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Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted

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Chapter 2: The “Coolhaes affair”: a struggle for dominance

In the second half of the 1570's, Coolhaes continued to be immersed in disagreements with the Reformed consistory and with his co-preachers. He called this the schism, *de scheuring*, and sometimes divided the unhappy experience into the first and second schisms. With Pieter Cornelisz he had various conflicts. The major one was the degree to which civil government should lead in the governing of the church. This controversy led to the aforementioned first schism of the church in Leiden in 1579, in which Coolhaes with the magistracy formed a new consistory, while the old “Calvinist” consistory also continued to meet. In the second schism in the following year, 1580, Coolhaes and Lucas Hespe argued over questions of baptism and communion with former Mennonites. Both of these quarrels involved three factions in addition to the city preachers: first of all, other Reformed preachers (both in Leiden, other cities, and in the surrounding Rijnland classis); secondly, the Leiden magistracy; and thirdly, the States of Holland. Coolhaes' sympathies were almost invariably with the magistracy.

This sequence of events was later nicknamed “the Coolhaes affair.” It is difficult to figure out who first coined this expressive phrase, but it has popped up frequently in most writings about Coolhaes from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. By calling the events of the disagreement between the Leiden consistory, magistracy, and the States “the Coolhaes affair,” this complicated power struggle is reduced to identification with the one who became its lightning rod.

This conflict situation was local in scope, but encapsulated the growing tussle in many cities between preachers, magistrates and the States. It was, in a sense, a “test case” for the emerging Republic, which looked on as the drama played out in Leiden. The controversy highlighted each faction's differing views of the ideal definition and balance of the church/state relationship, and the struggle in all were engaged for dominance.

This part of Coolhaes' life, which shows his struggle on behalf of the power of the magistracy against the consistory up until his excommunication, is more documented and discussed than any other period of his life. Coolhaes himself related much of the story in his first book, *Apologia*, and his second, *Breeder bericht*.¹ Coornhert, in helping the Leiden

1. Caspar Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht van die scheuringe der kercken Christi tot Leyden, ende den negen questien die rechte voort heen ende wederom ghedraghen, ende na eens yegelijcken goetduncken werden geinterpreteert, welcke deselve zijn, en tot wat eynde die ghestelt, en door wien sy in yeder mans handen zijn ghecomen, oock by wien het staet dat deze scheure tot deser tijt toe niet is gheheelt worden, etc.*, Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz? 1580.

magistrates to defend Coolhaes, wrote about it in *Justificatie*. Rogge wrote extensively about it. Almost any writer who has written at all about Coolhaes has mentioned it.

Most importantly, Christine Kooi has written a lively and comprehensive description of the events of the “Coolhaes affair.” Her book’s purpose is to show Leiden’s ecclesiastical journey from 1572, when the city first declared itself for the Reform, to 1620 after the Synod of Dordt. As an important part of this, she tells the story of Coolhaes’ Leiden ministry, as well as the similar case of later preacher Pieter (Petrus) Hackius, who held similar views to Coolhaes. She then follows events through the political turmoil between the Arminians and Gomarists at the University and the civic unrest which resulted from their disagreements. So Kooi focuses on Coolhaes, in general, only from 1572 to 1580, giving a very complete account of those years, referring to Coolhaes’ first two books, as well as archival and other sources, and reproducing the text of the agreement which resolved the “schisms”: the “Arbitral Accord.”² We can therefore be thankful for her full coverage of this period.

Since the purpose of this biographical sketch is to relate Coolhaes’ life as a relatively brief but updated story, so that the later discussion of his ecclesiology can be seen in the context of that life, using the work of others but especially his own writings, this section will be less detailed than that of Kooi. We will relate the essential biographical details of Coolhaes in this period of his Leiden ministry, especially related to ecclesiology, but not all of the detail Kooi brings to bear for her wider picture of Leiden.

Reshuffle the preachers?

As we have seen, differences of theological opinions were present from the time of Coolhaes’ arrival in the city. Coolhaes’ opponents in the city – colleague Pieter Cornelisz and the consistory – tried to solve this by a reshuffling of the preachers to their own advantage.

Initially, an attempt was made to transfer Coolhaes out of Leiden. In June 1577, Noordwijk, a preaching point for the Leiden preachers and part of the Rijnland classis,³ asked

2. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 217-20.

3. Leiden was the only larger city in the Rijnland classis, and was its driving force. Kooi lists the eventual towns in the Rijnland classis (although a classis book only exists from 1585): Benthuisen, De Kaag, Hazerswoude, Hillegom, Katwijk, Leiden, Leiderdorp, Lisse, Noordwijk, Oegstgeest, Rijnsburg, Sassenheim, Valkenburg, Voorhout, Voorschoten, Warmond, and Zoeterwoude. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49; J. Roelevink, “Inleiding classis Leiden,” *Classicale acta 1573-1620 II: Particuliere synode Zuid-Holland, Classis*

for one of the preachers to be permanently assigned to their village. Initially the consistory was opposed to the idea of losing one of their preachers, but when the magistrates of Leiden agreed with Noordwijk to help them in this way, the elders proposed Coolhaes for the transfer. Instead, the Leiden magistracy sent Pieter Cornelisz himself, but only for three months. This was not what the consistory had intended. Coornhert, defending both Coolhaes and the magistracy, wrote that Cornelisz “fell into the net he had spread for his brother Coolhaes.”⁴ Eventually, Noordwijk called its own preacher, Cornelis Rycwaert.⁵ As Kooi points out, the magistracy was strong enough to confound and overturn the decisions of both classis and consistory.⁶

Soon after, they saw an opportunity to move preacher Johannes Hallius out of the Rijnland classis. Hallius could be called Coolhaes’ protégé at this point, although it is not sure how much they really agreed theologically. He was an unmarried preacher from the Palatinate who had been living with the Coolhaes family for two years and who also preached in nearby Warmond.⁷ A request came in 1578 that Hallius move to another location in Flanders.⁸ Coolhaes and Hallius were against this move. The Leiden consistory believed that it held the authority to send him regardless. The Rijnland classis, which met in Leiden, addressed this issue on November 5, 1578. Coolhaes was the classis president at that time. The Rijnland classis had not been in existence long – it dated only from 1575, numbering at that time seven preachers in the Rijnland area. Up until that time, the classis of Delft had wanted Leiden to be included with them, but Coolhaes, in asserting the right of “Leiden with all of Rijnland” to have an independent classis, had sent word, as we mentioned earlier, that there was nothing special in which they needed the advice of the brothers there.⁹ Now, in 1579, the classis took a key role in the decision about Hallius, siding with the Leiden

Dordrecht 1601-1620, Classis Breda 1616-1620 (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1991), xxi.

4. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Aiiiijb.

5. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. I, 61.

6. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49-50.

7. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 36Jiiiiv.

8. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Civ.

9. “... dat wij niet besonder wichtigs hebben, dairin (?) wij die broederen raedt bedorffen...” AD, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 21, 24 Jan. 1575; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 48-49.

consistory. They voted, as the consistory had wanted, to send Hallius to the South. They charged two elders to accompany him to Warmond to request that the lady of Warmond, Henrica van Egmond,¹⁰ and the church there would release him from service. In the meantime, Hallius asked Warmond for support to keep him there. He wanted it, and evidently the Warmond church did not want to lose him.¹¹

Coolhaes, in a move which typified his attitude about the authority of secular government over the church, but also his ability to maneuver around obstacles, went over their heads and complained to the States of Holland, who advised the Rijnland classis that preachers should not be taken from the region or moved against their will. Meanwhile, the church in Warmond had had a change of heart. On November 11, 1578, a written consent for Hallius' dismissal came from them. Perhaps pressure had been applied from another quarter, such as the Leiden consistory. The classis was then called together for an accusation against Coolhaes and Hallius, along with the two professors of theology, Feugeray and Louis Cappel, in attendance. Coolhaes, at bay, held that the group had no authority over him; the case was delayed until the next provincial synod, and Hallius remained in Warmond and Leiden for the time being. The Leiden magistracy supported Coolhaes and reprovved the consistory.¹² Although Coolhaes undoubtedly wanted Hallius to remain, in a sense he had also used Hallius and this case to encourage the power of the magistracy over the consistory and classis.

