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Rebels for peace or a peace for rebels? A research about the local significance of the Pacification of Ghent in Utrecht, 1576-1581.

Mc Cann, Damien

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Rebels for peace or a peace for rebels?

A research about the local significance of the Pacification of Ghent in Utrecht, 1576-1581.



The siege of the Vredenburg castle. HUA 32316

<https://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/beeld/3198DDA1E0C652A884BF5C706E5E8A36>

Damien Mc Cann (1842471)

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Introduction

The Pacification of Ghent marked the next phase of the Dutch Revolt in the autumn of 1576 after deputies of the Estates-General decided to gather, sign and proclaim the peace treaty without any royal consent.

*'First that all offences, injuries, crimes and damages, occurred in the affairs of the troubles between the inhabitants of the provinces, (...) truly and in what manner they be, shall be forgiven, forgotten and held as never happened, in such that the causes of then will at no time be mentioned or may anyone be accused.'*¹

It was the first peace treaty to grant an unconditional amnesty and act of oblivion for all that had happened since the beginning of the Dutch Revolt a decade earlier. Unlike previous royal pardons, the Pacification's amnesty was granted to Protestants without a required reconversion to Catholicism. It was also the first treaty that annulled all heresy persecutions and verdicts which implicitly permitted freedom of conscience to non-Catholics. It accepted *de facto* public exercise of Protestantism in Holland and Zeeland with a proposal to settle religious peace terms at a future assembly of the Estates General. The treaty also attempted to provide a framework for reconciliation. It proposed measures to settle disputes over confiscated properties, permitted exiles to return, to restore trade with Holland and Zeeland, and professed the restitution of various local privileges (e.g. noble, clerical, urban). Moreover, the treaty reconciled Prince William of Orange – the rebel leader of the Protestant provinces Holland and Zeeland – with the Catholic noble grandees and most of the other provinces. It officially restored him as Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland, and permitted him to negotiate peace treaties with loyalist cities in these provinces such as Haarlem and Amsterdam. The treaty, however, did not restore the Prince's Stadtholderate of Utrecht. Above all, the Pacification was signed to demand the king to withdraw the Spanish *tercios* while the treaty simultaneously organized a common defence against a large mutiny of these veteran soldiers.

Although the Pacification was a failed treaty due to the political disintegration among the participating provinces, smaller superseding treaties and alliances, its influence as a frame of

¹ 'Eerst dat alle offensien, iniurien, misdaden ende bescadicheden, gesciet ter zaken van den troublen tusschen den ingesetenen van de provincien, (...) zoe waer ende in wat manieren dattet zy, zullen vergeven, vergeten ende gehouden zijn als niet gesciet, zulcx dat ter oirzake van dien te geenen tyde mentie gemaect oft yemandt aengesproken en zal moegen worden.' 'Bijlagen: de tekst van de Pacificatie van Gent met begeleidende documenten' in: eds., Michel Baelde and Paul van Peteghem, *Opstand en Pacificatie in de Lage Landen: bijdrage tot de studie van de Pacificatie van Gent: verslagboek van het Tweedaags Colloquium bij de vierhonderdste verjaring van de Pacificatie van Gent*. (Snoeck-Ducaju, Nijgh & Van Ditmar: Gent 1976) 350-359, 354.

reference for further peace negotiations had nonetheless caught the attention of several historians.² Michel Baelde and Paul van Peteghem, for example, argued that the Pacification was significant despite the lack of coherence and clarity in the text. The treaty's significance laid in the interpretative possibilities of its ambiguous articles. They argue that this ambiguity allowed a multitude of opposing views to refer to the Pacification – claiming loyalty to its content; while at the same time following their own local interests.³ In this sense, the Pacification can be considered beyond its success as a union among provinces and analysed for its varying local impacts and receptions. The interpretative possibilities of the Pacification provided opportunities for local governments to seize the legislative initiative of peace negotiations; thereby dictating its terms.

In this research I will analyse the local significance of the Pacification in the city of Utrecht from 1576 until the abjuration of king Philip in 1581. The main question of this thesis is: what was the significance of the Pacification of Ghent for both religious and civic peace settlements in the city of Utrecht until the Act of Abjuration? The province and city of Utrecht had billeted royal troops upon Alva's arrival in 1567 and had experienced armies marching up and down its countryside ever since. For almost a decade Utrecht functioned as a frontier stronghold for the Habsburg regime to launch campaigns into the rebel territories of Holland and Zeeland. Moreover, the city and States of Utrecht were punished for their lacklustre prosecution of the iconoclasts in 1566 and opposition against the new taxes. In 1570 the Duke of Alva had stripped the States and city of the right to self-govern and transferred their power to the royal appointees in the provincial high court (*Hof van Utrecht*). Throughout the 1570's, the States and city remained adamant about the restoration of their privileges. The Catholic high clergy in Utrecht – in particular the secular canons of the five collegiate chapter churches – were part of the vanguard opposition against Alva and the Habsburg regime. They immediately sent the deacon of St. Peter's chapter, Willem Veusels, on behalf of the States and city to Madrid to negotiate with the king about the restoration of Utrecht's privileges.⁴

As the ecclesiastical centre of the Northern Low Countries, these chapter clergy had traditionally yielded most power within the States of Utrecht; or as Benjamin Kaplan put it 'In no

² Violet Soen, *Vredehandel: adellijke en Habsburgse verzoeningspogingen tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2012) 110, 119-125, 130-137, 139, 153; Monica Stensland, *Habsburg Communication in the Dutch Revolt* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2021) 86, 89-93; Wim Blockman & Paul van Peteghem, 'La Pacification de Gand a la Lumière d'un siècle de continuité constitutionnelle dans les Pays-Bas 1477-1576' in: R. Vierhaus ed., *Herrschaftsverträge, Wahlkapitulationen, Fundamentalgesetze* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 1977) 220-234, 227-234.

³ Baelde & van Peteghem, 'De Pacificatie van Gent (1576)' in: eds., idem *Pacificatie en Opstand* (1977) 1-62, 50.

⁴ Benjamin Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht 1578-1620*. (Ph.D. dissertation Harvard University 1989) 8; Joan Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis: The provincial Estates of Utrecht 1576 1590* (Ph.D. dissertation St. Andrews University 1982) 6-7; Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011) 95, 100.

other Dutch province did clerics have such political clout.⁵ Unlike in the surrounding provinces, the States of Utrecht was divided into three traditional medieval estates; the first of the clergy, the second of the nobility and the third of the cities. The First Estate did not represent the entire clergy but only the canons of the five chapters that received prebends.⁶ The chapter clergy received these prebends from their vast properties as the largest landowners in the city and province of Utrecht together with several belongings in the surrounding provinces. These high churchmen were almost all of noble origin and thus often related to the nobility of the Second Estate and powerful aristocratic families in the Low Countries. Moreover, many of these chapter clergy, with their ‘notoriously secular life styles’, wanted to – above all – preserve their privileges and prebends.⁷

The Dutch Revolt also reignited a particular dynamic rooted in the history of Utrecht. Kaplan argues that the course of the Reformation in Utrecht showed continuity with religious reforms initiated before the Dutch Revolt, and included class conflicts embedded in the *longue durée* of the city’s social demographic history. The social tensions between craftsmen and patricians – infused with traditional factional divisions – had been part and parcel of the city’s political history and endemic conflict. The absence of a significant mercantile elite and distinct social structure of independent master craftsmen on the one hand, with high clergy and relatively influential nobility on the other, allowed for a political dynamic in which these classes fought for control of the city with help from interregional allies.⁸ Bearing this in mind, Kaplan argued that ‘It is beyond the question, however, that two hundred years of “guild democracy”, from 1304 to 1528, left a legacy of exception among ordinary burghers that, if the city were to regain self-government from the Habsburg overlords, they would have a say in its government.’⁹ The reinstatement of Utrecht’s civic militia in 1572 – dominated by craftsmen and other middle class groups – reinforced these memories.¹⁰

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will discuss the implementation of the Pacification and the immediate consequences in Utrecht until 1578. This part will consider questions such as: in what context and for which reasons did the States of Utrecht join the Pacification? What were the interests for the Catholic chapter clergy to sign the treaty? What were the consequences of the siege of Vredenburg for the role of the civic militia? What did the Pacification mean for the position of Prince Willem of Orange? And lastly, what were the roles of returning exiles in Utrecht?

⁵ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 95

⁶ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 27.

⁷ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 7, 95-97, 102.

⁸ *Ibid*, 92-94, 117.

⁹ *Ibid*, 117.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 121.

The next chapter will analyse how violations of the Pacification caused political disintegration over either revised interpretations or reaffirmations of the original treaty. This will include a discussion about the rise of religious tensions within the city over the course of 1578. What did the local government do to keep the peace? Who were considered suspicious in the city, and why? How did the Pacification shape debates about regulating religious co-existence? In what context and for which reasons was the Closer Union (Union of Utrecht) signed in 1579? What were the arguments of proponents and opponents for an alliance with Holland and Zeeland? And what was the significance of the Pacification in both their arguments?

The last chapter will examine the aftermath of the Pacification. While proponents of the Closer Union tried to obscure the Pacification, opponents attempted to resurrect the treaty in a last effort to pull Utrecht away from further entanglement with the radical rebel provinces of Holland and Zeeland. Yet, the local government of Utrecht forced reluctant chapter clergy to accept both the Closer Union and the local religious peace treaty. How was the opposition against the Closer Union organized? Why was the local rebel government able to force the chapter clergy into signing the Closer Union in 1579? For what reasons did the chapter clergy resist the city council's proposal for a local religious peace, and what were the consequences of the latter's unilateral proclamation of confessional co-existence? And lastly, when was the Pacification definitively rendered obsolete in Utrecht?

I will argue that the Pacification marked the beginning of Utrecht's rebellion and proved pivotal in the early stages of the Reformation in the city. The Pacification served as a frame of reference for policy changes and dictated discussions about how to interpret the treaty's peace terms under the continuously evolving circumstances, from its creation in 1576 until the Act of Abjuration in 1581. In doing so, I will use a variety of sources such as chronicles, ordinances, peace treaties, pamphlets, city council resolutions and chapter resolutions. Juxtaposing such sources can paint a picture of the developing peace terms while it may also provide context to incidents by examining conflicting perspectives about the meaning and causes.

Chapter 1: The Implementation of the Pacification

The arrival of the Duke of Alva in 1567 together with the Army of Flanders, the Council of Troubles and the new taxes had not produced the desired effect. The Habsburg methods of crushing the rebellion and relentless heresy persecutions had in fact alienated a large part of population. The heresy punishments of the Council of Troubles were perceived as too rigorous while the financial burden of new taxes and billeted soldiers weighed heavy on the whole society. After 1572, religious dissent and local revolts turned into an open rebellion and civil war in Holland and Zeeland. Several attempts to make peace with Holland and Zeeland had failed; the last negotiations had broken down in Breda in the summer of 1575. Moreover, the monarchy had gone bankrupt in September 1575 while Alva's replacement, governor Luis de Requesens, had already repeatedly asked king Philip to provide more financial aid in order to sustain the armies in the Low Countries. By 1576, several Spanish *tercios* in the Army of Flanders had stopped receiving full payments since almost two years. In addition, the sudden death of Requesens in March 1576 marked the collapse of royal authority. His death – together with the bankruptcy – caused an alarmingly large mutiny among the Spanish *tercios*. During the summer, these veteran soldiers sacked and plundered several towns across Brabant to make up for their back-payments.¹¹

The new royal governor, the half-brother of king Philip, Don John of Austria had been appointed in May 1576 and was instructed to immediately travel to the Low Countries. Don John, however, demanded a meeting with the king before taking office, which delayed his arrival in the Low Countries by another half year. In the meanwhile, the Council of State had to govern *ad interim* while attempting to address the grievances of the provinces. Yet, king Philip failed to provide clear instructions and thereby paralysed them. The high nobles in the Council of State were nonetheless able to pass some provisional legislation: they suspended the Council of Troubles, allowed the States and cities to recruit their own militias – in order to defend themselves against mutinying Spanish troops – and successfully outlawed the *tercios*; who were declared enemies of king and country.¹²

On the 4th of September, however, the members of the Council of State were arrested in Brussels by an officer of the States of Brabant; possibly with tacit support of Prince Willem of Orange.¹³ The Duke of Aarschot was placed under house arrest while his younger brother, the Marquis of Havré, was briefly imprisoned. Although most councillors were quickly released many were purged from the Council of State. The States of Brabant meanwhile invited the other States to

¹¹ Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 69-75; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 102-103.

¹² *Ibid*, 73-74; Soen, *Vredehandel* 106-108,

¹³ *Ibid*, 75; Soen, *Vredehandel* 108-109.

convoke an Estates-General, without royal consent.¹⁴ The Estates-General deputies were well aware of their feint legitimacy. The majority of them were nonetheless loyal to king Philip while they simultaneously seized the political initiative to deal with the mutinying *tercios* after months of a power vacuum.¹⁵

The Pacification of Ghent and the Siege of Vredenburg

Concerns about Spanish troops had been raised in Utrecht before the coup. Back in June the States of Utrecht had repeated its position to the Council of State, asserting that the civic militia and 170 Spanish *tercios* garrisoned in the Vredenburg citadel would suffice for the defence of the loyal city.¹⁶ The States of Holland had nonetheless sent a letter to the citizenry and eight militia captains of Utrecht in August, urging them to take up arms against the Spanish *tercios* and offering help to fight them.¹⁷ The Stadtholder of Utrecht, the Baron of Hierges, thought otherwise. He considered that Utrecht was still vulnerable to attacks from either the rebels in Holland or mutineers roaming within and around its lands. A couple of days after the coup, Hierges ordered three regiments of German soldiers on the 12th of September into the city of Utrecht and re-enforced the Vredenburg castle with artillery.¹⁸ Now the city had three armed groups to worry about: their own civic militia, a Spanish garrison in the Vredenburg loyal to Don John and several regiments of German mercenaries under command of Stadtholder Hierges billeted in and around the city.

After some delays the States of Utrecht were allowed by Stadtholder Hierges to send their deputies to Brussels for a meeting of the Estates-General on the 28th of September.¹⁹ While the Estates-General negotiated the Pacification, the States of Holland had sent two more letters to the Utrecht citizenry and eight militia captains. This time the deputies of Holland specifically demanded them to attack the *tercio's* in the Vredenburg. The letter concluded menacingly that inaction would cause the States of Holland to consider the citizenry of Utrecht as enemies. The militia captains responded that they wanted the *tercio's* to leave, 'that we will become freed from fear of the castle.'²⁰ They did not, however, commit themselves to an attack of the Vredenburg, and stated that they awaited the outcome of the Estates-General's peace negotiations before taking any action. A month of negotiations – sending deputies back-and-forth – was concluded with the Estates-General

¹⁴ Ibid, 75-77; Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1979) 180.

¹⁵ Ibid, 71, 77; Soen, *Vredehandel* 105.

¹⁶ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 10.

¹⁷ Johan van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek, vervattende alle de placaten, ordonnantien en edicten der edele mogende heeren Staten 'sLands van Utrecht* (Utrecht 1729) vol. 1, 35-37.

¹⁸ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 10.

¹⁹ Ibid, 11.

²⁰ Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek*, vol. 1, 38-39.

signing the Pacification of Ghent on the 8th of November. Ironically, Veusels had returned from Spain while the deputies of Utrecht were negotiating in Ghent. After six years of negotiating in Madrid about the restoration of Utrecht's privileges, Veusels had finally secured the king's permission on the 30th of October to rescind Alva's punishment of the States and city.²¹ The Pacification, however, rendered Veusels' remedies obsolete as it tied the fate of Utrecht together with the other fourteen rebel provinces. Moreover, days before signing the Pacification, however, events had quickly succeeded one another. The new royal governor Don John had arrived in Luxemburg on the 3rd of November and the brutal sack of Antwerp by mutineers the next day further entrenched the conviction across the provinces that the Spanish *tercios* must retreat from the Low Countries for a durable peace.²²

According to Joan Bannatyne, the withdrawal of the *tercios* was the main reason for the States of Utrecht to sign the Pacification.²³ The powerful Catholic clergy of the five chapters also had several other reasons to sign the Pacification. As the biggest landowners in the Sticht, the chapter clergy wished the armies to depart from the region, so their damaged properties could be repaired and they could restore the interest yield of their prebends.²⁴ The Pacification's article fifteen included a break from royal taxes for properties damaged by war. Furthermore, article nineteen specifically offered possible restitution or reasonable compensation for clerical properties in Holland and Zeeland. Lastly, the Pacification's emphasis on restoration of local privileges resonated with these chapter clergy who wanted to safeguard their diaconal powers and clerical immunities; which had eroded since the Habsburg central government had introduced a new bishopric scheme in 1559 and tried to streamline the church hierarchy with the royal bureaucracy in order to prosecute heresy.²⁵ The chapter clergy's active support as First Estate was fundamental for the participation of the States of Utrecht to the Pacification.

