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Steen, J.A. van der

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Author: Steen, Jasper Andreas van der

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CHAPTER 4

A CONTESTED PAST

In 1618, the clergyman and poet Caspar Barlaeus published an anonymous request to Prince Maurice of Orange. As a member of the persecuted Remonstrant religious minority in the Republic, Barlaeus sought Maurice's protection in the struggles within the public church between Remonstrant dissenters and orthodox Counter-Remonstrants. 'The welfare of this land', he wrote, 'is due to the freedom of conscience, acquired through the blood of the House of Nassau and so many courageous heroes and inhabitants of these lands.'¹ He then turned to some of the canonical episodes in the Revolt's history and reinterpreted them to suit his own purposes. The Remonstrants 'are still the same people, or at least the children of those people, who have taken shelter under the wings of the Prince of Orange of glorious memory, and have assisted him with goods and blood.'² And, he added, 'many of them still carry the scars of the Spanish tyranny.'³ The people of Brill were the first to oppose the duke of Alba, the author alleged (referring to the city's history as first Beggar town), but 'now' Brill's Remonstrants were excluded from the public church. It was no different in Leiden, where Remonstrants had starved just as much as the rest of the city's population during the siege by the Spaniards in 1573-74.⁴ The historical parallels in this pamphlet served to remind the stadholder, Prince Maurice, that the Counter-Remonstrant repression of religious minorities stood in direct opposition to what the Republic had been fighting for over the last forty years. The pamphlet is only one example of a much wider phenomenon, and in turn Counter-Remonstrants responded to the assertions of their opponents with alternative historical evidence. The political and religious conflicts of the Dutch Republic during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) thus involved a contest for the moral ownership of the communal past. The canon, which – as we have seen in chapter 2 – had first been used to demonise the foreign enemy, now became an important weapon for opposition groups in domestic politics.

¹ Caspar Barlaeus, *Clachte ende Bede Der Remonstranten hier te Lande / aen den Hoogh gheboren, Doorluchtighen Prince van Oraengien, Gouverneur van Hollandt, Zeelandt &c.* (1618), p. 6: 'de welstandt deser Landen bestaet meest in vryheydt der consciencien / die door het Bloedt van het Huys van Nassouwen, ende soo veler vromer Helden ende Inwoonderen des Landts is verkregen.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 11: 'Wy syn noch de selve Luyden / ofte altijt hare kinderen / die onder de vleughelen van den Prince van Oraengien H.M. hebben geschuyt / die hem hebben met goedt en bloedt gheassisteert.'

³ *Ibid.*: 'van welcke noch verscheyden de lidt-teecken der Spaensche tyrannijs draghen.'

⁴ *Ibid.*

This chapter examines these ‘memory wars’ in the first half of the seventeenth century and explains how public memories of the Revolt against the Habsburg overlord in the 1560-80s could serve decades later not only to bring people together but also to discredit opponents on the domestic political scene. The present chapter covers two cases in chronological order. The first is the conflict between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants in the Dutch Republic in the 1610s, as exemplified by the Barlaeus excerpt above. What began as a religious quarrel between two factions of the Reformed public church quickly became a political struggle that endangered the unity of the fledgling Republic. The second case will examine the serious challenge to Habsburg authority in the Southern Netherlands in 1632. During this year, a group of malcontent indigenous nobles conspired against the regime, thereby imperiling the dynastic and religious reconstruction that had taken place under the Habsburg rulers since the turbulent years of the Revolt. In both cases, memories of the conflict played a key role.

Memory wars in the Dutch Republic

As we have seen, the historical canon in the Dutch Republic was originally developed to unite ‘Netherlanders’ against Spain. To substantiate their claim that the Spanish were not to be trusted, anti-peace propagandists reduced the history of the Revolt against the Habsburg overlord to a selection of episodes to remind people of the cruelties Spanish rulers and their soldiers were capable of.⁵ The result was a relatively inclusive and non-confessional narrative that aspired to persuade as many people as possible that the war should be resumed. But the inclusive character of this narrative was put to the test when new internal divisions compromised the unity of the Republic. Around 1610, a religious quarrel broke out over the doctrine of double predestination between two professors of theology in Leiden: Jacobus Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus. The disagreement between the two men was ostensibly a matter for academics only, but it almost dragged the state into civil war.⁶

⁵ Pollmann, *Het oorlogsverleden*, pp. 9-10; Van der Steen, ‘Goed en fout’, pp. 87-88.

⁶ Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III: Bestand, 1609-1621* (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1966); A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldebarnevelt* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1998); for more concise explanations of the troubles, see: A.Th. van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen. Het kopergeld van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Ooievaar, 1996), pp. 304-311; W. Nijenhuis, ‘De publieke kerk veelkleurig en verdeeld, bevoorrecht en onvrij’, in: P. Blok, ed., *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden 6* (1977-1989), pp. 325-343; T. Kooite, ed., *Rekkelijk of precies. Remonstranten en contraremonstranten ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Utrecht: Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, 1994); Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the*

The disagreement between these theologians was about the Reformed concepts of predestination and human free will.⁷ Arminius believed that the doctrine of predestination allowed for the human initiative to reject God's offer of salvation. Otherwise people might mistakenly believe that God could be held accountable for human sin. For Gomarus, however, ideas of human involvement in the Lord's gift were anathema because they impinged on His absolute sovereignty.⁸ A.Th. van Deursen has shown that the supporters of these two men used not only doctrinal but also political arguments.⁹ Carolina Lenarduzzi has found that propagandists from both opposition groups were the first to appropriate public memories of the Revolt to conduct their political disagreements.¹⁰ Building on Lenarduzzi's work, this chapter will assess how this shift from external to internal usage occurred. We will see that when people begin to use historical interpretations to support two contradictory agendas, a political disagreement can become also a conflict about the appropriation and correct reading of the past.

The rhetorical use of history in the Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant struggles of the 1610s will be discussed in three sections. The first will involve the debate over which group had the oldest claim of being Reformed. The second section will deal with history as a rhetorical trap. It will examine the appropriation of Prince William of Orange's heritage by both parties. The final case will examine the use of references to the Spanish army commander Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba (1507-1582) as the Revolt's darkest villain. Before exploring these cases, I will introduce the religious troubles briefly.

Religious troubles in the 1610s

Around 1610, a number of Arminian clergymen in the Reformed public church were threatened with suspension because of their dissenting views, notably about the doctrine of predestination.¹¹ As a minority they began to seek support from government authorities. In January 1610, forty-four prominent Arminian clergymen presented a Remonstrance to the

Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565-1641) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 105-107.

⁷ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, pp. 228-229.

⁸ Nijenhuis, 'De publieke kerk', p. 334.

⁹ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, pp. 275-309

¹⁰ Carolina Lenarduzzi, 'De oude geusen teghen de nieuwe geusen'. De dynamiek van het oorlogsverleden ten tijde van het Twaalfjarig Bestand', *Holland* 43:2 (2011), pp. 65-69.

¹¹ Judith Pollmann, *Een andere weg naar God. De reformatie van Arnold Buchelius (1565-1641)* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2000), pp. 128-129.

States of Holland, arguing for a more flexible and inclusive public church.¹² Hence they became known also as *Remonstrants*. Holland's land advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the highest official of the province, favoured an inclusive public church and chose to support the Remonstrants for purposes of social harmony.¹³ Followers of Gomarus (or *Counter-Remonstrants*), however, were orthodox Calvinists who rejected doctrinal flexibility and government interference in the church.

Oldenbarnevelt's first major move was the *Resolution [...] for the Peace of the Churches [Resolvtie [...] tot den vrede der kercken]* (1613), which was drafted by Hugo Grotius, pensionary of Rotterdam and an Arminian sympathiser. The Resolution, adopted by the States of Holland in 1614, ordered both factions to bury the hatchet and agree on a policy of peaceful co-existence within the public church.¹⁴ Holland thus mandated toleration and instructed that the issue of predestination not be discussed in church services.¹⁵ Here, the States effectively decided unilaterally that the Arminian profession of the faith was an acceptable practice within the public church. Counter-Remonstrants saw this action as an undesirable compromise of their faith and as an intolerable intervention of the state in church affairs.¹⁶ On the local level these tensions led to serious disruptions to public order. In the Arminian bulwark of Rotterdam, for instance, the extremist Counter-Remonstrant clergyman Adam Hartwech purposefully took on his opponents in the streets. Together with his friend Abraham Vijven, a tinker originally from Liège and not schooled in theology, he visited the local taverns to dispute with random Arminians.¹⁷ Vijven came in conflict with the authorities when he insulted the preacher of Charlois. Due to the threat he posed to the public church he was compelled to leave the village by the beginning of May 1613. Vijven protested, and the sanction for his violation of the law was mitigated on the condition that he promise to cause no more trouble. Since Vijven refused to make any such promise, he was banished. A Schiedam printer, inspired by the events, wrote a critical

¹² Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 425.

¹³ For Oldenbarnevelt's religious convictions, see: Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III*, pp. 1-35; for toleration as a means to preserve civic harmony: Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 251; A. Algra en H. Algra, *Dispereert niet. Twintig eeuwen historie van de Nederlanden 2* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1978), p. 55; Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie. Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven* (The Hague: Smits, 1989), p. 233.

¹⁴ *Resolutie Vande Doorluchtige Moghende Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vriesland tot den Vrede der Kercken* (The Hague: Hillebrant Jacobsz, 1614), Knuttel 2109.

¹⁵ Kootte, ed., *Rekkelijk of precies*, p. 18.

¹⁶ See, for instance: Jacobus Trigland, *Antwoorde op dry vrighen, dienende tot advijs in de huydenaechse swaricheden* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1615), Knuttel 2191; Vincent van Drielenburch, *Cort examen ende sententie Johannis Vtenbogaerts over seker tractaet, welckes tytel is: Verdediging van de resolutie [...] der Staten van Hollandt [...]. totten vrede der kercken* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1615), Knuttel 2195.

¹⁷ W. Geesink, *Calvinisten in Holland* (Rotterdam: J.H. Dunk, 1887), p. 194.

poem about the local government's treatment of Vijven in which he posed the rhetorical question: 'Tell me, rambler fresh, in honour of Orange. What is the distinction, between Rotterdam's Inquisition and Spain'?¹⁸ The historical parallel equated the pro-Arminian government policies with those of the sixteenth-century Spanish inquisition. 'Inquisition' would for most people evoke an association with the severe religious persecutions on the eve of the Revolt in the 1560s. Rotterdam's city magistrates took this remark very seriously and condemned the printer to fourteen days' imprisonment.¹⁹

In the course of the 1610s, a string of political associations came to be attached to the religious disagreements. Counter-Remonstrants, for instance, argued that the teachings of their Arminian opponents smacked of Papist sympathies or even of 'Pelagianism'.²⁰ If a believer could himself influence God's offer of election by doing good deeds, what then distinguished the Remonstrants from evil Catholics?²¹ Furthermore, Gomarists increasingly regarded the Remonstrants as unpatriotic because they sought support from the advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, who was the architect of the controversial Truce with Spain. At the height of the conflict from 1617 onwards, Counter-Remonstrant propagandists even raised suspicions that Oldenbarnevelt was in fact a crypto-Catholic and in league with the Catholic powers France and Spain.²² Both Oldenbarnevelt and Prince Maurice lived in Arminian-dominated The Hague. Tensions rose in January 1617 when the Counter-Remonstrants, who refused to attend Arminian services, wanted a church building to be allocated to them. In the summer they had attended Gomarist services in neighbouring Rijswijk, but the winter rendered such *Auslauf* less attractive, especially for the young and elderly.²³ Things changed when Oldenbarnevelt asked the stadholder's assistance in

¹⁸ Jan Wagenaar, *Beknopte historie van't vaderland, van de vroegste tyden af tot aan het jaar 1767* (Harlingen: Volkert van der Plaats, 1776), volume 2, p. 74: 'Zeg my Trekker frisch, ter eere van Orange / Wat onderscheid daar is, tusschen Rotterdams Inquisitie en Spanje'.

¹⁹ W. Geesink, *Calvinisten*, pp. 237-238.