Consistorial innovation

The power struggle which would cause the "first schism" came to a head in January of 1579 over the selection of elders and deacons. Kooi posits that because of the Synod of 1578, and the victory over Catholicism in Amsterdam and Haarlem in the same year, the Reformed church in general, and possibly the consistory in Leiden in particular, were feeling

10. See also "Johan van Duvenvoorde, Heer van Warmond, Woude en Alkemade," www.geni.com/people/Johan-van-Duivenvoorder-heer-van-Breda/600000002739594906 (accessed January 26 2016).

11. Testimony of Tilmannus Cupus 1579? inventarisnr. 672, AD; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 50; and Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57-58. Also, Coolhaes wrote a short manuscript note to Cupus which is extant: Letter from Caspar Coolhaas to Tieleman Cupus, 1594, UBL.

12. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57-59; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49-51.

confident.¹³ Historically, the Leiden consistory, from 1574 until 1578, had followed the custom of submitting newly chosen elders and deacons to the magistracy for approval. This demonstrates the influence that the Leiden magistracy had kept over this process even after the city went over to the Reform. Coolhaes said that when he arrived in Leiden, the custom had already been well established: the list of new elders and deacons was suggested to the magistracy, approved, then read out to the whole church. More precisely, they were read out in both of the city's main Reformed Churches, i.e., St. Peter's and the Hooglandse Kerk.¹⁴ This was done on the Sunday following the approval, after the sermon. If there was no objection from individuals (*suffragia tacita* - silence is consent) in the congregation during the following week, they would be installed into service the Sunday after that.¹⁵

However, the Leiden consistory boldly decided to attempt to follow the prescriptions of the Synod of Dordrecht, 1578, in article 4. The Synod had decided that preachers should be appointed by the consistory together with the agreement of the deacons and the classis. Then, they should be presented to both the magistrates and the congregation, who had two weeks to object if they so chose. The civil magistrates, they believed, had no right to select clergy.¹⁶ This gave the church the initial power advantage in selection, and brought the secular government into the process only at the end. Coolhaes discussed the subtleties of this procedure at length in his first book, *Apologia*.¹⁷ The key point that he makes is that the one who approved the selection had the power.

So, during the Christmas season of 1578, things were done differently than before. The consistory went ahead and chose twelve elders and twelve deacons. As Kooi points out, this was the method which the Synod of Dordrecht 1578 had directed – twice the number of required elders and deacons were chosen, and the consistory would make the final selection later. They would be announced to the congregation, and then would be on trial for eight days, after which half would be chosen and after eight more days would be presented to the

13. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 55-56.

14. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 87.

15. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 33.

16. Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 229-30.

17. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 28 Gijiv-29Hv.

congregation, before they would be finally confirmed in their office.¹⁸ Their presentation to the congregation gave time for objections from the church community. So, the names of the proposed Leiden group of twenty-four were read out on a Friday after the sermon in St. Peter's church. One of them, Coolhaes reported, asked if the magistracy was aware of their calling. No, he was told, but the magistracy was always satisfied with the selection, even if the names would be sent to them after the installation. The one who asked the question was dissatisfied. Two of the candidates refused to accept the office under those circumstances.¹⁹

The secular government is not mentioned in the 1578 church order in relation to this process. The Leiden consistory, nevertheless, chose that moment – when the double number had been named but before they had been further narrowed – to go to the magistrates. Boldly, two consistory members went to the magistracy with the names of their candidates.²⁰ However, the magistrates refused to ratify them. Some of the candidates they found unsuitable. As Kooi mentions, the magistrates said that they would have liked to know the names before the congregation had heard them. They would have liked to veto candidates quietly, when desired. But on the other hand, that may likely have been the very reason why the consistory tried to force their hand.²¹

Who is an elder?

The magistrates not only refused, they asked for a written statement of a scriptural description of the duties of an elder, to be delivered in four days.²² Interestingly, the consistory chose Coolhaes to write this document. Why did they chose Coolhaes, with whom they already knew that they had disagreements? Possible explanations could be, first, that Coolhaes still had some support in the consistory despite Cornelisz and his party, or second, that he was thought to be fitter for writing a theological statement of this sort than Cornelisz.

18. *Acta of handelingen van de nationale synode der Nederlandse, Duitse en Waalse kerken, zowel inlandse als uitlandse, begonnen te Dordrecht de 2e juni, en geëndigt de 18e van dezelfde maand in het jaar 1578*, article 4, www.kerkrecht.nl/node/4888 (accessed 26 January 2016).

19. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 101-102; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 88-89, Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

20. Kooi lists the names and occupations of the candidates, and later the ones chosen. We will not reproduce them here or discuss them. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

21. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

22. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 101-102; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 88-89.

A third option might have been that they did not all actually know how deep-seated their differences were at this point.

Coolhaes' description of the ministry of elders²³ was based closely on Acts, Paul, Peter and James, and primarily analyzed the various Greek words used in the New Testament for elder, bishop, and overseer. He distinguished between "elders" of the first type, who are preachers with a public ministry and called to teach, exhort, comfort, pray, and discipline, and "elders" of the second type, who are also called to teach and exhort, as well as pray for the sick. Elders of the second type are not forbidden to preach, but they are not gifted for it or have not had enough practice in it, interpreted Coolhaes. However, this description by Coolhaes did not describe the duties of the sorts of elders that the Calvinists were envisioning. In fact, he said that both types of "elders" may discipline, but did not say it very resoundingly. Instead, "rulers," which Coolhaes again claimed was a synonym for what his generation had come to call preachers, should be the ones to discipline. What his document actually affirmed, and what all his examples pointed to, was that the preachers and teachers – those of the first type - are the true elders. Whoever is not a preacher or teacher, cannot in truth be called an elder.²⁴ He made the point also that preachers must be more learned and mature than the ones whom they teach.²⁵

Nevertheless, the consistory approved this description. They may not have disapproved of the content of the description written by Coolhaes, which as we will see was closer to their position than his subsequent written views would be, in that he at least accepted the value of elders of the second type, even though there was not much support for them from the New Testament. Later, Coolhaes will be much more critical of elders of this second type, and write that in many cases there is no necessity for consistories to exist.

The description was duly delivered to the magistrates, who then asked if the newly chosen elders would, in turn, sign it. However, they were unwilling. At this point, the chief disagreement seems to be not the content of the description, but that the magistracy should have demanded it. It seems that the discontent of the consistory over this grew as days

23. Coolhaes says that the description he wrote is reproduced in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, under letter M. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijv; Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiijv – Hiiijr.

24. Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiijv.

