For a better knowledge of the government of Alessandro Farnese in Flanders, it is necessary to know his political career and the connexions that he maintained with the court in Madrid; even, it is essential to understand the evolution of the factional fights there during the reign of Philipp II whose had their reflections in Brussels. According to this, I am going to make a short resume of Alessandro Farnese’s courtisan trayectory before explaining the last seven years of his life.

The commencement of the relationship between the Farnese and Philipp II is located in the year fifteen fiftyfive, with the appointment of Cardinal Caraffa as Pope which caused the beginning of the good relations between Margaretha of Parma and the new monarch. The same year, after a pact with Philipp II, Alessandro, who was ten years old, was sent to the king’s court to serve prince Don Carlos. When they returned to Castille in fifteen fiftynine, the ebolist court faction appeared as the ruling political group and Alessandro, as his mother had done, get bound to them.

The prince of Parma studied in Alcalá de Henares together with Don Carlos and Don Juan de Austria, starting a close friendship with the last one and accompanying him to almost all the places where Don Juan was. This idilic situation broke up with the decline of the influence of the ebolist faction around fifteen sixtyfive and the summit of the albist court faction, and with the promotion of Cardinal Espinosa. With the new courtisan situation, Farnese was forced to leave Madrid for some years in which his mother appointed his marriage with María of Portugal. The wedding was celebrated in Brussels in november fifteen sixtyfive but Alessandro had never agreed his mother election and there appeared the first disagreements between them, which were going to be reproduced years after. In fifteen sixtyseven Farnese tried to serve in the army which was going to be carried to the Low Countries by the duke of Alba but Philipp II did not concede this to him because of the ideological differences between the two nobles.

A few years after, Farnese improved his political position due to the factional changes which started to occur in the court of Madrid during the first years of the seventies with the arising of the papist faction, heir of the ebolist one, to which Farnese got bounded. This group imposed their ideas and this let Farnese to join the expedition of the “Holy League” against the turks fighting with them until fifteen seventythree. Once the league was dissolved, Alessandro was forced to go back to his domains in Parma, where he remained until fifteen seventyseven. During these years, Farnese entered in correspondence with the secretary Antonio Pérez, who was appearing as the most powerful patron in the court of Madrid. This relationship allowed Farnese, in his second temptative, to go fighting to Flanders, answering to Don Juan de Austria’s request. Farnese arrived to the Low Countries attended by a large household, composed mostly by italian servants and...
beside Don Juan until his friend’s death. Before this moment, Philipp II’s brother designated him as his successor as governor of the Netherlands.

This post augured Farnese a brilliant future but his connection with the papist faction became a trouble for him since fifteen seventynine after Antonio Pérez’s fall. In that moment the influence of the castellanists was growing and they started to impose a confessional ideology according with the castillian interests, specially after the annexation of Portugal. Farnese could not approach to the new courtisan patrons neither Mateo Vázquez and Juan de Zúñiga nor Juan de Idiáquez, Cristóbal de Moura or the third count of Chinchón. So, he became isolated and he just remained as Netherlands governor because of his military victories but once these decreased, his removal started to be considered.

When Farnese assumed the power in Flanders, the situation was very complicated as Phillip II’s authority had enormously decreased. The division between the loyal provincies and the rebel ones was confirmed in fifteen seventynine for the Unions of Arràs and Utrecht and this rupture got bigger when the rebels nominated the duke of Anjou as sovereign of their territories in the treaty of Plessis-lès-Tours in september twentynine fifteen eighty. On the other side, the archduke Mathias was forced to renounce and to leave Flanders in march fifteen eightyone.

