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Chapter 2 Delft: the city and its churches

2.1 Origin, population and economy

The city of Delft originated in the middle of the polder of Holland, most likely from the floods of 1164 onwards. The city was probably the result of an urban development plan. The first inhabitants settled on the shores of what used to be a region of creeks. To regulate the water levels in the area, the canal Delf (nowadays the Oude Delft) was dug and around this canal the town of Delft was created. The oldest document mentioning the city dates from between 1206 and 1215; the city was granted privileges in April 1246 by Count Willem II (of Holland).¹⁴⁰

Delft developed as one of the leading cities of the county of Holland; around 1500 it was the third town after Dordrecht and Haarlem, and came before Leiden, Amsterdam and Gouda.¹⁴¹ In 1514 a committee appointed by Emperor Charles V produced a report on the economic state of Holland, the so-called *Informacie up den staet*. Based on the facts in this report, the number of inhabitants of Delft around 1514 is estimated at about 10,000-12,000. A few decades later (in 1556) the population consisted of about 15,000 people. The Delft economy around 1514 had three pillars: industry (mainly textile industry and brewing), trade and transportation. The city was a regional market for the surrounding countryside and small towns like The Hague, and had two annual fairs: one around the feast of St Odulphus (12 June) and one around the feast of St Giles (1 September). Delft also was an important location on a shipping route from Amsterdam/Haarlem/Leiden to Rotterdam/Dordrecht.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Raue 1979 and Winsemius 1979, p. 11. On the history of the county of Holland see De Nijs/Beukers 2002.

¹⁴¹ Verhoeven 1999, p. x. The present second largest city of the Netherlands, Rotterdam, was still a very small town in the 16th century.

¹⁴² Verhoeven 1992, pp. 7-20. An edition of the 1514 report was made by Fruin 1866 (for Delft see pp. 322-339). See also Hoppenbrouwers 2002, pp. 143-145.

2.2 Churches and convents, especially the Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk

As in all medieval cities religion played an important role in Delft. In the early 16th century there were two main churches (the Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk, both parish churches), eight convents (of which three lay outside the city boundaries), five monasteries (two outside the city boundaries) and seventeen chapels. The chapels belonged to religious communities like beguines and to medical and social authorities like hospitals and orphanages. Thus the medieval citizens of Delft had an ample choice of where to attend mass.¹⁴³

The Oude Kerk ('Old Church') was built next to the canal Delf; the tower even leans over the canal.¹⁴⁴ The oldest parts of the stone building probably date from around 1200; it was most likely preceded by an 11th-century wooden church. It is generally assumed that the church was originally dedicated to St Bartholomew and the Virgin Mary.¹⁴⁵ From 1396 onwards it was dedicated to St Hippolytus. Considerable money was spent on the interior: rich altars, paintings, stained-glass windows and organs adorned the church. Of particular interest within the scope of this study are several church bells that were ordered from the 's-Hertogenbosch family of bell-founders Moer in the years 1496-1502, the organ commissioned from Hendrik Niehoff from 's-Hertogenbosch that was built in 1545 and the baptismal font and choir screen that were ordered from Bruges craftsmen in 1438 and 1469.

Another interesting connection with Bruges is the fact that from 1465 until 1522 the parish priests almost all came from Bruges; more specifically, they were all canons of the Sint-Donaaskerk and also fulfilled tasks for their ruler.¹⁴⁶ As we shall also see in the section on Bruges, the titular parish priest was not obliged to reside in Delft.¹⁴⁷ One such was the famous choirmaster and composer Gilles Joye,¹⁴⁸ who held the post from 1465 until his death in 1483.

¹⁴³ Kok 1979b and Verhoeven 1992, p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ This paragraph is based on: Oosterbaan 1973; Berends/Meischke 1979; Verhoeven 1992, pp. 21-24. Archival documents of the Oude Kerk are now kept in the Gemeentearchief Delft (GAD 435).

¹⁴⁵ Verhoeven 1992, p. 33 states that there are no sources for a dedication to the Virgin Mary, but that there are indications of a patronage by Bartholomew.

¹⁴⁶ Gilles Joye, Johannes Loesschaert and Anthonius Mettenye, based on Verhoeven 1992, p. 23, especially note 16 and Oosterbaan 1973, pp. 132-136. Gilles Joye was certainly not permanently active in Bruges as canon, since he was a member of the Burgundian court chapel from September 1462 until June 1468 or even 1471.

