

APPENDIX 2

The 'Illustrious Brotherhood of Our Blessed Lady' in 's-Hertogenbosch

After a siege that attracted people from all over the world, 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc, also known as 'Den Bosch') was conquered on the Spaniards in 1629.¹ It was a turning point in a campaign which, restarted after a truce of twelve years (1609–1621), had not been very successful so far.² The town came under a Protestant regime and the laws and decrees of the Union were imposed. Accordingly, all public exercise of the Roman Catholic religion was forbidden. Priests, including the bishop Michael van Ophoven or Ophovius (1570–1637), had to leave the town and, although nuns and beguines were allowed to stay, they were not allowed to make new recruits.³ The Reformed Church became 'dominating' Church and with the help of the armed forces houses of worship were given to Protestants. Although freedom of conscience was officially guaranteed priests, especially regular priests, became outlaws. Four protestant ministers were appointed to prepare the foundation of a local Reformed Church—among them Gisbertus Voetius.⁴

The privileges of corporations were explicitly guaranteed under the capitulation.⁵ Among those that continued to operate was an 'Illustrious Brotherhood of Our Blessed Lady' (*Illustere Lieve-Vrouwe-Broederschap*), founded in 1318 as part of a more general effort of the Church to gain control over the worship of the Mother of God.⁶ It was organized around a miraculous wooden image of

- ¹ Pieter Bor, *Geleentheyd van 's-Hertogenbosch, vierde hoofstad van Brabant: haar oorspronck, fundatie ende vergrootinge, verschyden hare belegeringen (...)* (The Hague: Meuris, 1630), pp. 107–412; Johan Hendrik van Heurn, *Historie der stad en Meyerye van 's-Hertogenbosch, alsmede van de voornaamste daaden der hertogen van Brabant*, 4 vols. (Utrecht: Van Schoonhoven, 1776–1778. Reprint 's-Hertogenbosch 1974); J.C.A. Hezenmans, *'s-Hertogenbosch van 1629 tot 1789: Historische Studiën* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Provinciaal Genootschap [1899]). For technical details of the siege see F.J.G. ten Raa/F. de Bas, *Het Staatsche Leger 1586–1795* (Breda: Koninklijke Militaire Academie, 1918), vol. 4, pp. 25–43.
- ² In 1625 the Spanish troops (under Spinola) retook Breda (reconquered in 1637 only). The loss was compensated by some smaller conquests, like Oldenzaal, by Ernst-Casimir of Nassau (Stadholder of Friesland), and Grol (Groenlo), by Frederik Hendrik, Stadholder of the other provinces and captain general of the army.
- ³ Van Ophoven was a Dominican priest. He studied theology in Bologna, became prior of the Dominican convent in Antwerp, head of the Dutch Mission, and in 1626 bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch. In 1636 the States General sent him into exile. He died in Lier (4 November 1637) and was buried in St Paul's Church in Antwerp. On him see NNBW II, 1027–1028. His diary (from 29 August 1629 till the beginning of 1632) was published by C.R. Hermans in: *Verzameling van oorkonden betrekkelijk het beleg van 's-Hertogenbosch in den jare 1629*, 4 vols. ('s-Hertogenbosch: Stokvis, 1850–1873), vol. 2. The same collection contains other documents concerning the siege. Frederik Hendrik's own memoirs were published in the 18th century: *Mémoires de Frédéric-Henri, Prince d'Orange, de 1621 jusqu'à 1646* (Amsterdam 1738).
- ⁴ W. Meindersma, *De gereformeerde gemeente te 's-Hertogenbosch 1629–1635* (Zaltbommel: Van de Garde, 1909).
- ⁵ Cf. Meindersma, *Gereformeerde gemeente*, pp. 193–200.
- ⁶ G.C.M. van Dijck, *De Bossche Optimaten. Geschiedenis van de Illustre Lieve Vrouwenbroederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch* (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1973). Documents concerning the affair of the Brotherhood were published in several contemporary sources, which will be quoted in due order.

the Virgin preserved in St John's Cathedral. The Brotherhood had two types of members: ordinary members and sworn members, also called 'swan-brethren' because they used to donate a swan for the yearly banquet. Sworn members were clerics in principle; in fact they were often chosen among the nobility, the magistrates, etc.⁷ As a result, the Brotherhood also functioned as an important social network.

