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Martin van Gelderen

From its declaration of independence in 1581 until these days of European unification Dutch foreign policy has always been a matter of 'peace, profits and principles', to quote the title of a classic study on the subject.[1] Blending the Grotian ideal of concord and peace with the pursuit of maritime and commercial interests, the Netherlands has tried to maintain the proper balance of power amongst its European foes and friends. Its main partner, if not always ally, was Britain. Throughout the modern period Anglo-Dutch relations have been characterised by the delicate interplay between the political need for cooperation and the intense commercial rivalry in maritime and colonial affairs. As Joris Voorhoeve, a former – and rather disastrous – Dutch minister of defence, has observed, 'from a purely political point of view' Britain and the Netherlands should have been 'archenemies'. But their mutual political interest in containing the most dangerous continental power, be it Spain, France or later on Germany, limited all Anglo-Dutch confrontations to short military or diplomatic struggles which soon were ended by a compromise settlement.'[2]

Elizabeth and the Dutch Revolt: The Treaty of Nonesuch

Officially Anglo-Dutch cooperation started in 1585, a decisive year in the history of the Dutch Revolt. The situation seemed hopeless. Under the leadership of Alessandro Farnese Spanish and Italian forces had reconquered the southern provinces of the Low Countries. Bruges and Ghent, the main strongholds of radical Calvinism, fell in 1584, Brussels and Antwerp in 1585. Farnese's stunning success was not only due to his military genius, but also to the chaotic defence policy of his adversary, the States General. The rebels seemed more divided than ever before. On top of all, William of Orange, the great political and spiritual leader of the Revolt, was assassinated in July 1584. His last words, 'My God, have pity on

[1] Joris Voorhoeve, *Peace, profits and principles. A study of Dutch foreign policy* (The Hague 1979).
[2] Voorhoeve, *Peace, profits and principles*, 25.

my soul and this poor people', bore testimony to the great confusion that afflicted the rebellious provinces.

Orange had worked hard to overcome the internal divisions amongst the Dutch rebels. Internal concord and foreign aid were, as Orange saw it, the 'bare necessities' for the rebel cause. As the eternal enemy of the Habsburgs, who more or less surrounded the country from the south, the east and, if the Dutch Revolt were to be lost, also from the north, France was an obvious candidate for seeking alliances and aid; so were protestant England and the Lutheran German princes, with whom the Nassau family had strong historic ties. But from the very beginning German Lutherans were wary of Dutch Calvinists; they never actively supported the Dutch Revolt. For strategic and pragmatic reasons Orange favoured French aid. This policy was controversial, especially when it involved such dodgy figures as François, the Duke of Anjou. While in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland there was a distinct preference for an alliance with England.

Farnese's *reconquista* alarmed Queen Elizabeth. She decided to intervene directly in the Netherlands. The Treaty of Nonesuch, concluded three days after the fall of Antwerp in 1585, pledged military assistance in the shape of an English army in exchange for the right to put English garrisons in a number of Dutch towns, such as Flushing and Brill. The Earl of Leicester, one of the Queen's confidants, led the English army. In February 1586 the States General appointed Leicester to the position of Governor-General with 'absolute power'. Leicester, ambitious and Calvinist, supported by Reformed preachers and thousands of refugees from Flanders and Brabant, did not hesitate. In April he issued a prohibition on trade with the enemy on penalty of death. A special committee had to control whether the merchants observed the new regulation. Holland, which had already taken precautions to warrant its independence by appointing Orange's son, Maurits of Nassau, stadholder and Johan van Oldenbarnevelt pensionary of the province, was furious. The conflict was aggravated when Leicester joined sides with radical groups in Utrecht and dismissed the moderate magistrates.

The conflict between Leicester and Holland touched the essence of the Dutch political system. Whilst Leicester's partisans argued that the Governor-General was the prime authority in the political system, Holland unequivocally asserted provincial sovereignty. Leicester was fighting a losing battle. He was no match for the political genius of Oldenbarnevelt, who systematically undermined his position. Moreover, Leicester's bold performance highly displeased the English Queen, who preferred a far more

cautious approach. Finally, the sudden betrayal of the towns of Zutphen and Deventer by English commanders to the Spanish in January 1587 led to a rapid fall in popularity for the English.

When it was revealed that Elizabeth was negotiating with Parma, and that Leicester was ordered to push the United Provinces to the negotiation table, the earl's authority received its deathblow. In an Anjou-like fashion Leicester seized a number of towns, thus digging his own political grave. In December 1587 he left the United Provinces; in April 1588 he officially resigned as Governor-General.

Oldenbarnevelt: foreign policy for a young republic

The States of Holland had asserted their power and Oldenbarnevelt accepted the consequences. In the midst of the conflict with Leicester he set up a more effective defence policy. The States of Holland decided to raise a huge field army of its own and accepted the financial sacrifices involved. Maurits was put in charge of the new army. The year 1588 was the turning point. The invincible Armada was defeated and, under the military leadership of Maurits and his cousin William Louis of Nassau, stadholder of Friesland, a revolutionary reorganization of the army began. In 1590, when Farnese was once again ordered to sacrifice his campaign in the Netherlands and to intervene in France to assist the Catholic Holy League in their fight against Henry of Navarre, Maurits seized the opportunity to take the military initiative. The unexpected capture of Breda, by means of a Trojan ship, was the start of a *reconquista* that brought the northern and eastern provinces and a part of Brabant back under Dutch control.

With Oldenbarnevelt as their leader the Dutch took full control over their government. Foreign princes were no longer asked to become governors or dodgy sovereigns. The United Provinces had found their way; they were becoming a republic.