²⁰ See, for instance, Anonymous, *Een kort en waerachtich verhael, wat voor een grouwelijck ghevoelen dat de Arminianen, Vorstianen, ofte nieuwe Arrianen, Pelagianen, Socinianen, Samosatianen ghesocht hebben in de Ghereformeerde Kercke in te voeren, en in kort hier teghen gestelt het ghevoelen der Ghereformeerde Kercke* (1612), Knuttel 2009; Jacobus Trigland, *Kerckelycke geschiedenissen begrypende de swaere en bekommerlijcke geschillen, in de Vereenigde Nederlanden voor-gevallen, met serselver beslissinge, ende aenmerckingen op de kerckelycke historie van Johannes Wtenbogaert* (Leiden: Adriaen Wyngaerden, 1650), ff. *3r-*4v, pp. 421-423.

²¹ Arminians, in turn, also accused Counter-Remonstrants of Papist tendencies. One Remonstrant author called the Gomarist clergymen who opposed government interference in church order 'Jonge Pausen vanden Ouden Paus van Rome' or young popes of the old pope of Rome: Robbert Robbertsz Le Canu, *Ratelwachts roeprecht, tegent boeck vanden schijndeuchtsamen engel, ofte geest Cornelis van Hil* (1611), Knuttel 1839, ff. 3r-v.

²² Van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau*, p. 270.

²³ Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III*, p. 439; for the term 'Auslauf', see Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by faith: religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), p. 145.

keeping the Counter-Remonstrants from causing unrest in the city.²⁴ Maurice was invited to appear at a meeting of the Delegated Councillors, together with the High Council, the Court of Holland, the Audit Chamber and the magistrates of The Hague on 13 January 1617.²⁵ The English ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton, although probably not present himself, wrote a report of this assembly. According to his account, the regents asked Maurice to prevent the Counter-Remonstrants from causing disturbances and, if necessary, to use his own princely guard or forces from outside the city to keep them in check. Maurice declined, arguing that his guard was there to protect only his own person and that military forces were for the defence of the country against foreign threats. In reaction to the continued pressure from the magistrates, Maurice ‘called for the register-book, wherein his oath was set down, which he took in the year 86; at which time he entered into the charge he now holds for the service of the state’.²⁶

The prince ordered the register-book for a purpose, it ‘being read in all their presences, and therein this article noted in particular, that both he and the states do mutually bind themselves, even to the last drop of blood, for the defence of the reformed religion, which was the first ground of their quarrel, and for which his father lost his life’.²⁷ Carleton never made any attempts to disguise his sympathy for the Counter-Remonstrant camp, but if he can nonetheless be trusted in his account, Maurice invoked the memory of his deceased father William of Orange to point out that the Revolt had been foremost a struggle for the Reformed religion.²⁸ ‘Sitting in the same chair which was anciently the place of the counts of Holland, [...] [where] he hath not been called before this time since 86’, the prince commanded the magistrates to assign a building to the Counter-Remonstrants and allow them free worship.²⁹ Maurice’s oath did indeed include a pledge for protection of the ‘true Reformed religion’. Strictly speaking, it did not specify this to be the Counter-

²⁴ Van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau*, p. 256.

²⁵ Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III*, p. 441; the term ‘Delegated Councillors’ is a translation of ‘Gecommitteerde Raden’. This institution was the executive committee of the States of Holland: Robert Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen in Nederland tot den val der Republiek* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), pp. 224-226.

²⁶ Dudley Carleton to Ralph Winwood, 14 January 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton, Knt. during his embassy in Holland from January 1615/1616 to December 1620*, edited by Philip Yorke (London: s.n., 1775), p. 87.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ See also J. Bax, *Prins Maurits in de volksmeening der 16e en 17e eeuw* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1940), p. 25; Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III*, pp. 443-444.

²⁹ Carleton to Winwood, 14 January 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton*, edited by Yorke, p. 87.

Remonstrant variant of the faith, even though this is what Maurice seems to have implied.³⁰ Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether the prince indeed acted as Carleton reported. It is obvious, however, that the ambassador thought it a good thing to have the Orange dynasty's support for the Counter-Remonstrant cause.

Carleton may not have been entirely representative of the Counter-Remonstrants, but he was an astute observer of Dutch politics and his accounts tend to be accurate, if perhaps somewhat simplified, reflections of Counter-Remonstrant sentiments. He wrote to the English secretary of state that 'the original cause of this disorder is easily discovered to be Arminianism: the effects will be faction in the state, and schism within the church'.³¹ He continued his report ominously, writing that 'the factions begin to divide themselves betwixt his excellency and mons. Barnevelt, as heads, who join to this present difference their antient quarrels'.³² These ancient quarrels concerned the negotiation of the truce with Spain and the Habsburg Netherlands. More recently, Maurice had also fallen out with Oldenbarnevelt over the advocate's wish to support the pro-Spanish and Catholic French government in its domestic struggles against Huguenot rebels, support which Maurice disapproved of.³³ To underline the urgency of his concerns, Carleton recounted the washing ashore of three whales – 'a popular vanity of prognosticating change', which nevertheless he 'cannot omit'.³⁴ Two of them beached on the Island of Brill 'in the very places and instant time of these tumults'. Brill had been the place where in 1572 the rebels first took control. Carleton was all the more surprised because 'it is remembered, that at the first breaking out of these country wars, there were two of the like bigness driven on shore in the river of Schelde below Antwerp, and at the framing of the truce one here in Holland'.³⁵ Apparently, Carleton's informants frequently used the Revolt to interpret the current state of affairs.

The news of Maurice's support for the Counter-Remonstrants spread quickly. Dudley Carleton wrote that at the beginning of February some Counter-Remonstrants in Rotterdam were holding a clandestine service in a private house. A group of Arminians allegedly threw stones at the house where the Gomarists were assembled, calling them

³⁰ Hugo Grotius, *Verantwoordingh van de vvettelijcke regeringh van Hollandt ende VVest-Vrieslant* (Paris: s.n., 1622), p. 121; see also: C.P. Hofstede de Groot, *Honderd jaar uit de geschiedenis der Hervorming in de Nederlanden (1518-1619)* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1883), p. 403.

³¹ Carleton to Winwood, 14 January 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton*, edited by Yorke, p. 88.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³³ Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt III*, p. 444.

³⁴ Carleton to Winwood, 14 January 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton*, edited by Yorke p. 89.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

slijkgeuzen or dirty beggars. A bold woman came out of the building and exhorted the unruly troublemakers to stop, reminding them that ‘his excellency is a slyk-gueux also’.³⁶

On 23 July 1617, Maurice and his princely entourage openly attended Counter-Remonstrant services in the Kloosterkerk in The Hague, defying his own Arminian preacher Uytenbogaert. Johan van Oldenbarnevelt saw the stadholder’s behaviour as the provocation it was likely intended to be. The States of Holland adopted a *Scherpe Resolutie* or sharp resolution, which allowed cities to employ their own *waardgelders*, mercenary soldiers, to enforce toleration of religious nonconformists within the public church.³⁷ The British ambassador was one of the most vehement opponents of this measure. On 6 October 1617, he felt compelled to speak out against government support for the Remonstrants and addressed the States General who were assembled in The Hague. The text was subsequently printed and distributed.³⁸ Carleton explained that ‘to seeke the originall of this euill any further backe then the time of Arminius professor at Leyden, were to disguise the fact’. He wanted to make clear that it was not the doctrinal documents of the Reformed church that were the source of all troubles but Arminius who was the culprit.³⁹ He provided a succinct history of the religious troubles and deplored the ‘animosities and alterations betweene the magistrates, sowernesse and hatred amongst the people’. Then, he portrayed nostalgically the situation before the conflicts in the 1610s. Before the rise of Arminius and his schismatic behaviour, there had been ‘vnion in the church and estate; good correspondence between the magistrates; Christian loue and charitie among the people’.⁴⁰ To solve the problems, Carleton urged the States General to hold a national synod: ‘I say nationall, because the euill being passed from province to province, a provincial synode is not sufficient’.⁴¹

A national synod had been a tricky subject from the start of the religious troubles. First of all, delegating church affairs to a national synod was placing the matter out of the hands of the provincial government, and that was exactly what the Arminians did not want.

³⁶ Carleton to Winwood, 6 February 1617, in: *ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁷ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, pp. 271-272.

³⁸ Carleton to Thomas Lake, 22 November 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton*, edited by Yorke, pp. 206-207; Jacob Taurinus, *Weegh-schael, om in alle billickheydt recht te over-vvegghen de oratie vanden [...] heere Dvdley Carleton [...] inde vergaderinghe der [...] Staten Generael* (1617), p. 4.

³⁹ Dudley Carleton, *The speech of Sir Dudley Carlton lord ambassador for the king of Great Britain, made in the assembly of the lords the Estates Generall of the vnitied provinces of the Low Countries. Being assembled at the Haghe. Touching the discord and trovbles of the church and policie, caused by the schismatic doctrine of Arminivus* (London: William Iones, 1618), p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

As a minority, they needed government protection to counterbalance the orthodox Calvinist majority within the Reformed church. Furthermore, a national synod was seen by the majority of cities in Holland as a challenge to provincial sovereignty.⁴² Carleton waved these objections aside. He made a rhetorical appeal as a foreigner: ‘I will not play the busie-body in aliena republica, therein to iudge how much euery prouince in particular ought in such occasions to yield to the publike’. And then he proceeded to do just that: ‘let them not forget the oath by which they are consolidated and closed up into one body which is the Vnion of Vtrecht grounded upon religion’.⁴³

The Union (1579) was, *de facto*, the constitutional document of the Republic, and although it guaranteed the sovereignty of each province, especially in matters of religion, ‘this ought to bee vnderstood’ – according to Sir Dudley – ‘soundly for the maintenance of the pure and sincere religion’. The articles which prescribed provincial autonomy in matters of religion, notably article thirteen, were originally intended to allow Holland to uphold Reformed purity ‘without being exposed to the will and pleasure of the other provinces which at that time were not reduced to such a union of the church as they enjoy at this present’.⁴⁴ Here, Carleton referred to the time around 1580 when, in many provinces in the east and south of the rebel United Provinces, the Reformed church was less developed and under constant pressure from Habsburg troops who were trying to reconquer the territory, quash the insurrection and ‘recatholicise’ the population. Now, the situation was different since the Reformed church had become the established public church in all of the provinces. The original intentions of the Union of Utrecht’s articles about provincial autonomy regarding religious matters had been overtaken by the new reality of Calvinist hegemony.

In this historical setting propagandists from the Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant camps tried to convince the population of the validity of their viewpoints. Increasingly, secular political arguments complemented doctrinal arguments and memories of the Revolt became political weapons.

⁴² J.G. Smit, ed., *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal. nieuwe reeks, 1610-1670: derde deel, 1617-1618* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 286.

⁴³ Carleton, *The speech*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7; see for article 13 of the Union of Utrecht: Simon Groenveld, *Unie – Bestand – Vrede. Drie fundamentele wetten van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), p. 65.

Who was first?

Just as Catholics at the beginning of the Revolt had argued that Protestants wanted to undermine church teaching (as we have seen in chapter 2), Counter-Remonstrants accused their Arminian opponents of introducing novelties into the public church. The severest allegation was that Arminians sought to dilute the most important doctrinal documents of the Reformed church in the Netherlands so that Arminian ideas about predestination could become accepted practice. The Synod of Emden in 1571 had accepted the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession, and it was the duty of consistories and classes to uphold them.⁴⁵ Counter-Remonstrants argued that both confessions had been fought for in the war against Catholic Spain. They felt that changing the catechism and confession would be tantamount to casting off the achievements of the Revolt.⁴⁶ Arminians found a way around the accusation that they sought to introduce novelties. Although Counter-Remonstrants perceived them as a religious group that had come into existence only in the early seventeenth century, Remonstrants argued that they acted more in the spirit of the Reformation than their adversaries.⁴⁷ Their Gomarist adversaries' claim of antiquity was clearly nothing compared to the antiquity of the Bible. Prince Maurice's Remonstrant court chaplain Johannes Uytenbogaert (who had been one of the first authors of the 1610 Remonstrance) was one of those who used this argument. In one of his pamphlets he sneered: 'The history of forty years on which the Counter-Remonstrants pride themselves is real novelty compared to the history of Holy Scripture and the first Christendom'.⁴⁸

The focus on the Reformation may also be explained by the fact that the year in which the past turned into a battleground of the two opposing factions (1617) marked the centenary of Martin Luther's Reformation. Reynier Telle, a pro-Remonstrant satirist, recalled that 'it is a hundred years ago, neither less nor more, that Luther ventured to reform the Roman church and her perverted doctrine'.⁴⁹ The Reformation of Luther spawned many

⁴⁵ Trigland, *Kerckelycke geschiedenissen*, ff. *3r-*4v, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁶ [Johan Casimir Junius], *Wederlegginge van de Weegschaal onlangs uytgegeven tegens d'oratie des ed. heere Dvdley Carletons* (1618), pp. 154.

