

Jo Spaans

VIOLENT DREAMS, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. ON THE ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

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Dutch society under the Republic was remarkable for its lack of religious violence. Some authors have suggested that this was due to a lack of deepfelt religious sentiment, or even to a lack of any religious feeling at all.¹ More widespread is the conviction that religious tolerance, a shared understanding that one should allow all the pursuit of salvation in their religion of choice, was at the root of this peaceful coexistence. In this paper I will approach the lack of violence from the opposite direction, looking at possible sources of friction between religious groups, and asking why these did not result in open conflict. This will allow us to question how religious identities were established and maintained in a religiously pluriform society, and how confessional frontiers functioned. Overall it will be argued that the lack of violence — despite the fact that people had strong emotional feelings about religion, religious change and the suppression of the old Church — stemmed from a deliberate and successful policy of secular authorities to defuse confessional difference as a possible source of violent conflict. Geographically the argument will focus mainly on Holland, the most mixed area, and chronologically on the first half of the seventeenth century, the period between the cessation of armed conflict following the consolidation of the Revolt, and the perceived ‘deconfessionalization’ from around 1650.²

The Revolt as a war of religion

The Dutch Republic emerged from the Revolt against the King of Spain. The Revolt had obvious political causes: the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries rebelled against the erosion of cherished particularistic privilege by centralizing forces in early modern state formation. Prominent among these grievances were the loss of control over the tax burden through the introduction of fixed tariffs and the harsh persecution of heresy, introducing new legal procedures. Even though most of the King’s subjects in the Low Countries did not contemplate conversion to Protestantism (or perhaps even because heresy was marginal in most of the area), this religious policy was

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¹ J.J. Woltjer, ‘Violence during the Wars of Religion in France and the Netherlands: a comparison’, in: *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 76 (1996), p. 44; C. Stoupe, *Religion des Hollandais*, quoted in Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland, 1570-1990*, Amsterdam 1996, p. 110.

² On ‘deconfessionalizing tendencies’ after 1648 see Heinz Schilling, ‘Confessional Europe’, in: *Handbook of European history 1400-1600*, Leiden 1995, vol. II, p. 669-670.

deeply resented.³ As the Revolt progressed, Protestantism came to play an increasingly prominent role. In large part this was due to the emergence of a French-inspired political Calvinism. This brand of religion was embodied by the Beggars, who formed the core of armed resistance against Spain and eventually succeeded in wresting the seven northern provinces from their Spanish overlord. After their initial victories in 1572, the Prince of Orange somewhat reluctantly declared himself for Calvinism, and supported the institution of public Reformed churches in the areas under his control. At the peace of Westphalia in 1648, with the recognition of the sovereignty of the Republic, the position of the Calvinist public Church was acknowledged.⁴

All this gave the Revolt the character of a religious war, comparable to the contemporary armed conflicts between Catholic and Protestant parties in the Empire and France. Official, Protestant propaganda celebrated the success of the Republic's arms as a sign of God's pleasure in the Reformed faith, and stressed the interpretation of the Revolt as a struggle for freedom of religion.⁵ This was however not a view universally shared. A well-known anecdote bears repetition here: In 1574 the city of Leyden, besieged by royal forces, issued paper emergency money with the motto 'Haec libertatis ergo' (All this for the sake of freedom). When one of the Protestant ministers in the city preached against this from his pulpit, asserting that the Revolt was not about freedom as such, but for the sake of religion, and freedom of conscience, town-clerk Jan van Hout rose in his pew, drew his pistol and threatened to shoot the man.⁶ The ambiguity about the conflict as a struggle either for religious or for political freedom has proven very tenacious, but more recent historiography looks more to a combination of both.

The Dutch Republic as an exception among confessional states

The Dutch Republic that emerged from this conflict was a confessional state, in which, despite considerable religious diversity among the subjects, only one church was publicly recognized, and all others relegated to a second-class position. Freedom of conscience was guaranteed, but penal laws restricted the religious organization and forms of worship of Catholics and later also of the Arminians. Others were connived at. The confessional state meant moreover that all adherents of faiths outside the official Reformed Church were excluded from public and, above all, political positions of power and influence. Not only were they denied the right to worship openly, and were the Catholics dispossessed in favour of the official Church, but all

³ H.F.K. van Nierop, 'De troon van Alva. Over de interpretatie van de Nederlandse Opstand', in: *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 110 (1995), p. 205-223.

⁴ Joke Spaans, 'Catholicism and resistance to the Reformation in the Northern Netherlands', in: *Reformation, revolt and civil war in the Netherlands, 1555-1585*, Amsterdam 1999, p. 152-153. Slow growth of Orange's position towards Calvinism: H. Klink, *Opstand, politiek en religie bij Willem van Oranje 1559-1568. Een thematische biografie*, Heerenveen 1997.

⁵ Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age*, New York 1987, p. 93-125.

⁶ P.J. Blok, *Geschiedenis eener Hollandsche stad. Eene Hollandsche stad onder de Republiek*, 's-Gravenhage 1906, p. 49.

political posts and many positions in the civil service were reserved for those who professed the dominant religion.

In a certain sense the position of tolerated churches in the Dutch Republic was worse than in France or the Empire, where, at least in some towns and regions, minorities could claim rights, however limited, under the provisions of edicts towards religious peace. In effect this meant that under certain conditions they could worship and enter political office, and that, as Olivier Christin had shown, a confessionally neutral political space was created in which conflicts between confessional groups and interests could be resolved.⁷ England shows a somewhat different pattern. It embraced Protestantism after a couple of swings back and forth between Protestant and Catholic ascendancy, dictated by the fates of dynastic succession. No religious peace was ever proclaimed, but the official Anglican Church was defined broadly, retaining many traditional elements, designed to embrace as large a part of the population as possible. Relatively small communities of Catholics and of Protestant dissent remained, and could be harshly persecuted. In the Dutch case, on the contrary, initial experiments with religious peace were shortlived, and moreover the Reformed Church was theologically and ecclesiologicaly exclusive. It long remained the church of a minority of the population only. Large groups thus faced some form of discrimination.

