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## **Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted**

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### **Citation**

Gottschalk, L. S. (2016, April 6). *Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/38762>

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Cover Page



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**Issue Date:** 2016-04-06

## Part I: The life Coolhaes led

### Chapter 1: From silent monk to preacher of reform

In this biographical sketch, the research of H. C. Rogge,<sup>1</sup> C. P. Burger,<sup>2</sup> W. Nijenhuis,<sup>3</sup> and others, who have done so much to verify the basics of Coolhaes' life story, will be used as the foundation, although not unquestioningly. Facts which have come to light since they wrote will be added, some contributed by other secondary writers and some emerging from archival research. Coolhaes' writings and the writings of others in his time will be mentioned along the way, but in-depth discussions of most of these will come the second part of this book.

Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes was born in Cologne on January 24, 1534 or 1536.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, inquiry at the Cologne city archives gives no definitive birth date, or further information about his father or his father's occupation, since there existed no birth-registers in sixteenth-century Cologne, and since Coolhaes was a common name in that area.<sup>5</sup> His family was apparently Roman Catholic,<sup>6</sup> devout, and educated, since Coolhaes testified that

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1. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*.

2. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*.

3. Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes," *BLGNP*, 100-102.

4. Most, including de Chalmot, Rogge, Burger, and Molhuysen and Blok say 1536. In this they are following the date in Meursius, *Illustrium Hollandiae et West-frisiae ordinum alma academiae Leidensis*, 3-5. On the other hand, the argument of the *BWPGN* for 1534 is that in 1614, when honored by the *burgemeesters* of Leiden for his service to the city, he was said to be "over 80 years old" which he would have been if he were born in 1534, *BWPGN*, 172; see also *Nav.* X, 279-80. Nijenhuis in *BLGNP* also lists 1534 as Coolhaes' birth year: Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes, Caspar Janszoon," 100.

5. Dr. Max Plassmann, Historisches Archiv der Stad Köln, confirms that the question cannot be resolved based on birth registers. He has been kind enough to write, "The finding aids of the City Archives of Cologne contain no hint on Caspar Coolhaes. There are no birth-registers or registers of inhabitants for the sixteenth century, so it is not possible to find traces of him or his family in the sources without further information (where he lived etc.). I also cannot find traces of his father. The name Coolhaes (Kohlhaas etc.) is to be found, but it is a frequent name, so it cannot be proven, that its bearers are relatives to Caspar Coolhaes without further evidence." E-mail to the author, March 11, 2014.

6. Dr. Josef van Elten, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln, has kindly let me know that regretfully no baptismal record exists for Coolhaes. He writes, "Unfortunately I have to inform you that church registers on baptism, weddings and mortality had been introduced in our church administration on demand of the Trent Council (1545 to 1563). Then it took some time, about one hundred years, until those registers were established in all churches of our diocese. So, I'm afraid to tell you, there will be no chance of getting a testimony of baptism." Dr. Josef van Elten, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln. E-mail to the author, May 11, 2015.

he had “from childhood (not to boast) known the Bible, and had seen and read much.”<sup>7</sup> It is striking that he was born in Cologne, a city which features in the story of several well-known Spiritualists in the sixteenth century. Caspar Schwenckfeld had been a student at the University of Cologne, before 1510 or 1511.<sup>8</sup> Much later, in 1565, Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert stayed in Cologne and became friends with jurist Aggaeus van Albada, who introduced him to Schwenckfeld’s works, and may have met Hendrik Niclaes there also.<sup>9</sup>

Surely young Caspar must have received a certain amount of education, since his later life shows him with at least some knowledge of Latin, a wide knowledge of the works of various authors, the ability to write theological prose, poetry, and fiction, and even the breadth of knowledge to understand and write about the chemical principles of distilling, which he would carry on as a successful trade. As will be shown, he had been a schoolmaster, and also lectured at the University of Leiden, albeit very briefly. Some believe that he may have been more or less self-schooled.<sup>10</sup> However, it has been more generally thought that he studied in Düsseldorf and perhaps in Cologne,<sup>11</sup> a view which will now be examined in light of some context and archival evidence. Coolhaes does not write anything about his education himself.

First, it is possible that he studied in Cologne at the cathedral school, or in Düsseldorf at the *Hochschule*. This study might have been under Johannes Monheim (Monhemius) of Elberfeld (1509-1564). It is a popular idea with scholars that Coolhaes had contact with

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7. “... ende van kints beenen aen (sonder roem te spreken) in de heyliger Godlicker Schrifture geoeffent.” Caspar Coolhaes, *Een cort, waerachtich verhael van tsorgelicke vyer, der hatelicker, ende van God vervloecter oneenicheyt in religions saken, ontsteecken zijnde in Hollandt anno 1574: door wien het selve ontsteecken ende smoockende gheleghen heeft tot int jaer 1579: door wien, ende wat plaetsen in Hollandt, tselve op gheblasen, dattet brandende gheworden is: Des welcken vlam een weynich gedaelt zijnde, door wien tselve opt nieuwe weder op gheblasen, stercker ende grooter gheworden is, dan het te voren was: des welcken vlam oock metter tijt minerende, nu wederom met veel ende verscheyden, so grooten, als cleynen blaesbalghen, teffens op gheblasen wort om stercker te branden, ten eynde, dat het gheheele landt, door het selve vernielt, ende inden gront soude moghen bedorven worden: door wat mannen tselve vyer by tijts uytgebluscht, ende soo gheheel tot niet soude connen ghedaen worden, dat van tselve gheen coolken meer over blijven, van t welcke men te besorghen mocht hebben, dat t eenigher tijt, aen tselve, een nieu vyer soude moghen ontsteecken worden. Tot ghetrouwer waerschouwinghe, ende opwecken van den ghenen, der welcken ampt is, om tselve by tijts te remedieren* (Leiden: N.p., 1610), 79.

8. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 70.

9. Hendrik Bongers, *Leven en werk van D. V. Coornhert* (Amsterdam: G. A. van Oorschot, 1978), 62.

10. This is the view of Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 35.

11. This view is found in many places, including the entry for Coolhaes in the NDB/ADB by Nijenhuis, “Coolhaes (Koolhaes, Coelaas), Caspar Janszoon,” *BLGNP*, 100, and Kaplan, “Coolhaes,” *OER*, vol. 1, 423. They are, possibly, using Rogge as their source.

Monheim, who admired both Luther and Calvin, as well as Erasmus, and who might have been an influence for humanism and/or Protestantism on the boy. Monheim had finished his M.A. in Cologne in 1530, served as the rector in the seminary in Essen (1532-1536), and then as rector also for the cathedral school in Cologne until 1545. In 1545, he became rector of a new *Hochschule* in Düsseldorf, which was established by Duke Wilhelm V that same year. Students there were taught Greek, law, catechism and the Bible, and held regular disputations. Monheim also wrote a series of textbooks in 1538-1550, then editions of Erasmus in 1551, and later a catechism, which showed influence of both Luther and Calvin, and which advocated a middle view of the Eucharist between the two.<sup>12</sup> This points to a possible evolution of Monheim's own views. It will be seen that Coolhaes' own Eucharistic views are hard to fit into either Lutheranism or Calvinism. If Coolhaes studied with Monheim, it would have been in the period between before 1554, and this means that he could have been at the cathedral school in Cologne<sup>13</sup> as a very young boy before 1545, and/or at the school in Düsseldorf after that.

Did Coolhaes attend one of Monheim's schools? It is impossible to say for sure, since there is no evidence. The school in Düsseldorf numbered 1,200–2,000 pupils in 1550, but no student lists survive.<sup>14</sup> However, Monheim's eclectic approach to the Reformers does resemble what Coolhaes' would be in the future. If Monheim's views were evolving, however, the boy Coolhaes would have been his student at an early stage in that

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12. See biographical articles about Johannes Monheim in the NBD/ABD. See also Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 9-11, about Monheim. Also see Judith Rice Henderson, "Humanism and the Humanities: Erasmus' *Opus de conscribendis epistolis* in Sixteenth-Century Schools," in Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell, eds., *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present. Historical and Bibliographic Studies* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 141-77, esp. 156-57, about Monheim's use of Erasmus in his teaching of writing. Also see: Johannes Monheim, *Catechismus, in quo christianae religionis elementa syncere simpliciterque explicantur*, ed. Karl Heinrich Sack (Bonnae: Eduardus Weber, 1847); F. Koldewey, "Johannes Monheim und die Kölner Jesuiten," *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 42 (1899): 106.

13. In answer to my queries about this, Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to write: "Unfortunately, there are no records of the students of the [Cologne] cathedral school. So Coolhaes might have studied there – but we cannot prove it." E-mail to the author, 14 May, 2014.

14. Again, Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to write: "Regrettably, there are no surviving lists of pupils of Monheim's famous Latin-school at Düsseldorf. Coolhaes should have studied here around 1550, together with approx. 1,200–2,000 pupils. It is most likely that Monheim was his teacher, but there is no definite evidence." E-mail to the author, 11 March, 2014. He continued, "The problem with the Latin schools in the 16th century is the general lack of records concerning their pupils (in contrast to university where many *Matrikel* have survived). This applies to Düsseldorf as well as Köln where Monheim was active in 1536-1545." E-mail to the author, 8 May, 2014.

development. Since Coolhaes' home area was a center of various developing confessional ideas, and he was seemingly in close proximity to the intriguing figure of Monheim, the idea of a possible connection between them is, therefore, tempting, but ultimately just speculation.

Second, some writers, as mentioned above, have also thought that Coolhaes studied at the University of Cologne.<sup>15</sup> Inquiry, nevertheless, shows that this is impossible, as he is not listed in their very complete student records.<sup>16</sup>

What is certain, however, is that in 1554 Coolhaes became a monk in the Charterhouse Koblenz.<sup>17</sup> He chose to take the cowl and to conform to the rule of silence which marks the Carthusian order. It is possible that even in the absence of other formal education, his time as a monk would have been a learning experience. In addition, he mentioned later in his life that he had also been a "procurator" in the monastery, but had not tried to profit from it financially.<sup>18</sup>

However, in 1560, after six years, he left the monastery. He changed his mind and his life's path by becoming a Protestant, writing that he had been "better enlightened by the Lord" and had left the monastic life to serve God.<sup>19</sup> His use of the term "enlightened by the Lord" suggests a subjective conversion experience. Nevertheless, Coolhaes records no actual description of one - nothing about any experience that would compare to the extreme *Heimsuchungen* of Schwenckfeld. Coolhaes' life changed in other ways as well. In that year, or the next, he married a woman named Grietje Casparsdochter from Koblenz.<sup>20</sup>

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15. De Bie, Lindeboom and Van Itterzon, for instance, maintain that Coolhaes studied at the university of Cologne, and after that at Monheim's *Hochschule* in Dusseldorf: *BWPGN* vol. 5, 172.

16. Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to verify for me that Coolhaes is not included in the Keussen edition of their *Matrikel*. E-mail to the author, 11 March, 2014. Dr. Max Plassmann, Historisches Archiv der Stad Köln, was also very helpful and kind enough to check the records of the University of Cologne. He assured me that no Coolhaes had studied there, and upon my further questions wrote, "Yes, the university records are complete, Coolhaes did not study in Cologne." E-mails to the author, 11 March and 19 March, 2014.

17. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 11. See also Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174. Dr. Anja Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz was kind enough to confirm to me that he had been a Carthusian in Koblenz: "Der Hinweis auf seine vorherige Zugehörigkeit zur Koblenzer Kartause findet sich in diesem Zusammenhang in einem hier bei uns erhaltenen Visitationsprotokoll (LHAKo, Bestand 33 Nr. 4942)." E-mail to the author, 12 March, 2014. see Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 11, and Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174.

18. Caspar Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt, op het min dan waerachtich schrijven van eenen, schuylende onder t'decksel van die gereformeerde kercke, sonder ontdeckinghe zijns naems teghens die Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhasen* ([Amsterdam]: Peeter Gevaertsz, 1600), 88.

19. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 141-42.

## Preaching in the Palatinate

After his conversion, Coolhaes lived in various towns in the Palatinate, in the valleys of the Mosel and the Rhine. First, he served as deacon and schoolmaster in Winningen, down the Mosel River not far from Koblenz.<sup>21</sup> He is known to have been the first schoolmaster after the Reformation in that town.<sup>22</sup> By the next year, 1561, he had gone south and was preaching throughout Pfalz-Zweibrücken. He also preached in Beilstein on the Mosel, and Siegen, east of Cologne. He served with two other preacher-colleagues. He says that relations were good between him and his colleagues; that “there was never a question between them.”<sup>23</sup> Much later, he reflected that perhaps he had begun to preach too soon.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps in retrospect he thought that he or his ideas were not fully mature, but at the time he seems to have pursued these ministry opportunities with energy and zeal. Frederick III, Elector Palatine, was not a Calvinist, but was sympathetic to Calvinism. He had made the Palatinate, especially Heidelberg, a place of refuge for Calvinists. This would be especially true after 1567 during the time of Alva.<sup>25</sup>

Coolhaes apparently identified himself as Lutheran during this time. Certainly it is clear that he read Lutheran theologians. In 1563, a report made at the time of an oversight visit to Coolhaes mentioned that he read the Bible zealously, as well as the *Loci* of Melancthon, Augustine’s *Confessions* and the writings of Johannes Brenz, the Lutheran

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20. We know this because Coolhaes quotes his wife as saying, while they were in Middelburg in 1581, that they had been married for twenty years. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131. Dr. Anja Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz has kindly verified that no other information about this marriage can be found in the archive. E-mail to the author, 12 March, 2014.

21. J. P. van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” in J. P. van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174.

22. LHAko, Visitation Protocol, Order no. 33 4942; also printed in Heinrich Engelbert and Günter Engelbert, eds., *Die Visitation in der hinteren Grafschaft Sponheim von 1560, mit Inventaren einzelner Kirchengemeinden* (Düsseldorf: Presseverband der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, 1969), 38, 58. Dr. Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, mentioned above, has kindly brought this to my attention.

23. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

24. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe, aen alle onpartydighe predicanten: om te waecken, ende by tijts te voorsien, dat die Sathan gheen nieu pausdom, aen des ouden benaest veruallen plaets wederom oprechte* (N. p., 1584).

25. Cornelia Boer, *Hofpredikers van Prins Willem van Oranje, Jean Taffin en Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 44.

reformer of the city of Schwäbisch-Hall and the duchy of Württemberg. Brenz had upheld real presence in the Eucharist, opposed the death penalty (which inspired Sebastian Castellio) but composed and implemented the “Great Church Order,” which enforced church government and discipline.<sup>26</sup> It is reported that Coolhaes complained about low church attendance, especially when the catechism was being expounded. He was also worried about “superstitions,” which is the word he uses throughout his later works to mean the vestiges of certain Roman Catholic practices among the people. Other surviving comments by overseers report negative characteristics. In 1564, he was accused by a search committee of lack of interest in study. In an oversight visit dated July 18, 1566, it was written that he improvised too much, studied too little and kept company with lots of “different” people,<sup>27</sup> which must mean that he had friends who were suspect characters.

To Deventer in the “miracle year”

In 1566, Coolhaes was called as preacher by the magistracy of Deventer, the first preacher openly chosen by that city,<sup>28</sup> and so came with his family into the Netherlands. The religious situation at that moment was unique. Some called this period a “miracle year” of evangelical openness, but for others it was a “time of troubles” filled with iconoclastic violence. In Flanders and Brabant it was explosive; in the Northern Netherlands not as much.<sup>29</sup> The situation in Deventer was quite peaceful in comparison to places in the south.

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26. James M. Estes, “Brenz, Johannes,” in *OER*, vol. 1, 214-15. For more about Brenz, see James M. Estes, *Christian Magistrate and Territorial Church: Johannes Brenz and the German Reformation* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007).

27. These visits are mentioned by Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 174.

28. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdruckers*, 34. For confirmation of this, see also Jacobus Revius, *Licht op Deventer: De Geschiedenis van de provincie Overijssel en met name de stad Deventer, boek 5 (1578-1619)*, (Deventer: Daventria illustrate, 1651). Reprint. (Hilversum: Verloren, 1995), 367. I have also found, with the kind help of archivists Jan Keuning and Hylle de Beer, that Coolhaes is mentioned in the Cameraarsrekening van 1566, Gemeente Deventer Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek, ID 0698, inv. nr.34. It is a note which testifies to some building work having been done – not a note of any real substance, but still one more testimony of his presence there at that time, and as a preacher, as Coolhaes is clearly listed in the section of “Pastoeren en Capelaneren,” which gives additional confirmation as to his position. Mr. Keuning also confirmed that there was no special record of the Reformed Church surviving from that year. E-mail to the author, March 11, 2014.

29. Alastair Duke and D. H. A. Kolff, “The Time of Troubles in the County of Holland, 1566-67,” in *Reformation and Revolt*, 125.



Why did Coolhaes leave the Palatinate and come to the Netherlands? The oversight reports he had been receiving in Germany had not been too glowing. Maybe things were uncomfortable for him there, either theologically or personally. But the simplest answer would be simply that he came at the invitation of the secular government, the magistracy of Deventer. Also, Deventer had a reputation for being both humanistic and biblical.<sup>30</sup> It had been a center for the *Devotio moderna*. It may have appealed to Coolhaes for all those reasons.

Apparently Coolhaes had made some connection with Deventer, leading to his call. One of the only sources of information about his ministry there is an uncharitable one. The Reformed preacher of Delft, Arent Cornelisz Crusius, who will be Coolhaes' adversary at the Synod of Middelburg in 1581, wrote that the specifics of how Coolhaes became a Reformed preacher in Deventer were unclear:

Caspar Coolhaes has never reliably shown how he came into the ministry of the Word in the Reformed Church. He was originally a schoolmaster in Nassau and if he was also a Lutheran preacher there, we do not know for sure, but, coming from Nassau to Cologne, his brother (during the first freedom of the Netherlands) recommended that he should go to Deventer and perhaps obtain a better condition. He came, stayed a while, and preached. If this was on the recommendation of Jan Arendtz<sup>31</sup> or not, we do not know, but after Jan Arendtz left he preached there and the church had use of his ministry for some time. However, he has not (it seems to us) shown us that he was legally sent and called, renounced his Lutheran errors and taken up the Reformed religion. Because of this he himself admitted that he preached on the topic about the Lord's Supper, because (as he said), "it would win the people better."<sup>32</sup>

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30. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174-75.

31. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 183. Note: Jan Arendtz was a hedge preacher in Amsterdam.

32. "Casparus Coolhaes heeft nooyt te deghen doen blijcken hoe hij tot den dienst des Woorts in de Ghereformeerde kercke ghecomen zij. Hij is aenvanckelick schoolmeester gheweest in Nassauwen ende of hij aldaer Luthersch predicker gheweest is, weeten wij voor seker niet, maer, uut Nassauwen tot Cuelen comende, heeft hem zijn broeder (in de eerst vrijhyt der Nederlandts) gheraden dat hij na Deventer soude trecken, mogehelick of hij aldaer beter eenigh conditie conde krijghen. Daer comende heeft hij hem een wijlken ghehouden ende is op den predickstoel ghecomen: oft gheweest is door recommendatie van Jan Arendtz of niet, weten wij niet, maer na Jan Arendtz vertreck heeft hij aldaer ghepredickt ende de ghemeente heeft zijnen dienst een wijl ghebruyckt. Doch hij heeft (ons achtens) noch niet laten blijcken dat hij wettelick ghesonden ende beroepen zij, zijn luthersche dwalinghen versaecht ende de Reformeerde religie anghenomen hebbende. Daeromme hij selve wel bekent heeft dat hij op 't stuk van 't Avondmael predickt, omdat hij (so hij seyde) 't volck te beter winnen soude." Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174. Original is in AD, Arent Cornelisz Collection, Stukken betreffende Caspar Coolhaes, inventarisnr. 83. Arent Cornelisz (Crusius) preserved much of his personal correspondence. H. J. Jaanus, *Hervormd Delft ten tijde van Arent Cornelisz (1573-1605)* (Amsterdam: Nordemann's Uitgevers Maatschappij N.V., 1950), 9, maintains that

This passage from Cornelisz shows his clear distrust of Coolhaes.

Incidentally, it is surprising that Cornelisz says in the passage above that Coolhaes began originally as a schoolmaster in Nassau. The only town where Coolhaes is known to have been schoolmaster is Winningen, west of Koblenz and the river Rhine in the Palatinate, as mentioned above.<sup>33</sup> The town of Nassau itself is east of Koblenz and the river Rhine. The two might be said to be in the same general region; perhaps that is what Cornelisz means. Or perhaps there was some misinformation or misunderstanding on someone's part. There is, it appears, no evidence to be found that Coolhaes had been schoolmaster in Nassau.<sup>34</sup> Whether this means that Arent Cornelisz was an unreliable source is uncertain. It is also interesting that Coolhaes' brother is said by Arent Cornelisz in the passage above to have advised him to come to the Netherlands. Nothing else is known about this brother aside from this brief mention.

Coolhaes himself testified that he served in Deventer from September 15, 1566 to May 6, 1567.<sup>35</sup> His descriptions of his time in Deventer show that he found the openness and toleration of religious differences in the city exciting, and applauded the magistrate-church relationship, which he said led in many cases to conversions from Catholicism to the Reformed religion. "The majority of those still in the darkness of the papacy came to God's mercy in a short time," wrote Coolhaes.<sup>36</sup>

The religious atmosphere was revival-like and also confessionally diverse, according to Coolhaes. He related that for thirty-four weeks he was preaching there on workdays as well

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"restful" people tend to preserve more of their personal papers. Whether or not one can call Cornelisz restful, it is certain that his carefully preserved correspondence gives valuable insight into this case.

33. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174.

34. For this information I am indebted to Dr. Rouven Pons of the Hessisches Hauptstadtsarchiv in Wiesbaden. He writes that Coolhaes is not to be found listed as schoolmaster in Nassau or indeed in any of their records. E-mail to author, 27 May, 2015.

35. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 79. His ministry in Deventer is also mentioned in Revius, *Licht op Deventer*, 96, note 367, on the basis of *NNBW*.

36. Caspar Coolhaes, *Apologia: een christelijcke ende billijcke verantwoordinge Caspari Coolhaessen, dienaer des goddelijcken woorts tot Leyden, daer in hy hem nootsakelijck sonder eenighe blamatie, met der waerheit ontschuldicht, teghen eenighe quadtwillighe ende onverstandighe, die hem van valscher leer, ende onchristelijcken leven beschuldighen, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden aen die edele erntseste, hochgheleerde ende wijze heeren, burgemeesters ende regeerders der loffelijcker vrije hanzestadt Deventer.* (Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz?, 1580), folio Aiiiiv.

as Sundays and holidays, in the evenings as well as the mornings, twice every day, three times on Sundays. There was a great hunger to hear God's Word, he observed, not only among the working classes but among the educated, the magistrates and nobility as well. This preaching did not emphasize confessional or denominational differences, but demonstrated a unity among the preachers.<sup>37</sup> Confessional labels were unimportant. Coolhaes wrote, "There was never heard 'Martinist,' 'Calvinist,' 'Mennist,' 'Papist,' but the Word was preached and also heard by the majority with singleness of purpose."<sup>38</sup>

There was no violent iconoclasm - the city had agreed with the reformers that they could use the church of Our Lady (the *Lieve-vrouwekerk*, also called the *Mariakerk*). It was a smaller medieval worship space built to abut the large *Lebuinuskerk*, just north of the river IJssel and near to the City Hall, located at New Market 35. Coolhaes was allowed to use it for preaching, ruled the authorities, if Catholics could also worship and if the church remained undamaged.<sup>39</sup> The atmosphere of tolerance was partially attributed to Johannes van Bronkhorst, rector of the canon school, who had studied at the University of Rostock, which had become Lutheran in 1542.<sup>40</sup> Of course, the city had long been a center for the Modern Devotion's focus on the religion of the heart. There was also already a precedent for Protestantism in Deventer's little Maria church, since in 1560 Carolus Gallus (Karel de Haan) had begun to preach there in a "Reformation-spirit" and served communion at Christmas in both kinds. Disagreement with the *stadhouder* had followed and Gallus was terminated as preacher; later he became an outspoken Calvinist and then professor at Leiden University in 1587. Incidentally, the Maria church fell into disuse and disrepair after the Reformed victory in Deventer in 1578,<sup>41</sup> and is now an empty, secular space for events.

Coolhaes will reminisce often in the future about the joy of this inter-confessional time of service in Deventer. One can understand Arent Cornelisz' suspicions about Coolhaes' true confessional allegiance.

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37. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiir.

38. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiiv.

39. *BWPGN*, 173.

40. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 175.

41. Lindeboom, *De confessioneele ontwikkeling der reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 12-13; Pieter Antoon Marie Geurts, *Voorgeschiedenis van het statencollege te Leiden, 1575-1593* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 43. Gallus was in Deventer only one year – until 1561. See: *BWDN*, vol. 7, 28.

## Examinations in Essen

Despite Coolhaes' enthusiasm for Deventer, Coolhaes and his wife<sup>42</sup> chose to flee from the war-threatened Northern Netherlands on May 6, 1567. They left Deventer and went to Essen, where he continued preaching. Others were fleeing also. The first revolt of William of Orange, Brederode and the "Beggars" had failed, and the rebels temporarily escaped abroad to safety. Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, the third Duke of Alba, entered the Netherlands and began to rule harshly.<sup>43</sup> Protestant preaching was discontinued throughout the Netherlands. The Eighty Years War – the Dutch Revolt – was beginning in earnest by 1568. Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert also passed through Deventer about this time. It is interesting to try to posit a possible connection during this period between Coolhaes and Coornhert, who would later correspond with each other. Coornhert worked for the "beggar" Van Brederode, and came in haste to Deventer, arriving on May 4, 1567 (or shortly thereafter), and stayed only a very short time. He wanted to go to Cologne or Emden, but went to Emmerich and then returned to Deventer. He had a letter from William of Orange in Emmerich and surely met with the prince in May of that year in Siegen where, as has been mentioned, Coolhaes preached in 1561. While Coornhert was in Deventer he wrote *Lijdens Troost*.<sup>44</sup> It is tempting to wonder whether Coolhaes became acquainted with or met with him there. Since Coolhaes fled on May 6 to Essen, they would have had only two days together at the most in Deventer to form or renew any sort of connection.

Coolhaes and his family settled in Essen for three years.<sup>45</sup> He himself reported that he and his fellow-preacher, Caspar von Isselburg, "lived together peacefully."<sup>46</sup> However, this

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42. It is not known if they had any children at this time.

43. The Duke of Alba is outside of our scope, but a recent work on him is: Maurits Ebben, Margriet Lacy-Briujn, and Rolof van Hövell, eds., *Alba: General and Servant to the Crown* (Rotterdam: Karwansaray Publishers, 2013).

44. Gerrit Voogt, *Constraint on Trial: Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert and Religious Freedom* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), 31; Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 46-47.

45. He is said by some to have been present at Wezel at the Synod of 1568 and signed their "convent." However, the questions surrounding this Synod are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Many scholars cast doubt upon the date, the extent or even the existence of this Synod. Contemporary sources do not mention the existence of the Synod of Wezel 1568. See: Owe Boersma, *Vluchtig voorbeeld: De Nederlandse, Franse en Italiaanse vluchtelingenkerken in Londen, 1568-1585* (Kampen: dissertation, 1994); J.F.G. Goeters, ed., *Die Beschlüsse des Weseler Konvents von 1568*. (Düsseldorf: Presseverband der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, 1968); J. de Jong, *De voorbereiding en constitueering van het kerkverband der Nederlandsche Gereformeerde kerken in de zestiende eeuw. Historische studiën over het convent te Wezel (1568) en de synode*

peace did not characterize their relationship with their surroundings. Coolhaes became embroiled in a theological controversy every bit as volatile as that which he would experience in the Netherlands in 1581-1582. Interestingly, neither Coolhaes himself nor Rogge even mentions these events, which were so similar to later Coolhaes episodes.<sup>47</sup> As would happen later, Coolhaes was conspicuously different in his views in his preaching in Essen, and must have been outspoken enough about them to be seen as a theological threat. For several decades, theological controversy in the German regions had raged as Lutherans, especially after the death first of Luther in 1546, and then of Philip Melanchthon, his theological successor and the codifier of much Lutheran doctrine, in 1560. Especially controversial were the doctrines of justification and the Lord's Supper. In both of these doctrines, Coolhaes would be seen to be suspect.

The council of state was not pleased with either Essen preacher.<sup>48</sup> Both were thought to be too Reformed. In truth, however, it seems more exact to say that Coolhaes showed signs of being more Melanchthonian, and even more precisely, to favor a synergist position (although he never identified himself this way in so many words). Synergism was a variant which Melanchthon came to by 1548, and which some of his successors (the Philippists) held, which tries to resolve the dilemma of predestination versus free will by saying that man must cooperate with God by yielding to him in contrition or repentance. Repentance, as will be mentioned continually through this dissertation, is a vital step into the Christian life according to Coolhaes. Luther and later Gnesio-Lutherans condemned this view as a denial of *sola gratia* itself, and thus a denial of the heart of the Reformation. For them the solution was neither synergism, nor Reformed doctrines of predestination and election, but the

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*te Emden* (1571), vol. 1 (Groningen: 1911), 192-93; J. J. Woltjer, "De politieke betekenis van de synode van Emden," in D. Nauta et al., *De Synode van Emden, October 1571* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1971), 22-49; J. P. van Dooren: "Der Weseler Konvent 1568. Neue Forschungsergebnisse," *Monatshefte für Evangelische Kirchengeschichte des Rheinlandes* 31 (1982): 41-55; *Communio et mater fidelium. Acta des Konsistoriums der niederländischen reformierten Flüchtlingsgemeinde in Wesel 1573-1582*, ed. J. G. J. van Booma and J.L. van der Gouw, in *Schriftenreihe des Vereins für Rheinische Kirchengeschichte* 103, Delft/Cologne, 1991; A. Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 76-77.

46. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

47. This controversial episode is summarized in *BWPGN*, vol. 5, 174-75.

48. This episode is touched upon in Hermann Burghard, *Essen: Geschichte einer Stadt* (Essen: Pomp, 2002), 219-21. Strangely, the book describes Von Isselburg's views but does not mention Coolhaes at all in the text. Nevertheless, they include a picture of Coolhaes with the caption: "Caspar Coelhas 1563–1615, Prediger in Essene 1571."

“monergism” of God’s grace.<sup>49</sup> In fact, Luther’s view and Calvinism are extremely similar, as neither in its pure form gives a place for human involvement in the salvation process. Despite this, Calvinism in Essen and other German places was as unpopular, and even sometimes as feared both theologically and politically, as Melanchthon’s views. The eventual execution of Nikolaus Krell for Calvinism in Saxony in 1601 shows this.<sup>50</sup>

The city of Essen sought to replace Coolhaes and Von Isselburg in May, 1570 with East Frisian Johannes Ligarius, but this was not successful. Former Essen preacher, Heinrich Barenbroch, a Lutheran of great influence in the 1563 reformation of that city, had left earlier in disagreement with Von Isselburg about communion, but then became involved back in the situation by writing to accuse both men of heresy and calling the Council of State for their removal. In response, Coolhaes and Von Isselburg first appealed to the *Rat*, and when refused, to the *Vierundzwanzig*, the “Twenty-four” or citizens’ council of the city, to have the matter judged by theological experts.<sup>51</sup> The Council, which wrote to Coolhaes about this on April 30, 1571, was enraged by this appeal to the populace.<sup>52</sup>

The Augsburg Confession had been the approved Essen standard.<sup>53</sup> Von Isselburg was seen to be too “Zwinglian,” and was asked to leave in 1571, going instead to Bremen.<sup>54</sup> Coolhaes himself was asked for a written statement of faith that same year which was sent to

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49. F. Bente, “The Synergistic Controversy,” *The Book of Concord*, [www.bookofconcord.org/historical-14.php](http://www.bookofconcord.org/historical-14.php) (accessed 26 jan, 2016).

50. For more information about the situation in Essen, see: Joachim Beckmann, *400 Jahre Reformation in Essen, 1563-1963: Festschrift der Drei Evangelischen Kirchenkreise in Essen* (Essen: Druckerei Gemeinwohl, 1963); Hermann Burghard, *Essen: Geschichte einer Stadt* (Essen: Pomp, 2002); Hanns-Joachim Massner, *Von Erbe der Väter - 400 Jahre Reformation in Essen; Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung 1963* (Essen: W. Th. Webels, 1963). About Krell, see also: Benno Bohnenstädt, *Das Processverfahren gegen den Kursächsischen Kanzler Dr. Nicolaus Krell 1591 bis 1601: dargestellt nach den Akten des Dresdener Haupt-Staats-Archiv* (Halle: C.A. Kaemmerer, 1901).