¹⁴⁷ Verhoeven 1992, pp. 22-24.

In 1451 a *zeven-getijdencollege* was founded in the Oude Kerk, which was responsible for singing the seven canonical hours every day.¹⁴⁹ At the beginning, the members of this *zeven-getijdencollege* were priests assisted by the sexton and the schoolmaster and his pupils. The schoolboys had to sing during Vespers on the eve of Sundays and holy days and on the days themselves at Matins, Mass and Vespers, so they had to sing at about a hundred days a year. Documents of the Oude Kerk show us that in the last decade of the 15th century professional singers and professional choirboys were hired to relieve the priests.¹⁵⁰ The turnover of these singers was high. The group usually consisted of a *zangmeester*, five to seven adult singers and about four to six choirboys.

Initially the Oude Kerk was the only church in town, but that had changed by the end of the 14th century. In 1351 or 1352 (31 January, 1 or 2 February) two men had a vision of Mary, sitting on a throne in a golden church.¹⁵¹ During the next thirty years this vision was represented every year around the same time at the same place; the place being the east side of the market square, where sentences were executed.¹⁵² In 1381 the city council decided to build a church there. The decision was probably influenced by the rising number of citizens, but the status of the city and the increasing request for (memorial) services must have been factors too.¹⁵³ That same year a wooden temporary church was put up and in 1383 the first stone of what was to become the Nieuwe Kerk ('New Church') was laid. The church was built in phases, and both church and tower were completed only in 1496.¹⁵⁴ The tower was crowned with a structure in the shape of an onion or apple. The Nieuwe Kerk was originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but already by 1404 a second patron had been chosen, St Ursula.¹⁵⁵ And coincidentally or not, relics of both Ursula and the patron of the Oude Kerk St Hippolytus were in Cologne.

¹⁴⁸ On Gilles Joye see Fallows ('Gilles Joye'); Strohm 1990², pp. 27-29; Andriessen 2002, pp. 156-160; Oosterbaan 1973, pp. 132-135; Borchert 2005, pp. 153-154.

¹⁴⁹ Oosterbaan 1973, pp. 224-231; Vente 1979; Vente 1980, pp. 49-80 and 102-110.

¹⁵⁰ Vente 1980, pp. 49-80 and 102-110.

¹⁵¹ Oosterbaan 1979, p. 38; Van der Kloot Meijburg 1941, pp. 17-18. Day and year are not precisely known. A document in Het Utrechts Archief describes the yearly ceremony of the remembrance of this miracle since 1383, including liturgical texts that were used, some of which were most likely sung in chant (Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Toegangsnummer 88, Inv. no. 283, dated end 16th-early 17th century).

¹⁵² This was swampy ground and therefore people probably saw marsh gas, according to Van der Kloot Meijburg.

¹⁵³ Verhoeven 1992, p. 21.

¹⁵⁴ On the building history see Van der Kloot Meijburg 1941.

¹⁵⁵ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 194-195. Verhoeven 1992, p. 318, note 81 mentions an earlier year: 1400.

The welcoming of several relics in the Oude Kerk in 1461 was the start of a new, yearly procession, held on the Sunday after the feast of St Pontianus (14 January).¹⁵⁶ Another relics procession was held on the Sunday after the feast of the Decollation of St John (29 August).¹⁵⁷ These two processions were not the only ones that were held every year. Medieval Delft had three more general processions: one on the day before Ascension Day, one in honour of the Holy Sacrament (Thursday after the first Sunday after Pentecost – Thursday after Trinity) and a so-called general *ommegang* (procession with relics along a particular route) on the Sunday after the feast of St Odulphus (12 June, during one of the annual fairs).¹⁵⁸ The first procession was held in good harmony between the churches (they fairly divided the proceeds of the collections),¹⁵⁹ but the last two processions were subject to rivalry. The churches argued about the starting and finishing point of the Sacrament procession, until in 1473 it was finally decided that the procession would start in the Oude Kerk and finish in the Nieuwe Kerk, both with equal pomp and circumstance. A similar discussion had taken place in the case of the general *ommegang* in June. The procession originated in the Oude Kerk, but after 1381 the Nieuwe Kerk was also involved, as was the city council, which was responsible for the general organisation and order. In fact, the entire community was part of the event; guilds for example had to perform plays, and people were expected to participate in and/or watch the procession. Both churches wanted their statue of the Virgin Mary to come first in line (Maria Jesse for the Oude Kerk and Maria ter nood Gods – a Pietà – for the Nieuwe Kerk).¹⁶⁰ The city council finally decided in 1450 that in even years Mary of the Nieuwe Kerk would come first, in odd years Mary of the Oude Kerk.

