lajos magyar király neje, 1505-1558* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1914), 61-6.

Emperor Maximilian.²³ Parker, even though he claims to assess *how* Charles acted in order to understand why he acted as he did, still does not analyse either how or why he appointed the women of his family to work for his government in a way that no other European ruler did.²⁴ There is an obvious lacuna to be filled through this study by scrutinising both the strategies behind the princesses' regencies and their consequences.

Simply comparing the regencies would undoubtedly completely leave Juana of Austria's short regency in Spain in the shadow of the regencies of her formidable aunt and great-aunt, who subsequently governed the Low Countries for nearly half a century. Juana's case demonstrates, however, the extent to which princess regents were part of a trusted system. Especially M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado's 1988 analysis of the last years of Charles V's reign shows that her time in power was based on established regency government, where her task was to represent the authority of her dynasty.²⁵ The three regents' cases demonstrate both continuity and change. All three princesses shared a similar life trajectory of a brief marriage as young princesses, followed by widowhood and regency. Chronologically, their childhoods covered a period when ideas about education were being developed and discussed by humanist thinkers. At the same time, the Habsburg Empire reached the turning point of its expansion, when, after Charles V's abdication in 1556, it was divided between the dynasty's Austrian and Spanish branches. The female regency, in the form of princesses who represented the absent ruler, was developed as a solution to the problems caused by the growth of the Habsburg composite monarchy. Besides providing a dynastic presence during the ruler's absence, the shared authority within the ruler's family promoted the importance of the Habsburg heritage. The emphasis on hereditary rights necessitated the use of Habsburg regents particularly in the areas that were not conquered, but inherited, such as Austria, the Low Countries (Burgundy) and Castile. When the Habsburg emperor had his family members representing him as the agents of his power, he was able to simultaneously pose as the undisputed head of the house and still have his person and authority symbolically present in every part of his realm.

Recent scholarship has moved beyond simply admiring and eulogising the prestige of the princesses. The Habsburg regents have received their share of the general scholarly interest in the history of early modern women. Their regencies have been scrutinised both as a political system within early modern Europe and individual performances.²⁶ However, those analyses

²³ Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A new life of Charles V* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 25.

²⁴ Parker, *Emperor*, xvi.

²⁵ Mia J. Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire. Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority, 1551–1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁶ Gilles Docquier, 'Une dame de 'picques' parmi les valets?: une gouvernante générale parmi les grands officiers des Pays-Bas burgundo-habsbourgeois: le cas de Marguerite d'Autriche,' in *Marie de*

have not considered how the princesses acquired the skills that enabled them to participate in the government. Neither have they explored whether the regents fulfilled the expectations placed upon them. The numerous studies on their patronage and collections have successfully showed how they were able to promote their own agency and represent their dynasty's power via material means.²⁷ Nonetheless, such studies have ignored the difference between formal education and informal cultivation. Despite Mary of Hungary's often cited frustrated exclamation that government and its requirements were 'not feasible for a woman',²⁸ the general tone underpinning the analyses was, and still is, that Margaret, Mary and Juana were indeed all exceptional women who benefitted from thorough education. The present work, in contrast, suggests that the regents' competence was based on circumstances rather than on a royal educational programme as such. Although the educational motives varied, they were seldom, if ever, connected with any forms of public power other than representation.

EDUCATED TO MARRY, APPOINTED TO RULE

This work combines the themes of education and regency, showing first that the princesses were not educated to rule as independent queens, and then exploring the regencies of each princess to discover how they faced the challenges encountered during their respective regencies. The princesses' competence for successfully managing a regency government was based on their upbringing as the future queen consorts. Regency showcased the

Hongrie. Politique et culture sous la Renaissance aux Pays-Bas, ed. Bertrand Federinov and Gilles Docquier (Morlanwelz: Musée Royal de Mariemont, 2008); William Monter, 'An Experiment in Female Government: The Habsburg Netherlands, 1507-1567,' *History Research* 3:6 (2013); Jean-Paul Hoyois, 'Des princes correspondants: Charles Quint, Marguerite d'Autriche, Marie de Hongrie et la régence des Pays-Bas (ca 1520-1535),' in *Épistolaire politique I. Gouverner par les lettres*, ed. Bruno Duménil and Laurent Vissière (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014); René Vermeir, 'Les gouverneurs-généraux aux Pays-Bas habsbourgeois,' in *À la place du roi : Vice-rois, gouverneurs et ambassadeurs dans les monarchies française et espagnole (xvie-xviii siècles)* ed. Daniel Aznar, Guillaume Hanotin and Niels F. May (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014).

²⁷ Dagmar Eichberger, *Leben mit Kunst, Wirken durch Kunst. Sammelwesen und Hofkunst unter Margarete von Österreich, Regentin der Niederlande* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005); Andrea Pearson, *Envisioning Gender in Burgundian Devotional Art, 1350-1530: Experience, Authority, Resistance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 163-194; *Women. The Art of Power*, ed. Sabine Haag, Dagmar Eichberger and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend (Innsbruck: KHM Schloss Ambras, 2018).

²⁸ 'que la femme, principalement estant vefve, ne peult faire comm'il seroit requis,' Mary to Charles [end of August 1555], *Papiers d'Etat*, 4, 475. The English translation from Iongh, *Margaret of Austria*, 202.

controversy of a princess as a prince and revealed how their education and their family's dynastic politics had influenced them. The novelty of this approach comes from the consideration of princess regency from a new angle. Rather than being based on the appointment of exceptionally competent princesses, it was a system based on traditional queen consorts. Inquiry into their childhood reveals that their primary role was simply to marry, to be spouses and bear children. The marriages with foreign princes were undoubtedly arranged as part of dynastic politics, but also to provide princesses with honoured and respected positions. I argue that female regency was perceived as a relationship equal to marriage, where the princess regent was the supporter of the ruler in the same way that a queen would support a king.

I seek to show how, in the context of their role, the regents obviously appear more accomplished and articulate than early modern women in general, and hence they have been considered exceptional. I suggest that they simply corresponded more extensively and signed more complicated letters than other women because they had the best staff and clerks. Compared to their contemporaries, as women they represented unusually large interest groups. They were advocates for the interests of the lands they were governing, the groups they were patronizing, their closest family, and hence they had the most to say on behalf of those interest groups as well as on their own. Therefore, their correspondence, especially with the ruler they were representing, differs strikingly from the correspondence of early modern women in general. A princess was born a princess, but regency was an office. As regents the individual princesses became symbols of an institution. It is thus important to consider both, on the one hand how the office holder and her assistants communicated, and on the other how the individual princesses coped as a part of this regency system.

Confusing the office and the office holder might also have in some cases led to misinterpretations of the princesses' skills and even of their characters. Evidently princesses, with an education and upbringing that was preparing them for queenship as consorts of monarchs, were also considered to be sufficiently qualified for regency. This work challenges the polarised view of Habsburg princesses as either helpless pawns in the dynastic marriage markets or as exceptionally competent regents. The Habsburgs, driven on a theoretical level by the pursuit of a universal monarchy, and on a practical level by reacting to the ever-changing constellation of the European balance of power, did not change their daughters' education to respond to the new challenges of an early modern government, but rather trusted in their claim for power through their heritage and the role of the family's women in its monarchical structure.

As regents, the Habsburg princesses did not manifest independent political power, but instead represented and supported the absent ruler. The studies on queenship show how the monarchy was understood as a dual entity where king and queen, the male and female, complemented each

other.²⁹ The Habsburg ruler and his princess regent were similarly a pair that jointly formed the reigning authority. To show how the ideals of queenship formed the models that the princess regents were educated to imitate, I take my cue from studies on the virtues of queens; to demonstrate the reality of the princesses' schooling, I draw from the scholarship on early modern court culture.³⁰ Further, I seek to show that, as regents, the princesses were comparable to queen consorts, with similar authority and prestige, although as substitutes for the absent ruler they occasionally assumed some of his duties. Yet, they always performed their duties in the ways that they had learned were suitable and appropriate for a princess. Thus, this work relates to prior studies on queenship by exploring the ways in which female power was manifested in early modern Europe and combines it with scholarship on the composite nature of the Habsburg monarchy in the 16th century. As the first princess regent, Margaret of Austria had to justify her regency, but once the institution of princess regents had been firmly established, the princesses more easily represented the undisputable hereditary power of the Habsburg dynasty. Therefore, this work does not concentrate on how they sought to legitimate their position, but on how they used it in combination with their upbringing.

The scholarship on the education of early modern princesses has approached the topic from two angles. On the one hand, scholars have examined the medieval queenly ideal, while on the other hand they have explored the influence of humanist thought of the early 16th century. Karen Green has shown how Christine de Pizan effectively used notions on female prudence to define female power. Tracy Adams has further argued that de Pizan's work had a profound influence on such prominent female figures of early modern French politics as Anne of France (1461–1522), and Louise of

²⁹ On queenship in general *Medieval queenship*, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993); Louise Olga Fradenburg, 'Introduction: Rethinking Queenship,' in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992); J.L.Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). On French queens, see Murielle Gaude-Ferragu, *La reine au Moyen Âge: le pouvoir au féminin: XIVe-XVe siècle* (Paris: Tallandier, 2014).

³⁰ *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521 – 1531*, ed. Orsolya Réthelyi, Beatrix F. Romhányi, Enikő Spekner, András Végh (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 2005); *Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558): Eine Renaissancefürstin*, ed. Martina Fuchs and Orsolya Réthelyi; Jose Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II, 1527-1546: La formación de un príncipe del Renacimiento* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1999); *La corte de Carlos V*, ed. José Martínez Millán, 3 vols. (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000); *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las Casas de las Reinas (siglos XV-XIX)* 3 vols., ed. José Martínez Millán and Maria Paula Marçal Lourenço (Madrid: Polifemo, 2008).

Savoy (1476–1531), contemporaries of Margaret of Austria.³¹ My work follows their argument, but I also seek to show that the queenly idea of female prudence was combined with humanist ideas, although rather those concerning the utility of classical languages and the importance of advisors than the humanist scholar's view on women.

Aysha Pollnitz has shown how the education of 16th century rulers, according to Erasmus, was 'working gateway to reason and the proper understanding of public duties'.³² However, this applied only to princes. The humanist scholars, led by Erasmus, mostly ignored the princesses in any other roles than as their patrons. When Juan Luis Vives wrote his *Education of a Christian Woman*, he emphasised female learning as the way to personal salvation, not as preparation for participation in society outside of a woman's family.³³ Nevertheless, Margaret of Austria's court has been pictured as the peak of northern humanism in the courtly context, but mainly due to its rich material culture. Margaret, for example, allowed Erasmus to use manuscripts in her collection.³⁴ Her court has been presented as the place where her very competent niece, Mary of Hungary, began learning what she would later refine in the court of her grandfather in Vienna.³⁵ However, if humanism in the context of regency is understood as an educational programme directed towards ensuring one's capacity to govern, its fruits demonstrated themselves in the work of the regency government rather than in court. This work aims to explore the means by which education gave the tools to princesses to rule within the limits of their appointment, and thus it

³¹ Karen Green, 'Phronesis Feminised: Prudence from Christine de Pizan to Elizabeth I,' in *Virtue, Liberty and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women 1400-1800*, ed. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007); Tracy Adams, 'Appearing virtuous: Christine de Pizan's *Le livre des trois vertus* and Anne de France's *Les enseignements d'Anne de France*,' in *Virtue Ethics for Women 1250-1500* ed. Karen Green and Constant Mews (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 115-131; Tracy Adams, 'Louise de Savoie, la prudence et la formation des femmes diplomates vers 1500,' in *Louise de Savoie: 1476 – 1531*, ed. Pascal Briost, Laure Fagnart and Cédric Michon (Tours: Presses Universitaires François Rabelais, 2015), 29-38

³² Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely education in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9.

³³ Juan Luis Vives, *The education of a Christian woman: a sixteenth-century manual*, edited and translated by Charles Fantazzi. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). The book was originally written in 1523.

³⁴ Alice Tobriner and Ilse Guenther, 'Margaret of Austria' in *Contemporaries of Erasmus: a biographical register of the Renaissance and reformation*, ed. Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher (University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1985-7), Vol. 2, 388-9.

³⁵ Jacqueline Kerkhoff, 'Madame Marije. Jeugdijaren aan het hof in Mechelen, Wenen en Innsbruck,' in *Maria van Hongarije. Koningin tussen keizers en kunstenaars, 1505-1558*, ed. Bob van den Boogert and Jacqueline Kerkhoff (Zwolle: Waanders, 1993), 35-6; Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 49-52.

contributes to studies on the successes and failures of the humanist educational programme.

Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have argued that 15th-century Italian humanists were not ready to recognise the value of women's learning in the public sphere,³⁶ and Aysha Pollnitz has further shown that even Mary I and Elizabeth I of England, both recognised as possible heirs to their father in their childhood, lacked competent education compared to their brother Edward.³⁷ Pollnitz's work demonstrates how in England the use of a liberal arts education produced rather brilliant results when the political ambition of the educators made Lady Jane Grey into an eloquent speaker for personal salvation and Edward VI into a skilled user of his pen.³⁸ However, Jane was an exception and nothing indicates that the Tudor kings, the Habsburg emperors, or the leading humanists, such as Erasmus, meant for princesses to actually rule like a prince.³⁹ The applications of humanism did still find their way into the princess regents' courts in the form of lawyers and secretaries using their learning to serve the princesses.

An analysis of Mary of Hungary's correspondence and her regency clearly indicates that she was using the basic tools of erudite argumentation. However, it was not Mary of Hungary's correspondence, but her connection with the famous humanist in the 1520s that gained her reputation as 'the Erasmian' of the Habsburgs.⁴⁰ I aim to demonstrate that her regency deserves to be taken as an example of the benefits of humanist education. Mary was a convincing writer, and apparently won her advisors over to appreciate her opinions. She was the only one of the Habsburg princesses who was mentioned as a competent Latinist in contemporary sources.⁴¹ The present study will demonstrate that her learning was connected to her position as the queen of Hungary, where Latin was the official language. Multilingualism was appreciated in Austria and its neighbouring areas towards the east and north-east. Thus, the motivation for her to become more erudite than her sisters and cousins was not connected with plans to

³⁶ Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities: education and the liberal arts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 32-6.

³⁷ Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 261.

³⁸ Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 196-8, 228.

³⁹ A similar attitude has been shown in the humanists' attitude towards female learning as the part of the male scholarly society. A.D. Cousins, 'Humanism, Female Education, and Myth: Erasmus, Vives, and More's "To Candidus"', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65:2 (2004).

⁴⁰ For example, Katherine Walsh and Alfred Strnad, 'Eine Erasmianerin im Hause Habsburg: Königin Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558) und die Anfänge der Evangelischen Bewegung,' *Historisches Jahrbuch* 118 (1998): 40-85.

⁴¹ Her court preacher, Johannes Henckel, told Erasmus that Mary was the only woman in her court able to understand Erasmus's Latin treatise *De Vidua Christiana* which he had dedicated to her in 1526. Henckel to Erasmus from Linz 13 Apr. 1530, *The correspondence of Erasmus*, nr. 2309, CWE 16. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

give her power, but again with the enforcement and enhancement of the power of the Habsburgs.

The most influential figure to use humanist learning for a princess's benefit was Margaret of Austria's advisor, Mercurino di Gattinara. The scholarship on Gattinara has concentrated on his career as the orchestrator of the universal monarchy of Charles V.⁴² The plan failed, but its building process produced the female regency in the form in which it appeared at the beginning of the 16th century. The studies on Gattinara have explored his thinking and political actions, but for the most part ignored his role in assisting Margaret of Austria in convincing her father, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, on the utility of her regency. Gattinara's significance for Margaret shows how having success in the male environment of early modern politics required that the princesses co-operate with their advisors, even though their upbringing had encouraged them to solely make use of their female networks.

This work offers an analysis of female regency from the angle of the actual work of government, consisting of council meetings and correspondence with the ruler. The competence of the princess regent was reflected in her ability to work with her advisors and councillors, and to persuade the ruler of the advantages of the policy she was promoting in her governmental actions. Scholars focusing on political history during the time of Charles V have recognised the role of the princesses in several detailed studies, while the more general works have left their regencies in the background.⁴³ However, their regencies have often been interpreted through the visual and material legacy of the time. I seek to show that the cultural accomplishments of the princesses did not directly contribute to their success in government, despite its undisputable contribution to the public image of the Habsburg dynasty. Scholarly research has lifted the Habsburg princess regents from that of admired illustrious ladies in the works of 19th-century historians to objects of critical study. However, still the image of the cultivated noble lady has followed them without a revised investigation. The importance of the art collections and artistic patronage of the Habsburg princesses in the early modern era is undisputable, but one cannot draw comprehensive conclusions about the princesses' education or competence for government from them.

⁴² John M. Headley, 'Gattinara, Erasmus and the imperial configuration of Humanism,' *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 71 (1980): 64-98; John M. Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor: a study of the imperial chancellery under Gattinara* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *Gattinara, Carlos V y el sueño del imperio* (Madrid: Sílex, 2005); Rebecca Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014).

⁴³ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing face* and Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments: the Netherlands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), both give a full analysis of the contribution of princess regents to the over all political situation.

Female regency was a consequence of the nature of Charles V's empire. Having inherited areas in Austria, the Low Countries, Spain and southern Italy, he was truly the ruler of a composite monarchy in the sense of geographically separate areas with various national identities governed by one ruler.⁴⁴ Despite different problems and challenges in the various parts of Charles V's empire in the Low Countries and Castile, the main arguments for the legitimization of the regents' power were locality and heritage from the previous (allegedly) prosperous rulers. The present study demonstrates that the emphasis on hereditary rights necessitated appointments of the ruler's family members, and when there were not enough princes, a princess was a functional solution. Particularly, when the closely related princess was a widow, she could plausibly act as the symbolic queen consort of the ruler.

The legitimization of female regency could be demonstrated through the love the queens and princesses had for their family and that their family had for them, and Aubrée David-Chapy has emphasised how in France Louise of Savoy was presented as the mother who naturally shared the interests of her son, Francis I, and his realms.⁴⁵ Although Charles V similarly assured his subjects that his aunt, Margaret of Austria, was 'like his true mother',⁴⁶ the female regency during his reign was regarded as a self-evident family arrangement where the princesses were doing their duty when no suitable princes were available. However, the focus on the three regents in this work shows how Margaret was threatened with dismissal during her regency, Mary herself used resigning as a threat and Juana in turn was for a future regency although she never reclaimed the position. Analysing their regencies from this angle deepens further our understanding of the complex ways in which people perceived of the regency as a fixed model that nevertheless required adaptation from the regent. The different prerequisites and changing political climate shaped female regency among the Habsburgs.

Overall, my work contributes to queenship studies in its attempt to highlight the various aspects of female power.⁴⁷ Katherine Crawford has

⁴⁴ J.H. Elliot, 'A Europe of Composite Monarchies,' *Past & Present* 137: November (1992): 48-71; H.G. Koenigsberger, *Politicians and virtuosi. Essays in early modern history* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), 1-25.

⁴⁵ Aubrée David-Chapy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie: inventions d'un pouvoir au féminin* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016), 207.

⁴⁶ For example, Charles's response to the news of Margaret's death, Charles V to the bishop of Palermo and count of Hochstraaten 6 Dec. 1530, Louis Prosper Gachard (ed.), *Collection de documents inédits concernant l'histoire de la Belgique*. Tome I (Bruxelles: Louis Hauman et comp., 1833), 294-5.

⁴⁷ Magdalena S. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2008); Erin Sadlack, *The French Queen's Letters: Mary Tudor Brandon and the Politics of Marriage in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York, NY / Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2011); Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of

shown how queen mother regents in France succeeded in combining female gender attributes and the regency.⁴⁸ The Habsburg regents, however, were not the rulers' mothers, and they sought to strike a balance between the comfortable role of queenly consort of the ruler and the challenging role of a reigning woman. The way that the Habsburg female regency worked as a form of co-operation between the ruler and the regent aimed at preserving his authority and tying it to traditional thoughts on patriarchal political power.⁴⁹ Unlike sovereign queens who faced a challenge 'in reconciling the two roles: modest, chaste, submissive woman on the one hand, and decisive, virile, powerful ruler on the other hand',⁵⁰ the princess regents were at least ostensibly free to leave the virility and power to the emperors they were representing.

Political, religious and geographical factors produced variable forms of ideal queenship, and similarly, of female regency. Many of them reflected the changes in Habsburg rulership. Female power was used by the Habsburgs to support the patriarchal entity as a whole, and it took diverse forms, moulded by local ideals and circumstances. Emphasis on participating in the court rituals and representation in the Low Countries made the princesses easier to approach and very likely prepared them for participation in governmental work. It is not a co-incidence that Margaret of Austria had in Gattinara an Italian lawyer to tutor her in the regency, but her great-niece Juana was accessible to the appointed councillors and clerics only. The power of the princess regents was shared with the ruler and the regency councils, hence successful governing meant the capability to work with men while keeping up the image of a queen.

Marital status as a widow and family ties with the ruler were the two essential requirements for a princess regent. These two requirements had multidimensional effects — the dowager princesses were the responsibility of their family, they required protection and moral guardianship. On the other hand, as widows they could be appointed regents. Remarrying would have prevented their appointment, because they could not then have posed as a queen for anyone other than their actual husband. Respectively, such an appointment served as an excuse not to marry, and it was clearly used as

Pennsylvania Press, 2013 2nd edition); *Early modern Habsburg women : transnational contexts, cultural conflicts, dynastic continuities*, ed. Anne J. Cruz and Maria Galli Stampino (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2013); *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies*, ed. Anna Riehl Bertolet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Helen Matheson-Pollock, Joanne Paul and Catherine Fletcher (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2018).

⁴⁸ Katherine Crawford, *Perilous performances: gender and regency in early modern France* (Cambridge (MA)/London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 148.

⁴⁹ Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 3.

⁵⁰ Sarah Duncan, *Mary I: Gender, Power, and Ceremony in the Reign of England's First Queen* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 11.

such by the Habsburg princesses. Since remaining widows prevented them from producing children of their own, they shared care and concern for the rulers' off-spring. The motherly role sheds new light on explaining the princess regent's role in general. I suggest that it is a fitting part of the interpretation that a princess regent was theoretically a queen consort.

Habsburg princess regents are in many ways a controversial subject of research when taken from a gendered perspective. It would be very tempting to see them either as independent women or merely as women stepping in to pose as Christian princes. There is no doubt that they were meant, to an extent, to be taken as the latter, to embody both the role of the king they were representing and the queen they were in reality (regardless of their official title) for the area they were governing. The functioning female regency in their cases required that they identify themselves as queen consorts, sharing a common interest with the ruler who had appointed them and limited their governing, at least ostensibly, within the expected norms of queenship. The princess regents' precise role and its limits were not defined. As the king was not present, the regent had to take over his duties, which meant she had to divide her time between male government officials and female attendants and friends. Besides the governmental work, they acted as household matrons, female networkers. Thus, understandably their public picture was a mix of stereotypical queenly duties and masculine performance.

In summary, the princess regents highlight more complex issues than simply a consideration of female power as being opposite to male power. The Habsburg family was indisputably patriarchal and demanded submission from its princesses, but it demanded the same from all its members regardless their gender. At the same time, the Habsburgs systematically elevated women to unusually high-ranking offices, and often allowed them to use their skills. Finally, in addition to gender, marital status, financial resources, parenthood and age, there was for the Habsburgs one dimension making the princess regents unique cases in gender studies – a Habsburg woman was evaluated in different terms than not only other women, but also non-royal men. Female power in all its visible forms was simultaneously exceptional, exemplary and used by the Habsburgs to promote their dynasty.

SOURCES

In 2002 Jörg Rogge pointed out that early modern women needed to be studied based on the expectations they faced.⁵¹ Pairing the study of

⁵¹ Jörg Rogge, 'Nur verkaufte Töchter? Überlegungen zu Aufgaben, Quellen, Methoden und Perspektiven einer Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte hochadeliger Frauen und Fürstinnen im deutschen Reich während des späten Mittelalters und am Beginn der Neuzeit,' in *Principes. Dynastien und Höfe im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Cordula Nolte, Karl-Heinz Spiess and Ralf-Gunnar Werlich (Stuttgart : Thorbecke, 2002), 235-76.

princesses' upbringing and education with an inquiry into their regencies, this work intends to do precisely that. First, to comprehend the nature of a queenly education, I have looked at treatises written for queens. As queenship was viewed as an exemplary role for women in general, I have also studied works written about the queens. They highlight the features most suitable for future generations to emulate. The works written for, or about, the three princesses have been given special emphasis. Jean Lemaire de Belges's treatise *Couronne Margaritique*, written in 1507 to promote the qualities of Margaret of Austria to her brother and father, Erasmus's *De Vidua Christiana*, written for Mary of Hungary in 1527, and Juana of Austria's early biography in Juan Carrillo's *Relación historica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças de S. Clara de la villa de Madrid* from 1616 all play a crucial role in defining the expectations of contemporaries towards the princesses.⁵²

There are few sources on the princesses' schooling. I have complemented the existing material on Margaret, Mary and Juana with documents concerning their sisters and other contemporary princesses. The princesses in general were often showcased as potential brides for foreign princes, and as future queens they were a source of interest to visitors and diplomats at the courts. Thus, various sources, such the ambassador reports, the letters of visiting preachers, and familial letters exchanged between the various Habsburgs, help reconstruct what we know of the princesses' childhoods.

While the sources on the upbringing and education of the princesses are few, their regencies have produced many documents, the most important of them being the letters exchanged between the emperors Maximilian and Charles and their princess regents. These letters are complemented by documents produced by the people around them: envoys' reports, the correspondence of their servants, and some individual curiosities, such the autobiography of Mercurino di Gattinara.⁵³ Although the key documents have been edited, considerable amount of material remains to be studied in the archives of Vienna, Simancas, Brussels, and Lille.

⁵² Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*. (1507) Codex 3441 Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Edited in *Œuvres de Jean Lemaire de Belges, IV*, ed. Jean Stecher (Louvain: J.Lefever, 1891); Erasmus of Rotterdam *De Vidua Christiana* (Basel: Froben, 1529). Reprinted as 'The Christian Widow' translated by Jennifer Tolbert Roberts in *Erasmus on women*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 187-229; Carrillo, *Relación historica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças*.

⁵³ They autobiography exists as a manuscript in L'archivio della famiglia Arborio di Gattinara, Mazzo 3, in Archivio di Stato di Vercelli. The Latin edition by Carlo Bornate is entitled *Historia vite et gestorum per dominum magnum cancellarium: (Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara): con note, aggiunte e documenti* (Torino: Artigianelli, 1914). Edition in English is in Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 75-136, in German in Ilse Kodek, *Der Großkanzler Kaiser Karls V. zieht Bilanz: Die Autobiographie Mercurino Gattinaras aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004), 106-249.

In addition to the tangible difficulties of palaeography and the lack of quantity, the correspondence has its own challenges, starting from the vague authorship of the letters.⁵⁴ Charles V had expressed plainly to his sister, Mary of Hungary, that his holograph letters were to be taken as statements that were not to be discussed further.⁵⁵ However, even the holograph letters did not necessarily indicate that the contents of such letters would have been known only to Charles and Mary, because sometimes Charles evidently copied drafts made by his advisors.⁵⁶ Hence, it is often impossible to be sure of the original author. Secretaries and scribes were widely used, and many messages were written at someone else's request, or even after a prepared draft of the letter. The bearer of the written notes often made reference to oral messages. The letters were communication between more people than just the writer and the recipient.⁵⁷ However, the letters are the best utterances of people who either alone, or as part of a team, aimed to persuade the reader or readers. Charles V's correspondence in general served solely the government, without any personal objective, and the same can be said of most of the official correspondence of the regents.⁵⁸

The correspondence of the Habsburgs had two obvious motivations: managing the government and enforcing the somewhat constructed bond between the ruler and his regent. The first purpose was obvious from the letters of the emperor, which contained his decisions and orders, as well as his answers to various questions. From the regents' side, the letters varied depending on the skills, experience and personality of the regent. Although most of the letters concerned the official issues of governance, some also included requests for the regents themselves and for their clients. Even in their most formal and matter-of-fact style, the correspondence also contained fine nuances. Such nuances included, for example, silences, revealed by the occasional references of the courtiers in their respective correspondence to issues that the regents did not tell the ruler. For instance, Juana of Austria's household would have liked the absent Prince Philip to know of their worries, but she kept the issues of her letters to her brother focused strictly on official matters.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Jane Couchman, 'What is "personal" about sixteenth-century French women's "personal" writings?' *Atlantis* 19:1 (1993): 17.

⁵⁵ M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion: Charles V and his governors,' in *Power and persuasion: essays on the art of state building in honour of W.P. Blockmans*, ed. Peter Hoppenbrouwers, Atheun Janse and Robert Stein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 66.

⁵⁶ Rodriguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 67.

⁵⁷ Heide Stratenwerth, 'Aktenkundliche Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation,' in *Karl V. Politik und politisches System. Berichte und Studien aus der Arbeit an der Politischen Korrespondenz des Kaisers*, ed. Horst Rabe (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1996), 49.

⁵⁸ Horst Rabe and Heide Stratenwerth, 'Die Politische Korrespondenz Kaiser Karls V. und ihre wissenschaftliche Erschließung,' in *Karl V. Politik und politisches System*, 14.

⁵⁹ Doña Leonor Manuel to Ruy Gómez de Silva 5 Jan. 1557 CODOIN 97, 323.

The second catalyst for the correspondence was to keep both the correspondents themselves and the people around them convinced that the relationship between the ruler and his regent was indeed genuine. Although at first glance the House of Austria, as the family titled itself, was a tight-knit community, most of the seemingly close family members did not even meet for years on end. For family members the most obvious signs of a good relationship were love and trust, which they lavishly repeated in their letters. Andreas Walther, a historian of the early stages of Charles V's reign, has refuted the genuineness of the mutual love expressed in the correspondence between Margaret of Austria and her father, Emperor Maximilian, and has claimed instead that Margaret was manipulating information in order to persuade Maximilian to support her and her party.⁶⁰ For the purposes of this study, it is irrelevant whether or not the regent and her imperial father really had genuine familial feelings for one another. However, the ways in which they expressed their love for and trust in one another in the communication are highly revealing.

Maximilian and Margaret never lived together and met only occasionally. During her regency, when they exchanged letters often, they met only a few times when Maximilian visited the Low Countries.⁶¹ The reports of the English ambassadors in the imperial and regency courts were, nevertheless, filled with references to Maximilian and Margaret both with respect to them writing to each other or waiting for letters from one another and then showing them to the English ambassadors to assure them of their mutual trust in one another⁶². It is also obvious that the letters from Maximilian especially were deliberately shown to the envoys, who either copied them or referred to their contents when writing home. As the actual recipient of the letters, Margaret maintained control over them, and in one frustrated report to Henry VIII from her court, the English ambassador complained in 1512: 'a post has arrived from Germany, but Madame is asleep, and the contents are unknown'.⁶³

From some letters it is possible to trace that the love expressed privately was a thing apart from the public expressions of love by the Habsburgs for one another. The latter, however, was what mattered. Charles V publicly

⁶⁰ Andreas Walther, 'Rezension: Kreiten, Hubert. Untersuchungen über den Briefwechsel Kaiser Maximilians I. mit seiner Tochter Margareta. Wien 1907,' *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* IV (1908), 257.

⁶¹ From August 1508 to March 1509 and a shorter stay 1513. Maximilian's Itinerary in Gerhard Benecke, *Maximilian I (1459-1519): an analytical biography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1982), 130-6.

⁶² For example, 2 Oct. 1515 Spinelly to [Wolsey] describes Margaret showing Spinelly a letter she received from the emperor. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, 2: 1515-1518, ed. J. S. Brewer (London 1864), nr. 981.

⁶³ Spinelly to Henry VIII 8 Aug. 1512, *Letters and Papers 1. 1509-1514*, ed. J.S. Brewer (London: 1920), nr. 1334.

expressed love for his son and heir Philip, but after the death of his nephew, Johan of Denmark, in 1532, Charles confessed to his sister Mary that he had loved Johan more than his son, because he had actually known the boy.⁶⁴ Still, he would never had put Johan first in the line for inheritance or given up anything belonging to Philip as his heir. When genuine emotions are recognisable in the letters, they appear in the form of concern for the recipient's feelings, rather than in the choice of words, as for example in Philip II's worry about how the news of their sister Juana's death should be broken to Empress María in Vienna.⁶⁵

It is also obvious, that letters reflected the regents as they wished to be seen in their office. They were not necessarily mirroring the way the princesses would act in other situations than as the delegates of the ruler. For instance, although Margaret of Austria's correspondence as the regent with her nephew, the emperor, consisted mainly of very detailed government documents, where the issues were matter-of-factly discussed on a case-by-case-basis, the reports of the English envoys give a different picture of her than the careful and considered documents. In their dispatches she is described as a rather dramatic lady, who sometimes jokes and sometimes speaks her mind and remembers to add that they are free to recount what she said, precisely as she said it, to their master Cardinal Wolsey.⁶⁶

Generally, there is an ongoing conversation in the letters between the regent and the ruler, although the preserved letters testify to the fact that many have gone missing. The letters themselves mention several problems with the communication. Despite often sending several copies of letters, and sometimes by different routes, messages were delayed or lost. Even when received, they were sometimes illegible, as was the one that Juana of Austria received after it had been carried in the sole of someone's shoe. There were also times when the hasty handwriting of the emperor proved to be too much for his regent and sister Mary, which may well comfort modern researchers confronted with major problems in deciphering the Habsburgs' handwriting. As aptly pointed out, they usually preferred ease of writing over legibility.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ 'Je l'ay autant sentu que je fis la perte de mon filz, car je le congnoissoys plus et estoit ja plus grant, et le tenoys comme pour tel.' Charles to Mary 13 Aug. 1532, Bad Abbach, CMCG 1, 440, nr. 229.

⁶⁵ Philip II to de Monteagudo 13 Sep. 1573, Del Pardo, CODOIN 110 (Madrid: Imprenta de la viuda de Calero, 1894), 310-1.

⁶⁶ For example *Letters and Papers* 4, 1524-1530, ed. J.S. Brewer (London: 1875), nr. 1092, 1413, 1647.

⁶⁷ Mary to Charles 3 Aug. 1532 CMCG 1, 388, nr. 221. Juana's letter to Charles cited in Peter Marzahl, 'Communication and Control in the Political System of Emperor Charles V. The First Regency of Empress Isabella,' in *The world of Emperor Charles V*, ed. Willem Pieter Blockmans and Nicolette Mout (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences 2004), 83. On the legibility of the handwriting of Charles's siblings, see Chloé Pardanaud, 'Plaider, convaincre, entrer en scène : Éléonore d'Autriche et la libération des Enfants de France, d'après sa correspondance inédite,' *Seizième Siècle* 4 (2008): 197.

STRUCTURE

The first part of the work concentrates on the education of the princesses, and the second on their regencies. The division draws its inspiration from Jardine & Grafton's 1986 book and the title of its second chapter, 'Woman Humanists: Education for what?'⁶⁸ While that text points out the controversy between the erudition of Isotta Nogarola and her actual ability to make of use that learning in 15th-century Italy, the princesses in this text require a return to and renewed emphasis of the question. Isotta received an excellent humanist education, but she was not able to use it. The princesses in turn might have needed such an education for their roles as regents, but they did not receive it. The look into the education of the princesses show that they were educated to be queen consorts, with an emphasis on proper comportment. Despite being readers of Christine de Pizan, most of the Habsburg princesses were blind to her plea that life often thrusts women into situations where they need learning, instead raising their daughters as they themselves had been raised.⁶⁹

The division of the study into two themes presents some narrative challenges precisely because the three protagonists were close, both as relatives and as actors in the political system of their family, and their lifespans overlapped. However, it turns out that the primary role of the young princesses did not evolve in the scope of this work, and the regency structure was at least meant to be similar in the Low Countries and Spain, further justifying the use of thematic approach. Although the forms of education and regency remained similar, the events of the princesses' lives were nonetheless so different that unnecessary repetition was easily avoided. Furthermore, the connections that the regents had with each other make it more intriguing to study their cases together.

The opening section on education in general suggests that although Habsburg princess regents have been considered special cases among the royal women of their time, they were typical examples of royal daughters, who received a traditional education for girls. However, while their schoolrooms continued to uphold long-established values, the world around them changed. The expansion and stabilisation of the Habsburg Empire had two-fold consequences for the princesses. On the one hand, it increased their value as the embodiments of the Habsburg dynasty and its claim to power, while on the other it enabled them to act as regents. Consequently, the former encouraged their family to keep them carefully guarded, thus preventing them from adequately preparing themselves for the challenges of the latter. The first section concentrates on the princesses' education in its

⁶⁸ Grafton and Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities*, 29.

⁶⁹ Christine De Pizan, *The book of the city of ladies* (New York: Persea books, 1982), II.36.1. The two queens who were putting unusual emphasis on their daughters' education were Isabel of Castile and her daughter Catherine of Aragon.

dynastic framework, with the subsequent chapters examining each regent's upbringing more closely.

The separate chapters on each princess' childhood and youth also include their marriages. Although according to the early modern definition, married women had passed their youth and were supposedly through with their education, all three of the princesses were quite young brides and their time as young wives still shaped their behaviour and gave them new skills. Moreover, during their marriages they were in a position that required queenly conduct, thus comments on their behaviour reveal the expectations they faced.

Margaret of Austria was formally married to the crown prince of France at the age of two, and at the age of seventeen to the crown prince of Spain. Thus, her childhood and youth were spent practicing the role of queen. Her proper conduct as the popular and graceful spouse of the sovereign was the main aim of her education, with the emphasis being on social rather than literary skills. She was the embodiment of female prudence. Mary of Hungary, in turn, moved as a child from her native Low Countries to Austria to prepare for her role as the queen of Hungary. Mary's language studies, including Latin, were significantly more developed than those of her peers, very likely due to the multilingual culture in Austria and Hungary. A learned young queen attracted both humanists and reformists, but it was clear that only as admirers and patrons. Although Charles V had appointed his female relatives as regents throughout his entire reign, he did not raise his own daughters to be rulers. Instead he kept María and Juana secluded in Spain and married them to their cousins, thus further emphasizing the importance of the Habsburg dynasty. Their lack of practice in courtly behaviour left a void that was filled with piety.

The second part of the work then discusses the results of the princesses' education when confronting the realities of the Habsburg government. It introduces the regency system in the composite monarchy, describes the realities of the appointments and outlines the political situation. The chapters on the individual princesses reflect on both their education, and the evolving nature of the regency. Although female regency was an obvious and often applied solution to the problems of the Habsburg monarchy, it varied geographically and gradually became more structured and hence less adaptable to the regent in question. The importance of the dynasty is underscored by the concept of the female regency as an office parallel with the position of queen consort. The dynasty, shared by birth or by marriage, gave women the possibility to combine traditional female values with a high status in the government. However, this combination made female regency a contradictory issue. On the one hand, the princess regent represented the dynasty and the absent monarch, while on the other she was his submissive servant, and as a woman dependent on the ruler or nobles for military leadership and other public roles.

The main challenges princesses faced as regents was working in an exclusively male environment after having been raised within an almost exclusive female setting and the need for persuasive rhetoric in their correspondence with the absent ruler. While their upbringing had advocated practical prudence, it was challenged when faced with the demands of the high office. However, the frequent use of female regents shows staunch trust in the importance of queenship, and the functionality of the relationship between the ruler and the regent. Furthermore, the nature of the princess regencies was very much dependent of the overall political situation, and the skills and character of the individual regents.

After a general chapter on the nature of female regency at the time, each regent is again treated separately. The account of their regencies is not strictly chronological, nor does it take into consideration all the events; instead, it concentrates on the changes in and particularities of the princess regency where the influence of the princesses' education was most visible. Margaret of Austria's career started with her co-operation with another novice politician, the future imperial chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara. Their work together created a role for a princess regent, who was to combine consistent regency policy with the rhetoric of humble submission to the ruler, first Margaret's father, Emperor Maximilian, and then her nephew, Emperor Charles V. Margaret also embodied the advantages of queenly virtues in her work in diplomacy and peace-making. Margaret's niece and successor, Mary of Hungary, showed how the humanist skill of persuasion could be best used and became one of the closest advisors to her brother the emperor while working to fulfil his political aims in the Low Countries. However, she was frustrated both with the restrictions caused by her gender during the times of military conflict, and later by the fact that after she had left the office of regent she was no longer accepted as a political actor. Finally, the regency of Charles V daughter, Juana, shows how little experience or education had to do with the regency appointments, but still even a young princess could have some influence on the issues she found important. After her regency, Juana remained in her brother's court, where her life demonstrated what kind of role a dowager princess could fulfil for her family, for example as the guardian of her nephews and as a potential regent until the end of her life. Her secret vows as a Jesuit also illustrates the possibilities for a non-public political influence.

The conclusion assesses the regencies in the eyes of their contemporaries. It shows that the longer the princesses served as regents, the more important their participatory role became within the government. Both education and politics are themes that are tempting to interpret either through the lens of failure or success. There is no doubt that the large composite monarchy was 'a failure', because Charles V did not become a universal Christian prince, but retired a broken man weary of wars and forced to divide his inheritance between his brother and son. His kingdom was too large for one man to rule

alone. However, inside the failure there were flourishing examples of success, of both the use of excellent advisors and successful applications of education.

This work considers the princess regents both in the context of their role in the political system and as individuals. Their office was established to enforce, and possibly even enhance, the power of their dynasty. Yet, as individuals they were required to fulfil their office by applying skills that were primarily intended for a different kind of use. By comparing and contrasting these three princesses, all of whom worked for the same ruler, it is possible to see how their lives and careers exhibit both the permanent values and the changes occurring in the world around them and in their dynasty's political balance. To sum up, this work aims to show that although they were not exceptional women capable of performing as men, their regencies represented a compelling combination of traditionally masculine skills and queenly virtues.

PART I EDUCATION

1 EDUCATING PRINCESSES

This chapter explores the education and upbringing of the Habsburg princess regents within the context of their dynasty's aims and realities. The princesses' childhoods and adolescent years were shaped by the immense importance of the hereditary line and the construction of its unity and continuity. The existing models and the reality of the royal households explain the choices made regarding their education. As imperial daughters living in the 16th century, they were carefully sheltered from the world in which they were expected to become queens, and perhaps later, regents.

DAUGHTERS TO KEEP THE REALMS CONTENT

The dynastic potential embodied in the princesses made them valuable. Therefore, their custody was an asset, and hence, the people guarding them controlled their childhoods. The importance of the blood that the princes and princesses had in their veins determined the location where the royal sons and daughters were raised. While the princes embodied the claim for power, the princesses represented opportunities for advantageous marriages, and therefore, they often spent their adolescent years in foreign courts as the promised brides of local princes. When the Habsburg Empire and dynasty grew with Charles V and his siblings, Charles as emperor attained a position where he could use his illegitimate offspring and his nieces for alliances and keep his legitimate daughters safely in his own custody.

Although their upbringing was an acceptable reason for the young princesses to go to live in the courts of their future grooms, the move was also a way to bind (or force) their family to commit themselves to the marriage. Charles V himself had been betrothed first to a French princess and then to an English princess as a toddler, and in 1515 his envoys told the French that unless Charles's current bride, Princess Renée, moved to the Low Countries, they were ready to break off the engagement.⁷⁰ Ten years and many engagements later, Charles married his cousin, the princess of Portugal, and hence resolved the problem of which one would be more use to the Habsburgs, the English or the French. If the purity of blood was the crucial criteria in choosing a bride from other dynasties, the intermarriages among Habsburgs brought up different priorities when choosing brides. When Charles later suggested that his son Philip could marry another Portuguese cousin, Princess María, he wrote that she had 'goodness, understanding, discretion and other grand qualities'. The vague

⁷⁰ Charles to his ambassadors in France, 15 Mar. 1515, CK 1, 30-1, nr. 17.

characterisation was followed with more tangible details: the precise sum of the dowry.⁷¹

Despite the still-prevailing image of the Habsburg dynasty as a unity that shared the claim to its extensive realms and an interest in defending those areas, at the beginning of the 16th century the members of the family were spread throughout different parts of Europe. The expansion of the realm had started with the marriage of Maximilian of Austria and Mary of Burgundy in 1477, and their grandchildren had already grown up in three different parts of their dynasty's holdings. The breadth of their dominions was based on hereditary rights in the different areas, and the pivotal role of inheritance made all the scions of the family crucially important. This became strikingly evident when Maximilian and Mary's only child, Philip the Fair, died in 1506. His children carried the claim to Austria, the Low Countries (Burgundy) and, through their mother, Juana of Castile, also to Aragon and Castile.

Thus, the main reason that Philip's sister, Margaret of Austria, moved to the Low Countries after his death was not at the time the regency, but the custody of Philip's children and especially his heir, Charles. Margaret had returned from her dowager lands in Savoy primarily to represent her father, Emperor Maximilian, and the Habsburg dynasty as the guardian of the children. In the meantime, in Spain the children's maternal grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon, took Philip's younger son and his own namesake, Ferdinand, into his care. Their younger sister, Mary, was soon sent to Austria as a pawn in her future marriage to the king of Hungary. None of these decisions was made primarily with educational motives in mind. Naturally, Ferdinand of Aragon hoped that, as a Spaniard, his grandson would be accepted as the ruler of the area after him, and Mary was to learn the language and manners of her husband's country, but the quintessential reason for each child's location in the realm was to maintain the control over them and the dynastic claim they embodied.

While in 1506 the young princes Charles and Ferdinand were the main concern of their respective grandfathers, the princesses were important in a different way. Despite the immense importance the early modern royals put on having at least one male heir, daughters were also quite welcome addition to the family. Charles V saw daughters as an essential part of the dynasty's continuity and stability, which in turn kept the subjects happy. This was aptly expressed in a letter written in 1531, in which he congratulated his brother Ferdinand after the birth of the latter's daughter, Mary. Charles wrote that he was delighted with the prosperity this girl would bring to them through the growth of their lineage and by keeping their lands content.⁷² Maintaining the

⁷¹ 'la bondad, entendimiento y discrecion y otras grandes cualidades de la serenissima infante doña Maria,' Charles V to Philip, Brussels 2 Apr. 1553, RMC 1, 160. Appendix B.

⁷² 'Je ne veulx delaisser vous congratuler la naiscence de ma petite nyece vostre fille, dont certes jay eu gros plaisir, tant pour le commung bien dentre nous et accroissance de ligne que nous conuient

family lineage was the key to extending the dynasty's power and making alliances with other princes, with the princesses being an invaluable resource; hence, ensuring their proper guardianship was essential for the family.

The guardians determined the surroundings where the children grew up, and those surroundings in turn had a decisive influence on how Habsburg princesses were brought up and educated. Although Western Christendom shared a common cultural background and the same beliefs, local traditions and conventions shaped the princesses' everyday lives. Since the 1477 union of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, the Habsburg dominions had consisted of areas geographically separated from each other. There were Habsburg princesses growing up in Austria, the Low Countries and Spain. With the Habsburg dynasty, then, the princesses' physical residence was never as self-evident as it would have been if they were daughters of some minor potentate in Europe.

The Habsburgs sent their princesses to be raised in different courts in the hope of keeping their lands together under the control of a healthy hereditary lineage and existing in peace through treaties with their allies.⁷³ Margaret of Austria spent her childhood in the court in France as the bride of the crown prince, while Mary of Hungary had the same experience in Austria and Charles V's daughters, María and Juana, were kept in Spain in order to prevent anyone else than their imperial father from deciding who they should marry. It was first and foremost the location of their childhood that shaped the way they were brought up and educated. It is indeed ironic that one of the most convincing reasons for choosing princess regents in the Low Countries was their status as 'natural born princes', as local representatives of the absent ruler, when the three princess regents, Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Margaret of Parma, who for the most part governed successively from 1507 to 1582, with only short periods when the regent was someone else, had spent their childhood and youth in France, Austria and Italy, respectively.⁷⁴ The choice of places where the princesses were brought up was never a coincidence, but a result of multiple factors. If it was not determined by their future as a spouse of a foreign prince; it was chosen to keep them safe from overly ambitious nobles or to make sure they remained apart from the possible aggression of neighbouring powers. Protection and safety were, for example, the motives in moving Mary of Hungary and her

et empourte grandement, et pour le bien et gros contentement de noz pays,' Charles to Ferdinand, July 1531, CK 1, 484, nr. 179.

⁷³ For the interpretation that this match-making was indeed conscious Paula Sutter Fichtner, 'Dynastic Marriage in Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Diplomacy and Statecraft: an Interdisciplinary Approach,' *American Historical Review* 81 (1976): 247.

⁷⁴ Margaret of Parma, Charles V's illegitimate daughter, was born in Oudenaarde in 1522. Mary sent her to Italy on Charles's request in 1533. Mary to Charles 24 Jan. 1533, CMCG 2, 12, nr. 335. On Margaret's childhood Charlie R. Steen, *Margaret of Parma: a life* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 8-12.

sister-in-law, Anna, to Innsbruck in 1517 instead of letting them to stay in Vienna, which was threatened by the troubles in Hungary.⁷⁵

The division of the dynasty into different courts, and the lack of personal contacts within the family, were compensated for by conscious image building among the Habsburgs. They commissioned family portraits of people, who never met in real life, posing side by side, such as Emperor Maximilian embracing his grandson Ferdinand in a painting by Bernhard Striegel.⁷⁶ Charles and his sister Eleanor met their eleven-year-old younger sister, Catherine, for the first time in Spain in 1517, where Catherine had been living with their mother. The chronicler witnessing the meeting praised Catherine's beauty and claimed that, among her siblings, she was the one who most resembled their father, Philip.⁷⁷ The resemblance made up for the years lived apart and identified the princess as being of the House of Austria. The contacts were also enforced by displaying the images of relatives; for instance, Margaret of Austria showcased a portrait gallery of her extended dynasty in her residence.⁷⁸ All the Habsburgs wrote of each other using their corresponding family relations rather than their Christian names. For Charles V and his brother Ferdinand, Mary of Hungary was always 'our sister the queen', and when Charles's daughter, María, married her cousin, Ferdinand's son Maximilian, Charles and Ferdinand shared news of 'our children' in their letters.⁷⁹

This fabricated Habsburg uniformity created the impression that the Habsburgs had all been brought up in a similar way. Yet, it is very telling that scholarly interest in their education has focused on the different branches of the family, Austrian or Spanish.⁸⁰ Despite embodying the same dynasty, the various princesses came from different backgrounds and local traditions. In addition, the differences in their upbringing did not remain constant, even

⁷⁵ Wilhelm Stracke, 'Die Anfänge der Königin Maria von Ungarn, späteren Statthalterin Karls. V. in den Niederlanden', (PhD diss., Göttingen, 1940), 11.

⁷⁶ Bernhard Striegel. *Familie des Kaisers Maximilian I. (1514)* Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Inv. Nr. Gemäldegalerie, 832: Available from <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/1849/>.

⁷⁷ Laurent Vital, 'Premier voyage de Charles-Quint en Espagne, de 1517 à 1518', in *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas, III*, ed. Louis Prosper Gachard (Bruxelles: Hayez, 1881), 140.

⁷⁸ Dagmar Eichberger and Lisa Beaven, 'Family members and political allies: the portrait collection of Margaret of Austria', *The Art Bulletin* 77:2 (1995).

⁷⁹ For example, Ferdinand to Charles from Passau, 20 July 1552, on how the king, our 'coming filz' had sent the news of the queen, our 'commune fille', on giving birth to a son (Emperor Rudolph). CK 3, 385, nr. 862.

⁸⁰ Gustav Strakosch-Grassmann, *Erziehung und Unterricht im Hause Habsburg* (Wien: Braumüller, 1903); Sabine Weiss, *Zur Herrschaft geboren. Kindheit und Jugend im Haus Habsburg* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2008), which concentrates on the Austrian branch of the family; Martha K. Hoffman, *Raised to Rule: Educating Royalty at the Court of the Spanish Habsburgs, 1601-1634* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), which covers the Spanish branch of the family from the Catholic Kings onwards.

for the approximately fifty years covered in this study. Some trends, such as the careful formal education of Spanish princesses during the time of Queen Isabel, turned out to be transient. At the same time, some features remained intact, such as the appreciation of multilingualism in the central European areas compared with the predominant use of French in the west.

In general, in France and Burgundy women's role in the court was more central than in Habsburg Austria or Spain, and therefore the princesses who lived in those courts learned to behave in the public sphere when attending court functions as part of their upbringing, as will be discussed in the following chapters.⁸¹ The variations in the customs were not necessarily only cultural but also depended on certain random factors. For example, the lack of a formal court in Austria during the time of Emperor Maximilian depended more on its itinerant ruler than on custom. Meanwhile, the Hungarian court simply lacked a queen for many years between the death of Queen Anne of Foix in 1506 and her son's marriage to the Habsburg princess Mary in 1521.⁸²

During the 16th century, Habsburg influence reached almost all corners of Europe and their princes and princesses were spread from Prague to Lisbon, and from Brussels to Naples. Political motives still determined the reasons for why a royal son or daughter was raised in a particular location. It was not until the 1560s, when a conscious decision was made to send Charles's and Ferdinand's shared grandsons to Spain, that educational motives were the conclusive factor. The archdukes Rudolph and Ernst were sent to be educated in the court of their uncle, Philip II, but even then scholars have speculated that the move was made to back up their possible claim as the heirs of their uncle, should his own unstable heir, Don Carlos, perish prematurely.⁸³

Despite all the geographical and cultural differences between the Habsburg courts, the traditions they had in common, as we shall see next, had to do with conventional ideas about monarchy and queenship, the role of the ruler's mother and spouse. The princesses had no other options than those described by Charles in 1531. They contributed to the happiness of their dynasty and its realms by marrying kings and becoming queens. Accordingly, the princesses were raised to be queens, and that assumption dominated their education.

⁸¹ On the different values on what was admired in woman for example Peter Burke, *The fortunes of the Courtier: the European reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 96.

⁸² András Kubinyi, 'Alltag und Fest am ungarischen Königshof der Jagellonen 1490 -1526', in *Alltag bei Hofe*, ed. Werner Paravicini (Sigmaringe: Thorbecke 1995), 197.

⁸³ Erwin Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Ersterzoge Rudolf und Ernst in Spanien* (Wien/Leipzig: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1927); Peter Rassow, 'Karls V. Tochter als Eventualerbin der spanischen Reiche', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 49 (1958).

IDEAL QUEENSHIP AND EXEMPLARY QUEENS

Although the Habsburg princesses were brought up in different courts throughout Europe, the common idea of a good queen shaped their upbringing and expectations for the royal daughters. Many aspects of the princess regents' behaviour indicate that they were profoundly influenced by the traditions of queenship and aimed at performing their roles accordingly. Even when as princess regents they were paired with a ruler who was not their *de facto* husband, they formed a pair where the princess could formally perform her duties as queen in the absence of the king. In their queenly role, they were acting, for example, as the merciful partners of a vengeful ruler, such as when Margaret of Austria took part in diplomatic negotiations on behalf of both her father, Emperor Maximilian, and her nephew, Charles V,⁸⁴ or when Mary of Hungary begged for mercy for the rebels of Ghent in 1539.⁸⁵ All the princess regents took their younger relatives under their tutelage and acted as the primary mother figures of the court.⁸⁶ They exercised considerable patronage of the arts, favouring projects that enforced the fame of their dynasty.⁸⁷ In short, they were queen consorts without actual husbands, and their royal counterpart was the ruler they were representing as regents.

Queenship studies have convincingly showed that the role of queen consort was an essential part of the monarchy and, as such, an institutional role, and likewise that individual royal women should be seen in the context of that institution.⁸⁸ With that in mind, it should be recognised that institution influenced both the regents' view of themselves and their constructed image. Although Habsburg blood was the leading principle behind the princess regents' appointments, their regencies also reinforced the respect and trust in the institution of queenship. As a necessarily female office, queenship was a special role assumed by a royal woman. In a sense,

⁸⁴ Most famously in the 1530 as the architect of the 'Ladies' Peace' of Cambrai. Joycelyne G. Russell, *Diplomats at work: three Renaissance studies* (Wolfeboro Falls: Alan Sutton, 1992), 94–158; Catherine Fletcher, 'The Ladies' Peace Revisited: Gender, Counsel and Diplomacy', in *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe*, 111–33.

⁸⁵ Peter Arnade, 'The Emperor and the City: the Cultural Politics of the Joyous Entry in Early Sixteenth Century Ghent and Flanders', *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 54 (2000), 90.

⁸⁶ Margaret of Austria was the guardian of the children of her deceased brother, Philip, while Mary of Hungary had her nieces, Christine and Dorothea, of Denmark in her court. Juana shared her court with her nephew, Don Carlos.

⁸⁷ *Women. The Art of Power*, ed. *Women. The Art of Power*, ed. Haag, Eichberger and Jordan Gschwend.

⁸⁸ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 25–7.

queenship was an idealised form of womanhood, and a queen needed to be an example for other women.⁸⁹

Two issues particularly attract attention with respect to the queenly ideals and models provided for the Habsburg princesses. First, although the models were often conventional archetypes leaning on biblical examples, the ideal of a queen among the Habsburgs altered considerably during the early 16th century. The starting point was the ideal of a chivalric lady, such as Mary of Burgundy (1457–82), who was at the centre of her husband's court. In fifty years, the ideal had evolved into that of the secluded queens of Philip II of Spain, whose role was strongly linked to piety.⁹⁰ Secondly, despite the many princess regents among the family, such as the princesses Margaret of Austria or Mary of Hungary, their regencies did not add anything to the model of an ideal queen. For instance, it was reported at the time that before her marriage to her uncle, Philip II, the Archduchess Anna was eager to see her aunt, Princess Juana, not because she had formerly been the regent, but because Anna had heard how beautiful she was.⁹¹

Considering the upbringing of a princess as a pathway to her future role as queen, queenship needs to be defined. Although giving birth to the heirs to the throne was obviously the most important role of the king's spouse, queens also had many other opportunities to exert influence. They were patrons of religion and merciful counterparts to their warrior husbands. They often supervised their children's early education. If the king was absent during campaigns or crusades, it was usually the queen who acted as the resident embodiment of dynastic rule. The king was the strong defender of the realm, while the queen was the compassionate protector of people's rights and, therefore, loved by them.⁹²

The queen's behaviour and bearing were pivotal. Her entire existence demanded that she ensure the wellbeing of her husband's subjects. Queens were often pictured as resembling the image of the Virgin Mary.⁹³ The analogy between a queen's beauty and her virtues dominated descriptions of the early modern royal women. The queens were always assumed to be

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Teresa Howe, *Education and Women in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2008), 34.

⁹⁰ Mary was the heroine in the chivalric story her husband later published. Maximilian I, *Die Abenteuer des Ritters Theuerdank*, ed. Stephan Füßel (Köln: Taschen, 2003). On the Spanish queens David Davies, 'The Body Politics of Spanish Habsburg Queens,' in *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa* 3, 1536.

⁹¹ Conde de Luna to Philip II 19 Jan. 1562 Prag, CODOIN 26 (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, 1855), 421. On a case that female power was not emulated by the contemporaries, see also Carolyn Patricia James, '“Machiavelli in skirts” Isabella d'Este and politics,' in *Virtue, Liberty and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women 1400-1800*, 70.

⁹² Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 11-12, 26-7; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 2-9.

⁹³ Gaude-Ferragu, *La reine au Moyen Âge*, 26.

beautiful, and if not, then at least virtuous. For instance, Antonio Beatis described Queen Claude in 1517 as 'young, and though small in stature, plain and badly lame in both hips', but he balanced this picture by assuring readers that she was 'said to be very cultivated, generous and pious'.⁹⁴ The Venetian ambassador described Charles's sister, Eleanor, at twenty-eight, along the same lines, as 'not ugly neither beautiful, but she seems to me very good'.⁹⁵ It seems like beauty was the first natural attribute of a princess, and failing that, she could still demonstrate to a goodness of heart. Similarly, the royal family and household were mirrors of the prosperity and tranquillity of the land. As Theresa Earenfight writes, the queen had moral duty 'to maintain properly order and honour of her person, the household and the realm'.⁹⁶

These were coherent ideals and undoubtedly in unison with the histories that the princesses heard or read of their predecessors and foremothers. However, the literature addressed to the princesses offered contradictory role models. On the one hand, the princesses had works by Christine de Pizan (1364–1430) in their libraries.⁹⁷ Christine might have struck a chord with the Habsburg princesses, when she wrote that although the capabilities of women and men were equal, their tasks were divided, and it did not make sense for women to take over those responsibilities that were already taken care of by men.⁹⁸ The princesses stepped beyond their normal roles only when no men of equal rank, that is to say, any princes of their own family, were available. At the same time, the humanist educational treatises, albeit recognising female erudition, still emphasised the importance of chastity and modesty above all else and urged women to remain in the domestic sphere.⁹⁹ In a somewhat contradictory manner, royal women were assumed to be special, and thereby able to rise to the tasks otherwise impossible for their sex, and yet at the same time they were expected to be the most modest and pious of ladies who other women could look up to and emulate.

⁹⁴ Antonio de Beatis 13 Aug. 1517 Rouen, *The travel journal of Antonio de Beatis : Germany, Switzerland, The Low Countries, France and Italy, 1517-1518*, transl. J. R. Hale and J. M. A. Lindon, ed. J. R. Hale (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1979), 107.

⁹⁵ Relazione di Gasparo Contarini ritornato ambasciatore da Carlo V, 1525, *Relazioni* I – II, 63.

⁹⁶ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 96.

⁹⁷ Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 86–7; Dagmar Eichberger, 'Una librería per donne assai ornata et ricca. Frauenbibliotheken des 16. Jahrhunderts zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit,' in *Die lesende Frau*, ed. Gabriela Signori (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 255; Claudine Lemaire, 'La bibliothèque des imprimés de la reine Marie de Hongrie, regente des Pays-Bas 1505-1558,' *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance* 58 (1996).

⁹⁸ Pizan, *The book of the city of ladies* I.11.1

⁹⁹ Cousins, 'Humanism, Female Education, and Myth', 214–5; J.K.Sowards, 'Erasmus and the Education of Women,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13:4 (1982); Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 78, 126.

There is nothing to indicate that any princesses attempted to acquire the kind of learning Christine was promoting for women in order for them to be able to fulfill their part of the divided duties of the society.¹⁰⁰ However, her idea of the concealed female intelligent has been considered typical for women like Margaret of Austria.¹⁰¹ Tracy Adams has convincingly written on the female prudence as the idea that the princess regents adopted from the books written by Christine de Pizan. She was a notable exception, though, among writers and philosophers, offering prudence as a general female quality,¹⁰² in contrast with the idea of *prudentia* as a male virtue. Although we do not know how the princesses attempted to adapt the values from Christine de Pizan's texts to their real lives, Adams suggests that the princess regents were part of a chain of strong women who were able to perform in politics due to their prudence.¹⁰³

In her works, Christine de Pizan echoed a tradition suggesting that intercession, the queen's right to appeal to her husband, was a powerful tool by which a queen could wield power. She was referring to a custom that was displayed in rituals and repeated in texts on queenship. In England, medieval queens traditionally pleaded for mercy from their husbands in connection with their wedding or coronation.¹⁰⁴ The treatises on queens prompted them to do good deeds through their husbands.¹⁰⁵ While seen as 'part of a masculine-feminine division of labour that often reinforced cultural stereotypes of women,¹⁰⁶ such treatises also included a strong notion of female intelligence. With her intellect, the queen was able to persuade the king to act according to her will. Adams describes queenly prudence as an ability to act within the conventions of female submission, but at the same

¹⁰⁰ Pizan, *The book of the city of ladies* I.43.1

¹⁰¹ Tracy Adams, 'Married Noblewomen as Diplomats: Affective Diplomacy,' in *Gender and Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Destroying Order, Structuring Disorder*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 52.

¹⁰² Adams, 'Appearing virtuous', 120; Green, 'Phronesis Feminised,' 28.

¹⁰³ Adams, 'Married Noblewomen as Diplomats,' 36.

¹⁰⁴ John Carmi Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', in *Women and Sovereignty*, 64.

¹⁰⁵ Constant J. Mews, 'The Speculum dominarum (Miroir des dames) and transformations of the literature of instruction for women in the early fourteenth century', in *Virtue Ethics for Women 1250-1500*, 26. On the strong emphasis on the queen's role in the 16th century as the advocate for her people given to queen Claude of France, see Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Claude of France: Justice, Power, and the Queen as Advocate for Her People', in *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval French Culture*, ed. Rosalind Brown-Grant, Anne D. Hedeman and Bernard Ribémont (Farnham: Ashgate 2015), 271.

¹⁰⁶ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 12.

time 'enable the possessor to adapt to situations while remaining virtuous'.

107

The interpretation is plausible and backed by considerable evidence, but as will be shown in the following chapters, in addition to their work with the ruler, the Habsburg princess regents faced many other challenges that demanded more tangible skills than just prudence. The texts by Christine de Pizan were, in any case, better in accord with the regent's role than the humanist scholar's manuals for women. Christine de Pizan offered the princesses thoughts on their potential in the traditionally male field of government, either reinforcing their family's right to rule when no princes were available or exerting a persuasive influence behind the scenes, but the contemporary humanists advocated piety without participation. Juan Luis Vives, in his 1523 work *De institutione feminae christianae* ('The Education of a Christian Woman'), wrote that girls should learn a bit of Latin but read only religious works, spend their time among women and keep themselves busy with needle work and prayers.¹⁰⁸ The work, like similar texts dedicated to noble and royal women, were still meant for wider audiences. As such, Vives's book emphasised the role of princesses as examples to others and was assumed they would live exemplary pious and chaste lives rather than participate in government with their brothers.

However, Vives too recognised the power of female persuasion, although the general tone of his work was far from defending female agency. To demonstrate his point, Vives chose Mary of Burgundy as his example. In the Low Countries, where Vives wrote his text, Mary was a well-known duchess as well as Margaret of Austria's mother and a famous queenly figure. According to Vives, Margaret's father, Maximilian, was a simple man and unable to gain the respect of his subjects. Mary, in turn, was more capable and considered more apt to run the government of her country.

*However, she never decided anything that was within her power without consulting her husband, whose will she regarded as law. And she had the authority to administer everything according to her own wishes without incurring the ill will of her husband, since Maximilian refused nothing to his beloved and prudent wife, owing to both his own mild disposition and her integrity of character.*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Tracy Adams, 'Theorizing Female Regency: Anne of France's Enseignements à sa fille,' in *Les femmes, la culture et les arts en Europe, entre Moyen âge et Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia J. Brown & Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 392.

¹⁰⁸ Vives, *The education of a Christian woman*. The book appeared in print for the first time in 1522.

