

## Maria Petyt – A Carmelite Mystic in Wartime

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# Maria Petyt

*A Carmelite Mystic in Wartime*

*Edited by*

Joseph Chalmers  
Elisabeth Hense  
Veronie Meeuwsen  
Esther van de Vate



BRILL

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# Chronological Table

1515-1582	Teresa of Avila lived
1545-1563	Council of Trent
1571-1636	John of St. Samson lived
Around 1600	Reform of Touraine started
1616-1680	Antoinette Bourignon lived
1618-1648	Thirty Years' War
1621	Michael of St. Augustine born at Brussels
1 January 1623	Maria Petyt born at Hazebroek
1630/1631	Maria contracted smallpox
1633	Infanta Isabella died
1634-1635	Maria went to school in a convent in St.-Omer
1635	France declared war on the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs and in the same year forged an alliance with the Northern Netherlands; the French temporarily occupied the territory between Aire-sur-la-Lys and St.-Omer
1636	Maria left her home because of the plague and stayed for a while with her uncle in Poperinge
1637	Michael entered the Carmelites
1638-1715	Louis XIV lived
1639	Maria stayed at Lille at the house of a pious family
1640s	Jansenist movement began
1641 or 1642	Maria entered the monastery in Gent
1643	Maria left the monastery: she could not participate in the divine office properly because of her bad eyesight
1644?	Maria's first profession as a Carmelite tertiary
1645	The constitutions of the strict observance were definitively accepted in the Belgium Province O.Carm
1646	The <i>Af-beeldinghe</i> of the third order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel of Daniel of the Virgin Mary is published.
1646?	Maria asked Michael of St. Augustine to be her spiritual director
1647	Maria Petyt's second profession as a Carmelite tertiary
1648	Peace of Westphalia
1654	Louis XIV crowned king
1 October 1657	Maria went to the Cluyse at Mechelen
1658	Maria received her first visions
1659	Treaty of the Pyrenees; period of peace between France and Spain from 1659 till 1667

5 January 1660	Approval of the ordinances at the Cluyse
1663	Antoinette Bourignon settled in Mechelen
1667	Antoinette Bourignon settled in Amsterdam
1667-1668	War of Devolution
April 1672	Louis XIV declared war on the Republic of the Seven United Provinces
May 1672	The French troops invaded the Southern Netherlands
December 1672	William III attacked Charleroi for the first time; this attempt failed; in 1674 and 1677 he tried again
June 1673	Siege of Maastricht and naval Battles of Schooneveld
August 1673	Spain joined the anti-French coalition, also known as the League of The Hague or the Quadruple Alliance
October 1673	Spain declared war on France
August 1674	Alphons de Berghes, archbishop of Mechelen, subjected the holding of processions to a strict discipline
1676	The Republic of the United Provinces was completely freed of French presence, except for Maastricht
July-August 1676	William III besieged Maastricht
1 November 1677	Maria Petyt died
1677-1680	Latin translation of Maria Petyt's writings
August 1678	Treaty of Nijmegen
24 April 1680	Date of the preface of the Codex Post. III 70
1681	<i>Kort Begryp</i> published
1683/1684	Life of Maria Petyt published
2 February 1684	Michael of St. Augustine died



## List of Contributors

### *Mirjam de Baar*

is Professor of Cultural History of Early Modern Christianity at the University of Groningen. Her current research focuses on the performance of male and female prophets in the Dutch Republic, their communication strategies and their involvement in international networks of religious dissenters in Early Modern Europe. She has published extensively on women and religion in the seventeenth century.

### *Anne-Marie Bos*

O.Carm is a researcher at the Titus Brandsma Institute, Nijmegen. Her publications include *Elijah looked and behold: Biblical Spirituality in Pictures* (Peeters, 2012).

### *Joseph Chalmers*

O.Carm, former Prior General of the Carmelite Order, has published seven books on Scriptural themes and prayer. He has also translated a number of books on Carmelite spirituality. At present he is the Chief Executive Officer of St. Luke Institute, an international treatment Centre for priests and religious, in Maryland USA.

### *Giovanni Grosso*

O.Carm earned a doctorate in Political Sciences (Rome, Università degli Studi “La Sapienza”, 1983) and, after the normal curriculum of Philosophy and Theology, he gained a doctorate in Church History (Pontifical Gregorian University, 2007). He served as Postulator General for the Causes of the Saints and Director of the Historical Archive of the Carmelite Order. In 2015 he was elected Prior Provincial of the Italian Province of Carmelites.

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T. O.Carm is Assistant Professor of Spirituality at Radboud University Nijmegen. Her main fields of research are Christian spirituality, interreligious spirituality, societal spirituality and theories on spirituality. She has published numerous studies on Carmelite spirituality, among them studies on John of the Cross, Francis Amelry, John of Saint-Samson, and Titus Brandsma.

*Michel van Meerbeeck*

studied history at Ghent University and theology in Liège where he was ordained priest (1986). In the year 2000 he earned the degree of doctor in history of the University of Louvain. His thesis was published in 2006 in the Library of the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*. At present he is a collaborator at the Centre for the Study of Augustine, Augustinianism and Jansenism of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Louvain.

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MAP *Map of Mechelen.* © STADSARCHIEF MECHELEN – WWW.BEELDBANKMECHELEN.BE.

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And there was a place open in Mechelen, very suitable for her plan; because it used to be a hermitage, which was built against the wall of the Church of the Reverend Fathers Brothers of Our Lady at that place, and it had a small window, through which one could see the Divine Service in the Church.

MICHAEL OF ST. AUGUSTINE (1681) 24

•••



# Introduction

The writings of Maria Petyt can be considered as belonging to the most interesting autobiographical documents that have been preserved in Carmelite spirituality. Her interpreters present her as a 17th century Flemish woman who retreated from the world and was devoted to a life of prayer resulting in intensive mystical experiences.

However, this memory of Maria Petyt was challenged in 2009, when Esther van de Vate was working at the archive of the Carmelite postulator in Rome and was comparing the Flemish edition of the writings of Maria Petyt with a contemporary Latin translation of these writings in Codex Post III 70. Esther van de Vate discovered a set of folios – Post III 70, fol. 30r-49v – which present a new image of this female mystic. Here Maria Petyt proves herself to be very interested and deeply engaged in political affairs. She inwardly absorbed herself in the Dutch War of Louis XIV and intensely shared in his victories and defeats. Maria Petyt even conjoined her spiritual credibility with the outcome of his military quarrels, which she prophesied. Another interesting aspect of the newly detected folios is Maria Petyt's stance towards Jansenism. Maria Petyt obviously thought deeply about this internal Christian conflict and took up a specific position. Dealing with these themes the folios show a stronger self-awareness by Maria Petyt than her other writings: here, Maria Petyt not only realizes that she has a local significance, but in these texts she considers herself having also a political mission within Europe.

The Latin folios about the Dutch War do not have a parallel in the Dutch edition of Maria Petyt's works and were never referred to in earlier literature. Even Albert Deblaere who did important and profound work on the writings of Maria Petyt in the 1960s and thereafter and who described Codex III Post 70 to some extent, did not say a single word about the folios concerning the Dutch War.

In order to do justice to Maria Petyt and to discover the tradition of female religious involvement in the 17th century, we have to reshape the image we have of Maria Petyt. We have all the more reason for doing this when we realize that Maria Petyt's writings are unequalled in volume and mystical content within the historical context of the Flemish speaking 17th century.

Thanks to the Carmelite Institute in Rome and Radboud University Nijmegen, Veronie Meeuwssen was able to do pioneering work on these folios in her Master's thesis and in a contiguous research project, supervised by Elisabeth Hense. Because the folios about the Dutch War were found to be so interesting and cause us to re-interpret the whole life and work of Maria Petyt, Elisabeth

Hense, Veronie Meeuwsen and Esther van de Vate decided to organise an international meeting of experts at Radboud University in 2011, entitled “Maria Petyt – A Carmelite mystic in Wartime”. Colleagues from Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands joined in and discussed with us various aspects of Maria Petyt’s historical context (part I) and different perspectives on the folios about the Dutch War (part II).

Referring to the historical context of Maria Petyt, Esther van de Vate gives a broad outline of the political and religious backgrounds of Maria Petyt’s folios about the Dutch War after having presented a short biography of Maria Petyt in which she gives special attention to the period of her life when she stayed at the hermitage in Mechelen where she wrote about the Dutch War. Michel van Meerbeeck provides new details about Maria Petyt’s life in the hermitage deduced from the ordinances written by Michael of St. Augustine which van Meerbeeck succeeded in finding recently. Mirjam de Baar compares the life of Maria Petyt with that of another spiritual virgin living at the same place and in the same time – Antoinette Bourignon – both of them, without knowing each other, claiming prophetic authority.

Referring to the folios about the Dutch War Giovanni Grosso gives a detailed description of Codex Post III 70, especially of fol. 30r-49v. Esther van de Vate supplies a critical analysis of the impact of the editing done by Michael of St. Augustine. Especially regarding Maria Petyt’s writings about the Dutch War we need to be aware of his influence. Folios 30r-49v about the Dutch War have been transcribed by Veronie Meeuwsen who also gives an English translation, complete with footnotes about the historical and spiritual background. Besides this, Veronie Meeuwsen comments on Maria Petyt’s support for the French King which is based on Maria’s specific use of discernment of spirits. Elisabeth Hense shows that Teresa of Avila’s spirituality of *The Interior Castle* – mainly the higher levels of contemplation within the 4th to the 7th mansions – is present in the folios about the Dutch War. This means that Maria Petyt considered her engagement in the Dutch War as part of her spiritual life. The specific prophetic dimension of the folios is explained by Anne-Marie Bos, who compares it to Elijah who is an important model of prophecy in Carmelite spirituality.

This study is brought to a conclusion by Joseph Chalmers who reflects on the changing views of the figure of Maria Petyt and how these might impact on Carmelite spirituality in general.

We cordially thank the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies, the International Office and the research group for Culture, Religion and Memory of Radboud University Nijmegen, the Sormani Foundation (Nijmegen), the Titus Brandsma Institute (Nijmegen) and the Institutum

Carmelitanum (Rome) for making this meeting of experts and the publication of its proceedings possible.

*Elisabeth Hense*

*Veronie Meeuwsen*

*Esther van de Vate*





PART 1

*Maria Petyt in Her Context*





## Maria Petyt – A Short Biography

*Esther van de Vate*

This biographical overview outlines Maria's girlhood, her period in Gent and her life in the Cluyse. The focus is mainly on the latter. It describes Maria's spiritual journey, her burgeoning spiritual authority and the last years of her life. The concluding section places Maria Petyt's spirituality in the context of her time.<sup>1</sup>

### Maria's Youth

Maria Petyt was born on 1 January 1623, the eldest daughter of a middle class family in Hazebrouck, a town in northern France which at that time still formed part of the southern Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Maria's education – she describes it at length in her autobiography<sup>3</sup> – reflects the strong confessional identity of the early seventeenth century Catholic reformation. At an early age she longed for the religious life and pledged eternal faithfulness to Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Fulfilling this ideal proved to be a long road, especially at a mental level. Maria was a child of her times, and the seventeenth century was a turbulent age fraught with spiritual confusion, the toll of bitter political friction, much warfare, a minor ice age and several plague epidemics.<sup>5</sup> Although many of these events affected Maria's youth, she mentions them only in passing in her autobiography: she spent

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<sup>1</sup> I want to thank Marcelle Manley (†) for the translation of this article.

<sup>2</sup> At the treaty of Nijmegen in 1678 the places where Maria spent her youth (Hazebrouck, Ieper, Menen, Poperinge, Saint-Omer) were ceded to France. Staring (1948) contains a compact but excellent biographic survey on Maria's youth.

<sup>3</sup> The autobiography appears in Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 1–195. The completeness of the information still needs to be researched. The earliest version – the Latin translation – contains 31 chapters in addition to the 155 of the subsequently published Dutch version: *Het leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia, (alias) Petyt* (1683). See Giovanni Grosso's contribution to this volume, p. 86. So far most historiography has been based on the Dutch version.

<sup>4</sup> Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Lehmann (1999) provides a good introduction to the history of the religious mentality of this century.

whole days playing on the ice<sup>6</sup> and with her brothers and sisters had to stay elsewhere because of an outbreak of the plague.<sup>7</sup> She devotes far more attention to the mental impact of these events, which commenced after she was scarred (for life) by smallpox: 'I became much rougher and wilder, and playful like other children (...) so gradually I acquired all sorts of bad ways and inclinations.'<sup>8</sup>

A detail from her autobiography – not even mentioned by her biographer<sup>9</sup> – marked the end of Maria's 'wild years'. A Spanish officer billeted in their home<sup>10</sup> caught Maria's fancy more than her parents deemed proper. They intervened and sent Maria to Lille to stay with 'deeply devout, pious people'.<sup>11</sup> There Maria's mind complied with their devotional piety. Her prayers to Our Lady to give her a nice and pleasant body 'to please someone more and to attract to my love'<sup>12</sup>, were not unavailing. When the bells chimed on St. Stephen's day Maria had a foretaste of the glory and bliss of heavenly life.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless she had to be touched by her Beloved no fewer than three times before she was able to write:

Look, my Beloved was so overly generous and in love with such an evil, bad and ungrateful creature (...) that I could not resist it the third time; for he used a stronger hand, and grace, that seemed to overwhelm me (...) he touched my heart so deeply that the world became disgusting to me.<sup>14</sup>

Maria returned to Hazebrouck and presented herself to the Regular canonesses of the Groenenbriel abbey in Gent, where she was accepted. However,

6 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 8.

7 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 13.

8 *'Ick wiert wat meer woest ende wilt, en speelachtigh ghelijck andere kinderen, (...) soo dat ick allenskens aen namp veele quaede manieren, ende gheneghentheden.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 8.

9 Michael of St. Augustine (1681).

10 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 16. In 1635 France declared war on the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs and in the same year formed an alliance with the northern Netherlands. The result was French incursions on the southern border of the Southern Netherlands, which Maria mentions in her autobiography. This unrest continued until 1660, albeit with a peaceful interlude of a few years.

11 *'by seer Godtvruchtigh ende stichtbaer volck.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 16.

12 *'om beter jemant te moghen behaeghen, ende te trecken tot mijne liefde'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 17.

13 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 17.

14 *'siet, mijnen Beminden was soo overgoet, ende soo verliefte op een soo boose, quaede ende ondanckbaere Creature (...) soo dat ick den derden keer daer niet teghen en kost; want hy ghebryckte een stercker handt, ende gratie, die my scheen te overweldighen; (...) hy hadde het herte soo gheraectt, dat de werelt my een walghe wiert.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 19.

the vicissitudes of war on the French border, especially the financial losses that her father suffered, prevented her from joining at once. After waiting a year she finally left home to enter. Meanwhile she trained herself in solitude and detachment.<sup>15</sup>

It seems to me that I spent entire days just praying, devoutly contemplating sacred images and reading good books (...) especially Thomas à Kempis (ca. 1380–1471) and Benedict of Canfield (1562–1610).<sup>16</sup>

### Her Gent Period

Maria was not to stay long in the Groenenbriel convent. Some six months after having received the habit, she was sent away on account of an eye disease. She spent a brief, solitary spell in the small beguinage in Gent, whereafter she moved in with a spiritual daughter<sup>17</sup> and her mother in the vicinity of the beguinage. The two women had the same spiritual director, an unknown Carmelite with a rather severe outlook, probably of the strict observance. Under his tutelage Maria, then about twenty years old, took her vows in the Carmelite Third Order. On this occasion she chose the name Maria of St. Teresa because of her special devotion to this great saint. Although Maria and her fellow inmate belonged to the third order, their director trained them in the strictly regulated daily schedule of Carmelite nuns, including the numerous devotional exercises and penances of those times. Despite a few excesses – her biographer questioned them<sup>18</sup> – Maria was not perturbed by the strictness. She even wrote about it:

These and similar mortifications did me a lot of good. Gradually it brought me such equanimity that I no longer concerned myself much, if

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15 *'Afgetrockentheyf'* is a key term in Maria's spiritual moulding. She practised seclusion from the world, her fellow humans and herself.

16 *'My dunkt, dat ick heele daghen anders niet en dede, als bidden, de Heylighen Beelden devotelijck aensien, ende lesen in goede Boecken (...) besonderlijck in Thomas à Kempis ende in Cantvelt.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 21.

17 'spiritual daughters' lived a semi-religious life. They observed no official enclosure and took no vows, or only very simple ones.

18 Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 10. He refers to Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 37f.

at all, with outward things but looked for everything within, where I eventually found everything.<sup>19</sup>

Some three years later her spiritual director moved elsewhere. Maria and her companions then entrusted themselves to the spiritual guidance of Michael of St. Augustine (1621–1684). Michael was 25 at the time, a philosophy lecturer at the friars' college in Gent. Maria corresponded with him for the rest of her life. Later in his career he served three terms as provincial and played a major role in the implementation of the strict observance in the Flemish province.<sup>20</sup> Michael was educated in the Carmelite Thomist spirituality of his day<sup>21</sup> and used this to guide his directorship of the second novitiate Maria Petyt and the other spiritual daughter followed in the Carmelite Third Order.<sup>22</sup> He initiated them into a profoundly interiorised Christological spirituality. The main aim was to bring the personal will into conformity with God's will. To that end sensory forces had to be purified and spiritual forces – memory, will and intellect – unified. But actual union with God surpasses all these spiritual exercises. God communicates himself in the ground<sup>23</sup> of the soul and thus accomplishes a union that human beings cannot attain through their own endeavours.

In this new framework Maria's outward mortification, so deeply inculcated by her previous director, moved into the background and the yearning for love featured more prominently. Under Michael's tutelage Maria devoted herself

19 'Dese ende dierghelijcke verstervinghen deden my groote deught; ick quam daer door allenxkens tot sulck een gelijckheyt des ghemoets, dat ick daer naer luttel, oft gheen werck en maecte van het uytwendigh, maer socht het al inwendigh, ende ick heb't allenxkens daer al ghevonden.' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 51.

20 In 1640 – the year Michael was professed – the Belgian province rallied behind constitutions based on the reformation of Touraine, in this article denoted by a current term in that time: strict observance. For the reformation in Belgium up to 1649, see Panzer 2006; for Michael's role in it, see Hoppenbrouwers 1949.

21 The four main premises of this framework were: control of passions that are the sources of vice; acquiring virtues that are lacking; union with God by means of prayer exercises; and fulfilling the vocation through active participation in the community. (Hoormaert (1996) 182). Besides this training in virtues, discernment of affects featured prominently. (Nativitate (1650) 118f.) Michael also strongly emphasised self-denial and mortification.

22 Maria refers to it as a 'half novitiate' (Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 52). A copy of her notes during this novitiate, Petyt (1647), is preserved in the archive of the Dutch province. Both women were professed a second time under the new third order rule published in 1646: *Af-beeldinghe van de derde orden onser L. Vrouwe des berghs Carmeli*, written by Daniel of the Virgin Mary.

23 In this passage 'grondt' is the point where God touches the essentiality of the soul with his graces.

fully to her spiritual journey. Yet during this second novitiate – notwithstanding all efforts to the contrary – an increasingly ambivalent attitude about her attempts at perfecting herself grew within her. As yet the Beloved did not reveal himself and even thwarted Maria's progress, 'as if with some violence'.<sup>24</sup> Maria was unable to reach perfection through her own efforts. She had to become more receptive to divine reality.<sup>25</sup>

### Life in the Community of Cluyse

As time went by Maria Petyt started longing for a stricter hermitic life. Together with a beguine from Mechelen, Catharina van Orsaghen,<sup>26</sup> she conceived of a plan to live according to the first rule of her order, albeit not like the discalced Carmelites<sup>27</sup> but more in the spirit of saints Euphrasia<sup>28</sup> and Euphrosyna,<sup>29</sup> two (proto-)Carmelite desert saints. This dream of a rigorous, secluded hermitic life was realised. On 1 October 1657 Maria went to Mechelen and moved into the Cluyse adjoining the Carmelite monastery, where Michael was living at the time.<sup>30</sup> Catharina van Orsaghen followed barely a year later. Michael formulated their ordinances, which were approved by the prior general on 5 January 1660.<sup>31</sup>

Maria's call to a heavenly life – her Beloved told her: 'I want (...) you to be entirely celestial and divine.'<sup>32</sup> – was a crucial facet of the spiritual life in the

24 *'Ghelijck met eenigh ghewelt.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 57.

25 Cf. Blommestijn (1983) 6.

26 Here the Dutch version of the Life omits part of the story; see Deblaere (1962) 330.

27 Unlike the discalced, the strict observance recognised the mitigations to the Rule of 1432. The mitigations include tempering the article on remaining in the cell and allowed Carmelites to eat meat three times a week.

28 Euphrasia, born in 387 and of imperial descent, entered an Essene desert convent in Thebaid at the age of seven. In the seventeenth century she was erroneously taken to be a Carmelite saint.

29 Euphrosyna (c. 424) rebelled against her father when she was married off. She proceeded to live a rigorous life in the desert, first in a male monastery, then in a hermitage. She, too, was mistakenly considered a Carmelite saint in the seventeenth century.

30 Initially Maria lived in the Cluyse with her former house-mates from Mechelen, but they returned to Ghent eighteen months later.

31 Alas, there is little archival information about this convent of spiritual daughters and the events have to be reconstructed, mainly from Maria's autobiography. See Van Meerbeeck 53f.

32 *'Ick wilde, seyde Hy, dat ge heel hemels ende goddelijck sijt'* Petyt (1647) 137. This quote is from a letter from Michael sent on 31st August 1681 from Thienen to some women who were admitted to profession in the Cluyse.

Cluyse,<sup>33</sup> a spirituality closely associated with the strict observance desire to live in ‘internal loving conversation with God’.<sup>34</sup> The sisters ‘of the holy Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, of the regular life of oral prayer and of inner prayer’<sup>35</sup> practised the exercise of God’s presence that was current at the time. They tried to rid themselves of all external images in order to discern God’s ‘eenigheyt’ (i.e. oneness) in their own lives and in the world around them.<sup>36</sup>

Some eighteen months after moving to Mechelen Maria dedicated the Cluyse in 1659 to the care of Our Lady and felt called to ‘appropriate this place, or the origin of our form of life, entirely and to call it by her [Mary’s] name.’<sup>37</sup> The hermitage sisters entrusted their prayer intentions ‘in, about, with and through Mary’<sup>38</sup> to God. In Maria’s correspondence with Michael a profound Marian spirituality emerges.<sup>39</sup> Where the image of Our Lady is reflected in the soul, motherly and compassionate qualities evolve.<sup>40</sup> Through this grace, communicated by Mary, the soul is fertilized with new life and generates this new life in God.<sup>41</sup>

Despite this Mary-form spirituality and ‘detached way of life’<sup>42</sup> conflicts – both in and around the Cluyse – escalated, not least because of Maria’s leadership. She writes about it at length in her autobiography.<sup>43</sup> These and later sources<sup>44</sup> make it seem doubtful whether the small community could ever have acquired sufficient inner cohesion to withstand the religious and theo-

33 *Ordonnantiën*, ‘Vande Novitien ende geprotestide’.

34 Healy (1956) 149.

35 ‘*van de alderheijlighste Maeghet Maria des berghs Carmeli van’t regulier leven van ’t mondtegebedt, ende van’t inwendigh gebedt*’ *Ordonnantiën*, exordium.

36 More particularly the strict observance focused on aspiratory prayer. However, from Maria’s letters we know that she was little inclined to urgent ‘flash’ prayers. Her prayer rather fits the definition of essentially aspiratory prayer. See Blommestijn (1987) 231. When the soul is spiritually touched by God it engenders a spiritual arousing to God, beyond all formal prayer.

37 ‘*dese plaetse, oft beginsel van onse forme van leven haer heel toe te eyghenen, ende te titeleren met haeren naem.*’ Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 314f.

38 ‘in Maria, om, met, ende door Maria’ Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 343.

39 Michael collected Maria’s letters on this subject in Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 306–404.

40 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 164f.

41 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 343.

42 ‘*afghetrocken maniere van leven*’ Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 102. *Ordonnantiën*, ‘Van den Handel met Menschen te vlieden’, states the rule on this point. ‘To shun dealings with people.’

43 See e.g. Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 81, 87 and 110. Michael provides information not mentioned in the *Leven*, Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 18.

44 See e.g. Michael’s letter on 24 February 1680 to his friend Seraphinus in Rome, from Brussels. Arch. Gen. Ord. Carmelitarum, II Flandro-Belgica.



logical tensions of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Hence, sadly, the community was not to be long-lived.<sup>45</sup>

### Maria's Spiritual Journey in the Cluyse

Maria Petyt initially fared well after her move to the Cluyse. Although her health was shaky, she felt she belonged there. In one of her first letters we find a eulogy to the narrow '*eenigheyt*'<sup>46</sup> [oneness] as a place to experience union with God. In her own words, Maria felt bathed in light and grace.<sup>47</sup>

The luminous start very soon gave way to profound darkness. This dark night, lasting a good four or five years, entailed great endurance and struggle. All Maria's regular practices palled on her.<sup>48</sup> She was prone to harm herself and felt doomed forever.<sup>49</sup> She experienced the desolation of this night as an opportunity to practice virtues.<sup>50</sup> She even refers to it as a spiritual crucifixion.<sup>51</sup> The Christ-like life that Michael had initiated her in during her novitiate now assumed a face of his own.<sup>52</sup> Maria experienced the dreadful pain of this night as purgatory and a penance imposed on her for the sins of others.

Maria's dark nights – there were more than one – probably contributed to the emergence of the Nothing in her writings. The conception of Nothing in her time was voluntaristic – that is, annihilation as an active means to perfection – and a widespread spirituality in beguinages and among other semi-religious. Yet comparative studies<sup>53</sup> reveal few parallels with the substantive Nothing in Maria's writings.<sup>54</sup> Thus Maria was not much concerned with 'work exercises'<sup>55</sup>, hence with a doctrine of active perfection. Her encounter with the Nothing happened in the dynamics of practicing the presence of God, an experience based on an ever more profound awareness of the divine All.<sup>56</sup> It was in

45 See Van Meerbeeck, p. 58.

46 The term '*eenigheyt*' is synonymous with monastic cell or hermitage.

47 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 102.

48 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 123 and 130.

49 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 132.

50 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 104.

51 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 117.

52 Deblaere (1962) 183–196; also see Mommaers (2003) 97–105.

53 An interesting article in this regard is Porteman (1973).

54 Uyttenhove (2004) 234.

55 '*Werckelijckke oeffeninghen*' Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 74f.

56 Her spirituality has features of the spirituality of St. John of the Cross that reached the southern Netherlands in the 1630s. Cf. Porteman (1973) 405.

annihilation that Maria Petyt came to know her Beloved. Entering the Nothing formed part of the love story. Maria's self-awareness grew from this relationship. Thus she gradually grew beyond herself and came into contact with the All of God's presence.

### Growth of her Spiritual Authority

Five years after the establishment of the Cluysse in 1662 Maria was afire with prayer for the *pristinus splendor*, the first lustre of Carmel. The prayer was applied to the austerely disposed Belgian province<sup>57</sup> and gave Maria some spiritual authority in the implementation of the strict observance in this province. Maria's spiritual motherhood – which is how she experienced her prayer – was not confined to acting as spokesperson with the Beloved,<sup>58</sup> but entailed penances and severe pain. Maria was confined to bed<sup>59</sup> to atone for sins committed by her brothers. Her prayer for heretics – who feature copiously in the document on the Dutch War<sup>60</sup> – is couched in terms of her spiritual motherhood. Michael describes it thus:

Virtually all her prayers are aimed at bringing many sinners, one by one, to the bosom of Christ, where they can imbibe some mercy and strengthening, alleviating grace, so she becomes mother to many souls that are born again in Christ. She describes these spiritual fertilizations and births beautifully in her *Leven*.<sup>61</sup>

Maria's first visions – a major factor in her spiritual authority at the time – antedate her spiritual motherhood and date to the year 1658.<sup>62</sup> They were not apparitions but mental images. The first signs of special visions only occurred

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57 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 171.

58 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 156f.

59 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 149f.

60 Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70: *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia Tertiariae ordinis Bmae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo*, fol. 30r-49v.

61 'By-naer alle (...) hare ghebeden, [waren] tot diën eynde; stellende vele Sondaers, een voor een, aen het herte Christi, om daer uyt te suyghen eenighe bermhertigheydt, en versterckende, ende verlichtende gratien: soo dat sy Gheestelycke Moeder wirdt van vele Zielen, die in Christo wurden her-boren. Welcke Gheestelycke bevruchtinghe ende baringhe sy wonderlyck beschryft in haer Leven.' Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 63f.

62 Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 59.

round about Ascension Day in 1669.<sup>63</sup> Then Maria saw the images outside her mind as well. In these first ten years, when Maria still experienced the visionary communications inwardly, she tested these experiences using Teresa of Avila as her frame of reference.<sup>64</sup> A telling example is Maria's descriptions of angels that she sent to assist souls in distress.<sup>65</sup> She experienced their appearance as an inward illumination or communication.<sup>66</sup> She saw them in the heavenly mirror of her mind. The flowering of Maria's love play with her Beloved likewise happened in her mind.<sup>67</sup> The visions Maria was given in the course of this play accompanied and oriented her in her spiritual phases as betrothed, bride and mother.

Deblaere calls Maria's descriptions of her heavenly experiences 'masterpieces of psychological observation and accurate discernment'.<sup>68</sup> Maria maintained this cautious approach in 1671 when recording her first prophetic visions.<sup>69</sup> Thereafter she increasingly often received communications from heaven: 'A soul thus united with God, what will it not know?'<sup>70</sup> Maria appears to have experienced great difficulty in this development<sup>71</sup> and on some points preserved secrecy, as may be seen in the document on the Dutch War.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless her supernatural intuition continued to evolve, or rather it intensified from prophetically tintured visions into 'bridal love with some executive authority'.<sup>73</sup> In several visions she was given the mind of a ruling queen and exercised heavenly authority.

### Maria's Last Years

All these developments took place some years after the completion of Maria's autobiography and her spiritual journey has to be reconstructed more or less

63 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 195.

64 Cf. Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 282f. Later she saw herself more as a reflection of Catharine of Genoa. Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 273f.

65 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 177.

66 Deblaere (1962) 108.

67 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 195.

68 Deblaere (1962) 115.

69 '*Eenen ziele met Godt soo vereenight, wat sal sy niet weten?*' Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 99. See Anne-Marie Bos' contribution to this volume, p. 266–281.

70 Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 37.

71 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 249.

72 See Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 94.

73 '*Bruydelijcke liefde met eenighe uytwerckende autoriteyt.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 151.

from external sources and her letters, inasmuch as these provide a fair reflection of her spiritual journey.<sup>74</sup> As noted already, the document on the Dutch war provides an important supplement for historical study of her person. Maria's prayers for the French king, for example, were not yet known to historians.<sup>75</sup> This document also provides the sole indication in Maria's writings that she adopted an explicitly anti-Jansenist<sup>76</sup> stance and was greatly concerned with the anti-monachist trends of her day.<sup>77</sup>

In the last years of her life, too, Maria was unable to live tranquilly with her vocation, driven as she was by her desire to lead an even more secluded life. The already meagre community life in the Cluyse still evoked resistance. Nevertheless apostolic prayer grew ever deeper in her soul: 'something new has happened to me (...) it seems to me that I am acquiring an apostolic spirit, both apostle and hermit. Dear father, what does your Reverence think? Can the two go together?'<sup>78</sup>, she wrote to her spiritual director.

As she advanced on her journey Maria increasingly experienced heavenly life – whose reality she yearned for so passionately and which gradually unfolded in her soul – in a dynamic in which love and death went together.<sup>79</sup> But Maria also experienced this advance to heavenly life in reverse mode. She frequently writes about a painful love death that purified her energies and made her receptive to God's spirit of love.<sup>80</sup> However, this spiritual death, however painful, happened in mutual overtures, intimacy between her and her Beloved. Her Beloved was no longer an external image. She received him as the Other living within her.<sup>81</sup> Maria calls this experience God-suffering.<sup>82</sup> Her prayer life

74 See Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 112–116.

75 See Veronie Meeuwesen's contribution to this volume, p. 244f.

76 Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 35f.

77 In the controversies about Jansenism pro-reform bishops were often regarded as Jansenists, while Rome was seen as anti-Jansenist. This polarisation had major implications for religious in the southern Netherlands, who regularly clashed with the bishops. Roegiers (1996) 55. See also Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 42–45, Michel van Meerbeeck's contribution to this volume, p. 56,58 and Mirjam de Baar's contribution to this volume, p. 76f.

78 '*Daer is my noch wat nieuws aenghecomen (...) my dunckt, dat ick eenen Apostolycken gheest kryghe; Apostolinne ende t'samen Eremytersse; lieven Vader, wat dunckt U-Eerweerdigheyt daer van? zal dit soo wel gaen?*' Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 203.

79 Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 149f.

80 Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 49.

81 Mommaers (2003) 104.

82 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 108f. Maria's work reflects a broad integration of Flemish themes that structure her spiritual journey. Crucial in this regard are the place and dynamics of the

moved in step with the spirit of love, which moved her prayers from the ground of her soul.

All the same, right to the end Maria was to experience her spiritual journey along with its counterpoint, the dark night. Even on her deathbed she still referred to this, according to Michael:

Where are all my earlier illuminations and divine interventions now? Now only I can do this. Keep my mind united with my Beloved. She requested that all her writings, which were full of heavenly teachings obediently recorded in her *Leven*, be burnt, for she had never relied on all these illuminations but solely on God. And she feared they contained hidden falsehoods. But in order to die in obedience she left everything to the decision of her spiritual director.<sup>83</sup>

Maria died in 1677 on 1 November, All Saints' Day.

### Maria in Her Own Times

At this stage a balanced picture of Maria Petyt in her day and age calls for further comparative study of the spirituality and position of female religious in the seventeenth century.<sup>84</sup> So far the main contribution to our understanding of the subject has been the study of the model of Teresa of Avila and its influence in the seventeenth century. The model had a great impact on early modern female spirituality.<sup>85</sup> Teresa showed many 'searching' women the way to the mystical heights and depths of another 'new world' that was discovered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>86</sup> This mystical journey has parallels

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encounter with God. The place of encounter is the ground of the soul. There the intellect can only behold the supreme Good 'passively' and receptively.

83 'Waer zyn nu alle myne voorgaende verlichtinghen en Goddelycke inwerckinghen? dit kan ick nu alleen doen: myn ghemoet vereenight houden met mynen Beminden. Sy versocht dat-men alle hare schriften die vol Hemelsche onder-wysinghen zyn, en in haer leven, door de ghehoorsaemheydt beschreven, soude verbranden, want sy op alle die verlichtinghen niet ghesteunt hadde; maer op Godt alleen: vreesende dat daer bedrogh mede schuylden. Maer om ghehoorsaem te sterven, liet alles in den wille van haren Gheestelycken Vader.' Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 103.

84 See Mirjam de Baar's contribution to this volume, p. 77ff.

85 Burke points out that saints model themselves on an earlier example. Burke (1984) 52. See Elisabeth Hense's contribution to this volume, p. 252ff.

86 C.f. Bilinkoff (2006) 116f.

with the church's expansionary movement into missionary territory, but it took place within the Tridentine constraints on female religious life.<sup>87</sup> Maria was indeed afire with apostolic prayer, but in her letters she nonetheless sighed:

Oh, if only I were a man! How I would travel the world, like another St. Francis Xavier to carry souls to my Beloved.<sup>88</sup>

Teresa of Avila's influence extended beyond this female quest for a 'new world'. In her study of Teresa's spiritual daughters, Jodi Bilinkhoff convincingly demonstrates that the image of Teresa also inspired great female creativity. Her 'daughters' not only read her books, but also wrote books of their own. A new literary genre evolved, comprising autobiographies and collections of letters, often written to spiritual directors.<sup>89</sup> Maria Petyt's writings and her fluent style unmistakably place her in this creative circle, which played a major role in handing down female Catholic culture.<sup>90</sup> There is an important difference, however. Whereas prayer in the Teresian model of sanctity is marked by an anagogic, ecstatic 'upward' movement, Maria's prayer is characterised by a downward movement into the depths of the soul. Her striving for union with God assumes a distinctive form in the '*eenigheyt*' [oneness], in which she encounters both God and the world around her. In this respect Maria's frame of reference is reminiscent of medieval Flemish mysticism that made a comeback in the seventeenth century. However unique Maria's spiritual journey may have been, its source and framework can be traced to the Tridentine reforms that caused a revival of medieval and Rhineland mysticism.

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87 Monteiro (1996) 24–27. See also Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 30–33.

88 '*Och waer ick eenen Man! hoe soude ick de werelt door-lopen, als eenen anderen H. Franciscus Xaverius, om mijnen Beminden Zielen aen te brenghen.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 126.

89 Bilinkhoff (2005) 24.

90 Bilinkhoff (2005) 110.

*gedient, door den seer Eerweerdigen pater Michael a S. Augustino provinciael van d'order der Eerw. paters Carmelieten onse Lieve Vrouwe Broeders in de nederlansche provintie; aan alle geestelijke sielen naementlijk aan de weerdige Moeder Maria a S.ta Theresia alias Petyt. door haer selven aengeteeckent int jaer 1647.* (Dutch Carmelite Institute, Steenstraat 39, 5831 JA Boxmeer. The Netherlands)

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# Maria Petyt against the Background of the Political and Religious Situation in Flanders in the Seventeenth Century

*Esther van de Vate*

Ecologically and politically speaking, the seventeenth century was a turbulent and unstable century.<sup>1</sup> There was a minor ice age going on. Crops failed and dangerous diseases like the plague and typhoid fever caused many deaths. Europe was ravaged by power struggles and wars. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) called forth a vicious circle of violence, which in the Habsburg empire alone claimed eight million lives.<sup>2</sup> For the inhabitants the consequences of the massacres and sackings were nearly incalculable. Not long after the Peace of Westphalia, Louis XIV (1638–1715) was crowned king of France in 1654. His expansive power politics brought a new wave of warfare over Western Europe, which we are introduced to in the document on the Dutch War.

Contributions from the history of mentality show the toll this took on the seventeenth century mind. People became anxious and confused.<sup>3</sup> Structures of interpretation, certainly religious ones, were put under pressure and events were interpreted on the basis of personal experiences and subjectively ex-

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1 I want to thank Sr. Rebecca Braun osc for the translation of this article.

2 Wilson (2009) 4.

3 See H. Lehmann and A.Ch. Trepp. (eds.) *Im Zeichen der Krise. Religiosität im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 1999. Lehmann summarizes: '*Die Geschichte der Religiosität im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts wird deshalb durch zwei Tendenzen bestimmt: Durch die häufig auch mit erheblichem politischem Druck forcierten Versuche der Obrigkeiten, in ihren Territorien religiöse Uniformität zu etablieren, und ebenso durch die nicht minder energischen Versuche weiter Kreise der Bevölkerung, sich ihres Seelenheils zu versichern. Während die Obrigkeiten die Maximen des Merkantilismus umzusetzen suchten, stehende Heere aufbauten und repräsentative Residenzen planten, kurzum: ihre politische Macht auszubauen und zu demonstrieren bestrebt waren, wurden viele ihrer Untertanen von endzeitlichen Ängsten umgetrieben. Hier, in diesen endzeitlichen Ängsten und den daraus für die Lebensführung gezogenen Konsequenzen, hat, wie es scheint, die für das 17. Jahrhundert so virulente religiöse Pluralität ihren »Sitz im Leben«.*' Lehmann (1999) 12f.

plained.<sup>4</sup> Although the world of Maria Petyt's experience fits in seamlessly with this development,<sup>5</sup> this transition did not take place unambiguously, either in the mind of Maria Petyt, or in her surroundings. From a historical viewpoint such irregularities make the discovered document an interesting source, which opens a clearer view on the diachrony of this process.

In order to situate the figure of Maria Petyt against the background of her times, this chapter first sketches a rough image of the process of confessionalization and the political and religious situation in the Southern Netherlands at the time. Attention is paid to the impact of the Council of Trent, especially in Flanders, and the emergence there of the spiritual daughters, who drew their inspiration mainly from Teresa of Avila. Next the Tridentine reform of the Carmelite Order (o.carm.) and the figure of Maria's spiritual director, Michael of St. Augustine, are described. Finally both, Michael and Maria, are situated in the context of Jansenism and anti-monachism. In each part, where applicable, we will focus on the position and/or spirituality of Maria Petyt.

### **Confessionalization and the Political Situation in the Southern Netherlands**

From a historical perspective the figure and spirituality of Maria Petyt become visible against the background of the catholic reformation or, phrased more broadly and properly, the process of catholic confessionalization in the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> After the violent polarization of the Reformation, at the end of the sixteenth century the theological and social tensions between Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists subsided.<sup>7</sup> Authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical, attempted to strengthen their power by creating religious uniformity in

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4 Roeck (1999) 331. This observation is shared in historical studies of spirituality, in which a turn is seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth century from an essentialistic piety focused on unity with God, to a spirituality centered on the human being which was of a more psychologizing nature. See Hoppenbrouwers (1996) 40 and Stegink (1985) 42–46.

5 Cf. Deblaere (1962) 232f.

6 Within historical research a paradigm shift can be seen in the past decades from the terms counter reformation / catholic reformation to the term confessionalization. These concepts proved no longer appropriate for identifying the cultural-historical developments in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, on the one hand because they placed too much emphasis on church history, on the other because the antithesis between reformation and counter reformation was historically untenable. See for an overview of the discourse Reinhard (1995) 419 - 452 and Burschel (1999) 588f.

7 Panzer (2006) 305.

their respective territories.<sup>8</sup> This political and religious consolidation was greatly promoted in the Southern Netherlands by the governors Albert of Austria and Isabella of Spain, son in law and daughter of the Spanish king Philip II.

The death of Archduke Albert and the resumption of the Eighty Years' War in 1621 brought a turnabout in this period of development. In Flanders, where infanta Isabella reigned on alone until her death in 1633, a dejected and bitter resignation grew.<sup>9</sup> Anti-Spanish sentiments impeded relations with Spain. Moreover France, after cardinal Richelieu took office as first minister of Louis XIII, became an increasingly important power on the scene of battle. Although Richelieu's involvement with the Southern Netherlands was initially not direct, he did in great measure finance the military interventions of the North German sovereigns against the Austrian Habsburgs, who could count on the support of the Habsburgs in Madrid.<sup>10</sup> One year after Isabella's death the new governor, cardinal-infante Ferdinand of Austria, delivered a devastating defeat to Sweden, the ally of the North German sovereigns. Not long afterwards, in 1635, France declared war on the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs and in the same year forged an alliance with the Northern Netherlands. French incursions on the southern border of Belgium – Maria mentions them in her autobiography<sup>11</sup> – were the result. The peace which was expected of the new governor was not yet forthcoming. He died in 1641. With every new governor after him, Spanish interest in Flanders decreased. Flanders turned out to be no more than a conquered land.

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8 The secular authorities, too, had an interest in the process of confessionalization: '*Pious and purified individuals in turn made for godly communities, ones that could serve as potent bulwarks against heresy.*' Bilinkhoff (2005) 93.

9 Houtman-Desmedt (1979) 385–395.

10 Rooms (2007) 21.

11 For this period in the life of Maria Petyt see Deblaere (1962) 28. The first incursions of the French state alliance in Flanders were in May 1635. Roosbroeck (1940) 5, 50. In 1638 the French temporarily occupied the territory between Aire-sur-la-Lys and St.-Omer. The siege of St.-Omer took place from May 24 until July 16, 1638. Maria must have been 15 years old then. She recalls, however, that she was about 17 at that time. Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 24. '*Both in Flanders and by some in the Netherlands the defeat of Atrecht <Aug. 9, 1640> was felt as a heavy blow and as the beginning of the French invasion.*' Roosbroeck (1940) 5, 52. From 1638 to 1642 the front remained mobile. The unrest lasted until 1659, albeit with an interval of several years. After the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed there was a period of peace between France and Spain from 1659 to 1667. See Rooms (2007) 24.

## War of Devolution

After several years of relative peace, at the end of the '60s the political horizon of Flanders was once again severely disrupted. As France was surrounded by Habsburg territory on all sides, Louis XIV had set his heart on conquering the Spanish Netherlands. Annexation would secure the northern border of France, keep England at a distance better and deter the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands.<sup>12</sup> In 1667 French troops, without any declaration of war, crossed the border of the Southern Netherlands. Louis XIV thought, at least that was his cover for this attack, that the supposed rights of inheritance of his Spanish wife, infanta Maria-Theresia, daughter of the recently deceased Philip IV, gave him claim to a part of the Belgian territory, including the city of Mechelen where Maria Petyt lived.<sup>13</sup> The so-called War of Devolution was then a reality.<sup>14</sup>

Although the French armies did not reach Mechelen, the tales of war will not have passed by the Cluyse where Maria lived. The sisters must have had knowledge of the French raid in the hermitage of the Carmelites in Liedekerke:

In the monastery Termuylen, in Liedekerke, they acted in a terrifyingly tyrannical way, dishonoring women and daughters in sacred places, irrespective of persons or age. Yes, they even disrobed the daughters stark-naked and hung them from the beams by their feet and whipped them in an infernal way until they bled. The Carmelites they tied to the tails of their horses in a more than barbaric manner and thus dragged them from their monastery and hermitage.<sup>15</sup>

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12 Sonnino (2009) 19.

13 Around 1640 the city numbered about 20,000 to 25,000 inhabitants. Marné (2002) 291. Control of the region Antwerp – Brussels – Leuven, with Mechelen in the center, was of great strategic importance in order to control the Southern Netherlands. Rooms (2007) 45.

14 The law of devolution – which still existed in certain parts of the Southern Netherlands – determined that in the case of the inheritance of children from different marriages, the private possessions were divided according to the estates that had been brought in. Each heir could lay claim to the estate of the marriage he or she had been born from. Although this claim did not apply to public possessions, Louis XIV seized upon the law of devolution as justification for invading the Southern Netherlands. Rooms (2007) 27f.

15 *'In het clooster ter-Muylen, te Liedekercke, heben sij schrickelijke tyrannie ghedaen, ont-eerende in de heilige plaetsen vrouwen en dochters zonder onderscheit van personen ofte ouderdom, jae, hebben selfs de dochters moedernaecht ontkleet ende met de voeten omhooghe ghehangen aen de balcken en naer hun vervloeckelijck werk die gegheeselt tot den bloede. De Carmelieten hebben sij op eene meer als barbaersche wijze ghebonden aen de steerten van hunne peerden ende alsoo ghesleept tyt hun clooster ende hermitage.'* From the

This report will have made an impression on the sisters, all the more when one realizes that the hermitage of Liedekerke is later mentioned in Maria Petyt's codicil.<sup>16</sup>

In Maria's biography, and in her writings, we find only one indication that the political unrest came closer to the inhabitants of the Cluyse:

On August 19, 1668, she <Maria Petyt> gained knowledge that, if one wants to ask something of God through the amiable Mother Mary, it is very good (...) to greet her with the hymn Ave maris stella etc., Hail Morning star etc. By this means she experienced much help, especially when they came to inspect all the houses in Mechelen in order to see if it was accommodation suitable for housing soldiers and they tried to burden her hermitage with the same.<sup>17</sup>

This inspection of the Cluyse perhaps had to do with the retreat of Spanish soldiers from the territory that Spain had to yield to France after the treaty of Aachen was signed on May 2, 1668.<sup>18</sup>

### The Dutch War

With the outbreak of the Dutch War in 1672, the political situation in the Southern Netherlands worsened again.<sup>19</sup> On May 18, 1672, without being offi-

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Gent Gazette, d.d. 19 September 1667, cited following Bronselaer [1945] 38f. This report, however, is probably not from the Gent Gazette but from the Gendtsche post-tydinghen, published by Maximiliaan Graet since 1667.

16 The name of this hermitage is mentioned '*by haere codicille van den 22 meert 1677*'. File Mechelen in the Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut (Dutch Carmelite Institute) in Boxmeer.

17 '*Den 19. Augusti 1668. kreegh sy kennisse, dat, als-wanneer men iet van Godt wilt versoecken door de minnelijcke Moeder Maria, het seer goet is, (...) haer te groeten met den Lof-sangh: Ave maris stella, &c. Weest ghegroet Morghen-sterre, &c. Hier door heeft sy vele behulpsaemheydt onder-vonden: dat besonderlyck, als-men tot Mechelen alle huysen visiteerden, om te sien, oft daer commoditeyt was, om Soldaten te logeren, ende men hare Kluyse met de selve socht te belasten.*' Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 89. See also note 37 in Michel van Meerbeeck's contribution to this volume, p. 57.

18 With the treaty of Aachen the Netherlands, Sweden and England allied themselves against France, aiming to end the War of Devolution. Spain was forced, among other things, to cede the southern part of Flanders, between Dunkerque and Lille (Maria's native region), to France again. France consented to the arrangement and ceased the war.

19 See Veronie Meeuwse's contribution to this volume, p. 244.

cially at war with Spain, Louis XIV once again invaded the Southern Netherlands, and initially marched on Gent but then turned towards the vicinity of Brussels. On June 4, his army advanced towards Maastricht which had at that point been besieged by the French for some time. Some months later, on August 30, 1673, Spain joined the anti-French coalition, also known as the League of The Hague, and declared war on France on October 15, 1673.<sup>20</sup> One year later Michael of St. Augustine, Maria's spiritual director, writes what this situation means for the Southern Netherlands:

The state of the country is very miserable, because an army of at least eighty thousand armed soldiers which, in common opinion, ought to have been enough to wage war against the French and drive them away from Belgium, now – because of what providence of God I do not know – without being chased<sup>21</sup> by anyone, confusedly fearfully and gone wild has so plundered our entire country that all the farmers have taken flight and there is, so to speak, no grain left for seed or food and there is no growth left on the fields.<sup>22</sup>

During this calamity Maria Petyt – against public opinion – prays for Louis XIV and his armies.<sup>23</sup> If one does not want to base oneself on the explanation she herself gives, namely the supernatural activity in her prayer, one can fall back on several other interpretations to explain this prayer. Perhaps Maria – and with her probably many other religious – did not see through the ideological apologetics surrounding the kingship of Louis XIV.<sup>24</sup> According to his court prelate J.-B. Bossuet, Louis XIV, as king, took the place of God. By placing Louis'

20 The reason for this was that Count de Monterrey, governor of the Southern Netherlands, had entered into an agreement with the Republic on the defense of important cities such as Breda and 's-Hertogenbosch. Rooms (2007) 47.

21 *Quasi* is not translated. It probably refers to '*nemine persequente*' in Proverbs 28, 1 (Vulgata).

22 '*status patriae miserrimus est, quia exercitus octoginta facile millium armatorum militum debellandis et e Belgio expellendis Gallis, communi iudicio sufficiens, nescio, qua Dei providentia, quasi nemine persequente confusus, territus, dissolutus, totam nostram patriam ita depopulatus est, ut profugis omnibus rusticis ne vel unum, ut sic dicam, granum pro semente vel nutrimento nec pallea in pagis remanserit.*' Ceyssens (1968) 242. Michael wrote this letter on October 20, 1674. Cardinal Bona died eight days later on October 28, 1674. Ceyssens (1968) 242.

23 Fol. 30v. See Veronie Meeuwse's contribution to this volume, p. 244ff and Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume p. 93f.

24 Burke (1992) 9.

image in line with figures like Clovis and Saint Louis,<sup>25</sup> Versailles propagated a sacred kingship. Another explanation could be that in her prayer Maria Petyt identified with the political interventions of a number of French Carmelites, key figures in the reform of Carmel (o.carm.).<sup>26</sup> John of St. Samson (1571–1636) was in contact with Maria de Medici, the mother of Louis XIII, and Léon de Saint Jean (1600–1671) gave the eulogy at the funeral of cardinal Richelieu in 1642.<sup>27</sup>

In any case, Maria did not pray without reflection on the political choices that were made. About the League of The Hague she writes to Michael of St. Augustine:

These sparks and impressions seemed to enlighten me and to notify me from the side of the Beloved how He complained very much about the innocent blood, which is unjustly shed by both sides in Holland and about the injustice done to Him from the side of the Spaniards, who seemed to use all of their forces and an extreme power to expel Jesus from his new kingdom, and, as far as they could, they tried to prevent the peaceful possession of His desired kingdom and of the catholic faith that began to be planted there etc. Not that the Spaniards have expressed this intention, but because they supply the heretics with their arms in order to expel the king of France, trusting in some promises made to them by that impious nation, hoping that they themselves would occupy Holland, gradually and eventually would subject them to their power.<sup>28</sup>

Here it becomes clear that Maria duly realizes that innocent blood is being shed on both sides in Holland and that she cannot reconcile herself to the not very confessional considerations of the Spanish authorities.

Yet it was not her political considerations that made Maria's prayer for Louis XIV so fervent. The catholic kingdom of her Beloved came first with Maria. She experienced her solitary prayer in service of the ecclesiastical authorities:

Sometimes the love-spirit seems to fly over the whole world like a bird, sometimes with the pagans, Turks, unbelievers, heretics, sometimes with the great sinners in order to convert them all to God, at other times with all the superiors of the entire Holy Church, with all the preachers, confes-

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25 Louis IX, King of France (1226–1270) played an important role in Carmelite tradition.

26 Read more on p. 38f.

27 See John of St. Samson (1656) 96f. and Smet (1982) 53.

28 Fol. 33r. Transcription and translation can be found on p. 142f.



sors, as if I join them and work together with them in order to perform in a worthy manner the burden of the authorities and to perform those services as pleases God and for the salvation of their subjects.<sup>29</sup>

Seventeenth century women were all but forced to develop such visionary forms of redemptive ministry, regardless of whether these were politically biased. The reason for this should be sought in the impact of the catholic reformation.<sup>30</sup>

### The Impact of the Council of Trent

After the Council of Trent (1545–1563) the apostolate of the Catholic Church – in response to the success of the Reformation – was intensified and disciplined. Historical research into the effects of the Council has made clear that this development in the direction of a sacramental, ministerial church was not one-way traffic from above. Willem Frijhoff even describes the confessionalization as a process of appropriation:

The process of giving meaning by means of which groups or individuals fill in the bearers of significance proffered, imposed or dictated by others with their own meaning and so make them acceptable, livable, bearable or humane for themselves.<sup>31</sup>

The principal instruments for the implementation of the Tridentine decrees were the sermon and the instruction of the catechism. Better schooled secular clergy and reforms within the religious orders were to ensure an orthodox preaching of the faith according to the guidelines of the church.<sup>32</sup> In the lives of famous saints, such as Borromeo, Teresa, Ignatius, Philip Neri and Francis de Sales, an ascetical piety was held up as an example and a climate of activism

29 *'somydyts schijnt den minne-gheest, als eenen voghel te door-vlieghen de heele werelt, nu by de Heydensche, Turcken, Ongeloovige, Kettters, nu by groote Sondaers, om die al tot Godt te bekeeren, nu by alle Oversten van heel de H. Kerck, by alle Predicanten, Biecht-vaders, my gelijck by hun voeghende, ende mede-werckende, om den last van overheyt weerdelijck te quytten, ende die diensten wel te volbrenghe naer't behaeghen Godts, ende tot Saligheyt van hunne Ondersaeten.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 32f.

30 See Bilinkhof (2005).

31 Frijhoff (1997) 108 (My translation), cited and endorsed by Marnef (2002) 299.

32 Jedin (1985) 4, 588f.

was encouraged.<sup>33</sup> The example of their striving for perfection was supported by a growing number of spiritual methods.<sup>34</sup> Medieval – and sometimes even early Christian<sup>35</sup> – traditions were, somewhat forcibly, reassessed and adapted to the demands of the modern age.<sup>36</sup>

This process of modernization in the Church was not favorable for women. The Tridentine reform pursued a different avenue for women than for men. Where the male religious identity centered on the military symbolism of the Jesuits, the female identity was laid down in the metaphor of virginity.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the Church harked back to medieval rules.<sup>38</sup> Not long after the Council, in the constitution *Circa Pastoralis* (1566), Pope Pius V declared the requirement of enclosure in the bull *Pericoloso* in 1568 applicable to all religious women.<sup>39</sup> This meant that only women who lived a contemplative life within the walls of the cloister were officially acknowledged as religious. Other forms of life, such as that of the tertiaries, proved no longer acceptable in the pope's view.<sup>40</sup> The consequence of this was that these communities were discouraged. They were changed into more exclusive and hierarchically organized forms of communal life.<sup>41</sup>

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33 'Obwohl die genannten Heiligen große Asketen waren, die alle mehr oder weniger zu persönlicher Religiosität, individueller Glaubensarbeit, Weltverachtung und visionärer Selbsterfahrung neigten, läßt sich im keinem Fall beobachten, was Max Weber 'planlose Weltflucht' genannt hat. Im Gegenteil: Ihr innerweltlicher Aktivismus steht außer Frage und rief schon in 17. Jahrhundert Erstaunen hervor; das immer wieder auch in Ablehnung umschlagen konnte, wenn allzu offensichtlich wurde, daß die voluntaristische Dynamik der fünf Aktivistinnen das vorherrschende religiöse Wertesystem durchbrach, in dem die *vita contemplativa* noch immer vor der *vita activa* rangierte.' Burschel (1999) 594.

34 Frijhoff (2003) 379.

35 Maria Petyt, for instance, revived an early Christian life model. See Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 11.

36 Much study of the revival of medieval spirituality was done by K. Porteman. See Porteman (1973) 400 and 406. That the apologetic nature of this revival also changed its content is ascertained in Porteman (1976) 139f. and Mommaers (1984) 749. The term 'forced' is taken from Bill-Mrziglod (2013) 68f.

37 Strasser (2004) 125.

38 Rapley (1993) 27f.

39 Monteiro (1996) 24–27.

40 Rapley (1993) 26 and Strasser (2004) 75.

41 Strasser (2004) 119f.

### The Tridentine Reform in Flanders

In Flanders the process of confessionalization was characterized by a successful adaptation to the guidelines of the Council of Trent.<sup>42</sup> Thanks to the tact of archdukes Albert and Isabella there came to be a good climate for the catholic reform. In their right to appoint new bishops the archducal couple let themselves be guided by the pastoral suitability of candidates such as Antoon Triest and Jacob Boonen.<sup>43</sup> This fair wind made the Southern Netherlands an attractive place to settle for young religious congregations such as the Capuchins and the Society of Jesus. The older orders as well, and their reformed versions, such as the Discalced Carmelites and the Recollects, flooded the Southern Netherlands in an 'invasion conventuelle'.<sup>44</sup> Circa 1650 there was a disciplined clerical system, which propagated a virtuous and edifying life.<sup>45</sup>

Life in the beguinages blossomed again, after the vicissitudes of the wars of religion, at least numerically and in a material sense.<sup>46</sup> The measures of the Council of Trent, however, were not without effect. On March 22, 1588 Johannes Hauchin, archbishop of Mechelen, promulgated general statutes for all the beguinages in his archdiocese, in which he stated the importance of a morally virtuous climate with a greater inward focus:

People who have true concern for their holiness labor diligently to see not only their sins but also the causes. It is not without reason that they do this, because differing company and disquieting places usually tempt and divert their followers or cool in them the ardor for God who desires to take up his abode in quiet hearts, where alone he wants to be and remain.<sup>47</sup>

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42 Lottin (1979) 63.

43 Cloet (2006) 12 and Venard (1992) 453.

44 'Die Hauptrolle bei der katholischen Restauration spielte jedoch der Ordensklerus. Während der ersten 30 Jahre des 17. Jh. waren die Niederlande von Ordensleuten regelrecht überlaufen.' Panzer (2006) 44. See also Venard (1992) 499. On their piety, see Axters (1960) 4, 69–239.

45 Cloet (2006) 14. See also Put (2009) 113–119.

46 Triest (1998) 42f. and Aerschot (2001) 41. According to estimates as many as one in 20 women was a beguine. Aerschot (2001) 40.

47 'Menschen die waerachtige sorge dragen voor hun salicheijdt, doen neersticheijdt om te schouwen niet alleene die sonden, maar oock die oirsaken der selven ende dat niet sonder groote redenen, want ongeelyck geselschap ende becommerde plaetsen, verleijden ende verstroijen gemejnelyck hunne aenhangens oft emmers vercoelen in hun die viericheyt tot Godt die sijne woonstede begeert te hebben in geruste herten daer hij alleen wilt wesen ende blijven.' Philippen (1918) 315. The statutes can be found in Philippen (1918) 315–328. These

Gradually a greater uniformity was imposed on these women and their autonomy disappeared as they came under the control of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>48</sup>

### Spiritual Daughters

In the foundation of the community of tertiaries in the Cluyse, the reader is extensively introduced to the rise of the spiritual daughters in the Southern Netherlands,<sup>49</sup> a movement that found its precedent in the Medieval '*mulieres religiosae*'.<sup>50</sup> Spiritual daughters, also called spiritual virgins, were catholic unmarried women or widows who lived outside the cloister in service of God and their neighbours.<sup>51</sup> They often lived together in a community.<sup>52</sup> This was a remarkable phenomenon, considering the decisions at the Council of Trent on the religious form of life for women as described above.<sup>53</sup> Spiritual daughters, after all, did not observe enclosure and professed no vows or only simple ones. The apostolic élan of their commitment, however, makes this development understandable.<sup>54</sup> Because of this it was possible for many new communities to form outside of the scope of the Tridentine rules, despite the fact that these rules had been made stricter.<sup>55</sup> Though Marit Monteiro does note:

All the same their opportunities to devote themselves actively to church and fellow human beings were limited by the social and ecclesiastical restrictions that applied to the members of their sex. (...) Not only concrete utterances on paper point to this, but also their strong Passion

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statutes by Hauchin had great influence and also served as a model for beguinages outside of the archdiocese, see Geybels (2004) 66f. and Philippen (1929) 186.

48 Triest (1998) 42.

49 Monteiro (1994) 57. De Vroede speaks of a '*qualitatively important phenomenon, that one found both in the countryside and in the cities.*' Vroede (1994) 71. In the home of the Petyt family, too, a spiritual daughter had her abode. See Petyt (1683) vol. 1,9.

50 Conrad (2013) 9. For a historical overview see Harline (1995) 543f.

51 Monteiro (1996) 13f.

52 Cloet (2006) 25f. '*M. de Vroede estimates that approximately eighty such communities were founded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, varying in size from less than ten members to more than a hundred. By the end of the eighteenth century the spiritual daughters – although formally they were not religious – represented between 15.5 and 17.5 % of the total number of women religious.*' Monteiro (1996) 32. For quotation, see Vroede (1994) 118.

53 Monteiro (1996) 44ff.

54 Monteiro (1996) 25.

55 That an active form of life could continue to exist was, at least in the Southern Netherlands, due to defense on the part of society and the local bishops. See Harline (1995) 550.

devotion could be an indication that the catholic gender coding of the day for women was very aggravating for these spiritual virgins.<sup>56</sup>

### Tertiaries in Carmel

Many of these spiritual daughters – among them Maria Petyt – chose to live as tertiaries under a monastic rule that had been adapted to their state of life. Despite public support<sup>57</sup> they, too, were subjected to a stricter life. In the Order of Carmel (o.carm.), the Prior General Theodore Stracci complied with the regulations that had been drawn up on December 20, 1616 by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1637. In his *Opusculum Regularum et constitutionem pro Tertiariis* he instructed the directors of the Third Order only to admit women who led an excellent and tested life, were at least forty years old, owned enough possessions to live on, had the permission of the local ordinary, were born of respectable parents and had a good name.<sup>58</sup>

Daniel of the Virgin Mary<sup>59</sup>, director of the Third Order in Flanders, rewrote the Third Order Rule of his province and published it as *Af-beeldinghe van de derde orden onser L. Vrouwe des berghs Carmeli*.<sup>60</sup> He there writes about the state of life of the tertiaries:

For although it is true that the state or condition of such persons is not truly the same as a Religion, it is yet a way of life that is very similar to that of the religious, especially if it is confirmed by a vow of eternal purity, without which that way of life does not deserve the name State, because State means steadfastness and constancy, that is to say, when one has so securely bound oneself to God by a promise that it cannot be dissolved. This happens by means of a promise of purity unto death.<sup>61</sup>

56 Monteiro (1994) 59. (My translation)

57 See n. 55.

58 Stracci also imposed other criteria for admission not mentioned here. These can be found in an unpublished document by A. Staring, with the title *Derde Orde. Regel III*. Dutch Carmelite Institute, Boxmeer. For the history and development of the Third Order within the Carmelite Order (o.carm.) in Belgium: Smet (1982) 557–560. On the *Opusculum*: Smet (1982) 537.

59 In his *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680) Daniel of the Virgin Mary O. Carm. (1615–1678) made many spiritual documents and biographies accessible.

60 Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1666). See also Michel van Meerbeeck's contribution to this volume, p. 55.

61 'Want al is't sake dat den staet oft conditie van soodanighe personen niet oprechtelyck eene Religie en is, nochtans is't een maniere van leven aen die van de Religieusen seer ghelyck;

This striving on the part of tertiaries not to be left behind by the members of the First and Second orders will have been part of a widespread process of confessionalization, but within that context should also be seen as a phenomenon typical of the French and the Southern Netherlands.<sup>62</sup>

Various rules of tertiaries show that their way of life in the Southern Netherlands was often to a great degree oriented towards the monastic life,<sup>63</sup> as was also the life of Maria Petyt and her sisters in the Cluuse.<sup>64</sup> When Maria looks back on the first time she made her profession on the '*derden Reghel vande Heylighe Maghet Maria des Bergh-Carmeli*' (Third Rule of the Holy Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel), she writes:

Although I professed the simple vow to observe the Third rule, our father confessor let us observe the rule of the religious regarding the fast days, abstinence, penitence, silence and so on. We could do that very well because no one stood in our way. The Third rule was then not yet printed and I felt drawn to a stricter life than to simply observe the Third rule, because the Third rule is more general for all sorts of people, so that it can be observed in the world as well.<sup>65</sup>

Maria must have made her first profession on the Third Order rule of the reform-minded general John Soreth (1451–1471). Soreth initiated the development of the Second and Third Order in Carmel and was a champion of the Reform of Mantua, a movement that strove for a return to the contemplative way of life in Carmel.<sup>66</sup>

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*besonderlyck als die bevesticht is door belofte van eeuwighe suyerheydt; sonder de welke die maniere van leven niet wel en verdient den naem van Staet: want Staet beteekent stantvastigheydt ende on-veranderlyckheydt, te weten, als-men sy-selven door belofte soo vast aen Godt is verbindende, dat-men 't niet en kan ont-binden; het welk gheschiedt door belofte van Suyerheydt tot de doodt toe.* Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1666) preface. On state see also Schulz (2013) 36f.

62 Monteiro (1996) 34.

63 Monteiro (1996) 34.

64 See Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 52.

65 '*Al dede ick simpelick belofte van te onderhouden den derden Reghel, nochtans gaf onsen Biechtvader ons te onderhouden den Reghel van de Religieusen, nopende de vastendaghen, abstinentien, penitentien, stilswyghentheyt, ende soo voorts, wy kosten dat ghevoeghelijk onderhouden, mits niemant hebbende inden wegh: Den derden Reghel en was alsdan noch niet ghedruckt; ende oock ick vondt my wat stricter ghetrocken, als simpelick den derden Reghel te onderhouden; want den derden Reghel ghemeynder is voor alle soorten van menschen, om oock in de werelt te konnen onderhouden.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 52.

66 His Third Order rule was promulgated on March 14, 1455, but only published in 1675 by Philip of the Visitation. The text of this *Troisieme Regle des freres et soeurs de Nostre dame*

Some years later Maria Petyt, following a second (half-)noviciate, made another profession as a tertiary, now on the rule from the *Af-beeldinghe*. Her later biographer and spiritual director, Michael of St. Augustine, gives the following reason for this:

In doubt as to whether her profession on the Third Rule of the Carmelites, when she still lived in Gent, had been valid, she renewed it in the hands of the most reverend father Gabriel of the Annunciation (...) <sup>67</sup> and was given a confessor [i.e. Michael of St. Augustine] who instructed her better in practicing her obligation or commitment. <sup>68</sup>

Maria, who already at her first profession received the name Maria of St. Teresa, was given this name because of the '*special attraction I felt towards this Holy Mother.*' <sup>69</sup>

### In the Footsteps of Teresa

During this century Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) was very popular among the (semi-)religious women of the Southern Netherlands. <sup>70</sup> In one of the popular

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*Dumont Carmel*, was (with some corrections) included in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum* VI, vol. III, 263–265 and in Grosso (2007) 272–274. The canonical beginning of the Third Order is dated on the basis of the bull *Dum intenta*, promulgated by Sixtus IV on November 28, 1476. Monsignani (1715) tom. I, 319–346. About her profession on this old Third Order rule Maria herself writes somewhat reservedly: '*The Third rule was then not yet printed.*' *'Den derden Reghel en was alsdan noch niet ghedruckt.'* Petyt (1683) vol. I, 52.

67 Omitted in this citation: *Als-doen Prior al-daer, en naer-maels Commissaris Generael door Hoogh en Neder-duytschlandt; waer hy de Reformatie der PP. Lieve-Vrouwe-Broeders heeft in-ghevoert: al was 't dat hemel en aerde schier tegen hem stelden; en is ghestorven Prior van Weenen, ende Procurator Generael in het Hof des Keyzers.* ('*At that time the prior there, and later commissary general for High and Low Germany, where he introduced the reform of the Fathers Brothers-of-Our-Lady, though heaven and earth nearly stood up against him. He died as prior of Vienna and as procurator general in the emperor's Court.*') From the latter we can infer how sore a subject Maria's prayer for Louis XIV was in Carmel. On the tensions surrounding Gabriel of the Annunciation, read Hoppenbrouwers (1949) 165f.

68 '*Twyffelende, oft hare Professie van den derden Reghel der Carmeliten, wettigh geweest hadde, als sy tot Ghent woonden, heeft die vernieuwt, in de handen van den seer Eer-weerdighen Pater Gabriël ab Annuntiatione (...). ende kreegh eenen Biecht-Vader, die haer beter onderwees in het oeffenen van hare obligatie, ofte verbintenisse.*' Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 20.

69 '*besonderen treck, die ick tot dese Heylighe Moeder ghevoelde.*' Petyt (1683) vol. I, 52.