¹⁵⁶ Verhoeven 1992, p. 34.

¹⁵⁷ Verhoeven 1992, p. 319, note 96.

¹⁵⁸ Verhoeven 1992, pp. 36-37. Oosterbaan 1973, pp. 240-265 gives details about some of the processions from documents of the Oude Kerk.

¹⁵⁹ GAD 435, Inv. no. 150, fol. CXIJr-CXIJv.

¹⁶⁰ See on these sculptures and on their devotion: Verhoeven 1992.

2.3 The interior of the Nieuwe Kerk

A regrettable lacuna in the sources from the Nieuwe Kerk that have come down to us is information on the interior of the church. We have to rely on the 16th-century chronicler, who mentions some very interesting things,¹⁶¹ later copied by Van Bleyswijck, which help us to form a picture of the interior of the church Gheerkin de Hondt worked in.

We read that a new altarpiece was made between 1484 and 1486 by Adriaen van Wesel, the famous Utrecht cabinetmaker who had also built the retable of the Confraternity of Our Illustrious Lady in 's-Hertogenbosch about ten years earlier.¹⁶² The altarpiece must have been placed on the altar table that was dedicated to Our Lady and St Ursula in 1476.¹⁶³ We have no information on how the altar by Van Wesel looked, and we do not know either if the two statues of Our Lady and St Ursula that stood next to the old one¹⁶⁴ also were placed next to the new altar. The crucifix that had hung above the old altar since 1449 probably remained in its place, but we cannot be sure about that either.¹⁶⁵ The chronicler also tells us about statues of the Apostles, which were on pillars in the presbytery, as is confirmed by a text in a private foundation for candlelight for the statue of St John the Evangelist in the presbytery, mentioning also the other statues of Apostles.¹⁶⁶

The chronicler mentions three organs that were built, repaired or rebuilt for the Nieuwe Kerk from 1429 onwards. First an organ named Ursula was built by master Jannes from Brabant. An organist was hired, a priest called Michiel Claes Touwensz., who received one fat goose every year in addition to his yearly payment and who carried out his duties for more than twenty years.¹⁶⁷ A new organist was hired in 1451, a young priest called master Lambrecht, for whom a new organ – the *Cruys orghel* – was ordered in the same year, paid for by the guild of the Holy Cross. The organ was placed in the transept above an altar dedicated to St George (Sint-Joris).¹⁶⁸ Only a few years later, a larger organ was built because, as the document says, master

¹⁶¹ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 202-256.

¹⁶² Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 233-234. See also Halsema-Kubes/Lemmens/De Werd 1980, pp. 11 and 60. Halsema-Kubes assumes that the altar either was burnt down by the fire that struck the Nieuwe Kerk in 1528 (she probably means the fire of 1536) or that it was destroyed during the iconoclastic fury in 1566.

¹⁶³ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 228.

¹⁶⁴ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 199.

¹⁶⁵ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 210. See also GAD 435, Inv. no. 160.

¹⁶⁶ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 245-246; see also GAD 435, Inv. no. 160.

¹⁶⁷ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 202-203.

¹⁶⁸ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 211.

Lambrecht the organist was such a good player. The assignment was given to a certain master Adriaen Pietersz., who received a great deal of money and even a pension. The organ was placed in the west end of the church, against the tower. In the event, the church masters were not in fact satisfied with Adriaen's job; they were disappointed in the sound of the instrument, although they agreed that master Adriaen had done his very best. Master Adriaen died in 1480 in the *oude manhuys* (the old men's home).¹⁶⁹ In 1459 the organ called Ursula was renovated by master Zwits.¹⁷⁰ Ten years later, in 1469, the same master made adjustments to the big organ that was built by master Adriaen, who was already too old by then to do the job himself. But he did not succeed, the church masters still found that the sound of the instrument had not improved.¹⁷¹ A new attempt was made in 1479-1480, when the organ-builder master Jan van Antwerpen was hired to replace the pipework, the wind chest and the bellows (windbag) of the instrument: only the organ-case remained. The organ builder received a payment of 52 Flemish pounds plus the material that he had replaced. At last the church masters were satisfied: finally the great organ was perfect. Master Jan was then asked to move the Cross organ from the transept to the middle of the church.¹⁷² The Ursula organ needed another repair in 1492, and master Jan van Antwerpen was asked again to do the honours. He made a completely new pipework and, as with the great organ, the only thing that remained was the organ-case. He also built a new positive organ, which was delivered at Pentecost 1493.¹⁷³ It was probably this positive that was carried into the tower of the church on 6 September 1496, when the singers celebrated the placing of a big wooden cross on top of the tower by singing 'Te deum laudamus' in polyphony. The joy was of short duration, since the cross turned out to be too heavy and fell down about five weeks later during a storm on St Victor's day (10 October). The cross was replaced by a smaller one.¹⁷⁴ The organs kept being troublesome, since in 1501 the two largest ones had to be restored again. This time the job was done by master Jan van Zwanenbroeck. During the next few years new repairs were necessary, especially to the Ursula organ. The work was done by several organ builders, who remain anonymous.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 214-215.