The immediate consequence of signing the Pacification did revolve around the withdrawal of Spanish *tercios* and led to the already tense situation of three armies in the city to escalate; ultimately resulting in the siege of Vredenburg. An anonymous source provides a detailed account of this siege. Muller has traced this source to the Utrecht chapter of St. Mary and argues that the author was probably a canon from this deeply conservative chapter.²⁶ The surviving text is a draft that was written in 1578 and thus biased by retrospect; to which I will return in chapter two.

²¹ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 11.

²² Soen, *Vredehandel* 109.

²³ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 12.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 90.

²⁵ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 3 7.

²⁶ Samuel Muller, 'Verhaal van het beleg van het kasteel Vredenburg te Utrecht in 1576, door eenen ooggetuige.' In: *Bijdragen en mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap, deel 6* (Utrecht 1883) 147-216, 159.

Furthermore, mentioned facts can be corroborated with other sources, such as the diary of the Catholic prior of Steyn in Amsterdam, Brother Wouter Jacobszoon.²⁷

The narrative recounts how the city council and burghers initially maintained good relations with Francesco Fernando d'Avila, the Spanish captain of the *tercios* in the Vredenburg. Back in 1574 the captain had ordered his troops to fight with the civic militia against Spanish mutineers attempting to plunder the city.²⁸ Yet, mutual distrust rose allegedly after d'Avilla got word of the Pacification, which he interpreted as an act of rebellion against the king. D'Avilla began stocking provisions in the citadel. The citizens for their part did the same after pressuring the council and began fortifying strategic positions.²⁹

The author describes how the city was struggling to secure funds to safeguard Utrecht from mutinying troops roaming in Brabant – and possibly either the Spanish garrison in the Vredenburg or Hierges' unpaid German mercenaries in and around the city.³⁰ The advocate of the States of Utrecht, Floris Thin, pleaded their cause at the Estates-General in Brussels. A solution to the inability of the States of Utrecht to raise enough taxes – if any at all – from both their damaged properties within the Sticht and confiscated belongings in rebel territory, was one of the main negotiating concerns that Thin had to resolve by signing the Pacification.³¹ Within Utrecht both the archbishop and chapter clergy were forced by the civic militia to provide funds. During their meeting at the Dom chapterhouse on the 14th of November, numerous militiamen overwhelmed the archbishop and threatened him into providing a loan.³²

Furthermore, fears that Utrecht would suffer the same faith as Antwerp intensified once the news had arrived mid-November. These fears soared after the *tercios* made a sally on the 21st of December attacking several citizens, firing heavy canons into the city and setting multiple buildings ablaze. The trigger for the sally remains unclear. Was the attack unprovoked, was it a defensive act or due to a misunderstanding?³³ The result was nonetheless that "in response" the citizens, militia and inhabitants (including women, children and clergy) created sconces, shot back from fortified church

²⁷ Isabella van Eeghen, *Dagboek van Broeder Wouter Jacobsz.* vol. 2 (J.B Wolters: Groningen 1960) 608-642; Pieter Bor, *Oorsprong, begin en vervolg van de Nederlandsche Oorlogen.* vol.1 Book 10 (Amsterdam 1680) 776-783. Bannatyne, *Conservatism* 12-15, see notes 36-39.

²⁸ Muller, *Verhaal van het beleg* 173-174. Bor *Nederlandsche Oorlogen.* vol.1 Book 10, 776. Soen, *Vredehandel* 100.

²⁹ Ibid, 176; van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 608-609; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 12-13.

³⁰ Muller, *Verhaal van het beleg* 177-184.

³¹ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 13, 90.

³² Muller, *Verhaal van het beleg* 182-185; van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 611.

³³ Ibid, 194-197; Bor, *Nederlandsche Oorlogen.* vol 1. Book 10, 777. The anonymous source and Bor argued that the Spanish sally was unprovoked. Brother Wouter seems to suggest that the sally was due to a misunderstanding. See: van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 623.

towers and lay siege to the citadel.³⁴ Saliently, the head of the Franciscans took refuge in the citadel, fearing that years of preaching against heretics and vocal support for the Habsburg regime would cause the population to turn on him.³⁵ Moreover, Hierges' German mercenaries outside of the walls were provided funds and let into the city to join the citizens besieging the *tercios* in the Vredenburg.³⁶

In the meanwhile, the former Stadtholder of Utrecht, the Count of Bossu – who had been released from rebel captivity in Hoorn as part of the Pacification (article nine) – travelled to the city. Once Bossu arrived in January he took command of the siege while heavy artillery and canons had arrived from Holland and Guelders. The siege caused much destruction throughout the city and lasted until the 8th of February 1577 when Bossu and captain d'Avila reached an agreement; the latter left three days later. The civic militiamen immediately took the opportunity to accentuate their military power by raising their banners proudly on top of the Vredenburg, only a few hours after the *tercio's* had left the citadel.³⁷

The Stadthoderate and Satisfaction of Utrecht

The victory of the city over the *tercio* garrison in the Vredenburg was by no means the end of unrest within Utrecht. As soon as the Spanish troops left, the question of who ought to be the rightful Stadtholder of Utrecht after the Pacification became most pressing. Prince William of Orange had been the Stadholder of Utrecht, Holland and Zeeland but had been stripped of his position by Alva in 1567 and replaced by the Count of Bossu. The Prince, however, was *de facto* the Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland since 1572 and *de jure* by articles six and seven of the Pacification. The Baron of Hierges had replaced the Count of Bossu as Stadtholder in 1573 after his capture, yet, Hierges' claim to the Stadthoderate expired with the release of Bossu in November. The Count received support from a large part of the States of Utrecht because he was a Catholic and could control the German mercenaries. Bossu, however, had no interest in the Stadthoderate of Utrecht without Holland and Zeeland, and instead offered himself for the Stadthoderate of Friesland, Groningen and Overijssel. Moreover, both Hierges and Bossu had left Utrecht and were perceived to have abandoned the city with the unpaid mercenaries.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid, 195-199; van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 623-625. The church towers of St. Jacobs and St. Mary had been fortified to gain high ground on the citadel.

³⁵ Ibid, 184; Bor, *Nederlandsche Oorlogen*. vol 1. book 10, 777; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 123.

³⁶ Ibid, 201.

³⁷ Ibid, 216; *Broeder Wouter* 641-642; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 13.

³⁸ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 14; Albert van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden van de Unie van Utrecht', in: *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht 1978* (1978) 24-55, 32.

Support for Bossu was not shared universally. Paulus Buys, the emissary of Willem of Orange, reported to the Prince in March that the city council of Utrecht and three of the five chapters supported him to be the Stadtholder. Moreover, the most vocal opponent of the Prince, the deacon of the Dom-chapter, Johan van Bruhesen, had fled the city on the 2nd of March.³⁹ Although the two chapters of St. Salvator and St. Mary remained reluctant, a majority within the five chapters was enough for the clerical vote of the First Estate and crucial for support of the Prince within the States of Utrecht.⁴⁰ The Orangist deacon of the chapter of St. John, Adriaan van Zuylen, argued that article seven of the Pacification allowed each province the choice to appoint the Prince as Stadtholder and draft a satisfaction treaty laying out the terms of government.⁴¹ The ambiguous article seven in the Pacification stated:

But regarding those towns and places, included under the commission of His Royal Majesty, received by him, that currently are not under the control and obedience of His Excellence, will this point be adjourned for time and later, that the same towns and places, having with other States joined this union and accord, His Excellence will give them satisfaction of the points, in which those might find themselves interested under his governance, may it be in matters of the exercise of religion or otherwise, lest the Provinces will not be dismembered and to avoid all disputes and discord.⁴²

On the 16th of March, the States of Utrecht ‘found themselves interested in his governance’ and ordered a commission to start drafting a satisfaction treaty with Prince’s emissary Buys.⁴³ The Council of State tried to block the negotiations with the Prince, arguing that the Pacification’s article seven only applied to cities such as Haarlem and Amsterdam in rebel territory; to not be dismembered from their province Holland. Both Haarlem and Amsterdam had been the last Catholic cities left within Holland and negotiated Satisfactions in accordance with articles six and seven of the

³⁹ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 239-240.

⁴⁰ Van Hulzen, ‘Achtergronden’, 34.

⁴¹ ‘P.Buys au Prince d’Orange, Satisfaction d’Utrecht, Lettre DCCVI.’ In: *Archives ou Correspondance inédite de la Maison d’Orange-Nassau*. G. Groen van Prinsterer (Leiden 1835-1915) vol.1 part 6. Huygens Instituut, 9-11; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 16.

⁴² ‘Bijlagen’ in: eds., Baelde & van Peteghem, *Opstand en Pacificatie* 356; ‘Maer belangende die steden ende plaetsen, begrepen onder die commissie van Conincklycke Majesteit, by hem ontfangen, die jegenwoirdelick onder ’t gebiet ende gehoorzaamheyt van Zijnder Excellentie niet en staen, zal dit point gescorst blyven ter tijt ende wylen, dezelve steden ende plaetzen, hen mitten anderen Staeten gevoucht hebbende tot deze unie ende accord, Zyne Excellentie henlieden zal gegeven hebben satisfactie op de pointen, daerinne zylieden hen zouden vinden geinteresseert onder zijn gouvernement, ’t zy ten opsiene van d’exercitie van der religien oft andersszins, opdat de provincien niet gedemembreert en wordden ende om alle twist ende tweedracht te schouwen.’

⁴³ Van Hulzen, ‘Achtergronden’, 34.

Pacification. In the case of Utrecht, however, the Council of State argued that article seven of the Pacification was never meant to apply to a whole province.⁴⁴

In the meantime, the Estates-General had continued to negotiate with the royal governor about ratifying the Pacification. A delegation had been sent to Don John in Luxemburg in December 1576 resulting in the Union of Brussels (6th of January 1577) and Don John signing the Perpetual Edict (11th of February 1577); both reaffirming to uphold the Pacification, remain loyal to king Philip and restore the Catholic faith. By April peace briefly seemed within grasping distance after king Philip had ratified the Perpetual Edict and Don John was received in Brussels with a festive Joyous Entrée; swearing to uphold the Pacification.⁴⁵

Yet, the Prince of Orange refused to sign the Perpetual Edict during negotiations at the Geertuidenberg in the summer of 1577.⁴⁶ The Prince was still solidifying his position through the Satisfactions of Utrecht, Amsterdam and Haarlem while his ambassadors tried to secure support for a political union between the States of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overijssel, Friesland and Guelders.⁴⁷ During the Geertuidenberg negotiations, the Prince, however, disregarded the Perpetual Edict's emphasis on the restoration of Catholicism and stated that he would never accept an Estates-General decision on religious matters in Holland and Zeeland. The Prince thereby violated the Pacification when it suited him. In response, Don John publicly declared the Prince of Orange a violator of the Pacification.⁴⁸

Back in Utrecht, the city experienced new tensions in late April when Hierges' billeted German mercenaries started demanding all their back payments. The mercenaries tried to capture the city and hold it to ransom. After the mercenaries had been beaten off by the civic militia, they set fire to several houses along the city walls which resulted in deaths on both sides and the imprisonment of their captains by the civic militia. The remaining billeted soldiers were kept in check by the militiamen. Moreover, to prevent another devastating siege, the city militia and the townspeople took it upon themselves to start knocking-down the Vredenburg; a tangible and symbolic victory of urban independence.⁴⁹

Yet, the city could not remain isolated from supralocal developments. The Prince of Orange and States of Utrecht continued negotiating during the summer about a satisfaction treaty. In June the States of Holland offered financial aid to deal with the remaining unpaid mercenaries in the city and roaming the Sticht's countryside, on the condition that the States of Utrecht conclude their

⁴⁴ Bor, *Nederlandsche Oorlogen* vol.1 Book 10, 793-794.

⁴⁵ Soen, *Vredehandel* 110-113; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 104-106.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 33-37.

⁴⁸ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 106; Soen, *Vredehandel* 113-114.

⁴⁹ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 17-18.

satisfaction with the Prince. The Estates-General now also favoured a satisfaction of Utrecht.⁵⁰

The decisive factor was the ‘stupid move’ of Don John to capture Namur on the 24th of July 1577.⁵¹ The royal governor had secretly expressed almost immediately after signing the Perpetual Edict to violate its terms when it suited him. Furthermore, Don John had anxiously left Brussels for Namur after the Duke of Aarschot and Marquis de Havré informed him that a murder was being plotted against him. The capture of Namur left Don John with two remaining loyal provinces (Namur and Luxemburg) while the other fifteen joined the rebelling Estates-General, putting the brothers Aarschot and Havré in a difficult position. Publicly, the brothers initially reconciled with Don John while simultaneously inviting Archduke Matthias of Austria in secrecy in late August to become governor of the Low Countries.⁵²

The capture of Namur sparked outrage against Don John, himself now deemed a violator of peace treaties, and drove the townspeople in Gent, Brussels, Antwerp and Utrecht directly into the arms of the Prince. On the 30th of July, the eight militia captains in Utrecht submitted a petition, demanding that the city council and States would come to a quick conclusion of the Satisfaction with Orange, otherwise they would take matters into their own hands. They also swore an oath that they would act for the ‘conservation of God’s honour, the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion and decent submissiveness to His Majesty.’⁵³ A couple of days later, the States send Floris Thin and other deputies to Brussels to finalise the negotiations with the Prince.⁵⁴

The Satisfaction of Utrecht was signed on the 9th of October 1577 when the Prince visited the city and was ratified by the States later on the 28th of October.⁵⁵ The Satisfaction’s text was just as ambiguous as the Pacification. The preamble begins by referring to the previously mentioned article seven of the Pacification as legal fundament for the Satisfaction treaty. Furthermore, the phrase ‘may it be in matters of the exercise of religion or otherwise’ in the Pacification’s article seven granted the Prince a large mandate in both religious and governmental affairs.⁵⁶ Yet, throughout the Satisfaction, several articles repeated that the Catholic religion would be upheld and no infringements would be made on the church’s nor the city’s privileges. One crucial phrase in article one, however, was scrapped from the final version. In article one the Prince promised Utrecht to ‘keep, conserve and maintain in the old catholic apostolic roman faith as was done beyond human

⁵⁰ Ibid, 18.

⁵¹ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 106

⁵² Ibid; Soen, *Vredehandel* 110-113; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 82.

⁵³ Pieter Bondam, *Verzameling van onuitgegeven stukken tot opheldering der Vaderlandsche Historie* (Utrecht 1781) vol.3, 54; ‘conservatie van Gods eeren, die Catholycque Apostolycque Roomsche Religie, en die behoorlycke onderdanigheit van Zyne Majesteit.’ Van Hulzen, ‘Achtergronden’, 37; Bannatyne *Conservatism* 18.

⁵⁴ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 18.

⁵⁵ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 18; Van Hulzen, ‘Achtergronden’, 38.

⁵⁶ Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 1, 47-51.

memory and has until now been observed and upheld', which was initially followed by the phrase 'without bringing it or be brought in any other religion, novelty or change.'⁵⁷ This proved too restrictive for the Prince and Protestants, and was thus scrapped; leaving article one to only promise to uphold Catholicism, without imposing further restrictions on other religions.