70 This popularity can be ascertained from, among other things, the many connections between the Discalced Carmel and the beguinages. Anna of Saint Bartholomew kept in

beguines' lives we read how Elisabeth van Soetems chooses Teresa as her patroness at her profession.<sup>71</sup> Later she calls herself a Carmelite and – like Maria Petyt – renounces the eating of meat: '*Not that she made her profession in that Order, but because she tried to observe that rule in everything.*'<sup>72</sup>

Often this popularity was shared by the counselors of these women. Daniel of the Virgin Mary<sup>73</sup>, who in his *Konste der Konste*<sup>74</sup> developed a method of prayer in Teresa's spirit, included a timetable for beguines in his *Af-beeldinghe*.<sup>75</sup> His discalced brother Herman of St. Norbert founded a community of spiritual daughters around the beguinage in Dendermonde in 1663, together with the beguine Anna Puttemans. These marolles, later also called maricolles, lived by a rule composed in the spirit of Teresa of Avila.<sup>76</sup>

One of Teresa's merits for the Church is that she shifted the prayer apostolate of women – praying for the souls in purgatory – in the direction of prayer for the church.<sup>77</sup> In the *Wech der volmaecktheydt* (Way of Perfection) she writes:

What does it matter that I am in purgatory until the day of judgment, if by my prayer even one soul may be saved? Of how much more importance is not the profit of so many souls and the glory of the Lord? And do not attend to pains that pass when you can do some greater merit to the one who suffered so much for us. (...) It is to his glory and the profit of his church.<sup>78</sup>

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touch with Maria van der Linden, beguine in Ghent. See Philippen (1929) 194. As early as 1632 a Dutch edition of Teresa's *Life* was presented to abbot Iosephus Geldolphus van Rykel, protector and biographer of many beguines' lives. See also Mirjam de Baar's contribution to this volume, p. 72ff and Elisabeth Hense's contribution to this volume, p. 252ff.

71 Begga (1712) 258.

72 '*Niet dat sy in dit Order professie heeft gedaen, maer om dat sy naer de regel des selfs, in alles socht te leven.*' Begga (1712) 261.

73 See Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 33.

74 See further Smet (1982) 445f.

75 Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1666) 101–105.

76 Quaghebeur (2009) 158. In the *Speculum Carmelitanum* we find written that Herman of St. Norbert wrote a book on the origin and institution of the maricolles. Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1680) tom. II pars II, 1129. With this Daniel is referring to Herman's *Humilis et libera familia Maricolarum sive tractatus explicans initium et finem sive scopum institutionis praedictae familiae*, Cologne 1678. Regarding the perfection to be strived for by the sisters, Herman in this book refers to his *Cibus solidus perfectorum, sive de Proposito et voto seraphico S. Mtris N. Teresiae faciendi semper quidquid intelligeret esse perfectius libri duo*, auctore R. P. F. Hermanno a S. Norberto. (p. 5) Read about this in Meulemeester (1913).

77 Weber (2000) 124.

78 '*Wat is daer toch aen ghelegghen, dat ick tot den dach des oordeels in 't Vaghevier sitte, indien door mijn ghebedt alleen een ziele mach saelich worden? hoe veel te meer, importerende het*



However much Maria Petyt felt attracted to the figure of this great Spanish saint,<sup>79</sup> the reader of the third book of Maria's *Life* will find that this transition to praying for the church hardly took place in her life.<sup>80</sup>

In Maria's religious identification it is mainly the image of the 'eremitical' Teresa that comes to the forefront.<sup>81</sup> When at the age of five Teresa is kept by her uncle from converting the Moors, she and her brother feel attracted to a radically solitary life: '*When I saw that it was impossible to go because they <the Moors> would kill me on account of God, we determined that we would become hermits.*'<sup>82</sup> This eremitical ideal<sup>83</sup> fits in entirely with the pursuit of perfection of the catholic reformation and was stimulated from above:

The *eenicheyt* <i.e. *hermit's cell*> is the best means towards the best end, because the end that the *eenicheyt* strives for is the contemplation of God or of the divine things, Bellarmine says. The divine people who are enlightened with eternal light and ignited by divine love, are held to be perfect. It is a completely perfect life, to be on earth with the body and with the spirit to abide in heaven: to live among people and be in the company of angels.<sup>84</sup>

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*profijt van soo veel zielen, ende de eere des Heeren? ende maeckt gheen werck van pijnen die vergaen, wanneer ghy eenighen meerderen dienst cunt doen aen den ghenen die soo veel voor ons gheleden heeft. (...) het is tot sijnder glorie en profijt sijnder kercken.'* Teresa (1634) 19f.

- 79 See also Elisabeth Hense's contribution to this volume, p. 256 and Mirjam de Baar's contribution to this volume, p. 73.
- 80 Maria's prayer mainly consisted of penance for the souls in purgatory. This is possibly related to the revival of medieval traditions mentioned earlier.
- 81 Burke points out how saints formed themselves according to the example of an earlier model. Burke (1984) 52. See Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 11.
- 82 '*Alsoo ick dan sagh dat onmoghelijck was te gaen daer sy my om Godt souden dooden, soo schickten wy dat wy souden heremijten worden.*' Teresa (1632) 6.
- 83 See also Axters (1960) 239–245.
- 84 '*De eenicheyt is den besten middel tot het beste eynde: want het eynde daer de eenigheyt toe is streckende, is de contemplatie oft de beschouwinghe van Godt oft van goddelijcke dinghen, seght Bellarminus. Die goddelijcke menschen die verlicht zijn met het eeuwich licht, ende onsteken zijn met de goddelijcke liefde, die worden ghehouden voor volmaeckt. Het is een perfect volkomen leven, in der aerden te wesen met het lichaem, ende met den gheest te woonen in den hemel: onder de menschen te leven, ende met de Enghele te verkeerem.*' Gorcum (1619) prologues. The 17th and 18th century situation of the eremitical life in France was studied and described in Sainsaulieu (1973).

In her choice for the eremitical life Maria Petyt did not ally herself to the Tere-  
sian reform, however, but to the strict observance of the original order  
(o.carm.).

### Reforms in the Carmelite Order (o.carm.)

The Tridentine reform of the Carmelite Order (o.carm.) was ushered in by the  
*Decreta ad Reparationem et Restaurationem regularis disciplinae* by the Prior  
General Henry Silvio.<sup>85</sup> In this reform the contemplative charism of Carmel  
was not so much called into question on its content as challenged regarding  
the traditional framework of its community life and prayer life.<sup>86</sup> Older and  
less old spiritual forms were brought back to life and integrated in the old ideal  
of the order. The aim of its reformers was ultimately a return to the sources and  
the retention of its contemplative legacy. The *'pristinus splendor'*<sup>87</sup>, the former  
radiance of Carmel, had to be restored.

Entirely in line with this, in 1659 Maria Petyt prayed to the prophet Elijah:

... to obtain that in his Order his first spirit, his first disposition be renewed  
and engendered, that is to say the continuous solitude, poverty, continu-  
ous prayer in purity of spirit, thoroughly and willingly foregoing the  
search for diversion in creatures.<sup>88</sup>

### The Reform of Touraine

An important point of reference within this reform movement was the prov-  
ince of Tours, especially the monastery of Rennes. The stricter discipline intro-  
duced there was initially called *observantia strictior*, later also *reformatio*  
*Turonensis* or *Rhedonensis* (Touraine Reform). At the beginnings of this  
reform stood Louis Charpentier and Peter Behourt.<sup>89</sup> Philip Thibault is named  
as a champion in its implementation. The great mystic of this reform was John

85 Panzer (2006) 50.

86 Plattig [sa] 1.

87 Panzer (2006) 295.

88 *'te verwerven dat in sijne Orden sijnen eersten gheest, sijne eerste instellinghe magh vernieuwt, ende verweckt worden, te weten, de gheduerighe eensaemhey, aermoede, ghe-  
duerigh Ghebedt in puerhey des gheests, grondigh ende ghewilligh derven van alle ver-  
maeck-soeckinghen in creatueren.'* Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 148.

89 Smet (1982) 36–62.

of St. Samson. His work, in which many traces of Rhineland and Flemish mysticism can be found,<sup>90</sup> had a profound spiritual reverberation in Carmel, as well as in the works of Maria Petyt.<sup>91</sup>

Although the separation between the original order and the disalced was definitive as of 1593, the reform of Touraine – following the Teresian reform – oriented itself towards ‘*the descent from our holy Fathers of Mount Carmel.*’<sup>92</sup> The parallels between the two reforms were not limited to this, however. Certainly in the initial stages Peter Behourt and Phillip Thibault sought a connection with the disalced way of life.<sup>93</sup> Many of their practices, such as mortification and self-denial, devotion to the child Jesus, forfeiting one’s family name and taking the name of a saint were adopted.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, the Touraine reform did not choose the model of reform of the disalced Carmel.<sup>95</sup> The Touraine reform recognized the stipulations of the so-called mitigated Rule of 1432.<sup>96</sup> In this regulation the stipulations regarding remaining in the cell were tempered and the Carmelites were permitted to eat meat three times a week.

### The Observantia Strictior in Belgium

This reform of the observantia strictior had profound effects in the Carmel of Belgium.<sup>97</sup> In 1603 the province was visited by the Prior General Henry Silvio,

90 A list of books read to the blind John of St. Samson can be found in Blommestijn (1987) 97–99.

91 Bouchereaux (1950) 269f. On the ties of this Carmelite reform movement with the salon of Madame Barbe Acarie and the French school Boaga writes: ‘*What were the relations between the protagonists of the Touraine reform and the prominent personalities of Hotel Acarie? They had personal connections: a) The Carthusian monk Dom Beaucousin, promoter of the reform of spiritual life among religious followers, was confessor and spiritual director of Fr. Thibault, who also frequently consulted him about the reform. b) The same Thibault was friends with Pierre de Berulle, with whom he often spoke of questions about the Carmelite nuns. c) While John of St. Samson lived in Paris at the end of the 16th century, he had as director Blanzay, who also visited Madame Acarie, and her spiritual daughters. John of St. Samson read Ruysbroeck and other authors then in fashion.*’ Boaga [sa] 3.

92 ‘*De afcomste van onse heylige Vaders vanden bergh Karmel.*’ Teresa (1650) fifth mansion, chap. 1, 88. See also Plattig (1995) 76.

93 Smet (1982) 55.

94 Panzer (2006) 303.

95 Panzer (2006) 90f.

96 Plattig (1995) 35. On the integration see Panzer (2006) 313.

97 Smet (1982) 110.

who on this occasion elucidated his decree mentioned above which ushered in the Tridentine reforms.<sup>98</sup> The reform of the Order that was set in motion after this visitation moved between two poles: avoiding scandals among the population<sup>99</sup> and building up the province along the lines of the Tridentine pursuit of reform.<sup>100</sup> The devotion to Our Lady, so typical of Carmelite tradition, proved an important theme in the process of confessionalization, which gained the loyalty of both bishops and the ordinary population.<sup>101</sup>

The first initiatives of reform were taken in the Carmels of Gent and Valenciennes. The protagonists were Martin de Hooghe († 1637) and Livinus d'Hondt († 1641).<sup>102</sup> In 1640 the Belgian province rallied around the constitutions that the Prior General of the Order Stracci had based on the reform of Touraine,<sup>103</sup> but until 1645 – when the constitutions of the *observantia strictior* were definitively accepted – there was a tense time concerning the question whether or not various local stipulations would be included.<sup>104</sup> After this period the pursuit of reform of the *observantia strictior* increasingly finds its own form.

98 Panzer (2006) 50. Mention is made of this decree on p. 38.

99 'so schreibt am 3. Juli 1624 Martin de Hooghe (...) 'Vorsorge zu treffen, daß nicht das Volk (...) das hier in Nachbarschaft und eingemengt zwischen den Häretikern sitzt, durch die Skandale der Ordensleute dem katholischen Glauben entfremdet wird'. Aus der Feder Isabellas lautet dasselbe Argument: 'Es kann mir nur höchst willkommen sein, daß die Religiosen in diesen Provinzen, die an der Nähe der Häretiker leiden, von allererprobtestem Leben sind.' Panzer (2006) 95f. In Ghent the original order did not yet receive the qualification of *disciplina regularis* from bishop Triest even in 1625. Cloet (1992) 163. Some of these scandals are described in Panzer (2006) 287f.

100 Panzer (2006) 95f.

101 Bishop Antoon Triest, bishop of Ghent, wrote in 1649 how with the revival of Marian devotion the former glory of Carmel was restored in his city. Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1680) II, no 3553, p. 1019. The Marian devotion was not unambiguous. Burschel writes: 'schon ein kurzer Blick in die einschlägige Forschungsliteratur läßt erennen, daß die nachtridentinische Maria in immer stärkerem Maße dazu eitrug, das katholische Kirchenvolk zu disziplinieren, um seine konfessionelle Homogenität sicherzustellen was wiederum zur Folge hatte, daß diese Maria nach und nach zu einer Maria wurde, deren Schutz, Trost und Hilfe nicht mehr umsonst zu haben war.' Burschel (1999) 590. On the question of how the Marian devotion gained the loyalty of the population as well, see note 113.

102 Smet also mentions the name of Francois Potel, see Smet (1982) 112f.

103 Panzer (2006) 308. 'Obwohl die belgische Provinz im Dezember 1640 die Konstitutionen annahm, die General Straccio auf Grundlage der Tourainer Satzungen erstellt hatte, trugen einzelne mit diesen Konstitutionen verbundene Bestimmungen zu einem Konflikt bei, der die Provinz zwischen 1641 und 1644 in die Spaltung trieb. Erst mit deren Überwindung und dem Sieg der 'reformatio pura' war die Grundlage geschaffen, um bis zum Jahr 1656 alle Konvente der Provinz der Reform zuzuführen.' Panzer (2006) 358.

104 Smet (1982) 119–121.

The initial identification with the way of life of the Discalced Carmelites then fades into the background and makes way for a stronger appeal to the work of John Soreth.<sup>105</sup>

These were the years in which Maria Petyt developed her spiritual authority, supported in this by her spiritual director Michael of St. Augustine. His influence on the observantia strictior in Belgium was great.

### Michael of St. Augustine

Michael of St. Augustine<sup>106</sup> – his name in the world was Jan van Ballaert – was born on April 15, 1621.<sup>107</sup> Jan must have been a determined and self-confident young man. When at a young age his mother advised him against entering the original Order of Carmel – the Order seems to have completely collapsed in Belgium<sup>108</sup> – he answered her: *'Who knows if it is not up to me to call this most holy family back to its first discipline.'*<sup>109</sup>

Entering in 1637, he received the habit of the Order on October 13, 1639. On October 14, 1640, the eve of the feast of St. Teresa, he professed his solemn vows and according to his biographer he displayed the same fervor as this saint.<sup>110</sup> About his virtuous life the same biographer writes: *'Do you want to judge how genuine his life was? Read his books that he wrote on the mystical and spiritual life and know with certainty that he lived in such a way.'*<sup>111</sup>

105 Panzer (2006) 296.

106 An elaborate biographical sketch is given in Hoppenbrouwers (1949) and *DS*, t.10, 1980, cc. 1187–1191. A biography of earlier date is Jacobus (1684) 322–331. The biography by Timothy of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is included in Wessels (1926) VII-XL. A French translation can be found in Lima (2005) 3–28.

107 According to his biographer Timothy, Michael was born in 1622. Timotheus (1926) VII. Michael's certificate of baptism and the baptismal registers of the parish of St. Nicholas, however, give the date of 1621, according to an annotation by Wessels to this passage and an elaborate footnote in Hoppenbrouwers (1949) 159.

108 The point of departure did not look very good, Daniel of the Virgin Mary reports: *'In conventibus Belgii Obseruantia, & Reformatio à Ven. P. Ioanne Soreth plantata perstiterat feliciter, & constanter per annos circiter centum (...) At sub annum 1570 per tumultus bellicos & haereticorum rabiem exsiccatus ibi penè fuit vertex Carmeli, periit omnis decor eius.'* Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1662) 348, no 649.

109 *'Quis scit, ajebat, an sanctissima haec familia per me non sit ad pristinam disciplinam revocanda?'* Timotheus (1926) IX.

110 Jacobus (1684) 326.

111 *'Zyt ghy keurigh hoe oprecht syn leven was? leest syne Boecken, welcke hy van het Mystieck en Gheestelyck Leven beschreven heeft, en weet voor-seker: dat hij dusdanighlyck heeft gheleeft.'*

In the execution of his administrative duties<sup>112</sup> Michael attached great value to the observance of Marian devotion. About this his biographer writes:

And in order to impress this devotion on the peoples' hearts more deeply, he was the first to have the portrait of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Naples publicly placed in our churches, by means of which so many anxious hearts found comfort in their need. This devotion was fostered every Wednesday by singing the Litany before it, with a great gathering of the people.<sup>113</sup>

It must have been this preference for Marian devotion that made Michael a fervent anti-Jansenist.<sup>114</sup> The polarization between Jansenists and anti-Jansenists in the Southern Netherlands has a complex history, however, which makes the fanatical dedication of Michael – and also of Maria Petyt – to anti-Jansenism understandable.

### Jansenism and Anti-Monachism

At the beginning of the Jansenist movement – in the 1640s, after the posthumous publication of the book *Augustine* by the bishop of Ieper, Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638) – Jansenism and the Catholic reformation still had many

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Jacobus (1684) 326. Omitted is '*Onder al, den Boeck: Van de Grondeloose Verloocheninghe syn-selfs, om Godt en Maria, in Godt en Maria. Syn: Godtvruchtigh Leven in Christo. Inleydinghe tot het Landt van Carmelus. Syn: Engels Leven. Syn: Thien-daeghsche Exerctien, in welke onse Religieusen hun eens's jaers moeten vertrecken.*'

112 Michael was provincial from 1656 to 1659, from 1667 to 1670 and from 1677 to 1681, assistant provincial from 1659 to 1663, from 1674 to 1677 and from 1681 to 1684. Moreover he managed the province as vicar from August 16, 1672 to the end of 1673 during the absence of the provincial.

113 '*En om meer in de herten der menschen dese Devotie te prenten, heeft hy den eersten ghewest, den welcken publieckelyck, in onse Kercken heeft doen op-rechten, het Portret van 't Miraculeus Beeldt van Onse Lieve-Vrouwe van Napels, door welke soo vele benouwde herten, in hunnen noodt, troost hebben vonden: en wiëns Devotie alle Woensdaghen, is vervoordert, door de Litanie, welke men singht voor 't selve, met eenen grooten toe-loop des volcks.*' Jacobus (1684) 327.

114 Michael was a member of the secret Society of anti-Jansenists founded in November 1678. See Van Michel van Meerbeeck's contribution to this volume, p. 58 and Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 112. Marian devotion was a very sensitive issue in this polemic. See Spiertz (1992) 43.

parallel features.<sup>115</sup> During this period the controversy, which began as a theological polemic, mainly centered on dogmatic questions about grace. Jansenism was suffused with a pessimistic anthropology. The human being's free will was not sufficient for observing God's commandments. The breaking point between the two groups came when Jansenist priests refused to renounce the five summarizing theses formulated in the bull '*Cum occasione*' (May 31, 1653).<sup>116</sup>

In a subsequent phase, after 1660, the followers of Jansenism proved ever less interested in dogmatic matters. Their attention was rather focused on the pastoral, spiritual and moral renewal of the Church.<sup>117</sup> In a growing polemic with anti-Jansenism – '*no Jansenism without anti-Jansenism*'<sup>118</sup>, Ceyskens once sighed – the movement ultimately hardened in the direction of rigorist standpoints and became increasingly detached from its pursuit of dogmatic reform in the 40s and 50s.

This hardening was not an isolated occurrence. A serious problem had arisen in the relations within the church due to the highly diocesan approach to the pursuit of reform in the Southern Netherlands. The relatively autonomous sphere of influence that the bishops strove after did not agree with Rome's pursuit of reform, which advocated far more centralized power politics.<sup>119</sup> This conflict became crystallized in times of high tension. The reform-minded bishops were considered Jansenist,<sup>120</sup> while an anti-Jansenist tendency was ascribed to Rome. That the escalation of the conflict was in the end dominated by a collision between these spheres of influence becomes apparent when Pope Alexander VII, despite his doctrinal sympathies for anti-Jansenism, nevertheless condemns laxist – read anti-Jansenist – theses.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Roegiers (1996) 43.

<sup>116</sup> The five theses (Denzinger 1092–1096) summarize the original doctrine of Jansenism, based on Jansenius' posthumously published work on Augustine. Already in 1641, 1642 and 1653 the book was banned by the Holy Office.

<sup>117</sup> Their demanding program required of every Christian a pursuit of holiness in his own way, in accordance with his 'state'. See Roegiers (1996) 45.

<sup>118</sup> Roegiers (1996) 45 cites Ceyskens.

<sup>119</sup> At the Council of Trent a Roman delegation had pushed the point that the bishops derived their jurisdiction from the pope. Although this view was rejected, elements of it had filtered into some documents. See Roegiers (1996) 55.

<sup>120</sup> Michael writes: '*episcopi reguntur a jansenistis.*' Ceyskens (1968) 226. There was good reason for this. Bishop Boonen hesitated to publish the ban on *Augustine* by Jansenius.

<sup>121</sup> Roegiers (1996) 56; Propositiones XLV damnatae in Decretis S. Officii; Errores doctrinae moralis laxioris; prop. 1–28, décret V du 24 sept. 1665; 29–45, du 18 mars 1666. Denzinger (2005) no 2020.



This controversy between Rome and the bishops had far-reaching consequences for the religious in the Southern Netherlands. They were labeled as anti-Jansenist, not least because the popes relied on the regular clergy for their policy of centralism, and because of their stance they often came into conflict with the bishops. Ceyskens describes this unpalatable polarization with a term he probably borrows from Michael of St. Augustine: anti-monachism.<sup>122</sup> As a culmination of this almost endlessly mounting power struggle, Alphons de Berghes, archbishop of Mechelen, subjected the holding of processions to a strict discipline on August 29, 1674.<sup>123</sup> He not only reduced the number, he also forbade carrying statues of saints in processions of the Blessed Sacrament. This prohibition had drastic consequences for the Carmelites, who in Brussels alone held roughly one hundred processions a year.<sup>124</sup> In 1676 Rome initially took the side of the archbishop.<sup>125</sup> Because of the strong resistance on the part of the religious, however, the case was once more presented to the Congregation of Rites. Pending their decision the practice from before 1674 was maintained. This conflict lasted until May 20, 1682, when in his letter, '*Cum Inter Venerabilem Fratrem*', Innocent XI pronounced in favor of the regulars.<sup>126</sup>

Maria Petyt did not live to see this pronouncement as she died in 1677. The Jansenist disagreement and the problems surrounding anti-monachism were by that time not nearly solved and also affected Michael and indirectly her own person. In 1673 there was a polemic regarding Michael's treatise *Marie-vormigh ende Marielijck leven in Maria om Maria*.<sup>127</sup> In a letter to his friend Seraphinus<sup>128</sup> Michael writes:

122 Ceyskens (1952) 20.

123 Ceyskens (1968) 222f. See also Smet (1982) 334. Alphons de Berghes (1624–1689) based himself on Borromeo's instructions and other practices that were customary in Italy. De Berghes became archbishop of Mechelen in 1671. Thanks to protection by the Spanish king he was only barely kept from being unseated in 1679 during an anti-Jansenist witch-hunt aimed at his person. See Ockeley (2009) 125–162.

124 Ceyskens (1974) xxvi, note 1. See also Ockeley (2009) 150.

125 Ceyskens (1968) 492.

126 The decree of Innocent XI can be found in Van de Velde [1829] II, 380–38.

127 Maria Petyt's visions of Mary underlie this treatise on 'Mariform' life. Michael does not mention Maria's name, but states as his source: '*Den geest schynt voort te leeren ende metter daet te doen ondervinden*.' ('*The spirit seems to continue teaching and actively cause to experience.*') However, the spirit speaks here with the words of Maria Petyt. We find passages from Petyt (1683) vol. 2, cap. CCVII and cap. CCVIII in chapters 6 and 7 of the treatise; cap. CCXVf. we find in chapter 12; cap. CCXII we find in chapter 13.

128 See Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 93.



It is written to me from Gent that our treatise on Marian life in Mary and through Mary is very displeasing to the Jansenists. What does his most eminent Bona think of this? Can a positive testimony not be obtained from him about this? I believe that that most eminent Lord is imbued with the spirit of his Holy Father Bernard who, as is well-known, excelled in the Marian path as described in this treatise. Meanwhile it is said that the Jansenists have taken offence at this and have taken the opportunity to publish this ultimately biased book.<sup>129</sup> It is a strange business that these people do want to know about the holy fathers, popes and the entire Church, which they want to reform, but condemn the spirit of the saints and scoff at their thoughts.<sup>130</sup>

This polemic did not leave Maria unmoved. In the document on the Dutch War we read how she (probably) shortly thereafter writes that the Jansenist attack on Marian devotion affects her painfully:

The necessity of the Holy Church, that was impressed upon me, was partly because of the uproars and commotions etc, which the Jansenists caused in the Holy Church, by their doctrines that they proposed as a great insult, criticism and blasphemy against the Holy Virgin, and the many errors that they thrust upon the hearts of the faithful.<sup>131</sup>

But however dramatic it was, the controversy did not leave deep traces in her writings.

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129 This book is *Monita salutaria Beatae Mariae Virginis ad cultores suos indiscretos*. The first edition of this polemical writing was published in Ghent in 1673. The name of the author, Adam Widenfeldt († 1678), had been omitted but the imprimatur, signed by Ignace Gillemans, a known Jansenist, evoked much opposition from the very start. Hoffer (1938) 187ff.

130 'scribitur mihi gandavo jansenistis multum displicere tractatum nostrum de Vita Mariana in Maria propter Mariam. Quid sentit de illo Eminetissimus Bona? Non posset obtineri ab ipso testimonium bonum de illo? Existimo eum eminentissimum Dominum imbuturum spiritu Sancti. P. Sui. Bernardi, quem in via mariana, qualis in isto tractatu describitur, excelluisse constat. Interim jansenistae dicuntur inde offensi, et accepisse occasionem saltem partialem edendi istum libellum. Est res mira quod isti homines velint sapere supra S.S. Patres, pontifices et totam ecclesiam, quam volunt reformare, et improbant spiritum Sanctorum, eorum sententias cavillant.' Mechelen, December 22, 1673.

131 Fol. 35v.

Maria's prayer for the Church and the original radiance of the Carmel continued for several decades after her death. In the 80s Angelo Monsignano, Carmelite Prior General, writes about the sisters of the Cluyse who:

... now number eight and who hope by God's mercy to persevere in this practice of hers unto death in order to advance <this practice> all the more diligently and happily on the narrower battleground of the First Rule of our Order.<sup>132</sup>

### In Closing

In her Cluyse Maria Petyt certainly did not find the heavenly life she hoped for in her ardent desire for God. She did, however, leave behind a living testimony to how an anchoress can be involved with the spiritual search of her times. It is not without reason that her spiritual director writes about her and many of the other searching women in this period:

Show me new Teresas, new Magdalenes, new Gertrudes, new Catharines of Siena, in purity of heart, in divine love, in Christiformity, in conformity with the will of God and at once God will marvelously appear in these, his saints.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> See note 11. '*...nu acht in 't getal zijn, de welcke in de pratycke der selver door de bermhertigheyt Godts totter doodt toe hopen te volherden ende om in dese van den eersten Regel van onse Orden engere strijdtbaene te vlijtiger ende te geluckiger te vervoorderen.*' At the second approbation of the ordinances of Schaarbeek. See Michel van Meerbeeck's contribution to this volume, p. 54. Persoons (2009) names the sisters on p. 275–277. Staring (1948) also mentions Sister Anna Gores and Sister van der Poorten, on p. 303.

<sup>133</sup> '*Toont my nieuwe Teresien, nieuwe Magdalenen, nieuwe Geertruyden, nieuwe Catharinen van Senen in puerheyt des herten, in goddelijcke liefde, in Christi-vormigheyt, in ghelijck-vormigheyt met den wille Godts, ende terstont zal Godt wonderlijck verschynen in dese sijne Heylighen.*' Petyt (1683) preface 3r.

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## Daily Life at the Hermitage in Mechelen at the Time of Maria Petyt (1657–1677)

*Michel van Meerbeeck*

### Introduction

There are many publications about Maria Petyt, particularly in the fields of theology and spirituality.<sup>1</sup> This is not surprising, because the contents of her work<sup>2</sup> are very intriguing from that point of view, so they seem to attract most attention. But by confining oneself to these fields one runs a real risk of drawing a distorted picture of Maria. Moreover, her work cannot be understood properly if certain historical elements are overlooked.

One might wonder why historical research on Maria Petyt has had such limited success. Is it because of a lack of sources? An attentive reading of her various works provides a lot of material for a biography, especially if one studies the whole corpus, not only the autobiography. Research so far has hardly gone beyond this initial stage. There is one fortunate exception: the study conducted by A. Staring.<sup>3</sup> This has still to be considered important along with the later significant work by A. Deblaere.<sup>4</sup>

The archives of the hermitage – filed systematically but, except for a few copies, not handed down to us – are among the possible sources.<sup>5</sup> The archives of the Carmelites at Mechelen, which were already admired by A. Sanderus<sup>6</sup> during Maria's lifetime, are still available. However, the documents that were preserved were not chronicles or visitation reports but a surprising number of notarial acts and financial information. Not only do they confirm what we already know from Maria's texts, they also make it possible to understand the financial and material basis of life at the hermitage.<sup>7</sup> Other information

1 For a substantial bibliography, see Lowyk (1991) 9–12, 47–50 and Persoons (2009) 277–280.

2 Petyt (1683).

3 Staring (1948).

4 Deblaere (1962).

5 E.g. Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro Belgica, convent of Mechelen*: acts of 9 September 1707.

6 Sanderus (1727) 238.

7 We hope to give an overview of these sources kept in several archives in a further study.

can be drawn from the correspondence of Michael of St. Augustine, most of which is kept in the general archives of the Carmelite Order in Rome.<sup>8</sup>

In 1999 by chance we were able to trace the ordinances of the hermitage of Mechelen, formulated by Michael of St. Augustine. We hope to publish them soon. This normative source contains a treasure of information about the hermitage. However, one has to exercise caution: there can be a big difference between the norm and one's perception of the norm.<sup>9</sup>

In this limited paper I outline daily life in the hermitage of Mechelen. First I sketch the context and then focus on the sisters in the hermitage. Their physical life will be described and thereafter their spiritual life.

### The Monastery of the Carmelites in Mechelen

The monastery of the White Friars of Mechelen reached its zenith in the early years of its reform.<sup>10</sup> It had been devastated during the religious wars, but after the destruction came a period of renewal. The first years after Maria Petyt's arrival at Mechelen saw the restoration of the church, and she was a witness to all the mess from the work in the church.<sup>11</sup>

Round about 1655 the monastery was a flourishing community which engaged in mentoring fraternities, offering spiritual guidance, hearing confessions, helping prisoners, nursing the sick, preaching and training the third order in Mechelen. The original list of the 57 members of the community in 1654 was found recently.<sup>12</sup> Michael of St. Augustine,<sup>13</sup> Maria's spiritual director,

8 E.g. Rome, Archivum generale ord. carmelitarum, II. *Flandro Belgica, conventus Brussel*, Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels 24 February 1680. Parts of this letter were published by Hoppenbrouwers (1960) 403 and Motta Navarro (1960) 59. I thank Emanuele Boaga O.Carm, general archivist († 2013).

9 *Ordonnantiën*. Until the publication of our overview we quote from the original folios of this document.

10 The obituaries and the reports (Mechelen, Stadsarchief, CC, 31: s.f.) of the White Friars of Mechelen claim that the convent was reformed in 1652, along with the entire Belgian province. But Panzer (2006) 270 mentions the convent of Tienen as the last reformed monastery of the province (1656).

11 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 173.

12 Leuven, KADOC, *Provinciaal archief van de Vlaamse Minderbroeders*, 2.2.291: J. van Meerbeek, *Register ende specificatie van allen de landen, bemden, bosschen, aerden ende opstalten der convente vande Patres Carmeliten binnen Mechelen toebehoorende* (1653), s. XVII. Recently returned to the Archivium archiepiscopalia of Mechelen, cf. Laenen (1914) XII.

13 Hoppenbrouwers (1949); Deblaere (1980); Possanzini (1998); Martinez Carretero (1991); Valabek (2008).

initiated the reform of the monastery. In 1656 he became provincial but stayed in Mechelen, where he was succeeded as prior by Daniel of the Virgin Mary.<sup>14</sup> The latter wrote a reflection on the rule for the third order<sup>15</sup> and one for the hermitage of Termuylen.<sup>16</sup>

As we know, the Carmelites through the centuries remained nostalgic about their hermitic life. In Mechelen George Peeters got permission to lead a sort of hermit life inside the monastery.<sup>17</sup> In the new constitutions the hermitic life in the desert was highly valued.<sup>18</sup> This stems from the revival of hermitages after the religious wars.<sup>19</sup>

During his visitation in 1652 the prior general encouraged the establishment of a hermitage in Liedekerke. After Daniel of the Virgin Mary, Michael was also involved in the construction of Termuylen.<sup>20</sup> Many benefactors, including the monastery in Mechelen, provided the necessary funds. Anna van Liebeke, who donated an annuity for Maria, founded and paid for a cell.<sup>21</sup> In her will Maria appointed the monastery of Termuylen her heir in case the projected hermitage of Mechelen should come to nought.<sup>22</sup>

The 17th century was also a century of record keeping. The acts of the Carmelite monastery were copied and declared authentic. Heavy books still testify to the administrative reform.<sup>23</sup> Today we know that the monastery owned four

14 Hoppenbrouwers (1934); Wijnhoven (1966); Melchior a Sancta Maria (1968).

15 Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1646).

16 Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Liedekerke: Ordo vitae regularis pro conventu eremitico Bmae Virginis Mariae dictae ad Mulam*.

17 The *attestatio de vita V.P. Gregorii Petri* was kept in the archive of the convent, cf. Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 11, 76. His biography was published in James of the Passion (1681) 131–133.

18 *Constitutiones* (1656) 7–13.

19 Sainsaulieu (1974).

20 Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Liedekerke*; Bronselaer (1954) 34–41.

21 *Kort begryp van de historie* (1753) 41–43. Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Flandro-Belgica, convent of Liedekerke: Liber diarius carmeli eremitici S. Josephi in Sylvalikerkana*, 19–22. A copy of the act of 6 April 1652 is in Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Liedekerke* but the minutes of this act are in Gent, Rijksarchief Gent, *Oud Notariaat*, 1270.

22 Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Mechelen*: declaration by F. Engrand, 16 December 1710.

23 Cf. n. 7.

houses on the Veemarkt.<sup>24</sup> One of these, called St. Joseph house, was sold to pay for the reconstructions.<sup>25</sup> The copyist also mentions a small house called *De Cluyse*, which was located next to the church on the Veemarkt. The now lost title deed dated from the 15th century.<sup>26</sup>

### De Cluyse

The debate about the origin of the hermitage started in the 18th century and still continues.<sup>27</sup> What we know for certain is that the building was called a hermitage before Maria's arrival.<sup>28</sup> Jan Abroex had been living there for many years and had extended his lease in 1649.<sup>29</sup> After his death the premises were vacant and in October 1657 *jouffrouw* Maria le Petit moved into the house, which she rented for 80 fl.<sup>30</sup> The dates when the rental fell due were Bamise (feast of St. Bavo, 1st October) and St. Jansmisse (feast of St. John the Baptist, 24th June). Some reconstruction work was done in 1650, but immediately after Maria's death the house was fully renovated. It adjoined the church and the sisters were able to follow the offices, probably through a window in their oratory. Some scandalmongers talked about an entrance, through which the fathers came to visit the sisters at improper hours. The vicar, a Jansenist, wanted to verify this but gave up, having achieved nothing.<sup>31</sup> On the other side of the Cluyse was the St. Joseph house. In 1659 the monastery bought back its former

24 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 6, 91.

25 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Augustijnen*, 40 B or: act of 27 February 1613.

26 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 1, fol. 168r-169r; cop.; Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 6, 91.

27 Persoons (2009) 260–263.

28 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 101.

29 Mechelen, Archivum archiepiscopalia, *Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 20, 180.

30 *'Is bewoont bij Jouffrouw Maria Le Petit ingegaen Bamise xvic sevenenvijftich, annue LXXX fl.*, Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 5, 169.

31 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 80. In the Latin version, Deblaere (1962) 316, and in Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 18, the 'man of quality' is identified as the parish priest. Christian de Cort (1611–1669) was involved with the mystic Antoinette Bourguignon and the Jansenists of Nordstrand; De Baar (2004) 77–99; Adriaensen (1988) 104–116.

property.<sup>32</sup> The goal was probably to give the community an adequate monastery with more space and a private chapel, as prescribed in the ordinances. During those years agreements about separating walls were also signed with other neighbours.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from the yard, the hermitage included communal rooms like a refectory (rarely used), a kitchen, a consulting room, and an oratory, the interior of which was affectingly simple: an altar with 'the devoted mother with her Jesus in her arms', between candlesticks and a crucifix of poor quality. The cells were just as poorly furnished: a straw mattress, white sheets, pillow and blankets, a small table and a chair, as well as a prie-dieu. A crucifix, an aspersorium and a picture of Our Lady were the only decorations. Stationery, some books according to the wishes of the mother superior, a lamp or a candle, a basin and a towel completed the inventory.<sup>34</sup>

The hermitage had a special statute: Maria Petyt was and remained a spiritual daughter rather than a proper nun, and a member of the Third Order of the Carmelites. She followed the first rule<sup>35</sup> and took no solemn vow of poverty.<sup>36</sup> Although the women were not looking for contact with the outside world, there was no enclosure. Because of these conditions the worldly authorities decided that soldiers could be quartered in this house: after all, the women were daughters and not cloistered sisters.<sup>37</sup> This statute, however, was provisional and the women were striving to have a real convent. The short office of Our Lady would be replaced by the long one, complete poverty would be introduced, the three solemn vows would be compulsory and there would be an enclosure.<sup>38</sup> Canonically Maria Petyt remained secular, to Michael of St. Augustine a cloistered sister in the making.

32 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 2, fol. 36r-37r; Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 5, 308. Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Oud archief, geschoeide karmelieten*, Q, 1, fol. 36-1.

33 Contract dated 4 December 1655; Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 5, 307.

34 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 3v/4r.

35 In Maria's autobiography she writes '*den eersten Reghel van onse Lieve Vrouwe des Berghs Carmeli, in eenighe maniere verschillende vande onderhoudinghe vande ongheschoeyde Carmelitessen, meer conform aen de onderhoudinghe vande HH. Euphrasia, ende Euphrasina.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 97.

36 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 9v.

37 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 327f.

38 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 7v-8v.

## The Hermits of De Cluyse

The hermitage never became a big community. There were always fewer than a dozen members.<sup>39</sup> To outsiders it seemed so ascetic and strict<sup>40</sup> that many candidates were scared off. Although we know that some women entered, we also have records of people leaving the hermitage. The hermitage lasted no longer than 70 years, with three mothers superior. The last one, Françoise Engrand,<sup>41</sup> knew the first, Maria Petyt. After her death in 1724 the hermitage was rented privately.<sup>42</sup> The sisters had to combine various functions in order to manage their life.<sup>43</sup> The mistress of the novices had time to take on additional duties. However, Maria Petyt, who provided spiritual guidance, felt overworked. Michael confirmed this and assisted Maria for a while.<sup>44</sup> But her stress was caused by the actual burden of the guidance, not by the numbers of candidates.

Of some sisters we know only their names, of others their origins, their financial status, their personalities. Of course, we know Maria Petyt best, but her fellow sister and successor Catharina van Orsaghen has remained fairly unknown to this day.<sup>45</sup> We suppose that her reputation was as good as Maria's.<sup>46</sup> She dreamed a lot and had anti-Jansenist visions, which many Carmelites respected.<sup>47</sup> Françoise Engrand made some excellent investments.<sup>48</sup>

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- 39 Persoons (2009) 276–277 compiled a list of 13 members and Staring (1948) 302f adds some other names. In the quoted letter of Michael of St. Augustine, n. 8, the hermitage had 8 or 9 members, 2 servants and 4 *filiae devotae*, with prospects of 3 postulants.
- 40 ‘*in rigidissima nostrarum Tertiarum congregatione Mechlinia*’, Timothy of the Presentation (1926), VII–XV.
- 41 She was buried in the church of the Carmelites, like Maria Petyt and Catharina van Orsaghe, Antwerpen, Stadsarchief / Felixarchief, KK (Kerken en kloosters), 1493, 72.
- 42 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 6, 91.
- 43 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 10r–12v.
- 44 In a letter to Françoise Engrand, quoted by Deblaere (1979) 45.
- 45 Cf. our contribution, n. 9.
- 46 Mechelen, Stadsarchief, CC, 31, s.f. (The diary notes the death of Catherina but not of Maria Petyt!); Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 378f.
- 47 *Het leven van de seer Edele Doorluchtigste en H. Begga* (1712) 485f; Ceyskens (1953) 97. All but one of the approbators of *Het leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia*, (*alias*) Petyt (1683–1684) were members of the secret anti-Jansenist association, Ceyskens (1950) 363–367.
- 48 E.g. Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Mechelen*.

Some sisters came from families of the Great Council, others had humbler backgrounds. Maria Petyt was from a prosperous merchant family. Catherina was the daughter of a wealthy pharmacist.<sup>49</sup> She was a Beguine before she entered the hermitage. Sister Hannes, a widow, was given a small sum of money by Maria Petyt in order to be able to enter the hermitage.<sup>50</sup>

This group probably had the same clothing, the same rules and the same ideal, and to the outside world the sisters probably lived like angels. Yet angels have wings and when flying some feathers are lost. There were internal tensions in the community life, however restricted this life was.<sup>51</sup>

When entering the hermitage, the sisters brought their own possessions with them. This money was managed by the mother superior and the priest who acted as spiritual director. They did not invest in land but in pensions.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes they invested in a house. On 14 February 1660 Maria Petyt and Catharina van Orsaghen were registered in the general ledger of Brabant for a hereditary pension of 12 fl. per annum.<sup>53</sup> Later this money went to the hermitage and, in 1724, to the Carmelites of Mechelen: the hermitage in Termuylen had meanwhile become a real cloister.<sup>54</sup>

### The Physical Life

In this section we describe a typical day in the lives of the sisters in the hermitage. We start with their physical life, the life of the body, realising that it is inseparable from their spiritual life.

We have access to a very precise schedule.<sup>55</sup> The sisters prayed their night prayer: they got up at midnight and went back to their cells at 1 a.m. They were

49 *Het leven van de seer Edele Doorluchtigste en H. Begga* (1712) 480.

50 Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica, convent of Mechelen*: act of 9 September 1707.

51 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 67–69, 156f.

52 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 9r-10r

53 Boxmeer, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut, *Provincia Flandro-Belgica*, box 1: act of 14 February 1660, cf. Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 11, fol. 36r-37r; Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 5, 113; Mechelen, Stadsarchief, *Archieven van het rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 6, 65.

54 Bronselaer (1945) 43.

55 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 2r-3r. This schedule would change if the sisters adopted the statutes of a cloistered order. The great canonical office would shift the return to the cell to 2 a.m.

woken again at 4 a.m. They went to sleep around 8 p.m.<sup>56</sup> Thus they had about seven hours' sleep. Maria Petyt wrote that sometimes, the night prayer brought on a certain weakness so she had to be taken back to her cell.<sup>57</sup>

Immediately after getting up in the morning the sisters had time to read and to tidy their rooms. They were also expected to take turns cleaning the hermitage once a week.<sup>58</sup> The detailed instructions concerning clothing might have been meant to avoid confusing the sisters with actual convent sisters like the Carmelites. By and large one could say that outside the hermitage the sisters looked like any other spiritual daughter. Inside the hermitage the rules concerning clothing were a bit more flexible. When possible shoes were replaced by slippers.<sup>59</sup>

After the morning chores the sisters went to two masses in the church. Until 11 a.m. they were allowed to do work that was not distracting. Their handwork was sold or used for catechism or liturgical purposes.<sup>60</sup>

At 11.30 a.m., after an examination of conscience, each sister ate her meal in her cell. This was followed by solitary recreation in the garden, either reading, writing or sewing.<sup>61</sup> We learned that Maria translated letters and also wrote a lot.<sup>62</sup> From 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. the sisters remained in their cells where they interrupted their work periodically for vespers and prayer.<sup>63</sup> After communal prayer in the oratory the sisters went back to their cells for supper. The communal night prayer was at 7.30 p.m.; twice a week it was followed by confession, spiritual instruction by the mother superior and her individual guidance. She had to visit her daughters in their cells at least twice a week.<sup>64</sup>

Although the sisters ate in their cells most of the time, on Sundays they ate in the refectory. At night it was usually bread and butter and fruit, and at noon soup with some bread. The fruits were selected carefully; meat and fish were excluded. Sometimes the sisters ate eggs. Beer regularly accompanied the meal. Wine was not allowed, except in cases of sickness.<sup>65</sup> Luckily there were

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56 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 3r.

57 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 216.

58 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 4r.

59 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 5r-v.

60 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 5v.

61 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 2v.

62 Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 22; vol. 2, 232; vol. 3, 128, 204; Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 238f, 249, 309.

63 When alone in her cell Maria sometimes postponed the minor offices. Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 43.

64 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 2v-4r.

65 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 4r-v.



exceptions to that rule. Maria Petyt did drink a goblet of wine during the carnival.<sup>66</sup> Fasting was very strict, but feasts were allowed from time to time.

### The Spiritual Life

All these physical constraints have to be understood in the context of Maria Petyt's striving for a life of intimacy with God. If we are not aware of this aim, we cannot understand her writings or her ascetic life. To reach her goal the accent was on solitude, silence and prayer.

Solitude was achieved by spending a lot of time alone in her cell, a minimum of refectory and recreation time, and a maximum of silent prayer. We shall not dwell on this subject. However, there was one difficulty: the outside world. In principle the sisters were only allowed to go out at Easter for the Easter service in the parish church.<sup>67</sup> Yet Maria Petyt made some exceptions, for example during a jubilee at St. Rumbold's cathedral.<sup>68</sup> The sisters had to go out in pairs. On these outings Maria picked up all sorts of news, with the result that her prayers always had a very human character of intercession.<sup>69</sup> Other sisters went out, too, for instance for shopping, particularly when there was no special sister for these tasks.<sup>70</sup> However, there were also contacts with the outside world inside the hermitage. These took place in the parlour, with another sister to witness the conversation.<sup>71</sup>

The sisters' ordinances and writings testify to a profound wish to participate in the 'great silence of the Carmelites'.<sup>72</sup> However, this inner attitude had to go hand in hand with outward silence. This was not always possible, and Maria complained that her sleep was disturbed by the noisy youth of Mechelen.<sup>73</sup>

Concerning prayer, we have to confine ourselves to its outward characteristics. First we need to comment on their reading. Maria and her sisters read the little office of Our Lady but in the ordinances Michael of St. Augustine writes that the sisters may read, when recognized as an enclosed convent, the ordinary choral prayer.<sup>74</sup> Maria did not have to strain to read the office with her by

66 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 186.

67 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 5v, Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 77.

68 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 199.

69 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 139f; Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 62.

70 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 11v.

71 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 6r.

72 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 257.

73 Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 239.

74 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 2r.

now healed eyes: she knew the prayers by heart.<sup>75</sup> After the night office the sisters practised self-flagellation.

In church the sisters attended two masses and received communion daily after the first mass.<sup>76</sup> Witnesses noticed Maria Petyt's intense devotion during this communion. Others commented on her attitude during the adoration, where she would sometimes stay for hours.<sup>77</sup> Occasionally Maria had a sudden impulse to receive communion from any priest who happened to be available at that moment.<sup>78</sup> Once or twice a week the sisters went to confession.<sup>79</sup> Once in a while they were allowed to confess to a priest they did not know. Spiritual guidance by priests other than Carmelites was not totally prohibited, but it was not encouraged in order to avoid getting lost in all sorts of spiritualities.<sup>80</sup> In this way the inner life of some sisters became such an intense union with God that it seemed to merge into eternal life.

When entering the hermitage the sisters were allowed to choose where they wanted to be buried.<sup>81</sup> However, the funeral service had to be held in the parish church first. Maria probably chose the Carmelite church, where she remained buried until the French revolution. Other sisters followed her example.<sup>82</sup> To date no relics of these bodies have been found. Who would think when climbing the stairs to the huge metropolitan church of Mechelen today that some of these steps are the gravestones of the sisters of the old hermitage?<sup>83</sup>

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75 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 324.

76 Justification in *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 7r.

77 Timothy of the Presentation (1729) 5, 4–7.

78 Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 249. In that time and district, it was common for anchoresses to receive communion frequently (every day).

79 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 71-v. Maria Petyt had many confessors. Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 200.

80 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 7v.

81 *Ordonnantiën*, fol. 8r.

82 Antwerpen, Stadsarchief / Felixarchief, *KK* (Kerken en kloosters), 1493, 65–78.

83 The gravestones were used for the restoration of the main entrance of St. Rumbold's Cathedral.

## Archives

**Antwerpen**, Felixarchief (Stadsarchief), *κκ* (Kerken en kloosters), 1493: [Norbertus a Sancta Juliana], *Conventus Mechliniensis, primum fundate in Neckerspoel, deinde translati intra muros Civitatis, nunc sub titulo Sancti Patris Nostri Eliae Prophetae, antiqua & novissima descriptio*.

**Boxmeer**, Nederlands Carmelitaans Instituut,

- [1] *Provincia Flandro-Belgica*, s.n.: *Box 1, varia*;
- [2] *Provincia Flandro-Belgica*, s.n.: *Conventus Mechelen*;
- [3] *Provincia Flandro-Belgica*, s.n.: *Conventus Liedekerke*.

**Gent**, Rijksarchief, *Oud notariaat*, 1270: Notaris A. Vanden Broecke (1652–1655).

**Leuven**, KADOC, *Provinciaal archief van de Vlaamse Minderbroeders*, 2.2.291: J. van Meerbeek, *Register ende specificatie van allen de landen, bemden, bosschen, aerden ende opstallen der convente vande Patres Carmeliten binnen Mechelen toebehoorende* (1653).

**Mechelen**, Archivum archiepiscopalia,

- [1] *Oud parochiearchief, St. Servaas, Schaarbeek*, kluis van St. Servaas: s.n.: *Ordonnantien voor de heremitagie der susteren van de Alderheylighste Maget Maria des Berghs Carmeli. Aen hun door Godts ingeven voorgeschreven door den seer eerwaardighe pater Michael a Sancto Augustino, provintiael der Nederduytsche provintie der eerwaardighe paters carmeliten onse lieve vrouwe-broeders in 't jaer 1660. Geaprobeert door den seer eerwaardighsten pater Marius Venturinus, generael van de voorseyde order ende apostolischen visiter der carmeliten, op den vijffden january 1660*. Until the publication, we refer to the original folios of this document.
- [2] *Oud parochiearchief, St. Servaas, Schaarbeek*, kluis van St. Servaas, s.n.
- [3] *Conventualia, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, 20: *cijnsregister*.

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- [1] *Archieven van het Rijksarchief Antwerpen in bewaring gegeven, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen: 1 Copies of acts of the convent, 5 Manuaelboeck, 6 Nieuwen registerboeck, 11 Inventory of the archives*.
- [2] *Augustijnen*, 40 B: act of the alderman (1613).
- [3] *Oud archief, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, CC, 31: *Necrologium Carmeli Mechliniesis; Ex diario Carmeli Mechliniensis*.
- [4] *Oud archief, Geschoeide karmelieten van Mechelen*, Q, 1: Brocardus a Sancto Flugentio, *Liber depositi Carmeli Mechliniensis ab anno 1584*.

**Rome**, Archivum generale ord. Carmelitarum, *II Provincia Flandro-Belgica*, s.n.: *Convent of Brussel*.

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\* (without signature = s.n.).

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- haere schriften ghetrocken, ende by een vergadert door den seer Eerw. P. Michaël a Sancto Augustino, Provinciael vande Paters onse Lieve Vrouwe Broeders des Berghs Carmeli, inde Neder-duytsche Provincie. Vol van volmaeckte deughden, om naer te volghen, van goddelijcke jonsten, verlichtighen, ende bewerkinghen om van te verwonderen, ende Godt te loven. Van alderleye onderwysinghen tot de volmaecktheyt voor de beghinnende, voortgaende, ende volmaeckte. Godt is wonderlijck in sijne Heylighen. Psalm. 67. 36. Te Ghendt, Gedruckt by de Hoirs van Jan Vanden Kerckhove, op d'Hooghpoorte in't ghecroont Sweerd. 4 vol.
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## Living as a Spiritual Virgin and Claiming Prophetic Authority: The Parallel Lives of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon

*Mirjam de Baar*

One of the most exciting things about doing historical research is discovering previously unknown manuscripts, particularly when they shed an entirely new or different light on familiar historical figures and raise new questions. This applies in particular to the Latin manuscript with autobiographical writings by Maria Petyt, which was recently discovered by Esther van de Vate in the Archive of the Carmelites in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Until now, Maria Petyt has always been regarded on the basis of her known autobiographical writings as a mystic who withdrew from the world to devote herself to prayer and meditation. But an entirely different picture seems to emerge from the recently discovered Latin manuscript – a picture of a woman who took a very close interest in political affairs and adopted a position in disputes in the church politics of her day. The question is how these seemingly conflicting self-representations relate to one another and, following on from that, how Petyt, as a religiously inspired woman, tried to assume – or was given – authority. Was this an atypical case or does Petyt's conduct fit into the repertoires of religious behaviour of female contemporaries who, like her, laid claim to a right to speak on religious matters? To answer these questions, I shall summon up another seventeenth-century spiritual virgin – another mystic and author of religious and autobiographical writings – whose early life and work have a lot in common with Maria Petyt's but who made completely different choices later in her life. She is Antoinette Bourignon. Unlike Maria Petyt she would break up with the Roman Catholic Church as an institution and cross the dividing line between the various Christian denominations by founding an ecumenical congregation before the term existed.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Vita venerabilis matris Mariae a Sta Teresia*, Rome, Carm. Archive, Post III, 70, fol. 30r-49v, translated into English by Veronie Meeuwssen. See p. 119–239 of this volume.

2 On Bourignon's spiritual leadership see esp. de Baar (2004).



### The Self-Narratives of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon

Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon were contemporaries: Maria Petyt lived from 1623 to 1677, Antoinette Bourignon was born in 1616 and died in 1680. Both left a spiritual autobiography that was published posthumously. Coincidentally, these works came out in the same year. Petyt's *Het Leven* was published in Gent in 1683 by Jan vanden Kerchove, in an edition edited by her spiritual mentor Michael of St. Augustine.<sup>3</sup> *La Vie de Dam<sup>lle</sup> Antoinette Bourignon*, edited by her spiritual son Pierre Poiret, was published by the Amsterdam booksellers Pieter Arentsz and Jan Rieuwertsz.<sup>4</sup> Anyone who studies the biographies of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon in any sort of detail must immediately be struck by the number of parallels in their self-narratives.

Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon were both born in the southern Flemish (now French) part of the then Southern Netherlands: Antoinette Bourignon in the city of Lille, and Maria Petyt forty kilometres away in Hazebrouck.<sup>5</sup> The language boundary between the Flemish-speaking and French-speaking regions of south Flanders ran precisely between the two places. Maria Petyt consequently grew up in a Flemish-speaking environment, although in her youth she spent some time in Lille and in Saint-Omer to learn French.<sup>6</sup> Unsurprisingly, her written Flemish is laced with French words. Bourignon's native tongue was French, although she must have been familiar with Flemish to some extent. In her autobiography she tells that when she was a child her parents sent her to Ieper for ten months to learn Dutch.<sup>7</sup> Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon both dwell on their childhoods at length in their autobiographies, on the parental environment in which they grew up and their leanings towards a life dedicated to God. Put the two autobiographies side by side and you see two lives that followed more or less identical courses until the moment the women reached adulthood. They both grew up in a well-to-do merchant's

3 *Het Leven van de Weerdighe Moeder Maria A S<sup>ta</sup>. Teresia, (alias) Petyt* (1683), ed. Merlier (1976).

4 *La Vie de Dam<sup>lle</sup>. Antoinette Bourignon* (1683), translated into Dutch as *Het Leven van Juffr. Antoinette Bourignon. Ten deelen by haar self, en ten deele by ymant anders van haar kennis* (1683). This work includes Poiret's biography of Antoinette Bourignon and two autobiographies by herself: *La Parole de Dieu, ou Sa Vie Intérieure*, written in 1663, and *La Vie Extérieure*, written in 1668. On Poiret, a former Walloon minister, see Chevallier (1994).

5 Biographical details of Maria Petyt's life are taken from Merlier's edition of *Het Leven van de Weerdighe Moeder Maria A S<sup>ta</sup>. Teresia, (alias) Petyt* (1683). Biographical details of Antoinette Bourignon's life are taken from her own autobiographical writings, published in *La Vie de Dam<sup>lle</sup>. Antoinette Bourignon* (1683).

6 Merlier ed. (1976) ch. VIII, l. 20 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 11.

7 Bourignon (1668) 152–153.



family where they lacked for nothing in material terms. Both became familiar at an early age with a faith pervaded by the spirit of the Counter Reformation. Lille, the prosperous textile city where Bourignon grew up and Petyt spent part of her childhood, was a bulwark of the Counter Reformation.

The Catholic offensive set in train after the Council of Trent went hand in hand with a re-landscaping of the public domain and with all sorts of new devotional practices. Between 1588 and 1667 the number of monastic foundations in Lille almost tripled. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits and the Capuchins – the two great militant orders of the Counter Reformation – founded new houses in the city. In their wake came other religious communities, which likewise focused primarily on prayer, instruction and evangelization. In the end seventeen new orders established themselves in the city, no fewer than twelve of them for women. The rise of all these new orders was accompanied by numerous new devotional practices, the construction of new Stations of the Cross, a revival of the Marian cult, countless processions and a run on relics, and by more intensive religious instruction, stronger visualization of key scenes in the life of Christ, more penitential sermons and so forth.<sup>8</sup> The experiences and impressions described in Petyt's and Bourignon's autobiographies make abundantly clear the extent to which the new spiritual zeal bound up with the Counter Reformation left its mark on their view of faith and their perception of reality in their youth.

As they look back over their lives, both Petyt and Bourignon refer to the burning desire for 'the wilderness' they felt in childhood.<sup>9</sup> The stories about the Desert Fathers, which they both knew well, must have been responsible for this at least in part. They both engaged in a battle with their parents to be allowed to pursue their spiritual ideal of a life cut off from the world and dedicated to God.

In 1636 Antoinette Bourignon ran away from home to escape a marriage her parents had arranged for her. In her spiritual autobiography written in 1663 she says that not long before this she had had a vision in which St. Augustine appeared to her and instructed her to restore his order.<sup>10</sup> For Antoinette Bourignon this was the start of a long spiritual quest that would eventually bring her to a critical, independent attitude towards the church authorities. For her own part, she would rather have entered one of the strictest new orders, the dis-

8 Lottin (2013).

9 Merlier ed. (1976) ch. VIII, l. 1–4 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, II. Bourignon (1663) 10; Bourignon (1668) 150.

10 Bourignon (1663) 7–9. In *La Vie Extérieure* she does not refer to this vision.

calced Carmelites, but her father refused to pay the dowry that was demanded.<sup>11</sup>

Maria Petyt did everything she could to persuade her parents of her deep-rooted longing for the convent life and eventually managed to talk them into letting her go to the Augustinian convent of the canonesses regular in Gent recommended by her confessor. The French invasion of Flanders in 1643–44 and the looting it brought in its train meant that Maria Petyt had to postpone her plans for a year. As a result of the crisis, her father was unable to raise the required dowry and thought it was too dangerous for his daughter to travel all the way to distant Gent.<sup>12</sup> The same incursion by the French army had personal consequences for Antoinette Bourignon, too. She had to leave the hermitage outside Lille city walls that she had moved into three years earlier because it was not safe to remain outside the city in time of war.<sup>13</sup>

Eventually both Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon sought a way of life in which they could give their own independent interpretation of their ideal of a life devoted to God and centred on prayer and meditation. In the Catholic Southern Netherlands of the time, particularly in Brabant and Flanders, women's opportunities to find an appropriate form for this were legion. They could enter a regular order or opt for a life as a Beguine or a Spiritual Daughter. Monials (nuns) took vows for life (poverty, chastity and obedience). Beguines, in contrast, made temporary vows and did not take a vow of poverty at all. Spiritual Daughters generally did not take vows, but chose to remain unwed and lived as laywomen serving God outside the convent walls.<sup>14</sup> Like the Beguines, they could retain their own possessions. The ways of life of Spiritual Daughters ranged from living alone or with a few other likeminded women, to coming together in a community. In practice these Spiritual Daughters often accepted a Rule, and placed themselves under the spiritual authority of their confessor.<sup>15</sup> The Belgian Church historian M. De Vroede, who devoted a study to Spiritual Daughters in the Southern Netherlands, did not venture to estimate numbers, but did suggest that in the seventeenth-century, at least, this was a significant phenomenon encountered both in the towns and cities and out in the country.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Bourignon (1663) 4–5.

<sup>12</sup> Merlier ed. (1976) ch. XIX = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 24ff.

<sup>13</sup> Bourignon (1663) 63–65; Bourignon (1668) 181.

<sup>14</sup> Monteiro (1996) 29–36.

<sup>15</sup> On the fusion of these duties see Ranft (1994).

<sup>16</sup> De Vroede (1994) (no references to Petyt).

Unlike Maria Petyt, Antoinette Bourignon never joined a religious order. She often spent time in communities of spiritual virgins, but she never took vows. Occasionally she came under the authority of a spiritual director, but certainly not in the sort of formalized way that seems to have been the case with Maria Petyt. This would probably have led in practice to a focus on different forms of spirituality, but fundamentally they were both concerned with developing an inner spiritual life that would if possible lead to communion with God. They must in part have drawn upon the same spiritual sources. Direct and indirect references in their writings point to the work of, among others, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas à Kempis, Francis de Sales and Benedict of Canfield.<sup>17</sup>

Coincidentally, both Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon ended up in Mechelen after an interlude in Gent. Petyt had indeed joined the Augustinian canonesses, but she had to leave the order during her novitiate because an eye condition prevented her from taking part in Mass as a choir nun. After a stay of five months at the Klein-Begijnhof in Gent, where she placed herself under the authority of a Carmelite as a novice of the Third Order, she moved in with another directee of this Carmelite. In her autobiography she describes the devotional practices and penances imposed upon her under his strict tutelage. When this Carmelite left Gent, she chose Michael of St. Augustine as her spiritual director and, when he became prior in Mechelen, she followed him after five years. In 1657 she and another sister moved into a house known as 'de Cluyse' – the hermitage – near the Carmelite church, and she lived there *de facto* in accordance with the first rule of the Carmelite order until her death.<sup>18</sup> Some other likeminded women joined Maria Petyt in this house in Mechelen to share her way of life.

In 1653 Antoinette Bourignon became a regent and principal of a home for poor girls in Lille, where she submitted to the Rule of St. Augustine. Accusations of sorcery forced her to resign from her position in 1662, and she left Lille to seek justice from higher legal authorities. This took her first to Gent and then to Mechelen. In Gent Antoinette Bourignon lived for a while with a group of spiritual daughters. In 1663, six years after Maria Petyt, Antoinette Bourignon settled in Mechelen. For the first seven weeks she stayed in the Groot-Begijnhof. After that she found a place with the Zwartzusters or Black Sisters.

During her time in Mechelen, Antoinette Bourignon's spiritual quest would result in a complete break with the Roman Catholic power structures. In 1667

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17 Deblaere (1962) 128–164, 174–176; De Baar (2004) 205, 207, 222.

18 For her daily programme in these years see the contribution of Michel van Meerbeeck to this volume, p. 53–66.

she left her homeland and settled in Amsterdam, the multi-confessional metropolis of the Northern Netherlands, with Christiaan de Cort, an Oratorian priest she had met in Mechelen and with whom she had become friends. Her life took a completely new course and her self-image and religious message changed dramatically. In Amsterdam Antoinette Bourignon broke through the boundaries of her religious environment. From 1669 she moved into the public sphere by publishing her writings in French and Dutch editions, later on also in German and Latin translations, so as to reach the widest possible readership.<sup>19</sup> In part as a consequence, she claimed for herself an entirely new role as a spiritual leader for questing Christians.

Reviewing the biographies of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon, we can say that until 1667, the year Antoinette left the Southern Netherlands, there are remarkable similarities between their 'external' lives. The question is whether we can also discern clear parallels in the way each represented herself – and, if so, from what these resemblances derive.

### Teresa's Life as an Exemplar

Peter Burke has pointed out the importance attached to modelling oneself on authorized examples in the Early Modern era when it came to self-representation in autobiographical texts.<sup>20</sup> It is likely that Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon chose to do this because their autobiographical writings served a very specific purpose. I shall come back to this shortly. This practice could go some way towards explaining why the life stories presented by Antoinette Bourignon and Maria Petyt are so remarkably similar.

Precisely when and why did Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon commit the stories of their lives to paper? Without knowing what the other was doing, they wrote their spiritual autobiographies at much the same time, while they were living in the same town, Mechelen. According to the Belgian scholar Albert Deblaere, who investigated Maria Petyt's life and work thoroughly, she began writing her life story in 1662 and worked on it for several years.<sup>21</sup> Bourignon wrote her *Vie Intérieure* in 1663. Both Petyt and Bourignon wrote the stories of their lives on the instructions of a religious authority figure. In Petyt's case, it was her spiritual director and confessor, Michael of St. Augustine. He ordered her to write 'an account of her life' and at the same time to record the extraor-

19 See de Baar (2004), Appendix III (overview) and Appendix A (enumerative bibliography).

20 Burke (1997) 17–28.

21 Deblaere (1962) 31.

dinary 'grace and divine influence she experienced by the mercy of God'.<sup>22</sup> His intention was to use what she wrote to investigate whether Petyt was led by the spirit of God or whether she might be misled. In Bourignon's case it was the Vicar-General of the diocese of Mechelen, Aimé Coriache, who instructed her to write her life story. He was not her spiritual director, but Bourignon had asked him for his support in her legal proceedings against the magistrate in Lille after she had been discredited there because of a 'sorcery affair'.<sup>23</sup> Coriache wanted to know whether Bourignon really was sent by God, as she insisted, before he agreed to help her. Bourignon must have realized only too well that this request provided her with the opportunity to get her claims to authority validated. On 6 November 1663 she presented him with her spiritual autobiography, which bore the revealing title, *La Parole de Dieu* (The Word of God).

Earlier studies of Petyt focus on the influence of Teresa of Avila, her great exemplar, whose name she took as her second religious name during her time at the Beguine community in Gent. Deblaere, for instance, points to the correspondences in the description of the form and symptoms of the disease from which Petyt suffered right down to specific terms and images, and he goes on to draw attention to the comparable development that Petyt and Teresa underwent in their perception of Christ. Petyt also took her categorization of visionary experiences from Teresa.<sup>24</sup>

Teresa's autobiography (*Libro de la Vida*), which at that time was available in numerous Dutch editions, clearly did more than leave its mark on the substance of Maria Petyt's spiritual education. The published biography of the Spanish Carmelite nun, who was canonized in 1622, must also have served as a model and source of inspiration when Maria Petyt came to write the account of her own life. It is remarkable, for instance, to take just a small example, that Maria Petyt mentioned the pleasure she got from reading stories of chivalry – just as Teresa of Avila had done.<sup>25</sup>

In an article on autobiographies by women in seventeenth-century Spain, the Spanish scholar Sonja Herpoel showed how Teresa's *Libro de la Vida* came to serve as a model for nuns.<sup>26</sup> This exemplary function of Teresa's book seems not to have been confined to the Carmelite sisters and their area of influence. In terms of its form and content, Bourignon's *La Parole de Dieu* likewise has

22 Merlier ed. (1976) Introduction, 7–8.

23 For the accusations of sorcery see de Baar (2004) 74–78.

24 Deblaere (1962) 145–52. Cf. the contribution of Elisabeth Hense on the spirituality of Teresa of Avila and the Latin manuscript, p. 252–265.

25 Merlier ed. (1976) ch. XII, l. 17–19 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 16. Cf. Teresa of Avila (1990) vol. 1, 13.

26 Herpoel (1994) 42–57. Cf. Herpoel (1999).

similarities to Teresa's spiritual autobiography, French editions of which were circulating in the seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup>

In writing the account of her life, Teresa of Avila had been influenced in turn by Augustine's *Confessions*, which is regarded as a paradigm for the genre of conversion literature in Western Christianity. At its heart is the destruction of old, sinful humanity and the rise of the new humanity reborn in Christ. In both Maria Petyt's and Antoinette Bourignon's work there are countless digressions about former levity and the worldly company in which they had lived. They can be described as *topoi*, but this does not detract from conversion. In both their autobiographies we also find the familiar *topoi* of the 'genre' of the vocation story: leaving parents, the specific motivation, the choice of a particular order or religious community, the opposition and the postponement of entering an order or community. In both, the subjection of one's own will to the will of God dominates the rest of their lives as they described them.

### Writing and being Written

God and no one else, declared both Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon, determined what they wrote. It was God, they said, who caused them to write through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They were only instruments. This claim to divine inspiration does not, however, alter the fact that we can identify countless places in their texts where the voice of God stops and that of the author herself begins. This raises the question as to whether two different components perhaps have to be distinguished in the writings of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon. I refer here, following the Belgian literary historian Karel Porteman, to the distinction between a receptive component – inspiration – and an active component – creativity, writing itself. In his discussion of Maria Petyt's work, Porteman tellingly summarizes the two components as 'writing and being written'.<sup>28</sup>

The term 'being written' contains within it the assignment of religious meaning promoted by female mystics. But in the same description we can also identify a sex-specific component that Porteman did not make explicit. In that sense, being written refers to one of the ways in which, until the Early Modern era, religious female writers justified their intervention in the dominant, male debate. What Maaïke Meijer, an expert in cultural studies and Dutch literature, has observed more generally about women who write applied to these women

27 De Baar (2004) 207.

28 Porteman (1997) 285. Cf. Porteman and Smits-Veldt (2009) 829–832.

as well. They had to subscribe to 'a cultural space where meanings are already laid down in a particular direction'.<sup>29</sup> Linda Anderson, who devoted a theoretical study to women's autobiographical writings, makes plain what this intervention implies: 'It is necessary to take into account the fact that the woman who attempts to write herself is engaged by the nature of the activity itself in re-writing the stories that already exist about her, since by seeking to publicize herself she is violating an important cultural construction of her femininity as passive or hidden. She is resisting or changing what is known about her'.<sup>30</sup>

Admittedly Anderson is referring to modern autobiographical writing in which reflection on the self is key, whereas Antoinette Bourignon's and Maria Petyt's autobiographical writings were primarily concerned with convincing the spiritual authority, on whose instructions the life stories were written, of their authenticity. And yet, the premise formulated here brings us back to the question as to how seventeenth-century semi-religious women like Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon had to write to produce an effect – and do it in a period when the feminine mystical experience was treated with distrust. It was not for nothing that, from the Counter Reformation onwards, female mysticism was kept under control by the system of spiritual leadership. For religious female authors it consequently came down to using the right 'rhetorical strategies'. Alison Weber, for instance, demonstrates the way Teresa of Avila availed herself of the 'strategy of concession' or the 'strategy of humility'.<sup>31</sup> Weber argues that using rhetorical strategies like these allowed Teresa to achieve her goals without disturbing the existing order. In the cases of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon, their credibility stood or fell by the extent to which they were able to persuade the reader of the message that God poured into their 'soul'. They had to find a convincing way of putting this in writing – but this was an act of human creativity that they could not lay claim to as such.