Oldenbarnevelt was the architect of foreign policy in the new republic.[3] In the 1590s the *approchement* between King James VI of Scotland and the Dutch Republic began. In February 1595 James sent Robert Denniston as Scottish envoy to Holland. The Dutch were pleased. They

[3] The classic general studies are A.Th. Van Deursen, *Honni soit qui mal y pense? De Republiek tussen de mogendheden (1610-1612)* (Amsterdam 1965) and Jan Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vols. I-III (Haarlem 1960-1966).

quickly proposed to set up an international anti-Spanish alliance that would include Holland, Scotland and England; later in the year the States General granted a pension to the oldest son of James, Henry. After the death of Elizabeth on the 3rd of April 1603, Oldenbarnevelt decided immediately to set up a delegation to pay respect to the new king. Just as in 1598, when he had gone to France with an illustrious Dutch embassy, featuring young Hugo Grotius as the new miracle of Holland, in order to sound out Henry IV, so in 1604 Oldenbarnevelt was keen to meet James I in person. The presence of Frederick Henry, the younger son of William of Orange and by far the most charming member of the Nassau family, underlined the importance of the embassy.[4]

James VI of Scotland (1566-1625)

Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619)

The trip to London was a mixed blessing. Whilst the new king had lauded Oldenbarnevelt in a letter from 1601, Holland's leader now learnt that James saw the Dutch as rebels, who were revolting against their legitimate prince. James refused to join the Dutch war effort against Spain. Whilst the new king – to Oldenbarnevelt's relief – did not refrain from the alliance with the Dutch, James emphasised his desire to live in peace with all European countries, including Spain. At the end of August 1604 England and Spain made peace with each other. The peace treaty with Spain

[4] Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. II, 496.

weakened England's position vis-à-vis the Dutch. Whilst Oldenbarnevelt realised that James would always want to appear and be honoured as Holland's best friend, the king's friendship had strong limits. James would and could never make war for the sake of the Dutch alliance.

Like William of Orange, Oldenbarnevelt was convinced that France, governed by Henry IV, was Holland's most important ally. The protestant sympathies of Henry would strengthen the natural antagonism between France and the Habsburgs, whose threat to the French still came, as in the old days of Charles V and François I, from three sides, the south, the north and the east. Given this situation an alliance between France and the new republic was imperative for as long as Henry's war with Spain lasted. As before, many Dutch, including most notably stadholder Maurits of Nassau, felt uneasy about relying too much on Catholic allies. Henry's willingness to convert, because Paris was worth a mass, increased the doubts of many Dutch. Maurits and those who saw the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism as the principal line of political division in Europe preferred strengthening the protestant alliance with the English. From 1612 Maurits opposed Oldenbarnevelt's foreign policy openly; the *approchement* with the English, with ambassador Sir Ralph Winwood in particular, became apparent when the stadholder was made a member of the Order of the Garter in 1613. Oldenbarnevelt did not oppose the alliance with James I but he viewed it with increasing scepticism. As Oldenbarnevelt saw it caution, the desire for peace, fear of war with Spain and the lust for maritime profits, exemplified by the activities of pirates such as Drake and Hawkins, continued to be the driving forces of Jacobean foreign policy.

Both Oldenbarnevelt and James were key players in the process of state formation in their countries. Both had only limited control over the classical instruments of statemaking, coercion and capital.[5] In England, as Kevin Sharpe and others have emphasised, 'the power of the crown and state depended largely upon its representation of authority.' Unlike other European monarchs James 'had no standing army or independent bureaucracy to enforce his will', which meant that 'both the cooperation of the political nation and the obedience of the lower orders rested more on a culture and ideology of order than on physical coercion.'[6] Above all James

[5] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge/Oxford 1990).
[6] Kevin Sharpe, 'The King's writ. Royal authors and royal authority in early modern England' in: Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake ed., *Culture and politics in early Stuart England* (Basingstoke 1994) 117.

used the power of the word 'to reaffirm and reauthorize paradigms that sustained his divine right.'[7] The royal writings were important 'acts of government', vigorous responses to political challenges and major 'attempts to lead men to God's reason and goodness through royal representation of His divine truths.'[8]

Unlike James Oldenbarnevelt never pretended to be divine or Solomonic. But just as with James the political eminence of Oldenbarnevelt rested to an important extent on his formidable powers of persuasion. In the peculiar constitutional interplay of town councils, provincial parliaments and States-General no political leader or faction could rule by dictate; never-ending negotiations, endless wheeling and dealing were – and are – the bread and butter of Dutch politics. From 1586 until his dramatic fall in 1619 Oldenbarnevelt was the master of this Dutch theatre of politics. The Dutch leader had, in the words of Louis Aubery du Maurier, 'une presence majestueuse, & disoit beaucoup en peu de paroles, avec un eloquence grave et succincte.'[9] Oldenbarnevelt used his talents and powers to turn the republic into a powerful state – with its own standing army and with a network of committees and councils that, in addition to the representative institutions of towns and provinces, made up the republican state apparatus that astounded so many foreign observers.

Like James, Oldenbarnevelt appreciated the necessity of developing a 'culture and ideology' for the new commonwealth. Whilst Oldenbarnevelt has often been seen as 'a political opportunist', who followed the maxims of 'reason of state',[10] it is important to note that he was keen to promote and steer public intellectual debate on all key issues, including the main areas of conflict and dialogue with the English ally. Hugo Grotius became Oldenbarnevelt's main political and intellectual confidante. Grotius played a dominant role in the commercial and colonial debates with England and he was the principal spokesman in the public debate on the conflict over the relationship between ecclesiastical authority and civil government that dominated Anglo-Dutch relations after 1610. Grotius was to Oldenbarnevelt what Locke was to Shaftesbury.

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[7] Sharpe, 'The king's writ', 131.
[8] Ibidem, 124.
[9] Louis Aubery du Maurier, *Memoires pour server à l'Histoire de Hollande, et des autres Provinces-Unies* (Paris 1711) 277.
[10] See most recently A.Th. van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau (1567-1625). De winnaar die faalde* (Amsterdam 2000) 143, 241, 273.

The Anglo-Dutch debate on the constitution: Wilkes against Vranck

From the very beginning Anglo-Dutch relations were a fascinating blend of political and intellectual exchange. In the 1580s the founding father of the new university of Leiden, Janus Dousa, was at the vanguard of both the diplomatic attempt to enlist English support for the Dutch Revolt and the intensification of humanist contacts. Justus Lipsius and Philip Sidney were not only leading the renaissance of Tacitism in their countries, they were also keen supporters of the Earl of Leicester and advocates of a strong central government in the United Provinces.[11] The first major Anglo-Dutch debate concerned the controversies over the constitutional make up of the Dutch provinces.[12] Sidney thought that Leicester had been invited to come to the United Provinces as a Roman dictator. Sidney said that 'he had learnt from history that when the state of the republic of Rome had been in utter peril or danger, as the Netherlands nowadays are, which [the Dutch] fully acknowledge, it had been necessary to create a dictatorship, with absolute power and disposition over everything concerning the prosperity of the country, without any instruction, limitation or restriction.'[13] Amongst the English the expectation was that the Dutch would, in the words of Fulke Greville, 'metamorphose this new aristocracy of theirs into their ancient and much honoured form of dukedom',[14] with first Leicester and then perhaps Sidney himself in the position of duke. Given this profound misunderstanding of both the history and contemporary politics of the Low Countries, the English counsellors were stupefied by Oldenbarnevelt's *coup* against Leicester and they expressed strong doubts about its legitimacy. On 16 March 1587,[15] Thomas Wilkes accused the States of Holland of 'reducing' the authority of Leicester. Wilkes argued that the commission of the States General had awarded Leicester, 'the supreme command and absolute authority' both in military and political affairs, 'as the Governor Generals

[11] Jan van Dorsten, *Poets, patrons, and professors. Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers and the Leiden Humanists* (Leiden 1962) and Blair Worden, *The sound of virtue. Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan politics* (New Haven and London 1996).