However, even in cities and territories in France and the Empire where biconfessional coexistence was instituted under a religious peace, and the rights of opposing parties protected by law, it proved difficult to maintain harmonious relations. Provocations were not at all uncommon, especially on the occasions of processions or religious festivals, and these could and did lead to violent confrontations.⁸ Also, the fact that religious peace had been declared did not prevent further major bloodshed. After the Peace of Augsburg (1555) the Empire went through a new and devastating religious war (1618-1648). In France the Edict of Amboise (1563) was followed by decades of intermittent warfare and a series of new edicts prescribing peaceful relations between Catholics and Huguenots. The Edict of Nantes (1598) seemed to conclude the hostilities, but in the seventeenth century the French monarchy encroached upon the hard-won liberties of the Protestants, ending in severe harassment, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and an exodus of religious refugees. In the Cévennes the cowed remnant of remaining Huguenots rose in revolt in the first decade of the eighteenth century and was suppressed by brutal force. England witnessed a series of Catholic plots to overthrow the Protestant government, enough to fill a Black Legend that has dogged the English Catholics throughout the *ancien régime* and beyond. The country moreover experienced a civil war in which differences between brands of Protestantism played a major part.

Compared to all this the Dutch Republic appears to have been a haven of tolerance, and as such it was renowned throughout Europe. The religious configuration and the

⁷ Olivier Christin, *La paix de religion. L'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVIIe siècle*, Paris 1997, also his 'From repression to toleration: French royal policy in the face of Protestantism', in: *Reformation, revolt and civil war in the Netherlands*, p. 201-214. In the Republic, the city of Maastricht was the only place where Catholics and Protestants had equal rights: P.J.H. Ubachs, *Twee heren twee confessies. De verhouding van staat en kerk te Maastricht, 1632-1673*, Assen 1975.

⁸ Christin, *Paix de religion*, p.108-117.

position of the Reformed Church as public Church were decided upon in the Unie van Utrecht (1579) and confirmed after the Peace of Munster (1648). Even when in 1672 French armies occupied large parts of the Republic, and restored the Catholic hierarchy and Catholic worship, notably in the old archiepiscopal see of Utrecht, there was no Catholic backlash against a century of Calvinist oppression.⁹ Religious violence, in the sense of violent conflict between groups of differing religions, was absent in the Netherlands.

Why? Did Dutch Catholics and Protestant dissenters not resent the Calvinist character of the new state? Like the English and German Catholics in areas turned Protestant, they were dispossessed of their churches and monasteries, and like all minorities everywhere they were not only denied the freedom of religious exercise, but also excluded from political influence and public office in general. Prominent Catholic families who had dominated civic magistracies for generations had to make place for new men, whose eligibility derived from their support of the Revolt and the new public Church. They seem to have had just as much reason for violent tendencies as minorities elsewhere.

Fear of Catholic insurrection

Curiously enough, resentment of confessional disadvantage is visible mainly as a reflection in Protestant fears. From time to time a lingering uneasiness about possible insurgence of Catholics against the new regime made itself felt. It incidentally surfaced in the form of panics. Rumours would suddenly appear, about Catholics who were amassing men and weapons in order to surprise the Protestants in their sleep, cut their throats, and overthrow the Protestant polity. Who exactly these Catholics were, and how the *coup* would work out is often left undetermined, but the part about cutting throats or similar bloody acts tends to be vividly present.

From the late sixteenth century, on the local level small panics or scares were not unknown. They may have been connected to the changing fates of war, and especially to periods in which a return, in whatever form, of religious freedom for Catholics seemed a possibility. In Haarlem during the Twelve Years Truce the magistrate was informed that Catholics were preparing for armed insurrection,¹⁰ and a few years afterwards a similar, although much more baroque, rumour shook Harlingen. A Catholic iron-merchant of that town, recently converted from the locally strong Mennonite community, had built a chapel into his house. The place was situated close to the city wall. It was large enough to serve as place of worship, not only for inhabitants of the town itself, but also for the faithful from the surrounding countryside, where the very few available and more or less itinerant Catholic missionaries hardly penetrated. It included a secret hiding place for visiting priests. The conversion of the merchant and his zeal for his new faith were well known. So was the fact that he preferred the Jesuits, who were considered to be in the pocket of

⁹ L.J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de 16e en 17e eeuw*, 3 vols, Amsterdam 1957, vol. II, p. 203-208.

¹⁰ Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie. Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven 1577-1620*, Den Haag 1989, p. 110-112.

the Spanish enemy, and whose presence in Friesland was forbidden under heavy penalties. The chapel was invaded several times, but the priest always managed to hide in time. The sheriff found praying faithful only. These were duly fined according to the penal laws, as was the owner of the house.

Although the Harlingen Catholic congregation counted no more than a good hundred persons, the necessary secrecy of its organization, its connection to the Jesuits, its supralocal constituency, its location near the apparently all too permeable city wall and also the line of trade of its main sponsor proved grounds for bizarre suspicions. In the fall of 1615 it was rumoured that the merchant was in secret correspondence with the Dunkirk pirates, who with the support of Spain severely damaged Dutch overseas trade.¹¹ He was believed to have arranged for 7000 pirates to take the Harlingen port by surprise, and to have amassed sufficient arms for all these men in an underground cache. The attempt would coincide with the detonation of a mine under the main church, at a time when the Protestant congregation was gathered there for worship. The merchant was believed to have dug a tunnel from his house to somewhere under the church in order to secretly plant the explosives. The rumour proved unfounded. The merchant had tried to persuade one of the Harlingen burgomasters to secretly convert to Catholicism and act as a covert protector of the fledgling Catholic organization in the town — which may have been considered treason of a sort, although of course of a totally unbloody variety.¹² In the Disaster Year 1672, again a rumour spread that a Catholic, in this case the lord of Liauckama Manor in Sexbierum, not far from Harlingen, had hidden armed men, to act as a fifth column assisting an English invasion. A local mob threatened the nobleman, but upon investigation the rumour proved unfounded again.¹³

In the early eighteenth century Catholic rituals seem to have been practised more openly than before. One of these was the pilgrimage to the ruined chapel-cum-miraculous source in Heiloo. In 1714 Calvinist ministers reported rumours spreading among local Catholics that the healing powers, attributed to the water of this source, would increase when mixed with Protestant, or rather ‘Beggar’, blood.¹⁴ The most widespread and best-known panic occurred in 1734, when Corpus Christi happened to coincide with the feast of St. John the Baptist on June 24. A purportedly ancient prophecy spelled disaster on the conjunction of these two festivals — an irregular occasion, as Corpus Christi is dependent on the lunar Easter cycle and thus moveable, and St. John’s day is fixed in the solar calendar. It’s therefor a very rare occasion, occurring once in a century at most. Rumours spread throughout the country, but particularly in the provinces on the western seaboard, that on this day the Catholics would overthrow local government and the State at large, and reinstate Catholicism.