¹⁷⁰ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 218.

¹⁷¹ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 226-227.

¹⁷² Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 230-231.

¹⁷³ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 240-241.

¹⁷⁴ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 245-246.

¹⁷⁵ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 252.

In 1436 the bell tower was made larger, so that more bells could be purchased.¹⁷⁶ In 1485 several bells were bought from Gobel Moer, the 's-Hertogenbosch bell-founder, because the boys of the forging guild had broken the biggest bell – called Redemptor – during the ringing. Gobel Moer founded a new one, which was called Maria and had a weight of nine thousand pounds. He also was asked to found an even larger bell, called Jesus, which had a weight of eleven to twelve thousand pounds. Both bells were so big and heavy that the bell tower had to be adjusted to house them.¹⁷⁷

A new wooden pulpit embellished the Nieuwe Kerk since 1490.¹⁷⁸ During the next years several lecterns and pews (in the middle of the church, only for women) were acquired. Reparations were carried out on the building, among others in the library.¹⁷⁹

Finally, a remark must be made on the most famous piece in the interior of the church: the sculpture of Maria ter Nood Gods (a Pietà), the miracle sculpture, about which the chronicler recorded eighty-nine stories.¹⁸⁰ According to the legend, in about 1381 a cabinetmaker passed Delft on his way to Antwerp/Bruges. He had a wooden sculpture with him of Mary, sitting under the cross with Jesus on her lap (Maria ter Nood Gods). The builders of the Nieuwe Kerk wanted to buy the sculpture for their new church, but it turned out to be too expensive. The next day, however, the woodcutter could no longer lift the sculpture and sold it for a lower price to the church builders. Suddenly the sculpture was portable again and was removed to the church, where from then on it was involved in many miracles. It was honoured in all possible ways, for example by processions that were held several times a year.¹⁸¹ And needless to say: it attracted many people to the church. The sculpture was put in a new wooden tabernacle in 1501. The builder of the tabernacle, Tieman Jansz., was also asked to carve new lecterns, chairs and other wooden furniture for the chapel in which the sculpture was housed.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 205.

¹⁷⁷ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 234-236. The Moer-family was still founding bells for the church in 1539 (GAD 435, Inv. no. 177).

¹⁷⁸ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 239-240.

¹⁷⁹ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 240.

¹⁸⁰ Verhoeven 1992, especially pp. 50-53. For transcriptions see Oosterbaan 1958.

¹⁸¹ Verhoeven 1992, p. 51.

¹⁸² Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 252-253.

2.4 The *zeven-getijdencollege*

Another subject of rivalry for both churches was the foundation of the *zeven-getijdencollege* in the Nieuwe Kerk in 1456, shortly after the foundation of the same college in the Oude Kerk in 1451. We are very well informed on the purpose of this particular *zeven-getijdencollege*, since we still have the foundation charter.¹⁸³ The charter, promulgated by Schout, Schepen ende Raide (the city council) tells us the following:

- ✚ The *zeven-getijdencollege* is created by the richest and wisest people in town and by the parish priest, to increase the number of services in the Nieuwe Kerk in honour of God, the Virgin Mary and all saints. To accomplish this, every year at St Martin's Day (11 November), three or four *sancmeesters* will be chosen to serve as procurator.¹⁸⁴ The procurators are required to administer the rents and goods that are given to the college and they also have to pay the priests who sing the seven canonical hours. The city clerk will keep the books of the *zeven-getijdencollege*, just as he keeps the books of the church.
- ✚ The schoolmasters, together with the schoolchildren, are required to sing Vespers on the evening before a holy day; on the holy day itself they are required to sing Matins, Mass and Vespers. The schoolmasters will be dressed in a *superplicium* (surplice) without a *caproen* (cope) but with a *bonet* (biretta) on their heads. Furthermore, seven or eight priests, or as many as the church masters and *sancmeesters* think are necessary, will be appointed to sing the seven canonical hours every day in the presbytery, according to the Ordinary of the diocese of Utrecht. The sexton will sing with them, unless he has to do something else for the church. All singers will be dressed the way the schoolmasters are dressed. The parish priest will lead the singing in High Mass.