[12] Martin van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) 199-207.

[13] Sidney as quoted in Worden, *The sound of virtue*, 247.

[14] Greville as quoted in Ibidem, 247

[15] T. Wilkes, *Remonstrance* (1587) in: P.C. Bor, *Den oorspronck, begin ende aenvanck der Nederlandtscher oorlogen, geduyrende de regeringe van de Hertoginne van Parma, de Hertoge van Alba, ende eensdeels vanden groot Commandeur*, Vol. 2 (1679) 918-921.

have had in the times of Charles V.'[16] Oldenbarnevelt and the States of Holland had now fatally wounded this authority. Wilkes presented a long list of accusations and questioned the States' claim to sovereign power. He argued that 'by default of a legal Prince' sovereignty belonged 'with the community', not with the States, who were 'but servants, ministers and deputies of the aforesaid community.'[17] As Wilkes pointed out, the community had limited the authority of the States, setting conditions to their functioning and decisions. Therefore, their authority was as different from sovereignty as 'heaven is different from hell' for, as Wilkes put it, 'sovereignty is not limited neither in power, nor in command, nor in time.'[18] Still less, Wilkes added, the States represented sovereignty, for such was precisely the role of the Governor General, described 'as a dispositarius or guardian of sovereignty until it pleases the prince or the people to revoke it.'[19]

It had become common sense in the United Provinces to present the States as representative institutions of the people; the idea of popular sovereignty, underlining the authority of the community, had become another key element in the justification of the Revolt. Wilkes used the idea of the States as delegates, who acted on order and instruction, to arrive at a radical conclusion. Combined with the notion, probably derived from Bodin, that sovereignty could not be limited, neither in power nor in time, Wilkes reduced the importance of the States and rejected their claims to political dominance, let alone sovereignty.

Oldenbarnevelt recognised the necessity of responding to Wilkes' *Remonstrance*. The town pensionary of Gouda, François Vranck, was asked to write a defence of the authority of the States. Originally a declaration of the States of Holland, Vranck's work was published, in a slightly revised version, as the *Short exposition of the right exercised from old times by the Knighthood, Nobles and Towns of Holland and Westvriesland for the maintenance of the liberties, rights, privileges and laudable customs of the country*.[20] Like Wilkes, Vranck accepted popular sovereignty as the foundation of the Dutch constitution, but unlike Wilkes, Vranck argued that in Holland the concept of 'the people' referred to the

[16] Wilkes, *Remonstrance*, 918-919.
[17] Ibidem, 921.
[18] Ibidem.
[19] Ibidem.
[20] Francois Vranck, 'Short exposition of the right exercised from all old times by the knighthood, nobles and towns of Holland and Westvriesland for the maintenance of the liberties, rights, privileges and laudable customs of the country' in: Martin van Gelderen ed., *The Dutch Revolt* (Cambridge 1993) 227-238.

corporations of the 'nobles and towns'. Vranck admitted that the States were representative institutions whose work had to be seen in terms of delegation. A delegate, participating in the States, could only act 'in conformity with his instruction and commission.' The delegates received their instruction from their principals, the estates of nobles and towns. But according to Vranck this did not diminish the importance of the States. For although sovereignty resided with the people, it was administered by their delegates, the States. Shrewdly employing Bodin's own distinction between the location and the administration of sovereignty, Vranck concluded 'that the sovereignty of the country is with the States in all matters.'

Vranck's *Short exposition* became canonical; it has been called the 'Magna Charta' of the Dutch Republic.[21] It did not of course settle the debate on the Dutch constitution. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the complexity of the debate was deepened, when the rift between the public church and civil government was opened up. James I became the most distinguished international contributor to a debate and conflict that brought the republic on the brink of collapse. The conflict between Arminians and Gomarists, or Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants, and the dramatic stand-off between Oldenbarnevelt and Maurits, culminating in the tragic beheading of the ninety year old statesman, have become defining moments in Dutch history. From the very beginning their interpretation has been deeply controversial, exemplifying profound rifts in Dutch society, not just in contemporary society but also in Dutch historiography. Liberal, Catholic and Calvinist historians have all given their versions of the drama, arriving at widely diverging conclusions.

Calvinists and regents

Most historians would agree that the coalition between Dutch Calvinists and the town regents in Holland had always been frail and uneasy. In 1581 the national Synod of Middelburg fully affirmed the Presbyterian organization and doctrine of the Dutch church.[22] The *corpus disciplinae* delineated the duties

[21] Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. I, 402.

[22] W. van 't Spijker, 'De Acta van de synode van Middelburg (1581)' in: J.P. van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg* (Middelburg 1981) 64-128 and R.H. Bremmer, 'De nationale synode van Middelburg (1581). Politieke achtergronden van kerkelijke besluitvorming' in: J.P. van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg* (Middelburg 1981)1-63.

of the church servants, ministers, elders and deacons, and affirmed that church government consisted of consistories and the so called 'greater assemblies', classes, particular (provincial) synods and finally the national synod. Three years earlier, the National Synod of Dordrecht had decided that church ministers should be appointed by the consistory in cooperation with the deacons and the classis. Having elected a minister, he was to be presented to the 'reformed government' and the congregation, which both had two weeks time to protest against the appointment. Thus by way of minor concession the synod recognised that in the procedure of appointing ministers town magistrates had a limited right of protest. But the consistory had the final word. The synod emphasised that the civil government was not entitled to appoint or dismiss ministers at its own will. With regard to the appointment of elders the synod claimed an even more exclusive right, not acknowledging any right of confirmation on behalf of the town government.