¹¹ Jaap R. Bruin, *Varend verleden. De Nederlandse oorlogsvloot in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw*, Amsterdam 1998, 33-34.

¹² H.J. Oldenhof, *In en om de schuilkerkjes van Noordelijk Westergo. Katholiek leven in Frieslans Noordwesthoek onder de Republiek (1580-1795)*, Assen 1967, p. 140-174.

¹³ L. Knappert, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk gedurende de 16e en 17e eeuw*, Amsterdam 1911, p. 259-260.

¹⁴ Peter Jan Margry, *Teedere quaesties: religieuze rituelen in conflict*, Hilversum 2000, p. 179.

Popular versions added gruesome details according to taste. Locally this led to appeals for adequate protection from a terrified population, and caused suspicions against local Catholics to be part of the rumoured grand scheme. The fear was fed by anonymous scaremongering. In some places in North-Holland nooses were found, which were taken as a sign of impending massacre, and threatening notes and pamphlets were spread in many places.

Although both central and local government initially ignored the rumours, popular unrest forced them to act. Their reactions varied according to the degree of panic, from a ban on the floral decorations, dancing, and drinking in the streets that made up the traditional festivities of St. John's day, to more extensive security measures such as investigation of rumours about plots, searches for hidden weapons and explosives, putting up of prize-money for relevant information and deployment of armed night-guards. Catholics were advised to stay in their homes, and in Harlingen a curfew was even imposed on them — for their own protection. The panic spread notably in those areas where strong Catholic communities had developed, and where seasonal workers, recruited from Catholic areas in the German Empire bordering on the Republic, came in in great numbers during the summer to assist in hay-making and other summer work.¹⁵

In all these panics and rumours one of the ingredients was the massacre of 'the Beggars'. This term has a decidedly Protestant connotation, and usually Protestants in general would feel included. It may be relevant, however, to recall that this term was coined originally for the armed bands that carried the Revolt, and was thus primarily associated with political Calvinism. The threats against 'the Beggars' implied in these panics and suspected plots were not so much directed against individual adherents of the public Church, as against the religio-political establishment founded upon the military successes of the 16th-century Beggars.

Significantly, the only religiously inspired but non-Catholic plot under the Republic was the attempt against the life of Stadholder Maurice in 1623, a few years after the Arminians had been outlawed. A handful of banned Arminian ministers laid plans to murder the Stadholder with the help of their adherents from the common people, or possibly even a French army. The plans, ill-conceived from the start, were not actually put into practice, but nevertheless those involved were closely questioned, in some cases executed, imprisoned or strictly banned.¹⁶ The plot was aimed at changing the religio-political situation, by forcing the succession of a Stadholder more sympathetic to the Arminian cause— not at the Calvinist faithful. As the Arminians remained a relatively small community, Arminian insurrection apparently never led to panics.

Martyrology

¹⁵ Willem Frijhoff, 'De paniek van juni 1734', in: *Archief voor de geschiedenis van de katholieke kerk in Nederland* 19 (1977), p. 170-233.

¹⁶ A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt*, Franeker 1991, p. 359-371.

Like most repressed religious minorities, Catholics developed a martyrology of those who had suffered for the faith during the Revolt. Best-known among those are the nineteen monks and priests, hung by the Beggar commander Lumey in the summer of 1572, for no apparent reason, who, even in living memory, figured as the martyrs of Gorkum in the history textbooks of Catholic elementary schools. Lumey was a known fanatic, and it is quite possible that his was a hate-crime against Catholic religious. In most other cases those who acquired martyr-status in all probability had been agents for Spanish forces. The two burgomasters of Haarlem who were hanged on the city walls, in plain view of the besieging Spanish troops, clearly were.¹⁷ So was of course Balthasar Geraerds, who was exemplarily punished as a ‘regicide’ in an elaborate public execution, but, like the burgomasters of Haarlem, immediately won renown among Dutch Catholics as a martyr of the faith. Vicar Apostolic Vosmeer surreptitiously acquired the head of Geraerds, which was stolen for him from the stake on which it had been exposed, and venerated it as a relic. He also tried to get the man beatified by Rome.¹⁸

Not much is known about these martyrologies and their reception by Dutch Catholics. Two printed collections were produced outside the territory of the Republic, in Antwerp and Cologne. Both these cities were centres of post-Tridentine Catholic reform and contained sizeable communities of Dutch Catholic exiles. These books stressed the cruelty of the Protestant heretics and the piety of their victims. As such they were anti-Protestant propaganda. Unlike the popular collections of hagiographies of Anabaptists and early Protestants executed for heresy under pre-Republic Habsburg rule, they appear to have enjoyed only limited circulation within the Republic. For the Dutch authorities during the Revolt these stories may have been considered treasonous.¹⁹ They could, however, also be read as devotional literature, and used to strengthen the self-esteem of Catholic minority communities.

Stories of this kind may have circulated in handwriting, rather than in printed collections. An example of such a manuscript tradition is the hagiography of Sebastian Craenhals, a petty nobleman, who had been a member of the Confederacy of the lesser nobility in 1566, but in the end had chosen not to join the Revolt. Subsequently he had a somewhat motley career, holding several posts as bailiff, sheriff and overseer of the dikes in several parts of North-Holland. In 1577 he took part in the negotiations to reintegrate his home town of Haarlem, until then with Amsterdam a Spanish-held enclave in rebel territory, into the States of Holland under the terms of the Pacification of Ghent. He was rewarded with a posting as rural bailiff, and assigned the task of ridding the countryside of the brigands, vagabonds and deserters who remained in the wake of the hostilities of the Revolt and who terrorized the peasant population. Policing the roads around Haarlem in the normal course of his duties, he ordered a band of marauding soldiers back to their barracks. Out of

¹⁷ Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 42-45 (n. 10).