⁴⁷ See for instance the discussion about the supposed *nieuwlichterij* of the Arminians in Uytenbogaert, *Coppe and its retort* in [Jacobus Trigland], *Klaer /ende grondich teghen-vertooch, van eenighe kercken-dienaren van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, gestelt tegen seker vertooch der remonstranten* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1617); see also: Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 230.

⁴⁸ Johannes Uytenbogaert, *Coppe van seker vertooch onlangs bij eenighe predicanten der ghereformeerde kercke ghedaen [...]. roerende de oudtheyt vande gereformeerde leere* (Delft: Bruyn Harmansz Schinckel, 1617), f. a3r: 'Een outheijt van 40. Jaren daer op de Contra-remonstranten stoffen is rechte Nieuwicheyt ten aensien vande oudtheyt des H. Schrift ende der eersten Christenheyt.'

⁴⁹ R.B. Evenhuis, 'Telle, Reinier', in: D. Nauta et al., eds., *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1978), pp. 375-376; Reynier Telle, *Vrede-zangh: ofte Jaer-liedt*.

others, which the author enumerated concisely, explaining in a very accessible way the rise of so many denominations. He began with Calvin who started reforming the church of Geneva but ‘gradually crept into the Netherlands, [where he] found many doors open.’⁵⁰ Yet, many others were not susceptible to Calvin’s doctrines and chose to support other sects. Roughly around the same time Menno Simons gathered many followers. ‘Then people had three Reformed churches here in the land, i.e. separated from the Pope.’⁵¹ And all schisms within the church continued until the present. Now we have ‘the Arminians dispute, as everyone knows, with the Gomarists.’⁵² Telle sought to explain that Calvinism was only one way of being Reformed, a view that favoured the Remonstrant arguments.

Interestingly, though, the rhetoric of seniority also proved irresistible for the learned Arminian clergyman Uytenbogaert. To strengthen his argument, he told the reader that ‘there are in these lands many preachers now dead, and some still alive, old men: who have declared and still declare never to have had a different sentiment than the current Remonstrants do now’.⁵³ He pointed to the example of Rotterdam preacher Jan Ysbrantsz, who from the very beginning of the Reformation in that city ‘hearing of Calvin’s predestination, already in that time publically refuted it, and that some old members noticing that some others sought to introduce it, departed for that reason from the church’.⁵⁴ And in the city of Hoorn, Clement Maertensz, one of the oldest retired clergymen in Holland, ‘frequently declared that from the beginning of his service onwards he had had and had learned no other feeling regarding the predestination than that of Melanchton, and to have learned such from Hardenberg, one of the very first preachers of our reformation in Emden’.⁵⁵ Hence the Counter-Remonstrant claim of being more truly Reformed was,

Op de voleydinge van de eerste hondert jaren, na de aengevangene reformatie der kercken 1617 (Amsterdam, 1617), f. a2r: ‘t Is hondert Jaer geleden / min / noch meer / Dat Luther heeft bestaen te reformeren / De Roomsche kerck / en haer verdorven leer’.

⁵⁰ Telle, *Vrede-zangh*, f. a2v: ‘Allencxkens tot in Neerlandt toe gekropen / By veelen heeft de deur gevonden open.’

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, f. a2v: ‘Daer hadd’men nu drie Kerken hier in ’t Landt / Gereformeert / dat ’s van de Paus geweken’.

⁵² *Ibid.*, f. a2v: ‘d’ Arminianen twisten / Soo Yegelijck weet / met de Gomaristen.’

⁵³ Uytenbogaert, *Coppe*, f. a4v: ‘Daer zijn in dese Landen veel Predicanten ghestorven / ende eenige die noch leven / oude mannen: die verclaert hebben ende noch verclaren / noyt ander gevoelen gehadt te hebben dan de Remonstranten nu doen / over dese materien’.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. a4v-b1r: ‘van Calvini predestinatie hoorende / de selve al op die tijt oentlick wederleyde / ende dat eenige oude lidmaten merckende dan eenighe andere de selve sochten in te voeren / daerom van de kercke geweken zijn.’

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, f. b1r: ‘heeft dickwils verclaert dat hy vanden aanvanck zijns dienstes geen ander ghevoelen gehadt heeft noch geleert en hadde / aengaende de predestinatie dan Melanchtonis / ende tselve geleert te hebben van Hardenbergio een vande aldereerste Predicanten onser reformatie binnen Emden.’

Uytenbogaert felt, inconsistent with reality. But perhaps more importantly, he thought it was necessary to draw on the recent past to argue his case.

What would William of Orange do?

By accusing them of jeopardising the religious achievements of the Revolt, Counter-Remonstrants had pushed Arminians into a defensive mode. In search of an effective offensive strategy, Arminian clergyman and propagandist Jacob Taurinus from Utrecht expanded the rhetorical repertoire of the Remonstrants by appropriating the Revolt's secular heritage. In one of his pamphlets, Taurinus addressed the 'Maiden of Holland' and tried to sway her to the Remonstrant cause. He reminded her of the province's illustrious history of independence: 'Eight hundred years and more it is past, that you have never been overlorded (although fiercely fought against)'. Is Holland now to abandon this proud tradition? 'That I think not: you have suffered too much, and fought too bloodily for more than forty years'.⁵⁶ The implication is that Remonstrants should be considered the true heirs of the Revolt's legacy.

In 1617, Taurinus wrote another influential pamphlet in which he adopted the national hero William of Orange as the retrospective protector of the Remonstrant cause.⁵⁷ According to Taurinus, a reconstruction of Prince William's motivation for entering the war could be used to prove that he did not act primarily out of religious motives. The author could thus show that the Counter-Remonstrant pursuit of Calvinist orthodoxy contradicted the original intention of the Revolt. To prove his point, he cited well-respected histories and in doing so did not shy away from recalling painful episodes such as the Iconoclastic Furies of 1566. During these furies, Catholic church property was destroyed by Protestant fanatics. For Taurinus, the episode confirmed that religious extremism leads to unrest. He noted that, at the time, William of Orange 'could not condone the breaking of the images [...] for

⁵⁶ [Jacobus Taurinus], *Ernstighe aenspraeck, aen de maeght van Hollandt* (1917), p. 3: 'Acht-hondert Jaer en meer is het nu wel gheleden / Dat ghy noyt wierdt verheert (hoe wel seer sterck bestreden)'; 'Dat en geloov'ick niet: ghy hebt te veel geleden / En meer als veertich Jaer te bloedelijck ghestreden.'

⁵⁷ [Jacobus Taurinus], *Na-Sporingh / hoe ende in vvat manieren, De door-luchtighe, ende hoogh-ghebooren vorst, de prince van Orangien, hooghloffelijcker memorie, de beschermenisse deser landen heeft aenghenomen, om de Nederlantsche Belijdenisse / als in allen deelen met Godts woordt accorderende / te manteneren: en t'gevoelen der Contra-Remonstranten, int stuck vande predestinatie met den aenclieven vandien, als Schrifmatich over al in te voeren* (1617); according to Carolina Lenarduzzi this is the first time that religious polemicists invoked the legacy of William of Orange for political purposes during the Twelve Years Truce: Lenarduzzi, "De oude geusen teghen de nieuwe geusen", p. 73; yet, earlier instances are known; on the Remonstrant side: Johannes Uytenbogaert, *Verdedigingh vande resolutie der [...] Staten van Hollant ende VVest-Vrieslant, totten vrede der kercken, teghen seker libel, gheintituleert Antwoort op drie vraghen* (Amsterdam: Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, 1615), f. **3v; and on the Counter-Remonstrant side: Van Drielenburch, *Cort examen*, f. b1r.

which reason he also did not remain without discredit or slander among part of the zealots'.⁵⁸ By 'zealots', Taurinus referred to militant Calvinists like Jan van Hembyze and Peter Dathenus from Ghent who had criticised Prince William's confessional elasticity in the 1570s and 1580s. The prince, then, had denounced religious extremists, even though it had made him unpopular among some of his supporters.

The pamphlet by Taurinus was not received at all well among Counter-Remonstrants. Carleton, especially, was not pleased. He called it a book of 'vulgar language in conformity to the discourse of mons. Barnevelt'. Like other Gomarists, he lambasted Taurinus' assertion that the Revolt was 'for civil respects only', and he claimed that this Arminian wanted 'to wound count Maurice through his father's sides'. In response, the ambassador insisted that William of Orange fought the war against Spain for three reasons: the inquisition, the building of citadels and the injustice, all three of which, he wrote, 'are now again practiced by the Arminian faction'.⁵⁹ Here we see that the ambassador gave his adversaries a taste of their own medicine. He came up with his own interpretation of the past in reaction to the Arminian propaganda.

The anonymous author of a particularly popular Counter-Remonstrant pamphlet entitled *The Right Track* [*De rechte spore*] was also disgusted by Taurinus' interpretation of history, stating: 'When I saw the title, I thought that a grateful Netherlander sought to circulate the highly praiseworthy deeds and name of the [...] prince'. That first impression proved false, however, for after having read the booklet, the anonymous author 'found that it was made in disparagement of his princely excellency's well-deserved and immortal honour'.⁶⁰ What stands out in this text is the elaborate scholarly apparatus. Just like Taurinus, he cited William of Orange's famous *Apology* (1581) multiple times. But the anonymous author disagreed with Taurinus' interpretation of the text. In the disputed section, William of Orange had written: 'I do not here (my Lords) want to enter into this question, which is the true religion'.⁶¹ Yet, where Taurinus had left it at that, the anonymous author revealed that the prince's subsequent words clarified that he had merely

⁵⁸ [Taurinus], *Na-Sporingh*, p. 9: 'het af-breecken der Beelden niet en heeft toe-ghestaen [...] daer over hy dan oock niet sonder lasteringe ende op-spraec by een deel ijveraers en is gebleven.'

⁵⁹ Carleton to Winwood, 30 October 1617, in: *Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton*, edited by Yorke, p. 196.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *De rechte spore ende aenwijsinghe, dat de [...] prince van Orangien [...] de bescherminghe der Nederlanden heeft aenghenomen voor de waerachtige religie, tegen de tyrannije der Spangiaerden* (1617), p. 3: 'Als ick den Titel zach / meynde ick dat eenich danckbaer Nederlander de hoogh-loflicke daden ende name vanden [...] Prince / hadde willen verbreyden ende groot maken [...] maer int lesen van 't Boecxken zelve / bevandt ick dat het ghemaect was tot verkleyninghe van syne Pr. Excell. wel-verdient ende onsterflic Lof'.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5: 'wy en willen hier niet discutereren, myne Heeren, welcke de warachtighe Religie is.'; the translation of this citation is from William of Orange, *The apologie*, f. o3v.

thought religion was the domain of clergymen and therefore fell outside his own area of expertise. The view that religion was, according to Prince William, best left to the church must have been appealing to Counter-Remonstrants. For the reader who wanted to check for himself what William actually wrote, the anonymous author referred to: ‘page 98 [of the *Apology*] that one can find in the last edition printed in Leiden anno 1609 or in the one printed in 1581 with Charles Silvius with the biggest type [on] page 165 or with the other type [on] page 111’.⁶² By citing multiple editions, the author lent weight to his argument and undermined that of his adversary. He enabled his readers to look up his references and verify the authenticity of the citations while pointing to the sloppy and biased Arminian interpretation of the source.