Article four stated that the Prince would bring no army or garrison into the city nor any ministers or preachers to exercise the Reformed religion. Articles eleven to fifteen offered mediation for restitutions of the confiscated Catholic properties in Holland and Zeeland that had belonged to the archbishop and chapter clergy of Utrecht. Article seven of the Satisfaction prescribed the new procedures for selecting the city councilmen, introducing a Holland-style *vroedschap* in Utrecht which granted Stadtholder Willem of Orange dominance over the annual nominees. Lastly, the Satisfaction claimed to have restored the Treaty of Toledo of Emperor Charles V by bringing Utrecht, Holland and Zeeland under one Stadtholderate while simultaneously emphasising its continuity with the Pacification of Ghent.⁵⁸ Yet the city council was swiftly purged of most serving members and replaced by a majority of new men, and on the 20th of November they resolved to expel all remaining soldiers under Hierges' command.⁵⁹

By the autumn of 1577, the Prince of Orange had significantly expanded his popularity and influence. In September, the Prince had gone to Brussels receiving strong support from the guilds. Under popular pressure of the townspeople of Brussels, the States of Brabant declared the Prince *ruwaard* of the province; a provisional governorship 'awaiting' royal confirmation.⁶⁰ The Duke of Aarschot and other Catholic noble grandees tried to oppose the Prince's appointment as *ruwaard*, arguing that no Protestant could hold such a high office. The Duke, as governor of Flanders, tried to incite opposition of the Flemish townspeople against the Prince, yet he ended up overplaying his hand when outraged Gentenaars arrested and imprisoned him on the 28th of October, leaving the soon to arrive Archduke Matthias at the mercy of the Prince. That day, the citizenry and particularly the guildsmen took the example in Brussels a step further. Led by radical Calvinists, such as the nobleman Jan van Hembyze and preacher Petrus Datheen, they not only overthrew the city council and replaced it with a committee of eighteen but also turned Ghent into a Calvinist republic.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 38; Arthur le Cosquino de Bussy, *Het Ontstaan der Satisfactie van Utrecht* (Ph.D. Dissertation University of Amsterdam 1910) 227. 'In den eersten dat zyn Excellentie de Stadt, steden en landen van Utrecht zal beloven te houden, conserveren en mainteneren in de oude catholycke apostolycque roemsche religie als die boven menschen memorie tot noch toe aldaer geobserveert ende onderhouden es geweest zonder inne te brengen ofte laeten inbrengen eenige andere religie, nyeuwicheyden ofte veranderinge.'

⁵⁸ Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 1, 47-51.

⁵⁹ Het Utrecht Archief [HUA] 702 121-1 f.4.r – 4.l.; Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 34; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 48-49.

⁶⁰ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 106.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 106, 110-111; Soen, *Vredehandel* 114-116; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 82.

Once the Duke of Aarschot was released from captivity it was too late. His plan to use the Archduke as a pacifying mouthpiece to counter Don John's antagonizing actions and alienate Willem of Orange had backfired. The impressive young Archduke was no match for the Prince's seasoned shrewdness and quickly became his pawn. On the 7th of December Don John was declared an enemy of the king and country by the Estates-General and replaced by Archduke Matthias as governor.⁶² King Philip tried to diffuse the situation. He sent the Baron of Selles from Spain with instructions to reconcile the Estates-General with Don John while side-lining the Prince's puppet Archduke Matthias. One of the Baron's prime tasks was to obscure the Pacification from memory during further peace negotiations. His instructions nonetheless resembled the Pacification which included a generous general amnesty and retreat of Spanish troops from the Low Countries. Don John, however, had beaten the Baron's peace to the punch and published a menacing amnesty on the 25th of January 1578; stating that only those who surrendered immediately would qualify. Rather than a reconciliatory gesture, Don John's amnesty was received as a war declaration.⁶³

Although Archduke Matthias was inaugurated as the new governor in Brussels and Don John declared a public enemy, the States soon started to experience military pressure and political divisions. Ten days after the Archduke's inauguration, the States army suffered their first major military defeat at the battle of Gembloux on the 30th of January 1578. Don John had received funds from King Philip to strengthen his army.⁶⁴ After Gembloux, Louvain and other cities in the region made their peace with Don John. The Calvinist republic of Ghent, however, had also been able to conquer territory in Flanders. By July cities such as Bruges, Oudenaarde and Ypres also had their city councils replaced by committees of eighteen.⁶⁵ Thus, the brief hope for peace in the spring of 1577 during Don John's Joyous Entrée had evaporated by the summer of 1578 due to the renewed war efforts. This allowed Willem of Orange to solidify his position by the Satisfactions of Utrecht, Haarlem and Amsterdam, while the appointment of Archduke Matthias provided the Prince with a pawn to pursue his own political agenda and further alienate Don John.

The arrival of Archduke Matthias also added an international dimension to the conflict. His brother, Rudolf II, the Holy Roman emperor, had sent his Catholic emissary, Otto-Heinrich von Schwarzenberg, to be the counterpart of the Baron of Selles. Rather than obscuring the Pacification, Von Schwarzenburg was tasked with defending the treaty because the emperor considered it a *via media* which resembled the Peace of Augsburg; tacitly supporting the imperial religious peace

⁶² Ibid, 106; Soen, *Vredehandel* 114-116, 119.

⁶³ Soen, *Vredehandel* 120-121. Bor *Nederlandsche Oorlogen* vol.1 Book 12, 932-933.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 120-121.

⁶⁵ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 110; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 86.

policies. Von Schwarzenburg was instructed to side-line Don John and offer to host a peace conference on (neutral) imperial territory.⁶⁶

The return of exiles and rising religious tensions

Beyond the military context, religious divisions rapidly caused disintegration of political unity among the provinces over the course of 1578. The Pacification had resolved that a future assembly of the Estates-General would further decide about matters of religion. The return of exiled Protestants, however, was a source of tension after the Pacification granted amnesty, restitution of property and *de facto* freedom of conscience by the annulment of heresy verdicts and an end to persecutions. The recent historiographical paradigm shift of understanding the Dutch Revolt in terms of a civil war has prompted new insights and research into the roles of exiles, refugees and the political implications of reintegration.⁶⁷

Several studies have shown how exiles played important roles in the distribution of propaganda in Holland; sometimes with instructions from the Prince.⁶⁸ Moreover, exiles were rewarded offices in Holland by William of Orange when cities had been won for the rebel side. Geert Janssen has analysed how rituals of cleansing were used by returning exiles to rehabilitate themselves within the local community. He has argued that 'the reintegration of Protestant outlaws was intrinsically connected to the simultaneous flight of loyalist, Catholic citizens whose houses and physical possessions were appropriated, purged and used as an instrument of rebel propaganda. Two contrasting streams of refugees thus became symbolically connected, as it was loyalist Catholics who provided exiled Protestants with the tools to turn themselves into the protagonists of the new regime.'⁶⁹ This was also the case for Catholic cities such as Haarlem, Amsterdam and Utrecht under the Stadtholderate of the Prince.

In Haarlem and Amsterdam the Satisfactions had guaranteed Catholic public worship in the cities, yet concessions were made to Protestants. These concessions, however, turned out to have opened the floodgates. In the first half year of 1578 both cities experienced religious violence and iconoclasm, culminating in so-called alterations; i.e. the Reformed religion became dominant and Catholic worship was severely limited.⁷⁰ Many returning exiles had radicalized and grown embittered

⁶⁶ Soen, *Vredehandel* 123-124.

⁶⁷ Geert Janssen, 'Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt', in: *History. Journal of the Historical Association* 94 (2009) 36-52, 38.

⁶⁸ Janssen, 'Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration', 40.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 38.

⁷⁰ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 107-108.

during their hardships of banishment; they were by no means willing to compromise for minor concessions.⁷¹

In Utrecht too, exiles began to return after the Pacification. The Council of Troubles had sentenced 103 people to be banished with confiscation of goods, while at least three were executed.⁷² The amnesty, annulment of heresy persecution and restitution of property in the Pacification facilitated a form of transitional justice. Several exiles and children of exiles took office in the city government of Utrecht after the Pacification. This can be discerned by comparing the names in the verdicts of the Council of Troubles with the name lists of office holders in the city government and States of Utrecht before and after the Pacification.⁷³

One prominent exile to return was the nobleman Jan van Renesse, Lord of Wilp and Wulven. The lord of Wulven was a signatory of the Comprise of Nobles in 1565 and had requested the royal governor Margaret of Parma and Stadtholder William of Orange in 1566 to grant the St. Jacobs church in Utrecht to the Protestants. After Alva's arrival, however, the nobleman, his father and mother were convicted in a mass verdict of the Council of Troubles (1568). The family was accused of sheltering Protestants in their lordships. The verdict also accused the young nobleman of taking part in the iconoclasm of 1566 during which he broke the door of the *Buurtkerk* with his sword and provided two pistols to other iconoclasts.⁷⁴ His father was executed in Utrecht in 1568 while the young Jan van Renesse and his mother were banished with confiscation of their goods. Their house at the prominent St. Jan's Kerkhof was turned into the chancellery for the High Court and States of Utrecht. During his exile the lord of Wulven took part in the siege of Leiden in 1574 on the rebel side and returned to Utrecht after the Pacification.⁷⁵ Once he returned in September 1577 his confiscated house was restituted and he began regularly attending meetings of the States of Utrecht as a member of the Second Estate. Later the Lord of Wulven became the commissioner-general of munitions for the Union of Utrecht (1579) and representative of Utrecht in the Estates-General (1584).⁷⁶

⁷¹ van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 705-706. The Catholic monk exactly describes this in Amsterdam after the alteration in February 1578.

⁷² Bannatyne, *Conservatism* 6.

⁷³ See: Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek [NNBW] 'Jan van Renesse', part 5, 585-586. A list of office holders in (the States of) Utrecht is available in Bannatyne, *Conservatism* 235-263. For name lists of annual officeholders in the city government, see: HUA 702 106. Name lists of office holders in the city government between 1576-1591 are also available in the *Kronijk van Utrecht, 1576-1591*.

⁷⁴ NNBW, 'Jan van Renesse', part 5, 585-586. Jan or Johan van Renesse is often confused with his father and name sake.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Although Bor would like to make us believe that only common people took part in iconoclasm, while noblemen such as the lord of Wulven never took part in such violence and would have predominantly played a mediating part in 1566. Yet, the lord of Wulven's later position as commissioner-general for munitions clearly showed that he knew a thing or two about guns. See: Bor, *Nederlandsche Oorlogen*, vol.1 book 2, 90-91.

⁷⁶ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 261.

A less prominent exile was Jan Pyll. He was convicted by the same mass verdict for having collected alms and organising Protestant public preaching. The name Jan Pyll is mentioned several times in the city records of office holders; as councillor in 1564 – and appears again after the Pacification in the same position between 1577 and 1579.⁷⁷ Other names of the mass verdicts also resurface on the city council in later years: Gillis Spaens (Councillor 1588) and Jacob van Bommel (Councillor 1589; Schepen 1590) were both condemned for iconoclasm.⁷⁸ In other cases, children or family members of exiles or condemned appear on the city council. For example, Cosyn Jacobsz. (Councillor 1585-1586; Schepen 1587-1589), was in all likelihood the son of Jacob Cosyn who was executed for taking part in the iconoclasm of 1566 and pressuring the city council into granting the St. Jacob's Church to Protestants.⁷⁹ It remains unclear when exactly these later serving council members returned from their exile, but it is possible that they would have been in the city before taking an office. Moreover, larger groups of anonymous Protestant refugees who had fled the city without an official heresy condemnation or any government office after their return, could also resettle after the Pacification. An anonymous chronicle – known as the *Utrecht Kronijk 1576-1591* written by a local cleric in both Latin and Dutch, provides a clue about who the local Protestants might have been. According to this chronicle, the same people who had been the vanguard at the siege of the Vredenburg, were the ones who in 1578 would not stop introducing novelty; i.e. Protestant reforms, and had forced *everyone* to join the civic militia in their guard of the city:

*'[The] people, [of] February the 8th, [1577], as pioneers and have done the breaking of the Vredenburg (...), have not rested of novelties, having forced clerical and lay, noble and nonnoble, high and low councils, under the civic militia's day and night watches, via military executions of those who did not obey.'*⁸⁰

Indeed, the council ordinance of the 7th February 1578 ordered *all* males between ages of eighteen and sixty to serve in the civic militia; i.e. the Catholic clergy included.⁸¹

⁷⁷ J.W.L. Raven., 'Kronijk van Utrecht 1576-1591' in *Kronijk van het Historisch Genootschap* 21:5 (1865) 530-576, 533-538; HUA 702 106; HUA 702 107; Jacob Marcus, *Sententien en Indagingen van den Hertog van Alba* (Amsterdam 1735) 107.

⁷⁸ Marcus, *Sententien en Indagingen* 107-225.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 351-352.

⁸⁰ Raven, 'Kronijk' 535. 'Mense february die VII, alst poinieren ende breken van Vreburch gedaen was (...), tot noch toe niet rustende van nieuwicheden, hebben geestelicke ende weerlicke, edel ende onedel, hoogen ende legen raed bedwongen, onder die burger veenelen dach ende nacht te waken, via armata executerende die niet en obedierden.'

⁸¹ Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 3, 584-585; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 120.

The Pacification had addressed several shared grievances across the States and attempted to restore the rule of law by formulating a framework for transitional justice. It was the first peace treaty that granted amnesty regardless of religion and de facto freedom of conscience. Moreover, the annulment of all heresy verdicts and restitution of confiscated properties, allowed exiles to return home while a future assembly of the Estates-General would further decide on religious matters. Yet, the Pacification was also structured to solve and serve local interests. Thus, the outcomes of each of the Pacification's articles also followed a particular trajectory in each province.

In Utrecht, the demand to withdraw Spanish soldiers had led to the siege of Vredenburg. The victories over both the *tercios* in the citadel and Hierges' billeted mercenaries were crucial for the development of the civic militia as dominant military force within the city and their captains' increasing role as political mouthpiece of the citizenry. Both the raising of the banners and following destruction of the Vredenburg citadel were omens for the rising power of the civic militia in Utrecht. Both these acts can also be considered as rituals of cleansing. The construction of the Vredenburg citadel had been a sign of submission to royal authority, its destruction was therefore a clear symbol of regained urban independence. The lack of an Stadtholder, the Pacification ambiguous article seven and the war with Don John, swayed the States and city Utrecht into closer cooperation with the radical rebel provinces of Holland and Zeeland under the Prince's Stadtholderate, while Orangist supporters and returning exiles increasingly took control of the local government. Over the course of 1578, the meaning of adherence to the Pacification's peace terms changed and dictated debates about how to proceed with regards to the developing circumstances and rising religious tensions within cities.

Chapter 2: The Consequences of the Pacification

Throughout 1578 the unforeseen consequences of the Pacification's framework for transitional justice and peace processes in Utrecht were further shaped by local, interregional and international developing military and political circumstances. The unilateral appoint of Archduke Matthias as new governor by the rebel Estates-General and war against the "public enemy" Don John, incited distrust and fears of conspiracies within cities, while it also alienated radical and moderate provinces from each other. In addition, as exiles were returning, Protestants were demanding rights of public worship while increasing distrust of Catholics and prominent members of the Habsburg regime led to coercive oaths of loyalty to the revolt. Moderate rebels and Catholics tried to prevent Utrecht from closer co-operation with the radical rebel provinces of Holland and Zeeland by reaffirming the Pacification's maintenance of the Catholic faith and freedom of conscience as status quo for non-Catholics. They pointed out violations of the Pacification's terms while emphasising the need for reconciliation under the king's authority. Protestants, however, used the Pacification to gain a foothold for more – if not exclusive – religious rights of public worship. A few pamphlets were written and distributed to sway the public opinion in Utrecht against further radicalization.

These fears for further entanglement of Utrecht with the rebel cause in 1578 also resonated in the retrospective bias of the previously mentioned anonymous source about the siege of the Vredenburg. In hindsight, the author, tried to provide both the "correct reading" of the siege of Vredenburg and diffuse the revolutionary spirit. According to Muller the text centred on two main arguments. First, the author tries to convince readers that the retreat of Spanish troops was necessary for peace. Secondly, the author claims that the siege of the Vredenburg was a response to the Spanish sally, and that the Utrecht citizenry, therefore, acted out of self-defence; 'never and would those of Utrecht have shot first.'⁸² A third argument, however, can be discerned: reaffirming adherence to the Pacification. The author, for example, recalls how the Pacification was received with explicit reference to article four about the upholding of the Catholic faith.

To endorse the pacification, still with the express condition, as had been recalled in the writing: that men yonder, will not or would attempt anything of which may

⁸² Muller, *Verhaal van het beleg* 160-161, 204-206. 'Dan nemmermeer en souden die van Utrecht eerst geschoten hebben'.

