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Introduction

For many decades musicologists have studied music of the Renaissance Low Countries, formed by the current Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and the north-western part of France. This period is particularly interesting, because in the 15th and 16th centuries, this region of Europe played the leading part when it came to music. The musical capacities of the many singers and composers from the area literally set the tone. Every self-respecting small town had at least one major church where liturgy was celebrated with great ceremony, including polyphony.³ Furthermore, several European courts had their own groups of singers and musicians. Together they formed a network of professionals who spread the musical heritage of the Low Countries all over Europe. Masters like Guillaume Dufay, Johannes Ockeghem, Jacob Obrecht, Josquin des Prez, Pierre de la Rue, Benedictus Appenzeller, Lupus Hellinck, Nicolas Gombert, Thomas Crecquillon and Adriaen Willaert were highly placed men in important churches and at courts, not only in the Low Countries but as far afield as Italy and Spain, who also left us many compositions of high quality. They overshadowed numerous colleagues who sang in less important surroundings, of whom we do not have much biographical information or for whom only a few compositions have come down to us. One of those so-called *Kleinmeister* was Gheerkin de Hondt.⁴

At the beginning of the 20th century, the German musicologist Robert Eitner described Gheerkin de Hondt as ‘ein sehr begabter, gewandter und erfindungsreicher Komponist, dessen Kompositionen so ansprechend sind, daß man das hohe Alter derselben fast vergißt’.⁵ Such an opinion can only act as an invitation to closer research into Gheerkin’s life and work. The purpose of this book therefore

³ Polyphony is many-voiced music in which the different parts (voices) move rhythmically and melodically independently (Elders 1985, p. 181).

⁴ Variants in name: Gheerken/Gerit/Gerrit/Gerryt/Gheeraert/Geerhart/Gerard/Gerart de Hont/die Hont/die Hondt. In musicological literature this composer has always been called Gheerkin de Hondt, after the name that occurs above the Superius and Tenor parts of his *Missa Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel* (Cambrai, Médiathèque Municipale MS 125-28, fol. 48v). ‘Gheerkin’ is the (affectionate) deminutive of ‘Gheeraert’ and means ‘little Gheeraert’ (see also De Coussemaker 1975², p. 75 and Fétis 1862, p. 365).

⁵ ‘A very gifted, skilful and inventive composer whose compositions are so attractive that one almost forgets how extremely old they are’ (Eitner 1900-1904, volume 5, pp. 199-200).

is twofold. On the one hand a picture will be given of Gheerkin de Hondt in his time. Where did he live and work? What were his duties and what was his social-economic status? On the other hand a sketch will be drawn of Gheerkin's music. Which compositions do we have and in which sources? How and where were they used? What was Gheerkin's position in the European network of singers and composers?

Up till now, only small paragraphs on Gheerkin's life and work have been published in the musicological literature. Besides the information by Eitner and the short texts in the well-known music encyclopedias *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, C.E.H. de Coussemaker, F.J. Fétis, J.A. Bank, A. Smijers, M.A. Vente, A. Dewitte, G.K. Diehl, H. van Nieuwkoop and P. Andriessen dedicated a few words to Gheerkin.⁶ Together, these publications give us a list of Gheerkin's compositions and of the cities and churches where he has worked: between circa 1520 and 1524 and from 1 August 1530 up to February 1532 in Delft (Nieuwe Kerk), between at least July 1532⁷ and the end of 1539 in Bruges (Sint-Jacobskerk), and from 31 December up to 2 October 1547 in 's-Hertogenbosch (chapter of Sint-Jan and Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap). In October 1547 Gheerkin left 's-Hertogenbosch for 'Vrieslant'; he was fired, because his wife had not taken good care of the choirboys.⁸ And although not all information we now have proved correct, as we shall see, our starting point will be to follow in Gheerkin's footsteps, which seem to lie only in the Low Countries.