¹⁰⁹ Vives, *The education of a Christian woman*, 218. Vives dedicated *De institutione* to Catherine of Aragon, then queen of England.

Vives's story reflects perhaps more the prevailing attitude towards the foreign Habsburg prince in the Low Countries than the wholehearted acceptance of queenly persuasion, but it reveals that the theme was still relevant.

Such female prudence is not directly mentioned in the Habsburg correspondence, but on several occasions the regents faced expectations to express queenly discretion. Maximilian often delegated diplomatic meetings with the English ambassadors to his daughter Margaret,¹¹⁰ who in turn assured Charles V that she could negotiate peace with France in 1529 on his behalf, because, as a woman, she had no similar honour to lose as Charles did.¹¹¹ Mary of Hungary was needed to smooth the family quarrels between Charles and their brother, Ferdinand, in 1551.¹¹² In those cases, their ability to arbitrate appeared as something typical for princesses and undoubtedly as one of the reasons why the princess regents were seen as suitable for their offices.

The controversies that the princesses faced culminated in the person of the one queen that all Habsburg princesses at the beginning of the 16th century considered their grandmother. Isabel the Catholic, queen of Castile (1451–1504), was widely recognised as an exceptional queen and offered up as a model for all her female descendants. As a potential heiress to the crown of Castile, she was presented as 'a mirror for princesses' in her youth. Isabel exceptionally was presented 'a mirror for princesses' in her youth. Father Martin Córdoba, in his *Jardín de nobles donzellas* prompted Isabel 'to study and listen to such things as are appropriate to the governing of the kingdom', explaining that as a princess Isabel was to rise beyond the restrictions of her gender. However, the rest of the treatise concentrated on advocating chastity and wifely obedience.¹¹³ It reflected aptly the contemporaries' confused approach towards the female rule.

In her person, the traditional queenly values met the examples used by humanists. As the mother of Duchess Juana, Charles V's mother, Isabel was a tangible example of queenship. When Margaret of Austria commissioned a work describing her virtuous life, *Couronne Margaritique*, in 1507, her meeting with Queen Isabel was described as a singular honour and

¹¹⁰ Maximilian 8 Dec. 1515 Commission empowering Margaret Duchess of Savoy to enter into a treaty with Joan Queen of [Castile] and Granada, Henry King of England and France, and Ferdinand King of Arragon, to wage war against the Infidels. [Spinelly to Wolsey.] LP 2, nr. 1261, 1339.

¹¹¹ Instructions of Margaret to monsieur Rozimboz for the Emperor 3 Jan. 1529. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (HHStA) Belgien PA 18/3 Fol 28-34.

¹¹² Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 38-9.

¹¹³ 'algunas oras del día en que estudie & oya tales cosas que sean propias al regimiento del reyno', Harriet Goldberg, *Jardín de Nobles Donzellas, Fray Martín de Córdoba: A critical edition and study*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 244. On the different interpretations of *Jardín de Nobles Donzellas*, see Barbara F. Weissberger, *Isabel rules: constructing queenship, wielding power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 37-9.

impressive event for young Margaret. The text described Isabel as ‘she who has no equal’ and ‘the great heroine of Granada’ because she was so admired for the re-conquest of southern Spain that she had carried out with her husband, Ferdinand, in 1492.¹¹⁴

Barbara Weissberger has analysed in depth the correlation between Isabel’s masculine power and her very feminine and motherly image. Discussing the varied and controversial reactions to Isabel’s queenship, Weissberger highlights the paradoxical reactions to the ‘unnatural’ female sovereign and the masculine political agenda.¹¹⁵ Isabel was, on the one hand, pictured in very feminine terms and presented as the Virgin’s earthly counterpart, while on the other her power was explained as stemming from her ‘masculine’ soul.¹¹⁶ Although the princess regents were not among those producing or reading texts that would have taken a negative stand on Isabel, they were left to make their own interpretation of how a queen should combine the different aspects of female rule. What is more, they hardly could have escaped noticing how easily a masculine queen was described as bizarre.

Juan Luis Vives was among the writers concealing Isabel’s sovereign queenship in the guise of traditional female virtues, joining a long tradition of ‘domesticating’ Isabel’s image.¹¹⁷ He especially underlined in *De institutione* how Isabel taught her daughters to be like ordinary women, teaching them to spin and sew.¹¹⁸ On the occasion when he mentioned Isabel’s daughters as rare examples of Latinists, he added that they also were chaste, and that

*none loved their spouses more, none displayed more compliant obedience, none preserved themselves and their loved ones more blamelessly and more assiduously, none were so opposed to base behaviour and lax morals, more fulfilled to such perfection the ideals expected of the virtuous woman.*¹¹⁹

This formidable queen was in other words recognised as special, but at the same time lauded for being a paragon of ordinary womanhood. This was not necessarily the example that royal women wanted to be given, but as the next chapters will show, the princesses were brought up with the similar conviction that Latinism was secondary virtue compared to chastity and devoted love for one’s spouse.

¹¹⁴ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 92

¹¹⁵ Weissberger, *Isabel rules*, especially xv.

¹¹⁶ Weissberger, *Isabel rules*, 82.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Teresa Howe. ‘Isabel La Católica as literary archetype,’ in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: critical essays*, ed. David A. Boruchoff (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 91-102.

¹¹⁸ Vives, *The education of a Christian woman*, 61.

¹¹⁹ Vives, *The education of a Christian woman*, 70.

The need to present the princesses as perfect wives with high morals naturally applied also to the regents. They were humble and obedient servants of the emperor, and had their chastity been questioned it would have threatened his authority. Nevertheless, the regents were leading the government, and therefore they needed to step into the male sphere of politics. They needed to attend meetings where they were the only females, which was something they had not been prepared or schooled for. Emphasising modesty and even direct seclusion, the treatises for women did not offer any assistance to princess regents. As positive feedback for their success in politics, they were also often praised as being 'masculine', just as Isabel had been, but that quality was not recommended to the next generation of princesses as a quality to emulate. As Stephen Kolsky has pointed out, describing Isabel as a traditional mother teaching her daughters domestic chores was very likely an attempt to 'embed them [queens] in the mainstream discourse -- thus obviating the danger to men'.¹²⁰

A similar interpretation could be made regarding Margaret of Austria, who during her regency sent her father the emperor shirts that she had sewn herself.¹²¹ Ostensibly, there is a contradiction between her highly exceptional office as regent and her very conventional behaviour. However, I suggest that what may seem contradictory behaviour was in fact conventional conduct expected of a queen, who was here expressing her devotion to her family, as she was supposed to. As a regent, she was serving her family in a female capacity, and accordingly, then offering female attention to her father. Princess regents were queens, but unlike Isabel, they were not sovereigns in their own right.

The controversy between the modest models of womanhood and the demanding reality of queenship that characterises female regency partly prevents us from seeing how fitting the regent's role was for princesses, who considered the regency as an extended form of queenship. Although attention has been paid to instances such as Margaret posing as an Amazon in court pageants,¹²² or Mary being admired for her masculine equestrian skills,¹²³ those instances were in fact trivialities. The princesses were not attempting to turn into men, but to expand the queenship to cover the duties

¹²⁰ Stephen Derek Kolsky, 'Making Examples of Women: Juan Luis Vives' The Education of a Christian Woman' *Early Modern Culture Online* 3 :1 (2012), 22.

¹²¹ Maximilian praised them lavishly in his letter to his daughter, 17 May 1511, CMM 2, 380, Appendice nr. 3.

¹²² Eric William Ives, *The life and death of Anne Boleyn: 'the most happy'* (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2004), 21.

¹²³ Roger Ascham to Edward Raven 1551. Roger Ascham. *The whole works of Roger Ascham, now first collected and revised by the Rev. Dr. Giles, vol. I, part II, Letters continued* (London: John Russel Smith, 1865), 249; Relazione de Marino Cavalli ritornato ambasciatore da Carlo V l'anno 1551, *Relazioni* I - II, 205.

of a regent. The answer to the question of how royal ladies were able to enter politics is simple: they were Habsburgs, and suitable for queenship as such.

SOPHISTICATED ANGELS AND GOOD CHRISTIAN WOMEN

As discussed above, chastity was one of the most emphasised virtues for women in general and princesses in particular. The royal lineage depended on the chastity of queens and the authority of the emperor on the decency of his regents. The demand for chastity impacted the princesses' surroundings in the form of separate living quarters for women in the royal courts. Besides keeping the reputation of the princesses intact, they also kept them in the female sphere even after their brothers started practising for their future roles as the actors in politics. The separation of royal daughters from the male sphere of the court left them without training for a future that might have included tasks in the government, which after all was run exclusively by men. Even when they were recognised as the ones who might become the exceptions to the prevailing situation, their training in that respect was not only neglected, but in fact outright obstructed.

When faced with the undeniably weak evidence on the formal education of princesses, historians have often assumed they absorbed the art of statecraft from their fathers, or else shared tutors and books with their brothers. Philip II's education has been thought to have benefited also his sisters,¹²⁴ although his sister Juana of Austria was eight years younger and had moved to a different court when her education began. The training of Philip's daughter, Isabel Clara Eugenia, for the regency has been described as 'attending the political activities of her father', when in fact her task consisted only of drying the ink on the letters Philip wrote.¹²⁵ The influential factors in the Habsburg daughters' childhoods were not their male relatives, but their physical location and the day-to-day realities of the court.

To put royal education in context, it is necessary to understand that the princesses' living conditions were part of their upbringing. The essential factors were the household arrangement, particularly the separation of the female household, the company surrounding the princesses, religious conventions and the age when they were considered to be adults. All these factors were supposed to contribute to what was in the end the core of princess education: virtuous comportment. As already discussed, virtuous

¹²⁴ Anne J. Cruz, 'Juana of Austria: Patron of the Arts and Regent of Spain, 1554-59,' in *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe* ed. Anne J. Cruz and Mihoko Suzuki (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

¹²⁵ Santiago Martínez Hernández, "'Enlightened Queen, clear Cynthia, beauteous moon": The Political and Courtly Apprenticeship of the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia,' in *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels* ed. Cordula van Wyhe (Madrid/London: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica. Paul Holberton Publishing, 2011), 36.

behaviour was highly esteemed among characteristics of an ideal queen. Queenly comportment was what the princesses were guided towards, second only to their highest purpose of producing offspring for their spouses. The fundamental requirement of chastity, which assured the royal spouses that their children were really theirs, was enforced by the surroundings and decent company.

The different treatment of girls and boys was marked by the separation of the young boys from the female household around the time when they were seven years old.¹²⁶ Gonzalo Sanchez-Molero notes that the idea was to start to prepare sons for their future when they reached the age where they could become useful to the society around them.¹²⁷ Removing boys from the women's company at an age when they were supposedly capable of independent thinking marked the fact that girls were not to learn the same tasks as boys. The separation launched the boys' education for their public roles. It also made the alleged sharing of tutors between siblings not just unlikely, but practically impossible. The princes were to work for the common good, the princesses to act as their merciful and submissive partners, and above all, bear children.¹²⁸

Although the conditions were seemingly the same in the different courts of the Habsburgs, there were local variations. For example, habits were much more relaxed in the Burgundian court than in Austria. In 1477, young Maximilian described in wonder to his Austrian friend that the women were running all around the palace in his bride Mary's household.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, ladies had their separate quarters in Burgundy, too.¹³⁰ Strict rules were also observed in the Spanish court.¹³¹ In 1536, Maximilian's then nine-year-old great-grandson, Philip, occasionally escaped from his tutor to his mother's quarters. The tutor, Juan Zuñiga, was obliged to follow his charge everywhere, but although the child could enter the women's spaces of the palace, Zuñiga as an adult male could not, which he apologetically explained to Philip's father, Emperor Charles.¹³²

¹²⁶ Charles shared the tutor with his sisters precisely until he was seven. Strakosch-Grassmann, *Erziehung und Unterricht im Hause Habsburg*, 26.

¹²⁷ Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 151.

¹²⁸ Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 203.

¹²⁹ 'daz frawenzimmer nichts bey den tag verspert die nacht uber. es is daz gantz haus voll iungfrowen undt frowen bey xl. sie muegen auch den gantzen taag uberahl im haus umblauffen' Maximilian to Sigmund Prüschenk 8 Dec. 1477, *Maximilians I. Vertraulicher Briefwechsel mit Sigmund Prüschenk Freiherrn von Stettenberg. Nebst einer Anzahl zeitgenössischer, das Leben am Hof beleuchtender Briefe*, ed. Victor von Kraus (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1875), 28.

¹³⁰ Charles Moeller, *Eléonore d'Autriche et de Bourgogne, reine de France, un épisode des cours au XVI Siècle* (Paris: Thorin et fils, 1895), 200.

¹³¹ Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun*, 43, note 24.

¹³² Cited in Gonzalo Sanchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 25.

Inevitably the rules were broken, but the chastity and honourability of the ladies demanded that any violations be punished, at least according to Archduke Maximilian, who as the regent of Spain in 1549 reported to the emperor of disturbance in the ladies' quarters. One of the archduke's servants had courted a maid, who had given him a copy of the key to the rooms of the ladies of the queen.¹³³ The fact that he included such an incident in correspondence that otherwise mostly concentrated on political events underscores the emphasis put on the subject. Eventually, the separation of the women came to be seen not only as the way to guard their chastity and virtue, but as the symbol of royalty, as is shown by the problems that Philip II's daughter, Catalina Micaela, had in the court of Turin in the 1580s, where the architectural structure of the palace contrasted with the Spaniards' view of proper lodgings for a royal lady.¹³⁴

The female household, '*cour de la dames*' or '*Frauenzimmer*', was headed by the 'governess', a term that was not associated with teaching. The governess, or *Hausmeisterin*, oversaw all the women of the household.¹³⁵ The women surrounding the princess socialised her into the ways of female court culture. Confessors assisted in the rudimentary moral upbringing of the infants, and clerics also tutored older girls.¹³⁶ The daily routine of the household was strictly defined as maintaining order, guarding the female virtue of chastity and keeping the women busy, as idleness was the most feared sin.¹³⁷ However much disgrace and dishonour these arrangements might have prevented in the eyes of contemporaries, they undeniably

¹³³ Maximilian to Charles 9 Apr. 1549 Valladolid, *Maximiliano de Austria, gobernador de Carlos V en España: cartas al emperador*, ed. Rafaela Rodríguez Raso (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1963), 86.

¹³⁴ Magdalena S. Sánchez, '"She Grows Careless": The Infanta Catalina and Spanish Etiquette at the Court of Savoy,' in *Early modern dynastic marriages and cultural transfer*, ed. Joan-Lluís Palos and Magdalena S. Sánchez (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2016), 24-5.

¹³⁵ Rosalind K. Marshall, 'In Search of the Ladies-in-Waiting and Maids of Honour of Mary, Queen of Scots: A Prosopographical Analysis of the Female Household,' in *The politics of female household : ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe*, Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 213.

¹³⁶ Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, 'Modelos educativos de Isabel La Católica,' in *La Reina Isabel y las reinas de España: realidad, modelos e imagen historiográfica*, ed. Maria Vitoria López-Cordón and Gloria Franco (Madrid: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, 2005), 131.

¹³⁷ On the ordinances of the court in Innsbruck during the time of Mary of Hungary was residing there see Paul-Joachim Heinig, 'Umb mer zucht und ordnung willen. Ein Ordnungsentwurf für das Frauenzimmer des Innsbrucker Hofes aus den ersten Tagen Kaiser Karls V. (1519),' in *Das Frauenzimmer*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2000); Michail A. Bojcov, 'Zum Frauenzimmer am Innsbrucker Hof Erzherzog Sigmunds,' in *Der Innsbrucker Hof : Residenz und höfische Gesellschaft in Tirol vom 15. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Heinz Noflatscher (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005).

excluded young girls from sharing in both the practical upbringing and schoolroom studies of their brothers.

The role of women was to nurture small children in the female environment and teach them morals and manners. A basic moral education was highly esteemed, and viewed as an essential motherly quality, thus one that the girls had to assume. One of the most striking cases indicating how much weight was put on it was that of Margaret of Austria, who was lavishly praised as the motherly educator of her nephew, Charles V. Her contribution to the moral development of the emperor was more appreciated than her political role as his regent. As late as her second regency orders in 1521, Charles still referred to Margaret as 'the one who had both taught him virtues and good manners and taken care of his lands' – in just that order.¹³⁸

The brides were always supposed to adjust to their new surroundings, but contemporaries argued over just what constituted the most appropriate surrounding for growing princesses. The question arose when Charles took over his inheritance in Spain in 1517 and still had two unmarried sisters, Eleanor in the Low Countries and Catherine in Spain. The Spanish wanted Archduchess Eleanor to come to Spain to be in proper company. In his memorandum to the regent of Castile, Cardinal Cisneros, the Spanish envoy, Manrique de Lara, suggested that being brought up with the ladies of rank would make Eleanor into a princess who would bring even more glory to her brother, Charles. He reminded the regent that the union of Charles's younger sister, Isabel, with the king of Denmark had caused only misery and warned that something similar might happen to Eleanor unless she was sent to Spain.¹³⁹ The envoy's thoughts reflect the importance of both company and custody. Should Eleanor stay with Flemish company, she would not rise to the same level as with the Spanish. If she stayed in the Low Countries, 'they', the people who had control of her, in other words Margaret and Maximilian, could only hope to arrange a marriage to some neighbouring prince with little prestige in the eyes of the Spaniards.

While the main concerns in 1517 seemed to have been proper company, morality and ethical values, or respectable behaviour and dressing according to rank, the question of the correct religion soon rose above other

¹³⁸ '... et le soing, peine et travail que'elle a prins, tant pour eslever et intruire nostre personne en vertuz et bonnes moeurs, comme pour dresser et conduire noz affaires par delà au bien et honneur de nous,' cited in Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 139. The wording was undoubtedly also meant to create an illusion of Margaret as Charles's mother, rather than aunt, in order to reinforce her legitimate position.

¹³⁹ Memorandum of Manrique de Lara for Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros 8 Mar. 1516, Alfred Kohler ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 37, nr. 3. King Christian lived openly with his mistress, whose mother was dominating the court. On the disapproval of the Habsburgs: 'la desplaisante et honteuse vie que tient nostre frère et beau-filz le roy de Danmarcke avec une concubinne' Maximilian to Charles Augsburg 18 Jan. 1516, CMA 2, 134, nr. 229.

considerations. When the above-mentioned Isabel of Denmark died in 1526, Charles and Margaret decided to obtain the custody of her children, in order to save them from the Lutheran influence of their father King Christian, and no doubt to keep the hereditary claim to the crown of Denmark in the catholic imperial camp.¹⁴⁰ The increasingly suspicious attitude of the emperor towards the Reformation also influenced his views on the education of his own daughters, as will be discussed below.

The change in the household arrangements did not offer the same kind of occasion for girls as it did for boys. The maturation of boys was tied to their alleged understanding and capability to learn skills important to their future roles, but girls' stages of life were defined first by their consciousness or ability to understand sin, and as teenagers by their ability to bear children. Margaret of Austria declared her eight year old niece Eleanor to be in need of a confessor when she considered the child old enough to understand what she was doing in 1507.¹⁴¹ Childbearing offered more physical restriction, as seen from the way Mary of Hungary in 1533 condemned the plans to marry her niece Christine of Denmark, because giving birth would kill Christine, who, according to Mary, was still a child herself at the age of eleven.¹⁴² Even still, Mary was not criticising the marriage or Christine's future motherhood as such, as bearing children was princesses' ultimate fate.

In 1514, King Louis XII wanted to re-marry and Ferdinand of Aragon wanted the bride to be his grand-daughter, Archduchess Eleanor. Ferdinand wrote harshly that Eleanor's guardian, Margaret of Austria, should not concern herself about the age difference between Eleanor and Louis (36 years) or how thin Eleanor was. According to the king of Aragon, 'in marriages of great kings difference of age is never taken into account', and it was a known fact that thin women get pregnant and bear more children.¹⁴³ Ferdinand instructed his ambassador to tell Margaret, that if she opposed the marriage, she clearly had gotten totally erroneous information; moreover, should she plan to marry the elderly king Louis herself, she could forget it as the king wants a child, and Margaret obviously could not bear him one.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Margaret to Charles 6 March 1526 over 'des enfans de Dannemarcke' CK 1, 193-6, nr. 83.

¹⁴¹ 'que Madame Helyenor a desja bonne congnoissance de bien et mal faire,' Margaret to Maximilian 1507. Max Bruchet. E. Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas* (Lille L. Danel, 1934), 336, X.

¹⁴² Mary to Charles 25 Aug. 1533 Gent, CMCG 2, 288, nr. 449. Geoffrey Parker points out that Charles seems to have confused Christine and her elder sister, Dorothea, but agrees that Charles should have listened to his sister's 'sensible argument'. Parker, *Emperor*, 215.

¹⁴³ 9 Mar. 1514 Ferdinand The Catholic to Juan De Lanuza, *Calendar of State Papers (CSP) Spain Vol. 2, 1509-1525*, ed. G.A. Bergengroth (London, 1866), nr. 163.

¹⁴⁴ King Ferdinand to Juan De Lanuza April 1514, CSP Spain 2, nr 169. King Louis eventually married the princess Mary of England, who was two years older than Eleanor.

In connection with the importance of being able to have children, physical attractiveness was also important.¹⁴⁵ It was a priority for King Henry VII in his quest for bride in 1505, ranking more highly than the potential bride's ability to communicate or her wealth. Henry's detailed inquiries are perhaps an exaggerated example, but they spell out the facts. He instructed his envoys to find out, among other facts, whether the queen of Naples had 'any hair on her lips' (the dutiful envoys reported back that as far as could be perceived, she had none) and 'whether the young Queen speaks any other languages besides Spanish and Italian' (according to the reply, she understands both Latin and French, but does not speak them).¹⁴⁶ Henry's inquiries in general indicated that physical attributes and wealth were of utmost importance, followed by an ability with languages insofar as they helped the couple to understand each other. As we will see later, the prestige of imperial blood and wealth from previous marriages led Henry eventually to forget the queen of Naples and to pursue a Habsburg widow, Margaret of Austria.

The correspondence about Philip II's bride, Maria Manuela, in 1542 further demonstrates the realities faced by a princess. Maria Manuela was the daughter of Catherine of Portugal, a Habsburg herself. The princess was described to her groom first and foremost as an excellent mother candidate for his children. The ambassador's reports told Philip that Maria Manuela was a pretty girl, even if a bit fat. According to the ambassador, she was 'an angel, very generous, quite sophisticated, and loves to dress well. Dances, sings, also knows Latin. Most of all: a good Christian woman with regular periods.'¹⁴⁷ Maria Manuela's mother, Queen Catherine, worried about her daughter's looks and their impact on the success of the marital relations. The concerned mother warned Maria Manuela not to eat too much, pointing out that she looked better thin, and pressed those around her daughter for news from the young couple's bedroom.¹⁴⁸ A successful queen was a fertile queen. Maria Manuela's father, King Joao, additionally advised his daughter to gain Philip's confidence, thinking of the probable regency waiting for her, but that was of secondary importance.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Cyrille Debris, 'Apparences corporelles et politique matrimoniale chez les Habsbourg à la fin du Moyen Âge,' *Apparence(s)* 2 (2008).

¹⁴⁶ June 1505. Henry VII to (and report of) Francis Marsin, James Braybrooke, and John Stile, *Calendar of State Papers Spain Vol. 1, 1485-1509*, ed. G.A. Bergenroth (London, 1862), nr. 436.

¹⁴⁷ Luis de Sarmiento to Cobos 25 July 1542 Lisbon, Jose M. March, ed. *Niñez y juventud de Felipe II : Documentos ineditos sobre su educacion civil, literaria y religiosa y su iniciacion al gobierno (1527-1547) I* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1941), 61. Translated in Nuria Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives: Catalina and Joao III of Portugal and a speculum for a queen-to-be,' in *Self-fashioning and assumptions of identity in medieval and early modern Iberia*, ed. Laura Delbrugge (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 230.

¹⁴⁸ Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives,' 245.

¹⁴⁹ Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives,' 237.

All the choices made in the education and upbringing of the princesses were made by men. Hence, it was hardly difficult for a princess to serve as a subordinate regent to Maximilian or Charles. They had grown up to assume undisputed male dominance. Fathers and grandfathers chose the confessors and tutors for princesses and decided where they were to reside. For example, Charles's daughter María was already married and had been appointed regent of Spain jointly with her husband in 1551 when she still wrote to her father to ask him to appoint her court officers.¹⁵⁰

MUSIC, LATIN AND LIBRARIES FOR WOMEN

The education of princesses in the late 15th century might have found a perfect definition when Pauline Matarasso described Anne of Brittany's schooling as having left her 'with cultivated tastes and a lifelong respect for learning'.¹⁵¹ Anne, born in 1477, was the queen that Charles VIII chose when he repudiated Margaret of Austria in 1491. The sentence could easily have been written about Margaret, who was brought up in the same cultural environment as Anne. As Lisa Jardine and Anton Grafton pointed out, "'cultivation" is in order for a noblewoman, formal competence is positively unbecoming'.¹⁵² The two princesses, Anne and Margaret, were well enough educated to respect and appreciate learning, but that did not mean they were necessarily able to use it. In their youth no-one expected them ever to have any need for thorough formal education. Despite the obvious importance of the princesses for their dynasties, the esteem they had among their peers, and occasional individual cases of powerful women, the emphasis put on their formal education was quite low, at least compared with the effort made to educate their brothers to become capable rulers. A woman in government was an anomaly, and it was not necessary to produce such unnatural cases deliberately. Comportment and virtuous behaviour were far more important than formal education.

Very little is known about the actual education of the princesses, or even of their lives in general during their early youth. As Elizabeth Howe notes regarding the education of Queen Isabel: "The picture that emerges of the early education of the young princess, therefore, depends in large part on what is known of the mature queen."¹⁵³ Similarly Joseph Patrouch acknowledges the dilemma in his book on Charles V's daughter, María, and her daughter, Elizabeth. He admits having constructed an 'imagined life of a

¹⁵⁰ María queen of Bohemia to Charles V 12 July 1551 Valladolid, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 281, LXVIII.

¹⁵¹ Pauline Matarasso, *Queen's Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance*. (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001), 52.

¹⁵² Grafton and Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities*, 33.

¹⁵³ Howe, *Education and Women*, 34.

person who left very few sources of her own. [...] The book is not about the archduchess; it is concerned with what went on about her.¹⁵⁴ Both the existence of female regency and the regents' self-promotion through art patronage have convinced many that especially the princess regents were exceptionally well educated. Anne of Brittany has received appreciative evaluations from scholars other than just Matarasso, but as George Minois has pointed out, should the accounts of her education be true, Anne was indeed better educated than Erasmus. In reality, Anne's formal education ceased when she was eleven years old.¹⁵⁵

It is evident that the princesses' formal education was by no means on the level of their brothers or the royal male scions in general.¹⁵⁶ Several princesses supposedly shared their brothers' tutors, but due to the household arrangements creating a separate female household, as discussed above, that was either not possible or at least highly unlikely. The daughters of Isabel the Catholic were educated by lesser churchmen, while genuinely erudite tutors were reserved for their brother, Prince Juan.¹⁵⁷ An illuminating comparison can be made between the instructions that Charles V and his sister Catherine each gave to their offspring. Charles drafted advice for his son in 1543 when Philip became the regent of Spain. Philip was fifteen years old at the time, but his father warned him not to think himself beyond learning. As a ruler of many countries and different people, it was essential for Philip to learn Latin. Catherine, in turn, as already discussed above, was preparing her daughter Maria Manuela for her marriage with the same Philip later the same year. The same age as her cousin and husband-to-be, Maria Manuela was advised to imitate the example of her pious mother-in-law, Isabel, and avoid court factions. As Philip was to become the ruler of many areas, he was likely to leave the regency to María Manuela at some point. To prepare for that eventuality, Maria Manuela's father did not encourage her to study, but to gain Philip's trust.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Joseph F. Patrouch, *Queen's apprentice: Archduchess Elizabeth, Empress Maria, the Habsburgs, and the Holy Roman Empire, 1554-1569* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2.

¹⁵⁵ Georges Minois, *Anne de Bretagne* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 48-49. Cited in Kathleen Wellman, *Queens and mistresses of Renaissance France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 61. A critical view on early modern princess education in Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 200-1.

¹⁵⁶ Aysha Pollnitz has shown that even in England Elizabeth I's education resembled more her sister Mary's than her brother Edward VI's. Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 241. Also see Howe, *Education and Women*, 34.

¹⁵⁷ Hoffman, *Raised to rule*, 55.

¹⁵⁸ *Cómo ser rey: instrucciones del emperador Carlos V a su hijo Felipe, mayo de 1543*, eds. Rachael Ball and Geoffrey Parker (Madrid/New York: The Hispanic Society of America, 2014). Catherine's instructions in Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives,' 226-252. On Philip's formal education Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent king: a new life of Philip II*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 16-7.

Without a doubt, women could benefit from studies when it came to their virtues and appropriate behaviour, but as Aysha Pollnitz writes, 'whereas male excellence was predicated on responsibility to the *civitas*, female virtue depended on women's successful discharge of their duties to male kin.'¹⁵⁹ The Habsburgs' expectations for their daughters seemed to be moderate, with Charles V being satisfied with his daughters learning to 'read, write, pray and a little Latin'.¹⁶⁰ Pollnitz points out that early modern women produced three genres of writing: the familial letter, the prayer and the translation.¹⁶¹ Unlike their Tudor cousins (if not literally related, at least so called as fellow royals), the Habsburg princesses were not known to write prayers or translations. Apart from Margaret of Austria's courtly poetry, their self-expression was limited to correspondence.

Margaret, who was educated to be the future queen of France, and a contemporary of Erasmus, has been esteemed as an especially cultivated woman. According to one scholar, she impressed the famous humanists as a learned lady, because 'her strong humanist culture is reflected in her fine artistic choices for major commissions of illuminated manuscripts destined in most cases to be offered as presents'.¹⁶² However, it was one thing to appreciate fine arts and cultivate relationships through precious gifts, but quite another to pursue the grammar, rhetoric and eloquence advocated by the humanists. Margaret was undeniably a paragon of queenly values and a skilful politician, but the closest she came to humanist learning was to let Erasmus consult the manuscripts in the library she had inherited from her ancestors, the Dukes of Burgundy.¹⁶³

Unlike modern observers, Margaret's contemporaries were content not to expect erudition from cultivated ladies. When a cardinal from Naples visited Margaret's court in Mechelen in 1517, his secretary wrote in his journal that '[her residence] has a rich and highly decorated library for women. The books are all written in French and bound in velvet with silver-gilt clasps.'¹⁶⁴ Sophisticated women read books, but the content was not that important.¹⁶⁵ When the princesses were called to show off their skills to the admiring ambassadors ready to report back to their masters about the potential of the young women as future queens, the princesses usually performed music or

¹⁵⁹ Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 203.

¹⁶⁰ Count of Cifuentes to Charles V 17 Jan. 1541. March, *Niñez y juventud* I, 132. There is no evidence Charles would have opposed the count's description of sufficient content for his daughters' curriculum.

¹⁶¹ Pollnitz, *Princely education*, 201.

¹⁶² Anne-Marie Legaré, 'La librairie de Madame: Two Princesses and their Libraries,' in *Women of Distinction*, 218.

¹⁶³ Tobriner and Guenther, 'Margaret of Austria,' 388-9.

¹⁶⁴ *The travel journal of Antonio de Beatis*, 92.

¹⁶⁵ For a more positive interpretation of Margaret's reading habits and the evaluation of her library see Eichberger, 'Una librería per donna'.

danced. This applied also to princesses who were noted for their studies as well, such as the daughters of Queen Isabel.¹⁶⁶ The importance of music was further seen in many references to teachers of music and dancing, while the letters rarely mentioned other tutors. Accordingly, Charles V's mother, Juana (1479–1555), was taught religion and Latin by Franciscan Andrés de Miranda, other evidence of her learning refers to music and musical instruments.¹⁶⁷ Despite her Latin studies, Juana was not expected to learn it well enough to compose letters, at last once she was married; her parents Isabel and Ferdinand wrote to their ambassador in England explaining why their daughter had not answered King Henry's letter: she did not have a Latin secretary with her.¹⁶⁸

Juana's children, Charles, Eleanor and Isabel, had as their first tutor, *maistre d'escole*, Juan de Anchieta, a singer and composer attached to Juana's chapel. It is evident that Anchieta's merits were musical rather than pedagogical, because later he followed Juana to Spain in the role of a singer.¹⁶⁹ Anchieta was speculated also to have acted as a mediator between Juana and her husband in their troubled relations,¹⁷⁰ which seems to indicate that the court intrigues surrounding the ducal couple were considered at least as important as the education of their children. Several references were made to the musical skills of the princesses at the time.¹⁷¹ However, music was connected to relaxation and leisure time. Despite its place in their education, they were not expected to perform in public. A rare reference to the role of music when a princess assumed the office of regent was Mary of

¹⁶⁶ Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen Life and Times* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 249.

¹⁶⁷ Miguel Á. Zalama, *Juana I: Arte, poder y cultura en torno a una reina que no gobernó* (Madrid: CEEH, Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2010), 33–5.

¹⁶⁸ Ferdinand and Isabella to De Puebla 28 Mar. 1497, CSP Spain 1, nr. 175.

¹⁶⁹ Mary Tiffany Ferer, *Music and Ceremony at the Court of Charles V* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 42. On Anchieta's biography Kenneth Kreitner, 'Juan de Anchieta and the Rest of the World,' in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara Weissberg (Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 170.

¹⁷⁰ Bethany Aram, *Juana the Mad. Sovereignty and dynasty in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 81; Fuensalida to Ferdinand of Aragon 26 Mar. 1505. Gutierre Gomez de Fuensalida, *Correspondencia: 1496-1509*, ed. Duque de Berwick y de Alba (Madrid: Imprenta alemana, 1907), 337.

¹⁷¹ Ignacio Javier Ezquerro Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas doña María y doña Juana,' in *La corte de Carlos V* 2:2, 133; Linda Maria Koldau, 'Frauen in der deutschen Musikkultur der Frühen Neuzeit,' *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 62:3 (2005), 222. On music in Mary's court, see Jacqueline Kerkhoff, *Maria van Hongarije en haar hof (1505-1558). Tot plichtsbetrachting uitverkoren* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2008), 173–9.

Hungary's statement in 1539 that music 'is an honest pastime and maketh good digestion, for that it driveth away many thoughts'.¹⁷²

Unfortunately, documentation of the Habsburg princesses' writing exercises has not survived, but it is evident that they practised letter writing by sending polite messages within their own family. The young archduchesses under Margaret of Austria's guardianship wrote to her, their 'good aunt and mother', to practise their skills. In a letter dating probably from 1507, the eldest of them, Eleanor, wrote to tell how

notre grant Pere nous a venu visiter de quoy nous avons un grant joie
[our grandfather visited us, which made us very happy],¹⁷³

and some years later she thanked Margaret for sending her news of her brother, Charles.¹⁷⁴ The latter letter has been preserved in its original form, revealing that Eleanor did not practise Italics. Around the same time, Charles too wrote to Margaret. After cordially expressing his wish to see Margaret, her nephew asked whether he could come to Brussels to see the park (which he misspelled 'prac'), and also requested whether the *sommelier* in his household could return to his office.¹⁷⁵ It is obvious that he was encouraged to be more active than his sister and considered a better channel for patronage.

Although Eleanor and Charles wrote to their aunt by their own hand, the children also used secretaries. In 1512, when Eleanor was fourteen, her aunt Margaret mentioned in a letter the secretary of her nieces, Jean Le Veau.¹⁷⁶ Likewise, a letter written by Charles V's daughter, Princess María, at the age of twelve in an early attempt at cultivating family relations with her father-in-law-to-be and her uncle Ferdinand in 1540 was noticeably only signed by the princess.¹⁷⁷ Young princesses evidently received enough practise in how to use their pen when they felt the need, because several letters exist, in which the teenage princesses expressed their grievances. Margaret of Austria protested losing the company of her friend (apparently Charlotte of Tarantino) in a letter to her guardian, Anne of France, at the age of twelve, while fifteen-year-old Mary of Hungary wrote to her brother Charles to

¹⁷² Wriothesley to Cromwell Brussels 17 Feb. 1539. *Letters and Papers* 14/1, January-July 1539, eds. James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (London: 1894), nr. 321.

¹⁷³ Eleanor to Margaret undated, 18th century copy, HHStA Belgien PA 1.1 fol 97r.

¹⁷⁴ Eleanor to Margaret 1510 Archive du Nord Lille (ANL) B18850.29979.

¹⁷⁵ Charles to Margaret 23 Apr. 1511. ANL B18852.30073.

¹⁷⁶ Margaret to Ferry Carondelet July 1512, *Correspondance politique et administrative de Laurent de Gorrevod, conseiller de Marguerite d'Autriche et gouverneur de Bresse 1507-1520*, ed. André Chagny (Mâcon: 1913), 154, LXII.

¹⁷⁷ María to Ferdinand King of Romans, May 1540 Arevalo. HHStA Spanien Hofkorrespondenz 1 Konv 3 fol 85. María had started her signature too near the edge of the paper and had to write the last letters under the beginning of her name, Mar-ia.

criticise the changes he had ordered to the court in Innsbruck in 1520. Mary's younger sister, Catherine, had showed herself confident enough to write to her aunt Margaret to make a plea on behalf of her governess in 1516 when she was only nine years old.¹⁷⁸

Secretaries were also used to translate letters both received and those being written, since not all the Habsburgs had a common language, even within their own family. Most members of the dynasty mastered at least two languages, learning the second one as adults, and especially the Austrian branch of the family also used Latin for practical purposes. Maximilian had in 1477 learned French to be able to converse with his bride, Mary of Burgundy, and the emperor also used French with his children, Philip and Margaret.¹⁷⁹ Margaret learned Spanish as the bride of Prince Juan, whereas Charles V learned the language only after he entered Spain as its king in 1517. His equally French-speaking younger sister, Mary, learned German in Austria. Charles's daughters, María and Juana, wrote mainly in Spanish, which their uncle Ferdinand could understand, but their aunt Mary of Hungary could not.¹⁸⁰

Given the linguistic confusion among the dynasty, it is evident that practicality guided language studies, and the expectations were usually not in touch with reality. In 1506, when Emperor Maximilian was urging that his grandson Charles should learn German, Charles's tutor replied that the six-year-old boy should learn to read first.¹⁸¹ Charles apparently had difficulties in mastering Dutch and German, but he did learn Spanish and Italian. He developed an interest in Latin only in 1550's.¹⁸² Likewise, despite Charles's advice to his son, Philip, to learn languages, when the ambassador, Renard, recommended that Philip should prepare for his marriage with Mary Tudor by practising French and Latin, Renard's letter in French had to be translated

¹⁷⁸ Margaret to Anne of France 17 Mar. 1492, Théodore Godefroy, *Histoire de Charles VIII roy de France et des choses mémorables advenues de son règne depuis l'an 1483 jusques à 1498 par Guillaume de Jaligny, secrétaire de Pierre II duc de Bourbon, André de La Vigne, et autres* (Paris: 1684), 547. Mary's letter in 1520, Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber', 120. Catherine's letter 4 August 1516 to Margaret mentioned in Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 219, note 33. The letter to her brother Charles from 12 Sep. 1518, *Calendar of State Papers Spain, Supplement To Volumes 1 and 2*, ed. G.A. Bergenroth (London: 1868), nr. 38.

¹⁷⁹ Maximilian occasionally wrote to Margaret with his own hand, proving his fluency if not talent in grammar in French. Hans Goebel, 'Die autographen französischen Briefe Kaiser Maximilians an seine Tochter Margarete. Eine kurzgefasste linguistische Analyse,' in *Pays bourguignons et autrichiens (XIVe-XVIe siècles): une confrontation institutionnelle et culturelle*, ed. Jean Marie Cauchies and Heinz Noflatner (Neuchâtel/Bruxelles: Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes, XIVe-XVIe siècles, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ María to Mary of Hungary HHStA Familienkorrespondenz A 31-2-1 5. Juana of Austria to Mary of Hungary 1553. Familienkorrespondenz A-39-8.

¹⁸¹ Parker, *Emperor*, 13.

¹⁸² Parker, *Emperor*, 377.

into Spanish for Philip.¹⁸³ There is no conclusive evidence about the language skills of the various family members, but most of them evidently spoke fewer languages than their biographers claim.

There existed no consistent programme of language studies for children. In principle, the princesses who married foreign princes needed to at least understand their confessor.¹⁸⁴ Princess Juana, when leaving Spain for the Low Countries in 1495, was taught the basics of French by reading familiar religious texts, such as the Ten Commandments. The same method was applied to her namesake and granddaughter, later betrothed to the prince of Portugal.¹⁸⁵ The next generation of Spanish princesses, the daughters of Philip II, learned French from their mother Isabel of Valois's ladies-in-waiting.¹⁸⁶ Occasional mentions revealed the skills of the various family members, such as Charles's request that his sister Mary would translate his letter to their sister-in-law Anne of Hungary, 'because I cannot write in German'.¹⁸⁷ Of the three of them, only Mary mastered both French and German.

The use of Latin varied markedly in different parts of the Habsburg lands. In Austria, it was used for communication, such as the conversations that Ambassador Fuensalida reported having with Emperor Maximilian.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, it is likely that it was taught to Maximilian's grand-daughter Mary in Austria, for her to be able to communicate in the multilingual surroundings as the queen of Hungary. Mary's nieces, the eldest three daughters of Ferdinand, were taught at least Italian and Latin, a skill they demonstrated for their uncle, Emperor Charles, in 1541.¹⁸⁹ In contrast, the court in Burgundy was solely French speaking, and the use of Latin was mastered by the ducal secretaries. In Spain, even though the daughters of Queen Isabel had been admired for their Latin,¹⁹⁰ Isabel very likely did not actually speak it.¹⁹¹ Charles V advised his son to learn Latin to prepare

¹⁸³ *Cómo ser rey*, Fol 7v. Renard letter cited in Parker, *Emperor*, 451, note 77 page 662.

¹⁸⁴ Karl-Heinz Spiess, 'Unterwegs zu einem fremden Ehemann,' in *Fremdheit und Reisen im Mittelalter*, ed. Irene von Erfen and Karl-Heinz Spiess (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1997), 31. Spiess also points out, that sometimes the decisions on dynastic marriages were done with speed that did not leave the bride much time to adjust to the linguistic challenges of her new surroundings.

¹⁸⁵ Jose Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, 'Portugal y Castilla a través de los libros de la princesa Juana de Austria ¿Psyche lusitana?' in *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa*, 1654.

¹⁸⁶ Hoffman, *Raised to rule*, 71.

¹⁸⁷ 'pars que ne luy say escripe en alemant', Charles to Mary 10 Oct. 1529, CMCG 1, 6, nr 8.

¹⁸⁸ Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, ix.

¹⁸⁹ Margot Rauch, 'Verkaufte Bräute? Kaiser Ferdinands I. Töchter zwischen Bild und Welt,' in *Nozze italiane. Österreichische Erzherzoginnen im Italien des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Sabine Haag (Wien: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2010), 30.

¹⁹⁰ Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 25.

¹⁹¹ Weissberger, *Isabel rules*, 263.

himself for the task of governing and to be able to communicate with all his subjects, but was content to have his daughters only learn enough to understand the Mass.¹⁹²

It will be shown later in the chapter on Mary of Hungary's education that the benefits of learning Latin may have contributed decisively to Mary's skills as a regent and an advisor to her brother, Charles V. Nevertheless, she was the only one of the regents we can assume was influenced by a classical education. The rest of the princess regents achieved the fruits of learning through their advisors and confessors. While considering the differences between the formal education of the princes and the princesses, it must be noted that most of the skills taught to boys were targeted at tasks that were then beyond female constraints, such as military leadership and direct contacts with the people they were ruling. Finally, the idea was that a regent should represent the 'natural prince' of the hereditary dominions, so their mother tongue was the crucial factor rather than their skills in foreign languages.

Nevertheless, the strongest still prevailing illusion regarding the princesses' schooling is their alleged excellent knowledge of Latin. According to 19th-century scholarship Margaret of Austria 'like all the illustrious women of her time spoke and wrote it with ease'.¹⁹³ As recently as in 2018, the catalogue of an exhibition showcasing the collections of the Habsburg princesses trusts that Margaret of Austria saw that 'all of [Margaret's brother] Philip's children learned several languages including Spanish and Latin'.¹⁹⁴ Language studies are the simplest way to assess the learning of the young Habsburgs, because the lack of sources prevents us from speculating on their curriculum in general. The princesses' Latin studies can be taken as an example of the gap between the still-prevailing view on princess education and the reality of the sources assessed in this work. Despite the belief that a cultivated regent raised learned princesses, it is highly unlikely that in reality any extensive study programmes were carried out in the Habsburg classrooms. There is no evidence that the children in question, except Mary of Hungary, would have mastered several languages as adults. Erasmus himself lamented the state of learning and mentioned only Queen Isabel the Catholic as a Latinist among the royal ladies of his own time.¹⁹⁵ If he had known that the scions of the ruling family in his own native Low Countries were fluent Latinists, he undoubtedly would have praised them in the hope of

¹⁹² Count of Cifuentes to Charles V 17 Jan. 1541 March, *Niñez y juventud I*, 132.

¹⁹³ Francisque Thibaut, *Marguerite d'Autriche et Jehan Lemaire de Belges* (Paris: Leroux, 1888), 13.

¹⁹⁴ Anne Marie Jordan Gschwendt and Dagmar Eichberger, 'A Discerning Agent with a Vision. Queen Mary of Hungary (1505-1558)' in *Women. The Art of Power*, 37.

¹⁹⁵ Erasmus, *A declaration on the subject of early liberal education for children*, translated and annotated by Beert C. Verstraete, CWE 26 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 323.

some kind of reward, as he did Mary of Hungary, as will be seen in Chapter three.

Furthermore, if the princes who were destined to rule and whose education received much more attention did not study languages, it is doubtful that the princesses did. Being more educated than the males would have been a waste of time and had to be hidden. When the illustrious Isabel's daughter, Catherine of Aragon, arrived in England in 1501, she could not demonstrate her knowledge of Latin because that would have revealed that her father-in-law, Henry, had not mastered the language.¹⁹⁶ Thus, even if Erasmus wanted to think that his Latin panegyric to Archduke Philip had met with Philip's approval, 'by his eyes, his expression, and (as they say) his very brow' when he delivered it in January 1504,¹⁹⁷ Lisa Jardine plausibly points out that it is not known if Philip understood enough Latin to comprehend the contents of the humanist's oratory.¹⁹⁸

The language skills of the princes and princesses must be considered from the standpoint of utility. There is no doubt that Margaret of Austria did speak Spanish, because she used it when talking with Spanish envoys and guests,¹⁹⁹ but the lists of the languages allegedly studied are not a reliable indication of reality. Margaret's skills did not help her nephew, Charles V, who notoriously did not speak Spanish when he arrived in the Iberian Peninsula in 1517, and it was reported to his aunt that he only gradually learned the language.²⁰⁰ In 1525, the English envoy complained while at Charles's court in Spain that he had found only one man in Charles's council whom he could talk Latin with, as the envoy could not understand their French.²⁰¹ It is quite likely that Erasmus's introduction of the classical languages as the central basis of a liberal arts education still had its effect on 19th-century historians. However, the 16th-century royals were more interested in maintaining the hierarchy and bringing up princesses who could communicate with their future husbands. Those royal grooms were presumably not Latinists.

However, the fact that the education of the princesses did not cover statecraft or classical languages did not mean they did not enjoy reading. The opportunities for study were naturally restricted by the availability of books. Research on the libraries of Margaret of York (Margaret of Austria's step-grandmother and godmother), Charlotte of Savoy (queen of France and Margaret's mother-in-law), Anne of France and Margaret herself have revealed that they all had significant libraries. Margaret left hers to her niece

¹⁹⁶ Garret Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1941, reprint 1971), 36.

¹⁹⁷ Erasmus, *Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*, ed. Lisa Jardine, xvii, note 19.

¹⁹⁸ Erasmus, *Panegyric*, 111, note 2.

¹⁹⁹ *The travel journal of Antonio de Beatis*. 89.

²⁰⁰ Laurent de Gorrevod to Margaret 28 May 1518 Saragosa, *Correspondance de Laurent de Gorrevod*, 380, CL.

²⁰¹ Lee to [Henry VIII.] 7 Sep. 1526 Granada, *Letters and Papers* 4, ed. Pascual de Gayangos. (London: 1882). nr. 2470.

Mary of Hungary.²⁰² Compared with their contemporary royal cousins in Britain,²⁰³ it seems that the Habsburg princesses attracted far fewer eager humanist tutors, perhaps because there were plenty of young men to be courted in the Habsburg circles or because the scholars looking for support knew that not many financial opportunities were available. Overall, the Habsburgs were undoubtedly so convinced of their dynastic claim and importance that their princesses did not need to convince their fathers, like the Tudor princesses, of their learning via translations.²⁰⁴ In addition, there were no religious tensions, and if there were any, the Habsburg princesses were not on the side where devotion was to be expressed via literary exercises.

CONCLUSION

Children were an essential part of politics in a system based on a hereditary claim to power. Royal daughters were brought up to be queens within the dynastic continuum. The traditional education for princesses emphasised chastity, proper conduct and prudence as well as skills in music and dancing. Compared to princes, princesses' curriculum did not include studying the skills needed for governing.

Christine de Pizan had insisted that women were as capable as men, thus the division of work was a practical arrangement, not a sign of women's limitations.²⁰⁵ The prevailing attitude of the early 16th century was more inclined towards the interpretation that a woman could have similar virtues as a man, but 'in relation to their function'.²⁰⁶ This was precisely how the Habsburg regent-queenship was meant to work. Female regency included a strong inherent appreciation for queenship and its values. A princess regent

²⁰² Anne-Marie Legaré, 'Charlotte de Savoie's Library and Illuminators,' *Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History* 4 (2001) ; Wim Blockmans, 'The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess,' in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion, and The Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 29-46 ; Legaré, 'La librairie de Madame'; Marguerite Debae, *Librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche*, (Bruxelles : Bibliothèque royale Albert Ier, 1987) ; Lemaire, 'La bibliothèque de la reine Marie de Hongrie,' 119-40.

²⁰³ Aysha Pollnitz, 'Humanism and Court Culture in the Education of Tudor Royal Children,' in *Tudor Court Culture*, ed. Thomas Betteridge and Anna Riehl (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press 2010), 42-58.

²⁰⁴ Aysha Pollnitz, 'Religion and translation at the court of Henry VIII: Princess Mary, Katherine Parr and the Paraphrases of Erasmus,' in *Mary Tudor: New and Old Perspectives*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

²⁰⁵ Pizan, *The book of the city of ladies* I.11.1

²⁰⁶ Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance notion of woman: a study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 56.

was not supposed to step in and fill the role of a prince; she was not a woman doing a man's job. Hence, she did not need to be educated like a prince.

A considerable exception in the education of princesses was made when Catherine of Aragon, Isabel the Catholic's daughter and Charles V's aunt, asked Juan Luis Vives to write instructions for her daughter Mary. Printed in 1524, *De Ratione studii puerilis* offered a radically different curriculum for a princess than Vives's previous work on Christian women.²⁰⁷ However, as Pollnitz points out, it remained as isolated attempt, which Vives did not explain or endeavour to offer to other princesses. Neither did the Habsburg princesses read the work. Margaret and Mary were already adults, and Charles's daughters were beyond the reach of humanist tutors.²⁰⁸ It should also be noted that 16th-century women who had received a formal education, such as Thomas More's daughter, Margaret Roper, were not expected to take part in the government.²⁰⁹

A closer look into the princesses' regencies reveals that even when they served as mere representatives of their dynasty, their tasks included transmitting orders and informing the ruler about conditions in the Low Countries. Those tasks alone would have required argumentative and persuasive skills at least as much as the cultivated habits provided by their queenly education. However, there is very little indication that they were deliberately taught those skills. In summary, a princess looking for ways to participate in the exclusive male machinery of government beyond just signing prepared documents had to find the support and tools somewhere else, as will be seen in the second chapter of this study.

²⁰⁷ Aysha Pollnitz, 'Christian Women or Sovereign Queens? Representing the Schooling of Mary I and Elizabeth I,' in *Tudor Queenship*, ed. Alice Hunt and Anna Whitelock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 130-1.

²⁰⁸ For a critical view on whether Mary Tudor benefitted from the humanist attention, see Andrew Taylor, 'Ad omne virtutum genus? Mary between Piety, Pedagogy, and Praise in Early Tudor Humanism,' in *Mary Tudor: New and Old Perspectives*, 103-22.

²⁰⁹ Peter Iver Kaufman, 'Absolute Margaret: Margaret More Roper and 'Well Learned' Men,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20:3 (1989). Margaret Roper has been also seen as a part of his father's politics, but in indirect way. Jaime Goodrich, 'Thomas More and Margaret More Roper: A Case for Rethinking Women's Participation in the Early Modern Public Sphere,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 39:4 (2008). The same of course applies to the princess regents, as will be discussed below.

2 MARGARET OF AUSTRIA 1480–1504

COURONNE MARGARITIQUE – MARGARET AND HER CROWN

Margaret of Austria's childhood was undeniably exceptional. She was born in 1480. Her father was a knightly Austrian archduke who had come to marry her mother, the heiress of Burgundy. She lost her mother at the age of three and her father was forced to accept a peace treaty that included her marriage with the crown prince of France and required her to be handed over to the French king immediately. The French sent her back ten years later, after calmly calculating that the heiress of Brittany was a more useful queen than the Duke of Burgundy's little sister. The little sister was, however, also the daughter of the King of the Romans and grand-daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor. She married the crown prince of Castile and Aragon in 1498, only to lose her husband later the same year. She next married the Duke of Savoy. She finally had some years of idyllic happiness as a popular duchess and consort of a chivalric duke. Her last husband lost his life after a brief illness in 1504, and the twenty-four-year old princess became a widow once again.

The facts alone are quite incredible, but it is even more fascinating how most of them are usually cited from a book Margaret commissioned herself. After the death of her last husband, Philibert of Savoy, her court poet, Jean Lemaire de Belges, penned a work he titled *Couronne Margaritique*.²¹⁰ The manuscript described an allegoric crown, *couronne*, that Margaret had earned by her virtuous patience in enduring many hardships throughout her life. Despite its artistic and erudite form, it was the only coherent contemporary description of the dramatic chain of events that made Margaret a romantic figure. It became part of Margaret's image as a symbol of refined melancholy, reinforced by art and her own poetry. However, at the same time it presented the potential regent as a popular princess, witty in conversation and patient when challenged.

The story of *Couronne Margaritique* functions on two levels. It is an account of a virtuous but unfortunate princess, while at the same time it

²¹⁰ Presentation copy of *Couronne Margaritique* that had belonged to Margaret's brother is Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek Cod. 3441. The work is published in *Œuvres de Jean Lemaire de Belges* IV, ed. Jean Stecher (Louvain: J. Lefever, 1891). See also nr. 85 in the catalogue of *Women of distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria*, 246-7. William Prescott thought *Couronne* was compiled of Margaret's writings by Lemaire, in his *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*. Vol II. 3rd edition. (London: Bentley, 1842), 326. Some scholars still take it as a chronicle. For example Matarasso, *Queen's Mate*, 77. For Charles VIII's biographies using *Couronne* see for example Yvonne Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son Milieu (1470-1498)* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1975), 107.

portrays Margaret's youth as a journey towards compensation for her misfortunes. It was unusual for a princess to recount her life, even if indirectly, at the age of twenty-five. Margaret, however, had a mission. The work served as part of Margaret's attempts to participate in the government of her family's realms, as will be shown in Chapter six. Despite being a literary work bound to its own genre, *Couronne* has a strong connection to reality and links the virtues it describes to the actual facts of Margaret's life.²¹¹ The structure of the work, which combines poetry with prose and allegory with historical facts, has inspired different readings among literary scholars.²¹² Although the text highlights Lemaire's rhetorical talents as much as its protagonist's life and virtues, it is an intriguing source on the characteristics of an ideal princess.

The pivotal message of Lemaire's work was that Margaret had in every sense the right to become a queen. *Couronne Margaritique* presents her as virtuous and talented, but also insists on the inherent value of her ancestry. Lemaire depicted Margaret as she intended to be seen, measured with the criteria by which princesses of her time were assessed. She had a princess's virtues: constancy, patience, popularity and intelligence. As a source describing actual events, it was a memoir of the dramatic events written with the hindsight of Margaret having survived all the numerous twists and turns, emphasising Margaret's wit, queenly features and stamina.

The simple existence of such a work as *Couronne Margaritique* testifies to the fact that Margaret grew up in a culture that appreciated literature. She had been encouraged to read, and she used books for recreation, gifts and self-promotion. She presented, for example, a lavishly illustrated copy of *Couronne* to her brother in 1506.²¹³ However, the most dominant feature of her upbringing was that she was groomed to demonstrate queenly comportment that included polite conversation and good sociable skills. She never achieved such queenship as the spouse of a ruler, but it was the reason for the surroundings she grew up in. Most of Margaret's later admired skills as regent trace back to her experience as princess in the courts of France and Spain. Nevertheless, the training she received during her youth was within the conventions of traditional queenship. I endeavour to show that those feminine skills enabled her to establish an agreeable working relationship with her advisors and supporters, but they did not prepare her to do the work of a prince.

²¹¹ The best documented work on Margaret's early life is Bruchet *Marguerite d'Autriche*.

²¹² Summary analysis in the different interpretations in Ellen Delvallée, 'Spécification et consolation dans La Couronne margaritique de Jean Lemaire de Belges' *Actes de colloques et journées d'étude* (13) 2015. The interpretation made in the context of Margaret's life-story in Françoise Blattes-Vial, 'Le manuscrit de la Couronne margaritique de Jean Lemaire de Belges offert par Marguerite d'Autriche à Philippe le Beau en 1505 La rhétorique et l'image au service d'une princesse assimilée à la paix,' *Le Moyen Âge* 1 (2015).

²¹³ Blattes-Vial, 'Le manuscrit', 83.

PREPARING FOR QUEENSHIP, 1482–1500

Margaret of Austria was born on 10 February 1480. Jean Molinet noted her birth in his chronicle as ‘the second child of madame Mary of Burgundy, spouse of Maximilian duke of Austria, only son of emperor Frederick III’.²¹⁴ The chronicler’s two lines included all the essential facts about the baby. She was the second child to unite the dynasties of Burgundy and Austria, and her grand-father was the Holy Roman Emperor.

Margaret lost her mother, Duchess Mary, already in 1482. With Mary’s death vanished Margaret’s father’s chances to control the situation in the Duchy of Burgundy. Maximilian was considered a foreigner in his wife’s duchy, and custody of the ducal children, Margaret and her brother Philip, was taken over by the city of Ghent. The peace treaty with France was signed, and as part of it, Margaret was to marry the French king’s son. Princesses were often engaged when they were only a few years old, but usually the young brides continued maturing in the care of their family and nurses, regardless of the alliances and treaties that their up-coming marriages were meant to strengthen. The exceptionally strict clauses of the treaty required that Margaret be taken to France immediately.²¹⁵

As a symbol of the peace treaty and as the future queen, Margaret was at the centre of many celebrations on her way to meet her groom.²¹⁶ When she was handed over to the French, the orator delivering the speech for the occasion compared Margaret to Esther and to all her illustrious namesakes in the royal house of France and the ducal house of Burgundy. All the previous namesakes had brought different counties or provinces as their dowries and so contributed to the growth and wealth of the Duchy of Burgundy. Now, Margaret was to bring some of those areas back to France.²¹⁷ Esther, in turn, was frequently cited as a model for early modern queens and comparing the young princess to her emphasised Margaret’s future role as a queen who would act as a petitioner for her subjects in front of the king, her husband. Margaret was thus put in a larger context both as the particular case of bringing the Burgundian dowry to France and as a general prototype of a queen.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Jean Molinet, *Chroniques I-V*, ed. J.-A. Buchon (Paris: Verdrière, 1827–1828), II 228.

²¹⁵ Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*. Band 1: Jugend, burgundisches Erbe und römisches Königtum bis zur Alleinherrschaft, 1459–1493 (München: Olenbourg, 1971), 166.

²¹⁶ Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son Milieu*, 28.

²¹⁷ Discours adressé au Dauphin par les ambassadeurs [Abbé Saint-Bertin] 16 Jan. 1483, *Lettres inédites de Maximilien, duc d’Autriche, roi des Romains et empereur, sur les affaires des Pays-Bas*. I, ed. Louis Prosper Gachard, 31–38, XIV. Also Molinet, *Chroniques II*, 379–82.

²¹⁸ Susan Zaeske, ‘Unveiling Esther as a Pragmatic Radical Rhetoric,’ *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 33:3 (2000), 204–6.

The young 'Esther' in the centre of the festivities was carried by her nurse to face the reality of queenship. In order to make sure she was a suitable bride for a prince, she was presented naked to Princess Anne of France and her entourage.²¹⁹ After the princess was accepted as fit for motherhood and giving birth to the next generation of royal children in the future, she was taken first to Paris and then to Amboise, where she was formally married in July 1483 to the thirteen-year-old Prince Charles. When Charles's father, King Louis XI, died some weeks later, little Margaret became the Queen of France.

The guardians of the young king and his child bride were the king's older sister, Anne of France (1461–1522), and her husband, Pierre de Beaujeu (1438–1503). Anne, the eldest child of King Louis XI, was considered the actual regent of France despite not holding the official title. She is usually regarded as a great influence on Margaret during her childhood due to her prominent position in court and in the government.²²⁰ That influence is difficult to define or prove, but Anne's writings shed light on the prevailing attitudes towards princess education in France. Anne's short treatise, *Enseignements à ma fille* ('Lessons for my Daughter'), offered advice to her own daughter, Suzanne (1491–1521).²²¹ Her book emphasised a fear of God and appropriate conduct according to Suzanne's rank. Anne prompted her daughter to read to avoid being idle and advised her on how to make pleasant conversation. Anne's book testifies to her ability to reading and express her own opinions, although at the same time her style reveals a lack of formal education.²²² It is, however, one of the few texts addressing the reality of a high-born daughter, highlighting the importance of choosing proper clothing as well as engaging in proper behaviour and speech. Tracy Adams has further demonstrated how Anne's work draws from the works of Christine de Pizan, promoting the need for proper comportment to appear virtuous, and thus attain 'cunning female intelligence', which could be used to influence one's husband.²²³

However, Anne and Margaret did not share the same court, and as a child Margaret might not have grasped the nature of Anne's power behind the scenes at all. Anne was still undeniably influential in indirect ways. She, for example, chose as Margaret's attendants only people who were part of her own clientele.²²⁴ The surviving account books reveal how Anne of France's

²¹⁹ Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*, 10.

²²⁰ Matarasso, *Queen's mate*, 40. David-Chapy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie*, 576–8.

²²¹ Anne de France. *Enseignements à sa fille: suivis de l'Histoire du siège de Brest*. Édition Tatiana Clavier & Éliane Viennot. (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006).

²²² Sharon L. Jansen 'A note on the translation' in Anne of France. *Lessons For My Daughter*. Translated from the French with Introduction, Notes and Interpretive Essay by Sharon L. Jansen. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004). 23.

²²³ Adams, 'Appearing virtuous,' 117.

²²⁴ David-Chapy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie*, 576–7.

advice worked in practice. The bookkeeping done by Margaret's treasurer in 1483–84 show that she had her own household apart from her mother-in-law, the queen-widow Charlotte of Savoy.²²⁵ Dressing up was part of the visual nature of the court and the queen's role in it, and a great deal of care was put into young Margaret's dresses and shoes.²²⁶ She learned charity by giving alms and had her own chapel. Even if she did not travel so much as Charles VIII and his sister did, she spent life as a royal from the start.²²⁷ The treasurer's notes reveal nothing of Margaret's formal education. Her early biographer mentions her practising drawing, painting and vocal and instrumental music.²²⁸ It seems doubtful that she studied languages, because it would have been highly unlikely that she did so when her husband did not, and both Charles VIII and his formidable sister Anne spoke only French.²²⁹

Couronne Margaritique does not comment on Margaret's life as a child either, with the narration beginning only when Margaret became older and her life took a dramatic turn. In 1492, alarmed by Margaret's father, Maximilian, marrying the heiress of Brittany and thus threatening France, Charles and his sister made a drastic decision. To annex Brittany to France, Charles repudiated Margaret and marched with an army to Brittany, where Maximilian's bride in turn left Maximilian, and consented to marry King Charles.²³⁰ *Couronne* describes the comportment Margaret showed in the face of this humiliation as a perfect performance of controlled and level-headed behaviour, illustrating precisely the sort of prudence that Christine de Pizan advocated in her writings. According to *Couronne*, this was a difficult decision for Charles, who cried when taking his leave of Margaret. He explained to Margaret that he had to consent to Maximilian's constant demands that he return Margaret to her father. Margaret, according to

²²⁵ Florence Trombert, 'Une reine de quatre ans à la cour de France: Marguerite d'Autriche, 1484-1485,' in *Autour de Marguerite d'Écosse: Reines, princesses et dames du XVe siècle*, ed. Geneviève Contamine and Philippe Contamine (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999), 125-6.

²²⁶ Trombert, 'Une reine de quatre ans,' 136-137. The same applied to her sister-in-law to-be princess Juana – most of the expenses concerning her in her childhood were associated with her clothing and accessories. Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 25-6.

²²⁷ Trombert, 'Une reine de quatre ans,' 148-9 shows that at least at the time she stayed mostly in Touraine.

²²⁸ Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*, 14.

²²⁹ Matarasso, *Queen's mate*, 35-36; Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son Milieu*, 22. Things might have been different, had she stayed in Burgundy, but although there were plans to appoint the famous humanist Rudolf Agricola to tutor the ducal children in 1481, nothing came of the plan, and there is little evidence that Philip would have mastered Latin later. Joseph Strelka, *Der burgundische Renaissancehof Margarethes von Österreich und seine literarhistorische Bedeutung* (Wien: A.Sexl, 1957), 18.

²³⁰ Anne and Maximilian had been only married by proxy, because the groom was fighting in Hungary at the time. Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I 2, Reichsreform und Kaiserpolitik* (München: Oldenbourg, 1975), 325-6.