This bold assertion of the independence of the Reformed Protestant church was unacceptable to a majority of the towns and States of Holland. One of the sternest opponents was the town of Leiden. In 1579 Leiden expressed its strong disagreement with the synod. Leiden argued that the appointment of ministers, elders and deacons pertained to the magistrate. Leiden's position was presented in a famous *Justification*, written by Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert. It accused the consistory of trying to 'usurp' the 'magistrate's regiment' and avowed that the magistrate 'being relieved of the awkward yoke of the tyrannical Romanists', did not intend to bear 'a new form of yoke from anyone else.'[23]

As the treatise pointed out, the Reformed Protestant consistory demanded the 'prohibition, constraint and punishment' by the town magistrate of Mennonites, Roman Catholics and all other religious groupings. Whilst the town magistrate was not allowed to interfere in church affairs, it was expected to execute the orders of the Reformed Protestants. With this policy, the *Justification* argued, Reformed Protestants threaded in the footsteps of the Inquisition, as they demanded the force of conscience, which had been 'the root cause of this bloody war.' If Reformed Protestants denied the Magistrate an independent judgment in religious affairs, then the aim of the consistory was to subject the Magistrate, to control its sword and to make it act like Pilate, who followed the wishes of the Pharisees without making a proper judgment himself.

[23] D. Volckertsz Coornhert, *Justificatie des magistraets tot Leyden in Hollant* (Amsterdam 1579) fol A4; and Van Gelderen, *The political thought*, 230-231.

As the *Justification* saw it, God instituted the magistrate 'to the defence of the pious and to the chastisement of the evil.' If this divinely ordained power was not to be abused, as had happened under the Inquisition, then the magistrate needed to have 'lawful knowledge' of the persons one wanted to appoint 'as shepherds in the church or shepherd-stable of Christ.'[24] On the basis of its divinely ordained duty the Magistrate had a rightful claim to the authority over the 'election and approbation' of 'church servants'.

Moreover, the 'office' of the magistrate was to take precautions and to settle disputes in both political and ecclesiastical affairs, especially if these tended to 'a common sedition'. This did not imply complete control over ecclesiastical affairs. The magistrate merely wanted to prevent the appointment of 'seditious spirits' in the consistory in order to safeguard the church from a new form of popery.

The Leiden *Justification* was music to the ears of politicians such as Oldenbarnevelt, who, whilst clearly sympathizing and agreeing with the main aspects of Reformed Protestantism, were not willing the replace the 'popery of Rome' with the 'popery of Geneva'. The outspoken support of many ministers for the Earl of Leicester had merely widened the divide between the Calvinist church and Oldenbarnevelt. In 1591 a committee of politicians and ministers was formed to discuss the church government and its relation to the civil government. Oldenbarnevelt joined the committee and to his own surprise he rather liked two of the ministers, Jacobus Arminius and Johannes Uyttenbogaert. At the instigation of Uyttenbogaert, who became one of his closest friends, Oldenbarnevelt even decided to join the church.

Arminian troubles

In 1602 Oldenbarnevelt was happy to support the proposal, engineered mainly by Uyttenbogaert and young Hugo Grotius, to appoint Jacobus Arminius to a chair in theology at the university of Leiden. The appointment was controversial. As a minister in Amsterdam Arminius had raised questions concerning the proper understanding of the doctrine of predestination within Calvinist theology.[25] From the very beginning the debate had an Anglo-Dutch

[24] Coornhert, *Justificatie*, fol B6.

[25] For a biography of Arminius see Carl Bangs, *Arminius. A study in the Dutch Reformation* (second edition; Grand Rapids, Mich. 1985). The most important recent studies on Arminius' theology are Richard A. Muller, *God, creation, and providence in the thought of Jacob*

dimension. One of Arminius' earliest works was the *Modest Examination of Dr. Perkins's Pamphlet*, a response to William Perkins's study *De Praedestinatonis modo et ordine*.[26] The *Examen Perkinsiani* is one of Arminius' richest texts, discussing key theological questions concerning supralapsarianism, election, providence and predestination. Against Perkins, a keen defender of the doctrine of double predestination, 'teaching that God had divided mankind unconditionally into elect and reprobate even before the fall of Adam',[27] Arminius argued in favour of a concept of predestination that would do justice to the subtlety of the interplay between man's free will and God's grace.

Written between 1599 and 1602 the *Examen Perkinsiani* was published in 1612, after Arminius' death, when the Dutch Republic was in the midst of the Arminian troubles. The debate on free will and predestination was a fatal test for the frail relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authority, especially in Holland. Oldenbarnevelt was not troubled by the theological debate itself; he probably was not really interested. Throughout the years of the Arminian troubles he said and wrote very little about predestination. The few paragraphs Oldenbarnevelt devoted to the issue emphasised the 'simplicity' of his beliefs. In a letter to his envoy in London, Caron, Oldenbarnevelt wrote that all his life he had felt 'that a good Christian should believe that he is predestined to eternal salvation by God's grace, because through God's grace he has the firm belief that his salvation is solely founded on God's grace and on the redemption of ours sins by our Saviour Jesus Christ.'[28] Whilst these words were plainly protestant, it is not so easy to interpret them as Arminian. Oldenbarnevelt seems to take the high road or

Arminius. Sources and directions of scholastic Protestantism in the era of early Orthodoxy (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1991) and Eef Dekker, *Rijker dan Midas. Vrijheid, genade en predestinatie in de theologie van Jacobus Arminius (1559-1609)* (Zoetermeer 1993); for a succinct study of Arminius' thinking on free will and predestination, see Eef Dekker, 'Theologische en filosofische vrijheid in de vroege zeventiende eeuw' in: Eco Haitsma Mulier, Wyger Velema ed., *Vrijheid. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 1999) 53-69.

[26] For the English translation see Jacobus Arminus, 'Modest examination of Dr. Perkins's pamphlet' in: Jacobus Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius* The London edition, vol. 3, (London 1875; repr. Grand Rapids, Mich. 1986) 249-484.

[27] Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists. The rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford 1987), 29; see also Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic. Conflict and consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge 1992).