Archives and libraries in the Low Countries and beyond offer us many treasures with information on social, political, economic, religious and musical life in the 16th century. A variety of contemporary sources allows us an understanding of the circumstances under which people lived. In the case of Gheerkin de Hondt, we can draw on different types of accounts and documents related to the institutions Gheerkin worked for, and to the cities he worked in. The number of contemporary sources in Bruges and 's-Hertogenbosch especially is so large, that a choice had to be made. The sources of the churches and institutions Gheerkin worked for provide the basis for his biography. Furthermore, the available city accounts of the cities

⁶ De Coussemaker 1975³ (facsimile of 1843 edition), pp. 75-76, 78; Fétis 1862, p. 365; Bank 1939a, p. 103; Bank 1940, p. 52; Smijers 1948-1955, pp. 222-230; Vente 1963a, p. 34; Dewitte 1971, p. 347; Diehl 1974, pp. 173-176; Van Nieuwkoop 1975, pp. III-VI; Vente 1980, p. 88; Andriessen 2002, pp. 267-269.

⁷ Roelvink 1995, pp. 11-12.

⁸ Although many *zangmeesters* were priests in those days, Gheerkin de Hondt clearly was not, also confirmed by the fact that the church accounts usually address him as *meester*, not as *heer*.

Gheerkin worked in have been examined for the years he lived in that particular city, in order to get a general idea of the situation during his employment. Where city accounts have not been preserved, contemporary chronicles were used where available. The administrative legal sources of Bruges and 's-Hertogenbosch covering the years Gheerkin worked there have only partly been studied. This was not an easy decision, because the sources may contain information on Gheerkin or his family. However, the time it would have taken to go through all these thousands of pages would not balance the results that might have been achieved in relation to the purpose of this book.

Not many sources survive from the period Gheerkin worked in Delft. The city was struck by a huge fire in 1536, four years after Gheerkin had left the town. Furthermore, the religious troubles of 1566, the Revolt of 1572 (the year Delft chose the side of the rebels against Spain and switched from Catholicism to Protestantism) and the fire in the city hall in 1618 caused a tremendous losses of documents.⁹ We are therefore lucky that we still have any documents of the Nieuwe Kerk (and the Oude Kerk) at all, although they show us a far from complete picture. In the course of history, documents concerning the church have been spread over several collections, among others the archives of the diocese of Haarlem. Since the second half of the 1980s most documents are kept in the Gemeentearchief Delft.¹⁰

The sources from the Nieuwe Kerk that do survive are rather complicated and fragmentary, and they only give us an incomplete view of daily life in the church. We know that at least three administrative accounts were kept in the Nieuwe Kerk: one by the *kerkmeesters* (the church masters; responsible for the building, but also for the payment of the organist), one by the *getijdenmeesters* (the administrators responsible for the payment of the singers) and one by the *heilige-geestmeesters*¹¹ (in charge of poor relief). For the periods Gheerkin de Hondt worked in Delft, fragmented information on singers, liturgy and music in general comes from two registers of the

⁹ According to former city archivist D.P. Oosterbaan (Oosterbaan 1973, p. 9).

¹⁰ Under Archiefnummer 435 (from now on referred to as GAD 435). Under this number we find documents up to 1572 of the Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk, as well as documents of which is unknown to which of the two churches they originally belonged (if they belonged to one of the churches at all). The inventory is to be consulted on the internet: <http://www.archief-delft.nl/>, click Archieven A-Z, search 17.01.03 Parochies, click 435 Delftse Parochiekerken. The previous document numbers of the Archief Bisdom Haarlem, used by Vente 1980, are added to the survey in Appendix 1. Vente 1980 also refers to archival documents in the city archives in Delft that were not yet listed at the time.

¹¹ We know that only from GAD 435, Inv. no. 165, being a charter signed by the *heilige-geestmeesters* (GAD 435, Inv. no. 165).

getijdenmeesters: one for the years 1520-1524 and one for the years 1524-1554.¹² Furthermore, we have some charters that are very important in the scope of this study, among them the foundation charter of the *zeven-getijdencollege*.¹³ Finally, some fragmentary information comes from several documents, which will be mentioned in the chapter on Delft and in the list of archival documents (Appendix 1).