¹⁸³ GAD 435, Inv. no. 181. A transcription is included in Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 265-268, containing errors. An explanation in Dutch on this text appears in Jas 1997, pp. 3-6.

¹⁸⁴ The word *sancmeester* is musicologically a misnomer: the procurators do not sing themselves and are not supposed to fulfill the role of choirmaster; they are responsible for the administration of the *zeven-getijdencollege*, and function under the church masters. Later, the men were called *getydemeesters* (GAD 435, Inv. no. 186, first page, no folio number). The use of the word *sancmeester* for the administrators is probably why the choirmasters were often called *coraelmeester*, although they were also called *sangmeester* (for example GAD 435, Inv. no. 191, fol. LXXr: *Ander uutgeven. Vanden sangmeester of choraelmeester syn an nemen ende betalingen*). The confusion also becomes clear in the chronicle on the Nieuwe Kerk, where on fol. 76v the word *sang* in *sangmeesters* has been crossed out (Appendix 3, 1486, around Christmas Eve).

- ✚ Every day a Mass will be read after Prime for all who have financially or otherwise supported the *zeven-getijdencollege*; this Mass will be read at the high altar, unless the altar is needed for something else. If one of the supporters of the college has died, a Requiem Mass will be sung by the priests on the Wednesday after the funeral, instead of the read Mass at the high altar. Candles and a *pelle* (pall) will be used. After the Requiem, a Miserere with Collect will be read. Furthermore, every priest will read a Vigil that same day. A general memorial service for all supporters who have passed away will be held every year, starting with a Vigil of nine lessons after Compline on the Tuesday after the octave of Epiphany (therefore the Tuesday after 13 January) and followed on Wednesday with a sung Requiem Mass after Prime. This yearly memorial service will be announced on the Sunday before it is held, reading all the names of those who have passed away.
- ✚ The priests, two procurators, the man reading the Epistle and the man reading the Gospel will serve at several feasts: Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Assumption of Our Lady, Epiphany, Corpus Christi, the procession of Our Lady, Saint Ursula, All Saints and Martinmas.
- ✚ Two of the priests will be chosen by the *sancmeesters* – advised by the parish priest – as leaders of the group.
- ✚ The church masters will tell the sexton when to ring the church bells before the seven canonical hours, at the discretion of the priests and *sancmeesters*.
- ✚ High Mass will end at ten o'clock, during Lent at eleven o'clock.
- ✚ If the seven canonical hours are discontinued at a certain time, supporters will be able to get their funding back. People also will receive their gift back if they want to change its use. If the seven canonical hours are no longer celebrated, but supporters do not ask for a refund of their endowment, the funds are transferred to the church.
- ✚ If the endowments are higher than needed to celebrate all the services mentioned in this charter, the church masters will receive the surplus and are allowed to use them to 'decorate' the church with books and other things that might be needed for the celebrations.

According to the 16th-century chronicle, already in 1455 a certain schoolmaster Zibrant had started to perform polyphony (*musijc*) on some feasts in the Nieuwe Kerk, 'for love' and without remuneration, with his students and some priests and other men who enjoyed singing polyphony.¹⁸⁵ As the foundation charter shows,

¹⁸⁵ London, British Library, Add. MS 25050, fol. 71r; Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 215-216. See also Beckers/Leeuw 1979, p. 113. The date of 1455 is probably incorrect and should be 1456, since the *zeven-getijdencollege* was founded in January 1456. This would easily be