[28] 'Oldenbarnevelt aan Caron' (18 October 1617) in: A.J. Veenendaal ed., *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Bescheiden betreffende zijn staatkundig beleid en zijn familie*, vol. III: 1614-1620 (The Hague 1967) 358; see also Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. III, 17.

occupy a safe middle ground. But with the church split between the followers of Arminius and his Leiden counterpart Franciscus Gomarus, it became imperative to resolve the theological controversy. Vital questions needed to be answered. Should theological questions be settled by a national synod of the church or should diversity be accepted, as long as the fundamentals of Protestantism were not at stake? Who should decide? Was it the church itself, was it the States General as the highest federal institution or was each province sovereign in decreeing its own solution? The Arminian troubles entailed fundamental debates about the nature of the church, its position in and relation to the commonwealth and the location of sovereignty within the Dutch Republic. From the beginning of the Dutch Revolt these issues had been looming; between 1610 and 1619 they were brought to their fateful climax.

Searching for answers Oldenbarnevelt relied heavily on the intellectual and political assistance of his closest confidantes, Uyttenbogaert and Grotius. In 1610 Uyttenbogaert published his *Treatise on the office and authority of a higher Christian government in church affairs*.[29] It included a refined dissection of the Counter-Remonstrant view on the relationship between church and civil government. Counter-Remonstrants endorsed the view that ecclesiastical and civil authorities were wielding very distinct powers of totally different kinds in two different spheres. In the words of Nobbs, 'the authority of the church was in religion and was a spiritual power; the sovereignty of the ruler governed external life by that coercion which was effective only upon the body. So long as each was active in its own sphere and faithfully observed the limits of its own function, there was no collateral authority and no possibility of conflict.'[30] Uyttenbogaert, however, insisted that this view implied 'collaterality'. Church and civil power were collateral; there was 'an equal high power for the ecclesiastical and secular authorities within the commonwealth.'[31] Counter-Remonstrants did not acknowledge the superiority of the supreme civil magistrate, of the sovereign. The commonwealth, so it seemed, had two sovereigns.

Ever since his visit to London Oldenbarnevelt believed that, whatever differences there might be with James I, they shared a distinct distaste for

[29] Johannes Uyttenbogaert, *Tractaet van t' ampt ende authoriteyt eener hoogher christelicker overheydt in kerckelicke saecken* (The Hague 1610).
[30] Douglas Nobbs, *Theocracy and toleration. A study of the disputes in Dutch Calvinism from 1600 to 1650* (Cambridge 1938) 5.
[31] Uyttenbogaert, *Tractaet van t'Ampt*, 18.

radical Presbyterians and an even stronger preference for the superiority of secular over ecclesiastical authority. In 1611 Oldenbarnevelt was shocked to find that James sided with radical Presbyterian theologians such as Sybrandus Lubbertus, professor of Divinity at the University of Franeker in Friesland, to oppose the appointment of Conrad Vorstius as the successor of Arminius in Leiden. In the judgement of James Vorstius was, so he told ambassador Caron, 'a pernicious person', who had repeatedly 'fallen into great errors in his interpretations and doubts concerning the divinity and Christ.' James deemed these errors to be 'wholly impious, godless, and yes full of Arminianism.'[32] In his public declaration on the affair, James went as far as to brand Vorstius as an 'Atheist', indeed 'a Viper, who may make a fearful rent, not only in their Ecclesiastical, but also in their [the Dutch] politic state.'[33] Oldenbarnevelt was stunned: 'I can really not believe, that on the issue of predestination and all that depends on it, the King would be so strict as to condemn all other opinions but those of Calvin and Beza.'[34] Holland's leader not only failed to recognise that James attack on Vorstius was not about predestination but about Socinianism; Oldenbarnevelt also did not see that, as Peter White has remarked, in attacking Vorstius, James 'was concerned to vindicate his own orthodoxy.'[35] From their side the English king and his counsellors failed to recognize that by presenting their grievances to the States General, where the English ambassador was entitled to speak, they were touching the heart and nerve of the Dutch political system, the issue of sovereignty. The appointment of Vorstius in Leiden was a matter for the

[32] A.J. Veenendaal ed., *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Bescheiden betreffende zijn staatkundig beleid en zijn familie*, vol. II: 1602-1613 (The Hague 1962) 492, 494. For James' religious policy and thought see Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The ecclesiastical policy of King James I', *Journal of British studies* 24 (1985) 169-207; Linda Levy Peck ed., *The mental world of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge 1991); W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge 1997); Kevin Sharpe, 'Private conscience and public duty in the writings of James VI and I' in: Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping early modern England. The culture of seventeenth-century politics* (Cambridge 2000) 151-171.

[33] *His Majesty's declaration concerning his proceedings with the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries in the cause of D. Conradus Vorstius* (1612) 6. For the Vorstius affair, see A.Th. van Deursen, *Honni soit qui mal y pense?*, 52-59; Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. III, 191-223; F. Shriver, 'Orthodoxy and diplomacy. James I and the Vorstius affair', *English historical review* 336 (1970) 449-474; W. Nijenhuis, 'Saravia and James I's moves against the appointment of Vorstius' in: W. Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata. Studies on the Reformation*, vol. II (Leiden 1994) 206-224; Edwin Rabbie, 'Introduction' in: Hugo Grotius, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas (1613)*, ed. Edwin Rabbie (Leiden, New York and Köln 1995) 16-29.

[34] Veenendaal, *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Bescheiden*, vol. II, 491.

[35] White, *Predestination, policy and polemic*, 161.

States of Holland and the town and university of Leiden, not of the States General. As Leicester had done before, the English were once again offending Holland's pride, its provincial sovereignty and civic autonomy. Moreover, the publication of James' *Declaration* in 1612 turned the Vorstius affair into a public conflict. James and Oldenbarnevelt were now asserting and claiming their authority in Holland's public sphere. More than ever their authority depended on political and theological argument, on powers of rhetoric and persuasion.