That may have been the reason why in 1641 the military governor of the town, Johan-Wolfert van Brederode (1599–1655), asked to be admitted despite the fact that he was a Protestant. He made the request not only for himself but for thirteen others, all Protestant. They were Brederode's right hand Philip van Thienen, town commander and deputy governor; Hendrick Bergaigne, Hendrick Kuysten, Gysbert Pieck van Tienhoven, Andries de Fresne, Adriaan Ploos van Amstel, Rutger Tullekens, Jacob van Casteren, Otto Copes, Johan Ruysch, Pieter Lus, Johan Gans van Bommenede, and Lazarus van Zonst.⁸ All were connected either with the military or with the town administration. In fact, the better half of the administration applied for membership.

Brederode's request caused much embarrassment, among Roman Catholics as well as Protestants. Catholics resented the idea, which they saw as a first step towards secularisation. Protestants on the other hand saw it as an act of idolatry. The fact that Andries de Fresne, Johan Gans and Otto Copes were Elders of the 'Walloon Church' ('Église wallonne' or French Huguenot Church), and Ploos van Amstel and Van Zonst of the Dutch Reformed Church, caused additional scandal. The Brotherhood on the other hand had little choice—rejection of Brederode's proposal would almost certainly lead to its total suppression. In spite, therefore, of the dissenting voices of an important minority (several of whom left the Brotherhood in protest) they decided that the Brotherhood would be mixed—eventually the sworn members would be half Catholic, half Protestant (even if for the moment there were still 28 Catholics against only 13 Protestants)—and would pursue its activities 'in so far as they are not contrary to the laws and religion of the United Provinces'. Roman Catholics on the other hand would not be vexed in their conscience or hindered in their private worship.⁹

The Protestant voice was articulated by Cornelius Leemans (1599–1668), minister of the Dutch Reformed Church.¹⁰ He wrote letters to two theological authorities: Godfried Udemans (1580–1649), minister in Zierikzee and author of popular theological works, and Voetius, his former professor of theology in Utrecht.¹¹ His question was twofold: 1) can a Magistrate tolerate an association

⁷ One of the more famous members had been the painter Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450–1516); cf. P. Gerlach, 'Jheronimus van Aken alias Bosch en de Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Broederschap', in: *Jheronimus Bosch: Bijdragen bij gelegenheid van de herdenkingstentoonstelling in 's-Hertogenbosch 1967* ('s-Hertogenbosch 1967), pp. 48–60; G.C.M. van Dijck, *Op zoek naar Jheronimus van Aken alias Bosch* (Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 2001).

⁸ Cf. Van Dijck, *Bosche Optimaten*, p. 321.

⁹ These conditions were laid down in an agreement. On 27 February Brederode and his friends were sworn in.

¹⁰ Leemans was appointed minister of the Reformed Church of Den Bosch in 1632; cf. Meindersma, *Gereformeerde gemeente*, pp. 78–79. On him see NNBW II, 797; De Bie et Loosjes V, 729–732.

¹¹ His letter of 6 May 1642 is translated in Voetius, *Specimen*, pp. 411–414 (for the full title see

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devoted to Mary; 2) is it right that a protestant participates in the activities of a brotherhood of St Mary? Udemans' answer was straightforward on both counts: 'No, never'. Voetius replied that he was astonished that the question was raised at all: 'Indeed, I think the decision should be crystal clear; in any case that is what it should be for any Reformed man. The definition and description of the Brotherhood evidently show that by its form, its object, its efficient cause, its goal, it is popish and superstitious and therefore in and through itself evil, very evil, abominable, detestable. If a Reformed man were to take part in it, that would amount to 1) a participation in the sins of others and in superstition; 2) an appearance of evil; 3) a reinforcement of idolatry and superstition; 4) a scandal'. The 'usual excuse', namely, that in this way Catholics could be motivated to convert to Calvinism was, according to Voetius, shallow: 'If that is an excuse I no longer know what would strengthen them in their superstition and allow them to wallow in their mud'.¹² To make his point Voetius sent Leemans a disputation on idolatry he planned to submit a few weeks later. The case discussed in that text was that of the Brotherhood, which without being explicitly mentioned was presented in a very recognizable way.¹³