¹⁸ Bernard Antoon Vermaseren, *De katholieke Nederlandsche geschiedschrijving in de XVIe en XVIIe eeuw over den Opstand*, Maastricht 1941, p. 50; Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 110 (n. 10).

¹⁹ Henk van Nierop, *Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier. Oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand*, Amsterdam 1999, p. 257-263.

resentment to his interference they soon afterwards ambushed him in his country house in Bergen, near Alkmaar, cruelly stabbed him to death and plundered the house. Two of Craenhals' daughters chose to live as religious virgins in Haarlem. They preserved his memory as a devout Catholic and a martyr for his faith, who had fittingly died in the same manner as his patron saint Sebastian. His hagiography, which probably never went further than this community of lay sisters, must be seen as a highly creative reinterpretation of history, and a work of religious edification only.²⁰ Martyrology apparently, despite its implicit criticism, did not so much lead to resistance, as to resignation.²¹

Interestingly, the Arminians also had their martyrs. Vondel's Palamedes presented Johan van Oldenbarnevelt as a tragic hero, who had spent his great talents in the best interest of the country but was cruelly sacrificed after the downfall of his faction. The walking stick that had supported the elder statesman on climbing the steps to the scaffold, was immortalized in his poems, and appears to have been preserved among his sympathizers. So were the bookchest in which Hugo Grotius had escaped from prison, the wedding-ring of Simon Episcopius, one of the principal ministers of the Arminian Brotherhood, and other, similar memoriabilia. In the later eighteenth century these men and their relics would play a ritual part in the meetings of a 'republican' club critical to the regime of the then-*Stadtholder*. There certainly was some invention of tradition here, but some of the relics were authentic, preserved among relatives and kindred spirits.²²

All in all there are, however, remarkably few stories of martyrdom. In most cases these Catholic martyrs died for their role in religio-political conflicts. They were, with the apparent exception of the Martyrs of Gorkum, never victims of interreligious hatred only. It is interesting here to look at the fate of clandestine priests. Unlike their English counterparts, Catholic priests were not outlawed in the Dutch Republic. Whereas in England priests could be hung, drawn and quartered for simply being there, in the Republic, breaking the penal laws that proscribed all but the most private forms of exercise of their religion was punished by banishment and fines. These fines were generally high, as they were meant to be punitive for the priest himself and for his lay patrons. Usually those who reported on infraction of the penal laws were entitled to a share in these fines. But although telling on priests was thus quite

²⁰ C.W. Bruinvis, 'Craenhals van Hottinga', in: *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*, 10 vols., Leiden 1911-1937, vol. III, p. 265-266, Theodorus Schrevelius, *Harlemum*, Leiden 1647, p. 229-230, J.J. Graaf, 'Bijzonderheden voor de kerkelijke geschiedenis van het Haarlemsche bisdom, ontleend aan de Levens der Haarlemsche "Maechden van den Hoek" beschreven door Trijntje Jans Oly', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis van het bisdom Haarlem (=BBH)* 10 (1882), p. 306.

²¹ Cf. for similar attitudes among English Catholics Peter Holmes, *Resistance and compromise. The political thought of Elizabethan Catholics*, Cambridge 1982, p. 47-62.

²² Wim Vroom, *Het wonderlid van Jan de Witt en andere vaderlandse relieken*, Nijmegen 1997, André Hanou, *De Onveranderlyke Santhorstsche Geloofsbelijdenis. In rym gebragt door eene zuster der Santhorstsche gemeente (1772) Elizabeth Wolff-Bekker*, Leiden 2000, p. 42-44.

profitable, it was not widespread. Apparently mainly priests who were suspected of disloyalty, or who had personal enemies, were betrayed to the authorities.²³

Like the fear of Catholic insurrection, the stories of martyrdom centered around the construction of the confessional state. The martyrs usually stemmed from the period of the Revolt (or from the Arminian Troubles), not from interreligious hate crimes. The martyrologies were, however, not used to foment resistance against the status quo, but rather as devotional literature for a community that had already resigned itself to minority status.

Forms of accommodation

So, the confessional state created inequalities between the adherents of the public Church, who could worship openly and were eligible for public office, and adherents of tolerated faiths, who were excluded from public worship and public office. Among Protestants fear of Catholic resentment breaking out in violent acts was at least latently present. A sense of dispossession and martyrdom informed Catholic self-esteem. Yet no violence worth mentioning occurred. Pointing to the existence of 'toleration' in the Dutch Republic is no solution here. Toleration does not compensate dispossession. Elsewhere I have argued that the Dutch Republic was, moreover, not exactly tolerant, but rather very strictly regulated.²⁴

I find it helpful to use David Nirenberg's views on the relations between faiths here. In his definition of religious violence as simply 'violence between members of different religious groups' all forms of agonizing over whether and how violence was the result of the depth of offended religious sensibilities is evaded. He describes the coexistence of Christians, Jews and Muslims in Old Castile as a rather well-integrated whole, in which, despite legal inequalities, peaceful relations were the rule, and violence was used mainly to mark, defend and maintain the boundaries between communities.²⁵ If we extend this thesis to include the religious situation under the Dutch Republic, we see here, too, a high degree of integration. Yet even violence to mark boundaries is virtually absent. I will argue that this may have resulted from the fact that in the early modern Netherlands the boundaries between communities of faith were systematically de-emphasized.

Religion and office

The most important of these policies may have been the way in which political office and civil service were kept accessible to a wider circle than only the members of the public Church. In a way this was a simple necessity. The Revolt brought new men,

²³ Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 74-79 (n. 10); Joke Spaans, 'Cornelius Hagius, een katholiek priester in een protestantse Republiek', in: *De zeventiende eeuw* 10 (1994), p. 32.

²⁴ Joke Spaans, 'Toleration through discipline: Religious policies in the seventeenth Century Dutch Republic', in: *Religious toleration and Calvinist hegemony in the Dutch golden age*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia en Henk van Nierop, Cambridge 2002 (forthcoming).