Apart from his view that Taurinus misinterpreted the source, the author pointed out that in other writings the prince’s concern for the maintenance of the Reformed religion was abundantly clear:

If he were to research the many old writings, commissions, and instructions by the prince of Orange in the years 1567, 1568, 1569, 1570, 1571, 1572, and subsequent years, until he was killed so cruelly and murderously [...] he would find this to have been his chief aim, above all to further the honour and service of God, to protect the oppressed Christians, and maintain the privileges and liberties of these lands.⁶³

Again like Taurinus, to bolster his agenda he cited well-known historians Pieter Bor and Emanuel van Meteren. Taurinus referred to these historians to demonstrate, for example, that William of Orange respected the authority of the provincial state assemblies, even when they were dominated by Catholics.⁶⁴ To him, this was evidence that Orange could not have been driven primarily by religion and that it was religious freedom the prince was after. The author of *The Right Track* read Bor and Van Meteren differently and concluded that William of Orange struggled ‘against the duke of Alba and his Spanish and

⁶² Ibid.: Pag. 98. diemen vinden zal in de leste Editie ghedruckt tot Leyden Anno 1609 ofte in de ghene die ghedruckt is Anno 1581 by Charles Silvius mete grootste Letter pag. 165. oft mette ander Letter pag. 111.’

⁶³ Ibid., p. 13: ‘Hy ondersoecke die menichfuldige oude Geschriften, Commissien ende Instructien by den Prince van Orangien in de Jaren 1567 / 1568 / 1569 / 1570 / 1571 / 1572 / ende naer volghende Jaren tot dat hy zoo wreedelijck ende moordadelijck om’t leven ghebracht is [...] hy zal overal vinden dit voornoemde syn oocmerck gheweest te zijn / voor al de eere ende dienst Godes te vorderen / de verdructe Christenen te beschermen / ende de Landen in hare Privilegien ende Vrijheden te houden’.

⁶⁴ Taurinus, *Na-Sporingh*, p. 7.

hispanicised followers', who in turn waged war against the heretics. William fought not for religious freedom but rather to defend the true reformed religion.⁶⁵ Such an interpretation placed the old prince in an entirely different light, namely as a protector of the faith and more specifically as the guardian of the Counter-Reformation confession.

The trap of history

We have seen how a group who took the initiative of referring to the past to argue a case practically compelled its opponents to do the same. Another good example of this phenomenon is the way comparisons with the duke of Alba served to vilify one's opponent. In the Counter-Reformation print entitled *Image of the Old and New Time* [*Afbeeldinghe van den ouden ende nieuwen tijdt*] we see Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt presiding over a table in the presence of several of his advisors, one of whom is whispering evil advice into his ear (Figure 13). In the text beneath the picture two viewers discuss what they see. One of them exclaims: 'Hang on! Who do I see there? [...] Hey mate, look at it, how well it is cut: Ey let us have a look: is it not Barnevelt? The illustrious president, full of power and great force?'.⁶⁶ The other, however, replies: 'Tis a president alright, but he is named the duke of Alba'.⁶⁷

And indeed, by flipping the top half of the picture the duke of Alba and his admirers suddenly replace Oldenbarnevelt and friends (Figure 14). In the background we see the Grand Place of Brussels in 1568 where the prominent counts of Egmont and Horne are about to be executed as political dissidents. The two persons in the text squabble for a bit about their discrepant interpretations, and then a third person enters the room. He understands the confusion and explains that there is, after all, not much difference between Oldenbarnevelt and the duke of Alba.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-13: 'tegen den Hertoge van Alba ende synen Spaenschen ende Gespangioliseerden aenhang.'

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *Afbeeldinghe van den ouden ende nieuwen tijdt / Met een t'samenspraeck van Beste-maet en Botte-maet* (s.l.:s.n., 1618): 'Hola! Wat sie ick daer [...] Hey maet / aenschout het eens / hoe fray is dit ghesneden: Ey latet ons besien: En ist niet Barnevelt? Den President vermaert / vol macht en groot ghewelt?'

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 't Is wel een President / Maer wort ghenaeamt Duc d'Alb'.



Figure 13. *Image of the Old and New Time*, Rijksmuseum RP-P-OB-50.584 & 585.



Figure 14. And by flipping over the top half the duke of Alba appears in conference with his Council of Troubles.

At the height of the conflict between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants, Maurice marshalled all the support he could get, charged Johan van Oldenbarnevelt with treason and ordered the advocate's arrest. The much-disputed National Synod had assembled at Dordrecht. It condemned Arminian theology and ordered the expulsion and exile of all Arminian clergymen who persisted in their doctrinal deviance. During one of his interrogations on 7 March 1619, the statesman Oldenbarnevelt pointed out that history was repeating itself. He named 'his two predecessors in office, Jacob van den Eynde, in the year

1568 under the tyranny of the duke of Alba and Paulus Buys', who had been captured by the earl of Leicester.⁶⁸ His historical reference failed to change the mind of his judges. Oldenbarnevelt, then seventy-one years old, was beheaded on 13 May 1619.

In the face of more persecutions, Remonstrant authors, too, began to draw analogies with the duke of Alba. The duke, whose cruel image had been used to convince Netherlanders to keep on fighting against Spain, was now deployed by Remonstrants for a new purpose: to show that the religious zealots were squandering the liberty of conscience. Examples include an account of a Counter-Remonstrant disruption of an Arminian service. An anonymous author in 1619 criticised Counter-Remonstrant measures against clandestine Remonstrant preaching just outside Rotterdam, where Arminianism had also been banned. In his text, he denounced the hypocrisy of the Counter-Remonstrants: 'how often they generally shouted against the procedures against them by the duke of Alba [...] is still fresh in the memory'. But since the 'bloodthirsty Calvinists or Gomarists [...] by force of arms, have gained the upper hand' not much was left of these hard-won liberties.⁶⁹ In a handwritten propagandistic poem circulating in The Hague, the juxtaposition between past and present is made even stronger:

Duke of Alba has exercised tyranny in Holland
 On equal terms the Prince [Maurice] establishes dominion
 You ask why it happens?
 I say, that in the prince of Orange
 The duke of Alba's spirit has come from Spain.⁷⁰

And in a letter he wrote on 2 April 1619, Uytenbogaert – who had gone into exile – justified his flight by arguing that he was 'allowed to escape and flee the perils [...]

⁶⁸ *Verhooren van Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*, edited by Matthijs Siegenbeek (Utrecht: Keming en Zoon, 1850), p. 186: 'Daarop hij dier tijd lettende van 't geene zijn twee predecesseurs in officio als Mr. Jacob van den Eynde, in den jaare 1568 onder de tyrannye van den hertoge van Alva, en Mr. Pouwels Buys'.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *Sommier verhael van de wreede handlinghe der bloet-dorstighe Calvinisten, ghepleeght teghen de Remonstranten buyten Rotterdam* (1619), pp. 3-4: 'hoe seer zy doorgaens hebben gheroepen teghen de Proceduren die de Hertoghe van Alba teghen haer, in dese Nederlanden, heeft aangheleydt, is noch is verscher memorie'; 't'zedert de Bloedtghierighe Calvinisten oft Gommarristen aldaer, door t'gheweldt van Wapenen de overhandt hebben ghekreghen'.

⁷⁰ Cited from Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 360: 'Ducq d'Alba heeft gedaen in Hollandt tyrannie. / Op denzelven voet sticht den prins heerschappie. / Ghy vraecht waerom het geschiet? / Ick zegghe, dat in den prins van Oraengien / Ducq d'Alba's ziel gecomen is uyt Spaengien.'

following the example of Christ, Paul and countless devout people, even among us (that is, during the times of the duke of Alba) who have all been fugitives.’⁷¹

The conspiracy of 1632 in the Habsburg Netherlands

Catholic observers in the Southern Netherlands took delight in the civil conflicts in the Republic. They relished the political and religious turmoil in the North and considered it proof that Protestantism leads only to discord.⁷² In a news report, one observer pondered the situation in the Republic: ‘How it shall proceed, time will tell, it does not surprise me that the Beggars are now going to rob one another, the old Beggars [i.e. the rebels against Spain] have for a long time robbed churches and convents, which were not their patrimony.’⁷³ In another news report, Counter-Reformation propagandist Richard Verstegan satirised the religious troubles in the North. As a running gag the author used the attribute ‘predestined’ pejoratively to ridicule the Northern troubles. Allegedly, a source from The Hague reported ‘that the Gomarists and the Arminians who are quarrelling about the predestination, are predestined never to agree.’⁷⁴

When a group of prominent exiled Remonstrant clergymen came to South-Netherlandish Waalwijk in July 1619, they were received cordially by Bishop Nicolaas Zoesius of Den Bosch who was visiting the place. Much later in the seventeenth century, Philippus van Limborch, the biographer of the prominent Arminian Simon Episcopius who was a member of the exiled party, wrote about the get-together. Several of the Arminians were invited to supper in the local convent of Beguines. Probably unable to refuse such an invitation from a potential protector, the visitors entered the convent. The bishop extended his hand and spoke:

⁷¹ H.C. Rogge, ed., *Brieven en onuitgegeven stukken van Johannes Wtenbogaert. Verzameld en met aantekeningen uitgegeven. Tweede deel. Eerste afdeling: 1618-1621* (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1869), p. 40: ‘dat het mij gheoorloft was de periculen [...] te ontgaen ende te vluchten, nae ’t exempel Christi, Pauli ende ontallijcke vroomen, selve oock bij onse (dat is de Hertoghe van Alva tijden), die al fugitif sijn gheweest.’

⁷² See for example: Sabbe, *Brabant in ’t verweer*, pp. 15-66.

⁷³ *Waerachtich verhael van den Oploop, twist ende tweedracht gheschiedt tot Amsterdam in Hollant, hoe datse daer nv tegen malcanderen opstaen, de oude Geusen teghen de nieuwe Geusen, ende hebben malcanderen verjaecht, de Caluinisten teghen de Armenianen [sic], gheschiedt den xix. Februarij 1617* (Antwerp: Abraham Verhoeven, 1617), f. a4r: ‘Hoe dat voorder vergaen sal wilt ons den tyt leeren / ten verwondert my niet dat de Geusen nu malcanderen gaen berooven / de oude geusen hebben kercken en cloosters berooft over lange tijt / dat en was hun Patrimony niet’.

⁷⁴ Richard Verstegan, *De gazette van nievwe-maren, van de gheheele vvereldt. Ghemenght met oude waerheden. Hierby is oock ghevoegt eene wederlegginghe van eenighe onbequame Nederlandsche spreuckwoorden* (Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1618), p. 42: ‘Dat de Gomaristen ende de Arministen die twistich zijn om de predestinatie / ghepredestineert zijn nimmermeer te accorderen’.

be welcome brothers: I call thee brothers, even though we differ in matters of religion; for we all seek salvation through the same Christ. Your suppression pains me. The duke of Alba has done most damage to the Catholic faith through his tough placards and severe persecutions. It would surprise me if your States were to pursue their benefits with the same measures that have spoilt things for us.⁷⁵

It seems unlikely that these were the bishop's exact words, and this tale is probably an example of Remonstrant myth-making. Pro-Remonstrant commentators liked to show that even in the Southern Netherlands people were reminded of Alba's tyranny when hearing of the persecution of Arminians in the Republic. What is certain, though, is that some Remonstrant refugees, including Episcopius, settled in Waalwijk and later in Antwerp. Local authorities saw generally no harm in the presence of the small group of outcasts from the Republic and granted them asylum. The relatively lenient attitude of the Habsburg authorities towards the Arminian heretics illustrates the successful religious transformation that the Southern Netherlands had undergone since the troubled period in the sixteenth century. The lands that had once been cradles for heretical thought had now become fully recatholicised in a Counter-Reformation that set an example to the whole of Catholic Europe.⁷⁶ The following section of the present chapter will look at the way in which the Revolt remained relevant in the South and examine how dominant readings of the past in the Southern Netherlands could nevertheless begin to serve new agendas in domestic politics, just as in the North.