25. "Want die een ander leren zal, met recht geleerder moeten zijn als die geleert wort." Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiij.

passed. Cornelisz said that the government should not interfere with church business - they had enough to do in governing the city. He also argued that the magistrates had not made a public confession of the Reformed religion, and so were not “church men,” and so the church should not be bound by their decisions.²⁶

For Coolhaes, this was the real beginning of the schism.²⁷ He, however, thought that the government’s demand was not unreasonable. He reasoned that he and the church had always been obedient to their legal government in all things not in conflict with God’s Word. In regard to the argument that the magistrates were not “church men,” he felt that although it was true that most were not communing members, they all attended church. In fact, he pointed out, five of them did come to the Lord’s Table, and all came to the sermons.²⁸

The matter did not end there. After twenty-four days without signing, the consistory went back to the magistracy and asked for Coolhaes’ description of the role of elders to be returned. They explained that Coolhaes had worked too quickly, and had left out some things. In the meantime, without consulting Coolhaes, Pieter Cornelisz and the consistory wrote to Delft, where stricter Calvinist preacher Arent Cornelisz obliged by writing a different description of the duties of elders. He wrote of their responsibility in Christian discipline – that they should keep an eye on the teaching and life-style of the preachers, the individuals of the congregation, and each other, and they should have the power to discipline offenders. The government should support them in these activities, and further punish offenders who had been banned if necessary.²⁹ This point of view, in fact, gives the elders and thus the consistory much more power, not only over the magistrates and the congregants, but over the preachers themselves. This document from Delft was then presented to the Leiden magistracy in the name of the Leiden consistory but without their signatures.³⁰ As Kooi mentions, no other church in another city was being put through this requirement of signing a statement, and Arent Cornelisz advised the Leiden consistory to resist it.³¹

26. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 89-90.

27. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijv-ijr.

28. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 105-107.

29. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 929-24.

30. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 107-109; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, Conversations Five and Six; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59.

At the beginning of 1579, therefore, the situation remained unresolved; the government did not ratify the chosen elders and deacons but the consistory did not back down from their position. This created a gridlock in the proper running of the churches in the city. Also, Coolhaes deplored the disobedience of the consistory to their legal government. During this time, the city of Deventer invited Coolhaes back to preach for several weeks. He said that he would have loved to go back for a visit to the place where he had been so happy and fulfilled; the Leiden magistracy gave him permission to go. However, the consistory did not want him to leave the city while so much remained unresolved.³²

Attempts at compromise

On a certain Wednesday in February of 1579, Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz, despite their general disagreements, were somehow able to come together to work on a compromise plan for a new consistory made up of three paid members of the magistracy's choice (in place of those they had rejected), and six members chosen by the consistory. As Kooi notes, since there was a vacancy of one preacher (at this point only Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz were left), the vacancy would leave enough money for the three elders chosen by the magistracy to receive a salary.³³ This was also in line with another point which Coolhaes had made in his original elder description – that a worker was worthy to be paid (1 Tim. 5:18).³⁴ In other words, he was still affirming that the office of these elders was of the same type as preachers - that they were also Christian workers, even if on a lower rung. The consistory approved this idea, and Coolhaes and Cornelisz went to the magistracy to propose it. The government agreed to the idea of paid elders, since the office required the time and effort of “the whole person.”³⁵ It is also logical to infer that they saw this as a sign that the elders were also in a sense employees of the city,³⁶ which they would have liked, since it made them their

31. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59.

32. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiijv, folio Fiiijv-r.

33. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 60.

34. Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiij.

35. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 95, quoting from Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Fiiijr.

36. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 61.

employers and so in some sense their authority. The magistracy agreed on February 14, 1579. However, a final decision was not made for another day. The consistory wanted a bigger majority than six to three would give them. Cornelisz countered their last-minute request with the idea of nine members selected by the consistory, and three by the magistracy. Coolhaes agreed for the sake of compromise, although he thought it too large a group overall for the purpose of easy decision-making. The government agreed to this proposal, and issued two additional written acts on February 15, 1579, signed by Jan van Hout.³⁷

However, in these two additional acts,³⁸ the magistrates had actually found other ways to increase their influence on the consistory. First, the government appointed not only three elders as agreed, and ratified the elders selected by the consistory, but also named two Reformed Leiden magistrates³⁹ who were to be present as well in all consistory meetings, to “preside,” and to limit further disputes. This was not unknown in Leiden, since in 1566 former Leiden Reformed preacher Joriaan Ypensz and his church council had invited two of the all-Roman Catholic magistracy to be present in their meetings, so that the “light” of the Reform could be seen by them.⁴⁰ As well, the magistrates directed that, in the future, the consistory should present double the number of candidates for elders, and the government, not the consistory, would approve half. The magistracy defended this change on the basis of the Synod of Dordrecht 1574, articles 28 and 29, which described just this procedure. Also, the salary was set for the three paid elders whom the government had named, and they were appointed for life. Groningen would make a similar move, in the church ordinance of 1594, to paid, life-term elders.⁴¹ The Leiden consistory, alarmed, would not agree to the terms set by the magistracy, fearing that life-term elders would become more powerful than elders appointed every year.⁴²

37. Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 97, note 19.

38. The two acts of the magistracy are found in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Appendices P and Q.

39. As mentioned earlier, we are focusing on Coolhaes and his views, and so we will not go into detail about the individuals named by the consistory or the magistrates, as Kooi has covered them thoroughly. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59-66.

40. This idea is also mentioned in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Fiijr-Fiiijv.

41. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 61; Heinz Schilling, *Civic Calvinism in Northwestern Germany and the Netherlands, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 1991), 110. For the magistracy’s defense of the two acts to the consistory, see 5 April 1579, SA II, inventarisnr. 3417 ELO.

42. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 97-99.

Coolhaes at this point decided to take his proposed trip to Deventer after all, but changed his mind because of what he called “my physical weakness, also because of a difficult sickness of my wife.” For four weeks, he wrote, he remained inside his house, and said that no one from the consistory, not even colleague Pieter Cornelisz, visited him.⁴³ Whether he and his wife were indeed only sick (it was the middle of winter, and sickness would not be unlikely for anyone then), or whether he was mostly sick at heart over the intractable division, or whether this was also a calculated move on his part, perhaps to avoid any consequences of this disunity, is impossible to say.

It does seem that he was less minded to compromise after this. Shortly after this month at home, he and Cornelisz were called to the City Hall at the end of March and asked by the magistrates why the situation with the elders and deacons was still unresolved. Both preachers acknowledged their fundamental disagreement. On his side, Cornelisz replied that the magistracy’s acts could not be accepted by the consistory while they limited its power. Coolhaes added that although he and his colleague preached one Gospel and had always acted in concord, he did not want to oppose the magistracy because he did not consider that the acts they had given were against the Word of God.⁴⁴ The relationship between Pieter Cornelisz and Coolhaes deteriorated further from this point. Coolhaes described him as “a good, friendly man, and gifted to teach” and said, “I do not give him the primary blame, but [blame] many others (whom for the sake of their honor I will not name here) who encouraged and stimulated him.” Coolhaes did not name names, but Coornhert described consistory member Matthijs van Banchem as “less than peace-loving, not a stranger to ambition or an appearance of holiness, because of which he has become the second leader of all the unrest.”⁴⁵

The magistracy strikes back

43. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiiijv; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 98.

44. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 34-35; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 103-104; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 62.

45. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 40Kiiiijr–41Lv. Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 60. See also Bongers, *The Life and Work of Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert*, 82.

At this point, neither the consistory nor the magistracy could bring themselves to be more flexible. The consistory turned a document in to the magistracy in their own defense (Coolhaes said he did not see this document⁴⁶), but the magistrates were having none of it. At two o'clock that afternoon the newly-chosen elders and deacons were called to the City Hall, and asked individually if they were prepared to serve under the conditions of the two acts. Of the twenty-four, only one agreed. Another made an excuse that he was about to move to another place. Twenty-two refused to serve under the new conditions. The magistracy immediately relieved those twenty-two of their consistorial positions and forbade them to meet further as a council. The magistrates then confiscated the key to the room where the consistory met, from the sexton. The group was forbidden to meet there, or anywhere else, any longer. The old consistory was furious, and said that because the key had been awarded to them by the States of Holland and the *stadhouder*, the magistracy was out of bounds to take it away. This, however, made no difference to the magistrates.⁴⁷ As Kooi notes, the key was a “powerful symbol... with its implicit assertion of the civil power’s domination over the physical space reserved for religious life....”⁴⁸

It should also be noted that this ironic appeal of the consistory to the higher powers of government over the magistrates shows how complicated the situation had become. At this point, it began to resemble a “palace coup.”⁴⁹ Actually, it was the palace itself which decided that enough was enough, and re-seized control from its rebellious subjects. The magistracy immediately asked Coolhaes to choose a new set of elders and deacons. Time was of the essence, and the new council needed to be presented on the following Sunday. Coolhaes wrote that he would have liked time to bring the matter before the church, but as the magistracy was insistent he chose two new elders to join the one who had agreed to the two acts from the magistrates. Actually, the two had served in the past, but had recently excused themselves because of work obligations. One suspects that perhaps they had not been of the same mind with the others, and Coolhaes now chose them because of this. He also chose six

46. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 105; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 32Hiiiijv.