Voetius' intervention could cause serious trouble because many considered him an authority on practical theology. The fact, moreover, that his intervention was printed meant that a secret compromise became impossible. Finally, Elders of two Churches (the Dutch and the Walloon) were involved, so the affair could lead to a division within those Churches. This was particularly true of the small Walloon Church, who saw three of its Elders join the Brotherhood. For their minister, Samuel Desmarets or *Maresius (1599–1673), this was presumably the main reason to intervene. In a pamphlet, *Defence of the piety and sincerity of the Den Bosch patricians in the affair of the Brotherhood called after the Holy Virgin*, he took the defence of the 'Den Bosch Patricians' (*optimates*) against Voetius, arguing that, although Voetius was right on the principle, he was wrong on the facts—indeed his informers (Leemans!) had undoubtedly supplied him with wrong information. If the Brotherhood were a religious and devotional foundation the people who joined it would certainly sin; but over the ages the Brotherhood had become an entirely worldly institution (comparable to, say, a hospital called after St Elisabeth or a guild called after St George). Accordingly, there was no question of either superstition or scandal.¹⁴ Maresius also empha-

below, note 34); cf. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, II, xxxii–xxxiii. On Udemans see NNBW X, 1065–1066; *Biografisch Lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlands Protestantisme* (Kampen: Kok, 1978–...), vol. 1, pp. 385–386. He had worked several times in Den Bosch on a temporary basis.

¹² *Kort ende oprecht verhael*, s.l.s.n., 1645 (Knuttel 5244), pp. 7–8; Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, II, xxxiii–xxxiv; Van Dijk, *Bossche Optimaten*, p. 325.

¹³ This disputation is the last of a series on 'indirect idolatry', submitted between 21 May and 14 June 1642; cf. Voetius, *Disputationes theologicae selectae*, III, 234–316.

¹⁴ *Defensio pietatis et synceritatis optimatum Sylvae-ducensium, in negotio sodalitatis quae a Beata Virgine nomen habet, testibus veritate et charitate* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Van Doccum, 1642). It was published at the end of September or the beginning of October 1642 (cf. Rivet to Sarrau, 6 October 1642, *Correspondance intégrale d'André Rivet et de Claude Sarrau, 1641-1650*, ed. H. Bots and P. Leroy (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University Press, 1978), vol. 1, p. 273). A clandestine reprint was made by Jan van *Waesberge, who also published Voetius' rejoinder (that is the reason why

sized Brederode's political motives: By permitting the Brotherhood to go on as it had done so far he would permit a secret channel for seditious Roman Catholic propaganda; by stipulating on the other hand that the Brotherhood should do nothing against the laws and the religion of the United Provinces he made an important contribution to the suppression of superstition. Finally, the effect of Brederode's step would be that the possessions of the Brotherhood could be used for truly pious works. In a general way Maresius blamed Voetius for choosing to discuss these things publicly, given especially that the people concerned acted in good faith. So in his eyes Voetius sinned against the precept of charity—one of the themes that would dominate Descartes' *Epistola ad Voetium*.

Needless to say that not everybody agreed. Some members of the Walloon Church joined the Dutch Reformed Church in protest.¹⁵ Leemans in turn resented the insinuation that it was he who had given Voetius wrong information. Towards the end of October he published a pamphlet *Reply to the calumnies which Tertullus, the defender of the Brotherhood of Mary, addressed to C.L., minister of the Church of 's-Hertogenbosch, without naming him*.¹⁶ The tone is particularly violent, so violent and indeed seditious that on 6 November the pamphlet was publicly condemned by the Den Bosch Magistrate.¹⁷ The Council made even an attempt to have Leemans dismissed as minister. As a reaction Leemans sought the advice of various theological and juridical authorities.¹⁸ Maresius tried to gain the support of André Rivet (1572–1671), not only one of the most influential theologians of the Walloons, but also chaplain at the court of Frederik Hendrik and governor of his son, the future William II.¹⁹ But although Rivet regretted the conflict and the negative publicity, he basically agreed with Voetius.²⁰ And so did

the pagination of the first edition is maintained). A third edition of the text can be found in Maresius' own *Ultima patientia* (Groningen: Nicolai, 1645), pp. 1–83.

¹⁵ Van Dijk, *Bossche Optimaten*, pp. 472–474.

