

A female political network

The correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, 1620-1642



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Cover image: Gerard van Honthorst. Portrait of Elizabeth Stuart, after 1642. Private collection by courtesy of Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder, The Hague.

Introduction

A distressed Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, (1596-1662) wrote on 23 November 1620 to her father, King James of England, "I beg Your Majesty most humbly to have a care for the King [of Bohemia] and me by sending us help, otherwise we will be entirely ruined. There is only Your Majesty after God from whom we can expect help."¹ Only three days before, the Imperial army had defeated the army of her husband, Frederick V Elector of the Palatinate (1596-1632) at the battle of White Mountain. This forced Elizabeth and her entourage to flee from their palace in Prague, into the unknown life of exile. She hoped her father would quickly come to their aid and help them peacefully return home. Unfortunately, this did not happen, instead this battle brought the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) to greater proportions and Elizabeth had to live in exile in The Hague for almost the remainder of her life. Elizabeth and her family's prospects of returning to their lands in the Holy Roman Empire remained very small. Their claim to Bohemia had disappeared with the battle of White Mountain and the Duke of Bavaria had strong claims to the Upper and Lower Palatinate.

As an English princess and (former) queen of Bohemia Elizabeth found herself in a peculiar situation in The Hague.² Her titles positioned her far above Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, but she dependent on his goodwill and money to keep her exiled court. Without a land, an army or any money, she had to rely on the goodwill of others. From The Hague Elizabeth used her correspondence networks to find support for her onerous situation, writing to family, friends and potential allies. These networks consisted of various groups of people who were connected to each other and of which Elizabeth was a part. The first network she turned to was her extended family, but a faction of English noblemen also formed a reliant group to find support.

Then, if matters were not bad enough, Frederick V died on 23 November 1632 in the midst of war, leaving Elizabeth and eleven young children behind. It seemed impossible for her to get out of this difficult situation. Nonetheless, by the end of the war in 1648 Elizabeth's eldest son Charles Louis (1618-1680) was restored with his father's title of Elector Palatine and he received the Lower Palatinate.

¹ C.E.S. I, letter 203: Elizabeth (in Breslau) to King James, 23 November 1620.

² Elizabeth continued to use the title of Queen of Bohemia despite losing the land.

This thesis will trace Elizabeth Stuart's correspondence networks, in order to find out what strategies she used to receive support to regain the Palatinate, and how her position within these networks changed after she became a widow.

The research focuses on the period from November 1620 until the end of 1642. Starting with the defeat at the battle of White Mountain and ending at a new changing point, where Elizabeth would become less involved in the Thirty Years' War, as the Diet of Regensburg had ended and the Civil War was breaking out in Britain. The Diet of Regensburg did not end the war, but the propositions made regarding the Palatinate remained standing until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The outbreak of Civil War in Britain meant that most of Elizabeth's supporters, including her sons, moved their attention away from the Thirty Years' War and instead focused on their own war.

The focus is on Elizabeth's correspondence networks, because she was reliant on these people in order to participate in the war and to receive an opportunity of regaining the Palatinate.

This thesis relates to several themes of early modern historical studies: queenship, dynastic networks, and female correspondence. In order to understand Elizabeth's exceptional position and why she acted in certain ways, it is important to compare her to other women and to put her actions in the perspective of early modern Europe.

The first perspective, of queenship, relates to gender studies and the growing attention of the role of women in history. Queens are interesting from this viewpoint because they were women in a public and influential position. Traditionally, politics was seen as a men's business, with the conventional image of a king alone on his throne. Various authors have counteracted this image and shown that queens also participated in the reign over a country.

Court historian Clarissa Campbell Orr focused in *Queenship in Europe* on queenship and in particular on the role of the consort, to analyse the role instead of giving a biography of a specific queen. Her focus was on how much power, officially or unofficially, a queen was able to have.³ Campbell Orr explained that a consort could have an influence on the king and his power, however in the past this has often been overlooked, as a queen was less visible with her informal power. Campbell Orr made a division of fields in which dynastic power could be exercised: political, social and cultural. She further divided this between

³ Clarissa Campbell Orr ed., *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815, the role of the consort* (Cambridge 2004) 1-2.

formal and informal power, whereby the king generally had all formal and official power in hands. The queen could still be influential and have some authority, but this was via an indirect, informal route. For example in cases where she was persuasive enough to let the king follow her wishes. Only in situations where the king was absent, either because he was away on military campaign, ill or death, the queen was able to exert formal power. This division was strongest in the political field, as this remained a predominantly masculine domain. The social and cultural domain were more open to the queen's influence. It depended on various elements how much power and influence she could exert: her personality, her will to have an influence, and the space she was given to use her powers.⁴

In *Widowhood and visual culture*, Allison Levy and other authors focused on the next stage for many queens: widowhood and regency.⁵ Statistically, already in early modern times women lived longer than men did, which meant that queens occasionally outlived the king and had to take over his rule, especially when the heir was still a minor. Nonetheless, widowhood was seen as an exceptional situation, as this was the only situation in which women were able to hold a position of great political power. Levy has given examples of various queens in early modern Europe who had to take over the rule over a country after their husband died, in which she shows that it was not as uncommon for a woman to rule as has often been thought.⁶

An interesting study of queenship to compare Elizabeth Stuart to, is Tryntje Helfferich's biography on Amalia Elisabeth of Hesse-Kassel (1602-1651), called *The iron princess*.⁷ Amalia Elisabeth was a contemporary of Elizabeth Stuart and she also became actively involved in the Thirty Years' War after the death of her husband Wilhelm V. Helfferich has attempted to identify the different arguments Amalia Elisabeth used to justify her authoritative position. In this thesis Helfferich's arguments will be compared to the justification Elizabeth used.

The second perspective is closely connected to queenship: that of dynastic networks. Princesses and queens were part of a large dynastic network. Katrin Keller has in various publications focused on the dynastic power of women and their specific situation. In *Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft* she for example explained that women had a large dynastic

⁴ Idem, 7-10.

⁵ Allison Levy, *Widowhood and visual culture in early modern Europe* (Ashgate 2003).

⁶ Idem, 2-3.

⁷ Tryntje Helfferich, *The iron princess, Amalia Elisabeth and the Thirty Years War* (Harvard 2013).

network, which they could use as a source of power.⁸ For all members of early modern ruling houses, the dynasty or family was the source of legitimate authority. In this respect women were able to claim authority from two dynasties: both the family they were born in and the family they married in. After marriage women usually moved to their husband's country, but they remained in contact with the dynasty they were born in. Therefore they were able to act as mediators or intermediaries between the two families, and ask for support from both.⁹

Similar to this is Theresa Earenflight's concept of the 'flexible sack'. With this 'sack', she meant the group of authoritative people around the monarch, who were able to strengthen and have an influence on the monarch's power. The people within this 'sack' could each focus on their domain, but their collaboration strengthened the power of the monarchy. Depending on the situation, this sack could stretch to include more powerful (family) alliances. This group could for example include the king, the queen, a queen mother, political advisors and religious leaders. Having a 'sack' of authoritative people around a queen could also make it easier for a woman to have the authority to rule, as she could be dependent on the support of these people, and their authority made her rule more acceptable.¹⁰

In the article *The power of female dynastic networks* Simon Hodson has studied Louise de Coligny (1555-1620) and her stepdaughters' dynastic networks.¹¹ He focused on their use of the term 'Femme d'Etat', which has been translated as 'woman of state' or 'stateswoman'. Louise de Coligny and her stepdaughters Charlotte-Brabantina and Elisabeth of Nassau encouragingly called each other by this title. Hodson explained their use of this title as "their sense of rank, their membership of a powerful and influential international dynastic-confessional network and their profound sense of the obligations which these factors imposed upon them."¹² In the letters between these women and in their

⁸ Katrin Keller, 'Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft', in: Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller and Matthias Schnettger, *Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Vienna 2016); Also: Katrin Keller, 'Kommunikationsraum altes Reich, Zur Funktionalität der Korrespondenznetze von Fürstinnen im 16. Jahrhundert' in: *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 31 (2004) 204-230.

⁹ Keller, 'Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft', 18-20.

¹⁰ Earenflight, Theresa, 'Without the persona of the prince: Kings, queens and the idea of monarchy in late medieval Europe', *Gender & History*, 19:1 (2007) 1-21, 10-11.

¹¹ Simon Hodson, 'The power of female dynastic networks: a brief study of Louise de Coligny, princess of Orange, and her stepdaughters', *Women's history review*, 16:3 (2007) 335-351.

¹² Idem, 348.

correspondence with other people in their dynastic network, Hodson observed that they actively made use of their relations to find support and in order to be politically active.

The third perspective connects with the sources used for this thesis: female correspondence. Letter writing was an important and busy occupation in early modern times. Couchman and Crabb have in *Women's letters across Europe*, pointed out that the aim of letters written by women was not just to share gossip. They often used it for (political) persuasion. Women used strategies to emphasise their relationship with the receiver in order to get support, because of either kinship, friendship or obligations.¹³ Simon Hodson and Jane Couchman have also observed that: 'In the context of familial and clientage networks, letter writing must be considered a political activity. It was to perform 'an act of presence' and to remind each party of 'the obligations that bound them together'.¹⁴

Couchman and Crabb furthermore stressed a critical reading of letters. Letters are composed texts that present a filtered representation of life. They should not simply be read as expression of life, but should also not be entirely dissected by removing all elements of rhetoric and fiction to find the true meaning. The forms these letters follow and the rhetoric that is used are just as important to understand the message in the letter. Most women studied in this book wrote letters of persuasion to family members, often the father of brother who ruled over another country, or to other women, their mothers, daughters and female friends. In most cases this was the circle upon which they built their network. In this respect it could be expected that Elizabeth Stuart too turned to a circle of male authoritative family members and female friends.

Arthur Herman has in his article *The Language of fidelity* done a more in depth study on rhetoric and the exaggerated use of language of fidelity and gratitude in patron-client relations.¹⁵ He explained that tokens of loyalty and affection should not be taken at face value, people merely wrote them to show that they had the intentions to give support. This did not necessarily mean that they would actually send this support. For a good relation between letter writers, the intentions of fidelity were valuable enough, as long as there was some consistency in the exchange of benefits between the two parties.¹⁶

¹³ Jane Couchman and Ann Crab, *Women's letters across Europe, 1400-1700* (Aldershot 2005) 11-12.

¹⁴ Hodson, 'The power of female dynastic networks', 337.

¹⁵ Arthur L. Herman Jr., 'The language of fidelity in early modern France', *The Journal of Modern History*, 67: 1 (1995) 1-24.

¹⁶ *Idem*, 6, 11.

This study on the correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart will add to what we know about these themes of queenship, dynastic networks and female correspondence from the early modern period and give a new example. Especially because Elizabeth lived in exile and most of her correspondence was with men, instead of with women as seen in most other examples. This thesis will show a new perspective on friendship and fidelity that was upheld via letter writing. The focus on the change in Elizabeth's position when she became a widow, gives an extra emphasis on the impact when a husband died. Frederick's death did not only have personal consequences, but it also created a shift Elizabeth's position within her networks and her status within her dynastic family.

Apart from this focus, this thesis will also add to a greater understanding of the Thirty Years' War and the building up to the British Civil War. Firstly, for the Thirty Years' War, most literature has focused on the great states and powerful men that participated in the war. They discuss the participation of the Habsburgs, Sweden and France, but omit that the war was largely fought on the lands of the many small states that formed the Holy Roman Empire. In her account of Amalia Elisabeth, Helfferich has recently given an example of one of the smaller states that was involved in the war and how she as a woman participated in the conflict. This study on Elizabeth Stuart and the Palatinate will bring a new example to this extensive war.

Secondly, via Elizabeth we also receive a perspective on England's position in the war, the reasons why especially the King was reluctant to participate in the war, but it also brings the Militant Protestants in English parliament forward, who were eager to help Elizabeth's Protestant cause. This friction between King and certain parliamentarians eventually had an influence on the running up to the British Civil War and explains why Elizabeth's children became involved on both sides of this war.

Jason White has in *Militant Protestantism and British identity* focused on this faction in British parliament and he mentioned Elizabeth's involvement in the Thirty Years War as an important element for these Militant Protestants, as they believed that Protestants everywhere had to protect each other.¹⁷ Additionally, Elizabeth's correspondence shows that the British noblemen she regularly wrote to, where the same men as White has identified to be part of this faction.

¹⁷ Jason White, *Militant Protestantism and British identity, 1603-1642* (London 2012) 2, 10-11.

Additionally, this thesis also fills a gap in the literature on Elizabeth Stuart and her family. Despite being part of the renowned Stuart dynasty and playing a role in the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, Elizabeth is not very well-known herself. A couple biographies have been written about her, however they are rather outdated. The most complete biography is by Mary Ann Everett-Green, written in 1855 and republished in 1909.¹⁸ The main criticism for this biography is the limited amount of correspondence of Elizabeth herself that is used, and the outdated research methods. In 1938, Carola Oman published another book on *The winter queen*, this book used very little sources and presents a romanticised portrayal of Elizabeth as a woman who primarily loved shopping and her dogs, whilst neglecting her children.¹⁹ More recently, Elizabeth has received renewed attention with the publication of Nadine Akkerman's two volumes of *The correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*.²⁰ As these publications are very recent, it has not been used for a renewed extensive study on Elizabeth's life yet.

Studying the literature on queenship and female correspondence in early modern times gives the expectation that Elizabeth's family network was important, as Keller, Couchman, Crabb, and other authors have all shown examples in which dynastic family connections were the most important network for women. Because family offered strong ties and a quick look at Elizabeth's family tree presents several options of powerful family members she could turn to. Additionally, these authors also often presented a regular correspondence between women, which was based on friendship but could also offer political support.

By analysing Elizabeth's network I hope to add to this literature on early modern women by: finding out what strategies a woman with a high rank, but without means, was able to use; understanding what role a queen could have next to her king, in which ways she could and wanted to actively involve herself in politics and warfare; and what new position and strategies she could use after becoming a widow.

¹⁸ Everett Green, Mary Anne, *Elizabeth Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia* (reprint: London 1909).

¹⁹ Carola Oman, *The winter queen: Elizabeth of Bohemia* (London 1938).

²⁰ Nadine Akkerman, *The correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, Volume I, 1603-1631* (Oxford 2015) (shortened C.E.S. I); Idem, *The correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, Volume II, 1632-1642* (Oxford 2011) (shortened C.E.S. II). A third volume of the period 1642-1662 is forthcoming.

Renewed attention can be seen in: Nadine Akkerman, *Courtly Rivals in The Hague, Elizabeth Stuart & Amalia von Solms* (Venlo 2014); Idem, 'Semper Eadem: Elizabeth Stuart and the Legacy of Queen Elizabeth I.' in: Smart S., Wade M.R. (Eds.) *The Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival* (Wiesbaden 2013).

The research for this thesis is primarily based on Akkerman's publications of *The correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart*. In these two volumes, Akkerman has collected, transcribed and translated all the known letters to and from Elizabeth. By studying this correspondence, there are certain aspects that should be taken into account. Firstly, although these publications include 1210 letters (of which 952 cover the period 1620-1642), this is not a complete account of everything Elizabeth has written and received in this period.²¹ A lot of letters have been lost. Sometimes the gaps in the correspondence are obvious, because only one side of a conversation has remained, or the writer referred to a letter that is missing from the records. However, there are also many letters that are not preserved and of which we have no trace that they have ever been written. Only the letters of people who deemed it worth to preserve Elizabeth letters, mainly royalty and noblemen, archived them. Additionally, only the archives that preserved over time are accessible to study. This means that especially personal correspondence with people, or descendants, who did not see the value of keeping an archive, has been lost.

Elizabeth lived in exile for a large part of her life, which made it more difficult for her to keep an archive. She did probably keep part of her correspondence in her own archive, however this was unfortunately lost when a ship with many of her possessions shipwrecked in 1661.²² Her correspondence was not part of an official state archive either in the Netherlands or in Britain. Therefore only the letters that were sent through official state organs, for example via the Stuart ambassador in The Hague, have been included in the state archives. Especially the survival of Elizabeth's private correspondence with women or men outside their official capacity is rather slim, as they not always archived everything.²³

Elizabeth also regularly urged her reader to burn the letters, fortunately, this was not always done, as we can still read these letters. However, there probably are letters that were destroyed after reading. Additionally not everything would have been shared in letters. Letter writing often followed a formal structure with standard ways to address the other. Occasionally, Letter-bearers were instructed with a spoken message for the receiver, which they did not want to tell in writing. Or a gift could be included as a token of affection or to please the receiver, which gave an extra dimension to the correspondence, but which has

²¹ The number of letters published in volume I and II.

²² C.E.S. I, introduction, 3.

²³ Idem, 1-3.

now been lost from sight.²⁴ Finally, a lot, but certainly not all contact between people went through letters. Especially contact with people who lived close to Elizabeth could be of great importance but is not be found in letters. Therefore, it is impossible to make a complete reconstruction of Elizabeth's network. However, what is remaining should give an insight in her network.

Especially the dependency on archives from the people Elizabeth wrote to means that it is likely there are blind spots in the correspondence. She might have had intensive contact with people we will never know about, because they did not keep an archive, their archive has been lost, or the connection to Elizabeth has not been discovered. These blind spots can influence the way we see Elizabeth's networks. For example, Thirty-two percent of Elizabeth's published correspondence is with the English diplomat Sir Thomas Roe (1581-1644), this could be because they were very close and regularly wrote to each other. However, it is more likely that Roe meticulously archived all his correspondence, whereas people around him only archived part of their correspondence. In order to have an overview of the distribution of Elizabeth's letters over the whole period, I have made a table that shows the letters Elizabeth sent and received. In this overview it is easy to see whom she corresponded with and that of some correspondents only one side of the conversation has survived.²⁵

Finally, a note on the language of the letters, as quoted in this thesis. Originally, a lot of correspondence between Elizabeth and her family or foreign royalty was in French, or occasionally Latin.²⁶ This was no problem for Elizabeth as she could write fluently in English, French and Italian. She only had difficulty with German, which made it more complicated to correspond with Frederick's family or Palatine and Bohemian noblemen. In this thesis, I have used Akkerman's English translations, as presented in her books. Only the letters that were originally written in English have remained in old English spelling, as Akkerman has only transcribed these letters. I have chosen to use the English translations, because this eases the readability of the text, it is more practical for a comparison between letters and it makes the text accessible to readers who do not read French or Latin.

²⁴ Couchman and Crab, *Women's letters across Europe*; James Daybell, David Gordon, *Cultures of correspondence in early modern Britain* (Philadelphia 2016).

²⁵ See appendix. Thomas Roe's correspondence amounts to 307 out of the total 952 letters.

²⁶ The Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna was the only one to write in Latin.

Structure wise, the thesis is divided in two parts, with Frederick's death as a turning point. The first part covers the period from November 1620 until November 1632, focusing on Elizabeth's position as a consort in exile. The second part starts with the death of Frederick on 23rd November 1632, until the end of 1642, focusing on Elizabeth's change to a widow and regent. In both parts, the first chapter gives a context to the period. By giving chronological overview of the events in which Elizabeth was involved, it becomes clearer how much space and opportunities she had to operate. The second chapter of both parts focuses on the representation of queenship, either as a consort or as a widow, in order to understand how much influence she had in this position and how she used this role. These chapters also give a comparison of Elizabeth to other queens, to understand Elizabeth's exceptional situation in exile. Finally, the third chapter of both parts focuses on her correspondence networks, whom she corresponded with and what strategies she used to receive support. This chapter takes an in-depth look at the structure, tone and wording in the letters. Finally, the conclusion compares the strategies, representation and networks of both periods in order to understand which strategies Elizabeth used to receive support and what change Frederick's death made on her correspondence.

Part one 1620-1632

A queen consort in exile

1. The context

On 8 November 1620 Elizabeth Stuart, her husband Frederick, their children and the entourage of their court hurriedly had to leave the Bohemian palace in Prague.²⁷ Frederick's army had just been defeated at the Battle of White Mountain, a place just outside Prague, and the Catholic army of Emperor Ferdinand II (1578-1637) and Maximilian, the Duke of Bavaria (1571-1651), conquered the city. This battle was the final defeat for Frederick and Elizabeth, mockingly called the Winter King and Queen as they ruled over Bohemia for only one year: from winter 1619 until winter 1620. At the same time was this one of the events that started the Thirty Years' War, a war in which most of Europe became involved, that destroyed large parts of the Holy Roman Empire, and forced Frederick and Elizabeth into exile for the rest of their lives.