*or hinder the old catholic roman religion and in the submission that men is owed
to his Majesty.*⁸³

The author reminds readers that endorsing the Pacification meant upholding the Catholic Church and loyalty to king Philip. Saliiently, the author's use of the conditional past tense of "would attempt" could tacitly suggest that hindrance of Catholicism was indeed attempted. Moreover, the author recalled what the Spanish captain d'Avila allegedly said after hearing about the Pacification.

*'that they, in doing such, have acted as public enemies (and were) of God, his
Royal Majesty and all lands.'*⁸⁴

Whether or not d'Avila said this is not the point. It is the phrasing by the author that is particularly remarkable. The author seems to agree with the statement he attributes to the captain by the words 'and were' between brackets. A further elaboration by the author about those who had acted as public enemies of God, the king and all lands, is absent.

Although the text seemed to be styled for wide dissemination, the abrupt end of the source – in the middle of a word – suggests that the text was abandoned. It remains unclear when and why exactly the text was abandoned; the only clue is provided by the phrase: '*A^o 78 Sub correctione.*'⁸⁵ In the early months of 1578, the local rebel government increasingly started suspecting Catholic clergy and monks of conspiring with the enemy, and thus began to enforce an oath of loyalty; arguing that the magistrate could expel anyone who disturbed the peace according the Pacification. Beyond the honest intentions of some magistrates, 'keeping the peace' became a means of the rebel governments to suppress any opposition to new policies.

Suspicious of betrayal and coercive oaths

In January 1578, the Jesuits became the first order to be expelled from the city. A council resolution stated that the Jesuit presence caused the common people to 'murmur' and that their removal was necessary to keep the peace.⁸⁶ A couple of weeks later, on the 3rd of February, the council resolved:

⁸³ Ibid, 175-176. 'Mede aldaer opt stuck vande pacificatie te erschrijven, toch met expresse conditie als inde verschrijvinge verhaelt wordt: datmen aldaer nijet doen ofte attenteren soude twelck soude mogen ofte hijnderen doude catholijckque Roomsche religie ende inde onderdanicheyt, die men sijne Ma. schuldig is.'

⁸⁴ Ibid. 'dat zij in sulcx te doen gedaen hadden als openbaer vianden (ende waren) van God, de Co. Ma. ende allen landen.'

⁸⁵ Ibid, 158, 161-163, 204.

⁸⁶ HUA 702 121-1 f. 14.r.

‘Thus, the Council has received some warnings that there are great betrayals being plotted, there where monks were sent from the one city to another. Thus, it is resolved that men in all monks’ monasteries of this city will be recorded by name and surname, of all those religious [orders] and conventuals that are within their monasteries, they are ordered to not increase nor decrease their numbers except with the knowledge of the Council. And commissioned to this are Jan Pyl and Lourens of Nyehoff councils.’⁸⁷

Catholic monks were thus treated with high suspicion and kept under close supervision. Most noteworthy, however, is the name of one of the council members responsible for this supervision: Jan Pyl. This is in all likelihood the same Jan Pyl who was sentenced by the Council of Troubles and returned from exile after the Pacification, as discussed in chapter one.

A city council resolution from the 15th of April highlights another case of a suspected betrayal. The resolution refers to betrayals in other rebel provinces, and stated: ‘that they [the city council] have been informed that there are some within this city who publicly support the party of Don John.’⁸⁸ At the instigation of the citizenry and city militia, the suspects were removed from the city for the duration of the investigation. Interestingly, the resolution emphasizes that the militia should never act again in such manner without informing their captains, the city council, mayors or sheriff (*schout*); ‘in order that the council in her reputation and authority will not be diminished.’⁸⁹ Yet, the response of the militiamen is also included in the resolution, arguing that they had to act to keep the common people (*gemeente*) quiet and at peace.

The author of the *Kronijk*, however, attributed the agitation of the common people to Protestants who had begun preaching in a shed beside the St. Nicolas Church since early April. Furthermore, the chronicle provides the names of the suspects – which are absent in the council resolution. These suspects were the previously mentioned deacon of St. Peter’s chapter Willem Veusels, two canons of St. Mary’s chapter, a pastor of the *Buurtkerk*, a nobleman and most noteworthy three members of the High Court of Utrecht.⁹⁰ Two of these men, Anthonis van Grisperre

⁸⁷ HUA 702 121-1 f. 18.r. ‘Alzoe de Raet enige wairschuwinge gecregen heeft van datter grote verraderens gesticht worden, daer de monnicken die van d’ene stadt in d’andere versonden worden. Soe is geresolveert datmen in alle monnicken cloesteren van dese stadt opschryvinge doen sall by naem ende toenaem van alle die religieusen ende conventenalen die binnen hoire clooster zijn, hemluyden bevelen t’selve getal nyet te vermeerderen noch te verminderen dan bij kennise vande Raet. Ende hier toe zijn commiteert Jan Pyl ende Lourens van Nyehoff rade.’

⁸⁸ HUA 702 121-1 f. 31.l. ‘dat zij onderricht zijn datter enige binne dese stadt zijn openbaerlick dragende de partheij van Don Johan.’

⁸⁹ HUA 702 121-1 f. 32.r.

⁹⁰ Raven, ‘Kronijk’ 536; van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter*, 716. See footnote 1. Willem Veusels deacon of St. Peter; Bartholomeus Goezen and Gerardum Wyckersloet canons of St. Mary; Everhardum Moelengrave pastor of the

and Jan van Lent had signed the executions of the Council of Troubles' mass verdicts; including the death sentences of Jan van Renesse, the elder, and Jacop Cosyn. They had ordered the banishment and confiscation of goods during Alva's rule, but could now be faced by vindictive returned exiles and hostile Protestants who could no longer be persecuted.⁹¹ The council resolution, nonetheless, concluded that the sheriff, both mayors and deputies of the court and council had investigated the suspects and after their visitations found no reason for suspicion.⁹² Yet, Catholics and prominent members of the Habsburg regime were treated with high suspicion and as potential traitors while the city council tried to retain control over the population and city militia.

A traditional tool for governments to enforce loyalty was to make everyone swear oaths; in this case to the rebel cause and its leaders. Such oaths proved too divisive to some, particularly Franciscans seemed unwilling.⁹³ Prior Wouter Jacobsz noted how in Amsterdam the Sea Beggars began forcing oaths of loyalty to be taken by everyone, including the Catholic clergy and the prior himself. He fled Amsterdam mid-April and took refuge in Monfoort, which grew into a small Catholic safe-haven.⁹⁴ In Utrecht too, from February onwards oaths were taken to uphold the Pacification, support the Prince of Orange and Archduke Matthias.⁹⁵

Religious tensions also reached the central rebel government seated in Antwerp, prompting them to draw up an ordinance to suppress dissident voices with oaths of loyalty to Archduke Matthias, Prince Orange and the Pacification while swearing to abjure Don John as royal governor. This ordinance of the 22nd April was copied in the resolution book of the High Court of Utrecht.⁹⁶ It shows how the amnesty and oblivion articles in the Pacification became conditional through the use of oaths. Any interaction with the enemy (i.e. Don John) was explicitly forbidden. This ban was connected to the Pacification's articles one and four about the oblivion clause and peace enforcement terms, respectively. The last phrase of the Pacification's article four had stipulated:

*'Neither will anyone, by causes from then, injure, irritate with words or with acts, neither with returning scandalizing acts, on penalty of being punished as perturbators of the common peace.'*⁹⁷

Buurtkerk; Cornelis Zuys; Frederick Uten Ham noble man, Lady Geertruyt Bacx, Nicolaes de Clerck pensionary; Antonis Grisperre, Johan Lent and Gerard Ratinge were the members of the High Court.

⁹¹ Marcus, *Sententien en Indagingen* 347-353.

⁹² HUA 702 121-1 f. 32.l.

⁹³ van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 710.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 717, 730; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 37.

⁹⁵ HUA 702 121-1 f. 19.l, 21.r.

⁹⁶ HUA 239 29-29-2 f. 279.l. 283.r.

⁹⁷ 'Bijlagen' in: eds., Baelde & van Peteghem, *Opstand en Pacificatie* 355. 'noch yemanden ter causen van dien t'injurieren, irriteren mit worden oft mit wercken, noch mit gelycke acten te scandalizeren, op pene van gestrafft te worddene als perturbateurs van de gemeene ruste.'

The oath described in the Antwerp ordinance, however, reinterpreted the meaning of injuries, irritations or scandalizing acts. In this way, the amnesty and oblivion clauses in the Pacification became conditional on loyalty to the rebel government by linking it to disturbance of the peace. Moreover, the ordinance disregarded the privilege of legal immunity for Catholic clergy, stating emphatically that even their temporal properties could be seized.⁹⁸ A proposed solution was to enforce a general oath of loyalty.

*'Forth, to further all insurance and to bar all suspicion, dissidence or distrust, all officers, lawmakers or magistrates, have ordered and order, all those residents within their jurisdiction, including clergy and religious [i.e. mendicant friars, monks and nuns], (without prejudice in any ways of their privileges and clerical freedoms) to swear and with solemnity an oath to affirm the foresaid Pacification of Ghent.'*⁹⁹

Those who refused the oath would be considered enemies and adherents of Don John. Furthermore, the phrase about clerical privileges and freedoms, proved situational. This was the case for the Franciscans in Utrecht, and elsewhere. A resolution of May 24th noted that the president of the Franciscans had informed the city council that they were not willing to take the oath of loyalty, requesting to leave in an orderly fashion without any scandal.¹⁰⁰ A month later, on the 27th of June, the council annulled the requested safe-passage until further notice from Stadtholder Orange. The city militia captains and several concerned burghers insisted that the Franciscans stayed out of the city until a decision was taken. They had informed the council that a significant number of burghers and common people were to take action if the Franciscans remained in the city. The resolution concluded that:

*'Those foresaid common burghers, in return have promised to not damage the convent of the Franciscans, nor to attempt any further novelty but submit to that which the magistrate, with advice of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder, will command and order them.'*¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ HUA 239 29-29-2 f. 280.l 282.r.

⁹⁹ HUA 239 29-29-2 f. 282.r. 'Voorts tot meerder verzeekerheijt van eenenijegelijcken ende alle suspitie dissidentie of wantrouwicheijt te weeren, hebben geordineert ende ordineren allen officieren ende wethouders off magistraten allen gheene die residers zijn onder huere jurisdictie zoe wel geestelijken ende religioesen (zonder prejudicie nogtans van hun privilegien ende Geestelijken vrijheijden) te zweeren en bij solempnelen eede te affirmeren de voirs pacificatie van Ghendt.'

¹⁰⁰ HUA 702 121-1 f.40.r 40.l.

¹⁰¹ HUA 702 121-1 f.46.l. 'Die voirs. gemene burgeren weder gelooft hebben tconvent vande minrebroeders niet te beschadigen, noch enige nieuwicheyt vorder te attenteren dan hem submitteren tot gene de magistraet, bij avise vande Prince van Oraiengers als Stadthouder, hemluiden belasten ende ordoneren sall.'

According to the *Kronijk*, 27 Franciscans were expelled that day because of their refusal to take the oath as published by the central rebel government in Antwerp. Moreover, brother Wouter reported that he spoke with one of the expelled Franciscans in Monfoort, telling the prior that he was chased out of Utrecht, robbed of his clothes and had to beg for his life.¹⁰²

The same council resolution also mentioned that the burghers had been angered by the sudden departure of the pastor of the St. Jacob's church, Hubert Duifhuis. This former Catholic priest had turned openly to Protestantism and officially requested the city council to preach in such a manner at the end of spring 1578; although the latter had been aware of the former's Libertine preaching at least since January. Together with his Catholic colleague, he had shared St. Jacobs Church, holding both Protestant and Catholic services after one another.¹⁰³ Duifhuis was not a Calvinist, but his Libertine preaching did increasingly anger the chapter clergy. On the 5th of July, the clergy of the five chapters had gathered at the Dom-chapter and stated that Duifhuis had broken his oath to his Catholic office arguing that his continued presence would have caused violence in the city. Furthermore, they argued that his Reformed preaching in the St. Jacob's church defied the Pacification, the Satisfaction and the recently sworn oaths.¹⁰⁴ For now, the chapter clergy had swayed the council not to grant Duifhuis this right, after which the latter left the city for Rotterdam.¹⁰⁵

In the meanwhile, Willem of Orange finalised the ordinance that attempted to introduce religious co-existence and convinced Calvinists at their national meeting, the Synod of Dordrecht, to adopt the treaty. The draft for religious co-existence (*Religie Vrede*) was submitted by the Synod of Dordrecht to central rebel government on the 22nd of June and proposed that when a hundred families or more requested public worship, they should be granted this right. It also professed to restore Catholic worship were it had been suppressed.¹⁰⁶ A city council resolution of July 31st notes how Reformed deputies had harassed them with daily requests for the free exercise of their religion since the proposal of the Religious Peace. The council stalled on a decision and stated that it would be first discussed by the States of Utrecht.¹⁰⁷ In the same month, the papacy added fuel to the fire by forbidding the clergy to attend the assemblies of the Estates-General and threatened to

¹⁰² Raven, 'Kronijk', 536; van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 733.

¹⁰³ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 47-49; Marinus den Boer, 'De Unie van Utrecht, Duifhuis en de Utrechtse religievrede' in *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht 1978* (1978) 71-88, 81; HUA 702 121-1 f.13.l. Both Kaplan and den Boer mentioned that Duifhuis informed the city council of his wish to preach in the Reformed manner, yet neither provide any (archive) references for their citations. A council resolution of the 10th of January 1578 does mention the 'good sermons of Duifhuis' at which time his sermons already preached against superstitions and images. Brother Wouter who also comments on the double service in St. Jacobs's. Van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 750.

¹⁰⁴ HUA 216 1-20 '5 Juli 1578'.

¹⁰⁵ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 47.

¹⁰⁶ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 108; Pierre Ubachs, 'De Nederlandse Religievrede van 1578', in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 77:1 (1997) 41-61, 46-47.

¹⁰⁷ HUA 702 121-1 f.51.l 52.r.

excommunicate anyone who supported the revolt.¹⁰⁸

The chapters were appalled by the Prince's proposal. During their meeting on the 3rd of August they stated that the Religious Peace violated the previous guarantees to uphold the Catholic religion outside of Holland and Zeeland. Several times it was promised that no novelty would alter this status-quo. The clergy resolved that they would offer no support for the treaty in the States of Utrecht as members of the First Estate. They would not swear an oath to a 'pretended religious peace' treaty which would further an alteration of the reformed religion and was contrary to the Pacification, Satisfaction and previous oaths.¹⁰⁹

In the meantime, the city council also acted on their own preferences and asked Duifhuis to return to the St. Jacob's church while granting his request to provide him with their protection.¹¹⁰ The council stated they preferred Duifhuis because he preached the word of God in the right manner while keeping the burghers and population at peace and unity.¹¹¹ In the meanwhile, Calvinists had not stopped demanding the council for rights of worship. The resolution of the 16th of August describes how the council was pressured by the Reformed (Calvinists) for a 'temple'. It stated that:

*'Burghers of this city, assisted with Petro Datheen [...] requested that those of the reformed religion want to be allowed and desired a temple, where they would be allowed to exercise their religion, similar to what they were permitted in other places and who recently had been commanded to do by the Estates-General and lawmakers of Antwerp.'*¹¹²

The council expressed their reluctance and tried to stall any formal decision by delegating it to Stadtholder William of Orange, Archduke Matthias and the Estates-General. Once again the council repeated that such novelties and innovations were contrary to the Pacification. Although the council had resolved – in order to keep the common peace – that the Calvinists should content themselves for now, in reality they could not stop them from occupying the Franciscan church that same night in August. The same Petrus Datheen, who had been a leader in the establishment of the Ghent Republic, held his sermon there the next day.¹¹³ According to the author of the *Kronijk*, another Calvinist pastor, an Utrecht native, Werner Helmichius, arrived from exile in Frankfurt to also

¹⁰⁸ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 109; Ubachs 'De Nederlandse Religievrede', 46.

¹⁰⁹ HUA 216 1-20 '3 Augusts 1578'.

¹¹⁰ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 47-48.

¹¹¹ HUA 702 121-1 f. 53.r.