¹⁶ C.L.E.S.M. [i.e. 'Cornelius Lemannus Ecclesiae Sylvae-ducensis Minister'], *Retorsio calumniarum quas Tertullus, sodalitatibus Marianae advocatus, C. L. Ecclesiae sylvae-ducensis administro, suppresso nomine impedit, in nupera sua Defensione pietatis et synceritatis (ut vocat) optimatum N.N. in negotio fraternitatis B. Mariae Virginis* (Amsterdam: Broers, 1642). That the date of publication was towards the end of October is claimed by Maresius, according to whom it came out *octobri jam adulto* (that is, supposedly, after 21 Oct), under the sign of the Scorpion (that is, after 24 Oct); cf. *Ultima patientia*, p. 318. It is confirmed by Rivet, who mentions Leemans' pamphlet in a letter to Sarrau of 20 October (*Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 284). The name 'Tertullus' (Maresius) is explained in the Acts of the Apostles: 'And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders and with a certain orator, Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul' (Acts 24:1). In the pamphlet Maresius is also called an Ismael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, of whom Scripture says that he will be 'a wild man [whose] hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him' (Gen. 16:12).

¹⁷ *Ultima patientia*, p. 324; cf. Voetius, *Specimen*, pp. 419–420; *Kort ende oprecht verhael*, p. 10; *Epistola ad Voetium*, AT VIII B, 77.

¹⁸ Their judgments, together with those of various synods, were published in 1645: *Oordeel van verscheyde voornaemste leeraers ende professoren der H. Theologie in de Academiën ende Hooge Scholen der Vereenighde Nederlanden, over de mariaansche broederschappen (...). Door een liefhebber der Waerheit overgheset* (Delft: Cloeting, 1645) (Knuttel 5243).

¹⁹ Maresius to Rivet, 15 September 1642, published in Nauta, *Maresius*, pp. 483–484.

²⁰ Rivet to Voetius, 16 November 1642, in Duker, 'Eenige onuitgegeven brieven van en aan Gisbertus Voetius' *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kerkgeschiedenis*, 4 (1893) 276–325. Rivet insisted on moderation: 'Mons. Voetius escrit contre luy [Desmarts] touchant les confrairies et pretend de

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others whom Maresius approached, like Vossius and *Colvius.²¹

Meanwhile Voetius prepared a rejoinder. By September 1642 two or three sheets were printed and circulated, albeit on a limited scale.²² Moreover, on 5/15 October he submitted for disputation four corollaries on the Brotherhood.²³ On 19 November the Den Bosch Magistrate asked their Utrecht colleagues to prevent the publication of Voetius' book.²⁴ A similar request was made to the Provincial States of Utrecht and to Voetius personally.²⁵ There was a small possibility of compromise. The governors of 's-Hertogenbosch declared themselves ready to comply with the judgment of a Synod, provided Voetius would withdraw his publication.²⁶

Utrecht (the town) turned out to be on Voetius' hand. After having consulted the University the *Vroedschap* answered their Den Bosch counter-parts that Voetius should be free to publish his book.²⁷ Voetius simply refused to withdraw his publication, as he wrote back on 21 November.²⁸ The attitude of the Utrecht States is less clear. According to Baillet, quoting a letter of Regius, the States stopped the printing of Voetius' book.²⁹ Whether that really is the case is not known. According to Voetius the printing of his book was interrupted, but he does not say why.³⁰ Printing was certainly resumed in December because on 26 December the Leiden theologian Johannes Polyander van Kerckhoven (1568–1648), whom Maresius had asked to try and stop Voetius, told Maresius that his intervention was no longer useful: 'We are told by reliable people that a few days ago the printing of his reaction to your book was resumed, so we are no longer in a position to do anything against it'.³¹ So much is clear, the printing process was

le convaincre d'avoir mal posé le fait. Je l'ay prié d'y aller modestement', Rivet to Sarrau, 24 November 1642, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 321.

²¹ Van Dijck, *Bossche Optimaten*, pp. 342–345.

²² Maresius, *Ultima patientia*, p. 318; cf. Voetius to Rivet, 26 October 1642 in *Archief voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis*, 4 (1893) 295. 'Voetius fait imprimer sa replique mais pour la chose seulement, sans toucher la personne', Rivet to Sarrau, 10 November 1642, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 305.

²³ For the text see *Disputationes theologicae selectae*, III, 1037; cf. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, II, 102ⁿ; Van Dijck, *Bossche Optimaten*, p. 345.

