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Migration and Cultural Transfer in Early Modern Leiden

Alisa van de Haar and Johannes Müller

Histories of migration are often told as narratives of hardship, expulsion and marginalisation, in many cases for good reasons.^{1,2} One often neglected aspect is the cultural impact of migration and mobility and the ways in which they shape, and often connect, host societies and places of origin. The early modern Netherlandish diaspora is a good example of how early modern displacement could lead to new opportunities for both the migrants themselves and for their host society, and also to fruitful exchanges of culture, knowledge and technology between European cities, regions and territories.³

Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Leiden, and other cities in the province of Holland, welcomed thousands of migrants from the Southern Low Countries and northern France. They had left their homes for economic, political or confessional reasons, most of which were related to the Dutch Revolt, the uprising of Netherlandish subjects against their sovereign Philip II.⁴ Among the migrants were many Protestants from the provinces of Flanders and Brabant, who sought refuge from religious persecution in Leiden, which had officially adopted Protestantism in 1572.

Because of the influx of large numbers of migrants, Leiden's demography changed considerably over a matter of decades: it is estimated that the city went from c. 12,000 inhabitants in 1581 to c. 45,000 in 1622.⁵ Its high immigration rate placed Leiden among the fastest growing cities in Holland. This

1 Part of the research for this chapter was conducted within the project 'Languages as Life-lines: The Multilingual Coping Strategies of Refugees from the Early Modern Low Countries' (2022–2026), funded by the Dutch Research Council, grant number VI.Veni.211F.017.

2 See, e.g. Bade, *Migration*; Terpstra, *Religious Refugees*; Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en verliezers*.

3 On cultural transfer and the exchange of culture, knowledge and technology in early modern Europe, see Höfele and Von Koppenfels, *Renaissance Go-Betweens*; Burke and Po-Chia Hsia, *Cultural Translation*.

4 On the – often interconnected – reasons for migration, see Vermeylen, 'Greener Pastures?'

5 Noordam, 'Demografische ontwikkelingen', 42–53; Noordam, 'Leiden als ideale stad', 17; Van Maanen, 'De Leidse bevolkingsaantallen', 63.

demographic expansion had strong repercussions for the physical urban space: in 1611, an entire district was constructed on the north side of the city to harbour its new inhabitants.⁶ Extensive archival and prosopographical research has been undertaken since the 1970s and 1980s and provides important insights into the places of origin and the occupations of the immigrants.⁷ These findings reveal the principal 'pull factors' of Leiden and show, at the same time, the diversity among the migrants themselves: on the one hand, many textile workers came to the city, which was known for its cloth industry, while on the other, the foundation of the university in 1575 attracted intellectuals, poets, printers, scholars and teachers.⁸ They brought their experience with them, both enriching the city and learning from local practices and knowledge through mutually beneficial processes of exchange. The diversity of the immigrant population is also reflected in their places of origin: while most migrants came from Flanders – notably Hondschoote, Ypres, and Belle – a smaller but still significant group had its origins in Brabant – especially Antwerp – and Hainaut.⁹ In recent decades, scholarly attention has shifted from quantitative to qualitative approaches to studying this migratory movement: research has been done on the cultures of memory surrounding the displacement of the diasporic community and on their (self)representation.¹⁰

This chapter explores the ways in which immigrants of different occupations managed to become an integral part of the various professional, religious, political, cultural and social communities of Leiden and how they shaped the city's cultural, economic and intellectual life. It examines how they fashioned new identities for themselves and negotiated their Southern Netherlandish migrant heritage in local and communal settings in their new hometown. Three key groups that define the demographics of the migratory movement into sixteenth-century Leiden are discussed, each belonging to a specific cultural occupational domain and reflecting the aforementioned pull factors: manual labour (textile workers); cultural life (writers and artists); and intellectual labour (publishers, scholars and schoolmasters). For each of these groups, the chapter will look at the ways in which they engaged with local civic identities and consider how their presence fostered cultural transfer and interregional exchange. Finally, this chapter will address the frictions

6 Van Oerle, *Leiden*; Taverne, *In 't land van belofte*.

7 Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek*, 125–34; Lesger, 'Migrantenstromen'.

8 Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers*, 83–88; Briels, 'Zuidnederlandse immigratie'; Lucassen and De Vries, 'Leiden als middelpunt'.

9 Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek*, 133.

10 Pollmann, 'Brabanters'; Müller, *Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt*.

that arose in the midst of Leiden's dramatic demographic expansion: in some cases, it proved difficult to negotiate shared civic identities or to create a sense of belonging and community that connected migrants and non-migrants. As we argue, newcomers used various rhetorical and narrative strategies to bridge this divide, and we will explore some key examples of these.

It is relevant to note that Leiden's early modern civic society was not only divided between a community of locals and new networks of immigrants that were trying to create a shared identity: the entire urban society was made up from partially overlapping, and in some cases concentric, smaller communities with permeable borders. An individual could belong, simultaneously, to multiple communities on a social, confessional and professional level, such as the trans-local and local community of immigrants, a confessional community of believers, and an artisanal community, e.g. a guild.¹¹ Each community would be responsible for its own members but also remain accountable to the municipal authorities. Each subgroup was thus marked by a constant (re)negotiation between the in-group and the civic administration, and thus by continuous exchange.