Regardless of whether Antoinette Bourignon and Maria Petyt were or were not convinced that they were inspired by higher powers and that it was not they, but God, who wielded their pens, putting this conviction into writing may have strengthened their prophetic identity. It could at the same time have reinforced their self-confidence in coming out with the divine truths that they were to interpret. From the previously unknown Latin manuscript of Maria Petyt's work, it would, after all, appear that, like Bourignon, she was credited with prophetic gifts.

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29 Meijer (1996) 38.

30 Anderson (1986) 59.

31 Weber (1990) 50–64.



## Prophetic Gifts

Maria Petyt communicated her prophecies in her letters to Michael of St. Augustine, whom she explicitly asked to keep secret for as long as she would live.<sup>32</sup> In the letters written between November 1672 and July 1673 she overtly demonstrated how she inwardly absorbed herself in the wars of Louis XIV empathizing with his victories and defeats.<sup>33</sup> Maria Petyt even linked her spiritual credibility to the outcome of the French king's military fortunes which she prophesied. She also wrote to her confessor how in her prayers and visions she dealt with the conflict with Jansenism, which struck at the unity the Roman Catholic Church in these years.

Maria Petyt's engagement with political and ecclesiastical events may at first sight seem odd, but, as we will see from Antoinette Bourignon's example, a life of prayer and meditation dedicated to God and a strong involvement with the world were not mutually exclusive. It is inherent in the prophetic self-image that a prophet or prophetess who regards himself or herself as an instrument chosen by God is driven to convey the message to the outside world. The fact that this outside world was, in certain circumstances, extraordinarily receptive to messages interpreted by female prophets is evidenced by the response that Antoinette Bourignon provoked between 1663 and 1667 in the circles of Jansenist oriented clergy. While she was in Gent and Mechelen, Antoinette Bourignon met a number of clerics with Jansenist sympathies.<sup>34</sup> As well as Aimé Coriache, there were Christiaan de Cort, Pierre Noels and Ignace Gillemans. Noels was an Augustinian priest, who had been Cornelis Jansen's secretary when he was Bishop of Ieper. Bourignon engaged in long conversations with him, about divine grace, about St. Augustine's ideas on it and about his conflict with Pelagius. On Noels' advice, it seems, she went to hear sermons by anti-Jansenists in Mechelen. Thanks to him she must have been able to build up a clear idea of the theological controversy that was causing considerable dissension among the clergy in Mechelen, too.

Antoinette Bourignon also conducted intense discussions, which she called 'conferences', with her other clerical friends. At these conferences she spoke freely about 'the miracles that God had performed in and through her, and

32 English translation of the Latin manuscript, *The life of the venerable Maria of Saint Teresa* 30r.

33 For Maria Petyt's preference for the French king see Veronie Meeuwssen's contribution to this volume, p. 240–251.

34 On Bourignon's involvement in the conflict between Jansenists and Jesuits between 1662 and 1667 see de Baar (2004) 82–94.



those that He intends to do through her in the future'. The consideration with which her listeners responded to what Antoinette Bourignon herself regarded as her divine message must have strengthened her image of herself as a prophet. One of them, De Cort, wrote down the answers Bourignon gave to his questions about the Church, the creed, the monastic life and the gospel under the title *La Lumière du Monde* – the Light of the World. The conferences with her clerical friends inspired Antoinette Bourignon to write a series of treatises on divine grace, free will, preaching and devotions, confession, penitence, the Eucharist, prayer, discernment of spirits and so on. These pieces circulated in manuscript form among her clerical friends, who copied them for their own use.

It emerges from Antoinette Bourignon's correspondence that the circle of Jansenist clerics with whom she was in touch from 1663 onwards were not simply receptive to her 'feelings', but actively encouraged her to express them. They even urged her to go to Leuven and share her view of the downfall and destruction of the Church with the academics at the university there. We may conclude from this that Antoinette Bourignon had successfully assimilated the ideas of her Jansenist-sympathizer friends. At the same time, as a layperson and a woman she remained an outsider – an outsider, what's more, who was interested not so much in questions of doctrine as in religious practice. The fact that Antoinette Bourignon nonetheless was accorded theological authority suggests, rather, that she was able to make the best and most convincing use of the 'room to speak' that opened up in and through the clash between two conflicting representations of free will and divine grace. She even managed to steer her own course. For instance, while she took a firm position against penitence purely for fear of punishment (*attritio*) and emphasized the need for true, perfect repentance (*contritio*), at the same time she rejected the Jansenists' strict doctrine of grace, which ruled that a person might only approach God in fear. In Antoinette Bourignon's view everyone could in principle be saved, thanks to a special act of grace, by following Christ's example and turning back to God.<sup>35</sup>

### In Conclusion

When I studied the historiography on Maria Petyt while I was preparing this contribution, it struck me how strongly she was embedded in a diachronic mystical tradition that goes back on the one hand to Flemish predecessors like

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35 See e.g. Bourignon (1681) vol. 1, ch. 2, 26–46.

Ruusbroec and Hadewych, and is inspired on the other by the Spanish mysticism of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. This embedding process was, of course, already set in train by Petyt's spiritual director, Michael of St. Augustine, who in selecting and publishing her writings had primarily an edifying goal in view. He presented Petyt, as emerges from his foreword to the reader, first and foremost as a model of virtue who deserved emulation. At the same time he endeavoured to silence any criticism of Petyt's work by contemporaries by propounding, contextualizing and empowering her bridal mysticism.<sup>36</sup> It is thanks in part to his intervention that Petyt has come to be regarded above all as a mystical writer.

I have demonstrated in this article that a broader contextual and comparative approach to Maria Petyt sheds light on new patterns and parallels that can be important to a better understanding of her life and work. Now that we know that the writings edited by Michael of St. Augustine do not contain Petyt's full works and that the newly discovered manuscript in Rome paints a different picture of her from the one that emerges from her works published in the seventeenth century, it would seem to justify the conclusion that 'mystic' is too narrow a classification. Maria Petyt appears, rather, to have presented herself as a 'prophetess'. The example of her contemporary, Antoinette Bourignon, shows that a spiritual virgin focused wholly on God or Christ in seventeenth-century Mechelen could certainly claim that role for herself.

From the recently discovered manuscript in Rome, it appears that Maria Petyt, too, took part in the dispute between the Jansenists and the Jesuits. Unlike Antoinette Bourignon she sided with the anti-Jansenists by disqualifying Jansenism as heresy. Was she in a similar way like Bourignon in contact with a network of anti-Jansenist-oriented clerics? Did she, like Bourignon, engage in so-called conferences, or was she involved in the theological arguments in some other way – through correspondence, perhaps? And finally, one could wonder whether Petyt and Bourignon may have regarded one another as competitors. Given the parallels between their lives and the small community in a seventeenth-century town like Mechelen, one would, after all, expect that at some point their paths must have crossed. However, there is nothing in their autobiographical writings to suggest that they were in touch either directly or indirectly. Is it possible that they 'cut each other dead' in their work, or did Maria Petyt only come to the fore after Antoinette Bourignon had left Mechelen in 1667?

It is typical of figures who present themselves as prophets or prophetesses that at a certain point they profess to be God's sole instrument chosen

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36 Deblaere (1962) 15–22; Merlier ed. (1976) Introduction, 5–12.

to proclaim His message to the world.<sup>37</sup> This claim of exclusivity in no way implies singularity, however, as the large number of prophets and prophetesses who made their voices heard in the liberal Amsterdam of the seventeenth century testifies. What is surprising, though, is that in the seventeenth-century city of Mechelen at around the same time two spiritual virgins should appear on the scene and present themselves as prophetesses. It is not so much the fact that they were women that is remarkable. It was, after all, as Bourignon's male friends stated explicitly, specifically to women that prophetic authority could be given in a certain context.<sup>38</sup> No, the surprising thing is that it has taken so many centuries for the intervention of a second religious or semi-religious female in a debate on a fundamental theological issue otherwise conducted by men to come to light. This has opened up new points of reference for further research on both Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon, who besides siding with opposing Church parties seemed to have had much in common. Whether they also shared similar ideas on e.g. spiritual motherhood and on 'the discernment of spirits' remains to be investigated.

Further comparative research into their theological ideas, self-image and self-representation may not only contribute to a better understanding of both Mary Petyt's and Antoinette Bourignon's writings but also deepen our insight in the cultural context that nourished these spiritual virgins and within which they could make their voices heard.

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37 Cf. Watt (2001).

38 De Baar (2004) 398–404.

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PART 2

*The Latin Manuscript about the Dutch War  
and Its Interpretation*





## Some Notes on the History of the Manuscript of the Life of Maria Petyt by Michael of St. Augustine

*Giovanni Grosso*

Every book has something unique. Each says something about the author and the content, the publisher, the printing, the distribution and the various outlets, the readers, imagined or expected, or unexpected or unsuspected. All of this goes to tell the story of that particular book. A fifteenth edition does not have the same value or importance as a first edition; a translation has a value of its own. We could continue in this vein ... but all of this is seen to be even more true if the book in question is a manuscript. In this case it has a uniqueness all of its own. A manuscript, even when it is a copy of a text, and not the first copy, is always something unique. No two pages are the same, even the errors are distinctive; every copy has a history of its own.

That is why it is possible to tell the story of the codex that contains the *Life* of the venerable Maria of St. Teresa Petyt, in a way that is analogous to the way in which we might tell the story of a person.

We begin with its physical appearance. The codex, identified by the number 'Post. III 70', measures 175 × 243 mm. It has 452 folios, numbered in pencil in the upper right-hand corner. This page numbering seems to have been inserted, if not before, at least in 1950.<sup>1</sup> Probably Pius Serracino Inglott, responsible for the Carmelite General Archive, decided to have the codex restored, given that its pages were in poor condition as a result of the passage of time, and other causes especially the damp, and were now held together by paper glue, containing synthetic ingredients, and covered by plastic film. Albert Deblaere affirms that this restoration was made by the Vatican Library's laboratory: '*ou plutôt, il y a été sauvé de la destruction totale*'.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Pius Serracino Inglott, or the general librarian Leo van Wijmen, in the course of re-ordering the Postulation Archive, which he was doing at the

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- 1 Deblaere (1962) 15–22 Deblaere says that he found the manuscript in the archive of the Collegio S. Alberto, Ord. Carm., Via Sforza Pallavicini in 1951. At this moment the new page numbering was already inserted.
  - 2 Deblaere (1962) 3–76: 13. This article was to be continued, as affirmed at its end, but the following part never appeared in *Carmelus*.

same time, gave a new number to the work. The new number (Post III 70) replaced the previous number (Post III 118), by which the work is often referred to, even in recent studies. This may be because the codex lost, or perhaps never had, on the back, the new label with the new number. This new number, however, is to be found at the upper right-hand corner of the first end paper. Here the number 118 was crossed out with a pen and the new number 70 was put in. The new numbering is also confirmed by the inventory made by Leo van Wijmen.

The binding is done with hard cardboard, covered with parchment, with two endpapers. On the back, in capital letters the title of the codex is printed:

VITA VENERABILIS  
MATRIS MARIAE  
A S. TERESIA

followed by a flower with four stylised petals. Lower down the older paper label is still to be found. It has a blue octagonal form on a rectangular base, and the former number. The new label, unless it got detached in some way, seemingly, was never attached.

The codex was probably compiled for a printed edition, but it does not seem prepared in order to be used for a canonization process.<sup>3</sup> The text shows many different hand-writings and is a compilation of seven different parts:<sup>4</sup>

- fol. 1r: Design of the titlepage for the printed edition.
- fol. 2r-5r: General Preface to the whole book prepared for the printed edition.

3 I must thank Elisabeth Hense and Edeltraud Klüeting, who studied and anatomized the codex and gave me more essential information for the description of the codex. See E. Hense & E. Klüeting, *Maria Petyts Visionen über den Holländischen Krieg*. Einige Bemerkungen zu Codex Post III 70 im Archiv des Postulators O.Carm. zu Rom, Via Giovanni Lanza 138. In: *Der Rabe des Elija*, 2013, 9–13.

4 E. Hense and E. Klüeting suggest that there were three main writers at the beginning of the codex, indicated as A, B, and C. The writer A copied fol. 2r-5r (Praefatio), 30r-33v, 38r-41v (Dutch War) and 118r-129v (section of the Second Part of the Vita); writer B wrote the beginning and the end of the *Index* (fol. 6r/v und 9r-15v; 28r-29v) remaining part of the history of the Dutch War (fol. 34r-37v; 42r-49v) and of the Second Part of the Vita (fol. 164r-177v, 250r-257v, 355r-372v, 377r-380v, 387r-428v, 437r-452r); writer C copied the remaining part of the *Index* (fol. 16r-27v), whereas the fragment of the *Index* (fol. 7r-8v) could be written by anyone other than the three writers.



- fol. 6r-29v: Two tables of contents by three different hands; two folios (7r-8v) are not bound with the others and contain a fragmentary list of chapters 56–158 of that known as the *First Part of the Life*. The main part of the Table of Contents (fol. 6r-v; 9r-29v), written by two different hands, shows the 911 chapters of the *Second Part of the Life*, indicated by chapter numbers, a short summary and the page numbers, but they do not correspond to the actual pagination.
- fol. 30r-49v: Text of the visions received by Maria of St. Teresa about the Dutch War<sup>5</sup>, written by two hands.
- fol. 50r-117v and 200r-216v: *First Part of the Life* by the same one hand and original foliation (5–89) not complete, while the first four folios are lacking.<sup>6</sup>
- fol. 118r-199v and 222r-230v: *Second Part of the Life* by various hands. The numbering 1A-20V on the fol. 118r-199v is referred to the pieces or *quaterniones*, as on the fol. 222 there is the number 21 and from fol. 230r the numbers indicate the single folios and not the sections; chapters 51–56 are lacking. The summaries in this part do not refer in fact to the codex division (pagination is different). Perhaps they could be written for an original draft of this copy of the manuscript.
- fol. 217r-221v and 231r-452r: is a continuation of the *Second Part of the Life*, written by different hands. Also in this part the summaries and pagination do not refer to the codex division in the Table of Contents.

The fol. 1r has at the top, in the centre, the monogram, 'M', above which there is a small stylised crown and underneath, an ornamental design. In fact, each of the folios of the codex begins with the name of Mary or the monogram 'M', written in different ways, with or without additional ornamentation, in the centre of the page, at the top; these monograms help in identifying the hand of the writer.

On fol. 1r the full title of the codex is given as:

Vita Venerabilis Matris Marię s S.ta Teresia

Tertiarię Ordinis B.mę Virginis Marię

De Monte Carmelo

Mechlinię defunctę kalendis novembris

Anno 1677

Ab ipsam ex obedientia et instinctu domino conscript[a]

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Esther van de Vate for her suggestions about this section of the book.

<sup>6</sup> In fact this part begins with the end of ch. 11 of the printed Dutch *Leven*, Petyt (1683/1684).

Et  
 Auctarium vitę illius  
 Ex eius scriptis collectum et compositum  
 per R.dum Adm. P. Michaelem a Sto Augustino  
 eiusdem Ordinis Provincialem Provincę Flandro Belgicę  
 dictę V. Matris per 31 annos directorem spirituales

There follows a biblical verse:

Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis Ps. 36

Then comes a drawing of a heart pierced by an arrow, the heart is crowned and inside the monogram 'MR' is written<sup>7</sup>.

On fol. 1r and 2r two small strips of paper were attached at the top on the left, each measuring around 50/65 × 11 mm, bearing the following instruction, '*Titulus generalis præfigendus initio totius libri*' (fol. 1r) e '*Præfatio generalis prædigendus <sic> toti libro*' (fol. 2r).

Michael of St. Augustine, the spiritual director of the venerable Marie of St. Teresa Petyt, wrote the General Preface (fol. 2r-5r) before the 24th of April, 1680 (fol. 5r), going by the date and signature (fol. 5v).<sup>8</sup>

Fol. 6r-29v contain the two indices.<sup>9</sup> In fact fol. 6rv and 9r to 29v carry the exact and almost complete index of the content of the second part of the codex. Fol. 7r-8v carry in large part the index of the chapters (from chap. 56 to the incomplete chap. 158) of the First Part of the Life of the venerable woman, that is fol. 50r to 117v. These two fol. 7r-8v are loose, and they are inserted incorrectly between fol. 6 and 9 and there are perhaps two leafs still missing, with the indication of the initial and final chapters of the autobiography itself, which must have had 186 chapters as Michael himself wrote in the General Preface: '*pro ut hic per 186 capita, deducta sequitur*' (fol. 4v, l. 35).

As rightly suggested by Rijklof Hofman and Veronie Meeuwssen,<sup>10</sup> the fol. from 30r to 49v were probably paginated incorrectly; it is possible that the codex lost its numbering and the sections at the beginning were taken apart, and whoever put them back together again might not have understood the original sequence, that may be reconstructed in this way: fol. 38r-41v – fol. 30r-33v –

<sup>7</sup> The design is partially lost because the sheet is damaged in the lower section.

<sup>8</sup> The preface is not an autograph of Michael of St. Augustine.

<sup>9</sup> We will indicate the folios following the modern numbering system in pencil and, if necessary and possible, pointing out the old numbering system in pen ink.

<sup>10</sup> I would like to thank Rijklof Hofman and Veronie Meeuwssen for their suggestion.

fol. 42r-49v – fol. 34r-37v. It is not clear why there are these few misplacements (fol. 30r-49v and 7r-8v) while almost the great part of the codex is continuous. It is difficult to understand why these pages, without any original numbers in pen ink, has been placed at the very beginning of the codex as an addition, before the section made up of fol. 50r-117v.

This section of the manuscript, by a single hand but not by Michael himself, turns out to be in the correct order, both because they are numbered in pen ink at the top right-hand corner<sup>11</sup> and because the chapters follow the order that is indicated in fol. 7r-8v of the index, even if they do not reach the number of 186 chapters as announced in the summary. The original numbering continues at fol. 200r-216v (fol. 200r has the original number 73), while the fol. 72rv is crossed out with a diagonal stroke in pen ink right through it.<sup>12</sup> The continuous pagination of these sheets suggests that there was a previous manuscript;<sup>13</sup> preparing the entire text for printing it was reorganized with the insertion of the Preface to the Second Part (fol. 118r) and the first 142 chapters of the Second Part of the Life.

The '*Praefatio in vitam Mariae a Sta. Teresia Tertiaria Ordinis B.mę Mariae de Monte Carmelo*' (fol. 118r) opens the Second Part of the Life. The manuscript is now by different hands. This section begins with 19 *quaterniones* (four sheets) identified by numbers and letters 1 A-19 T put at the bottom of the first page until fol. 193v. Then there is a *sesternio* (six sheets), which begins with a wide sheet (fol. 194rv, which has only the monogram 'MR' on the back) and the numeration 20V is on fol. 195r. The sequence is interrupted by the insertion of the chapters of the First Part of the Life, as we saw before. Chapter 50 ends at fol. 151v, with only seven lines; then follows fol. 152r (a new *quaternio* 10 K) where chapter 57 begins. Chapters 51–56 are lacking.

The examination made by E. Hense and E. Kluetting revealed that:

<sup>11</sup> The page numbering is sequential and goes from 7 to 72.

<sup>12</sup> All the folios have a 'spy' word in the bottom right-hand corner, which repeats the first word of the following page, which is very useful for checking the sequence of the text and possible interruptions or displacements, which, however do not seem to be there, except in the first few folios as we indicated earlier. The 'spy' word on this fol. is 'Maria' which does not help us much, since every fol. has the name or the monogram of the Blessed Virgin on it. The original 'spy' word of fol. 200v was 'rationalem' erased and changed with 'Maria', but it does not help much more.

<sup>13</sup> However, it is strange that these chapters are a translation of the chapters 150–181 in vol. 2 of the Dutch *Leven*. This sustains the conclusion that there should have been a previous manuscript of the Codex.

The codex is a compilation from at least two previous manuscripts. Michael decided to limit the *Life* to 186 chapters, so he had to put a new '*Praefatio*' at fol. 118r.

The section on the Dutch War (fol. 30r-49v) does not appear in both indices. We do not know why Michael thought this part was so important to be preserved if it was not intended for printing; it is possible that he feared reaction from the readers as he himself wrote at fol. 30r.

The person who bound the codex was conscious that fol. 7r-8v did not follow fol. 6rv; so he did not bind them with the rest of the codex, but left them loose as supplementary sheets between fol. 6v and 9r.

The sequence of the folios is precise for the part destined to be printed (the First Part and the Second Part). The section not destined to be printed does not have such an accurate pagination (the table of contents and the document on the Dutch war).

Having described the physical appearance of the codex, we might look now at the rather scant information that we have about its history.

Stefano Possanzini, in discussing the literary production of Michael of St. Augustine, affirms: 'Finally, in 1683, one year before his death, he published in Gent the *Life of the Venerable Maria of St. Teresa, Carmelite Tertiary*. This life, published in two volumes, in Flemish, was then translated by him into Latin and up to the present day the manuscript has been kept in the archive of the General Postulation.'<sup>14</sup>

This affirmation, however, needs correction, on the basis of the date that is at the end of the preface of the same manuscript (fol. 5r): '24th of April, 1680'. What do we think happened? Valerius Hoppenbrouwers gives us a suggestion toward resolving the problem when he uses some texts taken from the codex in his work on Marian devotion in Carmel. After a brief introduction to Maria Petyt, he then gave some information about the time when the codex was written.<sup>15</sup> This is what he said:

Michael of St. Augustine asked his directee under obedience to write her autobiography. He wanted to publish it along with his own spiritual annotations, but he was afraid that he might not have the freedom to do so because the Belgian bishops might not have given their permission. Therefore he set about translating the work into Latin, with the help of a few of his confreres – the same ones perhaps who helped in the copying

<sup>14</sup> Possanzini (1998) 32, where he cites Cosmas de Villiers (1752) vol. 2, 446.

<sup>15</sup> Hoppenbrouwers (1960) 403.

of the material in the text? – and he sent it to Rome in the hope of getting around the ban on publication. However, things did not work out that way, because the work was published in Gent between 1683 and 1684.<sup>16</sup>

From some letters sent by Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary from Brussels, now kept in the General Archive of the Order in Rome,<sup>17</sup> one could argue that Michael of St. Augustine himself sent the manuscript to the General Curia. In fact, these few letters contain some references to the *Vita*. The first one was of the 23rd of September 1679 from Brussels. In it (lines 3–4) Michael spoke about his desire to finish the redaction of the *Vita 'venerabilis Matris Mechliniensis'*. He came back to this argument in the letter of the 7th of October, writing that he intended to send the manuscript on the occasion of the General Chapter, as in fact happened.

In the letter of the 24th of February 1680 there is a paragraph about the folios on the Dutch War. Michael confessed his concern about the political opportunity of publishing the memoirs of Maria Petyt's position in the conflict. In this same letter there is also a post scriptum, in which Michael suggested that he would allow another copy of the *Vita* to be made in case the first copy had not been written out in an intelligible way. Michael wrote again on the 9th of March of 1680.

Three years later, on the 1st of April 1683, Michael asked again the help of the Order to obtain support from the confessor of the Pope. The most plausible reason would seem to be the one suggested by Hoppenbrouwers, namely that he was afraid of being turned down if he asked the Belgian bishops for the imprimatur.<sup>18</sup> At the end of the 17th century the anti-mystical currents and suspicions regarding the mystics, especially women mystics, were spreading everywhere.<sup>19</sup>

It seems very clear to me that the translation was carried out between 1677 and 1680, and more than likely before the 24th of April, 1680 and the codex probably reached Rome in that same year or not long afterwards. Perhaps it was occasioned by the General Chapter of June 1680, when Sebastian of St. Paul, as procurator of the Provincial, Michael of St. Augustine, together with

16 Petyt (1683/1684).

17 Rome, Arch. Gen. Ord. Carmelitarum, *l.l. Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*, II C.O. II 4 (1).

18 Cfr. the article of Esther van de Vate, p. 92–118.

19 Cfr. the article of Esther van de Vate, p. 92–118.

the two *socii provinciae*, Mark of the Resurrection and Jacob of Saint Antony, came to Rome.<sup>20</sup>

It is possible that the manuscript was given to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary who lived at that time in Rome. We do not know where it was placed, whether in the library of the *Studium generale* in Traspontina, in the General Archive, or elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> At a certain point (perhaps when the General Archive was reorganized in the 1960s?), the codex ended up among the documents of the Archive of the General Postulation, from which everything else followed.

As Hoppenbrouwers rightly points out, its contents are still useful and necessary for the reconstruction of the human affairs of Maria Petyt, in line with a more precise and detailed chronology. Reading it in conjunction or in parallel with the Flemish version printed in Gent, may offer us a series of interesting additions and useful clarifications regarding the entire experience of the mystic from Mechelen, the account of whose life is obviously filtered through the writing and reworking of Michael of St. Augustine. Once again, it is somewhat difficult to separate the stories and the experiences of these two: Marian and mariaform mysticism is probably the product of both and both gave it flesh.

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20 Cfr the letters mentioned above and Wessels (1934) vol. 2, 130f. The General Chapter confirmed Michael of St. Augustine as Prior Provincial: cfr. *ibid.*, 165.

21 Cosmas de Villiers (1752) vol. 2, 354, wrote about the manuscript of the *Vita Ven. Mariae a Sancta Theresia: 'quam suo in 9. Codice Ms. retinet R. P. Seraphinus Potenza, Carmelitarum Aedituus S. Marice Traspontine in Urbe'*.

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# 'Oh, How Spiritual Directors are Obligated to Remain Silent!' Michael's Redaction of the Writings of Maria Petyt: Some Initial Findings

*Esther van de Vate*

## Introduction

The current image of Maria Petyt, from the point of view of historiography and spirituality, would have been radically different without the editorial work of her spiritual director Michael of St. Augustine (1621–1684). The discovery of a document on the Dutch War in a Latin translation, lying in the archives of the Postulator in Rome<sup>1</sup>, not only causes us to revise this image, but also raises the question of the choices Michael might have made, and why. Were Maria Petyt's letters as uncontested as has hitherto been supposed?<sup>2</sup>

## Michael's Silence Regarding Maria's Prayers on the Dutch War

On 7 December 1674 Maria Petyt expresses herself sharply on the obligation of spiritual directors not to divulge to the world what is entrusted to them by their directees:

Oh, how spiritual directors are obliged to remain silent and not to make mention of the secrets of the souls entrusted to them. Neither are they to speak about their spiritual progress for the encouragement and edifica-

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1 Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70: *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia Tertiariae ordinis Bmae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo*, fol. 30r-49v. For a bibliographic description of the codex, see Deblaere (1979) 13, and Grosso's contribution to this volume, p. 83–88. I thank Dr Rijcklof Hofman and Veronie Meeuwssen M.A. for helping me with the translation of the Latin quotations and Drs Berbera van de Vate for helping me with the Italian quotations.

2 See e.g. Deblaere (1962) 19 and Deblaere (1979) 14, who did not question Michael's influence on the edition of the letters of Maria Petyt.



tion of others as long as these [souls] are living. At most, they may say something without naming anyone, so nobody can find out who it is.<sup>3</sup>

Probably this wistful admonition was meant for her own spiritual director Michael of St. Augustine, who initially made little secret of Maria's remarkable visions during the Dutch War, as evidenced by his letters to his friend Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, who lived in Rome.<sup>4</sup> In 1672 Seraphinus read several passages in Michael's letters about the visions of N.N. Mechlienensis, whose identity was no secret:

N.N. from Mechelen, full of God, is often driven by a wonderful impulse to pray for the conversion of Holland and for the success of France in this respect, and for our order in Belgium and for the whole church; God is working in her in a miraculous way.<sup>5</sup>

Seraphinus might also have read that Michael sincerely believed in the efficacy of Maria's prayer. At least so it appears a few months later when Michael wrote to him:

Already some two months ago our N. from Mechelen ceased to be driven by an impulse to pray, and since that time the king of France has ceased to meet with success.<sup>6</sup>

3 'Och hoe zyn de gheestelijcke Vaders verbonden te swyghen, ende gheen mentie te maecten vande secreten der Zielen, die hun bevolen zyn, noch sy en behoorden niet te spreken van hunnen gheestelijcken voortganck tot verweckinghe ende stichtinghe van andere, soo langh als die leven; ten hooghsten moghen sy jet segghen, sonder jemant te noemen, op datmen niet en come te weten, wie het is.' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 269; 7 December 1674.

4 Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary (ca. 1612–1688) taught philosophy and theology to his fellow brothers and was called to Rome in 1668, where he held various posts, including that of secretary general for Germany and Belgium.

5 'N.N. Mechl. Deo plena, subinde agitur mirabili spiritu orandi pro conversione Hollandiae, et prosperitate Galliae in istum finem; et pro Belgio ordine nostro, et tota Ecclesia; Deus mire in illa operatur.' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Mechelen, 27 May 1672, Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675–1698*. Michael of St. Augustine's letters are stored in a separate folder.

6 'N. Nostra Mechliniensis cessat agi spiritu orandi, iam a duobus circiter mensibus; et ab illo tempore cessat etiam Rex Galliae prosperari.' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Mechelen, 9 September 1672, Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675–1698*. Even after her death Michael entrusted himself to the prayers of Maria Petyt. In a letter from Mechelen in 1681 Michael mentioned her intercession several times, including: *'tam bonum et desideratum succesum capitulo post Deum et Matrem Amabilem*

When new developments were imminent Michael readily connected these with the prayer life of Maria Petyt. A week later he wrote:

When she asked the Beloved what would please him and to what she should dedicate her communion, she heard: 'To the king of France.' And so the impulse to pray for this king returned, and she added that the king had acted badly when he left his army and did not pursue victory. And indeed it is said already that the king had given up on the capture of Maastricht, et cetera and is to descend with a new army. Time will tell.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these quoted passages, Michael disclosed in the document on the Dutch War that Maria had asked him to keep secret her celestial knowledge about Louis XIV.<sup>8</sup> If we assume Michael's integrity as spiritual director, we cannot but conclude that Maria commanded this silence only in the second instance and she would not have asked for it unreasonably. In the aforementioned letter of 7 December 1674 Maria writes about a dark night in which she found herself since the Saturday before Palm Sunday. She blames the darkness of that night on the vainglory to which she succumbed in an unguarded moment:

It rewards me much before God that I have always tried to prevent anyone from learning about the grace which God has granted me, because I have always been an enemy of such revelations, [preferring] to remain unknown, because I rather fear that through human weakness I would be bitten by the infernal serpent because of some vainglory, to which I was not naturally inclined, and yet through circumstances I have succumbed.<sup>9</sup>

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*adscribo intercessioni V. Matris Mariae à Sta. Teresia.*' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698.*

7 '*dum autem illa peteret a Dilecto, pro quo placeret, et offeret suam Communionem audivit, pro Rege Galliae, et sic redijt spiritus orandi pro illo Rege, et addebat eum male fecisse, deserendo suum exercitum, nec prosequendo victoriam; iam autem dicitur ille Rex iterum absolute resobvisse intercipere Traiectum etc. et cum novo exercitu descendere; tempus docebit.*' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Mechelen, 16 September 1672, Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698.*

8 Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 30r.

9 '*Het verschoont my noch veel by Godt, dat ick altoos soo inde weir gheweest ben, op dat niemant in kennisse soude komen vande gratien, die my Godt ghegunt heeft, want ick altoos eenen vyant gheweest hebbe van sulcken openbaeringhen, om onbekent te blyven, vreesende, dat ick door menschelijcke kranckheyt ghebeten soude worden van 't helsch serpent door eenighe eydel glorie, daer ick oock uytter nature niet toe gheneghen en was, ende nochtans door occasie, ben ick' er inghevallen.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 269; 7 December 1674. For the date of the incident, see 268.

Immediately after this passage follows Maria's lament about indiscreet spiritual directors. What exactly caused Maria to lash out so fiercely against spiritual directors is not known, but it might be connected with her prayer life during the Dutch War.

The fact that Maria enjoined this secrecy *only for her lifetime* poses even more questions than the slightly curious approach to what transpired between the spiritual director and his directee. The limitation on the commanded secrecy raises the problem why the remarkable letter collection about Louis XIV was not included in the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia, (alias) Petyt*.<sup>10</sup> which Michael of St. Augustine published some six years after Maria's death in 1677. Nor is this letter collection included in the Latin *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia*,<sup>11</sup> which has come down to us in the Roman codex. This omission is strange, since after Maria's death Michael was free to reveal her visions to the outside world. Michael provides the reader of the document on the Dutch War with the following reason for his decision:

how the spirit of prayer and of divine love worked in her [Maria Petyt] and with what fruit I will explain here logically from her writings, but separated from the context of her *Life*,<sup>12</sup> so that it will not displease some people too much and ... whether these things come forth from a divine spirit or not I leave up to others who are capable of examining and weighing such things. I just refer to those things with the same sincerity in which they were written by her and entrusted to me.<sup>13</sup>

10 Some other letters: Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 32v, ll. 10–16 is a (not literal) translation of Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 94, ll. 6–15; Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 42r, ll. 4–26 by Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 94, l. 21–95, l. 13; Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 42r, l. 30– fol. 42v, l. 16 by Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 95, l. 18–96, l. 18; Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 43r, ll. 11–27 by Petyt (1683) vol. 3, cap. LXVIII, 100–101, l. 8; Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 44r, l. 44– fol. 44v, l. 20 by Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 13, ll. 10–34; Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 44v, ll. 24–44 by Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 114, ll. 5–27. There are some 'changes' in the Dutch edition, for example: '*spiritus orandi pro prosperitate armorum Regis Galliae*' (fol. 42r, l. 5) is replaced by: '*den gheest van bidden [...] tot uytroeyinghe der Ketteryen.*' (vol. 3, 94 l. 22f.).

11 See n. 1. Some of the letters relating to R.G. [Rex Galliae] are found in the Index (fol. 6–29): cap. 201, 257, 269, 877 and 879. For the rest it is not possible to determine which letters are concerned. Some parts of the codex are damaged.

12 Her *Vita*, Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70 and Petyt (1683).

13 '*qualiter autem spiritus orationis et diuini amoris in ipsa tunc operatus fuerit, et cum quali fructu, hic consequenter subiiciam ex ipsius scriptis seorsim tamen a contextu reliquae uitae ipsius, ne forte aliquibus displaciant, et nimiae uariorum Criisi exponantur, quae an a diuino spiritu processerint nec ne, aliorum quorum est similia examinare, et ponderare iudi-*

Perhaps Michael's 'some people' refers to Maria's compatriots. It is not at all likely that Maria's prayers for the French king could count on their understanding. On February 24th 1680 - Flanders was claimed in that year by Louis XIV because of his reunification policy - Michael writes to Seraphinus that he does not know what to do with Maria's writings on the Dutch War 'because most of them are very much in favour of the King of France and some are against Spain and the Emperor, who supported Holland at that time, and are in many respects very antagonistic.'<sup>14</sup> Michael trusts his friend with the knowledge of the spiritual involvement of Maria Petyt along with a surprising political consideration:

If the French King would know, he would be happy and have a strong motive to treat that venerable Mother with veneration, which perhaps in time could happen; if he would occupy the whole of Belgium, then it could not harm him to know it. The things I write are entrusted to Your Reverence [i.e. Seraphinus] so this knowledge [of Maria Petyt] can be used prudently.<sup>15</sup>

Probably Seraphinus might not have shared Michael's considerations in this respect. With his extensive contacts in the Roman curia<sup>16</sup> he should have been aware of the growing tensions about Gallicanism. Already on 10 February 1673, while Maria was still sharing her 'supernatural' knowledge about the Dutch War with Michael, Louis XIV forced the issue with his *Droit de Regale*, in which he laid claim to the regalia of all dioceses in France. On 19 March 1682 – the day the clerics of the French General Assembly endorsed Bossuet's four arti-

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*cio reliquo; referam tamen illa, ea sinceritate, qua ab ipsa scripta sunt, et mihi concredita.*  
Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 38r.

14 'sed quia pleraque multum sunt in favorem Regis Gall. et aliqua contra Hisp. et Imper. Hollandis tunc suppetias ferentes, essent forte multis odiosa.' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 24 February 1680. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

15 'si Rex Gall. sceret, haberet occasionem gaudii et fortem motivum illam V. Matrem colendi, quod forte cum tempore posset fieri, si totum Belgium occuparet, tunc eum non posset nocere, quod istu sciret haec scribo confidentur R. V. quae illam scientiam prudenter utentur' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 24 February 1680. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

16 Seraphinus had many contacts with the famous Cardinal Francesco Albizzi who was a influential member of the Roman curia; see Ceyskens (1974) XL. For more information on Francesco Albizzi, see Monticone (1960) 23-26.

cles<sup>17</sup> – the relationship with Rome was definitely in crisis. Amid such tensions Seraphinus might not have considered it appropriate to make these writings of Maria Petyt known, either to the world or to Louis XIV.

### Other Interventions by Michael

The editorial decision to omit the letter collection on the Dutch War from the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia* and partly from the *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia* makes us somewhat suspicious of what Michael asserts in his preface to the *Leven*:

Furthermore I have considered it wise to arrange this extension of the *Life* of this venerable mother Maria of St. Teresa [alias Maria Petyt] in such a way that I follow her style and sentences and, as best I can, I also follow and keep her words. I simply wanted to select from her writings and divide them into treatises and chapters. I wanted to create some order in the material, without adding anything of my own except rough and simple connections and headings of chapters.<sup>18</sup>

Although he claims he does not want to append anything, the omission of these letters suggests that Michael might have made less innocent choices than those mentioned in the preface to the *Leven*.

Mindful of such editorial choices that Michael might have made, some other problems call for clarification. The main one is what else Michael might have left out when editing the writings of Maria Petyt. There are indications that he did so more than once. While both Maria and Michael were fiercely anti-Jansenist, the word 'Jansenism' does not occur in the Dutch letter collec-

17 These articles argue that the only authorization given to the pope is on spiritual affairs; that in the exercise of his spiritual power he is subject to the authority of a general council; and that he must maintain without restriction the institutions, rules and customs of the French church and the French empire. The articles also state that the pope's decrees are valid for the entire church, but are only irreversible with the consent of the whole church.

18 'Voorts ick hebbe goedt ghevonden dese vermeerderinge van het Leven van dese weerdighe Moeder MARIA à SANCTA TERESIA soo te schicken, dat ick haeren stel ende sin, jac oock naer vermoghen; haere woorden maecke te volghen ende te houden, ende uyt haere schriften alleenlijck hebbe willen uytsonderen, ende ghelijck door Tractaten ende Capittelen verdeelen, ende in eenighe orden stellen de materien, sonder by naer jet van't myne by te doen, als een grove, ende sinpele Connexie, ende de Titels der Capittelen' Petyt (1683) vol. 1, Prologue.

tion.<sup>19</sup> Also, there are periods, especially in the latter years of her life, for which few letters are found in the Dutch edition. What went on in those years? Did she write less? Or did Michael omit these letters?

We encounter even more editorial problems when we consider all open questions about the history of the Latin codex. It was obviously prepared for publication.<sup>20</sup> Michael holds out this prospect in the *Kort Begryp*, a synoptic edition of the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia*.<sup>21</sup> However the Latin codex was never actually published. Did Michael – or someone else – decide on closer scrutiny that publication of this work was no less inappropriate than that of the document on the Dutch War?

In this article I can only give an overview of possible obstacles to the release of the Dutch and Latin editions. Those with some knowledge of the turbulent theological developments in the 1680s will know that Michael found himself in a minefield with a lot of difficulties. A researcher who inquires into these tumultuous years often has to conclude that the most plausible explanation is an interplay of various factors. So in this article I confine myself to a couple of scenarios of what might have happened.

### Michael's Troubles during His Work on the Latin Codex

First I will concentrate on the cancellation of the publication of the Latin codex.<sup>22</sup> A major reason could have been that Michael fell into discredit in the circles of the Roman Curia. In these years Michael became suspect because of his connection with the 'other Maria', a Norbertine sister from Mechelen who

19 Probably this also applies to Arch. Post. III, 70. The table of contents contains no reference to Jansenism. Some caution is called for, however, because a small section of the table of contents is damaged.

20 It is evident on the front page, where a note is added with the text: '*Titulus generalis prae-figendus initio totius libri*.' See also Deblaere (1962) 18f.

21 Only one copy of the single edition of the *Kort Begryp* in 1681 is to be found in the Royal Library of Brussels. However, the full text of the *Kort Begryp* is incorporated into James of the Passion (1681) 243–344. Michael writes about a Latin *Vita* in *Kort Begryp*: 'so it is worth reading that statement <by Maria Petyt>, written in her own hand, and extensively narrated in her *Life*, described in Latin, by the reverend father Michael of St. Augustine, provincial and her spiritual director.' 31f.

22 I omit the obvious possibility that the publication was stopped because of Maria's anti-Jansenism. Michael had overcome this problem already by leaving out those letters. See n. 19.

was under his spiritual direction.<sup>23</sup> Besides the information in his aforementioned letters to his friend Seraphinus, in which she is usually referred to as '*ista monialis*', nothing is known about this young sister. In 1680 she was 33 years old and well advanced in her prayer life.<sup>24</sup> Michael developed a close relationship with her, about which he wrote to Seraphinus:

This good nun is obliging to me in everything and we have agreed that all prayer intentions which are entrusted and recommended to her, as well as her own pious intentions, are also entrusted to me. And vice versa, all intentions which are entrusted to me, et cetera are also for her. And thus, although she is from a different order, she has a zeal that springs from holy inspiration and a motherly affection for our order. Therefore even your reverence is specially recommended to her.<sup>25</sup>

Such intimate spiritual contact between director and directee is strongly reminiscent of a letter from Maria Petyt to Michael, written on 24 June 1675. There we read how the Beloved, at Michael's request, joined Maria with her spiritual director as a partner:

Reverend Father, at your wish the Beloved seems to join me, unworthy as I am, to you as a consort of your reverence, helping your reverence according to the spirit and in the spirit, to labour, to generate, et cetera.<sup>26</sup>

23 The 'other Maria' also features only sparsely in the literature. See Ceyskens (1952) 13, n. 24: '*De alia poenitente, quae fuit Nobertina, nullam inveni litteraturam.*' However, Hoppenbrouwers (1949) 164 writes at length about this Norbertine sister.

24 On 9 March 1680 Michael writes from Brussels: '*spero quod promovebitur ad prelaturam etsi adhuc satis iuvenis, vix 33 annorum*' (Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*). In the same period (Brussels, 27 January 1680) he wrote a letter in which he tells that three years earlier, on 12 November 1677 (twelve days after Maria Petyt's death on 1 November 1677), he had received a note from this 'other Maria' with a vision and instructions on how to deal with the Jansenist tensions; see Ceyskens (1952) 66.

25 '*Ista bona monialis mecum facit in omnibus et convenimus, ut omnes ipsi commissae et commendatae, ac eius piae intentiones sint etiam mihi commissae etc. et vicissim omnes mihi commendatae etc. sint ipsius, unde licet sit alterius Ordinis, ex divino instinctu, habet etiam zelum et affectum maternam erga ordinem nostrum; et sic Reverentia Vestra est etiam ipsi specialiter commendata.*' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 9 March 1680. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

26 '*Eerweerdighen Vader den Beminden schynt naer uwen wensch, my onweerdighe als een mede-paer tot U-Eerweerdigheyt te voeghen, om naer den gheest, ende inden gheest U-Eerwe te helpen arbeeyden, baeren, &c.*' Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 150.



Like Maria Petyt, this 'other Maria' had great influence on Michael. On 23 September 1679 he writes how she discouraged him from going to Rome:

Moreover, a certain holy soul of the order of St. Norbert, entrusted to my guidance by her superiors, whom I have mentioned sometimes in my letters to your reverence, advised me against this journey as being not deiform. When I told her a few months ago, before she had asked God in her prayer for counsel, that I had to go to Rome, she made it clear that she rejoiced in natural hope that in Rome I could accomplish something against the Jansenists, about whom she had experienced once in the spirit that they were hated by God. But after being asked by me to consult God about the matter, she said that God didn't want me to undertake this journey because my presence in Rome could achieve nothing and because I would be detained on the way, et cetera. When I told her that I was healthy enough again and that there did not seem to be any excuse [for my absence], she did not alter her advice. When I visited her a week ago she told me again of her own accord that the Beloved absolutely didn't want me to make that journey. [...] The same nun, while praying for a remedy against the Jansenists, has been assured several times by God of a good outcome in Rome. Once when I told her that the deputies from Louvain had the ear of the pope and that negotiations in Rome were going badly, she answered: 'The Beloved promised me a truly happy ending. About this I cannot doubt. And see, from that time the negotiations seemed to go better.'<sup>27</sup>

27 *'Accedit quod quaedam sancta anima, Ordinis Sancti Norberti, a superioribus meae directioni commissa, de quo aliquando mentionem feci in meis ad Reverentiam Vestram litteris, istud iter tamquam non deiforme mihi dissuadeat. Cum huic ab aliquot mensibus dicerem me debere ire Romam antequam in oratione Deum consulisset, ostendebat se gaudere ex naturali spe, quod Romae aliquid possem efficere contra Jansenistas, quos aliquando in spiritu didicit Deo odibiles; sed cum meo rogatu rem Deo commendasset, dixit mihi ultro quod Dilectus non vellet, ut iter illud assumerem, quod Romae per meam praesentiam nihil posset fieri, et quod in via manerem etc. et cum ei dixissem me iam satis bona frui sanitate, nec videri subesse causam excusationis, reliquit hoc intactum; donec ab octiduo illam iterum visitando, ipsa iterato mihi ultro dixit, Dilectum absolute nolle ut iter arripiam [...] Dicta Monialis orans pro remedio contra Jansenistas aliquoties a Deo habuit assecurationem de bono successu Romae; cui cum aliquando dicerem deputatos Lovanistos habere aurem pontificis, et negocium Romae esse in malo statu, illa replicabat; equidem Dilectus mihi promisit bonum successum; de quo non possum dubitare; et ecce ab illo tempore negocium habuit meliorem apparentiam.'* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 23 September 1679. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae*



This unknown sister's name crops up regularly in Michael's letters to his friend in Rome, also during important times in the production of both the Dutch text and the Latin translation. On 9 March 1680, shortly before the preface of the Latin text was dated, Michael wrote that the 'other Maria' had received messages which were transmitted by Maria Petyt:

Within three or four days I hope to see her, and then I will discuss it specifically. She has experienced several appearances of our venerable mother.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately the content of these messages remains unknown. It might have referred to the publication of the Latin codex.

After this note he remained silent about the 'other Maria' for some years, as far as we can gather from Michael's correspondence with Seraphinus. Three years later, in the spring of 1683, a few months before the last '*facultas*' and '*approbationes*'<sup>29</sup> of the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia* were issued, Michael told his friend about the startling discovery that he was suspect in the eyes of the pope's confessor. Letters which the 'other Maria' had sent to Rome played a role in this awkward situation. At the beginning of this letter Michael narrates a remarkable encounter in the Carmelite monastery in Brussels:

The illustrious Mgr Internuncio<sup>30</sup> sent his secretary to the monastery to speak to reverend father provincial or, if he was absent, to the reverend father prior, and since both were outside the city and I was staying in the convent, the porter called me. Mgr Secretary asked: 'Where does father Michael of St. Augustine live, if not in Gent? (he said). The illustrious Mgr Internuncio, he added, would like to be informed about this father, about his qualities and merits. Then (I said): 'This father does not live in Gent; it is me.'<sup>31</sup>

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*1675–1698*. In 1679 the Louvain faculty received a condemnation by pope Innocent XI of 65 theses in the work of its moral theologians.

28 *Post 3.4. dies spero illam invisere et tunc specialius agam; habuit plures apparitiones a Ven. Matre nostra.* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 9 March 1680. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675–1698*.

29 Petyt (1683) vol. 1. after the Prologue.

30 The internuncio was Sebastiaan Antonius Tanara (1675–1687).

31 *'Ill. mus D. Internuncius misit suum secretarium ad conventum ut loqueretur R. Provinciali, vel, eo absente, R.P. Priori; et cum uterque esset extra civitatem et ego restarem in conventu, portarius vocavit me. D. Secretarius petibat: 'Ubi habitat Michael à Sancto Augustino, nonne*

A little below Michael continues:

The reverend father provincial presumes that from the beginning I was suspected, since the illustrious gentleman [the Internuncio of Brussels] has received letters from Rome in which he is asked to gather information about me because of the letters of that sister from Mechelen to our most sacred lord, handed over by your reverence [Seraphinus] to the pope's confessor, as I believe, so they may well see if there is something in them [the letters from the 'other Maria'] that needs to be believed. I have no doubt about the divine spirit of this nun whose divine writings I have edited, as ordered by God, in some form, which I have written down in some 70 folia in condensed handwriting.<sup>32</sup> They breathe an astonishing familiarity with the heavenly bridegroom. As a result of inquiries into my person [...] I was moved to send her two letters which she had sent to him, translated into Latin, also to your reverence. More than two months ago she sent me those letters with a description of the vision revealed to her. If you believe that it is advantageous, your reverence could read these letters aloud to the pope's father confessor or you could give him a copy, so it could be used by them for the good. I do not doubt that if the most sacred lord allows him to be informed, he will think otherwise about the 'novatores'[the Jansenists].<sup>33</sup>

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*Gandavi? inquit. Ill<sup>mus</sup> Dominus addet libenter informeretur de illo Patre; de illius qualitatibus et meritis. Ad quae ego: ille Pater non habitat Gandavi; sed ego sum....'* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 1 April 1683. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

32 These 70 folios with visions of the 'other Maria' have not yet been found.

33 '*suspiciatur R.A.P. Provincialis, uti et ego ab initio fueram suspicatus, quod Ill<sup>mus</sup> Dominus Roma acceperit litteras, ut de me sumeret informationes ratione litterarum istius monialis Mechliniensis ad Sanctissimum Dominum, a Reverentia Vestra Confessario Pontificis, ut puto, traditarum, ut forte videant an aliquid fidei illis habendum etc. Non dubito de divino istis <sic!> monialis spiritu, cuius divina scripta, quasi iussu Dei, in aliquam formam redegi, et exscripsi in 70 circiter foliis chartae presso caractere. Spirant stupendam familiaritatem cum Sponso caelesti [...] Occasione autem informationis factae de mea persona [...] fui motus ut secundas ipsius litteras ad eundem, latine translatas, ad Reverentiam Vestram transmitterem, quas ipsa mihi misit plusquam a duabus mensibus cum descriptione visionis sibi factae; quas Reverentia Vestra, si iudicet expedire, Patri Confessario Pontificis poterit praelegere vel etiam copiam dare, ut illis uti in bonum. Non dubito, quin si Sanctissimus Dominus sineret se informari, aliter sentiret de novatoribus.'* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 1 April 1683. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

Unfortunately these two letters of the 'other Maria' have not yet been discovered. However, the archives of the Carmelite Order in Rome contain a letter, in which Michael reveals the contents of two other letters from the 'other Maria'. On 28 May 1683 he wrote:

Last week I sent two letters from this nun which, I hope, may make a strong impression by putting matters in a holy light and leading to an actual movement. In those letters is written among other things that his holiness no longer has to doubt about a vicious evil, et cetera because it will be manifested only briefly as, for example, it is manifested now. For the 'novatores' of Belgium together with the 'novatores' of France, while they encourage each other with their knowledge, applaud the propositions against the pope in France, already approved and registered by the clergy and the king.<sup>34</sup>

So also the 'other Maria' claimed to have special knowledge about political affairs, like Maria Petyt in the document on the Dutch War. The prelates were unlikely to have considered this knowledge from God, given the reaction of the pope's confessor to the previous two letters which had been sent to him. Michael wrote that the confessor considered 'that these letters were written from a human spirit.'<sup>35</sup> Anyway, the bold actions of this young Norbertine sister raised doubts in Rome regarding her spiritual director and his editorial work for visionary sisters. This awkward situation could have been an obstacle to the publication of the Latin codex.

34 *'precedenti septimana misi secundas litteras istius monialis, quae utinam, mediante divina aliqua illustratione et efficaci motione, efficaciter afficiant mentem per; in illis inter alia habetur, quod sua sanctitas non diu amplius debet dubitare de malo serpente etc. quia brevi se manifestabit etc. pro ut ex nunc manifestat nam propositionibus contra pontificem in Gallia iam a clero et rege auctorizatis, et inter arresta regia registratis applaudunt novatores Belgii cum novatoribus Galliae confaederati et mutuas intelligentias foventes.'* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 28 May 1683. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

35 *'Ista monialis istas secundas litteras, prout et sua omnia, reliquit meae dictioni et arbitrio [...] His scriptis intelligo ex vestris Confessarium primas tandem tradidisse illi ad quem erant, sed quod ille existimet illas litteras ex humano spiritu scriptas etc. Sufficit, quod sint traditae; iam Dei est operari, prout spero operaturum, nisi peccata populi impediunt etc. Illa monialis reliquit ista divinae providentiae. Data tamen occasione insinuabo illi quid actum.'* Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels, 1 April 1683. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675-1698*.

### The Problem about the 'Oratio Quietis' in the Early 1680s

There may be another scenario explaining the cancellation of a Latin edition. During the process there could have been growing questions about the spiritual framework of Maria's letters. Working on the composition of the codex – Michael must have worked on it between 1677 and April 1680 – he might not have foreseen the rapid developments in the Roman Curia during and after these years, in which the Curia turned against mysticism and quietism, the *volta antimistica*.<sup>36</sup>

In the early 1680s a polarizing attitude was emerging against a new form of prayer, the *Oratio quietis* or prayer of quiet. In the instructions of the Holy Office we find the following description of this prayer:

They call it an acquired contemplation, a prayer of quiet, without form, without images, a mystical silence, a simple gaze, a withdrawal to the centre, a sacred darkness, a mental exaltation, a deifying unification and more such perfections on which some books dwell, that promise that the soul will ascend to purely intellectual contemplation, to the essential application<sup>37</sup> of the spirit and to the most eminent life.<sup>38</sup>

Although it is hardly possible in these early years to reduce any spiritual movement to a well defined content, the controversy about the *Oratio Quietis* crystallized rapidly.<sup>39</sup> The reason for this anti-mystical turn was the publication of

36 See Malena (2003) 116.

37 For the term 'application', see: *Dict. Spir.* 1: 822ff.

38 '*La chiamano contemplatione acquisitata, oratione di quiete senza forma, senza immagini, silenzio mistico, semplice sguardo, introversione centrale, tenebre divine, eccesso mentale, unione deifica, et altre tali perfettioni delle quali trattano certi libri, che promettono d'inalzar l'anima sino alla contemplatione puramente intellettuale, alla applicatione essenziale dello spirito e vita sopra eminente.*' Rome, ASU, *St.St.* (Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Fondo Stanza Storica) Volumi dei consultatori conventuali dei ss.apostoli U.F. 4. S.O. Fabro consultore. Propositiones cleri Gallicani, Taloni et Lavard. orationes quietis 1680–1690) fol. 370r (Palazzo del Sant'Uffizio, Piazza del Sant'Uffizio 11 00120 Città del Vaticano). For more information about the use of the term essential and eminent in the work of Maria Petyt, see Deblaere (1961) 1346–1366.

39 Eulogio Pacho writes about this preliminary phase of quietism in *Dict. Spir.*: '*Ceux qui ont le plus contribué à cette évolution peuvent être appelés «préquiétistes» à condition que cela n'implique aucune nuance péjoratives, aucun soupçon. Si des déviations se sont produites, plus ou moins nettes, c'est qu'un se sont produites, c'est qu'un sain équilibre interne n'a pas été maintenu; il faut alors détecter quand et comment elles se manifestent, les dangers qu'elles créent, les exagérations qu'elles suscitent dans la pratique de la vie spirituelle.*' *Dict. Spir.* 12,

the famous *Guida Spirituale* by Molinos in 1675. At the time this *Guida Spirituale* was a popular and widely read book in Rome. There was no problem until the end of the 1670s when the Jesuits Bell'Uomo (d. 1690) and Paolo Segneri (1624–1694) voiced the first protests against the book. In 1678 Bell'Uomo published a work entitled *Pregio e l'ordine dell'orationi de ordinarie e mistiche* in response to Molinos's thoughts on prayer. This writing, however, cannot really be called polemical in the opinion of Dudon, who records only slight concern about a 'new asceticism' in this work.<sup>40</sup> The debate on Molinos's thoughts became fiercer in March 1680, when the popular preacher Segneri informed his general that he planned to refute Molinos's ideas on meditation. In the same year his *Concordia tra la quiete e fatica nell'orazione* appeared.<sup>41</sup>

At first Segneri's efforts to polarise seemed in vain. On 26 September 1681 Cardinal Casanate, assessor of the Holy Office,<sup>42</sup> wrote the following comment in the margin of his *Memoria per il libro del Paolo Segnari della Compagnia di Gesu*:

On the basis of moderation, nothing prohibits the manufacture of books which attack the prayer of quiet. But for the proper force of the same [prayer] [someone must write] circular letters which should be given to him [Segneri], and which should be compiled by a special convocation of the father cardinals.<sup>43</sup>

This benevolent reception of the prayer of quiet seemed even more confirmed when on 26 November 1681, Segneri's *Concordia* was put on the Index.<sup>44</sup>

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2: 2758. The complexity of the facts and opinions prevents a researcher to form a clear picture of the dividing lines between pre-quietism and the prayer of quiet. Malena (2003, 6f.) writes about this problem: '*Appare perciò necessario cercare di analizzare tale strategia nel suo complesso, per evitare i rischi connessi all'adozione, come categorie di analisi storica, di quelli che furono capi di repressione inquisitoriale.*'

40 Dudon (1921) 66.

41 *Dict. Spir.* 12, 2: 2768. *Concordia tra la fatica e la quiete nell'orazione* appeared in Florence in the autumn of 1680.

42 Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310. (Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Via S. Ignazio 52, 00186 Rome) For more information on Cardinal Casanate, see Ceysens (1978) 144–147.

43 '*Nihil de moderatione prohibic*>* factem librorum e impugnanciu<m> orationi quietis, sed pro recto vi eiusde dandar ei literas circulares formandai per Congreg. particulare DD Cardinalium.*' Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 500v. The transcription and translation of this remark are tentative. Someone else might have written this note in the margin.

44 *Dict. Spir.* 12, 2:2770.

However, the atmosphere changed rapidly after this date. On 12 April 1682, one of the former assessors of the Holy Office, Cardinal Francesco Albizzi, completed a document called *Oratione di Quietate*.<sup>45</sup> In this treatise the cardinal refers to suspect forms of mystical prayer, such as those practised by the beguards. In his rejection of this prayer he did not advance substantive arguments, but rather stressed the threat which these movements constitute to the Church. Therefore, he believes, all writings on this theme in the vernacular should be destroyed and confessors and spiritual directors, especially those of nuns, should be instructed that only perfect souls may practise this form of prayer in complete solitude.<sup>46</sup>

Cardinal Francesco Albizzi was not the only cardinal opposing the prayer of quiet. We find the same thoughts in the notes of Cardinal Maracci, the confessor of Pope Innocent XI, to whom the 'other Maria' probably sent her visions.<sup>47</sup> Undated but presumably in the same year, his notes circulated in Rome, in which far-reaching measures regarding the prayer of quiet are proposed, including the banning of

groups, particularly of women, where contemplation or rather the prayer of quiet is openly practised. This would create disorder and noteworthy scandals [...] hence it seems necessary to forbid these meetings as they are already banned in some places.<sup>48</sup>

Cardinal Maracci also sought the prohibition of books on this topic except those with explicit permission from the Holy Office. Previously published books should be banned until they were purged of errors and suspicious passages.<sup>49</sup>

45 Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 87–102. For more information on Francesco Albizzi, see Monticone (1960) 23–26. Seraphinus had many contacts with him; see Ceysens (1974) XL.

46 Malena (2003) 5f.

47 There was a second chamberlain of the pope, Mgr Agostino Favoriti, but he passed away in 1682.

48 The notes of Cardinal Maracci are entitled *Errari principali intorno alla nuova contemplatione, o vero Oratione di Quietate*. Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 493–497. The quotation is found in fol. 497r: '*les conventicole particolarmente di donne, nelle quali si professa la contemplatione, o uero Oratione di Quietate: e ne nascono disordini, e scandali notabili, [...] unde pare nassario proibire queste adunanze si come gia state proibite in alcuni luoghi.*'

49 Dudon (1921) 154. Cardinal Maracci writes: '*Per oviare a i gravi mali, che ponno cagionare i sopradetti errori pare espediente che si proibisca il pubblicare in avvenire libri, attenenti à*

In an undated *Instruzione sull'orazione di quiete* in the archives of the Holy Office these thoughts about quiet prayer by women are accepted unequivocally. About the activity of *donniciole* (females) who pray on the lines of Teresa it says:

This most sublime contemplation can be acquired. It may even be practised by females, so they say: if you have made it sufficiently part of yourself, you can reach a habitus of personal knowledge of the beauty of virtue and the ugliness of sin; this ability one may acquire within six months according to St. Teresa and within two [months] according to St. Bonaventure. But it is true that St. Teresa never said anything like that.<sup>50</sup>

Those in the Roman Curia who took this *Instruzione sull'orazione di quiete* to heart were unlikely to have shown much appreciation for the prayers of the sisters in the Cluise of Mechelen, founded by Maria Petyt. She did not care much for what she called 'work exercises' but rather strove for profound quiet in God. She writes:

So normally I use no other means to prepare myself for prayer than trying to open myself inwardly more perfectly and to make an effort to expand my mind in God; the more quietly and easily this is done, the purer and clearer the entrance and access to God, and the sooner I come to pro-

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*Contemplatione in lingua volgare, e senza licenza, approbatione, e diligente revisione del S. Offitio, ò degli' Ordinari.* Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 497r. This thought is adopted and even extended in the instructions of Cardinal Casanate: *'inhibendo, ne in posserum tam meditationi, quam contemplationi addicti, verbis aut scriptis invicem se lacessant, neq super modo, et circumstantiis praefacurarum orationum questiones moneant, none de praedicta materia libros sue impressos, su manuscriptos quocumque idromate in vulgus disfundant, nisi de licentia Sacr. Congregationes Sancti Officii sub poenis arbitrio eiusdem.'* Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 468r; in *Instructio Pro Confessariis et directoribus animarum circa meditationem et contemplationem sive orationem, quam vocant quietis.* Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms Casanate 310, fol. 465–468.

50 *'Questa elevatissima contemplatione s'insegna, e si fà praticare perfino alle donniciole, e perche dicono, che per basta per farci habili ad essa haver acquistato un' habito di propria cognitione della bellezza della Virtù, e della brutezza del vitio, il cui habito al parere de S. Teresa può conseguirsi in sei mesi, e secondo S. Bonaventura in due. Mà il vero s'è, che S. Teresa non hà detto tal cosa.'* Rome, ASU, St. Volumi dei consultatori conventuali dei ss.apostoli UV 4, fol. 370v.

found quiet in God, or to union with the Spirit, or even to simply witnessing or contemplating the Beloved.<sup>51</sup>

Such descriptions of her mental prayer and her frequent references to Teresa could have led to misinterpretation by the Roman censors.<sup>52</sup> This might be another reason for the cancellation of the publication of the Latin codex.

As a counter argument to this second scenario one could point out that the first 'official' note on the banning of books about the prayer of quiet is dated almost two years after the date of signature of the Latin codex. However, it should be noted that one aspect of this mounting agitation against the prayer of quiet was already discussed by Italian censors in the 1670s, namely the place of the affections in prayer life. This discussion could already have created difficulties for the publication of the codex.

### Maria's Approach to the Affections

Maria's thoughts on feelings were quite different from the aforementioned notes of Cardinal Marraci where we read:

Furthermore, contemplatives have to flee from, reject and despise the feelings of sensory devotion, the tenderness of the heart, the tears and spiritual consolations, as contradictory to contemplation.<sup>53</sup>

51 *'Dus ordinairlijck en ghebruycke ick gheen en anderen middel voorbereydinche tot het gebedt, dan dat ick mijn inwendigh wat volmaeckter trachte te openen, ende den gheest in Godt uyt te spannen; ende hoe dit stilder ende eenvoudigher in sijn werck gaet, hoe den opganck, ende toeganck tot Godt puerder ende klaerder is; ende soo veel te haester kome ick tot een innighe ruste in Godt, oft tot de vereeninge des gheests, oft oock tot een eenvoudigh aenschouwen oft aensien des Beminden.'* Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 158f.

52 The Roman Curia's suspicion of '(pre-)quietism' in Maria's writings could only be based on a few arguments. In her letters one finds many passages in which she warns against deliberate emptiness: 'so I understand at least that a soul has to abstain from its own operation if it is in an actual state of enjoyment, or if it feels itself attracted and invited to this, or if it discerns any entrance to it, or if God has any other operations in it.' (*Soo dan, ick verstaen alleenlijck, dat een Ziele haer van alle eyghen werckinghe ledigh houden moet, als sy is in die dadelijcke ghenietelijcke gesteltenisse, oft als sy haer daer toe aengelockt, ende ghenoeyt gevoelt, oft eenighen inganck daer toe bespeurt, oft oock, als Godt eenighe andere werkinghen in haer heft.*) Petyt (1684) vol. 4, 187.

53 *'Ancora gl'affetti della devotione sensibile, la tenerezza del cuore, le lagrime, e le consolationi spirituali si devono fuggire e rigettare, anzi disprezzare dai contemplativi, come cose repag-*



For Maria the sensory forces of the soul were of great value in the process of divine formation, through which transforming grace can lead a soul into godly life. In her letters on the mariaform life – one of the key notions of the spirituality which made Michael and Maria well-known in Carmelite history – Maria describes the importance of the sensory forces of the soul:

In a way the amiable Mother appears to be the life of my soul, and thus the soul of my soul. For that reason she [Mary] brings forth [...] and gives birth to the life of the soul in God or divine life in God through a sensory flow in the soul of the generative, anticipating, strengthening, supporting, alluring, accommodating and following or continuing graces, so that the soul will carry on the divine life in God with more firmness, fortitude, purity, et cetera.<sup>54</sup>

Such thoughts about a sensory flow of grace might be acceptable in a Marian theology, but Maria Petyt was also fierce and directive about this issue in the field of spiritual direction. This might have caused trouble. In one of her noteworthy letters Maria inveighs vehemently against spiritual directors who believe that all natural affections have to be destroyed:

The Beloved has taught me and commanded me to write that some are to blame, who give general rules about mental prayer to souls which aspire to perfection in the purest sense and to mental prayer, and are ordered to exclude, reject, mortify and annihilate forever all sensory feelings, such as tender and passionate love, and any cooperation with their sensory forces, [...] Such teachers do not understand what it is to stand mentally under the free direction of the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit is absolute master and lord of the soul. He works both in the lower forces and in the higher, now in one way, then in another, just as he pleases, because sometimes he wants to be loved and served by all forces of the soul.<sup>55</sup>

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*nanti alla contemplatione.*' Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms. Casan. 310, fol. 494r item 5 in *Errari principali intorno alla nuova contemplatione, ò vero Oratione di Quietè.*

54 'De alder-minnelijckste Moeder schijnt op een seker maniere van spreken, te wesen het leven van mijne Ziele, ende aldus te zijn de Ziele van mijne Ziele, om dieswil dat sy [...] mijne Ziele voort-brenght, ende baert het leven der Ziele in Godt oft goddelijck leven, door een bevindelijck invloeyen der gratien van verweckende, voorkomende, versterckende, aenleydende, aenlockende, mede-gaende, ende naervolghende, oft continuerende gratien, om in het goddelijck leven in Godt, met meerdere vastigheyt, ghestadigheyt, puerheyt, &c. te continueren.' Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 343.

55 'Den Beminden heeft my gheleert, ende bevolen my te schryven, hoe qualijck dat sommige doen, de welke willen gheven generaele Reghels aen Zielen, die op het puerste van sin zijn te

When Michael put the date of 24 April 1680 below the preface of the *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia* he might not have been aware that the Italian discourse on mental prayer had already been focusing on feelings for some time. In the early 1670s an Italian edition of a text by the French Ursuline Marie Bon de l'Incarnation (1636–1680) entitled *Stati d'orazione mentale*<sup>56</sup> was submitted to Tommaso Menghini, inquisitor of the diocese of Gubbio and Casale Monferrato.<sup>57</sup> Initially only a single passage was revised and in 1674 the document was approved for printing. However, on 18 January 1676 this book was condemned by the Congregazione dell'Indice and put on the Index. Some months later an inquisitor from Genova published a decree of the Congregation of 29 April 1676, which clearly stated that the Inquisition condemns not mental prayer, which is called of feelings and of quiet, but [condemns] the claims of those who reject vocal prayer and other spiritual exercises used in the Holy Roman Church, and who even claim that those who practise the aforementioned prayer can be sure of salvation and do not need forgiveness and also [claim that] they commit mortal sin when they omit this form of prayer [i.e. vocal prayer].<sup>58</sup>

Although the sisters of Cluyse said their vocal prayers, Maria Petyt's attitude towards affective and sensory devotion could be as suspect to a censor as her striving for profound quiet in God. This aspect of her spiritual framework, too, could have been a reason for the cancellation of the publication.

It is not clear which scenario should be considered the reason why the Latin codex was not published. Probably it is impossible to trace the actual history.

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*trachten tot de volmaecktheyt, ende tot het inwendigh Ghebedt, datse voor altijd moeten uytsluyten, verwerpen, versterven, ende vernieten alle ghevoelijcke affectien, teere ende driftighe liefde, ende het mede-spelen vande ghevoelijcke krachten [...] sulcke Onderwysers en verstaen niet wel, wat dat is gheestelijck staen onder een libere bestieringhe vanden H. Gheest; want daer den H. Gheest is absoluut Meester, ende Heer inde Ziel, daer werckt hy soo wel inde onderste krachten, als inde opperste, nu op d'een, nu op d'ander manier, ghelijck 't hem belieft; want somtijds wilt hy ghedient, ende bemint worden van alle de krachten der Ziele, ghelijck inde Salighe inden Hemel.' Petyt (1683) vol. 3, 29. It is unclear whether this letter can be found in Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70.*

56 Malena (2000) 304.

57 See also [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tommaso-menghini\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/tommaso-menghini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

58 '*non damnat orationem mentalem, quae dicitur degli' affetti e della quiete, sed asserta illorum, qui reprobant orationes vocales et alia exercitia spiritualia, quibus utitur Sancta Romana Ecclesia, et asserunt, quod utentes praedicta oratione sunt securi de salute, non indigent poenitentia, eandem orationem omittentes peccant mortaliter.*' Malena (2000) 305, n. 90.

This last scenario, too, cannot really be clarified. But there is good reason to suppose an interplay of different factors and to assume that Michael might have been overcome by the inexorable wind that was blowing in the Roman Curia during those years.