Another contemporary source that gives us information on life in the Nieuwe Kerk is a chronicle that is nowadays in the British Library in London (Add. MS 25050). The chronicle was once owned by Michiel Vosmeer (23/08/1545–17/04/1617). An extensive edition of it has been published.¹⁴ We do not know who wrote the chronicle, but since the last entry by the original writer is from 1516, it probably dates from about that time.¹⁵ This chronicle was the basis for three later chronicles.¹⁶

It is probably due to the lack of (medieval) sources that there is no recent general historical study on the city of Delft. However, several publications on sub disciplines make up with this loss.¹⁷ The first person to publish on musical life in Delft in the Middle Ages was J.A. Bank in 1940,¹⁸ but his articles should be treated with much care. A second attempt was made by M.A. Vente, who published many facts on musical life in both Delft churches, but also left out many important details and made some mistakes.¹⁹ Nevertheless, if it had not been for the work of Bank and Vente, we wouldn't have known that Gheerkin de Hondt worked in the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft at all.

¹² Respectively GAD 435, Inv. no. 191 and 186. For the period before 1520 and after 1532, two registers of the church masters have been kept, one for the years 1497-1507 (GAD 435, Inv. no. 156) and one for the years 1536-1546 (GAD 435, Inv. no. 151). Also one register of the *getijdenmeesters* has been kept for the pre-Gheerkin period 1498-1513 (GAD 435, Inv. no. 187).

¹³ GAD 435, Inv. no. 181.

¹⁴ Oosterbaan 1958.

¹⁵ Verhoeven 1992, p. 64 mentions the large number of miracle stories from the period 1505-1516 and therefore reaches the conclusion that the manuscript must have been written in that period. For detailed information on this chronicle and for suggestions on the authorship see Appendix 2.

¹⁶ Van Bleyswijck 1667-1680; Van Rhijn 1720; Boitet 1729 (1972).

¹⁷ De stad Delft 1979; Verhoeven 1992; Verhoeven 1993b; Oosterbaan 1973; Oosterbaan 1966; Van Berckel 1897/1899/1901/1904.

¹⁸ Bank 1940.

¹⁹ Vente 1980; Vente 1979.

In Bruges the situation is completely different. Here many documents of the once very extensive medieval archives of Gheerkin's church, the Sint-Jacobskerk, have come down to us.²⁰ To begin with, we have all yearly accounts of the three church administrations: the church fabric (generally responsible for the building), the *Commuun* (generally responsible for the liturgy) and the *Dis* (generally responsible for the poor relief).²¹ Furthermore, we have many original foundation charters or copies of them containing information about liturgy and music. Quite a few of these foundation charters were copied into the *Cartularium Communitatis* from the *Commuun*, a register called *Registrum Contractuum Communitatis*, and the *Register van de verbanden* from the *Dis*.²² Important for information on the appointment and activities of the singers is a *Resolutieboek* (book of resolutions).²³ We also have two registers of graves, giving us information about memorial services.²⁴ And finally, there is an interesting register called *Planaris*, containing an overview day by day of the feasts and foundations for memorial services and poor relief.²⁵

Besides the rich archives of the Sint-Jacobskerk, we also can draw information from many medieval sources of the city of Bruges.²⁶ Important for the present study are for example the city accounts, including the accounts of the *rentenier* (the city

²⁰ For the archives of the Sint-Jacobskerk see: Rombauts 1986. There is a short supplement by Nuytens 1999 (my sincere thanks go to Dr. Nuytens for sending me this supplement). All documents are in the RAB, except for the church accounts of *Commuun* and *Dis* and a *Cartularium Communitatis* which are in the archives of the Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn in Bruges (OCMW-B; see below). Furthermore, a few documents are in the Stadsarchief Brugge (SAB, OA), but they were not important for this study (see Vandewalle 1979).

