The shock of Rocroi did little to alter official attitudes towards the Army of Flanders. Olivares’ policies remained more or less unchanged and continued to produce familiar results. Thus it can be argued that the years 1643–1659 belong to the Olivares era as firmly as the period 1573–1585 does to the school of Alba. The political fall from favor of the creators brought few changes to the military structures and procedures they had set in place.

A. Training

Rocroi sparked a momentary renewal of the old debate on how to prepare future officers and for some months it seemed that the Olivarrean project of formal training might be revived. In December 1643 don Andrea Cantelmo informed the King that a military academy had been founded in the Spanish Netherlands and that from among its graduates the monarchy could expect to recruit able leaders. However, no further mention of this institution appears in the official correspondence and the only method of officer training used by the Army of Flanders in the last years of the war was the old device of provisional appointments.

Despite the catastrophic effects which by his own account the policy of one-year commands had provoked in Rocroi, Melo counselled the King not to abolish it altogether. As Olivares before him, don Francisco considered provisional appointments an indispensable incentive “to reward some subjects and to teach them how to lead.” However, he proposed to limit the use of this method to some campaigns and only

1 AGS E 2060, CCE 17–2–44 (includes a letter from Cantelmo to Philip IV, 19–12–43).
to train specific individuals. Philip and his advisors agreed with Melo and ordered the implementation of his plan.\(^2\)

Melo’s successor as Captain General of the Army of Flanders, don Manuel de Moura y Cortereal, Marquis of Castelrodrigo, opposed all provisional appointments for well-known reasons: the vacuum of authority during the winter months, the delays in campaign preparation, etc.\(^3\) In January 1647, the \textit{Junta de Estad}, presided by one of the government’s most influential ministers, don Luis de Haro, (Olivares’ nephew) again debated the merits of provisional appointments and prepared a compromise solution identical to the arrangement of 1641–43: a proprietary and a provisional \textit{cabo} for every major rank.\(^4\) As before, this arrangement only deepened internal disunity in the high command; the two types of officer haggled or quarrelled over authority and refused to collaborate. Sometimes provisional \textit{Oficiales Mayores} tried to discredit their rivals, refusing to go to their help in difficult situations, hoping that the defeat of a proprietary \textit{cabo} would redund in their own promotion. Such quarrels were a major factor in the loss of Courtrai in 1646, to name only the most prominent case.\(^5\)

Despite this defeat, most of the counsellors of state were, as Olivares had been, more concerned with training and luring grandees to the general staff with the promise of high rank than with restoring harmony and cohesion to the high command. Another rout at the hands of Condé at Lens in 1648, prompted the Council to expand further this method of training and recruitment. In January 1649 Haro and Monterrey recommended that the Army of Flanders be divided into smaller detachments headed by provisional officers; there would be three provisional \textit{cабоs} per major high command rank, down to Sergeant General.\(^6\) By 1651, even the rank of Castellan had once again become provisional, although there were some proprietary \textit{Oficiales Mayores} present in every campaign.\(^7\) The high command never adapted to this device and continued to ail from a chronic crisis of authority and organization but it

\(^2\) Ibidem, Melo to Philip IV, 14–1–44, AGR SEG 231, 144, Philip IV to Melo, 7–4–44.
\(^3\) AGS E 2065, El Conde de Monterrey a 12 de Henero 1645, AGS E 2063, JE 3–4–45.
\(^4\) AGS E 2067, JE 16–1–47.
\(^5\) Ibidem, Junta del Conde de Castrillo…4–12–46. See also note 75 below.
\(^6\) AGS E 2171, JE 3–1–49.
\(^7\) AGR SEG 244, 19, Philip IV to Archduke Leopold, 14–5–49, AGR SEG 251, 354, Philip IV to Archduke Leopold, 14–12–51.