Couronne, calmly responded that she could not believe it would be her father's wish that Charles was to marry his wife.²³¹ From other sources, it appears that *Couronne's* depiction of the repudiation was closely linked to the way in which other contemporaries also saw it. Besides the humiliation for Margaret and Maximilian, the case was also a political scandal and judged an immoral deed in general. In his *Memoirs*, the famous Burgundian Philippe de Commynes noted how this act against God's will was the cause of the death of all Margaret's and Anne of Brittany's children.²³² Margaret's grandfather, Emperor Frederick III, told a French delegation in 1492 that he refused to negotiate with King Charles because of the injustice against his granddaughter, the king's legal wife, a 'pious child'.²³³

Margaret's first surviving letter originates from the time she awaited her return to Burgundy, and it was addressed to Anne of France. It was a hastily written note requesting Anne's assistance in her attempt to keep her friend with her, but the name of the friend was not mentioned:

Madame ma bonne tante, il faut bien que ie me plaigne à vous comme en celle à qui i'ay mon esperence, de ma cousine que l'on m'a voulu oster, qui est tout le passe-temps que i'ay & quand ie l'auray perduë ie ne scay plus ie feray. Parquoy ie vous prie que veuillez tenir la main pour moy qu'elle ne me soir osteëe, car plus grand déplaisir ne me scauroit-on faire [Madame my good aunt, I have to turn to you as the one whom I hope can help me, with my cousin who has been sent away from me, although she is the only entertainment I have here and without whom I do not know what to do. Therefore, I ask you for help because her departure is the worst setback I can imagine.]²³⁴

Lemaire's narrative claimed that Margaret handled the insulting situation with unwavering patience and proud spirit. The pages of *Couronne* record a witty remark made by Margaret when her courtiers commented on the sourness of the wine after one rainy summer, saying that the wine branches (sarments) were that year as good as the king's oaths (serments). She was above Charles's humiliating deeds and she was bright as well.²³⁵ Cruelly, Lemaire hinted that Queen Anne was limping, thus her appearance could not

²³¹ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 73–4.

²³² 'Mais toutes ces dames ont eu quelque malheur en leurs enfans' Commynes, Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires Livres IV–VIII*, ed. Jean Dufournet (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 66–7. Margaret miscarried a child in Spain in 1498 and Anne of Brittany's children with Charles VIII died all in infancy.

²³³ Susanne Wolf, *Die Doppelregierung Kaiser Friedrichs III. und König Maximilians 1486–1493* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005), 274.

²³⁴ Godefroy, *Histoire de Charles VIII*, 547.

²³⁵ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 105–6.

have been compared with Margaret's perfection, and sourly added that Margaret had lost her title to someone she could call her step-mother.²³⁶

Margaret's father, Maximilian, showed remarkable flair for propaganda in sending the leading nobles to fetch the princess home after the peace treaty was signed in 1493.²³⁷ This turn caused the Mantuan ambassador in the court of the Duke of Bavaria to report to his master that Margaret was now 'in the hands of the Burgundians', whereas Maximilian later used her return as one of his own heroic deeds when he 'freed' his daughter from the hands of the French.²³⁸ The teenage princess was still seen as a pawn symbolising her precious dowry rather than as an active individual. Her father had plans for Margaret and negotiated a double marriage between the son and the daughter of the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, and his own two children. In 1498, Margaret left for Spain. Maximilian, always appreciative of proper royal titles, sent a message to Margaret's in-laws before the marriage suggesting that they give Juan a kingship so Margaret could regain her lost title of queen.²³⁹ The wish was not fulfilled, but Lemaire did his best to present Margaret as a person who would have deserved to become the queen.

Couronne Margaritique presents the brief marriage as an exotic interlude. The burning love her husband Juan felt for her was very much a theme of royal marriages at the time.²⁴⁰ According to Lemaire, Margaret charmed not only Prince Juan but also her in-laws, and she won the hearts of the masses.²⁴¹ The brief period of happiness was ended by cruel fate. The couple married at Easter and Juan perished the following October. Later, Margaret gave birth to a stillborn child. According to Lemaire, she remained very popular among the people. He described in detail how the adoring people flocking to see her forced Margaret to seek out the shadows of olive

²³⁶ 'une autre, qui touchant hautesse dextraction ne de formosite corporelle, ne de rectitude, perfection et integrité de membres, nestoit en rien à elle comparable. Et qui plus est, se pouvoit dire sa belle mere,' Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 126–7. This part is crossed from the manuscript held in Vienna (Codex 3441). Anne's limp was noted also by others. Mathes Schmidl to Albrecht of Bavaria 26 Dec. 1493 Linz. *Regesta Imperii XIV* Ausgewählte Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Maximilian I 1493–1519, ed. Hermann Wiesflecker et al. (Wien: Böhlau, 1990–8), nr. 2880.

²³⁷ Molinet, *Chroniques*, IV, 387.

²³⁸ Benedetto Tosabecci to Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua: Munich 15 Aug. 1494. *Regesta Imperii XIV*, 1 nr. 3108. On the poem 'Do er sein tochter ledig macht' Thomas Ulrich Schauerte, *Die Ehrenpforte für Kaiser Maximilian I. Dürer und Altdorfer im Dienst des Herrschers* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2001), 270.

²³⁹ 1496 Instructions of Maximilian to Gaspar de Lupian. Joseph Chmel, *Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke zur Geschichte Maximilians I. und seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein 1845), CXXXI.

²⁴⁰ Gillian B. Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict in Sixteenth-Century Castile* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2018), 22.

²⁴¹ Pedro Mártir de Anglería to Cardenal de Santa Cruz 13 June 1497, CODOIN 9. (Madrid: Imprenta Góngora, 1953), nr. 176.

trees to escape the burning sun while waiting to be able to enter a city so as to avoid an awkward amount of attention. Here, the treatise emphasises Margaret's popularity over that of the crown princess, Isabel. She was the Queen of Portugal and, as the eldest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabel, the heir after Juan's death. According to *Couronne*, Isabel did not receive more than formal applause compared with the tumultuous love the crowds had for Margaret.²⁴² Readers at the time could not ignore that for the second time Margaret had lost her crown to someone she outclassed.

The tragic events were again also training for exhibiting queenly behaviour under challenging conditions. The tangible gain from Margaret's time in Spain was a chance to learn Castilian and form a personal relationship with her in-laws, Isabel and Ferdinand, and with her sister-in-law, Catherine, who was to marry the Prince of Wales in 1501. The Queen of England, Elizabeth of York, and the king's mother, Margaret Beaufort, sent a message from London that it was necessary for Catherine to use the opportunity to learn to converse in French with Margaret, because 'these ladies [in England] do not understand Latin, and much less, Spanish'. They also recommended that Catherine become used to drinking wine because the water in England was not drinkable.²⁴³ Combining the two, language and suitable drinking behaviour, asserts the practical approach to a princess's language studies. Perhaps Catherine in turn taught Margaret to speak Castilian. Margaret's skills in Castilian attracted also wider admiration than just Lemaire's prose.²⁴⁴ For example, one traveller reported that he heard her speaking 'excellent Spanish' with Cardinal of Aragon during the cardinal's visit to her court in 1517.²⁴⁵ Margaret later also later corresponded with her nieces' governess, Anna de Beaumont, in Spanish.²⁴⁶

It is evident that the two princesses, Margaret and Catherine, at some point also studied together, because the Italian scholar, Alessandro Geraldini, later sought their patronage, appealing to his role as their former teacher. Geraldini did not specify what exactly he had taught the princesses, but he later complained that girls in general were difficult to instruct.²⁴⁷ Unfortunately, his treatise on teaching women, *De eruditione nobilium pullarum*, has not survived.²⁴⁸ He had not tutored Margaret for more than

²⁴² Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 91.

²⁴³ De Puebla to Ferdinand and Isabel 15 July 1498, CSP Spain 1, nr. 202.

²⁴⁴ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 111.

²⁴⁵ *The travel journal of Antonio de Beatis*, 89.

²⁴⁶ Anna de Beaumont to Margaret 1512 ANL B18856 30494-30498,30503-30506.

²⁴⁷ John Easton Law, 'Alessandro Geraldini and the Tudor Court (1501-1518),' in *Alessandro Geraldini e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno (Amelia, 19-21 novembre 1992)*, ed. Enrico Menestò (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1993), 284.

²⁴⁸ Charles Fantazzi, 'Vives and the emarginati,' in *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 69.

five months, but apparently he had enjoyed some success, as Margaret accepted his pleas for patronage and reminded Catherine to do the same.²⁴⁹

When Margaret returned the second time to Burgundy, she had become a respectable princess whom the ambassador of the Catholic monarchs regularly visited.²⁵⁰ A widowed princess was also important enough to raise suspicions. Ferdinand and Isabel gave their ambassadors instructions to stop any plans to replace their daughter Catherine as the princess of Wales with Margaret or to have Margaret participate in the government of the Low Countries.²⁵¹ Margaret now had a role in her family's public ceremonies, such as acting as godmother in her nephew Charles's baptism right after her return in 1500.²⁵²

Margaret also cultivated her relationship with her father at the time, who had left the Duchy of Burgundy to her brother Philip in 1492 to concentrate on his duties as King of the Romans. Maximilian's letter to Margaret, sent around the time of her return, shows that she had written him about Archduchess Juana's safe delivery and her own proposal that the child would be called Maximilian. Notably pleased with this suggestion, Maximilian wrote in his answer that he was content with the child being named after Duke Charles of Burgundy, Maximilian's illustrious father-in-law.²⁵³

CONCLUSION

Couronne Margaritique describes how Margaret of Austria as already before her twentieth birthday performing a dramatic version of an ideal queenship. Her comportment throughout the setbacks reflected her virtuous character. In addition, she had charmed her husband and his subjects; she had even had a child and was a victim of cruel misfortune when she gave birth prematurely to a stillborn daughter.²⁵⁴ The accuracy of Lemaire's narration of the facts, even if polished and delivered in the most persuasive manner, indicates that the story was Margaret's as she herself perceived it. She would hardly have presented the manuscript to her brother if it was not what she considered a fashionable and competent work on her own life. She also kept a copy for herself, as the inventory of 1523 testifies.²⁵⁵ Besides the main themes

²⁴⁹ Margaret to queen Catherine of Aragon Mechelen 28 May 1518, LP 2, nr. 4195.

²⁵⁰ Fuensalida to Ferdinand and Isabel 13 Sep. 1500 Brussels. Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 151.

²⁵¹ Ferdinand and Isabel to Fuensalida August 1500, Granada. Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 570-

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²⁵² Rolf Strøm-Olsen, 'Dynastic Ritual and Politics in Early Modern Burgundy: The Baptism of Charles V,' *Past & Present* 175 (2002): 44.

²⁵³ Maximilian to Margaret March 1500 Augsburg. *Regesta Imperii* XIV 1 nr 9973a.

²⁵⁴ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 137.

²⁵⁵ Henri-Victor Michelant, 'Inventaire des vaisselles, joyaux, tapisseries, peintures, manuscrits, etc., de Marguerite d'Autriche, régente et gouvernante des Pays-Bas, dressé en son palais de Malines le

of her virtuousness and popularity, *Couronne* showcases Margaret's ability to contribute to courtly conversation. Many witticisms, mainly apt anecdotes combining verbal skills with quick understanding, decorate the text. The culmination of those clever wordplays was the epitaph Margaret, according to Lemaire, composed for herself when the ship carrying her to Spain was caught in a storm in 1498:

*Cy gist Margot la gentil' demoiselle
Qu'ha deux marys, et encor est pucelle*²⁵⁶
here rests gentle Margot, married twice but still a virgin.

Therefore, we can be sure Margaret was brought up to know how to speak out in a courtly environment, but what else had she learned? Regarding her schooling from infancy, the only source left is the Bible, where she had written the names of her maids of honour.²⁵⁷ It is indisputable that her reading habits were formed by the environment she was living in as a child, and Margaret apparently enjoyed reading also later in life. Though the Italian Beatis dismissed her library as being 'for women', the inventories show that the beautifully bound books did have substantial content.²⁵⁸ Collecting books was apparently part of Margaret's material cultivation, but the acquisitions she made to complement the library, which she had inherited from her step-grandmother, Margaret of York, indicate that she preferred history and chivalric romances to the more religious tastes of the elder Margaret.²⁵⁹

As noted above, Anne of France's treatise shows that reading was a part of the life of a French princess. Anne prompted her daughter to 'read lives of saints -- and also the sayings of the philosophers and ancient sages, whose teachings should be a true rule and example for you',²⁶⁰ and she cited numerous church fathers and philosophers. She mentioned individual writers, such as Boethius, but usually referred to 'a certain philosopher', most likely because she had read the compilation books typical to her time. Anne of France's library has been shown to contain works by all the authors she mentioned, so it was conceivable that she had read them herself.²⁶¹ Therefore, it is quite possible that Margaret in her youth read some of Anne of France's books or those of her mother-in-law, Queen Charlotte de Savoy.

9 juillet 1523.' *Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire* Deuxième Série, 12 (1871), 111.

²⁵⁶ Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 106.

²⁵⁷ Hanno Wijsman, 'Femmes, livres et éducation dans la dynastie bourgondo-habsbourgeoise. Trois Marguerites à la loupe,' *Publication du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes* 44 (2004), 186.

²⁵⁸ Eichberger, 'Una librería per donne'.

²⁵⁹ Debae, *Librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche*, xx.

²⁶⁰ Anne of France, *Lessons For My Daughter*, 28.

²⁶¹ Anne of France, *Introduction* (Sharon.L. Jansen), 10.

Margaret's apparent patronage and personal taste for literature and poetry were, however, a private pastime. Laments and poems that use Margaret's life for their motifs serve as proof of the interest in court poetry among those in the circles gathered around Margaret. Some of that poetry was written in a form that makes it possible to attribute them to Margaret, although with rather speculative evidence.²⁶² Two poems set to music were attributed to her by their editor, Martin Picker. The line lamenting the death of Margaret's brother, in Latin, uses a personal expression that could have only been written by Margaret, because she was the only one who could call Philip 'my brother', *Doleo super te frater mi, Philippe Rex Optime*.²⁶³ It has sometimes been seen as proof of Margaret's ability in Latin.²⁶⁴ However, as the opening sentence is a paraphrase from the Bible, *Doleo super te, frater mi Jonatha*, one also set to music in Margaret's court,²⁶⁵ it cannot necessarily be personally attributed to Margaret, and even if seeking to use it as proof that Margaret sometimes wrote in Latin, it does not confirm her skills. Rather, later evidence affirms that her Latin was quite limited at best. At the beginning of her regency, in 1507, her closest advisor sent Latin texts to her secretary to be translated for her.²⁶⁶

Had Margaret seen her literature pursuits as supporting her political career in any way, she surely would have affirmed her authorship and ensured that her father, her brother and later her nephew had known of the poems. As this was not the case, it is evident that such cultivation of talents was not expected from queens. The same is indicated by a report to the Duke of Bavaria written in 1493. The ambassador in the imperial court described Margaret as 'beautiful, sensible and well-mannered'.²⁶⁷ Writing from the court of Margaret's father in Austria, the ambassador clearly was not writing what he had seen himself, but what he had been told and what he found plausible for a princess, and that did not include writing poetry or reciting Latin. Margaret's childhood was quite typical for early modern princesses, and there is next to nothing to demonstrate what kind of formal education

²⁶² Mary Beth Winn, 'Marguerite of Austria and her complaintes,' *The Profane Arts* VII-2 (1998), 156.

²⁶³ Martin Picker, *The Chanson Albums of Marguerite of Austria: MSS 228 and 11239 of the Bibliotheque Royale de Belgique, Brussels* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), 56.

²⁶⁴ Iongh, Margaret of Austria, 108. Henne, *Histoire du Règne de Charles-Quint*, 15-17.

²⁶⁵ Vulgate II Samuelis 1:26; Nigel Davidson, 'The Motets of Pierre De La Rue,' *The Musical Quarterly* 48:1 (1962): 32.

²⁶⁶ '...pour ce quil est en latin le feres translater par Marnix en francoys...', Gattinara to Margaret 22 Nov. 1507, Leo Maurits Gerard Kooperberg. *Brieven van Mercurino Arborio de Gattinara aan Margaretha van Oostenrijk (1507-1508)*. Margaretha van Oostenrijk. (Amsterdam: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1908), 362.

²⁶⁷ Mathes Schmidl to duke Albrecht of Bavaria. Linz 26 Dec 1493, *Regesta Imperii* XIV 1m Nr. 2880.

she received. However, she assumed the role of an ideal princess well enough for one of her biographers to conclude that ‘we can be sure she received the best available education’.²⁶⁸ While there is no evidence of her schooling, it is indisputable that her experience came to be appreciated, as is evident in the admiration expressed for her learning of Castilian, knowledge of local customs and increasing popularity. Proper royal comportment combined with the desire to be a popular princess and an awareness of her rank as the emperor’s daughter were the assets that Margaret possessed when she was appointed regent.

²⁶⁸ Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 30.

3 MARY OF HUNGARY 1505–1529

PRINCESS OF BURGUNDY IN AUSTRIA

Mary of Hungary was another princess profoundly affected by the dynastic politics of her family.²⁶⁹ However, she did not commission a story of her youth like her aunt Margaret had done, and neither did she gain a reputation through her popularity. Her reign as the queen consort was in a country that did not recognise the need for a queen to complement the monarchy, and thus she lacked the opportunity to present herself as such. In the 1520s, Hungary only needed a warrior king to unite the country for the fight against the Turks. There were, however, new expectations for princesses that Mary was able to meet. She could impress the supporters of reformation and raise hopes for the acceptance of Lutheran doctrine among the Habsburgs. Those hopes were soon forgotten, and in the end, Mary directed her competence towards the benefit of her family. She was indeed more appreciated among her siblings than she would have been among the intellectuals of her day.

As noted earlier, the children of Philip the Fair and Juana were the best hope amidst the dynastic scheming at the beginning of the 16th century. Mary was the youngest to be born in the Low Countries, only three months before her parents left for Spain, never to return. Born in Brussels on the 15th of September 1505, she was engaged to the crown prince of Hungary in March 1506, a curious detail being that the prince in question was born only in July of the same year.²⁷⁰ The marriage was hastened in the hope of bringing the complicated negotiations over the Hungarian succession to an end. The situation in Hungary was unstable due to competing factions and the threat posed by the Turks, but Emperor Maximilian wished to establish a claim to the throne for his dynasty. In 1514, regent Margaret sent Mary to Austria according to Maximilian's instructions. After a festive wedding in Vienna, where Mary married Louis of Hungary and her brother, represented by Maximilian, married Anna of Hungary, the nine-year-old groom returned to Hungary. Mary remained in Austria until 1521, together with her new sister-in-law Anna. As another peculiar detail, it was to be determined later which brother, Charles or Ferdinand, would eventually be Anna's husband.

²⁶⁹ Mary's most comprehensive, if not very scholarly biography is still Iongh, *Mary of Hungary*. The scholarly interest in her has produced studies on more defined fields, such as her finances as dowager queen, her political career and her court in Heiss, *Königin Maria von Ungarn und Böhmen*; Gortervan Royen *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*; Kerkhoff, *Maria van Hongarije en haar hof*; Orsolya Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context (1521-1531)* PhD Thesis Central European University, Budapest 2010. Summary on the research in Heiss and Réthelyi, 'Maria, Königin von Ungarn und Böhmen (1505-1558), als Thema der Forschung.'

²⁷⁰ Heiss, *Königin Maria von Ungarn und Böhmen*, 1-2.

The choice fell on Ferdinand, who as Anna's spouse eventually shared her claim to the crown of Hungary after King Louis's death in 1526.

The competence and effectiveness Mary showed as regent have been viewed by scholars as proof of her having received a thorough education. However, just as with her aunt Margaret, next to nothing is known of her studies in her youth. The move to Austria meant that Mary's youth was spent in a court without a prince or a princess regent. Mary and Anna had their residence in Tirol, but the restless emperor seldom stayed anywhere for long and deprived Mary of chances to practise representational queenship. If the lack of practice in courtly comportment was replaced by reading and writing exercises, there is no evidence of it.

As a queen in Hungary from 1521 to 1526, Mary was an outsider two times over: in the eyes of the German princes, suspicious of her family's thirst for power, she was the symbol of Habsburg politics, whereas the Hungarian magnates considered her German. She had evidently during her youth in Austria changed her main language to German, although she also still spoke French. German was the *lingua franca* of Hungary, but Latin was the official language of the court.²⁷¹ The language studies of Mary and Anna were affected by the multi-lingual nature of the area, and they were taught Latin. Later, in her twenties, Mary emerges in the sources as a talented Latinist, although apparently only in the accounts of humanists or reformists who wished to advance their own cause through her support. Yet, it could be argued that the books that she studied while learning Latin were those that taught her to argue persuasively and ponder and justify her decisions. Her ties to the Lutheran reform movement during and shortly after her short reign as the Queen of Hungary, and the short interest Erasmus showed in her as a patroness, have prompted some scholars to even call her 'the Erasmian of the Habsburg dynasty'.²⁷²

Erasmus dedicated his book on widowhood, *De Vidua Christiana*, to Mary after her husband, King Louis, perished in a battle against the Turks in 1526, partly as a result of the active promotion of her court preacher, Johann Henckel. Despite thus gaining some fame as a patron of the humanists, the real training for her future regency came from managing her notable dowager estates in Hungary and Bohemia as well as acting temporarily as her brother Ferdinand's regent in 1527.²⁷³ However, she was also a competent letter writer and composed her letters to her brothers with care.

Mary's letters are the best proof of her influence on her brother's policies concerning the Low Countries. They attest to a fundamental grasp of the political situation, an ability to ponder the options available and skill at convincing the reader. I suggest that Mary acquired the tools for her successful regency as a result of various factors. Her education as the future

²⁷¹ Réhtelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 193.

²⁷² Walsh and Strnad, 'Eine Erasmianerin im Hause Habsburg.'

²⁷³ Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber', 128-62.

queen of an unstable region, her rather modest patronage of humanism and her efforts to ensure her financial survival as a young dowager queen all gave her skills and gradually experience at successfully expanding the limits of her regency and taking a prominent role in the government of the Low Countries during her twenty-four years in office.

IMPERIAL GRANDDAUGHTER, 1505–1521

Regent Margaret of Austria's court in Mechelen consisted of one household for the regent and a separate one for her nephew Charles (b.1500) and nieces Eleanor (b.1498), Isabel (b.1501) and Mary. Mary was only two years old when her father died, and it became obvious that her mother was not going to return from Spain. Maximilian, as the children's guardian, appointed Margaret to be in charge of them, and the girls had a Spanish noblewoman named Anna de Beaumont as their governess. Anna was a distant relative through their mother, Juana, and had arrived in the Low Countries with the duchess in 1498.²⁷⁴ Anna reported to Margaret in Spanish, but apparently she did not teach the language to the children.²⁷⁵ Margaret in turn reported to Emperor Maximilian. In their correspondence, Maximilian called them 'our children', sometimes even '*nos communs enfans*',²⁷⁶ whereas for Margaret they were 'monsieur my nephew and madames my nieces'. Most of the references to them concerned their health, either preventatively, like Maximilian's wish to have them leave Mechelen for Antwerp due to an epidemic,²⁷⁷ or as news on their various illnesses. The letters revealed who was Margaret's main charge. In 1509 she wrote to Maximilian

Monseigneur, à l'heure que monseigneur mon nepeur et moy avyons délibéré d'aller à Malines pour y faire la feste de Toussains, et le surplus de l'yver, est survenu que madame Isabeau, ma niepce , a prins la petite véreulle, et depuis madame Marye. Et encoires, Monseigneur, cejourd'huy, me sont venues nouvelles que madame Leonor se plaindoit de la teste...et que lesdits médecins dient que ceste maladye est contagieuse, et que monseigneur mon nepveur la pourroit prendre, sont d'avis que l'on ne doit bouger ny mener mondit seigneur et nepveur à Malines , pour éviter le dangier desdites véreulles²⁷⁸ [Monseigneur, when monseigneur my nephew and myself were ready to leave for Mechelen to celebrate the All Saints,

²⁷⁴ Moeller, *Eléonore d'Autriche et de Bourgogne*, 13, note 116.

²⁷⁵ Anna de Beaumont's letters to Margaret ANL B18856. Report on Charles's progress from Spain Saragosa Laurent Gorrevod to Margaret 28 May 1518 Saragosa. *Correspondance politique et administrative de Laurent de Gorrevod*, CL.

²⁷⁶ Maximilian to Margaret 4 July 1508 CMM 1, 68, nr.51.

²⁷⁷ Maximilian to Margaret 20 Sep. 1507 Innbruck CMM 1, 12-3, nr. 6.

²⁷⁸ Margaret to Maximilian 29 Oct. 1509 Bruxelles, CMM 1, 202, nr. 153.

it yesterday turned out that my niece madame Isabel had contracted smallpox, and after her madame Mary. Then today I received the news that madame Eleanor was complaining of a head-ache . . . and because the doctors say this illness is contagious and monseigneur my nephew might catch it, they think I should take him to Mechelen to avoid the danger.]

However, it is from Margaret's letters to her father that the rare facts of their education have been deduced. Margaret recommended in 1507 to Maximilian their tutor, Louis Vacca, who had 'taught monsieur my nephew letters and manner to his great benefit'.²⁷⁹ Margaret's court has been sometimes described as 'humanist'. The concept of a 'humanist court' as such is of course a paradox, as Erasmus despised court ceremony, although he claimed to support the existing institutions.²⁸⁰ The manners of the court, with all the corresponding lifestyle choices, pomp and ceremony, was nevertheless the core of the existing institutional order and Margaret's surroundings were famous for providing young people a place to practise courtly behaviour. The reputation of the court and proximity to Charles, Prince of Castile and Archduke of Austria, grandson of both the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, attracted nobles to send their offspring to be brought up alongside the young prince and his sisters. The Count of Furstemberg, whose son Frederick had been sent to the court the year Mary was born, wrote to his wife about how delighted he was in Frederick's knowledge of French and Latin and how he had learned to sing, dance and play the clavichord.²⁸¹ Mechelen was indeed a good place for a German noble to learn French, as that was the language of the court. Another student in Mechelen, eager to practise French and courtly manners, was Anne, daughter of the English ambassador, Thomas Boleyn.²⁸²

The correspondence of archduchess and her father reveals also that they were aiming for the crown for each of the princesses.²⁸³ To become a queen, a princess needed to marry a king. It took political scheming and lengthy negotiations to gain for the princesses a position where they could perform the role of queen that they had been trained for by practising the role and imitating the ideals of rulership. The little we know about Mary's childhood was in any case that it consisted of her education in the etiquette of queenship. Charles and his sisters shared the same tutor until 1507,²⁸⁴ but

²⁷⁹ 'prent journelement à le instruyi e en lettres et bonnes meurs, dont il prouffite grandement', Margaret to Maximilian December 1507, CMM 1, 35, nr. 23.

²⁸⁰ Maria Golubeva, *Models of Political Competence. The Evolution of Political Norms in the Works of Burgundian and Habsburg Court Historians, c. 1470-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 74.

²⁸¹ Moeller, *Eléonore d'Autriche et de Bourgogne*, 56.

²⁸² Retha M Warnicke, 'Anne Boleyn's Childhood and Adolescence,' *The Historical Journal* 28:4 (1985), 944.

²⁸³ Margaret to Maximilian 1511, CMM 1, 401, nr. 306.

²⁸⁴ Strakosch-Grassmann, *Erziehung und Unterricht im Hause Habsburg*, 26.

Mary was then only two years old. Some ideas about the princesses' early life can be obtained through Mary's sisters. The eldest sister, Eleanor, received her first book of religious texts on her seventh birthday,²⁸⁵ and when she was nine years old Margaret wrote to Emperor Maximilian recommending that Jean de Witte continue as confessor for Eleanor, who had according to her aunt reached the age to understand the difference between right and wrong. Margaret emphasised that governess Anna de Beaumont had told her that de Witte had 'honest conversation and good manners.'²⁸⁶ Erudition was noticeably not a recommendation in this context.

The few visits by Emperor Maximilian to the Low Countries were important for the children.²⁸⁷ The presence of the emperor brought the children onto the stage of diplomacy and, during his visits, they were allowed to take part in dancing, both for their own entertainment as well as for the ambassadors to see them.²⁸⁸ Margaret apparently generally approved of the children participating in the court celebrations as a part of learning about their roles in the future. She even wrote to Charles's governor, the Lord of Chièvres, in 1511 about how she had heard of her nieces' disappointment over being forbidden to dance and asked him to let the princesses take part, even when she herself could not be present.²⁸⁹

Besides Margaret's involvement in the upbringing of her nieces and worrying about their health, she participated in their marriage negotiations as well. In 1509, she told her father that the Portuguese dowager queen had approached her concerning her nieces and reminded her that should they accept the match, they still had two more princesses for other alliances.²⁹⁰ Charles's marriage with the Princess Mary of England was the regent's main goal, but the princesses' marriages were important as well. By 1510, there were discussions about Isabel's possible marriage to the son of the Duke of Guelders. Margaret and her imperial father pondered the suitable age for marriage, with Maximilian feeling that the proper age for a wedding was fourteen and sixteen for consummating the marriage.²⁹¹ However, both Margaret and Maximilian were suspicious of sending the young princess to Guelders and doubted the prestige of the match.²⁹² The Lord of Guelders was a mere duke, and their aim was to marry all the girls of their family into royal

²⁸⁵ Wijsman, 'Femmes, livres et éducation,' 186.

²⁸⁶ 'Tonneste conversacion et bonnes meurs' Margaret to Maximilian 1507. Bruchet & Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 336, X.

²⁸⁷ Eleanor to Margaret [1513?] HHStA Belgien PA 1.1 fol 97r.

²⁸⁸ Young and Wingfield to Henry VIII 27 June 1512, LP 1, nr. 1252.

²⁸⁹ 1511 september Margaret to Chièvres, Bruchet & Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 348, XXVII.

²⁹⁰ Margaret to Maximilian July 1509, CMM 1, 164, nr. 128.

²⁹¹ Maximilian to Margaret 10 June 1510, CMA 1, 206, nr. 83.

²⁹² Margaret to Maximilian 23 Dec. 1510 Mechelen, CMM 1, 357, nr. 271.

houses.²⁹³ Isabel did not leave Margaret's court for another five years, and then she left for Denmark, where she became the queen of King Christian II.

In 1513, the preparations for Mary's voyage to Austria began, and Margaret started discussing her retinue with the emperor.²⁹⁴ Margaret assured her father that she would appoint attendants for Mary according to the emperor's wishes.²⁹⁵ The decisive role of the patriarch in the decisions concerning the young princess's company emphasises its importance in the educational process. The journey to Austria as part of the marriage agreement brought young Mary to the centre of attention, as it had for the three-year old Margaret on her way to France thirty years earlier. On the fourth of May 1514, Margaret reported from Louvain that *madame Marie* was on her way.²⁹⁶

Perhaps Mary at her young age had not yet been thoroughly trained in the courtly manners that her aunt had mastered so well. Margaret's influence on Mary's upbringing seems to have ceased after she left her aunt's court. It is, however, known that Margaret sent an envoy to the Hungarian court to report on the health and character of the prince Mary was to marry, but the results of this mission are unknown.²⁹⁷ Margaret apparently did not give her nieces any written advice before their departure from her court. However, some of her views can be filtered from the messages she sent to Eleanor when she had married the King of France in 1530. Through her ambassador in the French court, Margaret prompted Eleanor to win the support of the mother and sister of King Francis through friendly and amiable conduct.²⁹⁸ But, although Margaret advocated solidarity among royal women, she also demanded that her nieces do their part in reflecting the family's rank. She scolded her niece Isabel for appearing in the Low Countries with a dress and entourage not fitting for a princess of her family when Isabel arrived with her husband King Christian after their flight from Denmark in 1523.²⁹⁹

Mary's wedding in Vienna in July of 1515 was a lively diplomatic occasion. Similarly as the siblings Margaret and Philip had in 1495 married Prince Juan and his sister Juana, Mary's union with Prince Louis was joined with that of Louis's sister Anne and Mary's brother. It was a curious double ceremony because, while it remained open which brother, Charles or Ferdinand, Anna should marry, Emperor Maximilian himself stood proxy for the Habsburg groom. The young brides did attract the attention of the

²⁹³ Margaret to Maximilian 1511, CMM 1, 401, nr. 306.

²⁹⁴ Margaret to Maximilian 1 April 1513, CMM 2, 126, nr. 479.

²⁹⁵ Margaret to Maximilian 24 Mar. 1514, CMM 2, 234, nr. 557.

²⁹⁶ Margaret to Maximilian 4 May 1514, CMM 2, 253, nr. 569.

²⁹⁷ Margaret to Maximilian in 1514. CMM 2, 278, nr. 587.

²⁹⁸ Margaret's instructions to Jean le Sauch for advice to Eleanor 21 July 1530, *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche et de ses Ambassadeurs a la Cour de France concernant l'exécution du Traité de Cambrai (1529-1530)*, ed. Ghislaine De Boom (Bruxelles: Lamertin, 1935), 131, nr 62.

²⁹⁹ Gorter-Van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 52.

spectators. Sir Robert Wingfield reported to King Henry VIII that Anna was very beautiful and that both the children of the King of Hungary were taller than their age would indicate. He described Mary as ‘now 10-year-old, little of stature in comparison of the other, but quick of spirit’.³⁰⁰ Unfortunately, the envoy did not specify how Mary’s brightness manifested itself.

Although Mary received her share of international attention during the wedding festivities, after the congress she and her new sister-in-law enjoyed a more sheltered life. Both the brides remained in Austria due to their age, the unstable situation in Hungary and the fact that that Anne’s potential grooms were still preoccupied, Charles in other dynastic negotiations and Ferdinand in Spain. After first years in Vienna, Mary and Anna moved to Innsbruck in 1517. The seat of the counts of Tyrol had not had a resident princess since the death of Maximilian’s second wife, Bianca Maria Sforza, in 1510. The account books and household ordinances provide some details about life in the court of the princesses during this time. We learn, for example, about how many candles the courtiers consumed on winter nights, but not what was read by the light of those candles.³⁰¹

Maximilian was seldom present, and the princesses were trusted to the care of *Hofmeister* and *Hofmeisterin*, Sigmund von Diedrichstein and his mother-in-law Paula von Firmian.³⁰² The court was supposed to run according to the rigid household ordinances that regulated life in the court and aimed to keep the ladies’ household, *Frauenzimmer*, strictly under control. As Paul Heinig has noted, the orders for the two princesses reflected their age and were obviously targeted at young girls.³⁰³ A household ordinance from 1517 or 1518 contained mostly detailed orders on when the doors could be opened and on surveillance of the ladies. It also defined the days that guests could visit, with the rest of the time being dedicated to ‘work and learning’. The nature of learning was not specified, but the orders went into some detail with instructions on how and when the young ladies were allowed to dance or go hunting.³⁰⁴

Markedly more attention was paid to keeping the young women of the court under the watchful eye of their guardians than on their actual activities, just so long as they stayed in the space and among the company indicated. An analysis of the members of their court has shown them to be surrounded by girls of their own age, mainly daughters of Austrian nobles, but also

³⁰⁰ Sir Robert Wingfield to Henry VIII. 31 July 1515, LP 2, nr. 766.

³⁰¹ Benecke, *Maximilian I*, 107.

³⁰² Konrad von Moltke, *Sigmund von Dietrichstein: die Anfänge ständischer Institutionen und das Eindringen des Protestantismus in die Steiermark zur Zeit Maximilians I. und Ferdinands I.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 78-9. Paula von Firmian was the former Hofmeisterin of Maximilian’s second wife Bianca Maria Sforza (1472-1510).

³⁰³ Heinig, ‘Umb mer zucht und ordnung willen,’ 313-4.

³⁰⁴ The ordinance is edited in Anneliese Gatt *Der Innsbrucker Hof zur Zeit Maximilians I. 1493-1519*. Phil. Diss. Innsbruck 1943, 195-7.

including the illegitimate daughter of King Sigismund of Poland.³⁰⁵ Hofmeister von Diedrichstein was apparently worried about being made responsible for this assembly of young women and feared that Mary and Anna might make complaints, but Emperor Maximilian assured the loyal Austrian that it was understandable that the young were sometimes a bit free and cheeky in their comments.³⁰⁶

At the age of twelve, Mary did not make a very favourable impression when Antonio Beatis, the secretary to Cardinal of Aragon, visited Innsbruck in 1517 and saw both the princesses. The Italian did not apparently even talk with the princesses, but after praising Anna for being lovely and amiable, Beatis evaluated Mary in the following manner: ‘The other, sister of the Catholic king and betrothed to the King of Hungary, is ten or eleven years old, dusky and not very good looking to my eyes.’³⁰⁷ If Mary was learning something behind the locked doors of the ladies’ quarters, she apparently was not supposed, or expected, to demonstrate it.

Despite the lack of sources describing Mary’s formal education, there is no doubt that she learned German in addition to her native French and that she was also taught Latin. Mary learned German since it was used in Austria, and she later used German word order and German idioms in her French letters.³⁰⁸ Anna, however, despite of her approaching marriage with a prince who could not speak German, did not use Mary’s company to learn French, as we know from the letter where Charles asked Mary to translate his messages to Anna.³⁰⁹ Hence, Mary joined the multilingual Habsburgs, among whom Emperor Maximilian was known to speak several languages, at least French and Latin besides his native German.³¹⁰ The court of Buda was also multilingual, due to its structure consisting of several nationalities. Latin was the official language, and the letters from Mary as the queen to her brothers were written solely in Latin.³¹¹ The mix of languages was well demonstrated in the lists of Mary’s personnel as the queen: she had a Latin secretary, a

³⁰⁵ Also Christopher of Württemberg and the prince of Cyprus Eugen de Lusignan were residing in Hofburg. Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 76. For the list of courtiers Appendix 1.

³⁰⁶ ‘kunden (wir) wol gendunkhen daz die jugendt etwas frech und frey sein’ cited in Moltke, *Siegmund von Dietrichstein*, 79.

³⁰⁷ *The travel journal of Antonio de Beatis* 18 July 1517 Innsbruck, 62-3. The secretary later during his voyage met Margaret and was impressed with her ‘great and truly imperial presence’, Ibid. 89.

³⁰⁸ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 54 note 32.

³⁰⁹ Charles to Mary 10 Oct.1529. CMCG 1, 6, nr 8.

³¹⁰ Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, 1 Jugend, 75. Wiesflecker lists also Slovenian, Dutch, English and Spanish. His follower in Austria, Ferdinand, was born in Spain and learned French before eventually learning German, and boasted in 1561 that his son Maximilian spoke six languages, probably German, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin and Czech. Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 9. Ferdinand’s older daughters were taught German, Italian and Latin. Rauch, ‘Verkaufte Bräute?’, 30.

³¹¹ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 54.

German secretary, a French secretary, a Bohemian secretary and a Hungarian secretary.³¹²

It has been even assumed that the learned humanists of the University of Vienna were in charge of Mary's education when she first arrived in Austria.³¹³ However, although her wedding was described by the humanist Johannes Cuspinian, then working as a diplomat for the emperor, Mary's possible connections with the university are not documented.³¹⁴ In Innsbruck, a Latin tutor named Nicolas Clever was on the payroll of the court between 1519 and 1523.³¹⁵ In any case, the level of Mary's skills is hard to prove. The letter Mary and Anna sent together to Margaret of Austria in 1519 to lament the death of Emperor Maximilian, written in Latin, could well have been composed by a tutor or at least under his supervision. The princesses used decorative language to confess their trust in divine protection, although their earthly hopes were on the arrival of 'our most illustrious bridegroom brother, the most renowned King Ferdinand, from whose sweet conversation in this, our great and so immeasurable grief, we hope that we may win some alleviation'.³¹⁶

Among the plausible explanations given for why Mary learned Latin when her siblings did not, the most credible have to do with the place where she was educated and even more with the role she was to fulfil. It was evidently seen as necessary preparation for queenship in Hungary. Most likely the books used to teach Latin were the same ones that trained Mary to prepare lists for her own consideration and to make convincing arguments. Gorter-Van Royen speculates that the inspiring European environment, Emperor Maximilian and the humanists attached to his court were behind Mary's upbringing.³¹⁷ However, Maximilian's possible eagerness to participate in his

³¹² Appendix 1 to Réthelyi *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*.

³¹³ Iongh *Mary of Hungary*. 37.

³¹⁴ Johannes Cuspinianus, *Congressus ac celeberrimi conventus caesaris Maximiliani et trium regum Hungariae, Boemiae et Poloniae in Vienna Pannoniae facti brevis ac verissima descriptio* (Wien 1515).

³¹⁵ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 60. He does not seem to have any scholarly merits to his name.

³¹⁶ quod immortalī Deo placuit, id nobis miseris mortalibus non displicere debere, sed omnimodam nostram spem in Domino collocandam censuimus. Cujus sacrosanctam Majestatem pro salute piissime illius anime continuis precibus defatigamus, atque ut serenissimum sponsum et fratrem nostrum, charissimum regem Ferdinandum incolumem ad nos cito perducatur – citation in Christopher Hare, *The high and puissant princess Marguerite of Austria, princess dowager of Spain, duchess dowager of Savoy, regent of the Netherlands* (London/New York: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 254-5. In mentioning this letter Jane Stevenson while noting Mary's skills as Latinist confuses her to be daughter of Beatrice of Aragon, which would have made her a daughter of Italian humanist tradition, but that is not obviously the case. Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 251.

³¹⁷ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 41.

grandchildren's education would have naturally been directed towards his heir, Charles. Despite his wishes that Charles would learn languages (often ignored or at least not carried out very successfully), Maximilian's appreciation for humanist learning stemmed rather from the desire to promote his family through the works of the humanist scholars³¹⁸ than his devotion to female education.

QUEEN OF HUNGARY AND CHRISTIAN WIDOW, 1521–1530

Mary's reputation as the Queen of Hungary between the years 1521 and 1526 underscored the prevailing conventional importance of proper comportment. The two attributes attached to her by those who had seen her around the time she left Austria were pride and a quick intelligence.³¹⁹ Both were suitable for a queen in moderate measures, but not necessarily on their own the qualities that would have made for an exemplary queen in the eyes of her contemporaries. Orsolya Réthelyi's dissertation on Mary's court as the Queen of Hungary shows that it was a multilingual and multinational environment, troubled by the disputes among Hungarian nobles.³²⁰

In 1521, two years after the death of Emperor Maximilian, the two princesses, Mary and Anna, left Innsbruck for their weddings. Mary met her brother Ferdinand for the first time during his wedding festivities with Anna in Linz.³²¹ Already four years earlier, Maximilian had been forced to defend Mary's marriage against the rumours he had heard circulating in the Low Countries over the problems Louis was experiencing with his realms. Apparently annoyed by the rumours, Maximilian wrote to his daughter Margaret that King Louis was a noble-hearted, good Catholic, sustaining the war against the Turks and guarding the Christian faith.³²² The then eleven-year-old prince could hardly have been much of a war hero, and once Mary's retinue reached the Hungarian court, the scepticism of Margaret's courtiers seemed to have been justified. Young Louis could not come to meet his bride because he was still on an unsuccessful military campaign against the Turks.³²³ While the court in Innsbruck had been in financial difficulty, the

³¹⁸ Parker, *Emperor*, 13; Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The visual ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 16.

³¹⁹ *Relazioni* I – II, 64. Stracke, *Die Anfänge der Königin Maria*, 30.

³²⁰ Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*.

³²¹ Ferdinand had left Spain in 1517 and after spending some time with Margaret of Austria in her court was now coming to take over the Austrian heritage of their grandfather Maximilian. Raymond Fagel. 'Don Fernando in den Niederlanden. Die Jugendjahre eines spanischen Prinzen,' in *Kaiser Ferdinand I.: Aspekte eines Herrscherlebens*, ed. Martina Fuchs (Münster: Aschendorff, 2003).

³²² 'comme prince de très noble cuer et bon catholique, soubstient continuellement la guerre contre les Turcs pour la foi crestienne' Maximilian to Margaret 1 Jan. 1517 CMM 2, 338, nr. 633.

³²³ Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 90.

King of Hungary was quite poor in comparison; at least according to some reports, the queen had to give clothes to the king, who did not even have enough to eat.³²⁴

The royal couple was still very young. At the time of their re-union, Louis was fifteen years old and Mary sixteen years old. In 1522, during the royal couple's stay in Prague, Mary wrote to a noblewoman in the Low Countries that her husband was 'a paragon of husbands'.³²⁵ Her positive view was not shared by all. The king and queen were accused of behaving too freely and of being morally corrupt. The king reportedly spent too much time in his wife's quarters, a notable indication of the importance of the ladies' separate living arrangements in courts as a sign of morality and decency.³²⁶ The interest in reformed ideas was also considered a sign of unruly conduct in imperial circles. Contemporaries suspected that the King Louis's maternal relatives were the evil influence behind the scenes, headed by the Margrave of Brandenburg, or else the imperial ambassadors, who in the eyes of the Hungarians had gained too much influence through Mary.³²⁷

In 1523, a summit was held in Wiener Neustadt, officially to discuss the threat of the Turks, but also to address the issues of the Hungarian court. It was attended by Louis and Mary as well as Ferdinand and Anna and the envoys of Charles and the King of Poland. Among the topics discussed was a suggestion for the reorganisation of King Louis's court, a clear sign that the young royals of Hungary were not displaying the proper dignity required. According to one of the participants, King Louis was told that now that he was 'bearded and wed', he was respected and consequently had to act like 'any catholic ruler, king or emperor behaves, such as the king of Poland, the Archduke of Austria, the king of France and other monarchs'.³²⁸

³²⁴ Hanns Schweinpeckh from Budapest, cited in Karl Stöegmann. *Über die Briefe des Andrea da Burgo, Gesandten König Ferdinands, an den Cardinal und Bischof von Trient Bernhard Cles* (Wien: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1857). 68.

³²⁵ 'j'ay le paragon des mariz' Mary of Hungary to princess of Chimay 6 June 1522 Prag, Louis Prosper Gachard, 'Notice des Archives de M. le duc de Caraman, précédée de Recherches historiques sur les princes de Chimay et les comtes de Beaumont' *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire* 1:11 (1846), 223.

³²⁶ Kubinyi, 'Alltag und Fest,' 199. On Louis's bad reputation in Hungarian historiography see Attila Bárány. 'Queen Maria, the Cult of Louis II and Hungary in the Low Countries' in *Történetek a mélyföldről. Magyarország és Németalföld kapcsolata a kora újkorban*, ed. Réka Bozzay (Debrecen: University of Debrecen, 2014), 363.

³²⁷ András Kubinyi, 'The Court of Queen Mary of Hungary and Politics between 1521 and 1526,' in *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521–1531*, 21.

³²⁸ 'est barbatus et uxoratus', *Krystof Szydlowiecki kancellár naplója 1523-ból*, ed. István Zombori (Budapest: METEM, 2004), 125. Réthelyi suggests this could have meant that the court in Hungary was seen as unorderedly because it lacked formal household ordinances like other royal courts of the time. Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 63.

A further strain put on Mary as queen was in striking a balance between different loyalties in the divided political atmosphere. As the emperor's sister, it was assumed she would remain loyal to her own family; however, since she had been educated and prepared for the role of queen, with an emphasis on adjusting to the local culture, she very likely felt herself first and foremost bound to her husband. Nonetheless, as András Kubinyi points out, it was unlikely that she had a coherent picture of the prevailing political situation.³²⁹ Her support for the king's German relations, the Brandenburg brothers, could have been prompted by her interest in reformed ideas, or, as Zoltán Csepregi suggests, rebellion against her brothers, who wanted to control her as the advocate of their interests in the region.³³⁰ After all, at that time she did not have a real relationship with either Charles or Ferdinand, and she quite evidently identified herself as the Queen of Hungary rather than as a Habsburg princess and sought to identify with her surroundings.

It is evident that Mary was not enjoying great success as Queen of Hungary. She was not popular, she might not even have had many opportunities to practise traditional queenly gestures due to the financial limitations faced by the realm. Worst of all, she did not have a child. From the Habsburg point of view, she had worried them with her behaviour, as is obvious from the comments made at the time of the Wiener Neustadt summit. However, in 1526 Mary's queenly reputation was dramatically reversed when Louis died in the Battle of Mohacs and the Turks invaded parts of Hungary. The disastrous defeat came as a shock, and Mary and her court fled from Buda to Pressburg. Mary became a victim in the war against the infidel. Although for some the disaster was the predictable result of a corrupt government, for the Habsburgs Louis was the fallen hero of Western Christendom.³³¹

The tragedy at Mohacs also changed Mary's relationship with her brother Ferdinand. Her brother was now the King of Hungary, as husband of the deceased king's sister, Anna, according to the treaty of 1515. However, his claim was contested by Janos Zápolya. Ferdinand was in desperate need of help in securing support among the local nobles, and Mary in turn, as a young widow in distress, needed her brother. They started a regular personal correspondence, in French, with occasional secretarial letters written in German or Latin to handle more official issues. Their letters were dominated by the three themes prominent in Mary's life at the time: her work to support

³²⁹ Kubinyi, 'The Court of Queen Mary of Hungary,' 23.

³³⁰ Zoltán Csepregi, ' "... ich will kain fleis nit sparen" - Königin Maria von Ungarn und das Haus Brandenburg,' in *Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558). Eine Renaissancefürstin*, 68; Zoltán Csepregi, 'Court Priests in the Entourage of Queen Mary of Hungary' in *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521 - 1531*, 60.

³³¹ Bárány, 'Queen Maria, the Cult of Louis II and Hungary,' 364.

Ferdinand's claim to the throne, her concern with her own holdings in the region and her suspected leaning towards Lutheranism.³³²

Ferdinand's decision to appoint Mary as his regent in Hungary is another example of the trust in the queenly prestige and importance of the dynasty, because Mary's reputation as the Queen of Hungary could not alone have convinced her brother that she possessed exceptional skills for government.³³³ His letters to her were very supportive. He frequently emphasised how content he was with her work for him, which was evidently meant both to boost Mary's self-confidence and to persuade the courtiers of his trust in her. It was after all likely that she was not the only one reading his letters.³³⁴ The letters Mary wrote to Ferdinand, in turn, revealed that she was now making use of the education she had received while studying Latin in preparation for her queenship. She adopted the models provided by humanist letter writing and regularly reminded Ferdinand of her own faults in the opening words of her letter. When asked of her opinion on something of importance, she carefully listed her views of both sides of the matter.

Mary's custom to use the pattern of listing the pros and cons of an argument is evident, for example, in a draft of a letter where she refused to accept the regency of Hungary for a second time. Despite dividing her points for and against the regency with care, all her reasoning leaned towards refusing the regency. For the items in favour of the refusal, she typically started

Erstlich mein unverstant den niemandt passer erkendt dan ich [first my foolishness which no-one knows better than myself].

She then moved on to analyse the situation in detail, pointing out that she was likely to be blamed for what others had already done. Further, she wrote that due to the very complex situation and local conflicts, it was difficult to assess the correct course of action. Finally, she concluded that the situation in Hungary was already a disaster. The list against refusing the regency started somewhat confusingly, with her eagerness to serve, but she then proceeded to argue that her attitude might turn against Ferdinand.³³⁵

As the Queen of Hungary, Mary had obtained a considerable number of estates in the kingdom.³³⁶ Her concern over these holdings recurred in her letters to Ferdinand. The management of the estates evidently brought her, if not income due to the difficult situation in the region, at least experience in economics and negotiating with her agents. These possessions have also been seen as the possible reason for her regency, because Charles trusted that the

³³² Their correspondence is published in KF 2 1/2: Familienkorrespondenz 1527 und 1528.

³³³ Ferdinand appointed Mary on 19 Jan. 1527, KF 2 1/2. 8-9.

³³⁴ Ferdinand to Mary 9 May 1527, KF 2, 1/2, 69, nr. 53.

³³⁵ Memorial der unschuldigung annemung das ampt gegen den kunig etc. February 1528, KF 2 1/2. 191-2, nr. 154.

³³⁶ Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 105-110.

regency court could be financed with her income, and Ferdinand in turn hoped that once she had gone to the Low Countries, the land would return to the crown of Hungary and be available for his use.³³⁷ Once more, it seems that the importance of a regent's character was only one of the factors considered by the Habsburgs.

While Mary worried about her finances, in his letters Ferdinand kept expressing his concern over the rumours that Mary had Lutheran sympathies. There was considerable support for the Reformation in the Hungarian court. The former guardian of the young King Louis, Georg of Brandenburg, was an open supporter of Luther. Queen Mary was exposed to the new faith in surroundings where the Reformation was an already existing reality and a possible choice.³³⁸ However, contemporaries in Hungary identified the Lutheran faith with Germans, a category into which they placed the queen. Papal Legate Burgio observed that in the divided court of Buda, the queen was gathering a German circle around her favouring them not as Lutherans, but as her servants and compatriots.³³⁹ As further proof of Mary's exposure to Lutheran thinking, Zoltán Csepregi has shown that Mary, in her letters written in German, discussed religious issues using the protestant vocabulary. For example, she wrote to Georg of Brandenburg, apparently jokingly, offering to sell some piety (*Frummigkeit*) to Georg, as she herself had plenty to spare.³⁴⁰

In 1526, Martin Luther knew enough about Mary's evangelical interests to translate four psalms as consolation after her husband's death.³⁴¹ Ferdinand protested strongly against Mary accepting such attention, which provoked Mary to answer:

Monsieur, j'ay reçust une lectre de vous escripte du 12 d'avril, ensemble und livre de Lutter dedié à moy, et entendu l'amonicion que sur ce me faittes. – Certes, monsieur, cy saroie voie parquoy luy poroie defender, je le feroie volontiers, mes de ce vous puyge bien avertir pour very que n'ay riens seu dud. livret et l'a escript sans mon seu et consentement, come ausy par le prologe poes connoistre.

³³⁷ Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber der Königin Maria,' 175-7.

³³⁸ On the early stages of the reformation in Hungary see Markus Hein, 'María von Habsburg, der ungarische Hof und die Reformation in Ungarn,' in *Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558). Eine Renaissancefürstin*, 261-72.

³³⁹ 'La Regina favorisce Tudeschi non como Lutherani, ma como suoi servitor, et perché sono di sua natione' Vilmos Franknói ed. *Relationes oratorum pontificiorum* cited in Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 192.

³⁴⁰ Csepregi, 'Court Priests', 52. Orsolya Réthelyi suggests that lack of sources might explain Mary's reputation as a reformist who avoided traditional queenly piety in form of pilgrims and charity. Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 165.

³⁴¹ *Vier tröstliche Psalmen an die Königin zu Hungern, ausgelegt durch Martinum Luther* (Wittenberg: Hans Barth, 1526). For editions see Walsh & Strnad, 'Eine Erasmianerin im Hause Habsburg,' 40, note 3.

[Monsieur, I have received your letter written on April 12th, together with Luther's book dedicated to me, and I understand your reproof. – Certainly, if I could defend myself, but I can tell you that I did not know about this book, it was written without my knowledge or consent, as you can well read from its prologue.]³⁴²

In his answer, Ferdinand accepted Mary's explanations, but he added that

j'espere que à moy ne me escripra iames livre de louuanges de ce que je garde et maigtiens sa doctrine que apele l'evangile [I hope that I will never get eulogies for guarding and maintaining his so-called evangelic doctrine].³⁴³

In 1530, when the siblings Charles, Ferdinand and Mary all gathered together in Augsburg for an imperial diet focusing on the religious disputes, Mary was eagerly taken as a possible Lutheran in the imperial camp. George Spalatin reported to the Royal Court of Saxony that she was a talented Latinist, always with a Bible in her hand. Philip Melanchthon described her to Luther as a pious student of theirs, who surely would ease the suspicions of her brother the emperor.³⁴⁴ It was evident that it would have indeed been a significant victory to have the emperor's own sister openly declare her faith in the reformed doctrine. Her position was also noted among those who opposed the Reformation. The Bishop of Vienna gave a sermon where he daringly pointed out that Charles and Ferdinand were like Moses and Aaron, who had had a leprous sister called Mary, as they too had a sister Mary, allegedly tainted with the leprosy of heresy.³⁴⁵ However, in Augsburg Mary made her decision. After Luther had denied her the possibility to confess the new faith in private, there is no indication of her ever returning to the matter.³⁴⁶

Mary's Lutheran sympathies had been predominantly private, to the apparent frustration of the leaders of the Reformation. Her support and admiration for Erasmus, in turn, were well known and eagerly used by the Erasmian circles in her husband's court. In 1522, during the royal couple's visit to Bohemia, a friend of Erasmus, Jacobus Piso, had written to the famous humanist. Piso told him how the teachings of Luther and Erasmus had been discussed at the king's table. One of the participants had claimed

³⁴² Mary to Ferdinand 15 Apr. 1527, KF II 1/2, 58, nr. 44.

³⁴³ Ferdinand to Mary 19 Apr. 1527, KF II 1/2, 59, nr. 45.

³⁴⁴ 'Mulier vere heroico ingenio, praecipua pietate et modestia, student nobis placare fratrem sed cogitur id timide et verecunde facere' Gorter-Van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 108.

³⁴⁵ Bart Jan Spruyt, "En bruit d'estre bonne luteriene": Mary of Hungary (1505-58) and religious reform,' *The English Historical Review* 109:431 (1994), 276.

³⁴⁶ Walsh and Strnad, 'Eine Erasmianerin im Hause Habsburg,' 79, note 171; Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 189.

that the two were thinking along the same lines and that Luther took all his major thoughts from the writings of the Dutch humanist. Piso feverishly disagreed and had gone to fetch a letter he had received from Erasmus to prove his point.

*Meanwhile I ordered that your letter should be sent for. When it arrived, first of all the queen seized it, eager to recognize your hand, and then the king -- The letter then flitted everywhere from hand to hand; silence fell while they read it, and the received opinion melted.*³⁴⁷

Although Piso used the opportunity to represent his royal masters as participants in contemporary intellectual discourse and to downplay any possible connections between Luther and Erasmus, or with his royal masters being admirers of the latter, the subject was commonly discussed at the time around dinner tables throughout Europe.³⁴⁸

As the merry court dinners where Erasmus had been discussed gave way to the darker times of exile, Mary's court preacher, Henckel, wrote to the famous humanist from Sopron in 1528. Henckel described his work at the court:

I now do again what I used to, preach the Lord's word to the court, which is such that you could not find one more intimate, moderate, truly and fervently religious. This is the work of my noble hearted queen - if you saw her in her home you would say you are in a school and not in a women's court! She always has a book in her hand, she learns and teaches and finds consolation to her bereavement in pious books, without neglecting the classics, this to such an extent that what others find difficult in the greatest prosperity she studies in mourning and tears.

He continued by telling that the queen now reads Erasmus' *Paraphrases* in Latin, which she had earlier read in German.³⁴⁹

It is obvious that Henckel's lavish praise of Mary was mainly aimed at getting Erasmus interested in his queen in order to have a share of the famous humanist's glory for himself. However, he could hardly have made claim to Mary's being learning without there being any substance behind his description. Some accounts credit Henckel himself with influencing Mary's

³⁴⁷ Piso to Erasmus Prague 1522, *The correspondence of Erasmus* nr. 1297, CWE 9, 118.

³⁴⁸ Michael Massing, *Fatal discord: Erasmus, Luther, and the fight for the Western mind* (New York: Harper, 2018).

³⁴⁹ Henckel to Erasmus Sopron 18 July 1528, *The correspondence of Erasmus* nr. 2011, CWE 14, 223.

learning and her tolerant attitude towards the reforms.³⁵⁰ He did not emphasise his own role, however, which would have been likely if he had actively tutored Mary.

Erasmus consented to Henckel's persuasion and dedicated to Mary his work on Christian widowhood, *De vidua christiana*,³⁵¹ partly addressed to a wider audience and partly to Mary in particular. The work is not counted among Erasmus's masterpieces, and it draws heavily on examples from the Bible.³⁵² As with Erasmus's other dedications to powerful women, it was very likely motivated more by the hopes for reward than attempts to instruct Mary.³⁵³ Nevertheless, it does shed light on the expectations Mary and other women faced. Erasmus considered the different choices a widow had to make: remarrying, remaining unmarried and caring for her children or other people in need of their help, or becoming a nun. None of the options took into account Mary's situation as a queen and regent.

Erasmus probably was aware that Mary's sister Isabel had recently died in the Low Countries, leaving three children, when he pointed out that Mary had 'no lack of nieces and nephews – whom your authority may refine in the discipline of piety'.³⁵⁴ Using biblical examples, he described for Mary a very traditional model of a widowed life of modesty and tranquillity. In general, according to Erasmus young widows should not enter monasteries to burden the Church, which already had many other obligations. He gave the impression that widowed women were themselves capable of considering their own situation and making the right decisions.³⁵⁵ Erasmus described piety as

*faith and charity, -- practised and nurtured by prayer, thanksgiving and meditation upon heavenly things. These activities call for sobriety, fasts, purity of life, vigilance, and the study of the philosophy of the gospel. That philosophy is acquired through listening frequently to sermons and by conversing with people outstanding for piety and learning.*³⁵⁶

In other words, study and conversations with learned men and women were options for a person like Mary. By reading the Latin Bible and listening

³⁵⁰ Roland H. Bainton, 'Learned Women in the Europe of the Sixteenth Century,' in *Beyond their sex : learned women of the European past*, ed. Patricia H. Labalme (New York/London: New York University Press, 1980), 122.

³⁵¹ Published as 'The Christian Widow' transl. Jennifer Tolbert Roberts in *Erasmus on women*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) and in *CWE 66 Spirituality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

³⁵² *Erasmus on women*, 185 (Introduction to the translation.)

³⁵³ Sowards, 'Erasmus and the Education of Women,' 80.

³⁵⁴ Erasmus, 'The Christian Widow', 223.

³⁵⁵ Erasmus, 'The Christian Widow', 212.

³⁵⁶ Erasmus, 'The Christian Widow', 216.

to Erasmus's friends preaching, Mary already fit the picture of a proper widow.

In addressing the treatise not just to Mary but also to a wider audience Erasmus placed Mary in the same position that she always found herself in as a princess, a model to other women, now a Christian widow more Christian than others.

*Go forth then, illustrious woman, to uphold the standard of piety for all the widows and all high-born ladies and, following in the footsteps of women who have been highly praised, be at once the teacher of the court of princes and an example of evangelical integrity.*³⁵⁷

Later, when thanking Erasmus for his treatise, Henckel testified, that Mary was not just exemplary but also exceptional: all the women around Mary were impressed by the work, but Mary was the only one able to read Latin.³⁵⁸

Although some readings of *De Vidua* see it as encouragement for Mary to be not just pious and humble, but also courageous when the time comes that men need her, just as Judith had been,³⁵⁹ Erasmus hardly had Mary's later career in mind, especially considering that Mary, later during her regency in the Low Countries, appeared at her most brave when confronting another Christian nation: France. However, it was another attempt by Erasmus to advocate for the compatibility of Christian faith with political office.³⁶⁰ Erasmus's work and Mary's future as a regent display the existing controversy between the advice and ideals of the humanists and the realities of the Habsburg dynasty. As little as Erasmus had hope of turning Charles into a peace-loving monarch, one who would remain in his native lands, his chances were no better in offering this kind of advice to the princess, who was ready to support her dynasty as the queenly assistant of her brother after losing her role as the queen consort.

Even though Erasmus's dedication is evidence that Mary had contact with the most famous humanist of all, it has been ignored that this relationship was not so much used by Mary, but by Erasmus himself. When Henckel reported Mary's delight with the book, Erasmus readily spread the news of

³⁵⁷ Erasmus, 'The Christian Widow', 227.

³⁵⁸ Henckel to Erasmus from Linz 13 Apr. 1530, The correspondence of Erasmus nr. 2309, CWE 16, 285.

³⁵⁹ Christine Christ-von Wedel, 'Haben die ungarischen Erasmusianer auf Erasmus eine Einfluß ausgeübt?: zur Frauen- und Friedensfragen im Werk des Humanisten,' in *Humanismus in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen. Politik, Religion und Kunst im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien and Krista Zach (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), 142-3.

³⁶⁰ John O'Malley, *Introduction to De Vidua Christiana*, CWE 66 Spirituality (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), xlix.

his popularity in royal circles further and wrote to Margaret Rope, Thomas More's daughter:

*So that you may have no reason to regret your devotion to learning, I am sending you a letter from a most worthy man who holds the office of preacher to Mary, the emperor's sister and former queen of Hungary. It was she to whom I dedicated the Christian Widow, which I believe you have read. From this letter you will understand with what enthusiasm this noble lady embraces the liberal arts.*³⁶¹

He then took the opportunity to enhance his chances in the eyes of those close to Catherine of Aragon, Queen of England and Mary's aunt. Erasmus wrote to William Blount about how Catherine

*has a niece very like herself, Mary the former queen of Hungary, to whom I dedicated my Christian Widow. How she felt about the book and with what interest she read it you will discover from the letter I sent to More's daughter, Margaret.*³⁶²

Thus, Margaret Roper, Catherine of Aragon and Mary of Hungary were aligned by Erasmus together as part of a circle of learned women in the same way as Erasmus participated in creating the Republic of Letters for humanists. However, he did so not for the women to enter into the male circle or even interact amongst themselves, but to support male erudition.³⁶³ Through her example, Mary could encourage more women to assume a God-fearing life – and to read the humanists' texts and hopefully sponsor them.

In 1530, after the Augsburg Diet, Mary's secretary Oláh wrote to Erasmus to tell him that Mary was departing for the Low Countries, as she had been nominated regent, forbearing benefits for Erasmus from such a supporter of his as the governor of his native lands.³⁶⁴ Erasmus, however, did not express delight in having this lady who appreciated the liberal arts as the regent. He even commented later that Mary was rather a student of the Low Countries than a governess.³⁶⁵ Erasmus was, respectively, not assessed much better by

³⁶¹ Erasmus to Margaret Roper 6 Sep. 1529 Freiburg, *The correspondence of Erasmus* nr. 2212, CWE 16, 42.

³⁶² Erasmus to William Blount, 8 Sep. 1529 Freiburg, *The correspondence of Erasmus*. nr. 2215, CWE 16, 46.

³⁶³ Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, man of letters: the construction of charisma in print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 98.

³⁶⁴ Nicolaus Olahus to Erasmus 25 March 1531 Regensburg. *The correspondence of Erasmus* nr. 2463, CWE 17, 310-11.

³⁶⁵ 'Maria Regina alumna patriae nostrae verius est quam Domina' Erasmus to Justus Decius 22 Aug. 1534, nr.2961, Allen 11 32/46-47. Cited in Anne M. O'Donnell. 'Contemporary Women in the Letters of Erasmus.' *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 9 (1989), 50. It is also worth noting James Tracy's point that it is questionable how much Erasmus actually understood of the prevailing

the imperial government. In 1532, Granvelle suggested that Mary should not let Erasmus return to the Low Countries because ‘he is fickle and very unpredictable’.³⁶⁶ Any attempts to have the humanist support the Habsburgs, or vice versa, were left to Ferdinand.³⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

By the standards set for queens, Mary was considered an ugly duckling. For a girl who was shorter and not as good looking as her sister-in-law, and who led her husband astray from the serious business of war, she matured into a heroic lady who was admired by Erasmus of Rotterdam himself. As life is not a fairy tale, it is obvious that it was Mary’s reputation, not the princess herself, that went through a metamorphosis. As will be seen later, she did not become a humble pious widow, but instead an energetic politician, and her allegedly masculine style received mixed reception during her long regency. Mary’s experiences from her youth show that a princess had limited power over her own reputation, and the urge for queenly comportment was indeed well-founded.