This situation of confrontation made that the provinces and the flemish nobles had to define their position so, a lot of them finished the ambiguity that they had used from the beginning of the Revolt. This affected specially to the members of the moderate faction or malcontents, who decided to returned to Philipp II’s obedience following the example of the lord of La Motte, the first one who did it. This group had had his origin in the duke of Alba times and got his peak during the government of Requesens and Don Juan de Austria, getting to the point to forsake the realist obedience. Their main leaders were the third duke of Aerschot an the lord of Champagney, Granvella’s brother, and they wanted that the important posts in the government were for the flemish and not for the foreigners. This reconciliation was possible mostly due to Farnese’s political ideas which refused the intransigence practiced by the duke of Alba and preferred that the flemish nobles had more political power. Alessandro tried to attract some of these lords with the promise of giving them back their old posts, in which he had great success. Apart of using the administrative charges for fitting in those elites, Farnese used his household to which joined some nobles like the lord of Haultpenne, as captain of the guard, Noricarmes, the lord of Molembais, in the future count of Solre, and the baron of Villy as gentlemen of the chamber and the lord of Vertaing as chamberlain.

After this reconciliation, Farnese had to faced his confirmation like governor as in Madrid it had been decided to use him only as a military commandant, designing his mother as the new governess. This decision was induced by cardinal Granvelle who since...
again in Madrid requested by Philipp II to supervise the functioning of the Monarchy while he stayed in Portugal. Margaretha of Parma arrived to Flanders in June fifteen eighty and then started intense negotiations between mother and son for distributing the power. The agreement was impossible and Margaretha had to return to Parma, being Alessandro confirmed as governor in December fifteen eightytwo. His military victories had increased his prestige and showed him as the best candidate. Among the Flemish people that supported Margareta of Parma we find Pierre-Ernest Mansfeld, an old friend of hers, which was the origin of the polemic relationship that maintained years later the Duke of Parma with Mansfeld and his son Charles.

Once he was confirmed as governor, Farnese started to define the people he was going to use for carrying out his political projects; among them were outstanding his secretary Cosme Massi and Jehan Richardot. The first one, following the trajectory of other governors private secretaries as Armenteros, Albornoz or Escobedo, intervened in financial and state affairs. As to Richardot, his political opportunism took him to a high position in the governor’s trust despite he supported the States General between fifteen seventy-six and fifteen seventy-eight, getting big relevance in state and juridical affairs. Not as close as them but also enjoying the governor’s grace we find the Lord of La Motte and, despite of his youth, Philippe of Croy, first Lord of Molembais and then count of Solre. As for the malcontents, Farnese tried to involved them in his projects but with the passage of time they started to complain because the governor trusted more other people so Aerschot, Havré and, specially, Champagney would faced up to Farnese at the end. Finally, was notable Juan Bautista de Tassis, Don Juan de Austria’s adviser during his government in Flanders and one of the most important hispanic ministers in France in the time of Farnese’s government. At the beginning the relationship between them was very good but later some problems took them to the confrontation.

Once his government was configured, Alessandro Farnese concentrated his efforts in the fight against the rebel troops, task in which he had great success because he obtained many victories thanks to the changes in the Royal Finances in fifteen seventy-eight and fifteen seventy-nine, that allowed to support the expenses of the military campaigns, and also due to the reforms that Farnese made in the army to avoid the riots. This “Reconquista”, together with the deaths in fifteen eighty-four of the Duke of Anjou and William of Orange, forced England to send a contingent of soldiers to the Low Countries. This is the situation we find in Flanders in fifteen eighty-five, the moment when started to appear the changes in the monarchy yet mentioned that would reflect in the Netherlands.

From fifteen eighty-five to fifteen eighty-eight –

Fifteen eighty-five was the culminating year of the Farnese’s “Reconquista”, when he recovered for the royal domain cities as Bruges, Brussels and specially Antwerp.
the most important harbour of the Netherlands meant the Farnese’s highest moment, as it looked to show the granting for him of the order of the golden fleece. This, together with the conciliatory mood that the king was showing concerning the Netherlands, seemed a good sign for the governer. Nevertheless, reality was different and the duke of Parma had to faced many conflicts with the hispanic ministers who were in Flanders treating the affairs about France and with the flemish advisers. This was a consequence of the delicate position he had in Madrid court and the impression that all of them had that he was favouring the italian nation instead of others. Two examples of this situation were the concession of the title of chivalry general to the marquis of el Vasto, instead of the one of Renty, and the grant of the captaincy of his personal guard to Pierre Francisco Nireli, his High Marshal, after the death of the lord of Haultpenne in fifteen eightyseven.