²⁵ David Nirenberg, *Communities of violence. Persecution of minorities in the Middle Ages*, Princeton 1998, definition on p. 31.

new families to positions of power. Urban magistracies were purged of those who had stood by the administration and the religion of the Spanish sovereign. Supporters of the Prince of Orange took their places. Often these would be avowed Protestants. For political and public appointments, profession of the official faith was a formal requirement. Well into the seventeenth century, however, Catholics, Mennonites and Lutherans are found in local government bodies, as sheriffs and bailiffs, as secretaries serving urban magistrates, as managers (*binnenvaders*) in public orphanages, schoolteachers etcetera.²⁶ There were several good reasons for this. In some places Reformed men of sufficient ability were hard to come by. Mixing in able dissenters of known loyalty to the new regime was not only expedient, but also resulted in governing boards that reflected some of the socio-religious composition of the local population, and undercut possible resentment.²⁷

Government office or civil service were valued highly because they gave access to influence where it counted: in the field of economic regulation. Local governments set tariffs and regulated their own markets, and threw in their weight in favour of their own cities in the provincial Estates, where supra-local commercial activities were controlled. The decisions taken at this higher level were often decisive for the health or even viability of local industry. This may have been one of the reasons behind intermarriages between Protestant families who were in urban magistracies, and wealthy Catholic families who were excluded. This field is as yet little explored. The connections between Protestant and Catholic elites are, however, obvious. These connections even amounted to considerable protection for Catholic clergy throughout the period of the *ancien régime*.²⁸

In the second half of the seventeenth century insistence grew on the requirement of profession of the Reformed religion for access to public office. At the same time a loophole was left open for those who did not want to become members of the public Church. Despite the obvious social benefits of church membership, there appears to have been considerable reluctance to join the Reformed congregations. Over all, membership of the Reformed Church may never have comprised a majority of the adult population.²⁹ The church itself maintained a high threshold through the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. As all forms of high living, such as dancing, drinking, gambling, promiscuity and conspicuous display of wealth, were subject to censure, church membership seems to have been unappealing both to well-to-do males and to the poorer sort in general. On the contrary, women, and especially widows, who could

²⁶ W.P.C. Knuttel, *De toestand der Nederlandsche katholieken ten tijde der Republiek*, 2 vols., Den Haag 1892-1894, vol. I, p. 163, 280-281, 347-354.

²⁷ Piet Visser, *Dat Ryp is moet eens door eygen Rypheydt vallen. Doopsgezinden en de gouden eeuw van De Rijk*, Wormerveer 1992, p. 58-77.

²⁸ H.C. de Wolf, *De kerk en het Maagdenhuis. Vier episoden uit de geschiedenis van katholiek Amsterdam*, Utrecht 1970, p. 95, 98, 132, 138, 147, 167, 173; connections through Catholic diplomats *ibid.* p. 113, 117, cf. J.J. Poelhekke, *Geen blijder maer in tachtigh jaer. Verspreide opstellen over de crisisperiode 1648-1651*, Zutphen 1973, p. 118, 140-141, 147-148, Pieter Biesboer, 'Burghers of Haarlem and their portrait painters', in: Seymour Slive, *Frans Hals*, London 1989, p. 27.

²⁹ Wiebe Bergsma, 'Church state and people', in: *A miracle mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European perspective*, ed. Karel Davidse en Jan Lucassen, Cambridge 1995, p. 196-228.

derive moral stature and respectability from church membership, were overrepresented in the membership lists.³⁰

Although, through the requirement of ‘profession’ of the Reformed faith, minorities were formally excluded, full membership of the public Church was not required for public functions. It was enough to be a sympathizer (*liefhebber*) of the Reformed religion. This category of sympathizers is something of a conundrum to historians of early modern Dutch history. Van Deursen, who tends to maximize the impact of the Reformed Church on Dutch society, regards the sympathizers as those who attended the Reformed services and contemplated membership, and many historians follow his line.³¹ There is a general, although totally unfounded, consensus that this category melted away somewhere halfway the seventeenth century. From then onwards, the population is considered to have been divided up among the different confessions.³² The existence of sympathizers is, however, attested well into the eighteenth century. By then, ‘sympathizer’ appears to have become a purely legal category, denoting those who did not hold membership in any church. These ‘religiously unaffiliated’ were defined as Reformed, even though they were not members of the Reformed Church, and without any requirement of having some emotional or otherwise affective tie to that religion.³³

As long as one did not become a full member of any of the dissenting churches one would thus count as Reformed ‘sympathizer’, with no strings attached. In this position, and given the necessary socio-economic status, one was eligible for public office.³⁴ This of course gave ample room for Nicodemism, and in fact examples are known of wealthy men in high office, married to staunchly Catholic women who supported the clandestine Catholic community, had their children raised as Catholics, sometimes even saw sons enter Catholic priesthood and daughters entering monasteries abroad or joining congregations of lay sisters. They themselves outwardly conformed to Protestantism as long as was necessary, and were reconciled

³⁰ A.Th.van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, p. 134-135 (n. 16).

³¹ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, p. 128-131.

³² J.A. de Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn Rome-Reformatie. Numerieke aspecten van protestantisering en katholieke herleving in de noordelijke Nederlanden 1580-1880*, Assen 1964, p. 61-68, more circumspect: Hans Knippenberg, *De religieuze kaart van Nederland. Omvang en geografische spreiding van de godsdienstige gezindten vanaf de Reformatie tot heden*, Assen 1992, p. 22.

³³ Joke Spaans, *Armenzorg in Friesland 1500-1800. Publieke zorg en particuliere liefdadigheid in zes Friese steden: Leeuwarden, Bolsward, Franeker, Sneek, Dokkum en Harlingen*, Hilversum 1997, p. 257.