47. Act of dismissal of the 1579 consistory, 30 March 1579 SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

48. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

49. Term from Charles Marius Dozy, “Kerk en staat te Leiden,” in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de maatschappij der Nederlandsche letterkunde* (Leiden: Brill. 1898), 19, and used by Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

deacons.⁵⁰ In addition, he recommended Johannes Hallius as a third preacher for the city. The deposed consistory and Cornelisz did not take this lying down. The old consistory continued to meet, disregarding the injunction against this; two separate groups began to operate in the church with much mutual animosity.

The magistracy continued to take the initiative by announcing their decisions the following Sunday, April 5, 1579, with a statement written by city secretary Jan van Hout. As Cornelisz refused to read the statement aloud, Van Hout himself did so. He read it out after Cornelisz' sermon in the *Vrouwenkerk* at eight-thirty a.m., and after Coolhaes' sermon in St. Peter's at eleven o'clock a.m. This action caused confusion in the churches, and gave rise to wild rumors that the government was trying to reinstate Catholicism or bring in Lutheranism.⁵¹ As Kooi notes, the people of the congregation did not see the nuances of competing ecclesiastical systems of government, but only the magistracy's unilateral actions.⁵² Church-goers became polarized in the weeks to come as Cornelisz preached against the magistracy in his sermons, while Coolhaes preached in support of them. Congregants stayed away from Coolhaes' sermons in droves. Aggrieved former elder Matthias van Banchem, along with two others, informed Arent Cornelisz of Delft that Coolhaes was teaching that, in the Old Testament, not the priests but the patriarchs and kings "reformed" religion.⁵³

In fact, Cornelisz and those who agreed with him did not buckle under yet. Cornelisz did not want to sit on the new consistory, and tried to thwart the alms-collecting duties of the deacons by omitting the usual mention of the poor after his sermon, and even mocking the serving deacons. The old consistory wrote to William of Orange on April 6, not asking for their offices back, but nevertheless complaining that the schism was not their fault.⁵⁴ William wrote back promptly to the magistracy saying that the difficult situation of the country at

50. List of elders and deacons chosen by Coolhaes in Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 107. in Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 5v, and in Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

51. Letter regarding magistracy decisions by Jan van Hout, 5 April, 1579, 1, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 106-109.

52. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63-64.

53. Matthias van Banchem, et al. to Arent Cornelisz, 6 April 1579, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 46, AD; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 65.

54. Old Leiden consistory to William of Orange, archiefnr. 445, nr. 46, 6 April 1579, AD. See also H. C. Rogge, "Brief van de Leidschen kerkeraad aan Prins Willem I," *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap* 30 (1874): 466-67.

present required that the relationship between the church and the city governments should be left as it had been.⁵⁵ Although this showed that William wanted to communicate with the magistracy, not the consistory, the old consistory itself took this message as favoring them. Cornelisz was so elated that before he could even read the letter, he announced (on Easter, April 19, 1579) that the old consistory would be reinstated. This disturbed the magistracy, who called both Cornelisz and Coolhaes in and requested that they preach only from God's Word and not mention political things.

In fact, on May 6, 1579, Cornelisz was relieved of his post by the magistrates. The Prince, in the meantime, fearing damage to the infant university, had asked two men to travel from the court to Leiden to investigate the turmoil. He had written on April 10, and the representatives arrived on May 8. But their efforts bore no fruit. They stayed only one day and returned to report to the States, and decided to meet together with court preachers in The Hague to discuss church/state issues. Coolhaes was asked to attend, but the magistracy responded that he was needed in the city. This was certainly a statement from them to the States that they could handle the situation themselves. Cornelisz' supporters continued to maintain that they possessed a "certificate" (William's letter) endorsing their method of choosing elders and deacons. The old consistory, although deprived of their access to their chamber, continued on as shadow elders.⁵⁶

Taking it outside

Pieter Cornelisz, the week after his dismissal, boldly began to preach in Voorschoten, a village south of Leiden; he had been requested to do this by Lord van den Wijngaerden, one of the two sent by the Prince to Leiden in May.⁵⁷ Hundreds of his supporters from Leiden traveled there every week for his sermons, the Lord's Supper and baptisms.⁵⁸ Back within the city, the magistracy and their consistory brought in two additional preachers: Lucas

55. William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 14 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

56. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Aiiiijr; William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 14 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Report of Caspar Coolhaes, two elders and two deacons, 5 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 67. See also Notes by Jan van Hout on a sermon by Pieter Cornelisz (fragment), 26 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

57. According to Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 115.

58. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, conversations five and six; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 68.

Anthonisz Hespe, an elderly man, from Nieuwveen, and Johannes Hallius from Warmond. Some outside observers did not take the situation too seriously. Pieter Cornelisz wrote to Hendrik van der Corput of Breda, then preacher in Dordrecht, maintaining the need for a return of “the church in her ancient liberty.”⁵⁹ Van der Corput, although in agreement with the sentiment, wrote shortly after to preacher Arent Cornelisz that the whole dispute was merely a personal conflict between the two preachers, and thus of little consequence,⁶⁰ Arent Cornelisz had already encouraged the Calvinist-minded in Leiden in their struggle against the magistracy’s attempts to rule over them.⁶¹ In Amsterdam, preacher and future professor of theology Johannes Kuchlinus hoped that libertines there would not follow the example of the Leiden magistracy.⁶²

However, the States and William himself did not take this divisive, potentially state-weakening situation lightly.⁶³ At that moment, they wanted stability, not innovation. The preachers gathered in The Hague approved a *Remonstrantie* which underscored the church order of the Dordrecht Synod of 1578. As Kooi emphasizes, they desired a separation of ecclesiastical and civil governments as much as possible. However, the Leiden magistracy disliked this effort on the part of the States to usurp their privileges.⁶⁴ And Coolhaes had shown at every turn that what he wanted was a church submissive to the local magistracy.

At this point, Coolhaes and Cornelisz were called before the preachers in The Hague to clarify their views to the assembly. Despite his and the magistracy’s reluctance earlier, this time Coolhaes went. The two preachers traveled there to testify on May 22, 1579. Before the assembly, Coolhaes maintained that the articles of Dordrecht 1578 were not in conflict with God’s Word. On the other hand, he said, the formulation of those articles was not the only

59 . Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 68; Pieter Cornelisz to Hendrik van der Corput, 5 June, 1579, no. 511, HUA.

60. Hendrick van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 13 May and 7 September, 1579; 100, 107-8, from “Brieven uit onderscheidene kerkelijke archieven,” *WMV*, ed. H. Q. Janssen and J. J. van Toorenenbergen (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1878), vol. 3, part 2, 100, 107-108; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 69; Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 31.

61. Deposition of Nicholas Stochius, 22 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 69.

62 . Kuchlinus to Arent Cornelisz, 24 April, 1579, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 5, 236-7.

63. William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 4 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; William of Orange to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 18 July, 1579 SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

64. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70.

possible, biblical formulation. In other words, he meant, the Calvinist faction did not have a monopoly on acceptable church orders. Further, he reasoned to the assembly, the articles had never been accepted by the Leiden magistracy, so surely the magistracy could not be accused of a violation of them.⁶⁵ These were equivocal statements, allowing Coolhaes both to affirm the articles of this Synod and to disagree with the preachers.