As to the conflicts with the castillian ministers entrusted in french affairs, these were caused because of their political differences. It was not advisable for Farnese to confront them because the recent events in the neighbour kingdom, with Philipp’s II decision of intervene and help the new Catholic League after the treaty of Joinville in december fifteen eightyfour, increased the relevance of those ministers and their opinion was well considered in Madrid. In that moment, the main advisers were Juan Bautista de Tassis, Comendador Moreo and Bernardino de Mendoza, who was just designed as ambassador in France after being expelled from England. All of them were connected in some way to Juan de Idiáquez and then to the castellanist court faction, so they supported an agressive policy towards France. Farnese, on the other side, wanted to avoid an intervention there because this would rest resources to the army in the Low Countries. These opposite interests caused that the confrontation among them was constant and unavoidable. The first conflict appeared when Tassis showed his intention of being designed as member of the council of State in Flanders and also when he wanted to take up the post of Veedor General, title that he had just received. Farnese denied both requests, mostly the second, because would have meant the end of the monopoly that his close advisers had in the finances administration. These advisers, comanded by Cosme Massi, were the contadores Pedro Coloma and Alonso Carnero as well as the auditor general Alonso de Salinas. In this conflict, Tassis had two supports: the first one was Comendador Moreo, that criticized Farnese when he was in Madrid court in february fifteen eightyseven because of some affaires concerning the Catholic League. The other one was Jerónimo Torellán, Juan de Idiáquez’s “creature” and old assistant of the Veedor General in fifteen seventy nine and eighty, Juan de Acuña Vela. The conflict took some years because although Tassis took up the post of Veedor in december fifteen eightysix, his work was not respected and the confrontations were constant until february fifteen eightyeight when an agreement was taken. Only the preparations for the Armada and the campaign of the army of Flanders in Lorraine made that the conflicts were interrupted.
As for the problems that Farnese had with some Flemish advisers, they appeared because those ministers did not feel appreciated and they did not have the governor’s trust as Cosme Massi or Jehan Richardot had. The main dissatisfied advisers were Champagney, Aerschot and Pierre-Ernest Mansfeld. The first of them, after being liberated in fifteen eightyfour by the rebels after six years in prison, began to ask for any administrative charge. The chance appeared when Farnese took Antwerp and offered him the possibility of recovering his old post as governor of the city, as well as the charge of *Chef des finances*. Despite the Farnese’s efforts about maintaining a good relationship with him, Champagneny did not get satisfied and was in opposition to the governor the next years. As to Aerschot, he was demanding from the king a favour due to his fortyfive years of royal service. He aspired to become a member of the *Conseil des Finances* but Farnese opposed it to avoid his possible alliance there with the count of Aremberg. This, together with the election of Mansfeld as the one who would imposed the order of the golden fleece to Farnese and would act as governor during the Farnese’s absence for the Armada campaign, made him furious. Finally, Farnese made all his best to had good relations with Pierre-Ernest Mansfeld but it was obvious that Mansfeld’s son, Charles, was an obstacle for this purpose because of his ambitions. Farnese did not trust him but he tried in all the ways not to upset Charles, so he granted him some favours as the title of artillery chef but it was not enough to calm him.

Nevertheless, despite of these differences, the governor trusted more Mansfeld than Aerschot so when Philipp II confirmed Farnese the Armada campaign the governor chose Mansfeld as temporary governor. This was a problematic election because this honour was supposed to be given to the adviser with the highest noble title which was not Mansfeld but Aerschot. In order to avoid the complaints of the last one, Farnese suggested the king to send him to the Empire in the moment of the campaign with the excuse of treating several affairs with Rudolph II. The council of State in Madrid approved his proposal so in November fifteen eightyseven Aerschot was sent there and ambassador Guillén de San Clemente tried to prolong his stay until the Armada campaign was on. Nevertheless, Aerschot noticed Farnese’s ideas and in may fifteen eightyeight left Prague in order to coming back to Flanders. He could not be retained neither by Guillén de San Clemente nor the count of Olivares in Rome, arriving to the Netherlands in june. With this plot, Farnese got Aerschot’s hostility and after all he did not even get Mansfeld’s friendship.