Unrest in the South

When the overlord of the Habsburg Netherlands, Archduke Albert, died in 1621, the Low Countries reverted to the Spanish crown in accordance with the Act of Cession of 1598.⁷⁷ As a concession to the Southerners for their loss of autonomy, Philip IV of Spain appointed Albert's widow Isabella as governor for the duration of her life. The transition from

⁷⁵ Sabbe, *Brabant in 't verweer*, p. 20; Philippus van Limborch, *Leven van Simon Episcopius, Eertijds Professor der H. Theologie tot Leyden* (Amsterdam: Izaak Pietersz, 1693), p. 248: 'Weest hertelijk welkom, broeders: ik noeme ulieden broeders, al is 't dat wy in veele poincten van de religie verschillen; want wy doch alle door eenen Christus onze zaligheid zoeken. Uwerl. verdrukkinge is my van herte leed. Duc d'Alba heeft de Catholijke religie door harde placcaten en strenge vervolgingen de meeste afbreuk gedaan, en onze zaken grootelijks beschadigt. Zullen de Staten van uwe zijde voordeel voor haer bejagen door dezelve middelen die ons bedorven hebben, dat zal my verwonderen.'

⁷⁶ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, pp. 15-191.

⁷⁷ *Collection de documents inédits I*, edited by Gachard, pp. 376-496.

archducal to royal sovereignty in the Netherlands coincided with the resumption of the war. Spain's army commander Ambrogio Spínola captured Jülich and Steenberg and seized the important frontier town of Breda in 1625 after a nine-month siege.⁷⁸ Yet, from 1625 onwards the war in the Low Countries was not going at all well for the Habsburgs. In 1627, the Spanish king went bankrupt, and the following year Admiral Piet Hein of the Dutch West India Company captured the Spanish treasure fleet at the Battle in the Bay of Matanzas near Cuba. The capture allowed the Dutch to spend more on their military forces while the financial loss on the Habsburg side seriously undermined the Spanish war effort.⁷⁹ Partly as a result of this situation, Frederick Henry of Orange captured the important Brabant city of Den Bosch in the summer of 1629. Army commander Carlos Caloma wrote on 20 September 1629 to the count- duke of Olivares that 'the three successive setbacks of the past year have left more of an impression than all the efforts and catastrophes of 63 years of war.'⁸⁰

The military defeats were not the only troubles challenging the regime. The indigenous elites in the South perceived an increase of Spanish interference in politics.⁸¹ At the beginning of the reign of the archdukes, these elites had still felt consulted, but around 1610 they began to sense a loss of power to the central juntas that came to dominate the decision-making process.⁸² René Vermeir has shown that Habsburg officials worried about the discontent among the clergy and nobility. The Spanish ambassador in Brussels, Francisco de Moncado, marquess of Aytona, in his letter to the count- duke of Olivares on 13 November suggested that although the people love the king, they hate the government of Isabella's counselor in the Netherlands, Cardinal Alonso de la Cueva, and the juntas in Brussels. As long as the king treated his people with affection and the army achieved at least some successes, Aytona argued, the people would be satisfied.⁸³ But no success was

⁷⁸ René Vermeir, 'Oorlogsvloek en Vredens Zegen. Madrid, Brussel en de Zuid-Nederlandse Staten over oorlog en vrede met de Republiek, 1621-1648', *BMGN* 115 (2000), pp. 5-6.

⁷⁹ Parker, *The Military Revolution*, p. 63.

⁸⁰ Carlos Coloma to Don Gaspar de Guzmán, count- duke of Olivares, 20 September 1629, in: A. Rodríguez Villa, *Ambrosio Spínola, primer marqués de los Balbases: ensayo biográfico* (Madrid: Est. Tip. de Fortanet, 1904), p. 566: 'Mas impresion han hecho en los ánimos de esta gente estas tres desgracias sucedidas es un año cabal, que todos los trabajos y ruinas de sesenta y tres de guerra'; see also: René Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog: Filips IV en de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1629-1648* (Maastricht: Shaker, 2001), p. 3.

⁸¹ Vermeir, 'How Spanish Were the Spanish Netherlands?', pp. 3-18; Jonathan I. Israel, 'De Spaanse monarchie tussen hamer en aambeeld', in: Paul Janssens, ed., *België in de 17^{de} eeuw* (Gent: Snoeck, 2006), pp. 33-39.

⁸² M.G. de Boer, *Die Friedensunterhandlungen zwischen Spanien und die Niederlanden in den Jahren 1632 und 1633* (Groningen: Noordhoff, 1898), pp. 5-9; Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, pp. 12-13, 29.

⁸³ Francisco de Moncado, marquess of Aytona to Don Gaspar de Guzmán, count- duke of Olivares, 13 November 1629, in: *Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII^e siècle. Tome II: Précis de*

achieved, and the regime of the Southern Netherlands was deeply worried it might witness an uprising similar to the rebellion in the 1560s and 1570s, even though many people in government were too young to hold any personal recollections of that past. De la Cueva, born in 1572, and acting *maestro de campo general* in the Army of Flanders Carlos Coloma, born in 1566, in their letters to respectively Philip IV and Olivares compared the unrest of 1629 to the past troubles of 1566.⁸⁴ In a meeting of the Spanish Council of State on 21 December 1629, the Spanish Inquisitor-General Cardinal Antonio Zapata y Cisneros also ventured his concern that if a power vacuum like that following Governor Louis de Requesens' death in 1576 were to occur again, 'the Netherlands would be lost entirely.'⁸⁵ Memories of the troubles in the 1560s and 1570s served thus as a warning to the Habsburg regime not to repeat the same mistakes. They also motivated government authorities not to underestimate the revolutionary potential of a discontented nobility.

The coalition of nobility and clergy sought to restore its role in politics and decision-making and to negotiate a lasting peace with the North. The indigenous nobility was afraid of losing its political influence, and the clerics feared that military incompetence might result in the ultimate downfall of Catholicism in the South.⁸⁶ The archbishop of Mechelen Jacques Boonen and the premier noble of the Southern Netherlands, the duke of Aarschot, sent a petition to Isabella, at the end of 1629 or beginning of 1630, to voice their discontent.⁸⁷ In the name of 'the first two Estates of the Low Countries: clerics and nobles,' they referred repeatedly to the troubled period of Alba's government to bolster their argument that Spain should contribute more to the military budget.⁸⁸ The regime agreed to some concessions, which – as Vermeir has pointed out – were of a ceremonial nature rather than real political accommodations.⁸⁹ These concessions could not prevent a faction of dissatisfied nobles from conspiring against the Spanish king in 1632. They opened

la Correspondance de Philippe IV avec l'infante Isabelle (1621-1633), edited by Joseph Cuvelier and Joseph Lefèvre (Brussels: Kiessling, 1627), pp. 489-490.

⁸⁴ Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Translation from Spanish into Dutch cited in: *ibid.*, p. 13: 'de Nederlanden wel helemaal verloren zouden zijn'.

⁸⁶ See Jan Roegiers, 'De universiteiten in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden,' in: *1648: de Vrede van Munster: handelingen van het herdenkingscongres te Nijmegen en Kleef, 28-30 augustus 1996* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), pp. 228-229.

⁸⁷ T. Juste, *Conspiration de la noblesse belge contre l'Espagne en 1632* (Brussels: Aug. Decq, 1851), pp. 16-18.

⁸⁸ 'Proposicion que hicieron a su Alteza el arçobispo de Malinas u duque de Ariscot,' British Library, Add MSS 14.007, ff. 427-428; see also: René Vermeir, 'De grens verlegd. Het Zuiden zonder Sluis tijdens de Tachtigjarige Oorlog, 1604-1648', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuws Genootschap der Wetenschappen* 2004 (2004), p. 55.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31.

unauthorised peace negotiations with the North and cooked up plans for dividing the Southern Netherlands between France and the United Provinces.⁹⁰

The conspiracy of 1632

Historian Maurits Sabbe called the political unrest in 1632 ‘the only serious attempt at opposition against Spanish authority’ in the Southern Netherlands since 1585.⁹¹ In view of the events of 1566, when noble opposition had prompted popular rebellion against the Spanish king, the developments of 1632 were disturbing for contemporaries, in particular, the Habsburg authorities.⁹² Count Henry van den Bergh, stadholder of Guelders, was one of the chief players in the conflict. In 1628 he had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Southern army as successor of Ambrogio Spínola. This appointment had angered nobles in Brussels, who had aspired to this post. When Den Bosch fell to the prince of Orange in 1629 and the city’s surrounding bailiwick could no longer be defended against the prince, Van den Bergh’s opponents seized the opportunity to spread slanderous accounts of his supposed incompetence and his immoral character.⁹³ Dismayed, he approached fellow dissatisfied nobles to take matters into their own hands. He openly defected to the enemy in June 1632. Former chairman of the financial council, René de Renesse, count of Warfusée also had reason to be unhappy. Warfusée claimed that the Spanish king, whose abysmal financial standing forced him to borrow or demand advances from his officials, still owed him arrears.⁹⁴ In April 1632, the count had secretly entered into negotiations with France and the United Provinces in The Hague regarding a military intervention in the South to expel the Spanish.

Together with Warfusée, Van den Bergh contacted Prince Frederick Henry of Orange. The prince promised to replace existing plans to besiege Antwerp with a campaign

⁹⁰ René Vermeir, ‘Le duc d’Arschot et les conséquences de la conspiration des nobles (1632-1640)’, in H. Soly, ed., *Beleid en bestuur in de Oude Nederlanden* (Gent: Vakgroep Nieuwe Geschiedenis, 1993), pp. 477-481.

⁹¹ Sabbe, *Brabant in 't verweer*, p. 11.

⁹² René Vermeir, ‘Het Spaanse bestuur te Brussel na 1621,’ in: Paul Janssens et al., eds., *België in de 17^{de} Eeuw* (Gent: Snoeck, 2006), p. 146; Yolanda Rodríguez Perez, *The Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 203-204.

⁹³ M.G. de Boer, ‘Het verraad van Hendrik van den Bergh en de veldtocht langs de Maas’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 13 (1898), pp. 20-27; see for instance the loyalist Count Jan of Nassau who told Jean-Jacques Chifflet ‘horrible things about Count Henry van den Bergh: that he has committed treason against the king during his campaign’: Jean-Jacques Chifflet to Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 16 November 1629, in: ‘Texte intégral des lettres’, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 282: ‘des choses horribles du Conte Henry de Bergues: qu’il a trahy le Roy en ceste campagne’; see also: Philippe Chifflet to Bagno, 15 February 1630, in: *ibid.*, f. 305.

⁹⁴ De Boer, ‘Het verraad’, p. 22.

along the Meuse River from eastern Guelders down south.⁹⁵ The Republic could then capture a string of Southern cities from Venlo to Maastricht. Warfusée and Van den Bergh promised Frederick Henry that they would feign ignorance of the prince's intention of pursuing the Meuse River campaign. Thus they were able to assist Frederick Henry by not warning their own master, Isabella, of the imminent danger.⁹⁶ The unrest which could result from the capture of important cities along the Meuse River would, they thought, increase their chances of successfully dividing the Southern Netherlands between the Republic and France and ending Habsburg rule in the Low Countries.

For the United Provinces, stirring up trouble in the South was a good strategy for weakening Habsburg authority. Reminding the Southern population of their previous protests against 'Spanish' domination and the Habsburg retaliation that followed might stimulate the population's grievances. Before the army of the prince of Orange was ready to march on Venlo and Roermond at the end of May 1632 the Northern States General issued a pamphlet in which they encouraged Southerners 'on the commendable example of their ancestors and predecessors [...] to cast off the heavy and unbearable yoke of the Spaniards'.⁹⁷ The pamphlet blamed the Spanish for their unwillingness to end the 'long-lasting and pernicious war', which the king of Spain started by his 'self-professed absolute Spanish rule'.⁹⁸ It linked the military fiascos as well as the presence of underpaid Spanish soldiers to the events that had followed Don Louis de Requesens' death in March 1576: a power vacuum in which Spanish soldiers mutinied and which culminated in the infamous Spanish Fury in Antwerp and the Pacification of Ghent. The pamphlet denounced Spanish violence (the Spanish are responsible for 'atrocious deeds, capturing, pillaging, murdering and burning of cities'). This behaviour justified the Pacification of Ghent, the agreement in which the 'States of the united Netherlandish Provinces declared the Spanish to be their

⁹⁵ Paul Janssens, 'L'échec des tentatives de soulèvement aux Pays-Bas sous Philippe IV (1621-1665)', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 92 (1978), pp. 112-113; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606-1661* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 184.