1 Migrants and the Textile Industry

While elite migrants such as merchants, scholars or clerics left the most archival traces, sources and written documents, the largest group of Leiden's early modern immigrants consisted of textile workers and labourers in related crafts. The influx of Flemish and Walloon migrants was a notable stimulus to the establishment of Leiden as an international textile hub.¹² While there had been a textile industry in Leiden since the late Middle Ages, the first half of the sixteenth century marked a period of decline. The expertise of skilled immigrant labourers was therefore highly valued, and some entrepreneurs actively tried to attract migrants.¹³ The potential for recruiting Flemish textile workers was soon discovered, and from the late 1570s onwards the Leiden magistrate issued contracts to exiles from Colchester and allowed them to settle in the city.¹⁴ Other textile workers came from the Netherlandish communities of

11 Halvorson and Spierling, *Defining Community*.

12 Lucassen and De Vries, 'Leiden als middelpunt', 153–56.

13 Noordam, 'Leiden als ideale stad'; Lesger, 'Migrantenstromen'; Posthumus, *De geschiedenis van de Leidsche lakenindustrie*, 1:70–72.

14 Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 29; Noordam, 'Demografische ontwikkelingen', 42–43; Noordam, *Geringde buffels*, 9.

Gloucester and Norwich, as well as from West-Flanders, for example Hond-schoote, a centre of the wool industry in the Low Countries.¹⁵ It is likely due to Leiden's reputation in the field of textile production that the city attracted more migrants from Flanders than Brabant. Brabant migrants, in particular those involved in commercial activities, moved instead to the trading hub of Amsterdam.¹⁶

These numerous Southern migrants played an important role in Leiden's spectacular population growth in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. Between 1574 and 1675, Leiden grew into the second city of the Dutch Republic, and during the main period of immigration from the Southern Netherlands its population almost quadrupled.¹⁷ It became Holland's most important production centre of cloth thanks to the involvement of immigrants, but the textile industry in other cities, such as most notably Gouda, also benefitted from the influx of migrants.¹⁸

As in most cities and territories in early modern Europe, Leiden's textile production was organised into local corporations. Next to a couple of guilds there were the typical Leiden *neringen*, which were vertically organised corporations that defined and implemented regulations for product quality but also established labour conditions within their respective trades.¹⁹ The influx of newcomers could challenge the position of the traditional guilds and *neringen*. These organisations were often focused on their own communities, and local citizenship was usually a prerequisite for guild membership.²⁰ Migrants were often able to buy citizenship and thereby get access to the local labour market, but they could be accused of trying to undermine local guilds or *neringen* by producing goods outside these organisations.²¹

The relationship between migrants and the guilds and *neringen* could become a topic of debate – and not only in the short term. As textile merchant Pieter de la Court argued later in the seventeenth century in several treatises, as well as in his historical account *Het welvaren van Leiden* (*The Wealth of Leiden*) from 1659, migrants had laid most of the foundations of Leiden's prosperity.²² The local guilds and corporations were a thorn in the side of De la Court, who lamented their old and outdated rules and restrictions on trade and labour. He

15 Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek*, 128, 133.

16 Briels, 118–9; Noordam, 'Nieuwkomers in Leiden'.

17 Noordam, 'Leiden als ideale stad', 17; Noordam, 'Demografische ontwikkelingen', 43–45.

18 Mijderwijk, 'Over de "wolle-laecken-volmolen"'.
 19 Van Meeteren, *Op hoop van akkoord*, 95–97.

20 Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, 100–105, 164–65.

21 Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek*, 127; Asaert, 1585, 266–68.

22 De la Court, *Het welvaren van Leiden*.

also decried them as dominated by locals who had done their best to exclude newcomers and undermine their new and innovative economic activities. In De la Court's historical panorama, Leiden had been an small, insignificant town in the later Middle Ages that only grew due to earlier immigration waves from the Southern Netherlands: from the medieval immigration of Flemings to Holland, to the migration waves during the Dutch Revolt, and the influx of refugees from war-torn Germany after 1618 and from France, Flanders and Brabant in the 1630s, Leiden owed its economic success to strangers who were initially excluded from local guilds. In order to strengthen its position, De la Court argued, the town should strip these organisations of their influence and liberalise trade and the production of local merchandise.²³

De la Court was himself an offspring of a Flemish migrant family from Ypres, from where his father had moved to Holland. In his account, Leiden's history is largely a history of migration, and the city owed its modern shape and construction to innovative newcomers.²⁴ The city's wealth was thus dependent on the economic freedom it offered outsiders who brought capital and expertise. While this message served De la Court's economic outlook as a textile merchant in search of new markets and production modes, he was often reminded of his status as a second-generation migrant and insulted as 'a degenerate, stinking and rotten Walloon' by those who disagreed with his economic and political vision on civic life in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.²⁵