Mary’s childhood resembled that of her aunt Margaret’s in the way that it was determined by high-level dynastic politics. Whereas Margaret’s fate was related to the balance of power around France, Mary’s was linked to her grandfather’s expansionist politics towards the east and conflicts within the country her husband was to govern. Although the aim was to train both princesses to become queens who would reflect female virtues and support their spouses in their work for the crown, the means and the results were different. Margaret’s upbringing was backed by tradition and continuity, whereas Mary’s upbringing apparently also followed tradition but lacked the queenly example.

The effect of a multilingual environment and the role of Latin in it had several consequences. On the one hand, it apparently offered her at least basic teachings in the art of argumentation and persuasion through the Latin texts used in teaching, and on the other it was associated with an interest in pure doctrine and the Bible. Although it is evident that Mary’s skills in Latin would not have attracted as much attention had she not been the sister of the

political situation. James D. Tracy, *The politics of Erasmus: a pacifist intellectual and his political milieu*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 107.

³⁶⁶ ‘il est variable et for inconstant’, Granvelle to Marie Regensburg 3 Mary 1532, CMCG 1, 219, nr. 125.

³⁶⁷ Jean-Claude Margolin, ‘Érasme et Ferdinand de Habsbourg d’après deux lettres inédites de l’Empereur à l’humaniste.’ in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: the man and the scholar: proceedings of the symposium held at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, 9-11 November 1986*, eds. J. Sperna Weiland and W. Th. M. Frijhoff (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 15-29.

emperor, her use of the language indicates that she had indeed learned to draft her own texts beyond mere conventional letter formulas.

In light of her correspondence, Mary was a far more eloquent writer than her siblings. However, once she in the eyes of the Lutherans and humanists was lost to the imperial political machinery, it was not her learning that impressed contemporaries so much as her masculine habits, especially her fondness for horses and hunting.³⁶⁸ Mary's erudition was not for the public to admire when it was used for the benefit of the Habsburg government. Perhaps skills far removed from conventional feminine virtues could not even be recognised, especially when used in closed council meetings.

Nevertheless, even if Mary had evidently benefitted from her education and proved to be a capable regent, she was not chosen for the office either in Hungary or in the Low Countries because of her skills, but because of her family connections and due to arbitrary circumstances. Having come from the same background and a shared youth together, Mary's sister-in-law, Empress Anna, was best known as a spouse and mother. Had Mary been able to produce fifteen children like Anna, her future would have certainly turned out to be different.

³⁶⁸ Laetitia Gorter-Van Royen, 'Les chasses de Marie de Habsbourg, reine de Hongrie et de Bohême, régente des Pays-Bas,' in *Pays bourguignons et autrichiens (XIVe-XVIIe siècles): une confrontation institutionnelle et culturelle*, ed. Jean-Marie Cauchies and Heinz Noflatscher (Neuchâtel/Bruxelles: Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes, 2006), 191-202.

4 JUANA OF AUSTRIA 1535–1554

LEGACY OF ISABEL THE CATHOLIC

Juana of Austria's childhood reflects the changes in the Habsburg politics and in the life of her father, Emperor Charles. By the 1530s, the dynasty had reached a status in which it no longer needed to seek new dynastic ties with other royals, but rather made it necessary to enforce unity between the families of Charles and his siblings. Charles had made a conscious decision to base his own family in Spain, where he married his cousin, Isabel of Portugal, in 1526. This decision had a profound influence on his daughters.

The image of an ideal princess in Spain that Charles's children were exposed to was quite different from the one he had encountered in his youth. As noted above, his aunt Margaret of Austria encouraged her court poet to present her as a beloved princess, whose virtues earned her the devotion of the people around her. However, Charles's daughters, Margaret's great-nieces María (b. 1528) and Juana (b. 1535), were born into a different world. Juana of Austria's image was also polished and described as exemplary, but in a remarkably dissimilar way. The Franciscan monk Juan Carrillo praised Juana in a biography published forty years after her death. One of Carrillo's anecdotes described how Juana had already as a child been so austere that other children were afraid of her.³⁶⁹ At the beginning of the 16th century, the exemplary princess had been easy to approach and quite popular, but now the paragon had developed into a reserved and dignified princess, raising respectful fear and piously praying for her dynasty's success.

The regent princesses were both required to be, and presented as, exemplary. This, however, they did only within the limits that the society around them esteemed to be exemplary. With Charles's daughters, it even seems that other contemporary noblewomen might have been better educated than they were.³⁷⁰ Although María and Juana were both strong-willed and energetic in their work when it came to exerting channels of subtle influence, they had relatively limited means to express independence in the same way as, for example, noble widows. They were not patrons of erudite scholars, neither did they gain practical skills by managing a household, because someone else did it for them. They were most likely excellent in forming networks and representing their position, but nevertheless they did not gain much solely from their status as princesses.

³⁶⁹ Carrillo, *Relación histórica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças*, Fol 4v.

³⁷⁰ Good examples of educated Spanish noblewomen are introduced in *Power and Gender in the Spanish Renaissance: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450-1650*, ed. Helen Nader (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

Juana, born in Madrid on 24 June 1535, was the youngest surviving child of Charles V and Isabel of Portugal.³⁷¹ Charles was waging war against Tunis when Juana was born, and Empress Isabel acted as regent during his absence. Juana lost her mother before her fifth birthday and was raised with her elder sister, María, secluded from the royal court and apart from their brother, Crown Prince Philip. After María married Archduke Maximilian in 1548, Juana lived with her orphaned nephew, Don Carlos.³⁷² In 1552, at the age of seventeen, she married the crown prince of Portugal. Her young husband died less than two years later, and soon after Juana left her baby son, Sebastian, in Portugal and returned to Spain to act as the regent for her brother Philip. Her regency lasted four years, from 1554 to 1558, covering her father's abdication and retirement to Spain.

Juana's regency at the age of nineteen is obvious proof of her father's attitude towards princess regents. It was an acceptable solution at a time when the ruling family had to be made visible and present, despite the need of the men of the family to be occupied elsewhere. However, Juana and her sister were also first and foremost brought up to be queens. Rather unusually, both María and Juana were betrothed relatively late. Their marriages to their cousins were typical of the new dynastic strategy of the Habsburgs to remain united despite the separate areas they were governing. Therefore, unlike the princesses who helped royals form alliances and perhaps later added a sizeable inheritance to expand the dynasty's lands and influence, Charles's daughters strengthened the existing bonds and ensured the House of Austria's unity, threatened at that time not only by the geographical distance between the various parts of the realm but also by the colliding ambitions of the dynasty's Spanish and Austrian branches.³⁷³

Charles's plans for his daughters' future seemed at first very traditional. However, those plans included some rather novel arrangements, especially for María. Despite originally gathering all the lands under his own authority, Charles later changed his mind and already in 1539 made plans to separate the Low Countries from the other parts of the realm. María had a pivotal role in these plans, as she was to inherit the area and govern it with her husband.³⁷⁴ Similar intentions were attached to the Treaty of Crèpy with France in 1544, when one of the proposed solutions was to marry María with the younger son of the King of France, with the Low Countries as her dowry. Although nothing came of these plans, they do testify to the fact that the

³⁷¹ Juana's major modern biography with documentation is that of Antonio Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita Juana de Austria* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2005).

³⁷² Don Carlos was the son of Juana's brother Philip (b.1527) and his first wife Maria Manuela of Portugal. He was born in 1545 and his mother died some days after his birth.

³⁷³ The culmination of the suspicions on both parts, Charles and Ferdinand, both supported by their sons, was the 1551 family crisis. See Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 38-9.

³⁷⁴ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 36; Charles to Philip 5 Nov. 1539, *Corpus Documental de Carlos V* (CDCV), ed. Manuel Fernández Álvarez (Madrid: Espasa Calpe 2003) 2, 34-36, CCXXX.

daughters had a role in Charles's plans. The latter case was even discussed with María herself, although the initiative to consult her came from the regency council in Spain, not from her father the emperor.³⁷⁵

Regardless of his schemes, Charles's attitude towards the schooling of his daughters was quite traditional. Although paying careful attention to his son and heir Philip's preparation for a future kingship, Charles saw no reason to do the same with his daughters. The educational conventions and disparity between the education of princes and princesses remained the same as they always had been. All the changes that did occur were a result of the political and confessional situation, not based on a demand or necessity for giving the princesses the tools to rule like a prince. The upbringing of Charles's daughters reinforced the importance of tradition, pure catholic piety and the need to keep the princesses away from anyone who could use them against their imperial father, even though both princesses were part of their father's political plans from the moment they were born.

The tradition of a princess's education in Spain was based on the much celebrated example of Queen Isabel and her daughters, one of them being Charles's mother, Queen Juana.³⁷⁶ Less educated than their brother Juan, scholars still view Isabel's daughters as having been more learned than the princesses who came after them.³⁷⁷ Nevertheless, already the education of Charles's youngest sister, Catherine (1507–78), is a good example of how the political situation determined her place of residence and company, without any particular attention being paid to her schooling. Catherine, born four months after her father's death, lived in confinement with her mother in Tordesillas until her marriage with the King of Portugal in 1525. It has been assumed that Catherine received a 'humanist education' in the company of her mother, but there is no evidence of any teachers other than Juana's confessor in addition to the queen herself.³⁷⁸

In her teenage years, Catherine was as prepared to write letters stating her opinion on matters as her sister Mary had been, as her letters to her aunt

³⁷⁵ Hayward Keniston, *Francisco de los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960), 278.

³⁷⁶ The recent analysis on the influence of the female networks see Antonia Fernández Valencia, "Educación y redes femeninas en la dinastía Habsburgo-Trastámara" in *Mujeres en la Corte de los Austrias: una red social, cultural, religiosa y política*, ed. María Leticia Sánchez Hernández (Madrid: Polifemo, 2019), 83–120.

³⁷⁷ Alvar Ezquerro, 'Modelos educativos,' 129–132; Hoffman *Raised to rule*, 55–6.

³⁷⁸ For a positive evaluation of Catherine's education see Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, 'A Forgotten Infanta, Catherine of Austria, Queen of Portugal (1507–1578),' in *Women. The Art of Power*, 53. On lack of teachers (and sources) Ana Isabel Buescu, *Catarina de Áustria (1507–1578), Infanta de Tordesilhas, rainha de Portugal* (Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2007), 55. On Catalina's tutor Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 106.

Margaret and her brother Charles from Tordesillas testify.³⁷⁹ In her letters, Catherine complained about the treatment she was receiving from her mother's guardians, apparently with good reason, since the humble conditions in which Catherine was living certainly shocked her siblings, Charles and Eleanor, when they met Catherine for the first time in 1517.³⁸⁰ Charles and Eleanor attempted to separate their mother from Catherine, but the project failed due to Queen Juana's dismay at losing her.³⁸¹ However, Catherine's surroundings were made more suitable for a princess, though the only additional investment in her education was a dancing instructor.³⁸²

The similar assumption of continuity after Isabel the Catholic characterises the accounts of the Portuguese princesses, although it rarely had tangible results in their lives. Charles's wife, Isabel of Portugal, was also the granddaughter of her famous namesake. It was assumed that her mother, Ferdinand and Isabel's third daughter, Queen María, had brought up her daughters herself. Despite such an assumption, it seems like Empress Isabel did not feel comfortable writing in Castilian, as she later even wrote her personal greetings to her husband's letters in Portuguese, showing she preferred her own mother tongue.³⁸³

Despite this alleged legacy of the Catholic Queen Isabel, and although the Habsburg dynasty was now seemingly stretching the forms of queenship to new levels by almost anticipating more princess regents, no radical reforms were made in the ladies' quarters of the court when it came to hiring tutors. The above-mentioned work of Father Carrillo offered mentions Juana's holiness as one of the signs of her intelligence, so that aided by heaven she could understand what she read 'from the texts that some people could never comprehend'.³⁸⁴ The message was spelled out quite clearly: princesses should seek understanding from divine guidance rather than from books. The accounts of Juana's youth were heavily influenced, first, by her reputation as the founder of the Monastery of Descalzas Reales in Madrid, and second, by her later reputation as the first and only female Jesuit.³⁸⁵ However, the realities of Juana's childhood and youth were, on a general level, attached to her father's politics, while on a practical level they were tied to her sister

³⁷⁹ Catherine to Margaret 4 Aug. 1516, Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 219, note 33; Catherine to Charles 19 Aug. 1521, CSP Spain Supplement, nr. 93.

³⁸⁰ Vital, 'Premier voyage de Charles-Quint,' 140.

³⁸¹ Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 221.

³⁸² Zalama, *Juana I: Arte, poder y cultura*, 280.

³⁸³ On Isabel's childhood s María del Carmen Mazarío Coletto, *Isabel de Portugal, Emperatriz y Reina de España* (Madrid: Escuela de Historia Moderna, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1951), 19. Her letters to Charles V are edited in the same volume pages 243-535.

³⁸⁴ Carrillo, *Relación histórica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças*, fol 5 verso.

³⁸⁵ Ana García Sanz, 'Juana de Austria: un modelo de intervención femenina en la Casa de Austria' in *Mujeres en la Corte de los Austrias: una red social, cultural, religiosa y política*, ed. María Leticia Sánchez Hernández (Madrid: Polifemo, 2019), 260-4.

María and their shared household. I suggest that what seemed to be a neglect of his daughters, was for Charles a way to raise them to support their brother in the same way as Charles's sisters had supported him.

THE LITTLE SISTER (1535–1548)

When Charles V married his cousin, Isabel of Portugal, in 1526, one of his main concerns was to obtain, besides a wife, also a regent for Spain. The royal succession was confirmed with Prince Philip, born in 1527, followed by daughter María a year later. After the birth of another son, Ferdinand in 1529, Charles left Isabel as regent. Faced with the realities of her husband's expansive realms, Isabel stayed in Spain with her children. Although with the title of empress, she never visited the Holy Roman Empire in her life.

Margaret of Austria, Charles's aunt and regent of the Low Countries, congratulated Isabel on Ferdinand's birth and wrote that Charles had promised to give the child to her. 'I have a hope that this one will be my son and my support at my old age', she wrote, adding that all Isabel had to do was to have more children.³⁸⁶ Charles undoubtedly meant that baby Ferdinand was to be brought up in the Low Countries to one day become the governor there, but exactly how they would have fashioned him into Margaret's 'son' and a local prince in the eyes of the people remained unsolved, as the infant died a year later.

Isabel acted as the head of the regency government until Charles's return in 1534.³⁸⁷ Her role was chiefly to represent Charles's authority for the government councils by being the one he corresponded with. Management of the government was, however, difficult. Charles's secretary of state, Cobos, defined the problem as stemming from 'the emperor's reluctance to authorize expenditures and the impossibility of him to judge from a distance who was most deserving of a reward'. Charles's slowness in decision-making further escalated the situation. The system left the empress supported by frustrated advisors.³⁸⁸ Isabel corresponded with Charles on how to best manage the government, but it is evident that she merely formally authorised the long letters prepared by others. The fact-filled documents had no personal touch other than the empress's farewell note in Portuguese.³⁸⁹ Even the ever-

³⁸⁶ 'según lo que prometió Su Magt, yo tengo esperança que este será mi hijo y caña para mi vejez' Margaret of Austria to Empress Isabel 15 Dec. 1529, CDCV 1, 186, LI.

³⁸⁷ Gillian B. Fleming points out that as Charles really was not the proprietary monarch, but a co-king of his mother, so he could technically not have regents, but that is not an issue here. Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 288.

³⁸⁸ Marzahl, 'Communication and Control,' 96, citing Cobos to Juan Vázquez 8. July 1540, AGS Estado 49 fol. 96-7.

³⁸⁹ Her letters to Charles are published as an appendix of Mazarío Coletto, *Isabel de Portugal*. Isabel's holograph autograph is always 'Beijo as maos de vosa magestade, la Reyna'.

important health of their children was communicated to the emperor by the courtiers rather than by the empress herself.³⁹⁰

Immediately after his return Charles started to prepare his campaign to conquer Tunis. In 1535 Isabel gave birth to a second daughter, Juana. She was still a child when the empress died in 1539. Her household had to be rearranged to serve the two surviving princesses, María and Juana. It was the specific will of the emperor that his daughters would be separated from their brother's court. The princesses were to reside in different locations in Castile.³⁹¹ The emperor spent the Christmas of 1541 with his children, but otherwise he was mostly absent from their lives.³⁹²

Juana's childhood was characterised by the determination that Charles had to keep his daughters separated from their brother and nobles other than those appointed by the emperor, and by Juana's status as the youngest child. The same kind of pattern of concentrating on the elder children is well known from other cases as well. In Spain, the preceding example was the attention that Ferdinand and Isabel paid to their eldest children, Isabel and Juan.³⁹³ The younger children were usually less often taken along for public occasions and resided longer with their mothers' households.

The political reasons that Charles paid such attention to his daughters' court very likely stemmed from the fate of their grandmother, the elder Juana (1479–1555). Queen Juana had been kept practically as a prisoner in Tordesillas for years. Her existence as the legal propriety monarch of Spain was violated first by her father, King Ferdinand, when he virtually stole her power after her husband's death in 1506 and locked her up, accusing her of being insane and incapable of ruling. Ferdinand's move was illegal, and yet even when her son Charles ruled Spain beginning in 1516, she still was held in captivity until her death. Without considering Charles's motives, or the original reasons for Juana's confinement, it is reasonable to assume that undoubtedly the Revolt of the Comuneros in 1520, when rebels had attempted to use Queen Juana as the nominal head of the government, was still fresh in his memory.³⁹⁴ Charles was very much aware of the risks of letting anyone gain control over royal women, who, according to the contemporary view, were not fully capable of answering for themselves.³⁹⁵ As young girls, María and Juana fell automatically into that category.

³⁹⁰ Published in March, *Niñez y juventud de Felipe II*.

³⁹¹ Ezquerria Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 129.

³⁹² Manuel de Foronda y Aguilera *Estancias y viajes del emperador Carlos V, desde el día de su nacimiento hasta el de su muerte*. (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1914), 507.

³⁹³ Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 26.

³⁹⁴ Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 259–63.

³⁹⁵ Fleming has shown that it is controversial how exactly Queen Juana was incapacitated if at all. Her worst mental problem might have been the fact that she was the legal ruler and there was no proof that she had supported Charles's northern advisors, although she never expressed any disloyalty towards her family and children.

The reasons for the troubles during the Revolt of the Comuneros were complex, but one factor was the resistance of the locals to 'Flemish' influences, brought first to Spain by Charles's father, Philip, and then by Charles himself in 1517.³⁹⁶ After the rebellion, Charles's policy changed and his own Spanish family served as the dynastic manifest of the new policy. Once again, the decisive factors behind the choices that influenced princess education were motivated by attempts to strengthen Habsburg power, this time particularly in Spain. The princesses were residing in the same areas as had Queen Isabel in her youth in an obvious attempt to identify them with their famous great-grandmother. Charles's daughters were surrounded by Spanish and Portuguese servants and never ventured outside Castile before their marriages.³⁹⁷

The princesses' court was under a strong Portuguese influence due to the courtiers, the same ones who had served their mother. The Portuguese and Castilian courts were culturally mixed at the time, because following the Castilian and Portuguese royals who had been united in various marriages, the nobles were also related to families on both sides of the border. Among them, both Portuguese and Castilian were spoken and written.³⁹⁸ Many courtiers had come to Castile with a Portuguese princess and returned with a Castilian one. Some of the nobles who arrived with Princess Maria Manuela, in the event of her marriage to Prince Philip in 1543, were the same ones, or else their offspring, who had gone to Portugal with her mother Catherine when she left Tordesillas in 1525 to marry her cousin, King John of Portugal.³⁹⁹

It is often assumed that both of Philip's sisters shared the same tutors as their brother,⁴⁰⁰ but it was only María who was born close enough to Philip to profit from his childhood in his mother's care. María also started her formal education together with Philip. As infants, they were both instructed by their mothers' chaplain, Álvaro Rodríguez, who had come from Portugal with Empress Isabel and served as her tutor when she was young.⁴⁰¹ José Sánchez-Molero has shown how the socialisation and formal education of Philip were divided according to the traditional model. In early childhood,

³⁹⁶ Bethany Aram, 'Philip the Handsome (1478–1506), Duke of Burgundy and King of Castile. Voyages from Burgundy to Castile: Cultural Conflict and Dynastic Transitions, 1502–06' in *Early modern dynastic marriages and cultural transfer*, 91–114; Wim Blockmans. *Emperor Charles V. 1500–1558*. (London: Arnold, 2002), 48.

³⁹⁷ Ezquerro Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 129.

³⁹⁸ Mafalda Soares da Cunha, 'João Soares De Alarcao (d. 1546) and his family: the marriage of Joao de Alarcao and Margarida Soares and the creation of a transnational Portuguese-Spanish nobility,' in *Early modern dynastic marriages and cultural transfer*, 158.

³⁹⁹ Félix Labrador Arroyo, 'Los servidores de la princesa María Manuela de Portugal' *La corte de Carlos V* 2, 2, 121.

⁴⁰⁰ Cruz 'Juana of Austria'. 105.

⁴⁰¹ Ezquerro Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 126–7.

when he was meant to learn basic moral behaviour, he was in the care of women. Once he had reached the age when he was ready to start on his path towards learning princely ideals, he was removed from his mother's household, set up in his own court surrounded by noble boys his own age.⁴⁰² Until that separation in 1539, María still shared parts of Philip's training in the manners of the court, acting as his companion. They were, for instance, reported showing off their dancing skills together to their grandmother, Queen Juana, in Tordesillas when María was ten years old.⁴⁰³

That María was also instructed by Philip's tutor, Juan Martínez Silíceo, is confirmed by letters in which Silíceo reported on the progress of the imperial children to their father. In 1535, when María was seven years old, Silíceo recommended that since the princess could now read well, she should start learning Latin.⁴⁰⁴ A little while later, he wrote praising Philip's progress and saying that he planned to start with María's Latin after Christmas, trusting that María was about to learn writing.⁴⁰⁵ Apparently first eager to prove his success with both children, the tutor had to soon back down, explaining that María was not 'so inclined' to learning as her brother, although quick-witted and equipped with a good memory, and so her Latin lessons would be postponed.⁴⁰⁶

When Charles left Spain again in 1543, he left Philip detailed instructions written by his own hand. A facsimile of the instructions shows that the emperor seems to have at first forgotten about his daughters, because he added a part on the princesses in the margin of his text, near the section where he had reminded Philip to treat old Queen Juana with due respect.⁴⁰⁷ Once María and Juana were taken into consideration, Charles specified his thoughts: he wanted the princesses to remain secluded from Philip's court and emphasised that even Philip should avoid visiting them. It was evident that Charles did not want anyone to try to influence his daughters, and so he attempted to prevent any attempts to control them. However, he still saw them as being valuable assets, and he was ready to use them to support and enforce his dynasty and dominions.⁴⁰⁸ Despite the interpretations that Charles's orders might also have been aimed at preventing the prince from having affairs with the ladies of his sisters' court,⁴⁰⁹ I would suggest that his real motive was to prevent anyone from attempting to use his daughters for political purposes against himself or Philip.

⁴⁰² Sanchez Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 34-5.

⁴⁰³ Sanchez Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 99.

⁴⁰⁴ Silíceo to Charles V 26 Nov. 1535 Madrid, March, *Niñez y juventud de Felipe II*. I, 68-9.

⁴⁰⁵ Silíceo to Charles 22 Dec. 1535 Madrid, March, *Niñez y juventud de Felipe II*. I, 70.

⁴⁰⁶ Silíceo to Charles 25 Feb. 1536 Madrid, March, *Niñez y juventud de Felipe II*. I, 70.

⁴⁰⁷ *Cómo ser Rey*, 60-1.

⁴⁰⁸ Ezquerria Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 129.

⁴⁰⁹ Ezquerria Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 144.

When the two princesses were left without their brother's company and tutors, there had been plans to ask the pious and learned Isabel de Josa to teach María, and probably also Juana, but the plans were abandoned.⁴¹⁰ María's first tutor, Álvaro Rodríguez, had been appointed to the princesses' court, but he died in 1541 and another teacher was needed. The man chosen was Juan López de la Cuadra. The princesses' mayordomo, the Count of Cifuentes, had written to the emperor referring to the need to have someone to teach the princesses to read, write, pray and *un moderado latín*, to understand the Mass. Cifuentes pointed out that besides being an honest and good man, the candidate, de la Cuadra, also had the advantage of not being young. From the letter, it is obvious that the princesses would have preferred more relaxed pursuits and the company of their brother, because Cifuentes described their delight in hunting with Philip.⁴¹¹

La Cuadra, as Hoffman aptly notes, had a bachelor's degree, 'which was hardly equivalent to the education of the prince's tutor but apparently sufficient for instructing the infantas'.⁴¹² From an undated letter to the emperor, we know that La Cuadra was not making progress, and he did not feel it was his fault. He had started with an hour and a half of teaching for María, and half an hour for Juana, but eventually they both studied an hour a day. However, María insisted that the maestro taught three other young ladies at the same time and divided the hour equally between the students. Cuadra complained that

enfermedades visitas, fiestas, calores de Verano y frios de invierno, también han ocupado mucho de este tiempo, como agora que ha quatro meses que no ha estudiado su Alteza en todo este tiempo spacio de cinco horas [bad health, visitors, parties, the hot summer and cold winter had taken so much of her time, that at the moment she had not studied more than five hours in four months].⁴¹³

As a result, María did not learn to read Latin. La Cuadra declared that given his student's attitude and the time allotted to him, he could only teach her to understand some Latin, not to write or read it. The letter is a curious attempt by a teacher to impress his employer while facing the difficult task of motivating the children to learn. It demonstrates, however, the princesses' importance, because La Cuadra trusted, after all, that Charles, among all his other worries about the government, was still greatly interested in his daughters' progress. Finally, the letter reveals the unimpressive level of their studies.

⁴¹⁰ Sanchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 185.

⁴¹¹ Count of Cifuentes to Charles V 17.1.1541 *Niñez y juventud de Felipe*. I, 132. According to him la Cuadra was 'virtuoso y onesto y de muy buena vida y enxepto y idalgo'.

⁴¹² Hoffman, *Raised to rule*, 56.

⁴¹³ Carta de Juan Lopez de la Cuadra, Maestre de las Infantas al Emperador, *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*. Ano IV, Num 19. Madrid, 15 de Octubre de 1874, 393-4.

The princesses' days were divided between mornings of study (or the avoiding of it, if we are to believe de la Cuadra) and prayers, and afternoons consisting of music and dancing.⁴¹⁴ As with other princesses, there are hardly any mentions of other tutors, but there are frequent references to the music and dance instructors. The Portuguese poet Jorge de Montemayor even later dedicated his most famous work to Juana, after having served her in his youth as a singer in the princesses' court.⁴¹⁵ In general, formal education seems to have had only a minor role in the princesses' lives, although many of Juana's biographers have preferred to cite the hagiographic treatise of Father Carrillo. According to Carrillo, Juana was an industrious learner and her childhood days were occupied with lessons in reading, writing and Latin, never leaving her an idle moment.⁴¹⁶

With churchmen of lower rank teaching the princesses, the difference between their schooling and that of Charles's heir, Philip, was striking. The ideal of a learned Christian prince had been eagerly adopted in both Spain and Austria, as both Philip and his cousin Maximilian were trained in various subjects. The prince had tutors in Latin, geography, history, mathematics and architecture. The emperor especially stressed the learning of Latin, important for a ruler of several kingdoms in which multiple languages were spoken. When leaving Philip as regent of Spain in 1543 at the age of sixteen, Charles pointed out that this new role did not mean that Philip was past the age of learning, and Charles reminded him again of how important it was to understand and to be understood by his own subjects and foreign ambassadors.⁴¹⁷

More than by their tutor, the two sisters were influenced by their governess. The lady taking care of them was Leonor de Mascareñas (1503–84), a noble Portuguese lady who had in her youth served the girls' maternal grandmother María, Queen of Portugal.⁴¹⁸ Being approximately the same age as Empress Isabel, Doña Leonor came to Spain as her lady-in-waiting. Among the ladies serving the princesses, she was the most appreciated, if not

⁴¹⁴ Alvar Ezquerro, 'Modelos educativos,' 133.

⁴¹⁵ Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 87.

⁴¹⁶ Carrillo, *Relación histórica de la Real fundación del Monasterio de las Descalças*, adapted to Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 93.

⁴¹⁷ Charles's instructions *Cómo ser Rey*. Fol 7v. On Philip's education and upbringing Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, José Luis, *Felipe II. La educación de un 'felicísimo príncipe' (1527-1545)* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2011); Parker, *Imprudent king*, 16-17. It must be noted that Philip did not quite live up to these expectations, as he was unable to find a mutual language with his English wife, Queen Mary, in 1554. They managed to communicate by him talking in Spanish and her answering in French. Parker, *Imprudent king*, 46.

⁴¹⁸ On Leonor see Saint Ignatius Loyola, *Letters to Women*, ed. Hugo Rahner (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960). 417-9. Also Sánchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II*, 47-9.

by title then by the trust given to her: she had the keys to the doors and windows, and she was the one allowed to dress María.⁴¹⁹

Having met Ignatius Loyola herself in 1527, Leonor de Mascareñas had a crucial role in introducing the Jesuit fathers to the princesses.⁴²⁰ Although she was not the only one influenced by the new company of Jesuits, her support for the movement combined female religiosity with very resolute action. The princesses were evidently impressed by her determination to follow her conscience. Doña Leonor had in her youth resolved not to marry and chose to dress in a Franciscan habit. She actively supported Ignatius, corresponded with him and other Jesuit fathers, and gave them, for example, the house in which to establish a Jesuit college in Madrid.⁴²¹ In 1542, Doña Leonor wrote to Father Favre about how she envied the chaplains who had left the princesses' household to follow the Jesuit calling after the visit of Favre, because

en la vida y perfección que á my me parece, que es seguiruos á uos y á Iñigo, que es la cosa que you de meyor uoluntad hiziera, si fuera hombre; mas como sea muger, tan peccadora y sin prouecho, no meresco pensar ni hablar en cosas buenas [I would with readiness choose the life of perfection, that is, follow you and Ignatius, if I were a man. But I am only a woman, a sinner making no progress in virtue, and I may not join you in meditating and discussing holy things, much less those that concern the Company of Ignatius].⁴²²

Doña Leonor's attitude had evidently a very strong influence on the two princess she was taking care of, as will be seen later when Juana's position as the first and only female Jesuit. She arranged Peter Favre to preach to the household of the two princesses in 1541. Favre was received in Ocaña by the count of Cifuentes, and Juana listened to his preaching.⁴²³ Doña Leonor's constant presence, the companion of likeminded ladies and the lack of other contacts were without doubt decisive in forming Juana's youth.

⁴¹⁹ Leonor Mascareñas to Philip II ca 1571, cited in Ezquerro Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 126, note 605.

⁴²⁰ Olwen Hufton, 'Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and their Female Patrons,' *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001), 336. On the Jesuit connections of the princesses' ladies Ezquerro Reveilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 141 ff.

⁴²¹ Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 417.

⁴²² Leonor Mascareñas to Peter Favre Ocaña February 1542. Faber, Petrus, *Fabri Monumenta. Beati Petri Fabri epistolae, memoriale et processus ex autographis aut archetypis potissimum deprompta*. (Madrid: Lopez del Horno, 1914). Epist. 48, 143. Translation from Hufton, 'Altruism and Reciprocity,' 337.

⁴²³ María was ill at the time but showed her interest by sending a message to father Favre. Hufton, 'Altruism and Reciprocity,' 336.

The contacts with the princesses were described in detail in the letters of the Jesuit fathers to Ignatius Loyola in Rome.⁴²⁴ The Society's leader understood that winning over the women who had connections to the emperor was important for their cause. Spanish nobles also had ties to Rome and Ignatius Loyola through the household of Margaret of Parma, the illegitimate daughter of Charles V. Born in 1522, Margaret had in 1538 married Ottavio Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III. Loyola was her confessor, and she provided the Jesuit with connections that led to the approval of the order in 1540.⁴²⁵ Also, Charles V's youngest sister Catherine, Queen of Portugal, had known Ignatius Loyola when he had served as a page in the court of her mother, Queen Juana.⁴²⁶ Thus it was indeed inevitable that Charles's daughters, too, had contacts with the Jesuits.

Keeping María and Juana away from their brother's court may have prevented the different court parties from gaining control over them, but it also left the young women open to other influences. Their isolation did not diminish their importance, as the eagerness of the Jesuits to report their success to their superior clearly testifies. A princess outside of the princely court was still a princess. Nevertheless, Juana's childhood was documented only in the private letters of her closest attendants. The princesses, especially after their mother's death, did not perform on public occasions, and therefore, they were not, for example, assessed by foreign ambassadors. For María and Juana, the moments to show their learned skills were rare or non-existent. For comparison, in 1541 the princesses' cousins, Ferdinand's daughters, welcomed their uncle the emperor to Innsbruck with a speech in three languages, Latin, German and Italian.⁴²⁷ Despite the nurtured family ties between the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Habsburg, their attitudes towards language studies remained different.

PRINCESS OF PORTUGAL (1548–1554)

Juana's marriage contract with the Prince of Portugal was signed as early as 1542, but it took ten years before Juana left Spain for Portugal.⁴²⁸ In her teens, Juana was more affected by her siblings' marriages. Philip was

⁴²⁴ Peter Favre to Ignatius Loyola Barcelona 1 Mar.1542. *Monumenta Fabri* Epist. 50. 150-1.

⁴²⁵ Giampiero Brunelli, 'Tra eretici e gesuiti. I primi anni di Margherita a Roma,' in *Margherita d'Austria. Costruzioni politiche e diplomazia, tra corte Farnese e Monarchia Spagnola*, ed. Silvia Mantini (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2003), 65-83.

⁴²⁶ Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 45.

⁴²⁷ Rauch, 'Verkaufte Bräute?', 30. Archduchess Anna (13) delivered her speech in Italian, her sister Maria (10) in Latin and the youngest Magdalena (9) in German.

⁴²⁸ P. Mariño, *Carlos V.: 1, España-Portugal* (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1978), 363.

married to another Portuguese cousin, Maria Manuela, in 1544, but she died the following year giving birth to a son, Carlos. María and Juana shared a household with the infant Carlos until it was María's turn to be united with a cousin, Archduke Maximilian, in 1548.

Archduke Maximilian's arrival in Spain in 1548 was part of the arrangement for him to marry María and the couple to rule as regents while Philip joined his father in the Low Countries.⁴²⁹ Maximilian arrived capable of speaking Spanish. His language skills very pointedly demonstrated the difference between the education of a prince and that of a princess. It also underscored how the family members brought up in Austria were prepared to use several languages. As discussed above, María was taught Latin, but there is more evidence of her not learning it than of her mastering it. Maximilian in turn was a skilful linguist, who was said to be able to converse in several languages.⁴³⁰ In 1549, Juana and her nephew, younger by ten years, were established in their own household separate from the regents' court.⁴³¹ Together, Juana and Carlos continued the life Charles V still judged to be proper for the younger generation of future rulers and regents.

Once again, the duty of taking care of the heirs of the realm was added to the governmental tasks of a regent, or in this case, the regent couple. As regents, Maximilian and María were responsible for reporting to Charles, and the task was mainly fulfilled by Maximilian. Dutifully, Maximilian wrote to Charles; besides recounting the details of government affairs, he also shared the latest news concerning the health of all the family members, including Juana and Carlos. He forwarded the recommendations of the doctors to move the princess and the prince into different housing in Aranda,⁴³² and a little later to Toro.⁴³³ In 1551, María, then the sole regent after Maximilian had travelled to Germany to attend a family meeting, wrote to Charles to thank him for allowing Juana to move to Valladolid to keep her sister company.⁴³⁴

Juana's role as the motherly figure to her nephew was perhaps the first apprenticeship she had for her future queenly duties. Both the regents and the mayordomo of her household assured the emperor that Juana and her young nephew preferred to stay together and that Juana treated Carlos like he was her son.⁴³⁵ When Juana left Spain for Portugal in 1552, Luis Sarmiento reported to the emperor about how, on parting, both Juana and

⁴²⁹ *Maximiliano de Austria*, 11.

⁴³⁰ Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 9.

⁴³¹ Louis Prosper Gachard, *Don Carlos et Philippe II* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1867), 6.

⁴³² Maximilian to Charles 21 Apr. 1550 Valladolid, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 184-5.

⁴³³ Maximilian to Charles 26 Sep. 1550 Valladolid, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 218-9.

⁴³⁴ María to Charles V Valladolid 13 May 1551, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 273.

⁴³⁵ Luis Sarmiento to Charles V Aranda 19 Apr. 1549, cited in Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 150-1.

her nephew cried for three days.⁴³⁶ The position of Carlos as the heir to the throne must not be underrated because of his later inabilities. After Juana left for Portugal, Philip transferred the seven-year-old boy, just like he himself had been, from the care of women into the hands of men and gave him the best tutors.⁴³⁷ Thus, Juana, in the eyes of contemporaries, had been guarding the future of Spain, not a retarded nephew.

Philip returned to Spain in August 1551, and Maximilian and María left for their own kingdom of Bohemia.⁴³⁸ In the letters Juana wrote to her brother-in-law Maximilian after his and her sister's departure, she emerges as a princess aware of her own status and importance. However, the style of the letters reveals that she was not an experienced letter writer, nor was she able to use any humanist techniques to persuade her recipient. In short and unstructured letters, Juana demanded news from Maximilian and his family and complained that she was left

sin sauer de V[uestrea] al[teza] y de my hermana que a cien mil anos
[without knowing news from your Highness and my sister for a
hundred thousand years],

with her tone becoming even more anxious as her departure for Portugal drew closer.⁴³⁹ Personal and passionate in tone, the letters were obviously not written by someone who would have had experience with official documents or had used letter writing as an exercise.

During her preparations before her marriage Juana met another Jesuit father, Francis Borgia (1510–72), a converted nobleman who had served at the late empress Isabel's court. Juana had undoubtedly continued having regular contacts with the Jesuit fathers, because Leonor de Mascareñas was known to have remained a patroness of the Society, and she had been Don Carlos's governess and had lived in the same household with Juana.⁴⁴⁰ Father Borgia, descendant of Pope Alexander VI, of the House of Borgia, had abandoned the life of a courtier and joined the Jesuits after his wife's death in 1546. He had been influenced the same Jesuit fathers, Araoz and Favre, who had earlier visited the princesses' household. Given his background,

⁴³⁶ Sarmiento de Mendoza to Charles V 24 Nov. 1552. CODOIN 26, 392. The 19th-century Belgian historian Gachard took such emotion to be proof that deranged Don Carlos did have normal feelings as a young boy. Gachard, *Don Carlos et Philippe II*, 8.

⁴³⁷ Parker, *Imprudent king*, 182.

⁴³⁸ *Maximiliano de Austria*, 31.

⁴³⁹ Juana to Maximilian 15 Aug. 1552 HHStA Spanien HofKorr 1/4 fol 62 and other letters from Juana to Maximilian in the same carton.

⁴⁴⁰ Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 423.

Father Borgia was exceptionally well suited to having conversations with the imperial family.⁴⁴¹

In 1552, Father Borgia undertook a delicate mission to engage in discussions with the elderly Queen Juana to clarify doubts about her spiritual condition. He reported his visit to Philip, but did not mention that he had talked with younger Juana as well.⁴⁴² However, he had introduced the princess to the spiritual exercises of the Society when visiting her household in Toro.⁴⁴³ A rare glimpse into the supposed recreational reading habits in Juana's household has been provided by Borgia's biographer, when the apparently delighted writer told of how the courtiers cried when Father Francis had persuaded them to abandon their profane books with their bright pictures in an effort to save their innocent souls.⁴⁴⁴ Juana allegedly gave away her books voluntarily. Father Borgia attempted to substitute the courtly entertainments with more pious alternatives. It is evident that he was offering a mode of religious practise and commitment that a princess could adhere to without giving up her position. Later, when visiting Juana in Lisbon in 1553, Father Francis continued to spread the word of God by replacing courtly pastimes with more virtuous options. He succeeded in persuading the ladies of the court to give up their traditional card games and take on an educational game of 24 virtues and vices, developed to support their spiritual growth.⁴⁴⁵

However interesting Juana found the teachings of Father Borgia, her duty was to become the Queen of Portugal. She was to be another link between the two dynasties on the Iberian Peninsula. Not only were Charles and Philip both married to Portuguese princesses, but likewise two of Charles's aunts and two sisters were married to Portuguese monarchs.⁴⁴⁶ After solidifying so many links, it was inevitable that the young couple was closely related, to the degree that Juana was to marry a prince that was her cousin both on the paternal and maternal side. Charles was probably aware that Juana's future as the Queen of Portugal could have meant a regency either in Portugal or Spain. If, or more precisely when, ancestry was to become a crucial factor in choosing the regent, Juana would be well qualified. Juana's role as the mother of the future scions of the dynasty, together with her mixed Spanish

⁴⁴¹ Jorge Sebastián Lozano, 'Francisco de Borja, de criado a maestro espiritual de grandes damas Habsburgo' in *San Francisco de Borja: Grande de España. Arte y espiritualidad en la cultura hispana de los siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. Ximo Company and Joan Aliaga (Ajuntament de Gandia, 2010), 67–90.

⁴⁴² Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 312.

⁴⁴³ Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 53.

⁴⁴⁴ Alvaro Cienfuegos, *La heroica vida virtudes, y milagros del grande San Francisco de Borja: antes duque quarto de Gandia, y despues tercero general de la Compañia de Jesus* (Madrid: La imprenta de Bernardo Peralta acosta de Francisco Medel del Castillo, 1726), 186–7.

⁴⁴⁵ Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 53.

⁴⁴⁶ His aunts Isabel and María and his elder sister Eleanor all in turn with King Manuel (1469–1521), and his younger sister Catherine with Manuel's and Maria's son King Joao (1502–57).

and Portuguese descent, made her an ideal spouse for Juan Manuel. It was hoped that Juana's marriage would produce an heir very soon, because the then fifteen-year-old prince was the sixth crown prince after the deaths of five of his older brothers.⁴⁴⁷

When Juana finally in 1552 left for Lisbon, the plans initially looked promising. The emperor heard that Juana was 'an angel' and that her behaviour was sure to make her father and in-laws happy.⁴⁴⁸ Juan Manuel was eagerly waiting for her, being prompted by his father to start a courteous wooing of his bride with love letters. The young prince was not quite up to the task of romantic suitor, though, and somewhat bluntly wrote to Juana that he hoped she would speak Portuguese, because he did not speak Spanish.⁴⁴⁹ Latin seemed not to be an option, and Juan Manuel certainly was no competition for their polyglot cousin Maximilian.

Once the couple had met, it was reported that Juan Manuel was infatuated with Juana, and soon she was pregnant. The reports on Juana's behaviour, however, gradually took on a note of increasing concern. When the prince was not in the palace, according to Charles's ambassador, Juana withdrew to her own quarters, covered her head with a veil and ate alone. Her in-laws approvingly took this as a sign of conjugal fidelity.⁴⁵⁰ However, at the same time other reports to the emperor noted that the princess refused to eat and was acting sullen and gloomy. Even worse, she was not showing proper respect to her aunt and mother-in-law, Queen Catherine.⁴⁵¹

Juana's reactions to a situation she evidently found distressing, the self-imposed isolation and eating disorders, resemble those of her grandmother, Juana.⁴⁵² The elderly queen had protested her confinement by often refusing to eat or to meet anybody. Although possibly motivated by religious examples, that kind of behaviour was not desirable for princesses, as the example of the elder Juana demonstrates. Such reactions were not in unison with the requirements of adaption, humility and patience. They were very likely the reason why Charles a year later resisted Philip's plans to appoint Juana and wrote

⁴⁴⁷ Anne Marie Jordan Gschwend, "Cosa veramente di gran stupore" Entrada Real y Fiestas nupciales de Juana de Austria en Lisboa en 1552,' in *El legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y ceremonia cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454-1648)*, ed. Krista de Jonge, Bernardo José García García and Alicia Esteban Estríngana (Madrid: Marcial Pons Ediciones de Historia, 2010), 180-1.

⁴⁴⁸ D.Luis Sarmiento de Mendoza to Charles V 24 Nov. 1552, CODOIN 26, 392-4.

⁴⁴⁹ Buescu, *Catarina de Áustria*, 291.

⁴⁵⁰ Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 168.

⁴⁵¹ Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 167-71.

⁴⁵² Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 200.

la Princesa es más ativa [que la reyna de Bohemia] y entonces ouo tales desórdenes [the princess is more active [than queen of Bohemia, her sister] and often rebellious].⁴⁵³

Juana's marriage was curiously identical as that of her great-aunt Margaret's union with Prince Juan nearly fifty years earlier. Both princesses were pictured as beautiful, healthy young women with sickly young princes as their husbands. According to the descriptions, the royal grooms became so infatuated with their brides that they could not restrain themselves, with fatal consequences.⁴⁵⁴ Even Emperor Charles had cautioned his son, Philip, on the occasion of the latter's marriage to Maria Manuela, using Prince Juan as a cautionary example of the dangers of sleeping with his wife too often.⁴⁵⁵ Regardless of whether this contemporary diagnosis was true, Juana's besotted husband also only survived a few months. Prince Juan Manuel died in the beginning of January 1554, eighteen days before Juana delivered their son, Sebastian.

Juana was successful in her most important task, providing the realm with an heir and exhibiting a spiritual devoutness that matched the piety of the Portuguese court. However, her comportment and the degree to which she adapted to her surroundings apparently did not meet with people's expectations. Overall, her Portuguese experience shows that the amount of attention devoted to the importance of decent behaviour was indeed necessary in courtly society. Her supposedly inappropriate behaviour contrasted strikingly with advice given by Portuguese monarchs to their daughter Maria Manuela when she had married Juana's brother Philip.⁴⁵⁶ Her short time as a crown princess further demonstrates that the future queen was not expected to deliver speeches or show her learning, neither in the privacy of the court nor in public. It was not even mentioned whether Juana spoke Portuguese, as her husband had desired. However, even if Juana's upbringing had failed to prepare her for her queenship, she was a Habsburg and, as such, ready for the regency when her brother summoned her back to Spain.

CONCLUSION

Juana's childhood shows how immensely important the control and safeguarding of his children were to Charles V. When they were young, he did not seem to be moved by personal feelings for them. Charles had grieved over

⁴⁵³ Charles to Philip 30 April 1554 Brussels CDCV 4, 40, DCII.

⁴⁵⁴ Comparison was made for example by Fernández de Retana, *Doña Juana de Austria*, 81–82.

⁴⁵⁵ *Cómo ser rey*, fol 6r.

⁴⁵⁶ Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives,' 237 ff.

the loss of his nephew Johan, whom he had known,⁴⁵⁷ but he did not know his own son Philip nor his own daughters. Johan's early death reminded him of the fact that the survival of the dynasty had become crucial. Charles's children were sickly. He had lost half of his legitimate offspring before they became adults. Health became the primary topic of all family letters and remained so for the rest of Charles's reign. If Charles did not know the details of his younger daughter's education, he did know if she had suffered from fever recently or not.⁴⁵⁸

The loss of their mother prevented María and Juana from practising for the role of queen in the same way as princesses who grew up in royal courts. Even when they had their own court and were treated according to their rank, greeting visiting ambassadors or participating in major festivities were not part of their youth. The women around them found the meaning for their existence in religion, and it was natural for the princesses to follow suit. Yet, however religious the court of María and Juana was, Juan Carrillo's tale of them growing so bashful that they refused even to bathe sounds less plausible than maestro la Cuadra's complaints of María chatting with her ladies during Latin lessons.⁴⁵⁹

Although the role of the princesses as the symbols of continuity prevailed, the attributes attached to them evolved over time. Princesses were still to be beautiful, but their beauty was not for all to see. The tone had changed from Lemaire's story of 1507, in which the new regent Margaret of Austria was so loved by the people that she did not hesitate to show her face to the crowds, to the anecdote told near half a century later, in which Juana, as regent, refused to be seen without a veil while talking to the ambassadors and councillors, causing some confusion as to her identity. After hearing complaints, she adopted the custom of lifting her veil at the beginning of an audience to prove that she was the princess, covering her face again once visitors had confirmation of her identity.⁴⁶⁰ Still, as the daughter of the emperor, she was as conscious of her own position and worth as Margaret had been.

Juana's formal education, it can be assumed, followed the conventions set for noble daughters. Additionally, the royal house had its own customs. Similarly as Empress Isabel's tutor had followed his pupil to Spain in the role of dean of her chapel, Lopez de la Cuadra was listed in Juana's retinue as a

⁴⁵⁷ Charles to Mary 13 Aug. 1532, CMCG 1, 440, nr. 229.

⁴⁵⁸ For example Maximilian to Charles 12 Nov. 1550 Valladolid reporting on Juana's tertian fever, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 233, LVII.

⁴⁵⁹ Fernández de Retana, *Doña Juana de Austria*, 62.

⁴⁶⁰ Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Chronique de 1507*; édition critique par Anne Schoysman; avec des notes historiques et un index des noms propres par Jean-Marie Cauchies. (Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2001), 55-7; Henrique Florez. *Memorias de las Reynas Catholicas* (Madrid: Marin, 1770) Tomo II, 873.

tutor when Juana left for Portugal.⁴⁶¹ Royal daughters were to be taught by chaplains the rudiments of Latin. Unlike her aunt Margaret, Juana was not taught to express herself artistically. Compared to her aunt, Mary of Hungary, Juana lacked the tools she could have acquired from a more thorough formal education. Even still, their lack of polished manners when confronted with the role of a young bride, in which they demonstrated determination but lacked in style and tact, were quite similar. In both cases, they grew up apart from the actual administrative court of the ruler with all of its ceremonies.

Juana's austere, although allegedly very beautiful, image also contradicts the one filtered through familial letters and the reports of the princess's attendants. In the latter, Juana seems to be rather passionate and unrestrained. Rodríguez-Salgado has described Juana as a woman with 'intelligence, vigour and pride',⁴⁶² and as we shall see, she was not a mere puppet as a regent. It might well be that both princesses, Juana as well as Margaret, were skilful in carefully crafting their image, merely responding to diverse expectations.

Juana, in any case, succeeded brilliantly in fulfilling her duties. She mothered a son who became a king, and she was praised for her beauty and piety. She did not create such trust in her new family as King Joao had hoped Maria Manuela would have in the court of Spain, but just like with Maria Manuela, Juana's marriage was too short to be analysed more deeply. More importantly, Juana's own family had that trust in her. Accordingly, she returned to Spain quite rapidly after the request was made by her brother. She became regent in 1554, and at the age of nineteen had the possibility to show how her education had prepared her for such an office.

While she was to become one of the living examples of the possibilities open to Habsburg daughters, and undeniably as conscious of her own worth as a princess as her aunt Mary and great-aunt Margaret had been as children, she was the most striking example of the persisting lack of attention shown towards women and the young scions of a family. Whereas the status of María's Latin education had been described to Charles, Juana's studies were mainly ignored. If the adoring biographers following in the footsteps of Father Carrillo wanted her to have been smarter than her peers, we really do not know that she was, because her contemporaries did not pay attention to her intellectual competence.

⁴⁶¹ Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 160; Ezquerria Revilla, 'La Casa de las infantas,' 126–7.

⁴⁶² Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 5.

PART II REGENTS

5 REGENCY IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES V

As argued in the first part, the Habsburg family considered their princesses to be capable queens, and as such, suitable regents. The aim of the second part of the study is to ascertain how the princesses faced the challenges of the office, which occasionally demanded more than any treatises on exemplary queenship could have prepared them for. Martha Hoffman, in her study of Spanish Habsburgs in the 17th-century, has aptly pointed out that the 'evidence suggests that successful female regency depended on a queen-regent's sharing the vision of royalty that placed a king unquestionably at the top of the early modern world'.⁴⁶³ Regency was first and foremost about promoting that vision, combined with co-operating with the ruler. A successful regent was the result of an upbringing that had prepared the princesses on the ways to negotiate and network with as well as persuade their peers.

PRINCESS REGENTS IN THE SERVICE OF THE DYNASTY

Although this part concentrates on success of the the princesses' education with respect to the realities of early modern government, it shows clearly how the office of regent was only one component of their existence. Their person was shaped and perceived as a combination of the roles of dowager queens, princess or duchess, in relation to their closeness to the members of their family. The regency, acting as the head of the regency council and as the ruler's formal representative, was certainly the main duty while in office. Apart from that all three Habsburg princess regents were dowagers, who had accrued various interests through their dowers, including networks of people. Margaret of Austria had interests both in Spain and in Savoy.⁴⁶⁴ Mary was a notable land owner in Hungary.⁴⁶⁵ Juana of Austria did not have wealth in Portugal, but she was the Portuguese king's mother. It was also assumed that the regent princesses, as high-ranking female members of their dynasty, would cultivate familial relations among their own kin as well as with other royals and nobles.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Hoffman, *Raised to rule*, 220.

⁴⁶⁴ Treaty between King Ferdinand The Catholic and Maximilian, Emperor Elect. 12 Dec. 1509. CSP Spain 2, nr. 33.

⁴⁶⁵ Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber,' 146-7.

⁴⁶⁶ On the female royal networks Susan Broomhall, 'Ordering distant affections, fostering love and loyalty in the correspondence of Catherine de Medici to the Spanish Court 1568-1572' in *Gender and Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Destroying Order, Structuring Disorder* ed. Susan Broomhall (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 51-65.

The regent princesses made quite an impression as unusual women, but their presence was a blend of conventional roles usually typical for women complemented with a few usually associated with men. A very appropriate example of their ambiguous existence in combining female virtues and authority among their masculine peers is the dedication of Cornelius Agrippa's *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* to Margaret of Austria.⁴⁶⁷ It was a peculiar treatise that put its writer's talents to good use in proving that women are indeed more capable than men, in a way that was hardly meant to be taken at face value. In any case the fact that it was dedicated to Margaret came from a very down-to-earth motivation; Agrippa's desire for an academic career in Dôle, which required Margaret's approval as the reigning duchess in the region.⁴⁶⁸

A closer look at the female regencies also shows how the princesses as regents, despite continuing to lead a life typical for a royal woman when it came to how they made use of their spare time, the company they kept or their behaviour, also worked with men, corresponded mostly with men and had male client networks as part of their official duties.⁴⁶⁹ As Susan Doran has pointed out, in her analysis of Queen Elizabeth I's reign, the actual government kept functioning as usual, although the head of it was a woman,⁴⁷⁰ but it was run by men. In France, the reigning female regent's patronage of her male supporters was seen in the difference between King Francis I's mother, Louise of Savoy, and that of his queen consort, Claude of France. Louise, who held the regency during her son's captivity, used her patronage to reward men who served her interests, while the queen consort used her intercession in favour of promoting female networks and religious issues.⁴⁷¹ There was no queen consort around for comparison for the Habsburg princess regents, but they combined the duties of their office in the male surroundings successfully with still living the life of a royal lady.

Despite the different ways of legitimating female regency, such as their mutual love for and a shared commitment to the common good of their lands and subjects, the core of the arrangement was unquestioned obedience to the dynasty regardless of love and confidence. André Poulet has defined medieval queenly regency as 'really the defence and preservation of male

⁴⁶⁷ Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *Declamation on the nobility and preeminence of the female sex*, ed. Albert Rabil, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 41.

⁴⁶⁸ Charles Nauert, *Agrippa and the crisis of Renaissance thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 25.

⁴⁶⁹ The regency government was likely to be supported with staff similar to that of the imperial chancellery 'consisting of men that worked, lived and ate together when they were traveling after the emperor'. Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor*, 78-9.

⁴⁷⁰ Susan Doran, 'Did Elizabeth's Gender Really Matter?' in *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies*, 51.

⁴⁷¹ David-Chapy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie*, 513.

supremacy -- essential to the survival of the dynasty.⁴⁷² The princess regents were not appointed because their family trusted them or had affection for them, but because they were family. The most striking example of regency being a non-emotional dynastic arrangement was Charles's own marriage. His plans for marrying his cousin Isabel, Princess of Portugal were laid out in a memorandum using the reasoning that after the marriage, he could leave Spain for Italy to be crowned.⁴⁷³ His brother Ferdinand's ambassador, Martin Salinas, reported on the marriage to his master using the same plain terms.⁴⁷⁴ Charles himself wrote to Ferdinand in June 1525 from Toledo

Mais pour laisser ces royaumes en bon ordre et gouvernement, je n'y vois aultre remede que de me marier à l'infante donna Ysabel de Portugal, ce dont les courtes desd. royaumes m'ont requis, me offrant pour ce grand service, et d'aultre part le roi de Portugal me offre ung million de ducas, la pluspart comptant, que seroit pour aider à fournir aux frais de mond. voyage d'Ytalie et pourroie laisser le gouvernement de pardeça en la personne de lad. infante que seroit avec bon conseil. [To leave these kingdoms in good order, I do not see any other remedy than to marry the Princess of Portugal, as the Cortes of these kingdoms has requested, offering me a great service for it, and besides the King of Portugal has offered me a million ducats, mostly in cash, which would assist me with the expenses of my voyage to Italy, and then I could leave the government to the person of the said princess with good councillors].⁴⁷⁵

The Cortes of Castile had indeed already in 1520 recommended Isabel as 'a faithful friend to our people and to all Castilians, who speaks Castilian as we do'.⁴⁷⁶ Ferdinand was the only one to bring family values into the conversation, when he wrote about how he wished that God would hopefully soon bless Charles with children, which would profit them both.⁴⁷⁷

The view presented in this study has challenged the standard view point on prominent cultivated women and has suggested instead that the princess regents were women capable of finding novel solutions even when starting

⁴⁷² André Poulet, 'Capetian women and the regency,' in *Medieval queenship*, 93.

⁴⁷³ Charles V, Memorandum on the present political situation, Winter 1524/25, Kohler, *Quellen*, 107, nr. 26

⁴⁷⁴ Martin Salinas to Ferdinand 3 Apr. 1525 Madrid, *El Emperador Carlos V y su Corte segun las Cartas de Don Martin de Salinas Embajador del Infante Don Fernando 1522-1539*, ed. Antonio Rodriguez-Villa (Madrid: Fortanet, 1903), 270, nr. 107.

⁴⁷⁵ Charles to Ferdinand 25 June 1525 Toledo. KF 1, 308, nr. 143.

⁴⁷⁶ Stephen Haliczer, *The Comuneros of Castile: the forging of a revolution 1475-1521* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 178.

⁴⁷⁷ 'consideré leaige de Vre Mte et tous ses affaires, mesmes qu'il n'y a que nous deux... à l'aide de dieu puisse consuir génération qu'est le fruit de mariaige', Ferdinand to Charles 1 Sept. 1525 Tübingen. KF Band I, 324, nr. 149.

from traditional premises. Regardless their image was and is mostly based on their visibility through rituals, or their influence on and patronage of architecture and the arts. Although I have emphasised that the political correspondence was not private, the circles reading it were nevertheless quite limited and their actual political presence in front of larger audiences consisted more of attending meetings and assemblies. The princess regents also took part in processions, entries and festivities, which were occasions designed to impress and loaded with symbolism. The unity of the Habsburg family and its benefits for their subjects were highlighted through such events as the opening of the 1520 States General in Brussels, where Charles sat on the throne between his brother Ferdinand and his aunt Margaret, and Chancellor Gattinara delivered an oratory describing the benefits the Low Countries would gain from having their prince crowned emperor 'by participating in the great good and grandeur which will ensue for the service of God and for the whole of Christendom you will recognize that clearly the hand of God is with His Majesty'.⁴⁷⁸ The reputation they had acquired did not come from their abilities to govern, but from their skills at making an impression.

The visual image of the princess regents effectively kept up the idea of power and prestige. All three princesses focused on in this study were presented in relatively masculine ways, which has sometimes been seen as a challenge to male political power. Although I have argued above that female regency was first and foremost based on the dual nature of the monarchy, where the regent was obviously the feminine one of the two, the political power claimed by the ruler and his regent was considered masculine. Therefore, rather than being perceived as a challenge, the masculine representation of the monarchy was a manifestation of the power the regent shared with the ruler. The evidently male style of representation prevailed although the portrait styles changed. Margaret of Austria was the only woman to appear in diptychs,⁴⁷⁹ while Mary of Hungary gained fame as the first renaissance woman with a contemporary life-size statue of herself,⁴⁸⁰ and Juana of Austria's portraits bore a striking resemblance to those of her father and brother.⁴⁸¹

The concept of shared rule, albeit one that denied any thoughts about an independent ruling woman, had already been used to explain the power of Queen Isabel of Castile in the late 15th century. Contemporaries had adapted to Isabel's position by placing her within the dual system. As Hieronymus Münzer, a German humanist and geographer, admiringly stated during his trip to the Iberian Peninsula in the 1490s: 'Such is her [Isabel's] counsel in

⁴⁷⁸ Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 108.

⁴⁷⁹ Pearson, *Envisioning Gender*, 163.

⁴⁸⁰ William Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings in Europe, 1300-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 122.

⁴⁸¹ Davies, 'The Body Politics of Spanish Habsburg Queens,' 1491.

the arts of war and peace that nearly all hold it above what it is possible the female sex can do... I believe that the Omnipotent on high, on seeing Spain languishing, sent this most admirable woman, so that, in union with the King, it might be restored to sound state.'⁴⁸² If the formidable grandmother of Charles V had shown that women could, *in union with the king*, support the government, then it is plausible that her descendants shared the same attitude. A recent work on Charles and Mary of Hungary's mother, Juana, affirms that 'women could rule — at least within the context of a sympathetically shared dual enterprise'.⁴⁸³ This perspective, I suggest, also explains the situation with Habsburg female regency. Nonetheless, it leaves open the question of what exactly was required of the female half of this enterprise. This section seeks to show that those requirements were open to negotiation and ever evolving.

There was nothing novel or innovative about female regency as such. Numerous royal mothers had been guarding their sons' inheritance on the thrones of Europe for centuries. The early sixteenth century also saw the rise to power of queenly regents other than just the ones representing the Habsburg rulers. Anne of France's regency for her younger brother Charles VIII had been informal in the 1480s, but, in 1504 a seriously ill Louis XII started preparing for his spouse Anne of Brittany's regency. She was crowned for a second time and symbolically wedded with the nation.⁴⁸⁴ Catherine of Aragon famously was a victorious regent during the Battle of Flodden in 1513, when her husband Henry VIII was engaged on the continent in a fight against the French.⁴⁸⁵ In the 1520s, the regent Margaret of Austria was able to handle relations with France in co-operation with its respective regent, Louise of Savoy, mother of King François.⁴⁸⁶ What made the Habsburg regencies unique was that the Habsburg regents were usually not wives or mothers of the ruling men, and they operated for long periods as parts of the larger empire, where the ruler was not incapable of ruling but an essential factor in the regents' governmental work.

A king had seemingly chosen his wife as the best candidate from among a list of beautiful and virtuous princesses with superb prospective mothering qualities, but beyond doubt a queen was chosen because of her royal pedigree. There was of course no way of knowing whether such a queen consort would prove to be a capable regent. However, it was the same situation with princes and kings. As Charles Beem notes, power was sometimes given to young boys, old men, women and lunatics.⁴⁸⁷ The silent solution was for the regency government to function *despite* the possible

⁴⁸² Hieronymus Münzer cited in Liss, *Isabel the Queen*, 269

⁴⁸³ Fleming, *Juana I: Legitimacy and Conflict*, 26.

⁴⁸⁴ Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Louis XII* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1994), 135-6.

⁴⁸⁵ Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 121.

⁴⁸⁶ For the French regents see Crawford, *Perilous performances*, 19-21.

⁴⁸⁷ Beem, *The Lioness Roared*, 2.

incompetence of a princess, if problems should arise. Yet, a paradox remained: despite Erasmus musing that 'on board ship, we do not give the helm to the one who has the nobles ancestry of the company, the greatest wealth, or the best looks, but to him who is most skilled in steering, most alert, and most reliable',⁴⁸⁸ there was no one offering a manual when the princesses took over the steering.

The three Habsburg princesses, Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Juana of Austria, were all young women at the beginning of their regencies and had been brought up in seemingly similar surroundings and according to similar principles, but their education yielded quite different results. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that they adopted various approaches to facing the challenges that emerged during their regencies. In all probability, Maximilian I, Charles V and Philip II all in turn assumed that the princesses would have only a representative role. Nonetheless, the Habsburg rulers firmly believed that the princesses, with their queenly education, were capable of fulfilling their duties as regents within the given requirements. What is more, as regents the princesses were obliged to obedience both through shared blood and their gender. The challenges and frustrations that the princess regents faced with their limited authority and the unrealistic financial demands placed on them were the sorts of problems that occurred also elsewhere in the Habsburg government. As princess regents, Margaret, Mary and Juana were the equivalents of queen consorts, who out-ranked all men and were able to establish a confidential relationship with the ruler. That relationship had a strong emphasis on counsel and a division of labour, enforced through the rhetoric of familial love. They were contributing to the government with the ruler's consent.

To evaluate the success of a queenly education in preparing princesses for regents, one must first consider the nature of Charles V's regency and the way he and his dynasty saw it. Using family members as regents was part of a dynastic politics in which legitimacy was based on ancestry. Younger brothers served their dynasty in that role, particularly in Austria with Charles's brother Ferdinand and his sons.⁴⁸⁹ However, when there were not enough princes, a princess was a functional alternative, particularly when the closely related princess as a widow could plausibly act as the symbolic queen consort. In this section, the regencies are considered as being shaped by the context of Charles's empire and the regents as the individuals shaped for the role by their childhood, youth and education. The princess regents were politicians, diplomats, advisors and communicators, with the qualifications of being princesses who had received a queenly education. I aim to show that Margaret, Mary and Juana all performed as regents by fulfilling the

⁴⁸⁸ Erasmus, *Education of the Christian Prince*, 5.

⁴⁸⁹ Charles's brother Ferdinand was his regent in the empire, and Ferdinand in turn divided his own lands to be governed by his sons: Maximilian ruled Bohemia, Charles Inner Austria and Ferdinand Tyrol.

expectations they would have faced as queen consorts. Charles, as well as Maximilian before him and Philip II after him, was content with that model. However, on many occasions the slow speed of communication, the ruler's other occupations and general political intrigues forced or enabled the princess regents to act more independently than had been planned.