51. For a description of the *Rat* and the *Vierundzwanzig* and their roles in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, see Burghard, *Essen*, 202-203.

52. *DBNL*, vol. 5, 174.

53. Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 176.

54. Johann Arnold von Recklinghausen, *Reformations-Geschichte der Länder Jülich, Berg, Cleve, Meurs, Mark, Westfalen, und der Städte Aachen, Cöln und Dordtmund* (Düsseldorf: C. H. E. von Oven, 1837), 359. Von Isselburg was also the father of Heinrich Isselburg, theologian in Bremen, 1577–1628, who also attended the Synod of Dordt in 1618-19 as part of the “moderate” Bremen delegation which opposed limited atonement (the other delegates were Ludwig Crocius and Mathias Martinius). See also “Isselburg, Heinrich,” *NDB/ADB*.

the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig for theological examination. They declared him to be both Calvinist and “heretical,” and he was then relieved of his post in Essen.<sup>55</sup>

This written statement of faith, handwritten by Coolhaes, listed in the Essen city archives as “Glaubensbekenntniss,” survives, but only partly. The seventy-two pages in the archive are, unfortunately, only the second half of the lengthy document. They are made up of articles numbered 10 through 20; the articles address the Word (art. 10), the invisible church (art. 11), the visible church (art. 12), discipline and the calling of clergy (art. 13), baptism (art. 14), the Law and the Gospel (art. 15), the Lord’s Supper (art. 16), repentance, conversion and the admittance of a sinner to the community (art. 17), the definitions of who are and are not true Christians (art. 18), rituals and ceremonies (art. 19), and finally the question of distinguishing between ministry and those who hold the office of ministers (art. 20).<sup>56</sup> It is striking how similar these topics are to the topics which consumed Coolhaes through the rest of his life. He lays out the ideas of the visible and invisible church. He addresses the question of inclusion and exclusion in both. He is concerned with the injustice of Christian discipline, and with the over-emphasis on rituals and ceremonies as opposed to

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55. Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 174-76. Van Dooren mentions on page 183 that he had access to documents in the city archive in Essen, but does not give more precise details. Through correspondence with Dr. Klaus Wisotzky from the Haus der Essener Geschichte/Stadtarchiv, and Dr. Magdalena Drexl, I was able to receive scans of three manuscripts: the “Glaubensbekenntniss von Caspar Coelhas,” 1571, Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 1-34, HEG/SAE; “Gutachten der Universität Wittenberg,” Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 95-123, HEG/SAE; and “Gutachten der Universität Leipzig,” Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 79-95, HEG/SAE. I am in the process of a more detailed study of these documents for their eventual publication. Dr. Drexl confirms that the “Glaubensbekenntniss von Caspar Coelhas” is incomplete, and they do not have the earlier section.

56. “Vom Wordt Gottes, wairumb und wairzu uns Gott sein Wort geben hat. Der zehendt artickel (Concerning the word of God, why and to what purpose God gave us His word, the 10th article),” 1v. [NB: The page numbers are in red pencil and modern script.] “Von den wahren unsichtbarlichen gemeinden Gottes der elffte Artikel (Concerning the true invisible communities of God, the 11th article),” 4v. “Von den sichtbarlichen gemeinden Gottes der zwelffte Artikel (Concerning the visible communities of God, the 12th article),” 6v. “Von Christlicher straeff oder disciplin, Item von dienern der Kirchen Gottes und ihrem beroeff, der 13. artickel (Concerning Christian punishment or discipline, also of the servants of the church of God and their calling, the 13th article),” 11v. “Von der tauff der 14 artickel (Concerning baptism, the 14th article),” 15v. “Vom Gesetz und Evangelio, der 15 Artikel (Concerning the law and gospel, the 15th article),” 21r. “Von des Herrn Nachmael, der 16 Artikel (Concerning the Lord's Supper, the 16th article),” 22r. “Von der Bueß (?) und bekerung des sünders und auffnemung desselbigen in Gottes gemein der siebenzehendt artickel (Concerning repentance and conversion of a sinner and the acceptance of the same into the community of God, the 17th article),” 23r. “Wilche die wahre Christen sindt und wilche für Christen zu halten oder nicht zu halten der 18. Artikel ( Who can be regarded as true Christians and who not, the 18<sup>th</sup> article),” 25r. “Von den Sitten und Ceremonien der neunzehendt Artikel (Concerning rituals and ceremonies, the 19th article),” 26r. “Von den Gottlichen Ampten, und was unterscheidens man haben muesse, zwischen den persohnen die die Ampten bedienen und zwischen den Amptern der 20. Artikel (Concerning the divine ministries and which difference must be made between those persons holding them and the ministries themselves, the 20th article),” Coolhaes, “Glaubensbekenntniss,” 30v. I am indebted for the kind help in transliteration of this manuscript to Dirk Pfeifer, PhD researcher at Leiden University.

an inner faith. He defends his ideas of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and he tries to make some statements about clergy. Here is also his characteristic emphasis on repentance.

The Leipzig theologians found Coolhaes' view of predestination - that God's choice of a person cannot be judged from externals, since one can repent at any time - to be problematic. Here again is a possible connection to the synergist emphasis on repentance. On the other hand, the Wittenberg theologians felt that Coolhaes affirmed determinism in his statement that the sin of Adam and Eve was necessary, rather than out of their free will. He was unwilling to be precise about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and wanted to be called by no confessional name but Christian. Both faculties admitted that in many aspects of the faith Coolhaes was one with orthodox teaching, but worried that he often used "strange, dark, almost dangerous and sometimes totally objectionable expressions."<sup>57</sup> This judgment of the theological faculties may have served to push him farther away from Lutheranism.<sup>58</sup> It may very well also have encouraged him - or indeed compelled him - to return to the Netherlands eventually, despite the war there.

However, first he and his family went to Monsheim (in the Palatinate, near Worms), where he had found a preaching appointment. Meanwhile, beginning on October 4, 1571, the ground-breaking Synod of Emden took place in Lower Saxony, in which exiled Reformed preachers met and Dutch Reformed Protestantism began to take real shape. It was already possible to begin to talk about factions in the Reformed Church which were present there - the *preciezen* and the *rekkelijken* (the stricter and the latitudinarian) and even perhaps to subdivide the latter further into *politieken/libertijnsgezinden*. *Politieken* or *libertijnsgezinden* could be used for those who would bind the church to the state, although these terms must be used with care and flexibility.<sup>59</sup> Coolhaes, however, did not appear at this Synod. He had been preaching in Monsheim beginning in that same year. He remained in this position for two years. There he is likely to have listened to the ideas of Thomas Erastus which were circulating regarding church/state relations.<sup>60</sup> Coolhaes says about this prosperous period of

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57. "... maar zij becritisceerde zijn vaak vreemde, duistere, bijna gevaarlijke en soms geheel verwerpelijke uitdrukkingen." These are Van Dooren's words. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 176.

58. Lindeboom, *De confessioneele ontwikkeling der reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 28.

59. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 48-51. On the other hand, newer scholars say that the struggle between these parties was less than was earlier thought - see James D. Tracy, "Emden, Synod of," *OER*, vol. 2, 40-41.



his life, “I had served similarly in the *Keurvorstelicker* Palatinate ... receiving a large yearly salary (as long as I was there I received more than 500 daalders per year)...”<sup>61</sup> In *Cort waerachtich verhael*, he relates his wife’s reminiscence, “As far as the brothers were concerned, we lived in the Wormsgau, and they served the church with us, and we with them, in peace and unity.”<sup>62</sup> Caspar and Grietje surely experienced these times of unity with relief, after the debacle in Essen.

Protestants were already in control in much of Holland in 1572. However, elsewhere fellow Reformed believers were suffering. On August 24, 1572, thousands of Protestants were killed in the St. Bartholemew’s Day massacre in France.<sup>63</sup> Many Huguenots fled (and would continue to flee) to the Northern Netherlands, which was now congenial for the Reformed faith. Were the southern immigrants more strictly Calvinist, thus becoming a destabilizing force for the Reformed Church in the North, which pushed it to the right? Some argue yes, but others feel that this is too broad a generalization, although the immigrants were certainly a revitalizing force to the economy and society.<sup>64</sup> This would be a factor in the Leiden church.

### Permanent immigration

In the winter of 1573, Coolhaes was called by the city council of Gorcum to return to the Netherlands and to preach there. Gorcum had only just experienced a Calvinist “revolution” in 1572 from the top down, as the rebel forces found the whole region essential to protect

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60. J. Wayne Baker, Review of Ulrich Gäbler, “The spread of Zwinglianism into the Netherlands and the Downfall of Caspar Coolhaes 1581/1582,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 17 (1986), 511. For more about Erastus, see: Charles D. Gunnoe, Jr., *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate: A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

61. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 53Or.

62. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

63. J. H. M. Salmon, “Wars of Religion,” *OER*, vol. 4, 260.

64. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 21-22, 104-105. Kees de Wildt, “Ambt, doop en avondmaal in de oudste Leidse kerkenraadsacta. Enkele aspecten van het Gereformeerde kerkelijke leven in de zestiende eeuw” (Leiden University, master thesis, 2007), 60. For more about Huguenot immigration to the north, see: Yves Krumenacker and Olivier Christin, eds., *Entre calvinistes et catholiques: les relations religieuses entre la France et les Pays-Bas du Nord (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), Jane McKee and Randolph Vigne, eds., *The Huguenots: France, Exile & Diaspora* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013); Geoffrey Treasure, *The Hugenots* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014).

against the Spanish. It was strengthened not only by their troops, but also by German and Walloon soldiers against the Catholics.<sup>65</sup> He may not have known it at the time, but with this move he was immigrating to the Netherlands permanently. Why did he leave a good, well-paying position in Monsheim, in his German homeland, to come back as a foreigner to a region at war? He did not say that he had become more convinced of the doctrines of the Reformed Church, although judging by his termination in Essen that may have been true. On the other hand, perhaps the atmosphere in the Palatinate had actually become too Reformed for his liking.<sup>66</sup> He did not write about theological factors affecting the move, but instead, he wrote, “Out of love for these Netherlands, I left it all, and with wife and children in mid-winter, not without hurt and danger to myself, came into this country.”<sup>67</sup> Coolhaes’ expression is interesting considering that a national identity for the former Northern Netherlands, the Dutch Republic, was arguably still in the process of being formed – both when he decided to return to the Netherlands in 1573, and still when he penned these words in 1580. Coolhaes identified the Netherlands as a distinct unit in his writing, and claimed loyalty to it. Did he really feel such warm affection for his adopted country? Perhaps, but on the other hand, it is possible that he may have been overstating his emotion and his hardships, either to prove his commitment to his accusers, or to put them to shame.

