Archduke Albert was one of the most important actors of Philip II’s and Philip III’s reign and the study of his household, its structure and the political circumstances that surrounded its evolution, could help us to know much more about his political career.

Albert was born in Neustadt the thirteenth November of fifteen fifty nine and he was the ninth son of the emperor Maximilian the second and the empress Mary, so Philip II’s nephew. When he was only eleven years old, he was sent to Madrid, together with his brother Wenceslas, for being educated in the orthodox catholic principles that Philip II wanted for the future emperors and, maybe, heirs of the Spanish crown. His sister Mary was very helpful in this strategy.

In the Spanish Court were, since fifteen sixty four, his brothers Rudolf and Ernest, with a household mostly composed for imperial servants with Adam of Dietrichstein as high steward. Nevertheless, what was valid for the elder brothers was not going to be for the youngers and Philip II decided to shape their household with castilian servants. Despite of this idea, the emperor compose their sons´ entourage with imperial servants, what was to be change in Madrid. Their household was smaller that the one which accompanied the archduchess Ana, who made the travel with them for getting married with Philip II.

The Journey of the three emperors´ children took place between July and October of fifteen seventy, passing through the Netherlands, and when they arrived to Madrid, they passed to Segovia where Philip and Ana got married. In that castilian city, started the process for composing the archdukes´ household, in which was very important the factional situation of the Spanish Court.

The “albist” faction, which had been the hegemonic one until a few years ago, had declined since his “patron”, the Duke of Alba, was sent to the Netherlands in fifteen sixty seven. His absent was exploited by the Cardinal Espinosa for promoting in the administration, thanks to the politic of confessionalitation of the monarchy. But, after fifteen seventy Espinosa´s influence declined and the components of the old “ebolista” faction took the power again. With this situation it is easy to suppose that the shape of the archdukes´ household was going to be controlled by components of the last courtly faction; specially by the secretary Gaztelu and don Juan de Ayala, who was nominated as its “ayo” and high steward. Between the two of them, they decided the structure of the household and they chose the names of the servants. On the other hand, Espinosa could control the composition of the household of the new queen Ana.

The new service started his functioning on the first of may in fifteen seventy one and was composed by seventy servants plus the pages, although some of them had more than one office. We know the name of all of them since the beginning till the end of fifteen seventy six thanks to the documentation that we keep in the Archivo General de Simancas, in the Contaduría Mayor de
Cuentas section, bundle thousand and twenty four. Analysing its composition, we could assert that their household was comparable with the ones that the young infantes received and inferior to the ones that the heirs, as for example Don Carlos, had. So, the household did not receive sections as the guards or the hunting or some of them were very reduced as the stables, in which was just important the house of the pages, or the chapel, compose just for the confessor, Gómez Manrique, and the camarero George of Austria, because the archdukes could use the queen or the king ones.

The wages were not very high if we compare them with the ones in the king and the queen households. For example, the high steward, don Juan of Ayala, had three hundred and seventy five thousand maravedis when the ones of the king and the queen obtained one million. That is the first reason which explained us that some servants had more than one office. The other reason is that the short age of the archdukes and its few possessions made unnecessary that some sections as the cellar, the wardrobe or other offices had big relevance, and one servant could exercise several occupations at the same time.

Part of the components of this entourage served for the first time in a royal household, but practically the half part of them had served before in other three households: twelve german people that came with the archdukes from the empire, because of the exigencies of the emperor, other twelve old servants of the deceased heir Don Carlos, and six members of Isabel of Valois’, Philip II’s third wife, household. The members of the last two groups, when the heir and the queen died, received a pension or “juro” for all their life or until they were provided in an office in another royal household. When they passed to the archdukes’ one, they lost their “juros” for receiving the wages of their new offices. Practically all of them obtained a better office that the one they had in their old households but with less salary, so we find the paradox that some of them earned much more money without having an office that when they received it.

After the configuration of their service, the archdukes started their education for being ready when their aunt had chosen a political mission for them. Albert was quite close of being elected as governor of the Netherlands in fifteen seventy six, after Requesens´ death, but the “papist” faction decided that Don Juan of Austria was a better candidate. So, Albert was entitled as cardinal and his name sounded as archbishop of Toledo, although Antonio Pérez preferred Gaspar of Quiroga because of his experience. On the other hand, Wenceslas received some prebends related with the order of the Hospital or Saint John, with the idea of being nominated as the prior of it. Nevertheless, his death in fifteen seventy eight stopped the process.