²⁴ Maresius, *Ultima patientia*, p. 331; for the text see Petrus Burmannus, *Trajectum eruditum*, Utrecht 1738, pp. 404–408. In Van Dijck (*Bossche Optimaten*, p. 347) there is some confusion on the dates, caused by the fact that Utrecht and Den Bosch adopted different calendars (a letter sent on 19 November from Den Bosch, where the Gregorian style was adopted, could be discussed on 14 November in Utrecht, which adopted the Julian Calendar).

²⁵ Maresius, *Ultima patientia*, p. 331 (text of the letter to Voetius on pp. 332–334); cf. Descartes, *Epistola ad Voetium*, AT VIII B, 78.

²⁶ Maresius, *Ultima patientia*, pp. 330–331.

²⁷ Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, II, 115–116; Kernkamp, I, 164–165.

²⁸ *Kort ende oprecht verhael*, p. 11; Maresius, *Ultima patientia*, p. 326; cf. Voetius, *Disputationes theologicae selectae*, III, 352.

²⁹ Baillet, II, 184; cf. Regius to Descartes [December 1642–May 1643], Letter 1, p. 5. In the States' Archives no confirmation could be found for Baillet's claim, who may either have misunderstood Regius' letter or be misled by Descartes' own words in his letter to Maresius.

³⁰ According to the book Voetius received a copy of the agreement between Brederode and the Brotherhood (of February 1642) on 12 December 1642, when 'this book was already written but its printing interrupted', *Specimen*, p. 208.

³¹ 'Nous avons entendu de fort bonne part que passe quelques jours, on a commencé d'imprimer sa réponse contre votre écrit, de sorte que l'occasion d'empêcher l'édition d'icelle nous est ôtée',

interrupted; there was a change of format (from in-8° to in-12°); and there may have been a change of the printer.

That is also the claim of Descartes at any rate, who got hold of the first three printed sheets (ready in September); then had to give them back without being allowed to make a copy and in January or February told Maresius that the printing of Voetius' book was now being resumed, not by the university printer, but by 'the same who prints the book against myself', that is, by Jan van Waesberge, who also printed *Admiranda methodus* (1643).³² If Descartes' claim is right that would mean that the first, shorter, version was printed by Aegidius (Gilles) Roman. And that could mean that the intervention of the States consisted in preventing Roman from printing Voetius' book, not in forbidding it to be printed at all.³³ In any case, Voetius' book (511 pages big) was published somewhere in March 1643 (although the *impressum* is of 1642) under the elaborate title: 'Example of the partly ambiguous and ridiculous, partly dangerous claims extracted from a treatise recently written to defend the erection and implantation among the Reformed of Brotherhoods of St Mary, under the title, etc.'³⁴ According to Descartes Voetius had speeded up the printing process so as to be in time for the Synod of the Walloon Church, which was to be held in The Hague on 15 April 1643.³⁵

As compared with his earlier publications on the same subject Voetius' book does not break new ground. Although more documents are cited and more facts reviewed his point remains the familiar one that, given the history and the ceremonies of the Brotherhood, it is not a civic but a religious association; that its practices are popish and idolatrous; that to join them is an act of participative superstition. It is at that point that Descartes intervenes in the discussion by taking the defence of Maresius, whom he does not seem to have known or met earlier.

The motives of some of the people involved remain the most puzzling aspect of this incident. First of all those of Brederode. In Maresius' *Defence* Brederode's step is presented as part of an over-all strategy of protestantisation, which should be applauded. Whether that really was his motive is not obvious—indeed, he may also have had personal motives.³⁶ That much is clear, his step was very much resented by the Den Bosch population, who saw it as a usurpation. This emerges from an interesting letter of Jacob Zweers or Zuerius (1587–1673) to his cousin

Ultima patientia, pp. 149–150; Van Dijk, *Bossche Optimaten*, p. 347.

³² Letter 8. Van Waesberge is indeed the printer whose name appears on the title page of Voetius' book, which came to be called: *Specimen assertionum partim ambiguarum aut lubricarum, partim periculosarum, ex tractatu nuperrimè scripto pro sodalitatibus B. Maria inter Reformatos (...) excerptarum, quod ecclesiis Belgicis, earumque fidis pastoribus et senioribus expendendum offertur à Gisberto Voetio.*

³³ Roman's privilege expired on 4/14 April 1643 and was not granted to another printer. After that date Van Waesberge acted as university printer *de facto*.