How had things come this far? Initially Frederick and Elizabeth had been one of the multiple Protestant rulers within the Holy Roman Empire. Elizabeth was the daughter of King James I and VI of England and Scotland and Frederick V was the Count Palatine of the Rhine. This title gave him the rule over the Upper and Lower Palatinate, a territory in the Holy Roman Empire; he was one of the seven prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire, which gave him great prestige and privileges; and as devout Calvinist, he was the leader of the Protestant Union, a coalition of Protestant states within the Empire. As a British princess, Elizabeth was a very eligible partner to many European royals and she received many marriage proposals from a young age. However, her father King James had very specific dynastic and political strategies for the marriages of his children.²⁸ If his son and heir married a prominent Catholic princess, and his daughter married a powerful Protestant, he imagined that he could keep Catholics and Protestants in Great Britain content, by showing that he was supportive of both religions. As Frederick was the leader of the Protestant Union, had a prominent position in the Holy Roman Empire, and was of the same age as Elizabeth, he was

²⁷ Of the children, only baby Rupert was with Frederick and Elizabeth in Prague. The other children were safely with their grandmother in Heidelberg, see below.

²⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *Image wars, promoting Kings and commonwealth in England 1603-1660* (Yale 2010) 111, 254.

seen as an ideal marriage candidate.²⁹ The couple married on 14 February 1613 in the palace of Whitehall in London, and via a festive tour through the continent, they moved to their palace in Heidelberg, the capital of the Lower Palatinate.³⁰

The trouble started when Frederick was elected King of Bohemia in 1619. Since 1526 the Bohemian crown had continuously been given to a member of the House of Habsburg, which at this point in time would be the Catholic Ferdinand II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The rebellious Protestant Bohemian Estates preferred a Protestant leader: Frederick V.³¹ Elizabeth's father King James and several other Protestant rulers warned him against accepting the crown, as it would cause trouble with the Emperor. Nevertheless, Frederick accepted to rule over Bohemia in September 1619. Frederick, Elizabeth and their entourage moved to the capital Prague, where as predicted they did not get the chance to have a long and peaceful rule. Throughout 1619 and 1620 they received military threats from the Catholic League, under leadership of Emperor Ferdinand II. This exploded at the Battle of White Mountain, where Frederick's Bohemian army was finally defeated.³²

The Duke of Bavaria, Maximilian, was one of Ferdinand's greatest allies in the Catholic League and he used Frederick's weak position to claim the Palatinate. Frederick and Maximilian were both descendants of the House of Wittelsbach, which in 1329 had been divided in two branches: The Bavarian branch, of which Maximilian was now head, and the Palatinate branch, of which Frederick was the head. Originally, the Wittelsbach family had been one of the seven Electors of the Empire. After the division this title had gone to the older Palatinate branch, however the Bavarians still hoped to have the title returned to them some day. The Emperor's anger against Frederick for taking the Bohemian crown proved the perfect opportunity for Maximilian to have the lands and Electoral title of the Wittelsbach family reunited in his Bavarian branch.³³

²⁹ Sara Smart and Mara R. Wade ed., *The Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival* (Wiesbaden 2013) 32-37.

³⁰ Brennan Pursell, 'The Palatinate and its Networks in the Empire and in Europe', in: Olaf Asbach and Peter Schröder, *The Ashgate research companion to the Thirty Years' War* (Farnham 2014) 32-33; Smart and Wade ed., *The Palatine Wedding of 1613*.

³¹ Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War, a sourcebook* (New York 2010) 33.

³² Brennan Pursell, *The Winter King, Frederick V of the Palatinate and the coming of the Thirty Years' War* (Aldershot 2003) 65, 81; Andrew L. Thomas, *A house divided, Wittelsbach confessional court cultures in the Holy Roman Empire, c. 1550-1650* (Leiden 2010), 191.

³³ Thomas, *A house divided*, 187-188.

In this battle, Frederick and Elizabeth not only lost Bohemia, but the Catholics also invaded the Palatinate, which meant they had no safe land to return to.³⁴ Both Frederick and Elizabeth wrote to family and Protestant allies, hoping these people would be willing to help them by either offering a safe place to stay or military support.

The first letters Elizabeth wrote in November and December 1620 were to her family members; her father, her aunt Charlotte Brabantina and her cousin and French army officer Henri III, Duke of La Trémoille. She also wrote to several English nobleman, including Dudley Carleton (the ambassador in The Hague), Edward Herbert (the ambassador in Paris) and Buckingham.³⁵ To her cousin Henri III, Duke of La Trémoille she for example wrote:

“[I] will assure you that all the misfortunes that have befallen me, of which your brother will tell you in the details, do not prevent me from continuing the friendship I have always vowed towards you. I beg you to be entirely assured of this, and that in everything that I can I will try to make it apparent to you by action;”³⁶

Other letters to her extended family and friends followed a similar pattern. She did this partially to let them know she was alive and had safely escaped Bohemia, as rumours were spreading that she had died of childbirth complications whilst fleeing the country. Elizabeth had been eight months pregnant at the time of the battle of White Mountain and her letters proved that she had survived childbirth.³⁷ Moreover, by stressing her friendship towards the recipient she hoped the other would return her friendship by offering support to her and Frederick.

While Elizabeth could temporary stay safe with Frederick’s sister in Küstrin, Frederick travelled around the Empire hoping to find allies who could support him to continue fighting. Support was something they desperately needed. Elizabeth was convinced that “I hope God will give vs againe the victorie, for the warres are not ended with one battaile, & I hope wee shall have better luck in the next.”³⁸ To her aunt Charlotte Brabantina she similarly wrote: “I

³⁴ Pursell, *The Winter King*, 65, 72-74, 107-115.

³⁵ C.E.S. I, letters 203, 206, 208-211.

³⁶ C.E.S. I, letter 211: Elizabeth (in Küstrin) to Henri III, Duke of La Trémoille [in Thouars], 9 December [1620]. Henri’s brother Frédéric de La Trémoille had been present at the Battle of White Mountain.

³⁷ A healthy son Maurice was born on 17 December 1620, named after the one man who was willing to give them refuge. He was Elizabeth’s fifth child and was born in Küstrin. Nethersole and others in British parliament had heard rumours that Elizabeth had died in childbirth (see letter 208).

³⁸ *Idem*.

console myself with one thing, that the war is not yet over.”³⁹ However, at this moment they had no real army to speak of, nor money to gather one. Elizabeth’s first hope for military support was from her father in England, to whom directly after the battle she wrote:

“I beg Your Majesty most humbly to have a care for the King [of Bohemia] and me by sending us help, otherwise we will be entirely ruined. There is only Your Majesty after God from whom we can expect help.”⁴⁰

Unfortunately, her father could not offer direct help. He had warned them against accepting the Bohemian crown and was not intending to solve the problems this had caused.

Moreover, he was in a politically difficult situation in England, offering them to take refuge in Britain would only weaken his hold over parliament.⁴¹

Fortunately, Frederick received an invitation from his cousin Stadtholder Maurice of Orange to take exile in The Hague.⁴² Frederick and Elizabeth gladly accepted this offer. Elizabeth’s residence in The Hague meant she was not in direct company of the Englishmen in court and parliament who were willing to support her, but this location and distance to the English court also benefited her. As many ships between England and continental Europe docked in The Netherlands, it was easy to ask passing British noblemen, diplomats and officers to make a stop at the exiled court in The Hague.⁴³ This gave Elizabeth the opportunity to receive first hand news on progress for Palatine support and to remind diplomats on their way to an embassy or negotiations of the situation she was in and whom they were fighting for.

The Palatinate court in The Hague consisted of a diverse crowd. Frederick and Elizabeth had taken a following of 220 men and women with them. There were British, Palatine, Bohemian and Dutch people present in Elizabeth’s household. Most of Elizabeth’s ladies-in-waiting were British, but there were also women from the Holy Roman Empire. Several Palatine and Bohemian noblemen and diplomats who continued to support Frederick and Elizabeth followed them to their exile court.⁴⁴ This large court soon proved to bring large costs, which brought them in financial difficulties. However, the presence of the

³⁹ Idem, letter 210: Elizabeth (in Küstrin) to Charlotte Brabantina (in Paris?), 9 December 1620.

⁴⁰ Idem, letter 203: Elizabeth (in Breslau) to King James, 23 November 1620.

⁴¹ Sharpe, *Image wars*, 117.

⁴² Pursell, *The Winter King*, 128. Frederick’s mother, Louise Juliana of Orange-Nassau, was a half-sister of Maurice.

⁴³ Akkerman, *Courtly rivals*, 3.

⁴⁴ Idem.

elaborate court did give royal prestige in the Dutch Republic. The British ladies-in-waiting also strengthened Elizabeth's network with the English nobility, as the women were often daughters of British politicians or diplomats who attempted to help her.

Whilst Elizabeth set up court, Frederick was in the Empire hoping to find military and financial support to regain his land. This quest was not easy. Losing their country had deprived them from an income by revenue from the land and the battle had cost the lives of many Palatine soldiers. There were very few men left and because Frederick could not pay their salary, many left his army. Consequently, with no own income or troops, Frederick was entirely reliant upon the support and goodwill of others. Initially he hoped that the Protestant Union would come to his aid by lending him money and troops, but even they dissolved their alliance in April 1621, disbanding their troops that had been protecting the Palatinate. In January of that year, the Emperor had placed Frederick under the Imperial ban, which meant that he was declared an outlaw in the Empire. No one was allowed to help him and everyone could rob or kill him without any legal consequences. Afraid to be placed under the same ban, the leaders of the Protestant Union stopped their support.⁴⁵

The next several years Frederick and Elizabeth continued to beg and hope for support from other Protestant and anti-Habsburg states in the Empire and the rest of Europe. They in particular hoped Elizabeth's father, James, would come to their aid, by sending English troops to the continent to fight for them. However, James was only open to help them by sending embassies to peace negotiations. Frederick in contrast, was convinced that taking up arms was the only way to solve his problems. He did not want a compromise, but would only accept a full return of his lands. Meanwhile James started negotiations with the Emperor in 1621 and later with Spain. They were willing to talk about the Palatinate to England, but only under the condition that Frederick would stop fighting and be willing to make a compromise. As a result, the refusal from both men to cooperate with the other made it impossible to have either military or diplomatic success.

King James' death in March 1625 and the passing of Maurice of Orange a month later gave Elizabeth a painful blow. During her stay in The Hague she had started to see Maurice as a second father, as he was of a similar age as her own father and had made her feel at home in The Hague. She wrote: "I haue had of late two such great losses, as hath

⁴⁵ C.E.S. I, introduction, 32.

made me vnfitt to write to you or anie else, as it gaue me double sorrow for the losse of such a father and such a frend whome I loued as a father.”⁴⁶

On the other hand, it gave Frederick renewed hopes for military aid. He had always been closer friends with Frederick Henry who became the new stadtholder, and who was married to Amalia von Solms, a former lady-in-waiting of Elizabeth.⁴⁷ The ascending of Charles to the British throne also gave them new hopes for military support from Britain. As a prince, he had openly expressed his support for the Palatine cause.⁴⁸ Frederick hoped this new leadership for his closest allies would work in his advantage, as before they reached power they had both promised to be open for military action and to support the Palatinate.

Directly after becoming king, Charles sent his cofferer Sir Henry Vane to The Hague. Elizabeth wrote after her meeting with Vane to her aunt “[Charles] assures me [...] that he will never abandon us, but will help us in our right to be restored.”⁴⁹ Additionally to Thomas Roe she wrote, “He will be both father and brother to the King of Bohemia and me”.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Charles was not able to interfere in the war either, as he did not have the money or sufficient support in parliament.

With Swedish participation in the war from 1630 onwards, there was finally real hope for Protestant victory and a recovery for (at least part of) the Palatinate. Over the years, the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus had reinsured Frederick that he would support the Palatine cause. Frederick had joined the Swedish army in the beginning of 1632 and since then there had been negotiations about a restoration of his land, as this was now partially in Swedish hands. Unfortunately, this positive prospect abruptly vanished with the death of Frederick on 29 November 1632.⁵¹

Throughout their years in exile, Frederick regularly travelled between armies in the Empire and Elizabeth in The Hague. His many lengthy letters to Elizabeth, in which he often wrote how much he missed her, made it seem as if they rarely saw each other. However, the fact that Elizabeth was almost constantly pregnant during their marriage indicates that they saw each other on a regular basis. They had thirteen children, of which eleven reached

⁴⁶ Idem, letter 371: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe (in Constantinople) 26 May 1625.

⁴⁷ Pursell, *The Winter King*, 232, 236.

⁴⁸ Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution, English politics and the coming of war, 1621-1624* (Cambridge 1989) 58.

⁴⁹ C.E.S. I, Letter 368: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charlotte Brabantina, 17 May 1625.

⁵⁰ Idem, Letter 371: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe (in Constantinople) 26 May 1625.

⁵¹ Pursell, *The Winter King*, 270-7.

adulthood and nine were born in exile. Most of the children did not grow up with their parents in The Hague. Elizabeth herself spent most of her childhood in Coombe Abbey, in Warwickshire, under the custody of the Harringtons.⁵² Their daughter Lucy Harrington, later Countess of Bedford, became one of Elizabeth's longest lasting friends and supporter for the Palatinate.⁵³ Similarly, Elizabeth's children spent most of their childhood away from their parents. The eldest, Frederick Henry, Charles Louis and Elisabeth, had not moved to Prague with their parents, but remained in Heidelberg under the custody of their grandmother Louise Juliana.⁵⁴ In 1620 Frederick Henry was secretly moved out of the country to safely stay with the Frisian Stadtholder Ernst Casimir and his wife Sophia Hedwig.⁵⁵

From 1624 Frederick and Elizabeth rented the Prinsenhof on the Rapenburg in Leiden where their children could live and be educated at the university.⁵⁶ The short distance between The Hague and Leiden meant that it became easier for the children to visit their parents. Unfortunately, the eldest boy, Frederick Henry, drowned in 1629 when he was only fifteen years old. Consequently, his three-year younger brother Charles Louis became the heir.

⁵² Akkerman, C.E.S. I, introduction, 6; Mary Anne Everett-Green, *Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia* (rev. ed. London 1909) 7.

⁵³ Kevin Sharpe, *Faction and parliament: essays on early Stuart history* (Oxford 1978) 143-144.

⁵⁴ Pursell, *The Winter King*, 84.

⁵⁵ C.E.S. I, letter 190: Frederick (in Rokycany) to Elizabeth [in Prague] 10 October 1620; Letter 220: Ernst Casimir to Elizabeth [in Küstrin] 18 February 1621.

⁵⁶ Th. Lunsingh-Scheurleer, C. Willemijn Fock and A.J. van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg, geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht*, volume II (Leiden 1987) 203-204.

2. Representation as a consort in exile

The defeat at the Battle of White Mountain had turned Elizabeth's entire life upside down. From a relatively carefree life, she now had to involve herself in politics and diplomacy to help her husband to regain his lands and title. For this first period in exile Elizabeth had an important role to perform as consort next to her husband.

Generally, a consort was in the first place the spouse of the monarch, she stood next to the king and as wife her main task was to bear a child to keep the dynasty alive. Nonetheless, there were many more positions she could fulfil. Elizabeth's mother Anna of Denmark has for example been described as both 'favourite of the monarch', 'intermediary between the British and Danish crown', 'mother of the heir and the country', and 'patron of the arts'.⁵⁷ Likewise, other queens have focused on religion and giving an example of piety. It depended on the situation and social setting which role she was to perform, but it was often a position of submission to the king or in a field where the king was not interested in (such as the arts).

Campbell Orr has made a division of political, cultural and social spheres, in which dynastic power could be exercised. With a further division between formal and informal power.⁵⁸ The queen could still be very influential, but this was usually via an indirect, informal route. As Anna of Denmark's title 'patron of the arts' shows, the cultural and social fields were more accessible to formal female influence. Campbell Orr for example explained that it was within the queen's power to entertain foreign visitors with banquets and balls, in the informal sphere, but the political negotiations were conducted with the king.⁵⁹

Elizabeth's role as consort was rather exceptional. With Frederick largely absent from the court in The Hague, she was not constantly under the influence of her husband. She organised lavish balls and theatre performances, was surrounded by English and German ladies-in-waiting and courtiers, and was regularly visited by English diplomats.⁶⁰ At the same time, most of Elizabeth's correspondence concerned political issues that belonged more to a

⁵⁷ Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England* (Philadelphia 2001) 5-6.

⁵⁸ Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Europe*, 7-8.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, 8-9.

⁶⁰ For Elizabeth's cultural courtlife see for example: Marika Koblusek and Jori Zijlmans, *Vorstelijk vertoon: aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (The Hague 1997); Wies Erkelens and Marika Koblusek, 'Het hof van de Winterkoning en Winterkoningin en het stadhouderlijk hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia van Solms', in Markus Schacht ed., *Onder den Oranjeboom: Nederlandse kunst en cultuur aan Duitse vorstenhoven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Munich 1999) 107-11; Jonathan Israel, *The courts of the house of Orange 1580-1795*, in: John Adamson ed., *The princely courts of Europe* (London 1999) 124.

'formal sphere'. The exile and the war that continued to rage around her meant she could not sit idly. With Frederick's dire position as an outlaw from the Empire, Elizabeth's position as daughter of the British King and niece of the Danish King made her a lot more suitable than Frederick to involve herself into politics and make requests for financial and military support from these large nations. She gradually became more active in thinking and corresponding about political concerns, in order to support Frederick. For example by requesting England to send money and military support and discussing what was happening on the battlefield with Christian of Brunswick and the Palatine officer Heinrich Mathias von Thurn. Formally, the political power was still in hands of Frederick, however informally Elizabeth at least shared the power with him. As a result, both Elizabeth and Frederick operated in the formal political sphere for the Palatinate.

This dualism of sharing the power between the king and queen was not uncommon for early modern European monarchies. Royal wives, mothers or sisters also often played a significant political role next to the king.⁶¹ This is for example visualised by Theresa Earenflight as a 'flexible sack'. She used this metaphor to explain that a monarch did not rule alone, but was influenced and supported by a circle of authoritative people around him. This circle could grow or shrink, depending on how much authority the King himself had, or if he was in need of many advisors. This circle of influence usually included the queen. Reversely, by absence of the king, the circle could still exert power in the name of the king.⁶² This also explains why Elizabeth focused her correspondence on Buckingham and Charles when she wanted help from her father. These men were close to James and were able to forward her wishes and influence the King's decision in helping her. To Buckingham she for example wrote, "I pray doe your best that he may quicklie haue a good answer".⁶³

As mentioned above Elizabeth's heritage as English and Scottish princess was still of importance. Katrin Keller describes this heritage of princesses as being members of multiple dynasties; a princess is born in one dynasty and by marriage part of another. She is able to receive legitimate power from both dynasties, which is more than a man could receive as he rarely became actively involved in his wife's dynasty.⁶⁴ In addition to her English and Scottish roots, Elizabeth also tried to made use of a third dynastic connection: the Danish court via

⁶¹ Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 6; Keller, 'Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft', 20.

⁶² Earenflight, 'Without the persona of the prince, 10-11.

⁶³ C.E.S. I, letter 412: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Buckingham, 13 June 1626.

⁶⁴ Katrin Keller, 'Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft', 19.

her mother Anna of Denmark. Her uncle King Christian IV of Denmark was a strong supporter of an alliance of Protestants and Denmark had a powerful position in Europe. This made Elizabeth eager to regularly remind him of his dear niece and her Palatine cause, “Which makes me require you once again and ever more insistently, to favour and advance in everything and by everything, that which you yourself in your singular prudence shall consider to be for the good of my said children”.⁶⁵

Interestingly Elizabeth corresponded very little with members of her husband’s family, she left this to Frederick. Possibly because Elizabeth did not understand German, but also because she did not find his family powerful enough to offer any support. Additionally, Elizabeth lived close to Frederick’s cousins Frederick Henry and Maurice of Orange, which could explain the lack of letters between them, as they regularly met each other in person.

Particularly to please her English supporters, Elizabeth not only emphasised her connection to the British crown as daughter of the King, she also made use of the positive image of her late godmother and namesake: Queen Elizabeth I. King James had started this connection of the two Elizabeths from the moment he inherited the English crown. The same teachers had educated the young Elizabeth Stuart as Queen Elizabeth I, teaching her music, dancing, and writing many languages, such as English, French, Italian and Latin.⁶⁶ This knowledge of languages became rather relevant for her extensive correspondence network. Here she also learned to copy Queen Elizabeth’s recognisable signature and make it her own, which would constantly remind the receivers of her letters of her famous predecessor. As a child, Elizabeth had also been dressed up as the famous queen on numerous portraits, wearing the same or very similar dresses and hairstyle. For example in a portrait from 1603, the year of James’ English coronation.⁶⁷ Later in life, she also used less direct references to the Queen in portraits. For example by being depicted with attributes referring to the goddess Diana (a crescent-moon and hunting attributes) a popular allegory in the English and French Renaissance, representing female power. Elizabeth I was in numerous portraits shown as Diana and several paintings of Elizabeth Stuart refer to this goddess.⁶⁸ These

⁶⁵ C.E.S. II, letter 266: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Christian IV [in Lübeck] 24 July 1636.