¹¹² HUA 702 121-1 f. 54.r. 'Burgers deser stadt geassisteert mit Petro Dathem, [...] versocht, datmen die van gereformeerde religie soude willen gunnen en believe enen tempel daer zij oeffeninge huerder religie soudon mogen hebben, gelijcx op andere plaetsen hemluiden gegonst was ende onlanx bijde generale staten de wethouders van antwerpen belast was te doen.'

¹¹³ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 122; Raven, 'Kronijk', 536.

hold his sermons in the Franciscan church of his home town. Moreover, the author of the *Kronijk* suggests that Calvinists could not be controlled and began breaking images in the Franciscan church.¹¹⁴

Two different Protestant groups now each held a church of their own; the Libertines of St. Jacob's and Calvinists in the Franciscan church. Kaplan has demonstrated how both Protestant groups appealed to different segments of society. The Libertines had their followers among the elite burghers and poor, while the Calvinists had disproportional support from middle class groups; or as Kaplan described them, the 'same segments [that] had dominated the city government from 1304 until as recently as 1528 (...) This background gave them self-confidence in opposing Catholic and Libertine authorities beginning in 1577. With the Dutch Revolt, they expected that the return of urban privileges and liberties would restore to them their voice in government.'¹¹⁵ That month, Helmichius already complained that the coexistence of two Protestant churches would eventually lead to division and disunity within the city.¹¹⁶

Political Disintegration

By the summer of 1578 the implementation of the Pacification had moved beyond its unifying efforts to force the withdrawal of Spanish troops in 1576. By now, selective interpretations of the Pacification and religious divisions had caused political disunity among the rebel provinces and began shaping two competing alliances; both claiming to uphold the Pacification. The proposed Religious Peace of the Prince of Orange and Calvinist coups had severely antagonized staunch Catholics in rebel territory; particularly in the Walloon provinces. Although the Prince claimed that the Religious Peace was a "clarification" of the Pacification, it became a catalyst for political disintegration.

To many Catholics the Prince's Religious Peace seemed to ratify all the blatant violations of the Pacification.¹¹⁷ The developments in Amsterdam, Haarlem and particularly Ghent had struck fear into Catholics and the more modest rebels. In May the Calvinist Republic of Ghent began enforcing oppressive theocratic policies against Catholics; followed by sackings of convents, iconoclasm and executions of five monks in a hunt for sodomites.¹¹⁸ Both Haarlem and Amsterdam also experienced violent 'alterations'; albeit not to the same degree as in Ghent. In Haarlem riots erupted in May.

¹¹⁴ Raven, 'Kronijk' 537.

¹¹⁵ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 145-146.

¹¹⁶ Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines* 92.

¹¹⁷ Soen, *Vredehandel* 125.

¹¹⁸ André Despretz, 'De instauratie der Gentse Calvinistische Republiek (1577-1579)' in *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent*, 17 (1963) 119-229, 170-177.

Although the local garrison of Protestant soldiers had been warned many times not to harass Catholics, they could no longer be controlled. Even though it had been decided to hold the annual Corpus Christi procession inside the main parish church to avoid Protestant offence, the soldiers nonetheless entered St. Bavo's, disrupted the service and attacked priests on the 29th of May.¹¹⁹

Two weeks after the Corpus Christi riot in May, civic militiamen in Amsterdam demanded that the city magistrates granted a church to the Reformed. The militiamen knew they had the support of the States of Holland and the Prince, and when their demands were not met, they stormed the city hall and arrested the magistrates. The same day, a crowd sacked the Franciscan convent, tracked down the friars and expelled them from the city. In both cities religious safeguards for Catholics – as prescribed by the Satisfaction's with the Prince – were dismissed as Protestants took every opportunity to gain ground, and eventually succeeded in establishing a formal monopoly of religious worship.¹²⁰

These violent 'alterations', continued iconoclasm and severe limitations of Catholic worship in many cities and towns fuelled division among the rebel provinces. Although the Prince had tried to impose moderation on radical Calvinist leaders – like in Ghent, and even though the Religious Peace proposed to restore Catholicism where it had been suppressed, he and local governments lacked the will or power to restrain the forces that had been unleashed. Indeed, the States of Hainaut and Artois publicly opposed the Religious Peace; which had been legally proclaimed by the Estates-General in their name. The Walloon States reminded the Estates-General deputies that the Religious Peace contradicted the Pacification's maintenance of the religious status-quo by sanctioning the Calvinist advances.¹²¹ At the same time, however, disunity and disillusion spread as several Catholic nobles began to make their peace with Don John. By the summer this disintegration had also reached the States' army as some regiments were mutinying. These mutineers or *Malcontents* were appalled by the radical Calvinist policies – e.g. in Ghent – and thus made contact with disillusioned nobles of the Walloon provinces.¹²²

After Don John's unexpected death in October 1578, his successor Alexander Farnese, the prince of Parma, took advantage of the increasing disunity among the rebel provinces by pursuing a different reconciliation strategy. Farnese had to demonstrate the regime's trustworthiness in order to reconcile Catholics who had grown deeply suspicious of the king's intentions. When Farnese took the initiative to reconcile the Walloon provinces he was confronted with strong adherence to one aspect of the Pacification of Ghent; the withdrawal of foreign troops remained an important

¹¹⁹ Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 108-109.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 109-110.

¹²¹ Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 89-92; Soen, *Vredehandel* 133-134; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* 190.

¹²² *Ibid*, 86-87; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity* 110; Soen, *Vredehandel* 125-128; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* 190-192.

demand. In November, however, the Walloon provinces definitively broke with the rebel provinces. Adherents of the Prince of Orange were removed from governments in Walloon cities such as in Arras.¹²³ The breakaway was formally expressed in the formation of a separate league by the States of Hainaut and Artois together with the city of Douai. On the 6th of January 1579 the Union of Arras was proclaimed; stating to truly uphold the Pacification, defend the Catholic faith and reconcile with the king.¹²⁴

Furthermore, during 1578 the increased international interference in the Low Countries by diplomats of the English queen Elizabeth I, and of the brother of the French king, the Duke of Anjou, prompted king Philip to accept the offer of the Holy Roman emperor, Rudolf II, to mediate.¹²⁵ The king preferred imperial mediation over French or English involvement and gave his approval in July 1578 to organise a peace conference in Cologne. Up until the winter, the emperor's emissary, Von Schwarzenburg, continuously pressed the Estates-General to join the peace conference, to which the latter agreed on the 18th of January 1579.¹²⁶

In the meanwhile, the negotiations for a closer political union between the States of Guelders, Utrecht, Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Overijssel and Groningen had also resumed during the summer of 1578.¹²⁷ The regional power balance had shifted once Willem of Orange's younger brother, John VI, Count of Nassau-Dillenburg, had been offered the Stadtholderate of Guelders in February. In June, Stadtholder Nassau requested the northern States to send deputies to a Diet in Arnhem to discuss their views on a political union; explicitly because the Walloon provinces seemed to be straying from their common union.¹²⁸ A month later, Nassau's emissary in Utrecht, reported back to him that the city of Utrecht seemed interested in the proposal, but the States – particularly the clergy of the First Estate – remained reluctant. The advocate of Utrecht's States, Floris Thin, was sent to the Prince in Antwerp to draft a treaty. Thin was a close adherent of Orange and tied the political union together with the implementation of the Prince's Religious Peace.¹²⁹ Deputies of Holland and Zeeland, however, were not willing to allow Catholics any religious rights within their provinces and would only consent to the implementation of the Prince's Religious Peace in the other provinces. Thus, Thin's draft was altered during the Diet of Arnhem, allowing the States of Holland and Zeeland to decide their own religious policies, while the other provinces would implement the Religious Peace.¹³⁰

¹²³ Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 47-48; Soen, *Vredehandel* 132.

¹²⁴ Stensland, *Habsburg Communication* 89; Soen, *Vredehandel* 133-134.

¹²⁵ Soen, *Vredehandel* 124.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 124-125, 128-129.

¹²⁷ van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 45; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 155.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 42.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 44-47, 53; den Boer 'De Unie van Utrecht' 73-74; Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crisis* 226, 258.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 46.

The Diet of Arnhem in September was an initiative of Stadtholder Nassau who had invited deputies of the States of Holland, Overijssel, Zeeland and Utrecht to further negotiate the union. Yet, the Diet began with local opposition by the deputies of the overwhelmingly Catholic Guelders' quarters. They rejected a closer political union and informed Nassau that they wished to remain with the Pacification. This infuriated and embarrassed the Calvinist Stadtholder. The Stadtholder was said to have replied, snarling: 'You salve and anoint yourself with the Pacification of Ghent, but I see what is going on.'¹³¹ Nassau's comment, however, entrenched the Guelders' deputies in their adherence to the Pacification. Moreover, a garrison of Protestant soldiers had attacked the Franciscan convent in Arnhem during the Diet. Yet, the impasse between Nassau and the Guelders' quarters permitted Thin to transfer the political initiative to the States of Utrecht, Holland and Zeeland. From October onwards, the negotiations of the union were continued in Utrecht.¹³²

The simultaneous military pressure from Don John and later Farnese together with the subsequent political disintegration among the rebelling provinces, forced Utrecht to choose whether to join a closer cooperation with the *de facto* Protestant States of Holland and Zeeland or to reconcile with Don John as several Catholic nobles, the *Malcontents* and States of Artois and Hainaut started to do. Either way, the States and city of Utrecht faced the possibility of becoming a frontier zone again; whether as buffer for Holland and Zeeland or once more as a Habsburg stronghold.

Although, several members of the chapter clergy had fled Utrecht by the summer, those who had remained in the city witnessed how Protestants occupied two churches, regardless of the chapters' refusal of the Religious Peace. On the 10th of November the clergy of the five chapters gathered after the city council had presented them with a draft version of the union, and articles concerning the local implementation of the Religious Peace. Although the council professed that the union would maintain the Pacification, Satisfaction and previous oaths, the chapter clergy nonetheless resolved that the union was unnecessary. The clergy requested in turn, that the council should rather make an effort in enforcing the previous oath and to remind other inhabitants of the peace terms that had been agreed.¹³³ Two weeks later, the clergy felt compelled to consent to the union, albeit on the condition that Guelders, Zutphen, Lingen and Overijssel would also join. The other two Estates of the States of Utrecht, had in fact proceeded the negotiations without the clergy

¹³¹ An. Nijhoff, 'Eerste Handelingen van Jan Graaf van Nassau-Katzenellenbogen, als Stadhouder des Vorstendoms Gelre en Graafschaps Zutphen' in *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche geschiedenis en oudheidkunde* (1837) vol.1 104-144, 126; Cornelis Dekker, et al., *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen 4* (Verloren: Amsterdam 1984) 13-15. 'Salft ende smeert u met de Pacificatie van Gent, ick sie wel watter omgaet.'; Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 42-46.

¹³² Dekker, *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen* 15; Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 46-48. Brother Wouter also commented on the iconoclasm in Arnhem. See van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter*, 750-751.

¹³³ HUA 216 1-20 '10 November 1578'.

of the First Estate; notwithstanding the meagre support among the nobles in the Second Estate.¹³⁴

On the 6th of December the States of Holland, Friesland, Zealand and Utrecht agreed upon a final draft for the Closer Union.¹³⁵ According to Geoffrey Parker the Closer Union's 'spirit was contrary to that of the Pacification: it made virtually no mention of the king's authority or the maintenance of the Catholic faith, and it did not envisage reconciliation with Spain.'¹³⁶ The Dom-chapter had, nonetheless, resolved to join the negotiations about the Closer Union with the city council, civic militia captains and States. On the 20th of December, the five chapters gathered again and agreed that their support for the union would depend on the participation of the provinces of Guelders and Overijsel, and the approval of Archduke Matthias, Stadtholder Orange and the Estates-General.¹³⁷

After the final draft version, two Utrecht canons Jacob Cuyntorff and Johan van Renesse, of the chapters of St. Salvator and St. John, respectively, tried to sway opinions against the Closer Union, before it would be ratified and proclaimed. Over the course of December they worked on a plea – nicknamed the Contra Union – that provided arguments why the city and States of Utrecht should *not* join the Closer Union. The text of the Contra Union mirrored the Closer Union, presenting its refutation article by article. First, the Contra-Union argued that the Closer Union would frustrate the upcoming peace conference in Cologne. The authors argued that the Closer Union contradicted both the Pacification, which was to be restored during the peace conference – and Utrecht's Satisfaction treaty with the Prince, which was meant to safe-guard the old customs and privileges of the city and States. By signing this Union, deputies would give Holland and Zealand the right to approve decisions of war and peace in Utrecht, thus affecting the latter's autonomy at the upcoming peace conference.¹³⁸ Moreover, the authors warned that Utrecht would become a buffer state to Holland and Zealand:

*'As long as the lands of Guelders and Overysseel [...] are not part of this Union [...], the land of Utrecht, will remain as frontier, [and] would be subjected to many unbearable burdens.'*¹³⁹

¹³⁴ HUA 216 1-20 '30 November 1578.'; Pieter Muller, 'De Partijstrijd te Utrecht over de Nadere Unie' in *Verspreide Geschriften* (A.W. Sijthoff Leiden 1906) 215-255, 215.

¹³⁵ Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 48-50.

¹³⁶ Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* 194.

¹³⁷ HUA 216 1-20 '12 December 1578', '20 December 1578'; Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 48-50.

¹³⁸ P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand der Utrechtsche katholieken, onder leiding van den scholaster van Oudmunster Jacob Cuyntorff, tegen de unie van Utrecht' in *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap. Deel 9*. (Utrecht 1886) 393-472, 403, 406-407.

¹³⁹ P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand', 404. 'soverre die landen van Gelre ende Overysseel (...) in dese Unie nyet en begeven (...) tlant van Utrecht, als frontier blijvende, onderworpen soude worden veel ondrachtelijcke lasten.'

The authors also conjured a spectre of Holland and Zeeland forcing a possible Protestant garrison upon the city; touching on the painful memory of the siege of Vredenburg. Even the offer of financial aid and firepower provisions by Holland during the siege of Vredenburg was made out of self-interest.

*'And although it seems, that those of Holland had aided with money and gunpowder to recover the aforesaid castle, having done that at the time for their own security and insurance, and thereafter had written so pointedly to have the payments of the aforesaid gunpowder and the borrowed money restituted, threatening to otherwise arrest inhabitants of Utrecht in Holland.'*¹⁴⁰

According to the authors, this caused Utrecht to use the last bits of their already meagre tax income to pay off the loans, which was a clear sign that:

*'Holland does not seek to defend us, but wants to remain protected by us, leaving us to be their frontline scone.'*¹⁴¹

Considering the spectre of billeted Protestant soldiers in Utrecht, the authors argue that those of Holland had already proven themselves untrustworthy after their soldiers broke the Satisfactions and oaths with the cities of Haarlem and Amsterdam, forcing Protestant garrisons on them; 'which ought to be a mirror, making trepidation and terror (insofar repose and unity is desired).'¹⁴² Religious 'diversity in that case (*as we gradually taste*) remains the root and mother of all twist, hatred and envy.'¹⁴³

Furthermore, the authors mention that Holland and Zeeland were exempt from implementing the Religious Peace; 'the free religion, that they desire in other provinces, also be allowed in theirs.'¹⁴⁴ In addition, the Contra-Union tries to stir up old anti-Holland sentiments in Utrecht by embedding the contemporary situation into a longer history of antagonism between the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 'Ende all schijntet, dat die van Hollant secours gedaen hebben met gelt ende cruyt om tvoirseyde slot te recoueren, hebben dat in die tijd gedaen tot haer selfs securitee ende verseeckerhey, ende namaels so scherp aegeschrevenom betalinghe van tvoirseyde cruyt ende geleent gelt gerestitueert te hebben, dreygende andersins dinwoonderen der stadt van Utrecht in Hollant bij arrest te houden.'

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 405-406. 'Hollant nyet te soecken ons te bewaren, maer deur ons beschermpt te blijven, ons latende tot haerluyder voorschans.'

¹⁴² Ibid, 405. 'behoort wel een spygel te wesen, scroem ende scrick te maken (soverre men rust ende enicheyt bemint).'