The year before this death, the service of both archdukes was divided, mostly because of the importance that the archduke Albert was obtaining in the Court. This process still was controlled for the “papist” faction and Albert was provided with offices that his old household did not have.
squires of the table or the ones of the chamber, and other offices that increased its number of members as the camareros, because of his ecclesiastic condition, passing from one servant to five, or the stewards, with the designation of other two together with Juan Pacheco y de Navas, the former one. We do not know exactly the rest of the components of the new service because the documentation of the Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas finishes at the end of fifteen seventy six, but the number and the name of the rest of members in the household should not change so much.

Until this moment, all the reforms of Albert’s household were controlled by the “papist” faction. Nevertheless in fifteen seventy nine started its decline and, although Albert service was a shelter for some of their members, the new courtier situation was shown in some new nominations as the one of Juan de Toledo y del Águila, son of the “castellanist” alcalde de casa y corte Alvar García de Toledo, as page in the year seventy nine. We have to realize as well, that Albert was always closer to the “castellanist” ideas than to the “papist” ones, despite his entourage was controlled by “papist” people. This affinity with the “castellanist” ideas supposed his nomination as Viceroy of Portugal in fifteen eighty three, instead of his mother Mary who supported the contrary ideas, in a moment that this court faction had climbed to the highest peaks of the administration, making good use of the new confessional idea which supported the Monarchy. Philip II wanted his nephew to implant these ideas of confessionalization in Portugal.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the structure and the components of Albert’s viceroyal household is quite incomplete because of the absence of documentation. Thanks to some memorials written by the servants and conserved in the Archivo General de Palacio Real de Madrid and the manuscript A-61 in the Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid, we have located some of the members, always in a partial way, although we can find some interesting conclusions.

According to this, Albert expressed his preference that the members of the household continuing being castilians as before, but Philip II decided to introduce portuguese people, as he had done in his own royal house in Portugal, in order to attract the affection of the territorial elites. So, the higher offices continued being occupied for the same castillian people but there were introduced Portuguese squires and portuguese offices as the crucífero or abreviador, occupied for the famous Roco de Campofrío. Albert learnt this lection and, as we shall see, he used his household in Flanders with this purpose. Another measurement was to provide the household with sections that it did not have before, because they were not considered as important, as the hunting or the guards, with an halberdier unit, and complete some others small sections as the stables, with Luis Enríquez as first high marshal, or the chapel.

Once Albert finished his mission in Portugal, where he had been for ten years, he returned to Madrid in fifteen ninety three, for helping his aunt in the government. Before leaving, he fixed that the rents of the lucrative Priorato of Crato were going to be administrated
With those rents, together with the ones of Toledo and Sigüenza that he obtained during those years, Albert had an important economic source for reward his entourage, what was an important reclaim for future servants.

Albert made the Journey to Madrid with his entire household and other servants, suite compose by nearly four hundred people, between august and September and his arrival to Madrid provoked a great disturbance because some royal servants had to let their own houses for accommodate Albert’s entourage. When Albert arrived to Madrid, he entered directly in the Council of State and in the Junta de Gobierno, appearing as the main important public figure together with the heir Philippe. But the dispatch of the affaires was not the only motive that moved Philip II to recall his nephew, there were another two more: the dinasticism and the archbishopric of Toledo.

According with his importance, the different courtier factions tried to attract Albert, but the “castellanists” had an important advantage because Philip II ordered Moura to be close of the archduke, giving him advise. The main reason for taking this decission was that the king did not control the entourage of his nephew, after ten years of absence, and the private had to start changing Albert’s household, “por lo asiduo que le veo a sus criados”. Nevertheless, empress Mary obtained the first success in this question, because Hans Khevenhüller, ambassador of the Empire in Madrid, was nominated as high steward and “sumiller de corps”, instead of don Juan de Ayala who was really old and died in fifteen ninety four. With this decision, the empress wanted to control Albert’s entourage and ideas, quite different of her ones, although she did not have success.