Conrad Vorstius (1569-1622)

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)

James I and Hugo Grotius

For Oldenbarnevelt it was vital to loosen the coalition between King James and the Counter-Remonstrants. He managed to engineer a letter from James, published in 1613, in which the King acknowledged and praised the authority of the States General in church affairs and called upon them to use their 'public authority' to silence the disputes on predestination.[36] Emboldened by

[36] The letter was published as *Copie van den Brief des Conings van Groot Britannien, gheschreven aen de E.M. Heeren Staten Generael der Gheunieerde Provincien. Waer in hy sijn Aadvijs,nopende het different tusschen de Remonstranten ende Contra-Remonstranten over-schrijft* (1613) Knuttel Pamphlet 2061.

this development Oldenbarnevelt secretly instructed Hugo Grotius to discuss the Arminian troubles with James in person. From 30 March 1613 until 31 May Grotius was in England as the most prominent member of a delegation of the Dutch East India Company to discuss a number of commercial issues, most importantly the English protests against the Dutch monopoly on trade with a number of Spice Islands, which, as the English delegates were keen to point out, seemed to contradict Grotius' own work on the freedom of the seas.[37]

Grotius met James on 16 April and again on 15 and 21 May 1613. The reports on these meetings vary. There is agreement that James smiled, but the smile must have been ambivalent. According to the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbott, James was deeply irritated by the arrogance and 'tedious tittletattle' of the Dutch humanist.[38] Grotius meanwhile was convinced of his own success. He thought his *exposé* of the position of the Counter-Remonstrants, of their refusal to give civil government any say in the election of church ministers had convinced James that the Counter-Remonstrants were, as the king had exclaimed himself, 'the veriest puritans.'[39] Grotius also felt that James had sympathy with the proposal to set up a General Council of Protestant Churches, which would establish the fundamentals of Christianity and would call for moderation in the debates on less important issues such as predestination. James himself, Grotius wrote to his friend Isaac Casaubon, with whom he developed the idea, would, as 'the wisest of Kings' be 'its president and moderator.' Establishing such a General Council was a matter of urgency, if only because, as Grotius wrote, 'every age

[37] For the documents concerning these debates see G.N. Clark, W.J.M. van Eysinga, *The Colonial Conferences between England and the Netherlands in 1613 and 1615*, Bibiliotheca Visseriana, vol. XV (Leiden 1940); the analysis of the debates appeared under the same title as Vol. XVII in the same series. For a thorough study of Grotius' role during these colonial conferences see most recently Martine Julia van Ittersum, *Profit and principle. Hugo Grotius, natural rights, theories and the rise of Dutch power in the East Indies, 1595-1615*, PhD thesis Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass. 2002) 468-624.

[38] Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. III, 288. See also Christopher Grayson, 'James I and the religious crisis in the United Provinces 1613-1619' in: Derek Baker ed., *Reform and Reformation: England and the continent, c. 1500-c. 1750* (Oxford 1979) 203 and Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Hugo Grotius and England' in: Simon Groenveld and Michael Wintle ed., *The exchange of ideas. Religion, scholarship and art in Anglo-Dutch relations in the seventeenth century, Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen 1994) 45-46.

[39] 'Grotius to Oldenbarnevelt 5/15 May 1613' in: P.C. Molhuysen ed., *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius. Eerste deel, 1597-17- augustus 1618* (The Hague 1928) 234-236. See Grayson, *James I and the United Provinces*, 203 and Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, vol. III, 289.

does not produce learned Christian Kings, nor will England always have a Casaubon', praised by Grotius as the direct successor of Erasmus.[40]

The call for a General Council continued to be an important element in the Grotian search for concord and toleration amongst Christians. As in his moral and political philosophy Grotius sought to solve conflicts in theology by emphasising the shared foundations of the churches. These shared foundations had to be derived by way of rational argument, thus guaranteeing their universal acceptance. Grotius developed this approach in *Meletius*, a manuscript written in 1611. It was his first attempt to defend religious toleration on the basis of a number of *decreta* and *praecepta*, which all faithful must accept.[41] In *Meletius* Grotius identified this approach with the stoic teaching of Seneca and Cicero that 'all voluntary actions are preceded by the understanding [*intellectus*] that necessarily consists of two parts: the one theoretical, the other practical.' The theoretical part should be based on a number of dogmata, *decreta*, from which fundamental ethical precepts, *praecepta*, must be derived. As far as religious debates were concerned this stoic approach had been favoured in particular by Christian Humanists, starting with Erasmus himself. It became the basis of Grotius' irenicism, which found its culmination in *De Veritate Religiones Christianae*, which Grotius himself probably regarded as his most important work.

Returning home in May 1613 Grotius was optimistic about the prospects for his ambitious irenic programme, which would restore unity in European Protestantism and concord in the United Provinces. But back home discord prevailed. In July 1613 Sibrandus Lubbertus published the massive *Commentary on the ninety-nine errors of Conrad Vorstius*.[42] In a clever move Lubbertus dedicated it to George Abbott. Lubbertus reiterated the accusation that the proposal to appoint Vorstius in Leiden had been an attempt to introduce Socinian heresies into the church, and he strongly rejected both the equation of Dutch Counter-Remonstrants with English Puritans and the accusation that the Counter-Remonstrants did not acknowledge any form of ecclesiastical hierarchy. Informed by Lubbertus' *Commentary* James now

[40] *Briefwisseling*, vol. I, letter 219; and Trevor-Roper, *Hugo Grotius and England*, 45.

[41] Hugo Grotius, *Meletius de iis quae inter Christianos conveniunt epistola*, ed. H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden 1988) III-19, 80 and 109. For Grotius' theology see Henk Nellen und Edwin Rabbie ed., *Hugo Grotius theologian. Essays in honour of G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes* (Leiden, New York and Köln 1994).

[42] Sibrandus Lubbertus, *Commentarii ad nonaginta novem errors Conradi Vorstii* (Franeker 1613); The preface to the commentary is reprinted in: Grotius, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas*, 423-439.

started to wonder whether Grotius' clarification of Counter-Remonstrant doctrines had been deceitful. Grotius had to respond. Urgency was required; Grotius wrote his reply in less than a month.[43]

Ordinum Pietas

The *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas* was the most comprehensive justification of the policy of Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius and their allies in the States of Holland to appear during the Arminian troubles.[44] The Latin version was published in October 1613, the Dutch translation, prepared by Uyttenbogaert, followed immediately and the French translation appeared a little later. The multi-lingual publishing campaign of *Ordinam Pietas* indicated the importance of the work; it was aimed to appeal to an international audience, to James I and other English readers in particular. Grotius emphasised the importance of the Anglo-Dutch alliance and praised the great liberality of King James, who, Grotius wrote, 'even after he had concluded peace with the Spaniards had constantly shown how much he had the welfare of our commonwealth, *reipublicae nostrae salus*, at heart.'[45] Grotius underlined the king's 'faithful, wise and salutary counsel' that 'public authority is needed' to settle the disputes on predestination and he endorsed the view, which he attributed to James, that the conflicting theological 'opinions do not differ so much that they are inconsistent with the truth of the Christian faith and the salvation of the souls.'[46] The problem with the Counter-Remonstrants was that they were neither willing to be charitable in church disputes nor prepared to accept the authority of the supreme magistrate to arbitrate and settle such disputes. In this sense Counter-Remonstrants were Puritans, who, Grotius writes, 'deny that the King is the head of the external Anglican Church.'[47]