As we have seen, the most important qualification of the princesses was their family and background as natives of the region they were governing. Their widowhood simplified the situation, but age was not a decisive factor. It was evidently believed that a queenly education, even without extensive formal studies, brought with it the necessary prudence. Thus, as seen in the first part of this work, it is not plausible to assume that they received a thorough education, when it is apparent that no-one expected them to have one, at least not in the same sense as their brothers.

The regency of Margaret of Austria was important as the first of its kind. Since her work during the years when Charles was still a minor was considered a functioning solution for the management of the composite monarchy, her guardianship was extended for a second term when Charles inherited the crown of Spain.⁴⁹⁰ Within a decade, another princess was appointed to the same office, when Empress Isabel became the regent of Spain. Mary of Hungary in turn showed how, so long as she laboured for the same goals as her imperial brother, she was very much appreciated as a regent and advisor, and even prompted to expand her role. Her niece Juana's regency in Spain was much more restricted by tradition and circumstances. However, she too was considered a capable regent. She also managed to remain a figure of authority and a prominent actor within her family after her regency, without need to consent to the traditional choices of re-marriage or monastery.

The comparison of the regencies of Margaret, Mary and Juana highlights the common features in the system, but it also simultaneously reveals the strong and weak points of each regent. Their skills stemmed from the educational choices made by the previous generations. In Juana's case, those choices were made by Charles himself. It seems that having a public role in a court, whether native or foreign, gave a regent good training for managing public occasions. However, Charles V either did not recognise this or saw it as too big a risk. Hence, the upbringing and education of the princesses did not prepare them to act as princes, but they did an acceptable and even praiseworthy job as governing queens on behalf their fathers, brothers and nephews, assisted by councillors. Only when conducting diplomatic negotiations was their counterpart or assistant ever another woman. During ceremonies and courtly entertainments, they were surrounded by their attending ladies, but in the council meetings they worked with men. The attention placed on proper comportment, which facilitated smooth co-operation with advisors, was perhaps quite apt training for them.

⁴⁹⁰ Elliot, 'A Europe of Composite Monarchies.'

However, in addition to the problems arising from the emperor's insistence on retaining the final power of decision and patronage for himself, even when it slowed down the workings of government, the gender of the regents was also a problem at times of military threat. As Mary of Hungary pointed out, the emperor was responsible only to God, but the regent was responsible to God, the emperor and his subjects.⁴⁹¹ Handling Charles V's empire was a task that no-one could master alone, and understandably the regents faced their share of problems and criticism. The criticism especially was problematic for the princess regents, who had been brought up with the ideal of popular queenship.

While the purpose and means of princess education were clear, the ways to use it were more ambiguous. The nature of the regency also changed as time went on. The man that Margaret, Mary and Juana were all representing, Charles V, was a boy of seven when his aunt Margaret took him to the meeting of the representative assembly of the Low Countries and an ailing man of fifty-eight when he died in Yuste while his own daughter Juana governed Spain. Besides dealing with Charles, the princess regents also had to deal with such prominent figures of their male line as the chivalric Emperor Maximilian and austere King Philip II. What these men were demanding from their regent was politically as exorbitant as what they were asking of their councils, states general and subjects: support, funding for their wars and, first and foremost, trust in their vision of the greatness of the House of Austria.

The strongest evidence for the success of female regency among the Habsburgs was the fact that it occurred so frequently. However, the reactions to it by the courtiers and public servants varied. Some men chose just to follow the emperor, while others used the regent to reach him. A notable group who ignored the princess regents and their potential was that of the humanists. Evidently dismayed by the failure of Charles and his fellow princes to lead Europe into a new era, or at least avoid constant feuding, Erasmus and his followers saw no opportunities for success in the princesses. However, men like Mercurino di Gattinara and Ignatius Loyola constructed their own versions of the common good of Christendom, with doctrines that also included also princesses.

'I AM ONLY ONE AND I CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE'

The need for regents, governors and viceroys resulted from the nature of Charles V's empire. As he wrote to his sister Mary in 1537: 'I am only one and

⁴⁹¹ 'que le prince mesmes, lequel, de soy gouvernant, n'a que à en rendre compte à Dieu, à quoy, en faisant ce qu'il peult, y satisfait; mais celuy qui a gouvernement soubz aultre, fault qu'il en rende aussy compte à Dieu, et outre ce à son prince et aux subjectz d'icelluy,' Mary to Charles in 1555, *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 473.

I can't be everywhere and I must be where I ought to be and where I can, often enough only where I can be and not where I would like to be: for one can't do more than one can do.'⁴⁹² This sentence sums up the situation: the question was not whether he, as emperor, king or Duke Charles, wanted to rule all his dominions himself – he could not have done it, even if he had wanted to. He could only be in one place at a time, while all his subjects in all his dominions wanted their ruler to be present all the time. Therefore, he needed to leave representatives throughout all his lands, especially for those who saw him as their hereditary ruler and 'natural prince'. To understand what was expected of the appointed regents, it is necessary to understand how the system functioned.

It was obviously not an innovation to use relatives of the ruler as representatives. Women had traditionally gained the role of a regent as mothers of kings who were still minors or as wives of crusading or conquering kings.⁴⁹³ However, the size of Charles V's empire brought this arrangement to a previously unseen level. There were so many areas where he could not be present himself that the need to have more than one queenly figure in the family was evident. The number of women involved in Charles V's government has drawn attention for a reason. Indeed, Charles's native lands were governed by his aunt Margaret of Austria from 1507 to 1515, when he was still a minor; she then regained her position two years later, which was ratified in 1519 after Charles won the imperial election. Margaret remained in office until her death in 1530, after which Charles appointed her sister Mary to fill the vacancy. Mary resigned in conjunction with Charles's abdication in 1555. Thus, from 1507 to 1555 Charles was represented by a woman when he was not in the Low Countries. To confirm the custom, from 1559 onwards another Habsburg princess, Margaret of Parma, Charles's illegitimate daughter, assumed the regency, after the plans for the return of Mary of Hungary were undone by her untimely death in 1558. The prominent feature of the government, led first from Mechelen and then Brussels, was that it was in constant negotiation with the representatives of the cities and local estates of the different parts of the region. The ruler and his regent had to lean on the support of the local nobles as well, as they needed them as governors and military leaders, because the region was in a nearly constant state of military activity due to the hostilities raised by the Duke of Guelders and France.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² Charles to Mary, Monzon 6 Oct. 1537, Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 123.

⁴⁹³ On female regents Poulet, 'Capetian women and the regency'; Crawford, *Perilous performances*. Notable case was Aragon, where composite nature of the realms made the queens representatives of their husbands. Theresa Earenfight, 'Absent Kings: Queens as Political Partners in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,' in *Queenship and political power in medieval and early modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Burlington (VT): Aldershot, 2005), 32-52.

⁴⁹⁴ Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 93-122.

Although Charles spent more time in Spain than in the area where he was born, there too he was represented by a regent for several years. There, the female line was not as conspicuous as in the Low Countries, but the regency was built around his immediate family. During the emperor's absences, in the years 1529–1532 and 1535–1539, he was represented by his wife and cousin, Isabel of Portugal. After Isabel, their son and crown prince, Philip, assumed leadership of the government, but when Philip left first to be introduced to his northern subjects in the Low Countries in 1548 and then to marry Queen Mary of England, the regency was first held jointly by Charles and Isabel's elder daughter, Maria, and her spouse, Archduke Maximilian, from 1548 to 1551 and then between 1554 and 1559 by their younger daughter, Juana. Despite the division of Charles's empire between his brother and his son, Spain still controlled the Low Countries after 1555, and therefore, Philip would need a regent in the future in either place. Philip's first wife, Maria Manuela, was instructed by her father, King John of Portugal, to gain her husband's confidence, as she was likely to act as regent in the future.⁴⁹⁵ As it happened, it was Philip's illegitimate half-sister, Margaret of Parma, who continued the regency tradition in the Low Countries, while Philip remained in Spain.

While authority was clearly tied to the royal family as a unit, the government was based on councils, which had multi-layered connections to the emperor. This system had its challenges, as noted even by the man who had a leading role in developing it. Charles V's powerful state secretary, Francisco Los Cobos, spelled the problem out to his follower, Juan Vazquez: the distant ruler could not see the immediate necessity of a crucial expenditure, which slowed the system down, and the distribution of rewards was twisted because the prince in charge of them was not present.⁴⁹⁶ That problem, however, was not connected to the gender of the regent.

The regents were given official orders from the ruler. The regent had the same powers as the absent ruler and governed in his stead. She was to be obeyed as the acting ruler. Thus, the authority of the regent was assured. There was no chance of misunderstanding, as the orders literally stated that the regent was there to replace the person of the emperor. As Maria José Rodríguez-Salgado rightly points out, 'It was essential to maintain the fiction that the monarch was never absent, since only a rightful sovereign had power over his/her subjects'.⁴⁹⁷ However, I suggest that this alter-ego personality

⁴⁹⁵ Silleras-Fernandez, 'Inside perspectives,' 239.

⁴⁹⁶ Cobos to Vazquez, cited in Marzahl, 'Communication and Control,' 96.

⁴⁹⁷ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 21; Horst Rabe and Peter Marzahl, "Comme représentant nostre propre personne" - The regency ordinances of Charles V as a historical source,' in *Politics and society in Reformation Europe: essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. Erkki Kouri and Tom Scott (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 21-22. Also see Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 129-62; comparative edition of Margaret's and Mary's orders, 326-339. Juana's instructions from 1554 CDCV 4, 105-9, DCXIV.

referred to the way both Charles and regent were incarnations of the same royal dignity, which stemmed from their shared blood. When gender was of secondary importance, it was quite possible for a princess to replace a prince – especially as the official regency documents were supplemented with private instructions.

After the public illusion of the ruler's presence was created, a subsequent set of secret restrictions listed what the regent could not do, thus limiting her possibilities and assuring that the real power rested with the emperor. The restrictions varied according to the situation and the regent in question.⁴⁹⁸ Generally, the regents of the Low Countries gained more powers as the pressure grew to raise more funding in the region. During Charles's reign especially, Mary of Hungary turned out to be talented in finding the means to support her brother's bellicose policies.⁴⁹⁹ The restrictions made the position of the regent difficult particularly in matters concerning patronage and in creating their own circle of authority and influence through their own protégés. The regents recognised this limitation and complained about it, claiming, not unreasonably, that by diminishing their authority Charles was harming his own.⁵⁰⁰

The office of regent was understood to be temporary, ending upon the return of the ruler. The regents themselves certainly seemed to see it as a limited office, and they viewed themselves as being accountable to the ruler. Such an understanding is evident, for example, in Margaret of Austria's plans to retire to a convent at the end of her regency in the late 1520s. She explained to the mother superior that before entering the monastic life, she had to give Charles an account of the charge he had given to her.⁵⁰¹ Mary, in turn, as a practical woman asked Charles after two years of regency if he could affirm the continuity of her term, because she had no money left.⁵⁰² The office was defined as a responsibility in the same vein as the emperor was seen as God's appointed defender of Christendom. Ferdinand made this clear when he wrote to persuade Mary to remain in office as regent in 1535. He assured her that it was not that he did not want to meet her again,

Mais, Madame, comme en ce monde ne sommes faits pour nre. propre profit ou pasetemps qui veut bien faire, sinon pour le bien

⁴⁹⁸ Orsolya Réthelyi points out that in Hungary Mary as a regent had no restrictions, but the regency was shared. Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 114-6.

⁴⁹⁹ Michel Baelde, 'Financial Policy and the Evolution of the Demesne in the Netherlands under Charles V and Philip II (1530-1560),' in *Government in Reformation Europe 1520-1560*, ed. Henry J. Cohn (London: McMillan, 1971), 224.

⁵⁰⁰ Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 120-1, 126, 196.

⁵⁰¹ 'car le temps approche, puisque l'empereur vient, à qui, à l'ayde de Dieu, renderay bon comte de la charge et gouvernement que luy a pleu me donner,' Margaret to Mother Anelle, cited in Baux, *Histoire d'église de Brou*, 110.

⁵⁰² Mary to Charles 24 Mar. 1532 Bruxelles CMCG 1, 143, nr. 81.

public de la chretienté et le service de Dieu, et tant un personnage est plus grand tant est il plus obligié ...je sais que seroit grande peine et desplaisir à l'emp., mons., si deussiés partir de pardela, et certes tiens non sans grand danger de ses affaires [but, Madame, as we are not in this world to gain profit or spare time, but to work for the common good of Christianity in the service of God, and the more high-born persons are even more obligated to this... I know how your leaving would hurt and damage the Emperor and endanger his affairs].⁵⁰³

In other words, they could serve God by serving Charles. This attitude was echoed by the rest of the family. Mary herself, after hearing of the appointment of his nephew and niece, Maximilian and María, as the regents of Spain in 1548, wrote to María stating that although this would now prevent her from seeing the couple, it was their common duty to serve the emperor.⁵⁰⁴

The restrictions that left the regent dependent upon the decisions and opinions of the ruler caused a massive amount of correspondence to flow from the regent's court to the imperial court, and vice versa. Especially in the Low Countries, the regent's court became a hub of correspondence.⁵⁰⁵ The letters varied from short notes to multi-paged memorandums, where the issues were often discussed item by item and notes scribbled in the margins. During Margaret of Austria's first regency, the letters between her and her father, Emperor Maximilian, Charles' formal guardian, were short and familiar compared to the lengthy documents that were exchanged between the regent's council and Charles' imperial secretariat. Scholars focusing on the correspondence of Charles V have noted that all of it was political, with very few references to anything private; the 'dynastic solution to the regency problem' caused the political correspondence to be equal to family correspondence.⁵⁰⁶ Juana of Austria, as regent of Spain, had the additional demanding task of keeping track of the instructions from both the retired Emperor Charles and King Philip, while keeping in mind that the two also wrote to each other at the same time that they wrote to her.

The writing and exchanging of letters among early modern nobles was a joint effort of scribes, secretaries and the person in whose name the letter was sent. It was not possible to attribute authorship of even holographic forms of correspondence.⁵⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it is evident that one of the most important tasks of the regent was to be the informer and informant between

⁵⁰³ Ferdinand to Mary 4 July 1535 Wien, KF 5, 272, nr. 905.

⁵⁰⁴ Mary of Hungary to María of Austria. Brussels. 27 June 1548, *Maximiliano de Austria*, 7-8.

⁵⁰⁵ The acknowledged writer Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549) according to scholars of her letters left hundreds of letters (886 to/by according to Barbara Stephenson in her work *The Power and Patronage Of Marguerite De Navarre*. (Ashgate, Aldershot 2004), 2 note 4), whereas surviving letters to and from Margaret and Mary can be counted in thousands.

⁵⁰⁶ Rabe and Stratenwerth, 'Die Politische Korrespondenz,' 17.

⁵⁰⁷ Rodriguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 68.

the central power and her own government. This put a strain on the argumentative and persuasive skills of the regent, her advisors and assistants. The most crucial part of the governing process was managing the finances. The formal representation enacted by regents required that they preside over the meetings of the councils and attend the meetings of the assemblies. First Maximilian and then Charles demanded subsidies for their endless expeditions, often for the defence of the region but also for campaigns in other parts of their empire. Complaints about finances formed the most emotional and eloquent sections of the regents' correspondence. As Mary wrote to Charles in 1538: 'It displeases me, Your Royal Highness, that I always have to sing a most tiresome note, but what I do is in order to give your Majesty the full facts.'⁵⁰⁸

The regents had plenty of opportunities to practise their own communicative competence. Besides the central figure of the ruler – Maximilian, Charles, or Philip in the case of Juana – other actors also needed to be considered. In addition to official correspondence with the emperor, the regents corresponded with different officials and ambassadors as well as with their royal relatives and their own trusted servants. Most of their letters were directly concerned with their office as governor or with networking as members of the royal family.

When reconstructing the daily routine of Mary of Hungary's court, it becomes evident that governing was an office that the regent took seriously. After waking up at five in the morning, having breakfast and going to mass, the regent 'saw to the state affairs' until lunchtime. Mary was a passionate hunter, and she went hunting every afternoon, but only if her duties allowed for it.⁵⁰⁹ Decades later, a member of her council recalled that during meetings, Mary sat on a slightly higher chair with an armrest at the end of the table, while the councillors sat on benches on either side of her, each according to their rank and function, and they went over the finances together.⁵¹⁰ Even if the regent did not wield ultimate power, she did her share of the administrative work.

As the public representatives of the emperor's person and authority, the role of the regents within the limits of their gender fitted within the framework of queenship. It would have been enough to merely represent the ruler, to deliver the commands of the central government and embody the dignity of the office and dynasty. Mary, however, proved to be far more than that, acting as a senior officer of her brother's empire in 1548, even if she

⁵⁰⁸ Mary to Charles April 1538 cited in Baelde, 'Financial policy,' 210.

⁵⁰⁹ Jacqueline Kerkhoff, 'The court of Mary of Hungary 1531-1558', in *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521-1531*, 141.

⁵¹⁰ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 187.

wrote to her niece María about serving and obeying.⁵¹¹ María, the recipient of that letter, for her part was not an active regent in Spain, leaving the governing to her husband. This shows how the person and the situation of each regent affected the way the regency functioned in practice.⁵¹² It confirms the supposition that qualities beyond family ties did not play much of a role in the choosing of regents.

THE MOST SUITABLE PERSONS

As it was evident that all the daughters of the imperial line from Margaret of Austria onwards were considered potential queens, what was it that made some of them regents? First, a lack of princes allowed them to step into the role. When Maximilian's only legitimate son, Philip, died in Burgos in 1506, there were no princes closely related to him, yet Philip had two sons who were still minors. Already Philip's voyage to Spain had necessitated a regency government in his northern duchy, but then the local nobles were able to take the lead in it. However, after his death the nobles turned to Maximilian, who wanted his dynasty to be represented. I seek to show that the solution of appointing Philip's sister, Margaret, as regent did not originate with Maximilian, but with Margaret herself, but the reasoning she used in persuading him was her existence as his daughter, in other words, precisely her place in the dynasty that Maximilian appreciated so much.

However, just opportunity alone was not enough. A princess who could assume the role of regent had to somehow be at least momentarily out of the marriage market. Margaret had resisted her father's attempts to persuade her to marry again. Maximilian genuinely wanted to see his daughter ultimately become a queen, and he could not understand why Margaret refused the already negotiated marriage with the King of England. She in turn used an excuse that spelled out clearly what was the purpose of royal marriages: she was sure she could not bear children anymore. Given the opportunity to reign, due both to the death of her brother and her status as a widow who did not wish to remarry, the most important of Margaret's assets was still her lineage. As Maximilian's daughter and Charles's aunt, she was supposed, as

⁵¹¹ 'Throughout this decade [1550's] he [Charles V] relied very heavily, at times exclusively on his sister, Mary of Hungary. From the closing months of 1552 there were long intervals when she, not the emperor, ruled,' Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 3.

⁵¹² Ana Díaz Medina, 'El gobierno en España de Maximiliano II (1548-1551)' in *Kaiser Maximilian II.: Kultur und Politik im 16. Jahrhundert*, eds. Friedrich Edelmayer and Alfred Kohler (Wien/München: Oldenbourg, 1992), 38-54. It is also to be noted that María went through three pregnancies during her time as the co-regent between 1548 and 1552.

Maximilian later wrote to Charles, 'to look after your interest, her being of the same blood'.⁵¹³

The same pattern of widowhood applied to Mary and Juana as well, except that by then female regency was an established tradition. With Mary, the length of her term in office, and her success in holding it, made her a part of the established system in Charles's eyes, because he could hardly believe that she would voluntarily resign. For Juana, temporary regencies in Spain were a point of fact. Even if she had considered the possibility of remarrying, since she was still young and had already proven her capability to bear children, she was still viewed as a potential regent for the rest of her life.

The order of the titles of princess regents tells us much about the rank of priorities in their life: they were above all queens and only temporarily officers. Margaret, Mary and Juana always first were identified by their royal or ducal titles, and only then by the title of the office they were holding. They were addressed as 'duchess governors' or 'princess regents'. The former title identified their permanent rank, while the latter title referred to the temporary office. Margaret was the Dowager Duchess of Savoy and the Duchess of Bourgogne, whereas Mary was the Dowager Queen of Hungary and Juana the Princess of Portugal. All the titles, with one exception, originated from their deceased husbands' rank.⁵¹⁴ This order reveals what was considered important: rank. Due to their rank, which in turn stemmed from their heritage and dynasty, the princesses were eligible to be appointed regents. The offices of regent and governor depended on the situation.⁵¹⁵

The importance of opportunity emphasises the fact that, despite their position as regents, these three princesses were just individual cases among the numerous princesses, all of whom could become queens, regents or nuns given the right opportunity. Also, as Olga Fradenburg has pointed out, even if female power was considered unusual as an idea, it did not mean it was not a frequently existing fact.⁵¹⁶ In general, the problems of the regency government did not stem from the person of the regent, but from the fact that they were a secondary solution to the ideal that the ruler would have been present himself. As such, if the ruler needed to be absent for compelling reasons, a princess was a good alternative. This is confirmed by numerous other cases when princesses were appointed for shorter periods of time to represent their spouses or brothers. For example, the widowed Mary of Hungary served as regent for her brother, Ferdinand in Hungary, from 1527

⁵¹³ 'par vray sang et nature ayme nostre bien et honneur et le vostre' 18 Jan. 1516, CMA 2, 134, nr. 229.

⁵¹⁴ Margaret was a duchess Bourgogne on her own right, but as will be seen she had to request the title from her father. Anne of France was similarly 'fille de France, duchess de...' David-Chapuy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie*, 567.

⁵¹⁵ Even Margaret spent several years ousted from her position before her return, and there was plans to replace her around 1530.

⁵¹⁶ Fradenburg, 'Introduction: Rethinking Queenship,' 7.

onwards,⁵¹⁷ whereas Charles appointed his widowed sister, Eleanor, as regent of Castile for short periods in 1522 and 1523,⁵¹⁸ and similarly, Ferdinand's spouse, Anne of Hungary, represented him occasionally in Austria.⁵¹⁹ The custom was not restricted to the Habsburgs, as is shown by the fact that their sister Isabel served as the regent of Denmark while her husband, King Christian, was in Sweden in 1521.⁵²⁰

Likewise, various plans were not always realised for diverse reasons. Already in 1516, it was rumoured that Charles had left his then eighteen-year-old sister Eleanor to represent him in the Low Countries while he sailed to Spain, apparently to reduce the power of a faction that would have profited from the regency of another princess, their aunt Margaret.⁵²¹ In 1545, Charles even considered appointing his sister Mary as his representative in the imperial diet, but Ferdinand reminded him that the Germans were not used to women.⁵²² This case also emphasises the fact that princesses were regents only in the areas that were considered part of the Habsburg patrimony and underscores the family's importance as the reason for their appointment. All these cases indicate that merely being a member of the Habsburg family made a princess a plausible candidate for the regency. Hence, for the most part lineage and marital status made a princess into what Charles, in his letter to Mary in 1531, described as 'the most adequate and appropriate person to take charge'.⁵²³ The same qualities that would have made princesses queens made them regents.

The princesses' birth place also mattered, because both the Low Countries and Spain resented foreign rule. Such rule had its embodiment in the north in Emperor Maximilian and in the south in Charles himself, with his Flemish entourage. Margaret and Mary were both born in Brussels and Juana in Madrid, all places that they later governed as regents. The two major factors in defining a 'natural-born prince' seemed to be the prince's actual place of birth and language skills. The tangible reality of this problem was evident. Erasmus himself had tried to persuade Duke Philip to stay in the Low Countries in 1504, despite the Castilian inheritance of his wife, Duchess Juana. He stressed in his *Panegyric* that Philip had no need to return to Spain, because that land now had its own heir, Philip's second son Ferdinand, who had been born there in Alcalá de Henares in 1503.⁵²⁴

⁵¹⁷ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 84.

⁵¹⁸ Parker, *Emperor*, 138, 143.

⁵¹⁹ Moltke, *Siegmund von Dietrichstein*, 204.

⁵²⁰ Steinar Imsen, 'Late Medieval Scandinavian Queenship,' *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 64.

⁵²¹ Spinelly to Henry VIII. 16 May 1516. LP 2, nr. 1895.

⁵²² Ernst Laubach, *Ferdinand I. als Kaiser : Politik und Herrscherauffassung des Nachfolgers Karls V.* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001), 38.

⁵²³ 'plus soufisante et ydoyne' Charles to Mary 3 Jan. 1531 Cologne, CMCG 1, 16, nr. 17a.

⁵²⁴ Erasmus, *Panegyric*, 127.

Later, the attempts to provide the Low Countries with a regent or a ruler that was their 'natural prince' became quite peculiar, such as the above-mentioned plans of giving Charles's second son to his aunt Margaret of Austria to be brought up in the region, or else getting Charles's son Philip and his wife to stay in the Low Countries long enough to beget a son.⁵²⁵ Therefore, it was more than convenient that there were locally born princesses available, with the proper lineage and a suitable marital status. It did not matter that both Margaret and Mary had spent their childhood away from the region. The same applied later to Margaret of Parma, who had spent decades in Italy but was chosen by her half-brother Philip to rule because of her background as a daughter of Charles and a Flemish mother, who spoke French and Dutch.⁵²⁶

Yet even more important than the somewhat artificial locality of the princesses was their close family relationship and shared ancestry with the emperor. Even Charles's wife, Isabel of Portugal, was his cousin, both being grandchildren of Isabel the Catholic. The dynasty tied them together to work for the same goals both in private and in public. Family also offered a structure and framework for the relationship between the ruler and regent. The concepts of family helped to ease the tension between the royal family members and helped them to negotiate with one another.⁵²⁷ The relationship between Margaret of Austria and Emperor Charles demonstrated the advantages of their kinship. During Margaret's first regency and while Charles was still a minor, it was Margaret who used the rhetoric of motherly love,⁵²⁸ but during her second regency Charles in turn referred to her as his real mother.⁵²⁹ First, Margaret legitimised her power by posing as the mother who had Charles's best interests in mind, while later Charles, who in the 1520s was becoming Castilian, needed a Flemish 'mother' to enforce his authority in the Low Countries.

The three regents covered in this work were all relatively young during the time of their appointment, but that was not seen as a problem as such. Margaret was twenty-seven, Mary twenty-five and Juana only nineteen. Margaret had been married twice, the other two once. In 1531, Charles's confessor wrote to Charles that the emperor's choice to appoint his sister

⁵²⁵ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 81.

⁵²⁶ Violet Soen, 'Philip II's Quest. The Appointment of Governors-General during the Dutch Revolt,' *The Low Countries Historical Review* 126 (2011), 27. Margaret of Parma was born in Oudenaarde in 1522.

⁵²⁷ Hoffman, *Raised to rule*, 15.

⁵²⁸ Lemaire de Belges, *Chronique de 1507*, 49. In France, the contemporary of Margaret of Austria was Louise of Savoy, who acted as the regent while her son Francis I was in Italy. Louise's power was legitimized by her motherly love - besides she was the only choice because all the men had gone to war. Crawford, *Perilous performances*, 21.

⁵²⁹ For example Charles's response to the news of Margaret's death. Charles V to the bishop of Palermo and count of Hochstraaten 6 Dec. 1530. Gachard, *Collection de documents*, 294-5.

Mary as regent might have been prudent, but as the princess was very young and alone, there was a great threat to the dynasty through the disgrace she might cause.⁵³⁰ Charles, then turning thirty-one himself, paid no attention to the warnings, but some twenty years later he himself resisted the appointment of his daughter Juana as regent, claiming that Juana was too young and not married.⁵³¹ Philip accepted the reasoning the first time he needed a regent, but in 1554, when Juana's husband died, Philip immediately started arranging for her return and ensuing regency.⁵³² Interestingly, it was the combination of age and gender that was seen as a problem, not gender by itself.

William Monter has argued that the regents of the Low Countries were 'all chosen specifically for their ability to govern effectively without a male partner',⁵³³ but the recognition of such an ability required that the princesses' skills would have been proved somehow beforehand, which was not the case. Moreover, they were to govern together with a regency council, which was to be exclusively male. However, on the other hand being a princess was not enough as such. The three regents, Margaret, Mary and Juana, were chosen and appointed in a situation where other solutions were available. As Rodríguez-Salgado has pointed out, in Spain when either the wife or the eldest son (of age) were present, either one of them was the self-evident choice for regent.⁵³⁴ An aunt, sister or daughter were not indisputable choices, but within the role of 'consort' to the ruler they were fitted into the political system of their family.

From the princesses' point of view, after the female regency had developed into an accepted tradition, it easily appeared as one of the choices a widowed princess had available to her. Juana of Austria, after her husband had died in 1554, sent a message to her brother Philip that she could serve him as their sister María had done, in other words, as a regent. She knew that Philip had just decided to marry Mary of England instead of María of Portugal, a highly unpopular move in Lisbon, where Juana was residing as the widowed mother of an infant. There her future looked highly uncertain, and the regency offered her an honourable excuse to return to Spain.⁵³⁵

Royal women who had accepted a future as a queen or a queen mother, but had lost it, were not as dangerous as the restless younger brothers of a ruler, but a burden all the same. Charles's elder daughter, Empress María, proved this point by causing confusion in the court of Spain after her return

⁵³⁰ Cardinal of Osma (García de Loaysa) to Charles Rome 21 Jan. 1531. CODOIN 14 (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, 1849), 119.

⁵³¹ Charles to Philip 9 Apr. 1548, CDCV 2, 612, CCCLXXXVII.

⁵³² Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 185.

⁵³³ Monter, 'An Experiment in Female Government', 441.

⁵³⁴ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 80.

⁵³⁵ Fernández de Retana, *Doña Juana de Austria*, 92.

to Madrid in 1580.⁵³⁶ By the time of her return, there was already an established attitude that royal women should work for their family, as stated by Cardinal Granvelle, who criticised María's plans to withdraw into a monastery instead of staying at the court and helping her brother, who had just lost his wife.⁵³⁷ In other words, it was a compromise for both — women could have more influence, but only if they worked according to the rules.

CONSORTS OF AN ABSENT RULER

As I have suggested earlier, the idea of female regency in the era of these princesses was to equate them with the role of queen consort. Obviously, they were not married with the ruler, but their family connection and shared interests, as well as their subordinate status to the emperor due both to their gender and their regency, made them equal to actual queens. The limits of the princesses' power in relation to the office of regent were far from clearly defined. As will be demonstrated below, Margaret of Austria, with the assistance of her advisors, sought legal confirmation of her authority, whereas Mary of Hungary did not see the office as the only way to work for the imperial government. She rather saw an independent household as the compulsory requirement for a royal lady to be able to fully participate in the government.

Several analogies can be found between their careers as regents and the queenly models their education had offered them. In addition to administrative work, which consisted of signing documents, attending council meetings and meeting with diplomats, the regents assumed many tasks typical of queens. While the purpose of the regent from the point of view of her dynasty was evident — public embodiment of the authority and private submission to the family hierarchy — she was also expected to defend the interests of the region she was governing as part of the dynasty's dominion and bring up the views of the subjects she was representing. While this was not clearly spelled out, the distress Margaret and Mary expressed when facing unpopularity in the Low Countries due to resentment of the emperor's demands and views on taxation shows that they expected to be appreciated for the work they were doing for the emperor's subjects and still aimed to fulfil their queenly ideal of popularity.

In 1512, a distressed Margaret wrote to her father

Monseigneur, pour ce que le peuple m'a trouvé tousjours conforme à vostre désir et preste à vous obéir de mon pouvoir, tant en cest affaire de Gheldres que aultres choses, il commence, par l'enhort d'aucuns mauvais espritz, comme il fait à croire, à murmurer sur moy, disant

⁵³⁶ Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun*, 45-50.

⁵³⁷ Elisabeth Schoder, 'Die Reise der Kaiserin Maria nach Spanien (1581/82),' In *Hispania – Austria II*, ed. Friedrich Edelmayer (Wien: Oldenbourg, 1999), 155.

*que je ne demande que la guerre et les destruyre, comme vous avés fait ça devant, et plusieurs aultres mauvaïses parolles tendans toutes à commocion de peuple-- que sont, Monseigneur, toutes mauvaïses choses , èsquelles par vostre venue pourrés remédier [people here think I am always doing according to your wishes and am ready to obey you, in this matter of Guelders and others; and they start, encouraged by some evil spirits, spreading gossip about me saying how I want war and their destruction, following your example, and many other bad words are whispered among people to stir up unrest-- these are all bad things that would be remedied by you coming here].*⁵³⁸

Mary of Hungary, in turn, towards the end of her regency complained Charles that,

*en temps de guerre , qui est en ce pays plus souvent que de besoing, il est pur impossible qu'une femme y puisse faire son devoir, mais très-bien supporter toutes les charges de toutes les fautes qui par aultres se peuvent commectre [in times of war, which in these lands is more often than not, it is simply impossible for a woman to fulfil her duties, but she can still be blamed for everything].*⁵³⁹

Especially in Spain, where no one ever questioned the need to have a member of the royal family always present and acting as a regent, it was assumed that the regency council functioned regardless of the regent's experience and age. Even here, the parallel with queen consorts is obvious. The existing scholarship on medieval noblewomen has shown how 'the consequent implication that a woman was a necessary element in the working of kingship does not necessarily indicate that this woman's position was personally empowering'.⁵⁴⁰

Princess regents had several suitable occasions to pose as merciful counterparts to the chivalric king. One traditional form of queenly participation was intercession, the appeal for mercy.⁵⁴¹ Thus, it was appropriate that after the Revolt of Gent in 1539, it was the regent Mary who asked for mercy from Charles.⁵⁴² Accordingly, Margaret had requested the release of prisoners during the wars against Guelders in 1511.⁵⁴³ Mercy was also related to the different notions of honour. Margaret offered to help Charles in his negotiations for peace with France in 1529, explaining that she and Louise of Savoy could mediate between Charles and King Francis

⁵³⁸ Margaret to Maximilian, 1512, CMM 1, 506, nr. 380.

⁵³⁹ Mary to Charles 1555, *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 454.

⁵⁴⁰ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 8.

⁵⁴¹ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 11-12, 198-9.

⁵⁴² Arnade, 'The emperor and the city,' 90.

⁵⁴³ Tracy, *The politics of Erasmus*, 99.

because then no male sense of honour would be hurt.⁵⁴⁴ Correspondingly, delicate marriage negotiations were sometimes left to women, as in the case of Queen Eleanor handling the discussions of her nephew Philip possibly marrying her daughter María, Princess of Portugal, in 1554.⁵⁴⁵

Finally, the most obvious and appreciated feature of a queen, the strengthening and nurturing of dynastic continuity, also included overseeing education and guardianship of the young members of the family. Thus, Margaret was the guardian of Charles and his sisters, while Mary raised the daughters of her sister, Isabel,⁵⁴⁶ and Juana's duties included fostering her nephew, Don Carlos.⁵⁴⁷ As discussed in Chapter one, the custody and company of the royal children was of crucial importance, both for the survival of the dynasty and their moral development.⁵⁴⁸ As we have seen, Margaret's regency enforced Charles' reputation as a natural-born prince, when he was seen as Margaret's son rather than as his real mother's son.⁵⁴⁹

There were certainly obvious differences between regents and queens. A queen was, as Theresa Earenfight has noted, made through marriage and motherhood.⁵⁵⁰ A regent was made through the ruler's absence. Queenship was associated with happy dynastic events and continuity, regency with an exceptional situation. Rodríguez-Salgado counts the evident advantages of a resident ruler: decisions were made quickly, the possibilities for financial and career advancement were greatly enhanced, and subjects in the region in question felt honoured having the ruler stay among them.⁵⁵¹ Regents had to cope with governing in a region where people were well aware of what they were missing, and yet a regent had to act as the faithful companion and supporter of the absent ruler. Hence, it is no wonder that both the emperor and his regents usually referred to the office more as serving and assuming responsibility than as an honour or privilege.

⁵⁴⁴ Instructions of Margaret to monsieur Rozimboz for the Emperor 3 Jan . 1529. HHStA Belgien PA 18/3 Fol 28-34.

⁵⁴⁵ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 78.

⁵⁴⁶ Dorothea (1520-80) and Christine (1521-90), daughters King Christian II of Denmark and Archduchess Isabel.

⁵⁴⁷ Gachard, *Don Carlos et Philippe II*, 6.

⁵⁴⁸ According to Juan Luis Vives 'here is great truth in the proverb "The daughter is like the mother". But the daughter is not so much like mother as she is like the one who brought her up, so that there are many bastard daughters who grew up with their paternal grandmothers, who were virtuous women, and deviating from their mother's character, took on the virtuous way of life of their grandmothers.' Vives, *The education of a Christian woman*, 279.

⁵⁴⁹ Margaret perhaps also helped to forget the memories Charles' real mother might have left with her disturbed behaviour in the court of Brussels.

⁵⁵⁰ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 37.

⁵⁵¹ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 23.

CONCLUSION

The tradition of female regents within the Habsburg dynasty was not a result of the individual princesses' particular talents. Neither was their education decisively different from that of other princesses who were not appointed regents. Their relatively young age and traditional positions as wives and widows had not given them opportunities to display any exceptional skills in governing that would have made them exceptional candidates, although their sojourns in foreign courts were likely to be counted as an advantage and helped them with the diplomatic tasks of their office. The real motive behind their appointments was their close family ties with the ruler and their status as widows. Additionally, as we will see in the following chapters, they often actively sought the appointment as a suitable position for themselves.

In general, choosing princesses to serve as regents emphasises appreciation for the role of a queen and the skills associated with it at the time. However, regency was quite a narrow role. The ruler himself was assumed to make the decisions and distribute justice. The daily business of government was likewise supposed to be run by the regency council together with its staff. The cases of Margaret, Mary and Juana show, however, that existing circumstances — mainly slow communication, the emperor's need for support in funding and unexpected situations, such as wars and religious unrest — broadened the regent's field of operations, and their work often exceeded the normal expectations for a queen.

As William Monter has pointed out, between 1507 and 1793 present-day Belgium and Luxemburg were governed for a total of 115 years by no fewer than six female regents, all appointed for indefinite terms because of their presumed governmental skills.⁵⁵² However, at the same time nothing changed in the patriarchal hereditary order, and the educational treatises targeted at future rulers were exclusively written for princes. One cannot but presume that the Habsburgs saw female regents as complementary to the male ruler, preserving the existing world order in the similar way as queens complemented the power of kings.

⁵⁵² Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings*, 36.

6 MARGARET — RATHER THE REGENT THAN THE QUEEN CONSORT

INTRODUCTION

There are different assessments of Margaret of Austria's political power during her regencies. Her first regency has even been seen as a failure due to the fact that the party supporting the imperial interests and English trade lost power when a party friendly to French interests succeeded in declaring young Charles to be of age in 1515.⁵⁵³ From a feminist point of view, it has been suggested that she was resented by the men, who did not want to share political power with her.⁵⁵⁴ I suggest that being among the political actors of the Low Countries, taking part in the competition was an achievement in and of itself for a 16th-century woman, and her role in developing the queenly regency as part of the Habsburg government was substantial.

Margaret's regency was a result of her own pursuit of an independent position that would enable her to live according to the standards of her rank without marrying again. One can assume that a regency was for her the most fitting role at the time, but it is obvious that she was also strongly prompted to work for her own advancement by her advisor Mercurino di Gattinara. As the Duchess of Savoy, she had gained herself a court consisting of men who profited from her regency and were happy to support the imperial faction in the Low Countries in her service.⁵⁵⁵

Margaret of Austria's two regencies, first when her nephew, Charles (1507–1515), was still a minor and then after Charles's absence from Spain and the empire, which proved to be more or less permanent (1519–1530), were fairly similar considering the nature of her work, but her different relationship with the ruler made them quite dissimilar.⁵⁵⁶ The first regency was marked by balancing between local interest groups in the form of nobles and states general on the one hand, and the intervention of her father the emperor on the other. Maximilian was, besides being the formal guardian of Charles, also lord over the parts of the Low Countries that belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. Charles's domains were structured with the same traditional models, but with more bureaucratic structures supporting them.

Margaret's regency was a continuum of the role of medieval queenship, where she assumed the role of mother figure for the heir to the dynasty.

⁵⁵³ Andreas Walther, *Die Anfänge Karls V.* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1911), 125.

⁵⁵⁴ Pearson, *Envisioning Gender*, 172–3.

⁵⁵⁵ 'Conseil privée de Marguerite' in Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*, 57–76.

⁵⁵⁶ Good summary of her regency is in Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 93–122. A thorough analysis of the politics of the era of her first regency is in Walther *Die Anfänge Karls V.*

However, distance from the ruler and active councillors both contributed to her establishing a regency that stretched the boundaries of female rule. Since the original constellation was not novel and, as such, not threatening to the existing order, it was accepted, and its advantages also made it an acceptable solution in the future. The assumption that the female regent complemented, but did not replace, male power fitted in well with the Habsburg composite monarchy. Margaret's regency demonstrates that a traditional queenly education was regarded as adequate for a princess who, after fulfilling of her duty as queenly spouse, could serve as regent.

During Margaret's regencies, the Low Countries were marked by the war against the Duke of Guelders, with the foreign policy wavering between France and England as well as local and imperial interests.⁵⁵⁷ The issue of patronage was crucial in defining who ultimately held power. Margaret was supported by officers she brought with her, most of them trained in Dôle, in Margaret's Duchy of Franche-Comte, but she also depended on local nobles to act as provincial governors and army commanders. Her first regency was characterised by difficult meetings with the estates and attempts to persuade them to allow funding for the defensive war against Guelders, all reported in her correspondence with her father. The different provinces were not just reluctant to support the emperor; they resented assisting each other as well. As Koenigsberger points out, there was no common national feeling or understanding of any common interests among the separate entities.⁵⁵⁸

Although the army was not successful, and her policies were opposed by nobles friendly to French interests, she did gain a reputation as a diplomat, leading negotiations that resulted in, first, the League of Cambrai against Venice in 1508, and then the Holy League against France in 1513. Margaret's upbringing and experience allowed her to exercise such diplomatic skills, skills that were highly in demand during the time when first her father was endlessly scheming to arrange different kinds of constellations among the European powers and then her nephew's large empire was threatened by powers wanting to restrict its expansion. However, the nobles, headed by the Lord of Chièvres, persuaded Emperor Maximilian to hasten Charles's emancipation by promising the emperor financial compensation, and Margaret was forced to withdraw from the political stage in 1515.

In 1517, Charles, who already held the title Prince of Castile as his mother's heir, also inherited the crown of Aragon from his maternal grandfather, King Ferdinand. In the overall excitement about the Spanish inheritance and the opportunities it presented, only one prominent noble stayed behind in the Low Countries, Charles's aunt. Margaret returned to politics, working for her nephew's 1519 imperial election, and finally in 1520

⁵⁵⁷ On Margaret's problems with the army and especially Guelders, see James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war: campaign strategy, international finance, and domestic politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 73-4.

⁵⁵⁸ Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 130.

she was officially recognised as Charles's governor. The Spanish dominions and Charles's victory in the imperial elections changed the status of the Low Countries from the seat of the Dukes of Burgundy into the part of a composite monarchy. Margaret, who had been a Burgundian satellite in her father's imperial system, became the representative of the new emperor in one of his provinces. Whereas during her first regency she had had to cultivate her relationship with her father via personal letters, her second regency established her more as the symbol of the presence of the emperor and his power.

READY TO SERVE HER NEPHEW, HIS COUNTRY AND HIS SUBJECTS

In 1500, after her return from Spain, Margaret was twenty years old. After her return from Spain Margaret appears in the sources through the reports of her former Spanish in-laws' ambassador, Gutierre Gómez de Fuensalida. Isabel and Ferdinand ordered Fuensalida to visit Margaret so he could tell them how her long journey from Spain had gone, and assure her that they were interested in her health and news, 'like she was their own daughter'.⁵⁵⁹ From there on the ambassador included the intrigues over Margaret's next marriage, apparently subject of dispute between her father, the emperor, and her brother, duke Philip.⁵⁶⁰ The following year the marriage contract was signed between Margaret and Philibert, Duke of Savoy. He had a reputation as a handsome chivalric prince and had been brought up in the court of France at the same time as Margaret. However, the decision was purely political. Savoy had been the route by which the French gained access to Italy, and Margaret's marriage was to be the turning point in the duchy's foreign policy.⁵⁶¹

Considering how short and undoubtedly different Margaret's marriage with Prince Juan had been, the time in Savoy was for her the first (and with hindsight, the only) time when Margaret had the opportunity to live the life she had been educated for as the spouse of a ruler. According to *Couronne Margaritique*, she succeeded in her role. She was extremely popular, and she loved her husband dearly. The official chronicler of the Burgundian court, Jean Molinet, echoed the same sentiment, assuring his readers that never

⁵⁵⁹ 'deseamos su salud y su bien como de nuestra propija fija,' Ferdinand and Isabel to Fuensalida 5 May 1500, Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 114.

⁵⁶⁰ Fuensalida to Ferdinand and Isabel for example 6 Aug. and 13 Sep. 1500, Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 140-1, 153.

⁵⁶¹ Margaret was only the first Habsburg to marry a Savoyard duke – the next duke, Charles III, married Charles V's sister-in-law Beatrix of Portugal and his son Emmanuel Philibert in turn married Philip II's daughter Catalina Micaela.

was a lady more loved than Margaret already from the time she went to meet her husband.⁵⁶²

The interpretations of Margaret's biographers have been notably different. They see her in Savoy for the first time stepping in to help govern, allegedly because Duke Philibert was more interested in hunting and court life than the affairs of his duchy, whereas Margaret, in turn, was ambitious. Allegedly, she was proud of her descent and felt obligated to assume the position she was entitled to. According to those accounts, she had not forgiven the French for the humiliation she had suffered in 1490. When the duke married the emperor's daughter in 1501 and the duchy became politically more hostile to French interests, it was a setback to the duke's illegitimate half-brother, René, who had been a strong influence on the government before Philibert's marriage. René was a supporter of France, and the opposition against him was assumed to be personified in Margaret. After he was accused of treason and expelled from Savoy, Margaret took over power.⁵⁶³

The evidence supporting the story of the wise princess, her light-hearted handsome prince, and the evil half-brother is doubtful. The central tangible event was the expulsion of René from the ducal court. According to the story told from Margaret's point of view in her biographies, she refused to see her authority pass to someone who had no right to it. She found the situation unbearable and saw to it that René lost favour with the duke. Both René himself and *Couronne Margaritique* connected the duke's marriage to Margaret with the disfavour.⁵⁶⁴ A contemporary chronicler stated that the duke's new wife induced him to think of his affairs, a view that fitted quite well with stories of a queen or duchess who used her female prudence to counsel her husband.⁵⁶⁵ René fled to France, where his and Philibert's sister Louise and her son, the Dauphin Francois, welcomed him. With hindsight, the fact that René harboured political sympathies for France is a much more plausible reason for his disgrace and expulsion than Margaret's ambition.⁵⁶⁶

Margaret undeniably gained personally from René's disgrace, because many of the lands that Philibert had previously given to his half-brother were

⁵⁶² Molinet, *Chronique*, V 156-157; Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique*, 95.

⁵⁶³ On Margaret's wish to be in control, and rule alone Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*, 48; Ursula Tamussino, *Margarete von Österreich. Diplomatin der Renaissance* (Graz: Styria, 1995), 93. The most recent account still leaning to the same literary sources is Adams, 'Married Noblewomen as Diplomats,' 60-1. Despite giving a new interpretation Adams does not shed any new light on the events or Margaret's actual role in them.

⁵⁶⁴ Cédric Michon, 'René, Grand Bâtard de Savoie (v.1473-1525),' in *Les Conseillers de Francois Ier.*, ed. Cédric Michon (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes 2001), 256; Lemaire de Belges, *Couronne Margaritique* 95.

⁵⁶⁵ François Bonivard, *Chroniques De Genève*, ed. Micheline Tripet (Geneve: Droz, 2001), 244.

⁵⁶⁶ Cédric Michon, 'Le rôle politique de Louise de Savoie (1515-1531)' in *Louise de Savoie: 1476 – 1531*, 105.

taken back and Philibert gave them to his wife instead. The Savoyard lands formed the core of Margaret's personal possessions, and a number of her letters still preserved in the archives of Turin discuss her affairs concerning those lands, which she kept after Philibert's death. Later, René tried to receive compensation from Savoy, but Emperor Maximilian urged the next duke not to revoke his expulsion.⁵⁶⁷

What has been largely ignored is the version of the story given by Mercurino di Gattinara, the man who was later became the grand chancellor for Charles V. His own account of entering the duke's service as the legal counsel for the duchess Margaret constructs a framework for Margaret's influence much more plausibly than the picture of a proud princess taking over the government from her charming but reckless husband. Gattinara (1465–1530) was the son of an impoverished nobleman from Piedmont. He had studied in Turin, with great success if he is to be believed, and his fame brought him to the attention of Duke Philibert. His ensuing success as a diplomat and politician revealed that he was indeed a well-read and talented man.⁵⁶⁸ He was also driven by ambition, and his rise to the highest level of European politics was launched as a result of his perception that Margaret had the potential and connections of a prince.

In his autobiography, Gattinara described his work for Margaret as a perfect match between a just princess and a learned lawyer. According to him, she had asked for his legal advice because she wanted to evaluate the petitions she received as duchess. She needed a 'learned, upright and fair'⁵⁶⁹ counsellor and chose Gattinara for the job. Margaret's queenly education had prepared her for the role of a merciful duchess as the companion of a masculine duke.⁵⁷⁰ She followed in the footsteps of the exemplary queens who had preceded her and aimed to be a popular, graceful and just duchess, one with whom the counsel of her advisors could make wise decisions. That kind of power was available for a noblewoman, whereas her possible informal influence behind the duke is impossible to detect. There are no letters from Margaret concerning the political issues from the time of her Savoyard marriage. Had she really ruled, or had Savoy had crucial

⁵⁶⁷ Maximilian to duke Charles of Savoy. Dec. Linz [1505] Archivio di Stato di Torino, Lettere principi forestieri, Mazzo1, Fasc8.

⁵⁶⁸ John M. Headley, 'Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara,' in *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 76–80. On his background all the biographies of Gattinara tend to rely on his own description of his youth in his autobiography. They autobiography exists as a manuscript in L'archivio della famiglia Arborio di Gattinara, mazzo 3, in Archivio di Stato di Vercelli. The Latin edition is Bornate, *Vita*. For translations I have used Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Hominem doctum, rectum ac iustum,' Bornate *Vita*, 245. On the original manuscript Gattinara has added 'doctum' to the text later. Fol 5.

⁵⁷⁰ For queens' role as intercessors and distributors of justice see Earenfight, *Queenhsip in Medieval Europe*, 11–12. Sadlack, *The French Queen's Letters*, 141–4.

importance for the empire, she undoubtedly would have written to her father about it. She did not, or else no one preserved the letters.

However, she gained fame as a perfect princess. As we have seen, Lemaire de Belges described her in glowing terms in *Couronne Margaritique*, and her exceptionality was even affirmed by a very influential writer, Erasmus of Rotterdam. In his one attempt at crafting a shameless panegyric,⁵⁷¹ when Duke Philip returned to the Low Countries in 1504 after his voyage to Spain, Erasmus included Margaret in a text overflowing with praise. Erasmus described Philip visiting his sister in Savoy on his way back to the Low Countries.⁵⁷² Not being present in Savoy himself, Erasmus wrote more about how he supposed a perfect princess would behave rather than how Margaret acted in point of fact. Erasmus praised Margaret lavishly. According to him,

*Margaret, the world's darling, to whom, alone of mortals after you, the fond fates have granted that in no age has that precious jewel [pearl, margarita] from which she takes her name and which her purity of character surpasses ever been so dear as she is to her own people. She is destined to be so firmly seated in everyone's affections that hardly any woman has been so beloved by one as she is by all.*⁵⁷³

Erasmus could have likewise expressed excessive admiration for Margaret's wise counsel or brave defence of her husband's ducal sovereignty, but it is obvious that, even if her time in Savoy was an apprenticeship for her participation in government, she exhibited such power behind the scenes. Neither ambition nor ruthlessness were appreciated in a princess and picturing her as such is pure speculation. For Margaret's future as an agent in the game of imperial politics, it was far more important that she had gained a highly ambitious advisor in Gattinara and that she had learned the official route to influence, via the documents signed by her father the emperor. The connection to the emperor was precisely what would help her move forward in politics.

Margaret's last marital tragedy happened when Philibert fell ill in September 1504 and died shortly thereafter. Being again a widow

⁵⁷¹ Philip and his wife Juana had been in Spain to claim Juana's position as the heiress of her parents after the deaths of her siblings, Juan and Isabel. Later, Erasmus was to claim that his flattery was aimed at presenting Philip with the goal he should be working towards, rather than picturing the duke as he was in reality. David Rundle. "Not so much praise as precept": Erasmus, panegyric, and the Renaissance art of teaching princes' in *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning*, ed. Yun Lee Too and Neill Livingstone. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁵⁷² The visit was very likely one of those parts that Erasmus had to add after receiving some information from the people who had travelled with the prince 'for it is a kind of sacrilege to write about a prince what one does not really know' Erasmus to Nicolas Ruistre, February 1504, *The correspondence of Erasmus* nr. 179, CWE 2, 79.

⁵⁷³ Erasmus, *Panegyrics*, transl. Betty Radice, CWE 27 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 26-7.

immediately changed Margaret's status in her family. She was still young and an eligible bride, but her status as a widow allowed more independence for her. Gattinara remained in Margaret's service, managing the legal disputes over her dowry with the next Duke of Savoy.⁵⁷⁴ Margaret backed up her claims by insisting that she needed income for her large building project in Brou, where she had pledged to build a church in memory of Duke Philibert.⁵⁷⁵ She declared that she needed funds for this enterprise, done for the glorification of the house of Savoy. From the new duke's perspective, her demands not only placed a burden on Savoy's finances but also threatened the duke's authority, as Margaret wanted to maintain sovereign rights over her lands.⁵⁷⁶ The case could not be resolved without appealing to the emperor. In 1505, Gattinara accompanied Margaret to Strasbourg, where they met with Emperor Maximilian and settled the dispute, indicating that they recognised her position as the emperor's daughter as being key to her advancement.⁵⁷⁷

Gattinara did not give an account in his autobiography of how he had assisted Margaret in approaching her family during her widowhood. Margaret's sister-in-law, Juana, had inherited the crown of Castile in 1504, following the death of Queen Isabel. Several signs indicated that Margaret, as a wealthy widow with titles of her own, wanted a role in the Low Countries if her brother was to remain in Spain to establish his power as the King of Castile. Her most notable step towards more visible self-promotion was to offer a copy of *Couronne Margaritique* to Philip in the presence of their father when they met in Cleves in 1505.⁵⁷⁸ As we have seen, the work depicted Margaret as the embodiment of queenly virtues and, in barely veiled terms, demanded that Margaret be compensated for all her misfortunes. The manuscript was not just a conventional gift but an act of self-promotion. The Venetian ambassador wrote in his report from Cleves, where he witnessed the meeting between the emperor and his children, that 'Madama Margarita' had planned to live in Flanders while the king was in Spain, but because she and her brother had not agreed on the issue, she had returned to her lands in Savoy.⁵⁷⁹ Margaret was both fashioning herself as an ideal queen and openly suggesting that she could participate in the government.

⁵⁷⁴ Bornate, *Vita*, 245. Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 79.

⁵⁷⁵ The church in question, in Brou, has been taken as major proof of Margaret being a cultivated princess able to skillfully use art as propaganda. For example, see Matt Ethan Kavalier, 'Margaret of Austria, Ornament, and the Court Style at Brou,' in *Artists at court. Image-making and identity 1300–1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 124–37.

⁵⁷⁶ Chagny & Girard, *Marguerite d'Autriche-Bourgogne*, 101; Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*, 92.

⁵⁷⁷ Tamussino, *Margarete von Österreich*, 110.

⁵⁷⁸ *Women of distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria*. 246–7.

⁵⁷⁹ Vincenzo Quirino's report from Cleves, 8 June 1505, 'Die Depeschen des venetianischen Botschafters bei Erherzog Philipp, Herzog von Burgund, König von Leon, Castilien, Granada, Dr.

Philip ignored such suggestions and was again ready to find Margaret another husband. The Spanish ambassador, Fuensalida, who had met Margaret in Bois-le-Duc in June 1505, reported hearing from her that she had offered to act as an intermediary between King Ferdinand and her brother, a feasible offer considering that she knew Ferdinand personally and spoke Castilian. However, Philip strictly forbade her from keeping in touch with her former father-in-law because they were both still capable of remarrying. According to Margaret, her father and brother had made her swear not to make any marriage plans of her own.⁵⁸⁰ Both Maximilian and Philip wanted Margaret to marry Henry VII of England, who was looking for a new bride after the death of his wife, Elisabeth of York, in 1503. King Henry had already made enquiries about Margaret. He was keen to know how rich she was, and his envoys were instructed to find out whether her dowry was in the form of real estate, pensions or other assets. He was also curious to know what she thought of other candidates pursuing her.⁵⁸¹

The plans were reported by the Venetian ambassadors in 1505,⁵⁸² and when Philip in the spring of 1506 was forced by a storm to stop over in England while on his way to Spain, he and King Henry VII ratified the treaty that had already been prepared for the marriage.⁵⁸³ The treaty included an addition that Maximilian was 'further bound to use all his paternal influence over the Archduchess Margaret in order to persuade her to consent to this marriage'.⁵⁸⁴ The addition hinted at existing doubt over her consent, and it was soon realised. Margaret refused the offer of marriage. Maximilian, who was interested in keeping King Henry VII from making alliances with either France or Aragon,⁵⁸⁵ duly sent his envoys to Savoy to urge Margaret to accept the marriage proposal, but, despite their 'begging and pressing',

Vincenzo Quirino 1505-1506,' ed. Constantin R. von Höfler, *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 66 (1885), 112.

⁵⁸⁰ Fuensalida to Ferdinand of Aragon, 15 June 1505 Bois-le-Duc, Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 384. Gorter-van Royen believes Margaret's dislike of the French was the reason that Philip and his supporters wanted to keep her out of the government Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 131

⁵⁸¹ Henry VII, articles which Anthony Savage shall communicate to Pedro de Ayala, 1505, CSP Spain1, nr. 429.

⁵⁸² Vincenzo Quirini to the Signory. 20 Dec.1505 and 1 Jan. 1506. *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* 1, ed. Rawdon Brown (London: 1864), nr.861, 862.

⁵⁸³ Full documentation of the contract and the details of the affair are found in Max Bruchet, 'Le Projet de Mariage de Marguerite d'Autriche Douairière de Savoie avec Henri VII' *Revue Savoisienne*, fasc. 4, 1920.

⁵⁸⁴ 20 March and 15 May 1506, Henry VII. Treaty with Philip King Of Castile concerning the intended Marriage with the Archduchess Margaret CSP 1, 455.

⁵⁸⁵ Hermann, Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I 3.: Auf der Höhe des Lebens, 1500-1508* (München: Oldenbourg, 1977), 295.

Margaret's response was negative.⁵⁸⁶ Despite the efforts at fatherly persuasion, the proposed marriage was more than just a family matter: the refusal was also an issue in a report sent from the council of the Low Countries to Philip in Spain.⁵⁸⁷

Margaret's decision was a crucial turning point for the Habsburg princesses. Perhaps for the first time ever, one of them had openly expressed a wish for a position that would profit their family but that would nonetheless free them from the obvious choice, marriage. The first clue that the refusal was not just a rejection of King Henry VII's proposal came with the report from the emperor's envoy. It delivered Margaret's message that, despite of her unwavering noncompliance, she was ready to serve her family in other ways. She had already told as much to her father and brother, and she still thought that she could work for the good of her brother, his children, their lands and subjects.⁵⁸⁸ The envoy, Ulrich Montfort, further suspected Margaret's servants of resisting the marriage. I suggest that she was very likely backed by her advisors, notably Gattinara. The determined refusal was justified by the reasoning of the combined minds of a princess and a lawyer.

It was left for Maximilian to explain her decision to the English. Margaret's father gave the impression of having had 'long conferences with the Archduchess', although they apparently did not meet in person. Maximilian further acknowledged that the treaty had already been ratified with the approval of his counsellors. He claimed to have told Margaret that

the King of England is honourable, because he is such a pattern of all the virtues. It [the marriage] is useful on account of commerce and the peaceful state of the Austrian dominions. It is necessary, because the Spanish succession cannot be secured, and the Duke of Guelders cannot be kept at bay, without it-- Should the marriage between the King of England and the Archduchess not take place, the King of England might marry into another family, and the marriage between Prince Charles and the Princess Mary would be endangered.

Then he repeated the words that Margaret had used to justify her refusal – that should she ever marry, she certainly would take king Henry VII as a husband, but she did not know if she could bear children, and she then provided the rather practical addition that her part in the marriage came at far too high a cost and would be harmful for the Low Countries. Margaret

⁵⁸⁶ Jean le Sauvage to Maximilian 30 June 1506, Chmel, *Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke*, 238, CXCV.

⁵⁸⁷ Monsieur de Croy and the council to duke Philip, 6 Aug. 1506 Namur, CMA 1, 52, nr. 14.

⁵⁸⁸ 'tousiours a estee preste s'employer a tout le bien du roy son frere, de messeigneurs ses nepueurs, des dite pays et subiectz' Ambassadors Montfort and Carondelet to Maximilian 8 Aug. 1506. Chmel, *Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke*, 243, CXCVI.

also doubted that her refusal would could do such damage as her father had claimed.⁵⁸⁹

Margaret's opportunity to compensate for the rejection through work for her family came rather suddenly. Her brother Philip died unexpectedly on 25 September 1506 in Burgos. Maximilian heard the news on 23 October.⁵⁹⁰ Meanwhile, Margaret and Gattinara left Savoy.⁵⁹¹ They visited Salins-les-Bains to attend a meeting of the local estates. Gattinara presided over the meeting, where Margaret was declared Duchess of County Bourgogne (Franche-Comte) as the heiress to her mother, Mary of Burgundy.⁵⁹² Margaret graciously accepted the decision of the assembly, but she noted that her title still needed the emperor's consent.⁵⁹³ From there, the pair continued to Germany to meet with the emperor. In his autobiography, Gattinara merely states that Margaret was present when the representatives of her deceased brother arrived to ask the emperor to take care of his grandchildren: 'pressed by administrative obligations in the empire he could not care for them himself, and so he appointed his daughter Margaret to this task'.⁵⁹⁴ The most persuasive way to remind the emperor of the possibility of his daughter serving as regent was of course to be present in person. Apparently, the princess and her advisor had indeed seized the moment.

I suggest that despite the view of many scholars, Emperor Maximilian was not the man who acknowledged the talents of his daughter Margaret as a suitable regent in 1507.⁵⁹⁵ Gattinara's role in recognising the possibilities of serving a female prince and assisting Margaret in obtaining the regency has gone unnoticed in the scholarship on the Habsburgs of the early 16th century. Although his political career has drawn the attention of scholars of imperial politics,⁵⁹⁶ his early role as the collaborator in Margaret's success has mostly been neglected. In 1516, Gattinara, a learned lawyer but also a great friend of humanist-inspired aphorisms, boldly stated to Emperor Maximilian that

⁵⁸⁹ LIX Breve Summarium Eorum Quae Dicta Sunt Oratoribus Serenissimi Regis Angliae ex Parte Sacratissimae Majestatis Caesareae 1507. *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII* ed. James Gairdner (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861.) I, 325 ; CSP Spain 1, nr. 560.

⁵⁹⁰ Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I* Bd 3, 302.

⁵⁹¹ Bruchet & Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 20.

⁵⁹² Monter, 'An Experiment in Female Government', 444.

⁵⁹³ Sessions des 23, 24, 25 novembre 1506 - Salins. Édouard Clerc, *Histoire des États généraux et des libertés publiques en Franche-Comté*. Tome 1. (Genève: Mégariotis, 1882), 238.

⁵⁹⁴ 'Cum is ob imperii occupationes tunc personaliter ipsius tutelle administrationi intendere non valeret, Margaretam filiam cum consiliariis opportunis ad id munus exercendum commisit ac premisit,' Bornate Vita, 248; Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 81.

⁵⁹⁵ Wiesflecker for one believes that Margaret was picked to the regency without any effort of her own. Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*. Bd 3, 304.

⁵⁹⁶ Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor*; Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*.

‘nobility is an accident which is daily acquired by virtue and lost by vices’.⁵⁹⁷ However, as his career reveals, he was well aware of the importance of that accident. There is no reason to believe that he ever would have decided to advance his career by serving Margaret had she not been the daughter of the emperor. Similarly, the somewhat romantic assumption that Emperor Maximilian recognised his daughter’s skills has very little bearing when we consider the vigour with which he pursued the plan of marrying Margaret to the King of England. The correspondence between Margaret, Maximilian and Gattinara reveals that it was far from easy having her role as regent ratified by the emperor, and none of Margaret’s alleged skills at statesmanship⁵⁹⁸ were ever mentioned in contemporary sources.⁵⁹⁹

Margaret and Gattinara were indeed the first ones to claim that she had assumed the regency because her family needed her. In 1515, Margaret, after governing the Low Countries since 1507, recounted to her young nephew Charles how she had been ordered to come and ‘take the regime and administration of your person and country’ upon the loss of his father. She explained that she had willingly obeyed her father, the emperor, because of the responsibility and servitude she felt for her nephew and her father.⁶⁰⁰ Fifteen years later, in 1530, Gattinara, then the imperial chancellor, gave a similar account of the same events in his autobiography. According to Gattinara, Emperor Maximilian had appointed his daughter to the guardianship of young Charles ‘with the help of appropriate counsellors’.⁶⁰¹ As we have seen, it was precisely as such a counsellor that Gattinara entered Margaret’s service in 1501.

After her appointment as regent, Margaret moved to the Low Countries, established her court in the city of Mechelen and summoned the states general. Her court has been titled ‘humanist’, but, despite its apparent refinement and fame, humanist learning did not touch the court directly, and it seems that Erasmus and other humanists more or less ignored Margaret’s

⁵⁹⁷ Gattinara to Emperor Maximilian 1516, cited in John M. Headley, ‘The conflict between nobles and magistrates in Franche-Comte 1508-1518,’ *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 9:1 (1979), 63.

⁵⁹⁸ ‘For in his daughter Margaret, were united a number of qualities which, in spite of her youth, made her better suited than many a statesman for the particularly difficult office of the Regent of the Netherlands,’ Iongh, *Margaret of Austria*, 110. According to Iongh, Margaret’s appointment was one of the few realistic decisions Maximilian ever made.

⁵⁹⁹ André Joseph Le Glay notes the long negotiations Gattinara had to carry with Maximilian and his council, wondering whether it was the reluctance of the emperor or the court intrigues that worked against the choice of ‘this superior woman’. André Joseph Ghislain Le Glay, *Études biographiques sur Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara* (Lille: L. Danel, 1847), 185-6.