⁶⁶ C.E.S. I, introduction 6.

⁶⁷ Painting ‘Princess Elizabeth, aged seven’ by Robert Peake (1603)

<<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/15650.html>> [last accessed 26 January 2018].

⁶⁸ Philippa Berry, *Of chastity and Power: Elizabethan literature and the unmarried Queen* (London 1989) 40; Dixon, *Women who ruled: Queens, Goddesses, Amazons in Renaissance and Baroque Art* (London 2002) 137; Akkerman, *Courtly rivals*, 9, 46.

references would not only remind people of her English heritage, but also connect her to the politically most powerful woman in recent history.

Comparing herself to this powerful queen could also give Elizabeth confidence. After she had confided to her friend Thomas Roe that she was losing hope, he wrote to her “Vouchsafe to remember the Motto of our last eternally glorious Elizabeth. This is done of the Lord, and it is wonderfull in our eyes, So shall the day of your retorne bee, to those honors, which you, aboue all Princes, merit.”⁶⁹ By quoting her godmother and referring to God, he urged her not to give up hope.

Elizabeth was certainly not the only queen consort who made use of her dynastic network. Katrin Keller has for example studied the correspondence network of Anne of Denmark, Electress of Saxony (1532-1585) who ruled next to her husband Elector August of Saxony for thirty-two years. Keller explains how Anne complimented and expanded her husband’s correspondence network. As a daughter of the Danish King and as Electress in the Holy Roman Empire, she could be an intermediary between these two states. Additionally Keller argued that as a woman, Anne’s letters had less official weight, which made her able to write more openly. Because the letters were not seen as official state correspondence, there were less formal boundaries she had to observe.⁷⁰

Anne maintained a close relationship with her Danish family by writing extensive letters to her mother and brother, and occasionally visiting them. Using her family ties, she gave herself a position as mediator or intermediary between her husband and her paternal family. In moments of conflict, she would ask her brother the King for support. When he did not cooperate, she would try to get help via mutual friends such as the Landgrave of Hesse, or the Danish parliament. This is not unlike Elizabeth, who would often ask British parliamentarians to press the English King for support, or had friends like her maternal cousin Sophia Hedwig of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in Leeuwarden do a good word to her uncle Christian IV of Denmark.

However, Elizabeth had more difficulty in maintaining a close familial connection to her family. She could not write to her mother, as she had passed away in 1619 and the exile made it too complicated to travel to England to visit her father and brother. Occasionally

⁶⁹ C.E.S. I, letter 295: Roe (in Constantinopel) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 30 March 1623.

⁷⁰ Keller, ‘Kommunikationsraum altes reich’, 204-230, 223-7.

This is not the same person as Elizabeth’s mother Anna of Denmark.

meeting each other in person strengthened family ties, which was difficult to achieve for Elizabeth. As a result, Elizabeth's letters to her father and brother were more formal and distant in tone. Nevertheless, Elizabeth was very much aware that she represented a connection between England, the Palatinate and even Denmark, which could make her a mediator for having these countries work together in the war.

In sum, the war, exile and difficult position of Frederick, meant that Elizabeth could not merely be the consort and sit idly in her palace and focus on informal activities such as her children and art. Accounts on the Bohemian court in The Hague indicate that Elizabeth regularly organised balls and hunting parties, but in her letters she rarely mentioned these activities.⁷¹ Instead, Elizabeth used her correspondence to help Frederick in places where he had less access, such as her family connections and the British noblemen who offered their support to the Palatine cause. Similar to Anne of Denmark, she used her position as consort to be an unofficial mediator between her Palatine family and her British and Danish family, hoping to find support. As she did not write out of a position as head of state, but merely as a poor daughter or cousin, she had freedom to ask for large and perhaps unrealistic requests, because her letters had less official weight than the letters of the King would have. The exile had altered the formal hierarchy of Frederick as the King and head of state, with Elizabeth below him as his consort. Their dire situation had forced them to work together and make use of every form of support each of them was able to receive.

⁷¹ Lisa Jardine, *Going Dutch: how England plundered Holland's glory* (London 2008) 82-88.

3. Correspondence networks

As a royal woman in exile, letter writing was a vital activity for Elizabeth to help her husband as much as she could. Her exile had left her far removed from both her English family and friends, and her Palatine subjects. Through her letters she was able to maintain contacts with family and friends, who might be able to help. In this dire situation, Frederick could not handle the political matters alone, therefore they made use of their combined networks in order to find sufficient support to regain their land.

Elizabeth's correspondence can be divided into several, occasionally overlapping, networks. The first group is Elizabeth's dynastic-family network, the kings, queens and princes who were bound to her by blood or marriage. The second group consisted of British noblemen, who took up most of Elizabeth's correspondence.⁷² This group can be separated between men who were active in English parliament; Stuart ambassadors on the continent; and British men who resided in The Hague. There is a regular overlap between these groups, as positions changed over time and they all corresponded with each other. As these noblemen were Elizabeth's fellow countrymen and their connection and friendship was with Elizabeth personally, it was logical that she took up this political correspondence with these men instead of Frederick. The third group consists of Palatine and Bohemian noblemen and military officers. This was mainly Frederick's domain, but they occasionally sent Elizabeth information about the progress and actions they were undertaking. After the death of Frederick the contact with this network transferred to Elizabeth.⁷³

In their studies on the relation between correspondents, Jane Couchman and Arthur Herman have both observed that letter writing was often used to remind the other of their relation and the obligations that connected them.⁷⁴ This is particularly visible in the letters Elizabeth wrote directly after the battle of White Mountain, in which she reminded people of her existence and of the friendship they had, but continues by using a pleasing tone in the way she addressed her reader. By stressing her friendship towards the recipient she hoped the other would return this attachment by offering support.

⁷² See appendix.

⁷³ See chapter 6 below.

⁷⁴ Hodson, 'The power of female dynastic networks', 337; Herman, 'The language of fidelity', 11.

3.1 Family network

In terms of status and influence on international politics, the first network of Elizabeth's extended family seemed, at first glance, to be the most important connection. It consisted of internationally significant people such as the British royals King James, her brother prince Charles; her maternal uncle the Danish King Christian IV; her maternal cousins Sophia Hedwig of Brunswick- Wolfenbüttel, Sophia's brother Christian of Brunswick;⁷⁵ Frederick's aunt Charlotte Brabantina and her son Henri de la Trémoille.⁷⁶

However, one should not overestimate the power of Elizabeth's dynastic-family network. Family strings might have bound Elizabeth to them; this did not guarantee her unconditional support. As merely a daughter and niece of great Kings, her position was in the margins of this network. England and Denmark (until 1625) were both not directly involved in the war. Therefore, if they would offer military support to Frederick and Elizabeth, the Habsburg states would interpret this as a declaration of war from England and Denmark. Especially King James desperately wanted to uphold his image as *Rex Pacificus*. However, the troubles with his daughter's family had made his ambition as peace mediator a lot more difficult.⁷⁷ Christian did not see any advantages in helping Elizabeth, as there was nothing for him to gain if he were to fight for the Palatinate.

Elizabeth's brother Charles was more open to the possibility of using a military force than their father. Especially during the first years of the war, he often sided with Buckingham, who despite being the royal favourite, was also supportive of military action for the Palatine cause. At the beginning of 1621, the Venetian ambassador in England reported about Charles: "His Highness is deeply interested in the present events of the world, but more for his sister and religion than for other reasons. Before his father he always aims at suppressing his own feelings."⁷⁸ Earlier in 1620, after Frederick had accepted the Bohemian crown, Charles admitted: "I have nothing else to do at present than to think of the affairs of the Bohemians and of my brother-in-law and nothing occupies my mind more. I have recently read, considered and studied the claims of the Bohemians and they seem to me well

⁷⁵ Sophia Hedwig and Christian of Brunswick were siblings. Their mother, Elisabeth of Denmark, was a sister of Anna of Denmark (Elizabeth's mother) and of Christian IV of Denmark.

⁷⁶ Charlotte Brabantina was a sister of Frederick's mother Louise Juliana of Orange-Nassau. They were the children of William of Orange and Charlotte of Bourbon. Maurice of Orange was their half-brother.

⁷⁷ Sharpe, *Image wars*, 118-120.

⁷⁸ State Papers Venice, XVI, entry 686: Lando, Venetian ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate, 15 January 1620.

founded.”⁷⁹ Charles knew that his father did not intend to send military support to Elizabeth, but these quotes indicate that he was very concerned for his sister and hoped to find a way to help her.

While Elizabeth’s correspondence with male relatives remained formal, she had more informal, friendly, correspondence with a couple of women, particularly with Sophia Hedwig of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and Charlotte Brabantina. They did not have a very prominent position within the dynastic network, which made it easier for Elizabeth to correspond with them on equal terms. Via them, Elizabeth was able to come in closer contact to male relatives who were closer to Sophia Hedwig or Charlotte Brabantina.

Sophia Hedwig lived relatively nearby in Leeuwarden as wife of Stadholder Ernst Casimir of Nassau-Dietz. The women had a lot in common. They had children around the same age, their husbands were often away on military expeditions and they both created a flourishing international court. More painfully, they would both lose their husbands in 1632, after which it was also up to Sophia Hedwig to take over her husband’s role and actively participate in the war, by taking leadership over their country and even being present at the battlefield.⁸⁰ Their correspondence varied from sending the best midwife, to news about mutual friends who visited each other’s courts, but also more political topics on potential military support from England and Denmark. After her brother joined Frederick on the battlefield Sophia Hedwig wrote, “Since it pleases God’s bounty to favour the beginning of my said brother’s enterprise, I will not doubt that the King of Denmark and other allies will assist him.”⁸¹

This brother, Christian of Brunswick, was a useful family connection. Brunswick was a strong military leader who continued to support Frederick and Elizabeth. Sophia Hedwig regularly informed Elizabeth of Brunswick’s actions and on one occasion he sent a report to Elizabeth directly.⁸²

In return for Brunswick’s support, Elizabeth arranged for him to be invested with the Order of the Garter in 1624. After the death of her uncle the Duke of Holstein in March 1624 a position in the order had become available. Elizabeth was after the Duke’s pension for

⁷⁹ Idem, entry 218: Lando, to the Doge and Senate, 30 January 1620.

⁸⁰ Matty Klatter, ‘Sophie Hedwig van Brunswijk-Wolfenbüttel’, in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. <<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Hedwig>>.

⁸¹ C.E.S. I, Letter 252: Sophia Hedwig (in Leeuwarden) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 8 February 1622.

⁸² Idem, Letter 267: Christian of Brunswick (at Landau) to Elizabeth (in The Hague) 25 June 1622.

Charles Louis and the position was a nice way to repay Brunswick's continuous support. To Edward Conway, Secretary of State, she wrote in April 1624: "[now Holstein is dead] there is a pension and a place in the garter royal I infinitely desire that my worthy Cousen the Duke of Brunswick may have his place in the garter and my second boy Charles [Louis] the pension".⁸³ A couple of months later Conway wrote that he had secured the pension: "I do this day carry to Court with me a warrant prepared for his Ma^{ty} signature for the pension to be continued to the young Prince your Ma^{ty} sonne, that was payd to the Duke of Holsteyn. I doubt not to dispatch it presently."⁸⁴ He also gave a positive account on the request for Brunswick "There is no doubt to be made of the Duke of Brunswicks having the garter [...] there must be action to keepe that gallant Duke of Brunswick on the party & on a large stage, to acte all his noble thoughts to the advantage of your Ma^{ty} service."⁸⁵ In December 1624 Brunswick travelled to England to be invested in the Order of the Garter.⁸⁶ The Venetian ambassador wrote about the event: "Prince Christian of Brunswick left after obtaining the order of the Garter, which he is thought to have earned by his merits and his devotion to the Princess Palatine, a fact which has rendered him most popular with all the people and nobles here."⁸⁷

Another connection between Elizabeth and Sophia Hedwig was their uncle Christian IV of Denmark, as their mothers were Christian's sisters. Sophia Hedwig and her mother helped Elizabeth to press Christian IV of Denmark to support them. In January 1622 Sophia Hedwig reported that her mother, Elisabeth of Denmark, had written to the King of Denmark:

"Since my brother [Brunswick] had engaged himself on his side, she begged His Majesty to assist him with men and money so as to emerge from the affair with his honour, integrity, and public approval. The said King greatly respects my mother and loves my brother like a son, which makes me hope that he will help him to restore Your Majesty's good cause".⁸⁸

⁸³ Idem, Letter 321: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Conway (at Whitehall) 29 April 1624.

⁸⁴ Idem, Letter 334: Conway (in London) to Elizabeth (in The Hague) 13 September 1624.

⁸⁵ Idem.

⁸⁶ Idem, Letter 350: Elizabeth to King James, 25 December 1624.

⁸⁷ Calendar of States Papers Venice, xviii, no. 759.

⁸⁸ C.E.S. I, Letter 248: Sophia Hedwig (in Leeuwarden) to Elizabeth (in The Hague?) 24 January 1622.

By not only requesting help from Christian IV herself, but also having Elisabeth of Denmark and Christian of Brunswick pressing to help the Palatinate, Elizabeth enlarged her chances of actual support from Denmark.⁸⁹

3.2.1 British noblemen

Elizabeth's second network, with English noblemen, took up most of her correspondence and was most fruitful in finding help. In her youth, Elizabeth had become acquainted with many English and Scottish noblemen and she had managed to build firm friendships with several of them who had been present at her household. She was well aware that these men could have some influence on decisions of the King and parliament. As said before, these noblemen can be separated in three groups.

The first group consisted of men who were active in English parliament. This included the first Duke of Buckingham, the third Earl of Pembroke, the second and third Marquess of Hamilton, the second Earl of Arundel, the first earl of Middlesex, the second Earl of Mar, and Viscount Conway.

Many of these noblemen supported an active and military approach to help Frederick and Elizabeth regain the Palatinate and Bohemia. They opposed James' peace strategies and tried to convince parliament to send troops to the continent. The most prominent person was George Villiers, the first Duke of Buckingham. He was the favourite of King James and after James' death, he remained a close advisor to the new King Charles I, until Buckingham himself was murdered in 1628. Because of his close position to both Kings, Elizabeth hoped Buckingham would regularly remind the King of the Palatine cause. When Frederick was offered the crown of Bohemia, Buckingham had been in favour of his acceptance. Despite the unfortunate outcome, Buckingham never openly regretted this decision and continued to support the Palatinate case whenever he could.⁹⁰

Elizabeth also turned to these parliamentarians for ongoing financial support, as they had to agree to any financial offers the King made. She wrote flattering letters to Sir Henry Montague, the Lord Treasurer; and the second Marquess of Hamilton, the King's

⁸⁹ Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway*, 55; Pursell, *The Winter King*, 153, 168.

In late December 1621 Christian IV sent an army of 2,000 infantry and 200 cavalry to join Christian of Brunswick. Additionally during this winter of 1622 Brunswick gathered an army of 15-20,000 men.

⁹⁰ Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution*, 58.

commissioner to the Scottish parliament.⁹¹ To Hamilton she wrote flatteringly: “I must desire you still to be assured of my loue, and intreat that you will continue the furthering of the good resolutions the King hath taken for our affaires but I need not say much to you vpon that subiect because I am sure you will not faile to doe your best”.⁹²

England did not have enormous financial resources that could be give away without risking the country to potentially end up in financial difficulties.⁹³ Parliament did agree to give Frederick and Elizabeth a monthly allowance that could be used to keep up the exiled court. From April 1621 Elizabeth received £1,000 a month and Frederick received an additional £500 a month, totalling in £18,000 a year. They also received £1,150 a year for provisions and liveries. Furthermore, Frederick received a pension of £6,000 per year from the Stuart Crown, which he used to maintain the house in Leiden (where their children lived) and ‘for the entertainment of his gentlemen and servants’.⁹⁴ Unfortunately the financial problems that English parliament faced, meant Elizabeth and Frederick regularly had to wait a long time to receive their money.⁹⁵ Whenever a new Lord High Treasurer was appointed in England, she reminded him of the outstanding payments she was still waiting for. For example after James Lay was appointed Lord Treasurer in December 1624 she wrote him:

“That now at your entrance into your Office, before the reuenues of the Exchequer be otherwayes disposed by yow, yow would proujde some way for setling the payment of that 18^m pound the yeare whjch it hath pleased the King my father to allow vnto the King my husband, and to me vpon some sure assignement, the vncertayne payment thereof hauing beene of small, or no aduantage to his Ma^{ty}, yet the occasion of the greate detriment, and trouble to vs.”⁹⁶

This letter indicates that she had not received her allowance for quite some time, or at least only a small percentage of the money. By reminding the new Lord Treasurer of these payments, she hoped this would soon be resolved.

Fortunately, Frederick and Elizabeth were not entirely reliant on their British relatives and other friends were more supportive towards the Palatinate cause. In October 1621

⁹¹ C.E.S. I, letters 217, 224 and 225.

⁹² Idem, letter 225: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to the Second Marquess of Hamilton, 17 April 1621.

⁹³ Sharpe, *Image wars*, 118-120.

⁹⁴ Everett-Green, *Elizabeth*, 235.

⁹⁵ C.E.S. I, letter 353, note 2.

⁹⁶ Idem, Letter 353: Elizabeth to Ley, 23 Jan. 1625.

Baron Digby arranged the remaining £30,000 they had requested by giving her a loan, together with Peter Vanlore, Sir Baptist Hickes and Sir William Cokayne.⁹⁷ Elizabeth thanked him by saying: “in the Help of Money you have lent our Soldiers, I cannot let so great an Obligation pass, without giving you many Thanks for it by these Lines, since I have no other Means to shew my Gratefulness to you.”⁹⁸

During the 1620s the third Earl of Pembroke and the Countess of Bedford formed a group of influential Scottish and English noblemen who supported active participation in foreign politics, to help Protestants throughout Europe. Jason White has named this faction of supporters ‘Militant Protestantism’. From the 1620s, the Palatinate family received a lot of their attention, as they were both Protestants in conflict with the Catholics and Elizabeth Stuart gave the cause a connection to Britain.⁹⁹ This group included Archbishop Abbot, Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, the Duke of Lennox and the Marquess of Hamilton. The Countess was a childhood friend of Elizabeth and because her husband, the third Earl of Bedford, was an invalid, she controlled his affairs. She was a close friend of the Earl of Pembroke and together they acted as advisors to Elizabeth on English politics. There were others who supported militant Protestantism, but were not included in Pembroke and Bedford’s group. These men were; the third Earl of Southampton, the third Earl of Essex, Edmund, Lord Sheffield, Lord Cavendish, Sir Edwin Sandys, Sir Robert Phelips, the Earl of Holland, Viscount Dorchester, Buckingham and Sir Thomas Roe.¹⁰⁰

Very quickly after the disastrous Battle of White Mountain, Buckingham wrote on behalf of this group, a letter of support to Frederick and Elizabeth:

“I cannot now giue you a greater testimony of my fidelity, then by humbly perswading you, to be a meanes to induce the King your Husband, wholly to rely vpon his Ma^{ties} Councill, & aduice, which he hath now sent by my Brother S^r Edward Villiers, as his full resolution; haing formerly debated, and consulted it, in the presence of the Prince, my lord Duke of lenox, the Marques Hamilton, the lord Chamberleyne, the lord of Arundell, the lord of Kelly, Viscount Doncaster, the

⁹⁷ Idem, Letter 242, note 1.

⁹⁸ Idem, Letter 242: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Baron Digby, October 1621.

⁹⁹ White, *Militant Protestantism*, 2, 10-11.

¹⁰⁰ Sharpe, *Faction and parliament*, 143-146; White, *Militant Protestantism*, 11, 77.

lord Digby, the two Secretaryes. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, & myself,¹⁰¹ who all with one joynt consent, approued what his Ma^{tie} now aduiseth, as most honourable, & most safe for him to Councell, & for the King your Husband to followe; Thus much I presume to make knowne vnto your Ma^{tie} referring other Particulars to the Bearer, who thinketh himself happye in this occasion, as I shall do in hauing many, wherby I may be employed in your Ma^{ties} Service So wishing your Ma^{ty} all increase of happiness and content”¹⁰²

The militant Protestants openly supported Frederick and Elizabeth as they saw their acceptance of the Bohemian crown and consequent outbreak of war, as a predestined struggle of Protestantism.¹⁰³ During the 1620s, while King James operated his strategy of neutrality and diplomacy, they hoped to make use of more military strategies by trying to find funding to send troops to the continent. James never openly denied the possibility of military support. There was however much debate on which strategy to apply, the costs and which country to use as an ally.¹⁰⁴ Some small steps of military support were taken, for example, a Council of War was created in 1621. In April 1624 Buckingham appointed Count von Mansfeld for an Anglo-French expedition, which he promised would only cost £40,000, however this turned out to be a lot more.¹⁰⁵ In the end, none of these actions was large and effective enough to make a difference. James was not willing to openly risk his neutrality in order to support his family.