education and church were closely linked. From 1342 onwards Delft had a so-called *Latijnse school* (Latin school), where boys aged eight and over were educated to become members of the clerical order or to be prepared to go to university. The school was related to the Oude and Nieuwe Kerk and one of its most important tasks was to supply both churches with choirboys.¹⁸⁶ As the foundation charter tells us, the boys sang Vespers on the evening before a holy day, and on the holy day itself they had to sing Matins, Mass and Vespers. According to the 16th-century chronicle, this turned out to be too much for them, since it did not leave enough time for school. Thus in 1484 the city council decided that the schoolboys no longer had to sing Matins, except on the eight most important feasts; in return, they also had to sing Mass at the Saturdays in the *Quatertempore* (the *Quattuor tempora* or Ember Days; four Saturdays a year) and also on the eves of Easter and Pentecost.¹⁸⁷ Singing Vespers on the evenings of holy days and Mass and Vespers on the holy days themselves seems to have been continued; no longer singing Matins seems to have been the only restriction in comparison to the foundation charter.¹⁸⁸ The tasks of the priests were increased from then on¹⁸⁹ and documents of both churches tell us that professional singers and professionally trained boys were hired from the end of the 15th century onwards.¹⁹⁰

In addition to the seven canonical hours, we know from the 16th-century chronicler that there were also *Lof* services in the Nieuwe Kerk. He mentions that a confraternity of the Holy Sacrament was founded in 1477, to sing a *Lof* on

explained by the fact that the chronicler mixed up different calendar systems (as Oosterbaan concluded). Another explanation could be that the singing of polyphony was the immediate cause of the foundation of the *zeven-getijdencollege*, although the competition between the Oude and Nieuwe Kerk is probably a stronger argument.

¹⁸⁶ Oosterbaan 1966 and Beckers/Leeuw 1979.

¹⁸⁷ London, British Library, Add. MS 25050, fol. 76r; Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 236-237. It might be 1485, since the chronicler mixed up different time systems and the decision was made around *Vastelavont* (Shrove Tuesday, therefore before Easter).

¹⁸⁸ There is a lot of misunderstanding here in literature: Oosterbaan 1966, p. 38 mentions that from 1484 onwards the boys only had to sing High Mass and Vespers on Sundays, plus Matins on the eight most important feast and Mass at the Saturdays in the Ember Days and on the eves of Easter and Pentecost; Beckers/Leeuw 1979, p. 113 mention that the boys had to sing High Mass and Vespers on Sundays, plus eight Matins on important feast, plus several Masses; Vente 1979, p. 158 mentions that the boys had to sing High Mass and Vespers on Sundays. Jas 1997, p. 10 notices this all, but forgets to mention that the boys also had to sing the High Mass on holy days.

¹⁸⁹ Beckers/Leeuw 1979, p. 113 and Vente 1979, p. 158.

¹⁹⁰ Vente 1980, pp. 49-80 and 102-110 and also: Oosterbaan 1973, p. 228.

Thursdays.¹⁹¹ From Christmas 1486 onwards, a *Lof* was sung on every day of the week: on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and on Our Lady's days a Marian *Lof*, on Thursday a *Lof* of the Holy Sacrament and on Friday a *Lof* of the Holy Cross.¹⁹² The chronicler explicitly mentions that the *zeven-getijdenmeesters* accepted this expansion of the number of *Lof* services and that they made their singers sing them in the presbytery.¹⁹³

Singing the seven canonical hours in the Oude and Nieuwe Kerk created not only an element of rivalry between the two churches, but also between them and other churches in the region. In 1511 a document was drawn up together with the *zeven-getijdenmeesters* of the Sint-Jacobskerk in the neighbouring town of The Hague, in which the conditions were arranged under which singers were allowed to go from one church to another.¹⁹⁴ In this competition clause the church masters agreed not to employ a singer of one of the churches within two years after he had left the church where he had been contracted; if they did, they had to pay a fine. A similar document was signed by the two Delft churches and the chapter of Sint-Marie in The Hague in February 1517.¹⁹⁵

The Oude and Nieuwe Kerk also worked together in getting funding for their *zeven-getijdencollege* to make all the services possible. The 16th-century chronicler mentions the foundation of a brother- and sisterhood (*broeder- en zusterschap*).¹⁹⁶ Indeed, a charter of the city council of 22 May 1462 and an act of approval of the Utrecht bishop David of Burgundy of 1 June 1462 mention this brother- and sisterhood.¹⁹⁷ It was founded by the Oude and Nieuwe Kerk together and named after Hippolytus and Ursula (the patrons of both churches). The purpose of the brother- and sisterhood was to achieve more financial scope with the money paid by the new members. It seems to have worked, although apart from the foundation charter no information remains on how the brother- and sisterhood actually functioned.

At least three other confraternities functioned in the Nieuwe Kerk. The first is a confraternity *des zueten names Jhesus* (of the sweet name Jesus), that was founded by

¹⁹¹ London, British Library, Add. MS 25050, fol. 74r; Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 229-230.