These remarks exemplify Grotius' strategy to defame the Counter-Remonstrants and to sway the opinion of James I. But they also point to the heart of the conflict. *Au fond* Counter-Remonstrants disagreed profoundly with Grotius' theory of commonwealth and church, with his views on sovereignty and his plea for toleration. Grotius had developed his theory of

[43] See Rabbie, 'Introduction', 39.
[44] I have used the splendid new edition and translation prepared by Edwin Rabbie.
[45] Grotius, *Ordinum Pietas*, 122-123.
[46] Ibidem, 124-125.
[47] Grotius, *Ordinum Pietas*, 172-173.

the formation of the commonwealth and the location of sovereignty in one of his earliest, unpublished works, *De Iure Praedae*.[48] Here Grotius explains that for reasons of demographic growth, better protection and greater economic convenience, lone individuals, living in the state of natural liberty, start to create small societies, which are 'formed by general consent for the sake of the common good.'[49] The *respublica* refers to a multitude of private persons who have come together to improve their protection through mutual aid and to assist each other in acquiring the necessities of life. At their own free will these individuals unite by way of civil contract – Grotius uses the term *foedus* – in a 'unified and permanent body' with its own set of laws. From *singuli* they turn themselves into *cives*, citizens.

The laws of the commonwealth emanate from its will as a unified body based on consent. Grotius argues that 'civil power, manifesting itself in laws and judgements, resides primarily and essentially in the bosom of the commonwealth itself.'[50] Of course not everybody has the time to devote himself to the administration of civil affairs. The exercise of lawful power is therefore entrusted to a number of magistrates, who act for the common good. By mandate the magistrates have the authority to make laws for the *respublica*, which bind all citizens. Grotius uses the concept of *magistratus* to emphasise that those who exercise civil power, be they king, princes, counts, States assemblies or town councils, are administrators. Arguing that 'just as every right of the magistrate comes from the commonwealth, so every right of the commonwealth comes from private persons', Grotius reaffirms later in *De Iure Praedae* that 'public power is constituted by collective consent.'[51] Following Vranck, Grotius makes a crucial distinction between the residence of supreme civil power and its administration. The supreme power of the commonwealth remains intact even after the appointment of one or more magistrates but the administration of public powers is to be

[48] Hugo Grotius, *De Iure Praedae Commentarius*, ed. H.G. Hamaker (The Hague 1868), abbreviated as *DIP*. I will also give references to the English translation *De Iure Praedae Commentarius. Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, Vol. I, ed. Gwladys L. Williams, Walther H. Zeyde (Oxford and London, 1950); for what follows see Martin van Gelderen, see 'Aristotelians, Monarchomachs and Republicans: Sovereignty and Respublica Mixta in Dutch and German political thought, 1580-1650' in: Martin van Gelderen, Quentin Skinner ed., *Republicanism. A shared European heritage. Volume I. Republicanism and Constitutionalism in early modern Europe* (Cambridge 2002), 202-204.

[49] Grotius, *DIP*, 19-20; *Commentary*, 20.

[50] Ibidem, 25.

[51] Grotius, *DIP*, 91; *Commentary*, 92.

divided amongst various magistrates. When he compares the constitutions of the ancient glorious republics, Grotius accepts the pleas of the wisest men for a *respublica mixta*, in the sense that a single *civitas* combines 'the majesty of a prince with the authority of a senate and the liberty of the people'. Grotius has a distinct preference for a *respublica mixta* where the aristocratic element dominates. In his highly popular *Treatise of the antiquity of the Batavian now Hollandish Republic* from 1610, in many ways the successor to Vranck's *Short exposition*, Grotius argues that Holland had been such a virtuous republic of optimates since the days of Roman antiquity.[52]

The public church is part of this commonwealth. As public office the public church stands under the authority of the magistrate, who holds and administers civil power on behalf of the unified body of citizens that make up the commonwealth. This conception of the position of the public church in the commonwealth implies, to quote Grotius, that 'nobody has the right to decide on the faith of the Church inasmuch as it is public, except for him in whose hand and power all public bodies lie.'[53] By implication it is the office of the supreme magistrate to appoint church officials. Grotius writes: 'Since the assignment of public offices of any kind is the task of those who wield supreme power, it is also his task wherever there is a public Church to charge suitable men with the care and functioning of the church in a certain city or place, not only because it pertains to him to enable his subjects to lead a life, that is respectful in every way, something that can hardly be achieved unless the ministers are good, but also because it is of great importance for the state of the commonwealth which men are entrusted with the ears and affects of the populace.'[54]

Given the public status of the Church, it is part of the commonwealth; hence its oversight lies with the supreme magistrate, whose civil powers are derived from the unified body of citizens that make up the commonwealth. Grotius is keen to point out 'that the form of government, *regia* or *optimatium*, does not make any difference.'[55] The Grotian theory of church and commonwealth applies as much to Holland as it does to England.

Grotius is also keen to point out the similarities between the churches of Holland and England. According to Grotius the Dutch church

[52] Hugo Grotius, *Liber de Antiquitate Reipublicae Bataviciae* (Leiden 1610) 22.
[53] Grotius, *Ordinum Pietas*, 188-189.
[54] Ibidem, 200-201.
[55] Ibidem, 174-175.

is not primarily Lutheran or Calvinist; it is above all Erasmian. In a bold move *Ordinum Pietas* argues that as far as the debate on predestination and free will is concerned, the tradition going from Erasmus to Anastasius Veluanus and then, most notably, to Coornhert, is the true foundation of the Dutch church: 'The majority of the population was, of its own accord, more inclined towards Erasmus' judgement, and consequently the book written by Anastasius Velunaus, which argued the same point, was also joyfully received, and Dirck Coornhert's cause, which for many reasons was otherwise odious, was made popular by nothing so much as the fact that he was believed to side with Erasmus on predestination and free will.'[56] The hallmarks of the Erasmian church are concord, 'peace and unanimity', which requires, as Grotius argues with direct quotes from Erasmus, 'that each party adapts itself somewhat to the other.' Concord calls for unanimous agreement on the 'absolute minimum', the few fundamentals of Christianity, 'leaving to each his own free judgement on many questions, because many things are very obscure.'[57] Grotius is more than happy to endorse the opinion of his friend Isaac Casaubon that the Anglican Church under James I epitomizes the Erasmian dosage of Christian liberty. According to this rosy interpretation the Church of England should be the model for all Protestant Churches; in this rosy sense Grotian theology was Anglican in inspiration.