³⁴ It was published before 16 March 1643; see Rivet's letter of that date to Sarrau, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 423.

³⁵ Descartes, *Epistola ad Voetium, Argumentum*, AT VIII B, 6.

³⁶ Religiously Brederode seems to have been a very tolerant man. His first wife, Anna of Nassau, and second wife, Louise Christina of Solms, protected the beguines. Apart from that, several of his ancestors had also been members of the Brotherhood.

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Constantijn Huygens.³⁷ Zuerius describes the unrest in the town and the dissatisfaction of the population over their being governed by ‘foreigners, most of whom have no property in the town’. Zuerius points out how things had become worse since Brederode and his fellows joined the Brotherhood ‘by the use of threats’. He claims that the rule that the Brotherhood should conform to the laws and the religion of the Union was strictly applied: the Brethren were no longer allowed to wear their gowns when one of them was buried—something they saw as contrary to the rules of the capitulation and over which they were so furious that ‘at the first funeral of a deceased brother they left the procession in the midst of the street and did not appear at another funeral for the same reason, unwilling to go about without their signs and emblems, as if they were soldiers without a flag’. Indeed, according to Zuerius the inhabitants of Den Bosch were so infuriated ‘that they were even more inclined to believe the sweet promises of the Spaniards’.³⁸ So if Brederode’s motives were political, the real effect may have been a hardening of the relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics.³⁹

The motives of Leemans as well as Voetius are more or less understandable. They had such an aversion from Roman Catholic practices that in their eyes any compromise on that score was a superstitious act of idolatry.⁴⁰ What is less understandable is the fact that Voetius felt called upon to intervene in an affair which engaged only the citizens of another town in another province. Admittedly, ’s-Hertogenbosch (and the Province of Brabant generally) was governed by the States General on behalf of the other provinces, so technically at least Utrecht was also responsible. A motive may also have been that several of Brederode’s friends came from Utrecht or were associated with important Utrecht families. Accordingly, Voetius’ intervention could be an indirect move in his battle over the Utrecht Ecclesiastical Goods—a battle which was still in its initial stage but over the years would become more and more important.⁴¹ Indeed, Brederode himself was Dean of the (Utrecht) Chapter of Oudmunster.

³⁷ Zuerius was member of the Council of Brabant, the body instituted by the States General for the administration of North-Brabant; cf. NNBW III, 1225.

³⁸ Zuerius to Huygens, 1 August 1643, Huygens, *Briefwisseling*, III, 418–419. The ‘Meierij’ (the region around ’s-Hertogenbosch) was still disputed territory. In a later letter Zuerius reports that Don Andrea Cantelmo, an Italian general of the Spanish army, had organized a plot to attack the town; 19 August 1643, Huygens, *Briefwisseling*, III, 433.

³⁹ Of course one should not forget that Zuerius’ letter was written after the interventions of Maresius and Descartes, so the incidents he describes may have been motivated by a wish to show that the rule that the Brotherhood should operate in conformity with Dutch law was taken seriously.

⁴⁰ During the years Voetius spent in Den Bosch there was a rumour that the sight of a crucifix left behind in St John’s Cathedral so infuriated him that he died on the spot; cf. Voetius, *Disputationes theologicae selectae*, vol. IV, pp. 838–843 (quoting Miguel de Lorenzana, *Relatio mirabilium signorum quae evererunt Sylvae-Ducis et poenae quam Deus Dominus noster maledictae sectae concionatoribus immisit*, Granada 1632).

⁴¹ At the Reformation the Ecclesiastical Goods (Chapters) had not been suppressed but secularised. So the Canons were lay people, who not only secured a considerable income (the Chapters were richly endowed) but also political influence, given the fact that the Ecclesiastical Goods continued to be represented in the Provincial States (they were the ‘first member’ or ‘geëligeerden’—‘elected’ by the two other ‘members’ of the States, the nobility and the towns, on the basis of a nomination made by themselves). Indeed, the president of the States was always a representative of the Ecclesiastical Goods. Voetius protested against this regime (which continued to exist until Napoleon), claiming that those goods belonged to the Church and should be used for religious and