²¹ The accounts of the church fabric are now in the Rijksarchief Brugge (RAB), Inv. no. 88, nos. 23-55 (1419-1797, with only a few lacunae). The accounts of the *Commuun* and *Dis* are kept in the archives of the OCMW-B. A preliminary inventory is available: De Duytsche 1955.

²² Respectively in the OCMW-B and the RAB 88, nos. 237 and 888.

²³ RAB 88, no. 21.

²⁴ RAB 88, nos. 197 and 198.

²⁵ RAB 88, no. 158. As far as I can determine, the word *Planaris* seems to be typical for Bruges, since all major churches had one or more *Planarii* (see also Dewitte 1997b). The word *Planaris* is most likely derived from the Latin word *plenum*, meaning 'full moon'. Therefore the word *Planaris* might be translated as monthly (liturgical) survey. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Karl Enenkel from Universität Münster for this explanation. Van Dromme 1908, p. 393 translates the word as *stichtings- of jaargetijdenboek*, meaning 'foundation or memorial service book'.

²⁶ Available in the Stadsarchief Brugge (SAB, OA). For the inventory see Vandewalle 1979. Many series of documents have been made accessible since then through computer databases (search system Marcus, accessible in the Stadsarchief, not on the internet).

treasurer).²⁷ From these it became evident that the name De Hondt was very common in 15th- and 16th-century Bruges. Several other series of documents also frequently mention the name, including legal sources. Some of them are easily accessible, since they have a contemporary index by name. These sources have been used for this book.²⁸ Others remain to be studied.²⁹

The richness of the Bruges archives has encouraged many people to write about the history of the city. A bookcase full of the beautifully published books and journals would deal with many different subjects. The first general study on the history of Bruges appeared in 1910; it was followed by several others.³⁰ Furthermore, various monographs deal with aspects of Bruges's history, for example on Bruges and the Renaissance, Bruges and the Hanse and Bruges and Europe.³¹ On the history of the church of Sint-Jacobs, several articles are significant for the scope of the present study.³² With regard to music, four important books should be mentioned, namely the ones by George Karl Diehl, Reinhard Strohm, Pieter Andriessen and Nele Gabriëls.³³ For the Renaissance period (in particular the 16th century), the large number of articles by the pioneer Alfons Dewitte must be referred to specifically, since they made the musical history of Bruges more widely accessible and formed the basis for many musicologists throughout the world who wanted to study the life and music of singers and composers in Bruges. However, there is still much more information available than that published by Dewitte.

Similar to Bruges is the situation in 's-Hertogenbosch, where many contemporary sources invited scholars over the centuries to publish on the history of the city. Numerous large and thorough studies are available to give us an impression of

²⁷ SAB, OA, Inv. nos. 216 and 219. As we shall see later, these two types of accounts were part of one account in the city of 's-Hertogenbosch.

²⁸ For example SAB, OA, Inv. no. 114, Wetsvernieuwingen ('amendments of the law'), search system Marcus; SAB, OA, Inv. no. 157, Civiele Sententiën Vierschaar, books 1528-1534 and 1534-1541 n.s.; SAB, OA, Inv. no. 165, Civiele Sententiën Kamer, for the period 1532-1540; SAB, OA, Inv. no. 198, Klerken van de vierschaar, search system Marcus; SAB, OA, Inv. no. 208, Wezengoederen (orphans' goods), search system Marcus.

²⁹ For instance SAB, OA, Inv. no. 199 (Procuraties, onvolledige reeks) and Inv. nos. 204-205 (Wezerij Ferieboeken-Wezerij voogdijschappen).

³⁰ Duclos 1910; Van Houtte 1982; Ryckaert/Vandewalle/D'Hondt/Geirnaert/Vandamme 1999; Ryckaert 1991; Geirnaert/Vandamme 1996; Jacobs 1997.

³¹ Martens 1998; Vandewalle 2002a and Vandewalle 2002b; Vermeersch 1992.

³² Hodüm 1954; Rotsaert 1962; Rotsaert 1977/1978/1979/1980; Rotsaert 1975; Declerck 1971.