⁶⁰⁰ 20 Aug. 1515 Brussels. Mémoire de Marguerite, présenté à Charles d’Autriche, CMA 2, 119, nr. 226.

⁶⁰¹ cum consiliariis opportunitis’ Bornate, *Vita* 248; Ilse Kodek translates this as ‘mit geeigneten Räten’ Kodek, *Der Großkanzler*, 123.

position. However, if Erasmus did not appreciate Margaret's political skills, he valued the *Aureus Codex* manuscript in her library and was grateful to use it in his translation of the New Testament – an often-cited fact to prove Margaret's involvement with him.⁶⁰² Obviously, this alone cannot prove that Erasmus and Margaret shared the same taste in books. As noted in association with Margaret's education and reading, an analysis of the contents of Margaret's library reveals that the regent preferring chivalric romances and works of history, in total contrast with what Erasmus would have recommended.⁶⁰³

Although the conventions of international diplomacy identified Margaret as the 'daughter of the caesar', she also took care to cultivate her image as the aunt of the young Duke Charles. Margaret's public role as a loving aunt was recorded by her court chronicler, Jean Lemaire de Belges, the author of *Couronne Margaritique*. Lemaire depicted a scene where Margaret left for an assembly of the States General after kissing her young nephew and nieces in motherly fashion, and 'the very noble children had tears in their eyes, crying because of the departure of that aunt, whom their filial affection and natural love recognized as their true mother'.⁶⁰⁴ If we are to believe Lemaire, Margaret's devotion to her nephew and nieces was not only private, but also acted out in public. The *Chronique de 1507* ('Chronicle of 1507') describes Margaret as an eloquent orator, who told representatives of the States General that she would not ask of them anything that their own prince would not ask, if he were of age. She then turned to the seven-year-old Charles and asked him to confirm her words.⁶⁰⁵ Margaret wanted her listeners to understand that even though Charles was a minor, this was just what he would have done if he had been old enough. The message for the public, and within the family, was that they were all working towards the same goal.

TUTORING THE NOVICE REGENT

Mercurino di Gattinara's significance as Margaret's advisor and political tutor in the beginning of her regency is clearly revealed in the letters he wrote from his mission to Emperor Maximilian in 1507 and 1508. The central subjects of his letters were information, networking, coherent communication and, above all else, exploiting Margaret's ties to Maximilian. Besides being an essential part of the dynastic system, the family represented

⁶⁰² Tobriner & Guenther, 'Margaret of Austria,' 388.

⁶⁰³ Debae, *Librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche*, xx.

⁶⁰⁴ 'Si ala prendre congé mondit seigneur son nepveu et de mesdames ses niepces et, en les baisant maternellement, les tres nobles enfans, ayans la larme à l'oeil, plouroient sa departie comme ceulx qui par affection filiale et amour naturelle plaine de generosité perdoient encores la veue de leur ante et marine, ou plustost vrayement leur mere,' Lemaire de Belges, *Chronique de 1507*, 49.

⁶⁰⁵ Lemaire de Belges, *Chronique de 1507*, 131-3.

Margaret's legitimate claim to the regency. Rebecca Ard Boone has described Gattinara's skills, which had brought him into the service of the Habsburgs, as consisting of his 'extraordinary command of what today might be called "soft power", the use of attraction and co-option to supplement coercion or force'.⁶⁰⁶ Although Boone's approach explains Gattinara's role in Charles's overseas power in the 1520s, the characterisation also excellently explains the success he had at the beginning of his career when seeking to justify ways for a princess to move forward.

Margaret now had a position that required more than demonstrating respectable behaviour and an appreciation for art and music, an office that put her queenly education to the test. Undoubtedly, the ideal of prudence and the practical experience of leading her own household had given her useful training for governing. However, as her bid for the regency was directly tied to the favour of her father, she now needed to establish a connection between the Burgundian court and that of the emperor's court and find the ways to persuade the emperor to take her views into consideration. Here, Gattinara had a chance to begin his career as a diplomat. He was sent as Margaret's envoy to Maximilian with several tasks. He was to ensure the ratification of her regency as well as the title of Duchess of Bourgogne that she had claimed for herself immediately after her brother's death. Once she was the duchess, Gattinara could acquire a title for himself in Franche-Comte. Finally, he was to put a definitive end to Maximilian's hopes of persuading Margaret to accept King Henry's offer of marriage. The instructions for Gattinara's mission to Germany included arguments supporting Margaret's rights to Bourgogne. They stressed her need to have a place to retire, which, unlike her possessions in Savoy, would be safe from the French. However, she was not planning to retire soon, but instead wanted Gattinara to remind her father that she could still serve him, even if by ruling such an area.⁶⁰⁷

Gattinara's letters to Margaret during his journey in 1507 are a splendid, if seldom used, source of practical advice and skilful tutoring of an apprentice regent. In them, he managed to entertain Margaret with news, advise her on the current situation and promote his own advancement at the same time. The letters provide a rare clue to the question how a princess, with virtually no education for government, learned the practical running of affairs in a male environment. Gattinara's core advice to Margaret was to take care of her own correspondence and keep her messages consistent, despite Maximilian's quite arbitrary style, to become connected with the emperor's inner circle and to make use of the fact that she was his only surviving child.

Gattinara left in August 1507 and reached the imperial court in Innsbruck in a month. He was apparently in his element there, mingling with the men who surrounded Maximilian. Despite his evident linguistic talents, he is not

⁶⁰⁶ Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 1.

⁶⁰⁷ Instructions, Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 337-9.

known for speaking German, but that did not slow him down in the multilingual court.⁶⁰⁸ Emperor Maximilian's court was almost constantly on the road, moving during Gattinara's visit to different locations in Tyrol, northern Italy and southern Germany.⁶⁰⁹ Maximilian was famous for his ability to combine a constant lack of money with the most fantastic and ambitious of plans. Gattinara apparently recognised this, but always carefully referred to Maximilian with the utmost respect. He diplomatically explained the emperor's plans as consisting of a 'head full of fantasies that raise his spirit so high it is difficult to follow'.⁶¹⁰ This is a good encapsulation of the emperor, who in his letters to Margaret was quite erratic, staying constant only in his suspicion of the French.⁶¹¹ Gattinara set himself the task of forming a working relationship with this volatile man.

Margaret's letters to her father were Gattinara's key to gaining access to the inner circle surrounding the emperor. Most of Gattinara's letters to Margaret consisted of detailed reports of his attempts to gain an audience with Maximilian. He described time after time how, immediately upon receiving a package from her, he made haste to see the emperor to hand Margaret's letter to him personally.⁶¹² These detailed narratives underscore the servitude of the advisor. In one of his letters, Gattinara describes how he was still in bed when the mail arrived at five in the morning. He soon got up and summoned his colleague, Sigismund Pleugh, and together they mounted their horses and rode from Innsbruck to Hall to catch the emperor while he was at the table. Gattinara described how Maximilian was so eager to hear the news that he came to talk to his daughter's envoys without even washing his hands.⁶¹³ Gattinara apparently also wanted to convince Margaret that her father was impatiently waiting to hear from her.

Correspondence and personal discussions needed to be conducted congruently. In December, Gattinara sensed contradictory messages in Margaret's letters and immediately rebuked her, writing that he had heard that Maximilian's secretaries mock the inconsistency of her letters. He

⁶⁰⁸ Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor*, 33. By the time Gattinara was appointed imperial chancellor in 1518, the Venetian envoy was convinced that he understood German as well. Parker, *Emperor*, 86.

⁶⁰⁹ Gattinara's letters were written in, for instance, Augsburg, Innsbruck and Bolzano.

⁶¹⁰ 'le Roy les tient en lair et ha beaucoup de fantasies en sa teste et ha son esperit si esleve quil est bien difficile a lentendre' Gattinara to Margaret, 4 Jan. 1508, Bolzano, Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 420.

⁶¹¹ When Gattinara was traveling towards the imperial court, Maximilian had analysed the French king's actions to Margaret and declared that everything indicated how 'le roy de France n'a pas intention de chaingier son mauvais vouloir envers nous' [the King of France has no intention to change his evil ways towards us]. Maximilian to Margaret 29 Aug. 1507, CMM 1, 7, nr 4.

⁶¹² For example Gattinara to Margaret 29 Oct. 1507 Innsbruck. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 351.

⁶¹³ Gattinara to Margaret. 10 Oct. 1507 Innsbruck. ANL B18847.29709.

excused his strict tone by appealing to his affection for Margaret's honour.⁶¹⁴ He also mentioned that he had previously advised Margaret to keep a register of her letters to her father so that she could always check back over her correspondence and avoid any contradictions.

Personal contact with the emperor was clearly of utmost importance. When the opportunity for discussing matters with the emperor was lost, as it was in October of 1507, when Maximilian, withdrew from the court due to an illness, Gattinara informed Margaret immediately and urged her to write to the emperor, trusting he would read her letters even when he would not receive people.⁶¹⁵ This illustrates Gattinara's view that Margaret's person was the most important asset she had in Maximilian's eyes. She was, after all, the only adult descendant of the emperor and the guardian of his grandchildren. Gattinara did not hesitate to persuade the emperor by resorting to the threat Maximilian could possibly lose Margaret. A dynasty worked only if the family survived, and the profit and honour of the House of Austria was the common interest of both the father and daughter. When he could not talk to the emperor directly, Gattinara immediately urged Margaret to write to her father, saying of the situation that he was leaving her

en ceste misere, poverté et perplexité que vous serez contraincte abandonner le tout, et que en perdant les pays il perdra ussy sa fillie [in misery, poverty and perplexity that forces you to abandon everything, and then he will lose not only his daughter, but his Low Countries as well].⁶¹⁶

Gattinara also thought of other ways to convince the emperor of the importance of his mission. He even drafted a letter template that Margaret could use to write to him and that he could then show to Maximilian.

Sera bien que de votre mayn escripres les motz ensuyvantz: President vous savez ma necessite en la quelle je suys: non seulement touchant les grandz affaires des pays de par deza mais aussy touchant mon cas particulier ... ne scay si vous haues bien remonstre le tout au roy mon pere, car il me semble que si vous luy eussies bien declarer mon cas... de ce que je luy requires... pour en hauoir une vone resolution a fin que je me puisse tirer ors de ceste melencolie et misere, aultrement je me doubte que en recompense des seruices que jhay faicz, je aquerrray quelque grande maladie et a lauenture la mort [It would be good if You wrote in Your own hand these following words: President, you know the situation with me, not only concerning the important affairs of these lands, but also concerning my particular case. ... I do not know if you have clearly enough explained everything to the King, my Father, but it seems to me that you have been taking

⁶¹⁴ Gattinara to Margaret 31 Dec. 1507 Innsbruck, Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 414.

⁶¹⁵ 12 Oct. 1507 Innsbruck, Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 343.

⁶¹⁶ Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 343.

care of my case quite well ... regarding the issue where I need a resolution to pull me out of this melancholy and misery; otherwise, I fear that as compensation for all I have done, I will only fall ill and that will lead to my death].⁶¹⁷

Margaret's surviving correspondence shows, however, that she wrote to Maximilian using softer and less emotional language than Gattinara recommended. She, for example, wrote that she was trying to be obedient, thinking day and night about how she could best succeed in her mission.⁶¹⁸ When Maximilian demanded that she provide assistance for his military campaigns from the Low Countries, she had to decline:

*Monseigneur, ayant receu voz letters ... ay incontinent panse comment je pourroy mettre le contenu en icelles a bonne exequution selon vostre desir, toytesvoies considerant en moy mesmes les affaires des pays de pardeca et la povrete de noz finances.... m'a semble bien difficile et quasi impossible, et pour ce que en moy n'estoit de conduyre seule vostre emprinse de si grande importance pour austain que c'est matiere de querre et que me scavoye defourme de tout pouvoir pour y user de commandement et auctorite, feiz rassembler scy tous les seigneurs chevalliers de l'ordre et autres du pays en bon nombre pour leur communiquer et exposer le contenu des vosdittes lettres. Lesquelz avoir ouy lesdis chevalier ont tous unanimement et d'un commun accord este d'avys que le contenu de vosdittes lettres n'estoit pas faisable pour plusieurs bonnes et grandes raisons dont ilz ont espoir vous contenterez [Monseigneur, having received your letters. ... I have constantly thought about how I could fulfil your demands, when I myself have to think of these lands and their poor finances ... it seems to me very difficult and almost impossible, and because it is a military matter where I should be able to use command and authority, I have asked all the members of the Order [of the Golden Fleece] and other nobles to assemble and have shown them the content of your letters. They have all been in accord and agreed that your demands are not feasible for many good and important reasons, which they hope you will understand].*⁶¹⁹

The word that Margaret and Gattinara both kept repeating was obedience. They reassured Maximilian that she was, and would remain, an obedient daughter and that she would govern only with the consent of her father. Her submission to the emperor's views shifted the responsibility to Maximilian, which was useful in the challenging political climate of the Low Countries. Margaret kept the same obstinate view still in 1515 in her memoir to Charles,

⁶¹⁷ Gattinara to Margaret 1 October 1507 Innsbruck ANL 18847.29707.

⁶¹⁸ 'n'ay fet que panser jour et nuit comment se pouroit fere,' undated memorandum by Margaret from 1507, Bruchet & Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 335, IX.

⁶¹⁹ Margaret to Maximilian, without date. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 466.

pointing out that she had never done anything ‘without the will and orders of the emperor who she was naturally obliged to obey’.⁶²⁰

Despite writing of obedience and submission, it was obvious that Margaret was not going to fulfil her father’s persistent wish and marry King Henry. Her initial refusal had been considered, as is testified to by the fact that Gattinara repeated the very same reasons, as including her inability to bear children anymore, or at least this is the reason Gattinara gave when he met the English ambassador at Maximilian’s court. In his discussions with the ambassador, Gattinara assured him that if Margaret ever wanted to marry again, she would choose the King of England, whom she knew to be ‘a wise, prudent and virtuous prince’, but she would rather serve her nephew and his lands or else enter a convent.⁶²¹ Gattinara and Margaret were persistent, but the emperor did not give in either. Maximilian tried several tactics, ranging from persuasion to near blackmail, to change her mind. Maximilian’s letters to Margaret also illustrate how the English marriage became a factor in the discussions on the ratification of her position. Just a few days before Gattinara reached his court, Maximilian wrote to Margaret, in his very peculiar French, that she should think once more on ‘the matter of England’. According to Maximilian, there was no hope of any help or assistance from King Henry unless Margaret would consent to marry him. She had no reason to fear, he wrote, she could quite easily return to govern the Low Countries for some months every year ‘with us’.⁶²² He then changed his tone and insisted that if Margaret did not want the father, she could take the son, Prince Henry, but that if she did so, he could not give her the powers of government because it would cause resistance in the Low Countries.⁶²³

It is evident that the primary role of a princess in Maximilian’s eyes was to marry. When his previous attempts to persuade her to accept the proposal failed, he shifted tactics to that of pure blackmailing, asking Gattinara whether Margaret wanted to ruin him and the family by refusing King Henry?⁶²⁴ As James Tracy has pointed out, one does not find the actual thoughts of the Habsburgs in their family correspondence, but their letters are a good indication of what they thought the other one would accept as a plausible reason for doing what they wanted.⁶²⁵ Maximilian also tried to

⁶²⁰ ‘sans le vouloir et ordonnance de l’empereur, auquel, comme la raison veult estoit tenue de obéir’ *Mémoire de Marguerite*, présenté à Charles d’Autriche, CMA 2, 120, nr. 226.

⁶²¹ Gattinara to Margaret 1 Dec. 1507 Mindelheim. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 378-9.

⁶²² ‘que vous nous pourrés servir en nostre gouvernement ung quartier, ou quater moes par anée, ou ancor en nostre absence un peu plus,’ Maximilian to Margaret 16 Sep. 1507, CMM 1, 11, nr 5.

⁶²³ Gattinara to Margaret 11 Dec. 1507 Memmingen. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 388.

⁶²⁴ ‘il scet bien que vous ne voudries estre cause de sa destruction et de toute la mayson,’ Gattinara to Margaret, 4 Feb. 1508, Trento, Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 432.

⁶²⁵ Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war*, 10.

dilute the attraction of the regency by making plans to send the Bishop of Trier to assist Margaret.⁶²⁶ The bishop possessed the same qualifications to serve as regent as did Margaret – he was Maximilian’s cousin, and as a member of the clergy, he was unlikely to seek any dynastic connections of his own or raise an army. Besides, he would be a good companion for an unmarried woman. Gattinara protested, writing to Margaret that the regency had to be hers only and that she could not have an inferior as her equal.⁶²⁷ Maximilian’s attempts came to naught, but they show how vulnerable and exceptional Margaret’s position was.

While working to advance Margaret’s cause, Gattinara met the influential men around Maximilian and encouraged Margaret to cultivate her relations with them. He wrote to her:

*ferez bien escrire de nouveau bones lettres: comant vous haues este advertyer par messire sigismund phleugh et moy: de la bone affection quelz ont a vous: et de la diligence quel font devers le roy vre pere pour la despechie a vous afferes de quoy les remercies les priant y vouloir preserver: et fere pour vous commant il soloient fere par le feu roy vre frere: et que vous recognestez bien leur poyne; aynsi que mhavuez doner chargie: et en tout ce que vous les pourres fere plaisir vous le feres tresvolunteres: vous advertyssant que ces lettres prouffiront beaucoup—et aussy pourres escrire une bone lettre a maistre hans renner que je vous hay adverty semblablement: car il ny ha secretaire quelcun quy soit tant avec le roy comme luy [It would be good if you wrote them again and told them You have heard from Mister Sigismund Pleugh and me what affection they have for You and how they have helped with Your affairs with the King Your Father and how grateful You are for their services for You and for the Late King Your Brother, how You recognise the efforts they do for You and tell them You will do all You can for them. I am telling You this will be worthwhile. ... Write also a letter to master Hans Renner, telling him I have told you the same, because no secretary spends so much time with the king than him].*⁶²⁸

Margaret took the advice, as her letters to Hans Renner later testify.⁶²⁹ Gattinara made it plainly clear that to manage her government with the support of her father, Margaret needed to take advantage of the structures and communication channels of the emperor’s court. At the same time, he taught her to appreciate her contacts and servants. If she was to have authority and respect as the emperor’s daughter, she needed to win the emperor’s servants over to her side and reward them. This should not be seen

⁶²⁶ Gattinara to Margaret 11 Dec. 1507 Memmingen. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 387

⁶²⁷ Gattinara to Margaret 11 Dec. 1507 Memmingen. Kooperberg, *Margaretha van Oostenrijk*, 389.

⁶²⁸ Gattinara to Margaret 10 Oct. 1507 Innsbruck, ANL 18847.29709.

⁶²⁹ Margaret to Hans Renner [end of February 1511] in the appendix of Walther, *Die Anfänge Karls V.*, 214.

as an underestimation of her capabilities or possibilities as a woman, but as a demand that she should act like a prince because a prince was not expected to govern alone.

Gattinara noticeably trusted that Margaret would act appropriately in the Low Countries during his absence without his guidance and advice. Despite his many suggestions as to whom, and how, she was to write, he never mentioned anything about her behaviour in his letters. As seen above, he tried to put words into Margaret's mouth and he sent her rough drafts of the letters she should write.⁶³⁰ However, his letters did not contain any advice on how to carry out the negotiations with the ambassadors at her court, even when signing a treaty with England was one of the most important issues for Margaret during Gattinara's time away. With her background, he could trust she knew how to manage such occasions, and judging from his style, she was probably a smoother negotiator than he was.

As Boone has emphasised, Gattinara had 'social confidence that bordered on impertinence',⁶³¹ and he did not hesitate to tell Margaret that he had his own honour to think about, which no prince could take from him. Should Margaret suspect his motivations, it meant that she did not deserve such a counsellor.⁶³² In his autobiography, he blamed his later setbacks in Bourgogne on his enemies and complained that Margaret had 'shown herself a woman' by listening to those advisors who were against him.⁶³³ In his worldview, there was a prince and an advisor and both had their honours and duties to uphold. Gattinara tirelessly protected his prince's honour, without forgetting his own, because they were linked. He put his learning in the service of a prince, talking of honour and profit in the same language as Emperor Maximilian. Gattinara's motives and ideas might not have been as noble as those of Erasmus's Christian Prince, but unlike the famous humanist, Gattinara put his theories into practise.

Although Margaret evidently followed Gattinara's counsel on how to cultivate her relationship with her father the emperor, Margaret's relations with Gattinara changed already at the beginning of her regency. Gattinara had worked to ensure her rights to the county of Bourgogne with equal vigour as he had advocated her regency. Soon, however, Gattinara's influence in the regency government was overshadowed by his ambition in the duchy, where he was president of the parliament in Dôle. Meanwhile, in her role as regent, Margaret was following the advice Gattinara had given him at the beginning of her office. She heeded his emphasis on the importance of personal presence and advised the English strongly to have an envoy in the imperial court, because the emperor must have 'much calling upon'. She also

⁶³⁰ This was common among princesses and their advisors, as can also be seen from Wolsey's corrections of the letters of Mary Tudor in 1515. Sadlack, *The French Queen's Letters*, 113-4.

⁶³¹ Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 10.

⁶³² Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 11.

⁶³³ 'mulierem se ostendisset' Bornate Vita 268; Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara*, 89.

recommended rewards for the staff around the emperor, including his secretary Renner.⁶³⁴

Gattinara continued also to serve in diplomatic missions. In 1509, he was in France negotiating a treaty between Maximilian, Louis XII and Ferdinand of Aragon. In 1511, he was back in Innsbruck and once again prompted Margaret to write to her father, 'for his benefit and to demonstrate how you have his affairs in heart', and he told her how Maximilian had expressed his content with Margaret and how she 'has shown courage of a man, not a woman'.⁶³⁵ Over time, though, their relationship cooled after Gattinara became involved in a conflict with the local nobles.⁶³⁶ However, Gattinara, aware of Margaret's situation after Charles's emancipation, and as always strict with the legality of the issues, still occasionally wrote to Margaret's secretary and advisor, Marnix and Gorrevod, to prompt them to work to maintain Margaret's authority.⁶³⁷

FROM GOOD DAUGHTER TO DEAR AUNT

Margaret's regency demonstrates that training for queenship was in many respects good preparation for the regency given the political situation of the Low Countries. She acted as a mediating authority between the different parties and negotiated between the English and French commercial and military interests, without forgetting her nephew's Spanish interests. By creating a connection of trust first with her father and later with her nephew, she created a model for Habsburg female regency.

Margaret and Maximilian's correspondence was a mixture of official documents and familial letters. The official issues were complemented the discussion of private matters and news of the children in Margaret's care. As shown above, Margaret based her claim to the regency on her position as Maximilian's daughter, who as a family member advocated both her nephew's and her father's interests. Gattinara prompted her to appear as a consistent, level-headed and prudent regent attending to the government according to her father's wishes. Despite the very personal nature of her relationship as a regent to her father as the actual ruler, Margaret had on her side a competent staff of advisors and secretaries. She kept her letters generally very sober in tone and drafted them in co-operation with her secretary, unlike Maximilian, who occasionally sent emotional and clearly

⁶³⁴ Young, Boleyn, Wingfield to Henry VIII 22 July 1512 and 13 July 1512. LP 1, nr. 1306, 1338.

⁶³⁵ "vous montrés avoir couraige d'homme et non pas de femme", Gattinara 7 July 1511 Innsbruck, Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques*, 417, CXXII.

⁶³⁶ Headley, "The conflict between nobles and magistrates," 73.

⁶³⁷ Gattinara to Jean Marnix and Laurent de Gorrevod 27 Sep. 1515 *Correspondance politique et administrative de Laurent de Gorrevod*, 330, CXXXII.

not very well considered letters and did not bother being consistent in his arguments.

Corresponding with the emperor was occasionally challenging because Maximilian's letters to Margaret were as erratic in their wording as his person appeared to be in Gattinara's letters. Gattinara's efforts during his mission could not have gone unnoticed, and when he was returning to Low Countries Maximilian lost his temper and poured out his anger at being pestered to give Margaret the power to ratify offices and benefices.

je vous don la réponse de nostre main par escript, afin que nous pouns véritablement croere que vous soes acertes informé sans interprète que yl nous touche... Si vous nous eusses escript seulement trois lingnes au lieu de dix , ou duse lestres ou artikls dedans vous lestres, lesquels estions si plains de mistères que yl nous estoit point possible de entendre ne tirer dehors la matère principal ; lesquels lingnes fusseunt par vous escriptes par tel manier ou forme : 'Mon père, envoyées moy hastivement mon povoer et commission pour prendre en vostre nom la fidélité et gouvernement des pays de bas Bourgogne, car mester Jean Renner, vostre secrétaire , ne m'a point envoyé mon commission susdit, selon la commandement et charge que vous ly avés baillié à la présence de mon président de Bresse', certes vous eusses ladite povoer ou commission landemen ou après que vous me eusses escript tel lingnes de lestres de dudit Renner, nostre secrétaire. [I am writing to you with my own hand so you we can be sure that you are informed without interpretation on the issues that touch us... If you had written us only three lines instead of ten, it would have been much easier to understand the principal matter. Had you written 'My father, send me without delay my power and commission to take in your name the government of these countries of Bourgogne, although master Renner, your secretary, has not yet sent them to me, although you have commanded so in the presence of my president of Bresse', of course you would have received your powers].
638

The president in question was Gattinara. Maximilian knew quite well who was coaching his daughter.

The affairs were not as simple as Maximilian's 'two lines' would have suggested. In his other letters, after confessing his most sincere love and affection for Margaret and his grandchildren, he turned to begging for money, blackmailing Margaret or scheming about some quite absurd plans, such as planning to become the Pope in 1512.⁶³⁹ Maximilian's ways of persuading Margaret included appealing to her sense of honour, to her love for him and to their house. Maximilian also seemed to trust his own charm, and several times he sought to postpone answering questions in writing and

⁶³⁸ Maximilian to Margaret 1508, CMM 1, 121-3, nr. 103.

⁶³⁹ Maximilian to Margaret 18 Sep. 1512, CMM 2, 37-9, nr. 411.

suggested that they could have a good talk once he came to the Low Countries.⁶⁴⁰ Apparently his self-confidence was at least partly justified. On the rare occasions that Margaret and Maximilian met, they obviously enjoyed an amiable relationship, which was not missed by those around them. The English commented on her meeting with Maximilian in 1513 by saying that the 'Emperor's servants will not be very glad of her coming, as they can rule him better in her absence'.⁶⁴¹

The emperor could afford to be angry with his daughter, and in 1513 he wrote in his own hand bitterly that he had done everything for Margaret's wellbeing and efforts to 'augment her honour', but 'if You continue writing malicious letters against Us, we will change our mind'.⁶⁴² Margaret's surviving letters, although less in number than those she received from her father, do not contain anything that could be interpreted as evidence of the selfish type of scheming that Maximilian seems to accuse her of. Margaret's harshest comments were usually inspired by the 'murmurs' of the people, malevolent gossip or suspicions of him favouring somebody else over her when she, as his only daughter, should have been preferred.⁶⁴³ In courtly manners, Maximilian trusted his daughter explicitly, saying 'when it comes to the ring you said Princess Mary of England has sent to our son,⁶⁴⁴ I trust you will handle a gift in return for her with your discretion';⁶⁴⁵ but in the same letter, he also retorted that he could not respond to the Aragonese envoy's affair as requested, because he has not been told what affair that was.⁶⁴⁶

Much of the communication was also managed through various servants and envoys travelling between the courts, which probably also caused misunderstandings. Those messages were usually hinted at in writing. Margaret's work was further complicated by Maximilian's way of saying that he would explain his reasons later, as he did, for instance, when asking her to

⁶⁴⁰ "Nous veneruns bientost devers vous en personne, là pourré vous avé nous communiquer de toutes ses choses plus assurément" Maximilian to Margaret 4 July 1508 CMM 1, 68, nr. 51.

⁶⁴¹ Spinelly to Henry VIII. 25 Aug. 1513 Lille, LP 1, nr. 2203.

⁶⁴² 'tout honneur et bien de vous, toujours et de vostre person; mes si vous continuerés toujours de nous escripi e mavez lestres sans réson , je croy bien que au derain vous me ferés changer propos' Maximilian to Margaret September 1513, CMM 2, 206, nr. 543.

⁶⁴³ 'me semble que moy, qui suis vostre seulle et unique fille, dois estre en ce preferée au dit conte et tous autres' Margaret to Maximilian April 1509, Bruchet & Lancien *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 338, XIV.

⁶⁴⁴ Charles was at the time engaged to Henry VII's daughter Mary (1496-1533), queen of France (1514-5).

⁶⁴⁵ 'nous remectons cela à vostre discrécion et serons contens de ce que par vous en sera fait', Maximilian to Margaret 30 July 1509 Ynan CMM 1, 169, nr. 129.

⁶⁴⁶ 'Touchant l'ambassadeur du roy d'Arragon... vous respondons que ne scaurions bien en ce vous conseiller sans entendre ce qu'il vous dira,' Maximilian to Margaret 30 July 1509 Ynan CMM 1, 169, nr. 129.

grant him the revenues of a castle in her duchy of Bourgogne 'for reasons I will tell you later'.⁶⁴⁷ The secretaries had a very important role in the correspondence of both Margaret and Maximilian. They had a significant role as moderators, making summaries for Margaret of incoming messages⁶⁴⁸ and editing her letters. When she used more emotional language, as she did in November 1512, telling her father that

Je vous promes, Monseigneur, que j'en ay si grant regere que suis taillie d'en tomber en quelque maladie, et vouldroie mainteffois estre au ventre de ma mère [I feel so bad about all this that I am in danger of falling ill and many times I have wished I were still in my mother's belly]

The rest of the sentence in the rough draft was corrected by her secretary, Marnix, to read '*ne scay que vous escripre*' [I do not know how to describe you].⁶⁴⁹ When the children in Margaret's guardianship were mentioned, Maximilian called them 'our children', sometimes even '*nos communs enfans*',⁶⁵⁰ and Margaret in turn mentioned 'monsieur my nephew and madames my nieces'. Most of the references to them concerned their health, childhood illnesses or residences safe from epidemics.⁶⁵¹ However, it is from Margaret's letters to her father that the rare facts of their education have been deduced.

Gilles Docquier argues that Maximilian personally did not without reservation accept Margaret's position as regent, although he did officially confirm her authority.⁶⁵² However, his cautious stance was not necessarily caused by Margaret's person or her gender, but rather by Maximilian's fickleness and general mistrust of everybody. Maximilian had been by far more suspicious with his son Philip's policies and what he counted as disloyalty towards himself.⁶⁵³ It was rather a compliment that in Maximilian's eyes, Margaret was in the Low Countries as an office holder playing in the same league as men. Thus, it was as one of the actors in the power struggles that Margaret's regency ended abruptly in 1515, when a party friendly to French interests headed by Charles's tutor, Guillaume de Croÿ,

⁶⁴⁷ 'pour aucunes grans raisons à ce nous mouvans et que vous ferons sçavoir cy-aprez'. 23 April 1509 Worms, CMM 1, 127, nr 107.

⁶⁴⁸ Walther, *Die Anfänge Karls V*, 255.

⁶⁴⁹ Walther, 'Rezension,' 266. Translation into English from Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 98.

⁶⁵⁰ Maximilian to Margaret 4 July 1508 CMM 1, 68, nr. 51.

⁶⁵¹ Maximilian to Margaret 20 Sep. 1507 Innsbruck CMM nr. 6; Margaret to Maximilian 16 June 1514 CMM nr. 574.

⁶⁵² Docquier 'Une dame de 'picques' parmi les valets?', 40.

⁶⁵³ Jean-Marie Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau: le dernier duc de Bourgogne* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 84-89; Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Band 2: Reichsreform und Kaiserpolitik 1493-1500* (München: Oldenbourg, 1975), 140-6.

persuaded Maximilian to declare the fifteen-year-old duke to be of age and ready to assume the government against a substantial payment to the emperor.⁶⁵⁴

Until that time, local nobles had primarily viewed Margaret as the representative of her father and as an anglophile and a successor in that sense of her step-grandmother, Margaret of York. If anyone had used her gender as an excuse for the limits of her regency, she herself did when explaining to Maximilian her helplessness in military matters.⁶⁵⁵ Even then, it seemed to be done as a matter of the ever-important proper conduct. For instance, in 1513 she refused to visit the armies with Maximilian during his visit to the Low Countries, explaining

[je] suis preste en ce et toutes choses faire ce qu'il vous plaira me commander; mais sans cella, ce n'est le cas de femme vefve de troter et aller visiter armées pour le plésir [I am ready to obey every command you are pleased to give me, but it is not for a widowed lady to visit the camp for entertainment].⁶⁵⁶

In 1515, Margaret's political opponents wished to shift the duchy's foreign policy towards France and further from the imperial anglophile stand. The nobles friendly to French interests were the same men whom Charles V's mother, Juana, had referred to when she in 1506 had told Castilian deputies that 'the Flemings do not permit women to govern'.⁶⁵⁷ The 'Flemings' then had been the supporters of Juana's husband, Philip, who had been sympathetic to French interests and had resisted Ferdinand of Aragon (and his influence through Juana), Emperor Maximilian (and his influence through his daughter Margaret) and the English party in the Low Countries.⁶⁵⁸ In 1515, they prevented Margaret from advocating the imperial cause by using the Order of the Golden Fleece as a tool of female exclusion.

The Order of the Golden Fleece was the most distinguished society in Burgundy, established by Margaret's great-grandfather, Philip the Good, to promote knightly virtues and in essence create an exclusive club for the

⁶⁵⁴ Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Band 4: Gründung des habsburgischen Weltreiches 1508-1519*. (München: Oldenbourg, 1981), 370-2.

⁶⁵⁵ David-Chapy in her analysis of princess regents of France shows how Anne of France's unofficial position caused complaints that she should 'stay at her estates and look after her household'. Margaret's official appointment perhaps saved her from such remarks. David-Chapy, *Anne de France, Louise de Savoie*, 133. Also see Fletcher, 'Ladies' peace revisited,' 118-9.

⁶⁵⁶ Margaret to Maximilian 22 Sep. 1513 Lille, CMM 2, 203, nr. 541.

⁶⁵⁷ Monter, 'An Experiment in Female Government', 442.

⁶⁵⁸ José Martínez Millán, 'Conseillers et factions curiales durant le règne de l'empereur Charles Quint (1500-1558),' in *Conseils et conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance v. 1450-v. 1550*, ed. Cédric Michon (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 116-8.

nobility of Burgundy.⁶⁵⁹ The dukes were the natural leaders of the order. Nearly all the ceremonies in the Low Countries concerning the ruler or his representative included lavish parts for the members of the order. One the privileges of membership included the right to be judged only by one's fellow members. The conflict between Margaret's interests and those of the order was initiated by the arrest of a Spanish noble, Juan Manuel. It had been done on Margaret's order after a request made by Ferdinand of Aragon.⁶⁶⁰ Her actions were condemned by the knights, many of whom held a political grudge against Margaret (and Ferdinand as the opponent of Margaret's deceased brother Philip). The disapproval was expressed as an injustice against the order precisely because, by its rules, a knight could be judged only by his peers, the other knights. Juan Manuel was a knight, Margaret was not.

The speed of Charles's emancipation tells much not just about Maximilian's dire need for funds, but even more so about the emperor's belief that Margaret was a regent only temporarily. It is obvious that Margaret knew it too, although from the sources it appears that she was genuinely hurt hearing her father had acted without consulting her.⁶⁶¹ However, she presented Charles and his council with a memorandum that was read aloud in a meeting.⁶⁶² The memorandum straightforwardly defended Margaret's regency and her position in her nephew's court. It opened with a demand for honesty, stating that she wanted to be addressed directly.⁶⁶³ She recounted how her regency had followed the tragic death of her brother and how her father had ordered her to come to the Low Countries and take over the administration 'of Charles's person and lands'. She had accepted because

*je avoie plus de devoir et astriction de sang, je acceptay volontiers ladite charge, délaissant tous mes affaires particuliers assés confuz pour mon soubit partement de pays de mon douhaire [it was my duty of blood; thus, I unconditionally accepted the responsibility and left all the confused affairs of my dowager lands behind].*⁶⁶⁴

After reminding them of the legitimation of her regency, Margaret's memorandum gave a detailed account of how she had spent the funds allocated to her. As described earlier, Margaret's account of accepting the

⁶⁵⁹ D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1987), 356-66.

⁶⁶⁰ Described in detail in Walther *Die Anfänge Karls V.*, 120-1.

⁶⁶¹ Ambassador Spinelly's report from Malines 6 February 1515. LP 2, nr. 124.

⁶⁶² Mémoire de Marguerite, présenté à Charles d'Autriche, 20 Aug. 1515 Brussels, CMA 2, 117-30, nr. 226.

⁶⁶³ 'j'ayme trop mieulx que l'on parle devant moy que derrière', CMA 2, 119, nr. 226.

⁶⁶⁴ CMA 2, 119, nr. 226.

regency as the 'duty of her blood' was a somewhat embellished version of her pursuit to gain that duty.

The unexpected end of the regency was a setback for Margaret. Maximilian assured her a year later 'not to be melancholy, for I give you a word of a prince that your father will not let you down'.⁶⁶⁵ Margaret's person in her father's eyes was not changed by her regency, which was clearly indicated by the way he treated her after it had ended. Convinced that as his daughter was both a very prestigious person and naturally the defender of their common dynasty, Maximilian wrote to Charles and demanded that the young duke honour his aunt and pay her a pension. He urged Charles to regard the work Margaret had done for him and reminded him that in his aunt, Charles had found comfort, counsel and assistance as in no-one else.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, Maximilian considered Margaret, as the senior royal lady, the most suitable guardian of Charles's dignity. As an evident recognition of her superbly queenly manners, Maximilian asked her to see that Charles received important ambassadors with due respect and manner.⁶⁶⁷ The emperor still sent Margaret copies of the letters addressed to Charles describing situations pertaining to his affairs of state, to keep her informed.⁶⁶⁸

Margaret was also still considered the guardian and tutor of her nieces, and she participated in deliberations about their possible marriages.⁶⁶⁹ Being the guardian of her nieces and hosting ambassadors were obviously the types of duties that Margaret had been brought up for. The emperor turned to her when he wanted to put end to the malicious rumours that he had heard circulating regarding the reputations of the Kings of Denmark and Hungary. Maximilian fiercely defended his choice of spouses for his grandchildren and required that Margaret support him.⁶⁷⁰ Margaret was also the one to receive

⁶⁶⁵ 'Ma bonne fille, ne prenez nulle mélancolye, car vous promettons en parole de prince, que de vostre bon père ne serez abandonnée,' Maximilian to Margaret, 5 Dec. 1516 Hagenau, Walther *Die Anfänge Karls V*, Appendix, 246, nr. 32.

⁶⁶⁶ Maximilian to Charles, 18 Jan. 1516 Augsburg, CMA 2, 133-4, nr. 229.

⁶⁶⁷ Maximilian to Margaret 19 Apr. 1516 Caldèze. CMM 2, 321, nr. 620.

⁶⁶⁸ For example Maximilian to Margaret 10 Mar. 1516 Roveredo, Hubert Kreiten, 'Der Briefwechsel Kaiser Maximilians I. mit seiner Tochter Margareta. Untersuchungen über die Zeitfolge des durch neue Briefe ergänzten Briefwechsels.' *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 96 (1907), 288, nr. 86.

⁶⁶⁹ Maximilian to Margaret 1516 CMM 2, 320, nr. 619; 26 Apr. 1516 Metz, CMM 2, 322, Nr 621. According to Spinelly's report to Wolsey, among Eleanor's suitors Maximilian supported the king of Poland and Margaret duke of Savoy. 21 Dec. 1515 Bruxelles LP 2, nr. 1317.

⁶⁷⁰ Maximilian to Margaret 1 Jan. 1517, CMM 2, 337-8, nr. 633. The rumors were right: Hungary was in the verge of civil war. Christian II lived with a concubine and turned into Lutheran, both deeds as unacceptable for the Habsburgs.

Prince Ferdinand when he arrived from Spain in 1517; this was reasonable considering that she spoke Spanish.⁶⁷¹

When Charles in 1517 left to claim his heritage in Spain after the death of his maternal grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon, Margaret was nominated as a member of regency council. Although the council was presided over by Claude Carondelet, as the highest-ranking noble Margaret could not be ignored.⁶⁷² Young Charles at this point evidently calculated that blood was the only thing that mattered, as he also considered leaving his sister Eleanor as his regent.⁶⁷³ Eleanor, however, followed Charles to Spain, because, as a young princess, she was destined for marriage rather than regency. Her speculated appointment was perhaps a gesture against Margaret and her supporters.

Margaret, together with the council of the Low Countries, did not from the beginning support the thought of concentrating power in the person of Charles, and she participated in drafting a suggestion that the imperial title should be pursued by Ferdinand instead of Charles, since Charles was already the King of Spain. Nevertheless, after Charles without hesitation claimed the title for himself, Margaret used all her influence and gave her closest advisors to assist Charles's bid in the imperial election.⁶⁷⁴ They kept her informed of the situation in the Habsburg Empire,⁶⁷⁵ as did her Medici contacts in Rome.⁶⁷⁶ Moreover, it was hardly entirely incidental that when Charles's chancellor, Jean le Sauvage, died in 1518, Charles called Mercurino di Gattinara to replace him, and very soon afterwards Margaret was appointed as the official regent.⁶⁷⁷

Margaret's second regency resembled her first one. The princess still acted as the emperor's queenly counterpart and the representative of their

⁶⁷¹ Fagel, 'Don Fernando in den Niederlanden,' 44-5. Later Ferdinand, like Charles, called Margaret his 'real mother': 'non seulement comme dame et tante, mais comme vraie mere'. Ferdinands instruction for Claude Bouton to Margaret 25 May 1523 Innsbruck, KF I, 63, nr. 38.

⁶⁷² Rabe & Marzahl, 'Comme représentant nostre propre personne', 81; Wim Blockmans, 'Women and Diplomacy,' in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 97.

⁶⁷³ Moeller, *Eléonore d'Autriche et de Bourgogne*, 274.

⁶⁷⁴ Walther, *Die Anfänge Karls V.*, 93. Karl Brandi. *Kaiser Karl V. Werden und Schicksal einer Persönlichkeit und eines Weltreiches*. 6. Auflage. (München: F. Brockmann, 1961). 85-6. Charles to Margaret and council 5 March 1519 Barcelona. Kohler, *Quellen*, 42-4, nr.4.

⁶⁷⁵ Mone 'Briefwechsel über die Kaiserwal Karls V.'

⁶⁷⁶ Instructions of Margaret of Austria to Rafael de Medici in Rome, February 1519 Mechelen, Federica Veratelli, *À la mode italienne: commerce du luxe et diplomatie dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux, 1477-1530 : édition critique de documents de la Chambre des comptes de Lille*. (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion /Archives départementales du Nord, 2013), 337, nr. 156.

⁶⁷⁷ On her use of Gattinara as a contact in the imperial court Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 137.

common dynasty. However, the growth of Charles's empire required readjusting both the system and the role of regent. Margaret was up to the task, and despite encountering the same problems over authority and patronage that she had experienced with her father, she developed an even more independent role as the chief contact with the English. However, she did not hesitate to change her stance when King Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey started drifting towards a break from Rome and violated her deepest convictions on the rights of princesses with Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Her zeal in pursuing peace negotiations with France and defending the unhappy queen of England show that she still considered queenly intercession to be her major function in addition to her governmental work as regent.

Charles's domains were larger than Maximilian's, and Margaret had to position herself accordingly in the new arrangement. During Maximilian's reign, the Low Countries had been the emperor's 'mambour', whereas now the area was truly part of Charles V's vastly scattered empire. Margaret's second nephew, Ferdinand, as the ruler of the Austrian lands and Charles's vicar in the empire, became her 'equal' and ally. The Spanish relations that Margaret had cultivated through her relationship with Ferdinand of Aragon were now handled directly through Charles. Affairs with the English were still a major responsibility for Margaret, and she gave audiences to English ambassadors. Her behaviour during the audiences grew even bolder, and while her reports to Charles became more official than her correspondence with Maximilian had been, she took on a more central role in the diplomacy.

It is evident that the correspondence Margaret had with both her father and later with her nephew served as a major tool in ensuring that regency fit into the queenly model. In her analysis of the rhetoric Margaret used when writing about military issues to her father the emperor, Catherine Fletcher plausibly argues that her strategy of writing to Maximilian as being in need of his expert military advice while at the same time deploying troops (if not in person, as Fletcher supposes, then at least as the authority behind the operations) was part of a gendered convention to adjust to expectations.⁶⁷⁸ Similarly, although Margaret in the letters to Charles appeared as a submissive, correct and polite lady, she showed energy and vigour when needed. When she had a dispute with the Estates of Brabant in 1528, the protocol testifies to how Madame declared that the need of the emperor for money had been made clear. The funds for the war would be used to defend them, their land and their goods. When the estates refused and the chancellor did not seal the decision to grant more money, she sealed them herself, impressing all present.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁸ Fletcher, 'Ladies' peace revisited,' 121.

⁶⁷⁹ Gordon Griffith, *Representative government in Western Europe in the sixteenth century. Commentary and Documents for the Study of Comparative Constitutional History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 351-2.

Especially at the beginning of her second regency, Margaret's correspondence revealed that, despite Charles's increasing power and his position at the head of the composite monarchy, he was still a young man. Once Charles had arrived in Spain in 1518, it was reported to Margaret that 'the king is fine, growing in size and virtue'.⁶⁸⁰ In 1521, Margaret told her councillor and confidant, Jean de Berghes, that Charles's face changed colour when he was angered at the delayed negotiations with England. The observant aunt commented that 'our emperor has a head like any other, subject to contrary winds applied to his ear that sometimes are able to cause him to waver'.⁶⁸¹ However, she accommodated her conduct accordingly, and when the young king became emperor, his aunt took her respectful and obedient role as a princess regent of his empire. Margaret's role as an older person, Charles's aunt and former guardian gave her some authority even after he had matured. Charles never seemed to have thought that he could persuade Margaret by meeting her. Maximilian, as was seen from Gattinara's reports to Margaret in 1507, believed that by talking to Margaret personally he could make her see things his way. The good aunt, '*ma bonne tante*', as Charles always addressed Margaret, could apparently not be so easily convinced just by his mere presence. Neither did Charles threaten Margaret, like Maximilian had done.

Although she had argued against the estates on behalf of the emperor, for him she now presented herself as the representative of his subjects, whereas for Maximilian she had been the representative of the young Charles's interest. In February 1524, she ended a long letter explaining how Charles's absence, the war and the lack of money troubled her daily, turning her longing for him and hopes for his happiness into the wishes of his '*subjects*' as well.⁶⁸² She was taking advantage of the prevailing opinion that the 'natural' prince should remain in his country, something she could not have done with Maximilian, as it was obvious that he was a foreigner and thus not missed in the Low Countries. Maximilian had had his own networks, which had originated during the time he had been the duke as the husband of Duchess Mary. For Charles, his aunt was a key contact in the area. In his letters, Charles kept repeating the wish that Margaret would tell him the news concerning her and his lands over there, '*parde-la*', as often as she

⁶⁸⁰ 'vostre nepveur, est en très bonne santé, Dieu mercy, et croist tous les jours de sa personne, aussi fait-il en sens et vertuz', Gorrevod to Margaret 28 May 1518 Saragosa, *Correspondance de Laurent de Gorrevod*, 380, CL.

⁶⁸¹ 'car nostre empereur a vne teste comme vng aultre, aueques soufles de jour et de nuit a son oraile, que aueunes fois le porpoint fere vavier', Margaret to Jean de Berghes November 1521. Karl Lanz, ed., *Sammlung von Actenstücken und Briefen zur Geschichte des Hauses Habsburg dem Zeitraume von 1473 bis 1576. 2.Abteilung Kaiser Karl V und König Philipp II. Erster Band* (Wien: Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1853), 442, nr. 137. Translation in Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor*, 36.

⁶⁸² Margaret to Charles 21 Feb. 1524 Mechelen, CK 1, 84, nr 49.

could.⁶⁸³ The role of a satellite ruler waiting for instructions and orders had evolved into the role of informer and mediator.

In this regard, Margaret had more power as the representative of Charles than she had had as that of Maximilian, as she now could deliver messages back and forth giving even more of her own interpretation of the issues. Just as Charles had inherited Spain as well as Naples and other areas in Italy, Margaret now became one of the regents in a larger system. She was one of Charles's informants. He, for example, wrote to Charles Lannoy, his viceroy in Naples, using nearly the same wording as he had when writing to Margaret, assuring the viceroy that he wanted to hear Lannoy's news.⁶⁸⁴ Lannoy, however, was not family, and Margaret became equivalent to Charles's younger brother Ferdinand, who took over the Austrian heritage from Emperor Maximilian in 1521 and acted as the emperor's vicar in the Holy Roman Empire. Charles often sent the same instructions to Margaret and Ferdinand and, in this way, made it understood that they were equals as his deputies.⁶⁸⁵ Margaret's correspondence with Ferdinand had the character of shared information between equals rather than the authoritative tone Charles had taken with Margaret as ruler. The influence of the advanced bureaucracy in the government in the form of secretaries and councils was reflected in the evolving structure of the letters. Instead of the several short letters exchanged between Margaret and Maximilian, the letters were now often multipage memorandums, dealing with issues one at the time, and often Charles's answers and comments were written in the margins of the letters he received. Cipher was used, and several copies of the letters were made.⁶⁸⁶

FOR PEACE AND LADIES' HONOUR – MARGARET AS A DIPLOMAT

If Margaret's main achievement within her own family was to be '*madame ma bonne tante*' for a number of kings and queens, for her contemporaries she became the 'caesar's aunt' who made peace with France. In August 1530, the King of France declared Margaret highly suitable for making future

⁶⁸³ 'Nous vous requerons avoir de voz nouvelles, et que nous escripvez de noz affaires de noz pays de pardela le plus au long et souvent que pourrez,' Charles to Margaret 15 Aug. 1522 Palencia CK 1, 65, nr. 36.

⁶⁸⁴ Charles to Lannoy 31 Oct. 1522, CK 1, 74, nr. 41.

⁶⁸⁵ For example the instructions of Charles for Ferdinand and Margaret through Guillaume de Montfort in 31 Jan. 1528 Burgos KF 2, 1/2, 176, nr. 149 and 8 Oct. 1528, KF 2, 1/2, 295, nr. 232.

⁶⁸⁶ For example a copy of Charles's letter to Margaret 14 Jan. 1526 in the English ambassador Wingfield's hand. LP 4, nr. 1889.

alliances with France after her good work in securing the peace treaty.⁶⁸⁷ The admiration for Margaret's work as peace maker is a visible demonstration of her success in queenly comportment. The Ladies' Peace, negotiated by Margaret and the French king's mother, Louise of Savoy, shows that female agency was better accepted when it took place within norms that included both Margaret's upbringing to be a graceful and sociable lady as well as fulfilling the role that queens (and mothers) could have in a male setting. Margaret's other effort at the end of the decade, assisting Catherine of Aragon, shows that her queenly and motherly influence indeed only functioned within normative limits and had less power when facing the unexpected.

Margaret's indisputable success as a diplomat and negotiator was most likely due to her education and preparation for becoming queen. It also testified to the fact that her assurances of loyalty had been taken at face value, because both Maximilian and Charles gave her the powers to arrange treaties on their behalf. Moreover, it showed that she had become a recognised actor on the political scene, and through her influence over the emperor, she had similar power as an active queen consort would have had. Margaret's ease at cultivating relationships through envoys and ambassadors was further smoothed over by the fact that she had already met many rulers in person. In 1505, the Princess of Wales, Catherine of Aragon, gave her opinion of the portrait of Margaret she saw in her father-in-law's court, feeling herself competent to do so because she had known Margaret in person.⁶⁸⁸ In 1511 Louis XII recalled for an ambassador details of Margaret's childhood in the court of France, having been present there as the young prince himself.⁶⁸⁹ Margaret's relations with Spain were indeed based on her personal connection to the monarchs. With the English, she rather relied on having met both King Henry and Cardinal Wolsey, and from there cultivated discussions with the ambassadors. She was a self-confessed friend of the English, but the Ladies Peace of 1529 represented a reconciliation between her family and their arch enemy, France.

Margaret's work as mediator between the Spanish royals and her father stemmed from her time in Spain. Her position as the dowager princess had been cultivated ever since she had returned to the Low Countries in 1500. Ferdinand and Isabel had sent their envoy, Fuensalida, to greet Margaret as soon as she had settled back in her native lands, and their friendliness had even raised Margaret's brother's suspicions.⁶⁹⁰ As so often with noble

⁶⁸⁷ 'Madame, que puisque vous estiés si heureuse d'avoir faict une si bonne ouvre que de ceste paix, qu'il failloit que en fissiez encores une aultre, qu'est des alliances,' Philip de Lalaing to Margaret Cognac 12 Aug. 1530, *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche et de ses Ambassadeurs*, 74.

⁶⁸⁸ De Puebla to Ferdinand of Aragon, 12 Aug. 1505. CSP Spain 1, nr 439.

⁶⁸⁹ Burgo to Margaret 14 Jan. 1511 Blois, *Lettres de Louis XII*, II, 92.

⁶⁹⁰ Fuensalida to Ferdinand and Isabel, 6 Aug. 1500, Fuensalida, *Correspondencia*, 142; Fuensalida to the same 15 June 1505 Ibid., 384.

dowagers, the interest in her dowry also connected Margaret to Spanish interests.⁶⁹¹ Though Queen Isabel died in 1504, Ferdinand of Aragon also considered Margaret a useful ally for his purposes. Their relations show how ambiguous the attitude towards an influential woman was at the time. On the one hand, the Spanish king was quite eager to make use of their acquaintanceship, but on the other it is difficult to evaluate how genuine his appreciation of her was. The king's remarks were often quite unrefined, as with the already quoted case when he prompted Margaret to offer Archduchess Eleanor as a bride for the aged Louis XII, adding that Margaret should not consider herself as the bride since the purpose was to produce an heir for Louis and she obviously could not.⁶⁹² Although her inability to have children was Margaret's own excuse not for marrying King Henry, Ferdinand apparently believed it could well be possible that Margaret wanted to be the Queen of France after all.⁶⁹³ It was obviously quite difficult for her contemporaries to grasp the notion of a lady of Margaret's rank not scheming for the crown.

However, Ferdinand for one trusted that Margaret was the key to reaching her volatile father. Ferdinand was already using another princess, his daughter Catherine in England, as his diplomatic representative.⁶⁹⁴ He mentioned to Catherine that Margaret would not mind the reputation that came with handling alliances.⁶⁹⁵ The same idea was in a Spanish letter to Margaret's secretary: she should meditate an alliance, 'a task which is certainly not difficult for her, and the execution of which would secure to her everlasting fame'.⁶⁹⁶ Before his death, Ferdinand of Aragon, according to English informants, suggested that Charles should come to Spain and leave the Low Countries 'under the rule of the Lady Margaret his aunt'.⁶⁹⁷ Despite occasional reports on how 'the ambassador of Aragon is dissatisfied with my Lady',⁶⁹⁸ Spanish envoys were also apparently trying to reconcile Chièvres with Margaret and Berghes as a way to smooth Charles's departure to meet his Aragonese grandfather, and they warned the English that no good would

⁶⁹¹ Margaret to Ferdinand of Aragon 28 Jan. 1507, ANL B18847.29671.

⁶⁹² Ferdinand of Aragon to Lanuza April 1514, CSP Spain 2, nr 169.

⁶⁹³ Ferdinand of Aragon to Urea 1514, LP 1, nr. 2475, 3405.

⁶⁹⁴ Michelle L. Beer points out that Catherine was Europe's first accredited female ambassador and links this role to 'the traditional roles as intercessor, peace-weaver and moral wife that she was expected to fulfil as a queen consort'. 'Between kings and emperors: Catherine of Aragon as Counsellor and Mediator', in *Queenship and Counsel*, 36.

⁶⁹⁵ Ferdinand of Aragon to Queen Catherine 18 Nov. 1509, CSP Spain 2, nr.27.

⁶⁹⁶ Miguel Perez Almazan (?) to the Secretary Of Margaret Of Austria. December 1509, CSP Spain 2, nr.31.

⁶⁹⁷ Spinelly to Henry VIII. 9 Jan. 1516, LP 2, nr. 1393.

⁶⁹⁸ Spinelly to Henry VIII. 17 Jan. 1515, LP 2, nr. 32.

come from preventing Margaret from taking part in the negotiations.⁶⁹⁹ Ferdinand's fears for the future of his policies and supporters were partly realised when Charles inherited Ferdinand's crown and declared himself a co-ruler with his mother Juana, meaning that Margaret's role as a connection to Spain diminished.

Although Spain was important for the Low Countries as an ally against France, the local trade depended more on England. As mentioned above, Margaret's first challenge in conducting relations with the English had been to maintain peace and amity while keeping King Henry's eager wooing under control. The elderly suitor died in 1509, and the younger Henry married Margaret's former sister-in-law, Catherine of Aragon. Henry VIII had been impressed during his meeting with Margaret's brother Philip in 1506, and so he was readily friendly towards Philip's sister.⁷⁰⁰

During her first regency, Margaret had often when consulting with the English diplomats relied on her authority as being the one receiving news from Maximilian first, and, despite the frustration she expressed to Maximilian, she staunchly defended her erratic father. In 1514, for example, she assured the ambassadors that she did not directly know the reasoning behind his decision, but she was sure it had been made in a manner specific 'to her father, to her, and to all their house'.⁷⁰¹ Margaret used her skills at courtly conversation to maintain cordial relations with the English ambassadors. She was openly friendly with the English envoys as well as with the younger Henry when she met him. Margaret joked with the ambassadors and made a bet with Thomas Boleyn in 1512 regarding the speedy conclusion of their current negotiations.⁷⁰²

Maintaining the boundary between light-hearted playfulness and inappropriate behaviour was a delicate matter, but Margaret encountered only one mistake in their dealings, and the fault was Henry VIII's rather than hers. In 1514, after Henry's campaign on the continent, there was a rumour that Margaret would marry Charles Brandon, the Duke of Suffolk and Henry VIII's favourite. The impropriety of even the thought of such match in Margaret's eyes is evident. When the Duke of Suffolk a year later did manage to elevate his position in royal circles by marrying Henry VIII's sister, Mary Tudor, Margaret did not even believe it to be true.⁷⁰³ The incident had started with courteous flirtation, spiced by language problems. S.J. Gunn blames

⁶⁹⁹ Spinelly to [Wolsey]. 4 Feb. 1516 LP 2, nr. 1479; Ponyniges and Tunstal to Wolsey 10 April 1516 LP 2, nr. 1755.

⁷⁰⁰ Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 48. In his first letter to Margaret Henry VIII addressed her as 'très-haulte et excellente princess, notre très-chère et très amée bonne cousine'. Henry VIII to Margaret 25 April 1509, London. André Le Glay, *Analectes historiques ou documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire des faits moeurs et de la littérature* (Paris: Techener, 1838), 178.

⁷⁰¹ Wingfield et al. to Henry VIII. 18 Apr. 1514, LP 1, nr. 2815.

⁷⁰² Young, Boleyn, Wingfield to Henry VIII 13 Aug. 1512, LP 1, nr. 1338.

⁷⁰³ Spinelly to [Henry VIII.] 27 Feb. 1515 LP 2, nr. 198.

Henry's 'maladroit sense of humour' for the misunderstanding, which nevertheless started a chain of gossip that was even passed along by Erasmus himself.⁷⁰⁴ The details do not interest us here, but the reaction does: such rumours about the princess regent forced Henry VIII to send an apology and explanation to Emperor Maximilian. The king assured the emperor that the story had been spread by someone who wanted to create misunderstandings between the two of them.⁷⁰⁵ The princess regent's reputation was a political issue.

Margaret's work at ensuring good relations with the English was appreciated, and the English representatives in her court accommodated to her wishes because 'she had been such a good friend that they did not like to displease her'.⁷⁰⁶ However, she did not let them forget her loyalties. After Charles's army had captured King Francis in Pavia in 1525, the English approached the French. When ambassador Wingfield told Margaret of the peace between his king and the French, and assured Margaret that this did not 'diminish his love for the Emperor and her', she replied that two of the most important things were the universal good of Christianity and pleasing the Emperor, and she let him understand that while the peace was helping advance the first, the latter was in this case a matter of opinion. When the ambassador tried to continue, Margaret told him that she had already heard the news from the regent of France and 'left for supper'.⁷⁰⁷ After that, Wingfield was forced to write home that he thought 'the old familiarity between the King and my Lady, shown in sending news by their ambassadors, is marvellously cooled'.⁷⁰⁸

After this marvellous cooling of relations, the more arrogant side of Margaret showed itself. In contrast to the very matter-of-fact style of her letters to Charles, Margaret was apparently putting all her self-assured queenly conduct into negotiations with England. Despite being a self-professed '*bonne anglaise*' and tireless advocate of amity between her family and the royal house of England,⁷⁰⁹ she made it clear to the envoys that she was first and foremost a princess of Austria. She had a vivid repertoire of ways to intimidate the envoys. Perhaps losing the alliance with the isle kingdom would not have been as destructive for their house as Maximilian had described to Margaret when he had wanted her to marry King Henry, but it was important all the same. The importance was even more keenly felt in the Low Countries due to the commercial connections between the two

⁷⁰⁴ Steven J. Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c. 1484-1545* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 29-30; Erasmus to William Gonnell February 1514. *The correspondence of Erasmus*, nr. 287, CWE 2, 278.

⁷⁰⁵ Henry VIII to Maximilian 4 Mar. 1513 Westminster, *Lettres de Louis XII*, IV, 274-6.

⁷⁰⁶ [Young, Boleyn and Wingfield to Henry VIII.] 17 Aug. 1512, LP 1, nr. 1343.

⁷⁰⁷ Wingfield to Wolsey 19 Sep. 1525, LP 4, nr. 1647.

⁷⁰⁸ Wingfield to [Tuke]. 12 Nov. 1525, LP 4, nr. 759.

⁷⁰⁹ Margaret to Jean de Berghes November 1521, Lanz, *Actenstücken und Briefen*, 441, nr. 137.

regions.⁷¹⁰ Margaret's assumed hatred for France could have been an obvious motive for her warm feelings for England, but it is more likely that her political position as the imperial representative determined her stance. When Wolsey complained of Margaret's behaviour, she compared him to a housewife who rebukes her husband in order to prevent him from rebuking her.⁷¹¹ She also put considerable eloquence into her instructions on how to make Wolsey understand the value of her amity. She prompted ambassador Knight to explain to Wolsey that,

*the Lords and councillors here unto the said candles, and the hopes that they have in the promises of England unto the light of the candles, so that oftentimes where many of the said candles lost their whole light, and many were dim and in jeopardy to extinct, her candle was ever fresh and never perished.*⁷¹²

Charles's crucial problem with his empire was its threat to all the other potentates in Europe. Despite the Habsburgs self-styling themselves as the defenders of Christianity and unity, for the other European powers they were the incarnation of selfish interest. The capture of King Francis in Pavia in 1525 culminated in the improbable dominance of the Habsburgs. The subsequent negotiations, king Francis's release and his sons' imprisonment in Spain, and various constellations of power had led King Francis and Emperor Charles to a stalemate. It was time for the queens to take over. Charles's spouse, Isabel of Portugal, was not capable of acting, and Francis's potential marriage with Eleanor of Austria was one of the many articles in the complicated Treaty of Madrid that Francis had violated by refusing to return the Duchy of Burgundy to Charles and claiming he had signed the treaty under duress. Thus, Francis's mother, Louise of Savoy, who had acted as regent during his captivity, sent a message to the woman who was guarding Charles's interests with the devotion of a mother – Margaret.

Louise and Margaret had both been raised in the French court. Louise and her brother Philibert became the protégés of Anne of France after their mother, Margaret of Bourbon, died in 1483.⁷¹³ Louise had acted as the regent during her son's campaigns and captivity in 1515–16 and 1525–26.⁷¹⁴ They had not met since Margaret had left the French court in 1491, but they were

⁷¹⁰ Steven J. Gunn, 'Wolsey's foreign policy and the domestic crisis of 1527–8,' in *Cardinal Wolsey: church, state, and art*, ed. Steven J. Gunn and P.G. Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 149–77.

⁷¹¹ Knight to Brian Tuke [5 June] 1524. LP 4, nr. 7.

⁷¹² Knight to Wolsey 16 Feb. 1525 Bruxelles. LP 4, nr. 1092.

⁷¹³ Pascal Brioiat, Laure Fagnart and Cédric Michon, 'Introduction,' in *Louise de Savoie: 1476–1531*, 13.

⁷¹⁴ On different assessments of Louise's influence over her son Robert Knecht, 'Our Trinity! Francis I, Louise of Savoy and Marguerite d'Angoulême,' in *Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2003), 72–3.

princesses raised according to the same tradition. For them, a reputation as peacemaker fit perfectly with the concept of a queen. Mediation was connected to patience and compassion, characteristics acknowledged as being typical of women and necessary for good queens.⁷¹⁵ Both Louise and Margaret had experience with handling diplomatic negotiations. Margaret had taken an active part in the formation of the League of Cambrai in 1508, and Louise had broken the Anglo-Imperial alliance through the Treaty of More in 1525.⁷¹⁶ The rhetoric used by both women shows that they leaned heavily on the medieval tradition of queenship.⁷¹⁷

When Margaret sent her maitre d'hotel, Pierre Rosimbos, to Charles in January 1529, the emperor had already been informed that the French king's mother had been in contact with his aunt.⁷¹⁸ Rosimbos was to explain to Charles how the long conflict had caused both parties to use such language that it was nearly impossible to find a peaceful solution. However, the endless war would ultimately ruin Christendom. Margaret understood that a peace

could not be thought of or proposed by the Princes without a sacrifice of what they held most precious, their honour; but ladies might well come forward in a measure for submitting the gratification of private hatred and revenge to the far nobler principle of the welfare of nations.

As for their advantage compared with other mediators, such as England or the Pope,

*their own particular interest it is probable would be too much considered, and something perhaps required in little territorial concessions as the price of their interference; whilst the intervention proposed could be subject to no such inconvenience; as the mother of the King and the Aunt of the Emperor who regarded him as her son as well as heir, would keep in view one sole object which they had mutually at heart, the general good of Europe, in the reconciliation of these two great Princes.*⁷¹⁹

The same kind of reasoning was used in the preamble of the treaty – the ladies were not bound to honour in the same way as men thus Francis could

⁷¹⁵ Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance notion of woman: a study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 20-2.

⁷¹⁶ Wiesflecker, *Maximilian I*, Band IV, 25-7; Knecht, 'Our Trinity!', 77.

⁷¹⁷ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 7.