¹⁴³ Ibid, 408. 'diversiteyt in dien (gelijck wij leyder prouven) wortel ende moeder blyeft van allen twist, haet ende nijt.' My cursive.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 408. 'die vrije religie, die in andere provinciën begeren, in den haren oick toelaten.'

regions; undoubtedly referring to the conflict between Hooks and Cods. If the States of Holland and Zealand cannot keep a promise with their own people:

‘What hope is there then, that they keep any promise with another foreign province, and in particular those of Utrecht, their neighbours, with whom they always quarrelled and had wars against, and have sought to bring them under their yoke.’¹⁴⁵

The plea concluded that proponents of the union inflated its urgency by exaggerating the threat posed by the enemy. Honest patriots would remain with the Estates-General and their previous oaths, rather than joining this divisive union.¹⁴⁶ The city council, however, was not willing to tolerate any opposition to their plans. They already had their minds fixed on implementing the Closer Union and a local Religious Peace in Utrecht. When the rumours of the Contra Union reached the city council, they arrested those involved; in fear that a larger Catholic conspiracy was being plotted against them. In addition, the council used the political momentum to force the five chapters into compliance and accept both treaties. The chapters grudgingly signed the Closer Union, yet they refused to sign the Religious Peace of Utrecht.

In a year time, the city of Utrecht had significantly radicalized. The war against Don John caused suspicions of betrayal to surge throughout the population. The return of Protestant exiles together with the annulment of heresy persecutions brought new tensions in the city and elsewhere. The council expelled some religious orders while it imposed close supervision on other monks and eventually decided to enforce an oath of loyalty to the rebel cause and its leaders. The civic militia and burghers also forced the city council to act against those they considered suspicious – such as during the investigation in April. The Prince’s Religious Peace sought to ‘clarify’ the Pacification’s open-ended article five in which it was stated that an Estates-General would decide about religious matters in the future. The Religious Peace proved too divisive and became the catalyst for political disintegration of the rebel provinces. After the Diet of Arnhem failed to produce the desired political union, Utrecht deputies were able to shift the political initiative to Utrecht. On an interregional scale this disintegration was followed by two competing alliances, yet locally the divisions also fermented. The arrests in relation to the Contra-Union showed that there was no room for discussion about what adherence to Pacification meant in Utrecht.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 409. ‘wat hoop is dan, dat sy enich gelove sullen houden andere uuytheemsche provincie, ende bijzonder die van Utrecht, haren nabuyren, daer zij altijts querelen ende oorlogen tegens gehadt ende gesocht hebben onder haren juck te brengen.’

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 409-410.

Chapter 3: The Aftermath of the Pacification

Although Parker was right to point out that the Closer Union was completely contrary to the Pacification, the latter nonetheless, remained an important point of reference in the peace negotiations and treaties between 1579 and 1581. Catholic opposition in Utrecht would continuously refer to the Pacification to point out Protestant violations and prevent them from gaining more rights and churches in the city. Each Protestant infraction, however, was met with appeasement while Catholic opposition was suppressed as seditious and disturbance of the common peace. The council used the political momentum in January to suppress any dissidence by portraying the Contra-unionists as conspirators who were planning to overthrow the local rebel government. In addition, the council unilaterally proclaimed a 'Religious Peace' in Utrecht, which gave the secular authorities unprecedented control over public religious life, granted two churches to the two Protestant groups and made severe infringements on the privileges of the clergy. This, together with arrest of Cuyntorff pressured the chapters into signing a Closer Union. Even so, the chapters resisted the council's Religious Peace until a severe incident in the summer prompted both Catholics and Protestants to revise the treaty. The revised Religious Peace, however, was also short-lived and the final blow came in March 1580, when Catholicism was outlawed. Both the outlawing of Catholicism and the Act of Abjuration, the next year, framed the Pacification as failed peace treaty that belonged to the past.

Political Momentum

The arrests of the contra-unionists stunned any remaining opposition against the Closer Union. The interrogations of Cuyntorff, his adherents and witnesses in the sheriff's book show both how opposition against the Closer Union was organized and why the local government seized the political momentum to suppress any form of dissidence. On the 28th of December 1578 Cuyntorff and several others were having dinner at his home while they discussed the Contra Union and made copies to disseminate. During their meeting Cuyntorff's son informed them that three vocal supporters of the Closer Union had left the city to bring a garrison of Protestant soldiers from Holland into Utrecht. The three men were a militia captain, Ryck van Bochoven, his officer Johan Buth, and a canon of the Dom, Willem Cleef. The next day, however, a complaint was filed by Aelgen van Bochoven that a rumour had spread the day before about her husband, the militia captain. Several witnesses testified that the rumour originated from Cuyntorff's son.¹⁴⁷ The same day

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 411-412, 413.

Cuynretorff was arrested at his house, brought to the city hall for interrogations and eventually released that night.¹⁴⁸ The next day, however, Cuynretorff was summoned back by the council and imprisoned together with some of his supporters; among them were militia captain Johan van Cootwijck and his officer Jan Cornelis van Helmont. Both the militia captain and his officer were removed from their positions.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the arrest of a clergyman by the secular authorities was an outright violation of the clerical immunity. Cuynretorff had argued in vain that his immunity made him unaccountable to the council's jurisdiction; he could only be judged by the archbishop.¹⁵⁰

According to Cuynretorff the text, its distributed copies and related gatherings had been organized only to "discuss" the Closer Union. Yet, the city council apparently suspected the adherents of the Contra-Union to be part of an elaborate conspiracy against the Closer Union. The council resolution of the 29th of December, for example, was headed:

*'Concerning a certain writing, conceived to destroy the Closer Union etc., which was further brought and communicated to some people, whom because of that seemed to prepare some alteration against the magistrate.'*¹⁵¹

The city council wanted to know if Cuynretorff's had been commissioned by the five chapters; he was not.¹⁵² They were also particularly wary of the lord of Montfoort who had been sheltering many Catholic refugees. The interrogators, for example, asked suspects and witnesses questions about communications with the lord of Montfoort, and whether he was organising violent opposition against the Closer Union.¹⁵³ The interrogators were furthermore concerned with the handwritten copies that had been distributed among the chapters and some of the civic militia captains, their officers (*vaandrighs*) and lieutenants (*rotmeesters*). Handwritten propaganda was just as dangerous as printed texts and could be produced and spread in secrecy more easily, as was the case elsewhere.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the interrogations showed that multiple gatherings had been organized to discuss the Contra-Union. One witness, a locksmith serving in the militia regiment of Van Cootwijck, testified that he had been summoned by the *rotmeester* of his militia regiment to the *Regulierenkerk*. There, Cuynretorff's "conspirators" read the Contra-Union out loud and pressed

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 393-401; Van Hulzen, 'Achtergronden', 50-51.

¹⁴⁹ HUA 702 121-1 f.72.l., 75.r., 76.r.

¹⁵⁰ HUA 702 121-1 f.73.l.; P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand'. 427-428. Saliiently, one of Cuynretorff's interrogators was Jan Pyl.

¹⁵¹ HUA 702 121-1 f. 72.l. 'Nopende seker geschrift geconcipteert tot destructie van de Nairder Unie etc., twelck voirts onder enige van de gemeente gebrocht ende gecommuniceert es, die daerdeur schijnen enige alteratie genomen te hebben jegens de magistrate.'

¹⁵² Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand', 416.

Ibid, 422-423, 425, 430.

¹⁵⁴ Femke Deen, 'Handwritten Propaganda. Letters and Pamphlets in Amsterdam during the Dutch Revolt (1572-1578)', in: *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* 12 (2011) 205-226, 207-212.

those present to sign it.¹⁵⁵ Several other testimonies showed how the rumours about the Contra-Union, the Protestant garrison or the lord of Montfoort spread. A canon, for example, testified that he had heard about the rumour of the Protestants' garrison on the eve of Cruynretorff's dinner from a nobleman when they were on the night watch together.¹⁵⁶

The reaction of the city council took reluctant chapter clergy by surprise and highlights the former's suspicions of the latter's intentions. Several requests of the five chapters to release Cruynretorff were ignored.¹⁵⁷ The city council, however, was conscious of their leverage over reluctant clergymen. On the 2nd of January 1579, the council resolved that they were willing to release Cruynretorff if the chapter clergy accepted the council's proposed Religious Peace of Utrecht. The next day, the council sent the draft to the five chapters.¹⁵⁸

On the 7th of January the Dom-Chapter proposed the city council to enact an act of oblivion for all that had happened since the Pacification:

*'That they will forget and forgive all crimes and injuries that have occurred somewhat since the Pacification of Ghent, may it be in cause of religion, without recollecting any, nor desiring any vengeance thereof.'*¹⁵⁹

Two days later, the five chapters responded to the council's Religious Peace. They rejected the council's proposal on the grounds that they could not support a treaty which contradicted the Pacification and Satisfaction. Moreover, they wished to retain their possessions and privileges.¹⁶⁰ The council reported to have read the clergy's response the same day. The council did not decide to give in to any of the chapters' demands. The next day, the council decided to proceed without the chapters' approval after several of its articles were 'altered and augmented'; probably at the expense of Catholics rights of worship and the chapter clergy's privileges.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the council was conscious of the political momentum and published the Religious Peace of Utrecht on the 11th of January 1579. The five chapters gathered five days later to discuss the points of which their deputies

¹⁵⁵ P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand', 419.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 420. The canon Berck and the nobleman Amelis Wten Eng.

¹⁵⁷ HUA 702 121-1 f. 73.r. P. Muller has suggested that the canon of St. John's chapter, Jan van Renesse, was probably quickly released from detainment because of his influential family. See P. Muller, 'De Partijstrijd te Utrecht', 217.

¹⁵⁸ HUA 702 121-1 f. 73.l. 74.r.

¹⁵⁹ HUA 216 1-20 '7 January 1579'. 'Dat zij alle misdaden ende injurien, die enichsins tzedert die pacificatie van Ghent geschiet moegen zijn ter cause van religie geerne vergeven ende vergeten willen sonder oeck enichsins d'selve wederom op te halen ofte eenige wraecke daervan te begeeren.'

¹⁶⁰ HUA 216 1-20 '9 January 1579'.

¹⁶¹ HUA 702 121-1 f.74.r. A.B.R. Du Croo de Vries, 'De stad Utrecht en de Unie 1578-1579', in *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht 1978* (1978) 56-70, 65. Du Croo de Vries affirms that the council augmented and altered the proposed peace at the expense of Catholic rights. The council resolution to which he referred, however, does not explicitly state this.

should try to negotiate a more moderate treaty with the council. The chapters were particularly concerned with the preservation of their clerical privileges and the jurisdictions of the ecclesiastical courts.¹⁶² The council resolved to give the five chapters an ultimatum. They would hear the chapters' deputy 'to know their grounds and to what end they would be willing to consent to a more amicable composition'; for which they were given three days.¹⁶³

The city council wanted to ratify the local Religious Peace and the Closer Union and was consciously putting pressure on the five chapters to sign both treaties. According to a resolution of St. Salvator's chapter, the secretary of the States of Utrecht allegedly threatened St. Salvator's clergy by informing them that their refusal to sign the Closer Union would cause them to be expelled from the city and their properties to be confiscated.¹⁶⁴ The clergy succumbed and representatives of each of the five chapters signed the Closer Union on the 23rd of January together with the Stadtholder of Guelders, Jan of Nassau, and deputies of the States of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht and the Groninger Ommelanden. Yet, the chapters refused the council's ultimatum of the Religious Peace and gave their revisions to the council on the 27th.¹⁶⁵ The council, however, swept away the chapters' revisions and decided to proclaim the Religious Peace the day after, on their authority alone, while they awaited a formal approval from Stadtholder Willem of Orange and Archduke Matthias.¹⁶⁶ The council was well aware of their power position and had seized the opportunity to publicly proclaim the Religious Peace – *de facto* enacting the treaty. This worsening relation between the city council and chapter clergy was above all evident on the 29th of January; the Closer Union was proclaimed festively while Cuyntorff was finally released and presented with the bill for his imprisonment.¹⁶⁷ According to the author of the *Kronijk*, George de Lalaing, the Count of Rennenberg and Stadholder of Groningen, had to interfere and negotiate for Cuyntorff release.¹⁶⁸

Resistance to the Closer Union was not limited to the chapter clergy in Utrecht. Deputies of Amersfoort had also rejected the Closer Union, which prompted the States of Utrecht to accuse the town of having an agreement with the enemy. The States of Utrecht informed Amersfoort's powerful Protestant neighbour, the Stadtholder of Guelders. The deputies of Amersfoort quickly caved in after Stadtholder Nassau sent soldiers to lay siege to the town and thereby forced them within five days to join the Closer Union. After Amersfoort's compliance, the States and city of Utrecht made haste to

¹⁶² HUA 216 1-20 '16 January 1579'. 'oeck te committeren onvercort nochtans heure privilegien ende gerechticheijden daer nae te sien offmen dienaegaende eenige moderatie zouden moegen maecken.'

¹⁶³ HUA 702 121-1 f.75.r. 'om te weten hunnen gront ende waer toe zij soude willen condescenderen bij amicabile compositie'.

¹⁶⁴ HUA 223 21-6 f.14.l. 'in weijgheringe wesen zouden, vuyjter stadt leyden ende haarluyden goederen te slaen.'

¹⁶⁵ HUA 702 1-2 f. 51.r. 54.r.; van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 3, 8.

¹⁶⁶ HUA 702 121-1 f.76.r.

¹⁶⁷ P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand' 472.

¹⁶⁸ Raven 'Kronijk', 537.

send these troops back over their borders to avoid the possibility of having to billet them.¹⁶⁹

Other provinces joined the Closer Union over the course of 1579. Yet, the military pressure of Farnese mounted after he left Luxembourg to lay siege to Maastricht on the 8th of March, which lasted until the 29th of June. Farnese's capture of Maastricht opened up the routes for the Habsburg army to march towards the Upper-Guelders' quarter. In the meanwhile, negotiations at the international peace conference in Cologne had begun in May. Opposing views on the Pacification's provisions for religious peace led to a stalemate once again. The king's and emperor's negotiators stressed to reaffirm the Pacification contained confessional concessions, which permitted Protestant worship only in Holland and Zeeland while the rights of non-Catholics in other provinces were limited to freedom of conscience. The States' delegates maintained that the Religious Peace had been a necessary elaboration of the Pacification to keep the peace. The negotiations in Cologne continued until November when all parties recessed. The conference, however, never resumed after the recess.¹⁷⁰

The Religious Peace of Utrecht

The preamble of the Religious Peace of Utrecht mimicked the legal justifications of the Closer Union. Both treaties tried to embed their justifications into a form of legal continuity by arguing that Don John had first violated the Pacification when he captured Namur. Yet, the justification in the preamble of the Religious Peace of Utrecht went much further. In this case, king Philip was also blamed for violating the Pacification. The preamble, furthermore, insisted that the king's decision to continue the war efforts with Spanish and foreign soldiers had left the rebel provinces with no other choice but to hire their own foreign soldiers to defend their lands. In addition, it argued that the foreign soldiers in service of the rebel provinces were mostly Protestants, and their presence had been the principal reason for the alterations. It purported that the soldiers' free license for Protestant preaching had also caused many local Protestants to preach openly; 'that man, currently has to work more to keep the people at peace rather than to contentiously maintain the Roman Religion' in order to avoid a civil war.¹⁷¹

The treaty's peaceful discourse, however, barely served to hide its cutthroat content; to staunch Catholics and conservative chapter clergy it was a gunpoint peace treaty. The treaty's 35 articles granted the secular authorities an unprecedented amount of power over religious life and tried

¹⁶⁹ HUA 702 121-1 f.78.r 78.l, 79.l.

¹⁷⁰ Soen, *Vredehandel* 139-142.