³³ Diehl 1974, Strohm 1990², Andriessen 2002, Gabriëls 2010².

medieval life in the Brabant town. An inventory of the old city archives of 's-Hertogenbosch by Jozef Hoekx and Valentijn Paquay with its extensive descriptions of the documents including references to literature and a general overview of the history of the town and its documents is an excellent starting point for research.³⁴

Already in the 16th century, the city clerks Petrus van Os and Willem Moel wrote a history of their town.³⁵ Many followed, among them an anonymous writer producing what we call today the chronicle of the Sint-Geertrui convent,³⁶ and Aelbertus Cuperinus, who gave valuable information on Gheerkin de Hondt.³⁷ In the year 2000 a general and very extensive city history up to 1629 was published by P.Th.J. Kuijer.³⁸

Many monographs have seen the light during the decennia. The general history of art in 's-Hertogenbosch in the Middle Ages by Jos Koldewey is very valuable for those dealing with art history.³⁹ The most important subject of art, the church of Sint-Jan, has been the theme of many voluminous books, all equally beautiful in their times. The most recent one is by Harry Boekwijt, Ronald Glaudemans and Wim Hagemans, offering us fine-looking 3D-drawings of all the building phases of the church.⁴⁰ Extensive studies on several subjects are all very helpful in creating a view of 's-Hertogenbosch in the 16th century.⁴¹ Very important for the scope of this book is the history of the Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap by Lucas van Dijck.⁴² On the musical history of the Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap, Albert Smijers was the pioneer, beginning with a series of publications of the musical entries from the accounts in the *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* in 1932. He stopped his research with the account of 1540-41, which was then completed by Maarten Albert Vente, who published his – less

³⁴ Hoekx/Paquay 2004.

³⁵ Editions provided for by Van Lith-Drooglever Fortuijn/Sanders/Van Synghel 1997; Hoekx/Hopstaken/Van Lith-Drooglever Fortuijn/Sanders 2003.

³⁶ Edition by Van Bavel/Kappelhof/Van der Velden/Verbeek 2001.

³⁷ See § 7.6. Edition by Hermans 1848. Since we have so many official contemporary sources (among them the city accounts and accounts of the Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap) and secondary literature, the many and extensive chronicles that have been written about 's-Hertogenbosch have been left out here, except of course for the one by Cuperinus. On the chronicles in general: Van Oudheusden 1991.

³⁸ Kuijer 2000.

³⁹ Koldewey 1990b and Koldewey 1990c.

⁴⁰ Boekwijt/Glaudemans/Hagemans 2010.

⁴¹ Only to mention a few: Schuttelaars 1998; Jacobs 1986; Blondé 1987; Hanus 2010; Van Drunen 2006; Van den Heuvel 1946; Van de Meerendonk 1967; Nauwelaerts 1974.

⁴² Van Dijck 1973.

extensive, more compact – results up to and including the year 1620 in the same *Tijdschrift* (in 1963). Because both founders of archival musicological research in the Netherlands left some blanks, I published a study on the (polyphonic) music history of the Broederschap between 1519 and 1568 in 2002.⁴³ In the same period, Ike de Loos studied the chant books of the Broederschap with a group of students at Utrecht University.⁴⁴ A new inventory of the archives of the Broederschap was provided by Jan Sanders in 2005.⁴⁵

The source material in 's-Hertogenbosch is very rich if we look for city documents and accounts⁴⁶ and the archives of the Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap. The extensive Bosch' Protocol (a wide-ranging series of legal documents, so-called *schepen protocollen*) has been omitted here, since it would take many months to read only the acts of the few years that Gheerkin de Hondt spent in 's-Hertogenbosch.⁴⁷ The medieval archives of the Sint-Jan church did not stand the test of time: only fragments of what was once an unquestionably rich archive have come down to us. Matters are complicated, because the available inventory is outdated and subject to a thorough update; therefore important documents may easily be overlooked until this new inventory is ready. A nice surprise are the archives of the Sacramentsbroederschap, containing information on their musical activities in the Sint-Jan. The situation of the episcopal archives is extremely sad: there is no inventory and the archives have been closed to the public since the summer of 2012.