³⁴ Sympathizers in magistracies, Charles de Mooij, *Geloof kan Bergen verzetten, Reformatie en katholieke herleving in Bergen op Zoom 1577-1795*, Hilversum 1998, p. 261. Even for office in the consistory being a sympathizer may have been enough, Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 87, 283-286 (n. 10).

on their deathbeds by Catholic priests.³⁵ Similar cases occurred among Lutherans and Arminians.³⁶

Being a ‘sympathizer’ in some places also gave one the right to vote for local government officers, including the Reformed ministers and the schoolmasters for the public school, a right denied to those who had openly joined dissenting churches. This of course helped to get persons elected who were broadly acceptable, but equally obviously chagrined the leadership of the Reformed Church, who saw more narrowly orthodox candidates excluded from pastoral and teaching posts they considered vital to the religious life of the local community.³⁷

Civil religion

Civil authorities played a very important role in maintaining religious peace and preempting interconfessional violence. Their definition of everyone who was not a member of the Reformed Church or of any of the tolerated churches as ‘Reformed’, and thus eligible for office, was only one aspect of their religious policy. Also in a wider sense they created a general Christian public sphere. The Reformed Church was maintained as the public Church, it occupied the medieval city churches, its ministry was subsidized and enjoyed the regard of public dignitaries. It held the monopoly on public religious exercise. At the same time, however, the influence of the public Church was restricted. Civic culture as a whole was not strictly ‘protestantized’. There was no pressure on people to join the Reformed Church — on the contrary, the Church was allowed to be rather strict in its admission policies.

All public education was officially Reformed. The rule that the pupils should be taught the elements of the Reformed faith applied, however, mainly to the public elementary schools and the schoolteachers in public orphanages and workhouses. The Reformed character of these schools does not seem to have been so strict as to be totally unacceptable to non-Reformed pupils and their parents. Moreover, private elementary schools with a Catholic, Lutheran or Mennonite character were often tolerated. Secondary and higher education was less confessionally defined. In some of the larger cities the Latin schools retained Catholic teachers and even rectors, which suggests that the schools were definitely Christian, but not very Calvinist.³⁸

Poor relief was even less confessionally defined than education. Although from the second half of the seventeenth century in many places all churches would organize local charity for their own members, all through the *ancien régime* civic boards of welfare officers, under the direct supervision of local magistrates, ran most of local

³⁵ J.J. Graaf, ‘De "vergaedinghe der maechden van den Hoeck" te Haarlem’, *BBH* 35 (1913), p. 437; Graaf, ‘Bijzonderheden’, *BBH* 10 (1882), p. 298-301, cf. B.A. Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele. Advocaat, priester en zielzorger 1579-1630*, Bussum z.j., p. 41.

³⁶ Willem Frijhoff en Marijke Spies, *1650. Bevochten eendracht*, Den Haag 1999, p. 397, Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 192-194 (n. 10).

³⁷ Wiebe Bergsma, *Tussen Gideonsbende en publieke kerk*, Hilversum 1999, p. 192-194.

³⁸ Frijhoff en Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, p. 237-256, Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 143-146 (n. 10).

poor relief. The regular support of locally resident poor who were not members of any church was always a civic matter, and so were the municipal orphanages for children of citizen status (*burgerweeshuizen*) and the municipal hospitals. These latter institutions were always open to all citizens, irrespective of religious affiliation.³⁹

Popular culture was not radically purged of all reminiscences of the Catholic past. Carnival, the popular feast of St. Nicholas, Epiphany, and St. John's day kept their places, despite frequent complaints about their 'superstitious' character from the Reformed consistories. A majority of the local population may have partaken in these festivities, which emphasised civic unity. In Amersfoort, a traditional procession to a miraculous statuette of the Virgin Mary lingered on into the eighteenth century. The annual festival had been an important civic event from the late Middle Ages, in which the whole community had partaken, and which, in combination with a free market and a festive parade of the militia, had attracted pilgrims and tourists. After the introduction of the Reformation the town magistrate tacitly maintained the pilgrimage, although in the seventeenth century it gradually developed into a more exclusively Catholic devout practice, whereas the parade and the market became secular holidays.⁴⁰ Less extreme was Haarlem, where the historic involvement of its citizens in the taking of the port of Damietta was a symbol of civic patriotism, and in the seventeenth century the 'ship of Damietta' was frequently used as a corporate symbol.⁴¹ Both Amersfoort and Haarlem had strong Catholic minorities. Elsewhere the continuity of traditional practices is less obvious. Civic culture traditionally had strong religious aspects, and in a confessionally pluriform society these aspects had to be, and were, chosen from a symbolic language that was widely shared, also when this meant that they could not be typically Reformed. The national days of prayer, initially staged by the Reformed Church, thus could develop into a central national religious ritual in which all churches participated.⁴²

A less obvious, but perhaps crucial element in this formation of a general Christian public sphere, encouraged by civic authorities, was the domestication of the clergy of all confessions. Especially the tolerated churches depended heavily on lay support. Well-to-do members of the religious communities provided space for worship in their homes or warehouses, they supported their clergy and their poor co-religionists. In all churches these prominent members were elected to consistories or boards, that effectively governed the church, where they nominated the clergy, controlled finances and maintained discipline within the community. As a rule they had access to local authorities, which often were prepared to connive at religious organization as long as this discipline kept both the faithful and the clergy from infringing on the public sphere and guaranteed loyalty to the existing order. The Reformed consistories were

³⁹ Spaans, *Armenzorg in Friesland*, passim (n. 33).

⁴⁰ Otthie Thiers, *Bedevaart en kerkeeraad. De Amersfoortse vrouwevaart van 1444 tot 1720*, Hilversum 1994.

⁴¹ Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 124-135 (n. 10).

⁴² Van Rooden, *Religieuze Regimes*, p. 78-120 (n. 1).

in a comparable position.⁴³ In a certain sense this made for a privatization of the various religions, which left room for a generally Christian, civic public culture.

Social convention

In ordinary social life there was little that distinguished the adherents of the various faiths. There was some geographic concentration of religious communities over the whole of the territory of the Republic.⁴⁴ But locally people of different religions lived side by side in mixed neighbourhoods. Faith was irrelevant for participation in neighbourhood-organizations.⁴⁵ There was on the whole no marked difference in dress or jewelry. Mennonites had a preference for simple dress styles, but so did the more devout members of other religious communities. On the whole dress expressed social status rather than religion, also for the devout.⁴⁶ The simple black-and-white, so characteristic of seventeenth-century Dutch portraits, was a formal, rather than a pious dress-style.⁴⁷ Catholic priests wore their cloth only inside their houses. Sometimes it is alleged by protesting Reformed consistories that Catholics flouted their convictions by openly wearing rosaries and churchbooks when on their way to church.⁴⁸ But in portraits and other imagery it is often impossible to recognize signs of religious affiliation.