3.2.2. Stuart ambassadors

The second group, of Stuart ambassadors in Europe, had a lot of overlap with the first group. Many noblemen spent part of their career as a diplomat outside England. During the times they resided in Britain, they were often found in parliament. Additionally, there was a lot of correspondence between the men in parliament and on the continent through the official state channels, but also through private correspondence. By upholding a regular correspondence with diplomats, Elizabeth was able to stay up to date with everything that

¹⁰¹ Prince Charles; Ludovick Stuart, 2nd Duke of Lennox and 1st Duke of Richmond; James, 2nd Marquess of Hamilton; Lord Chamberlain William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke; Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel; Thomas Erskine, 1st Earl of Kellie; Sir James Hay, Viscount Doncaster; Sir John Digby; Secretaries of State Naunton and Calvert, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Fulke Grenville, later Baron Brooke. Letter 206, note 2.

¹⁰² C.E.S. I, letter 206: Buckingham to Elizabeth [in Küstrin] [December 1620].

¹⁰³ Sharpe, *Faction*, 146-147.

¹⁰⁴ *Idem*, 150-2.

¹⁰⁵ *Idem*, 158-9, 170.

was happening throughout Europe. Especially in the period after 1632, these connections became very valuable when Elizabeth became more interested in meetings and conferences that were organised by various states, such as the conference in Hamburg in 1638 or the Diet of Regensburg in 1640.

Throughout her life, Elizabeth's most intimate and constant contact was with the diplomat Sir Thomas Roe (1581-1644). They had first become acquainted when he was a gentleman-in-waiting in her household between 1603 and 1605. Afterwards they had stayed in contact and Roe had accompanied the young Frederick and Elizabeth to Heidelberg after their marriage in 1613. Even though King James sent Roe far away as Stuart ambassador to Mogul India and Turkey between 1615 and 1629, Elizabeth and Roe remained close confidants and they regularly wrote each other lengthy letters.¹⁰⁶ It was often Roe whom Elizabeth turned to for political advice, and who informed her of news about the war. In June 1622, while Roe first complained about his ambassador position that removed him to Constantinople, he wrote to her "yet whatsoever I can collect here that may advance your Ma^{ts} affaires I will alwayes communicate with you."¹⁰⁷ Via the network of ambassadors, who regularly corresponded with each other through state channels, he received all sorts of news and rumours of plans and alliances that were made. In 1624 Roe for example wrote about the latest news he heard: "I will write to your Ma.^{tie} the Truth, as farrre as I conceiue yt; [...] Wee are fully resolued here, that the Emperour hath in preparation a very greate Army for Hungary or Transilvania. [...] There are daily commissioners passing, and treaties making, betweene Vienna and [Bethlen Gabor] [...] Butt as yet we heare nothing concluded."¹⁰⁸ He further continued by giving details of treaties and the size of their armies. He ended with an advice for Elizabeth: "Which to apply to your Ma.^{ts} service, I can giue no other aduice, Butt supposing the Changes in England, [...] that a diuersion in Hungary may aduance your Ma.^{ts} iust ends, it is very convenient."¹⁰⁹

Apart from this lifelong correspondence with Thomas Roe, Elizabeth also corresponded with other Stuart ambassadors. Resident ambassadors, who remained in the same country

¹⁰⁶ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 'Roe, Thomas' <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23943> [last accessed on 22 January 2018].

307 letters between Elizabeth and Roe have been preserved, that is 32% of Elizabeth's correspondence between 1620 and 1642. See appendix.

¹⁰⁷ C.E.S. I, letter 268: Roe (in Constantinople) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 27 June 1622.

¹⁰⁸ C.E.S. I, letter 317: Roe (in Constantinople) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 13 April 1624.

¹⁰⁹ Idem.

for a longer period, could be a valuable source for first hand news. Elizabeth occasionally had contact with for example with Edward Herbert, the ambassador in France between 1619 and 1624; Sir Isaac Wake, who has been ambassador in Savoy, Venice and France; and with Sir Bathazar Gerbier, a Stuart agent in Brussels from 1631.

Overall, in this first period until 1632, Elizabeth's correspondence with these Stuart Ambassadors was not very extensive yet. Apart from Thomas Roe, she only sporadically had contact with these men. Later in the second period, we will see that this group became a lot more prominent and extensive in her correspondence, when she focused her strategies more on diplomacy and therefore needed the support of this group.

3.2.3. Englishmen in The Hague

The third group of British noblemen consisted of the men who resided in The Hague. Upon arriving in the Netherlands Elizabeth gathered a network of English noblemen who resided there. The first person she turned to was the resident Stuart ambassador in the Netherlands: Sir Dudley Carleton.¹¹⁰ He worked in The Hague from 1616 until 1626 and again from 1627 until 1628. This made him her closest English contact at the beginning of her exile and he organised part of her correspondence with England. He was occasionally employed as letter bearer for the correspondence between Elizabeth and England that she wished to remain secret. He also regularly corresponded with other Englishmen about issues concerning the King and Queen of Bohemia, which he forwarded and discussed with Elizabeth.¹¹¹ It was assumed that Elizabeth occasionally read the state letters Carleton received, or at least received a report of what was enclosed.¹¹² In one letter Roe for example mentioned "I haue sent My L:^d Ambassador [Carleton] a lardger relation which seeing your Ma:^{ty} takes pleasure to read, I will craue leaue to refer you; It is meare a Cobby of that I send his Ma:^{ty} [James]." ¹¹³

The second Englishman to keep her company was Sir Francis Nethersole, who was appointed as English agent to the princes of the Protestant Union and as secretary to Elizabeth from 1619. He moved to the Bohemian court in 1620 and he was one of the men

¹¹⁰ Carleton is one of the first people Elizabeth wrote to after the Battle on White Mountain, C.E.S. I, letter 208: Elizabeth (in Frankfurt an der Oder) to Carleton (in The Hague) 7 December 1620.

¹¹¹ Gary M. Bell *A handlist of British diplomatic representatives 1509-1688* (London 1990) LC120; For example: State Papers Online, 84/105 f. 181, Carleton to Sir. Wotton.

¹¹² C.E.S. I, letter 253: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to King James, 16 February 1622, note 1.

¹¹³ Idem, letter 331, Roe (in Constantinople) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 4 August 1624.

who followed Elizabeth in her exile to The Hague. From 1624 he spent more time in England and became actively involved in English parliament, where he occasionally tried to gain more funds for the recovery of the Palatinate. Whenever Nethersole was outside The Hague he would write Elizabeth lengthy letters about everything that was happening at the Stuart court and parliament in England. After Carleton was dismissed as ambassador for the Low Countries, Nethersole attempted to succeed him, but he failed.¹¹⁴ Instead, Dudley's secretary Sir William Boswell was appointed as Stuart ambassador for the Low Countries, from 1632 until 1650.¹¹⁵

Via these men, Elizabeth was able to actively take part in the network of Stuart ambassadors and other English noblemen. They informed her of the news about what was discussed in English parliament and of the developments in the war in the Empire. Additionally, they occasionally reminded people to remember Elizabeth and the troubles her family had, for example relating to her financial difficulties.

The lack of funding and the high expenses to keep up a court had left Elizabeth in large debts to people in The Hague.¹¹⁶ She had for example never paid the rent for their house on the Kneuterdijk in The Hague and there were many outstanding payments for local shopkeepers.¹¹⁷ In order to keep the court running, Francis Nethersole and Dudley Carleton occasionally advanced her money. This gave Carleton extra financial difficulty, as he was relying on the English parliament for his salary and like Elizabeth's pension, this was not paid very regularly.¹¹⁸ Together with requests for his own salary, he regularly wrote appeals for Elizabeth's allowance. From April 1623 he also requested for an increase of the Palatinate court's allowance by £500 a month as debts continued to increase.¹¹⁹ In 1626, Lord Treasurer Ley arranged £10,000 to be sent to The Hague in order to clear household debts to many local shops, like the apothecary, the egg wife, the butcher, and the baker.¹²⁰ The sending of the money was passed by privy seal bill in summer 1626, however it would take until 1628 for Elizabeth to receive the money.

¹¹⁴ ODNB, 'Nethersole, Francis', <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19906>>.

¹¹⁵ Bell, *LC120, LC129, LC138*.

¹¹⁶ C.E.S. I, Letter 310, note 2.

¹¹⁷ Everett-Green, *Elizabeth*, 258; C.E.S. I, Letter 310: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Middlesex, 1 February 1624.

¹¹⁸ C.E.S. I, Letter 289, note 3; State Papers Online 14/133 f.34; Everett-Green, *Elizabeth*, 235. State Papers 84/120 f. 253, Carleton to Burlamacchi.

¹¹⁹ C.E.S. I, Letter 310, note 2.

¹²⁰ C.E.S. I, Letter 415, Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Ley, 14 July 1626; note 3; Green 258.

With her continuing pressing debts, she also asked friends to send her practical items as tokens of support. In 1627 Francis Nethersole's wife bought Elizabeth ribbons, garters and children's gloves worth £70.¹²¹ In 1631 John Ashburnham promised to "bringe your Ma^{tie} gloves, garthers, and roses, with stockings, and what els I can provide, which your Ma:^{tie} hath neede of."¹²² By this time Elizabeth had been in debt to several shops for such a long time that she probably had trouble to buy these items in The Hague herself.

Overall, Elizabeth's correspondence with English noblemen had an amical tone, indicating a relationship based on equal grounds, even though Elizabeth technically ranked higher in status as she was part of the royal family. The difference in status meant that Elizabeth and the noblemen were able to benefit from each other. Within her dynastic family network, Elizabeth was in a weak position, where she made many requests for help, but did not have much to offer in return. Her letters to family members had a very formal and obedient tone, because she was aware of her current low status and she had nothing to offer but words of praise for them. In contrast, with the men of a lower status, she was in a position where she as a princess and queen was able to benefit them too. These men could support her cause in parliament and in negotiations, whilst she could for example ask the King to give favours or higher positions. As a result, many of Elizabeth's letters to James, and later Charles, were requests to favour or give an audience to certain people who had helped her. For example when Francis Nethersole travelled to England she gave him a letter for King James that wrote:

"I beg this again most humbly, and that you will believe what this bearer [Nethersole] tells you who, I must give this recommendation, is Your Majesty's most faithful servant".¹²³

It is apparent that most of Elizabeth's correspondence was with men, not women. In the first period, only eight percent of the correspondence was with women, in the second period this diminished further to only two and half percent.¹²⁴ Elizabeth was aware that she

¹²¹ State Papers Online 16/70, f. 192, *Bill of articles of apparel sold to Lucy Lady Nethersole, for the Queen of Bohemia, 12 July 1627.*

¹²² C.E.S. I, Letter 564, John Ashburnham to Elizabeth, 8 March 1631; Ashburnham was part of Elizabeth's household in The Hague.

¹²³ C.E.S. I, Letter 227: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to King James, 22 April 1621; Pursell, 136-7.

¹²⁴ 36 out of 452 letters in the first period and 14 out of 566 letters in the second period. One should note that Elizabeth's correspondence is incomplete and as her own archive has not survived, the chances of finding her correspondence with females is a lot smaller than those with men, who's letters are archived in either private

had to focus her correspondence on people who were in a position to help her, and from whom she was able to gain something. The women she did correspond with were in a position of some sort of power and their conversations were on not only private or household matters, but they always mentioned topics relating to state business. Via Sophia Hedwig, she hoped to receive support from Christian of Brunswick and Christian IV of Denmark, and with Charlotte Brabantina she talked about the state of the Palatinate and family matters. These women belonged to Elizabeth's family network. They had their own contacts and correspondence with men who could help Elizabeth militarily, but it was easier for Elizabeth to approach them, because they were not restricted by correspondence through official state politics, like the men were. Sophia Hedwig and Charlotte Brabantina were also more eager to uphold a friendship with Elizabeth. Although no letters of Charlotte Brabantina to Elizabeth remain, Elizabeth's letters indicate that Charlotte Brabantina continuously emphasised her friendship towards Elizabeth. In one letter she wrote, "[this letter] will assure you that I love you always and entirely, and that I cherish with passion the demonstrations you give me by your letters of friendship."¹²⁵

Within the family network it was easier for Elizabeth to correspond with women, as they were more willing to stay in touch and find ways to help her, as they were not restricted by official state politics, like most men were. The male members of her family stayed more formal and distant in their correspondence with Elizabeth. To compare, Sophia Hedwig for example wrote Elizabeth relatively long letters in which she talked freely about both politics and gossip. About the opening of the English parliament, she wrote "hoping that this will be an outcome which will awaken the King from his profound slumber, and make him perform what everyone cries out and sighs for him to do."¹²⁶ In contrast, the letters of Elizabeth's brother Charles are a lot shorter and more formal, mainly discussing activities of diplomats. Even the news of him becoming a father was very short "lett you know, that this day you have a Nepueu borne, & to the end you may soone know it".¹²⁷

In a study on Anne of Denmark, Electress of Saxony, Katrin Keller observed that the majority of Anne's correspondence also was with men. Whilst Anne's correspondence with

or state archives. Nevertheless, the many letters and extensive correspondence that has survived indicates that Elizabeth spent a lot of time focused on political concerns.

¹²⁵ C.E.S. I, letter 270: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charlotte Brabantina [in Thouars] 6 July 1622.

¹²⁶ C.E.S. I, Letter 244: Sophia Hedwig (in Leeuwarden) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 6 January 1622.

¹²⁷ Idem, letter 543: Charles I (at St James's Palace) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 8 June 1630.

women usually lasted a lifetime, her correspondence with men had a stronger political purpose. Once her request or favour was granted, her correspondence with men whom she was not related to usually terminated.¹²⁸ In comparison, Elizabeth had a couple of men who she remained in contact with over the years, mainly the English noblemen Roe, Nethersole and Buckingham. She valued their friendship but also continued to make use of their positions and loyalty to her. Apart from them there were many men she only sporadically or for a short period corresponded with. In contrast to Anne, Elizabeth did not have female friends whom she continuously corresponded with, as not even her correspondence with Sophia Hedwig was very regular throughout the years, and only one letter between Elizabeth and her supporter and childhood friend Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford has survived.¹²⁹

In this first period of war and exile, we have seen that Elizabeth became more involved in politics and warfare. She was aware of the potential support they could receive from her extensive networks. Although Elizabeth's family network seemed the most influential and logical group to correspond with and ask for support, this was not the case. Elizabeth had a marginal position, from where she was not able to pressure her family to help. She continued to beg her father for support, but her formal and humble wording indicates a large distance between father and daughter. She closed most of her letters with the words "I beg you to continue towards me the honour of your good graces, I will try to make myself worthy".¹³⁰ The majority of Elizabeth's correspondence with British noblemen, in contrast, was informal and amicable of tone. She even gave them nicknames, such as 'Camels face' for the Earl of Carlisle.¹³¹

An extensive group of politicians, diplomats and other noblemen openly confessed their support to Frederick and Elizabeth. Several of them had known Elizabeth since she was a child and many of them saw their services to her family as support for the problems the Protestant religion was facing. Fortunately for her, these parliamentarians had a powerful position in England, where they worked with a system in which the King had no absolute power, but also had to receive permission from parliament. Because these networks

¹²⁸ Katrin Keller, 'Kommunikationsraum altes reich', 217-218.

¹²⁹ C.E.S. I, Letter 320: The Countess of Bedford [in England] to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 24 April 1624.

¹³⁰ Idem, Letter 308: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to King James, 20 January 1624. All other letters from Elizabeth to James include approximately the same sentence.

¹³¹ C.E.S. I, letter 495: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Carlisle, 16 February 1629.

consisted of Elizabeth's relatives and countrymen, it was more logical for her instead of Frederick's to stay in contact with these people.

In 1632, after fourteen years of war and only some occasional bright points and promises, there was still no end to the war in sight, at least not one that included a return to the Palatinate for Elizabeth and her children. With her husband and only military leader of the family dead, it was now up to Elizabeth to find new ways of restoring their land.

Part two 1632-1642

The widowed Stateswoman

4. The context

The death of Frederick on 29 November 1632 turned Elizabeth's life upside down for a second time. Living in exile had already put her in a precarious situation. Now she unexpectedly became a widow and, as her eldest son Charles Louis was only fourteen, an exiled regent. The future of her family and restoration of the Palatinate was in her hands. In the first twelve years of exile she had taken up a lot of state business; corresponding with statesmen, politicians and diplomats about alliances and support. But this now became her sole responsibility. Even though the ubiquity of war and the spreading of disease killed numerous male leaders at an early age, the death of Frederick came as a great shock to Elizabeth. His death was not even heroic on the battlefield, but was the result of a short sickness from fever, delirium, constipation, and an inflammation in his lungs.¹³² Only twelve days before he had written her "[I] assure you that I shall be until my grave. My dear and only heart".¹³³ He had no idea this promise of love would end so soon.

Elizabeth was devastated by the death of her husband. To her brother Charles she wrote: "[I am] the most wretched creature that ever lived in this world, and this shall I ever be, having lost the best friend that I ever had, in whom was all my delight".¹³⁴ Charles offered her to return to England "my dearest sister, I entreat you to make as much haste as you conveniently can to come to me, where I doubt not but you will find some little comfort for your own sadness".¹³⁵ Elizabeth refused, the main reason she gave for not accepting Charles' invite to come to England was because she followed the German mourning customs of not leaving the house for the first period of mourning.¹³⁶

A second reason to remain in The Hague was to show no defeat. To the English embassy of 150 men that Charles had sent to persuade Elizabeth to return to England, Elizabeth said that she was afraid if she would leave the continent so soon after Frederick's

¹³² Pursell, *The Winter King*, 277.

¹³³ C.E.S. II, letter 66: Frederick [in Mainz?] to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 17 November 1632.

¹³⁴ Idem, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1634.

¹³⁵ Idem, letter 68: Charles I (in Whitehall) to Elizabeth (in The Hague) 10 December 1632.

¹³⁶ Idem, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1632.

death it would seem like she abandoned the cause of the Palatinate. George Goring, who was part of this embassy, wrote about Elizabeth's choice:

"She vows she hath not been dissuaded by any, but that her present sad condition, outward and inward, the affairs of Germany as they now stand, and what the German princes now on foot may think of this her so sudden departure –whereby they may conceive she abandons the cause- hath only caused this adjournment of her passage into England to a more convenient time."¹³⁷

Her refusal was certainly not because she did not want to return to England, because they had been refused to take refuge in England when Frederick was still alive. In her letter to Charles she wrote that she would love to visit England, "Now I have another reason for wishing to live, in order that before I die, I may have the only comfort of which, in the affliction of my infinite loss, I am capable; - that of having the happiness of visiting you". However she would not do so "until my poor children can be re-established in the empire, or at least in a fair way of being so."¹³⁸ For as long as the status of her Palatine land remained unclear she felt it was best to remain in The Hague, where she had her own place and where she could stay in contact with British diplomats who travelled between England and the continent.

The organisation over the Palatinate did not fall to Elizabeth alone. Following a law of the Holy Roman Empire, Frederick's younger brother Louis Philip, Count Palatine of Simmern--Kaiserslautern, was appointed as Administrator for as long as Charles Louis was still a minor.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, Elizabeth resolved to spend most of her time corresponding with people who could help her and her family being reunited with the Palatinate.

Just when Elizabeth assumed her situation could not get worse, the Peace of Prague (1635) was announced. This treaty positioned Frederick as the scapegoat and originator of the war and as a result, his family was entirely excluded from any restoration.¹⁴⁰ The electoral title and the Palatine lands officially went to Maximilian I, the Duke of Bavaria.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Idem, letter 78, note 2; Green 305, from a letter of Goring to Coke; State Papers Online 84/146 f.17.

¹³⁸ Idem, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1634.

¹³⁹ Everett-Green, *Elizabeth*, 307.

¹⁴⁰ 'The Peace of Prague', in: Tryntje Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War, a documentary history* (Indianapolis 2009) 171.

The treaty stated: "As it is universally known [...] the proscribed Count Palatinate Frederick was a main instigator and originator of all of the disasters that took place in His Imperial Majesty's hereditary kingdom of Bohemia and subsequently in the Roman Empire."

¹⁴¹ Idem.