In the case of 'Vrieslant' the first question to be answered is which area is meant by this term. Pieter Andriessen states that this was Vriesland near Rotterdam, because he assumes that Gheerkin's final destination was Bruges again.⁴⁸ Indeed, there was a small village near Rotterdam called Vriesland (the polder of Vriesland already existed around the year 1200), which had a church, but that actually belonged to the

⁴³ Roelvink 2002.

⁴⁴ De Loos 2000c.

⁴⁵ Accessible on the internet: <http://www.bhic.nl> (Toegangsnummer 1232), click Archieven en boeken; search Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap. For Roelvink 2002 I used the old inventory by Van der Does de Bijle 1874. A concordance is given in the inventory by Jan Sanders.

⁴⁶ Complete from 1496 onwards, partly published by Van Zuijlen 1861. On the subject: Jacobs 1986, pp. 168-182; Van Synghel 2007, pp. 117-124.

⁴⁷ The general 18th-century index of names – not reliable – has been checked, but did not give any information on Gheerkin de Hondt. On the subject: Van Synghel 1993.

⁴⁸ Andriessen 2002, p. 268. Besides the fact that Gheerkin's return to Bruges is no argument for 'Vrieslant' being the village close to Rotterdam, the assumption that Gheerkin returned to Bruges at all will turn out to be wrong, see § 5.2.

nearby village of Hekelingen, which was situated just across the dike. The church was demolished shortly after 1850.⁴⁹ None of the archives of the church have survived, so we cannot reconstruct if this church was a (chapter) church where professional singers worked.⁵⁰ Although we do have to bear in mind that it is possible that Gheerkin left for Vriesland near Rotterdam, it is more likely, however, that the accounts of the Broederschap refer to the region of what is today called the Province of Friesland.⁵¹ For this book I therefore assume that Gheerkin de Hondt chose that area to work in when he left 's-Hertogenbosch.

In the Frisian archives of today, the situation is very poor. The records of the towns and villages have been spread all over the province and even beyond.⁵² Many church archives were destroyed after the Frisians permanently turned to Protestantism in 1580. The situation with the general archives of the towns and villages is not much better.⁵³ Because it is a mystery where exactly Gheerkin de Hondt worked in 'Vrieslant' the main goal of my research for this area was to get a general overview of where a highly-trained professional like Gheerkin might have

⁴⁹ Today, both Hekelingen and Vriesland are districts of the town of Spijkenisse. Information taken from a brochure of the municipality of Spijkenisse: Van Trierum 2008, pp. 12-13 (including maps).

⁵⁰ Kind notification of Mrs. E. Lassing-van Gameren of the Streekarchief Voorne-Putten en Rozenburg (23-08-2011). There is also no archival material of this church left in the archives of the dioceses of Utrecht (now at Het Utrechts Archief, see <http://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl>) and Haarlem-Amsterdam (kind notification of Mr. Floor Twisk, archivist of the diocese; see also Verhoofstad 1959).

⁵¹ In the 16th century spelled as 'Vrieslant' or 'Vrieslandt'. If 'Vrieslant/Vrieslandt' was mentioned in the accounts of the Broederschap, always the area Friesland in the upper north of the Low Countries is meant. In the Gheerkin de Hondt period 'Vrieslant' is described in the so-called *Beneficiaalboeken* of 1543, as containing the districts of Oostergo, Westergo and Zevenwouden (see § 8.1). The books were published in 1850 by Van Leeuwen. The originals are in the Fries Historisch en Letterkundig Centrum Tresoar in Leeuwarden, Toegangsnummer 14, Hof van Friesland, Inv. nr. 86 (Oostergo), 87 (Westergo) and 88 (Zevenwouden), see <http://www.tresoar.nl>. A map of 'Vrieslant' was published in Kalma/Spahr van der Hoek/De Vries 1980², pp. 172-173. These areas correspond to the current province of Friesland (officially called Fryslân). See also the map in AGN, volume 5, p. 314.