⁹⁶ De Boer, 'Het verraad', p. 149; J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 445.

⁹⁷ *Verklaringen vande hooghe ende mog. heeren Staten Generael [...] aende Nederlandsche provintien ende steden, staende onder het ghebiedt vanden koningh van Spagnien, vanden 22. mey ende elfden septembris, 1632* (The Hague: s.n., 1632), f. a3v: 'op het loffelijcke exempel van hunne Voor-ouderen ende Predecessseuren haer willen ontrecken van het beswaerlijck ende ondraechlijck Jock der Spaigniaerden'.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. a2r: 'het langhduyrich ende Landt-verderffelijck Oorloghe [...] verweckt door de ghepretendeerde absolute Spaensche Heerschappie'.

enemies.⁹⁹ The parallel between the contemporary political circumstances and the past events of the Revolt, and more specifically the Pacification, is made stronger in another pamphlet issued a few months later by the States General: ‘Give God our Lord, that the provinces may, just as they did fifty-six years ago, once more unite against Spain.’¹⁰⁰

Van den Bergh’s manifesto and Habsburg reactions

After Van den Bergh had feigned ignorance of the Meuse River campaign, he went to the neutral prince-bishopric Liège to organise an uprising against the regime.¹⁰¹ He tried to win over the Southern population by sending out open letters to Isabella and the people of the loyal provinces.¹⁰² Different copies of the manifesto circulated, but his main message was that the Spanish had failed to provide good governance.¹⁰³ He observed euphemistically that instances of Spanish malgovernance ‘have already spoiled matters before,’ presumably referring to the Spanish mutinies in 1576.¹⁰⁴ Within noble families, memories of the past were kept alive and, if necessary, used for practical purposes. Count Henry, for example, defended himself against slander by making an emotional reference to his ‘faithful services, for the time of forty years’ and pointing out that he had six brothers loyally serving their overlord.¹⁰⁵ When Van den Bergh thus appealed to the glorious deeds of his brothers and forefathers, he meant to say to Philip IV and Isabella: how could you question my loyalty?

Van den Bergh’s family past, however, was problematic, as one contemporary chronicler was keen to remark. He referred to Johan van den Sande’s edition of Everhard

⁹⁹ Ibid, ff. a3v-a4r: ‘grouwelijcke feyten / innemen / plunderinghe / moorderije ende brandinge der Steden’, ‘hier bevorens by de Heeren Staten vande samentlijcke Nederlandsche Provincien verklaert zijnde voor Vyanden’; see also Juste, *Conspiration*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ *Oude- /nieuwe vverelt, of Veranderinghe in dese Nederlanden met het overgaen van Maestricht te verwachten* (Nijmegen, 1632), Knuttel 4251, f. a3v: ‘Gheeft Godt de Heere, dat de Provincien noch eens, ghelijck eenichsins voor ses een vijftich Jaeren haer met malckanderen teghen Spangien verbinden’; see also: B.H.M. Vlekke, “Van ’t gruwelijck verraet, in den jare 1638 op Maestricht gepractiseert”: studies over de vestiging van het Staatsche gezag over Maastricht in de jaren 1632 tot 1639 (Antwerp: s.n., 1938), p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Balthasar Gerbier to Sir John Coke, 12 June 1632, TNA, SP 77/21 f. 241r; Frederick V, Elector Palatine to his wife Elizabeth Stuart, 17 June 1632, in: Nadine Akkerman, ed., *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia. Volume II 1632-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 101.

¹⁰² Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World*, pp. 185-186.

¹⁰³ The declaration evidently circulated among government officials; see for example: Balthasar Gerbier to Sir John Coke, 18 June 1632, TNA, SP 77/21, ff. 245r-252v; Balthasar Gerbier to Elizabeth Stuart, 26 June 1632, in: Akkerman, ed., *The Correspondance*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁴ Henry van den Bergh, *Coppe van twee brieven, dewelcke [...] graeff Hendrick van den Berghe [...] gheschreven heeft* (Leiden, 1632), f. 2v: ‘hebben teenmaan de saken bedorven’.

¹⁰⁵ Henry van den Bergh, *Declaration que son excellence le conte Henry de Bergh, maistre de camp general a fait pour le plus grand bien et repos dy pays* (Liege, 1632), p. 4: ‘mes fidels sevices, rendu l’espace de quarante ans’; another example is Jan van Montmorency, count of Estaires who in 1632 sought royal reconfirmation of his own and the nobility’s privileges by emphasising that his father had died in battle in 1585: see: Vermeir, *In Staat van Oorlog*, p. 31.

van Reyd's history of the Revolt to argue that Van den Bergh's conduct was 'similar to the count's father, Count William van den Bergh [who] through willful neglect surrendered Zutphen [in 1583] to the prince of Parma'.¹⁰⁶ William IV van den Bergh had indeed been a rebel but chose to reconcile with the king. Critics used this story to show that Count Henry's treason was customary in his family while at the same time praising his father William IV for choosing the 'right' side. The chronicler continued that in this matter Henry 'was more contemptible [...] and his father commendable [for] he sought to reconcile with God and his king'.¹⁰⁷ In his justificatory writings, Count Henry tried to disarm his opponents by claiming that he had a 'natural affection for the good of the country', and therefore was entitled to venture his dissatisfactions.¹⁰⁸

Count Henry's declaration circulated in Southern cities and could rely on some public support. When Frederick Henry laid siege to Maastricht on 6 June, the loss of the city was feared which caused unrest, not only among the elites but also among the ordinary citizens of Southern cities. A few days after the beginning of the siege, Isabella's chaplain, wrote in desperation to the former papal nuncio in Brussels, Cardinal Jean-François Guidi di Bagno: 'if God does not do miracles, I do not know what will happen'.¹⁰⁹ On 9 June, diplomat Balthasar Gerbier wrote to English secretary of state Sir John Coke that 'the inhabitants of Antwerp were yesterday in very great perplexity' because of the siege of Maastricht.¹¹⁰ Gerbier wrote to Coke on 26 June that Van den Bergh's declarations 'give rise to seditious discourses'.¹¹¹ Also on 26 June, some people vandalised an escutcheon of the king, and 'Vive le prince d'Orange' was shouted in the streets of Brussels.¹¹² A few days later, Philippe Chifflet informed Cardinal Guidi di Bagno that 'following Henry van den Bergh's manifestos his heretical consorts and partisans, fourteen or fifteen of them,

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous, 'Chronycke van Nederlant, 1523-1636', KBR, MS 10245-6, f. 180r: 'gelijck desen sgraven vader, graef willem vanden bergh, door moetwilligh versuijm sutphen aen den prins van parma over gaf'.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., f. 180v: 'meerder te misprijsen [...], ende synen vader te prijsen, die sich selven met godt, ende synen koninck socht te versoenen'.

¹⁰⁸ Henry van den Bergh, *Manifeste dv comte Henry de Bergh, Maistre de Camp General de l'Armée du Roy d'Espagne. Avec ses lettres escriptes à l'Infante, aux Prelats, Nobles, & aux Villes des Pays-Bas, sur le sujet de la prise de ses armes contre les Espagnols* (Bordeaux: Jacques le Coq, 1632), p. 8: 'naturelle affection au bien du pays'.

¹⁰⁹ Philippe Chifflet to Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 8 June 1632, in: 'Texte intégral des lettres', edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 435: 'Si Dieu ne fait des miracles, je ne scay ce qu'en sera'.

¹¹⁰ Balthasar Gerbier to Sir John Coke, 9 June 1632, TNA, SP 77/21, f. 238r: 'Les Habitans de Anvers en estoient hier en une perplexité tres-grande.'

¹¹¹ Balthasar Gerbier to Sir John Coke, 26 June 1632, TNA, SP 77/21, f. 274: 'ces declarations causent icij des discours seditieux'.

¹¹² De Boer, 'Het verraad', p. 31; also Gerbier continued to discuss the revolutionary potential of Count Henry van den Bergh's movement against the regime: see Gerbier to Coke, 3 July 1632, TNA, SP 77/21, ff. 288v-289r.

have this night broken an image of the king'. Also, they 'shouted in the streets that the Papists and the Spanish should be killed'.¹¹³ Chifflet was an ardent supporter of the regime and horrified at what was happening around him. On 15 June he had already written that

it is time, monseigneur, to open our eyes to see that by the overthrow of the house of Austria, the church would lose the most beautiful fleuron of its crown [...] it is the only and most powerful rampart against the infidel and the heretic and, should it fall, Christianity becomes prey.¹¹⁴

In his letter of 25 June, Chifflet with a touch of drama included the States of Brabant who, after the unrest in Brussels 'hastily assembled', and in their meeting threw themselves at the feet of Isabella, renewing their oaths.¹¹⁵ 'The ladies of the queen [Maria de Medici], who were present', Chifflet wrote, 'began to cry with joy and have admired the resolution of the good patriots and the loyal Catholics'. Nevertheless, the Habsburg authorities were concerned and decided to act quickly.¹¹⁶

An important reaction to Count Henry van den Bergh came from Isabella from 25 June onwards. The archduchess wrote several open letters, which were printed and addressed to the Southern States General (convoked again in 1632 for the first time since 1600), to the prince-bishop of Liège Ferdinand of Bavaria, to Liège's privy council and to Van den Bergh himself. Isabella declared herself to be saddened by the count's actions, 'forgetting all honours and benefactions that he has received.'¹¹⁷ She condemned his behaviour and cautioned the Southern States that Van den Bergh's remonstrations were deceptive. He would only bring the country to ruin. To increase the urgency of her warning she referred to 'the things which happened in the past, in the years seventy-six, seven, eight

¹¹³ Philippe Chifflet to Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 28 June 1632, in: 'Texte intégral des lettres', edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 445r: 'En suite des manifestes dudit comte Henry, les Hérétiques ses consorts et partisans ont, cette, nuit, au nombre de 14 ou 15, brisé l'image du Roy [...] et crié par les rue qu'il falloit tuer les Papaux et les Espangols'; see for the published edition of summaries of the letters: *Lettres de Philippe et de Jean-Jacques Chifflet sur les affaires des Pays-Bas (1627-1639)*, edited by Bernard de Meester de Ravestein (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1943).

¹¹⁴ Philippe Chifflet to Bagno, 15 June 1632, in: 'Texte intégral des lettres', edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 443: 'Il est temps, Monseigneur, d'ouvrir les yeux et de veoir que, par l'abaissement de la maison d'Austriche, l'Eglise perd le plus beau fleuron de sa couronne [...] c'est le seul et le plus puissant rampart contre l'infidelle et l'heretique et, si le boulevard tombe, la chrestienté est en proye'.

¹¹⁵ Chifflet to Jean-François Guidi di Bagno, 28 June 1632, in: *ibid.*, f. 445: 'assemblés hastivement'.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 'Les Dames de la Reyne, qui estoient présentes, se sont mises à pleurer de joye et admiré la résolution des bons patriotes et fidèles Catholiques'.

¹¹⁷ *Lettres de la serenissime infante et d'autres, touchant les actions du comte Henry de Bergh* (Brussels, 1632), p. 3: 'mettant en oubly tant d'honneurs & bienfaits qu'il avoit receuz.'

and nine, which we expect the eldest of you still to hold memory of.’¹¹⁸ This warning to the States hence served a clear purpose. Isabella understood that she could not afford to dissociate herself from the indigenous political elite as that might drive them into the hands of the discontented nobles and clerics. By invoking the past turmoil and civil conflicts she appealed to the Southern population to ignore Henry van den Bergh’s rhetoric.