**The Delay in the Publication of the Dutch *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia, (alias) Petyt***

In 1683/1684 a single Dutch edition of Maria's letters was published. This Dutch edition appeared more than three years after the date of the Latin preface, namely 24 April 1680.<sup>59</sup> Besides this noteworthy detail, there are other indications that the publication of the Dutch edition was delayed for some years. The title page of the *Kort Begryp* (1681) already refers to the forthcoming *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia*, suggesting that the *Leven* must have been almost ready to go to press at that time. This is confirmed when we read towards the end of the *Kort Begryp*: 'the same can be read in her *Leven*, which has been prepared for publication by her spiritual director, the very reverend father Michael of St. Augustine, provincial of our Dutch province.'<sup>60</sup> Another sign of a delay is that on the front page of the first volume Michael is called provincial, although he no longer occupied that position after 1681. Also Michael dated his '*protestatie van den autheur*' as early as 10 April 1681.<sup>61</sup>

Apart from the possibility that Michael of St. Augustine was prevented by ill health or pressure of work<sup>62</sup> from finalizing the bulky edition of the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia*, there may be other reasons for the delay. Staring states that Michael feared that in Belgium no permission would be given for publication 'given the Jansenist tendencies of the secular clergy, especially the bishops.'<sup>63</sup> This accords with a letter Michael wrote from Brussels in 1679 to his friend Seraphinus about sending the Latin *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia* to Rome for publication, because (he argues): 'I believe I can get it done more easily there, for here I am strongly opposed by critical censors.'<sup>64</sup> However, this explanation does not give the true cause for

59 The Latin preface is an almost literal translation of the Dutch prologue.

60 Michael of St. Augustine (1681) 98. On this subject, also see Merlier (1975) 29–41.

61 The author's protestation is found in Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 5r.

62 On 18 November 1678 Michael wrote from Mechelen that he did not have much time to work on the *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia* because of a visitation.

63 Staring (1948) 303.

64 '*confido ibi facilius impetrandam quam <sic!> hic a criticis censoribus plurimi me dehortantur.*' Michael of St. Augustine to Seraphinus of Jesus and Mary, Brussels 1679. Rome, Arch. Gen., *Prov. Flandro - Belgica, commune provinciae 1675–1698*.

the delay of the Dutch edition. The *approbationes* by anti-Jansenist censors at the beginning of the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia* date from 1680, which suggests that the anticipated problem of the Jansenist censors was quickly resolved by Michael.<sup>65</sup> Hence it cannot be the cause of the delay till 1683.<sup>66</sup>

### An Editorial Purge

To find the real obstacle to the publication of the Dutch *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia* we have inquired into the spiritual framework of the *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia* and noted the changes which Michael (or someone else) introduced in the document in order to get the right *approbationes*.<sup>67</sup> This editorial revision might give us the best insight into the problems the editor tried to avoid.

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- 65 The publication has no fewer than five approbations, whereas only two were needed. These are dated 27 July 1683, 3 July 1683, 12 July 1683, 12 September 1680, and 2 October 1680. (The *facultas* of the general and provincial are dated 7 March 1682, sq. 1 July 1683.) Apart from censors from his own order (Vincentius of the Nativity and Marius of St. James), we find the names of anti-Jansenist censors: A. Poelman, Nicolaus du Bois and Damman. The names of these censors appear on the list of members of the Secret Society: *Nicolaus du Bois: sacrae theologiae et utriusque iuris licentiatius, regius ac primarius sacrae theologiae professor in academia Lovaniensi, ac collegii regii ibidem praeses; Petrus Damman: sacrae theologiae licentiatius canonicus collegiatae Divi Petri [Lovaniensis], apostolicus librorum censor, collegii Dryusiani praeses; Adrianus Poelman: canonicus graduatus et archipresbyter cathedralis Gandensis, sacrae theologiae licentiatius.* Ceyskens (1950) 364. Michael himself was a member of this Secret Society of anti-Jansenists founded in November 1678. The Secret Society had a governing committee at Louvain that met at least once a week and gathered incriminating material against the Jansenists on behalf of a large group of members.
- 66 Although none too plausible, there is yet another possibility to explain the difficulties. In the 1680s the battle between the Carmelites and the Bollandists was at its height. Relations were seriously strained. Three days after the date of the preface of the codex, James of the Passion wrote: *Vix possumus nos cohibere in capitales nostri ordinis hostes, Jesuitas, qui mense Maio Vitam Sancti Angeli explodunt ut fabulosam, nullo vix fundamento nisi stramineo. Zelus Dei urget nos ad arma.* Ceyskens (1952) 102. This further cooled relations in the Secret Society, according to Lucianus Ceyskens (1950) vol. 1, 367. How this conflict could have influenced the assessment of the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia* is not clear.
- 67 Ferdinand van der Haeghen writes in his *Bibliographie gantoise (Gend 1860)*: *'Le père Michel de S.t Augustin, de ordre des Carmes ( ...) rapporte dans cette biographie un grand nombre de faits d'une authenticité douteuse. Aussi la cour de Rome l'obligea-t-elle de faire un*

The differences between the Dutch edition and the Latin codex are striking even at first glance. Regarding the sequence and compilation of the chapters, it is noteworthy that the Dutch collection does not parallel the Latin codex. In the Dutch edition Michael omitted about 56 chapters.<sup>68</sup> Due to the illegibility of some parts of the codex it is difficult to trace exactly which chapters are missing. We have to rely on the table of contents.<sup>69</sup> Although incomplete, the following may be stated about what may be inferred from the missing chapters.

Firstly, all letters about R.G. [Rex Galliae] are omitted by the editor. To some extent this also applies to the letters about R.H. [Rex Hispaniae], although the Spanish king is mentioned a few times in the letters on the Amiable Mother.<sup>70</sup> In the table of contents of the Latin codex we find the following chapters which are missing in the Dutch edition and in which we read among other things:

- Cap. 201: 'she [Maria Petyt] is moved to pray for all leaders of the church, for R.G., whose wicked life, and also God's wrath towards him, are revealed to her. This king is recommended to her, in order that she may pray for him in the hope of saving his soul. From the Beloved she understands that a relative of his has been liberated from purgatory.'<sup>71</sup>
- Cap. 269: 'The spirit of prayer in favour of the armies of R.G. is returning to her in deep contemplation, in the spirit, through the spirit, without words,

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*retractation.*' (vol. 2, 77) He refers to Cosmas de Villiers, *Bibliotheca Carmelitana*, 2, 446. There we cannot find any indication for this statement. But it could be right. It is striking that in the Dutch edition of Maria's autobiography 31 chapters are missing. In the prologue of the Latin *Vita* Michael writes about 186 chapters. In the prologue of the Dutch *Leven* he refers to 155 chapters. This requires further investigation.

68 Although difficult to compare because of the bad condition of the codex, in my opinion the following chapters or parts of chapters are missing: 51, 52, 54–56, 201, 232–233, 247, 257, 269, 308, 366, 410, 421, 443, 444, 466, 476, 478–479, 513, 759, 769–771, 804–811, 814, 817–821, 828–829, 850–851, 865, 875–884, and 907. On the other hand, not all the letters in the *Tractaet van verscheyden ghesteltenissen der zielen* (Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 196–300) are found in the *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia*, nor the following chapters from Petyt (1683) vol. 2, cap. 19, 32, 55, 192, 267; vol.3, cap. 149–151, 185, 214; vol.4, cap. 2, 8 and 31.

69 See Giovanni Grosso's contribution to this volume, p. 85.

70 Petyt (1683) vol. 2, 358–59.

71 Cap. 201: '*movetur ut oret pro omnibus superioribus ecclesiae; pro R.G. cuius mala vita, et dei contra illum ira illi revelatur; committitur ei iste R. ut pro illo oret, cum spe lucrandi animam eius; a Dilecto intelligit liberationem cognatae suae e purgatorio.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 13v. The name of the relative has not been discovered.

et cetera, and [the spirit] indicates to her its desire in the form of a simple intuition, which God understands.<sup>72</sup>

- Cap. 308: 'Asked to pray, she feels whether she'll be heard. She cannot pray for things that are not deiform. She prays for the king of Spain.'<sup>73</sup>
- Cap. 877: 'While the king of France besieges the city of Maastricht, in God she sees the city, certain that R.G. will fail [...].'<sup>74</sup>
- Cap 879: 'Besides other things, she understands in God that R.G. will gain his victories and she is commanded immediately to pray for the things that need to be done by God to secure the victories which she sees in God.'<sup>75</sup>

These chapters may have been omitted because of the strained relations with France or because Maria's supernatural knowledge was not considered according to God by the competent authorities.

Apart from these chapters about R.G. and R.H. several other chapters about Maria's visions and prophetic gifts are missing from the Dutch edition, for instance the following:

- Cap. 805: 'When she is not following her inner impulse she feels ill treated and darkened, she becomes afraid and she feels herself removed from the Beloved. She becomes afraid, asking herself whether the previous appearances perhaps were false.'<sup>76</sup>
- Cap. 880: 'God shows her how the prophets foresaw the future in the spirit and how some saints read the thoughts of others, and also how without the operation of her own intellect this prophetic insight is in the intimate

72 Cap. 269: '*redit spiritus orandi in favorem armorum R.G. in intima contemplatione in spiritu per spiritum, sine verbis etc. per simplicem intuitum notificando sua desideria, quae deus intelligit.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 15v.

73 Cap. 308: '*Rogata orare, sentit, an sit exaudienda; non potest orare pro rebus non deiformibus; orat pro Rege Hispan.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 16v.

74 Cap. 877: '*Rege G. obsidente Traiectum, videt illam civitatem in Deo cum certitudine quod cedet R.G. et [...]git illa [...]rcipi auxilio angelorum.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 28v. In the second part we read: '*[...] R.G. et intelligit illam intercipi auxilio angelorum.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 44r.

75 Cap. 879: '*independenter a relatione aliorum, in Deo intelligit victorias R.G. inde subito, monetur ad orandum, ad gratia agendas Deo pro victoriis quas in Deo videt.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 29r.

76 Cap. 805: '*non sequens internum tractum acciter corripitur, obtenebratur, auxiliatur, et a Dilecto alienatur, auxiliatur etiam an praeteritae apparationes non fuerint falsae.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 27r.

ground of her soul, united with God in a simple passive intuition, which is given to her.<sup>77</sup>

- Cap. 88r: 'The inner prophetic intuition originates from within, free from any other faculty of the soul. It must be entirely divine, for the mind stays passive while operation of the intellect conceals the complete ground [of her soul].'<sup>78</sup>
- Cap. 466: 'she greets her spiritual father in the heart of Mary [...], in which he seems to live. At Mary's feast she exults in the love of Mary, and for her order which she sees is more pleasing to her [Mary] than other [orders].'<sup>79</sup>

The editor also valued the discipline of her spiritual life. Where Maria's contact with her spiritual director was strained some chapters were dropped, for instance:

- Cap. 769: 'she laments that she cannot open herself to her spiritual director and she eschews speaking with people, even pious people, and she is drawn to follow this withdrawal and cling to God alone.'<sup>80</sup>
- Cap 770: 'The Beloved weans her from her spiritual director, by whom she was supported hitherto with the consent of the Beloved.'<sup>81</sup>
- Cap. 771: 'The Beloved himself wants to accompany her, so that she lives in God alone.'<sup>82</sup>

Thus Maria's idea that she could be guided by her Beloved alone was not considered wise, and probably for that reason it was left out of the collection. The

77 Cap. 88o: '*Deus ei ostendit quomodo prophetae in spiritu praeviderint futura, et aliqui sancti cogitationes aliorum, sine operatione propii intellectus ivisio prophetica sit in intimo animae fundo, Deo unito per simplicem passivum intuitum, qui ei datur.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 29r.

78 Cap. 881: '*intimus intuitus propheticus est intus expeditus ab omni alia animae potentia, et debet esse totus divinus, ad quem anima habet se passive, propria operatio intellectus totum fundum obnubilaret.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 29r.

79 Cap. 466: '*salutat Spiritualem in corde Mariae in quo videtur habitare; in eius festis exultet amore Maria, et erga ordinem suum quem videt illi prae caeteris gratum.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 19v.

80 Cap. 769: '*dolet, quod se non possit aperire Patri Spirituali et taedet eam loqui cum hominibus, etiam piis, et allicitur, ut hanc abstractionem sequatur; ac soli Deo adhereat.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 26r.

81 Cap. 770: '*Dilectus eam ablactat a Spirituali, cui hactenus ex permissu Dilecti innixa est.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 26r.

82 Cap. 771: '*Dilectus solus vult eam dirigere, ut vivat in solo Deo.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 26r.



chapters in which her desire to live in seclusion goes too far are missing from the *Leven vande weerdighe moeder Maria a S.ta Teresia*:

- Cap. 804: 'she is invited to the highest withdrawal and mortification of her senses more than ever before and she is stimulated by God to live in seclusion.'<sup>83</sup>
- Cap. 806: 'she is left to her nature and abhors the hermit's life, which is so withdrawn. She is tested by the vitality of her nature, and she is frightened'<sup>84</sup>

Again, we shall probably never know why the publication of the Dutch edition was suspended till 1683. However, if we combine all probable obstacles in the complete redaction of the writings of Maria Petyt, this purge of the Dutch edition may anticipate or even be executed on the instructions of the Holy Office. This conclusion may overstate the available evidence, unless similar situations can be demonstrated in historiography. At present I do not know of any such cases.

In any case, assuming that Michael himself – and not a censor – was responsible for this editorial purge of the Dutch edition, the topics of the aforementioned letters once more justify the conclusion that Maria's spirituality was very sensitive in these eventful years of the anti-mystical turn.

### Conclusion

When Maria's spiritual path is further investigated after this publication of her letters on the Dutch War, researchers have to be alert to the choices made in the redaction of her work. The recently discovered document on the Dutch War shows that Maria's spiritual path might have been very different from what has hitherto been ascribed to this famous Flemish mystic.

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83 Cap. 804: '*invitatur ad summam abstractionem et sensuum mortificationem, plusquam unquam autea, et monetur a Dilecto ut abstracta vivat.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 27r.

84 Cap. 806: '*reliquitur sue nature, quae abhorret vitam eremiticam tam abstractam; tentatur naturae vivacitate est, unde angustiatur.*' Rome, Arch. Post. III, 70, fol. 27r.



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- Rome, Arch. Gen. Ord. Carmelitarum, *II Flandro-Belgica commune provinciae 1675–1698*.  
Michael of St. Augustine's letters are stored in a separate folder.
- Rome, Arch. Post. Ord. Carmelitarum, III, 70: *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia Tertiariae ordinis Bmae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo*, fol. 30r-49v.

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# The Latin Manuscript about the Dutch War and Its Translation in English

*Veronie Meeuwsen* (ed.)

## Transcription of the manuscript

The manuscript could not be transcribed completely because it is partly damaged. At the bottom of the folios we find large blank spaces as a result of moisture, so that these parts of the text are hard or even impossible to read and to transcribe. Still the text that remains is valuable and provides a good idea of what Maria Petyt has written about her experiences during the Dutch War.

The transcription of the text provides the basis for a critical reading. I have tried to provide a transcription that is as literal as possible from the original text. Please keep in mind the following stylistic guide. The summaries of Michael of St. Augustine are indented texts as in the manuscript. Where the text is impossible to read this is indicated with dots: .... Uncertainties in the text I indicate with square parentheses: [ ]. Augmented texts on grounds of probability are indicated by pointed parentheses: < >. Line numbers between square brackets [ ] are added to make it easier to refer to the original text. Lines as in the original text, are separated by slashes (/). Folio breaks have an extra double slash (//) indication. Other signs like parentheses, underlinings etc. are literal reproductions of the text in the manuscript. The punctuation is adapted to modern usage. Abbreviations are written out in full.

I have transcribed all the text as literally as possible. However, I have some remarks about the transcription of some particular letters. For the letters *i* and *u* both as vowel or consonant the notation of the manuscript is followed, which makes clear that the scribe does not differentiate between *i/j* and *u/v*, which is usual in Latin texts from that time. With capitals it is the other way around: *I/J* and *U/V* are respectively written as *J* and *V*.

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\* Special thanks to dr. Rijcklof Hofman for his help with the transcription.

**Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sancta Theresia**

*Rome, Arch. Carm. Post. III, 70 f.30r-49v*

**30r**

[1] Iussu Dei sequentia scribit Suo Patri Spirituali suo secreto, quamdiu / ipsa uiuet. Sic autem incipit 7 Nouembris 1672. /

Sit nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum. / Quantum possum percipere et iudicare de mandato diuini Amatoris mei, arripui calammum in manu, ut an- / [5] notem sequentia, cum quasi mandato, quod debent manere secreta et occulta sub meo patre spirituali / solo, nulli alteri quidquam de illis notificando directe uel indirecte, quam diu ego uixero, ne malignus spi- / ritus inde sumat instrumentum, quo me oppugnet tempore tentationis. /

Post mensem internae derelictionis redit spiritus trahitur ad intimam quietem / A Dilecto possidetur, et eum possidet. Renouatur in ea spiritus orandi pro Rege / [10] Galliae, et amor maternus cum confirmatione praeteritorum. /

Cessante statu internae derelictionis et afflictionis, quem per litteras datas 16 et 17 octobris 1672 / Reuerentiae Vestrae notum feci, qui durauit circiter per

## Life of the venerable Maria of Saint Teresa<sup>1</sup>

*Rome, Carm. Archive, Post. III, 70*

30r<sup>2</sup>

At the command of God, she writes the following to her spiritual father, binding him to secrecy for as long as she would live. So she begins on the 7th of November 1672.

The name of the Lord be praised from now and forever more. As far as I can perceive and judge the mandate of my divine Beloved, I have taken my pen in hand, to note the following, with the instruction that it should remain secret, and known to my spiritual father alone. It may not be disclosed to anyone else, directly or indirectly, as long as I live<sup>3</sup>, so that no evil spirit may derive from it anything with which to attack me in a time of trial.

After a month of inner dereliction the spirit turns back. She is drawn to the most intimate peace, she is possessed by the Beloved, and she possesses Him. The spirit of praying for the King of France is renewed in her, as well as her motherly love with the confirmation of the previous things.

When my state of inner dereliction and desolation ended – a state that I have made known in letters of the 16th and 17th of October to Your Reverence, a

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- 1 I thank Miceál O'Neill O. Carm. and Joseph Chalmers O. Carm for their help as native speakers with the English translation and also Dr Antoine Jacobs for his support in historical questions.
  - 2 The manuscript is not bound in the original sequence. The original sequence should be as follows: First part: f.38r-41v, a half section: concerning the period of May 1672. (38r 1-3 can be seen as an introduction to the entire text about the Dutch War. It is the only place in the text where Maria Petyt is described and introduced with all her names and titles); Second part: f. 30r-33v, a half section: concerning the period of 7-15 November 1672; Third part: f. 42r-49v, a complete section, concerning the periods: a. 21 November – 17 December 1672 (f. 42v-45v3); b. New experiences in February 1673 (f. 45v); c. And 28-29 June 1673 (f. 45v-49v); Fourth part: f. 34r-37v, a half section: concerning: a. 4 July 1673 - 15 January 1674 (f. 34r-37v); b. A last mystical experience on 24/25 August 1676 (37v). In this original sequence the chronology of the text is correct. For this edition of the text we have chosen to keep the text in the sequence in which it has been preserved. See also the article of Giovanni Grosso, p. 83–91.
  - 3 Here Maria explicitly asks Michael to keep her letters secret, for as long as she lives. See also the article of Esther van de Vate, 92-118.

mensem, euigilauit in me et resuscitatus est nouus spiritus / qui aliquot mensibus in me quasi dormierat, et euanuerat, absque ulla operatione aut perceptione eiusdem / enim ab eo tempore quo rex Galliae recesserat in patriam suam. /

[15] In primis Dilectus me introsumpsit in se cum perceptibili et amabili obumbratione alicuius luminis / et splendoris suae diuinitatis, quod lumen illustrabat et penetrabat omnes animae potentias. /

Aliquot diebus fui tracta ad profundam intimam quietem in Dilecto quasi in somno amoris cum / euanescentia omnium, quae non sunt ipse, nihil aliud in me percipiendo quam eius praesentiam. /

Aliquando eram quasi ab ipso possessa, ipse possidebat me et ego possidebam ipsum tunc iterum mihi infun- / [20] debatur spiritus orandi pro Rege Galliae, sicut antehac, qui spiritus ualde uiuaciter et efficaciter / incipiebat operari ad eius succursum, et assistentiam, et omnes praeteritae internae d... icticones illumi- / nationes amorosae ad illum Regem inclinationes, maternus animus etcetera iterum ..... dabantur cum / noua confirmatione ueritatis. /

Dilectus eam ponit ad latus Regis istius, ut eum iuuet .....t / [25] benedictionem super illum et exercitum. Mira facit in[structu] .... .. circa Regem / cuius intentionem intellegit esse Deiformem. /

Percipiebam, quod Dilectus me constitueret ad latus huius Regis, et quod Dilectus me faceret ad illum / inclinari, quasi debuissem cooperari cum isto Rege: benedictionem quam iubente Dilecto antehac ipsi dederam / iterato impertiebar super ipsum et super illius exercitum cum efficaci et uiuaci amore /

[30] Ab illo tempore continuo sine cessatione mihi remanet spiritus orandi pro ipso. Quidquid Dilectus uidetur / desiderare, ut faciam et offeram sponte et ultro intus in fundo dictatur et per spiritum ..... mandatur / cum uiua fide, firma fiducia et forti d.....e oblationes quas debeo facere pr..... hauriebam / omnes ex Dilecto Iesu meo Deo homine. Omnes factae communioniones, quas facio, sunt .....o ipso sola ...nt / possit acquirere uirtutem, et gratiam, qua possit superare inimicos suos. /

state that lasted for about a month – a new spirit awakened and rekindled in me, that for a few months so to speak had been sleeping and had disappeared without any effect or perception of the same, namely right from the time when the King of France had returned to his homeland.<sup>4</sup>

In the beginning, the Beloved drew me inward with a noticeable and pleasant dimming of the light and with the radiance of his divinity, a light that lit up and penetrated all the powers of my soul.

For some days I was drawn to a profound and intimate quiet in the Beloved as a sleep of love with the passing of all things that are not Him, perceiving nothing in me other than his presence.

Sometimes I was as if he had taken possession of me. He possessed me and I possessed him. Then again the spirit of prayer for the King of France penetrated me, as before. A spirit that began to work vividly and powerfully, for his assistance and support, and all those past inner ... illuminations, loving tendencies towards that King, a motherly spirit etc. were again ... given with further confirmation of the truth.

The Beloved places her on the side of that King, to help him ... and to give his blessing to him and his army. She marvels at ..... the King whose intention she understands to be Godlike.

I perceived that the Beloved put me on the side of this King, and that the Beloved made me inclined towards him, as if I had to cooperate with that King. The blessing, which I on the Beloved's demand had given him in advance, I again bestowed on him and his army with powerful and vibrant love.

From that time on the spirit of praying for him stays with me constantly, without interruption. Whatever the Beloved seems to require me to do and to offer voluntarily and on my own accord, that is in my depth commanded, and by the spirit ... entrusted with lively faith, firm confidence and powerful ... The sacrifices I must make ... I drew all from my Beloved Jesus, God and man. All communions made, those that I make ... for him alone ..., might obtain a power and grace, by which he might overcome his enemies.

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4 At 7 April 1672 Louis XIV declared war on the Republic of the Seven United Provinces and quickly marched by way of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège and the Prince-Bishopric of Münster. After having conquered Utrecht, the French advances were stopped by deliberate inundations along the Dutch water line. A couple of weeks later Louis XIV handed over the command to Marshal Luxembourg and left the Republic with 20,000 soldiers.

[35] Quippe interius intelligo eius animi decretum et expositum, ac zelum circa Hollandiam esse plane Deiformem / nihil intendendo nisi honorem et gloriam Dei, ac conuersionem animarum et multi eum falso accusent et ..... / nentur qui spargunt contraria iudicia: uerum alia sunt iudicia Dei, alia hominum; ueritas semel patebitur / quia Deus erit cum ipso, et est cum ipso, et uidebimus potentiam Dei in ipso et cum ipso / operari. //

### 30 v

[1] Intelligit Iesum diligere istum Regem et ipsa eum diligit ut filium, et omnes / eius milites ut filios, circa quos materne occupatur, exercitum amando, / Angelos mittendo etc. /

Vidi et intellexi quod ille Rex sit a Jesu Dilectus, et per eundem amorem etiam a me diligitur / [5] uelut ..[aharut] filius, quem diligit Iesus; ideo quando pro ipso oro, dico ad Iesum; Dilecte, adiua / tuum et meum filium, tua uirtute sapientia et amore; et inde resultat ulterior dilectio, quae fluit / ad omnes eius subditos et milites, quasi omnes essent mei filii. /

Maternum meum cor et affectus ualde bene circa illos fertur et operatur, praesertim circa infirmos / .....sos ut eos commendem Dilecto meo quatenus eos uelit sanare confortare etc. ut sint apti et / [10] parati ad proelium; alius spiritus quasi igne amoris accensus dat Regi et militibus animos ne timeant / hostes suos, ut eos in nomine, et ad amorem Christi generose aggrediantur; ipsis ex parte Jesu / addicendo uictoriam. /

Spiritus amoris stabiliter se tenet ex parte Regis Franciae, cum tota anima, propensione, et / uidetur illum exercitum quasi supercomplexi, et supercomprehendere, quasi cum uirtute aliqua distri- / [15] butiua quae prouenit et fluit ex meo corde et intimo amore; spiritus amoris facit etiam instantias apud / [Dilectum] ut uelut mittere multitudinem Angelorum in eorum subsideum et assistentiam. /



For I understand inwardly the decision and the conviction of his soul, and that his zeal for Holland is clearly Godlike, intending nothing but the honour and glory of God, and the conversion of souls. And I understand that many people falsely accuse him ... and there are those who spread opposite judgments. But the judgments of God are unlike those of humans. The truth will be revealed once, that God will be with him and is with him and we will see God's power working in him and with him.

30v

She understands that Jesus loves the King and she also loves him as her child, and all his soldiers as her children, about whom she is worried like a mother, while she loves the army, and sends angels etc.

I have seen and understood that the King is loved by Jesus and by the same love he is also loved by me ... like a child whom Jesus loves. So when I pray for him, I say to Jesus: "My Beloved, help your child and mine, with your strength, wisdom and love." And from there results a further love which flows to all his subordinates and soldiers, as if all of them were my children.

My motherly heart and feelings are gathered very strongly around them and especially around the weak ... to recommend them to my Beloved, so that he might heal and comfort them etc, in order for them to be equipped and ready for battle. Another spirit<sup>5</sup> that is as it were kindled by a fire of love gives to the King and his soldiers the courage not to fear their enemies, so that in the name of and for the love of Christ they may go generous (whole-heartedly) towards them, while on the part of Jesus victory is promised to them.

The spirit of love remains firmly on the side of the King of France, with its entire heart and affection, it seems as it were to surround and include the army as a special virtue that comes and flows from my heart and my tender love. The spirit of love also makes intercessions to the Beloved, to send a host of angels to help and support them.

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5 Maria distinguishes different spirits in her mind.

Ex corde diuino fugit aliquam uirtutem, quae ex illa fluit in adiutorium Regis / Galliae, quem asserit uere conuersus, et continuatur spiritus orandi pro illo cum / perceptione diuinae maiestatis ad hoc allicientis cum certitudine boni successus. /

[20] Dum a 2 uel 3 diebus essem in oratione, uidebar ex corde diuino fugere diuinam quamdam uirtutem / et gratiam quae ex eodem uidebatur ulterius fluere in auxilium Regis Franciae. / .....dicunt Regem Galliae non esse uere conuersum, et quod ipse suscitet Turcas, ut / inuadat Rege.. .....itores Christianorum; si enim hoc sic esset, quomodo Iesus eum tanto uere diligeret / [Regem] ut uide..... Iesum eum diligere. /

[25] Die..... Nouembris 1672. continuatur spiritus orationis, ut supra et continuo / ..... et uiuacior, cum perceptione suauis diuinae maiestatis intus in me / quae mihi..... ..s.entiam me allicit, et consortat, cum praemagna fiducia, fide et certitudine / de bono successu. /

Hanc suauem maiestatem uideo et continuo gesto intra me siue in oratione siue extra; nihil me / [30] potest impedire [quo minus] illam percipiam: continuo contempler, ei amorose adhaeream ac fami- / liariter et amicabiliter cum illo agam et conuerser; nam spiritus solutus et liber ab omnibus et ab / aliis rebus <in>tactus se potest conseruare intus in castro animae: quasi seorsim ab aliis quae sunt / multiplic.....r corporalia sensuality, et a spiritu non assumpta, uel permissa; nam omnes / praedictae..... spiritus amoris sunt condita, et penetrata unitate Dei et consequenter / [35] sine medi ..... est unus et idem Spiritus Dei qui facit omnes istas diuersas operationes /

<Co>ntra naturae inclinationem a Deo mouetur, ut oret pro successu / [Re]gis Galliae, cum assecuratione, quod Deus illi faueat, et quod ille / praeualeat, contrarios exercitus reputat, ut muscas: spiritu circum- / plectitur exercitum Francorum, quomodo id faciat. /

[40] Experio[r] et animaduerto, quod istae operationes fiant in me supernaturaliter etiam contra na- / turalem meam inclinationem; nam secundum

From the divine heart comes a power, that flows from her to help the King of France, whom she declares to be truly converted. The spirit of prayer for him continues while she perceives that the divine majesty reassures her of the certainty of success.

When I was about 2 or 3 days in prayer, I saw some divine virtue and grace flowing from the divine heart ... which seemed ... to continue to flow to help the King of France. ... say that the King of France is not truly converted, and that he encourages the Turks to attack the King ... of the Christians<sup>6</sup>, if indeed this were so, how then could Jesus love the King as truly as I see that ... Jesus loves him.

... November 1672 the spirit of prayer continues, as described above and immediately ... and more vivid, with the perception of the sweet divine majesty within me, that for me ... lures and guides me ... with very great confidence, faith and certainty about the good result.

This sweet majesty I see and carry constantly within me either in prayer or elsewhere. Nothing can prevent me from perceiving him: that I constantly contemplate him and lovingly cling to him and speak and talk to him confidentially and as between friends, for the spirit that is unbound and free from everything and from all other things can reside in the interior castle of the soul:<sup>7</sup> as if he is separated from other things that are manifold ..... corporeal and sensual things, and not assumed but permitted by the spirit, for all the foretold ... of the spirit of love are founded and penetrated by the unity of God and so without ... .... is one and the same spirit of God that brings about all these different effects.

Against the tendency of her nature she is moved by God to pray for the success of the King of France, with the assurance that God is favourable to him, and that he prevails. She considers the enemy armies as flies: with her spirit she surrounds the French army, the way the spirit does.

I experience and perceive that these effects occur in me supernaturally and even against my natural inclination, because by nature I am more inclined to

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6 It is not clear to which contact of the French King with the Turks Maria refers here. But we have to see this in the light of the history of the struggle for power in Europe. In the ongoing fight between the Hapsburg and the Ottoman empire, France benefited from the opposition of the Turks against the Habsburgs and the Spaniards, who otherwise would have had too much power in Europe. This implicit support of the French though was contrary to the conflict of religions of the western Christian World against the Islamic World of the Ottomans. But all of this occurred mainly in the late sixteenth century (Lesaffer 1999, 21).

7 See the article of Elisabeth Hense, 253-265.

naturam magis inclinor ad iuuandum Regem Hispaniarum, / ut desiderem et postulem prosperitatem in illius armis, quia ipse est noster Rex, et etiam Ca- / tholicus. //

31r

[1] Ideo cogito, quod Deus decreuerit Regem Galliae honorare et eius regnum ampliare, et ideo me contra na- / turalem affectum faciat propendere, et stare pro parte huius Regis, ut eum iuuem. / Spiritus amoris et orationis pergit, uti supra dictum est, sed cum maiori tranquillitate, et intimitate Spiritus / etiam agitur, et certificatur, quod Deus se teneat pro parte Regis Galliae, et ideo ipse reportabit uictorias de ini- / [5] micis suis; de hoc non est dubitandum; hoc est certum et fixum; etiamsi exterior apparentia se aliter manifestet / utpote cum duo uel tres potentes exercitus ualidorum, robustorum, et in militia expertorum militum, sese illi opponunt, / nam si sunt in mente et animo meo uelut multitudo muscarum, sine uirtute, sine fortitudine, sine robore comparatiue / ad uirtutem et potentiam Dei, qui se inclinat, et beneuolum exhibet erga exercitum Regis Galliae. / Spiritus sese dispergit et expandit super hunc exercitum, illum quasi circumprehendendo: neque hoc in me operatur / [10] meus humanus Spiritus, sed est Spiritus Dei meo Spiritui unitus, qui id in me et per me et mecum operatur; / hoc fit tempore tranquillissimae quietis, et intimae coniunctionis, seu unionis mei spiritus cum diuino, sine uerbis / sine cogitationibus, et fere sine aliqua imaginatione alicuius rei corporeae. / Haec dispositio est nimis nobilis et nimis intima quam ut admittat, uel compatiatur aliquam imaginariam seu / corpoream imaginationem seu speciem alicuius rei in Deo cognitae aut memoratae ut summum sunt imaginationes / [15] seu species intellectuales (ut mihi uidetur) quae ibi tolerantur; quod si quidpiam, quantum ac ubique parum / de meo ibi uellem intermiscere, spiritus illico totaliter euanesceret, et obnubilaretur, ac redirem in meam naturam. /

help the King of Spain,<sup>8</sup> so as to desire and demand the prosperity of his arms, because he is our King and he is catholic.<sup>9</sup>

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I therefore believe that God has decided to honour the King of France and to expand his empire, and therefore he makes me incline against my natural feeling and stand on the side of this King, to help him. The spirit of love and prayer continues, as stated above, but with greater tranquillity and in the intimacy of the Spirit it is even said and assured that God is on the side of the King of France and that therefore he will bring back the victory over his enemies. There is no doubt about this, it is for sure, even if appearances might suggest otherwise, as it is when two or three strong armies of mighty and solid soldiers experienced in war would oppose him, because in my mind and in my heart they are like a swarm of flies<sup>10</sup>, without courage, without strength or power that might be compared with the strength and power of God, who inclines towards and shows kindness to the army of the King of France. The spirit spreads and extends itself over the army, as if going around it, and my human spirit is not doing this in me, but it is the Spirit of God united with my spirit that works in me and through me and with me. This happens at a time of very great quiet and calm, of intimate connection or union of my spirit with the divine, without words, without thoughts, and almost without any imagination of any corporeal thing. This disposition is too noble and too intimate to allow or tolerate any imaginative or physical representation of the image of a thing known or remembered in God, as if intellectual visions or images (as seems to me) are the highest,<sup>11</sup> which are tolerated there, but if I would intermingle myself in it, no matter how much and no matter where, the spirit would immediately and completely evaporate and would be obscured and I would return to my nature.

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8 I.e. King Charles II.

9 She should by nature be more inclined to the Spanish King, for the King of Spain is also the King of the Southern Netherlands, where she lives, which is still part of the Spanish kingdom.

10 This comparison with flies also occurs in Maria's letters. There she speaks about infernal spirits and compares them with flies. This image is known from Dutch spiritual tradition (see e.g. Lutgarde of Aywiers) and is used to indicate she has no fear of them, for flies can easily be beaten to death. In her trust in God there is nothing that can intimidate her. Even though these hostile armies are strong and powerful in this world, against the power of God they are nothing.

11 See the article of Elisabeth Hense, 253-265.

Nihil aliud debeo facere quam manere in unione cum diuino spiritu, et pati diuinam istam in operationem; est / etiam idem spiritus, qui orat modo innarrabili, prout ab aliquot mensibus: quando autem haec tam manifeste / in me percipio et experior, non habeo rationem, cur non expectem uictoriosum successum et bonum exitum in fa- / [20] uorem Gallorum; cum neque malignus spiritus, nec natura talia possit operari, hoc bene scio. /

Magis confirmatur de uictorioso successu quam diu manet unio animae / cum Deo; et contra contrariam apparentiam iterum certificatur de / uictoria Gallorum. /

Die 12 dicti mensis continuatur in me certitudo ut ante, cum noua continu .....e et illumina- / [25] tione. Quando spiritus decrescit in puritate et flacescit in actuali dilectione et inim.....d dilectum / conuersione; tunc etiam euanescit istud lumen, ista certitudo, et spiritus orandi et ..... timore / quod omnes hae[c] praeuisiones deuenient in nihilum et abibunt in fenum; quod quadam uoc.....debam / et timebam, quia erat mihi relatum de magna potentia et potentissimis exercitibus .....ibus con- / gregabantur, ut unanimiter aggredierentur et obruerent Regem Galliae; inde diceba.....extra omnem spem / [30] quod ipse posset euadere et in conflictu uictoriam reportare. /

Postquam meam uoluntatem conformassem, et uniuissem uoluntati dilecti mei, ut cum equanimitate et gaudio / spiritus hanc humiliationem sustinerem; subito reuertebatur spiritus et confirmabat omnes praedictas cert..... / [Sceneo] et spiritus non poterit cohibere, quia interius clamaret uictoria Gallis, uicto..... / quod spiritus plus uel minus est in Deo, proportionaliter etiam est maior uel minor conue..... /

[35] Quando eius spiritus est unitus Deo tunc est maio..... / intellectus unitus intellectui diuino uidet sicut ..... / uoluntas est una cum diuina unde etiam uult..... /

Quando spiritus humanus est unitus cum Deo, seu cum spiritu diuino tunc re..... / millum est lumen nec illuminatio quae mihi praebeat lumen, aut cognitionem..... / [40] humanus unitus intellectui diuino intelligit, cognoscit, uidet et scit ist..... / praeuidet, et scit; quia tunc anima est unum cum Deo, et consequenter int..... / cum diuino uoluntas humana est tunc perfecte unita seu.....um cum diuin ..... /

I ought to do nothing but to remain in union with the divine spirit and to endure that divine operation. It is even the same spirit that is praying in an indescribable way, for so many months now, but when I perceive and experience these things so clearly in me, I have no reason, not to expect the winning success and the good result in favour of the French, for neither a bad spirit nor such a nature could bring about this, which I know very well.

She is more certain about the winning success as long as she stays in the union of her soul with God, and contrary to appearances she is again assured of the victory of the French.

On the 12th day of that month<sup>12</sup>, the certainty in me continues as before, with new ... and illumination. When the spirit decreases in purity and fades in active love and ... the Beloved by conversion. Then even the light, that certainty will fade and the spirit of prayer ... and by fear that all these visions would come to nothing and go up in smoke, what I by some ... and feared, because as I was told about the great power and powerful armies<sup>13</sup> ... that were gathered to attack the King of France unanimously and overpower him, so I said ... beyond all hope that he might escape and carry the victory in the conflict.

After I had conformed my own will in oneness with the will of my Beloved, so as to endure this humiliation with equanimity and joy of spirit, suddenly the spirit returned and confirmed all that was said before ... and the spirit will not be able to restrain it, because from within the victory of the French cried out ... because the spirit is more or less in God, it is also proportionally greater or less ...

When her spirit is united with God, then ... is greater ... her intellect united with the divine intellect sees like ... the will is one with the divine and therefore also wants ...

When the human mind is united with God, or with the divine spirit, then ... there is no light nor illumination, which gives me the light or the knowledge ... the human ... united with the divine intellect understands, recognizes, sees and knows those ... foresees and knows. Because then the soul is one with God, and as a result ... with the divine ... the human will is then perfectly united or

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<sup>12</sup> I.e. November 1672.

<sup>13</sup> In September 1672 the Elector of Brandenburg and the German Emperor raised a relief army of 60,000 soldiers in Halberstadt.

Ideo uoluntas cum omnibus animae affectibus eo pro[uenue .et.] inclinatur..... / et amplectatur, nam anima tunc ..... est aliter maneri ..[o..... pelli...ad.....] //

## 31V

[1] nec minus quam Deus illa <sc. anima> desiderat uel uult: ad quaecumque Deus se conuertit ad ea etiam anima debet se / conuertere; quod Deus diligit, id etiam ipsa diligit, a quo Deus se auertit, ab eo etiam ipsa se auertit, nec / potest aliter, eo quod Deus eam possideat, moueat, regat, et cum ipsa sit unitus, ubi ipsa est unum esse, unum ope- / rari, et unum intelligere, unum uelle cum Deo. /

[5] Agitur diuersis modis orandi pro aliis, per instantias, per urgentem dilec- / tionem per sponsalem fiduciam ante faciem Dei, aliquando est apud Dilectum / in qualitate Reginae, quasi aequalis auctoritatis, et mittit Archangelum / Michaelem cum suis in adiutorium Gallorum. /

[10] Diuersi mihi adueniunt modi orandi, pro ut antehac; subinde cum instantia intima in spiritu, subinde cum urgente et efficaci amore, subinde cum sponsali amorosa confidentia. / Et familiaritate, quia haec uidetur animae intus dari; aliquando est quaedam profundior introtractio in spiritu / [ubi] spiritus est quasi ante faciem Dei, orans instanter cum amorosa instantia, sed nonformando aliqua uerba, ut cogi- / tationes. Haec oratio fit in spiritu per spiritum, absque cooperatione aliquarum aliarum potentiarum; haec oratio / facile duraret ad horas sine fatigatione; nam secundum omnem perceptibilitatem, est ipse ..et spirititus Dei qui / [15] orat in me et per me. /

Non debet Reuerentiae Vestrae uideri mirum quod dicam spiritum stare ante faciem Dei; placeat scire quod interiora mea / sint quasi caelum, in quo deus regnat, et perceptibiliter ac deprehensibiliter habet suam mansionem; tam certo / ac si ipsum oculis meis corporalibus uiderem, quamquam ego hoc caelum (quod in praesenti, et adhuc aliquando / [arias] sese manifestat cum



... with the divine ... Therefore the will with all the emotions of the soul ... is inclined ... and is embraced, for the soul then ... is otherwise to stay ...  
 ...<sup>14</sup>

### 31V

and the soul does not want or desire anything less than God: to whatever God turns, to that also my soul ought to turn. Whatever God loves, the soul also has to love that, from whatever God turns away, from that also the soul turns away, nor can the soul act in any other way, because God possesses it, moves it, leads it and is united with it, where it is one being, one working, one understanding and one willing with God.

She is driven by diverse ways of praying for others, with intercessions, with urgent love, with the Bride's confidence before the countenance of God. Sometimes she is with the Beloved in the quality of a Queen, as with an equal authority, and sends the Archangel Michael with his men to the aid of the French.

Diverse ways of praying came to me as before: now with an intimate intercession in the spirit, then with urgent and strong love, then with the loving confidentiality of a bride, because these seem to be given to the soul from within. Sometimes it is somehow drawn more deeply into ... the spirit is like as if it was before the countenance of God, praying earnestly with loving intercession, but not forming any words like thoughts. This prayer comes up in the spirit, by the spirit, without the cooperation of any other powers.<sup>15</sup> This prayer easily lasts for hours without tiring, because according to all perception it is ... self and the spirit of God, who prays in me and through me.

To your Reverence it must not look strange that I say that my spirit stands before the countenance of God. It may please you to know that my inner self is like heaven, in which God reigns, and perceptibly and understandably has his dwelling, as certain as if I had seen him with my eyes, although I obscure this heaven (which in the present and again at other times will manifest itself with

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<sup>14</sup> Here the manuscript is at many places unreadable.

<sup>15</sup> Maria Petyt speaks about higher and lower powers: *potentiae superiores et inferiores*. The lower powers are the sensory and emotional powers, and partly also the imaginary powers. The higher powers are spiritual powers of the human soul: intellect, will and memory.

tam diuina claritate et gloria, ut id uerbis explicare nequem ) saepius per rem / [20] rudem actiuitatem, et alias imperfectiones obnubilem. /

Ibi uidet spiritus Deum Dilectum suum quasi facie ad faciem, ibi cum meo loquitur quasi ore ad os, corde ad / cor, ubi permittitur quasi quiescere et fugere ad cor Dei aliquid diuinum, quod anima non potest explicare / Aliquando spiritus est ante hanc diuinam faciem instar ignitae et ardentis scintillae tranquille et efficaciter / [eualdes] ead....[a]more Dei. /

[25] Aliquando [anima] ...se sentit apud Dilectum suum plusquam in qualitate sponsae, sed etiam in qualitate Reginae / quasi constituta ..... [uslatus] in honorificentia, aequali potestate, et auctoritate iuxta ipsum u.g. dum / rogans [Doler] b.... quatenus illi placeret mittere Sanctum Archangelum Michaëlem ad exercitum Francorum / et ipsu..... e quasi generalem istius exercitus cum multitudine ad huc aliorum Angelorum simul / cum ipso .....andum exercitum aduersarius uidebatur mihi interius respondere tantum debes mandare / [30] ut regina su..... tis..... /

Intelligit quanti referat Gallos habere uictoriam in <imminente> conflictu / in Charleroi, et quomodo Hollandi intendant Hispanos decipere ..... / tur ad orandum ut Belgeum cedat Gallis. /

....tellexi in spiritu quanti sit momenti quod Rex Galliae imminentem conflictum lucretur atque ita / [35] ..... [uinoiis] sine iurisdictioni subicere; eo quod ubi mihi significatis ..eo... / .....a promotio S.tae Romanae .....num li et multi illud s..... / ..... pro ....plausibilia et Bona [promessa] quae status Hollandiae uidentur facere / .....s .... atet ibi deceptio et dolus sub istis pro missis; nempe statum ac praeualuerint / .....tatum recuperanierint se subtrahent Hispanis et cum his prouinciis facient / [40] .....egent, sine subiectione uel dependentia ab Hispanis nullis supremum dominum / .....ud se regiones multo magis intecientur Haeresibus et libertae Religionis / .....um certa quod fuerat aliqua illuminatio supernaturalis sicut superior, sed / .....acta ex ratione et externa apparentia. / .....ditur cor meum nouo igne et relo ad orandum Deum ut potius ..a cum Hollandia / [45] ..... //

32r

[1] Iterum agitur spiritu orandi pro Rege Galliae in spiritu per spiritum passiuè se / habendo Deo per se orante per efficaces instantias. /

divine clarity and glory, as I cannot explain in words), more often by some rude activity and other imperfections.

There the spirit sees his Beloved God as it were face to face, there he speaks as it were with my mouth to His mouth, with my heart to His heart, there he is allowed as it were to rest and take refuge within the heart of God, something divine which the soul cannot explain. Sometimes the spirit is before this divine countenance like a burning and fiery flame calmly and effectively ... love of God.

Sometimes the soul feels with the Beloved more in the quality of a Bride, but also in the quality of a Queen, as determined ... to honour, with equal power and authority with him e.g. while asking ... that it would please him that I would send the holy Archangel Michael to the French army ... and him ... as a general of that army with the multitude of other angels together with him ... the army seemed to answer contrary ...

She understands of how much importance it is that the French will have the victory in the imminent conflict in Charleroi,<sup>16</sup> and how the Dutch<sup>17</sup> intend to deceive the Spaniards ... to the praying that Belgium yields to the French.

...<sup>18</sup>

### 32r

Again she is driven by the spirit of praying for the French King, in the spirit, through the spirit, resting passively while God prayed through her with effective intercessions.

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16 This is about the attack of the Dutch army supported by the Spaniards on the power base of the French in Charleroi which took place in December 1672. This power base was an important strategic location of the French, which they wanted to keep at all costs so as to preserve the connection with France. The French succeeded in retaining Charleroi. On December 22 the siege of the Dutch was lifted, but the French were not capable of getting hold of Belgium. They had to keep defending against the attacks of the Dutch Prince. See Rooms, 2007, 46ff.

17 By "the Dutch" we refer to the people from the Northern Netherlands.

18 In the manuscript here about ten lines are following, which are not transcribed, because they were too difficult to read and interpret.

Die 14 Nouembris 1672. circa uesperas mihi iterum concedebatur spiritus orandi pro Rege Galliae, / sicut ante, n. ita ut oratio fieret in spiritu per spiritum, id est non per meam propriam actiuitatem, uel / [5] cooperationem, sed quam Deus operatur in fundo animae, anima se passiuè habente; ista oratio fit ualde / uiuaciter, efficaciter, et incessanter, et tamen ualde tranquille, simpliciter, et intime (quantum / potui meminisse). Haec oratio fluebat ualde nobiliter et uigoroſe ex Deo, uelut ex suo scaturigine, seu / origine, et iterum refluebat in Deum, uelut ad suum finem cum eadem tranquillitate, pace, intimitate / et sine imaginatione alicuius rei corporeae, sine formatione uerborum aut sensus, nihil aliud distincte / [10] percipiendo nisi Deum, quem aspectebam et diligebam ardenti animo, et cum ardentibus desideriis exauditi- / onis; qui ardens animus, et feruentia desideria stabant quasi aperta ante Deum cum efficaci et feruen- / ti instantia, continua quasi fluendo in Deum modo informi et intimo, quem aliter uerbis explicare / non possum. /

Dico quod Deum et alias inoperationes illas distincte perciperem et alio sensu id fiebat indistincte et abs- / [15] que intellectuali comprehensione, prae intimitate, abstractione imaginum seu formarum, et sine / absorptione, in qua spiritus stabat, et erat introsumptus. /

Eius spiritus subinde quasi expansus ante faciem Dei cum magna reuerentia aperit desideria coram Deo quasi urgens cor Dei ut exaudiatur. /

Aliquando erat spiritus quasi extreme expansus seu extensus ante diuinam faciem cum magna / [20] uiuacitate amoris et reuerentia desideria animae stant quasi aperta coram Deo cum urgenti / et amabili applicatione appressione ad cor Dei, ut exaudiatur iuxta beneplacitum Dei quod agnoscit / esse situm in exaudiri in illis, quae per desideria modo silentioso proponuntur; percipit ..... , quod Deus / in his suis potentiis taliter operetur, et haec desideria ab ipso proueniant, et his .....ntur, ut / ipsa diuino hoc modo Deum orat per Deum. /

[25] Intelligit etiam, sicut antehac quod Deus illa non intenderit dare nisi sic rogatus...co...cidetur / ipse mittere spiritum suum in nos, ut oremus, et postulemus gemitibus inenarrabilibus /

Spiritus ita expansus ante faciem Dei habet diuersas <inoperationes> cognitionis et amoris sine communicatione cum parte ...iore subinde / uidetur ibi liquefieri etc. occulto tamen modo efficiatur. orat. /

On November the 14th 1672 about the time of Vespers again the spirit of praying for the French King was granted to me as before, for the prayer happened in the spirit through the spirit, which means not by my own activity of cooperation, but as if God works in the soil of my soul while the soul holds still. This prayer occurs very vividly, effectively and incessantly and yet quietly, simply and intimately (as far as I could remember). This prayer flowed very nobly and vigorously from God, like from his spring water, or origin, and flowed back to God, like to his goal with the same tranquillity, peace and intimacy and without the imagination of any other corporeal thing, without forming words or sentences, distinguishing nothing but God, to whom I looked up and loved with a burning mind and with burning desires of being heard. This burning mind and these fiery desires stood as it were open before God with an effective and burning intercession, continuously as it were flowing to God in a unformed and intimate way, which I cannot explain otherwise with words.

I say, that I perceived God and those others operations distinctly and this happened indistinctly with another sense and without intellectual understanding, rather with intimacy, abstraction from images and forms, and without absorption, in which the spirit stood and was taken in.

Her spirit as it were stretched out before the countenance of God and with great reverence expresses her desires before God as if to urge the heart of God to hear her.

Sometimes the spirit was as it were extremely stretched out or extended before the divine countenance, and with a great vivacity of love and reverential desires of the soul stood as it were open in front of God with an urgent and loving affection urging the heart of God, so as to be heard according to God's will, that she acknowledges to be found in being heard in these things, that are proposed by the desires in a silent way. It<sup>19</sup> understands ..., that God in his powers operates in such manner and that its desires come from Him and by these ... are ..., so that in this divine way she prays to God through God.

She understands as well, as before, that God has not intended giving unless he is asked, ... to send his spirit to us, so that we might pray and ask with indescribable sighs.

The spirit that is thus stretched out before the countenance of God, has diverse operations of thought and love without communication with the .... part, immediately afterwards she seemed to melt there etc. In a way that is hidden, she prays.

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19 I.e. the spirit.

[30] Quando spiritus interius ante faciem Dei stat quasi apertus et expansus, tam habet diuersas operati- / ones cognitionis et dilectionis, quibus se in Deo et per Deum occupat subinde cum [feruente] et off..... / te amore qui solummodo operatur scintillat, et fluit in potentiis superioribus et ....[rsiti] / ista inoperatio non d.stendit ... profunde, ut potentiae inferiores cum illa habeant..... / cationem nisi quasi de longi parte possent aliquid inuestigare quid fiat et tra..... / [35] in quadam aurora. /

Aliquando uidetur spiritus ante faciem diuinam quasi liquefieri euanes..... / se ipso; subinde uidetur se dimittere in aliquod profundum quasi in aliquo[d]..... / essentialis nihilitatis et indignitatis, quasi indignus apparere cord..... / orationes impendi et eo audiri. /

[40] Tali modo, in hac dimissione et muto silentio, spiritus se expandit uel..... / coram facie diuina, quasi non ausus stare ante illam et illam..... / nostro modo loquendi prae magna reuerentia ueritus illum intuerit ..... //

### 32v

[1] ..... tan .... Occulto quodam modo, quem <non po>ssum exprimere, quomodo spiritus adhuc facit instan- / tias et orat. uerbi gratia pro prosperitate istius Regis, pro conuersione haereticorum ad ueram fidem etc. Atque / haec omnia operatur spiritus per se ipsum, per influxus supernaturales et illuminationes a diuino spi- / ritu actus et directus, quae mihi nunc praeter expectationem, fluide in mentem ueniunt, uti supra / [5] cooperante Dilecto, ut Reuerentia Vestra melius ad omnia possit attendere et apprehendere discretiones spi- / rituum /

Agitur spiritu amoris erga Iesum ut sponsum et confidenter ac zelose / agit pro conuersione Hollandiae, ut constituta illius mater; et / renouatur in ea maternus affectus erga Hollandos conuertendos /

[10] Die 15. dicti mensis Nouembris 1672. post meridiem incipiebat spiritus amoris operari ualde suauiter / et affectuose erga Iesum Dilectum meum et erga Regem Galliae eiusque subditos, primo erga Iesum Dilectum / meum

When the spirit internally stands before the countenance of God, as it were open and stretched out, still it has diverse operations of thought and love, with which it occupies itself in God and through God. Then with fervent and ... love, working only in one way, sparkles and flows in the higher powers and ... this operation doesn't descend ... deeply, so that the lower powers with that ... have ... unless as it were they could from a distant part trace something that happens and ... at some daybreak.

Sometimes the spirit seems as it were to melt before the divine countenance ... itself. Then it seems to let itself slip away in some profound place as it were in some ... of an essential nothingness and unworthiness, as to appear unworthy ... of prayers being dedicated and heard by Him.

Thus, in this dedication and mute silence, the spirit reaches out or ... before the divine countenance, as if not daring to stand before that countenance and that ... in our way of speaking, because of a great reverence, fearing to look up at Him ...

... <sup>20</sup>

### 32V

... some hidden way, that I cannot express, how the spirit yet makes intercessions and prays, e.g. for the prosperity of that King, for the conversion of the heretics to the true faith etc. And the spirit operates all these things by itself through supernatural influences and illuminations given and driven by the divine spirit, that now above all expectations come to my mind like before, cooperating with the Beloved, so that Your Reverence might better apply and employ the discernment of the spirits to all of this.<sup>21</sup>

She is guided by the spirit of love towards Jesus and confidentially and zealously she acts for the conversion of Holland, as if she were its mother. And in her a motherly feeling is renewed for the conversion of the Dutch.

On the 15th of November 1672 in the afternoon the spirit of love began to work very pleasantly and tenderly towards Jesus my Beloved and towards the King of France and his subjects, first towards Jesus my Beloved as if I were his chosen

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20 Here a part of the translation is omitted, because the original text (lines 34-45) is too badly damaged, and translation of the few words left would not add to the understanding of the text.

21 See the article of Veronie Meeuwsen, 240-251 and Anne-Marie Bos, 266-281.

uelut electa et carissima eius sponsa cum confidentia, sic cum illo agendi; multis colloquiis Ze- / losi et Zelotypi, dementati et quasi insanientis amoris de promouendo eius honore et gloria per conuer- / siones animarum in Hollandia, cum renouatione memoriae, quod Dilectus me antehac fecerit quasi illius / [15] matrem; per quod in me renouabatur maternum cor; et maternus amor erga illos sicut antehac. /

Multa sic occurrebant postulanda a Dilecto meo ad eorum salutem procurandam et assecurandam / etiam erga milites Gallos; hi omnes erant adeo suaues et amabiles in mea mente et animo, quasi / omnes fuissent mei gemini filii, et ego naturalis eorum mater; ideo sentiebam in me tenerrimam / cum ipsis compassionem quasi ipsamet sensissem eorum incommoda, frigus, penuriam etc. sicut natura[lis mater / [20] sentit] ..se compati et sentire incommoda dolores et inedia[m] etc. naturalium filiorum. / .....multae amorosae querimoniae ad Dilectum, quod hi mei filii istas omnes incommoditates / .....<in>iurias .....suras infirmitates etc. sustinerent amore ipsius, ut eum iuarent et con- / .....o regno, quos propterea deberet confortare refocillare, et calefacere interna di- / .....lla .....to. /

[25] Redit in ipsa confidentia, et animus quasi Reginae, et ut talis agit / cum Dilecto et Angelis; et quod Traiectum / non capiatur; postea cessat spiritus orandi et materne agendi. /

Adueni<unt>..... quaedam confidentia et animus quasi Reginae in[uad]antis, adhuc efficace et uiu[ace] / qua.. ab aliquot ..... cum tali animo plane confidenter ag[eb]am cum meo dilecto, et cum sanctis Angelis quasi / [30] iterum illis mandando, ut [unum] regnum Dilecti mei in Hollandia bene conseruarent et protegerent, ac genere / .....entur contra quoscumque qui Dilectum ibidem ex suo throno tentarent extrudere et ex suo regno expel- / .....Deu..... infernales iterum ibi ponerent in possessione uel saltem permetterent, ut Satan ibi haberet / .....siones iuxta Dilectum per tolerantiam seu permissionem liber[ae] religionis Catholicae ad... / .....intendunt) quam iniuriam Dilecto meo irrogari non possum pati. / [35] .....i et habere certitudinem, quod Dilectus impios qui inde ipsum exturbare inte- / .....geret per uictoriosum conflictum Gallorum et alios qui irent in [Prosidium] Hollan- / ..... / .....ntionem, quod Rex Franciae lucraretur conflictum, et quod ciuitas Traiectensis / .....bant ab illis non interciperentur. /

[40] ..... e spiritus amoris et etiam spiritus orandi, nec mihi erat amplius poss[ine] / .....riore dispositionem animi, per quod mihi incederat, quod [forte] / .....eram amplius orare uel exercere officia animi materni //



and most beloved bride full of confidence, to act with Him in this way, in many conversations of a zealous, jealous, foolish and almost insane love, to promote his honour and glory by the conversion of the souls in Holland, with the renewal of the memory, that the Beloved already before had made me so to speak its mother. Through this, my motherly heart was renewed in me, and a motherly love towards them as before.

Many things occurred to me: that I had to ask my Beloved to take care of and secure salvation also with regard to the French soldiers. All of them were so pleasant and beloved to my mind and to my heart, as if they all were my little twin sons and I was their natural mother. Therefore I felt a very tender compassion for them, as if I myself felt their discomforts, their cold, their hardship etc., like a natural mother notices ... that she sympathises and feels the discomforts, pains and the lack of food etc. of her natural sons ... many loving complaints to the Beloved, that my sons endure all their discomforts ... injustices ... infirmities etc. out of love for Him, to help Him and ... his kingdom, whom she therefore has to comfort, refresh and warm with inner ...

In her the confidence returns as well as the heart of a Queen, and as such she speaks with the Beloved and the angels. She asks that Maastricht will not be captured<sup>22</sup>. Afterwards the spirit of praying and of motherly acting ceases.

Some kind of confidence and the heart of a Queen come to me, even more powerfully and vividly ... of so many ... with such a heart I spoke quite confidently with my Beloved and with the holy angels as if to ask them again to preserve and protect the kingdom of my Beloved in Holland and generously ... against all those who would try to remove the Beloved from his throne and expel Him from his kingdom ....

...<sup>23</sup>

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22 By reasons of chronology *Trajectum* is translated as Maastricht instead of Utrecht. From 7 November till 22 December 1672 William III marched from Roosendaal to Maastricht. He freed the city temporarily from the French troops, who had taken the city.

23 Lines 23-38 are omitted, because the manuscript has too many gaps here.

33<sup>r</sup>

[1] In intimitate spiritus habet impressiones, quod Dilectus [conqueratur] de / effusione sanguinis innocentis in Hollandia et de iniuria sibi facta / ab Hispanis, qui impediunt Regnum Iesu in Hollandia. /

Iam ab aliquot diebus fiebant in meo fundo aliquae subitae illuminationes et impressiones, modo / [5] alibi explicato ubi agebam de aliquibus subtilibus et rapidis scintillis fundo animae iniectis (nisi errem). / hae scintillae et impressiones uidebantur me illuminare et mihi ex parte Dilecti, notificare quomodo / ipse ualde conquereretur de innocente sanguine, qui iniuste ab utraque parte in Hollandia effunditur, / et de iniuria sibi irrogata ex parte Hispanorum, qui uidentur uelle impendere omnes suas uires, / extrema uti potentia ad Iesum expellendum ex suo nouo regno, et quantum est in se, conantur / [10] impedire pacificam possessionem desiderati regni illius et fidei Catholicae ibidem plantari caeptae etc. / Non quod Hispani habeant expressam illam intentionem; sed quia commodant arma sua Haereticis ad expellendum Regem Galliae, [nisi] aliquibus promissis ab impia illa natione sibi factis, et sub spe, quod / [ipsimet] Hollandiam paulatim occupabant, et tandem totaliter suae subiicient ditioni. /

Verum iuxta ea; quae ego tunc ulterius uidebam et intelligebam, ista spes uana est et nulla, absque u..... / [15] secuturo effectu. Intelligebam etiam quod promissa haereticorum et praesentationes ab illis Reginae facta..... / non subsistent, et sint plenae dolis, et deceptionibus. Aliquo tempore Regina habebit possessionem et <iurisdictionem> / in aliquot eorum ciuitatibus. Seu si Deus permittat (quod Deus auertat) ut Rex Galliae cladem accipiat / et succumbat, et acceptae ciuitates ui armorum ipsi eripiantur; ista possessio Hispanorum <numquam> / durabit nec etiam unio quam Hollandi et Hispani habent inter se. /

[20] Sed Haeretici a suis hostibus liberati et pristinis uiribus restituti, aliquos alios hostes..... / ut Hispanos et Religionem Catholicam exterminent: quo casu et tempore Rex Gal..... / Regina Hispaniarum etiam frustrabitur omni spe exspectatione et promissis sibi fact..... / O quantam iniuriam et praeiudicium inde patentur Iesus quam infinita mala et ..... / ..eni.ent .. qualem uindictam clamaret apud Deum innocens ille sanguis ex utraque po..... allorum / [25] t..m c...e effusus! eo quod utrumque esset effusum sine fructu, de quibus ..... deberent / spon...ere apud Deum; quippe Rex Galliae usque modo effundit illum sanguinis ipso titulo ex zelo et inter- / ...e plantandi ibidem ueram et orthodoxam fidem et plantabam conseruan..... haec effusio sanguinis ex parte / Regis Galliae est sancta et iusta. /

33<sup>r</sup>

In the intimacy of the spirit she has impressions, that the Beloved complains of the effusion of innocent blood in Holland and of the injustice done to Him by the Spaniards, who try to prevent the kingdom of Jesus in Holland.

Already for so many days now some sudden illuminations and impressions occurred in my depths, in a way that I explained elsewhere when I spoke about some subtle and consuming sparks emerging from the bottom of my soul (if I'm not mistaken). These sparks and impressions seemed to enlighten me and to notify me from the side of the Beloved how He complained very much about the innocent blood, which is unjustly shed by both sides in Holland and about the injustice done to Him from the side of the Spaniards, who seemed to use all of their forces and an extreme power to expel Jesus from his new kingdom, and, as far as they could, they tried to prevent the peaceful possession of His desired kingdom and of the catholic faith that began to be planted there etc. Not that the Spaniards have expressed this intention, but because they supply the heretics with their arms in order to expel the King of France, trusting in some promises made to them by that impious nation, hoping that they themselves would occupy Holland, gradually and eventually would subject them to their power.

But because of those things, which I then saw and understood, this hope is vain and worth nothing, without ... the effect which will follow. I understood even that the promises of the heretics and the proposals made by them to the queen<sup>24</sup> would not last and that they are full of tricks and deceptions. Some time the queen will have possession and jurisdiction in some of their cities. Or, if God would allow (which God forbid!) that the King of France is defeated and succumbs and that also the conquered cities are captured by force of arms, then this possession of the Spaniards would never last; neither would the unity that the Dutch and the Spaniards have between them.

But the heretics freed from their enemies and restored to their former powers, will unite with some other enemies in order to expel the Spaniards and the Catholic Religion, in which case and time the King of France ... the queen of the Spaniards will be also frustrated by all the hope, expectation and promises made to her ...<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Maria refers here to queen Mariana of Austria, the mother of Charles II.

<sup>25</sup> Lines 20-35 are omitted, because the manuscript is too difficult to read there.

Deum uae et uae illis, qui ex liuore ex inuidia et propria quaesitione compluerunt, et persuadee... / [30] ..... lo me Regis istius propositum et intentum impediret ciuitates interceptas a ..... / aliquo sensu iterum [tradet] in [man]us haereticorum. / Etsi Galli praeualeant equidem Hispani [sunt] ..... / guinis effusi; nec eorum intentio ualet apud Deu..... / tasset praesentationem Regis Galliae. Holland..... / [35] Reges mansistent uniti. /

Et..... licet Dilectus per suam omnipotentem manum permitteret u..... / ..... num ..ominem temeret equidem Hispani magna ex parte..... / [apud sustanem] et in fructu[sla] effusio [omnis] istius innocentis sanguis..... //

### 33<sup>v</sup>

[1] tionem et resistantiam isti Regi in laudabili et deiformi illo intento factam: neque eos apud Deum excusabit / putata ipsorum bona intentio quia destrunt certam Dei gratiam, et salutem tot millium animarum, quae cum / habet stabilitatem et locum propter incertam et propria quaesitione mixta[m] gloriam Dei a se praetensam ut exspec- / tatam, quae est fundata super arenam, uel in uento, quem uolunt apprehendere sed qui e manibus auolant / [5] ad magnum eorum paenitere postea quando erit serius. /

Utinam Consiliarii Reginae haberent oculum ad promouendam in Hollandia puram et nudam gloriam Dei, et / salutem animarum, nam sicut uidebar intelligere diuinum illud lumen improbabat et culpabat ipsorum / conceptus proposita et concordiam seu pactum initum cum Hollandis. /

Intellegebam etiam, quod Regina melius et satius fecisset pro se et Deo gratius, si praesentationes Regis / [10] Franciae acceptasset; sic regnum ipsius mansisset in parte, et plus profecisset, quam iam (ubique postmodum) / et rex cum modica effusione sanguinis prosperasset et progressus fuisset in Deiformi suo proposito et inten- / to; accedit quod sic inter Reges Catholicos mansisset maior unio, pax et concordia; ubi iam apparenter / inter eos exorietur capitale odium, dissentio et inimicitia in ruinam totius patriae /

Explicat., quales fuerint praedictae cognitiones, quae supernaturales, quae / [15] non; timet Hispanis; et haec scribit inuita. /

Non dico quod haec omnes fuerint cognitiones supernaturales; sed a tempore, quo mihi contigerunt / dictae impressiones etc. omnes praetactae cognitiones stabiliter manserunt impressae in fundo meo, et / quando spiritus in me operatur, renouantur illae iterum et confirmantur, ut uerae; et manent tam / ...uc et certo mihi insitae, ut non possim illas reiicere uel diffiteri. / [20] .....lectas

33<sup>v</sup>

... and resistance committed against this King in his laudable and godly intention: and their putative good intention will not excuse them before God, because they destroy the certain grace of God and the salvation of so many souls, which now has stability and place, because of the glory of God which is to them uncertain and mixed with self-interest, presented by them as expected, which is founded on sand<sup>26</sup>, or in the wind, which they want to catch<sup>27</sup> but which will fly away from their hands to their great regret later when it will be too late.

O, if only the Counsellors of the queen had an eye to promote the pure and naked glory of God in Holland and the salvation of the souls, because as I seem to understand that divine light it rejects and disapproves of their concepts and plans, and their agreement or pact with the Dutch.

I understood as well that the queen would have acted better and satisfyingly to herself and more pleasingly to God, if she had accepted the proposals of the King of France. In that way she would have kept her kingdom and would have profited more than now (a little bit later) and the King would have brought about a good end with moderate spilling of blood and he would have been progressed in his godlike proposal and intention. Also there would have been a greater unity, peace and concord between the catholic Kings, while now apparently between them a profound hatred, discord and enmity is emerging, which ruins the entire land.

She explains of what kind the aforementioned thoughts were, which were supernatural and which were not. She fears the Spaniards and writes about this unwillingly.

I do not say that all these thoughts were supernatural, but from the time, that these impressions came to me, all thoughts that I obtained before stayed firmly impressed deep within me, and when the spirit worked in me, then they were renewed and confirmed as being true. And they remain so ... and certainly rooted in me, so that I could not reject or deny them.

...

She returns<sup>28</sup>

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26 Cf. Mt. 7,26-27.