Catholic and Protestant liturgical calendars differed, but this does not seem to have impeded conviviality. Catholics were supposed to observe dietary restrictions on specific days which may have set them apart from those of another persuasion. Observance of these rules may well have been low. We know of a Catholic *devote* who lived with Protestant relatives and was mildly teased about her observance, as if her behaviour was seen as merely eccentric. On the other hand we also hear of a generally low demand for meat during Lent in the decades after the Reformation, which may mean that Lent, and probably other elements from the liturgical calendar, had become totally integrated with popular custom, also among people who had joined Protestant congregations. The wide currency of the names of saints-days long after the introduction of Protestantism points in the same direction.

Also Catholics had more official holidays. Only incidentally do we glimpse conflicts between employers and employees about days of work and days of enforced (and unpaid) leisure. For Mennonites and Jews these marks of difference were somewhat

⁴³ Spaans, 'Toleration through discipline' (n. 24).

⁴⁴ Knippenberg, *De religieuze kaart van Nederland*, p. 9-62 (n. 32).

⁴⁵ Gabrielle Dorren, *Het soet vergaren. Haarlems buurtleven in de zeventiende eeuw*, Haarlem 1998, p. 18-19, 34.

⁴⁶ Cf. Gisbertus Voetius, *De praktijk der godzaligheid*, ed. by C.A. de Niet, 2 vols., Utrecht 1996, vol. 2, p. 293, 308.

⁴⁷ Irene Groeneweg, 'Regenten in het zwart, vroom en deftig? ', in: Reindert Falkenburg a.o., *Beeld en zelfbeeld in de Nederlandse kunst, 1550-1750*, [*Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 46], Zwolle 1995, p. 199-251.

⁴⁸ Margry, *Teedere quaesties*, p. 181 (n. 14).

more pronounced. The first had less respect for the Sunday as a day of rest than the Reformed or the Catholics, and there are recurrent complaints about Mennonites conducting business-as-usual on the Sunday.⁴⁹ Jews observed their Sabbath on the Saturday. This seems to have been generally accepted as part of their religion, but remained a distinctive aspect. More generally restrictions for members of tolerated religions to enter guild organizations were rare, except for, again, in some cases, the Jews.⁵⁰

In the first generation after the Reformation families were split between religions. And although there was a tendency towards same-faith marriages, mixed marriages were not at all uncommon, so that this situation was to some degree perpetuated. There were no legal restrictions on mixed marriages. Children could not be disinherited on the grounds of difference in religion, and parental consent could not be withheld for a mixed marriage for that reason only. Churches discouraged mixed marriages because they feared that one partner would press the other into conversion. This fear was justified, many of these cases occur in for instance the minute books of the Reformed consistories. Also the religious upbringing of children from mixed couples could raise complications. Over the course of the seventeenth century we see the development of a custom to have bride and groom make formal agreements beforehand, about non-interference in the exercise of each others religion and about the upbringing of the children, both among themselves and with their respective churches. Sometimes all children would be pledged to one church, often the girls would follow the religion of their mothers and boys their fathers', sometimes children would be baptized (or not-baptized in Mennonite congregations) alternatively in one and the other church, irrespective of gender.⁵¹ Here again the Jews were further removed from Christians than the various Christian communities from each other. Although sexual relations between Jews and Christians did occur, mixed marriages seem to have been rare.⁵²

All this resulted in a remarkable 'oecumenicity of everyday social conduct'. Foreign visitors commented on the common currency among the Dutch of the idea that every good Christian, irrespective of confession, would go to heaven.⁵³ Catholic master-painters accepted Protestant apprentices and vice versa,⁵⁴ and both painted every subject the customer demanded, also when specifically religious imagery was

⁴⁹ Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 131-135 (n. 10).

⁵⁰ Frijhoff en Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, p. 204 (n. 36).

⁵¹ Oldenhof, *Schuilkerkjes*, p. 78 (n. 12), Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 118-119 (n. 10), De Mooij, *Geloof kan Bergen verzetten*, p. 578-591 (n. 34).

⁵² Herman Roodenburg, *Onder censuur. De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700*, Hilversum 1990, p. 182-184, 297.

⁵³ The term 'omgangsoecumeniciteit' has been coined by Frijhoff. Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, p. 121 (n. 10).

⁵⁴ Gary Schwartz and Maarten Jan Bok, *Pieter Saenredam. De schilder in zijn tijd*, Maarssen 1989, p. 24, 34.

involved.⁵⁵ Only portraits of clergy in full clerical vestments seem to have been commissioned preferably to painters of the same faith.⁵⁶ A Protestant organ-maker repaired the instrument in an underground Catholic chapel, shared his lunch with the sisters whose place of worship it was, and was highly edified by their conversation.⁵⁷ Intellectuals mixed in debating clubs where the Bible was one of the favourite topics. Jews taught Christian theologians their Hebrew and introduced them to their exegetical traditions and rabbinical literature. Reformed members of musical clubs included Catholic devotional songs in their repertoire, and devotional books were read indiscriminately. There appears to have been a genuine curiosity towards other faiths: people attended church services other than those of their own church, and even works of confessional polemics seem to have been read for the information they contained on the tenets of rival beliefs.⁵⁸

Violent inner landscapes

De-emphasizing confessional boundaries apparently closely conformed to the sensibilities of the population at large. People whose neighbourly and family-relations went back for generations did not let confessional choices disrupt older ties. This did not imply that people did not care much about religion, or that confessional choice was seen as unimportant, even though for many people religious choice was contingent upon the chance of circumstances. Relatives, spouses, friends, and employers could and did exert pressure upon those around them in order to make them conform to their own religious choice. The extent of this confessional give-and-take becomes abundantly clear in the registers of church consistories and civil courts, where we find records of conflicts arising from mixed marriages.