During fifteen ninety three and ninety four, Albert’s figure was growing but Idiáquez and, most of all, Moura, tried to oversee his auctions and the distrust between them started to be really clear. In this moment, the situation was similar to the one that we could find in fifteen seventy six, when Don Juan de Austria was in Madrid and Antonio Pérez wanted him outside of the court. So, when his brother Ernest died in january fifteen ninety five, Moura and Idiáquez supported his candidature for being the next governor of Flanders and for marrying him with Isabel Clara Eugenia in order to carry out the Cession of the Netherlands to the two princes married together.

The twenty sixth of april, Albert was chosen as the new governor of the Netherlands and started the shape of his household. There were necessary a lot of preparations before leaving Castilla and they lasted four months, not so much time for a business like this. This was possible because part of the renovation of the household had been done between fifteen ninety three and fifteen ninety five. Practically all the portuguese servants stayed in their reign, except some as the hunter Manuel Pimenta or the cook Antonio de Almeida; and Moura had decided already several changes.

Specially important was the election of the new high steward. Khevenhüller wanted to go with Albert to the Netherlands serving in his two charges but Moura pressed for leaving him in Madrid.
and for divide those offices, what finally happened. Instead of him, Maximilian of Dietrichstein, former high marshal of the archduke Ernest, was entitled as “sumiller de corps” and Francisco de Mendoza, admiral of Aragon, as high steward. He had been at prison for two years after being intermediary in the non sanctioned marriage by the king between Mencía, duke of the Infantado’s daughter, and Antonio Álvarez de Toledo, Alba’s grandson. After his release, he was engaged with doña Mencía de la Cerda, sister of the count of Chinchon. Although the marriage was not celebrated at the end, the count of Chinchon promised Francisco de Mendoza that he would obtained an office in a royal household and, finally, he was designated as Albert’s high steward. His behaviour in Flanders was, sometimes, difficult to understand and the explanation is that his ideas were closer to the “papist” but he owed his office to an important “castellanist” as Chinchon. Nevertheless, he had Albert’s confidence, who supported all his demands.

Together with this two nominations, the rest of the main important offices changed. Philip of Croy, count of Solre, was the new high marshal instead of Luis Enríquez, Pedro de Alarcón was nominated as high chaplain and grand almoner, Fray Íñigo de Brizuela was the confessor, instead of Juan Velázquez de las Cuevas and Fray Juan Vicente who died before taking possession of the office, Pierre of Hénin-Lietard, count of Boussu, was the captain of the guards of halberdiers and archiers, and Luis Dávalos, Cosme de Meneses and Diego de Ibarra were chosen as new stewards. Also, we can find important changes in the secretary with the retirement of Mateo of Otthen, one of the most important servants of Albert, yet he was his preceptor before arriving to Madrid in fifteen seventy and his secretary after; and the designation of Juan de Frías, Mançisidor, Antonio Suárez de Argüello and Westernachen in different occupations.

These replacements were not just related to the main charges and even changed the lesser ones. This happened because of different reasons: the first one is that some of the servants preferred to stay in Madrid and asked for a “merced” or an office in another royal household. There were too many examples as Luis Enríquez, Mateo of Otthen, or the doctor of the chamber Suárez de Luxán, who passed to Margarita’s, Albert sister, household in the Descalzas Reales. Other group of servants died during the Journey to Flanders as Fray Juan Vicente or the squire of the table Enrique Berg. The third group was composed by servants who lost their offices because of their faults or caused by a decision of the Admiral of Aragon as the barber of the personnel Gregorio Pérez.

All these changes favoured the entrance of Flemish people in the household, one of the ideas that Albert had clear about his entourage. It had to contain Flemish for involving the territorial elites in his projects of government and, specially, for the Cession, what was in mind of Philip II and his closer advisers. We have seen already the count of Solre, who was the Flemish who obtained the highest position in the household, and together with him we can find, for example, five archiers de corps of Philip II, Philip of Berghes as groom of the saltery or Cornelis Banicque as member of the
stables. Even, we can find people of other nationalities as the polish Diego Woislawsky, valet of the chamber, or germans as the already mentioned Maximilian Dietrichstein or the halberdiers of the german guard of Philip II Hans Verestol or Matias Linden.

As we can realized, the work of the high steward and of the Bureau was really important and they had serious difficulties for shaping the household, because they had to study a lot of memorials, refused some aspirants to the offices and so on. We know quite well the activities of them thanks to the manuscript A-61 of the Royal Academy of History of Madrid, not only for this period, but even for the next years until fifteen ninety eight. From the factional point of view, it is quite difficult to mark a tendency in this process, because there were nominations of people closer to the “castellanist” ideas, as Juan de Toledo y del Águila or Francisco Campi, and to the “papist” ones, as the count of Solre or Pedro de Toledo.