All these conflicts obstructed governor’s preparations for the enterprise of the Armada, which was an old aspiration of the ebolist and papist factions since the duke of Alba was the governor of Flanders. Nevertheless, in this moment, the idea was promoted for the castellanist court faction while one papist as Farnese wanted to avoid it because the Armada would distract troops for the fight against the rebels. The factional situation in Madrid court, really favourable for the castellansists, made possible that the Armada was sent and Farnese’s opinion was considered.
It is not our intention to value Farnese’s behaviour towards the Armada breakdown because it has been analyzed for several historians. All of them agreed that the duke of Parma was not the principal responsible of the failure but it is interesting to notice that this event was the beginning of Farnese’s decline. His enemies, who had kept silent about his resignation because of Farnese’s military successes, started to criticize him and to ask for his removal, what they would obtained three years after.

Farnese made a great effort in order to prepare his troops since the moment that he knew that Philippe II had ordered the attack. Nevertheless, since the end of fifteen eightyseven, appeared rumours about his few enthusiasm towards the Armada and he had to defend of them. His enemies in Madrid made good use of the critics that Moreo, Bernardino de Mendoza and Juan Bautista de Tasiss made about him, with Mansfeld, Aerschot and Champagney would made bitterer. Even the Pope Sixtus the fifth censured Farnese’s opinions about the peace negotiations with England.

Once the moment of the departure was approaching, the duke of Parma started to organize the government in the Netherlands during his absence designing Mansfeld as temporary governor and Moreo as his assistant in the negotiations with the duke of Lorraine and Guisa concerning to the Catholic League in France. The situation, as we can see, was auspicious for the attacks again Farnese and they needed just an excuse. The perfect pretext was the Armada breakdown and with the first rumours about the defeating the accusations towards Farnese started to appear in four different fields: Flanders, Italy, France and Madrid.

In Flanders, Mansfeld threw the hardest attacks because of the precary situation in which the duke of Parma had left him the government and the limited number of troops that he had available. His critics were listened in Madrid thanks to his agent in that court Gilles du Faing. Besides the temporary governor, Farnese was criticized by other people as Champagney or Pedro Zubiaurre.

The duke of Parma received critics in several parts of Italy and, as an example, the duke of Saboye offered himself as Flanders governor.

In France, the attacks were directed by Moreo, Juan Bautista de Tassis and Bernardino de Mendoza.

Finally, in Madrid, Medina Sidonia’s circle of friends tried to defend him blaming against Alessandro Farnese, that had a worse courtisan situation. Although Philipp II and Juan de Idiáquez told Farnese that they still trusted him, in fact they did not.

Farnese tried to preserve his reputation with the help of his creatures in Flanders in order to attack Mansfeld. The same way, he sent the count Nicolo de Cessis, gentlemen of his chamber, to Rome with the excuse of his uncle’s, cardinal Farnese, illness but with the objective of justify Farnese’s actions. As well, he sent several reports to Madrid, insinuating that he was going to ask for the change and leave the general governor post. Yet in fifteen eightyfive he had threatened with
this after his father’s death as his son, Ranuccio, was very young. Nevertheless, the adveniment of
the Armada made him postpone his demand but the failure of the enterprise and the critics against
him returned his idea of renounced. Philipp II and Idiáquez’s letters ceased the sent of his reports
and, instead, Farnese decided to send Richardot to Madrid to defend his opinions. However, despite
these attempts, his image suffered a loss of credibility and the Armada breakdown was the beginning
of his political decline.

From fifteen eightynine to fifteen ninetytwo –

After the Armada, Farnese tried to improve his image obtaining a great victory against the
rebels using the army he had gathered to be sent to England. Nevertheless, the winter came and he
could not get his objective. This was the reason why the attacks against him grew in fifteen eightynine, even from people who had never criticized him as the duke of Pastrana and the prince of
Ascoli. Also complained about him the colonel Verdugo and Champagney.