¹⁷¹ HUA 702 2 f.44.r. This argument was first made in the Antwerp Ordinance of 22 April 1578.

to impose co-existence.¹⁷² The first article officialised the status quo as Protestants were granted the right of public worship and the two occupied churches, St. Jacob's and the Franciscan church. They were allowed to remove the images in both churches, albeit in an orderly manner. Article four left the possibility for Protestants to be granted more churches with the council's approval, although none of the chapter churches, inhabited monasteries or convents, nor would any other Catholic parish churches ever qualify for such a request. Article five prescribed that both Protestants and Catholics were allowed to hold funerals and bury their dead in the churches and churchyards of the other confession; albeit not during the church services of the respective religion. Articles six, seven and eight criminalised any form of insult or disruption of one or the other religion. Article nine severely restricted all church services, as it allowed them for only an hour between five and six in the evening and banned the ringing of bells, ceremonies and processions. Article ten reaffirmed the right of Catholic clergy to collect their taxes without hindrance. Article eleven allowed monks and nuns to leave their monasteries and convents whenever they wished and professed to provide them with an pension by the city council in proportion to the property they left behind. Article eighteen tied Protestant ministers and preachers to the city council. The latter paid the formers' salary, while all Protestant preachers had to take an 'oath of loyalty, and submission to the Magistrate, in all political matters.' Article twenty-five stipulated that the Catholic calendar of holy days would be observed and forbade Protestants from working with open doors on those days. In similar vein, article twenty-six stated that no meat would be consumed nor sold on days of Catholic abstinence.

The chapters' advice of the 27th of January, is also quite remarkable as it showed their views on each of the treaty's articles. The chapters' advice highlights which articles they accepted without any remark and which ones were refused. They also suggested several changes.¹⁷³ Articles one to three passed without any remark. Article four, however, included a salient suggestion: that Protestants should also not be allowed to request a church which was a dependent of the chapters, by which they meant their prebends, benefits and foundations. As for article nine, the chapters consented to the restricted times of church services and bell ringing, yet they opposed the ban on public processions and suggested to omit this clause. Some articles particularly angered the chapter clergy as they touched directly upon their privileges. Article twenty-one, for example, abolished all tax exemptions for everyone, lay or clerical. The chapters commented grudgingly that the magistrate could instead ask them for financial aid, as according to the old customs. Moreover, article twenty-two, stipulated that the clergy from now on also had to abide by the laws of the magistrate and was

¹⁷² Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 3, 4-8. 'dat men jegenwoordich meer moet arbeyden om de gemeente in vrede te houden, dan die Roomsche Religie contentieuselyken te mainteneren.'

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

no longer exempt from the watch and defence of the city. Furthermore, this article added that if a cleric would fail to meet those demands, they would be tried at the magistrate's court, with possible seizures of their temporal properties. The chapters' were willing to accept the first part of the article about abiding secular laws, however, they demanded that the last clause would be omitted; they would not subject themselves willingly to a secular court, nor approve possible seizures of ecclesiastical properties. The chapters refused article twenty-three in its entirety which stated that the clergy was subjected to the secular courts in cases relating to arbitration about merchants payments, deliveries of wares and goods, employment conflicts or any other civil disputes. The chapters also advised to omit article twenty-four completely. This article stipulated that no one could refuse the legal authority of the secular court. All burghers or inhabitants of the city would be allowed to sue each other and had to subject themselves to the secular court alone. Article twenty-four, therefore, attempted to both limit the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts and curb their clerical immunities. Most of the chapters' objections were thus about their own privileges and legal position rather than the restrictions of Catholic worship or the official recognition of Protestantism in the city.

The decision to ignore the chapters' advise and unilaterally proclaim the Religious Peace the day after was a bold move by the city council, albeit a calculated one. On the one hand the council knew they had to use the political momentum in late January, on the other hand, their unilateral proclamation undermined the customary ratification by other civil, clerical and governmental bodies to buttress legitimacy. Both the chapter clergy and the city council hoped that the response of Stadholder William of Orange would favour their perspective on the Religious Peace. The Prince replied in May.¹⁷⁴ According to the Prince the Religious Peace was to be praised as a *political* treaty, by which he alluded to its alleged religious bipartisanship. Yet, he also tried to appease both sides by giving some ambiguous advice. The Prince suggested that article four about possible future Protestant expansion to other Catholic properties should 'not be effectuated, *only if dire affairs as such required this*, and this without damage or harm to the clergy, whom keep the same possession and use of their benefices, prebends and foundations.'¹⁷⁵ The Prince disregarded the chapters' objection to article twenty-one which abolished the clerical tax exemption. Yet, he did grant them an act of 'non-prejudice' for the chapters' possessions, which meant that no tax arrears could be levied on the chapters' benefices, prebends or foundations. The Prince granted some small concessions to the chapters' concerns over their legal immunity. He suggested that article twenty-three about the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 8-9.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 'Niet worden geeffectueert, dan de saaken ten uystersten sulks vereyssende, ende dat al buyten eenige schade ofte quetse van den Geestelykhey, ende behoudens deselve de possessie ende 't gebruyk van hare beneficien, praebenden ende fundatien.' My cursive.

clergy's submission to civil court cases could be altered so the ecclesiastical courts would be preserved and allowed to deal with such civil cases. Only if the ecclesiastical courts did not treat a case within six to eight weeks or would be proven to judge a case unfairly, could a case be sent to the secular courts. Article twenty-two about the clerical observance of secular laws and submission to the magistrate's court, however, needed no revision according to the Prince. He argued that it was 'taking away the difference between those of the one and the other religion.'¹⁷⁶ In addition, the Prince added that if the chapters thought that Utrecht's Religious Peace needed any 'reparation or change', then they could do so with the advice of the allied provinces of the Closer Union, knowing very well that the clergy would find no support there.¹⁷⁷ The Stadtholder's reply, however, did not sway the chapters to ratify the treaty. Yet, from the council's perspective, their unilateral proclamation of the Religious Peace had already caused the desired effect. It was provisionally enforced.

In the meantime, a pamphlet had circulated in the city at least since February, which mocked the Closer Union, the Religious Peace and its advocates. In a composition of word play, the author incorporated names of local councilmen, officials and other leaders, while the general tenor of the pamphlet warned the people of Utrecht about further (Reformed) radicalization under the guise of patriotism and religious peace. The pamphlet, for example, deplores how the Pacification led to the Prince's backdoor appointment as Stadholder. The people of Utrecht had been told they bought wares of Ghent (i.e. the Pacification), yet they suddenly received a sufficient stock of Oranges (i.e. the Prince becomes the Stadtholder and local Orangists gain control over the city).

*Dan wilt men u Gentsche waren voorsetten om copen,
Dan worden u oerangens genochsaem aangetelt.*¹⁷⁸

The names of other leading figures and councilmen were also incorporated into this pamphlet; e.g. Floris Thin, Jan Pyll, the lord of Wulven or Hubert Duifhuis, among others. The author of the pamphlet, furthermore, warned the citizens of Utrecht that their privileges would be violated. Moreover, it sharpened the miscellaneous criticism of the various peace violations since the Pacification by pointing towards a double standard of appeasement; i.e. a breach of the peace by

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 9. 'Wegnemende het onderscheyd tusschen die van de een en d'andere Religie'.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ P. Muller, 'Stukken over den tegenstand' 469. 'Then man want to present you wares of Ghent to buy/ Then your Oranges become sufficiently stocked.' P. Muller thought that '*Gentsche waren*' only referred to the city. I am convinced that this refers to the Pacification's article seven due to the following line about the Prince and/or local Orangists.

Protestants was followed by appeasement while Catholic opposition was met with fierce repression, restrictions and expulsions.

'Ja, seyt men dan, ghy bent die Spaensche inquisitie quyt!

Men leert dat moedernaecte woordt op dorpen en stede!

*Dan geschiet hier een abuys, tmoet hebben respijt.*¹⁷⁹

In addition, the author of the pamphlet mocks Protestant claims to patriotism, juxtaposing it with the iconoclasm, expulsions and plunder of chapels and churches; 'good patriots hate the old religion.'¹⁸⁰ It seems as though the author struck an open nerve by pinpointing to this double standard of appeasement for "patriotic" Protestants and repression for "treasonous" Catholics, as the city council discussed the pamphlet twice; first in February and again in May. In February, the council resolved to not pay too much attention to the pamphlet and that it would suffice if the author and distributors came to the city hall to 'to answer for his error'.¹⁸¹ Whereas in May, however, the council resolved to set up a committee to investigate and expel anyone who had helped to write, copy or disseminate the handwritten pamphlet.¹⁸² The council was keen to repress any criticism of their unilaterally proclaimed Religious Peace while tensions in the city seemed to rise again.

A Shaky Semi-Simultaneum

The Religious Peace of Utrecht could be qualified as parity or semi-*Simultaneum* treaty; albeit a shaky one due to its limited legitimacy. Such religious peace treaties implemented either rigid equality between Protestants and Catholics in the distribution of church properties, financial benefits and government seats, or would enforce the sharing of church spaces. The Religious Peace of Utrecht granted Protestants legal rights and implemented regulations for the sharing of spaces and restricted what Kaplan called 'religious flashpoints'. For example, the articles that regulated funerals, weddings, processions, bell ringing, church service times, publicly working on Catholic holy days or the ban on selling and consuming meat during Catholic days of abstinence – were all measures to control the public space and attempts to limit antagonizing interactions between the different religions. It was no coincidence that the treaty tried to regulate these types of religious flashpoints. According to Kaplan, most of the early modern religious riots can be traced back to three types of events:

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 470. 'Yes, so man thus says, you are rid of the Spanish Inquisition!/Man learns the naked gospel in villages and towns/ Then here occurs an abuse, it must have respite.'

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 471.

¹⁸¹ HUA 702 121-1 f.80.l. 'zijn eratie verantwoirden.'

¹⁸² HUA 702 121-1 f.93.r.

processions, holiday festivities and funerals. This was because the degree of religious offence or scandal was often determined by its performance and claim to the public sphere, and those three types of events were often the most public religious acts.¹⁸³ Indeed, the religious violence elsewhere, such as in Haarlem, had occurred in relation to holy day celebrations of the Catholic calendar.

It seems as though there might have been an funeral incident in Utrecht sometime around May 1579. Yet, brother Wouter's diary is the only source that mentions it; neither the author of the *Kronijk* nor the city council resolutions – or even the sheriff's book, make any remark about a funeral incident in May. Brother Wouter, nonetheless, wrote that an incident occurred during a Catholic funeral in St. Nicolas' parish. According to him, a quiet late night funeral of a wealthy Catholic burgher was disturbed by several men who entered the church and began to sing Protestant psalms. This disruption sparked a violent reaction of the Catholic mourners as they beat the singing Protestants out of the church; leaving some of the latter injured.¹⁸⁴ If the incident happened it, seemed to have passed without much remarks. In June, however, a big incident occurred that prompted a revision of the Religious Peace.

On the 2nd of June, the council reported that they had received several complaints about a Dominican doctor whose preaching had caused some tumult. The council resolved to investigate the matter and forbade all Dominicans to preach in the meantime; Jan Pyll was, again, one of the council's investigators.¹⁸⁵ The Dominican doctor left the city and arrived in Montfoort two days later.¹⁸⁶ The following week, however, a crowd of about thirteen Catholics had gathered on the *Plaets* (i.e. the city hall square and Utrecht's political centre) to offer the council a petition, asking them to lift the ban on the Dominican preachers.¹⁸⁷ The petitioners argued that the ban was contrary to the Pacification, Satisfaction and Closer Union. The council briefly discussed the petition and recalled the Catholic petitioners to inform them of their decision. According to the resolution, several Protestants noticed the gathered Catholics on the *Plaets* and grew suspicious of their presence. The Protestants quickly drew up their own petition to demand the expulsion of the Dominicans. Moreover, they may have suggested that Utrecht's Catholics behaved like *Malcontents* (i.e., defecting Catholics). Both groups started taunting and insulting each other which culminated in an rapier-standoff of about fifty people. The civic militia captains quickly had the drums banged while militiamen rushed to the *Plaets*; disarming and confiscating the weapons of both groups. Later that afternoon, the council resolved to expel the Dominicans and at the request of the people they would

¹⁸³ Kaplan, *Divided by faith religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2007). 78-93.

¹⁸⁴ van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 768.

¹⁸⁵ HUA 702 121-1 f.96.r 96.l.

¹⁸⁶ Van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 769.

¹⁸⁷ HUA 702 121-1 f.96.l. 98.r.

‘inform if there had been any conspiracy among the Catholics’.¹⁸⁸ In addition, both Catholic and Protestants – particularly Calvinists – demanded a revision of the Religious Peace. The same night, however, several Protestants broke into the three Catholic parish churches, the *Buurkerk*, St. Nicolas’ parish and the Dominican church to destroy much of the interiors in a wave of iconoclasm. Moreover, some of the city council’s magistrates had been involved; although it remains unclear who exactly.¹⁸⁹ The next day, on the 11th of June, the council decided to expel instigators of the standoff on the *Plaets* and some of the iconoclasts.¹⁹⁰ The list of (to be) expelled people included a canon of St. Mary’s chapter, all the Dominicans, the writer of the previously mentioned pamphlet, the magistrates involved in the iconoclasm and St. Salvator’s canon Cuyntorff. On the 12th of June, the council and civic militia captains resolved to set up a committee and have deputies renegotiate the Religious Peace.¹⁹¹

The renegotiated Religious Peace was published on the 15th of June. It differed on a few key points with the previous version of January.¹⁹² Firstly, the line of argument about Don John’s and the king’s violations of the Pacification was omitted from the preamble. In the revised version the continuity with the Pacification was emphasised again. Moreover, an amnesty and oblivion clause for all religious crimes and injuries since the Pacification was added as the new article one of the treaty – in the a similar phrasing as the Dom chapter had proposed back in January.¹⁹³ It is not clear if this applied to the instigators of June standoff and iconoclasm. Furthermore, the Calvinists were granted two more churches: the *Buurkerk* and St. Nicolas’ parish; leaving the Catholic with only two parish churches: the Dominican church and St. Gertrude’s parish. Another newly added article banned Catholics from using bells and torches in the streets to perform the last rites. The fact that this article was newly added lends some more credibility to brother Wouter’s account of the funeral incident. The revised treaty incorporated the Stadtholder’s suggestion to permit the ecclesiastical courts to initially deal with civil courts cases themselves, before it could be passed on to the secular courts. The most important difference between the two versions of the Religious Peace was that the revised version in June had a better claim to legitimacy and broader support from the city magistrate, the five chapters, the civic militia captains and representatives of the Protestants. During the summer, both the Prince and Archduke Matthias would give their official approvals in name of the United

¹⁸⁸ HUA 702 121-1 f.98.r. ‘Datmen sich souden willen informereren offer enige conspiratie onder die Catholycke wart geweest.’

¹⁸⁹ HUA 702 121-1 f. 98.l. ‘Ende te selve gecomen zijnde tot kennisse vande hoifden vande magistraet hebben sich dair onder gegeven.’

¹⁹⁰ HUA 702 121-1 f. 98.r.

¹⁹¹ HUA 702 121-1 f.99.l.

¹⁹² Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 3, 9-12.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*; HUA 216 1-20 ‘7 January 1579’. The phrase ‘eenige wraecke daervan te begeeren’ was changed to ‘enige ondersoek dat van gedaan, of yemand achterhaalt zal mogen werden.’

Provinces of the Closers Union and (rebel) Estates-General, respectively; which meant that the Religious Peace of Utrecht was ratified by all government bodies in rebel territory.

Neither tensions, nor suspicions completely disappeared from the city with the revised Religious Peace. On the 3rd of July the council decided to enforce the loyalty of migrants who had arrived in the city since the Pacification. The council resolution affirmed that:

*'all foreign persons, that came from outside the city to here, since one year or one-and-half year (...) will do a reasonable certification which will show that they are good patriots and have not left their previous residence because of bad affairs or suspicions of such.'*¹⁹⁴

Kaplan has analysed the migrants that joined the Calvinists in Utrecht. According to him at least 22 migrants had joined the Calvinist church in Utrecht in 1579; mostly people from the Northern provinces (excluding Holland). In addition, between March and June 1579 the Utrecht Calvinist church gained 256 new members.¹⁹⁵ This membership surge of the Calvinists may explain why the revised Religious Peace in June granted them two extra churches. Other migrants may also have been Anabaptists (or Mennonites). According to brother Wouter, the Anabaptists started preaching openly in Utrecht after the revised Religious Peace, although these could also be Utrecht natives.¹⁹⁶

Catholicism Outlawed and the Act of Abjuration

For a few months the revised Religious Peace was upheld without any incidents in the city. In August the weapons confiscated during the June standoff were even returned to their owners.¹⁹⁷ In addition, a compromise was made to share the prebends of the chapters among Catholic and Protestants.¹⁹⁸ The religious co-existence, however, did not last as the revised Religious Peace would break down definitively after the reconciliation of the city of Groningen and the nobleman George de Lailang, Count of Rennenberg and Stadtholder of Groningen, Ommelanden, Friesland, Overijssel and Drenthe, with the king on the 3rd of March 1580. The news of the Rennenberg's reconciliation with the king travelled fast and sparked riots in Utrecht four days later. Iconoclasts broke into all churches,

¹⁹⁴ HUA 702 121-1 f.103.r 103.l. 'alle d'vuijtheemsche personen die zedert een jaer ofte anderhalff herwert van buten binnen dese stadt gecomen zijn (...) bij behoirlicken certificatie sullen doen blycken dat zij goede patriotten zijn ende om gene quade saicken of suspitien vuyt hier voirgaande residentien geweken zijn.'