⁷¹⁸ Rosimbos and De Barres to Charles V, 31 Dec 1529, Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques*, 676-91. CXCI.

⁷¹⁹ Instructions of Margaret to monsieur Rozimboz for the Emperor 3 Jan. 1529 HHStA Belgien PA 18/3 Fol 28-34. Translation in Bradford, William Bradford, *Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V. and his ambassadors at the courts of England and France* (London: R. Bentley, 1850), 223-5.

blame the peace on his mother should he disagree. Furthermore, Margaret and Louise were the only suitable negotiators for the occasion.⁷²⁰ Louise and Margaret met in Cambrai in July 1529, assisted by several councillors, and they succeeded in concluding the peace treaty. They celebrated the agreement in a Mass held in the cathedral on 5 August, and afterwards King Francis also came to meet Margaret.⁷²¹ The Ladies Peace was glorified as a triumph of female diplomacy. As one of the rare moments when both the negotiators were noble ladies, the occasion was considered remarkable. Catherine Fletcher points out that despite the emphasis on gender in the negotiations, the virtues valued in Louise and Margaret were precisely the same as male diplomats would have needed to possess – prudence, experience and dexterity.⁷²² When considering Margaret's entire career, the peace treaty was one of the few public occasions for her as a regent to appear on the highest stage of European politics, although her presence had been documented in the pages of ambassador reports and the Habsburg family correspondence for decades. I argue that despite demonstrating the capabilities of women as diplomats, the Ladies' Peace was a good example of the type of agency that fit into existing norms of queenship. It was an occasion where female forms of power were accepted and even appreciated.⁷²³

Compared with the attempts that Margaret made to assist Catherine of Aragon at the same time as she was negotiating alliances after the peace treaty, the peace initiative shows how situations in which a woman could try to actively participate were limited. Those prohibited to women were not even attempted, and those yet to be defined were doomed to fail. The peace was hailed as something the two women had done for the public good, as a rare effort to achieve a selfless goal. Margaret saw Queen Catherine's plight also as a point of mutual interest, this time for women. After the meeting in Cambrai, Margaret wished to convince Louise to support her concerns about the fate of Catherine through her ambassadors in the French court. Margaret felt deeply for her former sister-in-law and viewed King Henry VIII's divorce plans as wilfully illegal. She believed that Catherine should speak for herself and her position against her husband. Margaret asked for help in finding theologians in Paris to be sent to England to defend Catherine.

Margaret also asked Philippe de Lalaing and Guillaume de Barres to talk with Louise, 'Madame my good sister'.⁷²⁴ According to Margaret,

⁷²⁰ Russell, *Diplomats at work*, 107; Fletcher 'Ladies' peace revisited,' 115.

⁷²¹ Russell, *Diplomats at work*, 112-33.

⁷²² Fletcher, 'The Ladies' Peace Revisited,' 124.

⁷²³ Fletcher points out that in the Venetian reports from Cambrai 'only very rarely is any comment made on the specifics of their sex or gender'. Fletcher, 'Ladies' peace revisited,' 117.

⁷²⁴ Louise was sister of Margaret's late husband duke Philibert of Savoy.

que en debvez parler ung mot à Madame ma seur, de bonne sorte, luy remostrant qu'elle doibt garder l'honneur des dames et princesses, en chose tant honneste et favorable [you should have a word with Madame sister, telling her how she should guard the honest and beneficial honour of dames and princesses].⁷²⁵

Margaret felt that royal women were a breed of their own, with responsibilities and rights, and she attempted to convince Louise on the importance of their mutual duty to support the unhappy queen. Accordingly she wrote that Louise should be persuaded to talk with her son so that Francis would not support the King of England '*contre raison*' and would instead ask the opinion of the university, which Margaret clearly believed would condemn Henry VIII's plans.⁷²⁶ Margaret repeatedly brought up the subject in her letters and hoped the arrival of her niece Eleanor in Paris⁷²⁷ would help to gain help for Queen Catherine, as Catherine would then in France be seen as the aunt of their queen.⁷²⁸ Her attitude shows that she still firmly believed in the power and duty of queens to intervene by appealing to their spouse when they saw injustice.

The English divorce was also the last contact Margaret had with the humanists. It was very likely Margaret who appointed Juan Luis Vives as part of a delegation that travelled to England in 1528 to help the queen with the divorce proceedings.⁷²⁹ Not much is known about this delegation, except that it was a failure and not least because the advisors thought, to Catherine's rage, that it would be better if she had not defended herself at all. This also went against Margaret's view. When the interests of the humanists to offer their counsel and the need of a regent to find support for her efforts met for once, it was a failure because they disagreed on the methods.⁷³⁰ Margaret

⁷²⁵ Marguerite to Philippe Lalaing and Guillaume des Barres 24 Mar. 1530 Mechelen. *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche et de ses Ambassadeurs*, 42.

⁷²⁶ Marguerite to Philippe Lalaing and Francois de Bonvalot 28 Apr. 1530. *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche et de ses Ambassadeurs*, 67.

⁷²⁷ Eleanor married King Francis in July 1530 as the part of the peace treaty of 1529. Catherine of Aragon was her aunt, sister of her mother Juana.

⁷²⁸ Marguerite to Philippe Lalaing and Francois de Bonvalot 6 June 1530. *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche et de ses Ambassadeurs*, 91. Margaret repeats the same in the letter dated 9 July 1530 Ibid. 121.

⁷²⁹ Enrique González González, 'Juan Luis Vives. Works and Days,' in *Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition: A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Boston: Brill, 2008), 55. According to Carlos Noreña's biography it was Catherine who appointed Vives to be part of the delegation, Carlos G. Noreña, *Juan Luis Vives*. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970), 104.

⁷³⁰ Vives apparently thought Margaret anyway a possible supporter after losing the patronage of Catherine. He dedicated his *Sacrum diurnum de Sudore Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* to Margaret in 1529. Vives to Margaret 10 Nov. 1529 Brugge. Joannis Ludovici Vivis Valentini. *Opera Omnia*. Tomus VII. 42. (Valencia: Edición de los hermanos Mayans, 1782-1790). See also Strelka, *Der burgundische Renaissancehof*, 85.

leaned on the tradition of medieval queens rather than listening to the peace-advocating humanists of her own time.

Margaret died in 1530 while still in office, and the first public reaction was as confused as the prevalent political situation and reflected her participation in the events resulting in that turmoil. Henry VIII of England shocked the imperial ambassador by telling him that her death ‘was certainly no great loss for the world’.⁷³¹ Charles V, who was at the time in Germany, wrote to the regency council of his sorrow in losing the aunt who had been his ‘true mother’, who had shown her love by taking care of him and his lands in the Low Countries.⁷³² The connection between the region, the deceased regent and Charles needed to remain firm in the councillors’ mind until he had the time to appoint a new regent.

⁷³¹ Eustace Chapuys to Charles V. 1 Jan. 1531. CSP Spain 4, Part 2, 1531-1533, ed. Pascual de Gayangos (London: 1882), nr. 584.

⁷³² Charles V to the bishop of Palermo and count of Hochstraaten 3 & 6 Dec. 1530, Gachard, *Collection de documents*, 293-5.

7 MARY OF HUNGARY – COUNSEL AND CONSOLATION FOR THE EMPEROR

INTRODUCTION

Mary of Hungary was undoubtedly chosen in 1531 to continue Margaret's work because, like her, she was the reigning duke's sister and a widow. She was also exceptionally talented, and her brother Ferdinand praised 'her understanding, reputation and experience, and the trust one has [in her]'.⁷³³ She modestly disagreed. She refused a second regency in Hungary in 1528 and claimed she had too much 'foolishness'. When she then was asked by Charles and Ferdinand to follow Margaret as the regent of the Low Countries, her answer still mentioned '*folie, jeunesse et inexperience*', that is, she added youth and inexperience to the list, but this time she thanked them for the trust and honour she had received despite those qualities and accepted the appointment.⁷³⁴ She had just some months earlier presented Charles with another memorandum, apparently concerning her own future, as Charles promised to provide an answer after consulting with Ferdinand, indicating that whatever she had put in that memorandum was important and required the attention of them both.⁷³⁵ Charles had appointed a princess with a talent for rhetoric and energy for method.

Mary's letters to her brothers, and her regency in general, reflect her education. She had evidently been taught to formulate her letters with courtesy, to present both the pro and contra sides of an argument, and to justify her opinions with reasoning adjusted according to the recipient. However, she seemed to lack the polished diplomatic manners of her predecessor, Margaret of Austria. Although her education made her an efficient regent, appreciated by the emperor, she herself occasionally had difficulties in reconciling the roles of a queen and a governing regent.

Mary was fully aware of her skills as the emperor's advisor and hoped to remain as one after resigning the regency. However, it turned out that her advice would not be welcome unless she agreed to remain in office. Her gender enabled her to manage the regency in a functioning partnership with the emperor, but correspondingly the regency also gave her freedom to overstep the limits of her gender. Without the regency her possibilities were far more limited. As already discussed in connection with Margaret, the roles of a dowager queen or duchess and that of princess regent were in many ways similar, but where Margaret saw a major part of the authority end with the

⁷³³ 'vostre entendement et reputacion et l'esperience que aves aux affaires' Ferdinand to Mary 7 Feb. 1528 Gran. KF 2, 1/2, 189, nr. 153.

⁷³⁴ Instruction for Mary to Boussu for Charles, Krems 1531. CMCG 1, nr. 23.

⁷³⁵ Charles to Mary, 18.6.1530 Augsburg. CMCG 1, nr. 12.

office, Mary did not.⁷³⁶ Analysis of her career, including her aims after her resignation, opens a novel view to her regency and its nature as a unique version of queenship.

Mary succeeded her aunt Margaret as the regent in January 1531, but the choice had obviously been discussed even before Margaret's death in 1530.⁷³⁷ Charles's decision to appoint Mary after Margaret was the clearest indication that the queenly regency model, as introduced by Margaret, functioned quite well and served Charles's centralized government. A princess of the house was also considered an obvious choice, as can be seen, for example, from the rumour that after Margaret, Charles might have chosen another aunt of his, Catherine of Aragon.⁷³⁸ The suggestion does not indicate so much the possibility of Catherine's regency as the general thought that Margaret could well be succeeded by another princess. The most obvious choice would have been Charles's elder sister, Eleanor, the widowed queen of Portugal, but she had married Francis I of France in 1530.⁷³⁹

Mary's regency in the Low Countries covered the twenty-five years that Charles still reigned and ended with his abdication in 1556.⁷⁴⁰ The restructuring of the councils of the Low Countries after the model of Spain had been in the plans for some time, and the transition from Margaret to Mary provided suitable opportunity to enact the reform. The structure of the councils was made to resemble that of Castile, and the regent was given more power. As Koenigsberger notes, this made the government more effective, but it did not really increase the emperor's influence in the Low Countries. At the functional level, the main problem remained that of patronage. Charles was convinced he needed to have the final say, while Mary was as frustrated as her aunt had been by lacking the means to boost her own authority and reward her supporters.

Mary's regency was not a tranquil time for the Low Countries. Profound controversy stemming from conflicting interests caused permanent disputes within the States General over the continuous demands for money from the government. Similarly, as during Margaret's regency, the provinces and towns still had little sense of comprising a common nationality or entity in any sense compared with the politics of unity that the House of Austria was advocating. The northern provinces did not see how the defence of the southern provinces would be in their interest and condemned the war against France. Religious divisions had yet to cause serious problems. The main

⁷³⁶ Margaret to Maximilian 21 Dec. 1515, CMM 2, 313-4, nr. 614.

⁷³⁷ Réthelyi, *Mary of Hungary in Court Context*, 121.

⁷³⁸ MiÇer Mai to the Emperor 22. Jan. 1531, CSP Spain 4:2, nr. 603.

⁷³⁹ In 1528 there were rumours of Eleanor's possible marriage with Fredrick of Palatine and regency jointly with him. Salinas to Ferdinand 6 Nov. 1528 Toledo, *Cartas de Don Martin de Salinas*, 418, nr. 173.

⁷⁴⁰ A good summary of Mary's reign can be found in Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 123-71.

sources of unrest were taxation and war. Mary was disturbed by the people's complaints and used just as strong language as her aunt had done, accusing the people of being ungovernable⁷⁴¹ and threatening to resign several times. Her complaints were obvious exaggerations, but Mary evidently found it difficult to retain order in the area without Charles's help. She several times complained of her incapacity to use force since she could not lead armies. Charles indeed came to the Low Countries to pacify the Revolt of Ghent in 1540 and to personally campaign against the French in 1552.

The end of Charles and Mary's reign was marked by severe problems of divided authority, when the emperor, the regent, and Charles's son and heir Philip were all present in the Low Countries.⁷⁴² However, it is evident that both, Charles and Philip, were satisfied with Mary as a regent, although there are indications that she was not always taken for granted as a capable independent regent by outside observers. Especially with the threat of war, the nobles, who led the army, were assumed to manipulate her.⁷⁴³ Interestingly it seems that she succeeded so well in supporting Charles and Philip that they were happy to allow her more space than even she wanted to take. A competent princess regent, when serving the aims of the ruler, was very much appreciated. The time after Mary's withdrawal from the governorship of the Low Countries in 1556 especially shows that she aimed to be an informal but authoritative background politician, and in that role she was comfortable with her position. She saw the honorary title of queen, her close family relations and her experience as justifications for her continuing participation in managing state affairs. As we shall see, she was less successful in her later career than she had been as a regent.

This chapter shows how the influence of Mary's upbringing and education was reflected in her regency and discusses the issues she tried to impose on her brothers. Her political career as part of Charles's reign has been analysed previously, as has some aspects of her regency, such as the structure of her court. However, her exceptional skill as a persuasive letter writer has only partly been recognised.⁷⁴⁴ That could be partly due to her own attitude, because although she used her skills to successfully persuade her brothers on topics concerning the Low Countries and the common good of their house, she nevertheless found the regency challenging for a princess. She had the capability to rule but was frustrated by the limits on the suitable conduct for a widow and wished to find a way to combine her power with a less formal

⁷⁴¹ Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 144.

⁷⁴² Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 73-7.

⁷⁴³ For example Salinas to Ferdinand 7 Mar. 1535 Medinaceli, *Cartas de Don Martin de Salinas*, 635, nr. 272.

⁷⁴⁴ This is most likely because her correspondence has been edited only fairly recently, and the editing is only in its beginning stages. For more of an analysis of her correspondence, see Laetitia Gorter van Royen, 'Maria von Ungarn als Korrespondentin,' in *Maria von Ungarn (1505-1558). Eine Renaissancefürstin*.

role. I suggest that especially towards the end of her term, she attempted to become a senior advisor in the empire, without an official position.

Mary's image has been twofold. On the one hand, she has been pictured as a devoted servant of Charles, and on the other as an iron lady who intimidated even her imperial brother.⁷⁴⁵ I suggest that Mary was doing her best to fulfil the role of a queen. A queen's duty was to be a complementary and counselling force working beside the king: in this way, Mary supported Charles as if he indeed were her husband. Hence, I think her regency should be considered as an attempt to have a functional, if not entirely submissive, relationship with Charles, and by no means as an attempt to struggle against the restrictions he had put in place.

MADAME MA BONNE SOEUR – MARY AND CHARLES, LANGUAGE AND LETTERS

In her analysis of the art of persuasion found in the letters of Charles and his regents, Rodríguez-Salgado has concluded that the personal touch in the writing is difficult to detect because they did not write genuine autograph letters. There is evidence that Charles even sometimes copied a secretary's readymade drafts to make the letters look like his own personal message.⁷⁴⁶ However, it is well recognised that Charles used a more familiar and polite tone in his letters to Mary, and Rodríguez-Salgado has compared them to those he wrote to his wife Isabel during the times Isabel acted as regent of Spain. She attributes the differences to the less dominant role Isabel had in the government compared with that of Mary, and to plain linguistic reasons, because Isabel wrote in Portuguese and Charles in Castilian, which was not his mother tongue.⁷⁴⁷

Rodríguez-Salgado plausibly sees Mary's position as being different in the sense that she was not obliged to be a regent, whereas Isabel, as Charles's wife, had no choice.⁷⁴⁸ Mary also kept constantly referring to her plans to retire.⁷⁴⁹ In the beginning of Mary's regency, it was evident that Charles V saw a princess regent as the best possible choice. She fit quite well into the constellation where Charles was the head of the dynasty and his lands, and his brother Ferdinand was his representative in the empire, his wife Isabel in Spain and now Mary in the Low Countries. Mary very consciously moulded

⁷⁴⁵ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 71.

⁷⁴⁶ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 67.

⁷⁴⁷ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 80.

⁷⁴⁸ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The art of persuasion,' 81.

⁷⁴⁹ She was so convincing that the threat has sometimes been taken at face value, although I argue that she used the threat of resignation as a rhetorical tool. For an opposing viewpoint, see Gabriëlle Dorren 'Plichtsgetrouw tegen wil en dank. Abdicatie en laatste levensjaren van Maria van Hongarije,' in *Maria van Hongarije*, 208-19.

herself into the role of Charles's obedient companion, but at the same time she actively offered her advice to him from the beginning. Mary's success as regent of the Low Countries has often been explained through her loyalty to her brother Charles,⁷⁵⁰ but I suggest that her acts of sisterly love constituted a similar performance aimed at the smooth functioning of the regency, as Margaret's humble love for her father and nephew had been.

There are indications that Mary had actively offered to assist Charles in some way already before Margaret's death, despite declining to continue as Ferdinand's regent in Hungary.⁷⁵¹ Over the previous quarter of a century, an idea had developed among members of the House of Austria that a princess regent was a feasible solution for a government of ruled along hereditary lines in the areas they controlled. It had likewise become obvious that Charles would not reside in the Low Countries permanently. At the beginning of Margaret's regency, the general assumption had been that the lack of an adult resident prince would only be temporary, and as shown in the previous chapter, so the decision to appoint a princess as regent had been prompted by the princess herself. Unlike his grandfather, Charles had grown up in a world where princesses were regents and did not need persuasion to accept the job.

In his letter asking Mary to take over the task of government, Charles once more affirmed the view that a princess was, in his eyes, the best available candidate in the prevailing situation: 'since I cannot be there, you are the most suitable'. He also spelled out the limits of her role: Mary should see that her household was strictly Catholic and leave the Lutheran members of her retinue behind.⁷⁵² It did not matter that Mary had not even visited the Low Countries since she had left fifteen years earlier as a ten-year-old girl. Similarly, Charles had appointed his Spanish-born brother, Ferdinand, as his vicar in the Holy Roman Empire when Ferdinand was in his early twenties,⁷⁵³ so the young age and lack of prior knowledge about the area were not an issue for either princes or princesses.

Although her regency did not start with a similar effort to seek legitimacy as Margaret's had, Mary's situation resembled that of Margaret's in many ways. She too was closely related to the emperor; she was a widow and she had been educated to become a queen. She had the dowager queen's income from Hungary, which was similar to Margaret's income from Savoy and also similarly contested by the new ruler. In Mary's case, the new ruler was her

⁷⁵⁰ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 195.

⁷⁵¹ Daniel Robert Doyle, *The body of a woman but the heart and stomach of a King: Mary of Hungary and the exercise of political power of early modern Europe* (Dissertation. University of Minnesota, 1996), 153. KF. II 1/2, nr. 154.

⁷⁵² Charles to Mary, 3 Jan 1531 Cologne. CK 1, 156-7.

⁷⁵³ Ferdinand was born in Spain in 1503, he left for the Low Countries at the age of fifteen and he took over the Austrian lands some years later. Mary was crowned Queen of Hungary at the age sixteen, she was a widow at the age of twenty-one and regent at the age of twenty-five.

brother, Ferdinand, but from Charles's point of view that was no reason why she would not cover the costs of her regency court with her own income.⁷⁵⁴

Following Margaret, Mary was able to take over an office already prepared for a royal lady. She had better prerequisites for a functional relationship with the ruler than her aunt had had at the beginning of her regency in 1507. Whereas Margaret had not shared the cultural or linguistic background of her father the emperor, Mary and Charles had the same mother tongue, French, and had spent their childhood in the same court. They were of the same generation, and besides, had at the beginning of Mary's regency had a chance to establish a personal relationship during Charles's stay in Brussels.⁷⁵⁵ Thus, from the beginning Mary possessed the most important asset of an advisor, a strong personal relationship with the ruler. Her letters show that she was keen and able to use such a channel of influence.

Charles's decision to appoint Mary was not accepted without reservations. When hearing of the plans to appoint her, the emperor's confessor, García de Loaysa, warned him about choosing someone so young, although 'courageous and chaste'. He recommended that Mary be 'given an older wise man, who she would have respect for', and her ladies replaced by older women. According to the confessor, this would save Charles from having nephews with a bad reputation.⁷⁵⁶ Contrary to this view, suspicious as it was of young women's abilities to control themselves, Mary herself recognised that widowhood and independence were necessary for a princess regent to be able to govern and rejected all the plans for her to remarry.

There were, naturally, such plans: dynastic marriage was still the most obvious choice for all the women among the Habsburgs. In 1532, the King of Scotland was brought up as a possible husband for Mary. Mary was resolute in her answer to the issue:

*Quant a ce qu'il me touche monseigneur, vous savés ma resolucion en laquelle espere par la grace de Dieu, continuer. Més puisqu'il tent plus oultre a aucune de vostre sanc, et que vous avés icy deux de vos nyepses. [Considering myself, Monseigneur, you know my resolution on this, and I intend to keep it. But if he is interested to take another one of your family, you have your two nieces].*⁷⁵⁷

She ascribed to the same theory as Margaret had in 1507: the next generation should be committed to maintaining the dynastic bonds, in this case their nieces, the daughters of the late Queen of Denmark.⁷⁵⁸ To Mary's

⁷⁵⁴ Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber,' 177.

⁷⁵⁵ Charles was in the Low Countries when Mary arrived in April of 1531 and he left at the beginning of 1532. Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 116.

⁷⁵⁶ Cardinal of Osma (García de Loaysa) to Charles, Rome 21 Jan 1531, CODOIN 14, 119.

⁷⁵⁷ Mary to Charles 13 June 1532 Gent. CMCG 1, 288, nr. 165.

⁷⁵⁸ Gernot Heiss suggests that she refused because she knew she could not have children. Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber,' 170. This, I argue, would have meant that she knew she would fail as a queen.

benefit, there were more princesses around that could be used in alliances than there were princes to assist in the government. She had several nieces, who could be promised to different grooms, even though they were still too young, but the young sons of Charles and Ferdinand were of no use as regents yet. So, when referring to Mary as the most suitable choice, Charles was not being blunt but stating a fact.

Mary showed similar firmness with Charles's attempts to control her household. As noted, Charles had told her not to include Lutherans in her retinue. She wrote to Ferdinand that she had been silly to take on the task without realising she could not choose her own people.⁷⁵⁹ As it turns out, and as Jacqueline Kerkhoff has shown, Mary did not change her entourage as requested. She left her evangelical court preacher, Johannes Henckel, behind in Hungary, but Henckel received a pension from her. Her secretary, Nicolas Oláh, followed her to the Low Countries, as did most of the members of her court.⁷⁶⁰ Mary saw herself as a regent subordinate to Charles, but as an independent queen. Her court was her household and, as such, hers to decide.

Despite this show of independence, Mary adapted to the regent's role as the queenly counterpart to the ruler and was also keen to use the metaphor in her correspondence. She explained her reluctance to remarry (and give up the regency) by telling Charles that she herself was content with 'You and the King [Ferdinand]'.⁷⁶¹ She used the allegory of herself as the wife of her brothers to legitimate her obstinate decision. Charles wrote back that her two husbands were little company to her, but he accepted her answer.⁷⁶² Mary emphasised this image of them as a couple for the rest of her regency, which serves to testify that she did not comprehend any kind of ambiguity regarding gender roles. If there was a ruling woman, it was a queen, a female companion to the king. The companion did not have to be overly modest, though. When Mary presented herself in her letters as a humble servant, professing herself to be young, inexperienced and a 'fool', she took careful note of the instructions she received, but on the matters concerning her own household she did what she felt was best. She is a good example of the limits and means of a capable princess. Mary's relationship to Charles and the

⁷⁵⁹ Cited Jacqueline Kerkhoff, 'Marie de Hongrie et son train en 1531,' in *Women at the Burgundian Court*, 112.

⁷⁶⁰ Kerkhoff, 'Marie de Hongrie et son train en 1531,' 111.

⁷⁶¹ Mary to Charles, 13 June 1532 Gent, CMCG Nr. 165. Also, Mary to Charles, Bruxelles 27 July 1532. Ibid. Nr. 214. Notably, King Francis's sister, Margaret of Angouleme, went even further and wrote that her brother was 'her second Christ, her father, her brother and her husband'. Knecht, 'Our Trinity,' 82.

⁷⁶² 'Vos deus marys vous trayteront mal quant au dvoyr de nuyt, ny de vous tenyr compaignye. Mays a la reste, je vous respons pour tous deux qu'ils ne vous faudront de vous estre vrays bons feres', Charles to Mary, 4 July 1532 Bad Abbach CMCG 1, 321, nr. 186.

whole nature of her regency were just as much a queenship as Margaret's, even though her image has sometimes been that of a masculine woman.⁷⁶³

Such suspicions as Loaysa's fears about Mary's youth show how important it was for the regent to maintain and cultivate the trust that Charles had in her. She had to prove in her letters that she was not, as Erasmus had stated in 1534, 'a pupil rather than a governess'.⁷⁶⁴ Naturally, Loaysa and Erasmus resented a type of female power that they did not accept. Loaysa was not an advocate of young women gaining a prominent place in society, and Erasmus resented the thought of the Low Countries becoming a part of the Habsburg Empire.⁷⁶⁵ However, in Charles's mind the Habsburgs were the suitable rulers of the Low Countries, and gender was a secondary consideration in comparison.

Charles's attitude towards his government in general had changed around the time of Mary's appointment. Margaret's death in December 1530 had incidentally followed the death of her old servant and ally, Mercurino di Gattinara, the previous June. Gattinara and his ideas about universal empire had had a strong influence on Charles. With him gone, Charles was determined to keep greater control for himself, although he still had strong advisors, among them Nicolas de Granvelle, who oversaw the affairs of the Low Countries.⁷⁶⁶ However, the whole empire was not to have one chancellor any more, and the government was united only in Charles's person. Gradually, Mary matured into the role of Charles's primary advisor on issues concerning the Low Countries. She clearly aimed to bypass Charles's other advisors rather than negotiate through them, as Margaret had done.⁷⁶⁷

Mary considered herself to be in a special position among the nobles and advisors surrounding the emperor, and her attempts to gain for herself priority access to the attention of Charles led her, in the beginning of her regency, to disputes with the influential Granvelle. Mary suspected that Granvelle tried to control her channels of influence in reaching out to the emperor, but Charles supported the councillor.⁷⁶⁸ The same urgent approach towards gaining the emperor's attention was, on the other hand, controlled by Mary herself when it came to the nobles in the Low Countries. During her

⁷⁶³ She has even been styled 'Charles in petticoats' by Brantôme, according to Hugo Rahner's edition of Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 40. However, one could argue that this was meant as a compliment for Charles.

⁷⁶⁴ O'Donnell, 'Contemporary Women in the Letters of Erasmus,' 50.

⁷⁶⁵ James D. Tracy, *Erasmus of The Low Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 94-5.

⁷⁶⁶ Blockmans, *Charles V*, 132.

⁷⁶⁷ For a comparison of the subsequent regents' correspondence with Charles, see Hoyois 'Des princes correspondants'.

⁷⁶⁸ Daniel Doyle sees the reconciliation with Granvelle, advanced with Mary's help in providing Granvelle's son with the bishopric of Arras, as a sign of Mary's skilful use of patronage. Doyle, *The body of a woman*, 357-8.

regency, the flows of information were filtered through the regent even more notably than in Margaret's time. In 1537, Granvelle wrote to Mary about how in the Spanish court there was a rumour that Mary opened all the letters, even those from the nobles' wives.⁷⁶⁹ Therefore, similarly as with Margaret, the most important asset for the regent was communication with the emperor.

Mary very consciously used her role as the emperor's main informant to present her own views. After offering her thoughts on issues, Mary always wrapped up her letters by noting that Charles had the final say. But as she explained to Charles, she trusted that it was better to consider the details of the issues herself in order to offer him all the information needed in forming his opinion before she left the final decision to him:

*Monseigneur, non pas pour chose que je pense qu'il soie besoin que die biacoup d'opinion, veu que savés voz affaires y très bien pour commander se qu'il vous plait qu'en tous endroit se doit faire, toutefois pour faire mon du et ausy que say avés asteure sy très tant et grandes affaires que ne sey s'il vous plaira penser a ses particulieres...Més la conclusion sera de vous obeir en tout se qu'il me sera posible et ce qu'il vous plaira me commander [Monseigneur, it is not that I think that my opinions would be necessary, You know your affairs well enough to command what you please and what is right to do, but I always try to do my duty and knowing your affairs are grand and important, and maybe you do not want to bother with details... but in the end I obey you in everything possible and as you wish to command me]*⁷⁷⁰

During the first years of her regency, she was still somewhat unsure if her careful deliberations were appreciated, but Charles assured her that the length of her letters did not matter, as they were always useful.⁷⁷¹ By 1542, Charles expressed his doubts about his military plans in a letter to Mary, explaining 'I cannot make up my mind what would be best for me to do, since with Monsieur de Granvelle absent there is no one here whom I can consult'.⁷⁷²

Such assurances were part of the constant mutual performance of family love that the Habsburgs maintained in their letters, undoubtedly meant to emphasise their unity with respect to outsiders as well as amongst themselves. There were still some genuine hints of familiarity in their correspondence. The common passion for hunting was a favourite subject for the siblings amidst discussions of all the political news and issues. Recounting the hunting trips and boasting about their success functioned as

⁷⁶⁹ Gorter-van Royen, 'Maria von Ungarn als Korrespondentin,' 49.

⁷⁷⁰ Mary to Charles 10 July 1532 Bruxelles, CMCG 1, 337, nr. 196.

⁷⁷¹ Charles to Mary, 15 July 1532 Bad Abbach. CMCG 1, 348, nr. 202.

⁷⁷² Charles to Mary, 26 Jan. 1542 Tordesillas, cited in Parker, *The emperor*, 285.

an additional bond between them, working very likely better than the formal assurances of mutual love, which conventions would have obliged them to use anyway. When Charles was taking curative baths during the Diet of Regensburg in 1532, he did not complain so much about missing the meetings as about envying Mary for the chase she had.⁷⁷³ Some weeks later, the emperor forgot to make the ‘customary recommendations’ in his letter because he was in a hurry to go hunting and only returned to pen this blessings and good-byes later.⁷⁷⁴

Another rare personal subject in the letters was that of the emperor’s illnesses. Mary was perhaps in his eyes one of the very few people allowed to discreetly recognise the fact that Charles was more of a sickly man than a war hero. Mary in turn was consoled by Ferdinand. When she confessed herself ill and complained of ‘women’s’ headaches,⁷⁷⁵ Ferdinand encouraged her to get back on her feet by pointing out that men have headaches too, and he encouraged her to carry on with her appointment, as Charles needed her.⁷⁷⁶ Despite those moments of confidence, most of the letters were filled with official issues concerning the government.

Mary’s letters affirm that she was an educated writer, except for her handwriting, which certainly was not fine Italics. She apparently preferred to write the letters and memorandums herself and used writing as a way to organize her thoughts. She wrote drafts and corrected her own text, until she was happy with the result.⁷⁷⁷ Mary mastered the formal structure of the letter and was particularly meticulous in explaining her motives in discussing various subjects thoroughly. Just as she had carefully pondered the pros and cons of her possible regency in Hungary in 1528, more than twenty years later she clarified her decision to resign and follow Charles to Spain by listing her reasons for and against such an action.⁷⁷⁸ Her systematic style is also testified to in the way she carried summaries of her correspondence with Charles and Granvelle with her if she had to travel from Brussels.⁷⁷⁹ She combined the consistent and analytical approach with occasional decorative language. During her regency, Mary still often belittled her abilities.

⁷⁷³ ‘Je suis bien envyeulx des beaus passe tamps que avés, et que j’en puis avoyr ysy’, Charles to Mary, 19 June 1532 Bad Abbach CMCG 1, 296, nr. 172. Also, see Gorter-van Royen, ‘Maria von Ungarn als Korrespondentin,’ 48.

⁷⁷⁴ ‘Pour ce que ay haste pour aller a la chasse, j’ay oublié les recommandacions acoustumees’, Charles to Mary, 23 July 1532 Bad Abbach. CMCG 1, 364, nr. 208.

⁷⁷⁵ ‘mon male acoustumé, quy tient souvent aulx fames quy est d’avoir mova[i]se teste’, Mary to Ferdinand, 24 Jan. 1533 Brussels. KF 4, 70, nr. 686.

⁷⁷⁶ ‘La mauvesse teste est aucune fois aussy bien – au moins de mon couste – maladie de homes come de fames par quoy vostre excuse n’estoieit necessaire’, Ferdinand to Mary, 8 Feb. 1533 Linz. KF 4, 81, nr. 690.

⁷⁷⁷ CMCG 1 Introduction xiv. Also evident from the originals in HHStA Belgien PA.

⁷⁷⁸ Mary to Charles, 1555. PEG 4, 478.

⁷⁷⁹ Gorter-van Royen, ‘Maria von Ungarn als Korrespondentin,’ 50.

Sometimes she wrote that she was a fool and complained about how she was not able to keep her head together with all the demands of her office.⁷⁸⁰ Considering her efficient governing style and evident talents, especially with financial tasks, she probably simply wanted the kind of assurances she received from both of her brothers as answers to her frustrated letters.

While the letters to Charles concentrated on the governing of the Low Countries from the subservient standpoint of a regent, in the letters to Ferdinand Mary discussed the situation in Hungary in a far more equal standing with her brother. She continued to insist upon and guard her rights in Hungary until the matter was finally settled in 1548.⁷⁸¹ When she learned that Ferdinand's officers had acted without notifying her concerning her Hungarian holdings, Mary ordered her servants to hold all the information from the officers until the matters were dealt with in a proper way.⁷⁸² They also discussed matters of the empire that touched upon them both, mainly the affairs of northern Germany and Denmark. For Mary and the merchants in the Low Countries, access to the Baltic Sea was a question of both commerce and survival, while Ferdinand worried about the stability of the Holy Roman Empire.

Among Charles's servants, Mary was in some respects comparable to Ferdinand. Sometimes she was even better informed than him, for example in 1535, when Ferdinand heard of Charles's campaign in Tunis from Mary.⁷⁸³ Hence, her part in the political system and her personal importance to her siblings set her apart from the other royal women. Her sisters were also in important positions: Eleanor as the Queen of France, Catherine as the Queen of Portugal. Their cousin and sister-in-law, Isabel of Portugal, was, besides empress and queen as Charles's wife, also the regent of Spain. However, these women's correspondence does not reveal as deep a personal confidence on the part of their male relatives as the letters from Charles and Ferdinand to Mary, nor does it provide such sharp commentary on the world around them as Mary's letters. Considering Mary's role as part of Charles V's political system, she is justly recognised as an advisor of the emperor.⁷⁸⁴ The role of a confidential advisor was undoubtedly less in conflict with such active participation in politics and government than the ideal of a submissive princess regent.

⁷⁸⁰ For example, in instructions of Mary, 24 Jan. 1531 CMCG 1,18b.

⁷⁸¹ Heiss, 'Politik und Ratgeber,' 180.

⁷⁸² Mary to Ferdinand, 4 Sep. 1535 KF 5, 317, nr.923.

⁷⁸³ Ferdinand to Mary, 25 Apr. 1535 Wien KF 5, 225, nr. 884.

⁷⁸⁴ Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impersario of war*, 315; Rodriguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 5.

MARY ON WAR, HONOUR AND REGENCY

As noted above, Mary emphasised to Charles that the final decision was his, but she could provide him with thoughts to help him find the best solution. The issues that prompted Mary to offer her views often involved patronage and managing people. She might have had a great deal to say on Habsburg family policy, but if she did, she saved those thoughts for personal meetings. However, she did not hesitate to protest if she disapproved of Charles's decision, such as his personal participation in the military campaigns. The subjects that were close to her heart were the typical queenly ideals that prevailed at the time.

In the same way that Mary talked of Charles's family and Christendom in the same sentence, she confidently mixed personal and public matters in her letters. For example, the subject that interested all the siblings was the situation in Denmark. Denmark was a concern with respect to trade in the Low Countries, a factor to consider in the balance of power in the northern parts of the Holy Roman Empire as well as a dynastic question. The heir of the deposed King Christian II, Dorothea, was a daughter of their sister Isabel. Moreover, one of the most important princes of the empire, Frederic of Palatine, was pursuing her hand in marriage. Mary was the guardian of Dorothea and her sister, Christine, both of whom were residing with her in Brussels. Although Mary was firm in her own refusal to remarry, she knew that marriage to some prince was the unavoidable fate of her nieces and speculated over the possible choice of grooms with Charles.⁷⁸⁵ In doing so, she assumed the same role that regent Margaret had had in her own life.

Generally, in the issues concerning their dynasty Mary supported Charles. Both Charles and Ferdinand had their own children to place on the dynastic marriage market: Charles with three children surviving infancy, Ferdinand with an impressive thirteen. From the 1540s onwards, there was also the question of the succession to the various titles Charles held. He had planned for his son Philip to follow him, but for once Ferdinand had plans of his own. The situation culminated when the brothers met in Augsburg in 1551. When Charles realised that Ferdinand and Archduke Maximilian were against him, he wrote to Mary and asked her to join them. Perhaps she could persuade Ferdinand, or at least 'advise and console' Charles.⁷⁸⁶ During the negotiations in Augsburg, Mary was assisted by Granvelle in, according to Rodríguez-Salgado, 'alternatively coaxing, cajoling and bullying her two brothers and nephews' as a means of forcing them into an agreement.⁷⁸⁷ The issues of

⁷⁸⁵ Mary to Charles, 18 Mar. 1532 Brussels, CMCG 1, 135, nr. 79.

⁷⁸⁶ 'a me conseiller et consoler', Charles to Mary, 16 Dec. 1550. CK 3, 20, nr. 724.

⁷⁸⁷ Maria J. Rodríguez-Salgado, 'King, Bishop, pawn? Philip II and Granvelle in the 1550s and 1560s,' in *Les Granvelle et les anciens Pays-Bas*, ed. Krista De Jonge and Gustaaf Janssens (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2000), 107.

succession were too sensitive to discuss on paper, but Mary obviously also handled the personal discussions with skill.

Family quarrels were kept behind closed doors, but Mary was frank regarding such issues as the various councils in the Low Countries and their members. She keenly considered the appointments of the councillors and discussed the nominations in her letters. She was pragmatic, and for example in 1532, she considered different candidates for chief of the Council of Finances. One of the lords was too unexperienced, one too soft and another 'as You know, good to talk with before the dinner, but after the dinner not in order'.⁷⁸⁸ Long dinners seemed to be a challenge for council work. Mary declared to Charles that taking care of affairs and getting answers from the councils took time because of their petty jealousies, and she emphasised that she was not the one delaying the decisions. As a remedy, she tried to avoid meetings after dinner, as they tended to be even slower.⁷⁸⁹ Considering her eagerness for hunting, she might have been making excuses for not working in the afternoons, but her practical attitude towards the council reflected a hands-on approach to government. Curiously, her evaluations of the councillors resemble quite a bit those that Charles had offered to his son Philip in his instructions ten years later.⁷⁹⁰

Thinking that Charles put a considerable amount of time and especially most of his money into waging war, it is natural that, as his assistants and supporters, his regents were also involved. Here too Mary's approach was very practical. Where Margaret's library revealed a preference for chivalric romances and history, Mary owned a considerable number of books on military arts.⁷⁹¹ She also took part in all the activities connected with the military campaigns, except for leading the army herself.⁷⁹² But despite being interested in the logistics and details, Mary had a totally different attitude than her imperial brother towards the personal honour involved.

For Charles, military success and the honour it brought were of crucial importance.⁷⁹³ Mary had a distinctively different attitude towards war than Charles, and despite her self-professed eagerness to take part, she condemned it. Mary had already in 1528 protested Charles's chivalrous plans

⁷⁸⁸ 'Devant diner, il fait bon parler a luy, més après diner iln'I a pas d'ordre', Mary to Charles, 3 Aug. 1532 CMCG 1, 386, nr. 221.

⁷⁸⁹ Mary to Charles, 14 April 1532 Antwerpen CMCG 1, 170, nr. 95.

⁷⁹⁰ Geheimer Aufzeichnungen Karls V. für seinen Sohn Philipp, Kohler *Quellen*, 297-9, nr. 81.

⁷⁹¹ On books Mary owned, see Lemaire, 'La bibliothèque de la reine Marie de Hongrie'. The analysis of Mary's library shows her inclination towards more matter-of-fact literature than her aunt, who had obviously enjoyed literature as entertainment.

⁷⁹² Her military activities have been accounted in Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, Chapter IX Voorbereidingen op de oorlog 1542-43 and Chapter X De oorlog in de jaren 1542-43, and Doyle 1996, chapter VII War 178-200.

⁷⁹³ On the male Habsburgs ideas of war and honour, Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 25-33; Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war*, 35.

to have a duel with the King of France, saying that such a thought was unheard of among Christians.⁷⁹⁴ She was not alone; Margaret, too, had warned Ferdinand not to face the enemy in person when he was defending his Hungarian lands against the Turks.⁷⁹⁵ Mary emphasised the threat that war brought to reputation. Charles saw his own participation in fighting against his enemies as a pivotal role in defending his honour as the champion of Christendom, whereas Mary thought it unnecessary to put his person at risk. When Charles during his Tunis campaign of 1535 made the decision to confront the enemy himself, Mary wrote to Ferdinand and expressed her concern about Charles risking his person by going to sea.⁷⁹⁶ All the glory that the Habsburg men saw in action on the battlefield was lost on Mary.

Three years later, Mary did not hesitate to express her opinion directly to Charles, when she heard that Charles intended to go to war against the Turk again in person, this time heading straight to Constantinople. She prepared a memorandum for Charles and declared

Et considerant, monseigneur, que vous poves assez connoitre, s'il avenoit en quelque fortune de votre personne, en quoy dieu vous veuille garder, en quel terme delesseries vous l'imperatrix, monseigneur, vos enfans et nous tous ensamble vos pays et suges, et meme la religion chretienne, laquelle il est tout notoire depent seulement de la votre, et reputacion de votre maieste. Commen sories vous reponder deuant dieu, ai ung tel mal avenoit par votre faulte? [And considering, Monseigneur, as you can understand, if something happens to you, may God guard you from it, how are you able to leave the empress, your children and all of us, your lands and subjects, and the Christian religion, who all depend on your majesty and your reputation?] ⁷⁹⁷

In a letter to Charles she continued

ne vois pas que icelle y saroit faire bien a la crestiente, ni y garder votre honneur, mes au contraire porois estre cause, en y prosednat de telle sorte, de la ruine de la chretiente et de tous vos pays, et desolation de votre famme, enfans, parens, serviteurs et suges [I do not see how it could be for the good of Christianity or guard your honour; on contrary, it could cause the ruin of Christianity and your

⁷⁹⁴ 'les nouvelles touchant l'empereur...et le roy de France... m'ont estéés fort estranges à ouir, et croy que depuis la nativité de notre seigneur cas pareil n'est avvenu en la chrestienté de telles personnes', Mary to Ferdinand, 4 Sep. 1528 Trautmannsdorf, KF II 1/2, 284, nr. 219.

⁷⁹⁵ Margaret to Ferdinand, 13 June 1529 Brussels, KF II 2/2, 432, nr. 311.

⁷⁹⁶ 'Ausy me samble que la reputacion n'y seroit ausy bien gardée quy seroit bien requis, car cant tout est dit de mestre sa personne en tant de hasart comme la mer peult porter, oultre stuy de gaire contre ung pirate ou laron de mer', Mary to Ferdinand, 12 April 1535, KF 5, 211, nr. 879.

⁷⁹⁷ Gutachten der Königin Maria für den Kaiser, August 1538. Karl Lanz (ed.) *Staatspapiere zur Geschichte des Kaisers Karl V.* (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein, 1845), 266, LIV.

lands, leave your wife, children, family, servants and subjects desolate.]⁷⁹⁸

Here, it is apparent that Mary was writing as a queen who had lost her husband in a battle against the same enemy, and she personally was able to imagine the consequences of the emperor vanishing in combat. Moreover, for her the guardian of Christendom had responsibilities to his family and subjects, duties that mattered more to his honour and reputation than any possible victories.

In this light, it is evident that Mary aimed to follow Margaret as a peacemaker. Mary and her sister Eleanor made several attempts to meet and negotiate peace between Charles and Eleanor's spouse, King Francis. In 1532, they planned to have 'just a meeting of sisters'.⁷⁹⁹ To Mary's disappointment, Charles disapproved, and when finally in the autumn of 1535 the queenly sisters met in Cambrai, Mary had not been granted the power to make decisions by the emperor, and neither was Eleanor capable of promising anything on behalf of her husband. Mary grandly wrote to Ferdinand that they had discussed the good of Christendom, but there were no actual results.⁸⁰⁰

Mary's more pacifist attitude was reflected likewise in her more moderate view toward Lutherans. In 1545, she asked Charles 'whether it were not better for the good of Christendom to leave them as they are until it pleases God to dispose [of them] otherwise'.⁸⁰¹ All in all, Mary represented the traditional queenly values of peace and conservation of the *status quo* and balancing her 'husbands', as a good queen should. As we have seen, she also took care of the princesses of her family and expressed female prudence in warning her brother of the dangers of engaging in a naval battle. Even if in the correspondence she emerges as an influential and capable governor, she was a queen and aimed to behave like one. During her lessons in Innsbruck, she had learned, besides Latin, also systematic thinking and the art of persuasion, but she had not been trained for war, only to follow and reproduce the values of traditional queenship. However, thus far she had managed to balance the contradictions inherent in combining queenship and governing. The clash between her identity and her position became visible after her decision to follow Charles and resign from her office while maintaining her royal dignity.

Mary's role in Charles's government had increased in the 1550s due to the emperor's depression and illnesses, which prevented him from leaving Brussels. Charles's stay would normally mean him taking active part in local

⁷⁹⁸ Mary to Charles 10 Aug. 1538, CK 2, 289, nr. 459.

⁷⁹⁹ 'seullement sentrevoir comme sœurs', Mary to Charles, 27 Dec. 1532, CK 2, 29, nr. 312.

⁸⁰⁰ 'le bien de la chretienté sans regarder au particulier', Mary to Ferdinand, 4 Sep. 1535, KF 5, 316, nr. 923.

⁸⁰¹ Mary to Granvelle, 1 July 1545., cited in Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war*, 205.

affairs, but he was at times quite melancholy and sometimes his gout forced him to stay in bed for weeks.⁸⁰² Closer personal proximity meant less correspondence, but Charles's reaction to Mary's resignation was the sincerest demonstration of the appreciation he felt for Mary's work as regent. He had not anticipated her plans and tried to persuade her to stay in office. Mary's decision was an issue in the correspondence of their advisors and secretaries well before Charles's actual abdication. By October 1554, Charles knew that Mary would refuse to continue after he himself had left for Spain. The emperor wanted his sister to wait for the return of his heir, King Philip, so they could discuss what would be the best way to proceed after the emperor's abdication.⁸⁰³ It was typical that Charles required Mary to take part in the discussions regarding different possible solutions to the dilemma. Charles did not only worry about how Philip would manage without Mary's assistance; he was also afraid that the locals would be offended if he retired and took Mary with him.⁸⁰⁴ The discussions of Mary's successor also underlined the problem of uniting the regent and the military leader in the same person, or at least in a couple. The suggestions included Ferdinand's son Maximilian together with his wife and cousin, María, or the Duke of Savoy with Christine of Denmark, all close relatives.⁸⁰⁵ The urge to have the 'natural born prince' in the Low Countries was now complemented by a need to have a man to lead the army, and the strategy of marriages within the dynasty was always present.

Mary had written to Charles to ask for permission to retire at the same time with him.⁸⁰⁶ The letter is evidently a carefully considered manifest of her thoughts on the regency and, at the same time, her best effort to persuade her brother. She started by declaring her intention to make Charles understand her point, which she knew Charles was not taking too well, but, being a reasonable man, would understand. Like Margaret in 1516, she emphasised that in accepting the regency, she had obeyed out of love for the emperor, knowing he did not have anybody else, with his children being still too young. She then declared that she had been well aware of her insufficiency, being 'of feeble body, mind and understanding', referring to her heart problems. She reminded Charles that she had waited first for his return, and then for his son to come to take over.

Mary's account of the state of the Low Countries was grim. It was hard for a regent, she wrote, because

⁸⁰² Parker, *Emperor*, 452-3; Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face* 86.

⁸⁰³ Charles to Eraso, 1 Oct. 1554, CSP Spain 13, ed. Royall Tyler (London: 1954) nr. 67.

⁸⁰⁴ Eraso to Vazquez, 1555 CSP Spain 13, nr. 234.

⁸⁰⁵ Maximilian was Ferdinand's eldest son, married to Charles's daughter María. The Duke of Savoy was Emmanuel Philibert, the nephew of Charles's wife, Isabel, through his mother. He eventually was chosen as Mary's successor, although he did not marry the Duchess of Lorraine, the widowed Christine of Denmark.

⁸⁰⁶ Mary to Charles, 1555, *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 469-480.

*le prince mesmes, lequel, de soy gouvernant, n'a que à en rendre compte à Dieu, à quoy, en faisant ce qu'il peult, y satisfait; mais celuy qui a gouvernement soubz aultre, fault qu'il en rende aussy compte à Dieu, et outre ce à son prince et aux subjectz d'icelluy. [the prince answers to God only, but he who governs in his stead answers to God, the Prince and his subjects].*⁸⁰⁷

A woman was different from a man like white from black, so how could she cope with being in charge of everything. It was difficult to win the good will of the nobles and the cities, and to cope with all the people as a widowed woman. From her tone it was obvious that the worst for her was to bear the malcontent of the people during war, being forced to leave the army in the command of others. For a prince, it is the loss; for a princess, it is the eternal dishonour, she complained. She was convinced that a woman could not govern properly, but assured Charles that she had done her best:

*...des services qu'ay faict à vostre majesté, encores qu'ils n'ont estez si grans qu'eusse désiré, si ont-ils esté faictz avec une volonté et fidélité si entière et amour si parfait, que si le sçavoir, pouvoir et capacité eussent correspondu à ce, oncques prince n'eust sceu estre mieulx servy que vostre majesté eust esté de moy [the services done to Your Majesty, perhaps as great as could have been desired, they were done with such a fidelity and love for you that had my capacities matched with my love, no prince would ever have been served better].*⁸⁰⁸

She apparently felt that she had here found the right words, because she repeated them in her resignation speech.⁸⁰⁹ Now she wanted to retire. Charles, she pointed out, had opened her eyes through his example. How could she stay when he was leaving?

Things were changing, and at fifty she did not want to 'learn her ABC's' again.⁸¹⁰ She had planned for a long time to go to Spain to serve their mother, but now that the old queen had passed away, she had thought of retiring with their sister, the dowager queen of France. Eleanor wanted to return to Spain to be reunited with her daughter. Mary considered living together with Eleanor, an honourable and convenient solution. Being her usual practical self, she had also considered how she would adjust to the situation if Eleanor died. Once more, she wrapped up the letter by leaving the choice to Charles. Her overview was that the reasons for her staying were her duty and love for Charles and his son, and the justification for her leaving was the just reward for her services in the form of a peaceful life and the company of her siblings.

⁸⁰⁷ *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 473.

⁸⁰⁸ *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 477.

⁸⁰⁹ Discours de la reine Maire aux états-généraux Louis Prosper Gachard (ed). *Analectes belgiques, ou Recueil de pièces inédites, mémoires, notices, faits et anecdotes concernant l'histoire des Pays-Bas*. (Bruxelles : Chez Brest van Kempen, 1830), 101.

⁸¹⁰ 'en mes vieux jours songer de [apprendre] et recommencer mon ABC', *Papiers d'Etat* 4, 476.

This remained her argument for the next years, when Charles and Philip insisted on returning to the issue. But for the moment she had her way.

Mary's work and her attitude were illustrated in her part in Charles's very impressively staged abdication ceremony in 1555. Mary sat on the right side of the emperor (and is very clearly seen in the numerous paintings and prints that were made of the occasion) and in his resignation speech Charles briefly mentioned his appreciation for her work.⁸¹¹ The recognition of Mary's importance was emphasised even more by Philip's attempts to make her return to the regency. There is little doubt that she was appreciated as a specialist on the government of the Low Countries, not only because her family trusted her, but for the acknowledged competence she had shown while in office.

THE RETIRED QUEEN

Like her brothers, Mary was comfortably acting on the wider European stage at this point. Charles was simultaneously Charles of Gent, heir of Isabel and Ferdinand in Spain, and Maximilian's follower in the Holy Roman Empire. Spanish-born Ferdinand rather easily assumed an Austrian identity and learned to communicate with his siblings in French. Mary had, after her youth in Austria and Hungary, become a convincing 'natural princess' and regent of her native lands. In addition to that role, she seems to have thought of both returning to Hungary⁸¹² and having more of a political role in Spain. The Venetian observers interpreted her attitude as devotion in being made 'the true executor of the emperor's plans'.⁸¹³

Charles, Eleanor and Mary finally sailed south in September of 1556. Philip remained in the Low Countries, having left the regency of Spain to his sister Juana. Charles had already decided to withdraw to Yuste to live in apartments attached to a Hieronymite monastery. He made no plans to participate in the government. He resolutely ordered rooms prepared only for himself, indicating that he had no plans to share his life with any member of his family.⁸¹⁴ His daughter, the regent Juana, was residing in Valladolid with Philip's heir, Don Carlos, a child of ten, and they were not encouraged to visit Charles.

As will be seen in the next chapter, it was challenging for Juana to maintain her position in a situation in which Charles arrived with his

⁸¹¹ Ansprache Karls V. vor den Deputierten der niederländischen Generalstände. Brüssel, 25. Oktober 1555. Kohler, *Quellen*, 467, nr. 117.

⁸¹² István Fazekas, 'Miklós Oláh, Secretary to Queen Mary of Hungary (1526-1539),' in *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521-1531*, 44-5.

⁸¹³ Relation de Frédéric Badoardo 1557, Louis Prosper Gachard, *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénitiens sur Charles Quint et Philippe II* (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1855), 16-7.

⁸¹⁴ Parker, *Emperor*, 472.

patriarchal authority, even if recognising the official position of his daughter. Two queen aunts who also needed to be housed in Valladolid when they arrived were an additional burden for the princess regent. Juana had received instructions from her brother Philip on how to arrange the palace in Valladolid to accommodate all, herself, her nephew and the aunts, by moving the council meetings to another building.⁸¹⁵ There was no ready space for Mary and Eleanor in Spain. As noted earlier, the latter had based her move to Spain on the assumption that her daughter, the infanta Maria, whom she had left in Portugal more than thirty years before, would come to live with her. As she had promised, Mary put her energy in to assisting Eleanor in her plan. She wrote to their youngest sister queen Catherine of Portugal and finally accompanied Eleanor to Badajoz to meet Eleanor's daughter.⁸¹⁶

The multi-layered system of authorities and positions was not just problematic for the women themselves, but also for the courtiers. Once sent from London to Valladolid to deliver Philip's messages, Ruy Gomez stated that he would kiss the hands of the Princess [Juana] but not of the Queen [Mary], because he only respected the authority of 'my king and his heir' and no other.⁸¹⁷ Gomez in this way pointed out that Juana was representing the sovereigns of Spain, Charles and Philip, while Mary was not. In this case, it was the local authority, not the dynastical hierarchy that counted.

Despite maintaining formal friendly relations with Philip, whom Mary frequently professed to love, the ever-observant Venetian ambassadors were sure that there was no real affection between aunt and nephew.⁸¹⁸ Nevertheless, Philip's envoys to Spain were instructed to meet with Mary and ask her opinion on issues concerning the Low Countries and its defence against France.⁸¹⁹ Charles, in turn, simply announced that he would answer letters after 'the queen has visited me'.⁸²⁰ Juana respected this position, despite their possible disagreements, and reported dutifully that she had shown the letters to Mary, and likewise Mary kept Juana informed and pointed out to Philip that she had done so.⁸²¹

The problem in Mary's and Philip's relationship emerged when she was trying to find her own residence. First, she suggested to Philip that he give

⁸¹⁵ Philip to Juana, 8 Sep. 1556 Gent, RMC 2, 94, V.

⁸¹⁶ Mary to Catherine, Queen of Portugal, 20. Nov. 1556, Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Estado 112, fol. 218. Sancho de Cordoba sent a description of their meeting to Juan Vazquez from Badajoz, indicating that this was another case where a princess's existence was of crucial importance. AGS Leg. 128 fol. 232-3.

⁸¹⁷ Ruy Gomez, 13 Sep. 1557, CODOIN 97, 291.

⁸¹⁸ In 1557, the Venetian ambassador Badoardo reported that the 'king of Spain [Philip] hates her, and she hates him'. Gachard, *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, 16-17.

⁸¹⁹ Philip's instructions to Ruy Gómez 2 Feb. 1557 Brussels. RMC 2, 159, note 1.

⁸²⁰ Charles to Philip, 17 Sept. 1557 Yuste. RMC 2, 243, LXIII.

⁸²¹ Mary to Philip, 9 Dec. 1556, RMC 2, 124, XIX.

her regions around Ocaña, with jurisdiction of the lands. Philip refused.⁸²² Finally, Mary drafted a bold plan and wrote to Philip suggesting that he give her some of the regions that belonged to the religious orders. According to her, the area was of no importance to Philip, and she speculated that the Pope would surely give a dispensation for her to take possession of the land. Additionally, she again stated that she needed jurisdiction in the area and now backed up her request with the reasoning that she was too old and tired to mess with the local authorities.

Pues que he pasado mis dias con tanto trabajo por el servicio de Su Magestad y de Vuestra Alteza, me parece que es lo menos que Vuestra Alteza me debe; y así le suplico me dé este contentamiento. [Because I have so far spent my life working for the emperor and your highness, I think Your Highness owes me this for my contentment].⁸²³

Her letter was very bold in its straightforward style, but at the same time all she suggested was reasoned with care. Philip was shocked. The king wrote a note at the bottom of the letter: ‘the queen knows her business, but no one here has this kind of authority except me and the emperor’; he then asked his advisors to suggest a solution.⁸²⁴

The solution Philip would have appreciated was simply that Mary would return to the Low Countries. Mary had kept in touch with government officials in the area. Her correspondence with Viglius van Aytta, president of the Privy Council, reveals that she kept herself informed on the situation and that she still cultivated the networks attached to her regency. She had learned to appreciate the learned men of the ‘long robe’ more than the nobles, and one of those men was Aytta.⁸²⁵ She did not let him forget her. After landing in Laredo, in Spain, she wondered why he had not answered, assuring the president that since she had not experienced a shipwreck, he could very well write her again.⁸²⁶ Aytta obviously thought it better to follow her wishes, and he kept her updated on proceedings in the region that she had formerly governed. He wrote his last letter without knowing that she had died in Spain.⁸²⁷

The dire circumstances in the Low Countries had indeed escalated under the new regent, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy. Mary appreciated Emmanuel Philibert as a capable regent, mainly due to his military experience. He also

⁸²² RMC 2. 125, and Philip’s notes on the letter, 126, note 1.

⁸²³ Mary to Philip 10 May 1558 Cigales, RMC 2, 390-2, CXXXII.

⁸²⁴ Note in Philip’s hand, ‘pues no quiere respetarme ninguna superiodad, y yo no quiero que lo sea otra en mis reynos, sino Su Magestad,’ RMC 2, 395.

⁸²⁵ Folkert Postma, ‘Granvelle, Viglius en de adel (1555-1567)’ *Les Granvelle et les anciens Pays-Bas*, eds. Krista De Jonge and Gustaaf Janssens (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2000), 159.

⁸²⁶ Mary to Aytta, November 1556 Valladolid. Archives Générales du Royaume Bruxelles (AGR). État et Audience 127 fol 13b.

⁸²⁷ Aytta to Mary 1558, AGR Aud. 127, fol 96v.

had the advantage of not being as young as she herself had been at the beginning of her regency.⁸²⁸ However, she kept emphasising that no regent could restore order in the Low Countries unless the king himself came and punished the rebels. Philip, in turn, thought Mary herself should return, as she was the only one with sufficient authority and experience.⁸²⁹ Mary's letters to Philip in 1558 concerning her possible return to the Low Countries have not received much attention, as they are obviously meaningless given the fact that she never returned, but died on the return journey.⁸³⁰ However, those letters summarise Mary's views on the regency and affirm her conviction that a queen could not succeed in such an escalated situation of unruliness. In the two letters, Mary first states her conditions for return, then gives a detailed account of the aspects of the government in the Low Countries.

Mary started her letter to Philip with the familiar description of her shortcomings, easily recognisable from her letters to Charles decades earlier. She wrote of her advanced age and ill health but professed her devotion to Philip's cause. If she was to return, that would only be because of the 'great love, veneration, obedience and servitude' with which she devoted herself to Charles and Philip, and if she believed it was for the benefit and protection of their house. She then listed for them her practical conditions, stressing that she was going to live in her own style and with her own household. Apparently realising the problems she had encountered in finding an independent estate in Spain, she wanted to make sure she would not land in a similar situation in the Low Countries. Most of all, she emphasised that she would not return for any purpose other than to negotiate and advise; she did not want to assume public authority. Of the two roles she had had, she wanted to keep the one of advisor and retire from the regency. Her dignity as a dowager queen would guarantee her the rank and position needed for an honourably court and company.

She also kept insisting that Philip should come to the Low Countries himself, because otherwise there would be no hope of calming the situation. According to Mary, 'people in Flanders do not have a sense of justice, obedience or respect', hence the only way to deal with them was to use force. Showing herself to be quite familiar with the practicalities of that solution, she gave an analysis of the recruitment situation in the area and pointed out that even though Emmanuel Philibert was a competent regent, she recommended that Philip be present in the region himself. Mary demanded that they keep regent Juana fully informed, which was typical of her attitude towards regency. A regent had to rely on sharing information and avoiding factions. She appreciated open communication over personal feelings. She

⁸²⁸ Mary to Philip September 1558, Gachard, *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, 272-4.

⁸²⁹ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 203-4.

⁸³⁰ Letters from September. Deciphered copy Archivo General de Simancas Leg. 128 fol 348. and Leg 128 fol 349.

wrote to Philip that she had visited Juana in Valladolid and that the regent knew as much as she was writing to him.

When Philip first had asked her to return, she insisted staying through Charles's latest illness. Charles was as insistent that she return as Philip. He urged the regent Juana to persuade Mary and appealed to the very same union between himself and Mary that Mary had used as an excuse not to remarry. He wrote how her reluctance to return would jeopardise her work for him and Philip, who was 'as much her son as he is mine'.⁸³¹ However, this particular illness turned out to be Charles's last, and the retired emperor died on 21 September 1558 in Yuste. After that, Mary started preparing herself for the journey back to the Low Countries. She wrote from Valladolid at the beginning of October that Charles had not withdrawn his support for her conditions before his death and urged Philip to come to the Low Countries as well.⁸³² However, Philip had to do without the support of his aunt, because Mary too died on 18 October.

If the combination of the regency and the limits of the queenly role had made Mary anxious, her choice to mix the roles of an active advisor and a retired queen disturbed her nephew. Philip nevertheless appreciated her work and experience, and even after her death he continued to refer to the counsel of his aunt in his correspondence,⁸³³ clear proof that Mary had succeeded in what she had evidently seen to be her mission as the regent: serving her prince faithfully. Moreover, interestingly the urge for Mary's return shows how she had succeeded in one queenly occupation, that of creating a prominent presence. Charles and Philip believed that she could have calmed the troubled situation in the Low Countries. Her knowledge and experience could be replaced by councillors and advisors, but they could not imitate or replicate her authority.

Mary had gained from Charles and Philip the appreciation of her knowledge and experience, but that was not widely recognised by the people around them. In the eyes of her contemporaries, Mary had gained a reputation as a masculine woman – not so much because of her decisive and energetic working style, but through her fondness for hunting and skilful horsemanship.⁸³⁴ Roger Ascham, the secretary of the English ambassador to Charles V, described her as a virago when encountering her on her way back to Brussels from Augsburg in 1551, marvelling at the speed Mary had taken to ride the distance between the two cities.⁸³⁵ Mary's outer lack of femininity took attention away from her competence: the virago in question had, just

⁸³¹ Charles to Juana, 27 aug 1558, '...ella a padecido tantos y tan grandes trabajos, y que se viniessen agora á perder con tanta infamia nuestra y del rey, que tan su hijo es como mió', RMC, xlv note 1.

⁸³² Mary to Philip, 10 Oct. 1558 Valladolid, RMC 1, 417-9.

⁸³³ El obispo de Arras al Rey D. Felipe II con las repuestas marignales del Monarca, 14 Dec. 1558, *Papiers d'Etat* 5, 388.

⁸³⁴ Gorter-van Royen, *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden*, 9.

⁸³⁵ Roger Ascham to Edward Raven, 1551, *The whole works of Roger Ascham*. 249.

before meeting Ascham, successfully negotiated a reconciliation between her brothers during their talks about the succession strategy, taking part in the decision concerning the future of Europe. Nevertheless, Ascham was only impressed by her skilled horsemanship.⁸³⁶ Her competence was hardly recognised beyond those at the highest level of Charles's government.

It was not readily clear to all the people surrounding the court that Mary held formidable power. Those close to her appreciated her abilities, among them her own secretary, who described her 'as a shrewd, quick-witted and yet a circumspect person, not at all rash in her actions'.⁸³⁷ Contemporary diplomats noted Charles's appreciation of his sister's support and work as regent.⁸³⁸ In 1518, Emperor Maximilian had issued coins with the picture of himself on one side and the profiles of Charles and Ferdinand on the side. In 1532, the same coins had the imperial brothers on one side and Mary on the other.⁸³⁹ The message was that she was undoubtedly sharing the power and prestige of her brothers, but under their authority.

While studies of her regency adequately place her in the context of the political world of Charles V, they almost without exception mention her 'humanist education' without recognising that she possessed the education of a queen, not of a prince.⁸⁴⁰ The queen as regent successfully conveyed a sense of duty for her task and an apparent interest in the business of governing. Over the years, she gained experience, which in turn brought her respect. However, despite her obvious success and competence in the eyes of those for whom she worked, Mary did encounter major problems in upholding the female regency. First, she failed on the queenly side of her office when her peace-making efforts were ignored. The peace treaty made by her and her sister Eleanor would undoubtedly have brought glory both to her family and herself. Second, as a woman she could not participate in any military action. Mary personally saw this as harmful to her reputation because she was, as her brother's representative, blamed for the war, even though there was next to nothing she could do to win it. A prince could choose, as Machiavelli suggested, to be loved or feared, but the choices available for princesses were far narrower.