The journey was dangerous because of Spanish troops, which had become a persistent reality in the Netherlands. After the mid-1540’s, their discipline diminished and their numbers grew. Combined with anxiety about a possible “Spanish Inquisition” in the Netherlands, they were feared.<sup>68</sup> Coolhaes related that he and his family traveled through “enemy land” - past Grave, from Goch until Zaltbommel. The Spaniards were on the road on foot and horseback, but the travelers were able to elude them. A very close call happened

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65. A. J. Verschoor, ed., *Classicale Acta 1573-1620, VIII Classis Gorinchem 1579-1620* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2008), XXV–XXVI.

66. This is the opinion of J. C. H. de Pater, *Jan van Hout, 1542–1609, een levensbeeld uit de 16e eeuw* (The Hague: D. A. Daamen’s Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1946), 55. For the importance of the Palatinate as both the center of the debate between the Genevan and Zurich models of church government, and a “Reformed stronghold,” see Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: a Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 193, 211-16.

67. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 53Or. For a detailed discussion of political and linguistic questions regarding the developing identity of the Netherlands, see Alastair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 9-51; also, R. Stein and J. S. Pollmann, eds., *The Dynamics of Identity in the Low Countries, 1300-1600. Toward a Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

68. Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 66.

near Ravenstein: they were hiding in a house to which Spanish troops were trying to gain access. Unable to enter, the troops went away to the nearby village of Oss, but returned again to knock on the door of the house where Coolhaes and his family were at that moment. Everyone in the house kept silent and the house was not taken. He considered that had the Spaniards found them there, they would have killed them.<sup>69</sup>

Was there really so much danger from the Spanish troops? Coolhaes' fear seems extreme. It may have been that the Spanish had been vilified to such an extent that people expected unreasonable cruelty from them.<sup>70</sup> However, both Henricus Vellelius and Joost de Jonge (who was indeed later captured and executed) said that they were afraid to travel to the Dordrecht Synod of 1574 because of fears of the Spanish.<sup>71</sup> Sources point to rape and mutilation of women and others in this period at Spanish hands, in the Northern Netherlands especially in Naarden and Zutphen, and in the South in Mechelen and Antwerp.<sup>72</sup> William of Orange's politics were assisted by "tap[ping] into the anti-Spanish prejudice in the Empire." Beggar songs also "fed this 'Hispanophobia.'"<sup>73</sup> Coolhaes himself referred to "the power and violence of the bloodthirsty Spaniards and their 'attack dogs.'"<sup>74</sup> Although his views on Catholics overall in his later life were tolerant, Coolhaes continued to think the worst of the Spanish once he was in Leiden. He maintained in 1581 that the Spanish had no other aim but to bring eternal slavery into the Netherlands.<sup>75</sup> He considered that he and his family had been delivered by the Lord on that day near Ravenstein. It had been a narrow and miraculous escape.<sup>76</sup>

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69. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 540iiv.

70. See K. W. Swart, "The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War," in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman, eds., *Britain and the Netherlands*, vol. 5 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 36-57.

71. R. H. Bremmer, *Uit de geboortegeschiedenis van de Gereformeerde kerken in de Nederlanden* (The Hague: Willem de Zwijgerstichting, 1977), 25.

72. See Peter Arnade, "The City Defeated and Defended. Civism as Political Identity in the Habsburg-Burgundian Netherlands," in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650*, ed. Robert S. Stein and Judith S. Pollmann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213.

73. Alastair Duke, "In Defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555-1576," in *Networks, Regions and Nations*, 235-36.

74. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiir.

75. "Coolhaes aan de Leidse magistraat d.d. 27 juli 1581," in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 80.

They arrived in Gorcum in mid-winter, 1573, and served there until May of 1574. Coolhaes quotes his wife remembering, “Having been called to Gorcum, we came in danger of both of our lives, and my husband served the church together with Henry, our fellow worker and brother, very peacefully.” This was the same Henricus Rolandus Vellemius, Protestant preacher in Cologne (1571-1572) and Gorcum (1573 -1574), who was relieved of this latter ministry at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574.<sup>77</sup> Coolhaes was very negative about that Synod, which he nevertheless was brave enough to travel to attend. It may be that he was so negative about it partly for their attack on his colleague.<sup>78</sup> Vellemius was accused of scandalous and offensive behavior, although what this could have been is not known; many questions remain surrounding him and his case.<sup>79</sup> However, although this judgment of his close coworker seems a logical reason for Coolhaes’ dislike of this Synod and may surely have been a factor, he never mentions this aspect of the Dordrecht Synod. He had other criticisms of it, which will be mentioned later.

In any event, Coolhaes stayed in Gorcum only a short time. Perhaps his assignment there was intended to be short, but in any case the Leiden magistracy called him. It is important to emphasize here that he was called not by the Leiden church, but by the Leiden magistracy only.<sup>80</sup> Coolhaes uses the word “magistracy” to designate the ruling council of a city. It would be more precise to define the entire group of rulers of Leiden as the *Vroedschap*, which is composed of a sheriff (*schout*), four mayors (*burgemeesters*), eight aldermen (*schepenen*), forty town councilmen (*vroedschapleden*), one or two legal advisors (*pensionarissen*), and the city secretary (*secretaris*). The sheriff, mayors and aldermen made up the court (*gerecht*), which also is sometimes called the magistracy.<sup>81</sup> The call to Coolhaes

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76. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 7-8.

77. *NNBW*, deel 3, 1279-80. For more discussion of this, see Verschoor, *Classicale Acta*, XXXIII-XXXIV. Coolhaes is not mentioned here, although he is listed on page 540. Unfortunately for us, the actual records of the classis do not begin until 1579, so we do not find any records of Coolhaes there, either.

78. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 35.

79. Bremmer, “Uit de Geboortegeschiedenis van de Gereformeerde kerken,” 24-25. See also Verschoor, *Classicale Acta*, XXXIII-XXXIV, 540.

80. See Andrew Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory: The Upbuilding of a Calvinist Church in Holland, 1572-1590,” in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 165.

81. Sterling A. Lamet, “The Vroedschap of Leiden 1550-1600: The Impact of Tradition and Change on the Governing Elite of a Dutch City,” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (1981), 16. To see the diversity of the

was made after the first siege of Leiden,<sup>82</sup> in May, 1574. He accepted and left Gorcum on June 1, but the second siege of Leiden began suddenly and the city was surrounded. Unable to enter, he and his family stayed in Delft, “awaiting” (as he wrote) “what the Lord, in his mercy, would do with the frightened and very dejected city.”<sup>83</sup>

During this time of waiting, as the Spanish held Leiden in their grip, he preached in Delft (three weeks), Dordrecht (ten weeks), and Gouda (one and one-half weeks).<sup>84</sup> He was also able to attend the Dordrecht Synod of 1574; however, he was not favorably impressed. Although religious matters were, in his view, in chaos, since the States were not united confessionally, there were also very few qualified preachers. Most, he relates, were “beginners,” who had either been priests or monks earlier and had not truly left the mindset of Catholicism, or who had been artisans or trades-people (clothes-makers, shoemakers, weavers, locksmiths, and so forth).<sup>85</sup> It has been alleged that Coolhaes is responsible for the idea, said to be current until the recent past, that it was easy to become a Reformed preacher, because so many lazy artisans were accepted who had been looking for a profession that was less strenuous and more regularly paid.<sup>86</sup> Coolhaes’ negative reaction to the “newcomers” would have also been a reflection of his conflict with the stricter Calvinists at the time of his writings.<sup>87</sup> In any event, Coolhaes was urged by some there in Dordrecht to serve in Rotterdam, since Leiden was not open. He decided not to take them up on their suggestion, not only because he was committed by his word to the magistrates to go to Leiden, but surely also because, owing to his view of the authority of the civil government in religious affairs, he preferred invitations to come from the magistracy of a city, than from the church. He may also have suspected or known that the more Calvinist nature of that city would prove

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Leiden magistrates, see also: Dirk Jaap Noordam, *Geringde buffels en heren van stand: Het patriciaat van Leiden, 1574-1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994).

82. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiiiv.

83. “... verwachtende wat de Heere uyt ghenaden, met der benauder ende seer bedructer stadt soude doen willen.” Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 9.

84. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiiiv.

85. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 10.

86. Ingrid Dobbe, “Requirements for Dutch Reformed Ministers, 1570-1620,” in *The Pastor Bonus: Papers Read at the British-Dutch Colloquium at Utrecht, 18-21 September 2002*, ed. Theo Clemens and Wim Janse (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 191.

87. H. H. Kuyper, *De opleiding tot den dienst des woords bij de Gereformeerden* (The Hague: 1891), 267.

uncongenial to him. He would not be dissuaded; he wrote that he was already present from that time in Leiden, “not physically, but with heart and soul.”<sup>88</sup> Again, one wonders what prompted his decision. What really drew him so strongly to the war-torn, hungry city of Leiden? He does not give us any further answers. Perhaps it was because he felt so sure of the support of a broader magistracy.

### Theological disagreement in liberated Leiden

Coolhaes and his family finally entered Leiden on October 3, 1574 - the very day of its liberation by the Beggar forces. The prince’s troops had cut the dikes and come in with flat-bottomed boats on the resulting flood, bringing food for the citizens, who according to the traditional view had been subsisting on rats, dogs, cats and horses. About half of the population was said to have died of starvation - “Hunger was Leiden’s means of heroic suffering.”<sup>89</sup> More recent research speculates that this situation may have been slightly exaggerated - there may have been food left in the city, but the presence of the plague in the summer and contaminated drinking water leading to dysentery may have accounted for so many deaths.<sup>90</sup> Others maintain that Leiden may have been liberated just in time; if the Spanish had not lost courage but had held out even one more week, Leiden would possibly have had to capitulate - which may very well even have meant the end of the rebellion.<sup>91</sup> In any event, one cannot help but try to imagine the joyous atmosphere of the freed city. A service of thanksgiving was held that day in St. Peter’s church, led by preacher Pieter Cornelisz, who had served in Leiden throughout the Spanish occupation.<sup>92</sup>

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88. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiv.

89. Peter J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: the Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 241. For a summary of this time period in Leiden, see Jan Wim Buisman, “Kerk en samenleving,” in R. C. J. van Maanen, ed., *Leiden, de geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad*, vol. 2, 1575-1795 (Leiden: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Leiden, 2003), 127-31. For more information, see: Raymond Fagel, *Leids beleg en ontzet door Spaanse ogen* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999); Herman Amersfoort, *Belaagd en belegerd* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2011).

90. Thera Wijsenbeek, *Honger*, 3 Oktoberlezing 2006 (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2006), 28-29.

91. J. J. Woltjer, *Kleine oorzaken, grote gevolgen* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1975), 11.

92. L. Knappert, *De opkomst van het protestantisme in eene Noord-Nederlandsche stad* (Leiden: S. C. van Doesburgh, 1908), 269.