2 Migrants and Urban Art and Literature

On an artistic level, too, immigrants in Leiden negotiated between their southern origins and local civic identities. Among the migrants were many individuals who, back in their hometown, had participated in local chambers of rhetoric. These chambers were literary societies whose members, named *rederijkers*, discussed and practised the art of rhetoric in the vernacular, producing poetry and theatre and often participating in civic festivities. The chambers united individuals – mostly men – from the middle and higher classes. Among their ranks were schoolmasters and painters but also brewers and drapers, who thus practiced literary activities in a community setting alongside their professional lives and engagements. Such chambers were also

23 Weststeijn, *Het welvaren van Leiden*, 159.

24 De la Court, *Het welvaren van Leiden*, 43.

25 Voetius, *Den ver-resenen Barnevelt*, fol. B3. For more pamphlets that used xenophobic rhetoric against De la Court, see Weststeijn, *Het welvaren van Leiden*, 31–33.

present in Holland, and their archives show that they welcomed rhetoricians with a migrant background. Arjan van Dixhoorn, who studied the northern chambers extensively, suggests that the chambers offered valuable network opportunities to the immigrants exactly because they united men from diverse professional and social backgrounds.²⁶ After the Siege of Leiden, the city had one chamber, named *The White Columbine* and founded in the late fifteenth century. It welcomed various migrants and became an important hub for literary exchange between poets from the Southern and Northern Low Countries.²⁷

While it was thus possible for migrants to join a local rhetoricians' chamber, in 1590 a group of migrants asked the city council of Leiden for permission to found their own chamber. The municipal archives explicitly state that the request was made by the 'Flemish rhetoricians', and it is emphasised that they belonged to the 'Flemish nation'.²⁸ It is therefore likely that the decision to found a separate migrant chamber was at least in part based on the wish to create a separate society uniting people who shared a geographical origin and diasporic experience. In agreement with the magistrate, they created the chamber *The White Lily* (later renamed *The Orange Lily*), tailored specifically to Flemish immigrants.²⁹ The foundation of this chamber allowed migrant rhetoricians to meet in an atmosphere of shared experiences of displacement, but *The Orange Lily* was far from closed off to local civic identity: they shared their stories of war, loss and flight with Leiden's inhabitants, and also negotiated the integration of the migrant community in Leiden through their literary output. Leiden was not the only city where immigrants founded their own chamber of rhetoric: in 1598, a group of primarily Brabant migrants in Amsterdam created *The White Lavender*.³⁰

The Flemish chamber of Leiden played an important and tripartite role when it came to promoting Leiden's communal identity: first, the literary productions of the chamber – distributed orally, in manuscript or in print – provided a means for this particular group of immigrants to present themselves to their new city of residence. Its artistic leader Jacob Duym (himself a Brabanter), for instance, published a collection of plays in 1606, in which he elaborated on the bravery with which he had defended the fatherland and the hardships he had endured, thus presenting himself (and, implicitly, his fellow refugees) as a patriot who had suffered so the Northern Low Countries could

26 Van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten*, 119–20.

27 Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 104; Koppenol, 'Jacob Duym'.

28 Van Boheemen and Van der Heijden, *Retoricaal memoriaal*, 402.

29 Mak, 'Jacob Celosse'; Briels, 'Reyn genuecht'; Koppenol, 'Een wereld apart?'

30 Smits-Veldt, 'Het Brabantse gezicht'.

be free.³¹ The collection, titled *Een ghedenck-boeck, het welck ons leert aen al het quaet en den grooten moetwil van de Spaingnaerden* (*A Memorial Book that Teaches Us About the Great Evils of the Spaniards*), contained six plays on the Dutch Revolt.³² One of these plays depicted the Siege of Leiden and reserved a crucial role for the Flemish refugees who appeared in it: as Duym makes clear, these people were among the most loyal members of the Northern Netherlandish resistance against the Habsburg 'Spanish' authorities, whose tyranny they had experienced themselves in the South.³³

Combining migrant and local identities was not uncommon among southern authors in the Leiden Flemish chamber. In particular, the annual commemorations of the Leiden Siege became occasions to inscribe migrant identity into local memories and identities.³⁴ For these commemorative festivities, *The Orange Lily* annually contributed poems and songs about Leiden's Relief (*Leidens Ontzet*). The chamber was paid by the city, for example, for its contribution to the commemoration of the end of the Siege of Leiden in 1592. In another play about the Siege, migrant writer Jacob van Zevocate expressed the gratitude of the refugees to their new home towns, to which they felt strong commitment and loyalty, in similar terms.³⁵ Nostalgia for Flanders is combined with praise of Holland, which has now become the true home of the refugees. This dual loyalty to both the region of origin and the host community is reflected in the fact that *The Orange Lily* was also known as the 'Flemish Chamber of Leiden' (Figure 13.1).

The chamber represented and reinforced the local identity of the city of Leiden, not only internally, by participating in local festivities in the city itself, but also externally. The Flemish chamber took part in competitions that were organised by chambers of rhetoric in other cities in Holland, such as the festival that took place in Haarlem in 1606.³⁶ Each chamber represented its city of origin, and both *The Orange Lily* and *The White Columbine* attended to defend Leiden's honour.