The princess regents adapted the duties of their office to queenly models of conduct. Mixing the roles of regent and queen was acceptable, but not clearly defined or overly flexible with respect to the regent's own

⁸³⁶ On the family crisis of 1551 Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 38-9.

⁸³⁷ Her Latin secretary Miklós Oláh, cited in Fazekas, 'Miklós Oláh,' 44.

⁸³⁸ Gachard, *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, 16.

⁸³⁹ Kerstin Merkel, 'Bruderbilder – Herrscherbilder. Inszenierte Bruderliebe als Garant für politische Qualität in der Frühen Neuzeit' in *Menschenbilder. Beiträge zur Altdeutschen Kunst*, ed. Andreas Tacke and Stefan Heinz (Petersberg : Imhof, 2011), 239.

⁸⁴⁰ 'Mary received the best of humanist educations including the study of languages, literature and history, in preparation for her role in serving the dynasty and her future husband.' Doyle, *The body of a woman*, 202.

interpretations. The regents filled their correspondence with language of humility and assurances of obedience. Besides expressing devotion to their male relatives and their dynasty, it can also be seen as a way to guard their own reputation. They aimed to fulfil the goals set for queens: to be loved and appreciated by the people, not to be feared or despised. If the final decisions were not theirs, they ensured themselves fame as respected and honoured princesses, even if carrying out the unpopular orders of the ruler. After all, it was not their fault if the people complained; rather, such complaints arose from the fact that ‘people in Flanders do not have a sense of justice, obedience or respect’, as Mary wrote to Philip in 1558.⁸⁴¹ The decision to choose his half-sister, Margaret of Parma, to take over the regency in 1559 shows that King Philip still saw the queenly regent as a working solution, or perhaps considered it at least the best of several bad options.

In 1558, Mary had finally agreed to return to the Low Countries to assist Philip. She was preparing for the voyage when she died in October. Her passing left a gap in the dynasty’s system, felt painfully by her nephew Phillip, who was struggling with his rebellious northern subjects. Mary died only months after her closest siblings, Charles and Eleanor; being the last, she did not have any immediate family to mourn her passing. She was a political actor until the end. Philip, famous for his reserved air, privately complained that everything was failing, when he learned the news.⁸⁴² He was not referring to his private life, but to his government.

⁸⁴¹ Mary to Philip, 7 Sept. 1558 Cigales, AGS Estado Leg. 128 fol 349.

⁸⁴² Parker, *Imprudent king*, 57.

8 JUANA – PRINCESS OF PORTUGAL AS A PRINCE IN SPAIN

INTRODUCTION

Juana of Austria's regency was yet more proof of the trust her dynasty had in princess regents. It also shows how different various parts of Charles V's empire were, despite the efforts to unify his government. The comparison of her regency with those of her aunt and great-aunt shows how a Habsburg princess could successfully act as a regent with very little experience and limited education if she was able and willing to co-operate with the male regency government. In Juana's case, her views on the limits of the regency matched those of the ruler who had appointed her, which also made her part less complicated.

A look into Juana's childhood shows that the status of princesses did not work solely to their advantage. Helen Nader's compilation of articles on the women of the Mendoza family demonstrates that early modern Spanish noblewomen could and did make choices for their own life and were literate in Latin as well as active patrons of literature.⁸⁴³ Juana and María were also active and ready to stand up for their rights, but their education fell short in comparison. They were not Latinists, and unlike their contemporaries, they had received very little training in practical household management. Juana was willing to accept the regency, as she was later apparently ready to participate in the issues that concerned her, such as religious patronage, marriage negotiations for her son, connections to her sister the empress and her own marriage. However, as the princess she had been guarded even from education.

Juana, as the daughter of the emperor, was naturally raised for queenship and evidently had a strong sense of her own rank and importance. She saw the regencies of her mother, the Empress Isabel, and her sister María as examples that she could follow. However, she worked rather as the head of the council than as an independent ruler, writing her letters jointly with her council and without personal rhetorical effort to influence her father and brother. The others did not assume she would think for herself, but merely represent the authority of her family. The divided authority between Charles and Philip confused her regency, blurring the idea of Juana as a queenly companion to the ruler. Juana's life after her regency in turn shows that her queenly education and rank as well as the lack of princes in her family allowed her to establish a relatively comfortable existence as the dowager princess. Gender became in some cases a secondary attribute to her descent.

⁸⁴³ Helen Nader, 'Introduction: The World of the Mendozas,' in *Power and Gender in the Spanish Renaissance: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450-1650*, 6.

Her later fame as the only female Jesuit has disguised the fact that she remained a potential regent until the end of her life.

Juana stepped into a tradition of twenty-five years of regencies, occasionally broken by Charles's visits to his Spanish dominions. The role of regent was in theory similar to relations of power in the Low Countries, not least because the government had recently been rearranged by the chancellor Gattinara.⁸⁴⁴ In an empire like Charles's, one person hardly was all powerful in any sense, but the correspondence of his regents in Spain confirm that they were more dependent on the regency council in their communication with the emperor than Margaret of Austria and especially Mary of Hungary had been in the Low Countries. The president of the regency council, Juan de Tavera, wrote to Charles in 1529: 'She [Empress Isabel] keeps good order in everything but Her Majesty does not have to justify herself to anybody and does not have any experience or knowledge of these countries'.⁸⁴⁵ Tavera's comment, although not very flattering to the regent, affirms, however, that the regent's role was considerable.

The regency had a long tradition in the Iberian Peninsula. Aragon had long been a composite monarchy, and various queens of Aragon had served as regents. Theresa Earenfight lists their tasks as consisting of 'certain routine government business, including the exercise of justice, maintenance of public order, supervision of all subordinate royal officials and in some cases, command of military forces', and she defines the characteristics of rule as the 'nature of authority exercised in conjunction with the king himself'.⁸⁴⁶ Compared with that degree of power, Empress Isabel and her daughters had had a far more restricted role. Overshadowed by the figures of Charles V and Philip II, Charles's Spanish regents have often been considered as minor actors.⁸⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the tradition of the regent's correspondence varied. While Prince Philip and his cousin Maximilian had been diligent correspondents as regents, the princess regents, Isabel of Portugal and María of Austria, had not established a level of communication comparable with that of Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary as regents of the Low Countries. Compared with Margaret and Mary, Juana had the advantage of having known Philip since he was a child, whereas Margaret and Mary had had to form a relationship with the ruler, Maximilian and Charles respectively, as adults and through correspondence.

⁸⁴⁴ Gattinara's role in the beginning of Margaret of Austria's regency is discussed above. On his influence on Charles V Headley, *The emperor and his chancellor*.

⁸⁴⁵ Marzahl, 'Communication and Control', 87.

⁸⁴⁶ Earenfight, 'Absent Kings,' 36-7.

⁸⁴⁷ Wim Blockmans, for instance, in his biography of Charles V manages to pass all those regents with one sentence, 'The lack of experience of these youthful regents placed a heavy burden on their advisors, who took the opportunity to extend their own power and build up their own networks.' Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V*, 119.

Juana was only nineteen years old when her husband, Prince Joao Manuel, died, and she returned to Spain in 1554. Juana's son, the infant Prince Sebastian, was left with his grandparents. Philip was on his way to England to marry Queen Mary, and their father Charles wanted him in the Low Countries to be able to formally abdicate power. Juana's regency was a time of distress in Spain. The emperor and his son had bold plans beyond the borders of Spain, but they were ruthlessly using up its resources. The military threat from northern Africa and the Mediterranean that the regency government was most concerned with was not what most concerned the absent prince. There were also profound problems in terms of domestic issues.⁸⁴⁸ In practice, the model of governing that Juana faced as regent with a retired emperor and an absent king was peculiar. After Charles's formal abdication in 1556, Juana was regent for Philip, and in theory Charles only had moral and paternal authority over her. However, Philip kept referring to the emperor as an authority that needed to be consulted. Philip seemed to believe that the presence of Charles in Spain, combined with Juana as regent, was sufficient to make the Spanish government work while he was absent.⁸⁴⁹ It is evident that the people around them were also confused, as is testified to by the courtiers wondering about the lack of messengers between the princess and the emperor after Charles's landing in Laredo in October of 1556.⁸⁵⁰

Juana's regency ended with Philip returning to Spain in 1559. From then on, Juana stayed in or near the court. She acted as a supportive companion to Philip's wives, first Queen Isabel of France and then Queen Anna of Austria, as well as to his nephews, who were sent from the Austrian court to be educated in Spain.⁸⁵¹ She did not return to Portugal and never saw her son again. Despite the plans to nominate her a regent again while Philip would return to the troubled Low Countries, Philip stayed in Spain and Juana remained as 'the Princess of Portugal' in his court until her death in 1573 at the age of thirty-eight.

Compared with the regencies of Mary and Margaret, Juana's regency was relatively short, and she had not yet turned twenty. Her life as a crown princess in Portugal had only lasted two years.⁸⁵² As a princess regent who was very young and inexperienced, yet educated in an environment in which she was made well aware of the potential queenly roles for princesses beyond traditional motherhood, Juana was undoubtedly also a strong-willed woman.

⁸⁴⁸ The best account of the political situation during her regency is Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*.

⁸⁴⁹ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 207.

⁸⁵⁰ Louis Quijada to Juan Vazquez 14 Oct. 1556 Burgos, RMC 2, 97, VII.

⁸⁵¹ Philip married Isabel in 1559 and Anna in 1570. Anna was also close to Juana as she was Philip's and Juana's niece, daughter of their sister María.

⁸⁵² For comparison: Margaret had spent ten years in France and four in Spain, whereas Mary spent a total five years as queen in Hungary and four as a dowager queen before her appointment in 1530.

She had a reputation for having a masculine attitude, spending very generously and being beautiful.⁸⁵³ Her own family members praised her virtue and beauty, especially her likeness to her sister and relatives, a characteristic emphasising the Habsburg unity amongst themselves and in relation to others.

Juana's role models were her mother and sister, both regents. She fulfilled the contemporary requirements for a princess and thus a potential queen – she was beautiful, lived an exemplary religious life and, as Charles's daughter, naturally was among those closest to him and, as such, shared the family's authority. The Venetian ambassador noted that she was 'virile', mentally more a man than a woman.⁸⁵⁴ I suggest that Juana was not attempting to pose as a man, but as she assumed many of the duties in her brother's court that would have belonged to a prince, had there been one, the observant diplomats equated this princess with a prince. However, as the regent Juana was acting as a queen to Philip. That assimilation with queenship caused her to be pictured as an ideal queen, and her image was polished to resemble that of a nun. She was held up as a model to mould the next generation of Spanish queens. As David Davies writes, 'Spanish Habsburg Queens were not seen to be involved in the Liberal Art or Sciences. They had to exhibit higher ideals. They had to embody the Theological and Cardinal Virtues. Thereby they contributed to the well-being of the Monarquía Católica because, hopefully, that would merit the bestowal of God's grace.'⁸⁵⁵ Without denying Juana's obvious piety and personal religious convictions, she was not such an embodiment of Spanish Habsburg piety as her early biographers wanted to depict her, but rather an individual who made the most of her role as princess, and often also as prince, of Spain.

SERENISIMA PRINCESA – JUANA, PHILIP AND THE EMPEROR

The system surrounding Juana was the result of a long tradition of absentee rulership. Aragon had had its own viceroy since Ferdinand the Catholic's death and Charles's accession in 1517. The office was held by trusted noblemen, beginning with Bishop Alonso of Aragon, illegitimate son of King Ferdinand. In Castile, Cardinal Cisneros and later Bishop Adrian of Utrecht were appointed to lead the government. The Comuneros Revolt (1520–21) changed the situation, and since then, during Charles's absence, the regency

⁸⁵³ Gachard, *Relations des ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, 62. In 1565, Juana, then thirty, was described 'more gracious than beautiful' after her health problems. Giovanni Sorenzo 1565, *Relazioni I – V* (Firenze: A Spese dell'editore, 1861), 121.

⁸⁵⁴ Relazione di Federico Badoero nel 1557, *Relazioni I – III* (Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1853), 249.

⁸⁵⁵ Davies, 'The Body Politics of Spanish Habsburg Queens,' 1536.

had been held by a member of his own family. The regents had first been Charles's wife Isabel, followed by his son Philip after her death and finally, during Philip's first voyage to the Low Countries, by Ferdinand's son Maximilian and Charles's daughter María as a couple. The plan in 1553 had been for Philip to marry another Portuguese cousin, Queen Eleanor's daughter María, who then could have stayed behind as the regent if Philip needed to assist his father in the Low Countries. The Habsburg dynasty was by now giving the impression of a family that tended to recruit princesses for regency rather than appoint them because they had no other options. But, in 1554 the situation changed with Mary of Tudor's accession to the throne in England, and the Portuguese marriage was discarded when the new queen gave her consent to marry Philip.

At that time, Charles did not even fully participate in the events because he had, due to physical and mental collapse, withdrawn from the government in Brussels and relied on the his councillors, especially his sister Mary.⁸⁵⁶ Philip was sent a document signed by Charles with the name of the regent left blank, and it was assumed that he would choose some experienced man of state. When Philip heard of the death of Juana's husband, Prince Joao Manuel, in Portugal, he immediately began negotiations on her return through his ambassador in Lisbon, and without waiting for confirmation from Charles, appointed Juana as regent.

Charles signed a confirmation of the appointment in March of 1554 in Brussels, appointing in his and his mother's name 'our beloved daughter and granddaughter' as the lieutenant and governor.⁸⁵⁷ Juana left Lisbon to meet with Philip and receive his personal instructions. The pattern conspicuously resembled that of Margaret meeting Maximilian in 1507 and Charles coming to the Low Countries at the beginning of Mary's regency in 1531. The personal instructions had a significance that could not be replaced by written ones. Philip nominated the council members to support Juana and left the experienced secretary Juan Vazquez as state secretary. Juana settled into life in Valladolid, again with Philip's son Don Carlos.

Rodríguez-Salgado argues that Philip knew that Charles would not have appointed Juana, and her appointment was part of Philip's very determined policy to assure that he ultimately retained power before leaving for England. Philip had suggested Juana as regent already in 1548, when María and her husband Maximilian were appointed, but Charles had explained that he was not going to appoint a young and unmarried woman.⁸⁵⁸ Juana was perhaps in her father's eyes not only too young, but too strong-willed and perhaps too active a supporter of Spanish interests when he had to think about his entire

⁸⁵⁶ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 86-8.

⁸⁵⁷ Charles V, *Amplio poder para el gobierno de la Corona de Castilla, en ausencia suya y del príncipe Felipe II a favor de su hija doña Juana de Austria*, 31 Mar.1554, CDCV 4, 33-7, DCI.

⁸⁵⁸ Charles to Philip 9 Apr. 1548, CDCV 2, 612.

empire.⁸⁵⁹ She did indeed become identified with the Ebolist Party of the court, so named for the fact that it had formed around the Portuguese courtier Ruy Gomez, Prince of Eboli.⁸⁶⁰

Evidently, Juana had already been working discreetly to promote her interests from Lisbon, because the imperial ambassador, Luis Sarmiento de Mendoza, wrote to Charles as early as January, when Juana allegedly did not even know yet that her husband was dead, praising Juana as the daughter of the most royal house, an important woman of the world and beautiful as an angel, but unable to attain a position worthy of her in Portugal. The ambassador candidly suggested that if the Prince (Philip) was to leave Castile, Juana could return and 'attend the government with the council of state as Your Majesty orders and sign like the most serene Queen of Bohemia [María] did'.⁸⁶¹ As Juana's biographer Villacorta Baños-García points out, there was no reason that the ambassador would have written on his own behalf. At that moment, the news of her husband's death was allegedly kept from Juana, who was quite advanced in her pregnancy, but the letter indicates that she knew the truth. Her son was born four days after the ambassador's letter was dated, but it did not change her attitude, nor did she use him as a reason to stay in Portugal. The ambassador's letter reveals how the regent was perceived as the highest authority able to sign documents. It left many options open. From Juana's point of view, it meant that she did not even envisage her possible role in the government as that of someone who should grasp the variety of issues that were being handled. Her offer to assist her brother also included an indisputable identification of Juana with her sister. They were both prototypes of a potential regent.

It seems like Philip was not affected by Juana's setbacks in Portugal. As noted earlier, Juana's brief marriage was not an exemplary performance in queenly behaviour. She had completed the most important part of her task, given Portugal an heir, but otherwise she had behaved alarmingly enough for her father to be notified. Considering the lack of references to the princesses' behaviour in general, minor disturbances were obviously not worth documenting. In the light of Philip suggesting Juana for the regency already in 1548, when she was only thirteen years old,⁸⁶² it is plausible that in her brother's eyes the regent was not to be an active individual, but a symbol of his family and its dependency on him. Hence, Juana even as a very young girl would have been preferred by Philip over his cousin Maximilian, who, even though his brother-in-law, also had his own interests in mind. It is also

⁸⁵⁹ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 87.

⁸⁶⁰ Carmen Sanz Ayán, 'La regencia de doña Juana de Austria, su dimensión humana, intelectual y política,' in *La monarquía hispánica Felipe II, un monarca y su época: Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, 1 de junio, 10 de octubre, 1998* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1998).

⁸⁶¹ Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 184-5, citing Sarmiento from the original in Simancas.

⁸⁶² Philip himself had been twelve when he became the regent for the first time.

possible that this was one of the cases that demonstrated the problems of divided authority at that the transitional time between the reigns of Charles and Philip, and Philip was not simply aware of his sister's problems in Lisbon.

Charles was still suspicious of the arrangement, and he warned Philip of Juana's character.⁸⁶³ As Charles certainly had not spent a great deal of time with his daughters, having not seen Juana since his departure from Spain more than ten years earlier in 1543, the characterisation was most likely based on the reports he had received of Juana's behaviour in Portugal and perhaps specifically those in Sarmiento de Mendoza's letter. In any case, it was evident that Charles was not looking for a similar actor for Spain as his sister Mary was in the Low Countries. However, Juana's rhetoric, when joined with that of the regency council, came to resemble that of her aunt's in the continuous demand that the ruler would return – although Juana and her council were not asking Charles, as Mary of Hungary had done, but Philip to return.

During Juana's regency, the official correspondence was read aloud in the council meetings, and the formal letters signed by the regent were undoubtedly joint efforts. Moreover, the regency government was arranged so that Juana was not the only primary informant reporting to Charles and Philip. Mary had in a sense shared some of the government of the Low Countries with Granvelle, but Granvelle had stayed with the emperor, leaving Mary alone in the Low Countries. But Juana's partner in the government was Juan Vazquez de Molina (ca.1500–1570). Vazquez had been appointed as secretary to the empress during Isabel's first regency in 1529.⁸⁶⁴ In such a divided court, he had first acquired offices through his powerful uncle, the secretary los Cobos, and during Juana's regency he, too, was supporting the Ebolist Party that Juana is usually associated with.⁸⁶⁵ The references to Juana in the secretary's letters, and vice versa, and the fairly equal distribution of letters flowing between the emperor and Philip, as authorities, and Juana and Vazquez, as mainly their informants and intermediaries, seems to indicate that the princess and the secretary were at least formally working together. The assumed division between Vazquez doing the work and Juana representing the authority of the office is quite plain from a quote in letter to Ruy Gomez stating that 'the state affairs now were considered by Juan Vazquez for himself and by Don Garcia [de Toledo, Juana's mayordomo] for the Princess'⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ Charles to Philip 30 April 1554 Brussels, CDVC 4, 40, DCII.

⁸⁶⁴ *Los Consejos y los consejeros de Carlos V. La corte de Carlos V.* 3: 2, 449.

⁸⁶⁵ Especially José Martínez Millán, 'Familia real y grupos políticos: La princesa Doña Juana de Austria (1535-1573),' in *La corte de Felipe II*, ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994), 73-106.

⁸⁶⁶ Letter to Conde de Melito 5 Jan. 1558, CODOIN 97, 335.

Even though all letters were styled according to the prevailing letter-writing conventions of the time, a personal tone is most strikingly absent from Juana's regency correspondence. She and her government sent and received letters that came nowhere near to expressing the constant language of mutual love that had prevailed in the northern regents' correspondence since the time of Margaret and Maximilian. Even in her personal letters, Juana kept her distance and did not describe her love, but rather her eagerness, to see her relatives again. She seems to have identified her family with the office she was holding, and the austerity it required was reflected in her letters to her father and brother. Whereas Charles's siblings had repeatedly voiced greetings to 'dear sister' or 'good aunt' and signed the letters with just their first names, Juana addressed her letters to Charles not as father, but as '*Sacra Católica Cesárea Magestad*', and she signed her letters to Philip plainly as 'The Princess' in the Spanish manner. Charles still addressed his official letters to 'his very beloved and dear daughter',⁸⁶⁷ and his private letters to 'daughter'; he signed them, as Maximilian had his letters to Margaret, 'your good father'.⁸⁶⁸

Juana's formal and pragmatic style was, however, meant for the letters she signed in the role of a princess. The few friendly letters that she evidently wrote as a private person, not as an office holder, reveal her to be a lively and spontaneous writer. She had written directly to her brother to inform him that her aunts, Queen Mary and Queen Eleanor, had arrived in Spain. She did not express personal feelings even when she explained to her brother how she managed to find funds for their aunt Mary after Philip had failed to pay Mary the money he owed her in the Low Countries.⁸⁶⁹ When writing directly to Ruy Gomez, however, she talked about how

Grandísimo contentamiento es para mí por el buen suceso que Dios dá á mi hermano por todas partes, porque es señal que todo anda bueno: las paces del Papa nos han dicho por muy cierto, y no lo sabemos por el Duque si ha venido correo de Italia, que esto me hace pensar que no las hay, y quel Papa está tan fuera de razón como siempre [I am very content with the success God has given to my brother in all parts, it seems to be a sign that everything will go well. The Pope's peace should be certain, but as I do not know if the Duke has mail from Italy, I am afraid he has none, and the Pope is out of his mind as usual.]

⁸⁶⁷ Serenísima Princesa, nuestra muy chara y muy amada hija. For example, Charles to Juana, 15 Jan. 1556 Brussels, CDCV 4, 254, DCCIV; Charles to Juana, 20 Feb. 1557 Yuste; Ibid., 302, DCCXXXVII.

⁸⁶⁸ 'Vuestro buen padre, Carlos.' For example Charles to Juana 1 Apr. 1557 Yuste, CDCV 4, 311, DCCXLIV.

⁸⁶⁹ Juana to Philip 15 Jan. 1557 Valladolid, CDCV 4, 293, DCCXXXI.

She also vividly described how her aunts, Queens Eleanor and Mary, had quarrelled with Gomez's father-in-law. Now that the two had left Juana's palace, she confessed to be

extremo contenta porque no he visto peor compañía de la que ellas me hicieron [extremely content because they were the worst company for me].⁸⁷⁰

Compared with Margaret's and Mary's letters on serving their house, its lands and subjects, Juana's letters were less eloquent and focused on the matter at hand. On the verge of the empire changing hands from Charles to Philip, the language of the family letters turned from focusing on Christian common good to the will of God. Dynastic marriages were referred to as decisions that had to be done according to God's plan. Eleanor explained to the ambassador in Portugal that Philip did not marry his daughter, Princess María of Portugal, because God had given him the task to save England, and therefore he had to marry Mary Tudor.⁸⁷¹ Similarly, Eleanor's younger sister, Queen Catherine of Portugal, urged her niece Juana to accept Juana's son Sebastian's marriage with the Princess of France because it was more to the service of the Lord and his Catholic Church than the marriage Juana and Catherine had hoped for.⁸⁷² At the same time, the royal family was referred to more as persons who had an exceptional right to know or to even comment on royal decisions rather than as people who would feel familial affection for each other.

Inexperience or inability might have contributed to Juana's exercise of power through either silence or disobedience. Unlike the other regents, there are several cases where Juana chose not to inform the ruler. For example, it was reported to Ruy Gomez after a court scandal that 'Princess [Juana] has not written anything about this to her brother because she despises the whole affair.'⁸⁷³ There is no evidence that she told her brother and father about her Jesuit vows either. Similarly, she knew of the Inquisition's procedures in Spain earlier and in more detail than did Philip.⁸⁷⁴ Probably she kept discussion of religious issues to a minimum because the subject was sensitive, and she perhaps knew her views were not accepted by Charles and Philip. The tense political situation and the two parties forming around the figures of the Duke of Alba and Ruy Gomez, Prince of Eboli, also caused her

⁸⁷⁰ Juana to Ruy Gómez de Silva 6 Nov. 1557, CODOIN 97, 298-300.

⁸⁷¹ Eleanor to Don Juan de Mendoza, Valladolid November 1556, CSP Spain 13, nr. 286.

⁸⁷² Catherine to Juana, Almerin 13 Mar. 1569, CODOIN 28 (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de Calero, 1856), 509-11. Juana had apparently wished that Sebastian would marry her niece, Archduchess Isabel. Despite all the negotiations and speculations, Sebastian remained unmarried.

⁸⁷³ Doña Leonor Manuel to Ruy Gómez de Silva 5 Jan. 1557, CODOIN 97, 323.

⁸⁷⁴ Parker, *Imprudent king*, 130.

to show discretion and not share too much.⁸⁷⁵ Due to her religious convictions and her connections to Portugal, Juana was a natural part of the latter circle, but Carmen Sanz Ayán argues that she used the margin she had to act as a regent to balance between the two opposing parties.⁸⁷⁶ However, she is seen as a figure that attracted the ‘humanistas y religiosos’,⁸⁷⁷ with the tangible result being the attention and patronage she showed to religious orders.

In her brilliant account of the challenging times of power switching from the imperial power of Charles, who had attempted to rule all Europe, to Philip’s focus on wielding power in Spain and the Netherlands, Rodríguez-Salgado highlights just how complex the time was for contemporaries. Philip faced constant challenges to his authority during the regency, apparently supported by both Juana and her council. Rodríguez-Salgado further argues that Juana and the regency government ignored the fact that some of the ships sailing from America went missing in 1556 and 1557, to the great annoyance of Philip and Charles. She interprets this as ‘the beginning of a drift away from the sovereign and towards greater independence’ from the Habsburg central system.⁸⁷⁸ By 1558, Juana directly refused to obey Philip’s orders to take bullion from the Indies.⁸⁷⁹ In addition to expressing independence on financial issues, Juana also in 1555 went along with the defence of Bougie on the North-African coast and the orders to execute the operation’s commanders after the fortification was lost.⁸⁸⁰ In January 1558, she explained to Philip that she had on her own initiative authorised actions on the southern Mediterranean coast ‘without waiting to consult your majesty, because we felt that it was necessary’.⁸⁸¹

The complex nature of female regency and different levels of authority and respect required have already been discussed in the previous chapter in connection with Charles and Mary’s arrival in Spain. Charles had, besides fatherly authority, also the glory of being the emperor, a title that people around him did not forget. His retirement was somewhat peculiar. He did not want to assume responsibility for anything, yet he saw himself as entitled to express his opinions and even give orders. Mary too, as we have seen, had kept her title and continued to conduct herself as a queen. Both recognised

⁸⁷⁵ José Martínez Millán, ‘Factions and Political Groups at Philip II’s Court: Albists vs Ebolists,’ in *A Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions: Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550-1700)*, ed. Ruben Gonzalez Cuerva and Alexander Koller (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 113-4 and 126-7.

⁸⁷⁶ Sanz Ayán, ‘La regencia de doña Juana de Austria,’ 146.

⁸⁷⁷ Eduardo Torres Corominas, ‘La corte literaria de doña Juana de Austria (1554-1559),’ in *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa*, 2, 931.

⁸⁷⁸ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 208-12.

⁸⁷⁹ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 250.

⁸⁸⁰ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 270.

⁸⁸¹ Cited in Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face*, 282.

Juana's powers as the regent, but both also saw her as the younger scion of their dynasty.

The issues where Charles's fatherly authority superseded Juana's attempts at independence were family matters. As emperor, for him the family matter in question was the regency government of Portugal. Juana wrote to Portugal when hearing of the accession to power of her son, Sebastian, at the age of three after the death of King John in June of 1557. Apparently, Juana had used wording that seemingly questioned priority being given to Queen Catherine, her aunt and the grandmother of Sebastian, instead of her, the mother of the young king. The messenger stopped in Yuste on his way to Portugal, and there Charles read Juana's message and without any hesitation took and replaced it with his own. He explained to Juana that 'with these things one has to act with all possible courtesy, especially you being a daughter', and he assured her that the issue was best handled between the brother and sister, himself and Queen Catherine.⁸⁸² Juana's reaction to this is not known, which is an indication that unlike Mary, who had protested when she saw her rights violated, Juana did not want or was not able to articulate her point of view.

Despite the incident, Charles firmly supported Juana as the regent in Spain. After the regency council's independent policies, Philip's reaction was to replace Juana's mayordomo, Garcia de Toledo, and demand that Juana show all her letters to men Philip considered loyal to himself. She refused and offered to resign. The person who convinced Juana to stay was Charles.⁸⁸³ Charles's gesture was, I argue, not a sign of appreciation for Juana as a person, but for female regency and its role in demonstrating and supporting the unity of the Habsburgs.

THE RETIRED PRINCESS

Juana's life after her regency shows how different a regency was from the other roles possible for a princess, and how the regency changed a royal woman into an actor who left numerous documents and was often mentioned in the correspondence of the ambassadors and other contemporaries. When the ruler returned and her regency ended, she still had a role in the royal family, but the mentions of her in official documents, and particularly the documents produced by herself, dried up immediately. Even if Juana maintained a close relationship with the ruler, her brother Philip, and had a

⁸⁸² 'Y es bien en estas cosas y entre hermanos yr con mucho miramiento por todos respectos. Y más, vos, siendo hija.' Charles to Juana 5 July 1557 Yuste, CDCV 4, 333, DCCLVIII. The next in line after Sebastian to inherit the crown of Portugal was Charles's other grandson, Don Carlos, Philip's son and heir, a fact that comes up in Charles's letters.

⁸⁸³ Rodríguez-Salgado, *The changing Face*, 287. On further conflicts between Philip on the one hand and Juana and the regency council, on the other, over authority in Aragon, see *ibid.*, 291-4.

position as the mother of the crown prince of Portugal, she ceased to have an openly active presence. However, also after her regency she continued to step in when the Spanish royal family ran out of princes and performed the role of a prince within the limits suitable for a queen. Even if she was ‘only a daughter’, as her father the emperor had pointed out to her, an imperial daughter had a relatively wide space for her activities. There was also the ever-present speculative aspect regarding a possible second regency, although there is no surviving evidence of either her own consent or refusal.⁸⁸⁴

When Philip returned in 1559, Juana immediately withdrew and returned to the role of a princess. She was still the next in rank in the Spanish court after Philip and his wife, though at the moment of his return he did not have a wife. Juana’s official title was Princess of Portugal, and she self-evidently also carried the prestige of being the mother of the king of that country. She was only twenty-four years old. Unlike Mary, who, as has been discussed above, kept her position as an advisor even after her retirement, Juana seems not to have possessed any special knowledge or expertise that would have made her irreplaceable, so Philip could easily replace her with advisors. However, she retained her position as a significant member of the royal family, where she had a special position as guardian of, first, the heir Don Carlos, and later Philip’s young spouses, Isabel and Anna, and finally her nephews, the young archdukes of Austria, who were sent to Spain for their education.⁸⁸⁵ Unlike Mary, who struggled to settle in Spain and could not see herself returning as a private person to the Low Countries, Juana was content acting as a prince in her home country.

With Juana, the marriage speculations continued as they had with the other princesses. Contemporaries anticipated that she would aspire for a queenship in the same way that Margaret of Austria had been suspected of being overly eager to marry Henry VII or Louis XII fifty years earlier. Despite the spreading suspicions regarding Don Carlos’s health and sanity, contemporaries still thought that he could marry his aunt. The idea was brought up by the King of Portugal (who was both Don Carlos’s grandfather and the father of Juana’s deceased husband), who pointed out that Juana already had proven to be able to bear sons.⁸⁸⁶ In 1560, advisors reported to Queen Elizabeth of England that Juana and Don Carlos would become the regents of the Low Countries as a couple.⁸⁸⁷ However, these rumours also

⁸⁸⁴ Rodríguez-Salgado is convinced she refused having the experience and knowing how demanding it was. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, states generals and parliaments*, 217.

⁸⁸⁵ On her relationship with Isabel of France, see Cruz, ‘Juana of Austria,’ 115.

⁸⁸⁶ Luis Sarmiento de Mendoza to Philip, Lisbon 18 June 1556, Villacorta Baños-García, *La Jesuita*, 382.

⁸⁸⁷ Throckmorton to the Queen, Hardwick 28 Nov. 1560, *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, Vol. 3, 1560-1561, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: 1865), nr. 737.

indicated a trust in Juana's abilities as a regent, at least among the Habsburgs. In the reports to Maximilian II, Juana was considered a suitable spouse for her nephew because she could take over the government should Don Carlos, due to his obvious problems with physical and mental health, be unable to rule.⁸⁸⁸

Philip's queen between 1559 and 1568, Isabel of Valois, had brought French influence into the court. Ambassador Fourquevaux included Juana in his reports as an actor in both dynastic and regency politics. In 1566, the French ambassador expressed concern over the talks of the possible regency because choosing Juana instead of Queen Isabel would have diminished the French influence.⁸⁸⁹ The Habsburg relatives in Vienna were still confident of Juana's superiority over both her nephew and her sister-in-law. The imperial ambassador's opinion was that if Isabel was to be the regent, then she would do everything with 'the advice, knowing and approval' of Princess Juana.⁸⁹⁰ Later, the French ambassador associated Juana with the negotiations between France and Portugal, and he reported rumours that Juana's love for Sebastian was not very strong and that she kept in mind that the next in line of succession, Don Duarte, would very likely marry her should Sebastian die.⁸⁹¹ Speculations on Sebastian's survival probably increased due to the fact that it was known in Spain that Juana's son had 'the temper of the prince of Spain', that is Don Carlos. The French ambassador told Catherine de Medici that Sebastian was volatile and very obstinate.⁸⁹²

Marriage speculations were of course a popular subject among ambassadors at the time, not just regarding Juana but all the princes and princesses, as is well known from the case of Queen Elizabeth of England, but the talk surrounding Juana was proof of the general assumptions that she had both the ambition and capability to be a queen. Unlike with Elizabeth,

⁸⁸⁸ '...unter dem schein, das es die noturft erfordert, das ime ain weib gegeben werde, die da wis zu regiern, und was an ime mengelt, durch ieren verstant thue estatzen' Dietrichstein to Maximilian II, Madrid 29 June 1564, *Die Korrespondenz Der Kaiser Mit Ihren Gesandten in Spanien : 1 : Der Briefwechsel Zwischen Ferdinand I., Maximilian II. Und Adam Von Dietrichstein: 1563 – 1565*, ed. Arno Strohmeyer (München: Oldenbourg, 1997), 227, nr. 41. On Don Carlos and Juana see also Gachard, *Don Carlos et Philippe II*, 164-9.

⁸⁸⁹ Célestin Douais, *Les dernières années d'Élisabeth de Valois, reine d'Espagne, d'après ses lettres inédites et les dépêches de M. de Fourquevaux, ambassadeur (1565-68)* (Toulouse: Imprimerie et librairie Édouard Privat, 1896), 10.

⁸⁹⁰ '...soll si ["khunigin"] doch nuer dennamen haben und alles mit rat, vorwissen und verwilligung der printzessin gehandelt werden.' Dietrichstein to Maximilian II, Madrid 29 June 1564, as *Die Korrespondenz Der Kaiser Mit Ihren Gesandten in Spanien*, 229.

⁸⁹¹ Fourquevaux to Catherine di Medici Madrid 20 Sept. 1570, *Dépêches de M. de Fourquevaux, ambassadeur du roi Charles IX en Espagne, 1565-1572, Tome II*, ed. Célestin Douais (Paris: E. Leroux, 1900), 271, nr. 253.

⁸⁹² Fourquevaux to Catherine di Medici, Madrid 29 Nov. 1569 *Dépêches de M. de Fourquevaux*, 153, nr. 205.

there was no gossip about favourites or visiting suitors connected to Juana; on the contrary, she was, at least among her family, known to resist any such plans. In 1569, Philip wrote to their aunt, Queen Catherine of Portugal, that he had not even discussed the French proposals of Juana's marriage to Charles IX with the princess herself, knowing she did not want to hear them; he chose to share the plans concerning Sebastian's marriage because Juana was naturally involved as Sebastian's mother.⁸⁹³

As we have seen, Juana had served as the motherly figure in her nephew Carlos's life. She assumed a similar role towards her Austrian nephews. King Philip did not have a large family, especially after the deaths of Queen Isabel and Don Carlos in 1568. The eldest sons of María and Maximilian were sent from Vienna to be educated in Spain. Juana was often with her nephews, the archdukes Rudolf and Ernst.⁸⁹⁴ As the eldest children of the emperor, they needed to have someone with royal prestige with them at all times. Conspicuously, Philip's daughters, Juana's nieces, Isabel Clara Eugenia and Catalina Micaela, born in 1566 and 1567, respectively, were not under her care, but were instead entrusted to the care of the Duchess of Alba after the death of their mother, Queen Isabel.⁸⁹⁵ Juana's role as the companion to the heirs of her siblings emphasised her prestige and perhaps also gave her an excuse to ignore any possible marriage speculations.

Juana maintained the customary courtly correspondence of a royal lady with her relatives in different courts. She of course exchanged letters with her sister-in-law, Mary Tudor, with a friendly tone,⁸⁹⁶ and she naturally kept up contact with her in-laws in Lisbon. She had most frequent contact with her sister, Empress María, in Vienna. The sisters' zeal for working together was so strong that Philip had to explain to his envoy that the correspondence between his sisters must be taken into account. 'The empress and the princess of Portugal are such good sisters and love each other so much that they write and communicate everything in detail', he explained.⁸⁹⁷ Where Maximilian and Philip perhaps could not find a common viewpoint on matters, María and Juana had no such problems. Juana was the one to arrange spiritual support for María in her attempt to remedy her husband's suspiciously protestant thinking.⁸⁹⁸ Maximilian in turn speculated on her

⁸⁹³ Philip II to Catherine of Portugal 28 Feb. 1569, CODIN 28, 497-9.

⁸⁹⁴ For example in April 1569 the young princesses were in Alcalá (in the same house where Juana and María had stayed as children, according to the ambassador, Fourquevaux), Philip was in Escorial, while Juana and the archdukes were traveling to Segovia. Fourquevaux to Catherine de Medici 7 Apr. 1569, *Dépêches de M. de Fourquevaux*, 70, nr. 175.

⁸⁹⁵ Fourquevaux to Catherine de Medici 18 Nov. 1568, *Dépêches de M. de Fourquevaux*, 22, nr. 155; Broomhall, 'Ordering distant affections,' 71-2.

⁸⁹⁶ Juana to Mary Tudor 3 Aug. 1554 Valladolid, CSP Spain 13, nr. 15.

⁸⁹⁷ Minuta de la Instrucción que se dio al conde de Monteagudo, 12 Jan. 1570, CODIN 110, 9.

⁸⁹⁸ Robert Holzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung* (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1903), 332-3.

marrying his young brother.⁸⁹⁹ The sisters' connection was also appreciated for re-enforcing the ties between the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. Maximilian II told the Spanish ambassador that he loved his daughter Anna most because she resembled her mother and the Princess of Portugal more than her sisters did.⁹⁰⁰ A comparison of Juana's letters with those of María reveals that their shared childhood and education made them nearly identical letter writers in their personal correspondence. María wrote short letters, occasionally in her own hand, using what the editor of her letters calls 'cumbersome writing'.⁹⁰¹ As such, they resemble the letters Juana wrote to Maximilian in her youth, with an untrained hand and with more energy than structure (or length).⁹⁰² It is obvious that although the sisters were both far from passive, their use of power did not fit well with government convention, nor did it reveal many traces of formal education.

The relevance of the princesses as potential regents was further demonstrated by the speculation on possible regents after Juana's death in 1573. Should Philip be absent or in the case of his death, the obvious regent would have been his wife. But after Philip's fourth wife, Anna, died in 1580, no princess, prince or queen was available, until his sister María, Maximilian II's widow, returned to Spain in 1582. One of the reasons offered for María's return was that she could look after the education of Philip's children.⁹⁰³ After her return, while living in the monastery founded by Juana, it was rumoured that María would perhaps become the regent of Portugal or Spain, if needed.⁹⁰⁴ None of those plans came to fruition and María become more firmly established at the monastery without actually taking her vows, though

⁸⁹⁹ Giacomo Soranzo to the Doge, Vienna 3 Feb. 1560, *Venetianische Depeschen vom Kaiserhofe: (disparci DI Germania)*, 3, ed. Gustav Turba (Wien: Tempisky, 1895), 136, nr. 60.

⁹⁰⁰ Chantone to Philip II, 31 Mar. 1565, CODOIN 26, 523.

⁹⁰¹ *Epistolario de la emperatriz María de Austria: textos inéditos del Archivo de la Casa de Alba*, edited by Juan Carlos Galende Díaz and Manuel Salamanca López (Madrid: Nuevos Escritores, 2004), 125.

⁹⁰² Juana's letters to Maximilian, HHStA Spanien HofKorr 1/4 fol 62. A similar style is apparent from the analysis of the letters of the Princess of Eboli, Trevor J. Dadson, 'The education, books, and reading habits of Ana de Mendoza y de la Cerda, Princess of Eboli (1540-1592),' in *Women's literacy in early modern Spain and the new world*, ed. Anne J. Cruz and Rosilie Hernández (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 82.

⁹⁰³ Schoder, 'Die Reise der Kaiserin Maria', 155. In 1581 both Rudolf II and Philip II agreed to her request of returning to Spain. The question was resolved due to the premature death of Queen Anne of Austria on 26 October 1580. Philip II remained a widower in charge of his young children, thus he needed his sister Mary to be able to assume the regency, to be a substitute for him in the government of the recently acquired crown of Portugal and to serve as mediator for the marriages of the next generation of the dynasty. Ruben Gonzalez Cuerva, 'From the Empress to the Ambassador: The "Spanish Faction" and the labyrinths of the Imperial Court of Prague, 1575-1585,' *Librosdelacorte.es* 2:7 (2015), 11-25.

⁹⁰⁴ Philip II had annexed Portugal in 1580 following the death of Juana's son Sebastian.

maintaining an active connection with the court of her brother.⁹⁰⁵ This continuous speculation regarding Juana and her sister as possible regents shows yet again how deeply the regency was attached to them as sisters of Philip II, without any reference to their possible skills or experience in governing. Therefore, although it seems their education did not account for the possibility of them ruling one day, it reveals that female regents were indeed supposed to have received an education in how to be queens, as Juana and María had.

THE JESUIT PRINCESS

Juana's evident competence as regent, but lack of education and inexperience as a princess, is a fitting analogy to her fame as the first and only female Jesuit in the society's history. It should be kept in mind that apart from herself and the Jesuit fathers, no one knew about her vows. She was not recognised as the person behind the Jesuit fathers' pseudonym 'Mateo Sanchez' before 1921.⁹⁰⁶ From Juana's point of view, her position as the emperor's daughter brought her privileges that superseded in many respects her gender. She was able to take part in usually exclusively male activities and contribute to a cause that was important to her; in the case of her regency, her dynasty, and with the Jesuits, her salvation. She had undeniably gone further than any woman of her time in terms of her career, but she was always denied having access to real executive-level power. Although evidently a very determined woman, Juana would not have risen to the position of a regent or a Jesuit without her background and family.

Juana had met Father Francis Borgia again when she returned from Portugal. The contacts with Jesuits had occurred since Juana's early childhood, on both a personal and social level. Her wish to join the society was kept secret, with the letters exchanged between Father Francis in Spain and Ignatius Loyola in Rome at that time merely discussing 'Mateo Sanchez' and 'his' joining the society. 'Mateo Sanchez' was Juana, and after much deliberation the society allowed her to become a Jesuit.⁹⁰⁷ Similarly as her regency was the result of the conviction of both Charles V and Philip II regarding the utility of the princess regency and her own willingness to serve as a regent, her Jesuit vows were a combination of Father Borgia's commitment to the Habsburg princesses⁹⁰⁸ and Juana's own devotion.

⁹⁰⁵ Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun*, 146.

⁹⁰⁶ Wenceslao Soto Artuñedo, 'Juana de Austria ¿de la Compañía de Jesús?' in *V Reunión Científica Asociación Española de Historia Moderna. Vol. 1, Felipe II y su tiempo*, ed. José Luis Pereira Iglesias, José Manuel de Bernardo Ares and Jesús Manuel González Beltrán (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 1999), 582 note 27.

⁹⁰⁷ John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 318.

⁹⁰⁸ Soto Artuñedo, 'Juana de Austria ¿de la Compañía de Jesús?' 582.

Borgia, already in his discussions with her in 1554 in Toro, had advised her 'not to forget God in the middle of governmental tasks'.⁹⁰⁹ For him, Juana was the means to a higher purpose, God's work, whereas for Charles she was one part of his goal, the glory of their dynasty.

The attraction of the Jesuits for women was most obviously in a shared enthusiasm for participating in the tasks required to fulfill Loyola's vision.⁹¹⁰ Father Borgia's central role for Juana is explained by his noticeable ability to merge the religious with courtly manners and also his involvement with Juana's whole family. He had been sent to discuss religion with Juana's grandmother and to meet Juana's son when it appeared that he was having similar problems as his cousin Don Carlos.⁹¹¹ Ignatius of Loyola was, however, sceptical about women's role in religion in general and stated that if he had to deal with women, they should be 'women of birth against whom no breath of evil rumour could arise'.⁹¹² The Jesuits in Spain were convinced that in Juana, they had found just such a model of piety given her role as regent.⁹¹³ Moreover, while it is evident that Juana's position as the only female Jesuit was truly exceptional, the Jesuits were strict in their demands that she kept her outer appearance as a royal woman intact. In that way, they could avoid any future situation in which 'some other person of like condition would trouble the Society for a similar admission'.⁹¹⁴ As it happens, Juana dressed relatively piously because she was entitled to the garments of a widow; therefore, her austere dress did not need an explanation.⁹¹⁵

Lisa Fullam has convincingly argued that she was accepted as a member because she, unlike other women, was able to be on 'a mission' in the manner

⁹⁰⁹ Soto Artuñedo, 'Juana de Austria ¿de la Compañía de Jesús?' 581.

⁹¹⁰ Hufton, 'Altruism and Reciprocity,' 331.

⁹¹¹ Dauril Alden, *The making of an enterprise: the Society of Jesus in Portugal, its empire, and beyond 1540-1750* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 83.

⁹¹² Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 442; Alden, *The making of an enterprise*, 20.

⁹¹³ 'En la princesa se ven tantos y tan buenos efectos de su comunicacón, que tiene edificado todo el reino con su buen ejemplo en los pocos dias que ha que vino de Portugal a esa gobernacion.' Father Bustamente to Ignatius Loyola 24 Aug. 1554, cited in Cándido de Dalmases, *Francis Borgia, Grandee of Spain, Jesuit, Saint* (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 119.

⁹¹⁴ Instructions from Rome to Father Francis Borgia 26 Oct. 155, Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 58.

⁹¹⁵ Rosa Helena Chinchilla, 'Juana of Austria: Courtly Spain and Devotional Expression,' *Renaissance and Reformation* 28:1 (2004), 22. A great deal of attention has been given to the nun-like attire that most of the female regents wore. However, Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Juana all wore a widow's dress, with adjustments made according to the contemporary courtly fashion. It was only Juana's niece, Isabella Clara Eugenia (also a regent of the Low Countries), who actually wore the attire of a nun, but she did it only after the death of her husband, Archduke Ernst, in the 1620s. Cordula van Wyhe, 'The Making and Meaning of the Monastic Habit at Spanish Habsburg Courts,' in *Early modern Habsburg women: transnational contexts, cultural conflicts, dynastic continuities*, 243-73.

required for all the members of the society.⁹¹⁶ Though her mission was not quite similar to the missions of the Jesuit brothers, she could use her influence in favour of the society and its goals in a special way, due to her rank as princess. She might have contributed to the society, but it is doubtful whether she received anything in return. Nothing in the sources indicates that being a Jesuit led to any assistance in her regency tasks. Her commitment seems to have been solely for her private spiritual consolation. Interestingly though, in allowing her to enter the society the Jesuit Order had shown much more of a tactical eye than Martin Luther had in 1529, when he denied Mary of Hungary the possibility to be a Lutheran in private. Still, neither the Lutherans nor the Jesuits gave the regents any means to cope with the situation imposed on them by their rank.

To balance Loyola's demand that her vows be kept secret, Juana also insisted on her royal authority even over the Jesuits fathers in Spain. She might have been spiritually humble, but she was a princess nevertheless. She realised that it was a problem that the Jesuit fathers in her court were equal to herself as her brothers in Christ, but under her authority as their sovereign. She hit upon a solution and wrote to Father Ignatius asking him to give her the authority over the Jesuits in Spain so that they could be made to act 'through holy obedience' in serving their spiritual father. She ended her letter with the royal phrase '*que en ello me haréis mucho placer*', in this you will give me very great pleasure.⁹¹⁷ Despite its significance to Juana personally and the fact that the society certainly later gave her a considerable reputation, Juana's membership in the society did not alter its structure or change the attitude towards woman as merely instrumental in the society's work towards its ultimate aims.⁹¹⁸

Juana had a reputation as an exceptionally devout princess long before her Jesuit commitment became known. Her first biography resembles that of a hagiography and emphasises Juana's devotion, giving rise to the previously mentioned anecdotes regarding Juana's saintly childhood.⁹¹⁹ Presenting Juana as a very religious princess has been interpreted as an attempt to provide future generations of royal women with an acceptable model to emulate.⁹²⁰ It is likely that she combined in her religiosity similar paradoxes as she did in her regency. Despite her piety, she was a devoted friend of her sister-in-law, Isabel of Valois, whose accounts reveal just four active

⁹¹⁶ Lisa Fullam, 'Juana, S.J.: the past (and future?) status of women in the Society of Jesus,' *Studies in the spirituality of Jesuits*, 31:5 (1999), 29.

⁹¹⁷ Juana to Ignatius Loyola 7 Feb. 1556, Loyola, *Letters to Women*, 62.

⁹¹⁸ Elisabeth Rhodes, 'Ignatius, Women, and the Leyenda de los Santos' in *A companion to Ignatius of Loyola: life, writings, spirituality, influence*, ed. Robert Aleksander Maryks (Boston: Brill, 2014), 21.

⁹¹⁹ Fernández de Retana, *Doña Juana de Austria*, 62.

⁹²⁰ Carmen Saen de Casas, 'Juana de Austria como modelo de feminidad regia en La hija de Carlos Quinto de Mira de Amescua,' *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 68:1 (2016), 32.

interests: dancing, gambling, and above all, plays and clothes.⁹²¹ Likewise, in spite of her youth and lack of experience, her regency was much appreciated by her father.

⁹²¹ Parker, *Imprudent king*, 160.

CONCLUSION

The childhoods of Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Juana of Austria all demonstrate that Habsburg daughters were brought up to be queens. In addition to their primary duty of ensuring the continuity of the dynasty by bearing children, they reflected the prosperity of their husbands' lands through their virtuous comportment and piety. However, how their lives took shape depended on political and dynastic circumstances. The role of a queen or princess included many preconceptions and created expectations for the princesses themselves as well as for the people around them. Queenship was considered a princess's duty, her privilege and ambition. Few contemporaries realised that the princesses were more content to exercise queenship in the form of regency than to marry a king.

The princess regents were relatively successful in their offices, either due to comparatively low expectations regarding their efficiency, a functioning collaboration with their advisors and secretaries, or their skills and education. Although the outdated view that the success of the Habsburg princess regents stemmed from the 'considerable aptitude for government that distinguished the women of the Habsburg race'⁹¹⁷ does not sound plausible anymore, the trust placed in a famous family's formal learning has not faded. Interestingly, the same critical eye that condemned Charles V as only average already in the mid-20th century⁹¹⁸ has not ceased to claim that his sisters would have been scions of the humanist court culture of their aunts. This work corrects many speculations on the possible 'humanist' studies of the princesses. It shows, however, that there were indeed ways in which a princess could have a role in politics. Participation in government required more practical studies than cultivation or refinement.

The difficulty to define what exactly would have been expected from a princess regent has its background in the undefined and vague notions regarding female rule. Mary of Tudor, who despite being a sovereign queen, was certainly expected by the Spanish to form some sort of dual enterprise with her husband, Philip of Spain, their prince, and fulfil her task at the level required by her office. The Spanish expressed their disappointment in her via the following comment: 'The Queen is a good soul, but not as able as we were led to suppose—I mean as a stateswoman.'⁹¹⁹ In other words, though people expected a princess regent to be skilled at statecraft, such skill was not defined with respect to the tasks assumed by a regent. The evaluation of a regent's accomplishments depends also on what people expected of them at a particular time and place. As queens, they would have failed had they not

⁹¹⁷ Julia Mary Cartwright Ady, *Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan and Lorraine, 1522-1590* (New York: E.P. Dutton and company, 1913), vi.

⁹¹⁸ Brandt, *Kaiser Karl V*, 11.

⁹¹⁹ Ruy Gómez de Silva to Francisco de Eraso, London, 23 Aug. 1554, CSP 13, nr. 40.

produced children, but as regents they were supposed to either successfully support the emperor's policies or protect the lands they were governing. The princess regents seem to have for the most part achieved both, by various means. Understandably, the duration of their regencies affected both the praise and criticism they received at the time. Juana of Austria, who lived for fifteen years after completing her regency, was at the time of her death esteemed as a dowager princess and the king's sister rather than as a regent.

The position of the regents as the only authorities present, despite the imperial authority backing them up, caused them to be evaluated in male terms.⁹²⁵ On the one hand, Gattinara blamed Margaret for behaving like a woman when he suspected her of listening to other advisors;⁹²⁶ yet on the other hand, her friendliness towards the English was lavishly praised by the envoys, who wrote home that 'such generosity is seldom to be found among women; though all others have changed she has never varied.'⁹²⁷ The Venetian Navagero marvelled in 1546 at Mary's ability to take part in all matters concerning statecraft and war,⁹²⁸ and his colleague Badoero in 1557 admiringly reported that Juana managed the government more like a man than a woman.⁹²⁹ The Habsburgs in turn did not see their princesses as masculine. They were appointed as women and treated as princesses. Even Mary expressed her skills as a nurturing sister when Charles returned to the Low Countries. During his 1553 campaign it was reported that 'the Emperor is in good health, and leaves Mons in Hainault for the camp, accompanied by the Regent, who, as she has been a good and necessary minister for the government of these countries, so is she the best nurse that ever he had.'⁹³⁰

Pride and self-assurance, unavoidable in the princesses because they were themselves exposed to the same propaganda regarding their family's superiority throughout their lives, were also often judged as negative qualities in women. Juana was certainly considered a proud woman, and apparently for good reason. Geoffrey Parker cites Juana's testimony during Bartolomé Carranza's trial in 1562, when Juana answered the Inquisitors' question about her age by saying that she was fifty, although she was twenty-seven at the time.⁹³¹ Her refusal to remarry was in some cases seen as a sign

⁹²⁵ Christopher F. Laferl and Christina Lutter, "Innere" und "äußere" Autonomie einer Fürstin der Frühen Neuzeit. Maria von Ungarn am Beginn ihrer niederländischen Statthalterschaft (1531-1534),' *Frühneuzeit-Info* 8/2 (1997), 175.

⁹²⁶ Bornate, *Vita*, 268.

⁹²⁷ Kight to Wolsey 24 Sept. 1515, LP 2, nr. 945.

⁹²⁸ *Relazioni* I - I, 299.

⁹²⁹ Relazione di Federico Badoero nel 1557, *Relazioni* I - III, 249.

⁹³⁰ The Bishop of Norwich to the Council, Brussels 10 Sep. 1553, *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Mary 1553-1558*, ed. William B. Turnbull (London: 1861), nr. 33.

⁹³¹ Parker, *Imprudent king*, 159.

of contempt, that she considered the candidates beneath her.⁹³² To sum up, the mixed expectations resulted in mixed evaluations, but some permanent values prevailed. The above chapters have demonstrated that not just the regencies, but already the royal marriages, required a considerable amount of tact and adaptation from the princesses. Their behaviour was directly reflected in their reputation, albeit variously among their contemporaries and in later years. Juana's bold answer was also meant to convey that she considered herself out of the marriage market, because at the age of fifty she would have been past her fertile years. It appears that with all three of the princess regents, contemporaries viewed their refusal to remarry as signs of pride and stubbornness. However, they all evidently consciously chose the regency over marriage and motherhood, realising they could not combine them.

Mary of Hungary was an undeniable success story of formal learning, even when her schooling was motivated by the same aim of preparing her for a successful queenship that influenced all the princesses' upbringing. Even with her encouraging example, the Habsburg regent princesses are a further example of the rocky road encountered by humanists in educating and reforming royals. For instance, Margaret of Austria's childhood and her court might well have given rise to opportunities to educate witty young women in the spirit of the chivalric romances so resented by the humanists, which according to Joan Kelly was much more beneficial to young women than the their rigid advice.⁹³³ On the other hand, such active advocates of female regency as Mercurino di Gattinara were still interested in humanist learning, even though the thought of advancing the common good through one dynasty was rather far from Erasmus's thinking.⁹³⁴

The emphasis on proper conduct and the skills attached to the arts over any type of formal education for princesses is evident. Following the conventional codes of conduct had its advantages. Although seemingly submissive servants of their dynasty's interests, the princesses still found themselves on unsteady ground when stepping into the role regent as women. They all could have been targets of malicious rumours, and they certainly survived for than a few such rumours. Margaret's experience of flirting with Duke of Suffolk, as recounted above, shows that even the playful affairs of princess regents could cause international conflicts. Additionally, the close advisors of noble women were almost always suspected of having some degree of intimacy with the ladies in question, and although Margaret and Gattinara seemed to have avoided such rumours, there is speculation

⁹³² Report to Catherine de Medici, Madrid 9 March 1562, Louis Prosper Gachard, *La Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris, Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits qui concernent l'histoire de Belgique II* (Bruxelles: Hayez, 1877), 157.

⁹³³ Kelly, Joan, 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?' in *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

⁹³⁴ Headley, 'Gattinara, Erasmus and the imperial configuration of Humanism,' 95-6.

that her confidant, the Count of Hochstraaten, was the subject of her romantic poetry.⁹³⁵ Juana's relation with Father Borgia caused gossips.⁹³⁶ So, it was necessary to behave according to the social norms and maintain an image that was exemplary and admirable, friendly and hospitable, without anything that might hurt the reputation of the regent and her family.

Yet, the time spent learning how to be the perfect brides to princes clearly took time away from the princesses' other studies. Music and dancing apparently took up a great deal of time. Literary pursuits were more in the direction of teaching governmental skills, and the teaching of foreign languages was also important. The educational programme concerning languages was indeed quite pragmatic, though, and it seems that if there were no fixed marriage treaties, language studies were then forgotten. Mary of Hungary's studies were clearly a result of her position as the queen of a multilingual people, whose languages were not similar to her mother tongue. Thus, although Mary is a dashing example of a woman putting her studies to good use, the motivation was still purely dynastic. She is also a model example of the fact that once this occurred, even if by accident, it was not appreciated by those who seemingly supported learning.

Since Margaret of Austria left for the court of France in 1482, her family was scattered around the courts of Europe. From a dynastic standpoint, the presence of Habsburgs in different regions of Europe and the family ties acquired through marriages created a great potential for expansion, but it also gave rise to insecurity. Charles V's power did not manifest itself only in vast domains, but also in the ability to control his dynasty and particularly his immediate family in a way that Emperor Maximilian was unable to do. As a result, while Maximilian's daughter became a political figure, Charles's daughters were more active within their family. The use of family in the composite monarchy had a profound effect on all members of the family and dominated all the decisions made regarding them: their reputation, their education and their possibilities to find the means to support their regencies. The family alone would have not made such an impact; it was the family that used its hereditary claim for power to legitimate its actions and acted based on a family-wide network to rule and control the dominions acquired via that network that made the Habsburgs so imposing.

The chapters on the three regents have shown how each of the princesses adapted to the evolving political constellations. The institution of regency also developed and adapted to fit the regents' capabilities and experience. I have shown that the princess regents performed their tasks within the tradition of medieval queenship, despite the expansion of the Habsburg Empire towards unforeseen overseas power. However, at the same time the

⁹³⁵ Winn, 'Marguerite of Austria and her complaintes,' 158; Strelka, *Der burgundische Renaissancehof*, 55.

⁹³⁶ Marcel Bataillon, *Études sur le Portugal au temps de l'humanisme* (Coimbra: Université de Coïmbre, 1952), 275.

sovereign queens of England were negotiating their path towards female kingship.

Medieval queenship included the notion, that 'the queen shared something of the masculine aspect of royalty that was not open to other women'.⁹³⁷ According to Carole Levin, this view was shared also by Queen Elizabeth, who 'may have yielded that modesty, simplicity, and obedience were acceptable behavioural traits for other women, but she refused to accept them for a queen'.⁹³⁸ It was indeed Elizabeth who showed, that princess regents did share the speciality of queenship, when she playfully suggested in 1564 to the Spanish ambassador, that she could live with princess Juana of Austria as a couple, because 'how well so young a widow and a maiden would get on together, and what a pleasant life they could lead. She (the Queen) being elder would be the husband, and her Highness the wife.'⁹³⁹ However, as a regent Juana had her companion in the ruler she was representing.

The participation of the princesses described in this work demonstrates that the princess regency was a part of female activity within the dynasty. Charles V's will testified to the fact that the princesses were firmly in their place in the patriarchal system. His daughters were behind his son in the hereditary order, but before his brother Ferdinand. In the Low Countries, the first executor of his will was his sister Mary.⁹⁴⁰ Ensuring the male hereditary line mattered the most, and everyone in the family, regardless of gender, was to work towards this end.

In association with the success of their upbringing and education as regents, the princesses very likely also evaluated themselves in other respects as competent governors. Despite gaining their reputation as regents, they were dowager princesses and queens as well, often keeping an eye on the issues concerning their previous marriages. Margaret's diplomatic role towards Ferdinand of Aragon and her concern over her possessions and building projects in Savoy, Mary's wealth and interests in Hungary and Bohemia, and finally Juana's position as the mother of the King of Portugal were all vital interests of the princesses and shaped their identities. Furthermore, they had a presence as significant members of their family both in the court where they were residing as the guardians of companions or as correspondents keeping contact with those who resided further away. The regents of the Low Countries were a pivotal contact for Archduke Ferdinand, while Juana was a major actor in maintaining the informal connections between the courts of Philip II and Maximilian II. Those roles were the ones they had been prepared for and did not exist separately from their offices as regents, but rather complemented them.

⁹³⁷ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 93.

⁹³⁸ Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 12.

⁹³⁹ Guzman De Silva to Philip II 27 June 1564, CSP Simancas 1, nr. 253.

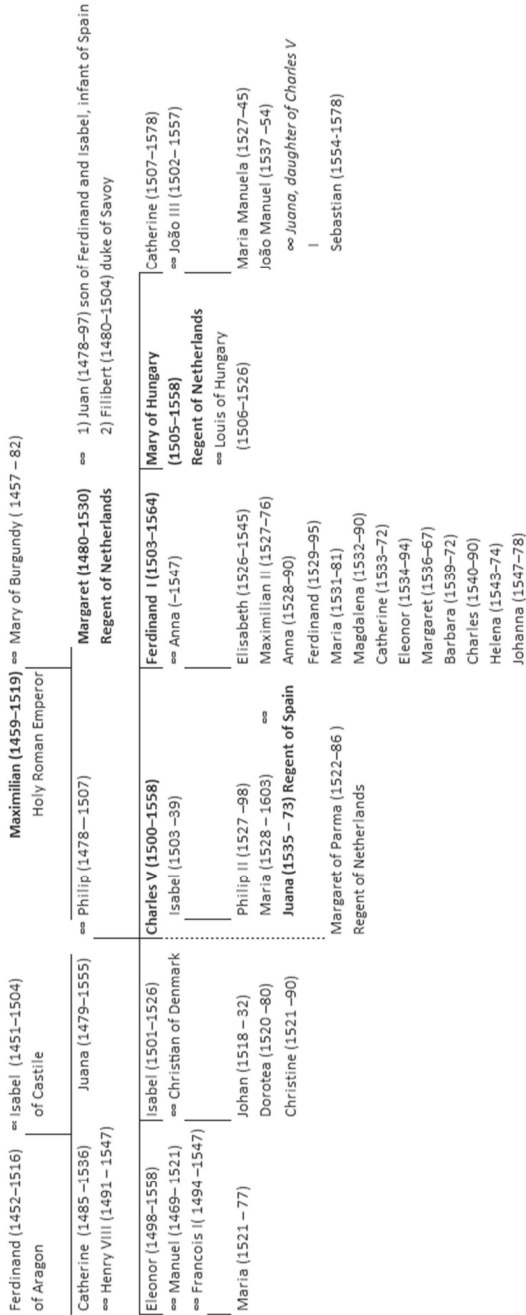
⁹⁴⁰ 'Testamento de Carlos V', 2 June 1554 Brussels, CDCV 4, 94, DCX.

The regencies of Margaret, Mary and Juana show that although gender was of secondary importance when choosing a regent, through their place in the Habsburg dynasty first and foremost as women and princesses, they were able to work with the emperor. There is no doubt that sexual inequality was a fact of life at the time; however, they were certainly not performing as surrogate men, but rather as women and queens. As princess regents, they were able to work, as Mary of Hungary wrote, for 'what is best for our House and the common good of Christendom'.⁹⁴¹ The order of Mary's objectives reveals why they were so well received by their family, but not appreciated among the humanists, who after all also were devoted to the common Christian good. The best and most eloquent evaluation of Mary's regency was made by herself, and yet again, like all her best efforts, it was addressed to Charles in her letter discussing her resignation. The chapters on individual regents show how their work was most appreciated by the ones who they were working for.

Female regency in the Habsburg dynasty was a form of queenship. The princess regents were educated as queens. The evolving nature of queenship and the Habsburg Empire influenced their schooling. Therefore, despite seemingly similar backgrounds, the three princesses, Margaret, Mary and Juana, did not receive a similar education. However, they all aimed at performing their duties according to their family's expectations.

⁹⁴¹ Mary of Hungary to Ferdinand, 1 May 1550. Kohler, *Quellen*, 402, nr.104.

GENEALOGY



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