Coolhaes was about forty years of age when he arrived in Leiden. He was not inexperienced as a preacher; he had been preaching since at least 1561, i.e., thirteen years. However, any initial euphoria on the part of the new city preacher and his flock soon gave way to tension. The city had been Reformed since 1572, when it became part of the rebellion. But there was no “haven of spiritual serenity” in the public church.<sup>93</sup> The position of the Reformed Church was far from secure, and the disagreements and *twisten* in exhausted and depleted Leiden came at a time when unity would have been particularly helpful.<sup>94</sup>

Coolhaes’ ministry in Leiden was marked with disagreements between himself and the other preachers, elders and deacons, especially fellow preacher Pieter Cornelisz. The two preachers differed on various points. Early conflicts between Coolhaes and Cornelisz reflected Coolhaes’ openness to those with differing views about ceremonies and sacraments, his belief in the authority of the civil government in church life, and his indifferent attitude to keeping up the Presbyterian system of consistory, classis and synod. Coolhaes reported that it was said that the preachers in Leiden were lazy for not preaching as often as preachers did in other cities. He tended to want to keep up local customs, while Cornelisz stood on the side of the decisions of the Dordrecht Synod of 1574, and opposed evening prayers, funeral sermons (which could imply prayer for the dead), and celebration of holidays which fell on days other than Sunday<sup>95</sup> - all customs which smacked of Catholicism.<sup>96</sup> It was harder, in a sense, for the Reformed to tolerate Catholics than other religious groups, because they were the “false church” from which they had been liberated. Mennonites and Lutherans were seen as being merely deceived.<sup>97</sup> Evening prayers were discontinued, then reinstated when it was discovered that Delft and Rotterdam, which had never had evening prayers in the past, were

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93. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 1.

94. Point made by Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 38-39.

95. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 73Tv. Coolhaes also speaks of this in his *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100.

96. Rogge makes this point. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 53. Rogge also asserts that Christmas in 1574 was on Monday, so traditionally there would have been preaching on both Monday and Tuesday. This, according to him, made this question of the celebration of Christmas especially rancorous in 1575. However, Rogge is in error about the days at issue. December 25, 1574 was a Saturday according to the Julian calendar, so there could have been preaching on Saturday and Sunday, or on Sunday only. The Gregorian calendar, or “new style,” ten days later than the Julian calendar, was adopted in Holland only in 1583 (see Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, xvii).

97. Christine Kooi, “Popish Impudence: The Perseverance of the R.C. Faithful in Calvinist Holland, 1572-1620,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 77-78, 82.

now holding them.<sup>98</sup> Baptism is also mentioned by Coolhaes as a divisive issue. Pieter Cornelisz baptized by sprinkling, which Coolhaes declared was not done in any other church in Holland, Zeeland, or West-Friesland.<sup>99</sup> However, he says that he tried for a time to conform in these things for the sake of unity. He mentions that the Leiden consistory met about once per month, whereas in other places more frequent meetings were the norm. For example, in Dordrecht, the consistory met every Sunday after the mid-day sermon, every Thursday at 2 p.m., and other times when necessary.<sup>100</sup> Although active in the local Leiden/Rijnland classis, Coolhaes showed himself to be reluctant to accept advice from other classes, stating that there was nothing particular for which he needed the brothers' counsel.<sup>101</sup> That attitude was suspicious to his fellow preachers, both in Leiden and in other cities.

It is not surprising that agreement was hard to reach. The Reformed Church was the "public" church<sup>102</sup> of Leiden and, increasingly, of the cities of the emerging Dutch Republic. In many ecclesiastical and social ways it was the inheritor of the Roman Catholic Church. It used church buildings as it saw fit, its clergy were on the city payroll, and it performed important functions in the community. However, not all city inhabitants were part of it, as they generally had been (at least in name) of the Catholic Church.<sup>103</sup> Communing members (*lidmaten*) of the Reformed Church were a small percentage of the population. An additional number were called *liefhebbers* or *toehoorders*. They were perhaps a large number, although it is difficult to say as data are insufficient. They, by their own choice, attended and often participated actively, but were nevertheless not full communing members. Other city residents were affiliated with another church, secretly or openly, as much as they were allowed or dared, or with no religious community at all. This is consistent with the Union of Utrecht in 1579, especially its famous thirteenth article, which meant to guarantee freedom of conscience in Holland and Zeeland.

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98. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100.

99. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100. Coolhaes directs us to his *Wederantwoort*, para. 143.

100. "Extracts from the Consistory book of the Reformed Church at Dordrecht, 1572-1574," [www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/sources/Pages/15721574.aspx](http://www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/sources/Pages/15721574.aspx) (accessed January 26, 2014).

101. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49; AD, no. 23, 24 Jan. 1575.

102. There is some difference of opinion between scholars as to when it is proper to call the Reformed Church the "public" church. Officially, it is correct to use it from the mid-seventeenth century, but Kooi uses the term for the Reformed Church in Leiden during Coolhaes' tenure as preacher.

103. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 7-9.



However, this meant that the Reformed Church was not a *volkskerk* - a national, “people’s” church - in the way the Catholic Church had been. It did not embrace the whole nation. Instead, the Reformed Church maintained strict membership requirements which included doctrinal and lifestyle requirements. The idea of this Reformed Church as the “public” church was already a compromise. Nevertheless, the stricter preachers of the Reformed clergy did not find the idea of a small Reformed Church as the public church paradoxical. To them, purity of doctrine and of the members’ lifestyle was paramount, and they expected the secular government to support and defend them. Calvinists insisted upon having a special and exclusive relationship with the secular government, which they expected to recognize their authority and legitimacy.<sup>104</sup> In cities such as Delft and Dordrecht, magistrates and church consistories shared this vision and worked together in harmony.<sup>105</sup>

However, this was not the case in Leiden. Within the Reformed Church itself, consensus was lacking. Thus, the composition of the team of preachers present in the city at any one time determined to a large extent how that church would look. In Leiden the preachers “fell out” with one another regularly, as well as with the magistrates. They tried to get rid of each other, or left in anger. Just before Coolhaes entered the situation, there had already been conflict. Adriaan Jansz Taling, who had left Leiden to preach in Delft before the second Spanish siege, refused to return after the liberation because of conflicts with certain church members.<sup>106</sup> Taling is said to have been the one who had been upset with the magistrates for issuing paper money inscribed with the saying, *Haec libertatis ergo* (“This is for the sake of liberty”), rather than, as had been suggested, *Haec religionis ergo* (“This is for the sake of [the] religion”). He seems also to have called the magistrates pigs from the pulpit.<sup>107</sup> Pieter Cornelisz may have been the preacher who, during the occupation, insisted that the motto on Leiden paper money should read *Haec religionis ergo*. Jan van Hout, city secretary and at that time also one of the mayors, became so disturbed with this sort of talk

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104. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 9.

105. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 13.

106. For more information about Taling and Verstroot, as well as the other earliest Reformed preachers in Leiden, see Rosemary Jones, “De Nederduits Gereformeerde gemeente te Leiden in de jaren 1572-1576,” *Leids Jaarboekje* 66 (1974): 132-34. For more about the relationship between church and City Hall in these years, see Jan A. F. de Jongste, *Om de religie of om de vrijheid: spanningen tussen stadhuis en kerk in Leiden na het beleg* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1998).

107. Johan Koppenol, *Leids heelal: het Loterijspel (1596) van Jan van Hout* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 31.

that he pointed a gun at one of the city preachers, probably Adriaan Jansz Taling, and threatened to shoot. This could certainly have colored Cornelisz' subsequent view of the magistracy.<sup>108</sup> Coolhaes claimed, however, that no Leidener would have taken up arms or given a penny for “the religion” – they had fought for liberty.<sup>109</sup> As we mentioned in the Introduction, he was a clear proponent of *libertatis causa*.

Emotions also ran high when Claes Jansz Verstroot, another Leiden preacher who had served through both Spanish sieges, requested permission to leave Leiden in 1575 in order to serve in Hazerswoude (southeast of Leiden), despite opposition from the city church council and magistracy. Coolhaes urged him to think of his responsibility, but after some time Cornelisz and Coolhaes convinced the city magistracy to grant his request.<sup>110</sup> However, the Leiden magistracy claimed that Verstroot, who was beloved by the community, was driven away by one of the “opponents;” presumably Cornelisz, and was currently preaching in Naaldwijk, southwest of The Hague. This acrimony, the magistrates said, opened their eyes to the party-spiritedness of some of the consistory.<sup>111</sup> From the point of view of some of the Reformed Church, the magistrates in Leiden were too strong and too aware of their position and authority after having come through the Spanish occupations. The magistrates believed that they controlled the governing of the Reformed Church, and consulted preachers in neighboring cities for support so as not to lose that control.<sup>112</sup>

Leiden was not unique in these struggles for control between the civil government and the Reformed Church council. Rotterdam and Gouda also experienced serious tension. Rotterdam already had a strongly Calvinist preacher, Aegidius Johannes Frisius. The consistory was outraged when the magistrates appointed the preacher Petrus Anastasius

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108. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 56. See Brandt, *Historie der reformatie*, 554; also Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 49-59. For more about Jan van Hout, see: Karel Bostoën, Piet de Baar and Kees Walle, *Jan van Houts nalatenschap: bronnen* (Leiden: Vereniging Jan van Hout, Uitgeverij Ginkgo, 2013).

109. Quoted in Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 59. Bostoën does not give the reference, but it is from Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie vanden kercken raedt ende ouerlinghen [sic], aen dien plaetsen daer een christelijcke magistraet is, het ghevoelen der kercken Christi tot Zurich, tot Bern, ende anderen dierghelijcken vermaerden steden ende plaetsen in Zwitserlandt, door den eerweerdighen welgeleerden Rodolphum Gwaltherum, in verscheyden zijnen sermonen int latijn beschriven, uit het latijn ouergheset door C.C.V.M.I.D.H.G.* (Gouda: 1582), 1611 edition, 2b.

110. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 56.

111. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Aiiiij.

112. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 36.

Hyperphragmus Gandensis,<sup>113</sup> known also as Pieter Overdhage, who had earlier fled to Emden. The Rotterdam consistory did not approve of the choice or of the fact that the nomination which had been made without them. But not only did the consistory's threat of complaining to William of Orange not help their case, the magistracy went ahead and fired Frisius. However, ultimately Overdhage was considered by many as a problematic choice, and the magistrates did not take him on either.<sup>114</sup> This all took place in Rotterdam several years before the Leiden "Coolhaes affair" of 1579. Then, in 1582, in Gouda, a dispute similar to the "Coolhaes affair" and its aftermath, was played out around preacher Herbert Herberts. Herberts, who had ministered in Dordrecht, in 1582 preached affirming human perfectibility over the Heidelberg catechism, rejecting predestination, and affirming freedom of choice. He left to preach in Gouda, a city known for a broader church. Nevertheless, Herberts was asked to account for his unorthodox views. Over the next several years, the Gouda magistracy supported and protected Herberts against Calvinist preachers and synods.<sup>115</sup> So, we see that conflict over these issues, while pronounced in Leiden, was not unique.

Much of this conflict arose because the Reformed Church did not yet have a clear identity. Everything about the church was developing – its organization, its theology, its practice. This was a "plastic phase;"<sup>116</sup> opposing theological views had not yet been co-opted by various interest groups. Because of this, the terms "Calvinist" and "Reformed" are often not used as equivalents. "Reformed" sometimes signals a broader view, while "Calvinist" often means a Genevan-influenced person of narrower views.<sup>117</sup> However, there actually existed many variations in Dutch Reformed thought in the sixteenth century. Some were more fervent and polemical, others were more irenic.<sup>118</sup> Coolhaes himself did not want to be called a Calvinist. He states:

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113. "Gandensis" means: from Ghent/Gand.

114. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 165.

115. A. J. van den Berg, "Herman Herberts (ca. 1540-1607) in conflict met de Gereformeerde kerk," in *Kerkhistorische opstellen aangeboden aan prof.dr. J. van den Berg*, ed. C. Augustijn, P. N. Holtrop, G.A.M. Posthumus Meyjes, and E.G.E. van der Wall (Kampen: Kok, 1987), 20-29; A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen, kerk en kerkvolk ten tijdens van Maurits en Oldenbarneveldt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 53; Pettegree, "Coming to terms with victory."164.

116. Woltjer, *Kleine oorzaken, grote gevolgen*, 14.

117. For example, see Duke, "Perspectives on European Calvinism," 4.

118. Nijenhuis discusses many contrasting figures: Arent Cornelisz, Marnix van St. Aldegonde, the Dutch refugee churches in London and Emden including Lawrence Jacobsz. Reael, Lutheran-leaning

I call Calvinists the ones who stand upon Calvin and his writings and would not diverge from them even a tiny bit ... Our office is not Calvin's but Christ's; not Calvin's but Christ's teaching to preach. And Calvin did not die for us. He does not have the witness from God that he could never err. Just the same as Luther, Zwingli, Brentius, Bullingerus, Bucerus, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, Beza, Gualterus, and whoever may be called good men. God the Lord does not point us to them, neither to Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and those like them and their writings, but he points us only to his divine Word.<sup>119</sup>

This is consonant with what he had affirmed in Essen in 1571 – that he would rather be called “Christian” than any confessional title.

## A new university

In 1575, Leiden University was founded. On February 8, the university was inaugurated with pomp and pageantry. Coolhaes played an important part. He participated as a preacher on the day, and then as the first, albeit temporary, lecturer of theology in the infant university. The festive day of dedication began with a service in St. Peter's at seven o'clock in the morning (most sources agree that fellow preacher Pieter Cornelisz preached at this early service).<sup>120</sup> This was followed by the procession at nine o'clock - a lavish parade from St. Peter's church to the new Academy Building, including participants in classical costumes, a decorated boat

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Amsterdam preachers Petrus Gabriël and Jan Arentsz., court preachers Pierre de Villiers and Jean Taffin, Petrus Dathenus, Franciscus Junius, Adrianus Saravia, and Herman Herbertz. See: Willem Nijenhuis, “Varianten binnen het Nederlandse Calvinisme in de zestiende eeuw,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 89 (1976): 358-72.

119. We give here the unabridged passage: “Ic noeme Calvinisten de gene die also op Calvinum ende zijne schrijften staen, dat sy niet een tittelken daer van souden afwijcken willen, of hy al wel (als een mensche zijnde) de sake niet effen so wel hadde ghetreffet, ende alle anderen die int cleynste daer teghen souden willen kicken, ofte dit, of dat, also niet verstaen en conden ghelijck Calvinus, verachten, lasteren, verdoemen: onser ampt is, niet Calvinum maer Christum: niet Calvini, maer Christi leere te prediken. Ende Calvinus en is voor ons niet ghestorven, hy en heeft oock dat ghetuychnis van God niet, dat hy niet en hadde moghen dwalen. Desghelijcken oock Lutherus, Zwinglius, Brentius, Bullingerus, Bucerus, Ecolampadius, Melancthon, Beza, Gualterus, ende hoe die goede mannen souden moghen ghenoecht worden: God de Heere wijset ons oock niet op hare, noch op Augustini, Hieronimi, Ambrosij, ende hares ghelijcken schriften, maer hy wijst ons alleen op zijn Godlick woort”. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 100 BBiiiiiv-r.

120. Matthijs Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis der Leidsche hoogeschool van hare oprigting in den jare 1575, tot het jaar 1825*, vol. 1 (Leiden: S. en J. Luchtman, 1829), 18; Willem Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid. De Leidse universiteit in heden en verleden* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008), 22. Note: this book is also published in English: Willem Otterspeer, *The Bastion of Liberty: Leiden University Today and Yesterday*. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008. See also: Willem Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas: het dubbeltalent van de Leidse universiteit* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000), 5-8.

on the Rapenburg called “the ship of Apollo,”<sup>121</sup> music, and the firing of artillery.<sup>122</sup>

Coolhaes is pictured walking in the procession in the engraving which commemorates it, along with other professors, representatives and guests.<sup>123</sup> Coolhaes walked between Gerhard van Wyngaerden (representative of His Excellency and the Court of Holland) and Jacob van der Does, city official. Each teacher was flanked by secular officials and honored guests.<sup>124</sup>

Coolhaes then spoke “in praise of holy theology,” “De s.s. theologiae laudibus” - an address which is not extant.<sup>125</sup> It is interesting to wonder why Coolhaes was requested to speak and to teach, rather than Pieter Cornelisz, his fellow preacher. One can speculate that his academic qualifications, whatever they were, were seen to have been better, or perhaps the magistracy’s favor was the deciding factor.<sup>126</sup>

Can Coolhaes truly be called the first “professor” of theology at Leiden University? Some say yes, while others think not.<sup>127</sup> He had no official appointment. Nevertheless, an engraving was made of Coolhaes late in his life in Leiden, commemorating him as a professor of theology. The facts are as follows. The inauguration had taken place on February 8, 1575. The statutes of the university had been drawn up on June 2, 1575, declaring the four

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121. A. J. F. Gogelein, and R. E. O. Ekkart, *Leidse universiteit 400, stichting en eerste bloei 1575 - ca. 1650* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1975), 37.

122. Ro Van Luttervelt, “De optocht ter gelegenheid van de inwijding der Leidsche universiteit,” *Leids Jaarboekje* 50 (1958): 87-104. For a description of the procession in English and of motivations in the founding and planning of the new university, see J. A van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors. Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists* (Leiden: Sir Thomas Browne Institute, 1962), 2-8. For more description, see also Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 1, 17-20.

123. Van Luttervelt, “De optocht ter gelegenheid van de inwijding der Leidsche universiteit,” 101.

124. Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis*, 21. An enlargement of Coolhaes in this engraving can be seen in Bostoen, *Hart voor Leiden*, 58. Two of the engravings of the procession are in existence. The first is anonymous, from 1575 or shortly after. The second, basically a mirror image of the first with some variations, was also anonymously done and printed in Leiden by Pieter van der Aa after 1682.

125. This was reported by J. J. Orlers, who chronicled city happenings. Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 22.

126. Fatio and Maag speculate that it was the latter. The choice of Coolhaes showed the magistracy’s power of the university at that time. Fatio, *Nihil pulchris ordine*, 7; Karin Maag, *Seminary or University? The Genevan Academy and Reformed Higher Education, 1560-1620* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995), 173.

127. Coolhaes is listed as the first member of the faculty of theology in Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 4. On the other hand, Rogge does not think he deserves that title. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 49. Agreeing with Rogge is A. A. Bantjes, *De Leidse hoogleraren en lectoren 1575-1815; 1. De theologische faculteit* (Werkgroep Elites, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, August, 1983), 20 - 21. He lists Coolhaes as though he had been a professor, but adds “Wellicht nooit echt hoogleraar geweest en slechts les gegeven in theologische faculteit,” 21. Bantjes uses Rogge as his main source. Otterspeer, the modern historian of Leiden University, does call Coolhaes the first professor of theology. Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas*, 5.

faculties of the university to be Theology, Law, Medicine, and “Philosophy” (including liberal arts subjects, classical languages and Hebrew). The earliest record of the students of the university, the *Album studiosorum*, begins with its first entries in August of 1575, with two students.<sup>128</sup> However, Coolhaes had taught only in the spring of that year - i.e., after the service of dedication, but before the statutes had been drawn up. Unfortunately no records remain of it. It is not surprising, since the first years of the university were difficult both financially and organizationally.<sup>129</sup>

The answer to this question of Coolhaes’ status surely depends upon the definition of “professor.” Guillaume Feugeray is commonly viewed as the first professor of theology in Leiden, whereas Coolhaes is described as having been engaged to “hold some lessons” in theology, a phrase that is also used of most of the other *hoogleraren* who walked in the procession on the day of dedication. In the contemporary engraving of the opening procession, he and the other *hoogleraren* are dressed in the now-recognizable regalia of Leiden professors.<sup>130</sup> Siegenbeek lists them as: Coolhaes (Theology), Diederick van der Nieuwborch (Law), Joost de Menyn (Law), Pieter van Foreest, also called Petrus Forestus (Medicine), Lauren van Oorschot (Medicine), Geraert de Bont (listed as a Doctor of Medicine, who would give lessons in Astronomy and Mathematics), and Cornelis de Groot (Philosophy). Siegenbeek says that the university, anxious to provide qualified teachers, had mostly engaged these early teachers only until an academically qualified person could be found. Only two of the original six “professors” remained at the university after the first months - De Bont and De Groot. The others, like Coolhaes, assisted the University in getting off the ground, but did not stay in academia.<sup>131</sup> Coolhaes had a friendly relationship with the soon-dismissed first professor of Hebrew, Herman Rennecher, and with his successor, Johannes Drusius, who lived with Coolhaes as lodger. Perhaps Coolhaes was one of several who sang a satirical song outside of Rennecher’s window in October, 1576.<sup>132</sup>

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128. Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 1.

129. P. C. Molhuysen, “De eerste secretaris van de senaat der Leidse hoogeschool,” *Leids jaarboekje* 6 (1909): 58.

130. A clear version of this engraving is reproduced in Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 24-25.

131. Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis*, 2. See also Maag, *Seminary or University*, 173.

132. This is the conjecture of Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 85-88. For more about Drusius, see: Theodor Dündelgrün, “Johannes Drusius en Leiden,” *Omslag: bulletin van de universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden en het*

Coolhaes lectured on the Epistle to the Galatians in the spring of 1575.<sup>133</sup> One of the key verses of that epistle is “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1), which is appropriate for Coolhaes because, as we will see, he opposed what he saw as the slavish attention of the Reformed to “human” religious rules and regulations. Perhaps this emphasis already formed part of his lectures. It also could very well have been connected in Coolhaes’ mind to “*Haec libertatis ergo*” – *libertatis causa*. As for the students to whom Coolhaes lectured that spring, no list of them exists. Perhaps Coolhaes lectured to non-enrolled auditors. Perhaps some of the early auditors became enrolled students later.

Guillaume Feugeray arrived later in 1575: a French preacher who had been recommended by De Villiers, one of the court preachers of William of Orange. Feugeray set out a curriculum of biblical theology for the new faculty to teach - a study of the Old and New Testaments which focused on the common dogmatic *loci*, and excluded “quibbling” about truth.<sup>134</sup> After Feugeray took up residence at the new university, Coolhaes no longer gave lectures.<sup>135</sup> Also, Ludovicus Capellus is recorded as having held an oration in June of 1575, which has also been called the dedication of the university.<sup>136</sup> This all points to a conclusion that the entire arrangement with Coolhaes had always been meant to be temporary. In support of this is the fact that Coolhaes never complained of any inequity in his departure from university teaching. He is not reported to have complained about it to others, and he never mentions it in his writings.