The lively festival culture of the chambers of rhetoric resulted in strong interurban networks, making them important sites of interregional exchange

31 On Duym and his self-presentation, see Koppenol, 'Jacob Duym'.

32 Duym, *Een ghedenck-boeck*.

33 Once Duym had lost hope of a Habsburg defeat, he moved to Muisbroek near the fort of Lillo, an external bastion of the Dutch Republic in Brabant. See Koppenol, 'Jacob Duym'.

34 On these annual commemorations, see Pollmann, *Herdenken, herinneren, vergeten*.

35 Parente, 'Latin and the Transmission of the Vernacular'.

36 On this festival, see Ramakers, 'De "const" getoond'; Müller, 'Orthodoxie jenseits der Konfessionen?'



FIGURE 13.1 The entry of the Flemish chamber The Orange Lily from Leiden into Haarlem
 SOURCE: Optocht door de Vlaamse rederijerskamer De Orange Lelie / De Witte Lelie uit Leiden, 1607, anonymous. Copper engraving, 200 mm × 430 mm
 RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM, RP-P-OB-80.859C

and cultural transfer.³⁷ In the second half of the sixteenth century, rhetoricians from the Southern Low Countries started experimenting with new poetic forms in Dutch, such as the sonnet and iambic verse, inspired by poetic trends in France. Both through the networks of the chambers and the activities of southern individuals moving north, these literary experiments also reached Holland, and especially the closely linked intellectual circles of Leiden and Haarlem.³⁸ Leiden's city secretary, Jan van Hout, was among the first to write Dutch sonnets in the North.³⁹ It has been suggested that his poetic innovations had been inspired by southern refugees with whom he had maintained close contacts.⁴⁰ Even after Antwerp had fallen back into Habsburg hands in 1585 and many rhetoricians had left the South, rhetoricians' networks were maintained across the whole of the Low Countries: in 1620, a festival was organised in Mechelen, and chambers from Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland participated, including *The Orange Lily*.⁴¹

37 Van Dixhoorn, Mareel, and Ramakers, 'The Relevance of the Netherlandish Rhetoricians'.

38 Smith, 'Paix et poésie'.

39 Bostoen, *Hart voor Leiden*, 101–3.

40 Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 180–81.

41 Thieullier, *De schadt-kiste der filosofhen ende poeten*.

In Leiden's learned circles, further experiments with new literary forms in the vernacular were conducted. Among the most influential were the writings of Daniel Heinsius, the son of Protestant refugees from Ghent. During his studies at Leiden's university, he had developed an interest in classical languages, and he was later appointed professor at his *alma mater*. He wrote a large poetic oeuvre in Latin and Greek, sometimes using the pseudonym 'Theocritus a Ganda' (Theocritus from Ghent). Although he had left Ghent at a very young age and was firmly embedded in the Leiden network of humanists, Heinsius consciously referred to his southern roots through his pseudonym. He applied his extensive knowledge of classical literature in his Dutch poetry, producing vernacular poems in classical forms such as odes and elegies in iambic verse.

Heinsius' experiments would have an impact not only on the Dutch literary culture of the Dutch Republic, but also on German literature. His works were highly appreciated by Martin Opitz, who modelled his *Buch der teutschen Poeterey* (*Book of German Poetry*), the most influential prescriptive-poetical work in German-speaking Europe until the eighteenth century, on Heinsius' poetical ideas.⁴² Heinsius, having lived through migration himself, and impacting German literature through his Dutch poetry and the interregional Republic of Letters through his Latin and Greek works, is an exemplary case of how complex the web of early modern cultural transfer often was.

While Flemish and Brabant artists had less impact on Leiden's cultural life than those of other Holland cities,⁴³ Leiden's *Guild of Saint Luke* also counted migrants and second-generation migrants among its members, for example Gabriël Metsu and David Bailly, whose parents were migrants from Hainault and Flanders, or Matthijs Naiveu, Pieter du Bourdieu and Edward Collier, whose family backgrounds are less clear. The town was also an important place for tapestry weavers. This craft had undergone a process of transfer similar to the textile industry, and Holland had become a destination for Flemish tapestry weavers from Oudenaarde, Bruges and other places over the course of the seventeenth century – even before the Dutch Revolt.⁴⁴ Tapestries made by Flemish migrants decorated Leiden's town hall and it is likely that the maker of the iconic tapestry *The Siege of Leiden*, which is now kept at Museum de Lakenhal, also had migrant roots.⁴⁵

42 Rothmund, *Martin Opitz*; Deneire, 'Daniel Heinsius'; Yüksel, 'Daniel Heinsius als Leitfigur'.

43 Van der Linden, 'Coping with Crisis'.

44 Hartkamp-Jonxis, 'Flemish Tapestry Weavers', 16–18.

45 Asaert, 1585, 285; Hartkamp-Jonxis, 'Flemish Tapestry Weavers', 18.

3 Making a career out of displacement: Schoolmasters, Publishers, Scholars

Leiden was a city of letters, especially after the founding of the university in 1575, and many migrants made a living by using their education and language skills. Among the migrants from the Southern Low Countries who moved to Leiden in the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth were, strikingly, many schoolmasters. Johan Briels was able to find archival traces of 418 teachers from the South who moved north, and no fewer than 112 of them settled in Leiden, versus sixty in Amsterdam.⁴⁶ With its university and many schools that provided students opportunities for higher learning, Leiden truly was a centre for education.