After hearing this news, Elizabeth wrote to Archbishop William Laud: “the articles of peace betwixt the Emperour and the Electour of Saxe; which they woulde haue generall, and utterlie exclude my children, from the Electorat and there countrie, which by the laws of Germanie they cannot doe.”¹⁴²

The only concession the treaty gave to Elizabeth and her children was to offer them a lifetime annuity and princely pension, but only “as long as they dutifully humble themselves before His Imperial Majesty” and the treaty stated that “this would be out of imperial graciousness, not out of indebtedness”.¹⁴³ Or as Elizabeth herself interpreted, “if my children will humble themselves to the Emperour he will giue them some meanes to liue”.¹⁴⁴ No matter how much she had lost, Elizabeth was not willing to submit herself to the Emperor’s command. Angry with the little England had done to support her she added in her letter to Roe, “now doe you judge wither this will not open there eyes on your side the sea if they be not shot out with pistols concerning the promiss of the Electorat.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly she said to Laud, “I hope this will open the King my deare Brothers eyes to see how he is abused by that side, I write this freelie to you because I think it concernes the kings honour to be reuenged of there falshood and neglect towards him as much as it will be for our good.”¹⁴⁶

The Peace treaty was intended to end the war, but it was hugely in favour to the Catholics and the imperial power. Many Protestants and international allies protested against the treaty, which meant that instead of peace it brought a new phase to the war. This could be seen as a positive development for Elizabeth’s family, as continuing the war indicated that there was still chance of a more positive outcome. Elizabeth wrote to a long list of Protestant leaders, hoping to create an alliance with the people who also had been excluded or disadvantaged by the peace treaty.¹⁴⁷ These men had a similar idea and planned a meeting in Lüneburg. However as the war continued after 1635 they saw no need to extensively talk about it.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² C.E.S. II, letter 191, Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud, 12 July 1635.

¹⁴³ ‘The Peace of Prague’, in: Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War*, 171.

¹⁴⁴ Letter 190: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe, 12 July 1635.

¹⁴⁵ Idem.

¹⁴⁶ C.E.S. II, letter 191: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud, 12 July 1635.

¹⁴⁷ The men she wrote to were: the King of Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, Duke Wilhelm of Saxe-Weimar, the Duke of Holstein, the Duke of Brunswick, Duke Georg of Lüneburg, the Dukes of Mecklenburg and the Landgrave of Hesse. C.E.S. II, letter 221: Elizabeth to Avery [in Hamburg] 10 February 1636; see page 62 below.

¹⁴⁸ See chapter 6, Correspondence networks, below.

Charles Louis turned eighteen on 1 January 1636, making him officially old enough to rule without a consort and an administrator. However, in this precarious situation Elizabeth was of opinion that she should continue her political work and correspondence for the Palatinate. Charles Louis could take up the one sphere where Elizabeth as a woman did not have easy access to: the military. Despite her focus on diplomacy, Elizabeth had realised she needed an army in order to be taken seriously at the negotiations tables and to form alliances. Going into meetings empty handed made negotiating difficult and offering military support could help them finding an alliance. Because they had no own Palatine army, Elizabeth hoped that Charles Louis could either lead an English army or take command over another army in the Empire.

To show that Charles Louis was taking his responsibilities as Count Palatine, Elizabeth sent him to England to ask Charles for military support. She continued to hope that her brother would send English troops to the continent to fight for her family. With Charles Louis as the officer for these troops he would be able to show his active and adult involvement in the war. Potential allies, such as Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel, who hoped to receive English support via the Palatinate, also requested this on various occasions. In 1636, Wilhelm wrote “If it should please the King your brother to use my troops to put to rights affairs in Germany, where the Palatine Electoral House and the children of Your Majesty have so much interest, in their old roles, I would have preferred to engage with him than with any other monarch in the whole of Christendom.”¹⁴⁹

Before Charles Louis went to England, Elizabeth in preparation requested William Laud to press Charles and to organise an army for Charles Louis. Laud was a member of the Board of Ordnance, which was responsible for many military activities, and she hoped he would be able to convince Charles and the rest of the board to help them.

“If now, that my sonne is coming to be of age, the King will not giue him meanes to goe and defend what he has of his cuntry and get the rest but force him to sitt still heare and doe nothing the worlde will think that he doth consent the wrong that is done him, besides it will reflect vppon the king my deare Brothers honnour if now he shoulde not giue him a good assistance.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ C.E.S. II, letter 228: Wilhelm V (in Kassel) to Elizabeth, 24 March 1636.

¹⁵⁰ C.E.S. II, letter 194: Elizabeth to Laud, 20 July 1635.

Charles, who like his father favoured peace negotiations, offered his help by sending three peace embassies to the continent in 1636. However all three embassies ended in failure, because Charles had given them unrealistic propositions no one was interested in.¹⁵¹

Eventually in 1637 Charles offered his nephew a military fleet. Charles Louis was “soe much overjoyd with this meane to let your M.^{ty} knowe, that it seemeth to me as a dreame [...] the King hath [...] resolved Monday last with his instruction to let me seeke my furtune at sea”.¹⁵² Elizabeth was also happy with this fleet as she could finally take action, “I ame confident that when I can lett the states know the particulars of the number of the ships that are to be sett out with my sonne, they will also send of theirs to joine with them.”¹⁵³ Thomas Roe and Landgrave Wilhelm were less optimistic about the fleet, because the Palatinate did not lie at a sea, which meant a fleet could never reach their land.¹⁵⁴ Additionally Roe was of the opinion that this fleet was a simple solution for Charles to keep his sister and nephew content, without really upsetting other parties or truly participating in the war.¹⁵⁵ Elizabeth agreed with Roe’s criticism on the fleet, but she was happy with any support she could get: “I will also be as free with you, and confess trulie I haue no great opinion of anie expedition by sea, I meane for the maine action; but beggars must be no chusers”.¹⁵⁶ Charles Louis was also aware that a fleet was not ideal, “there is noe question if I had meanes to goe with troopes to Germanie it were much more both for my honour & profit, if that could not be, certainly it is better to doe any thing then to be thus idle”.¹⁵⁷ In the end it did not matter if a fleet would be helpful or not, as the ships never left the English harbour. Charles let sending the fleet depend on France’s response to a Franco-Stuart treaty, but France continued to postpone a definite answer.¹⁵⁸ Roe reported “There is not much preparation nor speech of hastening the Prince Elector to Sea; though the ships are ready: because the delay of France giues his Ma:tie reason to pause, & not doe the worke for them, who wilbe bound to doe nothing in exchange.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ Wilson, *Europe’s tragedy*, 584; Springell, *Connoisseur and diplomat*, 36-37; Kevin Sharpe, *The personal rule of Charles I* (Yale 1992) 519-536.

¹⁵² C.E.S. II, letter 310: Charles Louis (in Theobalds) to Elizabeth, 30 January 1637.

¹⁵³ Idem, letter 312: Elizabeth to Laud, 14 February 1637.

¹⁵⁴ Idem, letter 315: Roe to Elizabeth, 27 March 1637; Letter 323: Charles Louis (in Whitehall) to Elizabeth, 3 May 1637.

¹⁵⁵ Idem, letter 315.

¹⁵⁶ Idem, letter 321: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe, 16 April 1637.

¹⁵⁷ Idem, letter, 323, Charles Louis (in Whitehall) to Elizabeth, 3 May 1637.

¹⁵⁸ Wilson, *Europe’s tragedy*, 594.

¹⁵⁹ C.E.S. II, letter 325: Roe to Elizabeth, 18 May 1637.

The negotiations for a Franco-Stuart treaty had not been successful, but they did lead to an invitation for England to participate at the conference in Hamburg in 1638, where representatives of France, Sweden and Holland had gathered to form an alliance. This was the first time Roe got the opportunity to represent England and help Elizabeth at negotiations for the war, but Charles made his position rather difficult. He had to persuade the others to fight for the restoration of the Palatinate while his only offer was the English fleet, which would not sail under the English flag, but under Charles Louis' flag.¹⁶⁰ Unsurprisingly, the other parties expected more from England and were not interested in such a weak alliance.

Meanwhile Elizabeth found another military opportunity for Charles Louis when in October 1637 Landgrave Wilhelm V passed away. Elizabeth was sad for the loss of her friend and advisor, but she also saw an opportunity for Charles Louis to take control: "His armie is now without a head, therefore my sonne has taken the resolution to take it to himself."¹⁶¹ Charles Louis sent his servant Horneck¹⁶² to the widowed Landgravine Amalia Elisabeth and to Lieutenant General Melander, who had temporarily taken over leadership of the Hessian army, to request becoming the leader over the army.¹⁶³ However, Amalia Elisabeth was not willing to give away the control over her army. In January 1638 she decided to take the command over the army herself, as this was her country's primary remaining asset. She did not want to weaken the protection of her own land by giving her army to someone who wanted to use it for his own benefit. As a woman she was not interested in being on the battlefield herself, therefore she let General Melander run the army in her name.¹⁶⁴

Whilst the war continued Elizabeth decided to give all her sons a military training, as it would enlarge their chances of taking command over the troops of a befriended state. In 1637 she sent her third son Maurice to the Prince of Orange to give him a military training, "to learne that profession which I beleeeue he must liue by".¹⁶⁵ Frederick Henry of Orange's army was fighting the Spaniards in Breda. Elizabeth felt it was better to have her sons fighting for the Dutch than not fight at all, therefore Charles Louis and Rupert left England to join their brother in the Dutch army. Elizabeth professed her idea to Laud: "I think that he

¹⁶⁰ Michael J. Brown, *Itinerant Ambassador, The life of Sir Thomas Roe* (Lexington 1970) 214-5.

¹⁶¹ C.E.S. II, letter 351: Elizabeth to the Marquess of Hamilton, October 1637.

¹⁶² Wolff Ebert von Horneck, Swedish officer and Palatine servant from 1636.

¹⁶³ C.E.S. II, letter 357: Elizabeth to Roe, 31 October 1637.

¹⁶⁴ Tryntje Helfferich, *the iron princess*, 43.

¹⁶⁵ C.E.S. II, letter 326: Elizabeth to Laud, 29 May 1637.

[Rupert] will spend this summer better in an armie then idlie in England, for though it be a great honour and happiness to him to waite vppon his Vncle, yet his youth considered he will be better employed to see the warrs.”¹⁶⁶ She also felt that if her sons gained experience and a good reputation, it would be easier to get them in a leading position of their own army.

After Charles Louis had failed to gain command over the Hessian army, Elizabeth and Charles Louis decided to take matters to their own hands and organise a Palatine army. Elizabeth had secretly saved up money, which she now decided to invest.¹⁶⁷ In March 1638, they were able to buy the city of Meppen for £75,000 from Anna von Schade, the widow of Field Marshal Dodo zu Inhausen und Knyphausen.¹⁶⁸ Charles Louis used Meppen as his headquarters, from where he hoped to invade the Palatinate. He received support from the Scottish officer James King, the German officer Hans Christoff von Köningsmarck, the German Colonel Thomas Ferencz, and his brother Rupert.¹⁶⁹ About this decision to spend all her money on an army, Elizabeth said, “I hope the king my deare Brother will not be offended with his [Charles Louis’] resolution, if he be I must be the cheef blamed because I persuade my [son] all I can to doe it.”¹⁷⁰ She did not need to worry, as Charles “was pleased to write to me himself, that he doth approue of my sonnes intentions, and with so great a fauour as the bestowing his money towards the leauies.”¹⁷¹ Despite the positive prospects of having an army and receiving money and troops from supporters, the army was very quickly crushed. On the first of May, before they had truly started to fight, the Imperial forces defeated them. Charles Louis managed to escape, but his brother Rupert and several other men were captured and imprisoned in Linz.¹⁷²

After this fiasco, Charles Louis found another army he could take command over. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar died on 18 July 1639. The ‘Bernhardines’ had been one of the strongest troops fighting against the Emperor and Charles Louis was eager to have these men on his side. He wrote to the four officers of the Bernhardines offering his leadership. They were interested in Charles Louis’ offer and invited him to their garrison. Unfortunately whilst travelling incognito through France to reach them, Cardinal Richelieu’s agents

¹⁶⁶ Idem, letter 331: Elizabeth to Laud, 20 June 1637.

¹⁶⁷ Akkerman, *introduction C.E.S. II*, 11.

¹⁶⁸ C.E.S. II, letter 372: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud, 3 March 1638, note 2; F.J.G. ten Raa and F. de Bas, *Het staatsche leger IV, 1625-1648* (Breda 1918) 103.

¹⁶⁹ *Het staatsche leger IV*, 103; Akkerman, *introduction C.E.S. II*, 12.

¹⁷⁰ C.E.S. II, letter 373: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Gerbier [in Brussels] 11 March 1638.

¹⁷¹ Idem, letter 376: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud, 22 April 1638.

¹⁷² C.E.S. II, introduction, 12; Letter 381: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to the Marquess of Hamilton, 24 May 1638.

arrested Charles Louis. Their official reason was that he travelled without a passport, however it was more probable that Richelieu wanted to incorporate the Bernhardines in the French army. From March 1640 Charles Louis received more freedom to travel around France and in July he was released, after which he went back to his uncle in London.¹⁷³

Rupert was not released until October 1641, when he was freed to be able to visit the Emperor at the Imperial Diet in Regensburg. This was the first diet since the start of the war, in which Emperor Ferdinand III hoped to make agreements with all the Estates of the Empire that would end the war. Thomas Roe was sent as a special ambassador for England and he worked together with the Palatine ambassadors Spina and Peblitz, who acted on Elizabeth's behalf.¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth had written to Laud and Vane hoping they could convince Charles to send Roe as ambassador to the diet: "beseech my brother that if he send an Ambassadour it may be Thom Row."¹⁷⁵ In June 1640 Roe was sent to Regensburg.¹⁷⁶ Here, he kept Elizabeth and Boswell, the British ambassador in the Netherlands, up to date by sending extensive letters about everything that was discussed and who he had been talking to. He hoped to find support from Brandenburg, Lüneburg and Hesse to help the Palatinate House and to oppose the decisions made at the Peace of Prague, as this treaty had negatively affected them all.¹⁷⁷

The decisions made in Regensburg regarding Elizabeth's family were relatively positive and remained unchanged in the final Peace of Westphalia, which would end the war in 1648. The outcome of the Diet proposed the creation of a new, eighth electoral title for Charles Louis, which meant that both the Bavarian and the Palatine branch of the family would have a title. Regarding the lands, the Lower Palatinate, which included the capital Heidelberg, returned to Charles Louis, whereas the Upper Palatinate remained in Maximilian's possession.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Elizabeth and Roe were not happy with this outcome of the Diet. Elizabeth declared that she "desired all or nothing"¹⁷⁹ and Roe called the outcome "absurd, vniust, dishonourable, and impossible".¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ C.E.S. II, letters 495; 514; 539; 554.

¹⁷⁴ Bell, E97; C.E.S. II, Letter 580: Roe [in Regensburg] to Elizabeth [in The Hague], 14 August 1641.

¹⁷⁵ C.E.S. II, letter 540: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Vane [at the Stuart court], 8 August 1640.

¹⁷⁶ Idem, letter 565: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe [on his way to Regensburg], 19 June 1641.

¹⁷⁷ Idem, letter 580: Roe [in Regensburg] to Elizabeth [in The Hague], 14 August 1641.

¹⁷⁸ Wilson, *Europe's tragedy*, 625, 726.

¹⁷⁹ C.E.S. II, letter 616: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe [in Vienna], 2 June 1642.

¹⁸⁰ Idem, letter 614: Roe [in Vienna] to Elizabeth [in The Hague], 14 May 1642.

Nevertheless there was not much they could do about this proposition. In June 1642 the Diet had ended and Roe was recalled back to England. There was a lot of unrest in England and in August 1642 the Civil War broke out. This conflict diverted the attention of everyone around Elizabeth away from the Palatinate. Suddenly Elizabeth had to choose between her brother and her friends in parliament. She had long begged for support from her brother, often via her acquaintances in court and parliament but now these two groups were at war with each other. Elizabeth and Charles Louis decided to side with the Parliamentarians, to whom they declared their support in a public declaration.¹⁸¹ Akkerman has suggested that Elizabeth's choice for parliament was because they paid her pension money.¹⁸² Another reason could be that throughout her life it had not been her brother who gave support, but her friends: the people in parliament. They supplied her money, voiced her cause at negotiations on the continent, reminded the king to help his sister, and kept her up to date on how the war was progressing. From the moment Frederick was offered the crown of Bohemia, her father King James had protested against accepting. In parliament there was however a great faction of men who supported Frederick and Elizabeth's choice.¹⁸³ Now the civil war turned her longstanding supporters against Charles, it is understandable that she chose their side. Their friendship and support had been more profitable to her Palatine cause than what Charles had ever offered her.

No matter which side she supported, this new war distracted everyone in Britain away from what was happening with the Palatinate. Even the Palatine brothers turned their focus on this conflict and against each other. Charles Louis joined his mother in supporting the Parliamentarians, whereas Rupert and Maurice joined their uncle's side and became officers in the Royalist army. Additionally, the noblemen who had previously supported Elizabeth now also had to focus on the trouble in their own country. They could not spare their time and money on the Palatine cause whilst they were at war themselves.

¹⁸¹ 'A declaration of the Prince Paltsgrave, to the high court of Parliament, concerning the cause of his departure out of England in these times of distractions, and the manner of his carriage and behaviour during the time of his continuance with His Majesty in the north. Likewise his earnest request to the Parliament, and the Parliaments answer thereunto: declared in his letter to the House of Peeres on Tuesday last. Also the Queen of Bohemia her resolution concerning Prince Roberts coming into England against the Parliament. Likewise a true relation, shewing how the Marquesse of Hartford and his company are beset by the Earle of Bedford and his forces' (1642).

¹⁸² C.E.S. II, introduction, 13.

¹⁸³ White, *Militant Protestantism*, 11, 129-130; Sharpe, *Faction and parliament*, 144.

With her family divided and her most trusting supporters caught up in their own war, Elizabeth's prospect of a complete restoration of the Palatinate seemed further away than ever. As Charles Louis turned twenty-five in 1643 and Elizabeth did not expect any more support from her personal network, there was not much more she could do for the Palatine Cause. It now truly became Charles Louis' job to have his land returned to him. Having grown up in war and away from his native land for most of his life, Charles Louis was more willing to make compromises. Therefore, when at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 the proposition of receiving the Lower Palatinate and a new Electoral title was created, Charles Louis gratefully accepted. It was finally time to rule over the land he had been fighting for all his life.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Wilson, *Europe's tragedy*, 726; Pursell, *The Winter King*, 285-6.

5. Representation as a widow

Widowhood brought women in an exceptional situation. It opened a window of opportunities and positions that were generally not accessible for women. They were able to officially enter the formal, masculine sphere of power and politics, by justifying it in the name of their deceased husband and minor son. Many high placed women like Elizabeth, used their status as widow for a justification of political power. Elizabeth was certainly not the only woman in early modern Europe who became regent over a country after the death of her husband.

In the biography on Amalia Elisabeth of Hesse-Kassel, Tryntje Helfferich presented three arguments Amalia Elisabeth, and many other female monarchs, used to justify the powerful position they had taken up.¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth and Amalia Elisabeth found themselves in very similar situations during the Thirty Years' War, they were both Protestant rulers who had lost most of their land in the Holy Roman Empire and whose husband had unexpectedly died in the middle of the war.¹⁸⁶ The first argument for actively taking control that Helfferich gave was the role of a mother who has to protect her children; secondly to uphold her husband's legacy; and finally as a responsibility that God had given her.¹⁸⁷ In Elizabeth's letters, we can see these same arguments.

The first argument, of the duty as a mother to protect her children, was particularly relevant for widows who had underage children whom they acted as regent for. Amalia Elisabeth repeatedly stressed her role and responsibilities as a mother who wanted to preserve her children's territory, title and religion.¹⁸⁸ To the French King Amalia Elisabeth begged "to conserve her with all her children and states under the wings of his favor and protection, [and] to prolong the treaty and alliance of the father with the children as long as it pleased his Majesty."¹⁸⁹ Similarly only a couple of weeks after Elizabeth had become a widow, she asked Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel, Amalia Elisabeth's husband and constant supporter of Frederick, to support her and her children in the continuing fight for the Palatinate:

¹⁸⁵ Helfferich, *The Iron Princess*.

¹⁸⁶ Amalia Elisabeth's husband Wilhelm V died in 1637.

¹⁸⁷ Levy, *Widowhood and visual culture*; Helfferich, *The iron princess*.

¹⁸⁸ Helfferich, *The Iron Princess*, 51.

¹⁸⁹ *Idem*, 58.