27 Cf. Prov. 30,4; Eccl. 1,14.

28 At the bottom of this page is written the custode (catchword) *Redit*. This is an indication that the next page should begin with this word *Redit*. But the next page in the manuscript

mihi [faciet ut] illas querelas de iniuriis ab Hispanis sibi illatis, et de ista effusione / .....inis innocentis cuius Hispani sunt causa; secundum omnem apparentiam et quantum / illuminatio supernaturalis in magna tranquillitate et abstractione sine / .....one potentialium inferiorum; id fiebat celeriter et uelociter, sed cum plena / .....tudo .....ntione ueritatis; et ista certitudo ab illo tempore sic mansit aliquando cum / [25] .....aliquo.....itudine amoris propter iniuriam quae Dilecto meo et multis animabus / .....rogatur. /

.....u..b[is] intimae illae quae.....iae Dilecti aliquid portendunt, et ad illas bene attendere oportet / .....s.....nde [aff]ectus p.....os; nam si haec sint uera, non tam suauiter trans[ibunt] / .....nius, sine post aliquod te ..... pro certo Dilectus ista non permittet sic transire, quia / [30] .....[ennis], magnum ..... isi forte in meis illuminationibus decipiar; quod / .....uodem non potui.. me cohibere, quem haec annotarim, postquam saepius / .....m f.... in abundantia inter scribendum cum tali pondere et sertim / ..... haeream consternata. Tempus docebit, a quo spiritus / .....u..... mihi quod auaritia fefellerit sapientiam Hispaniorum. /

[35] .....Redit //

### 34r

[1] Die 4 Julii intellexi, ciuitatem Traiectensem Regi Galliae traditum eodem / die quo mihi significabatur, Regem accepisse auxilium et assistentiam a sanctis / Angelis, n. die 30 Junii; sit inde Deus benedictus in saecula. /

Patitur quasi infernale tormentum pro peccatis Regis Galliae, quod / [5] tormentum utcumque describit, et diu patitur sine solatio. /

Usque ad octauam Julii, Dilectus secundum omnem apparentiam, me usus est, ut satis- / facerem pro delictis Regis Galliae, accepta mea praesentatione ad satisfaciendum / pro illo, et patendas etiam paenas infernales; quod certo quodam modo mihi fuit / concessum per insolitum, et a me hactenus non probatum tormentum, quod debui / [10] sustinere in anima mea, et mihi uidebatur esse poena infernalis. / Mihi uidebatur, quod sub corde meo quasi accenderetur ignis, quo cor ineffabili / modo cruciabatur, et tormentabatur; praeterea omnia, quae per sensus, per auditum, / uisum, tactum, et gustum poterant intrare; Item per imaginationem, uel alias / potentias sensituias, ista omnia, ista abiecta uidebantur tendere ad cor, ad / [15] illud cruciandum modo ineffabili. /

34r

On the 4th of July<sup>29</sup> I understood that the city of Maastricht was delivered to the King of France on the same day on which to me a sign was given that the King had accepted my help and assistance from the holy angels, namely on the 30th of June.<sup>30</sup> May God be blessed therefore in eternity.

She suffers as it were infernal torment for the sins of the King of France, which she describes as well as she can, and she suffers for a long period of time without consolation.

After my proposal to make reparation for him and even to suffer infernal penances, the Beloved used me until the 8th of July, according to all appearances, to make reparation for the faults of the King of France. For sure that was something that was allowed to happen to me in some way by an unusual and by me not yet endured torment, which I had to undergo in my soul, and which seemed to me to be an infernal punishment. To me it seemed that under my heart as it were a fire was ignited, through which my heart was tortured and tormented. Besides all of this, there was all that came to me through the senses, through hearing, through vision, touch and taste. Also through imagination or other sensory powers, all these things, that I had rejected seemed to press upon my heart, to torture it in an ineffable manner.

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begins with a different word. This is an important evidence that the manuscript has not been bound in the right sequence. The next page should be 42r, which begins with the custode *Redit*, and which also connects to this page 33v chronologically. See footnote 1 about the original sequence of the manuscript.

29 Here begins the fourth part of the document. 4 July 1673 is intended. The Siege of Maastricht took place between 13 June and 26 June 1673.

30 On 30 June the surrender of the city had taken place.

Insuper omnes creaturae uidebantur insurgere contra me, quasi a Deo fuissent ad- / hibitae, uelut instrumenta ad me cruciandum; in omnibus rebus, et occu-  
rentiis, sen- / tiebam extremam contrarietatem, et repugnantiam; pars supe-  
rior erat quasi - / cooperta, et sepulta in sensualitatibus naturae, et quasi  
submersa in mari amari- / [20] tudinis; aliquando prae uehementia paena-  
rum, eram quasi extra me, et ualde ob- / tenebrata in intellectu, et de facto,  
prae nimia duratione patiebar quasi de- / liquia; quippe uires consumebantur  
per praemagnam illam et omnis solatii / expertem passionem in spiritu, et na-  
turam. /

Postea subinde parum consolabar, et confortabar per aliquem suauem,  
inti- / [25] mum occursum et fruitionem praesentiae Dilecti mei, sed plerum-  
que uersor in statibus / paenalibus, praesertim sentiendo naturales meas pas-  
siones, quae iterum quasi reuiriscunt / imo uidentur uiuaciores, quam umquam  
C praesertim prouitas ad subitandum Chole- / ram. Ac, quamuis enim per Dei  
gratiam passiones illas non sequar, equidem / illas sentire tam uiuas, est mihi  
magna crux. /

[30] Agitur uehementibus passionum motibus, quasi sibi relicta, et /  
tristis usque ad mortem etc tandem cessant penalitates, quas / partim  
pro Rege partim ad exercitium humilitatis sustinuit. /

Passiones, quas sentio, sunt quasi tortores, seu crudeles lictores, ad torquen-  
dam / animam, eo magis, quod debeam eas comprimere, et earum motibus  
incessanter resistere, / [35] et quia sentio aliqua apparentia mala, uel inuita,  
subinde timeo, ne sim in malo / [stratu], quippe istae sensibilitates, et passio-  
num uiuacitates sunt ualde peregrinae, et / insolitae, inde nescio quid cogitare;  
an non sit ibi manifestatio...ignium defectionis / in uia perfectionis, quae  
mihi persuadebam me iam supra ..... endisse, et per- / fectioni ualde ap-  
propinquare; aliquando uereor, ne alicu.....ittam aliquod / [40] magnum scan-  
dalum; inde quasi timeo a me ipsa, et mihi ipsi plane diffido. /

Passio tristitiae etiam non est minor, nec eam possum diuertere; anima  
mea / est quasi tota perfusa, et penetrata interno [maerore], tristitia, et pressu-  
ra; uide<or> / aliquo modo experiri tristitiam et pressuram, quam Jesus susti-  
nuit in horto / quando dicebat, tristis est anima mea usque mortem: o  
quantopere qua.... //



Besides all creatures seemed to rise against me, as if they were used by God as instruments to torture me. In all these things and occurrences I felt an extreme contrariety and contradiction. My superior part was as it were covered up and buried in the sensations of nature, and as it were submersed in a sea of bitterness. Sometimes because of the violence of the punishments I was as it were outside myself and my intellect was darkened and in fact because of the long lasting duration I suffered like a criminal. For my powers were (strength was) consumed by that very great suffering in spirit and nature.

After that suddenly I was consoled somewhat and comforted by some pleasant intimate encounter and the joy of the presence of my Beloved. Mostly I remained in a harassing (distressing) state, feeling particularly my natural suffering, which comes back to life and even seems to become more vigorous than ever, especially making me feel as if I was about to contract Cholera. And although by God's grace I will not catch that disease, it still is a heavy cross for me to feel these things so in such a lifelike way.

She is seized by violent motions of suffering, as if she were left to herself, and saddened to death etc. Finally the punishments stop, punishments she had endured partly for the King and partly as an exercise of humility.

The passions that I am feeling are like the torture of a cruel flogging, to torment my soul, even more because I must suppress them and resist their motions incessantly. And because I experience some bad or unwanted appearances, I suddenly fear to be in a bad situation, for these sensations and the vividness of this suffering are very strange and unusual. Therefore I do not know what I should think: whether or not it is a manifest sign of weakening on the way to perfection, of which I had persuaded myself that I had already ... and truly approach perfection. Sometimes I fear, that some ... some great scandal. Therefore I am somewhat afraid of myself, and distrust myself completely.

The suffering of sadness is not less, and I cannot turn it away. My soul is as it were totally invaded and penetrated with inner sadness, sorrow and depression. I seem in some way to experience the sorrow and depression that Jesus endured in the garden, when he said: "my soul is saddened to death".<sup>31</sup> O how much ...

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Mt. 26,38.

34<sup>v</sup>

[1] hi itatus! quam procul abssum ab omni uana praesumptione! quidquid /  
umquam boni in me fuit, hic quasi euanescit, et est, quasi numquam fuisset; /  
etiam quae antecederet scripta sunt de Rege Galliae, non possunt mihi seruire  
ad / aliquod solatium. /

[5] Die 11 dicti mensis totaliter cessauit passibilis illa et sensibilis dispositio;  
et / sentio me, sicut antea, plane suauem et mitem, a motibus passionum, et  
oppug- / nationibus partis inferioris plane liberam; et licet laboriose conarer,  
non / possem tales naturae sensibilitates causare; uidentur ista iam transacta /  
esse in alio homine; cum interna certificatione, quod istos paenales status /  
[10] sustinuerim ex speciali dispositione et permissione Dilecti, partim, ut sat-  
tis- / facerem pro Rege Galliae, et partim, ut sic melius conseruarem humilita-  
te. / Sic Dilectus nouit prudenter mecum agere; ne uane me extollam in / eius  
donis; ipse me ponit in meo nihilo, et me facit experiri meam impossibilita-  
tem /

Post aliquam animi repugnantiam scribit ex obedientia aliqua / [15] de  
sua interiori dispositione; iussa orare contra Gallos in / Hollandia, agitur  
diuino spiritu orandi in illorum fauorem. /

Die 6. Ianuarii 1674, ad honorem et gloriam ssmae Trinitatis. quando qui- /  
dem Reuerentiae Vestrae desiderium sit, ut aliqua scribam, quae in me agun-  
tur, faciam / quod potero, et scribam ea, quae mihi occurrunt; sensi aliquam in  
hoc animi / [20] repugnantiam, sed iam me sentio suauius inclinatum, prop-  
ter spem, quod / per hoc inueniam aliquam occasionem humiliationis, eo  
quod per omnes / istas nugas, omnes aliae meae apparenter perfectiones, et  
inoperationes / spiritus, etiam parui fient, nec approbabuntur; haec spes me  
allicit et / exstimulat, ut omnes meas nugas resolute edicam. /

[25] Cum ad requisitionem suae Excellentiae, Gubernatoris Patriae, esset  
in- / dictus generalis dies precum in omnibus huius urbis Ecclesiis, n. in ipsa /  
uigilia natalitiorum, et primo ac secundo festo, ut attentatum contra Gallos / in  
Hollandia ad uotum succederet; conabar una cum aliis iungere preces / meas,  
et ad intentum orare. Sed spiritus meus non uolebat se conforma[re] / [30] nec

## 34v

... How far away am I from every vain presumption! Whatever good has ever been in me, that evaporates now as it were and it is as if it had never been there. Even what I have written before about the King of France, cannot serve me now as consolation.<sup>32</sup>

On the 11th of this month<sup>33</sup> this suffering and sensitive state ceased in me totally. And I feel as before, completely pleasant and gentle, completely free from motions of suffering and attacks of my inferior part. And although I tried strenuously, I could not cause such sensitivities of nature. They seemed already to have transferred to another human being. With inner certainty that I had endured those tormenting states because of a special disposition and permission of the Beloved, partly to make reparation for the King of France, and partly so that I would be kept in greater humility. Thus the Beloved knew how to act prudently with me, so that I would not extol myself in his gifts in vain; he placed me in my nothingness, and made me experience my powerlessness.

After some repugnance in her heart she writes out of obedience some things about her inner state. Although she is commanded to pray against the French in Holland, she is driven by a divine spirit to pray in their favour.

On the 6th of January 1674, to the honour and glory of the most holy Trinity. When Your Reverence wishes, that I write about some of the things that happen in me, I will do whatever I can and will write those things that occur to me. I have felt some repugnance of heart in this, but I already feel more pleasantly inclined, because of the hope that I will find in this some occasion of humility, because through all these trifles, all these apparent perfections of mine and the workings of the spirit, will also become little, and they will not be approved. This hope allures and stimulates me, to proclaim all my trifles resolutely.

When at the request of His Excellency, the Governor of the country<sup>34</sup>, a general day of prayer in Churches of this city<sup>35</sup> was announced, to take place on Christmas eve, and on the first and second feast day, so that the attack against the French in Holland would succeed as desired, I tried to unite my prayers with the others and to pray according to his intention. But my spirit did not

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32 N.B. This is the fourth part of the document. Maria refers here to following passages.

33 I.e. July 1673.

34 I.e. Don Juan Domingo Mendez de Haro, See also n. 78.

35 I.e. Mechelen.

cooperari; furiebam interim secundum uoluntatem et spiritum humanum / quod poteram, ut obtemperarem mandato superiorum. /

Die 30 natalitiorum, n. in festo S. Joannis, uidebatur spiritus diuinus in / me orare, et postulare gemitibus inenarrabilibus, et in me operari modo insolito / et inexpectato, plane contrario requisitioni et intentioni nostri Principis; / [35] imprimis eram [in]trosumpta seu introtracta in illa extraordinaria et prae- / magna unione cum Diuinitate, quasi etiam ab uno aut altero anno frui- ta / fui; In hac unione, subinde per uires nonnihil demittebar cum aliquali / mei ipsius perceptione, non rudi, sed ualde sublimi, spirituali, et nobili modo / nempe in qualitate tenerrimae et amantissimae sponsae, quae permittitur, uel / [40] potius a diuino spiritu taliter agitur, ut cum suo diuino Dilecto confi- denter / et familiariter conuerteretur, et agat de rebus ipsum concernentibus: / non tamen //

### 35<sup>r</sup>

[1] Non tamen uidebam Christi humanitatem, sed erat comprehensa, et abscon- / dita sub summo illo Bono, seu diuina Essentia, quae se mihi manifesta- bat; / et sui fruitionem indulgebat; nam nullae species imaginariae in me tole- / rabantur, sed solae intellectuales. /

[5] Tenerrimus ille sponsalis amor dabat mihi confidentiam postulandi et / orandi Dilectum meum, ut, cum ipsi notum esset, per quos eius honor et glo- ria, / deberet promoueri, et Bonum Sanctae Ecclesiae, ac salus animarum pro- sperari, / et iuuari, siue per exercitum Caesarium, siue per exercitum Hispanorum, siue / per exercitum Gallorum, dignaretur benedicere illis, per quos maius / [10] bonum fieret; ac proinde, ut secundum diuinam suam prouidentiam, et / Charissimum beneplacitum uellet illis auxiliari, et dare uic- toriam. /

Videbar percipere, quod Deus inclinaretur, et se conuerteret ad exercitum / Gallorum, et se ab illis auerteret; tali modo mihi insinuando, et spem dando, / quod daret suam benedictionem, et manus auxiliatrices Gallis, ut sic diuinae / [15] prouidentiae dispositio fortiretur effectum, non obstante, quod humani- tus loquendo / id uideretur esse extra omnem apparentiam et econtra esset summa appa- / rentia, quod Galli succumberent, et ad interneccionem redige- rentur, propter / potentissimos exercitus Imperatoris et Regis Hispaniarum il- los aggredi paratos. /

want to conform and cooperate. I exerted myself in the meantime with all my will and human spirit, as far as I could, to obey the command of my superiors.

On the 30th of December, on the feast of St. John, the divine spirit seemed to pray in me and to postulate with indescribable sighs and to operate in me in an unusual and unexpected way, clearly contrary to the request and the intention of our Prince.<sup>36</sup> Firstly I was turned or drawn inward in that extraordinary and very great union with the Divinity, as I had enjoyed it for one year or another. In this union, suddenly I was somewhat brought down by forces with some perception of myself, not in a rude, but in a very sublime, spiritual and noble way, in the quality of a very tender and loving bride, who is permitted or better who is so by the divine spirit, that she associates with her divine Beloved confidently and familiarly, and speaks about things that concern Him:

35<sup>r</sup>

Yet I did not see the humanity of Christ, but that was enclosed and hidden under that highest Good, or the divine Essence, that manifested itself to me and that allowed me to enjoy it. For no image was tolerated in me, but only intellectual images.

That very tender bridal love gave me the confidence to ask and pray to my Beloved, that – while it was known to Him, by whom his honour and glory should be promoted and the salvation of souls should be advanced and helped, whether by the army of the Emperor<sup>37</sup> or by the army of the Spaniards or by the army of the French – that he should bless them, by whom a greater good could happen and then, according to his divine providence and his most beloved will, that he would help them and grant them victory.

I seemed to perceive that God inclined towards and turned to the army of the French, and that He turned away from the others. In this way suggesting to me and giving me hope that He would give his blessing and a helpful hand to the French, so that in this way the disposition of divine providence would strengthen the effect, notwithstanding that humanly speaking this seemed to be beyond all appearance and that to the contrary it was the most likely outcome that the French would succumb and would be destroyed because of the most powerful armies of the Emperor and of the King of the Spaniards that were ready to attack them.

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36 Perhaps she refers here to Don John of Austria, natural son of Philip IV. In 1672 he still was titular Governor of the Southern Netherlands.

37 I.e. Leopold I.

Porro Dilectus uidebatur a me requirere, ut Gallis impertirer eius / [20] benedictionem; quod sic ipso facto faciebam, et videbar aliquo modo imprecari / maledictionem nostro exercitui, nimirum nostris subtrahendo omnem sapientiam, / animos, et uirtutem; id non faciebam ex me ipsa, sed diuinus spiritus uide- / batur id in me, et per me operari, absque eo, quod id possem impedire. /

Familiariter agit cum Angelis pro auxilio Gallorum, intellectus / [25] unitur intellectui diuino, cum assecuratione diuinae inoperationis pro Gallis. /

Isto tempore etiam agebam ualde familiariter cum sanctis Angelis, uelut / cum administratoriis spiritibus Dilecti mei, ipsis committendo omnem curam / conuersandi, amplificandi, et stabiliendi regnum Dilecti mei, et in istum / finem, personaliter accedendi, et in congressibus auxiliandi illis, quos Dilectus / [30] ad hoc elegerat: id fiebat cum tanta fiducia, fide et animi libertate, ut / de ueritate illorum ne uel semel possim dubitare. /

Post quam familiarem cum Angelis conuersationem [e]t communicationem / continuo introsomebar et introtrahebar in praedicta ....ni..ente unione, / non solum in unione mei spiritus cum spiritu Dei, s[ed] ..... Unione / [35] potentiarum superiorum, nempe intellectus cum intellectu diuino, memoriae / cum memoria diuina, uoluntatis cum uoluntate diuina, hoc est aliquid / aliud, quam quod ordinarie nominatur uel dicitur unio cum Deo; ad hanc / unionem explicandam, multa occurrerent dicenda, quae tempus iam non permitt.... / Eodem tempore iterum plene certificabar quod omnes illae inoperatio[nes] //

### 35V

[1] illuminationes, et modi orandi spiritus etc quae a duobus annis in me / fuerunt quoad Regem Galliae, omnia prouenerint, et in me acta sint / a diuino spiritu; pro illa ueritate bene uoluisssem sustinere tot mortes / quot habeo in corpore meo membra. /

[5] Continuat in ea spiritus orandi totus diuinus, uidet in / Deo, pro quibus Deus uult orari; pro Ecclesia contra Iansenistas / contra imminentes haereses; quomodo oret. /

Uterius spiritus orandi continuabatur in me multis horis, absque de- / ficientia uel flaccescentia, et absque eo, quod per aliquid possem im- / [10] pediri, siue

Further it seemed that the Beloved required from me, that I would give his blessing to the French. Indeed I did so and I seemed in some way to curse our own army, by withdrawing all wisdom, courage and virtue from them. I did not do that on my own account, but the divine spirit seemed to operate that in me and through me, without me being able to prevent it.

She speaks in a familiar way with the angels for them to help the French, her intellect is united with the divine intellect, with the assurance of the divine working for the French.

In that time I also spoke very familiarly with the holy angels, as the helping spirits of my Beloved, committing to them all my care about handling, amplifying and establishing the kingdom of my Beloved, and I asked them to go there personally, and help them in their confrontations, those whom the Beloved had chosen for that purpose. This happened with great confidence trust and freedom of heart, so that I could not even for a moment doubt the truth of these things.

After that familiar talk and communication with the angels I was continuously drawn and pulled inwards in the aforementioned ... union, not only in the union of my spirit with the spirit of God, but ... the union of higher powers, namely of my intellect with the divine intellect, of my memory with the divine memory, of my will with the divine will. This is something different from what is usually called or named union with God. To explain this union many things occur that must be said, which time does not allow any more ... At the same time I was fully assured again that all those operations,

35V

illuminations and ways of praying of the spirit etc, which have been in me for two years in relation to the King of France, all occurred and have been produced in me by the divine spirit. For that truth I would have well wanted to sustain as many deaths as I have members in my body.

The completely divine spirit of praying continues in her. She sees in God that for which God wants her to pray: the Church, against the Jansenists, against imminent heresies. So she prays.

The spirit of praying continued in me for many hours, without interruption or relaxation, and without being hindered by anything, whether I was reciting the

cum aliis recitarem officium, siue hinc inde irem per / domum; nam ista oratio fit omnino in spiritu, per spiritum, et, meo / uideri, est plane supernaturalis; quippe omnes potentiae uidentur esse / suspensae a suis naturalibus operationibus, quam diu ista oratio / durat; ipsae se continent in quiete, et habent se permissiue. /

[15] Ista oratio est insolitus, efficax, et uiuus ad Deum intuitus, et conformis / ad ipsum amoris affectus; ubi anima non loquitur, nec supplicat, nec blande / deprecatur, nec aliquid repraesentat, nec expresse commendat aliquam / rem tamquam procul absentem, sed uidet in Deo uelut in speculo, ea, / pro quibus Deus uult orari; et Deus conformiter uidet in anima, ea, / [20] quae ipsa postulat, uel postulare uult, absque eo, quod ipsa expresse proponat / quid, aut quomodo; totum est conclusum et implicite, seu tacite, com- / prehensum in isto diuino intuitu, et pariformi amore Dei. /

Verumtamen anima bene scit, in quem finem spiritus taliter oret / et postulet; erat tunc pro conseruatione et amplificatione Sanctae / [25] Ecclesiae; in illo intuitu, seu aspectu et dilectione Dei etiam comitatur / quaedam feruens et urgens instantia, quae quasi cor diuinum uult penetrare / et ideo uoco istum aspectum efficacem et uiuum. /

Necessitas Sanctae Ecclesiae, quae mihi imprimebatur, partim erat / propter tumultus et commotiones, etc, quas Iansenistae causant in Sancta / [30] Ecclesia, per eorum doctrinas apprehendendo magnam inhonorationem / contumelias, e[t] blasphemias contra Suam uirginem, et multos errores / quos ingerunt <cor>dibus fidelium; partim propter incursum Turcorum / partim propter interitum fidei in Hollandia plantari caeptae: etiam in hac / patria periclitantis; nam paucis diebus ante, dum accederem ad sacram / [35] communionem, mihi ad uinum repraesentabatur iconomachia, et uiolationes / templorum, et sacrarum imaginum, quae uidebantur exerceri per haereticos / et a fide apostatas in his Prouinciis. /

Post quam repraesentationem ueniebat in me spiritus orandi, ad summa //



liturgy of the hours with others, or I was going to and fro through the house. Because that prayer was given totally in the spirit, through the spirit and is, as it seems to me, clearly supernatural. For all powers seem to be suspended in their natural operations, as long as that prayer lasts. They find themselves in a state of quietness and devotion.

That prayer is an uncommon, efficient and vivid intuition in relation to God and corresponds to the affection of love that a person has for Him. There the soul does not speak or beg, nor does it pray blandly for forgiveness, nor does it represent anything, nor does it commend something expressly that is far away, but it sees in God as in a mirror those things for which God wants it to pray, just as if God sees in my soul those things for which it begs or wants to beg, without the soul proposing expressly to Him what and how. Everything is included and implicit or concealed, and comprehended in that divine look and in conformity with the love of God.

Still the soul knows well to what purpose the spirit prays and begs in such a way. It was then for the preservation and expansion of the Holy Church. That look or sight and love of God is accompanied by fervent and urgent intercession, which as it were wants to penetrate the divine heart, and therefore I call that sight efficient and vivid.

The necessity of the Holy Church, that was impressed upon me, was partly because of the uproars and commotions etc, which the Jansenists caused in the Holy Church, by their doctrines that they proposed as a great insult, criticism and blasphemy against the Holy Virgin, and the many errors that they thrust upon the hearts of the faithful.<sup>38</sup> Partly the necessity came to me because of the attack of the Turks<sup>39</sup> and partly because of the destruction of the faith that had begun to be planted in Holland. Even in this country there was a danger. For some days before, while I went to holy communion, at the wine the iconoclasm was represented to me, and the violations of the temples and of sacred images, which seemed to be done by heretics and apostates from the faith in these Provinces.

After that representation the spirit of praying came to me,

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38 Maria Petyt is a fervent opponent of Jansenism, which she saw as a heretical movement. She saw Jansenism and other heretics as a great danger for the unity of the Church. This is also the main reason why she chooses the side of the French, because she believes that the French want to bring back Holland – also a heretical country because of the dominance of Protestantism there – to the true faith of the Roman Catholic Church.

39 In August 1672 Ottoman forces, invaded Ukraine.

## 36r

[1] ista mala inuertenda, et deprecanda, per oblationem praetiosi sanguinis Christi / aeterno Patri; eadem oblatio mihi etiam mandabatur in praedicta ora- / tione, cum uariis adhuc aliis amoris inuentionibus, et amorosis allocuti- / onibus ad Jesum, et ad aeternum Patrem, quae mihi iam clare non occurrunt. /

[5] Sponsaliter agit cum Dilecto, et familiariter cum angelis, orans / pro ecclesia, et mandans caedere Caesarianos et Hispanos, / quos uidet nihil effecturos. /

Quando eodem tertio festo natalitiorum subinde tantisper remittebar / ab ista supermagna unione, et ponebar in dispositione, et statu amantis- / [10] simae sponsae, et familiaris, ac confidentialis conuersationis cum Dilecto / meo, ut dictum est, tunc manebam eleuata supra me ipsam, sed non / extra me ipsam, id est, habebam adhuc aliquam perceptionem mei ipsius in / Deo, et discretio- nem, seu distinctum cognitionem eorum, quae Dilectus in / me, et per me ope- rabatur, et me uolebat operari, nempe attentissimum illum, / [15] et amorosum aspectum diuinae praesentiae ipsius, istam orationem pro / Sancta Ecclesia, et oblationem praetiosi sanguinis Christi, conuersationem / et familiaria collo- quia cum Sanctis Angelis, instar regalis sponsae cum / aulicis et nobiles sui regalis Sponsi, agendo praecipue de rebus concernen- / tibus prosperitatem et promotionem regni Dilecti sui. /

[20] Idcirco cum a Dilecto meo intellexissem, quod Hispani et Caesariani ope- / rarentur et agerent contra ipsum et eius honorem, et gloriam etc, dabat / spiritus amoris mandatum Sanctis Angelis, ut istos exercitus profligarent, / et eneruarent, ipsis auferendo uires et animos, ne possent effectuare suum / intentum et propositum, in praeiudicium regni Dilecti mei, Sanctae Ecclesiae. /

[25] Sentiebam quod hoc sic fieret; quod nostri Principes nihil efficerent, prout / ante Carolo-reginum, ab illo tempore apparebat noster exercitus in mente mea / quasi congregatio muscarum, sine potentia, sine uiribus, quia Deus non erat cum / illis; Idem iterum renouabatur subsequenti die precum, quod n. nostri / Principes cum omnibus istis orationibus nullum a Deo accipe- rent auxilium. /

[30] haec scripsit 6. Januarii 1674, quando illa contigerant circa natalitia 1673. /

## 36r

to turn aside that greatest evil and to pray that it would not happen, by the offering of the precious blood of Christ. That same offering was also demanded of me in the aforementioned prayer, with various other expressions of love and loving utterances to Jesus and to the eternal Father, that do not clearly occur to me anymore.

Like a bride she speaks with the Beloved, and familiarly with the angels, praying for the Church, and asking that the imperial forces and the Spaniards retreat, whom she sees will not reach any success.

When afterwards on the third day of Christmas I was somewhat released from that very great union, and I was placed in the disposition and state of a most loving bride, and of a familiar and confidential conversation with the Beloved, as it is said, then I remained lifted up above myself, but not outside myself, that is, I had still some perception of myself in God, and a discretion or distinct comprehension of the things, which the Beloved operates in and through me and which he wants me to operate. Namely the most attentive and loving sight of his divine presence, that prayer for the Holy Church, and the offering of the precious blood of Christ, the conversation and familiar talks with the holy angels, like a royal bride with the courtiers and nobles of her royal Bridegroom, preferably speaking about questions concerning the prosperity and promotion of the kingdom of her Beloved.

Therefore when I had understood from my Beloved, that the Spaniards and the imperial forces operated and acted against him and against his honour and glory etc, the spirit of love gave the order to the holy angels, that they should defeat and enervate those armies, taking away their forces and courage, so that they could not carry out their intention and plan of harming the kingdom of my Beloved and the Holy Church.

I felt that this happened like this. That our leaders did not achieve anything, like it was before Charleroi.<sup>40</sup> From that time on our army appeared in my mind like a swarm of flies without power, without strength, because God was not with them. The same thing happened again on the next day of prayer, that our leaders with all their prayers would receive no help from God.

She wrote this on January 6th 1674, while these things happened during the days of Christmas in 1673.

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40 See n. 16.

Imperatorem et Hispanos male facere assistendo Hollandis contra / Gallos, et Deum puniturum illos, qui Gallos impediuerunt in Hollandia. /

Reuerentia Vestra mihi asserit, quod Princeps noster tam bene intendat, et quod Imperator / sit pius uir; uerum, uti mihi uidetur, ipsi non faciunt pia [o] pera, sicut Zelosos, et / [35] Catholicos Principes decet, qui deberent armis suis uti ad .....em Sanctae / Ecclesiae, ad eradicationem haeticorum, etc; cuius contrarium nostri faciunt, impedi- / endo, quantum in se est, omnem profectum et propagationem sacrae nostrae fidei in / Hollandia, nec uoluerunt consentire, ut Hollandi cum Rege Galliae concordarent / cum titulo, et conditione permittendi templa Catholica in omnibus suis Ciuitatibus; / [40] uti dicitur et uero simile est, ex inuidia et maleuolentia, ne Rex Galliae haberet / honorem, quod in istis partibus sanctam Ecclesiam promouisset. / Ipsi impediunt, ne ille Rex gentem illam haeticam etc euertat, et regn..... //

### 36v

[1] Jesu ibi plantet et stabiliat; et interim ipsi id non intendunt, cum tamen sit in / illorum potestate iam multas urbes haeticas pro se intercipere, uel apud status / praetendere libertatem fidei Catholicae in compensationem subsidii Hollandis / praestiti; quod iam uix ipsis posset recusari. /

[5] Sciat Reuerentia Vestra, quae seminauerunt nostri, haec et metent; Deus qui corda nouit / omnium, retribuet secundum opera eorum, et non secundum iudicium hominum, si / Imperator, et noster Princeps unanimiter cum Rege Galliae Hollandiam agg- / ressi fuissent, uel saltem sese continuisent, nullum Hollandis praestando subsidium / spatio medii anni Hollandia fuisset intercepta, et omnia cum bono ordine et pace, / [10] ualde Christiane processissent; pro ut Rex Galliae in principio incipiebat cum bono / zelo, pietate et laudabili regimine in populo suo; uerum praedicti nostri Princip[es] / in supremo gradu ei dederunt occasionem exacerbationis, et iracundiae; et inde / tam multa mala prouenerunt, et adhuc sequentur etiam in hac Patria, pro / ut ex nunc incipiunt. /

[15] Omnis conspiratio humana nihil ualet, quando Deus non uult cooperari, et(...) / Deus non cooperabitur, et in similibus non uult cooperari contra

She says that the Emperor and the Spaniards do evil by assisting the Dutch against the French, and that God will punish them, because they impede the French in Holland.

Your Reverence assures me that our Leader conducts himself well, and that the Emperor is a devout man. But as it seems to me they do not do pious works, as would befit zealous and catholic leaders, who should use their weapons to ... of the Holy Church, to the eradication of the heretics etc. They do the contrary, impeding, as much as they can, the progress and the extension of our holy faith in Holland. They did not want to consent that the Dutch would come to an agreement with the King of France about the legal foundation and condition to permit Catholic churches in all its cities. As it is said and as it truly is, this was on grounds of envy and malevolence, so that the King of France would not have the honour of promoting the holy Church in these regions. They prevent the King from destroying those heretic people, and planting and establishing the kingdom

36v

of Jesus there. And in the meantime they do not intend to do this, although yet it is in their power to already win over many heretic cities for themselves, as a compensation for the support given to the Dutch. That could hardly be refused to them.

May Your Reverence know that what our people have sown they will also harvest<sup>41</sup>, that God who knows the hearts of all, will recompense according to the works of each one, and not according to the judgement of men. If the Emperor and our leader, unanimously with the King of France, had attacked Holland, or if they at least had restrained themselves from supplying the Dutch with their support, then Holland would have been occupied in the space of half a year, and all would have been ended in good order and peace, in a Christian way, as the King of France began to do in the beginning with zeal, piety and laudable rule over his people. But our aforementioned leaders have, to the highest degree, provided the opportunity for bitterness and rage. And so many bad things have come forth from that and many things will follow also in this country, like those beginning already.

No human collaboration can achieve anything, if God does not want to cooperate, and ... God will not cooperate and in similar cases does not want to

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41 2Kor 9,6; Ps. 126,5

diuinam suam / dispositionem, et promissionem: quippe in spiritu saepe intellexi istud uerbum / quando uidebam contrariam apparentiam alicuius boni successus etc contra / Regem Galliae, et in istum finem indicebantur multi dies precum etc, ad / [20] bonum successum sui propositi, et intenti, caelum et terra transibunt, uerba / autem mea non praeteribunt. /

Attamen ab aliquot hactenus mensibus, non uideo, quod Rex Galliae tanto / Dei fauores, et benedictionem mereatur, sicut antehac; quia Dilectus (~~~~) / nullum mihi de hoc dat signum, sed ex parte hoc me celat / [25] subinde mihi aduenit aliqua intima notitia seu suauius impressio in fundo animae / associata paruo et humili animo; quod Dilectus eo utatur, ut instrumento, qui / perferiatur id, quod sua Maiestas mihi promisit; secundum quod Reuerentiae Vestrae scripsi / significaui: et non obstante quod multi ualde male loquantur, et indicent de / isto Rege Galliae, tamen remanet aliquid diuinum scintillans in meo fundo, / [30] quod ipse cum tempore adhuc fiet ualde bonus, et Deo gratus.

Scripsit haec die 15. / Januarii 1674. /

Agitur spiritu orandi, ne Traiectum occupetur ab haereticis, et im- / perat Angelis, ut sponsa Jesu; et in festo S. Ludouici cogitur orare / pro uictoria Gallorum, quae succedit; conuentio cum hereticis / [35] prouocat iram Dei, quam praedicat. /

Reuerende et aman.... Pater, mihi adhuc aliquid uenit in memoriam, nempe quod / spiritus meus s....pere moueatur, et trahatur, ut efficaciter et amorese / agat, ad [ciuitatem] Traiectensem conseruandam sanctae Ecclesiae, ad quod / mihi infunditur uigorousus, et efficax spiritus orandi, iam fere quatuor / [40] septimanis continuo per totum diem, absque relaxatione. /

Iste modus orandi exercetur modo singulari; non esset mihi possibile istum ad / talem orationem tractum annihilare, reiicere, uel dimittere; quippe secundum / omnem experientiam, ista oratio est plane supernaturalis extra propriam / [o]rationem; ideo tunc deprecor Ssmam Trinitatem cum mire humili / [45] (am....) //

cooperate against his own divine disposition and promise. For in the spirit I often understood this word, when I saw the contrary appearance of success etc against the King of France, and for that purpose many days of prayer were indicated for the good success of his intention and plan: "Heaven and earth will perish, but my words will not pass."<sup>42</sup>

Still for some months now I do not see that the King of France merits so much the favours and blessing of God, as before, because the Beloved gives no sign to me about this, but he keeps it hidden from me. Right after that some intimate knowledge or pleasant impression comes to me in the depths of my soul, associated with a small and humble heart: that the Beloved uses him<sup>43</sup> as an instrument, to complete what his Majesty has promised me. According to what I have written to Your Reverence, I have made it clear. And notwithstanding that many speak very ill and badly about that King of France, yet there remains some divine sparkling in my inner depths, that in time he will become very good and dear to God.

She wrote this on January 15th 1674.<sup>44</sup>

She is led by the spirit to pray, that Maastricht will not be occupied by heretics, and thus she commands the angels, as the bride of Jesus.<sup>45</sup> And during the feast of St. Louis<sup>46</sup> she is forced to pray for the victory of the French, which succeeds. An agreement with the heretics provokes the wrath of God, which she predicts.

Reverent and most beloved Father, to me something else has come to my memory, namely, that my spirit ... is moved and attracted, to speak powerfully and lovingly, to preserve the city of Maastricht for the Holy Church, to which end a vigorous and powerful spirit of praying has been infused in me, for almost four weeks continuously throughout the day without relaxation.

That way of praying is practised in a particular way: it was not possible for me who was drawn to such prayer to annihilate, reject or let it go. For according to all experience, that prayer is clearly supernatural beyond my own prayer. Therefore I then beg the most holy Trinity with a marvellous, humble ...

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42 Mt. 24,35

43 I.e. the King of France.

44 In this document there are no letters from the period 15 January 1674 till 24 August 1676.

45 In 1676 Maastricht was still occupied by the French. From 6 July till 26 August 1676 William III besieged the city. It was not until the Peace of Nijmegen in 1678 that Maastricht became again part of The Dutch Republic.

46 The feast of St. Louis is on the 25th of August, feast of Louis IX, King of France in the period 1226-1270.

37<sup>r</sup>

[1] amorosa, et urgenti instantia; haec oratio habet diuersos modos, sed potissimum / spiritus cum humili demissione, sese coram diuina Maiestate quasi annihilando, / orat et postulat gemitibus inenarrabilibus, cum mire uiua fide, firma spe / exauditionis, et feruenti dilectione, absque multis uerbis, solum modo cum simplici / [5] repraesentatione, et aspectu ad Deum, modo essentiali implorando diuinam / uirtutem, et omnipotentiam, ac simul ministerium, et auxilium sanctorum / Angelorum, aliquando per modum mandantis, seu instar sponsae mandando / ministris Dilecti sui, ut istos sanctae Ecclesiae inimicos repellant, destruant, / profligent; hoc totum fit fiducialiter, cum sponsali confidentia, et ami- / [10] cabilitate, ac una cum magno zelo, et zelotypia ad curandum et pro- / mouendum interesse Dilecti, pro quo iam unice uiuit. /

Aliquando coram ssmo sacramento in extraordinaria, et insolita dispositione (nescio quomodo hoc nominabo, uel quibus uerbis explicabo) est ibi / spiritus quasi expansus, et attractus supra propriam suam operationem; ubi / [15] diuinus spiritus Jesu, istum superpurum, extaticum, et supra se raptum spiritum tenet occupatum, et in eo operatur, ut oret et postulet, quatenus / ista Ciuitas possit remanere sanctae Ecclesiae. /

In festo Sancti Ludouici Regis, die 25. Augusti 1676, et die praecedenti, / saepius interius mouebar, et mouebar ad orandum, hoc modo, festina, et / [20] exoccupa te, ad orandum, quia iam tempus est; quasi iam aliquis conflictus uel assultus fuisset prae manibus, uel in fieri, uel imminuisset: uidebatur / spiritus tam diu in oratione debere perseuerare, quam diu iste conflictus, / seu assultus duraret; et postea intellexi, quod noster exercitus amiserit / conflictum cum internecione multorum militum, et uirorum illustrium, / [25] quantum existimo, eodem tempore, quo spiritus tam instanter interius mouebatur, et instigabatur ad orandum. /

Reuerentia Vestra existimabat, quod si ista Ciuitas fuisset intercepta, cecisset Hispanis, / sed mihi uidebatur plane contrarium; nam in fundo meo erat aliud testimonium, quod iste rumor esset falsus: amantissime Pater, quid est mirum, / [30] quod Dilectus permittat cladem pro parte nostra? nam quam diu nostri / adhaerent, et suppetias ferunt isti impiae nationi, prouocant, et attrahunt / super se, et super Patriam, iram et indignationem Dei. /

Iam a pluribus annis uidi in spiritu, quod Deus istam unionem et con- / uentionem cum Hollandis mire reprobaret, et odio habere, et ideo huic /



37<sup>r</sup>

loving and urgent intercession. This prayer has various forms, but preferably the spirit prays and begs with humble meekness, as it were annihilating itself before the divine Majesty, with ineffable sighs, with a marvellously vivid faith, a firm hope of being heard, and with fervent love, without many words, but only with a simple representation and vision of God, in a way that is essential to implore the divine virtue and omnipotence and at the same time the support and help of the holy angels, sometimes by way of ordering and like a bride ordering the servants of her Beloved, so that they might drive away, destroy and defeat those enemies of the holy Church. All of this happens intimately with the confidence of a bride, and with friendliness and at the same time with great zeal and effort to take care of and promote the concerns of the Beloved, for whom it<sup>47</sup> has lived pre-eminently.

Sometimes in the presence of the most Blessed Sacrament in an extraordinary and exceptional disposition (I don't know how I should call this, or with which words I will explain it) there the spirit is in some way spread out and extended above its own operation. There the divine spirit of Jesus in that great purity, in ecstatic condition and as one risen beyond itself, keeps the spirit occupied, so that it prays and begs, to that extent that the city might remain with the Holy Church. During the feast of the holy King Louis, on the 25th of August 1676 and the previous day, I was often internally moved and I was moved to pray in this way: "Hurry, and commit yourself to praying, because it's time already." As if already some conflict or assault was impending or happening or imminent. It seemed that my spirit should persevere for so long in prayer, as long as that conflict or assault would last. And afterwards I understood, that our army had lost the conflict with the loss of so many soldiers and illustrious men, as I believe, at the same time that my spirit was so insistently internally moved, and was instigated to pray.

Your Reverence believed that if that city had been occupied, it would go to the Spaniards, but it seemed clearly to me to be the contrary. For in my depths there was some indication that that rumour was false. Most beloved Father, no wonder that the Beloved allows our side to be defeated! For how long do our people cling to and support that impious nation and draw down upon them and their country the wrath and indignation of God.

For many years I have seen in the spirit, that God in a wonderful manner disapproves of that union and agreement with the Dutch<sup>48</sup>, and looks upon it

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47 I.e. the spirit.

48 Probably Maria refers to the Quadruple Alliance of 1673.

[35] quamquam innocentes id praecipue debeant luere; quomodo negotium / successit cum Comite Monti, cui etiam tanta comminatio facta est, / quia ipse ad istam unionem et conuentionem plurimum contulit, et / Hollandis suppetias dedit, cum pluribus aliis, qui non impune euadent. / fa xit Deus, ut punitio ipsorum sit tantum temporalis, et animae illorum / [40] seruentur. //

37<sup>v</sup>

[1] Deus ostendit potentiam suam in obsidione Traiectensi, / ne cedat haereticis, Angelis coöperantibus pro Gallis. /

Postea, Dominus Lucas Commissarius regius in nostro exercitu, nos / certiores fecit, quod noster exercitus recesserit a Traiecto, et cum / [5] infamia illam Ciuitatem deserere debuerit; sit Deus ideo benedictus, / o quam mirabiliter Deus ostendit omnipotentiam suam in ista obsidione / et quid possint illi, quorum Deus adiutor est; mira de istis dicuntur, / quae tamen abusive magis tribuuntur generositati, et subtilitati Gallorum / quam cooperationi, et auxilio omnipotentis. /

[10] Inter alia refertur, quod cuniculi a nostris facti ad euertenda fortalitia / Ciuitatis, ante tempus, accenso puluere tormentario, eruperint uersus nos- / trum exercitum, et magnam in eo stragem fecerint, plurimos mactando / nullo damno illato fortalitiis ciuitatis, uel Gallis, in eruptionibus ex / Ciuitate in nos- / tros obsidentes milleni occidebantur in nostro exercitu, / [15] et pauci ex Gal- / lis: Item fortalitia de die per explosionem tormentorum / bellicorum destructa, restaurabantur de nocte, in assultibus, quibus haeretici / aggrediebantur Ciui- / tatem, ad eam intercipiendam, uidebantur quasi quibus- / dam instrumentis omnium colla abscindi; ita ut spargeretur, numquam / simile quid fuisse audi- / tum. /

[20] Existimo Sanctos Angelos hic fuisse in opere, et uelut fideles Jesu mi- / nistros / ista insolita, et mirabilia fuisse operatos et restitisse tot, et [tam...] hor- / rendis / assultibus tam potentis exercitus. /

with hatred, therefore, although they are innocent, they will have to pay for it in particular. How the affair with the Count of Mons has succeeded, to whom also such a threat has been made, because he has contributed very much to that union and agreement and has given support to the Dutch with many others, who will not get away unpunished. May God ensure that their punishment will only be temporal and that their souls will be saved.

37<sup>v</sup>

God shows his power in the occupation of Maastricht, that he doesn't yield for the heretics, while the angels cooperate at the side of the French.

Afterwards, Lord Lucas<sup>49</sup>, the commissioner of the King in our army, informed us that our army had withdrawn from Maastricht, and shamefully had to leave the city.<sup>50</sup> Therefore God be blessed, o how wonderfully has God shown his omnipotence in that occupation and what could they do, whose helper is God! Miraculous things are said of them, that nevertheless unjustly are ascribed more to the generosity and attention of the French than to the cooperation and help of the Almighty.

Among other things it is said that the trenches that our people made to destroy the fortification of the city, have exploded, because the gunpowder was ignited prematurely, to the detriment of our army, and great destruction was caused by it, whereby very many were slaughtered without any damage done to the fortifications of the city or to the French. With the outbreaks from the city against our occupiers thousands of men were killed in our army and only a few of the French. Likewise the fortifications that in the daytime were destroyed by the explosion of the cannons were restored at night. In assaults, in which the heretics attacked the city in order to occupy it, it seemed that with some kind of instrument the necks of all were ripped off, in such a way that it was said that never had anything of that kind been heard before.<sup>51</sup>

I believe that the holy angels were working here, and that as the faithful servants of Jesus they operated these uncommon and miraculous things and resisted so many and so horrendous assaults from such a powerful army.

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49 The full name of this commissioner is not retrieved.

50 See n. 45.

51 It is not clear to what kind of weapon Maria refers here. The description seems to be of the guillotine, but that was not invented before the French Revolution in the 18th century. More likely Maria mentions here a weapon like a musket or bayonet, which was developed in the 17th century and capable of killing many people in a short amount of time.

Iam exerior et uideo fuisse uerum id, quod mihi in fine mensis Aprilis / in spiritu fuit manifestatum, quomodo Deus sese poneret a parte exercitus / [25] Gallorum; quod ideo Rex Galliae esset futurus uictoriosus in omnibus suis / attentatis; non obstante, quod noster exercitus esset facile triplo numerosior / exercitu ipsius, tamen omnis ista multitudo mihi apparebat quasi multitudo / imbecillium muscarum, qui ubique succumberent. /

Veritas istius manifestationis, seu uisionis semper mihi remansit, et inhaesit / [30] sine ulla dubitatione, non obstante quacumque ..... ia apparentia, et / dictis hominum ....redo Reuerentiam Vestram adhuc me..... um quae de illis tunc / Reuerenti ae Vestrae di..... quam cum magna cauti[one] et uerecundia; quia Reuerntia Vestra / praesefe ..... splicetiam, inhibendo mihi, ne orarem; sed frustra est inhibitio / humana, quando Deus iubet, et ipsemet iussa operatur et exequitur in / [35] anima, et cum anima; arcana, dispositiones, et iudicia Dei sunt mirabilia, et / [ing]eniis humanis abscondita, ideo illa oportet uenerari, et adorari.

Haec scrip[sit] / ..... Augusti 1676 //

38r

[1] Aduertentia circa ea quae transacta sunt in Venerabili Matre Maria / a Sancta Theresia tertiaria Ordinis fratrum Beatissimae Virginis Mariae de monte Carmelo / tempore belli Gallici in Hollandia anno 1672 et sequentibus. /

Dum Rex Galliae maximo congregato exercitu Hollandiam inuaderet animo (ut pie credere / [5] licet) illam totaliter occupandi, et ad gremium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae reducendi, ualde frequen- / ter Venerabilis haec mater Maria a Sancta Theresia mirabiliter acta et directa fuit spiritu orandi / pro bono et optato istius belli successu; qualiter autem spiritus orationis et diuini amoris / in ipsa tunc operatus fuerit, et cum quali fructu, hic consequenter subiiciam ex ipsius / scriptis seorsim tamen a contextu reliquae uitae ipsius, ne forte aliquibus displaceant, et / [10] nimiae uariorum Criisi exponantur, quae an a diuino spiritu processerint nec ne, aliorum / quorum est similia examinare, et

Yet I experience and see that it was true, what was shown to me in the spirit at the end of the month of April, how God had placed himself on the side of the army of the French. That meant therefore that the King of France would be victorious in all his efforts, notwithstanding that our army was easily three times as numerous as his army. Nevertheless all that multitude appeared to me as a multitude of weak flies, that would succumb no matter where.

The truth of that revelation or vision has always stayed with me and stuck with me without any doubt, notwithstanding some ... appearance and the talk of men ... Your Reverence yet me ... that about these things then Your Reverence ... that with great caution and respect, because Your Reverence ... preventing me from praying. But human preventing is in vain when God commands and when He himself operates and carries out what he has commanded in the soul and with the soul. The secrets, dispositions and judgements of God are miraculous and hidden for human understanding. That is why they are to be venerated and adored.

She wrote these things on ... August 1676.

### 38r

Some remarks about the things that have come to pass in the Venerable Mother Maria of St. Teresa of the third order of the friars of the blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, at the time of the French War in Holland in the year 1672 and in the following years.<sup>52</sup>

When the King of France had gathered a very large army and invaded Holland with the plan (as one might piously believe) to occupy it completely and to lead it back to the womb of the holy Roman Church, very frequently this mother Maria of St. Teresa was miraculously driven and led by the spirit of praying for the good and desired success of that war. However, how the spirit of prayer and of divine love worked in her and with what fruit, I will explain here logically from her writings, but separated from the context of her life, so that it will not displease some people too much and<sup>53</sup> ... and whether these things come forth from a divine spirit or not, I leave it up to others who are capable of

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52 This is originally the beginning of the entire text, where Michael introduces Maria Petyt and the letters that she has written about the Dutch War. He begins here first with a short introduction in which he personally addresses the readers.

53 See article of Esther van de Vate, 92-118.

ponderare iudicio reliquo; referam tamen illa, ea / sinceritate, qua ab ipsa scripta sunt, et mihi concredita. /

Dilectus ei indicat Regem Galliae sibi facere rem gratum inuadendo Hollandiam / promittit uictoriam, et uult ut ipsa eum iuuet, uidetur Deus Hispanis minari / [15] quia iuuant haereticos; non tamen Regi, qui cum suo Regno, eius curae committitur. /

Die 3. maii 1672 sub oratione uespertina uidebatur Dilectus mihi significare, quod Rex Galliae / ipsi praestaret rem gratam inuadendo Hollandiam, cui etiam addicebat uictoriam. Dilectus mandabat / mihi, quod debuerim ipsi opitulari per orationes, et hoc sensu esse coadiutrix, et compugnatrix in ipsius / exercitu. /

[20] Verum Hispanis uidebantur fieri comminationes, eo quod Dilecto multum displicerent propter assiste.... / et copias auxiliares, quas praestant Hollandis, per quas quodam modo conant..... in....di..... ne Hollan..... / reducat ad fidem Catholicam, sed uidebatur quod displicentia et com..... Dilecti non .....esse.... / praecise contra Regem aut Reginam, sed contra aliquos eorum consiliarios ..... inistro.... quia Reg..... / non uidebatur bene de rebus informata; ideo commendabat mihi Dilectus uti uidebatur.... / [25] ut in meam curam susciperem iuuenem Regi, et eius regnum, ut illud seruarem illesum..... / qualem finem spiritus amoris de nouo accipiebat nouum accessum zelum et consipientam / ..... ut hunc iuuans ..... /

(.....) /

Die 4 dicti mensis renouabatur hic spiritus ..... / [30] ..... //

38v

[1] Dilectus se ei exhibet laetabundum de instante occupatione Hollandiae, ostendit ei / feruorem nouorum Catholicorum et regnum suum dicit / etiam esse ipsius. /

Dilectus communiter et familiariter mecum agendo et conuersando, uidebatur inter / [5] alia ostendere magnam laetitiam, gaudium et iucunditatem, eo

examining and weighing such things. I just refer to those things with the same sincerity in which they were written by her and entrusted on me.<sup>54</sup>

The Beloved informs her that the King of France does something that pleases Him by invading Holland. He promises the victory and wants her to help Him. God seems to threaten the Spaniards, because they help the heretics, yet not the King, whom with his kingdom is entrusted to her care.

On the 3rd of May 1672 during Vespers the Beloved seemed to indicate to me, that the King of France did a pleasing thing to Him by invading Holland, and He even promised him the victory. The Beloved charged me to help him by my prayers and to be in that sense as a helper and ally in his army.

But the Spaniards seemed to be threatened, because they displeased the Beloved very much due to the assistance ... and auxiliaries, which they have given to the Dutch, by which they tried in some way ... Holland ... was led back to the catholic faith, but it seemed that the displeasure and ... of the Beloved not ... was ... straight against the King or Queen<sup>55</sup>, but against some of their allies ... because ... seemed to be not well informed about things. Therefore the Beloved commanded me as it seemed ... that I should take care of the youth for the King<sup>56</sup> and of his kingdom, so that I would preserve it ... to such a purpose the spirit of love received anew access, zeal and wisdom ...

...

On the 4th day of that month this spirit was renewed ...

38v

The Beloved manifests himself to her rejoicing in the imminent occupation of Holland; he shows her the zeal of the new Catholics and says that his kingdom is also hers.

The Beloved, commonly and familiarly speaking and interacting with me seemed among other things to show me his great joy, happiness and rejoicing,

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54 From the beginning of this fol.38r until here it is Michael of St. Augustine who addresses the readers, from here on it is Maria again who writes her letters to Michael. Only the summarising parts are from Michael.

55 Maria refers to the King and Queen of Spain.

56 Charles II was born in 1661 and suffered from physical and mental disabilities.

quod iam tempus aduenisset quo Hollandia / fieret Catholica; sicut aliquis, qui uni suo confidenti refert, et notum facit suum instantem honorem / et gloriam, quam ibi adepturus est per lucrum, et conuersionem animarum, quasi ad hoc anhelaret, ut / ibi uelut rex constituatur in plena possessione regni sui. /

Ipse mihi proponebat feruorem et sinceritatem, qua ibidem noui Catholici, ipsi seruiant, et confite- / [10] buntur nomen sanctum eius: deinde uidebatur mihi dicere, regnum meum erit etiam regnum tuum / meus honor erit etiam tuus, mea gloria tua gloria. /

Animatur ut iuuat Exercitum Gallorum et animat ad pugnandum pure pro fide / et fertur erga illos spiritu amoris. /

Per hanc familiarem cum Dilecto Conuersionem magis in corde meo accendebatur ignis diuini / [15] amoris cum zelosis et feruentibus desideriis et affectibus ad iuuandum exercitum Gallorum eosque exci- / tandos et animandos ad zelotypum zelum pure et simpliciter praeliandi et pugnandi pro fide. /

Hic ignis amoris agit et impellit spiritum amoris in praedicto exercitu, nunc apud efficiarios, nunc / ad gregarios milites ad eos extimulandos, animandos et confortandos in amore Christi, ut corpus animam / ..... afferant et exponant ad obsequium Jesu; quo sic eum iuuent ponere in solio regni sui, profli- / [20] ..... et incedit... endo expellendo, et delendo omnes eius inimicos: zelosi affectus quibus spiritus / amoris hic occupatur sunt magni et singulares, attamen cum bono ordine, et bene regulati. /

Deus uult ab ipsa orari pro Rege Galliae cuius mala uita ei manifestatur, et / quantus illi Deus sit offensus; orat pro eo cum spe exauditionis. /

Feria 2 Pentecostes 1670 existens in oratione intelligebam deum uelle orari pro Rege Galliae / [25] ..... to sum....per tangebar in corde meo ut pro illo orarem



because the time had already come that Holland would become Catholic. Like someone who tells and notifies his imminent honour and glory to a confidant, which He will acquire there by the winning and converting of souls, as if He was yearning to be constituted as King in full possession of his kingdom.<sup>57</sup>

He put me in mind of the enthusiasm and sincerity with which the new Catholics there<sup>58</sup> would serve him and would confess His holy name. Then He seemed to say to me: "My kingdom will be also your kingdom and my honour will be also yours and my glory your glory."

She is animated to help the King of the French and she animates them to fight purely for faith and she is driven towards them by the spirit of love.

By this familiar interaction with the Beloved a fire of divine love was ignited more in my heart with zealous and fervent desires and affections to help the army of the French and to encourage and animate them to a zealous zeal purely and simply to fight and battle for faith.<sup>59</sup>

This fire of love leads and impels the spirit of love in the aforementioned army, sometimes with the executive officers, then again with the ordinary soldiers, to stimulate them and animate and comfort them in the love of Christ, so that they bring body and soul ... and expose them to the obedience of Jesus, in which way they help to place Him on the throne of his kingdom, defeating, ... expelling and destroying all his enemies. The zealous affects by which the spirit of love is occupied are great and singular, nevertheless in good order and well regulated.

God wants her to pray for the King of France whose bad life is shown to her, and how God is offended by him. She prays for him with the hope of being heard.<sup>60</sup>

On the second day of Pentecost 1670 while I was in prayer I understood that God wanted me to pray for the King of France ... I am ... I was touched in my

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57 This seems to be the main argument why Maria Petyt believes that the Beloved chooses the side of the French, namely so as to help Him recapturing his Kingdom in Holland.

58 I.e. in Holland.

59 Explicitly Maria states here that she wants this war to be purely fought with motives of faith and not with hate or bloodlust.

60 Here Michael inserts a fragment of a letter written on the second day of Pentecost, 1670. This day Maria understood that God wanted her to pray for Louis XIV.

etiam cum lacrimis quatenus de- / ..... mala et scandalosa uita et perueniat.....  
 ueram et ....am uitae emendationem mihi / ..... et ... ..... quod ipse causat..... /  
 (.....)//

## 39r

[1] anima a Dilecto commendatur, ut pro illa orem, hoc subito et quasi in instanti apprehendit meum cor / animum et affectum, instar scintillae ignis in fomite, et manet ibi scintillare, nec extinguitur; quod dum per- / cipio, sum quasi certa, quod ista sit mihi data, et pertinebit ad me. /

Die 4 maii 1672 renouabatur mihi memoria, quod a duobus annis uel circiter Dilectum ualde instan- / [5] ter rogauerim pro Rege Galliae, quando tam male uiuebat, et postulabam a Dilecto hanc animam, ut illam mihi / uellet donare, quam ipse mihi etiam promittebat; et de facto mihi dabat: atque intelligebam, quod praesens ipsius / bonus zelus instar seminis seu scintillae, iam in corde ipsius caeperit scintillare et operari. /

Orans Jesum ut benedicat exercitui Gallorum iubetur illi etiam dare benedictionem / ut sponsa et compar Jesu: materno corde est pro illis sollicita, et utitur ad hoc / [10] obsequio Angelorum. /

Quando semel Dilectus meus ualde familiariter mecum agebat sicut amantissimus sponsus cum sua / charissima sponsa, multa et multiplicia ad ipsum habebam alloquia, quae omnia annotare est mihi impossibile. / Inter alia ipsum orabam, ut exercitui Gallorum uellet dare suam benedictionem; et ipse uicissim mihi dicebat / Da tu etiam illis tuam benedictionem, quia tu es consors mea, et uolo tibi iuxta me facere istum honorem: tunc / [15] dicebam cum Apostolo Petro; Dilecte in uerbo tuo id faciam et illis benedicebam in hunc modum omnipotentia / patris, sapientia filii et amor spiritus sancti sit uobiscum ad superandos ecclesiae hostes, amen. /

Die 26 maii 1672 et diebus praecedentibus, fruebar subinde intima tranquillitate, subinde etiam ..... / spiritu orandi, cum libero accessu et confidentia ad Dilectum quasi materno corde occupata .... / exercitu Regis Galliae, ne ipsis deficiunt necessaria uel animi ad persequendum, et prospere exequendum id

heart to pray for him even with tears, in as far as ... the bad and scandalous life ... would come to ... an improvement of life for me ... and that he causes ...

...

### 39r

The soul is commanded by the Beloved to pray for those things. Straightway and as if at that instant my heart gained courage and feeling, like a spark in the fireplace, that remains shining and does not go out: While I perceive that I am nearly certain that this is given to me and will affect me.

On the 4th of May 1672 my memory was renewed, that for about two or three years I have prayed to the Beloved very urgently for the King of France, when he lived so badly, and I commended that soul to my Beloved, so that he would want to grant to me what he himself promised me. And in fact he gave it to me. And I understood that there was fine zeal in him like a seed or a spark, that already began to glow and operate in his heart.

While praying to Jesus that He might bless the French army she is commanded to give them also her blessing as the bride and equal of Jesus. With a maternal heart she is concerned about them and hence she uses the obedience of the angels.

When once my Beloved spoke very familiarly with me like a most loving bridegroom with his dearest bride, I had many and varied conversations with him, of which it is impossible for me to write them all down. Among other things I prayed to him that he might give the army of the French his blessing. And he in turn said to me: "You give them your blessing, because you are my equal, and I want you to be with me in making that honour." Then I said with the Apostle Peter: "Beloved, on your word I will do that".<sup>61</sup> And I blessed them in this way: "The omnipotence of the Father, the wisdom of the Son and the love of the Holy Spirit be with you so as to overcome the enemies of the Church. Amen."<sup>62</sup>

On the 26th of May 1672 and the previous days, I enjoyed then an intimate tranquillity, then also ... the spirit of praying, with free access and confidence to the Beloved, as with a motherly heart concerned ... about the army of the King of France, so that they might not lack the necessary things or the courage to persevere and to bring to a successful end what they already had begun to

61 Cf. Mt. 14,28.

62 Unknown blessing.

quod / [20] iam aggredi coeperant in Hollandia: ad quod utebar obsequiis Sanctorum Angelorum accepta ad hoc fiducia, / et certa confidentia, etenim spiritus amoris manet ad hoc stabiliter inclinatus, ut pro ipsis sit sollicitus / pro illis oret etc eo quod id adeo concernat maiorem Dilecti mei honorem, gloriam et beneplacitum ..... / salutem plurimam animarum. /

Videtur sibi esse grauida omnibus animabus in Hollandia conuertendis quas / [25] quasi a Dilecto concepit, ut sit illarum mater sicut ipse est Pater, quas Christo / parturit materno affectu distribuendo illis dona gratiarum. /

Postridie Ssmae Trinitatis 1672 uidebatur mihi, quod essem quasi spiritualiter impregnata orbis animabus / in Hollandia ad fidem Catholicam conuertendis uidebatur omnes illas in corde meo habere conclusas, et quod hoc / sensu illas ut fetus spirituales a Diuino amatore meo concepissem, et ipse me uellet facere spiritualem .... / [30] matrem sicut ipse erat earum Pater. /

Confirmatio uidebatur iterum esse renouata quod essem consors Dilecti, et de facto haberem .... haer..... / et praetenerum affectum erga omnes istas animas ----- ut eas Gro..... / amoris erat ualde fluidus amabilis ..... et uigorousus in operando .....ebantur ex..... / ...mae in ..... est ab animis praeferrem ..... / [35] Sentiebam quasi mihi dari confidentiam a Dilecto ..... perire diuinos ..... / domum fidei et alia dona spiritus sancti pro libitu distribuenda infidelibu..... / decreuerat illuminare dono et lumine toriae fidei; sed illud opus non ..... / amabilem in auxilium, seu potius ut ipsa dignaretur ista dona distribue..... / ut sic omni optatum melius sortinentur effectum, utpote cum hoc..... / [40] cui ego uelut eius ancilla illas animas adferrem. /

Hoc procedit cum mire amicabile confidentia uiua spe ..... / [di]gnatio sit a ..... //

### 39v

[1] Acta spiritu amoris confidenter agit cum Dilecto ut eius consors de conuersione animarum / istarum, ut se sponte subdant Regi Galliae, ut mittantur operarii boni, occupatur circa / illas, ut uera mater, ut pariat, nutriat etc. Dilecto eam ad hoc animante. /

attack in Holland. Thereto I used the obedience of the holy angels, the faith that I had received up to now and the certain confidence, for the spirit of love remains stably inclined towards this, so that there is concern about them and prayer for them etc., because it concerns so much the greater honour of the Beloved, his glory and pleasure ... the salvation of very many souls.

It seems to her that she is pregnant with every soul in Holland in order to convert them, whom she as it were has conceived of the Beloved, so that she is their mother like He is their Father, and to whom she has given birth with a maternal affection while bestowing on them the gifts of grace.

The day after the feast of the Holy Trinity<sup>63</sup> 1672 it seemed to me that I was as it were spiritually impregnated so that I might convert all parentless souls in Holland to the catholic faith, and it seemed that I had all of them in my heart, and that with this feeling I had conceived them like spiritual offspring of the divine lover, and that He wanted to make me their spiritual ... mother like He was their Father.

The confirmation seemed to be renewed again, that I was the companion of the Beloved and that I in fact had ... and a tender feeling towards all those souls ... of love was very fluid, loving ... and vigorous in operating ...

I felt like some confidence was given to me by the Beloved ... the divine ... the house of faith and other gifts of the holy spirit to be freely distributed among the unbelievers ... decreased to illuminate with the gift and light of ... the victory of faith. But that work not ... loving to the help, or better so that she is deemed worthy to distribute those gifts ... so that they sort out the effect wished by all, as with this ... to whom I bring those souls like his servant. This proceeds with an extraordinary, loving confidence, with vivid hope ...

### 39v

After the spirit of love had spoken she speaks confidently with the Beloved as his companion about the conversion of those souls, so that they voluntarily surrender to the King of France, so that good workers are sent. She is concerned about them, like a real mother, to give birth to them, to feed them etc., while the Beloved enlivens her in this.

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63 I.e. the 12th of June 1672.

Spiritus amoris tunc miscet cum Dilecto multa et sponsali confidentia plena colloquia uelut cum suo / [5] consorte, ut omnia necessaria ordinentur et disponantur pro istis apparenter conuersis et conuertendis / animabus uerbi gratia ut cito conterantur et emolliantur, nec maneant obstinatae, et obduratae, ut se facilius / subiiciant Regi Galliae, ne alioqui tam multi in sua infidelitate et erroribus moriantur etc. /

Item ut illi complaceat mittere idoneos et zelosos operarios in hanc suam uineam, quos donis spiritus sancti / decorare et aptare dignetur ut pauco tempore multa opera praestent et copiosos fructus adferant, tunc / [10] nihil uideatur mihi recusari; sed omnia ad uotum concedi, nam ipsemet Dilectus meus excitat in me haec / zelosa, blandientia seu urgentia desideria, plena materna sollicitudine et dilectione, ut sic eum amorose / cogam prouidere de omnibus ad animas istas spiritualiter pariendas et ad salutem educandas necessariis: ad / hoc dat mihi Dilectus persuauem confidentiam seu potius ipse me ad hoc uidetur allicere ut materno meo corde / et erga istas animas affectui dem libertatem. /

[15] Quando spiritus amoris hoc percipit, facit maternum cor quasi dilatari cum suauis amicitate et amore / easdem quasi supercomprehendendo et superamplectendo ac cum aliqua diuina uirtute attractiua (quae / tunc ....i conceditur) easdem sic congregando et concludendo in meo amantissimo corde, cum intentione zelo / .....siterio illis incubandi, eas calefaciendi, enutriendi et praeseruandi ab omnibus earum salutem impe- / dientibus uel retardantibus eodem modo sicut gallina cum pullis suis, tunc eius spiritus ueraciter / [20] habet indolem et inclinationes gallinae erga pullos suos. /

Agitur efficaci spiritu orandi pro conuersione peccatorum et Rege Galliae, Dilectum / quasi urgendo et cogendo et uidetur Dilectus correspondere uotis. /

Spiritus orandi plerumque est ualde uigorosus et efficax tam pro conuersione animarum, quam pro adiutorio / Regis Galliae, spiritus subinde habet quasi fortem, et efficacem, attractionem et impulsionem usque in cor diuinum /

The spirit of love exchanges then with the Beloved many conversations full of bridal confidence like as if to his companion, so that all necessary things are ordered and disposed for those who are apparently converted and for the souls who must be converted, e.g. that they might be quickly exhausted and weakened and not remain obstinate and persistent, that they might easily submit to the King of France and that not so many might die in their infidelity and errors etc.<sup>64</sup>

Likewise it pleases Him to send suitable and zealous workers to this vineyard, whom he deems worthy of decorating and honoring with the gifts of the holy spirit, so that they in no time do many works and bring forth copious fruits.<sup>65</sup> Then nothing seems to be refused to me, but all is granted to me in accordance with my prayer. For my Beloved himself arouses in me these zealous, charming or urgent desires, full of maternal concern and love, so that I urge them lovingly to take care of all things necessary so as to give birth to those souls spiritually and to nurture them to their salvation. To this end the Beloved gives me a pleasant confidence or rather He seems to attract me so that I give free rein to my maternal heart and affection towards those souls.

When the spirit of love perceives this he causes my maternal heart to be extended with pleasant friendship and love, embracing and surrounding them and by some divine attracting power (which then ... was permitted) and gathering and enclosing them in my very loving heart, with the intention, zeal ... to watch over them, to warm them, to nourish them and to protect them against all that might hinder or retard their salvation like a hen with her chicks. Then of course his spirit has truly the natural ability and inclination of a hen towards her chickens.<sup>66</sup>

She is led by a strong spirit of praying for the conversion of the sinners and for the King of France, as it were urging and forcing the Beloved, and the Beloved seems to answer her prayers.

The spirit of praying is mostly very vigorous and strong both for the conversion of souls and for the help of the King of France. The spirit has as it were a strong and powerful attraction and impulse to the divine heart. This happens through

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64 It should be noted that Maria Petyt is not so much praying against the Spanish soldiers and against the people in Holland, but is instead praying for the conversion of those souls, to bring them back to what she sees as the true Catholic Church. She even hopes that they will not die before being converted.