It seems that it was, at least in part, the presence of the university from 1575 onward that attracted migrant teachers to the city.⁴⁷ In a school book she published after moving to Leiden, schoolmistress Magdalena Valery claims that she opened her own school there because ‘the female youth had just as much need for good, learned, and virtuous instructors and teachers as the male youth, for whom the university had been founded there.’⁴⁸ Valery thus explicitly comments on what she has to offer the city of Leiden. At the same time, however, like many other teachers who left the Southern Low Countries, Valery does not hide her background as a migrant:⁴⁹ the title page presents her as ‘head of a French school for girls at Leiden’, but in the main text she explains that she received her own schooling in Antwerp.⁵⁰ She negotiates a place for herself in Leiden, without ignoring her roots.

Like Magdalena Valery, many migrant teachers opened their own French schools in Leiden, where they taught reading and writing in both Dutch and French. Knowledge of French was much more common in the South than in the northern parts of the Low Countries, but it was a valuable skill.⁵¹ French was an important *lingua franca* of interregional trade, and therefore the many schoolmasters with expertise in this language were welcomed in Leiden. Teachers required permission from the local magistrates before they could

46 Briels, ‘Zuidnederlandse immigratie’, 651.

47 Briels, ‘Zuidnederlandse onderwijskrachten’, 104.

48 Original: ‘la jeunesse feminine avoit autant besoing de bonnes, doctes, & vertueuses instructrices & maitresses, qu’auroit la jeunesse masculine : Pour laquelle l’Université y estoit establie’; Valery, *La montaigne des pucelles*, pt. A2r.

49 Van de Haar, ‘Beyond Nostalgia’.

50 Original: ‘Maistresse d’Escole Françoisse de jeunes filles en la Ville de Leyden’; Valery, *La montaigne des pucelles*, pt. A2r.

51 Van de Haar, *The Golden Mean*, chap. 2.

open a school, and the city archives show that a high number of migrants obtained it.⁵²

As the most important prerequisite for becoming a French schoolmaster was a solid knowledge of the language, the educational sector offered valuable opportunities to migrants from the South, many of whom had a good command of French. Cases are known of a monk and a goldsmith from the South who, moving north, decided to establish themselves as French schoolmasters there.⁵³ Moreover, it was an occupation that, as Valery's case demonstrates, was available to women. As a daughter of Huguenot refugees, Valery used her native language proficiency to open her own French school for girls.⁵⁴

The many schools opened by migrants in Leiden were important sites of both linguistic and cultural exchange. They were attended by local students as well as migrant children, who, just like their teachers, spoke one of the southern dialects of Dutch. Furthermore, the southern culture of the schoolmasters would have become apparent in the classes, as well as in certain school books: Antwerp had been an important centre for educational printing, and many migrant editors and authors brought their writings with them in order to republish them in the North. A school play in French for girls written by the migrant Peeter Heyns was thus reissued in Haarlem after the schoolmaster moved there. The play portrays two sisters living in a city that shows a clear resemblance to Antwerp, which would thus have been re-performed in a northern context.⁵⁵ Publications like these show that these displaced schoolmasters did not hide their southern roots while they were building a new reputation and publication list in the Northern Low Countries. Furthermore, they maintained a diasporic network, and frequently contributed laudatory poems to publications by other migrants. It is telling that Heyns had his play published by a fellow migrant, Gillis Rومان.

As education flourished in Leiden, so did printing: printing presses were needed to provide school books to the students who attended all levels of education in the city. The highest level of technological know-how in terms of printing was available in the South, and therefore migrants played a large role in the swift expansion of the printing press in Leiden, which has been termed 'the miracle of Leiden'.⁵⁶ In the 1570s, migrant printers largely took over the

52 Briels, 'Zuidnederlandse onderwijskrachten', 104.

53 Briels, 123–24.

54 Van de Haar, 'Van "nimf" tot "schoolvrouw"'; Dietz, *Lettering Young Readers*, 203–37.

55 Van de Haar, 'Beyond Nostalgia'; Van de Haar, 'Both One and the Other'.

56 Hoftijzer, 'Het Leidse wonder'.

local market.⁵⁷ Only Amsterdam attracted more book printers and sellers from the Southern Low Countries.⁵⁸ The flourishing of printing in Leiden also gave impetus to the local practice of a closely related and relatively new artform in which southerners excelled: copper engraving. As printing activities were on the rise, so was the demand for skilled engravers who could provide images for the many books that were produced. The most famous and successful engraver active in Leiden in the later sixteenth century was the Antwerp-born Jacques de Gheyn, who created engraved portraits of, among others, the abovementioned Jacob Duym.⁵⁹