“I beg you most affectionately to continue with your good and sincere intentions towards me, and to favour with your good counsel, advice, and assistance on all occasions, all that you consider yourself able in any way to contribute to the good of my children and the re-establishing of the Palatine Electoral House, of which they are the issue.”¹⁹⁰

Wilhelm replied to her letter urging her to actively take control over the situation and follow Frederick’s footsteps, as this was the right moment to do it.

“Now it is for you, Madam, to give assistance at this time, and return to the paths followed by the King your husband of most happy memory, to provide for the security of our religion, and the re-establishing of your dear children in their inheritance, because affairs find themselves in such a state, that not even our enemies would know how to prevent us by the remnant of their power, nor those who are in alliance and good relationship with us, confronted with contamination and contradictions. No better opportunity has ever presented itself till now to arrive at your just pretensions with less pain than now.”¹⁹¹

A week before, Elizabeth had already written to her brother Charles that she was indeed going to fight for her children, “I must prefer the welfare of my poor children to my own satisfaction. The last request that their father made me, before his departure, was to do all that I could for them: which I wish to do, as far as lies in my power.”¹⁹² She felt that she had no choice, as she was obliged to give her children the future they deserved. If she wanted her eleven children to have an income, to marry to good partners and to have their own land to live on, she had to continue fighting.

Elizabeth’s mention of “their father’s” request shows she used the second argument: to uphold Frederick’s legacy. Elizabeth was devastated after the unexpected death of her husband. To her friend Thomas Roe she expressed her reaction to the sad news: “You may easily imagine how I was struck with the newes, though Dr Rumph tolde it me verie discretlie, it was the first time that euer I was frighted, for it struck me as colde as ice and coulde neither crie nor speake nor eate nor drinke nor sleepe for three days.”¹⁹³ She stayed

¹⁹⁰ C.E.S. II, Letter 69: Elizabeth to Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel, 17 December 1632.

¹⁹¹ Idem, letter 73: Landgrave Wilhelm V (in Kassel) to Elizabeth, 8 January 1633.

¹⁹² Idem, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1632.

¹⁹³ Idem, letter 89: Elizabeth to Roe, 22 April 1633

in bed for eight days before she felt strong enough to get up. To her dear friend Lady Broughton she confessed that she expected never to get over her grief:

“for there neuer liued a better housband nor more carefull then he was of me, and dailie more and more I finde his loss, so as shall euer greeue for him so long as I liue for the contentment I had in this worlde was in him and it is dead with him.”¹⁹⁴

Additionally she explained that she now had to take over Frederick’s work as the head of their state:

“I think you woulde neuer haue thought that I shoulde become a states woman, which of all things I haue euer hated, by my infinite loss of my deare housband hath forced me to come to that which I neuer hoped to be putt to”.¹⁹⁵

To her friend she justified taking up this task not because she wanted to, but because it was her duty to continue Frederick’s legacy and finally resolve the troubles her family had to endure. This made it seem as if Elizabeth had never participated in any state business, even though the analysis of the first period has shown that she had not been sitting idly. The first ten years in exile had already prepared her for this role as states woman.

Amalia Elisabeth used similar arguments as Elizabeth, stressing that her actions and policies were following the orders and intentions of her husband. Wilhelm V might be dead; she continued his work as if nothing had changed.¹⁹⁶ Where Elizabeth initially downplayed her choice of taking this leadership position by justifying that she had no choice towards her late husband and children, Amalia Elisabeth immediately openly claimed her new position. After Wilhelm’s death, she wrote a letter to inform the people and government of Hesse-Kassel that their leader was dead and that she would continue his rule.¹⁹⁷

In a society where politics and warfare were seen as the male domain, referring to a deceased husband provided women with the legitimacy to take over his rule. Especially in situations of war where a distant family member or enemy was able to make a claim to the throne, as was the case with Elizabeth where Maximilian of Bavaria was eager to claim the

¹⁹⁴ Idem, letter 83: Elizabeth to Lady Broughton, 22 February 1633.

¹⁹⁵ Idem.

¹⁹⁶ Helfferich, *The iron princess*, 50.

¹⁹⁷ Idem, 48.

Palatinate indefinitely as a reunification of the Wittelsbach lands, as it had been before 1329.¹⁹⁸

The final argument that was often used was related to religion and of having a responsibility to God. Religious disputes were an prominent aspect of the Thirty Years' War, and Frederick and Elizabeth had profiled themselves as supporter of a Protestant union. As a Protestant Elizabeth trusted that these circumstances were part of God's plan. Very formal and in line with religious practices of the time, she wrote in her first letter after Frederick's death: "It has pleased God, Director of all things, to withdraw the King, Monsieur my husband, from this temporal life into the life eternal."¹⁹⁹ This did not lessen Elizabeth's grief over the loss of her husband, but it did show her that it was God's will for her to take over her husband's work. Likewise, Amalia Elisabeth told her council "we must in this case submit ourselves to His fatherly will, in the comforting hope and expectation that He, in His merciful consolation, will stand by or strengthen us and help us to carry and surmount the heavy cross He has given us."²⁰⁰ It was not unusual to refer to God's will, as in early modern Germany women often turned to the bible for guidelines how to behave as a widow, taking inspiration from biblical widows and what the bible said about widowhood.²⁰¹

Compared to Amalia Elisabeth, Elizabeth did not extensively refer to religion. Amalia Elisabeth mentioned God and prayer in every letter to Elizabeth, for example by repeatedly writing "I hope the good Lord's Will will be to bring this to a happy end, for which I pray to him from the bottom of my heart".²⁰² Elizabeth's references to God and prayer were more wishes of success to her recipients, such as to Henry Vane on a mission as Stuart ambassador: "I pray make the best of all [...] I pray God you make a good end of those treaties."²⁰³

As mentioned above, Elizabeth summed her new position up as "becom[ing] a states woman".²⁰⁴ Elizabeth was not the only woman who in this period called herself a 'states woman'. Several years earlier in 1616 Louise de Coligny (1555-1620), who also resided in The

¹⁹⁸ See chapter 1, page 13.

¹⁹⁹ C.E.S. II, Letter 69, Elizabeth to Wilhelm V, 17 December 1632. This is the first known letter after F.'s death.

²⁰⁰ Helfferich, *The iron princess*, 52.

²⁰¹ Albrecht Classen, 'Widows: Their Social and Moral Functions According to Medieval German Literature, with Special Emphasis on Erhart Gross's 'Witwenbuch' (1446)', In E. DuBruck & B. Gusick (Eds.), *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 28 (2002) pp. 65-79, 70.

²⁰² C.E.S. II, letter 139: Landgravine of Hesse to Elizabeth, 1634.

²⁰³ Idem, letter 48: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Vane (in the Swedish camp in Germany) 12 July 1632.

²⁰⁴ Idem, introduction, 3; letter 83: Elizabeth to Broughton, 22 February 1633.

Hague, wrote to her daughter (and aunt of Frederick) Charlotte-Brabantina:²⁰⁵ “you are a woman of state, and that you are employed at the peace conference, [...] your brothers say that they are very happy to have a sister who is a great stateswoman.”²⁰⁶ Louise de Coligny, Charlotte-Brabantina and her sister Elisabeth of Nassau all called each other ‘Femme d’Etat’.²⁰⁷ All three women experienced relatively long widowhoods, which gave them opportunity to have an influence upon their family’s dynastic policy. Moreover, it seemed these three women enjoyed their political power and they strengthened each other in taking opportunities.

In this letter where Elizabeth called herself a ‘states woman’ she did not sound eager to take up this role, but in the actual letters she wrote to statesmen and politicians we can see that she took her role very seriously and wanted to use all the power she had to re-establish the Palatinate lands and title for her children. Already before Frederick’s death, she had established herself as part of several international networks and from 1632 she made herself heard more profoundly to the people around her. She wrote more and longer letters, and enlarged her correspondence networks to include international statesmen, who previously had communicated with Frederick.

In January 1633, only two months after Elizabeth had become a regent, she demanded Axel Oxenstierna, the chancellor of Sweden, to return the Lower Palatinate to her:

“I promise myself your candour and generosity, so that on this point as in the restitution of all that you hold in the Lower Palatinate, you will defer voluntarily to reason and equity. You will never encounter a more opportune occasion to oblige not only the Palatine Electoral House, but also the Crown of England, to all sorts of recognitions and good offices towards the Crown of Sweden, to which in addition to this obligation you will gain the praise of having succoured and delivered the oppressed, which are the effects of a true friendship.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Louise de Coligny was the fourth wife of William I of Nassau. Charlotte-Brabantina (1580-1631) was her stepdaughter, as she was the daughter of William I and Charlotte de Bourbon. Charlotte-Brabantina married Claude de La Tremoille. One of Charlotte-Brabantina’s sisters was Louise Juliana, Frederick V’s mother. Her (half) brothers were Maurice and Frederick Henry of Orange.

²⁰⁶ Hodson, ‘The power of female dynastic networks’, 337; Paul Marchegay ed., *Lettres de Louise de Coligny, Princesse d’Orange: a sa belle-fille, Charlotte-Brabantine de Nassau, Duchesse de la Tremoille* (1872) 79, 80. French original: “vous êtes femme d’Etat, et que vous êtes employée à la conférence de la paix” [...]“vos frères, qui disent qu’ils se réjouissent bien fort d’avoir une sœur qui soit grande femme d’Etat.”

²⁰⁷ Hodson, ‘The power of female dynastic networks’, 348. ‘Femme d’Etat’ is by Simon Hodson translated as both ‘woman of state’ and as ‘stateswoman’.

²⁰⁸ C.E.S. II, letter 76: Elizabeth to Oxenstierna, 31 January 1633.

She used every argument she had to convince Oxenstierna to return her land; her family connection to England, her friendship with the Swedish royal family, and the agreements Frederick and Gustavus Adolphus had made about the restoration of the Lower Palatinate before they both passed away in November the year before.

Elizabeth understood that visual signs of her widowhood would help to justify her political power. It was important to keep the memory of her late husband Frederick alive in order to remind other parties in the Thirty Years War what she was fighting for. The formal mourning period generally lasted a year, in which the widow dressed in black, regularly fasted, and focused on constructing her husband's memory.²⁰⁹ Further details of mourning rituals differed between countries. Elizabeth mentioned that "the custom in Germany being not to stir out of the house for some time, after such a misfortune. And since I was married into this country, I should wish to observe its customs carefully, so as to give no occasion for scandal."²¹⁰ It was very important for her to be seen as a respectful German widow, in order to justify her involvement in the war and the Palatinate. In the letter to her brother, she added, "I doubt whether, even after the expiration of the aforesaid term, I shall be able so soon to enjoy this happiness, until my poor children can be re-established in the empire."²¹¹ This already indicates her intentions of remaining in mourning for the rest of her life, or at least until Charles Louis was crowned Elector Palatine. Elizabeth would indeed continue her mourning rituals for the rest of her life. She always dressed in black, she fasted every Thursday (the day she heard about Frederick's death) and used black wax to seal her letters. Especially the black seal worked as a visual reminder of Frederick and her peculiar situation to everyone who received her letter. A traveller's account also mentioned "all the rooms in the Queen's house, walls, beds and all, covered with black."²¹² This made it impossible to forget her situation as a widow.

Elizabeth also used portraiture to show these visual signs of her widowhood. Despite her financial difficulties, she commissioned many paintings and occasionally sent a portrait to her friends.²¹³ Apart from her obvious black clothing, she made use of allegories that referred to her situation. In one portrait, she dreamily holds a sceptre and wears a crown.

²⁰⁹ Levy, *Widowhood and visual culture*, 51-52.

²¹⁰ C.E.S. II, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1632.

²¹¹ Idem.

²¹² William Brereton, *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1634-1635*. (Chetham 1844) 34.

²¹³ Roe for example received a painting of her. See C.E.S. I, letter 229: Elizabeth to Roe, 31 May 1621.

The objects indicate her position as ruler, whereas her facial expression emphasises that the return of her power was still far away.²¹⁴

Amalia von Solms later copied Elizabeth's portrayal as widow. She had been Elizabeth's maid-of-honour before she married the Dutch Stadtholder Frederick Henry of Orange in 1625. The Stadtholders Maurice and Frederick Henry had previously not invested much in creating a grand court culture in The Hague. Elizabeth however had used examples from her British upbringing, mixed with the Heidelberg court culture of her husband, to create her court in The Hague. As part of her entourage, Amalia had many opportunities to follow Elizabeth's example and take inspiration from her for creating her own Dutch court culture.²¹⁵ There are many nearly identical portraits of both women and after the death of Frederick Henry in 1647 Amalia continued to present herself similarly to Elizabeth.²¹⁶ She too continued to dress in black for the rest of her life and she commissioned paintings that gave legitimacy to her position as widow and regent.²¹⁷

Elizabeth was not the only woman who responded with such a shock to the death of her husband. Even women who had a more powerful position than their husband, and who were not so dependent on his legacy, acted in a similar way. Before her, Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589) had also continued to wear her widow's garments for the rest of her life, as a way to distinguish herself from the women around her. She chose the colour black, as this traditionally was the colour male monarchs in mourning used.²¹⁸ Michael E. Yonan for example described Empress Maria Theresia of Austria's (1717-1780) response to her husband's death as a shock. She cut her hair short, remained absent from court activities for several months, and just as Elizabeth she wore widow's dresses for the rest of her life and connected her husband's death to religion.²¹⁹ Or, perhaps most famous Queen Victoria (1837-1876, a descendant of Elizabeth) is characterised by her black mourning dresses which she continued to wear for the remainder of her life.

²¹⁴ Gerard van Honthorst, *Elizabeth Stuart as widow, with crown, veil and staff* (1635) Private collection. Nadine Akkerman, *Courtly rivals in The Hague, Elizabeth Stuart & Amalia von Solms* (The Hague 2014) 81-82.

²¹⁵ Mies Erkelens and Marika Keblusek, 'Het hof van de Winterkoning en Winterkoningin en het stadhouderlijk hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia van Solms', in Markus Schacht ed., *Onder den Oranjeboom: Nederlandse kunst en cultuur aan Duitse vorstenhoven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Munich 1999) 108-109.

²¹⁶ Akkerman, *Courtly Rivals*, 81, 84, 90

²¹⁷ Eikema Hommes, *De oranjezaal*, 63.

²¹⁸ Dixon, *Women who ruled*, 122.

²¹⁹ Michael E. Yonan, 'Conceptualizing the Kaiserintwitwe: Empress Maria Theresia [of Austria, R. 1765-1780] and her portraits', in: Levy, *Widowhood and visual culture*, 112.

In conclusion, for the rest of her life Elizabeth continued to emphasise her status as a widow with visual signs, because this justified her power and position as a female ruler. Additionally, she kept the memory of Frederick alive because through him her son had the right to claim the title of elector and the Upper and Lower Palatinate. She made extensive use of the colour black in order that everyone who met her, visited her residence, saw her portrait or received a letter was reminded of her widowed status. As it was still seen as an exceptional situation when a woman became a ruler, Elizabeth felt the need to remind people that she was only acting in the place of her deceased husband and underage son. In her letters she claimed that she did not want to become a 'stateswoman', but that her situation had forced her to become one. She felt obliged to continue Frederick's legacy, everything he had been fighting for, and to give her children the safe future they deserved. As long as her family was not re-established in the Palatinate, she stayed in mourning. She not only mourned the loss of her husband, but also the loss of her land.

6. Correspondence networks

Now Elizabeth had become a widow and a 'stateswoman' her networks became even more important than before, and she spent most of her time discussing and writing about politics to her family, friends and allies. To her friend Lady Broughton she wrote, "my misfortune hath brought me into so manie affaires as I haue little time left to write to my priuat friends".²²⁰ Before his death, Frederick and Elizabeth had shared the task of corresponding with people who could help them, this meant that talking about state business was not entirely new for Elizabeth, but it now became her responsibility to uphold a position in these networks.

During the first period of war, Elizabeth's father and brother had tried to convince Frederick and Elizabeth to focus on diplomacy instead of fighting to end the conflict. Especially Frederick had not been interested in a diplomatic approach, as he preferred fighting over talking to the Emperor. Nonetheless, after Frederick's death Elizabeth realised that she was more likely to return to the Palatinate via diplomatic negotiations than via a battle. Without Frederick, there was no one to fight in name of the Palatinate until Charles Louis and his brothers were old enough to join an army. Moreover, the people who had continuously proved to be supportive of the future of Elizabeth and her children were primarily diplomats. Therefore, it is not surprising that Elizabeth became more interested in negotiations and diplomatic solutions. This focus on diplomacy is clearly visible in the receivers and topics of Elizabeth's letters. The majority of her correspondence was with British noblemen, but also Palatine men who directly represented her family. The correspondence with a new network, of Protestant leaders, also focused on the diplomatic conferences and meetings that were being organised.

6.1 Family network

The first group to discuss is her family network. In the first period of war, this was the first group Elizabeth turned to and where she hoped to find support. However, it had become clear that her family was not willing to offer concrete support. Now she had become a widow, Charles' first offer of support was to invite her back to England.²²¹ Elizabeth was flattered by the invitation, as she had not been welcomed back to England since her exile.

²²⁰ C.E.S. II, letter 83: Elizabeth to Lady Broughton, 22 February 1633.

²²¹ Idem, letter 68: Charles I (in Whitehall) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 10 December 1632. See page 39 above.

She replied, “God knows that it would be my only comfort [to return], but I must prefer the welfare of my poor children to my own satisfaction. The last request that their father made me, before his departure, was to do all that I could for them; which I wish to do, as far lies in my power. [...] Pardon me that I write you this, instead of obeying your command –doing it against my will- but my misfortune constrains me.”²²² She did hope he would “take us all into your protection, for after God, our sole resource is in you”,²²³ but it was to be on her own terms, in The Hague.

After Elizabeth turned down this invitation, the correspondence between them weakened. Elizabeth received news and offers of diplomatic missions via the British noblemen, or after 1636 from her sons Charles Louis and Rupert, when they moved to the Stuart court. Elizabeth hoped her sons would have more luck convincing Charles to offer military support, as their future depended on it and they hoped to command the British troops.

Regarding Elizabeth’s extended Danish family, contact with them also primarily occurred via advisors and ambassadors. Denmark had entered the war and Christian IV was active in organising anti-Habsburg alliances, but this did not mean he intended to help his niece. At the conference of Hamburg in 1638, he had even attempted to exclude Charles Louis from participating in the peace conference.²²⁴

On other occasions, which were not directly related to warfare, the contact between Elizabeth and Christian had been more positive. After the death of her maternal grandmother Sophie of Mecklenburg in 1631, Elizabeth hoped to receive an inheritance. However, in Denmark inheritances only went to male members of the family. After Nethersole and Frederick argued that Elizabeth needed it more than her brother Charles, she asked Nethersole to make this request to Charles. In April 1632 she heard that he succeeded:

“Nethersole writes to me that the King my deare Brother hath giuen me his part in those moneys and goods that he is to inherite of my Grandmother; for by the lawes of Denmarck the daughters inherite the mothers goods equale with the sonnes so as he was to haue that which belonged to Queene my mother, and he

²²² Idem, letter 71: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Charles I, 24 December 1632.

²²³ Idem.

²²⁴ Idem, letter 401: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe (in Hamburg) 13 September 1638. “I cannot enough wonder at the King of Denmark his ill nature in condescending that the Prince Elector Palatine shoulde be putt out of the treaty of Lubeck [later Hamburg]”.

hath giuen it to me, by a formal act, which he will send by an Ammbassadour who is also to condole with my Vncle for her death.”²²⁵

Straightforward as it sounds, it took years and several missions of the Stuart diplomat Avery and the Palatine diplomat Rusdorf to the Danish court to negotiate about the inheritance. Christian IV of Denmark was reluctant to give the inheritance as he was still waiting for money that the late King James I had borrowed from Denmark.²²⁶ As Britain did not have the financial resources to repay Denmark, asked Charles in 1638 if Elizabeth’s inheritance could be used to pay of his debts to Denmark. Roe forwarded Charles’ proposition:

“to recall, and settle the king of Denmarke, to liquidate all accounts with him to which purpose he hath written to your Ma:^{tie} that you will please to send me a power to release for you your interest in your grandmothers legacie and therein to refer yourselfe to his abundant goodnes, which I presume your Ma:^{tie} will not refuse, being both to accommodate his, and your owne business.”²²⁷

Elizabeth had no choice than to comply, as she felt obliged both to Charles and to Christian. She said “when the king did give me that [unknown] did not think it woulde come to gret a sume as it is.”²²⁸ Charles might have regretted giving away such a large sum when he was in debt himself.