Coolhaes was asked to sign a written version of his statements. In addition, the preachers reproved him, saying that he should have disapproved of the actions of the magistracy. At this point, Coolhaes left the meeting, perhaps in anger or frustration, or to gather his thoughts. Two men followed him. They seemed to have misunderstood and thought that Coolhaes had acted against his own conscience in submitting to the magistracy. Coolhaes then revised his response. He recommended that two representatives be sent to the Leiden magistrates, so that it would be understood that the magistracy had no intention of taking away the discipline from the church – an accusation which had been made often. He admitted that he had been hasty in choosing the new consistory without church input. Because of this, he declared that he would offer his resignation to the magistracy. This revised statement was then written up into a document, but Coolhaes did not sign it, making the excuse that it had been written hastily on a piece of scratch paper. Because of his wife's ill health, he said, he wanted to hurry back to Leiden, but promised to return immediately the following day to sign a fair copy. Once at home, however, he decided to speak to the magistrates in order to bring their answer back to the meeting. The magistracy did not want him to sign anything, but would not accept his resignation. In fact, they forbade him to return to the meeting in The Hague.⁶⁶

Was this avoidance calculated disobedience on Coolhaes' part? His excuses for not signing seem disingenuous. He may well have been expecting the magistrates to protect him, when they heard about what had been said in The Hague. In any event, from Leiden Coolhaes wrote to the preachers to explain his non-appearance, while the magistracy wrote to the States to say that the whole business involved them and not Coolhaes, and that no more time should be wasted upon it. The preachers, however, recommended that both Coolhaes and Cornelisz should be suspended and that a general synod should follow. The States, in their turn, decided

65 . Coolhaes, *Cort waerachtich verhael*, 12/Bijb; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 118-21; Van Wyngaerden and Casembroot to Coolhaes, 20 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

66. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 118-20.

that Coolhaes should be advised to stop preaching temporarily, and wrote to all cities on May 30, 1579, that no changes should be made in them, either church or city government, and sent them all a copy of the Dordrecht 1578 church order.⁶⁷ However, the magistrates told Coolhaes to keep preaching. They ignored the directive of the States, even in the face of a persistent rumor that Coolhaes and the magistracy had conceived a plot in which Coolhaes was paid to continue splitting the church, which he firmly denied.⁶⁸

This caused the shadow consistory to contact the States again. The States sent two noble members to request Coolhaes' suspension by the magistracy: Artur van Brederode and Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. But the magistrates thought that it was Pieter Cornelisz, and his unauthorized activities south of the city, which should be stopped, rather than Coolhaes.⁶⁹ The Rijnland classis responded to all this with mixed messages. Officially they recommended that Cornelisz should stop his ministry in Voorschoten. At the same time, they protested the magistracy's treatment of him. Cornelisz himself persisted in meeting with the shadow consistory in nearby Rijnsburg, which resulted in the banning of two of those members from Leiden and Rijnland (including the aforementioned contentious Van Banchem) for three years when the magistracy learned of the meetings which they had forbidden.⁷⁰

Let us refocus our attention on Coolhaes in the midst of this complicated flurry of communications and demands. It is not surprising that Coolhaes would go against the wishes of the Reformed preachers. It should be noted, though, that in this case he also disobeyed the directives of the higher civil authority, the States, in order to obey the directives of his local civil authority, the magistrates. This theme will come back again and again in his story – while for Coolhaes civil authority comes before the authority of preachers, synods and consistories, local civil authority comes before distant or national civil authority.

67. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70.

68. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 118.

69. Petition of Leiden's deposed consistory to the States of Holland, June 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Document, 3 July, 1579, folio 113v., SA II, no. 44, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70-71.

70. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 71; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 123-55; Declaration of the Rijnland classis, 23 May, 1579, no. 511, HUA; Deposition of Govert Henricsz van Gesteren, preacher at Rijnsburg, 25 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Deposition of Johan Vos, preacher at Benthuizen, 27 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Act of banishment against Matthias van Banchem and Nicoles van Dam, 27 July, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. As Kooi notes, their case was appealed and their ban was lifted: Document, 29 September, 1581, no. 556, case no. 228, NL-HaNA For more about the confusion which these events caused among the people of Leiden, and the disputes which arose among them, see Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 72-73.

Tilius and Coornhert intercede

Thomas van Thielt (Tilius),⁷¹ who had been involved in the debates in which Coornhert had participated in Leiden and elsewhere, now tried to intercede for reconciliation in the Leiden church. Tilius had likely been sent by William of Orange. Unlike the court preachers Jean Taffin and Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers, he was often sent by the Prince to solidify churches in other cities in the Netherlands and mediate in disputes.⁷² Tilius urged people not to abandon the Leiden churches, and took part in preaching in Leiden. He called for a new church council to be elected and for a fresh start on all sides. Coolhaes approved of Tilius – he praised him in *Apologia*, saying that he labored day and night to bring unity, but that he was suspect to many, who questioned his authority to preach and act.⁷³ The people were suspicious of his connection with the Prince – as Kooi notes, William was resident in Antwerp at that moment - and many objected to any attempt from the outside at control.⁷⁴

Coolhaes continued to be a focal point of suspicion, especially concerning his lifestyle, teaching, and new consistory, and so an attempt was made to find impartial judges to address this. Tilius was named, along with Artur (also known as Artus) van Brederode from the Court of Holland and the well-respected Justus Lipsius, humanist, classical scholar, and rector of the university, but they were rejected because they were not all communing members of the Reformed Church.⁷⁵ Coolhaes was seen as more and more of a troublesome

71. Thomas van Thielt, or Tilius (c. 1534-1590), was a well-respected churchman of great activity. Reformed preacher in Antwerp beginning in 1579, the same year as these events, he had also founded congregations in several Dutch cities including Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Delft and Haarlem. He had good contact with William of Orange, and corresponded with Beza. He had earlier been the abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Bernard. “Thomas van Thielt,” *NNBW*, vol. 2, 1433-36. See also the biography of Tilius on Leiden University’s site by Guido Marnef, www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/dutch/personen/heilingen/Pages/thielt.aspx (accessed January 27, 2016).

72. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 5; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 79-80; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 14 September, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

73. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 56Oiiijr.

74. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 79-80; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 14 September, 1579, no. 3417, SA II, ELO; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 18 September, 1579, no. 3417, SA II, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 125-26; Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, points 60-64.

75. Response of the old consistory to Tilius’ recommendations, 30 September, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 13 November 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 123-26.

character, and was accused of many excesses and deviant behavior.⁷⁶ In 1580, Menso Alting, the fervent and influential Calvinist preacher of the exile congregation in Emden from 1575, wrote to Arent Cornelisz that “the daily vomiting forth of poison by Caspar of Leiden wounds me to my very soul [...] If the magistrate were not such an enemy to all religion he would never permit the man such freedom.”⁷⁷ Everardus Bommelius (Van Bommel), preacher in Gouda, preached for a time in 1581 in Leiden. He apparently spoke out publically against Coolhaes, but later wrote a letter of apology for his slander, saying that he knew nothing of Coolhaes other than virtue, honor and piety.⁷⁸

The enlisting of Tilius seems to have been a move for reconciliation in the city’s church on the part of the Prince. It did not work, and Tilius blamed the partisan extremism of the Calvinists.⁷⁹ The magistrates tried from their side to defend their point of view. They enlisted the renowned Dirk Volckertz Coornhert, who, as has been mentioned, had debated preachers Arent Cornelisz and R. Donteclock in Leiden on religious issues a couple of years previously in 1578, to write in defense of Coolhaes anonymously in their name. Coornhert’s *Justificatie* (1579) is a fiery defense of Coolhaes, the magistracy, and all their actions. It was signed initially by city secretary Jan van Hout alone, perhaps because the association of Coornhert with it would certainly put off the more Calvinist faction. It was first thought by some to be Coolhaes’ work. Coolhaes denied this,⁸⁰ and Coornhert’s authorship eventually became known. The writing styles of Coornhert and Coolhaes are also very different.⁸¹ Since the *Justificatie* deals with church/state relations, more concentrated discussion of it will come in Chapter 7.⁸² Although Coolhaes and Coornhert differed in some of their views, Coolhaes later defended Coornhert also, saying that Coornhert did “only as a friend is obliged to do.”⁸³

76. Coolhaes defends himself against these in *Apologia*, folio 16Diiiiiv-r, for instance.

77. Letter from Menso Alting to Arent Cornelisz, 24 March, 1580. AD 112, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 47, AD. It is also quoted in and translated by Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 167.