Whether or not Isabella’s open letters made an impact, Henry van den Bergh’s were poorly received.¹¹⁹ His close friend and brother-in-law Count Floris II of Culemborg (1598-1639) wrote a letter to break the news.¹²⁰ Van den Bergh replied on 8 July 1632 that he ‘had read the letter with a greatly saddened heart’ and that ‘God in his eternity knows that it pains me from the bottom of my heart that the manifesto does not have more of an impact than it has until now’. But he added with a touch of optimism that he would remain patient, at least until Maastricht had fallen.¹²¹ As the weeks went by, however, it became clear to Count Henry that the predicted success of his manifesto would probably fail to materialise, even after the eventual fall of Maastricht. At the same time, there was no going back from his rebellion against the regime. On 5 July, the Great Council of Mechelen had charged the count with *lèse majesté* and ordered his arrest.¹²² Count Henry refused to surrender. Instead, he sought a way to clear his reputation, if not in the eyes of the Habsburg authorities then at least in the court of public opinion which might still be swayed to sympathise with him. On 6 August 1632, Van den Bergh wrote a letter to his sister, Catharina, in which he asked her for advice on how to go about writing an apology.¹²³ On the same day he wrote a similar letter to his sister’s husband, Floris II: ‘so I beg you, sir, for

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-5: ‘les choses cy devant passées, mesmes és années septantesix, sept, huict, & noef, desquelles nous tenons les plus anciens d’entre vous bien memoratifs.’

¹¹⁹ Paul Janssens, ‘De landvoogdij van Isabella, 1621-1633’, in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 6* (Haarlem: Fibula – Van Dishoek, 1977-1983) p. 381.

¹²⁰ Floris II of Culemborg to Henry van den Bergh, s.d.: ‘Stukken betreffende de apologie van graaf Hendrik van den Bergh na zijn overgang naar Staatsche zijde’, Gelders Archief, archief Heren en graven van Culemborg, inv. 411, f. 80; the letter was probably written before the reply of Van den Bergh on 8 July 1632 but after 18 June, the date of Van den Bergh’s manifesto.

¹²¹ ‘Graaf Hendrik van den Bergh aan graaf Floris II’, Gelders Archief, archief Heren en graven van Culemborg, inv. 458, f. 79: ‘iech hab U.L. briff wol met bedroften hertzen gelessen Godt wet in der ewicheit das es mir wol aus grunt mines hertzen let dot dat dat manifest nit mer operit als es bist nue zu gedan hefft’; also cited in part in De Boer, ‘Het verraad’, p. 95.

¹²² *Adiournemen dv Comte Henry de Berghes, par le président et autres seigneurs du Grand Conseil de Malines* (Mechelen, 1632); see also: Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Saken van Staet en Oorloch, In, ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden, Beginnende met het Jaar 1621, ende eyndigende met het Jaar 1632* (The Hague: Johan Veely, Johan Tongerloo and Jasper Doll, 1669), p. 1198; on 12 July, Philippe Chifflet informed Jean-François Guidi di Bagno of the verdict and added as postscriptum that ‘we have celebrated the vigils of the anniversary of the late Archduke [Albert]’ [‘nous avons célébré les vigiles de l’anniversaire du fut Archiduc’], in: ‘Texte intégral des lettres’, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, KBR, MS II 7277, f. 453.

¹²³ Count Henry van den Bergh to Countess Catharina of Culemborg née Van den Bergh, 6 August 1632, Gelders Archief, archief Heren en graven van Culemborg, inv. 459, f. 22.

the sake of our friendship, to inquire if there is a competent man in Holland who is willing to come to me in order that he, after having listened to my arguments, may assist me.’¹²⁴ Further on in the letter he drew a comparison between his own text and William of Orange’s *Apology* from 1581: ‘I was told that when the old prince fell from the king’s grace, an operation against the prince was put into effect and that the prince had commissioned a reply to the accusations. If one could get hold of a copy that would be highly profitable for me in order to make a beginning of my own text.’¹²⁵

On 26 August 1632, the city of Maastricht finally fell, marking the end of the Republic’s successful campaign along the Meuse River and the worst loss for the Habsburg regime since Frederick Henry had captured Den Bosch in 1629. Northern pamphlets celebrated the military success of Prince Frederick Henry. In one of them, a triumphal song, organist and mathematician Wynant van Westen commented on the situation in the Southern Netherlands:

All Brabant is in commotion, heads are tumbling, the nobility is up in arms, the common people are on the move

Lady Isabel, to whom the troubles are most distressing, fears Antwerp’s strong castle, and the capture of Brussels.¹²⁶

Van Westen satirised Philip IV of Spain, presenting a desperate king who lamented his fate: ‘where are now my Granvelles? Where is Farnese? And where is the duke of Alba?’¹²⁷ The author juxtaposed contemporary civic unrest, resulting from the military defeats, with the past: when the current monarch’s grandfather, Philip II, had been king and was guided by gifted yet contentious councilors such as Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, Alexander Farnese, duke of Parma, and of course the duke of Alba. But now, as Van Westen congratulated himself, these men were gone and the Southern Netherlands were in

¹²⁴ Count Henry van den Bergh to Count Floris II of Culemborg, 6 August 1632, Gelders Archief, archief Heren en graven van Culemborg, inv. 458, f. 21: ‘soe bidt iech U.L. hir met gans dinstelich mir de frinschap willen don and lassen doch dar in Hollant um hoeren ouff men mi rein bequam man dar solde kommen bekomen de hir bie mich wolde kommen um alle mine Reden gehort hebbende mich mochte assistiren.’

¹²⁵ Ibid, f. 21; See also De Boer, ‘Het verraad’, p. 21 on this quote and on the particulars regarding Van den Bergh’s apology.

¹²⁶ Wynant van Westen, *Nassausche vrevgden-sangh, over de [...] veroveringhe der machtighe stadt Maestricht* (Nijmegen, 1632), f. b2v: ‘Gansch Brabant is in roer, De Hoofden gaen op rollen: Den Adel op de been, ’t gemeene volck aen ’t hollen / Vrouw Isabel, die ’t meest der landen onlust deert, vreest Antwerps vast slot, en Brussel overheert.’

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 5: ‘Waer zijn nu al mijn Granvellen? Waer Farnees? En waer Duc d’Alv?’

a state of uproar. The marquess of Santa Cruz, the highest Spanish army commander of the Army of Flanders and successor to the traitor Van den Bergh, was also the target of the people's displeasure. A satirical pamphlet parodied the Lord's Prayer and heavily criticized Santa Cruz:

Our father, who art in Brussels / Here your name is damned / Your will is of no value / Neither in the heaven nor on earth / You take our daily bread / Our women and children live in dread / You forgive no one his guilt / Because with hatred and malice you are filled / Our father who is in heaven / Deliver us from this hound of hell / That he may return to Spain / to make fig baskets.¹²⁸

This song was not new: it had been sung before in 1572 to taunt the government of the duke of Alba.¹²⁹ In March 1572, lawyer Philip van Campene from Ghent had written in his diary: 'On the XVIth, small notes in disparagement and dishonour of the duke of Alba were found lying on the streets of the city, in which he is portrayed as someone without compassion and pity for his neighbours [...] And this was drawn up in a rhetorical poem, with a prayer to the Lord, for deliverance of such hellish demon, done in the way of Christ's prayer, Paternoster.'¹³⁰ A sixteenth-century format of criticising the current regime could thus be reused more than half a century later.

To minimize the damage, the Southern government also spread a declaration in which memories of the Revolt were deployed to bolster the political argument of the

¹²⁸ Jacob Lievensz van Rogge, *Een Nieu Geuse Liedt-Boeck waer in begrepen is den gheheelen handel der Nederlantsche Oorlogen / vanden Jare 1600. tot op het Jaer 1645* (Haarlem: Robbert Tinneken and Jan Pietersz. de Does, 1645), p. 162: 'Onsen vader, die te Brussel syt, / Uwen name is hier vermaledyd, / Uwen wil is nergens van waerden, / Noch in den hemel noch op der aerden, / Ghy beneemt ons dagelickx broot, / Onse vrouwen en kinderen hebben 't noot, / Ghy vergheeft niemant syn schuld: / Want ghy syt met haet en nydt vervult, / Onsen vader, die in den hemel syt, / Maect ons desen helschen hond quyt, / Dat hy in Spaengien magh geraken, / Om aldaer vyghenkorven te maken'.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, 'Paternoster aen den Marquis de Santa Croce tot Brussel gestroyt' (1633), in: *Nieuw geuzenliedboek: waarin begrepen is den gantschen handel der Nederlanden, beginnende anno 1564 uit alle oude geuzenliedboeken bijeenverzameld*, edited by H.J. van Lummel (Utrecht: H. Honig, 1892), p. 521; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, p. 127.

¹³⁰ De Potter, ed., *Dagboek van Cornelis en Philip van Campene*, pp. 388-389: 'Den XVI^{en} zijn binnen deser stede ghevonden, op straete liggende, briefkins ter blaempte ende onheere vanden Hertoghe van Alve, daer hij staet ghedonommeert als eenen, die gheen compassie noch melijden en heeft met zijnen naersten [...] Ende [dit] was ghestelt in rhetorijcx dichte, met een ghebet anden Heere, omme van sulc eenen helschen duvele ontslegghen te zijne, ghemaect opde maniere van tgebet Christi, Onse Vadere'; Johan Verberckmoes, *Schertsen, schimpen en schateren. Geschiedenis van het lachen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, zestiende en zeventiende eeuw* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1998), pp. 168-169; for an English translation of this version see: John Lothrop Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (London: Routledge, 1882), p. 544

regime.¹³¹ The pamphlet *La Flandre Fidelle* alleged that Van den Bergh was in league with the enemy. It was probably the Habsburg government in Brussels who ordered the pamphlet to be written under the pseudonym of Bartelemy de Guret. In his open letters written from Liège, Van den Bergh had branded the Spanish as a cruel and tyrannical people. The author of *La Flandre Fidelle* challenged that assessment and stressed that there were others who found the Spanish nation one of world's most virtuous. He reached the conclusion that neither of these stereotypes should be advanced by anyone and disputed the popular Black Legend about the alleged innate cruelty Spanish people exhibited in their territories. The author wrote that

in all nations there are those who are capable and those unworthy, those good and those bad [...] and it is not always the good who are employed in government. That is why it is not reasonable to impute to the nation at large, the vices and errors of individuals. It is necessary to judge everything without passion, where there are good Spaniards there are bad ones too.¹³²

Northern propaganda had drawn a tendentious picture of the Revolt, vilifying Spain. In his pamphlet, the author presented an alternative version by focusing on the disloyalty of the rebels during the Dutch Revolt and by drawing a parallel with Henry van den Bergh seeking aid abroad.

René Vermeir has convincingly argued that *La Flandre Fidelle* was probably a government-endorsed publication because the text mirrored the Habsburg arguments that were used in later texts that served to brand France and the Republic as the ultimate villains, such as the *Mars Gallicus*, written by Cornelius Jansenius, which will be analyzed in chapter 5.¹³³ Furthermore, nothing is known about the author, the fictional gentleman Barthelemy de Guret. In any case, censors would not have allowed this political text to be published had it not supported the viewpoint of government officials. The author of *La Flandre Fidelle* dedicated his tract to Philip IV to convince him that the Southern

¹³¹ Bartelemy de Guret, *La Flandre fidelle. Ov discovrr politique svr la revolte dv comte Henry de Bergh. Dedié au roy. Par le sieur gentilhomme originaire de la comté de Saint Paul* (1632), Knuttel 4238, f. a2r.

¹³² Ibid., f. b2r: 'De toutes nations, il s'en trouve des capables & des indignes, des bons & des mauvais [...] ce ne sont pas toujours les meilleurs qui sont employez au gouvernement de l'Estat. C'est pourquoy il n'est pas raisonnable d'imputer à la generalité d'une nation, les vices & les erreurs que commettent de particuliers. Il faut iuger de toutes choses sans passion, il y a des bons Espagnols, aussi en y a il des mauvais'.

¹³³ Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, pp. 168-169.

population at large had nothing to do with the insurgence of a small group of nobles. He reminded his overlord that his right to rule had long been established and claimed that what he called ‘nos malheurs’ could not be blamed on the Spanish regime. De Guret turned the argument around by arguing that it was not the Habsburg authorities and their advisors who were oppressing the population; it was the malcontents who were doing so by making common cause with the enemy. To prove his point he directly referred to the past: ‘On this topic, the histories are plentiful’, and further on in the text added that ‘sixty-six years of war have provided us with hundreds and hundreds of examples of the insolence of Hollanders’.¹³⁴ Although Philip IV was the addressee, the text’s real target was the Southern population.