The university was, of course, an important driving force behind the printing 'miracle': professors wished to publish their books; students needed them for their studies. Willem Silvius, from 's-Hertogenbosch in Brabant, was the first appointed printer of the university, although he did not print many works before his death in 1580. His successor, Christophe Plantin, however, would have an important impact on Leiden's typographical environment. Plantin, originally from France, had established himself in Antwerp in the 1550s, as he was attracted by the metropolitan status of the city. His confessional preferences remain unclear – probably intentionally, so he would not lose precious clientele on either side of the political and religious divide. In 1582, while Antwerp turned into a bulwark of the Revolt, he came to Leiden to print for the university, leaving the Antwerp workshop in the hands of his sons-in-law.⁶⁰ He would stay until 1585, when Antwerp came back under royal dominion. He was quite prolific in his Leiden years, printing high-quality works for the university as well as, for instance, chambers of rhetoric. Plantin's trajectory shows that not all migrants were religious refugees: in his case, it seems to have been a conscious commercial decision to move to Leiden.

Upon moving back south, Plantin appointed his son-in-law Frans van Raphelingen (Raphelengius) in charge of the Leiden workshop.⁶¹ Raphelengius was a native of Lannoy (near Lille) who entertained Calvinist ideas, making Leiden a safer place for him to work than Antwerp after 1585. He arrived in January 1586 and started printing for the university. He used Plantin's famous printer's mark, the golden compass. He thus maintained a visual connection with his father-in-law's renowned workshop in Antwerp that would have stood out to the early modern reader. Raphelengius was not only a valuable asset for

57 Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers*, 83–111.

58 Briels, 17.

59 Ekkart, 'Leidse schilders', 178–79; Van Regteren Altena, *Jacques de Gheyn*.

60 Breugelmans, *Christoffel Plantijn in Leiden*.

61 Voet, 'Het Plantijnse huis te Leiden'.

the city of Leiden because of his qualities as a printer, but also because of his knowledge of multiple languages. Besides Latin and Greek, he was well-versed in Hebrew, Chaldean, Syrian and Arabic. His skills did not go unnoticed, and in the year of his arrival he was appointed Professor of Hebrew at the university, alongside his position as academic printer.

Evidently, books were not only produced in Leiden but were also sold there by booksellers operating as intermediaries between printers and their public. Louis Elsevir, who was born in Leuven and had worked for Plantin for some time, moved north for religious reasons. In 1580, he opened a book bindery and bookshop at the Rapenburg, marking the start of a family business that would last for over a century.⁶² Several of his sons became important printers, and one of them was later appointed official printer of the university. It was an Elsevir who was responsible for the printing of the first edition of Galileo Galilei's *Discorsi e dimonstrazioni* in Leiden in 1638. In part because of this migrant family, Leiden's printing scene gained great international importance.

Elsevir opened his bookstore at the Rapenburg in order to be as close as possible to his clientele: university students needing study materials. Thus, as a firm Protestant, he set up shop on this street that had until shortly beforehand been dominated by a Dominican monastery. After the Siege of Leiden, this former site of Catholic worship had been confiscated by the municipal authorities and then reassigned to the university, founded in 1575.⁶³ This change in societal function altered the urban functioning of the Rapenburg, turning it into the city's educational heart. Instead of Dominican nuns, it was now frequented by mostly Protestant students and professors.

Indeed, in the first decades after its foundation, Leiden university employed many professors who, like Raphelengius, had left the troubled South. Before 1575, the only university in the Dutch-speaking area had been that of Leuven, in Brabant. This changed with the arrival of academic education in Leiden, but the city did rely heavily on southern immigrants to fill its various chairs.⁶⁴ For a long time, the direction of the university was even in the hands of a southerner: Justus Lipsius, who had previously worked as a corrector for Plantin's printshop and had been appointed professor of history and a rector.⁶⁵ Like his former employer, however, he would later return to the South, taking up a chair at the university of Leuven. The student population, too, was characterised by the strong presence of foreigners. Martine Zoeteman-van Pelt has

62 Dongelmans, Hoftijzer, and Lankhorst, *Boekenverkopers van Europa*, 8.

63 Van Dalen, *Rap* 73.

64 Heesakkers, *Een netwerk aan de basis*.

65 Enenkel and Heesakkers, *Lipsius in Leiden*.

calculated that until the middle of the eighteenth century, around half of the students enrolled at Leiden were not originally from the Republic. It is unclear how many of them came from the Southern Low Countries. Zoeteman-van Pelt rightfully describes Leiden university, in the first century and a half after its foundation, as an 'international university'.⁶⁶

4 Migrants and Civic Conflict

It is hardly surprising that the accommodation of thousands of migrants within a short time period challenged local ideas about belonging and civic identity. Due to the early modern culture of communal belonging, the position and the status of migrants often needed to be negotiated. As a result, debates about belonging and identity in urban and communal settings could intersect with conflicts that were not necessarily related to matters of migration. The most prominent examples of such conflicts were the religious and political quarrels that occurred between Calvinists and non-Calvinists, first in the 1580s and then during the final years of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621).⁶⁷ While the conflicts of the 1580s and the 1610s greatly impacted Leiden, they were fought all over the Northern Netherlands, and especially in Holland. In both cases, immigrants from the Southern Netherlands were often associated with Calvinist radicalism and were attacked in pamphlets, songs and other popular writings.