78. Nicolaas Christiaan Kist and Willem Moll, “Caspar Coolhaes en Everhardus van Bommel,” *Kerkhistorisch archief* 2 (1859): 473-77. See also “Bommelius, Everardus,” *NNBW*, vol. 1, 401.

79. “Briefwisseling van Thomas Tilius,” ed. A. A. van Schelven, *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 55 (1934): 155-60; Hendrik van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 15 November, 1579, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 2, 119.

80. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 101Ccb (the first page of the Last Conversation).

81. “Coolhaes is as wide-ranging as Coornhert is concise.” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 33, my translation.

Meanwhile, other communication had arrived in Leiden which needed to be answered by the magistrates. The States of Holland had decided, back on May 27, 1579 that voting cities should be asked for their advice on the *Acta* of the Dordrecht Synod from 1578, so the classis of Rijnland sent it to the magistracy on June 30, 1579.⁸⁴ Coolhaes had not attended that Synod, although three other local clergy had.⁸⁵

The magistrates replied with their *Advies* after just three days, sending an answer on June 30.⁸⁶ The *Advies* was strongly worded (perhaps even “hateful”⁸⁷) and uncompromising - their “confession of faith”⁸⁸ against what the Reformed preachers were attempting with their proposed church order. Perhaps it seemed harsh partly because the Leiden magistrates responded quickly, whereas other cities did not hurry, and their reports were not submitted in time for the meeting of the States on August 25, 1579. On the other hand, the magistrates did not have to hesitate to know what they thought about this issue. Most likely the *Advies* was largely the work of Jan van Hout (who signed the document) and perhaps Jan van der Does (Janus Doesa),⁸⁹ noble statesman, historian and librarian. Actually, Leiden was not the only city to refuse support to the 1578 church order, which was never in fact adopted officially. Gouda, Delft, Rotterdam, and Hoorn were also against it, whereas Amsterdam, Haarlem, Dordrecht, Alkmaar, Schiedam and Brielle were in favor.⁹⁰ In the meantime, Coolhaes and

82. See also Kooi’s summary of the contents: Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 75-77. For negative reactions to the *Justificatie*, see Hendrik van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 7 September, 1575, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 2, 109-10, and from the Brielle classis, J. Reitsma and S. D. van Veen, eds., *Acta der provinciale en particuliere synoden, gehouden in de noordelijke Nederlanden gedurende de jaren 1572-1620*, vol. 2 (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1893), 183-91.

83. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, folio B, point 16; Bijr-Bijv, point 26; points 45, 47.

84. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73.

85. J. C. Overvoorde, “Advies van burgemeesters en gerecht van Leiden aan de Staten van Holland over de acta van de in 1578 te Dordrecht gehouden synode,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 9 (1912): 119, with note to F. L. Rutgers, ed. *Acta van de Nederlandsche synoden der zestiende eeuw*. Wercken der Marnix Vereniging, series 2, vol. 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1899. Reprint. Dordrecht: Van den Tol, 1980), *Acta*, 96.

86. A complete copy of the answer of the Leiden magistrates, alongside the heading of the *Acta* articles, can be found in: Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 117-49.

87. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 123.

88. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 118.

89. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 120.

90. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73; C. C. Hibben, *Gouda in Revolt: Particularism and Pacifism in the Revolt in the Netherlands 1572-1588* (Utrecht: HES, 1983), 108-109.

the new consistory tried to bring some stability to city worship in the midst of these upsets. One thing they mentioned was an exhortation to the magistrates to be more regular in taking communion and listening to the sermons.⁹¹ This is interesting as evidence that the magistrates may not have been after all very regular in their church attendance, and that Coolhaes may have been exhorting them as their pastor, even as he agreed with many of their policies and their authority in general over the church. On the other hand, perhaps this exhortation reflected the view of the consistory members or the congregation, rather than Coolhaes himself.

Unapologetic *Apology*

In early 1580, Coolhaes released his first book, *Apologia*. Dated January 27, 1580, it is a relatively cheerful, upbeat defense of himself and his ideas. *Apologia* contains first a dedication to the magistracy of Deventer, and then a dialogue of ten conversations between Coolhaes and a presumed fictional character, “Theophilus.”⁹² This Theophilus is described as a friend from Deventer who comes to Leiden to investigate rumors he has heard about their former city preacher – that he is a schismatic and disturber of the church of God in Leiden, and that he and the Leiden magistracy are “godless” libertines. This genre of conversations, which Coolhaes will repeat in several of his later works, is called a “pamphlet dialogue.” This genre often featured lay people who “spoke the truth,” or who criticized the church or clergy.⁹³ The accessible style leads one to think that Coolhaes was defending himself more in the court of public opinion, than to his colleagues.

Apologia is the longest and in many ways the most important of Coolhaes’ writings, even though it is in a popular style, because it covers most of his ideas: his views of sacraments, preachers and synods, his church/state ideas, some information about his personal life, and underlying it all, his Spiritualism. Because of this, a complete review of the

91. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 75; Proposed ecclesiastical regulations, submitted to the *Gerecht* (unfoliated, in Coolhaes’ hand), 7 August, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

92. This character, if fictitious, may have been meant by Coolhaes as an allusion to Luke 1 and Acts 1.

93. Steven Ozment, “The Revolution of the Pamphleteers,” in *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso. Aspetti della propaganda religiosa nel cinquecento*, ed. Antonio Rotondo (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1991), 6-7.

book will not be given here, but only an overview. In subsequent chapters, points will be drawn from it as appropriate.

Here, it is enough to relate that “Theophilus” comes to visit Coolhaes in mid-winter, and they speak about old times in Deventer and about the accusations which have reached his friend’s ears about Coolhaes and the terrible state of the Leiden church. Because anyone may come to the Lord’s Supper in Leiden (open communion), people say it is like visiting a dog stall or a pig pen⁹⁴ – meaning that dubious characters appear in church and chaos rules throughout the service. Theophilus has a hard time believing these tales, for he arrived in Leiden a few days earlier, in time to hear all the sermons throughout Christmas week and to see the Lord’s Supper distributed on Christmas Day. He is impressed by the orderliness and piety which are evident.⁹⁵

He says also that Coolhaes was accused of living a luxurious and gluttonous life. Theophilus therefore comes to the house of Coolhaes and his family, and sees that it is nothing like the extravagant rumors which he has heard of the preacher’s lifestyle. Coolhaes defends his choices, but on the other hand does not condemn those who might live more prosperously. Preachers deserve a reasonable standard of living, he says. He affirms diversity in religious and lifestyle choices, as long as all Christians build together on one foundation.⁹⁶ If some do not go to communion, have had their children baptized by Catholics or have been married at the City Hall rather than in church, they should not be condemned or despised.⁹⁷ No, love should be the mark of Christians.⁹⁸ It is not ours to judge, but only God’s.⁹⁹

What would the Coolhaes household have been like? In the Leiden population register of the following year of 1581, the Coolhaes household living in Leiden are listed as Caspar Coolhaes, Grietje Casparsdochter his wife, their children Sara, Rebeke, Caspar, Adolf, and

94. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Cv.

95. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 9Cr.

96. 1 Corinthians 3:10-12.

97. From 1580, those who did not want to marry in the Reformed Church could marry before magistrates in Holland. See: J. J. Woltjer and M. E. H. N. Mout, “Settlements: The Netherlands,” in Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History 1400-1600*, vol. 2, (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 407.

98. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eiijv.

99. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eiijr.

Judith, and their serving maid Agnies van Collen.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps Agnies, at least, had come with them from Germany, since her name means “from Cologne.” The 1581 census listed the Leiden city population as 11,899; possibly about one third of those were immigrants,¹⁰¹ as the Coolhaes family had been.

Returning to *Apologia*, we see that, at his friend’s request, Coolhaes retells the history of the conflicts between himself, the Leiden consistory, and the magistracy which he believes should guard and guide the church. He talks about the meeting at The Hague and his defense, then the issue of internal church government – the consistory, the deacons, the oversight of elders for the six areas of the city, the roles of classes and synods, the relationship of the internal church structure to the secular government, and the right use of sacraments. The friends also have a lengthy discussion about Christian discipline. True discipline is achieved not so much by the church and elders, as by God himself and by fellow Christians as they exhort and rebuke each other using the “rule of love” – mutual exhortation among congregants, which should lead to amendment of life. Coolhaes then states more precisely what the tenets of his belief are. Keeping close to the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, he gives a special emphasis to the doctrine of hell, in which he was reputed not to believe. Actually, he says, he teaches the reality of spiritual pains in hell which are worse than any merely physical pain.¹⁰² His teaching about the Lord’s Supper emphasizes the spiritual eating of Christ’s body and blood.¹⁰³ *Apologia* leaves no doubt about Coolhaes’ basic views, and foreshadows many of his later writings.

More division

100. “Coolhaes, zie: Colohaes Casparus,” Volkstelling 1581: Stadsbestuur (SA II), nummer toegang 501A, inventarisnr. 1289, folio 79v, ELO. See also: Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 37. Sara is mentioned, on the occasion of her marriage in 1691, to have been born in Leiden. Marriage record of Sara Caspersd. Coolhaes, 6 Sep. 1591, Nederlands Hervormd Ondertrouw (1575-1795), archiefnr. 1004, inventarisnr. 2, folio B-160v, ELO. Baptismal records have not been found for any of the children.

101. These immigration statistics are found in F. Daelemans, *Boekhoudingen van landbouwbedrijven in de Hoeksewaard uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw Leiden 1581: een socio-demografisch onderzoek. Afdeling agrarische geschiedenis. Bijdragen 19* (Wageningen : Landbouwhogeschool, 1975), 147, 200.

102. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 90Zijv–90Zijr.

103. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 98BBijv.

However, in late January 1580, another row was already in the making, involving Coolhaes and preacher Lucas Hespe. The story of what Coolhaes calls the second schism is told by him in his second book, *Breeder bericht*.

Breeder bericht (1580), sometimes referred to as Coolhaes' "second Apology,"¹⁰⁴ is not a dialogue like *Apologia*, and there is no playfulness in its tone as there was in its predecessor. Instead, it is a terse re-telling by Coolhaes of his conflicts with Hespe.¹⁰⁵ Evidently Coolhaes was moved to seriousness in his self-defense by the continuing contentious situation. There are several theological disagreements documented in the book, but at the heart of it all is Hespe's disagreement with Coolhaes over the case of a man named Jan Janszoon. A Frisian wheelwright, with Mennonite connections, Janszoon had unbaptized older children, but also a new baby born in Leiden for whom he desired baptism. Janszoon was not opposed to the baptism of his older children, but at that point wanted to have them taught Christian doctrine first and baptized later. In addition, Janszoon wanted to receive communion in the Leiden church, and even eventually train as a preacher. Coolhaes let him preach to judge his giftedness, saying that he did not wish to "quench the Spirit."¹⁰⁶ At some point, the knowledge that Janszoon's older children were unbaptized became public. The situation proved to be explosive. Hespe declared that he could not "break the bread of the Lord" with anyone with whom he was not in complete agreement. Coolhaes, however, maintained that all were brothers who held to the same foundation, even if they were mistaken about or ignorant of some details. Coolhaes said that Hespe was a good preacher, but misused his gift; that he spread untruths and allowed his opponents "to blow up this little flame of disunity into a big fire that went on to be seen over the whole town - even all of the Netherlands – alas, even as God allowed."¹⁰⁷

Coolhaes wrote a detailed description of his views for Hespe on January 16, 1580. Despite an apparent cease-fire between the two, on the very next day, Sunday, January 17, Hespe preached against Coolhaes with great rancor.¹⁰⁸ Coolhaes approached several

104. For instance, in Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 116.

105. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 10r.

106. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 2r.

107. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 8v, 5v. In saying this, Coolhaes is appropriating Coornhert's fire metaphor from *Remonstrance*, Aijv–Aijr.

influential men to ask if he might perhaps tender his resignation and be moved to a different place. However, the magistracy did not approve this.¹⁰⁹ Intervention by certain magistrates, elders, and Warmond preacher Pieter van Oy, in whose house Hespe was living at the time, achieved, again, apparent reconciliation.¹¹⁰ But all was overturned when Hespe, who had asked in view of his age to seek a place of ministry which was less tiring,¹¹¹ returned from a visit to North Holland on February 24 with the demand that he would not give communion again with Coolhaes unless he also was at peace with the brothers there, and if the Leiden preachers (Coolhaes and Hallius; Pieter Cornelisz had since gone to Zeeland) would appear to give account of themselves, together with him, at the next synod.¹¹² This was surely an attempt to bring the latitudinarian Coolhaes in direct contact with stricter preachers, and perhaps discipline him in some way outside of the safety of the shadow of Leiden's City Hall.

For his part, Coolhaes declared himself willing to go to any classis or synodal gathering, as long as he was reasoned with out of God's Word. He would not be judged by human regulations and rules. As he wrote, "Once I was a monk, and I beg leave to refuse to put on that hood again, and not to be bound by human institutions."¹¹³

The Leiden consistory would not agree to send Coolhaes and Hallius to the next synod. They instead petitioned the former elders and deacons, still a force for stricter Reformed rule, on March 6, 1580, to participate in mediation with magistrate-appointed mediators. This petition was signed by Leiden *burgemeester* Pieter Adriaansz van der Werff, fellow preacher Hallius (who despite growing disagreement with Coolhaes apparently desired mediation rather than Hespe's methods), and an elder named Jacobsz. This was, in fact, a consistory sub-group which would be expected to agree with the magistrates and Coolhaes.

108. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 4r. For more of Hespe's view, see his statement from the preceding year, Deposition of Lucas Hespe, 14 August, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. Kooi suspects that he leaned more toward the Calvinists' views. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82.

109. Willem Jan Reyersz van Heemskerck (*burgemeester*), Pieter Oom Pietersz (alderman) and Pieter van der Werff (deacon). Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82.

110. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 5r.

111. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 6r-7v; Letter from Hespe, 26 February, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82-83.

112. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 7r. Kuchlinus wrote to Arent Cornelisz of his meeting with Hespe: Kuchlinus to Arent Cornelis, 1 March, 1580, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 5, 245-46; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 83.

113. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 7v.