With this damage of his image, Farnese decided to send one of his main advisers, Richardot,
to Madrid. However, he could not cease the rumours and neither avoid the order to Farnese to enter
in France with the army, something that he did not want to do in order to maintain the troops in
Flanders. Despite the big efforts of the duke, the council of State in Madrid decided to support the
french Catholic League that had lost their leader after the duke of Guisa was murdered and cardinal
Bourbon’s death. Their situation got better with the hispanic support and when they found a new
leader, Charles of Mayenne, Guisa’s brother. The duke of Parma sent one thousand and eight
hundred men comanded by count of Egmont at the beginning of fifteen ninety. This army was
defeated in the battle of Ivry in march fourteen, diying the flemish noble. This failure origined new
critics against Farnese as many flemish considered he had sent Egmont to a certain death and they
demanded from the governor a more determined intervention. In order to get it, Philipp II proposed
Sixtus the fifth to support militarily the Catholic League but the Pope, who was indeed fond of
upholding the League, did not want to send an army, and until the brief pontificate of Gregory the
fourteenth Rome did not send troops to France.

Farnese’s ideas were going against the current again and in consequence he received new
critics, but he respected the royal decision and started the preparations for the military intervention,
meeting Mayenne in may fifteen ninety.

During the preparations, Farnese insisted in defeat in the first place to the flemish rebels in
order to concentrate after in France. Also in Madrid the necessity of neutralising them was also
being considered but instead of military intervention they decided better to start negotiations with
the emperor, some german princes or the Pope as intermediaries. However, the beginning of these
conversations was delayed and when the Empire emissaries arrived Flanders in the last days of
fifteen ninetyone was impossible to reach and agreement.
Farnese departed to France in August fifteen ninety commanding a numerous army, leaving again Mansfeld as temporary governor. Many historias have written about the campaign so I am not going to talk about it. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the importance of this first intervention in France in Farnese’s courtisan situation because, although he got the main objectives, it meant his definitive political decline. The reason was that after helping Paris, Farnese decided to come back to Brussels despite of the demands of the Catholic League and Philipp II’s ministers that asked him to stay in France. The duke of Parma sent Alonso de Idíaquez, the secretary’s son, to Madrid in order to defend his ideas but it did not work.

The hardest critics, in this moment, came from Comendador Moreo, who attacked the half-harted efforts the duke made about the intervention in France and also the excess of use of the italian nation in the government. This critics got worst when he started approaching the jesuit Antonio Crespo de Molina, who had arrived Flanders after being in the Armada and was a Madrid Council of State spy. He became an important adviser during Farnese, Fuentes and Ernesto’s government, being also the confessor of the last two. One of Moreo’s letters was intercepted by Henry of Bearn, who sent it to Farnese provoking again the controversy between the two of them. Only comendador’s death the thirty of August fifteen ninety in an hugonout ambush finished this confrontation.

At the same time, the duke of Parma had to attend his fight against Mansfeld, whose triggered off was the difficult relationship between Farnese and his creatures in one side and Charles Mansfeld in another. Before the departure to France, Charles refused to be present in the expedition comanding the artillery because he was upset for the appointment of the lord of La motte as Maestre general de campo instead of him. He preferred to stay in Brussels in order to prosper during his father’s provisional status as governor. Farnese, of course, was opposite to this idea and insisted in his obligation of going to France but Charles left the military camp and refused his charge in the artillery. So, the duke of Parma departed without him and substituted Charles for the Lord of la Motte as chef of the artillery. Pierre-Ernest Mansfeld defended his son, and also Philipp II did when he let Charles to stay in Brussels, so Farnese felt completely discredited.