We can conclude that the renovation of Albert’s service was really deep for two reasons: that the archduke would stop being affected adversely by his servants and for adapting it to his future as sovereign of the Netherlands. In all, the household that left Madrid the twenty sixth of august was composed by two hundred and thirty people, where we should add the two units of guards that linked to them in Flanders, “con que su Alteza dispuso su Casa con poco menos que lustre de Palacio y Casa de Rey”.

The suite arrived to Brussels the eleventh of february in fifteen ninety six and, once in Flanders, seven members of the deceased archduke Ernest household passed to Albert’s one although a lot of them were refused and had to come back to the Empire. Together with this, some Flemish were entering in the household, specially in some offices as the stewards, the squires of the chamber or the squires of the table, which increased their number in order to let them entering. Beside, the naturals entered in the lesser offices when the spanish servants died or came back to Castilla. Nevertheless, we have to realize that most of the important charges remained in Spaniards hands as the high steward.

Also, the different areas suffered changes between fifteen ninety six and fifteen ninety eight. We know quite well this moment thanks to some documentation we keep. Beside of the manuscript A-61, we have two lists of the household, one from fifteen ninety five which is in the Archives Generales du Royaume in the section Papiers d’État et de l’Audience and other from fifteen ninety eight in the Vatican Archives in the Fondo Borghese, and a “Registro de partes de las cosas tocantes a la casa de su Alteza de 1595 a 1598” which is also in the Brussels archive in the section Secretairie d’État et de Guerre. In the definitive text there is an exhaustive description of the changes in the different sections and a list of the members of the household that we know, nearby
four hundred and seventy people, between fifteen seventy and fifteen ninety eight, but due to lack of
time we cannot speak deeply about them right now.

At the same time that the conversations for carrying out the Cession were advancing, Albert’s
household was changing for adapting it to the new situation as sovereign, instead of general
governor, and for fusing it with the one of the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia. It was decided that the
servants who were going to accompany Albert in his Journey for getting married with the Infanta,
had to pass through Italy. On the other hand, some others servants remained in Brussels because of
their age, illnesses and personal decisions.

From the Court of Madrid, Philip II’s advisers tried to force the Admiral of Aragon not to go
with the household and change his office as high steward for the one of ambassador at the Empire.
The admiral did not want this change and he fought against this decision. Finally, with Albert’s
help, he retained the office but stayed in the Netherlands instead of making the Journey. Nevertheless, he took care of every preparative, starting with the number of stewards that were
going to travel, a matter of special importance after knowing that he was not going to make the
travel. Finally, Luis Dávalos, Diego de Ibarra and the count of Issenghien made the Journey. The
last one, together with the squire of the house Gilles du Faing who wrote a diary over the travel,
were the persons in charge of the seven Flemish noble women that were going to serve at the
Infanta’s household as the countess of Bucquoy, Magdalena of Trazegnies, Marie of Montmorency,
Claudine of Mérode, Alexandrine and Françoise of Noyelle and Louise of Sainte-Aldegonde. In
Valencia, several ladies of honour of the former Infanta’s household linked to them, specially
important was Juana Jacincourt as camarera mayor, together with other castillian women and men
of other royal households that were in Castile in that moment and wanted to improve their offices.
Nevertheless, just a few servants of the former Infanta’s household went to Flanders with the new
sovereigns and their household was mainly composed for Albert servants and new incorporations.

Also was decided the change of many important offices as the high chaplain, captains and
tenants of the guards, squires of the house or the table,… and the increase of other offices. At the
same time there were established several “ayudas de costa” in order of the servants did not have the
same economical problems as they have had in the Journey of fifteen ninety five and ninety six. The
states were reduced to three, the provision of money for the travel was secured and the stables were
reformed for such an important movement.

Finally, the suite left Brussels the ninth of September in fifteen ninety eight, although the
archduke stayed there until the fourteenth informing the temporary governor, cardinal Andrew of
Austria. Albert came back to Brussels the year after with a new title, sovereign of the Netherlands,
and a new household which Dries Raeymaekers has spoken about before.