While both conflicts touched on a number of more fundamental doctrinal issues, they ultimately revolved around the position of religion and the public church in the new society that emerged after the revolt against the Habsburgs. During the 1580s, Reformed theologians and believers insisted on a church model in which secular authorities had little influence on clerical matters, and in which synods, classes and local consistories had the final say in the installation of ministers or in the maintenance of church discipline.⁶⁸ Their opponents favoured a more Erastian model (named after the Swiss clergyman Thomas Erastus), in which local and provincial authorities should be more closely involved in church matters, so as to implement checks on radical tendencies in the congregation. What was at stake here was not only the problem of authority but also the question of whether the public church should be either an open and inclusive body of believers or one based on an exclusive

66 Zoeteman-van Pelt, *De studentenpopulatie*, 117–19.

67 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*; Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, 227.

68 Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 86–90.

model in which members had to conform to congregational discipline in order to receive the Holy Supper, one of only two sacraments that the Reformed Church still maintained.⁶⁹

A second, and politically more consequential, conflict emerged in Leiden during the second decade of the seventeenth century. In 1604, two Leiden theology professors, Jacob Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus, a migrant from the Southern Netherlands himself, had engaged in a debate on the nature of Divine grace and justification. Gomarus argued that the Protestant principle of *sola gratia* excluded any form of human contribution to salvation. If sinners could not be redeemed because of their good deeds, a wilful decision to accept God's grace would also represent an act that at least partially contributed to the sovereign divine decision to save sinners from damnation. This decision was independent from human action and will, and salvation was thereby absolutely predestined. Arminius, representing a less strict faction in the Reformed Church, did not explicitly deny predestination but acknowledged at least some form of human agency in the process of salvation. In his view, predestination was closer to a form of foreknowledge, and so God's decision to save individuals was more based on the prescience that these people would accept the offer of salvation.⁷⁰

That a doctrinal issue at this level of theological abstraction had such a wide resonance was not only the consequence of the central position of religious questions in the society of the Dutch Republic. The debate fully escalated around 1609, the year of Arminius' death. His followers, who were then labelled 'Arminians', and later 'Remonstrants' (after the 'Five Articles of Remonstrance' of 1610, a series of theological propositions formulated by Arminius' followers), tended to be in favour of the decision to sign a truce agreement with the southern provinces and the Habsburg government. A truce with the Catholic authorities was a setback for many migrants who still hoped for the victory of the Northern Provinces and, eventually, a return to their former homelands, as the example of Jacob Duym illustrates. The final play of his *Ghedenck-boeck* of 1606 is a stark warning against a 'false peace' with the Habsburg enemy.⁷¹ Even though the Twelve Years' Truce was only announced in 1609, rumours about an agreement had already begun circulating in late 1605, and, as Duym made clear, a truce would lead to the loss of the Southern Provinces and thus make it impossible for him to return.

69 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 40.

70 Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 133–35.

71 'Een bewys dat beter is eenen goeden krijgh dan eenen gheveysden peys', in: Duym, *Een ghedenck-boeck*, 6.

In both conflicts, the Calvinist-Erastian controversy of the 1580s and the debate around predestination during the 'Twelve Years' Truce, southern migrants were typically associated with the more orthodox, if not radical, wing of Reformed Protestantism.⁷² Even though the assumed Calvinist radicalism of Flemish and Brabant immigrants was often exaggerated in media such as pamphlets, songs and plays, they were indeed often over-represented in the new Reformed Church. This requires an explanation. As we have already seen, communal institutions and identities in the early modern Netherlandish cities were typically based on local descent, and admission to guilds or public offices was reserved for local citizens. Church organisations offered an attractive alternative and allowed migrants to fully participate in the local community. Local connections and networks were of crucial importance in the early modern city, as they provided access to charity and support in times of need.⁷³ Being an official church member could thus be of vital importance for newcomers to Leiden and other Holland towns.

Locals without a migrant background, by contrast, were often more reluctant to join the Reformed Church.⁷⁴ In some cases, magistrates and church consistories agreed to set limits on the number of southerners who could be elected as elders and deacons. In Haarlem, a town with percentages of southern migrants similar to Leiden, Flemish and Brabant church members could only fill fifty per cent of the consistories while the other half of the positions were reserved for Hollanders.⁷⁵ That such measures were taken certainly illustrates the prominent position of southerners in the Reformed Church. Yet, the large numbers of migrants in the Reformed Church should not be taken as clear indication of the Calvinist radicalism of which this group was often accused. Such accusations became commonplace following the conflicts of the 1580s. To the annoyance of many established patrician families, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who acted as Governor-General of the Northern Netherlands after the assassination of William of Orange and had many orthodox Calvinists among his local allies, had installed a number of southerners to offices that were traditionally held by locals.⁷⁶

When Leicester left the Netherlands in 1587, the appointments of the 'foreigners' he had installed were reversed, and again southerners were more

72 Asaert, *1585*, 289–99; Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, 314–15.

73 Boele, *Leden van één lichaam*, 255.

74 Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, 90; Duke, *Reformation and Revolt*, 291.