After the first entrance in France, the precarious situation of the Spanish Monarchy in Flanders and in France forced Philipp II to take several decisions in order to change the situation in the last months of fifteen ninety and the first ones of fifteen nineteyone. The first one was the substitution of Bernardino de Mendoza for Diego de Ibarra, Idíaquez’s creature, who had to watch over Farnese’s actions in addition to being ambassador in France. When Ibarra arrived to the Netherlands contacted the governor’s enemies as Juan Bautista de Tassis or the Mansfeld and started to criticize the work of the financial officials as Pedro Coloma and the brothers Carnero.
Another Philipp II’s decision was asking Farnese in August fifteen ninety-one the creation of a *Junta* for the financial studies, composed by Juan de Lastur, J. B. Tassis, pagador Gabriel de Santistebean, Richardot and Diego de Ibarra. However, this never became a reality until fifteen ninety-four because of the incoming of the second intervention in France and the small interest of Farnese in it cause it was against his ministers.

The last Philipp II’s measure was to force the second duke of Parma’s entry in France, after decide that her daughter, Isabel Clara Eugenia, should aspire to the French crown getting married with the archduke Ernest. This business acquired the priority in the foreign affairs of the monarchy and the king ordered the ambassador Guillén de San Clemente that he should start negotiations with the emperor Rudolph II to allow the marriage. Together with this, the king sent the second duke of Feria, elected by Idiáquez because of his castellanist ideas, as ambassador in the States General which were going to treat the affaire in Paris and Íñigo de Mendoza, marquis of Mondejar’s brother, as jurist for solving the problems created by the French Salic Law. The two of them met Diego de Ibarra and Juan Bautista de Tassis in Flanders in fifteen ninety-two and passed to Paris but their mistakes and divergences made them be unsuccessful.

The governor of the Netherlands, of course, was again out of keeping with the idea of entering again in France but he could not avoid it. Now, he joined with the assistance of his son Ranuccio, who arrived in Flanders in July fifteen ninety-one, and with the papal army comanded by Hercules Sfrondato, count of Montemarciano and pope’s nephew. The precedence problems between Farnese, Mayenne and the count of Montemarciano showed again that the duke of Parma did not enjoy of supports in Rome court or in Madrid one.

Here I should make an interruption to outline that the armed intervention of the papal troops in France corroborated the interest of Rome to influence in the events of the north of Europe. This was confirmed with the dispatch to Flanders of Jerónimo Matteucci as general comisary of the papal army in the Netherlands, of Inocencio Malvasia in fifteen ninety-three, who can be considered as the first papal nuncio in Flanders, and of Ottavio Mirto Frangipani in fifteen ninety-six. Until this moment, it had never been a nunciature in the Low Countries, wich depend of the one in Cologne, although Gregory the thirteenth sent Filippo Sega to Flanders in fifteen seventy-seven with the attributions of a permanent nuncio but he remained just for a few months. This interest was taking up again a few years after but it was not until the government of the archduke Ernest when the nuntiature of Brussels was founded.

The fifteen of November fifteen ninety-one, Farnese departed for France leaving Mansfeld again as temporary governor. This election produced controversy now that the Croy family, directed by Aerschot and supported by Havré and Aremberg, did not accept being governed again for the luxemburgois noble. It was obvious that Farnese was going to find a difficult situation in Flanders.
when he came back. Sure enough, when the duke of Parma arrived Flanders in July fifteen ninetynine to take the waters in Spa due to his illness, the situation was extremely critical. Not only Mansfeld criticized him but, as well, he desauthorized him in financial affairs and Charles Mansfeld came to blows with the governor’s creatures charges of these affaires. Farnese had a delicate political position and he preferred go directly to Spa, avoiding Mansfelds’s presence. Instead, the duke of Parma acted against Champagney, who had intrigued against him, expelling him from Flanders in October fifteen ninetynine.

Finally, Farnese returned to Brussels in the middle of October and convoqued the collateral councils for the fourteen and eighteen. Mansfeld did not go to the first summons although he was in the second one, where they had a bitter confrontation. The duke of Parma was conscious that his retreat and death were close and decided to write a political testament to his son Ranuccio where he explained his thoughts and ideas and where he asked his son for taking care of his memory. Farnese left Brussels in November for preparing the third intervention in France, as was ordered by Philipp II, but he did not enter in the adjacent kingdom because he died the third of December. His death did not allow him that his relief was yet decided one year ago.