¹⁹² London, British Library, Add. MS 25050, fol. 76r-v; Oosterbaan 1958, p. 237-238.

¹⁹³ See also Van Bleyswijck 1667-1680, p. 210: ... *ende dese iiij Loeven anvoirden die Seven-Getijde-Meesters, ende dede die doen by hoir Sangers up hoich coor.*

¹⁹⁴ Vente 1980, pp. 102-103. The original is now in GAD 435, Inv. no. 8.

¹⁹⁵ Oosterbaan 1973, p. 229.

¹⁹⁶ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 223.

¹⁹⁷ GAD 435, Inv. no. 10 (charter numbers 5342-5343). A transcription (with errors) of the charter of the city council is published in Van Berckel 1901, pp. 213-214.

the *ghesellen van den rethorijcke* (rhetoricians) in 1487.¹⁹⁸ It remains unclear whether the singers of the *zeven-getijden* had to sing during the liturgy celebrated by the new confraternity, although it seems at least possible, since the *zeven-getijdenmeesters* had the responsibility for the administration of the confraternity. The confraternity was also responsible for the so-called first Mass that was held on Sundays in the Nieuwe Kerk since 1493.¹⁹⁹

In one of the documents from the period that Gheerkin de Hondt worked in Delft, we find an item telling us that the church masters received an amount of 20 *schellingen groot* (20 shillings of Flemish groats) each year from this confraternity.²⁰⁰ For that, the confraternity received candlelight for the daily Masses and they were allowed to ring the large bell once a year. Rather mysterious is the statement that the organist played during the *Lof* services because of the seven canonical hours. This suggests that this confraternity contributed at least financially to the seven canonical hours and paid for the organ music during the *Lof* services.

A similar text can be found for the second confraternity active in the Nieuwe Kerk. The Heilich Cruys ghilde (the guild of the Holy Cross) paid an equal amount of 20 shillings of Flemish groats every year in January, also for candlelight and for the organist.²⁰¹ The third confraternity active in the Nieuwe Kerk is the confraternity of St Nicholas.²⁰² The confraternity celebrated the feast of St Nicholas every year with a sung, solemn Mass. In 1514 the organist and bellows blower were paid 3 *stuivers* each, the organist for playing *op tgroote werck* (the great organ). During several moments before, during and after the ceremonies the church bell called Maria was rung. Payments to singers are not mentioned; therefore it remains unclear if they were involved with the yearly Mass of this confraternity.²⁰³ As we shall see in

¹⁹⁸ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 238-239 and 242. A series of 1500 'brijeffgens' ('little letters, notes', a sort of devotional picture) for this confraternity was printed between St Martin 1531 and 1532 (GAD 435, Inv. no. 186, fol. Cjv). Two examples of these 'brijeffgens' are kept in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, objectnumber RP-P-1949-341 and RP-P-1908-1936.

¹⁹⁹ Oosterbaan 1958, p. 242.

²⁰⁰ GAD 435, Inv. no. 150, fol. XLr.

²⁰¹ GAD 435, Inv. no. 150, fol. XXXIXr.

²⁰² In Het Utrechts Archief, a booklet with the articles of association (written in 1572) has been kept (Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Toegangsnummer 88, Inv. no. 301). This document tells us that the confraternity was founded on 6 December 1508 (6 December being the feast of St Nicholas). I thank Jacobijn Kiel for pointing my attention to this document.

²⁰³ Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Toegangsnummer 88, Inv. no. 301, fol. [6v-7r]. The agreement is between the church masters and the members of the confraternity of St Nicholas. The servants mentioned (sextons, organist, bellows blower and 'gravedigger') were all under responsibility of the church masters; the payments to the singers were the

's-Hertogenbosch, it is possible that the confraternities 'borrowed' the professional singers that were active in the church for their own services. Perhaps that is what is going on here. Van Bleyswijck, the 17th-century author of the history of Delft, refers to the many guilds that were hosted by the church, but except for the information mentioned above, the church documents do not inform us on how they functioned.²⁰⁴