75 Müller, *Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt*, 91.

76 Oosterhoff, *Leicester and the Netherlands*, 118; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 175.

structurally denied access to public offices in Holland and Utrecht. The association of radical Calvinism with 'strangers' from Brabant and Flanders was reinforced by an attempted coup in Leiden, where a number of Calvinists, including the Flemish theologian Adrianus Saravia, tried to bring the town under Leicester's control in 1587.⁷⁷ Three Flemings were executed, and a number of other conspirators were condemned to death in absentia and fled with Saravia to England where the latter had been living since his flight from Antwerp in 1585. These events remained present in the collective memory and were often used to identify southerners as radicals who needed to be excluded from political office. Even the pro-migrant advocate Pieter de la Court had to admit 'that in the year 1587 some Flemings have very imprudently collaborated with the Earl of Leicester to reform the government', but, as he added, this occasion was unjustly held against the many migrants who wished to live peacefully within Leiden's city walls.⁷⁸ The idea that support for Leicester was mainly concentrated within migrant circles also ignores the fact that his political allies were the magistrates of many cities without any significant migrant populations, for example all Frisian towns (with the exception of Franeker) as well as Alkmaar, Hoorn and Enkhuizen.⁷⁹

While both contemporary public opinion and modern historiography tend to depict southern migrants as loyal allies, if not radical propagandists, of orthodox Calvinism in its Gomarist version, it is important to realise that this image was in itself an effect of contemporary media discourses.⁸⁰ The French-speaking Walloon stranger congregation that was part of the public Reformed Church, played hardly any role in the quarrels that took place during the Twelve Years' Truce (Figure 13.2).⁸¹ However, two factors made an alliance with the Counter-Remonstrant cause indeed attractive to migrants. First, church membership offered strangers a social safety net and a place in society when they were excluded from other local organisations.⁸² And second, the political promises of the faction behind the Gomarists appealed to people who had not given up hope of returning to their former homelands in the South.

77 Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia*, 102.

78 De la Court, *Historie der gravelike regering*, 209: 'Het is nochtans waaragtig, dat eenige Vlamingen in den jaare 1587 seer onvoorsigtlik met den Grave van Leycester aanspannende om de regeering te hervormen, occasie hebben gegeven tot een scheuring [...].'

79 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 228–29.

80 Müller, *Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt*, 90–110.

81 Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 155.

82 Boele, *Leden van één lichaam*, 244; Asaert, 1585, 268–69.

During the turmoil of the Dutch Revolt, Leiden strongly benefited from the skills and expertise as well as the networks of Southern Netherlandish migrants. This was especially true of the textile industry, which largely drew on Flemish and Brabant newcomers and played a crucial role in Leiden's economic bloom between the late-sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth centuries. In the cultural sphere and the world of learning, poets, rhetoricians, publishers and scholars transplanted Southern Netherlandish cultural ideals and conventions to Leiden. Southern writers were formative in the renewal of Dutch literary poetics – and their ideas eventually also shaped new literary cultures of the German-speaking world, where Heinsius became a role model for a new generation.⁸⁴

Leiden's new academy presented itself as an alternative to the university of Louvain, to where Holland's elite had previously sent its students. The new centre of learning in the North heavily depended on southerners who could now be recruited and whose academic prestige attracted students from all over Europe. The new university was also quickly surrounded by a publishing industry that served the academic book market. Migrant publishers like Plantin, Elsevir and Raphelengius became widely known as entrepreneurs who were able and willing to engage in prestigious and ground-breaking publication projects. Their international networks provided them with the contacts that were necessary to achieve this.

The challenges that migrants faced, such as exclusion from local networks, could not always be overcome easily. However, Flemish and Brabant newcomers actively engaged in the promotion of civic identities and local pride. The southern chambers of rhetoric eagerly participated in commemorative festivities, and wrote poems, plays and songs about Leiden's heroic struggle against the Habsburg oppressors: Jacob Duym's play on the Siege of Leiden was staged for decades and continued to appeal to local audiences. Duym, as well as other writers, actively tried to combine Leiden's local identity with the ideal of a common Netherlandish 'fatherland'. This idea was attractive to migrants for two reasons. First, it allowed them to present themselves as part of a national community that connected Hollanders and southerners and legitimised their position in the new society. Like the Leideners during the Siege, the migrants had suffered 'Spanish' oppression, and a shared sense of suffering and identity helped build a connection between the two groups. Second, the idea of a wider 'fatherland' held out a vague promise, especially for first-generation migrants,

84 Van Ingen, *Holländisch-deutsche Wechselbeziehungen*.

that perhaps it would once again be possible to return to the South, after the final defeat of the Habsburg oppressors.

Civic and local identities had several layers and dimensions, and migrants needed to position themselves carefully in each of them. Being a member of the public Reformed Church or a southern rhetoricians chamber (which could be mutually exclusive, since church authorities often had mixed feelings about the public culture of rhetoric), an inhabitant of a 'Flemish' neighbourhood or an almshouse, or someone newly accepted to a local guild – all these identities required different positionings in relation to questions of community; but migrants were often successful in finding a language to bridge differences and to become part of Leiden's society.

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