6.2 Protestant leaders

A new network Elizabeth attempted to become part of was with Protestant leaders who were involved in the war. Frederick had previously had been in contact with this group and Elizabeth hoped to take his place in this network. The use of this network became most apparent after the Peace of Prague in 1635. Elizabeth was not intending to accept this peace treaty. Therefore she wrote to many Protestants who had also been disadvantaged or excluded in the Peace agreement, hoping to form an alliance with these men. To her closest companion in this network, Landgrave Wilhelm V she said, “It is for the said Protestants to be vigilant concerning their affairs and to take good and firm resolutions concerning them.”²²⁹

²²⁵ Idem, letter 22: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Vane [in the Swedish camp in Germany] 5 April 1632.

²²⁶ Idem, letter 24: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Christian IV, 17 April 163; letter 61: Christian IV to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 27 October 1632; letter 107: Elizabeth to Christian IV, 18 September 1633.

²²⁷ Idem, letter 380: Roe (in Gravesend) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 21 May 1638.

²²⁸ Idem, letter 384: Elizabeth (in Rhenen) to Roe (in Hamburg) 19 June 1638, in cipher.

²²⁹ Idem, letter 193: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Wilhelm V (in Kassel) 20 July 1635.

The men she wrote to were Christian IV of Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, Duke Wilhelm of Saxe-Weimar, the Duke of Holstein, the Duke of Brunswick, Duke Georg of Lüneburg, the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Landgrave Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel.²³⁰ Elizabeth had heard that they were intending to have an assembly in Lüneburg in January 1636 where they would discuss how to proceed. In her letters to them, Elizabeth wanted “to recommend to them the affairs of my children, and to beseech them most justly to take seriously in hand the re-establishing of the Palatine Electoral House.”²³¹ She hoped they would also take her situation in consideration and admit one of her diplomats to the assembly. Elizabeth informed Joseph Avery about her plans. He was as a Stuart diplomatic agent stationed in Hamburg, which was near Lüneburg and meant he would easily be able to travel to the assembly. Avery was invited, but eventually the conference was cancelled, after it had been postponed several times. With the war continuing in 1636 most men saw no need to protest against the treaty. Only Wilhelm V and Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar openly protested the Peace of Prague, mainly because they had been excluded from the treaty themselves.²³²

Most of the letters to these Protestant men were a one-way correspondence of Elizabeth begging for support and inclusion in their alliances. The only men she corresponded with on a more frequent and responsive basis were Landgrave Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel and the Swedish Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna. The contact with Oxenstierna was not out of friendship with either Elizabeth or Frederick. He had taken over the rule over Sweden after King Gustavus Adolphus had died in the same month as Frederick. Because Frederick and Gustavus Adolphus had been in the process of making agreements about a partial restoration of the Palatinate (which was in Swedish hands), Elizabeth and Oxenstierna, both in their new positions had to resolve these unfinished agreements.

Oxenstierna was not intending to restore the land to Elizabeth’s family. He reasoned that there were no concrete agreements and that it was not a good timing, with Elizabeth recently having become a regent, he expected that without Frederick the land would soon fall back into enemy’s hands.²³³ Elizabeth counteracted that “you will never encounter a more opportune occasion to oblige not only the Palatine Electoral House, but also the Crown

²³⁰ Idem, Letter 221: Elizabeth to Avery [in Hamburg] 10 February 1636.

²³¹ Idem.

²³² Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years’ War* (London 1984) 143.

²³³ C.E.S. II, letter 75: Oxenstierna (in Halle) to Elizabeth, 18 January 1633.

of England".²³⁴ Eventually Oxenstierna sent a long list of conditions for the return of the Palatinate, including the demand that Charles and the Administrator of the Palatinate would actively enter an alliance with Sweden.²³⁵ Elizabeth was unable to honour these demands and the land remained in Swedish possession. After this, the correspondence between Elizabeth and Oxenstierna did not entirely disappear. They continued to occasionally share news about the Swedish army, especially when Elizabeth's son Maurice served in the army of the Swedish Field Marshal Johan Banér from 1640 until 1641.²³⁶

From the moment of Frederick's death Elizabeth had received a lot of valuable advice and support from Landgrave Wilhelm V of Hesse-Kassel (1602-1637), who had been friends and constant allies with Frederick. He was saddened by the loss of his friend, "There we were on the point of undertaking a union and a reciprocal support, when destiny, bursting asunder our plans, deprived me of the best of my friends."²³⁷ To Elizabeth he wrote words of encouragement to continue Frederick's legacy in re-establishing the Palatinate for her children. He hoped to continue the plans he had made with Frederick, but now with Elizabeth at the lead.²³⁸ This encouragement and words of support helped Elizabeth in finding ways to participate in the war.

Wilhelm had a rather strong army and Elizabeth hoped to work together with him in order to receive military support from him. In 1633 she raised two regiments with money from the States General, they could train and fight in Wilhelm's army until she needed them herself.²³⁹ However, when in December 1633 the Administrator of the Palatinate, Ludwig Philipp, needed the regiments Wilhelm was not very obliging and Elizabeth had to repeatedly demand for her regiments:

"The Duke of Simmern, Administrator to the Electoral Palatinate, my brother-in-law, strongly desired as soon as possible to have the two regiments which I had raised previously under the favour of your arms, so that he could use them on occasions when he has great need of them in the Palatinate."²⁴⁰

²³⁴ Idem, letter 77: Elizabeth to Oxenstierna, 31 January 1633.

²³⁵ Idem, letter 96: Coke (in Worsop) to Elizabeth, 1 June 1633.

²³⁶ Idem, letter 615: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Oxenstierna, 28 May 1642, note 2.

²³⁷ Idem, letter 74: Wilhelm V (in Kassel) to Elizabeth, 8 January 1633.

²³⁸ Idem, see page 50 above.

²³⁹ Idem, letter 133: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Wilhelm V, 5 December 1633; Everett-Green, 313.

²⁴⁰ Idem, letter 145: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Wilhelm V (in Kassel) 25 January 1634. In letters 146 and 148, she made the same request.

Additionally, because the regiments had suffered a lot of casualties, Elizabeth wrote him: “I beseech you most affectionately to be prepared, in continuation of your good and sincere intentions, to give the order that all that remains of the said two regiments can be reassembled and maintained in good order, to leave there in four weeks at the latest.”²⁴¹ Because Wilhelm’s army had weakened he was reluctant to let the regiments go, but in March he complied and sent them marching to the Palatinate.²⁴²

While Elizabeth discussed these military affairs with Wilhelm, she also corresponded with his wife Amalia Elisabeth. These letters had a more private and trivial tone, talking about health, exchanging gifts and Amalia Elisabeth’s prayers for Elizabeth’s good fortune.²⁴³ However when Amalia Elisabeth became a widow and regent herself in 1637, she proved to be a strong replacement of her husband. After her husband’s death, Amalia Elisabeth exclaimed to Elizabeth, “I protest that there is no one in the world who understands [my] afflictions better.”²⁴⁴ Both women promised to inform the other of what was happening in the war and to keep the other in mind during negotiations. For example, in preparation for the Electoral congress at Nuremberg in 1640, Amalia Elisabeth wrote:

“The instruction for my people [...] to agree entirely with the sentiments of Your Majesty that the safety of our religion and the tranquility of our dear country depend upon the re-establishment of the Palatine House. These interests are too solitary and my most humble affection too strong for me not to be able to assure Your Majesty that on this and other occasions I will conduct myself with all possible care to execute your commandments”.²⁴⁵

Naturally, these words were primarily to flatter Elizabeth, as Amalia Elisabeth did not have a very strong or prominent position at the meeting herself. Hesse-Kassel was not part of the Electoral College, which made the people she sent to the congress merely bystanders.

6.3 British noblemen

Finally, Elizabeth’s most intensive correspondence network continued to be with British noblemen, who operated in English parliament or worked as diplomats. Compared to the first period, this network did not radically alter, it merely intensified. In the first period, this

²⁴¹ Idem, letter 145.

²⁴² Idem, letter 155: Wilhelm V (in Kassel) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 15 March 1634.

²⁴³ Idem letter 138: Landgravine of Hesse to Elizabeth, 1634; letter 139, idem.

²⁴⁴ Idem, Letter 496: Landgravine of Hesse (in Lippstadt) to Elizabeth [in The Hague], 12 December 1639.

²⁴⁵ Idem, letter 520: Landgravine of Hesse (in Kassel) to Elizabeth (in The Hague) 10 April 1640.

group had taken up 53 percent of Elizabeth's correspondence, whilst in the period after 1632 it had grown to 73 percent. Elizabeth's new position as head of her family and her growing interest in a diplomatic solution meant that her correspondence with British noblemen became most important. Sir Thomas Roe continued to be her closest and most trusted friend who she corresponded with most extensively, as half of the letters within this network was with him.²⁴⁶

Other Englishmen in this network included: William Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury (1573-1645)²⁴⁷; Sir Balthazar Gerbier, a diplomat in Brussels (1592-1663/7)²⁴⁸; Thomas Howard, the fourteenth Earl of Arundel (1585-1646)²⁴⁹; Sir Henry Vane (1589-1655)²⁵⁰; James Hamilton, third Marquess of Hamilton (1606-1649)²⁵¹; and Sir William Boswell, who succeeded Dudley Carleton as England's resident ambassador in The Hague from 1632 until 1650.²⁵² Gerbier and Hamilton had already been present as correspondents to Elizabeth in the first period, but their correspondence became a lot more frequent after 1632.

The new additions to this network could also be connected to the positions of these men. William Laud, for example, became the archbishop in 1633, which made him a more prominent and interesting connection for Elizabeth. Elizabeth's correspondence with the Earl of Arundel really took off when Charles sent him to Elizabeth to invite her back to England and later when he was sent on a mission to the Emperor in 1636. When this mission was ending she invited him to The Hague "I shall be extreme glade to see you, and talke freelie with you of all things, and I assure you, you shall not come to a place where you shall be welcome then hither."²⁵³

As mentioned before, most correspondence between Elizabeth and heads of states, including the Kings of England and Denmark, happened not directly, but via noblemen who acted as mediators or ambassadors. For conferences, such as the one at Hamburg in 1638 or

²⁴⁶ Two-hundred-ten (known) letters were written between them in this period.

²⁴⁷ Sixty-four letters between Laud and Elizabeth.

²⁴⁸ Twenty-six Letters of Gerbier to Elizabeth in this period, only one reply has been recovered.

²⁴⁹ Eight letters between the Earl of Arundel and Elizabeth.

²⁵⁰ Seven letters from Elizabeth to Vane.

²⁵¹ Fifteen letters from Elizabeth to Hamilton.

²⁵² Four letters from Elizabeth to Boswell, but they both stayed in The Hague. Several letters make it clear that Elizabeth and Boswell read each other's letters. For example in C.E.S. II, letter 416: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe [in Hamburg] 22 November 1638. Elizabeth mentioned that she had read Coke's letter to Boswell and that he would write Roe more about the subject.

²⁵³ C.E.S. II, letter 289: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Arundel (in Regensburg) 6 October 1636.

the Imperial Diet in 1640, it was normal to send a representative to the negotiations. Elizabeth was fortunate that her brother sent an ambassador to most conferences that were being organised. For a long time she had lobbied to let Thomas Roe be England's representative. She argued that he was a very experienced diplomat, and personally, with Roe she was certain that he would keep her wishes for the Palatine cause in mind. To Archbishop Laud she wrote, "I vnderstand that the king my deare Brother will send an Ambassadors to Hambourg, if it be so, I wish he woulde make choice of honest Sr Thomas Row there can be none fitter for that impoyment, I know you may help my desire in this."²⁵⁴ From 1638 Charles gave in and appointed Roe for the conference in Hamburg and later for the Imperial Diet in Regensburg.²⁵⁵

Throughout the period, Elizabeth kept her eyes and ears open for new conferences. As an exiled, poor widow, she was generally not high on the invitation list to these negotiations and conferences. Many states felt that Elizabeth had nothing to offer, she only had a list of requests for her restoration of the Palatinate. Nonetheless, this lack in invitations and things to offer did not stop Elizabeth attempting to send representatives to meetings throughout Europe. Her correspondence with several of Charles' diplomats meant that she had agents throughout Europe who could inform her of conferences that were being prepared, such as Avery near Hamburg and Denmark, and Gerbier in Brussels. Additionally, she hoped that for special missions, Charles would send the diplomats who had indicated to be supportive of the Palatine cause.

Apart from diplomatic concerns, Elizabeth continued to be in financial difficulties. The death of Frederick made Elizabeth's financial problems more complicated, as English parliament wanted to reassess her pension money. Elizabeth's income from England used to be split between an income for Elizabeth and one for Frederick. With Frederick's death this part of their pension would disappear, while Elizabeth's costs remained largely the same. To arrange her financial affairs, she sent Francis Nethersole to the Stuart court in 1633.

It is notable that during the 1630s Elizabeth started to write to several of the British noblemen in cipher code. She had already been writing encrypted letters to her husband in the 1620s, but after his death she enlarged her circle and frequency of using coded

²⁵⁴ C.E.S. II, letter 331: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud [in Lambeth Palace] 20 June 1637.

²⁵⁵ Bell, C11. In April 1638 Roe had been appointed as ambassador extraordinary to the conference in Hamburg. C.E.S. II, letter 379: Roe (in St Martin's Lane) to Elizabeth [in The Hague] 6 May 1638.

messages. She mainly used it with her most frequent correspondents, the English and Palatine diplomats. One of the most frequent users of encrypted letters was Sir Balthazar Gerbier, who worked as an English diplomat in Brussels. He had received his ciphers from Buckingham in 1622 and shared the code with Elizabeth.²⁵⁶ From 1625 Elizabeth also started to write to Thomas Roe in cipher. The main objective for writing in code was to safely exchange messages. If enemies intercepted letters, which occasionally happened, they would not know what was written in the letter. However, they rarely changed the cipher over the whole period and many people used the same cipher. It is likely that using a cipher mainly represented trust and a personal bond between the correspondents, more than safekeeping. Receiving the code to decipher it not only meant winning the trust of the sender, but also being admitted to a secret community.²⁵⁷ Gerbier's use of Buckingham's code was for example a reminder of his connection and affection to Buckingham.

Elizabeth's letters with Thomas Roe regularly ended with the sentence "please burn this letter". As we are able to read these letters this obviously has not been done, nevertheless similarly to using an easily decipherable code this sentence could be seen as a token of trust and friendship, that she had written something personal and private that was not to be shared with others.²⁵⁸

Another protection for sensitive information was using a trusting letter bearer. They could verbally pass on a message that they did not trust to write down, in case someone stole the letter. Additionally, the letter could also be an accompaniment for the bearer. As mentioned in Elizabeth's network during the first period, Elizabeth often gave English diplomats or other men who passed The Hague a letter to give to the person they were travelling to. In these letters, Elizabeth recommended her affection for the bearer and hoped the receiver would treat the bearer nicely. This was often for men visiting the Stuart Court in England, but she also used it for diplomatic missions. For example, when Charles sent Arundel on a mission to the Emperor, she gave him letters for the Emperor, his wife, his son (Ferdinand, the King of Hungary) and his wife (Maria Anna of Spain) which all went along the lines:

²⁵⁶ Oxford Dictionary National Biography, Gebrier, Balthazar <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10562>> .

²⁵⁷ Nadine Akkerman, 'Enigmatic cultures of cryptology', James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, ed., *Cultures of correspondence in early modern Britain* (Philadelphia 2016) pp. 69-84, 75-78.

²⁵⁸ Arnold Hunt, "'Burn this letter": Preservation and destruction in the early modern archive, Daybell and Gordon, *Cultures of correspondence*, pp. 189-209, 202.

“[I] do not allow Monsieur the Earl of Arundel, ambassador of the King of Great Britain, my brother, to leave here without accompanying him by this note, to beg Your Majesty most humbly to restore and maintain my eldest son, Monsieur the Elector Palatine, in full possession of the Rights, Estates, and Dignities to which God and nature have called him.”²⁵⁹

With these letters Elizabeth made clear that Arundel not only operated on behalf of the King of England, but also on behalf of her.

6.4 Palatine and Bohemian noblemen

Apart from her British noblemen, Elizabeth also started to correspond with Palatine and Bohemian noblemen who had remained supportive to Frederick. Officially, they received their orders from Louis Philip, the Administrator of the Palatinate, or from Charles Louis. But similar to the British men, Elizabeth was eager to encourage these noblemen in their work. Unfortunately, no correspondence with Louis Philipp has been recovered. However, we do know of correspondence between Elizabeth and noblemen who acted as diplomats for the Palatinate at several conferences: Johann Joachim von Rusdorf (1589-1640), Sir Thomas Ferencz, a colonel of infantry in the States’ army and later for Charles Louis’ army, Konrad Spina and George Johann Peblitz. Elizabeth also encouraged them to work together with the English diplomats who were present at these conferences.²⁶⁰

Rusdorf and Roe were, for example, both present at the conference in Hamburg. During this conference, the possibility arose for Charles Louis to take command over the army of Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. Because Charles Louis hoped to receive Swedish support, Elizabeth asked Rusdorf and Roe to discuss the matter and together ask the Swedish ambassador Salvius for support. Elizabeth wrote to Rusdorf, “I pray you to listen to the advice of Monsieur Ambassador Roe, [...] that you speak to Monsieur Salvius, and require him to write to Sweden and do what is necessary so that we can know as soon as possible

²⁵⁹ C.E.S. II, letter 235: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Emperor Ferdinand II, 22 April 1636. See also letter 236: Elizabeth to Empress Consort Eleonore; letter 237: Elizabeth to the King of Hungary; letter 238: Elizabeth to the Queen of Hungary, all dated 22 April 1636.

²⁶⁰ No letters from Spina and Peblitz, but they are named by Roe that he worked together with them. C.E.S. II, Letter 538: Roe to Elizabeth (in The Hague) 23 July 1640.

what are the intentions in this regard of the Queen my cousin and the Messieurs Administrators of the Crown”.²⁶¹

6.5 Persuasiveness

The primary assets Elizabeth possessed to convince people of her cause was her knowledge of languages (she could read and write English, French, Latin and Italian) and her ability to build relationships on terms of fidelity, friendship and gratitude. In her letters, Elizabeth regularly reminded the recipient of her friendship and affection towards them; “I beseech you always to have indubitable certainty of my inviolable affection towards you.”²⁶²

Furthermore, as seen in the chapter on Elizabeth’s representation of widowhood, she used visual signs in her letters to remind her correspondents of her pitiable situation. They first had to open her letter with a black seal, a token of mourning, before reading her message.

In *The language of fidelity*, Arthur Herman discussed the exaggerated use of language of fidelity and gratitude in patron-client relations.²⁶³ Promises of support did not automatically mean that this would actually be done. Elizabeth occasionally fell victim to this discrepancy between someone’s promises and their actions, especially with her father and brother when they promised military support. On the other hand, Elizabeth also made many promises without following up with actions. Her argument was that she would return the fidelity once she was in a more stable position herself, “when the times shall give me the happiness of being able to demonstrate to you by action my gratitude you will find me truly.”²⁶⁴ However, everyone knew this time was far away, if it would ever happen.

Many Protestant leaders hoped Elizabeth would be able to involve England in the war, as this would give them the opportunity to create a strong Protestant alliance. In letters and at negotiations they offered the use of troops to invade the Palatinate, under the condition that England would provide additional manpower. For example, in 1636 Landgrave Wilhelm V offered military help to Elizabeth, if he could have an alliance with England. He wrote to Elizabeth, “If it should please the King your brother to use my troops to put to rights affairs

²⁶¹ Idem, letter 466: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Rusdorf (in Hamburg) 1 August 1639. Bernard’s army had been in French service, but there were chances of them transferring to Swedish service. See C.E.S. II, Letter 470: Elizabeth to Roe, 5 August 1639.

²⁶² Idem, letter 248: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Wilhelm V (in Middelburg), 12 May 1636.

²⁶³ Arthur L. Herman Jr., ‘The language of fidelity in early modern France’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 67: 1 (March 1995) pp. 1-24, 6.

²⁶⁴ C.E.S. II, letter 220: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Wilhelm V (in Kassel) 2 February 1636.

in Germany [...] I would have preferred to engage with him than with any other monarch in the whole of Christendom.”²⁶⁵ Elizabeth pleaded Laud to convince Charles to work together with Wilhelm. “I hope the king will accept of his offer, and not suffer him to perish, or be forst to make his peace for lack of assistance, I neuer saw a man shew more affection to anie”.²⁶⁶ Wilhelm was not only loyal to Elizabeth, but also an experienced officer: “in that case the king has bene manie times in doute where to haue a fitt man to command an armie, now he may haue this Prince who is a braue worthy man of our owne religion”.²⁶⁷ The chances of England joining the war were very slim, nonetheless, Elizabeth never explicitly told the men who were willing to support her that England would give no military support.