Lack of information also hampers our knowledge of the so-called *Paasspel* (Easter Play, a mystery play performed on Holy Saturday) in which both the Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk seem to have been involved. Van Berckel and Oosterbaan mention references to this play in documents of both the Oude and the Nieuwe Kerk, dated 1496, 1503 and 1520-21.²⁰⁵ We may therefore assume that the play was an affair in which the entire Delft community was involved and of which the costs were split between several authorities. It remains unclear if it was held every year. It seems to have been quite a large play, with many people involved, and it was shown on a large stage. Interesting is that the music of one of the participants has come down to us on a parchment scroll that has a small cord on its bottom, probably to attach the document to the costume the actor was wearing.²⁰⁶ The part is that of the *Phisicus*, the doctor talking to the women who are on their way to Jesus' grave to embalm him. Unfortunately, this is the only part of the play that is left. Therefore we cannot say if the music performed was for one voice, or polyphonic.²⁰⁷

Information on a similar play has come down to us through the 16th-century chronicle.²⁰⁸ The writer mentions a play on the occasion of the feast of the Epiphany in the year 1498, celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany after Vespers at three o'clock in the Nieuwe Kerk. He tells us about priests playing the roles of the Three Kings, who entered the church on horseback. Angels were singing *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, standing near the great organ hanging on the wall, while herdsmen were playing under it. A 'living' crib of real people was set up in the presbytery.²⁰⁹ The scene was

responsibility of the masters of the *zeven-getijdencollege* and would not be mentioned here.

²⁰⁴ Van Bleyswijck 1667-1680, pp. 245-247.

²⁰⁵ Van Berckel 1904, pp. 316-322 and Oosterbaan 1973, pp. 221-224.

²⁰⁶ The document is now in GAD 435, Inv. no. 216. It remains unclear to which church it belonged. Van Berckel gives pictures of the document, a transcription of the music that is in *Hufnagelschrift* and a translation in Dutch of the Latin text.

²⁰⁷ Since the melodic line is coherent, and the music is written in *Hufnagelschrift*, it seems more likely that the music was performed for one voice.

²⁰⁸ Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 246-249.

²⁰⁹ According to the same chronicler, a new wooden crib was bought in 1502, mentioning that the *Bethleem* (as the group was called) normally stood next to the presbytery from Christmas until the feast of the Purification (2 February; Oosterbaan 1958, pp. 253-254).

completed with a star that was placed above the crib. The chronicler speaks of singing kings; therefore we know that music was involved, perhaps in the same way as it was in the Easter play. In this case it was definitely polyphonic music, since we have payments to the *ghesellen* and *jonghen* and the writer of the motets. *Ghesellen* were adults, and *jonghen* were choirboys, and therefore we know that different voice-parts were involved. Furthermore, motets always consist of several voices. We do not know if this play was performed every year, but it certainly appears to have been performed regularly.²¹⁰

We may conclude that the city of Delft had a very vivid Catholic life. Nevertheless, it was also one of the first cities in the Low Countries where the reformation instigated by Martin Luther took hold at a very early stage and on a large scale. The principal of the Latin school was already suspected of spreading the new religion before April 1522. Soon the parish priest of the Oude Kerk also was one of the suspected persons and by 1525 Margaret of Austria called Delft one of the worst cases of heresy-infected cities of the entire county of Holland. That Delft was popular with followers of the new religion is not only shown by the many convictions for heresy, but also by the fact that the city housed a number of printers who published heretical literature.²¹¹

But before the city became a victim of the iconoclastic fury in 1566, it was hit by another disaster. On Friday, 3 May 1536, while the singers of the Nieuwe Kerk were singing the Magnificat during Vespers, Delft was struck by a great fire, which burnt down or heavily damaged 66 to 75 per cent of the city, including the Oude and Nieuwe Kerk. The restoration took about ten years, during which the income of the *zeven-getijdencollege* was used for rebuilding and not for singing polyphony. It was not until the first of January 1546 that the singing of the seven canonical hours was restored in its old glory and professional singers were hired again.²¹² But that was not Gheerkin's concern. He had already left Delft in 1532.

²¹⁰ GAD 435, Inv. no. 186, fol. Cv-CJr mention payments in the late 1520s (exact years unknown), to *den ghesellen ... mitten jonghen* (the choirboys), who followed the *Betleem* in procession. It remains unclear who are precisely meant by the *ghesellen*, but the singers must have been at least among them. A payment was also done for the copyist of the motets that were sung during the procession: *Item noch ghegheven die controleur van die moutetten te scriven die zy inden ommeganck songhen vier stuvers*.

²¹¹ Kok 1979c.

²¹² Kok 1979a, pp. 98-99. See also GAD 435, Inv. no. 152, fol. 1r and XCXJr; Inv. no. 186, fol. LXXv, XCVr. The fact is also mentioned by our chronicler: Oosterbaan 1958, p. 256.