So, in conclusion, Coolhaes played a part at the university’s beginning, but it is actually quite generous to give Coolhaes the title of “professor.” He participated in the university’s opening ceremonially, but after that seems by any account to have taught only one set of lectures. His students were not registered or even recorded. He may have sat in on

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*Scaliger Instituut* 1 (2008): 12-13; Jacob van Sluis, “Een proefschrift over Johannes Drusius,” *Letterhoeke* 2 (2006): 22-23; Martin H. H. Engels, *Merendeels verloren gegaan: 2000 brieven aan Johannes Drusius (1550-1616)* (Leeuwarden: ME Uitgeverij, 1995); Abel Curiander and Herman Van den Abeele, *Leven en werken van Johannes Drusius* (Oudenaarde: Sanderus, 1979).

133. L. Knappert, “Een academisch leerplan van den jare 1575,” *Leids jaarboekje* 6 (1909): 73.

134. John Platt, *Reformed Thought and Scholasticism: The Arguments for the Existence of God in Dutch Theology, 155-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 119. Platt does not mention Coolhaes in his book.

135. Knappert, “Een academisch leerplan van den jare 1575,” 73.

136. Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas*, 16.

some *colleges* (lectures), especially in 1578 and 1586, which will be described later, but he did not participate in any disputations, or serve in any other related capacity.

#### At home between Rapenburg and Papengracht

Although his official time lecturing at the university was brief, Coolhaes continued to lodge students and visitors in his nearby house close to the university, in houses backing each other on the parallel Papengracht and the Rapenburg streets. Some of his lodgers are known to have been German students, from the Palatinate. It has always been a Leiden tradition for students to lodge in private homes.<sup>137</sup> For example, a “fashionable University boarding house” called the “Huis te Lochorst” is mentioned in connection with Geoffrey Whitney, the English student and later well-known poet and compiler of verse in his *A Choice of Emblemes*, which was published in Leiden by Plantijn. This boarding house was in Coolhaes’ street, the Papengracht, just a few doors away from him - evidently “particularly popular with English undergraduates.” Jan van Hout also allowed students to lodge in his house in the Breestraat, near to the City Hall. In 1581, four students registered in the Faculty of Arts, as well as Van Hout’s son who was also studying, lived with the humanist city secretary.<sup>138</sup> One could suppose that Van Hout, poet and humanist as well as politician, was especially interested in students with literary aspirations.

Coolhaes lived on the Papengracht and extended to the parallel Rapenburg.<sup>139</sup> He had two plots of land beside each other on the Rapenburg (numbers 18-22), and adjoining land on the Papengracht (numbers 13-19); more surface area together than any of the surrounding houses. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, in their multi-volume history of all of the parcels

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137. For more discussion of this, see Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 89.

138. Van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors*, 124, 131; see also plate 5, which is located between pages 108 and 109.

139. The location of Coolhaes’ house can be seen in Salomon Davidsz van Dulmanhorst, Jan Pieterz Dou, and W. Pleyte, *Leiden vóór drie honderd jaren en thans* (Leiden: Brill, 1874), appendices XIX and XXV, 83. The house at Rapenburg 22 is also mentioned in Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 88. The best source for information is Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel. *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 1, 25; vol. 3, 40, and vol. 4, 268, 344, 352-53, 365, 372, 389, 395-98. The gate between 18 and 20, which he made, is still visible in the photo from c. 1870 in Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, in *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 380. There is also plan of the ground floor, but from 1977, on page 381, as well as a photo of the living room from 1983. The same book, pages 380-83, describes the changes to Rapenburg 20 through the centuries. It appears that very few if any features remain from the time Coolhaes lived there.



of land on the Rapenburg, throughout the centuries often the most elite area to live and work in the city of Leiden, record that Coolhaes and family came into Rapenburg 22 in 1574, and in 1583 also bought Papengracht 13-17 which backed it, and which included the area of Rapenburg 18 and 20. He then sold Rapenburg 22 to move into the “little house” 18, which he expanded into the empty lot of 20. In 1590 he sold part of the property, Papengracht 19, and the descriptions of the sizeable complex mention a large room and a kitchen.<sup>140</sup> It seems that he and his family lived on the Rapenburg side and records showed that he rented the Papengracht house.<sup>141</sup> His friend, Dr. Johannes Heurnius, professor of medicine, had Papengracht 21 and 23 – a location which retains a medical association with the house title “Hôpital Wallon” (although the buildings presently on these sites do not date from Coolhaes’ time).

This sizable space was useful for lodging traveling preachers and students, and became very important later when Coolhaes began his distilling business.<sup>142</sup> Coolhaes lived there with his wife, children, and serving maid, as well as lodgers, students and occasional visitors. The household engendered some controversy on several fronts. Some of his critics thought that he lived too luxuriously for a preacher, and that he associated with the magistrates and was compromised by social intimacy with them. Others suspected his household of unseemly frivolity and lawlessness. Coolhaes defended himself: “I bought this house when I first came to this country and city; I brought the money with me to pay for and repair it; no one gave me a penny toward it and I bothered and bother no one for it.”<sup>143</sup> To charges of gluttony, he replied that he hardly earned enough to feed and clothe his wife and small children, not to mention the preachers who from time to time stayed with him, who had been driven out of the Palatinate. Even if he could afford banqueting, he said that he was sickly, could not stand excessive eating and drinking, and was never more healthy than when he kept to his “diet.”<sup>144</sup>

As to insinuations regarding his relationship with the magistrates: “Now further, that I banquet every day with the honorable magistracy of Leiden, gorging myself and drinking to

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140. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 344, 352-53.

141. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 395.

142. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 365-67.

143. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 15Diiir.

144. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiir.

excess, they themselves can testify for me that it is untrue, and none of the citizens can say that they have seen it or heard it from reliable people.”<sup>145</sup> Concerning the lifestyle of his student lodgers, he thought that they merely took “honest exercise” and played musical instruments. Rowdy, boisterous behavior was noted as being a problem in Leiden earlier in 1575,<sup>146</sup> and dancing was often frowned upon. Some, especially Mennonites, Coolhaes wrote, assumed that when music was present, so was dancing. However, he asserted, there was nothing wrong with games with balls or playing the lute. He wrote that “young people who study must have exercise to move their limbs and drive away melancholy and heaviness.”<sup>147</sup>

### Coornhert and the Leiden disputation

During this period, Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert, the famous Dutch humanist, poet, playwright, and “self-styled critic and gadfly” of the Reformed Church,<sup>148</sup> debated Reformed preachers Arent Cornelisz and Renier (also known as Reynier or Reginaldus) Donteclock in Leiden on April 14, 1578. Hundreds attended the public disputation at Leiden University. It is not known if Coolhaes attended, but it is hard to believe he would have missed it. Unfortunately, he did not mention the event in any of his writings. Like Coornhert, Coolhaes was already a critic of the views of many of the Reformed preachers. Also, as we will see, Coolhaes echoed so many ideas from Coornhert<sup>149</sup> that it seems extremely likely that the

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145. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiiir.

146. Jones, “De Nederduits gereformeerde gemeente te Leiden,” 139.

147. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiiir. It should be noted that Coolhaes almost always used the term “Anabaptists/*Doopsgezinden*.” I will generally use the term “Mennonites” in this dissertation, since Anabaptists have come to be associated primarily with the Munster radicals and other extremists, whereas after Menno Simons (1496-1561), those in the Netherlands holding Anabaptist beliefs and practices have generally been called Mennonites. I will, however, use “Anabaptist” if I refer mainly to their theological views. However, others differ in their precise usage of these names. Piet Visser, for instance, prefers to use “Mennonite” only for those groups which harken directly back to the influence of Menno, but “Anabaptists/*Doopsgezinden*” for the groups which emerged from the Waterland rift in 1557. Piet Visser, “Mennonites and *Doopsgezinden* in the Netherlands, 1535-1700,” in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 299-300.

148. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 197. See also Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 156-57, for a description of Coornhert and Coolhaes. See also: Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, *Politieke geschriften: opstand en religievrede*, ed. J. Gruppelaar (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

149. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 123. See also Hendrik Bongers, *The Life and Work of Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert*, trans. Gerrit Voogt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 72-77.

humanist served as a source of inspiration to the preacher, even though Coolhaes does not credit Coornhert with this in his written works.

Many of these ideas were brought out during the disputation. Coornhert, Cornelisz and Donteclock, as we have mentioned, debated the definition of the true church. Coornhert believed that the Roman Catholic Church, while flawed, was indeed the true church, and defended Roman Catholic rights to free worship. He thought that the Reformed Church was dangerous and ill-conceived. He despised the Heidelberg Catechism. He did not believe in the doctrine of predestination. Indeed he went further - he denied original sin and affirmed perfectionism (human perfectibility) in this life.<sup>150</sup>

It is outside the purpose of this study to do more than touch upon this event briefly, but some of Coornhert's points bear so much resemblance to the ideas of Coolhaes that it would be remiss to give them no attention at all. Some of these are: Coornhert emphasized the difference between the visible and the invisible in sacraments and ceremonies. What is internal is essential; the external is valueless. Ceremonies (in other words, the sacraments and how they are administered, as well as church orders and every custom and tradition), are not important enough to fight over. Therefore, freedom for religious diversity is very important. To punish and kill the "others," the diverse, those whom many were calling "heretics," is in Coornhert's view a great wrong. This position led him to defend the right of those others to their ceremonies, even as he thinks those ceremonies unimportant.<sup>151</sup> As we will see, Coolhaes, while criticizing but still remaining in the Reformed Church, was also preoccupied with defining the nature of the church, and focused on distinctions of external practices versus internal realities. Similarly to Coornhert, Coolhaes was willing to allow all sorts of ceremonies for the sake of diversity but did not find any of them truly important. Coolhaes also criticised the Heidelberg Catechism. In these several things, Coornhert and Coolhaes were kindred spirits.

In this chapter, we have seen the early part of Coolhaes' life and his entrance into Leiden, as well as the beginnings of the divisions centered around him which would grow in the Leiden Reformed Church in the years immediately following. In the next chapter, we will

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150. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 56; Hendrik Bongers J. R. H. Hoogervorst, M.E.H.N. Mout, I. Schöffer, and J. J. Woltjer, eds. *Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert: Dwars maar recht* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1989), 24-26. For a theological discussion of Coornhert's views on perfectibility, see also W. Nijenhuis, "Coornhert and the Heidelberg Catechism. Moment in the Struggle between Humanism and Reformation," in *Ecclesia Reformata. Studies on the Reformation*, vol. 1, part 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 188-206.

151. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 83.

focus on the most important of these conflicts, the so-called Coolhaes affair, between Coolhaes, Pieter Cornelisz, the Leiden elders and the magistrates, over elder selection – a dispute which became so serious that it eventually led to Coolhaes' excommunication and defrocking.