65 Cf. Mt. 9,37-38; 20,1-16; Lc.10,2.

66 Cf. Mt. 23,37; Lc. 13,34.

[25] hoc fit per aggressiuum, fortem, uigerosum amorem, qui ualde subtiliter et spiritualiter operatur in fundo animae / magis infusus quam ipsemet operatiuus. /

Est ipsemet ignis amoris, qui tunc ardet in fundo, et hanc attractionem seu appressionem facit usque in cor diuinum / tunc est in anima praemagna propinquitas et intima perceptio seu experientia diuinae praesentiae intus / in me absque ullo medio, quasi apprimendo etc. /

[30] ..... o hoc sit tunc percipere et experiri seu intime comperire licet aliquis diuinae praesentiae effectus / ..... ut quas, correspondet isti expressioni animae uotis annuendo ac se ad animam inclinando, quasi ipsi / ..... mplectendo, et insinuando per concordiam mutuorum desideriorum, per conuenientiam suam / .....tum. /

.....liquo tempore ..... in absorptione et unione cum Deo attamen subinde ex /

[35] .....dilectione euigilando iterum incipit se occupare in ista uigilosa appressio do- /

.....liquum ad quiescendum in se in puria solitudine spiritus et tranquillitate / .....loquando erinttiterius spiritum id locarivota ubi est necessitas spiri- / .....rtum de illa ....xit ad uarios effectus / .....uc alios in me habet effectus, ..o quod speciali uirtute ac uehementia / [40] .....oca procul rer....a uerbi gratia ad praedictum exercitum Gallorum uel alio / ..... animarum spiritus ..... /

(.....) //

#### 40r

[1] Hoc agitur, uel fit in me non per modum naturalium cogitationum uel imaginationum, sed quasi spiritus eo trans- / portaretur per impulsus amoris eodem modo, sicut glans ferrea e tormento bellico propellitur uel ignis et pulueris / tormentarii ad loca remota, et ibi operatur miris et peregrinis effectus, nam eodem modo spiritus tunc per / uolentiam extraordinarii ignis amoris, et diuinae uirtutis expellitur, seu emittitur; quae diuina spiritus comitatur / [5] spiritum in operando, quasi unanimiter simul cum spiritu cooperando; et quidquid, tunc spiritus attingit uel / ubicumque appropinquat ibi quasi exit ab ipso quaedam uirtus se ipsam communicando. /

Hanc experientiam et deprehensionem quomodo haec uirtus exeat ex spiritu, et quomodo ipse sese communicet, non possum / aliter explicare; nisi quod experior, quod quasi quaedam uirtus de me exeat, quocumque tunc spiritus aduenerit uel / quidquid attingerit, quo tempore benedicerem cum Jesu, quando illa mulier ipsum tetigerat, quis me tetigit; quia uirtus / [10] de me exiuit. /



an aggressive, strong, vigorous love, that operates very subtly and spiritually in the depths of my soul, more infused than self operated. It is the fire of love itself, that burns then in the depths of my being, and causes this attraction towards or pressure upon the divine heart. Then there is in the soul a very great proximity to and intimate perception of the divine presence inside me, without any medium, as it were impressed in me etc.

... this is then to perceive and experience or intimately sense, although some effect of the divine presence ... corresponds with that expression of the soul that grants the prayers and inclines to the soul, as it were him ... and penetrating through the concord of mutual desires, through his agreement ...

... some time ... in the absorption and union with God still immediately out ...

... by love awakened begins again to occupy itself in that vigorous pressure ...

... to the rest in itself in pure solitude of spirit and tranquility ...

...

#### 40r

This is done or happens in me not in a natural way of thoughts and imaginations, but as if the spirit is transported there by an impulse of love in the same way as a iron bullet is shot out of a cannon by the power of fire and gunpowder to faraway places, and there miraculous and strange effects are brought about. For in the same way the spirit then, by the violence of an extraordinary fire of love and of divine virtue, is poured out and sent forth. That divine spirit accompanies the spirit in operating, as it were unanimously working at the same time with the spirit. And whatever the spirit then accomplishes or approaches, there, as it were, some power comes out of it that communicates itself.

This experience and grasping how this power comes out of the spirit and how it communicates itself I cannot explain otherwise. Except that I experience that as it were some power comes out of me, and wherever then the spirit arrives or whatever it touches, at that same time I blessed with Jesus, as when that woman had touched Him: "Who has touched me, because a power has come out of me."<sup>67</sup>

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67 Cf. Mc. 5,30; Lc. 8,45-46.

Dilectus ponit Regem Galliae in eius corde tamquam filium; Rex Hispaniae quasi alienatus / pro aliquo tempore, et eius regnum quasi obscuratum in eius animo, postea Rex Hispaniarum / iterum intromissus in eius corde ambo sustunt et quasi gemini eius filii. /

Dilectus intromisit Regem Galliae in corde meo et spiritus amoris aliquando habet multa agenda cum illo / [15] uelut cum meo filio, quae confido per Christum in Christo rege misse. /

Rex Hispaniarum circiter duobus mensibus fuit alienatus a meo spiritu amoris et eius regnum aliquantulum / obtenebratum in animo meo; quod me parum mouebat, et sentiebam compassionem cum illo, quia timebam ... esse / signum alicuius displicentiae dei uel mali successus, uel futurae punitionis regno eius imminenti ... / [u]erum necdum in uno uel in alio sum omnino certificata, sed intilenis rex uidetur iterum intromissus .. cor. mea / [20] [e]t spiritus amoris uidetur hos duos reges ualde amicabiliter circumplecti, ut eos simula..... et ..... / ...uicem iuuat; sed quando et quo modo haec unio in ipsis fiat necdum uideo, nec intelligo ambo sunt aequae / suauis et amabiles in mente mea, quasi duo gemini filii, qui sunt mei et ad me pertinent. /

Isti modi orandi et operandi sicut cum collusione partis sens.....ae suo directione / spiritus secundum lumen diuinum quo fit, ut ubique occurrat ... diuinae essentiae /

[25] Omnes hi modi orandi et operandi spiritus amoris fiunt cum uiuacitate et cooperatiue ...entiarum sensi / ...ruarum et simul rationalium; attamen illae potentiae non operantur plus uel uiuacius quam spiritus eorum / [o]bsequio iudicant; spiritus manet suprema .., illas impediendo et dirigendo secundum exigentiam et / [p]lacitum; unde omnes animae potentiae manent [ben]e ordinatae et regulatae dilata ..ndordinatione ad spiritum / principalem et quo spiritus subiectione erga Deum uel sub nimirum uotionae directione etc. diuinae ..... / [30] in anima lucentis. / [Ab]iecta, quae tunc animae proponuntur uerbi gratia ambo illi reges, illorum regnum exercitum ..... / [s]ensibilia corpora et in speciem multiplicia uerumtamen .....ndo spiritus sic est ..... / diuino lumine, tunc statim ... /

(.....)//

The Beloved places the King of France in her heart like a son. The King of Spain seems to be alienated for some time, and his kingdom is as it were obscured in her mind. Then the King of the Spaniards is let in to her heart again, and both Kings are lifted up and are like her twin sons.

The Beloved sends the King of France into my heart and the spirit of love sometimes has many things to do with him like with my son. I trust that they have been sent to the King through Christ and in Christ. The King of the Spaniards has been about two months alienated from my spirit of love and his kingdom was somewhat obscured in my mind. That did move me a little, and I felt compassion for him, because I feared ... to be a sign of some displeasure of God or of a bad outcome or future punishment that threatened his kingdom ... but I am not yet totally assured of the one or the other, but ... the King seems to be sent in again ... my heart ... and the spirit of love seems to embrace those two Kings in a very friendly way, so that ... them ... and one another... helps. But when and how this union in them will happen I do not see nor understand. Both are equally pleasant and friendly in my mind, like two twin sons, who are mine and belong to me.<sup>68</sup>

Those ways of praying and operating like with the collusion of a part ... in his direction, the spirit according to the divine light, by which it happens that everywhere occurred ... to the divine essence.

All these ways of praying and of operating of the spirit of love happen with vivacity and cooperatively ... and at the same time rational. Nevertheless those powers do not work more or more vividly than the spirit of them ... The spirit remains supreme ..., impeding them and directing them according to the demand and the agreement. Therefore all powers of the souls remain well ordered and regulated ... to the principal spirit and with which the spirit by the subjection to God or under ... direction etc., divine ... in the soul of the one who enlightens

...

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68 It is clear that she longs for some kind of union between the two Kings of France and Spain. She wants them both on the same side, to strive together for the Kingdom of God on earth.

## 40v

[1] Accipit spiritum orandi adhuc nobiliorem a diuino spiritu, qui simul cum / eius spiritu orat modo inenarrabili. /

Sabbato post festum Sanctissimi Sacramenti, accepi spiritum orandi ualde diuersum a praecedenti; etc. / meo iudicio est multo nobilior, sublimior, et perfectior, nec etiam minus efficax, immo potius / [5] efficacior, eo quod diuinus spiritus meo spiritui unitus, hanc orationem ipsemet operatur, et fere omnia / in me, mecum et per me faciat. /

Etenim diuinus spiritus uidetur me tunc possidere, in me uiuere, et per me orare modo ineffabili, tunc / uenio in notitiam istius quod ait Apostolus de oratione diuini spiritus in nobis, ipse spiritus postulat in nobis / gemitibus inenarrabilibus; per quod Apostolus non uult dicere uel significare, quod spiritus gemebunde / [10] oret uel quod illius gemitus sint tam multiplices, ut sint innumerabiles, et ineffabiles, sed uult dicere, quod / modus orationis, quo spiritus in nobis orat, sit inenarrabilis. /

Atque hoc uerum est, quia quando me deprehendebam a spiritu Dei sic possessam, singulariter coram, directam / et intime cum illo unitam, et quod diuinus spiritus in hac cum meo spiritu unione inciperet orare, raro etc. / numquam antea probato modo, tunc aperte intelligebam, quod hi essent gemitus inenarrabiles spiritus, de / [15] quibus loquitur Apostolus. /

Dictus modus orandi fit per eleuationem spiritus ante faciem Dei; tunc / spiritus Dei unitus spiritui eius orat pro Rege Galliae quem spirituali / modo uidet in Deo, ut in speculo. /

O qu..... ille modus orandi, quid adferam, ut de illo aliquid dicam Reuerentiae Vestrae faciam quod potero / ..... to committam ....ta oratio fiebat in aliqua ..ertatione spiritus, semel sub recitatione ho- / [20] .....faceram communionem; uidebatur mihi quod in hac eleuatione spiritus starem ante / faciem Dei ..... erius operationis, aut perceptionis animae, nisi uisionis seu intuitus Dei; hoc / uiuere hoc int..... amare et orare modo ineffabili; et spiritus Dei meo spiritui unitus id in me / faciebat se illud .....ere amare, orare seu ipse aspicebat, amabat et orabat. /

40v

She receives from the divine spirit a spirit of prayer that is more noble, that prays together with her spirit in an ineffable way.

On Saturday after the feast of the holy Sacrament<sup>69</sup> I received a spirit of praying very different from the previous etc. In my opinion it is much more noble, sublime and perfect and not less efficient, on the contrary rather more efficient, because the divine spirit is united with my spirit. He himself operates this prayer and does almost everything in me, with me and through me.

And indeed the divine spirit seems to possess me then, and live in me and pray through me in an ineffable way. Then I become known by what the Apostle said about the prayer of the divine spirit in us: "The spirit himself intercedes in us with ineffable sighs."<sup>70</sup> With that the Apostle does not want to say or signify that the spirit prays sighing or that his sighs are so multiple that they are uncountable and ineffable, but he wants to say that the way of praying, with which the spirit prays in us, is ineffable.

And this is true, for when I found myself possessed by the spirit of God, singularly directed to Him and intimately united with him, and that the divine spirit in that union with my spirit began to pray, in a strange etc, and never before experienced way, then I understood clearly that these were the ineffable sighs of the spirit, of which the Apostle speaks.

The aforementioned way of praying happens by the elevation of the spirit before the countenance of God. Then the spirit of God united with her spirit prays for the King of France, whom she sees in a spiritual way in God, like in a mirror.

O how ... that way of praying, that I do, so that I may say something about him to Your Reverence, and do whatever I can ... entrust ... prayer happens in some ... of the spirit, once under the recitation of the Hours ... I received communion. It seemed to me that in this elevation of the spirit before the countenance of God ... of the operation or of the perception of the soul, unless of the vision or sight of God. To live that, to ... to love and to pray in an ineffable way. And the spirit of God united with my spirit did that in me that he ... to love, to pray or He saw, loved and prayed.

69 The feast of the holy sacrament was on the Thursday after the feast of the holy Trinity. In 1672 this was on June 16, 1672. The Saturday after that was June 18, 1672.

70 Rom. 8,26.

.....uero eram ad ..... abstracta, et absque imaginationibus omnium quae sunt extra Deum; ego nihil aspi- / [25] .....eram nihil cogni.....i.dium, id pro quo spiritus orabat, erat Rex Galliae, pro adiutoria et assistentia / ....ipsius in sua..... ciene reducendi Hollandiam ad fidem Catholicam; huius rei habebat spiritus / .....ssima.....quam ..... tiam quasi sine corpora, uel imaginaria representatione uel cogitatione / .....quod ..... tua hic non cooperaretur, et consequenter ipsa non haberet corpoream / .....ligu.m seu repraesentat .... imaginariam istius Regis aut alterius rei; sed intellectus passiuus / [30] ..... conuenger.... contemplans et simul ille intellectus passiuus uidebat et / quod spiritus ..... in Deo, in nuditate cogitationum seu imaginationum seu / .....cogitationibus .....non possum .. explicare. / ..... mihi caten.....sicut aliqua .....ea duntur, et uidentur in speculo / ..... per hoc a uisione contemplation Dei medietur aut ullatenus im- / [35] ..... repraesentatio Regis et proposie .....seu interati ipsius erabit omnino / .....erum in diuina essentia .....in speculo manifestatum et reprae- / .....orationem.....gratias dicto Regi conferri / ..... //

## 411

[1] Videbam et percipiebam quod ista oratio haberet magnos effectus, et ui illius isti Regi affluerent multae / gratiae diuina auxilia, et diuinae cooperationes in presequendo et exequendo ipsius proposito et intento; / clare etiam intelligebam quod Deus illi uellet largiri istas gratias, et diuina auxilia subministrare ac ad / intentionem Regis cooperari mediante tali oratione, et non aliter, et quod Deus ad hoc assumeret et elegeret / [5] aliquas paruas et humiles ac simul puras et Deum sincere amantes, ut pro illis orent inter / quas paucas uidebatur sua maiestas me indignam etiam uelle impendere, audere autem dicere quod / Dilectus mea solius opera uel oratione ad hoc uelit uti, uideretur mihi intollerabilis praesumptio, quamquam / interna Dilecti alloquia, amicitia, et exhibitae beneuolentiae aliquid simile uiderentur testare; uerum / hoc satius reiicitur. /

[10] Independentem a relatione aliorum, in Deo intelligit uictorias et prosperitatem / Regis Galliae uarie agitur, ut pro illo oret gratias agat etc. /

Etiam si nullus mihi quidquam diceret de uictoriis, quas reportat Rex Galliae in Hollandia, non ideo / minus scirem; nam habeo de illis quasi spiritualem Echo, et certam cognitionem, quod faciat progressus, et / habeat uictorias, eo quod

... truly I was to ... abstracted, and without imaginations of all things that are outside of God. I saw nothing, thought nothing ... for which the spirit prayed, was the King of France, for the help and assistance ... of him in his ... of leading Holland back to the catholic faith. Of this case the spirit had ... than ... as if without a body or an image, representation or a thought ... that ... this doesn't cooperate and therefore she has no corporeal ... nor represents ... image of that King or of some other thing. But the passive intellect ... contemplating and at the same time that passive intellect saw that the spirit ... in God, in nakedness of thoughts or imaginations or ... with thoughts ... I cannot ... explain.<sup>71</sup>

...

#### 41r

I saw and perceived that that prayer had great effects and by its power many graces flowed to that King, along with divine help and divine cooperation in carrying out his plan and intention. Clearly I understood that God wanted to grant him those graces and provide him the divine help and by such prayer and not otherwise cooperate with the intention of the King and that God for this purpose took and chose some small and humble and at the same time pure and sincerely God-loving women, to pray for them, and among these few His Majesty seemed to want to use me unworthy as I am. But to dare to say that the Beloved only wanted to use my work or prayer alone to this end, it seemed to me an intolerable presumption, although the internal conversation with the Beloved, the friendliness and the demonstrated benevolence seemed to prove something similar. But this should better be rejected.

Independent of the accounts of others she understands in God the victories and prosperity of the King of France. She is led to pray for him, to give thanks etc.

Even if no one had said anything to me about the victories, that the King of France achieves in Holland, then I would not have known it any less. For I have about them as it were a spiritual Echo and a certain awareness, that he makes progress and has victories, because I see in the spirit and feel that God is with him and because the Beloved brings me certainty about them in some spiritual

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<sup>71</sup> Here she speaks about the intellectual prayer which is without her own thoughts, images etc. and yet from the other side, i.e. from the side of the Beloved she receives the prayer for the French King, so it is a passive kind of prayer.

uideam in spiritu, et sentiam quod Deus sit cum illo, et quia Dilectus spiritua-  
li / [15] quodam et intimo modo me de illis reddat certiolem; sicuti dicente  
Apostolo, ipse spiritus testimonum / reddit spiritui nostro quod sumus filii Dei,  
sic etiam diuinus spiritus testimonium perhibet spiritui meo / quod ille Rex  
prosperetur et uictorias reportet de inimicis suis. /

Aliquando etiam aliquod diuinum lumen in spiritu resplendens me excitat  
ad orandum, uel ad .....um / actionem, ut Deum de illa prosperitate et successu  
armorum, laudem, benedicam et glorific..... / [20] ut Regem Deo commen-  
dem. /

Duobus uel tribus diebus, postquam dictus sciendi modus in me fuisset, Di-  
lectus mihi con.... / unum alium, uti mihi uidetur, sicuti antehac descripsi, et  
Reuerentiae Vestrae tradidi, de aliqua uisione in spiritu. /

Conatur explicare quomodo dicta oratio pure fiat in sp[iritu] ..... spiritus /  
Dei ipsi unitus orat, et Deus se ipsum uidet, et amat et .... anima facit /  
[25] per gratiam quod Deus facit ex natura. /

Procul digressa sum ab eo quod caeperam dicere, n. quomodo iam sit spiritus  
orandi diuersus a praecen- / denti, nempe quomodo haec oratio fiat omnino in  
spiritu, sine illa cooperatione potentiarum inferiorum / et sensitiuarum, etiam  
sine perceptione illarum; nam in praedicto aspectu Dei anima est abstracta a  
se ipsa / et est pure spiritus unitus diuino spiritui. /

[30] Est mirabile et uix intelligibile, quomodo dicam me esse unum in Deo,  
et quomodo in hac unio[ne] / Deum uideam; nam nostro modo loquendi, cum  
eo quod uidemus non sumus unum; est aliquid aliud <quod> / uidemus, et  
aliquid aliud quocum sumus unum; nam unum est unum, et aspicere so-  
nat..... / et illud quod aspicitur; uerum .... aliter se rei habet in hac contempla-  
tione..... / spiritus de qua loquor. /

[35] Hoc momento mihi indicit quomodo id sit, et quomodo id possim  
explic[are] ..... / piciat se ipsum cognoscat se ipsum, ac complaceat sibi ipsi  
diligat se ipsu[m] ..... / essentialissime secum et in se ipso unitus et unus est,  
sic etiam ..... /

Anima facta unus spiritus cum Deo ..... / est unum esse, unum operari,  
intelligere ..... //

#### 41V

[1] Eodem modo Deus dat animae per gratiam id quod ipse est per naturam,  
quam diu n. haec unio durat, / ipsa est unus spiritus cum Deo, unum operari,



and intimate way. Like the Apostle said: *“The spirit itself bears witness to our spirit, that we are sons of God.”*<sup>72</sup> So also the divine spirit bears witness to my spirit, that King prospers and obtains victories over his enemies.

Sometimes also some divine light shining in the spirit excites me to pray or to ... action, so that I praise, bless and glorify God for that prosperity and success with weapons ... so that I entrust them to the care of God.

Two or three days after the aforementioned way of praying had been in me, the Beloved ... me some or other, as it seems to me, like I have described before, and have reported to Your Reverence, about some vision in the spirit.

She tries to explain how the aforementioned prayer happens purely in the spirit ... the spirit of God united with her prays and God sees himself and loves and... the soul does by grace what God does by nature.

I have far departed from what I began to say, that is how different this spirit of praying is from the previous, yes how this prayer happens totally in the spirit, without that cooperation of inferior powers and senses, also without the perception of them. For in this sight of God that has been mentioned the soul is abstracted from itself and is purely spirit united with the divine spirit.

It is amazing and hardly intelligible how I can say that I am one in God and how in the union I see God. For in our way of speaking we are not one with what we see. What we see and what we are one with are different. For one is one, and beholding sounds ... and what is beheld. But ... different ... has in this contemplation.... the spirit about which I speak.<sup>73</sup>

This moment he shows me how this is and how I might explain this ... knows himself and pleases himself and loves himself ... very essentially with him and in himself is united and one, also ...

The soul is made one spirit with God ... is one being and one operating, understanding ...

#### 4IV

In the same way God gives to the soul by grace what He is by nature, as long as this union lasts. It is one spirit with God, one operating, one understanding,

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<sup>72</sup> Rom. 8,16.

<sup>73</sup> Clearly language here cannot express exactly the union with God that Maria Petyt has experienced.

unum intelligere, unum uelle, unum diligere / ipsa non nouit differentiam uel distantionem inter ego et meum, omnia plane unum sunt et in uno quae- / cumque cognoscit uel intelligit. /

[5] Quocirca quando ipsa orat, est spiritus Dei qui orat in illa; quando ipsa contemplatur et diligit Deum / est Deus qui se ipsum in illa contemplatur et diligit. /

Hic status unionis in se comprehendit bene aliam puritatem, simplicitatem, intimitatem, et sublimitatem / spiritus, quam praecedens; quando enim tunc spiritus amoris operabatur et dirigebat meas animae potentias / tunc multum cooperabar, licet acta et directa per gratiam, et per ignem amoris; tunc etiam magis perci- / [10] piebam me ipsam, uel aliqua alia, licet tamen in Deo; sed non eram sic plane unum cum Deo, sicut modo / habebam cooperationem simul cum gratia seu spiritu Dei; at iam uideor totaliter esse unum cum Deo, et in / ipsum mutata, spiritus Dei hic fere facit omnia ipsum; sine gustare sine experiri, et sine distinctione, / potentiaram inferiorum et superiorum. /

Quidquid in Deo aspicio, gusto, experior, percipio, id totum est absorptum in unitate diuinae essentiae ipsi... / [15] in hoc statu nullo modo sum idonea ad externam locutionem uel occupationem, sed anima mea tendit ad / summum tranquillitatem, omnes meae potentiae sunt arrestatae et suspensae in Deo, et attractae in sublimi- / tate sp[irit]us, existentes ibi in suo centro, quamdiu hic tractus, seu status unionis durat; quidquid est / extr.... centrum, est mihi taediosum et causat nauseam. /

Dicta oratio diuini spiritus fit sine uerbis, sine instantiis, per aspectum ad Deum / [20] haec oratio est efficacior altera, utraque tamen a Deo datur; neutra est in / hominis potestate. /

Quando hic spiritus orationis in me operatur, tunc haec oratio non fit loquendo, uel per uerba nec / cum blandis instan[t]iis pressionibus etc. sed solummodo, cum uno intuitu ad Deum, et cum ardente amoris / affectu; qui tam su<auis>ter et intime in anima operatur, ut ipsamet uix percipiat; eo quod eius intuitus et / [25] tota attentio sit, adeo arrestata, et fixa in Deo: hoc diligere, hoc aspicere ad Deum, siue hic intuitus, haec / [d]ilectio Dei, notificant Deo, quid ipsa desideret, et postulet, u.g. prosperitatem faelicem progressum / armorum Regis Galliae contra Haereticos in Hollandia, anima scit et intelligit hoc sic esse, ideo in / hoc tranquillo intuitu anima multo plus facit, quam si formaret expressa uerba; nam mihi / uel unus nutus sufficit. /

[30] E[xper]ior quod spiritus multo efficacior oret in hoc tranquillo et amoroso aspectu Dei, quam cum multis / <bla>ndis supplicationibus et

one wanting, one loving. It does not know any difference or distance between I and my, all is clearly one and in that one it knows and understands all.

Therefore when the soul prays it is the spirit of God that prays in it. When it contemplates and loves God, it is God who contemplates and loves himself in the soul.

This state of union comprehends in itself well another purity, simplicity, intimacy and loftiness of the spirit, more than the previous. For when the spirit of love operated and directed the powers of my soul then I cooperated much, although I was led and directed by grace and by the fire of love. Then also I perceived myself more, or something else, although still in God. But I was not so clearly one with God, as if I had now a cooperation at the same time with grace and with the spirit of God. And already I seemed to be totally one with God and changed into Him. The spirit of God now made almost everything Him. Without tasting, without experiencing and without the distinction between inferior and superior powers.

Whatever I behold in God, and taste, experience, perceive, that is totally absorbed in the unity with the divine essence itself ... in this state I am in no way capable of any speaking or occupation outside of Him, but my soul tends to the highest tranquillity, all my powers are resting and residing in God, and are attracted to the sublimity of the spirit, being there in his centre, for as long as this attraction or state of union lasts. Whatever is outside ... the centre is for me disgusting and causes nausea.

The mentioned prayer of the divine spirit happens without words, without intercessions, but through the sight at God. This prayer is more effective than other prayer, although both are given by God. None of them is within human power.

When this spirit of prayer operates in me, then this prayer does not happen in speaking or by words or with sweet intercessions and pressure etc, but only with one beholding of God, and with a burning feeling of love. That operates so sweetly and intimately in my soul, that the soul itself hardly perceives it, because its gaze and total attention is so much held and fixed in God. This loving, this beholding of God, or this look, this love of God, notifies to God, what the soul desires and begs, e.g. prosperity, a happy progress of weapons for the King of France against the heretics in Holland. The soul knows and understands that this is so, therefore in this peaceful sight the soul does much more than if it had formed expressed words. Because for me one gesture is sufficient.

I experience that the spirit prays much more forcefully in this quiet and loving sight of God, than with many sweet prayers and intercessions ... still the

instantiis ..tamen siue unum, siue aliud neuter modus orandi est in mea /  
 .....um uel alium meum uiri..... possum assequi, uel causare etiamsi  
 ad id adhiberem omnem / ..... sed ambo debent mihi concedi utrumque  
 ..... operari spiritus Dei siue eius / ..... loco quando mihi gratiose ..... eo dif-  
 ferentur accommodare / [35] .....quando spiritus et illi locum dando  
 siue uno siue alio modo cum sancta libertate / .....us operari dignatur. /  
 ..... //

## 42r

[1] Redit iterum spiritus orandi in fauorem Regis Galliae, in spiritu / per  
 spiritum, ante faciem Dei, essentiali modo notificand[o] Deo / sua desid-  
 eria etc. /

Die 21 Nouembris 1672, post sacram communionem rediebat spiritus orandi  
 pro / [5] prosperitate armorum Regis Galliae, quando spiritus eleuatur ad  
 contem- / plationem Dei, communiter mihi aduenit spiritus orandi, modo iam  
 saepius dicto, / aliquando diu durat, aliquando tantum ad unum miserere, uel  
 circiter; potest / nominari spiritus passiuae orationis, quae solummodo fit in  
 spiritu, per spiritum in / magna sublimitate et distantia ab omnibus his inferio-  
 ribus. /

[10] In hoc modo orandi numquam sunt cogitationes, uerba, imaginatio-  
 nes, spe- / cies aut formae aliquarum rerum, quas eloqui possumus; spiritus  
 orat non / formando cogitationes; quantum possum assequi, quando spiritus  
 sic stat ante / diuinam faciem, et orat, tunc omnes instantiae, desideria, ap-  
 pressionem, affectionem, / et cognitionem animarum, pro quibus orat, sunt occul-  
 te conclusae, et impercep- / [15] tibiliter operantur in, et per istum aspectum  
 spiritus Deum intuentis, per / quem aspectum anima essentiali modo Deo no-  
 tificat sua desideria, et Deus / illam intelligit sine cogitationibus, uerbis, uel  
 imaginationibus circa illa, pro / quibus orat; quia spiritus tunc stat apertus  
 ante Deum uelut clarum spe- / culum, et etiam omnia, quae Deus actualiter  
 operatur in spiritu, sc. istam / [20] orationem, quae omnia sunt Deo nota, quia  
 actualiter fluunt ex Deo in ani- / mam, et iterum refluent ex anima in ipsum. /

Tunc tantum est unus simplex intuitus animae, seu spiritus ad Deum, et  
 secreta / seu tacita notificatio suorum desideriorum; quod fit cum tanta tran-  
 quillitate / et abstractione in spiritu per spiritum, ut ipsamet uix sciat uel

one or the other, neither way of praying is in my ... or my other ... I can follow or cause even if thereto I applied all ... but both must be granted to me, each of both ... operate the spirit of God or his ... place when to me graciously ... differ to accommodate ... the spirit and giving place to it in one or other way with holy liberty ... deems worthy to operate.<sup>74</sup>

42r

Again<sup>75</sup> the spirit of praying returns in favour of the King of France, in the spirit, through the spirit, before the countenance of God, in an essential way notifying God of his desires.

On the 21th of November 1672 after holy communion the spirit of praying for the prosperity of arms of the King of France returned, when the spirit was elevated to the contemplation of God. In general the spirit of praying comes to me in a way that I have mentioned more often, sometimes lasting for a long time, sometimes only as long as one *Miserere* or thereabout. This can be called the spirit of passive prayer, that happens only in the spirit and through the spirit in a greatly sublime way and distance from all these inferior powers.

In this way of prayer there are never thoughts, words, images, sights or forms of things, that we can describe. The spirit prays while not forming thoughts. As far as I can fathom, when the spirit stands like that before the divine countenance and prays, then all intercessions, desires, pressures, feelings and thoughts of the souls, for whom he prays, are included in a hidden way and work imperceptibly in and through that sight of the spirit that is finding God, through which sight the soul notifies God in an essential way of its desires. God understands it without thoughts, words or images concerning that for which it prays. Because the spirit stands then open before God like a clear mirror and also all that God at the moment operates in the spirit, namely that prayer, all of that is known to God, because it flows at the same moment from God into the soul and reflows again from the soul into Him.

Then there is only one simple movement of the soul or of the spirit to God and a secret or silent notification of its desires. That happens with such tranquillity and abstraction in the spirit and through the spirit, that the soul self

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74 Two ways of praying are discussed here, both of which are passive kinds of the prayer. The prayer that she describes here which is without words, intercessions etc seems to be a kind of prayer from the state of a *unio mystica*.

75 Here begins the third part of the document. It follows on fol. 33.

postea .....niscatur; / [25] hoc intelligit anima esse, adorare Deum in spiritu et ueritate si.....ebus, / imaginationibus, aut formis. /

Dicto modo dicit intelligi dum dicit se aliqua in.....dere / intelligere etc, sc. ista fieri sine uerbis, sine speci[ebus] corporeis; / uidet creaturas in Deo ut unitas diuinae essentiae. /

[30] Hoc modo debet Reuerentia Vestra intelligere multas differentes inoperationes, quando / facio mentionem, quod aliquas alias operationes uideam in Deo, intelligam / in Deo alicuius rei in Deo meminerim uel aliquas alias operationes spiritus, / siue orare, siue aliquid aliud praecipue istud orare tempore unionis, siue / sublimis contemplationis, nimirum, quod similia semper fi.... sine imaginatio- / [35] nibus, sine uerbis, sine cogitationibus, sine ullis speciebus[us] ....um corporearum / quia nullae cogitationes; aut species corporeae etc. pe.... spirit..... / nam spiritus ea uidet, ea comprehendit solummodo in ..... / ueritate, et unitate, quae Deus est; omnia autem quae in Deo ..... / telliguntur, cognoscuntur, sunt Deus in Deo, quia in Deo ni..... / [40] et quamuis ibi sit aliqua reminiscentia aut cognitio alicuius ..... / Deo, non uidetur, nec cognoscitur ut creatura, sed ut unita ... / in diuina essentia, et ut unum cum illa. /

Quidem uerum est, quando Deus aliquid manifestat ..... / Galliae, eius intentum, eius exercitum, eius progressum ..... / [45] absoluta indistinctio, quam in sola simplici, informi eius / ...icio; est aliqua distincta indistinctio in ill.... que a..... //

#### 42v

[1] cognoscuntur conclusa et unita in informi unitate diuinae essentiae; ideo nullae ima- / ginationes possunt incidere in intellectum, ut aliquid distincte de illis dicamus, / uel formemus; solummodo retineo obscuram cognitionem et confusam memori- / am aliquorum, quae Reuerentiae Vestrae scripto explico, quam optime possum. /

[5] Haec reuera bene potest uocari oratio passiuā, ad quam de nostro nihil possumus / addere, ut illam assequamur, uel ut diutius continuemus; nihil ibi de meo est inter- / mixtum, nec potest intermisceri; quando uero aliquid de meo accedit, et si tan- / tum simplex aduertentia, uel reflexio ad illam, ilico intermittitur, uel minuitur / ista inoperatio, et anima deorsum demittitur in se ipsam. /

[10] Aliud est, quando spiritus amoris orat, et confidenter agit cum Dilecto / tunc enim miscetur aliquid plus de meo, ibi tolerantur actus fidei, spei,

hardly knows or afterwards ... understands that this is: to adore God in spirit and in truth without ... images or forms.

In this way she says to be understood, while she says that she some ... understands etc, namely that this happens without words, without corporeal images. She sees creatures in God as a unity of the divine essence.

In this way Your Reverence must understand the many different operations, when I make mention of some other operations that I see in God, and understand in God and remember something in God or some other operations of the spirit whether praying or something different, in particular this praying in a time of union, or of extraordinary contemplation, certainly that similar things always happen ... without images, without words, without thoughts, without any sights of corporeal ..., because no thoughts or corporeal sights etc ... the spirit ... for the spirit sees them, comprehends them only in ... truth and unity, which is God. But all that in God ... is understood, known, is God in God, because in God ... and although there is some reminiscence or thought of some ... God, is not seen and not known as a creature, but as united ... in divine essence, and as one with it.

It is certainly true, when God manifests something ... of France, his intention, his army, his progress ... absolute confusion, how in only simple, unformed ... of him ... ... there is some distinguished confusion in that ...

#### 42V

They are known concluded and united in an unformed unity with the divine essence. Therefore no images can end up in the intellect, so that we might say or form something distinct about them. I only keep an obscure thought and a confused memory of some things, that I explain to Your Reverence in my writing, as well as I can.

Indeed this might well be called a passive prayer, to which we cannot add anything of ourselves to attain it or to continue it any longer. Nothing of myself is intermingled in it, nor can it be intermingled. But when something of myself approached, even if it were just a simple turn or reaction to it, then suddenly this operation would be interrupted or diminished and the soul would be thrown back down on itself.

It is different when the spirit of love prays and speaks confidently with the Beloved, for then something is mixed of myself, and there acts of faith are

chari- / tatis etc, ac cogitationes et imaginationes secundum exigentiam istius / orationis et cum Dilecto conuersationis: attamen etiam sic omnia diriguntur, / et proueniunt ab influxu diuinæ gratiæ, cui anima tunc respondet, quam inse- / [15] quitur, et quacum simul operatur, secundum quod tractus, motio et influxus / gratiæ uidetur manuducere, et dirigere. /

Docetur spiritum amoris sequi modo simpliciore, quasi uno / nutu uel ictu oculi ad Dilectum, ad Angelos cum sola / ultronea ebullitione amoris. /

[20] Dixi antecedenter, quod uiderer instructa, quod spiritum amoris parcius / sequi debeam; nunc doceor, quomodo liberius eum insequi liceat praesertim / extra orationem, sed modo tranquilliori, nobiliori et spiritualiori, nempe sine / multis discursibus, aut expressis multiplicibus uerbis, aut alloquiis ad Dilec- / tum ... ad sanctos Angelos, sed solummodo per tranquillam ebullitionem / [25] teneri ... [s]uauius amoris, quasi uno nutu, aut amoroso oculo ad Dilectum, / ei propono...do, et notificando id quod spiritus amoris dictat, u.g. de auxilio, / de protectione etc concedenda Regi Galliae, uel exercitui illius, de donis gra- / tiarum impertiendis animabus conuertendis etc. /

Operationes et accessus amoris interius ultro ebullientes ad hoc, uel illud / [30] in Deo dilectum etc, tantum debent fieri ....asi cum breuibus excursibus / spiritus, non se ulterius uel uiuacius extendo uel dispergendo extra limites / simplicitatis: ignis amoris bene potest scintillare in corde, imo etiam flam- / mare, sed totum cum tranquillitate, quasi quiescendo, et euanescendo in / fundo: unde h...ndo aliqua uerba amoris, suaues affectus, uel etiam aliquis / [35] zelus ad ....ore.. Dilecti, uel salutem animarum ebulliunt, oportet illa it / .....uiuaciter actiue ab .qu.. reflexione, uel aliqua stabili de illis / .....e, ac sine additione aliqua ex parte nostra. /

....ur habere unionem cum intellectu diuino in quo uidet / .....a, quae scripta combusserat, ut iterum scribat: uitem / [40] .....ilecti, ut zelet eius gloriam. / .....ris 1672, euigilans, et postea iterum in oratione, uidebar / .....unionem cum intellectu diuino; per quam multa, quae / .....erum et combusseram (uti Reuerentia Vestra scit) iterum renoua- / .....abantur, et uiuaciter in memoriam reducebantur //



tolerated and of hope, love etc. and thoughts and images according to the requirements of this prayer and of the conversation with the Beloved. Nevertheless also in this way all is led by and stems from the influence of divine grace, to which the soul then responds, which it follows and with which it operates at the same time according to which the need, the movement and the influence of grace seem to guide and to direct.

She is taught to follow the spirit of love in a more simple way, as with a wink or a nod to the Beloved, to the angels with only a voluntary outburst of love.

I have said before, that I seemed to be instructed that I had to follow the spirit of love more sparingly. Now I was taught how it is permitted to pursue it more freely especially outside of prayer, but in a more quiet, noble and spiritual way, yes even without many dispersions or many expressed words or talking to the Beloved ... to the holy angels, but only by the quiet simmering of a tender ... sweet love, like with one wink or with a loving eye to the Beloved, to him ... and noting what the spirit of love dictates, e.g. about the help, the protection etc, which should be provided to the King of France or to his army, about the gifts of grace which are granted to the souls which should be converted etc.

The operations and tendencies of love which spontaneously boil up inside or what is loved in God, just have to happen ... with short digressions of the spirit, not extending or spreading out further or more vividly outside the limits of simplicity. The fire of love may well sparkle in the heart, yes even flame, but all with quietness, like resting and vanishing into the depths. Hence ... some words of love, sweet feelings or even some zeal to ... of the Beloved, or the salvation of the souls boil up, it should be that it ... vividly, actively, without reflexion or some stable ... about them, and without any addition from our side.

... to have union with the divine intellect in which she sees  
 ... which writings she had burnt, like she wrote again: ...  
 ... of the Beloved, so that she strives for his glory.  
 ... 1672, waking up, and then again in prayer, I seemed  
 ... union with the divine intellect. By that many, that  
 ... and I had burned (as Your Reverence knows) again renewed  
 ... and vividly were brought back to memory.

43<sup>r</sup>

[1] demonstratione, et suasione, ut rursus exscriberem, (sed id adhuc parum differo, / donec spiritus me magis urgeat). /

Item mihi significabatur, quod Rex Galliae occupabat Hollandiam; hoc mihi / uidebatur omnino certum: Item certificabar, omnes operationes, quas spiritus / [5] amoris ab octo uel nouem mensibus et postea in me, et per me operatus est / quoad Hollandiam, fuerint diuinae; qui spiritus iterum resumit suas opera- / tiones, sicut tunc; et sentiebam me quasi fuissem charissima consors Dilecti / mei, tota zelosa pro augenda gloria eius, in lucro animarum cordi habendo, / primo eas perducendo ad ueram fidem, deinde ipsis prouidendo de omnibus / [10] gratiis ad salutem necessariis et utilibus. /

Eodem die ante et post sacram communionem incipiebat spiritus amoris, et / spiritus orationis me ualde efficaciter inuadere, qui mihi uidebatur quasi uim / inferre, et mihi uelle praeualere, sed me statim accommodabam, et sequebar, / quo ipse me impellebat, et ubi erat impetus illius, illuc gradiebar; uidebar / [15] interius intelligere; sponsa mea non semper est tempus quiescendi, me in / tranquillitate fruendi, et dormiendi somnum amoris; sed in illis etiam, quae / mei honoris et gloriae sunt, oportet te esse, et occupari; eui-gila et surge, et dis- / pone te ad operandum. /

Statim eram parata, sed intelligebam, quod Dilectus me non uellet extra- / [20] here ex mea solitudine; quia illa mihi est omnino necessaria ad diuinum / eius propositum et intentum; sed solummodo uolebat, ut darem locum spi- / ritui amoris; et ecce statim omnes meae potentiae inferiores uidebantur se / insolito quodam diuino modo aperire, et expandere, ut quasi apprehenderent / et haurirent spiritum diuinum, eique locum praeberent, qui spiritu[s]... [in]cipiebat / [25] in me operari hoc modo; spiritus uidebatur quasi circumplecti ... christi- / animum rara dilectione, et praetenero affectu, ad salutem ....., quos / Deus praelegit ad salutem; pro ut alibi fusius praeduxi. /

Renouatur in illa tener affectus erga Regem Galliae ut a / Deo et in Deo dilectum, et instanter pro eo orat; unde putat / [30] eum non esse tam malum, uti multi eum reputant. /

Quando spiritus amoris sic in me operatur, tunc renouatur in me iste tener / amoris affectus, et sensibiliter spiritualis inclinatio erga Regem Galliae, uti / antehac, uelut erga aliquem a Deo et in Deo Dilectum [imp]etus spiritus, quo /

43<sup>r</sup>

(...) the demonstration and persuasion, to go back to writing (but I postpone that still a bit, until the spirit urges me more).

Likewise it was signified to me, that the King of France occupied Holland. That seemed to me completely certain. Likewise I was assured that all the operations, which the spirit of love had operated in me since eight or nine months ago, and afterwards had operated in me and through me with regard to Holland, had been divine. That spirit resumed again his operations like then. And I felt myself like I was the most beloved companion of my Beloved, totally zealous to increase his glory, and to have the profit of souls at heart, first by leading them to the true faith, then by providing them with all graces that are necessary and useful for salvation.

The same day before and after holy communion the spirit of love and the spirit of prayer began to invade me very forcefully, that seemed as if to bring me strength and to want to prevail upon me, but I suddenly conformed and followed, where he urged me and where his attack was, there I went. I seemed to understand inside: "My bride, it is not always time to rest, to enjoy me in quietness and sleep the sleep of love. But also in those things, that are to my honour and glory, there you should be and be occupied. Be vigilant and arise, and prepare yourself for work."

Immediately I was ready, but I understood, that the Beloved did not want to extract me from my solitude. Because that is for me entirely a necessity for his divine plan and intention. But He only wanted that I give place to the spirit of love. And see, at once all my inferior powers seemed to open themselves in an unusual somewhat divine way,<sup>76</sup> and to spread out, so that they would apprehend and take in the divine spirit, and give place to it. That spirit ... began to operate in me in this way. The spirit seemed as it were to embrace ... Christianity with a strange love and very tender affection, to the salvation ... whom God has elected for salvation, as I have suggested elsewhere.

In her a tender affection towards the King of France is renewed as if loved by God and in God, and instantly she prays for him. Hence she believes that he is not as bad as many regard him to be.

When the spirit of love operates so in me, then that tender feeling of love is renewed in me, and sensibly I can feel a spiritual inclination towards the King of France, like before, as towards someone who is beloved by God and in God.

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76 See n. 15.

erga eum feror, est magnus et rarus, quia ex natura .... non sum inclinata / [35] erga homines, nec sum amatiua hominum (uti Reuerntia [Vestra] .... motio- / nem gratiae; sentio me quasi tutam pro ipso, n. in eius fauorem ..... / Instantiae, et amorosae postulationes, quas spiritus facit pro ips..... / Dilectum, apud Matrem amabilem, et sanctos Angelos, sunt millae et ..... / quae omnes a spiritu amoris dictantur et pronuntiantur per int..... / [40] ebullitiones amoris. /

Haec in me deprehendens non possum credere mala, quae de isto Rege .... / guntur; ab aliquot diebus ueniebat me aliquis inuisum, qui hunc .... / depingebat tam turpiter, quasi fuisset notorius scurra et nebul..... / multum uulnerabat, et eum totis uiribus defendebam; quia ..... / [45] apparet in animo meo, quam homines ipsum diiudicant; ..... //

43<sup>v</sup>

[1] nequam, et tam impius, ac peruersus traducitur, non possem eum adeo / in Deo diligere, nec essem adeo stabiliter bene ad illum inclinata; secun- / dum naturam non habeo ad hoc ullam rationem, aut motiuum, sed potius / e contrario. haec scripsit 9 Decembris 1672. /

[5] Propter dicta de mala Regis uita conatur se ab illo auertere / sed in oratione discit plane contrarium, cum inclinatione ad / illum, et certitudine, quod Deo placeat; et erit uictoriosus / orat pro illo contra aduersarios illius. /

Quia praedicta persona tam multa mihi referebat ad confirmationem, quod / 10 dictus Rex esset nequissimae et perditae uitae, et ideo omni benedictione in- / dignus, adeoque merito Deo sic disponente, perdidisset conflictum, et habu- / isset cladem magnam, in punitionem praeteritae suae, et adhuc, ut dicebat / praesentis scandalosae uitae; idcirco conabar me ab isto Rege alienare, omnem / affectum abstrahere, spiritum pro ipso orandi repellere, omnem meam inte- / [15] riorem experientiam, et testificationem abiicere, et diffiteri; uelut meram / fraudem et deceptionem, non sine sensu praemagnae afflictionis, et interna / praessura. /

Uerum cum me dedissem orationi, Dilectus me iterum faciebat sentire / et intelligere plane contrarium, cum tali interna certificatione ueritatis, / [20] cum tali confortatione, cum tali illecebra, amore et beneuolo affectu /

The force of the spirit, by which I am brought towards him, is great and strange, because by nature ... I am not inclined towards men, and I am not a lover of men (like Your Reverence ...) ... movement of grace. I feel like I am being saved for him, for in his favour ... Intercessions and loving prayers, which the spirit does for him... the Beloved, in the presence of his loving Mother, and the holy angels are thousand and ... that all are dictated by the spirit of love and are pronounced by ... simmering of love.

Discovering these things in me I cannot believe the bad things that are ... about that King. Since some days ago someone came to me unseen, who ... depicted him so shamefully, as if he was a notorious criminal and ... wounded him much and I defended him with all my strengths. Because ... appears in my mind, like men judge him ...

#### 43v

... wicked, and so impious and perverse is transferred, I could not love him so much in God, and I would not be so stably well inclined to him. According to nature I have no reason or motive for this, but rather the contrary. These things she wrote on 9 December 1672.

Because of the things that are told about the bad life of the King she tries to turn away from him, but in prayer she learns clearly the contrary, with the inclination to him and the certainty that he pleases God, and that he will be victorious. She prays for him against his opponents.

Because the afore-mentioned person told me so much as confirmation, that the King of whom I am speaking had a very wicked and corrupted life, and therefore was unworthy of all blessing, and as God had disposed with good reason he had lost the conflict and had suffered a great defeat as punishment of his former and, as it is said, still presently scandalous life. Therefore I tried to alienate myself from that King, and to withdraw all affection and to repel the spirit of praying for him, and to reject and deny all my inner experience and proof. As if it were mere fraud and deception, not without the feeling of great affliction and internal pressure.

But when I had given myself to prayer, the Beloved made me feel again and understand clearly the opposite, with such an inner certainty of the truth, with such comfort, with such allurements, love and benevolent affection towards

erga hunc Regem, ut pro illa ueritate bene uoluisset mori, quod ipse / esset a Deo dilectus, et quod haberet uictoriam in Hollandia; nam / zelus, et spiritus, qui mihi pro tunc de nouo iterum infundebatur, coö- / perab[atu]r simul cum spiritu Dei, ut exercitum haereticorum, et etiam nostr- / [25] um ex[ercitu]m, qui ipsis uenerat in subsidium, delerent, profligarent, ipsorum / robur et potentiam eneruarent etc. /

In dictis precibus a Gubernatore Patriae pro successu contra / Gallos ante Carolo-regium, ipsa dicit omnes preces fore inefficaces / et unam exaudiendam contra omnes: uidet spiritum Dei ferri / [30] super exercitum Gallorum. /

Hoc tempore quo Patriae Gubernator comes de monterei requisierat, / ut indicerentur preces communes, et omnis clerus, ac totius Patriae Reli- / giosi omnisque [p]opulus orarent ad optatum successum sui boni propositi, / et intenti (uti di[ce]bat) quod erat, ut cum omni suo exercitu coniunctis / [35] [c]opiis hae..... obsideret Carolo-regium, et alias Ciuitates in fauorem / .....xis Auriaci; hoc ego audiens, eram prae zelo fere in interna motione / .....ae, et dicebam, subridendo intra me; orate uos omnes, orate, orate, quam / .....uultis, cum omni uestra oratione nihil obtinebitis; nam latet alicubi / .....humilis anima abscondita in angulo, quae a Deo accepit potestatem / [40] .....bendi omnes orationes tam multorum, et impediendi, ne a Deo ex- / audiantur, quia bene scit, quod exauditio istarum orationum tenderet, et / .....contra Dei honorem et gloriam, et contra promotionem Sanctae Eccle- / [siae]..... nes orant, ne-scientes, quid orent, n. qui suam intentionem for- / ..... conformabant intentioni supradictae. /

[45] ..... parua et humilis anima erat illuminata et instructa de //

#### 44<sup>r</sup>

[1] ueritate et orabat contrarium, quam alii, acta et impulsa per in- / stinctum et impetum spiritus sancti, et huius humilis et abiectae animae ora- / tio fuit exaudita contra omnes, prout postea ex effectu secuto patuit, / quando nostri

this King, that I would have wanted to die for that truth, that he was loved by God and that he had the victory in Holland. For the zeal and the spirit, that was poured into me then anew, cooperated at the same time with the spirit of God, so that they would destroy and defeat the army of the heretics and also our army that had come to help them, and would weaken their strength and power etc.

In the prayers that have been mentioned by the Governor of this country for success against the French before Charleroi,<sup>77</sup> she says that all prayers will be powerless and that one must be heard against all. She sees that the spirit of God is brought to rest over the army of the French.

In this time when the Governor of this country, the Count of Monterrey<sup>78</sup> requested that common prayers be proclaimed and that all clergy of the country and all people would pray for the desired success of his good plan and intention (as he said), which was that he with the troops connected with all his army ... would occupy Charleroi and the other cities in favour ... of Auriacum.<sup>79</sup> When I heard this I was moved internally by zeal ... and I said, smiling inside: "Pray all of you, pray, pray as much as you ... want, with all your prayers you will obtain nothing. For somewhere is hidden ... a humble soul lost in a corner, who receives from God the power to ... all prayers of so many, and to impede that they are heard by God, because He knows well, that the hearing of these prayers tends and ... against the honour and glory of God and against the promotion of the holy Church ... they pray, not knowing, what they are praying for, namely that his intention ... they conformed to the afore-mentioned intention."

... a small and humble soul was illuminated and instructed about ...

#### 44r

the truth and prayed contrary to the others, led and driven by the incitement and insistence of the holy spirit, and the prayer of this humble and inconsiderable soul has been heard against all, as afterwards is proved by the effect that

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77 See n. 16.

78 Don Juan Domingo Mendez de Haro was married to the 6th Countess of Monterrey and used the titles of his wife for himself.

79 Auriacum is the Latin word for Orange. Perhaps Maria refers here to William III the stadtholder of Holland.

milites, et haeretici prae inedia et miseria debuerunt rece- / [5] dere cum ma-  
gno damno et infamia. /

Quid est mirum, quod Galli ita praeualeant et sint adeo uictoriosi in / Hol-  
landia? Deus est cum illis; semel uidi in spiritu, quomodo spiritus Dei / fereba-  
tur super exercitum Gallorum, sicut olim spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas. /

Possessa a spiritu Jesu agitur zelo animarum, cui resistit ut / [10] sus-  
pecto, quia non sequitur exspectatus effectus in Hollandia / iuxta ali-  
quorum relationem, quam a Dilecto intelligit esse / falsam. /

Uideor percipere, quod aliquando sim possessa a spiritu Jesu, qui in me / pro-  
ducit sitibunda desideria salutis animarum, qualia Jesus habuit, dum /  
[15] uiueret, et adhuc iam in uita sua gloriosa, hic spiritus mihi heri die 16 /  
Decembris 1672, subito quasi infundebatur; cui sub initium nonnihil reluc- /  
tabar, quasi illum reprobando; cogitans ad quid seruiunt istae operationes  
spi- / ritus amoris? quid inde prouenit? solummodo habeo desideria, et affec-  
tus, sine / ulterioribus affectibus; prout patet quoad Regem Galliae in Hollan-  
dia, ubi / [20] spiritus amoris adeo continuo, et quidem tam singulari modo  
operatus / fuit cum apparente bono successu, et iam ista bona apparentia qua-  
si inuertitur, / et omnia susque deque uertuntur, et totaliter intricantur. /

Sic mihi ab uno aut altero referebatur, quod uictoriae Regis Galliae tota- /  
liter inuerterentur, quod illi iterum aliquot Ciuitates in Hollandi[a ar]mata /  
[25] manu essent ereptae, sed fuerunt mendacia. /

Item quando noster exercitus simul cum haeticis Carolo regium obside-  
bat, et / mihi multa dicebantur de illorum uictoriis, quae erant falsa, et omnino  
contraria, / quia cum confusione prae inedia et miseria coacti sunt soluere ob-  
sionem, et / recedere ad sua praesidia; ita ut passim potuerint aduertere,  
quod male- / [30] dictio Dei fuerit super illos. /

Item quando Reuerentia Vestra mihi scribebat Boxmera, quod ibi multum  
timeretur, / quod Galli succumberent, et caederentur, eo quod Hispani et Cae-  
sariani magnas / haeticis darent suppetias, ita ut humanitus loquendo, ab-  
sque speciali Dei assistentia / Galli undique expellerentur, et haeretici  
praeualerent, quo .... negocium Religi- / [35] onis ibi ualde male cederet, Reli-  
giosi, et Catholici eii..... omnes hae / apparentiae faciebant me multum



followed, when our soldiers and the heretics, because of starvation and misery, had to withdraw, with great damage and disgrace.

No wonder that the French prevail, and have so much victory in Holland! God is with them. Once I saw in the spirit how the spirit of God was brought to rest over the army of the French like once the spirit of God was brought to rest over the waters.<sup>80</sup>

Possessed by the spirit of Jesus she is animated by zeal for souls, to which she resists as to a suspect kind of zeal, because the expected effect in Holland doesn't follow according to the story of some. But of the Beloved she understands that these stories are false.

I seem to perceive, that sometimes I am possessed by the spirit of Jesus, who produces in me thirsty desires for the salvation of souls, such as Jesus had while He lived, and still now has in his glorious life. This spirit was suddenly as it were poured into me yesterday on the 16th of December 1672. To which I resisted from the beginning somewhat, as if I rejected it, thinking: to what purpose do those operations of the spirit of love serve? What comes forth from it? I only have desires and feelings, without further feelings. Like it appears in regard to the King of France in Holland, where the spirit of love has operated in such a continuous and even such a particular way with apparent success, and yet that good appearance is sort of inverted and all is turned upside down and is totally confused.

This way it was told to me by the one or the other, that the victories of the King of France are totally inverted, that some cities in Holland were recaptured with an armed force, but those stories were lies.

Likewise when our army together with the heretics occupied Charleroi many things were said to me about their victories, which were false, and entirely the opposite, because with the confusion in the face of starvation and misery they were forced to renounce the occupation and withdraw to their garrisons, so that they could observe everywhere that the curse of God would be over them.

Even so when Your Reverence wrote me from Boxmeer, that there was great fear that the French would succumb and fall, because the Spaniards and the Imperials gave great support to the heretics, so that humanly speaking, without the special assistance of God, the French would be expelled from everywhere and the heretics would overpower them, ... the case of religion would yield there very badly, the Religious and Catholics ... all these appearances

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80 Vg. Gen. 1,1.

diffidere de ueritate illorum, qui mihi / interius uidebantur reuelata, pro aliquo tempore, donec Dilectus mihi[i].... / de istis daret confirmationem. /

Deus sibi complacet in operationibus spiritus amoris, et illas / [40] remunerat, etsi effectus sperati non sequantur; quod etiam sanc.. / Gertrudi reuelatum est. /

Dum haesitarem in praedicta ambiguitate, et differentia de bono spiritu pro .... / cessus expectationi meae contrarios, uidebatur mihi interius responderi ... / ficari, permittite amorem operari, da illi plenam agendi libertatem, non .... / [45] iendo, an aliqui effectus, seu fructus sequantur, nec ne; istae operationes .... //

#### 44v

[1] mihi complacent, sunt mihi pergratae, et tibi meritoriae, ac fructiferae, eodem / modo, acsi omnes illas animas de facto mihi lucrata fuisses, et ad me reduxisses. / Ex quo sequebatur ulterior cognitio, quod Dilectus illos affectus, et fer- / uentia desideria uellet remunerare, uelut facta, etiamsi effectus non semper, / [5] nec in omnibus sequatur; sicuti Concionatores, Confessarii, et alii operarii in / uinea sanctae Ecclesiae, non frustrantur meritis, et mercede laborum suorum, / quos exentlant ad lucrandas animas, etiamsi de facto pau- cas Deo lucren- / tur; dummodo tantum faciant, quantum in se est, operando et laborando cum / sincera, et pura ad Deum intentione, cum zeloso conatu, solummodo acti di- / [10] recti, et impulsu motiuo charitatis Dei et proximi ibi, enim sic procedendo habeat / plenam mercedem suae perfectae uoluntatis et dilectionis: hoc ualde clare in- / telligebam cum magna assecuratione et certificatione ueritatis. /

Ad maiorem certificationem mihi etiam reducebatur in mentem id, quod / Dilectus semel respondebat S. Gertrudi in simili casu suam querimoniam / [15] ipsi deponenti, quod non semper uideret actuales fructus sequentes ex huius- / modi zelis desideriiis, feruentibus amoris affectibus, et similibus amorosis / operationibus spiritus amoris, quo subinde agebatur; ipsi enim interius dice- / batur; etiamsi ex illis non uidear desideratos pullulare fructus, mihi in / illis complaceo, et meam inde haurio iucunditatem, uidendo sic ista bona / [20] desideria, et motiones amoris operari. /

made me doubt much about the truth of those things, that seemed to be revealed to me inside, for some time, until the Beloved gave confirmation about those things.

God is pleased with the operations of the spirit of love, and He rewards them, even though the desired effects do not follow. All this is also revealed to the holy Gertrudis.<sup>81</sup>

While I hesitated in the aforementioned ambiguity and doubt about the good spirit for ... contrary to my expectations, it seemed that I was answered inside ... permit love to operate, give it full freedom to act, not ..., or some effects or fruits follow, or not. Those operations ...

#### 44V

please me, are pleasant to me and meritorious to you and fruitful, in the same way like you have won all those souls in fact for me and have led them back to me. From there followed a further thought that the Beloved wanted to reward those effects and fervent desires as if they were achieved, even though the effects did not follow always in and in all. Just as the Preachers and Confessors and other workers in the vineyard of the holy Church were not frustrated by their merits and by the wages for their labors, which they ... to win souls, even though in fact few are won for God. As long as they do as much as they can, operating and laboring with a sincere and pure intention for God, with zealous effort, only driven, directed and motivated by love for God and their neighbor there, for proceeding so he has gained full wages for his perfect will and love. I understood this very clearly with great assurance and certainty of the truth.

With greater certainty it was brought back to my mind what the Beloved had once responded to St. Gertrudis in a similar case when she placed her complaint before him, that she didn't always see the actual fruits that followed from her zealous desires of that kind, from the fervent feelings of love and from the similar loving operations of the spirit of love, by which she was led directly. For it was said to her inside: even though I seem not to bring forth fruits from those things, I am pleased in them and it gives me delight when I see that those good desires and movements of love are operated so.

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81 I.e. Saint Gertrude of Helfta.

Spiritus amoris habens libertatem mire in ea operatur, et / subito ab ea exit uirtus ad omnes mundi partes, in Hollandiam, / ..d exercitum Gallorum. etc. /

Statim ....[sp]iritui amoris dabam locum, ipse incipiebat ualde ingeniose industrie, / [25] et amorose operari modo tam suauifluo, quasi intus et foris diuino influxu / fuissem possessa; omnia, quae erant intra me, cooperabantur huic amori; / omnes . animae potentiae, cor et animus, quasi dissoluebantur, aperiebantur; et / in libertatem afferebantur, modo quodam, quem nescio explicare; omnis / sanguis, et corporis uenae etiam uidebantur amori cooperari. / [30] Tunc uidebatur subito et subtiliter uirtus aliqua de me exire, quae in / instanti sese uidebatur dispergere, et peruolare omnes mundi partes, ubi / ..... aliqua .... itas animarum, quas Deus uolebat iuuare et aliqua gra- / tia .....re. / Hab..... in animo, qui diuersimode egebant gratia Dei, spi- / [35] [ritus] ..... amicabiliter excipiebat, sonebat, amplexabatur etc. unum / .....que suo modo, secundum exigentiam necessitatis, in qua erant constituti / .....cuti amantissimae, suauissimae, et amabilissimae Matres solent facere. /

In Polonia, in Hollandia, in exercitum Gallorum etc inueniebat spiritus / amoris abun..., quod ageret, in multis maestis desolatis, derelictis pusillanimis, / [40] .....us, et miserabilibus animabus: haec omnia fiebant, cum uelocitate, etce- / ..... te uolando ulterius de uno ad alium, quasi ab aliquo deductus cum / .....tione personarum, in quibus operari oportebat; nam amor est uelox in / [op]erationibus, dum ei cum libertate spiritus licet operari.

haec scripsit / .....mbri 1672. //

#### 45<sup>r</sup>

[1] Post multos mysticos agones diuina gratia superatos, dat locum / igni amoris, qui in corde et spiritu ardens aliquando uidetur / sursum trahere omnes animas extra Deum in natura, et in / peccatis uiuentes. /

[5] Die 17 dicti mensis, post diuersas animae dispositiones, post multos agones et / mortes amoris, qui uno die diuersimode accidunt et adueniunt, ex parte maligni / spiritus, et partis inferioris, a quibus spiritus frequenter oppugnatur, et uariis / insidiis, et laqueis circumuenitur, ut sic in sua pura, intima, et

The spirit of love having its freedom works in her and suddenly a strength comes out of her and spreads to all parts of the world, to Holland, to the army of the French etc.

At once ... I gave place to the spirit of love, it began to operate very ingeniously, industriously and lovingly in such a sweetly flowing way, as if I was possessed inside and outside by a divine influence. All that was inside me cooperated with this love. All powers of the soul, heart and mind, were sort of dissolved, were opened and brought to freedom, in a way that I cannot explain. All the blood and veins of my body also seemed to cooperate with love. Then suddenly and subtly some strength seemed to come from me, that seemed to spread instantly and fly to all parts of the world, where ... some ... of the souls, which God wanted to help and some grace ...

... in mind, that miss in different ways God's grace, the spirit ... received friendly, sounded, embraced etc. one ... in his way, according to the requirements of necessity, in which were constituted ... very loving, sweet and charming mothers use to act.

In Poland<sup>82</sup>, in Holland, in the army of the French etc. the spirit of love found abundantly ..., which acted, in many sad, desolate, abandoned, pusillanimous ... and miserable souls. All these things happened quickly, etcetera ... flying further from the one to the other, as it were drawn down with ... of persons, in whom it should operate. For love is quick in her operations, while she is permitted to operate with freedom of the spirit.

These things she wrote on ... 1672

#### 45r

After many mystical struggles in which she was overcome by the divine grace, she gives place to the fire of love that, burning in the heart and in her spirit, seems to draw all souls that live outside God in nature and in sin.

On the 17th of that month after various dispositions of the soul, after many struggles and deaths of love, which happen and arise in any one day in different ways, from the part of an evil spirit and of an inferior part, by which the spirit is frequently attacked and is also surrounded by various treacheries and traps, so that in this way he is diverted and hindered in his pure, intimate and

82 Probably Maria refers to the Polish–Ottoman War (1672–76).

immediata ad / Deum conuersione diuertatur, seu impediatur, ipse spiritus diuina uirtute, et / [10] gratia Dilecti adiutus, et confortatus transcendit omnia, et dat locum, ac age- / ndi libertatem igni diuini amoris, qui insolito, nobili, spirituali, et simul sensibili / modo, in corde et spiritu accenditur, et ardet cum stabili sursum-flammatione / ad Essentiam increatam, cum tranquillitate, et simplicitate, et tamen uiuaciter / et efficaciter, non intime. /

[15] Aliquando nonnihil impetuose, cum simultanea secum et sursum attractione / omnium animarum, quae extra Deum uiuunt in peccatis, in natura; in sensualita- / tibus, et inordinatis ad creaturas affectionibus: atque iste impetus amoris, et / zelus animarum uidetur etiam esse bene regulatus secundum inoperationem / diuini spiritus. /

[20] Docetur in dicta dispositione attendere, ut istum ignem amoris / passiuè sinat ardere, sine propria operatione. /

Uidebar interius instrui, quod in huiusmodi dispositione, solummodo debeam atten- / dere, ut illum ignem amoris sinam passiuè sursum-flammare et ardere quatenus / sic melius in me possit consumere omnem subtilem mixtionem, fu.....ntum, / [25] uel adhaesionem ad aliquid extra Deum, uel quod Deus non est, uel .....Deiforme, / etiam ad dona, et fauores Dilecti, ne aliquid uel minimum spiritum a Deo / mediet, uel impediat. /

Item, quod debeam aduigilare, ut nihil accedat de propria operatione, uel / aliquid a parte inferiore ingestum, ut sic ille ignis amoris in sua puritate et / [30] nobilitate conseruetur, et sinatur operare secundum modum actualis tractus / Dilecti, cum plena libertate spiritus, dando amori plenum ..iurum /

Porro quando iste ignis amoris de nouo in me accenditur et operatur, tunc / iterum renouatur in me spiritus supradictae faecunditati.... animarum, pro- / pensio, et effusio amoris erga easdem, qui amor ex am[an]te corde meo pro- / [35] fluens est mirabilis et ineffabilis. /

Uidetur tunc quod omnia interiora mea, et uiscera nihil sint aliud, nisi / oleum suauifluum effusum, seu balsamum diuinae benignitatis, clementiae / misericordiae, et dilectionis u.g. ad animas in Hollandia uel alibi conuertendas, ad desolatos consolandos, ad pusillanimes confortandos, ad miseros / [40] subleuandos in exercitu Gallorum, ad omnes animandos, et ad Deum / perducendos etc, idque cum insatiabili fame et siti, ut omnes Deo pariter / et Christo lucrifaciam. /

Spiritus amoris supercomplectitur, et supercomprehendit illos omn[es] / [ta]nta charitate, amabilitate, zelo et feruore, ut prae teneritudine ... //

immediate conversion to God. The spirit itself is helped and comforted by divine strength and the grace of the Beloved transcends all and gives place and freedom of acting to the fire of divine love, that is ignited in an unusual, noble, spiritual and at the same time sensible way in the heart and the spirit, and burns with a stable upward flame towards the uncreated Essence, with quietness and simplicity and yet vivaciously and forcefully, not intimately.

Sometimes somewhat impetuous, with a simultaneous attraction to itself and to on high of all souls which live outside God in sin, in nature, in sensualities and disordered feelings towards creatures. And that attack of love and zeal for souls seemed to be also well regulated according to the operation of the divine spirit.

She is taught in the aforementioned disposition to make sure to let that fire of love burn passively without her own operation.

I seemed to be instructed inside, that in a disposition of this kind, I only had to make sure that I let that fire of love flame upwards passively and burn so that it could better consume in me every subtle mixture, ... or attachment to anything outside God, or what is not God of ... Godlike, even to gifts and favours of the Beloved, so that not anything, even the smallest might repel or impede my spirit from God.

Likewise I must watch that nothing is added of my own operation or something applied by an inferior part, so that the fire of love is preserved in its purity and nobleness and is left to operate by way of and the actual drawing of the Beloved, with full freedom of the spirit, giving to love the full ...

Further when that spirit of love is ignited again in me and operates, then again the spirit of the aforementioned fertility is renewed in me ... of the souls, the propensity and effusion of love towards them. That love which flows from my loving heart is miraculous and ineffable.

It seems then that all my interior and my entrails are nothing but sweet-flowing oil poured out or balm of divine goodness, clemency, mercy and love, e.g. to convert souls in Holland or elsewhere and to console those who are desolate, to comfort those who are pusillanimous, to support those who are in the French army, to animate all and to lead them back to God etc., and that with an insatiable hunger and thirst so as to win them all for God and for Christ.

The spirit of love includes and embraces them all with so much love, friendliness, zeal and enthusiasm that by reason of the tenderness ...

45<sup>v</sup>

[1] fere deficiam, et liquefiam; cor agitur quasi cum spirituali quadam in-  
qui- / etudine, absque tamen interruptione internae pacis, quietis, et tranquil-  
litas / animi. /

Renouatur in ea spiritus amoris erga Regem Galliae, qui, uti / [5] et Rex  
Hisp., sunt illi, ut duo filii, sed magis Rex Galliae, pro / quo periclitante  
iubetur diuinitus orare. /

In mense februario 1673, renouabatur in me spiritus amoris, et spiritualis /  
inclinatio nis, ac unionis erga Regem, et cum Rege Galliae: hic erat positus / in  
corde meo, et etiam Rex Hispaniarum, quasi ambo fuissent mei filii: spi- /  
[10] ritus amoris habebat multa agenda cum Rege Galliae, sed non multum /  
attrahebat Regem Hispaniarum; uidebatur illum ex parte relinquere / inaduer-  
tenter, uelut filium, seu puerum dormientem. /

Item quadam nocte inter horam 12mam et 1am, ab aliquo quasi excitabar, /  
qui mihi dicebat, ora pro Rege Galliae; eodem tempore infundebatur mihi /  
[15] spiritus orandi; aliquo tempore post incidebam in somnum; circa horam  
2am / iterum excitabar, et dicebatur, ut ante, ora pro Rege Galliae; aliquam diu  
post / rursus obdormiebam, et pro 3a uice excitabar, et mihi dicebatur, ut uide-  
batur, cum / maiori auctoritate, ora incessanter; unde suspicabar, et collige-  
bam, quod Rex / uel eius exercitus esset in aliquo periculo. /

[20] Perseuerabam in oratione, circiter usque ad medium septimae matuti-  
nae, quando / uidebar intelligere, quod periculum transiisset, ex his uerbis:  
iam cessat peri- / culum, et non poteram postea amplius orare; hoc erat circa  
tempus, quo Ciuitas / N... nsis erat obsessa a Gallis. /

.....r spiritu amoris et orationis pro Rege Galliae, ut Deus illum / [25] domi-  
num harum Prouinciarum, cum spe successus; et / uidet S. Ludouicum  
amicabiliter inclinatum ad hunc Regem. /

Circa idem tempus semel tenerrimo ferebar amore, et beneuolentia erga  
hunc / Regem, eo quod cum tanto zelo suam uitam et coronam Dilecto obtulis-  
set ad / Hollandiam reducendam ad fidem catholicam; multum mouebatur, ut  
supplicarem / [30] Dilecto meo, quatenus hunc Regis erga se zelum et amo-  
rem uellet per aliqui / remunerare et .... orare, n. ut ei complaceret istum facere



45v

(...) I fall and melt. My heart is driven as it were by some spiritual restlessness, still without an interruption of the inner peace, quietness and tranquility of my mind.