⁵² The inventories of the most important archives for this book were accessible through one of the following websites: <http://www.tresoar.nl>; <http://www.gemeentearchief.nl> (Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden); <http://www.friesarchiefnet.nl>. Quite a few inventories have been made accessible in print in the 20th century, for example for the cities of Franeker and Franekeradeel (Obreen 1974), Sneek (Keikes 1955), Bolsward (Keikes 1952), and Harlingen (Obreen 1968).

⁵³ That medieval Frisian sources are rare is also stated by Verhoeven 1994, p. 13.

found convenient conditions in this region. Therefore, a detailed study of local, social and cultural history as has been made for Delft, Bruges and 's-Hertogenbosch has not been done for Friesland. Instead an overview will be given of where singers of Gheerkin's calibre were singing the seven canonical hours, and – more important – where they sang polyphony. The basis for this survey was provided by the book by Auke Hendrik Vlagsma on the Frisian organs.⁵⁴ Vlagsma's research shows that from the period around 1547, the accounts of only one of the many churches in the district have been kept, namely those of the church of Bozum.⁵⁵

As in Delft, the poverty of the sources has restricted writing about the history of medieval 'Vrieslant', although the Middle Ages and different (religious) aspects of the Frisian history around 1550 have been represented in several books⁵⁶ and a number of articles.⁵⁷

Part I of this book is the biographical part. Chapter 1 sketches an overview of the situation in the Low Countries in the first half of the 16th century, mainly concerning the musical tradition. The origins, political situation, daily life, social circumstances, religion and music in the cities where Gheerkin de Hondt worked are the themes of Chapters 2, 4, 6 and 8. Chapters 3, 5 and 7 deal with Gheerkin's employment: what do we know about his appointment, his colleagues, the tasks he had to fulfill and the music he had at his disposal? Chapter 9 tries to place Gheerkin in his surroundings: what was his social-economic status as *zangmeester* and composer?

In Part II the musical context of Gheerkin's works is the essential subject: which compositions have come down to us, in what sources do they occur, and what do these sources tell us about the distribution of his music? First, the list of works currently known are given (Chapter 10), followed by a description of the sources of

⁵⁴ Vlagsma 2003.

⁵⁵ Now kept in the Regionaal Historisch Centrum Groninger Archieven, Toegangnummer 622, Borg Lulema 1400-1900, Inv. no. 68, Rekening kerk Bozum 1515-1556. I have consulted the above mentioned inventories and asked several archivists if there were any other church accounts from the period around 1547, but as far as we know now, none have survived. I am grateful to Mrs. Marga ten Hoeve (Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden), Mr. Otto Kuipers and T. Busstra (Fries Historisch en Letterkundig Centrum Tresoar), Mr. Robyn Steensma (Fries Archief Net) and Mr. Wietze Ypma (Stichting Archief- en Documentatiecentrum voor r.k. Friesland) for their help in this matter.

⁵⁶ Kalma/Spahr van der Hoek/De Vries (eds.) 1980²; Verhoeven/Mol 1994; Mol 1994; Spaans 1997; Breuker/Janse 1997; Faber 1972; Woltjer 1962; Kunst 1999; Schroor 2011; Hallema 1931.

⁵⁷ Vlagsma 1996; Theissen 1913; Telting 1856; Hallema 1953b; Faber 1972.

Gheerkin's compositions (Chapter 11). Then a small discussion of the authenticity problem is presented (Chapter 12). Finally, the music itself is discussed (Chapters 13-15). Models, settings by other composers and Gheerkin's use of text are the central themes. How he is influenced by other composers is traced, in relation to his biography. A complete edition of Gheerkin's works is in preparation. It is explicitly not the purpose of this study to provide a detailed musical theoretical analysis of Gheerkin's work. I would gladly invite other scholars to pick up that gauntlet.