It is important to note that in terms of its intellectual inspiration, Grotian theology went well beyond the confines of the Anglo-Dutch exchange. As always Grotius dwelled on a wide range of European sources, including the works of Leonardus Lessius, Philippus Melanchthon, Jean Bodin, Isaac Casaubon and perhaps most notably Marsilius of Padua and Fernando Vazquez, the Castilian councillor of Philip II. The Castilian connection was no coincidence. One of the ironies of the Arminian troubles was the profound influence of Spanish Neo-scholasticism on Calvinist debates. Arminius himself was deeply influenced by the work of Luis de Molina; Grotius was more than happy to acknowledge the importance of the work of Vitoria and above all Vazquez.[58] In terms of intellectual history

[56] Grotius, *Ordinum Pietas*, 150-151. The reference is to Anastasius Velunaus, *The layman's guide*, published in 1554 and one of the earliest works of the Dutch Reformation. See Van Gelderen, *The political thought*, 69-70.

[57] Ibidem, 168-168. The quotes were taken from Erasmus, *De amabili ecclesiae Concordia.*

[58] For Arminius and Molina see Dekker, *Rijker dan Midas* and Muller, *God, creation and providence*; for Grotius and Vazquez see Martin van Gelderen, 'From Domingo de Soto to Hugo Grotius. Theories of monarchy and civil power in Spanish and Dutch political

the Anglo-Dutch exchange was embedded in the European 'Republic of Letters', of which Grotius became the embodiment after his dramatic escape from his prison in Loevestein in 1621.

Tragedy

For Oldenbarnevelt and Grotius the Arminian troubles ended in tragedy. The bold assertions in *Ordinum Pietas* put Grotius at the centre of debate and conflict. Reponses to Grotius were written by Johannes Bogerman, Antonius Walaeus and, of course, Lubbertus himself.[59] As it turned out Grotius and Oldenbarnevelt were neither able to enlist the support of King James, who may have seen that Grotian political thought was rather different from his own work, nor to sway Dutch public opinion. When Maurits declared his support for the Counter-Remonstrant cause, the battle was lost for Grotius and Oldenbarnevelt. The lifestyle of Maurits, whose court exemplified the virtues and vices of the Dutch brothel, may have been a disgrace to the Counter-Remonstrants, but his popularity helped them to sway public debate, which turned out to be the decisive factor in the battle over public authority in the Dutch commonwealth. When the Synod of Dordrecht elevated the doctrine of double predestination to dogmatic heights, Grotian irenicism suffered a grave public defeat. But the victory of orthodox Calvinism was in many ways a pyrrhic one. Due to the decisive role of the stadholder the Calvinist church had to accept the *de facto* superiority of secular authority; on this issue Maurits was in complete agreement with his mentor and rival, Oldenbarnevelt. Moreover, whilst Grotius lost the political battle, his works had a long lasting powerful influence in framing the language of politics and law, not just in Holland, but across Europe. Finally, for all its dominance, the Calvinist church was not able to impose its dogma and discipline on the Dutch faithful. Due to the Arminian troubles the quest for discipline and uniformity badly

thought', *Il Pensiero Politico* 23 (1999) 186-206; reprinted in: Graham Darby ed., *The origins and development of the Dutch Revolt* (London and New York 2001) 151-170.

[59] Johannes Bogerman, *Ad Scripti Magnificiet Clarissimi viri D. Hugonis Grotius, Illust. Hollandiae Ordd. Fisci AdvocatiPartes priores duas, In quibus tractat causam Vorstij et Remonstrantium, sive Pastorum illorum qui sequuntur sententiam J. Arminii* (Leeuwarden 1614) Knuttel Pamphlet 2120; Sibrandus Lubbertus, *Responsio ad Pietatem Hugonis Grotii* (Franeker 1614) Knuttel Pamphlet 2115; Antonius Walaeus, *Het ampt der kerckendienaren: midtsgaders vande authoriteyt ende opsicht, die een hooghe Christ. Overheydt daerover toecompt* (Middelburg 1615) Knuttel Pamphlet 2204.

suffered. Arminians and Calvinists fought their battles in the public domain. The big winners of the Arminian troubles were the publishing houses; for the period between 1610 and 1620 the major Dutch collection of pamphlets lists 1368 different publications. Some of them, including some of the so called *Ferry conversations*, that presented their readers with fictive recordings of conversations on the ferries that connect the main towns of Holland, were more or less civilised. Henricus Slatius, the Arminian author of *The predestined thief*, which offered a conversation between a Calvinist preacher and a thief awaiting the death penalty, still used highly amusing satire to ridicule predestination. But the highly popular *Arminian shit-car* (1618) and the *Song of the hat maker of the Remonstrants, who scolds the children of God for fools and madmen, and who wants to put on their head (which belongs to Christ alone) his beastly, popish and Antichrist's hat* (1617) showed that in the heat of the debate the pen was weak and discipline easily lost. 'Hot Protestantism' was the result.[60] Whilst protestant church consistories sought to promote religious discipline and uniformity, protestant pamphleteers lost themselves in 'Grub-street', the world of libel, insult and slander, of violent rhetoric. The town magistrates in Holland were unable to curb, if indeed they ever try to do so, the development of a public sphere of pamphleteers and printmakers, whose loyalties wavered between church and commerce, faith and felony. The political culture of pamphlets and prints provided authors and readers with novel instruments to fight out their theological and political conflicts in the public domain, with levels of participation that were unrivalled in Europe – from the church to the ferry. Discord was not squashed but channelled in the alleys of 'Grub street'. In many European countries conflicts were – and are – settled by murder, killing and poison; in the Dutch Republic the pen had become the mightiest sword. 'Grub street' was a major step towards civic and civil society, perhaps even to civilization?

[60] I owe the term to Peter Lake. See Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat. Protestants, Papists and players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven and London 2002) to which I am much indebted.