Political texts in the Southern Netherlands generally paid little attention to the Revolt, but with *La Flandre Fidelle* the Habsburg government broke with this convention. The author gave a positive spin to the Union of Arras in 1579 and to the early reconciliation of the Walloon provinces with the Spanish king, ‘the service of which remained deeply etched in their hearts’.¹³⁵ Although they had voiced their discontent and had perhaps engaged in some dubious activities against the Habsburg regime, they brought a ‘happy ending’ to their attempts by always remaining ‘loyal malcontents’.¹³⁶ It was a different story with Henry van den Bergh, the author argued, because although he had pretended to fight for ‘the good of the religion, the king and the country,’ he had collaborated with the enemy *before* he had made his grievances public. And what good can be said, the author asked rhetorically, about one who is not ready to face the storm and, instead, retreats to safety?¹³⁷

The author explained that, through resolve and resilience, the regime in the 1580s had managed to reconcile Southern provinces once again to its cause. But this had not been easy. He evoked the memory of the situation of fifty-five years before 1632, in 1577, when Don John of Austria faced the challenging task of regaining the Low Countries with only Namur and Luxembourg as his base. His successor had put an end to the unrest in the Walloon provinces. ‘The duke of Parma, having assembled the pieces of our debris,’ he

¹³⁴ De Guret, *La Flandre fidelle*, f. b1v: ‘Les histoires en sont pleines’; and f. c3r: ‘soixante six ans de guerre nous ont furny cent & cent exemples de l’insolence des Hollandois’.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. b3v: ‘le service de laquelle demeueroit profondement grave dans leur coeur’.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*: ‘Ainsi eust une heureuse fin ceste enterprise de fideles malcontens.’

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*: ‘le bien de la Religion, du Roy & du Pays’.

wrote, ‘reestablished the Catholic party in its entirety.’¹³⁸ Owing to Parma’s prodigious military skills, other Southern provinces followed suit. Why, then, the author asked, had Count Henry jeopardised these hard-won achievements? To gain freedom from Habsburg centralism is the implicit answer. But the author presented the example given by the Republic, and by Holland in particular, as unworthy of emulation. By reminding his audience of the religious struggles between Counter-Remonstrants and Remonstrants, the author hoped to convince them that freedom of religion leads only to discord.¹³⁹ And ‘although the Arminians are less dangerous, they are of another religion than us, and should we be governed by the one or the other, we would always be under the yoke of heretics’.¹⁴⁰

One of the most serious allegations against Van den Bergh was that he was in league with the enemy, just as the rebels were before him: ‘some people who were powerful in our States General once called hither a duke of Anjou and in Holland people had an earl of Leicester act on their behalf’.¹⁴¹ Here the author pointed to the 1580s to reject this kind of treachery but also to show that no good could be expected from such foreign interventions: ‘[Anjou] set his mind to making us French, and the other [Leicester] to ruining and subjecting the party he commanded to the crown of England.’¹⁴² The author arrived at the crux of his argument: ‘Indeed, if it is necessary to chase away all Spaniards, it is necessary to dismiss the archduchess, who is Spanish and to abjure the king, who is Spanish also.’¹⁴³ If Van den Bergh did not want a Spanish administration in the South, what, then, did he want?¹⁴⁴ Van den Bergh’s plans for a governor checked by powerful nobles and native officials were, according to the author, reminiscent of the days when ‘the old prince of Orange’ invited the duke of Anjou as the new sovereign. Although handing over sovereignty to the duke, William of Orange imposed so many restrictions upon him ‘so that he did not serve but as a fool’s bauble’.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Ibid., f. b4v: ‘Le Duc de Parme ayant recueilly les pieces de nostre debris, restablit le party Catholique en son entier.’

¹³⁹ Ibid., f. c3v.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: ‘quoy que les Arminiens soyent moins dangereux, si sont ils d’autre Religion que nous, & soit que nous soyons gouvernez par les uns ou les autres, nous serions tousiours soubz le ioug des heretiques’.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., f. b2v: ‘quelques uns qui avoient le plus de pouvoir en nos Estats Generaux ont autrefois appelle un Duc d’Aniou, puis on s’est servy en Hollande d’un Comte Leycestre’.

¹⁴² Ibid.: ‘l’un a employé toutes les pensées à nous rendre François, l’autre à ruiner & assubiettir le party auquel il commandoit à la couronne d’Angleterre’.

¹⁴³ Ibid., ff. d1r-v: ‘Certes s’il faut chasser tous les Espagnols, il faut chasser S.A. qui l’est, & adiurer le Roy qui l’est aussi’.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.: ‘quel sera le pied du nouveau gouvernement dont parle le Comte Henry?’

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., f. d1v: ‘qu’il ne servist que de marotte’.

The outcome of the 1632 memory war

The discontented nobles could not find enough support for their protests against the Habsburg authorities, neither among themselves nor among the general population in the South. Despite all fears for revolution, then, the summer of 1632 remained quite calm.¹⁴⁶ Appeals to the traumatic past failed to convince the war-weary Southern population to side with Count Henry and his supporters. The same chronicler who cited William IV van den Bergh's defection in 1583 wrote that the absence of a popular rebellion was to be expected

because people would be very wicked, indeed, if they let themselves be deceived for the second time. The examples [of the first time] are still fresh in the memory of the Catholics: how they had a net thrown around their head at the beginning of their rebellion against God and the king of Spain Philip the Second.¹⁴⁷

The States General of the North had also miscalculated Southern enthusiasm for the nobility's conspiracy. Philippe Chifflet wrote on 12 July 1632 that the people in the Netherlands were so fearful of falling into the hands of heretics that a popular uprising was not to be expected.¹⁴⁸ Isabella had a different explanation for the success of her approach. She wrote to Philip IV that through her constant concern for remaining in the population's favour she had prevented the reoccurrence of a revolt, which, she wrote, stood in sharp contrast to what the 'previous [governors]' had achieved. Isabella thus compared her own performance to that of her predecessors who dealt with the beginning of the troubles from 1566 onwards, and she congratulated herself that she had done rather well.¹⁴⁹ The regime had learned an important lesson from the past: act quickly on signs of rebellion but also maintain the population's favour through persuasion rather than coercion. The lessons that the past offered did not end here. Isabella implored Philip IV to make haste in sending her successor Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand to the Netherlands. By 1632 it had become clear to Isabella and to most Habsburg officials that a natural prince and army commander would be

¹⁴⁶ Paul Henrard, *Marie de Médicis dans les Pays-bas* (Paris: Baudry, 1876), p. 252.

¹⁴⁷ 'Chronycke van Nederlant, 1523-1636', KBR, Ms. 10245-6, f. 178v: 'want sauden voorwaer wel groote slechte menschen moeten wesen / die hen sauden laten bedriegen voor den tweeden keer, waer van dat de exempelen noch alte versch syn in de memorie vande catholijcken, hoe datse hun het net over het hoofd hadden getrocken int beginsel van hare rebelligheijt tegens godt en den koninck van spaegnien phillippus den tweeden'.

¹⁴⁸ *Lettres de Philippe et de Jean-Jacques Chifflet*, edited by De Meester de Ravestein, p. 160.

¹⁴⁹ Cited in J.J. Poelhekke, *Frederik Hendrik prins van Oranje: een biografisch drieluik* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1978), p. 391: 'los passados'; M.G. de Boer concurs that the failure of the conspiracy was in large part due to the Governess: De Boer, *Die Friedensunterhandlungen*, p. 4

the only solution to the unrest facing the land. Perhaps, Isabella thought aloud, it would be best to ask him to lay down his cardinal's hat because people in the Netherlands have a great dislike of cardinals, no doubt referring to the experiences with Alonso de la Cueva whose unpopularity could vie with that of Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, one of the officials whom local elites had challenged in the run up to the Revolt during the 1560s.¹⁵⁰

Seeing *La Flandre Fidelle* as Habsburg propaganda and examining Isabella's reaction to Henry van den Bergh, a change in the dynamics of memory in the Southern Netherlands can be observed. *La Flandre Fidelle* was in fact the most elaborate historical narrative used in 1632, and it served as a political weapon in the hands of the regime. Isabella also seemed comfortable referring to the Revolt in her public writings. As representative of the malcontents, however, Henry van den Bergh was more cautious in his references to the past. He probably realised that bringing up memories of a rebellion that had brought disorder to society was not the best strategy to convince the war-weary population of the legitimacy of his protests.

Conclusion

We have seen that in the Northern and Southern Netherlands new political circumstances could make the memories of the Revolt relevant once more. The canonical narratives that had developed in the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg Netherlands after the Revolt had broken out in 1566 originally served to bring people together in the war effort. In the North, propagandists against peace spread stories about Spanish cruelties and unreliability to convince people that war was better than peace. And in the South, where people generally experienced the Revolt as an embarrassing episode, the church and the Habsburg dynasty explained away the troubles by focusing on the ultimate victory of Catholicism, the providential role of the Habsburg dynasty and the malice of heretics. Where memories of the Revolt were thus initially used to unite the populations in the North and South, respectively, by examining two very different memory wars, this chapter has shown that pressure groups and political activists also started to use the canonical narratives for internal polemical purposes, to wage domestic political battles.

¹⁵⁰ Isabella to Philip IV, 28 November 1632, in: Cuvelier and Lefèvre, eds., *Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne* II, p. 659; Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog*, p. 104; Olivares interceded and said that these matters must be left to experts in civil and canon law, see: 'Consult of the Spanish Consejo de Estado', 29 January 1633, in: *Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne* II, edited by Cuvelier and Lefèvre, p. 669.

An examination of the politics of memory during the conflicts between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants has revealed how the Revolt could become the object of disagreements in domestic politics. During the Twelve Years' Truce of 1609-1621, Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants contested the moral ownership of the communal past. They both drew on the inclusive canonical narratives about the Revolt to bolster their arguments and thereby turned the past into a rhetorical battleground. There are several reasons why public memories of the Revolt were used. In the first place, an important condition for using episodes of the Revolt successfully as a political weapon was that they were widely known and recognised as important. Since the episodes had already reached canonical status in the discussions about war and peace, people could easily understand or at least identify with the historical references, which accordingly carried rhetorical value. Secondly, the secular history of the Revolt was just another way of appealing to a more general audience. At the beginning of the religious troubles, academic discussions about doctrine prevailed. But as religion and politics became even more entangled than usual, both factions needed to address a more general audience that was not necessarily trained in theology. The widely known history of the Revolt was an emotive theme that many people could associate with, and it could therefore serve as an effective frame of reference. Thirdly, I found that the appropriation of such popular memories of the past by one party forces the other party to do the same, however reluctantly. This resulted in two alternative interpretations of history and a memory war. Ultimately the 'winner' of this memory war was decided not by rhetoric but by 'real' actions. Due to the ultimate victory of the Counter-Remonstrants, the canonical narrative about the Revolt became associated not only with anti-Hispanism but also with Calvinist orthodoxy and the prince of Orange, giving this narrative an internal religious and political flavour which it had previously lacked.

What we have seen in the Southern Netherlands is perhaps even more surprising. The previous chapters have shown that soon after the Habsburg reconciliation and appeasement of the Southern provinces, the Revolt became a kind of taboo. People focused on the successful Counter-Reformation and tried to suppress memories about past public unrest and Spanish cruelties. This chapter has shown, however, that painful episodes such as the Iconoclastic Furies in 1566 and the Spanish mutinies of 1576 could gain renewed importance when internal divisions arose. In this sense, the case of 1632 reveals a dynamic similar to that playing out in the Dutch Republic, on a slightly smaller scale but no less

significant. When Henry van den Bergh began to claim moral ownership of the communal past, the worried Habsburg authorities could have simply ignored the references. Yet, apparently these references carried such political potency that the authorities felt compelled to react on equal terms and referred even more elaborately to the troubled past of 1566-85. The governmental elite drew lessons from memories of the sixteenth century: lessons on how not to deal with rebellion. Ironically, the result was that the government – who formally wanted the Revolt to be forgotten – very briefly became the most prolific political exploiter of public memories of the past Revolt. Again, it appears that once war memories had been invoked by one side, it became impossible for the other side to avoid also using them.