The Farnese’s relief –

As we have seen, Farnese had requested his relief as governor in fifteen eightysix. However, Philip II denied it because he was necessary for the Armada campaign. Its failure and Alessandro’s disobedience during the first intervention in France made change king’s ideas. Since fifteen eightynine there were conversations around Farnese’s relief but this was not decided until December fifteen ninetynine.

The critics concerning his management had been growing, not just for the people who has been his enemies from the beginning, but there appeared three priests working like spies in Flanders. The first of them was Antonio Crespo, yet mentioned, the second one was Fray Baltasar Delgado, who was in the Netherlands with the official mission of obtain the relic of Saint Lawrence’s head which was in a german abbey but actually working as informer of the council of State, and in the last place Fray Pedro Aimerich, Saint Andrew in Bruges abbot, who in fifteen ninetynine travelled to Madrid for carrying the relic of Saint Philipp’s foot but whose real intentions were to support Manfeld’s ideas at the spanish court.

All these critics and intrigues materialized in December fifteen ninetynine represented in the decision of Farnese’s removal. The motifs and the people chosen by Philip II for carrying out his plans are described in Cabrera de Cordoba’s chronicle: the loss of prestige of the duke of Parma was clear and the opinions showed in the council of State by Hernando de Toledo and Juan de Idiáquez made Philipp II choose cardinal Andrew of Austria, archduke Fernando’s son, as the new governor. The chosen one for communicating Farnese this notice was Juan Pacheco Osorio.
marquis of Cerralbo, which was in Torino at the moment. The messenger received his public and secret instructions dated in the thirty one of December fifteen ninetyone with the communication that he should go to Flanders in order to notify Farnese that he should travel to Madrid for informing the king about several important questions concerning to the Monarchy. In those instructions appeared many options depending of Farnese´s reaction but in all of them he should leave Flanders with Mansfeld as temporary governor. As well, Cerralbo should inform Andrew of Austria about he had been chosen as new governor and he should travel to Flanders when Farnese had left the Low Countries in order to avoid emulations. At last, the instructions established that if Mansfeld died before Andrew´s arriving, Cerralbo should govern together with the Conseil d´État.

The marquis of Cerralbo started his journey from Saboye in February fifteen ninetytwo but his mission was interrumpted because he died on march the twentyeight, when he was still in Italy. This set back delayed for a few months Farnese´s relief but in june it had been chosen a substitute, who was going to be the definitive, to carry out this mission. He was Pedro Enríquez, the count of Fuentes, who was also in Saboye and would have great importance in Flanders affaires. He was commended for doing, exactly, the same job as Cerralbo with identical instructions. The only difference was that in that case the new governor was going to be the archduke Ernest of Austria instead Andrew. This new election was made, according to Cabrera de Córdoba, due to the strong personality of cardinal´s father and also because of the unknowing of Andrew´s attitude. Nevertheless, we considere that the real motifs that produced this changement were the possibility that Isabel Clara Eugenia obtained the french crown married to Ernest, as well as favouring the peace negotiations with the rebels.

Fuentes started his journey at the beginning of October and soon this was known in the Netherlands. Farnese made his best not to meet him and left Brussels in November the nineteenth with the excuse of prepare the army in Arrás for the third intervention in France. In November twentythree Fuentes arrived Brussels finding that the governor was absent and he could not meet him because the duke of Parma died in the night of December the second. Despite of Philip II´s displeasure about Farnese´s work in his last years, he tried to keep in secret his last intention of removing him. All the decisions were taken in secret and one example of this is that until Ernest did not arrive to Flanders there were rumours in several european courts about the name of Farnese´s succesor.

This was the dishonorable ending of one of Philipp II´s best generals caused by the discredit in wich he had fallen in the last years of his life due to the unfavourable, for him, courtisan changes in Madrid which were producing in that time.