A more intimate picture arises from the collection of hagiographic Lives of a community of Catholic lay sisters (*kloppen*) in Haarlem, written in the first half of the seventeenth century. A considerable number of these women came from mixed family backgrounds. For some the choice for a celibate religious life was spontaneous, but as often as not they were influenced by relatives, employers or friends. This decision was not always easy, however, as in many cases even Catholic parents often had rather seen them marry, or were sceptical about the somewhat unclear status of their way of life as lay religious. Of course it also went against the current in an officially Reformed society. There seems thus to be ample ground to trust the assertion, inevitable in hagiographic literature, that these sisters were firm in their vocation. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the support of their sisters in the community and the close guidance of their spiritual director, quite a number of them at one time or another had serious doubts.

⁵⁵ See the remarkable Catholicizing paintings by the Protestant Saenredam, Schwartz and Bok, *Saenredam*, p. 65-76, 84-5, 96, 105, 107.

⁵⁶ Biesboer, 'Burghers of Haarlem', p. 32-34 (n. 28).

⁵⁷ Graaf, 'Bijzonderheden', *BBH* 10 (1882), p. 394 (n. 35).

⁵⁸ Jori Zijlmans, *Vriendenkringen in de zeventiende eeuw. Verenigingsvormen van het informele culturele leven te Rotterdam*, Den Haag 1999, p. 56; Frijhoff en Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, p. 359 (n. 36); De Mooij, *Geloof kan Bergen verzetten*, p. 265-273, 304-305 (n. 34).

In some of the Lives these doubts are mentioned only in passing, as if they were a natural part of the religious life. In a way they were. The devotion practiced in this community was of a somewhat ascetic kind. The sisters filled their days with manual work, charity, prayer and meditations on the life and death of Christ and on the virtues of — especially — the early Christian desert fathers and virgin saints. At least daily they were expected to examine their consciences. A relentless, all day round, conscious exercise of Christian virtue was seen as a necessary protection against the temptations of the Devil who is, after all, especially keen on corrupting the more pious souls. ‘Barrenness of spirit’, a state often mentioned in the Lives, periodically overcame many of the sisters. In sermons the spiritual director comforted them by explaining this barrenness was just a stage on their road to perfection, a stand-off with evil, which would certainly be overcome and followed by an experience of the Divine.⁵⁹

In some instances, however, sisters displayed more worrying forms of doubt or barrenness of spirit, bordering on melancholia or even desperation, and again interpreted as demonic temptation. In recent psycho-historical research the relationship between religious experience and psychological disorders has received some attention. Melancholy and suicidal tendencies born from desperation are mostly associated with the stricter forms of Protestantism, with their supposedly harsh regimes of child-rearing, their gloomy predestinarianism and their emphasis on examination of conscience. Catholicism is even said to have been better equipped with rituals and pastoral care than Protestantism, to hold these melancholic tendencies at bay.⁶⁰

Willem Frijhoff has suggested a rather different explanation for psychological disorders of this type in the early modern period. He focuses on demonic possession and reports of satanic temptations, expressed in ‘unnatural’ physical symptoms. He describes these as mental conflicts, born from transformations in society at large and in changing views on man’s eternal salvation. As such he draws connections between several cases of collective and individual experiences of demonic possession, that in sixteenth century societies were interpreted as the results of witchcraft, but in the course of the seventeenth century increasingly came to be considered as resulting from temptation by the Devil.⁶¹

There may well be considerable overlap between these phenomena and the melancholia of the sisters of Haarlem. A spectacular case is that of Ida Pietersdr. de Goyer. We don’t know much about her family background, except that both her parents were Catholics. As a child she was drawn to the religious life, but at the same time it seems to have repelled her. While meditating she had scary auditory and

⁵⁹ E.g. Book of sermons (1606) in Utrecht, Library museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht, Collection Warmond, shelfnr. 92 D 2, f. 14v-20r.

⁶⁰ Markus Schär, *Seelennöte der Untertanen. Selbstmord, Melancholie und Religion im alten Zürich, 1500-1800*, Zürich 1985, Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *Social discipline in the Reformation. Central Europe 1550-1750*, London/New York 1989, p. 162-168.

⁶¹ Willem Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf, 1607-1647*, Nijmegen 1995, p. 277-289.

sensory sensations. She turned to the enjoyments of ‘the world’, but after some time joined a community of Franciscan nuns on the advice of her confessor. She could however not resolve to take her final vows. When she wanted to enter the community of lay sisters instead, this met with opposition from her parents. Eventually they gave in and she seemed to have found her calling at last. But once, in the dead of night, she heard a terrifying noise, which she held to be her unconquered sinfulness crying out at her, and a warning of her imminent death. To the great consternation of the entire community she then fell into a raving madness which lasted for almost half a year. During this affliction she uttered unspecified but apparently very serious accusations against her parents. Clarity of mind eventually returned, which gave her the time to retract these and make her peace with God and mankind. She died shortly after her recovery, having received the Sacraments of the Church.⁶²

As far as we can see this woman was insecure about her chances for salvation. She had long wavered between a life in the world and a religious life, had chosen a form of the latter after considerable hesitation, and although she seemed secure, was overcome with a terrifying sense of lack of control over her senses and affections. The same can be inferred from a number of other Lives. Otherwise exemplary sisters are portrayed as struggling to overcome ‘the world, the flesh and the Devil’, in worrisome inner conflicts. In a number of cases these conflicts, generally to be expected in a religious person, were intensified by doubts about the choice of religion they had made. In the case of Ida Pieters this was the choice for or against the religious life, in sisters from confessionally mixed families, often with relatives who tried to restore the unity of faith, the confessional divide was experienced as extremely painful. It may well be that the fact that confession was so much a matter of individual choice, as it was in the Dutch Republic, transferred the battleground over religion, between Protestant and Catholic, to the individual soul and conscience, creating violent inner landscapes⁶³, rather than violence in the streets.

⁶² Catarina Jans Oly, *Levens der Maechden*, vol. 2, f. 105r-131v, Library museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht, Collection Warmond, shelfnr. 92 B 14.

⁶³ Adapted from a column by Gregory Gibson, *New York Times*, 23 April 1999.