¹⁹⁵ Kaplan *Calvinists and Libertines* 125, 129.

¹⁹⁶ van Eeghen, *Broeder Wouter* 769.

¹⁹⁷ HUA 702 121-1 f.108.r.

¹⁹⁸ van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol.1 214-216.

convents and monasteries of Utrecht – even the Dom church which had been spared so far. The author of the *Kronijk* duly noted: ‘On the 8th of March, the iconoclasm of all Utrecht’s churches had been completed.’¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the city council resolution reported that several (Reformed) burghers met at the Franciscan Church:

*‘And so by the evening the news arrived that those of Groningen had been treated badly and some were killed, so they began to mobilize all of the eight banners.’*²⁰⁰

The resolution described how the whole civic militia insisted that the council removed several people from the city (who remains unmentioned), which the latter did, so as to keep the people at peace. In addition, the eight militia captains submitted a petition to the council which included several radical demands. The petition urged the council to outlaw Catholic worship, to expel all Catholic foreigners that had arrived in the city since 1571, to cease all gatherings of the five chapters, to grant the eight captains the chapterhouse of the Dom for their meetings, and to remove all ‘Papists’ from the meetings of state affairs such as the States of Utrecht and United Provinces of the Closer Union.²⁰¹ The council refused to cease the meetings of the chapters – as the latter needed to meet to discuss the affairs of their properties. The council also refused demand for the removal of Catholics from meetings of the States of Utrecht or of the United Provinces of the Closer Union. Nor did the council grant the captains the prestigious chapterhouse of the Dom – they were given the chapterhouse of the Franciscans instead. The council did resolve to expel all Catholic foreigners that had arrived in the city since 1571.²⁰² Moreover, the council unilaterally took the decision on the 18th of March to provisionally outlaw the public exercise of Catholicism in the city; until the Prince or the United Provinces decided otherwise.²⁰³ Indeed, the Prince did decide otherwise and tried to sway the council and the eight militia captains to reverse the decision. He sent several letters urging them to observe the Religious Peace.²⁰⁴ Although the council expressed to honour the Prince’s decision to restore the Religious Peace, they nonetheless tried to take control over all ecclesiastical property in and around the city.²⁰⁵ Moreover, the council decided to outlaw both public and private exercise of Catholicism definitively on the 18th of June. The phrasing of the ordinance includes a rather

¹⁹⁹ Raven, ‘Kronijk’ 542. ‘Nimirum 8 Martii, Traiecti peracta est iconomachia omnium ecclesiarum’.

²⁰⁰ HUA 702 121-1 f.133.r. ‘Also jegens de avont tydinge quam dat die vande Groeningen qualicken getracteert ende eendeels omgebracht waren, soo hebben sij sich mit alle de acht vendelen op de been gegeven.’

²⁰¹ Bor, *Nederlandsche Oorlogen* vol 2, Book 14, 172-173.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ HUA 702 121-1 f.136.r. The States of Utrecht met the same day in the chapterhouse of the Dom where outraged clergy demanded to stay with the revised Religious Peace and immediately cease the ban on Catholic worship; see HUA 58 1-2 18 March 1580.

²⁰⁴ van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* Vol. 3, 13-15. The Prince sent at least three letters: one to the council (23rd of March), one to the eight militia captains (24th of March) and another one to the city as whole (13th of May).

²⁰⁵ HUA 702 121-1 f.135.r., 139.r., 143.l. 144.r.

remarkable inversion of the common derogative denomination of Protestants as the *pretended* reformed religion, describing Catholic clergy and monks as ‘of those that man call Priests and living under orders [i.e. monastics].’²⁰⁶ Moreover, anyone who would be caught practicing any form of Catholicism would be fined ten Carolus guilders of which one third went to the denunciator, another to the attending officer and the last allegedly went to the common people. In addition, all clergy (men and women) were forbidden from wearing religious clothing in the streets, on the penalty of losing these clothes.²⁰⁷ Yet, even though Catholicism was outlawed, the power of the five chapters could not be completely dismantled as they continued their existence in a secular form. Secular canons continued the administration of their vast properties, receive prebends and retained their position within the First Estate of the States of Utrecht; albeit no longer in their position as Catholic clergy but as so-called *Geeligeerden* after 1582. Several of the (former) Catholic chapter canons – such as the previously mentioned dean of St. John, Adriaan van Zuylen – thus retained their prebends and power within the States of Utrecht.²⁰⁸ The initial limited religious toleration of Pacification that had allowed Protestants freedom of conscience in Utrecht had been gradually “clarified” by the (revised) Religious Peace and was ultimately completely overthrown once Catholicism was outlawed in the city and province of Utrecht.

A year after the outlawing of Catholicism, the United Provinces of the Closer Union put the nail in Pacification’s coffin with the Act of Abjuration (1581). The preamble of the Act used the Pacification to justify the abjuration of the king by ascribing all infractions of the peace solely to the royal party. The Pacification was tacitly rendered obsolete by the frame that the treaty belonged to the past and defined it as a failed attempt to reach peace.²⁰⁹ In order words, the rebel governments claimed to have done their utmost best to keep the Pacification’s peace while Don John and the king had continuously violated its terms. This ultimately left the United Provinces with no other choice than to consider Pacification’s attempt to reach peace as having failed definitively and belonging to the past.

²⁰⁶ Van de Water, *Groot Placaatboek* vol. 3, 466. ‘van den geenem die men noemt Priesters ofte geordende personen.’

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*; Raven, ‘Kronijk’ 543.

²⁰⁸ Bannatyne, *Conservatism in Crises* 262.

²⁰⁹ ‘Placcaet van de Staten generael der Geunieerde Nederlander: bij den welcken, mids de redenen in ’t lange selve begrepen, men verklaert den Coningh van Spaegniën vervallen van de Overheyt ende Heerschappye van dese voorsz Nederlanden, ende biedt synen Naem ende Zeghel in de selve Landen meer te gebruycken, 26 Julii 1581.’ in Jan Jansen, *Nederlandtsche placcaet-boeck: waerinne alle voornaemste placcaten, ordonnantien, accorden, ende andere acten ende munimenten, uyt-ghegeven by de EE. Hoog-Mogende Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenigde Nederlantsche Provintien; sedert dat Philippus II. Koninck van Spagnien eerst verclaert is, vervallen te wesen vande Hoogh-Overigheyt deser landen, in't jaer 1581, tot op den teghenwoordighen jare 1644. In twee deelen vervat ende begrepen worden* (Amsterdam 1644) vol. 1, 1-9, 6-7.

Conclusion

Although, the Pacification was a yardstick for peace to all its adherents, its implementation, was left to the local authorities. In other words, each of the participating provinces expressed their desire for a common peace while particularism and local interests prevailed in the implementation of the Pacification. It permitted local governments to seize the political initiative and dictate peace terms without royal consent. I argue that this case study of Utrecht has confirmed Baelde & Peteghem's observation that the Pacification was significant despite the lack of coherence or clarity of the text. As they argued, the treaty was indeed influential because of the interpretative possibilities and various local impacts. But in what sense? Did the Pacification successfully lead to the enforcement of its terms locally? Or did the treaty only lead to bickering about either its original intend or the changed meaning during the developing and unforeseen circumstances?

The enforcement of the Pacification's original terms in Utrecht lasted roughly until the end of 1577. Several of its terms were successfully implemented during this period: the *tercios* and foreign mercenaries were beaten, heresy persecutions and verdicts were suspended and annulled, exiles could return with restitution of their property, Protestants were permitted freedom of conscience, self-governance and local privileges were restored, while the province was no longer the Habsburg frontline for military campaigns into rebel territory. Moreover, if it was true that captain D'Avila of the *tercios* in the Vredenburg considered the treaty as an act of rebellion, and if the militia vanguard during the siege indeed consisted of (returned, exiled or future) Protestants, then the Pacification not only marked the beginning of the rebellion in Utrecht, but was also its direct cause. However that may be, the victory at the Vredenburg meant that the civic militiamen became the dominant military force in the city and increasingly claimed to have "restored" their role of political mouthpiece for the citizenry.

We have seen how, after the siege, the vacancy of the Stadtholderate of Utrecht became the first sticking point that demanded an interpretation of the Pacification under changed and unforeseen circumstances. The ambiguous article seven of the Pacification enabled Prince William of Orange and his supporters in Utrecht to reinterpret its meaning in order to apply it to a whole province. Don John's capture of Namur was decisive for the resurrected relevance and reinterpretation of the Pacification regarding its unforeseen consequences and the changed circumstances. The violation of the treaty by the representative of royal authority was crucial in several ways. It provided the rebels with an opportunity to appropriate the language of peace and to selectively adopt the terms of the Pacification while obscuring their own violations. Don John's move was also pivotal for the expansion of William of Orange's power, who solidified his position in

Brabant and in the remaining loyalist cities and towns of Holland and Zeeland. In Utrecht, it permitted the Prince's local supporters and the militia captains to pressure the States into accepting a satisfaction treaty. In addition, after the first draft was proposed, the Prince's deputies were able to renegotiate a restrictive clause that obstructed potential religious co-existence. Furthermore, the Prince gained control over the appointment of the annual city council. Finally, the arrest of the Duke of Aarschot enabled the Prince to take control of the newly appointed governor, Archduke Matthias, while Don John was further alienated after he had been abjured and declared an enemy of king and country by the rebel government. From that point onwards, the implementation of the Pacification's original terms in Utrecht was abandoned and overtaken by bickering about the treaty's changed meaning; in which debates about the growing religious tensions predominated.

In the early months of 1578, the authorities both had to enforce loyalty to the rebellion and deal with the rise of religious tensions within the city. Don John's military pressure and menacing amnesty fuelled distrust of some Catholic clergymen and prominent members of the "former" Habsburg government in Utrecht. The newly appointed Libertine oriented city council imposed a particularly strict supervision on monks, expelled two religious orders and enforced local allegiance to the rebel cause by prescribing both an oath of loyalty and an ordinance that conscripted *all* able men in the watch duties. In addition, the unconditional amnesty and oblivion clauses of the Pacification were reinterpreted and became conditional on loyalty to the rebellion.

In the meanwhile, Protestants began to preach more openly and demanded official rights of worship. During the summer of 1578, the unofficial simultaneum in St. Jacobs parish was briefly interrupted as the Catholic chapter clergy blocked the Libertine oriented city council from officially appointing Hubert Duifhuis as Protestant pastor. Yet, the proposed Religious Peace provided opportunities both for the Libertine council to recall Duifhuis and for the local Calvinists to demand the use of the vacant Franciscan church. Hence, the ambiguity of both the Pacification's articles on religion and the tactful omission in the Satisfaction treaty resurfaced. Strictly speaking, neither the Pacification nor the Satisfaction explicitly forbade Protestants from gaining more rights of worship; both stipulated that the Catholic religion and faith had to be upheld without hindrance or disturbance of the peace. The author of an anonymous account of the siege was quite clear that this was no longer the case in 1578; the probably conservative clergymen asserted that the hindrance of Catholicism was evident. Yet, both such restrictions and elaborations were framed by the city council as necessary measures to keep the peace within the city.

The proposed Religious Peace was the catalyst for further political disintegration among the initial participating provinces. This disintegration prompted the northern provinces to resume negotiations about a closer political union. While the negotiations for the draft of the Closer Union were finalised in Utrecht, the "contra-unionists" tried to rally opposition forces in the city and sway

local public opinion with a pamphlet, which highlighted the peace violations of the Pacification by Protestants in Holland and their intentions to turn Utrecht into their buffer-state. This provided the rebel government with the perfect opportunity to arrest the “contra-unionists” for sedition and force the remaining opposition – particularly within the chapter clergy – to sign the Closer Union in January 1579. Simultaneously, the city council used the political momentum to unilaterally proclaim the local Religious Peace. The satirical pamphlet in 1579 pinpointed to the double standards of appeasement and the later expulsion of a Dominican preacher substantiated this claim, which caused tensions to erupt in a standoff and wave of iconoclasm. The standoff in June 1579 prompted a revision of the local Religious Peace, which reaffirmed legal continuity with the Pacification, granted the Calvinists two more churches, passed an act of oblivion for all that happened *since* the Pacification and had more legitimacy due to its ratification by all the rebel government bodies.

The shaky simultaneum lasted only until March 1580. Rennenberg’s decision to reconcile with the king caused the whole civic militia in Utrecht to riot and “complete” the iconoclasm in the city. The captains’ radical petition was partially adopted by the council. Catholic public worship was provisionally outlawed in March and then definitively in June. The council also expelled all foreign Catholics that had arrived in the city since 1571. Interventions of the Prince were in vain. At the same time, the council refused the militia captains’ demands to abolish the chapter clergy as a whole. These “clerical nobles” with their aristocratic networks, could not be swept aside. Several of the canons retained their positions in a secularized form and remained represented in the First Estate as *Geeligerden*. Lastly, the Act of Abjuration in 1581 reframed the Pacification as a failed treaty. Its, peace terms belonged to a forgettable past while its violation served to legitimize discontinuity with the present.

The act of oblivion in the Pacification was an unintended double edged sword and was tacitly one of the most significant elements of the treaty. The act of oblivion in the Pacification meant to erase the decade of conflict and offer a *tabula rasa* to restore peace. This meant that the treaty tried to stop further violence and confiscations while imposing a new status quo. It effectively buried the last decade and became an anchor point in disputes about legitimacy. Yet, as Pollmann noted, oblivion-clauses contained an inherent paradox: in order to forget the past, one must be reminded of what to forget. She argues that: ‘What acts of oblivion effectively help to produce, then, was a narrative that, by bracketing off and ‘forgetting’ one part of the past, encouraged people to reinvent a new form of continuity between past and present.’²¹⁰

This is exactly what happened with the Pacification in Utrecht. Yet, there were multiple narratives competing with each other about which parts of the past should be forgotten and what

²¹⁰ Pollmann, *Memory in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford University Press 2017) 153-154.

constituted the new continuity with the present. Legal continuity with the Pacification was crucial for legitimacy of legislation between 1576 and 1579. The ambiguous article seven of the Pacification had formed the legal basis for the Satisfaction treaty in 1577. The coercive oath in 1578 was the next reinterpretation of the Pacification; the unconditional amnesty and act of oblivion became conditional on loyalty to the rebel government and its leaders. The debate about religious co-existence was the catalyst for political disintegration. The opposing views centred on the choice either to “clarify” the Pacification’s article five with religious co-existence in all provinces (but Holland and Zeeland) or to reaffirm article four to maintain the Catholic religion with freedom of conscience for non-Catholics, while only permitting Protestant public worship in Holland and Zeeland.

In essence these debates were about how to interpret the Pacification under the continuously changing circumstances. The “originalist” side argued to reaffirm its terms in the original meaning of 1576, while the “clarifying” side, on the other hand, argued that the changing circumstances and cherry-picked peace violations on the part of Habsburg loyalists, necessitated an elaboration of the Pacification. After 1579, the “clarifying” argument – which still rested upon the Pacification for legitimate legal continuity – was increasingly overtaken by an “abnegation” argument. In this line of argument legal discontinuity with the Pacification was used to legitimize new alliances and legislation. The argument went that Don John’s and the king’s violations had rendered the treaty obsolete; as a consequence, it no longer served as a guiding reference for peace policies in the present or future. In this narrative the Pacification’s terms became a part of the past that had to be forgotten. The new continuity with the present was not based on the treaty’s terms but on its violations and frame of belonging to the past. In other words, the Pacification’s failure became part of the new narrative of legitimacy, while its terms were “bracketed-off” as a forgettable past.

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