Given the almost universal disapproval of Brederode's step in Calvinist theological circles the fact that it was defended by Maresius is actually much more surprising. It can be explained only as an attempt to prevent the disintegration of his own congregation, who were deeply divided on the subject. Still, Rivet and other prominent members of the Huguenot community were not in favour of Maresius' intervention at all. According to a letter to Claude Sarrau of 8 September 1642 Rivet had tried to dissuade Maresius.⁴² A few weeks later he implored Maresius' brother Charles, a lawyer, to intervene on his behalf—which Charles would have promised to do.⁴³ And although Rivet became more conciliatory later, admitting that on the level of the facts Maresius could be right and that the only scandalous thing about the Brotherhood was its name, he continued to distrust Maresius' way of presenting them.⁴⁴ In any case he hoped that his appointment as professor in Groningen would prevent Maresius from further action—in vain of course for on the point of hardheadedness Maresius could clearly see Voetius straight in the eyes.⁴⁵ And although the Walloon Synod of April 1643 did not explicitly dissociate itself from Maresius (a firm pronouncement on the 'question de droit' was avoided), the delegates remonstrated with him that he should not have undertaken his defence without consulting with the other Walloon Churches.⁴⁶

One can only guess why Descartes intervened, given especially his general cautiousness in matters pertaining to religion and politics. A reason could be that he was completely blinded by his hatred for Voetius, who clearly exasperated him beyond measure. Another reason could be that he wanted to broaden his case by showing that even a perfectly orthodox minister as Maresius could provoke Voetius' anger. A more political reason, finally, may have been that in that way he hoped to please those he believed to be Voetius' direct masters, the States of Utrecht. As we already saw Brederode was Dean of Oudmunster.⁴⁷ Friends of Descartes, like Studler van *Zurck and De *Wilhem, enjoyed Utrecht prebends.

charitable purposes. In 1660 feelings on this matter were running so high that two popular Utrecht ministers, Van de Velde and Teellinck, were sent into exile. Voetius himself barely escaped imprisonment; cf. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, II, 326–334.

⁴² 'Je l'avoy exhorté a ne prendre point la defense de cette cause, que je trouve mauvaise', *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 243. 'Monsieur Desmarets s'attire bien de l'envie de defendre une confrairie ainsi bigamée', Rivet to Sarrau, 19 September 1642, vol. I, p. 253.

⁴³ 'Pendant ces vacances ayant rencontré Mr Desmarets avocat, ie lui ai fait honte du livre de Mr son frere pour cette pretendue confrerie mipartie: laquelle il improuve entierement et en doibt écrire à Bolduc comme il faut', Rivet to Sarrau, 26 September 1642, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 260.

⁴⁴ 'J'ay leu celui de M^f desmares et me semble que dans le fait ainsi qu'il le pose, asc[avoir] que c'est une confrairie purement seculiere pour des œuvres charitables il n'y a pas grand mal: et le seul scandale du nom est ce qui peut rester d'achoppement. Mais ie me doute qu'il deguise un peu la verité; et c'est peutetre sur quoi cet autre de la mesme ville [Leemans] le presse', Rivet to Sarrau, 1 November 1642, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 293.

⁴⁵ '... s'il m'en croid il le laissera sans replique, et fera choses plus utiles en sa nouvelle condition', Rivet to Sarrau, 16 March 1643, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 423.

⁴⁶ Rivet to Sarrau, 21 April 1643, *Correspondance intégrale*, vol. 1, p. 449; cf. *Livre synodal*, I, 439–444.

⁴⁷ In Utrecht there were five Chapters: of the 'Dom' (the main church, dedicated to St Martin and formerly the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Archbishop of Utrecht), of Oudmunster, of St John's, of St Peter's and of St Mary's.

Appendices

Among Brederode's friends *Ruysch and Ploos van Amstel came from important Utrecht families. By giving them public support against Voetius Descartes may have hoped to win their sympathy for his own case. If that was indeed the case Descartes' strategy was based on a serious misunderstanding of the delicate balance between the Town and the States (which was usually antagonistic) and of the relation between the States and the University (which, although it exercised what was seen as a sovereign right and was therefore nominally subservient to the States, was in fact governed by the Town). So much is clear, Descartes knew Maresius thanks to the intervention of a third party. This may be someone from Utrecht, like Gijsbert van der *Hoolck, who represented the Province in the States General, and may have had an interest in stirring the flames. But as long we do not certainly know the identity of this third party it must be presumed that Descartes' motives will remain more or less uncertain.