In her the spirit of love towards the King of France is renewed. He and the King of Spain are like sons for her, but particularly the King of France, for whom she is commanded to pray when he is in danger.

In the month February 1673 the spirit of love was renewed in me along with the spiritual inclination and union towards and with the King of France. He was placed in my heart and the King of the Spaniards also, as if they both were my sons. The spirit of love had much to do with the King of France, but did not so much attract the King of the Spaniards. He seemed to leave him mostly neglected, like a sleeping son or boy.

Likewise one night between 12 and 1 o'clock, I was awakened by something that said to me: "Pray for the King of France". In that same moment the spirit of praying was poured into me. Sometime later I fell asleep. About 2 o'clock again I was awakened and it was said like before: "Pray for the King of France". Sometime after that I fell asleep again and for the third time I was awakened and it was said to me, as it seemed with greater authority: "Pray incessantly". So I suspected and found that the King or his army was in some danger.

I persevered in prayer, until about the middle of the seventh hour in the morning, when I seemed to understand that the danger had subsided based on these words: "Already the danger is subsiding". And I could not pray after that. This was at about the time that the city<sup>83</sup> ... was occupied by the French.

... by the spirit of love and of prayer for the King of France, so that God ... him lord of these Provinces, with the hope of success. And she sees St. Louis<sup>84</sup> amicably inclined towards this King.

About the same time I was once moved by a very tender love and benevolence towards this King, because he had presented his life and crown to the Beloved with such zeal to lead Holland back to the catholic faith. I was so moved that I begged my Beloved, in order that he might wish to reward this zeal and love of the King towards him with something ... and to pray, namely so that it might

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83 Unknown city.

84 I.e. Louis IX, King of France (1226-1270).

Dominum et Regem / .....Prouinci....., in quem finem agebar, ut accederem ad  
sacram commu- / nionem ..... desiderati successus. /

In m.... Augustus 1673, in festo S. Ludouici Regis Franciae, in oratione /  
[35] ...umtum memini, post sacram communionem, percepi in spiritu, quo-  
modo / ...e sanctus Rex offenderet aliquam amicabilem propensionem huic  
mo- / derno Regi; id quod me faciebat sperare aliquid magnum super illum, et  
de illo. /

Intelligit plures esse pro Rege Galliae, quam contra; iubetur / maledicere  
aduersariis Gallorum; uidet Deum iratum Impera- / [40] tori et Hispanis  
ob suppetias datas Hollandis. /

....lud tempus, quando per hanc Ciuitatem transibant multi milites /  
....ut irent in subsidium haereticorum, multum inde contristaba... /  
.....nt impeditur (;) pium et deiforme ....litum praedicti Regis .... //

#### 46r

[1] mihi dicebatur interius consolata etc, quia plures sunt pro Rege, quam /  
contra Regem. /

Alio tempore, quando ob praedictum finem adhuc transibant milites, uide- /  
batur mihi mandari, ut illis maledicerem, et uerba maledictionis in illos /  
[5] pronunciarem, a qua suggestionem multum perhorrescebam, et illam reii-  
cie- / bam quasi a maligno spiritu prouentientem; uerum quanto magis reii-  
ciebam / et reprobabam, tanto magis urgebar; ideo ad Dilectum meum conuersa,  
di- / cebam maesto et afflicto corde; Dilecte, si tu illis maledicas, ego etiam  
male- / dico, sed rogo, ut illa maledictio tantum cadat super corpora, et non  
super ani- / [10] mas illorum; sic cessabat pressura, nec urgebar amplius, et  
manebam quieta. /

Circa istud tempus, semel mane euigilans, sentiebam mentem meam om- /  
nino turbatam, eo quod Dilectus meus, sese per impressiones in anima mea /  
ostenderet ualde offensus et iratum, quia Imperator mittebat tot copias mili- /  
tum in subsidium haereticorum, et quantum in se erat, uolebat impedire ho-  
norem / [15] et gloriam Christi, et salutem tot animarum. /

Dilectus uidebatur ipsi minari aliquas plagas, non quidem ipsius personae,  
sed / ipsius regno, aliquam illius diuisionem per aliquos eius aduersarios, et  
quod / Hispania etiam participaret: habebatur etiam adscriptum hoc modo;  
non sum / certa, quod hae omnes fuerint illuminationes supernaturales; eo

please Him to make him lord and King ... Province ... to which purpose I was led, so that I might go to holy communion ... of the desired success.

In the month of August 1673, on the feast of St. Louis the King of France,<sup>85</sup> in prayer ... I remembered after holy communion, I perceived in the spirit how ... the holy King experienced a friendly propensity towards this modern King. This made me hope for something great for him and from him.

She understands that there are more in favour of the King than against him. She is commanded to curse the opponents of the French. She sees that God is angry with the Emperor and with the Spaniards because of the support they have given to the Dutch.

... that time, when through this city went many soldiers  
 ... they went to the help of the heretics, therefore was much saddened ...  
 ... was hindered ... pious and Godlike ... of the aforementioned King...

46r

was said to me consoled within etc., because there are more in favour of the King than against the King.

Another time, when because of the aforementioned purpose soldiers still passed, it seemed that I was asked to curse them and pronounce curses against them, by which suggestion I began to shiver much and I rejected that as if it came from an evil spirit. But the more I rejected it and disapproved of it, the more I was urged. Therefore turned towards my Beloved, I said with a sad and afflicted heart: Beloved, if you curse them, I also curse them, but I ask, that that cursing fall only over their bodies and not over their souls. So the pressure ceased and I was no longer urged and I remained quiet.

About that time, once awakening early, I felt my mind totally disturbed, because my Beloved showed himself by impressions in my soul very offended and angry, because the Emperor sent so many military troops to the help of the heretics, and as much as he could, he wanted to impede the honour and glory of Christ and the salvation of so many souls.

The Beloved seemed to threaten him with some misfortunes, not only to his own person, but also to his empire, some division of it by some of his opponents, with Spain also participating. It was added in this way. I am not certain that all these things were supernatural illuminations, because natural reason

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85 See n. 84.

quod ratio / [20] naturalis facile possit formare argumentum ex apparentiis externis, et de / iudiciis, quae ratio potest inuestigare et assequi de aliquibus rebus, quas uidit, / audiuit, et considerauit, u.g. quia ratio facile potest iudicare, quod I[mper]ator / etc operaretur contra Deum, et quod Deus id non relinqueret impunitu[m]. /

Uidet in Deo conflictum duorum exercituum, et [Gall]os / [25] habere uictoriam, et occupaturos Hollandiam. /

Circa idem tempus, cum uacarem oratione, uidebar esse rapta in spiritu, et in / Deo uidere, et (ut dicitur) legere, quod duo exercitus contra inuicem appro- / pinquarent, et inter se configerent, et quod Galli in hoc conflictu reportarent / uictoriam, et quod Rex Galliae occupabit Hollandiam. /

[30] Haec uisio huius rei futurae, in Deo, erat talis, qualis in Prophetis, quando / aliqua futura prouidebant, prout ab anno, uel circiter [quas]i fuit demonst[ra] / tum, et insinuatum, quomodo futura uideantur, et sciant, ...ut ...ntia, quae / procul dissita, ut propinqua; quia .... Deo omnia praeterita et futura sunt / praesentia, atque Deus est nobis proximus et ualde intime praesens, ergo omnia / [35] quae sunt in Deo, sunt etiam hoc sensu nobis proxima, et intime praesentia, atque / ut sic immediate uidentur et cognoscuntur in Deo uelut uitrum, quod a splen- / dore solis ab omni parte est pellucidum, et penetratum etc. /

Intelligit Deum ualde male capere, quod Religiosi grauentur / gabellis, et pecunias illis potius obfuturas, uti suo tempore patebit. /

[40] Alias, quando Domini statuum Patriae Religiosis auferebant sua priuilegia et ... / ciebant illos contribuere et soluere uecticalia, sicut saeculares, et quadam / spernebant orationes religiosorum pro prosperitate nostri Regi ... / ... in..et pecuniis etc, magis fidendo .... //

#### 46v

[1] contra ius cogebat illos soluere, quam orationibus etc, mihi per intimas im- / pressionem, et alias perceptiones internas uidebatur significari quod

could easily form an argument from external appearances and from judgments, which reason can investigate and understand from the things, that it has seen, heard and considered, e.g. because reason can easily judge that the Emperor etc. operates against God and God cannot leave that unpunished.

She sees in God the conflict between the two armies, and that the French will have the victory and will occupy Holland.

About that same time, when I was devoted to prayer I seemed to be seized in the spirit, and to see in God and (as it is said) to read, that the two armies drew nearer to each other in battle and pierced one another and that the French in that conflict brought back the victory and that the King of France would occupy Holland.

This vision of this future event, in God, was such as it was in the Prophets, when they foresaw some future things, like one year ago or thereabout, as if it had been demonstrated and insinuated how the future would be, and they know ... that ... which are far away, like they are near. Because ... in God all past and future things are present and God is very near to us and very intimately present, so all things that are in God are also in this sense very near to us and intimately present, and like that, they are seen and known immediately in God like in a glass that by the splendor of the sun is transparent and accessible from each side etc.

She understands that God takes it very badly that the Religious are overburdened by taxes, and that the money they handed over will rather in its own time injure them.

Another time, when the Lords of the states of the Country took from the Religious their privileges and ... them to contribute and pay taxes like seculars<sup>86</sup>, and somewhat rejected the prayers of the religious for the prosperity of our King ... in ... and money etc, rather trusting ...

#### 46v

against the law forced them to pay, which by prayers etc, by intimate impressions and other inner perceptions seemed to be signified to me, that the

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86 Perhaps Maria refers here to an ordinance announced by Count de Monterrey on the 1st of June 1672, see the *Derden placcaet-boeck van Vlaenderen* (1685) 37.

Dilec- / tus id ualde male caperet, mihi significando, quod ista pecunia ipsis  
non / prodesset, uel ad aliquid proficeret, sed potius obsesset, et noceret; prout  
patebit / [5] suo tempore, quando uidebunt, quantam benedictionem et uic-  
toriam / Deus dabit Regi Galliae, eo quod ipse maiorem fiduciam posuerit in  
orationibus / famulorum et famularum Dei, illas humiliter et desideranter po-  
stulando / ad suum pium intentum; quod illi a Dilecto concessum est, prout ab  
effectu / satis patet, et mihi notum est, quomodo Deus aliquas animas moueat,  
et / [10] specialiter inoperetur, ut hunc Regem per suas orationes iuuent in  
suis / armis, et qualem ipse inde habeat prosperitatem, et quales progressus  
faciat / quia magis Deiformiter agit, et Religiosos, ac statum Ecclesiasticum  
magis / reueretur, quam hi nostri Domini modo faciunt. /

Multipliciter, mirabiliter et diuine agitur, et monetur ut / [15] oret pro  
Rege Galliae. /

Ego misera peccatrix debui illo tempore multum orare pro Rege Galliae, / et  
adhuc debeo modo orare pro prospero successu armorum ipsius / tunc tempo-  
ris spiritus Dei, singulariter in me operabatur quemdam orandi modum /  
quem hic refero; spiritus meus uidebatur sursum eleuatus et attractus ante /  
[20] faciem Dei, et procumbebat pronus ante pedes diuinae maiestatis (nos-  
tro / humano modo loquendi et intelligendi) nam Deus non habet manus,  
uel / ped[es], uel aliquam speciem, aut formam, sicut homines, aut aliquid  
aliud. /

.....ut melius dicam, meus spiritus erat depressus, et demersus in / aliqu..... li  
profunditate, amictus lumine, seu Clara notitia essentialis / [25] suae m.....tis  
coram incomprehensibili maiestate Dei; et una accensus / feruente [et a]rdente  
amore, absque formatione uerborum, uel sensus, faciebat / assiduas instan-  
tias ad cor diuinum, illud urgendo, quasi Deus permisisset se / a meo spiritu  
superari, et amorose cogi; non eram ego, quae sic orabam, sed / spiritus Dei in  
me. /

[30] Aliae particularitates istius orationis iam mihi non occurrunt, quia /  
iam circiter a octo mensibus ista contigerunt. /

Aliquando ..... ista oratio per uehementem et uigorosam appressionem / seu  
imp..... itat ad cor diuinum, non cum propria actiuitate, uel / per pro..... nem,  
sed ad hoc actus, seu diuinam inoperationem / [35] .....atiens; et ideo talis  
oratio me numquam fatigabat, etiamsi durasset / integris diebus /

Ob tristia nuncia de uictoria Hollandorum contra Gallos, tota deso- / lata,  
quasi sine spe etc spiritu rapitur in Deo, et toto die intime / spiritu et cor-  
pore roborata fruitur ferculis ex mensa sanctorum. /

Beloved took it very badly, indicating to me that that money would not benefit them, or be of any use, but would rather in its time injure them, as in time will be clear, when they will see what blessing and victory God will give to the King of France, because he has placed more confidence in the prayers of the male and female servants of God, asking them humbly and earnestly for this pious intention. That is granted to him by the Beloved, as is clear enough from the effect and it is known to me how God moves some souls and especially operates in such a way that with their prayer they help this King with his weapons and with the kind of prosperity he has from that and the kind of progress he makes, because he acts in a more Godlike way and respects the Religious and the state of the Church more than our people do at the moment.

In many ways, miraculously and divinely she is led and admonished to pray for the King of France.

I poor sinner had to pray at that time much for the King of France and still I must pray so for the prosperous success of his weapons. Then at the time the spirit of God operated in a particular way in me with some manner of praying that I refer to here. My spirit seemed to be elevated upwards and attracted before the countenance of God and knelt down low before the feet of the divine majesty (in our human way of speaking and understanding), for God has no hands or feet or any appearance or form like humans, or anything else.

... that I rather say, my spirit was depressed and sunk in some ... depth, clothed with light or with a clear knowledge of his essential ... in the presence of the incomprehensible majesty of God. And at the same time ignited by a fervent and burning love, without the formation of words or senses, my spirit made constant intercessions to the divine heart, urging that, as if God had permitted that he could be lovingly coaxed and overcome by my spirit. It was not I, who prayed like this, but the spirit of God in me.

Other details of that prayer do not occur to me anymore, because those things happened already about eight months ago.

Sometime ... that prayer by a severe and vigorous pressure or impact ... on the divine heart, not through its own activity, or by ... , but led to this or ... a divine operation ... and therefore such prayer doesn't ever fatigue me, even if it should last for whole days.

Because of the sad reports about the victory of the Dutch against the French, totally desolate, as it were without hope etc, she is swept up in God and the entire day intimately strengthened in spirit and body she enjoys the dishes from the table of the saints.

[40] ..... uigilia purificationis D. uirginis 1673, quando Reuerentia Vestra mihi referebat /.....ta tristia et mala nuncia de Hollandia, quomodo haereticum Caesar- /.....intercepissent Ciuitatem monasteriensem, Groeningam etc, et om... /.....lans crudeliter mactassent, uel pessime tractassent ..... /..... //

## 47r

[1] absque ulla spe, quod Galli occuparent Hollandiam iuxta quod mihi uidebatur / promissum; eo quod humanitus loquendo, hoc iam uideretur esse extra omnem / apparentiam propter potentem trium exercituum resistantiam. /

Ipo festo D. Uirginis, incipiendo ab oratione matutina, erat meus spiritus / [5] introsumptus in Deo, et toto illo die manebat ualde intime tractus cum / actuali quiete in Deo; totum illum diem transigebam in continua oratione / quietis, et introtractionis, facile quinque horis consequenter, absque ulla fa- / tigatione corporis aut animae, econtrario corpus et anima per illam orationem / quasi nutriebantur, et confortabantur, magis quam aliquis ex opiparo / [10] conuiuio; eo quod mihi apponerentur aliqua fercula de mensa sanctorum, / quae fercula uerbis exprimere nequeo; fruebar etiam nutritiua quiete et / nutritiuo amore, cum exigua perceptione dispositionis corporalis. /

Intimius introtracta fruitur praesentia Dilecti, qui eam amplexatur / et consolatur, assecurans sparsa nuncia esse falsa, et Regem Galliae / [15] triumphaturum in Hollandia, in quem finem accipit spiritum orandi. /

Ante et post sacram communionem, aliquo tempore adhuc profundius in- / troducebar, et introtrahebar; ubi praetenere, ualde intime, suauiter et proxime / fruebar praesentia Dilecti, modo singulari, qui me ualde amicabiliter uide- / batur tractare, amorose amplexari et dulciter consolari, de dolore, afflic- / [20] tione, et uulnere amoris, quo pridie propter praedicta nuncia fueram sau- / ciata et angustiata. /

Dilectus mihi dicebat (tamen sine strepitu uerborum) per instinctum, seu / notificationem ualde intimam, et occultum, sponsa mea, sis c[ertifica]ta /



... on the eve of the purification of the Virgin of God 1673<sup>87</sup>, when Your Reverence referred to me ... sad and bad reports about Holland, how the heretics with the imperial ... have taken the city of Münster, Groningen<sup>88</sup> etc, and all ... have slaughtered cruelly or have treated very badly ...

47<sup>r</sup>

without any hope that the French might occupy Holland according to what seemed to be promised to me. Because humanly speaking, this seemed to be already beyond all appearance because of the powerful resistance of three armies.<sup>89</sup>

On the same feast of the Virgin of God, beginning with morning prayer, my spirit was drawn into God and the entire day it remained very intimately centred with quietude in God. I passed that entire day in continuous prayer of quiet and inwardness, easily five hours consecutively, without any tiredness of body or soul, on the contrary, body and soul were as it were nurtured through that prayer and comforted, more than someone might be by a sumptuous banquet. Because some dishes were placed before me from the table of the saints, which dishes I cannot describe in words. I enjoyed also the nutritious quietness and nutritious love, with only a small perception of my corporeal disposition.

More intimately drawn inwards she enjoys the presence of the Beloved, who embraces and consoles her, reassuring her that the reports that have been spread are false and that the King of France will triumph in Holland, for which purpose she receives the spirit of praying.

Before and after holy communion, I was still for some time led deeper and drawn inwards. There, very tenderly, intimately and amicably, he embraced me lovingly and consoled me pleasantly for the pain, the affliction and the wound of love, by which I had been wounded and frightened because of the aforementioned reports.

The Beloved said to me (still without the sound of words) by an intuition or a very intimate and hidden notification: "My bride, be assured, your son the

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87 2nd February

88 The Bishop of Münster besieged the city from 21 July till 17 August 1672.

89 Probably Maria refers to the armies of the German Emperor, the Spanish and the Elector of Brandenburg.

filius tuus Rex Galliae triumphabit in Hollandia; et mihi uideb...., quod / [25] mala nuncia superius relata non essent uera, praesertim de .....te mo- / nasteriensi; habebam omnino aliam cognitionem, et melius ...e testimo- / nium, cum magna securitate et pace. /

Aliquot diebus postea, Reuerentia Vestra mihi rursus confirmabat praedicta nuncia / utpote non melius informata; quare deposita mea opinione, diffide- / bam prae- / [30] tactae internae testificationi, ac cognitioni; sed accedens ad orationem, iterum / continuabar sicut ante, quod ista non essent uera. /

Die quinta eiusdem mensis, sub oratione uestertua mi.... bito aborieba- / tur / insolitum magnum lumen, et diuina claritas, quae me .....i unde ..... / ...lustrabat, et circumfulgebat, ac me ponebat in ....., et / [35] assecuratione, quod Rex Galliae triumpharet in Hollandia ... omnibus, / qui illi resistebant; adueniebat mihi etiam spiritus orandi pro faelici p[ro-] / gressu, et illius assi- / stentia cum uehementi ardore diuini amoris. /

Spiritus orabat ualde efficaciter et feruenter cum magna reuerentia, / amo- / re, et humilitate inclinatus, et prostratus coram diuina maiestate, una / [40] etiam agebar spiritu Deum laudante et benedicente, eo quod tam mira- / bi.... / uelrer cum hoc Rege cooperari ad promotionem S. Ecclesiae et salutem / [ani-] / marum. /

Sic ibam cubitum; mane euigilans, sentiebam cor ualde accensu.... / ...ns in diuino amore, modo mirabiliori, quam umquam. //

47<sup>v</sup>

[1] Possidetur a spiritu Dei, qui eius spiritui unitus incipit miro et / supernaturali modo cum eo occupari in fauorem Regis Galliae in / eius exercitu, dispergens se super totum exercitum. /

Secundum omnem apparentiam et experientiam, possidebar tunc a spiritu / [5] Dei, quod fiebat quasi per suauem et simul potentem superationem et / absolutam introsumptionem mei spiritus in spiritu Dei, spiritu me sic uolunta- / rio / possesso; incipiebat spiritus Dei in illo, et cum illo mirabiliter cooperari, / modo raro, numquam antea probato, et supernaturali, n. pro assistentia et / adiutorio Regis Galliae in eius exercitu, ad confortandos milites etc, in quem / [10] finem distincte percipiebam, quod diuinus spiritus cum meo coniunctus et / unitus (nam hi duo tunc tantum erant unus spiritus, et unum esse sine

King of France will triumph in Holland.” And it seemed to me ... that the bad reports which were given before, were not true, especially about ... of Münster. I had a totally different knowledge and rather ... testimony, with great certainty and peace.

Some days later, Your Reverence confirmed the previously mentioned reports for me again, although they were not better informed. That is why, after having laid aside my opinion, I doubted the previously experienced inner testimony and cognition. But going into prayer, again it continued in me like before, that those things were not true.

On the fifth day of the same month,<sup>90</sup> during Vespers suddenly the uncommon great light and the divine clarity disappeared from me, that ... me ... from there ... enlightened and shone around me and placed me in ... and the assurance, that the King of France would triumph in Holland ... all, who resisted him. Also the spirit of praying for the fortunate progress and assistance of him came to me with an intense glow of divine love.

The Spirit prayed very fervently, very effectively and with great respect, love and humility bowing and prostrating himself before the divine majesty. At the same time I was also led by the spirit that praised and blessed God, because so miraculously ... to cooperate with this King for the promotion of the holy Church and for the salvation of souls.

So I went to sleep. Early in the morning awakening, I felt my heart aflame... in divine love, in a more miraculous way than ever.

#### 47<sup>v</sup>

She is possessed by a spirit of God, that united with her spirit begins in a wonderful and supernatural way to be occupied in favour of the King of France with his army, spreading themselves over the entire army.

According to all appearance and experience I was possessed then by a spirit of God. This happened as by a sweet and at the same time powerful overcoming and total drawing of my spirit into the spirit of God, after the spirit had possessed me so voluntarily. The spirit of God began to cooperate in him and with him miraculously in a strange and supernatural way, never before tested, coming namely to the assistance of the King of France in his army, to comfort the soldiers etc., to which purpose I perceived distinctly that the divine spirit connected and united with mine (for these two were then only one spirit and one

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90 I.e. February 1673.

dif- / ferentia uel distinctione) se inclinaret, et dispergeret super istum exerci-  
tum, / ipsis communicando, in ipsos influendo, et effundendo aliquid diuinum,  
quantum / existimo, fortitudinem, sapientiam, et dilectionem. /

[15] Intelligebam, aliquod attentatum, uel conflictum esse prae manibus, et  
, ut / mihi uidebatur, de facto esse in fieri, eo quod Deus mecum, et ego cum  
Deo / tunc tam efficaciter cooperaremur multiplicibus modis, cum tam uiua  
per- / ceptione et certitudine, quod illae operationes spiritus essent diuinae, et  
quod / Deus esset cum isto Rege, et consequenter, quod in suis attentatis, assul-  
tibus, con- / [20] flictibus obtineret uictoriam, ut pro ista ueritate bene permi-  
sissem me comburi. /

Sperat per omnia prosperum successum istius Regis, quia spiritus / mire  
pro eo orat, et diuinam uirtutem illi et exercitui communicat, / ac a Deo  
iubetur illis benedicere, et aduersariis maledicere. /

Ista ... perceptibilis diuini spiritus meo spiritui uniti inclinatio ad illum exerci-  
tum / [25] faciebat me magna, bona attentata, et uictorias sperare, eo magis,  
quod spiritus tunc tam / singulari [m]odo in me oret, et ex Deo et ex me tam  
diuina uirtus exeat, et effluat in / Gallos; ..fien..i propter multiplices benedic-  
tiones, quas per internam directionem spiritus / illis frequenter impertior, ap-  
precior, et illis a Dilecto etiam ultro concedi postulo, / econtra maledictiones  
secundum corpus imprecor aduersariis illorum, Deum depre- / [30] cando, ut  
ab illis auferat potestatem, sapientiam, animos et fortitudinem, neque ego /  
sum, quae sic oro, et postulo, sed spiritus Dei in me, per me, eo quod aduersarii  
Regis Galliae / agant contra Deum; nam Dilectus commendauit, et donauit  
mihi Hollandiam. /

Durante eius a Deo possessione redit dispositio Reginae mandantis / cum  
potes[ta]te sibi a Dilecto concessa; tunc mandat Angelis, ut / [35] iuuent  
Dilectum ponere in regno suo, et iuuent Regem Galliae / qui ..... se  
paratos. /

Quando eram in supradicta possessione, seu possessa a diuino spiritu, mihi  
iterum ad- / ueniebat ille animus, seu animae dispositio quasi Reginae man-  
dantis, cum potestate, et / autoritate mihi a Dilecto infusa et concessa, imo  
cum suaui, et amicabili quasi / [40] ad hoc coactione, ita ut non uiderer aliter  
posse, prae uehementia spiritus, prae ex- / uberantia ardentis diuini amoris,  
prae spirituali ebrietate etc, quae tunc in me in- / ueniuntur. /

being without difference or distinction) inclined and spread himself over that army, communicating to them, flowing into them and pouring out over them, as I believe, some divine force, wisdom and love.

I understood that some attack or conflict was pending and, as it seemed to me, that in fact was happening, because God with me and I with God cooperated then so strongly in multiple ways, with such a vivid perception and certainty that those operations of the spirit were divine and God was with that King and consequently that he would obtain victory in the attacks, assaults and conflicts, so that for that truth I allowed myself fully to be consumed.

Throughout all she hopes for the prosperous success of that King, because the spirit prays miraculously for him and extends divine power to him and his army, and by God she is commanded to bless them and to curse their opponents.

That ... perceptible inclination of the divine spirit united with my spirit to that army made me hope greatly, for good attacks and victories, the more because the spirit prayed then in such a particular way in me, and from God and from me went out a divine power that flowed into the French. ... because of the many blessings, which I through inner direction of the spirit frequently give them and pray for them and ask from the Beloved that those are also granted to them, and, on the contrary, I pray for malediction for the body for their opponents, asking of God that from them all might, wisdom, courage and strength be taken, and it is not I who is praying like that, but the spirit of God in me, through me, because the opponents of the King of France act against God. For the Beloved has entrusted and given Holland to me.

While she was possessed by God the disposition of a commanding queen returned with power that was granted to her by the Beloved. Then she commands the Angels that they help to place the Beloved in his kingdom and help the King of France, who ... ready.

When I was in the above-mentioned possession, or possessed by a divine spirit, again that spirit or disposition of the soul came to me as of a commanding queen, with might and authority infused and granted to me by the Beloved, yes even with a sweet and friendly sort of coercion, so that I seemed not to be able to do anything else, because of the heaviness of the spirit, because of the exuberance of the burning divine love, because of the spiritual inebriation etc., which were found then in me.

Quo tempore cum singulari animi confidentia, et libertate, ago cum sanctis Angelis / ... mandando, ut fortiter agant, generose cooperentur, interceptas Ciuitates custo- / [45] ...nt, attentata et conceptus aduersariorum detegant, euertant etc, et omnia / .....disponant, prout res exigit, et est necessarium, ut Dilectus meus ibidem perfec- / .....stituatur, et stabiliatur in regno suo; ipsi Angeli exhibebant se ad into... / ..... zelosos, et promptos etc, mihi promittentes prosperitatem, et progr[essum] / .....um Regis Ga[lliae] //

48r

[1] Dilectus dignetur mihi ignoscere, si in his errem, et de defectu sinceræ humilitatis, / et de uana praesumptione sim culpabilis, audendo similia credere, et eloqui; ali- / quando simile quid uel solum cogitando, erubesco prae uerecundia, et humiliatione, / nempe, quando ista inoperatio transiit; sed spiritu redeunte, et iterum operante, / [5] ista formido, et erroris suspicio, ac uerecundia euanescit, quasi omnia essent bene. /

Iubetur a Dilecto annotare, quod Angeli apparuerint, ut iuuenes / accincti in corporali specie, et intelligit multa mala nuncia contra / Gallos esse falsa. /

Antecedenter sponte defui, et omisi scribere, quod modo ex parte Dilecti mei, uidetur / [10] mandari, ut scribam; quia eram nonnihil ambigua de ueritate, an imaginatio, et soler- / tia naturalis ibi non tantisper collusisset; uerum hodie uidebar aliter certificari, / nempe, quod Sancti Angeli sese exhibuerint promptos ad parendum meis mandatis / praetactis, et uiderim illos in specie Iuuenum, quasi accinctos ad iter: hae sunt primae / uices, quibus eos uidi in specie humana, et sic cum illis egi; ista uisio non diu durabat, / [15] ut mihi uidetur, non ultra duo Pater noster. /

Postea per diuersos intellexi, quomodo plura mala nuncia essent mendacia, et / econtra Galli fere occupauerint unam integram Prouinciam in Hollandia: sum / certa, quod Sancti Angeli ipsis praestent magnam assistentiam, et multum auxilientur / sed an sit uerus rumor de magna illa uictoria, non scio, nam de illa in spiritu / [20] nihil percipio.

haec in Febuario 1673. /

Constituatur quasi Regina mandans a latere Dilecti, et mandat / angelis, ut assistant Regi Galliae, et eius exercitui in Hollandia. /

In that time with a particular self-confidence and freedom, I speak with the holy angels ... ordering that they act forcefully, cooperate generously, watch over the conquered cities ... uncover and overthrow attacks and plans of the opponents, and dispose all ... insofar as it is required and necessary, so that my Beloved at the same place ... and is established in his kingdom. Those angels offered themselves to ... zealous and ready etc, promising me the prosperity and progress ... of the King of France.

48r

May the Beloved deign to forgive me, if I am mistaken in these things and would be guilty of the weakness of sincere humility and of vain presumption, daring to believe such things and to speak them out. Some time when I only even think something, I blush with shame and humiliation, namely when this operation has passed. But while the spirit returns, the suspicion of error and shame vanishes, as if all were good.

She is commanded by the Beloved to note that the angels have appeared like young men with a physical appearance and she understands that the many bad reports against the French are false.

Previously I have of my own accord failed and neglected to write what now seems to be demanded of me from the side of the Beloved that I write. I was somewhat ambivalent about the truth, due to imagination and natural ingenuity joining together. But today I seemed otherwise to be reassured, namely that the holy angels had offered themselves ready to obey my previously mentioned orders and I saw them in the form of young men, as it were girded for a journey. These were the first times that I have seen them in a human form and so I have spoken with them. That vision didn't last long as it seemed to me, not longer than two Our Fathers.

Then of different people I have understood how the very many bad reports were mendacious and that the French on the contrary had occupied one complete province in Holland. I am certain that the holy angels have given them great assistance and have much helped, but if that rumour about that great victory was true I don't know, for about that I perceive nothing in the spirit.

These things she wrote in February 1673.

She is placed like a commanding queen at the side of the Beloved and commands the angels to assist the King of France and his army in Holland.

Quando diuinus spiritus me assumebat, infundebat spiritui meo diuinam quamdam / uirtutem, et alias cum ipso similitudines, et sic simul in unum, uidebatur diuinus / [25] spiritus et meus spiritus obumbrare Regem Galliae, et ipsi infundere aliquam / diuinam uirtutem, et alia dona, eumque sub suo comprehenso assumere. /

Uidebar iterum constituta in isto animo et dispositione Reginae mandantis; / cum perceptione, pro tempore ualde modico, circiter unius medii Aue, quod a Dilecto ... / uarer in spiritu, et ponerer iuxta eius latus, prout in anterioribus scriptis habetur. / [30] Inde iterum incipiebam mandare sanctis Angelis, ut Regi eiusque militibus / auxiliarentur, et praestarent assistentiam in promouendis negociis in Hollandiam, ad / honorem et gloriam Dilecti mei, et ad salutem animarum: o qualem confidentiam, / quantam spiritus libertatem experitur tunc anima mea in hoc negocio assumendo, / et prosequendo, quasi ad me pertinente, et mihi commisso! alie...e tamen magna / [35] perfundor uerecundia, et profunde demergor in nihilo meo cum adnihilatione / et stupore, quod Deus taliter mei meminisci, ac in me sic operari dignetur, quae ipsi / sum adeo infidelis in multis, et sum omnium indignissima. /

Haec dona nihil faciunt, nisi me deprimere, et profundius descendere in abyssum / uilitatis et nihilitatis meae; atque sic profundus descensus iterum causat maiorem / [40] eleuationem in Deo; quanto altius, tanto demissius, et quo demissius, eo altius; / tunc etiam mihi in memoriam reducebantur multae alteriores gratiae, uti dictu / est, cum securitate et certificatione ueritatis illarum. /

Dilectus ostendit se iratum Regi Galliae ob peccata dissimulata, et ... / minatur subtrahere manum auxiliatricem in Hollandia, quem i.... / [45] conatur placare, sed ipse renuit: ac uidetur cessare fauor caeli pr.... /

..... 1673 et aliquot diebus praecedentibus, habui in spiritu multa .... //

48v

[1] impressiones, et alias perceptiones, quomodo Dilectus ostenderet male contentum / et iratum contra Regem Galliae, eo quod in suis subditis tolerasset et dissi- / mulasset multa mala, et grauia peccata, nec impediisset, nec puniesset; / intelligebam quod in his secutus fuisset humanas suas passiones, neglecto et / [5] seposito lumine gratiae, sibi a Deo concesso, ut illud sequendo,



When the divine spirit took me up, he poured some divine power into my spirit and other similar things with that, and so at one and the same time the divine spirit and my spirit seemed to overshadow the King of France and to pour divine power into him along with other gifts, and to take him in their protection.

I seemed to be placed again in that mind and that disposition of a commanding queen, with the perception for a very limited time, about one and a half Ave Marias, that I was ... by the Beloved in the spirit and was placed at his side, as it is maintained in previous writings. After that I began again to order the holy angels to help the King and his soldiers and provide him with assistance in promoting his business in Holland, to the honour and glory of my Beloved and for the salvation of souls. O what confidence and how much freedom of spirit my soul is then experiencing in taking up this business and proceeding with it, as if it is -pertaining to me and entrusted on me! ... still I am plunged in great disgrace and deeply sunk in my nothingness with annihilation and stupor, that God deigns to remember me so and work in me in this way, who am so unfaithful to him in many things and most unworthy of all.

These gifts do nothing but dishearten me and lower me deeper into the abyss of my unworthiness and nothingness. And so the deep descent causes again a greater elevation in God. How much higher that much deeper and how much deeper, that much higher. Then also many deeper graces were brought back to my memory, as it is to say, with certainty and certification of the truth of those things.

The Beloved shows himself angry with the King of France because of his concealed sins and ... threatens to withdraw his helping hand in Holland, which ... tries to appease, but he refused. And the favour of heaven seems to cease for ...

... 1673 and some previous days, I have had in the spirit many ...

48v

Impression and other perceptions, how the Beloved showed himself unhappy and angry with the King of France, because he had tolerated and concealed many serious and weighty sins among his subjects and had not impeded or punished them. I understood that he had followed his human passions, while the light of grace, that God had granted him, was neglected and set aside, so that if he had followed that light, he would have preserved among his people

in populo suo ser- / uaret sanctum quemdam uehendi modum, secundum exemplam S. Ludouici Regis Galliae. /

Uidebatur Dilectus uelle subtrahere manum auxiliatricem in prosequendis uic- / toriis in Hollandia, quasi Rex se illa manu auxiliatrice indignum redderet. /

Id summopere sentiebam prae teneritudine affectus in amore Dilecti confide- / [10] rando in hoc eius interesse etc; magnopere occupabar, et me totam impendeba.. / ut Dilectum super hoc placarem, et isti Regi propitium redderem per actus contri- / tionis, per orationes, per gemitus, et intimas lamentationes nomine istius / Regis, quatenus Dilectus ipsi hanc noxam dimitteret, et eum dignaretur assu- / mere, sicut prius; sed Dilectus uidetur se exhibere quasi implacabilem, quasi / [15] renueret exaudire, sed spiritus orandi econtra non cessat illum deprecari. /

Circa hoc tempus amisit ille Rex conflictum in mari contra haereticos, etsi / de eo nihil scirem, dum praedicta in me transibant, nisi aliquo tempore post, quando / illud referri audiebam; de quo non mirabar, nec turbabar, quia nihil minus / exspectabam, attentis comminationibus Dilecti. /

[20] Adhuc aliquoties pro ipso orauit, magis ex proprio meo spiritu quam aliter, / ide..que sine efficacia, sine accessu, sine confidentia, et sine exauditione; uidebar / pulsare ad fores unius surdi, et quasi cortina aliqua fuisset interposita, ne / uiderem, uel perciperem aliquid boni, uel aliquid pro ipso fauorabile apud Di- / lectum; omnis bona apparentia, et prosperitas, ac fauor caeli uidebatur inuersus / [25] et auersus; in quo debebam me uoluntarie resignare, totum diuinae dispositioni / committere, et annihilare in uoluntate Dei. /

Agitur miro spiritu orandi pro Rege Galliae, et Dilectus facit / eam pro illo pati, sicut alias pro illo fecit orare. /

..... aliquam ualde penalem dispositionem, iterum percepi spiritum Dei in me / [30] ...ari, et tunc etiam incipiebat ille spiritus in me orare pro Rege Galliae, supra / [om]nem modum, et intellectum, sine uerbis et sine cogitationibus. /

Hic orandi modus est plane absconditus, et paucis notus; anima nihil ibi addi... / .... suo, sed solum .... titur, et sinit spiritum Dei in se orare; tantummodo debet attend[ere] / ut eum non inte.... et, aliquid de suo miscendo; sed se in sancto otio, ac in tranquil- / [35] litate ..... illi dare libertatem agendi. /

some holy way of acting according to the example of St. Louis, the King of France.

The Beloved seemed to want to withdraw the helping hand he gave in the preceding victories in Holland, as if the King had shown himself unworthy of that helping hand.

I felt this above all because of the tenderness of the affection in the love of the Beloved trusting in this interest of his etc., I was very occupied and felt that it all depended on me to appease the Beloved over this, and to give the favour back to that King by acts of contrition, by prayers, sighs and intimate lamentations in the name of that King, in order that the Beloved would let go this transgression of his and would deign to take him up, like before. But the Beloved seemed to hold himself implacable as if he refused to hear, but the spirit of praying on the other hand did not cease to pray to him.

About this time that King lost the battle at sea against the heretics,<sup>91</sup> though I knew nothing about that, while the above-mentioned things were going on in me, except some time after, when I heard the report. About that I did not wonder nor was I disturbed, because I expected nothing less, after I had heard of the threats to the Beloved.

Still several times I have prayed for him, more from my own spirit than otherwise ... without force, without access, without confidence and without being heard. I seemed to knock on the door of someone who is deaf, and as if some curtain had been placed between us, so that I could not see or perceive anything good or anything favourable for him in the Beloved. Every good appearance and prosperity and favour of heaven seemed to be inverted and turned away and so I had to resign voluntarily and commit myself totally to the divine disposition and become nothing in the face of the will of God.

She is led by a wonderful spirit of praying for the King of France, and the Beloved makes her suffer for him, like he has made others pray for him.

... some very painful disposition, I have perceived again the spirit of God in me ... and then also that spirit began to pray in me for the King of France, beyond every way and intellect, without words and without thoughts.

This way of praying is obviously hidden and known to few. The soul ... there nothing ... but only ... and let the spirit of God pray in it. It only has to take care that it ... him not ... and something of itself intermingling. But itself in holy rest and in quietness ... giving to him the freedom to act.

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<sup>91</sup> Maria refers here to the naval Battles of Schooneveld on 7 June and 14 June 1673.

Quando hoc sic fit, tunc anima a spiritu Dei possidetur; spiritus superior animae / ..... diuinam illuminationem instructus separat se a spiritu inferiore, et uni- / to cum spiritu diuino, et ita orant simul in uno; haec oratio erat pro Rege Galliae / sed durabat modico tempore. /

[40] Mane euigilans, inueniebam me denuo in interiori afflictione, pressuris, an- / [gu]stis etc quasi perfusam, post aliquantulum temporis incidebat mihi quidam / [inst]inctus cum illecebrosa cognitione, sicuti praeterito anno pro isto Rege orasti, ita / .... pro illo debes pati, a me quasi requirendo bene essem parata pro illo / .....sustinere, ad quod me statim praesentabam, me offerendo ad omne D... / .....ne placitam, etiam ad tolerandos poenas ... afflictiones infer..... /

..... //

#### 49r

[1] Agitur spiritu orandi pro Rege Galliae, quasi cogendo Dilectum, / ut eum iuuet, cum fiducia exauditionis. /

Ab illo tempore uidebatur mihi interius accrescere suauior quaedam confidentia, / et fiducia, postulandi a Dilecto assistentiam et auxilium pro isto Rege, ut posset / [5] suis aduersariis resistere, et praeualere. /

Ante et post sacram communionem, cum essem spiritualiter Deo unita, id est / tota in spiritu, et abstracta ab omni sensu, in pura unitate, et nuditate, incipiebat / spiritus premere, et urgere Dilectum, imo quasi cogendo aggredi, ut uellet exten- / dere potentem manum suam ad iuuandum istum Regem, quatenus promissio a / [10] Dilecto mihi facta plenum sortiretur effectum; spiritus dicebat: Dilecte mi, / tu debes id facere, et mihi uidebatur, quod non amplius tergiuersaretur, uel / abnueret, et ex parte ad meam postulationem auscultaret, dando quasi confiden- / tiam perseuerandi in oratione, et in faciendis instantiis; ex quo sequitur praedulcis / fiducia instantis uictoriae. /

[15] Agitur spiritu orandi, et penitendi pro Rege Galliae, ut placet Dilectum, / cum impressione, quod conuertetur a suis peccatis. /

Die 28 Junii 1673, post sacram communionem sentiebam aliquam confidentiam, / et fiduciam ad deprecandum pro Delictis Regis, et Dilectum illi propitiandum; Item / agebar spiritu paenitentiae, contritionis, et confessionis eius nomine Dilecti faciendae, / [20] instar matris pro suo filio, cum praesentatione

When this happens in this way, then the soul is possessed by the spirit of God. The superior spirit of the soul ... instructed by a divine illumination, separates itself from the inferior spirit and is united with the divine spirit, and so they pray together in one. This prayer was for the King of France, but lasted a short time.

Awakening early I found myself anew in inner affliction, pressures, anxieties etc, as it were overshadowed, after a little time some intuition fell on me with a seductive thought: "Like you prayed the previous year for that King, so ... you must suffer for him", requiring of me as it were that I be ready to sustain him ..., to which I presented myself at once, offering myself to all ... pleasing, also to tolerate punishments ... afflictions ...

...

49r

She is led by the spirit of praying for the King of France, as it were forcing the Beloved to help him, with the belief of being heard.

From that time on some sweeter confidence and faith seemed to grow within, to ask of the Beloved assistance and help for that King, so that he could resist and overcome his opponents.

Before and after holy communion, when I was spiritually united with God, that is completely in the spirit and abstracted from every sense in pure unity and nakedness, the spirit began to press and urge the Beloved, yes almost to approach him forcefully, so that he would extend his mighty hand to help that King, and so that the promise made to me by the Beloved would have full effect. The spirit said: "My Beloved, you must do that." And it seemed to me that he no longer turned his back on me or denied it, and from his side listened to my request, giving as it were confidence to persevere in prayer and in making intercessions. From this came a very sweet faith in the impending victory.

As it pleases the Beloved, she is led by the spirit of praying and of doing penance for the King of France, with the impression that he is converted from his sins.

On the 28th of June 1673 after holy communion I felt some confidence and faith to ask forgiveness for the offenses of the King, and to make reparation to the Beloved for him. Likewise I was led by the spirit of penance, contrition and confession made in the name of the Beloved, like a mother for her son, with

pro ipso satisfaciendi utpote interius / ultro ad hoc mota, mere et pure ex zelo promouendi commune sanctae Ecclesiae bonum; / Item mihi infundebatur spiritus offerendi passionem, uulnera, et sanguinem Jesu / ad placandum Deum, sicut mater solet agere causam filii apud Patrem, et delinquentem / filium offenso Patri studet reconciliare: fit etiam mihi quaedam quasi impressio, quod / [25] ille Rex deuenerit ad agnitionem, contritionem, confessionem, et sui ipsius humiliationem. /

Quando haec sunt transactae, et iterum ponor in paupertate, et carenti ..... omnium / perceptibilium, et sensibilium donorum Dei, in tenebris, in doloribus, [pr]essuris, et / angustiis, in parte inferiore; tunc excidunt mihi omnes praeteritae operationes .... / sic de isto Rege scriptae, omnia mihi tunc uertuntur in dubia, quod forte ..... / [30] proueniant ex naturali solertia, uel ab aliquo peregrino spiritu; eo magis, qu..... / postea me quasi sentio alienam ab isto Rege, et cum aliquali auersione ab illo, a ..... / ulla teneritudine affectus, uel amoris erga illum inclinatione, quae solummo[do] ..... / tam diu durat, quam diu illa operatio amoris etc in me est. /

Ab alia parte etiam mihi incidit, quod Dilectus meam praesentationem, et / [35] animi promptitudinem ad satisfaciendum pro illo, ratum habu[er]it et acceptauerit / et in istum finem me constituat in tam paenali animae statu; cum t...i suspensione / omnis sensibilitatis, gustus, solatii etc. secundum pariem superiorem et inferior[em] ... / et relinquitur in totali et omnimoda derelictione, ualde dura, sensibili, eo magis ... / quia Dilecto permittente, pars inferior tunc est adeo sensibilis, et tam tenera ... / [40] aliquid sustinendum; ita ut uel minima contrarietas alicubi in aliqua re, uel / in aliquo obuia sit quasi uulnus in corde meo. /

Angustiae etiam et pressurae sunt tam sensibiles, ut mihi aliquando sudor eru.... / et ex re possim respirare, prae maerore, non sciendo, quare; quid sit de ueritate .... / Dilecto; uerum Lumen haec dispositio uidetur mihi ualde peregrina, quod sine .... / [45] ten..... sensibilis, usque ad ....criimas; uidetur mihi quod tunc sim posita .... / ..... //

## 49v

[1] Lumen fidei ad me exercendum in praesentia Dei, est plane spiritualis et a sensibus abstractum. /

the willingness to give satisfaction for him, as if I was voluntarily moved to this inside, merely and purely out of zeal to promote the common good of the holy Church. Likewise the spirit of offering the passion was poured into me, the wounds and the blood of Jesus to appease God, like a mother uses to plead the case of her son with the Father, and seeks to reconcile her wrongdoing son with the offended father. It happens also to me as if I also got some impression, that the King had come to acknowledgement, contrition and confession of his sins and some humiliation of himself.

When these things are done, and I am placed again in poverty and the missing ... of all perceptible and sensible gifts of God, in darkness, in pains, in pressures and anxieties, in an inferior part, then all the previous operations fail me ... so written about that King, all is turned into doubt for me, that strongly ... come forth from a natural ingenuity or some strange spirit. The more ... afterwards I felt sort of alienated from that King, and with some kind of aversion towards him, by ... some tenderness of feeling or inclination of love towards him, which only ... lasts as long as that operation of love etc. is in me.

On the other side it also occurred to me, that the Beloved had approved and accepted my willingness and the readiness of my mind to give satisfaction for him, and to that purpose he had placed me in such a painful state of soul, with the ... suspension of all sensibility, taste and solace etc. just like the upper and lower wall<sup>92</sup>... and I was left in total and complete abandonment, very hard, sensible, the more ... because while the Beloved permits it, my inferior part is then so sensible and so tender ... to sustain something, so that even the least contrariety, anywhere, or in anything, or in any matter comes to me like a wound in my heart.

I could feel the anxieties and pressures so much, that sometimes I broke out in sweat ... and I could just gasp out of sadness, not knowing why. What is the truth ... in the Beloved. But the Light seems in this disposition very strange to me, because without ... sensitive, to the point of tears ... it seems to me that I am placed then ...

#### 49v

The light of faith that must be shone on me in the presence of God, is clearly spiritual and abstracted from the senses.

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92 See article of Elisabeth Hense, 252-265.

Ostenditur ei in spiritu malum imminens isti Regi, et exercitui illius, /  
 quali Deus illis uellet maledicere, quod ipsa conatur deprecari, ac intel-  
 ligit / [5] Deum isti Regi placatum, et eum adiuturum ad nouas uictor-  
 rias. /

Die 29 Junii, festo Ss Apostolorum Petri et Pauli 1673 habui in spiritu aliquas /  
 tristes repraesentationes de Rege Galliae, uidebatur capiti illius et toti exerci-  
 tui / imminere ingens malum, perinde acsi quaedam maledictio super eum  
 fuisset / comminata, nam Deus, imo totum caelum uidebatur faciem suam ab  
 illo auertere, / [10] unde multum turbabar, consternabar et contristabar; con-  
 fugiebam ad passionem, / ad uulnera et sanguinem Christi, ut possem commi-  
 natum, et mihi ostensum malum / deprecari. /

Post aliquid tempus apparebat in meo interiori quoddam diuinum bonum,  
 seu / diuina maiestas, et accipiebam quasi confidentiam, et illecebram ad eam-  
 dem ado- / [15] randam; spiritus meus prouoluebat se ante pedes huius maie-  
 statis, pronus super / faciem suam in terra (nostro modo loquendi) et  
 incipiebam cum magna humilitate / et amore, longo tempore exorare, suppli-  
 care, et postulare remissionem pro hoc / Rege, cum intimis gemitibus inenar-  
 rabilibus, Deo demonstrando omnia mala / quae ex illa maledictione etc  
 prouenirent; Item ut Deus dignaretur ipsius misereri / [20] et oculo misericor-  
 diae respicere ad omnem effusionem tam copiosi sanguinis innocentis / quem  
 uidebam profundendum, casu quo commitrata maledictio fuisset sortita  
 suum / plenum effectum; et ut Deus uellet misereri tot animarum, quae per  
 hoc aeternalit... / perirent; ut saltem uellet exaudire praetiosum sanguinem  
 Unigeniti sui filii etc. /

Qui[b]us peractis, percipiebam pacem inter Deum et istum Regem esse fac-  
 tam, et / [25] Regem esse Deo reconciliatum; per diuinam quamdam irradia-  
 tionem seu illumi- / nationem in fundo animae meae, pro certo cognoscebam,  
 quod Rex deinceps iterum / haberet uictorias; non obstante, quod iam aliquo  
 tempore passus fuisset cladem, / multos milites amisisset, et uideretur esse ex-  
 tra humanam spem, et apparentiam / ..... amplius obtinendi uictorias. /

[30] Fertur spiritu amoris erga Regem, et exercitum ante Traiectum,  
 quam / ciuitatem clare uidet in Deo, cum assecuratione, quod Rex illam  
 intercipiet / ministerio Angelorum, quorum auxilio postea intelligit eam  
 interceptam. /

Rediebat mihi teneritudo amoris et maternus affectus erga istum Regem, sicu-  
 ti anno / praeterito ; spiritu amoris iterum aderam Regi, et eius exercitui in



To her is shown in the spirit the evil that threatens that King and his army, with which God wanted to curse them, because she tries to ask for their forgiveness and she understands that God is appeased concerning that King and that he will help him with new victories.

On the 29th of June on the feast the holy Apostles Peter and Paul 1673 I had in the spirit some sad representations about the King of France. It seemed that some huge evil hung over him and his entire army, as if some curse was threatening him, for God, yes even the whole of heaven seemed to turn away his face from him, therefore I was very confused, dismayed and grieved. I took my refuge in the passion, the wounds and the blood of Christ, so that I could avert the threat and the evil that was shown to me.

After some time inside me there appeared some divine good or divine majesty, and I received as it were a confidence and incitement to adore that same thing. My spirit hurried to the feet of this majesty, flat on its face on the ground (in our way of speaking) and I began with great humility and love to pray for a long time and to beg and ask remission for that King, with intimate and ineffable sighs, demonstrating to God all the evil that would result from that curse. Likewise that God would deign to remember him and look back with his merciful eye to all the spilling of so much innocent blood, which I saw that would be shed, in which case the threatened curse would have had its full effect. And that God wanted to have mercy on so many souls, who by this eternally ... perish. That he at least would hear the precious blood of his only begotten Son etc.

After these things had been completed I perceived that peace had been made between God and that King and that the King was reconciled with God. Through some divine irradiation of illumination in the depths of my soul, I knew for certain, that the King immediately again had lost many soldiers and it seemed to be beyond all human hope and appearance ... to obtain more victories.

She is animated by the spirit of love towards the King and the army before Maastricht, which city she sees clearly in God, with the assurance that the King will occupy it with the ministry of the angels, by whose help she understands later that that city is occupied.<sup>93</sup>

The tenderness of love and maternal affection towards that King returned to me, like in the previous year. With the spirit of love I stood again with the King

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93 See n. 29.

conflictu ante / [35] ciuitatem Traiectensem, ad eos inuandos, non dubitans, quin eam occuparent. /

Eodem die post meridiem uidebam in Deo, uelut in speculo, quod Ciuitas illa breui / traderetur; Deus ostendebat mihi istam ciuitatem in se cum tali claritate, sicut aliquid / uidetur in speculo, cum plena certitudine, quod Rex illam interciperet. /

Sequenti die, ultimo mensis, mane hora sexta, cum essem in uia ad templum, mihi / [40] subito oboriebatur aliquod extraordinarium lumen diuinum in supremitate spiritus / per modum stantis fulguris corruscantis, quod durabat circiter ad unum Aue / Maria, et sic disparebat. /

In hoc lumine, et per hoc lumen intelligebam et percipiebam Sanctos Angelos / ....isse in adiutorium et assistentiam Regis, cum praemagna certificatione / [45] [uer]itatis, et assecuratione, quod deinceps iterum haberet bonum successum / /.....o laetabar, et laudabam Dei misericordiam. //

and with his army in the conflict before the city of Maastricht, with the invading troops, not doubting that they would occupy it.

On that same day in the afternoon I saw in God as in a mirror, that the city would be soon delivered. God showed me that city in him with such clarity, like something that is seen in a mirror, with full certainty, that the King would occupy it.

The next day, the last of the month, early in the sixth hour, when I was on my way to the church, suddenly some extraordinary light arose in the sublimity of the spirit in the form of a standing bolt of lightning, which lasted about one Ave Maria, and disappeared just like that.

In this light and through this light I understood and perceived that the holy angels ... to the help and assistance of the King, with a very great certainty of the truth and assurance, that he would immediately enjoy good success ... I was pleased and praised the mercy of God.

# Maria Petyt's Support of the French King

*Veronie Meeuwsen*

## Introduction

A new text by Maria Petyt, which has not been edited before and has therefore remained unknown so far, provides an opportunity to scrutinize her spirituality anew. The text consists of a collection of letters that Maria wrote to Michael of St. Augustine. All of them deal with the period of the Dutch War and Maria's experience of it. The letters are well worth studying, because they make it clear that although Maria Petyt lived a secluded life, she was certainly concerned with the world outside her hermitage.

This article examines the insight that the new text by Maria Petyt affords into her spirituality, focusing more specifically on her support of the French king and the discernment of spirits in this context. The text tells how Maria developed a preference for the French king and how she prayed for him from her hermitage. She speaks about sending angels to him and his army to assist them, and how she was concerned about him like a mother. She seemed to be advocating his cause so that Michael would also side with the French. Regarding her belief that it was God who sent her to help the French, we have to ask what role the discernment of spirits played in this. This spiritual practice was an important part of her religious life. In what follows I look at Maria's own criteria of the discernment of spirits and how she applied them in her choices regarding the Dutch War so as to see how it worked and whether it failed or succeeded.

## Discernment of Spirits

First I briefly describe what the discernment of spirits meant to Maria Petyt: how did she make her choices and how did she discern what stemmed from God and what did not? The term 'discernment of spirits' indicates judging which spirit directs the impulses of the soul: the good spirit of God, the evil spirit of Satan or the human spirit itself. This is necessary to determine whether the cause of a given impulse is good, evil or should be seen as neutral. Sometimes such discernment is made possible by a special gift of intuitive

perception, but mostly it also requires reflection on arguments and emotions, as well as the direction of others. The most famous example is the *Spiritual Exercises* by Ignatius of Loyola, where we find rules for the discernment of spirits.<sup>1</sup>

Maria Petyt learned much about the discernment of spirits from her spiritual father Michael of St. Augustine. He taught her to 'conform completely to the Holy Humanity of Christ, with all that concerns his external person, like his humble, mild, meek lovingness, his way of speaking, all his virtues and ways of acting'.<sup>2</sup> To do so it is essential to learn to let go of all personal activity so as to grow in pure faith in God's presence and in loving inclination towards him. You must let go of all of your own sensory expectations and images as well as your thoughts.<sup>3</sup> It is important to discriminate between your own activity and God's activity in you. In this regard Maria frequently used the word 'deiform', referring to conformity with God's will and letting go of your own. But the word 'Godlike' can also indicate that the form of the essence or activity is determined by divine influence.<sup>4</sup>

Important criteria of discernment are mentioned in chapter 54 of Maria's autobiography.<sup>5</sup> The key criterion is termed 'holy freedom'. Spiritual discernment has to provide this freedom for the soul to be able to grow in love of the Beloved.<sup>6</sup> There are other criteria mentioned in this chapter of her autobiography. Maria says that the divine spirit grants the soul the power of discernment so as to moderate all her activities which are focused on God.<sup>7</sup> Although it is

1 Cf. Baers (2003) 68; DS (1990), vol. 3, 1311–1330.

2 Merlier (1976) ch. 41 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 54. '*Hy leyde my voor, dat ick moest sien my heel ghelijck-vormigh te maecken aen de H. Menscheyt CHRISTI, soo veel als sijnen uytwendighen Persoon aengaet, ghelijck aen sijne ootmoedighe, soete, sachtmoedighe, ende minnelijcke minne, ende conversatie, ende soo voorts in alle sijne andere deughden, ende manieren van doen.*' All English translations of the *Life* in this article are my own.

3 Merlier (1976) ch. 42 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 55.

4 Deblaere (1962) 394.

5 Maria finished writing her autobiography four years before the Dutch War. So it provides us with a good frame to analyse the changes in her thoughts about discernment.

6 Merlier (1976) ch. 54 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 71. '*(...)het welcke involghende, wiert ick terstont ghewaer een beantwoorden vande Goddelijcke gratie, in mijn inwendigh, met een vermeerderen vanden inwendighen peys ende vrede der zielen, ende een soetere toeneyghinghe der liefde tot den Beminden, ende soo voorts; want andersints de heylighe liberteyt des gheests soude daer door te seer ghehindert gheweest hebben.*'

7 Merlier (1976) ch. 54 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 71. '*Het is eyghen aenden Goddelijcken Gheest, al waer hy werckt, oft de ziele jevers toe drijft, 't zy tot penitentie, vasten, abstinentie, waecken ende bidden, oft jet anders, daer altijd maete in te stellen; hy gheeft haer een onderscheyt, ende discretie, om het lichaem niet te bederven, oft te seer te matternen, op dat het bequaem*

true that Maria had the typically dualistic approach to humanity of her day, in which the body was considered of little value and mind and spirit were all-important, she uses in this stage of her life moderation as a criterion of discernment. Moderation is necessary so that the body will not be excessively confused or fatigued. A third criterion Maria writes about in chapter 54, is the distinction between exhortations and movements induced by a good spirit and those that come from an evil spirit. Maria looks at the 'fruits' of the spirit. What comes from the good spirit, the spirit of God, is accompanied by 'mildness, peace of mind and soul, inner quiet, humility, resignation, subservience, love and caution. (...). Anything that does not have these virtues is suspect.'<sup>8</sup>

The role of the spiritual guide is no less important. Maria submitted all her experiences to him and expected him to help her discern what came from herself and from the 'Fiend' and what came from God. Maria usually had great confidence in Michael's discernment.<sup>9</sup> Hence she set great store by obedience, which entailed relinquishing her own will and learning to curb her impulses. Through such blind docility and obedience to her spiritual father she believed she would draw closer to following God's will. In this sense she saw her spiritual guide as a representative of God. She believed that in the words of the guide God himself was speaking to her, admonishing and leading her.<sup>10</sup>

In her autobiography these were the things Maria Petyt held on to when she had to decide what to choose. The prime consideration was that all criteria of discernment had to lead to 'holy freedom' of the soul so it would be free from all that keeps it from doing God's will. The divine spirit could be recognized by its moderation, whereby the body would not be unduly confused or fatigued. It was also accompanied by experiences of inner peace, humility, resignation, love and the like. Finally, obedience to her spiritual guide was a major support, especially in times of crisis.

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*zy, om den gheest te volgen ende te dienen.*' Although Maria mentions moderation as a criterion of discernment, this seems to be somewhat arbitrary, dictated perhaps by her spiritual director. In practice this was not one of Maria Petyt's chief criteria.

- 8 Merlier (1976) ch. 54 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 71. '*Syne aendryvinghen ende beweghinghen komen altoos aen met eenighe soetigheyt, ende stilligheyt des ghemoets, met inwendighen peys ende vrede der ziele, met een sekere inwendighe ruste ende ghetuyghenisse, dat sulcke dryvinghen, inghevinghen ende beweginghen voort-komen vanden goeden gheest, vergheleschapt met een ootmoedighe, vredighe gelatentheyte ende onderworpentheyte aen 't goetduncken, ende wille van de ghene, die haer regeren. Als het anders is, soo is het suspect.'*
- 9 Although her confidence in Michael was great, Maria also had moments of doubt and lack of faith in him, e.g. Petyt (1683) vol.1, 248.
- 10 Cf. Merlier (1976) ch. 78, 109 = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 99, 139.

We will keep these criteria in mind when we look at her experiences and choices at the time of the Dutch War.<sup>11</sup>

### Historical Background to the Dutch War

Let me explain the historical background to her text about the Dutch War. This war was a political and military conflict between France and the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, the current Netherlands. In 1672 the French king Louis XIV attacked the Republic. After the Eighty Years' War, which ended in 1648, the Northern Provinces were an internationally recognized sovereign state named the Republic of the Seven United Provinces. The Southern Netherlands, which was mainly Catholic and still under Spanish rule, was no longer claimed by the Seven Provinces, so it was finally at peace with Spain.

At that time France rose to dominance in Europe. The young French king Louis XIV had ambitious plans. He regarded himself as an absolute monarch accountable to God alone. He strived, moreover, for universal authority in Europe. At that time the Dutch Republic was also one of the superpowers, mainly because of its mercantile and shipping interests. It was affluent, while all neighbouring countries experienced financial troubles. As a result of this difference they were very interested in the strategic power base of the Netherlands.<sup>12</sup>

In 1667 Louis XIV attacked the Spanish Netherlands. He was married to the Spanish princess Maria Teresa and on the strength of a dowry stipulation he thought he could claim parts of the Spanish Netherlands. In a short time he conquered some major cities and border areas in the Spanish Netherlands. In this so-called War of Devolution it became clear how weak the Spanish army in the Southern Netherlands had become. The Seven Provinces were concerned about the growing power of France, so they made a pact with Sweden and England, the Triple Alliance. This put a stop to Louis XIV's advance. He withdrew and kept the conquered areas, but renounced his right to the Spanish Netherlands.

In 1672 Louis XIV wanted to conquer the Republic. With the support of the English, as well as the Electorate of Cologne and the Prince-Bishopric of Münster on the Rhine, he invaded the Seven Provinces, whereupon the Dutch War began.<sup>13</sup> Initially the Dutch were surprised by the French invasion and Utrecht

11 See also Elisabeth Hense's and Anne-Marie Bos' contributions to this volume, p. 252–265 and 266–281.

12 Dreiskämper (1998) 26–40; Rooms (2007) 30–69; Janssens (2006) 40–46.

13 Ibidem.

was conquered with little effort. While the French believed victory was in the bag, the Prince of Orange, William III, made a strategic move by flooding the countryside with deliberate inundations along the Dutch water line. That stopped further French advances. In the meantime, in December 1672, the prince attacked Charleroi, an important strategic base of the French. This attempt failed, but in 1674 and 1677 he tried again. These attacks were a heavy blow to the French defence, which wanted to preserve the base at Charleroi at any price.<sup>14</sup>

Spain did not want to intervene in this conflict, but it had too many common interests with the Netherlands. Even before the French invasion there were agreements that Spain would assist the Netherlands in the defence of important places. In May 1673 Louis XIV again attacked the Spanish Netherlands and wreaked havoc. Officially the Spaniards did not declare war on France until October 1673. In 1674 the war moved mainly from the Republic to the territory of the Spanish Netherlands. This shifting of the battlefield meant a success for the Dutch, because now the Spanish Netherlands could serve as a buffer between France and the Republic; for the Spaniards it was a failure, because their interference had led to war with France on their own territory. By 1676 the Republic of the United Provinces was completely freed of French presence, except for the city of Maastricht, but French troops occupied large parts of the Spanish Netherlands and the Spanish armies were hardly capable of resisting them. In that year peace negotiations started. But the Spaniards and William III were not yet willing to accept the peace; they first wanted to reduce the power of the French king. The conflict continued in 1677 and the French armies gained new victories in the Spanish Netherlands. After all the exhausting battles and sieges peace between France and the Republic of the United Provinces was eventually declared on 10 August 1678. On 17 September 1678 France and Spain also reached agreement on which areas and places would henceforth belong to France and which would form part of the Spanish Netherlands. Although the war had started between the French and the Republic, the Spaniards were the eventual losers, because large parts of the former Spanish Netherlands were claimed by the French.

### Choice to Side with the French

From 1672 onwards Maria Petyt's letters to Michael of St. Augustine began to mention experiences relating to the Dutch War in her prayers and visions. In

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<sup>14</sup> Rooms (2007) 44–46.



these experiences and visions the 'spirit of prayer' made it clear to her that she had to choose the side of the French king. 'I perceived that the Beloved put me on the side of this king, and that the Beloved made me inclined towards him, as if I had to cooperate with that king' (30r). Her main task was to pray for the French king and his army. She was convinced that her prayer directly influenced the course of the war.

The question is what drove Maria to choose the side of the French. She says: 'I understand inwardly the decision and the conviction of his soul,<sup>15</sup> and that his zeal for Holland is clearly Godlike, intending nothing but the honour and glory of God, and the conversion of souls'(30r). Maria Petyt calls the intentions of the French king 'Godlike'. To her this was an important criterion of the discernment of spirits. When speaking about the French king as Godlike she was signifying that he acted in accordance with God's will or that his activities were determined by divine influence. For her this was the cardinal reason to choose the side of the French, for she based all her choices on whether she would be acting and living in accordance with God's will. When in her eyes the French king seemed to live and act in accordance with the will of God, she could not but support him if she was to obey God. The question remains: how did she know that the intention of the French king was Godlike? This again called for discernment of spirits to decide whether the knowledge derived from her own thoughts and images or from a good, divine spirit. Maria believed the king's intentions to be Godlike because according to her he was not striving for his own honour or gain but for the honour and glory of God and for the conversion of erring Dutch souls.

### Dutch Heretics

More than once Maria says that the French king started the war in order to convert the Hollanders and to plant the Catholic faith in Holland. For this reason she prayed fervently for the success of the French, for it was her deepest desire that the Hollanders would be brought back to the 'true' faith of the Catholic Church:

... it seemed to me that I was as it were spiritually impregnated so that I might convert all parentless souls in Holland to the Catholic faith' (39r). This wish to convert the Hollanders stemmed from her conviction that the Hollanders had rejected God and that God longed to return to

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15 I.e. the soul of the king of France.

Holland and establish his kingdom there. As Maria put it, her Beloved was joyful 'because the time had already come that Holland would become Catholic. (...), as if He was yearning to be constituted as king in full possession of his kingdom (38v).

Maria speaks about heretics in Holland. We must interpret these words in the context of the dominance of Protestantism in Holland. After the Eighty Years' War the Protestants had not only emerged from Spanish oppression, but Protestantism had also become the dominant religion. In most places Catholic gatherings were forbidden and Catholics were no longer allowed to hold public administrative positions.<sup>16</sup>

When Maria speaks about heretics in Holland who should be brought back to the true faith, she is referring to Protestants who had an anti-Catholic policy. Maria was convinced that in attacking Holland the French king's intention was to bring the country back to the Catholic faith. She believed that the Catholic Church was in crisis. This was a result not only of the Protestants' separation from the Catholic mother church, but also of all kinds of new movements within the Catholic Church in the time of the Counter- Reformation. Maria saw a great danger in the movement of the so called Jansenists:

The necessity of the Holy Church, that was impressed upon me, was partly because of the uproars and commotions, etc which the Jansenists caused in the Holy Church by their doctrines that they proposed as a great insult, criticism and blasphemy against the Holy Virgin, and the many errors that they thrust upon the hearts of the faithful... (35v).

Maria saw the French king as someone who was also opposed to the Jansenists. Jansenism was a movement in the Counter-Reformation started by Cornelius Jansen from Leuven, whose theological ideas about free will, justification by faith and divine grace were based on the doctrines of Augustine. In the Spanish Netherlands and in France Jansenism had become very popular. Louis XIV was an avowed opponent of the movement.<sup>17</sup> Maria Petyt also considered Jansenism to be a heretical movement. The rise of Jansenism and Protestantism in Holland are mentioned in the same breath as a threat to the Catholic faith, and in her opinion the French king was God's instrument to put a stop to these developments.

16 Note that the separation between Catholics and Protestants was not equally strict everywhere, e.g. in Maastricht where Catholics and Protestants coexisted in relative peace.

17 Maland (198) 310–313.

### Two Royal Children

The fact that both the French and the Spanish king were Catholics posed a problem for Maria Petyt: which of the two should she choose, since both embraced the 'true' Catholic faith? It troubled her that there was enmity between the two kings, who should be fighting together like brothers for God's good cause. She felt a special bond with both kings, as if they were her sons. Nevertheless her preference lay with the French king, to whom she was led, as she put it, by the spirit of love:

In the month of February 1673 the spirit of love was renewed in me along with the spiritual inclination to and union towards and with the king of France. He was placed in my heart and the king of the Spaniards also, as if both were my sons. The spirit of love had much to do with the king of France, but did not so much attract the king of the Spaniards. He seemed to leave him mostly neglected, like a sleeping son or boy (45v).