Herman emphasised the exchange of benefits and gratitude as important factors in patron-client relations, in which gratitude is the recipient’s part of the exchange.²⁶⁸ Elizabeth was aware that she could do not much more than to thank for the goodwill of others. The words she chose in the greeting and closing of her letters give example of the humble and serving position she placed herself. She for example closed her letters with words as “Your Majesty’s most humble and obedient”²⁶⁹ or “Your most affectionat Cousin to serve you”.²⁷⁰ Elizabeth referred to many people as cousin. Even when the family connection was far away, she would remind them that there was a familial bond between them. Similarly to the English noblemen she was their “most constant or affectionate friend”.²⁷¹ Reversely these noblemen presented themselves as “most humble servant”, as they hierarchically still stood below Elizabeth.

In conclusion, the change of Elizabeth from a consort to a regent meant that Elizabeth’s correspondence became more important and she spent a lot more time writing about politics and warfare. Elizabeth still hoped her family would offer support, but she realised she should not put all her efforts towards them. The network with British politicians and diplomats became Elizabeth’s primary focus. Throughout the time, these men had been most reliant and supportive to her. Additionally, the position of the Stuart ambassadors

²⁶⁵ Idem, letter 228: Wilhelm V (in Kassel) to Elizabeth, 24 March 1636.

²⁶⁶ Idem, letter 285: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Laud, 29 September 1636.

²⁶⁷ Idem.

²⁶⁸ Herman, ‘The language of fidelity’, 11.

²⁶⁹ For example in letter 235: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Emperor Ferdinand II, 22 April 1636.

Many letters were written in French, however, for the practicality of comparison I have used the English translations.

²⁷⁰ For example in letters to Landgrave Wilhelm V or to Amalia Elisabeth.

²⁷¹ For example to Thomas Roe, William Laud and Henry Vane.

throughout Europe gave her eyes and ears in many places. There were some changes in the names of noblemen who she corresponded with, as positions were taken over by new people, but they continued to represent an important network who could voice Elizabeth's concerns both in the British court and in parliament.

Frederick's death meant that Elizabeth also had to take over his correspondence. Her lack of German reading and writing skills made correspondence with Palatine and Bohemian noblemen more difficult, as a result, most correspondence with these men was taken over by the Administrator Louis Philip and Elizabeth's sons. She did still correspond with several men: particularly the diplomats Rusdorf and Ferencz, who also met British noblemen at conferences and occasionally travelled with Elizabeth's eldest sons.

Elizabeth tried hard to become part of the network of other Protestant leaders in the Holy Roman Empire. However, since the battle of White Mountain, Frederick had experienced trouble receiving their support and Elizabeth too had difficulties becoming allies with them. They were open to admitting Elizabeth to their negotiations, but mainly because they still hoped for an alliance with Britain and did not want to ignore her entirely.

Conclusion

In 1642 peace probably felt further away than ever for Elizabeth, with the Thirty Years' War continuing in the Holy Roman Empire and the Civil War starting in Britain. Nonetheless, it was time to enter a new period where her son Charles Louis could finish the Palatine struggle. At the age of twenty-five Charles Louis had no more need for a regent and Elizabeth's options of finding support were reaching their limits. Particularly the Civil War had rapidly made Elizabeth's supporters lose their ability to come to her aid.

Despite Elizabeth's claim that she had never wished to become a 'stateswoman', over the preceding twenty-two years she had precisely been doing that, fighting a political battle using all the powers she had available. In the first period, when Elizabeth still had Frederick on her side, she had started to use her networks to find out if they would be able to help her family. The people she wrote to were primarily family members and connections in England, they were an extension to the network Frederick was part of, of people in the Holy Roman Empire and other Protestant states in Europe. Elizabeth's connections in Britain, Denmark and Friesland added to Frederick's circle, but only after his death did her networks become of vital importance to Elizabeth and her children.

Three elements stand out after researching Elizabeth's correspondence networks throughout this period. The first point is that Elizabeth's extended family network turned out to be not as helpful as expected. Most queenship studies show that family was the most important network where they could receive power and influence. On the outset, Elizabeth's attempts to connect to her mother's Danish family gave an expectation of even more chances of support from her family.

In reality, family ties did not guarantee unconditional support. This was partially because England was financially and militarily not very strong, but also because both England and Denmark did not see any personal advantages in helping the Palatine family. King James wished to focus on peace, Charles was constrained by financial issues inside England, and Christian IV of Denmark did not feel a strong tie to his niece.

The second surprising point was the lack of female correspondence and cooperation. During the early period, Elizabeth had friendly correspondence with Sophia Hedwig and Amalia Elisabeth. Although they ended up in a similar situation, as widows who had to continue their husbands work in the war in order to provide a future for their children, this

did not bring them closer to each other. On the contrary, their contact weakened as they all had to focus the war, in this situation powerful men were more relevant than to stay in touch with other women.

Thirdly, perhaps most striking was the large presence and importance of the network of British noblemen. They took up approximately 65 percent of Elizabeth's correspondence that has been preserved. In terms of direct support towards the war, these men were not in a powerful position where they could offer grand gestures. Nonetheless, it was important for Elizabeth to uphold her correspondence with these men, as they were most willing to help her. This willingness was partially because there was a balanced relationship between them. In her family network, Elizabeth was always in a lower position, where she had to be humble and hope they would have mercy for her. In contrast, with the noblemen she could use her royal status to her advantage. To them she represented herself as both a queen, whom they because of rank had to respect and who could do a good word for them to the king, but she also presented herself as a friend who stood on equal ground. With this mix, she hoped to receive genuine and unconditional support, because they would want to help her. The Protestant element in this war also helped in receiving support from this group, as most of them were in favour of Militant Protestantism. The Palatine cause offered an example of how they could help the international acceptance of Protestantism against the Catholics.

This relationship of equals was not only visible in the exchange of benefits, but also in the tone of their letters. While Elizabeth's letters to family members were very formal and humble, the letters with the British noblemen had a more amiable tone. Aside from information about the war and English politics, Elizabeth requested after their wife and children, shared gossip about the latest love relationships, they nicknamed other people and referred to popular plays.²⁷²

Although this network already took up a prominent place in Elizabeth's correspondence before 1632, they truly became of importance after she became a widow. As she said at some point, "beggars must be no chusers", she realized that as an exile states woman she had to accept all the help she could get, which in her case came from these noblemen.²⁷³ This could explain her turn to a diplomatic solution after Frederick's death.

²⁷² Thomas Roe and Elizabeth for example occasionally quoted plays from Shakespeare; see for example C.E.S. II, letter 569: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe, 8 July 1641, where she quoted from Henry IV.

²⁷³ C.E.S. II, letter 321: Elizabeth (in The Hague) to Roe, 16 April 1637; see page 44 above.

Looking at the resources she had as a widow, these noblemen and diplomats were most willing to help. Especially after the disastrous outcome of the Peace of Prague in 1635, she realized that she needed diplomats who could fight for her rights at the negotiations table. Apart from these negotiations, this network of diplomats who were stationed throughout Europe could inform her of what was happening in the Holy Roman Empire. They were very useful as they had eyes and ears in many places and they easily travelled around, which made it possible for them to visit Elizabeth in The Hague.

The importance and influence these noblemen had, also shows that in early modern times one should not only look to the monarch for power and authority, but also to the nobility who had high positions in court and parliament. Especially in England, they had a lot of influence on decisions that were being made.

One last important strategy that Elizabeth used in all her correspondence after she became a 'states woman' was her representation of widowhood. She cleverly emphasized her widowed status in order to receive compassion and support. Her choice to continue to use and wear signs of mourning for the rest of her life not only reminded people of the loss of her husband, but also her loss of land. Her black clothes and letter seals were visual reminders of her legitimization of power and of her feeble situation.

In the end, it is quite surprising how Elizabeth as a poor, exiled widow still managed to receive continuous support from these British noblemen, this shows that fidelity was still important in the seventeenth century. What is most surprising is that eventually at the end of the war, Elizabeth's and her children were restored with the Lower Palatinate and Charles Louis received a new Electoral title. Although Elizabeth herself was still not satisfied, as they did not receive the Upper Palatinate, this restoration was quite an achievement. Especially for someone whose position had been lowered to a 'beggar' and who at the peace treaty of 1635 had been entirely excluded of any restoration. Her persistency to ask everyone she knew for support and collaboration with noblemen had eventually paid off.

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Appendix

Analysis letters volume I

Letters relevant to part one: 386 letters (letters 202-588 [from November 1620, the battle at White Mountain, to end of book, December 1631]).

Person	Position	Letter To Elizabeth	Letters from Elizabeth
King James	Royal		203, 226, 227, 228, 230, 231, 233, 235, 253, 258, 269, 284, 303, 308, 309, 313, 326, 332, 337, 350,
Maurice of Orange	Cousin of Frederick	202	
Dorothea Sibylla	German Duchess	204	205
Frederick	Husband	207, 212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 222, 237, 239, 240, 241, 246, 259, 261, 264, 265, 266, 271, 272, 273, 286, 278, 282, 285, 304, 451, 452, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 520, 521, 522, 525, 527, 528, 530	
Eliza Elmes-Aspley	Friend, female, lady-in-waiting, married Morton in 1624	219	422,
Ernst Casimir	Stadtholder of Friesland, married to Sophia Hedwig	220, 490,	494,
Christian IV Denmark	Uncle, King of Denmark	236	
Sophia Hedwig	Cousin via mother, married to Ernst Casimir	243, 244, 245, 248, 251, 252,	
Mayerne	Doctor	249, 537, 538,	
Isabella Clara Eugenia	Spanish royal	256	250
Francis Bacon	English nobleman	260, 387,	263
Dudley Carleton	English ambassador in The Hague, Viscount Dorchester	485, 533, 550, 580, 581, 585	208, 418, 471, 481, 482, 483, 524, 556, 557, 584, 587
Carleton the younger	English nobleman, cousin of Carleton	319	
Edward Herbert	Stuart ambassador in Paris		209, 262
Charlotte Brabantina	Aunt of Frederick		210, 214, 247, 270, 291, 302, 330, 368, 449, 470,
Henri III, duke of la tremoille	Cousin, son of Charlotte Brabantina		211

Buckingham	Nobleman, English	205, 307,	217, 234, 275, 318, 327, 358, 365, 372, 412, 417, 423, 439, 443, 453, 456,
Roe	Diplomat, English	268, 279, 283, 293, 295, 301, 316, 317, 323, 324, 328, 331, 335, 339, 340, 342, 348, 355, 357, 363, 367, 374, 379, 380, 381, 385, 388, 394, 397, 398, 400, 402, 406, 409, 416, 420, 421, 425, 427, 429, 431, 437, 441, 447, 450, 454, 457, 459, 463, 491, 497, 498, 504, 506, 508, 518, 526, 531, 541, 544, 546, 555, 565, 568, 583	221, 229, 238, 277, 281, 288, 298, 315, 333, 352, 371, 407, 413, 455, 500, 510, 519, 523, 534, 539, 542, 549, 563, 571, 572, 575,
A countess	English		223
Montagu	Lord Treasurer		224
2 nd Marquess of Hamilton	English nobleman		225, 297, 345,
3 rd Marquess of Hamilton	English nobleman, son of 2 nd Marquess		535, 536, 547, 548, 553, 554, 561, 562, 567, 569, 570,
Baron Digby	English		242
George Abbot	English nobleman		254,
States General	Politics Netherlands		255
Rudyard	English nobleman		257
Christian of Brunswick	Royal, family	267	
Lambert Charles	Officer	274	
Nethersole	Nobleman, English	286, 329, 460, 461, 462, 466, 472, 473, 475, 477, 492, 493, 496, 505,	280, 480,
Middlesex	Nobleman, English		287, 289, 294, 299, 300, 310,
Oliver Cromwell (senior)	Nobleman, English	290,	

Anhalt	Cousin?	296,	292,
Conway	Nobleman, English	334,	305, 314, 321, 325, 336, 341, 467, 468, 464, 349, 351, 364, 411, 445, 448, 484, 487,
Mar	Nobleman, English	408	306, 376, 384, 389, 395, 432, 582,
Countess of Mar	Female, English		383, 396,
John Donne	English priest	311, 366, 403,	312, 404,
Countess of Bedford	Woman, English	320,	
Jacob Lardinois van Limberg		322	
A maidservant	Dutch	338	
Louise Juliana	Mother of Frederick	343, 344,	
Essex	Nobleman, English		347, 430, 501,
Ley	Lord Treasurer		353, 373, 415,
Heinrich Mathias von Thurn	Palatine officer		354, 356, 375, 382, 386, 390, 391, 392, 399, 401, 433, 434, 435, 438, 440, 476, 478, 511,
J. Chambermayd	English nobleman	359	
Unknown female acquaintance		360	
Charlotte of La Tremoille	Royal, Female	361,	369,
Sir Francis Cottington	English nobleman	362	
Albertus Morton			370
Lady Morton	Female, English		393,
Mansfeld	Officer	377	
Charles I	King, brother	502, 503, 543, 545, 551,	378, 405, 414, 489, 499, 507, 578,
Sir henry Wotton	English Nobleman	410, 488, 529,	

Gaston of Orleans			424
Sir John Coke	English nobleman	442	426,
Sir Jacob Astley	English nobleman and military commander		428
Margrave of Baden-Durlach, Georg Friedrich	Member of Protestant Union	559	436
Nithsale	Officer, Danish army		444
Henriette Catherine de Joyeuse	Female, royal		446
Prince Palatine Frederick Henry	Son	458,	
Thomas Locke	English parliament	465	
William Murray	English nobleman, Charles' groom of the bedchamber		469,
Maule	English nobleman, close to kings		486
First Earl of Carlisle, James Hay	English nobleman and diplomat		495, 509, 512, 540, 560,
Edmondès	English ambassador France	532	
Vane	English nobleman	552	
Anne Clifford	English female		558,
Sir John Ashburnham	English servant in the Hague	564	
Empress Consort Eleonore	Female, wife emperor Ferdinand II		566
Earl of Arundel, Thomas Howard	English art collector, politician and diplomat		573
Laud	Archbishop of Canterbury	576, 586,	574, 579,
Wake	Englishman in Paris		577
Gerbier	Stuart ambassador in Brussels		588

Analysis letters volume II

January 1632 – December 1642.

Letters 1-66 belong to part one, as they cover the period January 1632 until November 1632, when Frederick was still alive.

Person	Position	In cipher code	Letter To Elizabeth	Letters from Elizabeth
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Gerbier	Stuart ambassador in Brussels	Yes	1, 3, 7, 9, 18, 31, 34, 36, 39, 42, 46, 72, 88, 227, 259, 263, 274, 297, 318, 319, 366, 370, 377, 382, 395, 414, 422, 463, 467, 475, 479, 481, 483, 487, 500, 523, 533,	373
Roe	English ambassador	From letter 321	10, 11, 29, 38, 84, 100, 105, 149, 162, 173, 177, 185, 187, 198, 209, 230, 247, 249, 269, 273, 279, 286, 292, 303, 308, 315, 325, 328, 334, 336, 342, 355, 364, 371, 379, 380, 383, 387, 388, 390, 391, 397, 399, 402, 408, 409, 413, 419, 424, 428, 433, 434, 437, 439, 442, 444, 449, 452, 454, 457, 460, 464, 471, 474, 476, 480, 484, 485, 492, 498, 499, 505, 507, 511, 515, 521, 528, 534, 538, 543, 545, 551, 562, 567, 574, 577, 580, 584, 588, 590, 592, 593, 594, 598, 601, 605, 607, 612, 614, 617, 620, 622,	2, 45, 89, 106, 120, 157, 176, 181, 183, 190, 203, 205, 216, 226, 234, 240, 255, 268, 276, 284, 299, 307, 313, 317, 321, 330, 339, 357, 359, 362, 365, 374, 375, 384, 386, 393, 394, 396, 400, 401, 405, 407, 410, 412, 416, 420, 423, 427, 432, 435, 436, 440, 441, 445, 447, 448, 450, 453, 455, 456, 458, 461, 462, 465, 468, 470, 473, 477, 478, 482, 490, 491, 493, 497, 502, 504, 506, 508, 517, 519, 524, 532, 535, 537, 544, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 552, 553, 561, 565, 566, 569, 575, 576, 579, 582, 586, 589, 591, 596, 597, 599, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 613, 616, 621,
Marquess of Hamilton	English nobleman			4, 17, 63, 67, 78, 87, 95, 126, 130, 151, 158, 204, 340, 351, 361, 381, 425, 587,

Frederick	Husband		5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 37, 40, 44, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66,	
Lady Broughton	English female friend			8, 49, 54, 83, 99,
Christian IV	Royal, family		20, 61,	24, 107, 266, 295,
Princes of Denmark	Sons of Christian IV			108, 109,
City of Amsterdam				21
Vane	English Officer		64	22, 23, 30, 33, 48, 85, 102, 131, 208, 222, 540, 555,
Rantzau	Danish diplomat			25,
Rosenkrantz	Danish politician			26
Friis	Danish Reichskanzler			27
Iver Vind	Danish politician			28
1 st Earl of Carlisle	English nobleman			32, 212,
Avery	English diplomat in Denmark/Hamburg		35,	112, 214, 221, 239,
Arundel	English diplomat		74, 79,	43, 80, 81, 150, 289, 430, 488,
Countess of Arundel	English female noble			55,
Charles I	Brother, king England		68, 147,	71, 91, 113, 143, 556,
Wilhelm V	Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel		73, 101, 114, 152, 155, 171, 198, 228, 229, 261, 619,	69, 76, 103, 133, 145, 146, 148, 160, 166, 201, 220, 248, 267, 290, 293,
Landgravinne of Hesse	Amalia Elisabeth		138, 139, 184, 243, 431, 496, 501, 520,	495, 512,
Oxenstierna	Swedish chancellor		75, 116, 132, 141, 154, 182, 233, 258, 352,	70, 77, 82, 98, 104, 135, 136, 156, 163, 168, 169, 287, 486, 542, 558, 615,
Coke	English nobleman		96, 196,	86, 179, 192, 200,

1 st Earl of Bridgewater	English nobleman			90,
Nethersole	English nobleman		92, 144,	140,
Laud	English bishop		188, 195, 202, 207, 218, 232, 242, 260, 277, 291, 304, 309, 314, 324, 335, 338, 344,	93, 178, 180, 186, 191, 194, 199, 206, 215, 223, 224, 241, 254, 270, 275, 280, 285, 300, 301, 306, 312, 316, 320, 322, 326, 331, 333, 337, 356, 358, 360, 367, 369, 385, 389, 403, 404, 406, 415, 429, 446, 451, 459, 469, 489, 526, 541,
Zawadsky	Polish ambassador		94	
Constantijn Huygens	Dutch		97, 170, 211, 418,	
Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin	German			110, 122
Adolph Friedrich of Mecklenburg	German duke			265
Anstruther	English ambassador in Denmark		115,	111
Rusdorf	Palatine diplomat in Hamburg		117, 125, 127, 138, 137, 142, 161,	118, 129, 466,
Elector of Brandenburg	German			119,
Duke of Holstein-Gottorp	German			121
Duchess of Holstein-Gottorp	German female			123
Melander	Lieutenant General of the army of the Landgrave of Hesse			134,
Boswell	English ambassador in Netherlands			153, 164, 165, 167,
Lady Killigrew	English female noble			174,

3 rd earl of Mar	English nobleman			175,
Scudamore	English ambassador in France		210,	217,
Wentworth	English nobleman		231,	213,
Charles Louis	Son	Yes	219, 225, 244, 250, 251, 253, 256, 262, 264, 271, 281, 282, 283, 305, 310, 323, 327, 329, 332, 345, 346, 347, 349, 353, 354, 392, 398, 421, 509, 514, 516, 518, 522, 525, 527, 529, 531, 539, 554, 557, 560, 563, 564, 568, 578, 581, 583, 585, 609, 610, 611,	
Emperor Ferdinand II				235,
Empress consort Eleonore	Wife of emperor			236,
King of Hungary				237
Queen of Hungary				238
Ferencz	Palatine diplomat		245, 252, 272,	
Curtius	Palatine diplomat		246,	
Wotton	English nobleman		257,	
Earl of Holland	English nobleman		348,	278, 294, 298, 311, 341, 343, 350, 363,
Baner	General			288, 296,
Simonds D'Ewes	English nobleman			378
Bernard of Saxe-Weimar	German			411, 426,
Cave	English diplomat	Yes	417	
2 nd Earl of Northampton	English nobleman			438

Penington	Admiral in the Downes			443
Sir Francis Windebank	English nobleman		494, 510	
Queen Christina of Sweden			503	
Sophia Hedwig	Female cousin in Leeuwarden			536,
Frederick Henry	Prince of Orange		570	
Marmaduke Langdale	English, had fought under Vere in 1620			571, 572, 573,
Willem Frederik	Dutch			595, 603,
Earl of Lanark				618