However, on March 10, 1580, the former elders and deacons returned an answer which declined this request; they maintained that the Prince and the States had sufficient information and that the decision was in their hands. In response to this, the current consistory wrote to them once more on March 15, to exhort them to peace and unity, but then decided that it would perhaps be better to communicate this in person. A meeting was arranged for several representatives of each side at the house of the verger on March 27, 1580, where it was agreed that Coolhaes and one other preacher from his side, and two preachers from the other side, would address the case from God's Word. If they could not agree, a church judge would be chosen by both parties.¹¹⁴

The party which represented the old consistory came back on March 28, 1580, with an additional condition - that the Prince and the States would be kept informed and be represented. Again, one can note here that the old consistory, which wanted freedom from secular government, nevertheless attempted to use the power of the higher government to maneuver against the city magistracy. The present consistory would not go this far. But the Prince and States ruled that both Coolhaes and Hesperus must suspend their ministry until the next synod. They demanded obedience of Coolhaes in particular, communicating this in writing to both preachers and the Leiden magistracy on April 6, 1580.¹¹⁵

However, the magistracy overturned this and commanded that Coolhaes continue preaching, on the grounds that the States had been misinformed by Coolhaes' opponents, and would forgive the preacher upon the receipt of better information.¹¹⁶ They also saw this as necessary for the public church in the city, because Hesperus refused to preach.¹¹⁷

Successful arbitration

The schisms were finally resolved through mediation. Leiden *burgemeester* Willem Jan Reyersz van Heemskerck, in the name of the Leiden magistracy, had gone to ask Thomas

114. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, Appendices F, folio 22v., G, folio 23, and I, folio 26; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82-84.

115. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 182.

116. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 10v.

117. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, Appendices F, folio 22v.

Tilius in Antwerp to return to Leiden to help with this, but Tilius declined the invitation.¹¹⁸ Perhaps more investment in Leiden or perceived association with Coolhaes would not have been good for him. Ysbrand Balck (Trabius), on the other hand - another Antwerp preacher of Frisian origin, a follower of Bullinger, and a delegate to the Synod of Dordt in 1578¹¹⁹ had been on the verge of leaving Antwerp for a post in Friesland, but agreed to come to Leiden on an interim basis. Coolhaes stepped down from preaching when Balck arrived on July 15, 1580.¹²⁰ Balck would later return to Leiden again to preach, from September 1585 to approximately May 1587.¹²¹ Rogge thinks that because of Coolhaes pulling back and Balck taking over the preaching during the reconciliation process, Coolhaes' opponents may have been more ready to consider compromising and agreement.¹²² Balck appears to have been favorable to Coolhaes; at the later Middelburg Synod in 1581, he was one who refused to sign the sentence against Coolhaes.¹²³ It is not unusual that Balck would have been sympathetic to Coolhaes, as he also identified as Reformed but was known to be sympathetic to the Augsburg Confession.¹²⁴ His presence nevertheless also seemed to mollify Coolhaes' opponents also and they agreed to meet together with him, the magistracy, the current consistory, and Coolhaes. Balck, together with University bursar Volker Westerholt and local Latin school rector Nicholas Stockius, were able to plan the negotiation process. The old and

118. List of expenses incurred by the negotiation of the Arbitral Accord, January 1581, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

119. Willem Nijenhuis, "Balck," *BLGNP*, 20-22. Balck was Reformed but with a "broader outlook;" see "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 221. For new work on Balck, see also: Frank van der Pol, *Mosterdzaad in ballingschap: over christelijke Identiteit en geloofsrepressie in de Nederlanden: Het cleyn mostertzaet (1590)* (Kampen: Kok, 2007); Frank van der Pol, "Conversion and Civil Society: Ysbrandus Trabius' Sermon 'Het cleyn mostertzaedt'" (1590) in *Paradigms, Poetics and Politics of Conversion*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer, Wout J. van Bekkum, and Arie L. Molendijk (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 73-84; Frank van der Pol, "Ysbrand Trabius' 'Het cleyn mostertzaedt' (1590): Aspekten der Theologenbildung in einer reformierten Predigt," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis und Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 231-44.

120. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 84-5; J. Reitsma, "Ysbrand Balck. Een predikantenleven in de tweede helft der zestiende eeuw," *Friesche Volksalmanak* 16 (1899): 46-67.

121. "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 229.

122. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 183; Reitsma, "Ysbrand Balck," 58; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 85.

123. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 128. See also the correspondence of Aggaeus van Albada in regards to Balck, PAP 2 and 3, UBL.

124. "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 228.

new consistories participated in this plan.¹²⁵ Arbiters from both church and state, from inside and outside Leiden, were selected to deliberate the conflict.¹²⁶ These lengthy meetings, held from September 10 to October 29, 1580, finally produced reconciliation, culminating in the document named “the Arbitral Accord.”¹²⁷ The document itself was intended as a “formula of concord”¹²⁸ to restore good will and trust in the Leiden church. It described the more Calvinist side and Pieter Cornelisz as having had a “thoughtless zeal for ecclesiastical freedom” while Coolhaes needed to ask forgiveness and submit to church discipline and then be reinstated as preacher, together with Cornelisz and Hallius. Both sides were thus to admit fault, although Pieter Cornelisz who had, in the midst of the conflict, departed to Middelburg to serve a church in Walcheren in Zeeland,¹²⁹ was not happy with the statement and wrote to complain. The Accord also directed that the consistorial mess would be resolved by each side selecting six possible candidates and then letting the magistracy appoint eight of them, and that two magistrates would attend future consistory meetings, but only to listen, not to preside.¹³⁰ Despite some lingering complaints, a formal acknowledgement and ceremonial reconciliation happened on Sunday, November 27, 1580, when one of the arbiters, Wernerus Helmichius from Utrecht, read the Accord to the congregation in St. Peter’s church.

The resolution, however, did not fully answer and heal the deep divisions between parties which believed in very different models of church/state relations. On a personal level, also, relationships between the preachers were not truly healed. In the end Hesperus succeeded (according to Coolhaes) in turning their third colleague, Hallius, against his former mentor. Coolhaes must have shown some temper here – he confesses to being too heated in his

125. Negotiation compromise between the old and new consistories, 19 August 1580, SA II, no. 3358, fols. 11-14, ELO.

126. Antwerp consistory to the Leiden magistracy, 28 July, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. This was to lengthen Balck’s stay: Draft negotiating compromise, 15 July, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. Also, Geurts, *Voorgeschiedenis van het staten college te Leiden*, 7-13. For a list of all arbiters, see Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 85-86, 220.

127. “Het Arbitrael Accord,” 29 October, 1580, SA II, no. 3358, RKZA, ELO. The text of the *Arbitral Accord* is also reproduced in Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 217-20.

128. Letter of Werner Helmichius to Hendrik van der Corput, 31 December, 1580, Appendix D, in J. Hania, *Wernerus Helmichius* (Utrecht: H. Honig, 1895), xi–xv; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 86.

129. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 109; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 87.

130. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 87; Extracts of Pieter Cornelisz’ letter to the arbiters, 17 November, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. See also Old consistory to the Leiden magistracy, 28 November, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO, for continued complaints about the banishment of Van Banchem and Van Dam.

reaction against the younger preacher.¹³¹ Hallius in 1581 moved to Amsterdam to preach. Later in his life, he identified himself as a Contra-Remonstrant.¹³² For his part, Hespe did not remain in Leiden, but went to Haarlem.¹³³ The controversies around Coolhaes himself did not come to an end either, but progressed to the Middelburg Synod and beyond, where he would be defrocked and excommunicated.

So it is apparent that the disagreements in Leiden and beyond, with Coolhaes at their center, become more and more heated and difficult to resolve. The disputes contained in miniature many of the issues with which the society was wrestling – what the nature of the “public church” was, and how far its authority extended; the role of government in church life, both city and national; and the appropriateness of church discipline. The “Coolhaes affair” was in reality less about Coolhaes than it was about the competing consistories and factions – the local magistrates and their party on one side, the “Calvinists” both in Leiden and in the wider regions on the other, and the power of the Prince and States. Coolhaes inevitably threw in his lot with the authority of the local government in Leiden. In the next chapter, Coolhaes will be forced before his opponents and judged by his peers.

131. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 3r.

132. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57.

133. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 182-87; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 83; Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 110-16; Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de reformatie. Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven* (The Hague: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1989), 279.