This preference for the French king that, according to Maria herself, derived from the spirit of love, is explained by Maria's perception of the two kings' motives in the war. The Spanish king had entered the war to help the Hollanders, so he was an ally of the heretics. The French king, on the other hand, attacked the Hollanders and according to Maria he did so in order to re-establish the Catholic faith in Holland. The Spaniards, who had only a century before forcibly imposed Catholicism on Holland and had strictly prohibited Protestantism, were now coming to help these heretics. The only thing Maria could wish for this Spanish king, who was still like a son to her, was that he would get back onto the right path and fight on the side of the French king so as to expand God's kingdom on earth.

### The Bad Life of Louis XIV

Not only was Maria wrestling with the question of how to choose between two Catholic kings, but also with problems raised by Louis XIV's lifestyle. Many bad things were said about him and Maria was confronted with such rumours. These negative reports confused her and made her doubtful about the good things she experienced in her visions regarding the French king.

More than once she sighed and said that human judgments meant nothing to her, because she was so much swayed by God's judgment of this king. Still she could not deny that there was a lot of evil in the French king's life. She was

not only informed about this by the people around her, but also got to know it in prayer. She learned 'how the Beloved showed himself unhappy and angry with the king of France' (48v).

This brought Maria to the conclusion that she should take the king's sins on herself and make reparation for them, so that he could continue his efforts in the war. This was a special request, and it was granted to her. Maria experienced that she had to suffer and in that way could make reparation for the sins of the French king.

### Praying out of Obedience

Maria Petyt mentions several times that she was commanded by her superiors to pray for Spanish success in this war, that is to pray against the French. She tried hard to obey these orders, but again and again experienced in her prayers that she could not. Eventually she no longer tried, but was certain, as she put it, that the prayers of so many religious were useless when it was not what God wanted:

Pray all of you, pray, pray as much as you ... want, with all your prayers you will obtain nothing. For somewhere is hidden ... a humble soul lost in a corner, who receives from God the power to ... all prayers of so many, and to impede that they are heard by God, because He knows well, that the hearing of these prayers tends and ... against the honour and glory of God and against the promotion of the holy Church (43v).

She no longer doubted that she was on the right side – the side of the French king – and that all who were praying for something different were on a false trail. She found this certainty, as noted before, in the inner knowledge that she received in prayer that the French king was acting in accordance with the will of God.

Michael also wanted to convince Maria of the evils of the French king and that she should rather pray for the Spaniards. From her answers to Michael it becomes clear that he wanted to convince her of the good intentions of the leaders of the country and of the Germans and Spaniards. For example: 'Your Reverence assures me that our Leader conducts himself well, and that the Emperor is a devout man' (36r). Somewhat pedantically she answers:

Your Reverence believed that if that city<sup>18</sup> had been occupied, it would go to the Spaniards, but it seemed clearly to me to be the contrary. For in my depths there was some indication that that rumour was false. Most beloved Father, no wonder that the Beloved allows our side to be defeated! For how long do our people cling to and support that impious nation and draw down upon them and their country the wrath and indignation of God (...) May God ensure that their punishment will only be temporal and that their souls will be saved (37r).

Here it is clear that Maria in her turn tried to convince Michael that she was right and that the French king's actions were good and Godlike.

There seems to be a sharp contrast between obedience to Michael, which according to Maria's biography was of great importance to her, and the fact that now she could no longer obey him. However, it must be said that basically she had always tried to override her own experiences of prayer in regard to the French king so as to remain obedient, but again and again her prayers confirmed the Godlikeness of the French king and that God wanted her to pray for him and not for his opponents, so she could no longer remain obedient to whomever. Obedience to Michael had always been an important support, but it became clear that this obedience had its limits, for obedience to God or to whatever God's spirit asked of her surpassed obedience to any human being.

### Discernment of Spirits Revised?

Let us review all this in the context of the discernment of spirits. What is changed? Maria made a clear choice in favour of the French on the basis of her experiences in prayer. She believed that it was a divine spirit that inspired and encouraged her consistently to pray for the French. One can recognize and discern that divine spirit not only by the holy freedom of the spirit, but also according to the criteria of moderation, inner peace, humility, resignation, et cetera, and of obedience to her spiritual guide.

The moderation of the spirit – that is, that the body is not confused and fatigued too much – seems to be lacking in the case of Maria's suffering for the sins of the French king. This penance was accompanied by severe spiritual and physical pain, which seems to contradict the criterion of moderation. Moreover, Maria's experiences were confusing to her, because they were contrary to everything that she was told in her environment. Nevertheless this confusion

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18 I.e. probably Maastricht.

was not lasting, for the spirit gave her such strong confirmation that in the end she had complete inner confidence and certainty.

This certainty brings us to the next set of criteria: that of inner peace, humility, resignation, et cetera. These terms crop up constantly in her texts. Her experiences were intense and had a deep impact, but they were always accompanied by a fire of love, deep inner certainty, vividness, power and the like, which accorded with this criterion of the discernment of spirits.

Obedience to the spiritual guide seems to be the most difficult criterion in this context. Maria could not remain obedient to Michael and other superiors any more, for this was counter to the inner certainty given to her in prayer. She tried hard to be docile and obedient and was willing to give up all her own certainties, but there was a power which was stronger. In the end Maria was convinced that she did not obtain this certainty from herself but from the spirit of God. Obedience to God was obviously more important than obedience to a human being, even if it was the spiritual guide in whom she had such great trust.

But in the end Maria's key criterion was the holy freedom of the spirit, liberated from all human and worldly desires and inclinations. It becomes clear that Maria really was freed from these things, because she did not follow her own will and initiative in praying for the

French king. She was willing to obey her superiors who asked her to pray for the Spaniards, but in the end, when she kept feeling that the Beloved wanted her to pray for the French, she obeyed that impulse. As Michael left the judgment to others, I also leave it to others to judge whether Maria Petyt followed a divine spirit or was led by human or evil impulses. But I am sure that she was sincere in seeking to do what God wanted of her.

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# The Spirituality of Teresa of Avila and the Latin Manuscript about the Dutch War (folios 30r–49v)

*Elisabeth Hense*

## Introduction

The spirituality of Teresa of Avila permeates Maria Petyt's writings to such an extent that we cannot fully understand her autobiography and letters without knowing Teresa's main works.<sup>1</sup> Teresa's legacy seems to be the key not only to Maria's Dutch writings but also to the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War (1672–1678).

The intimate relation between the spirituality of the two women manifested in the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War can be demonstrated by focusing on mental prayer, which both women considered the principal form of their spiritual life.<sup>2</sup> First I will comment on mental prayer in *The Interior Castle* (or *The Mansions*) of Teresa of Avila.<sup>3</sup> Then I will show that Maria Petyt had a natural affinity with mental prayer from her youth onwards, but did not really understand it until she began reading Teresa's works and was progressing on the spiritual path. Next I will identify the levels of mental prayer in the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War, which prove to be the supernatural levels corresponding with the fourth to seventh mansions of *The Interior Castle*. I will conclude with an evaluation of Maria's visions and experiences relating to the French king and his army in the context of these heightened levels of mental prayer.

The rearrangement of folios 30r to 49v of the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War – whether intentionally or accidentally<sup>4</sup> – joins together those

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- 1 Cf. Deblaere (1962) 145–52. Deblaere writes extensively about the influence of Teresa's life on Maria Petyt. He detected parallels between Teresa's and Maria's Christ-centred mysticism, their experiences of illness and their devotion to St. Joseph. He considers Teresa's concept of visions as recorded in *The Interior Castle* to have influenced Maria.
  - 2 Deblaere does not mention Teresa's influence on Maria Petyt in respect of mental prayer.
  - 3 *The Interior Castle* was first translated into Dutch by the Franciscan Willem Spoelberch in 1608 (Brussels and Antwerp). After that year Teresa's works became widespread in Dutch speaking areas.
  - 4 See Giovanni Grosso's contribution to this volume, p. 83–91.



parts of the manuscript that relate closely to the supernatural levels of mental prayer described in *The Interior Castle* (folios 30r-37v), whereas the folios of minor interest concerning these supernatural levels (folios 38r-49v) can be seen as a second part of the manuscript about the Dutch War.

### Mental Prayer in *The Interior Castle*

*The Interior Castle* is divided into seven mansions (also called dwelling places), each representing a certain level of mental prayer that brings the soul step by step closer to God.

The entrance to the castle takes the form of active prayer, characterized by conscious striving to stay in God's presence.<sup>5</sup> When the soul starts to practise this kind of prayer she also starts realizing her own inner beauty given to her by the grace of God despite her human shortcomings, sins and puniness. Proceeding to the second and third mansions, the soul seeks to advance through meditation on God's works, empathizing with God's love for creation, and through humble daily attention to the divine presence. She now has to persevere in prayer – even in times of mental aridity or temptation, when Satan tries to block her path and dissuade her. The soul's desire to do charitable works is growing and so is her aversion to sinning. By gently acquiring the habit of recollection and remaining in a state of surrender to God the soul finally manages to enter the other mansions.

The fourth to seventh mansions are considered mystical.<sup>6</sup> From now onwards the soul has to cease her own activity and gradually let God take over. She experiences divine delights flowing directly from God, leaving her peaceful, calm and filled with sweetness.<sup>7</sup> She comes to know the prayer of quiet, during which she surrenders herself into God's hands.<sup>8</sup> In the fifth mansion the soul is immersed in the prayer of divine union.<sup>9</sup> In this kind of prayer, union with God's will is much more important than temporary ecstatic union.<sup>10</sup> The two kinds of union induce such powerful perceptions that she cannot doubt them.<sup>11</sup> The comparison with a silkworm developing into a butterfly

5 Ch. 1. For the English translation, see Kavanaugh & Rodriguez (1980) 261–452.

6 IV-VII.

7 IV, 2–3.

8 IV, 3. For the controversy about the prayer of quiet in Maria's time, see Esther van de Vate's contribution to this volume, p. 92–118.

9 IV.

10 V, 3-3.

11 V, 1.9.

conveys the transforming power of the prayer of union.<sup>12</sup> This is where Teresa talks about spiritual betrothal for the first time.<sup>13</sup> In the sixth mansion the soul spends more and more time with her beloved, but at the same time is exposed to many outside afflictions.<sup>14</sup> She again undergoes severe temptations and inner struggle and she pines away with fervent desire for God. She understands how to discern his favours (trances, ecstasies, raptures, flights of the spirit, jubilation, visions) from the effects of fantasy and imagination.<sup>15</sup> The soul achieves full clarity in prayer and spiritual marriage with God in the seventh mansion.<sup>16</sup> Here God and the soul become absorbed in each other's affairs. They cannot be separated any more – they are indistinguishable, one and the same.<sup>17</sup>

### Maria's Natural Affinity with Teresa

In her autobiography Maria Petyt tells us that she first discovered mental prayer when she was twelve. Mental prayer was easy and delightful for the young girl: she enjoyed spending her time absorbed in God's presence. The sweetness of these experiences sometimes lasted two hours.

Our Beloved Lord then gave me the gift of mental prayer, and as I have come to understand now, more than mental prayer, sometimes even supernatural prayer. I seemed to be drawn into great devotion and exaltation of the spirit, I don't know how or where. Sometimes this lasted two hours. I continued this sort of prayer for such a long time without any effort or labour and as far as I can remember with a sweet and flaming love.<sup>18</sup>

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12 V, 2.7.

13 V, 4.3.

14 VI, 1.

15 VI, 2–10. For discernment of spirits in Maria's works, see Veronie Meeuwse's contribution to this volume, p. 240–251.

16 VII.

17 VII, 2.4.

18 We do not know whether Maria took the practice of mental prayer directly from the writings of Teresa or whether it came to her via her spiritual environment. Cf. Merlier (1976) ch. IX = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 12.: *'Onsen Lieven Heer gaf my van alsdan de gratie van het verstandelijck Ghebedt, ende soo my nu dunckt, meer als verstandelijck Ghebedt, oock somtyts tot het overnatuerlijck Ghebedt, soo dat ick scheen ophetrocken te zijn in een groote aendachtigheyt ende verheventheyt des geests, ick en weet niet, hoe, oft waer, somtyts twee*

In Teresa's and Maria's terminology mental prayer can be natural – this relates to the first mansion of *The Interior Castle* where the soul is actively acquiring the habit of prayer – and it can be supernatural – this relates to later mansions of *The Interior Castle* where God pours prayer into the soul while she remains passive. It was the sweetness of this passively received divine gift that the young girl was often allowed to enjoy for lengthy periods.

Maria discovered another taste of this divine gift in her early twenties, shortly after leaving the cloister of the Augustinian nuns. In this period uncertainty about her future troubled her and now she experienced mental prayer as a guiding power that could balance her and orient her towards her intimate life with God despite many outward anxieties. She often sat in a church and gained a sense of security, assistance and support during mental prayer. She clearly understood what should be the goal of her life and wrote a vivid account of it for her spiritual father,<sup>19</sup> but he did not recognize Maria's inward state. Neither did Maria, for she did not yet understand the writings of Teresa of Avila too well.

In that prayer my Beloved gave me such clear insight into the kind of prayer and inward exercise that I should practise and into the path that he wanted me to take that I wrote a whole page about it. But the content of this insight and instruction was so perfect and utterly pure that I am at this moment not yet able to experience it fully. The Beloved instilled in me the goal to which he called me. But I couldn't understand the content as I understand it now. I shall have to work all the days of my life to properly experience the instructions that my Beloved gave me inwardly on that day.<sup>20</sup>

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*uren lanck gheduerende. Ick continueerde in dese soorte van Ghebedt soo langhen tydt sonder eenighe moeyte, oft aerbeyt, soo veel, als my ghedenckt met een soete, opvlammende liefde.'*

19 A Carmelite father, cousin of a friend of Maria Petyt, whose name we do not know. Cf. Merlier (1976) ch. XXIII-XXIV = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 31ff.

20 *Het leven van Maria Petyt*, ch. XXVI = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 36. : 'Mijnen Beminden gaf my in dat Ghebedt soo klaer te kennen de maniere van Ghebedt, ende inwendighe oeffeninge, die ick moest houden, ende door wat wegh, dat hy my leyden wilde, dat ick'er wel een heel blad papier vol van schreef; maer het inhoud van dese kennisse ende inlichtinghe was van een soo groote volmaecktheyt, ende uytterste puerheyt, dat ick teghenwoordigh de selve noch niet volkomelijck beleeft en hebbe; den Beminden gaf my in, het eynde, daer hy my toe riep, maer ick en verstondt het inhoud niet, ghelijck ick nu dat verstaen, want my dunckt, dat ick mijn leven daghen werckx ghenoech hebben zal, om die leeringhe volmaecktelijck te beleven, die den Beminden my inwendigh alsdan heeft ghegheven.'

Although Maria had experienced mental prayer from her twelfth year onwards and she enjoyed the sweetness and strength of that prayer, she did not fully fathom it at the time. She perceived the beneficial effects of mental prayer, but did not really grasp what it was about. She might have formed a better idea some months later, when she mentioned Teresa in her diary for the first time.<sup>21</sup> Teresa was a shining example to the young woman and Maria wanted to throw herself straight into the spiritual path that Teresa had taken. Maybe now she started to comprehend mental prayer as a powerful means for her spiritual life.

During the years that followed she grew in mental prayer and – as we shall see – might have experienced its fullness in her twilight years, when she was concerned about the French king's war in Holland.

Against the background of her own experiences of mental prayer it is not surprising that Maria felt an intense spiritual kinship with Teresa and that she added Teresa's name to her own when she took vows in the Third Order of the Carmelites: thenceforth she called herself Maria of St. Teresa.

### Levels of Mental Prayer in the Latin Manuscript about the Dutch War

Maria's chronicle of 7 November 1672 speaks about the prayer of quiet that Maria enjoyed when her inner engagement with the French king had been going on for two years.

For some days I was drawn to a profound and intimate quiet in the Beloved as a sleep of love with the passing of all things that are not Him, perceiving nothing in me other than his presence.<sup>22</sup>

She remained for some days in this prayer,<sup>23</sup> held in divine love 'with a noticeable and pleasant darkening of the light and with the radiance of his divinity, a

21 Merlier (1976) ch. xxxvi = Petyt (1683) vol. 1, 49: '(...) *my docht, dat in Godt my gheene dinghen onmoghelijck en waeren, ja oock niet moeyelijck, soo dat ick altemet hoorende spreken ofte lesen vande groote heyligheyt van de Heylighe TERESIA, seyde met onnooselheyt, ick hope oock Heyligh te worden, om dieswille dat ick in my soo stercken wille ghevoelde, om my ten uyttersten te laeten kosten, gheen moeyte, oft aerbeyt aensiende, om de deught te beherten, ende te vervolghen; t'saemen oock een hope op Godt, dat sijne gratie my noyt en soude ontbreken, ghelijckse aen de Heylighen noyt ontbroken en heeft.*'

22 30r.

23 Cf. 1 Thess. 5:17: '(...) pray continually'. During this prolonged prayer she remained able to function in all necessary activities, as she said elsewhere (see e.g. 35v). Teresa wrote about the same experience in VII, 1.8.

light that brightened and penetrated all the powers of my soul'.<sup>24</sup> During the prayer of quiet Maria did not eliminate her political commitment. On the contrary, she found herself encouraged in her solidarity with the French king: 'Then again the spirit of prayer for the king of France penetrated me (...) A spirit that began to work vividly and powerfully in his assistance and support.'<sup>25</sup>

The prayer of quiet belongs to the fourth mansion of *The Interior Castle*, described by Teresa as follows: 'It is a recollection that (...) seems to me to be supernatural. (...) They say that the soul enters into itself and, at other times, that it rises above itself.'<sup>26</sup>

Teresa considered the prayer of quiet to be the beginning of mystical or supernatural prayer. At the threshold to this kind of prayer the soul no longer exerts human effort but surrenders herself totally into God's hands.

When his majesty desires the intellect to stop he occupies it (...) and gives it a light so far above what we can attain that it remains absorbed. Then, without knowing how, the intellect is much better instructed than it was through all the soul's efforts not to make use of it. <sup>27</sup>

This means, as Teresa put it, that the soul no longer needs to construct the 'many aqueducts'<sup>28</sup> to connect with God, who is her spiritual wellspring. In the prayer of quiet the water flows readily from God directly into the soul. <sup>29</sup> Even if the soul wants to remain active and work, she cannot.

Maria Petyt refers to the divine spring most explicitly in 32r:

This prayer flowed very nobly and vigorously from God, like from his spring water, or origin, and flowed back to God, like to his goal with the same tranquillity, peace and intimacy and without the imagination of any other corporeal thing, without forming words or sentences, distinguishing nothing but God, to whom I looked up and loved with a burning mind and with burning desires of being heard. This burning mind and these fiery desires stood as it were open before God with an effective and burning intercession.

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24 30r.

25 30r.

26 IV, 3.1–2.

27 IV, 3.6.

28 IV, 2.3.

29 Cf. IV, 3.8–9.

In Maria's case, being absorbed in the prayer of quiet while remaining engaged with the French king implies that she saw her political commitment to the French king flowing directly from God into her soul – her soul remaining quiescent, receptive to the divine inspiration.

Some months later<sup>30</sup> Maria went beyond the prayer of quiet. She now entered what Teresa called the prayer of union. This prayer is typical of the fifth mansion, characterized by Teresa as very deep, sound spiritual sleep.

There is no need here to use any technique to suspend the mind, since all the faculties are asleep in this state – and truly asleep – to the things of the world and to ourselves. As a matter of fact, during the time that the union lasts the soul is left as though without its senses, for it has no power to think even if it wants to. In loving, if it does love, it doesn't understand how or what it is it loves or what it would want. In sum, it is like one who in every respect has died to the world so as to live more completely in God.<sup>31</sup>

During the short period of the prayer of union the devil cannot mislead the soul with corporeal or imaginary visions.<sup>32</sup> Without seeing anything with either her bodily eyes or the eyes of the soul the person unites with God so intimately that she senses the divine presence simply in a so-called intellectual vision. Following the spiritual tradition, Teresa understood intellectual vision to be a powerful, sure sense of connectedness and oneness with God – a feeling that cannot be doubted.<sup>33</sup> In *The Interior Castle* this feeling already occurs in the fifth mansion, although Teresa does not describe the intellectual vision until the sixth mansion.

When Maria immersed herself in the prayer of union her inner engagement with the French king persisted, although her environment was critical of it. But Maria felt serene, because she understood her experiences to arise from the prayer of union:

My human spirit is not doing this in me, but it is the Spirit of God united with my spirit that works in me and through me and with me. This happens at a time of very great quiet and calm, of intimate connection or union of my spirit with the divine, without words, without thoughts, and

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30 Cf. 31r. The manuscript does not give an exact date.

31 V, 1.4

32 V, 1.5

33 VI, 8.2

almost without any imagination of any corporeal thing. This disposition is too noble and too intimate to allow or tolerate any imaginative or physical representation of the image of a thing known or remembered in God, as if intellectual visions or images (as seems to me) are the highest, which are tolerated there, but if I would intermingle myself in it, no matter how much and no matter where, the spirit would immediately and completely evaporate and would be obscured and I would return to my nature.<sup>34</sup>

These words explicitly indicate that there can be no doubt about the divine character of her experiences and that they should be understood as manifestations of the prayer of union. While absorbed in this kind of prayer Maria felt strong divine support for her inner solidarity with the French king and she felt sure that God would grant him victory 'even if' appearances might suggest otherwise, as when two or three strong armies of mighty and stalwart soldiers experienced in war were to oppose him.<sup>35</sup>

According to Teresa the soul should merge her will with the will of God during this state of union and should rate the conformity to God's will far more highly than the ecstatic feelings caused by this union.<sup>36</sup> Ecstatic feelings are temporary, while the union of the human and the divine will may last for ever. Thus by focusing on the conformity of her will to the will of God Maria emphasized the stability and reliability of her relationship with God.

To whatever God turns, to that also my soul ought to turn. Whatever God loves, the soul also has to love that, from whatever God turns away, from that also the soul turns away, nor can the soul act in any other way, because God possesses it, moves it, leads it and is united with it, where it is one being, one working, one understanding and one willing with God.<sup>37</sup>

Hence this trustworthy uniformity of God's will and Maria's forms the basis of her prayer for the French king but this does not mean that everything remains delightful. As Teresa indicated in the sixth mansion of *The Interior Castle*, there might still be a lot of turmoil and doubt even after experiencing the prayer of union. Teresa refers to severe illness which is to be anticipated in this period. From her own experience this seemed a greater trial than all other external tribulations that she suffered.

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34 31r.

35 31r.

36 V, 1.12; V, 2.12; V, 4.5.

37 31v.

The Lord is wont also to send it (the soul) the severest illnesses. This is a much greater trial, especially when the pains are acute. For in some way, if these pains are severe, the trial is, it seems to me, the greatest on earth – I mean the greatest exterior trial, however many the other pains. I say ‘if the pains are severe’, because they then afflict the soul interiorly and exteriorly in such a way that it doesn’t know what to do with itself.<sup>38</sup>

Knowing that Maria structured her chronicles according to the higher mansions of *The Interior Castle*, we are not surprised to find a parallel with this state of trouble and corporeal and inner pain in Maria’s diary. In the beginning of July 1673<sup>39</sup> she entered a period of extreme endurance of some sort of acute pain.

After my proposal to make reparation for him and even to suffer infernal penances, the Beloved used me until the 8th of July, according to all appearances, to make reparation for the faults of the king of France. For sure that was something that was allowed to happen to me in some way by an unusual and by me not yet endured torment, which I had to undergo in my soul, and which seemed to me to be an infernal punishment. To me it seemed that under my heart as it were a fire was ignited, through which my heart was tortured and tormented. Besides all of this, there was all that came to me through the senses, through hearing, through vision, touch and taste. Also through imagination or other sensory powers, all these things, that I had rejected seemed to press upon my heart, to torture it in an ineffable manner.

(...). Sometimes because of the violence of the punishments I was as if I were outside myself and my intellect was darkened and in fact because of the long lasting duration I suffered like a criminal. For my powers were (strength was) consumed by that very great suffering in spirit and nature. (...). Mostly I remained in a harassing (distressing) state, feeling particularly my natural suffering, which comes back to life and even seems to become more vigorous than ever, especially making me feel as if I was about to contract Cholera. And although by God’s grace I will not catch that disease, it still is a heavy cross for me to feel these things so in such a lifelike way.<sup>40</sup>

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38 VI, 1.6.

39 The year is missing in the manuscript, but is probably 1673.

40 34r.



Again following Teresa's understanding of these experiences, Maria interpreted corporeal and spiritual pain as divine punishment for sin – in Maria's case the sins of the French king – and as a purification of the soul – in Maria's case in order to deepen her humility.<sup>41</sup> Teresa and Maria both mentioned that they faced heavy opposition in that state and that their environment seemed to be enraged with them.<sup>42</sup> Both talk about a period of reconsidering all earlier spiritual experiences and being boiled down to nothingness.<sup>43</sup>

Finally there is a resumption of loving union with God. Here Teresa spoke about spiritual marriage, a state in which the soul considers God's affairs to be her own and 'that he would take care of what was hers'.<sup>44</sup> On 30 December 1673 Maria again reported her experience of being drawn to her bridegroom and dealing with his affairs in this state:

I was turned or drawn inward in that extraordinary and very great union with the Divinity, as I had enjoyed it for one year or another. In this union, suddenly I was somewhat brought down by forces with some perception of myself, not in a rude, but in a very sublime, spiritual and noble way, in the quality of a very tender and loving bride, who is permitted or better who is so by the divine spirit, that she associates with her divine Beloved confidently and familiarly, and speaks about things that concern Him.<sup>45</sup>

In Maria's case the affairs of her beloved concerned the blessing of the French king and the struggle against the heretics, whether Protestants or Jansenists.<sup>46</sup> In this state it seemed to Maria that her beloved understood her without any words and she understood him:

There the soul does not speak or beg, nor does it pray blandly for forgiveness, nor does it represent anything, nor does it commend something expressly that is far away, but it sees in God as in a mirror those things for which God wants it to pray, just as if God sees in my soul those things for which it begs or wants to beg, without the soul proposing expressly to Him what and how. Everything is included and implicit or concealed, and

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41 34r.

42 VI, 1.3 and 34r.

43 VI, 1.11 and 34r-34v.

44 VII, 2.1

45 34v.

46 35r.

comprehended in that divine look and in conformity with the love of God.<sup>47</sup>

As is typical of the seventh mansion, Maria associated this prayer with a fresh affirmation of truth.

At the same time I was fully assured again that all those operations, illuminations and ways of praying of the spirit etc, which have been in me for two years in relation to the king of France, all occurred and have been produced in me by the divine spirit. For that truth I would have well wanted to sustain as many deaths as I have members in my body.<sup>48</sup>

The numerous parallels with the fourth to seventh mansions of *The Interior Castle* and the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War are really extraordinary. Not only are these higher levels of mental prayer represented in Maria's writings; she also takes over a series of literary motifs from *The Interior Castle*, such as the motif that it is God who wants the soul to write about her inner experiences,<sup>49</sup> that the soul is like a second heaven for God,<sup>50</sup> that everything has to be discerned time and again,<sup>51</sup> and that there can be no doubt about these inner perceptions.<sup>52</sup> Maria even explicitly referred to *The Interior Castle* to indicate that she felt like Teresa about her intimate friendship with the divine majesty who granted her the richness of her inner life:

This sweet majesty I see and carry constantly within me either in prayer or elsewhere. Nothing can prevent me from perceiving him: that I constantly contemplate him and lovingly cling to him and speak and talk to him confidentially and as between friends, for the spirit that is unbound and free from everything and from all other things can reside in the interior castle of the soul: as if he is separated from other things that are manifold ..... corporeal and sensual things.<sup>53</sup>

All these parallels with *The Interior Castle* seem to be highly pertinent for a proper understanding of Maria's inner solidarity with the French king. In other

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47 35v.

48 35r-35v.

49 I, 1.1; I, 27; 30r.

50 VII, 1.3; 31 v.

51 IV, 1.4; VI, 2.6; VI, 3.4; 32v.

52 V, 1.9; VI, 3.12; 31r; 33v; 35r.

53 30v.

words: Maria's political engagement was authorized through the supernatural stages of mental prayer which she experienced. Naturally she sided with the Spanish king, as she said, 'because by nature I am more inclined to help the king of Spain, so as to desire and demand the prosperity of his arms, because he is our king and he is Catholic.'<sup>54</sup> But in the war against Holland she had – in a supernatural way – to identify with the French king, whom she considered to operate by divine mandate.

### Evaluation of Maria's Visions and Experiences regarding the French King

Maria's chronicles about the French king probably started in 1670, and became more extensive in 1672 at the beginning of the war against Holland.<sup>55</sup> After that she empathized intensely with his ups and downs during this war, because she believed that God himself had initiated her spiritual engagement with him. So time and again she saw herself alongside the French king, blessing him:

I perceived that the Beloved put me on the side of this king, and that the Beloved made me inclined towards him, as if I had to cooperate with that king. The blessing, which I on the Beloved's demand had given him in advance, I again bestowed on him and his army with powerful and vibrant love.<sup>56</sup>

Often she inwardly saw the French king as the child of God and her own child. She even saw all the French soldiers as her children, in need of her prayers to strengthen and animate them.

I have seen and understood that the king is loved by Jesus and by the same love he is also loved by me ... like a child whom Jesus loves. So when I pray for him, I say to Jesus: "My Beloved, help your child and mine, with your strength, wisdom and love." And from there results a further love which flows to all his subordinates and soldiers, as if all of them were my children.<sup>57</sup>

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54 30v.

55 This is the earliest date that can be found in the Latin manuscript about the Dutch war. See 38v.

56 30r. See also 35r, 39r, 47v, etc.

57 30v.

By considering political affairs while absorbed in mental prayer Maria clearly showed that for her divine love is not restricted to inner feelings but may have outward consequences. But what consequences could a contemplative woman living in strict seclusion evoke? Maria thought that her prayer might have consequences for nothing less than the outcome of the French king's war against Holland. In this sense her prayer could be seen as a political act.

Maria's primary political objective was the conversion of heretics and the reunification of the Church. She thought that this could be accomplished through the military intervention of the French king. In accordance with her political objective, her evaluation of the political situation and her divine inspiration Maria saw an outward key role for the French king in this battle and an inward key role for herself (and some of her companions).

Clearly I understood that God wanted to grant him [the king of France] those graces and provide him the divine help and by such prayer and not otherwise cooperate with the intention of the king and that God for this purpose took and chose some small and humble and at the same time pure and sincerely God-loving women, to pray for them, and among these few His Majesty seemed to want to use me unworthy as I am.<sup>58</sup>

Although the French king was criticized by many people in Maria's environment because of some of his political and strategic actions which seemed to jeopardize church unity, Maria stuck by him.<sup>59</sup> Neither could her natural solidarity with the Spanish king and the demands of her superiors to pray for him lure her away from the French camp.<sup>60</sup> Maria was sure that it was God's will that she should sympathize with Louis XIV. She felt that God wanted her to express her love for this king and to make it effective through prayer. She did not even renounce the French king because of his moral shortcomings.<sup>61</sup> Rather she was ready to suffer vicariously for him and herself endure divine punishment for his sins.

Why did Maria adopt this attitude? In the midst of all dilemmas Maria anticipated that church unity could be accomplished only through the victory of the French king. It was her longing for the reunification of the church that inspired her to side with the French king as the strongest party in this war. However, Maria must have felt some ambiguity about the French king, whose

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58 41r.

59 30r, 30v, 43r, 43v.

60 31r, 32r, 34v, 43v etc.

61 34r.

ambitions did not readily coincide with her longings. At times she dissociated herself from the war, but nevertheless she remained trustful that God would ultimately give the divine blessing independently of the course of the battles. Eventually Maria understood that it was enough to persevere in loving God and all her fellows – Catholic or otherwise – and that everything else should be left to God.<sup>62</sup>

I gave place to the spirit of love, it began to operate very ingeniously, industriously and lovingly in such a sweetly flowing way, as if I was possessed inside and outside by a divine influence. All that was inside me cooperated with this love. All powers of the soul, heart and mind, were sort of dissolved, were opened and brought to freedom, in a way that I cannot explain.<sup>63</sup>

Finally Maria's real objective was to realize the divine goodness, kindness, compassion and love for all people. She was not exhilarated by a feeling of conquest. Rather she was seeking to incorporate everybody into the holy community of the church.

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62 44r and 44v.

63 44v.

# The Prophetic Spirituality of Maria Petyt and the Latin Manuscript about the Dutch War

*Anne-Marie Bos*

## Introduction

As Michael of St. Augustine arranged all Maria Petyt's texts according to their content (autobiographic notes, texts about Jesus, about Mary, about the Eucharist, etc), in this manuscript he collected those texts in which Maria Petyt treats the Franco-Dutch war.<sup>1</sup> She wrote these texts during the last five years of her life.

What strikes me in reading this particular collection of texts are the many associations with prophetic spirituality. Since Maria Petyt was a Carmelite Tertiary with a Carmelite spiritual director (Michael), it is understandable that the prophetic tradition might resonate in her writings. The Carmelite Order originated in the tradition of men (and women) who wished to lead a life like that of the biblical prophet Elijah, the solitary one *par excellence* and the prototype of all hermits. The first Carmelites on Mount Carmel were eager to walk, literally, in the footsteps of Elijah. From that time on, Elijah has been considered to be at the core of Carmelite spirituality.<sup>2</sup>

In this article I will read the texts of Maria Petyt<sup>3</sup> in the manuscript from the prophetic perspective. What can the manuscript in question teach us about the prophetic dimension of Maria's religious life? For the theoretical background of prophetism I will use the biblical studies of Kees Waaijman<sup>4</sup> and I will look at its distinctive characteristics. A first characteristic of the prophetic dimension is that it is initiated by the Word of God (*The Beloved Speaks*). Second, prophets see from the point of view of God's future (*Perceiving the Future*). Third, in biblical tradition, prophets play a role with respect to

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1 See Giovanni Grosso's contribution to this volume, p. 83ff.

2 See for instance: Boaga (1990).

3 We just have the Latin manuscript provided by Michael of St. Augustine (and its English translation by Veronie Meeuwesen). Unfortunately we do not have the original Dutch texts of Maria Petyt.

4 Waaijman (1985) 14–21; Waaijman (2002) 196–200.

kingship (*Related to Kings*). Fourth, the prophetic word can turn out to be either positive or negative (*Divine Judgement*). Finally, biblical prophets viewed themselves as belonging to a tradition (*Prophetic Tradition*).

### The Beloved Speaks

The first text (in the original sequence) recalls the origin and core of Maria Petyt's position in relation to the Franco-Dutch War:

On the 3rd of May 1672 during Vespers the Beloved seemed to indicate to me, that the King of France did a pleasing thing to Him by invading Holland, and He even promised him the victory. The Beloved charged me to help him by my prayers and to be in that sense as a helper and ally in his army (38r).

The text starts with a date just after the beginning of the Franco-Dutch war in April 1672. Maria recalls that it was during liturgy (vespers) that the Beloved (Jesus, God) seemed to indicate to her that He was pleased with the invasion of Holland by the king of France, and that He promised her that this king would triumph. The Beloved entrusts Maria with the task of helping the king, by means of prayer.

It is typical for prophetic spirituality (as we explicitly find in Scripture), that it results from the Word of God. God speaks directly to the prophet. It is 'a dialogic event of contact'.<sup>5</sup> 'The first step and also the final source of a prophetic act was a moment of deep personal contact with God' (*persönlicher Gott-ergriffenheit*).<sup>6</sup> The Word of God 'happens' to the prophet, 'occurs' to him and this has an immediate effect on him.

In the text of Maria Petyt this divine word (address) is pervasive. If Maria Petyt has a prophetic gift (it is too early to say so, but if so) it originates in her mystical experiences: she tastes the Beloved. She has no choice, since her mystical experiences compel her to act personally. As Jeremiah said: 'If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name', then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.' (Jer 20:9). This is a core character of prophecy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Waaijman (1985) 15–16.

<sup>6</sup> Fohrer (1969) 239.

<sup>7</sup> Waaijman (1985) 16.

In the introductory lines of the text, cited above, Maria Petyt testifies that she receives messages from 'the Beloved'. Maria Petyt speaks a lot about the Beloved. She explicitly mentions 'Jesus my Beloved' (32v) and the 'Beloved God' (31v), but in most instances she uses the name 'the Beloved' without further designations. It demonstrates the divine unity that she perceives: the One God (Cf. John 10:30: 'The Father and I are one.'). Also, by persistently using the name 'the Beloved', Maria Petyt affirms that she is relationally connected to the divine reality, and that this relational connection is a connection of love. This specific name, 'the Beloved' (which is a widely used name in mystical texts), reveals that Maria Petyt has been touched by God, and that her heartstrings are tugged.

As was mentioned above, the 'dialogical event of contact' between God and the prophet is the heart of prophecy. Maria Petyt beautifully describes how she desires God and that her soul *cannot* do otherwise:

...and the soul does not want or desire anything less than God: to whatever God turns, to that also my soul ought to turn. Whatever God loves, the soul also has to love, from whatever God turns away, from that also the soul turns away, nor can the soul act in any other way, because God possesses it, moves it, leads it and is united with it, where it is one being, one working, one understanding and one willing with God. (31v)

Maria Petyt perceives a close and open connection between her soul and God. The soul desires to be guided by God, to follow God. It cannot desire, turn, love or act otherwise, because it is fully united with God who governs the soul. This immediate connection between God and the human soul is the source of prophecy. As the biblical prophet Amos says: 'The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?' (Am 3:8).

Hearing the Word of God is a combination of being addressed and hearing content. About the first aspect, being addressed, Maria Petyt shows no doubt. She describes exactly this close and open connection between God and her soul. About the second aspect, the content, Maria Petyt is somewhat reserved. She testifies that the Beloved '*seemed* to indicate to me', and that He '*seemed* to show me'. Although Michael of St. Augustine is more outspoken in his comments (the headings) about the truth of her perceptions, Maria often articulates her own perceptions with some restraint: 'I felt', 'it seemed', 'I perceived'. Her wording, her style of writing (as far as we can conclude from the translations) shows that she is very near to her own inner self: she is aware of the fact that she interprets her perceptions and searches for understanding. Remarkably transparent, she articulates this restraint. However, it does not prevent her



from acting according to what she perceives and understands. Throughout the texts, more and more she seems to trust her perceptions as truly the vision of the Beloved, especially because of its continuous confirmation in her prayers.

In this manuscript, Maria Petyt also writes about her reflections on how she should appreciate the messages about the war that people bring her (41r). She struggles with the fact that her inner perceptions do not correspond to what she hears from the people (30v). The differences between these messages and her own understanding cause her to have serious doubts about the truth. When the Beloved gives her 'confirmation about those things', all doubt is gone (43v-44r). Later on, however, (February, 1673), when Maria Petyt receives reports about the sins of the king of France and messages that he is losing the battle in Holland, as a reaction, she tries to alienate herself from that king and to reject as false all her former inner feelings in favour of him. However, in prayer she receives new clarity of the Beloved, which makes her certain of the opposite stance and revives her zeal again (46v-47r). This critical reflection (which is an aspect of discernment)<sup>8</sup> can never be brought to an end. Maria Petyt beautifully shows that these critical reflections are fundamentally part of the divine-human relational process: she keeps searching, not-knowing, willing to hear, questioning herself, being insecure. But also, again and again, Maria Petyt discerns in favour of her inner knowledge – what she perceives as coming from her Beloved. When 'the Beloved speaks', it overrules all other voices.

### Perceiving the Future

In the opening sentences of the text, cited above, Maria Petyt mentions that the Beloved has promised the king of France the victory. This might be a question of foreseeing, that of the various possible outcomes of the present invasion, his victory is the one that is expected. About one year later, when the battles continued – army against army – Maria Petyt perceives 'that the French in that conflict brought back the victory and that the king of France would occupy Holland'(46r). She evaluates it as a prophetic vision:

This vision of this future event, in God, was such as it was in the Prophets, when they foresaw some future things, like one year ago or thereabout, as

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<sup>8</sup> Waaijman (2002) 492–500. See also Veronie Meeuwse's contribution to this volume. p. 240ff.

if it had been demonstrated and insinuated how the future would be... (46r).

Maria Petyt refers to a second prophetic characteristic: providence. Her description corresponds to a broad understanding of what this prophetic gift implies. However, a study of biblical prophetism gives another understanding of it.<sup>9</sup> Prophets see from the vantage point of God's future. This is the work of God: the Lord tears his prophet away from the 'now' and places him in the future from the vantage point of which the prophet looks back at the present. 'A prophet sees as already having happened (prophetic perfect) an event that is a mere possibility in the present.'<sup>10</sup>

We can read a beautiful example of this biblical prophetic dimension in the opening pages of Maria Petyt's text (original sequence). This text is from the 4th of May 1672, just at the beginning of the war:

The Beloved, commonly and familiarly speaking and interacting with me, seemed among other things to show me his great joy, happiness and rejoicing, because the time had already come that Holland would become Catholic (38r).

Here we see the prophetic perfect: 'the time had already come'. This is the perspective that Maria Petyt will keep in mind during the war that has just started: that it will please God that the Dutch Republic has become Roman-Catholic instead of adhering to the Reformed Church. This perspective is affirmed in her prayers in which she perceives the word of the Beloved. She cherishes this perspective. The overwhelming joy of the Beloved has thrilled her. She cannot let it go; she has to remain loyal to this perspective, this possible future. She is seduced.

The prophetic perspective Maria Petyt perceives guides her and she cherishes it. However, she does not pin down the Beloved with it! God's future is still open. Even when Maria Petyt receives from different people reports that are in favour of the king of France (news that would be in agreement with her cherished perspective) she does not follow those reports because they are not confirmed for her in her prayer in the spirit (48r).

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9 Waaijman (1985) 16.

10 Waaijman (1985) 16.

In her mystical experiences, the prophetic perspective – that Holland will be Catholic – is nourished.<sup>11</sup> This perspective derives from these experiences, but it is interesting that it is also connected to the context of these experiences: Catholic liturgy. Maria Petyt often testifies that the Beloved speaks to her or shows her something during liturgy or at times that are connected to liturgy: ‘before and after holy communion’ (43r; 47r; 49r), after holy communion (42r; 45v; 49r), ‘while I went to holy communion’ (35v), on or after ‘the feast of...’ (39r – Holy Trinity; 40v – Blessed Sacrament; 45v – St. Louis King of France<sup>12</sup>; 47r-v – Purification of the Virgin; 49v – the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul; 34v – Holy Trinity, Christmas, St. John<sup>13</sup>; 37r – St. Louis), ‘sometimes in the presence of the most Blessed Sacrament’ (37r), and ‘during vespers’, or ‘at the time of vespers’ (38r; 32r; 47r). From this perspective, it is no wonder that Maria Petyt is so zealous for the primacy of the Catholic Church above the Reformed Church: all her visions seem to be connected with the liturgy, often connected to the Eucharist. Maria Petyt, who perceived in her inner self a close union with God, would have been affected emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually by the suppression of the Catholic faith. Theologically, her main objection against the Reformed tradition is that they ‘destroy the certain grace of God and the salvation of so many souls’ (33v). Throughout the text this seems to be her only interest, it plays an active role in her reflections.

The prophetic perspective – perceived from the vantage point of God’s future – is indissolubly connected to her own viewpoint. This solid connection can be explained as a result of a process of ‘transformation’. In the manuscript, Maria Petyt not only describes her experiences of being immediately addressed by the Beloved, she also describes how she receives and interprets the words, images, visions, and thoughts that she receives in this contact. In her texts we can read in what way her understanding of what happens in the war is formed and dictated by this contact with her Beloved. She is aware that she is standing in the midst of a tension. She chooses a journey of resistance against her private nature. She cannot neglect that the spirit guides her into an area that she would never have chosen for herself. (30v-31r).

11 In 1672, also the Catholics who lived in the Republic (about 40% of the population) and the Catholics in the Southern Netherlands hoped that the Republic would become Catholic again. Some also had visions in this direction. See: Frijhoff (2002).

12 In Western Europe, the French king – more than other anointed kings – was considered to represent the Biblical Kings. See: Bloch (1973). Many kings of France were called Louis, but the only canonised king was Louis IX (1214–1270).

13 Probably Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist is meant here.

Maria Petyt explicitly presents her experiences as a process of transformation: 'I ought to do nothing but to remain in union with the divine spirit and to endure that divine operation' (31r). This process of transformation takes place in her inner soul and has its effect on her actions.

An example of this transformation is that Maria Petyt sees herself as a mother in this war: 'the Beloved (...) made me so to speak its mother' (32v; cf. 39r; 30r; 30v; 43r; 49r). She is transformed by the Beloved who plants in her a loving heart. Maria Petyt testifies that both the king of France and the king of Spain 'were my sons' (45v). This image of herself as their mother shows her experience of being indissolubly connected to both of them, with a motherly heart. For instance, she feels that she has to ask forgiveness for the offenses of the king, and that she has to compensate the Beloved (his father) for him: 'like a mother uses to plead the case of her son with the Father, and seeks to reconcile her wrongdoing son with the offended father' (49r). Thinking about both kings, her motherly heart speaks. And her motherly feelings are not restricted to those kings; her motherly heart also goes out to the French soldiers in their battle for the glory of God and the conversion of the souls in Holland (32v).

### Related to Kings

In her prayers, Maria Petyt is primarily concerned with the leaders in the Franco-Dutch war (especially with the Catholic kings) and even sees herself as an ally in the army. This is also one of the characteristics of prophetic spirituality, that they are related to kings.<sup>14</sup> The prophets of Israel consistently played an accompanying role with respect to kingship. In Scripture we find many examples of cooperation between kings and prophets, but it comes to a conflict between them when the king breaks the relation with God.<sup>15</sup> Not just prophetism, also kingship is rooted in a mystical transformation by God.<sup>16</sup> That is also what Maria Petyt recognises and appreciates in the king of France:

I was once moved by a very tender love and benevolence towards this King, because he had presented his life and crown to the Beloved with such zeal to lead Holland back to the Catholic faith (45v).

<sup>14</sup> Waaijman (2002) 199.

<sup>15</sup> Waaijman (2002) 199.

<sup>16</sup> Waaijman (1985) 21.

Towards the other king, the king of Spain, Maria Petyt is primarily critical: She perceives that the Beloved is unhappy and angry with this king, because he tolerates and conceals many serious and weighty sins among his people. He follows his human passions, while he neglects divine grace. According to Maria Petyt, he would do well to take the example of the king of France (48v).

As ordered by the Beloved, Maria Petyt assists the king of France by her prayers. Repeatedly, she testifies that her prayer has great effects. By the power of her prayer, 'many graces flowed to that king'. He receives 'divine help and divine cooperation in carrying out his plan and intention' (41r). The power of prayer is well known in Scripture. As the 17th Century Carmelite Daniel of the Virgin Mary explains in *Konste der Konsten*:<sup>17</sup>

Our Holy Father the Prophet Elijah was a mortal man similar to us. And he has prayed that it would not rain (to punish the great and awful sins of the people of Israel) and it did not rain for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and heaven has given rain and the earth fruits. By prayer, Joshua has halted the sun until he had conquered his enemies. Isaiah has turned the sun backwards. The above mentioned prophet Elijah raised – by prayer – a child from death. The same the Holy Apostles did, and many others, who – by means of their prayer – raised the dead to life, gave health to the sick and did many other miraculous works.<sup>18</sup>

In her prayer Maria Petyt supports the French in their attack against the Dutch. For her it is 'no wonder that the French prevail, and have so much victory in Holland! God is with them' (44r). The power of her prayer, its effect, depends on God. That God is with the French, Maria Petyt has also seen in a vision:

Once I saw in the spirit how the spirit of God was brought to rest over the army of the French like once the spirit of God was brought to rest over the waters (44r).

This vision of Maria Petyt reminds me of the vision of the Carmelite sister Anna of Saint Bartholomew. She had a vision when she was praying, and in her prayer recommended to God the Carmelite friars who had gathered in a provincial chapter. She did this with special zeal. The Lord showed her, so she testifies, the monastery of the gathering, with above it a shining cloud. In the midst of that cloud, she perceived 'Our Holy Father Elijah', who had spread his

<sup>17</sup> Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1669) 3f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 17:1; 18:42; Josh 10:12; Isa. 13: 10; 1 Kings 17:20–22.





*S. Propheta ELIAS visus est à ven. Matre Anna à S. Bartholomæo pallium suum Valisoleti extendere supra Carmelitarum Capitulum; cuius mirabilis, et inexpectatus fuit exitus. Cap. 24. vitæ M. Annæ à S. Barthol.*

FIGURE 10.1 Abraham van Diepenbeek, Vision of Anna of St. Bartholomew.

mantle over the room of the chapter 'like a father covers his children with the shadow of his mantle and takes care of them'. After the chapter the newly chosen provincial stated that:

When we went into chapter it seemed like we were all united with God. This made us all have the same opinion and made us all inflamed by the love of God.<sup>19</sup>

A depiction of this vision is made by a contemporary of Maria Petyt, the well known artist Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596 's-Hertogenbosch – 1675 Antwerp).<sup>20</sup> In a series of 41 copper engravings of the life of Elijah, Van Diepenbeeck also made a copper engraving that refers to this vision of Blessed Anna (Figure 10.1).<sup>21</sup> In the front we see Sister Anna from the rear. Diepenbeeck lets us stand behind her and to see what she sees: Elijah spreading out his mantle over the Carmelite chapter.

### Divine Judgement

The fourth characteristic of prophetic spirituality that sheds light on the manuscript under discussion is that the prophetic word can turn out to be either positive or negative.<sup>22</sup> The word of the Beloved as Maria Petyt perceives it is primarily positive for the king of France and his army, and negative for the Spaniards and the army of the Emperor. Moreover, it is negative for the Reformed Church of Holland.

In Scripture, a negative prophetic word is nourished by the conviction that only through destruction is a new beginning possible. This might explain how Maria can speak about 'moderate spilling of blood' (33v) and that she can say:

no wonder that the Beloved allows our side to be defeated! For how long do our people cling to and support that impious nation and draw down upon them and their country the wrath and indignation of God (37r).

Not without reason she refers to Scripture: 'that what our people have sown they will also harvest' (Gal 6:7–8), and 'God who knows the hearts of all, will

<sup>19</sup> Anne of St. Bartholomew (1669) 62–63.

<sup>20</sup> Zoege von Manteuffel (1913) 243.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel of the Virgin Mary (1680) 114. Cf. Kotschner (1985) 76–77.

<sup>22</sup> Waaijman (2002) 198.

recompense according to the works of each one, and not according to the judgement of men' (Cf. Prov 24:12; Luke 16:15) (36v). As was said before, it is a process of inner discernment that Maria Petyt is writing about. At one moment, when it seems to her that she is asked to curse the Spanish soldiers and the soldiers of the Emperor, she rejects it as if it comes from an evil spirit. However, the pressure she feels is severe. Therefore she turns towards her Beloved and says:

Beloved, if you curse them, I also curse them, but I ask, that that cursing fall only over their bodies and not over their souls (46r).

At another moment she prays likewise for the people of Holland: 'May God ensure that their punishment will only be temporal and that their souls will be saved' (37r). To Maria Petyt these negative prophetic words are unavoidable steps in the direction of God's future.

Prophets are counter voices which continue to 'undermine the self-delusion of power'.<sup>23</sup> Maria Petyt claims to see and understand what has real power. For instance, although the unity between Holland and the Spaniards seems to be strong, Maria Petyt understands that this unity will never persist: it is 'vain', 'worth nothing', 'full of tricks and deceptions' (33r).

Also, if two or three strong armies would oppose the king of France, in her mind and heart these armies are 'like a swarm of flies'. For when she considers the strength and power of God (who is in favour of the king of France), those two or three strong armies appear to be without any strength or courage (31r). In her final notes (August 1676) she repeats this self-delusion of power when she states that 'all that multitude appeared to me as a multitude of weak flies, that would succumb no matter where.' (37v).

A biblical example of this undermining of the self-delusion of power we can find in the story of Elijah at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20–40). Elijah battles the power of the prophets of Baal and their influence on the people and king Ahab. In this battle, the prophets of Baal are exposed as powerless prophets. The result of this unmasking is that Elijah orders that they have to be killed (1 Kings 18:40). That is a verse in Scripture that many people stumble over.

It is interesting to look at a depiction of this verse made by Abraham van Diepenbeeck (Figure 10.2). Although not many artists have taken up the challenge of presenting this verse, Van Diepenbeeck did.<sup>24</sup> In this representation of the life of Elijah, he shows him in the midst of the killing.

<sup>23</sup> Waaijman (2002) 213.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel a Virgine Maria (1680) 70. Cf. Kotschner (1985) 32–33.





FIGURE 10.2 Abraham van Diepenbeeck, The killing of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40).



FIGURE 10.3

*Abraham van Diepenbeeck, The killing of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40) – detail.*

Looking at this specific engraving, our attention is immediately drawn to the faces of the prophets of Baal who are lying on the ground. The picture shows swords and lances, used by men dressed in military uniforms. We see the intention to kill and we see the results: wounded or unconscious or perhaps dead people, faces grimaced from pain and terror, some seem to call for mercy. Remarkably, we see hardly any blood (the figure in the front has a spraying shoulder wound and one figure shows a scratched cheek). At the centre, we see the prophet Elijah, dressed in a Carmelite habit. He points at the soldier in the front who is stepping on the fertility (the vital parts) of one of the prophets of Baal.

Elijah seems to be stoic towards the suffering of the prophets of Baal. However, when we look at the close-up (Figure 10.3), we can see that Elijah's face is not stoical: his upper lip is lifted (instead of a so-called stiff upper lip) – Elijah shows emotions. Also his eye-brows seem to frown.

Elijah's face is surrounded by the aureole, with a kind of empty space in between. Looking at this face, the world around the face seems to have the significance of a vision – a symbolic representation: Elijah – as in a prophetic sight – looks at what happens: the prophets of Baal are stripped of their power, of their fertility. This is an image of the self-delusion of power.

Often the Word of God is most uncomfortable. First of all it is uncomfortable for the prophet but also for the audience of the prophet. The Word of God confronts as in the words Elijah spoke to King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1; 18:18; 21:17–26) confronting the king with his acts. It is not without reason that Elijah fled as soon as he spoke to Ahab (1 Kings 17:1–2), and that he mostly remains in solitude, coming down, showing himself to the king, only as the word of God speaks to him.

A clear difference between Maria Petyt and the biblical prophets seems to be that Maria did not speak out. Unlike the biblical prophets, she did not tell the people what was wrong. The core-business of this lay Carmelite, who has withdrawn into a hermitage, is her prayer. But is this difference really crucial? It depends on the perception of prayer. For Maria Petyt her prayer was without any doubt influencing and changing the world (41r; 30r; 43v; etc.).

Maria Petyt testifies that she never received a divine command to go physically to the king. Her call is to help him by prayer (43r; cf 38r). She knows that the Word of the Beloved that she perceives will not be welcome in her country. She explicitly asks for these writings to be kept secret as long as she lives. They were meant to be known to her spiritual father (Michael) alone. The reason for it is that she fears a time of trial in which she can be attacked (30r). Her fear is not without reason. She writes and bares her inner thoughts that do not correspond with the thought of that time. On the contrary, they are completely opposite the general opinion. By writing down these inner thoughts about the invasion of the king of France, she makes herself vulnerable. What she really seems to fear is that it might influence her inner conversation: the spirit would be 'obscured' (31r).

### Prophetic Tradition

We have considered the manuscript from the perspective of four aspects that characterize prophetic spirituality: that prophecy originates in the Word of God, that the prophet sees things from the vantage point of God's future, that the prophet is concerned with kings and that the prophet announces a divine judgement.

My question was: What can this manuscript teach us about the prophetic dimension of Maria's religious life? The main contribution, in my opinion, is that Maria Petyt tries to describe what is behind the biblical expression 'The Lord said'. In Scripture, we hear very little about the processes of discernment that prophets have to endure. Maria Petyt repeatedly tries to put words on it. In this perspective it is interesting that Maria Petyt also recaptures an expression that is at the heart of Elijah's prophecy: standing in front of the Lord (1 Kings 17:1). Maria Petyt experiences this in her inner self:

There the spirit sees his Beloved God as it were face to face, there he speaks as it were with my mouth to His mouth, with my heart to His heart, there he is allowed as it were to rest and take refuge within the heart of God, something divine which the soul cannot explain (31v).

The manuscript shows more remarkable similarities to Elijah. For instance her use of the word 'zeal', recalling Elijah's famous words: 'I have been zealous with much zeal for the Lord' (1 Kings 19:10.14). Likewise, Maria Petyt finds zeal in herself and she encourages the kings and their soldiers also to have zeal for the Catholic faith (38v). Another similarity is that she writes that her prayer is opposed to the prayer of a large number of people. Maria Petyt is convinced that her prayer will be more effective than theirs, for the power of her prayer stems from her Beloved. It reminds us of the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, when he was alone against four hundred prophets of Baal and that only his prayer was answered (43v). Also Maria Petyt's suffering of sadness, hostility, bitterness and darkness (34r) is known in the Elijan tradition (1 Kings 19:4.10). Finally, when Maria Petyt describes how prayer nourishes her more than a sumptuous banquet would (47r), she uses a biblical image of divine feeding. It reminds us of Elijah, who received a scone and a jar of water that gave him the remarkable strength to walk for forty days and forty nights. (1 Kings 19:6–8). These associations between the story of Elijah and the writings of Maria Petyt reveal that she might well have experienced herself standing in the prophetic tradition.

What this manuscript can teach us about prophetic spirituality is how it is rooted in the inner life in which God speaks and transforms the prophet to the core. In Scripture the focus of the texts seems to be primarily restricted to the content of the Word of God. Maria gives us the opportunity to hear explicitly about the inner processes that lie beneath the prophetic action.

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# Epilogue

*Joseph Chalmers*

This book is an excellent collection of contributions on the life and experience of Maria Petyt and provides some fascinating new insights into this little known but important figure in Carmelite history and spirituality. The seven specialists provide many new details about the life of Maria Petyt and her spiritual involvement in the Dutch War. The Latin manuscript of her writings which she entrusted to the care of her spiritual director, Michael of St. Augustine, is published for the first time along with a translation. Unfortunately there are some missing parts and indecipherable words but the sense is clear. Other contributions describe some interesting parallels with and influences on the life and writings of Maria Petyt. Overall one is struck by the new light shed on Maria Petyt in these descriptions and interpretations. It seems worthwhile to highlight some of these new elements and to give an indication regarding possible further research.

## Her Life and Her Prayer

Maria Petyt is an important figure in the history of Carmelite spirituality. She lived a profound life of prayer as a committed lay woman and lay Carmelite. She had a yearning for union with her Beloved (Jesus) from an early age and to dedicate herself to him in the religious life, although it is heartening to note that she also had the normal feelings of most young women. She could very easily have followed the path to marriage and family but circumstances shaped the direction of her life. A disease of the eye meant that she could not continue in the abbey of the canonesses she had entered but this disappointment did not deflect her from her dedication to God. She placed herself under an unknown Carmelite who had rather strict views. Then Michael of St. Augustine came on the scene and he seemed to suit her more as her spirit began to unfold and soar under his direction. Her bodily mortifications began to take a back seat and what came to the fore was her desire to be in union with God. Her devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, was profound, and she sought to reflect in her own soul the image of Our Lady by means of which motherly and compassionate qualities would shine out.



Michael of St. Augustine, who is himself an important figure, for his influence on the spread of the Carmelite 'strict observance', which eventually impacted the whole Order down to modern times, as well as his understanding of the 'mariaform' shape of the Carmelite life, was Maria Petyt's spiritual director for many years. It has long been wondered who influenced whom and in what direction. This book points us in a certain direction although more work remains to be done in this area.<sup>1</sup> In Esther van de Vate's chapter on Michael's redaction of the writings of Maria Petyt, she points out that 'the current image of Maria Petyt, from the point of view of historiography and spirituality, would have been radically different without the editorial work of her spiritual director Michael of St. Augustine'.

It is the hitherto undiscovered manuscript on the Dutch War which has caused a revision in the image of Maria Petyt and her relationship with Michael of St. Augustine. We discover for the first time her opposition to Jansenism and her political involvement through a profound prayer life. We discover also her sense of herself as a prophet and we see certain areas where she and Michael of St. Augustine may not have been in total agreement. There is ample room for further reflection on the relationship between the two and how each impacted the other's relationship with God. This book provides a solid base for further reflection.

Maria experienced great darkness at times when her spiritual exercises lost their attraction and she felt drawn to the 'Nothing'. Although the same term can be found in contemporary writings, it seems clear that Maria carried it to another level, which had little to do with external penances but instead reflected a profound love story between Maria and the Beloved. Her experience of darkness, when better understood through more profound research, will have an effect on sanjuanist studies in that she bears witness to the profoundly positive reasons for the dark night.<sup>2</sup> She believed that the darkness of the night was an opportunity to practice virtue. The experience, though intensely painful, was positive in that it was suffering borne for others to expiate their sins. The influence of her experience of the night on her concept of the 'Nothing' could contribute greatly to the study of the positive aspects of the experience of darkness on the spiritual journey.

These studies on Maria Petyt's life of prayer particularly during the Dutch War bring about a shift in her image also regarding the influence of women spiritual writers and thinkers in the Southern Netherlands of the 17th century.

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1 Cf. Possanzini (1998) 158–170. Possanzini gives a good description of the spiritual relationship between the two.

2 Cf. Deblaere (1962) 169ff.

The biographical article written by Esther van de Vate, which focuses on the latter half of Maria Petyt's life, gives a lot of attention to her apostolic and visionary prayer within the context of the strict observance of the Flemish Carmelite Province.

A preview of a larger historical study on archival data concerning the community life of Maria Petyt is offered by Michel van Meerbeeck. In his article about daily life in Maria's hermitage, the Cluyse, the reader is informed about the order of the day and the main structures in this little community of tertiaries. The author derives his information from the hitherto unknown ordinances and other financial and notarial sources which add new knowledge to the study of the historical background of her life. These data are also important regarding the tensions that emerged within and around the young community.

### The Manuscript

The postulator of the Carmelite Order, Giovanni Grosso, gives a detailed description of the manuscript called *Vita Venerabilis Matris Mariae a Sta. Teresia Tertiariae ordinis Bmae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo*,<sup>3</sup> which is of great value for the historical research on the spirituality and life of Maria Petyt. The history of this manuscript could provide us with important information about the problems Michael of St. Augustine might have faced during the editing process of her writings. Grosso concludes that further research on the manuscript, particularly when it is studied in conjunction or in parallel with the Flemish version, may offer interesting new information and useful clarifications regarding the experience of Maria Petyt.

In Esther van de Vate's chapter about Michael of St. Augustine's editing of the writings of Maria Petyt, she has found some interesting external references in the correspondence of Michael of St. Augustine, which made her reconsider his role. In response to the questions about why the Latin manuscript was never published and why the publication of the Dutch edition was delayed for several years, some scenarios are outlined. Van de Vate also examined to what extent the Roman anti-mystical turn could have influenced the edition of Maria's writings. She concludes that in the 1680s the reception of Maria Petyt's spirituality could have been far more sensitive than has been assumed till now.

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3 Rome, Arch. Post. III. 70. (Curia Generalizia, Via Giovanni Lanza 138, 00184 Rome)



## The Dutch War

Marie Petyt exercised a spiritual motherhood in regard to the Carmelites of the Belgian Province and then more widely for 'sinners', especially those involved in the Dutch war, who play such a prominent part in her own unedited writings. This is a completely new element in her spiritual physiognomy and one that is particularly studied in this book. As Veronie Meeuwssen writes in her chapter, this newly discovered text 'provides an opportunity to scrutinize her spirituality anew'. We have made a beginning in this book but no doubt future researchers and authors will also reflect on Maria Petyt's political involvement and how this affected her mystical relationship with Jesus or indeed how the relationship shaped her outlook on her world and its problems.

Maria was convinced that God was directing her to side with the French king particularly in his war in the Netherlands. She was also particularly concerned with the problem of Jansenism and its effect on the Church. Veronie Meeuwssen describes the process of discernment of spirits followed by Maria Petyt to decide whether some impulse was from God or not. Meeuwssen shows which criteria of discernment are used by Maria Petyt and that although Maria had great confidence in the direction of Michael of St. Augustine, whom she saw as a representative of God, she believed that in the case of the Dutch war she was directed by the Beloved himself.

Maria's role in the Dutch wars was to pray for the French king and his armies. She believed that he acted according to God's will and her whole focus was to do God's will in her own life. In Holland the Protestants had the upper hand and oppressed Catholics so she believed it was Louis XIV's intention to win back Holland for Christ and his Church. She also saw Jansenism as a dangerous heretical movement that was threatening the Catholic Church in the region. She believed that the French king was opposed to the heretical ideas. The Spanish king was also a Catholic and, according to Maria, should have been fighting on the same side as Louis. She looked upon both kings as her sons but favoured the French king as she believed that he was doing God's will. She was aware of the French king's scandalous life and she asked to take his sins upon herself so that he might focus on accomplishing his task given him by God.

Obedience came to be a problem for her though she always thought highly of this virtue but when her political leaders demanded that all religious in the area pray for the success of the Spanish king, she could not obey for she was convinced that the French king was in the right. Furthermore she was convinced that all the prayers of the other religious would not prevail over her poor prayers since God clearly desired the victory of the French king. She even clashed with and refused to follow her director, Michael of St. Augustine, to

whom she had pledged obedience, because she trusted her own inner experience.

### Parallels and Influences

Esther van de Vate has an important chapter on the political and religious backdrop to Maria Petyt's life. The 17th century was a very violent and unstable time in Europe. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which put an end to the Thirty Years War, unfortunately did not ensure peace for long, and so we read of the warfare in the document on the Dutch War. The newly discovered document from Maria Petyt does show how her personal experiences were shaped by the larger historical context.

Van de Vate teases out the implications of the process of confessionalization and the impact of the Council of Trent, particularly on the Carmelite Order. The spirituality of the Order had a profound impact on Maria's spiritual development. Maria too had a profound impact on the spirituality of the Order, particularly on the development of the reform "strictior observantia". Van de Vate also shows how the redemptive prayer style of Maria Petyt was understandable given the Catholic culture in which she had been brought up. She also lived during the anti-Jansenist struggle and she was affected by the Jansenist view of Our Lady which she considered to be blasphemous.

The chapter by Mirjam de Baar on the comparison between Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon shows Maria's translation of her inner experience into external action was not completely singular. De Baar points out that their lives until adulthood followed more or less identical paths although Bourignon ended up by leaving the Catholic Church. It seems that they did not know each other, yet they wrote their spiritual autobiographies at much the same time, while they were living in the same town, Mechelen.

It is clear that Teresa of Avila, and particularly the book of her *Life*, which was widely available to Maria and Antoinette, had a direct influence on Petyt at least, as was shown in the studies of Albert Deblaere, Teresa also seems to influence the writing of Bourignon. Another influence on both is Augustine's *Confessions*, which de Baar notes 'is regarded as a paradigm for the genre of conversion literature in western Christianity.'

Both Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon claimed divine inspiration for their writings. However, women who claimed any sort of spiritual experience, particularly in the 17th century, were subject to mistrust and control in a male dominated culture. They had to have recourse to certain 'strategies' in order to be acceptable. In the case of Maria Petyt, her works were published posthu-

mously by her spiritual director, Michael of St. Augustine. In doing so he edited and contextualized them and it is principally due to this presentation that she has come down to us as a mystic. However the discovery of the hitherto unknown manuscript shows us another side of Maria Petyt. She, like Antoinette Bourignon, understood herself to be a prophet, even though she did not want Michael to publish her prophecies as long as she was living.

De Baar suggests some interesting directions for a future comparative study of Maria Petyt and Antoinette Bourignon in regard to the cultural context which nourished their spiritual ideas as well as the ideas themselves. Despite the fact that they took up opposing positions on the question of Jansenism, they did have a great deal in common. Never do they refer to each other in their known writings but it would be fascinating to discover if their paths crossed at any point or whether they knew of each other.

Elisabeth Hense points out in her chapter on the spirituality of Teresa of Avila and the manuscript of Maria Petyt about the Dutch War that the spirituality of Teresa 'permeates Maria Petyt's writings to such an extent that we cannot fully understand her autobiography and letters without knowing Teresa's main works. Teresa's legacy seems to be the key not only to Maria's Dutch writings but also to the Latin manuscript about the Dutch War.'

Basing herself on *The Interior Castle*, Hense shows that Maria Petyt filtered her experiences through the same levels of mental prayer as those explained by Teresa. In fact it was only when Maria studied the writings of Teresa that she began to understand and have confidence in her own experience. From the age of twelve, Maria 'enjoyed spending her time absorbed in God's presence'. Often the experience would last for two hours without fatigue and filled with a sweet love.

Maria felt an intense kinship with Teresa of Avila and took her name as her patroness when she committed herself to the Third Order of the Carmelites. Elisabeth Hense traces a number of parallels in the manuscript on the Dutch War with the later mansions of *The Interior Castle*. A more lengthy study of this aspect is called for and I am sure would produce some fascinating findings both for the understanding of Maria Petyt as well as for the reception and influence of Teresa's writings.

Anne-Marie Bos examines the recently discovered manuscript of Maria Petyt from the point of view of the prophetic vocation. She assumes that her formation in Carmelite spirituality, mediated by Michael of St. Augustine, since it is impregnated with the spirit of the Prophet Elijah, had a profound impact on Maria's self-understanding. Prophetic prayer was rooted in her inner life and initiated a thoroughgoing transformation process. Clearly Maria did not speak out publicly like the prophets of old. Instead her prayer was focused

on the desire that God's will be accomplished during the Dutch War. She clearly believed that her prayer was influencing and changing the world.

### Future Directions

This book is a profound beginning of a study which will surely take us in a number of directions in the future. The new information gained on the personality and spiritual life of Maria Petyt is highly significant for understanding this figure who is gaining ever more respect as an important exemplar of the spirit of Carmel. Maria Petyt's experience has something to say about the history of the place of women in the Church and their impact on the major questions of their day. Her relationship, if any, with Antoinette Bourignon, and the spiritual currents of their day, in particular Protestantism and Jansenism, needs to be studied in greater depth and would surely produce some interesting findings. The impact of the Prophet Elijah on Carmelite spirituality in shaping its prophetic self-understanding has been taken a step forward by the discovery of the manuscript which reveals the involvement of this Carmelite woman in the political affairs of her day, even if only from afar, through her profound prayer. Finally, as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of Teresa's birth, we can see in the figure of Maria Petyt another example of how the Carmelite Order in all its manifestations took into itself the teaching and experience of the saint.

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